

**THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA
HON. SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012**

The following office bearers of The Mountain Club of South Africa were elected for the current year at the Annual General Meeting held on **Saturday 13 April, 2012** in Cape Town.

The office bearers who served on ExCo 2012:

Mr David Jones	President
Mr Tonie Roux	Deputy President
Mr Lester Coelen	Hon. Treasurer
Mrs Jenny Paterson	Hon. Secretary
Mr James Voortman	Additional member
Mr Dobek Pater	Additional member

The Central Committee comprised of the Chairperson of the various Sections, as follows:

Mrs Thea Groenewegen	Chairperson - Amajuba Section
Mr Brian Lambourne	Chairperson - Cape Town Section
Mr Chris Jones	Chairperson - Eastern Province Section
Ms Charlotte Augustyn	Chairperson - Free State Section
Mr Ulli Deutschländer	Chairperson - Hottentots Holland Section
Mr Dobek Pater	Chairperson - Johannesburg Section
Mr James Voortman	Chairperson - KwaZulu-Natal Section
Mr Petrus Nel	Chairperson - Magaliesberg Section
Mr Roland Graf	Chairperson – Namibia Section
Mrs Avril Powrie	Chairperson - Paarl Wellington Section
Mr Bill Uren	Chairperson - South Cape Section
Mr Wim Morris	Chairperson - Stellenbosch Section
Mr Johan Botha	Chairperson - Tygerberg Section
Mr Tonie Roux	Chairperson - Worcester Section

Finances (Hon. Treasurer : Mr Lester Coelen)

The Club's finances remain in a healthy state, with Accumulated Funds standing at R108 690 (2011 – R121 892) and Special Purpose Funds at R782 850 (2011 - R732 036) – a decrease of R13 202 (2011 - Increase of R20 045) and an increase of R50 814 (2011- R75 679) respectively over the previous year.

The net increase in Accumulated Funds was due to there being a net Deficit of R13 202 for the current year compared to a Surplus of R20 045 for the previous year – a net decrease of R33 247. This was due to a net increase in Operating Expenditure of R39 910; a decrease in Levies of R2 409 offset by a reduction in Non-Operating Expenditure of R9 073. The major increases in expenditure related primarily to Advertising (R4 370); Local Travel for Central Committee meetings (R10 798); attendance at UIAA meetings – extra meeting (R23 233); UIAA Subscriptions (R3 295) and President's Award (R6 921); offset by a decrease in costs of Website/Computer (R2 700); Legal Fees relating to copyright (R5 244) and grant to Magaliesberg Protection Association (R10 000).

The net increase for the current year in Special Purpose Funds of R50 814 compared to an increase of R75 679 for the previous year. The net decrease of R24 865 was due to a reduction of Donations/Grants received of R31 000 and Expenditure of R18 772 for Search and Rescue, offset by an increase of Donations/Grants received for Centenary Youth Fund of R10 233 and an increase in expenditure in respect of Expeditions – Operating of R10 648; Publications of R6 181 and Centenary Youth Fund of R8 880 and an increase of Interest allocation of R2 840.

In view of the Club's status as a Public Benefit Organisation and the tax exemptions that flow therefrom, the Club has no tax liability.

UIAA MATTERS

The MCSA continued to play a prominent part in the activities of the UIAA (Union of International Alpine Federations) during 2012 with the MCSA delegate serving on its Management Committee, elected there to represent Africa.

After the turmoil of the 2011 General Assembly when sharp questions were asked of the President by the Management Committee of the UIAA regarding gross over-expenditure, which resulted in the resignation of the President and two of his Board with full effect at the end of December 2011, the organisation was left short-handed at Board level. Since over-expenditure was the issue, it was decided not to call a Special General Assembly in order to immediately elect a new President or to fill the other Board vacancies and so incur further costs. Instead some of the duties of the Executive Board were taken over by volunteers from the Management Committee until the next General Assembly in October 2012. The MCSA delegate was one of those volunteers. He served on a working group to complete a forward-looking strategic plan for the organisation that had been set in motion by the ex-President. He was also the co-ordinator for arrangements made to properly elect a new President.

