



Happy Holidays 2021!



We start the year with 2 weeks of quarantine so Anya can travel to Taiwan for a gap year Mandarin program. A visa deferral requires we quarantine for another 2 weeks. Anya finally gets to Taipei and more quarantine. Happily, the fun program is worth the trouble.

A new household game involves hiding a small pink octopus where someone will eventually discover it. Example: one morning Jan picks up his winter hat and is surprised by an octopus smiling underneath.

We receive our first big snowstorm in years. We (sans Anya) head to Mt. Baker for skiing, our first time visiting the area as a family. Liya is the boldest skier of our group, seeking out double-black diamond runs marked with "Danger" signs.

Jan leaves Salesforce after just 15 months there as a software architect. While the company had its good points, modern megacorps also have many dysfunctions. Since leaving, Jan's had a great time with a new software project of his own.

With plenty of time for the hiking season, Jan starts with a 3-day solo hike along the scenic eastern edge of Puget Sound on the Pacific Northwest Trail, from Chuckanut Drive to Fort Casey on Whidbey Island. A week later he joins his friend, Marc, on a 3-day trip up the lush Hoh River Valley in the Olympics.

Angela takes a woodworking class, crafting a wooden carrying case for growler beer jugs. If we owned any growler beer jugs, we'd now have a way to carry them.

Liya's last cross-country season got pushed to this spring. She captains a great 16-girl team — the largest girls' team in years. At the end of the season, her teammates and coaches celebrate her with testimonials. Many cite Liya's feat of running 500 miles over summer 2020 as an example of her grit and dedication.

Jan and Angela rent a Sprinter van RV for a 5-day loop through Eastern Washington, stopping at stunning Palouse Canyon, Sun Lakes/Dry Falls, Northrup Canyon, and Steamboat Rock. After dropping Angela off at home, Jan takes Liya and Bree on a second RV trip to quiet Rasar State Park, the colorful Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, and gorgeous Deception Pass on Whidbey Island. It's tons of fun to relax, cook, eat, shower, and sleep in a compact little van.

Anya returns from Taiwan. To let Bree continue attending her school in person, Jan takes Anya on a 1-week trip around the Olympic Peninsula to visit peaceful Lake Quinault and Lake Crescent, and charming Port Townsend and Langley.

Liya joins a school group on a 5-day bike camping trip along a challenging loop of dirt and country roads in Oregon's Deschutes River valley.

Angela returns to Choate Rosemary Hall to attend the graduation of Evrim, our friend from Turkey. After a cold, rainy ceremony, Evrim returns with Angela to spend another summer with us. The next morning, Angela wakes Bree for school. Angela: "Get up! It's 7:00 am." Bree: "Mmmph? No, it's not. It's 4:00 am." Angela's watch was still on Eastern time.

Liya's senior class has their prom at the Olympic Sculpture Garden, followed a few days later by graduation. The school holds the ceremony in the cavernous stadium where the Seattle Mariners play so that each student can bring a large family group. Ours includes Lyn, plus Cheng-nan and E-moon who come in from Virginia. It's fun to watch Liya on the Jumbotron as she receives her diploma.

Liya organizes a 3-day, girls-only trip to Portland with Anya, Sabriya, and Evrim. They visit the Japanese garden, science museum, and art museum — but especially Powell's books, acquiring a shelf-load of books in 4 separate trips.

With the arrival of good weather, Jan and Bree take her friend Hazel and Hazel's dad backpacking up a beautiful ridge in rugged North Cascades National Park. Liya and Jan spend 4 days on a scenic loop near Waptus Lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Liya uses the trip to hone her backcountry skills, and the following week conducts her own backpacking trip in Alpine Lakes with her friend Casey. Liya and Anya take Evrim and Anya's friend, Katie, for a day hike on Mount Rainier. Anya takes a friend backpacking in Olympic National Park.

We replace the front sidewalk and walkway that have been destroyed by our beautiful, rapacious magnolia tree. The city says the huge, 40-year-old tree is "too significant" to remove, but oddly does permit a crew to cut its roots, thereby dooming the tree to die on its own in a few years.

Angela accepts a new pastor position at Community Presbyterian Church in Buckley, WA. When a half-year job search revealed few openings in Seattle, she



JULY



AUGUST



SEPT



OCT



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER

began looking further afield, including out of state. Happily, she found a small, healthy, friendly church in the little town of Buckley, about an hour away — a long commute, but she's just down there a few days a week.

