

namibian **YOUTH PAPER**

The paper for today's youth

Issue 20, June 29, 2004

HEALTH



A brand HIV-AIDS Awareness programme targeting primary schools kicks off in the north.

Page 7

CAREERS



Many people watch their health these days. This young woman makes it her business.

Page 9

ENVIRONMENT



The start of a fortnightly series on the owls in Namibia so we can learn more about them.

Page 10



ON THE BALL ... This group of young people did not wait to be asked but volunteered their time to work in the Biodiversity Garden at the National Museum in Windhoek week before last. Their efforts not only included digging and planting but they also managed to move huge rocks, something due to be done much later on. Project coordinator, Tharina Bird from the museum, commended the volunteers for their punctuality, keenness, self-motivation, hard work and wonderful spirit. "With kids like these, Namibia has indeed got a bright future," she added.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8 2003 3

The namibian - National News



Nothing to fear

A group of biology and science pupils from the Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura had the time of their lives during the recent school holidays. The group went on a collecting trip to the Huns Mountains in the South with scientists to collect specimens for the National Museum's collection. One of the most positive things, expedition leader Tharina Bird, said was how learners lost their fear of spiders and snakes and came to appreciate and value them instead.

THIS ONE'S SAFE ... Hilma Nuulo from Jan Jonker Afrikaanse Secondary School in Katutura was one of the lucky Grade 10 learners who went on the latest Edu-Ventures expedition, this time to the south, during the last school holidays. Here she holds a scorpion which is not dangerous.



*the namibian - Youthpaper
October 12, 2004*



Benson: the spiderman

CUDDLY... Part-time curator's assistant Benson Muramba holds this baboon spider in the palm of his hand.

Picture the scene. You're walking through an ill-lit barn. Shafts of eerie light seep through cracks in the woodwork, illuminating huge and intricate spider's webs. Almost inaudibly, you hear the clacking of mandibles. You turn, slowly, and point your flashlight to a dark corner. Nothing.

Wham, a huge, furry baboon spider leaps in your face, its razor-sharp fangs dripping with deadly venom.

"That is utter nonsense," says Benson Muramba, part-time curator's assistant at the Namibian National Museum's Arachnology department. Benson has a passion for spiders and gets pretty angry when they are depicted as deadly, ferocious or mean. "Spiders are mostly harmless, lovable creatures," he says. "If people took the time to get to know spiders, they would also love them."

Benson is 20 years old and finished high school last year at Immanuel Shifidi High School in Windhoek.

He helps to take care of specimens, while the arachnid curator, Tharina Bird, is on a field trip, collecting spiders and scorpions for the museum.

"Hollywood makes a number of mistakes," says Benson. "Firstly, have you ever seen a spider jump onto you to attack you? Also, spiders will mostly try to flee. The worst lie that movie-makers tell is that spiders are all dangerous to humans. 'There are over 600 spider types in Namibia. Only four of them are known to cause serious effects in humans.' These include the violin spiders, brown button spiders and sac spiders. These can give nasty bites, but hardly ever

do. Even their bites are mostly treatable.

"The vast majority of spiders, even those in your bath, are completely harmless. Spiders play such an important role in nature - why don't they make a movie about that?"

Benson enjoys being different. He is, as far as he knows, the only Herero spiderman in the world, he jokes. "In my culture, spiders are not considered very important. Many of my friends don't even know the difference between spiders and insects. I have great plans to

become a scientist and will return to my people and teach them about spiders."

Benson has nine brothers and sisters - he is the second-youngest. "Most of my brothers and sisters are professional people, or are studying. I'm the only one who is into spiders."

Namibia needs local scientists, says Benson. "Many of the curators at the museum are from other countries - we don't have

enough local scientists." He

says he would encourage younger people to get into science

as a profession. "But it's not a bed of roses. Unless you have a passion

for the science field you choose, you might give it up later. It's hard work, but worth it."

It's not impossible to follow a career in the natural sciences, as Benson's overseer, curator's assistant Hermine Inana-Uusiku explains. "I started at the museum as a receptionist. The museum assisted with my training and now I am here. I hope to become a chief curator one day," says the 32 year-old mother of one.

Like Benson, Hermine has no fear of spiders. "I'm the one who removes them from the bath," she says and laughs.

At work, she also feeds the scorpions. "They are not scavengers. They want to kill their own food." She feeds them live insects. "They are hunters, just like lions," she says with admiration.

During my visit, Hermine was sorting insects and spiders from a tray placed in the field, filled with a liquid known as "anti-freeze". The liquid preserves insects and spiders that fall into the traps. "The insects are sent to the other departments and we keep the spiders," she explains.

Spiders can also fly. "Many smaller spiders travel for miles on the wind. They just release a little line of silk, lift their abdomens up in the air and off they go," says Benson. Also, he says, spider webs are so strong that scientists are now investigating ways to make bullet-proof vests out of spider's web. "It's so light, but stronger than steel."

- Kobus Oosthuizen



INTERESTING FIELD... "It's not all roses," says Benson, as he toils in the specimen room.



CLOSE UP... Curator's assistant Hermine Inana-Uusiku studying an arachnid specimen under the microscope.

YOUNG SCIENTIST
... Jackson Hilibiwa (17) and Makurata Shamayuko (18), both Grade 11 learners at Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura, did a project on spiders for the recently held Science Fair. They put much effort and enthusiasm into this, came up with interesting results, and got gold up to the Nationals. They left for South



Africa, last Wednesday together with 26 other children, to represent Namibia in the South African Science Expo. Jackson was a member of the second Edu-Venture trip to the Huns mountains while Makurata was on the third trip to the Namib Desert.

the namibian - Youthpaper / October 5, 2004



WELL DONE! ... Shifidi Secondary School learners Seveleni Akathingo (left) and Engenesia Neumba show off their gold medals they won during the recent Namibian National Science Fair. The two Grade 12 learners presented a project on Biodiversity – A Living Garden. Both attributed their vast knowledge of the Namibian environment to the EduVentures Expeditions they went on with the people from the National Museum recently.

Picture Perfect

Photos by Conrad Angula



SMART ... Laurinda Dumba (left) of Shifti! Secondary School poses with Divlan Manuel of the Blinkogies kindergarten.



HAPPY DUO ... Johannes Mayumbelo (left) and Herdedeiro Sabino from the School for the Hearing Impaired strike a pose.



HAPPY SMILES ... Helena Hairungu, Alina Mwale and Innocence Augostino were happy to pose for the Youthpaper.



ALL SMILES ... Mina Witbooi (centre) is seen here with her friends from the School for the Hearing Impaired in Windhoek, Kathiku Rengora (left) and Rosalia Augustus.



JOVIAL ... Denise Haoses, Keiue Muramba and Lucia Mubalu from the School for the Hearing Impaired enjoying the EduVentures party last Friday.



GETTING STARTED... Groups of young scientist were also on hand at the launch to collect pledges from the guest to help pay for the event.



First African science fair for Windhoek



OLD SCIENTIST ... IMLAST events manager Ursula Matzopolous and managing director Raoul Matzopolous (right) with a rather "old" young scientist Lazarus Jacobs who was the director of ceremonies at the launch. Lazarus was a keen contestant in science fairs when he was still at school and Mrs Matzopolous was his teacher.

Learnings at schools up and down Namibia are had at work thinking about what to exhibit on this year's science fair. As we know these fairs are becoming more and more popular and attracting many more learners from the regions as well.

This year though we won't only be competing with learners from more regions, we will have to pit our skills against all of Africa and some other countries as well.

Namibia, small as it is and with a handful of volunteers, has been taking part successfully in science fairs in South Africa and overseas for many years. Twenty-three in fact the organisers tell us.

Last year at the International Science Fair in Santiago in Chile, Namibia was invited to bid to host the first regional science fair to be held in Africa. With firm support from South Africa and Tunisia, Namibia's bid was successful.

That is why we have to plan to accommodate and compete against around 700 young scientists from 40 African countries and others like the United States, Mexico, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Taiwan, China and Germany at the Expo Science Africa (ESA) 2006.

To help organise this huge event, we now have a new non-governmental organisation IMLAST (International Movement for Leisure Activities, Science and Technology) to assist the Namibia Mathematics and Science Teachers Association (Namsta) and the Ministry of Education.



COOKING ... Twenty-two-year old Klaas Gombob, who used to attend Cosmos High School, and is going to college later this year with his solar oven.

The international body that has been running science fairs around the world since 1976 and has 100 bodies affiliated to it and is called MILSET, had been trying to find a country to host a fair like ESA 2006 for about eight years.

Now that Namibia has taken on the job, there is heaps of planning to be done.

At the launch of ESA 2006 in Windhoek last week, Prime Minister Nahas Angula explained how important such a fair is and asked everybody from the learners who will take part to government ministries, embassies and businesses to help where they could. That is why a number of businesses pledged money and assistance at the launch. Having so many visitors to Windhoek is expected

to bring an amount of about N\$8 million to the city.

In his address Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture Minister John Mutorwa, standing in for education minister Nangolo Mbumba reminded the audience that Article 20 of Namibia's constitution, about education, was part of the chapter on fundamental human rights and freedoms. That education was a fundamental right.

Education too, he said, was a partnership. "Education is too broad and complex to be left to the government alone," he said urging support for the big international event. We have published the budget to give an idea of what is needed to get this event off the ground and make it a big success.

- Carmen Honey

Preliminary Budget Items ESA-2006

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Venue</p> <p>1.1 Hiring of Windhoek Showgrounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main hall 1400m² Presidential hall 1100m² Kitchen facilities 100m² Sundry facilities <p>1.2 Venue Decoration and accessories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carpets Plants Banners Chairs tables and benches table cloths Project display boards 700 x 5100-00 Special details for display boards 700 x 520-00 e.g. names <p>1.3 Special decorations at Show Grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54 x Flags 54 x Flag poles <p>2. Accommodation</p> <p>700 Learners</p> <p>300 Adults</p> <p>18 Special MILSET guests</p> <p>3. Meals</p> <p>700 x 6 days Breakfast (at Hostels)</p> <p>1000 x 6 days Lunch (at Exhibition)</p> <p>1000 x 6 days Supper (at Exhibition)</p> <p>4. Special events</p> <p>Opening ceremony</p> <p>Gifts and Honors d'Ouvres for Special Guests</p> <p>Entertainment</p> <p>Dinner</p> <p>Cultural evening</p> <p>Entertainment</p> <p>Dinner</p> <p>Prize giving</p> <p>Entertainment</p> <p>Dinner</p> <p>Closing Ceremony</p> <p>Entertainment</p> <p>Dinner</p> <p>Science and technology conference</p> <p>Refreshments</p> <p>Presenters</p> <p>Audio Visual Material</p> <p>Stationery</p> <p>Promotional Items and Awards</p> <p>Trophies T-shirts</p> <p>Certificates Programmes</p> | <p>Medals Banners</p> <p>Gifts</p> <p>5. Event Management</p> <p>Personnel (5)</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Telephones and Communications</p> <p>Office Equipment</p> <p>Office Rental</p> <p>Administration</p> <p>Recruitment of Participants</p> <p>Traveling expenses</p> <p>Postage and Courier services</p> <p>Publications, Brochures and Programmes (Local and International)</p> <p>Advertising (Newspapers, TV, Radio, T-Shirts)</p> <p>Special Adverts (Science Fair Magazine)</p> <p>Insurance and med rescue / ambulance</p> <p>Production of a Science Fair Magazine</p> <p>Special Consultants</p> <p>Security</p> <p>Cleaning Services and Refuse removal</p> <p>Professional Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreters Chaperones Floor Managers Event Casuals Information Desk Officials Exhibition Judges <p>OUR CONTACT DETAILS:</p> <p>Name: Raoul Matzopolous</p> <p>Tel.: 220785</p> <p>Cell: 081 297 9336</p> <p>Email: rmatz@afrionline.com.na</p> <p>Name: Ursula Matzopolous</p> <p>Tel.: 220785</p> <p>Cell: 081 297 9336</p> <p>Email: rmatz@afrionline.com.na</p> <p>Name: Ivone Hansen</p> <p>Cell: 081 273 0317</p> <p>Name: Jonathan Wilsnack</p> <p>Tel.: 064 216600</p> <p>Cell: 081 204 8257</p> <p>Email: wilsnackj@gsnamibia.com</p> <p>Name: Peter Bond</p> <p>Tel.: 225897</p> <p>Cell: 081 207 4457</p> <p>Email: pbonds@cyberhost.com.na</p> <p>FAX NUMBER: 061 - 212070</p> |
|---|---|



TRADE TALKS ... Deputy Trade and Industry Minister Bernhard Esau enjoying a chat with Windhoek businessman Steve Galloway at the launch of the Expo Science Africa 2006 in Windhoek last week.



