

## PEOPLE

### MENSE ABANTU

#### Who is our new promotion and publications librarian?



Renee Cohen has 18 years experience as a corporate librarian in special collections development - specifically in architectural libraries and office management. During this time she has met many individuals in

the commercial world and has built up a network of contacts and a style of communication which has made her effective and efficient in her working environment.

Renee has also spent time as library co-coordinator in a Further Education and Training (FET) college (False Bay College Westlake) and as librarian at a top private girl's school, Herschel Girls Senior School.

She enjoys working with people and takes pleasure in making a difference to those in need of assistance. She is also a mom of two children aged 10 and 11 and this is her second job when she goes home.

Her hobbies include an interest in health and homeopathic healing, a good book and a great movie. She also enjoys walking in the mountains.

*Welcome to the dan, Renee. We are confident that you'll add another dimension to this section. ED*

#### Beloved and admired librarian passes away

Vincenzo Serafin (commonly known as Vincent) Kolbe was born of an Italian father and a Cape Town mother and classified as 'coloured'. He will always be remembered for the promotion of libraries and literature amongst the coloured people.

As a young child living in the area, Vincent was my librarian at the Bonteheuwel Public Library from about 1966/7. In October 1976 I was appointed as a member of his staff.

The original Bonteheuwel Library was then a 2-bedroomed sub-economic City of Cape Town house, the building bricks of which were manufactured by my late father. The four square metre bathroom was the Reference Room with no private staff or work-room space until the new library was built

and opened in 1967. During the first few months of the new library opening Vincent hosted numerous local and overseas visitors - one photograph taken during this time is featured in the **Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa (SESA)**.

As Bonteheuwel Library was the biggest library in a then demarcated area for Coloured people, visitors such as State President, Jim Fouché, various mayors and other dignitaries were continuously hosted in the ensuing years.

He was very passionate about librarians establishing and promoting a culture of reading amongst what we today call our 'end-users'. Parents and educators were always encouraged to register themselves and their children as members of the library.

I can't remember Vincent ever being convinced of any reason or excuse to have a class visit or story-telling session cancelled or postponed. If the children could not come to the library the librarians would always go to the schools and nursery schools ... and so we established a bond between schools, the community and library staff, always striving for that common goal, that a child should read ... and read ... and read! The foundations were laid to establish a culture of reading as Vincent's staff relentlessly continued to serve 16 primary and three high schools in the Bonteheuwel area. As these young children grew older they also accepted the library as a place to debate and promote their ideas. At one stage he declared that 'forward we shall march' and that 'there was no turning back'. He obviously became a household name in the Bonteheuwel area.

He vehemently fought the notion that a child on the Cape Flats is not able to read the same book as a child from the previously whites-only Rondebosch and Atlantic Seaboard areas and was thus very passionate to encourage this reading culture to prove his point.

Sadly, there was always going to be opposition to his vision. He was a keen supporter (and also at times critic) of the vision of the then Head of the Children's Department of City Libraries, Lydia Pienaar, whose books, **Die kind en sy literatuur**, and **Die kind se literatuur** he regarded as valuable to children's librarians.

Vincent believed that a librarian should always be actively involved in acquiring books '... tend, fend and mend your books'. One can also understand why he would always seek to have multiple copies of children's books in an area serving so many schoolchildren. One copy of titles such as **Rooikappie en die wolf**, **The monkey and the crocodile**, **Where the wild things are**, **Die vet kat**, et cetera, would never be enough! He believed

that librarians should give 'the right book to the right child' and 'die kind kom eerste' (the child comes first). He would come down heavily on staff not giving a child proper reader's guidance. Later on other libraries on the Cape Flats and the then newly established Mitchells Plain areas endeavoured to create this reading culture by extending the outreach programmes that Vincent and his staff were so passionate about. We need to remember staff have always been redeployed or transferred on request ... and so the objectives would continue to be spread.

During the times of unrest (1976, 1980, 1985) Bonteheuwel Library was never vandalised. We believe it was because of the relationship between the community and the staff; because of the outreach programmes that Vincent was so passionate about. He fought to keep libraries open during times of unrest even when the Bonteheuwel Library

*Of interest:* Kolbe was born on 19 July 1933 in District Six. He travelled overseas on study grants, was interviewed on BBC and attended an international library conference in Chicago.

