

We proudly present our new tax deduction: Robert Becker Zapolsky Williams. Born July 22nd, 2004 at 11:15 am. At birth, he weighed 7lbs, 4oz, and was 20 inches long. See his web site, www.kayakero.net/per/jr/, for many more photos and details.



Foregoing the idea of auctioning the naming rights on eBay to cover tuition payments, we chose the name to honor some friends and family. First, Robin Duggar “forced” Sarah and I to go out. We didn't think using her name for a boy a good idea, even though there are plenty of male Robins. Also, on David's paternal grandmother's side of the family, Robert Hendry was the first Hendry to leave Scotland's Isle of Arran for the United States.

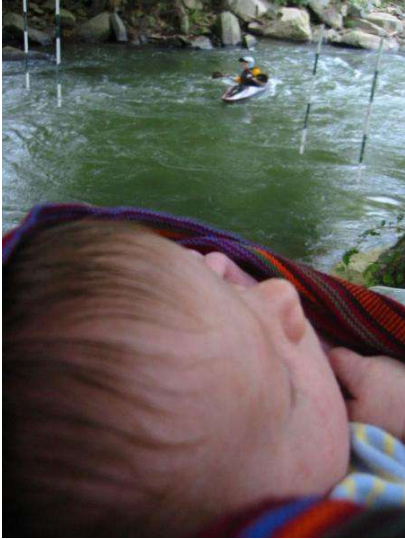
Becker is Sarah's maternal grandmother's maiden name. We were looking for a way to honor Sarah's mother, Lois Lorraine. Lois's father was Augustus Stef and her mother was Ida Becker. We didn't think our son looked like a Louis or a Larry, and August in Washington, DC is nothing to celebrate, Stef seems too stern but Becker we really liked.



Visits from friends and family filled Robert's first days and weeks (his web site documents most of those visits). He may not remember all the folks he met but Sarah and David enjoyed the company, advice and occasional meal that the visitors brought. Both sets of grandparents came by to meet the newest member of the family and help us adjust to our substantially changed lifestyle. (Maybe not all that substantially, we've been hauling him off to

restaurants and on trips – movies, however, are still hard to come by.)

AARP adjusted well to our new status. Sarah took 5 months off and started back part-time before returning to a full-time schedule. David, while working too much, is managing to take Wednesdays off (and do minimal work from home those days). We found a spot in day care for Robert close to the office; most days Sarah will stop over for



his lunch. And he's been a trooper on the commute; Robert seems to feel at home on the train (of course, he did experience it for months in utero).

We started out with a bassinet for Robert next to our bed courtesy of the hugely helpful Emily – who advised on what we needed and what we didn't need from the baby superstore Babies ' R Us. Between the shopping advice, bassinet and hand me down clothes, she has really given us much more time to enjoy Robert rather than stressing about his needs.

As noted earlier, Robert has impacted our lifestyle, but not too much. We both enjoyed the river this past summer; with Robert watching from the sidelines.

On one of David's parents visits, Sarah stayed at home while Robert ventured out with his dad and grandparents but without his mom for the first time. He did not seem to mind his dad's first primary caregiver experience. The objective: the new Air and Space museum by Dulles Airport, and while Robert napped part of the time, he seemed to enjoy the sights and sounds. We think he'll really have a blast with the Space Shuttle Enterprise after its restoration when he can get a close-up look.



In September, Robert and I joined Sarah on her annual walk from DC to Alexandria. This year someone taped small flags to the 14th Street Bridge. With Robert in his stroller (I really should have taken a photo of that), we stuck an umbrella on the front of the stroller to shade him from the sun (we experienced spectacular weather again, much like 2001). We both expected some form of security to approach us as we wheeled our odd little stroller with the umbrella covering it up to National Airport. But we didn't get any second looks. I do like the tradition but hate the cause of it; I wish I didn't feel it inevitable that terrorism will strike again. And I wish Robert sees the end of terrorism throughout the world.

