

Happy Holidays 2018



JANUARY



We're looking forward to having all the girls at home for Christmas!
"Wait, they're not all at home?" Well, 2018 held at least one big surprise for us...

Bree gets a Lego robot kit from Uncle Chris for Christmas. She and Jan build a "Sky Crane" running along cables high above the 1st floor to entertain our cats.

For Jan's 50th birthday last December, Angela arranged a schedule with his friends to take him out to lunches and dinners over the course of 2018. He enjoys these get-togethers all year long. Most interesting pickup: Brian comes to our neighborhood in his boat to take Jan out for seafood. Best indoor event: Indoor skydiving with Bruce. Best outdoor view: Mt. Pilchuk day hike with Chris Z.

FEBRUARY



We make our annual "Big White-Knuckle Drive" to Big White, BC, driving through a snowstorm passed flipped cars and jackknifed semi-trailers. The bitter -4°F/-20°C cold does not put off the 14 families that have gathered from Bree's school. Anya spends the week skiing the crazy runs with her friends, and Bree tries snowboarding for the first time.

After three years of listening to Liya and her sisters play the *Hamilton* musical soundtrack, we all finally see the touring production ourselves in Seattle.

Anya: Reads Dostoyevsky for fun.

Also Anya: Routinely puts empty food containers back into the pantry or fridge.

MARCH



Jan heads to Tokyo for some meetings, taking the weekend beforehand to play tourist and meet up with the Iinumas and Yamamuras. The Shinoharas visit us in May for some nice outings including hiking and kayaking on Lake Union.

Angela proposes a cleaning contest to the girls: one point for each household object put away. Somehow, this works. The girls eagerly put away anything left out on the kitchen island, coffee table, etc. Jan goes to wake Bree up for school — and discovers she's already downstairs putting away the previous night's dishes. In the end, Anya wins by a nose. Angela awards books as prizes to all three girls.

APRIL



Anya often brings a group of high school friends home for lunch on Thursdays. One Thursday, Liya brings a group of her friends home too. There's a huge impromptu teen lunch of Japanese snacks and Mario Kart racing.



Our cats turn 2 years old. Anya sums up them up this way: "Mojo definitely has mojo... but Moxie doesn't really have any moxie."

Angela takes Anya and Liya to Taiwan for spring break. They visit Yangmingshan National Park, where the girls want to hike up to sulfurous steam vents. Angela's not prepared for a hike, but gamely (if slowly) hikes up in clogs. They also bike around Sun Moon Lake, visit the Taichung Museum of Taiwanese Art, and reunite with extended Chen family relations.



For Sabriya's spring break, Jan takes her to Eastern Washington for camping at Steamboat Rock and backpacking at Ancient Lakes. They also head to Victoria, BC, for a few days of the usual (high tea) and the unusual (feeding the hotel's resident marmot). On the harbor quay, they come across a bronze sculpture of a hand holding a mirror, one of 12 bronzes hidden around downtown Victoria. The hunt for all 12 takes them to the Beacon Park petting zoo, where the daily "Goat Stampede" (running goats from the barn to the petting area) is so hilarious, they come back the next day to watch it again.

We celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary!

MAY



At Mother's Day brunch, Anya notices something: "Wait, Bree, when did you get braces?!?" Bree: "I've had them since January."



An upperclassman invites Anya to prom. Before the dance, Anya reluctantly accepts Angela's help with her makeup. Angela: "She doesn't want my help!" Jan: "Did you want your mom's help for your prom?" Angela: "Er... No."

JUNE



After the girls' schools end for the summer, we take a family trip to the Galapagos Islands with a family-focused Stanford Travel/Study group. We start in Quito, Ecuador, with a cable car ride up the Pichincha volcano, and a side trip out of town to Papallacta hot springs. We spend a week on a boat in the Galapagos Islands, which are teeming with zillions of animals — but only about 15 *kinds* of animals. By the end of the week, we're happily picking out marina iguanas from land iguanas, and albatrosses from frigate birds. On Santa Cruz Island we see giant tortoises the size of golf carts, and on San Cristóbal Island we see *baby* giant tortoises the size of grapefruits. The babies might live for 150 years, so our great-great-great-grandchildren might come back and visit them. There's plenty of time for us to play around as well: kayaking with sea lions, swimming, and reading. The girls make some good friends during the trip.