MAKING A CONTRIBUTION ... Andreas Wienecke (left) of the Habitat Desert Research and Development Centre pledging his time and professional advice at the launch. Next to him is Harald Schütt of Amusha Consultancy Services while young scientists circulate in the background collecting pledges.

namibian

Issue 20, June 24, 2003

Sugar Daddies

The issue of sugar daddies is being widely discussed. Read what some of our learners have to say on the topic.

Page 5

A black and white photograph of three young men standing side-by-side outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored t-shirt, the man in the middle is wearing a white t-shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt. They are all looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, light-colored wall or rock face.

Meet a group of learners who had the chance to do something really special and useful during the holidays.

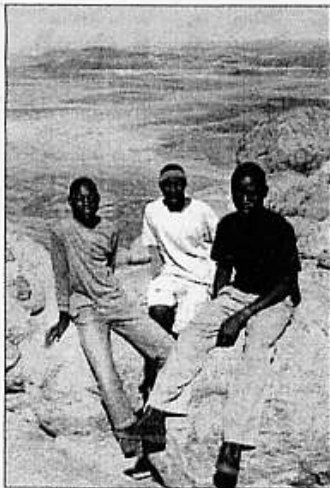
Pages 6&7

Read about two organisations that are making a big contribution towards helping people learn about HIV-AIDS in Kunene. Page 11

Page 11



ON TOP OF NAMIBIA.... Immanuel Shitidi High School learners (from left) Marco de Cavalho, Lot Gabriel, Levi Mulokoshi, Hilma Angula, Jeremia Shapaka, Benson Mwiramba and David Nangombe at the highest point in Namibia, the peak Konigsstein in the Brandberg, during a trip there in the May holidays to help scientists collect specimens. Read about them on pages 6 and 7.



WHAT A VIEW ... Jeremiah, David and Benson on one of the highest points on the Brandberg, during their recent trip.



TOUGH TERRAIN ... The collecting trip on the Brandberg was no walk in the park as the team had to cover some very difficult ground.



THAT'S BETTER ... Teacher Nicholas Krone attending to Hilma's blisters during their collecting trip on the Brandberg during the holidays.

What a scientist collects

When you visit a museum, you expect to view collections be they of birds, animals, traditional cultures, minerals, historical artefacts, to name a few. These collections don't just happen to be there by chance. They are an investment in knowledge created by scientists in their different specialities. Collections, each looked after by a specialist in a particular field called a curator, allow for the development of information based on physical evidence. But what we see in a museum is only a fraction of what is done with a collection.

Behind the scenes, many thousands of specimens are kept under special conditions. There are far too many to display for the public, but that doesn't mean they are simply packed away and stored.

Social scientists (archaeologists, ethnologists, anthropologists, historians) as well as those scientists trained in natural history (geologists, palaeontologists, botanists and zoologists) keep on updating their collections with new material for research by themselves and other scientists around the world.

A recent discovery that has drawn a lot of interest is that of the insect called the Gladiator, on Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg.

In the May holidays, a group of physical science and biology pupils from Immanuel Shifidi High School in Katutura got the chance to find out exactly how scientists go about their collecting.

The National Museum's curator of arachnida (spiders) Tharina Bird was preparing a collecting expedition to the Brandberg with a South African entomologist (a zoologist specialising in studying insects), Michael Stiller who is working on

leaf hoppers.

With school holidays fast approaching, Immanuel Shifidi physical science teacher, Nicholas Krone, suggested they take a group of his learners along to help as part of an educational outing.

And that is how the seven learners came to experience the real thing and climb a mountain around two kilometres high.

"It was really very worthwhile," according to Tharina. She said, in

learners would have the opportunity to go on similar expeditions.

She said she was delighted at the enthusiasm and dedication shown by the Shifidi group. The 10-day trip was physically demanding as they only stayed in one place for a day or two. The Brandberg is not the easiest climb and they covered long distances, sometimes under cover of nightfall, and were lucky to find plenty of water.

During the trip the group also did



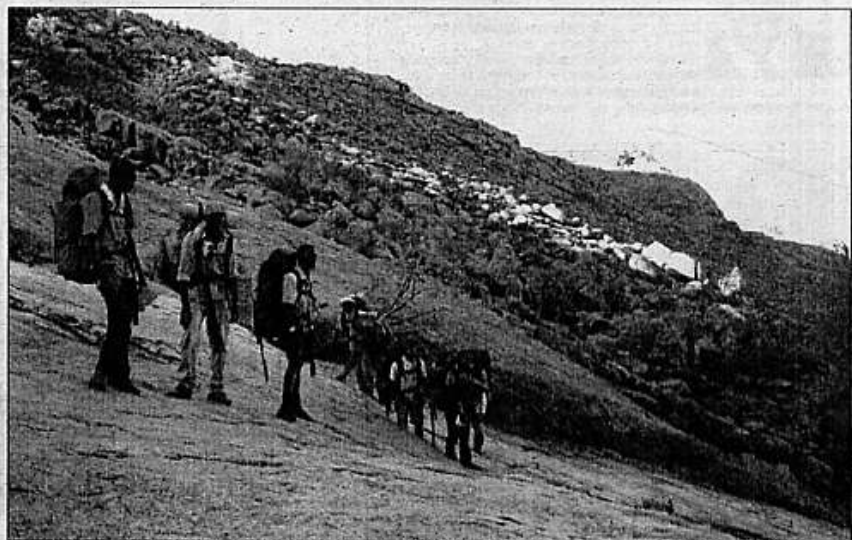
RIGHT UP THERE ... The hikers reach the top of a ridge during their 10-day collecting trip in the Brandberg to help scientists with their research.

her view, there were two criteria that could be used to measure the success of the trip. The one was if a reasonable amount of good collecting was done and secondly if the learners had an enjoyable educational experience. "In both cases, I am satisfied," she said, adding plans were underway to start a project called Biodiversity Edu-Ventures, where many more

some soil erosion control. "We did our little bit," Tharina said, adding that if all climbers did the same it would make a difference to the erosion on the mountain.

Equipment for the trip was sponsored by the Rössing Foundation, while Namibia's National Biodiversity Programme helped with food and medical supplies.

- Carmen Honey



EASY NOW ... Carrying everything you need for a 10-day trip was all in a day's work for the Immanuel Shifidi learners and three adults who climbed the Brandberg to collect specimens for the National Museum in the May holidays. These pictures were taken by the adults and kindly shared with us.

Our experiences on the Brandberg

If anyone would like to visit the Brandberg, you must be in good health, physically strong and really someone who uses his brain well. The Brandberg is like another world on its own with its undisturbed beauty that only a few can see and acknowledge as also only a few people can really make it there. You must carry all your basic needs and equipment, with this I mean your food enough for the days that you are going to stay there, water, small gas stoves, gas cylinders, small pot for boiling water, sleeping bags etc. You must know how to use your food so that it must not get finished earlier than



VERY IMPORTANT INSECT ... This newly discovered insect found last year on the Brandberg, the Gladiator, has had a new order created for it because it does not fit into any other order of insect.

you have planned to use it. Use water wisely so that the animals that live in the mountain can drink - not only animals but also people who come to the mountain. I have seen a lot of plants, animals and also the

Brandberg itself which I only used to see in magazines and television pictures.
- Lot Gabriel (19) Grade 11

The trip was cool but it was tough. You really have to use a lot of energy and you must be self-motivated. Even when it was tough, I really learned a lot of new things. And I gained lot of new skills and knowledge. Some of the new things I had only heard about, but now I have seen them and it won't be difficult for me to learn about them. You can say this was a science studying trip not a collecting trip. Because afterwards I understood science better and what it is all about. There is really a big different between us who went and those learners that stayed behind. Take a look at this example: In school we study about different type of rocks and we who went saw them and those who stayed behind did not see them, and it is to our advantage who went. This trip also taught us how to work together with others as a team.

- Levi Mulokoshi (18) Grade 11

This was the most inspiring trip I've ever had. It showed me reality and I had a lot of experiences. At first I regretted ever going there, but then there was no turning back, so I decided not to give up. I have seen and learned so many new things, such as sleeping cold, walking long distances and being at

a high risk of dying. What I've learned is that everything does not have to be easy in order to for you to succeed. Besides that, I learned that nature is never friendly to a person. If only I was asked to make a wish, I would wish to go back again. When I came to the city everything was just horrible, every second I wished I was in the bush. It took me two weeks to overcome that. I really, really appreciate what Mr Krone has done for us, giving us that precious opportunity. Thank You!
- Hilma Angula (17) Grade 12

The first night we arrived, we slept in a valley. Sandy and Stony. Slept well. We woke up around 07h00 and 08h00 and prepared breakfast. We ascended. We couldn't wait to reach there. This trip was my first time to experience life in the mountain.

