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M44/489

08/02/88

MARION NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 1988  
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NEW YEAR HAS COME AND GONE NOW AND MOST NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS HAVE QUIETLY BEEN LAID TO REST. THE SMOKERS HAVE STARTED SMOKING AGAIN AND THE TEETOTALLERS HAVE RESUMED THEIR ALCOHOL FREE LIFESTYLES AFTER THE NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES. EVERYBODY IS BACK AT WORK AFTER THE HOLIDAY, IT WAS ONLY GARY, OUR MEDIC, WHO HAD EXTRA WORK OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS ARE ALSO HARD AT WORK RAISING THEIR YOUNG. MANY AN UNSUSPECTING PERSON HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY SKUAS AFTER INADVERTANTLY WANDERING TOO CLOSE TO THE SKUA CHICKS. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE EVEN HAD THEIR BALACLAVAS SNATCHED AWAY DURING THESE ATTACKS. THE SEAGULLS ATTACKS ARE EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE. THEIR DIVE BOMBING TACTICS HAVE FORCED MOST INVADERS INTO RETREAT IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID THE FOUL SMELLING BOMBS.

THE FUR SEALS ARE ALSO VERY AGGRESSIVE AS IAN DISCOVERED ONE DAY. HE WAS BITTEN ON THE LEG WHILE TRYING TO REMOVE SOME FISHING LINE WHICH HAD BECOME ENTANGLED AROUND A FUR SEALS NECK. HIS WOUNDS HEALED QUICKLY AND HE AND JACO ARE NOW ON THEIR SECOND TRIP AROUND THE ISLAND THIS MONTH. THEY ARE BUSY DOING A FUR SEAL CENSUS. THE ELEPHANT SEALS HAVE RETURNED TO MOULT AND ONE OF THE COWS WHICH HAD A RADIO TRANSMITTER ATTACHED TO ITS HEAD IS ALSO BACK.

HUNDREDS OF WANDERING ALBATROSSES CAN BE SEEN COURTING AND DOING MATING DANCES AND A FEW OF THE MORE FERTILE ONES ARE ALREADY SITTING ON EGGS. JUG IS VERY BUSY RINGING ALBATROSSES (WHICH WILL BE MONITORED IN THE YEARS TO COME) AND HAS ALSO DONE A ALBATROSS CENSUS OF THE WHOLE ISLAND. HE IS ALSO MONITORING AN ALBINO AND TWO HYBRID (MACARONI-ROCKHOPPER) PENGUINS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THESE HYBRIDS HAVE BEEN RECORDED HERE AND WE ARE HOPING THAT JUG WILL WRITE A FEW ARTICLES (UNDER THE PSEUDONYM OF CHARLES GILBERT) ABOUT HIS FINDINGS. OF FURTHER INTEREST HAS BEEN THE APPEARANCE OF ROYAL PENGUINS AMONGST THE MACARONI PENGUINS. IT IS, HOWEVER, NOT YET CERTAIN IF THEY REALLY ARE ROYAL PENGUINS AS ROYAL PENGUINS DO NOT NORMALLY OCCUR ON MARION.

PHOTOGRAPHY IS STILL THE MOST POPULAR HOBBY ON THE ISLAND AND SO IT WAS FITTING THAT A FEW DILIGENT PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE STILL AWAKE TO PHOTOGRAPH THE FIRST SUNRISE OF 1988. FOR ONCE THE WEATHER CO-OPERATED TO PRODUCE A SPECTACULAR SUNRISE ALTHOUGH, AT THIS ADVANCED STAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS, NOT EVEN THE MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED LENS COULD GET THE SUN INTO FOCUS. THE RESULTING PHOTOGRAPHS RANGED IN COLOUR FROM PITCH BLACK TO SNOW WHITE AND MOST OF THOSE IN BETWEEN HAD SLOPING HORIZONS.

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PAGE TWO OF NEWSLETTER:

A NUMBER OF PEOPLE MADE USE OF THE ONE OR TWO FINE DAYS WE HAD AND HEADED OFF TO THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS AND THE ICE PLATEAU. ANDRE MEYER DID PIONEERING WORK FOR THOSE OF STOUTER BUILD AND WAS THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE NARION 44 EXPEDITION TO CLIMB STATE PRESIDENT SMART PEAK, THE HIGHEST PEAK ON THE ISLAND. IN GOING SO HE ALSO SHOWED THE YOUNGER GENERATION ON THE ISLAND A THING OR TWO. CLOSE ON HIS HEELS FOLLOWED JOHNNY AND JUG. A NUMBER OF OTHER ATTEMPTS WERE THWARTED BY BAD WEATHER. ANDRE JOUBERT AND GARY, IN NEED OF A WELL EARNED REST, WENT ON A TRIP AROUND THE ISLAND.

