

**Association for South African War-blinded Veterans
Vereniging vir Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog-verblinde Veterane**

Message from the Chairman

Dear Colleagues and Readers

As the year draws to a close and we prepare for the festive season I would like to wish you all a blessed Christmas, a safe holiday period and a wonderful year ahead.

2018 took its toll on St Dunstan's as we said our goodbyes to Gawie Breytenbach and shared the sudden loss of Charmaine Dickson, wife of our former CEO Charles Dickson. Charmaine had always been very involved with Charles in St Dunstan's so her passing came as a great shock to all of us.

As you will read in the magazine we hosted the Long Cane Rally in Muizenberg on 13 October 2018 and once again it brought together many of the friends of St Dunstan's to enjoy both exercise and fresh air. Our own Jeremy Opperman participated enthusiastically in the event and by all accounts he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

The most significant event of the year was Project Gemini hosted by St Dunstan's in South Africa for the first time. Project Gemini is a UK-based activity that brings together war blinded veterans from the United Kingdom, South Africa and the USA for a week-long fellowship and adventure. Over the last four years we have sent two South African beneficiaries to the UK each year to participate in this event. St Dunstan's was asked to host the 2018 event. The event was held in Cape Town and our staff under the leadership of our CEO, Gareth Morgan, did a marvelous job in the planning and execution of the event and for this we owe them a great big thank you.

As we come to the end of another year, let us look around at our families, our friends, our colleagues and our neighbours and thank God for the good people that surround us.

It is better to appreciate the things we have than to have something we do not appreciate.

Brian Figaji

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Long Cane Rally

On a windy and sunny day in October the Annual St Dunstan's and John and Esther Ellerman Long Cane Rally was held at the Muizenberg Pavilion. This year's event, the 100th year of service for St Dunstan's was special; accordingly extra effort was put into making the event unforgettable.

The route had participants circumvent the pavilion twice and finish back at the hall to receive their participants' gift. As with previous years each participant and volunteer received a t-shirt and a cap - since it is our centenary year both t-shirt and cap are embossed with the 100 year logo.

Participants came from all over the Western Cape and ranged in age from 10 to 70; all eagerly anticipating a fun day out in the sun surrounded by friends and the sound of the waves crashing in the background.

Sedick Jordaan from CTSB led a group of participants.

Participants walked along the pavilion walkway towards the waterpark.

Every year we are fortunate to have several guide dogs partake in the event. Our own director Jeremy Opperman navigated the course with Ronnie, his new guide dog.

As usual, the 2018 centenary event attracted generous partners to the rally. These ranged from our long-time partners Karen Smit of Vodacom to our new partners

assisting in the lead up to the event by creating awareness on the airwaves across the Western Cape. Thank you to Good Hope FM DJ Danilo Acquisto who led the team on the day. A special mention goes to our t-shirt sponsor Dan Cockrane of IBCO. We thank him for his commitment to the event. There were a number of other sponsors who came on board to provide participant gifts and lucky draw prizes. A big thank you goes to Kelly White of Greenleaf Olive Oil and Candice Sessions of Joekels Tea Packers.

A number of the St Dunstan's directors, family of staff and public attended the event. Thank you to the Chairman and Directors who attended the event and lent a hand where needed.

Participants enjoyed drinks and a meal at the event

Dollence Makhubele from Athlone School for the Blind and Gareth Morgan from St Dunstan's with one of the learners who won a lucky draw prize.

Project Gemini

Gary Tomlinson, Suritha Blake, Lee Evans and Nicky Shaw settle in to watch a beautiful sunset and the start of a busy week.

Sunday 30 September 2018

After months of preparation, lengthy planning, meetings and much anticipation the week arrived. The South African St Dunstaner's descended on Lagoon Beach Hotel at lunchtime for the week-long event. Our friends from across the pond arrived thereafter. Everyone settled in and the group gathered a few hours later to be welcomed and receive information about the upcoming activities.

