

FAREWELL: Sean and Joanne McCoy

Remarks made by Roger Dickson at the end of the Chairman's Run on 7 January 2007.

It is my pleasure to say a few brief words about **Sean** and **Joanne McCoy** as we say farewell to them from VOB. Most will know that they are moving this week to the far-away shores of Sydney and this is their last VOB function before leaving.

Sean and **Joanne** have been an integral part of VOB ever since joining. They have helped make what we have today. **Sean** joined in 1991 and **Joanne** in 1996. They are people who straight away got involved and have given so much to VOB. Simply because it's what they are like as giving people and it's also what they've enjoyed.

I'd like to just mention some of the lighter moments we will associate **Sean** and **Joanne** with as we say goodbye to them. **Sean**: Well he's been actively involved in the VOB committee almost since he joined VOB in 1991. **Sean** was club captain for some 4 years and chairman for another 2 years. He is one of only 5 people who have been awarded life membership at VOB, the others are: **Eric Bateman**, **Tim Noakes**, **Monty Monteiro** and **Dave Lotter**. **Sean** described his role as Chairman as "seeing to it every member of the club is happy." That you did. **Sean** is always a man for a good party. He was even heading for a "quiet one" beer at the club, when he got himself signed on as captain. But, I really knew he was a man for a party, when it was through **Sean** that I found out about the water table that hands out Sambuca during the **Knysna Half**. The **Knysna Half** is clearly a favourite of **Sean's**. He has tradition, still going in 2006 of taking a dip in the Knysna Lagoon at 16km when you get toward the finish. Who wants to be too serious about a lekker run anyway?

One year at **Knysna** while **Sean** was our VOB Club Captain and he was in particularly good spirits with **Julius Oosthuizen** at the

start, he sounded his fish horn in the crowd and the whole race started to his fish horn, never mind time keepers and starters' guns, **McCoy** was there! He didn't always start things early. I was grateful when he was doing announcements on the slab at the end of 2000 because it gave me more time fight through city traffic to VOB for club runs at 6.05 pm, or even 6.10 sometimes if **Sean** was in full voice.

Sean put that projected, booming voice to good use at VOB. It was so strong, that **Sean** was single handedly able to get the whole start of VOB races quiet to hear **Sean** announce - who needs a PA system? Being on top of things and always announcing things, **Sean** was regularly on hand at race prize givings. I remember him being quick enough to stop me handing out a bottle of wine or whisky or something to a young 13-year old prize winner at the presentation once.

Sean is the only one I know who has never had a bad *Two Oceans*. He's always been comfortably through Rhodes Drive in a beach chair, to cheer and support. Sensible really; not one to race more than 21km our **Sean**.

In amongst all this, **Sean** always had a serious eye for talent. Not just your **David Bokwe's**, **Sipho Phala**, **Jakes Mfini** and **Mziyanda Gumenge** - but also a certain **Joanne**. Then know as **Joanne De Wet**, she joined VOB in 1996 and **Sean's** life has been the richer for her moving here ever since.

Joanne wanted to be sure that her talent wasn't lost to other clubs, so she married the club captain. Very clever **Joanne**! According to *Imbaleki*, in 1997, you actually got **Sean** to listen to your suggestions for the *PE Relay* team arrangements - that must have been love.\

Joanne has always been on top of *Two Oceans* - like **Sean**. But, unlike **Sean**, she actually ran it. She is one of the few people I know who has won a Gold Medal at **Oceans**, but not a silver. It must be our **Captain McClarty's** fault, that 4:01 finish time, he

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always likes a long speech before he lets you off on a run...

Joanne is very fast a runner. When **Joanne** “blows” it’s merely a slow down from a 2h55 marathon to a 3h05 marathon! But, on the one day at SA Marathon Champs that she was in the best shape of her life and she must have been tired of all seeing all **Sean’s** orthotics in shoes. So she took hers out. Well despite the unusual tactics of handicapping oneself, **Jo** still came among the top runners at those SA’s. **Joanne** too was in some her best form ever in 2001 when she ran an 84 min, only to discover soon after that she was pregnant with **Ryan**. **Sean** was going to great lengths to give himself a chance of staying with **Joanne** in races.

Where were **Sean** and **Joanne** involved? Well everywhere frankly. I’ll just list some of

the things we want to thank **Sean** and **Joanne** for:

- Contributions as committee member, Captain; Chairman; and Chairman of the Development Sub-committee.
- **Sean’s** great part played in all races organised by VOB.
- Prize-giving: Sean would single-handedly put together VOB Prize-giving. Apparently for 2 days before Sean wouldn’t be working for Allan Gray so much, but VOB.
- See those metal stakes we use for races, those are all **Sean McCoy**.
- Same can probably be said for our gazebo, and brollies – **Sean McCoy**.
- The dozens of spreadsheets organising data and results, which we all use and the annual fixture list – **Sean McCoy**.



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- Contributions to *Imbaleki*.
- Representing VOB at WPA
- Helping transform WPA 10.
- Taking on and leading the VOB Development Programme – **Sean and Joanne**.
- People's bus assisting with transport and lifts – Sean and Joanne
- Personal Mentor to so many athletes at VOB.
- Nights before races, 4 or 5 athletes sleeping over at the McCoy's.
- VOB current colours standards – **Sean McCoy**.
- VOB constitution – **Sean McCoy** together with **Stephen Brindley**.
- VOB's cross-country T-shirts incentive idea – **Sean McCoy**.
- The VOB Grape Run course – **Sean McCoy**; **Joe Tyrell** and **Seamus Daly**.
- Sponsor relationships – **Sean McCoy**.
- Leader and encouragement of Track and Field – **Sean McCoy**.

As Pete Riches put it so well: "*All of this has taken a huge amount of time and personal effort, and Sean stands alone among those who in recent times have brought VOB to where it is today. Sean has personally made an inestimable contribution to the activities of the Club, and to the good of its members. We acknowledge the work that Sean McCoy has done for VOB, and we thank him most sincerely for it.*"

We've been privileged to have two such wonderful people as our friends, and as leaders at our club. Thank you for all you do and have done for VOB, both of you.

Sean, Joanne, Ryan and Jason, we wish you well. May you have a well-deserved break from all you've done at VOB and made VOB into. God bless you! We wish you every success. Please accept a token of thanks with special memories from us all at VOB.

Roger Dickson

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**Contact: Stephen Brindley
Tel: (021) 715-7120
Fax: (021) 715-2062**