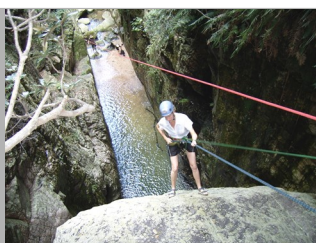




AGM



**Adventure
Hiking**



**Quarterly
Newsletter**

July, August and September 2009

FOOTNOTES



**Neil Ransome
Hiker of the Year**

IN THIS ISSUE



Neil Ransome received the Club's Hiker of the Year Award which was presented to him at the AGM on the 18th March, 2009. This recognises Neil's many contributions to the Club's hiking activities.

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Editor's Notes Harry Parsley

For the AGM this year the gates of the Floreum were unlocked with no power blackouts to keep the premises closed. A good attendance was there to hear the reports of the various EXCO members and the future activities planned for the Club. As befits an eating club with a hiking problem the catering was of the normal superior standard as well. An outline of the AGM proceedings appears in this edition on pages 6-10.

Fifty two members present at the AGM completed the Member Attitude Survey. The results of this survey are on pages 11-13. The survey shows a high level of satisfaction with the Club, but as EXCO constantly wishes to improve things for the Club certain issues will be addressed to try and ensure this. Those who participated in the survey are thanked for their contributions. However, we don't want the monitoring of member attitudes to be infrequent and discreet events. All members are also encouraged to communicate their ideas directly to EXCO members or through channels such as Footnotes.

Footnotes has received requests for the placing of advertisements in the publication as was done in earlier Footnotes editions. As my first priority was to get the re-styled Footnotes bedded down I have delayed doing this until now. This edition now has its first advertisement, which is fittingly from Bryan Lever who has been a good supporter of Footnotes, so hopefully members will support him by considering his photography courses. The advertising rates appear on page 15. Please inform friends and colleagues of the advertising potential of Footnotes.

Once again we have a bumper edition filled with wonderful hike reports. My thanks to the contributors for the articles and photographs. When sending photographs it would be helpful if you could identify the people in the pictures. The readers like to know who the people are, but unfortunately I don't always know the people either.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE 20th September, 2009

Email all articles and correspondence to the editor.



Robbie MacDonald
Chairman

GOING THE EXTRA MILE: THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Our AGM this year went off smoothly compared with the previous one. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to attend, your interest and support is much appreciated. Moreover, by contributing to the affairs of the Club and raising matters of concern your committee is able to determine the needs of our membership and act accordingly. It was also interesting to note that all the EXCO members were eager to present their reports. This demonstrates their depth of commitment and enthusiasm. Also a big welcome to the new committee members for 2009. I am sure that you are equal to all the challenges we face this new year. And thanks to all who took the time to complete the questionnaire. The results have been analysed we will be attending to areas where improvement is indicated. My thanks to Harry Parsley for developing the document and for analysing the results. This is not just another paper exercise. The results will be used to improve the way the Club is run and give you the hiker more reasons to smile.

The Easter Camp at Cathedral Peak was well attended, the weather was perfect and there were hikes to suit all abilities. The new camp at Didima is a great improvement over the old one. Thanks must go to Jim Hutchison for towing the big tent and setting it up, to Jean Smilkstein for producing a wonderful happy hour and Bruce Munton for weaving his special magic spell.

There have been several disturbing incidents of hikers and climbers being mugged in areas that up till now have been considered safe. For your safety and others please walk as a group. Keep your leader in sight; avoid wearing expensive jewellery or carrying large sums of money. It is a good idea to make copies of your SIM card addresses, your ID Medical Aid number and store them in a safe place.

We have been concerned about the slow but sure drop in membership over the past few years. This is due to a number of factors e. g. members emigrate or move to another district, etc. We also realise that every visitor is a potential member and should be encouraged to join. We should go out of our way to make newcomers welcome and pay special concern to any anxieties they may have about the trail, proper equipment, etc. This is

where you the member and of course our leaders can be of great help. How about inviting that friend at work or that cousin who seem to be at a loose end at the weekend to come out with us? And if leaders actively encourage visitors to become members and always have a supply of membership forms handy we will more than make up for the natural drop in membership.

Congratulations to those six intrepid hikers who took part in the Drakensberg Grand Traverse from the Sentinel to Bushmansnek completed in 11 days in mainly great weather (how about a slide show guys?) And a big thank you to the re supply team for the enthusiastic support.

That's all for now
Happy Hiking!

I have very big shoes to follow on from, but Jean has really put systems into position which are easy to follow and I am confident that I can carry on from where she left off. Thanks to everyone for the



Marion Hufner
Club Administrator

good luck wishes in the position as Club Administrator for the JHC.

Kindly keep me updated with your latest contact details, email and postal addresses, etc. When making a direct deposit into the JHC account, **please ensure you put your name and the reason for the deposit**, for example, Jones: subs or Jones: Holhoek or Jones: Easter camp. This will enable me to correctly identify the entry. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

If you do not receive the monthly notices and activities email, it means I need your new email address.

Feel free to contact me on any queries on 087 940 1903 or email: jhc@mweb.co.za

Happy hiking

**You can hire Hikers Haven at Foothold, camp there, or simply come to the monthly camp.
Contact number: 0879-401-903**



Peter Faugust Slide Shows

On 10th March, 2009 **Neville van der Merwe** gave us a talk entitled: "Travelling in the United Kingdom and Scotland – A Youth Hostel Association experience."

Neville enjoys cycling which has now led to an interest in mountain biking and later also canoeing. Every year Neville goes to Plettenberg Bay for three weeks to pursue his hiking and canoeing interests together with a few friends.

On the 14th April **Peter Faugust** was a "guest"



Bev Brockman thanking Neville van der Merwe for his presentation. Photo: Harry Parsley.

speaker at his own slide show. Peter has been a member of the Hiking Club for 33 years and a member of the Mountain Club of SA for 27 years. In 1990 the Club bestowed Honorary Membership on him. Apart from his hiking activities he has been a member of the S.A. Archaeology Society for more than twenty years. Amongst his numerous memberships of organisations is also a member of the Camera Club of Johannesburg. He has been running the ever entertaining and successful slide for the Club for 28 years now.

In the 1970's and 1980's he became involved in exploring the Drakensberg in which he would take hiking trips lasting from four to ten days. In that time he has hiked up more that 25 passes. The

title of Peter's talk was: "The Drakensberg Passes – Leslie's Pass to Corner Pass, March 1982."



Drakensberg scenes.

Photos: Peter Faugust.



Bev Brockman
Vice Chairman

JHC AGM - 18th MARCH 2009
Eco Access

Last year in October, we had the privilege of spending two special days up at Castle Gorge with two groups from the Eco-Access organization.

Eco-Access is an organization that dedicates time to take children that are either disabled, deaf, blind, dumb, or mentally challenged into nature. They are often taken on camps, walks into various areas, mainly outside of Johannesburg. The Chief Operations Officer, Dr Khanya Rajuili, arranged the groups along with volunteer helpers, the "Natural Born Leaders" as they call themselves. This is a group of energetic young adults that dedicate their lives to these children. Many of the children never get to see beyond where they live and school, so a nature outing is very special for them.

We had disabled children on the first outing. One boy was born with polio and as a result had a missing lower leg. His foot extended from his knee and he wears a prosthetic lower limb. One of his arms ends at his elbow. He managed the climb up to the saddle and to Piranha pools slowly, but well and was the first one to cool off and swim in the water. Another was missing a hand and had a speech impediment. He was our paparazzi cameraman for the day. We also took some of the group to the main waterfall.

