

Dear friends all over the world,

Another year has gone by and the December darkness has come to our northern country again. We in Sweden hang Advent stars in our windows and, as usual, I sit down to summarize what has been another hectic year in our family. The year had a sad beginning as Anders' father passed away at age 79, Dec. 20 so 2006 started with a funeral. Since he was old and had cancer we weren't as upset by his death as when my father died suddenly 1992 but still, losing a parent makes you think more about the way you live and the "meaning of it all", especially as you grow older.

Most things in our lives are the same - Anders and I are both working as physicians at Danderyd hospital but I continue to do many other things besides seeing patients. In February I was very much engaged in the process to implement a major change in the hospital's computerized patient records and I also represent our hospital in a large Stockholm project on computer-based documentation routines in healthcare. It is very interesting and I hope to spend more time doing it next year as we re-organize my department (again!) and I have declined to be part of the "inner circle" in that process. Both Anders and I also enjoy teaching medical students and giving lectures about our specialities for primary care physicians and nurses. We have started a small business together called "LHHL Communication" and we have a really nice logotype created by Anna's (ex) boyfriend Anders is also happily singing in Mikaeli Chamber choir, as well as being their secretary (check their homepage http://www.mikaeli.se/index_en.shtml, he is in the middle of the second row). My participation in the choir I sing in has, for a number of reasons, not been very active this year but I hope to start again this spring.

What about our daughters? **Anna**, 25, is graduating this spring after four years of studies to become a speech therapist. She plans to start working next fall after a summer of traveling to visit friends. At the moment she is a bit unhappy as she and her boyfriend Kent broke up after more than three years of relationship. However, since they both agreed that it was the best thing to do so she is coping quite well. Anna is also busy singing in two choirs, enjoying it a lot and she also has a good weekend job in an Apple store. **Ida**, 22, has soon finished the 4th semester (out of 11) of Medical school, doing really well so far. She still finds time to sing in her choir, Sofia (<http://www.sofiavokalensemble.com/>) which won a prestigious prize in a choir competition this year. Ida recently started dating a young jazz musician, Svante, and they seem very much in love after three months so we are very happy for them. **Eva**, who just turned 20, had a much better spring semester '06 at Augustana College (after transferring from North Park). One of the main reasons was that she was allowed to join the Augustana choir, an excellent choir with a great conductor. Eva returned to Sweden in June and we had the been able to find an apartment in Stockholm waiting for her. So she and Carl, her boyfriend since more than four years, now live together. Eva got a job as a secretarial assistant at a law firm in Stockholm that she likes a lot but her plan is to study meteorology next fall as she likes physics and math and is interested in issues regarding the climate.

What about our vacations, travels and other highlights during 2006? Well, here is the short version...

January: Anders and I had a week of relaxation and a little bit of skiing - it is very cold and dark that time of the year.

March: Our second trip up north, again just the two of us, but since I was recuperating from an operation I was not really allowed to ski (but I couldn't resist a few, easy slopes anyway).

April: All of us went traveling: Anders to Paris for the European Urology Association, I went to London with colleagues to study computerized patient records in the UK and Anna + Ida flew to Chicago to visit Eva, friends from college and to spend Easter with our dear Wisconsin friends. As Anders and I came home we went up north again (!) to do a bit of Easter skiing. End of April it was my time to fly to Chicago, both to visit Eva at Augustana but also to fly to Massachusetts to sing in the Alumnae Choir at Mount Holyoke College as my choir conductor retired. I had a really great time staying with my MHC alto friend from 1976, Am Fredricks, and singing with the choir again was a wonderful experience!

May 9: My 50th birthday! I celebrated by having more than 100 people coming over to our small house for a big reception - lots of work but also lots of fun. My brother also showed up from South Africa as a surprise. It was a day to remember.

June: As last year, Anders and I took a week off and went to Crete for a week of warm sun and relaxation.

