

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 3/2015

Dear BOTSFA members!

Summer has come and gone, paving way for the beautiful autumn colours. August turned out to be the month that will be fondly remembered as providing the best summer weather – clear skies and no rain – in Sweden. But all good things do also come to an end, as we have begun to scrape ice off our windshields and pull out our winter clothes. The weather is very much like the experience with Botswana winters – sub-zero temperatures during the night, clear blue skies during the day, with temperatures rising to 15–20°C.

It is that time of the year when I wish I could be in Botswana and Sweden at the same time. I love hunting for mushrooms and Sweden provides the thrill that has become part of my annual pastime. Nature in Botswana is waking up to the reddish colours of young mopane leaves and the singing of cicadas. Jacarandas, syringas, flamboyant trees and bougainvilleas are decorating the country with beautiful varieties of flower colours.

The articles in this issue quench my homesickness. AnnaLena Hellström and Micke Granath, BOTSFA members, take us through the experience they had during their wedding which they celebrated in Molepolole. A weekend in Vänersborg during 5–6 September brought members of BOTSFA together. This was followed by the occasion of the celebration of Botswana's 49th Independence Anniversary on September 30th in Stockholm.

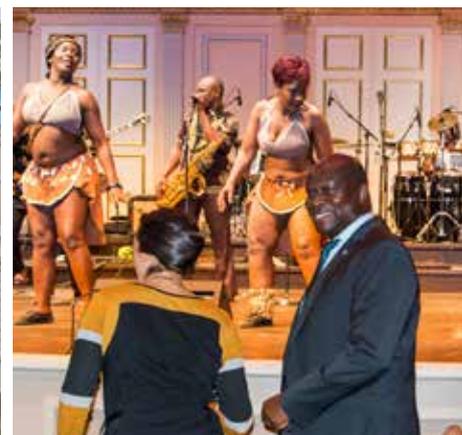
All we need are more sunny days in Sweden and an abundance of rain in Botswana ...

Don't forget to enter the 2015 Photo Competition – theme, »Friends« (See Dumela 1/2015).

Pula/Skål!



Julia Majaha-Järtby
BOTSFA, Chairperson



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

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.

visit us on www.botsfa.nu



PHOTO COURTESY OF Nelly Kabomo-Hogård

A Swedish couple's marriage in Molepolole, Botswana

TEXT AnnaLena Hellström
PHOTO Micke Granath

IT ALL STARTED IN ESKILSTUNA. My sister is a teacher. She informed me that she had met a fantastic woman from Botswana called Nelly, married to Kalle. Nelly was taking a course in *vård och omsorg* (health and nursing care) and wanted to improve her swimming. My sister undertook to give her lessons and asked if I could join them. After the first swimming lesson, we had a chat. I informed Nelly that I would be turning 50 and that I had plans to combine my birthday celebration with getting married to Micke Granath, who I had lived with for 17 years. Nelly asked if we would like to get married in Botswana and in a traditional setting. Without asking Micke, I said yes! When I came home and told him what I had decided over a casual chat, he thought it was a joke. But when Nelly started making plans for the celebration in Botswana, we both realized it was for real. So in a way it was Nelly who proposed to me.

The wedding was to take place in Molepolole. Nelly went to Botswana to prepare everything about a month before we did, and we joined her in February. When we arrived we had to take care of the paperwork. It was very interesting to see how that worked. Everyone was so kind and so excited about us Swedish people coming there to have a traditional marriage. We told them that we wanted to have the marriage in the main kgotla in Molepolole. This was granted. Nelly and Kalle took us to the Bakwena Tribal Administration, where we were introduced to the paramount chief, Kgosi Kgolo Kgari Sechele III. We felt very warmly welcomed.

Another part of the preparation for us was to get dressed the traditional way. Nelly's mother, who is over 80 years old, sewed our clothes. She sat the whole day sewing skirts for me, my sister, our daughter and my mother-in-law. I am so

glad that we could give her a walker which we brought with us from Sweden. There were also people slaughtering two goats, a process we totally avoided witnessing. When our daughter accidentally found the head of a goat in the fridge, the day after the wedding, she screamed so loud that I was glad we had not participated in the slaughter.

Nelly had really tried to prepare us for what would happen during the wedding, but I think that most of it escaped my mind because of the excitement. The wedding day started at 5 a.m. for me and Micke. I went to Nelly's place and Micke went to the kgotla, the tribal meeting place, for the men's ceremony. I think Micke had wrong clothes on because a man gave him a jacket to wear. Also from what I could see from the film we got after the wedding, my brother-in-law and my father-in-law had problems knowing when to have their hats on and when to take them off. Micke got good advice at the kgotla. He symbolically paid lobola to my family by using cattle that had strayed past the wedding place. He was a little tense because lobola is nothing we are used to.

There were lots of people at the wedding. I watched the procedures of the women's ceremony in the garden from Nelly's house. I was very impressed by how easily my mother-in-law, my sister and my daughter became part of the traditional negotiations. My mother-in-law was 74 when she went for the wedding.

