

3 of 12 2009

Contents

- *From the Editorial Team*
- *Council Has Stood the Test of Time*
- *2009 National and Provincial Elections*
- *VIPs to Receive Training on National Credit Act*
- *39th Biennial Conference – Book Now!*
- *South African Braille Writing Competition*
- *Preparing Students for O&M Training*
- *Disability Framework for Local Government Launched*
- *Boomroc and Voices - Audio Books*
- *On-demand Accessible Books*
- *Website offering Monthly Audio Magazines*
- *What's Happening?*
- *World Glaucoma Day*
- *Blind Killer's Appeal Denied*
- *Employment / Advancement Opportunities*
- *Imfama Magazine*
- *A Voice of Direction*
- *Casual Day Results*
- *Pioneer Distribution List*
- *Sport*
- *SARS Forms for Comment*
- *Bureau Tours*
- *Angela Davey*
- *Resource Centre*
- *Accessible Bibles*
- *New Lexmark Accessibility Solution*
- *The Seeing Machine*
- *Accommodation Available at Magaliespark*
- *Software to make a Cell Phone Camera more Accessible*

From the Editorial Team

We are in the home stretch in the lead-up to the 2009 National and Provincial elections, scheduled to take place on 22 April. Please see the section in this edition which focuses on the election and on your participation. We also enclosed details of the IEC's information booklet which is available in braille and large print from Council's offices.

Unfortunately we can not do much about the world-wide 'credit crunch', we are however, in the process of training people on the National Credit Act as part of a workshop taking place at Council.

[Back to contents](#)

Council Has Stood the Test of Time

The South African National Council for the Blind (Council) turned 80 years old on the 20th of March. From very humble beginnings in Cape Town in 1929, Council has developed into a mighty national organisation with its head office in Pretoria. Council covers all of the provinces in South Africa and attracts visitors from all over Africa and even beyond.

Council, which is an umbrella organisation that incorporates 95 organisations for and of blind people in South Africa, celebrated this momentous occasion – its 80th birthday - with a cake-cutting ceremony. The ceremony was led by Council's esteemed Chairperson, Judge Zak Yacoob – Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. In his address to the ceremony's guests, Judge Yacoob, who noted that Council's "work is more important than its celebrations", said however, that he enjoyed "the relaxed atmosphere and the simplicity of the function". He thanked everyone for their contributions on all levels during the past 80 years and especially thanked the blind and partially sighted people of South Africa because they "make Council's work worthwhile just by being there".

The event was attended by Council's Honorary President, Dr. William Rowland, as well as by members of Council's democratically elected National Executive Committee, representatives from the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness' Board and from Council's member organisations as well as many excited staff members. The event was rounded off by the release of 80 orange and black balloons.

[Back to contents](#)

2009 National and Provincial Elections

- ***Separate Ballot Papers for VIPs?***

SABC2 had announced on 29 March that there would be braille ballot papers available for VIPs to use in the 2009 elections.

According to information that is currently available to Council, this is not the case. Some of our staff as well as members of our NEC consulted the IEC about the voting process. The idea was to produce a template specifically for blind users' benefit - the print ballot would be placed inside the template. The template would contain some braille markings.

Template production was outsourced. The process involved asking for quotations from five organisations. Unfortunately Council could not provide a quote within the limited timeframe. The successful organisation has yet to be disclosed.

[Back to contents](#)

- **Information booklet**

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) produced an information booklet as part of their voter education campaign – funded by the Embassy of Japan. They had the booklet converted to both large print and braille formats. Copies of these booklets in both formats, have been supplied to Council.

The booklet covers topics such as:

- What is an election?
- Why should I vote?
- Who can vote?
- What are you voting for?
- How do I vote?
- Will there be special votes, etc.

Please contact Agnes at Council for your copy in either large print or braille on 012 4523811 / agnes@sancb.org.za.

[Back to contents](#)

- **The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)**

Visit the IEC's website for any information on the election at: www.elections.org.za

[Back to contents](#)

- **Special Voting Procedure**

For the upcoming National and Provincial Elections, the Electoral Act of 1998 makes provision for certain categories of voters who will not be at their voting station in the voting district in which they are registered on Election Day (22 April), to cast their vote on day(s) prior to the election date.

- **Who qualifies for a Special Vote?**

Special voting is prescribed by section 33 of the Electoral Act.

If one of these categories applies to you and you cannot vote at the voting station in the voting district in which you are registered on Election Day (22 April), you can apply for a special vote and vote before Election Day.

a) Physical infirmity, disability or pregnancy;

- 1) If due to physical infirmity, disability or pregnancy you are unable to vote at your voting station in the voting district where you are registered on Election Day (22 April), you can apply for a special vote and if it is approved, you will be visited at the place where you are confined due to your condition.

