



Holidays 2020

Well! This year was certainly... different. All things considered, we're doing okay.

In the halcyon opening days of 2020, we celebrate New Year's on the Big Island of Hawaii. On New Year's Day, we have fun SNUBA diving in Kealahou Bay (like scuba diving, with a long snorkel hose that goes up to the surface).

Back in Seattle, Liya spends her Saturdays teaching skiing at Snoqualmie Pass. The young kids angle for a chance to sit next to Teacher Liya on the chair lift.

A lot of crafting goes on in the winter months. Liya gives Jan a wooden, hand-cranked toy she made for a class. Bree constructs a spring-loaded "kibble bomb" for our cats that shoots kibble in all directions.

Angela's Taiwanese church decides to focus on services in Taiwanese instead of English, so in mid-February she winds down her work there. She spends the rest of the year preaching as needed at different churches.

Angela takes Liya and Bree to California for midwinter break to visit Angela's brother, Johnny, and so Liya can tour some colleges. From there they go to Lake Tahoe. Jan meets up with them for skiing at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, places Angela fondly remembers skiing at while in college.

Once a week, Jan commutes to Bellevue by electric scooter. The morning ride is more fun than a car but slower; the return is more fun than a car and also faster.

At the beginning of March, everything goes crazy. Jan's preparing to leave to speak at a conference in San Francisco when he learns that all work travel has been suspended due to COVID concerns. A week later, his office closes. As Seattle-area retirement homes see their first COVID cases, Jan's mom Lyn moves from her retirement home to our guest room.

Meanwhile, Anya's spending a week of spring break with Angela skiing in Aspen/Snowmass in Colorado (Angela's new favorite ski resort!). This will be the last time in 2020 any of us travel outside of Washington.

Bree's school announces an extended spring break, then remote classes. Liya's high school follows suit, followed by Anya's. Jan scrambles to upgrade our home network to accommodate the 4 non-stop video calls going every school/workday.

Jan and Liya go for a walk on Camano island, followed by lunch at a restaurant — the last time for a while, it turns out. Washington State enters lockdown.

Even our cats, Mojo and Moxie, are affected by the pandemic — although for them, it's a positive thing. Now that all 6 of us (including Lyn) are indoors all day, Angela and Anya find their cat allergies have worsened. As a last resort, we decide to let our indoor cats venture outside. They're as happy as cats can be.

Bree keeps busy crafting, making a shirt and skirt from her own pattern.

Our friends offer us the chance to stay at their rustic cabin on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. Jan, Angela, Anya, and Lyn make the trip. It's far from everything, but close enough that we don't have to stop along the way. It's wonderful to be able to walk somewhere other than our home neighborhood.

The girls and Lyn make a paella to celebrate Jan and Angela's 22nd anniversary.

Anya is accepted at Stanford University, and will start in fall 2021. She defers her admission so she can take a gap year studying Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan.

The Choate Rosemary Hall Quiz Bowl team has come a long way since Anya co-founded it last fall. The team participates in many in-person tournaments and (post-COVID) remote tournaments. One classmate tells the school newspaper that the club's warm online "family" has helped her get through this challenging year. Anya glows.

Choate conducts a remote graduation for Anya's Class of 2020. We all get up early for the East Coast start time. As the head of school reads the names over a slideshow of faces, Anya yells out capsule summaries of each graduate: "She's a good friend! ...He's really nice! ...She's amazing! ...I have no idea who that is!" We all clap for her friends, and then loudly when Anya's name is read. For a remote graduation, it's actually a pretty nice event.

We spend a weekend at an AirBnB on the Kitsap Peninsula, going for walks on the long Puget Sound beach, kayaking, and doing exotic things like browsing in bookstores. (Rural Kitsap County is more open, pandemic-wise, than ours.)

One of Anya's international school friends, Evrim, needs a place to stay for the summer. We squeeze her into our home, bringing our total occupancy to seven.

JANUARY



FEBRUARY



MARCH



APRIL



MAY



JUNE



JULY



Bree turns 13! We now have three teens (four, counting Evrim). Later this year, Liya turns 17, and Anya, 19.

