

To all our friends around the world,

Time has passed so quickly this fall and suddenly it's time for me to try to summarize the "Hallin family story 2013" in my yearly Christmas letter! This has been a year filled with new experiences, spending more and more time with our grandchildren, but also spending money buying a caravan for traveling in Sweden and a new, bigger home for our skiing/hiking vacations!

Our tradition is to begin the New Year in **Tegefjäll/Åre** in northern Sweden and this year Ida, Svante and Gustav came along. Little did we know that this was our last in old "Alptoppen", in a few weeks we will spend our first New Year in "Smultronet", a new bigger apartment for our growing family, 5 minutes walk from the old one (my sisters' family will take over that place). In February Anders and I went to Africa, starting out by visiting my brother and his family in their beautiful house in Camps Bay, having a great time! Then we started our tour with G-adventures - three weeks by bus from **Cape Town to Livingstone**, 5300 km (3294 miles) with an interesting group of people and an excellent leader. We went through **South Africa, Namibia** and **Botswana**, made many stops e.g. saw the living desert in Namibia, were "poled" in Mokoros (canoes) into the Okavango delta and spent a night in primitive tents, walked with bush people in the Kalahari desert, took a boat tour on the Chobe river, watching herds of elephants and many other wild animals. We walked the bridge into **Zambia** and saw the magnificent Victoria falls before flying home. In March I took Anneliese, our "extra" daughter living with us, up north (Anders couldn't take time off) and I acted as her skiing teacher during four days of fun including some scary moments since she had not really done downhill skiing before.

In June we went to the area in Sweden called **Dale-Carlia** as an exam gift to Anneliese, stayed in a nice hotel overlooking lake Siljan, had three great days visiting the Falu Copper Mine, Nusnäs (where Dala horses are made), and the homes of artists Anders Zorn and Carl Larsson. Our Midsummer celebration at **Marholmen**, my mum's summer house became a Swedish-American party with Anneliese's sister Britt, two of Ida's US friends and Anna's new boyfriend Paul joined us together with Anders sister, her ex-husband and their son. The week before Midsummer Anders and I had bought a comfortable Caravan to use as an extra guest house (I didn't have to sleep in a tent this midsummer) and we also used it for most of our summer traveling in Sweden this year. We had a mix of vacations: a trip with Anna to see an Opera in **Vadstena** where her friends were performing; visiting "long-time-no-see" friends in **Gisselbo** and **Nora**; listening to fantastic concerts in different places around Lake Mälaren where Svante was on tour with a jazz ensemble; driving up north to visit our good friends at **Höga Kusten** before going to **Urkult**, our favorite music festival. Eva, Carl and little Lena joined us for the festival so the caravan was full but for a week it worked perfectly since the weather was nice. Little Lena had fun at Urkult, lots of children around and Lena was probably one of the most photographed kids as she was walking around, carrying Carl's ukulele, so cute! After the summer we had busy schedules but managed to take off for a long weekend to travel with our choir to Italy and the **Amalfi Coast** - no concerts, but rehearsing at Capri and enjoying a mini-vacation. Dark and gloomy November in Sweden calls for a break - Anders wanted to go to Africa again so we ended up taking a charter to **Gambia**, staying in a luxurious beach hotel for a week, reading books, taking long walks along the beach, eating good food and just relaxing. Since we're not planning any trips abroad this spring - because we want to be in our new skiing house - it was good to get some vitamin D from the sun. I've had also a number of work-related trips on my own this year (Buenos Aires, Singapore, London, Paris and Barcelona) but they are more work than fun and I really prefer traveling with Anders.

Our **job situations** have actually changed slightly. **Anders** is now working in a privately owned clinic. He likes it although I think he works very hard and too many hours since the schedule is often overbooked. We'll see what happens, he is trying to make some changes that hopefully will make things better. I am still working at Danderyd Hospital, being a so-called "Process Leader" for Endocrinology/Diabetology but the Dept. of Internal Medicine got a new head in September. I really like him so far but of course he will want to make changes and there are issues that need to be addressed so we'll see what happens. I have also been engaged in a new HND-center, patient-centered care for patients with Heart disease, Diabetes and impaired Kidney function. I am not doing active research but I work a lot around Quality Assurance evaluations. The only thing that I don't like about my job is having to be on-call, it tends to be more stressful for each year. Once I turn 60 I don't have to do it - but that takes another in 2.5 years... I got a really nice encouragement for my work achievements this year as the board of the Swedish Association for Diabetologists selected me as the "Diabetologist of the year 2013". I feel very honored and will receive a sum of money as well!

Finally some extended family updates: **Anna** (32) still lives in Brooklyn, continuing her PhD studies. She is teaching courses at NYU + working on the proposal for her thesis i.e. she works a lot. This spring she started dating **Paul**, an Australian-born guy, now living in NYC that also has lived in Sweden (!) and speaks some Swedish. He came to our Midsummer celebration, we really liked him and they seem to fit so well together and since this fall they are sharing Anna's apartment. **Ida** (29) is busy doing her internal medicine rotation at Sankt Görans hospital and **Svante** has quite a lot of work as a freelance base player e.g. in bands, theatres and shows. Their son **Gustav** (19 months) has fun at a good Daycare center close to their apartment in Stockholm (they moved back in April after the smoke damage last July) and, when needed (e.g. when both parents work nights), we enjoy baby-sitting Gustav. **Eva** (27) is working part time at her research position in meteorology which also includes teaching and taking courses e.g. this summer in France (but Carl and Lena came along). **Carl** works as physiotherapist among the elderly and seems to enjoy his job. Little **Lena** (16 months) spends her days at a parent driven/cooperative Daycare center that she just loves and we enjoy baby-sitting her too when Eva and Carl need help. **Anneliese** took her Master Exam in June and has worked extremely hard this fall, trying to find a way extend her stay in Sweden. She won a big prize in an entrepreneur program but also works fulltime at KI and she now has a visa to stay until 2015! She spends Christmas with her family in Vermont, so nice for her and them!

Spending time with the grandchildren is our first priority nowadays but we try to find time for our old hobbies - genealogy (when I have time...) and singing in choirs. 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 all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Lena & Anders