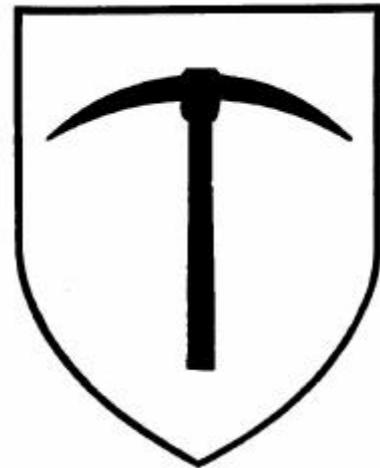


**Sep - Dec
2002**

PIONEER TRAIL



**Meeting
Mabukuwene Nature Reserve
Fridays 19:00 - 21:00 hrs**

**Scout Leader
Norman Scott
P O Box 129, Bulawayo**

1st BULAWAYO (PIONEER) SCOUT GROUP

UNDER THE PSEUDOLACHNOSTYLIS MAPROUNEIFOLIA

Our Scouting fortunes during 2002 somehow survived and surprisingly flourished in a very harsh economic climate. All our planned activities, plus a number of extra ones, materialised and we experienced some first class Scouting.

The last few months have not been overly active, deliberately planned, for the end of year school examinations had to be given time as they are to be taken seriously, a tough decision to take when you are a teenager. However, our monthly hikes and the parent camp which is held each term dominated our programme and

happily I can report that they were successful. An extra event held in October was a family Troop dinner held out at Gordon Park to celebrate with Fr. Odilo his 90th birthday. This proved to be a most convivial evening, topped off with the reading from his hike logbook of two hikes he had undertaken in the



Chimanimani Mountains in 1986 and 1989. As we had all been on hikes in these fantastic mountains, his logs brought back fond memories of our own hikes. Fr Odilo may be ninety years old but he is sixteen years young at heart.

Late in the year, we added another activity to our programme by introducing “bundu bashing” in my Land Rover, Inguluvane. In place of the November and December hikes we went “bundu bashing” which proved to be really exciting and popular, most probably because the Scouts did most of the off road driving. We have concentrated on two very washed out and overgrown tracks in the Toghvara dam area. These tracks were last used by myself in 1982 when they were then already a good 4x4 challenge. You can imagine their condition now, twenty years later. No doubt this activity will be opted for over hikes, fuel permitting, in our 2003 programme of activities.

Our Troop membership took a knock when Patrol Leader Maurice Hutton bade farewell to the Troop on Friday 15 November 2002. His final meeting was held at his house and took the form of a sausage sizzle and splash in the swimming pool. The Hutton Family are now trying to settle down in Wellington, New Zealand. E-mail's received indicate that they are happy but still have to adjust to their new life as things are vastly different in New Zealand to what they were used to here.

In the new year we will need to undertake a recruiting drive to bring the Troop numbers back up to Patrol strength for we have lost two members this year and have not yet replaced them. One may be wondering why we only have seven or eight Scouts in the Troop. The reason is that the present members have opted to keep the Troop small. There are many advantages to this, as we can all fit into one vehicle when ever we go anywhere, and we have been doing a fair amount of travelling to get to our hike areas. As we do not have our own premises all our equipment has to be taken to each meeting. Also with the shortages we are experiencing at the moment, including food, catering is made easier if there are only a few of us. Most importantly we have become a very closely knit unit. Naturally there are some disadvantages for with only one Patrol there is no inter Patrol rivalry and only one person gets the opportunity of being a Patrol Leader, although duties to organize various events are rotated to overcome this problem to some degree. Then, when we enter competitions if a member cannot be present our team is depleted which is a disadvantage.

In looking forward, all indications point to a very difficult year ahead. Hopefully, by continuing to "do our best" we can benefit from our Scouting activities and above all remain positive about our own futures.

Until the next time, it is back to my hammock beneath my favourite *Pseudolachnostylis Maprouneifolia* with a floppy hat pulled low over my eyes and in so doing, I wish you a blessed Christmas and good, exciting Scouting in the New Year.

Norman Scott
Scout Leader



The troop with the 2002 haul of trophies - Byo East District Swimming Gala, JOTA shield, Colin Turner Pioneering Competition: l to r: Jonathan De Jong, Paul Carlsson, Maurice Hutton, Joe Rose, Mark Perry (Mark holding Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Scouting Commemorative Medallion)

A little girl walks into a pet shop and asks in the sweetest little lisp: "Excute me, mithter, do you keep wittle wabbits?"

And the shopkeeper gets down on his knees, so that he's on her level, and asks: "Do you want a wittle white wabbit or a soft and fuwvy black wabbit or maybe one like that cute wittle brown wabbit over there?"

