

# DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 3/2011

## Dear BOTSFA members!

Summer is slowly but surely gliding away. All good things must, indeed, come to an end, perhaps a reminder of how quickly time flies when we have fun.

The boat trip to Åland to celebrate Botswana's 45th Independence Anniversary provided a well desired mingle, spanning from Botswana of the 70-ies to the present Internet-driven world. Thumbs of the younger generation were consistently on the mobile/I-phone keyboards while the older generation reminisced over Botswana of yesteryears. Pula, Botswana!

In this issue of Dumela, you will read about the visit to Sweden in August by the Motswana jazz singer Shanti Lo, about Planet Baobab Lodge, and my participation in and experiences of the Makgadikgadi Pans Midnight Walk 2011. Last, but not least, the issue shares a brief report about BOTSFA's trip to Åland with its readers.

Wishing you a pleasant transition into the beautiful autumn colours!

My best regards,



## Independence Cruise

On Saturday October 1st, on the day after the Botswana Independence Day – September 30th – H.E. Bernadette S. Rathedi, the Ambassador of the Embassy of Botswana and all her staff, and about 20 members of BOTSFA, went on a Cruise to Åland to celebrate Botswana's 45th Independence Day. An interesting program set up by the organising committee included Botswana's National Anthem followed by the official message from the President of Botswana read by the Ambassador. The participants were informed about BOTSFA's current project (Bright Faces Daycare Center), and support for cultural visits by artists from Botswana. The participants watched a documentary »När det regnar manna från himlen« made by Lasse Berg 25 years ago. This was followed by interesting questions and discussions on the changes that have taken place to-date. A quiz by the organisers, Per and Julia Järtby, challenged the grey cells of the participants divided into six subgroups. In the end Julia declared us all winners with the highest scoring team getting chocolates for sticking their head a little higher. The Botswana Independence Cruise, in sunshine and crystal clear skies, was a great success and became a very good opportunity to meet old and new friends!

*Ulla Odqvist*

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# Makgadikgadi Pans Midnight Walk

TEXT **Julia Majaha-Järtby** PHOTO **Per Järtby**



»WHY?« was the consistent response I got to my mentioning of going on the Makgadikgadi Pans Midnight Walk. –Wow, but

how come you decided to take that walk? is the response I got to my mentioning of having participated in the walk and walking the full distance (90+ kilometres) on two consecutive nights. Why?

I don't think I knew what I was getting myself into but I had the urge to just go for it. Per and I started walking around Sigtuna, on average 50 km/week some three months' before the walk, with the usual interruptions that come with Swedish summer: spending time with friends, taking care of grandchildren, and trying to keep the garden clean and green in style with neighbours.

–You must be very fit to venture into such a long walk, commented a friend. –No, I am hoping to get fit from the walk and also lose some weight, I said, not being sure what I meant. I think I lost myself in the process.

–You are the pioneers for this walk, said Stellan Bengtsson to 25 walkers gathered together, with each pondering over the 130 000 or so steps that only three of us would later complete.

The midnight walk turned out to be an all-night walk. I walked for 22 hours during two nights with only two hours' mid-morning sleep. A full moon brilliantly lit the way between the walk's destinations of Kubu Island and Mosu village. My spirits were up during a good part of the walk but, I must admit, there were moments when I almost faltered into catching a ride on a quad bike. Now I am glad I resisted that temptation!

As I tracked behind Nicky Bousfield, 81 years' old, whom I struggled to keep up with, my mind kept rallying back to a young doctor who had attended to my ankle, which I accidentally sprained a few days before the walk. I had pleaded with him »to fix the ankle«. To my confession that I needed the ankle to be fixed to walk across the Makgadikgadi Pans, he asked –How long is the walk? –About 90 kilometres, I said. –At your age, the comment slipped the doctor's tongue! Yes, at my age...

I had been inspired by Mats and Cecilia Wanger's previous year's expedition on a three-day Makgadikgadi Pans Walk. They and their family friend, IngMarie Ahlstrand, had talked about the walk with an infectious enthusiasm. They gave tips over the gear we would need for the walk and that helped a great deal. But, throughout the walk, the comment by



**I struggled behind 81 old Nicky Bousfield**

the doctor kept ringing in my head, »At your age!« If only he knew he gave me the strength to persevere! I was not going to let age decide what I should or should not do. I adopted Nike's motto, »Just do it!«

Nicky and I proved between us that age is a matter of the mind. This was my first pans' walk but Nicky was no novice to Y Care walks – a simply amazing iron lady. Yes, Nicky is now leading my way – I will follow in her footsteps. My feet are already itching for more Kalahari sands. I have tried to hide my pride over having walked two marathons in two nights, but can't. I was one of the three walkers out of 25 who completed the whole walk of 90 kilometres Makgadikgadi Pans Midnight Walk and on my feet!



# Planet Baobab-connector to Makgadikgadi

TEXT **Julia Majaha-Järtby** PHOTO **Per Järtby**



Mats Ögren Wanger had recommended Planet Baobab for lodging during the Makgadikgadi Pans Midnight Walk. Per and I were welcomed by a statue of a giant anteater, short of reaching Gweta village. We turned left onto a dirt road through mopane bushes. A few meters to the south of the main road lay an expansive dust-filled parking area. We had arrived at Planet Baobab! As we approached the reception desk, my attention was grabbed by a semi-circular »sofa« which stretched along the wall of the spacious reception area. Fifteen to twenty people could easily sit on it.

