

*To all our friends around the world,*

December... and time for me to remember and try to summarize what happened in the Hallin family 2012. This year has given us some fantastic experiences so it's really a joy to write this, my yearly Christmas letter!

**Vacations:** As usual we started off with a one-week trip to **Tegefjäll**, our "home" in northern Sweden, to celebrate the New Year. We spent another week there in March – skiing, taking saunas, relaxing, reading books i.e. just "not working". In between those snowy weeks, in February, we took a three-week trip to Indonesia – **Bali, Lombok and Gili islands**. After five initial relaxing days in Jimbaran on our own, we travelled with an Intrepid group, enjoying an itinerary that included many things: biking among rice paddies, hiking early one morning in the dark to a mountain top, taking several boat trips, dolphin watching and snorkeling. All in all it was an interesting and fun trip but I doubt we'll return. Lots of trash on the beaches, stepping over numerous offerings on the sidewalks didn't quite appeal to us so we feel we've "been there, done that" and are looking for new places to go. Our summer vacation this year was spent in Sweden, visiting Eva and Carl in **Skåne** (southernmost Sweden) and relatives in **Småland**, going to a birthday party in **Dale-Carlia**, then driving further north to visit good friends at **Höga Kusten** – a beautiful World Heritage site – and last but not least we revisited **Urkult**, our favorite music festival! Besides great concerts, an extra bonus was that our oldest daughter Anna was part of the fantastic opening night performance with fire dancing – magic! After an extremely busy fall Anders and I recently returned home from a relaxing week at **Fuerteventura**, one of the Canary Islands, invited and joined by my mum who turned 80 this spring. We stayed in a luxurious beach hotel in Corralejo and had a nice week despite the fact that the weather wasn't so good. Just as last year I've also had some work-related trips without Anders – two Advisory board meetings discussing a new insulin (Copenhagen and Frankfurt) and two major diabetes conferences (ADA in Philadelphia and EASD in Berlin).

Our **job situations** are the same as in 2011. Anders is working only weekdays, performing small surgical/urological procedures one day per week, seeing outpatients the rest of the week and he doesn't have to be on call. However, due to organizational changes he will move another clinic in January 2013 but we hope it'll be just as good. I continue working as diabetologist at the Dept. of Internal Medicine, Danderyd University hospital and like it. However, I wish I didn't have to be on-call, a task that tends to be more stressful for each year. My research activities have been slow for years but in August this year that changed as my PhD-student was to present her thesis Sept. 28. We worked practically day and night to make the final revisions and eventually she presented a fine thesis that she defended excellently. Since her studies partly are a continuation of my old results it felt really nice!

The most fantastic highlights 2012 have been our **family events!** It started April 28 with **Eva and Carl's** belated wedding party: celebrating 10 months of being married as well as 10 years of being a couple (that same date)! And one of the speakers at the party added another celebration: "10 fingers in the right place" (you may remember that the wedding party 2011 had to be cancelled due to Carl's finger accident). This year we had lots of time to prepare the party and everything turned out just perfect! Anna flew in from NYC to be a toastmaster together with Carl's brother Axel and they did a great job to coordinate all the fun and touching speeches. Only one small "problem" had emerged: Eva had to get a new wedding dress, one for pregnant brides! And we were wondering if Ida was going to be able to participate since her pregnancy was almost full-term but she was there but only four days later, May 2, our first grandchild: **Gustav Alfred Söderqvist**, was born! The delivery was very fast; Svante and Ida arrived less than an hour before their son was born at "my" hospital. I was allowed to meet little Gustav within a few hours after birth, an amazing experience that can't be described in words! And then, three months later, Carl and Eva had a baby girl August 9! Again I got permission to visit the small family in the delivery room, seeing our new granddaughter. When the parents told me that her name would be **Lena Betty Maria Nygren**, Lena after me i.e. "mormor" (maternal grandma), Maria after "farmor" (paternal grandma) and Betty after our "extra wonderful US grandmother" (Betty Park) – you can imagine how touched and honored I was!

Now for some other family updates: **Anna** (31), our Fulbright scholar, still lives in Brooklyn, continuing her PhD studies at NYU. This year she has presented and defended her first project and is also teaching at NYU. To keep in touch Anna has Skype-dinners with her sisters' families as the babies grow so fast! Before going on maternity leave, **Ida** (28) finished the surgical part of her internship at Sankt Görans hospital. **Eva** (26) presented her Master's thesis in meteorology in June and also applied for and got a research position at the university. Our two fantastic son-in-laws are, besides being proud fathers, continuing their careers: **Svante** as a musician and **Carl** as a physiotherapist and "activity coach" among the elderly. Since August we have also a new member in our household, **Anneliese Lilienthal**, a young Mount Holyoke alumna (class of '05) that I met at a MHC Choral Reunion in 2008. She is a trained Medical Illustrator, has Swedish heritage and visited me in 2010. She became interested in studying Global Health at the Karolinska Institute, a prestigious Master's program, and we encouraged her to apply. She was accepted, got a scholarship, and now stays with us this year. It's great having her in the house, we really feel like she is our 4<sup>th</sup> daughter!

Besides family, job, trips we still have the same old hobbies – I do genealogy (when I have time...) and sing in my choir, Anders still sings in the choir in our next-door church. Since Lucia and Christmas is a wonderful time for choir singing in Sweden we are looking forward to the holidays when we again can form a family choir to celebrate the holidays!

*We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

*Eva & Anders*

PS. One bad thing happened this year. In July a restaurant in the house where Ida, Svante and Gustav lives caught fire. Luckily they weren't home, but their apartment and many of their belongings were damaged by smoke. Initially it was said it would take "a couple of weeks" before chemical treatment could make it inhabitable again so initially they stayed with us. It was fun for us since we could be with little Gustav daily. However, eventually they moved to an evacuation apartment and they are still there because the floor in the living room has to be removed... We feel really sorry for them but are glad that no one was hurt.