

Dear

This yearly Christmas letter is planned to be the **last** such **Christmas letter** that we shall write and send. Time has come to cut down, drastically, on our budget for their mailing — so even Christmas cards will be curtailed. But you will always be in our thoughts. Sorry – well, to some, a relief.

We wish you all a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**.

2008 was a good year, we are settling, more-and-more, and “for good”, in Denmark (!).

Charlotte's Family: Charlotte, Wei Wei, Camilla (12) and Caroline (8) live some 4 miles from us, in a lovely house. C&C go to a very nearby school, 400 meters away or so, Camilla joined the Vedbæk Girls Guard (marching band) and so far plays the piccolo flute. Wei Wei is often in China, for months, to act in TV series, movies and on the stage of the State Central Experimental Drama Theatre in Peking. Then Kari, when in Denmark, often drives over to fetch Caroline from School, or other such “child rearing” activities. They often, typically weekly, come to us for dinner, just 2-3 hours. We enjoy seeing the family being a family and the two lovely girls growing up.



Center: Summer in China and Wei Wei movie posters. Flanks: C&C at home. Photos curtesy WW

Nikolaj's Family: Nikolaj, Bodil, Marianne (11), Katrine (9) and Jakob (7) live far way, in Woodinville, near Redmond (Microsoft, MS), near Seattle. Marianne was accepted into a new school that specialises in science, in Kirkland, and thus takes a special bus, early, ooooh so early. She won a US\$ 25 book-credit for being the student, at her former school, who could remember most digits $i \pi$ (a whopping 200 !). Kari went there Oct. 24–28 and Nov. 5-15. Loved it. Nikolaj is at MS Research and Bodil with a pharmacological research laboratory. Dines saw the kids in Feb. and Kari in Nov. They circulate wonderfully in each their own stellar orbit. We are hosting Marianne and Camilla, next August 2009, for a 12 or so day stay at “our place” in South Tyrol, Hotel Latemar. Both girls have been there, with us, alone, and this time they shall have their own room !



The family in Woodinville — with Kari in her US “Paradise”. Photos curtesy Nikolaj

Kari: Kari has her life pretty well-defined: centers around, well, no, not as you guessed, Dines, but her Patchwork & Quilt: her three downstairs rooms: Boutique, Workshop and “Classroom”, the latter doubles as a family room. Tuesdays 9–11 women attend 10–14 o'clock classes and the chattering is on. Often they buy from her boutique. Kari had an exhibition of her works at the Parish community center of the Ny Holte Church — and is working on a whole new set of P&Qs for her next exhibition there, Oct.–Nov. 2009. Kari returns from her Oct.24-Nov.16 US West Coast + Houston, Texas (“The” annual Quilt Show), trip with “zillions” of fabrics. Yes, Kari went to the US and was there when Barack Obama got elected. First 5 days with Nikolajs', then 2 nights at a splashy hotel in Houston for the “greatest” P&Q show, then 5 days in the SF Bay Area visiting friends of more than 40 years. Then back in Woodinville 5–15 Nov. On Nov. 19 she has a course in a small town 30 kms west of Fredsvej ! Then joins Dines in Vienna a week later when he returns from 5+ days in Japan !

Fredsvej 11: On October 19 a greenhouse was completed in our garden and so was a solid set of steps leading from the bottom of our garden up into the forest beyond — and years of garden reconstruction work has now ended. We are very satisfied — and Dines is hilariously so. Inspects “his park” daily and plans for next springs' green house activities. It really is not, so much, for growing tomatoes and all that, but for storing apples (etc., etc.) in the winter and for providing shelter from the rain for afternoon cocktails and wine drinking in the summer (etc., etc.). Kari takes care of many, many flowers: up around our terrasse there are many garden pots and plots flowering from spring to fall.



The same tree — four seasons — and the greenhouse

Dines: Dines' days go with reading the newspaper; checking the e-mails (incl. extensive e-mail-based work for Academia Europaea (AE, the European Academy of The Arts, Humanities and Sciences) of which Dines is chair of its Informatics Section); writing mostly on his next book; also writing and editing a few papers for conferences and journals; tottering in the garden (mowing the lawn, weeding here and there); reading books (detective stories as well as great novels); watching, occasionally a TV detective series programme, seldomly the news; kissing Kari; etc. Dines' "business travels" this year included three days in **Heidelberg** (AE) in April; almost three full days in **London** late June (incl. book-hunting); to **Minho** (Portugal) mid Sept. for almost five full days; then, the following week, to **London** (two full days) and **Liverpool** (AE, four full days). Final "business trips" of the year were to **Graz** via **Vienna** to lecture for 7 weeks — with a detour late Nov. to **Japan** (textiles for Kari) again via Vienna out and back — where Kari joined Dines in Vienna for her two weeks with Dines in Graz. After 2–3 days in Vienna by auto train: Vienna–Hamburg home for Christmas.

Travels: Dines "burned" up his airline savings on a business return trip to the **US West Coast** in February 6–28. Mostly visited friends in the **San Francisco Bay Area**. Went, in Barbara Lucas' car down on Highway 1, out, via **Santa Barbara** to **Pasadena** and up, on 101, via SB to San Jose, to Peter and Christa Lucas. A weekend + a Monday was spent in **Seattle**, with Nikolaj's and at Microsoft Research (they paid that part of the trip). We travelled together to **Warsaw** May 8–11, early am out, late pm home, full four days with the Blikles. First day we saw the Blikle pastry plant and many of Blikle's pastry and delicatessen outlets and cafes and saw/heard Rossini opera in a beautiful chamber opera house. Went to Cracow the next day with Warsaw Philharmony concert that evening. To Kazimierz the following day with Rossini's Barber of Sevilla that evening at the Warsaw opera house. Sunday, the 11'th we went to the posh Konstantia suburb, saw many of the very beautiful villas and mansions as we strolled around — and spent time at Lucas Blikle's, the son and their grand son — the mother was busy at the main Blikle place in Warsaw that day. Early July to **Kiel**, for a festschrift event (W.P.deRoever), stayed with the wonderful Langmaacks: Annemarie and Hans. Sept.22–Oct.2 we went to **Andalusia: Marbella, Jerez de la Frontera, Sevilla** and **Granada**, stayed with our friends, Gülay and Ole Guldberg in Marbella and shared the trip to JdIF from where we went on by bus. The trip of the year.

During Dines' and Kari & Dines' Austria visit we also visited our friends: the **Leitgeb** winery family in Rust and the **Plöchl** winery family in Lutzmannsburg — from where we bring wine home.

Church: Dines enjoys attending high mass at Virum Church and became a member of the Virum Church Parish Council. A new activity. Listening to the interpretation of the espistles of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the Evangelical Lutheran way is a never-ending process. There are ongoing, but not final answers. There is the faith. It harmonises well with worldly activities — such as science.

This letter was written during Dines' three Graz weekends. See photos:



South Styria; right three photos from my room balcony on trip #1

Next: Christmas, at Charlotte's, a first Christmas at the home of some of our Grandchildren for both of us. Plans are, for Dines to lecture, Feb.–Juli, at the Techn. Univ. of Milan, Italy, at University of the Saarland in Saarbrücken, Germany, and at Univ. of Kiel also Germany. We shall see whether Dines has the stamina for any and all of these three "assignments". Kari will be busy with P&Q — every day !

Closing: We wish you all a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**.