One of the side effects of Robert's birth and Sarah's time off is a small group, dubbed Rosemoms, of new mothers in the Rosemont neighborhood. Sarah sent a couple emails around and ended up with a group meeting at one of the local coffee shops. It became so popular the original few started meeting a bit earlier to avoid the crowds. While the group has faded away with Sarah's return to work, a couple of Robert's friends remain

from the Rosemoms set.

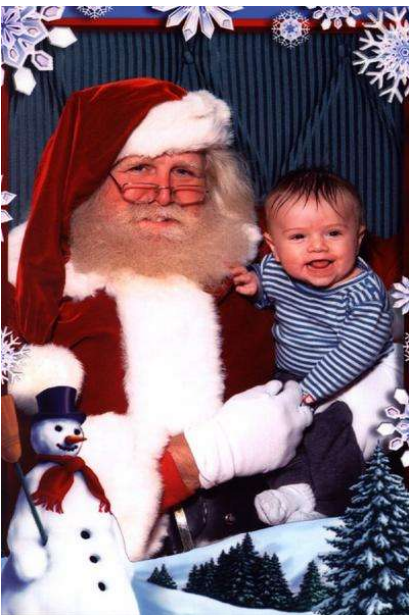
One of the nicest visits was from David' s sister-in-law Susan who flew up from Atlanta just in time to allow us to go to the Birchmere for Ed' s birthday party – our first time to leave Robert without a parent. Everyone enjoyed the show; we only called Susan once to make sure things were OK, and we both found a new musician to enjoy, Sam Bush. Susan also figured out the ideal way to mount the alphabet cards Janek gave us: she painted two frames on Robert' s walls and mounted the letters with a lovely border around them.

Some of Robert' s early fun included Del Ray' s At on the Avenue; a visit to AARP (and David' s inflatable penguin – don't ask); and many walks down King Street to the waterfront, once to see the Party Parrots.

In October, we popped Robert into his car seat and flew down to South Carolina for Henry's birthday party. Robert seemed to not mind his first plane trip (at the tender age of 12 weeks). Sally arranged a fantastic surprise party and everyone, Robert included, had a great time. Sarah worried a bit about the “cabin” Sally found for us; it turned out to be a lovingly restored southern farmstead.



Following that plane trip, we took Robert on his first road trip up to Sarah' s old stomping grounds for a visit with Harry and Leonor. Again, he had no problems with the traveling, and we all enjoyed the chance to visit.



We followed that with a Williams gathering on the Outer Banks to celebrate Thanksgiving and David's parent' s 50th wedding anniversary. Robert seemed to really enjoy the attention from the older kids (and aunts and uncles). And we filled the long weekend with good food, good friends and good fun.

I don' t know if we' ll have the same long running tradition as Loren, Susan, Kate, Sam and Sally with their Santa photos, but here is Robert' s first chance to whisper into Santa' s ear just what he wants for Christmas...

After the mall photo, we headed to New Jersey for Christmas (having just visited with all of David' s family for Thanksgiving). Robert and his parents enjoyed his fun filled first Christmas. Balloons fascinate him, and

he loves toys in general. But he didn't seem to get the whole "guess what's in the wrapping paper before you unwrap it" thing.

David's Christmas present: a digital SLR. After seeing how good Sarah's digital images look, and how bad the digital age mixes with chemical photography, he's taken the D-SLR plunge and now owns one of the more obscure digital cameras: Pentax's *istD*. It's chief benefit being he can continue to use his 35mm lens collection.



A sad note this year: Maxime de la K Williams, who joined us in the summer of 1998, did not survive a massive seizure in January. We will miss him and regret that Robert did not have much of a chance to get to know him.

And we wrap up on a happier note with Robert's April Baptism at Saint Luke's in Boone.



We drove down (the traveling trooper theme again) for a long weekend of family, fun and celebration. Hank and Sally squeezed in the trip as well and joined us for the ceremony. All the excitement wore Robert out.

