

Newsletter #2
Jan - Feb 2012

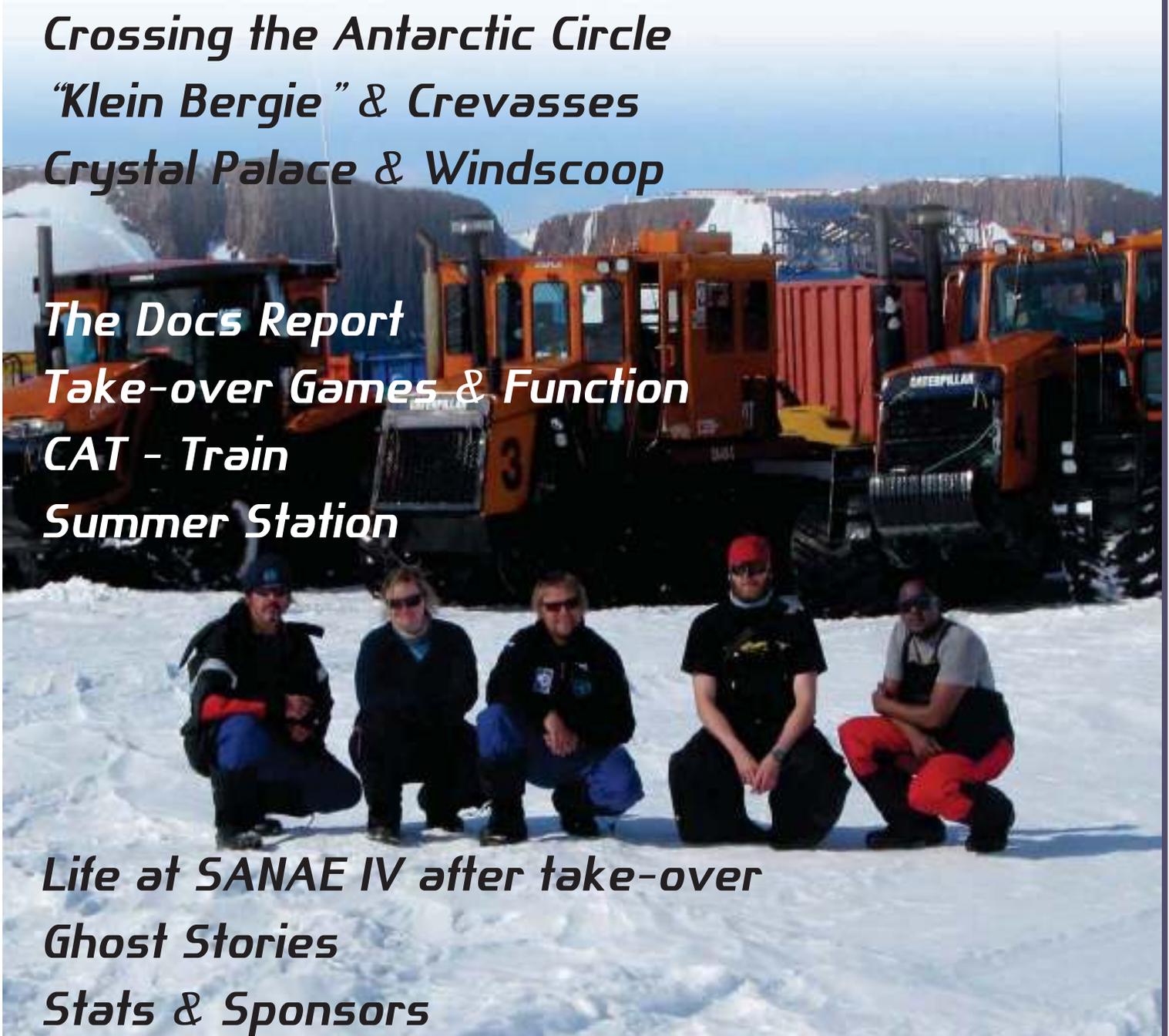
SANAE 52

»» Home, sweet home...

