

The Scott Family Gazette

December 2021

Merry Christmas all!

Another year, another missed Scott Family Gazette! Yes, again in 2020 we missed sending the Scott Family Gazette update, so I'll take a moment to fill in not only this past year but also 2020.

You'll notice I'm writing this in a slightly different format than prior Gazettes. Since this wasn't written in time to get out, I'm only sending out e-copies to be virtually read. To make it easier to read, it's only one column.

Of course being residents of planet Earth, I'm sure anyone asked to highlight the 2020 and 2021 years would answer the biggest thing is COVID-19. I'll try to keep that description short.

Susan continues to work four days a week at the importer Calkins & Burke (having Thursdays off), and I continue to work for Change Healthcare. I should mention that my company Change Healthcare is expected to be acquired by UnitedHealth Group in early 2022. I used to joke when I worked for McKesson I was working for the biggest company that nobody had ever heard of. I guess that will be the case again as UnitedHealth Group is like McKesson, also a Fortune 500 top 10 company. As 2020 started Susan was working two days a week in the office and two days from home, and I was working three days in the office and two days from home.

The first few months of 2020 saw us up skiing every weekend. Both Kayla and Melissa were curling every weekend. Kayla's piano lessons and Melissa's accordion lessons continued. Kayla was in sewing once a week. Melissa continued in Girl Guides.

Does anybody remember March of 2020? I'm sure I don't need to say, but that was when the Coronavirus with COVID-19 sent the world for a shake-up. Yes yes... both girls started to remotely home school. Susan and I thankfully are in jobs that do fine with work from home, so we also started working from home full time.

Was COVID-19 the biggest long term change for us? Probably.... but not necessarily....

Over the years the girls had talked about the desire to get a dog, but it had always been set aside. We were concerned that for the first six months a puppy left at home by itself seemed questionable. With all of us schooling and working from home, suddenly the idea of getting a dog seemed doable.

We got Spot, a cockapoo, from a Williams Lake breeder in late March. The wrinkle with getting a dog just as COVID-19 social distancing was at its height was Spot never got the recommended socialization. He also was never left home alone. Those two combinations means he often doesn't take easily to new people (especially if they come into our house). Also, if one of us leaves his separation



Scott family, labour day weekend 2021



Scott family hiking summer of 2021

anxiety definitely comes out. However, we love him as an addition to our family all the same.

Having Spot has got us out on a few walks a day (Melissa is almost obsessive about it), so since late March 2020 we have reliably got out for numerous walks/hikes a day.

The girls had both been in Odyssey of the Mind, and were confident they would win the nationals, going to Ames Iowa to compete again at world finals. COVID, though, dashed those dreams, and they never made it past the provincial qualifiers which happened in early March of 2020.

In June of 2020 Kayla “graduated” from Montecito Elementary. The principal and teachers made up for restrictions by putting on a respectable red-carpet walk for all the grade 7 graduates in the gym one at a time with their parents.

In July of 2020 we made it to our cabin finally (the latest we had ever gone), and did get out for some gorgeous days on the boat. We tried to teach Spot to swim that year, but his apprehensions got the better of him and he never really swam. We did get up to Albas falls. Late summer my Aunt Laura and my cousin Colin, along with some second cousins of mine, made it out for a visit and we spent a few days on the lake with them.

In the summer Susan took her level 2 first aid renewal course. She got 100% on not only the written but also the practical, something her instructor said he had never seen achieved.

Also late summer we got a new car, replacing our 2002 Jetta with a 2020 Kia Niro PHEV. It’s nice to be able to drive around town using only electricity, but when going farther, such as Kamloops, to use regular gas in hybrid mode.

Kayla started her year at in grade 8. The school ran things differently than in the past to keep “COVID bubbles” smaller; Kayla will explain more details later in her update. Melissa was in grade 6 in a class that was closer to normal.

At the end of 2020, we were blessed to have the ability to get season’s passes for Mt. Seymour resort and went out for many mountain snow adventures. Over the season, I personally got up to the mountain 45 times. The majority (over 30) were for skiing, half a dozen for snowboarding, another half dozen for snowshoeing, and finally a couple of times for snow-tubing. Kayla and Melissa joined me on many of the outings. A grade 7 girl in Melissa’s split class was also reliably coming to Mt. Seymour once a week with her dad. It was this girl’s second time in Melissa’s split class, so they were reasonably good friends. She had also been in Kayla’s split class twice, so they also knew each other. The practice of social distancing at the mountain allowed people in the same bubble to ride next to each other on the chairs, but if you weren’t in the same bubble you could sit at opposite ends of a quad (4 person) chair. Since the girl was in Melissa’s bubble at school, and Melissa and Kayla were in the same bubble, the three of them could ride on the same chair (Kayla at one end, the girl on the other end, and Melissa in the middle since she was in both their bubbles’). I would ride on opposite ends of another chair with her dad.



