

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 4/2012

Dear BOTSFA members!

As we draw close to the festive season, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support for the activities of BOTSFA during 2012 and to wish you, your families and friends enjoyable Christmas and New Year celebrations.

I am delighted and proud that Dumela has maintained its flow of issues on various interesting articles, including portraits of personalities that have made an invaluable difference to the development of Botswana. But there are times when one would wish to freeze time – for life to go on.

It was with great sadness to learn about the passing of *Dr. Alec Campbell*, archaeologist and founder of Botswana National Museum, on November 24, 2012. Dumela featured a portrait of Dr. Campbell in issue No. 02/2010. Campbell leaves behind a legacy of love with nature summed up in his interview by Kerstin Jackson Main, where he succinctly says about his legendary contribution to archiving Botswana's natural

endowments, »One look at the hills (Tsodilo) was enough to create a love bond between them and me. It was not just their beauty and not their uniqueness in desert sand dunes. I think it was the spirits there as well.«

In this issue of Dumela, you will read about Botswana's respected and loved Ambassador, H. E. Bernadette S. Rathedi, who will be leaving Sweden after seven years of admirable diplomatic service. Join me in wishing Ambassador Rathedi good health and many prosperous years to come.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Happy New Year!

Julia Majaha-Järtby
BOTSFA

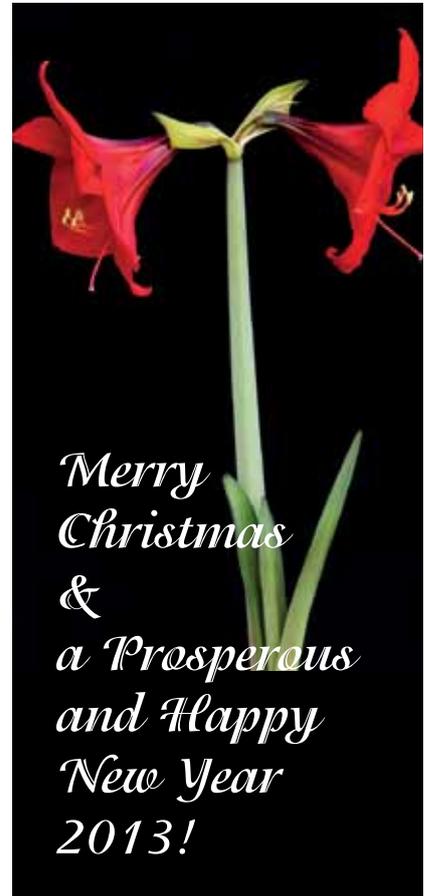


PHOTO Per Järtby



Botswana's Ambassador, H. E. Bernadette S. Rathedi will be leaving Sweden after seven years of admirable diplomatic service.

PHOTO Mats Ögren Wanger

REMINDER MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2013

To assist the Association in maintaining a current record of membership, please pay by February 28, 2013.

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

Plusgiro 85 10 39-8, or
Bankgiro 428-6472

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



TILL WE MEET AGAIN – Ambassador Bernadette S. Rathedi leaves Sweden

INTERVIEW & PHOTOS **Mats Ögren Wanger and Per Järtby**

TRANSCRIPTION **Julia Majaha-Järtby**

AMBASSADOR TO Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Russia and Ukraine. The mission is also accredited to Holy See, Latvia and Lithuania

TENURE 2005 – 2012

OTHER APPOINTMENTS Counsellor in Sweden, 1992 – 1997 and Pretoria, South Africa, 1997 – 1999. Chief of State Protocol, 1999 – 2005

FAMILY One daughter and three grandchildren

Describe your first contacts with Sweden.

Prior to my career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC), I worked for the Department of Unified Local Government Service, where I had the responsibility for the training of local authorities' staff. The capacity building program for this department received Swedish aid through Sida, and organizations like SIPU handled some of the capacity building projects. As part of my work as a training administrator, I interacted with Swedish experts and visited Sweden for the first time. Upon transfer to MOFAIC, I was later posted to Sweden as Counsellor. The years I worked as Chief of State Protocol provided me the opportunity to work with Swedish Ambassadors to Botswana and other diplomats from some of the countries to which the Embassy is now accredited.