I experienced a lot being at the second and the highest peaks in Namibia. I have learned a lot like the formation of stars making up a hunter and a scorpion. I have seen beautiful flowering plants, animals and many, many creatures. I even saw animals which I thought were extinct. Man this mountain is like paradise. It has clean natural water, huge granite rocks, some have white quartz crystals sparkles. It's good to sleep under the stars. How can I say this trip was fun, enjoyable, lovely. So I appreciate my teacher for choosing



WHAT HAVE WE HERE ... Scientists Tharina Bird, from the National Museum in Windhoek, and Lot Gabriel, David Nangombe and Hilma Angula examine the specimens they collected during their Brandberg trip.

me to accompany them. When I read this description I dream of returning to the mountain.
- Jeremy Shapaka (17)

I was very proud to be selected to take part. Although the aim of the trip was collecting different kinds of insects, it was also an opportunity for me to see the highest mountain and peak in Namibia. The trip was very educative and informative. I learned more about different insects and spiders that live on the mountain. To get or collect different kinds of insects and spiders you have to move from one place to another and this involved climbing or going down the mountain and it was the difficult thing because you were carrying a heavy bag and sometimes you had to climb very steep cliffs. My advice is that next time one must undergo a certain test before going. But anyway it was worth it. I realise that I can overcome any obstacles in life no matter how hard, I have also learned that suffering is part of life and will be with it. I really had fun over there every one was good to me and I hope that we can do it next time. Thanks every one.
- Benson Muramba (18) Grade 12

I really enjoyed the Brandberg during the last three days. The first day I got very scared

because we arrived there on Friday midnight. It was very dark, we could not see anything. We started to walk on Friday morning, I only climbed for five minutes then I got tired, I never felt so tired in my all life. The second day was the worst day of my life, at the beginning everything was fine, I only thought I got used to it, but when we started going up slopes I didn't feel my legs. I felt fire running through my legs but Miss Tharina and Mike helped all along. The last three days were my best days - I was fitter and always in the front positions. The nights were the best time of the day, we used to sit around the fire telling stories and jokes. I learned how to make fire with wood, I learned how water is very important in our lives, I learned how to catch a scorpion hiding in the hole, I started to know myself better. I learned that we

must appreciate what we have at home, and I got some experience on cooking food without using too much gas.
- Marco de Cava-lho (19) Grade 12

At first I thought the Brandberg mountain was a very little, thin and tall mountain. But when we got there it was very amazing to see that it is huge with very large kloofs, valleys, waterfalls, water holes, peaks and fantastic natural vegetation. Luckily we found much fresh water at lots of points.

I had a lot of bad and good experiences. The bad experience is that I fell very tired the first day we walked up. I also started eating some of my food faster than normal and I realised it was not good and I learned my lesson.

I have gained a lot of knowledge. I learned different types of species, also the different names of spiders,

like the sun spiders and baboon spiders. The difference between male and female spiders, I can now show it. I also learned that scorpions with a thick tail are the most venomous ones. I saw some interesting animals, which I have never seen before. I even caught a Gladiator, which is a new upcoming species. Scientists are busy working around the clock trying to learn more about that species. It was also my first experience to be in direct contact with white people. I realised that white people are just the same as us. It is only the colour that differs, and they have a very good sense of humour. They are not bad people at all!! It was a very passionate moment for me to watch the sun rising on top of Namibia (Königstein). It was an unforgettable trip from which I have benefited a lot.

- Nangombe David (17) Grade 11



HELLO DOWN THERE ... A view of the collectors from on high during their 10-day expedition to collect spiders, scorpions, insects and a few snakes on the Brandberg.



DOING THEIR BIT ... Team members helping to stop the erosion on top of the majestic Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain.

the namibian **YOUTH PAPER**

The paper for today's youth

Issue 34, October 14, 2003

ACHIEVERS



Putting in that extra effort does pay off as these learners prove d with their haul of deserved year-end awards.

Page 4

COMMUNITY



Dibasen recently celebrated its 21st and the school community is working hard to restore the well known institution.

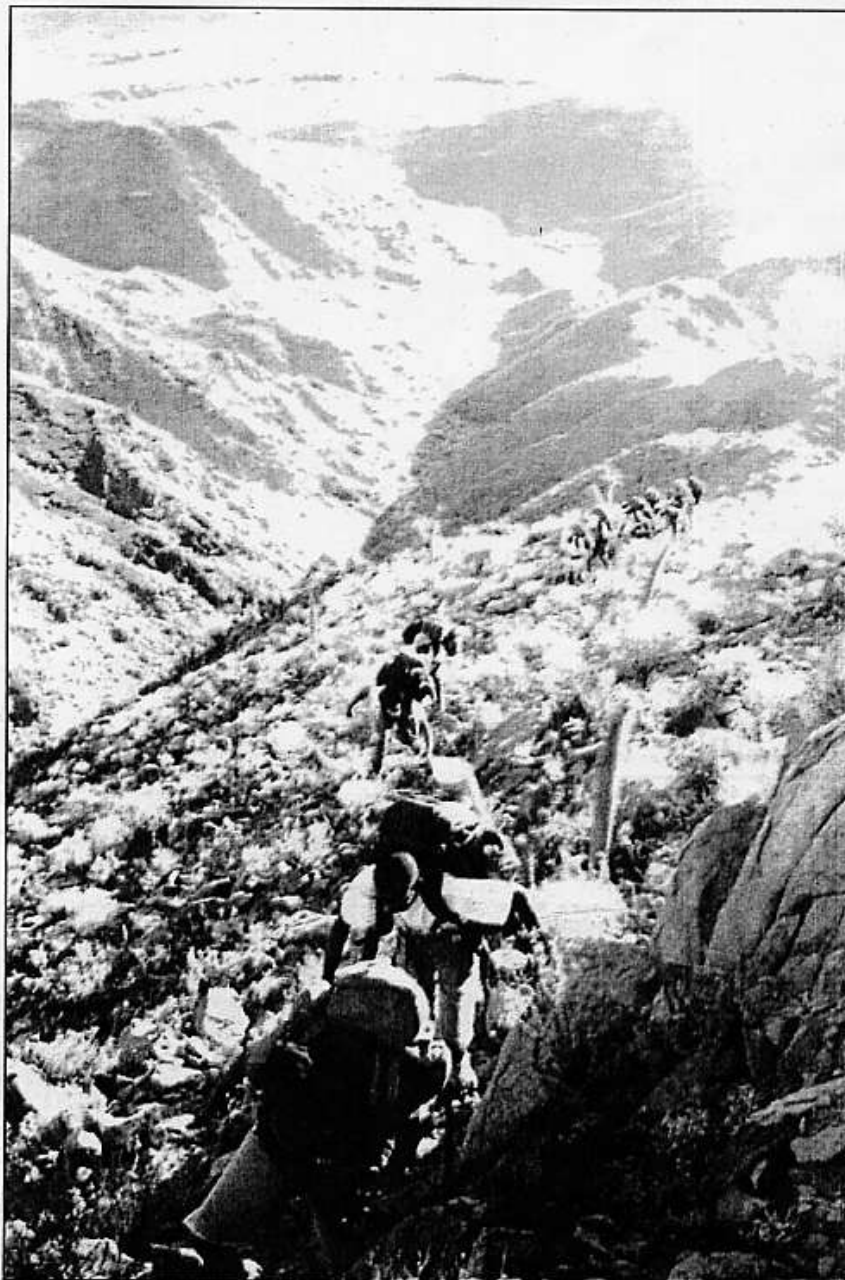
Page 6&7

SPORT



An uplifting story of a young man who proves you can turn your life around, even in very difficult circumstances.

Page 11



KEEP GOING ... Twelve lucky learners from Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura had the chance to go on a collecting expedition for the National Museum last holidays. The trip took them to the Huns Mountains in the Ai-Ais Hot Springs Game Park in the south. Here they make their way up a rocky incline to enjoy a spectacular view from the summit.



THANK YOU ... Big thank you hug for Tharina from Helmut Hansen on receiving a certificate and small memento of their trip.



CAN'T BE US! ... Some of the participants enjoying a slide show of their scientific collecting expedition to the Huns Mountains in southern Namibia. Pictured at the back are (from left) Chris Bird, and the four adults who went on the expedition, Claire Kolberg, Holger Kolberg, Nicholas Krone and Tharina Bird.

Doing valuable work

A second group of learners from Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura have had the opportunity to get close to nature with scientists during a recent trip to the Huns Mountains in the south.

Ten Grade 10 and two Grade 12 learners, who take biology and or science, with their science teacher Nicholas Krone, accompanied Tharina Bird, curator of arachnida (spiders) and myriapoda (insects like centipedes and millipedes, with segmented bodies) from the National Museum, in Windhoek, on a 10-day collecting trip during the last school holidays. Scientist Holger Kolberg,

who specialises in wetlands, park planning and research, and his wife Claire, who teaches at the Holy Cross Convent made up the four adults who guided the young helpers.

The team covered about 10 kilometres in all during their expedition which saw them climb some of the highest peaks in Ai-Ais Hot Springs Game Park, which is about 4 000 square kilometres in area, and borders South Africa. Going was tough because vehicles are not able to make it very far in the park with the party having to hike most of the way, carrying everything they needed.

The trip is part of a project called Edu-Ventures, started by Tharina, to help overcome a staff shortage at the museum by using volunteers and also expose talented young Namibians to the sciences in the field. It has also given former participants a chance to see parts of the country and experience things they would never have done.

The party examined different habitats especially the plants and insects in the area, in the east, known as the Succulent Karoo. Tharina concentrated on collecting insects, while Holger did some bird-ringing to keep a check on the habits and distribution of various species.

Plants increase in number the higher one climbs in the mountains, because the higher you go, the more moisture there is. When the group started out, they were scared of the spiders and snakes they came across.

"Now they have learned how to handle them, and respect them too," Tharina said at a slide show in Windhoek last week. She urged the youngsters to share what they had experienced with others and teach them what they had learned. Climbing the rocky mountains was difficult and daunting, but the group agreed that once you do it, it feels very good. - Carmen Honey



COOLING OFF ... The whole gang splashing in the Orange River bordering South Africa, which can be seen in the background. Back left science teacher Nicholas Krone, James Ukarerani, Unomasa Kapere, Wickens Kamuluezo, Edison Hoebebe and Michael Kazondunge. Bottom from left Hilma Angula, Ciska Rukaro, Jackson Hiltiwa, Tauno Ipingo, Helmut Hansen, Severeni Akathingo and Margret Karihinga.

WHAT A SIGHT

... Posing with the rare Aloe pillansii (Bastard-kokerboom) found only in the south of Namibia are (from left) Tauno Ipingo, Severeni Akathingo (behind), Hilma Angula and Helmut Hansen during their expedition in the Huns Mountains.



NOT THE HARD ROCK CAFE ... Learners had to make the best of it when it came to making their sleeping arrangements on the rocky and steep terrain.



BIRD RINGING ... Scientist-Holger Kolberg places a ring on a bird's leg before releasing it back into the wild. When found later the ring will be able to help researchers work out a lot of information about the bird.



FASCINATING

... One of the things that changed during the trip was the learners' attitude towards spiders and snakes, once they had been shown how to approach and work with them. Here Margret Karihinga holds a Psammophis notostictus (Karoo sand snake).



WHAT HAVE WE GOT? ... Examining an automatic light trap that attracts insects for collection. It uses solar power and comes on automatically at night. Here it is being checked for specimens after being left behind at the base camp for three days.



A pictorial look
at what the Immanuel Shifidi
Secondary School learners from
Katutura experienced on their
recent expedition into the Namib
Desert to help collect specimens
for the National Museum in
Windhoek.



• Students' opinions •

A group of learners from Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura has returned from their third Edu-Venture, this time to the Namib Desert. The Youthpaper asked some participants about their experiences:



Hilma Anghuwo (16)
Grade 11

"It was my very first time to go to the desert and I still feel excited. The experience was worthwhile and I picked up valuable knowledge about how plants and animals survive in the desert."

