

Botswana gives flavour to SweZam Annual General Meeting

Some two dozen members of the Swedish-Zambia Association made their way to Etnografiska museet on March 14 for the Annual General Meeting, one of the regular features on the Swe-Zam calendar.

Early arrivals heard Swedish journalists Jenny Söderqvist and Helen Åberg recount their terrifying experience of coping in the Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana after their hired vehicle exploded and they were stranded without water among wild animals. The two made headlines in Sweden when their ordeal was reported in May 2006, and they have also written about their experience in the book, *Exit Kalahari*.

After their exciting story, the respective friendship associations met for more mundane discussions at different locations in the museum.

Swe-Zam Chairman Rolf Svanström made a summary of activities during 2008, including highlights from the Youth Rights Information Centre project at Mindolo. Members supported extending this project, giving the incoming board one of its first tasks. But as Treasurer Elisabeth Persson and others noted, there is need to raise more funds for the mandatory portion that Swe-Zam has to pay in order to secure funds from Forum Syd. Members, including those not able to attend the March 14 meetings, were invited to suggest means to raise funds – contact information for the board is offered on the website and in the Newsletter.

The meeting also approved some amendments to the constitution, and elected a new board for the coming year.

With the formalities taken care of, it was time to get a drink and mingle with members and guests from other associations before finding a seat at one of the dozen tables set up in “verkstan”.

The buffet offered dishes familiar from both Swedish and Southern African dinner tables, including a classic meat dish from Botswana with pounded meat cooked off the bone.

Unlike previous years, there was no disco. The joint events ended with a special showing of “The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency,” an adaption of Alexander McCall Smith’s first book in the best-selling series on Mma Ramotswe. Quite a few chuckles were heard after the film as people went to get their coats and headed out into the wintry Stockholm night.

/Lennart Simonsson