



Happy Holidays 2024

JANUARY



Angela, Evan, and Liya start the year in Taiwan visiting Chen family members. Evan and Liya extend the trip to travel with their grandparents, including a trip to the mountain town of Jiufen, known for its teahouses.

Evan and Liya both begin terms studying abroad. Evan heads to an intensive Spanish language program in Madrid, Spain. His good childhood friend, Jane, is in the same program; they have fun exploring Madrid and traveling around.

Liya flies to Costa Rica for a semester at the School for Field Studies, an undergraduate program focusing on environmental studies and research. She lucks out with a great group of 28 students. The field work is the highlight of the program: everything from climbing in trees, to catching bats, to shooting leaves out of trees with slingshots. (Liya is a crack shot.) Liya enjoys the tropical climate, the cute birds, the abundant fresh fruit, and the school's swimming pool.

FEBRUARY



Jan and Angela return to Big White, BC, for the first time in 5 years to help our friends Valerie and Brent celebrate Brent's birthday. We have fun revisiting the ski runs we did countless times with our kids on mid-winter school breaks.

MARCH



Bree attends her third Emerald City ComicCon. For the first evening, she wears a *Legend of Zelda* cosplay of the hero Link, including the ridiculous, elaborately festooned "Cici Hat" from one of the game's side quests. This unusual cosplay garners many complements and requests for photos. The convention is soon followed by another: Sakura Con, where Bree and her friend Will look great together as two wizard friends from the manga, *Witch Hat Atelier*.

APRIL



During Bree's Spring break we travel to San Juan Island to visit our friends Marc and Megan. We explore Mount Grant, an alpaca farm, an American Camp and English Camp (sites from the supremely stupid US/Canada Pig War of 1859).

Bree gets our cat Mojo to wear a collar with a bell so that he's less likely to kill birds and small animals in our yard. Mojo's new nickname: "Mr. Jingles". Mojo frequently pounces on his brother Moxie, with the sad result that Moxie is always on edge and will panic at any noise. Moxie's new nickname: "Flinch".

Bree's school puts on their spring musical, *Six*, adapted from the Broadway show about the six wives of Henry VIII. Bree co-leads the costuming team to produce glam costumes for all the leads. She creates a tear-away costume for Anne of Cleves, which requires creating both an inner and outer costume — making sure the outer one tears away just where it's supposed to and not anywhere else.

MAY



Jan accompanies Lyn on a visit to see her sister Chuckie in Middlebury, VT. Lyn and Chuckie are delighted to see each other for the first time in 6 years, and it's great to spend time with Jan's cousin Dave and his wife Diane.

Liya returns from Costa Rica. Walking around our neighborhood on the first morning back, she observes: "There are no lizards in sight. If we were in Costa Rica right now, from here we'd be able to see at least ten lizards."

JUNE



Evan leaves for a summer in Taiwan to study Mandarin at the International Chinese Language Program at National Taiwan University (where Liya studied a couple of summers ago). The other people in his student dorm apartment are all Dutch: "They have marked their territory with stroopwafels."

Jan and Bree spend a week in Japan. They use a hotel above busy Shibuya Station as a base, venturing to places Bree loves (trendy Harajuku and the Nippori fabric district) and some new places (the 21_21 Design Sight museum, an amazing wood joinery museum, and a café where food is delivered by cat robots). It's wonderful to reconnect with friends in Tokyo. Jan and Bree make a side trip to Nikko to see the famous temple there and scenic Lake Chuzenji.



At the start of June, Angela helps Liya settle into a student apartment in New Haven that Liya will share with friends through the summer and her senior year. Over the summer Liya researches viruses at a Yale lab, presenting a poster about her work at an academic conference in Montreal. As a side gig, she also works as a summer counselor for middle school students from Korea. Liya's supposed to make sure they do homework in the evenings, but they already work so diligently that it's Liya who feels obligated to get in some extra work.

