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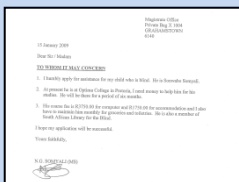
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LOUIS BRAILLE BICENTENARY IN PARIS

Helen Keller once said that we the blind are as indebted to Louis Braille as mankind is to Gutenberg. It was Louis Braille's contribution to literacy, access and intellectual freedom, through the tactile rendition of the printed word that blind braille users, teachers and producers from five continents came to acknowledge as they commemorated the birth of Louis Braille.

On 4 January celebrations commenced in Paris with a commemorative mass held in the chapel of the National Institute for the Young Blind, followed by a wreath laying ceremony on the tomb of Louis Braille in the Pantheon. In the evening an organ recital by blind organist Jean-Pierre Leguay took place in the Notre-Dame cathedral to pay homage to great blind organists. From 5-7 January the conference "Braille 1809 - 2009 Writing with six dots and its future", organised by the Valentin Haüy Association and the National Institute for the Young Blind took place at the UNESCO headquarters.

The conference took a probing look at the past, present and future of the braille code and was attended by approximately 500 delegates from 46 countries spanning 5 continents.

During the first session participants covered the life and work of Louis Braille, the braille system and its application to music, mathematics and information technology.

During the session titled "Braille in the world in various languages" participants covered braille practices and challenges of braille production in languages such as Japanese and Arabic, and highlighted the significance of braille for the deaf-blind, while participants in the session "Braille unification: success and obstacles" raised persuasive arguments for a more uniform braille code.

"User's perspectives over the world - braille in the developing countries," covered challenges faced by third world countries, among these costly assistive devices, braille paper and the like.

The session "Braille in the context of new technologies, addition or competition" covered braille and scientific research, braille and school integration, braille in our daily life and highlighted the significance of braille in professional and social integration.

Three workshops covered cartography, relief drawings and children's books; tactile handling of line, space, works of art and braille and games.

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DIRECTOR'S COMMUNIQUE

THE FRIENDS WE KEEP



The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) is celebrating its 90th year of existence this year. It had its proud origin in Grahamstown during 1919. Because of this historical fact, there is a general misconception that the Library only serves the blind

and print-handicapped people living in and around Grahamstown. People often refer to the SALB as the "Grahamstown Library" or the "Blind Library of Grahamstown". The term "South African", as part of the Library's name, implies that the Library's responsibilities are not confined to the boundaries of Grahamstown alone.

The SALB is a National Library serving people across South Africa, Africa and even internationally. The Library is blessed to have a dedicated team of staff members trying their best to deliver products and services as required and we will continuously strive to improve what we do. However, we cannot do things on our own and pretend that there is no bigger world out there. We need the support of many other organisations to assist us to improve what we do and to share our experiences with others.

The Library is therefore a member of a number of organisations and initiatives doing exactly that on an international level. As a member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) as well as the Libraries Serving People with Print Disabilities Section linked to IFLA, the Library contributes to international initiatives and applies new knowledge to our operations.

The Library is a member of the DAISY Consortium which consists of all the major Libraries for the Blind internationally and other organisations supporting the continuous development and improvement of the



DAISY technology benefiting all involved.

The SALB is currently a member of an International Steering Committee responsible for developing an implementation strategy for the Global Library for the Blind. This initiative will make it possible for our members to have access to much more reading material in future.

On a national level the Library is represented on the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS). This Council is a statutory body advising both the Minister of Arts & Culture as well as the Minister of Education on library matters. The SALB ensures that the interests of the blind and visually impaired are fairly represented in the activities of the Council.

Although the SALB is a unique library, it cannot operate in isolation from other South African Libraries. As a result of this, the Library is a member of the Library & Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) where we participate in matters affecting all South African libraries. The Library is also a member of the Legal Deposit Committee. The SALB is not one of the 5 Legal Deposit libraries but we are working on conditions that will allow us to receive South African publications in future in electronic format and to make them available in alternative formats.

The Library is a paid up member of the Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA). This gives us the opportunity to be in direct contact with South African publishers discussing and understanding mutual challenges and opportunities. The SALB is also part of the Copyright Committee of PASA where we have successfully concluded a Copyright and Electronic File transfer License with South African publishers.

The Library is also a member of the South African Book Development Council (SABDC). Here we contribute

THE FRIENDS WE KEEP

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to the development of a Book Development plan for South Africa ensuring that the needs of blind and print-impaired people are also considered. The Library has most recently been requested to serve on a Ministerial Task Team to investigate a South African Book Development plan. It goes without saying that the SALB also has a responsibility to participate in initiatives affecting the blind.

