

Good old year, happier new one

(Amsterdam, 13 January 2016)

Dear friends,

this is a personal summary of 2015. It gives me bitter-sweet feelings to look back on the year that has finished, and remember the best - and worst - moments.

As a family, we've spent several wonderful vacations together: a week at CCCamp, long weekend on a sailing-boat on Texel, visited the ADM festival, and with Nana's family we took a train trip to Croatia and stayed in Stoja, the camping in Pula. We also had many parties - - for Alisa's and Charlie's birthdays, for two St. Nikolaas-es: Dutch and Serbian, BBQ in Arnd's garden, in Hoofdorp with Brane & his family. . . many sleep-overs. . . and visited KattenCafe!, and we saw many films and shows together: Minions, Transylvania, Big Hero 6 and PRISCILLA the Queen of the Desert!



Alisa achieved a huge milestone this year - - she finished primary school, entered the school of her choice - - gymnasium called Amsterdam Lyceum, and finished first term with a good "report"!

Charlie's health improved, he almost never has asthma attacks any more. He is in Group7 in school.

Our extended family got even more extended: kids cat Muis got kittens!! We all took care of the cat and of kittens, but one of the five died. Other four were sold to people around Holland.



Our robotic family got extended too! Alisa got a new phone, (Charlie got Alisa's old one), I bought an extra laptop (my old!), and a *rice cooker* and *waterpick* and *a new oven*!

Our older robots are: Bread-baking machine, sandwich-maker, dish-washing machine, clothes washer&dryer, gas heater, blender, soya-milk-maker, mixer, staaf-mixer(!), electronic toothbrushes, fridge, gas-cooker, vacuum-cleaner, many computers & tablets & phones, and quadcopters, modem, and let's not forget toaster & water-cooker.

I list them here in order to show gratitude - - they take part in our daily lives and help a lot, but they also use lots of electricity & gas, and other materials that went into their production - - and that will have to be discarded at some point. I also list them to show how MANY there are (about 30!), and to remind myself how much I will miss them when I move away from automatized consumer society.

On the not-so-bright-side, both kids, *and* Nana's kids, had lots of lice during the year. It's a constant struggle and source of frustration. . .

Both Alisa and Charlie play a musical instrument (bas guitar and trumpet, as well as drums, and singing!), and performed many times on stage this year!!



As a Couple

Together, Arnd and me did three major undertakings:

- visited Japan

<http://becha.home.xs4all.nl/japan-2015-tourists-in-kyushu.pdf>

- climbed the mountain!

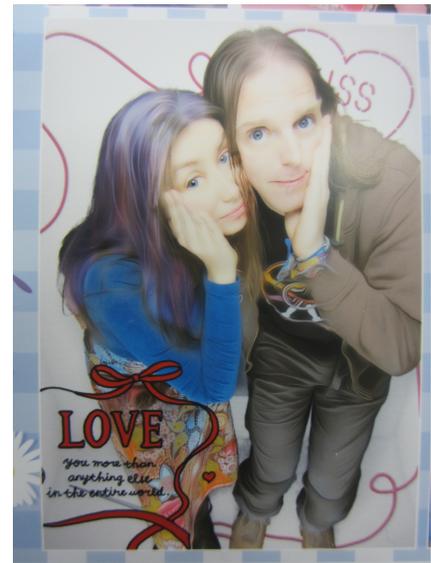
Storzic, in Slovenia -- so monumental that it deserves own story!

- went to our fifth CCC congress together (#32c3)

<https://lists.puscii.nl/wws/arc/uncivilization/2015-12/msg00031.html>

<https://lists.puscii.nl/wws/arc/uncivilization/2015-12/msg00040.html>

<https://lists.puscii.nl/wws/arc/uncivilization/2015-12/msg00046.html>



We also “survived” several smaller projects: workshops about massage and orgasmic meditation; hackerspace dramas, concerts, house(s) refurbishing, beer makings & tastings, dinner parties.. as well as enjoying many visits to the sauna, alone, as a couple, with kids, and with friends.

It’s been almost four years that we are together!! It was wonderful time, and our love is still going on strong! We are beyond sparkling sizzles, more into the slowly-simmering-warmth.



Work

At work, my biggest achievement was - - to work less!!

https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Hackers_tribes#Working_Less

Since October I am working only three days a week, and that gives me SUCH A RELIEF! I am much more rested, relaxed, and energetic! This in turn makes me more productive, even if I am working shorter hours.

My other major achievements were: creating a Wikipedia page for RIPE Atlas; organizing two hackathons; creating a webinar & giving three of them; giving countless presentations; helping add 62 more “RIPE Atlas anchors” to the project, and - - winning NLNOG Networking Quiz prize!!!
(3rd place, HOWEVER I was better then the other 70 network engineers & sysadmins!)

RIPE Atlas webinar video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJMFGuM0kMo>

Working less also means traveling less, and earning less money, but that is good - - more time at home, and more time for family and friends!

Friendships & losses

Azart returned!! The Ship of Fools, and the captain of it - August - who both ruled my heart 16 years ago, are back in Amsterdam! This reunion brought back many more friends from the past - Krien, Viktor, Robbie, and many acquaintances - Kika, Xavier, Richard, Russian musicians Lena & Volodja.. I was so pleased to see them again, that I organized my birthday bash on Azart.

