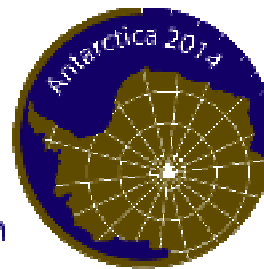


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# SANAE53

South African National Antarctic Expedition



NEWSLETTER #8

## Staying (In)sane



“...renewal not by  
fire, but by a  
reluctant mistress  
letting her hair  
down.”



## The Vibe

‘If it’s at all spontaneous, I don’t know whether it even makes sense sometimes’...  
Allen Ginsberg

The vibe happens when the atmosphere cracks open - unveiling the fabric and rhythm of nature’s beautiful dance. And just like the atmosphere, the body cracks open to increase the receptive area, to broaden the sensory experience in order to appropriately celebrate the arrival of a lifelong companion. This companion is not necessarily the most spectacular scenery, but any moment and place that causes

perfect productive collisions with the senses. Like comparing handmade to factory made - the perfect sensory storm prepared for the individual.

The vibe brings out childish, as well as ogre-like existential behaviour. Running and diving in the snow; at the same time howling deliriously fuck-knows-what at the Milky Way – Aurora-filled night sky. Not ‘fist at the sky’ desperately, trying to smash the ‘quiet desperation’, but due to sensory saturation spilling over and ultimately flooding all rationality; initially experienced many years ago for the first time.

The vibe causes narrative without reflective revolution. Linear sequences stop abruptly, fold back, and form attachments of meaning and purpose. Like a mystical pattern, lifted from the underlying clutter, or like seeing stellar constellations for the first time. In a blink of an eye

space and time are thwarted; and for that instant, just for a moment, previous badly dealt hands become stepping stones, purposefully dealt to cause theatrical climax – ultimately serving as platform for the hero’s ending.

The vibe is for once, unlike a phoenix rising from its own ashes, renewal not by fire, but by a reluctant mistress letting her hair down. She is not impressed by force. Entering her secret places is not dependent on reflective meditation, or forceful withdrawal from the daily rush. She does not move by trends, finds camping and holiday resorts repulsive, small town weekends away from the city laughable. She hates prearranged meetings. Her methods are mystical and indented for falling in love. Her momentary movements and unveilings sporadic and unpredictable, and ultimately overlooked by the need for instant gratification.

By Christiaan

## Working on Diesel Day Tank Faulty Cable

On doing daily base checks, Brandon and Raymond observed that the day tank was not pumping diesel up from the bunkers to the base day tank. I immediately checked the float switch on the day tank and the controls, but it was in order. I went to the diesel bunkers, as that’s where the pumps and contactors are situated that pump diesel up to the base day tank.

With the aid of Patrick, Brandon and Raymond, we pumped up the diesel manually, while trying to detect the problem. On analysing the sensing cable that controls the flow of diesel up from the bunker, we found that it wasn’t sending the signal through from the diesel bunker to the day tank and back for the control contactors to energise to activate the pumps to

pump diesel from the bunkers. After searching through the hangar for a replacement cable we found a 25m cable to allow us to make a joint between the sensing cable to the bunker and the controls at the day tank, and have a temporary solution for the diesel to be pumped up normally again.

By Charles

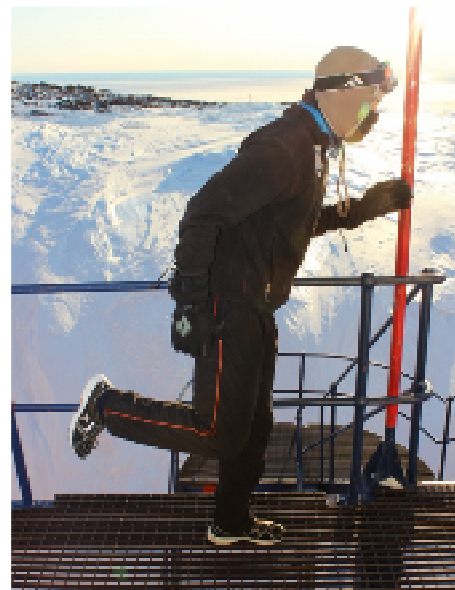
# Jogging in Springtime

I just woke up after 4pm on 16 September to find The PK (PotchKassie aka Hendrik) in the corridor on his way for a jog outside. Initially I wasn't interested as I've just woke up, but decided to join. Hendrik is probably the most regular extreme jogger in the base, inviting us with jogging throughout winter.