After the morning ceremony we went to an office to have some papers signed. It was very hot for us pale Swedish people but the singing and dancing kept us going. Then we went to the kgotla for the wedding ceremony. I think this was the part that is comparable to the Swedish tradition. After the exchange of vows and the rings and some tears,



we drove to the local museum where we took some pictures. We also visited a very nice place with a green garden.

When we came back to Nelly's place, the food was ready and the party could start. Everything looked fantastic with the tent and the setting with Swedish colours. The food was delicious and there were speeches in Setswana and English. The speech that really moved me to tears was our daughter's. It takes beautiful celebrations to hear beautiful words!

Soon after the celebration started, some women came carrying buckets of local beer on their heads. Very impressive! Micke was really excited, as he had looked forward to tasting the beer. Although this was a new experience for us, he thought the taste was marvellous. I think I have to get used to it by drinking more of it when we are next in Botswana.

During the singing and dancing, some women told me that I had to leave the party to change clothes. The women carried lots of stuff. We left Nelly's place and walked to another house. I later understood that this was a symbol for my new home together with my husband. To match the advice that Micke was given by the men at the kgotla, I also got lots of good advice from the women on how to become a good wife. I hope it will help me.

Even if this is not about the wedding, I want to mention that we visited two schools the day before the wedding. We were accompanied by the Paramount Chief and, of course, Nelly and Kalle. One of the schools will stay in my and my daughter's hearts forever. It was Anne Stine School for disabled children. As a teacher, I was very happy to see how the teachers in that school made a big difference for those children and I was also a little bit sad when I heard that the school had more land to expand on but no money to build.

They told us that there were more children in need of this kind of school but there was no room to take them. I could see that it was true. I hope they find a solution because this was really something for the citizens of Botswana to be proud of. I have seen and heard of so many examples where disabled children are kept home or hidden from the rest of the society. If decision-makers could see this example and the progress made by the children at Anne Stine School, I am sure it would change the way how countries, in general, treat this group of children.

The second school we visited was Kwenasereto Junior Secondary School which had been officially opened by Folke Löfgren, former Swedish Ambassador to Botswana. The school had serious water shortage, which we later understood was a general problem for Gaborone and surrounding villages.

The whole wedding celebration was a bewildering and, at the same time, a fantastic experience. Since we came back to Sweden, many of our friends have asked us about the trip and our experiences – and I can't really explain what happened. If I should try to sum up the experience, it would be happiness, kindness and love from all the people we met in Botswana. We hope that we shared some love with them.

Our thanks go to Nelly Kabomo-Hogård and Karl (Kalle) Hogård for hosting us, Kgosi Kgolo Kgari Sechele III, the District Officer who officiated at our wedding, all those who participated in the various arrangements for the wedding ceremony and many more ...





BOTSFA Get-together Vänernborg, September 5–6, 2015

Fifty BOTSFA members and Friends of Botswana gathered in Vänernborg during the weekend of September 5–6.

Participants were welcomed by Botswana and Sweden's flags flying high next to each other in front of Vänernborgs museum, thanks to the director, Peter Johansson, who went beyond the call of duty to make the get-together memorable. A welcome remark by the Major of Vänernborgs Municipality, Marie Dallin, set the platform for the comfort that participants needed to feel at home. The Embassy of Botswana was represented at the highest level, reinforcing the strong diplomatic and cultural exchanges between the two countries and the strong social bonds that characterise BOTSFA – where friends meet.

A Namibia delegation of four people working with preparations for an exhibition, XOM/Etoshia, a Namibian Story, at Vänernborgs art gallery during September also joined the get-together. The presence of the Namibian group provided an interesting interaction on discussions related to the early Swedish travellers/explorers to Namibia and Botswana.

The get-together ended with a dinner at Lagergrenska, a nice old building in the centre of Vänernborg. The occasion ended with a guided tour of the places where the explorers had lived and where they were buried.



Celebration of Botswana's 49th Independence Anniversary in Sweden

September 30th brought at least 400–500 Friends of Botswana to Musikaliska in Stockholm. The Embassy of Botswana hosted a memorable celebration. Following a sumptuous meal and speeches by the Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana, H. E. Mr. Lameck Nthekela and the Head of Africa Unit in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pereric Högberg, guests were entertained to music by Re Botswana Music Ensemble from Botswana.

PHOTO BOTSFA gallery



Botswana showing the way

At the last Summit in Gaborone in August this year, President Seretse Khama Ian Khama succeeded President Robert Mugabe as Chairman of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Khama immediately demonstrated that he will exercise a different kind of leadership than his predecessor. He immediately commented on the recent tendency in some African countries (Burundi in particular) to try to extend term limits for elected leaders – beyond what is provided for in the constitution. He made a clear statement that such manipulations should not be accepted or tolerated.

Botswana is reliable when it comes to governance issues. In the recently published Ibrahim Index for African Governance for 2015, Botswana has a top spot among all African countries – now in third place after Mauritius and Cape Verde. Congratulations!

Sten Rylander

