

# SKY PILOT NEWS

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SARAH WITH MOWER DONATED BY STUDENTS OF WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL

**JOE'S SNAKE BITE: From the Sky Pilot's Log 2CH Broadcast.**

My assistant, Joe, was a good fellow in most ways, though a bit of a misfit in the tropics. He and George did not get on too well as a rule, though there was never any real animosity between them. They had one thing in common, however, they both hated snakes. And there were plenty of snakes in Arnhem Land where we were stationed.

I had to go away in the aeroplane to attend to an injured stockman and it was unfortunate that it was just the day we had arranged to take the school children for a picnic. George had been asked to accompany us as he was a firm friend and favourite with the children. When I knew that I would be away I had a few words with George. "Look here, George," I said, "I have to go away for a few hours and that means that you and Joe will be alone with the kiddies. I know that Joe can be very trying at times, but you will try to make allowances for him, won't you?"

"I will that, Smithy," he replied. "As a matter of fact, I have a lot of admiration for Joe. He can't help bein' what he is; I guess he must of been born that way. Anyhow you can count on me. If I can prevent it we won't lock horns while you're away—that's a promise."

George kept his promise and behaved himself very well. He only made one slip and that was while Joe was saying grace before dinner. Joe believed in a long grace. True to his promise, George sat down and kept his eyes so tightly shut that he didn't see the bull-ants' nest behind him. What he said when the bull-ants started on him rather upset the grace; but under the circumstances he was forgiven.

After dinner the children played in the bush. George and Joe sat down on an old log and yarned while they kept their eyes on some of the toddlers who couldn't join in with the other games. One little girl amused herself by poking a stick into the hollow of the log the men were sitting on. It wasn't till she screamed that they realised that anything was wrong, and they looked up in time to see an ugly snake with its head drawn back ready to strike the toddler. Joe was the nearest. With no thought for himself, he jumped forward and grasped the snake with his bare hands. As the snake's fangs sank into Joe's arm George shuddered. "Joe," he whispered, "Joe, old man, you've been bit!"

Joe went very white. He wrapped a handkerchief round his arm while George killed the

snake. Between them they tightened the ligature and George hurried Joe back to the mission. Somehow George found the permanganate of potash and rubbed the crystals into the bite after he had sucked out the venom. He was as gentle as a nurse.

"How's that, old man?" he asked finally. "For heaven's sake try to buck up. Smithy will be back any minute and he'll fix you up proper. Wish I knew more about snake bite. How do you feel now?"

Joe's answer came in a voice that quivered. "I've gone a bit numb, George. It was a big snake and unless Smithy comes back soon it looks like the end. I can feel the poison workin'."

"Don't talk like that, Joe," said George with forced cheerfulness. "You'll be all right. Smithy's always gettin' bit and it don't seem to hurt him much."

"He's been bit that often he must be immune by now. Anyhow he knows how to treat snake bite—he's used to it. I wish he'd come quick."

"So do I. Look here, Joe . . . what I mean ter say is . . . oh, hang it all, it was a darn brave thing you done, Joe. I take off me hat to you. Tell you the truth I didn't think you had it in you. It was the gamest thing ever I seen."

"Thanks, George. I—I'm glad I done it. I was always scared that when the time came I might—well—fall down on the job. I was dead scared, George, an' I am still. I hate snakes an' it's a rotten way to die."

"Don't talk about dyin', Joe. You'll be all right, I know you will. I'm not much good at prayin' but if I thought it would do any good I'd go down on my knees right now. I wish Smithy would come."

"George, you've been very decent today. I know you don't like me much an' maybe it's my own fault, but—well, we seem to look at things so different. If—if only you would become a Christian I wouldn't mind dyin' so much."