Monday

On Monday morning we were taken by coach to the Castle of Good Hope - known locally as Cape Town Castle or simply The Castle. This impressive bastion fort dates back to the seventeenth century and is the oldest surviving building in South Africa. It has been the centre of political, military and civilian life at the Cape since 1679 and inside its fortified walls there are four majestic and lifelike statues of Kings Cetshwayo, Langalibalele, Sekhukhune and 17th century freedom fighter Nommoa, who had all at one time languished inside the castles' gloomy cells for resisting the power of the British and Dutch authorities.

A very knowledgeable and humorous tour guide gave us a tour of the castle. He kept us entertained with anecdotes and historical facts about the fort. At one point he locked us all in the ammunition cellar in order for us to experience how dark it was; much to the amusement of our totally blind veterans.

We were shown the torture chamber and the magnificent ornamental fountain and pool. We also had the opportunity to visit the armory and pay our respects at the shrine for those members of the Cape Highlanders Regiment who died in conflicts around the continent of Africa. We also witnessed the ritual of the Ceremony of the Keys and the firing of the cannon at noon.

In the afternoon we participated in dragon boat racing in the calm waters of the lagoon at the Waterfront. It was great fun with two very competitive and enthusiastic teams battling it out for the win!

Tuesday

Early on Tuesday morning we headed out on the West Coast road (R27) to Buffelsfontein Wildlife Reserve. Buffelsfontein is situated an hour from Cape Town in the heart of the West Coast. Once a cattle farm of 1600 ha the reserve is now the ideal place to see lion, buffalo and white rhino. You may also catch a glimpse of cheetah, giraffe, zebra and blue wildebeest.

The owner Paul Loubser warmly welcomed us and took us on the drive in a large Bedford game drive truck. We were very fortunate to spot most of the animals. We saw a family of ostriches, herds of zebra, springbok, wildebeest and golden oryx. My favourite animal encounter during the safari experience was being so close to the giraffes. Paul's knowledge of the animals and plants was impressive. His passion for animals runs deep. Afterwards we enjoyed a delicious lunch of proudly South African dishes at the restaurant. Some of the visiting UK veterans tasted Mrs Ball's chutney for the first time. Richard Haynes loved it!

On our way back to the tour bus Paul showed us some buck horns (kudu, gemsbok, springbok and oryx) for the blind veterans to feel. It was an amazing experience to see George de Nobrega feeling these huge kudu horns and to see him amazed by their size. Paul also gave us a cheetah skin to feel. Gary from the UK veterans enjoyed that moment the most. He made sure Glynis took plenty of photos to take home to show his family.

Wednesday

Cape Town is known the world over for its beauty and its many wonderful tourist attractions, however this beauty sometimes comes with a catch and it's something most Capetonians know all too well; the unpredictable the weather. Some days are perfect clear skies, 30 degree temperatures, not a breath of wind and the ideal day for the beach or to be out and about. On the flipside, one can experience all four seasons in one day which as we discovered put pay to our trip up to the top of Table Mountain on Wednesday morning.

Nevertheless we took it in our stride and the trip up the mountain was replaced with a guided bus tour around the peninsula which ended at Kirstenbosch Gardens for lunch and a walk around the world famous gardens nestled at the eastern foot of Table Mountain. Wednesday evening saw the group having dinner at the V&A Waterfront and enjoying The Cape Town Comedy Club.

Thursday

Thursday was another beautiful day, the sun shone magnificently in a clear azure sky. We set off to visit the Simon's Town Naval Base. The South African Navy's largest naval base started off as a small dockyard facility for the Dutch East India Company in 1743 before it was taken over by the British Royal Navy in the 1790's. The base was eventually handed over to the South African Navy in 1957.

During our visit the group was split into two smaller groups, one toured the South African Navy submarine Queen Modjadji 1 and the other went onboard a tug boat which proceeded to tow three frigates out into the Atlantic Ocean. What a fantastic experience for all!