It was a cold but nice day outside. Clear skies, dry bulb temperature of -25°C and practically no wind. This is considered as a gift in September. We geared up for the run: thermals, double socks, jogging shoes, jackets, two buffs and snow goggles. When stepping outside I felt the cold, but I quickly warmed up on starting to run.

was still out and we had great contrast. It's always surprising to run a new route in the snow in an area that you have seen many times from afar. You find so many up hills and contours that look flat from a distance. This is something you also realize when driving a skidoo or challenger.

On the first leg, we ran into the sun mostly downhill, all the way down to the outskirts of the wind-scoop around the mountain. This is truly a majestic place and we stopped occasionally to take some of it in. Upon reaching our turning point, the base was a tiny structure on a massive



mountain when looking back. The wind picked up slightly and we started heading back to base. Uphill, with the sun be-

more difficult and walking more tempting than on the downhill. On the final stretch, we were out of the sunlight blocked by the mountain. At this stage the wind picked up further; not a strong wind, but in this temperature you definitely notice it.

The run was incredible and took us to a sauna, which took longer than usual to warm us up.

By Francois

The route PK chose was a windscoop run around the North, passing Kleinkoppie. It was my first run on this route. The sun

hind us, I guess that the return leg was tougher for me than the veteran PK. Breathing through your buff becomes

## Antarctic Mechanics

What can I say? Well, I'm pleased to say that we are nearing the end of our term here in Antarctica, which, to me, was one of the most challenging experiences ever. As a mechanic tending to all repairs on the dozers, challengers and skidoos that, being outside, can be tricky. One has to be fully dressed in your winter gear, as the temperatures are freezing cold. It's difficult to work with gloves, but somehow we manage.

Let's talk about the muscle machines that

are the Challengers. These machines are awesome and strong and can carry heavy loads and cut through ice like nothing. I will have the privilege of using them to go on the cat-train to Neumayer III station in December to meet the new team.

Then we have the three ADE engines that are currently running the base. They are still in good order and are being well maintained.

This was a great year, a great experience,

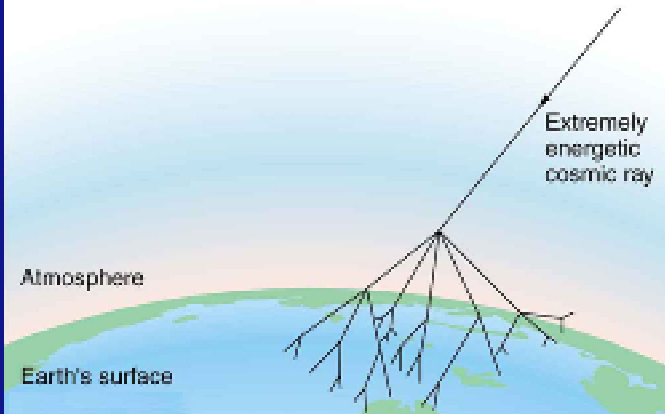
and a great challenge with an awesome and fabulous team.

What will I miss of Antarctica? The most beautiful sunsets and sunrises in the world and the best quality time you can spend with yourself.

By Raymond

## An Elementary Introduction to Astrophysics

In the previous issue, I tried to explain what a neutron monitor is. In this issue, I will explain from where neutrons originate and the science behind it.



Most of the time, a neutron monitor records galactic

cosmic rays and their variation with the 11-year sunspot cycle and 22-year magnetic cycle. A cosmic ray, unlike its name, is a particle that travels near the speed of light. In other words, these particles have massive energies. Cosmic rays are composed primarily of high-energy protons and atomic nuclei; they are of mysterious origin.