She in turn puts her hands on her knees, leans forward and says in a quiet voice: "I don't fink my pyfon weally cares!"

CONGRATULATIONS

Our good sailor Joseph Rose, in his little O.K called Frith has won two racing cups this sailing season; both are floating trophies. One was for the Easter Regatta, the other for the Closing Cruise.

He collected The Charles Stirling Cup from the Easter Regatta which was held over the Easter weekend, from Friday to Sunday afternoon. All the competitors camped out for the weekend. There were three races each day and on Sunday the winner was to be the Highest Scoring senior racer in the personal handicap. Here points are not awarded to the racer that finishes first, rather who did best in their handicap which is extra time given according to the type of boat (slower or faster) or how good a sailor you are. You did a sterling job Joe!

Joe also won the Jubilee Rose Bowl for the highest points at the Closing Cruise on 24 November 2002. This marks the end of the Sailing Season because the dams are then too low, time is required for repairs and maintenance of the boats and the sailors need to catch their breath. Joe came first in the Closing Cruise. For this event the sailors set off at different times and it is a shortened course which means at a certain time a horn is blown, a bucket and flag raised and the leader goes round his next buoy and finishes. He came second in the last two which were pursuit races as well. Well done Mister Rose!

We would all like to congratulate and commend Joe for his wonderful effort and achievement. Well done !

Mark

THE LANDY 'BUNDU BASH'

It was Friday afternoon at about 5.00 pm when Norm picked us all up from our homes. This was going to be a different adventure, instead of a hike, we were off on a 'bundu bash' in Norm's Landy. When we got to Maurice's house, Maurice took over the driving and drove us first to Retreat Shops where we bought some rolls and goodies. Then we were off to GP. When we arrived at GP we lit the boiler and Norm did a few things, then we left for Maleme Rest Camp where we had to get permission from the Warden so that we could drive around freely without being harassed by Game Scouts. Since it was just Mark, Maurice, Norm and I and because Maurice had driven from town to GP it was my turn to drive to Maleme.

We arrived at Maleme in the dark and Norm, Mark and Maurice went in to see the Warden. We got permission and were off again, this time to our final destination for the day, Togwana Dam. Mark did the driving which was along very rough roads. We got to Togwana at about 7.30-8.00 ish. We made a large fire over a nest of "fire" ants and we ate some delicious pies baked by my Mum. Later on Maurice and I decided to make a fire in the boiler so that we could have hot showers. We eventually got the fire going and once lit it was huge, flames were coming out of the top of the chimney which was about four metres high. The water soon heated up but ran out of the taps very slowly.

In the end we found ourselves all under one shower because there wasn't enough pressure to have two showers going at once. We then got out, changed and went to bed under the stars. We all slept very well and woke up to an overcast morning. It was a little drizzly which made the cooking oil spit at anyone who went near to cook the eggs and bacon. After breakfast we cleared up, packed everything into the landy and set off back up the Togwana Road.

After a few kms I stopped the landy and Norm took over since we were going onto the bundu track. We started off on the so called "Warden's Track" which seemed to me normal Matopos bush. We crashed over young trees and maneuvered our way around gullies until we came to a large tree that lay in our way. It had fallen in a recent fire which had burnt through the area. Out came the axes and saws and we got to work trying to clear it. After we had chopped off the branches that were in the way we pulled them off the road with the landy's help. Then we were off again crashing over trees and stopping to cut down the occasional tree too big to drive over.

A short time later we came to a rocky sort of valley which we had to cross. This looked to us (Maurice, Mark and I) almost impossible, but Norm didn't think so. We finally managed to get through onto the other side which was quite steep. We drove on a little further then stopped to cut a few more trees down. These were quite straight and Maurice decided to take one as a Thumb Stick (walking stick). We kept driving until we came to a little stream which was in fact the Togwana River. Norm got out to investigate and try to find the road. While he was gone we got out the water melon, cut it up - we all had quite large pieces and left Norm an extremely small piece! I then went off to try and find Norm without success so ended up chasing cows. I then headed back to the landy thinking that Norm might be back waiting for me, but discovered that he wasn't.

We waited and when he returned we crossed the river and continued along what seemed to be a thin path made by the cattle. We did actually find the track in the end, followed it up a valley, but did not get very far because there was another track which we had to turn onto and then could not find the original track.



While Norm went to find the elusive track, We got the cards out and played 'idiot'. This is a card game that Maurice and I had been taught by some Norwegian girls staying at a cottage on the Hutton's property. I won. Mark and Maurice went on playing to see who would be the 'idiot'. It turned out to be Maurice.

