# University of Nairobi

## Library Newsletter

No. 2  May 2005

## Inside

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# From the University Librarian's Desk

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## THE ORIGIN

The University of Nairobi Library has been in existence since 1956 when the Royal College was established. According to a report by a Mr. Lindsay Keir who was on an official visit to educational institutions in East Africa, the staff of the Royal Technical College comprised three officers, namely; the Principal, the Registrar and the Librarian. An earlier recommendation referred to the Library as the life-blood of much of the work of the college called for "particularly careful and generous treatment." The report goes on to add that the Library be given high priority in the order of new buildings. It was suggested that the Library be named Mahatma Gandhi memorial library. The history of the library however, may not be a remarkably long period in terms of institutional historical development.

A lot has happened since the initial plan period that marked the setting up of the Library as referred above. Most of the experiences and changes that the Library has gone through may be viewed as a reflection of developments at both the University and national levels. The spectacular growth and enrolment in higher education is one such development while the downturn of the economy of the 1980s and the 1990s is also illustrative of this point.

For the Library, the above events, and others, translated into specific challenges that we had to grapple with and are gradually getting to overcome. It is no wonder that in the last few years most of our efforts were dealing with what may be rightly referred to as firefighting.

## THE CHALLENGES

Firstly, an issue that was to challenge the Library to the core involved budgetary allocations and the funding for the procurement of books and journals. The funding dwindled to near zero levels as the Government, itself undergoing the throes of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), changed its policies and drastically reduced funding to universities. This came at a time when globally, the cost of books and journals escalated thus making a bad situation worse. As a result, the Library, which was subscribing to over 3000 current journals and buying most if not all the relevant course titles as they were published, was reduced to relying on gifts and donations!

Another occurrence that dealt the Library a blow of staggering proportions was the retrenchment of staff. As commonly said, troubles do not come singly, but rather in battalions! Retrenchment came at about the same time that the University
was to introduce module II/parallel programmes. The total effect of the two was shattering as the Library struggled to
serve a much bigger, more sophisticated and more demanding population. From a relatively easy to manage undergraduate population of about 14000 students, the Library now has to cater for over 30000 users!

A third aspect related to modern approaches and methods of running libraries through the introduction of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). Developments in this area have transformed libraries worldwide. Against this background of universal transformation in the management of information through digitalization, it appeared like the University of Nairobi Library was predestined to remain manual even as libraries with less stature sprinted past and got automated.

## OVERCOMING

Notwithstanding the above scenarios, there has been good news in that on the whole most of the challenges have been overcome and many of our objectives realized. In dealing with these challenges our strength has principally come from, among others, standards and procedures that are well established, and a generally committed and knowledgeable staff. As a result the Library is at a stage that could be appropriately termed THE NEW BEGINNING. While the road is still long and winding, we can now see the way ahead as the articles in this Newsletter point out. The digitalization process has moved extremely well. We have moved deeply into the arena of lots of efforts has been made on the training of first the library staff and later of library users. These efforts are continuing.

We are re-establishing the book and journal acquisition, selection and procurement procedures and processes and have incorporated the new procurement regulations reasonably well. In this regard the Library has been exempted from the requirement to tender for books and journals, and instead allowed to apply the direct procurement method. This is a positive move in the facilitation of collection building.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that during what one may term the recovery process the Library has enjoyed continued support from the University management who have been there even when the times were lean. The Library has also benefited from linkages with a number of international organizations including VLIR, International Society for the provision of Scientific Publications (INASP) and Association of Commonwealth Universities.

In conclusion, we appreciate that institutional recovery is not an easy undertaking, but we also know that it can be exciting. I wish all of us BON VOYAGE as we travel the new road to bringing the University of Nairobi Library to higher heights.

*Salome Mathangani*

*University Librarian*

## Editorial

Like the sun rising in the early morning sky after a dark and stormy night, so is the Library system emerging from the days of want and financial doldrums. New books are arriving regularly, journal subscriptions are being honored and computers are being installed. The bindery is doing what it does best- binding thesis and a few new staff have been employed, others promoted. The hopeful anticipation of year 2003 has been translated to real tangible resources! There is evidence of change and innovations; and we have for instance brought PSRI and IDS libraries under unified command. ICTs have taken root with constant skills upgrading amongst library staff.

As the University Librarian shows in her *A New Beginning* article we are witnessing a rebirth, a renewal, a rising from the ashes like the phoenix.

This rather belated second issue carries a variety of diverse articles, which we hope will prove to be not only educative but also informative and entertaining. As we urged in the first issue, this is your newsletter to which you should contribute generously. Everybody ought to have something worthwhile to say. The silent will not be heard. Add your voice.

*Mwangi Kamonde*

*Editor*

> We are witnessing a rebirth, a renewal, arising from the ashes like the phoenix.



