



Canadian Jesters Team (and Partners)

- Bob and Diane Dubeau (Montreal)
- Ivars and Susan Sayfy (Montreal)
- Vinnie Taylor (Ottawa)
- Molson and Lynn Robertson (Toronto)
- Dave Clements (Calgary)
- Doug and Jan MacDougall (Vancouver)
- Dave and Barb van Wely (Toronto and ex S.Africa)
- Simon Dorey (Vancouver)
- Alan Hunt and Carla Faris (Toronto)
- Frank Legacy and Leah Burton (Moncton & Ft.St John)

CAJ: Canadian Jesters,

CTJ: Cape Town Jesters

KJ: Knysna Jesters

SFJ: St Francis Jesters

DJ: Durban Jesters

PMJ: Pietermaritzburg Jesters

JBj: Jo'burg Jesters

My first glimpse of Southern Africa was the vast Namibian desert emerging from the morning mist with craggy mountains dotting the landscape. I am sure that we flew over various coastal towns as we approached Cape Town but inland it was pretty devoid of people until we saw the outskirts of Cape Town. I stayed with a high school friend for the first night at the coastal town of Llandudno which is now a very sought after spot but quite secluded. To be able to relax and sun in 27 degrees (though very windy) overlooking the sea was the perfect antidote for February in Vancouver.

Cape Town was sunny, hot and simply beautiful. The CAJ gathered together from various points and training backgrounds at Mark Reid's house at 3.00pm on Saturday the 26th for the official

start of the tour. It was a muted beginning with the Canadian team being introduced to their teammates and respective spouses (mostly for the first time) as well as meeting most of the CTJ for the first time and their respective hosts for the next three days.

However some of the CAJ had already made themselves familiar with SA. Dave Clements and I had trained for the singles matches by visiting the vineyards for some wine tasting at lunchtime. Susan and Ivars Sayfy and Barbara and David van Wely had arrived in Cape Town several days early to sample the many attractions in the city and surrounding areas. Bob and Diane Dubeau had been acclimatising in CT for a week visiting most of the local sights plus a day trip to Cape Point, Robben Island and a couple of days in the wine lands. Molson and Lynn (Robertson) and Alan and Carla (Hunt) were en route from their safari, and Frank (Legacy) and Leah (Burton) were still travelling from London though, as they found out the next day, Leah's luggage wasn't!

Most of the team passed on the sumptuous spread that the CTJ had prepared for us to slow us down on the courts, and headed for Kelvin Grove Country club for our first match. Kelvin Grove was next door to the Newlands Rugby stadium and Newlands Cricket Ground homes to the SA Springbok rugby and cricket teams respectively. That evening was the first match of the tri-nations club competition (the Super 15) so the club was packed with people getting their first few in before the game.

The hot weather made for challenging courts. However, we had been thoroughly prepared by our captain and we emerged 7-2 winners over the opposition. Bob led with a fine captain's innings of 3-2 but only one other could match this so hefty fines were levied on those who won 3-1 and 3-0 whereas those who lost were pretty much bankrupt. This result comprehensively already surpassed the previous Canadian team record which was 47 losses and 1 win over the course of their SA visit.

We repaired to poolside for a drink before a super dinner of local salmon and veal shank and some excellent company. Already the muted beginning was long passed and friendships were being renewed for some and started for most amid the relaxed and bon vivant atmosphere that marks Jesters get together and tours. By the time we broke up with golf and hiking organized for the Sunday morning, we were fast friends. That night however saw the first of what we can only suppose to be many tricks to upset our focus. On showing me to my room, (staying with Western Cape Jesters chairman, Johann "Bez" Bezuidenhout) the surprise of the night came out just a little early. On entering the room an object descended from the ceiling and crawled along the bed. Described as a harmless rain spider this hairy brown monster was clearly trained to come down after I had gone to bed and so deprive me of a good night's sleep. It did mean that I slept with the windows closed and one eye open.