When Norm came back he said that he could not find the track and that we would have to go back. By this time it had started to drizzle and it was getting cold. We tried keeping warm by running behind the landy but it was so wet that we decided to try and brave the cold and got into the landy. We took turns driving back. The road was clearer and the return journey was quicker and we soon got back to the main road. We drove back down past Togwana Dam and a little further on stopped to turn off onto another track. We did not get very far on this track as we lost the road after about 500m and spent ages driving around trying to find it. Eventually we stopped and Norm went on another of his 'walk abouts' to try and find the track.

While Norm was away Maurice started a fire in the rain to cook lunch. He must have been very hungry because starting a fire in the rain is quite a task particularly if you are used to using paraffin, which we didn't have. When Norm finally returned the fire was going well and we started to cook sausages. It seemed like as soon as we started to cook it rained even harder. We got into the landy and watched the sausages cooking from there - at least we were dry. Eventually the rain subsided and we were able to eat our sausage rolls. After lunch we continued on the track until we came to a large dwala which was very steep and wet. Norm decided to climb it in the landy which we did not think was such a good idea so we climbed out and followed on foot. At the top we got back into the landy and proceeded on our "Bundu Bash". We passed cattle but when we tried to catch them we were always unsuccessful. Got a little lost trying to find a hut which Norman wanted to show us but soon got back on course and found it. The hut was made of brick and cement but it did not have a roof. Norm told us about its potential and what it could be used for then we headed back the same way we had come. Maurice, Mark and I attempted, again, to catch some cows without success. When we got back to the main Togwana Road it was getting late and we decided to return to town with a brief stopover at GP.

We all enjoyed our "Bundu Bash" very much. It was also the last activity that we would go on with Maurice as he would be leaving for New Zealand in just two weeks. I think he will be back some day in the future.

Joe



Maurice with the leather bound photograph album presented to him by the troop on his departure for New Zealand

MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We arrived at a place which had huge trees towering over a green lawn providing cool shade for the many people attending the Meeting. It was a very hot day and the trees provided a welcome cool area. While the Meeting was taking place Maurice, Joe, Mark and myself went for a walk. We came across a small flowing stream which opened up into a deep crystal clear pool. We decided not to swim because we did not want to catch bilharzia. Believe me we were all very tempted to cool down in the clear water. After climbing on a granite gomo we went for a climb on one of the many granite kopies. The scenery was breathtaking when we reached the top. All the vegetation was green.

Thanks Norm for a great outing.

Paul

FAREWELL TO MAURICE



The Hutton family

The weekend on which Maurice left a sausage sizzle had been organised and Joe's Father picked us all up with our sausages and we drove to Mabukuwene to find Norm standing at the gate as there was a caravan meeting on and the venue was not available. After a short conference we decided to return to Maurice's home and braai our meat there. We left. Norm caught up with us as he had stopped for a brief chat with the campers. We lit the fire and while waiting for it to die down sat and talked with music in the background. Maurice's parents joined us. Norm gave Maurice a book, on the building of Lake Kariba from the animals' perspective, as a farewell present. I hope Maurice enjoyed reading the book on the plane!

After a while the Scouts decided to go for a swim and headed off to the pool We were surprised when Norm joined us a little later on .We were still in the pool when Joe's Mom came to collect us at 9.30. It was a good evening and a wonderful way to spend our last Scout Meeting with Maurice.

Joe

A MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT. MY FIGHT FOR LIFE AND SLOW RECOVERY

From a former Bulawayo Scout

In 1977, I joined the Rhodesian Air Force, as an apprentice, Aircraft Radio and Telecomms Technician, where I excelled. In about July 1980, out of about twenty technicians, I was chosen to be sent on a course in Italy, to learn about a new radar system that was to be purchased. Then fate took over.

In 13 Oct 1980, I went out for supper at a friend's place on my new "MEAN MACHINE", a Yamaha GS 750. I can still remember only having a glass of wine with a meal and one beer, hence I was sober! Anyway, as I was approaching the New Sarum Air Force Base boom, a truck was coming towards me, at 21:40, without any lights on. He turned right into the road on my left. I braked, but couldn't avoid colliding into the canopy of his truck. The driver was apparently blind drunk! My next memory was nine weeks later.

The results of this accident are: Two weeks in ICU, unconscious for seven weeks and off work for eleven months. Left arm paralyzed, no lower or side vision in left eye, vision is now poor due to high pressure on the brain, and am now squint. Hence, I have to wear glasses, right ear deaf, total loss of sense of smell, right leg shorter than left and I now talk with a stutter. But don't worry. I'M ALIVE.