On the second outing we had the Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf. These children were younger and were a little fitter in climbing to the saddle. However we spent most of the time at Piranha pools. They all had a glorious day. It is so different looking, instead of listening to a group of young girls having their chitter-chatter all in sign language !

Various members helped on those days, including Robbie. Their help was greatly appreciated. Thank you!

I am in the process of booking more dates for the schools. Dr Khanya has requested more days to accommodate more schools.

So members, please let me know if you are available to assist. I will be looking for volunteers for this truly rewarding time to give to these children.

I would like to Thank Wendy Farrow for her wonderful hard work and her efforts with Youthful Hiking. Lately, YH has not been as successful, and there are too many issues around the title/age.

Tracey May has been extremely successful with her Kloofing. Well done Tracey! So it was fitting to recognise this and invite her onto the committee. This is Adventure Hiking. Tracey also attracts the young. However, what they do is more of an adrenaline rush, i.e. kloofing, abseiling, etc... Clearly for the more fit.

So members, please support Tracey in her new venture.

I'll be putting a few ordinary hikes on the programme. Wendy Farrow will be assisting these with me.

I would also like to thank Sue Desmond for all her efforts this past year. Due to her good programme we even managed well when she was walking about Australia for six weeks. Well done for the Bibbleman Trail Sue! However, Sue needs more support from the leaders. She battles to find sufficient leaders for the Sunday hikes. PLEASE support her!

Olga, well done for your social events.

Monica Brits made a very successful summit of Aconcagua in December 2008. Monica, we are so proud of you!

Sadly we lost a good friend, Alan Ralph, tragically. We all miss you. Also Robert, a brisk hiker sadly left us.

I would like to thank everyone on the committee for all their support during the year, especially Robbie and Jean Williams.

Advertising rates for a single insertion in Footnotes

Full page back cover R300

Full page inside front and back covers R250

Full page anywhere else in the magazine R200

Half page inside R110

Quarter page inside R80

Classified R50

All advertisements must be received in ready to print formats and received before the closing deadline of the edition concerned.

QUOTES FROM THE AGM



President: Howard Rayner

2008 showed a significant drop in membership for the second consecutive year. Serious efforts to recruit new members are required.

Weekend events continue to be popular but smaller numbers are booked for each event and events in less popular months have been reduced.

Olga Braude is to be congratulated on putting together some exceptional social events of which the 21st anniversary party at Foothold and the Halloween party at Segwati in November stand out.

The Club will be celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2011 and planning should start early to celebrate this significant event.

Jean Williams has single-handedly grown the Wednesday mid-week hikes to the successful events that they now are. Thank you, Jean.



Chairman: Robbie Macdonald

I have tried to present a concise picture of the club's affairs for the year 2008. There are many challenges that will present in the coming years, Such as:

Our ability to attract new members while retaining existing ones.

Expanding the number and scope of Sunday hikes.

Adapting to changing situations in the country.

Invasive alien weed eradication and environmental issues.

The club's relationship with land owners, the HO-SA, other clubs and interested parties.

Maintaining and improving the excellent management and media standards.

Encouraging members to volunteer whatever services they can.

I am sure that we are equal to these challenges. I believe that the club is being managed in an exemplary manner. The spirit and camaraderie remains high and members continue to contribute their time and energy thus ensuring that we retain our place as the number one hiking club in South Africa.

QUOTES FROM THE AGM

**Adventure: Tracey May**

The new Adventure Section incorporates the previous Kloofing Section and outings will be held once a month throughout the year, usually on the second Sunday of each month.

We will be doing activities such as abseiling, rock climbing, river rafting, kloofing, ziplining etc.

People who are looking for something different and lots of fun should come and experience one of the adventures - being fit and agile does help on most of the trips.

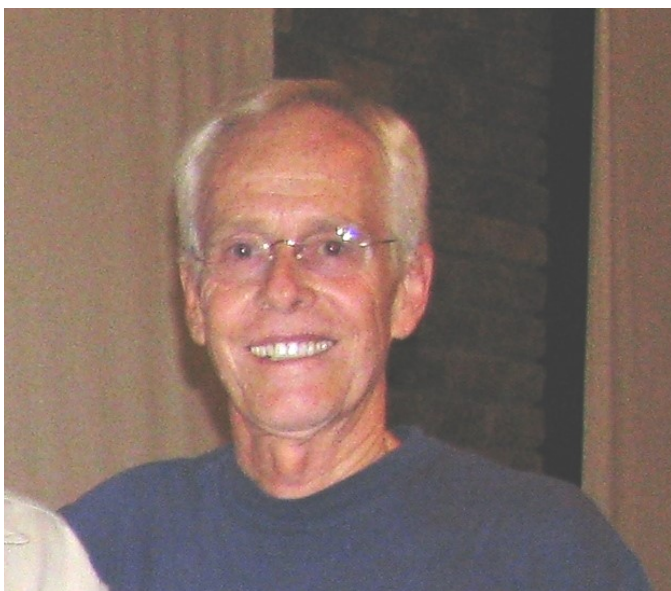
**Bev Brockman: Vice Chairman**

Eco-Access: We will be taking children to castle Gorge and request volunteers to assist when more dates are arranged for 2009.

Youthful Hiking has been stopped and Adventure Hiking with Tracey May has taken its place.

Sue Desmond needs more support from the leaders for Sunday hikes. Sue was thanked her for all her efforts.

Monika Brits submitted Aconcagua, December 2009. Second highest climbing peak.

**Harry Parsley: Media Coordinator**

The new-format Footnotes magazine has been well accepted and members were thanked for their contributions of articles and photographs.

The website is attractive and Jean Smilksteen was thanked for the many hours she has put into making the Club's website as attractive as it is.

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QUOTES FROM THE AGM

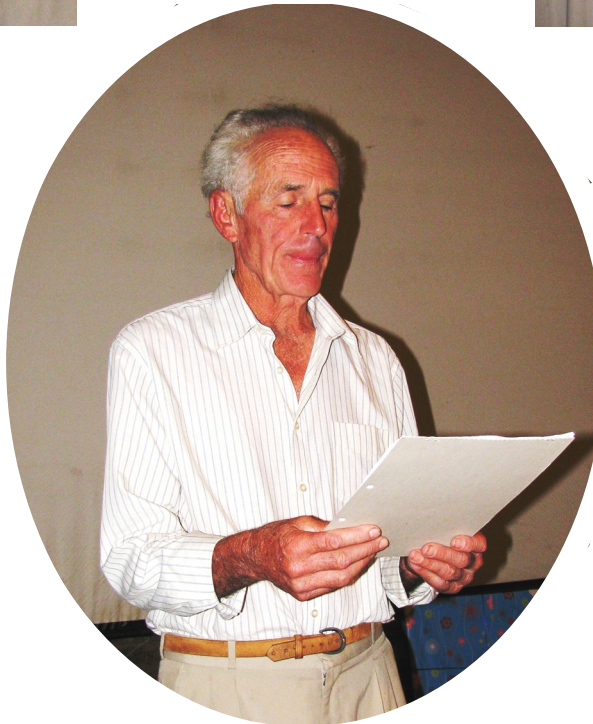


Treasurer: Clive Williams

Clive stepped in to complete the financial report at short notice when the previous incumbent had to withdraw. He could report on the healthy state of the finances and also that SARS had approved the Club's financial procedures.

