

SKY PILOT NEWS

APRIL,
1970

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SKY PILOT FELLOWSHIP

Rally and Sale of Work

to be held (D.V.) in the grounds of

MARELLA MISSION FARM

ACRES ROAD, KELLYVILLE, N.S.W.

Saturday, 2nd May, 1970

10.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

2.30 p.m. PUBLIC MEETING. FREE PARKING. ALL THE USUAL STALLS.

REFRESHMENTS AND HOT PIES AVAILABLE.

Do your Mother's Day shopping while you enjoy a day's outing in the country; at the same time you will be helping this work for the dark children of our land.

Make up a car party, including your friends. For children there will be swings, donkey and pony rides and motor boat rides on the Mission Lake and other attractions.

If you are unable to come by car, there are buses from Parramatta to Kellyville Post Office. The Mission Farm is about one mile from the Post Office, but transport between the Mission Farm and Post Office bus stop will be arranged for the following buses:—

Depart Parramatta Station: 9.06 a.m., 10.06 a.m., 11.06 a.m., 11.40 a.m., 12.20 p.m., 1.12 p.m.

Depart Kellyville P.O.: 11.50 a.m., 12.45 p.m., 1.23 p.m., 1.53, 4.16, 5.16 p.m.

If coming by car, turn off Windsor Road, at President Road, follow to end, then turn left into Greens Road and first turn to left is Acres Road. The Mission Farm is the third home on the left in Acres Road.

Gifts for the stalls will be greatly appreciated. They should be railed to Marella Mission Farm, Parramatta Railway Station, or brought direct to the Mission Farm before or on the day of the Rally or posted to Box 29, P.O., Castle Hill, 2154, as early as possible.

For further particulars, please 'phone Marella Mission Farm, 629-1555.

PLEASE PRAY FOR A FINE DAY

PALMER'S IBIS: From the Sky Pilot's Log 2CH Broadcast

The wet season had broken some weeks before, and the whole of Arnhem Land was changed to a miracle of green. At night the frogs made such a noise that we could hear them half a mile away. Paddocks that a month before had been burnt and brown with as little vegetation as a busy street, were now like waving fields of wheat. Palmer's peanuts were growing strongly, and the rest of his farm was a picture with cotton plants, milo and sweet potatoes. Only a day or two before he had been telling me it gave promise of being the best season ever since he had come to the Northern Territory . . . and then came the grasshoppers! Like a great cloud stretching from horizon to horizon, they settled on the ground, and within a few hours had done terrific damage to the young growing crops on Palmer's peanut farm. The peanut farmer came to me in great distress.

"I say, Smithy," he said, "isn't there anything I can do? These grasshoppers have started to clean up my farm, and there won't be a thing left in a day or two. I can't get poison from the South in time to be of any use. I've used all I had. I borrowed all Jim's ducks — seventeen of them — but they're so full of hoppers they won't eat another one, and you can't see any difference. It's terrible. I'll be ruined again just when I was getting on my feet."

"What about the flame thrower?" I suggested. "That ought to do some good."

Palmer shook his head. "I tried that," he said. "I used a 44 gallon drum of crude oil and I killed so many of the beastly things that the place stinks of roast grasshoppers; but there are reinforcements arriving every day to take the place of the others. Please, Smithy, come and give me a hand. Surely there is something I can do?"

"It sounds bad," I replied. "I'll come along if you think there's anything I can do; but you know as much about these pests as I do, and without an army of flame throwers or cartloads of poison, I don't see what we can do."

"Just come along and see for yourself," urged Palmer. "Even if you can't do much to help me, it makes it easier to have someone to talk to. I'm almost out of my mind with worry. Ann's away, and I'm all on my own. Oh, it's cruel to see the crops cleaned up, till there's not a leaf left on the young plants. Please come along, Smithy."

"Right you are. I'll be ready in half an hour."

It was a most discouraging sight to see the thousands of grasshoppers invading Palmer's farm.

They came in waves like the flood waters that once had washed away the work of years and brought Silas Palmer to ruin. It was with a feeling of hopelessness that we stood by, unable to stem the tide of ever-flowing insects that left ruin and destruction in their trail. Already they had almost cleaned up the young milo that had shown so much promise, and Palmer groaned audibly.

"Another few hours," he complained, "and they'll have finished off that milo. Then they'll start on the sweet potatoes — some of them are in the vines now — and after that the cotton and the peanuts. There's no stopping them."

"So far," I told him, "they have only ruined the milo. If you could stop them from spreading now, there wouldn't be a great deal of damage done — except to the milo, of course, and that would probably shoot again. If it doesn't you could replant it without much labour or cost."