You are leaving Sweden at the time when most people complain about the cold weather. How have you found winters in Sweden?

The challenge with coping with the Swedish winters is not so much the cold. It is the darkness, which is too long

and intense. Unlike in Botswana, houses here are built to weather the cold. I have felt much colder during winters at home than here. Actually, my exposure to living in cold countries dates back to my days as a student in Swansea, Wales, and Indiana in the United States. But, yes, the winters here can be quite harsh.

Looking back, what do you see as the highlights of your tenure as Ambassador to Sweden?

Being Ambassador for a country which, at independence in 1966, was among the poorest in the world and seeing the evolution of bilateral relations over the years has been very interesting. The discovery of diamonds soon after independence and our leaders' prudent management of resources pushed Botswana to middle income category at the hiatus of my career with the MOFAIC. Sweden had already started scaling down its grant-type assistance at the time of my appointment as Ambassador in 2005. While a number of countries completely cut off bilateral assistance upon reclassification of Botswana as a middle income country, Sweden decided to enter into other forms of development cooperation, based on cost sharing. The grant-type assistance, however, continued in support of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The partner-driven relationship has been of great benefit in the areas of capacity building, specifically with regards to meteorology, tax management, tertiary education and others. The current partnership strategy comes to an end in December 2013, begging the question of what happens next.

Of note is the State Visit by Botswana's third President Festus G. Mogae in 2006, followed by the State Visit by HM, King Carl XVI Gustav. Not only did the two high level visits reinforce the ongoing collaboration in the

public sector, they opened partnerships in the private sector. While there has been greater flow of Swedish companies establishing businesses in Botswana, trade has also extended to at least one Botswana transport company, Seabelo Express, purchasing Volvo and Scania vehicles from Sweden and, lately, Mabeo Furniture, showcasing beautiful furniture pieces in Sweden.

What other areas of partnership do you think have made a difference?

Cultural exchanges, for example music, are becoming forceful avenues for partnerships. A big Botswana choral group, Sedibeng, visited Sweden in 2010, followed by two visits by Motswana jazz singer Shanti Lo and world famous guitarist, John Blackie Selolwane. We recently had a visit to Gothenburg by a very original folk music group and there have been reciprocal visits to Botswana by Swedish music groups. I hope these partnerships will grow from strength to strength.

Has your earlier diplomatic work prior to being Ambassador benefitted your seven-year tenure?

Indeed, my contacts with Swedish Ambassadors to Botswana as Chief of State Protocol have been of immense benefit. The initiative for the State Visits started during Ambassador Birgitta Karlström Dorph's posting to Botswana and was reinforced by both Ambassador Annika Jagander and Chargé d'Affaires Marie de Frutos' inputs. I have stayed in touch with most of the former Ambassadors to Botswana, to our countries' mutual benefit. Contacts made during my time as Counsellor were very beneficial when I returned to Sweden as Ambassador.

During your time as Ambassador, have there been people who have made a difference in the relations between the two countries?

There are many people who have made a difference in supporting me as friends. Mr. Anders Lindberg of JKL Group, and a neighbor, has been very helpful on links with the private sector. I am constantly in touch with Julia Majaha-Järtby (former classmate) and her husband Per Järtby, who live in Sigtuna. They have been most supportive at both professional and private levels.

Do you have any places that you have taken a liking for?

I developed a liking for Sigtuna, a town where my daughter went to school and where my friends, the Järtbys, live. Sigtuna has provided me with the rural touch I miss from being away from home. I live near Millesgården, the beautiful sculpture park, and generally find the archipelago remarkable. I have only travelled as far north as Dalarna and regret that I never ventured beyond. I would have liked to spend a night at the Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi but, for now, the Ice Bar Stockholm will have to suffice.

Botswana is becoming well known in Sweden

compared with a few years ago. What do you think has contributed to this?

Besides the State Visits, the work of the Embassy has been significantly boosted by trade and cultural promotions, embracing a number of trade missions, visits by the Botswana Tourism Organisation, music groups and the holding of a Botswana arts and crafts market. But we should not forget the impact of author Alexander McCall Smith's »The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency« book series. The first book was published around the time of my appointment as Ambassador. In my view, Prof. McCall Smith's books have enormously lifted the hidden friendly Botswana nature to international levels.