*Crossing the Antarctic Circle
"Klein Bergie" & Crevasses
Crystal Palace & Windscoop*

*The Docs Report
Take-over Games & Function
CAT - Train
Summer Station*

*Life at SANAE IV after take-over
Ghost Stories
Stats & Sponsors*



Crossing the Antarctic Circle ««

by Grethe

So you would never guess this, but apparently there is some world wide tradition that follows crossing the Antarctic Circle line (roughly 66 degrees). Ok, fine, everyone knew, and stories about what it could possibly be about ran rampant through the boat. Some thought they would be dragged kicking and screaming from their rooms, others thought it would be medieval torture, others were saying it's going to be nothing, don't worry about it. All I know is that when the time came, everyone felt the adrenalin and shared the bewildered look of stepping into the unknown.

The previous night, the "gorillas" came to everyone's room and "scared" them into attending the next day's "punishment hearing". As you can see, Cornelia and I were clearly scared to our cores. We would never think of disobeying the powerful and mighty King Neptune. But what could we have possibly done wrong?

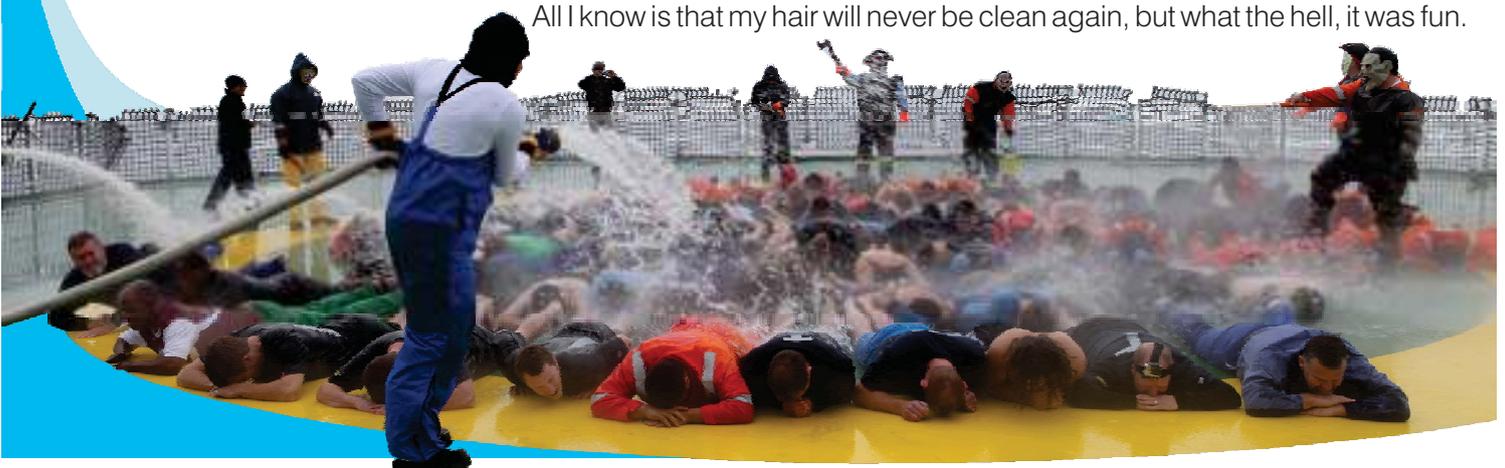
The next day we found out the hard way. Firstly we all lay sprawled on the heli-deck like sardines waiting to be marinated in the icy salt water the boat had been floating in. Wish granted, and might I just add: *profanity* it was cold. But the masses would rise against the gorillas and King Neptune by singing in unison and disobeying their orders to not look up, yes sir-ree, we showed them. One by one we were called forth to pay for our crimes against humanity:

- Adam: Excessive tallness.
- Rob: Crimes against fashion - owns only 1 pair of shoes.
- Craig: Lust - criminal interest in the ship's engines.
- Pieter: Chocolate consumption beyond that which is considered gentlemanly.
- Wihann: Criminal levels of series watching - for all that is good and holy, there must be consequences.
- Philip: Anti-competitive practices - in the form of premature beard growth.
- Cornelia: Public consumption and distribution of ginger laced tea.
- Kgmotso: Internetlessness unbecoming of an engineer.
- Grethe: Crimes against humanity - subjecting a beanie to high levels of pink.
- Karabo: Assault with intent to cause grievous harm to the S.A. Agulhas II by means of flying punch from bunk bed.



