

# Sunrise On Africa's Peaks

SoapKidz: Registration Number: 2006/008482/08; P.O.Box 12486 Queenswood 0121

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Issue No 2: 2005



## Orienteering at Delta park 3 July 2005 by Allan

An early morning start from Hartbeespoort with the two Rob's. Time for a quick cup of coffee while loading the car before we set off at a slower than expected pace owing to the fact that the wind-screen was covered in ice and our designated driver Rob B could only see out of a patch the size of a saucer.

By the time we got to Jo'burg both ourselves and the car were slightly thawed. Despite the others lack of faith in my map reading skills (I have this theory that all roads lead to Soweto and manage to put it into practise every time I navigate through Jo'burg) we arrived safely at Delta Park to join the growing huddle of volunteers from RACO and SOAP. By the time the Kidz and our fearless leader Noeksie arrived there were so many volunteers that the RAC organizers were starting to look alarmed.

In her usual style of a small and determined whirlwind Noeksie distributed SOAP & SOAP Kidz shirts, backpacks, compasses, popcorn, water, rubbish bags and encouragement to everyone in sight whilst trying to play down a rumour that she had been waiting patiently at the wrong gate as everyone else gathered at the orienteering Start banner.

Then it was time for an introduction to orienteering from the RACO before we split into small teams for a more detailed explanation of maps, compasses, control points, etc from the RACO mentors who would run with each team. Secretly sure that I would somehow manage to lead our team into the heart of Soweto despite the able assistance of Rob B and Dylan of RACO, I opted to carry the backpack of supplies and the rubbish bag and leave the complicated stuff to them and our enthusiastic kidz.

After collecting our starting time and the card to be punched at each control point the next thing we knew we were running across Delta searching for buildings, footbridges, boulders and trees marked on our map. Any thoughts of collecting a full bag of rubbish vanished as the next 36 minutes were spent running, locating the orange control point bags, clipping our card, debating our position and running some more (occasionally in circles). By the time we made the final sprint for the finish line I was puffing like a steam train and wondering just where my fitness had disappeared to. We crossed the finish line to the shout of "Ons is 'n span" as proudly as if we had finished a marathon, and convinced we had won.

Then it was time to collapse on the grass drinking water and eating popcorn while we watched the other teams dashing across the park and the finish line. I did notice that a fair percentage of the volunteers were looking as exhausted as I felt while the kidz soon recovered to eat naartjies and argue good naturedly over tactics, running styles and what the results would be. I solved the problem of my empty !)



**Did you know that more than 30 bags of litter were picked up by the SOAPKIDZ at Delta Park ?**

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Rubbish bag by collecting all the rubbish from the finish line. After the scores were tallied it was time for speeches and prize giving. Each team was rewarded with a sweets pack and had their photograph taken.

In the end our team came second (the winning team taking about 34 minutes to complete the course). After group photographs it was time to bid farewell to the Kidz who were all looking happy but tired. A thank you song, big smiles, handshakes and hugs; and then they were heading to the bus and lunch.



*The SOAP Crew, RACO Members and SOAP kidz*

Plans for future expeditions and adventures for the Kidz were discussed as aching muscles were stretched in the sun, before we packed up our gear (including an impressive pile of collected rubbish). I have this suspicion that I was not the only one to be heading home for an afternoon nap while resolving to get fitter before the next energetic SOAP Kidz event.

### Some feedback from the volunteers

"It was a wonderful experience especially after the unbelievable gestures of appreciation from the kidz at the end of the event even though I was not physically involved with them!

I had a great morning - and the kids are so much fun to be with. Would love to get involved again - up for anything! - Stephanie

I'm sure the kids (and all the adults) enjoyed it. I found it a rewarding experience. We must look to doing this again. - Pat from RACO

The orienteering event for the Abraham Kriel Home gave me an opportunity to share my enjoyment of the sport with those less fortunate than myself. I appreciated the efforts of young Charles who applied what he had learnt about compass work in his geography classes at school. He, along with his teammates, Eugene & Basie were full of energy until the last part of the course - looks like they are going to need more training! On the whole I was impressed by their positive attitude towards life and I wish them well. Gary

### **A Special Thanks to**

**RACO** for organising the event and their assistance  
**Print to Advertise** for sponsoring the printing  
**Cross Clothing** for sponsoring the T-shirts  
**Pureau** for the water  
**The SOAP Crew** for their time

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## Vergenoeg 10 July 2005 by Ian Du Plessis

It's Sunday morning –10 July 2005, the sun has just showed face over the eastern rim of the horizon, small patches of mist blanketing low-lying stretches of landscape. From various directions the designated vehicles are speeding towards the planned rendezvous, codenamed: Vergenoeg.