Phillipines visitors to JKML
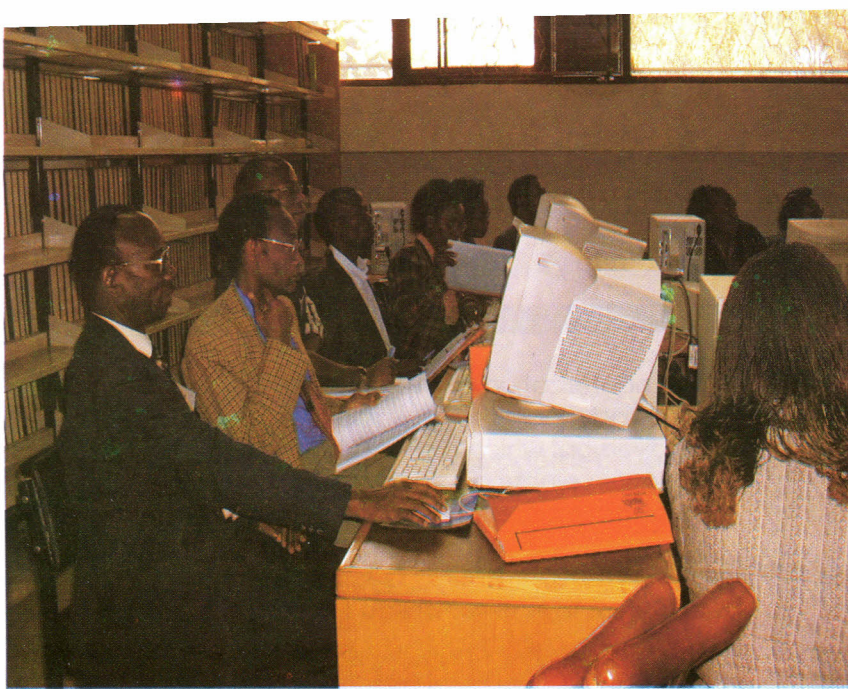
# Centre for Advanced Studies in Environmental Law and Policy (CASELAP) Library

## CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY (CASELAP) LIBRARY

On Friday, 2nd July 2004, a presentation of books and computer equipment from the Environmental Law Institute (USA) took place. The presentation was made by Dr. Peter Matlon of the Rockefeller Foundation, on behalf of the ELI and was received on behalf of the University of Nairobi by Professor Kaimenyi, DVC (AA.). The book donation consisted of approx. 7000 volumes, a large number of which are volumes of the *Federal Reporter* and other law reports. The donated books are very current and pertinent to the proposed teaching programme of CASELAP. Eight personal computers and peripherals, including a printer, also formed part of the donation.

Presently, the CASELAP Library is located on the 2nd floor, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library. When the renovations to the CASELAP building on Arboretum Drive are complete, it will be relocated to the custom-built Library and Documentation Center. The CASELAP Library will support teaching and research in environmental law and policy.

*R. Kiathe*

*Senior Librarian, JKML*

# University of Nairobi Moves into Electronic Age

Computerization of the University of Nairobi Library is at an advanced stage. The project started in 2001 with data conversion, which is now complete. The whole catalogue is now in electronic form and is available on the net. The automation project is in two parts:

- Automation of library services
- Access to internet-based electronic resources

Automation of library services focuses on computerization of the normal services like

√        Borrowing and returning of library material
√        Reservation of library material
√        Electronic catalogue
√        Electronic provision of library material.

The process will enable library users in the University network will be able to access the library and search for information electronically from their offices without having to go physically to the library. There are plans to set up computer laboratories in the library to provide access to those users who will not have computer facilities in their offices/rooms. Already one computer laboratory has been set up on the first floor of JKML. The electronic services will enhance the efficiency of accessing information in the library.

Efforts are being made to extend the electronic services to the sub libraries on various campuses. Plans are at an advanced stage to network the libraries to facilitate sharing of information on all campuses. If this is achieved, it will be possible to know from any campus what resources are available on all other campuses without physically going there. It will also facilitate better communication between the libraries.

> Library users on the University network will be able to access the library and search for information electronically from their offices without having to go physically to the library.

*Electronics Resources Workshop*

PERI Workshop

Through the Programme of Enhancement for Research Information (PERI), the University of Nairobi Library is accessing over 10,000 full text journal articles from over 12 databases in all subject areas. This is a golden opportunity for research at the University. A lot of advantages come with this facility:

• *Effective Retrieval*: The resources are well indexed. It is therefore easy to retrieve what is relevant to your needs within a very short time, in comparison with manual environment

• *Currency:* E-resources are very current. It is possible to access articles as current as only one week old
• *Simultaneous access*: E-resources facilitate simultaneous access. Many users are able to access the same document at the same time enhancing information sharing.

• *Meta search*: Electronic environment facilitates ability to search several databases at the same time (Meta search).

• *Morale boosting*: E-resources boosts the morale of the user. It is fun and enjoyable
The Library staff has been trained to assist users with the new electronic environment.

It is hoped that by the year 2006,the University of Nairobi Library will have fully computerized its services.

*Jacinta Were*

*Systems Librarian*
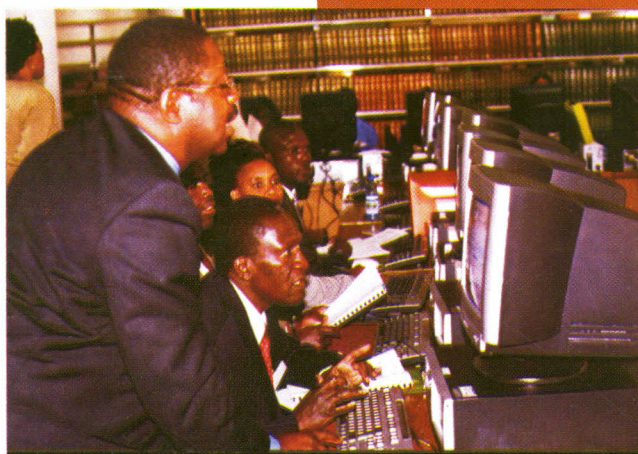
# Enhanced University of Nairobi Website

The library has been in the process of enhancing its website to reflect more innovative services through electronic means. This has been influenced by the advancement of ICTs in the library environment as well as the changing needs of our information consumers. Users are more enlightened and demanding in terms of access to new information resources. Websites are also increasingly becoming the medium for promoting products and services worldwide.

