



Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers ASAIB

NEWSLETTER

“Excellence from A to Z”

JUNE 2011

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ASAIB CONFERENCE DITSONG MILITARY MUSEUM MAY 2011



Attending my first ASAIB conference was an amazing experience! Starting my day by getting out of bed at 5am is not my favourite thing, but travelling from Pretoria to Johannesburg with a wonderful group of women (thank you Antoinette for your intrepid driving!) and making new friends, more than made up for it. Getting stuck in traffic was actually quite fun!

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to each of the speakers and learnt a huge amount, from tips on how to run a freelance business, to a glimpse behind the scenes of getting your own book published (and producing your own index), as well as what goes into compiling a bibliography to something as important as the TRC, and the fascinating and varied work of a museum curator. As a newcomer to the world of indexing, I found Marlene's FAQ session very informative and it's a pity that time constraints did not allow for more discussion.

I'm feeling quite daunted at the prospect of entering the world of freelance work, after eighteen years of full-time employment, and also feeling nervous about whether I can acquire the necessary skills to become an indexer. The conference gave me a real boost and thanks to all of you who spent time talking to me and giving me advice and encouragement. Studying an indexing course online as I am doing can be quite lonely, so I was delighted with the opportunity to meet some real life indexers 'in the flesh', so to speak. I felt really exhilarated that evening and more confident about continuing with my studies.

Hats off to the organisers for a well-run, stimulating event! Even the venue, with its somewhat surreal setting of old aeroplanes and tanks did not disappoint. I am already looking forward to next year's conference.

Tessa Botha

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The Andrew Masondo library

The Ditsong Military Museum library is named after Andrew Masondo. Andrew's mother was nurse Elsie Masondo and worked for Dr. Moosa Patel in Claremont, a suburb adjoining Sophiatown and Newclare. Dr. Patel was a close friend of Abdul Bemath's father going back to the 40s. Dr. Patel encouraged Andrew to pursue academia as he was a brilliant mathematician. The rest is history!

Submitted by

Abdul Bemath

SANET LE ROUX WINNER OF THE BETTY MOYS PRIZE

The Betty Moys Prize

Local ASAIB member wins Betty Moys prize

The late Betty Moys MBE, distinguished indexer and formerly the Society's Honorary Treasurer, left a generous legacy to the Society to provide an annual prize for a new indexer. This currently takes the form of a prize of £500 for the best newly Accredited Indexer in each calendar year.

All candidates who successfully complete the Training Course between 1 January and 31 December, based on the marking date of the Practical Indexing Assignment are automatically considered. The successful candidate will have received high marks in all the test papers; the comments of Markers and Practical Indexing Assignment Advisers are also taken into consideration. The selection is made by the Training Course Committee and announced at the annual conference.

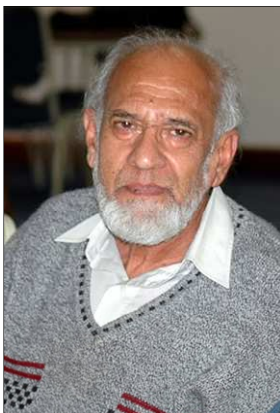
Our heartiest congratulations to ASAIB member, Sanet le Roux, for winning this prestigious award .

Submitted by Steve Anderson

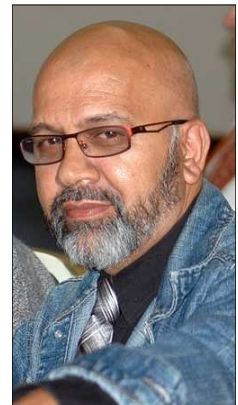
ASAIB AWARD

The ASAIB 2011 Award for best index and bibliography published during 2009 and 2010 was made at the 2011 conference.

Dr Jackie Kalley was awarded first prize for her index to *The Journal of African Elections*, vol. 9, no. 1, June 2010, p. 191 – 216, a Subject and Author Index to vols 1- 8.



