

Redakteur / Editor
Grizell Azar-Luxton
Tel: (021) 483-2446

Subredakteur / Sub-editor
Janine de Villiers
Tel: (021) 483-2234

Grafiese Ontwerper / Fotograaf
Graphic Designer / Photographer
Monica Wagner

Administrasie en Advertensies
Administration and Advertising
Hennelie de Klerk

Tel: (021) 483-2483

Faks / Fax: (021) 419-7541

Webtuiste / Web site
www.westerncape.gov.za/library
E-pos / E-mail
capelib@pgwc.gov.za
grizell@iafrica.com

Adres / Address
Posbus 2108 Kaapstad, 8000
PO Box 2108 Cape Town, 8000
Geindekseer in / Indexed in LISA
(Library and Information Science Abstracts)
© Biblioteekdiens © Library Service
SA ISSN 0 008 5790

Reproduksie / Reproduction
Fotoplate (Pty) Ltd
Nyman Street, Maitland 7405

Drukker / Printer
Mills Litho
11th Avenue, Maitland 7405

Omslagontwerp / Cover design
Monica Wagner

Fotografie / Photography
Wayne Keet

Redaksionele beleid

Die **Kaapse Bibliotekaris** is die huisblad van die Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Biblioteekdiens en verskyn tweemaandeliks. Dit bevat artikels oor biblioteek- en inligtingwese, nuusberigte, resensies, aanwinstlyste asook praktiese artikels. Die redaksie behou hom die reg voor om, indien nodig, bydraes te redigeer, te verkort of te herskryf. Die publikasie van artikels wat nie in opdrag geskryf is nie, kan egter nie gewaarborg word nie. Die menings van medewerkers is nie noodwendig dié van die Biblioteekdiens nie. Alle kopie vir 'n bepaalde uitgawe moet die redaksie twee maande vooruit bereik. Artikels, briewe en nuusberigte kan direk aan die redakteur gestuur word.

Editorial policy

The **Cape Librarian** is the house journal of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service and is published bi-monthly. Articles in the field of library and information science, library administration, news items, reviews and accession lists are included. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit, shorten, or rewrite any copy should it be deemed necessary. We cannot guarantee that unsolicited copy supplied will be printed. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Library Service. Copy for a particular issue must reach the editor two months in advance. Articles, letters and news items should be submitted directly to the editor.

We are very excited to welcome as guest editor Elinor Sisulu, author of the award-winning biography of the Sisulu family, **Walter & Albertina Sisulu**, as well as the successful picture book, **The day Gogo went to vote**. To have her as part of our editorial team for this celebratory issue of the **Cape Librarian** of our country's ten years of democracy, is indeed a privilege.



Ons is baie opgewonde om Elinor Sisulu as ons gasredakteur van hierdie, ons spesiale 10 jaar van demokrasie herdenkingsuitgawe van die **Kaapse Bibliotekaris** aan u bekend te stel. Soos baie van ons lesers weet, is sy die outeur van die pryswennende biografie, **Walter & Albertina Sisulu**, asook die suksesvolle prentboek, **Die dag toe Gogo gaan stem** het, en ons is trots daarop om haar as deel van ons redaksionele span te verwelkom.

Grizell Azar-Luxton

GUEST EDITOR - ELINOR SISULU

As South Africa celebrates ten years of democracy and our society takes stock of the successes and failures of the past decade, it is only fitting that we reflect on what has happened in the book world. This issue of the **Cape Librarian** is a special one in that it does exactly that. Prominent actors in the book world share their thoughts on which books best reflect the momentous changes in South Africa during our first decade of democracy. The articles by Stefan Wehmeyer and Janine de Villiers look back on the past ten years in the library world and provides a comparison to the pre-1994 period. And the emergence of some exciting young South African writers is celebrated.

All I can add to this impressive collection of articles is a reflection on my own involvement in the book development world, a world into which I was drawn as a result of a children's story I wrote in 1994. I was so inspired by the spirit and determination of the elderly people who voted in South Africa's first democratic election that I wrote a story about a six-year-old girl accompanying her grandmother to the polling station. **The day Gogo went to vote** was snapped up by a major American trade publisher and published as a picture book in 1996. It was selected for the 1997 Notable Books Lists of the American Library Association, the International Reading Association and the Smithsonian Institute. Next came the Best Children's Book Award of the African Studies Association and the Jane Adams Award for books promoting peace and democracy. It also made it to the *Best Books* lists of a number of Education Districts in the United States (US). It was widely reviewed in major newspapers such as the **New York Times** and **Boston Globe**, and almost every major children's book review publication in America. The book still features on most primary school reading lists in the US and Canada.

Gogo was published in South Africa in 1997 by Tafelberg Publishers in six languages - Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Sepedi, Tswana and Afrikaans. After the overwhelming success of the book in the US, I had high expectations of how the book

would be received in South Africa. I thought that if Americans liked the book so much, South Africans would like it even more. I soon realised that this was not the case. Compared to the response in the US, the book caused barely a ripple in South Africa.