Sunday saw one group head for the links, while the other headed for a hike on one of the Silvermine Walks, part of the Table Mountain National Park. This was an excellent hike hosted by JP van Niekerk. We gathered at his beautiful home in Constantia and about 15 of us – with some non-Jesters as well – headed up to the beginning of the tour. JP is an accredited tour guide as well as being the former Dean of Medicine at the University of Cape Town and so he was able

to set the scene well and point out to us all the important factors – such as the Cape being one of the most biodiverse places in the world.

As we climbed in the heat we gradually were able to see the magnificent scenery that makes up the Cape with its dramatic mountains rising steeply from the land and the superb ocean views and beaches, as well as the sprawl of Cape Town.

Our enjoyment of the hike was greatly aided by the fact that Robin Kemp and Garth Eagle, as well as JP, were so knowledgeable of the fauna and birds that inhabited the hills. We were introduced to the magnificent Disas and the King Protea – the national flower of SA. The views became more dramatic as we climbed higher and at the top, overlooking Chapman's peak, Hout Bay and Noordhoek beach, we had rooibos (red bush) tea – an indigenous tea full of invigorating properties, syrup lemonade, rusks and dried fruit. An orange breasted sunbird, indigenous to the Cape area, was spotted on the way down as well as a well disguised bark spider with its web strung alongside the path.

The heat of the day caught up with us on the way down and a few of us had to be taken out by a park ranger vehicle but it was certainly nothing that a few cold ones and a dip in the pool couldn't revive.

The Sunday pm saw us meet at Western Province Cricket Club for the first doubles match of the tour – softball doubles – which is usually played on an international doubles court, wider than the singles court but the same length. This proved to be very entertaining for all and the "official" match ended in a draw. Frank earned his nickname – Matchball – by serving out to give his opponents their win.

The evening entertainment was in smaller groups at different hosts' houses. Bob, Diane, Vinnie and I joined Bez at Aussie Bob and Carol's place in Durbanville – some 45 minutes north of the town centre – where I was billeted with Bez – and a number of other local Jesters. Personally, the part that I have found the most enjoyable of this tour is the fact that we ate outdoors almost every single night – sharing excellent food, wine, and company in fabulous houses in a marvellous atmosphere. We really have to wonder why we live in a cold climate.

Monday we went on the City Blue Tour around the local peninsula which incorporated the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, the Aviary, the vineyards, and the beautiful local coastal towns including the World Cup Stadium by the sea. Molson reduced some of the vegetation to its basics, labelling a very large cactus as a "big cabbage". Dave Clements and I skipped ahead to the finish at the Waterfront shopping/tourist centre where we had an excellent lunch overlooking the harbour. While Dave had the fish dish, I had a sample of ostrich, warthog and kudu for a different flavour of meal. Ostrich had the more distinctive flavour. We then headed for the cable car to Table Mountain but it had been closed due to high winds a few moments before. Vinnie had made it to the top for a few minutes before being ordered off. Susan and Ivars who had been trying to get up there for 5 days almost made it, but also arrived as it closed.

We ended our visit to Cape Town with a fabulous feast at Martin and Rosie Brossy's lovely home where an excellent meal, good company and JP's mouth organ solo, all part of the fare.

An ungodly early start (4.30 am for me) to catch the 6.00 am bus to Knysna, some 500km to the east. We didn't leave the Cape Town city limits until 7.30 am after picking up passengers at a number of suburban stops including a horde of young students off to their boarding school. The edge of Cape Town was marred by huge shanty towns with some horrific looking tin shacks – all of which, we are told, are being replaced by modern buildings as and when the government gets around to it. A lot of the problem we are told is because of illegal immigrants swarming to the cities and not being prevented or removed.

InterCape buses were very comfortable but we hadn't been informed about the religious foundation associated with the company and soon we were into 6 hours of religious programming on the en- route DVD system. Unfortunately it didn't do wonders for our squash. We drove through miles of farmland in the hinterland and, finally, at about 1:25 pm hit the coast which made for a pleasant change. We arrived in Knysna about 3:00 pm where we were met by the local Jesters and escorted to our different abodes. A group stayed with Rein Hofmeyr in his house on the hill, 3 couples were assigned to the Hollow Lodge owned by a Jester Eric Brotherton and Hilary, and I stayed with Errol Siebrits on Thesen Island (a modern housing development on an island with canals between the houses). Errol appeared to be a relaxed, quiet and knowledgeable person and drove me around much of the city centre and hills telling me about Knysna's history, current situation and the local squash scene. Boy was I fooled!!