I was just about to settle down on this inviting sofa when I heard the traditional »dumelang« coming from the reception desk. –Dumela mma, both Per and I responded. –I am Masego Sebokolodi. Welcome, the young lady said with a warm smile and quickly registered us for our two-night stay and handed the key to number 3 Bakalanga twin mud hut. Masego, who we would later learn was assistant manager, escorted us to an area linking the reception and bar.

We settled ourselves on settees covered with black and white cow hide and were warmly welcomed by Alwyn Peterson, Planet Baobab's manager. –Skâl, we clicked our glasses absorbing the picture decorations surrounding the bar area. Europe had converged on the Kalahari sands as one heard Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch and several other languages echoing around. As more visitors arrived, Alwyn moved around to wel-

come and chit chat with groups and individuals.

During the sundowner, I ask Alwyn what management plans he has for the lodge. –I have two major projects. I am planning a restaurant workshop. The kitchen needs a »facelift« and there is urgent need for waste management and recycling, says Alwyn with a concerned look on his face.

In the evening we were treated to dinner within sight of the open-thatched kitchen and in full moon. There appeared to be no stress, exactly what we needed before our two nights of walking!

–I started as a kitchen staff working in the bar and dining, says Masego. –Planet Baobab has responded to the demands by increasing the number of huts to 18 overtime and introducing dome tents and a camping space. The combination of huts and tents has responded well to the needs of family groups, elderly guests and low budget »backpackers«. The lodge has a capacity for 140 guests and tonight we have 130. She is quick to add that the opening of the pool in 2005 has made a big difference in attracting European tourists. –They find the Makgadikgadi heat unbearable, she laughs. Luckily we were there in the cooler August month.

At the dinner, my mind goes back to what Alwyn said about the kitchen. Soon after the chef, Kaizer, places my fillet steak order on the table, I nod my head in agreement to what Alwyn earlier said. –The food needs exceptional spicing to appeal to cross-

cultural tastes, I say to my husband, who nods back.

We did not dip ourselves in the biggest swimming pool on the Kalahari sands but the waters never stayed still. Youngsters were jumping in and out like dolphins.

We had read about the meerkats safari and had booked to experience it. The day tour took us to Ntwetwe Pan, one of the Makgadikgadi pans' great expansions of nothingness.

There were 10 of us (6 young Italians, a young Dutch couple and Per and I). Ndabona, our driver and tour guide, had cautiously warned us that meerkats do not like extreme temperatures, but was hopeful that we would see them. The temperatures had risen from 7°C in the early morning to 25°C by the time we reached the pan at 1 pm. We were lucky, as after a bit of search, we came across the meerkat family.

I left Planet Baobab thinking, –This is the gateway to where baobabs rule and meerkats monitor the vastly-stretched Makgadikgadi pans and planet earth. The lodge provided the serenity that we needed before venturing into the Midnight Walk...





## Jazz singer Shanti Lo visits Sweden

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

**DURING AUGUST 2 TO 16** jazz singer Shanti Lo from Botswana visited Stockholm. Shanti Lo had been invited by the Pride Festival Committee to perform at the Solidarity Gala in Kungsträdgården on August 6. He was accompanied by world famous guitarist, John Selolwane, who has played with Paul Simon in Graceland and Hugh Masekela among other famous artists. With Shanti Lo came also his manager, Soares Katumbela

The group extended the stay for performances at Glenn Miller Café, Hellsten Hotel, EthioStar Restaurant and Etnografiska museet. BOTSFA board member Mats Ögren Wanger organized for Shanti Lo to perform at Nyhetsmorgon on TV4, and BOTSFA organised performances at EthioStar and Etnografiska museet. A concert was also held in Andreas' Church at Södermalm in Stockholm. The Embassy of Botswana generously supported the group during the stay. This was the first single cultural visit by an artist from Botswana.

Shanti Lo, John Selolwane and Soares Katumbela were very pleased with the visit, and would like to come back to Sweden for performance tour in Stockholm and other places in Sweden. The establishments of contacts with many Swedish musicians look promising!



It is with regret that BOTSFA has to announce the death of **Svenolof Forsman**, who passed away at 70 years of age on August 18, 2011 in Arjeplog. Svenolof was a longtime member of the Association and worked for Roads Department in Botswana during the mid 1970ies. Svenolof is survived by his sister Lena Forsman and grand-daughters Juni, Molly och Minna Andersson.



In a new book, »I DON'T KNOW WHY I WAS CREATED«, Botswanas foremost artist Dada (Coex Ae Qgam) is portrayed by Ann Gollifer and Jenny Egner. Read the review at [botsfa.nu](http://botsfa.nu)



**MIN UD-KRÖNIKA**  
(My Foreign Ministry Chronicle)  
by Ulla Odqvist

»Min UD-Krönika« is a captive book. It draws on fantasy and takes us on a journey over an ordinary person's work career around the world. In this book, Ulla covers her experiences in the countries in which

she developed her diplomatic career, specifically China–Angola–Botswana and Bosnia Herzegovina.

The book is in Swedish but the Botswana chapter has been translated and posted under [www.botsfa.nu/news.html](http://www.botsfa.nu/news.html). The chapter on Ulla's experiences in Botswana takes us on a journey over the challenges of her job, starting with preparations for a Botswana official delegation, led by the then Minister of Finance Peter Mmusi to Sweden in 1982, to discussing Swedish development assistance to Botswana. Ulla's experiences later span over social life in Gaborone; safari excursions to Chobe Game Reserve, and a revisit to Botswana twenty years' later. The chapter is a journey of a warm relationship with Botswana, and the challenges faced in dealing with the politically-loaded responsibilities over neighbouring South Africa.

The book can be ordered through: [Litenupplaga.se](http://Litenupplaga.se) or at various Internet bookstores.

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