We are a member of the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) and have membership in the Provincial structures of the SANCB. We also have good working relationship with Blind SA and play a role in the activities of Braille SA in terms of braille standards.



On a local level the Library collaborated with Rhodes University to establish what is known as the "Grahamstown Librarians' Forum". This is an informal group of more than 50 Grahamstown library workers who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss library related matters.

The SALB is involved with all the above for one reason only – to ensure that the reading and information needs of the blind and visually impaired are put on the agenda and to play a meaningful role as a Library in the wider world.

We are proud of the friends we keep and are continuously looking to make new friends in the future

FRANCOIS HENDRIKZ

LOUIS BRAILLE BICENTENARY IN PARIS

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At the conference "Braille 1809-2009 : Writing with 6 dots and its future" it was resolved to:

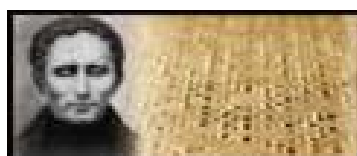
- ◆ urge the World Blind Union (WBU) and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) to promote the teaching of braille as early as possible to blind children as well as to adults according to personal need;
- ◆ urge the WBU to re-establish the World Braille Council with a view to unifying all elements of braille and the various braille codes to the extent that may be practicable;
- ◆ urge the WBU to commission a third edition of "World Braille Usage" from a source with the necessary expertise and means to achieve such a task;
- ◆ urge UNESCO, in collaboration with the WBU, to convene an international conference to advance the unification of braille;
- ◆ urge the WBU to promote the use of braille in public spaces and to mark consumer products.



On 8 January various cultural exhibitions took place. These included a tour of the National Institute of the Young Blind, where cultural objects of braille production, such as first slates and styluses, the first braille book to be produced, could be viewed. Delegates also had the opportunity to visit the Pantheon, the final resting place of Louis Braille.

A further highlight was a visit to the birthplace of Louis Braille where the home and workshop were visited and inventions by Louis Braille, among these the raphigraph, could be viewed.

The future of braille lies in the hands of users, teachers and producers. Much needs to be done to ensure that children attend school, learn braille as early as possible, and have access to libraries and enjoy the benefits of literacy, professional and social integration bequeathed to us by Louis Braille.



PASHA ALDEN

TALKING BOOKS



Title: Chasing Cezanne

Author: Peter Mayle

Accession No: DA1831

Narrator: Olive Christensen

Category: Detective

Mention the name *Peter Mayle* and you are immediately transported to a cosy French restaurant filled with gourmet dishes. Of course Peter Mayle learnt how to live 'rough' during his time in Provence, but this is a mystery drama, which has connections in the USA, France and a bit of Provence. The good guys are Andre, Lucy and Cyrus. The baddies (if you want to know) are revealed by the very pleasant voice of Olive Christensen, the narrator. Somehow she gets her tongue around all the French names and places.

Oh Yes....the subject of this story is art theft and forgery and a most exciting story it is. Much of the beauty of France is displayed in this novel by Peter Mayle. It's witty with a smattering of drama, and of course a fair amount of French cuisine. A wonderful novel.

Review by Jeremy Dawes

Title: Bookseller of Kabul

Author: Asne Seierstad

Accession No: DA1617

Narrator: Erica Grant

Category: Biography

Where is Kabul? Oh yes, it's where all the fighting has been taking place in Afghanistan and of course where the Taliban blew up three Buddhas carved out of a mountain side. Other than that this lawless territory has remained much of a mystery, now that everybody talks about Baghdad. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is a factual story in a sort of fictional way, of what the real Afghanistan has been through in recent times. There is the adherence to Islam, the family killings, the diet, the very rich, and the very poor. And the life before and after the American bombings. This is a riveting story by Norwegian author, Anse Seierstad, who has written successfully about Russia, China and now the secret country of Afghanistan. When you've listened to this book (as you must), you'll find the answer.....Would I want to have been born a woman in a patriarchal society?