We enjoyed lunch at Dixie's Restaurant in Glencairn nestled on the picturesque False Bay coastline with idyllic views of the ocean. After lunch we drove the short distance to the False Bay Shooting Range where we had a great time firing the CZ polymer pistol, the M4 carbine assault rifle which fires a 5.56 round and the .22 semi-automatic rifle. It was fantastic to be able to shoot again and there were some really decent shots, notably Glynis Gillam who had an excellent overall score and proved to be quite a sharpshooter! Annie get your gun!

Friday

One cannot visit Cape Town and not go up Table Mountain. That is exactly what we did on Friday morning and the weather gods were looking after us. It was another spectacular start to the day with brilliant sunshine in a clear cloudless sky. After an early breakfast we set off in the coach. We took the twenty minute drive to the foot of the mountain and already there was a three hundred metre long queue of people waiting to board the cable car. Fortunately for us we had pre-booked and were escorted to the front of the queue and went up in the lift to the departure point. The cable cars has capacity for up to 68 people and what is remarkable is the fact that the car revolves 360 degrees when ascending the mountain, giving sighted passengers an amazing view of the urban sprawl of the city of Cape Town and its surrounding areas.

Once atop Table Mountain the views are unsurpassed. Robben Island, where former South African president Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for eighteen of his twenty seven years of incarceration looked resplendent in the morning sunshine. The mountains that surround the Cape Peninsula and dominate the skyline are epic and

majestic. The views were indeed spectacular. Table Mountain is truly one of the great wonders of nature and the experience of visiting this iconic landmark will stay with me forever.

On the way to our next destination we were entertained on the coach by singer and guitarist Renier Heyns, a South African war blinded veteran who visited the Brighton Centre in 2015 with Project Gemini. We all enjoyed lunch at the Boerebraai Restaurant in the heart of the Middelvlei Wine Estate; the food was amazing and plentiful.

We ended our week as most people do at one of the oldest pubs in South Africa called Foresters Arms or commonly known as Forries, in Newlands. In fact, it has been listed in the Guinness Book of Records for the most beer sold in the southern hemisphere. We sat in the garden courtyard enjoying the buzzing atmosphere. Everyone seemed relaxed and enjoyed the cool evening breeze.

Saturday

Saturday morning greeted us with sunshine and the infamous Cape Doctor - the south-easterly wind. This didn't stop the group from making their way to the Waterfront. The local shuttle service got us there in about 30 minutes. On arrival at the Waterfront, it became clear that almost everyone wanted to go shopping to find souvenirs to take home.

The group soon divided into smaller groups to go their different ways. We browsed through the V&A Waterfront Mall. Shop assistants were warm and friendly and didn't mind us showing interest in their wares.

A short while later we visited The Watershed market. The atmosphere there was much more festive. The stalls offered beaded items, local paintings, ostrich feathers and painted ostrich eggs, coasters of the Big Five and lots more. Everyone was fascinated with the local arts and crafts and we re-visited some stalls because it was not an easy task buying something when presented with so many interesting choices. The ostrich eggs converted into bedside lamps and lights were popular, followed by beaded items and other items that depicted the Big Five. Unfortunately the furniture was too large and too heavy to take home on the aeroplane. I am sure if no one had a luggage limit many more items would have been purchased.

We all met up at the bus and the load was significantly heavier than on our arrival. Everyone agreed the morning was well spent and that they had had quite an unforgettable experience.

Saturday was our last day and as George says, "We ended the week on a fiery note!" We boarded the Tigger 2, a beautiful power catamaran at the Waterfront with the expert help of the crew. It was all hands on deck when suddenly someone shouted, "Smoke!" The crew were focused on helping us all to board that they left

the braai on the boat unattended. We had the opportunity to see everyone in action in an emergency situation. The catamaran was filled with smoke and everyone had to move to the top deck for fresh air.

The crisis was quickly brought under control. We all received a complimentary drink to enjoy while we settled in for a wonderful cruise to Clifton Beach where we anchored to enjoy a delicious sunset dinner. It was just awesome and exhilarating feeling the not so gentle breeze as we cruised while watching the sunlight sparkle on the water with a refreshing spray to cool us off. Everyone was chatting about their week and it was clear friendships were made and others were strengthened. One beneficiary commented that it was wonderful to have the opportunity to spend more time with fellow beneficiaries.

