



Mountain Club of South Africa KwaZulu-Natal Section

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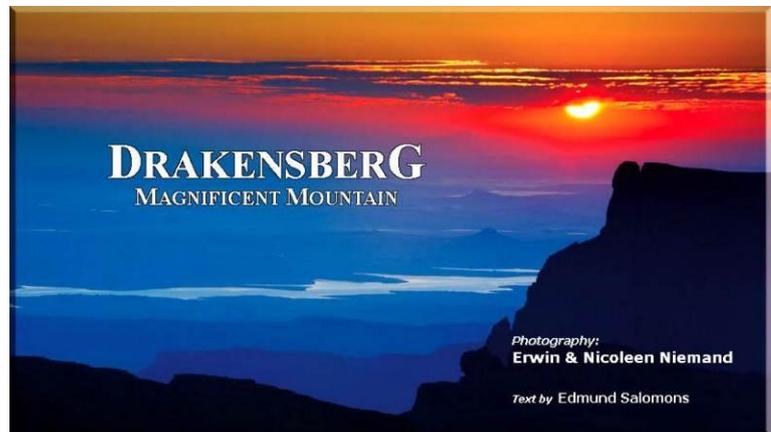
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NEWSLETTER

July/Aug/Sept 2011

Club News

- Welcome to the following new members who have recently joined the Club: John Alexander and Michael Mason - also Honorary Members Mervyn Henwood (the Club auditor) and Lt. Col. Trevor Williamson (O.I.C. 15 Squadron).
- It is with regret that we hear of the death of Tessa Cousins (56), who was killed in a climbing accident caused by a large rock falling on her, in the Cuillin Mountains in Scotland. Tessa's partner, Dirk Versveld, broke his leg in the accident. Our sincere sympathies are extended to Tessa's family and friends.
- July Camp is in progress - from the 2 to 16 July, at Injisuthi. Our best wishes go to Rikki and her team of helpers, for good weather and a successful camp. Graham Smith has used his engineering talents to build a special fireplace for using at the campsite - hope all goes well with the results of his hard work!
- Roy Gooden has kindly donated a number of mountaineering books for the Club Library; thanks Roy!
- Talking of books, Edmund Salomons has written the text for a new book, called "**DRAKENSBERG - Magnificent Mountain**", which is a coffee-table book that covers the region which we as visitors and inhabitants of this area have come to know as the "*Drakensberg*". The book was published by Oshana Publishing (<http://www.oshana.co.za>); the photographs were taken by Erwin & Nicoleen Niemand, who spent three years in the Drakensberg capturing its ever-changing beauty.



Enquiries: Edmund Salomons email: inkosana@inkosana.co.za

- **PLEASE NOTE:** that the Club Committee's email addresses have changed - refer to the Contacts List on the back page of the Newsletter. The new addresses are also shown on the Club's website.

- **2011 SUBS - some members have not paid their 2011 subs as yet - reminder Statements are being posted to those members; so PLEASE PAY YOUR SUBS as soon as possible.**

Climbing News

The Brian Godbold Award - Mountaineering Incentive Scheme

The Brian Godbold Award is an incentive scheme to encourage KZ-N Section members to climb the classic routes of the Drakenberg. In order to qualify, climbers have to climb 7 of a list of 10 peaks via a rock or ice route. The list of peaks is shown below. **The first recipient of this award is Hannelie Morris, who summited the following peaks:**

Sentinel via the Angus-Leppan Route
Mponjwane via the S crack variation. (her final peak on 1 May 2011)
Bell via Hooper's Route
Pyramid via the Standard Route
Column via the Escarpment Arête
Monk's Cowl via the Standard Route
Rhino Peak via the SE Arête

There are at least another 2 people who are close behind! Who will be next?

A certificate of accomplishment will be awarded to climbers who successfully summit any 7 of the following 10 Drakensberg peaks. The start of the scheme is back dated to 1 January 2004.

1. Sentinel Peak
2. Devil's Tooth
3. Mponjwane Peak
4. The Bell
5. The Column
6. The Pyramid
7. Monk's Cowl
8. The Injisuthi Western Triplet
9. Giant's Castle
10. Rhino Peak

Climbing Mponj

by Hannelie Morris

Having always wanted to climb Mponj, I eventually put it on the meetsheet for the 1st of May long weekend. Ten of us hiked up Rokeries with lots of climbing gear, warm clothes and a good deal of food. And was the weather cold! We collected water from drips of ice stalactites as we got to the top of Rokeries. We were at Mponj Cave early enough to be able to check and plan our route from the escarpment before the mist came in.

