



PACK CHAT

October 2009 – Volume 2

It seems like an absolute age since our last edition of Pack Chat – my apologies.

With the year almost over, I thought I would put together a Christmas edition. But before we head off to the North Pole.....

THE CUB PROGRAMME

By now you should have all heard about the changes to the Cub Programme, which come into effect from the 1st October. Change is never easy and we have had a number of changes of late. They say change is as good as a holiday so let's embrace these changes and enjoy the challenge ahead.

I thought I would share *The Lesson from a Coffee Bean* with you.

A young woman went to her mother and complained, saying life was so hard. The daughter was tired of fighting and struggling with an endless stream of day-to-day issues that sapped her enthusiasm. It seemed as if when one problem was solved, a new one rose to take its place.

Without saying a word, her mother (who had endured a hard life), took her to the kitchen and filled three pots with water on the stove. In the first, she placed carrots, and in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let all three boil without saying a word. Ten minutes later she turned off the stove. The mother fished the carrots out (putting them in a bowl), pulled the eggs out (putting them in a different bowl), and then ladled the coffee into yet another bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked. "Tell me what you can see." "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the daughter replied, a bit confused. "Come closer and feel the carrots," the mother asked. The daughter did so, and noted that they had become mushy-soft. Then, the mother asked her to take an egg from the hot water and break it. After pulling off the shell, the daughter noticed that the egg had become hard-boiled. Finally, the mother asked her daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma, then asked, "What's the point, mom?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity – boiling water – but each had reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it became mushy and weak. The egg had started fragile; its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting in the boiling water, it had hardened inside. The ground coffee beans were unique. After they had been in boiling water, they released a rich aromatic flavour and improved the water.

Life-Giving Questions:

"Which are you?" the mother asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?" Think about it. Are you a carrot that seems strong, but after experiencing the pain and adversity that naturally comes with life, wilts, becomes soft and loses its strength? Or, are you like an egg that starts with a soft, malleable heart, but hardens as you encounter difficulties in life? Does your outer personality look the same as it always has,

but on the inside you know you've become bitter tough and hardened? Or are you like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water – the very circumstance that brings the pain. When life's experiences get difficult and hard to manage, do you accept the challenge, keep smiling and attempt to grow through the experience (i.e. releasing a pleasing fragrance like the coffee bean)?

People, who practice living their lives like coffee beans, try to bend with difficulties, avoid anger and all resentment. They live life as an unfolding adventure that sometimes becomes very hard, but offers opportunities for growth even through the sting of disappointment.

Life is good. Learn to celebrate the good times and grow through the difficult ones. Learn from each other to avoid becoming like the soggy carrot or the hardened egg. Seek to improve the world, especially when it's difficult.

- Author Unknown



DID YOU KNOW.....

October is Astronomy Month in South Africa? Why not discover the secrets of space – need some ideas – go to:

www.saasta.ac.za/astronomy/index.shtml

A Mystery Safari (Pow Wow) is happening in the Eastern Cape next year? It is going to take place from 24 to 26 April 2010 at the Sumcay Christian Centre on the banks of the Swartkop River. Cost is R800.00 (excluding travelling). If you haven't heard about this exciting event, please get hold of your APC Cub Programme as accommodation is limited and you DON'T want to miss out.

WEBSITES

I was watching a kiddies programme the other day and they were talking about Valentines Day – wow a bit early wouldn't you say! What grabbed my attention was a lady who had some rather nice crafty ideas made from next to nothing. Her website address is www.craftycorner.co.za; they

have a sister site www.upcycle.co.za, which has some lovely ideas on making items from rubbish – ever thought about what to do with the keys on your old keyboard? Check out the website.

PROGRAMME IDEAS

All over the world, Christmas celebrations reflect local culture and traditions. These traditions may differ but they all share in the wonder and magic of the holiday season.

The Truth about Santa Claus

Do children today still believe in Santa?

More than half a century ago, a little New York girl had her doubts about the existence of Santa Claus.

So also have millions of other people all over the world. But perhaps this girl was unique in asking a newspaper to set her mind at rest on the subject.

Her name was Virginia O'Hanlon and this is the letter she wrote to the *New York Sun*.

Dear Editor,
I am eight years old. Some of my friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says if you see it in the Sun, it is so. Please tell me the truth is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia

The Editor, Edward Mitchell, was a man of imagination and understanding. He decided that he would print a reply to the little girl's question. And that reply, penned by his assistant, Frank Church, has always been considered one of the finest pieces of editorial journalism ever to appear in the columns of this famous New York journal. In a slightly shorter form we give it here.....

'Virginia,' the letter began, 'your friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticisms of a special age. They do not believe except what they can see.'

'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.'

'Alas, how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as though there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.'

'You might get your Papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see him coming down, what would that prove? The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders of the world. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside the curtain and view the picture, heavenly beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in the world there is nothing else real and abiding. No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives for ever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the hearts of children.'

Virginia grew up to become a teacher and never lost the faith she gained when she was only eight – not a faith in a flesh-and-blood Father Christmas but in the unseen spirit that spreads happiness everywhere in this happy and holy season.

Father Christmas Hanger

Equipment: red card, black card, string, hole punch, felt-tipped pens, scissors, cotton wool and glue.