We headed back to the Waterfront while the sun was setting displaying glorious colours on the horizon. What a beautiful city we live in and what an amazing finale to the week and Project Gemini.

Sunday

The week came to an end as quickly as it had started, a non-stop activity-packed week that few will forget. Having the opportunity to share this experience with so many and more especially hosting our guests from the UK and creating an experience for some who had never visited Cape Town, or South Africa for that matter, is something the team at St Dunstan's is proud to have accomplished.

AGM 2018

The Annual General Meeting held in September 2018 took on a slightly different feel this year. We took a break from our usual venue and put a new venue to the test. We hosted our guests in The Zambezi Room at The River Club. Among our guests we were very fortunate to host the Disability Unit from the Simon's Town Naval Base as well as a number of military, naval and air force members. Due to the unavailability of our Chairman to host the AGM the baton was passed to ReINETTE Popplestone to manage proceedings.

Speakers Philip Bam previously from LOFOB and Jeremy Opperman spoke about and relayed the history of the respective organisations they represent. Jeremy Opperman spoke about the 100 year history of St Dunstan's.

After the interesting and informative speeches and a short closing by ReINETTE Popplestone, it was time for the food and drinks to be shared along with some great conversations and stories of days past.

The attendees enjoyed some snacks after the meeting

Day of Remembrance 100 Years On

On the lawns of the Union Buildings in Pretoria stands The Wall of Remembrance. The names of the fallen South African soldiers of the First World War are engraved on it.

An hour before the ceremony began dignitaries and special guests were shown to their seats. As the clock struck the hour of eleven the bells rang out marking the 100 year anniversary of the end of World War I.

The service began with an opening hymn followed by a scripture verse from Exodus 12:14, a short sermon and a final hymn. Guests remained standing for the Last Post, a two-minute silence and ending with the Reveille.

The wreath laying ceremony was supported by the SA Army Band and two bagpipers. A total of thirty-seven wreaths were laid from the various veterans' organisations which included the military attachés from France, the United States, Canada, Namibia and Japan as well as the high-ranking officers, Chief of the SA Navy, Army and Air Force. George De Nobrega, guided by his brother Carlos, laid a wreath on behalf of St. Dunstan's. Members of the public were given the opportunity to lay their own wreaths and poppy flowers.

The ceremony was concluded with singing of the national anthem followed by a word of thanks and refreshments.

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the guns of Europe fell silent.

“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

We will remember them.”

(Excerpt: For the Fallen by Lawrence Binyan 1914)

A Trek Through Paradise

18 November 2018.

My fingers are curled lightly around the harness handle. We move in perfect symmetry, confidently weaving our way down the sandy footpath. Oppies, officially

Opera, my black Labrador suddenly slows. A step later she stops. A recording of my own voice announces in my Bluetooth earpiece, "Step down onto the beach".

Clipped to the waistband of my jeans was the latest edition to the Humanware stable of assistive technology for people who are blind; namely the Victor Reader Trek. The pocket-sized Trek is a multi-functional audio recorder and player aimed at educational, vocational and general entertainment applications.

Unlike its predecessor, the Victor Reader Stream, the Trek has one major additional feature; a built-in talking GPS. This GPS is identical in operation to the now obsolete Humanware Trekker Breeze but accomplishes satellite acquisition in only 8 seconds compared to the 30 to 45 seconds of the Breeze.

I reach into a pocket and extract a single dog pellet. Oppies is eagerly anticipating her reward! I gingerly hold the treat between thumb and forefinger. "Good girl!" I tell her. I release the pellet mindful that the slightest hesitation after the point of contact between dog snout and my fingers can have painful consequences.

I stand motionless, taking a moment to reflect and contemplate. I feel misty droplets of sea spray on my cheeks. Smelling the saltiness in the fresh air; I hear nothing but the unrelenting roar of the crashing waves. I am so grateful to have free and unrestricted access to one of the most pristine stretches of the glorious African coast. From where I stand at the edge of the green tropical belt, had I not been blind, looking in every direction I would not been able to spot a single sign of man's impact on mother nature.

