

On July 4, 1970 I found myself alone in a restaurant in Stockholm, and couldn't help but notice a beautiful young woman among a group of people at a nearby table. She was tall and statuesque with long blond hair, a stunningly attractive face, and an infectious smile. There was disco music and a dance floor, so I gathered my courage and asked her to dance. To my delight she agreed and subsequently invited me to join their table. Her name was Maj, and as we talked, the fact that she was beautiful became irrelevant, and I knew that this intelligent, vivacious, kind, thoughtful woman was the person with whom I wished to spend the rest of my life. To my incredible good fortune, at that instant she made the same decision about me.

From that moment we were soulmates, and for the next 36 years we lived an enchanted life. Together our lives blossomed with an unbroken series of personal and professional successes, international adventures amid medieval splendor, extraordinary friendships, and the simple pleasures of love and companionship.

Maj was taken from me by ovarian cancer on November 1, 2006, and this memoir is written to give shared form and substance to these cherished memories.

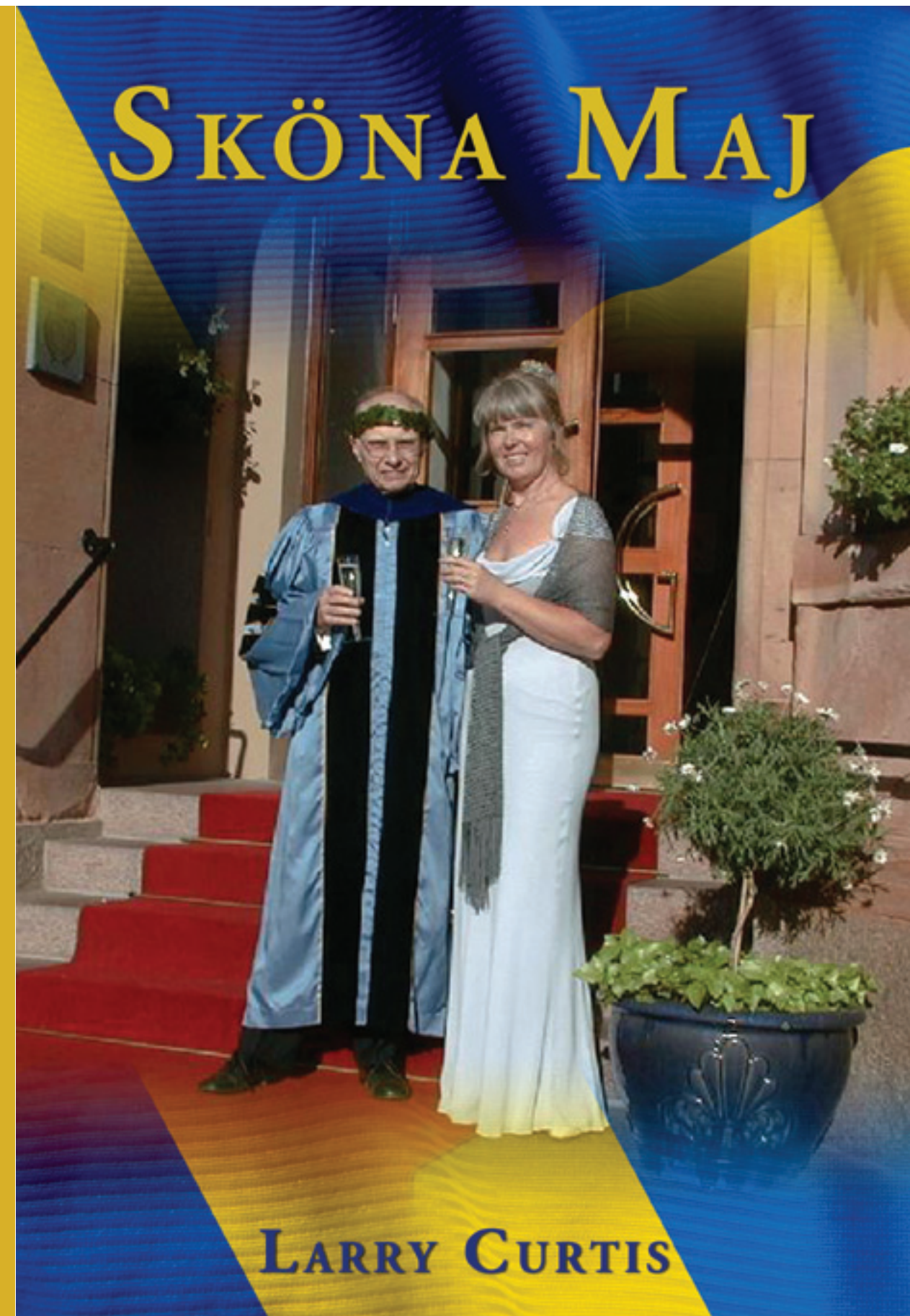
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SKÖNA MAJ

LARRY CURTIS



Sköna Maj

An Enchanted Life

By Larry Curtis

Preliminary Draft Follows.

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I had the joy of the love and companionship of my soulmate Maj Rosander Curtis from the moment of our first meeting on July 4, 1970 until death took her from me on November 1, 2006. From that first meeting our common wish was to spend the rest of our lives together. We shared many years of unbroken good fortune and had a nearly perfect life together, which now exists only in my memories. In order to give form and substance to my rich mental images, I have prepared this memoir.

Larry Curtis, 17 February 2009

1

Summer of 1970

The joy of my life began in 1970. I was 34 years old, and had completed my PhD in 1963. I was employed thereafter by the University of Toledo, at that time as an associate professor of physics and astronomy. It was the turbulent 1960's. I had gone through a painful divorce, we all had been buffeted by political and social turmoil, and I had become pessimistic about my ability to carry out the basic research for which my education had prepared me. Increasingly I had been drawn into university administration, and I was being pressured to assume the department chairmanship. I was at a fork in the road between idealistic dreams and pragmatic realities.

As I was contemplating my future, a departmental colleague returned to Toledo from a one-year sabbatical leave at the University of Arizona. He noted that I was eligible for such a leave, and urged me to use it to travel somewhere far from Toledo. He emphasized the perspective that can be gained from such an experience, and its value in considering life-altering decisions. I was at that time in a relationship with a woman who seemed anxious to accompany me on such an adventure, so I began to examine the possibilities. I selected two laboratories that matched my research interests, one in Lyon, France and another in Stockholm, Sweden, and contacted the directors of both institutes. To my surprise, both laboratories offered me financial support as a visiting scientist, and I needed only to decide which offer to accept.

It happened that Indrek Martinson, a researcher from the Stockholm laboratory, had spent a research leave at the University of Arizona at the same time as my colleague. On their way back to Stockholm, Indrek and his wife Evi stopped in Toledo to visit us. Indrek and I connected immediately, so I accepted their offer and

we began to make plans for my visit. Initially all seemed to be going smoothly, but as my plans for the leave converged, my relationship with my companion began to diverge. It totally disintegrated shortly before the end of the school year and, reluctantly, I decided to continue on alone.

That summer the Stockholm group hosted an international conference in Lysekil, a seaside resort on the west coast of Sweden, at which I presented an invited talk.

On the Detroit-Copenhagen-Gothenburg flights I sat next to a beautiful young Swedish actress named Agneta Eckemyr. She had been living in the US, and was returning to visit her parents in Karlsborg. She subsequently went on to a very successful career, appearing in many films (with the Disney organization and other international studios), and on US television. She also did modeling (appearing on the front covers of Playboy and Cosmopolitan magazines). Currently she is a boutique clothing designer in New York City. At that time she was returning to Sweden with a large amount of checked luggage, which she asked me to help transport to her connecting flight. We continued chatting during the layover. When we parted she gave me her address and telephone number in Karlsborg, and suggested that I visit her there. It was a delightful introduction to Sweden. The kindness and sensitivity of a lovely actress toward a lonely professor gave me confidence in making friends in my new Swedish environment.

The Lysekil conference was held June 7-12, and at its conclusion I traveled on to Stockholm. Thus I was alone in a strange country, not speaking the language, and knowing no one other than Indrek and Evi. Moreover, in Sweden the entire month of July is the federally-mandated employment vacation, and most of the population retreats to their summer cottages in the forests. I called Agneta Eckemyr, but her mother told me that she was in London. Feeling somewhat isolated, I decided that this would be a good time to learn the Swedish language, and began attending night classes with other guest workers.

I started to read Swedish newspapers, looking for ways to entertain myself. One newspaper announcement caught my eye. It was an organization called "Club Academica," and was a social group bringing together persons who possessed an academic degree. During the summer the club occasionally held social events at various restaurants in Stockholm. This seemed like a good way to prac-

tice my Swedish, and perhaps to meet some Swedish people outside those at the research institute.

Thus it happened that on July 4, 1970 I found myself in a restaurant called "Fasching" (German for carnival) in Stockholm, which hosted the club, served refreshments, and played disco music. As I sat at my table and looked around the room, I saw at a nearby table a strikingly beautiful young woman. She was tall and statuesque with long blond hair, a stunningly attractive face, and an infectious smile. Also seated at the table were another woman and a man. Gathering my courage, I walked over to the table and asked "Får jag lov?" ("May I have permission?" - Swedish for "May I have this dance?"). She responded "Ja," and we moved onto the dance floor.

Since I was more interested in communicating with her than with practicing my Swedish, I asked "Do you speak English?" With that glorious smile she responded "You're not English - you're an American!" She then described a recent visit to the US, and indicated how much she had enjoyed it. She pointed out to me that this was the fourth of July, and that I could instead be drinking Budweiser at a reception at the US Embassy. And, most importantly, she invited me to join them at their table.

We talked for perhaps an hour. She said that her name was Maj, and asked me if I knew how to spell it. I said yes, I knew that Sammie Davis Jr. had married a Swedish actress named Maj Britt, and that her name was pronounced "My." Maj told me that the actress was Maj-Britt Wilkens and, like the actress Ann-Margret Olsson, she used her hyphenated first name professionally. Maj is Swedish for the month of May. The words *Sköna Maj* in the book title mean "beautiful May" and this is the title of one of the most popular traditional Swedish songs. It is a stirring welcome to springtime sung by student choirs in celebration of graduation.

Maj had recently graduated from the University of Lund, and was working for the summer at a hospital patient library in Linköping, a town about two hours south of Stockholm by train. She was only in Stockholm for the day, to register for classes at the Stockholm library science school. In the fall she would be studying there for an advanced degree. The other people at the table were old friends from high school who now lived near Stockholm, and with whom she was staying for the night.

By this time, the fact that Maj was beautiful was irrelevant. I knew that this immensely intelligent, vivacious, kind and thought-



The smile across the crowded room - 1970.
“Den första gång jag såg dig, det var en sommar dag . . .”

ful woman was the person with whom I wanted to spend the rest of my life. What I could not have known then is that at precisely the same instant, this mature, worldly, 24 year-old person had (for some unfathomable reason) made the same decision about me. I still find this fact incredible, and can offer no explanation other than that I am the luckiest person on the face of the earth. From the moment we met we became soulmates that even death cannot part.

Maj then had a brief discussion in Swedish with her friends. She reported to me that it was now time for her friends to go home. In panic my thoughts went quickly to finding a way to see her



Shopping in London.

again, but to my joy she continued “would you like to join us and have breakfast at my friends’ house?” Thus the four of us took the subway to the railroad station, and then rode a narrow gauge railway train to the picturesque Stockholm suburb of Nockeby. At the Stockholm latitude, in July the sun dips for a time beneath the horizon, but some light remains in the sky until it returns with a glorious sunrise.

We talked through the night, and made plans for the future. We arranged that I would rent a car and drive down to visit her in Linköping, and that she would later return by train to visit me in Stockholm. I had sublet a luxurious flat from a colleague at the research institute who was spending the summer at his forest stuga.

The flat was at Sybillegatan 3 in downtown Stockholm, across from the dramatic theatre and the Stockholm music museum. We talked by telephone every day during that period. We had a glorious summer, which we capped off with a vacation in England. I arranged to buy a car for export in Amsterdam. We took the train to pick up the car, toured Holland and Belgium, and then spent a week in England before returning to Sweden. In pictures from that trip we both look so young and so happy.

Thus began my sabbatical year.

2

A sabbatical year in Stockholm

On my arrival in Stockholm I was provided with temporary lodging in the guest apartment at the Research Institute for Physics until such time as I could obtain appropriate accommodations for the year.

This was a nontrivial task, since Stockholm is a planned city, and an important aspect of that planning is to avoid urban sprawl by limiting population in the central city. To achieve this, Stockholm is ringed by outlying, localized, high-rise housing enclaves. These are connected to the city like spokes in a wheel by rapid transit links. At first glance, this seemed a stark contrast to a suburban bungalow, separated from the neighbors by a picket fence, that has long been considered the american dream. However, the conformity and modularity of these high-rise housing units possess a less obvious advantage. By taking an elevator to the ground floor and walking a hundred yards, one is in the lush forest that surrounds Stockholm. This allows an easy escape to nature, which belongs to everyone through the idyllic swedish concept of “allmansrätten” (an ancient custom of unfettered eminent domain that seems utopian, but somehow works in Sweden).

For the summer, I had been able to sublet the picturesque apartment in the historic center of Stockholm, but I needed to find longer term accommodations by the end of the swedish vacation period. As one approach, on the advice of friends I registered at Stockholm University as an undergraduate student. Since I already had a PhD this may seem strange, but in Sweden the education is free, one can become a student merely by presenting adequate educational credentials, and lifetime learning is encouraged. Being duly registered I became eligible for a student apartment.

This led to another magic moment. I was discussing with Maj the various options for my lodging, and she casually suggested, "I already have a student apartment, so you could stay with me." She went on to point out that "in Sweden the housing unit will move another bed into the apartment if we ask them." Thus, as the fall term approached, Maj obtained her apartment in a student housing complex called Jerum. My Stockholm landlord returned from the countryside, and we set up housekeeping in Maj's apartment. In Sweden the student apartments are compact, but self-contained, consisting of an individual bedroom and bathroom, and a kitchen and dining room that is shared with others on a corridor. We managed to survive without moving in a second bed.

Early in the term I had one frightening weekend. Maj told me that she would be returning to her home in Småland for the weekend. She said that her former boyfriend had asked to see her, and she had agreed to meet with him. She was apologetic, but indicated that she needed to make some decisions, and it was something she needed to get away to do. I felt shattered, but by that time I had learned to take her at her word. I felt that this might be the end of a dream, but I knew that I could do nothing but wait. When she returned she reaffirmed the fact that she wanted to be with me for the rest of her life. She fantasized that we would have a child together - a daughter named Sarah, who would learn to dance ballet. We had a busy, fulfilling, and joyful life together, and somehow Sarah never came to be.

My american colleague was correct - in this idyllic land, all of the fears, anxieties, and frustrations that I had felt in Toledo melted away in sublime happiness.

With Maj as my guide, I learned to love the swedish countryside, the ancient traditions, and to understand the advantages of a greater degree of conformity than exists in competitive America. An ancient swedish proverb states "Lagom är bäst" which translates roughly to "Just-right is best." Cooperation is valued over competition, meaning that sports teams are almost always balanced, with no stars and no weak players. For a competitive american alpha male this takes some getting used to, but the approach can lead to a new level of equanimity and an immensely satisfying and rewarding life.

One of our first social occasions as a couple was the visit of Maj's Norwegian friend Anne-Grete. She and Maj had met when they both worked a summer in England as strawberry pickers. The three of us went to the royal summer palace in Drottningholm. We toured the gardens and Drottningholm Slottsteater, a theatre in which operas are still performed as they were when it was built in 1766. We returned to Jerum to prepare dinner, and a group of students were playing Swedish folk music in the dining room. I asked one of the students if I could borrow his fiddle, and I played the folksong "Gärdebylåten" with them by ear. I recall that Maj was shocked that I had this secret ability. I had not previously mentioned that I studied violin as a child, and had been playing in concerts, operas, and musicals throughout my college days. I can recall saying with studied modesty, "Oh, it's just something I picked up."

Here I must also confess another small conceit. Many people attribute the fact that I learned to speak Swedish to Maj. In fact, I never allowed Maj to teach me to speak Swedish. I wanted to conceal from her my struggles with the pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Thus, after attending some classes, I listened to the radio, watched television, and read detective novels armed with a dictionary, hoping to impress her. I recall one day when we were talking with a group of people she commented to me "Do you realize that you are speaking Swedish?" Again I casually dismissed it as "just something that I picked up."

Later we had a visit from Kerstin, another of Maj's close friends. With her we visited Sigtuna, a viking village from the 10th century. We also visited Gamla Uppsala, where ancient kings were interred in a viking burial mound, and the old cathedral where, among others, Anders Celsius is buried.

Later Maj took me to her favorite restaurant in Stockholm's Gamla Stan (Old Town). The restaurant was called "Fem Små Hus" (Five Small Houses). A Swedish troubadour named Fred Åkeström was dressed as the Swedish poet and musician Carl Michael Bellman (1740-1795), and he serenaded us throughout dinner. The songs of Bellman are not only beautiful, but they also provide vivid descriptions of features of old Stockholm that are still preserved today.

Of particular interest is Haga Park, a vast nature preserve north of Stockholm. It has many lakes, woods and gardens, as well as ancient castles, pavilions, and a copper tent. One of Bellman's most haunting melodies, "See the butterfly at Haga" (Fjäriln vingad syns



Fagerhult 1971.

på Haga) is commemorated by a self-contained butterfly house in Haga. Maj and I once attended a Bellman festival in Haga Park. Hundreds of picnickers filled the hillside, enjoying the summer and singing Bellman's songs. I recall being troubled by the number of wine bottles that littered the area when the festival ended. We returned to the park the following day for a brunch of waffles, strawberries and whipped cream. I was amazed to find that the hillside was immaculately clean - a tribute to the Swedish deposit requirement on wine bottles.

Maj often suggested unusual activities that turned out to be unexpected fun. One day she told me that there was a kite-flying party taking place in the Gärdet area of Stockholm. She packed a lunch and we went there by subway. There in a large field were throngs of

people, and the sky was filled with hundreds of kites of many sizes and shapes. The wind was blowing toward the Baltic, and many of the kites had played out so much string that each kite appeared only as a dot. It was a festive and friendly occasion, with many people enjoying companionship and a beautiful sunny day. It was a simple but highly memorable pleasure.