"I have also learned that in nature every living thing has a purpose. I was particularly fascinated by the scorpions and I have found out that they are really not so dangerous if you know how to handle them."



Tangeni Namwandi (17)
Grade 11

"It was also my first time to go to the desert and I think that it was cool and very interesting out there. We have learned a lot and I have now a completely different outlook about insects and reptiles."

"It was very interesting to learn that snakes, spiders and insects are not so dangerous unless you hurt them. I never dreamed that I would hold a snake or spider with my bare hands but I did during the expedition."



Emily Eino (16)
Grade 11

"I found the trip very interesting and I experienced a lot of things about the reptiles and insects that are kept in the museum. My favourite part of the expedition was when I caught a desert snake."

"It is a very interesting reptile particularly because I have never seen such a snake before. In fact, it was the very first time that I have ever seen sand dunes with my eyes. I have never been to the desert before."



Petrus Undari (22)
Grade 12 (finished)

"This is the one trip I always wanted to go on. I have always put pressure on my teachers to take me with. This is only for Grade 10 learners and me being in Grade 12 last year I had no chance but I eventually got the opportunity."

"The desert was fascinating and it was the first time I set my foot in the Kuiseb River. I was thrilled by the desert animals, their own unique way of living. I was surprised to see a jackal, springbok and gemsbok in the desert."



Elifazer Uukunde (18)
Grade 12 (group leader)

"This trip was an exciting eye-opener to me. I have learned a lot during this excursion in the desert and it is fascinating to know how animals learn to survive with so little water in the desert."

"I also learned about the living organisms in the desert like snakes, plants and scorpions. The desert is so beautiful and seeing springbok and even goats surviving in such a dry environment really surprised me."



Martin Ndishishi (22)
Grade 12

"I really looked forward to going on this expedition because I always wanted to see what the desert looks like and how the animals survive there. I was particularly thrilled by the way the springbok walks."

"I also enjoyed the excursions on the dunes and mountains. I used to be afraid of heights but I really had fun. I learned things like how to save water in the desert because there was no place to find water."



LOOK THERE... An exciting Lydia Thomas looks at the photo exhibition of their expedition to the Brandberg.

On top of the world

Seven Grade 10 learners from Jan Jonker Afrikaans Secondary School in Katutura made their first contact with Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg, near Uis, during the recent school holidays.

This group took part of the increasingly popular Edu-Venture programme, which is being conducted by the National Museum of Namibia.

As in the past, the learners had to collect specimens and other biological items for the museum. This was the highlight of these popular educational tours where learners

work alongside scientists and help in the museum's research.

Apart from the excursions and mountain hiking, sleeping in the open and the search for the creepies and crawlies, the learners also enjoyed the beautiful landscapes that surround the 130 million year-old mountain. And after each day's long walk, there were 12 in total, learners cooled off in the natural pools at the foot of the mountain. They were also exposed to different foods from the ones they normally eat at home like soya beans.

Learners enjoyed the beauty of the landscape and the Ugab River that runs past the mountain; the biodiversity – in the form of the different specimens like the caterpillars, snakes and scorpions and the archaeology – which is created by the beautiful rock paintings of the previous inhabitants of the mountains.

The Brandberg is also known for its flora (plants) like the rare tobacco plants, said to be the first of their kind in the entire world and which the former inhabitants of the mountains also used to smoke.

Museum open day



SO MUCH TO SEE... Learners from a number of Windhoek schools took the opportunity last week to visit the National Museum in Windhoek during their Open Day activities. These allowed visitors a close up look at the various displays. Here Tharina Bird, who is the curator of Arachnida and Myriapoda (the department for spiders and insects like millipedes and centipedes), explains an interesting point to a group of learners. She took the Jan Jonker Afrikaans group on the Edu-Venture trip to the Brandberg.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT... From left Cornelia Shapopi (17), Francisca Andrade (20) and Morning-Star Thindi (15) of Elita du Plessis High School in Khomasdal hear all about plants and their uses from the assistant to the curator of the history department, Christine Kooper. This was one of the many departments that showed learners up close what they did during the National Museum in Windhoek's Open Day activities last week.



These Grade 10 learners from Jan Jonker Afrikaans Secondary School in Katutura have just returned from their school's first Edu-Venture, which took them to the Brandberg. This is what they told The Youthpaper about their experiences:



Revival Garoes (16)

"The trip to the Brandberg was fun but tough. We were also made to eat food that we don't normally eat and the water was very dirty. I also got one of my trousers torn and I was very angry with myself. "It was so wonderful to wake up on a mountain for the very first time. The tour was very heavy and I really enjoyed the soya beans. I was also very excited when I held a scorpion in my hand for the first time."

Emily Uusiku (15)



"This exhibition was very interesting and very educational for me. It was also an eye-opener in many aspects, especially about the nature. We experienced a lot of good things during our 12-day stay in the mountains.

"I have learned that everything that exists in nature has its purpose. It was fun walking in the field but I was so scared when we had to climb up the mountain. I must, however, admit that I was scared to sleep in the open in the field."

Deon Gamxarub (17)



"The Edu-Venture was very interesting and I really enjoyed myself a lot. We were singing and dancing and it was my first time to hike up a mountain. I was dead scared of snakes and scorpions at the beginning.

"But I have developed a different outlook about reptiles and insects because I have even held a scorpion in my hand. These specimens are actually harmless if you don't intend to harm them. The water was green but safe to drink."

Frans Abraham (15)



"The expedition was kind of nice but very tiring, especially when we had to hike up the Brandberg. It was tough but I enjoyed the excursions and the other kids were just fun to be with. I enjoyed the singing and dancing.

"I came to terms with the beauty of nature and I really am thrilled about the beauty of our country. I have developed a great interest in nature it all looked so boring at the beginning now I know that everything has its purpose on earth."



Fillemon Tobias (17)

"The tour was fun and I really enjoyed walking on the mountain. It was very tough at the beginning but I can tell you for sure now that I will be more than willing to go back to the Brandberg again. It is so beautiful.

"I have learned a lot about scorpions and snakes and I even had the opportunity to hold both in my hand. I have become fond of snakes now and they are real beautiful reptiles. We brought a lot of specimens back for the museum."

Dolton Naruseb (15)



"I was very excited to be on this tour and I must tell you that I was never disappointed when I got to the Brandberg. I really enjoyed myself and I have learned a lot of things and I made a lot of friends.

"The mountain hiking was exciting and I have also learned how to handle animals and how to use water. We had to survive with little water and I think that I will always go back because I really had a good time there."



Lydia Thomas (16)

"The moment I enjoyed the most was when we were handling the scorpions. I was not scared when I held it in my hand. In fact, it felt so good. The most difficult part of the expedition was to climb up the mountain. "It was a scary but also very exciting experience. The water was green but it was drinkable and it was fun sleeping in the open. I was not scared of snakes and scorpions because we were sleeping at safe places."



Shifidi science duo clinch international bronze

Two young scientists from Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School in Katutura surpassed their wildest dreams to clinch bronze medals at the South African-hosted International Science Fair in Pretoria a fortnight ago.

Jackson Hilifilwa and Makurata Shamayuko, both 17-year-old Grade 10 learners at the school, were very proud when speaking to *The Youthpaper* during an interview at the school last Thursday.

Said Makurata: "This is definitely the proudest moment in my life. Coming from a poor background like mine I did not really expect to come back with a medal from South Africa. I am happy about what we have achieved in Pretoria."

"There were a lot of children out there and the competition was very tough. There were also other learners from Windhoek and another school from Rundu competing. Some returned with bigger prizes and some others came back empty handed."

Added Jackson: "I also felt very special when our names were announced for the bronze medal. Hell! This is really like a dream to be

I am happy, I am excited and I am very proud to have upheld the name of our school."

"First gold in both regionals and the nationals back home in Namibia and now an international bronze. It feels so great and I don't really have words to explain my joy at the moment. We are aiming for more gold next year."

The learners, who have both been on the Edu-Venture

Fair in Windhoek.

"We decided to do a project on spiders because it sounded so original and that is something we really want to do. I must admit that the Edu-Venture trips we undertook last year played an influential role in the selection of our project."

"Spiders are probably one of the most feared insects in our country. They look so scary and we so badly wanted to find

"Most of the data we gathered about the spiders was gained during the Edu-Venture explorations."

It is also where we discovered our love for creatures and nature at large. We have learnt to appreciate and preserve nature."

"The most valuable thing we have learnt about spiders is that no matter how ugly they are, they are not really as dangerous as



DELIGHTED ... Makurata Shamayuko (left) and Jackson Hilifilwa, take a delightful chunk from their bronze medal they clinched at the International Science Fair in Pretoria, South Africa, last week. The Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School Grade 10 learners also received gold medals for their spider project during the Namibian Young Scientists Regional Exhibition and the Namibian National Science Fair, respectively.

trips organised by the National Museum of Namibia, entered the very same project on spiders which secured them gold medals at the recently-held National Science

why they look so scary. But we also wanted to teach the world out there that they were harmless creatures of nature," explained the Rehoboth-born Jackson.

they look. They will not do harm to mankind unless they are hurt or threatened first," noted Windhoek-born Makurata.

Both learners, who started their primary



Hilma Nuule (15)

"I decided to go on this trip because I was very curious about nature. The learners who went on previous trips always had fantastic things to say about conservation and nature and I wanted

to experience it myself.

"I must admit that I understand nature and its functions better now after this trip to the south. The place is very mountainous. Dikkewillem mountain and Kirchberg have such beautiful flowers and plants and I really enjoyed being there."



Mirjam Hamunyela (14)

"The best part of this trip to me was when we had to look for spiders and scorpions under the rocks. It was really fun and I enjoyed myself tremendously. I also liked to climb on the

school education at the Mandume Senior Primary School in Katutura, want to follow different fields when they leave school.

Jackson wants to become a doc-

mountains although I was very scared at the beginning.

"I will never forget the moment I stood on top of the Dikkewillem because it was the very first time I'd been on a mountain. I have also learnt the importance of wild plants and that they can be used to make medicine."



Monica Henkali (16)

"I live in the Shandumbala section of Katutura and I will be honest with you and admit that I have been guilty of spoiling nature by throwing papers and other stuff in the veld. I did not know what I was doing then."

tor, while Makurata seems to be truly hooked on nature as she wants to become a nature conservationist.

The latest Edu-Venture trip was

"But I have a better understanding of nature conservation now. I was actually shocked to learn that I was destroying the grass and plants in the field. I have also learnt to love and respect nature and its inhabitants."



Daniel Jason (16)

"I have developed a different outlook on nature after coming back from the Edu-Venture trip. I have promised myself that I will contribute to protect nature by starting a cleaning up campaign in my area."

"I have learnt why it is important to keep our environment clean because it prevents the soil from getting damaged. In addition, a clean soil also helps the plants and flowers to grow better. The trip also gave me a better understanding about spiders."

sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) through the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) and the Rossing Foundation.
- Conrad Angula

the namibian YOUTH PAPER

The paper for today's youth

Issue 23, July 19, 2005

GENERAL



The votes for the finalists of the Miss Teen 2005 pageant have been counted and the results made known.

