

The Scott Family Gazette

December 2019

Merry Christmas all!

When last we wrote (the newsletter), we were describing our plans for the 2018 holiday season. It unrolled as wrote. The girls and Glen had two weeks off, Susan one. We spent Christmas itself in Kamloops with Glen's parents. We actually plan the identical thing this year, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. Our time in Kamloops last Christmas included a day trip out to church in the North Shuswap, and then on for a short visit to our cabin in Anglemont (which was snowed in and well winterized). Christmas Eve Eve (yes, dinner on the 23rd) saw the return of tradition, with liver and onions. Christmas Eve itself saw us hike the Xget'tem Trail, running from Petersen Creek up to Sahali (and back). Once back home we went with our friends Jen and Zac and family to a presentation of Hansel and Gretel, performed at the Surrey Arts Center. Glen and the girls went snow skiing on New Years Eve (as well as other days over the holidays), and then we all played an Exit Room game (small self run version) for New Years Eve itself.

The rest of winter 2019 saw us get out for some local snow skiing quite a bit, Kayla took skiing lessons in school and made it out a few times, with Glen along one day to help as a parent volunteer. Both girls continued their piano lessons, and Melissa continued taking accordion lessons while Kayla continued sewing lessons and rock climbing.

Just like a year earlier, both girls were involved at



Scott family with Santa, December 2019

school in teams competing in the Odyssey of the Mind competition. They went and represented their school for their ages at the provincials, and both won a place to go to the International competition taking place this year at the Michigan State University. For both Canada and the US, winning the provincial or state competition allows you to

compete at Internationals. For the other 30 countries who send teams to the competition, you really do have to win at the National level (of course it depends a little bit on the country). Both girls were happy with how their teams performed.

Glen continued to play beach volleyball with some work colleagues until mid April.

Easter saw us take an early trip to our cabin. We brought along a couple of bows and arrows that the girls had got, and we had fun doing archery and flying drones for the few times we made it to the Shuswap this year.

Late spring Glen's work had a push on for an upcoming release of their product, and he ended up working a good amount of overtime, which definitely helped accumulate a few days that we definitely put toward more holiday time, but more on that in a bit.



Scott family with Pluto at California Adventureland

On the July long weekend, both girls did make an attempt at waterskiing, but due to it being so busy and wavy, neither fully made it up. Due to other summer holiday commitments we next made it to our cabin on Labour Day, and then for final

closeup on Thanksgiving.

Why did we not make it to the cabin much this year? Vacation day shortage. Why? Wasn't I a moment ago saying Glen had accumulated some extra days? Well, we used our trailer a lot. Where did we use our trailer you ask? Well, we did spend a quick weekend at Sasquatch Provincial Park



Glen, Melissa, Kayla, Susan. Armitage Park Campground, OR with Glen's brother's family (those still at home anyway), but the major outing was a drive down the West Coast (and back) almost to Mexico.

We had booked off from mid July to early August for almost three weeks. We left by 7:00am on Thursday, July 18th, with the plan being that if we got to the border early we should avoid any significant border line-up. We achieved our objective and got through quick. Our idea was that we should push hard the first few days to get past the "neighbourhood" of anywhere we could reasonably go for a weekend trip, and I think we succeeded. We camped our first night at Armitage Park in Lane County, just a bit outside of Eugene Oregon. Actually such a gorgeous campground that we returned for a night on our way back almost 3 weeks later. Our second night was Sycamore Grove just outside of Red Bluff. It wasn't planned, but we surprised ourselves when we drove in with a serious sense of deja-vu, having camped in the identical campground 5 years earlier when we did a similar road-trip down to Disneyland. A few years of budget shortage for State Parks was very

visible, with this particular park being in much worse state of wear than it had been when we stayed here five years earlier.

The rest of our trip down saw us camping on the beach, spending a couple of nights in San Francisco, and finally ending in a San Diego KOA just a few kilometres north of the Mexican border where we had a booking for five nights.