Social Organiser: Olga Braude

Olga outlined the many wonderful social activities that had been organised during the year under review.



Property Administrator: Jim Hutchison

Jim reported on the improvements at Foothold and thanked those who had contributed to keeping the Club's facilities in good condition.



Youthful Hiking; Wendy Farrow

The Youthful section has been replaced with Adventure Hiking. Thanks to all for their help.

Hikes Organiser: Sue Desmond

Sue reported that the Club's aim was to have a varied and interesting program of Sunday, weekend, long distance, and Drakensburg hikes, and possibly an overseas hike as well.





Some of the 54 members who attended the AGM.

Photo: Harry Parsley



The newly elected Committee. Left to right: Frances Raal, Beverly Brockman, Jim Hutchison, Sue Desmond, Robbie Macdonald (Chairman) and Harry Parsley.

Photo: Jessie Moehl.



Robbie thanked Jean Williams and Milly Saffer (below) for their contributions to the Club over the past year.
Photos: Harry Parsley



Stunning snacks display .

Photo: Olga Braude



MEMBER OPINION SURVEY

RESULTS OF MEMBER SURVEY

Editor

The survey was conducted amongst those members who attended the AGM on the 18th March 2009. In total, 52 members completed the survey, although not all completed every section.

Respondents were asked to rate the questions below according to the following rating scale:

1 = Strongly agree; 2 = Mildly agree; 3 = I'm neutral about this issue; 4 = Mildly disagree;

5 = Strongly disagree

The percentages shown in the tables below are the number of respondents who completed that section expressed as a percentage of those rating the section. The circled figures show areas of strong perception (either positive or negative) regarding the issue.

1. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES					
Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
The Club's administration is good.	82%	14%	0%	2%	2%
The membership subscription fees are too high.	13%	6%	31%	13%	38%
The Club should strive to recruit a more diverse membership.	22%	30%	38%	8%	2%
EXCO understands what the needs and desires of the members of the Club are.	21%	46%	23%	11%	0%
In overall terms the Club is providing value to its members.	77%	17%	0%	4%	2%

2. HIKING ISSUES					
Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
There are sufficient hikes on the hiking programme to cater for the hiking needs of all.	45%	32%	9%	11%	4%
I would like to become a hike leader (the Club would supply the necessary support and training).	10%	17%	32%	7%	34%
The affordability of the hikes is well within the means of all members.	32%	40%	23%	2%	2%
The Adventure programme that is being introduced sounds most interesting.	43%	36%	16%	2%	2%
The Wednesday hikes are most enjoyable.	51%	9%	40%	0%	0%

MEMBER OPINION SURVEY

3. MEDIA

Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
Footnotes Magazine is a quality publication of which the Club can be proud.	72%	21%	6%	0%	2%
I read at least 60% or more of each edition of Footnotes.	51%	32%	11%	2%	4%
Footnotes should be discontinued as everything in it can be put onto the Club's website and there is already too much duplication between the two.	7%	4%	13%	11%	65%
I think that the Club's website is most attractive and enjoyable to browse.	28%	40%	28%	2%	4%
I surf the Club's website at least once per month.	15%	11%	19%	30%	26%

4. SOCIAL

Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
We should discontinue the Christmas Dance in favour of another year-end social activity.	42%	13%	21%	15%	10%
The Club's social activities are too expensive and that's why more people don't attend.	9%	20%	33%	19%	19%
I enjoy most of the social activities organised by the Club.	30%	21%	37%	7%	5%
The slide show evening is most enjoyable.	43%	39%	14%	0%	5%
Foothold is a great venue to spend a weekend (especially for the Club weekend).	64%	20%	9%	2%	5%

5. GENERAL

Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
I am prepared to help the Club in activities such as maintaining Foothold, patrolling Castle Gorge and others. If so, please give your name to our Club Administrator.	31%	23%	21%	10%	15%

MEMBER OPINION SURVEY

5. GENERAL (CONTINUED)

Ratings	1	2	3	4	5
I am prepared to help with Crofton weeding, trail maintenance and other similar activities (if your answer is positive please give your name to our Club Administrator, Marion Hüfner).	11%	26%	26%	11%	26%
I have skills that could be useful to the Club and I would like to share these with the Club (if your answer is positive to this question please give your name to our Club Administrator, Marion Hüfner).	15%	26%	26%	9%	24%

CONCLUSIONS:

Major areas of perceived positive performance:

Club administration.

Overall value the Club is providing to its members.

Wednesday hikes.

Footnotes.

Foothold.

Website

Hiking programme (with the majority of hikers).

The slide shows (although there is a significant number who rate is only as good).

Potentially, the new Adventure Programme.

Areas for further thought:

Club fees (19% and possibly more think the fees are too high, or are unaware of the value that the Club delivers).

15% and possibly more feel the hiking programme does not cater for them.

It appears that the Xmas dance concept has gone out of favour.

The cost of some of the social activities may need to be reviewed.

There is a significant number of people who are willing to help the Club in some or other activity.

All readers of Footnotes are encouraged to comment on these survey findings by sending an email to the editor at the email address on page 2. If you have other comments about the Club and its operations please do the same. The committee welcomes all comments that can contribute to the improvement of the Club and the pleasure it brings to members. (Editor).

RULES OF THE JOHANNESBURG HIKING CLUB

Rules

All persons taking part in club activities do so entirely **at their own risk** and must adhere to the rules of the Johannesburg Hiking Club.

- 1: Hikers must follow the instructions of the appointed leader and must remain with the main party unless the leader has agreed to a splinter group controlled by a nominated sub-leader.
- 2: No fires may be lit (except at designated sites by permission of the hike leader) and must be extinguished completely before leaving the site.
- 3: All litter must be carried away.
- 4: No uprooting of plants or picking of flowers is permitted and care must be taken to avoid damaging trees, fences or private property.
- 5: Dogs and radios are not allowed on hikes or at camps.
- 6: Anyone under the age of 18 years who attends a hike must be the responsibility of a nominated member.
- 7: Nude bathing can be offensive. Please exercise discretion.
- 8: All behavior likely to bring discredit to the name of the club is to be avoided.

Camp and trail booking procedure:

Phone the designated leader of the trail or camp to reserve a place for yourself. Full payment of the event fee must be made promptly, either by making a deposit into the club's bank account, or by sending a cheque made payable to the Johannesburg Hiking Club. Your booking will only be confirmed once the club has received full payment. It will automatically lapse if payment is not received within two weeks from date of booking, unless otherwise arranged. If you wish to cancel your booking, the fee will be refunded **ONLY** if the club is notified at least two weeks prior to the event and a replacement can be found. If cancellation is later than prescribed date, fees will not necessarily be refunded.

