THE M.I.T. CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Presented at the AGM, 28 July 2004

Introduction
At the beginning of the first year of existence of the M.I.T. Club of South Africa, we set ourselves the following goals, i.e. to:

1. Maintain a viable base of dues paying members, minimum of 10% of total alumni population;
2. Hold a minimum of 2 club events per year;
3. Maintain a set of official club Bylaws;
4. Have active club officers in accordance with the Bylaws;

These goals were all achieved with the exception of 5., as will be reported on below.

Some interesting fact about M.I.T. alumni clubs:
- There are about 100 M.I.T. alumni in South Africa out of about 100 000 world-wide
- There are about 45 active international clubs (outside of the US)
- There are 3 M.I.T. Clubs in Africa: Egypt (1999); Nigeria (2003); and South Africa (2003)

The official purpose of an M.I.T. Club is to:
- Develop and sponsor activities
- Provide a link between alumni and M.I.T.
- Encourage alumni in financial support of M.I.T.
- Cooperate with M.I.T. in recruiting students and promoting its reputation.

Membership
The Club has 15 dues paying members out of a possible 96, which gives us a market penetration of 16%, well above the required 10%. Thanks very much to Johann Ahlers and later to Darryl Aberdein for their sterling work in this regard. Johann resigned from the executive committee in February of 2004, and I am very grateful to Darryl who took over the membership portfolio in addition to his other duties. I would also like to express my appreciation to all the alumni who did join the Club in 2003-2004; we appreciate your support.

Events
The Club held two events during the reporting period, three if you include this AGM.

Johannesburg Observatory – 27 September 2003
For this event we took advantage of the fact that Mars was closer to the earth than it has been for more than 60,000 years! Prof Derck Smits of UNISA delivered a multimedia presentation and dealt with the most significant discoveries over the last 10 years and the big questions we hope to answer in the next 10 years. He also guided the 17 attendees in looking at selected bodies in the sky through the large 26-inch telescope at the observatory. Thanks very much, especially to Gerrie and Kathy van Zyl for all their hard work in making this event a success.
Executive Speaker Event: 24 March 2004
The first event in our Executive Speaker Series was a presentation by Brian Bruce (15E ‘85), CEO of Murray & Roberts. Brian’s topic was “Perspectives on the Challenges facing Socio-economic Development in South Africa”. This event exposed 35 alumni and other attendees to a pertinent topic, and stimulated business networking between M.I.T. Alumni and with alumni of other selected universities. An added attraction was the venue - The Forum at the Dimension Data Campus in Bryanston. Thanks very much to the executive, especially to Gerrie and Kathy van Zyl for all their hard work in making this event a success.

Communications
The Club sent out various general newsletters throughout the reporting period, as well as specific notices to advertise the events that were held. In addition, the Club has also now got an official website: [http://alumweb.mit.edu/clubs/south-africa/](http://alumweb.mit.edu/clubs/south-africa/) Thanks very much to Kathy for handling this portfolio with such enthusiasm and professionalism, and to Darryl for his help in setting up the website.

Finance
Many thanks to our Honorary Treasurer, Darryl Aberdein, for the competent way in which he is overseeing the finances of our Club.

The finances of our Club are in a healthy state and at the financial year-end we had some $1062 in the bank. A more detailed report will be given later during this meeting.

MIT matters
I met with Christine Tempesta in Cambridge on 13 June 2003 to discuss the activities of our Club. She was very pleased with the way in which the Club was formed, and with the Bylaws that we filed with the Alumni Office. Christine has since been promoted and our new direct contact is Krista McCabe, Assistant Director of Clubs and Regional Programs for MIT.

I did not represent our Club at the 2003 Annual Leadership Conference (ALC), but three executive committee members did visit MIT during the reporting period.

General
The executive committee met four times during the reporting period, twice at the Van Zyl’s residence in Johannesburg and twice at the BrainWorks offices in Pretoria. Thanks to Gerrie, Kathy, and Darryl – your hospitality is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank our members and the Executive Committee for making this a successful first year for the M.I.T. Club of South Africa. I wish you all the best for 2004-2005.

Ian K Craig
Pretoria
28 July 2004