We gathered at the Knysna Squash Club at 5.00 pm for our singles/doubles matches on singles courts. We all enjoyed the heat and the games, though doubles requires a lot of awareness of all the players' position and lets were frequent. The end result was a match win for Knysna, a games win for us and a tie overall – a happy end. We repaired to dinner on the deck – again in warm weather and another enjoyable evening of laughter ensued. It was only as some were beginning to leave that I began to have an inkling of my fate. "Who are you staying with," asked Hilda Hofmeyr. "With Errol," I replied innocently. "Oh," she laughed, "you won't get much sleep!!" Minutes later, Errol invited me downstairs to have a game of Crocodile. It was when I saw the shooters being lined up that I realized I was in trouble. Desperately I tried to persuade Errol that this wasn't needed but the Crocodile was remorseless. The Crocodile is a child's toy where the mouth of the crocodile is opened and you have to press its teeth, one at a time until its mouth snaps shut-- the one who gets bitten drinks the shooter – and so on. We were joined by Frank who at least spread the damage around but I was well on the way by the time the game ended. We cleaned up, and then had another Crocodile game before heading home. We managed to get home safely and then Errol suggests a drink on his boat – so since it was a beautiful night – I agreed. Then he unties the boat, starts the engine and so began an adrenaline pumped drive through the canals – at 2.00 am with no lights and no idea what I was doing. I judged that being the driver was safest which was ironic since I had not driven a boat for 20+ years. What made the trip so difficult and at the same time so enjoyable was that the reflections were perfect so that what looked like a 4 storey house was in fact a 2 storey one with the blackness of the water contributing to the depth perception problem. We lived to tell the tale though I must admit a few

choice words and much whining was directed at Errol. I managed 3 hours of sleep and mercifully had no after effects. I think the adrenaline had conquered the alcohol.

Tuesday morning arrived a few hours later. We headed for the Heads – two cliffs that overlook the entrance to the lagoon around which Knysna is located. Breakfast was excellent – again what a pleasure to be able to eat outdoors - and then a group of us headed out to the Elephant Park while others went to play golf. Knysna's Elephant Park is a refuge for elephants as well as part of a scheme to build up the indigenous elephant herd in Knysna which once was mighty but was down to 3 by the mid 70s. The elephants have been partly trained so they line up behind a barrier to be fed by the visitors which proves to be an interesting interaction and then they move off to forage. We were allowed to follow and touch them, which proved a little too close for Dave who was searched for food, or was it that an amorous female knew he was travelling alone. You are not allowed to bend down near them or approach from the rear or get in between them. We followed up with a walk through a forest (Garden of Eden) where we saw a Knysna louri (or something like that) but no baboons. On behalf of the Knysna Jesters, Rein awarded me an elephant dung ball for surviving Errol! Doug was subsequently crowned king.

We had lunch at the Knysna Yacht Club and then treated to a ride in the Knysna rescue boat as Rein is a senior member of the rescue boat crew. Each group was taken out to sea and was shown some of the places where the crew did their training. You got a sense of what it was like to go out to sea on a rescue and how brave these people are when you consider that the seas can get really rough. Their last trip out was to retrieve 11 bodies from an airplane crash up the coast.

We ended the evening with a fabulous oyster and paella feast at Rein's house with its magnificent views over the lagoon and town, an amazing feat considering that Rein and Hilary had no water until 4:00pm. Imagine cooking rice for 40 people with bottled water.

After another late night for me which included the island security guards coming to tell us we were making too much noise (playing pool) we had an early start for the two hour drive to St. Francis Bay and the SFB Doubles Tournament. The weather has turned a little and we had some rain on the way but not enough to dampen our spirits.

