

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 4/2010

Dear BOTSFA members!

Autumn leaves are falling... what a beautiful wonder in Nature!

Enjoying this colourful scenario, sweets for the eye and energizing thoughts for the soul ... winter is eventually approaching and/or has arrived in some parts of Sweden. Let us enjoy this change of season, light candles, and forget about the darkness!

Dumela has the honour to present a portrait of Gus Nilsson, done by Mats Ögren Wanger, when visiting Sanitas recently. There are many of us who know Gus and his family well, so enjoy the article! For those who don't know him – visit Sanitas when you next go Gaborone!

Many events happened in September in which botsfa was present and, in some cases also engaged. botsfa Board members Julia Majaha-Järtby and Mats Ögren Wanger attended the International Book Fair in

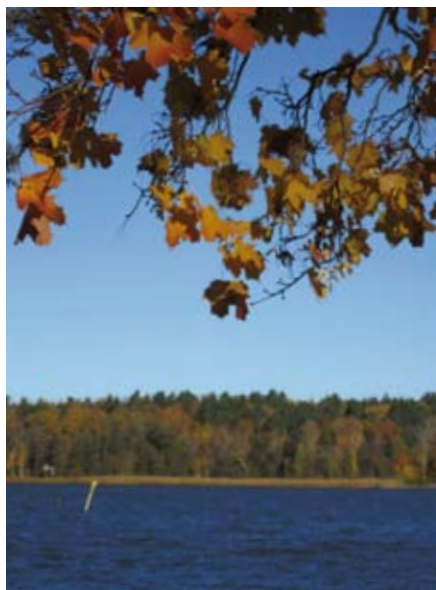


PHOTO Ulla Odqvist

Gothenburg and brought back material for Dumela. You will find an introduction to a portrait of Motswana author Unity Dow by Cecilia Wanger. However, a more comprehensive article will be published under Dumela Magazine at www.botsfa.nu. The book fair and the visit of Alexander McCall Smith in Stockholm, and the dinner in his honour at »Sällskapet« and more, are covered in Julia's article. Last but not least, don't miss the words on Sedibeng Choral Society, a

much charismatic choir from Botswana on its first tour ever outside Botswana; and a word on the exquisite cuisine prepared by Chef Joseph Seeletso during the McCall Smith's dinner and at Botswana's 44th Independence Anniversary Celebration in Stockholm! Also listen to, and watch Sedibeng at www.botsfa.nu!

The Photo Competition has been concluded and the winners chosen. Visit www.botsfa.nu and you will find all competing pictures on our website. The winners are presented on page 4.

Fast approaching the end of the year 2010, I would like to take the opportunity of wishing you a Merry and Peaceful Christmas, and a very Happy New Year!



Best regards,
Ulla Odqvist
BOTSFA's Chairperson

Ulla Odqvist

VISIT OUR HOMEPAGE
www.botsfa.nu

For four decades, Swedish born Gus Nilsson has run the Plant Clinic and Nursery Sanitas in the outskirts of Gaborone. The name Sanitas comes from Latin and means 'healthy'. It covers the basic idea of disease-free plant production. Sanitas has grown and developed continuously, since the start in 1970. In 1996, Gus and his wife, Sieglinde, opened the popular »Tea Garden« restaurant to visitors. The restaurant is often fully booked especially during weekends. In September this year, Sanitas opened a conference- and exhibition building, called »@linnaeus«.



Gösta »Gus« Nilsson – 40 years with Sanitas

Gus Nilsson's interest for, and engagement in biological diversity, environment friendly cultivating methods, and possibilities for the ordinary people to provide for their own survival, remain unchanged and solid:

– I am a Motswana, a citizen of Botswana, but I don't have the possibility of buying land. This is a big problem. From the beginning, this area was nothing but bushland. I was allocated 5 hectares when I started the development of Sanitas. I, however, today lease 14 hectares.

Seemingly tireless, the tall man Gus leads us around the cultivated areas, a green paradise in the middle of the very dry area surrounding it. With the help and assistance of his wife, Sieglinde, and his two sons, Mattias and Kent, the green paradise is flourishing. Mattias and Kent work at Sanitas but live in Gaborone with their families, while Gus and Sieglinde live at Sanitas.

– Here you see the area of my naartjie cultivation, he says, pointing at rows of seed cultivated trees with citrus fruits that look like mandarines, however smaller.

