

CLUB CAPTAIN'S REPORT

I begin this report, grieving for **Denis Nixon** who was shot and killed in his own home having just finished eating his dinner. A member of many years and a familiar figure at time trials and races, he will be sorely missed by all of us. Our condolences and prayers are with **Hinke, Ian, Carrie**, and the rest of the family.

Fraser (Denis's nephew who witnessed him die and had a gun held to his head), we did not know you until this moment. You are too young to let the witnessing of this appalling scene be a burden on your young shoulders. You could not have done anything more in the face of adversity. Do not blame yourself, there is nothing you could have done to save **Denis**.

On a somewhat lighter note, we bade farewell to **Malcolm Powell** and "the Pub of Eternal Despair", more so with the latter than **Malcolm**. We are sure he understands this sentiment. "The Pub of Eternal Despair" was a pub on wheels that was pushed during the *Two Oceans* race by **Malcolm** and a number of club members some of whom I remember including one **Louis Brink** (who bailed) and **Dion Middelkoop**. The attire for the run was a top hat and tails in the VOB strip.

Sean and **Joanne McCoy** left early this year to play for the opposition, Australia. **Sean** is a former Club Captain and Chairman who took the club from strength to strength. **Joanne** was a W. Province and South African runner and achieved club colours. Her name was constantly in the winning teams and positions. Her greatest disappointment was a 4:01 *Two Oceans*. She missed her silver by a mere minute and some seconds along with yours truly in the same race.

All of these members have contributed to the ongoing success of VOB over the years and I would like to single out Sean McCoy for his devotion to the club.

Our elite athletes have faired extremely well this year, and hot on their heels are the



ladies and veterans who have outperformed the men in general. Prof **Dermott Devine**, a Great Grandmaster, has been showing the younger generations that not only can one run at 70 years old, but that one can even win.

The prize giving was held in March and **Roger Dickson** as usual put in a tremendous amount of effort. A powerpoint presentation was organised by **Aarnout Brombacher** with all the results being placed on a screen. Hours were spent trawling through the race results and times to work out the winners for each category. The downside to the prize giving was that quite a number of the prize winners were not there. Which gives rise to the question: "Does VOB want an awards evening?" The positive was that Groot Constantia opened their doors to accommodate us and we had a

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fantastic evening with plenty of food (sponsored by Sothebys) and wine to consume. Thank you Groot Constantia.

Dave Artlett won the most time trials run in a year: 50 out of 52. He said that he goes on leave for two weeks. **Louis Brink** won the esteemed "Baxter's Bailers" T-shirt for a monumental bail at the Voet. In his defence, he said that it was a planned bail. We are awaiting confirmation on this, but in the mean time he is the owner of the shirt for a year.

Aarnout Brombacher was awarded Chairman's Award for his unselfish service to the club. He is a relatively new member to the club who took up the reigns of responsibility so efficiently.

Due to some so-called technical hitches by WPA, the licence numbers only arrived late January, which caused panic among runners

who wanted to enter races. This placed pressure on the committee of VOB to get everyone licensed in time. For the first time in all the years at VOB, we had queues leading out of the doors of the club, reminiscent of election back in '94.

I wish all our athletes participating in *Comrades* that they achieve what they set out to accomplish. To be a runner is not easy. The training, the injuries and the loneliness of long distance running takes discipline and self-belief, and in the end we actually only compete against ourselves. Yesterday's hero is a true adage.

Until Next Time!

Richard McClarty



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