



RHODOS

STAFF NEWSLETTER

17 NOVEMBER 1997 VOL9 NO 19

Wide-ranging address from V-C

It is vitally important to develop correct communications with staff, said Dr Woods, at the Vice Chancellor's Address to Staff — November 6, this year. He continued by saying that he intended to have meetings where he could put forward developments at Rhodes every six months or so.

Although there are various formal ways of communicating with staff, such as Senate and Faculty Boards, he wanted to foster communication with staff in every way possible. Last year he visited every department in the University and intended to do this again next year and every second year thereafter.

"One of the great problems at Rhodes is the way rumours circulate. It is quite unbelievable", he said. There were two rumours that he wished to deal with immediately. The first was that bonuses would be cut. "Bonuses are not being cut.

"The second rumour is that I don't take the arts and humanities seriously. This is rubbish. The arts and humanities are a recognised

strength of Rhodes University." He went on to point out, as one example, that while other Universities were closing language departments, Rhodes was continuing to offer all the languages we have been offering in the new School of Languages.

Dr Woods went on to discuss the new Higher Education Bill, which has recently been passed. Although he was uneasy about the powers vested in the Minister of Education, the fact that funding would change from the SAPSE system was more important. "The new system will be that set out in the Higher Education Review and because it is planned on a three-year forward roll, it will make planning easier", he said.

He then outlined the academic planning programme from the "Bosberaad" held last year, through the departmental reviews, to the first report of the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee (APSC) to a special Senate.

continued on page 4

Rhodes library pioneers Internet links

Rhodes University Library is one of the first libraries in South Africa to have developed the facility to provide a direct link from a catalogue record to an Internet site.

The University Librarian, Mr Felix Ubogu, said that, provided the right software is in place, it is now possible to launch a URL from the Rhodes catalogue. This means that users will be able to move from the record of a book or journal to the full-text version on the Internet simply by clicking the mouse. The system is being tested before Rhodes introduces it to other sites around the country.

In the past year the Rhodes Library has been at the forefront of implementing new information technology in several other areas of service. It is the only library in the Eastern Cape that uses electronic communication to order material, transfer records, distribute overdue notices and notify users of new books received by the library.

The library is also the first outside the USA to join the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD) based at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The NDLTD project seeks to create a global digital network of theses and dissertations. Earlier this month the full text of an honours project by Rhodes Computer Science student Thabo Nojoko was mounted on the Internet. The library hopes that eventually all Rhodes theses will be available in electronic form.

Mr Ubogu pointed out that Rhodes library users would be able to take full advantage of these innovations if they have the necessary computing equipment. The library OPACS have to be upgraded before students can access these resources in the library.



Fuzzy researchers ... Two active young researchers from overseas visited the Rhodes School on Fuzzy Sets in the Mathematics department for a month. They were professor Frank Klawonn, from Emden, Germany, who is an expert in Fuzzy Control; and Professor Javier Gutierrez Garcia, from Bilbao, Spain, who specialises in Fuzzy Topology. They are seen with their hosts (Back, from the left): Dr Babington Makamba, a produce of the School and lecturer at Fort Hare; mr Andre Swartz, Masters student; Dr Mike Burton. (Front, from the left) Professors Murali, Klawonn, Kotze and Gutierrez Garcia.



The Editor

I trust Mark Hazell was misquoted in the 31 October edition, and that you are actually encouraging people to put bricks in their cisterns rather than in their toilets — the latter could exacerbate a perennial problem!

We are reminded of the water lost through the irrigation system as we wade across the swamp on the Great Field rugby pitch and skip around the sprays coming up from the ground on rainy mornings. You will recall that the game against Edinburgh University was nearly cancelled due to the augmentation of a day's heavy rain by the irrigation system.

While I'm at it, NOW is the time to remove the alien vegetation from the hockey goal area at the west end of Great Field and get the next generation of grass on the bald patch. Likewise the entry to the Great Field from the grandstand changing rooms needs its annual reconstruction while it still gets plenty of sun.

All good wishes

M G Whisson
Honorary Grounds Inspector

Mark Hazell, Manager, Grounds and Gardens, replies:

At the moment we do not have the facility to override the computer programme that runs the irrigation system. We have motivated for a system which incorporates its own weather station and waters according to the readings

of rainfall and evaporation rates. This system is expensive, but it would save water, power and Professor Whisson's feet. The system could also be controlled by a telephone call. According to the new legislation we will only be allowed to water after 3.30 pm and before 10.00 am. This means that the situation will get worse because most of the irrigation will be done at night.