The sharp contrast between publishing a children's book in South Africa and in the US opened my eyes to a whole new world. I learned from Louise Steyn, my editor at Tafelberg, and from other children's book writers, that children's books in South African generally receive very little attention. Very few publications review children's books, and even when they do, they often ignore local books and authors. Our booksellers focus on imported books, and the major book stores stock very few South African books. I was especially disappointed by the sales of the African language editions of my book, and discovered that library services, major buyers of books in African languages, had suffered severe budget cuts, resulting in a dramatic drop in the sales of these books.

After long discussions with Louise Steyn about the problems of children's book publishing in South Africa, I became involved, at her recommendation, in the newly-established Centre for the Book. This had been set up to promote the development of writing and publishing in all South African languages, and to foster a culture of reading by promoting easy access to books for all South Africans.

As chairperson of the Advisory Board of the Centre for the Book and more recently, of the Book Development Council that oversees the donor-funded projects of the Centre, it has been gratifying to observe the establishment of projects such as *The First Words in Print* (FWIP). A unique project that produces storybooks in all South African languages for children in the 0-5 year-age-group, FWIP has grown from strength to strength and has delivered books to thousands of children in disadvantaged communities. The *First Words in Print* project provides children with a shared South African literary heritage. I am especially proud of the South

African Children's Literature Network, an e-mail discussion group formed after a successful symposium on children's literature organised by the Centre for the Book in March 2001. Since then, the Centre has established a Writer's Network, as well as a Community Publishing Project, which gets children and young people to write and publish their own stories.

It would be unfair of me to ramble on about Centre for the Book initiatives without acknowledging the contributions of organisations and institutions throughout the book world in South Africa. Since 1994, there certainly has been an increased awareness among various actors in the book chain in South Africa of their role in helping to develop a wider reading culture. The Print Industry Cluster Council, who comprise paper manufacturers, printers, publishers, booksellers and librarians, has become more organised. The establishment of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) has helped librarians discover a sense of common purpose and identity, and their achievements have been considerable. Non-governmental organisations such as READ and Biblionef have done amazing work in getting books distributed to disadvantaged communities. The South African chapter of IBBY (International Board for Books for Young People) has worked tirelessly to organise the biennial IBBY Congress in Cape Town in September this year. It is the first time that this international congress on children's literature is being held on the African continent, and it is most appropriate that this should happen during the tenth anniversary year of South Africa's democracy.

While we should all pat ourselves on the back for our many achievements during the past decade, we would not be honest if we did not also reflect soberly and seriously on the unfulfilled potential of the book development sector. The development of a distinct South African literary culture as part of the work of building a nation is certainly in keeping with President Thabo Mbeki's vision of an African renaissance. Our constitution also recognises the linguistic rights of all South Africans, and national language policies recommend access to literature and reading materials in the mother tongue. Despite a favourable policy environment, and the fact that much has been achieved in the past ten years, we still face similar problems in book development and publishing in South Africa to those found elsewhere in Africa. These include shortage of capital and skills, less than adequate marketing and distribution structures, low levels of literacy, and the lack of a reading culture.

...expenditure on libraries fell at precisely the moment when libraries, which in the Apartheid era had catered only for a small and privileged group, were expected to expand their services dramatically to cater for the broader population

In the course of my work with the Centre for the Book, I have often felt frustrated that the full potential of the Centre has not yet been realised, due to lack of resources and capacity. Because of lack of investment, many of our wonderful plans to promote a vibrant book

industry and library system simply cannot be brought to fruition. I sometimes wonder why it is that in a country in which both the President and the Minister of Education are confirmed bibliophiles, library budgets in real terms have actually fallen in this first decade of democracy. What is more, expenditure on libraries fell at precisely the moment when libraries, which in the Apartheid era had catered only for a small and privileged group, were expected to expand their services dramatically to cater for the broader population.

The Noma award-winning writer and acclaimed academic Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza wrote in his article, *The dynamics of book and library development in Anglophone Africa*: 'If books constitute an important part of the social and cultural capital of society, libraries are the banks where this capital is most productively invested for private and public use and profit.' If we follow Zeleza's argument that a vibrant book industry and library system are essential components of any nation-building project, the levels of investment in the library system in this country should be increased a hundred-fold, and librarians should feature among the highest paid and most valued workers.

I believe passionately in the need to lobby continuously for increased investment in the three I's - language, literature, and libraries. We need to demonstrate the employment creation potential of such an investment. We must develop a bold vision that will convince those who control the national purse-strings that South Africa has the potential to become a major player in global publishing. I will end by once again echoing Paul Zeleza, who articulates these issues more elegantly than I ever can: 'Clearly, books and libraries are not a developmental luxury but are essential, especially in our so-called information age where knowledge and information have acquired the materiality of capital and commodities, whose uneven accumulation dictates the wealth and poverty of countries, communities and classes.'