JULY



Angela spends a week on the East Coast with her longtime friend Sarah, including a relaxing two days at the Miraval resort in Lenox, MA. From there Angela visits her parents in McLean, VA, where E-moon has been keeping orchids as a hobby. She has four orchid plants named after four of her five

AUGUST



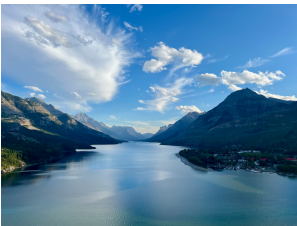
SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



grandchildren: Evan, Liya, Anthony, and Brian. Bree inquires as to why there is no Bree orchid. E-moon acquires a fifth orchid named Bree.

Jan spends a week on Lake Huron in Michigan with Lyn, Chris, and Skye’s family, where they reconnect with far-flung relatives. They enjoy beach walks, barbecues, swims in the lake, and an inner tube float down the Rifle River.

Jan and Chris reunite for a weeklong bike trek on the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany in upstate New York. The biking is as good as at it gets in the U.S.: flat and easy, with frequent towns for food (or milkshakes), along a scenic, tree-lined canal. It’s like riding through a narrow park 100 yards wide and 360 miles long.

A busy summer doesn’t leave Jan enough time for more than two short backpacking trips. He makes a through-hike of the South Coast Trail on Washington’s wild Olympic Coast with friends Chris, Joe, and John. They have two beautiful days, and even on the rainy and muddy third day the coast is gorgeous. Later he and Bree do their annual father/daughter trip, this time to Waptus Lake in Alpine Lakes Wilderness. A day hike up to remote Spade Lake is steeper and harder than expected, but the lake is spectacular and refreshing.

Liya turns 21! She begins her senior year at Yale to complete her major in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Evan begins his senior year as a History major at Stanford. In October he turns 23.

Bree (17) leaves home a little earlier than expected. She follows in Evan and Jan’s footsteps to spend her final two years of high school at Choate Rosemary Hall in Connecticut. Her first semester is just about perfect: a room of her own in a fun dorm in the middle of campus, a great set of interesting and challenging classes, excellent teachers, and an engaged group of student peers. She happily dives into costuming work for both the fall play and musical. As luck would have it, Bree is only a short ride from Liya, so the two visit each other when they can.

To help adjust to life as a couple again, we spend a week at Glacier National Park in Montana and Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta. Glacier had been on Angela’s list of places to visit for a long time, and the scenery is as awe-inspiring as expected. That said, the glaciers aren’t exactly easy to see; we make a substantial day hike up to see the Grinnell Glacier. Waterton Lakes across the border is equally beautiful, with a wonderful lodge and a cute town to explore.

Angela still pastors at Community Presbyterian Church in Buckley, delivering weekly sermons (on our church’s YouTube channel @cpcbuckley4532) in which every message reminds us: “All life is prayer.”

Jan’s been fostering a tiny handful of early adopters for Origami, the programming language he’s designing so people can make websites more easily. He enjoys helping the enthusiastic user community share their ideas on the web.

When Johnny comes to town for the weekend, Angela organizes a small Chen reunion over dim sum at Triumph Valley in Renton — it’s quite good!

We fly to the East Coast for Bree’s Parents Weekend and follow her around to her classes. The three of us pick up Liya for a long weekend in New York City. At dinner the first night, Liya and Bree are surprised to see Evan — he’s flown across the country to spend the weekend with us, so all five of us are together for the first time all year. We see some shows, make a trip to The Met, enjoy warm fall weather, and catch up with Jan’s stepsister Anne and some old friends.

Angela travels with Jan in tow to Phoenix, AZ, where she serves as a polling place “peacekeeping chaplain” on election day. We visit the beautiful Desert Botanical Garden, home to countless weird plants that don’t look like they’re from Earth.

Our family friend Evrim moves back in with us while she takes a leave of absence from Brown University. Evan first met Evrim at Choate, and she stayed with us during the early months of the COVID pandemic. Evrim will take a break from studying while she changes majors; we’re happy to host her again.

Skye, Jared, and their sons join us for a cozy Thanksgiving gathering, along with Lyn and Angela’s cousins Leslie and Eddie. We have fun exploring the Seattle Aquarium’s new Ocean Pavillion on Seattle’s renovated waterfront.

We post stories throughout the year at family.mikovsky.com, where you can also sign up for our monthly email newsletter.