

Tech Track

Scouting has given many a boy a push in life

Eleven of the twelve astronauts who walked on the moon were Boy Scouts.

The youngest climber of the high peaks on all seven continents is a scout. The first nonstop solo flight around the world was done by a scout.

This year is the centenary of the Boy Scout movement.

Scouting started in 1907, when Lord Robert Baden-Powell held the first scout camp on Brownsea Island, in England. In 1908, Baden-Powell, who was a lieutenant general in the British Army, wrote his scouting principles in a book called *Scouting for Boys*.

A couple of years later, in 1910,

an equivalent organisation for girls, the Girl Guides, was founded, and today the two organisations together have a worldwide membership of 38-million in 216 countries.

It is generally said that Baden-Powell's idea to form the scout movement germinated in South Africa, where he was fighting the Boers. Baden-Powell was besieged in Mafikeng by a much larger Boer force and, with his back to the wall, he realised the value of young boys.

At Mafikeng, there was a cadet corps, which was a group of boys who supported the British soldiers by carrying messages and doing

other important jobs.

As part of their training, these boys were taught how to survive in the veld.

Baden-Powell noticed that, when the boys were given responsibility for important jobs, they rose to the occasion and performed really well.

He also noticed how the survival training taught the boys a sense of independence, and how to think for themselves.

This impressed him and, later, after the Boer War, he started the Boy Scout movement as an organisation to build the character and confidence of the youth.

Baden-Powell's book, *Scouting for Boys*, sold like crazy and soon the movement was spreading, and developing. The first overseas unit was founded in Gibraltar, in 1908, followed quickly by a unit in Malta.

The first large foreign country to start scouting was Canada, followed by Australia, New Zealand and then South Africa. By 1910, countries such as Denmark, India, Russia and Greece were in the movement.

I was a scout and am proud of the fact that I became a Springbok Scout, which is the highest award in South African scouting. Not many boys make it to Springbok Scout. I have two sons, Warren and Steven, and both of them also became Springbok Scouts.

I was able to watch them and their scouting friends develop leadership characteristics and learn to stand on their own two feet.

There were many stories of the rain coming down just as they were about to pitch camp, and they then had no option but to get on with it and get the camp up and operational.

There was no option to call the teacher, or mom.

As boys progress towards Springbok Scout, they have to plan camps



Kelvin Kemm

for groups of scouts.

This includes buying all the food, making sure that it is nutritionally balanced, arranging the cooking equipment, tents, and all that is necessary.

It also includes getting written permission from the owner

of the land to use the property and getting signed permission forms from the parents of the boys, to attend the camp.

The boy organising the camp also has to have the phone number of a medical doctor in the area, as well as a list of potential emergency numbers, in the event of any sort of trouble needing attention.

The boys are also trained in first aid. I myself have had to use this training a few times. I was also proud when Steven was acting as a voluntary driver during the World Earth Summit in Johannesburg and a foreign delegate collapsed on the floor at the Sandton Convention Centre.

Steven immediately gave the person treatment on the floor and restored his breathing pattern. I was not there but a number of delegates told me about it afterwards. Other people stood around, not knowing what to do.

So, Baden-Powell's foresight has given millions of boys worldwide a push in life that has helped many of them achieve more. Eleven scouts walking on the moon tells one something.

I hope that scouting in South Africa goes from strength to strength. A particular word of appreciation must go to all the scoutmasters who keep the system going.

By the way, there are now Girl Scouts in South Africa – the girls wanted to be with the boys.

A famous scoutmaster, whose 'jungle name' is Chamois, was instrumental in this move, even though he picked up some flack at the time.

Chamois became a scoutmaster in his mid-twenties, much to the surprise of many in the movement, and he went on to become a star.

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COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN

MENTORSHIP MISSION

Draughtspersons urged to start thinking outside the box

Dennis Ndaba | Staff Writer

The South African Institute of Draughting held its National Computer-Aided Draughting and Design Conference in Boksburg, on the East Rand, last month.

Speaking at the conference, Stratek CEO Dr Kelvin Kemm, who is also a columnist in *Engineering News*, stressed the importance of mentoring novice professionals.

"The reason why South Africa has a good rugby team is that there is a mentorship programme in place.

"The new players joining the team have to acquire information and the experienced play-

ers have the onus to pass on the knowledge for the benefit of the country."

He emphasised that the new players must not be too shy to ask questions because this will increase their knowledge levels.

"In the case of draughtspersons, the need to conceive what they are drawing, which will lead to actualisation and radical ideas, is paramount."

He urged draughtspersons to start thinking outside the box and to come up with new factory layout designs that will improve the flow of goods, leading to increased productivity.

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