The alien vegetation at the hockey goal area at the west end of the Great Field is on the list of matters needing attention.

The patch at the entry to the Great Field from the grandstand changing rooms is a problem that we cannot solve at the moment. It is a heavy traffic area and does not get enough sunlight in winter. The answer would be a strip of astro turf.

(One of the most loyal readers of Rhodes, Mrs Jean Chapman, phoned to say that putting bricks in toilet cisterns was not a good idea because they disintegrate. A bottle of water, preferably square like a Gin bottle is a better bet. (This could also be a good way of hiding your secret stash of Gin too!)

The Editor

I, having not been able to amend my letter published in your last issue as it had already gone to print so that certain statements therein could not be retracted, retract any personal aspersion or slights cast upon the actuary for the Pension and Provident funds, Mr Hayler, and the actuarial profession in general.

I thank him and Mr Smith, the secretary for these funds, for providing clarifications on the issues raised and hope that readers are enlighten now as to the elements and perspectives of such funds.

John Landman
Human Movement Studies

The Editor

Those of you who attended last night's address to staff by the Vice-Chancellor may remember my rather incoherent question to

him regarding Rhodes' attitude to environmental issues. His response was to mention the new Environmental Studies degree, and the audit currently being conducted by structures coordinated by the Environmental Studies Unit.

During a private discussion shortly thereafter, Dr Woods assured me that, even whilst waiting for the results of the audit which would inform the development of an appropriate set of environmentally-sound principles and practices within Rhodes, every effort is already being made in the design and erection of new buildings, for example, to ensure as high a level of environmentally-friendliness as possible in the interim. Great stuff.

There are however numerous local and global examples of companies, institutions, individuals, and governments which pour enormous sums of money into advertising, environmentally-related development projects, etcetera, in order to project an acceptably green image, whilst at the same time continuing to be guilty of outrageously destructive practices, always for the purpose of maximising profits.

It is hoped by many that Rhodes' interest in environmental sustainability arises more out of a genuine desire for the long-term survival of humanity and the earth we live on, than regarding it as an expedient marketing strategy for the short-term survival of Rhodes itself.

Finally, has Dr Woods considered the possibility that the reason why few service staff attend meetings of this nature at this time is because most rush to catch the last taxis in order not to have to walk home over hill and dale, however environmentally-friendly that may be? Perhaps the process of transformation may be served in some small way by the university laying on at least a few of its vehicles to help transportless staff reach home after dark, if more suitable meeting times cannot be found.

Yours sincerely

Jane Thompson
ILAM

Rhodes Squash Club wins top Port Elizabeth award

By Siseko Njobeni

The Rhodes University squash club has recently completed a very successful season on and off the courts. Club chairman Ian Rowett and his committee were the proud recipients of the Eastern Province Squash Rackets Association's Club of the Year Award presented at the annual end of year function on Monday 27 October. The award was shared with the I.M.A.T.U. club from Port Elizabeth. At the same function the stu-

dents collected their trophies for winning both the men's 2nd and 3rd leagues. The 1st league side finished fourth. The Club of the year award was not only won on the basis of results on court. The commitment of the players and committee members, the successful organisation of the Grahamstown Electrical Distributors Rhodes Squash open and the running of coaching courses at the Rhodes courts were all factors which caught the attention of the Eastern Province administrators.

The 2nd and 3rd league sides were

invited to play at the recently held national championships in East London, an event featuring the top sides from around the country. The 3rd side performed well, finishing runners up to a strong Cape Town side. The 2nd league team finished a creditable third. The Rhodians efforts at Nationals did not go unnoticed, however, with fellow competitors voting them the most social club, an award which by all accounts was the most coveted of all at this year's event.

Open day for Matric pupils in East London



Recently, the East London Campus of Rhodes University had an Open Day for matric pupils from local high schools.

The pupils, from Stirling, Hudson Park and Selborne High Schools, were shown around the campus and given brief lectures in Social Work, Commerce and Primary Education.

During one of the lectures, Dr Keith Tankard of the History Department told the pupils about the history of East London which he has put on the world wide web. Dr Tankard hoped that other people would contribute to the web site

(<http://www.ru.ac.za/el/history/>).

