

# HiTAC

Newsletter of the Taranaki Alpine Club Inc.

Volume 97 Issue 8

## Coming Events

### Club Nights

**C**lub Captain - Duncan Kemsley announces :  
**7 November**

#### Guy Fawkes Night

Club night is to be at Nita and Terry Campbell's on Lower Egmont Road. Rapid No. 597 (That's the white numerals on a blue stick). Starting at the earlier time of 7:00pm. BYO barbeque, refreshments and fireworks.

**21 November**

#### Quiz Night

A particularly interesting and proactive night of fun and hilarity organised by our esteemed Kapitan.

**6 December**

#### Christmas Dinner

The last official Club Night for the year at the RSA Strandon, opposite Mangorei Road on Devon Street East.

More details as they come to hand in the November Hi-TAC

If anyone has ideas on Club Night content Duncan would be keen to hear from you. You may know someone able to give a presentation or you may have done something you wish to tell the Club. All serious suggestions considered.

Should be a nice quiet family affair degenerating as the night wears on. See you there.

#### **15 November** **Okahu West**

Harry "Gasper" Gaastra will lead the annual west side climb up the Okahu from Kahui Hut. This is an excellent opportunity for members to get an appreciation of the lesser visited aspects of our mountain. The trip will most likely start from New Plymouth on Friday night and sleep (bivvy) at Kahui Hut overnight. The following day, climb up to the Okahu and onto the West Ridge and Summit, descending to Taurangi. If anyone can help with transport to Kahui Road end and from North Egmont or would like to go, please contact: Harry on Ph 757 8884.

**29 November**

#### **Club Captain's Barbecue**

To be held at the Kemsley residence 27 Belair Avenue, New Plymouth, starting around 5:30 pm. There will be some alcohol provided. BYO food and barbecue (cooker), and refreshments. Everyone welcome. Should be a nice quiet family affair degenerating as the night wears on. See you there.

**Wednesday Evenings**

**Rock wall or Paritutu**

**13 & 14 December**

### Social & Trips

#### **Caving Trip to Awakino**

Steve Miller will be hosting this most spectacular excursion to the North Taranaki caves. Just to the seaward side of State Highway 3 after exiting the Awakino tunnel (more or less). Costs are minimal and as an added bonus the canoeing in the Awakino is not bad either. Transport enquiries and participants should contact Duncan on ph 751 1191 for further details.

#### **Taurangi Upgrade**

**1 & 8 November**

#### **Lodge Maintenance**

There will be a hardy few excavating the external plumbing pipework near the front of the Lodge. Volunteer and would be drain diggers should apply on the day. Following this exploratory "dig" the pipework will be placed weather permitting ASAP. If you're at the Lodge you may be slightly inconvenienced by the pipes being disconnected for a brief period. This work is being done in preparation of the Lodge upgrade. (See over for those details).

**Early December**

#### **Lodge Upgrade**

Any queries regarding Lodge maintenance should be directed to Mark Francis Ph 758 6310.

**Club nights held every: 1st & 3rd Thursday at 8:00pm for 1st & 3rd FRIDAY for August onwards at the Foundation for the Blind 131 Vivian Street.**

**Lodge Booking Officer: Janica Chilcott Ph (06) 754-4404 or Fax (06) 753-7937  
or write to: Box 356 New Plymouth email address: rosse@clear.net.nz**

## Minarapa - Skied at last.

The "annual" (yeah, right!) TAC ski champs were held on 11 October. Despite much initial interest and due to a deceptive low cloud layer in the morning, only six skiers and one snowboarder made it to the Lodge. With a perfect day the consensus to do a summit ski was easily reached. The skiers set off via North Ridge to the summit encountering primo "doo-laa" en-route (ed: maybe *Kossman* could provide a definitive description of this type of snow condition). After lunch on the summit, Minarapa was the call for all except Alec, who was happy just to complete his first ski via North Ridge - way to go *Holyman*. For the pioneers though, it was a short traverse to the entrance gully. We jumped in one at a time to find slightly inconsistent snow - hard one side, deep and heavy on the other, causing a number of minor spills - *Guido* (C. Prudden) tweaking his knee badly in the entrance gully. After some primo spring corn lower down and a long traverse to the col, we hiked back up and into Snow Valley. With energy