Abdul Bemath was awarded second prize for his index to *Africa South:Viewpoints, 1956-1961*. Edited by M.J.Daymond and Corinne Sandwith. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011. 419p



Professor Muhammed Haron, was awarded first prize for his bibliography : *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: An Annotated Bibliography (Circa 1993-2008)*

ASAIB AGM 12 NOVEMBER 2010



Entering Sheenagh Harris' rose garden was a delightful experience.. Although the roses were not in full bloom, the garden immediately captured one with its beauty and natural quiet. Sheenagh explained that the roses are grouped according to colour, names or types. We savoured the scents and textures in joyful admiration.

Members relaxed in the sun or shade of the leopard tree on the lawn with their picnic baskets. Louise Matschke, Curriculum Specialist at the Johannesburg Zoo, fascinated us with her entertaining talk on the nature of zoos and biomimicry. She highlighted improvements at the Zoo to make enclosures more apt and friendly for the animals housed, the important function to conserve endangered species, educating the community and zoo visitors (pointing out that children are often better behaved than adults), specific characteristics of certain animals etc. The use of nano-technology in the reproduction of e.g. natural colouring was so interesting.

Members agreed this was one of the most enjoyable ASAIB annual general meetings. It concluded again with a lucky draw for one of Jackie Kalley's rose calenders.



Our speaker,
Louise Matschke



Our chairlady,
Marlene Burger



The pitfalls of E-Book buying: what to look out for before you purchase

By Melissa J Perenson, PCWorld

http://www.pcworld.com/article/219335/the_pitfalls_of_ebook_buying_what_to_look_out_for_before_you_purchase.html

Buying e-books sounds so easy, and using them seems so effortless. The books are a breeze to purchase, and you can easily store great numbers of them, especially if your e-reader has a removable storage card.

Not surprisingly, e-book sales are jumping. In fact, a report by Forrester Research predicts that sales of digital titles (and readers) will top \$1 billion in 2011. And the *New York Times* this week started adding e-books to its weekly Best Sellers list.

As your collection grows, though, so does your need to manage the resulting virtual library. IF you aren't careful, you'll find yourself with books purchased on Amazon.com that are readable only on an Amazon Kindle e-reader device or app, books purchased at Barnes & Noble that require a Nook e-reader device or app, books purchased through Apple that are viewable only on the Apple iBooks app, and so on.

The issue of incompatible formats and the difficulty of organizing books that you buy from different e-book sellers are two things that you should consider before committing to a specific e-book platform.

Book Management

In the days of physical bookshelves filled with physical books, most people tended to organize their libraries haphazardly--perhaps by subject, perhaps alphabetically, perhaps by what size of books a particular shelf could accommodate. But with a little effort you could (probably) quickly scan your collection and walk away with the title you wished to read in short order.

Unfortunately, the lack of a universal bookshelf is a huge issue in the e-book world. Buy a book, and if you want to read it again three years down the line, you'll have to remember where and how you bought it.

A Google search reveals various software programs designed to "convert" e-books. But generally, such programs entail converting what you have into a PDFfile--and most types of e-reader software and hardware do a crummy job with handling PDFs.

Ultimately, what consumers need is e-books that they can buy and read anywhere, using any software they choose on any device they have at hand, whether it be a phone, a tablet, a laptop, or a PC. No muss, no fuss. This issue is critical to library management and to the future success of e-books.

The concept of buy-anywhere content will drive the digital publishing industry, according to a new study from ABI Research. The flexibility of the multiplatform world established by Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Kobo has its good points, but consumers need more.

In the study--"Digital Publishing for Portable Devices"--ABI notes that digital sales of books, newspapers, and magazines are expected to grow to nearly \$16.5 billion worldwide in 2016. That figure is more than five times greater the corresponding number for 2010, and it approaches half the total for the publishing industry as a whole. We wouldn't be surprised if the rise in digital sales were even more rapid if the current barriers among types of software and devices broke down entirely..

