

# DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 1/2014

## Dear BOTSFA members!

**A**s BOTSFA celebrates its 30th anniversary in April this year, one cannot help but reflect on the strength of the relationships between Botswana and Sweden and Batswana and Swedes. The first Dumela (Dumela 1/84), a 20-paged document, was issued in 1984. In the »chairperson's letter«, Torsten Johansson (BOTSFA's first Chairman), writes: »Få är de länder som vi svenskar fått så många vänner i och som vi trivs så utomordentligt att arbeta tillsammans med.« *»Few are the countries that we Swedes have so many friends and with which we have exceptionally good working relationships.«*

In a letter to Jimmy Gunnarsson, first Secretary of BOTSFA, dated 2nd August, 1984, Sam A. Mpuchane, Ambassador to Sweden, (designated from London), writes:

– Dear Mr. Gunnarsson,

It was a great pleasure for me to receive an invitation to write an introduction to the first issue of the Swedish-Botswana Friendship Association's magazine DUMELA.

The magazine is a most laudable manifestation of your association's vitality even though it was only launched in April.

I am therefore very happy to enclose herewith my introductory remarks.

I wish you and the Association all the best.

Yours sincerely,

S. A. Mpuchane

Ambassador to Sweden

Ambassador Mpuchane concludes his 1,5-page introduction to the launch of Dumela as follows:

– Deep satisfaction with and encouragement to the Association were expressed by President Masure when, during his visit to Sweden, he had the occasion to speak at a reception given in his honour by the Association's members.

...

May DUMELA grow and become a successful mouth piece of the Botswana-Sweden Friendship Association. Pula!

PULA • PULA • PULA

Julia Majaha-Järtby

BOTSFA

Chairperson



### Welcome to BOTSFA!

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES

- Individual: SEK 175
- Family: SEK 300 (incl. children up to 15 years of age)
- Student: SEK 100
- Institution: SEK 500

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For an update of records, please send an e-mail to [AndersHj@botsfa.nu](mailto:AndersHj@botsfa.nu) with the name(s) and contact details of the renewal or payment for new membership.

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Mabel



Diphere

## Like one of the family – portraits of four women who worked for Swedish families in Botswana

TEXT Julia Majaha-Järtby PHOTO Per Järtby

**Generally, when Swedes came to Botswana, from as far back as the early 1970s, they would have never employed anyone to work for them as a house-helper or maid, as commonly known in Botswana. The majority of the Swedes were fairly young, in the process of building their families, or simply inexperienced in handling the role of employer. Dumela met with some of Botswana women who worked for Swedes to get an impression of their views regarding their employers. Each of the women summed up the relationship as cordial and respectful – Swedes are kind – *Ba na le Botho*.**

### Mabel Nkwe

My first job was with the UN High Commission, in Gaborone, where I worked for two years. Thereafter I left to work for a Swedish family, Lars and Birgitta Dahlberg, in 1974. When Lars left in 1986, I got a job with the Swedish Embassy to work at the Ambassadors' residence. I have worked for all Ambassadors and Chargé d'affaires who came to Botswana since then. I remember each and every representative I worked for in the order they came (Ambassadors Göran Zetterqvist, Folke Löfgren, Bengt Sparre (Chargé d'affaires), Rasmus Rasmusson, Ambassadors Christian Rehlén, Birgitta Karlström Dorph, Annika Jagander and Marie de Frutos (Chargé d'affaires). When the Embassy of Sweden in Botswana was closed, in 2008, I transferred to the Swedish Trade and Investment Council – today Business Sweden – which operates from what used to be the Ambassadors' residence and now is called the Sweden House.

People have wondered why I decided to continue to work for the Swedes all my life. Swedes are generally good

natured and caring people – *Ba na le Botho*. I have mostly felt like part of the family.

Looking back, one of the things I very much enjoyed was learning to understand people – specifically having worked for so many Swedish Ambassadors. The interactions I had with them and their high ranking guests, such as the Presidents of Botswana, Heads of States and foreign diplomats made me appreciate that we are all human, irrespective of the positions we hold in society.

Through the cordial relationship I had with my employers, I got very strong encouragement for my two sons to get education. While I have enjoyed my work as a house-keeper, I learned to see education as a key to success.

