

THE CIRCLE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2002

Time runs fast and time changes even some Circle fundamentals. When Jos retired after a reign of ten years we quickly could agree on Petter as the next Circle president. Now -more than 13 years after graduation - its time for a change again. I feel honored and proud to belong to this group of great people who are spread out all over the world and still have something beautiful in common. I will do my best to steer the Circle through the next years and to enhance the flow of information among its members. Although the technical means get better and more efficient by the second it seems nevertheless more difficult to keep in touch. Many thanks to Petter to keep the movement going and the attendance figures of the last Circle meetings speak for themselves – all that based on the great job of Jos during the first ten years.

Since the Circle is a moving and revolving group I think it will be best to communicate through e-mail and the net – even more so because the Circle database of physical addresses is hopelessly outdated. Our web-site www.usfcircle.com should be active during the summer and will include various sections about Circle events in the past and in the future. Moreover, it will contain the possibility to register one's address so during some time in the future we can go back to the good old mail, if it should be around by that time...and if we still want to.

Stockholm has been a great meeting with lots of people showing up and we are all looking forward to meet next year in Athens. Of course any event in between official meetings is most welcome and I will be more than happy to spread the news.

I will keep you posted about the official launch of the site and would like to close with an invitation to share information with each other. Writing the newsletter all by myself is all right but it's not ideal. Please keep me updated about your lives and news you would like to disseminate; I am traveling quite a lot but it would be foolish to try to cover everybody – so please write or ring and I will be more than willing to do the rest.

Have a great summer!

Wilfried

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Long time – no see

So we did it again - official report about the Circle Meeting in Stockholm.

Outgoing president Petter Danielsen had done his utmost to organize a weekend in a city none of us had a clue about. But thanks to sightseeing tours, boat rides and eager explorations by various Circle members, we departed with quite some knowledge about the Swedish capital and its history. For the lesser interested in history: Stockholm is a fantastic and charming city if you manage to hold winter and rain at bay....or as the old Swedish saying goes: "We do have summers in Sweden – last year it was a Tuesday"...

Nevertheless the saying we experienced three days of sunshine, some wind and some drops of rain – and quite agreeable temperatures of 15 – 18 degrees C. We started Friday night with a dinner above one of the most fashionable markets in town. After market hours this charming place is a restaurant – quite elaborate food and good wines from the Mediterranean countries. Since the author of the article arrived too late I can only recount the stories after 10.30 p.m. And for a change I will tell you right away who has been there.

Present president **Petter** Danielsen had continued to change his life and after a Porsche and a new job he appeared with the wonderful and charming *Angelique* from Belgium. Much to Jan's delight, who not only had introduced them to another but who happens to be a strong advocate of cross border relations as well....Petter is running his own consultancy together with childhood friend *Dag*, who backs up the scientific side of the enterprise. His vast experience in steering Viking boats and eating stone crabs had been tested by selected Circle members last year. He joined the meeting from Saturday onwards.

Lars and *Ena* had flown in from London and are in preparation for a serious summer vacation in their house at the Norwegian coastline. Lars is doing fine, the two girls are growing, and Ena is checking out designer hotels and restaurants on a global scale for new ideas.

The godfather of them all, **Jos** Piron is alive and well although he remained somewhat bleak about the future of the chicken business. But remember, there is no business like chicken business...which becomes more true by the minute... Or maybe some hints of a midlife crisis are to blame; he just turned 40 some days prior to our meeting. In any case, his wife *Nathalie* is well and in eager preparation for an adequate birthday celebration. She even traveled to Switzerland to learn about the art of melting cheese... so gourmets and gourmands in the Ravels area look out!

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Dirk and *Elena* came from London as well and have changed their brief, 4-year liaison into cohabitation and apartment sharing. Elena is working in the media business with extensive travel to Milan and Rome, whereas Dirk has quit internet banking to enjoy life for a while. Marriage and kids were discussed during the meeting but no final conclusion has been reached.

