



Dear friends

The year we are leaving has been packed to the gills. This has caused us to be less active in the «keeping in touch» department than we wanted. On the other hand, this is the time for sitting down and making sense of 2006. We'll pass a short recapitulation around to friends and family.

A year usually contains both good and bad, and to get the bad out of the way first... This has been a year of not feeling well. The usual bouts of cold and flu hit us like a hailstorm in January and February, when we were done with one bout, another started. We got so used to feeling awful that it took us a while to realize that Thomas was anemic and lacked vitamins. As if that weren't enough, Thomas suddenly found himself in need of emergency surgery in an unmentionable (at least in these types of letters) region. Hege has felt the strain, too, with feeling more sick and tired in this last pregnancy. She's also had a problem with her back that is still not resolved.

So how was all this compatible with having a newborn baby girl in the house? When challenges start piling up it is fantastic to get help. Thomas' parents, Liv and Kåre, were already on standby, ready to look after Håkon while we aimed for the maternity ward. They therefore gamely reacted fast when crisis hit. Thomas was hospitalized on a Monday just days before the due date. He was released on Friday and on Saturday morning we found ourselves in a taxi bound for the maternity ward. Just 75 minutes after we were admitted on May 20th Marie Orlaug, in a real hurry, was delivered. Within short she had eaten, spit up and fallen asleep. And this is Marie in a nutshell: always ready for a meal, always enjoying a nap, and otherwise she is the smiling happy baby that alternately observes the world and gets wildly enthusiastic over what she observes. She is such an easy baby. Already after 10 weeks she decided to sleep through the night!

Håkon has entered the role of older brother with commitment. He knows that small babies need lots of cuddling and attention and he early on proclaimed he would be there for her! Mummy could be responsible for the food and after a moment's thought he decided that daddy could be in charge of diapers. And behold, this is now the actual division of work that we have. Every night Marie Orlaug gets to spend a little while in Håkon's bed while Thomas reads to them both. If she comes along when we pick him up at school, he shows his baby sister off with pride. He usually runs into the house to greet her when he returns home and gets very disappointed if she is asleep when he arrives. Marie is equally enthusiastic about her brother. It is a good thing that they so clearly enjoy each other's company. We know it isn't easy for Håkon to get used to sharing the attention, help and hugs he was used to having all to himself.

We have not travelled as much this year as usual, but we have managed a few visits around the country. We spent the winter holiday in Eiksund with Hege's dad and the summer was spent in the sunny east with grandma, and Thomas' parents. Håkon spent his 7th birthday in Legoland with dad, cousin Martin and uncle Nils Petter. That was a great success! We have had a lot of visits from family and good friends, but we always hope for more.

We would like to round this letter off wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year. Best possible wishes from Flaktveit!