"That's true, but they won't stop there. I know they won't. They'll be into the cotton and peanuts in a couple of days, and that's where the ruin will be. I can't afford either the time or the money to replant cotton and peanuts; not at this time of the season. Isn't there anything you can do?"

"We can pray about it," I told him. "That's about all we can do now."

"Pray! I mean something practical. Don't get me wrong, I'm not slinging off at prayer; but this is something that needs more than prayer."

"I thought you had tried everything else you could think of."

"So I have. There's nothing more I can do, nothing at all."

"Well, why not give God a chance to do something?"

Palmer hesitated and spoke almost diffidently. "Well — er — I don't think — that is — well, hang it all, we must be practical. What can God do in answer to prayer?"

"He can save your crops, or anything else He wants to do."

"It's all very well for you to talk like that; but what can you expect God to do? I mean — well, you wouldn't expect Him to send down fire from heaven to burn the grasshoppers, would you?"

"I wouldn't worry **how** He got rid of the hoppers; that's His business. But we haven't even asked for His help yet. If we ask Him to save your cotton and peanuts, and He does, will that satisfy you?"

"Oh, yes, that would suit me fine. Yes, if

the cotton and peanuts were all right. I wouldn't mind about the milo and sweet potatoes. But you must be fair and give God a chance; this is something that seems unreasonable to ask Him to do. What I mean is — well, do you expect Him to strike the grasshoppers dead, or what?"

"There you go again, worrying about God's part of the work. I said we ought to ask Him to save the important crops, and it doesn't matter how He does it. Aren't you satisfied with that?"

"Well," Palmer admitted, "it wouldn't do any harm to pray about it, even if it doesn't do any good. There's nothing else we can do now."

"If that's the way you feel about it, you can hardly expect God to answer your prayer. A condition of prayer is that we have faith. I think this time you'd better leave the praying to me. Prayer without faith is a waste of breath."

"Well, if God answers your prayers and saves the cotton and peanuts, I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll give the mission"

"Hold on, Palmer! Are you trying to bribe God? That won't work either. God can supply all the needs of the mission without your help. If He lets you help that is a privilege for you. You speak as if it is a favour of yours to help God with His work. No, leave it at that for the present. You go away and have a sleep. You're worn out for lack of sleep, and there's nothing you can do, anyhow."

Usually it takes time to have prayer answered, and we have to be patient and wait God's time. In this case there was no time to spare. If God failed to answer the prayer within a day or two at the outside there would be no crops left. It was an urgent matter, and I mentioned that fact when I prayed about it. I was hoping that some sudden heavy storm might kill most of the grasshoppers — I couldn't see how otherwise the prayer could be answered. I was as bad as Palmer in wanting to see how the prayer could be answered. I realised that a storm heavy enough to kill the grasshoppers would, in all probability, be severe enough to destroy the crops too. However, I put the thought from me and prayed simply that God would save the crops that meant so much to my friend. Almost immediately I felt the assurance of answered prayer, and it was with real confidence that I told Palmer that he had no need to worry any more as I was sure the prayer had been answered. He didn't seem very impressed, and said he hoped I was right. Anyhow, we turned in early that night and slept till daylight. In the morning we went out, and the grasshoppers were as thick as ever, and they had moved onto the sweet potatoes. Palmer groan-

ed again.

"This is the end," he wailed. "I knew it would happen. Thanks for trying to help me, Smithy, but . . . well, I don't blame you; it was asking God to work a miracle."

"Miracles don't worry God. But when He works a miracle, it usually looks so natural that we don't recognise it for what it is."

"Well, anyhow, it's too late now even for a miracle. I say! Look at that flock of birds! What on earth are they? They look like geese or something; but they aren't flying in formation."

"They're coming this way, too. I think they look like cranes or something. Wait a minute until they come closer. They're flying slowly, whatever they are. I think they may be . . . yes, that's it, they're ibis."

"Ibis? Good heavens, I've never seen such a mob of them before. I wonder what's bringing them this way?"

"They're coming in answer to prayer. They're the miracle we asked for. They've come to help you get rid of the plague of grasshoppers. I knew something would happen today, but I never thought of ibis. They're better than a heavy storm or anything I could have thought of, as they won't hurt your crops while they're cleaning up the hoppers."

"Why, do they eat grasshoppers?"

"I'll say they do. I was reading in Leach's book that two naturalists came on a flock of ibises in the Riverina. They estimated the flock to contain 240,000 birds. They found that each bird shot contained on the average 2,000 young grasshoppers. Now work that out! It means 480,000,000 grasshoppers a day. Palmer, your cotton and peanuts are safe; God sent an army to your help. Isn't that a miracle?"