There were fourteen people staying in my place this year (for of them for the second time), and a cousin who registered to my address. This is fewer then in 2014, when I opened up my house as a kind of “hackbase” for nomadic hackers.

It was not planned to show hospitality to less guests - - it kind-off just happened. From all 40 visitors till now, only with one I had a traumatically bad experience, but, as a wise man said, it was a cheap life lesson: no-one was physically hurt, and I learned to respect my boundaries and express them more clearly.

Many friends died in 2015.
My biggest loss was death of Zora, my god-mother.

Zora was a woman who raised me: she took care of me when I was a baby & my mother was working, we were living like tenants in their .. shed, and when we moved to our own “house” (another shed) we stayed close. She was a typical matriarch: she ruled the domestic world of her yard, pantry, kitchen; her then-teenage daughters were babysitters for me & Nana, and when we grew they were our biggest supporters & confidantes, in the struggle with our parents. Then Nana & me became god-parents to Zora’s grandchildren, and “tribal ties” became even stronger.



However, living thousands of kilometers away does bring distance between hearts, and we stopped being closely connected family. I of course visited about once a year, but that's not enough. After long illness, Zora died in May 2015, age 84. I was lucky to have seen her for the last time in April. I did go back to Belgrade again, for the funeral - to pay respect to the woman who was more than a grandmother to me.

Two more personal friends died: čika-Sloba, & Alma; and two more people from the Internet community that I slightly knew: Caspar Bowden and Felipe Rodriguez - - both fighters for the more fair Internet, in their own ways.

At the end of the year I went to another funeral: of Rob Blokzijl, who chaired RIPE community and RIPE meetings "forever". Since I first joined in 1999 he was the embodiment of RIPE. The funeral itself was, for me, an homage to his wife, Lyn, one of the warmest and the strongest women I know. She made a celebration of the moment of saying good-bye, and she contributed a precious occasion for reunion of the friends that Rob Blokzijl cultivated within the community. Personally, it was a reminder of Olivia's funeral, eight years ago - - same "Dutch" setting in the cemetery & crematorium, and many of the same people that came to Olivia's funeral.

Several of the "celebrities" that died were dear to me too: Marshall Rosenberg (NVC author), Terry Pratchett, Arsen Dedić, Oliver Sacks.

Personal

Biggest personal achievements in 2015 were:

- doing yoga every day!
- losing another 5 kilograms of fat
(that's 10 kg net in 18 months, or 18 kg up-and-down...)
- taking time to be in nature: roller-skating, walking in the dunes, doing yoga outside, swimming
- throwing a HUGE BIRTHDAY PARTY for my 43rd birthday at Azart
- organized two large-ish UnCiv meetups, many small ones
https://events.ccc.de/camp/2015/wiki/Session:Ants_and_Squirrels_UnCivilization_ReUnion
https://events.ccc.de/congress/2015/wiki/Session:Ants_and_Squirrels_go_32c3_UnCiv_meetup
- gave a lighting talk about Lika: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hau7ivcHZYE#t=20m24s>
- organized three "women in tech" meetups in TechInc
https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/User:Becha/Events_2015#WomenInTech
- (almost) bought a house in Croatia
- read 50-100 books (lost count. . .)

... in addition to those mentioned above:

- climbing the mountain!
- visiting Japan!
- being at the sea!

I also survived Lyme Disease, student demonstrations & distant terrorist attacks; I made minor contributions to help the refugee crisis, colored my hair for the first time in my life, and got the undercut; went to many conferences and missed even more, and wrote a lot for UnCivilization discussion list: <https://lists.puscii.nl/wws/arc/uncivilization/>



Political

Most of my political activism was – being “armchair revolutionary”, consisting of either reading or writing, and sometimes having passionate discussions. It can all be found either on Twitter or on TechInc wiki, on UnCivilization list archives; I am going to compile a summary.

Special mention to the video released by Matthijs & Irene: me talking about “Takers & Leavers”!
<https://vimeo.com/150826656>

My most active TechInc projects:

Hackers Tribes Saving the Planet: https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Hackers_tribes

MeshNet aka Community Networking: <https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/MeshNet>

Ladies Night: improving diversity in tech / hackers world:
https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Ladies_Night

Internet_Governance_and_hackers (ruling the Internet)
https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Internet_Governance_and_hackers

Hackerspaces_tour (visiting other hackers, inter-connecting various/similar communities)
https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/Hackerspaces_tour

Writings in 2015:

<http://becha.home.xs4all.nl/olivia/olivia-january-2015.html>

<http://becha.home.xs4all.nl/hackers-of-the-world-unite.html>

<http://becha.home.xs4all.nl/hackerspaces-patriarchy-equality.html>

Squirrels & other animals



2016

I have several big plans for 2016:

- becoming a Born Again Vegetarian - - as a political statement!
- visiting Kathmandu - - dream destination from my adolescence
- going on vacation to Slovenia in February
- organizing camping UnConference in Lika in August
<https://wiki.techinc.nl/index.php/User:Becha/Lika#2016>
- doing more for Women In Tech (FemHack? CyberFeminist?)
- at work: moving office
- further cultivating UnCivilization community & activities

Love from Vesna (& Alisa, Charlie, Arnd)