For more information on special votes, visit:

www.elections.org.za/Voting_SpecialVoting.asp

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Parties participating in this year's election***

Please note that this list is sorted alphabetically, and that the parties will not appear in this order on the official ballot paper.

Click on the name of a party below to download the party's list of candidates in PDF format, or click on the website address next to the name to view their manifesto.

You can also visit www.polity.org.za/page/elections-page and view all the parties from there.

- A Party – <http://aparty.org.za/home/the-a-party-manifestowhat-we-stand-for.php>
- Africa Muslim Party - www.africamuslimparty.org/Index_files/Page472.htm
- African Christian Alliance – www.acaparty.org.za/ (homepage – no manifesto available online)
- African Christian Democratic - www.acdp.org.za/ACDP2009Manifesto.pdf
- African Independent Congress – No website or manifesto available.
- African National Congress - www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=elections/2009/manifesto/policy_framework.html&title=2009+Election+Manifesto
- African People's Convention – www.theapc.org.za/
- Al Jamah-Ah - www.aljama.co.za/uploads/downloads/Media_Pack_Manifesto_%202009.pdf
- Alliance of Free Democrats - www.afd.org.za/docs_speeches/AFD%20ELECTION%20MANIFESTO.doc
- Azanaian People's Organisation – No website or manifesto available.
- Black Consciousness Party – No website or manifesto available
- Cape Party www.capeparty.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=9
- Christian Party – www.cp.org.za/index.php
- Christian Democratic Alliance – www.cda.org.za/elections.html
- Congress of the People - www.congressofthepeople.org.za/documents/cope_manifesto.pdf
- Democratic Alliance – www.da.org.za/campaigns.htm?action=view-page&category=6329&sub-page=6330
- Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa – No website or manifesto available
- Great Kongress of South Africa – No website or manifesto available
- Independent Democrats - www.id.org.za/acl_users/credentials_cookie_auth/login_form?came_from=http%3A//www.id.org.za/policies/2009-id-manifesto/folder_summary_view
- Inkatha Freedom Party – www.ifp.org.za/
- Keep it Straight and Simple – No website or manifesto available
- Minority Front – www.mf.org.za/site/MF/Manifesto
- Movement Democratic Party – No website or manifesto available

- National Alliance – www.nationalalliance.co.za/policy.asp
- National Democratic Convention – Website still under construction
- National Party South Africa - www.nationalparty.co.za/manifesto%202009.htm
- New Vision Party – Website still under construction
- Pan Africanist Congress of Azania – www.pac.org.za/2009-Election-Manifesto.pdf
- Pan Africanist Movement – www.pam.org.za/docs/PAM-Manifesto.doc
- Peace and Justice Congress – www.pjcongress.co.za/
- Sindawonye Progressive Party – No website or manifesto available
- South African Democratic Congress – No website or manifesto available
- South African Political Party – No website or manifesto available
- United Christian Democratic Party – www.ucdp.org.za/manifesto.htm
- United Democratic Movement – www.udm.org.za/
- United Independent Front – www.unitedindependentfront.co.za/
- Universal Party – No website or manifesto available
- VryheidsFront Plus – www.vryheidsfront.co.za/a/index.asp
- Women Forward – www.wf.co.za/site/awdep.asp?depnun=29469
- Ximoko Party – No website or manifesto available

To download the full candidate list (for all parties) in Excel, visit: www.elections.org.za/Candidate%20Lists%20per%20Party.xls

Unfortunately none of the lists state whether the candidates have a disability or not.

[Back to contents](#)

VIPs to Receive Training on National Credit Act

The National Credit Regulator (NCR) is presenting a programme to alert visually impaired people to the importance of the National Credit Act (NCA). The regulator is funding the joint Train-the-Trainer Programme, which is led by Council.

The first session of the programme, which included 20 visually impaired people, was held in Pretoria on 25 and 26 March. The second phase of the programme will be about training identified visually impaired people in debt counselling in order to enable them to service their constituencies and the general public. This will take place on 30 and 31 March.

The training will focus on the Act and the roles and responsibilities of the regulator, a body which was formed to regulate the Act. The NCR has undertaken the responsibility of managing the implementation of the first phase of the project while Council will make their training facilities and equipment available for an effective and efficient training environment.

According to Mr. Setou, Senior Manager: Education and Strategy at the NCR, this is the first project for visually impaired people in South Africa that is tailor made for personal finance management and debt counselling services.

The Act which was signed into law on 15 March 2006 is aimed at regulating the credit granting industry, curbing reckless lending and ensuring that consumers are protected from harmful business practices by lenders.

Transactions that fall under the Act include loans and other credit from banks, including mortgages, overdrafts, credit cards, vehicle finance and any other personal finance; furniture finance, clothing accounts, any other type of credit from retailers; micro-loans, pawn transactions and any other type of credit or loan provided to a consumer.

