



# SANAE 47

47<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL ANTARCTIC  
EXPEDITION

## NEWS



### NOVEMBER 2007 – TEAM TRAINING

## Introduction

It's been a long time coming, but after the months of changes, excitement and hard work we have been able to settle down enough to allow us to produce the first newsletter for the 47<sup>th</sup> South African National Antarctic Expedition. This edition describes the month of team training in Cape Town, as the team grew together and learnt new skills for the long expedition ahead.

The various articles have been written by all of the team, and I have tried to keep editing to a minimum to preserve the unique flavours that make SANAE 47 special. In order to accommodate our overseas colleagues, I have provided a short synopsis for each article which has been written in Afrikaans. The photographs used are all taken by the team.

The next editions (to follow soon) will detail the voyage to Antarctica, the frenetic takeover period and summer expedition, and the first months alone on the ice.

-Ross Hofmeyr



## Contents

We introduce you to the team in the first piece – **meet the team!**

Neels Fourie reports on what it is like to drive a microbus around the Mother City as we travel more than 4000km in 30 days to complete the team training in “**How to Drive like a Cape Town Taxi**”

Gerhard Laubscher reports on the **Heavy Vehicle** training, describing how we learnt to operate bulldozers in freezing temperatures.

Richard Duncan gives his personal account of the **Mountaineering and Snow-craft** training, which proved to be a challenge mentally and physically.

A day of **personal development** and teamwork training turned into a fascinating time of discovery – and a whole lot of fun. Hear about Gerhard's experience at Ysterplaat Air Force Base.

The team was accommodated together for the duration of the training – hear what Saziso Nginda has to say about the **team accommodation** at the Melkbosstrand Guest House.

Anton describes the fun and good food we shared at the Pic'n'Pay **School of Cooking**.

We tell you a little about all the **supporters** in South Africa who are backing the team members.

See out **parting shot** – we'll include a beautiful photograph with each issue to provide candy for the eyes as well as the mind.

Disclaimer: This newsletter is produced and edited by the team members of SANAE 47. The content does not denote official policy of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Directorate: Antarctica and the Islands.

## Meet the Team



### **Daleen Koch – IPY Scientist/Engineer**

Daleen is “as Gauteng as they come,” being born and raised in Bronkhorstspuit. She attended school in Pretoria and studied at what is now the University of Johannesburg, completing Electric and Electronic Engineering “in her spare time” between movies, swimming, diving, hockey, outdoor stuff, scheming and socializing. Prior to the expedition, she worked at Mondi in Richards Bay and then moved to the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory for her training and familiarisation with the systems for which she is responsible here in Antarctica. Her work at SANAE IV is focussed on measuring fluctuations in the Earth’s magnetic field, using sensitive magnetometers. For more info about Daleen, check out her profile on Facebook. To find out more about IPY, see [www.ipy.org](http://www.ipy.org)



### **Morgan O’Kennedy – Cosmic Ray Physicist/Engineer**

Morgan grew up in Bellville, Cape Town before moving to Porterville, a small town in the Western Cape (*well known for its paragliding, I might add -Ed*). He studied Electric and Electronic Engineering at Stellenbosch University, where he discovered the opportunity to go to Antarctica. Morgan loves the outdoors, especially mountaineering and river rafting. Other hobbies include astronomy, photography, playing guitar and tennis. Before commencing the expedition, he went through an intensive training phase at North-West University in Potchefstroom to help him understand the operation of the scientific instruments at SANAE IV, and learn the ‘basics’ of space physics, which he finds very interesting as an engineer. Morgan’s work centres upon the aurora as a window upon space weather.



### **Llewellyn Kriedemann – Radar Engineer**

‘Leeu,’ as he is known on the team, was born and raised on SA’s West Coast in the town of Vredenburg. He too studied Electronic and Electrical engineering at Stellenbosch University and then underwent intensive training in Hermanus at the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory. His hobbies include blacksmithing and spending time outdoors, braaig and driving fast cars and cars fast. Llewellyn is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the massive HF radar array, which forms part of an international collaborative network of polar radar systems which monitor changes in the Earth’s ionosphere.

**Santjie du Toit - Meteorologist**

Santjie was born and raised in Pretoria (Tshwane) and completed her degree in meteorological forecasting at the University of Pretoria. She was the only member of the overwintering team to have visited SANAE IV before, making the journey during the 2004 takeover season. After another year of study, she took the post of meteorologist (aka 'metkassie') to the 63rd expedition to Marion Island in the Southern Ocean (see [www.sanap.org.za/marion](http://www.sanap.org.za/marion)) for a year. Antarctica, however, has always been 'the ultimate,' so she couldn't wait to return.

**Richard Duncan – Diesel Mechanic**

Richard hails from Benoni, Gauteng, but is possibly the most avid Sharks supporter alive. He has worked in many weird and wonderful places including Tanzania, Zambia and Ireland, and enjoys the outdoors in his spare time, with hobbies including angling and collecting and restoring Morris Minor motor cars. Richard and Neels together are responsible for maintaining and fixing the base's collection of engines – our three massive diesel generators, the huge Caterpillar Challengers and bulldozers, the skidoos, uncountable pumps, motors, ducts, fans... you name it, they can fix it.

**Neels Fourie – Diesel Mechanic**

A native of the small town of Baberton – famed for its flowers - Neels is married with a teenage daughter, and has the grey hairs to prove it. Having risen to the top of his profession, he found the next exciting challenge – Antarctica! Specialising in diesel power generation, along with Richard, Anton, Saz and Gerhard he forms a vital part of the technical team which keeps SANAE IV and thus the research projects running. In addition, he is also the deputy team leader and keeps Ross on the straight and narrow. Back home he enjoys hiking, birding and fishing; at SANAE you're likely to find him sketching or building a puzzle when not up to his elbows in engine oil.