We were all guilty as charged, so with our tails between our legs we accepted our fates. But really, let's be realistic, what could they really do, it's not the 1600's anymore, a bit of flour and egg, a dunk or two, some Tabasco, and you're on your merry way and Mrs Neptune boobies were staring right at me, who can take anything seriously after that?

All I know is that my hair will never be clean again, but what the hell, it was fun.



“Klein Bergie” & Crevasses

by Philip

Klein Bergie



Entrance to Klein Bergie as seen from inside its windscoop



How do you find crevasses that you can't see? It is best to rope-up when exploring new terrain and be wary of any variation in the snow consistency. While walking you also use a walking axe to test the solidity of the snow/ice before stepping on it. When one finds such a crevasse it is also good to open it up as best as possible, especially in the region where one wants to cross it. Doing so allows you to see where to place your feet as well as show you where the crevasse starts and ends.

Right: Since crevasses are usually covered, it is difficult to gauge their size, and a small crack on top can lead down to a big fissure below.



Marking the crevasse

When the area around SANAE IV was first explored, there were a few mountains that were left unnamed. One of these was a small mountain that was not deemed large or important enough to name. But we South African's decided that it can not continue like that and named it “Klein Bergie” (Afrikaans for “Small Mountain”)

Despite the name, “Klein Bergie” is really not that small and because of the winds here in Antarctica, there is a valley that has opened up at the mountain so that the mountain is on one side and an ice/snow wall is on the other side.

Although it is situated less than 2km from the base, it is a welcome retreat and just shows us another of Antarctica's marvels. Amongst others, there are also a few crevasses which gave us an excellent opportunity to exercise some of the necessary skills in finding and marking out crevasses.

Firstly, a crevasse is just a fancy word for a big hole in the ground which is usually covered with a thin layer of snow so that you can not see it. It can be very dangerous if one falls into one of these, but if one follows the normal safety precautions you should not have any problems.

DANGER ALERT!



Crystal Palace & Windscoop

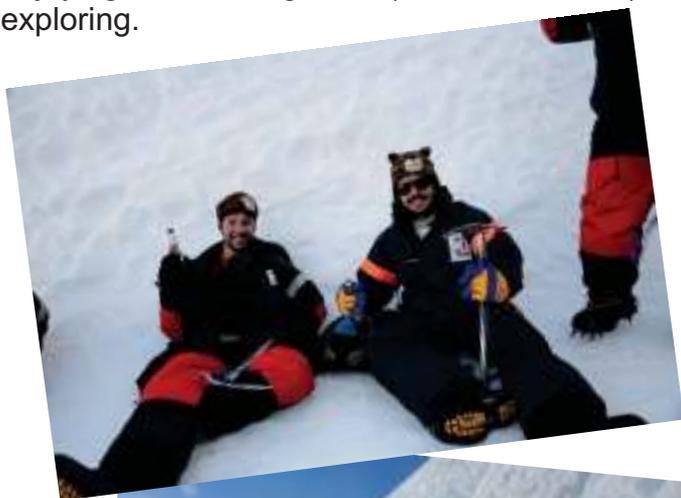
by Adam

'The windscoop' is a formation created by the wind as it blows around Vesleskarvet. It makes for quite a nice outing as it is a short skidoo ride away and quite picturesque.

Crystal palace is located a short hike up the hill and over a crevasse from the windscoop. In the palace one can find ice formations and what can be described as a frozen pond.

Our American friend from the Balloon Project, Brett Anderson, and one of our SANSA helpers, Padraig Riley enjoying a refreshing drink (before it freezes) after some exploring.

Fun time on the skidoo passenger carrier all the way to the windscoop.



Entrance to Crystal Palace



Everyone enjoying the view



Rob ready for action at the foot of Crystal Palace in full Extreme Cold Weather (ECW) Gear with crampons.



The Docs Report

by Rob



The 2012/13 Take-Over period at SANAE IV base was an eventful one, especially so from a medical point of view. It all started with a scientist who tripped and fell back on the Agulhas II and sustained an injury to his right shoulder. I flew out there the next day by helicopter, and ended up stabilising a dislocated shoulder.

