

MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2021

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1. PRESIDENT’S RAMBLES

Well, that is it! 2021 is virtually done and chalk dusted! The National Committee wishes all members, a blessed Christmas, happy holidays, a fantastic festive season and a 2022 filled peace and mountainous adventures.

I recently attended an evening club meeting of the Magaliesberg Section and listened to an informative presentation by Otti Nesor, on a Virtual Traverse of the Magaliesberg. One could not help being impressed by the institutional knowledge and information which resides within the experience of our members, but also by the value and beauty of our properties, many of which are not visited on a regular basis. Hopefully Covid is waning, and this can be rectified. The evening was certainly an inspiration to spend more time exploring (and protecting) the many properties to which we have access.

We are also in the process of re-establishing contact with the members of the CAMC, (the Confederation of African Mountain Clubs), we have had positive responses from Kilimanjaro Mountain Club, The Mountain Club of Zimbabwe, the Mountain Club of Malawi and the Mountain Club of Kenya. There are of course many opportunities to collaborate on issues of interest to the mountaineers of Africa, and also the possibility of a reciprocal arrangement/agreements so that members could have use of each club’s mountain huts and/or equipment. Discussions are at an early stage, but we anticipate great progress during 2022.

This year saw Kuba Miszewski take over as the new chairperson of the Paarl/Wellington Section from Riaan Doorduyn. I would express our gratitude and thanks to Riaan for the commitment time and effort he has spent not only on the affairs of PW but also as a member of the National committee and looking after the interests of the MCSA in general. We look forward to working with Kuba, who brings a wealth of MCSA, Scouting and organisational experience to our committee.

I opened this ramble with news of an inspiring talk, if you have not yet had the opportunity of enjoying the UIAA Webinar, the third in the Mountain Network Series: “Mountain Women” which is built around content from “Herstory”, you should make time to do so, it too is truly inspirational.

11 December marks the United Nations' annual International Mountain Day. This year's theme is *sustainable mountain tourism*. A day to be spent, climbing, hiking, enjoying or even reading about (and planning to visit) our mountains in Africa!

I recently received the following greeting from a long-standing friend: "Look to the Hills!" This certainly seems entirely appropriate, (for more than one reason), and hence I use the same greeting to you all.

That's Me!

2. INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY

The official theme for 2021 is sustainable mountain tourism.

Sustainable tourism in mountains can contribute to creating additional and alternative livelihood options and promoting poverty alleviation, social inclusion, as well as landscape and biodiversity conservation. It is a way to preserve the natural, cultural and spiritual heritage, to promote local crafts and high value products, and celebrate many traditional practices such as local festivals.

Mountain tourism attracts around 15 to 20 percent of global tourism. Tourism, however, is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities on all continents. In mountains, the restrictions of the pandemic have further compounded the vulnerabilities of mountain communities.

This crisis can be seen as an opportunity to rethink mountain tourism and its impact on natural resources and livelihoods, to manage it better, and to harness it towards a more resilient, green and inclusive future.



3. COVID-19 UPDATE

I had hoped to be able to say that this part of the National Newsletter is no longer a permanent fixture. Indeed, the vaccine roll-out is proceeding apace, but it now appears that

we may be heading back into the woods! The omicron variant, first identified by our own excellent scientists, appears to be taking over the role as chief villain and causing all sorts of issues around the world – let alone here in South Africa.

So – it still comes down to how the various Sections of the Club will deal with vaccinated and non-vaccinated members. We are actually fortunate(?) that as a Club, we do seem to have a choice. Most members are probably well able to get their jabs so it then becomes a personal thing. It seems to the Editor, that at least down here at the southern end of Africa, that meet leaders are increasingly saying that only vaccinated people may attend any specific meet. Possibly we should run parallel meets for the non-vaccinated! Any takers for that idea!

[Here the Editor interjects with a personal note. I would rather not attend a Club meet/event where non-vaccinated people are present. Consequently, I will enquire as to the vaccination status of the other participants and decide whether to continue or not based on their replies.]



Your President (and the Editor) also has the “advantage” of reviewing the Covid situation world-wide through the UIAA Covid working group. These findings and a review are to be found on the UIAA web site should you be interested to know more.

But to end this piece with my usual exhortation:

PLEASE STAY SAFE!!!

And look carefully at the guidelines and (necessary) regulations so that we can all enjoy the Club and its amenities.