To me, Stockholm remains an old friend. When I make return trips to other cities I am struck by the changes that have occurred. When I return to Stockholm, much remains as it was in Bellman's time and, nostalgically, as it was when Maj and I first met there.

During that year we often visited Maj's parents' home in Fagerhult in the Småland region of Sweden. My active vocabulary in Swedish had now grown to the point where I could express myself quite well, but I did not have a large enough passive vocabulary to completely understand what was being said to me. Maj's parents, Torsten and Maja (Johansson) Rosander, knew no English. In addition they had a delightful småland accent that was quite different from the Stockholm dialect. (It has been suggested that a language is a dialect that has an army.)

I met Maj's sister Kicki, her brother Reine, his fiancé Ann-Mari, and various aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. I discovered that Swedish can be superior to English in designating the positions of relatives in the family tree. Thus I met Faster (father-sister) Helga and Faster Judith, Moster (mother-sister) Anne-Lisa and Moster Ingelil, and Morbror (mother-brother) Werner and Morbror Ragnar. This scheme can be usefully extended to delineate the linkages of cousins, such as Fasterson Birger, Mosterson Weine, and Mosterdotter Wiwi-Ann.

The Rosanders lived on a farm that primarily produced timber, but there were also dairy cows and chickens. It was (and remains today) an idyllic retreat in the middle of the forest, on a lake that contains crayfish. The name of the parcel of land on which the farm stands is "Soläng," which means "sun meadow." "Fager" is an archaic word that means "fair" or "beautiful," and "hult" is a common suffix on town names in Småland that probably translates to a "hollow." Thus when Maj told a Swedish person that she was from Soläng Fagerhult, it tended to conjure up a sunny meadow in a beautiful hollow, which is a very accurate image.

The domestic crayfish season began on August 8, and thereafter



Kicki, Arvid, and Hilda setting out crayfish cages in Soläng.

it was our occasional task to catch enough crayfish to supply a “kräftskiva,” which is an eating, drinking, and singing party that is popular in all of Sweden, but especially so in Småland where these crustaceans inhabit the lakes.

Crayfishing begins by going onto the lake in small boats to set out crayfish cages. The cages are baited with fish and attached by a string to a numbered float (for systematic retrieval). The cages are lowered to the bottom of the lake in a pattern that can be retraced in the early morning. Crayfish crawl in during the night, but the cages must be retrieved before sunrise, when the crayfish would crawl out. A measuring gauge is used to insure that they all exceed the minimum legal length. Since there is very little nourishment in a single crayfish, a very large number must be harvested.

The crayfish catch is dumped into a pot of boiling water containing salt and dill. They are eaten cold, in a most viking manner, very loudly sucking out the salt-dill marinade. It is a festive tradition. All participants wear bibs and party hats, and paper lanterns are hung. It is largely an excuse to skål (which translates to “bowl,” the



A crayfish party.

drinking vessel of the vikings) with aquavit, and to sing “kräftvisor” (crayfish songs).

Although I had chosen to accept the position in Stockholm rather than the offer from Lyon, there were colleagues in Lyon with whom I was also anxious to collaborate. Therefore Maj and I traveled to Lyon, spending time in Paris as well. The lyonnaise gastronomie was superb, as was the cultural atmosphere. I noticed that there were ruins of ancient roman aqueducts in the middle of farmer’s fields, and the farmers simply worked around them leaving them undisturbed. One day some of us had a picnic sitting atop one of these aqueducts.

The choice between spending my sabbatical in Stockholm or in Lyon could have gone either way, and this caused me to ponder the many individual choices that I had made throughout my life. A change in any of my choices could have prevented me from being at the right place at the right time to meet Maj. I could only conclude that, no matter how it might have seemed at the time, every choice that I had ever made had been the *correct* choice.

When we returned to Sweden, I was invited to give a talk at Maj's alma mater, the University of Lund in the Skåne region. The countryside was bathed in glorious sunshine with mild weather every day we were there. Later I obtained a position in Lund and we lived there. I was surprised to find that the ideally sunny days occur only in the summer, and in the winter the weather is decidedly english, with nearly constant rain. Maj had neglected to tell me that, but the region possesses many compensating features.

Thus my sabbatical leave brought everything that I could have hoped for, and more. A loving and supportive relationship, a myriad of new cultural experiences, extensive travel, and a feeling of self-fulfilment. Strangely enough, these many activities not only did not detract from my professional productivity, but rather elevated my work to a new level. Buoyed by the sense of fulfilment that Maj brought to my life, I was able to make professional advances beyond my wildest hopes. Whatever successes I have had I owe directly to Maj. I can only hope that I was able to bring to her life some measure of similar fulfilment.

3

Introducing Maj to my world

As my second summer in Sweden drew to a close, it was time to plan our homeward travel. Maj had enjoyed her earlier trip to the US, and was looking forward to returning with me. However, Toledo Ohio had not been on her earlier itinerary, and I hoped that it would not disappoint her.

I had purchased a car for export that we had driven for a year in Sweden, and it was now necessary to ship the car to the US. The car would arrive at the US port in New Jersey, and it seemed simplest to collect it there, and drive it through to Toledo. We had a friend in the physics department at Princeton University who had a Swedish wife, and we arranged to fly to New York, and stay with our friends at Princeton until the ship arrived. This also gave Maj a chance to see Princeton as an example of the US before I introduced her to Toledo. While in Princeton I compared its atmosphere to that of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, just a one hour drive north of Toledo. This also provided an opportunity to show Trenton to Maj, which might cast Toledo in a more favorable light.

When we planned our trip to the US, Maj was reluctant to talk with her parents about moving permanently to another country. Thus we had not discussed marriage with them. However, it was essential that we obtain a US residence visa for Maj. We chose to get a type-K Fiancé Visa, which would allow three months to prepare for a US wedding. Since we did not want to favor my mother over Maj's family when it comes to weddings, we proceeded with some discretion.

With the stress of settling in, obtaining an apartment, showing Maj around the city, beginning my teaching and research activi-

ties, and other obligations, we began to run out of time to schedule the marriage. We did the necessary paperwork and obtained the marriage license, but we needed to find the appropriate person to perform the ceremony. It happened that Roger Ridgeway, the University Chaplain, was a friend. I rang him up in his office and explained the problem. He responded that he would be glad to help, so we decided that Maj and I would meet him in his office the next day to discuss the details.

As we sat in his office Roger read from his book to indicate to us the words that are usually said. When he came to the part "Do you, Maj, take Larry, to be your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honor and cherish, till death you do part?" his quiet reading was suddenly punctuated by Maj's firm and enthusiastic response "I do." At this point I realized that this was not a rehearsal, this was it! Maj was ready to complete the process at this instant! I had secretly worried that she might change her mind, and with great joy I responded equally vigorously when it was my turn to say "I do." It might have been more festive if we had not been sitting down, if we had been dressed in formal attire, if we had organ music, bridesmaids and ushers, and all the normal trappings. But this simple statement of an enduring lifetime commitment made an impact on me that will follow me all the days of my life.

It all worked out well. By the time we told my mother that we were married she had grown so fond of Maj that the fact that we were already married delighted her. She never expressed any disappointment over the lack of a formal wedding. Maj actually waited three years before telling her own mother that we were married. There is an old tradition in Sweden for couples to live together for a very long time before getting married, and by that time her mother knew that we would be returning to Sweden regularly.

At this time my mother (Grace) was 63 years old, living alone, and teaching kindergarten in a Toledo public school. My father had died suddenly of a heart attack in 1966. He was 61 and had no previous history of illness. Grace had suffered the deaths of her mother, father, and a sister before I was born. A second sister died when I was three. While I was in high school her brother died, and her last remaining sister died the year we returned from Sweden. With



Wedding - November 29, 1971.

my father's passing she had been thrust into bereavement, and into many responsibilities previously assumed by my father.

My parents had very different personalities from each other, and my father and I were very much alike. Since Maj and my father were both cerebral and witty, I knew that they would have had much in common. In contrast, I had been concerned that Maj might find my mother's ways a bit smothering.

I quickly discovered that exactly the opposite was true. Maj had an unusual sense about people, perceiving what they needed, and

knowing how she could help them. Her training in library science was in bibliotherapy, which uses an individual's relationship to the content of books, poetry, and other written words as a healing experience. Working as patient librarian in the hospital in Linköping, she had spent much time with patients, first learning to know their interests and needs, then recommending reading materials, and finally returning to discuss the materials with them. She had the ability to engage people with interests very different from her own, and to help them in ways that the doctors and nurses could not.

Thus my marriage to Maj was the best thing that could have happened to my mother. Despite the fact that Maj and I were often abroad, Maj became a better daughter to Grace than the son I had been, and she also inspired me to be a better son.

As we were leaving Sweden, my friend Indrek was preparing for his doctoral thesis defense. In those days the doctoral degree was awarded only to mature scientists with a long dossier of career accomplishments. Indrek had performed post-graduate research for many years and had assembled an extensive array of published papers. (Subsequently an educational reform was introduced that makes the modern Swedish doctorate similar to the US model.) At that time the defense was rightfully called a "doctoral disputation." Two examiners (designated as opponents) were brought in with the task of dissecting all of the respondent's papers, and ferreting out any flaws. It was an adversarial relationship, and it was considered poor form to find nothing to vigorously oppose.

I was asked by Stockholm University to be one of the opponents in Indrek's disputation. This was a great honor that I gladly accepted. However, I would need not only to read critically every word of every paper, but also to prepare my line of questioning in Swedish (and be prepared to understand his responses in Swedish). While my conversational Swedish was by this time fluent, my technical vocabulary had gaps. I made these preparations, and after only a few months back in Toledo, I made a return visit to Sweden. The exam went well and, as is the custom, I delivered a 17 minute after-dinner speech in Swedish at the banquet that followed.

Indrek subsequently became professor and director of the Atomic Physics Laboratory at the University of Lund, a member of the Physics Nobel Prize Selection Committee, and ultimately chair of the Physics Section of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Maj had various job offers in Toledo during that year, but unfortunately all had the serious limitation of a one- or two-week vacation after a year of employment. I had a three-month break during the summer, and we wanted to spend those months in Sweden. Regrettably, there were no working outlets for Maj's many talents and abilities during this period.

The academic year passed rapidly, and we returned to Stockholm for the summer of 1972. We sublet a flat from Indrek Martinson's sister Maja which was at Atlasvägen 53 in the Stockholm suburb of Nacka. I worked at the Research Institute, and Maj obtained a job at Sveriges Radio, the Swedish national radio and television company. There Maj worked as a summer replacement for the program librarian. Her responsibility was to classify, characterize, and archive television programs for purposes of information retrieval. She enjoyed the work and returned to the job for several summers, and for a while, full time employment.

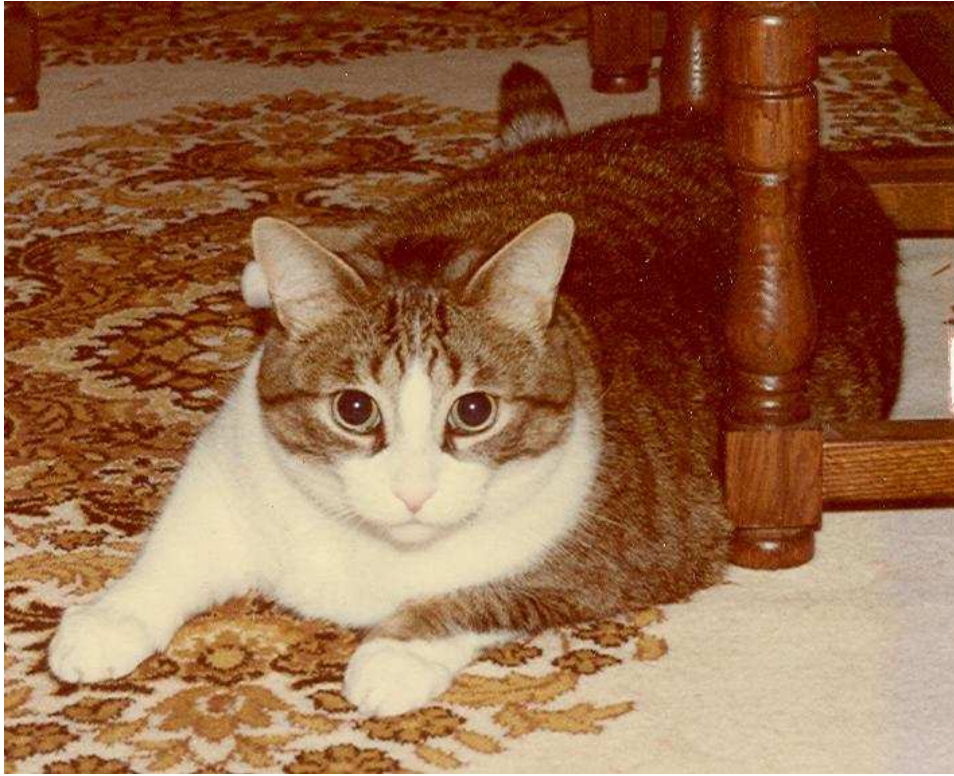
4

Establishing american roots

When I first brought Maj to Toledo after my sabbatical leave, there was stress to find an apartment quickly, and the one we chose was adequate, but not entirely satisfactory. During that year we looked into other possibilities, and selected a townhouse at 3255 Milstead in Toledo. It was open and airy, had hardwood floors, and was within bicycling distance from the university. Maj was able to decorate it to her taste with woven throw rugs and other swedish accessories. Thus in 1972 we vacated the first apartment in June and moved into the townhouse in September.

With Maj feeling at home in Toledo, we began to put down roots. For Maj this meant getting a cat. Maj loved cats, and my mother was happy to have the cat live with her in her house during the summer months, so a cat would not inhibit our travel. Maj answered a few advertisements in the newspaper that offered newborn kittens for adoption, and she found one that matched very closely the appearance and disposition of her swedish cats. Maj named the tiny kitten "Plutten" which is Swedish slang for a tiny little thing. To our surprise the cat grew up to weigh almost 20 pounds, making his name an irony. Upon seeing Plutten, Maj's relatives in Sweden attributed his size to the fact that "everything is bigger in the US." During his long lifetime, this cat became a world traveler, flying twice across the Atlantic.

During the next three years we set up an annual rhythm in which we were in Toledo for the nine-month academic year, and in Stockholm and Fagerhult for the three summer months. Although this schedule prevented Maj from taking a job, she made friends easily and had many hobbies. She also enjoyed the resources in the nearby university town of Ann Arbor. In the many specialty stores



Plutten.

there Maj could obtain swedish foods, stylish clothes, and scandinavian arts and crafts. We often drove to Ann Arbor for shopping, to see shows, to attend concerts, and to dine in fine restaurants.

After my father's death, my mother had joined a ballroom dance group, and began to travel to dance competitions. One of the competitions during this period was held in Hawaii. There she met Homer, who was a member of a competing dance group. Homer's wife had passed away recently, and Grace and Homer struck up a friendship that eventually led to their marriage. Homer was a kind, intelligent, and resourceful man who took extremely good care of Grace. This was a great comfort to us. As Grace entered retirement she had cataract surgery, and driving a car became difficult for her. Because of Homer's companionship, Maj and I were able to travel to Sweden for long periods with the confidence that Grace was happy and secure.



Maj and Grace in Toledo townhouse, January 1972.

Unfortunately, Homer also passed away after only of few years of their marriage, leaving Grace as a widow for the second time.

During this period we had a number of visitors from Sweden. A conference in my field was held in Tucson, Arizona in October 1972. The conference was held at a dude ranch, and Maj and I traveled to Tucson for a combined vacation and business trip. Indrek and Evi Martinson also attended this conference, and on their way back to Sweden they stopped off to visit us in Toledo. This was during the runup to the 1972 US presidential election, with McGovern/Shriver opposing Nixon/Agnew. Indrek and Evi went to a rally at which McGovern spoke, and they were given straw hats to wear and pennants to wave. These absurd outfits seemed almost like one of Nixon's famed dirty tricks.

During this time we were also planning another project. The Copernicus satellite had been launched into space in August 1972. This probe contained a short-wavelength telescope which telemetered back ultraviolet data that had been inaccessible to terrestrial observations. These observations had the potential to specify the el-



Maj and Larry photographed in Old Tucson, October 1972.

emental constituency of the interstellar medium, but atomic structure properties needed for their interpretation were lacking. The data were being analyzed at Princeton University.

Because of the work I had done in Sweden, and because Princeton possessed unique instrumentation that I could bring to bear on this problem, I was offered a guest scientist position at Princeton.

This was an exciting scientific challenge, and Maj had enjoyed our earlier visit to Princeton, so I accepted the offer. I rearranged my obligations in Toledo so that we could reside in Princeton during December 1972 and January 1973. We sublet a two-floor townhouse unit in the eight-story Hibben apartment complex near the Princeton laboratory.

It was a productive time for my research and, with the help of her Swedish friend at Princeton, Maj found much to occupy herself. Our group leader was Lyman Spitzer, one of the pre-eminent scientists of the 20th century. Spitzer had been the first to propose placing a large telescope in space. Once a week we attended a bag lunch at the Institute for Advanced Study. There the spirit of Einstein still prevailed, and the distinguished mathematician and physicist Freeman Dyson led invigorating discussions of the latest scientific developments.

Several times during these years we traveled to Los Alamos, New Mexico to visit our friends Dick and Maggie Silbar, and we met a number of their friends who were also connected with Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. One Christmas we attended a party there at which we met a scientist named James L. Tuck. During World War II, Jim Tuck was the director of the British delegation to the Manhattan Project. His research prior to that time had concerned shaped explosive charges, and their application to antitank weapons. It was Jim Tuck who developed the technique of explosive lensing, which was crucial to the production of the plutonium atomic bomb.

