

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 1/2020

Dear BOTSFA members

DUMELANG! We had planned to meet during our Annual General Meeting, but the Coronavirus decided that this would not be. The virus is a pandemic with no boundary. We plan to set a new date for the AGM as soon as things get back to normal. For now, let's respect guidelines for minimizing the spread, especially by practicing social distancing and handwashing.

In this Dumela, Mats Ögren Wanger shares his experience on being stuck in the Corona »lockdown« and what may await us »post« the pandemic. We also have the usual informative column by Honorary Consul Kent Nilsson, followed by glimpses of happy children at Bright Faces Daycare Centre on the last page.

PULA!!!

Nelly Kabomo-Hogård
BOTSFA
Chairperson



See more about Bright Faces Daycare Centre on page 4.



Last flight from Botswana

by Mats Ögren Wanger

The deadly Corona Virus is dramatically changing our lives, breaking our patterns and plans. It's not gently shaking humanity and its foundations, it's rocking us senseless.

A foretaste of the Virus in Gaborone in mid-February

I remember telling ambassador Lameck Nthekela and his wife Ikanyeng by the dinner table at their residence in Pretoria about my experience when I landed in Johannesburg. I had been very surprised by the entrance of a group of military uniformed officers, with masks and eyeglasses, into the plane. They took each passenger's temperature. I got a little shaken, but this was just the beginning and foretaste of what was to come.

Corona times in Gaborone

I came to Gaborone on the 26th of February, following a week in Maseru, to launch a new tennis practice ball and art wall at Gaborone Sport Club — and to be at the opening of the art exhibition »Difficult Women« by Ann Gollifer and four other artists, held on 10th of March at the National Museum.

No handshaking no hugs

At the exhibition there were no handshakes nor hugging. At the tennis club, we greeted each other by

 to page 4

Welcome to BOTSFA!

MEMBERSHIP FEES

• Individual: SEK 175 • Family: SEK 300 (incl. children up to 15) • Student: SEK 100 • Institution: SEK 500
Plusgiro 85 10 39-8, or Bankgiro 428-6472

Visit us on www.botsfa.nu

There have been good rains in Angola, resulting in the panhandle depositing water into the Okavango river. This follows poor rainfalls in Angola in 2019, which has led levels of water in the delta being too low and a disincentive to tourism. With the Okavango river level reportedly high, there is hope that once the Coronavirus lets go off its grip on the world, the delta should become the usual centre of attraction for tourism. Paddling on Hope ...



THE RIVER AND THE MODEL

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY Mats Ögren Wanger



PHOTO BY
Raees Abdoola
DRESS DESIGNER
Mothusi Lesolle
The dress won
an award in New
York. The dress
is called
Motlalepula.

Once upon a time the Thamalakane River in Maun was flowing calmly like it usually does during summer times. On this particular day, a day in January when life was easy, the river was excitedly getting ready for a late afternoon meeting with a woman who had come for a Mokoro trip.

Stray dogs by the waterline

To the sound of cowbells, she slowly walked down to the waterline. Everyone likes it by the river, she thought to herself. Amid her thoughts horses, donkeys and stray dogs strayed freely along the river. Children helping their mothers washing clothes by the shoreline waved and she smiled back.

Gold on the river

Kindly the river had asked the sun for a golden light and the water lilies to get polished and to stay open. »How do I look?« the river asked the Marabou storks in the reeds and didn't notice the woman coming. »Not bad, you look good to me,« she said before the storks had a chance to open their mouths. »Julia Tsile is my name.« »Oooh, hello I'm

Thamalakane,« the river said and encouraged her to get into the mokoro. The poler pushed the mokoro closer to the woman, so she the river could embrace her in the open water.

– Where are we going, where are we flowing?, she asked.
– Share a story with me, tell me who you are and I will take you up streams to my dreamland, my source, to the warm summer rains, the river said.

– It sounds promising, what can I tell you, I am known as »Juice«, I'm a mother to a beautiful son, I am a mother before everything else, I was raised by a single mother who hails from Kanye. My father is Herero even though I never got to meet him. I run an agency in Botswana called Juice Promotions Model Management. I have been modelling for 17 years. I have a university degree in Tourism Management and am currently studying linguistics, majoring in German at Goethe German Institute in Cape Town.

– Tell me Mr River, how long have you been floating here?
– Oooh dear, I have been coming and going here for so long, before Botswana. before Bechuanaland. I remember

when the river bushmen settled down here and the crocodiles came long before them.

– So you are a model, just like my water lilies, they are my models. Why are you a model?

– I honestly never wanted to be a model. I grew up as a tomboy. I played volleyball for the Botswana National Volleyball team. I proceeded to play professionally for Mafolofolo Volleyball Club. I used to get a lot of compliments for looking like a model. So, I got the courage to go to companies to propose to model for them at the age of 18 and then managed to book my first job being featured in Lapologa magazine. This opened doors for me to do local fashion shows at the time. I have been modelled in South Africa and East Africa for 10 years.

– »Juice« have you ever struggled to survive in the model industry?

– It can be a brutal industry. Being a model to me means resilience, a person who is able to take rejection and be willing to do it over and over again to get the job and also have a unique signature about you, especially your looks and style.