4. MCSA JOURNAL 2021

This is a continuing call for contributions for the 2021 Journal (No 124). Please download and familiarise yourselves with the Guidelines, StyleSheet and use the Photo Template on the MCSA National website, to be found on this link: <https://mcsa.org.za/about/journal/>

The deadline is 31 January 2022.

Please do take note that submissions are to be as WORD documents (not formatted), and please take note of the procedures for photographs. Send to jennyapaterson@gmail.com

Thank you and looking forward to some super contributions!

5. WALKING WITH GIANTS

There are 1-2 places available to join Norman Owen-Smith on a 13-day trek following the Galana River through Tsavo National Park in Kenya during mid-February. This is fully supported slack-packing. For more information, contact norman.owen-smith@wits.ac.za or google 'Walking with Giants' via Africa Geographic.

6. UIAA UPDATE

The UIAA continues pretty well all 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.

6.1 UIAA PLAYS ACTIVE ROLE AT COP26

Since COP21 in Paris in 2015, the UIAA has had a regular presence at the conference. Spearheaded by its Mountain Protection Commission, this forms part of the UIAA's active involvement in international events and initiatives related to climate change and the mountain environment. This includes activities related to the MoU between the UIAA and the United Nations Environment Programme signed in 2020.

On 4 November, the UIAA announced that it has become a signatory and launch partner of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

The UIAA has also published two statements related to its commitment to Climate Change projects – 2015, aligning with COP objectives – 2019, a summary of Climate Change commitments following the 2019 UIAA General Assembly.

The UIAA is also represented in the Sustainable Summits Conference documentary for COP26. This will be premiered on Tuesday 9 November. The film will also be released on the Sustainable Summits YouTube and their website shortly after the premiere.

The official trailer can be found at: <https://youtu.be/4o18xcYT8Lo>

6.2 2020-2021 UIAA MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

As you will all know – from careful reading of previous Newsletters(!) – the UIAA Mountain Protection Award was recently finalised. The MCSA entered with a heli-hacking project in the Fynbos Biome and we had high hopes! These were unfortunately not realised but we are free to enter it again next year, if it is so decided.

The winners of the various categories are given here (below):

- **Giroparchi Nature Trail** - by Fondation Grand Paradis, a project based in the north of Italy was named as winner of the 2020-2021 UIAA Mountain Protection Award partnered by the Bally Peak Outlook Foundation.
- **MacGillycuddy Reeks** - European Innovation Partnership Project from Ireland has been named Runner-Up as part of the 2020-2021 UIAA Mountain Protection Award
- **Zéro Déchet Mont Blanc** - with the No Bins Project has been named Best New Initiative as part of the 2020-2021 UIAA Mountain Protection Award

All very worthy projects and we congratulate the winners. Go to the link below to access the YouTube video of the award ceremony and links to the projects.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNdDhJul_r4

However – there is always a however – your Editor is quite sure that if some of the MCSA initiatives were properly formulated and presented, we would be a shoo-in for the award. I am thinking specifically of our outreach programmes country-wide. How about it guys..?! I have bounced this off a couple of people at the UIAA and they are in agreement that we have a real shot! And EUR20 000 translates into a LOT of Rands! Watch this space



6.3 UIAA MEDICAL COMMISSION – TRAINING COURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Many countries offer regular courses in mountain medicine. The medical commissions of the UIAA and ICAR, together with the International Society for Mountain Medicine (ISMM) established minimal requirements for a formal diploma course in August 1997 (Interlaken, Switzerland). Many course organisers adopted these standards and the resulting Diploma in Mountain Medicine (DiMM) has become a widely respected qualification. The regulations have been updated to reflect developments in mountain medicine, and to ensure that the high standard of the DiMM is maintained. It is the intention of the UIAA Medical Commission to bring these courses and training opportunities to all parts of the world, and possibly where such courses are not on offer yet. In 2022, MedCom is planning to run a dedicated course alongside its annual meeting, scheduled to be held in South Africa. It is due to take place in Stellenbosch with the intent to cover topics specific to the needs of the country.

7. FACEBOOK AND WEB PAGES

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

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

8. NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

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

These have been distinctly lacking over the last years – so please remember to send any items that may be of interest to the broader, national membership for inclusion here.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

“We always destroy the thing we love the most”.

Oscar Wilde