At this time Tuck had turned his attention to the phenomenon of ball lightning, and was attempting to produce it and study its properties in the laboratory. He had read that a number of occurrences of ball lightning had been reported in Sweden, and when he learned that Maj was Swedish, he was interested to know if she could provide any first-hand information on the subject. It happened that Maj's brother Reine had observed a puzzling phenomenon that had been tentatively attributed to ball lightning. It was interesting to watch Maj in an extended and animated scientific discussion with one of the primary developers of the atomic bomb.

In 1982 a six-part TV miniseries titled "Oppenheimer" was presented on the Public Broadcasting System *American Playhouse* series. This was a co-production with the BBC, and traced the life and work of J. Robert Oppenheimer on the Manhattan Project. In it actors played the roles of many of the leading scientists of the day, among them Jim Tuck. The play included a scene reenacting a meeting at which Oppenheimer and the other scientists described the vexing problem of obtaining confinement in the plutonium detonation, and the actor playing Jim Tuck sketched for them the shaping of the charges that ultimately provided the solution to the prob-

lem. I pointed out to Maj that this portrayal was of the person she had briefed on the subject of ball lightning.

Later in the play there was a scene involving a gathering of the scientists at a party, but the mood was somber because of some recent scientific setbacks. At this point the Jim Tuck character emerged from the group and attempted to cheer up the party. He jumped up onto a table and began singing and dancing. Unfortunately Tuck had passed away in December 1980, so we could not determine whether this scene was truth or theatrical license.

During the summer of 1973 we returned to Sweden and lived in the house in Nockeby owned by Maj's friends from Fasching. Again Maj worked as the program librarian at Sveriges Radio, but this time I had a research project in Germany.

A colleague at the Free University of Berlin was planning a laser measurement of an atomic lifetime of unprecedented accuracy and, since this is my area of expertise, I was offered a guest scientist position. Included in the offer was the use of a flat in West Berlin. This was important because the limited space within the Berlin wall created a severe housing shortage. The experiment was a success, and set standards of precision that stood for many years.

Berlin was an exciting place to live. Although it was confined and embedded within East Germany, it was bustling with activity, and the research was generously supported by the west german government which was committed to maintaining its presence there. The restaurants provided culinary specialties of many cultures, the people were friendly, and the science was superb. There were still many bombsites remaining from World War II. I made several crossings into East Berlin, and the differences were striking.

During the summer of 1974 we sublet a flat from a swedish architect named Jan Magnus Berg. The flat was on an upper floor of a tall building at Katarinavägen 20 that picturesquely overlooks the Baltic Sea as it meets the old town. The flat was linked to the Katarina elevator, a historic structure built in 1883 that connects a scenic overlook to the Slussen subway station below. Maj continued her work as program librarian and I worked again at the Research Institute for Physics.

In Toledo I occasionally played the mandolin with an amateur

group consisting of a guitarist, a banjoist, and a singer. Once after Maj had listened to us perform, I commented that my little round-back italian mandolin could barely be heard when the 5-string bluegrass banjo was playing. During this summer, we were strolling past a music store in old Stockholm when I spied a strange sight in the window. It was a mandolin with a banjo head, and I commented to Maj that it was probably very loud, and might challenge the volume of a bluegrass banjo. Later that week, I came home from work to find the banjo mandolin on the dining room table. Maj had decided that this was something that I should have. I took it with me to Fagerhult, and played swedish folk songs to everyone's delight. I carried it back to Toledo where it was more than a match for the bluegrass banjo. This was typical of my life with Maj. She recognized before I did those things that would please me.

During this period, Indrek indicated that the Swedish Natural Sciences Research Council (NFR) was sponsoring a limited number of senior postdoctoral fellowships for the 1975-76, and asked if I would be interested being recommended for one.

At the end of that summer I would be starting the fourth academic year since my 1970-71 sabbatical leave, and one is eligible for a sabbatical leave only once each seven years. However, if I obtained a fellowship, it could be possible to arrange an unpaid leave-of-absence. While our plan of spending academic years in Toledo and summers (and sometimes Christmas vacations) in Sweden had been working satisfactorily for several years, I was troubled by a situation in which I was professionally occupied in Toledo, while Maj was not. The idea seemed attractive, so I responded affirmatively.

We then returned to Toledo for the 1974-75 academic year. A few months into the term I received a telephone call from Indrek indicating that the fellowship had been approved, and we began plans for another year's leave-of-absence in Sweden.

This solved another potential problem in our cat-boarding arrangements. While Homer was very fond of Plutten, he had an allergy to prolonged exposure to cat fur that would have required an alternative solution. Plutten would travel with us to Sweden.

Having put down roots, there were many preparations required. It would be necessary to move out of the townhouse and to sell the car. We would need to obtain a flat in Stockholm, buy an export car

for pickup in Sweden (a Volvo) and, most importantly, arrange to take the cat to Sweden.

This was before the bridge between Denmark and Sweden had been built, so Sweden was effectively insulated from Europe by a body of water, and there was no rabies in Sweden. Thus there were very strict rules regarding the importation of animals into Sweden. It was necessary to obtain health and vaccination certificates from the US, and to apply for an animal import license from the Swedish Board of Agriculture. The cat was required to remain in the animal quarantine in Gothenburg for four months (120 days). There were long waiting lists for space in the quarantine, so it was necessary to make the booking far in advance. However, we were assured that accommodations in the quarantine were clean, spacious, quiet, and friendly, that the food was good (fresh fish), and that the personnel were kind animal lovers. Later when Maj visited our cat in the quarantine, she was pleased to find that all of this was indeed true!

We made these plans during the academic year. Maj left early so that the cat could complete the quarantine by the time I arrived, and so she could secure lodging in Stockholm. I drove Maj and Plutten to Chicago O'Hare Airport so that the cat would have a nonstop SAS flight to Copenhagen. We cringed at the thought of watching the cat and carrier disappearing on the luggage conveyor belt, but that never happened. Maj spoke with members of the crew, and the captain respectfully introduced himself to the cat, and personally carried him out to the plane. Living in today's world, it is comforting to recall that there was a time when air travel was humane.

5

A second year in Stockholm

Maj's travel to Denmark went well. She disembarked in Copenhagen, and watched through the terminal window as the baggage was unloaded. She saw the cat carrier being off-loaded for transfer to a domestic flight to Gothenburg. She then succeeded in finding the danish baggage handler who had unloaded the cat, and asked if the cat was still alive. The smiling dane responded that the cat was fine and had many lives left, and Maj could relax.

When her connecting flight arrived in Gothenburg, her brother Reine was waiting to meet her, and they claimed the cat in customs. The customs agent opened the cat carrier for inspection, expecting to find a fancy show cat. Astounded, he exclaimed "This is just a common swedish farm cat, that we already have thousands of in Sweden!" Reine was a very gentle person, but at that point he exhausted his vocabulary of swedish swear words, and informed the agent that this was a very special cat.

It was then time for Maj to say goodbye to the cat and travel to Fagerhult with Reine. The quarantine had visiting hours on Saturdays, and once Maj and her sister Kicki drove to Gothenberg to visit the cat. The cat was ecstatic to see Maj, and the personnel told her what a good cat he had been. They said that they often played with him to pass the time. However, when it came time to leave, the cat screamed so loudly and continuously as they walked away that they could not bear to make another visit. They had been warned that visits can be difficult. Left alone, the animals adjust to the quarantine, and periodic visits can cause the trauma of separation to be repeated. We already knew that Plutten would remember us, since he always recognized us when we picked him up after a summer at my mother's house.

When I arrived in Sweden I went directly to Fagerhult to meet Maj. We took the train to Gothenburg, first picking up the car at the Volvo plant, and then picking up the cat at the quarantine. We then drove to Fagerhult for preparations for the midsummer celebration. The Swedish midsommar corresponds to our first day of summer, and is probably the most beloved holiday of the year. Part of the festivities in Fagerhult involved a lottery, and all of the townspeople were expected to purchase lots. The drawing was held under the midsommar pole in the town park, and the name read off was "Plutten Curtis." Maj's mother had to explain to the neighbors that it was Maj's cat, not her son. I believe it was a handmade quilt that Plutten won.

One of the stimulating friendships that Maj and I had in Sweden was with Sture and Dagmar Fröberg. They were originally from Fagerhult, but when they were young they moved to Stockholm. There Sture had a very successful career in business, which involved extensive travel in Europe. Upon retirement they returned to live in Fagerhult, where Sture built both an elegant house and a hunting lodge in the woods behind it. Sture was an avid collector of unusual objects, a connoisseur of fine wines, and a gourmet chef. Maj enjoyed hearing Dagmar describe how she was thrust from a small town environment into European high society. Sture also had many interesting stories to tell.

For example, in the early 1920's Hermann Göring was employed by the Svenska Lufttrafik as a commercial pilot ferrying mail and passengers between Sweden and Germany. At that time Göring was a decorated former World War I fighter pilot and the former commander of Baron Manfred von Richthofen's famous "Flying Circus" squadron, but he had not yet become involved in the horrors of Nazism. In his travels Sture encountered Göring, and found that they shared a common interest in hunting. Through his descriptions of his experiences, Sture gave me insights into events in Europe that subsequently had a profound impact on the world during my early years.

It was during his time in Sweden that Göring met his future wife, the Swedish baroness Carin (Fock) von Kantzow. Carin Göring died in 1931, but we were told that she once owned the house in Nockeby that is next to that owned by Ingrid and Jan Molin, the friends that Maj was with on the night that we first met.

Maj, Plutten, and I lived in the Fröberg's hunting lodge for part of that summer. Over the years we were able to spend many enjoyable hours with them.

Maj arranged a delightful flat at Hästhagsgatan 16 in Sundbyberg, a suburb of Stockholm. It was a duplex that we shared with the owner, Henrietta Fjällström, who subsequently became a good friend. We often visited her in later years, and she came to see us in Fagerhult.

During this year there had been a change in the program librarian's position at Sveriges Radio that had both good and bad consequences for Maj. As part of labor negotiations, the union had demanded that the summer seasonal part-time position be extended into another full-time librarian's position. Thus Maj was offered a full-time position, but the possibility for her summer employment in the future had vanished. Nonetheless, it finally became possible for Maj to utilize her educational and professional abilities.

During the summer Maja, Torsten, Kicki, Maj and I made a ferry boat trip to the island of Gotland, and to its ring-walled Hanseatic city of Visby. I had read (in Swedish) about the importance of Visby in the viking novel "Röda Orm" by Frans G. Bengtsson (the source for the 1964 Hollywood movie "The Long Ships"). Ulf Erlandsson, a friend from Fagerhult, was then the assistant fire chief in Visby, and he took us on a tour of the medieval city. He and Kicki connected again shortly thereafter, and were subsequently married. They are the parents of Maj's nephew Arvid and niece Hilda.

During the year prior to our arrival Professor Bengt Edlén at the University of Lund had reached the mandatory retirement age, and his chair was declared open. At that time Swedish professorial chairs were few in number and long in occupancy, so there was fierce competition when one was vacated. Several of my friends were in the running, among them Indrek Martinson. The process took some time to play out, but by spring it had been announced that Indrek had been named to occupy the chair.

At that time the title "professor" had a much different meaning than it does in the US, or than it does in Sweden today. The professor was the head of an institute, and while the institute would have many researchers who held doctorates, there was only one professor. With this highly selective process, the professors held

significant power. They were responsible for deciding the course of research, the awarding of the research funding, and controlled the operation of their institutes.

Thus it could happen that when a new professor was appointed, the researchers from the earlier professor would be reassigned or terminated. I heard an urban legend concerning a professor who had reached retirement and was being honored at a reception. When the speeches concluded and the celebration ended, the professor was leaving the building when he heard a loud noise. He turned to see his research equipment being thrown into a dumpster from a third floor window. I cannot confirm the verity of this story, but it does illustrate a known tendency.

Indrek sought to add new research directions to the institute, but he also felt committed to retain the high quality activity that Edlén had built, and to continue to support those researchers who were in place. However, to move into new areas, Indrek needed researchers in the area that we had developed in Stockholm. To achieve this, the professorship was accompanied by another position called a “docent,” which was declared open for applicants.

While I already held a tenured full professorship in Toledo, a position in Sweden had a certain appeal. Because of our transatlantic shuttle, Maj had not until this leave-of-absence been able to take a full-time job that utilized her training. In contrast I had already been a professor for a dozen years. Moreover, it seemed highly unlikely that I would receive this docent position, which was being sought by many highly qualified swedish and danish researchers. However, if I did obtain such a position, Indrek and I might be able to build a research institute of international stature.

To our surprise, I was selected to occupy the docent position. I quickly discovered that having two jobs can be disorienting. If one has either one job or no job there are no decisions to make. Having two choices requires wide-ranging considerations. Thus my first reaction was to attempt to buy time to make this potentially life-changing decision. In retrospect, this seems like a selfish response, but at the time I was not sensitive to possible implications to the two institutions and to the other applicants. I was still in my american competitive mode, and had not yet learned to appreciate the virtue of the swedish cooperative mode.

I telephoned my department chairman in Toledo and explained the situation. I said that I had been offered a position in Sweden,

and asked if I could obtain a second year of unpaid leave-of-absence to try out a new job. It seems now like an outrageous request. While on leave my salary was available for a temporary placement, but such a person would not be motivated to build the long-term programs needed to attract external funding. Moreover, temporary positions can be exploitive.

Within one hour I received a return call from the chairman. He had discussed the matter with the dean of the college, and they had agreed to grant my request, given assurances that there was a significant chance that I would ultimately return to Toledo. I agreed.

Of course this change in plans caused some problems. For example, we had purchased a US-equipped Volvo for export, and after one year we would either have to export it to the US, or have it retro-equipped to meet swedish specifications, and pay the (very high) swedish tax on the purchase price. We succeeded in this task, but only after an unimaginable series of bureaucratic nightmares.

During winters we frequently went cross-country skiing. While we were in Toledo we had taken a trip to the upper peninsula of Michigan. We took Plutten with us, and it was necessary to find lodging that was pet-friendly.

In the swedish countryside, when the snow cover is above the fenceposts *allmansrätten* permits one to ski freely, assuming as obvious the exercise of simple courtesy and no infliction of harm to the environment.

During this winter we took an extended ski holiday to Norway. Maj chose a village called Trysil, and telephoned to book a cabin in the mountains. She asked if we could bring our cat, and the agent responded with a melodic Norwegian phrase that Maj translated for me as "Welcome to the little person!" The cabin was delightfully traditional, meaning that for warmth I had to split wood for the fireplace. I was provided with a woodpile and a lethal-looking axe. Before undertaking this task I watched some of the norwegians, and discovered that I could split the wood without chopping off my foot if I bent my knees as I chopped, minimizing my arm motion and keeping the axe handle nearly horizontal. It was fun, although it made me feel painfully urban.

Despite the fact that there were a large number of skiers near the lodge, there was much space in the fjords. After a few minutes of skiing we were on a large snow-covered plateau with no other skiers

in sight. Occasionally we would see a stovepipe poking up through the snow, indicating that there was a cabin somewhere beneath us. I recalled seeing the norwegian World War II documentary film "Heros of the Telemark," and marveled at the ability of norwegians to survive and thrive for months while isolated in this environment.

I had done a lot of downhill skiing when I was in graduate school, and I had assumed that cross-country skiing would require similar skills. Maj showed me that this is not true. She always carried a variety of ski waxes for her traditional wooden skis, and had a smooth rhythm by which she could glide effortlessly. I found that on a long trek, as my legs began to tire my skis would stop momentarily between strokes, increasing the friction and making me even more tired. We did travel great distances, but usually with Maj moving on ahead and then waiting for me to catch up.

When Grace learned that I had been offered a job in Sweden and that we were planning to stay at least another year, she suggested that she and Homer might visit us during the summer. Maj contacted one of the newsmen at Sveriges Radio who had indicated earlier that he was looking for a summer sublet for his apartment in downtown Stockholm. He and his family would be away at their summer house, so Maj arranged to rent the apartment for Grace and Homer during their visit.

In an earlier summer Grace had taken a bus tour through scandinavia, stopping off to visit us in Stockholm and meeting with Kicki and Reine when her bus passed through Växjö, a city near Soläng where they lived.

It was fortunate that a royal wedding was planned for the time when Grace and Homer were in Sweden. On June 19, 1976, King Carl XVI Gustav and Queen Sylvia were married in Storkykan Cathedral in Stockholm. The night before the wedding ABBA had performed "Dancing Queen" for the soon-to-be Queen Sylvia. (Agnetha, Björn, Benny, and Anni-Frid had won the prestigious Eurovision Schlagerfest song contest in April 1974 with their hit "Waterloo.") Maj and I, Kicki and Ulf, and Grace and Homer all witnessed the event. As the cortege left the cathedral the couple were driven past us in an ornate carriage, and were then transferred to a boat that carried them across the waters of the Strömmen strait to the royal palace.

We then showed Grace and Homer some of the sights of Stock-

holm, and then drove them down to the farm in Fagerhult to meet Maj's parents. The interaction between the parents was easier than we had anticipated, considering the language impediment. As long as either Maj or I was present to make the simultaneous translation, they conversed easily, and had much in common.

While Torsten and Homer were both farmers, they were also both patent-holding inventors. Torsten was a natural tinkerer, and had designed and fabricated various mechanisms for which he received royalties. For example, one mechanism was used in automatic milking machines and was marketed by the Swedish company Alfa Laval. Similarly, Homer was an engineer who, together with his son Stan, had invented a sugar beet thinning machine that was marketed by the John Deere Corporation. This used an optical sensor and an on-board computer to measure the number of plants per unit length. It activated a digging tool that automatically removed plants when the density exceeded a prescribed limit. It was my task to make the simultaneous translations, and it was technically challenging.

We took Grace and Homer to neighboring towns to meet with Maj's relatives. Once we traveled to Oskarshamn to have lunch with Kicki and Ulf. Another time we traveled to Växjö to have lunch with Reine and Ann-Mari. As usual, Reine was very thoughtful, and told my mother that my Swedish was better than his English. This was a very kind gesture, as his English was flawless.

Grace was tearful as they departed for their return flight. She was fearful that she would at best see Maj and I only when we made brief visits to the US, and that she would never again see Plutten, who had been a good companion to her before she met Homer. We tried to reassure her that nothing was certain, but it was nonetheless a painful parting.