beginning to fade a slalom course was hastily set up followed by one run each. Campbell Whit showed top form, blitzing fellow competitors Mike, *Kossman*, and *Ebby* (Steve Miller). Well done to Campbell, fellow racers and Minarapa descenders; *Kossman*, *Ebby* and Mike. Hopefully this will spark a revival of the annual ski race. Top stuff to Simon Bridgeman (last seen disappearing into the cloud on the North side) - first snowboard descent of the Minarapa and to *Holyman* (Alec Heilbron), - his first summit ski descent on the big skis and thanks to JT (John Thomason) for supplying the gates. And has anyone seen Simon?

By Duncan "*Kossman*" Kemsley

PS Did you here Don King (Greg Larkin) did two summits without sun-glasses recently.

## The "sastrugi" debate continues...

**SASTRUGI-** Clarification for Kiwis  
*Extract from the Mountaineering Manual 1980*

In New Zealand "sastrugi" refers to needles of hard ice often found on high ridges near the main divide of the Southern Alps (the term has a different meaning elsewhere). Typically they are about 10cm long and 3cm in diameter and point towards the prevailing wind (the northwesterly). Sometimes sastrugi may be two meters long and packed on top of each other. The small needles snag the rope on a ridge, but good rope management with the rope tight between climbers will reduce snagging. Sastrugi is a hazard because if a crampon point pierces the neck of the needle it will break, perhaps causing a fall. In any case it is very difficult to walk on.

By Chris Prudden

(Ed: We owe this entire debate to *Kossman*, for his insistence of the use of the international definition for sastrugi on an Instruction Course held earlier this year. The definition above is correct for New Zealand descriptions of "ice fingers" but, is somewhat out-of-step with the international definition.

No doubt you have all had the chance to read our opinions and now are able to formulate your own on which term you might wish to use.

## These boots are still for sale.

One pair Dachstein plastic all purpose climbing boots suitably for all types of mountaineering.

Size 10-1/2 to 11-1/2

Any reasonable offer accepted. Contact Chris Prudden Ph 758 8261.

## Missing in action

One bamboo shafted ice axe with Taranaki Alpine Club engraved on the shaft. Other new members would like you to return it so they can use it. If you have information on the whereabouts contact Barry Francis Ph 758 6287.

## News from the Executive

**T**he committee received a report on the Lodge Upgrade Project from Charlie (P. Andrews) and Nede (R. Eden). they explained that drawings had been sent to the NPDC and a Building Consent had been issued for the work to begin. The Builder will be available in early December and crucial materials will need to be ordered ASAP. Costs to the Club are estimated at \$48000. This differs significantly from the estimate tabled at the last AGM as follows:

- the ground floor exterior (blockwork) will be protected to negate painting
- the SAR window will be removed and replaced with a double glazed unit.
- the roof, flashings, spouting and downpipes will be replaced.

We are asking businesses around Taranaki for sponsorship and should be able to reduce the cost to the Club. GST may be able to be refunded - \$5300.

The Club is quite financial and with the \$15000 received from the TSB the cost to the Club effectively has not increased much for the huge increase in benefit.

It should be noted that painting the Lodge would have cost \$1500-\$2000 dollars annually. Painting of the new cladding system is not required.

Work is to start as soon as possible and will take between four to six weeks depending on the weather. Scaffolding around the perimeter of the Lodge will be undertaken immediately following the replacement of the sewerage pipeline and soak hole lining.

Certain elements of the building work are commercially sensitive at this time so, after supply contracts are settled, we will be able to provide more complete picture of the costings.

If any members require a copy of the current Constitution apply in writing to the Secretary.

That's all for now.  
Charlie and Nede.

## Mountain Scene by Chris Prudden

**W**hile spring can be more fickle and changeable than the other seasons the rain always eventually shows up, and after such a sunny winter its no surprise its been a little damp. However in order to stay positive about mountain sport remember we have activity days and rest days, so sort those slides and read those books.

