

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2020

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1. PRESIDENT’S RAMBLINGS

While I – and many other people – are pleased to note that the Covid-19 regulations are slowly being eased all over the world, we are still restricted in our choice of mountain trips. So many of my ramblings are now “virtual” – more on that in a minute.

As I write, our activities are still limited in terms of where we may or may not travel to climb. In this respect, us southerners are a good deal better off than our northern cousins. We do at least have considerable mountains within our municipal boundaries so that each of the Western Cape Sections have access to the mountains we love.

The northern sections – notably Jo’burg and Magaliesberg – are much more limited in the scope of what they can and can’t do. It is obviously frustrating to be stuck in the huge conurbation that powers this country and not be able to access the beautiful kloofs and crags of the Magaliesberg range. The Club is very cognisant of this situation which is why we have lodged a formal application with the powers that be in an attempt to ameliorate this dire situation. We are optimistic that we will succeed as manifestly, walking and climbing in the mountains is good for both body and spirit and can be done quite safely even under the most rigorous C-19 regulations!

We therefore ask members to respect the regulations as far as is practicable until our application has been adjudicated and we are able to access the mountains once more. The application is largely being driven in Johannesburg by Jenny Paterson, our indefatigable Secretary. Please do not make her life any harder by asking for permits to Club properties until we are able to, once again, get out there.

In terms of other “activities”, the Club, through the Cape Town Section recently held its first “virtual” slide show via the Zoom platform. For this first presentation, we limited the audience so we could see how it worked – and it worked very well! Your President presented slides from a trip to Patagonia in 1978(!) to a “select” group of Cape Town members plus several international “virtual” visitors. People logged in from Argentina, Canada, UK, Switzerland, Belgium, New Zealand and even from Jo’burg! The (recently scanned) slides were well-received and the discussion that ensued after the slides was most enlightening! I think we will be repeating this even after we are out of lock-down conditions! Many thanks to Anita in the Cape Town office for dealing with many of the admin issues and to Christina Hagen for hosting the Zoom meeting.

We are slowly getting to the aims that I outlined in the last National Newsletter and there are several things in the pipeline that I hope to report on next time – when I am not under such pressure to produce this rambling!

But do look at some of the links that are provided in the sections below – there are some really interesting bits and pieces as well as ideas for future trips...

2. COVID-19 REGULATIONS

As was noted in the President's Ramblings (above), we as an organisation, need to be seen to be following the rules otherwise we may well damage our Club's image in the eyes of government and of the vast bulk of the people of this country. So please bear with the Club as we attempt to improve the situation as much as we can.

PLEASE STAY SAFE!!!

3. UIAA UPDATE

The UIAA continues most of its normal activities with numbers of initiatives on the go. Members are urged to go to the UIAA web site - <https://www.theuiaa.org/> - for more information plus a load of other useful data.

3.1 COVID-19

"For a large number of the member federations, the COVID-19 situation continues to be the dominating challenge in both private and public life.

The UIAA is fully aware of the hardships, and in some cases the intense suffering, brought about by the pandemic. A Covid-19 working group has been set up to provide support for member federations where applicable."

Following up on last month's story about donation of masks to the Frere Hospital in the Eastern Cape by a UIAA-accredited Chinese laboratory, as noted, this proved to be proved an exercise in frustration for those of us directly involved – most notably, Eckart von Delft, the MCSA representative on the UIAA medical Commission. We last reported that the masks arrived at O R Tambo – only to discover that while they had arrived before the cut-off date for donations to be allowed in duty-free, that date had passed while they sat in the ware-house at the airport and we now had to pay about R25 000 to have them released through customs! The Chinese came to our rescue once more and offered to pay this amount! Then came the truck drivers' strike! However, the masks did finally make it to the right address and all is well in that respect!

3.2 UIAA PUBLISHES 2018 CARBON FOOTPRINT CALCULATION

As part of its commitment to tackling climate change and reducing its own CO₂ emissions, the UIAA has published its first annual Carbon Footprint Calculation.

This report, covering 2018, outlines the ongoing results of monitoring and reporting of the UIAA's carbon footprint, which is in response to its signed commitment in early 2019 and participation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Sports for Climate Action.

This might be something that the MCSA might attempt to emulate. Please go to <https://www.theuiaa.org/mountaineering/uiaa-publishes-2018-carbon-footprint-calculation/> for more information. Any volunteers..?!?

3.3 CERTIFIED EQUIPMENT

The UIAA Certified Equipment database comprises a public search function which allows mountaineers, climbers and all interested stakeholders to look for UIAA Safety Label certified products available in the market across all accredited brands and manufacturers.

Go to <https://www.theuiaa.org/safety-standards/certified-equipment/> to access this facility.

3.3 2019 UIAA MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD

While this has been one of the unfortunate casualties of the Covid-19 pandemic and was cancelled for this year, we will need to take the opportunity to enter our Club's outreach programmes as a contender for the award in 2021. Your President will be leaning on the leaders of our outreach programmes to put together an entry. Check out the UIAA web page on this one: <https://www.theuiaa.org/category/2019-uiaa-mountain-protection-award/>

Following on from the item that was included in the last National Newsletter (above), The MCSA National Environmental Convenor, Maretha Alant (who is also on the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission), sent the following message:

"As a reminder, the 2020 Respect the Mountains movement has been launched and it would be much appreciated if you could spread the word. The Respect the Mountains flyer and the Registration Guidelines are attached. There is an online registration form that needs to be completed.

I suggest Sections list potential projects for inclusion and send a brief description with photos to me. Let's aim to get 5 MCSA projects on the website for 2020. I can complete the online registration when we have the projects ready for submission"

The links are: <https://www.theuiaa.org/the-uiaa-mountain-sustainability/respect-the-mountains/>

and

<https://www.theuiaa.org/uiaa/fresh-impetus-for-the-uiaa-respect-the-mountains-movement/>

4. ASIAN ALPINE E-NEWS

The Club continues to receive this fascinating newsletter and I urge Club members to investigate the latest edition – and the previous issues – at https://asian-alpine-e-news.com/asian_alpine_e-new_issue_no72.pdf

5. MOUNTAIN RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Another interesting site is the Mountain Research Initiative (<https://mailchi.mp/mountainresearchinitiative.org/mri-july-2020-newsletter?e=85c7433ba2>).

This organisation reports on mountain research around the world and some of this is very interesting and pertinent to our activities. Of local interest is the publication of "A Scientific Bibliography of the Drakensberg, Maloti & Adjacent Lowlands". This was produced by the Afromontane Research Unit at the university of the Free State This may be purchased from the MRI web site

6. FACEBOOK AND WEB PAGES

6.1 National: abbreviated link for the national MCSA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MCSA125/

6.2 Links for all the sections' web pages are on the MCSA national webpage.

7. NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

Please send any newsworthy items for inclusion in MCSA National News Letter with Greg Moseley at: moseleyg@zsd.co.za

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

“If an expedition cannot be planned in half an hour on the back of an envelope, it is not worth going on!”

Probably either Eric Shipton or Bill Tilman!