A second team member managed to fracture his right ankle when losing his balance in deep snow. We X-Rayed and treated him with a fibreglass cast here at SANAE, but by far the most significant injury occurred on 27 January when Cornelia Oberholzer, our space weather engineer, fell from a radar mast and injured her knee. Initial X-Rays failed to show a fracture to her knee or surrounding bones. Both myself and Dr. Bester however suspected a serious ligamentous injury based on clinical examination.



Cornelia was evacuated to Cape Town the next day, and underwent surgery for extensive injuries to her knee the very next day.

We were all waiting with baited breath to find out if she will recover enough to return and continue her convalescence here at SANAE. However, after numerous discussions with her surgeon, the Surgeon General, myself and several DEA officials it was decided that it would not be in her best interest to return to Antarctica until her knee has completely recovered.



We were all devastated at the news, as I'm sure Cornelia was too. She's become a permanent part of our overwintering team, and it's very hard to visualize the months ahead without her sunny personality and no-nonsense attitude.

There's a silver lining to this cloud though – we've heard that Cornelia will remain at SANSA for the remainder of 2013, and has already signed up as a member of S53, who will be relieving us in December. That's fantastic news, and everyone here is very excited at the chance to see her again!



From all of us here in Antarctica: All the best Cornelia, and we hope you make a speedy recovery!



Take-over Games & Function

by Karabo

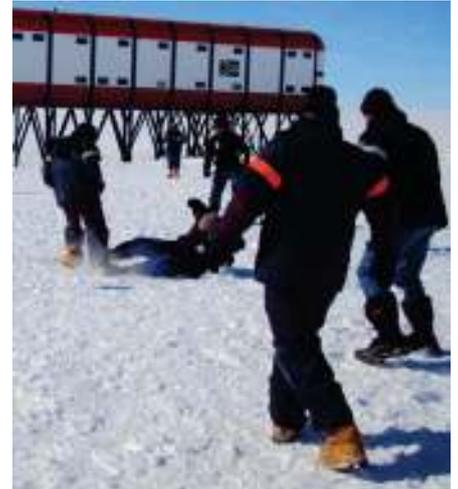
Take over games are by far the most anticipated part of the take over period. All the rivalry and conflicts were resolved on the score board. I think at some point the women felt like they were drowning in testosterone given off by the guys, it was that intense.

Men from all over the world came to participate in a series of games such as pool, darts, table tennis, soccer, boot throwing, tug-of-war and finally the main event, and apparently new to the take over games, the 50m pampoenskoen race. This race sent chills down everybody's back when they had to think of the defending champion Karabo aka "The Bullet".

Unfortunately The Bullet sustain a groin injury during a soccer match earlier on in the day. This became a handicap for him in the 50m dash and led to a lousy 2mm defeat by a very arrogant individual, who was 3 times as fit as the bullet and weighed almost half as much as he did. In my opinion that win wasn't anything to be proud about. It was clear to everyone that if the track was 51m long, the bullet would have obviously won the race, as he is more accustomed to 100m sprints.

The Boot throwing event was also quite intense, at least 70 percent of the people in the base took part in it. Some of the strongest men at Sanae threw the boot meters away hoping to catch up to the one throw which left everyone with a dry and cold taste in their mouths. A throw which will be remembered for years to come, it wasn't much of a surprise that the man who had thrown this far was yet again Karabo aka "The Bullet".

The take over games were a great success and above all, friends were made and we had a fantastic time.



The Groin Injury in Action



Our team trying their hand at rope pulling under Rob's leadership, against the drivers.



Pieter taking part in the boot throwing competition

Karabo and Adam doing their traditional drinking ritual as given birth to on the boat, this is one bromance that will last as forever...well at least until the alcohol runs out.