When a cosmic ray particle encounters Earth, its first interaction is usually with an air molecule at an altitude of 30 km or so. This encounter causes the air molecule to split into smaller pieces, each having high energy. They in turn hit other air molecules,

resulting in more secondary cosmic rays. The process continues and secondary by-products (including neutrons) will reach ground level where they can be detected by neutron monitors.

Occasionally, the sun emits cosmic rays of sufficient energy and intensity to raise radiation levels on the earth's surface to the degree that they are readily detected by neutron monitors. They are termed "ground level enhancements" (GLE). Scientists are still theorising about why the sun produces GLEs.

By Hendrik

## Is Our World Coming to an End???

I was browsing through my favourite cartoon website xkcd.com, when I stumbled on their new hilarious "what if" section. The pseudo-scientific question of the day was "How long could the human race survive on only cannibalism?" The part that struck me was: "If the average human weighs 50 kilograms and eats a couple thousand calories per day, then one person contains enough meat to feed another person for about a month." This means that with some fuzzy maths and the fact that the SANAE food store had been more than kind to our waistlines, we might have only one person left by the time the ship arrives. Seems like the world might end for most of us.

Not that I think we run the risk of turning to cannibalism;

we do have enough food to probably last us another three years. But it is concerning when a random article on the amount of people needed to create viable space colony ends with the following sentiment:

A final concern raised at the American Association for the Advancement of Science's annual meeting in Boston was the possibility of infighting. Small communities isolated for long periods at research stations in Antarctic and even families travelling on long car journeys, provide examples of how small conflicts can quickly escalate.

But Moore points out: "Some small island communities on Earth have lived in peace and harmony for thousands of years because they have de-

veloped ways of solving conflicts. These are not taken to Antarctica."

By Cornelia

## Zombie Emergency Procedure

In case of Zombie Apocalypse:



95% of all known zombies can be stopped by decapitation or destroying the brain. Aim your desperate, improvised weapons at the head and neck.

**DO NOT SPLIT UP!**

Someone WILL get killed, turn into a zombie and the next person to see them will go "Oh, it's my friend, I'll just turn my back and OH GOD WHY IS HE EATING MY BRAIN?!"



**DO NOT USE FIRE**

The only thing worse than undead hordes trying to eat your brain is undead hordes trying to eat your brain WHILE ON FIRE.

# Lady Luck

Don't need a four leaf clover, don't need a good luck charm... As the song goes.

Murphy's law, according to the internet, was named after Capt. Edward A. Murphy, an engineer working on Air Force Project MX981, (a project) designed to see how much sudden deceleration a person can withstand in a crash. Then something went wrong.

But the original name for 'if anything can go wrong it will', was Sod's Law, because it would happen to any poor sod who least needed such a catastrophic event.

Or maybe it could be blamed on the human factor. The doctor, well-known Col. John P. Stapp, had a paradox: Stapp's Ironic Paradox, which says, "The universal aptitude for ineptitude makes any human accomplishment an incredible miracle." And of course this could creep in into any of the stages of planning, design or maintenance of Antarctic equipment.

Count your lucky stars if you are one of those people who is always lucky. If you are one of those guys who always pick the right horse and walk away with the fair lady. Sure, this is the place for you.

According to Murphy's Law, everything that can go wrong, most certainly will go wrong. Now, if you have bad luck like me, and working on old equipment that was destined to have failed for a long time, and throwing in all the constant storms raging outside trying to make a point that



man is not welcome in this part of nature, brace yourself. This is a place where the gods furiously vent their frustrations, and in the process sweep away all efforts of installations that man has invented to stand up against their rage.

Well, I am one of those people who will be outside with a fork in my hand the day that it starts raining soup or beer. So I should have known that my year of fun has been booked from the start.

It made me think of an unlucky security guy working at a bank. The previous night, his buddy was on duty guarding the bank and had a great shift with nothing going wrong. Next night, the other poor sod was on duty: then there was a bank robbery. They crept up on him by unforeseen means, by manipulating the high tech security cameras before he could activate an alarm, tied him up and robbed the bank of 50 Million Rand.