The people manning these vehicles are commonly known amongst close circles as the S.O.A.P. ("Sunrise On Africa's Peaks") crew, a seasoned (and unseasoned) group of mountaineers, adventure and thrill seekers led by a legendary marksman, Karen, a.k.a. Noeksie, assisted by Frans, fundi on fauna & flora. The aim of this mission is one thing: get up the mountain, inhale as much fresh air as you can, look for indigenous trees and spot the endangered Cape Vulture who took the Magalies as a last sanctuary for survival.

The tricky part of this mission is to get a group of kids from the Abraham Kriel Children's Home unscathed up the hill and down, attempting to embed some beautiful images of nature and sheer joy of the great outdoors in their minds (and if they can: to remember the Cape Vulture).

08h45 C.A.T.: A number of mighty 4 x 4's and a few not so big SUV's are snaking their way up a concealed dirt road in the foothills of the mighty Magalies, dust devils dancing in the wake of the passing cars, occupants periodically coughing of the dust seeping into the cabs. One by one vehicles screech to a halt at the pre-decided way point, occupants pouring out, hunting for dust free fresh air. Just then a kombi troop carrier came to a stop underneath a huge tree, near the farmhouse, high pitch noises from children's voices and laughter escaping the confines of the vehicle. It's them, the Rascals!! Be ready, it's show time!! Oversized grey t-shirts are dished out to the SOAP crew and some small day pack back packs given to kids and SOAP crew members, containing water and refreshments.

Frans and Oom Jan (of the farm) gave a quick overview on the sortie and then an eager group of people began to ascend the mighty, towering berg. Every now & then a voice from one of the SOAP crew echo through silence: "Hey, you boy, in front, slow down!!" And then there's little Jacques, possibly the most notorious of them all: Tall, skinny, brown hair cut short, canny eyes gazing out underneath his eyebrows, wearing a bleached denim, an old sweater coming of yonks back and sneakers the size of small boats! Not to forget the young girl wearing a slightly more adventurous, exposing attire...already one of the more seasoned travellers warned her: "Girl, keep your eyes open, today here's one boy who may be very fascinated by the view!"

Halfway up the footpath, the travel party is stopping for a quick break, the kids hastily rummaging the bags for water, or whatever they can find to quench the thirst.

Then it's pushing on again, still a way to go before the plateau is reached. Suddenly Frans calls the group to a halt, the group unknowingly split up—did they take the wrong fork in the road or what? A few minutes go by and slowly soft humming of voices becomes audible, the people still out of view. Eventually the groups merged again. At on stage little Jacques picks up an old chunk of wood and says: "As ek daai aasvoel sien, gooi ek hom met die stok!" Frans replied: "What if that big bird goes "agro" and grabs you off the mountain?!" Little Jacques: "Ek gaat vir hom gooi met die stok!"

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At one stage a small spider is spotted by two of the boys. It's quietly sitting on a neatly woven blanket of webbing carefully set up between the grass and small rocks protruding from underneath the surface. WOW! "Let's feed it!" the joyful screams come.



Within minutes two handfuls of insects are dumped on the web, some of the grasshoppers seeming like an elephant compared to a domestic cat! Poor little creature! He in a flash retreats into dark shadows of his den as far away as possible from the commotion up above! An hour ticks by, and the group descends downhill again (to the delight of the spider!)

Finally everybody reached the little rocky outcrop on top of the plateau, a good vista on the domain of the vultures; the cliffs and the blue skies. To the east, someone is pointing out to the blue sky, there they are, lazily soaring on the up draught and upper jet streams.

The kids appear to have little interest in the happenings up in the sky, they are scrambling for something to feast on, and guess what they found: packets of popcorn! Soon popcorn is flying all over the place, muffled crunching of the snacks in overfull mouths and soft mumbling voices...yeah, so much for spotting those endangered birds.