Precautions: The following basic precautions are recommended: Kindly carry your **medical aid card** or details with you at all times; Carry a minimum of 2 liters of water and drink sufficiently during the hike; Wear an effective hat; Use a high UV protection sunscreen lotion; Carry rain gear and a jersey in both summer and winter – during a thunderstorm the temperature can drop by as much as 10° Celsius; Wear strong suitable footwear that will provide traction and support the ankles (lace tightly); Walk with care to prevent injury

SUNDAY HIKES

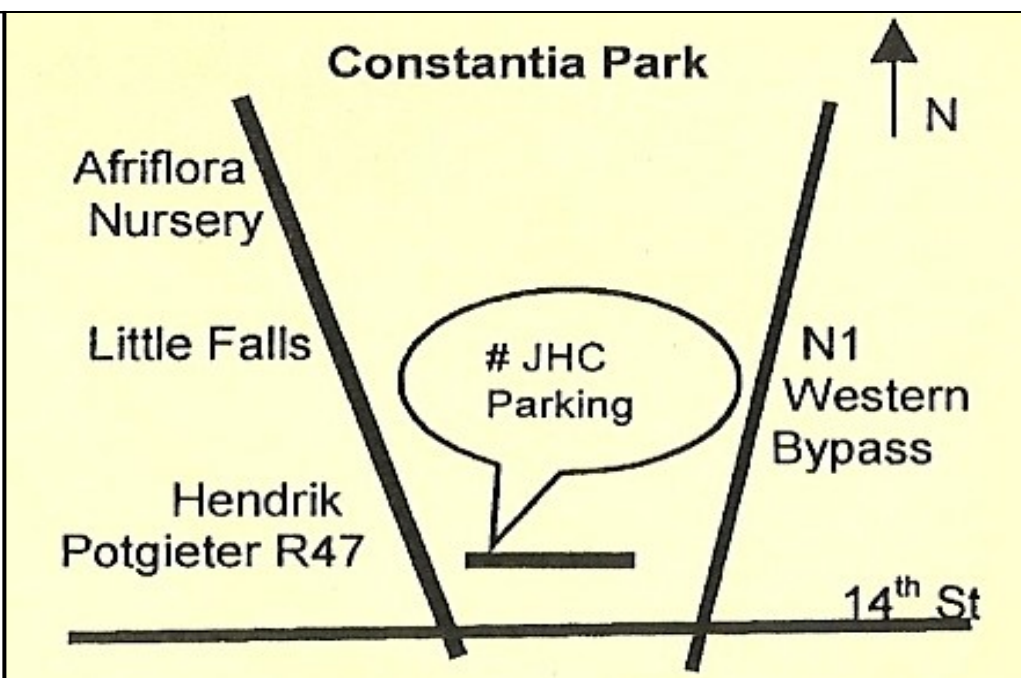
Meeting place: Constantia Park, Gateway House.

Meeting time: 07h45, but consult programme as times can be earlier or later on occasions

Return to meeting place: Varies, but usually before 17h30

Hike fees: Refer programme (non member fee in brackets). Bookable events indicated by 'B'

Restrictions: Certain events are subject to restricted numbers identified by, eg, R(10)



ADVERTISEMENT

Digital Photographic Course

The basics to get you going.



If you are confused with all the settings on your digital camera, use it on "Auto" and get frustrated when some pictures just don't turn out right – **then this course is for you.**

Course A: 3 Modules:

Sat 0800 to 1200: Theory and camera settings 4 hrs

Sat 1200 to 1700: Practical on Location 4 hrs

Sun 1700 to 2100: Adjudication and computer post production 4hrs.

Image manipulation software (GIMP) supplied for free. I take a maximum of 6 students at a time, so book early to get a place.

The cost is a mere R700 with a full money back guarantee if you are not satisfied at the end of the last session

Venue: Upstairs at Scrooges, Brightwater Common, Randburg, Johannesburg, or my home in Ferndale depending on numbers.

Course B: 1 Module: A 3 hour course on getting to know your camera, its settings and the best way to use it, along with some imaging theory. The cost for this is R200 and will be on a Friday evening at my home from 1900 to 2200.

Come along and have some great instructive fun

For bookings contact:

Bryan Lever

Phone: 011-787-9642

Cell: 082-414-5690

Email: blever@intekom.co.za

HIKE REVIEWS

SONDELA

Merle Doctor

Wednesday Hikers always make the most of a day out.

Our Phaladinge hike had to be postponed, due to the path being overgrown with reeds as high as an elephant's eye. Jean is amazing and found us another venue for the day. A large crowd turned up for our next Phaladinge hike. The drive there was in pouring rain!

After a lot of discussion it was decided to retreat to the Jasmine Windmill restaurant for tea and

cake, only to find it closed for cleaning, so off we tramped to the coffee shop upstairs. Orders went in, then the electricity went off. It came back just in time to heat up the apple pie. The third attempt, was a lovely day, and we had a wonderful time, the hike ends with lunch at the Prella restaurant. A choice of Bobotie or Chicken salad, made with avo's and mango and washed down by a cool drink or beer.

What a way to spend a Wednesday good hiking, good food and great friends.



Bobotie and good company on the Wednesday hike.

Photo: Merle Doctor

HIKE REVIEWS

DRAKENSBURG GRAND TRAVERSE

Mike Hamilton

Between the 13th and 24th April, 2009, I was fortunate to be part of a team of six that hiked the Drakensberg Grand Traverse, a demanding, scenic hike with friends old and new. This is a record of what, who, when, how and why we tackled this adventure.

The Team



George Christian (49)



Sue Desmond (50)



Andre Kleynhans (51)



Hilke Kruger (51)



Bernard Donnelly (53)



Mike Hamilton (50)

What is the Drakensberg Grand Traverse?

In short, the Drakensberg Grand Traverse is a back-packing hike from Witsieshoek through to Bushman's Nek. From the starting point, the Sentinel Car Park, the trail leads up the zig-zags to the well known chain ladders that take you to the top of the escarpment near Mont Aux Sources and the Tugela Falls. From there, the trail hugs the escarpment and meanders over hills and down valleys offering magnificent views of the major features of the Drakensberg. Apart from the well known passes and features, the trail includes the highest points in South and Southern Africa, Mafadi and Thabana Ntanyana respectively, at elevations of just short of 3500 metres.

The traverse is completed when reaching Bushman's Nek, a border control point between South Africa and Lesotho some 230 km walking distance from the start. The hike typically takes 12 to 13 days, and is at an average altitude of just over 3000 metres above sea level. Total ascent during

the hike is in excess of 8000 metres and there are about 28 "climbs" in excess of 200 metres. No technical skill is required; the "climbs" are essentially steep ascents.

Although the hike can be done as a fully unsupported activity, it is common for hikers to be supported by friends who carry up additional supplies at the 6 day halfway mark at the top of Bannermans Pass or Langalibalele Pass, and perhaps at the 9th day mark at the top of Sani Pass. There are no facilities on the mountain and hikers must ensure self-sufficiency with respect to all weather gear, food, medical supplies etc.

When is the Best Time?

Autumn presents a good opportunity, enough daylight to complete 8-9 hours walking, fairly moderate night time temperatures, less chance of storms, but still plentiful water on the mountain for drinking, cooking and washing.

The chosen time for our traverse was from 13th to 24th April 2009. This was a good combination of numerous public holidays with seasonal advantage.

Travel and Accommodation Arrangements.

Any hike that finishes some distance from where it starts needs good logistical planning.

Starting the Traverse at Sentinel Car Park means that all have to get there at a specific time. For an early morning start, accommodation must be arranged nearby and transport to Car Park organised.

Finishing at Bushman's Nek, some 230 km south of the start, meant that we needed one or more vehicles at or close to the end point.

We arranged the cars to have two in Harrismith and a Landrover at Himeville. We had accommodation booked in Harrismith and early Monday morning, about 06h00, Jan and Helen of Harrismith Backpackers drove the five of us to Sentinel Car Park where we met Andre and started the hike.

