

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association

No 1/2009

Dear BOTSFA members!

IN FULL SUMMER, i.e. sunshine, temperatures around 20–25° C, just a little breeze, and chanterelles waiting plentiful in the forests, it is a pleasure to inform you about what has happened since the Annual General Meeting which took place on March 14 at the Etnografiska Museet.

The AGM voted all members of the previous 2008/09 BOTSFA Executive Committee back and increased the number by voting in Julia Majaha-Järtby and Mats Ögren Wanger. This raised the number of members from 7 to 9, as provided for in the Constitution. At our first Executive Committee Meeting, it was decided that a Working/Editing Group be formed to start up-dating BOTSFA's website, and making our newsletter, Dumela, more interesting and its issuance more frequent. It was also decided that another publication, Dumela

Magazine, be introduced on the website, to allow for issuance of articles on special themes. This should also provide the opportunity for a broad-based contribution by the Association's members. More information will follow.

Seboleleng Bertilsson, and Pretty Phologolo (First Secretary at the Embassy of Botswana) have formed BATSWE (the Batswana in Sweden Association). The aim is to provide an avenue for greater socialization among Batswana and increase greater awareness of issues that cut across interests and relations between Batswana and Swedes with links to Botswana.

The recently formed Working/Editing Group has started strongly to update BOTSFA's website, www.botsfa.nu and will launch a fresh and more interesting up-to-date site towards the middle of

September. Unfortunately, the Working Group's time did not permit to finish »Dumela 1/09« before summer. However, now you are holding it in your hand!

Enjoy reading and until next time,

Take good care!

Mela Örgen 



www.botsfa.nu
will get a face-lift in
mid-September.
Welcome to visit us!



From Bromma, a suburb of Stockholm, to a safari lodge in the Okavango Delta

Described by many as the Garden of Eden, the Okavango Delta lies in North West Botswana. This is the place where Tiny Hansson has her business and workplace, Mapula Lodge. Three years ago she lived an ordinary Swedish family life in Bromma, with her children in a daycare center, »dagis«. She never thought of owning and running a safari lodge in one of Africa's most beautiful and difficult-to-reach wildlife areas, but today she is a lodge owner in the Okavango swamps.

Dumela met Tiny at Mapula Lodge, late last year, and got the following insight into her fascinating entrepreneurial life.

—After ten years in Sweden, I started to feel home sick for Botswana and my home village, Mochudi. My dream was first to open a wedding boutique in Gaborone. Fate decided otherwise. By chance and an unbelievable opportunity, my dream took me to a totally different place. My husband, Göran, was looking through a magazine while travelling back to Botswana a couple of years ago, when suddenly he drew my attention to an advertisement: Safari Lodge for sale.

—We both immediately felt that this was a once-in-a-lifetime op-

portunity. Upon arrival in Botswana, we hurried to the bank to be the first to bid for the lodge, and in advance of the big South African operators who are taking up most of this type of business. Luckily, the Botswana authorities are encouraging Botswana to be involved in tourism, and that seems to have partly contributed to our opportunity to buy the lodge.

Looking back, to run and operate a safari lodge, did it turn out the way you expected?

—An ordinary and sane person would not have taken the risk. Lodge operation is tough terrain, filled with unimaginable challenges. It is essential to have a great passion for this kind of life, and to be totally committed. My husband and I took over a worn-out lodge. We had a vision to provide competition against South African-owned safari lodges in the area, which charge up to 1000 US dollars per night. We wanted to create a real and genuine atmosphere in order to attract tourists.

—To get logistics to function was a tough trial as the lodge is situated 170 km from the nearest village, and the terrain is surrounded by water and wild animals everywhere. Driving through the swamps is a big challenge. Sometimes the vehicles get

stuck and have to be winched using a tractor. Maintenance of tools and motors is always an on-going project, and has to be done with close to military discipline.

In what way does Mapula Lodge differ from other lodges in Botswana?

—The safari guides and the working staff employed by Mapula Lodge all come from rather isolated and non-electrified villages in the neighborhood, e.g. Seronga, Gudigwa and Eretsha. Most of them have never travelled to Gaborone. At Mapula Lodge they meet people from all over the world. The encounters become very interesting, and the guests are happy to learn about Botswana culture and to experience the friendly and genuine atmosphere at Mapula Lodge.



Tiny Hansson and a colleague Ditshebo

What are your feelings for working in a place where there are so many wild animals?

—You have to be very careful and always on your watch, especially in the dark while walking home after work, i.e., to the staff living quarters. Mapula Lodge is located in an area rich with lions and other wildlife. Otherwise it is always a privilege to sit together with the guests and look out over the lagoon and watch the elephants pass by in this untouched nature. We have also had such good luck to see wild dog families with puppies, which is very unusual, even so unusual that it was written about in the international magazine »Africa Geographic«!

Would you like to say something to BOTSFA (Botswana Sweden Friendship Association)?

—Yes, tell the members that Botswana has much more than wildlife safaris to offer! Last autumn we had a group of Swedes who came to Botswana and made a combined culture-safari trip. The idea of a combined culture-safari trip came from Elisabeth Wesström, founder of the Afro art shops in Stockholm. The program includes visits to Tsodilo Hills, a world heritage site, basket weaving centers, Kuru art in Ghanzi, and much more. These are combined with a stay at Mapula Lodge.

—I hope that BOTSFA can also have meetings in Botswana, to help those who have lived in Sweden to stay in touch!

