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FOR YOU

If you found the contents of editor's letter in the last (May/June) issue of the **Cape Librarian** somewhat disconcerting — and you really should have — rest assured that this one will offer no lesser degree of discomfort. I mentioned that, according to recently released information from the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*, a worrying 81% of all Grade 4 learners in the country cannot read for meaning.

From there, the hits just keep on coming for South Africa's beleaguered youth. In anticipation of World Play Day that falls on 28 May, a similar study released by UNICEF reported that 43% — nearly half — of all households in the country have zero access to *any* books. In another disturbing finding, 58% of caregivers said that despite having books on hand, only 32% called upon these regularly.

The devastating implication of such literary poverty is that intellectual deficits become entrenched from an early age; rendering the young learner's academic potential as a future school-goer at a disadvantage for the rest of their life. Remembering that the majority of brain development takes place during the first 1,000 days of any human being's existence, the combination of hearing stories and play pave the way for foundational literacy in formal school some years later.

Moreover, the UNICEF study found that while 92% of respondents acknowledge the value of play as a means to learning, a still-too-disproportionate percentage of parents as well as caregivers deemed educating as the sole responsibility of teachers.

World Play Day's theme for 2023 was *Playing towards sustainability*; and emphasised environmental implications of buying toys. In terms of related activities involving learning, 33% of the households surveyed admitted to never presenting art activities to their children; while another 71% denied engaging in any form of gameplay. Which, again, are future enablers of creativity and problem-solving.

Based on the above, clearly South Africa's education problems extend beyond the mere availability of books. It starts with parents' approaches to raising children; and their relationships with books and reading. Considering the role they (are meant to) play in communities, the most pressing question of all, then — is what is the role of libraries? And how can they be better co-opted not just in the pedagogical process, but also to deliver a greater societal impact?



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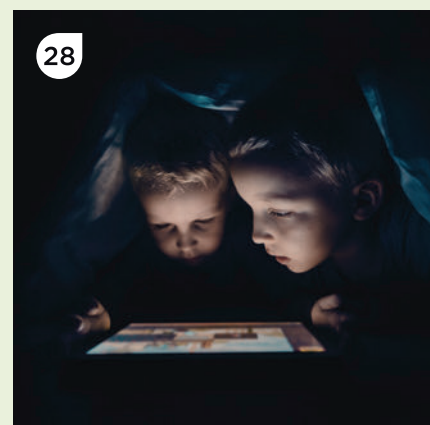
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ON THE COVER

Traversing the Little Lion's Head

In facilitating the meander from Camps Bay to Hout Bay, the arduous construction and eventual opening of Victoria Road (named in honour of the then-Queen) by Thomas Bain in 1887 revealed a most scenic travelling route. For the horse-drawn carts of that period, however, it was all but a smooth excursion. Cart drivers had to be cautious of the sharp corners and near-vertical paths required to ascend the steep surrounding hills. Yet, to most visitors and picknickers, a drive along Victoria Road proved rewarding. Over time, the road became revered for its tranquility, its views and was even nicknamed the 'Cape Riviera'.

As a natural sightseeing attraction, the almost identical though diminutive mountain twin of Lion's Head along the Southern Peninsula as depicted in the photograph, was fittingly named by the Dutch as the *Klein Leeukoppie*, or Little Lion's Head. Rising to a height of 440 metres above sea level, the mountain spirals upwards as Victoria Road winds around its slopes to provide breathtaking views of Hout Bay Valley and its ocean. When the Cape's late British Governor, Lord Carnarvon, drank in the picturesque sights on his drive to Hout Bay, he described the journey as the finest in the world. Following the bygone years once characterised by occasional Sunday drives, today Little Lion's Head still holds an attraction for the fit and adventurous — as a short, though

challenging hiking trial to its summit for local and international visitors alike. And, of course, to grasp the Cape Peninsula's peerless scenery.

The **Cape Librarian** extends its gratitude to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS) for making available its rare collection of vintage photographs for the cover images of the magazine in 2023.

Picture credit: WCARS, AG1830. View of Little Lion's Head from Victoria Road between Camps Bay and Hout Bay showing horse-drawn cab in foreground.

libraries | biblioteke | amathala eencwadi

Somerset West is a launchpad for dreams

Forming part of the City's Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy, **Somerset West Library** hosted a career expo on 13 May. The target audience was unemployed youths and Grade 11 and 12 learners from schools in the surrounding Helderberg area.

Ward Councillor Norman McFarlane opened the programme by motivating the attendees to read and use the library. Doctor Lizette King from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) gave an inspiring talk about studying librarianship and entry requirements to university. Finally, local teacher Hydricht Philander motivated the attendees by emphasising the value and reward of continued hard work.

A number of educational institutions marketed their services at exhibition tables. These included UWC, Boland College, Boston City Campus, Aleit Academy, Regent Business School, AFDA, Northlink College and Belgium IT Campus. SARS, the Department of Social Development, as well as Just Scuba counted among the non-academic institutions (also with displays).



The event was a great success. Fifty attendees were catered for but 77 turned up. As Cllr McFarlane indicated, there is definitely a great need for such events as was proved by the number of people from the community that attended.

Nizam Bray, Principal Librarian: Somerset West Library

Show me the money



Staff at the **Hospital Street Depot** in Head Office Cape Town created a display called *Show me the money*. The display showcases books on the history of money, how to invest your money and how to plan your budget.

The WCLS's crusade for advancing literacy knows no limits



Creatively interpreting protocol in the WCLS SOP for the construction of library displays, Sandra Kingswell from the **Hospital Street Depot** is on a mission to teach literacy to the least imaginable participants. While a successful outcome of Sandy's tireless endeavour could in no way be guaranteed, we can safely confirm that no mannequins were harmed in the making of this display

Premier Winde's Overberg cycle tour



Premier Alan Winde and Minister Anroux Marais handed over book packs to libraries in the Overstrand as part of the Premier's cycle tour in the Overberg area. (Ltr): Premier Alan Winde; Principal Librarian: **Hermanus Library**, Leesy Lisa; Minister Anroux Marais; and Director: Library Service, Cecilia Sani.

Excitement for Netball World Cup 2023



As we build up the excitement to the Netball World Cup 2023, staff at the **Hospital Street Depot** in Head Office Cape Town celebrated the 50-days-to-go milestone on Friday, 9 June. The Netball World Cup 2023 will be hosted in Cape Town from 28 July to 6 August.

Greenhaven Library

Lots of fun was had when **Greenhaven Library** celebrated World Read Aloud Day and World Book Day. The library is a place where your imagination can run wild. The community's crèches and schools always look forward to the visits from Greenhaven Library staff. The library had their very first puppet show this year to celebrate World Book Day. Staff members made a big book that served as a theatre case for the puppet show.



(Above): Lee Anne van Rooyen and Myrtle Speelman visited Groot Brak Primary for World Read Aloud Day

(Below): Staff members made a big book that served as a theatre case for a World Book Day puppet show



Bathandi, babhali, bafundi besiXhosa, sihlaba ikhwelo kuba ikhwelo lityala. Sicela nithumela amabalana, amangaku, nako nakuphi okunokuphucula, kufundise, kwazise, kukhulise, konwabise kuphinde kukhuthaza ukubhalwa nokufundwa kolwimi lwesiXhosa. Sikhuthaza ooSozilwimi ukuba imisebenzi yabo yophando eshankathelweyo ngesiXhosa ingangeniswa nayo ukuze ipapashwe njengenqaku eliyakufundwa luninzi lwabantetho isisiXhosa nabanqwenela ukusifunda.

Wynberg's history captured by Oral History project

On 6 June the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport launched the 2023 Oral History Initiative at Wynberg Civic Centre. The launch was hosted by the Western Cape Library Service in partnership with the City of Cape Town Municipality, and the Wynberg Public Library. Approximately one hundred guests, including the storytellers, attended the launch.

In her keynote address, Minister Anroux Marais said: 'The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has worked very hard over the past few years to capture the oral histories of communities across the province. Storytelling is the oldest form of capturing histories, and by recording these first-hand accounts by local people, we want to ensure that we do not lose the authentic accounts of historic moments in the area. Wynberg is an area that has many fascinating stories, and much can be learned from listening to these stories. There is no better way to experience a story than to hear it directly from someone who experienced it first-hand and we hope that by capturing these accounts, we can preserve them for future generations.'

Minister Marais continued: 'The writer Sue Monk Kidd said: "Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here." When we tell the stories of the past, we remember where we have come from, and it makes us reflect on where we are going. Our country sadly has lost many documented stories of the past and we want to ensure that we do not lose these voices from our history. It is also important for the local people that live in this area that they hear the stories of the past from voices that are familiar to them, and with whom they can identify. Thank you also to the municipality and other role-players who have supported and encouraged this project so that we can add these stories to the collection that we have built up so far. I hope that we can continue capturing and listening to these stories for many years to come. Only once we listen to, and learn from the past, can we truly move forward into the future.'



(Ltr): Cecilia Sani, Director: Western Cape Library Service; Nadia Ismail, Principal Librarian: Wynberg Library; Ninnie Steyn, Director: City of Cape Town Library Service; and Anroux Marais, Minister: Cultural Affairs and Sport

The department recognises the importance of collecting, preserving, protecting and disseminating living heritage. With this aim in mind the department embarked on a process to record the oral histories of the people of the Western Cape. Through this initiative, the oral histories of local communities across the province have been captured and preserved so that future generations can hear first-hand accounts of the histories of their areas.

The department will continue rolling out this initiative in various communities across the province.

Neville Adonis, Assistant Director: Information, Research, Publication and Promotions, Western Cape Library Service

Stal uit in Swellendam

Nie net is die **Archbishop Desmond Tutu Openbare Biblioteek** in Swellendam 'n voortreflike bron van boeke, kennis en toekomsgerigtheid nie; as gemeenskapsinstelling bied die gebou ook die geleentheid aan plaaslike inwoners om hul kuns en kunsflyn gratis in die biblioteek se uitstal area ten toon te stel.



A partnership in search of perfection

On 25 May, UNISA Library Cape Town presented a programme titled *Nal'ibali Lamadoda – Here are the stories of men*, at **Worcester Library**. The university has been collaborating with the Breede Valley Municipality Library Service for many years. The partnership is set to once more be extended with the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding. The programme was organised by Geraldine Cele, Manager: UNISA Library Services, Cape Town Branch Library; Christine Gerber, Library Manager: Breede Valley Municipality; and Karen Jorgensen, Senior Librarian: Worcester Library. Luwatlin Malgas from the Community Development section also assisted. The programme was intentionally launched on 25 May: Africa Day. The theme for this year was *Opportunities in challenging times*. A group of young men, currently enrolled in a programme at Change Makers in Worcester, participated in the programme. The speakers were Glynn Frank Alard, Academic Literacies Facilitator at UNISA; Lonwabo Gobeni, Student Advisor; and Dr Shahieda Jansen, Deputy Director Academic & ICT Support at UNISA. Dr. Jansen is a clinical psychologist and author of the book **Masculinity meets humanity: an adapted model of masculinised psychotherapy**. She indicated how



(Ltr): Glynn Frank Alard, Academic Literacies Facilitator at UNISA; Dr Shahieda Jansen, Deputy Director Academic & ICT Support at UNISA; and Lonwabo Gobeni, Student Advisor

she deals with masculine therapeutic sessions, while Messrs. Alard and Gobeni told inspirational stories about their lives and how they managed to rise above circumstances towards success. The sixteen young men from Change Makers actively participated in the Q&A session because they could relate to the stories of all three speakers.

Christine Gerber, Library Manager, Breede Valley Municipality

Hermon maximises a library's value

I am forever looking for ways to serve my community. In 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I recognised that my community was in need of assistance because the local grocery stores experienced food shortages. Many adults had lost their jobs. But I saw a solution: to grow one's own food via a seed library. Subsequently, for the next two years I tried to find donors to get such a project off the ground; and last year Goedgedacht Trust donated 100 seeds to **Hermon Library**, whereafter I could start the Hermon Seed Library.

A seed library is an excellent way for people in the community to access free seeds for planting in their garden. Libraries are no longer simply book depositories, nor are they just places to access the internet or borrow DVDs from. They are centres of creativity and innovation. The seed library comprises collections held within the library that allow patrons to 'borrow' seeds for planting in their home gardens just by showing their library card. Of course, the original seeds can't be returned to the libraries. Instead, at harvest time, seed borrowers are asked to take photos as evidence of their progress; the check-in will be the photo of the plant; and seeds that were collected from their harvest are returned to the library for the next person to borrow for planting in the following season. One benefit of local seed sharing is the development of seeds that have adapted to local conditions. Our seed library has helped gardeners, both novice and experienced — to supplement their diets with freshly grown vegetables.

In rural communities, libraries are major centres of activity. They strengthen these communities by offering places to socialise and forums for sharing knowledge and experiences with others. Seed libraries provide a wealth of information about growing seeds and developing sustainable food



systems within the greater surrounding areas they serve. They increase food security and ease the financial burden of buying ever-expensive food from shops.

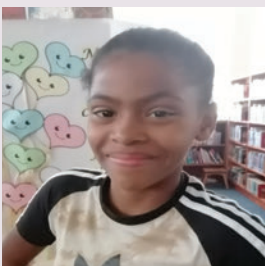
Creating a garden space also has an unintended but positive side effect: playing in the dirt is also therapeutic! My hope for the future and my community will be that a seed library will bring awareness to people that seeds equal food.

Hildegard Adonis, Library Assistant: Hermon Library

Só inspireer my biblioteek my

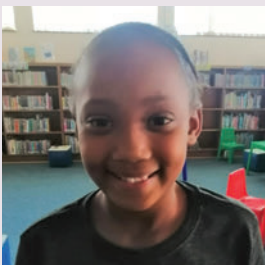


Xivah Lakey
 Ek besoek **Happy Valley Biblioteek** gereeld. Ek geniet die rustigheid en al die wonderlike boeke. Ander tieners verkies om heeldag op hul fone te sit, maar ek verkies om my tyd in die biblioteek te spandeer. Ek het 'n groot liefde vir lees. Ek is op my gelukkigste as ek lees!



Edwaria Hill
 Ek hou baie van die biblioteek. In die biblioteek is daar 'n verskeidenheid boeke. Ek neem amper elke week nuwe boeke uit, want om te lees is vir my die heel lekkerste en beste ding om te doen. Juffrou het gesê dit maak ons baie slim. As ek navorsing moet doen help die biblioteek tannies ons en elke

week doen ons lekker aktiwiteite waar ons speletjies speel, stories lees en mooi goedjies maak. Ek moet elke dag die biblioteek besoek. Al kom groet ek net. Die tannies is die vriendelikste en die beste by Happy Valley Biblioteek!



Lizmarie Roux
 Die biblioteek is baie lekker. Ons lees baie lekker stories en Tannie Marva lees gereeld stories vir ons. Ons maak ook die mooiste goedjies en kan ons huiswerk kom doen by die biblioteek. Ek en my maatjies kom neem elke week boeke uit en sal altyd vir mekaar ons stories vertel. Die biblioteek

is 'n lekker plek om net te kan kom sit om al jou huiswerk klaar te kan doen.