Bernard and *Marlyse*, happy and well, have serious plans on their minds: To start a housing project in the south of France. Since Logitech is doing fine, rumors have spread that Bill Gates is considering some reconstructions in his mansion to catch up...Bernard is still traveling extensively and the famous, TIME covered folding keyboard is in the stores for sale.

Jan has ended another relationship which lasted for more than ten years...No, no secret marriage we did not know about! He parted from Butterfield & Butterfield but retains good contacts; the book about his painter-grandfather is in the final stages (as during previous meetings) and love life is fine. After some flight trauma last summer, Jan is using the train and has decided to give women outside his TGV radius a little break. *Monica* Queralt joined from Brussels where she is working as a coach for various management courses. She backed up the Spanish delegation together with *Eugenia* Carranza who had flown in from Madrid. We all missed Luis, who cited some last minute travel for not showing up this time; he is doing fine otherwise.

Last but by far not least we had **Paris** Kazakias among us, alive and well and after some stints in Western Europe back to his native Greece. He not only surprised us by his presence, he had beautiful company as well. *Nadia*, his personal tennis trainer and fitness coach had just hooked up with him recently. Bo, who is still busy killing tuna fish and growing a family, sent his uncle *Peter* to keep up with the latest news first hand.

Back to the dinner. After closing hours and increased desire to enjoy the Stockholm nightlife we could not superate several doormen who obviously had been warned about our arrival in town. Having some drunk Norwegians in our group did not help either...so we ended up at the bar of the Scandic hotel, which brought some Mid-West charm and a good country singer to our lives. But it did not really matter since we had so many stories to tell...

So after some drinks we headed for our swimming hotel Petter had reserved for us. A former yacht owned by Barbara Hutton (did not attend USF for those of you who did not know!) and now a hotel with quite peculiar features. The most interesting one is certainly the bathroom/toilet/shower which comes literally all in one. I leave some slapstick like situations to your imagination...

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After a few relaxing hours we made it to a bus tour the next morning. Stockholm was basically a bunch of unrelated islands until Mr. Nobel invented dynamite. This not only won him respect all over the world, it helped the city grow as well namely by making the surrounding rocks habitable. These former, lesser-sought areas are now home to Swedish yuppies and internet millionaires, which means they will be on sale anytime soon. The Wasa museum provided information about Vikings and their impressive skill in building boats that would carry them over big parts of the globe, long before the Spanish and the Portuguese made their famous discoveries. After so much history our brains took a rest during some shopping and lunching in the old town of Stockholm. For those of you who love salmon and herring the Swedish capital is a paradise. Both come in various forms, smoked, in herbs, sauces, with and without spices and after some tries we tried some more. A small nap on the boat provided the right energy to start the notorious annual meeting.

Since bad experiences in the past had produced long meetings with endless discussions, we took the reverse order this time: We started with the meeting before dinner. Petter broke the news that he intended to retire to focus on his love and professional life and that he was willing to give up his position as president. Following old Circle tradition, presidents are not elected but selected and strangely enough Petter choose the much-delighted author to carry on. This was certainly an offer I could not refuse (I have been living in Italy long enough and know most of Mario Puzo's books...), so I will do my best to continue the story of benevolent dictatorship...the following discussion circled about web-sites, new logos etc. (please read previous reports on the subject); good news is: The Circle has a .com address, right on time after the first internet boom seems to be over; check out www.usfcircle.com and wait until further notice to see something... we intend to be online in the next couple of weeks and after that we will be open for input and contributions...

The Circle dinner took place on the boat as well. After the official part was over, Petter had selected a three-course meal to be washed down with gallons of white and red wine. The food was good, the service patient and the wines – thanks to Swedish EU membership – drinkable and affordable. Stories and cognac flew until the morning ours but lacking party animals like Luis we broke up early, at least for Circle standards...Careful planning cut our way home to a few stairs, which deserves some extra applause.

