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World Braille Day

4 January 2016

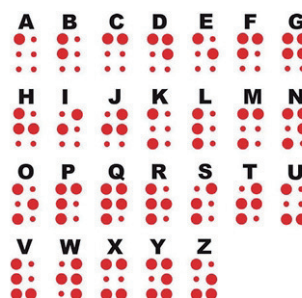
Braille, invented by the Frenchman, Louis Braille in 1821, is a coded system for reading and writing used by the blind or visually impaired. Officially recognised in France in 1854, the invention of the Braille code is now celebrated annually on Louis' birthday, the 4th of January.

Born in the small town of Coupvray, France twenty miles east of Paris, Braille was blinded in both eyes as the result of an early childhood accident. He mastered his disability and excelled at his studies, receiving a scholarship to France's Royal Institute for Blind Youth. He began developing his own system of tactile code while attending the Institute to allow blind people to read and write quickly and efficiently.

Inspired by the military cryptographer Charles Barbier's 'silent' communication system, Braille later constructed a new method of code built specifically for the needs of the blind and presented his work in 1824 for the first time. His first Braille book was published in 1829.

Louis Braille served as a professor at the Institute and spent the remainder of his life refining and extending his system which went unused by most educators until after his death from tuberculosis in 1852.

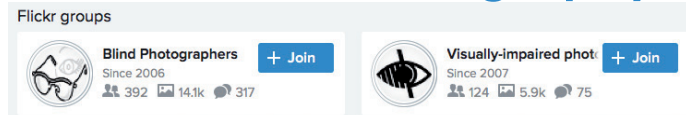
Braille has now been acknowledged as a revolutionary invention helping to provide equal opportunity for many blind and visually impaired people throughout the world and has been adapted for use in many languages.



Louis Braille inventor of Braille, the coded system used by blind or visually impaired people to read and write.

TALKING TECH

Interested in Photography?



The website Flickr is a social space where more than three hundred blind and visually impaired photographers have come together to share their best shots and to provide advice and support for other blind people who want to get started with photography. All you need to join a blind or visually impaired group is a Flickr account.

Get clicking: www.flickr.com



Facebook's Working On A Tool To Help The Blind "See" Images

Right now, blind and visually impaired people who have access to screen readers (tools used to identify what's displayed on a screen) can listen to what people are writing on Facebook, but there's currently no way to figure out what's going on in the millions of photos shared on Facebook every day. That's why Facebook is currently working on an artificial intelligence-based object recognition tool to help blind users get an idea of what's in all of the photos people share on Facebook.

To read the full article go to: <http://techcrunch.com/2015/10/13/facebook-working-on-a-tool-to-help-the-blind-see-images/>

Posted Oct 13, 2015 by Megan Rose Dickey (@meganrosedickey)

Blitab

is the world's first tactile tablet device for blind and visually impaired people, enabling them to browse the web on an innovative Braille screen. Blitab is a responsive Braille device for reading and writing that functions like a tablet and ebook. The tactile tablet has no mechanical elements; instead the screen is covered with small physical dots (1200 dots in total) that rise and fall on demand, creating a whole page in Braille code.

<http://www.designindaba.com/articles/creative-work/blitab-enables-blind-people-browse-web-responsive-braille->



BALANCING SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the key responsibilities of a profitable organisation is to increase the share value of the organisation on behalf of its shareholders. As a non-profit organisation, the SA Library for the Blind is also looking to increase stakeholders value and improve and expand the services rendered to our more than 5,400 registered members.

The SALB, as one of 26 Public Entities, is dependent on the financial support received from the Department of Arts & Culture. It is the Management of the Library's responsibility to ensure that these funds, which are tax payers' monies, are utilised in accordance with applicable financial legislation. We are proud to have received an unqualified audit from the Audit-General of the Eastern Cape for the 2014/2015 financial year. Responsible financial management ensures continued support for the Library from the Department, thus enabling the Library to continue rendering its services to members, a costly endeavour. It is therefore our aim to once again receive a clean audit for 2015/16.