Afterwards, they left him in a position of which he could untangle himself and left. Now my question is: "If you were that poor guard, would you pitch up for a meeting at work the following day, with a

smile on your face. Would you pitch up at all?"

Luckily for that guard, he had time to run and a place to hide until things settled down, so that he could start looking for other employment.

How about being that deep in sheep dip when you are at a place like this. Nowhere to run. No place to hide, and not even a chance of resigning, because there is no transport to take you away.

So if you meet Lady Luck on your way here, please bring her along. I sure would love to meet her too. Then maybe I would not have to phone home to report that I have seen my Aurora.

And if you survive a year with minor incidents and failures, count your lucky stars. Who knows, you may even have the guts to apply for another year of good luck.

I wish you luck.

By Leonard

*"The universal aptitude for ineptitude makes any human accomplishment an incredible miracle." - Col. John P. Stapp*

# Oktoberfest!

Oktoberfest is the world's largest fun fair held annually in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. It is a 16-day festival running from late September to the first weekend in October with more than 6 million people from around the world attending the event every year. The Oktoberfest is an important part of Bavarian culture, having been held since 1810. Other cities across the world also hold Oktoberfest celebrations, modelled after the original Munich event.

Here at SANAE, we can't take 16 days off to party, so we hosted our own miniature Oktoberfest on Saturday, 27 September. The whole team dressed up in traditional clothing: Dirndl for women; Lederhosen for men. The smoker's lounge was decorated to look like a Bavarian beerhall. And Oktoberfest-themed Oompa music played all day long.

A special Oktoberfest beer was brewed long in advance, namely a Kölsch Bier. This delicious beer was clearly the star of the event, as the entire brew was drunk on Oktoberfest day.



Traditional fare was prepared, namely Kassler (cured, smoked pork chops), Wurst, Bretzeln, Kartoffelsalat, and personalised, giant, heart-shaped Lebkuchen. Thank goodness for the beer, as the Kassler recipe turned out to be very heavy on salt.



The day was a great success and fun was had by all. Some brave souls even dashed out into the cold Antarctic air for a photograph in their outfits in the snow. Even the Bavarians would have been impressed by SANAE's Antarctic-Oktoberfest.

By Patrick

# Birthdays' Icy Treats

Just like at home, birthdays are special at SANAE:

On your birthday, you can choose many aspects of the day:

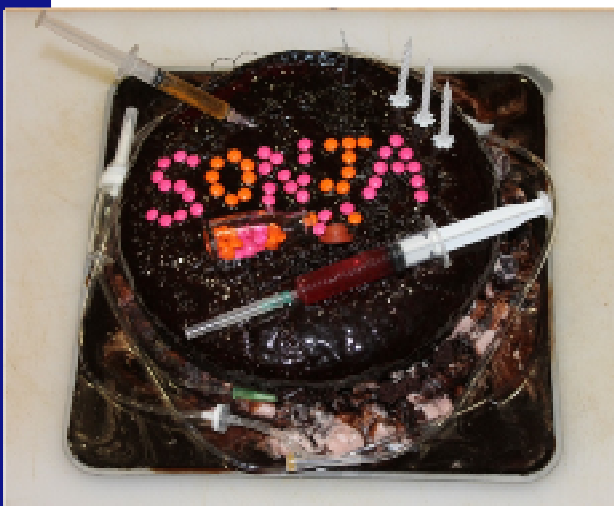
- Would you like brunch?
- Can someone else do your cleaning duty for the week?
- What can the chef of the day cook for dinner?
- What would you like as an activity for the day?

After several birthdays this year, we have experience in individualised birthdays:

- An 80s themed party
- A neon glow-in-the dark bash
- A sleek cocktail and sushi bar
- A treasure hunt
- Scrumptious brunches with choices to excite even Marie Antoinette
- And birthday cakes - for those who have no bread - including blueberry-cheesecake, black forest cake, Opel-cake, vlakoek, chocolate cake and creatively decorated vegan chocolate cake.

To crown your birthday experience, you will get your own snow bath. This entails a bath dug into the snow,

where you lie down and get buried up to your neck. You get a quick-funnelled drink of choice and may then race your frozen body back into the base and the warm sauna. Success, your birthday is complete.