Review by Jeremy Dawes

NEW DAISY TITLES 2009

Please note that this list serves as an indication of the latest available titles

TITLE	AUTHOR	Category	Acc No.	TITLE	AUTHOR	Category	Acc No.
THE ROTTERS CLUB	JOHNATHAN COE	YAF	DA1700	LAST OF THE DUANES	ZANE GREY	WES	DA1729
THE BLACK ECHO	MICHAEL CONNELLY	THR	DA1705	THE VIKINGS	JOHN FARMAN	JUV	DA1734
THE BONE COLLECTOR	JEFFERY DEAVER	THR	DA1704	THE COMPLETE GAP SERIES	STEPHEN DONALDSON	SCI	DA1721 – DA1723, DA1725-DA1726
THE VILLAGE BY THE SEA	ANITA DESAI	FAM	DA1713	WHEN THE RAIN CLOUDS GATHER	BESSIE HEAD	FIC	DA1711
THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV	F.M DOSTOEVSKY	DET	DA1710	GREAT LAW AND ORDER STORIES	JOHN MORTIMER	LAW	DA1717
THE ICE AGE	M DRABBLE	FIC	DA1707				

PLEASE QUOTE THE ACCESSION NUMBER WHEN ORDERING YOUR BOOK CHOICES

NEW APPOINTMENTS

STEPHEN GRANT DRENNAN – IT SECTION HEAD



Stephen was born in the Orange Free State on 3rd August 1981. He moved to Grahamstown in 1982 with his parents, who still live here. He attended Graeme College until Grade 9 and then moved to Adelaide Gymnasium, where he completed matric. The next move was to Port Elizabeth where he furthered his studies at Damelin College doing a PC Engineering Diploma and completing the MCSE (Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer) Courses. Having completed these courses, Stephen moved to London and worked for the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales as a Project Manager and Technical Support Analyst. Missing the South African weather, four years later it was back to sunny South Africa. For the next year Stephen worked for Konica Minolta in Cape Town as a member of their technical sales team.

After realising Cape Town was still not home, the next move was back to Port Elizabeth and it was time to be self-employed. Stephen opened his own company, Drenn-Tech which proved to be a successful sales and technical support company for the small to medium-sized business. Another 4 years down the line and having gained the required experience, it was time to settle down — back home to Grahamstown. On 1 December 2008, Stephen took up the position as Head of IT at the S A Library for the Blind. He looks forward to settling in for a long and prosperous career with us.

BRAILLE ESSAY COMPETITION

The South African Library for the Blind and Blind SA supported by the SA National Council for the Blind have launched a national braille writing competition for visually impaired persons. This competition is in support of the international bicentenary celebration of Louis Braille's birthday during 2009. The competition started officially on 1 November 2008 and the closing date is 30 April 2009. The theme of the competition is "My Brailiant Life / My Braillejante Lewe/Ubomi bam be Braille obyismangaliso", which focuses on the importance of braille in peoples' lives and how they interact with the world as a whole - through braille. The competition is divided into 4 categories:

- ◆ **Primary school learners (Grades 1-7)**
- ◆ **Secondary school learners (Grades 8-12)**
- ◆ **Open/Adults**
- ◆ **Professional Braille workers (Braillists and Proofreaders)**



Each contestant will be required to submit an essay of between 200 and 500 words. The winner for the primary school category will receive R1,000, R2,000 for the secondary school category and R5,000 for the Open and Professional Braille workers categories. Entries for the competition will only be accepted in braille - either produced on a Perkins Brailier or using a slate and stylus; in either unified or non-unified braille code and in any one of the 11 official South African languages. Entries for primary school learners may be submitted in contracted or uncontracted Braille. All submissions in the other categories should be submitted in contracted braille only. Each contestant will receive a framed certificate for their participation. The adjudication of the essays will be focusing on the creativity of the essay content as well as the quality of braille usage.

For further information, contact either Christo De Klerk, Chairperson of Braille SA at chrisod@absa.co.za or on 011 350 8132; OR Mark Sunners, Marketing Assistant at SALB at mark.sunners@blindlib.org.za or on 046 622 7226

CARING FOR YOUR CD'S



1. Always handle CD discs by the outer edges or the centre hole.
2. Do not touch the shiny surface of the discs.
3. Remove dirt, foreign material, fingerprints, smudges and liquid immediately by wiping it off with a clean soft cotton cloth.
4. Do not write or put markers, labels or stickers on the discs.
5. Always keep the disk free and away from dirt, liquid, sharp objects or other foreign material.
6. CD/DVD-cleaning detergent, isopropyl alcohol or methanol can be used when wiping the disc with a clean cotton cloth – start in straight lines, from the centre towards the outer edge of the disc. Dry disc thoroughly before use.
7. Do not bend the discs in any way.
8. Keep the discs away from extreme heat, direct sunlight, UV light and high humidity.
9. Do not stack discs on top of each other.
10. Always return the disc to its container immediately after use.