Source: BuaNews 20/3/2009

[Back to contents](#)

39th Biennial Conference – Book Now!

Council's 39th Biennial Conference will take place from 12 to 16 October 2009 at Mmabatho in the North West Province. It is time to make your booking!

Reduced rates have been negotiated at the following three venues in Mmabatho. Please make your bookings directly through these establishments, making reference to the SANCB block booking. In view of Mmabatho being a very popular conference venue for North-West provincial government departments, the special rates and block booking can only be held until the end of April - so please book early!

- Tusk Mmabatho Hotel: Contact Person: Seipati Mocumi, Sales Executive on phone: 018 389-1826, fax: 018 389-1746 or e-mail: mmabsales@tusk-resorts.co.za
- Mmabatho Hotel School (adjacent to the Walmont Mmabatho Palms Hotel): Contact: Angie Basiele, Reservations Manager on phone: 018 386-2222 extension 129, fax: 018 386-2858 or e-mail: abasiel@nwptb.co.za
- Garden View Guest Lodge: Contact: Rina or Elmarie on phone: 018 381-4076 or fax: 018 381-3110

[Back to contents](#)

South African Braille Writing Competition

This is your last chance!

The South African Library for the Blind (Blindlib) and Blind SA, with the support of the South African National Council for the Blind, launched a national braille writing competition for visually impaired persons to commemorate international celebrations of the Louis Braille Bicentenary, which takes place throughout this year.

- **Closing date:**
30 April 2009.

- **Competition theme:**

Writers who wish to enter the competition, should compile an essay addressing the theme: "My Brailliant Life / My Braillejante Lewe / Ubomi bam be Braille obungumangaliso". This theme focuses on the importance of braille in peoples' lives and how they interact with the world as a whole - through braille.

- **Essay format:**

Each contributing essay should be between 200 and 500 words, and should be submitted in braille - either produced on a Perkins Braille or using a slate and stylus. Entries will be accepted in either unified or non-unified braille code and in any of the 11 official South African languages. Entries for Primary school learners may be submitted in contracted or uncontracted braille. All submissions in the other categories should be submitted in contracted braille only.

- **Competition categories:**

The competition will be divided into four categories:

- 1. Primary school learners (Grades 1-7);
- 2. Secondary school learners (Grades 8-12);
- 3. Open/Adults;
- 4. Professional braille Workers (braillists and proofreaders).

- **Competition prizes:**

- Primary school: R1 000;
- Secondary school: R2 000;
- Open and Professional braille Workers: R5 000 each.

- **Contact:**

For a copy of competition rules and an entry form, or for general enquiries, please contact Christo de Klerk on christod@absa.co.za / 011 350-8132

[Back to contents](#)

Preparing Students for O&M Training

It is general knowledge that there is a huge shortage of Orientation & Mobility (O&M) practitioners in South Africa. This has a negative impact on the lives of many visually impaired persons (VIPs) as their potential for independence is never fully developed.

Council is currently preparing 15 young persons, newly out of school, to start working in this field. The six week long course will prepare them to work as field-workers in Mpumalanga until they enrol at the SA Guide Dog Association for the Blind next year to start their formal O&M training.

We wish these students well and look forward to the difference they will make in many people's lives.

[Back to contents](#)

Disability Framework for Local Government Launched

Government has developed a framework outlining specific measures that Local Government can take to include people with disabilities into its workforce so that they can actively participate in service delivery.

The Disability Framework for Local Government was launched by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government Sicele Shiceka, along with the Minister in the Presidency Manto Tshabalala-Msimang and Chairperson of South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Amos Masondo, in Pretoria on 17 March.

Speaking at the launch, Chairperson of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Amos Masondo, said the framework would set guidelines for all spheres of government to take into account the interests and needs of the disabled. "Our aim is to help ensure the championing of disability rights and create and empower persons with disabilities. We also seek to help mainstream disability in all activities and programmes in local governments and in municipalities," Mr Masondo said.

The framework, during its implementation, will ensure that at least two percent of staff positions, including middle and senior management in Local Government, are allocated to qualified people with disabilities by March 2010.

The National Disability Policy, which will enhance programmes and frameworks intended to aid the disabled, has been drafted and will be taken to Cabinet.

Source: BuaNews 17/3/2009

[Back to contents](#)

Boomroc and Voices - Audio Books

Boomroc Productions, in conjunction with Voices, is converting books into audio format for the visually impaired community. Almost any book can be converted. This is how it works:

If you want Jake White's book converted into audio format, you can send the printed copy of the book to Boomroc Productions and they will do the rest (get all permissions, a reader, etc). When the process is completed, they send you the printed copy of the book back, together with the audio book. This whole service will cost you only R175 per book.