Up at 5 am and got going shortly after. BUT we nearly got bowled out with the scramble down to the start of the route – a crazy downwards climbing move to do in the dark and cold!!! All went well from there onwards. Thanks to superb beta from Gavin Raubenheimer, the climbing went without mishap. Although it nearly was not the case, as I had dropped our route description, pictures and all the beta about halfway up. Luckily we could retrieve it. I hope to never forget the final S-crack - what superb climbing!! All three parties were at the top by 1 in the afternoon, and after a few quick photos we abseiled down, and were drinking tea in the cave again by 4 pm – thanks to Gordon for fetching water!! It was really lovely to have the support team on the other side, taking photos, shouting abuse and just making us feel less lonely!



Climbing parties: Hannelie Morris and Josh Pickering, Klara and Georg Pollinger (Germans who love travelling and doing what everyone doesn't do), Tony van Tonder and Bugs Sprouse.

Support team: Gordon Jenkins, Ian Bailey, Cally Henderson and Chris Joubert (a lonely half-stranger from the Free State, who then hiked on to Witsies).

WIT UMFOLOZI MEET 16-19TH JUNE 2011 *by Ian Bailey (also photos)*

A very successful meet was held during this longish weekend with some 21 people attending at its height on the Saturday. This enabled the "camping" fee for all to be held at the group rate of R50pppn, thanks to the landowner Mr Greef, who continues to make significant improvements to the venue. The two rondavels have been rebuilt and boast washbasins in or outside, as well as a guard hut with Mkhize, the guard from the old camp across the river, in attendance.

It was great to see the old diehards including Jan de Groot, who cooked breakfast for all takers, as well as a selection of strong young sport climbers who will be representing South Africa at the World Junior Championships in France later this year. It was amazing to see Scott and Trent attempting, and finally conquering a 27 on the Warrior Wall (that was nearer a 29 - so they said - climbers days are not what they used to be!). Anthony Van Tonder bolted and led a bold new line, the first for 2 years - which included quite a lot of gardening and he emerged victorious after dark, covered in soil and grass roots.

Even the older (and beginner) climbers can successfully lead the easier, bolted short route, making this a very versatile venue. More visits are needed however, to keep the paths to the other crags open and the routes free from vegetation, although this wasn't really a problem. As always, the evenings round the campfire were hilarious, with much ribald humour and war stories as

the beer and wine flowed. But unusually, no-one was sleeping on the deck as it was rather chilly (although there were Yoga classes in the morning – see pic below), but climbing shirtless was a pleasure by midday.

Details of Anthony's route: *Thin White Line* grade 18, +/- 23m, 9 bolts + 2 anchor chains. *Nice*, three stars (maybe 4), on the Friction Wall, between *Devil in Disguise* and *Picture Frame*. Start behind the bush at the back of the right *Lunch Block*. Climb up the face following the thin quartz seam to a ledge with aloes. Continue up the corner system to the chains at the top, moving left onto the arête for the last few metres.



And Now For The Good News ! Reduced Fees at the White Umfolozi !

by Gavin Peckham

After consultation with a number of interested parties, Mr Greef has decided to accommodate younger climbers and impoverished students by reducing the daily rate to R50 per person per night irrespective of whether they camp or occupy one of the huts. The only proviso is that there will be a minimum charge of R200 per night. So as long as you are a group of four, you will be in 'the pound seats'. Even if you want sole occupation of the venue as a honeymoon couple, the minimum charge will still have you forking out only R100 pp for this privilege. As an incentive to families, children **under** 12 years of age are free. A day-fee of R30 per person will apply to those who pop up for the day but do not stay overnight.

Mr Greef is also planning to buy a gas fridge for the large hut in the near future so ice and cold beer will soon be the norm. There is no venue in KZN where climbers have been made to feel so welcome. Please support KZN's Most Climber Friendly Land Owner by organising family trips, private climbing trips, birthday party trips and possibly a few Viking's funeral trips for members who are now well past their prime. Whilst most of the "plum lines" have been snapped up, there is still a great deal of potential for new routes if you'd like to see your name in perpetuity in the route guide!

For less than the price of just 2 climbs at The Rock in Umhlanga, you can

have two full days' of unlimited climbing at the Umfolozi - **pleeeeeeze** is there a choice?! I know that the White Umfolozi is a bit off the beaten track but, from Durban, it is no further than travelling to Eagle Mountain. It is a **really** magic place and you can always extend the trip to take in the views of the Hluhluwe Game Reserve and various Zulu cultural sites if you choose - or you can go back to Monteseel and climb "Think" for the 5976 th time - get a life - the glorious Umfolozi awaits you!

**Next meet at Wit Umfolozi
6/7 August 2011**

Competition Climbing

by Dylan Salt

On the 14 Feb 2011 a small group of teenagers from KZN went to Reunion Island to compete in the French Bouldering World Cup, a FFME Sanctioned event. This was the first Youth Team ever in the history of SA climbing to compete in an international event and was made possible with the newly formed SANCF (South African National Climbing Federation).