**Saziso Nginda – Electrical Engineer**

Saziso comes from eZagwityi in Butterworth. He attended a local junior school, then went to Kentane (Macibe) for his high school and studied Electrical Engineering in NMMU. He is a member of the technical team and responsible for power generation, base control & automation system, water generation system, fire alarm and base electrical system. He enjoys watching movies, listening to music, reading and travelling. He'd love to visit the following African countries: Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Uganda then the Island of Mauritius. One thing that he misses a lot is a Sunday morning church service.

**Anton van Zyl – Mechanical Engineer**

Married with two children in Cape Town, Anton is a great family man but could not refuse the opportunity for adventure. He graduated from the Cape Technicon and draws on his strong background in mechanical engineering projects to meet his responsibility for the base's myriad systems – power and water generation, temperature management, waste processing, etc. Back home he enjoys spending time with his children outdoors, and his lesser-known other talents include baking a mean loaf of bread – a very welcome skill at SANAE!

**Gerhard Laubscher – Electronic Engineer**

Gerhard was born in Montagu, matriculated and studied in the Cape and has been successfully employed in his own electronics development and design firm in Tableview, Cape Town. He learnt about the Antarctic Expedition when contracted to undertake work at the new Marion Island base – once the seed was planted, the lure of Antarctica was too great to be ignored. Gerhard takes pleasure in the unique opportunities on the white continent – the 24-day or night; a drink with pure blue ice; the rigors of the world's worst weather; the camaraderie of the isolated team. Here at SANAE, he is responsible for the electronic systems – communications, computers, command-and-control network, telephones, radio and satellite systems.

**Ross Hofmeyr – Expedition Doctor & Leader**

An avid outdoorsman, Ross grew up in and around Cape Town and studied medicine at the University of Stellenbosch. A youthful love of mountaineering led to many years service with the mountain and wilderness rescue services and keen interest in expedition medicine. In 'real' life, he pursued experience in trauma and emergency medicine before joining the SANAE team as doctor – responsible for all preventative, curative and emergency response, dental work, radiography, laboratory investigations, etc. In addition to the physical and mental health of the team, as expedition leader he is responsible for the administrative and logistic requirements as well. Antarctica is the culmination of lifetime dreams, but Ross quips that it proves that no matter how far you go, you can never escape the paperwork.

## How to drive like a Cape Town Taxi

Written by Neels Fourie.

Edited by Dr. Ross Hofmeyr.

It is the morning after night before, and I should have stayed in bed. If I had known what was waiting for me I more than likely would have stayed in Barberton. There we have 5 sets of traffic lights and at the most you will have 5 vehicles waiting for it to turn green. There is no hooting, drivers showing signs at each other, pushing one another off the road and trying to squeeze in front of one another as if there are no other vehicles on the road except you.

Next, there was the Doctor who was elected as the Team Leader for the SANAE 47 expedition all the way to Antarctica but whom I still don't now more than an alien. Suffice to say he was the chosen one to do the driving after all he is the Team Leader. First of all he could not get the Kombi started then he could not find first gear. At a stop sign he then misses first gear and by more than likely being used to a lever to steer a ship he then selects reverse gear. *(That kombi had a temperamental immobiliser and miserable transmission... and perhaps I had become too used to my motorbike. I really can drive. Promise. – Ed)* So, the story really begins with me to do the driving.

Residing in Melkbosstrand Guest House we are ready to leave on our first mission to get 10 team members to Bellville, at a place called Barloworld. Now, in the back my mind I think to myself: "If Ross cannot drive a Kombi how the hell is he going to cope with a dozer?" Never mind about Ross - worry about me getting my team members there safely in time for the training. The traffic is appalling. Luckily there are no back-seat drivers as everyone is still checking out whether I can drive or not. The first comment comes from my dear team member Richard: "Toppie, you must drive properly! This is not Barberton: there are robots and stop signs and



not a Bushman to flag you down with a tree branch!" This "Toppie" thing was so then repeated so many times that I am now officially nick-named Toppie.

The directions came from Ross and Anton who are born and bred in Cape Town... then another team member by the name of Daleen questions their directions. Now I start asking questions: "Is it left or is right, or must I stay in the middle lane or must I move to another?" Please take in consideration that on the highways and byways there are more cars around me at any given time that there is in the whole of Barberton. I am freaked out, and all I want is a stiff brandy!

Circles are the worst thing. People do not know how a circle works, or who has the right of way, or once you get in, how to get out. In Cape Town, if you are in the middle lane you can get stuck there for ever. Then there is the Cape wind, which you have to compete with as well. When you drive with a gusting crosswind it looks like you are inebriated and all of your passengers are suddenly silent. Not that you only feel the silence - you also see in your rear-view mirror. I mean can I drive or what? *(Aha! Vengeance is mine! That's Karma for you. –Ed)*

Finally, there is the traffic on the M5 were it splits to the N1 to Paarl and Cape Town. This is a disaster waiting to happen! One day we had to turn off onto the N1 to Paarl. That queue was *(nasty word removed here)* kilometers long. We were fighting the Battle of battles. The funny part of it all is that the queue does not get any shorter due to the fact that the people keep pushing in. The next day I had to contend with the same scenario except I had an ace up my sleeve. On route back the same stretch I indicated that I anticipated taking the N1 Cape Town turn off and not the N1 Paarl turn off. Boy o boy - did I get a howl from the team. "Don't worry," I said "today is the day that I am going to drive like a true Capetonian." When I got to the N1 Paarl turn off I indicated that I was going to turn right, and jumped in front of another poor soul. Every body in the Kombi applauded and I felt very proud about myself to be able to drive like a true Capetonian in such a short period of time. *(In defense of my city, it's only a small percentage of drivers who act in this fashion. Unfortunately, most of them are at the wheel of a Kombi or microbus. The true gentlemen ride motorcycles).*

I can honestly say that something that I did not expect so soon was the team work within the team. One morning on our way to DEAT the Kombi overheated which forced me to stop to prevent damage to the engine. Luckily, we stopped near a dam. I got out and opened the engine compartment to check the water level, which was too low. It was as if everyone knew exactly what to do. A line formed through a fence and down to the water, empty cold-drink bottles were grabbed and soon they were flying back and forth along the line to be filled in a manner that would have impressed the Springbok back line. I was a very proud, saying to myself: This is a team with which I can go to Antarctica.