If you want a specific book, but you don't have the printed copy, you can just contact them and supply them with the necessary information. The service will cost the same, except that the cost of the original book will be added – if you would like to keep the printed copy.

The R175 is basically an administration fee and postage back to you. They also send a copy of the book to both Pioneer School and SA Library for the Blind.

For more information or to make use of this service, contact: Boomroc Productions on 072 691-9223 / 023 347-2785 / boomroc@vodamail.co.za

[Back to contents](#)

On-demand Accessible Books

The Australian based internet bookshop, Read How You Want, offers a wide selection of on-demand, optimised alternative format books. Each edition has been optimised for maximum readability, using their patent-pending conversion technology.

Their goals are:

- to make reading easy and enjoyable by delivering formats that suit the reader and
- to give people with reading difficulties access to books in the formats of their choice - at an affordable price, and as soon as the book is published.

From April, visually impaired readers will be offered the first chapters of bestsellers for free from Read How You Want. The chapters will be available from the website of accessible technology leaders HumanWare, who are partners in the project: www.humanware.com/en-united_kingdom/home .

Or visit www.readhowyouwant.com/ for more information and ordering details.

[Back to contents](#)

Website offering Monthly Audio Magazines

Visit www.airsla.org/ for audio versions of various publications.

For periodicals, visit the page: www.airsla.org/cat_periodicals.asp, where they have links to publications like National Geographic, Readers Digest, People Magazine, Popular Mechanics and the like.

You can also find links to specific articles on these pages where you can download the .mp3 file and listen to it.

[Back to contents](#)

What's Happening?

- ***NEC Meeting***

Council's National Executive Committee Meeting will take place from 15-17 April, at Council's premises. During this meeting as well as the sub-committee meetings, important governance issues will be discussed.

[Back to contents](#)

- **Rotary Pioneer Rally**

The third Rotary Pioneer Rally will be held on Saturday, April 18. It promises to be a huge success, with 40 celebrities already having confirmed their attendance.

The organisers said that the crews of two television programmes, Fiesta and Kwêla, will also be at this year's fundraising function.

[Back to contents](#)

- **VIP Workshop at Wits**

Wits is inviting you to the '2009 Visually Impaired workshop' on 7 and 8 May 2009 with the theme: Road Map to success for the child with Visual Impairment

The cost for attending this workshop is R300 per person for the whole conference or R50 per session. The venue is the Children's Memorial Institute (Old TMI) - corner of Gate 13 Joubert Street Ext. & Empire Road, Braamfontein.

Please contact Nerina Nel, CDC Manager, for any enquiries 011 643 3050 /082 638 3269 / nerina.nel@wits.ac.za

[Back to contents](#)

- **Techshare 2009**

Work is now well underway in preparing for Techshare 2009 at ExCeL in London from 16-18 September 2009. Diarise this expo so that you can enjoy this excellent opportunity to learn about developments and innovations in digital assistive technology.

Call for papers now open: you can get involved in the expo by shaping the content of the event through a submission of an abstract outlining your work, research or activities – which, if chosen, will be presented to the international audience at Techshare 2009. You can download the call for papers' guidance and submission form from:

www.rnib.org.uk/tscallforpapers

For more information, contact techshare@rnib.org.uk

[Back to contents](#)

- **Movie night**

As reported in previous I-Opener editions, Jacob Kruger is arranging a movie night for VIPs. This will take place on 25 April from 2 pm 'till late, in Kempton Park. Jacob will be playing a few movie soundtracks with descriptive narration (which forms part of the normal soundtrack) before the movies begin. Sighted people are also welcome, but will have to wear blindfolds so they can be sensitised to the VIPs' experience.

VIPs will be getting dinner free of charge, but will have to pay for their drinks. Sighted guests will be paying a flat rate of R150 which will include

the costs of their dinner, and compulsory blindfold (to be used in some fun sensitisation exercises), but they will also have to cover the cost of their drinks.

The venue, called Antheo's, is situated just off the R25 in Kempton Park, so it's relatively easy to find, but should you need directions or GPS coordinates, you can ask Jacob on webmaster@blindza.co.za or visit www.blindza.co.za/movienight.htm

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Higher Ground's First Gauteng Camp***

By now I'm sure most I-Opener readers are familiar with the Higher Ground camps. Higher Ground is a fun weekend camp, arranged especially for people with disabilities. The first Gauteng camp for VIPs will take place from 8 to 10 May at Hekpoort.

Cost is R600 per person for 2 nights and 3 days - 3 meals per day and all activities are included.

Visit www.higherground.org.za and click on the link 'Gauteng Camp 2009' to fill in the online booking form or for further information and booking forms please contact Emma on 072 039 0907 / HigherGroundSA@gmail.com

[Back to contents](#)

World Glaucoma Day

The first tour by the Vodacom Foundation Mobile Eye Care Unit took place at Mamelodi Hospital from 12 to 15 March as part of the World Glaucoma Day Celebrations (on 12 March) in conjunction with Prof. Polla Roux and his team of ophthalmologists from the University of Pretoria.