Because of this additional involvement, the MCSA agreed to its President attending the mid-year meeting of the Management Committee held in Hungary during May 2012. Ordinarily the MCSA delegate contributes by email but sends apologies for the mid-year meeting because of the cost involved in attending. (The meetings are invariably in the Northern Hemisphere – usually in Europe.) This gesture of support was greatly appreciated by management in the UIAA and it confirmed the solid contributions that the MCSA can make to this organisation because of its unaligned position and because it speaks for a Continent that is otherwise poorly represented. Similar appreciation has frequently been expressed for the willingness of MCSA members generally to volunteer to serve on UIAA Commissions, so that our Club enjoys and deserves considerable respect.

The 2012 General Assembly of the UIAA, held in Amsterdam, was a very important one indeed as delegates came ready to scrutinise expenditure to make sure that a dangerous trend had been reversed and to elect a new President able to correct a situation that had appeared to be getting out of control. So successful were the austerity measures introduced, including volunteer work by Management Committee members and the introduction of tele-conferencing to reduce travel costs, that a complete turn around was presented with almost a complete recovery of "wasted" money. South Africa and New Zealand made a concrete contribution to the turn around by organising the first experiment in tele-conferencing when its delegates, both of them on the Management Committee and part of the Strategic Plan Working Group, organised a simple internet link-up with European counterparts when the MCSA President was on a private visit to New Zealand. The UIAA Acting President also contributed significantly by delegating attendance of meetings, wherever possible, to members of his management team living closest to the venues.

The election of a new President at the October General Assembly was well handled in accordance with the UIAA Constitution but was a tightly contested affair between two strong candidates. The Acting President, Jordi Colomer from Spain, was supported by many Federations in spite of his mature age and a lack of fluency in English which is the language of debate in the UIAA, because of the good job he had done in restoring the finances. He was defeated by a much younger candidate, Frits Vrijlandt of the Netherlands, because of his energy and because he is fluent in English and a number of other European languages. Also strongly in Vrijlandt's favour was the promise he seemed to offer of successfully persuading the huge German and Austrian federations

to return to the UIAA. They had withdrawn a few years earlier in protest of certain policies being pursued by the ex-President.

The four year term in Office of the 2012 MCSA President on the Management Committee will come to an end at the General Assembly in October 2013. The UIAA will surely be hoping again for a nomination again from the MCSA to fill this vacancy and to represent for Africa for the next four years.

UIAA Access Commission

Corresponding Member: Roy Kendal

At the Access Commission meeting in October 2012 in Amsterdam, Jeremy Colenso stood down after six years as the MCSA representative to the UIAA Access Commission. The nomination of Roy Kendall, a member of the Johannesburg Section, was made at the General Assembly meeting in Amsterdam, accepted by the Access Commission to be the MCSA representative for the years 2013 – 2016. His nomination was accepted and he will act as corresponding member only, as full membership requires attendance at meetings throughout the world and budgetary constraints prevent this.

A meeting of the Access Commission was held in Santiago, Chile in March 2012. Also, for the first time, a Skype meeting was held in July 2012, allowing corresponding members an opportunity to 'attend' official meetings.

At the meeting in Chile Jeremy Colenso's report informed the Commission about Anthony Hall, a Cape Section member, about his M.Phil academic thesis and its valuable work on negotiation of access to privately owned mountain land. The Access Commission agreed that the thesis be adopted and used by the Commission. Also addressed by the Commission was the public access to a proposed conservation area in the Rio de Olivares. This together with the controversial issue of the HydroAsyn hydroelectrical project were among the issues addressed. In the Rio De Olivares issue, this was state-owned land where access through a permit system was established.

The Skype meeting was successful, although not represented by any MCSA member. Interesting to note was the input from the corresponding member of the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) whose access issues are not dissimilar to some of the access issues we have in South Africa. In Switzerland, it seems that many areas are under the 'Ecological Authority' who have established 'rest areas' and areas of 'hunting restrictions'. The SAC have been active in maintaining access to these areas and have considered taking legal action in order to retain access should access be denied.