Goodbye for now - I would like to thank the team for everything thus far, and for putting the trust in me to drive them more than 4000 km around the Mother City in a single month. Last but not least, I would also like to thank Ross and the team for choosing me as Deputy Team Leader.



## Swaarvoertuig-opleiding

Gerhard Laubscher

*English Summary: Gerhard tells the tale of his trial and tribulations getting his paper and dental work up to date after being appointed to the team at very short notice. After emotional highs and lows, and managing to survive dental surgery he joins the team for the Heavy Vehicle Training, covering theoretical and practical knowledge required to operate the massive bulldozers and Challengers (tracked diesel-powered vehicles used to tow cargo on sledges) down on the ice. The team learns how to inspect and start the machines in sub-zero temperatures, and how to manage basic field repairs, before moving on to the practical aspects of driving the 20-ton monsters. The broad skills of the team, particularly Daleen and Santjie, are a source of joyful surprise. The entire team passes the training and written test with flying colours, no doubt thanks to the excellent training from our instructor, Ian Gouvias.*

Aanloop tot deel van SANAE47 span-

Vrydag, 2 November 2007, het ek die Dokument van Onderneming' en my aanstelling as die 'Elektroniese Ingenieur' vir die SANAE 47 span vir die 2008 Oorwinterings-periode, aanvaar, geteken, gefaks. So het 'n mallemeule van opleiding en voorbereiding afgeskop, want die mv SA Agulhas vertrek die 4de Desember na die SANAE IV basis in Antarktika! Inderdaad 'n proses wat my lewenspatroon skerp beïnvloed het. Na my gespratel om al die dokumente te teken en goed te oorweeg wat al die implikasies sou wees op my lewe vir die daaropvolgende 15 maande, het Maandag opgedoem, ja, opgedoem, omdat deel van my onderneming is om my tand-gesondheid op datum te bring.

Maandag, die 5de November, het beteken ek moet vir dentale chirurgie gaan met die doel om, onder andere, tand-inplantates in my

bokaak te plaas. Met groot vrese en baie benoud het ek gewag vir my 16h00 afspraak, net om telefoniese verwittig te word (na 15h00) dat as gevolg van 'n plaaslike kragonderbreking (dankie Eskom...) die prosedure nie kon uitgevoer word nie. Dit sal moet oorstaan na Dinsdag. Na al my emosionele energie opbouing en trauma vir die Maandag-Prosedure, het dit toe alles in 'n groot bloep-oomblik verander! Julle weet mos, ballon-bars-oomblik... Glo my, my emosies het omtrent wipplank gery! Ek het eers 'n sug van verligting gegee, daarna het dit my getref, ek het die foltering nie ontsnap nie, dit is net uitgestel na Dinsdag. Hmm... my moed was in my skoene!



In tussen tyd...

Wel, in tussentyd het die res van die span alreeds Maandag begin met vaardigheidsopleiding vir die Oorwinterings-periode. Die eerste kursus is opleiding om die Swaarvoertuie te gebruik, wat behels die teoretiese aspekte sowel as die praktiese bestuursvaardighede om die voertuie te



bedryf. Die voertuie waaraan ons blootgestel is, is twee tipes 'Dozers' en 'n sleepvoertuig, die 'Challenger'. Die 'Dozers' is toegerus met sneeu-skraap lemme, een met 'n skepbak en die ander met 'n skraapbak. Die 'Challenger' word hoofsaaklik gebruik vir die sleep van diverse vrag.

My Krisis-Dinsdag het om 12h30 sy verloop geneem en na sowat twee-ure in die stoel, loop (of was dit waggel?) ek uit die teater, met 'n mond wat dik geswel is, terug na my huis om dit af te slaap. My instruksie van Susan (ons MHB) was om haar onmiddellik te kontak sodra die prosedure uitgevoer is. Met sleptong en bedremmeld het ek haar gekontak om te bevestig dat ek die foltering oorleef het en darem nog daarvoor kon praat. Wat wel tot my deurgedring het is dat my spraak-patroon beïnvloed is. Dit sal seker so wees totdat my tong ophou vassit aan my verhemelte of gewoon gaan raak aan die nuwe vorm in my mond. Susan het my ingelig om so gou moontlik aan te sluit by die groep om by die swaarvoertuig bestuurkursus aan te sluit. Ek het ingestem om die span om 19h00 Woensdagaand by DEA&T-kantore aan die Oos-kaai in die waterfront te ontmoet. So het die volgende fase afgeskop.



Woensdag, 7 November om 19h00 het ek die res van die SANAE 47 span ontmoet en is ek opgeneem in die geleedere van die span. Ek vermoed dat die spanlede my so halfskeef aangestaar het, wat met my skewe-dikbek en al, en onbehoorlike uitspraak. Ek het nogal halfgoor gevoel.