The following services were offered:

- Screening Clinic: Assessment of eye conditions, refraction and correction of refractive errors as well as treatment of other eye conditions i.e. glaucoma and admission of clients suffering from cataract.
- Pre-operative preparations of identified cataract clients.
- Surgical procedures
- Post operative review and discharge

[Back to contents](#)

Blind Killer's Appeal Denied

A Texas court Wednesday 18 March denied an appeal by a death row inmate who ripped out his remaining eye and ate it, saying he is "clearly crazy", but legally "sane."

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals turned down all 44 claims that Andre Thomas made in his bid to avoid the death penalty. Judge Cathy Cochran wrote in a 14-page opinion that Thomas, who removed and ate his own eye several months ago, "is clearly 'crazy,' but that he is also 'sane' under Texas law."

No date has been set for the execution of the 26 year-old Sherman man for killing his estranged wife's 13-month-old daughter five years ago. His wife and their 4-year-old son also were murdered in the same attack. They were all stabbed and had their hearts ripped out, authorities said.

Source: United Press International, Inc.

[Back to contents](#)

Employment / Advancement Opportunities

- ***Agency looking for candidates***

Samantha Venter, who works at a recruitment consultancy, is looking to expand their company's recruitment and placement service by including more people with disabilities in their database.

If you are interested in being placed on this database for potential job opportunities, please contact Samantha on 082 379-0347 / samanthav@jhb.lr.co.za .

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Operations Manager – Mamelani Projects***

Mamelani Projects is a registered non-profit organisation working in the areas of Community Based Health Education and Youth Development. They are looking for an Operations Manager who will provide programme and administrative support to the organisation.

- **Qualifications, experience and skills required:**

- Experience and skills in fields of financial management, project management and fundraising;
 - Experience in developing and mentoring staff;
 - Working experience within the NGO sector;
 - Excellent communication skills and proficiency in Microsoft Office computer programmes such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
 - Proficiency in English and fluency in one other official South African language;
 - A bachelor's degree would be advantageous.

Send your CV to carly@mamelani.org.za

Deadline: 17 April

[Back to contents](#)

- **Blind and Visually Impaired Rights Adviser**

Based in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

The Progressio development worker (DW), working as a Visually Impaired Rights Adviser, will work alongside a local NGO – Doses of Hope - Somaliland Braille centre. The DW will also assist in teaching Braille and in overcoming barriers that prevent the visually impaired from being active and creative members of the community, through giving access to information, rehabilitation and other support services.

- **Qualifications, skills and experience:**

- A degree level qualification or equivalent diploma in a relevant discipline;
- A minimum of three years' work experience in organisations / institutions for visually impaired persons, that deal with visually impaired rights and advocacy;
- Proven experience in designing, implementing and monitoring advocacy programmes / initiatives;
- Experience in capacity building within the NGO/CBO (capacity building organisation) sector;
- Experience in training / facilitation methodologies and in direct training ability as well as in campaigning, community mobilisation and networking;
- Good team building skills and a consensus led approach to work;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills;
- Ability to plan and implement your own work;
- Willingness to undertake road travel in Somaliland;
- Somali language skills, and cultural sensitivity in an Islamic/Somali environment are also essential;
- Working experience in a resource poor environment; previous experience in the Somali context; understanding of the issues facing a post-conflict society are highly desirable.

For further information and an application form visit:

www.progressio.org.uk/jobs

Closing date: 14 April

[Back to contents](#)

- **Training at Braille Without Borders**

The International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs is a NPO educational training centre for blind and partially sighted adults who have a desire to foster social change in their communities and throughout the world. Located in Kerala, India, this eleven-month training course founded by Braille Without Borders, offers full scholarships and transport to qualified, motivated candidates.

The course covers business management, communication, project and financial planning, open source computer technology, English, public speaking, and fundraising, among other subjects.

The institute is now accepting applications for the course beginning

January, 2010. Candidates from all over the world who are at least eighteen and older and who can read and write English are invited to apply for this one-year program before the 30th of June.

For more information please visit: www.bwb-iise.org or write to BrailleWB@gmx.net

[Back to contents](#)

Imfama Magazine

The first edition of Imfama for 2009 is due to be distributed soon. This highly respected magazine/journal is produced by Council three times a year and is available in the following formats:

- Full colour print
- Braille
- Electronically
- Audio (on tape) – converted by Tape Aids for the Blind
- Daisy format – converted by SA Library for the Blind

Should you wish to receive this free publication, please write to Stacey at Council: stacey@sancb.org.za and state clearly which format you request and the appropriate address for delivery (postal address for print, braille, tape and Daisy and email address for electronic format).