I was rushed to the Andrew Fleming Hospital in Salisbury, by an Air Force ambulance, where the neurosurgeon met me on arrival. He apparently fought for my life for four hours, and then put on medical records, which I found out much later from Station Sick Quarters, 24 hours to live! He performed a tracheotomy on me, so I could breath through a pipe, and I was put on a ventilator. My face apparently swelled up to almost twice its normal

size. Two days later he performed a craniotomy on me to remove bone fragments from above my left eye and also to relieve pressure on the brain. I spent two weeks in ICU with all sorts of machines attached to me, and was on the critical list. After a week I was taken off the ventilator and miraculously was able to breathe on my own although still unconscious. After which, I was then transferred to a normal ward. I lay unconscious for seven weeks. My Mom sat beside my bed each day, talking to me, playing music to me and praying for me to live and not give up “the fight for life”.

During this time the neurosurgeon, told my parents that as he didn't know the extent of my head injury, he couldn't say how far I would recover. But said that he doubted whether I would ever talk again, and was sure I would spend the rest of my life in a wheel chair! I went from 75kg down to 45kg in weight in two months, as I was being fed intravenously. After spending two months in the hospital, I was transferred to the St Giles Rehabilitation Center, where a week later, I got my first memory. I remember lying in a “cot”, being a bed with bars at the side, talking very slowly and in a monotone, and being potty trained again. As my neck was in spasm, I couldn't lift it up, and so I had to wear a neck brace. My stutter only started after I fell one evening and unfortunately hit my head on my bedside locker.

Each day I would go for both physiotherapy and occupational therapy. After about six weeks of intense therapy, I started trying to walk again. What a mission! Due to a fractured right ankle, crushed right heel and a pinched nerve it was so painful, that I used to cry. But I didn't give up, because I hated my wheel chair! They used to do both electro and hydrotherapy on my left arm, which is now paralyzed, due to nerve damage — being damage to the radial nerve in my left upper arm, and a lesion of the brachial plexus, at urbs point. I still had grip in my hand, but couldn't open it. if my forearm was lifted I could push it down, but couldn't lift it, and if my hand was raised, I could push it down, but couldn't lift it. As my hand was always clasped, the occupational therapist, made a brace to force my fingers out. When this was put on, I used to cry with the pain! I remember getting a weekend out, and can still remember my father, carrying me to the bathroom and bathing me, just like baby.

Whilst in St Giles, I met two young Christian ladies, who were visiting a man *who* was like I should have been. He couldn't walk or talk, who was miraculously healed! Anyway they ministered to me, and used to take me to church, in my wheel chair. A while later, just after I had started walking again, they took me to hear an evangelist. After his sermon, he gave an altar call and this is when I gave my life to the Lord! Since then, the Lord has worked many miracles in my life. I have found that when I walk close to Him, life goes well. BUT, when I drift away, things start to go wrong!

After three and a half months of hard labour, blood, sweat and lots of tears, I was discharged from St. Giles and transferred to Tsanga Lodge, which was a rehabilitation centre for handicapped members of the Rhodesian Forces. I only stayed there for about three weeks, because my left shoulder kept on dislocating, and one morning, whilst exercising, I also refractured the arm. So my Dad came up from Bulawayo, and took me back to Salisbury, to see the specialist. He said he could not do anything more for my arm, and suggested amputation!

Dad then took me home to Bulawayo, and soon after that, my uncle came up from Johannesburg, South Africa. He took me to see a friend of his, who was an orthopedic surgeon, in Bloemfontein, South Africa, who, after examining me, said, that through a series of operations he could give back to me partial use of my left arm. So over a long period, he performed four operations on me. The first was a left shoulder fusion, which left me in a fibre glass cast around my left arm and chest for three months. He then took bone from my hip, and fused my left wrist, which I couldn't raise, but could pull down. In the next operation, he transferred the tendons, that I had used to control my wrist movements, and connected them to my fingers and thumb. I could now semi open my hand! In the last operation he did a “Clarke Procedure”, in which he transferred the lower third of the pectoralis major muscle, (the muscle above my left breast, and transferred it into my left arm. This was done to replace my damaged biceps muscle. Unfortunately, due to my head injury, the last two operations were not a great success, but I at least have partial movement of my arm.

After eleven months I finally went back to work in the radio section of the Air Force. They tried putting me back on the bench, doing radio repairs again, but I didn't cope, due to eye sight being so poor, and also, due to my head injury, couldn't concentrate for longer than about two hours. When I finally got the correct glasses, I literally wept with joy, as I could see so much better. Then, when the Officer in Charge of the Radio Equipment Stores left the Air Force, they put me in charge, and I managed to run them without any problem. However, I still had to go to St Giles three afternoons per week for physiotherapy. Due to a fractured pelvis, I developed a

stricture in my urethra, which meant my urinal stream was very narrow, and thus, spent half the day and night in the toilet! So once a month, I had to have urethral dilation. This problem was only sorted out after I emigrated to South Africa. Where a urologist cut the blocked piece of pipe away, and made a new one using flesh from my mouth! This was the most painful operation I have ever had! I was apparently given "MORPHINE" about four times in the first day. In another operation, an eye specialist also corrected 90% of my squint. The remaining 10%, is now corrected by prisms, in my glass lenses. What a life!

