

# The Miksovsky Family Journal

Christmas 2007



Happy Holidays once again! 2007 was a complete circus, and the middle months of the year were little more than a hazy blur. But the year started off normally enough—or as normally as possible in a household bracing for the arrival of a new member...

We started the year by squeezing in a few final trips as a family of four. In January we drove up to Whistler, BC, where Anya refined her snowplow technique. It was great to be able to actually ski with her—even if the ski patrol did have to sweep us off the mountain! Liya's looking forward to joining her sister on the slope this winter. In February we visited the Big Island of Hawai'i with Angela's best friend Sarah Schershel and her family. Exploring Hawaii Volcanoes National Park was all the more fascinating with Sarah's geologist husband, Craig. We even got to see real glowing lava oozing down the side of the Kilauea volcano at night! We had a fun drive around the island to the Kona side for snuba (not scuba) diving, a luau, and many trips to the beaches around Waikoloa. In May we went to San Francisco to see Jan's brother Chris. He recently founded outdoor products company Human Gear ([humangear.com](http://humangear.com)), whose first product arrives in early 2008. Chris's tour of San Francisco included the familiar (cable car rides) and the unfamiliar (buffalo in Golden Gate Park).



Our remaining plans for the spring and summer flew out the window in late May, when Angela was suddenly placed on hospital bedrest. Angela spent ten days being endlessly poked, monitored, and woken up in the middle of the night. Jan took over all the normal home and child activities *and* tried to maintain a normal office schedule. In retrospect that was an inopportune time to have had construction builders completely tear apart our kitchen for a remodel. Having Anya and Liya's end-of-year preschool program during that period didn't help either, nor was it wise, in retrospect, to have just moved them into a shared bedroom for the first time. Those ten days were *crazy*.



Angela was eventually released for modified home bedrest, also known as "house arrest." Angela's mom E-moon and Jan's mom Lyn were lifesavers, taking turns staying with us for weeks on end. Many friends helped by bringing over meals. (The single most common dish: Lasagna, which turns out to be easier to bake if your kitchen has an actual oven. For many weeks, ours didn't.)

During the long bedrest period, Angela took up knitting. She's now knitted a beautiful blanket, a couple of scarves, a hat, and a pair of baby mittens. Next step: mittens with thumbs. In that same period, Angela accepted a cool community service award *in absentia* from her alma mater, Fuller Theological Seminary.

The baby needed to be delivered by Caesarean section, so Angela's doctor scheduled the delivery for July 9<sup>th</sup>—over a month early! The first part of the delivery went fine. "We've got a cute something. It's a... girl!" After that things went haywire. Complications developed on both Angela's and the baby's side of things, with the result that Angela had a longer recovery than normal, and the baby ended up in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit due to a problem in her tiny lungs. Even after Angela was released home, we spent a harrowing week of hospital visits. Sample conversation snippet from the night nurse: "Well, let's see, the baby's doing just fine. We just fed her, and she's sleeping... oh, and in the middle of the night she stopped breathing and had to be resuscitated." Those NICU nurses turn out to be a steely-nerved bunch.



As luck would have it, the NICU staff tried a non-invasive trick that resolved the baby's respiratory issues nicely, and all was suddenly well. We later learned from a source inside the hospital that one of the NICU doctors had invented that very trick, that furthermore he's the only doctor in the hospital that uses that trick, and that it's pretty darn lucky we had that doctor.

Crisis over, we could get on with the normal world-ending utter chaos attending the arrival of a child. We named our new daughter **Sabriya Chen Miksovsky**. How'd we come up with Sabriya? Our name search was simplified by the requirement that the name end in -ya. Sabriya was in our final list, though we held off making the official selection until we could actually meet her and try out names in person. Sabriya is Arabic for "patience". We call her "Bree" for short. Finding Chinese characters for her turned out to be problematic, as Chinese doesn't have a "br" sound. We eventually decided to write her name 仁雅, which can be written as Jen-ya. The first sound is halfway between "Jen" and "Ren". (Good luck with that.)



Anya and Liya were delighted to have a new member join the Ya-Ya Sisterhood. Holding Sabriya for the first time, Anya was so overcome she burst out laughing! And Liya has turned out to be a naturally attentive big sister. She's always happy to replace Bree's pacifier when it pops out, and is an inventive entertainer—she recently tried teaching her five month-old baby sister the letters of the alphabet.