[Back to contents](#)

A Voice of Direction

The technology of Step-Hear can pave the way to increasing the independence of VIPs. This product aims to supply the VIP with information on the location of objects such as lifts, shops and so forth, when in a strange environment. It was developed by engineers who specialise in special needs technologies and it is an information and navigation reference point system consisting of two components: the base unit and the activator.

The base unit is installed in key locations like public buildings, shopping centres and hospitals and contains pre-recorded information. The activator is a much smaller device that is owned by individual people and resembles a remote control. A user in possession of a Step-Hear activator will be alerted that a Step-Hear base unit is nearby, by both a vibration and beeping sound from the activator. When the user presses the button of the activator, the base unit's pre-recorded information will be played from the activator, for the user's benefit.

Source: www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enDispWho=Articles%5E12499&enPage=BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=object&enVersion=0&enZone=Health

[Back to contents](#)

Casual Day Results

The results are out for Casual Day 2008 - and once again, the blindness sector benefited substantially.

In the blindness sector congratulations goes to several member organisations:

- The most successful beneficiary in the sale of stickers in the Free State was the Free State Society for the Blind who sold 1839 stickers;
- The welfare Organisation that sold the most golf shirts was Tshilidzini Special School which sold 2026 golf shirts;
- The welfare Organisation that sold the most caps was also Tshilidzini Special School which sold 1200 caps;
- The highest number of stickers sold by an NGO was also Tshilidzini Special School which sold 42 505 stickers!
- Tshilidzini Special School also awarded special school-prizes to individuals who contributed the most to the project.

All Council's member organisations are urged to participate in Casual Day 2009 (it will take place on 4 September) - for every sticker sold by your organisation, you get to keep a percentage of the profit.

For more information, please contact korky@sancb.org.za or casualday@mweb.co.za

[Back to contents](#)

Pioneer Distribution List

NAP recently created a distribution list for current and old Pioneer School pupils to stay in touch and discuss issues of mutual interest.

To subscribe, go to the following URL with your web browser and fill out the information: <http://lists.napsa.org.za/mailman/listinfo/pioneers>

You can also subscribe through email, by sending a message with the word 'subscribe' in the subject field to: pioneers-request@napsa.org.za

[Back to contents](#)

Sport

- ***SA's blind Ironman is on a mission***

As reported in previous editions of I-Opener, Francois Jacobs was the first blind man to complete the South African Ironman competition in April last year. He also completed the Australian Ironman competition at the end of last year.

This coming weekend he will be doing it again. This time he aims to provide assistance to Farhana Moosa who suffers from AS (Ankylosing Spondylitis). AS is a form of arthritis that can result in paralysis if untreated, but the treatment is expensive. That is why Francois has

pledged to do the Ironman again this year - to raise money for Farhana's medical treatment. This extraordinary blind athlete wants to give the lady with the sore bones the opportunity to keep on running after her three children – an ability that most parents take for granted.

Francois and Farhana both work at Momentum where all the staff members have been asked to sponsor Francois or donate money towards this venture.

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Goalball Tournament at Zimeleni Special School in Katlehong***

The teams participating at this event were:

- Gauteng North;
- Filadelfia School;
- Optima;
- Ga-Rankuwa;
- Univen;
- Katlehong.

With the exception of Gauteng North, all teams had both male and female teams participating in the tournament.

- **Results:**

- Team Gauteng North won in the male team category, beating Ga-Rankuwa in the finals.
- The winner for the female category was Optima - defeating Univen in the finals.

I-Opener congratulates the winning teams, especially our own Optima ladies!

[Back to contents](#)

- ***SASAPD Nominees***

The nominees for the Executive Committee who are listed below, can be voted for at the SASAPD Annual General Meeting on 5 April:

- **President**

- Koos Engelbrecht
- Isaac Shadung

- **Vice-President**

- Isaac Shadung
- Sharief Gamiet

- **Treasurer**

- Bennie Dorfling

- **Executive Members**

- Sharief Gamiet
- Mbulaheni Festus Maluma
- Heloise Visser
- Kobus Marais
- Isaac Shadung
- Abraham A. Mouton
- Christina Saunders
- Elroy Swart

- **Sports Convenors**

- Dion Bishop
- Zelda Hansen
- Ernesta Strydom

- **Athlete Representative**

- Natalie du Toit
- Scott Field

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Blind Navigators Rally Club***

The blind navigators rallies are still taking place and they are constantly looking for new navigators, who must be able to read English Grade 2 braille. You are welcome to go along on a rally as a passenger for the first event to see how it works.