Page 4

EDUCATION



Another group of young Namibians gets the chance to visit spectacular areas of the country.

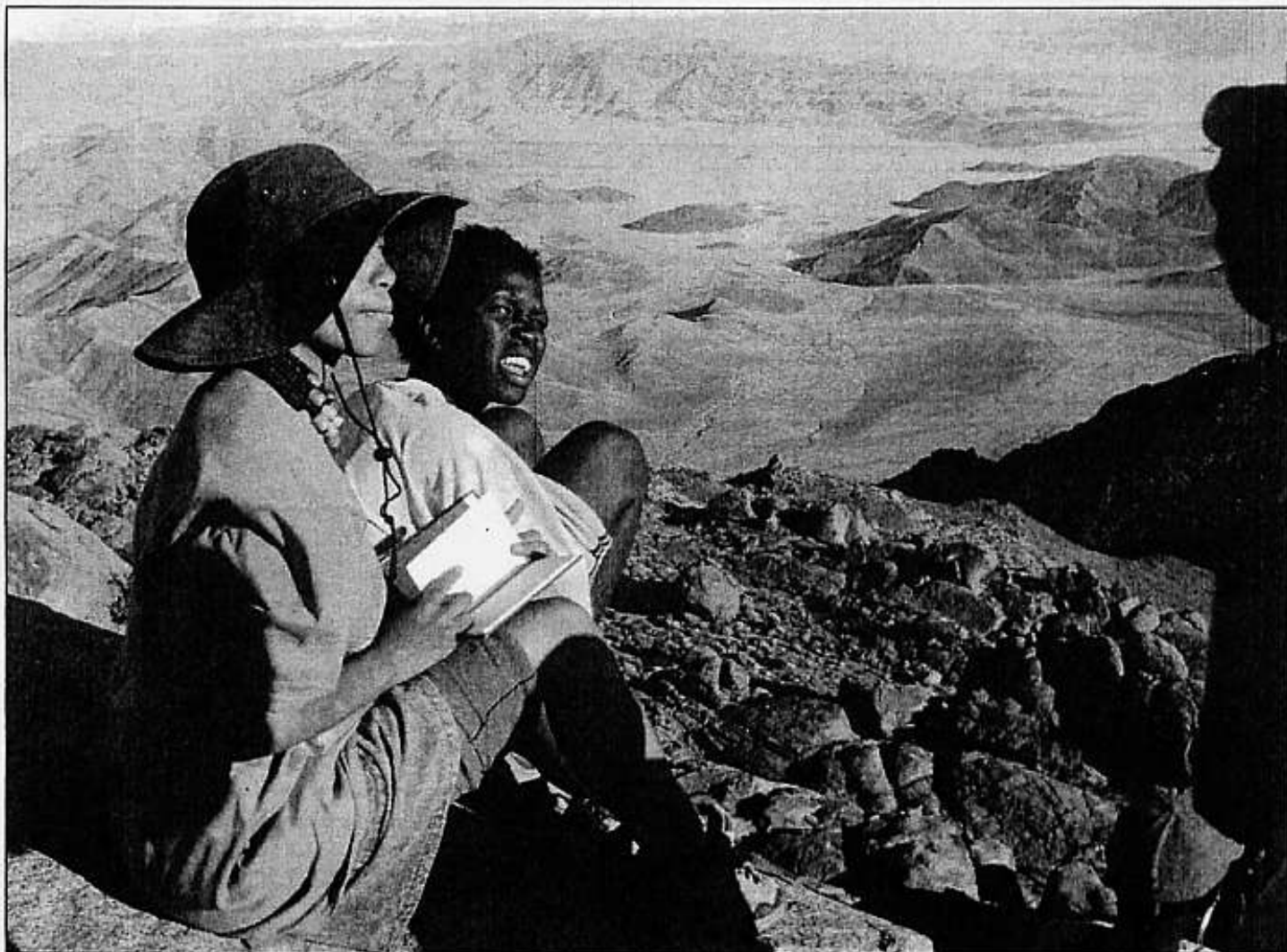
Page 6

CAREERS



This man makes something everybody eats every day. It may not be hard to do but it is very important.

Page 9



HIGHER AND HIGHER ... A trip on an EduVentures expedition always has something special to offer. Here Fatima Mouton and Ida Ruweza from the National Institute for Special Education in Windhoek enjoy the spectacular view in the Namib-Naukluft Park. See the story on page 6.

SchoolNet a hit at educational forum

Namibia's SchoolNet is a project that could be replicated all over Africa, according to a report on information and communication technologies in basic education released at a recent conference in Dakar, Senegal.

Namibia was one of the countries to exhibit their best practices in education at the Education For All (EFA) Dakar +Five meeting last

There the international community committed itself to six major goals of Education for All (EFA) by 2015.

The SchoolNet project, according to the special report on ICTs in education in Namibia, could be modified and then used elsewhere.

It said it was important that the ICT application enjoys official government sanction and is guided by carefully arrived at pedagogical and

"Notwithstanding this, it should be underscored that SchoolNet Namibia's achievements ... can serve as an impetus for other African countries," the report said.

"In addition," the report went on, "SchoolNet Namibia's provision of technical ICT services to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government departments, unemployed



INCLUDE US IN ... Women's rights are not to be taken lightly in the Holy Cross Convent's 'Perfect Nanny' production, based on the Disney classic Mary Poppins. You can meet the suffragettes and the rest of the cast in their production on August 4, 5 and 6. Call the school for information on special shows for other

A group of 16 secondary school learners went on the sixth EduVenture expedition recently. For the first time in the history of the expedition, the majority of the learners, except for the four from St George's College, came from the National Institute for Special Education. The Youthpaper talked to some of the children and this is what they had to say:



Keiue Muramba (16), Grade 8
"It was the first time for me to go on an expedition and to Namib-Naukluft Park and I really enjoyed myself out there in the field. It was very tiring but also very exciting at certain stages of our tour, especially at the Aandster Lodge. I have seen a lot of spiders, scorpions, lizards and snakes but I was too scared to touch any. I also enjoyed playing in the sand dunes as it was my first time and climbing up the mountain was the most difficult task of the tour."



Innocent Agostinho (14), Grade 6
"It was my very first time to go on an Eduventure expedition and I enjoyed myself a lot. It was a very good opportunity for me to go on holiday although it was very tough for the first two weeks of the tour. We had to survive with very little water and we had to carry our own luggage in bags, even when we were climbing up the mountain and it was very tough. I was too scared to collect any reptiles but the tour was very educational."



Moses Vzezevete (18), Grade 8
"It was my first time to climb a mountain and my first trip to the Namib-Naukluft Park. I really enjoyed it out there in the field and we also had to sleep outside under the stars which was also very exciting. I have seen a lot of springbok, scorpions and I even saw a very small snake but I was too scared to touch it. I really struggled with my luggage and the water was also too little. I think that I have developed excellent survival skills."



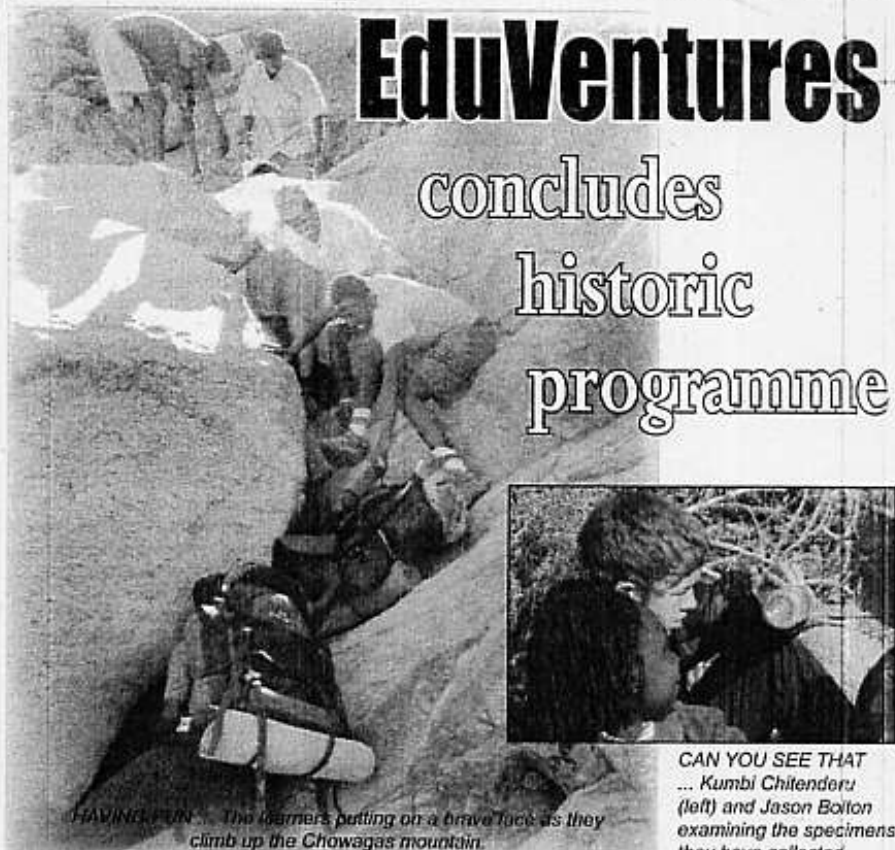
Nasjtassia Komer (15), Grade 7
"This was my first EduVenture expedition but I will really welcome a return trip. I had so much fun and made a lot of new friends on this tour. I was fascinated by the beauty of nature and there was so much to see. I also liked the food we ate during our stay at the Aandster Lodge but the water was very little, especially out on the mountain. I was scared of scorpions and snakes but I really enjoyed watching game like the springbok."



Jason Bolton (15), St George's College, Grade 10
"This was also my first time out with the EduVenture expedition and I must admit that it was an exciting learning experience. I learnt so much about nature, it feels that I have been in the Namib-Naukluft Park for ages. The people from the museum are wonderful and it was so exciting to listen to what they had to tell us about nature and the environment. I have personally collected scorpions for the museum and I was not scared at all."



Ebenetia Plant (16), St George's College, Grade 10
"The EduVenture expedition was so much fun and it was an eye-opener, especially to the beauty of nature. I think that I have definitely developed a completely different perception about nature and its inhabitants."



HAVING FUN ... The learners putting on a brave face as they climb up the Chowagas mountain.

CAN YOU SEE THAT ... Kumbi Chitenderu (left) and Jason Bolton examining the specimens they have collected.

The EduVentures programme achieved another first when it invited learners from the National Institute for Special Education (NISE), who were joined by their counterparts from St George's College, to their most recent expedition to the Chowagas Mountain in the Namib-Naukluft Park.

Altogether 12 deaf and hearing impaired learners from NISE and an additional four from St George's participated in the 15-day long mentally and physically challenging expedition to the Namib Desert.

The purpose of the trip, as with all previous five journeys to remote areas to investigate Namibia's biodiversity, was to collect specimens for the National Museum of Namibia.

And, apart from identifying and bringing back all kinds of live specimens, like spiders, scorpions and insects, as well as small mammals, lizards and snakes, for museum collections, the learners also gained valuable experience and hands-on education regarding the various aspects of biodiversity.

