

# Mountain Club of South Africa KwaZulu-Natal Section

P O Box 50649  
Musgrave Road  
4062

E-mail: [info@kzn.mcsa.org.za](mailto:info@kzn.mcsa.org.za)

Website: <http://kzn.mcsa.org.za>

## NEWSLETTER

Jan/Feb/Mar 2009



### Message from the President, MCSA- KZN Section

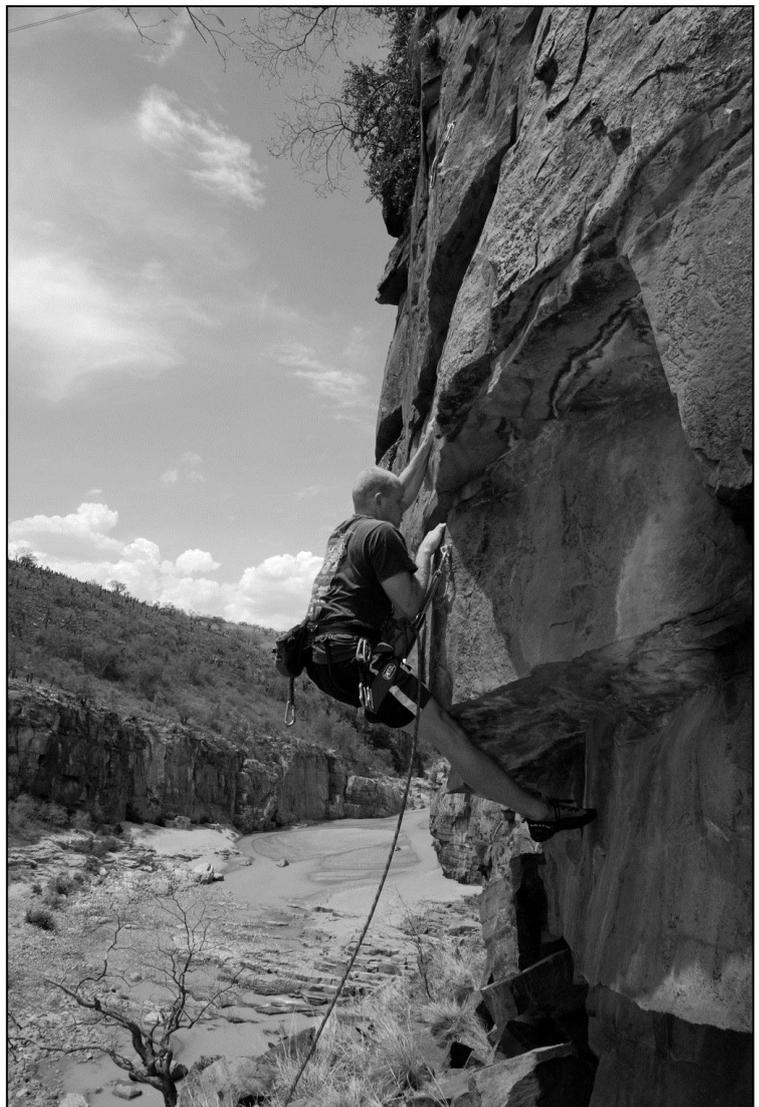
The editor has been kind enough to hold this issue back from going to press, allowing me enough time to type a short note at the end of the year. At this point in the year most of us are lucky enough to take a brief break from the usual pressures of life, and spend some relaxing time with family and friends. I trust that some of you will even manage to escape to the mountains and crags.

My best wishes to you all, for a fantastic festive season full of the things that make you smile, and an awesome New Year.

Cheers, Scott

### Club News Membership

No new members have joined. We say goodbye to Angus McFarlane, who is transferring to the Eastern Cape – thanks for all the work you did in organising the club socials and slide shows, Angus!



Hallam Payne on opening ascent of 'Relative Youth',  
Umfolozi River.

*Anthony van Tonder*

## Club News

### **All Climbers Please Note:**

The land on the North Bank of the Umfolozi River has yet again, been sold. Access negotiations with the new owner are under way. Until further notice, all climbing and access to the North Bank is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. Please do not be tempted to trespass and thus endanger future access to this excellent venue. Climbing is only allowed on Mr Greef's land on the South Bank until further notice.

A recent event was the combined PMB and KZN social in the form of a Quiz Evening, held at the Hacienda pub/restaurant at Monteseel. It was well attended and great fun was had by all – it was also Andy Wood's birthday, which was celebrated in style by being the Quizmaster for the evening, spurring the contestants into exercising their collective memory banks and showing off their climbing knowledge. Thanks Andy, for the hard work putting the quiz together, and to the sponsors of the prizes.