For the fall we had arranged to rent a university apartment in Lund. With the ending of the summer we moved out of the apartment in Sundbyberg, Maj resigned from her position at Sveriges Radio, and we moved southward.

6

Moving to Lund and revisiting Toledo

Our apartment was in a division of Lund called Norra Fäladen, and had the address Kännarsvägen 7. It was comfortably furnished on the second floor of a two-story unit. It had a quick and frequent bus connection to the physics building. Later we secured a used bicycle, which was a popular means of transportation in this university town.

Having grown up on a farm, Maj felt that her cats should experience the out-of-doors. Our Toledo townhouse had an enclosed backyard, and our Sundbyberg apartment had an enclosed balcony, so Plutten was accustomed to this restricted privilege. Thus Maj was dissatisfied with the very small unenclosed balcony in the Lund apartment. I was able to remedy this by constructing a balcony enclosure from wood and chicken wire.

Lund is an ancient walled city that was founded in around 990 by King Canute. It has a high-arched romanesque cathedral that was consecrated in 1145. The university was founded in 1666, and is rich in tradition. My research area was initiated in Lund in 1888 by Janne Rydberg, who developed the famous Rydberg formula of atomic physics.

Maj was a graduate of Lund University, having received a Philosophie Kandidat (Fil. Kand.) degree in the faculty of humanities just prior to our first meeting. This degree corresponds to a very rigorous Bachelor of Arts.

Because of her time at Lund, and because many persons from Småland were associated with Lund University, Maj already knew many people in the area. Thus we enjoyed a large circle of good friends.

As a result of my interactions with Indrek, a collaborative program between Toledo and Stockholm had been established. This had now been extended to Lund, and Dave Ellis, another professor from Toledo, was on a sabbatical leave in Lund at this time. Dave, his wife Kitty, and their son Derek had sublet a rowhouse in the Östra Torn section of Lund from a Swedish researcher who was spending a year in the US.

Indrek was settling into his new surroundings, and planning the formation of a new center for the production of atomic data. One of the important applications of this work involved energy production using controlled nuclear fusion. Dave and I were investigating research problems associated with this effort, and working with Indrek on funding requests.

The winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize in Physics was Samuel C. C. Ting. Sam and I went to graduate school together, taking the same classes and sharing laboratory space. Maj and I had the opportunity to get together with Sam, his wife Kay, and his daughters Jeanne and Amy when they visited Lund on their way to Stockholm.

Their hosts had taken Kay on the usual spouse's tour of the city, but she was trained as an architect and had technical interests. Thus we discussed an architectural procedure that was being used in Östra Torn. The row houses there were not only prefabricated, but also prefurnished. A house (complete with furniture, refrigerator and stove) was then hoisted with a crane, transported to the site, and lowered onto a waiting concrete slab. Unfortunately there was not time to show her the Ellis's lodging.

The next morning we transported the Ting family to the Stockholm train. Later that week we traveled to Stockholm to attend the Nobel ceremonies. When the ceremonies were complete, Sam walked to the front of the stage and beckoned to his daughters to come forward to see his medal and certificate. Maj and I were touched by this simple ploy that allowed his daughters to share in the event. They were photographed and internationally televised, and the photo of Sam and his daughters subsequently appeared in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

It was a moving vicarious experience to witness the conferring upon an old friend the highest award of our profession. We could not have guessed then that within less than twenty years we would witness the same award being conferred upon Martin Perl, Sam's

thesis director and my academic advisor when I entered graduate school.

It was a very productive year. In addition to working with Indrek and Dave, I developed a close working relationship with the former holder of Indrek's chair, Bengt Edlén. Through extensions of his work to applications utilizing new measurements of unprecedented accuracy, I developed a prolific research program that continued for over 25 years.

During the years 1976-77 I was able to pursue a research project in the history of science that had long intrigued me. I had noticed that the mathematical concept of exponential growth and decay was usually described in textbooks as "the radioactive decay law." Since nuclear disintegration had only been discovered at the beginning of the 20th century, I was curious as to the historical origins of this concept. Since I was living in Sweden, I had access to the libraries of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Carolina Rediviva at the University of Uppsala, and the University of Lund. Thus I was able to personally read original sources dating far back in history. The staff of the Musée du Louvre in Paris was also most helpful, arranging to have photographs made at my request of a Sumerian cuneiform tablet from 2000 BC. My studies resulted in a comprehensive article documenting the ancient origins and applications of this concept. The article was titled "Concept of the exponential law prior to 1900" and was published in 1978 in the *American Journal of Physics*. In 1991 this article was selected by the editors of that journal among the "Memorable papers from the *American Journal of Physics*, 1933-1990."

Although highly productive, this was also a time of stressful contemplation for Maj and myself. While we were lucky to have a choice of living our lives in either of two wonderful countries, the burden of making a permanent decision began to weigh on us. Moreover, unexpected events occurred that complicated matters further.

It began with a position that became available in the public library in Kalmar, the city in Småland where Maj had attended high school. Maj applied for and subsequently obtained this position, and we both wanted her to have some time to work in her profession regardless of our ultimate decision between the US and Sweden.

I found a temporary solution that would keep my Toledo option open without relinquishing the Lund position. I could request a one-year leave-of-absence from the Lund docent position, and return to Toledo for the academic year. I could still be in Sweden during the summer and the Christmas break. This would allow Maj to try the librarian position, and we could re-evaluate after a year. We elected to do this.

Maj rented an apartment at Stagneliusvägen 43B in Kalmar. She moved to Kalmar and began her work at Kalmar Stadsbibliotek and I returned to Toledo.

When I arrived in Toledo, I found that my mother and Homer had purchased a condominium and were about to put my mother's house up for sale. We therefore made an arrangement whereby we deferred the sale. For the time being I lived in my mother's house and took over the responsibility for its upkeep and maintenance.

My residence in Toledo that year caused me to experience the "Blizzard of '78." As I was driving home from the university on Wednesday January 24, 1978, I heard on the radio that two weather fronts were moving in. One was a cold front from North Dakota, the other was a moisture front from the south. It was tentatively predicted that the two fronts would miss each other, with the cold front passing north of Ohio. However, a heavy snowstorm remained a possibility. Fortunately, I heeded that warning and stopped at a grocery store to buy provisions.

When I awakened the next morning I was without electrical power, and there were huge snowdrifts blocking both the exit doors in the house. The two fronts had collided, dumping 13 inches of snow on the region. A level 3 snow emergency was declared, and all non-emergency vehicular traffic was banned. I could not get out of either door of the house. Fortunately power was restored to my area, providing operation of the furnace and preservation of the food in my refrigerator and freezer. Telephones continued to function, so I could talk to Maj between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM (the time-shifted interval between the end of her work day and her bedtime). When I was able to exit the house I skied to the nearest convenience store to find empty shelves, since no delivery trucks could get through.

Fortunately I had a project to pursue. Jan Håkansson, a good friend and former classmate of Maj, was preparing to defend his doctoral thesis on dental care in Sweden. Jan was already a practic-

ing dentist, and had undertaken a state-supported research study of the effectiveness of the Swedish National Dental Health System that had been introduced in 1974. It was planned that Jan's thesis would be made available for worldwide distribution, and I had volunteered to translate it into English. My captivity provided an opportunity to devote full time to this task. In cases where I was uncertain of a translation, I contacted Maj by telephone. This situation persisted for more than a week, causing what was termed an "epidemic of cabin fever."

Thus, despite the fact that Maj and I were residing on different continents, during this period I had more contact with Maj than with any other person.

In April of 1978 Kicki and Ulf made their first visit to the US, and visited me in Toledo. Grace and Homer enjoyed seeing them again, and I was able to acquaint them with the city. I recall one sunny afternoon we packed a lunch of fried chicken, and had a picnic sitting next to the old canal locks at Sidecut Park. Ulf commented on his surprise at how similar to Sweden parts of the US could be.

During their visit Maj contacted me with the sad news that Reine had been taken seriously ill and required surgery. Maj had given much thought to the situation and, since there was nothing that Kicki could do at this time, she recommended that we allow her to enjoy her vacation for the few days remaining. Maj instructed me to brief Ulf on the situation, and to ask him to withhold discussion of it with Kicki until an appropriate time on the trip back. This was the first indication of difficult times that lay ahead.

Although it was painful for us to be apart for these periods, Maj enjoyed the work in the library. Thus we sought to find a way to extend the situation yet another year. I worked out an exchange program between the universities of Toledo and Lund. Ulf Litzén, a researcher at Lund, would come to Toledo and assume my salary and teaching obligations. I would return to Sweden to resume my docent position. In addition, Ulf's Lund salary would become available to continue the employment of the person who was currently replacing me in my docent position.

The housing situation also worked out well. Ulf, his wife Kirsten, and his daughter Kristina would live in my mother's house in Toledo, while I would live in their house in Lund.

The only problem with the plan was that during the week Maj would live in Kalmar, while I would live in Lund. It was not ideal, but it did seem like a compromise solution that might work.

We carried out the exchange, but the next two years brought many difficulties.

7

Lund and Kalmar

The exchange worked out. I returned to Lund, moved into the Litzéns' house at Hövdingavägen 11, and resumed my work in the docent position. The Litzéns moved into my mother's house and Ulf assumed my teaching load. Maj lived in her flat in Kalmar.

Reine's condition was serious. He was now in intensive care in the Lund hospital, which was located directly across the street from the physics building where I worked.

Maj and Reine had always been very close. Although Reine was 18 months older than Maj, the numbers of elementary school students in rural Sweden were small, and the grades were often combined, placing Maj and Reine in the same class. Thus Maj and Reine entered high school (the Swedish *gymnasium*) in Kalmar together, took their student qualifying exams together, and graduated together. (My parents had a similar experience. While my mother was two and one-half years younger than my father, and started school three grades behind him, by the time they finished elementary school they were together in the same grade.) Because of these experiences Reine was not only a supportive big brother to Maj, but also a classmate and companion.

Since the Litzéns had a three-bedroom house, I could provide lodging in Lund so that Maja, Torsten, and Ann-Mari could be near Reine. Maj came down to Lund on weekends, and the five of us occupied the house, and took turns sitting with Reine at the hospital. Maja was with him almost continuously, but we relieved her whenever possible.

Reine was nominally in the IC unit to gain strength for another operation, but as time passed the prognosis worsened. Nonetheless,



Maj and Reine in their high school graduation picture. The caps are the badge of graduation in Sweden.

the doctors were reluctant to dampen his spirits by moving him out of the pre-operative section. Despite his weakness, he often described how anxious he was to again watch the Kalmar FF soccer team play.

One afternoon I had come to sit with Reine so that Maja could have lunch. Reine was sleeping and I was reading a newspaper. Suddenly Reine sat up and said “Jag är rädd!” which means “I am afraid!” I felt panic, since I lack skills in spiritual support, and feared that a clumsy phraseology in Swedish could worsen his anxiety.

I asked “Vad är ni rädd för, Reine?” (What are you afraid of, Reine?) Although he seemed dazed, he replied that the basement of the new house that he and Ann-Mari had built was leaking water, and he hadn't been able to contact the contractor. If repairs were not made soon, there might be serious damage. This was a great re-

lief! He was afraid of something that I could fix! I assured him that Ann-Mari and I would contact the contractor and order the repairs.

As time passed Reine's condition worsened, and Maja and Torsten reached exhaustion. Concerned for their health, we persuaded them to return to Fagerhult, assuring them that Ann-Mari and I would continue the vigil, and keep them informed. Late on the night of October 17, 1978 we were awakened by a telephone call from a nurse indicating that Reine would probably not survive the night. Ann-Mari and I hurried to the hospital, entered through the emergency room entrance, and rushed to Reine's room. He had already passed away. The room was darkened and the nurses had lit candles on each side of his bed. (I suspected that he had died before they called, and they did not want to tell us over the telephone.) I called Maj in Kalmar and described the peaceful scene. Reine was 34 years old.

Reine's funeral was my first experience with the Swedish final rites, and it was a deeply moving experience. It was conducted in the old church in Fagerhult, with burial in the adjacent churchyard. Maj asked if I would act as escort for Ann-Mari, and I was honored to serve in this capacity since we had both been there during Reine's final days and hours.

Hymns were sung, Bible passages were read, and eulogies were delivered. Then the tradition is for the pallbearers to come forward, carry the casket out to the gravesite, and lower it into the open grave with long straps. The congregation follows the pallbearers in a long procession. Each member of the congregation comes forward individually to the grave, speaks a farewell, and lays flowers around the grave. Ulf delivered a graveside eulogy on behalf of the family.

I was prepared for this, until the point where the pallbearers came forward. I recognized them as close friends since high school of Reine and Maj. After securing the lowering straps, each reached into his pocket and pulled out his "studentmössa," the white cap that all Swedish students are awarded when they pass their examinations and graduate from high school. When they pulled on their caps, my vision was suddenly transformed. In my imagination I saw these seven close friends on April 30, 1960, gathered about a "Vallborgsmässoafton" (Walpurgis night) bonfire, celebrating their graduation by singing "Sköna Maj." I imagined how they had been welcoming springtime, and looking to the future with youthful op-



Torsten and Maja Rosander in Solång, Fagerhult.

timism. The poignancy of this gesture was overwhelming, and I struggled vainly to maintain outward composure.

Little did I know then that within 28 years I would return to this church to play a similar role in the most unbearable loss of my life.

Maja and Torsten also had an older son Ryan, who had shown much early promise. However, after achieving success both at the university and in the workplace, Ryan suffered a total mental breakdown. Subsequently, Ryan and his wife and children chose to completely isolate themselves from the Rosander family. The combined effect of the death of Reine and the estrangement of Ryan and his family were a source of much grief for Maja and Torsten.

Since Maj had traveled to Lund on weekends when Reine was ill, I did more of the commuting after Reine's death. I took a Friday afternoon train to Kalmar, and we had Friday evening through Monday morning together. We were able to have many enjoyable times with this schedule. I could devote long hours to work when I was alone during the week, and hold the weekends completely open for activities with Maj.

During the spring, a friend at the institute who knew that I played the violin recruited me to play in the pit orchestra for an amateur opera group. The music department of the university loaned me a violin. The opera was Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor," adapted from Shakespeare's play. It was novel to hear the equivalent of Shakespearian dialog in Swedish. There were many superb singers available, so they mounted two productions with two completely separate casts, which performed on alternating nights. One of the musical directors suggested to me that the melodic nature of the Swedish language accounts for the many great opera singers that the country has produced. Maj traveled to Lund to attend a performance.

Sweden has a long tradition of gender equality. In 2003 the proportion of persons aged 20-64 who were in the labor force was 79% for women and 84% for men. As a result, situations in which married couples work for a time in different cities are more common in Sweden than in other countries. However, this situation clearly complicates personal and professional goals.

The fact that I was not a Swedish citizen apparently made our situation atypical. Because I was a foreigner who was living in a different city from my wife, our case tripped an investigation by the Department of Immigration. I had to report to their office in Lund and Maj had to report to their office in Kalmar. We needed to demonstrate that we had a real marriage, and that I had not hired Maj to marry me simply to gain a residence permit. The immigration officers were embarrassed when they discovered that we were married in the US more than seven years earlier. This added a touch of humor to an otherwise stressful separation.

Despite the difficulties imposed by our working conditions, the opportunity for both of us to be employed within the Swedish econ-

omy provided cultural insights about each other that were beneficial in later years.

As a visiting scientist I had learned about some of the virtues of the Swedish "middle way," but when my status changed from temporary honored guest to permanent member of the work force, this perspective affected me in unexpected ways.

The translation "just right" for the Swedish word "lagom" seems positive, but to an American its association to "mediocre" has a negative connotation. In sociological surveys, Swedish people are usually rated among the "happiest" of nationalities. This derives partially from the sense of security provided by the welfare state, but also from a tendency for the people to adopt modest, achievable expectations.

The work environment in Sweden is horizontal and not vertical. For example, Maj's brother-in-law Ulf was highly trained to be an assistant fire chief. He had not been promoted from being a fireman, and he was not promoted to chief when his fire chief retired. When he was assistant fire chief in Visby he successfully applied to be assistant fire chief in Oskarshamn. Every job is a meaningful vocation, and not a path upward.

This avoids the American tendency toward the "Peter Principle," in which competent workers are promoted until reaching a position for which they are incompetent, and this becomes their life work. I understood and applauded this aspect of the Swedish model, but until that time I had been oblivious to its effect on me.

While I was working in the docent position, I noticed that a vacant professorial chair in my field at a Danish university had been advertised. Knowing that the occupant of such a chair usually possesses significant research resources, I was intrigued. The advertisement prescribed that credentials be formally submitted to the Danish Queen, which added a touch of adventure. I submitted credentials, and although I was not selected, I was found to be "well-qualified" and the committee report on me was quite flattering.

I thought nothing more about it until a friend asked me why I was dissatisfied with my position at Lund. I was thunderstruck that my application for a more powerful position could reflect badly on my institute. After some reflection it began to make sense. By applying for the docent position I had expressed my desire to be a docent. I had been granted my desire, and now had a permanent position, whereas other applicants for my position did not. If I had received

the professorship, what would I apply for next? Prime Minister? Pope?

In my naïveté I had learned to speak Swedish, developed an affection for the Swedish forests and lakes, and adopted many Swedish customs, but I was still very much a highly competitive American. With Maj as my partner I had every reason to be ecstatic, but I had not yet accepted the contentment inherent in the Swedish concept of *lagom*.

This epiphany gave me a deeper understanding of Maj's perspective, and I resolved to endeavor to provide her with the opportunity to achieve contentment in her work.

The next year would be very stressful, involving difficult decisions and unforeseen setbacks. For four years we had the luxury of living and working in two countries, and advancing both of our careers while we had many exciting experiences. However, this had now evolved into a situation where we alternated between living in different countries one year, and living in the same country but in different cities the next. Having achieved our goals, we needed to move to a situation in which we were together as much of the time as possible, and share any needed sacrifices.