An ecstatic Tharina Bird, coordinator of EduVentures, described the latest expedition as both historic and very successful during a reunion reception, which also doubled as the closing of the annual 'Museum Open Days'.

"This is obviously the most challenging expedition to date. For the first time in the history of this programme we invited learners from the National Institute for Special Education for this very challenging task."

"And as you know these kids cannot speak or hear and you can just imagine what we had to endure during the journey. Our task was not made easier by the lack of transport because we had to travel in very inconvenient fashion," she said.

Tharina explained that transport has always been one of the biggest stumbling blocks of the expedition ever since the programme was launched back in 2003.

It was started to assist the cash-strapped museum keep up its collections and give keen youngsters a chance to do what scientists do in the field.

She pointed out that despite the logistical help from the major sponsors like NamibRand, the transport was not always enough to carry

selves is an understatement because these kids really had a wonderful time. The experience they have gained and the knowledge they have picked up is very valuable.

"At times they had challenges to endure, especially the demanding mountain hiking, which needed great strength and courage to overcome. However, these learners showed great determination and commitment to pull through," she noted.

The entourage spent two nights at Sesriem Camp after a gruelling week and a half of collecting activities. This provided time out from a rigorous programme, and allowed the children to experience the Namib in all of its true splendour. - Conrad Angula



LAST CHECK ... Moses Vzezevete (right) has his bag fitted.



INSPECTING ... Nasjtassia Komer is all concentration as she inspects a specimen.



CAMP SITE ... Moses Vzezevete at the camp site at the foot of the Chowagas Mountain in the Namib-Naukluft Park.

the namibian **YOUTHPAPER**

The paper for today's youth

Issue 35, OCTOBER 25, 2005

HEALTH



Members of this struggling HIV-AIDS club are doing their best to get up and running again

Page 4

SCIENCE



Another enterprising group of young scientists has just come back from a collecting trip to the south

Page 5

CAREERS



A young man from Swakopmund followed his dream and now has his own clothing label for the youth

Page 9



WHAT A VIEW! ... Hard at work collecting scientific specimens for the National Museum of Namibia during a recent EduVentures Expedition are Francis Bassingthwaite (left) from St Paul's College, Windhoek and Benson Muramba, a technical assistant at the museum. On this expedition participants covered 70km by road and 2 000km by vehicle to collect around 1 500 specimens of spiders, scorpions, insects and some reptiles. Photo: EduVentures



BRIGHT SPARKS ... The St George's Primary School team walked away with the honours in this year's TOAM Computer Maths Olympiad for primary schools around Windhoek. Fifteen schools participated in 2005. Photo: Henry van Rooy

Putting Namibia on the film map

Two young Namibians from the north have had their film scripts selected from about 22 000 from all over Africa to be made into movies.

Some months back we carried a story where around 800 young Namibians entered their film scripts in the Scenarios from Africa competition coordinated by the Ombelja Yehinga (Red Ribbon) Organisation dealing with HIV-AIDS and its prevention. The theme was around the topic of HIV-AIDS.

Twenty nine of the 800 odd

entries made it to the national stage of the competition.

On October 14, in Burkina Faso, judges from a number of African countries chose the best 15 English and best 15 French entries. The best 10 in each category are due to be filmed by some of the continent's top filmmakers.

These works are also to be translated into a number of African languages, as well as French and Portuguese, Namibian judge, Marius Johannes, told the Youthpaper last week.

The lucky Namibians are

Adriano Venancio (19) when he entered, from Rundu who wrote a script with rape as the theme, and Sydney Makholi (18) who wrote about HIV-AIDS and people with disabilities.

The project sponsors which include Unicef, Comic Relief, Planeté and TV5, to name a few, are recruiting funding to bring the scripts to the screen.

Adriano and Sydney will each receive a medal, a certificate and a small cash prize, according to the organisers. - Carmen Honey

EduVentures Expedition 7 a huge success

GOTCHA! ... Finding the first three gladiators ever recorded from the Gondwana Canon Park was one of the highlights of the EduVentures Expedition.

The 7th EduVentures Expedition has served its purpose fully. EduVentures are centred around two-week long exploratory and data-collecting expeditions to remote areas during which groups of children, accompanied by scientists and teachers collect data, specimens and artifacts of Namibia's natural and social history.

Project coordinator Tharina Bird announced that the two-week expedition, which was held at Klein Aus Vista and the Gondwana Canon Park in the south of the country, was probably the most successful expedition to date.

A group of 23 people, consisting of 15 learners and eight adults, took part in this expedition, which also witnessed children from the Namibia Institute for Special Education (NISE) taking part for the second time.

"This will probably go down as the most challenging and exciting expedition in the seven year history of the EduVentures project. This group was also very special in the sense that they worked very well as a group."

"There were fewer complaints overall and the children were tremendously focused on the job at hand. This expedition was also very successful in the sense that we collected more specimens than at any other time," Bird noted.

She described the finding

of three gladiators, the first ever to be recorded from the Fish River Canyon, as one of the biggest highlights of the exploration.

Added Bird: "We initially mistook the first gladiator we found for a cricket or even a praying mantis. We also found several rock engravings in the riverbed and the kids were completely fascinated by the rock art."

"They also learned how to distinguish historic rock art from modern day graffiti. What also excited the learners was to hear that rock art was actually used as a way of communicating by our ancestors."

She added that the beautiful plants and landscape also added to the magnificent view from the plateau, which makes for an excellent tourist attraction. The entourage was also very lucky to see the Namib's wild horses galloping free and sustaining themselves in one of the world's harshest climates in a scenario which, according to Bird, does not happen too often. The participants were also privileged to take part in a proper research project at Klein Aus Vista. Most of the expedition took place in the Gondwana Canon Park, following the Gaap River up to the Fish River Canyon and back over the rugged Bergland plateau overlooking the canyon and valleys.

She described the Gondwana Canon Park as a



WELL DONE! ... Pieter Genis (right), presents Innocence Agostinho, learner at the National Institute for Special Education, with the Nicholas Krone floating trophy which is only presented to participants for exceptional achievement during the EduVentures Expedition. The prize in memory of the EduVentures co-founder who died earlier this year.



WAY TO GO! ... Francis Bassingthwaite (left) receives the trophy for being the best collector from EduVentures project coordinator Tharina Bird.

place which falls within an area rich in biodiversity and endemics, but with little scientific data available and at many places very difficult to reach.

"A good place for the 7th EduVentures expedition to collect data," she said, adding that animals and plants collected during this expedition were placed in Namibia's scientific collections.

- Conrad Angula

A group of 15 learners from schools around the city have just completed the final EduVentures Expedition for 2005. We asked some for their views and this is what they had to say:

Chris Claassen (16)
St Paul's College
Grade 10



"This tour was truly an opportunity of a lifetime for me. I have always dreamed about going on expeditions of this magnitude. I had a lot to learn, especially about biodiversity and I was impressed about what nature has to offer."

"This was a completely new experience for me and I also made use of the opportunity to learn more about the (deaf/dumb) sign language. It was amazing how much I learnt in such a short time because I had to communicate with deaf kids."

Grace Luvindao (15)
St Paul's College
Grade 10



"This was the most difficult adventure I have ever been on. Apart from being too little, the water tasted completely different from the water I am used to in Windhoek. I am one who loves drinking a lot of water."

"I found the mountain hiking particularly tough because we had to climb with our heavy camping bags. I was not scared of any snakes at all because we were told that they were harmless unless you hurt them."

Johannes Neporo (18)
Jan Jonker Secondary School
Grade 12



"I really enjoyed being out there in the wild because the expedition was for a very good cause, as we went to collect specimens for the museum. I particularly enjoyed swimming at the A-Ais hot springs."

"The toughest job for me was to look after the learners because I was their supervisor. I had to see that they were doing everything correctly like, packing their bags and tidying up the places where we camped."

Annita Shoongelent (16)
Jan Jonker Afrikaans
Grade 10



"I initially found the mountain hiking tough because I had never climbed mountains before. But I started to enjoy myself as the days passed. I have learnt a lot of useful things like how to treat living organisms."

"I also enjoyed the food because we had a lot to eat. I also enjoyed sleeping in the open at night because the stars were so beautiful to watch and the scientists had a lot to teach us about nature conservation."

Johannes-Weyantshu (15)
Institute for Special Education
Grade 7



"The trip was fine. I was only scared when it was night and time to sleep because I was very wary of snakes and other poisonous reptiles. But I was okay after we started to catch spiders and other specimens."

"I think I have now overcome my fear of creeping stuff. I can proudly say that I held a spider in my hand and it did no harm to me. People must start to appreciate nature by keeping our fields and environment clean."

Mina Swartbool (15)
Institute for Special Education
Grade 7



"I had the most wonderful time of my life on this trip because it was so nice to dig the spiders out of their holes. I must, however, admit that I was initially scared of them and I did not like the idea of sleeping in the open."

"But the trip was very useful to me in the sense that I have learned how to climb mountains, how to use water very carefully and that insect repellents don't bite unless you have caused them harm."



MEASURING ... Learners of EduVentures seen at Klein Haus during the last expedition of the year.



HEAVY DUTY ... Innocence Agostinho carrying one of the heavy rucksacks.

Students Find New Insect At The Canyon

• Sven-Eric Kanzler

Insects that made headlines all over the world four years ago can be found at the Fish River Canyon. This is one of the findings of the most recent expedition of the EduVentures initiative to southern Namibia.

Living specimens of this predatory insect, nicknamed Gladiator, were first discovered in 2001 on Brandberg Mountain in north-western Namibia. According to experts, this was as sensational as if a mammoth had been found alive. Until now, it was not known that the insects occur at the Fish River Canyon as well. The ones found there could even be another new species.

Slides of the Gladiator and the expedition were shown at the Habitat Research and Development Centre (HRDC) in Katutura on Friday evening, and EduVentures rewarded participants of the expedition for commitment and motivation during an award ceremony. Innocence Agostinho (14), a deaf-mute pupil at the Namibian Institute for Special Education (NISE), was awarded the merit award, Francis Bassingth-

waighe (15) of St Paul's the best collector prize and Anita Shoongeleni (15) of Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School a 'pizza prize' for the Gladiator find. EduVentures is an initiative within the National Museum of Namibia to gather valuable data and get young people excited about nature.

Fifteen girls and boys from Windhoek and Katutura took part in the expedition from August 20 to September 3. The first stop was Klein-Aus Vista (Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park) west of Aus, where information about the lesser baboon spider was gathered – for a science project of spider expert Tharina Bird.

Three days later, the group was hiking in the Augrabis area, the northern part of Gondwana Cañon

Park at the Fish River Canyon. There, biologist Samanta Mapfumo and pupil Anita Shoongeleni found three Gladiator insects. They are between two and four centimetres long, resemble young praying mantis insects, but in contrast to the latter grab their prey with front and middle pairs of legs.

Since they could not be classed with any of the 30 known insect orders when they were discovered four years ago, a new order – the first one in 87 years – was established for them: Mantophasmatodea (Heel walkers). Apart from this exciting find, the students gathered about



NOVELTY ... Anita Shoongeleni with both of her Gladiator insects. Photos: EduVentures

2 000 plant and animal samples for the scientific collections of the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) and the National Museum.