A head injury takes a full five years to get over, and the hardest part was having to accept my disability. I could no longer work on car engines, which had been my hobby, or play any type of sport. I also had to learn to dress myself with one hand, as well as try to eat! Can you imagine, trying to cut a nice juicy steak, with only one hand. It is not easy being disabled! ! If I wanted to get anywhere, I had to rely on other people to give me a lift, or walk! Hence, as I got tired of walking, hitch hiking and catching buses, like a fool, I bought another motorcycle, which had an automatic clutch. You can but guess what happened, yes, that's right, I got knocked off again! This time a little old lady, didn't stop at a stop street. So back to hospital I went, for skin graft on my right leg. The result: I have now given up motorcycles completely, and now will only drive a car, which is a lot safer!

During my youth I was very involved in the Boy Scout movement where I enjoyed camping, hiking and out door activities. So, before emigrating, I abseiled again, and even tried climbing kopjies again. Unfortunately, whilst climbing Shumba Shaba, a kopjie in the Matopas National Park near Bulawayo one day, I slipped, and re fractured my left arm again!

Three years after my accident, the man who caused the first big accident, finally went to court, and under the new Zimbabwe government, was fined THIRTY DOLLARS or THIRTY DAYS! ! Anyway, I sued his insurance for pain, suffering and loss of future earnings and they paid me 92 000 dollars, which in those days was "Big Bucks". As the future of the air force did not look too good, and Zimbabwe, did not have very much to offer a disabled person like me, I left the "Blues" in Jan 85, and I just loafed around until June 85. During this time I bought a speed boat, and had a lot of fun on Lake Macillwaine near Salisbury now Harare), and I even went to Lake Kariba once. During this time I was staying in a flat, with an ex Air Force friend, where we had lots of parties and fun together, as he also had a speed boat.

Anyway, my Dad flew up from Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, in June 1985, and we then left for South Africa, by road, crossing the border on my 26th birthday, 24 June. But when I emigrated, all I could only take out, was \$10 000. I had to "invest" the rest in 4% bonds. I managed to get this money, as well as a lump pension pay out, out of Zimbabwe, hut had to forfeit 60% of it, to the government. However, considering the current exchange rate, I still scored.

I then got bored just sitting around at my parent's home doing nothing. Until one day, I saw an advert in the newspaper, explaining all about the Milestone Club for the Disabled, which had recently been started by the Pietermaritzburg branch of the Natal Cerebral Palsy Association. So I phoned up, and went in to the office, and of course, told them my sorry story. Anyway, soon afterwards, I started repairing domestic appliances, working under their auspices. I could not have managed this, without the help and advice, from my Dad. But, he would only help me, after I had tried, and failed a few times! This taught me to puzzle things out on my own! Dad always said to me that "You have got to be Cruel to be Kind"! ! How right he was But, unfortunately, as my heart was too soft, I was too generous income was poor. I did this, for just over a year. Life was hard, and my future? What future!

During this time, I joined the Milestone Club, and was soon made Chairman, which position I held for six years. We were given two adjoining prefabs for a club house, and as I had so much free time on my hands, with help I put in an interleading door, built a smart coffee bar, erected colored lights, raised money, scrounged a 'fridge, music system, dart boards, carpets, chairs, and all sorts of things. As chairman, I organised club outings to places of interest, braais, parties and two weekend outings, where we slept over in rondavels! I in fact, met my wife who has a slight physical disability, at one of these parties. She came as the guest of one of our members.

I got my first lob, after about 18 months, with a company where I assembled printed circuit boards. My salary was R600 p.m. Now, to me, this was "Big Bucks"! Hut, unfortunately the PCBs got smaller and smaller, with more and more components on them and I unfortunately made a few mistakes, which cost the company money, and hence, six months later, I was fired! "Tuff Luck"! Two months later I started in another job, where I was,

once again, repairing domestic appliances. But my salary was only R400 p.m.! However, three months later I got my BIG CHANCE. I started working for a company, where I was, finally BACK TO MY TRADE! ! My salary was R400 p.m., which was great, considering the fact that I battled! It sometimes took me almost two days to repair one radio. But I still never gave up! I was determined to make a success of my life and to once again become independent. This company is owned by two ex Rhodesian brothers whom I truly admire and am eternally grateful and thankful to for being so patient with me and also, giving me the chance to prove myself and make something of my life again. I have been working here now since March 1987, and love it. I do of course still battle, only having one hand and a mouth, but I never give up. I find each faulty radio a challenge, and as far as I am concerned, I am a winner !