Libraries have to provide value added services that reflect the needs of their information consumers.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, a new look website has been launched. Users can now access the library holdings through the VUBIS Smart OPAC as well as get access to electronic periodical articles from journals available to University of Nairobi. The website will be accessible through the University site hyperlink: **http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/** Users may also go direct to the library website; **http://library.uonbi.ac.ke/**

The library has also made available a new linking program for both books and journal articles. The new context sensitive linking program, **VLINK** is a product of the Free University of Brussels. Users can at the click of a button link to full text articles of journals, online bookshops, and search engines where they can search for information related to the item at hand. In the new website, users can also access Internet based databases that have quality academic information, online dictionaries and encyclopaedias as well as scientific institutions and libraries.

It is hoped that as we endeavor to enhance the website, we will be able to bring together more quality resources for our users and that they will also give us feedback through the channels available on the new site.
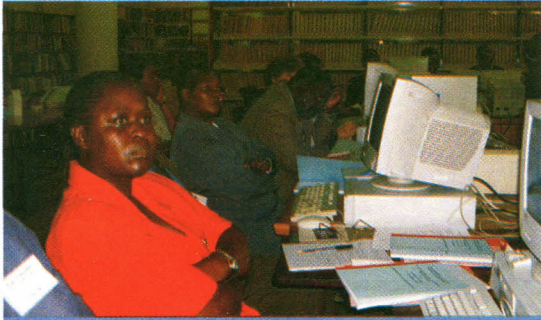
*Agatha N. Kabugu*

*Periodicals Librarian*



*Electronics Resources Workshop*

> Users are more enlightened and demanding in terms of access to new information resources.



*Electronics Resources Workshop*

# Computer Care

In this age of information technology, computers are everywhere, in offices, in houses, in laboratories, and it's appropriate to pose the question" Are the computers given the necessary care and maintenance they require? If so, who does it?"

What are the basic steps we should take to enable our computers last longer?

Heat is the greatest enemy to a computer system. It causes the internal components and chips to wear out. Heat also lowers the performance of the computer. Computers should therefore be kept in places without direct heat or sunrays.

Dust is the second enemy to a computer system. Think of dust as a blanket, which keeps the chips and other internal components of a computer hot. The more dust, the hotter they get. Dust also reduces airflow within the computer system. Computers should therefore be cleaned (wiped) for dust and other debris on a daily basis. The ordinary duster is sufficient for this purpose. However proper cleaning is required once in a while (say after two months). It is recommended that the inside of a computer system (CPU) is cleaned at least twice a year using a vacuum cleaner, while the inside of a monitor is cleaned after every two years. This type of cleaning requires the services of a computer expert. The computer covers also need to be cleaned.

Liquid is the third enemy of a computer system. No meals should be allowed next to the computer system. Users are tempted to take tea while working on the computer systems. This kind of behavior should be discouraged. The other enemies are computer furniture, ventilation, magnetism, power fluctuations and covering materials. It is recommended that computers be placed on flat surfaces (tables) or proper computer furniture. Computers that are placed in slanting position affect the internal components. Ventilation around a computer system is important. A computer system should have enough space behind for ventilation. Magnets can cause permanent loss of data on hard or floppy disks. It is important to keep anything magnetic away from computers and floppy disks too. Problems of power can be caused by over-voltage, under-voltage, power blackouts and surges. To prevent power problems, surge protectors and power backups (e.g. UPS) should be used.
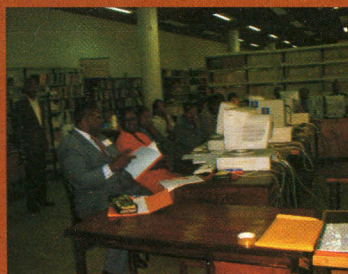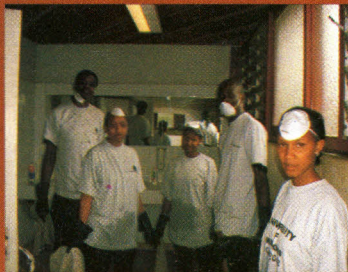
When it comes to software, care should be taken to avoid viruses. Viruses may enter a computer system through diskettes or through the Internet. Diskettes should always be scanned for viruses before use. Hard drives should be regularly scanned for viruses. Here, a recommendation of two weeks is advised. All programs downloaded from the Internet should be scanned for viruses. The latest anti-virus (virus scanner) software should be installed in a computer system and updated every fortnight.

## TIPS ON COMPUTER CARE:

- Place the computer on a flat surface (table).
- The computer should not be kept in a place with direct heat or sunrays.
- The computer should have enough space behind for ventilation.
- Regularly clean the computer for dust and other debris.
- Remove dust from the inside surfaces of a CPU at least twice a year.
- Clean the inside of a monitor every two years.
- Do not spill any liquids into a computer system.
- Keep anything magnetic away from computer systems.
- Use surge protectors and power backups to prevent power problems.
- Scan diskettes for viruses before use.
- Scan hard drives for viruses every fortnight.
- Update the anti-virus program every fortnight.
- Scan all programs that are downloaded from the Internet.
- Handle the computers safely and with care
- Cover the computer with clean covering materials.

The responsibility of taking care of the computer lies with the user of the computer (i.e. the person who uses the computer). Your computer system will last for a long time and give you good service if you take good care of it and follow the above simple suggestions to prevent problems occurring. Repair costs as well as purchases for new computer systems will go down. Computer breakdowns and work interruptions as a result of the breakdowns will be minimized.

**John Chepkwony**

**Systems Administrator**

# Association of Commowealth Universities Print Journal Project



The ACU journal project is an initiative aimed at making journals available to selected African Commonwealth member universities at a small fraction of the publisher price.