What memories do you take with you from Sweden?

I have found Swedes to be very warm and caring people, very similar to Botswana. While getting to know Swedes takes long, once they warm up to one, they become friends for life. I had a humbling experience of hosting Their Majesties the King and Queen of Sweden, and part of their delegation, at the Botswana residence before their State Visit. I had brought a Botswana chef, Mr. Joseph Seeletso, living in Poland, to prepare the dinner. It turned out to be a memorable experience.

Do you have favourite Swedish foods?

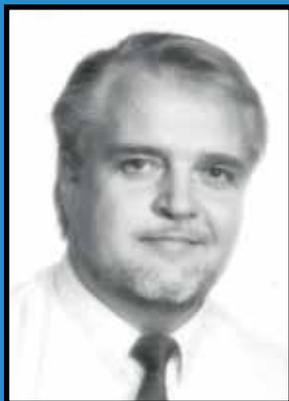
I love blueberry pie. I have also enjoyed salmon and pike. Sadly I am allergic to shellfish. That has meant missing the joys of celebrating the famous Swedish crayfish-eating festivities.

What advice do you have for your successor?

Like in any other of our missions, the host Ministry for Foreign Affairs is a very important link to all other organs in the country. In addition, the relations with Sida officials, the Swedish Trade Council, collaborating partners, including the private sector and NGOs, former Swedish Ambassadors to Botswana and other Embassies, particularly those representing our region and the continent, are key in enhancing partnerships. Last, but not least, is the role that BOTSFA has played. The association has been an invaluable partner in supporting cultural exchanges between Botswana and Sweden.



NOTICE BOARD



It is with regret that BOTSFA has to announce the death of Karl-Arne Bertilsson who passed away at 67 years of age on September 18, 2012, in Stockholm. Karl-Arne was a longtime member of the Association. He worked for Ericsson in Sweden and, in 1994–1995, was assigned to work as a staff trainer for Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) in Botswana. Karl-Arne is survived by his wife Seboleleng Bertilsson and stepson Koketso, and children from his previous marriage, Kamilla, Kent and Karl.

- The Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2013 will be held on March 16, 2013. Further information regarding venue and time will be posted on www.botsfa.nu and/or sent by e-mail to members.



Jag har gått en skrivarkurs som heter »Kvinnor skriver« på Marieborgs Folkhögskola i Norrköping. Mitt projektval det tredje året blev självklart att skriva om familjens två år i Botswana. Jag var lärare i Old Naledi och min man arbetade som Transport Officer inom Department of Water Affairs. Våra möten med människor i både glädje och sorg plus fantastiska naturupplevelser gör att jag bär på en ständig längtan tillbaka ... Boken är i A4-format med 70 sidor text och bilder. Jag säljer den till självkostnadspris plus porto = 225 kr Kontakta mig, Birgitta Andersson, e-mail: birgittaochgunnar@telia.com



PHOTO Pretty Machado-Phologolo

Botswana Folk Music Singers in Gothenburg

On November 4–5, I visited Gothenburg for performances by a Botswana folk music group. Also present at the performance were H. E. Ambassador Bernadette Rathedi and her colleague and First Secretary at the Embassy of Botswana, Ms. Pretty Machado-Phologolo. We were welcomed by Botswana's Honorary Consul resident in Gothenburg, Mrs. Viveka Lien. This was the first cultural visit to Sweden by a folk music group from Botswana.

The group led by Kopano Mantswe, drummer, and comprising very original talented segaba (tin guitar) player, Ntsoane Ramontsho, female stinkana (thumb piano) player Kemoitsisamang Makaso and guitarist, Solly Sebotso, took the Museum of World Culture (Världskulturmuseet) audience by storm.

This was one of the most original musical performances I have seen in a long time, and in a beautiful setting. The auditorium, with 80 seats, was full to capacity and some people had to contend with listening from outside.

On the second day, the Embassy, hosted a reception at the museum. This was attended by Swedish music collaborators with Botswana and some business partners.

BOTSFA thanks the music collaborators in Botswana, particularly Anna-Carin Persson, and Botswana's music partner in Gothenburg, among others, Leif Karlsson, for the excellent arrangements.

Julia Majaha-Järtby

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