We got married In 1991, and in February 1992 our son, Shane David, was born. What a blessing he has been to us. He is well mannered, polite, very bright, a good all rounder at sport and liked by everyone, young and old alike. He makes us so proud. Dad's big boy.

We started our married life in a small one bed roomed flat, where we lived for three years. I then bought our first home in a low class area, which was all that I could afford at the time. I repainted, grew a smart garden, and put up a verandah with roof for braais. But then, the thieves arrived, and stole from us three occasions. So I sold up and bought another home in a middle class area. We are now very happy here as it is nearly twice the size as the first home, and have had no more theft, "YET". I of course, put up another roof over an existing slab for braais and parties etc. I, in fact, had a big party for my 40th birthday. As my in-laws are very keen on camping, we have camped at Cathedral Peak on three occasions, which is great. Not to mention the fact that that I joined them on hikes into the Drakensberg! I have, with help, been up to Doreen Falls and down to Rainbow Gorge twice, apart from all sorts of other walks.

Considering the fact that I am the sole bread winner, I would say that I have done OK. I drive a Nissan Sentra, have a wife, a son, a good secure job, a house full of furniture and my only debt is a small household bond. So Gav is OK, however, I can honestly say that I could never have come this far without all the love, care and devoted attention I received constantly from my father and late mother. May the Good Lord Bless her soul and may she rest in peace forever. Not to forget God, who spared my life! I still battle financially, but then again, who doesn't. The main thing is that I am happy and feel that I have made a success of my life. Don't you?

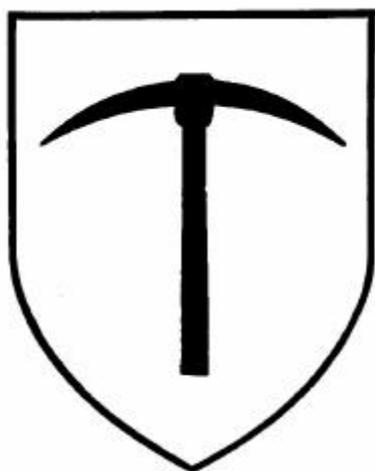
Gavin Classen.

P.S. If you are experiencing something similar to what I have been through, just set yourself a goal and strive to achieve that goal. You will always have downfalls just never give up. Nothing is impossible when you put your mind to it!



Lunch break whilst bundu bashing





***1ST BULAWAYO (PIONEER) SCOUT
TROOP***

TROOP PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

JANUARY TO APRIL 2003

JANUARY

- 2 - 6 Chimanimani hike
- 10 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene
- 12 Gordon Park service : 1200 noon
- 15 Schools open
- 17 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene
- 24 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene
- 31 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene

FEBRUARY

- 7 - 8 Monthly hike
- 9 Gordon Park service
- 14 - 15 Parents camp
- 21 - 23 Baden-Powell camp
- 23 B.P. DAY service, Gordon Park : 1200 noon
- 28 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene

MARCH

- 7 - 8 Monthly hike
- 9 Gordon Park service : 1200 noon
- 12 Africa Scout Day
- 14 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene
- 21 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene - sausage sizzle
- 28 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene

APRIL

- 4 - 5 Monthly hike
- 11 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene
- 13 Gordon Park service : 12 noon
- 16 Schools close
- 18 - 20 Easter
- 25 Troop meeting : Mabukuwene

Additional activities may be added

THE SHINING STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Once upon a time - oh, many, many years ago as time is calculated by men - but which was only Yesterday in the Celestial Calendar of Heaven - there was in Paradise, a most miserable, thoroughly unhappy and utterly dejected cherub who was known throughout Heaven as The Littlest Angel. He was exactly four years, six months, five days, seven hours and forty-two minutes of age when he presented himself to the venerable Gate-Keeper and waited for admittance to the Glorious Kingdom of God.

Standing defiantly, with his short legs wide apart, the Littlest Angel tried to pretend that he wasn't at all impressed by such Unearthly Splendour and that he wasn't at all afraid, but his lower lip trembled and a tear disgraced him by making a new furrow down his already tear-streaked face - coming to a precipitous halt at the very tip end of his small freckled nose.

But that wasn't all. While the kindly Gate-Keeper was entering the name in his great Book, the Littlest Angel having left home without a handkerchief, endeavoured to hide the tell-tale evidence by sniffing. A most unangelic sound which so unnerved the good Gate-Keeper that he did something he had never done before in all Eternity. He blotted the page!