Melton Kivitts
Section Head : Audio Production

SALB ACQUIRES COPYRIGHT

The South African Library for the Blind recently signed blanket copyright agreements with the following publishers allowing the Library to reproduce their books in alternative formats without delay as we acquire them:

VIVLIA PUBLISHERS, PENGUIN S.A, HSRC AND JACANA MEDIA

We would like to extend our thanks to them all – they have enabled us to fulfil our mission to provide material to the visually impaired of our country.

Busi Lungile
Section Head : Cataloguing and Collection Development

SONWABO'S STORY ... AN APPEAL

Magistrate Office
Private Bag X 1004
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140

15 January 2009

Dear Sir / Madam

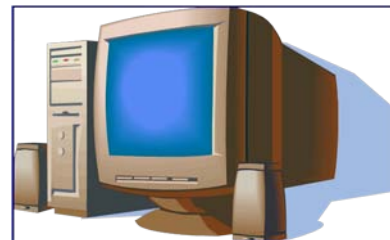
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

1. I humbly apply for assistance for my child who is blind. He is Sonwabo Somyali.
2. At present he is at Optima College in Pretoria, I need money to help him for his studies. He will be there for a period of six months.
3. His course fee is R3750.00 for computer and R1750.00 for accommodation and I also have to maintain him monthly for groceries and toiletries. He is also a member of South African Library for the Blind.

I hope my application will be successful.

Yours faithfully,

N.G. SOMYALI (MS)

The emotion-inducing appeal above is from Ms Ntombi Somyali. She works as a court interpreter at the Magistrate's Office, Grahamstown. For the past few years she has been looking after her sisters' child, Sonwabo, due to her sisters' mental ill health and has now adopted him. Sonwabo is blind. A rugby accident at school caused his blindness. Having attained his Grade 12 at Khanyisa School for the Blind in Port Elizabeth, Sonwabo spent a year in the broadcasting industry working for Kingfisher radio station in 2008.

At present he is doing a computer course at Optima College in Pretoria, which is run by the SANCB. Unfortunately, Ms Somyali has been unable to raise the necessary funds for his tuition and accommodation. As Sonwabo is a member of the Library, Ms Somyali approached the Library for help. She understands the importance of her adopted son being trained so that he can be self-supporting.

**Should you wish to assist,
donations can be sent to the Library marked "SONWABO".
Any financial assistance – irrespective of the amount – would be
greatly appreciated.**



CIRCULATION SNIPPETS

SPECIAL REQUEST FROM OUR MARKETING DEPARTMENT:

Please return your Audio Makwenzeke ASAP as we use the disc again for the next edition!

'DIE HUISGENOOT'

A pilot project to produce the magazine 'Die Huisgenoot' in Daisy format was recently completed. Many thanks to those who took part in the project and provided us with the necessary feedback to refine our product. 'Die Huisgenoot' on Daisy disc will be produced on a monthly basis on a re-writable disc. Members who wish to subscribe to the magazine should contact us at: audiolib@blindlib.org.za or phone 046-6227226 (ask for Colette) or send a fax request to 046-6227650.

Please note that we are currently limited to 400 subscribers due to production logistics.

NEW BOOKS:

Thank you for the positive response to the e-mail list for new accessions. The second list went out on 17 December. If you are not yet included – send an e-mail to : ria.greaves@blindlib.org.za

PLEASE NOTE:

A complete list of all the DAISY titles in electronic format (email) is available. If you wish to have a copy sent to you, please contact Ria Greaves at : ria.greaves@blindlib.org.za

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 046 622 7226

Fax: 046 622 4645 or 046 622 7650

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME:

Q: How long may I keep my books?

A: For a period of 3 months. Please return your books as soon as possible. This is the only way we can all share the collection of braille books, cassettes and Daisy books. If you haven't finished reading your books in the three month period, please let us know.

MEET A MEMBER:

Our special member for this edition is Mr Benjamin Skosana of Port Elizabeth. He joined the Library in 1996 and has been an avid reader. Apart from reading books on many different subjects, he also reads in three languages, namely English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. We often receive feedback from Benjamin. His latest favourite is Blue Horizon by Wilbur Smith (DA156). Benjamin is a dedicated employee at Canon Eastern Cape. We are very proud to have him as a member.

Number of books read: 965

MEMBERS' RECOMMENDATIONS:

Daphne Wilson, Knysna: A fortunate life by A.B. Facey – DA1051. *"Social history full of anecdotal incidences, sheer courage and human resourcefulness"*

Mollie Bailes, Cape Town: When we were orphans by K. Ishiquro – DA35. *"A delightful detective story, wonderfully narrated."*

