

## **Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een gelukkig nieuwe jaar van Hugh and Becky,**

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That is Dutch for Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from Hugh and Becky. In case you don't know we are spending our first Christmas in The Netherlands. Hugh accepted a position as the head of the laboratory for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). This group manages the international chemical weapons treaty. Hugh has been working with them for about ten years, and now works for them. He started his new assignment on July 26 and Becky joined him a month later after finishing up some last minute things in California. We plan to be here at least three years.

We will not try to cover all the stories related to our move and resettlement here in this letter. You can get more in depth stories at <http://updates.fg-tours.com>. To cover a few key points;

- The move went very smoothly;
- We are renting a typical Dutch house in a nice neighborhood, in a suburb of The Hague;
- Our house in California is rented;
- We use Dutch bikes, busses, trams, and trains to get around, while our new car mostly sits idle;
- Dutch is a very hard language to learn;
- The weather is very different than we are used to, we have over 4" of snow now;
- OPCW is more bureaucratic than LLNL;
- Becky retired and does not understand why the lady of leisure has lists of things to do every day;
- We are as busy as ever;
- We miss our friends and family;
- We are happy here.

We have room for guests and you are all invited. Via our first guest, Hugh's niece, we found out that 1) museums are closed on Mondays, 2) the weather will impact your plans and 3) you'll be glad you came.

Our families are all well. Becky's parents are getting great care in their assisted living facility and her sister has dedicated much of her time to their well-being. Becky's niece, Sarah, gave birth to a beautiful little girl, Mackenzie, in January.

This year's pictures are from our last Christmas/New Year vacation in Peru, with a focus on Mayan culture and visiting Machu Picchu, and Ecuador, with a focus on the Galapagos Islands. Both parts of this diverse trip were fascinating and are on our re-do list. Ecuador's controlled access to the Galapagos Islands' maintains this fragile and unique ecosystem, while allowing visitors to enjoy it.

Knowing we were likely moving to Europe the rest of our travels were to favorite spots in California; Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, and of course, San Francisco. Since we have been here we visited several towns in the Netherlands, Salisbury, England, Brussels, Belgium, Hugh has had business trips to Sweden, Switzerland, and Washington DC, and Becky visited the Christmas markets in Nuremberg, Germany. We plan visit Borneo and Singapore during the first two weeks of January, as part of a business trip for Hugh. We are dreaming of trips to Italy, Greece, an African safari etc. This hemisphere is rich in travel options!

Hope to hear from you. Our e-mail and snail-mail addresses are below. Best wishes,

**Becky Failor and Hugh Gregg**

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