*On top of the plateau*

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Finally everybody made it back to base camp! Noeksie starts to prepare some hotdogs and the kids are darting towards her, each to be there first, like hungry piranhas smelling a dead duck! Finally the feeding frenzy is over and all are called for a group photo. That done, time has arrived for departure.

Out of the kombi the chorus comes, here and there an off-beat tune: "Ons se BAIE, BAIE dankie, ons se BAIE, BAIE dankie vir 'n lekker dag! Want julle is sukke GAWE MENSE; want julle is sukke GAWE MENSE!!



And so the voices of the group of happy kids fade away as the troop carrier speeds off in a cloud of dust...The SOAP team!



**A big thanks to**

**Oom Jan from Vergenoeg** – the kidz loved the hike

**My friends** who sponsored the backpacks – they are ultra cool!

The **SOAP CREW** for your time and last but not least

The **SOAPKIDZ** – you guys are so special.  
**Noeksie**

## Stirrup Glen Orienteering 17 July 2005 by Crazy AI

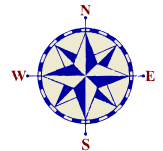
Another SOAP inspired early morning start with Rob H's landrover bursting at the seams with all things necessary to keep the SOAP kidz alive & well for a day of REAL orienteering at Oom Koos' farm. The trial orienteering in a city park had gone well ... now the RAC had recklessly invited us to do the Real Thing alongside Real orienteers!

But we were soon issued with a kidz team each and instructions explaining the proper way to orienteer. Despite Noeksie's pleading we were only allowed to compete in Green Code (beginners with a slight idea) ... Noeksie had hoped to compete in Brown (requiring SAS training & 8 km's of running).

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Arriving at Stirrup Glen ( famous for a previous SOAP kidz horse riding adventure day ) all was a frenzy of activity; the Landrover was unpacked, RAC people looking very professional set up colour coded boards, registration tables, etc; the kidz arrived & were issued compasses, water, backpacks, etc. Only us volunteers looked cold, a tad apprehensive & not quite sure what to do.

Registration completed; the whistle blown & we were busy copying circles to mark the control points from the fixed map onto our own maps. The first point was easily found but we totally missed the second; found the third & had to backtrack to find the lone bluegum tree marking Number Two. I felt really bad about helping to lead my team astray but by this time there were quite a few teams who seemed to have lost that tree! A friendly RAC participant gave us some valuable tips which unfortunately didn't prevent us from walking kilometers (or so it felt!) in the wrong direction & having to backtrack again to find a control point in the blue gum forest. What made us feel better was that we knew there were more than a few teams still heading in the wrong direction!



**Handing out  
compasses**

After trading information with other SOAP kidz teams the rest of the course was relatively straightforward; a scramble to the boulder clusters & a jog down a dusty track, through the fence and to the finish line. Looking up to the skyline we could see the figures of those teams who had continued onwards & upwards instead of doing the blue gum forest backtrack.

Oom Koos had the horses organized and kidz were riding around happily in all directions. Consulting the time board we found that the team that had boasted loudest about their time had missed the Number Two control point & were disqualified. Rob H & The Blind Guy had been cooking up a storm on the braai to refuel the kidz, who soon recovered their energy to practise rugby moves; practise trick racing on a rusty gokart & do some more riding before they were piled into the bus to return to Joburg.

The SOAP volunteers & singles then gathered by the braai for lunch, tall stories & Sunday afternoon sun baking before some of us headed home for an afternoon nap & the more inspired went off horseriding.  
**Another successful SOAP event .. lots of tired smiling kidz & lots of exhausted smiling volunteers**

**Marking the maps**



# Sunrise On Africa's Peaks



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A new Soapkidz record was set today 40 bags of rubbish. Read the story below



## Eersterus Orienteering Sunday 31 July 2005 by Ian du Plessis

It was a cold Sunday morning when a group of invaders suddenly out of the blue made a stop at the Eersterus Plaza. In a haste an 'operations centre' was set up in the veld, complete with flags, pointers starting point and the end mark. Churchgoers at the small congregation close by looked in awe at all the mishmash of activities which in the beginning might have seemed a bit strange, people running about, erecting flags, carrying boxes, chairs, tables, bags and other things of logistical nature, for a reason totally unknown! Two locals walked by, popping a question: "Wat is hierie? Van wa is julle se mense?"