The next morning brought sightseeing by boat. We visited canals and the open sea and gained more insight into the beauty and size of the city. Rich vegetation alongside the riverbanks, spacious gardens and wonderful houses proved that Sweden is certainly a wealthy country worth living in. To continue in style *Magnus*, a friend of Jan, native Swede and working in Brussels suggested brunch at the Grand Hotel. This turned out to be one of the better ideas of the recent past, since the food was just excellent. We learned some more different

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varieties of salmon and herring and tasted rein-deer and elk. Different forms of aquavit helped us to digest and to lift our spirits. After this outstanding brunch we took a little walk and some relaxation to be ready and hungry for dinner.

Opera Café, a classic among dinner and city hangouts was the venue for our farewell dinner. Once again we enjoyed each other's company, caught up on the latest gossip and experienced the good sides of a country. Opera café turned itself into a clubbing location and the cool Swedes became hotter and hotter right after midnight. Jan had to be tied up, which he truly enjoyed by the way...

So another meeting came to and end. Bernard had organized a visit to a Swedish start up company for Monday morning and we got to realize that Swedish companies seem to be on the forefront of the new communications business. After this event people mostly dispersed or carried on with their jobs or their visits of the country.

Well, and the location of the next Circle meeting will be: ATHENS. Cradle of mankind and hometown of Paris Kazakias who is willing to host and organize the event. So stay tuned, relax, and have a wonderful summer....

So what else is new? Gossip from direct and indirect sources...

Beatrice and **Henning** have been traveling extensively with their son Nils. Since he is another true, highbred Circle baby, his parents cannot start soon enough to bring him up to speed. They visited friends in California and went for a trip to Japan. Henning is trying his best to improve the Tyco share-price but times are rough, to say the least. Beatrice is enjoying Wiesbaden, at least some days, and is studying Norwegian during her scarce spare time.

Nathalie sponsored and cooked a birthday party for godfather president **Jos** Piron. About 30 friends and family members could enjoy the feast, which featured a several course menu and selected wines to accompany the food. **Minka** and *Rene* were among the guests and they have not eaten since...they are using their free time for studying Spanish and enjoying their finally finished swimming pool.

Whereas the North of Belgium saw a sumptuous, Roman style food festival, **Bernard**, *Marlyse* and the author watched the Ferrari Grand Prix in Montreux, Switzerland. This race in the streets of picturesque Montreux exhibited the Maranello racing machines from all times. We agreed that the 250 Ferrari from the late Fifties is the most classic one and we decided to start to save some money right away; any offers for a old Fiat 500?...

Marlyse will take Edouard and Josephine to Legoland (Denmark) before they will visit Lars and Petter in Norway, where Bernard will join the holiday crowd.

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Jan will have to leave his Chateau any time soon and is looking for places. During a recent visit we could testify that his castle attic has become very cozy and even the kitchen is now fully equipped. Jan has distributed his collection of paintings over the numerous walls and is rightfully horrified about moving everything again. If any of you feels like buying a Chateau outside of Brussels with a bohemian tenant in the upper floor, please call him immediately.

Barbara Weiss appeared and disappeared among various Circle members and is supposed to be somewhere between Vienna and Frankfurt looking for a job. Any updates are welcome.

Petter, freed from the tedious task of being Circle president, is full of love and romance. During his recent stay in Brussels he proposed to *Angelique* who was delighted and moved by the offer. Wedding bells will ring sometime next year, so look out for the proper announcements.

Nina and Elisabeth paid a visit to the Ganders and enjoyed their home and a lakeside swim. Nina will end her Efta project in Brussels later this year and will move back to Norway. So will Elisabeth from August onwards to attend school.

Beatriz Glez Coviella and *Diego* will give up their shuttling between Madrid and Cordoba and will settle in Andalusia. Beatriz finally gave in to move to the south and leave the Spanish capital behind.

Serge Stolitz is working in Geneva, trading commodities for Paribas. He is fine, still likes Asian food, and has promised increased information about his live.

Dai Takahashi resurfaced during the recent World Cup. Although no direct contact has been established I was copied in his e-mail conversations with Jos. Rumors have it that he was dancing in the street after some Japanese victories but is supposed to be back to his desk since the quarterfinals.

Last note

Please send digital pictures (preferably in CD format) of the last events to my address for further publishing:

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