I wish for a continued strong cooperation between Botswana and Sweden. The closing of the Embassy was a very sad development.

### Diphere Modise

My first job was with a Swedish family, Ove and Maria Andersson, who I worked for from 1976 to 1984. I was 16



*Florah*



*Ditsile*

years of age and had no work experience. Maria treated me like a daughter and I learned a lot from her patient training. I then worked for Birgitta and Örjan Bäckman (1984–1987), Arne and Marianne Sjöberg (1987–1990). Thereafter I worked for at least four other Swedish families. My most recent employer, Tommy Carlsson, who worked for the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS), left Botswana in December 2013. I am currently unemployed but hope that I can continue to work for Swedish families until I retire.

What I have like most about working for Swedes is that they are not »slave-drivers«. I had weekends off, which provided me the opportunity to build my home in Mochudi.

I have saved all the references I have been getting from my employers and hope that my children will keep them as memory for the family.

Good luck to Botswana and Sweden!

### Florah Mmadipene Moeng

I worked for a family who were younger than me, Per and Julia Järtby, from 1973 to 1977. I still refer to Julia as my daughter as I never felt like her employee. They respected me and I respected them. A combination of a Swedish man and a Motswana woman could have turned out to be a problem, as they could have been differences regarding how I should be treated as a house-helper. But till today, I feel like I lost a family when they left Botswana.

When, in 1976, Botswana celebrated its 10th anniversary of independence, the Järtbys saw an advertisement seeking women interested in working at the temporary residences of the visiting presidents and prime ministers who came for the celebration. Per and Julia encouraged me to apply. I was selected and underwent some training in cooking. When the time came for the celebration, I was assigned to

President Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire. An unforgettable experience!

When Per and Julia left for Sweden in 1977, I briefly worked for family Eric Leijonhuvud. With the reference I had from the organisers of the independence celebration, I started looking for jobs outside housekeeping. Thanks to my kind Swedish relationship, I got a job as a matron at Scottish Livingstone Hospital in Molepolole. I was later transferred to Sekgoma Memorial in Serowe where I worked until my retirement. Today I am living a comfortable life, but regret that I never visited Sweden when I was younger. I wish Botswana and Sweden Pula!

### Ditsile Mmopyane

When Sixten and Viera Larsson came to Botswana in 1975, I had no hesitation to work for them. I had never worked for Swedes but their approach made me feel comfortable. I liked the family with their pretty little girl, Paula, who was as old as my own daughter, Thuna. The girls became friends and played together a lot. I worked for the Larssons until 1977 and when they later returned to Botswana in 1981, I was very happy to continue where I had left off. I stayed with them until 1985.

Between the time the Larssons were away from Botswana, I worked for an English family for two years (1978–80) and later for another lovely Swedish family, Mia and Anders Johnson. I enjoyed working for Swedes a lot. I have since 1989 worked at Westwood Primary School. It is a very different type of work and I miss the family touch.

I was happy to see Sixten and Viera when they visited Botswana in 2006 and I hope they will come again. I would like to see also my other Swedish friends.



## Bright Faces enters a NEW PHASE

**Bright Faces Daycare Centre** started New Year 2014 with a repainted wall and a lease agreement for operating from a new premise. Bright Faces' director, Neo Chitombo, plans to run daycare operations from both premises – the new one as daycare and the old premises as a nursery for

toddlers. The new premises should enable Bright Faces to obtain a licence to operate as a full-fledged daycare.

Dumela congratulates Neo Chitombo for persevering in the interest of children, particularly orphans in Kumakwane. Well done Neo!

## TOY JOY

The Embassy has a collection toys, donated by Toy Joy Project in Finland, which are meant for use by children in Botswana. If you are going to be travelling to Gaborone/Botswana and would wish to assist in transporting some toys, please contact the Embassy of Botswana at [botstock@gov.bw](mailto:botstock@gov.bw).



**BOTSFA AGM**  
**March 8, 2014 in Bromma**

## BOTSFA Membership

BOTSFA attracted a record number of new members at the beginning of 2014. The association opened the year with 18 new members (9 individuals and 9 families) compared with the insignificant numbers that have joined in the past. Several members have also renewed their membership. Dumela welcomes the new members and thanks those who have renewed for the continued support.

For joining BOTSFA or renewal of membership, please see details on page 1.

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