"Forward!" I order. Together we step down onto the beach. Immediately we turn sharp left heading north-east. Maintaining direction on a beach is of course simply a matter of keeping the sound of the pounding surf to either one's left or right. Orientation demands minimal input and concentration. Walk where the sand is hard and wet, move slightly away from the sea when waves lap at one's ankles! Checking whether the tide is coming in or going out prior to setting out can be helpful but is not essential.

On the other hand determining the distance one has walked is not something one can easily ascertain unless one encounters very specific rock formations, river mouths etc. Thanks however to my Trek, if I've turned to my left I know that the next residential village after Trafalgar, Marina Beach, is exactly 2,180m from where I stepped off the path. Had I turned right my Trek knows that my next point of interest (in fact obligatory point of return) is the substantial shark-infested Mpenjati River mouth, some 6,340m in a south-westerly direction.

Having opted to head for Marina Beach, from time to time as I walk I reach down and press the Where am I button on the Trek. I hear, "Heading north, 622m from..." followed by a recording of my own voice, "Marina Beach". If curious, I can also press

the "Info" button which informs me of the total time I've been walking, the total distance walked, my current speed in kilometres per hour and even my altitude - this aspect is not particularly relevant when one is of course at sea level.

Some ninety minutes later, after walking 82 up the sandy track, somewhat ambitiously referred to as Beach Lane on the street map of Trafalgar, I turn left onto Nelson Drive, a tarred road. 248m later I take a left into Effingham Parade. I'm heading almost due south so the sea, which is approximately 100m as the crow flies, is on my left. 614m later my Trek tells me to turn right into Jutland Place. Of course Oppies knows the route so such instructions are for the most part superfluous, nonetheless having a Trek on my hip does allow me to deviate from time to time from my usual routes and explore the many quiet, leafy lanes of the village entirely independent of a sighted guide.

96m later Oppies turns slightly left. "Curb!" I instruct. A few metres later she comes to a halt at the start of our brick driveway. I feel the familiar, enthusiastic oscillations through the harness handle as she wags her tail, her eyes have locked-on on her four-legged friends who have been waiting patiently for our return. I give her a treat before saying, "Gate!" As we step up to the driveway gate my Trek speaks, "Driveway gate".

The accuracy of the Trek is something to behold. In most situations it is accurate to within 2m to 4m but at times it is accurate to within a mere 1m. This is using the US Military GPS network, which the US degrades to an accuracy of between 8m and 12m when deemed necessary for strategic reasons. I've only found degraded accuracy to render the Trek ineffective on a handful of occasions, but then again, one must not forget that when one has a guide dog a talking GPS is only a supplementary orientation aid.

Remaining however on the topic of GPS accuracy, the Trek is Galileo-ready. Galileo is a civilian and totally new GPS system presently being rolled out in Europe and which will see utilisation in Southern Africa hopefully within the next 18 months. The benefit of the 100% civilian Galileo over the US Military GPS is that accuracy will typically be better than 1m and in most circumstances as good as 30cm!

Having entered our property I re-lock the gate and unharness Oppies. In a millisecond she transforms from obedient genius into wild, carefree hooligan charging at lightning speed across the lawn, paws flailing and churning up dust. The uninformed blind observer might believe it was a horse galloping past or perhaps a cheetah in pursuit of his supper.

I hang Oppies's harness and leash on the hook on the back door, unclip my Trek and check my total walking distance and walking time. I ease myself onto the couch. I select Internet Radio and then my favourite radio station, MSN News broadcasting from Washington DC. After catching up with events in the United States I select

BBC World Service and hear what's been happening in other parts of the globe. Satisfied that the world has been getting along quite nicely for the past couple of hours without my intervention, I select Offline Bookshelf, then Audible, followed by the title of the novel I'm currently reading: Maya's Notebook by Isabel Allende. The protagonist uses the word obdurate, within a sentence, "The past is obdurate". The word implies stubborn but in the context, I'm not entirely certain what the author is meaning. On the Trek I press the Online Bookshelf button, and then select References. Once there I select Search on Wiktionary before typing the word obdurate using the Trek's numeric keypad. A clear, intelligible synthetic voice reads the Wiktionary result. Duly informed, I return to the novel, press the Play button and continue listening where I left off.