Roseline Roux
 Daar is so baie redes hoekom ek biblioteek toe kom. Een van hulle is die boeke. Ek is baie lief vir lees. Die stories inspireer my. Ek glo hoe ouer jy word kan jy ook baie leer. Die tweede rede is die vriendelike personeel. Hulle is altyd behulpsaam en het altyd

'n glimlag op hul gesig. Hou aan met julle goeie diens Happy Valley Biblioteek!



Listowen Ross, IKT Yeboneer
 Ek wil eerstens begin om te sê dat Happy Valley Biblioteek nie so 'n vriendelike plek sou wees sonder die mense wat hier werk nie. Hulle is meer as net werkskollegas, hulle is nou soos my tweede familie weg van die huis af. Toe ek die eerste keer opdaag was ek baie senuweeagtig, maar Mevrou Marva en die res van die span het my op my gemak laat voel en baie vriendelik verwelkom.

Ek geniet my werk as IKT Yeboneer — om die kinders en ons gemeenskap te kan help maak my baie gelukkig.



Elaine November, Biblioteekassistent: Wakkerstroom-Oos

Ek het 'n liefde vir mense en kinders. In 2016 het ek begin werk as biblioteekassistent en 'n groot liefde vir boeke ontwikkel. Dit is vir my 'n plesier om te sien hoe die kinders se gesiggies ophelder wanneer hulle deelneem aan lees en ander aktiwiteite. Ek is baie lief vir my werk en geniet dit verskriklik baie!



Berenise Slingers, Biblioteekassistent: Middelrivier

Ek het altyd 'n liefde gehad vir lees en het altyd gesê ek sal dit geniet om tussen boeke te werk. In 2014 het my droom 'n werklikheid geword. Nou geniet ek wat ek doen en leer so baie. Biblioteekwerk is nie net 'n werk nie, maar dit bring so baie vreugde in my lewe. Om met die gemeenskap te werk is vir my 'n pluspunt.

Passionate about Prince Albert Library

Seventeen years ago, when I first considered moving to Prince Albert from Cape Town, where I worked at the university and had access to both university and municipal libraries, I was told, 'You will love the library — and the librarian will get any book you need, she loves hunting for books for people.'

So it proved. Not only was Reinie Smit able to order any books I needed but I even had the pleasure of reading a first edition copy of John Betjeman's poetry! Service is the first priority and provided by the most friendly and efficient staff I have ever met in Reinie, Jeanetta Nel and Kato Malies.

Prince Albert has a widely diverse population in terms of education, from members with very little schooling to retired academics and professionals. The 1,500 children in the community have had to rely entirely on the library and its bank of three computers to do their research for the numerous assignments they are obliged to complete, until an e-centre opened here earlier this year. Adults and children all find the library a warm, welcoming place and it really is an important hub in the town.

Our children refer to our librarian as *Tannie Reinie* — and she is a marvellous honorary aunt. Besides making sure the children learn how to respect books and use the reference library and computers, she also shows interest in their lives and gently disciplines those who need to learn how to say 'please' and 'thank you'. During the school holidays the children can relax at the library with colouring-in books and jigsaw puzzles.

At the other end of the scale, a really important service being delivered is that to our retirement home, when a weekly visit includes delivery of books to those who are confined to their beds. Reinie's caring personality shows itself in this work.

The annual Library Week is a great event in Prince Albert. Reinie and her committee of Library Friends arrange art and writing competitions for the junior school children and visit the pre-schools to read stories. A tea party with entertainment is held for the more than one hundred over-60-year-old readers. Besides this, the elderly and mostly illiterate, townfolk who attend the Bejaardesorgsentrum,



Jeanetta Nel and Kato Malies



Reinie Smit

are also entertained to a tea party and readings or choir items. It is telling that members of the community are happy to volunteer their skills of poetry, storytelling and singing on these occasions. During Library Week the building is decorated with the children's art, for which prizes are awarded and sweets, library bags and bookmarks are distributed to all the children visiting the library. This takes a tremendous amount of organisation on Reinie's part.

I must also mention the library assistants: Jeanetta Nel was the library cleaner; she is now a thoroughly capable assistant, having been trained by Reinie. Jeanetta runs the library most efficiently when Reinie is visiting the satellite branches at Leeu-Gamka and Klaarstroom. She is confident about procedures and friendly and competent when assisting clients. Kato Malies was one of my pupils when I taught at the local high school and it is a delight to see the quietly confident, hard-working library assistant she has become. With only three staff in this busy library, the work is exacting and yet all three are always cheerful and welcoming.

The value placed upon the library and its staff by our community is reflected in the fact that when the local Quilters Guild created a Heritage Quilt for the town's 250th birthday, they chose our library as its permanent home. A number of artists have also donated canvasses which decorate the walls. Many residents have donated books, magazines, CDs and DVDs, making the gifted collection at of the library truly magnificent.

From a professional perspective, I have found the non-fiction books particularly useful in compiling material for my story-telling business. The collection Reinie has assembled of local books and numerous articles from magazines and newspapers about Prince Albert, is an invaluable resource. As a member of the annual Prince Albert Leesfees Committee I am proud to work with Reinie, who provides a vital link in co-ordinating our outreach to the schools during the festival.

I have lived in three small towns, all with libraries, yet this is the first where I can honestly say that every member is a friend as far as the staff are concerned. We are extremely blessed in having Reinie, Jeanette and Kato as our library staff.

Ailsa Tudhope



Extending our archives for future generations

by Gustav Hendrich



Archives are great storehouses of material for the historian, the economist, the sociologist and the student of political science, as well as for investigation of legal matters... and although records are dead administratively, they are vital historically', was the captivating statement by the former Chief Archivist of the Union of South Africa, Dr Colin Graham Botha in 1924.¹

Archives — as places for the physical storage of documents, or formally known as archival repositories, were, however, in the past perceived as old, dusty buildings. As a result, their intrinsic value to both public and government was often ignored. This notion has gradually changed with modern archival repositories today being state-of-the-art buildings. But essentially, to researchers and historians in particular, our archives hold the key to unlocking the past.

Since the late 19th century, the rendering of an archival service in South Africa has gained importance together with most advanced governments, recognising the need for safekeeping their mostly written paper-based documentation as primary sources for future consultation. The sharp increase in population growth after the Second World War in 1945 led to more documents being created; although for storing them it inevitably caused a problematic situation for the archives service: a constant necessity to extend its repositories.

(Left): Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Roeland Street, Cape Town

A history of a lack of storage space

When considering the South African context, the archives service was virtually non-existent before 1876. The creation of the first Archives Commission at the Cape laid the foundation for the modern archives service. With much of the earlier archives of the Dutch East India Company, in particular the archives of the Council of Policy from 1651 to 1795, the Court of Justice and others — being distributed between locations such as the Castle of Good Hope, the Cape High Court and various departmental buildings, the first archivists Rev. HCV Leibbrandt and Dr. GM Theal appealed to the colonial authorities with much determination for the centralisation of these records in a single archives building.

The early archivists felt it their duty to not merely safekeep documents, but also to collect, preserve and provide accessibility by compiling inventories, indexes and guidelines for reference purposes.² During the 1920s, Botha, who by that time became renowned for his scientific advancement of archive services, stipulated the specifications for an ideal archives building to ensure that 'the security of the Archives lies in the building in which they are housed, and chief factors to be borne in mind in putting up such a structure are immunity from fire and damp, plenty of light and air; economy of space, adaptability to enlargement, and the methods of storing, using and controlling the Archives'.³

However, by 1932 the situation regarding the storage of archives, then held in the basement of the Parliament Building in Cape Town, became so untenable that a building belonging to the University of South Africa had to be purchased by the Archives Commission to rectify the problem. With the first Cape Archives Depot (CAD) being housed in a prestigious, dome-shaped building, further development in the archival service could take effect.

As governments experienced a massive increase in documents during the post-war period that followed after 1945, owing to the call for retaining information as evidence by their state organs/departments, a similar situation arose at the Cape. In 1948 it was reported with dismay that

'the main Archives building is filled almost to capacity'.⁴ The gaining of additional storage facilities became a matter of extreme urgency. As an immediate remedy, supplementary buildings were made available in the Marks Building in Parliament Street and Slotsboo Building to provide additional temporary storage. These additions were, considering the available structures, however, only marginal as improvements. The shortcomings of the CAD became ever more apparent, since its rounded, high ceiling and elongated shelves had insufficient lighting, which proved impracticable for shelving and retrieving records. Moreover, the wooden material used in its interior posed a serious fire risk.⁵

By the mid-1970s, the lack of storage at the CAD had become a source of resentment for archivists. Much to their relief, the large site of the former Roeland Street Prison was obtained by government authorities. Except for the picturesque front façade and walls, the prison barracks were demolished for the construction of a modern archives building complex. After almost five years of toil and truckloads of records being transferred from Queen Victoria Street to their new location, the state archival repository was finally opened on 13 November 1989.⁶

Ever since its establishment, the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS) with its 46 strongrooms, Reading Room facilities, records management, preservation and recently incorporated digitisation sections, has evolved into a multifunctional institution.⁷ It has strove throughout to uphold the French archival principles of *provenance* and *respect des fonds* of respecting the originality of sources; and of adhering to archival best practice and conservation. In contemporary times, the WCARS plays a vital role in providing access to original primary documents and rendering a sound service to local and international visitors for gaining insight on family history and the South African past.

Extension plans mothballed

After a lapse of more than thirty years, the present-day archives repository is yet again facing an ever-demanding and problematic obstacle — namely

the need for more appropriate storage space for safekeeping our records of enduring value. From an archivist's perspective, the most critical requirement to remedy the problem is for the extension of the current building so as to create long-term storage space for at least another 25 years and beyond.

Nonetheless, even before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, elaborate construction plans for the additional ultramodern building extensions had been drawn up in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, the WCARS and government authorities. However, with financial support for the then-imminent construction being subsequently withdrawn because of the negative impact of the pandemic, the aspirations of the archivists to see the extensions of the building being built were dashed.

Ironically, while the COVID-19 impacted negatively on the eagerly awaited extensions, the records created about the same said pandemic would ultimately also have to be preserved in the repository as a historic record. Furthermore, since the repository is in possession of records of previous pandemics, such as the bubonic plague at the Cape of 1901 and the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918, the housing of the COVID-19 records would be a valuable addition and beneficial for future medical historical research.

Since the prevalence of the disease started to diminish during 2022, hopes were rekindled to revive the initial attempt of extending the Archives' space. At this point it is appropriate to elaborate on the several crucial reasons or underlying motivations for the additional extensions.

Strongrooms filled to capacity

What became evident from the historical explanation regarding storage space, is that the lack of sufficient accommodation has been a recurring annoyance to the residing archivists. The repository has, strictly speaking, been filled to the brim through an influx of departmental, local authority records and accessions (donations from private individuals and associations) from previous decades. The incalculable value of permanent



Newly imported Zeuschel OS Q0 digital scanner inside the Digitisation section. (WCARS, photo by Frank Pople)

archival groups, most notably the Dutch East India Company Council of Policy from 1651 to 1795; the Batavian Republic of 1803 to 1806; the vast archives of the Colonial Office in the period after the Second British Occupation in 1806 until the unification of South Africa in 1910 (that comprise an entire strongroom); the Government House, Slave Office and Defence Department records — to mention just a few — certainly represents some of the most prominent sets to be kept unhindered.⁸

In practice, however, in the allowance of transferred records in some strongrooms, especially received from the Master Office of the High Court (MOOC) pertaining to the Death Notices/Estate Paper records for the period from 1834 to 1996 — being of pivotal importance to genealogists and researchers — remains a source of considerable strain.

Congestion in strongrooms has inevitably occurred since these records have been shelved into every open available space, even extending to the sides and corridors of strongrooms, often to the detriment of the permanent groups. In some instances, the logical numerical sequence of archival groups has been disrupted, with certain parts or archival volumes continuing in the adjacent strongroom, causing much confusion to archivists and auxiliary staff needing to retrieve a record timeously for clients in the Reading Room.

Prominence of the original records

Since the WCARS houses records dating to 1651 (with the first recorded document being that of minutes of a meeting held on board the Dutch ship, *Drommedaris*, en route from the Netherlands to the Cape of Good Hope) and being of politico-administrative nature, records from several archival groups have been requested by the public for consultation regularly. These are unique and irreplaceable primary sources of information; and hence of fundamental significance to genealogical researchers on matters of immigration, or legal persons enquiring on documents for related purposes or court cases. The archives of the Master

Office of the High Court (MOOC), the archives of the Department of Home Affairs for the Western (HAWC), Eastern (HAEC), and Northern Cape (HANC), covering the former Cape Provincial area for the period from 1895 to 1972, as well as the archives of the Cape Supreme Court (CSC) from 1828 to 1980, are of essential importance to researchers.

On an academic level, the value of the Council of Policy records was epitomised by various transcription initiatives between the TANAP/TEPC projects, the WCARS, the Netherlands government and National Archives in the Hague, as well as the National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which acknowledged the collection for its value. During a ceremony on 6 April 2005, the VOC archival group was formally recognised by means of an inscription in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in the WCARS Reading Room — representing a milestone in the history of the archives repository.⁹

On this note, it is important to stress the value of other significant records, especially the Death Notices and Estate Papers and of the HAWC archival group; and the frequent requests for the copying of their original record, and their certification. In legal terms; and under the regulations of foreign affairs offices/embassies for immigration purposes, the duplication of records in electronic format is not acceptable on the grounds of the authenticity of the record — be it a Birth, Marriage or Death Register record reference or Estate Paper notification.

To add insult to injury, there is a global lack of uniformity on the acceptance of the digital/electronic copies since some countries only recognise the original sources. Thus, in light of the demand for permanent housing of paper-based records, the legal requirements have remained largely unchanged. In legal terms, there is no substitute for a copy of the original that has been certified by an authorised government official. The necessity of storing the original documents, especially in the sense of legal compliance, is therefore an underscoring factor for the argument for the construction of a physical building.

Backlog in transfers

A further hindrance, which emanates from the fully-laden strongrooms, is the sheer unavailability of shelving capacity for the new arrivals of transferred records from governmental departments. This in turn has created an enormous accumulation of records and a backlog for records requiring permanent shelving. After the Archives and Records Management section has, as per procedure, inspected, classified, and approved the records, the general regulation is that all government documents must be transferred to the archives after a period of 20 years. The transported records are then conveyed to the loading zone, packed into acid-free boxes and temporarily kept at the bindery. Thereafter they are added to the archival groups and data-coded.

Yet, the congestion inside most strongrooms is a source of major concern for archivists in the Archives Management and staff responsible for ensuring properly controlled transfers.

With limited space in the strongrooms, it is virtually impossible to commit to the basic core functionality of any archival repository, namely that of arrangement and description. This situation causes a slowdown of records being arranged, together with inventories being compiled, record references and descriptive data captured to enable easy access on the National Archives of South Africa online website. Provinces need to submit their records to the National Automated Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS); but the backlog to fulfil arrangement, largely owing to the shortage of storage, continuously hampers the progress of the archives service.