- **Confirmed dates for events in 2009:**

- 10 May - Timken Lotus Classic Rally;
- 31 May - The High Five Road Rally;
- 12 July - Icicle Rally;
- 16 August - Forkman Classic Rally;
- 13 September - Western Cape;
- 11 October - Spirex Rallyesport Classic Rally;
- 8 November - Sarra Rally.

For any enquiries, contact: Susan Webber on 0126753102 / 0824922004 / Susan.Webber@Momentum.co.za.

[Back to contents](#)

- ***Blind climbers challenge Mount Kilimanjaro***

On 18 March at 07:30 South African time, 24 members of the team of 25 High Sight Expeditioners stood at the summit of Kilimanjaro - Uhuru Peak, the Highest Mountain in Africa, the largest volcano. In doing so, they broke the record of having 7 non sighted climbers at the summit.

Rusty, the 8th non-sighted climber, had to turn back at Gilmans Point; a brilliant achievement in itself as the pull up to Gilmans is long and arduous.

So, every climber will come home with a certificate in their bags, proving that anything is possible in life if you just put your mind to it.

Congratulations from the I-Opener Team to all the climbers and the guides on the team.

For more information, visit:

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=18551688148#/event.php?eid=73057032104 or www.nomadicadventures.co.za/High_Sight_Expedition.html

[Back to contents](#)

SARS Forms for Comment

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) has called on taxpayers and practitioners to comment and give feedback on the draft versions of all income tax forms for the 2009 Tax Season.

"The forms have been updated and improved as part of the ongoing work to simplify the income tax process and taking into account feedback received and lessons learned during Tax Season 2008" SARS said.

On the Income Tax Return for Individuals (ITR12), SARS said improvements include combining and simplifying the farming and business income sections, adding additional verification information under banking details for security purposes and introducing a new medical aid code (4040).

This code, it said, will distinguish between contributions made via an employer (code 4005) and those contributions not reflected on an IRP5.

SARS also encouraged practitioners and taxpayers to access the draft forms and comment via the SARS website at www.sars.gov.za.

This year the deadlines for submission of income tax returns for individuals and trusts are 18 September for manual filers and 20 November for electronic submission.

"SARS is hoping that Tax Season 2009 will build on the gains of the past two years which have shown an impressive switch to electronic submission of returns and the resultant improvements in efficiency for taxpayers, practitioners and SARS."

Last year, over 86 percent of all returns submitted during Tax Season 2008 were done via either the SARS eFiling system or electronically at the SARS branches.

Source: [BuaNews 10/3/2009](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Bureau Tours

You can have your eyes screened by one of our mobile Eye Care Division surgery units when they visit the following towns/areas in April. People who experience eye problems, vision difficulties, eye pain, infections and inflammation can report to Council staff from 08:00am on the screening days. People with blindness-causing conditions will be seen by an eye specialist and a sight-restoring operation may be performed. Spectacles are also available.

- **Order of St Johns Team**

16 April ,Donald Fraser Hospital – Limpopo

23 April, Nkhensani Hospital- Limpopo

For further information, contact team leader Alfred Mekwa on 082 337-1422.

- **Lions International Team**

20 – 24 April, Botshabelo Hospital– Free State – operations only!

For further information, contact team leader Jona Rampudu on 082 291-9014

- **Life Health Team**

16 April, Settlers Hospital, Grahamstown – Eastern Cape

23 April, Victoria Hospital, Fort Beaufort – Eastern Cape

For further information, contact team leader Grace Sithole on 073 751-4329

- **Vodacom Team**

16 April, Tonga Hospital - Mpumalanga

23 April, Bethal Hospital– Mpumalanga

For further information, contact team leader Samuel Mulovhedzi on 083 442-0328

[Back to contents](#)

Angela Davey

On Sunday 22 March an icon and very special person, Angela Davey, passed away peacefully. Since the 1980's, when she developed low vision, Angela began lasting relationships with Council, Retina SA and Tape Aids for the Blind.

After being diagnosed with macular degeneration, Angela became extremely creative in coping with her visual impairment - from getting rid of any excess clutter at her home, to attending a course at Optima College.

Coming from a paramedical background herself, she was very knowledgeable on her condition and gave strength and advice to other people diagnosed with macular degeneration, should they have crossed her path. Her tenacity and determination only recently slowed down as her health deteriorated. Angela's life was a long and full one, and she will be missed by all who came in contact

with her. I-Opener and the rest of Council's staff extend our condolences to her son and extended family.

[Back to contents](#)

Resource Centre

Please note that the Resource Centre will be closed on 31 March, due to the financial year-end stock take. Hopefully it will re-open on the 1April.

In these tough financial circumstances, you can still count your riches after purchasing the following assistive devices:

- Money template @ only R15 – this locally manufactured ingenious metal 'stick' allows you to measure notes so that you can determine the note's denomination.
- Abacus @ R120 – the abacus has been around for thousands of years and is still very popular.
- Talking and low vision calculators ranging from R105 to R135 – no brainpower needed.