We filled our time in San Diego visiting zoos and water parks and a day at the beach. The roller coasters and other rides at SeaWorld were a lot of fun. With six days in San Diego, we were still sorry to finally leave it, but we did have something to look forward to, heading back North to LA where we had a campground just outside of Disneyland booked for six nights, and so giving us seven days where we were spending time in Ahaheim, or around Los Angeles. From some websites that track such things, the prediction between the parks we planned to hit (Disneyland, Disneyland California Adventureland, and Knott's Berry Farm) was that the Disneyland parks were busiest at the start of the week, and towards the end of the week got a bit quieter, so we decided to spend our first full day at Knott's.

We had a great time, but from a "optimize the thrills perspective", it was probably the wrong order to do things in. For those unfamiliar, let me tell you, Disneyland is filled with the traditional



Kayla and Melissa climbing the rock wall at our campground in San Diego

Disney rides, fun, but not so many rides that are at the top of thrills in the world of today's rides. Disneyland California Adventureland of course was the park that Disney added about 20 years ago to better compete with the other parks that offer much bigger rides, and it has a few thrillers, but certainly is not filled with them. Although Knott's may not compete with some of the biggest parks around such as those at a Six Flags park, from a thriller perspective the coasters and other rides they have at Knott's generally beat the pants off those even in

Disneyland California Adventureland. So we spent our first full day at Knott's riding some big coasters and rides, which then made the rest of

the week seem comparatively tame. Don't worry, we still thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

Our second full day we did go to Disneyland proper, probably the place we should have gone first if we wanted a week of "ramping up the thrills" in our rides. This first day we drove over to the park, but from then on we generally took the bus (the parking lot at Disneyland is still a LONG way from the park entrance). We visited the old stand by's such as The Pirates of the Caribbean, the Haunted Mansion, the Matterhorn, Splash Mountain, the Enchanted Tiki Room, Autopia, as well as some more modern day cornerstone Disney rides such as the ride through the temple with Indiana Jones and also got to experience the new Star Wars land where the four of us (along with a couple of other single riders) got to pilot the Millennium Falcon on a scavenging mission where we try to collect enough "treasure" to pay off the rental of the Millennium Falcon.

One thing all enjoyed was spending a few classes in a Disney Animation studio where we were taught by a Disney animator on how to draw some animated characters. We all took part in learning how to draw Goofy, and the ladies spent some time in another class learning how to draw BB-8 from Star Wars.

After a week in LA we headed back North, spending 3 nights and 4 days driving, getting back late afternoon on Tuesday, August 6.

We had Susan's brother's family out for couple of weeks on a visit when we got back. The girls went with their cousin Jessica to Kamloops to spend a few days with Grandma and Grandpa.

Kayla and dad went to the PNE, and had our pictures taken with Keri Adams and Krissy Van from the CTV news

morning show, took part in a strong woman show (ask Kayla who was bright red with embarrassment during the show), and saw some PNE mainstays such as pig races and SuperDogs show.



Full Scott family on Splash Mountain at Disneyland

As summer wore on we spent some nice evenings on some bike rides and did a number of steep short hikes to get in some outdoor exercise (the trail on the North side of Burnaby Mountain was a winner).

Our friends' Jen and Zac as usual did a wonderful job of planning their annual Alice Lake camping trip. Ten families all with kids of a similar age leads to a very good time. Kudos Zac and Jen! To be fully honest, I should tell the complete story of our time in Alice Lake, as well as our early summer outing to Sasquatch Provincial Park with

Glen's brothers' family. Both outings? Mice in the trailer! We did get some traps while at Sasquatch, but we never did catch anybody. I believe the mouse jumped out on the last day as we were packing up to come home. Alice Lake? Same traps, but much more success. We caught 4 in the space of about 24 hours. Sasquatch Mice are smarter than Alice Lake Mice?