Digitisation demand

In coming to terms with the aura of the digital age, Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig of the Centre for History and New Media, predicted the effect of digitisation on academia and archives that 'tomorrow's historians will glory in a largely digital historical record, which will transform the way they research; present and even preserve the past'.¹⁰ During the 2010s the WCARS embarked on the opening of a new section specially designed for



An archives strong room in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service



The additional wing at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Roeland Street, Cape Town

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the purpose of digitising paper-based records to a digital format.

By establishing the Digitisation section, equipped with the latest scanners such as an impressive overhead scanner for larger-scale sources, the A2/A1 V-shape book scanner with its retractable cradle for scanning archival/book manuscripts; and the i2s quartz A1 (3D) flatbed scanner and software, inroads have been made by utilising such advanced technologies to capture information. By embracing the digital age, the WCARS is striving to bring our technologies on par with international trends.

The importation of new ultramodern scanners from abroad owed to the demand for mass scanning, has placed further strain on the limited available working space inside the digitisation room. Hereto is added the intended digitisation projects of records from the former Northern and Eastern Cape territories, which resided in the Cape Provincial geographical area until 1994. After the provincialisation of the Western Cape, the request has arisen for the possible reclamation of archival records pertaining to the mentioned territories from the WCARS — to the respective archival repositories located in the Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces.

With the recent issue being politically controversial with regards to the custodianship of the records and their historical value, the argument has been made for the digitisation

of these records. The initiative would simultaneously demand an increase in the capacity of the digitisation section with more staff and equipment to be provided in the prospective archival building extension. Thus, besides archival shelving/storage space, provision should also be made to ensure sufficient working areas for the advancement of digitisation at the WCARS.

Extending for greater service delivery

The indicated motivations thus serve as the overarching reasons for the archival repositories' building extensions. The dire need for obtaining storage space has, as mentioned in the historical outline, remained a phenomenon that has had to be constantly addressed to ensure the continuation of a functional and effective archival service. In most cases, the government has been instrumental in providing financial funding to the advancement of the archives service and its benefit for the public. As an inspector-general of the French archives and author on archival buildings, the late Michel Duchein emphasised the advantages of extending archival repositories because it allows for 'greater convenience and flexibility'.¹¹

With the construction of the WCARS building in the 1980s, provision has been made for additional underground

foundations to be utilised for future building complexes. Therefore, with the available open spaces at the Archives, the addition of new buildings would be uncomplicated. As a recommendation regarding the economic flow of archivalia, Duchein pointed out that it would be more convenient to 'put the working areas of an archives service in an old building and to build a new repository block immediately next to it'.¹²

The conversion of the interior of the old building into a workspace, including the possible enlargement and upgrading of the Reading Room, together with strongroom improvements, would arguably be more economical, which in turn would allow for greater improvisation on the functionality of the archives service.

With optimism for attaining funding for the drastic need for extension, it is envisaged that such enhancements would contribute to archival service delivery; the accelerated progress of the digitisation section and of course, the long-term preservation of our records as heritage monuments reflecting our South African history. Thereby, the human right of access to information will be further secured for generations to come.

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The oldest libraries in the world (Part 2)

by Yvette Herbst





*This second part follows from the first, which was published in the May/June issue of the **Cape Librarian**. It examines some of the most ancient libraries from around the world.- Ed.*

Saint Catherine's Monastery

When Egeria, a Western European Christian woman widely regarded to be the author of a detailed account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land visited the Sinai in 383-384, she wrote approvingly of the way the monks read the scriptural accounts to her concerning the various events that had taken place there. The library at the Holy Monastery of Sinai is thus the inheritor of texts and of traditions that date to the earliest years of a monastic presence in the Sinai.

The monastery itself is also considered to be one of the oldest functioning Christian monasteries in the world and it is a UNESCO World Heritage site. In earlier times, manuscripts were kept in three different places: in the north wall of the monastery in the vicinity of the church, and in a central location where the texts were accessible.

The earliest Sinai manuscripts were practical texts for use in the services, or to inspire the monks that lived in the area. Materials enabling manuscript production were brought to the area with great difficulty. The deterioration of such texts through use was checked by the dry and stable climate, and the extreme isolation of the monastery

protected it from destruction. In this way, the present library of Saint Catherine's Monastery had its beginnings.

The library today contains some 3,300 manuscripts in the Old Collection and the many documents in the archives. In 1975, a cache of manuscript leaves and fragments was discovered in the north wall. These were damaged fragments that had been left behind when the books and manuscripts were moved in the 18th century, collectively known as the *New Finds*. The monastery has been predominantly Greek throughout its history and this is reflected as such in the library. But it has also been the destination of monks and pilgrims from many lands, who left behind manuscripts in their languages, both as gifts to the monastery and for use by future pilgrims. This accounts for manuscripts in eleven languages, with important collections in Arabic, Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Georgian, and Slavonic.

The Sinai manuscripts continue to be essential for the study of the scriptures, the writings of the early Fathers of the Church and the history of the services. They also include manuscripts of classical Greek texts, especially of important medical texts.

A few of the Sinai manuscripts are splendid works of art, with gilded letters and brilliant illuminations, created in Constantinople in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, when the city was at its height of being the centre of culture and devotion. But no less significant are the humble manuscripts written at Sinai often on reused parchment, bound between rough boards, the pages stained from long use, a witness to the deprivations and austerity of Sinai; and to the generations of monks who have maintained the life of devotion and the cycle of daily services at this holy place.

Librije in Zutphen, Netherlands

Dating to 1561, the chained library of St. Walburga's Church in the centre of Zutphen is one of the few surviving chained libraries, a practice of the Middle Ages when libraries were first open to the public, where books were so valuable that they were locked in place to keep them from being stolen.

(Left): Saint Catherine's Monastery
thetimes.co.uk



The chained library of St. Walburga's Church in the center of Zutphen

The 'Librije' has altered little over the centuries.

The library has a naturally lit reading room where walking along the reading desks one finds leather-bound books (tomes) still attached in the same place

as in medieval times, making it the oldest intact library in the Netherlands.

St. Walburga's Church itself dates to the 11th century; and it was partly the religious passion of the clergy that formed the library. They believed that

reading the right books would keep people away from the temptations of the Reformation. On the floor is said to be the devil's footprints, which haunted a wayward monk who dared to eat chicken during Lent and was condemned to a tormented evening locked in the library.

Wells Cathedral's Chained Library in Somerset, England

Wells Cathedral's Chained Library was built over the East Cloister following instructions in the will of the Bishop of Bath and Wells who died in 1424. It was the largest medieval library in England when it opened in the 1450s. It is one of only four such chained libraries in the country.

The Chained Library at Wells Cathedral houses books published before 1800. The Reading Room was created in 2002 to allow access to the post-1800 books and journals. These were collected by the canons in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and reflect their wide-ranging intellectual interests. The core of the collection of some 2,800 volumes is theology, but science, medicine, history, exploration, and languages are also well-represented.

There are some good examples of manuscript books, but the medieval contents of the library were lost at the time of the Reformation.

The strength of the collection is in printed books, the earliest being a Pliny **Naturalis Historiae** printed in Venice in 1472 by Nicholas Jenson and a set of Aristotle's works published in Venice in 1497. Other early books include Vesalius' **De Humanis Corporis Fabrica** of 1555, which is the book of anatomy that heralded the advent of biology as a subject, and the earliest complete atlas of the world by Abraham Ortelius which was first published in English in 1606.

Laurentian Library in Florence, Italy

Michelangelo designed and built this library which opened in 1571. On the first floor of the Brunelleschi cloister is the entrance to the Laurentian Library housing what can be considered the most important and prestigious collection of antique books in Italy. It has over 11,000 manuscripts and 5,000



Wells Cathedral Chained Library in Somerset, England

books that once belonged to the private library of the Medici family.

It comprises the most lasting cultural inheritance that the Medici family has passed down to the attention, care and admiration of posterity. The collection had its origin in the humanistic interests of Cosimo the Elder and his attendance of the Academy of Roberto de' Rossi. There followed his friendship with Niccoló Niccoli with whom he shared a passion for collecting ancient manuscripts of the works of classical authors. With Niccoli's guidance Cosimo acquired a great number of these. At the former's death in 1437, Cosimo inherited most of Niccoli's library and donated a great many of these manuscripts to the monastery of San Marco.

The library followed the difficulties of the Medici family. In 1494, following the sentence of exile imposed on Piero the Unfortunate and his banishment from Florence and the whole of the Medici family, the library was confiscated by the republican government and absorbed into the library of the San Marco monastery. In 1508 it was reclaimed by Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent (he later became Pope Leo X), who transferred it to Rome. His successor Clement VII, Giulio de' Medici, son of Giuliano di Piero, brought the collection back to Florence in 1523 and immediately commissioned Michelangelo to build a library to house it.

This was to be another very important project for Michelangelo because he made preliminary drawings for it and concerned himself with its construction for ten years before his definitive departure for Rome in 1534. However, he did not relinquish control of the project, monitoring the phases of building as the work was continued by his followers Giorgio Vasari and Bartolommeo Ammannati, who also completed Michelangelo's New Sacristy, and who were assiduous in following the master's plan.

The Sorbonne Library in Paris, France

As part of the University of Paris, the Sorbonne Library was established in 1289. In 1791 during the French Revolution, the books were distributed to other libraries to protect them. Many of these books have since



The reading room of the Laurentian Library

been returned. The library's original architecture was officially restored in 2013. The reading room stretches over 60 meters and seats 260 people.

It is generally recognised that the Sorbonne Library contained one of the

largest collections of books brought together in a medieval institution and was an influential collection as well.

By the end of the 13th century the Sorbonne Library was a major centre of theological study at the University of



The Sorbonne Library



The Great Hall is part of Lambeth Palace Library

Paris and was used not only by its own students, but also by other masters of the Faculty of Theology.

The influence of the collection extended beyond Paris to the Italian humanists. It was at the Sorbonne Library that Petrarch and Salutati acquired their texts of Propertius, Plato's *Phaedo*, and Tibullus. The catalogues compiled in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries testify to the richness and variety of the Sorbonne's manuscripts and to the inventiveness of the individuals who compiled them. The manuscripts are testament to the detail of information supplied and the cataloguers' ability to describe the contents of composite manuscripts.

Library catalogues such as these have long been used as sources for literary and intellectual history. In instances when their purpose and method of construction are understood and when they are as precisely dated as possible, the catalogues of an institution can render a service in understanding the growth and development of that institution, and in dating the people whose names are associated with the institution's books.

Four medieval catalogues of the Sorbonne Library survive: a small fragment of a very early catalogue of the collection; a shelf list and an analytical catalogue of the chained codices in the *magna libraria*; and a catalogue of the unchained codices in the *parva libraria*, completed in 1338. Mention is made of two other general catalogues, in 1290 and 1321. These catalogues, along with over 1,500 surviving manuscripts and several college provisions relating to the library, are the sources from which the library has been studied.

The Lambeth Library in Canterbury, England

Lambeth Palace Library is the historic library and record office of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the national library and archive of the Church of England. Its collections have been freely available for research from 1610, when it was established under the will of Archbishop Richard Bancroft. The Lambeth Library features books from the 9th century to today.

Bancroft bequeathed his successors a collection of around 5,600 printed



The National Library of South Africa

books and about 500 manuscripts. His successor, George Abbot, arranged for the first catalogue to be compiled, enlisting the aid of King James I, who saw the new library as 'a monument of fame' in his kingdom. Archbishop Abbot, in his turn, left over 2,500 books and 50 manuscripts to the library.

All three archbishops had been able to take advantage of the unprecedented book-collecting opportunities offered by the spreading of monastic libraries in the 16th century. Lambeth Palace Library soon became one of the most important libraries in England.

When Peter the Great visited in 1698, he is alleged to have said that the library was the most astonishing thing in England and he had 'never thought there were so many books in all the world'.

National Library of South Africa

The Governor of the Cape Colony, Lord Charles Somerset, issued a proclamation in 1818 launching the first South African Public Library. Somerset stipulated that a wine tax

would be levied 'to place the means of knowledge within the reach of the youth of this remote corner of the Globe, and bring within their reach what the most eloquent of ancient writers has considered to be one of the first blessings of life, "Home Education"'. The library's first significant acquisition was the collection of Joachim Nicolaus von Dessin, who donated his books to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1761 to serve as the foundation of a public library. In 1820 the board of trustees decided to donate the Dessinian Collection to the new library. Other notable donations followed over the years, among others from Sir George Grey who, when he left South Africa in 1861, presented the library with his remarkable personal collection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts and rare books.

Sir George Grey was an avid book collector and left the library with its most valuable repository of not only medieval *incunabula**, but also early texts written in African languages and correspondences between himself and prominent African leaders of his day.

This NLSA has a parliamentary

mandate to collect and preserve important publications and documents and make them accessible to the public.

The National Library in Pretoria can accommodate 1,300 visitors at a time and stocks about two to three million books, with capacity for another 3.5 million. It houses rare collections of books from South Africa and around the world; as well as periodicals, newspapers and Africana. Many items are available on CD or microfilm, in digital format or online for research.

Among these treasures are 115 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, including the oldest in Southern Africa: a Latin copy of the four gospels dated between AD 875 and 900. There are also first and second Shakespeare folios.

* *In book history, incunabula refers to all books printed with metal type from the beginning of Gutenberg's movable type printing press, starting around 1455 to the end of 1500.*

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Amapolisa olwimi isiXhosa kuncwadi

ngeXolisa Tshongolo



Qaphela, eli nqaku liqulethe amagama anzulu esiXhosa

Ngumcimbi onenkqayi ukuphuntsiwa kolwimi isiXhosa ngabaleli kwiincwadi zesiXhosa, ngelithi kubangulwa amagama nolwimi olukrwada. Kukho uluvo nengcamango yokuba ulwimi isiXhosa lunamagama akwada nangamele kusetyenziswa kwimicimbi esesikweni, efana neyasesikolweni nasetyalikeni. Oku kukhokelele ekubeni kubekho isiXhosa ekuthiwa sesisulungekileyo, esasesikolweni nasetyalikeni nakweminye imicimbi yodidi ke ukutsho, ze kubekho neso kuthiwa sisiXhosa samaqaba neendlavini. Kambe ke igama elithi 'indlavini' nelithi 'iqaba' ngumcimbi wenye imini kuba akathethi le nto uninzi lwabantu luthi athetha yona; okwanamhlanje ndigxile ekuphuntsiweni kolwimi isiXhosa ngelithi sinamagama athukayo.

Apha ekubhalweni kweencwadi umsebenzi wabaleli bolwimi kukuphucula ulwimi olusetyenziswe ngumbhali ukubhala incwadi yakhe. Oku ke kwenzelwa ukuba incwadi le ibe semgangathweni ofanelekileyo, nolwimi olusetyenziswe kuyo lube lolusulungekileyo ngokwegrama nangokwemigaqo yokubhala nokupela emiyo. Kuninzi lwabaleli ke kwendele imfundiso yokuba amanye wamagama esiXhosa akwada xa esetyenziswa ngobunjalo bawo, nekumele ukuba aphetshwe ke ngoko. Bawachwethela bucala ke amagama abawazi ngokuba 'akwada' okanye 'ayathuka' xa bedibana nawo ezincwadini abazihlelayo. Isizatho ke kukuba iincwadi kulindelekele ukuba zisetyenziswe nasezikolweni. Ezizikolweni nasezityalikeni ke kulapho sele sivile ukuba kukho amagama ekuthiwa akavumelekanga ukuwasebenzisa. Kananjalo, isikolo sithathwa njengendawo yempucuko

ekungamele kungena bubi kuyo, amagama 'krwada' namagama 'athukayo' ke akavumelekanga.