Spring most definitely means skiing, and Taranaki has some of the best 'corn' snow in the world, I kid you not! So it's all on for that summit ski descent or that valley, face or ridge you've always wanted to track out. Yes, the days are long and the snow rapidly softens in the sun, but there's no time on the mountain to let your guard down. So, if you're climbing or skiing always take a full kit and stay on your feet, it's what being in the mountains is all about. To descend, follow the rules, walk, glissade, or ski. It was a tired and under skilled individual who ever thought of the undignified and poorly controlled *bumslide* and for those that choose do it with crampons on, we'll write about it in your obituary.

Ski action has pretty much consisted of getting to the top of the ski run (summit), via the line of least resistance (North Ridge) and skiing down the drop of choice. I will mention here that the practice of skiing a route *blind*, that is with-out climbing up the same line should only be attempted by advanced skiers and those who have a good knowledge of terrain and snow conditions on Mt. Egmont.

Kossman (D. Kemsley) soloed skied a descent of the Northern slopes, his second on the same week-end and Don Paterson skied from the summit on telemarks, the weather and snow conditions were described as excellent.

Davo Bolger skied Surrey Road on a breezy day but blue sky and great snow, he finished the run out through Organ Pipe Valley.

The Holyman (A Heilbron) made his first full ski descent from the Summit of Taranaki, and he described it as very pleasing and good to *get done*, good on you mate.

### MINARAPA SKIED

It was really just a matter of time but the approach slopes had always been too icy and rough, then all of a sudden you're up there with your skis and

conditions are OK.

There were probably too many on the slope to do a tight and steep drop but it happened and after a Summit gathering everyone wanted to be in. Simon Bridgeman registered a few firsts on the day, he must have been watching the Ed H story on TV, as he made his first ascent of Mt. Egmont, his first snow board descent and was the first Snowboarder to descend the Minarapa Valley.

The exposed approach slope proved to be firm and the steep, narrow headwall gully harboured some difficult snow but that's what this sort of skiing is all about. The team exited through the Minarapa Col, traversed the upper Kokowai above the Flounder and descended back to Tahurangi Lodge.

The team was Chris Prudden, Duncan Kemsley, Steve Miller, Simon Bridgeman, Campbell White plus a Mate.

Climbing news is a little thin but the Holyman and Greg Banks were seen climbing East Ridge and later dabbling on some ice in the Crater, no further details at this time.

Plumber (J. McLean and Brick (P. Lethbridge claimed another ascent of the summit.

### RUAPEHU

Steve Miller and Guido (C Prudden), met up at Turoa following a shocking week of weather and after a mixed day of skiing on and off trail and including a light snow fall, skinned above the cloud and to the head of the Mangaehuehue Glacier. It was a superb run down with pristine fresh snow, so good in fact they skinned back up for another run. However as with all Mountain experiences you have to go down some time and the pair skied down into ugly wet cloud, mush snow and a quiet ski area closed for the day, back to the car at 5.30.

### SOUTH

Gareth Sharp completed his winter in the South Island and Southern Alps with an ascent of the testing South Face of Mt. Aspiring and also a snow board descent from the summit. This is believed to be the first snow board descent from the summit of Mt. Aspiring.

Kevin MacLaughlan (Queenstown) reports doing a ski tour from Classen

Saddle down the Meuller Glacier and out via Meuller hut and Mt. Cook. Snow and weather excellent.

### OS

Could report heaps here, plenty of action from two Taranaki Tigers in the European Alps.

BRAIN (Bryan mad) has been touring on the continent and UK for the last couple of months and also put in a few weeks in the hills. His warm up on the Breithorn 4000m set him up for the objective The Matterhorn 4478m via the Hornli Ridge which he accomplished in 5.5 hours. Brain is due back right about now so we will catch up on the latest.

MAL (Mark Hall) just about a local now, Mal has had another excellent climbing season in the Alps and can you believe it, a chance meeting with Brain in Grindlewald. To cut the story a little short he climbed from Shammung with excellent conditions including, Petite Agile Verde, Agile du Midi-Cosmiques Arete, Aiguille Plan. From Grindlewald to the Mittellegi Hut (Eiger), From Zermatt Matterhorn, Breithorn, Zinalrothorn, Rimpfshorn, all around the 4000m mark and plenty more!

## New Members

The Club welcomes Alison Russell, a process operator at Methanex and we look forward to seeing her up on the hill.

HiTAC

Taranaki Alpine Club  
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New Plymouth

POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW  
PLYMOUTH