- Cut out a star shape (five points) from the red card.
- The top point is Father Christmas' head. Punch a hole in the top and tie on a piece of string so that he can be hung up.
- Draw on a face using the felt-tipped pens.
- Draw on buttons down the centre of the star.
- Cut out, from black card, two boots and stick them on to the bottom two points, his feet.
- Glue on some cotton wool for a beard and furry bits on the coat.

Pass the Parcel

Take a special treat that can be shared and wrap it with several layers of Christmas paper. Have the Cubs sit in a tight circle and pass the parcel around until the music stops or a leader says STOP. The Cub with the parcel takes off one layer of paper and the parcel proceeds around the circle again. Keep removing layers until the prize is revealed. All the Cubs can then share in the treat.

Christmas Card Hunt

Collect old Christmas cards and cut each in half. Put one half in a basket and the other half in a pile to be scattered around the room.

Each Cub starts by taking a half card from the basket. On 'go' they all go off to find the match and bring it to a leader to verify it's the right one. Then they go back to the basket and get another until all the cards have been matched up.

We don't have snow at Christmas time but have you ever wondered why the snow is white?

Why the Snow is White

After the Creator made the heavens and the earth, He decided to make snow. The only problem was he had run out of colours, so He told the Snow to find his own.

So the Snow went to the Grass and asked for some colour, but the Grass would not part with any of it. Next, the Snow went to the Tulips with the same request, but the Tulips just laughed at the Snow. After that, he went to the other flowers, but none were willing to part with any colour to help the Snow out.

In despair, the Snow sat down beside a bed of Snowdrops. The Snowdrops, seeing his sadness, asked, "why are you down like this?" The Snow explained his problem, and how all the other flowers and plants had treated him, and how, if he does not find some colour, he will end up like the Wind (disagreeable and furious because he cannot be seen).

The lowly little Snowdrop felt sorry for the Snow and offered him some of its colour. The Snow gratefully accepted – and that's why the Snow is white.

Because of the way the Flowers, Grass and others were so disagreeable and nasty to him – the Snow hides them all winter long. All that can be seen are Snowdrops!



Christmas Tongue Twisters

(say these five times fast)

Seven Santas sang silly songs
 Santa's sleigh slides on slick snow
 Bobby brings bright bells



Pin the Star on the Christmas Tree

Equipment: a paper Christmas tree; a paper star per Cub; prestik; blindfolds.

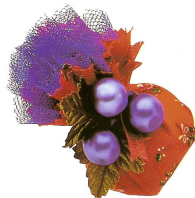
Played like pin the tail on the donkey. Cubs line up in relay formation; the first Cub in the six is blindfolded. He/she has to walk up to the tree and "pin" his/her star to the tree and return to the Six. The blindfold is handed to the next Cub in the six and so on. The winner is the Cub who pins his/her star closest to the top of the tree.

Pot-Pourri Sachets

You will need:

Printed cotton Christmas fabric
Coloured net
Pot-pourri
Scissors, pinking shears and pins
Elastic bands
Ribbons
Wired baubles, berries and sequins
Pencil and small plate

1. Lay out the fabric, wrong side facing you. Place the plate on the fabric and draw around it with a pen. Using the pinking shears, cut out the circle, just inside the pen line.
2. Pin the fabric circle to two pieces of net. Using pinking shears, cut out two slightly larger net circles. Lay the fabric circle down, wrong side facing you. Place the two net circles on top.
3. Pour a small mound of pot-pourri into the centre of the circles. Gather the circles up around the pot-pourri and tightly wrap an elastic band around the fabric. Frill the fabric out at the top.
4. Decorate the sachets with a ribbon bow. Add other trims, like wired beads, poking the ends of the wire around behind the ribbon. You could stitch or glue a few sequins to the bow as well.



Christmas Stocking

Equipment: a Christmas stocking per Six; a number of Christmas decorations – the same for each Six; Christmas tree.

The time has come to decorate the Christmas Tree. Cubs are in relay formation. The leader calls out a decoration he/she needs to put on the tree. The Cubs have to run up to the Christmas stocking and feel for the object the Leader has called for. Once found, the Cub can put it on the Christmas tree (either the real thing or a paper tree). The game continues until everyone has had a chance to identify an object and decorate the tree.

Spy Santa

Before the Cubs arrive, hide a small statue or picture of Santa Claus in the room. Announce that Santa is somewhere in the vicinity and everyone is to look for him. When a Cub locates the replica, he/she should not give away the location but should whisper its location to the leader, be seated, and watch the others look.

Christmas is a time for giving. Times are tight but as B-P said:

"Brother Scouts – Hitler does not seem likely to give us a Merry Christmas, so if we are to have one at all we must make it for ourselves. One way to this end is to double our Good Turns usual at this season, and to inspire our boys to do the same – Robert Baden-Powell. 1940

So let's double our Good Turns and bring a little festive joy to those around us. Visit the old age homes in your community and sing or read to the elderly. Go and play games with the youngsters in children's homes. Find something you can do to help animals in shelters. There is so much we can do that doesn't involve money.

May I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for all your hard work during the year. Sometimes it isn't easy, I know, but hang in there as the work you are doing with our youngsters is invaluable.

I hope you and your families have a blessed festive season. If you are travelling, take care on the roads. Enjoy the break!

Jeanette