Mandihle ndilitsolise ke elithi ngamampunge ukuthi kukho amagama akwada namagama athukayo. Ngamampunge aphindiweyo lawo! Okokuqala, uluntu maluqonde ukuba ngaphambi kokufika kwesikolo netyalike asivanga ukuba kwakukho amagama awayethathwa ngokuba akwada okanye ayathuka. Ityalike nesikolo zifike kuthethwa ze zasebenzisa iilwimi ezikhoyo ukufundisa nokuguqula abantu. Kwisikhokhelo sasesikolweni (ikharityulam) nakwisikhokhelo sasetyalikeni (iBhayibhile) akukho mfundiso imalunga namagama ekuthiwa ayathuka. Into yokuba kukho amagama athukayo nakwada ivele apha kubashumayeli beetyalike nakubahlohi ezizikolweni, iluluvo nengqiqo yabo ukuba xa ubani ekwezi nkqubo umele kuguqula ngento yonke. Ukutsho oko ke into yokuba kukho amagama athukayo nakwada yinto efundiswe bumini, ze yamila de yangathi yinto ekhoyo.

Okwesibini ke emakuqatshelwe kukuba akukho gama lithukayo okanye likrwada ngokunokwalo. Amagama ngamaqeqe njee ekungokho nto yawo de anikwe intsingiselo. Amagama ekuthiwa akwada okanye ayathuka yinto ayinikwe ngabantu leyo ngokusekelwe kwizimvo zabo eziphenjelelwa zizinto ngezinto, ingekuko ukuba ayathuka wona ngokunokwawo. Umzekelo, igama elithi 'umnqundu' okanye elithi 'indutsu' zizithethantonye ezingenanto yakwenza nakuthuka, zizibizo zamalungu omzimba. Kodwa ngandlela ithile lawo magama anezotho kumaXhosa, akawafuni nasezincwadini zawo, ngesizathu esingacacanga sokuba akwada. Akukho namagama wambi ke ekuthiwa kumiswe wona endaweni yawo, okukhoyo kukuba akafunwa, endingazi ukuba aza kubizwa kuthiweni na la malungu omzimba engazuya ndawo nje wona. Kodwa kwa-abantu banye kulula kubo ukuthi 'anus' nokuthi 'vagina' xa bethetha ngenyo. Xa ke bekwazi ukuwabiza la malungu ngezinye iilwimi, oko kubonisa nje mhlophe ukuba nala esiXhosa akazange athuka. Xa kanti kwaezo nto zinye ziyabizeka ngezinye iilwimi umntu angazeki tyala, livela phi ke ityala kula esiXhosa?

Okwesininzi emakuqatshelwe kukuba isithuko sisenzo ngaphezu kwegama. Amanyala nezinto ezilizothe eluntwini

zizo ezisisithuko. Umzekelo, umntwana womKristu othi abe lisela okanye isidlwengu lowo mntwana sisithuko kubazali bakhe. Umntu owenza umbulo sisithuko kubantu bosapho lwakhe. Kambe ke isithuko sisithuko kulowo sisithuko kuye; okusisithuko komnye kusenongamchaphazeli omnye. Umzekelo, ukuba sisithuko komntwana womKristu ngenxa yokuba elisela akusisithuko kubantu abangamasela, njalonjalo ke. Amagama wona athuka kuphela xa athe asetyenziswa gwenxa ngeenjongo zokuba athuke okanye anyelise. Umzekelo, sele sivile ukuba igama elithi indutsu alithuki, kodwa ukuba ubiza ngalo umntu, lowo lisingiswa kuye uziva enyeliswa.

Omnye umzekelo, ukuphuhlisa ukuba into esisithuko ayisosithuko komntu wonke, ubufebe yinto echasiweyo kodwa kukho abantu abazizifebe. Xa umntu kusithiwa usisifebe uyakhathazeka, kodwa abe ekholwa bubufebe obo, ukutsho oko nangani esi senzo sisithuko nesinyeliso, kodwa simnandi kosenzayo kuba naku engahlukani naso. Ke ngoko igama alinanto, okunento sisenzo, kuba xa kukhalinyelwa ubufebe akucinywa gama koko kucinywa isenzo. Oku kuphuhlisa ukuba akho amagama asetyenziselwa ukunyelisa, kodwa abe engezizo izinyeliso wona ngokunokwawo koko ezizibizo nezichazi zezenzo ezo.

Ngala magqabantshintshi ke, ndiyabakhalimela abaleli beencwadi zesiXhosa kulo mkhwa wabo. Mabayeke isiXhosa nobutyebi baso. Olu lwimi lutyebe luyachininika sisigama. Ukuba abaleli abakwazi ukumelana naloo nto mabadede, bangakwamkeli ukhlehla iincwadi ezinala magama endaweni yokuba bawachwethele bucala. Abaleli mabayazi ukuba kuqale kwathethwa ngaphambi kokuba kubhalwe, ke ngoko ubhalo alunakulawula ukuthetha koko lulawula ukubhala ngokwemigaqo negrama. Mabazi kananjalo ukuba isiXhosa sithethwa ngeendlela ezahlukileyo kwiindawo ezahlukileyo, la magama bathi bona ayathuka angamagama emihla ngemihla kwezinye iindawo.

UGq Xolisa Tshongolo nguManejala oPhezulu wePhondo leMpuma Koloni kwiBhodi yeeLwimi zonke zoMzantsi Afrika (PanSALB)



Celebrating 50 years of St Helena Bay Library 1973–2023



As is too often the case, details are lost, or sources differ in their recollections. Because of this, little is known about the original library, other than that it was opened in 1973.

At a later date the firm Oranje Vis donated funds and the library was relocated to its current position in the centre of the town.

The building in which it now housed was originally a municipal parking garage — one can still see where the garage doors were located — and there are plans to expand the building to cope with the rapid growth of the population.

People readily associate St Helena Bay with writers Pieter and Jenny Pieterse, but other authors have also used it as their base. When doing research for the book **The West Coast Agterbaai**, Stefan and Ronél Maré interviewed many local legends, creating a sound collection of information which they are using to plan future literary ventures.

St Helena Bay is a coastal town situated within the Saldanha Bay Municipality in the Western Cape. On 27 September 2023, the St Helena Bay Public Library will celebrate its 50th birthday anniversary after opening its doors to the public for the very first time in late September 1973.



(Left): St Helena Bay Public Library in 2018

(Above): The original library was housed in this residential building, that was built circa 1873 in the fishing village of Stompneus Bay

Demographic profile of St Helena Bay

Population	11 529
Male	5 707
Female	5 822

Population groups	Percentage
Black African	29.7%
Coloured	59.3%
Indian/Asian	0.3%
White	10.3%
Other	0.5%

Gender distribution	Percentage
Male	49.5%
Female	50.5%

Education	Percentage
No schooling	2.2%
Some primary	12.7%
Completed primary	8.5%
Some secondary	20.6%
Matric	0.5%
Higher education	5.8%

(Census 2011)

St Helena Bay Public Library Statistics

Total membership	908
Adults	751
Children	134
ICT	23

Total circulation	14 002
Adults (fiction and non-fiction)	12 265
Children (fiction and non-fiction)	1 079
Periodicals	382
OverDrive	269
CDs	7

(WCLS Annual Review 2021/22)

Compiled by the Research Section of the Western Cape Library Service



A perspective on leadership

by Leonard Fortuin



different classifications of leadership and lastly list actions that can be taken to increase leadership capacity.

What is leadership?

Leaders perform the following actions:

- Lead and direct (show the way forward, especially via their communiques, decisions and actions)
- Create an environment in which people thrive, prosper, grow and develop
- Inspire, motivate and influence behaviour
- Articulate a clear vision linked to achievable goals and objectives and generate positive action towards realising this shared vision
- Focus on performance and achievement
- Provide those they lead with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve identified goals and objectives
- Solve problems
- Have the ability to get things done properly and on time.

What are typical leadership qualities?

- Personableness, tactfulness, patience, social adeptness, charisma and empathy
- Honesty and ethics-driven
- Integrity
- Creativity, intuition and innovative thinking
- Self-confidence and assertiveness
- Strong communication and management skills
- Had effective leaders as their mentors
- Perseverance in the face of failure and a never-give-up mentality
- Willingness to take risks
- Objectivity, flexibility and openness to change
- Level-headedness and responsiveness in times of crisis
- Driven by serving the greater good
- Seeing the bigger picture.

It should be noted that all of the above actions and traits can be acquired through conscious and sustained learning interventions.

The difference between leaders and managers

The concepts of leadership and management are many times used interchangeably but are not identical. They are closely related and ideally should co-exist harmoniously as they are, in fact, complementary to each other. All supervisors and managers on an organigram can display leadership and managerial competence, although in varying degrees. Some leaders are also managers, but not all managers are leaders.

The general perception is that leaders and managers are only found on the organisational structure from first-level supervisor upwards. This not true. There are people who do not occupy positions of formal authority, but still exert a significant impact on the functioning of the organisation (often labelled as troublemakers!). Ideally, their skills should be positively harnessed towards the betterment of the organisation.

Managers delegate responsibilities and get people to follow the rules and processes to reduce risks and deliver predictable outcomes. They do not challenge the status quo but strive to maintain it. They oversee the tactical steps required to complete the work needed and hold people accountable. Managers are doers and implement the vision set by leaders.

Leaders, on the other hand, motivate and inspire people and concentrate on the personal development of themselves and their team. They envision their team's future growth and map how their staff must realise that vision. A leader analyses and assesses virtually every situation to maximise the opportunities that it presents (or create new ones through innovation). They tend to ignore existing structures and value independence and personal freedom.

Leadership classification: wellness conference

During my recent attendance of a wellness conference, three types of leadership were identified: thought, compassionate and systemic. For the purposes of this article, I briefly scanned the literature on these three leadership types.

In a previous article, I briefly touched upon the role of leadership in professional service delivery. In this issue I intend to expand on the importance of this aptitude.

Leadership is an integral and indispensable part of human (even animal) societies. It is found everywhere; from business to government, politics, religion and communities. Leaders are entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of their subjects and determine their direction, resulting in the dynamics of the latter grouping shaped in accordance with the vision and aspirations of its leaders.

Good leaders therefore make a point to reflect upon the status and dynamics of their organisation. Do those whom you manage continuously complain, blame others and are defensive? Do they get the job done, but not much more? Is there a tangible, contagious excitement, enthusiasm and passion that focus on results, achievement and personal well-being?

To assist with reflections of this nature, I will firstly define leadership, then differentiate between a leader and a manager; enumerate the

Thought leadership

Thought leadership is the expression of authentic ideas that demonstrate superior expertise, experience and passion. Thought leaders are eager to share their knowledge, thereby increasing organisational value. This discipline is characterised by innovative thinking, insight and information — and when shared, accords substantial organisational influence.

Thought leaders usually have strong opinions, substantial experience, in-depth knowledge, promote transparency and have the ability to think outside the box.

Compassionate leadership

Compassionate leadership focuses on relationships which makes their team

feel valued, respected and cared for. This motivates them to reach their full potential and do their best work. Compassion fuels positive change and creates safe environments that encourage productivity, heightens employee morale and aids staff retention.

Compassionate leaders are skilled in attentive listening, understanding, empathising, supporting, communication, controlling their emotions and showing gratitude. They are also contemplative, self-aware, curious, confident, ever-present, collaborative, civil, courageous and in some respects — also vulnerable.

A possible side effect of continuously practising the above, is emotional and

spiritual fatigue (as everyone wants a piece of the compassionate leaders' attention). If these demands are managed appropriately, it will result in increased resilience and improved approaches to stressful situations (for both the leader and others).

Systems leadership

Systems leadership applies skills and capacities that catalyse, enable, and support systems-level changes across large, decentralised organisations. It is well-suited to deal with complex challenges that require collective action. Literature reveals that systems change leadership usually occurs in a five-step cyclic process:

- Stakeholders are convened and committed to a specific course of action through dialogue
- Flowing from the above, a shared understanding is created of the components, actors, dynamics and influences that create the system and its current outcomes
- Stakeholders are engaged and energised through continuous communication to build trust, commitment, innovation and collaboration
- Accountability is valued through the adoption of shared goals and principles. It is qualified through measurement frameworks, coordination and governance structures
- Progress is continuously reviewed and actions accordingly revised to facilitate a learning and developmental approach.

System leaders display systematic thinking skills; have an open mindset, value diversity and inclusion, build relationships (especially by making the benefits of participation visible and tangible), communicate effectively and are oriented towards delivering strong outcomes.

Other types of leadership classification

The course literature also revealed that leadership classifications are exhibited on a continuum and are constantly revised and expanded as new research comes to light. For ease of reference, below is a table of some more leadership type/style classifications:



Leadership type	Leadership style
Situational	Adjusts actions based on the readiness or skill level of followers in a given situation
Contingency	Depends on having the right staff for the right situation
Transactional	Rewards or punishes followers to achieve results
Transformational	Transforms followers through personal example
Affiliative	Prioritises emotional intelligence and strong emotional bonds between managers and team members
Coaching	Invests time and energy into developing individual team members
Charismatic	Motivates and influences others with their personality and charm
Servant	Belief that one should strive to serve others, rather than accrue power or take control
Autocratic	Complete control and an unbending approach to beliefs and rules. The team has no say in decision making and is expected to follow the path of the leader
Laissez-faire	Team members have the freedom to perform their job according to their will. They are given the freedom to bring in their perspective and intelligence. Followers reveal their professional character in their response to this leadership style
Democratic	Team members and leaders equally contribute to actualising the vision. They work together and motivate each other to achieve their personal and professional goals
Bureaucratic	Strict adherence to organisational rules and policies. They make sure that their team members do the same and is organised and self-motivated

From the above it is evident that the listed traits overlap between the different leadership styles. If one then



accepts that leadership is the ability to exhibit certain behavioural actions, then there can be no definitive or best type of leadership. Although psychological predispositions influence what leadership type one gravitates towards, the good news is that leadership can be improved through the assimilation of leadership traits. Leadership behaviour therefore comes down to personal choice.

Leadership development

Leadership development can only be improved if a conscious decision is made in this regard. It cannot be forced upon someone. After all, one can lead a horse to water, but you can't force it to drink.

Once this decision towards development is made, the leadership behaviour and trait profile which comes most naturally to the individual is chosen. It should then be practised consciously for a week both at work and in their personal life. This exercise should be repeated for each of the attributes chosen. Care must be taken to also include and practise the most challenging attributes. Over time the subject's leadership behaviour will evolve; and progress can be tracked from observing behavioural changes in both the organisational and personal spheres.