Kayla with her baritone

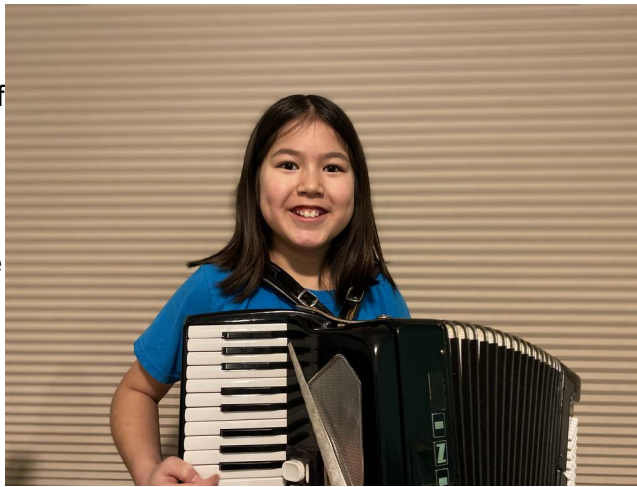
Speaking of rodents, I should mention that as we turned to fall and the girls went back to school, they finally went out and got themselves a new pet hamster in addition to the dwarf frog and a couple of fish that they've had the last couple of years. Basal the long haired Syrian hamster joined us early September and went with us to the lake in October. But sadly soon after Basal passed away, theory being from heart failure. Due to the frequent in-breeding of hamsters, this supposedly happens all too often. Soon after the girls went and adopted a Russian dwarf hamster, this

guy, named Atlas, seems to be in much better health and we all have thoroughly enjoyed having

him added to our family (he gives us great fun watching him go for a run in the standard hamster wheel several times a day – supposedly he runs 8km / day, which from a size perspective, if scaled up in linear fashion would be the same as me (Glen) running 2,400km in one day). The girls have done a wonderful job of taking care of their hamsters, and spend endless time doing research on how best to care for a hamster so they can give the absolute best care for their little charge. They're just like parents with a first baby! They've even taken up having a web site at <https://apethamster.ismarvelous.com/> at which they write articles on hamster care. If you want to visit, go ahead (for those of you with a paper copy of this I'll save you some typing by giving you a scannable QR Code):



Both girls took up curling this fall, going every week or two to curling lessons down in New Westminster at the Royal City Curling Club rink. Melissa dropped piano lessons, but kept up her focus on the accordion. Kayla has stayed in piano, as well as sewing and rock climbing. Both girls are again on Odyssey of the Mind teams, again this year competing in different age groups. Both girls are continuing their involvement in girl guides. Kayla's fourth year of involvement specifically has her in her first year of Pathfinders, and



Melissa with her accordion

Melissa in her fifth year with the guiding program is in her second year of Girl Guides.

In school, Kayla joined the band, and has been filling our house with the lovely sound of a baritone (mini Tuba for those of you not so familiar with band instruments). As we get close to Christmas (we're in the last week as I write this) she was out playing a few band concerts.

Susan has really picked up her pickleball attendance, reliably going every week (other than for a few

weeks where she instead was visiting physiotherapy due to knocking her alignment out while at work – but thankfully that misadventure seems to be over).

Other than getting out a few times for some quick hikes up Burnaby Mountain, Glen's work has regrettably kept him away from returning to weekly volleyball. Overtime for a few months did mean he built up a few days extra of holidays to end the year with (looking at it from a glass half full perspective).



Scott family hiking in Vancouver, Dec 2019

In the coming days we are going to our friends to take part in the traditional carolling session with old Toastmaster friends, Melissa is doing an

accordion concert with fellow accordion players (Kayla did a piano concert a week ago), and then we're going to the interior to spend Christmas itself with Glen's parents as well as his brother's family who are going as well. When we get back we hope to get out for some good skiing.

We're on the web.
More photos can be viewed at
www.sgscott.com



From our family to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope that 2020 is a good year for you!

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