

1. Editorial

I have had to duck-‘n-dive a sore-throat/cough/sneeze/wheeze virus this past week which Sonja brought into our house. Her delightful grandson, for whom she is officially a part-time nanny, was kind enough to give it to her! We practice cohabitant distancing as far as is practical, sleeping in separate bedrooms, wearing masks when near each other in the house and trying not to touch the same surfaces like kettle handles, fridge doors, door handles, taps, etc, etc, etc. Not very practical, probably not entirely effective but better than nothing. In 2019, in fact, I had decided that we should wear medical masks when either of our bodies was providing Air-BnB accomodation to a bug. A brief bit of research suggested that it might be 70% effective in preventing infection. Of course we had no idea of the impending disastrous state we would be living in during 2020.



This brings me to the question of how crowds are the perfect environment for viruses to spread their ‘love’ around. The afore-mentioned grandson had been unusually healthy and snot-nose free during the whole lockdown period, when he no longer was going to his play school every day. Neither did his little sister get sick, not his parents – nor his Ouma Sonja. But after 1 week back at school, he got sick and so did sister, Momma, Pappa and Ouma.

I am very sure that the viruses which I picked up in the past few years and which kept me out of running for a few weeks each time, were picked up while waiting at the start in amongst a thousand other runners on a cold Saturday morning. As always, this precedes an energy-sapping race and the concomitant, temporary weakening of the immune system. It was almost without exception that the aches and pains started on the Monday – two incubating days after the race.

So far (touch wood) this lonely year, I have not been infected. What is that saying? How am I going to approach races when they do resume? Will I – and many others I am sure in the ‘new normal’ – wear masks while bunching at the start? Will there be some kind of aversion to bunching up at the start? Will it now take 8 minutes to cross the start line when setting off from the back of a kilometer-long, socially-distancing start bunch? Could Gordon Sumner aka Sting and leading member of the band *Police*, have been forecasting COVID-19 when he penned that song “*Don’t Stand, Don’t Stand, Don’t Stand so Close to Me*”.



Time to boot this coronavirus into outer space!

Your comments, suggestions and contributions are most welcome. Email me at nevyoung@starwaders.com.

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2. Know your Running Club Friends - Chris Burger

As you can see in this photograph, Chris is not a member of the CSIR Running Club, but is a regular at the club Tuesday time trial. That is convenient for Chris because he works at the CSIR in a building very close the recreation centre from where the time trial sets off.

Chris refers to his personal running blog which he writes under the pen name Yeti. He explains that this is due to him being the *Abominably Slow Man*. There is plenty of entertaining running reading at <http://b.org.za/stories/races.htm>.

You will notice that Chris frequently participates in the CSIR Virtual time Trial. The inclusion of his profile in this newsletter is thus entirely justified. Enjoy the read.

I am no athlete. A slightly idiosyncratic set of legs and way too much time sitting in front of computers conspire to keep this potato mostly just off the edge of the couch. The "55" age tag on my running vest doesn't help either.

Towards the end of 2011, I suddenly found myself with some spare time for the first time in decades. I decided to tackle a project that had been on the back burner for years: The Midmar Mile. I tried to convince Laurens Cloete and Karel Matthee to join me. They responded that they would join me if I joined them for Comrades. I didn't think it was a fair trade, but I agreed. I entered Comrades and started training. I had two months to learn to swim and seven months to learn to run.



Karel didn't come to the party, but Laurens did. Learning to swim properly was a great challenge. The story is on the Web (<http://b.org.za/stories/midmar2013.pdf> or <http://b.org.za/stories/midmar2013-Af.pdf>).

Running was much harder. I qualified for Comrades 2012 by the skin of my teeth. I bailed out around 60 km, elated that I was able to get that far with no ill effects. 2013 was worse; I made it to about 53 km before the heat and wind became too much. 2014 was going to be my big year. Unfortunately, early in the year it all came to a grinding halt. I severed my left knee in a running accident, leaving me unable to even walk. The leg was sewed back on, and a rehabilitation process spanning more than five years started. I set my sights on Comrades--a handy measurable goal.

Within a year, I managed to walk 10 km, then 21. I gradually progressed to what could loosely be described as "running", 10 km, then a half marathon, then 32 km. Because of my fragile knee, I set my sights on the next "up" Comrades, in 2017. The race went very well up to the halfway mark. Descending into Harrison Flats, I felt a twinge of cramping in my hamstring. 10 km further, I was lying on the roadside in excruciating pain. Sane people would have given up. I tried again in 2019. This time, I avoided cramping, but found myself at the top of Polly Shortts with 8 km to go and 56

minutes to the cutoff. I managed to pull a rabbit from the hat and finished with about three minutes to spare. My rehabilitation was finally complete.

These days, I'm mainly driven by a need to avoid turning into a bag of lard and the lure of a back-to-back medal. The bad flu this year actually helped me. I can hopefully kill two birds with one stone next year, collecting the centenary medal and my back-to-back in one go. I hope things are back to some degree of normality by then. In the mean time, I chronicle my experiences in road races at Yeti's Race Reports (<http://b.org.za/stories/races.htm>).