For orders or enquiries, contact Martie at Council's Resource Centre:
resource@sancb.org.za / 012 452-3811.

[Back to contents](#)

Accessible Bibles

A wide variety of accessible Bibles are available from the Bible Society, in braille, audio (CD), MP3 and large print formats. The English bibles are available in King James, Good News and NIV editions. Bibles are also available in most of the indigenous languages. In some African languages only parts of the braille Bibles are available due to a lack of demand for these languages, so please enquire about your preference.

The Afrikaans 1953 and 1983 versions which are now available in MP3 format include the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs books as one item.

The Bible Society, in conjunction with Pioneer Printers, is investigating the possibility of translating the Bible into Daisy format as well.

Contact the Bible Society on: 021 421-2024 / 011 970-4010 /
corne.metcalfe@onthedot.co.za

Aurora Ministries (in the USA) distributes the English MP3 format Bible free of charge to South Africa.

Visit: http://audiobiblesfortheblind.org/Get_Started/Recipients.html for more information.

[Back to contents](#)

New Lexmark Accessibility Solution

Lexmark International has announced a new application designed to make many of their printers easier to use for visually impaired persons. The Lexmark Accessibility Solution focuses on the Lexington printer maker's multifunction printers, which print, scan, copy and sometimes fax.

With the new software, people can do all the things they normally would do on the printer's touch screen panel on their computers. The printer software works with a number of computer accessibility products such as GW Micro's Window-Eyes, etc. Lexmark said.

"This new application from Lexmark will help to level the playing field for low-vision and no-vision individuals," Jenny Tyree, vocational rehabilitation administrator for the Kentucky Office for the Blind, said in a statement. "In the past, visually impaired workers have been unable to be competitive when seeking jobs that require the use of general office equipment."

For more information on the software, visit www.lexmark.com/accessibility.
Source: www.kentucky.com

[Back to contents](#)

The Seeing Machine

During a trip to the optometrist 20 years ago, Elizabeth Goldring was inspired to create a "seeing machine" for visually impaired people. That was when Goldring, who is partially sighted herself, first encountered a Scanning Laser Ophthalmoscope (SLO).

The SLO is a tool that uses an infrared laser to shine an image onto the retina, bypassing haemorrhages and other defects within the eye. The patient reports when he is able to see the image, allowing the examiner to identify areas of healthy and unhealthy retinal cells. During the test, her damaged eyes could clearly read words. "I had to have one of those machines", says Goldring, now a senior fellow at MIT's Centre for Advanced Visual Studies. However, the cumbersome, \$100,000 SLO wasn't practical outside doctors' offices.

She has collaborated with Robert Webb, inventor of the SLO and a physicist at Harvard University's Schepens Eye Research Institute, to create a mobile version called the Retinal Imaging Machine Vision System. The new device substitutes LEDs for the costly laser to illuminate a screen that focuses visual data from a computer or camera as a full image onto the retina.

Their latest prototype is a 13cm wide box with a digital camera attached. By manipulating the camera's zoom, Goldring is able to recognise faces and distinguish objects. She plans to begin testing the portable Seeing Machine Camera at the Joslin Diabetes Centre Eye Institute in Boston. "With this device I can see when my daughter is smiling", Goldring says

Source: www.popularmechanics.com/science/research/4308785.html

[Back to contents](#)

Accommodation Available at Magaliespark

Timeshare at Magaliespark was very generously donated to Council recently – Council would like to sell the space. We have made a provisional booking for 11-18 September. The booking can be changed if necessary - but we cannot make use of it during school holidays. The chalet can accommodate 6 people. Please contact Korky if you are interested on 012 452-3811 / korky@sancb.org.za .

[Back to contents](#)

Software to make a Cell Phone Camera more Accessible

Would you like to take some photos without having to get hold of a sighted person to do it for you? Most modern cell phones comprise a camera as a regular feature, so why not use it? Try out the vOICe (v Oh I See). It is add-on software for the phone which allows you to aim better with the camera since it renders an audio version of what is in front of the camera and can even do a form of colour identification (using your cell phone).

There are different versions available, which work on phones, laptops, webcams etc. Best of all – it is free ware!

If you're interested, visit www.seeingwithsound.com/

[Back to contents](#)

I-Opener is produced by the Access division of the South African National Council for the Blind. Please send your comments and suggestions to iopener@sancb.org.za. You have received this newsletter because we thought that you might find it interesting or because someone else has forwarded it to you. If you would like to subscribe to I-Opener, please e-mail us at iopener@sancb.org.za with the word "subscribe" in the subject field or body of the message. If you do not wish to receive future editions of I-Opener, send an e-mail to the same address with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject field.

[Back to contents](#)