A conference on the International Reciprocal Agreement on Mountain Huts, at the end of 2012, resulted in modifications to existing agreements. What this means is that UIAA members can obtain stamps from the Reciprocal Secretariat which effectively allows them a reduction in hut fees from 30% – 50 % in over 1200 huts all over the European Alps.

New to the Access Commission is the Expedition Working Group. This group would work semi-autonomously but would report to the main Commission. Ulrike Kiefer, MCSA's national convenor of Expeditions, accepted the nomination by MCSA.

Going forward the main task for the Access Commission is to create a wiki-style site for global access information. The aim is to have a single page summary for each country with links pointing to more specific information. While a page has been created for South Africa there is no detailed information on it as yet. This is my main focal point for the immediate future.

In going forward it is hoped that by liaising with the land and access representatives of the various MCSA Sections, that I will be able to communicate to the UIAA Commission relevant issues that affect the different sections and also to see how the UIAA Access Commission can help in resolving local issues. Also to be able to feedback pertinent information to the various sections.

The Access Commission president is still Clare Bond of the BMC but Lucio Foppoli has had to step down as vice-president as she has been voted onto the UIAA Management Committee and is not permitted to hold both positions. This leaves the position of vice-president Access vacant.

UIAA Medical Commission

Corresponding Member: Dr Eckart von Delft

The UIAA Medical Commission (MEDCOM) has compiled the following expert papers on topics in mountain medicine and mountain activities:

1. Portable hyperbaric chambers
2. Traveller's diarrhoea
3. Children at altitude
4. Use of hiking sticks in the mountains
5. People with pre-existing conditions
6. Work on hypoxic conditions
7. Travel at high altitude
8. Blood borne infections in climbing
9. Prevention and control of Legionella infections
10. AMS, HAPE, HACE
11. Nutritional considerations
12. Water purification in the mountains
13. Effects of extremes of temperature on drugs
14. Women going to altitude
15. Contraception at altitude
16. Travel to altitude with neurological disorders
17. Eye problems on expeditions
18. Injury classification for mountaineering and climbing sports
19. Altitude and other illnesses on Kilimanjaro
20. Commercial trek organization quality checking
21. 4 x 4 Health rules for mountaineers

These position papers can be viewed on the Medcom Webpage of the UIAA. The Medcom Mission is to increase the knowledge about medicine among doctors and mountaineers all over the world. The Commission collects, evaluates and discusses data and attempts to reach an international consensus on difficult issues of prevention and treatment of illness and injuries.

It has also developed a standardised Diploma of Mountain Medicine for three different categories:

1. Basic Mountain Medicine
2. Trekking and Expedition Medicine
3. Speciality Course for Mountain Emergency Physicians

Member Federations are invited to offer these courses but must follow the UIAA Diploma Curricula. The Diploma is run jointly with the International Society of Mountain Medicine (ISMM) and the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR). The Diploma carries the logo of the UIAA, ISMM and ICAR. Minimal Standards for Mountain Rescue Preparation are also set down by Medcom. Medcom also publishes reports by member federations on local mountain medical knowledge.

UIAA Mountain Protection (Conservation) Commission

Corresponding Member: Ms Maretha Alant

Some UIAA correspondence was received. There was no need to prepare any documentation for the UIAA. Maretha Alant was appointed as a UIAA Mountain Protection Assessor for a one year period. No requests to assess projects have been received to date.

UIAA Safety Commission

Commission Member: Alan Jarvis

1.0 Summary

The last SafeCom meeting was held in St Petersburg, Russia from 30 May to 1 June 2012. Our convenor did not attend it although he had been involved throughout the year before and after the meetings. The most important issues from the year with respect to the SafeCom were:

- The Annual meeting was well organised and productive, and showed the results of some good work through the year by its members. In addition it was a good venue for the exchange of ideas
- The German Mountaineering Federation (DAV) was again quite active in safety related events throughout the year which is a positive sign of their continued interest in at least the UIAA SafeCom.
- The number of Federation delegates attending was the same as in 2011 with six of 13 delegates attending.
- The number of label holders (manufacturers), observers, test labs and related was again about the same as always: a pretty good turn-out. In fact there are 60 manufacturers with 1 860 safety labels (is one label per piece of gear that they sell), and numbers are still increasing.
- The various working groups were quite productive and steady progress is being made on the various issues.