During the 1950s and into the '60s he was a vital part of Cape Town's multi-racial jazz scene. He was a cultural activist working with MAPP, an organisation that brought musical education and political awareness to township youth.

He was a founding member of the District Six Museum and in 2002 was awarded an honorary MA by the University of Cape Town.

<http://blogs.uct.ac.za>

<http://johnedwinmason.typepad.com>

*Sunday Times*

became a target of the state security forces. Other than closing the late-night shifts, they could not believe that the library was operating as normal. Young, untrained police constables or defence force servicemen would come into the library instructing us to close the library and go home. Vincent would defy these illogical instructions and his staff fully supported him.

He was a keen campaigner for the extended Mobile Library Service into areas where there were no library services. After working (amongst others), at the Hyman Lieberman (District Six), Kewtown and Bonteheuwel Libraries he moved on to Kensington Library and back to Bonteheuwel Library in the early 1980s during a time of intense school boycotts and unrest. Sadly, Vincent did not seem to have the energy or inclination to work under these conditions as he was near to his age of retirement. He then moved on

to Observatory Library. He became part of the District Six Museum after retiring from the Cape Town City Libraries Service.

Vincent's interest in communities also spread beyond the field of community libraries, as he was a keen sportsman and a very talented musician. The only problem that most of us had with him was that he thought he was in charge of us on the soccer field as well. We used to have him substituted early in the game during the social matches between staff. He 'repaid' us by not approving our leave easily or by changing our time-table to work an additional late night or by dumping on us a pile of books that suddenly had to be repaired or discarded. In those days we were open until 20:30 three times a week.

I will never forget how Vincent would play the piano with his back turned. Although I did not know him as a political activist he fully supported the struggle against apartheid.

His spirit of generosity and charity was beyond belief.

He was 'Googled' many years before the Internet was a reality. Vincent the mentor, story-teller, historian and to many a fatherly figure, was not always going to be around as an active librarian and musician. It was time for him to go ... and by all accounts before his death and at the time of his funeral he seemed to have made peace with his Creator.

So, Vincent, my friend and mentor, where there is no more sorrow, suffering and pain, keep telling those stories and let the music play.

Nick Fester  
Librarian, Mowbray Library

## BIBLIOTEKE

### LIBRARIES

### AMATHALA EENCWADI



▲ D'Almeida Biblioteek se personeel hou lesers goed ingelig met interessante en opvoedkundige uitstallings

## Ons vier Waterweek



▲ Waterweek is in Meulstraat Biblioteek in die Paarl gevier met 'n uitstalling deur die ingenieursafdeling van Paarl Munisipaliteit



▲ Tydens Biblioteekweek in Meulstraat Biblioteek het Frieda Marais 'n poppekasvertoning gehou

## Hartenbos Openbare Biblioteek

◀ Dis 'n heerlike lente' - 'n pragtige uitstalling in die voorportaal van **Hartenbos Biblioteek** wat deur Nadine Sydon opgestel is

▼ Die dames van **Hartenbos Biblioteek** het op Loslitdag op 3 September 2010 as 'Cowgirls' gaan werk. Agter (vlnr): Nadine Sydon en Pearl Lewis. Voor: Eldri van Dyk en Christa Booysen.



▲ Frieda Marais met twee van haar gewilde karaktertjies



## Paasfees by Meulstraat Biblioteek



▲ 'n Oulike uitstalling om Paasfees in die Paarl by Meulstraat Biblioteek te vier



### More soccer fun!

◀ Rosaline Coert, Jerome Fisher and Linde Davids getting into the soccer spirit at Mamre Library

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

### SKRYWERS EN BOEKE IINCWADI NABABHALI

#### Drum writer dies

Former **Drum** magazine and Durban-born author Professor Lewis Nkosi has died at the age of 73.

Professor Nkosi was born in Chesterville in December, 1936. According to the SA History Online web site he studied at various Durban schools before enrolling at the ML Sultan College. He moved to Johannesburg when he was 19 and became a journalist for Drum magazine in 1951.