The competition was an amazing event and considering that Paul Bruard only placed 10th in this competition, we were not expecting our team to fare well. Jason Salt (15) though, surprised the French climbers (u17 group) by destroying the prelim routes which were ranging from 6c/7a – with 12 routes needing to be done in 60mins – and was selected for the 6 finalists.

The final was a very hard-contested event with each finalist having to do 3 routes at 3 minutes per route – the routes being approximately 5m in height. Jason amazed the French judges with his strength and on sight ability – the grades being around 7b – and it was only due to his misunderstanding (all commentary was in French) on the finishing hold of one route, which found him narrowly missing a podium finish and being placed an incredible fourth.

So Jason Salt became the youngest and at present, the only South African climber to have achieved such a high position at this event.

Recently the NBL Finals was held at Grahamstown University, where Jason (who had just turned 16) competed in the u19 age group where he easily reached the finals. The final routes were set hard at around grade 28 but Jason with tremendous crimp and sloper strength fought off a talented group of climbers to achieve first place.



Jason has consistently on sighted many boulder problems around the country and in Reunion all ranging from 6c to 7b, sent a few 24 sport routes and has now done Republic, Adam, Think and lately Utopia on trad.

On the 14 August he will be a member of the SANCF Team going to Imst in Austria, to compete in the Youth Lead World Championships.

A rigorous selection process was conducted for this team, held at The Barn (Pretoria East) where his age group (u17) had to on-sight grade 25 and flash 26.

Well done Jason! And good luck for the World Championships.....

Hiking News

Is Dead Dog dead?

by Iona Stewart

May is arguably the best month of the year to hike in the berg. This year, Anthony organized a great meet sheet with three hiking weekends in May, and yet sadly, not one of them materialised. Gordon was due to take a trip to Zulu Cave, but as only one hiker applied to go, the trip was cancelled. The following weekend, I was due to take a trip to Dead Dog Cave again, as a result of many requests since finding the cave in the latter half of last year. I had nine takers and it all promised to be a great hike. Sadly, in the last week before going, each one fell by the wayside for one reason or another, all of them perfectly valid reasons. The last two trippers cancelled via e-mail on the Friday night due to transport problems!!

Thus due to "unforeseen circumstances beyond our control", May has come and gone with no hiking excursion for the Mountain Club taking place, and thus no reports to write about. Sorry about that everyone!!

Rescue News

by Gavin Raubenheimer

This past Easter was one of the busiest ever.

22 April 2011 - Rescue Call-out. A well-known BASE jumper and reliable source of information, reported that he suspected two friends of his had had an accident on the main wall of the Amphitheatre. The reporting party had been watching from the side of the Sentinel and he said he thought one of the jumpers had opened his canopy far too close to the cliff and then had disappeared from sight. The other, a female, had no canopy open at all. The MCSA treated this as a very serious situation and went about getting all necessary resources together. Before the operation got going, the "missing" two reported by phone they were in fact, all ok.

24 April 2011- Rescue Alert. Seven day walkers called the MCSA Rescue Convener directly from a small hill called "The Dome" located near Witsieshoek Hotel. They said they were "lost and terrified" and needed to be rescued. Ezemvelo Staff and Hotel staff were sent out and the party brought back to safety after nightfall.

25 April 2011 - Rescue Alert. A male hiker became separated from the rest of his group, somewhere in the area at the bottom of Cowl Fork. He was reported missing a day after he got separated. A hasty search was done and he was soon found on Van Heynigen's Pass.

26 April 2011 - Rescue Alert. The MCSA co-ordinated the rescue of a female hiker who had broken her ankle at the top of One-Tree-Hill. A locally based helicopter was used to bring her down.

27 April 2011 - Rescue Call-out. Two hikers were 2 nights overdue in the Monk's Cowl area. At the same time, two German climbers were also overdue from climbing Monk's Cowl peak. After hasty searches for both parties, a full search operation was launched, involving Ezemvelo staff, MCSA, SAPS Search and Rescue and the SAPS Airwing. A proper search plan was also done before the operation got underway. Mountain Club members were airlifted to search some areas on foot while the SAPS Airwing also carried out air searches. Both parties were found after about 5 hours of searching and were not in any real trouble,, but they had underestimated distances.

27 April 2011 - Rescue Call-out. At the same time as the above operations were taking place, another hiker was in trouble at the top of Tutumi Pass. This male hiker had injured his back whilst hiking. An Oryx from 15 Sqn and the MCSA team flew to the scene late on the 26th, but could not land due to high winds on the escarpment edge. The same team flew in the next morning and airlifted the patient to hospital.

30 April 2011 - Rescue Alert. A lone male hiker went missing whilst walking between Monk's Cowl and Didima Camp on a day hike. He reported in the following day and walked out at the Drakensberg Sun hotel.

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