



The Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
Founded in 1894

Annual General Meeting

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The President and Council of the Institute invite members, their guests, and members of other constituent societies to attend the Annual General Meeting 2011

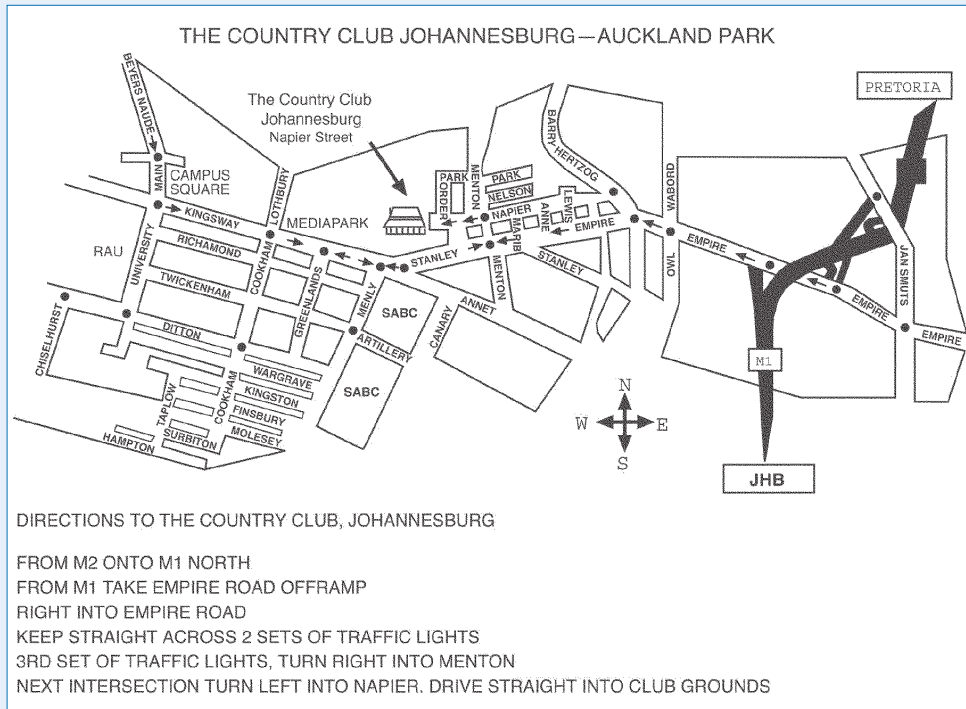
Thursday, 11 August 2011

The Country Club, Johannesburg, Napier Road, Auckland Park, 2006
at 16:30

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Confirmation of minutes
3. Obituaries
4. Honorary Life Fellowship
5. Brigadier Stokes Memorial Award
6. Presentation of awards, medals, and certificates
7. Presentation of student prizes
8. Annual report of the Council and accounts for the year ended 30 June 2011
9. Declaration of election of office bearers and members of Council for the year 2011/2012
10. Election of auditors and honorary legal advisors for the year 2011/2012
11. General
12. Induction of President—J.N. van der Merwe
13. Presidential address
14. Vote of thanks
15. Photographs of all Council members

A cocktail party will be held after the meeting



JACOB NIELEN VAN DER MERWE



Nielen was born on the property of the Durban Navigation Colliery (DNC), where his grandfather was a miner. His father was a writer/journalist and the family lived in several places including Koffiefontein, which was the mecca of Afrikaans magazine publication at the time when he first went to school there.

They later moved to Boksburg where he completed his schooling at the Hoërskool Voortrekker, where he was Head Prefect.

After school Nielen enrolled for a BSc Mining Engineering degree at the University of Pretoria. During that time obtained his first mining qualification at the

ERPM mine, an Onsetter's Certificate. Prior to graduating he served on the Students Representative Council.

Following the initial production training period as a stoper at the West Driefontein Gold Mine, he was seconded to the Rock Engineering Department as part of the compulsory periods in service departments. There he found the opportunity to perform mining engineering as opposed to production management, and never went back.

He later moved to General Mining at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine and eventually, after the merger with Union Corporation to become Gencor, got involved in the rock engineering of a number of gold, platinum, asbestos, and coal mines. During that time he obtained a MSc (Engineering) degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. He founded the Trans-Natal (now BECSA) rock engineering department, where Coalbrook in particular played a major role in his affinity for coal mining.

Nielen then moved to Sasol for more difficult coal rock engineering conditions at Sigma Colliery and also the Secunda Collieries. During this time he completed a PhD degree part time during evenings, weekends, and holidays, again at the University of the Witwatersrand under the guidance of Professor Sandor Budavari. Following brief spells with the ITASCA consulting group and the CSIR's division of Miningtek, he joined the University of Pretoria as Head of Mining Engineering. His first retirement was from that position, after which he became involved with the CIC Energy group to plan coal mines in Botswana.

Following his second brief retirement, he is now back in academia in the position of Centennial Chair for Rock Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Nielen was President of the South African National Institute for Rock

Engineering for a number of terms and was instrumental in transforming the association into an Institute. He moved on to become the first African to be President of the International Society for Rock Mechanics and after his term expired, was elected President of the Federation of International Geo-Engineering Societies, representing around 40 000 geo-engineering specialists globally from four international societies a position he holds today. He is also chairperson of the Advisory Committee for the United Nations International Atomic Energy Association Network for Uranium Production Education and Training.

Nielen is passionate about rugby, Italian opera, and good food.

He considers himself fortunate to have the support of his wife, Hantie. They have three children, Melani, Hein, and Nielen; and also a grandson, Niel.

His strongest ambition now is to serve the SAIMM well and eventually succeed at retirement.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Role of the SAIMM and the Universities in the Future of the South African Mining Industry

Without the mining industry, there would have been little to distinguish South Africa from the majority of developing nations in Africa. The industry was pivotal in the economic and political development of the country. After more than a century of mining, what are the future prospects for our industry?

This question is examined from a technocratic perspective against the background of the current state of the industry, taking into account our resource base and current production levels of the most important minerals. The industry will mine whatever people are prepared to pay for—what do the people of the world want?

The factors that could impact on the future of the industry are reviewed. These include political developments, the global economic crisis that is not yet over, and technical challenges. It is indicated that political interference in the South African mining industry is not new, it has in fact always been there. The mining industry is populated by mining people, and the survival of the industry through very difficult times has been due to the resilience and resourcefulness of this special breed of people.

To continue to develop in a sustainable manner, the South African mining industry has to be backed up by technological development to cater for an ever-changing environment. The current role of the SAIMM and the universities in the industry and their supporting role for future development are analysed.