

# 2008 Christmas News from Nadine, Per and Aksel in Herrliberg, Switzerland.



**Tradition?** It's that time again – Christmas time and newsletter time. I think the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue makes this newsletter a tradition doesn't it?



*Snow in late March 2008*

**January.** At first, it didn't seem like much had happened in the first few months, but then I was kindly reminded that we had Katerina and Penny come and visit in January. But that's all I remember. As usual we had snow till quite late, I think we got the last round in April.

**C-permits.** A minor, but notable event was getting our C-permits in March. A Swiss C-permit is a permanent residency permit (Niederlassungsbewilligung). We'll now no longer be taxed at source, but apart from that, it doesn't actually affect our daily lives an awful lot, yet somehow it does feel like having reached another milestone.



**New heating system.** Hans-Jörg had warned us quite early that he would be digging up the garden in spring for laying down hot-water pipes for our new communal heating system. Work was meant to start mid-April, but somehow got delayed until late May. Mind you, once they got started, it was over and done with in a couple of days.

The new heating plant uses wood chips (see the picture on the next page), and is shared between our house and Hans-Jörgs, later on probably also his parents house which is across the road.

**Graubünden.** In July we were invited to spend a weekend with our friends Stephano and Heike in their new place in the mountains, about 30 mins from Chur. A very nice place, up in the mountains far away from everything, but close to a small mountain Beiz, that even served Erdinger Weißbier. What more can you ask for?



*Aksel and Per in Graubünden*

**Travel.** Aksel is the one who has been out travelling – during July and August he managed Greece, England and Denmark in just a few weeks.

Nadine and Aksel went to Greece to see the family and generally take some time off, even if those two objectives don't always go well together :-). After Greece, they went to England to go visit Penny who was staying with her parents in Devon.

**My 25<sup>th</sup> highschool reunion.** And then we all went to Denmark - I was going to my 25<sup>th</sup> high school reunion, so we got some cheap(ish) tickets on Air Berlin, flew to Hamburg, got a rental car and drove the rest of the way. It was really quite a relaxed way of doing it. The reunion itself wasn't really a big event, but it was good fun to meet up again and find out what everyone had been up to in the last 25 years.



*Wooden chips for the new heating plant*

**Kindergarten.** Of course, it was important to get all of this travel done before Aksel started Kindergarten on 19 August.

He is now in Kindergarten five days a week from 0800 till 1145 after which he walks to the Kinderhort for lunch. Mondays and Thursdays he spends the afternoon in the Kinderhort, on Tuesdays he's back in Kindergarten for the afternoon. He got used to both Kindergarten and Kinderhort very quickly, and really enjoyed his time there right from the beginning.

His language is picking up too – he still understands English, German, Danish and Greek, but he speaks really only English and Swiss-German. Occasionally he'll blurt something out in Danish, but at other times when I ask him for the Danish version of something, he'll ponder it for a bit, and say “Ich cha nööt wie du, Far”. (I can't do like you, Dad).



*Aksel in Greece*

**Despite** being not quite 5, Aksel's already got quite a collection of friends. He and Roger, the neighbours boy, play together quite often, outside or inside. Then there is Dante, Alicia & Pascal's son, Tim and Maximo, two boys from the Kinderkrippe Aksel used to go to - Tim is Yoon-Hee and Jens' son, some good friends of ours, and although Tim is about a year younger than Aksel, they're best friends and see each other just about every weekend.

Recently Aksel has been striking up friendships with his new classmates. Just the other day I got a call from one of the other parents - “I'm Luca's mother, would Aksel like to come over and play?” Of course he would – Luca lives in Wetzwil, a little place (ein “Weiler” in German, a “hamlet” in English) only about a kilometre from our house. The next day I got another call - “Hi, I'm the nanny who looks after Lily and Nina, would Aksel like to come over and play?” ... so he's going over there next Wednesday for lunch right after Kindergarten.

**Nadine.** Given the latest problems in the financial industry, in one way it's quite surprising that Nadine's still got a job. In another, I guess someone has to look after all the money the rest of us lost in this debacle.

