



Dear friends, 2013 has flown by much too swiftly, and we can look back to many happy events and accomplishments, while appreciating our growth (tenacity and blessings) through previous challenging times.

We are now fully initiated into the American college experience, having 3 college boys studying on different campuses, and living various distances away from home. Niels has become majorly involved in quadcopter system design for his PhD, Dieter is finalizing his BEcon/Math degree with more focus on Computer Science, and Pierre-Henri started his BFine Arts (Digital/Game Design) at Art Academy University in San Francisco, daily commuting from home via Caltrain. In June Niels celebrated the halfway mark in grad school with a Masters Degree in CS, during a joyful ceremony at Stanford Engineering. It becomes challenging to plan activities that include the entire family, but we manage to keep all involved (or at least updated!) through commuting, flying, driving, and various new virtual networks. Pierre has had interesting times at Cloudmark, often telecommuting and meeting at odd hours when conferencing to Japan, China or Brazil. After meetings in South America he managed to pay a special visit to his parents, Oupa Piet and Ouma Hardy, and brother Hennie with wife Karen, also meeting our 4 lovely nieces in Paraguay. I have been involved in more exciting research at Stanford, adding a few manuscripts to the ever-beckoning publication horizon, and also attending the annual conference of the MSA in Indianapolis. Since this was my first time back in Indiana since 1984, when I did some PhD research at IU, Pierre and Pierre-Henri flew out to meet me in Indianapolis, after which we did a fast and furious tour of the midwest: driving down to Bloomington to spend time with my old friend Jocelyn Turner on campus, then north via Chicago, including dinner with Tony and Paula Ferguson, and continuing to Madison WI to reconnect with our dear friends Paul and Joani Weimer and family. Finally we continued around Lake Michigan to Pinckney, MI, to meet our lifelong Stellenbosch friends Jannie and Elfie Loubser and family. With them we toured into Canada via unforgettable Mackinaw Island, the Agawa Canyon train ride, ending with a delightful BBQ on the banks of their lake, literally in their front yard. Unending forests, countless lakes, and vast plains covered in green, left a lasting impression of how wide and enormous this country is.

Earlier in the year Niels officiated the joyful celebration of Marcello and Yizhuo's wedding, during a lovely family breakaway to Napa Valley. At a Women in Architecture event in Berkeley I spent a delightful day with



Eleni Bastea and guests, who also celebrated the publication of her first poetry collection. From my male dominated science world it was indeed a breath of fresh air to indulge in discussions on green design, retrofitting of suburbs, and nurturing sustainability, majorly through women's influence. We were again treated by an evening with Bernard and Ria Prior, visiting Liz, Jun and family in San Rafael. Fun events at SF Jazz Center and Alvin Ailey's Dance Company were shared with our marvelous hosts Neil and Joy McGowan, and Blair and Sharon Bolden - after a great 'L' party at the Boldens for Blair's 50th bday. All was not partying though, and we were glad to survive our first government shutdown without too much trauma to research and progress.

At the start of summer the boys invited their mom to go with them to New York, where we spent a week traversing the city from Brooklyn to Haarlem, visiting stunning and extravagant places at all wicked hours of day and night. Our host apartment was close to Central Park, Juilliard School of Music, Times Square...the Empire State Building...and we visited Ground Zero that left a lasting impression. We further took a boat trip to Lady Liberty, and walked across Brooklyn Bridge to spend a day in a vibrant Brooklyn.

We were delighted to meet two young couples from Stellenbosch who were studying/working in the USA. Ree and Philip Geldenhuys came as special graduate students to Cal, while working with the nonprofit 'community-keepers' in Stellenbosch. We shared special times with lots of laughter in SF and the hills around our neighborhood. I was further treated by the company of Johan and Helanya Fourie, during their 3-month sabbatical/research visit through the USA. I especially find it encouraging to see and hear the excellence of the leading young minds in our homeland. The future of our loved ones in South Africa we hold very dear, and I was fortunate to meet Helen Zille, leader of the Democratic Alliance and premier of the Western Cape. What a dynamic leader! She inspired us all. A few weeks ago, we also had the privilege to take part in the celebration of Nelson Mandela's life, when he died after a long battle with ill-health - and a long walk to freedom... Hearing people's life stories through a shared inspiration by a man whose spirit was larger than life, was indeed a sobering experience. We remain proudly South African.

For the first time since 2005 we celebrated Christmas with Oupa Nellis and Ouma Gerda, sisters and cousins, nephews and nieces, childhood friends and loved ones in South Africa. How we wish we could all be together! We now realize the plight of many countries in the loss of a generation who seeks education, their fortune and a new life elsewhere.... not to return. We are not alone in our longing. Our roots are tied to the exploration of Africa, and we wish to continue our influence, love and caring for that stunning part of the world.

Our very best wishes for a wonderful, inspiring and fulfilling year 2014. May you stay ahead of the tides, and ride your wave with joy!
Pierre, Lydia, Niels, Dieter, Pierre-Henri

