

To all our friends around the world,

December is here and it's dark outside but lots of candles and stars in our house. The Nobel Prize Laureates got their medals two days ago and tomorrow, on St. Lucia's day, Anders and I have a special celebration; it's been 35 years since we first kissed – time really flies! This is also the time for me to sit down and summarize our year and here it is:

Our job situations are the same as last year (and the year before...) and work itself is just as busy as always but for some reason I don't think of it as stressful as I used to. Maybe I'm getting better at not thinking about the hospital when I'm not there? And perhaps that's one of the good things about getting older and, hopefully, wiser? But I still really like my job as a diabetologist, I love seeing my patients, many of them I've known for 10-15 years, and I also enjoy the company of my closest colleagues. But I will try something new next year as I will take a longer time off (>3 months) at the end of 2010 when our hospital is planning to introduce a new IT-system for computerized records. Because of my earlier experiences (I've been actively helping during all major IT-changes the past years) I have decided not to engage in that project, it is so much work and I really don't have the energy for it this time. And Anders has serious thoughts about making a major job change next year but no decisions are made. He might start working in a smaller clinic, affiliated with our hospital, only seeing outpatients and doing less major surgery. We'll see what happens...

As many of you know a great thing about hospital jobs in Sweden is that we get time off as a compensation for all our on-call nights/weekends and we try to use that time to relax and to travel. Three times this year, in January, March and April, we drove up north to **Tegefjäll**, our place in Åre which is Sweden's largest skiing resort. We had a great New Year's Eve celebration together with our three daughters + two fiancés. The skiing conditions were best in March, I enjoy perfect snow and newly prepared slopes and I'm getting a bit too old (or too scared?) to improve my skiing skills when the snow conditions are difficult. In October I drove up north again to spend an interesting week doing genealogical research. The most important finding this time was that my great grandfather Per Johan Landstedt did not suffer from schizophrenia (as said in the church books) but sadly seems to have suffered from a very deep depression for which he was admitted to a mental hospital from 1917, a time when there was no good treatment for that condition, to 1925 when he died.

My only visit to the **United States** this year was a fantastic Glee Club Alumnae Reunion at **Mount Holyoke College**. I arrived on Jan. 20, just as Barack Obama had been sworn in as the 44th president and the country seemed full of hope and expectations. Andrea Taber, my alto friend, picked me up at the airport in NYC and the next morning we drove up to South Hadley where we stayed in a beautiful B&B. The reunion was very well organized and it was great meeting MHC women of all ages, rehearsing with fantastic conductors and performing at the Gala Concert on Jan. 24. One of my dorm friends from 1975-76, Nancy Odom Perry, came all the way from Hingham to see me, so nice! Before flying home I spent a couple of days with the Taber's, visiting Yale coming back from Mass. and spending a fun day at MoMA with Andi.

Our other trips have all been within **Europe**. In March Anders and I spent a weekend in **Amsterdam**, enjoying long walks and boat tours on the canals in this wonderful city. In September I attended the European Diabetes meeting in **Vienna**, a city that I hadn't visited since 1979. However, our most interesting vacation this year was a "road trip" to **Poland** inspired by Justina, our "cleaning lady" for many years. We took a ferry from Stockholm to Gdansk on July 26, bringing our small Toyota Yaris, and then drove almost 2000 miles the following two weeks, visiting beautiful cities e.g. Cracow and Poznan, magnificent churches e.g. St. Mary's Basilica, the Wieliczka salt mine and Zakopane ski resort in the Tatra mountains. We also spent time at the concentration camps of Stutthof, Auschwitz and Birkenau, giving us insights into the unimaginable horrors that took place there. Poland is a fascinating part of Europe that we really can recommend visiting. In November Anders and I and my mother spent a week at the southern coast of **Gran Canaria**, the largest of the Canary Islands. It was a vacation purely for "refueling" our bodies with sun, vitamin D and rest, a truly relaxing week. But we both like adventures so now we are looking forward to our next trip that is scheduled seven weeks from today! Jan. 30 we leave for a 24-day trip in Vietnam, traveling from Saigon to Hanoi in a small group, using local transportation, will be exciting!

But we Swedes sometimes forget that **Sweden** can be a fantastic country in the summer and this year we really enjoyed being "tourists at home" for a couple of weeks. We had the most beautiful weather during the week in late June when Karen Park Koenig and her 11-year old daughter Martha were here. It was a pleasure to have them with us and we did many fun and "touristy" things such as taking the boat into the archipelago of Stockholm, fishing Baltic herring from our own little boat, seeing the Wasa ship, walking around in the Old Town and spending two days in the beautiful area of Dale-Carlia visiting the Falu Copper Mine and other sights.

Before I end our yearly "report", I'd like to give you a short update on what our daughters are up to these days:

Anna, 28, still works as a speech/voice therapist but as her proud parent's we can tell you that she was one of this year's Swedish Fulbright grantees and will go to the US next fall (we don't know where yet) to start working on a PhD in speech and language pathology. It is really exciting but we will miss having her around in Stockholm. **Ida**, 25, had her first, real job as a doctor in internal medicine this summer and will be graduating from the Karolinska Institute on June 4, 2010. She is getting married to her fiancé Svante on Aug. 7 in the county of Hälsingland where Svante grew up, an exciting event for us all! **Eva**, 23, is now in her 3rd year of studying meteorology, doing really well on all the exams. She and her fiancé Carl are thinking about getting married in 2011 but no dates are set yet. All five of us continue to sing in our choirs enjoying it a lot, especially now around Christmas time. Early tomorrow morning Anna will be one of the Lucia maids knocking on the bedroom doors of this year's Nobel laureates – an honor and great fun!

Now I really have to stop writing the 2009 chapter "The Hallin story". We now would like to say...

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