On a more positive note, about a month ago Credit-Suisse sponsored a visit to the BMW Sauber Formula One Racing Labs in Hinwil, about 30mins from here. There was a brief introduction by Peter Sauber himself, and a live transmission of the Brazilian GP, but Aksel and I really just went for the food, and to see the wind-tunnel and the supercomputer. (all very impressive, also the food).



*BMW Sauber race car*

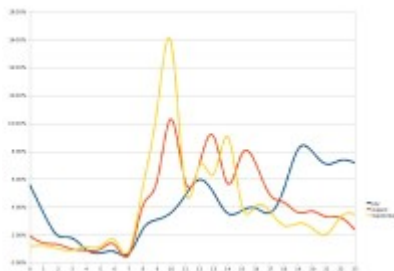
**Spamchek.** In some ways it's been a slow year, but in others quite a lot has happened. I had to sack Jacques, the 2<sup>nd</sup> salesman I hired last year. He wasn't making the numbers, something I just cannot afford. Quite a disappointment and quite expensive too, but that can't be helped. I still think we need someone else, but for the



moment we're holding off on that.

Just about a year ago, on 1 January 2008, our exclusive reseller deal with Rotronic AG took off. Well, it didn't actually "take off" as such – we realised fairly quickly it wasn't going to, and met with Rotronic again in April to cancel the exclusivity (it was quite clear that Rotronic would never be able to make the numbers it would require). We now have a regular reseller contract and they're slowly beginning to gain some momentum. Only just the other day we received the PO on behalf of a Norwegian oil exploration firm.

**Spamchek Report.** In May, I wrote our first quarterly report. We're still keen on getting noticed by the press, and being recognised as the Swiss specialists on email security. The quarterly report is a few pages of mostly boring statistics of the last three months. However, for Q2 we managed to spot a particular trend in the daily activity of the Swiss "botnet", namely that it goes out for lunch! This got us quite a bit of press, and the Q3 report was also well received. Even better, we were the subject of a slightly heated discussion in an on-line forum after PC-Tipp (a Swiss PC magazine) quoted part of the report.



*A graph from the Q3 report*

**European trademark.** Around September, we were notified by the "EU Office of Harmonisation in the Inner Market" that we had been awarded an EU trademark for "Spamchek". Also a quite significant step, although we're still not quite certain how best to leverage it.



**STOP PRESS!** Aksel has given up the dummy! As always with him, it happens when he wants it, not at any other time. A little less than two weeks ago, Samichlaus came and used his magic to make all the dummies disappear. And that was it.

**Christmas.** We're going to Denmark for Christmas and again we're taking Nadine's mum Penny with us. We'll be going up on 23<sup>rd</sup> and back again on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully the weather gods will be on our side.



**Julefrokost!** The previous years we've usually been invited to a Danish julefrokost in one place or another, typically with other Danes. This year I thought it would be fun to see somebody else, so tomorrow (14 December), we're doing a julefrokost in our house with some of our local friends.

The menu (sorry, only partially in English) is as authentic as possible under the circumstances - herring (red & white & sherry) and karrysalat, fish (salmon, mackerel, trout), egg, caviar and benfri sild, små frikadeller, leverpostej med bacon og champignon, fiskefrikadeller, stegte fiskefileter med remoulade og citron, blodpølse med sirup og æblemos, ost og rejer – plus home-made rugbrød and three different kinds of snaps, including a Norwegian Linie Aquavit courtesy of Jens & Yoon-Hee. Most appropriately, they brought it for my 44<sup>th</sup> birthday (in German, 44 is known as a "Schnapszahl"). I think I might turn 33 next year and make sure every everyone understands this excellent Schnapszahl concept.

Guest-wise we've invited Kat & George, Alicia & Pascal and Yoon-Hee (Jens is away on business or something), plus children, so a full house I reckon. It'll be fun to see who will be having blodpølse and who won't :-)

Well, that's all for now - I'll finish by wishing you a very Merry Christmas und einen guten Rutsch!

