

*To all our friends around the world,*

The darkness of December in Sweden is here again as another year has passed. As we grow older, every year seems to be shorter than the one before but looking back, we had time to travel and experience many exciting things during 2008.

Work has, not surprisingly, been very busy - we are running faster and faster. But we still manage our patients with good quality, however to the prize of a constantly stressful situation at work. However, the way our system works, we can get many weeks off to compensate for all our on-call nights/weekends. But we do other things than patient-related work. My PhD-student needs support and tutoring and I also continue to give lectures and courses (taking time off from the hospital). It is enough work to give us the extra money to buy a few new Macintosh computers that are fantastic! Anders also bought the iPhone on the very day it was released in Sweden and he loves it! He enjoys teaching the medical students in urology and this fall our daughter Ida was one of his students. Our family's choir engagements are still very active: Anders sings in Mikaeli Chamber Choir, Anna and Eva in Johannes, Ida in Sofia while I sing in my "just-for-fun"-choir with old school friends. My main hobby, however, is still genealogical research and nowadays I mostly do research regarding other people's family trees. Anders is the "IT-maintenance guy", fixing with the home network, computers, iPods etc - not only for me but also helping our three daughters! We both enjoy on updating our home page ([www.lhhl.se](http://www.lhhl.se)) maybe once a month (Anders uploads files and photos, I do the writing) and we now have almost all the pages also in English!

Our vacations and travels this year have really been great – here is a summary:

In **January** we "traditionally" went up north to Åre, relaxing, reading and skiing. During the following weeks we were preparing mentally and physically (walking our treadmill), for our "adventure" of the year: Nepal, **March 3-25!** We went trekking in the Himalayas (Jomsom Trek, part of Annapurna Circuit) for 8 days, and then we went to Chitwan National Park, Kathmandu and the medieval town of Bhaktapur. We had "full board trekking" i.e. we (group of 9 Swedes) had 3 Sherpas, 5 men in the kitchen and 11 porters, taking care of us and our stuff. These wonderful Nepalese men came with morning tea to our tent, cooked all meals, carried most of our stuff, put up our tents and encouraged us to keep on hiking when our feet and legs were aching – we did 6-8 hours of walking each day... It was a fantastic trip in many ways that really can't be described in words. We will always be grateful to my friend that invited us to come and join the group. If you look at the photos we posted on our homepage you may get a small sense of the peace and beauty that we experienced.

In the beginning of **June** I attended the ADA (American Diabetes Association) meeting in San Francisco and when it was over Anders joined me. The meeting, San Francisco and even the weather were great. When Anders came we spent a nice day of sightseeing and very, very nice evening with friends we haven't seen since 1997, Jay and Sue Toole - enjoying an incredible gourmet dinner! The next morning we started driving south on US 1, spending a few days along the coast - having lunch in Monterey, visiting Hearst Castle (weird but interesting), enjoying the beautiful Getty Center in LA. However, our final destination was the San Diego area for a visit to my cousins who came to stay with us last summer and also meet the relatives who haven't been to Sweden (yet). We stayed with Jim and Debbie in their magnificent house in Alpine. That's where we helped organize a Swedish Midsummer celebration for a big crowd of Landstedt family, all ages! I got up early (to avoid the heat) to make a midsummer pole from an old wooden cross, covering it with leaves and flowers, making two big wreaths. Anders made lots of Swedish meatballs and three big Strawberry cakes "Swedish style" with whipped cream. We also served pickled herring from IKEA and "snaps" (both Midsummer necessities), and managed to have everyone leave the air-conditioned house to go out and sing/do "The little frogs"-dance!! Of course we did many other things during our stay e.g. went to the San Diego Fair, took a bus sightseeing with lunch at Hotel Del Coronado, went to a baseball game at Petco park (Padres won!) with the whole family, went kayaking with cousin Sandy, stayed with the Thoma's, having a nice dinner in La Jolla etc. All in all we had a really great time!

Back home we worked 12+12 long days/nights at the hospital before **August** when our next three-week vacation started. We rented a caravan and drove north to "Urkult" (our favorite world music festival) and then spent a week of genealogical research and a couple of relaxing days at the High Coast, a beautiful World Heritage area. During **September** Anders went to Milan with his choir and I went to Rome for the EASD meeting and in **October** I attended an interesting meeting in Munich about a new insulin. Then in **November**, as the darkness returned to Sweden, we went to the US again, this time to Florida to get some light and to celebrate Thanksgiving with Betty and John Park, our dear American "family" and best friends from my college year. Anders and I started out with a couple of fun and crazy days at the Disney parks in Orlando, going to the parks we've never visited, then drove to the Gulf Coast for a relaxing time at Seaplace on Longboat Key (west of Sarasota) where Betty and John have their nice condo. We had a wonderful time (as always) e.g. having a traditional turkey dinner with stuffing and cranberry sauce, many great discussions and seeing some interesting movies.

A "daughter update": **Anna**, 27, is working as a speech and voice therapist at a private practice but is applying for research positions in her field and thinking of perhaps getting a PhD in the US. She loves traveling and went to for a month Bolivia this summer, climbing the Huayna Potosi (6088 m or 20,826 ft.). I am glad she didn't tell mum until she had survived that. **Ida**, 24, soon finishes her 8<sup>th</sup> semester at the Karolinska Institute, at the moment being very stressed up about exams. She and her Svante (the jazz musician) were engaged to be married 080808 (in Mt. Rainier Nat'l Park), they seem very happy. And this week **Eva** and her Carl did the same thing! On Eva's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday (Dec.9) Carl surprised Eva with a song he had written, asking her to marry him, very romantic. They are both students, Eva enjoys her advanced math and physics, studying to become a meteorologist (climate researcher) while Carl is studying at the Karolinska to become a physical therapist. So all our daughters are doing well and we enjoy having them for dinner and a "sleepover" now and then.

This was the 2008 version of "The Adventures of Anders and Lena" (part 28, I think...). So, now all I have to do is to say:

*From All of Us to All of You - A Very Merry Christmas!*