The E-Book Format Morass

Today, the e-books you buy are closely tied by digital rights management technology to a particular seller or reading device. This state of affairs dates back to when Amazon launched its first Kindle e-reader (and Kindle e-book format) in 2007. Amazon remains the only bookseller to require customers to use a proprietary format (albeit one based on the Mobi book format) in its e-book readers, be they hardware devices or software apps; even public-domain books purchased via Amazon use Amazon Kindle formatting. As a result, none of these titles are readable on other, non-Amazon e-book app readers or hardware devices. To see why this is a problem, just look at how many entries Wikipeida has for e-book formats. (PCWorld rates the top e-readers.)

The digital rights management issue remains a point of distinction between Amazon and its competitors. Sony and Kobo, which sell e-book readers as well as e-books, are quick to point out that they, unlike Amazon, use the industry standard ePub format; Apple does, too.

But ePub support alone isn't synonymous with cross-platform support. Applying DRM to an ePub file can make the ePub book incompatible with other e-readers (be they software or hardware). For example, Adobe Digital Editions ePubs that carry DRM can be read by other software or devices (like Sony's Digital Reader series of e-readers) that support Adobe Digital Editions. But if you use Adobe's PC-based library manager, you'll have to jump through the hoop of entering an Adobe ID.

Barnes & Noble's e-book shopping experience can be even more confusing: The company has voiced support for ePub, and it offers ePub-formatted books; but when you buy a book, you have no way of knowing whether it has DRM protected. If it is, it's locked to Barnes & Noble's system. Furthermore, if you want to redownload an e-book you bought from Barnes & Noble, you'll have to provide the credit card number that you used to buy it originally.

Apple applies its own DRM on top of ePub, so don't bother trying to port titles that you buy at iBooks over to anything other than an Apple iOS-based device (such as an iPad or an iPhone). And Google Books, the latest comer in the e-bookseller arena, brings its own DRM to bear.

The E-Book Apps Trap

It's easy to assume that if you buy a Kindle, you'll shop at Amazon. Nevertheless, the concept of "buy once, read anywhere" is flourishing. Though Amazon, B&N, and Kobo sell their own hardware, they make Android, BlackBerry, iOS, and PC apps available as well. Effectively this means that you can read books, magazines, or newspapers that you purchase at one of these stores on most devices you're likely to have in the future--if you use the appropriate platform's app.

Effectively, this means that the e-books you buy are trapped in an association with a single software reader. If you buy wherever an e-book happens to be priced lowest, or if you use a gift card to buy books from a particular store, those books will be tied to the store where you bought them. The idea of maintaining a single digital bookshelf where you can search for all of your e-books vanishes. You can use the free open-source Calibre software to convert files from one platform to another, but the translations can be rough, and the reflow and pagination may not be work properly.)

The appeal of buy-anywhere is twofold. First, consumers need the freedom to shop freely at different e-bookstores, just as they can shop for Blu-ray movie discs at any of a number of retailers, online or otherwise. Second, consumers need to be able to view the contents of their purchased libraries in a unified fashion. The more books we collect, the greater will be our need to be able to organize our collection. The on-board e-reader organizational tools are fine for a handful of books, but for dozens or hundreds of books accumulated over the years, they're inadequate.

IN DEFENCE OF LIBRARIES



Speech by Philip Pullman (*best-selling author of the trilogy His Dark Materials, The Golden Compass, and many other works*). He spoke to a packed meeting on 20 January 2011, called to [defend Oxfordshire libraries](#).

<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/save-oxfordshire-libraries-speech-philip-pullman>

Image by guardian.co.uk

You don't need me to give you the facts. Everyone here is aware of the situation. The government, in the Dickensian person of Mr Eric Pickles, has cut the money it gives to local government, and passed on the responsibility for making the savings to local authorities. Some of them have responded enthusiastically, some less so; some have decided to protect their library service, others have hacked into theirs like the fanatical Bishop Theophilus in the year 391 laying waste to the Library of Alexandria and its hundreds of thousands of books of learning and scholarship.

