

## **CHRISTMAS 2001**

Dear Family and Friends,

Now that all of us are a year older and, hopefully, wiser, it is time once again to look back and take stock, so we may keep you informed of our wellbeing.

This year has proven, once again, in personal terms at least, to be a vintage year, a year of the fondest of memories, a year of relatively good health, and a year of some exciting new developments within our family.

First of all, our grandson Matthew got himself a cute sister, Zoie, in late September whose birth was a lot easier than Matthew's had been and who also made life a lot less difficult for Marina and Haig once she got home. We managed to squeeze in just a couple of visits with our granddaughter and her happy family, before we drove South for our hibernation. Some day, we will have to figure out how to place a photo at the top of our Christmas letter, but suffice it to mention that Zoie is a picture of health, with a full head of quite dark hair, unlike her brother who had little or no hair to start with and took his time to build a beautiful head of red curls. Zoie is a bright star born into a world full of unmitigated sadness and perplexing conflict.

A major highlight of our year was our five-week vacation in the Netherlands, where we were lucky enough to have two nieces and their families offer their homes for us to stay in, while they were vacationing elsewhere in Europe. This provided us with the opportunity to spend a stretch in Henk's former hometown, Arnhem, and another stretch near Haarlem (of Frans Hals fame and a stupendous organ in the Great Church) and some beautiful Dutch beaches. As well, we had lots of nice visits or stays with most of the Dutch family, had wonderful outings with some of the family, took many day trips, and generally relished every moment of our stay. We saw many scenic old towns, admired and/or heard quite a few magnificent organs, and were thrilled with several very exciting outdoor and indoor exhibitions of sculptures. We also much enjoyed our visit to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, where we were struck by his obvious popularity among the young people from all over the world, who spend as much time in lengthy and lively line-ups to get in, as they spend indoors to admire his works. It was good to be back and catch up with the Dutch family.

Back home from Europe, Henk had to have an angiogram again, in order for the cardiologist to determine the condition of heart and arteries, following the quadruple bypass operation and indications that all was not quite perfect. It turned out that one of the bypasses did indeed not succeed, but the good news is that it is not as bad as we had feared.

We also enjoyed some good times with all the children visiting our home together, including Albert and his wife, Anoush, who had their wedding while we were in Europe. We were sorry to have missed the wedding, but enjoyed going through the pictures of the big event. We are likely to see less of them in future, as they are now living in Kingston, where Anoush is studying medicine and Albert started a new job.

This was also the year that Linda's parents, the Kreugers, celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary ! As well, members of the family "all across the Country" are busily engaged in planning a special event and reunion for the occasion when Ruth Kreuger will turn 90 next April. Hard to believe when you see her on the golf course or at the bridge table !

We are currently well into our Florida life, enjoying unprecedented warm and beautiful weather. We plan to be here for almost six months, so Henk can stay on top of his exercise program and daily walks, without any weather excuses so to say, and in fact enjoying his opportunities to do so in gorgeous park settings, while both of us also get in quite a bit of golf.

We wish all of you excellent health and lots of happiness in the coming year, and a memorable time with family and friends over the Holiday Season !

Henk and Linda