It was clear that I must make a final decision between my position at the University of Toledo and the University of Lund, both for our benefit, and for the benefit of the two institutions. In view of the extensive body of research that I had produced since meeting Maj and working with Indrek, I was reasonably optimistic that I could obtain federal research funding in the US. Staying in Lund would not solve the problem posed by the necessity for Maj to live in Kalmar. In the cold light of reality that I had now gained, the advantages of a tenured professorship in the US were undeniable.

For Maj, there were also competing priorities. Her position at the library was probably her last chance to utilize her education. Her parents had just suffered the loss of a son, and by staying a little longer she could help them get past a difficult adjustment. This would mean another painful separation, but this would be better than forcing Maj to cut short her goals to further my own. In retrospect this was correct decision, but it was painful at the time.

We decided that at the end of the summer I would resign from my docent position and return to Toledo. I would apply for federal research funding to determine if my position at the University of

Toledo would indeed allow me to carry out the research program that I envisioned.

Maj would continue to work in Sweden. We would talk regularly by telephone. During the Christmas vacation I would travel to Sweden, and we would take a ski vacation together and plan further.

Unfortunately there was more to come. Shortly after I returned to Toledo I received an early morning telephone call from Grace. Homer had awakened at the usual time, but he seemed confused and disoriented. I quickly drove to their condo, confirmed that Homer should be hospitalized, and telephoned for an ambulance. He had been diagnosed earlier with leukemia, but he had been successfully treated for quite some time with medication and transfusions, and had been in remission. After a few days in the hospital he passed away from a cerebral hemorrhage.

Thus Grace had to face her second bereavement, this time when she was much older, much more frail, and unable to safely drive a car.

After 10 years of a full and carefree life, Maj and I now had new responsibilities that we needed to address.

8

Toledo and Kalmar

My return to Toledo involved many new developments, some good and some bad.

As soon as possible I began to write research proposals to various federal agencies. In the spring the US Department of Energy announced their intent to fund my proposal to them. The initial grant was for two years starting July 1980. This was a personal grant to me as sole principal investigator. It had broad flexibility, and permitted me to pursue a research program driven primarily by my own curiosity. This program went on to be very fruitful and personally satisfying. It received uninterrupted and continuous funding from the US DoE, and was terminated only when I retired from sponsored research 23 years later because of Maj's illness.

Owing to the research productivity that I had sustained in the ten years since I first met Maj, I was selected to receive the 1980 Award for Outstanding Research from the University of Toledo chapter of Sigma Xi, the National Research Honor Society. The sudden increase that had occurred in my professional productivity was not coincidental. Every success that I have achieved and every measure of recognition that I have been given was a direct result of the support, inspiration, and confidence that was provided to me by Maj.

In the fall there were problems with Homer's estate with which we had to deal. His last will and testament decreed that Grace was to have a life estate on the condominium, after which it would pass to his heirs. However, the timing of his death caused certain features of his estate planning to be disallowed, significantly increasing the estate tax. As a result, not all of the conditions of the will could

be met. Homer's son Stan and daughter Nancy were very kind and accommodating, and with some effort we were able to work out an arrangement whereby Grace could continue to live in the condominium as long as she was able. This was very important, since it avoided the necessity of moving her back into her own house, where she would be not only isolated, but also under the significant stress of home maintenance. Grace lived on in the condominium until May 1994. At that time it was necessary for her to move to an assisted living facility, and the condominium was finally passed to Homer's heirs. In December 1997 Grace moved into full nursing home care, and in January 2002 she passed away, three months short of her 94th birthday.

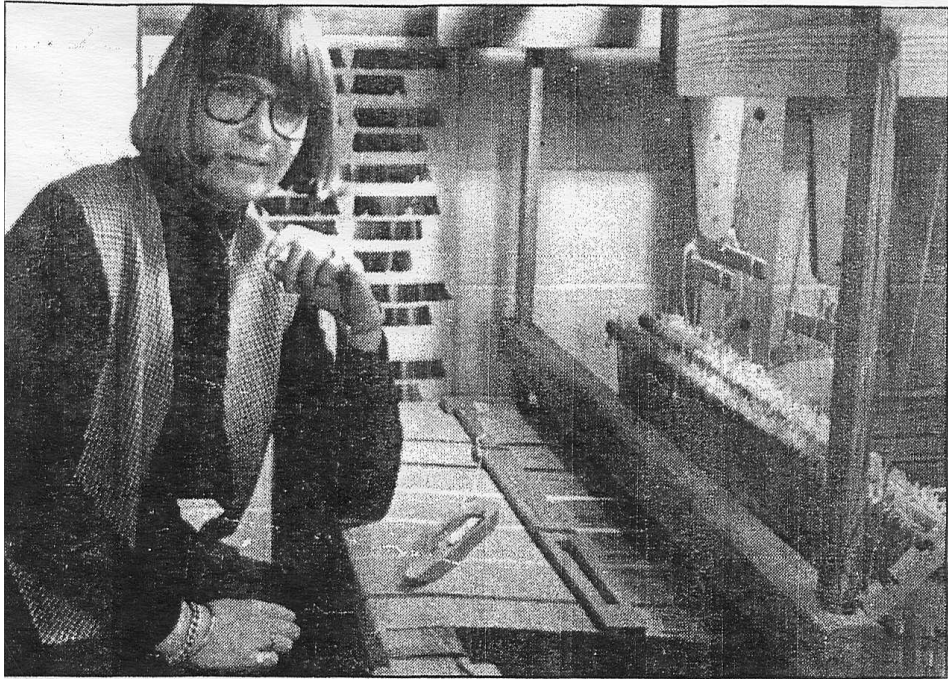
For me it was a busy but lonely and depressing time. I was again back in the country of my birth, but my experiences made me feel, in many ways, more Swedish than American. When Maj and I were together, she provided an atmosphere of comforting Swedishness, but left alone I felt a degree of culture shock.

During the Christmas vacation I traveled to Sweden, and Maj and I took a ski vacation at a resort there. Maj indicated that she had enjoyed the opportunity to work in Sweden, and we agreed that we needed to resolve the problems created by our separation. We needed to decide whether we should sell Grace's house, or if we should acquire it from her.

In the spring Maj telephoned me with the long-awaited news that she was now ready to return permanently to Toledo. And she had a plan. As soon as possible she would come to Toledo for a visit, and we could together plot our future.

Maj was now satisfied that she had completed her career as a librarian, and had other goals. She had always enjoyed books and dealing with people, but she was reluctant to follow the trends toward electronic and digital media. She was now ready to describe herself as a "former librarian" and eager to return to Toledo and make a permanent home.

It was necessary for her to sell the Volvo in Sweden. It was now Swedish-equipped and the Swedish tax had been paid. She would then assemble her favorite possessions and ship them in a container vessel. And, she would book flight reservations for herself and Plutten.



Maj at her loom.

Maj had a plan of accomplishments that she wanted to achieve, and was enthusiastic and anxious to begin. Her plan was thorough, ambitious, and satisfying.

First and foremost, Maj and Plutten returned by a direct SAS flight from Copenhagen to Chicago. I again drove to Chicago O'Hare Airport to meet them, so that both my wife and my cat could enjoy a non-stop flight. Unlike Sweden, there were no restrictions on pet importation into the US. Plutten had become a veteran traveler, and did not seem to mind the trip.

Maj had long been an expert weaver. In her early life she was surrounded by her grandmother's woven sheets and towels, her mother's woven rag rugs, and her aunt's woven curtains and upholstery fabric. When she first moved to the US she had missed her textile treasures, and had now decided to return to her weaving. She shipped her loom to Toledo. It was a large Swedish model that permitted a warp width of greater than one meter. It had been built by hand for her by her father. She had a talent for form, color, and



A photograph taken by Maj that was published in the book
“The Romantic Herb Garden.”

texture, and subsequently developed a unique style that blended Swedish traditionalism with contemporary American elements.

Together with the loom, she would also transport her furniture in the container vessel. Some pieces had been in her family for generations, others she had purchased from IKEA.

Maj had also desired to become more active in gardening, one of her long-time interests. She later became a state-certified Master Gardener. She studied plant photography, and ultimately assembled a comprehensive array of plant photographs. One of her photographs appeared, with permission, in the book “The Romantic Herb Garden,” by Caroline Holmes, the British garden author, designer, and historian. A copy of that photograph is reprinted here. Maj became very active at the Toledo Botanical Gardens, designing and implementing beds in the Herb Garden, the Raised Bed Garden, and the Blair Museum Garden. She was also active in gardening at the 577 Foundation, which is an educational, environmental, and conservationist project created in Perrysburg, Ohio by the philanthropist Virginia Secor Stranahan.

At least for the time being, we decided to acquire Grace's house. It was in need of repair, and we refurbished it with aluminum siding, a new roof, a new furnace and air conditioner, replaced poorly insulating windows, etc. Maj completely redecorated the house, and to this day it is a showplace of scandinavian taste adapted with an american accent.

In addition to all of her other activities, Maj began taking science courses at the university. At that time the University of Toledo provided tuition waivers for all undergraduate studies taken by faculty spouses. Her advanced education in Sweden had all been in the "Latin line" (liberal arts and humanities), which had not included the mathematical pre-requisites for many of these courses, but this did not seem to be a challenge for her. She took a number of courses in the areas of chemistry, biology, geology, and physics. She found the courses very interesting, and absorbed the material very easily with a minimum of study (and required no help from me). She scored high A grades in all of the courses, and later formed personal friendships with some of her professors, who had enjoyed having her in their classes. She also made use of these waivers to take exercise and dance courses.

We looked back with both relief and satisfaction on the previous four years. We had successfully spanned our two countries and gained new insights into each other, albeit at the price of periods of stressful separation.

Once again I had made the correct choice in allowing Maj time to solve our problems in her own way. Our love had survived the strains of uncertainty, separation, and indecision. We had then been together for 10 years, and would have another 26 years of unqualified happiness.

9

Reunited

Upon her return to Toledo, Maj made a suggestion regarding my mother that I would recommend to anyone in a similar situation. I had tried to visit Grace as often as possible since Homer's death, but my visits had been irregular. Grace would always be happy to see me, but when it was time to leave she would become sad. Maj's suggestion was that we set up a regular schedule that Grace could count on. Every Sunday afternoon would be dedicated to Grace. If we had to be away, we would reschedule to another day, but there would always be a known future visit on her calendar.

At Grace's request we bought frozen pies for her freezer, and every week before we arrived she would bake one of the pies and fix coffee for us. With this schedule she never appeared sad when we left. We continued this schedule when she moved into assisted living and ultimately into full nursing care. Thanks to Maj, this simple regimen brought contentment to Grace and lifted from me any burden of guilt that I might otherwise have felt. Such was Maj's innate wisdom.

In 1982 we traveled to Washington DC to attend a conference. While there we met with our friends Dick and Maggie Silbar, who were then living in Maryland, and went on some shopping expeditions. In one antique store Maj spied a brass doll bed, and immediately imagined Plutten sleeping in it. I had bought an old brass bed at a garage sale my first year out of graduate school, had polished and lacquered it, and we were still using it. Maj quickly caught herself, and said "That would be silly - it is expensive and Plutten would never sleep in it." It is seldom that my instincts are correct regard-

ing presents, but my experience with the banjo-mandolin convinced me that Maj should have that brass doll bed.

While Maj and Maggie were looking at clothes, Dick and I went back to the antique store, bought the bed, and hid it in the trunk of the car. I mentioned nothing more until we arrived home, when I unloaded the bed and brought it into the house. Maj was surprised and delighted, and Plutten slept on it regularly for the rest of his life. The banjo-mandolin had taught me a lesson.

On April 9, 1983 Maj's mother was to observe her 70th birthday, and Maj persuaded Maja and Torsten to travel to Toledo to celebrate the event with us. Both were interested in seeing the US, and wanted to learn more about Maj's life in Toledo, so we planned the trip. The arrangements presented some challenges, since neither could speak or understand any language other than Swedish.

We booked an SAS flight for them between Copenhagen Kastrup and Chicago O'Hare Airports. Maj and I traveled by automobile to O'Hare, and picked them up. Thus there were Swedish-speaking stewardesses on the flight, and we were there to translate thereafter.

One problem that Maj anticipated was our television set. We had shuttled back and forth between Sweden and the US in the interval 1976-1980. When we returned to the US we found it difficult to readjust to US commercial-filled television. Thus we had only an old, small, black and white TV. Maj correctly anticipated that Torsten would want to watch TV, but between the language problem and our archaic TV, it would not present US life favorably. We upgraded to a color TV, although of modest size. A large TV screen dominating a tastefully decorated room conflicted with Maj's sensitivities. Although she eventually allowed me to acquire a flat-screen HDTV, she restricted it to a 17 inch model.

Torsten enjoyed watching sports on the TV, particular ice hockey. However, he was puzzled that the play was punctuated with organ music. It seemed to him a strange intersection of a sports event and a raucous church service.

We took them shopping, and I was surprised to find Maja in an animated discussion with an american woman. When I approached I found that they were speaking two different languages, but seemed to be in complete agreement. Shopping seems to be an activity that transcends cultural differences.

They stayed at our house, but often visited Grace, and also Dave



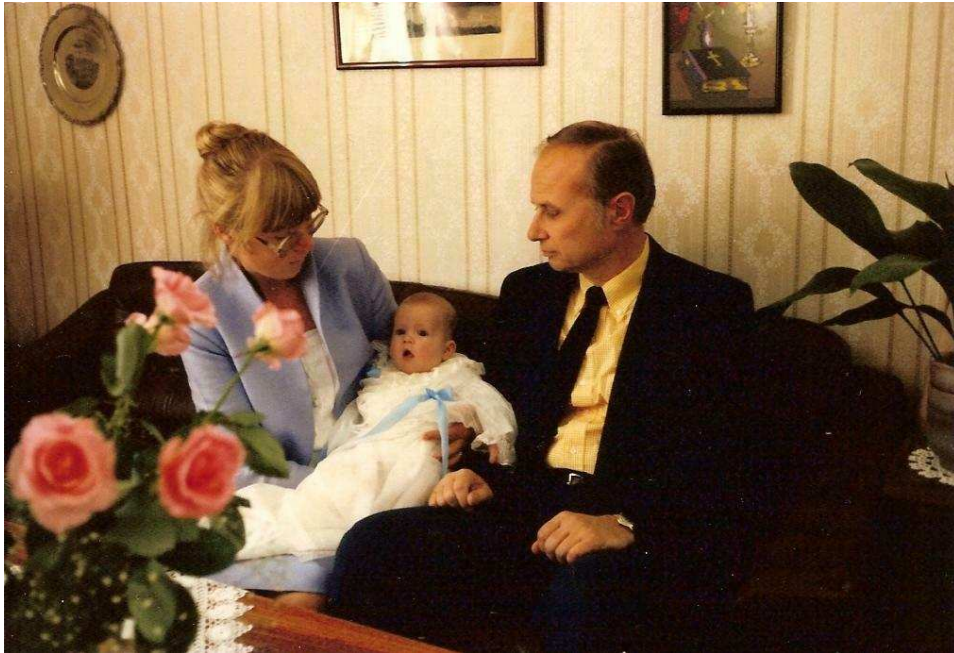
Maj, Maja, and Torsten in Toledo celebrating Maja's 70th birthday, 1983.

and Kitty Ellis, who had visited Sölang during Dave's sabbatical leave in Lund. On the occasion of Maja's birthday, Grace, Kitty, Dave, Maj, and I gathered with Maja and Torsten in a local restaurant to celebrate the occasion.

At the end of the visit we drove them to Chicago, and they left with a positive impression of Toledo, the US, and the american people.

In 1982 Kicki and Ulf's son Arvid was born. He was named after Maj's paternal grandfather. From an early age Arvid exhibited a curiosity about all things, and he and Maj became very close. In 1985 a daughter Hilda was born. Our life had been so rich that the time had never seemed right to start a family. Arvid and Hilda acted as the surrogates for the children that we never had.

In 1986 I was elected to the rank of fellow of the American Physical Society, and Maj and I traveled to Eugene, Oregon for the presentation of the award at the spring meeting of the society. We combined the trip with an extended vacation. We rented a car and



Maj and Larry at Arvid's baptism, 1982.

drove down the California coast to San Diego. Along the way we stayed at a number of bed and breakfast homes with access to the Pacific Ocean. There we witnessed spectacular sunsets and took long walks on the ocean floor at low tide.

When we arrived in San Diego we visited my aunt Helen (the widow of my father's brother, Russell Curtis) and their grown children Barbara and Robert. Helen Gustavsson Curtis was the daughter of Swedish immigrants, and had kept in touch with her heritage through membership in Swedish organizations. She and Maj became fast friends.

In my childhood we had made several visits to San Diego to see my father's mother, his two brothers, and their families. I could recall that the voice of Helen's father had been my first contact with the melody of a Swedish accent. Like Torsten and Homer, he was a wood crafter.