Here in Oxfordshire we are threatened with the closure of 20 out of our 43 public libraries. Mr Keith Mitchell, the leader of the county council, said in the Oxford Times last week that the cuts are inevitable, and invites us to suggest what we would do instead. What would we cut? Would we sacrifice care for the elderly? Or would youth services feel the axe?

I don't think we should accept his invitation. It's not our job to cut services. It's his job to protect them.

Nor do I think we should respond to the fatuous idea that libraries can stay open if they're staffed by volunteers. What patronising nonsense. Does he think the job of a librarian is so simple, so empty of content, that anyone can step up and do it for a thank-you and a cup of tea? Does he think that all a librarian does is to tidy the shelves? And who are these volunteers? Who are these people whose lives are so empty, whose time spreads out in front of them like the limitless steppes of central Asia, who have no families to look after, no jobs to do, no responsibilities of any sort, and yet are so wealthy that they can commit hours of their time every week to working for nothing? Who are these volunteers? Do you know anyone who could volunteer their time in this way? If there's anyone who has the time and the energy to work for nothing in a good cause, they are probably already working for one of the voluntary sector day centres or running a local football team or helping out with the league of friends in a hospital. What's going to make them stop doing that and start working in a library instead?

Especially since the council is hoping that the youth service, which by a strange coincidence is also going to lose 20 centres, will be staffed by – guess what – volunteers. Are these the same volunteers, or a different lot of volunteers?

This is the Big Society, you see. It must be big, to contain so many volunteers.

But there's a prize being dangled in front of these imaginary volunteers. People who want to save their library, we're told, are going to be "allowed to bid" for some money from a central pot. We must sit up and beg for it, like little dogs, and wag our tails when we get a bit.

The sum first mentioned was £200,000. Divide that between the 20 libraries due for closure and it comes to £10,000 each, which doesn't seem like very much to me. But of course it's not going to be equally divided. Some bids will be preferred, others rejected. And then comes the trick: they "generously" increase the amount to be bid for. It's not £200,000. It's £600,000. It's a victory for the volunteers. Hoorah for the Big Society! We've "won" some more money!

Oh, but wait a minute. This isn't £600,000 for the libraries. It turns out that that sum is to be bid for by everyone who runs anything at all. All those volunteers bidding like mad will soon chip away at the £600,000. A day care centre here, a special transport service there, an adult learning course somewhere else, all full of keen-eyed volunteers bidding away like mad, and before you know it the amount available to libraries has suddenly shrunk. Why should libraries have a whole third of all the Big Society money?

But just for the sake of simplicity let's imagine it's only libraries. Imagine two communities that have been told their local library is going to be closed. One of them is full of people with generous pension arrangements, plenty of time on their hands, lots of experience of negotiating planning applications and that sort of thing, broadband connections to every household, two cars in every drive, neighbourhood watch schemes in every road, all organised and ready to go. Now I like people like that. They are the backbone of many communities. I approve of them and of their desire to do something for their villages or towns. I'm not knocking them.

But they do have certain advantages that the other community, the second one I'm talking about, does not. *There* people are out of work, there are a lot of single parent households, young mothers struggling to look after their toddlers, and as for broadband and two cars, they might have a slow old computer if they're lucky and a beaten-up old van and they dread the MOT test – people for whom a trip to the centre of Oxford takes a lot of time to organise, a lot of energy to negotiate, getting the children into something warm, getting the buggy set up and the baby stuff all organised, and the bus isn't free, either – you can imagine it. Which of those two communities will get a bid organised to fund their local library?