So, come celebrate your next birthday at SANAE!

By Sonja



## S53 Best Of ...

Quote of the Month	“You are a prince and I am a princess” - PK to Metkassie
Song of the Month	“If I were a rich man” - Fiddler on the Roof
Movie of the Month	Spirited Away
Success of the Month	Cleaning and rebuilding the bouldering wall

### Meals of the Month

24 September was “Ouma Nellie se dag”, SANAE version of Heritage day:

Spilt Pea Soup  
Skaapboud  
Yorkshire Pudding  
Sago-hoender-tert  
Meat Balls  
Vegetable Pie  
Melkkos  
Bread Pudding  
Souskluitjies

### WEATHER STATISTICS 16 SEPTEMBER – 15 OCTOBER 2014

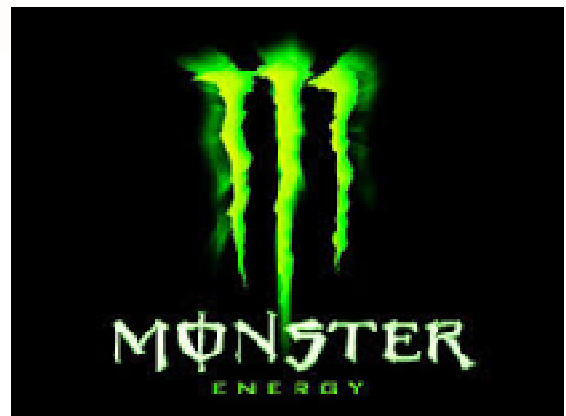
	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Pressure (hPa)</b>	896.9 (16 <sup>th</sup> Sep)	862.7 (11 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	879.6
<b>Temperature (°C)</b>	-14.5 (27 <sup>th</sup> Sep)	-29.8 (10 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	-23.6
<b>Humidity</b>	86% (4 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	16% (27 <sup>th</sup> Sep)	63%
<b>Wind gust (m/s)</b>	42.3 (18 <sup>th</sup> Sep)		



# Our Amazing Sponsors

## Main Sponsors

**SASOL**  
*reaching new frontiers*



## Gear

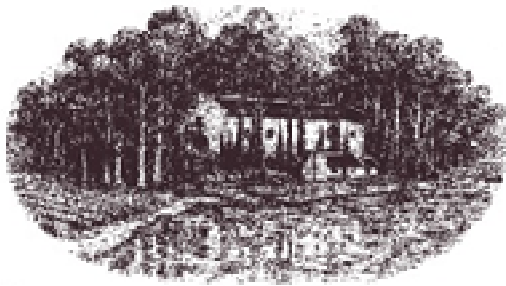


**CityROCK**  
*Mountain Mail Order*  
Climbing Gym & Gear Shop

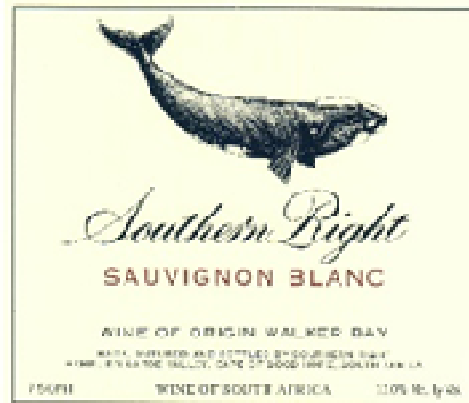


**AWESOME  
TOOLS**

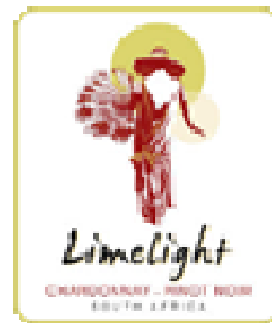
# Wine



HAMILTON RUSSELL VINEYARDS



SEVEN OAKS WINE



THE WINEGROWERS' ASSOCIATION  
SOUTH AFRICA

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Creating Wines of Distinction



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"In aid of humanity"

SPRINGFIELD ESTATE

# Various