Steve and Christine are delighted to announce that their daughter Heather married Ryan Martin on the 6 December 2008. Ryan doesn't climb... yet, so Steve and Heather have their work cut out for the next few months, but he does enjoy the great outdoors.

**Advance Notice of the AGM in 2009:** to be held at Assagay Hotel on the 7th March 2009, at 3pm.

### **MCSA 2007 Journals:**

The Journals will only be posted out after the New Year owing to the Festive Season and the fact that many people will be away during that period. However, any local members who wish to can collect their copies from either Audrey van Coller (tel: 031 7028013 or 082 8792606) .

### **Membership Subs for 2009 will be as follows:**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
OM (Ordinary member)	220	240
OJ (Ordinary married)	160	180
CM (Country single)	145	160
CJ (Country married)	105	120
AM (Associate-no Journal)	95	105
AJ (Ordinary associate-Journal)	160	175
Family	Free	Free

**From the Editor:** Best Wishes to everyone for a wonderful Christmas and New Year. To those of you who contributed articles and photos for the newsletter during the past year – thank you, I appreciate your support.

*Anne Rodwell*

## Cambalala News

Maureen Thomson is relinquishing her role in taking bookings for Cambalala, which she has done very capably and cheerfully for the past few years. Thank you Maureen!

Bookings will now be taken as from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, by Alison Misselhorn, who can be contacted as follows:

Tel: 031 764 2692

Cell: 082 4888 391

e-mail: [alisonmisselhorn@mweb.co.za](mailto:alisonmisselhorn@mweb.co.za)

Address: 44 Uplands Drive, KLOOF, 3610

### **Booking Information for Cambalala Hut:**

The fees for the use of Cambalala will be increased from the 1st January 2009, and will be as follows:

Cottage fee: R40.00 per night. This amount is the required fee, to be paid on booking, which will confirm your booking.

Members' fee: R15.00 per night

Non-members' fee: R30.00 per night

## Hiking News

### **HIKE TO TARN CAVE 25/26 October, 2008**

*by Margaret Brown*

Despite the fact that it was the weekend of the Currie Cup Final, there were ten of us who set off into the mist, for the hike to Tarn Cave. They were Mike and Mavis Morris and their daughter Fay, Jane Dickinson, Suzie Raymond, Iona Stewart, Brian Maxwell and his wife Jenny and daughter Tanith (visitors) and myself, as leader.

As we were filling in the mountain register, the ranger asked why we would want to hike all the way to a cave in the wet? I think I said we hoped Sunday would be nice! Soon after stopping at Cedric's Pool for tea, I decided not to go up to Tarn Cave as there was thick mist and I knew we would be quite damp in the cave. So we headed off to Surprise Cave for lunch, by which time the weather was rather cold. Fortunately Daniel's Cave is a very short distance around the corner from there, and we settled in for the afternoon and night. The first, warming, round of tea got under way. Iona and the Morris family went out into the mist for an hour's walk.

During the night most of us noticed that the stars were out, and sure enough, Sunday dawned bright and sunny. Having seen Vast Cave marked on the map, we thought we'd try and find it. It is correctly marked so wasn't difficult to find - and really *is* vast. Well done to whoever found it!

Tea, a swim, and then lunch rounded off the hike. On the main path, about four km. from the cars, we noticed tyre tracks from either mountain bikes or scrambler bikes. Could this be possible? Are vehicles allowed in this controlled area? With storm clouds gathering, we were glad to get onto the main road in good time and saw the rainsqualls from the distance as we drove away.

## **BUSHMAN'S NEK TRIP: October 2008**

*by Graham Smith*

Friday's weather forecast predicted rain over the entire weekend and heeding it normally makes sense. Nevertheless, the team left Durban at 5:30am on Saturday and we were chatting in the sunshine in the foothills of the Berg two and a half hours later.

The trip started from the Pringle's farmhouse. Friendly, as farmers' wives always are, Catherine Pringle then drove us 4 km's to the river crossing with Rebecca, her two year old daughter, doing most of the driving!!!