It is a challenging exercise; but all change interventions require dedication, commitment, patience, strategy, practise and education. Other impacting variables in the leadership development process are energy, emotions, time, relationships, purpose, finances and the ability to celebrate victories, however big or small.

In developing one's own leadership potential, one simultaneously strengthens the leadership potential of those you lead and interact with. You become a role model that inspires other people towards great leadership.

Conclusion

Excellent leaders have one unifying attribute, which is to influence others to serve the greater good. As public servants we share such purpose; and that calling should infuse all our actions and decisions. Within this context, the development of our leadership skills is paramount if we are committed to fulfilling our mandate of serving.


Failing to do so opens the door for corruption, unethical behaviour and nefarious practises.

Leonard Fortuin is the assistant director of the Metropole Region at the Western Cape Library Service



Parenting in a digital world

by Nomonde Nggoba

A photograph of two young children, a boy and a girl, looking intently at a tablet computer. They are positioned in a dark environment, possibly under a blanket, with the light from the screen illuminating their faces. The boy is on the right, looking towards the left, and the girl is on the left, looking towards the right. The tablet is held in front of them, and the screen shows some colorful content.

In centuries past, children were taught their cultural values by their parents, communities and printed books at school. In the 20th century, these sources of developmental enrichment were replaced by television in the 1950s; the internet in the 1990s and social media in the 2000s.

Today, the internet is part of everyday life and our smartphones keep us constantly connected wherever we go. Digital devices can make one feel in control, but without proper care and balance their effect on end-users is often addictive. More than ever, looking after one's mental health is a critical aspect of digital citizenship.

On the other hand, a lack of understanding of such matters by parents not only leads to their children being exposed to online threats, but also creates a disconnect with their more tech-savvy offspring — thereby missing out on the potential for empowerment that the digital world also holds.

Below is a list of titles intended to educate young and old on the perils and pleasures of youth in a digitally dominated world.

HEALY, Jane M

Failure to connect: how computers affect our children's minds for better and worse.- Simon and Schuster, 1998.

This book is based on extensive research, interviews and observation conducted in the USA. It studies the role of computers in children's lives today, particularly in education; and whether the former are instrumental towards helping or actually harming their development. The author started off as an enthusiast for computers in education but later became troubled by the way they are being used. It is argued that while computers are still seen as fulfilling a useful role, the author highlights their negative impacts. For example, computers and educational software are being heavily promoted for commercial gain with little regard of their actual benefits to children; schools see computers as a quick fix for shortcomings in education and spend 'too much money and too little thought' on them; gimmicky (but ineffective) 'edutainment' programmes are often promoted or chosen; many parents mistakenly imagine that children must be learning something useful if they are using computers; and that they should be introduced to computers as young as possible. The author believes that young children gain little and may in fact be harmed by computer use and that much more thought must go into the way computers are used by older children. This is a well-researched book

that should be read by parents and educators. The author is an educational psychologist with extensive experience as an educator.

GOODSTEIN, Anastasia

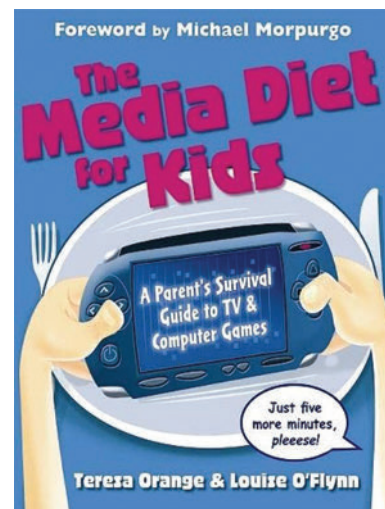
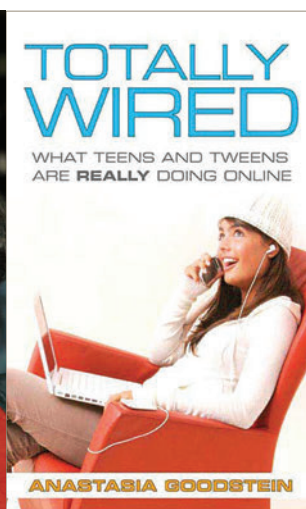
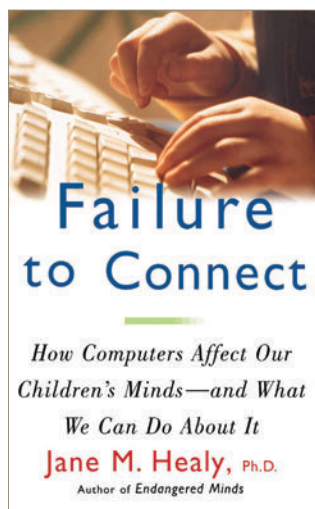
Totally wired: what teens and tweens are really doing online.- St Martin's Griffin, 2007.

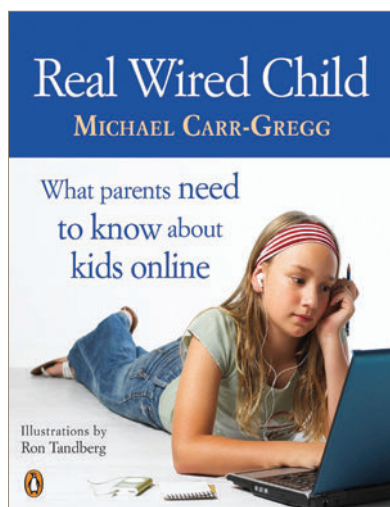
'Goodstein isn't a parent and hails from Generation X, but she has a keen interest in teenagers, a background in teen media and writes a blog... which is devoted to teen media and marketing. The author explains that she's spent her career trying to be a voice of reason for teens and for adults trying to reach them; in this book she continues her quest to help parents understand their kids by offering a window into their digital world. Goodstein covers the bases, including cyber bullying, blogs and social-networking sites such as MySpace [which predated Facebook]. She asks boomer parents to remember talking on the phone for hours or writing in a diary, which she compares to chatting online and blogging. Today's teens are developmentally identical to teens who listened to Elvis and wore poodle skirts, Goodstein argues, but they have a new venue — the internet — for exploring their hopes, desires and voices. Goodstein urges parents to take the plunge into cyberspace not only in order to keep their children safe but also to build closer relationships...

"Ask them about their digital lives", she advises, "and they'll start talking about the rest of their lives." Focusing on the pros rather than the risks, Goodstein presents a solid and accessible guide to help understand the wired generation.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

ORANGE, Teresa and O'FLYNN, Louise
The media diet for kids: a parent's survival guide to TV and computer games.- Hay House, 2005.

This is a very accessible, practical and useful book that will encourage parents to limit their children's time spent in front of the television and computer screen to a golden two hours per day. The authors first delve into the pros and cons of television, and what they do here is not discussing it in blanket terms, but rather under topics such as the social side and the physical. Then there is a chapter on what kind of media person your child is and what kind of a media parent you are, because of course there are variables and we all use and enjoy media in different ways. The third part of the book covers the media diet that limits screen time to two hours per day and how to go about instituting such a plan and advises on keeping to it. It also talks about how to become a savvy user of media and to help your child become one too — and lastly, there are ideas for encouraging activity away from the screen. The book is aimed at parents of children between the ages

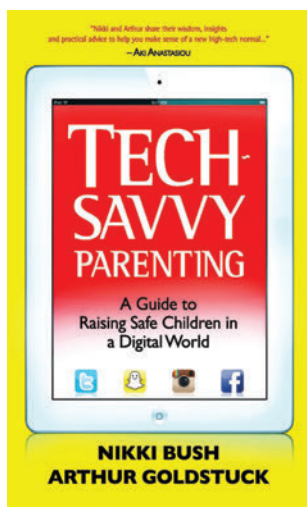




of two and twelve years of age. Despite extensive research by the authors this is not an academic book; instead we get a lot of helpful quotes from parents and children dotted throughout the text: for example one learns about the sneaky things children try to get more TV time; but there is also support for parents in their efforts to try and limit their children's screen time. Much of the information is conveyed in point form and there are lots of drawings. A must-read for parents.

CARR-GREGG, Michael
Real wired child: what parents need to know about kids online. - Camberwell, 2007.
 The author, an Australian psychologist who specialises in teenage behaviour, gives essential information and advice for parents to understand the online world children are exploring. It explains the five key activities by children online: communicating, social networking, web surfing, downloading and gaming; highlights the risks and how parents can help their children to minimise them. It includes case studies and at the end of the book a host of online resources for parents to obtain assistance.

BUSH, Nikki and GOLDSTUCK, Arthur
Tech-savvy parenting: a guide to raising safe children in a digital world. - Bookworm, 2014.
 'Bush, a parenting expert, and Goldstuck, a technical commentator,



want to help parents get a handle on what's happening in consumer technology. In this sensitive and insightful guide they carve a path through the maze of terminology, dangers and opportunities to help parents navigate new spaces together with their children with greater confidence. In explaining the technology they never ignore the human context: to place children's use of technology in the context of the relationship between parents and their children. The guide will ensure children are both safe and savvy in this fast-changing world, and the process starts with parents. For families to remain connected, both online and offline, and for young people to develop into responsible digital citizens — parents need to bridge the digital divide for their children.' (*snl24.com*)

WILLARD, Nancy E
Cyber-safe kids, cyber-savvy teens: helping young people learn to use the internet safely and responsibly.
 - John Waley, 2007.
 'Most folks are aware of such internet dangers as free-flowing pornography reachable by kids, but how many are aware of all the other dangers facing young ones such as identify theft, addictive gaming schemes (as time wasters and replacement for real world activities), the ability to download term papers and other works so as to



avoid homework, or, again, the rights of sites to do whatever they want with uploaded materials, a condition which can cause extreme embarrassment and even financial loss? Willard's text deals with each potential danger according to type and age group. Each chapter begins with an incident demonstrating the danger (an excellent awareness-building tool, especially for those of us who had no idea this particular danger existed) followed by an analysis of what is involved in the danger, and then positive and usable advice for parents on how to prevent their children from falling prey to the danger. But make no mistake, Willard is a strong advocate of the benefits of internet participation for children when they are properly supervised, and that does not mean peeking over their shoulder all the time. This positive attitude towards the internet, while recommending non-invasive supervision is a remarkably well-developed strength of her book. She is not whining about the dangers or urging censorship as so many gloom and doom critics do; she is providing a positive means for parents to help their children make the most of their web experience, an experience critical to every youngster in this age of the cyber-reality of communication. (A prototype parent-child agreement is included, and should be a valuable tool for developing cooperation among family members). As an educator, I find this book an essential tool for all



teachers and school administrators, and, of course all librarians, who need this background to appreciate the pitfalls which may occur in classrooms and reading areas and how to be aware and prevent them.' (*amazon.com*)

ORMEROD, Katherine
Why social media is ruining your life.

- Cassell, 2020.
'The internet has set destructive standards of flawlessness and comparison. We're working so hard to live up to these new benchmarks that we're burning ourselves out, and we're working so hard to maintain them that we're self-perpetuating an unobtainable reality. Until girls and women alike see the social media fantasies for what they are — constructed realities — and stop comparing their lifestyles, bodies, partners, even families to those seen on their feeds and screens, they will never be able to realise their [own] potential in the workplace, in the political system or in their quest for happiness. In this book the author explodes our social media-addled ideas about body image, money, relationships, motherhood, careers, politics and more, and gives readers the tools they need to control their own online lives, rather than being controlled by them. An important book for any woman who has ever looked at her Instagram feed and experienced sensations of inadequacy.' (*amazon.com*)

ROBERTS, Jilian
Kids, sex & screens: raising strong, resilient kids in the sexualized digital age.- Fair Winds, 2019.

'Children are being exposed to sexual content at a younger and younger age, whether through the internet, advertisements or interactions with their peers. When children are exposed to this sexual information without context (or images of a graphic nature), they can experience lasting psychological effects with damaging ramifications. The author explains in easy-to-understand language what exactly the psychological effects of that exposure can look like, and offers parents the tools and expert advice on how to handle that appropriately. Weaving eye-opening accounts from her own counseling practice with up-to-date psychological science, the author gives a unflinching account of our hyper-sexualised society. The author pairs this explanation with advice and concrete actions that parents of both girls and boys desperately need. Writing with sincerity and authority, the author has an important message for parents: by mitigating the risks the child faces navigating a sensational and sometimes disturbing world — they are able to grow up healthy and mentally resilient. Using her seven-point compass as a navigational tool, the book helps parents make sure children mature in a manner that is age-appropriate in a "mature content" world.' (*amazon.com*)

Additional reading

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- Hurt, Avery Elizabeth. You're the product: how your data is being sold.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Morgan, Nicola. The teenage guide to life online.**- Walker, 2018.
- Morris, Tylor. Bullies and trolls: protecting yourself on social media.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Morris, Tylor. They're watching you: personal privacy on social media.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Morris, Tylor. What you post lasts forever: managing your social media presence.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Morris, Tylor. You're addicted to your phone: how to break the habit.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Peters, Jennifer. You're being duped: fake news on social media.**- Enslow, 2020.
- Sadleir, Emma and Harrison, Lizzie. Selfies, sexts and smartphones: a teenager's online survival guide.**- Penguin, 2017.
- Stevenson, Tyler. Reality television: guilty pleasure or positive influence.**- Lucent, 2020.
- Vink, Amanda. The dangers of digital addiction.**- Lucent, 2020.

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Nomonde Ngqoba is a book selector at the Western Cape Library Service.



Book reviews

compiled by book selectors

ADULT FICTION

FOURIE, PP

'n Hart is so groot soos 'n vuus.- Kwela, 2021.

'n Hart is so groot soos 'n vuus is die storie van 'n seun, Paul, se komplekse verhouding met sy gewelddadige dog charismatiese alkoholis-pa. Paul onthou sy ouers se somtydse versoening, gevolg deur desperate vlugtogte saam

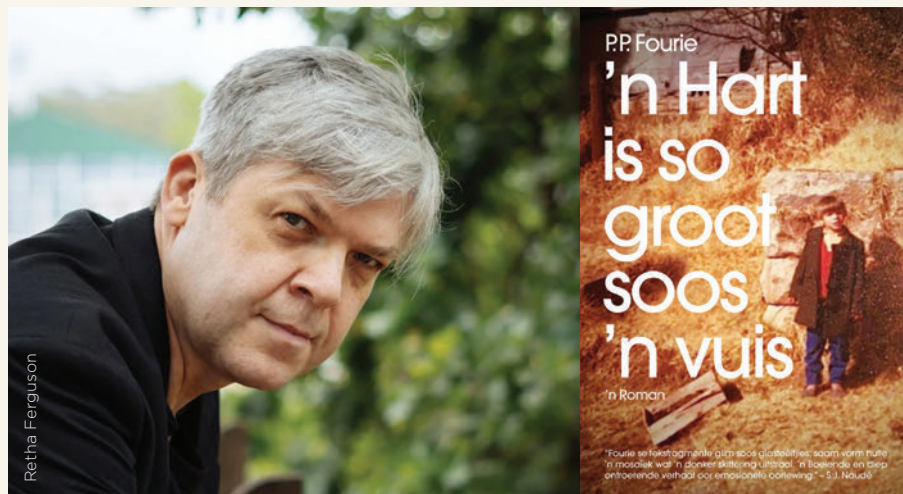
met sy ma. Dit is ook die roerende verhaal van Paul se ontwikkeling as jongman, en van sy selfontdekking. En die storie van sy ontferming oor sy vervreemde halfbroer, iemand wat hy met alle mag wil beskerm, die enigste ander persoon wat daardie man "Pa" kan noem.' (*graffitiboeke.co.za*)

Hierdie titel is deur die skrywer in Engels vertaal en beskikbaar as **The heart is the size of a fist** (2021).