Jan hikes for 10 days along 170 miles (274 km) of the Pacific Northwest Trail in NE Washington. Lyn drops him off at a remote bridge over the Kettle River, and he starts hiking west. This section of the PNT is 60% beautiful — the Kettle Crest range, the Okanogan Mountains, Swan Lake, Bonaparte Lake, and Whistler Canyon — and 40% forgettable dirt roads through monotonous national forest and farmland. Some places like Thirteenmile Canyon are so stunning, it's hard to believe one can live in Washington for 30 years and never hear about them. Jan hears loons at night (and sometimes coyotes), passes through a valley with a resident wolf pack, and says hello to a small, fearless bobcat. But the animals he sees most often — many, many times — are cows. So many cows.

The Washington Trails Association posts *A Trail System at Work*, which looks at Jan's 2019 hike from our house to the Pacific Crest Trail at Snoqualmie Pass.

The COVID situation improves a bit, so Lyn moves back to her retirement home.

We spend a lot of time swimming in Lake Washington this summer. Evrim doesn't know how to swim, so Angela and the girls give her swimming lessons.

Angela begins a certificate program in Spiritual Direction. She also begins searching for a new church and a new position. If you know of a church looking for a pastor, let her know!

This year, Jan and Bree's annual father-daughter camping trip is to Ross Lake for canoe camping. Everyone wants to go camping this year; Jan and Bree are lucky to get the last campsites available on the lake's south end. They make good use of a lightweight tarp as both an impromptu sail and a daytime rain shelter.

We make a family trip to Leavenworth in Eastern WA. The town has had to make some accommodations to the pandemic, but we still get to enjoy hiking, swimming, and German food in a faux-Bavarian setting. Evrim enjoys this last trip before she heads back home for the start of the remote school year.

Bree begins 7th grade online, and Liya begins her senior year of high school online. Anya's scheduled language program also begins with remote classes, but she'll go to Taiwan for in-person classes in January 2021. Taiwan has done a stellar job managing the pandemic, so Anya will get to enjoy a normal lifestyle.

Jan and Angela spend four days camping at state parks in a rented camper trailer. The camper is a small bedroom on wheels, with a shower, bathroom, and a galley kitchen around the back. They spend two nights camped at the curiously named Cape Disappointment State Park at the mouth of the Columbia River in SW Washington. They find it's a fun and safe way to enjoy a beautiful spot.

Sabriya spends 90% of her waking hours doing video calls with friends. She gets up early every day and goes for a long walk while chatting with a friend. She spends the school day online, then resumes video calls for the rest of the day.

Anya, meanwhile, is mostly nocturnal. She stays up late each night, surfacing in the mid/late afternoon to ask if anyone wants to go get coffee with her.

We vote in the general election: Angela, Jan — and Anya too!

We'd hoped to spend Thanksgiving or Christmas with family but increasing COVID cases end those plans. We still have a pleasant Thanksgiving at home, including a nice video call with Jan's mom, his brother, and his sister's family.

One of Liya's standout remote classes has been her sculpture class. The teacher normally has students work with wood, glass, and metal, but those require a well-equipped studio. The teacher threw out 40 years of coursework and came up a new curriculum of paper-based sculpture projects students can do from home. Liya enjoys it and creates some interesting sculpture pieces.

Jan completes his first year as a software architect at Salesforce. The glacial pace of a large company is frustrating, but otherwise it's a decent place to work. He really hadn't liked the commute, so working from home has been a boon.

Sabriya has fun reading *The Odyssey* for her literature class. One morning, we hear her wailing. "Odysseus' dog, Argos, *dies*? He *dies*?!? That's terrible!"

Jan's brother Chris celebrates Jan's birthday with a video lunch in which they both consume identical U.S. Army MRE (Meal Ready-to-Eat) lunches. The meal includes a shelf-stable "pizza", and a nice, piping hot, chemically heated cobbler.

AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER

