

Dans 2021



Enjoying kuchen. Kristin, Ellen, Harry and Kaitlin Dan.

“Seniors, Colleges, and Instruments Oh My...”

It has been an interesting year hasn't it? So throw on top of everything, the anticipation of high-school graduation, college applications, and all the hubbub that goes with these activities. Kaitlin and Kristin are graduating seniors: I wonder too, how did this happen so quickly, seems they were just toddlers a few years ago. The girls are winding down their high school careers with the final senior classes. They are soon working on their final STEM projects which are handled like an engineering design and development real-world project. Both girls were in their fourth year of marching band and received their “jackets” only given to the few students who complete four full years. This year held some new fun for Kristin as she was selected to be the drum major! She had a special uniform, mace, and learned to do a backbend so the feather on her hat touched the ground behind her.

Both girls are in wind ensemble at school and each received a very nice award scholarship for their efforts of leadership over the past three years. Kristin is also in the jazz band playing trumpet and also in the pep band. Both are hoping to be in the pit orchestra for the spring musical. Additionally, Kristin is in

the chess club. Kaitlin is a student leader in the knitting club and has completed a number of knitted blankets for Project Linus as well as a beautiful crocheted baby blanket.

College applications are going on with the first round completed as of now. Next year we will be able to report where the girls land. They are looking at schools local to Columbia, MD as there are a number of really good schools so close to here. Everyone is asking the girls where are you going and what are you majoring in – hard questions to answer when you are still in high school coming off a whole year of virtual school and things not really “normal” as we have defined normal in the past.

Fun happenings in the instrument world at our house. Kaitlin used some of her inheritance money to purchase a lovely English Horn or Cor Anglias – isn't that just a fun word to roll off your tongue? It shares some similar aspects to an oboe, double reed etc. but has a longer length, thus a deeper woody sound and a lovely curved bocal. Our neighbor saw the girl's Christmas video last year and realized they had an E-flat Clarinet hanging on their wall not being used so they gave it to the girls. I happened to see a nifty old (really old) piccolo on a website but the bidding went crazy high. A day or so later I saw another one, not that I was really in the market for it, put in a low bid, and won! Kaitlin now has a D-flat 6 key piccolo just for fun. It was made in the late 1800s in Germany and for the most part military purposes. This one is in great shape, appears never to have been repaired and has original leather pads. In the Baltimore Youth Symphony, the girls played a Beethoven piece that had a lovely piccolo part – one that would have been played on a piccolo like this 1800s one – so Kaitlin played it for the piece. Their school band director was cleaning out the closets and offered the girls a baritone that is a bang and dent model – the bell is crunchy looking. But then, he said wait a minute would you like this bassoon? It is a lovely German-made instrument....but had a repair bill higher than the school could justify as they had 7 bassoons and zero players. We took it to our special repair guy and it is being touched up with some new pads and rods and should be in fine playing order in a few weeks. Kristin is teaching herself how to play and will be in the spring concert not only in the higher group on French Horn but also in the freshman band on bassoon. We have a whole level of new “noise” at our house – although most of it is lovely and we often have impromptu duets of various combos of instruments. Kristin took choir as her fun class this year and for the most part, accompanies the singers on piano. We just found out that Kristin made all-state senior orchestra as first chair French Horn which is quite an honor as it indicates she is the top horn player, of all students, in the state of Maryland. This is her fourth year being selected which is quite an honor.

Harry still plays volleyball a couple of times a week since gyms have opened up. He also refs one night a week just to keep in the game. Harry has started going to Tai-Chi once a week with a buddy from the neighborhood. In addition to keeping the leaves off the grass – which is hard right now as they are all blowing in from all over, his big job is driving the girls to various activities. A big one this fall was going to every home football game helping manage the kids and gear for the shows.

Ellen does sewing for church making repairs to costumes used for the Christmas event Journey to Bethlehem. We managed the marching band fitting this year, outfitting the kids in bib pants, jackets, shoes, capes and hats – big job – but the bigger job was hemming dozens of pants and jackets sleeves.

When I asked the family what is one thing you want to say in the *HH* – I got fun answers: I liked that we make sushi – as they stuff the current batch in their mouth – as they perfected making it this past year. I like that I went to school a whole year in PJs – said the teen who was virtual all year and PJs didn't matter. I love the cats and I better say I love my family too – brought a lot of laughter.

With that, I finish the news with the usual love your family give them a hug and in Harry's words: life is short so eat dessert first! Says the family who had pie for breakfast, pecan for two of us, and apple for the other two of us...aren't Thanksgiving leftovers great!

Ellen, Harry, Kristin, and Kaitlin Dan





