I've found the time trial and some of my fellow runners to be a great source of inspiration. Were it not for the time trial and individuals like Laurens, Ken H, Walter, Karel, Neville and Elaine, I would seldom be able to overcome my impressive array of excuses. You'll find most of their names in Yeti's musings. The excuses emanate from my work in radio frequency spectrum management at the CSIR, a small farm, my work as a part-time ambulance jet driver throughout Africa, some occasional flying, making music, writing, travelling and a host of other activities.

My favourite race is probably the Spirit of Flight. My PB for 10 km is around 48 minutes, with 1:52 or so for the half marathon and 4:20 or so for the marathon. I keep hoping that I'll be able to break four hours on the marathon before I finally have to hang up my running shoes. As for future plans, I've dabbled in triathlons and would dearly like to complete a full Ironman one day. I would also dearly love to complete a marathon on each continent. Maybe I should aim for Pyongyang in April. Just not so sure what they'll do to me if I don't make the cutoff...

3. Your Running Profile

Chris's profile was the only one I received, so here is another appeal for your story. The few requests that I have put out, are not surfacing yet. Whether you are an experienced runner, a novice, a committee member, your profile is surely interesting and helps us to get to know each other.

Here follow the prompts that I provide as a guideline. You can submit in your own format, just as Chris has done in his profile in this newsletter.

- 1) Do you have nice photos that I could use?
- 2) Married and children? (Optional)
- 3) Age group?
- 4) Professional/working field? (Optional)
- 5) When did you start running? When did you join the CSIR running club?
- 6) Have you run Comrades? How many times?
- 7) What is your favourite race?
- 8) What do you regard as the peak of your performances in races?
- 9) What are your PBs for Comrades, 42km, 21km, 10km?.
- 10) Do you have any particular aims for your running in the future?
- 11) Anything else you would like me to include?

4. Virtual Time Trial Results

These are the submissions for the past week. Not many of the regulars have made a submission this week. I have heard that there were several problems on Saturday morning.

I did not run in the morning because Sonja invited a sore-throat/cough/sneeze germ into our house, meaning that I did not want to stress my immune system unnecessarily. I ran a very gentle 5k in the afternoon.

I have heard that KenH ran out of physical steam early in his run, after forgetting to start his stopwatch and then having his phone battery run prematurely flat, cutting his Strava recording short. Walter appears to have had a tech fail, failing to get cell reception to Endomondo in the area where he ran. He nevertheless managed to enter a run from earlier in the week.

On the positive side, we had what appears to be two families join us this week. Shaun Joynt from the Love Running club brought along his family and the Nel family. Ian Nel ran exactly a half-marathon in a good enough time to place 2nd in the VTT. Thanks for joining us – we look forward to ‘seeing’ you again.

Rietha Gaybba is maintaining her position at the top of the table. Elize Fourie is performing better each week.

The Week 27 July till 2 August

Lic#	Name	Gender	Age Cat	Club	Date	Distance	Time	Elevation	DEAG Adj Pace (min/km)
1701	Rietha Gaybba	Female	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	27-07-2020	12.05	01:08:00	188	3.9
9999	Ian Nel	Male	Master (50 to 59)	None	01-08-2020	21.1	02:16:32	369	4.3
1611	Willie Fourie	Male	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	02-08-2020	12.04	01:07:32	90	4.6
1645	Elize Fourie	Female	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	02-08-2020	11.1	01:12:58	67	4.7
9999	Mark Thompson	Male	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	31-07-2020	9.58	00:57:26	191	4.7
1696	Ken Halland	Male	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	28-07-2020	8.18	00:49:49	102	5.0
1677	Walter Smuts	Male	Master (50 to 59)	CSIR	28-07-2020	8.12	00:50:19	90	5.2
6774	Shaun Joynt	Male	Veteran (40 to 49)	Love Running	01-08-2020	10	01:01:31	214	5.2
1570	Neville Young	Male	Grand Master (60-69)	CSIR	01-08-2020	5.2	00:38:34	88	5.8
9999	Caitlyn Nel	Female	Senior (18 to 39)	None	01-08-2020	5	00:36:35	86	6.2
9999	Trudi Joynt	Female	Master (50 to 59)	None	01-08-2020	5	00:52:06	79	7.6
9999	Genevieve Joynt	Female	Senior (18 to 39)	None	01-08-2020	5	00:51:06	79	8.5
9999	Melani Nel	Female	Veteran (40 to 49)	None	01-08-2020	5	00:56:24	10	9.6

Name	What they said (numbers are temperatures)
Rietha Gaybba	8
Ian Nel	22
Mark Thompson	Can't run this Saturday, so Friday is the new Saturday this week ... 2000m climb for July done and dusted !
Shaun Joynt	22
Neville Young	Slow, so as not to stress my immune system while there is a sore-throat germ in the house
Caitlyn Nel	22
Trudi Joynt	22
Genevieve Joynt	22
Melani Nel	25