My eerste dag van amptelike diens was Donderdag die 8ste November. Die span het in 'n gastehuis in Melkbos saamgewoon en ek het om 07h00 die oggend aangesluit om saam met die GMV-bussie te ry na Barlow World in Stikland. Dit is hier waar ons opleiding gekry het op die Caterpillar 'Dozer' Voertuie. Ek het verstaan van my mede-spanlede, wat twee dames insluit, dat nie een van ons vorige kennis het van die gebruik van die tipe voertuie nie.

Ons Instrukteur, Ian, het met sy deeglike kundigheid en met baie geduld ons met Teorie en met praktiese opleiding die weg gewys. Dit het my so half herhinner aan die K53-bestuurkursus vir swaar motorvoertuie wat ek in die verlede gedoen het. Ons het elkeen 'n dik handleiding ontvang waarin ons uitgewys is die moets en moenies. Die voertuie is Diesel-aangedrewe met kettingband-aandrywing. Ons het van verskillende aspekte van die voertuie geleer : Een van die belangrikste is hoe om 'n voertuig aan te skakel in die sub-zero temperatuur van die Antarktiese omgewing waarin ons die voertuie gaan gebruik; voertuig-inspeksie; ketting-spanning; 'Webasto' gebruik, onthou tog om die Verkoeler-kombersie af te haal! sneeu in die lugweg; Haal asb. die lugweg-kappie af; inspeksie van die olie-vlakke, olie-plekke.... Al die aspekte wat betrekking het om ons al die inligting in 'n kort tyd oor te dra sodat ons by SANAE onself kan help. Ian het duidelik die belangrikheid onderstreep deur uit te wys dat ons die voertuie gaan gebruik ter oorlewing op die basis. Tipiese gebruik is bv. om sneeu skoon te skraap waar dit opbou, om die area skoon te skraap, sneeu te skraap vir die Watersmelter en laaste ook vir ons basiese vervoer oor die ys. Die inligting so oorgedra dat dit vir ons duidelik

geraak het die Antarktiese omgewing passief gevaarlik is, gewis nie 'n plek vir sussies nie!

Die Teorie is opgevolg met praktiese bestuursvernuf en gebruik van die voertuie. Ek was nogal beïndruk met Daleen en Santjie se hanteervermoë en behendigheid agter die stuur (of is dit stang....?) Knap gedaan julle, ook aan die res van die span! Omdat ek laat aangesluit het, het twee van die span, Neels en Richard, my sommer gou toewys gemaak. Dankie julle! Ek het, met julle hulp, sommer gou-gou die kloutjie by die oor gekry! Ek weet nie of ek altyd die lem so goed op die grond gekry het nie..... maar dit daar gelaat. My indruk is dat almal die ondervinding terdeë geniet het! Ek dink een van die lekkerste ondervindings vir almal was om met die 'Challenger' rond te ry! Die ding bestuur amper soos 'n motorvoertuig, net heelwat anders!

Geen kursus is volledige sonder pen-op-papier nie. Ons het Vrydag 'n Eksamen afgelê om ons vaardighede wat ons kollektief in die week aangeleer het te toets. Ek het ook 'n addisionele toets afgelê, die toets is deur

almal gedoen aan die begin van die kursus. Die doel daarvan was om vas te stel wat jou vaardigheidsvlak is voor die opleiding, of so iets? Ek kan getuig dat ons almal die eksamen geslaag het en dat ons, in tyd, 'n sertifikaat gaan ontvang om te verklaar dat ons die opleiding ondergaan het. Dit beteken ons mag die voertuie bestuur soos wat dit benodig word in Antartika.

Ter afsluiting wil ek, namens ons span, vir Barlow World en Ian, vir al die personeel wat vir ons versorg het in die tyd by Barlow World (ook die kos-tannie!) bedank. Dankie vir die professionele manier waarop inligting wat ons nodig het op so 'n kort tyd oorgedra is en ons in te pas in julle besige program. Ek glo ons gaan die waarde van die inligting pluk wanneer ons gekonfronteer word met werklike situasies in Antarktika.



## Fire-fighting Training

By Sanki 'Brandslang' du Toit

It was a beautiful and sunny day. The birds were chirping and the squirrels were chasing each other up and down the trees. The sky was blue. But nobody cared about that! We were about to enter the chamber of death... We had our fire fighting at RED WATCH, Tokai Forest in Cape Town. The first day we had theory classes where everything from the type of extinguishers to use, to the details of a "flash-over" was described to us by our charismatic host, Swannie (he was a bit scary too...). We also practiced to wear and operate breathing apparatus as we would need these for our practical day.

The next day we had our practical where we first used normal fire extinguishers and a fire blanket to put out smaller fires. After lunch the time has come for the real test: to take a fire hose down a series of small ladders, in a pitch-black chamber filled with smoke from a humongous fire that was built just outside. Yikes!



We were divided into two groups of five. Each member had a specific position and number. No names were used as they would be futile in an environment where you can barely hear each other, let alone see. We were given fire overalls, boots, gloves, goggles and hard hats to wear as well as the breathing apparatus.

One by one, we descended into the black smoke. The first person that entered was the one that moved all the way to the point of the "fire". This person managed the hose. Due to rising heat the whole chamber felt like an inferno. Luckily we were not expected to find the fire and put it out. Our course merely required us to have that experience so that we're not totally unfamiliar should we (hopefully NOT!) need it one day.

I think most of us were relieved to stand in fresh air again after we left the chamber. We then had to clean up and scrub off the soot from our helmets, boots and goggles.

Before we went home we had to squeeze in a 15 minute test (which we all passed!) and just like that we all had our certificates.

It was exciting, interesting and scary at the same time and definitely an experience none of us will forget!