Po Po's birthday summer of 2021



Kayla and Melissa at our cabin summer of 2020

Due to COVID, Christmas of 2020 was held with extreme social distancing- at home by ourselves. We did a day long zoom meeting Christmas day, eating dinner virtually, playing games, chatting with my brother's family and parents.

Lest you think we only ever have happy events, I suppose I should share a few not so happy. In the fall of 2020 we were saddened to learn Uncle Earl had passed away in Southern Chile. Then, in mid January 2021, Susan's father passed away.

As we get further into 2021, I'll leave many of the details to the later Kayla and Melissa updates, so just give some highlights.

Beyond mountain snow sports, as the year progressed we continued to take numerous hikes and walks. Many were with the girl and her dad from Melissa's grade 6/7 split class.

Originally we talked we would maybe take our main summer vacation in the Yukon and a bit of Alaska. With COVID being such a variable, we called it off early and again headed to our cabin for our summer getaway. We spent a very nice couple of weeks going swimming and keeping the boat in the water at our buoy. We hiked to the top of Copper Island. This year, Spot figured out how to swim and went in a number of times (I think mostly to see if his pack needed his "help").

The fall saw us out for many hikes and as winter arrived we went up to Mt. Seymour for skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing.

From our family to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope 2022 is a good year for you!

Kayla's Update

Before we get into it, I'm Kayla, I'm 14, and in Grade 9 and high school. I probably haven't seen you this year, so this is a quick(ish) update on my life.

For the first part of 2021, and second half of my grade 8 year, my school continued with the quarter system. Basically, we stayed with the same class the whole year and took 2 classes at a time for 10 weeks. It meant the classes were really intense, as we had to cram a year's worth of information into 10 weeks of 2.5 hour classes. This year we've been on the semester system. Now, we take 4 classes for half the year, and we're with different people in each class. Twice a week we still have long blocks, but most people find them harder to concentrate in.

In grade 8 I joined the Ultimate Frisbee team, in which we practiced even though we couldn't compete. Ultimate is a sport where players throw a frisbee with the purpose of reaching the end zone, where you score points. There weren't very many people on the team, but it was still fun to play. I am also the second slowest person on the Cross Country team. The season was from September to early November, and we had races every week. Practices were 3 days a week, so once you included races, Cross Country was after school 4 days a week. I started out as the slowest runner by far. By my last race, though, I was 2 minutes faster than my previous best time. Something that really helped was the hill beside my school. There's the most brutal, steepest hill we would run up every single time, but it paid off. My team came second at Zones and went on to Provincials, but being one of the slowest runners, I did not make the cut. I would like to point out that Cross Country is the only sport at my school that accepts everyone who tries out. This does not mean I have lots of athletic ability!



Kayla and Spot in June 2020

Over the summer Melissa and I started martial arts, too. It's a mix of a number of different styles. I've been enjoying it so far, but the push ups part is debatable. We'll be

moving up to a different class in the new year.

Since school started, I've joined a few different clubs. My two favourite and most frequent ones are Reach for the Top and Christmas Cheer. Reach for the Top is a trivia club, and we compete every other week. Some of the questions asked are totally random and about something no one's ever heard of. I'm really slow hitting the buzzer when I do know an answer, so I usually have to wait until everyone else is uncertain. We've been having issues finding enough people to play games, but we (the Junior team- Grades 8, 9, 10) have won every game we've played so far. In Christmas Cheer, we fundraise for the Burnaby Christmas Bureau. There were bottle drives and sales throughout the year. This year, \$15,000 was raised with a \$10,000 goal.

So far over Winter Break, we've gone skiing and taken some snowboarding lessons. After completing my lessons, I'm thinking skiing is more my thing. I definitely plan on learning to snowboard better, but I don't like having to constantly strap in and out of the board. When we're not on the mountain over the holidays, I want to catch up on some reading. I have a long list of classics I plan to read, and currently have about ten out of the library (I haven't finished any of them). Fiction written more recently is just too good. I also need to do some hours of cooking. I've been working on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and one component of it is a skill. I've chosen cooking to be my skill and still have a lot of hours to go. One last thing I plan to work on is my song. In piano, I've been composing a song. It's still in the very early stages, but I think it's going to be a ragtime. In the past year, I've mostly moved away from playing RCM, focusing more on jazz and ragtime. Hopefully it all turns out okay.