The Student Affairs Administrative Officer, Ms Claire Collet said that next year they hoped to attract pupils from disadvantaged communities like Mdantsane and Duncan Village. "We will look at things like organising transport for them," she said.

Statement by National Tertiary Education Union (Rhodes)

National Tertiary Education Staff Union (Rhodes) (NTESU) recognises the current Academic Planning process as vital if Rhodes University is to prepare itself to face the current crisis and future uncertainty surrounding higher education policy and tertiary institutions in South Africa. Nonetheless, NTESU would like to express its concern about the present "Academic Planning: 1997" document, and the process leading up to it, as follows:

1. Despite all protestations to the contrary, NTESU is left with the impression that the proposed plan is a financial exercise which ignores or obscures debate about Rhodes University as an academic institution. NTESU is concerned that the plan fails to articulate a vision about what sort of university Rhodes should attempt to be, and instead is guided by perceived market trends which may or may not prove to be long standing. NTESU is also concerned about:
 - whether the financial criteria used to determine present costs fairly depicts the share of "real" costs between faculties, disciplines and departments;
 - whether financial and other criteria used to determine the future of departments are applied to different departments equitably;
 - how "the market" is defined or measured;
 - whether the proposed plan merely reacts to immediate student demand rather than actively attempts to identify a wider role for Rhodes in the South African, regional and international context.

NTESU recognises the plight of staff members in departments which have been

identified by the Academic Planning and Staffing Committee as being seriously short of resources. Staff in these departments are labouring under untenable workloads and stress levels.

Accordingly, NTESU calls on the University to make the recommended resource allocations to these departments as a matter of urgency. The allocation of resources to promote new developments should also be addressed with immediate effect so as to exploit present opportunities.

2. NTESU is concerned that, the Rhodes Academic Plan has been drawn up in isolation from related plans being implemented at other universities. NTESU questions, in particular, whether there has been any discussion of the planning exercise by the Committee of University Principals, and the extent to which there has been any attempt to co-ordinate the Rhodes proposals with plans elsewhere. NTESU emphasises the need to conduct the current review of the University as a holistic exercise, and believes that the academic and non-academic reviews cannot be considered in isolation from each other.

3. NTESU recognises that the AP&SC has made considerable efforts to involve departments in the review exercise. However, staff members have expressed grave concern that the Committee has not consulted widely enough regarding the procedures best employed for this exercise, that: the exercise has been unduly rushed; some head of departments have not involved their staff in the process; and, that special faculty and Senate meetings were only conceded after strong

representations from members of staff.

NTESU urges that in future a more concerted effort be made to involve all staff in this review process, and that greater efforts be made to inform the entire University community about the latest developments.

4. NTESU would like to record its dismay and concern about the prospect of retrenchments for a substantial number of staff. NTESU recognises the right of the University to restructure, and in extreme circumstances, to retrench staff. However, NTESU finds it difficult to reconcile the short-term perspective of the present plan with the very long term implications of retrenchments. Furthermore, NTESU protests that the University seems to be abandoning the principle of tenure, with all its importance for protecting academic freedom and autonomy, and for the attractiveness of academia as a professional career. NTESU would also like to record its concern about the manner in which the University seems intent upon implementing retrenchments, with no formulated terms upon which such retrenchments will be carried out.

NTESU resolutely believes that:

- it must be fully involved in any proposed retrenchment exercise;
 - any retrenchment programme be negotiated and fully transparent;
 - and that the principles and practices regarding any retrenchments be applied to individuals uniformly and openly.
- NTESU notes that the Vice-Chancellor has committed the University to a policy of "humane retrenchment", and looks forward to the University defining that term.

Many issues covered during V-C's address

continued from page 1

One reason for this planning process was the need to shift the staff:student ratio from 1:12 to 1:14 or 15. "The British norms are, for the humanities 1:22 and for the sciences 1:18, so we would still retain

a favourable ratio which is accepted as one of our strengths." Dr Woods said that there were too many small classes at Rhodes. "In future we will have to negotiate our budget with the Ministry and I can't justify tiny classes. All the disciplines in the new Faculty of Humanities are critical to the future of the University, but they must be sustainable", Dr Woods said. He

explained that the APSC had various sub-committees dealing with targets and numbers in the various programmes offered. "This will mean that we can forecast the development of the academic environment at Rhodes", he said.