Some five minutes later the Trek emits a soft bong sound similar to that warning one hears when it's time to fasten seatbelts on an airliner. The sound in the case of the Trek however indicates that a podcast has just been downloaded. I press the Time button on the machine. Hearing that it's, "11h06" I realise that it must have been the latest edition of the China in Africa podcast published every Tuesday at 11h00. I put Isabel Allende to one side as I delve into the machinations and aspirations of China and her economic policy insofar as Africa is concerned.

Besides the addition of the GPS function, compared to the Victor Reader Stream, the Trek has a significantly faster processor with an internal memory of 32GB compared with the 8GB of the Stream. The Trek can also use SD cards up to 256GB in capacity compared with a 32GB SD card limitation of the Stream. The Trek also adds the convenience of Bluetooth connectivity and an analogue FM radio capability; although at the time of writing the latter is still to be activated by Humanware.

Retail prices in the US are \$369 and \$699 for the Stream and Trek respectively. For an estimated price in Rands one must multiply the US Dollar pricing by the current ZAR/USD exchange rate, add R800 for shipping plus 15% South African VAT. Humanware is represented in South Africa by Edit Microsystems (Pty) Ltd. Tel: +27 (0)21 433 2520. Users requiring syllabus-structured one-on-one training in the use of either product may call Neville Clarence on Tel: +27 (0)39 313 0067 or email: nclarencej@gmail.com. Alternatively send an SMS with the word Trek to +27 (0)81 729 9479.

As a beneficiary of St. Dunstan's Association for South African war blinded veterans, I express my sincere gratitude for their generous gift of a Humanware Victor Reader Trek.

Paralympian Victorious in Equality Court Case Against Cape Town Wine Farm

A visually impaired Paralympian swimmer has emerged victorious from a three-year discrimination battle with Cape Town wine farm Durbanville Hills.

The wine farm agreed to issue a public apology admitting to discriminating against Hendri Herbst, who was refused entry to the wine farm's restaurant because of the presence of his guide dog.

In the settlement agreement ordered by the Equality Court last week Friday, Durbanville Hills agreed to contribute R50 000 to the South African Guide-Dogs Association, and a further R50 000 to Herbst as compensation.

"I was shocked by the outcome because throughout the entire legal process, they held firm that there was no discrimination," Herbst told News24.

"We were happy to go to court to establish legal precedent, so we were caught off guard when they approached us with a settlement proposal."

However, Herbst said the case was never about the money.

Awareness about rights

"The goal was always to improve awareness about the rights associated with guide dogs. This conversation was long overdue," Herbst, a law student, added.

"Hopefully, employees will take their education and training, with regard to visually impaired persons, seriously."

Dr Theo Broodryk, head of the Stellenbosch Law Clinic, agreed that the settlement was "not only a victory for visually impaired people, but would assist in creating awareness about the right of the disabled not to be discriminated against".

The law clinic instituted legal proceedings in the Equality Court on Herbst's behalf when he was refused entry to the wine farm's restaurant, based on the presence of his guide dog Stan, a golden retriever.

"When we arrived, the hostess would not let us inside because of their 'no dogs' policy. I explained to her that Stan is a guide dog, not a pet," he said.

Herbst claimed that he was not allowed to use the toilet unless he was escorted by a male.

Durbanville Hills has since apologised for the incident and says it is committed to ensuring that all persons, including blind persons with guide dogs, are welcomed at its restaurant and tasting facilities.

"It is the policy of Durbanville Hills that blind persons and their guide dogs are welcome to visit any part of the public areas of the cellar, the tasting room and restaurant," managing director Albert Gerber said.

“Durbanville Hills unconditionally apologises for the experience of Mr Herbst and his family on December 30, 2014 at its tasting and restaurant facilities.”