He was forced into exile in 1960, and studied at Harvard University on a Nieman Fellowship. He lived in exile in Britain and Switzerland.

He became a literature professor and held university posts in the United States, Zambia and Poland.

Nkosi's first novel, **Mating Birds** (1986), earned him international acclaim, but was banned by the apartheid government. More recently, he wrote **Mandela's ego** (2006), which was shortlisted for the Sunday Times Fiction Prize.

In recognition of his contribution to South African literature, he was awarded the Order of Ikhamanga by then president Kgalema Motlanthe in October, 2008.

*Cape Times*



◀ Ronel September, Pam Baliso en Tanya Wiese was verantwoordelik vir hierdie treffende Biblioteekweekuitstalling in die Paarl



◀ En in die Junior biblioteek, Paarl Meulstraat is ook 'n Biblioteekweekuitstalling gehou



► Oktober is Kankermaand - steek 'n kankers aan. (Vnr): Ronell Bruère en Lee-Ann van Rooy by hulle treffende uitstalling in Langstraat Biblioteek

## LITERÊRE TOEKENNINGS

### LITERARY AWARDS AMABHASO WONCWADI

#### Groot Romanwedstryd-wenners

Die wenners van Tafelberg Uitgewers en Sanlam se Groot Romanwedstryd 2009 is onlangs aangekondig.

- Eerste prys: **Wals met Matilda** deur Dan Sleigh (R75 000)
- Tweede prys: **Die naamlose** deur Mariël le Roux
- Derde prys: **Dwaalpoort** deur Alexander Strachan.

Dan Sleigh se debuutroman, **Eilande**, het tien jaar gelede ook die eerste prys in hierdie wedstryd verower. Hy is daarna met nog vier literêre pryse bekroon: die RAU-, MNet-, WA Hofmeyr- en die Helgaard Steyn-pryse. Sy roman het ook groot sukses in Brittanje en Nederland behaal en in die VSA is dit in *Booklist* se toptien-lys opgeneem. **Eilande** is ook opgeneem in Peter Boxall se **1001 books you must read before you die** (2006).

Alexander Strachan was in 1990 die heel eerste wenner in dié kompetisie met sy roman **Die jakkalsjagter**. Hy wen R25 000 vir **Dwaalpoort**. Mariël le Roux wen R50 000 vir **Die naamlose**.

Die volgende boeke was, in alfabetiese volgorde, op die kortlys:

- **Die kaaimansblom** deur Morné Malan
- **Donker Messias** deur Chenél Pieterse-Boyle
- **Korban** deur Jacques Pretorius
- **Sewe dae by Silwer Streams** deur Barend Vos.

Die beoordelaars was Steward van Wyk (Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland), Tertia Koegelenberg (voorheen van Exclusive Books Brooklyn, nou by Graffiti Boeke) en die skrywer, Marita van der Vyver.

Die kompetisie het op 31 Desember 2009 gesluit en 105 inskrywings is ontvang.

*Die Burger*

#### Wenners van Woordveertjies

David Kramer is onlangs deur die ATKV op die Woordveertjietoekennings vereer; so ook die Vrystaatse digter, Gilbert Gibson, asook die romansier Eben Venter. Die Woordveertjies is vanjaar die derde keer

in samewerking met Sanlam aangebied. Altesame 15 Woordveertjies is toegeken om uitsonderlike prestasies met die Afrikaanse woord te vereer.

Kramer is vereer vir sy bydrae oor hoe hy die Suid-Afrikaanse en Afrikaanse kultuurlandskap onomkeerbaar verander en verryk het. Hy het tot dusver 21 CD's, 11 musiekblyspele en nege verhoogproduksies agter sy naam.

Die ATKV Prosa Prys is aan Eben Venter vir **Santa Gamka** toegeken. **Anderkant Pontenilo** van Irma Joubert het die Liefdesroman Prys gewen.

Gilbert Gibson het die Poësie Prys vir sy bundel **Oogensiklopedie** ontvang.