Berg trips generate lots of claptrap during the walk in and this trip was no exception. "Beef and Dairy Farming, course 101" was aired as each and every cluster of cows was encountered. An oddly coloured Nguni cow in a herd of uniformity led Iona Stewart to mumble, "how on earth did my Bull get here?". That of course formed the basis of a discussion as to whether this would stand legal scrutiny as supporting evidence in a land redistribution claim!....the conversations rambled on. Bernie Carr, on the other hand, gave some lectures on electric fencing, which was not understood by the others who failed this level one course. Judging by Bernie's no-panting and fast-walking style it was suspected that he had grabbed the fence on at least two occasions to up the frequency and/or voltage on his pacemaker.

A prominent Nek (2065m) was reached at about 2pm and lunch was eaten in the shade provided by a corrugated shed which was window-less and door-less but as dry as a tomb with a floor covered in that fine sort of dust that almost hangs in the air when you sneeze or cough.

After lunch, packs were dumped and the group walked off along the ridge that lies parallel to the Mount Sutherland rib but one large valley system to the South. This ridge contains Tsolwane and Mt Arthur and before dissipating as foothills, curves around gently to end in a handsome 2265m peak. In the Slingsby 1998 map this peak is only identified by a trig beacon height but on a recent map it is named as Ben Nevis... can any readers explain this? The search for caves drew a blank but Ben Nevis' peak was "scrambled" by Bernie with the trip leader a poor second after continually being distracted in his search for an electric fence!

The walk back from Ben Nevis saw a gentle breeze show signs of becoming a gale and that night the wind whistled through the shed with the mist replacing the tomb-dust and being faintly reminiscent of a cloud of atomized sputum from an early morning coughing spell in a TB clinic. A spare sheet of corrugated iron was soon spliced into the doorway, even though the remnants of the doorframe were fragile accumulations of charcoal where the frame had bravely resisted the ravages of an earlier grass fire.

The "door" worked and the mist was excluded. However, deadening the sounds of a corrugated shed in a gale that is being driven from the very bowels of East Griqualand is an impossible task. Throughout the night the wind whistled and "gusted" and the rusty nails securing sheet and timber groaned and laboured.

The long and noisy night over, Sunday was largely still and misted over and only a descent of 500m gave adequate visibility, though Mt Sutherland remained obscured to the very end. The trip ended well with a cup of hot tea

in the deserted farmhouse, courtesy of Catherine and Andrew. Begrudgingly the team then started their return to the Big Smoke.

Be warned that seating three in the front of a two-seater TATA bakkie with the handbrake midway between the seats, carries a Surgeon General's warning of potential harm to one's health!

## **ZULULAND CLIMBING NEWS**

*by Gavin Peckham*

The club meet towards the end of September attracted about a dozen climbers. The meet started off with a day of extremely pleasant and sociable climbing at oNgoye where Anthony van Tonder opened two new routes on the Barbet Boulder "Tarzan"(17) and "Gecko"(19). After this, most of the party moved on to the Umfolozi where, as usual, a good time (and much climbing) was had by all.

Several new sport routes have been opened on Mr Greef's crags on the South bank. Hallam Payne opened "Relative Youth" (19), Hansie van Rooyen opened "Sticky Fingers" (23) and Anthony van Tonder and Gavin Peckham have opened several other routes in grades between 17 and 20.

### **NEWS FLASH.....**

IN BRIEF (More details in due course) Mr Greef's cottages at the Umfolozi have been burned down by arsonists. The toilet, shower, solar heater, water supply and lower deck are still intact. Thus climbers can still visit the venue provided that they bring their own tents or sleep on the lower deck. Mr Greef is planning to rebuild a larger, more fire and burglar proof facility as soon as possible.

### **RUMDOODLE and BOLTS by Gerald Camp**

Some of you may be pleased to know that some routes have been re-bolted, and some bolts added to make them safer. This mainly applies to the first and second bolts (courtesy of the KZN Schools Climbing League and Bolting Fund).

One can often only really assess the safety of old bolts once the hangers have been removed, and chopped. It is also pleasing to know that, of the about 30 bolts placed, only one could have been considered dubious.

***Running Down a Dream*** (24) (Additional bolt near bottom)

***Living by the Moon*** (25) (Peg replaced by bolt and additional bolt near bottom and independent anchors)



**Impossible Slab** (12) (previously scary and unsuitable for a climber learning to lead)

**Pigs in Space** (17)

*Superbreath – no drill needed here!*

**Grasshopper** (16) Route straightened and improved.

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### **Fun-in-the-sun Competition** *(or, nostalgic reminisces from Gerald Camp)*