This project has taken into consideration the fact that the cost of journals has kept on increasing over the years while budgets for most African Universities have kept on decreasing. This situation has caused a lot of concern for both publishers and the universities. Responding to this situation, the Association of Commonwealth Universities initiated the "**Protection of African Universities Project**" to enhance access to journals in a way that both benefits the institutions and the publishers. The scheme started as a pilot project in 2002 with six universities and ten publishers. The ACU undertakes the publicity of the project to the Universities, takes orders and payments and passes them on to the publishers. The publishers distribute the journals for the orders endorsed by ACU.

The University of Nairobi took part in the project in 2003/2004 and was placed in Band A which receive journals at 10-20% of the normal institutional subscription rate. As a whole, the University has spent Ksh 5,841,963.05 for subscription to 192 journal titles in 2003 and 139 titles in 2004. These journals cover all disciplines. It is hoped that libraries will publicise the availability of these journals to users. In the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, the Periodicals Section has started displaying the Table of Contents (TOC) page of received journals on the journal display racks on the ground floor. This is an attempt to improve the usage of these journals.

*Agatha N. Kabugu*

*Periodicals Librarian.*



*University Librarian addresses a meeting at the medical library.*

# University Library Bindery



Library Staff at the Nairobi International Trade Faie

**In recent years the bindery has expanded its services to include binding of dissertations for students of this university.**

The bindery was started in the early 1960s. The aim of starting a bindery was to specifically bind and repair library books and other reading and teaching materials. In recent years the bindery has expanded its services to include binding of dissertations for students of this university. The services have expanded further to include the binding of all types jobs on commercial basis.

## Staff

Between 2001 and 2003,the bindery lost its entire staff except the head Binder. However in November 2003 the scenario changed with the recruitment of six new binders. The current staffing of the bindery comprises of the head binder and six bookbinders.

When the required binding materials are available, the Bindery can produce slightly over 2000 bound volumes per month. This works out at an average of 350 volumes per month per binder.

In the month of April 2004 alone the bindery was able to generate income totaling to slightly over KSHS. 60,000. Most of this money came from binding of dissertations for students in readiness for graduation.

One of our major challenges is the availability of binding material, which often slows our work down. This is being addressed appropriately. Meanwhile, i would like to take this opportunity to thank the Library Administration for facilitating the employment of new Binding Assistants in the Bindery. The backlog of work in the Bindery will soon be a thing of the past.

*Nicholas N. Wambua*

*Head Binder.*

Library Staff at Kabete Campus Library

# Conraference Report

## WORKSHOP ON PRESERVATION OF AFRICAN DOCUMENTATION HERITAGE, CAPETOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 27TH – 31ST OCTOBER 2003

The seminar was held at Cape Town's Milner Hotel.  It was organized by IFLA Africa section and sponsored by UNESCO Memory of the World Program.  About 35 participants representing over 16 Institutions in the Africa region attended it.

Topics covered included:
- Deterioration of Library and Archival materials with special emphasis on paper materials
- Preventive conservation
- Collections care with respect to climate
- Storage and Basic book repair
- Preservation program
- Emergency preparedness
- Integrated pest management
- Reformatting – Microfilming and digitization as
- Preservation strategy.

The workshop reviewed the problems facing conservators and librarians *derived from "Inherent vice"* and gave guidance on how to tackle them.

The workshop was an intense five - day learning experience consisting of formal lectures, practical hands-on exercises in conservation, demonstrations of repair techniques, and panel and working groups discussions. Material distributed included a book on preservation of library and archival materials prepared by IFLA.

## Benefits from the Seminar

The benefit from the handouts for reference use in our Institutions was non pareli;
- We learnt of what is termed as the  *"inherent vice"* i.e. the risk of our collections disintegrating because of component materials.
- We learnt how destructive we might be in using photocopy machines or even allowing our materials to be taken out for photocopying by non-conservators.
- We learnt new techniques; our knowledge of conservation was either confirmed or corrected.
- We shared experiences and met colleagues whom we can turn to for help and advice.
- About the preservation plan and risk assessment, we have been given the motivation, the means and modus operandi to put theory into practice in our Institutions without further delay.

*As one bestowed with taking care of University archives am particularly pleased to advice, share and affect the knowledge and skills acquired.*

Finally, it is quite important to be provided with regular training; we all need updated information.

**Emmah Manyeki**

**Head, University Library Archives**

# Rising from a Certificate to a Masters Degree in Library Services


*Library Staff awarded dgrees in 2004*

My academic and professional journey has enabled me to rise from being a holder of a Library Certificate from the Kenya Polytechnic to one with a Master of Philosophy in Information Sciences from the Moi University.

There is no single source of inspiration that I can think of. A combination of forces and factors has been cheering me on in my academic journey. Among them has been my very strong personal desire to achieve and attain self-actualization.

## Before joining UoN
My first encounter with failure and disappointment was when the results for Kenya Advanced Certificate Examinations were announced some twenty-four years ago. I was used to sitting and passing exams and basking in that glory until I " failed" my exams and therefore wasn't what was popularly called ` University material':

I then registered as a private candidate but again I still missed the required mark. The quality of a good certificate became apparent as I was seeking for employment. I landed a job as an untrained teacher and rose through the ranks. In four years time, I had become the Head of English and Literature Department and had started a drama Club. I won the District Inter-Secondary Schools' Trophy and was nominated the Executive Secretary to the District Secondary Schools' Drama Association

## Joining UoN
I applied and got a job with the university. The major problem was leaving my teaching profession having just participated and won the District drama festivals, and was scheduled to participate in the Provincials. However I was lured to the University by the hefty salary of Kshs 1,650, and later realized that I would also be drawing a house allowance of Kshs 650. I made up my mind and left teaching.