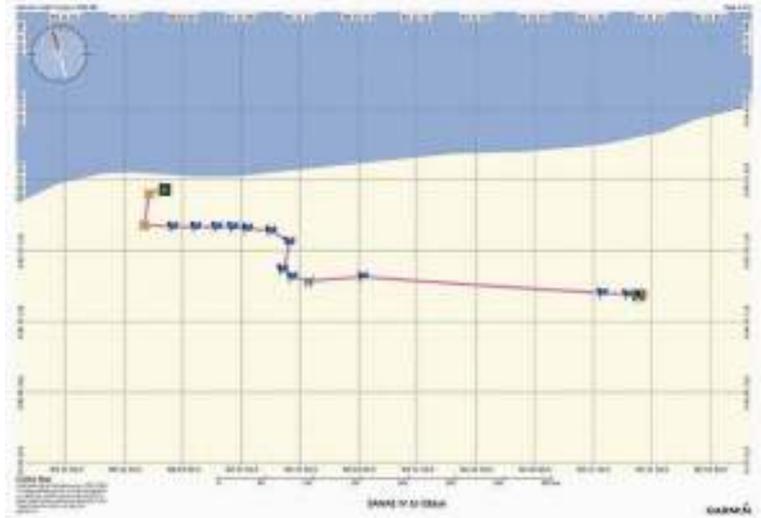
CAT - Train

by Adam



At the end of takeover backloading needs to be done. The ship is loaded mainly with waste and vehicles (Skidoos/Challengers/Bulldozers) which need to be serviced in South Africa.

This is accomplished by using Caterpillar Challengers to drag sleds of items $\pm 300\text{km}$ across the ice to Akta Bukta where Ebase is situated. Loads of 90 tons can be pulled. The vehicles have 1000l tanks which are refueled approximately half way.



Summer Station

by Wihann

The SANAP Summer Station is a base used in the summer when offloading of cargo needs to be done from the ship at Akta Bukta. It's quite close to Neumayer 3, the German base.

The base is not very big, but is comfortable for 20 people. It has all the basic facilities that a person would need to survive. Most people don't like the toilet system, because it's a dry system and has to be emptied every 2nd or 3rd day. It can become very smelly if there are 20 or more people in the base. If you want to take a shower, it has to be a soldier's type shower. Wet your body. Soap well and rise. No singing and dancing in the shower because you have to make the water yourself. Like I said, the base is not very big. But you can easily have a braai there, or if you want even a small party. I celebrated my birthday on 11 February with some of the German overwintering team members. What a great evening. They baked a cake for me. Awesome.



One day after back loading of the cargo onto the ship, we found a very big and bright yellow post box in the middle of nowhere. We had to stop and see what was inside. Yes, alcohol. Very good stuff. But unfortunately we were still working and far from the base on skidoos, so could not have some. So we just took pictures and went on our way.

After all the cargo was back loaded and the ship left us all alone on the ice shelf, it was time for us to leave Summer station and head back to SANAE with 15 sleds and 3 Challengers. That was a big challenge!



Challenge Accepted



Life at SANAE IV after Take-over ««

by Pieter

All of the takeover maintenance and support teams have left the SANAE base. A peaceful atmosphere took over and the remainder of our overwintering team started with our duties for the year ahead. From the technical side my first step was to fill our water tanks. We spend quite a lot of time at the water smelter to melt water for the base. The second big job was to clean the recently vacated rooms.



Out of the blue we receive a message that a Chinese inspection team was going to visit us at SANAE base. Furious and fast activity ensued in order to prepare for their visit.

Additionally, the weather turned unpleasant shortly afterwards.



The skiway had to be graded in record time, regardless of the poor conditions. I commenced driving up and down the skiway, pulling a beam behind the Caterpillar to flatten the surface. The little black flags flapping in the wind as my only guide. The other team mates prepared rooms for the visitors. Once we were done everybody awaited news of the plane's take off from Neumayer. An unexpected opening in the weather allowed the flight in to SANAE. The visitors were brought to the base via skidoos with passenger sleds, while the pilots prepared the aeroplane to overnight.

After dinner, a tour of the base ensued. All involved were very impressed, especially with the innovative way we made use of the waste generator heat to warm the base. Many questions were asked, especially about the snow smelter and related system. Our visitors will incorporate many of these ideas into the Chinese base that's yet to be built.



The weather deteriorated through the night, with snow, high winds and whiteout conditions the next morning. After an early breakfast all visitors were taken out via snow mobile to the aeroplane. The poor weather, with barely 5m visibility, necessitating the use of a GPS to navigate to the runway. The pilots managed to take off in these extremely hazardous conditions after confirming reasonable visibility at Novo..