Our arrival at St. Francis Bay was much as elsewhere. Friendly faces, renewal of acquaintances from previous tours and immediate directions. We were quickly assigned our hosts and headed for their homes. St. Francis Bay is fundamentally a vacation resort by the sea and is small and spread out with a couple of golf courses to keep people busy. The houses have to keep to a certain architectural concept which includes either thatch or grey slate roofs – so there were a lot of thatched houses. The bachelors were assigned to a friend of the Jesters (Alan Duffy) which turned out to have a delightfully remodelled house on the canal system, only a hundred metres from the sea. We settled in to what was in effect a hotel as we had been assigned a maid for the weekend to do laundry and prepare breakfast.

We joined the others for lunch at the local shopping centre – the centre of town – and then off to the doubles match on one of the St Francis Bay Club's two doubles courts. The other court was hosting a UK v S.Africa match. The SA strategy seemed to be to get us off the bus, stuff our

faces with food (and beer) and then off to the courts handicapped more than usual- but happy! Another ploy seemed to be to deprive key members of our team of their much needed sleep- successful in some cases, in others it may have backfired on the perpetrators. We finally realized upon receiving some updates from our Chair, Marc Lalonde, that our tricky hosts had been forwarding scouting reports from town to town, since Cape Town, and had obviously decided that we had to be slowed one way or another. Little did they realize that we were quite capable of that feat ourselves. The matches ended with a win for the S.African (Eastern Cape) team. That was not important at this stage since the bar was open and dinner was to be served. We had a pleasant Jesters opening dinner and a relatively early night.

The Friday saw each of us with two doubles matches as we were all entered in two divisions (except for Vinnie and Ivars, who because of their age and experience were entered in three!) Other than the Open tournament which was the best of 3, each match went for 20 minutes and the winner was the one ahead at the end of this 20 minutes. The seeding left a little to be desired as some of us found ourselves playing the top seeds and, thanks to the nature of the draw, a loss meant that we were condemned to the bottom half of the draw – but such is life! Bernice and Helen took the ladies to a penguin rescue and rehabilitation center which provides treatment and temporary care to injured, displaced or oiled marine birds. Although they try to release them within thirty days, some like a blind penguin (Stevie Wonder) will never be released. The center operates thanks to volunteers and private donations. The ladies then visited Nomvula Knitters set up by Frances Becker of Saint Francis who is dedicated to improving the lives and living standards of the local community. Sales were brisk that day as the ladies purchased beautiful brightly coloured sweaters, shawls and cushions made of organically grown cotton twisted with bamboo. After lunch, those who were not on the courts joined the ladies on a walk along the seashore and the dunes. The walk ended at Helen's where they took in the spectacular views. Friday night was another Jesters only dinner at the club.

Saturday saw us all playing at least 4 games over the course of the day. Some of the ladies were smart enough to abandon the men to the sweat of the courts and to take this opportunity to play at a fabulous links course where they witnessed Helen (Bridges) shoot a 79, her best score ever. Saturday evening was the tournament dinner held at the neighbouring Cape St. Francis Resort and was marked not only by great companionship but by the skits performed by each group. We had pulled together a skit entitled "We're Canadians and We're OK" (a variation of Monty Pythons' I'm a Lumberjack and I'm OK"). Other skits included horse racing, stand-up comedy, ninja dancing and a transvestite striptease (by the Cape Town Jesters) of some merit as it was adjudged the best. Dancing followed and then some took a dip in the pool (led by the eminent Michael Melvill) and others followed this up with a drive in the dunes which didn't get very far but entailed some serious digging out until 4.30 in the morning. It is understood that the snow experience of sundry Canadians was useful in this regard!!!

Sunday saw the playoffs take place and some stellar performances from the team saw Doug and Molson win the 60+ age group and Vinnie and Ivars come second in the 70+ group. More interesting was their performance in the 60+ group where they surprised several strong teams including the top seeds to finish 3rd overall and just missed being in an all Canadian final. Overall it was a most enjoyable occasion and I certainly believe that we should move to International

Doubles when expanding doubles in Canada since the courts are a lot cheaper to build and it doesn't require learning a different game.