Mats Ögren Wanger



photo Mats Ögren Wanger



photo Björkebaum & Ed

Staying in touch

DUMELA got in touch with Ruben Björkebaum in the beginning of June. Ruben worked for the then SIDA peace corps' services in Mahalapye during 1981-83. He was a crafts teacher, and his wife a mathematics teacher, at Madiba Brigades Centre. Their interests and affection for Botswana made them continue to stay in touch with friends in Botswana following their return to Sweden. They are currently active in Östersund's United Nations Association, previously chaired by Maria Ed.

Ten years ago, a Motswana, Mrs. Maggie Visagie, from Tsabong, was elected chairperson of the Östersund UN association board. She initiated a project for Tsabong, which was to build a house for culture meetings and other activities for the benefit of HIV-infected people. Unfortunately Maggie Visagie's plans to launch the project in Tsabong in 2004 met with resistance and never got started. However, at almost the same time, Kgomotso Counselling Centres were established in Botswana, with one located in Tsabong (today there are 7 centres) under the umbrella organisation BOCAIP (Botswana Christian AIDS Intervention Programme). The Tsabong centre receives support from Östersund's UN Association.

Dumela was informed of arrangements for a study tour of the KCC in Tsabong by Ruben and Maria, which

took place in August. Together with the KCC board, of which Maggie Visagie is a member, the tour discussed the centre's educational needs on HIV/AIDS, with a view to identifying suitable courses and study trips to other centers, etc. With the assistance of the KCC board, the tour made a financial calculation of the costs in readiness for a funding application to SIDA. Ruben's earlier contacts with SIDA have revealed that SIDA no longer funds housing construction projects, an important need by the Tsabong KCC. Currently, all work is being conducted from a caravan. As SIDA's funding is limited to organizational and staff development, rental expenditures and house construction will have to come from other sources.

The study group is fortunate in having a very good relationship with a former coordinator at the Tsabong KCC, Joyce Oletile, who is on a two-year social studies' program at the University of Göteborg. Last autumn, Joyce, a member of BOTSFA, visited Östersund and made presentations on the HIV-situation in Botswana, and was part of the Swedish-UN pre-study tour which took place during her vacation in Botswana.

Ulla Odqvist

For more information about BOCAIP, and the Swedish UN-Associations, please visit www.bocaip.org.bw and www.sfn.se



photo Björkebaum & Ed



photo Ednah and Michael Lord

BATISWE picnic

The Batswana in Sweden Association (BATISWE) organised a get together picnic at Haga Park in May. The main aim of the picnic was to bring together Batswana in Sweden and to inform them about the objectives of the association and also to encourage them to become members.

At least 20 Batswana and their families attended the picnic held on May 30. It was such a joy to also see the kids having such a fun time. Our Honourable Ambassador B. S. Rathedi also graced us with her presence, which was such a wonderful thing considering her busy schedule. A few members had volunteered to bring some dishes and the gentlemen were of a great help barbecuing the meat. The weather was also on our side that day. That whole week we had been crossing our fingers that it should be a sunny Saturday, and our wish was granted.

Her Excellency, Ms. Rathedi closed the event by encouraging Batswana to strive to work together and to join the association. She said that the association could act as a support system for Batswana in Sweden and should be used as a platform to communicate how we may help each other.

Nickie Kgasa

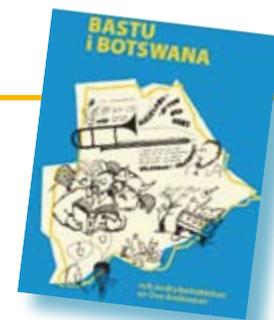
Notice board



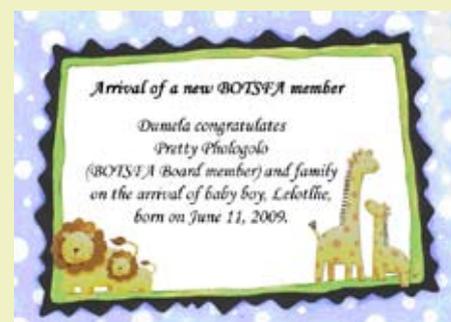
Travel on your mind?

December 16, 2009, is premiere for the first »culture and safari« trip to Botswana by Scandinavian travel agency »Tema«. During 14 days, the group will travel through four areas of cultural interest: Selinda Reserve in Linyanti, Tsodilo Hills, Makgadikgadi Pans, and the Okavango Delta. The group will also travel by boat on the Thamalakane River to remote villages such as Seronga. For more information contact »TEMA RESOR«

- Those who haven't paid the 2009 membership fee, please pay to either **Plusgiro no 851039-8** or **Bankgiro no 428-6472**. If you don't know if you have paid, please ask the treasurer at ullaBn@botsfa.nu.
- BOTSFA membership has increased since Fall 2008. Please refer interested Batswana and Swedes to contact ullaBn@botsfa.nu who is responsible for membership inquiries.
- Batswana living in Sweden can contact Seboleleng Bertilsson, seboleleng@hotmail.com to get more information about BATISWE (Batswana In Sweden Association).



»BASTU i BOTSWANA« (Sauna in Botswana) contains 26 stories and reflections, written by Ove Andersson when he was Head of the Department of Town and Regional Planning in 1980–1984. His stories were published in SIDA's »Newsletter« in Gaborone. If you would like to buy this »tidsdokument«, which reflects Swedish development assistance and other personal reflections on life in Botswana, contact Ulla Odqvist at gunnur46@hotmail.com. »Bastu i Botswana« costs 250 SEK, packing and postage incl.



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