"We certainly don't want to downgrade the humanities and the arts — that is why we will have a full-time Dean of Humanities from next year. His job will be to strengthen the programmes offered, based on our strengths.

"We have also decided that we need a full-time Dean of Research. We undersell ourselves in this area. This is partly because we are isolated, but we must do more to attract people and funding for our research efforts", he said.

Dr Woods said that while there were some areas where there would be cuts, there were others where courses would be increased — an example being the new undergraduate courses in Environmental Science and Ichthyology and Fisheries Science. "The APSC recommended that Religion and Theology should be closed, but Senate and Council did not agree, so we have a year to negotiate with the Churches.

"Similar reviews of the administrative divisions are being undertaken at the moment and the interim report has gone to Senate. One problem is that there are no benchmarks against which we can measure the efficiency of our operations", he said. One idea which had come from this review process was to provide a seamless progression for students from recruitment to graduation.

"There should be a new emphasis on strategic Human Resource training and a means found to reward those who perform well." Dr Woods stressed that all these developments included the East London campus, which was developing along somewhat dif-

ferent lines than Rhodes Grahamstown.

He said that support staff in academic departments would be reviewed next year.

Dr Woods said that student recruitment had improved greatly this year. "As of October 30, we have made 1 655 offers to

students. This compares well with 904 at the same time in 1995 and 1 172 in 1996. More important is the figure for applicants who have accepted and paid deposits. This stands at 769 for next year, as compared with 276 at the same time in 1995 and 324 in 1996.

"We have a residence crisis looming for next year. Students are staying in residence longer because it is cheaper to do so than move

into digs. We are considering building a Graduate Village on the land opposite the DSG fields and, after registration next year we will consider building a new undergraduate residence", Dr Woods said.

Other developments included the start of the Eden grove project, the installation of a 115-place computer laboratory, the opening of the CEC early this year and the fact that Rhodes has bought all the land on the block in East London except for St John's church. "We are also waiting to hear whether we have got Transnet land there, which will enable us to develop the East London campus further", he said.

Dr Woods went on to discuss the need for quality assurance. He said that Rhodes had offered itself for a pilot Quality Audit earlier this year. "We learned a lot from it. Ultimately our budget depends on our quality", he said. He said that there had been outstanding leadership in the SRC this year and that he was confident that next year's SRC leadership would be equally strong.

"Transformation is making slow progress, but it is on track. There is now a working executive showing much potential. The new Bill means that this has changed from a Broad Transformation Forum to an Institutional Forum. Several new initiatives have come out of this process — a Student Services Council replaces the Senate/Student Liaison Committee and a committee to review the Disciplinary Code, among others."

Dr Woods concluded by mentioning his fundraising trips to the UK and USA. "These trips realised several large private donations, including US\$1 million from the Mellon

Foundation for postgraduate black scholarships."

Dr Woods went on to reply to several questions which had been submitted before the meeting and several more from the floor. The first was from Professor Roger Southall, who was concerned that staff in the humanities have to do much more to attain rank than do those in market-related departments. He asked if the University had deliberately adopted a policy of easier promotions for people in such departments.

Rhodes is in competition with other universities for good people in market-related disciplines and that this problem also applied to the sciences as well as the humanities, explained Dr Woods. He said that Rhodes does not have a policy of easier promotion in these cases. He said that staff in market-related departments were different people with different qualities and cited a Professor of Accounting with a CA and a diploma in tax, qualifications which are appropriate for that position. On the question of whether Rhodes had considered the option of rewarding such people financially, Dr Woods said that this

was an established policy, but such people want the titles. On the further question of non-monetary rewards for staff in disciplines where promotion is more difficult to obtain, he said that this would be part of staff development in future.

Miss Lindsey Sheard of the Department of Statistics queried ad

hominem promotions. She asked that people being evaluated be interviewed and that there be better representation on the committee of experts in the field of the person being evaluated. She felt that the ratio of scientists to non-scientists disadvantages non-scientists. Dr Woods said that it would be impossible to interview as many as 60 applicants, as many were successful under the present system, where only applicants who appealed after they were unsuccessful are interviewed. He said that, in fact, there were only four scientists on the twelve-person committee.

Ms Chloe O'Keeffe, of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies on passive smoking and the possibility of enforcing a non-smoking policy. Dr Woods said that this was in the pipeline and that next year there would be a proposal to faculties, administrative divisions and Senate to ban smoking in all academic and administrative buildings. "Those who wish to smoke will have to do so outside", he said. The questions answered from the floor will be covered in the next edition of Rhodes.