The summer was spent in Sweden, enjoying the Nordic light. In **July** we had three students from Augustana staying with us. Anders, who had an extra week off, took them and Eva on a road-trip up north and they had an exciting hike in bad weather in the mountains. In **August** we rented a caravan and took a trip to visit friends, to do genealogical research and to attend the world music festival "Urkult" a 4th time! Both Ida and Eva joined us for the festival, great fun.

September: I attended the European Diabetes meeting in Copenhagen, always a good way to get updated.

October 11: Anders 50th birthday - he and Anna and celebrated 75 (25+50) years with a big family dinner. Later the same week I had a presentation at a pharmaceutical research meeting in Barcelona, I was a bit nervous but it went well.

November: As a "mutual" birthday present Anders and I had decided to travel somewhere unusual and we decided to go as far away as possible i.e. **New Zealand**. We booked a so called "independent, 4-WD self-drive" tour, staying in small, pre-booked, bed-and-breakfast places, driving altogether 5600 km on both the north and the south island. It was a fantastic trip- we had a chance to see sperm whales, dolphins, penguins, albatrosses, steaming thermal areas, volcanoes, beautiful alps and deep fiords, glaciers and a lot of sheep. We enjoyed every minute and the four weeks passed much too quickly.

Now it is two weeks since we returned home from NZ, the 12 hours of jet-lag are gone and we are busy working again. Its "pay-back time" to our colleagues who covered for us so we will be working most of Christmas this year. Luckily Eva, who is looking forward to a Swedish X-mas after spending 2004 in South Africa and 2005 in the US, has promised to be a "keeper of traditions" and make all the food and decorations required to make our Christmas a great holiday for all of us.

And - as always we hope and wish that You all have a peaceful and relaxing holiday with family and friends!

From All of Us to All of You - A Very Merry Christmas!
Lena & Anders

The Hallin family 2006



Ida and Anna celebrating Lena at her birthday reception



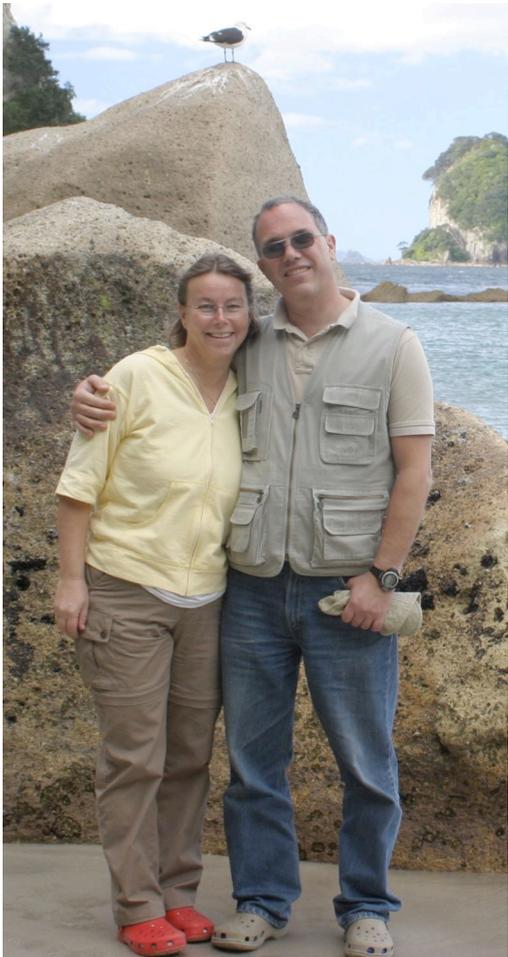
May 9, 2006: Lena's 50th birthday



Ida and Eva taking an "outdoor shower" in northern Sweden



Waimangu thermal area, New Zealand



On the beach in Stingray Bay, North Island, New Zealand



Christchurch, New Zealand, Nov 28, 2006

Cheers for a Happy New Year