"Oh, you ain't goin' to die, Joe; God couldn't let that happen. An' maybe I'm nearer to bein' a Christian than you think. Of course I like to argue, and I put on a bit of an act sometimes; but all the same I take a lot of notice of you fellows. It ain't so much what you say . . . I know you are genuine and you try to live out what you preach. I guess God understands bushmen like me. I'll never be no 'oly saint, but

maybe I'm closer to God than you think. Anyway I always try to do the right thing."

"But," Joe insisted, "why don't you admit your need of a Saviour and confess your sins to God? I know he'll forgive you."

"I ain't much good at confessin'. I'd have to go back a long way. Unless I tell the worst and lump the rest I can't waste that much of God's time. Maybe God understands . . . Anyway you ain't goin' to die. If only . . . say, listen, I can hear the aeroplane! You'll be all right now, Joe, here's Smithy comin'."

A few minutes later I was in the room. After a brief examination of the punctures in Joe's arm I gave him a sleeping draught.

"Drink this up," I said. "That's the way. You're out of danger now so you can have a good sleep and in the morning you won't know that you were bitten by a snake. Come on, George, we'll go over to the office and let Joe have a good sleep."

When seated in the office George told me the whole story. I asked him what precautions he had taken and he mentioned casually that he had tried to suck out the venom.

"That was a risky thing to do," I told him. "Of course it's quite safe if you had no broken skin in your mouth, but there is always some danger. You could drink the venom and it wouldn't hurt you, but even a tiny scratch in your mouth would be fatal if the venom got into it."

"Hang it all, Smithy," said George. "It was the least I could do. Joe risked his life for that kiddie. Anyone would do what I done."

"Well I'm proud of you both, George. You are both very gallant gentlemen. By the way, what did you do with the snake?"

"It's here, Smithy, in this sugar bag. I thought it might do for your collection though it's a bit knocked about. I hit it pretty hard and often. I **hate** snakes!"

Poor old George! That was many years ago, but I never forgot the incident. Sometimes we Christians worry too much in our attempts to get loved ones to sign a decision card, or to conform to our own particular method of expressing our faith in Christ. It states clearly in the Bible that there is no other way that we can be saved except through faith in Christ, but God is no less righteous than we. He can look into the hearts of men and I'm sure that many a man we worry about is already at peace with God through Christ—even if he does not parade the fact should be. Open confession will prob-

ably come later, but it is better to come naturally than to be forced by our over-eagerness.

Whenever I think of the incident I feel proud of my two friends who were terrified of snakes and yet acted bravely. I did not keep the snake. It was badly damaged, and in any case was not a valuable specimen, being nearly a young python. It was quite harmless and its bite would not have hurt a child—but I never let George or Joe know that.

And the final entry in today's Log is taken from the 19th chapter of the First book of the Kings. Elijah said: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left. . . ." And the Lord said: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal."

**RALLY AND SALE OF WORK:** The 29th Anniversary Rally and Spring Sale of Work was held at Marella Mission Farm on 29th October. The day proved to be the hottest we have yet experienced for a Sale and though we had a good crowd in the morning there were very few people who ventured out in the afternoon. A storm broke later in the afternoon but by that time most of the visitors had gone home. Had the storm come in the morning it would have ruined our Sale but God was good to us, as He always is, and the Sale was a success, though, because of the heat, not as good as the previous one.

At the Public Meeting the Bible Reading and Opening Prayer were given by Mrs. Ken Nash. The children prepared by Mrs. Twible, sang very well in spite of having "stage fright". The children at present at Marella are much younger than those in residence at our last Rally and we missed the stronger voices of older children; however everyone enjoyed the singing. As usual the music was supplied by Mr. Ken Hodkin, who has been one of our most faithful helpers over many years dating back to our first Rally in the Sydney Town Hall. Following is a list of the takings from the various Stalls:

Boat Rides	6.32
Books	52.51
Cakes and Jams	299.33
Cassettes (Profit)	27.00
Children's	106.88
Fancy Work & Baby Wear	208.35
Jewellery	90.00
Jumble	536.58
Parkfield	672.89
Pies	83.90
Plain Work	199.43