The production of audio and braille material, providing assistive reading devices and access to additional reading material is not cheap. As such, the Library is proud to have added an additional 230 audio and 230 braille titles to its collection during the 2014/2015 financial year - these titles were produced by the SALB themselves. To fulfill members' needs, the Library also purchased 226 audio and braille titles from various international book suppliers.

Additional titles are also on offer for download via the Overdrive catalogue, found on the Library's website: www.salb.org.za. The South African Library for the Blind is aware that this service, due to limited access to the internet by many members, does not benefit everyone and is investigating various options to make it available to more members in the future. This, however, will take careful planning and negotiating on SALB's part and the involvement and participation of various other stakeholders.

As a member of the international body Accessible Book Consortium, the Library can access existing audio material through the TIGAR catalogue. The catalogues of selected international libraries are listed on TIGAR and we are thereby able to share reading material. 91 other titles were downloaded in this way last year, saving the Library invaluable money and time and making these titles available to members within a matter of days.

Because assistive reading devices are costly to obtain and maintain, the Library is actively investigating various other devices in the marketplace. The cost of our current device, provided free of charge to members, is approximately R3,500 per unit. A different device, available from a South African supplier, currently under evaluation by the Library will be closer to R300 per unit - a massive cost saving! Value for money, sound quality and ease of use is of course paramount and just some of the criteria that must be met.

Improving and expanding access to reading material for members in the most cost-effective manner is a tight balancing act for the Library. But compromising our service in any way, is not an option and all the Library's staff is therefore dedicated and committed to improve what is on offer to library members.

Information Science student connects with SALB staff



Want to learn more about SALB?

Don't worry, the South African Library for the Blind allows members of the society to visit and learn more about the Library. Just call 046 622 7226 to set an appointment.



An agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

Like many have said, experience is the best teacher of all things, and theory plays a crucial role in introducing the practice. Nompumelelo Mayi, a final year student in Library and Information Science, has gained hands on practice at the South African Library for the Blind (SALB). This was done as part of the University of Fort Hare Library School fieldwork. The fieldwork's objective is to acquaint students with Library and Information Services (LIS) industry experience. It is during the fieldwork that students are awarded an opportunity to spend a specific period of time with LIS practitioners who enlighten them on the basic skills required to succeed in the field. Mpumi, as known to many, spent three invaluable weeks at SALB, and she was exposed to various departments such as Circulation, Cataloguing, Dispatch, Braille Production and Audio Production.

The highlight of the fieldwork, according to Mpumi, was to generate picking lists. She was also impressed by the team work that the SALB staff members have shown towards reaching the objectives of the organisation. Mpumi found the experience to be empowering as she discovered the requirements of successful information specialists.

"It also helped me to gain confidence about my career because I will go to work knowing what is expected of me", said Mpumi. This not only shed light on the importance of knowing where her future lies but also on the prominence of practical aspect of career opportunities.

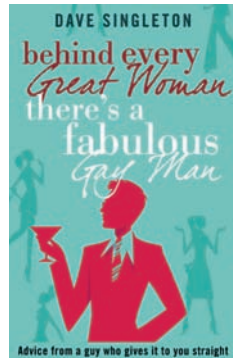
The LIS Senior Manager, Neli Kaunda hailed Mpumi for choosing a vibrant field of study. She also reiterated that the Library seeks to recruit more students through an internship/learnership programme to give students professional exposure.

NEW BOOKS

Behind every great woman there's a fabulous gay man

By Dave Singleton (DA 6739: 6 hrs, 28 min.)

Gay or straight, men are men so who better to give you a no-holds-barred glimpse into the mysterious world of what men really think? Your female friends may be full of sympathy but Dave Singleton understands how the male mind works and has your best interests at heart. This book tells you how to avoid the pitfalls of the dating game, live stylishly and be even more fabulous than you already are.



Skaduself

By Paula Marais (DA 7126: 10 hrs, 06 mins.)