"We certainly don't want to downgrade the humanities and the arts..."

"Ultimately our budget depends on our quality ..."

LIRI trains unemployed for self-sufficiency

Helping to curb the high rate of unemployment in Grahamstown is everyone's responsibility and the Leather craft Division at Liri Technologies, Rhodes University, is working hand in hand with the Department of Labour on a leather craft training programme for the unemployed with a view of making trainees skilled enough to become self-sufficient.

By Siseko Njobeni

Trainees who enrol in LIRI's programme are put through three weeks of intensive training and the first session began on October 13 and on Friday last week, with 15 participants.

Liri's Leather craft manager, Mr Mike Ginn, said that he had approached several institutions for trainees. The Grahamstown Areas Distress Relief Association (GADRA), through the Given Employment Bureau, and the School Leaver's Opportunity Training Scheme (SLOT) responded by encouraging students to attend.

"We went to GADRA and SLOT

because we were looking for people who have already made an effort to improve their situation, but the primary requirement for this programme is lots of enthusiasm," said Mr Ginn. We aim to help the trainees to become economically productive on the face of the escalating problems with finding a job in the formal sector and we are most grateful to GADRA and SLOT who are helping their trainees with a small financial sponsorship for a starter toolkit and some leather," he added.

During the three weeks, the trainees are taught many aspects of leather crafting and handle various types of leather, learn decorative surface techniques, glueing, punching, thonging and stitching styles,

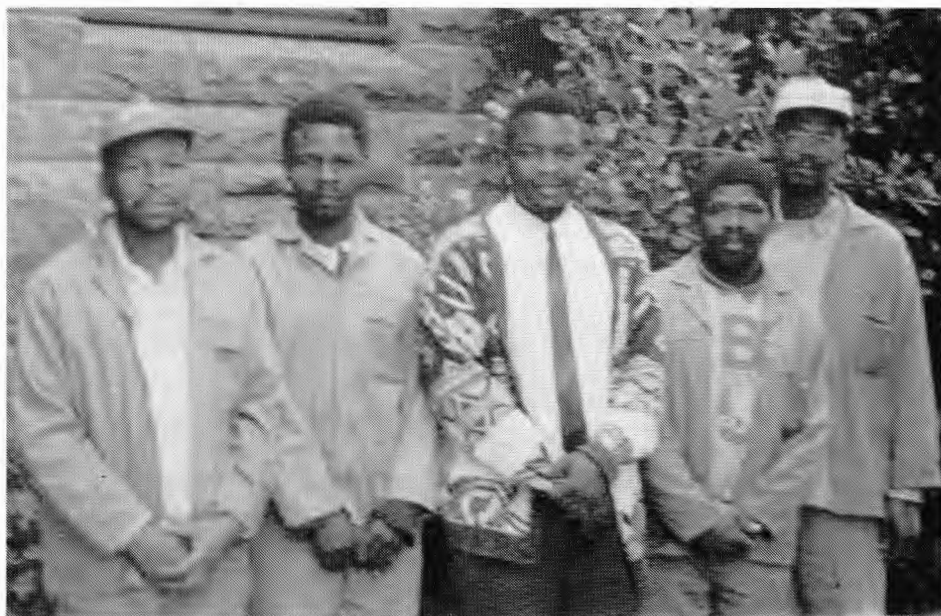
pattern design and development and learn to dye and finish articles to a high standard.

To prepare them for the "real world", cost-cutting and time-saving skills are stressed, marketing and direct sales techniques encouraged and they are helped to investigate traditional Afro-leather crafting designs and to target the tourist market with their goods.

Three further programmes are to follow, starting on November 17, 12 January and February 1998. The November class is already full with trainees from the East Cape Rural Industries.

For further details about the training, contact Mike Ginn on (0461) 31 8548.

Vigilance and concern pays off



By Siseko Njobeni

MRS CHARLOTTE WOODS thanks Eric Radu, Eric Dondashe, Elijah Ntentile, Samuel Mpumlo and Michael Badu of Janitoring and Cleaning Services for their concern and vigilance when finding her handbag which she left at the 1820 Settlers National Monument last month.

On October 3, Mrs Woods, with Kate Benyon of the Marketing and Communications Division, went to the

Monument to look at the venue that Rhodes will use during next year's Sasol SciFest.