From that moment on, the Heavenly Peace was never quite the same and the Littlest Angel soon became the despair of all the Heavenly Host. His shrill, ear-splitting whistle resounded at all hours through the Golden Streets. It startled the Patriarch Prophets and disturbed their meditations. Yes, and on top of that, he inevitably and vociferously sang off-key at the singing practice of the Heavenly Choir, spoiling its ethereal effect.

And being so small that it seemed to take him just twice as long as anyone else to get to nightly prayers, the Littlest Angel always arrived late and always knocked everyone's wings askew as he darted into his place. It was even whispered among the Seraphim and Cherubim and then said aloud among the Angels and Archangels, that he didn't even look like an angel!

And they were all quite correct. He didn't. His halo was permanently tarnished where he held onto it with one hot little chubby hand when he ran and he was always running. Furthermore, even when he stood very still, it never behaved like a halo should. It was always slipping down over his right eye. Or over his left eye. Or else, just for pure meanness, slipping off the back of his head and rolling away down some Golden Street just so he'd have to chase after it!

Yes, and it must be here recorded that his wings were neither useful nor ornamental. All Paradise held its breath with the Littlest Angel perched himself like an unhappy fledgling sparrow on the very edge of a gilded cloud and prepared to take off. He would teeter this way- and that way- but, after much coaxing and a few false starts, he would shut both of his eyes, hold his freckled nose, count up to three hundred and three, and then hurl himself slowly into space! However, owing to the regrettable fact that he always forgot to move his wings, the Littlest Angel always fell head over halo! It was also reported and never denied, that whenever he was nervous, which was most of the time, he bit his wing-tips. Now, anyone can easily understand why the Littlest Angel would sooner or later have to be disciplined, and so, on an Eternal Day of an Eternal Month in the Year Eternal, he was directed to present his small self before an Angel of the Peace.

The Littlest Angel combed his hair, dusted his wings and scrambled into an almost clean robe, and then, with a heavy heart, trudged his way to the place of judgment. He tried to postpone the dreaded ordeal by loitering along the Street of The Guardian Angels, and he idled more than several immortal moments to carefully examine a display of aureate harps, although everyone in the Celestial City knew he couldn't tell a crotchet from a semiquaver. But at length and at last he slowly approached a doorway which was surmounted by a pair of golden scales, signifying that Heavenly Justice was dispensed within. To the Littlest Angel's great surprise, he heard a merry voice singing! The Littlest Angel removed his halo and polished it upon his robe, a procedure which added nothing to that garment's already untidy appearance and then tip-toed in! The Singer, who was known as the Understanding Angel, looked down at the small culprit and the Littlest Angel instantly tried to make himself invisible by the ingenious process of withdrawing his head into the collar of his robe, very much like a snapping turtle.

At that, the Singer laughed, a jolly heartwarming sound and said "Oh! So you're the one who's been making Heaven so unheavenly ! Come here, Cherub and tell me all about it!" The Littlest Angel ventured a furtive look from beneath his robe. First one eye. And then the other eye. Suddenly, almost before he knew it he was perched on the lap of the Understanding Angel, and was explaining how difficult it was for a boy who suddenly finds himself transformed into an angel. The whole trouble was that there wasn't anything for a

small angel to do. The Understanding Angel smiled and in his eyes was a long forgotten memory of another small boy in a long ago. Then he asked the Littlest Angel what would make him most happy in Paradise. The Cherub whispered in his ear:

"There is a box I left under my bed back at home, if only I could have that?". The Understanding Angel nodded his head "you shall have it" he promised, and a fleet-winged Heavenly messenger was instantly dispatched to bring the box to Paradise. And then, in all those timeless days that followed, everyone wondered at the great change in the Littlest Angel for, among all the Cherubs in God's Kingdom, he was the most happy. His conduct was above the slightest reproach. His appearance was all that the most fastidious could wish for, and on excursions to Elysian Fields, it could be said and truly said, that he flew like an angel!