Source: <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/paralympian-victorious-in-equality-court-case-against-cape-town-wine-farm-20181001>

Reducing Fear in PTSD Recovery

There are a lot of different elements that induce fear after trauma and while living with PTSD. Off the top of my head I think of:

- memories
- thoughts
- smells
- sounds
- feelings
- triggers what ifs
- new traumatic experiences

I bet you could add a few more ideas to this list of where fear comes from. The truth is, with PTSD fear is about as ubiquitous as the air we breathe. So, what then?

Recently, I survived another life-threatening trauma, which has caused me to have fear on my mind. During this trauma I was very afraid. I was cognitively and physically impaired, which meant I couldn't fend for myself; I was powerless.

And yet, fear hasn't become an overwhelming issue in these days of my recovery. Why not? Because I've got a great set of tools to stop fear in its tracks. I've been practicing these things for years, which means now I use the skills as if they are reflexes; easily and with great success. I still experience moments of fear, but I move through those moments rather than get tripped up by them. Here are some of the ways I do it:

Face the fear. Our natural tendency is to turn and run from anything that frightens us. Actually, that's a biologically hardwired tendency and can go a long way to helping our survival as a species. As survivors healing from PTSD, however, running away indulges our avoidance tendencies (a hallmark of PTSD) and so actually puts us deeper into PTSD rather than bringing us out of it. Healing means finding the courage to face the things that frighten us most.

Find a buddy. All too often in PTSD we assume a) no one will understand us, b) no one feels the way we do, c) no one can help us. Newsflash: You are part of a large crowd of people who feel exactly the same way you do. And, there are people who have many ideas about how to help you feel better. Holding yourself in isolation allows the situation to feel like its you vs. the fear. You and your posse vs. the fear is a much stronger position, whether that's allowing one person to support and help you or many.

Write it down. Trauma creates chaos in your mind. PTSD is part of the process of how your mind struggles to create a new order. You can give this process a boost by organizing information. When the fears swirl through your mind, pin them down with words that are outside of your mind. One great way to do this is to write out what your fears are. When you choose the language to express your feelings you reclaim a very important element of control.

Say it out loud. The things in your mind feel more intense, sound louder and look bigger than they actually are. When you say these things out loud you further the process of shrinking them down to size. Hearing the fear in the real world places it in a more proper context, which allows you to begin separating yourself from it. The more separated you become the more the fear shrinks.

Make a plan. At the bottom of every fear is, as fear expert Susan Jeffers explained, the thought, "I can't handle it!" But what if you knew you could handle it? Knowing what you will do and how you will do it shrinks the fear again. When you have a strategy you claim even more control, which shifts you from powerless to powerful, which can reduce fear to a small squeak! vs. the loud booming voice it used to have. Think ahead into your fears and decide how you would respond to those situations should they occur.

There will always be fear. The goal is to learn how to be proactive, how to manage it; how to overcome and transcend it so that you are in control and the fear, like a small, annoying insect, is dealt with the way you choose.

Source: www.sadag.org

New Year's Resolution Ideas and How to Achieve Each of Them

1. Get in shape: Losing weight is the top resolution for Americans, and combined with “exercise more” and “stay fit and healthy” it is something that over a third of the population wishes to achieve. It's easy enough to start an exercise and diet program, but the trick is to find a decent one that will give you steady results and will be easy to stick to in the long run. Have a look at these tricks, hacks, exercises and mistakes to avoid to make the best out of your resolution.

2. Start eating healthier food, and less food overall: This is usually an extension of the previous resolution. Switching to a healthier diet can be incredibly tricky when we are surrounded by cheap junk food. However, with a good amount of determination and some basic tips you can slowly develop healthier eating habits. Learn to control emotional eating, be aware of reasons for diets to fail, make use of these tricks and have a look at these awesome and healthy recipes.

3. Become more polite: Good manners have always been an important part of a civilized society. They make it easier to connect with others, avoid offending people and will ensure that others perceive you as a good and trustworthy person. So know the etiquette, be prepared or other manners in other countries, deal with rude people in the right way and learn how to say no.

