



April 15, 2004

Good news this year: We passed the amnio test; Max Kitty's seizure seems, for now, to be a one time thing, and David's spinal surgery went well.

That was last month.

As you can tell from the photo, we're expecting a new tax deduction, due in mid to late July (<http://www.kayakero.net/per/jr/>). After much discussion, we've decided not to auction off the naming rights on eBay to pay for college tuition, as there might be issues with that: young

"Microsoft Windows Williams" is not an option.

Sarah is doing well, she has gotten over the, "everything smells rotten" phase of pregnancy and is starting to get used to strangers rubbing her tummy and asking when she is due. And as we mentioned at the outset, all the tests have been good so we are expecting a genius who will complete the work on the Grand Unified Theory, cure cancer and compose the great American symphony. All before high school graduation, of course (which should be good enough for a scholarship -- no need to auction the naming rights).

In March, Sarah was off at Ikea when Maxime de la K, aka Max Kitty, started twitching and quickly was overcome with a violent seizure for 30 to 45 seconds. (The scary zombie movie we saw the night before didn't help calm David's nerves watching this). So David called the vet and was advised that immediate review was better than waiting 45 minutes for Sarah to fight her way back through weekend rush traffic on I-95.

Fortunately, the animal hospital is pretty close, so David packed Max up and walked with him to the hospital where he was poked, prodded and pronounced OK, though they thought it best to watch him overnight. He came home fine the next day and hasn't shown any symptoms since then.



David carried him rather than drove because his back had been deteriorating for about a year. Driving, riding in a car or even sitting hadn't been options since the winter. But the week after Max's episode, David was in the human hospital getting a nip and tuck on the disc between the L4 and L5 vertebra (a laminectomy, for those who want to look it up). The surgery went well and David was walking (and sitting, briefly) the next day before being pronounced OK and going home. Though the insurance company was willing to spring for two days of hospital recovery, and the brand new hospital is very nice, being there was not nearly as nice as home (and no one at home was going wake him up three times a night to take his blood pressure). Besides, Sarah was tired of fending off staff who wanted to take her straight to the delivery room, "4 months early, no problem," they

kept saying.

David is now feeling much better: rides in the car without pain; drives a bit on occasion; comfortably sat for dinner with Sarah's dad Harry, and has shown off in the office by tying his shoes (previously a slow and painful process). As long as he is good and does not damage it during recovery, the disc should heal from the surgery by the end of April. Dr. Moskovitz assures us David will be up to "child rearing duty" by July. (And maybe in a kayak again this fall.)

To prepare herself for David's upcoming surgery and recovery, Sarah went on a "chick's weekend out" in February with girlfriends in Miami. She really wanted to get out of winter for a bit and had a great time laying on the beach and dipping her toes in the ocean. Janek and Emily are both doing well (Janek hosting visitors to Miami when she's not teaching at the University of Miami and Emily showing expectant parents the ropes at Toys R' Us when she's not working for the Charles County school system, or raising her own two kids).



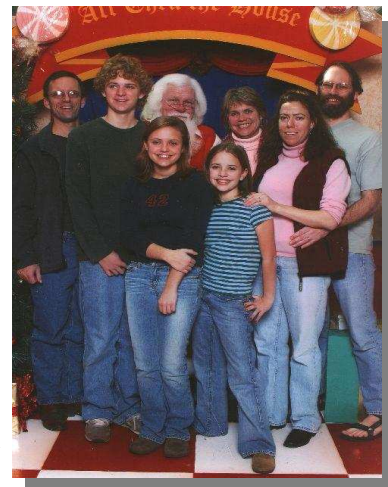
Also in February, Sarah was not amused at David's suggestion that with her sonogram scheduled for Groundhog's day, she could be in for 6 extra weeks before delivery if the fetus saw its shadow.

January was the month for David's physical therapy; trying to help his back without surgery. He got a little frustrated when the therapist insisted he was getting better while he insisted he wasn't. But the telling moment was the off-hand comment that the

first 4 or 5 hours of the day would be painful, but it would get better after that. That wasn't very good news with the expectation of a little tax deduction due in the summer. Hence the visit to Sarah's surgeon. In defense of the PT folks, they did point out that working with them sooner rather than 9 months after the fact, would have improved chances for a non-surgical fix.