"I really enjoyed looking for scorpions," Innocence Agostinho says in sign language and smiles. "It was simply great holding the Gladiator insect in my palm," recalls Karen Mutota (16, Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School).

"And I caught a grass snake and fed it grasshoppers," Francis Bassingthwaighe adds with sparkling eyes. All of them agree that the most difficult part was hiking with backpacks. But after the first few days, everyone got used to it.

The enthusiasm of the youngsters clearly proves the success of EduVentures. The programme was started two years ago by Tharina Bird (spider

expert at the National Museum) and the late Nicholas Krone, then a teacher at Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School. Three expeditions and several weekend excursions are arranged every year. Selection of participants is strict.

The expedition would not be possible without donations and support. Main sponsors were the National Museum, the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), the Rössing Foundation, the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), and the Gondwana Cañon Park. Valuable contributions were also made by Tré Supermarket, Plastiprint and Klein-Aus Vista.

For more information, contact EduVentures at (061) 27 6809, info@eduventures-africa.org, www.eduventures-africa.org.



HERE HE IS ... Gladiator in typical surroundings at the Fish River Canyon.

namibian YOUTH PAPER

The paper for today's youth

Issue 20, June 27, 2006

EDUCATION



A fire has destroyed most of this environmental education centre and help is needed

Page 4

SCIENCE



Another group of young Namibians has a chance of visiting a fascinating remote part of the country

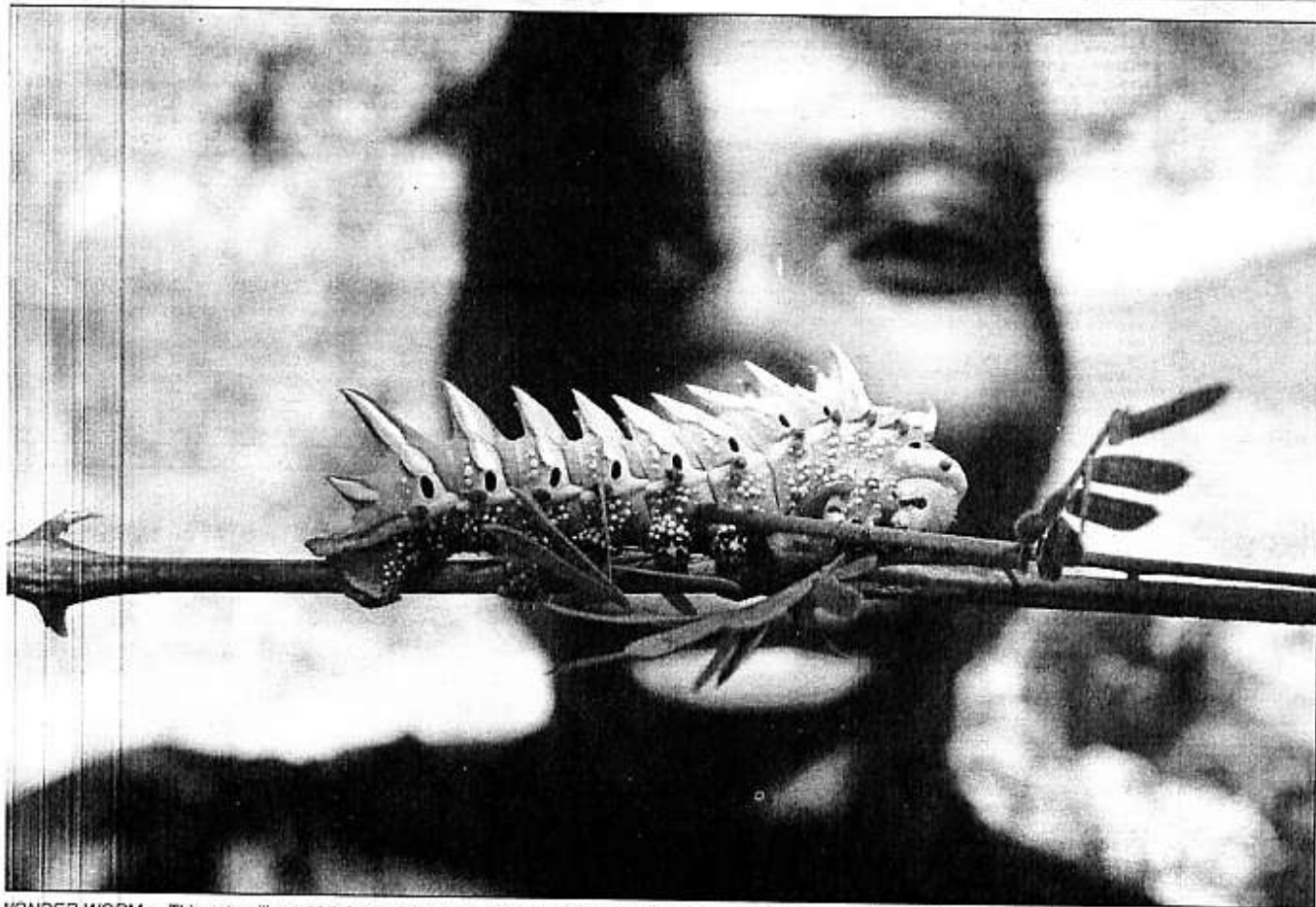
Page 6

CAREERS



This young man has your life in his hands literally when he goes to work in aviation

Page 9



VONDER WORM ... This caterpillar, which has adapted its shape to look like the leaves around it, is among the 4 000 odd mainly plant and insects specimens brought back from the recent EduVentures trip to the Baynes Mountains just inside Namibia's border with Angola. The learner in the background is Sammy Tjiute from Omuhonga Mobile School. Photo: Contributed. See page 6.

Nothing beats a trip with EduVentures!



BEAUTIFUL BACKGROUND ... National Museum technical assistant Benson Muramba giving a presentation to parents, friends and sponsors in Windhoek after the EduVentures trip to the Baynes Mountains in northern Namibia. Photo: Carmen Honey

Imagine 11 days of hiking, in the middle of nowhere (okay in the Baynes Mountains), going up hill at times, with a minimum of 22kg on your back for the girls and 24kg for the boys, no assurance of 100 per cent clean water, sleeping on the ground and no promise of proper baths before the eleventh day. Then think of EduVentures!

On the 14th of April, we (Tim Holch and Winnie Ndjalo) had the opportunity to accompany the EduVentures team on their 7th expedition to the Baynes Mountains in search of new species of arthropods and practically any other interesting creatures we could find and carry. Previous expeditions were to the Waterberg, Brandberg, Namib Desert etc and the 8th expedition will be to the Sperrgebiet. One had to be physically and mentally ready for the 10 days of hiking.

The day before the departure, we prepared everything for the expedition. Our chores included cutting cheese, rationing the food for the 10 days of hiking and checking everyone's luggage.

The journey to the Baynes Mountains was very long thus we got the opportunity to get to know one another better. The first night we slept at Etosha and early the next morning, made our way to Opuwo, where we picked up the four Himba guys and their teacher, who were to accompany us (they stay in and around the Baynes Mountains and speak the Oshiwambo language and being Oshiwambo speaking it was not very difficult to communicate and to understand their language). At first, we did not speak to each other but as time went on we started talking and even laughing with each other! That night we had a glimpse of the beautiful Epupa falls and slept there.

In a very grand lorry we were put early in the morning and off to the Baynes Mountains we went!

10 days!

First night in the mountains was fun. Since it had rained just a few days before we found water near to where we were sleeping. We sort of got "ahead of ourselves" and had ample fun with the water. From that first night I had a feeling... The feeling of 22kg on your back is not pleasant. Believe you

me! The instant that 22kg went on my back I knew it was not going to be like a stroll in the park, because the first day was the worst of them all.

Getting used to the "pain and suffering" was very difficult for me but to survive I had to keep up. I had to motivate myself! At some point I even wanted to give up but just kept on going. You can imagine how we felt when they informed us that we had to hike for one extra day. However all the hiking and collecting was worth it!

The best part of it all was the end. We went to Epupa Camp got a wonderful treat (deliciously baked "chocolate" cake), went for a swim, chilled, chilled and relaxed...

The next day we went to Etosha again got a special permit to enter a gate that normally only scientists



CREATURE COMFORTS ... EduVentures expedition leader Tharina Bird, who is the curator of the spider collection at the National Museum in Windhoek, at one of the overnight campsites on their 11-day expedition. They had plenty of rain on the trip which is why there is so much plastic about to keep their packs dry. Photo: EduVentures



MAKING FRIENDS ... Learners on the Baynes Mountains expedition got the chance to meet the local residents, the Tjimba and learn a little about their customs and culture. Photo: EduVentures

enter and saw a lot of different kinds of animals (we were even allowed to get out of the cars!)

What we all learnt at EduVentures was something no school could have ever taught me! Learning for me started the very first day I set foot on EduVentures territory till the moment I left that place. Not only did EduVentures teach me about nature, stars, even grass, but it also taught me stuff about myself.

If you did not go along I feel pity for you because you missed out on an unforgettable experience and will probably never experience life the way we did! - Winnie Ndjalo (DHPS)

Learners help maintain science collections

Namibia's National Museum and the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) are over 4 000 specimens richer thanks to the hard work of a group of learners and teachers, who have just got back from a trip of a lifetime.

Aged between 15 and 18, the 13 learners from the Deutsche Höhere Privatschule (DHPS) and A Shipena High School in Windhoek and from the Omuhonga Mobile School in Kaokoland spent from April 15 until May 4 in the remote Baynes Mountains, just inside Namibia's northern border with Angola in an area formerly known as Kaokoland.

They were accompanied by EduVentures scientists, a biologist from Germany and two Tjimba and one Himba boy from the area lead by Tjajandjani 'Jan' Tjimba.

The 11 day expedition involved spending three nights in Tjimba



NIGHT WORK ... Learners, some with head torches, looking for insect specimens between stones and grass at night during their 11 day collecting trip. Photo: EduVentures

guest quarters and having a chance to get to know their hosts and some of their traditions. In contrast to the Himba, who are cattle herders, the Tjimba on mountains plateaus used to live on what they caught hunting and fruit and tubers before more recently turning to cattle herding.

As the area is so difficult to cross, the participants travelled on foot with three donkeys to help carry some of the load. The three Kaokoland learners, who were in great physical shape and knew the area, enjoyed their 'home advantage' by scouting the way and sharing their knowledge about nature with their new friends.

"News of our expedition spread like wildfire, of course," said Samanta Mapfumo of EduVentures. "People actually came over from other villages to join us for a chat in the evening."

What did they bring back? "More than 4 000 plant and animal samples were collected: 2 822 insects classed with 26 of the 32 known orders"

including a few 'Gladiators' discovered in 2002), 1 132 spiders and scorpions (the largest one had the size of a man's hand), 118 millipedes and centipedes (among them one with feather-like appendices - the most peculiar centipede the scientists had ever seen), five worms, 15 amphibians, 21 reptiles 1 bird and 71 plants." The main sponsors were Nedbank, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Kaokohimba Safaris, Epupa Camp, Namibia Nature Foundation and Rossing Foundation. EduVentures would welcome more sponsors as well as scientists and teachers to accompany the learners. Over 90 learners from 12 schools have had the chance to go on an EduVentures trip since the project started in 2003. For more information contact Tharina Bird or Samanta Mapfumo at (061)276809 or email: info@eduventures-africa.org or visit www.eduventures-africa.org.

