



Happy Holidays 2017

Welcome to the *twentieth* edition of our holiday letter!

JANUARY



New Year's finds us in Kauai with Jan's family. We all fit into an AirBnB in Hanelei, on the beautiful but extremely wet north shore. Hanalei Bay is a great place to try surfing. We also enjoy a hike on the muddy Kalalau Trail to Hanakapi'ai Beach, a visit to the Limahuli Botanical Garden, and some stand-up paddleboarding. One thing we do not care for: wild roosters outside at 4:00 am.

Jan launches Presterity, a volunteer-driven political web site collating alarming news about the Trump administration. The project comes together surprisingly quickly and garners a core group of active participants. Jan is interviewed by news organizations like NPR and the Seattle Times. However, it eventually becomes clear that there is no shortage of news coverage of the terrible political developments — in fact, there's way too much. By April, volunteers drift to other projects. The work was rewarding while it lasted.

FEBRUARY



Meanwhile, Anya marches with her grandparents in the Women's March protest in Washington, DC. Anya and E-moon both wear pink hats knitted by Angela. Angela wears her own pink hat as she marches in Seattle.

Bree's class makes dioramas depicting important scenes from books they've read. Bree recreates a pivotal scene from *Anne of Green Gables* in which Anne's classmate, Gilbert Blythe, teases Anne about her red hair. In response, Anne breaks a chalkboard slate over Gilbert's head.

Anya and Bree do their after-dinner chores with Anya carrying Bree on her back. Anya's arms are holding Bree, so Bree acts as the arms of the combined Anya/Bree unit. Chores take a long time because they're laughing so hard.

We return to Big White, BC, for the girls' mid-winter ski break. Bree now feels comfortable on the easier Expert runs, and Liya is now as fast or faster than both Angela and Jan. Anya's probably better than everyone, but we have no way of knowing, as she spends every day skiing with friends. While ice skating there:

Jan: "Hey, Bree, would you rather play 'Snow Fairies' or 'Ice Monster'?"

Bree: "... Um... What are those?"

Jan: "I don't know. Pick one and I'll make it up."

MARCH



Liya's 8th grade makes their big class trip to Spain. Her class spends the first half of the trip in Valencia to see Las Fallas, a multi-day festival with huge, colorful sculptures that are burned at the festival's climax. The class spends the second half of the trip in Barcelona, touring La Sagrada Familia and other sights. Liya has a great time. Jan points out that *his* school field trips never went anywhere more interesting than Trenton, NJ.

Bree plays in a 3rd grade Ultimate Frisbee league. There is much rain. Anya plays Ultimate for her high school team. In May, she invites Jan to the team's end-of-season party — where students *and* parents play Ultimate. Playing for the first time in 20 years, Jan is completely exhausted after five minutes.

Jan and Bree play a Nintendo game, *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. It's beautiful and engrossing. Anya and Liya join. The game has many puzzles and battles, but they spend much of the time harvesting virtual fruits and meats.

APRIL



Jan, Liya, and Bree have a spring break vacation in Japan. We visit our friends the Shinoharas in Tokyo, as well as Chie, Jan's language exchange partner from many years ago. We spend 2 days hiking the historic Nakasendo walking trail between picturesque old-style villages in Nagano and Gifu Prefectures. Per Liya's suggestion, we visit Ōkunoshima ("Bunny Island") and its thousand bunnies. Last stop is Hiroshima. Pictures: bit.ly/miksovsky-japan-2017

MAY



We ask our city if we can cut down the huge magnolia tree in our front yard, because it rips up our sidewalk, driveway, and sewer pipes. The city says no.

JUNE



Liya graduates from 8th grade in a nice ceremony at the Seattle Children's Theater. Jan's mom and Angela's parents attend.