## Span-bou dag

Gerhard Laubscher

*English summary: We travel to Ysterplaat Air Force Base for a day of team-building and personal development led by Chaplain Kobus de Lange. Gerhard's hopes for a peaceful day are dashed as we kick off with a game of tag and other physical activities. Soon we are laughing and relaxed. The games have a lesson, and we discuss boundaries and rules. Next, we are invited to draw our lives and dreams on paper, and each member of the team talks about themselves after the team tries to decipher the diagram. There are some surprises. Thereafter, we discuss the fundamental principles of working in a team. The day ends with a tour of 22 Squadron, especially focussing on the impressive Oryx helicopter, in this case, the specific aircraft that was used in Antarctica in the past. We leave very grateful to the Air Force, and in particular, Chaplain de Lange.*



Na afloop van 'n besige Oorwinteringsopleiding van sowat drie weke of so, sien ek op ons weekbeplanner die laaste span-aktiwiteit, voordat ons moet oppak, wegpak, koebaai-sê. Dit is die dag van selfverreiking by die Lugmag Basis Ysterplaat. Ek dink ons het nie presies geweet wat om te verwag nie, behalwe, wel, 'n lekker rusdag miskien?

Donderdag, 22 November, stiptelik om 08h00 daag ons op by die Offisiers-menasie. Ons is verwelkom deur die Kapelaan, Kobus de Lange. Hy sit ons toe onmiddellik op ons gemak deur te vra waarom ons hierdie dag by LMB YPLT deurbring en wat ons graag wil doen. Hmmm, vir 'n vlietende oomblik het dit deur my nougesette gedagtes gegaan: 'Moet hy nie eintlik vir ons sê wat ons hier kom doen en gaan maak nie?' Natuurlik het 'n paar pittige idees na vore gekom uit die groep: Wat van 'n tjop braai, met 'n paar bruinetjies by; ekself het gedink dat dit nou lekker sal wees om by die see te gaan uitspan met 'n koppetjie koffie, of so iets.... Kobus het geduldig ons punte op die witbord aangeteken. So het die dag begin, met 'n paar losse punte van ons verwagtinge. Min het ons geweet dat die dag veel anders sal verloop dan wat ons onself voorgestel het!

Kobus het voorgestel ons moet eers 'n bietjie vars lug skep, dalk 'n bietjie plesier hê met so 'n tikkie oefening. 'Oefening?' Vra ek myself af.... Ja, oefening inderdaad! Ons speel toe aan-aan, daar somer buite tussen die braaigeriewe. Ek dink ons was heeltemal onkant gevang, die keer. Na 'n paar stywe probeerslae het ons tog begin ontspan, vrylik asemgehaal en selfs 'n paar keer gelag! Verskeie van ons span moes maar vinnig skoonmaak om nie 'aan' te wees nie. Neels het dit egter ontgeld, 'n paar keer gegly en moes die spit afbyt. Behalwe die moontlike knou van Neels se ego, het almal dit geniet. Die spel het verskillende variasie ondergaan, met die doel dat ons moet leer om mekaar aan te raak, sodoende die begrip te bevestig dat deur nader aan mekaar te wees, binne mekaar se ruimte te beweeg, leer ons so ook meer van mekaar. In elk geval, dit is my afleiding, ek



vermoed die spanlede het dalk ander afleidings gemaak. Kobus het 'n ander variasie van 'n speletjie voorgestel, een waar ons in twee spanne ingedeel is. Elke span moes in 'n reguit ry staan en dan onder mekaar se bene deurkruip. Gelukkig was ek nie in Anton se span nie, ek weet nie hoe hy homself onder sy spanmaats se bene deurgekry het nie, maar hy is daardeur, knap gedaan Anton! My afleiding van die spel? Ek het nie veel kommentaar nie, behalwe dat my jean pype nou vol groen gras vlekke. Omo-oomblik?

Nadat almal hul asem terug gekry het, is ons genooi om ons wildste drome uit te lewe op papier.... Goed, goed, skrywers-vryheid (of so iets?). Kobus het ons gevra om ons soos voorskoolse kinders in te dink, vir ons vetkryt en papier in die hand gestop en gevra dat ons 'n skets moet maak om ons lewenspad uit te druk. Nou ja, is hierdie versoek die spreekwoordelike kat-innie-duiwehok situasie of chaos? Na so 'n halfuur of wat het die Picasso en van Goghs (Dada!) onder ons uitgedop! Ons het almal daarna die sketse (of is dit nou tekeninge?) ingehandig en ewe

plegtig in 'n kringetjie om Kobus gesit. Hy het lukraak 'n skets in die lug gehou en kommentaar gevra van die groep, sonder om die 'kunstenaar' te identifiseer. Daarna het hy gevra dat die werklike kunstenaar moet opstaan om sy of haar skets uiteen te sit. Ek dink dit was 'n baie interessante oefening gewees.

Vir my was dit lekker om op so 'n sinvolle manier uiting te kan gee en myself so beter te leer ken. Dit was interessant om sketse van my spanmaats, die kommentaar van ons almal, tesame met die uitleg van die kunstenaar aan te hoor en dit te korreleer met wat my verwysingsraamwerk van die persoon is. Ek dink ons het in die proses baie van mekaar geleer.

Die volgende aktiwiteit was 'n spanpraatjie oor wat span-etiek is. Verskillende punte van bespreking is aangeteken wat ons uitmekaar getrek het. Van die punte wat by my bly vassit is : respek; vertroue; goeie kommunikasie; samewerking; groepbelang; ondersteuning. Daar was heelwat meer punte geopper. Ek vermoed elke persoon het hieruit

uitgeskep wat vir hom of haar van toepassing is. Ek dink die proses het ons op verskeie maniere beïnvloed sodat dit 'n gunstige teelaarde geskep het waarin die gedagtes verder kan ontkiem.