2.0 Specific Issues

2.1 Information from SafeCom meetings and working groups

Minutes and attachments for all the meetings for the past nine years are available from Alan Jarvis.

2.2 Via Ferrata-related issues

2.2.1 Via Ferrata related fatality in Austria:

The UIAA SafeCom was used as the means to address the failure of a Via Ferrata energy absorber in Austria that caused a death, with several meetings organised by the UIAA SafeCom and all manufacturers participating. There was quite a fast response to the problem and it was interesting to see that the UIAA was used in an event that occurred within the EU and thus within the mandate of the related EN standards (which have some legal bearing in the EU whereas the UIAA standards do not). And in fact, the accident occurred in Austria and yet both the German and Austrian Alpine Clubs were completely supportive of the UIAA being fully involved, which is encouraging for the future re-incorporation of these two Clubs into the UIAA.

The fatal accident occurred when the VF shock absorbing device failed to hold the load of a climber falling on it after he slipped from the climb. After investigation it was found it had been made according to standard but that with extensive use it had been exposed to dirt and sand and this had worn the safety leash, especially since it was the elasticated variety that tends to bounce up and down with the movement of the climber. If the fibres are dirty, the sharp particles wear the fibres, eventually not being able to sustain the required load due to a fall. Discussions on the best ways to modify the standards as well as equipment recalls of affected sets are underway. More details can be seen on the UIAA site: http://www.theuiaa.org/commissions_safety.html.

2.2.2 VF Construction Standard Working Group

There has been good progress on this and a standard should be issued soon with recommendations on VF construction. This could be useful in South Africa.

2.3 Anchors, in particular chloride stress corrosion cracking (SCC)

We are slowly but surely moving forward on this. Most climbers are aware of the potential safety issues with premature anchor failure due to corrosion/SCC. The difficult part is determining which areas are at risk. Once that is done, the solution is fairly straightforward; we know what materials can be used to make resistant anchors. The only real issue is they are usually quite a bit more expensive than the more commonly used ones. However since they are very likely going to last at least twice as long even without risk of SCC failure this should make it easier to decide to use them. Our convenor is co-ordinating some research into corrosion/SCC of anchors by an Italian university and hope this will help us decide which areas are at risk of SCC.

2.4 Avalanche Air Bags

Although not an issue in South Africa, it is interesting to note that many people in avalanche areas tend to carry these systems that inflate upon demand and keep the skier/snowboarder/walker from being smothered in the soft snow during the avalanche. The UIAA is seen as a good organ to issue a standard on these since their use is global and not just confined to the EU.

2.5 Non-metallic chocks

Although the use of plastic for chocks is not that unusual an idea, it does show that the past assumptions concerning the affect of temperature on material properties has been somewhat complacent when only metal was being used. Therefore there is now some consideration of both high and low temperature extremes with respect to equipment safety.

2.6 Other topics

The following topics were discussed at the meetings and usually had a working group involved. Interested people should contact me for more information:

- Connector strength: continued work on the various tests
- Test results -vs- claimed performance: there is some inconsistency in some items with respect the values for equipment strength/ratings that manufacturers claim compared to what is tested, or what is required by the relevant Standard. However, after discussion it was decided that this is quite a difficult area to police. There will, however, be more discussion on how the UIAA can be used as a forum whereby complaints against UIAA -labelled products can be addressed.
- Harnesses: continuing work on various issues such as safety for climbers falling upside down, testing issues (design of dummies etc).
- Crash pads: continued work on this to make the Standard and requirements better
- Ropes edge test: another issue that has seen a lot of work, how to test for how resistant a rope is to failure from a sharp edge
- Ropes dry coating: finalising the revision on rope dry coating requirements
- Snow picket standard: final draft almost ready

3.0 Conclusion

Jarvis's experience has been that the Safety Commission is both a good organisation for mountaineers/climbers in general, and in particular for the MCSA. We might not see the effects of all of their actions but it is good to have a more global organisation than the EU-related standards committees, which tend to be quite Eurocentric.