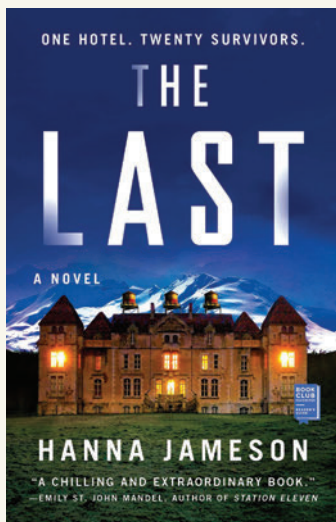
JAMESON, Hanna

The last.- Viking, 2019.

'A historian documents his strange days hiding out in a Swiss hotel in the aftermath of nuclear war. American historian Jon Keller is at a conference at L'Hotel Sixime outside of Zurich when a nuclear weapon destroys Washington, and more major cities aren't far behind. The president is dead, and millions of others are, too. The horror is almost too much to contemplate. Many people in the hotel flee, but Jon stays and begins to chronicle his days with the small remaining group of guests and staff. He worries about his wife and two daughters back in San Francisco and laments that he didn't leave on the best of terms with his wife. He befriends a few of the guests, most notably the outspoken Tomi, who is the only other American; they have a doctor and plenty of food stores for the time being. Jon makes a record of his experiences in the hotel and collects the stories of his fellow survivors, hoping he can preserve something of what they were before the world went sideways. When Jon and a few others find the body of a little girl in a rooftop water tank, Jon resolves to find her killer. Trusted with a set of



Retha Ferguson



Sophie Davidson



jillmansell.co.uk



master keys, Jon sets about snooping around the enormous hotel. He often feels as if he's being watched, adding a distinct element of creeping dread reminiscent of *The Shining*. Jameson delivers an eerie and unsettling tale, made even more so by its frequent mundanity. Even with a world in chaos, people still do what they do: form alliances, keep secrets, make love. They also go to lengths they never imagined they would. Jameson's premise certainly resonates in our current political climate and blame for the situation is leveled directly at Tomi because of whom she voted for in the last presidential election, even as Jon ruminates that those who voted otherwise (like him) didn't do enough to stop what happened. It makes for propulsive reading, but readers invested in what happened to the little girl in the water tank will find themselves scratching their heads when all is finally revealed in a rather rushed finale. A thoughtful, page-turning post-apocalyptic tale marred by a disjointed conclusion.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

MANSELL, Jill

Should I tell you.- Headline Review, 2022. '[The author] offers a pleasant, offbeat tale of love and family. When adult foster siblings reunite to meet and investigate their father figure's much younger Russian girlfriend, Olga, they're forced to confront their own

relationship woes. Good girl Amber Nicholls and playboy Lachlan McCarthy have been secretly pining for each other since meeting as troubled teens, but fear of rejection (Amber) and of ruining the family dynamic (Lachlan) keeps them from acting on their feelings. Though some readers will be turned off by the taboo of former foster siblings dating, Mansell does a good job making them a couple to root for. Meanwhile their foster brother, Raffaele Wright, learns the unexpected truth behind his ex-girlfriends' angry outbursts, the reason for their breakup. And, instead of the nefarious gold digger the trio were expecting,

laid-back Olga charms and her astuteness proves beneficial to all as they navigate complex interpersonal dynamics. Even family friend Benji gets a chance at romance as he works on overcoming his shyness. These inventive, intertwining love stories will have readers hooked.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

NEWMAN, TJ

Falling.- Simon, 2021. 'Terrorist to pilot: Crash the plane and kill everyone aboard, or your family will die. That's the choice that faces pilot Bill Hoffman after he is FaceTimed



Melissa Young



in the cockpit of Coastal Airways Flight 416 by a man who has his wife, son, and infant daughter bound, gagged, and strapped with suicide bombs — a man he believed was a cable repairman when he left the house on his way to work. “I’m not going to crash this plane and you’re not going to kill my family,” Hoffman bravely replies — but it’s clearly going to take some doing. This authentically detailed and unquestionably thrilling thriller is the debut novel of a bookseller-turned-flight attendant-turned-novelist. Newman uses her background to great advantage in portraying her three flight attendants — a black woman named Jo, a tiny white guy they call Big Daddy, and a newbie still on probation, Kellie. From their intuitive evaluations of the passengers, as they board to their collaborative problem-solving style to little details like how they funnel leftover first-class meals to the pilots, these characters give the high-flying heroics of the plot a grounding in reality. Air traffic controllers and pilots are also depicted with veracity and respect. On the other hand, the FBI agents are two-dimensional, and the characterisation of the villains is a serious flaw. Casting Middle Eastern men as terrorists crashing planes is dated and reactionary at this point, even if the word *Islam* is not mentioned once and the characters explicitly reject jihadism. These guys’ avenging rage has its roots in the horror of the

US withdrawal from Kurdistan and the American public’s complete lack of interest, but this is not enough to rescue this racist stereotype. An exciting story with great details, lots of action, and an unfortunately problematic premise.’ (*kirkusreviews.com*)

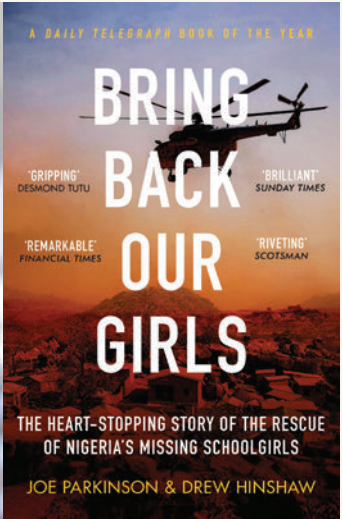
PARKINSON, Joe and HINSHAW, Drew
Bring back our girls: the heart-stopping story of the rescue of Nigeria’s missing schoolgirls.- Swift Press, 2022.

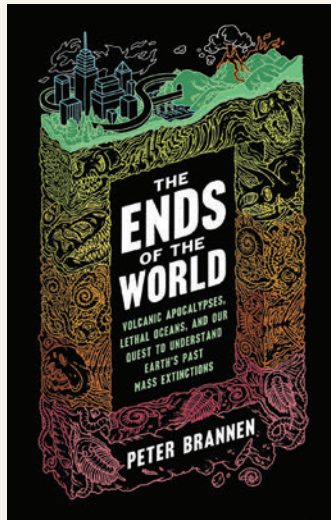
‘Two *Wall Street Journal* reporters examine the geopolitics surrounding the tragic 2014 kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram. Bringing together years of investigative reporting and the diaries of some of the victims, Parkinson and Hinshaw detail the relationships among terrorism, geopolitics, social media, local conflict and American military intervention. In 2014, Boko Haram, led by a deeply disturbed and avid Youtube user named Abubakar Shekau, kidnapped 276 Nigerian schoolgirls from their dorm in the middle of the night. What followed was a uniquely 21st-century phenomenon tied to and distorted by social media in novel ways. The authors describe how the international interest of the events on Twitter affected the reality of hostage negotiations and prospects for release. In fact, the millions of well-intentioned tweets to *#BringBackOurGirls*

actually endangered the girls further, emboldening Shekau to keep them as prized hostages. This “hashtag activism”, write the authors, impeded rescue efforts, as “the intense global focus on whether the girls would be rescued was part of why they couldn’t be”. The authors, both seasoned journalists, occasionally slip into overly detailed descriptions and spend more time than necessary on secondary actors, which disrupts the narrative momentum established by the girls’ diaries. At times, the text reads like a collection of articles. Ultimately, however, the authors effectively distill the myriad experiences into an intricate portrait of an unprecedented global event. Parkinson and Hinshaw recount the atrocities endured by the girls without undue sensationalism, and they artfully explore the fascinating relationship between social media and the girls’ testimonies. They also offer an engaging analysis of how the *#BringBackOurGirls* campaign morphed into a full-scale American military intervention. In light of the proliferation of hashtag activism by individuals and corporations following the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, this exploration of the unintended impact of social media activism is both poignant and relevant. A nuanced investigation into the humanitarian realities beyond the viral *#BringBackOurGirls* campaign.’ (*kirkusreviews.com*)

STALS, Jeanette
Diep spoor.- Penguin Random House, 2021.

‘Katrien is ’n sensitiewe kunstenaar, getroud met Gerrit, ’n musikant. Hulle het ’n seun, Fransie en woon in Stellenbosch. Dina, haar eertydse grootwordmaat, werk nou vir die gesin. Dan tref ’n ramp die gesin [Gerrit sterf] en Katrien, Fransie en Dina verhuis saam met Stefaans na die onrus-geteisterde Oos Kaap en word op die ou end deel van die Groot Trek. Aan die ander kant, in die binneland, is daar die jong isiZulu-meisie, Thabisa. Haar hele lewe soos wat sy dit ken, word in ’n oogwink verwoes en sy vlug met slegs twee jong oorlewendes as geselskap na die land van die Ndebele. Sy pas nie in nie; sy is deel van ’n ander volk, maar het niks om na terug te keer nie. Dan hoor sy gerugte van bleek mense met





huise wat deur osse getrek word wat in hulle rigting kom en sy droom drome oor dié mense. Dis die inleiding vir die verhale van die drie vrouens. Katrien, die fyn kunstenaar, los alles wat aan haar bekend is en trek na 'n onbekende toekoms. Sal sy ooit weer haar geliefde verkwaste kan gebruik of sal sy die res van haar lewe bloot moet veg om te oorleef? Dina sien haarself as die onsigbare. Soms is sy bitter teenoor Katrien wat alles het wat sy nog altyd wou gehad het, maar haar liefde vir Katrien is sterker as haar afguns — totdat sy en Katrien vir dieselfde man lief word. Thabisa se grootste begeerte is bloot 'n veilige hawe; iewers waar sy inpas en nie langer in vrees hoef te lewe nie. Sy kan egter nie terug na die isiZulu of die Ndebele nie; sal die aankoms van die trekkers vir haar 'n nuwe begin of weereens vlug beteken? Die werklike veldslae en gebeure is vernuftig as agtergrond vir die stories van die drie vroue aangewend. Die feit dat dit om die beurt deur die oë van die vroue vertel word, het die bekende geskiedenis 'n baie meer persoonlike gesig gegee... Die taalgebruik in die boek het my ook beïndruk; behalwe dat dit in poëtiese mooi Afrikaans geskryf is, is die dialoog en uitdrukkings van die betrokke tyd ook baie oortuigend. Die boek word nie net aanbeveel vir liefhebbers van historiese fiksie nie; lesers van menslike verhale sal dit ewe veel geniet. Dis boonop 'n lekker dik boek, perfek vir winteraande, en verdien vier sterre.' (*goodreads.com*)

ADULT NON-FICTION

BRANNEN, Peter
The ends of the world: volcanic apocalypses, lethal oceans, and our quest to understand Earth's past mass extinctions. - Oneworld, 2018.

'With projections about the disastrous consequences of climate change becoming more dire with every new geological survey, some scientists have begun sounding a warning that Earth may be facing a sixth extinction event every bit as final as the demise of the dinosaurs. This time, of course, the animal species they're referring to is humankind. To put this sobering prospect into context, award-winning science-journalist Brannen provides a much-needed overview here of those previous five extinctions, both as a cautionary lesson and a hopeful demonstration of how life on Earth keeps rebounding from destruction. Using an engaging travelogue format, Brannen introduces each era's major species in successive chapters, beginning at 445 and ending at 66 million years ago, covering the End Ordovician (graptolites), Late Devonian (trilobites), End Permian (tabulate coral), End Triassic (conodonts), and End Cretaceous (dinosaurs). Brannen doesn't hesitate to underscore the unsettling common factor in these extinction events: too much atmospheric carbon dioxide. Everyone from climatologists to general science buffs will enjoy this well-written,

closely focused, if somewhat grim look at our planet's paleontological history.' (*booklistonline.com*)

COETZER, Juliana
Die kind se naam is Anneke. - Human & Rousseau, 2021.

'Ses jaar ná **Bloedvreemd** skryf Juliana Coetzer wat hét geword van haar dogter, Anneke. Op sewejarige ouderdom het sy 'n breinvirus opgedoen. Ses jaar later vra mense steeds — wat het geword van julle? Is Anneke oukei? Met 'n skreiend eerlike stem skryf Juliana oor die verdere reis. Anneke kan al hoe minder praat en verstaan, en steeds probeer sy haar onafhanklikheid behou. Maar elke dag bring sy eie uitdagings. Aangrypende leesstof vir enigiemand wat al verlies ervaar het.' (*goodreads.com*)

HILLMAN, Jonathan E
The digital silk road: China's quest to wire the world and win the future.

- Profile Books, 2021.
 'Napoleon Bonaparte may have referred to China as a sleeping giant, but there's little doubt that the country is now wide awake. Hillman, a senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, here examines how China is positioning itself to become the world superpower in digital infrastructure by the year 2050. Hillman cites multiple examples of China's ever-increasing international

influence, including its expansive networks (underground, underseas, wireless, satellite) and its attempts to arbitrate global connectivity standards (thus becoming the sole supplier). Security and surveillance also loom large as Hillman discusses the philosophical differences between East and West about the purposes of connectivity and describes frighteningly accurate and intrusive cameras already in use by the Chinese government (and currently for sale to interested buyers). Numerous examples prove just how pervasive Chinese mega-companies like Huawei already are and Hillman warns against complacency and underestimating China's technological ambitions. His writing is lucid and nuanced, and his warning that America needs to wake up is timely and compelling.' *(booklistonline.com)*

HOLIDAY, Ryan and HANSELMAN, Stephen

Lives of the stoics: the art of living from Zeno to Marcus Aurelius. - Profile Books, 2022.