The trees stand in rows in gravel beds, approximately one meter from each other. Gus explains with excitement the different unconventional cultivation methods that he has developed, and proudly explains the successful growth of the plants that are a result of the methods.

– These fruits are very popular. We make lemonade from the juice, and sell it in our restaurant. The method of cultivation of naartjie trees is successful here. Why aren't there more fruit cultivations in Botswana, he says, maybe more to himself than asking me. They could solve the problems of poverty in the country!

Another of Gus' innovations is the so-called Sanitas' wall, a wall that is covered by an array of wall-fixed pots out of which the vegetation grows.

It is a simple and cheap method to cleanse grey water and rainwater in dry climate areas. A big part of the water passes through the plants in a productive way instead

of evaporating from the soil. Consequently, this is better use of the water, which is very scarce in Botswana.

– With my methods, I could make the desert turn green! In my new book »A new green revolution«, I try to describe how far one can go with rainwater only.

Gus also talks about the rights to ownership, a subject close to his heart. He grew up as the son of a crofter.

– If you let people own land, they would be able to create a self-sufficient living. As an example, I would like to compare it with the Swedish »Egnahemsrörelsen« (Get-your-own-home Movement) that started at the end of the 19th century, and gave industrial workers possibilities of becoming millionaires. Something similar is needed also here. The lack of ownership rights makes the world stand still.

Gus Nilsson has sent many letters to politicians and organizations about his creative thoughts, plans and appeals.

– With 50 hectares, 50 households in Botswana would be self-sufficient! 500 000 small farms would need only 5 hectares in Botswana. I have pointed this out to the authorities here.

Originally educated at Cornell



www.sanitas.co.bw

BOTSWANA visits SWEDEN

University in the USA, Gus Nilsson had 25 years' experience in horticulture. He arrived in Botswana with a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology in 1967. Before that he had been working with cultivation in Sardinia and Kenya for some years.

– It was a great challenge to make use of the scarce water that falls as rain. However, the great relief to live in Botswana is that there is little bureaucracy!

Sweden, his old home country, has during the years received many well directed kick-in-the-butt from him in, among others, one of his booklets with the vivid title »Lyft på kjolen, Moder Svea – och släpp dina medborgare fria!« (Lift your skirt, Mother Svea – and set your citizens free!). This booklet Gus Nilsson presented to Ingvar Carlsson, Prime Minister at the time.

From where does his driving force come?

– From my Mother. From the age of five, I helped her with our small cultivation. She had never time to read, but she knew everything about cultivation of small pieces of land.

Eventually the sun sets behind the mulberry trees at Sanitas. The bees buzz around, and the scent from carnation and chrysanthemum lies heavily in the twilight air. The birds' singing reaches an evening-crescendo, and from a distance one hears a dog's lonely bark. Gus himself pounds in the ground with a spit to show the cultivation depth. I wonder if he doesn't have great feelings when looking at everything he has achieved.

– I think only about everything which time didn't permit me to do. I think of everything not yet done. Why are fruit and vegetables and flowers imported from South Africa at high costs instead of being produced in Botswana? I plan to run the whole Sanitas farm with biogas in the future. Nobody knows if I'll still be here... Luckily, my sons, Matias and Kent are interested in this method too.

TEXT AND PHOTO *Mats Ögren Wanger*
TRANSLATION *Ulla Odqvist*

It all started with the International Book Fair in Gothenburg (September 23–26), a must for book lovers. The theme this year was »Africa in Focus«. The fair featured a number of African authors, including Unity Dow (Botswana) Petina Gappah (Zimbabwe), Nadine Gordimer (South Africa). The world famous author of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, Alexander McCall Smith, whose books are set in Botswana, was a great attraction and a key speaker at the fair.

Following the fair, the Embassy of Botswana organized events that showcased Botswana's song and food cultures in Stockholm, blended with a choral visit to Uppsala. At a dinner arranged in honour of Alexander McCall Smith and in celebration of Botswana's 44th Independence Anniversary in Stockholm, the Embassy treated the audience to Botswana cuisine prepared by Chef Joseph Seeletso (a Motswana living and working in Poland) and breath-taking performances by Sedibeng Choral Society, from Botswana.



The presence of the world famous author of No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, Alexander McCall Smith, and Unity Dow placed Botswana on a high pedestal at the book fair. McCall Smith has written 11

books under the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series and the character he has created, Mma Ramotswe, is world famous for her wisdom and warmth.

