

“Adenovirus meeting” an Autobiography – Author Unknown

“Ain’t no need to watch where I’m goin’; just need to know where I’ve been.” Tow Mater circa 2006

In Umea [2012], I’ll have my 10th party. Curiously though, only a handful of you know how I got here. I don’t want to brag, but, my first four parties were the golden age of molecular biology when the mystery of RNA splicing and DNA replication were being unravelled. EMBO also adopted me as its logo. Between 1976 and 1983, it was heady times - I travelled to Sweden, Portugal, Germany and Scotland.

Then, somehow, somewhere, for 12 years I lost my bearings and became just another DNA tumour virus. Then in 1995, in the brisk winds of Scotland, Willie struck the steel against the flint - a spark and I began to smoulder.

2000 Autrans, Isère, France, April 2-4

I felt my fire start at the beginning of the 21st century: Wisia brought me back to life in 2000 in Autrans, a small family ski resort in the Alps. Sure, she created a scientific committee to help her, but they’ll all admit that it was her drive and passion that brought me back to life and made me feel wanted. In Autrans, people who cared again surrounded me. The ambiance was familial, warm and electric. Wisia treated everyone who came to see me equally. You came because you wanted to – not because you got a free trip to the mountains.

There was a murmur on every slope in the mountains, “We have to do this more often...”, I recall hearing.

2003 Montpellier, France

But nobody stepped up and said they wanted me. It took a long time, too long, but someone did adopt me. In the autumn of 2003, Eric said he wanted to celebrate my 50th anniversary in a village nestled in the hills north of Montpellier. Like my re-birth in the mountains, I was humble and surrounded by family - everyone came because of me, not for the wine and warm autumn sun.

There was a buzz from every dale in the garrigue, “We have to do this more often...”, I recall hearing.

2006 Zürich, Switzerland, August 30 to September 02 (8th)

I was more alive than ever - clearly, I had become a party that you looked forward to regularly. Urs couldn’t resist my charm. I knew he wanted me; he spoiled me in the mountains and the garrigue. With the mildest of nudges, Urs welcomed me to Zurich in 2006. I started to flex my muscles even more and show my beauty, I entertained with more topics and attracted even more of you - and again you all came for me - no free rides.

There was chatter from every cove on the lake, “We have to do this more often...”, I recall hearing.

2009 Dobogókő, Hungary, April 26-30 (9th)

This time I didn’t leave anything to chance; I made you decide before you went home where my 2009 party would be.

You made Balazs and Mari blush, and me feel needed. I headed to Dobogóko, a village in the hills overlooking the Danube outside of Budapest. With the Hungarian hospitality, organization and devotion throughout the previous parties, I knew I was here to stay. Veni, vidi, vici.

There were shouts in every nook of the lodge “We have to do this again, but where?...”, I recall hearing.

2012 Umeå, Sweden, June 13-17 (10th)

I was too confident, I allowed you to leave before you chose my next address. Fortunately though, I knew that my 21st century hosts wouldn’t forget me. Again, Wisia, Eric, Urs, Mari and Balazs devoted their time and energy to find me a home for 2012. They wanted to find someone who loved me as much as they do.

What a pleasant surprise too, I am going back to Sweden. Ah the Swedes, they’ve been there from the beginning and always had a twinkle in their eyes for me. I’m looking forward to seeing Göran and his protégé Niklas again- Niklas was young and energetic back in Autrans and always came to see me. I know that Wisia’s imprint will be in Umeå again you’ll come for me, not for a free trip to see the northern lights during the summer solstice.

While the Umeå nights are short, I won’t let you go without finding me a new home. But, I also think that every 3 years is a bit too long... I miss some of you. How about seeing each other in 2014?

And, as an adolescent, I may be ready to see more of the world. Yes, I’m “European” but I’m looking for someone who cares about me - and there are a few, even some from the other side of the pond, who have been fans since 2000. If you do get me, do not forget Wisia’s influence - some traditions are worth keeping.

Now you know where I’ve been - but nobody knows where I’m goin’... until the vote.

2014 La Jolla, California, USA, July 16-20 (11th)