*Kenya Librarians attending an Electronics Resource Workshop*

Normally it's said that the size of our plans will determine the size of our future. Consequently, it is better to be a man of small abilities with big plans than be a man of great abilities with a small plan. Seventeen years ago, I left teaching and joined the UoN and was placed at the bottom. Never used to being at the bottom, I decided that this was not going to be a permanent station., I enquired and learnt that one could leave the station after training at the Kenya Polytechnic but had to wait for two years. I patiently waited for my turn but I suffered omission and had to wait for three years. Finally my chance to train came and I realized I could start from where I was and make a good ending. I learnt of more opportunities if I successfully completed the course. I eyed Moi University, which had a few opportunities for mature entrants. It was a tall order and I was prepared to leave behind negative attitudes towards work since I have realized that ones attitude towards work is largely responsible for ones performance at work.

I desperately wanted to succeed and reach the top of my professional ladder and become Dr. Mwangi. I realized that success would come within me. I did not have much going for me except sheer determination that my life-long dream had to be achieved. I was prepared to sacrifice everything to achieve this success. Talk of launching a missile from a canoe!

### The big Struggle

Disappointments and setbacks have always been there but through perseverance, hard work and desire to succeed, I have overcome. For seven months as an undergraduate, I did without pay. I had accepted a study leave without pay, which later proved suicidal. This temporary setback came to pass and I have never turned back since they say the harder the battle, the sweeter the victory.

### What fires me on?

It's  evident that success in any area is like a fire lit within a person, which is not easily extinguished. It is largely 'an inside job'. However, many others have also contributed towards this success. To start with is my wife who has a lot of faith in what I do. This knowledge has enabled me to push on and achieve success. Our children and their upbringing make it also necessary for me to improve myself career-wise. The many friends and colleagues I have made also encourage me to pursue the line I have chosen to its success.  My lecturers too have faith in my abilities and constantly urge me on. My enemies too have had their contribution. It's known that nothing moves forward without opposition. Can a bird really fly in a vacuum or a motorboat cruise without the presence of some friction? My employer has also recognized my efforts and therefore the totality of these is what I consider as the booster in my success.

Lastly, to God be the glory for he has responded to all my needs without fail.

### *Parting shot*

If people can believe in themselves, it is amazing what they can accomplish.

1980- Completed A-levels (1982- Employed as a Teacher
(1986- Employed as an untrained library assistant
1991- Promoted to Trained Library Assistant
1997- Promoted to Senior library assistant  (2003- Promoted to Librarian (equivalent to a lecturer of the University)

**John K. Mwangi**

**Parklands Library**

> If people can believe in themselves, it is amazing what they can accomplish.

# Letters to the Editor

## REASONS FOR STARTING A POSTGRADUATE LIBRARY PROGRAM:

I wish to take the cue from the last issue on the challenge for the first Ph.D. candidate to register. Taking another angle in relation to the matter, I would like to say that there are so many reasons for starting a post graduate program at the university of Nairobi,some of the reasons are: -

• So many people would take advantage of it given the centrality of the Nairobi University, both physically and academically.

• Depending on the courses offered, there are so many graduates from Moi and other Universities who are working and who would readily join it as regular or parallel students, because they need post graduate qualifications for career moves, but may not be able to go too far from their families or their jobs. Therefore saying a ready market exists is not an exaggeration and I dare you to prove me wrong.

• Thirdly, looking at the bigger picture, beginning a library school would certainly thrust the University of Nairobi system further into the 21$^{st}$ century mode of thinking .We could for example start seeing books on the local library and information scene rolling off the press. Research projects would thrust us into developing a pool of knowledge on the information field. It sometimes feels so dreary teaching the Diploma course using only foreign-oriented texts.

• Finally jobs would be created.

• Even if we were to start with borrowed lectures it means that within no time we would have our own.

So what are we waiting for? Hopefully not for somebody else to seize the chance and start doing it in our own premises.

It's now over to you Mr. Editor what do you have to say?

*Margaret W. Gikenye*

*College Librarian, College of Health Sciences*

### Editor's Note:

Mr. George M. Gatero, of the Medical Library joined Moi University in January 2005 to pursue a PhD. degree in Library and Information Science!

**Bravo**

# Guest Columns



## Organization of Student Volunteers (OSV) -a call to serve

Here a question that would arise would be" Students doing philanthropic work? That would have seemed highly unusual and an incredible deviation from the usual rowdy, destructive university students whose only relevance to the press headlines comes when they throw stones. Not anymore. The Organization of Student Volunteers (OSV) is one of the student efforts aimed at hugely realigning the student image to that of considerable, industrious and zealous character dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the society purely through service to the community.

With a membership drawn from the undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi, osv has never faltered in its quest to offer the community an opportunity to be served, and has achieved tremendous achievement since its inception in the past year. Members of this benevolent organization have largely benefited from the challenges that the day-to-day issues in the welfare of the larger society come along with, by effortlessly striving to surmount them from a voluntary service perspective.

In tackling the challenges across the past year, osv engaged its members in various voluntary drives. It was actively represented at the world clean up event organized by UNEP where its efforts and invaluable presence contributed to the success of the whole event. OSV has rendered its contribution to the welfare of the disadvantaged children in the society where it has visited children in the society, homes to give emotional support and lend a helping hand to chores at those homes.

It has also participated actively in the promotion of the academic standards by organizing visits to schools, ranging from preparatory schools to primary schools and to secondary schools,
in an earnest effort to quench its desire to serve and benefit others.