Because they had to use some trestle tables, they asked the Janitor, Mr Elijah Ntentile, to send some of his men to the Monument to help them.

When Mrs Woods realised that she had left her handbag at the Monument, she enquired there and found that the Janitor's men had found her bag and handed it to the Security Staff there. She is extremely grateful to them.

Chemistry honours former HOD

By Siseko Njobeni

THE CHEMISTRY Department at Rhodes University has honoured a former Head of Department, Professor John Nunn, who died in 1995, by renaming its first year laboratory after him.

Prof Nunn became the first Professor of Organic Chemistry at Rhodes University in 1962. Three years later he became the Head of Department. He also served the University as the Dean of Science.

Speaking during the renaming, the Head of the Chemistry Department, Prof Perry Kaye, said that it was important to recognise the contribution that Prof Nunn had made, not only to the Department but also to the entire University.

Prof Nunn's first PhD student and the present Head of the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Prof Lambe Parolis, said that Prof Nunn was more than just a supervisor, "he was my mentor". He described him as a good and efficient administrator.

A plaque at the entrance to the newly named laboratory describes Prof Nunn as a perfectionist who made a major contribution to the planning and construction of the National Chemical Research Laboratory (NCRL) in Pretoria and the building in which the Chemistry Department is housed.

Awards for hard working ELAP students

At an end of year ELAP party, 25 students received certificates honouring their hard work and self-discipline over the year.

"ELAP aims to develop students' academic competence. This means developing their ability to function effectively at different university tasks. We need to acknowledge students who have done well in these tasks and we do this through awarding certificates in different categories", explained Ms Helen Alferts, the coordinator of the ELAP course.

The categories include the top ELAP student and top students in each group.

These two categories are based on marks. However it's important to remember that marks are not the only criteria for success in ELAP. There are other categories which include awards for improvement, participation, computer literacy and journal writing.

"While it's great that the top students often manage to maintain their positions throughout the year despite increasing complexity of language and content, it's the students who are weak at the beginning but show great improvement during the course of the year, that are the real success stories of ELAP", Ms Alferts added.



Top performers ... ELAP top students in each group together with their tutors. From left: Enoch Hermanus, Helen Alferts, Luxolo Tyali, Fleur Theophilus, Zikho Fatman, Arona Dison.



All smiles ... ELAP top student for 1997, Sicelo Moya, receives his certificate from Helen Alferts — ELAP Co-ordinator.

Smalls

Accommodation wanted

Young, female professional seeking accommodation for 1998, in modern house in secure area. Non-smoking. Off-road parking. Phone Elizabeth at 311317 (h)

Politics Lecturer seeks 1 bedroom furnished flat/cottage from January 1998. Contact David Pottie, ext 8356, e-mail: podp@giraffe

Accommodation offered

BED and BREAKFAST. Self-contained flatlet, pool, private entrance. R55,00 p.p. Contact Sheryl-Anne Drennan at ext 8298/9 (a.m.); 27189 (h) or cell 082 657 0359.

Kidds Beach Self-catering flatlet. Bedsitter with 1 double bed and fold-out two-seater couch; TV. Separate kitchen with double hotplate and fridge. Shower/toilet. Ideal for a couple with one or two children. R120 per night. Available for weekends and vacations. Some Dec/Jan dates still available. Phone 0431 811671 evenings

Miscellaneous

Karoo Lamb for Christmas Contact Joyce Sewry. e-mail: chjs@warthog or 25083 after hours.

OLD MUSEUM JARS. Once again the J.L.B. Smith Institute is offering a stock of its old (pre 1940's) apothecary-style museum jars purchased for Prof. Smith's first collections. Sizes are 2,5 l (R35) and 5,0 l (R70). Glass tanks also available, prices negotiable. Get your Christmas shopping done early for that impossible-to-shop-for special one. Contact: Dr Eric Anderson, 311002.

Housesitter available. January – April 1998. Conducting research in Geography Department Contact Gina at g9770008@giraffe, Tel: 312 050



THE MUSTARD
SEED

HEALTH
SHOP

A Slimming Menu. Are you too busy to plan, prepare and cook good food? Let us do this work for you. We offer healthy, tasty food and deliver it. We can cater for your specific dietary needs. Please contact the Mustard Seed at 311 496 or 311 174