UIAA Youth Commission

Corresponding Member: Mrs Jenny Paterson

The UIAA Youth Commission continues to provide wonderful opportunities for youth members to participate in expeditions and/or Global Youth Summits arranged by Member Federations. *Global Youth Summit* is the name for UIAA youth events which promote peace and co-operation between countries, and protection of the environment.

Two members of the MCSA took advantage of events on offer: Mercia Theron (Magaliesberg) attended a GYS event in Ariège (France) organised by the French Alpine Club and a grant of R1 500 was made to her from the Centenary Journal Youth Fund. Hugo Kritzing (Tygerberg) availed of the opportunity to visit the Balkan Mountains in Kosovo, an expedition organised by the Kosovo Mountaineering and Alpinists Federation. The articles on their respective trips can be found elsewhere in this Journal.

With funding assistance provided by various Sections - for which we again record our thanks - Brett Nicolson attended a UIAA Youth Leader Training Seminar hosted by the Alpine Association of Slovenia. Brett's attendance there was 'conditional' upon him running a Youth Leader Training Course for the MCSA. Upon his return, Brett did a presentation to Cencom at its meeting in November, which included certain recommendations on the way forward. This presentation was well received by Cencom and the inaugural MCSA/UIAA GYS Youth Leader Training Course will take place in August 2013. The venue will be Maretlwane Bush Camp in the Magaliesberg. The President of the Youth Commission is keen for the MCSA to include participants from other African countries, and contact has been made with the Mountain Clubs of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya and Namibia.

National MCSA Subcommittees:

The Convenors of the National Portfolios continue to contribute their time and expertise. The MCSA wishes to record its appreciation to all of them. Their reports follow.

Expeditions

Convenor: Ulrike Kiefer

The sub-committee members: Ulrike Kiefer (Johannesburg), Ian Bailey (KwaZulu-Natal), Greg Devine (Johannesburg), Russel Dodding (Johannesburg), Alard Hufner (Johannesburg), Andre Schoon (Cape Town), Donovan van Graan (Johannesburg) and Julia Wakeling (Cape Town).

The aim of this sub-committee is to promote expeditions of members to mountains around the world. This is done in various ways: by providing some financial assistance, making available specialised equipment, giving logistical support or a combination of all of these.

MCSA members wishing to apply for sponsorship or support may do so by sending their completed application form to expeditions@mcsa.org. This form and applicable guidelines are available from the MCSA website or from the Honorary Secretary, secretary@mcsa.org.za. Certain conditions apply and a full expedition report is expected from the expedition leader after their return.

Three expeditions were sponsored by Cencom.

- Baffin Island: Andrew Porter, Clinton Martinego, Dave Glass, Steve Bradshaw (jnr) and captain Bob Shepton completed the fabled north-west passage in a 33 foot fibreglass boat and along the way established some new big wall routes. This expedition received funding of R2 500 per MCSA member, i.e. a total of R7 500. Andrew's article *Arctic Dreams*, can be found elsewhere in this Journal.
- Trango Towers: Douard Le Roux, Alard Hufner, Shelly Hufner, Robert Powell, Adam Liebenberg and Carter Jensen made up the team. Dobek Pater and Neil Grimmer joined

them for the walk-in and then continued over the Gondogoro La. They received a cash grant of R4 000 per team plus the use of the two-way radios and satellite phone. Douard's article *Trango Towers*, can be found elsewhere in this Journal.

- India: A young and enthusiastic team of UCT students went to climb in the Miyar Valley in the northern Indian mountains. They were Duncan Fraser, Brendan Argent, Jonathan Glover, Chris Laidler, Leonard le Roux and Kieran Armin. They hoped to climb two unclimbed peaks. Due to unseasonal warm weather, snow conditions were treacherous and they did not summit, but came to within 100 metres of the summit of Tharang I. They also climbed an unnamed 5 300 m peak in the area. They were granted R2 500 per MCSA member, i.e a total of R7 500.

The expedition fund at present includes four Kenwood two-way radios with spare batteries, a hyperbaric pressure bag and a Thuraya satellite phone. New batteries for the two-way radios were purchased this year. The balance available for grants on the Expedition Operating account is R8 921 as at 31 December 2010. The capital account stands at R174 102,23.