In the campus environment, osv has tirelessly rendered its service to the university community by leaving an example for all co-related societies and clubs to emulate. OSV has been active in ensuring the sustenance of the environment by organizing clean up exercises, tending to the numerous flowerbeds in campus, among many more worthy activities. A large contribution of the organization's efforts has been directed to the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library where, time and again, OSV has cleaned up various sections in the large library. The East Africana and Reserve sections benefited recently when the organization cleaned up the sections, dusting the materials available and putting them in order before storing away the brooms and the rags. All these efforts are purely guided by a motive that there is no better way to live than to serve. Members of this organization have picked a quip from the benign knowledge that those who are truly selfless can only render true service. Membership is open and voluntary to any undergraduate students at the University of Nairobi who express interest in offering an extrovert service to the society.

Such an understanding is crucial to the success of the organization and the building of an essence of team –work and spirit necessary in meeting its expectations to the good of the community.

In summing up, a phrase to epitomize what the organization stands for may be aptly stated that we have nothing to offer but heartfelt service to the benefit of humankind. Osv is poised to go places, seek challenges and surmount them whether its service is rewarded or not, the members shall still have the satisfaction of work well done. To those interested in philanthropic work, please get on board. OSV is the train to that destination.

*By OSV team.*

# ELECTRONIC JOURNAL SERVICE

Ask virtually anyone in the library concerning the above and you will be referred to the computer section for more help/information. This brief contribution aims to introduce all people to exactly what Electronic Journal service is about.

Electronic journal service is made possible by PERI (Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information), sponsored by INASP (the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications).

PERI was developed in the years 1999/2000 with research partners and librarians in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the New Independent States to support information production, access and dissemination, utilizing the new information and Communication Technologies.

Each participating country has nominated a coordinator to plan and steer the implementation in the context of the research needs in their country. INASP on the other hand, contributes in administration and capacity building through its skilled and experienced team.

INASP is a co-operative network of partners whose aim is to enhance worldwide access to information and knowledge, and to negotiate cheap discounts on behalf of the developing countries i.e. participating countries end up paying 10 % of the total cost of the electronic databases.

Electronic Journal Service makes it possible for users to access full-text journal articles online. It is made up of many multidiscipline databases. It is a free service to all staff and students of the University of Nairobi.

The entire university community is therefore called upon to properly utilize the service as the University has spent a huge amount of its finances to subscribe to the service. Searches are carried out by subject, journal title or author of the articles.

The Electronic Journal Database, which are multi-disciplinal comprises of the following:

- EBSCO (includes 16,500 titles  of which 7,000 are full text)
- Blackwell (733 titles)
- Emerald (120 titles)
- Gale (1,200 titles)
- AJOL (170 titles abstracts only)
- Royal Society of London (6 titles)
- Institute of Physics (37 titles)
- OUP (120 titles free to UON)
- Mary Ann Liebert (55 Journals)

There are other free online databases, whose information can be got from Periodicals section or the computer lab.
Access time for the user is between 8.00 am to 4.00pm, Mondays to Fridays only, and remember this is free.

*Dorothy Njiraine*

*Librarian Periodicals*

It is a free service to all staff and students of the University of Nairobi.

## THE ROLLING STONE GATHERS MOSS

I take this opportunity to greet you and introduce myself to all those colleagues I have not had a chance to interact with. My name is Emily H. Kamau, currently the librarian of IDS/PSRI library. I joined the University of Nairobi Library Services in May 1987, and left in 1994 to join my husband and family in a mission that took us to various countries including Zambia, Holland and Zimbabwe. When I was requested to write an article for the University Library Magazine, I was happy to have an opportunity to share my experiences outside Kenya.

Ever heard of the wise man's saying that "a rolling stone gathers no moss"? I think this statement is not true after all. I gathered a lot of it as we rolled from one country to the other. My horizons were widened in many aspects. I had a chance of learning about different cultures and languages among other things.

The Zambian - (Mbemba language) — Uli shani? (How are you?)
More than one person - Muli shani? Or Mwashibukeni?
The Zimbabwean – (Shona Language) — Magwanani – (Good morning?)
Maskati - (Good afternoon?)
Manheru – (Good afternoon?)
The cool greetings for comrades would be—Ndeipi – (What's up? Or how are you doing?)
The Dutch - Goedemorgen? (Good morning) goedemiddag? – (Good afternoon?) Goedeavond? – (Good evening?)
Other Dutch casual greetings - Hoe gaat het met ye? (How are you?) Answer to which would be – heel goed (very good) or prima (great).

### ABOUT THE COUNTRIES

#### Zambia
The Zambians are friendly, helpful and generous. While in this country I was lucky to work in Copper belt University library in Kitwe. I joined at a period when they were automating their library services using Stylis software. Automation was done in phases and modules. The first module to be put in place was cataloguing. This involved the retro -conversion of all the library records and thereafter the maintenance and updating of the databases. The other modules like circulation and acquisition were also put in place. Copper Belt University library (CBUL) was completely computerised and fully connected to the Internet by the time I left this library. The library was working towards identifying information resources that could be shared as well as seeking co-operation for networking with other libraries. The experience gave me the opportunity of practising my computer skills and acquiring automation tips that might come handy someday.

"East or West Home is Best"



*Senior Library Staff at Tigoni House for Lib. strategic plan workshop*

## Holland

This is a non-English speaking country. Circumstances compelled me to learn the Dutch language for easy communication. Holland is one of the flattest countries on the planet. This is because the land was created by empting water from the sea. The most common features include windmills, which were used for this purpose as well as for providing power. The Dutch have more bicycles than automobiles. Bicycling is not just a recreational sport, but is also a primary means of transport. Bike paths exist next to every major road through the countryside into the centre of the big cities. The most common crime in this country is bike theft. It happens so often that no one bothers to file a police report or make an insurance claim.