The older sisters have, of course, been growing by leaps and bounds themselves. In September, Anya began kindergarten at Seattle Country Day School, a perfect place for her. She was nevertheless nervous about starting school, and freaked out at orientation the week before school began. Anya always likes to know what's going on before it happens, so we spent a lot of time covering how drop-off on the big first day would go. Jan assured Anya he would make *absolutely sure* that Anya knew when he was leaving. On the first day, after shepherding Anya to her classroom, Jan knelt down on the floor in front of Anya, touched his nose to her, and said very loudly: "OKAY, ANYA, I'M GOING NOW." Anya laughed and laughed, and all was well. (Jan still occasionally drops her off this way, to her continued amusement.) Anya seems to love everything about her school. One of her favorite rituals is bringing home books from the school library, and she's learning the joys of reading. If we fail to mention that a restaurant serves Anya's favorite food item, she can now look over the menu herself and declare, "I want Mac and Cheese!"



Liya is very happy in her second year of preschool at the Pebble School and her third year with teacher Christine. Liya loves to learn the songs in class, and absorbs herself in art projects. She consistently amazes everyone with her empathy. If someone mentions they're thirsty, Liya brings them a glass of water. If someone asks for more snack and discovers it's all gone, Liya offers them half of her own portion.

Both girls have fun extracurricular activities, though for sanity's sake we strive to keep down the number of these going on at any one time. Both girls enjoy playing music on the piano. (Anya has successfully achieved her personal goal of memorizing every song on both Backyardigans CDs, in the process ensuring that

everyone else in the family has done so as well.) In the spring, Anya and Liya took ballet and tap dancing, respectively, and over the summer they had daily swim lessons. Liya learned so quickly that she was moved up to an older swimming class—and was still one of the only kids in that class with the nerve to try jumping off a diving board! In the fall, Liya enjoyed a kids' tumbling gym, while Anya tried soccer for the first time. We had no idea she'd take to it so quickly! At her age, they keep the rules simple: three girls per team, no assigned goalie, 15 minute halves—and no score. The kids mostly swarm around the ball, so one friend refers to this league as "Bumblebee Soccer". By the end of the season, though, Anya was starting to realize that she can kick the ball towards the goal herself, even if that means she will have to *take the ball away from an opponent*.



Before bedrest and Bree threw the year into confusion, Jan managed to come up with quasi-monthly science projects for the girls. This year saw heavier use of science kits, including one for making a simple telescope from cardboard and lenses, and another for assembling a plastic model of a human skeleton (whom the girls inexplicably named "Caroline"). The girls had fun with projects from chemistry (homemade ginger ale) to electricity (discovering that a tiny electric current could pass through both their bodies to sound a buzzer). The year's highlight project was the tour Jan organized

for a number of parents and kids to visit Seattle's wastewater treatment plant. Okay, you're saying, that's sort of an odd family destination, and it's true the girls didn't think much of the smell. But they do know now that sewage has to actually go somewhere. For a week afterwards, whenever they flushed a toilet they would happily yell at it, "Have a fun tour!"



As for Jan, he recently celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. His company, Cozi, continues to grow healthily, and its family-oriented software has received good press in papers like the Wall Street Journal and on countless family blogs. This helped secure another successful round of financing and business partnerships with some consumer industry giants. Jan's favorite deal: the special Hasbro product edition, in which a corner of the Cozi screen features a smiling Mr. Potato Head. Best of all are the people Jan gets to work with at Cozi, now a rather large "family" of about 25 employees. Jan's also excited

about the new Family Journal feature, which this year dramatically simplified the recording of the bulk of the stories you're now reading in this letter. Check it out at [cozi.com](http://cozi.com).

Each year we love to receive visits from friends and family. This year's visits included: Angela's cousin George and wife Julie; Jan's stepsister Anne and husband John; our friends from Japan Satoru and Hiroko; Angela's parents; and Angela's cousins the Chous. Next year we're looking forward to hosting Jan's stepmother Marlee, who swears that in 2008 she will *finally* make it to the Left Coast.



The holidays find us relieved that we have made it through a year in which we descended deep into chaos and then slowly climbed back up to a level of chaos we're now learning to embrace. We look forward to a smoother 2008, and wish you a Happy New Year as well.