On completion of the hike, we had arranged for Himeville Arms to collect us at Bushman's and we all overnighted at the Himeville Arms on 24th. Thereafter, we left Andre behind as his wife was collecting him from Himeville, and we all piled in to our Landrover to return to Harrismith where we collected our respective cars and headed home.

Re-Supply Teams.

Sue worked with Neil Ransome to put re-supply team together. The team included Neil, Paul, Tess, Hanneke, Coen and Bengt from Johannes-

HIKE REVIEWS

burg as well as Brendan and Tish from Durban. They brought our goodies to the top of Bannermans Pass, and contributed much positive spirit and cheer. The following day we walked with them to the top of Langalibele Pass top where we had breakfast before going our separate ways.

Sani Pass allows a four-by-four vehicle to reach us at Sani top. This means that there is no restriction with respect to re-supply team numbers and load.

Rescue Team.

George contacted and liaised with Andy Wood and Gavin Raubenheimer of the Mountain Club, Pietermaritzburg division for rescue backup.

Personal Packing Lists and Goal Weights.

When hiking for an extended period, the challenge of ensuring everything you need is packed and that you stay within a goal weight for your backpack is no mean feat. Some members went to great lengths to cut down a few grams here and a few grams there. In the end, all backpacks weighed in at about 18kg when fully loaded for each day. This is surprising considering what is to be taken along.

The Experience.

It is after all, all about the experience. Months of talking and planning finally culminate in the start of the trip. Without going into an itinerary and day by day blow account, I will share some of the key aspects of the experience:

Beauty and Tranquillity.

I have seen the Drakensberg many times but never quite as I experienced it on this trip. Twelve days of walking in scenery that is splendid does not dull the senses to the beauty and sense of tranquillity that abounds. Having said this, it must be noted that the scenery does change through the trip:

The northern part of the hike is majestic. The peaks, passes, ridges and cutbacks are bold in their definition. Scenes like Madonna and her Worshipers, the Traveller, Mweni, Rockeries, Cockade, Cathedral and the Chessmen etc are understated when referred to as grand. Looking down on the sea of clouds in the early mornings is surreal. The effort expended is forgotten and you run out of adjectives and refrain from even attempting to describe the grandeur. The climbs and descents are steep and frequent and the reality that the top of the escarpment is not flat certainly hits home.

The southern part of the hike is more tranquil. The valleys are wider, the climbs more gradual and less frequent. Although you go higher in elevation, it seems less challenging. Perhaps this is because you become fitter as you progress; or perhaps it is a change in the terrain. There is a wonderful sense of open space and timelessness. Hills have kraals on them and shepherds and their sheep and horses are seen fairly regularly. The ground is fertile and there are moles by the million.

Weather.

We started out fair and enjoyed sunny and rainless days for seven days. On the eighth day we had cloud and rain late in the afternoon. On the ninth day we had sleet followed by snow for most of the day trundling into Sani. This added greatly to the experience of getting to the highest point in Southern Africa, Thabana Ntanyana, enjoying the displays of ice bedecked frozen grasses; quite spectacular.

Not keen to start the tenth day in sub-zero conditions we were somewhat sceptical about the weather, but the days got better and we rolled through the rest of the trip in good weather.

Pace and Timing

Our plan allowed for approximately 20km per day. We covered the guideline schedules Day 1 and Day 2 in one day, camping just short of Madonna. Our second day we covered Day 3 and part of Day 4 of our guideline schedule meaning that we had some insurance against bad weather if needed.

We reached Bannermans at 11h00 on our sixth day allowing us to do some rest and recovery, dry out tents, and do washing before our re-supply team joined us.

We gained distance on our seventh day giving us insurance for the leg to Sani. This was useful as the day before Sani it rained late in the afternoon and the day to Sani where we summited Thabana Ntanyana. The ice landscapes and frozen vegetation were a sight to behold. We were slowed by the climb in continuous sleet and snow. We reached the top of Sani in the snow by 15h00. Sani could not have been better placed for a welcome break from the cold and the raw elements.

The final leg to Bushman's was easily covered. We again made up time due to the fair weather from Sani and left ourselves a short final day getting down Thomatu Pass to Bushman's Nek border control by 11h45.

All in all, probably due to fair weather and a disciplined team, we had little difficulty in covering the

HIKE REVIEWS

distance required each day. By ensuring we kept to our planned stops and breaks and were all ready to leave on time, we were able to go at a pace comfortable to the slowest in the team, myself, and reach our daily goals.

People Encounters.

An experience like this is greatly affected by the encounters you have with other people. Overall this was an incredibly positive trip:

The hospitality, openness and kindness of some of the Himeville Arms staff to George and I was wonderful. We felt like more than guests, rather like friends in the local community.

Jan and Helen, not only accommodated us at very favourable rates in the backpackers in Harismith they are no longer advertising, but also woke early and drove us to Witsieshoek in their cars to ensure we could get an early start.

Witsieshoek, at the Sentinel Car Park was as disorganised as usual. We supplied a hike register sheet with all our info and paid fees despite the person in attendance indicating that there are no receipts. Whether the fees paid go to any cause relating to assisting hikers is a good question.

Casual hikers who spend the Easter weekend in around the Tugela Falls area on top of the escarpment are always susceptible to opportunistic theft. We met, as always, disgruntled hikers that had lost boots and backpacks despite the fact that they were followed down by Parks Board guards carrying rifles. It seems this problem is here to stay.

In the central berg area, we encountered numerous "Dagga Smugglers". Initially small groups of 3 or 4 people acting as mules each carrying a sack, heading for one of the passes in the late afternoon, hoping to offload their goods and return in the early hours of the morning. As we neared Judges, ironically, we met the largest groups we had seen. There were approximately 40 to 50 men gathered around donkeys with large quantities of sacks. They were not aggressive and we moved through the group as we crossed the saddle.

As we progressed further south and the landscape opened up with broader and flatter valleys, we encountered more shepherds. Kraals dotted each hill and herds of sheep and horses grew in number. It was interesting to witness the hill to hill communication between shepherds, as well as the good relationship between the shep-

herds and their multiple dogs. Friendly, always keen on a handout of sweets, we had no negative interactions at all. A harsh lifestyle that reminded us how little some people can live on.

On reaching Bushman's Nek border control point we offered our passports but as we were hikers it was indicated that this was unnecessary. We had not technically left South Africa although we spent the last 12 days walking predominantly on the Lesotho side of the international boundary. The border was most friendly and no objection to being used to take photographs of our group and allowing us to enjoy some cold drinks and beers on the verandah of his post.

Reflections.

Now that the trip is over, what remains? An opportunity to reflect on the trip highlights a few points:

One of the things we did at the end of most days was to get the team to come together in a circular embrace or huddle and end the days walk. I suggested we should use this time to symbolically cast our grudges and negative emotions on the floor in the circle between us before we all stamped our feet as a means of putting problems behind us. It was interesting to me that there were days where I had difficulty letting go. I was sometimes reluctant to stamp my foot down in the circle and move on. Silly, but interesting.

Records.

GPS tracks, way points and routes are available. Contact me for any information as needed. mike@hamilton.co.za.

For reasons of space Mike's highly informative article had to be shortened for Footnotes. His full-length version could serve as a reference for anyone intending to do the Travers. He can be contacted on mike@hamilton.co.za for more information or comments on his article (Editor).