But one of the few things that make life bearable for the young mother in the second community at the moment is a weekly story session in the local library, the one just down the road. She can go there with the toddler and the baby and sit in the warmth, in a place that's clean and safe and friendly, a place that makes her and the children welcome. But has she, have any of the mothers or the older people who use the library got all that hinterland of wealth and social confidence and political connections and administrative experience and spare time and energy to enable them to be volunteers on the same basis as the people in the first community? And how many people can volunteer to do this, when they're already doing so much else?

“But one of the few things that make life bearable for the young mother in the second community at the moment is a weekly story session in the local library, the one just down the road. She can go there with the toddler and the baby and sit in the warmth, in a place that's clean and safe and friendly, a place that makes her and the children welcome.”

What I personally hate about this bidding culture is that it sets one community, one group, one school, against another. If one wins, the other loses. I've always hated it. It started coming in when I left the teaching profession 25 years ago, and I could see the way things were going then. In a way it's an abdication of responsibility. We elect people to decide things, and they don't really want to decide, so they set up this bidding nonsense and then they aren't really responsible for the outcome. "Well, if the community really wanted it, they would have put in a better bid ... Nothing I can do about it ... My hands are tied ..."

And it always results in victory for one side and defeat for the other. It's set up to do that. It's imported the worst excesses of market fundamentalism into the one arena that used to be safe from them, the one part of our public and social life that used to be free of the commercial pressure to win or to lose, to survive or to die, which is the very essence of the religion of the market. Like all fundamentalists who get their clammy hands on the levers of political power, the market fanatics are going to kill off every humane, life-enhancing, generous, imaginative and decent corner of our public life. I think that little by little we're waking up to the truth about the market fanatics and their creed. We're coming to see that old Karl Marx had his finger on the heart of the matter when he pointed out that the market in the end will destroy everything we know, everything we thought was safe and solid. It is the most powerful solvent known to history. "Everything solid melts into air," he said. "All that is holy is profaned."

Market fundamentalism, this madness that's infected the human race, is like a greedy ghost that haunts the boardrooms and council chambers and committee rooms from which the world is run these days.

In the world I know about, the world of books and publishing and bookselling, it used to be the case that a publisher would read a book and like it and publish it. They'd back their judgement on the quality of the book and their feeling about whether the author had more books in him or in her, and sometimes the book would sell lots of copies and sometimes it wouldn't, but that didn't much matter because they knew it took three or four books before an author really found his or her voice and got the attention of the public. And there were several successful publishers who knew that some of their authors would never sell a lot of copies, but they kept publishing them because they liked their work. It was a human occupation run by human beings. It was about books, and people were in publishing or bookselling because they believed that books were the expression of the human spirit, vessels of delight or of consolation or enlightenment.

Not any more, because the greedy ghost of market madness has got into the controlling heights of publishing. Publishers are run by money people now, not book people. The greedy ghost whispers into their ears: Why are you publishing that man? He doesn't sell enough. Stop publishing him. Look at this list of last year's books: over half of them weren't bestsellers. This year you must only publish bestsellers. Why are you publishing this woman? She'll only appeal to a small minority. Minorities are no good to us. We want to double the return we get on each book we publish.

So decisions are made for the wrong reasons. The human joy and pleasure goes out of it; books are published not because they're good books but because they're just like the books that are in the best-seller lists now, because the only measure is profit.

The greedy ghost is everywhere. That office block isn't making enough money: tear it down and put up a block of flats. The flats aren't making enough money: rip them apart and put up a hotel. The hotel isn't making enough money: smash it to the ground and put up a multiplex cinema. The cinema isn't making enough money: demolish it and put up a shopping mall.

The greedy ghost understands profit all right. But that's all he understands. What he doesn't understand is enterprises that don't make a profit, because they're not set up to do that but to do something different. He doesn't understand libraries at all, for instance. That branch – how much money did it make last year? Why aren't you charging higher fines? Why don't you charge for library cards? Why don't you charge for every catalogue search? Reserving books – you should charge a lot more for that. Those bookshelves over there – what's on them? Philosophy? And how many people looked at them last week? Three? Empty those shelves and fill them up with celebrity memoirs.