My mother's teaching kept me safe

– I always tell the story that I left Botswana in a backpack to move to South Africa to pursue my dreams. There were times I would go to bed hungry with nothing to eat just to save transport money to be able to go for a casting. And, as someone who came from humble beginnings, I was never exposed to bad influence because my mother's teachings and prayers kept me safe. I knew I was there as a mirror to my family and, at the time, I also knew I am representing my country.

Hey river man, do you see the red and purple rain clouds in the horizon?

– It never seems to rain it just seems to pour over there. Take me there please, I feel the aim in life now, it's to be happy, and I feel the place to be happy is here, and the time to be happy is now.

Yes, we are nearly there, we are close to my source, my aim in life.



Dumelang dear Botsfa members!

Since Friday morning April 3rd, we are officially on a 28-day lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. President Masisi declared a 21-day State of Public Emergency on the same date, later extended to six months by parliament on 9.04.2020. The President and all who had been in the venue were sent to quarantine, following report of a positive test on a nurse who had been assigned to take participants' temperatures for the session to proceed.

During the lockdown, we are to practice »Extreme Social Distancing«. Only essential service providers are permitted to be open to the public. Schools and universities are closed. All borders are closed for passenger traffic, but goods are permitted to pass. The general public is confined to staying at home. Sanitas is closed as well and has only a small crew from staff living within walking distance to the garden centre – to try and keep all plants alive.

As of to-date, we have 13 confirmed cases and one death. We have good reason to be worried, our health facilities are not prepared for this. The whole of Botswana has only few ventilators and very limited ICU beds. The tourism industry has now come to a complete standstill. Many businesses will have zero income for probably several months. Many employees will lose income and, in most cases, maybe also their jobs. We are all very worried as to how we will survive the crisis. The delay in the onset of the spread in the country, compared to other countries, is that we can learn from what has happened in those places and be better prepared. Let's hope this works.

On a more positive note, we have had a fantastic summer with 'normal' temperatures and decent rains. We are still hoping for a few last rains before the arrival of winter. Our dams are looking good and Angola has also experienced good rains and a strong Okavango river is starting to fill up the dry delta, yet again. Even the Zambesi is pumping into the Vic Falls, which are more powerful than they have been in years.

The evening before lockdown, I took the opportunity to enjoy a great paddle in my kayak on the Gaborone dam. Gives one hope of a better tomorrow...

Wishing you all a safe and happy Easter. I have seen great pictures from the unfolding spring. Enjoy! Pula!

*Kent Nilsson
Swedish Honorary Consul*

having rackets touch. It felt so strange to not touch friends in the manner we had always done.

»Wake up alarm calls« in end of March

After the 20th of March, I witnessed the society closing down – step by step. The police came to my tennis club and closed the bar. Sanitas Tea garden closed; all liquor stores closed. There were long queues outside supermarkets, where people bunkered groceries and other stuff. A maximum of 50 people was allowed to enter at a time.

Leading the nation in difficult times – do what I say, not what I do!

In Mmegi newspaper and other media, we could read headlines as one on the 20th of March issue entitled “Masisi’s Namibia trip was irresponsible and reckless”. There was public anger.

While the president and cabinet minister Unity Dow declared in statements to the public that they must STAY HOME, they themselves traveled to attend the swearing in ceremony of the president of Namibia. This, despite the country grappling with the outbreak of the coronavirus.

The Director of Health Services, Dr Malaki Tshipiyagae,

had to place Masisi on a 14-day quarantine upon his return from Namibia.

Getting home before lockdown

My first flight home to Stockholm with Turkish Airlines was cancelled and my second flight got cancelled. I thought for some time I would be locked in Botswana for months. I made sure I got my stay extended and got 60 extra days in my passport from Immigration. But luckily, I managed to get on Ethiopian Airlines’ last flight out from Gaborone to Addis Ababa. Then I finally touched ground at Arlanda on the 29th of March, five days before Botswana officially declared a state of emergency and lockdown. This was preceded by the country announcing its first cases of positive tests for Corona.



BOTSFA member Annalena Hellström, born on 16.03.1965, passed away on 18.01.2020. Annalena and her husband, Micke Granath, married and celebrated their wedding in Molepolole, Botswana in 2015 (see an article in Dumela 3/2015). She is survived by her husband Micke and daughter Elin Zetterkvist.



A MORNING AT BRIGHT FACES DAYCARE CENTRE

TEXT BY Julia Majaha-Jartby
PHOTOS BY Per Järtby

showers visitors with the joy of seeing kids passing through one of the smallest but very effective moulders of the future of Botswana. Established single-handedly by Neo Chitombo in 2007, the daycare, located in Kumakwane, prides itself with pre-school tutoring of predominantly orphaned

children. Some of the alumni are now in their teens and some of them are in secondary schools.

Dumela carried an article on the daycare in issue No3/2010 (<http://botsfa.nu/dumela/mail%20DUMELA%2010-3.pdf>).

The daycare has faced many challenges over the years as, with time, some parents have preferred to have their children at preschools with better facilities. The number of

kids dropped to an all-time low (7) at end 2019, but when Dumela visited in January 2020, the number had risen to 25, with more expected to enrol. Neo was recently joined by a partner, Motlalepula Batshani, with administrative expertise and this seems to have lifted the profile of the daycare:

Facebook: Bright Faces Day Care Centre. The recent lockdown for the coronavirus applies to the daycare.