HIKE REVIEWS

REMHOOGTE Jackie Celliers

The moderate minus group led by George Christian on Sunday 2, May 09 at Remhoogte were in for a lovely surprise! While admiring the view of Hartebeespoort dam we were alerted to a 3m+ African Rock Python in the grass right behind us. We took pictures and marvelled at the sight then left him in peace and continued our hike.



Shawn getting a close up view of the python.
Photo: Jackie Celliers.



Close-up view of the python.
Photo: Jackie Celliers.

ADVENTURE PROGRAMME Tracey May

Summer and spring kloofing.

A Kloofing Hike is held by the JHC once a month on the second Sunday of every month during summer only. The first hike is in October and the last is in March. We explore the kloofs in the Magaliesberg area, some of them being Mhlabatini, Tonquani, Groot Kloof, Dome Pools and Fern Kloof.

You need to wear clothes that you can get wet in



e.g. board shorts, a costume with a shirt over etc. Bring a waterproof bag to put inside your backpack to ensure the contents don't get wet as you will often need to swim and/or jump into pools with your kit on. The most important item will be your shoes: choose boots, aquashoes or Rockies that have an excellent grip even when

HIKE REVIEWS

wet – most injuries are caused by wearing inadequate shoes so you will enjoy the experience a lot more with the right shoes on. The other regular requirements for a day's hike are, of course, 2 litres water, sunscreen, hat, packed lunch, small first aid kit and a change of clothes that you can leave in your car for after the hike.

If you are looking for adventure, are not afraid of heights, enjoy ropework (climbing up and/or down a rope) and abseiling, jumping into pools, boulder hopping, swimming, walking through water, under and over obstacles and are reasonably fit and agile then kloofing is for you!

Autumn and winter.

From April 2009 the JHC will offer an Adventure



program throughout the year and in the colder months we will do a variety of adventure trips ranging from rock climbing, abseiling, dry kloofing, river rafting and zip lining. Again we appeal to people to be fit and agile, wear the right gear and come prepared for a challenge!

Come along and join us for an unforgettable experience, lots of laughs and a good challenge – guaranteed to have you looking forward to the next trip. Check out the program and book ahead with Tracey on 083-273-7906. Call early as there are a limited number of hikers allowed on each trip, usually 10-15.

This is an exciting new programme offered by the Club. Why not put some exhilaration into your life and join Tracey and adventure bunnies (Editor).

SLAGTEHOEK

Photos by Charley Lewis



Olga crossing river.



The group.

HIKE REVIEWS

ELSA AND ELISABETH IN CHINA, 22, APRIL TO 2, MAY 2009 Elisabeth Pickard



Thursday 23 April

We had two good flights and an interesting time in Dubai airport - walked for miles as the airport is so enormous. We arrived in Beijing on Thursday at 2pm local time (six hours ahead of Johannesburg). It was really foggy there and it poured all night. We bought a SIM card and sent Ann a message. Her reply came back as pictures of boxes so it seems that the card cannot interpret English. We caught the shuttle bus to the city centre and then walked for about two hours with our heavy packs to this hostel. Taxis wanted to pick us up saying we were too old to walk; this is not the case of course. The youth hostel is located near Tiannamen Square and all the city tourist attractions so it was really convenient. The facilities are basic, but clean.

Friday 24 April

We spent an amazing day around Beijing visiting Tiannamen Square and the Forbidden City. We were taken for Tea Ceremony by a Chinese student and also for an attempted financial "ride", almost - but refused to pay full price. We sampled 8 different teas which should have cost us R700, but we got away with paying only R50. Apparently it is a student scam to take visitors to these tea houses. It is so different shopping as we don't know what we are buying or seeing as hardly any English is spoken and all labels are of course in Mandarin. We managed to buy a tin of fish and biscuits for supper tonight and two apples and found lovely green tea.

The only people who speak any English are students who stop us in the street wanting to practice English. Elsa says "for an agnostic she does well to have so many guardian angels" as we are grateful when these students find us.

Saturday 25 to Friday 1st May

We left Beijing for two days and travelled by overnight sleeper to Xian to visit the Terracotta Warriors. The train journey was an experience in itself as we were only able to book a hard seat. i.e. we sat up all night - 14 hours. The locals were very amused by us as they seldom see white people. They tend to stare continuously as though we are from Mars, especially at me with blonde hair. They took photos of us and wanted our photos taken with them and their families. The Warriors are so amazing. The Emperor spent 36 years having them built so that if

he was invited back to this world again after his death, he would have a ready made ar-



Terracotta Warriors. Photo:

Elisabeth Pickard

my. There are about 4000 of them and each one has a different face and dressed in their different uniforms. They were in colour but the colour disappeared when they were exposed to the elements. They have been covered by a building, in fact three buildings. We then went to see the pandas who are gorgeous, so cuddly. On Wednesday we set off to find the Great Wall. It is about 75 miles north of the city. We had a fabulous day climbing the wall. I did not realise how much it wound around the mountains, how wide it was, just awesome. We first chose the

HIKE REVIEWS

steepest way to walk, east, as there were less people there and then walked west. We walked in total for 5 hours. It is so so steep that on some parts we had to pull ourselves up with the hand rail. Other parts have steps but they are very deep.

On Thursday we went to see the Nest which was be our first experience of travelling on the underground and also our first meal in a restaurant. We had been too nervous to go into a restaurant before as we could not ask how much anything is or what to eat. We managed to order something we liked though. We have been buying food on the street, like sweetcorn on the cob and many Chinese snacks, but we don't know what we have eaten most of the time, but we have not been sick. Restaurants are inexpensive - R20 for a main course and plenty of it. In the evening we went to an acrobatic show which was of world class, just fantastic.

Friday 1st May

We spent the day going to visit the Nest and the Water Cube.

Saturday 2nd May

This is the day we left China. It has been the most amazing trip and such an eye opener and education. China is just so huge with many huge buildings and highways. Sandton will look like a doll's house in comparison. The Chinese people are so friendly and helpful too.

Here are some of the public signs and findings we found amusing:

- Avoid treading on the grass. Little grass too has a life.
 - Don't use whilst the train is stabling
 - Don't pour waste into the pond (basin)
 - Caution, risk of pinching hand (in a door)
 - Chinese proverb: A man is not a true man if he has not climbed the Great Wall
 - Chinese don't eat bread or dairy products – so no cheese to buy and yogurt only just being introduced.
 - They eat duck like South Africans eat chicken – Peking Duck available in restaurants and from the street vendors (head and neck included!)
- Eastern toilets are an acquired practice – one develops strong knees and a good aim! All public loos are free and you have to carry your own tissue as it is not used in the east. A separate receptacle for the used tissue is available. If flushed down the loo the loo will “break” accord-

ing to the signs.

All in all a fantastic holiday ... We were left with a very strong impression of the efficiency of the Chinese and a very strong expectation of them fulfilling the opinion expressed sometime in the last century that they will take over the world eventually (i.e. the yellow peril)



Tony Ferreira, a wonderful leader of the slow group on the Foothold hike on the May camp at Foothold.

Photo: Harry Parsley.

EASTER CAMP



Photos: Robbie Macdonald.

FERDIE'S 80TH

Happy 80th birthday Ferdie from all at the JHC



FOOTHOLD CAMP MAY, 2009.