At 9h30 the bus pulled in at the shopping mall parking lot and the SOAP Kidz filed out, some with cheerful smiles, laughing and shouting and others who looked like they were still halfway caught in dreamland!

Before long voices of more "authority" sounded up and oversized t-shirts were handed to the kidz and crew alike. In a flash the kidz were paired up in small groups of two's and three's and more helpers than kids. The orienteer head master gave a quick briefing and maps, clip cards and compasses were handed to all groups. Already the Vikings from Norway (some Norwegian visitors attended the orienteering day) had tackled the circuit, making the six million dollar man look like a novice!



T-shirts sponsored by Afriking being handed out.

One by one the small groups departed, kidz happily running off in the distance. Even a group of stray kids and a puppydog coming to have a look at the event taking place, was immediately coaxed by head organizer Noeksie to participate and all received new yellow t-shirts, except the dog! What will they tell their parents, where did those shirts come from?



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At one point one of the SOAP Crew went to buy a cold drink at the SA Family Supermarket store in the Eersterus plaza—upon finding out what the event was about, they sponsored a whole crate of cans of cold drinks plus chips—THANK YOU!! That tasted refreshing and put a smile back on all the kids' faces!!

As the minutes slipped by, so the groups returned, trickling in over the finish line, times eagerly recorded and watches checked. The groups brought their black refuse bags they received back, filled with anything from a banana peel to an old shoe long forgotten by its owner. All the black bags were dumped behind the judge's desks soon looking like a young mountain! As usual the favorite snack, namely popcorn was flaunted all around tuning down the humming of voices. Soon to follow was a box full of lollipops and there kids and adults grabbed one each chasing after the sweet glucose taste.



The SA Family Supermarket guys, the Soap Kidz and the SOAP dog

Little Jacques (known for his short temper) guarded his refuse bag with the fury of a Doberman, not letting one person within a five-metre radius: "Myne is die volste, ek gan wen!"

Then the headmaster called for order and prizes were given to the mighty Norwegians and achievers of the other groups. Winners received certificates under loud applause of the audience. From SOAP's side Team 5 received a prize for picking up the most rubbish. What a successful morning!

A **BIG thank you** to **Noeksie** and the Event Organizers - **ROC, SA Family Supermarket, Afriking** and all who participated and contributed to a day of fun and success!



The SOAP crew and kidz with all the rubbish they picked up while orienteering

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## Abraham Kriel Children's Home and the Mexican Devil plant 23 July 2005 by Richard Malan

We set out early on a winter morning (well early for us anyway 06h00) after an invitation from Karen and the Magaliesburg Mountaineering club to help in eradicating the world or Dome pools of the Devil plant. An enthusiastic 11 kids, Tilly and myself got into the Kombi, after getting clear route directions from our hosts and not wanting to listen to Tilly I took us on the scenic route and a one hour trip to the meeting place took two hours.

When we arrived at the meeting place it was cold and misty (ag no what did Tilly get us into) the kids were ready and eager to start, when we informed them it will take another hour or so, Karen was full of energy chatting away with the kids like long lost buddy's. We met some of the expedition members there - Otti and her hubby from Magaliesburg mountain club and Karen and her two friends and of we went in the Mooi nooi direction, I was telling the kids it seems like we are missing the mountains when all of a sudden left on this sand road right again and left again and Bobs your aunty there was the stopping place with directions to the Dome pools.

Otti was out with the do and don'ts in the bush, what to do with toilet paper, some of the kids where stunned (no toilets just the bush, they must be joking) only Karen had all the back packs ready with the much needed padkos (popcorn and juice). There the expedition s started, over the farmers' fence and into the bush we go.



*The kidz were fascinated by Stefaan's knowledge about the plants and insects.*

Otti's Hubby knows all about the plants trees and the bush it was quite awesome to hear the kids quiz him on the trail about this plant that one and the other. About 1 hour later we stopped at our first waterhole with the purest clearest drinking water ever (hoping no one further up was using the stream) Hannes had his first slip and went into the water backside first. There we were introduced to the Mexican Devil plant, and given a crash course into the sticky stem type of leaves and not to confuse it with the local type.