Again, most of the girls had decided to avoid the smelly, sweaty courts and thanks to Antoinette, drive 1 hour to tour the Tsistikamma National Park area, explore the adjacent coastline, the spectacular walking trails and swing on the several suspension bridges (yeah Jan) crossing the Storm River gorge. Unfortunately, the men will have to return again to St-Francis Bay to see this attraction. In the company of Pandy and Greg, we had a booze cruise through the canal network later on Sunday afternoon followed by a formal dinner at the St.Francis Bay Golf Club which included a presentation of survival medals to our team! We definitely believe that this would make a great training base for future tours. Dave Clements has put himself in charge of finding would be buyers!

Monday we said goodbye to our hosts and we were driven to Port Elizabeth to take the flight to Durban. We all had overweight luggage but thanks to Pandy's insistence, the Airline waived the extra luggage fees. We had been told, as we had been at Knysna, that we weren't playing immediately but were not surprised when we were driven straight to the beautifully located Durban Country Club and given our opponents. The Club is only a few minutes from the sea and the renovated beach promenade. The golf course hosts the South African Open on a regular basis. Durban was much more humid than the Cape and this affected a number of our team members as we struggled to compete. We managed to scrape out a draw, and then repaired to our hosts to change for dinner which was held in the north-western part of the town – at Marten and Sheila Corfe's beautiful home overlooking the Cotswold Downs golf course.

Tuesday saw the group head to the Valley of 1000 Hills for a Zulu dance and cultural experience, and a tour around the crocodile farm and snake exhibition. The latter included, for the brave ones (I won't say fearless), handling a python. The power in their muscles was quite something – almost as much as in our own!! (or so I am told). While one group headed to the golf course, (Vinnie almost shot his age with a 74). The others went on more of a tourist trip taking in a bead market (where our group cleaned out the beaded salad servers and spoons/forks - which, as Dave Clements found out, are way too dangerous to take through airport security!!); a trip up the Durban World Cup Stadium which gave a fabulous view of the beach, the Country Club, and the centre of town; a quick visit to the renovated harbour and waterfront, before heading to the Marine and Water Park where we indulged in some much needed shopping. We finished off the day with a well attended Jesters dinner at the Ushaka Cargo Hold Restaurant located in an old ship on the Durban seafront boardwalk. The ship's hold housed an enormous aquarium containing a number of very large sharks. The following day, Wednesday, we were driven to a halfway point between Durban and Pietermaritzburg where we were picked up by the PMJ. Fond goodbyes for our Durban hosts and we were off to the African Bird of Prey Sanctuary. It was a very hot day for the visit but we found the birds most interesting and some simply magnificent in size, colour and presence. We toured the various cages and then had an excellent picnic lunch under a shady fig tree. The raptor show was very interesting and entertaining and this was followed by the feeding of the vultures. The vultures were quite accustomed to visitors and took our presence as an indicator that food was about to arrive. In the meanwhile, they jostled quite aggressively for position nearest the gate and this included some vicious attacks on the exposed

necks. The feeding was just as aggressive and those who missed out were simply going to have to try harder the next day – kind of how Bob has driven the team in training! One of the vultures was called Vinnie so Vintage Vinnie found himself with a new name.

We then had a few hours break with our hosts – including a much needed swim – before meeting at the Hilton school to play our match. The school has the largest school grounds in the world but this includes an 1800 hectare game park. Our matches concluded with the inevitable draw- but a very fine game between Doug and Molson, and Mike Short and Des Royappen, was abruptly stopped when Des succumbed to the heat. One of the PMB Jesters was a physician and fortunately Des was deemed alright.

A formal dinner was held at the Fleur de Lys Club on the Hilton School grounds with most of the PMB Jesters and their partners in attendance. The evening included the singing of a number of Zulu songs by the serving staff, a rendition of not much note or harmony by a joint Jesters choir (including a few Canadians), and an excellent harmonica solo by Rob Van Heerden. We retired marginally earlier than usual.

Thursday was a very lazy day. Breakfast was followed by a drive back to the Valley of 1000 Hills, near where the Zulu dancing had been on Tuesday, and we had a pleasant lunch at the Pot and Kettle overlooking the valley. We were then driven to the Durban airport, flew to Jo'burg and straight into dinner at Roger Fuller-Good's large and impressive home – complete with pool and pub-bar. A very pleasant evening which was made even more enjoyable by being able to catch up with a few people we had met at St. Francis Bay. Unfortunately the first of our group departed that evening. Alan and Carla stayed at the Jo'burg airport as they had to return home to meet up with their children for a spring break ski vacation.