Plants .....	102.27
Pony Rides .....	12.60
Produce .....	534.74
Refreshments .....	154.60
Second Hand Toys .....	63.75
Soft Drinks Ice Cream .....	229.94
Stamps .....	253.90
Sweets .....	61.08
Van Dykes .....	150.00
White Elephant .....	216.24
Youth Fellowship .....	402.96
Christmas Cards .....	4.55
Films .....	23.00
Donations .....	1612.60
Donations by Mail .....	596.50
Blue Mountains Auxiliary .....	300.00

This gives a total of \$7,001.92 less expenses of \$744.00 which leaves a net profit of \$6,257.92 which is only \$889.44 less than our all time record of May, 1977. We have much cause to praise God for this evidence of His love and provision for us. This profit will help reduce the overdraft in our General Fund which has been worrying our Auditors.

Our new Farm Manager, Mr. Joe Curtis, managed very well in the preparation for the Rally and he was ably assisted by Miss Patricia Martin, our Land Girl, and voluntary Workers Mr. & Mrs. Martin, Mr. Vic Knight and Mr. J. Dunne.

**VEGETABLE GARDEN:** Many of our visitors have remarked on the attractive vegetable garden Mr. Joe Curtis, the Farm Manager, has maintained. It certainly is a credit to him and it is a great asset to the staff and children as the fresh vegetables appear on the table in succession. We have also planted a number of young fruit trees which in time to come will be a welcome asset. A lot of our other fruit trees had been neglected; and uncared for fruit trees are a liability rather than an asset. Those trees worth saving have been pruned and sprayed and are receiving regular attention.

**CHILDREN'S LETTERS:** We often receive letters from boys and girls who have left Marella to return to parents or other relatives. Some of their remarks are quite interesting and very touching. Amongst these were letters from Kim and her brothers from which these extracts have been taken.

"How are you? I tried to ring you up but I couldn't because the operator couldn't reach you. Of course you wasn't home, I suppose."

"I hope you are going well at Marella Mission Farm and how are the girls and boys? I am in the football team for Nambucca Heads and I'm put centre. I'm being good for Mum and Dad but been a little bit bad."

"Dear Marella Farm, I hope you are all well and all the boys and girls at Marella. And we might come down for the Fete on something October. And bye for now, and I know I writ a short letter because I had to go out. Love from Kelvin and the rest of the family. Sorry about the mistake I done."

**JANET AND RITA:** Those older friends may remember Janet and Rita who were two sisters cared for at Marella over 20 years ago. They stayed with us while they attended school and when they left school they took positions on the staff for a short time, helping to care for the younger children. When they left our care and went out into the community they both married and had children of their own.

Recently we had a visit from Rita and her husband and three children. They spent a happy little time with us before returning to their home in the country. Rita told us that her sister, Janet, had lost her husband when he was only 28 years of age and she was left with five children all under eight. She was unable to cope, even with Rita's assistance, and we promised that we would do what we could to help. A little later Janet herself arrived with the two oldest of the children and she asked us to care for them as they were within our admittance age limit. This we were very pleased to do and they have settled down very happily and are now attending school. The boy is named Glenn and his younger sister, Simone.

Janet is the third of our former girls to ask us to care for their children. It is encouraging to know that the children who were so happy at Marella when they were young are anxious for their own children to have the same love and care that they themselves experienced so long ago.

**CONCLUSION:** We are nearing the end of yet another year. Already we have made arrangements for the placing of the children for the four week period from Boxing Day; the staff, who will also be on holidays during this period, are also making plans to have a much needed break. Friends have been very good and many parties have been arranged for the children and they are assured of a very happy Christmas; however we usually experience a very lean period in January and February; most of our expenses continue while the children are away and holiday pay for the staff is a big drain on our resources. We would, therefore, ask you to make it a special matter of prayer that God will provide for all our needs as He has never failed to do in the past.