

From my perspective, this family is starting to figure out the benefits of my "take it slow" therapy sessions. There is a real art form to the low-frequency pace. They started the year out properly in January with a long relaxing snow shoe up Big Hill behind their house. I knew they were planning the trip right when I saw tea, sandwiches, and, of course, chocolate bars packed into their little day packs. From there it was easy for them to figure out how to cross-country ski on that afternoon in January with temperatures well below zero. The trick is to be in still, calm conditions. The little one, called Katya, is particularly good at it, though she is nearly as tall as the full size humans these days. She is a natural when it comes to rejecting the modern-day dilemma of over scheduling. For her, violin and playtime are more than sufficient to fill the days after the hectic rat race they call Middle School.

Maybe that is why there was so much celebration with ice cream after Middle School Concerts and the big Suzuki public concert at Dartmouth's Hop Stop. But February was more enjoyable with the smaller gatherings for recital, workshop, and, of course more cross-country skiing over the river and through the woods on the nearby Quechee public trails. But most of all, snow storms are the best moments to remember. I must say, I do support the Katya's preparations for these activities. She diligently checks the internet to see how much snow will fall and has a hard time going to sleep on those nights in anticipation of the 5:30 AM phone call from the Superintendent with his announcement that school is cancelled for the day. On those days I see a very dynamic role shift - Katya is calm and beaming with joy and relaxation, while the two larger ones, Hans and Cathy, scramble to deal with the sudden schedule change and all that extra work with those things they call shovels.

As the snow melted away in March, there were more sound waves rippling through my room as I listened to many, many practices. These events included a big concert with the Middle School and High School Bands combined, another recital, and for Hans, the Bach Marathon Concert. In April, Hans needed to travel. He must be one of those migratory types because first he traveled north to Montreal for a chance meeting with family. Shortly after his return, he packed up the family for a road trip south to Long Island and New York City during Spring Break. They had an excellent time with wonderful friends and visits to the American Museum of Natural History, The Met, and the South Shore Natural Science Center.

In May, Hans tried a different migration pattern. This time he went east to Bavaria and Warsaw for a combination of work and family. But as this is springtime, Katya and Cathy enjoyed opening ceremonies to the outside green spaces and end of the school year concerts. These stretched from May into June with parties for music groups and physicists alike. For Cathy, the big event was a new electric chain saw to clean up the property without the frustration of an old gas motor.

Summer was different this year without the big family trip across the Atlantic. Trips included a working meeting near the NH seacoast and family camping trip with Geiger and Coleman folks to Glenn Island on Lake George. It was a chance to work on the little activities that build long, fun memories. One, in particular, was the slow restoration of an old 16-foot sailboat christened "The George" in honor of he who used to sail it on Cazenovia Lake. A nearby sailing club made it possible to keep it in the water all summer so that the whole family could learn how to sail a small boat. Other fun events included a day trip to Squam Lake Natural Science Institute to see Katya's favorite mammal - big Cats! Apparently these are much, much bigger than the big cats that gaze at me with their large curious eyes as I clean the glass and polish the interior settings, so I was more than happy to not participate.

In late August, I praised Katya for her skills in diplomatic negotiations as she navigated the tricky waters to earn the right to own an iPod with internet access, and especially - headphones!!! The headphones have served her well. She quickly mastered the art of transcendence from the day-to-day hectic human world by exploring the slower waves of repetitive music in the form of iTunes. On this subject, I am particularly pleased with the school system level known as Seventh Grade. Many of her size have these relaxation systems including one very good friend who has a water-speaker version. To show how effective such mediation can be, we witnessed her initiative to formally join a sports team - Field Hockey. This very methodical decision came as a shock to Hans who was pondering his own youthful years and his struggle with the hardest class he ever took - GYM.

The fall colors complemented the hard interior renovations I continued to work on in my studio. The addition of pumpkins and unusual cross-breeding of squash types made for interesting Halloween pumpkin carvings and harvest time. Most unusual of all were those experimental carrots harvested in mid-November that were big enough to each provide a full meal for a family of three. But most special of all, in November, was the migration westward for a Thanksgiving feast in Cazenovia with a 27-person family portrait to honor the lifelong achievement of Gramma Geiger as she crested the noble three-quarter of a century mark - with honor, grace, and a fun-filled bowling extravaganza.

In December, Hans migrated one more time eastward to Bavaria to spend some precious time with Opa, Hans' sister Johanna, and her growing family. Meanwhile from my perspective, I watched as my whole world unfold into a magical display of colorful lights, several new blue and red fish, and a big tree sturdy enough for the local big cats to climb - or at least be yelled at when they did. Hans returned just in time to round off the year with restful days to recover from jet lag, eat great food, and enjoy lots of Lego adventures.

Well, I better get this message transmitted through my antenna to that laptop so we can get this out to everyone before Valentine's Day. Peace and Good Health to all in the New Year.

Stinky the Aquarium Snail, on behalf of Katya, Hans, Cathy, Max, and Kobay