



Niederried, January 2010

Hi there,

the beginnings of our yearly letters are unfortunately not getting better, we look back on a turbulent year and don't expect it to get much calmer in 2010. But as always let's start with the beginning.

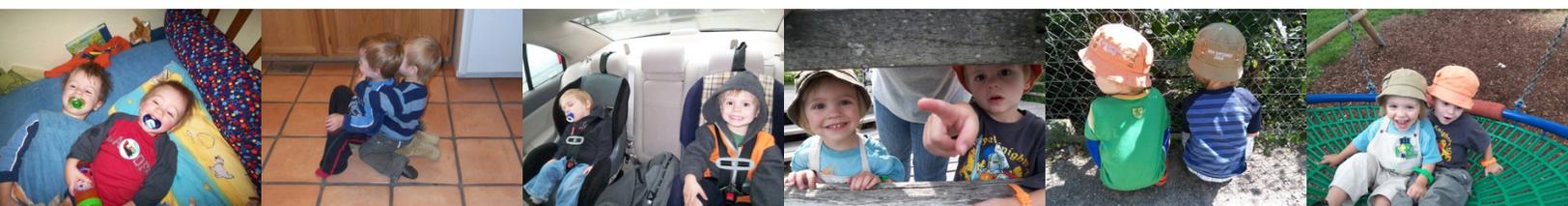
The prospect of moving back to Switzerland in the course of the year presented us with many "last times" and "last chances" in Colorado. We finally saw the Zoo lights in the Denver Zoo, we enjoyed the champagne powder in Loveland once again and Eva finally took a knitting class in the fabulous yarn shop in Boulder and learned rather late in life how to knit socks.

A "first time" he was really proud of came in February for Samuel: he is wearing big boy pants, in wise precaution we bought at least two dozen identical ones featuring "Thomas the Tank Engine". As in the last years Reinhard was away for our wedding anniversary (hopefully this was a last time as well), this time for a one week work visit with Marc in Texas. Samuel had lots of fun at the birthday parties of his friends (Julian, Noah) and was almost unable to wait for his own party, which he celebrated together with Finn on March 1st.



In March we also took a trip to Texas all together, a conference for Reinhard in San Antonio, although it was only a long weekend we all had a fabulous time (except for the few hours when Eva managed to flood the hotel suite). There were a lot of goodbyes to say, for example to our pediatrician Dr. Campbell, to NCAR by Eva and also to the last big Colorado snow storm. The last "calm month" ended with a quick trip (first time without the kids!) for Eva to Switzerland for an interview (unfortunately without success). The three boys visited a bunch of Austrians on a ski weekend trip to Winterpark.

April was (mainly for Eva) reserved for packing, cleaning up, selling, giving away, donating and throwing away and always more packing of our household stuff as well as for the planning of the sale of our house. From the 26th on we lived with our Austrian friends and on the 27th our household was packed into a container while Reinhard taught for the last time at CSM and the boys had their last day at Kindercare (playfully Colorado surprised with a last but thankfully small snow storm on this day). In the evening the whole family witnessed how our car was loaded last and we could say "bye" to the container, Samuel was already worried about his Legos.... Not knowing whether to laugh or to cry we flew to Europe on the 29th.





On May 2nd we celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with Eva's parents and an enormous crowd of relatives and friends, still under jet lag the boys were amazed by so many people. Reinhard returned to Golden already on the following Monday he still had to administer exams etc. To our great relieve we had two interested parties for our house during this time and he could sign most of the necessary papers for the sale on place. A few administrative details (among others the official closing) had to be done from Switzerland. Everything went — to our great amazement — smoothly and very easily, we can still astonish friends and colleagues with anecdotes about it.

After Reinhard's return to Switzerland we moved Eva's stored stuff from her parent's place in Denkingen to our new apartment in Effretikon (moving in no.1, thanks to Carmen and Martin for their help and the handed down furniture), where we stayed for a very short while. We then went to where Reinhard is from, the Niederried in the canton Valais and waited there for the arrival of the container. Reinhard inherited the apartment of his Grandmother a few years back and gave notice to the tenant in early spring. Thanks to the combined efforts of the families Furrer and Abgottspion in cleaning and touching up the apartment we could spend out first time as a family in Switzerland in an almost perfectly furnished apartment, which the vacation enthusiast Samuel calls his vacation home. Thanks to the whole family! We used the time to sort and pack Reinhard's (not so few) things, in the course of this he heroically said goodbye to his beloved Atari. What a bless for the boys that Caroline reserved a good chunk of the garden for their excavating projects!



Grandma and grandpa Furrer brought Reinhard's stuff to Effretikon with a rented transporter (moving in no.2) and helped us fabulously with the proper moving in no.3 on June 9. Samuel was relieved when the movers carried his box of Legos from the container to his room. The transporter was loaded directly from the container with furniture and boxes destined for the "vacation home" and driven back there by the grandparents (together with some of Carmen's things but that gives the whole moving story another too complicated level. . .). Thanks to Toni and Martha for their help! The boys had a week full of (re-)discovery of their toys. . . Next, Thomas and Kathrin came armed with a drill to help us hanging up lamps and most importantly to set up the book shelf (you remember Reinhard's enormous self-made beauty?), big thanks to both of them! And then there was no choice but to unpack all the boxes and to find a new place for all these things, mainly Eva accomplished this in several iterations (and she does not want to move again for a few years. . .). The boys started their new daycare "Kinderhaus Ahoi" at the end of June. The beginning went relatively smoothly, Samuel and Benjamin ending up in the same group, they were happy to be among other kinds again (for two days a week).