Ons laaste span-aktiwiteit was gewees om 'n 'span-visie' saam te stel waarby ons almal kan meeklink vind. Kobus het ons op ons eie gelos sodat ons idees kan rondgooi. Verskeie sinsnedes en woorde het na vore gekom. Tyd het ons ingehaal en ons kon nie tot 'n vergelyk kom oor 'n 'span-visie' nie. Wat my egter sal bybly en wat vir my persoonlik sinvol is, is Daleen se punt dat 'ons vertrek as onbekendes vir mekaar en hoop om terug te keer as goeie vriende'. Dit, in 'n neutedop, het die dag se verrigtinge vir my goed opgesom.

Ons het die verrigtinge afgesluit met middagete. Ek wil graag vir Kobus namens die SANAE 47 span dankie sê vir die interessante dag en ek dink ek praat namens almal as ek sê dat ons het verryk die LMB YPLT verlaat. Ons het egter nie al ons doelwitte bereik nie : Die tjop-braai en bruinetjies is nog uitstaande, maar ons sê : 'Kapelaan Kobus, ons kom terug, dan neem ons jou op vir daai tjop!' Aangaande my see-gedagtes, wel, ek sal dit verseker inwerk wanneer ek weer terug is in die 'States'!

Dankie aan LMB YPLT wat vir ons die gaping geskep het in julle besige program om onself beter te kan leer ken en ook om van die vliegtuie en helikopters van naby te kon sien.



## Mountaineering and Snow-craft Training

Richard Duncan



**Mountain climbing!** Two words that instantly instil fear into any 46 year old that has never climbed a step ladder higher than his garage roof.

This part of the training started on Friday evening with a 2 hour lecture at the DEAT Waterfront offices. The team arrived 20 minutes late due to an overheating Kombi and we were met by mountain man extraordinaire Ross Sutter. Ross is your typical hillbilly who is obviously more at home on a mountain than in the city, and it was clear that he was frustrated at us being late.

The lecture started with the normal introductions and we were shown an array of knots, pitons and anchors which did nothing to boost my confidence. Then we were shown ropes that are used in this crazy pastime, and when I decided to ask a question as to what weight the rope could hold before it snapped I was bluntly informed that “a rope never snaps.” Now I certainly don’t know about mountaineering but I do know that a rope

definitely snaps, so now the confidence was really shattered. The lecture ended and we arranged to meet on the waterfront the next morning.

Saturday morning we arrived bright and early and Ross showed us the 4 meter high wall that we would be practicing on. “All right,” I thought, “This is more like it. I can surely handle this.” He then went on to teach us knots like the “Figure-of-8,” “Bowline” and the “Double Fisherman’s knot.” We were shown slings, prussiks, karabiners, and harnesses. We were then given the chance to climb and abseil the wall and after 2 hours of this I felt that I was ready for Everest. By this time everyone was hot, tired, hungry and thirsty, there were no toilet facilities and this too was becoming a problem, but mountain man insisted we continue and it was only after a threatened mutiny that our fearless leader was allowed to escape to get some McDonald’s.





4pm arrived and we all thought “that’s it for today” but hillbilly had other ideas. We pack up all the equipment and move 20 meters away and a new lesson is started. Now it is all about “belay and belay anchors” - please understand that by now I and I am sure the rest of the team are thoroughly tired and sunburnt and anything that this creature of the mountain is trying to teach us is going right over our heads.

The day finally ends at 6pm and the team has a braai planned for the evening but Cape Town has a backward law of closing bottle stores at 5 pm, so we are set to braai without beer - “great”.

The following Friday evening 6pm we are set for round 2 of the lectures. The team has just finished our final day of fire fighting so we arrive at DEAT black, smelly and tired. No bother for mountain man: he immediately launches into a lecture on ice and snow climbing. We are told about ice anchors, kicking steps and using an ice axe to make steps. Surprisingly the lecture ends at 8pm sharp. We are to meet Saturday at 8:30am at the Higgovale Quarry which is on the foot of Table Mountain.

We arrive at Higgovale and start lugging crates of equipment to the training area. The walls are about 15 to 20 meters high but to me it looked closer to 200 meters. The mountain goat splits us into 3 teams and shows us where he wants us to set up anchors, and so everybody gets to work calling on our poor instructor every 5 min to come and check on us. My team consists of Gerhard, Anton, Toppie Neels (aka “Die Vlermuis van Barberton”) and myself. Now a funny thing is that ever since Gerhard joined the team he has always been the first to volunteer for anything and nothing was different here. Attached to this 12mm diameter rope he had the dubious honour of being the first to test the anchors. To the left of us the other teams were going great guns: Llewellyn, Morgan, and Sazi were going about their business as if this was just another day at the office, and further left was

the good doctor Ross Hofmeyr, Daleen (aka Barbi) and Santjie (aka Brandslang) effortlessly abseiling down the rock face.

It was then the turn of yours truly; surely this had to be the most traumatic moment of my life. With a dry mouth and stiff limbs I was coaxed over the edge - this is the stuff nightmares are made of and if it had not been for the encouragement from the rest of the team I think I would have frozen right there. At a snail’s pace I made my way down the face and by the time I reached the bottom the confidence that I had felt the week before was slowly retuning.

The rest of the morning was spent abseiling and the afternoon was ascending and being lowered using different belay techniques. The day ended at 16h30 and this time we had made sure of stocking up on beer which after a day like that certainly hit the right spot.

Sunday the team were back at Higgovale where the day was spent practicing glacier walking and learning the different pulley systems for crevasse rescue – a strange thing to do in 30° heat!

Appreciation must go to Ross Sutter for his willingness to share his knowledge and his patience in teaching the different techniques, but most thanks must go to my team mates whose encouragement surely saw me through this stage of my training.



## Team Training Accommodation

Saziso Nginda

The team got together on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2007 to commence training. We had to stay in the same place for the whole month for operations and logistic reasons and No. 22 Mostert Street, Melkbosstrand is where we were accommodated.

