

Exchange Student Georg Stenstrom

Dear Rotary Club of Christchurch Sunrise!

Time sure flies. A far greater time than I had hoped has now passed without me visiting, and it is something I think of very often. I also feel guilty for not sending you emails now and then, especially as I so thoroughly enjoy Iain and Janet's Christmas updates...! I am forever grateful to you all for the time I got to spend down there. I speak of NZ very often and have souvenirs on display (including a cutting board – not to be used as such! – made from recycled "pre-quake housing material" which Lee Barber gave me at her last visit).

Anyway, back to my ongoings. In order to have at least some logic behind things, I think I'll have to go about this chronologically. I also understand you probably won't have time to read all of this between the eggs Benedict, so please go ahead and use the excerpts you think are most interesting!

After Chch, I moved directly to Ankara, Turkey, where dad worked at our embassy and I went to an American High School. I thoroughly enjoyed my two years there, as did the family, and we traveled quite a bit of the country. One special thing which I have my NZ "heritage" to thank for, was the knowledge of Gallipoli and thus I went there during ANZAC day. It was a very special and moving commemoration of the battle. On a lighter note, I also worked for part of a summer as a white water rafting guide – something I picked up at CBHS and through the North & South Island trips.

The next step after Turkey brought me back home and to the start of Law School at Uni. Five and a half years later, I picked up my LL.M. (Master of Laws/J.D. depending on translation), but I had also taken 2*½ year off for military service and an internship at the Swedish Embassy to South Africa. I was unfortunately not in South Africa during the Super Rugby season, but I did represent the All Blacks by wearing a cap and doing my best to taunt my South African friends 😊 Unfortunately, the cap blew off my head and into the Indian Ocean off the coast of Mozambique when I was out on a dive trip. The South African skipper was more than a little pleased we could not spot it amongst the waves...

I have now been working for an American pharmaceutical company called Amgen for almost three years. At Amgen, I negotiate contracts and budgets for our clinical trials in the eight countries of the Nordic and Baltic. I am also team lead locally and Forum Chair of my role globally.

Finally, my private life: I am together with a veterinarian named Sophie, and her two dogs (schnauzer and miniature schnauzer). We will celebrate two years this fall. I sold my apartment last October and moved in with her, and we are currently selling her apartment as we bought a new one, together, just two weeks ago. We will move in there on November 16 and start another chapter of the Book of Life. Sophie has met two of the Barbers (Lee and Bronte) and is almost looking as much forward to going to New Zealand one day, as I am.

I will always be grateful to all of you, especially my families – Iain & Janet; Gary & Lee; Brent & Helen; and Nigel & Anne – for taking me in. I did also highly enjoy time with many of the rest of you, and I am most thankful for this as well. Not to exclude anyone, but Gary Masters' boat in the Sounds and Terry Jacobs' taxidermy and ballooning with his son are two of many fond memories!

I still follow you on Facebook and it looks like you are doing a great job with the Community.

I would very much like to hear from you, and please let me know should you be in the neighborhood of Northern Europe!

With the warmest of regards, Georg



Roger Turner has been following up on these students. This is the second of a series