Die roman begin waar Thea in die hof en later in die tronk is. Deur die stemme van Thea, haar dogter Sanusha en haar man, Clay, ontvou die verhaal van 'n ma wat in 'n monster of 'n winkelpop kan verander weens nageboortelike depressie en psigose. In Skaduself kry die leser 'n blik op wat ouers daartoe dryf om die ondenkbare te doen. Die boek is in die liga van Elbie Lötter (alias Anchien Troskie) se Dis ek, Anna en Annelie Botes se Thula-Thula en Raaiselkind. Die openbaring van die onnoembare daad wat gepleeg is, vind eers naby die einde van die boek plaas en dit kom as 'n skok, selfs al het alles in die verhaal jou daarop voorberei. Dis 'n hartverskeurende storie. Ek is seker dat dit by baie boekklubs nog lang gesprekke gaan ontlok.' (Die Burger; RAPPORT WEEKLIKS)



Saving chimpanzees: a man on a rescue mission

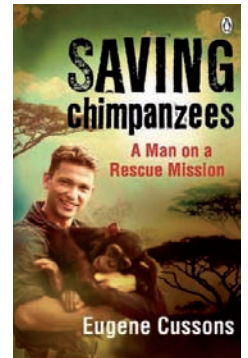
By Eugene Cussons (B10707: 3 vols. & DA5800: 9hrs.)

Genetically, the chimpanzee is humankind's closest relative in the animal kingdom. Yet in recent times humans have shown scant regard for the welfare of their intelligent cousin.

Conflicts and endemic poverty across their range have decimated wild chimpanzee populations and they are today a seriously endangered species. Destruction of their habitat and the bush meat trade have disrupted their complex social structures, often resulting in orphaned youngsters - some of which are sold illegally as exotic 'pets' to people who do not understand their highly specialised needs. In association with the Jane Goodall Institute South Africa, Eugene Cussons and his family established Chimpanzee Eden in the South African Lowveld as a sanctuary for the relocation of abused and orphaned chimpanzees from all over Africa. Often at great personal risk, Cussons travels throughout strife-torn African countries and brings traumatised primates back to the safety of Chimp Eden where, for the first time for most of them, they have freedom and the opportunity of being with their own kind, as well as the attention of experts.

Saving Chimpanzees is a remarkable account of some of his rescue missions - complicated operations requiring diplomacy and no small measure of courage and dedication.

Now updated after the recent terrifying incident at Chimp Eden, Eugene provides insight and describes the events, reasons and consequences of the attack on a student. (Penguin)



MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT TO READ?

We will add new magazines and newspaper later this year. So, which one would you like to read and in which format between the following?

Magazines	Newspapers
1. Finesse	1. Sunday Times
2. Finweek	

Make your choice by contacting us on 046 622 7226 or lethabo.ledwaba@salb.org.za



OverDrive Collection

With OverDrive, you can browse and borrow audio books for a period of 2 weeks. The Library will purchase new OverDrive books later this year. You can access the site via our website www.salb.org.za. If you have not looked at it yet, you are missing out. For more information contact 046 622 7226, our friendly staff members will assist you.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BRAILLE PRODUCTION



The Braille Production department has received a new Embossor 600 SR that is more advanced than the one we were using before. It's a 3-in-1, it prints, perforates and cuts at the same time, which results in quicker printing and binding. This makes workflow in the printing department more productive, resulting in more efficiency and effectiveness.

We also have 2 new English Trainee Braillists who started 1 September 2015, Portia Mqeke and Sinazo Afrika. Here are more about them:

Sinazo

My name is Sinazo Afrika, 30 years of age. I am a married woman with one child. I was born and bred in Grahamstown.

I joined the SA Library for the Blind in February 2015 as a copy typist on a seven month contract basis. On the 1st September 2015 I obtained a permanent position as a Trainee Braillist. I am so excited because it has always been a dream of mine to become a Braillist one day, as this is a very scarce skill.

I am a passionate, smart and determined female with a desire to make a positive impact with the experience and skills that I have accumulated over the years. I believe that meaningful value has been added to my life by joining the SALB, and I am looking forward to adding value to the Library's Vision, Mission, Values and Goals.

SALB IS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK!

Portia

My name is Portia Mqeke. I am married and have two kids. I matriculated in 2002. In 2009 I did a Management Assistant Course and in 2010 I started working as a Receptionist at Drs Lloyd and Partners. I started working at the SALB as Trainee Braillist 1 September 2015. It's so exciting to be learning Braille, it's something totally different. I love taking on new challenges to develop myself and to improve my skills and career, and to also share my ideas. I'm blessed to be part of the SALB family. Thank you.

