



# S61

# NEWSLETTER

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**MAY/JUNE 2022**

# WINTER

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May was as brief as its phrasing, the storms from the previous month subsided. This fortunately provided us the opportunity to complete the depo work outside just in time for the last sunset of 2022.



*Eric & Fez iced up*

It was a mighty effort from the team to endure the cold for the cause by digging out buried sledges and containers. We had teams for digging, driving and parking the cargo.



*Maanda & Thobani ready to dig*

Unfortunately the day that the sun made its last hora the wind was flexing its stride with bone chilling gusts. The planned festivities were ruined however this did little to ruin the excitement within the team as we braved the wind to take some pictures.



*Thobani's pose for the Gram*



*Thulz with the sun in his hand*

Taking a picture on a windy day in Antarctica is not the easiest thing to do. Firstly one needs to master up the courage to free their hand from the warmth of their glove (sometimes gloves), secondly to swiftly handle the phone and take a picture. I would compare the feeling of an exposed hand to a finger being mistakenly hit by a hammer.



*JC with his Gram pose*



*Maanda also has a Gram pose*

It definitely is not the total darkness one would imagine when it is said that the sun has taken its slumber. For about two hours in the day (12:00-14:00 pm) there is some feint light that comes through and it is just conducive enough for work to be done.

June came by with storms lasting up to ten days whilst we were enclosed in the base, this served as a reminder of the land we dwell in. Despite the gloom of the weather there were holidays to celebrate, such as Youth day and Midwinter. Youth day (June 16<sup>th</sup>) was celebrated by enjoying the musical SARAFINA, this movie is part and parcel of South Africa's heritage as it reminds us of the bravery of those who fought hard for the freedoms we enjoy today. Midwinter celebrations were also celebrated by viewing and enjoying a film. We watched "THE THING", watching this movie is custom to all who live in Antarctica through the winter.

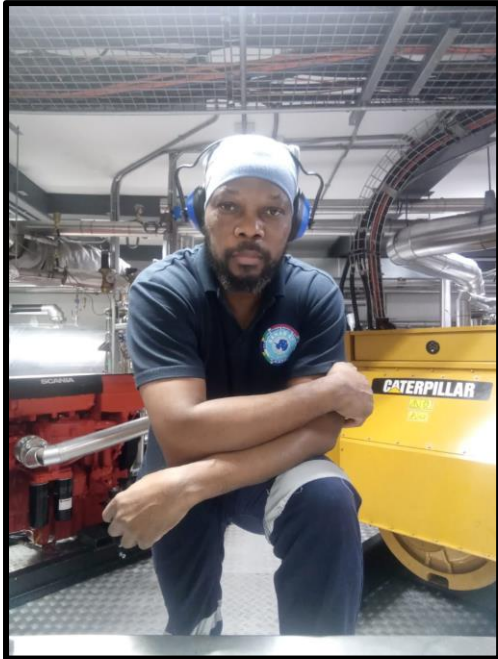
*The team posed for the midwinter greeting card*



For this issue of the newsletter we will get to know Mr. John Manyatsa Skelete more as he shares what he gets up too. John is the most experienced member of the expedition team and we are truly grateful to have him with us.

# John's Tale

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## **1. What motivates you to come back to Antarctica?**

“Adding value to the SANAP program in terms of technical support is what motivates me. I utilize my experience, skills, expertise and knowledge to assist those who wish to learn and grow.”

## **2. What is it that you do here?**

“I am a diesel mechanic at SANAE IV Base. My primary duties are to take care of the power generation, secondary duties are to maintain vehicles, machines, snow mobiles and all associated”

## **3. Take us through your daily routine.**

“Prior to my daily task, staying fit and healthy is my priority. After this I follow my routine which is power generation checks, vehicles and associated checks.”

## **4. What has been your most profound experience here on the frozen continent?**

“My greatest experience would be working in harsh conditions and trying to adapt. This is the only continent with harsh conditions that cannot be experienced anywhere else.”

## **5. How would you share or spread awareness about these research expeditions?**

“I spread awareness through word of mouth, media houses and the interviewers taken prior embarking on the SA Agulhas II. Also share through social media and our own newsletters.”

## **6. Other than your love for the ice, what else sparks your interest?**

“The scenery, as a traveler it is important to experience new things: such as environments and weather and style of living during my expedition.”

## **7. How would you express to the SA public how cold Antarctica is?**

“I have tried and come up short, Antarctica's weather is incomparable and unexplainable.”

## **8. What do you miss from SA?**

“I miss my boy, apart from our unique diverse culture.”

## 9. John will you be coming back again?

“NEVER SAY NEVER, I grew up through the program and it is good to be part of it. One never knows what the future holds.”

Wonderful to hear from the man with all the experience, 9 expeditions he has under his belt.

Thus far in the winter, the team is buzzing with enthusiasm to some of the board games. Learning new things is always stimulating. Chess is enjoyed thanks to Eric’s mastery of the game whilst 30s brings out the competitive nature in all of us. Fortunately the banter is civil and is taken lightly. Pool maintains its standing as the most played game.



*The team relaxing in the games room*

Before we part a brief insight into the weather stats will be shared, numbers might clear the picture about the conditions down here.

**WEATHER STATS:** May-22

	Maximum		Minimum		Average
<b>Pressure</b>	898.5hPa	13th	864.4 hPa	20th	885.1hPa
<b>Temperature</b>	-10.7 °C	13th	-32.4°C	16th	-19.4 °C
<b>Humidity</b>	88%	2nd	22%	13th	62%
<b>Wind Gust</b>	33.9 m/s	8th			11.2m/s

**WEATHER STATS:** Jun-22

	Maximum		Minimum		Average
<b>Pressure</b>	911.0hPa	15th	869.9 hPa	21st	890.4hPa
<b>Temperature</b>	-11.6 °C	7th	-30.4°C	16th	-20.1 °C
<b>Humidity</b>	92%	19th & 21st	19%	5th	57%
<b>Wind Gust</b>	45.9 m/s	13th			12.3m/s

We hope everyone is well and keeping warm at home. We have reached halfway and look forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of our time here. Goodbye!

EDITOR: MAANDA MULAUDZI