Helsinki Journal, Entry 31, March 4, 2007

It’s difficult to pass up opportunity. So when we were given the chance to have free lodging in Lapland – the north-of-the-article-circle region of Finland – it was impossible to pass up.

Alex in Luosto on the day we arrived.

Luosto Mountain in the distance (where our cabin was) from Pyhä Mountain.

We flew from Helsinki early on Friday and took a bus to Luosto, which is a very small town with a small ski hill and great cross country skiing. We were there together from Friday to Tuesday. Over the weekend, we skied at nearby Pyhä Ski Resort, which is a bit bigger and has better terrain than Luosto. A family downhill skiing excursion was unexpected, but we were with another family, the Harrios, who were skiing and so we decided to do it as well. Although it was an expensive two days, it was worth it. They had
telemark gear for me, the conditions and weather were outstanding, and the surprising fact that the locals didn’t ski off of the groomers (!!!) made for great skiing. There were steeps too. I was grinning, and am now as I think of it. Who needs drugs or therapy when there’s skiing?! Oh, and there were tons of other telemark skiers, but they didn’t ski the powder if you can believe it.

Full moon at Pyhä Mountain

Jen and the kids left Luosto on Tuesday at 3pm and I stayed on for a meeting of the Finnish group of Inverse Problems researchers. I write from the beer-bottle-strewn meeting table on my last night here. Tomorrow I catch the bus at 7am and am off to the start of the border-to-border skiing event, Rajalta Rajalle-hiihto, which I’m worried about. The temps are going to be high (+ degrees Celsius), which makes waxing conditions difficult, especially for a hack such as myself. Give me a time independent prayer of good luck please, since when you read this I will already be done.

Right: Jen at our cabin. Left: me at Pyhä; note the T-bar lift in the background.
Elli at Pyhä

On the way to sledding at Luosto Hill.