Then it came to pass that Jesus, the Son of God was to be born to Mary, of Bethlehem, of Judea and as the glorious tidings spread through Paradise, all the angels rejoiced and their voices were lifted to herald the Miracle of Miracles, the coming of the Christ Child. The Angels and Archangels, the Seraphim and Cherubim, the Gate-Keeper, The Wingmaker, yes and even the Halosmith put aside their usual tasks to prepare their gifts for the Blessed Infant. All but the Littlest Angel. He sat himself down on the top most step of the Golden Stairs and anxiously waited for inspiration. What could he give that would be most acceptable to the Son of God? At one time, he dreamed of composing a lyric hymn of adoration, but the Littlest Angel was woefully wanting in musical talent. Then he drew tremendously excited over writing a prayer! A prayer that would live forever in the hearts of men, because it would be the first prayer ever to be heard by the Christ Child, but the Littlest Angel was lamentably lacking in Literary skill. "What, oh what, could a small angel give that would please the Holy Infant?". The time of the Miracle was very close at hand when the Littlest Angel at last decided on his gift. Then, on that Day of Days, he proudly brought it from its hiding place behind a cloud and humbly with downcast eyes placed it before the Throne of God. It was only a small, rough, unsightly box, but inside were those wonderful things that even a Child of God would treasure! A small, rough, unsightly box lying among all those other glorious gifts from all the Angels of Paradise! Gifts of such rare and radiant splendour and breathless beauty that Heaven and all the Universe were lighted by the mere reflection of their glory! And when the Littlest Angel saw this, he suddenly knew that his gift to God's Child was irreverent and he devoutly wished he might reclaim his shabby gift. It was ugly, it was worthless. If only he could hide it away from the sight of God before it was even noticed! But it was too late! The hand of God moved slowly over all that bright array of shining gifts, then paused, then dropped, then came to rest on the lowly gift of the Littlest Angel! The Littlest Angel trembled as the box was opened and there before the Eyes of God and all his Heavenly Host, was what he offered to the Christ Child. And what was his gift to the Blessed Infant? Well, there was a butterfly with golden wings, captured one bright Summer day on the high hills above Jerusalem and a sky-blue egg from a bird's nest in the Olive tree that stood to shade his Mother's kitchen door. Yes and two white stones, found on a muddy river bank where he and his friends had played like small brown beavers and at the bottom of the box, a limp tooth-marked leather stirrup, once worn as a collar by his mongrel dog who had died as he had lived in absolute love and infinite devotion.

The Littlest Angel wept hot, bitter tears, for now he knew that instead of honouring the Son of God, he had been most blasphemous. Why had he ever thought the box was so wonderful? Why had he dreamed that such utterly useless things would be loved by the Blessed Infant? In frantic terror, he turned to run and hide from the Divine Wrath of the Heavenly Father, but he stumbled and fell and with a horrified wail and clatter of halo, rolled in a ball of consummate misery to the very foot of the Heavenly Throne! There was an ominous and dreadful silence in the Celestial City, a silence complete and undisturbed save for the heart-broken sobbing of the Littlest Angel. Then, suddenly, the Voice of God, like Divine Music, rose and swelled through Paradise! And the Voice of God spoke, saying "Of all the gifts of all the angels, I find that this small box pleases me most. It's contents are of the Earth of men and My Son is born to be King of both. These are the things My Son, too, will know and love and cherish and then, regretful, will leave behind him when His task is done. I accept this gift in the Name of the Child, Jesus, born of Mary, this night in Bethlehem."

There was a breathless pause and then the rough, unsightly box of the Littlest Angel began to glow with a bright unearthly light, then the light became a lustrous flame and the flame became a radiant brilliance that blinded the eyes of all the angels! None but the Littlest Angel saw it rise from its place before the Throne of God, and he and only he, watched it arch the firmament to stand and shed its clear, white, beckoning light over a Stable where a Child was Born. There it shone on the Night of Miracles and its light was reflected down the centuries deep in the heart of all mankind. Yet, earthly eyes, blinded, too by its splendour could never know that the lowly gift of the Littlest Angel was what all men would call forever:

" THE SHINING STAR OF BETHLEHEM "

Ack: "The Transvaal Scouter"

I believe that

She is 92 years old, petite, well poised and proud. She is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed, and her makeup perfectly applied, in spite of the fact she is legally blind. Today she has moved to a nursing home. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making this move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, where I am employed, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet curtains that had been hung on her window.

"I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year old having just been presented with a new puppy. "Mrs Jones, you haven't seen the room ... just wait," I said. Then she spoke these words that I will never forget:

"It is a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice. I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or I can get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do work. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I will focus on the new day and all of the happy memories I have stored away just for this time in my life. Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you have already put in.

- I believe - that our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.
- I believe - that no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.
- I believe - that just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.
- I believe - that true friendship continues to grow, even over the longest distance. Same goes for true love.
- I believe - that it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- I believe - that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.
- I believe - that you can keep going, long after you can't.
- I believe - that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.
- I believe - that either you control your attitude or it controls you.
- I believe - that heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.
- I believe - that money is a lousy way of keeping score.
- I believe - that my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best time.
- I believe - that sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down, will be the ones to help you get back up.
- I believe - that sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.
- I believe - that it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.
- I believe - that no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.
- I believe - that just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other ... And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.
- I believe - that you shouldn't be so eager to find out at secret. It could change your life forever.
- I believe - that two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.
- I believe - that your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people whodon't even know you.
- I believe - that even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you, you will find the strength to help.
- I believe - that credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.
- I believe - that the people you care about most in life are taken from you too soon. "