Elsa Winckler van Bettiesbaai wen die Romanses Prys met **Tussen Jazz en Rock**.

**Seisoen van Sonde** het aan Chris Karsten van Johannesburg die Spanningslektuur Prys besorg.

Die Dramateks Prys gaan aan die skrywer Willem Anker van Stellenbosch vir sy verhoogstuk, *Skrapnel*.

Die Woordwystoekening gaan vanjaar aan **Annerlike Afrikaans**. Anton Prinsloo is die samesteller.

Die ATKV se Kinderboektoekennings gaan aan:

- **Voorleeskategorie, 3-6 jaar: Aspris krokkedis**, Theresa van Baalen.
- **Reënboogfeetjie se spesiale dag**, Johann Strauss (illustreerder)
- **Selfleeskategorie, graad 1-3: Slym van die beker van geluk**, Fanie Viljoen
- **Selfleeskategorie, graad 4-5: Middernagfees**, Jaco Jacobs
- **Selfleeskategorie, graad 6-7: Perfek**, Jaco Jacobs
- **Selfleeskategorie, graad 8-10: Pandora se Boks**, Nelia Engelbrecht.

*Die Burger*

#### Breyten wen weer

Breyten Breytenbach word met sy bundel **Oorblyfsel/Voice over** die eerste digter wat 'n tweede keer met die Protea Prys vir Poësie bekroon word.

Hy het dié prys twee jaar gelede ook gewen met sy vorige bundel, **Die windvanger**.

**Oorblyfsel/Voice over** is 'n voortgesette gesprek, 'n soort tweegesprek, met die oorlede Palestynse digter Magmoed Darwiesj en sy werk.

Charl-Pierre Naudé, Gilbert Gibson, Antjie Krog en Loftus Marais is vorige wenners van die Protea Prys.

*Rapport*

#### Spanish author wins Nobel

Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa has been named the winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature. He is one of the Spanish-speaking world's most acclaimed authors and a former presidential candidate in his homeland.

Vargas Llosa has written more than 30 novels, plays and essays. In 1995 he won the Cervantes Prize, the most distinguished literary honour in Spanish.

The Swedish Academy said it honoured the 74-year-old for mapping the 'structures of power and (for) his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt and defeat. His books are often complex in composition, having different perspectives, different voices and a different time place. He is also sharing in a new way, he has helped evolve the art of the narration'.

Vargas Llosa is the first South American winner of the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature since Colombian Gabriel Garcia Marquez won it in 1982.

He burst on to the literary scene in 1963 with his groundbreaking debut novel **The time of the hero**, based on his experiences at a Peruvian military academy. The book won the Spanish Critics Award.

*Cape Times*

## MISCELLANY

### ALLERLEI IINCWADI EZAHLUKENEYO

#### Librarians - please help!

The Bookery - home of Equal Education's Book Drive - is looking for retired librarians or librarians with experience and time to spare, who would be prepared to help train those staffing the new libraries that Equal Education is providing to underprivileged schools. If you are able to help, please call Themba on 021 461-4189.

Having received publicity from their previous library openings, the staff at The

Bookery has received several requests from schools requiring libraries and they are following up to see what each school's exact requirements are.

In the meantime, volunteers are invited to pop in at The Bookery to help sort, label and cover books destined for underprivileged schools. Take a friend, it's fun.

The Bookery is at 20 Roeland Street, Cape Town and is open from 9:00 to 17:00, seven days a week. Call Cosmas at 021 461-4189.

*Cape Times*

## Police raid in Hillbrow

Gauteng Police have announced the discovery of an arms cache of 200 semi-automatic rifles with 250,000 rounds of ammunition, 10 anti-tank missiles, 4 grenade launchers, two tonnes of heroin, R80 million in forged South African banknotes and 25 trafficked Nigerian prostitutes, all in a block of flats behind the Hillbrow Public Library.