It's a world class guest house, with nice sea-facing view in the West Coast. Remember we come from different areas and provinces and we have to work as a team for the whole year, so this is where it all starts. Some of team members had already known each other and they got there early and they had a privilege of choosing rooms and beds.

We were using two houses, one as head-quarters because it had the team leader, me

and the two toppies of the team; the other house was just for B&B. For people of different ages, racial groups and social life to be accommodated under one roof seemed to be a minor for guest house personnel. Every team member had something to do eg. walk on the beach, go to a bar, coffee shop or sit at home and chat getting to know each other better. The set-up and allocation of the guest house made it easy for us gel as a team as there wasn't much happening in the surroundings, which meant that we must spend time together. It was a nice experience as we got to know people and their behaviour's before it was too late. People were able to express themselves freely and it then made it easy for getting to know each other better session.

A job well done to the organizer's for such an initiative, it worked very well for SANAE 47 team members.



## Pic 'n Pay School of Cooking

BY ANTON VAN ZYL

Cooking they say, o yes cooking...

It was a Monday morning and off we went to cooking school. The instructor's name was Kelly, and what a dish she was! She introduced herself and gave us each a folder with simple, easy, tried and tested recipes and believe me - they work!

First she showed us how to bake simple but very tasty bread. After she had finished it was our turn to do the same. We then worked in teams of two's and prepared muffins and other sorts of baked goods. When I thought the day could not get any better, the bread was ready to come out of the oven and boy did all ten of them look good...mmmmmm... it tasted like Grandma baked it at the farm.

After we tasted our breads the second batch of goods were ready to go in the oven. The day was almost over and I could not believe how fast the time went by. Kelly gave us more tips on cooking and some of us had questions for her. It was then time to take out our second batch of baking goods, looking even better than the first ones. We took the results of our baking home and enjoyed them - boy did we have a feast that night.



Wednesday was our second and last day of cooking. Kelly showed us how to cook an omelette with a tomato and onion filling, and then it was our turn to do the same. Yes once more it worked and ten very tasty little omelettes were born. After we had our omelettes we cleaned up and washed our dishes, then went over to prepare light meals. Gerhard and I made an egg and haddock casserole.

Next, the big guns came out we made our dinner time meals. We were in teams of two and my partner and I made a fish biryani dish which was very good and easy to make. Then the big tasting began: everyone was tasting his or her friend's food. To my surprise all the food was very tasty and I am looking forward to having meals prepared at SANAE by my team mates. I know we will not go hungry at all and we are all able to cook. The day was over and we cleaned up and took all our lovely food home.

That evening we had another feast at the guest house. Thanks Kelly, it was great.

## SANAE 47 Supporters

The team of has been privileged to have enthusiastic support of individuals and companies back home in South Africa, who have shown their personal and social commitment to furthering scientific knowledge through applied research. Although the team's necessities are met by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's Directorate: Antarctica and the Islands, under which SANAE falls, we have had many personal donations of comfort items, specialised clothing and equipment to make our long year of isolation more enjoyable. In no order of importance, our supporters include:



**First Ascent** ([www.firstascent.co.za](http://www.firstascent.co.za)) are a South African company who have a long history of making top quality mountaineering and outdoor clothing used by many of SA's top climbers and outdoor enthusiasts. They were delighted to support the team as we expanded on our already extensive wardrobes of issued clothing, making sure that we'll all be warm, dry and comfortable while working in the world's harshest environment.



Specialist suppliers **RAM Mountaineering** ([www.rammountain.co.za](http://www.rammountain.co.za)) gave us incredible support in acquiring outdoor equipment of the highest quality, from headlamps through to crampons.

**BondiBlu** ([www.bondiblu.co.za](http://www.bondiblu.co.za)) make eyewear strictly for the adventurous, and have a strong tradition of supporting the Antarctic teams.

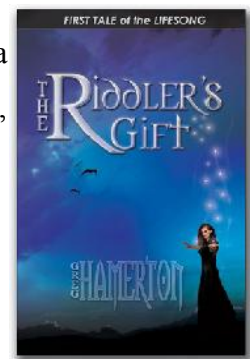
They donated a pair of high-quality sunglasses to each team member... and then threw in sun and skin-care products as well, keeping our eyes and skins safe from the intense radiation in summer.

Adventure film-makers **Fresh Air Crew** gave each member of the team a peak cap, warm fleece beanie (a real favourite) and a t-shirt in support. See some of their prize-winning work at [www.freshaircrew.com](http://www.freshaircrew.com).



**Kanu Wines** are a well-known wine farm between Cape Town and Stellenbosch, and have won several awards for their produce. They donated wonderful wines, including the sublime Limited Reserve Merlot which has blown off our woolly socks.

Cape Town author **Greg Hamerton** kindly donated a copy of his new fantasy novel "**The Riddler's Gift**" to the team, which will be added to the SANAE IV library. The book, published by Eternity Press ([www.eternitypress.co.za](http://www.eternitypress.co.za)) is the first in the Lifesong trilogy, an epic fantasy tale.



Previous SANAE expedition leader and doctor **Farouk Parker** (SANAE 40) contacted us out of the blue with a donation of hundreds of movies and many hours of music, which has been added to the base library to be enjoyed in the dark winter months for years to come.