On Friday we were treated to a tour of Soweto – one of the original and largest townships that had been created in the late 1940s and has grown and grown. What made the tour even more special was that our tour guide was Trevor Tutu – son of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was a very strong anti-apartheid activist and is now quite critical of certain aspects of the ANC governance. We were taken to his house in Soweto but Trevor's parents were away. Trevor had been to university with SA Jester President Mike Melvill. We visited the Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum which tells the story of the 1976 student actions against having to be taught in Afrikaans. This led to strong police action and the death of an unknown number of people. We lunched at Wandie's Place, one of the more famous shebeens (pubs) that had sprung up illegally during apartheid. Outside the pub a few locals were selling their wares. One particular large strong voiced lady was promoting her bracelets at these interesting prices: one for 15 Rand; two for 20 Rand; and three for 50 Rand. A number of our group chose the 3 for 50R option -go figure. Lots of laughs from the other vendors. We were then shown a couple of school squash courts that had been used until fairly recently but seemed no longer in use. A local squash coach showed us around and talked to us about his efforts to develop squash in the community. We then went to the Soweto taxi centre where you can get a taxi to anywhere in southern Africa. It is supposedly one of the roughest areas in Soweto and adjacent to a two kilometre long hospital block which is considered the most advanced trauma center in S.Africa, simply because they have more unpleasant wounds than anywhere else. We were the only white

people there and probably would not have been very welcome without Trevor's presence. The quality of housing varied greatly within the township with very good houses being next door to some very basic ones. Compared to the squatters camps we saw outside of Cape Town, Jo'burg and outside most of the cities we visited, most homes we saw in Soweto seemed luxurious.

We finished up the day with our match of doubles and singles at the Jo'burg Country Club with a fabulous squash centre with both doubles and singles courts. Lots of squash but 6,000 feet makes the ball a little quick off the front wall – especially a regular double yellow. This was followed by a lovely alfresco dinner at the club with formal speeches and presentations and Roger Fuller-Good modeling the latest in men's supporting garments!

Saturday saw one group head for the golf course while others, under the expert guidance of Chic Chamberlain, visited the Cradle of Humankind where the oldest skull and skeleton of mankind has been found. This involved some underground walking in the Sterkfontein Caves and a visit to the Centre's museum where several Jesters were able to reunite with their ancestors. We followed this with a visit to the Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve where we were fortunate to see a variety of animals including white lions, cheetahs, wild dogs, water buffalo, zebra, ostrich, various antelope and rhinos. While the lions, cheetahs (both kept in separate areas) and dogs were fed their food – which made for some good pictures, the others were relatively wild so for those of us who had not been on a safari (game drive, going to the bush/veldt) this was enjoyable and educative.

We ended a very hot day with a pleasant Jesters dinner at the Al Fiume Resort located by a river northwest of Jo'burg. The evening was also sad as it was the end of the tour and meant goodbyes for all of us, not just from the Jo'burg Jesters but also from the rest of the Canadian team and so effectively the trip ended all too soon. A few of us did return to Roger's house to help lighten the bar. I must admit to having too much Amarula liqueur but did recover by mid-afternoon of the next day. I ended the stay with my host by having a gemsbok braai (barbecue) courtesy of Brad's girlfriend Ramee whose parents raise game on their farm in Namibia and periodically send her some choice cuts.

A beautiful country, with stunning scenery, lots of resources and some definite opportunities as well as some serious problems – which no doubt will be resolved in one way or another. The increase in security measures over the last few years (almost all houses were walled with electrified fencing) was alarming but we did not see or experience anything unpleasant. Apparently, insurance companies require these enhanced security precautions if you wish to get insurance on your property and possessions.

Fabulous hosting, wonderful things to see and do and great comradery on the team, definitely not a tour to be missed!

Highlights: warm weather, eating outdoors, no bugs, great hosting, wonderful scenery, meeting fellow Canadian Jesters from across the country, and, despite what we had read, no issues regarding security. **A trip of a lifetime.**