Information Technology

Convenor: Michael van Breda

Professor Michael F van Breda continued as the IT Convenor for the year. Peter Jan Randewijk graciously offered his expertise in IT matters.

Websites

The URL mcsa.org.za continues to be hosted on a US based server managed by Roland Magg. Each section has a subdomain on this system. There were no reported downtimes in the year. The national site has been moved on to Google at cen.mcsa.org.za. The national website is being kept up to date, has the latest news regarding items such as SuperTramp, and UIAA notices. It is hoped that it will continue to be seen as a central repository of information regarding the Club and its activities. Sections are urged to make more use of the website, and to encourage their members to do so too. With a view to our younger members, the Club also now has a Facebook site under MCSA.

e-Mails

The e-mail system continues to be hosted on the mcsa.org.za site. As in past years a number of sections are making use of forwarders. This provides a useful mechanism to keep email addresses the same from year to year when committee members change.

Mailing lists

We have not been able to recruit a volunteer to take over e-News but our secretary has done an admirable job of forwarding news to the section chairs for their further distribution to members. The important function of e-News editor is sorely missed and it is hoped that a volunteer will come forward soon to continue this important line of communication amongst members.

Calendar

There is a calendar on the central website. Sections are urged to make use of its functionality. There are great advantages to this and hopefully in the future more sections will do this and one can have one integrated events calendar.

Journal

Editor: Jenny Paterson

Editing sub-committee comprised: Bridget Carrick; Russ Dodding; Annette van den Berg; Gary van Vuuren.

Some interesting contributions were received and thanks to early submission, the 2011 Journal was delivered to Sections for early distribution. What continues to impress is the quality of photographs being submitted.

Some comment of the publication in its present form was received and this will be taken into account and considered for the 2012 edition.

MCSA Supertramp Award

Co-ordinator: Ms Petro Grobler

The MCSA Supertramp award is awarded under the auspices of the Magaliesberg Section to a South African adventurer under the age of 25 years. For the 2012 award, six applications were received of which one did not meet the age requirements. The award was made to Alasdair Walton, a member of the Johannesburg Section for an expedition to Colombia. This expedition commenced late in December.

Mountain Conservation

Convenor: Maretha Alant

Committee members: Maretha Alant (Convener), Fran Hunziker and Fred van Berkel.

Commenting role:

The MCSA commented on the Proposed Regulations for Wilderness Areas In National Parks & Nature Reserves in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act No. 57 of 2003). The Johannesburg and Magaliesberg Sections commented on the Scheerpoort Eco Estate: There was concern about this development as it is within close proximity of the vulture colony.

Involvement in regional conservation initiatives:

The Magaliesberg Biosphere application was endorsed by the Johannesburg and the Magaliesberg Sections. The South Cape Section attended the Garden Route Initiative (GRI) meetings and will support the establishment of a biosphere reserve in the Garden Route.

Extensive projects for 2013 are planned by Johannesburg, Magaliesberg and South Cape Sections. See Sections' Annual Reports for further details of conservation initiatives.

Search and Rescue

Convenor: Rob Thomas

The composition of the Sub Committee was changed slightly. The committee member for rescue of each section that fields a rescue team was automatically added to the committee. Committee members comprised:

Mr Rob Thomas (Chair, ICAR Flight Rescue Representative); Mr Mike Klopper (Johannesburg); Mr Dean van der Merwe (Magaliesberg); Mr Gavin Raubenheimer (KwaZulu-Natal); Jason Schoeman (Eastern Province); Tim Jones (Eastern Province - took over from J Schoeman); Mr Andrew Scott (South Cape); Ms Gela Tölken (Hottentots Holland); Mr David Nel (co-convenor Cape Town); Mr Andy Wood (co-convenor Cape Town); Dr Rik de Decker (IKAR Medical Representative); Mr Lester Coelen (Search management advice); Mr Brent Jennings (Technical rescue advice).

Funding

During 2012 there was again a substantial donation from the Department of Transport in the form of an annual grant. This grant is a recurring one which helps considerably with the preparation of the rescue teams. The original grant was valid for five years and was re-negotiated during 2011.