That's all the greedy ghost thinks libraries are for.

Now of course I'm not blaming Oxfordshire County Council for the entire collapse of social decency throughout the western world. Its powers are large, its authority is awe-inspiring, but not that awe-inspiring. The blame for our current situation goes further back and higher up even than the majestic office currently held by Mr Keith Mitchell. It even goes higher up and further back than the substantial, not to say monumental, figure of Eric Pickles. To find the true origin you'd have to go on a long journey back in time, and you might do worse than to make your first stop in Chicago, the home of the famous Chicago School of Economics, which argued for the unfettered freedom of the market and as little government as possible.

And you could go a little further back to the end of the nineteenth century and look at the ideas of "scientific management", as it was called, the idea of Frederick Taylor that you could get more work out of an employee by splitting up his job into tiny parts and timing how long it took to do each one, and so on – the transformation of human craftsmanship into mechanical mass production.

And you could go on, further back in time, way back before recorded history. The ultimate source is probably the tendency in some of us, part of our psychological inheritance from our far-distant ancestors, the tendency to look for extreme solutions, absolute truths, abstract answers. All fanatics and fundamentalists share this tendency, which is so alien and unpleasing to the rest of us. The theory says they must do such-and-such, so they do it, never mind the human consequences, never mind the social cost, never mind the terrible damage to the fabric of everything decent and humane.

I'm afraid these fundamentalists of one sort or another will always be with us. We just have to keep them as far away as possible from the levers of power.

But I'll finish by coming back to libraries. I want to say something about my own relationship with libraries. Apparently Mr Mitchell thinks that we authors who defend libraries are only doing it because we have a vested interest – because we're in it for the money. I thought the general custom of public discourse was to go through the substantial arguments before descending to personal abuse. If he's doing it so early in the discussion, it's a sure sign he hasn't got much faith in the rest of his case.

No, Mr Mitchell, it isn't for the money. I'm doing it for love.

I still remember the first library ticket I ever had. It must have been about 1957. My mother took me to the public library just off Battersea Park Road and enrolled me. I was thrilled. All those books, and I was allowed to borrow whichever I wanted! And I remember some of the first books I borrowed and fell in love with: the Moomin books by Tove Jansson; a French novel for children called *A Hundred Million Francs*; why did I like that? Why did I read it over and over again, and borrow it many times? I don't know. But what a gift to give a child, this chance to discover that you can love a book and the characters in it, you can become their friend and share their adventures in your own imagination.

And the secrecy of it! The blessed privacy! No-one else can get in the way, no-one else can invade it, no-one else even knows what's going on in that wonderful space that opens up between the reader and the book. That open democratic space full of thrills, full of excitement and fear, full of astonishment, where your own emotions and ideas are given back to you clarified, magnified, purified, valued. You're a citizen of that great democratic space that opens up between you and the book. And the body that gave it to you is the public library. Can I possibly convey the magnitude of that gift?

Somewhere in Blackbird Leys, somewhere in Berinsfield, somewhere in Botley, somewhere in Benson or in Bampton, to name only the communities beginning with B whose libraries are going to be abolished, somewhere in each of them there is a child right now, there are children, just like me at that age in Battersea, children who only need to make that discovery to learn that they too are citizens of the republic of reading. Only the public library can give them that gift.

A little later, when we were living in north Wales, there was a mobile library that used to travel around the villages and came to us once a fortnight. I suppose I would have been about sixteen. One day I saw a novel whose cover intrigued me, so I took it out, knowing nothing of the author. It was called *Balthazar*, by Lawrence Durrell. The Alexandria Quartet – we're back to Alexandria again – was very big at that time; highly praised, made much fuss of. It's less highly regarded now, but I'm not in the habit of dissing what I once loved, and I fell for this book and the others, *Justine*, *Mountolive*, *Clea*, which I hastened to read after it. I adored these stories of wealthy cosmopolitan bohemian people having affairs and talking about life and art and things in that beautiful city. Another great gift from the public library.