'Holiday and Hanselman explain in this stellar work the implications of Stoic dedications to truth, wisdom, resilience, and character. The authors present the work as a series of biographies of philosophers and ground each of the 26 profiles in the virtues of courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom that Stoics believe necessary to living a

happy life. They distinguish pen and ink philosophers (more concerned with writing than living) from the Stoics, whose central tenet is summed up best by Marcus Aurelius: Do the right thing. The rest doesn't matter. Including profiles of Stoics who were boxers, slaves, failed merchants, Roman senators, and occasionally iron women, each chapter provides a brief historical context before exploring the challenges of seeking a humble life in the Stoic fashion. Rather than offering prescriptive practices, the authors believe one can learn more from the Stoics' lived experiences (their works) than we can from their philosophical writings (their words): Cynic philosopher Crates of Thebes taught Zeno to learn from humiliation; Cleanthes of Assos, a middle-aged water boy, preached stoicism at night in the streets; Chrysippus, a long-distance runner, stressed the value of meritocracy over the misjudgments of social position. This illuminating collection of biographies makes great use of Stoic wisdom to demonstrate the traditions values for any reader interested in ancient philosophy.' *(publishersweekly.com)*

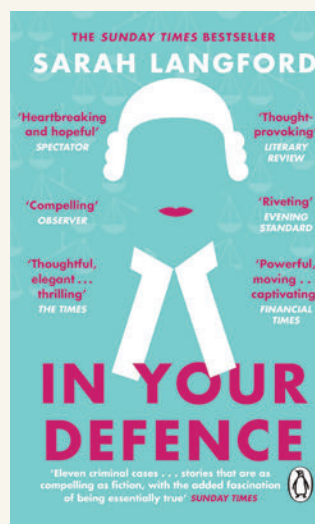
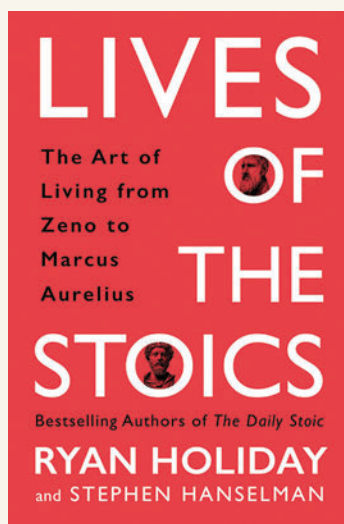
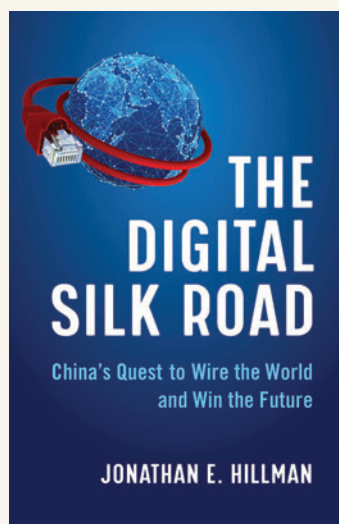
LANGFORD, Sarah

In your defence: stories of life and law.

- Black Swan, 2019.

'This is no typical legal memoir. Against the backdrop of a justice system in crisis, Sarah Langford guides readers

through 11 cases demonstrating the workings and failings of the underfunded, overburdened criminal and family courts, laying bare the impact of successive funding cuts that undermine justice for victims and defendants and severely reduce access to the family courts for those without means. Inevitable comparison will be made with the Secret Barrister's exposé of the crumbling justice system, **Stories of the law and how it's broken**, but here the human tales of heartache and humour, of high drama and quiet pain take centre stage. We encounter Dominic, whose criminal career progresses from youth to magistrates and inevitably to crown court; Derek, charged with sexual activity in a public lavatory and facing the unbearable prospect of his homosexuality being revealed in court; and Rita, dragged down by an anachronistic law that does not separate a wife's will from her husband's. The usually closed doors of the family court are flung open, revealing a system swamped by unrepresented litigants and crippled by delay. We meet Saba, a young Bangladeshi woman whose violent and controlling husband seeks custody of their daughter; Maggie, the 22-year-old mother at risk of having her second child removed; and Jude caught in the crosshairs of his parents broken relationship... In the closing pages Langford warns that further erosion of the legal system threatens our nation's stability. It is a compelling read for





anyone who cares about fairness, justice and humanity and should be on the reading list of all politicians and policy-makers.' (*theguardian.com*, Catherine Baksi)

METELERKAMP, Petrovna

Jeanne Goosen: 'n Lewe vol sinne.

- Hemel & See Boeke, 2020.

"'n Biografie van die bekroonde skrywer Jeanne Goosen, met foto's, briewe en bydraes van vriende wat vertel hoe hulle dié ikoniese figuur ken. Die skrywer, Petrovna Metelkercamp, is die 2019-wenner van die ATKV-Veertjie vir nie-fiksie vir **Ingrid Jonker — 'n biografie**. Die boek bevat materiaal wat voorheen ontoeganklik was en belooft om ure se leesgenot te verskaf aan die duisende aanhangers van die digter-dramaturg en skrywer van **Ons is nie almal so nie**." (*graffitiboek.co.za*)

VAN DER VYFER, Marita

'n Baie lang brief aan my dogter.

- Tafelberg, 2021.

"**'n Baie lang brief aan my dogter** is Marita van der Vyfer, een van Afrikaans se mees geliefde skrywers, se ontroerende jeugmemoires. Hierin vertel 'n Afrikaanse ma vir haar Franse dogter van haar grootwordjare in die sestigs en sewentigs, in die bloeityd van apartheid. Maar is dit ook 'n storie oor taal en boeke en die wonderwerk van woorde. En hoe dit gekom het dat 'n skaam boekwurm uit 'n Afrikaanse

middelklasfamilie, wat slegs 'n geslag vroeër nog werkersklas was, 'n skrywer geword het. Dis 'n boek wat die meeste mense nie sal kan neersit nie omdat dit 'n speurtog is deur 'n skrywer se beginjare en 'n liefdesbrief is aan 'n dogter en aan 'n taal en aan 'n land. En 'n ma se poging om sin te maak van hierdie onverskillige en wrede wêreld waarin sy haar nou begewe.'" (*afrikaans.com*)

VAN HEERDEN, Schalk W

Betereinder. - Lux Verbi, 2023.

'**Betereinder** is 'n menslike gids oor hoe om te floreer in Suid-Afrika. Schalk W van Heerden verbreed lesers se verwysingsraamwerk in die hoop dat hulle 'n aktiewe rol in die land sal speel. Hy ondersoek huidige rassegesindhede en gee wenke oor hoe die wit middelklas beter met hul medemens kan omgaan. Hy wys hoe armoede bekamp kan word. Schalk beantwoord moeilike vrae en deel stories met humor en empatie wat die leser se hart sal aangryp en ook sal laat glo dat hulle 'n verskil kan maak.'" (*nb.co.za*)

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

AHLERS, Nerine

Teiken in Parys. - Lapa, 2023.

'**Teiken in Parys** is die derde in die reeks oor die 17-jarige Dienkie se avonture in die Franse hoofstad.

In die eerste roman, **Losprys in Parys**, stuur haar ouers haar Parys toe om ses weke by haar vriendin Lea deur te bring. In die tweede roman, **Per ongeluk Parys**, het sy slegs drie weke in die stad oor. En by die begin van hierdie betrokke roman, wat gemaklik alleenstaande gelees kan word, het dit gekrimp na twee weke. Nie net word Dienkie, of Amandine, soos die verleidelike Sergio haar noem, gekonfronteer met die dilemma van 'n moontlike interkontinentale liefdesverhouding ná haar onvermydelike terugkeer na Suid-Afrika nie; Sergio moet boonop 'n deel van die kosbare tyd wat hulle saam oor het, by sy oupa gaan deurbring. En die slinkse Veronique gaan saam; oorgenoeg redes vir sluimerende onsekerheid. Hoogtepunte van hierdie roman is ongetwyfeld Dienkie se ontluikende volwassenheid, veral ten opsigte van die verwerking van haar geliefde ouma se dood, asook die insluiting van 'n besondere liefdesgedig in die teks. In Sergio se afwesigheid is die besluite oor die toekoms van hul verhouding nie Dienkie se enigste uitdaging nie; sy bevind haar midde-in 'n uiters amusante bomdrama wat deur 'n paar hoëhakskoene veroorsaak word; ontmoet Graham, wat haar hartseer oor haar ouma verstaan en boonop ook van Suid-Afrika is, maar ongelukkig derhalwe haar gevoelens vir en keuses betreffende Sergio kompliseer, en sy en Lea beland per abuis in 'n holderstebolder avontuur

met gewetenlose skurke op hul spoor. Hoogtepunte van hierdie roman is ongetwyfeld Dienkie se ontluikende volwassenheid, veral ten opsigte van die verwerking van haar geliefde ouma se dood, asook die insluiting van 'n besondere liefdesgedig in die teks. Die skrywer se uitbeelding van Parys, die perfekte romantiese agtergrond vir jong liefde, gekombineer met 'n lekker spannende avontuur, oortuigende karakters en subtile humor, verseker een groot leesplezier vir lesers van 13 jaar en ouer.' (*netwerk24.com*)

CONAGHAN, Brian

The M word - Bloomsbury, 2019. 'Acclaimed YA author Brian Conaghan is known for his unflinching explorations of lives in crisis. He spares the reader nothing in his raw, irreverent and tender prose; from his Carnegie Medal shortlisted debut **When Mr Dog Bites** to the profoundly moving **The weight of a thousand feathers**, Conaghan confronts everyday grief, illness and poverty and shows how healing and strength are borne from unbearable loss. **The M word** is Maggie's story, the portrait of a young artist in her own words. From the graphic opening chapter in which she undergoes her first tattoo, a defiant my..me??.not sure, to her frustration with her depressed, unemployed mother, Maggie's bleak life gradually unravels. While her mother's scars are invisible, we learn Maggie's are

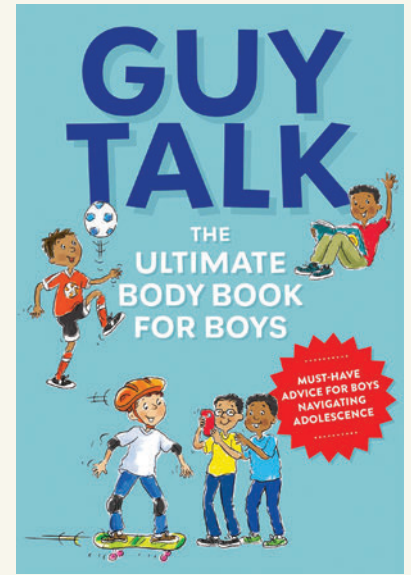
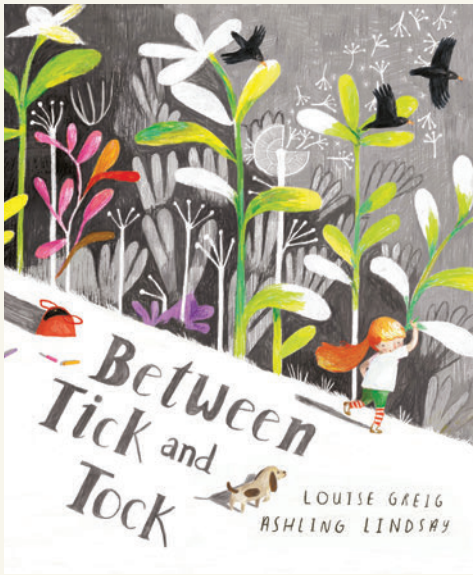
very real. Self-harm and private conversations with her childhood toy keep her afloat after the death of her best friend, Moya. We only see Moya through Maggie's eyes, a girl with a hard shell who is relentlessly ridiculed and who understands that love is complicated: Love just makes me feel sick all the time — it comes attached to pain. Maggie's sessions with her counsellor seem to lead nowhere, though hope eventually appears at college. New friends, and a fresh chance of a life free from the guilt of Moya's suicide, are on the horizon. Conaghan deals adroitly with complex themes; particularly, the grinding poverty families face when unemployment hits. Maggie's attempts to understand her mother's depression, the mingled love and exasperation revealed in her internal diatribes, will unfortunately ring true for many young readers. Maggie's lonely trip to the food bank is only one of the many poignant moments in a novel which is irreverent, raw, and often deeply unpleasant. Underpinning it all, however, is Conaghan's compassion and humanity.' (*The School Librarian*, Alison Brumwell)

O'DONOGHUE, Caroline

All our hidden gifts - Walker Books, 2021. 'An Irish teen grapples with past misdeeds and newfound ties to magic. When 16-year-old Maeve discovers a deck of tarot cards stashed with a

mixtape of moody indie music from 1990, she starts giving readings for her classmates at her all-girls private school. Though her shame over dumping her strange friend Lily during an attempt to climb the social ladder at St. Bernadette's is still palpable, it doesn't stop her from trying to use the tarot in her favor to further this goal. However, after speaking harsh words to Lily during a reading, Maeve is horrified when her former friend later disappears. As she struggles to understand the forces at play within her, classmate Fiona proves to be just the friend Maeve needs. Detailed, interesting characters carry this contemporary story of competing energy and curses. Woven delicately throughout are chillingly eerie depictions of the housekeeper, a figure who shows up on an extra card in the deck, echoing the White Lady legend from Irish folklore. Even more disturbing is an organisation of young people led by a homophobic but charismatic figurehead intent on provoking backlash against Ireland's recent civil rights victories. Most characters are white; Fiona is biracial, with a Filipina mother and white Irish father. Roe, Maeve's love interest and Lily's sibling, is a bisexual, genderqueer person who is a target for intolerance in their small city of Kilbeg. An immersive tale of brave, vulnerable teens facing threats both real and fantastic.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)





JUVENILE FICTION

GREIG, Louise

Between Tick and Tock/illustrated by Ashling Lindsay.- Egmont, 2018.

'A charming tale about a little girl called Liesel and the bustling city that she lives above. [The illustrations of] Liesel and her home in the clock tower in warm peachy colors stand in stark contrast to the greyness of what lies outside her window. Liesel peeks out at the grey, watching the city's people below as they rush from one thing to the next. They do not stop to say hello or to help each other. There is urgency in the illustrations that is further pushed along by [the author's] short, hurried snippets of text throughout. With a magical pause of the clock between tick and tock, Liesel freezes time and gets to work, spreading her warmth and carrying out good deeds throughout the city. Liesel is the only character with a name; all other characters are named according to what they are feeling, putting faces to worry and loneliness. This personification of negative emotions is a clever way of opening up a conversation with younger readers about things that may trouble them. Liesel reminds the reader of the importance of looking after each other and slowing down in this busy world, a valuable lesson for readers young and old.' (*childrensbooksireland.ie*)

HARTLEY, Stefania Leonardi

Die mooiste fabels deur La Fontaine.

- Human & Rousseau, 2020.

'Met die voorlees van die eerste verhaal in dié storiebundel, was my knapies reeds vernog aan die skattige karakters wat so mooi geïllustreer is. Daarby lees die stories vinnig en maklik en praat die karakters in skattige kort rympies. Elke storie het ook 'n lewenslesie in sy slot. Dus was my "net een slaapydstorie"-manifes maklik omvergegooi en het ons sommer 'n paar verhaaltjies deurgewerk voordat Klaas Vakie ongeduldig begin raak het. Jean de La Fontaine se klassieke versameling sprokies bly lieflik en 'n mens kan verstaan waarom die Franse dit eens op 'n tyd as verpligte leerstof vir kinders ingespan het. Vir die kleinspan wat gek is oor diestories is daar ook oorgenoeg in die bundel soos *Die wesel en die koringskuur*, *Die wolf en die lam*, *Die duif en die mier* asook *Die donkie en die hond* (om maar 'n paar te noem) wat hulle heel gelukkig sal hou. Weer eens 'n klassieke toevoeging tot die boekrak of daai Kerskous.' (*netwerk24.com*)

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

VALLO, Chris

Guy talk: the ultimate body book for boys.-Applesauce Press, 2021.