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl occurred on April 26, 1986. Småland is very close to Russia, and was in the direct path of the plume of radioactivity that silently swept over Sweden. In the outside world, one of the first indications that something was amiss



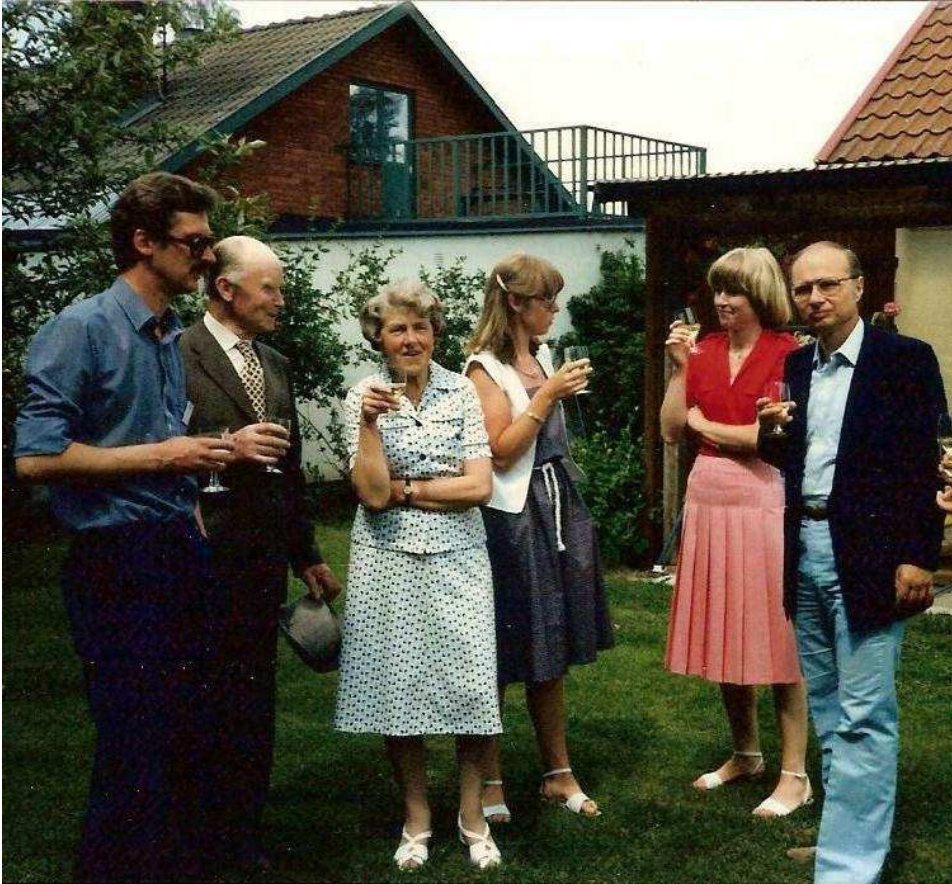
Maj saying *hejdå* to Arvid and Hilda at the end of a trip to Sweden.

occurred in the nuclear power plant in Oskarshamn. The plant routinely monitors the employees as they enter and leave the facility. On this morning they found that they were detecting unacceptable levels of radioactivity on the employees as they entered the plant.

As the nature of the situation began to emerge, warnings were issued. Sweden had made preparations for such an occurrence. One of the measures was to instruct persons in the affected area to ingest iodine supplement tablets. Radioactive iodine is one of the sources of contamination in such an accident, and saturation of the body with normal iodine inhibits the absorption of the radioactive isotope. Unfortunately, Maja was allergic to iodine, and could not take the supplement.

Much has been written about the Swedish environmental impact of this accident but, despite our initial concern, none of Maj's relatives or friends suffered any discernable effects.

As discussed earlier, Kicki's husband Ulf was for a time assistant fire chief of Oskarshamn. However, the nuclear power plant had its own specially-trained fire department, so his responsibilities involved only coordination between the two agencies. The situation can be likened to that in Monroe, Michigan, near Toledo. It is sim-



Ulf, Torsten, Maja, Maj, Kicki, and Larry at the Erlandsson's Musikvägen house in Växjö.

ilar in size to Oskarshamn, and it is the site of the Enrico Fermi nuclear power plant. Accordingly, Ulf and Kicki's visit in April 1978 had been in part a business trip to learn about the Monroe fire station. Ulf and I were treated to a tour of the facilities as honored "visiting firemen," and the event was described in the local newspapers.

By 1986 Plutten was beginning to show signs of advancing age. Despite the best efforts of our veterinarian, his quality of life was in decline. He still enjoyed sitting in the back yard and watching birds, but his movements were limited. One day a small female kitten came to our yard and sat next to him. Plutten had always



Skrållan.

been aggressive toward other cats, and chased them out of the yard, but these two cats became instant friends.

Plutten was clearly disturbed if we brought him in the house without the kitten, so, reluctantly, we acquired a second cat. For the next months the two cats were inseparable, with the kitten grooming Plutten, and sleeping next to him. Perhaps the kitten had been separated from her mother, and Plutten was now fulfilling that need.

Eventually Plutten died, and the kitten searched for him for days. The loss of a long-time family pet is difficult, especially one that had shared so many experiences with us. Maj felt that Plutten himself had selected this kitten to fill his place in her life. There are more tragic losses than that of an animal companion, but one need never apologize for loving another living creature. Maj named the kitten "Skrållan" after a character in a children's book by Astrid Lindgren, and she lived to a very old age.

During the first nine years that we had Plutten, we lived in various apartments in Toledo, Stockholm, Lund, and Kalmar. Thus

Plutten was primarily an indoor cat. When we spent time on the farm in Småland, Maj felt that the surroundings were cat-friendly, and Plutten was allowed to explore the out-of-doors. When Maj and Plutten returned to Toledo in 1981, we allowed Plutten to have the run of the garden. He enjoyed this privilege, and stayed within the confines of our property.

Skrållan came to us as a stray kitten, and did not want to give up her relationship with the out-of-doors. She loved to climb, and would sit on a fencepost or the top of Maj's trellis to watch birds. She would occasionally jump from the trellis to the roof of the house, and could retrace her steps and return to the ground with agility. However, her love of the out-of-doors did give us one fright.

There was one wintry night when there had been a severe ice storm, and temperatures were predicted to fall far below freezing. Skrållan did not like to use the litter box, and begged Maj to let her out. Reluctantly, we turned on the yard lights, let her out, and sat down to dinner. Usually she would return quickly, jumping on the screen of the back door. When she did not return, we became alarmed and looked around the house. We did not sleep well, and got up throughout the night to look for her. The next day we walked all around the neighborhood, looking for her, fearing that we might find the worst. I put a lost-cat advertisement (with a reward) in the newspaper, and drove to the homes of a number of people who responded to the ad. I saw several very nice kittens (that I believe I persuaded the finders to adopt), but no Skrållan.

Over a week passed, and we had given up hope. Suddenly there was a noise at the back door, and Maj opened it to see Skrållan clinging to the screen. She was hungry, but showed no symptoms of being outdoors for so many days in subzero temperatures. The only plausible explanation that we could imagine was that she had entered a neighbor's garage looking for mice, and became locked in when they went on vacation.

There was another time when Skrållan used up one of her nine lives. Since Maj often worked in the garden, our garage door was usually open during the day. Since we had valuable tools and sports equipment in the garage, we closed the door at night. We had a remote-controlled door closer, which Maj and I had slightly different rituals for using. I went out to the garage to watch it close, to be sure that nothing (for example, Skrållan) was blocking it. Maj simply clicked the remote from inside the house. Maj felt that there

was no danger, since the door was interlocked to reverse direction if it met resistance, and we both knew that Skrållan was a very street-wise cat. However, one night I heard two blood-curdling screams: one from Skrållan and the other from Maj. Maj had closed the garage door from the bedroom, and heard a scream from Skrållan. She rushed out the back door to see the garage door stopped a few centimeters from the floor, with Skrållan's head protruding like a guillotine. Luckily we were able to raise the door and free the cat. Skrållan was badly frightened, but not injured. Maj was sometimes impatient with my tendency to imagine worst-case scenarios, but she was also grateful when my precautions turned out to be valid. I was never tempted to utter the words "I told you so."

Beginning in 1987 an endowment was established to support a Raoul Wallenberg Scholar Award at the University of Toledo. This award is a memorial to the Swedish humanitarian who, through service as a diplomat, worked to save the lives of Hungarian Jews who were being sent to Nazi death camps. In the later stages of World War II, Wallenberg issued to them official-looking "protective passports" from the Swedish embassy. These documents identified the bearers as Swedish nationals awaiting repatriation. It is estimated that, by this courageous ruse, he saved at least 15,000 lives. He is considered by many to be the most heroic figure of the 20th century. He was subsequently captured by the Russians, and his ultimate fate remains uncertain. Wallenberg and Winston Churchill are the only persons ever to be granted honorary US citizenship.

I mentioned to the president of the university that Professor Guy von Dardel, the half-brother of Raoul Wallenberg, was a colleague of mine from the University of Lund. I suggested that Guy might be willing to visit Toledo, and could present a physics colloquium, and also address the general community concerning Raoul.

At that time Guy thought there was a possibility that Raoul was still alive, and confined in a Russian prison. On the deathbed of their mother, Maj Wising von Dardel, Guy and his sister Nina Lagergren had promised that they would never stop searching for Raoul. I knew that Guy was anxious to discuss his brother in any forum available (they had recently appeared on the US TV program *Nightline*). Guy, Nina, and Raoul were members of a prominent Swedish banking family. Nina is the mother of Nane Lagergren, the wife

of former UN Secretary Kofi Annan, with whom we later shared a memorable experience.

The president was very positive toward the idea, and urged me to make the contact. I telephoned Guy, and he was pleased to accept our invitation. In October 1987 Guy and his wife Matilda (Mattie) arrived in Toledo.

Guy's discussion of his life with his older brother at the public lecture was a deeply moving experience. He discussed the fact that Raoul's father (Raoul Oscar Wallenberg) had died three months before Raoul's birth, and that his mother had subsequently married to Guy's father (Fredrik von Dardel). He described their early life together, and Raoul's experiences as a student at the University of Michigan. We learned that Raoul had been inspired to undertake this humanitarian mission by the 1941 Leslie Howard movie *Pimpernel Smith*.

The audience sat in rapt attention, and at one point a member of the audience rose to describe the experience that had been related to him by his hungarian grandfather. The grandfather was about to be seized by Nazi soldiers when a diplomatic limousine with swedish flags on the fenders pulled up. A man jumped out and said to his grandfather "You! You're a Swede - I saw you at the embassy. Take this passport and get in the car!" The man attributed his grandfather's survival and his own presence in the room to that swedish diplomat. It was an experience that few in that room will ever forget.

Mattie is an artist with whom Maj had much in common (her father was the painter Kurt Jungstedt and her grandmother was the opera singer Matilda Jungstedt). Guy is a brilliant physicist and a kind and gentle man, who is a privilege to know. His visit was an unmatched experience for me. As I showed Guy around the campus, I ran into a few friends, and introduced Guy to them. I could see in the eyes of my friends that the heroism of Raoul caused a mystical aura to form about Guy, some of which shone upon me for having such a friend.

10

Golden years: the 1990's

During the decade of the 1990's we had an amazing amount of good luck and an unbroken series of wonderful opportunities and experiences. Our lives were meaningful and fulfilling, and we looked to the future with eager optimism. We had no hint of the misfortune that would befall us in the new millennium, but for the moment our happiness was overflowing.

I was eligible for a sabbatical leave for the academic year 1989-90. We wanted to spend as much time as possible in Sweden, but we now had more responsibilities than in earlier times. We had a house with a garden that Maj adored. Grace was living alone in the condominium and could care for Skrållan, but we were not comfortable with leaving her alone for a period as long as 15 months. Therefore we decided to increase the number of overseas flights, and alternate between locations with extended stays on both sides of the Atlantic.

I received a research grant from the Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics (NORDITA) to carry out research in both Lund and Oslo Norway. The Norwegian connection gave us a chance to spend time with Maj's friend Anne-Grete.

I was an invited speaker at the International Workshop on the Physics of Highly Charged Ions. The event was underwritten by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and held at its scientific research station in Abisko, above the arctic circle. The scientific programme was held in the morning and evening, leaving time for skiing and hiking during the afternoons.

The Royal Physiographic Society of Lund awarded me the 1990 Gunnar and Gunnel Källén Prize, which is conferred once each three years (the 1987 award went to Benoit Mandelbrot, of fractal fame). In addition to a cash award, this prize stipulated that

I present a memorial lecture on a scientific subject of interest to the general public. The prize was established in memory of Gunnar Källén, a brilliant young Swedish physicist who perished in the crash of a small plane he piloted while returning from the CERN research center in Switzerland. This award had special meaning to me for two reasons: in my doctoral research I had learned much from a textbook written by Källén, and; our friend Mattie von Dardel was a passenger in the same plane crash, and survived despite injuries.

For my public lecture I chose a topic I titled "Probability densities and Newton's laws: why didn't Isaac Newton think about the probability of getting hit on the head when he sat under the apple tree?" In it I discussed the 18th century paradigm adopted in introductory physics courses, and argued that this ignores simplifying and unifying discoveries of the 20th century. I proposed an alternative structure based on dwell times rather than instantaneous trajectories. It was attended by a large general audience, and was enthusiastically received. As a result, I have continued to develop this topic to stimulate educational reform, and have given numerous invited colloquia on the subject.

The sabbatical leave worked out well. I was able to devote full time to research, and Maj and I were able to once again enjoy living in Sweden for extended periods, without sacrificing the life that we had built up in Toledo.

In 1991 I was invited to be a participant in a Nobel Symposium on atomic physics held at the Saltsjöbaden resort south of Stockholm. During this symposium I was contacted by the University of Toledo with the news that I had been elevated to the rank of "distinguished university professor," one of ten such chairs at the university. Subsequently the president of the university invited me to deliver the commencement address to approximately 7,000 students, parents, and families. Previous commencement speakers had all been well-known figures from outside the university, but owing to my international work, I became the first internal faculty member to give this address.

In the spring of 1994 Maj suggested that the time had come to move Grace into an assisted living facility. I had tried to keep her in a familiar environment as long as possible. I hired people from an agency to help her during the days, and some of her neighbors in the condo watched over her. She was 86 and becoming forgetful, and

we were concerned about her compliance with medications. With a slow decline, it is difficult to decide when to make a large change. As usual, Maj's instincts were better than mine in this matter.

We considered the various possibilities, and decided on a nursing facility that could provide assisted living now and full nursing-home care later. Not wanting to upset her, we suggested that she try this new living arrangement for a few months, and we would retain the condo and all of her possessions so that she could move back if she did not like the new surroundings.

She had her own small apartment, and could still fix coffee and pie for us on Sundays, and seemed happy. Thus after a few months we had an estate sale, cleaned things out, and Homer's son Stan put the condo on the market. Maj's wisdom was also crucial in carrying out these tasks. We could not subject Grace to the trauma of throwing out old possessions, and indeed she never again asked about the condo, or any of the possessions. It would also have been difficult for me to decide which mementos of Grace, Homer, and my father would be saved. Maj made those decisions, for which I was truly grateful.

In 1997 the nursing home contacted us, and informed us that Grace now required more care than the assisted living section could provide. They stated that she should be moved to the assisted living II section, which we found to be essentially a waiting room for an opening in the full nursing care section. Assisted living II was much less comfortable for her than assisted living I had been, so we were relieved when we were able to move her into full nursing care.

We continued our Sunday visits, with Maj bringing baked goods and a thermos of coffee. If the weather was good, we would put Grace in a wheelchair, and take her with us for a walk around the grounds. It was in a pastoral setting, on the edge of pond where swans and geese swam. Grace's 90th birthday was April 25, 1998, and Maj planned a birthday party that was attended by Homer's son and his wife, and many of Grace's oldest friends.

In the summer of 1994 Maj planned to attend the conference "Convergence 94" of the Handweavers Guild of America, which was held in Minneapolis during the period July 7-10. She was to be accompanied by a young girl named Kristina from her village in Sweden, who had been working as an Au Pair for friends of ours in Ann Arbor, Michigan. On Tuesday July 5, 1994 Maj was working at

Toledo Botanical Gardens. In a rare moment of carelessness, she stepped on her cultivator (a short gardening implement with a sharp hook on the end). The hook penetrated both her tennis shoe and her foot, protruding out of the top of her shoe. Although a potentially frightening experience, Maj found the situation absurdly humorous. While her co-workers called the rescue squad, Maj calmly discussed the work that remained to be done on the garden. When the paramedics arrived, they were reluctant to try to remove the barb. Maj asked them if they had a saw in their truck that they could use to cut off the handle. Then she would be able to walk. They sawed off the handle, and called an ambulance.

I was at home when I received a call from one of the workers at the garden. She began by telling me that "Maj is all right, but she got her foot caught in her cultivator and was taken to the hospital. She asked me to tell you to meet her at the hospital." Too quickly I left for the hospital, and wished that I had asked more questions. As a city boy, I had no idea of what a "cultivator" was, and imagined some massive farm implement, possibly drawn by tractor.

When I arrived at the hospital I found Maj sitting in an ER examination room, smiling, with her impaled foot and tennis shoe resting on a chair. Soon the head of the ER came in. He said that the barb would have to come out, and asked Maj if she wanted an anesthetic. Maj said she was fine, and declined with a smile. He removed the cultivator, gave her a tetanus shot, and wrote out a prescription for an antibacterial drug.

Maj indicated that she planned to fly to Minneapolis in two days to attend a conference, and asked if she should take any special precautions. The physician, clearly impressed by her spunk, wrote out the name and telephone number of a physician friend he had in Minneapolis, and told her to contact him if there were any complications. Maj proceeded on the journey with no detectable limp. When I asked her many years later if she ever felt a numbness or twinge in that foot, she said the two feet felt and looked identical.

Later, when a more serious illness struck, Maj showed the same strength, refusing to allow a disease to inhibit her (and my) enjoyment of life.

At age 50, Maj decided that it was time to realize her lifetime desire to dance ballet. She signed up for classes, bought leotards and ballet slippers, and set up a ballet bar and mirror in the basement.

I encouraged her but, recalling how easy it was to learn to play the violin at age eight, and how difficult it was to improve my performance as an adult, I hoped that she wouldn't be disappointed. To my pleasure, she picked it up very quickly, and showed great flexibility and effortless grace in her motion.

The winner of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Physics was Martin L. Perl. Marty was my first academic advisor when I entered graduate school, and was also Sam Ting's thesis adviser. In 1989 I had become a topical editor for *Physica Scripta*, the archival research journal published by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and I had also done occasional background research for the selection committee for the Nobel Prize in Physics, which is awarded by the academy. In recognition of my service to the academy, Maj and I were invited to attend the 1995 awards ceremony and the royal banquet and ball that followed it.

It was indeed a memorable occasion. It was the 100th anniversary of the signing of Alfred Nobel's will, and the 200th anniversary of the death of Carl Michael Bellman, the Swedish poet and composer. The theme of the banquet in the city hall was Bellman, with troubadours and choirs singing Bellman songs, and ballet dancers dressed as Bellman characters. Maj found the ballet captivating, in which a ballet dancer dressed as Bellman descended acrobatically down the banister of the staircase of the Blue Hall (the staircase is shown here in a picture).