4. Reduce stress: They say that stress is one of the biggest killers out there, and it can have a very destructive effect on your relationships as well as your health. It may be an unavoidable side effect of our hectic modern lifestyles, but it can be effectively managed with the help of useful, easy to practice tricks for stress management.

5. Meet new people: When we get stuck in a rut, we usually end up staying at home most of the time, missing out on a lot of interesting opportunities for networking and having fun. Meeting new people can be beneficial to your mental well-being and help your career, so don't be afraid to get out there and make some friends. Overcome your shyness, get some knowledge and go and get to know new and interesting people.

6. Become more active: Some people don't really have a big weight problem, and they even get some exercise a few times a week, but they just sit around the most of the time at home and at work, which can have a negative effect on their posture and health. In that case, all you need is to find ways of moving around more throughout the day instead of staying hunched over the computer. It's even more fun if you share your activity with friends and family.

7. Learn to be happier with your life: Even those that are in decent shape, make a good living and have stress under control can still be unhappy. It takes time and patience to learn how to find joy in the little things and not to let problems bring you down.

8. Get more quality sleep: With big TV's, computers, smartphones, tablets and all sorts of gadgets with glowing lights and beeping alerts, it can be hard to get enough sleep at night. You should be gunning for at least 8 hours of sleep a night, and there are fairly simple ways to achieve this number if you make use of science and everyday hacks.

9. Start writing a book/journal: You'd be surprised to know just how many people out there have an interesting story to tell, but lack the confidence and skill to write everything down. Even if it is just a few random thoughts scribbled daily in a journal, you shouldn't be afraid to give writing a go with a few tips and tricks.

10. Learn how to defend yourself: Being able to ensure your own safety, and the safety of those you love, is a very important skillset to have. It's not all about groin kicks and palm strikes, however. You need to learn how to conduct yourself and what kind of behavior to look out for in others.

11. Spend more time with the people that matter: There is just too little time in this life for us to waste it on insincere, duplicitous and toxic people. We should focus on the people who we care about deeply and who care about us, as this is the best way to stay happy.

12. Spend less time on social media: Some people might not spend hours in front of the TV, or playing video games, but social media has become a serious addiction among a wide range of demographics. It's fine to stay in touch with friends and family, but if you consistently spend more than an hour every day on social media, it's time to make a change.

Well, there you have it – an extensive list of advice, tips and tricks to help you see your New Year's resolution through and make some long-term changes in your life. I wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Back Page News

Congratulations:

Kalolina Kawewe will be celebrating her special birthday on 6 January 2019.

Congratulations:

Mani Ruieindo is a prefect for 2019 at the Kimberley Boys High

Rest in Peace

Condolences:

It is with great sadness that we learnt the passing of Charmaine Dickson on 4 October 2018.

“A good heart has stopped beating. A good soul ascended to heaven”.

Condolences:

Sadly, we learnt about Rueben Matthews’s demise on 25 Nov 2018.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Your presence at our events was always one graced with smiles and goodwill , the selfless support you gave, the role you played in so many lives will be missed, Rest well friend “

2019 Reunion

Dates to be communicated soon

Office Closure:

Our office will be closed from Thursday, 20 December 2018 from 12h00 and will reopen on Tuesday, 8 January 2019 at 8h30.

Happy Holidays:

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with peace and happiness.

From the St Dunstan’s Team

ST. DUNSTANS

Association for South African War-Blinded

Veterans Vereniging vir Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlogs-Verblinde Veterane

INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION NOT FOR GAIN (Co. Reg. 1944/17587/08)

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Have you thought of leaving a lasting gift?

St Dunstan's, like many other associations, rely heavily on bequests/legacies to carry out its work. A simple gift can transform the lives of blind ex-servicemen and women. You could help St Dunstan's continue in its tradition of helping people come to terms with their blindness and achieve a level of independence in their daily lives. In this way you can literally leave the world a better place. Should you require confidential assistance in adding St Dunstan's to your Last Will and Testament, please feel free to contact our chief executive officer; Gareth Morgan, who will be glad to be of assistance to you.