This is an informative and easy to

read beginner's guide to puberty for pre-teens that covers a diverse range of topics. It is illustrated for better understanding and covers a diverse range of body types. Pre-teen boys are provided with answers to the questions they don't know who to ask or are too embarrassed to ask; ranging in subject from body changes, personal hygiene to healthy eating and tips for sensitive topics such as divorce, bullying, cyber bullying, stress, drugs, alcohol and moving to a new place. **Guy talk** offers guidance and support for boys as they navigate this important stage in their lives. **AM**

Most of these titles are available in e-format on the Western Cape OverDrive webpage and Libby app.

Die meeste van hierdie titels is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles are not yet available at the libraries.

AM Ayanda Majola

Study methods for learners and students

by Lizelle Burger

The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of empowering students and learners with study methods that are specific to their needs and expectations.

During my research for this article, I've come across a magnitude of different study methods. It is therefore based on several examples suggested by specialists as well as my own experiences as a lifelong student.

Choosing the correct study method is a crucial part of any learning process that students tend to underestimate. Deciding on the best method for the situation can help students reach their full potential, whereas a poorly chosen study technique will have the opposite effect, no matter how hard the student tries to study.

Most students unfortunately rely on ineffective study strategies. Research

has found that between 83,6% and 84% of students rely on re-reading; a study method that provides minimal benefits.

There are far superior study methods out there than re-reading. Methods that have been developed and researched by the world's top learning scientists. Yet surprisingly few students have ever heard of them. That is why utilising them effectively will give the student a headstart to turn all their studies into a successful experience.

Definition of a study method

The following definition is a very simplified one:

A study method is something that a student can use to help them to remember important facts



and concepts to achieve the best results in one's examinations.

A more comprehensive definition:

Study methods are the process of breaking down the study material and approaching it one step at a time. To decide on a particular study method is the best way to achieve better results and to study more productively as well as improving one's quality of learning.

Students should familiarise themselves with the following study methods.

1. Spaced repetition

Spaced repetition, sometimes called spaced practice, is a study method that involves separating study sessions into

spaced intervals. It's a simple concept but a game-changer to most students because of how powerful it is.

Rather than concentrating all studying into a small-time frame, this method requires students to space out studying by reviewing and recalling information at optimal intervals until the material has been memorised.

This technique has gathered increasing popularity in the 21st century, and it's not without good reason. Spaced repetition combines all the existing knowledge we have on human memory and it uses that knowledge to create optimised algorithms for studying. Anyone trying to become a better and more efficient student can benefit from spaced repetition. Spaced repetition is used in conjunction with other study methods, and it's especially powerful when combined with active recall.

2. Active recall

Active recall, sometimes called retrieval practice or practice testing, is a study technique involving actively recalling information (rather than just reading or re-reading) by testing yourself repeatedly. Most students justifiably dread the word 'test'. After all, tests and exams can be very stressful because they are usually the main point of measure for one's academic success.

However, active recall teaches us to view tests from another perspective. Not only should we learn for tests, but we should also learn by testing. Through flashcards, self-generated questions and practice tests, this study method uses self-testing to help your brain memorise, retain and retrieve information more efficiently.

When students are practicing for an upcoming exam, there's no better study method than active recall. By using

active recall, a student can evaluate their preparedness dozens of times over. When a student conducts these practice tests over a long period of time through spaced repetition, they will be able to gain success in their studies.

Keep in mind, though, that while very effective, active recall is also one of the most tiring study techniques on this list. It requires strong mental focus, deep concentration, intense mental stamina and is cognitively demanding.

3. Time-management technique

This technique is also called the Pomodoro study method. This is a time-management technique that uses a timer to break down studying into 25-minute (or 45-minute) sessions. Then, after each session, the student can take a five-minute (or 15-minute) break, during which one entirely distances one from the study topic. And after completing four such sessions, a student will take a more extended 15-to-30-minute break.

The common benefits are that it's a simple and straightforward technique; it forces the student to map out daily tasks and activities, allows for easy tracking of the amount of time spent on each task and provides short bursts of concentrated work together with resting periods.

Do keep in mind that this method is mostly conjectural as there is little scientific research on its effectiveness. Another drawback of the Pomodoro study technique is that it's not ideal for tasks that require prolonged, uninterrupted focusing.

4. Feynman technique

The Feynman technique is a flexible, easy-to-use and effective study technique developed by Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman. It is based on a simple idea: the best way to learn any topic is by teaching it to a sixth-grade child.

While this concept is not as advanced as the super-optimised spaced repetition algorithms, it's nonetheless a method that continues to be relevant nearly a century after its creation.

The Feynman technique is a powerful learning tool that requires students

to step out of their comfort zone by breaking down even the most complex topics into easily digestible pieces. Digestible enough for the average sixth-grade child.

This may seem like an easy task at first. After all, how difficult could it be to explain something to a child? In practice, it can be very difficult because of having to simplify and explain complex arguments in an age-appropriate manner. Upon starting to use the method, one discovers that unless the topic has not been already mastered, meeting a child at their level of understanding is not easy.

To explain something clearly, a student needs to define all unfamiliar terms, generate straightforward explanations for complex ideas, understand connections between different topics and sub-topics; and articulate what is learned clearly and concisely. The Feynman technique forces the student to learn more deeply and think critically about what is being learnt — and that is also why it's such a compelling learning method.

5. Flashcard-based learning method

This method was developed by Sebastian Leitner in 1972. The Leitner system is a simple and effective study method that uses a flashcard-based learning strategy to maximise memorisation.

The student first needs to create flashcards. The question is written on the front of the cards and the answer on the back. Then, once the flashcards are ready, three numbered boxes are required to store the cards in.

Then the studying can start. In the beginning, all cards are placed in Box 1. A card is taken from Box 1 and the question answered from memory. If the answer was correct, the card is placed in Box 2. If not, it stays in Box 1. This process is to be repeated until all the cards in Box 1 have been reviewed at least once. After that, each box of cards is reviewed based on time intervals.

Besides card placement, another important detail of the system is scheduling. Every box has a set review frequency, with Box 1 being reviewed the most frequently as it contains all the most difficult-to-learn flashcards. Box 3 will contain the cards with the questions

already mastered, which is why it does not need to be reviewed as frequently.

It's particularly effective at language learning owed to the ease of creating translation-based flashcards.

6. Preview, question, read, reflect, recite and review study method

This method is also called the PQ4R method and is commonly used to improve reading comprehension; and is an essential method for students with reading difficulties. The PQ4R method was developed by the researchers Thomas and Robinson in 1972.

However, the usefulness of PQ4R is not restricted to students with reading disabilities. The same six steps can be taken by any student trying to better understand what they're reading.

Improving reading comprehension is a worthy goal for any student; and if one needs to read through a massive textbook for an exam, the PQ4R method offers a practical framework. It allows the student to understand all the passages of the text better and retain the information better.

By improving our reading comprehension, we can better synthesise information and interpret text. However, we must be careful not to let this strategy consume too much of our time during study sessions. Many modern learning scientists consider reading a passive and ineffective study strategy, and it's best to rely on other methods.

While I don't use this study method as frequently as the other methods listed above, I still consider it an important tool in my skill set. Whenever I need to extract the most critical details from a large textbook, I utilise PQ4R to help me process the information quicker while boosting memorisation and retention. PQ4R is a good study method to have on hand, but it's not something you should view as your primary strategy.

7. Time-proven method (SQ3R)

SQ3R was developed by Francis P Robinson in 1946 and is the predecessor of the PQ4R method. It's a time-proven technique that can be adapted to virtually any subject. The method's abbreviated name in full stands for *Survey, question, read, recite and review*.



It can be used to study anything quicker, better and in a more structured way than conventional methods.

Still, a major drawback of this technique is that it is mainly used for improving reading comprehension — and reading is not considered an effective study strategy anymore.

In addition, three of the five steps of this method involve a passive approach (surveying, reading, and reviewing) rather than an active one. Modern learning theories suggest active retrieval serves information retention far better than passive reading. This method is recommended only when the student doesn't have the time to use a more robust method, such as spaced repetition.

Also, SQ3R is best used when the primary source of information comes from a textbook. In such cases, the technique can be very helpful for summarising the key points written in the source material.

Conclusion

There are many study methods available to students in the 21st century. The most ideal ones will depend on each student's learning style, as well as the quantity and complexity of study material on hand. When possible, I recommend students make use of a combination of approaches like spaced repetition, active recall and the Pomodoro method, but the other strategies listed here certainly have their uses as well.

Above all, the learner must try to be flexible and keep an open mind towards maximising their learning potential.

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**Think and eat yourself smart:
A neuroscientific approach to a
sharper mind and healthier life**

<https://e-student.org/best-study-methods>

Lizelle Burger is the library manager at Matzikama Municipality



Public libraries and leisure reading: the role that ebooks play

by Luinda Lilley





Studies over the years have shown that leisure reading can improve our mental health, help people see the world from different perspectives, and contribute to establishing better connections with others. After the freedom-limiting COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020, we rapidly moved into a virtual world and started ereading for pleasure alongside our regular printed books.

Collaborative partnership of brick-and-click libraries

The City of Cape Town, along with the Western Cape Library Service (WCLS), have invested resources to provide access to ebook collections to enhance the overall online content offering to the public in the province. We are seeing that library collections follow a collaborative approach where our print and ebook collections have a symbiotic relationship. We should therefore not think of the ebook collections as taking funds away from the print book budget. The physical libraries and OverDrive's Libby app are not in competition — they are partners.

Research worldwide tells us that library patrons enjoy reading both print and ebooks. The National Reading Survey 2023 (NRS) found that 51% of adults read print fiction books and 47% read print non-fiction books. It is also clear that the popularity of digital book reading is increasing (35% read online fiction, 30% read online non-fiction and 24% read downloaded ebooks), but it

has not replaced print book reading. Clearly there is a crossover or hybrid reading pattern emerging.

Decline in reading and literacy

Worldwide, leisure reading has been in decline for years. Various sources such as the World Economic Forum, Gallup News and the National Assessment of Educational Progress, have conducted studies over decades and all conclude that children in particular are reading less and less for enjoyment. The definition of reading for enjoyment is reading for entertainment or relaxation. Two important studies were produced on literacy and reading in South Africa:

1. South Africa's 2021 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)
2. South Africa National Reading Barometer, June 2023.

The now much-cited PIRLS report revealed a disturbing decline in literacy levels and reading comprehension. 81% of Grade 4 children were found to be unable to read for meaning in any language — a decline of three per cent from the 2016 result of 78%.

The objectives of PIRLS comprise the following:

- To assess how well South African Grade 4 and 6 learners read; and to identify possible associated contextual factors
- To compare the reading literacy of Grade 4 South African learners, both against international and national benchmarks for all 11 official languages and across all nine provinces.

The following extract from the NRB report outlines its objectives as:

'The National Reading Barometer project describes adult reading culture and the broader reading ecosystem in South Africa. The project includes two components. The National Reading Survey (NRS) is a nationally representative survey of the adult population aged 16+. It profiles adults' reading practices, preferences and contexts, and includes questions on reading with children, digital reading, library use and language preferences.

The survey was designed to enable limited continuity with the 2016 National Reading Survey run by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC). The National Reading Barometer (NRB) is a new compilation of secondary datasets, plus selected data points from the NRS, that collates and tracks changes in the overall health of the South African reading ecosystem. The National Reading Survey and Barometer will be repeated in 2026 and 2030.'

On the The National Reading Survey's question of *Who reads for enjoyment?* the corresponding answer was:

Teenagers (ages 16-17) are most likely to read for enjoyment (62% read frequently, compared with 52% of 18-35 year olds and 45% over the age of 35).

The results from these reports prompted me to think deeply about the role that OverDrive's Libby App can play in promoting reading for leisure. OverDrive is an ebook and digital audiobook platform that was purchased by the Western Cape Library Service for use by all provincial libraries. The content is jointly developed by selectors from the WCLS and the City of Cape Town Library Service.

The digital coin is both a bridge and a divide

The increase in digital reading is in large part due to the evolution of smartphones. The latter is the device of choice for digital reading. The NRS indicates that 84% of internet users use a smartphone versus 7% computers and 1% tablets. For South Africa, though, the biggest challenge in South Africa remains internet access. The NRS found that 27% of readers reported that they had no internet access and a further 16% said access was unreliable. It follows then that those without internet access are usually 50+ years old, live in rural areas, are less educated (incomplete secondary or lower) and have lower household incomes. Clearly, in South Africa affordable internet access is still a barrier to opportunities; which is additionally inhibited by high data costs.

Libby.
The library reading app

GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

In the Western Cape we are very blessed by the continued government investment in public libraries.

Continuous progress is being made to expand technology access and fund initiatives to promote digital literacy by the WCLS (through the installation of WiFi) and the City's Library Service (SmartCape and WiFi). Library staff are constantly working to improve the digital literacy of their patrons and encourage use of the available digital resources.

Interestingly, patterns show that people read more broadly across genres when reading digital content. In terms of title and subject content, many patrons (and parents) cite concerns about the quality of digital reading — and it is here that Libby

should be highlighted as a proven quality resource for readers of all ages.

This task will require the efforts of all the role players to ensure a more equitable and connected world.

Limited language availability

Librarians face a major challenge with the lack of available materials in isiXhosa and to a lesser extent, Afrikaans. English is the dominant publishing language and as such, resources at all reading levels and abilities are readily available.

The NRS results re-affirmed that access to African language materials for adults and children still lags behind English and Afrikaans; and is unequal across languages.



- 97% of English-speaking homes own at least one book in English
- 78% of Afrikaans speakers own at least one book in Afrikaans
- 68% of isiXhosa and isiZulu speakers own a book in their respective home languages.

The Libby selectors stay abreast of new local releases and also showcase the collections to ensure ease of access.

Important role of libraries and librarians

I was very pleased to see how the NRS reflects positively on the trusted role that libraries still play. Libraries remain important places for reading material

access, but are still not accessible to all. The NRS found that although 58% of adults have access to a community library, this is spread highly unequally between provinces; ranging from 86% having access in the Western Cape to just 20% in the Eastern Cape.

A Singaporean study on leisure reading found that recommendations were critical in helping adolescents find appealing materials. Once again, Libby stands out here as the WCLS' and City's librarians select and promote popular authors, in-demand titles and award winners. We then use the curated lists feature in OverDrive to highlight and recommend books. The sad reality in South Africa is that many users don't borrow print or ebooks for a variety of different reasons.

Librarians are also aware that many elderly patrons lack the technical knowledge to access reading resources online. The simplicity and reliability of the Libby app has a crucial role to play here because accessing great books is in truth very easy.

It is my belief that Libby is well positioned to support the recreational reading needs of the Western Cape. It is also a resource that can be used to improve the reading abilities of our patrons through the provision of several value-adding features, such as the *Read Aloud* book series, the availability of dictionary and read-along audio features, as well as dyslexia-friendly fonts.

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Theo Ndzengu: messenger and cleaner, East London Region, rolls out the 'No parking' sign in Oxford Street, East London in 1962 as the travelling library approaches for loading

www.westerncape.gov.za/library



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