Reinhard's official starting date at the university was July 1st but during that first period he often met the secretaries taking their first break when he arrived at the office. You could say he started slowly...



We also visited Eva's friend Evi near Stuttgart for the christening of Niklas, Reinhard's youngest godchild. At the end of the month Reinhard had to return to Colorado, his master student had his exams and a workshop in North Carolina and JSM in Washington DC followed. In the meantime Eva and the boys were visiting Denkingen again and enjoyed the summer with excursions and the kiddie pool in the garden.

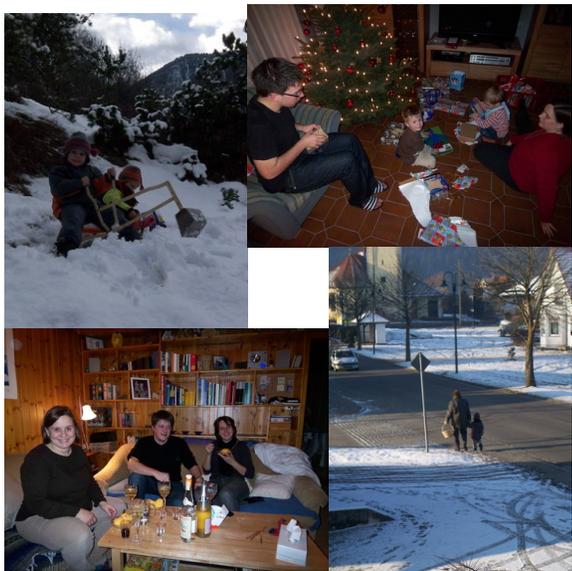


Reinhard was back in time for Benjamin's birthday and we invited Eva's entire family to Effretikon, Benni loved his big party! A few days later Eva's nephew and niece, Nico and Anna-Lena came to stay for a few days with us. Eva and the boys started to get to know the surroundings of Effretikon with them: Kyburg, Technorama in Winterthur, kid's zoo in Rapperswil and then the four of us on our own Wildpark Bruderhaus, Erlebnisbauernhof Jucker in Seegräben, Stein am Rhein etc. In September we took a trip to Sweden to visit Nina, Erik and Lars. Reinhard combined the trip with a little work making contacts with geologists in Stockholm. And for trips, he also made a short visit to Trondheim, Norway in October. After all these travels he promised to reduce them "a little". "Hopefully!" thought Eva and the boys because in the meantime we were sure that our family would grow once more in 2010: our youngest family member will be born at the end of April! Samuel and Benjamin cannot wait for a new sibling, Samuel made sure that the baby would be sleeping in their room, if possible very close to his bed!





October to December were filled with visits (to the Renaud–Cantonis in Geneva, to our vacation home, to the Stürmer–Gölzens in Stuttgart) and invitations to our place (the Knuttis, Doug Nychka, Oma, Carmen, Caroline with her four men, Reinhard's students). Also, Samuel and Benjamin had finally the possibility to get to know Swiss Raclette, Swiss Fondue, Swiss Fondue Chinoise, Swiss meringues with double cream and in a slightly different category the Swiss Nikolaus and a Swiss hair dresser. The very first encounter was in each case rather sceptical, but from the second time on they enjoyed as if they had never left Switzerland.



A week before Christmas Eva and the boys drove to Denkingen to Eva's parents, in the meantime Reinhard had to sit through plenty of meetings at the university and worked with a visitor (his former student) until the 22nd. The boys enjoyed the days with Oma, Opa and plenty of snow, sledding the little hill behind the house at -12 centigrade! Reinhard joined them on the 22nd and then we finally were on vacation! Christmas presents are opened on the 24th in Germany and we were at Gebhard's and Annette's house, Eva's brother and sister-in-law, the 25th was celebrated with the entire family at Oma's and Opa's. Afterwards we drove to the Niederried, where we enjoy pure vacation since then; Samuel and Benjamin with their cousins, godmothers, grandma and grandpa and not to forget sledding in Gspon, Reinhard making a fire each day and small projects in the house and Eva by having a relaxed family (by now Reinhard doesn't even think anymore that the bell clock on the wall is striking too slowly).

We spent New Year's eve with Carmen and Richi, our first Fondue Chinoise together and the view on the fireworks in Stalden, Eisten, Gräechen and Zeneggen. It was again a turbulent year, although 2010 promises to be exciting and intensive as well with the arrival of our last family member at the end of April, it will be filled with kid's laughter and parent's smiles.

Benjamin, Samuel, Eva & Reinhard

PS: There are always beds for visitors in Effretikon and the Niederried. Samuel loves to offer his bed as well. . .