FOOTHOLD CAMP APRIL 2009

Merle Doctor

Do you ever give a thought as to how wonderful Foothold always looks, when you come to hike? Do you ever think of who cuts the lawn, before you arrive? Who built the loos? Who painted the chairs, the building...even the roof! Who cut the dead trees down, kept the paths open, made the curtains, washed the towels to name just a few of the chores.



It's thanks to Jim and his band of 70+ year olds, who are hard at work every month, to keep your property in tip top condition for no remuneration.

Elizabeth provided all who were at Foothold on Saturday night with a splendid feast to celebrate Ferdie's 80th Birthday. They met on a JHC hike thirty years ago and are still hiking at 70 plus.

While hiking the 'Bird Path' at Foothold Marge, Judy, Jean and Jetta got in to the old bath that stands all alone in a field the old house long since tumbled down. Meanwhile Darth Vader, alias John, in his grass cutting gear. Jim, who never is never still enough to take a photo, whizzes past with the wheelbarrow.



Garth Vader, alias John, getting stuck in to a super dusty job at Foothold



Ferdie and Elizabeth toasting his eightieth birthday at Foothold and their thirty-year relationship. They met on a JHC hike all that time back and still going strong together.

CLUB NEWS

Donations

The following people are thanked for their donations that they made to the Club:

Kurt Stauch

Peggy Watson

Derek Coop

Allen & Ida Scott

The Flower Society

Thembakazi Mali

Pierre & Maryna Le Roux

Charlie Montross

Kevin Walsh

Maryann Schoeman

Hilary Jackson

Peter Thomas

Gunter Godecke

New members

A warm welcome is extended to our following new members. We trust you will enjoy the camaraderie of hiking with the Johannesburg Hiking Club.

Barbara Skok

Coen Terblanche

Rona von Benecke

Bobby Dickson

Taryn van Olden

SURVIVAL TIPS

Nigel Naylor

NETCARE 911
011-254-1555

You can hire Hikers Haven at Foothold, camp there, or simply come to the monthly camp.

Contact number: 0879-401-903

SURVIVAL TIPS

Replacing the gas cylinder on a Gaz/Haz/Bluet gas lamps/stoves:

I was on a hike the other day and at the overnight camp some fellow hikers were complaining at how difficult and dangerous it was to replace the disposable gas cylinders on their stoves/lamp. They said that there were often gas leaks whilst doing the change and they hated this operation. On further enquiry it transpired that they released the catches to the cylinder (which is a difficult task in it's own right) and then pushed the cylinder in place, thereby puncturing the can. And this is where the gas leaked out and you had to be very fast otherwise there is gas everywhere.

This was the second time I had come across this problem and the fellow hikers told me they had been doing this for over 20 years. So I informed them of the correct procedure:

Move to an open area which is well ventilated and away from people – this is to eliminate any injury or damage in case of a mishap

1. Switch on the lamp/stove and leave open until the cylinder is completely empty

2. Unscrew the lamp/stove from the base

3. Make sure the rubber seal on the lamp/stove is clean and not damaged

4. Remove the catches at the base of the base and remove the gas cylinder.

5. Replace the gas cylinder and replace the catches.

Screw in the lamp/stove part into the base. Whilst screwing in the cylinder will be punctured in a neat way with minimal gas loss and danger,

Natural Soap:

I came across an amazing tree the other day. It is known in Afrikaans as the "Seepblinkblaarboom", or "soap tree" in English. The literal translation of the Afrikaans name is "soap shiny leaf tree". You will find that Afrikaans is a very descriptive language: The leaves are dark green and shiny, with a serrated edge. The stems and branches are purple in colour.

The leaves and stems can be crushed and used as a natural soap, and hence the name of the plant. It is indigenous to the Western and Eastern Cape (my province of origin!) but can be found in Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West provinces where they have been planted.

I know that washing in streams is of concern for hikers as many animals will not drink in water that humans have bathed in using commercial soaps.

SURVIVAL TIPS

There is a very nice "Zebra Pool" on the 4th day of the Naaukluft Hiking Trial in Namibia as we were told that if you use soap at this pool the zebra's will boycott the pool and we hikers would be the poorer for it.

As a matter of interest the Xhosa's make a broth of the leaves and stems to use to treat their cattle for "Quarter Fever". I have not been able to find out what it is. The Xhosa's also used this plant for washing clothes.

Some hikers have asked about a natural soap, so here it is. The trees range in price from R175 to about R450 per tree. The nursery at the Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens has some in stock. So go out and buy a tree and have your very own source of natural soap for hiking. Not many people can claim to have picked their own soap straight from the tree and it is very fresh!

Your lower limbs (i.e. Your pelvis, legs, knees, ankles and feet):

Why write about this? Because it is your lower limbs that get you into the hike and must also get you out of the hike. You can break an arm and still walk out. But break a leg and you will not be walking out (Unless of course you are of the same calibre person as that in the movie "Touching the Void").

Pay particular attention to socks and boots, taking care to keep your socks dry to avoid blisters. This is not a serious problem on short hikes, but on long hikes it can be.

I came across an incident on the Otter Trail where a friend of mine had new boots and suffered all the way in silence until the last 3 kilometres when he happened to mention me that his ankles were aching because he had tied the boots too tight around the ankles. I showed him how to tie the boots without straining the ankles. So please bear in mind that boots can be tied in many different ways. The bottom part of the boot should be particularly tight when going down hills so as not to damage your toe nails on the descent. Also, make sure your toe nails are cut short in order not to lose them.

HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU NEED A DAY?

Article submitted by Frances Raal

Water is an important structural component of skin cartilage, tissues and organs. For human beings, every part of the body is dependent on water. Our body comprises about 75% water: the brain has 85%, blood is 90%, muscles are 75%,

kidney is 82% and bones are 22% water. The functions of our glands and organs will eventually deteriorate if they are not nourished with good, clean water.

The average adult loses about 2.5 litres of water daily through perspiration, breathing and elimination. Symptoms of the body's deterioration begin to appear when the body loses 5% of its total water volume. In a healthy adult, this is seen as fatigue and general discomfort, whereas for an infant, it can be dehydrating. In an elderly person, a 5% water loss causes the body chemistry to become abnormal, especially if the percentage of electrolytes is overbalanced with sodium. One can usually see symptoms of aging, such as wrinkles, lethargy and even disorientation. Continuous water loss over time will speed up aging as well as increase risks of diseases.

If your body is not sufficiently hydrated, the cells will draw water from your bloodstream, which will make your heart work harder. At the same time, the kidneys cannot purify blood effectively. When this happens, some of the kidney's workload is passed on to the liver and other organs, which may cause them to be severely stressed. Additionally, you may develop a number of minor health conditions such as constipation, dry and itchy skin, acne, nosebleeds, urinary tract infection, coughs, sneezing, sinus pressure, and headaches.

So, how much water is enough for you? The minimum amount of water you need depends on your body weight. A more accurate calculation is to drink an ounce of water for every two pounds of body weight.

Here is the calculation for your minimum water need per day:

Here is the calculation for your minimum water need per day

Your weight	75	kg
Requirement	2475	ml

HIKING LIFESTYLE



AT LEAST WE HAVE NETCARE 911

TAXI DRIVER

Unknown

A passenger in a taxi leaned over to ask the driver a question and tapped him on the shoulder. The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up over the curb, and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window. For a few moments everything was silent in the cab, and then the still shaking driver said, 'I'm sorry, but you scared the daylights out of me.' The frightened passenger apologized to the driver and said he didn't realize a mere tap on the shoulder could frighten him so much. The driver replied, 'No, no, I'm sorry, it's entirely my fault. Today is my first day driving a cab. I've been driving a hearse for the last 25 years.'