Ghost Stories of SANAE IV and Neumayer III

by Adam, Philip & Grethe

SANAE seems to be full of ghost stories – and not even old ones. Since we came here we had a few experiences with the unexplained. Here are some of these stories:

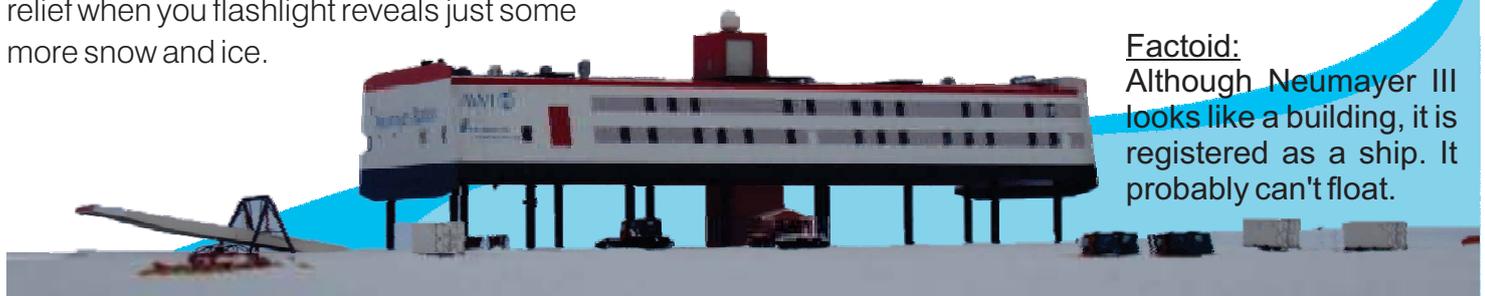
1. Wihann and Philip were busy sanding wood in the carpenter's shop when one of the planks which stood against the wall slid out from the corner of the room without either of them disturbing the area. No-one was hurt due to this phenomenon, but we are keeping our eyes open.
2. A pilot swore some-one was touching his arm on the stairway in C - block.
3. Kgmotso swears that the heat dump fan switches on just when he walks past it, and it is loud enough to scare anyone half to death.
4. Then there is the ever present story of the antarctic mole rat
5. And then the old German base...



The bay and base (Ebase or Summer Station) which is used for loading is near to the new German base (Neumayer III) and a stones throw from the decommissioned German base, Neumayer II.

Neumayer II was situated under the ice. It was decommissioned when Neumayer III replaced it. Currently all that is left are the tunnels which housed it. There are some fantastic ice formations inside of it from clamshells to hexagonal tubes. It's like being in a different world altogether. And it can be very frightening, with the cracking and falling of snow crystals, one can't help but look over your shoulder and let out a sigh of relief when you flashlight reveals just some more snow and ice.

Factoid:
Although Neumayer III looks like a building, it is registered as a ship. It probably can't float.



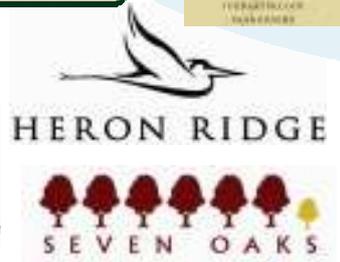
Weather Stats:

	Jan	Feb
Temperature		
Minimum:	-14.4 °C	-19.9 °C
Average:	-6 °C	-11.8 °C
Maximum:	3.1 °C	-4.2 °C
Pressure		
Minimum:	876.7 hPa	867.1 hPa
Average:	888.2 hPa	881.3 hPa
Maximum:	898.5 hPa	893.3 hPa
Humidity		
Minimum:	20 %	24 %
Average:	70 %	69 %
Maximum:	98 %	95 %
Wind Gust		
Maximum:	30.1 m/s	23.3 m/s

Average Daytime Length:

Jan: 23h 59min
Feb: 18h 28min

Stats & Sponsors



Special Thanks to:

A. Zieža
G. Moriss
94.7 FM



MEERLUST



Creating New Worlds of Light



**Photo of the Month: See Above
Taken by Craig**

**Quote of the month:
"Refueling should only take a hour"**

**Movie of the month:
The Grey - it was so bad**

**Song of the month:
Let's pretend we're in Antarctica
- Of Montreal**