It was December, and darkness and snow cover have a special Swedish magic. Our entrance into the banquet was lit by flaming torches. Maj enhanced the illusion throughout the week by planning activities which duplicated experiences that we could have had in 1795. On one evening we visited Skansen, the open air cultural museum that sits on a hill on the island of Djurgården, located near the center of Stockholm. There, in Bollnäs square, a traditional Christmas market has been held since 1902. It is held in a tent illuminated by burning lanterns, and captures very well the spirit of the past. During our visit we dined in historically-preserved restaurants in Gamla Stan (the Old Town) that served traditional Swedish culinary fare.

Maj enjoyed meeting Marty Perl, and we were able to provide him with useful information. Since physics is the first award named in Nobel's will, protocol dictates that the physics laureate has, as din-



Nobel Prize Banquet in the Blue Hall of Stockholm's Stadshus
December 10, 1995.

ner companion, the queen if male, the king if female. It happened that Princess Victoria had recently celebrated her 18th birthday, and had thus become Crown Princess Victoria, eligible to become the first ceremonial queen in the modern era. The Nobel Banquet was her social debut (the press had agreed to respect her privacy until she attained adulthood), and she would replace her mother,



Larry and Maj with Marty Perl, a friend from graduate school and winner of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Physics.

Queen Consort Silvia (the wife of the king, but not a ceremonial monarch) as his dinner companion.

The existence of a ceremonial monarchy in Sweden serves a very useful purpose. Since the monarch is the guardian of the traditions and culture of the country, one can vigorously oppose the policies of the government and the parliament, and yet be fiercely loyal to the country as personified by the monarch.

We warned Marty that the tabloid press would have many questions for him.

Marty handled the social debut of the crown princess masterfully. His picture was on the front page of every newspaper. He responded to the questions of the reporters by saying "she is lovely, her English is perfect, and we conversed about everything - travel, politics, language, and science." I gathered up some Swedish newspapers, and

when I returned to Toledo I translated them into English and sent them to Marty. Stanford University made a large display out of my newspapers and translations.

Marty had already won the hearts of the public at the prize presentation. Marty shared the prize with Frederick Reines, who was aged, frail, physically disabled, and easily confused. Rather than marching onto the stage with the other laureates, Reines was helped to his seat by a student usher. When the physics prize was announced, the two had been instructed to stand, hear their work described, then come forward individually to receive the medal and certificate from the hands of His Majesty the King. Reines stood, but appeared unstable, and grasped his program in one hand and its English translation in the other. Even if he were able to walk to center stage unassisted, he have no free hand with which to receive his award, or to shake hands with the king. Marty immediately seized the awkward moment, took Reines' programs from him and set them on a chair, grasped Reines' arm firmly to steady him, and together they approached the king. They received the largest applause of the day. The newspapers described this in great detail, and called it "a beautiful picture of scientific collaboration." This was the Marty Perl that I remembered from graduate school, the professor who invited graduate students to his home, and treated us as equals.

Once again, Maj and I were able to experience vicariously the greatest achievement a scientist can attain, and the greatest and most elegant social occasion that her country can present.

December 14, 1995 was Maj's 50th birthday, and she planned a reception in Fagerhult for her friends. November 4, 1995 was my 60th birthday, and some people had joked that we were celebrating our 110th joint birthday in Sweden. There was a large turnout of old friends, and some of Maj's younger friends volunteered to be "Pigor" (maids) and came dressed in traditional swedish serving costumes.

Initially the hosting of this commemoration seemed uncharacteristic for Maj, who usually planned celebrations for other people. I discovered her motivation when she rose to give a speech after the dinner. Choking back tears she recounted that June 6, 1994 had marked the 50th anniversary of the birth of her brother Reine. Thus it was important to her that that we gathered together at this time



Larry, Maj, and Maja at Christmas dinner 1995.

to commemorate the 50th birthday that was denied to Reine by his death at age 34.

It is interesting that Reine was born on D-Day, June 6, 1944, and that his older brother Ryan had been born on June 6, 1940. Ryan had been named after the Irish writer Cornelius Ryan, who was a war correspondent in London at the time. The war was then very close to neutral Sweden, and Torsten was impressed by the work of this writer. It is an odd coincidence that Cornelius Ryan subsequently wrote the book "The Longest Day," that describes the D-Day invasion of Normandy that occurred on the day of Reine's birth.

For many years Maj and I had enjoyed a close relationship with Mike and Martha Manheim, who now live in Strafford, Vermont. Mike is a Shakespearian scholar who was for many years the chair of the Department of English at the University of Toledo. Martha is a scholar of Russian literature. They are among our oldest and dearest friends, and we often visited them in Vermont, either for



Mike and Martha Manheim, Maj and Larry Curtis, in Strafford Vermont.

the fourth of July or for Thanksgiving, or both. Maj loved Vermont, and we considered buying a retirement home in this beautiful little village.

Strafford is populated by many fascinating and gifted persons, and a visit there is always stimulating and thought provoking. The Manheims' neighbor was the late William Sloane Coffin, for many years the chaplain of Yale University, an internationally prominent pacifist, and the former senior minister of Riverside Church in New York City. Bill was a magnet for distinguished visitors to Strafford.

During one of our visits, the author Arthur Miller and his wife Inge Morath (a noted austrian photographer) were guests of the Coffins. Miller gave a dramatic public reading from one of his plays in the town hall, after which a few of us joined him for drinks at the home of Ned Coffin, Bill's brother. Living and working in Sweden, I have had the opportunity to informally interact with many Nobel lau-



Anne-Grete, Larry, and Maj in Toledo.

reates, but an evening chatting with Arthur Miller stands out as a profoundly memorable experience. This was enhanced because Maj, having graduated with a major in English literature, could share equally in the experience. Miller's plays, his courage in stand against HUAC, and his personal life made him larger than life. Maj described him the most magnetic personality she had met.

During July 1997 Anne-Grete and Johannes traveled from Norway to visit us. After some time in Toledo, we traveled together to Vermont to spend time with the Manheims. We then rented a car and drove east, taking a car ferry to Nova Scotia. We drove around the coast, stopping in Halifax to attend the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo. The event featured military bands, pipes and drums, choirs, gymnasts, dancers, and military displays and competitions. To witness a regiment of bagpipers playing *Amazing Grace* is a memorable experience.

On the return trip we stayed in a number of bed and breakfast establishments in Canada and Maine. One of them provided cats with the rooms if desired. Maj selected one of the cats, who slept with us in our bed. Another bed and breakfast was patrolled by a

very small lion. The proprietor of the B&B was a veterinarian who had a long-haired, yellow pet cat. To give the cat relief from the heat, he trimmed the fur in the summer. He called it "The Lion Clip - Patent Pending." It left long hair in a main around the neck and in a ball at the end of the tail, and looked very much like a lion.

One of Maj's enduring passions was american jazz. Before we met she had visited the US and spent time in New Orleans, an experience she never forgot. Her interest in jazz was rekindled and enhanced when the legendary jazz great Jon Hendricks joined the faculty of the University of Toledo. Jon was named a distinguished professor of jazz studies, and I was a distinguished university professor of physics and astronomy, so we had many occasions to meet professionally, and later, socially. Jon is immensely creative and curious, and we have had many stimulating discussions on a wide variety of topics.

Maj took an exercise course together with Jon's wife Judith, and Jon relied on Maj for news concerning his many friends among swedish jazz musicians. (Jon is famous in the US, but in jazz-loving s Sandinavia his name is a household word.) We attended nearly all of Jon's concerts that took place in the Toledo area. Although there were usually many prominent people crowding around Jon, he always found a way to come over to greet us, often with questions and ideas to discuss.

One of Jon's projects involved a benefit concert that he arranged and participated in at the Catholic Corpus Christi Campus Parish across the street from the University of Toledo. Maj found the combination of the music and the soaring crystal architecture of the chapel to be very spiritually moving. One of her last requests was that I explore the possibility of having a memorial service for her held in the Corpus Christi Parish, despite the fact that we are not Catholic, and had no previous connection with the parish. I shall forever be grateful to Father James Bacik for his kindness and sensitivity in not only granting Maj's request, but also for providing spiritual support to me and an uplifting role in conducting the memorial service.

Maj's reputation as a weaver had been growing during this period. Her wall hangings, rugs, place mats, etc., were being sold in craft stores and galleries in Ohio and Michigan. She had been giving

weaving lessons, both private and in classes, and she was often asked to give weaving demonstrations at craft fairs and other special events. In a newspaper interview, Maj described how her weaving permitted her to maintain contact with her Swedish heritage while making an artistic expression. In her own words:

Weaving has given me a great sense of continuity in carrying out this tradition, although in a new setting with certain adaptations.

The structured aspect of the principal tool in weaving - the loom - appeals to me. It gives direction and order to a sometimes huge assortment of threads - the warp. Within the loom's constraints I can let loose my creativity though my choice of technique, design, fiber, and color. My Swedish background shows through in my choice of technique - the various rips, twills and monk's belt - and fibers - cotton and linen. I like to think that my contribution to the art of weaving is my use of design and color which is more contemporary than those used by my Swedish ancestors. This merger of tradition and innovation is very important to me as I try to bridge the gap between utilitarianism and aesthetic qualities in my work.

In November 1995 Maj collaborated with a potter, Mary Weiss, to present an exhibition at the American Gallery in Sylvania Ohio. Maj's work also received national recognition. She was contacted directly by the Clinton White House, and invited to prepare a woven Christmas ornament, which subsequently adorned the National Christmas Tree in Washington DC.

On December 17, 1998 I was contacted by the dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Lund, and informed that I had been selected by them to receive the title and degree "Philosophia Doctor Honoris Causa." To receive such a great honor from this prestigious and venerable institution had special meaning, both to me and to Maj.

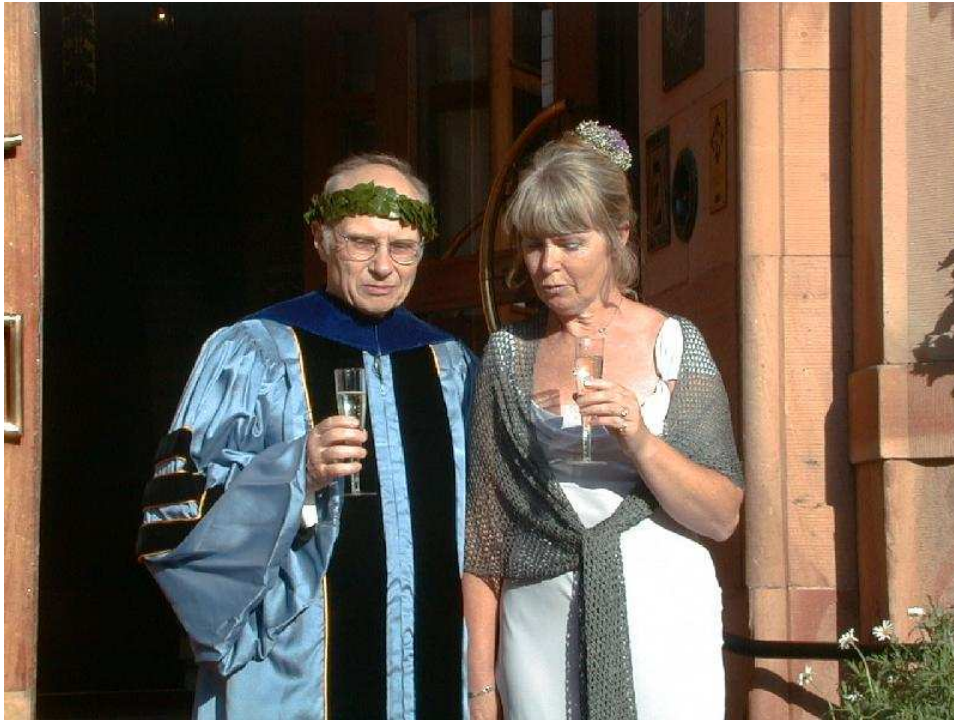
As a student I had seen the Ingmar Bergman film "Smultronstället" (Wild Strawberry Patch). It is the story of a professor of medicine who, aged and a widower, journeys by car from Stockholm to Lund to receive an honorary degree. The journey revisits the places and times of his life, mixing present and past, dreams and reality, and premonitions and nightmares. The back story is of the Doctoral Promotion, and it was captivating. I was impressed by the medieval cathedral, the ancient academic rituals, and the concept of



Lund Cathedral (consecrated 1145) on Promotion Day 1999.

the academy as the repository of human knowledge. That I lived to participate in the splendor of this scene was a dream come true.

The title of the film can be misleading to persons not familiar with Swedish culture. Wild strawberries are a special delicacy that cannot be cultivated, and grow only in very special places in the forests. To find a wild strawberry patch in the woods is considered among



A reflective moment at the Lund Grand Hotel, May 28, 1999.

the happiest of events, and one is tempted to keep its location a secret. Thus the wild strawberry patch is a metaphor for the recollection of the happiest moments of our lives. Surely May 28, 1999 was a wild strawberry patch to Maj and I.

The images in the film foretold my own later experiences. It began with a giant academic procession from the university building through the wall of the ancient city, and on to the the romanesque cathedral. This was accompanied by trumpet fanfares, garland girls spreading flower petals, and masses of people lining the route. Inside the cathedral the entire ceremony was conducted in Latin (my name was Laurentium Iohannem Curtis). There was beautiful music and an address by the university rector. With the conferring of the degree, a laurel wreath was placed on my head, a ring was placed on my finger, and an artillery regiment on the village green fired a cannon salute. (The 80 mm artillery shell casing was presented to me at the banquet, and I carried it through security checks on the flight home). During the recessional the bells in the



Honorary Doctorate, University of Lund May 28, 1999.

church towers rung, and a contingent of soldiers in renaissance era uniforms presented a saber salute to us.

At the same ceremony, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was also awarded an honorary doctorate. Like Maj, his wife Nane Lagergren Annan (the niece of Guy von Dardel and Raoul Wallenberg) was there to witness his award.

I was asked by the university officials to present the after-dinner speech at the large banquet afterward. I gladly accepted, and, since my words were carefully chosen to express my feelings on that day, I include the text below.

I would like to say a few words to our hosts on behalf of today's Hedersdoktor promoti. This is not an easy task, because the events of the past few days have been a moving personal experience that is difficult to describe in words. Therefore, I can only describe my own personal feelings about the University of Lund, based on over 25 years of collaboration and friendship, in the hope that these have resonances with the other recipients.

The University of Lund has long been a magical place for me. Like so many of my generation, I saw Ingmar Bergman's film *Smultronstället* (Wild

Strawberries) when I was a senior in college. I was very moved by the triumphal scene of the Doctoral Promotion and the retrospective message of the film. We children of the 1950's were very much influenced by the Swedish culture, to which we were introduced by the Swedish film makers. They caused us to look forward in time so that someday (at a time like today) we could look back over our lives with some degree of satisfaction. You have transported us into our own fantasies with magnificent renaissance academic splendor. Today's Doctoral Promotion was a truly beautiful ceremony!

Lund continued to play a role in my life. Already as a graduate student at the University of Michigan I came to admire the work of Lund Professor Gunnar Källén, who my mentors told me was a genius in a class with Mozart. Like Mozart, he left us too early. At Michigan our most cherished alumnus was the heroic Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. One of the great privileges of my collaboration with Lund has been my friendship with Professor Guy von Dardel, who is not only a pre-eminent high energy particle physicist, but also the half-brother of the most heroic figure of the 20th century.

My own research field of atomic physics was not only invented and perfected at Lund, but the University of Lund remains the world center of research in that area. The field was begun by Professor Janne Rydberg with his famous Rydberg formula. Professor Rydberg was before my time, but I have had the privilege of knowing and collaborating with those who have followed him. I have met Professor Rydberg's successor, Professor Manne Siegbahn, who received the Nobel Prize for the development of X-rays. Although Professor Siegbahn eventually moved to Uppsala, all of the work for which the Nobel Prize was awarded was performed right here at Lund. I was a disciple and pupil of Professor Bengt Edlén, who perfected the spectroscopic techniques begun by Rydberg, and along the way discovered through his measurements that the temperature of the solar corona was 2 million degrees rather than 6 thousand degrees as was previously thought. Thus Professor Edlén revolutionized our knowledge of the sun. I have worked for 30 years with Professor Indrek Martinson, who has opened the field to the crucial new area of time-dependent processes, and also raised the level of international collaboration at Lund to an unprecedented level. Late in his life, Sir Isaac Newton reflected on his scientific contributions by saying "If I have seen further than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants!" Here at Lund, I have had the privilege of standing face-to-face with the giants upon whose shoulders I stand!

Lund professors such as Indrek Martinson have followed Carl Linné, who entered the University of Lund in 1727 as a medical student. Linné (similar to our experience today) became the great Carolus Linnæus, who sent his students all over the world to collect biological specimens and bring them back to him for classification. In the same way Lund professors have traveled all over the world, teaching us, sometimes learning from us,

and they have brought back to Lund biological specimens like myself! At the University of Lund we have blossomed in the fertile soil of Skåne in ways that would have been impossible without our connections to Lund. I can personally say that any successes that I have had in my career and any accomplishments that I have achieved in my research are owed in large part to my collaborations here at Lund.

The only honor that I treasure more than the Hedersdoktor that I received today is the many years of friendship and collaboration that I have had with my colleagues at Lund.

Vi tackar så mycket för den stora äran som vi har fått här idag, och för att vi har blivit äkta medlemmar av Lunds ryktbar Universitet. Idag är, utan tvekan, en av den största smultronställerna i våra liv, och våra tacksamhetsskuld är oändlig. Tack och skål till Lunds Universitet!

Apparently these remarks touched many members of the audience, as I received a long standing ovation. When I returned from the podium to my seat next to Maj, many people approached our table to shake hands with us, some of them with tears in their eyes. That Maj and I could share this happy moment with each other and with the hundreds of people in attendance was a high point in our lives.

My greatest pleasure in receiving this award was derived from the fact that this was Maj's alma mater, and Lund was the location where many of her oldest friends lived. We were thus able to host a dinner at the Grand Hotel, and invite many of Maj's old friends to share the moment with us. I recall a TV advertisement for a jewelry store that stated: "She promised to take you for better or for worse. Isn't it time to let her know her know how things are going?" Although, as in so many cases, the direct honor came to me, I hope that Maj understood that the true credit was owed to her.