Holland is a big player in the market of flowers and plants. Half of all the flowers traded internationally come from there. The Dutch also use flowers to express their emotional life, love, friendship, joy, sorrow, harmony etc. The Dutch people eat to live. They do not put a lot of emphasis on their cooking. Would you fancy a dish of mashed potato with cooked vegetables and meat stirred in as a staple? The Dutch name for it is stampport. The dish may provide good nutrition but it is not an interesting one. What about erwten soep? A pea soup in which floats ham and vegetables. The soup is all hearty and guaranteed to keep out the cold but not very exciting. Desert and wine is a must in every dinner…(a nice Dutch tradition)

## Zimbabwe

A beautiful country with great tourist sites e.g. Victoria Falls, lake Kariba (where tourists flock for fishing expeditions), the great Zimbabwe ruins, etc. I really enjoyed my stay in this country. The people are friendly and hospitable. The country is unfortunately facing a wide variety of economic problems such as soaring inflation that rose to 228% in the year 2003. Much of the needed support from IMF support has been suspended because of the country's failure to meet budgetary goals. The government's land reform program has nearly destroyed the commercial farming sector. Recently, food and petrol are rare commodities in Zimbabwe. This does not mean that we did not enjoy our stay there. We have fond memories of the exciting places we visited.
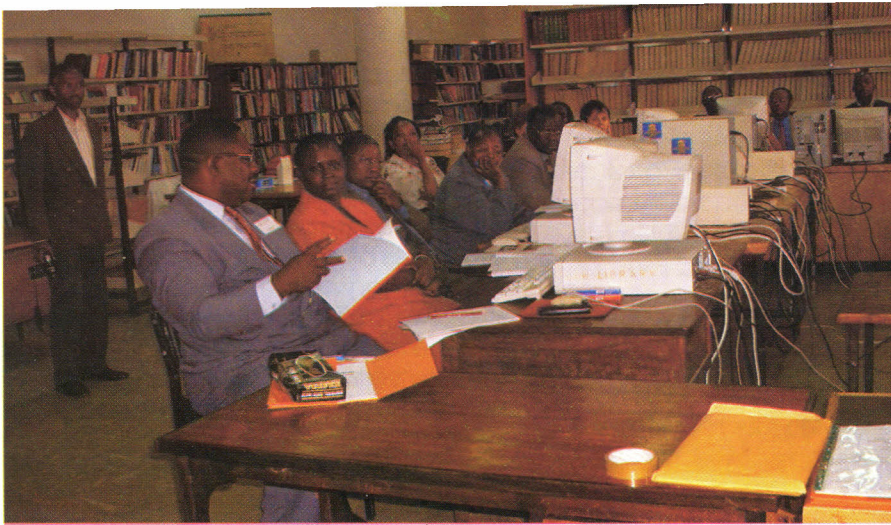
## Home is best

It feels good to be home after all those years. It feels even better to be back at the UON with my fellow library colleagues. "East or West home is best". I hope that my experiences out there will add value to the work ahead of me.

*Compiled by*

*Emily H. Kamau.*
*IDS/PSRI Library*



*Nairobi International Trade Fair*

## ADD LIBRARY

The ADD library serves the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Development commonly referred to as ADD. The faculty comprises five departments namely Architecture, Building Economics, Design, Land Economics and Urban and Regional Planning. All these departments offer courses both to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The library also shares its resources with Housing and Building Research Institute (HABRI).

The library has a seating capacity of 120. It has a book stock of approximately 122,000 including the bound journals. The faculty has a population of over 650 and a teaching staff of 117. Students from other faculties also patronize the library.

The ADD library has been in existence since 1972. Apart from the University of Nairobi community, the library is open to outsiders for a small fee. Due to its proximity to the halls of residence, many users prefer it to the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML) especially at night.

For the subject areas it covers ADD has the best library in Africa, south of the Sahara (the university of cape town has the best) our materials include books, journals and films

The space available for the readers is inadequate, but we expect to get additional space once the ADD Building extension work is complete.

ADD library is one step behind other University of Nairobi libraries in terms of computerization and the Internet.
But we hope that the Internet will soon be available. This will enable us to offer an improved service to our patrons.

*By P. Otsyula*
*Senior Library Assistant, ADD Library*



*Students in University Library*

# The Work Ethic

Ethics consists of the fundamental issues of practical decision making, and its major concerns include the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong. Ethics and morality are closely related.

There are two ways to look at ethics, from the world's point of view, that is, ethics in the absence of theology, and from the theological point of view. However, whether or not a man confesses to the existence of God does not alter the fact that God exists and that each man has a direct and immediate responsibility before him. The subject matter of ethics is human conduct, those actions which man performs consciously and willfully and for which he is held accountable. This article takes a look at the work ethic from the secular point of view.

The work ethic is a cultural norm that advocates being personally accountable and responsible for the work that one does and is based on the belief that work has intrinsic value. Good work ethic and work attitudes are essential for success. Without a good work ethic businesses and industries struggle as productivity falls short of what is needed. Work ethic is usually associated with people who work hard and do a good job.

However, competition for employment does not always permit the matching of individual interests with job types. This often leads to an unhappy and unfulfilled worker.