Then I came to Oxford as an undergraduate, and all the riches of the Bodleian Library, one of the greatest libraries in the world, were open to me – theoretically. In practice I didn't dare go in. I was intimidated by all that grandeur. I didn't learn the ropes of the Bodleian till much later, when I was grown up. The library I used as a student was the old public library, round the back of this very building. If there's anyone as old as I am here, you might remember it. One day I saw a book by someone I'd never heard of, Frances Yates, called *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. I read it enthralled and amazed. It changed my life, or at least the intellectual direction in which I was going. It certainly changed the novel, my first, that I was tinkering with instead of studying for my final exams. Again, a life-changing discover, only possible because there was a big room with a lot of books and I was allowed to range wherever I liked and borrow any of them.

One final memory, this time from just a couple of years ago: I was trying to find out where all the rivers and streams ran in Oxford, for a book I'm writing called *The Book of Dust*. I went to the Central Library and there, with the help of a clever member of staff, I managed to find some old maps that showed me exactly what I wanted to know, and I photocopied them, and now they are pinned to my wall where I can see exactly what I want to know.

The public library, again. Yes, I'm writing a book, Mr Mitchell, and yes, I hope it'll make some money. But I'm not praising the public library service for money. I love the public library service for what it did for me as a child and as a student and as an adult. I love it because its presence in a town or a city reminds us that there are things above profit, things that profit knows nothing about, things that have the power to baffle the greedy ghost of market fundamentalism, things that stand for civic decency and public respect for imagination and knowledge and the value of simple delight.

I love it for that, and so do the citizens of Summertown, Headington, Littlemore, Old Marston, Blackbird Leys, Neithrop, Adderbury, Bampton, Benson, Berinsfield, Botley, Charlbury, Chinnor, Deddington, Grove, Kennington, North Leigh, Sonning Common, Stonesfield, Woodcote.

And Battersea.

And Alexandria.

Leave the libraries alone. You don't know the value of what you're looking after. It is too precious to destroy.

So many books but so few takers

By Sheree Bega
Senior reporter Saturday Star

Rob Senneck stands amid an avalanche of books. They are crammed everywhere around him, on bookshelves, tumbling out of boxes and stacked in mounting piles on the floor - about three million of them.

And if Senneck and the Rotary Club of Bedfordview have their way, these books heaped inside - and outside - the warehouse at the Humanitarian Distribution Centre in Bedfordview will soon be where they belong: in the hands of children.

"Our aim is to empty this place so that when the next containers arrive packed with books, we've got empty shelves to put the books on," explains Senneck, an honorary Rotarian. "Our aim is to put a book in every child's hand? but the sad thing is that we can't get enough customers." For the past decade, schools, libraries and individuals in Texas in the US, aligned to the Rotary International, have donated millions of maths, science, biology and reading books and sent them here in a bid to boost literacy levels.

Every month, four more containers arrive, each packed with about 300 000 books.

In turn, the Rotary Club has sought to distribute them - for free - to any school or teacher that asked. Too few have done so.

"It appears that people don't know about us. It's such a pity because these books are wonderful and free. We're failing at maths and science but here are all these books to help our children.

"Many of these are brand new books? Some school libraries have nothing in them; we've put the first book in their hands in places like Butterworth.

"The resistance we've been getting is the bureaucracy of education authorities. Officials have not been willing to spread the word on the grounds the books are not curriculum aligned."

The Rotary Club has now teamed up with David Silman, a director in Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga's office, to get the books to where they're desperately needed.

In the few weeks since Silman publicised the "book store" on Talk Radio 702, he's had 400 responses from schools and community libraries. Literacy, says Silman, is non-negotiable. "Schooling and books go hand in hand. A school without a library is not a fully functional school."