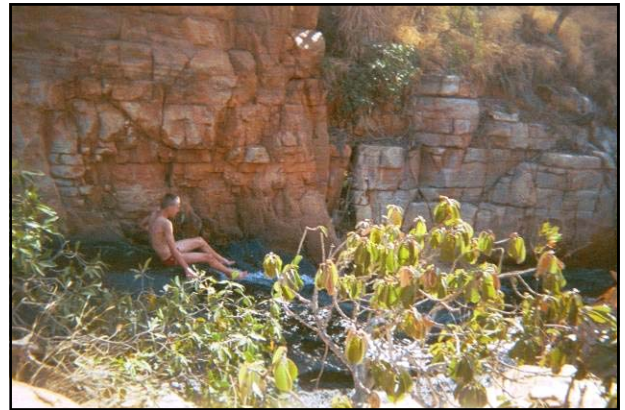
Once we reached the resting point we were dealt into three groups made our different ways and started the work, thorns in fingers wet shoes and sweat was the order of the day, kids stripped down to undies for the river crossing to get them Devil plant on the other side

.Meeting for lunch was quite a story as half of the group was still up stream making there way down, the rest down stream were enjoying the water falls and pools to swim in (you can not keep a kid out of the water even if it is that cold),

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It seems the boys upstream were eager to get down stream and left the girls and the others in the group behind to catch up on the swimming, sliding down the natural slides was just as much fun as Siphon demonstrated but if you take the wrong line, like Braam it could be painful on the behind. Michael just watched and wondered should he or not.

The girls could not swim as they did not bring costumes and had to sit and watch (ag shame ne)



*One of the SOAPKIDZ going down the slide*

As always every good time comes to and end and we had to leave whilst the rest were staying over for the week end, after long goodbyes and some sad hearts we bid our host farewell even if we wanted to stay, on the way home all was just talking of the good time they had Christo and Siphon can't wait to do it again especially if it is in Drakensberg area, then the ZZZZZ fell over the Kombi and we had a quite trip back

Greetings and GOD'S blessings over all until we meet again –  
Richard Malan

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Some of my thoughts and feelings – Noeksie aka Karen  
I decided to join the three girls, Samantha, Linda and Gerda for the Saturday deweeding session. Samantha was absolutely fascinated by the bugs and plants and was hanging on Stefaan's lips.



As soon as she learned something she would run back to us to give us a lecture. When she scrambled up a rock shouting "I'm on top of the world" I didn't know if I should laugh or cry. It takes so little to make these kidz happy.

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Linda was very quiet the whole time and when I mentioned it, Gerda said "don't worry, she's enjoying it in her own quiet way". I walked back to the car park with them and felt rather sad when they left – especially since they were all keen to spend the night under the stars.



Cois deweeding

The next morning Cois and Andre pretended to sleep when I got up for a S.O.A.P moment. Thank goodness – because in my attempt to get to the top in the dark I got lost in the thorn bushes and since they don't share my sentiment about sunrises, they probably would have killed me. After my 3 hour bundu-bashing exploration it was time to tackle the weeds in the streams.

Andre and myself took turns telling the blind man where to "feel" for weed and after some probing the weeds would come flying past our heads. After several hours and just as many encounters with thorn bushes I was ready to retire but the blind guy was still feeling strong and war was declared on the thorn bushes. At this stage Cois was walk-

ing in front waving his stick at the "wag-'n bietjies" while I was cowering behind him.

Around 16h00 the day-group came marching past us and inspired by the thought of an ice cold lager waiting we joined them and raced back first to the car-park and then to the Upper Deck in Harties.

### A Big Thank You to

The **MCSA – Magaliesberg** for the opportunity you gave the kidz to enjoy the mountains

**Otti and Stefan Neser** - for the love and knowledge you shared with the kidz – it was so special

**My friends** – for always being there when I need help. Thank goodness you pretended you were sleeping

**Cois** – for being unstoppable and the big protector. You really saved me from those "wag-'n bietjies"

**Noeksie**

And **Otti Neser** said.....

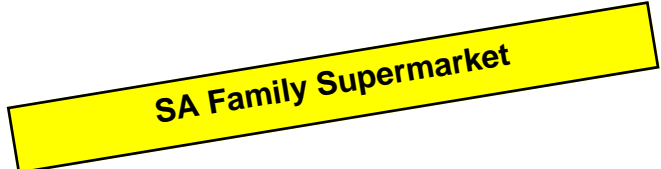
"BAIE BAIE DANKIE vir die help met die onkruid in Dome die naweek! Die Magaliesberg self sê ook dankie.....". Otti Neser



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