After school lets out, we travel to a place we've never been: Scandinavia. In Stockholm, we walk around the old town of Gamla Stan and visit a number of museums. Our favorite is the Vasa, dedicated to a huge wooden ship that sank in the harbor, then was raised and preserved. We spend a day visiting a Viking excavation at Birka, and a day in the city of Malmö. In Copenhagen, the girls discover pålægschokolade: thin sheets of dark chocolate eaten atop buttered bread. It's awesome. We do a high ropes course in a park, and visit Rosenborg Castle and Tivoli Gardens. In Reykjavik, we drive the Golden Circle to see Gullfoss Waterfall, Strokkur Geyser, and Þingvellir National Park. We hike a mile underground in the freezing cold lava tube at Víðgelmir. At the Reykjavik Open

JULY



Air Museum, we see an old-world artifact no longer found in America: a seesaw. Jan just about balances Bree+Liya. Pics: bit.ly/miksovsky-scandinavia-2017

Bree attends a couple of summer tech camps. Her favorite is a wearable tech camp: she sews a cute cat, then adds gear and writes code to light up its LED collar and vibrate its belly as if it's purring.

July: Bree turns 10! August: Liya turns 14! October: Anya turns 16!

Jan goes with Bree and Lyn to Au Gres, MI, for a memorial service for his Aunt Barbara. A sad occasion, but also a chance to reconnect with extended family.

Angela celebrates one year as the English Ministry Pastor at First Taiwanese Presbyterian Church. She's been diligently learning *Robert's Rules of Order*, training leaders, launching an English Language Learning Ministry, delivering sermons and pulling together the English service every week, and helping discern God's plan for the church. All "part-time"! Good thing she enjoys her call.

Jan's backpacking trips take him to: Flapjack Lakes in Olympic National Park with friends Marc and David; Toleak Point on the Olympic coast with Bree; and Baker Lake with friend Satoru. Jan and his brother Chris take Lyn on a 3-day backpacking trip in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Jan's final highlight for 2017 is with Chris along 60 miles of the Sunshine Coast Trail in British Columbia. It's not all sunshine, but the views are amazing. bit.ly/miksovsky-sct-2017

AUGUST



Jan and Anya read a series of Agatha Christie mysteries together. They read 50 pages at a time, then stop to discuss which character is the most likely killer.

Bree sews herself a great pair of warm pajamas with bunnies on them.

This year's total solar eclipse passes directly over Salem, OR — right where Jan's sister Skye and her husband Jared live. Every hotel and campground for miles is booked out, so we camp in their backyard. Cousin Leif, now 3, comes down with a fever, but his new baby brother, Auden, is full of smiles. On the morning of the eclipse, we watch the moon slowly edge in front of the sun. When the moon obscures $\frac{3}{4}$ of the sun, the daylight starts to look strangely flat. When the eclipse totality hits around 10:15 am, it's absolutely jaw-dropping.

We squeeze many day hikes into our 6th week at Stanford Sierra Camp. Anya, who never goes in for hiking, stuns us by asking Jan if he'll take her on a hike up Mt. Tallac, the hardest hike from camp. To fit in this unexpected hike, Jan and Anya make a nighttime ascent on the very last day we're there. They leave at 3:00 am, arrive at the summit in time for sunrise, then hustle back down.

Bree starts 4th grade and comes home shouting, "Science is awesome!" We're so glad her school's venerated science teacher decided to stay for at least one more year. Bree's now the only child in the car when Jan drives her to school.

Liya starts 9th grade at the same high school as Anya, now in 10th grade. Each morning, Liya leaves on time and walks to school. Anya leaves late and runs.

Jan's consulting company, Component Kitchen, is now in its third year. 2017 had a few ups, but more downs. He and his partner Rob hope 2018 will be better.

Our girls like Pocky, a Japanese snack of cracker sticks dipped in chocolate. Angela gives Jan a box of the dark chocolate "MEN's Pocky" variety. Bree modifies the label to read "WOMEN's Pocky", then helps herself to some.

For art class, Anya paints a photorealistic scene based on a photo she took when we visited Birka, Sweden, in June.

If we find one of our two cats, Moxie and Mojo, sitting and staring at a closed closet door, it means the other cat is stuck on the other side of that door.

Anya and Liya run cross country for the first time. Liya is faster than Anya!

Jan: "So you're the fastest freshman girl!?"

Liya: "... Yes."

Anya: "She's the *only* freshman girl. So she's also the slowest."

We drive with Lyn down for a family Thanksgiving in Cannon Beach, OR. Chris joins us, as does Skye and Jared and their boys. Despite the off-season, the weather's not all bad, and the wild ocean looks beautiful.

Jan turns 50! Angela organizes a celebration party at our house. Chris flies up from San Francisco to make a surprise appearance, and we have a chance to reconnect with many neighbors and old friends.

SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