AFTER THE FESTIVE SEASON A NUMBER OF PEOPLE DECIDED TO STAY AWAY FROM THE BASE FOR A WHILE. STEVE H STAYED OUT FOR TWO HUNTING SESSIONS AND DEON AND RORY HAVE BEEN OUT SINCE THE START OF THE FIRST SESSION THIS YEAR. WE HOPE TO SEE THEM AGAIN JUST BEFORE TAKE-OVER.

DURING THE FIRST HUNTING SESSION OF THE YEAR, MARCEL RECEIVED THE TRAGIC NEWS THAT BRUCILLA, HIS PET MOUSE, HAD PASSED AWAY. THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT MARCEL GOING THROUGH THE DARK DAYS THAT FOLLOWED WAS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT BRUCE, HIS OTHER MOUSE, WAS STILL ALIVE AND HEALTHY. IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SAME THING HAPPENING TO BRUCE IT WAS DECIDED TO GIVE HIM A SERIES OF INTENSIVE MEDICAL AND FITNESS TESTS AND ALSO TO PUT HIM ON A SCIENTIFIC BIOKINETIC TRAINING PROGRAMME. TO HELP WITH THIS PROGRAMME JAN DONATED A TREADMILL WHICH WAS RESTORED BY BETA AND MARCEL.

THERE WAS GENERAL PANIC AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTH WHEN DIRTY DIESEL CAUSED THE ELECTRICITY GENERATORS TO CUT OUT. EVERYBODY AT BASE WORKED FRANTICALLY UP TILL THREE O CLOCK IN THE MORNING TO BRAIN THE DIRTY DIESEL. THE PROSPECT OF COLD SHOWERS UNTIL THE TAKE-OVER PERIOD SENT SHIVERS THROUGH US ALL BUT LUCKILY CHRIS CAME TO OUR RESCUE AND, AFTER A FEW DAYS OF HARD WORK, SORTED OUT THE PROBLEM. THIS WAS DONE WITH THE CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT AND URGING OF THE OTHER TEAM MEMBERS.

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PAGE THREE OF NEWSLETTER:

THE NIGHTS ARE RAPIDLY GETTING LONGER NOW AND DAYS WITH FINE WEATHER ARE BECOMING SCARCER. AN UNUSUAL HIGH PRESSURE CELL SOUTH OF THE ISLAND CAUSED ONGSHORE WINDS FOR THREE DAYS. THE LARGE SWELLS WHICH RESULTED CAUSED WAVES WHICH BROKE OVER THE POINT AND OFTEN OVER THE CRANE AND STORES AS WELL, LEAVING THE SURROUNDING CATWALKS STREWN WITH KELP.

JUG, GARY, JONATHAN AND FRANK HAD BIRTHDAYS DURING JANUARY. HENNIE BAKED A CAKE FOR JONATHAN. ONE AND A HALF DAYS AND FIVE ATTEMPTS LATER HE PRODUCED A CAKE WHICH, ALTHOUGH FAR FROM SATISFACTORY, WAS PRONOUNCED EDIBLE BY THE REST OF THE TEAM. THIS WAS DONE WITH HENNIE'S HEALTH IN MIND AND ALSO AS A RESULT OF THE LIMITED BAKING SUPPLIES ON THE ISLAND. UNFORTUNATELY, EVERYBODY ELSE'S HEALTH SUFFERED.

THE VISIT BY TWO JAPANESE WHALE RESEARCH SHIPS CAUSED GREAT EXCITEMENT. CAMERAS, BINOCULARS AND TELESCOPES WERE BROUGHT OUT AND TRAINED UPON THE SHIPS ONLY TO SEE THE CREW BRING OUT CAMERAS, BINOCULARS AND TELESCOPES AND TRAIN THEM UPON US. VOSSIE ORGANISED RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SHIPS AND WE WERE ALL AMAZED WHEN THE RADIO OPERATOR ENDED OFF THE CHAT BY SAYING BAIE DANKIE IN AFRIKAANS. THE SIGHT OF OTHER PEOPLE REMINDED US OF HOME AND OF OUR RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IS NOW VERY CLOSE. ORGANISATION AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE TAKE-OVER PERIOD ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY.

WEATHER DATA:

HIGHEST TEMPERATURE	14,4	DEGREES C
LOWEST TEMPERATURE	0,8	DEGREES C
AVERAGE TEMPERATURE	7,1	DEGREES C
AVERAGE SEA TEMPERATURE	6,2	DEGREES C
AVERAGE SUNSHINE PER DAY	5,6	HOURS
TOTAL RAINFALL	199,3	MM
HIGHEST WINDSPEED	141,8	KM/H
SUNRISE 1 JAN	05H38	
31 JAN	04H18	

WEATHER DATA BY FRANK SOKOLIC  
NEWSLETTER BY NICO DU PLESSIS

31/02/03