Unity Dow, a Motswana human rights activist and former high court judge, has published 5 books set in her homeland, Botswana. The two authors held several seminars which attracted many attendants keen to meet and listen to the stories about their literal worlds and views on Botswana and Africa. The interviews with McCall Smith and Dow were extended to tv and radio relays. A cherry on the cake were seminars by Lasse Berg, who is an authority on cultural issues embracing Botswana. BOTSFA Board members, Sten Rylander and Mats Ögren Wanger played significant roles in some of the discussion programmes. Gothenburg echoed Botswana, Botswana and Africa, Africa!

The McCall Smith dinner held on September 26 at »Sällskapet« in Stockholm attracted 120 guests, a significant number of whom were people who had worked or lived in Botswana. There was lots of reminiscing from the good old times. Chef Seeletso's dinner, with typical Botswana ingredients of goat meat, seswaa (pounded meat) and other foods exotic to Botswana, provided finger-licking tastes. Sedibeng Choral Society filled »Sällskapet« with sounds that left the audience spell-bound and crying for more. Unfortunately the performance had to be brief



to allow the choir some rest in readiness for a 4 am appearance on TV4, where the choir memorably featured on Nyhetsmorgon. The gap that the choir left at »Sällskapet« was enthusiastically filled by Lilla Akademien music group. A night to remember for the dinner guests!



The song and cultural road meandered into an early celebration of Botswana's 44th Independence Anniversary, on September 27 at Scandic Sergel Plaza Hotel in Stockholm. The occasion was graced by the CEO of BEDIA, Mr. Jacob Nkate. Chef Seeletso filled the plates of a very international gathering with Botswana foods, with Sedibeng leaving its audience mesmerized. Those who did not get a chance to be part of the earlier food and song experiences were treated to Sedibeng's full show »Made in Botswana« at Wiks Folkhögskola and Regina Teatern in Uppsala and, on September 30 (Botswana's Independence Day), at Immanuelkyrkan in Stockholm. Alexander McCall Smith's address to »Sällskapet's« guests, the showcasing of Chef Seeletso's Botswana cuisines and Sedibeng's song and dance in Stockholm and Uppsala, left an indelible trail. Pula Botswana!

by Julia Majaha-Järtby
PHOTOS Per Järtby and Mats Ögren Wanger



Congratulations to the winners of the 2010 photo competition. There were twelve entries by four petrographers. Winners are:

- 1st San walking in Kalahari by Mats Ögren Wanger
- 2nd Linyani sunset by Mats Ögren Wanger
- 3rd Sand Road in Chobe by Ulla Odqvist

To view all pictures visit www.botsfa.nu
Get ready for the 2011 photo competition (theme to be decided).

BOTSFA members and friends informal GET-TOGETHER

Botsfa members and friends will be meeting at Black and Brown Inn on Hornsgatan 50B Stockholm, T-bana Mariatorget, www.blackandbrown.se.

The get-togethers are preliminarily scheduled to take place every second Monday of the month, starting November 8 and aim to, among other things:

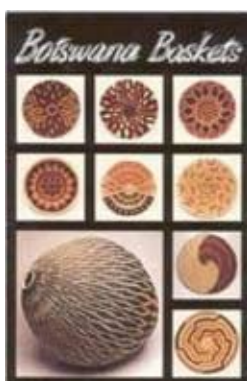
- bring people with interest in Botswana together, in an informal setting
- have a bite or a drink together in a relaxed atmosphere
- from time to time have short presentations of, say, photo collections, videos
- share updates on developments in Botswana.

Unity Dow Advocate for women and children

Dumela met with Unity Dow during the Gothenburg International Book Fair and has an article in Dumela web Magazine at www.botsfa.nu. Read about this very interesting and dynamic former High Court Judge, advocate for women and children's rights and author of five novels based on Botswana.



Unity says about her career as a writer, –Writing novels is a way of communicating with a broader public, and I turn to readers who love Botswana.



Botswana Crafts Market

The Embassy of Botswana and BOTSFA, in conjunction with the Department of Arts and Culture in Botswana, will host a Christmas craft market at the Etnografiska museet during December 5–19. There will be a variety of crafts for sale including the famous baskets and other artifacts. This provides an opportunity to get a Botswana feeling and collect arts for home decorations and to give special Christmas presents to family members and friends.

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