- Carmen Honey



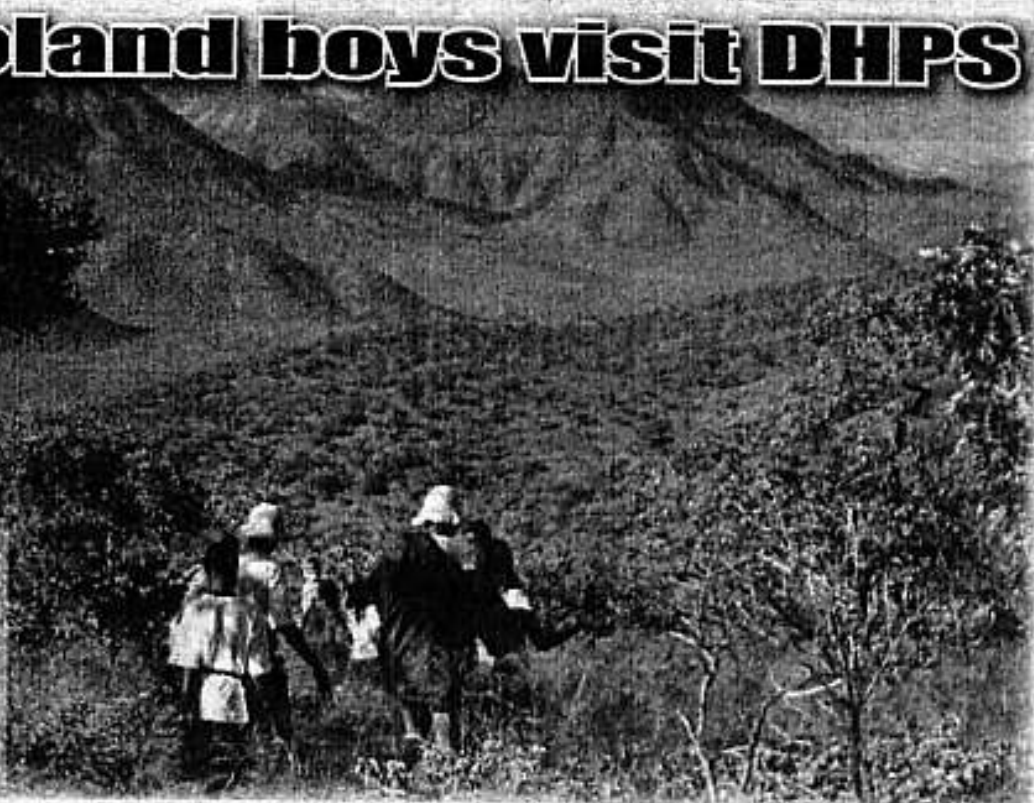
HERE'S HOW ... The adults look on as learners on the EduVentures expedition to the Baynes Mountains collect water in the traditional way. Photo: EduVentures



WELL DONE ... At the end of every expedition the learner who has excelled in all aspects receives an award for being the best participant. Here Tharina Bird presents Fenny Tjiposa from the Omuhonga Mobile School with the prize and a certificate.

Kaokoland boys visit DHPS

STUNNING VISTA ... Learners from DHPS, A Shipena Secondary School and Omuhonga Mobile School heading out on their EduVentures collecting expedition in the Baynes Mountains recently. Photo: Contributed



In the April-May holiday some students went on an EduVentures expedition to the north-western part of Namibia, the Kaokoland. Four Grade 9 students from the Deutsche Höhere Privatschule (DHPS) and eight from A Shipena Secondary School and three from Omuhonga Mobile School in Kaokoland attended the trip.

On Wednesday, June 21, 2006, class 9d of DHPS was given the honour of playing host to the three boys from Kaokoland, one of them Himba and the other two Tjimba. They go by the names of Sammy, Fenny and Johannes.

When some of the students at our school first heard that three boys from

Kaokoland were coming to visit, they thought that the boys would be dressed in Himba traditional clothes and that the boys would be different. But they were surprised because the boys were dressed just like any other teenagers in Windhoek and they could speak a bit of English.

The boys attend Omuhonga Mobile School, which means that school doesn't always take place at the same place. They were fascinated by our school because it is very big and has a swimming pool. But most of all they were interested in the way that we all get along well even though we all come from different backgrounds and we be-

long to different tribes.

The boys enjoyed themselves a lot and so did we. We also learnt a lot from them, they told us about their school, the different ethnic groups they come across at their schools and the difference between the ethnic groups.

We personally think that it was a wonderful experience for both the students from Kaokoland and the students from our class because they had the chance to see and experience another culture which is different from the cultures they experience everyday but yet still is Namibian.

- Martha Hatutale and Desmond Katamila



HIGH TECH ... Fenny Tjiposa from the Omuhonga Mobile School in Kaokoland enjoying an introduction to computers while on a visit to Windhoek. Photo: Contributed



NEW BUDDIES ... Sammy Tjiuto, Fenny Tjiposa and, on the far right, Jan Tjajandjambi with Julian Kavenjandja who is in Grade 9 at the DHPS where the learners from Omuhonga Mobile School spent a day in Windhoek recently. Photo: Contributed



NEW STUFF ... DHPS Grade 9 physics teacher Henrike Schmidt-Dumont (right) demonstrating apparatus in the laboratory while (from left) Sammy, Fenny and Jan look on. Photo: Contributed

namibian YOUTHPAPER

The paper for today's youth

Issue 13, April 11, 2006

SCIENCE



A truly Namibian project where children go on expeditions for science is officially introduced

Page 5

COMMUNITY



Katrina Cui proves that children from marginalised communities can do well too

Page 9

SPORT



This young man is about to attend his second world championships in a new sports code

Page 12



OUR OWN SPOT ... Fifteen-year-old Innocence Agostinho from the NISE School for the Hearing Impaired in Windhoek looks on as EduVentures founder Thorina Bird explains the project to Youth minister John Mutorwa. EduVentures officially opened their science laboratory at the Windhoek Museum on Thursday. Innocence took part in the recent Science EduVentures expedition to the Langer Heinrich Mine area in the Namib Naukluft Park. See story on page 5. Photo: Carman Honey

Students practise science

After thoroughly examining the animal under the microscope, Aina Mwalya types "predatory spider" into the computer list. Next to her, Johannes Mayumbelo excitedly compares the entry with his own list. Both lists are extensive and contain many names of the insects and arachnids which were collected in a study area close to the new uranium mine Langer Heinrich in Namib Naukluft Park. The question which Aina and Johannes are dealing with is: will they be able to find two comparable areas, one of them in the vicinity of the mine, the other close to Blutkuppe, a little further away?

Aina and Johannes go about their task like seasoned scientists. Even though they are only 14 and 17 years old and still at school. They are two of 18 students from five schools who are taking part in the first Science EduVentures project. The basic issue is the impact of the new uranium mine on the environment.

EduVentures is an initiative of the National Museum of Namibia which aims at raising enthusiasm for nature and the natural sciences in young people; at the same time valuable data as well as plant and animal specimens are gathered for the scientific collections of the National Museum and the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI). EduVentures participants found the Gladiator insect, which was only discovered recently, for the first time at the Fish River Canyon in September last year, and near Aus they came across two spider species which so far had not been known to occur in Namibia.

With Science EduVentures the initiative is taken one step further: participants do not merely collect data, but complete all the scientific tasks which are necessary to answer a particular research question.

Eighteen students who had already gathered some experience on a previous EduVentures expedition were chosen from among the many applicants. A meeting during the weekend of 17 to 19 February prepared them for the project. The basics of scientific work were among the main topics: what is the aim of science? What is the meaning of ethics in science, what is 'unethical' conduct? What methods are available to a scientist and why does he have to consider them? The participants were also given an introduction to the study area and the uranium mine Langer Heinrich. Experts of the University and



HARD AT WORK... Monica Henghali (17), Jan Jonker Afrikaans Secondary School in front with Hilma Nuala (17) of St. Paul's College (left) and Karen Mutota (16) of Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School working away on their experiments in the Science EduVentures laboratory. Photo: Contributed

the Polytechnic of Namibia in the fields of biology, chemistry and social science acted as lecturers and mentors.

The mine had caused headlines; environmental initiatives criticised that permission has been granted to mine uranium in a national nature conservation area and warned of irreparable damage to the environment. "This is a highly controversial issue", admits Thorina Bird, a co-founder of EduVentures and an arachnologist (expert on spiders) at the National Museum. "But for this very reason it suits our project extremely well: the students have to learn to approach issues as neutrally as possible instead of being guided by emotions."

The main question concerning the environmental

impact was divided into six sub-sections and corresponding sub-projects. Can the mine's overburden be rehabilitated again? Which plants and animals in the area concerned live in potholes and their surroundings? What are the consequences of extracting large amounts of groundwater? How do mining operations affect the camel thorn trees which sustain numerous animals? How do plants in the area react to abiotic (chemical) substances and what does it mean for rehabilitation after the mine closes? And the question which Aina and Johannes are looking into: are there similar areas close to the mine and further away (at Blutkuppe)? The purpose of this last question is to monitor both areas over

an extended period of time so that possible changes in the vicinity of the mine can indeed be attributed to mining activities.

Work on site started one week after the introduction. During their eight-day excursion the 18 students gathered data for their research

questions. They measured temperatures and wind speeds, took soil samples, collected plants and caught animals. The samples were also needed for the scientific collections at the National Museum and the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI). During the excursion the students also learnt that on a field trip things do not always work out as expected: reptiles and small mammals did not cooperate and could not be trapped.

Work in the Science Lab

Back in Windhoek the material was eagerly evaluated. For this particular purpose EduVentures has set up a laboratory, equipped with microscopes, computers, internet access and essential textbooks, in a room of the National Museum. "Many schools do not offer computer classes yet", says Samanta Mapfumo from EduVentures. "We show the students how to use the internet for research or how to compile Excel tables and charts, so that later at university they do not find themselves at a complete loss."

The participants of Science EduVentures got together for another meeting from March 24 to 26. This time the focus was on how scientific results are presented. Because this part of scientific work is practised as well: participants in the project started to present their findings and conclusions on Thursday, April 6.

The actual reason for the public event is, however, the official inauguration of the 'Science Lab' and thanking the donors. Renovating and equipping the lab would have been impossible without the support of the Embassy of Germany, Builders' Warehouse, WORX and the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN). EduVentures needs continued support in future as well: another two EduVentures excursions and two Science EduVentures projects are planned for this year.

Contact: EduVentures, +264 (0)61 276809, info@eduventures-africa.org, www.eduventures-africa.org

EduVentures statistics to date

Expeditions: 7

Children: 75

Schools: Immanuel Shifidi Sec School, Jan Jonker Afrikaans Secondary School

NISE for the Hearing Impaired, St George's College, St Paul's College, Windhoek High School

Km walked: 301 km

Km driven: 9929 km

Specimens collected: 7586