



SAARP SOCIAL SERVICES - PINELANDS

(Reg No 2006/003084/08)

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Monthly Meetings: 3rd Thursday @ Pinelands Bowling Club,
St Stephen's Road. Doors open at 09:00, meeting closes 11:15

NEWSLETTER : APRIL 2021

Dear SAARP Friends

Well, it's Easter Monday as I write and I hope you have all enjoyed an unusually festive long weekend with family and friends, and are sated with rich food, chocolate eggs and all the other traditional things we indulge in at Easter. It's been so long since we've been able to get together and relax in each other's company. We now wait to see whether or not Covid-19 has more surprises in store for us, though.

Last month we did manage a small gathering for a last-minute Bingo morning; only about 20 of us there, and I wonder if that was because so many are still acutely aware of the danger inherent in mixing with others. It's going to take a long time for us to get used to living the 'new norm'; perhaps, once our vaccine roll-out begins (*ha, ha*) we'll be more confident about socialising again.

At the Committee meeting on 1 April it was decided that we'll have a tea party on Thursday 15 April; refreshments to be provided by the Committee. Mary Whitelaw has agreed to talk to us about her serious battle with the virus which I'm sure you'll all find very moving, as did the Committee when we heard her speak of it.

Before I leave the subject of Easter and its traditions, there are a couple of things I'd like to share with you:

(a) Easter Bunny: The Bible makes no mention of egg-laying hares delivering decorated eggs to well-behaved children on Easter Sunday! The exact origins of this mythical mammal are unclear, but rabbits, known to be prolific procreators, are an ancient symbol of fertility and new life.

According to some sources, the Easter bunny arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its coloured eggs. The custom gradually spread across the US and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries grew to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests.

Question: What do you get when you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole?

Answer: A hot, cross bunny!

(b) **Easter Eggs:** Although Easter is a religious holiday, some of its customs are linked to pagan traditions; the egg is an ancient symbol of new life associated with festivals celebrating spring. From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus's emergence from the tomb and resurrection.

Decorating eggs is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century. The custom of the time forbade eating eggs during Lent, but hens kept laying them; people would hard boil them, then paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them at Easter as a celebration.

The largest Easter egg ever made was over 25 feet high and weighed over 8,000 pounds. It was built out of chocolate and marshmallow and supported by an internal steel frame.

(c) **Paschal Lamb:** Lamb is a traditional Easter food. Christians refer to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," though lamb at Easter also has roots in early Passover celebrations. In the story of Exodus, the people of Egypt suffered a series of terrible plagues, including the death of all firstborn sons. Members of the Jewish faith painted their doorposts with sacrificed lamb's blood so that God would "pass over" their homes. Jews who converted to Christianity continued the tradition of eating lamb at Easter. Historically, lamb would have been one of the first fresh meats available after a long winter with no livestock to slaughter.

ELIZABETH, A 7-YEAR OLD ROCKET MAKER

A BBC item about a creative youngster caught my eye:

Elizabeth is an aspiring astronaut with lots of creativity - so much so that she spent her time during lockdown building her own rocket, and it works very well! Along with her mum Jennifer, Elizabeth built a working rocket that they tested out in their living room. They had special blast-off decorations, and the living room launch was a mission success!

Mum Jennifer said: "We measured some secret ingredients out and cooked up some smoke from our static fire in the living room and it was a success". After the success of their first "launch", Jennifer and Elizabeth took the rocket to their launch pad in the garden and treated their neighbours to a fantastic show! Jennifer said: "It was amazing to see her get so hands-on with every aspect of building it... just to turn some cardboard boxes into something amazing was incredible to watch".

Elizabeth hopes to become an astronaut one day, and US company Astrobotic will be helping her get that little bit closer - the company will be taking her YouTube sticker to the Moon on their Peregrine lunar lander later this year. A spokesperson for the company said: "Younger generations need

role models that look like them. Elizabeth's enthusiasm for space is fantastic and we're proud to be sending her sticker to the Moon".

Some comments generated by her achievement:

'That is amazing! I can't believe the rocket took off! That girl has a big dream and I hope she achieves it!'

'At school, we made a small module and put an egg inside. When we dropped it, the egg didn't crack!'

'That girl has some SERIOUS science skills for a seven year old!'

'Wow!! That's amazing!! Super well done!! We made a bird feeder during the past year but I don't think it compares to Elizabeth's amazing rocket!!'

Astonishing what kids get up to these days!

Thinking about rockets and space travel, last week Jared Isaacman, a 38-year old billionaire entrepreneur, announced the ***ALL-CIVILIAN CREW*** who will accompany him on the next SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule which is due to launch in September for a 3- or 4-day mission. At the announcement Isaacson told reporters: ***"When this mission is complete, people are going to look at it and say this was the first time that everyday people could go to space."***

Isaacman designed the mission to raise awareness & support for St Jude Children's Research Hospital, a leading paediatric cancer centre in Tennessee, to whom he has already pledged a personal donation of \$100 million (R1.47 billion). The civilian crew members named are:

- (a) Hayley Arceneaux, 29, a bone cancer survivor and one-time patient at St Jude. She is a physician's assistant at the Hospital.**
- (b) Chris Sembroskie, 41, an aerospace data analyst and US Air Force veteran. He was selected through a sweepstakes that drew 72 000 applicants and raised \$113million in St Jude donations.**
- (c) Sian Proctor, 51, a geoscience professor at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona. He was previously a candidate to become a NASA astronaut.**

All four will undergo extensive training modelled after the curriculum NASA astronauts use to prepare for SpaceX missions.

I'm sure we will watch developments with interest and wish them all a successful mission and safe return to earth.

RECYCLING OF FACE MARKS

Please, *please* remove the elastic earstraps before ditching your masks. Apparently birds are strangling themselves with them.

HANG IN THERE!

Eleven people – 10 men and 1 woman - were hanging on a rope, under a helicopter. As the rope was not strong enough to carry them all, they decided that one would have to leave, otherwise they were all going to fall. They weren't able to choose that person, until the woman gave a very touching speech.

She said she would voluntarily let go of the rope because, as a woman, she was used to giving up everything for her husband and kids or for men in general, and always making sacrifices with little in return. As soon as she finished her speech, all the men started clapping



THINKING OF OTHERS

As a result of the pandemic few of us haven't suffered the loss of family members, close friends and neighbours due to the virulence of Covid-19. Grieving during lockdown has also been particularly painful, and not being able to say goodbye leaves a sadness that doesn't pass. One thing we have had to learn is the acceptance of *death as part of life* – Westerners could learn so much from tribal people in this regard.

Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, weddings etc. have also been warped by social distancing, masks and sanitising. Now, with restrictions gradually being lifted, we must take care not to let our diligent observance of the protocols be affected in any way – the dreaded Third Wave is threatening to overwhelm us if we do, and SA cannot afford to return to hard lockdown again.

Hope to see a good turn-out at our meeting on 15 April.

Cheers for now

Ruth

PS One of our members has a small business in Maitland and they are wondering if one of you from Pinelands club would be interested in helping at the business for 2 days a week.

Should you be interested please contact: Mrs McKay 0219112331 or Rory Mckay 0837006060.

COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS				
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