STAFF SCENE

AT SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND



While we are mourning the loss of our friend, others are rejoicing to meet him behind the veil.

~ John Taylor

In Memoriam:

Sadly the SA Library for the Blind experienced the loss of one of our pensioners, Mrs Maria Killian, who passed away on 2 June 2015 at the blessed age of 89.

On 22 September 2015, Mr Siyabulela Vikilahle, a Project Assistant at the SA Library for the Blind passed away after a tragic motor vehicle accident.

A number of our staff also experienced personal losses in their family circles.

Our thoughts and prayers accompany them all.

Rest in Peace



An agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

The period 1 June to 31 August was quite an eventful one on the Human Resources front.

Appointments (Permanent Establishment):

Ms Nombasa Kate started at the Library on 1 June 2015 as the new Braille Consultants Assistant. Ms Kate obtained a National Senior Certificate and also holds an N4 Human Resources Management Certificate. She is computer literate and obtained high marks in this field during her studies at N3 and N4 level. Ms Kate worked in different capacities at a legal firm in Grahamstown from January 2011 to June 2015. Her work experience is in an administrative and office assistant field.

Ms Yolelwa Mbanjwa who worked in the same position during 2012/2013, was re-appointed as the Project Coordinator of the Library Project in KwaZulu Natal. She started on 1 July 2015 on the project. The project is funded by the Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture in KwaZulu Natal on a conditional grant basis.

Ms Mbanjwa obtained a B.A. Hons. Degree in Social Work in 2003. In 2005 she completed a Diploma in Project Management as well as a Certificate in General Management. In 2006 she completed a Certificate course in Restorative Justice and Victim-Offender Mediation Skills. She also completed courses in Media Communications, Water Quality Safety Plan Framework, Camps and Youth Development, Capacity Development and Empowerment on National Programme HIV/AIDS and Care of Children, Life Skills Training and Qualified Assessor. She has many recorded achievements listed on her resume and her work experience ranges from being a Tutor and Supervisor in 2002 to 2006 to Senior Community Facilitator or Researcher to Consultancy work, Social Supervision and other Project Coordinator and Programme Manager over a 13 year period.

Ms Neliswa Mtsewu was appointed on 22 July 2015 as the Project Coordinator of the Library Project in the Eastern Cape. This project is funded by the Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture in the Eastern Cape on a conditional grant basis.

Ms Mtsewu holds a BTech Public Management qualification which she obtained in 2004. She also completed a N4 Human Resources Certificate at Buffalo City FET College, a Frontline and Public Relations Certificate and a Skills Development Facilitator Assessor and Moderator course. Ms Mtsewu is a Qualified Skills Development Facilitator, a Registered Assessor and Moderator.

Ms Mtsewu started as a Marketing Admin Support Clerk in 2001. Other positions held over her 14 year career include an Independent HR Consultant, a Training Coordinator and Administrator, a Community Development Officer, office Manager and a Skills Facilitator.

Mr Paul Thompson was appointed as Project Coordinator in the Western Cape from funds provided by the Western Cape Provincial Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. He started on 11 August 2015.

Mr Thompson completed a Local Economic Development Qualification, an Assessor qualification and HIV Counsellor Training. He is currently busy with a Project Management Certificate. He has a number of achievements listed in his resume.

Mr Thompsons employment career started out in 2005 as a Local Economic Development Officer and in 2009 he was employed as a Operations Coordinator. He was also a Project Coordinator over the period October 2010 to November 2012 and again in April 2013 to July 2015, before starting at the SA Library for the Blind.

Promotions:

During July 2015 three staff members of the Library were promoted, with Board approval, after their revised post profiles were reviewed by a grading expert. Mr Rostienne Mager's post title changed to Technical Officer and Ms Florence Jadi's post title changed to Library Officer along with the change in salary grades. Mr Malibongwe Nquma's post title remained unchanged as Accountant, although his post grade was changed.