Next year, in 2022, I plan to try out for the Ultimate team again. I also plan to run more often, in preparation for Cross Country. When the Cross Country season starts, I want to, at the very least, be at the same level I was at the end of this season. If Covid's not too bad, I think I'll run the Vancouver Sun Run. For the Duke of Ed, I also need to start volunteering some more. Volunteering positions are really hard to find right now, especially being only 14. I have been volunteering for the library for the past year, but I'd like to volunteer more. In March, I'm going on a ski trip to Whistler with my school, so I am looking forward to that.

Soon another year will have passed, in which I hope I will have moved forward in some aspects of my life. With luck, Covid will get better, so here's to 2022!



Kayla and Melissa Labour Day 2021

Melissa's Update

This past year has definitely been... different. That is compared to years before 2019. If you're including 2020, it's almost the same. For me, in both years a regular day has looked like wake up, eat, go to school with a mask, come home, eat, sleep and repeat. Pretty simple if I do say so myself. Occasionally I go out into the indoor public, but when I do, it is all while wearing a mask.

So, what have I been doing to entertain myself? In the past year, I've taken up stretching, martial arts, and yoga. Even though we are supposed to be staying home during Covid, I have become a lot more active. I still haven't broken my streak of taking Spot on a walk every night. On the topic of my pets, nothing has changed much. Thankfully, there have been no deaths of my pets this year as we still have Spot the dog and Clay the frog. We do not plan to get any more pets as Spot is a handful.

Over Summer break, I learned to type using all 5 fingers on the keyboard. Before that, I only knew how

to use my pointer fingers while staring at the keyboard and possibly making multiple typos on my screen. The motive was my dad promising if I could pull off 40 words per minute, he would get me a membership for my favourite video game. Sadly, when the time of testing came, I failed. Even though I didn't get that membership, I am extremely glad I can type quickly now.

When my birthday came along in November, my grandma, other grandma, grandpa, aunt, other aunt, and uncle came over for dinner. It was very enjoyable to socialize again with family. Those were the highlights of my year.

This winter break has been fun as well. It has so far been quite strenuous because of 6 days straight of snow sports. The first 3 days of the snow sports were spent doing snowboard lessons. On day 1, we stayed on a very small hill until graduating to the magic carpet for 1 run at the end. On day 2, we did a lot of work on the bunny hill. On day 3, I expected to go on a chairlift, but sadly we practiced more on the magic carpet. In my opinion, I started off as one of the worst in the class, but in the end, I became the best. We were up there on the other 3 days because Kayla was taking snowboard lessons. While Kayla was in her lessons, we skied for 2 days and snowshoed for 1 day. When Kayla came back from her first lesson, she had already been on the chairlift multiple times. That made me slightly envious of her because she went on a chairlift on her first lesson, while I never went on one in any of my lessons. Since we are both now done with our lessons, we each have an opinion about snowboarding compared to skiing. Kayla prefers skiing while I prefer snowboarding. This works out because we share one board so now we don't have to fight over it.

We haven't yet lived through the second half of our winter break and we don't have any major plans for it. It will probably just be more snow sports and dog walks. We will be back at school on January 4th if things go well with Covid. Since the Covid cases are above 2000 in British Columbia, going back to school is questionable. Hopefully Omicron is able to get under control.

2022 is coming up and I don't have any big plans. I'll graduate from Montecito in June and go to Burnaby North high school in September. That will be exciting. I hope that Kayla will be able to help me navigate through it as she has been going there for a couple of years now.

I will continue with martial arts and accordion in 2022. I've been doing martial arts through 2021 and by the end of 2022 I expect to progress multiple belt levels. Currently I have a hi-gold belt. Earlier this year, I did the Royal Conservatory of Music exam for level 3 accordion. Somehow, I was able to score a 90/100 which has the title: "First Class Honours with Distinction." In 2022 I plan to do more accordion and pass a level 4 exam.

So, this year has been quite a roller coaster ride. New variants of Covid have made us have to stay home more. Over that time, I was able to find new interests and learn new skills. This winter break consisted of mostly skiing and snowboarding and we look forward to do some more. In 2022 I want to continue with accordion and martial arts, and I look forward to going to high school. That was my 2021 Christmas update.



Melissa and Spot on a hike



Melissa playing accordion (on right) in MacLean Park, June 2020