To escape record Seattle heat of 107°F/42°C, we spend July 4th in cooler temperatures at a cabin on the Wenatchee River in tiny Plain, WA. Everyone's happy to discover ample outdoor chairs in which they can read in the shade.

Sabriya turns 14. Bree's favorite gift is from Evrim: a small, posable figure of Dobby the Elf (from Harry Potter) whose aesthetic value is hotly debated.

Jan's big solo hike this year is a week on Washington's easternmost section of the Pacific Northwest Trail. Lyn drops Jan off in the middle of a remote Idaho forest and he hikes back into Washington. Smoke from distant forest fires robs the trail of views but, on the plus side, Jan gets to meet and camp with a number of thru-hikers (people hiking the whole trail in one go). He's now hiked 450 miles of that trail, leaving footprints all the way from the Idaho border to our house.

Anya and a local friend hatch a plan to start their freshman year at Stanford University by traveling to school by *bike*. When the friend decides she can't go, Jan steps in to accompany Anya. A flurry of gear purchases, route planning, and training follows. (Step 1: Get dusty bike out of shed.) Liya joins Anya and Jan for a 3-day shakedown bike trip from Peach Arch Park at the U.S./Canada border back to our home in Seattle. En route, we discover that Anya has packed 5 heavy books for the 2-night trip, including 3 books on the French Revolution.

A week later, Anya and Jan roll out of our driveway to start the 1000-mile/1609-km journey to Stanford. They bike an average of 40 miles/64 kms a day for 25 days, taking a handful of rest days. Some of the trip follows quiet country roads, but much is on busy coastal Highway 101. Halfway through, Anya discovers that her big, zippered wallet contains a giant pile of heavy coins, many of them from Taiwan. The cycling adventure takes in cliffs and sea stacks along Oregon's coast, an amazing horse-drawn carriage museum, a visit with Jan's sister Skye's family, wildlife (countless eagles, amusing seals, scampering river otters, and a gray whale), massive redwood trees, crossing the windy Golden Gate Bridge, and finally pedaling into the Memorial Church quadrangle at the center of Stanford.

Anya moves into a dorm hosting about 60 freshmen in Stanford's Structured Liberal Education program, which includes a heavy load of reading, writing, and discussion. She also begins studying Taiwanese and playing in the school's Calypso steel pan drum band.

Back at home, Liya and her friend Katherine tackle a summer challenge they'd set to swim 1.5 mi/2.4 km across Lake Washington. They make it safely across.

The next day, Liya leaves to begin her own freshman year at Yale University. Angela accompanies Liya to New Haven, CT, and helps her move into Davenport College, where Liya meets her four suitemates. Liya joins an orientation backpacking trip with other freshman women, during which she celebrates her 18th birthday. Liya settles nicely into college life, particularly enjoying her physics and math professors. Her Mandarin and African dance classes are interesting as well. She continues running and playing cello for fun, and picks up a new activity of urban exploring: finding and gaining access to basements, roofs, tunnels, and other hidden (often off-limits) corners of the Yale campus.

Bree starts 8th grade, marking our 15th year at her K–8 school. With Anya, Liya, and Evrim gone, we're down to just three people. [sniff!] At school Bree enjoys math best; outside school, she tinkers with projects, plans cosplay outfits, and participates in a weekly Dungeons & Dragons campaign with friends.

Jan and Lyn fly to visit Jan's brother, Chris and his partner Julie. They moved to Bend, OR, this summer after many years in San Francisco.

Bree scribbles a note on Angela's calendar identifying Nov. 16th as "National Give Your 3rd Kid Books Day". To Bree's great delight, this ploy actually works.

Liya and Anya return for Thanksgiving. Anya is now 20 years old. Skye and her family come up from Oregon, as do Chris and Julie. Bree's cousins, Leif and Auden, are playing with her when they ask, "Where's Bree?" (Since they last met, Bree grew past Angela in height, began wearing glasses, and cut her long hair short.) With the addition of Lyn, we have a full family Thanksgiving dinner.

And that's a wrap! You can follow our stories all year at family.miksovsky.com, or click the link there to get our monthly email newsletter.