11

A gift of time

The new millennium began on a number of positive notes. My research proposal to the US Department of Energy was once again renewed, assuring that my research program would continue. I had begun to work on a graduate textbook on atomic structure that was subsequently published by Cambridge University Press in 2003 (dedicated to Maj). There was a conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland in August 2001 that Maj and I attended.

The trip to Ireland was a joy. After the conference we rented a car together with friends and took a vacation in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. To the gardener within Maj, the Emerald Isle was magical. The frequent short rainfalls caused no inconvenience if one had a “brolly” (umbrella), and they created lush vegetation. Our hosts at the conference indicated that Queen’s University Belfast had substantial funding for visiting scientists in my area, and this seemed like an excellent opportunity that we could explore after my eventual retirement.

During this time Maj took a course in jewelry making in which she learned to work various metals through flame soldering and malleability. She produced many beautiful necklaces, bracelets, and other pieces, some entirely metallic, others combined with her textile components. She also extended her work with Mary Weiss, and together they designed forms that integrated ceramic and textile elements in imaginative ways.

In January 2002 Grace began to grow weaker. She could no longer eat, and would not swallow when fed. She was sensitive to infections that were becoming resistant to penicillin, and her body

seemed to be shutting down. She had hospice care in the nursing home. Maj and I sat with her and were present when she passed away on January 20, 2002. A male nurse on duty at the nursing home had been one of her kindergarten students many years earlier, and he sat with us in the last hours. She would have been 94 on April 25, 2002.

Maj planned a memorial service that was held at Grace's church on February 5, 2002. I delivered a eulogy in which I traced the course of her life. A tenor from the church sang *Amazing Grace*. More than 50 persons attended the service.

Maj was planning to leave for a visit to her mother on Wednesday February 27, 2002. On Sunday February 24 she complained that she felt a numbness in one of her legs. Fearing a circulation problem, she was concerned about the risks of flying. Early Monday morning I called our family physician John McGreevey, and he examined her immediately. He could find no obvious cause, but arranged to have a Doppler scan performed early Tuesday morning to see if there could be a blood clot. The test was negative, so McGreevey arranged for a CT scan early Wednesday morning. The CT scan revealed a large mass in the abdominal region. McGreevey arranged for her to see a surgical oncologist on Thursday. The surgeon requested that the hospital operating room be opened on Saturday, at which time he removed the mass. Through heroic efforts, Dr. McGreevey had moved Maj from a complaint to a completed surgery in less than six days.

The mass was a malignant ovarian cyst, and Maj opted to begin chemotherapy immediately in the hospital, which used the drugs Taxol and Carboplatin. The chemo was effective, and after 6 months of treatment Maj was, at least temporarily, declared to be in remission.

After playing in a concert with the university orchestra on Friday April 5, 2002, I began to have severe abdominal pains. Maj was incapacitated from her operation and could not drive me to the hospital, and I was reluctant to call an ambulance and leave her alone. Thus I waited until morning to call a friend who drove us to the hospital emergency room. There an X-ray examination indicated that I had a full obstruction of the small intestine.

The possibilities were serious. I was warned by the doctors that the obstruction could be caused by cancer or by a dying intestine, in

which case they would close the incision and administer palliative care. I was in such great pain that I accepted this information with no panic or anxiety. However, the prospect that I might not survive the surgery or the condition that it revealed caused me to feel that I was failing Maj at the time she most needed my support. On Sunday April 7, 2002 I had emergency exploratory surgery.

I regained consciousness as I was being wheeled from the recovery room, and the first sight I saw was Maj's face with tears streaming down her cheeks. In a choked voice she said "It was the best thing possible - it was an adhesion with a diverticulosis scar!" Although I was groggy, I realized then that these were tears of joy, and together we would get through these surgeries!

For many weeks both Maj and I were incapacitated with extensive abdominal incisions, unable to drive, and barely able carry out simple tasks. With the help of friends, we worked through this period.

By June 2002 Maj and I had both recovered from the effects of surgery. Maj was growing anxious to visit her mother, and her oncologist said it would be possible for Maj to delay her next chemo treatment by another week in order to make a trip to Sweden. Thus we spent the period June 20 - July 4, 2002 in Fagerhult.

It was the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Maj's graduation from elementary school, and her classmates from Fagerhult were planning a reunion. Initially Maj was reluctant to attend. She was in the middle of chemo treatments, and was wearing a wig. It was a custom-made human hair wig that we had purchased, and looked very good (although it required careful styling). I succeeded in convincing her that no one would notice the wig, and she should at least put in a brief appearance. She did go, and stayed until the end of the party. Moreover, she had such a wonderful time seeing her old friends that she met with many of them again the following day.

During her entire illness, Maj never told her parents that she had ovarian cancer. Torsten died without ever knowing. After Maj's funeral in Fagerhult I had to explain to Maja why Maj had kept her illness from them. Although many people knew about her first surgery, only her closest friends knew of her subsequent multiple rounds of chemo. She had been active, healthy, and energetic all of her life, and it was important for her self-image that people around her continue to perceive her in that way. It was clear to me that

the appearance of good health that surrounded Maj was crucial to the positive attitude that she steadfastly maintained throughout her illness.

By September, Maj had recovered from the side effects of the chemo, and she rewarded herself by a vacation in Ireland. Classes were in session, so I could not join her, but her friend Betty Jean Jacobson accompanied her. They stayed on the Dingle Peninsula, which Maj claimed as her favorite place on earth. While Maj and Betty Jean were in Ireland, I received an emergency message from Kicki, advising me that Torsten had been taken ill, and had passed away at the age of 92.

It became my task to contact Maj. I telephoned the Irish bed and breakfast that she had listed in her itinerary, and broke the sad news to her. Since there was nothing Maj could do until the funeral, we arranged for her to finish her stay in Ireland with Betty Jean, and changed her return reservation to include a stop in Copenhagen. I booked a flight from Toledo and we met in Fagerhult.

The funeral was on September 27, 2002. Maj planned the service. I found the passage in Ecclesiastes 3 on "A time for all things" in the Swedish Bible, and suggested it as a reading. Apparently that old testament passage is not well-known in Sweden, and all felt it captured the occasion. Maj and Arvid both gave eulogies, as did Sveneric Johansson, a friend of Torsten, a classmate of Maj, and a colleague of mine from Lund.

We returned to Toledo, and spent Thanksgiving week of 2002 in Vermont with the Manheims.

To make up for the sadness that interrupted Maj's 2002 trip to Ireland, we arranged a repeat trip during the summer of 2003. This time I could accompany her, and we were joined by our friends Don and Emily Lewis. We rented a van and traveled during the period May 20-29, 2003. Everything went smoothly, except that it was overcast on the days that we were on the Dingle peninsula.

The 50th Reunion of my high school graduating class was held on July 19, 2003. Maj had recovered sufficiently from her chemo treatments so that she was able to attend with me. She enjoyed meeting my old classmates, and formed acquaintances and friendships with many of them.

In August 2003 we visited our friends John and Susan Bryant in Lakeside, Michigan. Susan owned an arts and crafts gallery called



Ireland 2003.

“The Beech Tree” in Northport, Michigan that featured Maj’s weaving. We had traveled there several times, with Maj giving weaving demonstrations, and John and I sailing his boat on Lake Michigan. They had now opened an arts and crafts gallery called “Sprite of Hand” in Lakeside that also featured Maj’s work.

During Thanksgiving week 2003, we again visited the Manheims in Strafford, Vermont.

Over the next few months, Maj’s CA125 blood test fluctuated, but seemed to be gradually increasing. There are other factors that can cause an elevation of this cancer marker, so we traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota during the period January 28-30, 2004 to obtain a holistic evaluation. The diagnosis indicated that she should undergo another set of chemo treatments. The first treatment went well, but on the second treatment she had an allergic reaction to Carboplatin. This is a common problem, with many patients developing an allergy after approximately eight treatments of platinum. Thus, for this round of chemo, the drug Taxol was used alone.

This time Maj also used the injectable medication Iscador. This is



Maj setting up a weaving demonstration at the Beech Tree Gallery in Northport Michigan.

a mistletoe derivative in common usage in Europe, used as a complement to standard chemotherapy. Although not widely available in the US, we obtained it from a clinic in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Maj completed this second six-month chemo protocol, and again showed no evidence of disease, indicating remission. During the period April 14-29, 2004 Maj traveled to Sweden to visit her mother. I was still teaching and remained in Toledo.

In August 2004 there was a conference at the University of Wisconsin in my field, and we combined this with a vacation. We drove to Luddington, Michigan on August 5, and took the car ferry across Lake Michigan to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. There we spent several days touring Door County. We stayed in B&B's and enjoyed good weather, good food, and interesting sights.

On Sunday night we went to an outdoor theater that was featuring a well-known play "Guys on Ice" (a comedy about ice fishing). When we returned to our B&B I felt a strange itching, and discovered that I had, for the first time since my childhood chicken pox, exhibited a case of shingles. On Monday morning we skipped the opening session of the conference and went to the University Health Center. Fortunately we caught it early, and I was prescribed medication that

cured the outbreak in two days. It has never recurred. We enjoyed the conference, and on our return trip home, we stopped at the IKEA store in Chicago. There we ate a Swedish dinner and bought Swedish foodstuffs and home furnishings.

By 2005 Skrållan had reached the age of 19 years, and was beginning to fail. Despite many attempts to provide her with nourishment, she was not eating, and her quality of life was diminishing. Reluctantly, it became necessary to have her put to sleep in July 2005, which left a great emptiness in the house. Maj was initially unwilling to think about getting another cat, but our neighbor Bonnie was convinced that this would be a mistake.

Our neighbor Bonnie had been taking care of Skrållan for us whenever we were away from home. She was also a volunteer at "Paws and Whiskers," a cat rescue shelter in Toledo. One day a cat was brought into the shelter that Bonnie was convinced was perfect for Maj. The cat had survived a very bad experience, having been trapped for several months inside a house that was abandoned due to foreclosure. How she survived is a mystery, but a neighbor finally noticed her peeking out of a window, and she was rescued. The neighbor tried to adopt this cat, but she had other cats that she preferred. She is a very gentle animal, and will not fight back.

Bonnie convinced Maj to visit the cat at the shelter, and Maj immediately fell in love with her. She is a classic Tabby with the "bullseye" patterns on her sides. Her markings are completely left-right symmetric, and her fur is very smooth and silky. Maj named her "Tussah," after the fiber produced by the wild Tussah silk worm in tropical or semi-tropical forests. The cat could not leave the shelter immediately because she required further medical care. Her legs were shaved to accommodate intravenous drips used to rehydrate her. Maj was just leaving for Sweden to visit her mother. The day before Maj's return I picked up Tussah at the shelter, and gave her time to become accustomed to our house before Maj arrived.

When Maj arrived Tussah eagerly greeted her. For the rest of Maj's life she and Tussah were inseparable. Tussah followed Maj around the house, and slept next to her in bed every night. When Maj was undergoing chemo and could only lie on the couch and watch TV to pass the time, Tussah would sit on her stomach and purr. Maj called it a healing experience. To this day, Tussah still sleeps in my bed in Maj's place, and is a great comfort to me.



Tussah.

In April 2006 Kicki and Hilda visited us in Toledo. This was very helpful to Maj, as it was both a working and a relaxing period. With their help, Maj was able to revive the garden from the winter and do the planting for the summer. The four of us also went on shopping and restaurant expeditions both in Toledo and Ann Arbor, and attended an Opera (Pagliacci). We telephoned Maja on April 9 to congratulate her on her 93rd birthday.

During the 2005-2006 academic year I had arranged my schedule so that I could do much of my work at home, meeting my classes and otherwise communicating with my students electronically. On June 1, 2006 I officially retired from the university so that I could spend full time with Maj.

Subsequent to Maj's diagnosis of ovarian cancer, we had almost five years of quality time together, interspersed with difficult periods of debilitating chemotherapy and frightening medical testing and evaluation. However, we were both grateful to have had this time together. Although I still have painful moments thinking of things that I wish I said or done differently, this gift of time gave to both of us the peace-of-mind of knowing that there were no important expressions of our love that were left uncommunicated.

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The last chapter - sista sommar i Sverige

After the death of Torsten, it was Maja's desire to continue to live on the farm in Soläng, and Maj took an active role in making this possible. Although living alone, Maja wore an alarm that was coupled to a nearby nursing facility, and a representative of the facility checked on her and administered her medications daily. We had a calling plan on our telephone which made calls to Sweden very inexpensive, and Maj talked at great length with Maja several times per week.

On one occasion Maj became worried when Maja's voice seemed weak and she was slurring her words. Thus Maj contacted the nursing facility and arranged emergency medical attention. It was determined that Maja had experienced a mild heart attack. She was to be taken to the hospital, and Maj again intervened, and arranged by overseas telephone that Maja be taken to the hospital in Växjö rather than the one in Kalmar. Although Kalmar was slightly closer, Kicki would be able to visit the hospital in Växjö on a daily basis.

We resolved to visit Sweden whenever Maj's treatments permitted it, and eased the strain of travel by flying first class.

Our last trip to Sweden together occurred during the period June 28 to July 13, 2006. We flew to Copenhagen where we picked up a Saab rental car. On the drive to and from Småland we stopped off to see many friends. In Soläng Maj was able to help Maja with her gardening. Together with Maj's childhood friend Margareta Mjörndal, we toured several glass factories in the region, and Maj bought some beautiful glass sculpture. There are several features of Swedish eye-glass lenses that Maj preferred over their US counterparts. Thus she had her eyes tested in Växjö, and lenses inserted into a very

stylish frame that she had purchased in Toledo. We invited Kicki, Arvid, Hilda, and friends to an elegant dinner at Stadshotellet in Växjö. At the end of the period we drove back through Skåna, staying the final night with Kerstin and Mischa Labbé in Simrishamn.

Although we had a most delightful time during our visit to Sweden, Maj was having increasing problems with her digestive system. When we returned to Toledo she was admitted to the hospital. It became clear that there were tumors pressing on the intestines that were interfering with their function. After a week of intravenous feeding in an attempt to allow the intestines to recover, it was necessary for her to undergo another major surgery. The operation was successful in removing the obstructions, and gave us some additional quality time together.

After the surgery chemotherapy was stopped, and Maj received palliative care through hospice. Because of the nature of the intestinal surgery, Maj had problems both with her appetite and with her ingestion of food. In order to address these problems, it was suggested that Maj enter a local hospice for inpatient care. There was space available at the hospice in Perrysburg. There Maj was under the care of Dr. Jerry Steiner. Jerry is the father of Jack Steiner, a young physics student from Ohio University, who spent the summer of 2004 in Toledo collaborating with me on a research project under the sponsorship of the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program. Jack and his fiancé Christina became good friends of Maj and I, and Jack went on to do his doctoral research at Harvard University. Jerry is an expert in pharmacology, and he was able to stimulate Maj's appetite and her sense of well-being. She began to gain back some of the weight she had lost with the surgery.

Maj had been doing very well, and we planned to return home. However, one morning upon arising she fainted in the bathroom. When she revived she was unsteady and unable to walk. This did not seem to be associated with the cancer, and could have been caused by a bump on the head when she fell. Thus she was able to be taken to a hospital for tests without the need to withdraw from hospice care. Diagnostic X-rays indicated that she had suffered a mild pulmonary embolism. Maj did not want to re-enter the hospital, so it was arranged that she could receive the needed treatment (blood thinners, etc.) in the much more cheerful surroundings of the hospice.

With permission, I had brought Tussah to the hospice to visit Maj. At the end of the day I began packing up Tussah's litter box and toys to take her home, as I did not want her to interfere with the operation of the facility. However, the nurses expressed great disappointment, and urged me to allow Tussah to stay. Tussah was very quiet and well-behaved, never attempting to leave the room. One kind lady on the housekeeping staff bought a toy for Tussah - a small blue plastic wiffle ball with a bell inside, which Tussah still plays with today. There was a sofa bed in the room, so (with my occasional trips home for a change of clothes) the three of us lived very happily in the hospice room for four weeks. At that time Maj could return home, where she received hospice nurse visits as a home outpatient.

During this period Maj made inspiring efforts to extend her life as long as possible, primarily I believe, for my sake. A physical therapist came to our home twice a week, and each day Maj diligently performed exercises to rebuild her strength.

At the end of October Maj began to have intestinal problems again, and we hoped that this might be aided by another stay as an inpatient at hospice. This time there was a room available at the hospice facility in Toledo, which is only one mile from our house. By this time Dr. John McGreevey had become the physician in charge of this facility. Dr. McGreevey had earlier been our family physician, and it was he who had so effectively expedited Maj's diagnosis and surgery.

Despite the best effort of all involved, Maj slipped into a coma and passed away as I held her hand on November 1, 2006.

On November 17, 2006 a Memorial Service was held for Maj at the Corpus Christi Campus Chapel across from the University of Toledo. It was attended by approximately 150 people, and featured displays of loaned examples of Maj's weaving and photographs of gardens that she had designed and produced. Kicki and Arvid traveled from Sweden to attend. Father James Bacik and Hospice Chaplain Karen Thompson spoke, Betty Jean Jacobson delivered the eulogy, and tenor Erik Johanson sang a medley of Swedish songs.

December 14, 2006 would have been Maj's 61st birthday. On that day we held a funeral at the old church in Fagerhult Sweden, and

Hilda and I laid Maj's ashes to rest in the churchyard adjacent to it. When my time comes my ashes will be laid next to hers.

Many of Maj's friends traveled to Fagerhult to attend the services, and a reception was held in Solång afterward. Maja found some comfort in seeing so many of Maj's friends, and we made plans for a traditional Swedish julbord dinner with her for Christmas. However, five days after the funeral Maja passed away peacefully in her sleep.

Maj and I had a wonderful life together, and despite the sadness that overcomes me now, as ALS victim Lou Gehrig said in his farewell speech "Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

*Kära Maj -
jag älskä dig för evigt . . .*