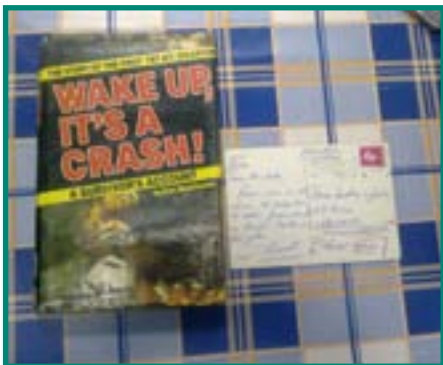
Local residents were stunned.

A community spokesman said: 'We're shocked. We never knew we had a library!'

## Interesting postcard

Recently a **Brackenfell Library** user, Mrs E Smith, was very excited to discover a library book, **Wake up, it's a crash** by Earl Moorhouse. It tells the story of Lufthansa Flight 540, which was a commercial Lufthansa Boeing 747-130, carrying 157 people (140 passengers and 17 crew members), operating the final segment of its Frankfurt-Nairobi-Johannesburg route. On 20 November 1974 it crashed and caught fire shortly after take off. This was

▼ *Seen here is the book about the crash and also the postcard on which the stamp is clearly visible that indicates that it survived the crash 36 years ago.*



the first ever crash involving a Boeing 747. Of the 157 people aboard, 59 perished (55 passengers and 4 crew members). On this flight was a postcard sent to the Smiths who at that time lived in Umtata. The postcard survived the crash and later found its way to the Smiths.

**Sunell Lötter**

*Principal Librarian, Brackenfell Library*

## Library on the move: Iziko Museums of Cape Town's Social History Library relocated

Iziko's Social History Library was closed to the public from 8 February 2010 while relocating from the South African Museum in Queen Victoria Street to the newly renovated Iziko Social History Centre (ISHC) at No 17 Church Square in the city centre. The library re-opened on 19 April 2010.

One of the three libraries of Iziko Museums of Cape Town, the Social History Library focuses on the history and people of Southern Africa, with a special interest in Cape Town and the Western Cape. The library provides access to a large collection of books and periodicals that cover topics such as history, popular culture, slavery, furniture, ceramics, textiles, decorative arts, historical paintings at the Cape, archaeology and architecture.

The Social History Library is not a lending library, though the public may make use of it for general reference and research, free of charge. The library is open on Mondays to Fridays between 10:00 and 16:00.

For more information or to book a time to visit, contact Thundeza Mafungwa or



Bandile Mbobo at: Tel: 021 461-3375 or e-mail: <tmafungwa@iziko.org.za>; <bmbobo@iziko.org.za>

## ON WRITING

### SKRYFGEDAGTES EZABABHALI

#### A brief word of advice

A friend is writing a novel and he wants advice. Sounds familiar? I suppose many librarians, teachers, anyone working at a publishing house will have heard this one. The problem is: anyone can use advice, especially writers. If not, they will never show any progress.

I walked into a book stall at the Cape Town Book Fair a while ago and opened the latest offering from a well-respected novelist. I did not like his previous book, because I believe it was pedantic and smothered with facts. Death by crushing - that was a method of execution in the old days: they piled rocks on you until you could not breathe anymore. Literally and figuratively, this can happen with books and readers, too. So I reluctantly opened this book and read a few lines, and it was, like, 200% better than I expected. Nice flow, direct prose in the present tense, lyrical phrasing... I was elated. Here was someone who is clearly getting better at his craft. Now I just hope he does not die on us before the next (hopefully even brighter) gem lands into our literary treasure chest.

Yes, everyone's a critic, I know... as long as you do not intend to wound. The best way of ensuring that is never to mention names, and to admit that you might not be any better at writing yourself. Then the author could filter the bile from the juice and learn something without just trying to beetle-brow everybody. Anyway, someone said that a genius is useless as a teacher. I believe that, and therefore I am willing to offer more than my condolences to aspiring authors. Like them, I am chiselling away in the hope of creating something worthwhile someday.



Of course, contrary to what most people think, writing a novel well does not mean that you are the epitome of writing. Essayists, short story authors, poets; all may be excellent at what they do, and work really hard at it, but somewhere along the line the misconception was born, like an unwanted child at a *Kalfiefee*, that the novel is the omega of literature. What utter nonsense! And not only the so-called masses believe this. I spoke with someone in publishing and she called anyone who is not (yet?) a novelist . . . a wannabe. So, even if you have been published 1000 times in any other genre, you are (still) a wannabe. I burned my tongue on my cappuccino, but refrained from showing the pain that wracked my body from tongue to toe.