Liaisons and memberships

Organisations with which the MCSA maintains a relationship in a rescue-specific context include

- a. SASAR Aeronautical Sub Committee (under the SA Department of Transport)
- b. ICAR (International Commission for Alpine Rescue) Flight Rescue and Medical Sub Commissions

Subcommittee activities

A decision was taken to schedule a National Search and Rescue meet in the Magaliesberg for 2013 to be run by the Gauteng team.

Team activity

Teams remained active with a variety of rescues.

Once again the aviation fraternity was the recipient of a significant amount of effort from the MCSA, including one incident which saw teams from Gauteng and from Cape Town/Hottentots Holland being deployed to Beira in Mocambique to search for a South African-registered aircraft. Similarly KwaZulu-Natal section responded to a SAAF C47TP crash at the top of the Long Wall in the Giant's Castle area of the Drakensberg, with members of the Gauteng team assisting the ARCC (Air Rescue Control Centre) with planning function and local knowledge.

In January the Gauteng team was requested by SAAF to assist with flood rescue work in Limpopo/Mpumalanga.

The Eastern Province team was sadly subject to substantial turmoil with the sudden resignation of their convenor who was heading off to travel overseas for an extended period, being replaced at short notice by Mr Tim Jones. At the same time there was a knock-on effect from the previous year and a number of senior team members resigned in solidarity with Mr Rob MacGeoghegan who had been subject to disciplinary action by the general committee of the Eastern Province section. This left the team in a position where it had to put in substantial effort to improve the skills levels of the remaining members in order to ensure a continuity of service to the public. A decision was also taken at Central Committee level to assist the Eastern Province team with equipment in order to ensure an acceptable level of capability. As a precaution, both the South Cape and KwaZulu-Natal teams were alerted that they may need to assist with more technical rescues as an interim measure. Although there were two occasions where the other teams did assist the Eastern Province team these were for reasons of geographical proximity rather than technical capability.

Developments

In the Western Cape the Red Cross Air Mercy Service (AMS) helicopter continues to be widely used for rescues, sometimes frustrating ground parties who will walk for hours only to be stood down when the patient is airlifted out from under their noses. However, rescuers continue to find that they are often required for those rescues which cannot be performed using helicopters, such as during foul weather. Unfortunately, the frustration being experienced as a result of the frequent use of the AMS helicopter is evident in the effort required to raise adequate numbers of rescuers when the helicopter is unable to respond.

Youth

Convenor: Jenny Paterson

Committee members: Steve Cooke (KwaZulu-Natal), Uschi Magg (Johannesburg) and Gary van Vuuren (Magaliesberg).

See report under UIAA Youth Commission above.

Activities**Annual Dinner**

The dinner was hosted by Johannesburg Section at the Johannesburg Country Club, which also hosted the second Cencom meeting that weekend. The dinner was attended by 73 members and non-members and Rob Thomas, national convenor of Search and Rescue, was the guest speaker.

Annual Memorial Service

The Annual Memorial Service, led by Bishop Geoff Davies from The Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute, was held on Sunday, 26 February 2012 at Maclear's Beacon on Table Mountain. The Act of Remembrance was read by Brian Lambourne, vice-Chairman of the Cape Town Section. The service was well attended.

Awards

Neil Margetts of Johannesburg Section was nominated for the President's Award in recognition of his promoting rock climbing in South Africa through organising rock climbing competitions; for developing new rock climbing venues and establishing new routes; securing access to new venues and safety of climbers at existing climbing venues, and establishing a national organisation (SANCF) to promote competitive sport climbing among school-going youth. The award will be presented to him at the Section's Annual General Meeting.

BMC Meets

The BMC continues to offer these enjoyable meets annually: a winter meet one year, and a summer meet the next. Two spaces were again allocated to the MCSA and were allocated to Colin McCoy (KZN) and Marc Booyesen (JHB). Marc's article can be found elsewhere in this Journal.

National Meet

The National Meet was hosted by Magaliesberg Section and took place at Waterval-Boven to coincide with the Rock Rally. More details can be found in the Magaliesberg Section's Annual Report.