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HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Friday, December 16th 2011

Daily News-Record

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## Book Shipment Arrives In Africa

*Posted: December 16, 2011**By EMILY SHARRER*

HARRISONBURG — Higher-than-expected shipping fees that prevented a shipment of books donated by area residents from reaching a Zambian village library have been waived, thanks to a Bridgewater College connection at a large shipping company.

For more than 11 weeks, books bound for the Nkhanga Village Library, a project led by Bridgewater sociology professor Mwizenge Tembo, were stuck in Durban, South Africa.

A friend of Tembo's, New York City resident and Zambian native Mbumwae Suba-Smith, was shipping the books along with some of her personal belongings to Zambia and said she ran into problems with higher-than-expected shipping costs.

Suba-Smith said she was working with Royal Pacific Shipping Co., a freight forwarding company, to ship the books through the Maersk Line, an international shipping firm.

After she refused to pay what she said were higher-than-quoted costs by Royal Pacific, the books remained in South Africa until last week. That's when a member of BC's board of trustees stepped in to help.

The trustee? Russell Bruner, who just happens to be the CEO of Maersk.

After hearing about Suba-Smith's troubles, Bruner enlisted the help of Tom Sproat, Maersk's senior vice president of customer service, to straighten everything out.

Sproat says the company chose to waive all shipping costs and ship the books from Durban to Lusaka, Zambia, free of charge. The books arrived in Lusaka last week.

"From the Maersk standpoint, we always try to help communities develop," said Sproat. "This seemed like it was such a well-intentioned move that kind of got caught up through no one's fault."

Suba-Smith said she was grateful for Sproat's help and is happy that the books have

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finally arrived in Zambia.

“This was just such a good gesture around the holidays,” she said.

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