But no matter how much this idea will be refuted, uprooted, upended or lampooned, it will not die. This is a fact, and we will live with it until doomsday, and probably after that. And with this gloomy image burning deep in my being I sat down and drew a few pebbles from the quarry of my own flimsy castles.

It went like this: in the title of your book, dear friend - why not use idiomatic expressions, or part of one, for a title? People may actually recognise the phrase, and they enjoy participating in the game. Just like political cartoons - if the cartoonist hints, very subtly, and the reader sees the light, that is the magical moment when the message hits home. Compliment the readers on their insight and invite them into the game, into the book. Then you open the stage and let the footlights shine on the first rrrriveting scene. 'Action' comes after the lights, not before, and cameras are banned - the readers are not really that brilliant; you need to hold their hands a bit until they are on that bridge and before they notice the rope around their ankles. Then. You. Push.

So the reader is hooked? No, no, nooo. This is only first gear. Now momentum must be secured, but as hills and valleys are encountered, other gears have to be utilised. And try to keep it smooth with the minimum of grinding and neck-jerking. Show, don't tell . . . drive, let the passenger look around. And

know where you are going. Do not dare to hope you will reach some destination before the petrol runs out.

A clear plot is essential, which necessitates good planning. Work out the ending - rather work backwards to the beginning if necessary - drifting around is indeed getting nowhere slowly, maybe ending up in a donga (read: pothole in South Africa). To find yourself in a dark place, even hoping that the light may be a train, is not *ayoba*. This is actually why it is best to write about things and places you know - if the milieu is well described, the reader will have faith in your guidance towards the ending and will not hop off before the destination is even in sight.

Does this make sense? Of course it does. Lots of things make sense, but that does not mean we actually feel compelled to execute them. At least not without a gun. And ultimately hitting someone's foot.

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Dr Francois Verster  
Correspondent

## Cape Librarian 40 YEARS AGO ...

Stefan Wehmeyer Deputy Director: Regions

- ▶ *Story hour at sea.* 'The SA *Elsies Rivier*, a big white ship with a long, silver funnel sailed out of Table Bay harbour bound for Europe. On board was a young man and a group of 60 smiling children.' Howard Eybers, children's librarian at *Elsies River Public Library* related how he livened up story hours by taking the kids on an imaginary trip to Europe.
- ▶ Die Kaapse Provinsiale Biblioteekdiens koop 'n reeks van 11 Pierneef-afdrukke aan. 'Hierdie kosbare afdrukke is van swart ebbehoutrame voorsien . . . en kan vir 'n beperkte tydperk en uitsluitend vir tentoonstellingsdoeleindes uitgeneem word.'
- ▶ *Bejaardes lees net so graag*, heet 'n artikel in die **KB**. Biblioteke kan dienste aan afgetredenes lewer deur by te dra tot 'n positiewe en gesonde houding teenoor die oudag en oues van dae. Inligting kan verskaf word aan dié wat binnekort aftree en vir dié wat reeds afgetree het. 'In die Bellville Biblioteek is onlangs 'n voor-aftreekursus aangebied.'
- ▶ Mrs Donna Kay Pantzer (yes, this was her surname) from City Libraries wrote an article about a new approach to readers' guidance. On the history of this subject she reported that, as early as 1885, the St Louis Public Library employed staff known as library hostesses, 'who gave a highly personal service'.
- ▶ Beurse in Biblioteekkunde is destyds deur die Kaapse Provinsiale Administrasie beskikbaar gestel aan voornemende studente aan die Universiteit van die Wes-Kaap. Met vandag se tekort aan bibliotekaris, het dit nie dalk tyd geword dat so iets weer ingestel word nie?
- ▶ Isn't the following news item sweet? It was reported that a Mr Uys who died in Johannesburg left R500 to the Swellendam Public Library with the proviso, however, that a shelf be erected for books written by people from Swellendam. I wonder if that shelf is still there?