FNB ATM PROTECTION

Submitted by Frances Raal

In the spite of armed robbery, here is something you may really need. When a thief forces you to take money from the ATM do not argue or resist, you might not know what he or she might do to you.

What you should do is to punch your pin in the reverse, i.e, if your pin is 1254, you punch in 4521. The moment you punch in the reverse, the money will come out but will be stuck into the machine half way out and it will alert police without the notice of the thief.

Every ATM has it; it is specially made to signify danger and a need for help.

ASTRONOMY

RHYTHMS OF THE OCEAN

Paul Rangecroft

Many of us have hiked the Otter Trail along the Tsitsikamma coastline at some stage and know that you have to reach the mouth of the Bloukrans River at a time of low tide in order to cross over safely. Low tide occurs twice over a 24-hour period (as does high tide), and the timing of the tides changes from one day to the next, so you have to consult tide tables before leaving on the hike to establish when low tide will occur on the day you anticipate reaching the Bloukrans mouth. Why does the tide change four times a day (twice would seem to make more sense) and why is the timing not consistent from one day to the next?

The ocean tides are the product of forces of gravitational attraction exerted on the earth by the sun and the moon. Any two bodies in space exert gravitational attraction upon each other, and the magnitude of the attraction between them is dependent upon their masses and the distance between them. Whilst the sun is very much larger than the moon, the moon is very much closer to the earth and the force which it exerts upon the earth is therefore greater than that which the sun exerts – the moon's gravitational attraction is thus the principal cause of the earth's ocean tides.

The gravitational pull of the moon creates two bulges in the earth's oceans, both in line with the position of the moon but on opposite sides of the earth. On the side of the earth which faces the moon, ocean water is drawn away from the body of the earth to form a bulge, whilst on the opposite side, the body of the earth is drawn away from the ocean, causing a bulge to form in the ocean. High tides occur where the two bulges are situated and low tides in between where ocean water is being drawn away to form the bulges. As the earth rotates on its axis, the tidal bulges move across the oceans while maintaining their positions relative to the moon, and over a 24-hour period, this movement produces four changes in the tide along the earth's coastlines (two periods of high tide and two of low tide).

The timing of the tides advances by 50 minutes each day. In other words, the interval between tides on successive days is not exactly 24 hours (the time it takes the earth to complete a rotation on its axis), but 24 hours 50 minutes. This is be-

cause the moon advances in its orbit as the earth rotates on its axis, and as a result, the earth has to spin through a little more than 360°, or for an additional 50 minutes, before a particular coastal location lines up with the moon again.

High tide occurs at a particular coastal location at the time of day when the moon reaches its zenith (the midpoint of its daily passage across the sky) and again 12 hours 25 minutes later when it reaches its zenith on the opposite side of the earth. There is usually some variation from this in the timing of the tides at different coastal locations because of the influence of a number of different factors upon the pattern of the tides.

The two high tides occurring at a particular coastal location within a 24-hour period are usually of a different magnitude. This is related to the tilt of the moon's orbital path relative to the plane of the earth's equator. There are two points in the moon's orbit where its orbital path intersects with the earth's equatorial plane. When the moon reaches these points, the two tidal bulges will both be centred upon the equator and the tides will be of similar magnitude. At all other times in the moon's orbit, one bulge will be centred in the northern hemisphere and the other in the southern hemisphere. Most coastal areas will be located closer to the centre of one bulge than to the centre of the other, and so will experience tides of different magnitude.

The influence of the gravitational pull of the sun on the tides becomes apparent at certain times in the lunar cycle. At times of new moon and full moon, the sun and the moon are in alignment with the earth and the gravitational pull of the sun reinforces that of the moon, producing unusually high tides called *spring tides*. At times of half moon, the gravitational forces of the sun and moon are at right angles to each other, and so work against each other, resulting in subdued tides called *neap tides*.

The tides are also affected by variations in the moon's proximity to the earth. There is a point in the moon's orbit where it is nearest to the earth (known as its *perigee*) and a point where it is furthest from the earth (known as its *apogee*). When the moon moves through the perigee stage of its orbit, its gravitational pull on the earth increases and the tides become higher than usual. If the moon reaches its perigee at a time of spring

ASTRONOMY

tide (as it does twice a year), exceptionally high tides occur. This would be an ideal time to cross

the Bloukrans as the associated low tides are exceptionally low!

JOIN A TRIP TO KANCHENJUNGA

KANCHENJUNGA: SEPTEMBER 2009 Mike Openshaw

This trek is still on, with an adjustment. Those of us who have expressed interest in this expedition, have decided to tackle it from the Sikkim, India, side of the mountain, as we have had enough Kathmandu experiences and rather fancy visiting Darjeeling.

The plan is to fly Emirates to Darjeeling, via Dubai and Kolkata, returning via Delhi and Dubai. The quote we have received for the flight is R8 300.00 (The price is subject to increases, currency fluctuations, availability and may change until paid in full).

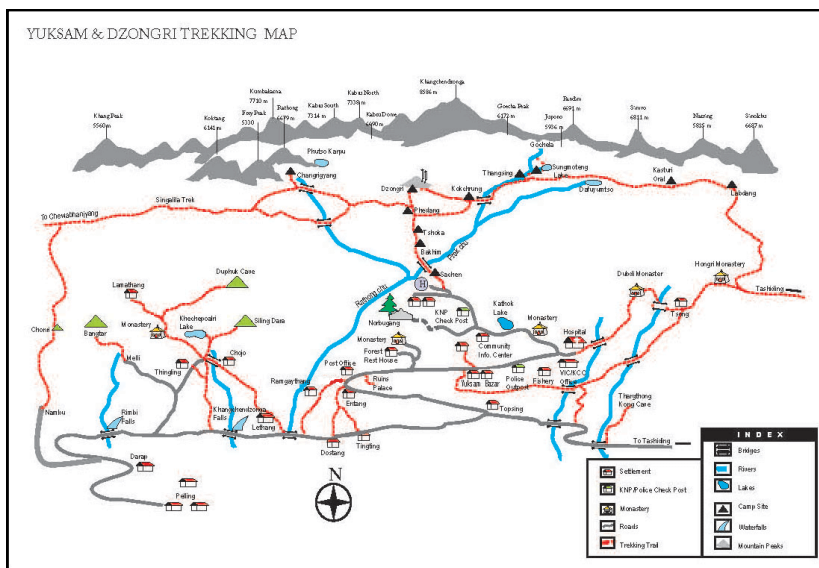
The trip consists of 11 days hiking at high elevation (max. 5 000m) and some long drives, 11 nights camping and 3 nights in hotels (bed and breakfast only), a total of 15 days, excluding the flights. It also includes some sightseeing around Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, all meals during the trek, services of porters, pack animals, camping equipment, as well as an English speaking guide.

The prices quoted are subject to change, until paid in full:

2 people sharing	USD 1 559.16 per person
4 people sharing	USD 1 039.12 per person
6 people sharing	USD 906.25 per person

This means that the total cost, at today's exchange rate, will be in the price range of R20 000 to R 23 000.

YUKSAM & DZONGRI TREKKING MAP



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Fish River Canyon.

Photo: Robbie Macdonald.