On the 1st of December 1991, the normally lethargic atmosphere of Monteseel was transformed into something seldom seen. Nine teams of two climbers each arrived to participate in a competition of a different kind. Each team was issued with a list of a possible two routes, and had to climb as many of them as possible in the four hour allotment. Each route had a score which was not solely dependent on its grade. The aim of the scoring system was to prevent congestion on the trad routes, to handicap the hard men and to lure climbers onto routes seldom done. The system was particularly successful in the latter, with one team being lured onto Edge of Eternity (21) with a carrot of 25 points. Unfortunately the team were forced to withdraw after an unsuccessful attempt. Pete Janschek took a fair whopper, plucking his belayer (Egmond Goedeke) off his stance - who then swung wildly into the path of a large, fleshy Euphorbia bush (which Pete had wisely avoided during his flight!). It was then off to Hammarsdale Hospital for Egmond to have his raging, bloodshot eyes flushed of the evil sap.

Up at the Amphitheatre, Brian and Gnomie Shuttleworth, drawing on their wealth of experience and maturity, climbed steadily up seven routes. In the meantime Rowan Drummond and Arnie (his real name unknown) cranked themselves into a frenzy up eleven routes - at an average grade of 21. Even Gavin Wood arrived to make his 723<sup>rd</sup> ascent of Pin Up after a three-year layoff. Fun was had by all, and Cecilia, manageress of Colorado Tavern and someone who has come to regard climbers with a mixture of affection and suspicion, welcomed the competitors and camp followers to the prize giving. Congratulations to Rowan and Arnie (of uncertain breeding) who picked up first prize and Steve Salmon and Brett Clarke who came second. The prizes were in the form of cash and came out of the combined entrance fees for the competition.

*(Extract from the 'Southern Rock', January 1992)*

## CONTACT LIST – MCSA KZN COMMITTEE 2008

Name	Home No.	Work No.	Cell No.	Email
<b>President</b> Scott Sinclair		031 260 1151	083 235 4938	president@kzn.mcsa.org.za sinclaird@ukzn.ac.za
<b>Hon. Secretary</b> Hannelie Morris			084 486 2949	secretary@kzn.mcsa.org.za morris.hannelie@gmail.com
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b> Fred Rodwell	031 767 2038		073 174 8327	treasurer@kzn.mcsa.org.za faraway@chillibyte.com
<b>Hon. Administrator</b> Anne Rodwell	031 767 2038		073 174 8369	info@kzn.mcsa.org.za faraway@chillibyte.com
<b>Rock Climbing &amp; Mountaineering</b> <i>Colin McCoy</i>	033 345 1085		082 546 7963	rock@kzn.mcsa.org.za zr5trm@webmail.co.za
<b>Sport Climbing</b> Dave Drummond		031 719 5500	084 607 0818	sport@kzn.mcsa.org.za Daved@ptn.ssi.co.za
<b>Access</b> Andy Wood		033 383 0100	082 573 0221	access@kzn.mcsa.org.za andy@hiltoncollege.com
<b>Conservation</b> Iona Stewart	033 330 4942		082 990 3968	conservation@kzn.mcsa.org.za iona@sai.co.za
<b>Meets Convenor</b> James Voortman	031 763 5000		082 466 1731	meets@kzn.mcsa.org.za jamesv@icon.co.za
<b>Rescue Convenor</b> Gavin Raubenheimer	033 343 3168	033 343 3168	082 990 5876	rescue@kzn.mcsa.org.za peakhigh@futurenet.co.za
<b>PR &amp; Durban Socials</b> Angus McFarlane	031 767 0447	031 910 1216	082 921 7368	pro@kzn.mcsa.org.za angus.mcfarlane@za.sabmiller.com
<b>Assistant PR</b> Eric Penman			076 867 9972	
<b>July Camp</b> Rikki Abbott	033 330 3921	033 355 9358	082 538 5389	abbottr@dae.kzntl.gov.za ronwedd@netactive.co.za
<b>Cambalala Hut</b> Clem Robins	031 701 6810		082 771 2514	robinsca@xsinet.co.za
<b>Cambalala Bookings</b> Alison Misselhorn	031 764 2692		082 488 8391	alison.misselhorn@mweb.co.za
<b>Maritzburg Socials</b> Ian Bailey	(h) 033 345 7501	Fax: 033 345 7501	083 269 6201	ianbailey@telkomsa.net
<b>Mountain Rescue - KZN</b>	082 990 5877 / 10177 (in KZN) / Toll Free: 0800 005 133			
<b>Drakensberg – 5 day weather forecast</b>	082 231 1602			
<b>MCSA-KZN Section Website</b>	<a href="http://kzn.mcsa.org.za">http://kzn.mcsa.org.za</a>			
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