Terminations:

Mr Bili resigned without notice as the Project Coordinator of the Eastern Cape after one month of service. In terms of the recruitment agency, personal family reasons were the result of his decision.

General:

No less than 8 staff members of the Library attended the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) held in Cape Town during August. This event is held in a different country each year. This year, for the first time in 8 years the conference was held in South Africa and the Library managed to take a large group of staff to the conference. This was an ideal opportunity to network with International counterparts and other national colleagues and associates.



The Library concluded its 2014/15 financial review by the Auditor General in July 2015. The Library has again received an unqualified audit opinion from the Auditor General for this review period. The Library has a proud history of maintaining this status over the years. The Auditor General commended the Library for submitting financial statements that were 100% free from material misstatements.

This reaffirms the commitment of ensuring efficient and effective Corporate Governance at the Library. The Library will continue building on the relations with the Auditor General as well as other relevant Stakeholders to ensure that this success is maintained and that we continuously improve on our reporting.

The Annual report was also submitted in August 2015 for onward tabling at Parliament. This report contains a summary analysis of how the Library has performed over the 2014/15 period including the report of the Auditor General and the financial statements.

Benchmarking on Recording Equipment with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC):

Five SALB staff members from Audio Production (Melton Kivits, Themble Gxekwa, Andrew Brooks, Nomfuneko Melitafa and Zodwa Gqolodashe) together with the Senior Manager of Production, Pumla Mahanjana, visited the SABC offices in Port Elizabeth on the 20th August 2015.



Some of SALB staff who visited the SABC studios.

The SALB Audio team's benchmarking trip focused on the operational side of radio at the SABC (Umhlobo Wenene) in Port Elizabeth - specifically on how content is presented to listeners.

Ms. Ntombi May, the Deputy Station Manager welcomed the SALB staff and gave a brief overview of their operations.



Ms. Ntombi May.

This introduction to SABC took place in the boardroom, where SALB staff were then introduced to Ntombesizwe Ndzima, the Studio Manager. Ms. May took the SALB staff on tour of the various recording studios. Staff also went through the old and

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) Trip to Port Elizabeth

20th August 2015



Ms. Ndzima with SALB staff.

new broadcasting studios and were given an equipment demonstration, specifically focusing on editing and live broadcasting. The broadcasting studios utilise software called the Dalet/playout system.

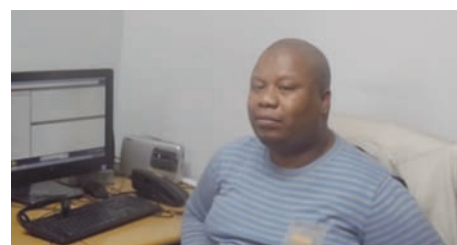


Mr. Mzileni.

Staff got to meet Mr. Mzileni, an Editor and a Producer of the Drama studios and were impressed by the way the SABC does editing. While actors (narrators) are busy reading their scripts, producers are editing simultaneously. This is something for SALB to aspire to in the near future. Some of the producers also use Pro-tool, Audacity and Folly sound effects software for editing and adding sound effects.



Mr. Phethelo explaining to SALB staff.



Mr. Xolisa Yekani.

SALB staff met Mr Phethelo who's been working in the Audio Library Archives for more than 30 years. The SABC's music library archive has a collection of more than 7000 CDs and LPs and they use a library management system called: Media Management Record Library System. This is a potential system for the SALB's Audio Production to utilise on our own Audio books in the near future.

SALB staff also met Mr. Xolisa Yekani, the only blind Producer at SABC. Mr. Yekani is a member of South African Library for the Blind. He uses Jaws software and Audicity for editing.

Summary of the day's activities

Highlights of the tour were the new experience it offered and the great educational expedition it provided. This tour will assist the SALB to review technological improvements and upgrades required for their existing studios in Grahamstown.

Staff were fascinated by the Audio Library Archives and the software used to allocate their CD's.

Some of the SALB staff were impressed by SABC's knowledge of sound, the energy of staff members and their willingness to share information.

They liked the drama studio equipment and overall the dance equipment used and how everything works together.

It was truly a learning experience and Production Services are now busy with the implementation of new technology to revamp the SALB recording studios.