"A miracle! I'll say it is. I only hope they land here and don't fly past. They don't seem to be slowing down."

"There you go again! still doubting God. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The ibises did not go past; they settled in great clouds on the paddocks of Palmer's farm, and as systematically as an army on the march they formed lines and marched into the invading grasshoppers. The ground seemed suddenly to have blossomed into blue and white flowers as the birds, with their straw-coloured necks, waded into those grasshoppers, stepping daintily on their long red legs. All day they worked and the next, and when they took their leave on the third day it was because there were not enough hoppers left to feed them. Palmer's crops were safe; not only the peanuts and cotton, but also the sweet potatoes.

What is more, the milo sprouted again and made the best crop Palmer had ever harvested.

And the final entry in today's Log is taken from the 65th chapter of Isaiah: "Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

CHILDREN'S OUTINGS: We have a number of friends who take groups of children for outings every month. Sometimes there are different groups and most of the children thus have frequent outings. These outings are not set down for any specific date in the month as often we have outings to which all the children go as a family; but we try to arrange for the friends to take their group of children every 4 or 5 weeks. As a matter of fact at some times of the year, particularly near the end of the year, there are not sufficient Saturdays to enable all outings suggested to take place; we have to reduce the list of engagements to fit the time available.

It is very good for the children to have these friends to take a personal interest in them and to give them the pleasure of outings and we are most grateful to those who arrange it.

LESLIE NIXON: We seldom have any serious illness or accident here but recently, whilst playing with the other boys, Leslie tore one of his fingers rather badly on a barb-wire fence. We took him to the hospital and he had a couple of stitches inserted. It healed up very well and is now perfectly normal again.

TUTORS: As mentioned earlier, we have been able to arrange for a group of tutors to come out one evening each week, during term, to coach the dark children in their homework. There was a long break during the Christmas holidays but the tutors resumed their voluntary tuition on 4th March. This should be a great help to our children. We are most grateful to the tutors who so freely give of their time and talents; they also arrange their own transport so this is no burden on the Mission.

EASTER SHOW: Almost all of the older children were able to visit the Royal Easter Show this year. Several of the staff members took groups of children with them on the Saturday and Monday. It was not possible to arrange for the children to attend the Castle Hill Show and so they were very pleased to be able to attend at the Royal this year. In spite of the crowds they managed to get about quite well and only two of them were lost for a while.

Heather Warwick is to be congratulated on winning several prizes in the Tippler Class with her pigeons.

PHOTOS IN LEAFLET: Many of our friends have remarked about the interesting photos in the Sky Pilot News. By means of these photos they feel that they have come to know some of the children personally. They have remarked what fine and happy children we have at Marella. Unless otherwise stated all the photos that appear in the News are taken by Mr. Langford-Smith.

SOUVENIRS: We still have stocks of souvenir articles for sale in aid of this work. They are as follows: Serviette Rings \$1.30; Tea Spoons 95 cents; Butter Knives 85 cents; Sugar Spoons 85 cents; Jam Spoons 85 cents. Postage on any of the above articles is 5 cents each.

There are also car stickers available. These carry the Mission Badge depicting an Aboriginal boy watching the billy boil and they are printed in three colours and look very attractive. They are 30 cents each, post free.

10" Long playing records of the Sky Pilot's Log taken from the original tape (including the voice of the late Mr. Sid Everett, as "George") may be obtained for \$4.00 each. The stories on this record are: "George's Son," and "A Dead Tooth."

MRS. LANGFORD-SMITH: Over the Christmas holidays Mrs. Langford-Smith had a severe attack of rheumatism. While on holidays she was unable to lift her arms above her head. This rather spoiled the time that should have been a rest time for her. Local doctors were unable to help her and it was not until she returned to Sydney and visited a Specialist that she was able to secure relief. She is very much better now, and she has been able to keep on her usual routine work. We would value your prayers for a complete recovery.

BRUCE LANGFORD-SMITH: Bruce Langford-Smith, who has been a jackaroo on out-back stations for the past 10 years, has, for the last few years, been working at Victoria River Downs Station in the Northern Territory. Recently he was appointed Improvements Supervisor and has been engaged largely on Agricultural and Irrigation work. He came down at Christmas time and was the leader of the C.S.S.M. Beach Mission at Norah Head. While at home he was able to do a lot of work on the Mission Farm.

Bruce has decided later in the year to return to Marella and take over the working of the farm section of the work. He will be able to relieve his father of quite a lot of responsibility. He is also planning to engage in Youth Work in this district and beyond. It will mean sacrificing a good position in the N.T. and your prayers are asked for Bruce and his future.