The many characteristics of work ethic can be summarized using the terms interpersonal skills, initiative and dependability

Interpersonal skills include habits, attitudes, manners, appearance and behaviours we use around others which affect how we get along with other people. It is a goal of a teacher  help students to correct bad habits and to develop good interpersonal skills. As adults, it is *our own responsibility* to initiate any changes that might be needed.  Being able to manage relationships with other people is a large part of being successful in the workplace. Conflicts in communication style play a problems. When people with differing communication styles work with each other, the potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication increases.  Courtesy, good manners and respect for authority also play a role in interpersonal skills. Examples of poor interpersonal skills include coming to work smelling of body odor or alcohol, receiving too many personal phone calls at work and entertaining private visitors during working hours

Many jobs require only a limited work ethic but today's information age workplace requires that people often work with less direct supervision and often set their own schedules.  They frequently experience change and innovation in their work.  As technology advances and manual operations are replaced by machines, people increasingly must adapt and retrain in the workplace in order to keep abreast of new developments in ICT and the profession generally.  Lack of initiative leads to procrastination and missed opportunities and can become a real problem.  The result will be poor performance, and, eventually, job loss. Drive and effort are both components of initiative.  No matter how gifted a person is, unless they work harder and longer than their colleagues they will not be the best. The amount of drive and effort put forth by an employee makes the difference between average performance and high performance.  People who have initiative do not just talk about what needs to be done but look for ways to do it and then see that the work actually does get done.

One of the most highly sought after traits for workers in the modern workplace is dependability.  This work ethic construct includes honesty, reliability and punctuality. Whilst accepting that these traits have a generalized acceptance as to their meaning, there may also be cultural variations, e.g. persons working in Nairobi, relying on public transport and living outside Nairobi may just not have the *ability* to be punctual and so unpunctuality comes to be accepted as the cultural norm, even more so during the rainy season. Since their employment contract states a certain salary for a certain number of hours worked the element of lack of integrity creeps in if the stipulated salary is accepted for fewer hours worked.  The honest, upright worker will find some way to compensate for time lost due to unpunctuality.  Those who do not will be considered as lacking in integrity unless this behaviour has become the accepted cultural and ethical norm.

Honesty, too, wears many hats. In some cultures it may be quite acceptable to make promises and never keep them. In another it may be acceptable to "borrow" money or other items with no intention of repayment or return of the items borrowed since both parties have this same understanding. A Maasai may not consider taking another person's cattle as theft since he believes that all cattle belonged to him in the first place. However, honesty in the workplace must be based on the accepted norms that taking something that does not belong to you is theft, that a promise to undertake some activity is binding and that you owe your employer a day's work for a day's pay. In the library "illegal borrowing" is a disease which needs to be eradicated. It is very tempting to take a book to one's office or desk without first having it properly issued out. Library staff are also notorious for borrowing more than the stipulated number of books and for keeping books long overdue. It seems as though Library staff treat these activities as "fringe benefits".

Performance during working hours of activities totally unrelated to the job is clearly unethical. To sell foodstuffs such as eggs, milk, rice, etc. during working hours is theft of the employer's time, as is surfing the internet for extended periods of time when such surfing is totally unrelated to the work one has been employed to do. Employees may also "steal" from their employers by abusing the services available to them e.g. use of office telephones for personal calls, misuse of office stationery, photocopying machines, etc. One might also ask whether it is ethical to do consultancy or work on a bibliographic project during office hours for which payment is to be received outside of one's normal remuneration. Employees who undertake these kinds of activities are considered as not very dependable and are expensive to keep around because of the wasted time and resources their behaviour causes.

Employers over the years have been asked to list the most important skills and characteristics they look for when hiring new employees. High on the list are good communication skills, positive attitude, and the ability to be dependable, punctual and responsible. Personal characteristics include dressing properly, being polite and displaying self-confidence. You can find out how you score in the above areas by visiting the internet Work Ethic Site ( HYPERLINK "http://www.coe.uga.edu/workethic" www.coe.uga.edu/workethic) and taking the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI) online quiz.

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It is hoped that this short article will prompt discussion and future contributions on the topic of work ethics. Therefore, at the risk of opening a can of worms, I pose the following questions:

Are there alternatives to the 8-5 work culture? Would people be more productive sharing jobs. The Institute of Manpower Studies has found that employees who work non-standard hours tend to be more efficient, enthusiastic and committed. Would this lead to an improvement in punctuality and productivity?

Is leadership based upon the work one *doesn't* have to do?

Are wealth and virtue incompatible? (That is after the pursuit of gain to meet normal needs)

Is work still perceived to be a punishment from God?

How does the "cultural norm" differ? Should the Library (or the University for that matter) consider creating its own work ethic statement which takes into account the cultural differences between Kenya and other, more developed countries?

Since Kenya is said to be 80% Christian, should the work ethic be based on biblical concepts?

**R. Kiathe**
**May 2004**

# Diploma in Information Studies

The above programme was started in the Library in April, 1999. It has been run by Librarians from the University of Nairobi for the last six years. Five groups of students have graduated from the course.

This course has been a challenge to Librarians. They have been able to prepare teaching notes, organise lesson plans and take students through practical sessions. The outcome have been very encouraging. Students have passed very well, some in flying colours.

The graduates from the Diploma course have gotten jobs in the Library sector and other Information sectors in the country. Others have gone for higher education in various institutions, locally and abroad. We have two former students who are already in the final year of a Bachelor of Information degree course.

The Librarians who have been teaching this course are always challenged to practice what they teach in the classrooms. This has been in the area of management, Cataloguing and classification, Dissemination of Information, to mention but a few. The greatest challenge has been in the area of Information marketing and public relations. As we train our students to become better information workers, we are challenged to improve on our public relations as an organization. We hope that as we continue to teach Library and information Studies form the Library, we shall continue to work on a positive image of the Library as a whole.

*Grace Irura*

*Course Coordinator*

> The graduates from the Diploma course have jobs in the Library sector and other Information sectors in the country