For Christmas last year, we headed South for a visit with all of David's family and saw that kids do grow up: Sam offering Sarah guitar-buying advice (he's doing great in a band), and Kate looking at colleges (which made us think of auctioning naming rights). Sally continues to seem about 5 or 10 years older than she is, and Aaron had a great time with his extended family ([http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/dec\\_03/](http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/dec_03/)).

After Christmas we headed straight up to New Jersey to visit with Sarah's family (too brief a visit with the Seattleites, who had to head back to the Pacific Northwest). All are doing well and the house continues to morph under Elle's guidance and the hammer of Nick (their personal contractor). Elle's son Nicholas will soon graduate, so free of college tuition payments (those





naming rights again), she went to Argentina to visit her family and do a little shopping in celebration.

In November we celebrated our 5th wedding Anniversary (time flies when you're having fun). David spent a couple days in Long Beach, California early in the month working on AARP's remote web servers. Visiting there and seeing AARP's mailing operation which sends out about a million

membership kits monthly, was a new view of the Association for him. Sarah's early November trip was to Long Island for a very overdue visit with Marc, Michelle, Reese, Justin, Tessa and Noah (and Scooby). It was Sarah's introduction to Noah, their youngest (and Michelle swears last) kid.



Sarah visited her old New England stomping grounds in October when she presented research at a Harvard symposium; Boston being just down the road from her alma mater, Clark University.

In September, Sarah and David joined Hank and Sally (and met up with Steve and Helen) at the Gauley River. This was a clear indicator that David's back was not



in good shape as he enjoyed reading in the cabin and being shuttle bunny while they were on the river. Sarah wasn't entirely sure about rafting the Gauley with these amateurs, but her mind was quickly changed when she saw how good the old Five-Holers worked together. Tracey and her daughter also came up so 4 of the six folks in the raft were ex-guides from the Chattooga River. Sarah reports excellent lines in all the rapids and her best Gauley trip ever.

We also entertained David's folks in September. They came up on the heels of Hurricane Isabel ([http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/sep\\_03/](http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/sep_03/)) for a lovely long weekend which included a trip to Baltimore. We were able to visit the USS Constellation to see a civil war era sailing ship and learn about it's duty in the Mediterranean during the civil war. (David's history weakness was showing: he hadn't considered that our civil war would have spilled over to Europe.) And we saw the Baltimore Orioles take on the Toronto Blue Jays.

In August we got to see another baseball game, this time the Everett, Washington Aqua Sox as we joined David Z. and family for his 40th birthday party at the ballpark





([http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/aug\\_03/](http://www.kayakero.net/per/vac/aug_03/)). We had a great visit with them and marveled at the work they' ve done *orthier* house. We also really enjoyed the fantastic Pacific Northwest weather (the week we were there was the good weather week in ' 03). We walked around Seattle and did some hiking on the Olympic Peninsula (complete with ferry rides). We had a chance to visit with the whole clan as Harry and Elle came

out for the festivities as well.

June and July were quiet months for us, staying in DC and working. AARP continues to treat us both well -- the new performance review/compensation system was a winner for us this year. And the work, both in Knowledge Management and Web Strategy and Operations, remains interesting and challenging. We expect to be testing out the family friendly features of employment at AARP later this year.

We had a nice long weekend visit to New Jersey in May to see how the remodeling was going. 430 Harrison was starting to take on it' s new look and it was interesting to see how the skylights and new walls and windows were changing things. It was wonderful to have a chance to visit with Harry and Elle and catch up on things with them. That trip followed on the heels of a visit from David' s folks to Alexandria, so we were able to visit with both sides of the family.

And April last year we celebrated our tax refund with a new car purchase (the first for either of us). And followed that with David tweaking his back putting kayaks on the new car. The lesson he is trying to learn from this last year is to pay more attention to similar problems in the future and seek medical help sooner and more aggressively. Waiting to see if it got better meant getting epidural cortisone a bit too late for the best chances of it to be effective, and similarly the physical therapy might have been effective if started sooner. As they say, live and learn -- we expect to be doing a lot of both in the coming years.