Businessman **Tom Cook** donated a new set of weights and exercise equipment to the base, to supplement the excellent gym. Hopefully by the time summer comes around again we'll be fit enough to lift all the boxes of new supplies ;)



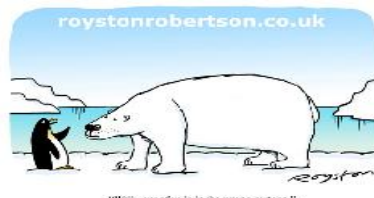
**Orms ProPhoto** in Cape Town has a longstanding relationship with the Antarctic Expedition, and honoured this as usual with very competitive rates on all types of camera equipment for the team. Considering some of us spent several month's salary making sure we have the best kit to record our expedition for posterity, the generosity of Mike Ormrod and his excellent team was well appreciated. They can be found online at [www.orms.co.za](http://www.orms.co.za)

**Pepperdew Piquanté Peppers** make something special, a fruit somewhere between a tomato and a red pepper. If you haven't tasted pepperdews, you don't know what you are missing. Perfect on pizza, we despaired at the thought of leaving them behind, until Pepperdew donated enough peppers and pepperdew sauce to last us through the year. Awesome!



**Allesverloren Wine Estate** is well-known in the Cape, and jumped at the opportunity to donate wine to the team, which has been a firm favourite.

Cape Town artist and graphic designer **Jacob Krynauw** of **K2 Design** produced the wonderful SANAE 47 logo *pro bono*, and then went on to design the striking expedition t-shirts which have become very sought-after.



The shirt, of course, would be incomplete without the perfect Antarctic cartoon, supplied by freelance cartoonist **Royston Robertson**. See more of his work at [www.royston.dircon.co.uk](http://www.royston.dircon.co.uk)

**JP Bredell Wines** donated some of their fine wines and incredible John Platter 5-star port to

the team. Their dark label brings immediate smiles to the dinner table.

An entire box of **new books** was donated by the **Kane Book Club**, which has been added to the base library to be enjoyed by teams for years to come.

**Caturra Coffee** is behind many of the best cups of coffee you've tasted at restaurants around SA, and now they are helping us wake up with a smile in Antarctica as well. With 100kg of their finest coffees, we'll be warm in the darkest winter months, ensuring 'a lifestyle with taste'.



**KWV** is a well-known South African cellar who have supported the Antarctic teams many times in the past, and we were luckily no exception. To stave off the cold they donated some of their excellent 5-year brandy and sweet Red Muscadel.

**Peninsula Beverages** made a very kind donation of cases of soft drinks including Coke, Fanta, Sprite, etc. Although we have large supplies of food and drink, there is something wonderful about opening a cold Coke so far from home – it becomes a real treat.

You can always trust **South African Breweries** to come to the party – they donated cases of assorted beers to the team, for the end of those hot days out in the blazing sun...uh, well, you get the idea.

Ask any South African to name things unique to our beautiful country, and it won't be long before they mention **Mrs Balls Chutney**. Mrs Balls is an institution of its own, and has spread around the world. When they heard of the expedition they immediately sent hordes of chutney and personalised Mrs Balls tops to show their support.



**Weltevreden Wine Estate** jumped at the opportunity to provide some fine wines for the

team, which have complemented our dinners and brought warmth and mirth. I imagine I can taste the smells of Africa...



The **Overberg Paragliding Club** gave each team-member a long-sleeved shirt, perfect for wear around the base or as a base-layer when venturing out into the cold. Find out more about paragliding and the club at [www.overbergparagliding.com](http://www.overbergparagliding.com)

**Rosendal Private Cellar** are best known to our team for their beautiful rosé wine, but came to the party and donated many wonderful bottles.



**Martingraphix** ([www.martingreaphix.co.za](http://www.martingreaphix.co.za)) are a Cape Town company specialising in graphic design, advertising and promotional items who were absolutely indispensable in getting the

shirts, badges, stickers and banner done for the team, at discounted rates. We couldn't have done it without them!

**Clinique** very kindly donated skincare products to the team, to keep our mug's healthy and hearty.



**McGinty's Pub** in Benoni were so taken with the idea of the project that the owner immediately pledged his support – thanks guys, we'll have one on you!

(Please, if I've omitted you from this list, contact me immediately so that I can rectify my egregious mistake. Mail Ross on [ross.hofmeyr@sanae.sanap.ac.za](mailto:ross.hofmeyr@sanae.sanap.ac.za))

## How can I find out more?

The Antarctic Expedition is full of interesting aspects, encompassing the scientific work we do, the logistics of working in such a distant and isolated location, and the human factors of being alone for so long. We love to hear from you and grow public awareness of the projects, and for you to be involved. Here are some ideas to learn more:

- Visit the official SANAE website at [www.sanap.org.za](http://www.sanap.org.za) and learn more about the base, the logistics, the science and the people.
- Email the team at [sanae@sanap.ac.za](mailto:sanae@sanap.ac.za) with your questions or news.
- Email team-members directly, using the format below: [firstname.lastname@sanae.sanap.ac.za](mailto:firstname.lastname@sanae.sanap.ac.za)
- Visit the websites of our sister projects at Marion and Gough Islands: [marion.sanap.org.za](http://marion.sanap.org.za), and [gough.sanap.org.za](http://gough.sanap.org.za)
- Many of the organisations involved have their own pages, and some team-members have personal blogs. Check out (in no order of preference):
  - The links page on the official SANAP website has plenty- <http://www.sanap.org.za/links.html>
  - The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) – [www.scar.org](http://www.scar.org)
  - The Hermanus Magnetic Observatory - [www.hmo.ac.za](http://www.hmo.ac.za)
  - Ross' blog about living in Antarctica - [www.doctorross.co.za](http://www.doctorross.co.za)

Finally, you can CALL US at normal South African telephone rates by dialling:

021 405 9428/9

## Parting Shot



Photograph © Ross Hofmeyr 2007

The SA Agulhas, research and supply vessel for the South African National Antarctic Programme, stands ready for the long voyage south at her berth in Table Bay Harbour, as a 'tablecloth' of cloud pours over Table Mountain.