JULY



Jan enjoys another summer backpacking in the Pacific Northwest. Chris comes up to join Jan and Lyn for camping in Olympic National Park; when an airline misplaces Chris' gear, the three visit the park's wonderful old lodges instead. Jan takes his friend Tony to Baker Lake, and friends Derik and Satoru to the spectacular Goat Rocks Wilderness. Jan's sister, Skye, comes up from Oregon for a brother/sister trip along the Lewis River. Jan and Chris meet in Oregon to hike the Timberline Trail around Mt. Hood, which they can barely see through a haze of forest fire smoke. Jan convinces Angela and the girls to try a family backpacking trip to Toleak Point on the Olympic coast — and fully 60% of our family would do the trip again! Some of the trips get a little crazy. Jan does an urban day hike around the southern half of Lake Washington (32 miles/51 km!), and his right foot doesn't forgive him for weeks. His last trip of the year is an overly ambitious 42 mile/67 km hike with friend John from Stevens Pass in the middle of the Cascades all the way down to Leavenworth. In 3 days, the pair climb 14,000' of elevation and descend 17,000' of elevation — 9000' on the final day alone. By the time the two stagger into Leavenworth, they can barely walk.

This year, Sabriya turns 11, Liya turns 15, Anya turns 17.

AUGUST



Each girl develops their own summer routine. Bree: Get up between 6–7 am and immediately start playing with Lego. Spread a layer of Lego over bedroom floor, upstairs loft, and main floor family room. Liya: Get up at the crack of dawn and go for a morning run before the air gets too warm. Take shower, select outfit, dress, cook hearty scrambled egg breakfast, walk to babysitting job, babysit until lunchtime. Anya: Come downstairs at 10 am wrapped in a blanket, park on family room couch, binge-watch "Psych" detective drama/comedy until shooed away from TV by parents, prepare a lunch of spicy Szechuan instant noodles, take book outside and read on backyard hammock for rest of the day.

We go to Sierra Camp near Lake Tahoe for our 7th year, and enjoy the usual family camp activities. Liya asks Jan to take her on the same midnight hike that Jan did last year with Anya up Mt. Tallac to see the sunrise. Jan hadn't ever considered the danger that a 2:30 am hike might somehow become a tradition.

SEPTEMBER



Anya leaves home a couple of years sooner than we had expected! She's going to spend 11th and 12th grades at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, CT. Anya wanted a bigger school with harder classes, and we eventually worked out that Choate, Jan's own alma mater, was a good match. Jan drops Anya off on Labor Day. The registration process goes smoothly, and there are helpful seniors in the school's traditional registration uniform (bright yellow t-shirts with the words, "May I Help You?") to move her into McCook House with 25 other girls.



Back at home, Liya begins 10th grade and Bree starts 5th grade. Liya's enjoying filmmaking and women's studies classes. Bree still loves art, math, and science.

Liya has a great time running cross-country for the second year. She runs a fantastic race at the Bi-District Championship Meet — among her teammates, she comes in 3rd, behind the two team captains. The results qualify her individually for the Washington State championship in Pasco, WA; her school also qualifies as a team. Liya develops good friendships with her teammates and coaches. For fun, they all participate in a Tough Mudder obstacle course event that, naturally, involves a great deal of mud.

OCTOBER



Jan, Angela, and Bree visit Anya at Choate for Parents Weekend. We spend two mornings following Anya through an abbreviated class schedule, and also have a chance to talk with each of her teachers. As we walk around the campus, Anya occasionally sees a new friend coming the other way and shouts, "Hey [name]! This is my sister!" (There is no mention of her parents.) We follow the visit to Choate with a weekend in Manhattan, where we see *The Play that Goes Wrong* and meet up with the Snyders and the Lin/Connelly-Smiths. Jan also squeezes in a nice visit with Anne to see his stepmother Marlee, who's doing as well as can be hoped for in a facility for patients with dementia.

NOVEMBER



Anya comes back home for Thanksgiving break, and we all spend Thanksgiving itself with Johnny and Jenny Chen, their two boys, and Angela's parents at Johnny's home in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. They're all doing well.

Angela continues to serve at First Taiwanese Presbyterian, where she creates leadership exercises involving giant gym balls, makes word art out of mushroom clouds, and baptizes people of all ages.

DECEMBER



As the weather turns colder, Liya and Bree push us to get a Japanese kotatsu, a low table with a heating element under it and a quilt draped around it. We have fun in the evenings studying and reading snuggled up around it. We're looking forward to having Anya back home for winter break and having all five of us together. We hope you're able to spend the holidays with family and friends too.