

Dear friends,

Delft, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010

Once again we have succeeded in concluding another year with Christmas tree, traditional Norwegian Christmas dinner, and much music. Before the habit of writing “2010” has taken hold, we try to reflect briefly on all that happened since the previous New Year’s letter.

**Sunniva** (now 6½) has been busy with a number of fundamental learning activities: At school she has become a very active and eager pupil, and has transformed into an avid bookworm. She has also worked hard at swimming practice, which has paid off with no less than two swimming diplomas. She’s also beginning to make serious progress on the piano and violin. She is a very active child in every sense, never short on conversation topics, and finding it difficult to sit or stand still... unlike her big sister (with whom she is too often likened), she actually *enjoys* outdoor sports, and did surprisingly well on ice skates this winter. Among the many happy events, it was however a big disappointment that her neighbour and best friend Joyce moved to another town this fall.

**Ursula** (12) bid farewell to the dear old neighborhood elementary school in July, celebrating the end of 8 years with her old classmates with a trip to the Dutch island Vlieland, and performing in the school Musical. In August she started in the first year of the Dutch secondary school system, at the Stanislas College in Delft, which means a lot of homework – but she’s managing very well! She’s still taking piano, viola and singing lessons, adding to this the new activity of school orchestra, so her weekly schedule is full... which means there’s much less time for the “couch potatoing” business. Some of the choir highlights this year included the recording of a CD with Christmas carols (in July!) and participating in the Dutch premiere of Liszt’s “Legend of the Holy Elisabeth”.



*The happy family at Villa Papiniana, in Florence (photo credits to uncle Jakob)*

For **Marianna**, 2009 was a year of reflecting upon past achievements and pondering the options for new directions. Having much less work than before with church music, the weekends have been freed up for other things, such as designing and executing a truly impressive Master Plan for the refurbishment of our house, which ended up revolutionizing the living room, the “front office”, and two bedrooms. The results are much to everyone’s liking! Next to this, of course, she’s ever busy with her work in music, playing the bells, etc. A novelty last year was the addition of children’s Yoga to her repertoire of teaching skills, which she has integrated in her kindergarten music lessons. She was also featured in a public TV program under the amusing title “The Hip-hopping Carillonneur” (viewable with [this link](#) within The Netherlands).

Contrasting his wife’s blazing energy, **Kristofer** fell victim to the “fifth disease” virus in February, taking him down so badly that it took a good three months to resume his normal work schedule. The upside to this was being able to spend more time with the family... and the viola. There was much music overall this year again, with no less than 15 concert performances, too many to summarise fairly in a sentence or two. The most exciting musical event in 2009 was undoubtedly buying a new viola, with which he hopes to embark on many more [musical adventures](#).

Both family vacations went to Italy this year, first to Florence in the spring for a long-planned reunion with our Norwegian family in the beautiful hillsides of Settignano. In July, we once again had the luxury of spending time on the beaches of Sardinia with our (Dutch-)Italian family: Nonno and Lenie, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews – totaling 15 of us! In November we then had return visits in Delft from Italy and Norway, and the Christmas holiday was also spent in Delft with Bestemor and Bestefar. Summing up, we managed in 2009 to survive the worldwide financial crisis, the Mexican flu, Michael Jackson (who would’ve thought?), and hope for ourselves and all of you to be just as fortunate in 2010!

Sunniva, Ursula, Marianna and Kristofer

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