He dismisses claims that the books are not useful because they are not aligned with the curriculum. "Since when is Shakespeare different? Maths is maths.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to get books to school. There are only 2 000 school libraries in the 28 000 schools in the country. By the end of next year, I want these books to be in every classroom in South Africa."

Many of the brimming boxes are labelled "Books for the world". Senneck says: "Sometimes we get books that are overprints, meaning they were going to be pulped."

For the teachers who hear about the free educational books, it sounds too good to be true.

Rotary's only conditions are that the books must never be sold and that they must be selected for their usefulness to the children for whom they are destined - not just taken because they are free.

"I love seeing the look on the teachers faces as they take the books they need," says Senneck.

Teachers can select 30 books for use in their classrooms, as well as reference books for their libraries and reading books for their pupils.

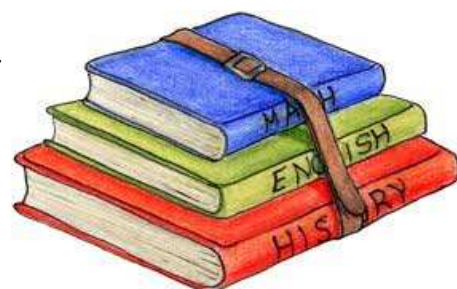
Librarian Amanda Davids of the Eldocrest Primary School in Eldorado Park smiles as she shows her shopping trolley packed with poetry, wildlife books and novels.

"We're definitely coming back. It's such a wonderful resource - and it's free. It's difficult to get kids to read and away from the TV or their computer games today. We need all the help we can get."

Selwyn Meyer, the head of department at the neighbouring Nancefield Primary School, has his hands buried in a box of books, searching for a set of encyclopaedias his school has never owned.

"They are essential for research? Our library has been sparsely stocked and this is a great initiative, which gives us the opportunity to get our kids reading."

"Since when is Shakespeare different? Maths is maths."



Nearby, Dina Aphane is among a team of volunteers who spend their days unpacking and sorting the books for further distribution. "I've sent about 5 000 books and 60 encyclopedias to Limpopo."

Raymond Levenberg, who has run the project for several years, says more than eight million books have been distributed in the past decade. "But our biggest problem has been getting more people to come get books. Reading is the best medicine anybody can find. It's good for the soul."

Silman can be contacted on e-mail: silman.d@dbe.gov.za

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Another view on this very thought-provoking subject comes from Jeandré du Toit who says the following:

There may be good reason to reject some of the non-fiction books based on California and Texas book adoption procedures:

* AIP (2005-09-28). "Astronomical Society Speaks Out on Teaching of Intelligent Design" <<http://www.aip.org/fyi/2005/140.html>>. American Institute of Physics.

* Feynman, Richard (1985). "Judging Books by Their Covers". Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! W.W. Norton & Company. * McKinley, James C. Jr (2010-03-12).

"Texas Conservatives Win Curriculum Change" <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/13/education/13texas.html?src=me&ref=general>>. The New York Times.

Jeandré saw some printouts (lacking attribution and possibly from the web) that a school student had to learn verbatim, with mistakes about the very nature of the subject, and wrote that if good books offered via Rotary can be used instead of such copy/pastes from the web the distribution of these books would be most welcome. Checking the books first would not however be easy, as explained in the Feynman chapter cited above.

This would make an interesting and relevant discussion on our google groups site asaib@googlegroups.com if ASAIB members would like to contribute.

COPYRIGHT ISSUES

This white paper, **It Will Be Awesome if They Don't Screw it Up: 3D Printing, Intellectual Property, and the Fight Over the Next Great Disruptive Technology**, examines how intellectual property (IP) law impacts the rapidly maturing technology of 3D printing, and how incumbents who feel threatened by its growth might try to use IP law to stop it.

<http://www.publicknowledge.org/it-will-be-awesome-if-they-dont-screw-it-up>

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