

April 15th, 2006

This year's Tax Day Letter is brought to you by the letter **T**. **T** as in **T**ravel, **T**rain and **T**uscany. But I'm jumping ahead. There really isn't any news to report that does not center on Robert and most of that is well documented on his web site (<http://www.kayakero.net/per/jr/>) and our blog (<http://www.kayakero.net/news/bloxom>).

Last April, before we set out on our **T**ravels, we had shelves built in to what used to be the living room (now Robert's playroom). The Ikea shelves were great but not even close to Robert-proof or Robert-safe. The built-ins give us a bit more space for Robert to play in, and for almost a year the shelves were high enough that he could not take things down. We knew that wouldn't last, but it was nice for a while. Just after the shelves were finished, the men folk from Sarah's family came for a visit. David and Ian came in from Seattle and Harry came down from NJ. They just wanted to be sure the newest man child was doing well.



While our construction was minor and internal, next door the little white farm house was replaced by a huge two unit condo contraption designed to take full advantage of the zoning laws. It has been sad to see our sunlight going away, and we're not on great terms with the owner/contractor, but it was interesting to see the house arrive as several boxes to drop in place. According to the owner/contractor though, the boxes as delivered were twice the size that he ordered – odd that they fit on the foundation prepared for them....

May saw Robert inheriting a really cool sports car from our friends Marsha and Bob (and their kids, Ben and Julia). He really likes trips to the blue park in it; and we really enjoy the resemblance to his Grandfather in this photo from 1973.



June was the beginning of the **T**rain craze. David's parents drove up to Alexandria and we then took the **T**rain to New Jersey to visit with Harry and Elle. Sarah drove the luggage up as this was the second

leg of David's parent's trip to Ireland. From NJ, they were flying to Dublin and so had two weeks of luggage with them. Robert seemed to really enjoy his time on a "real" choo choo, rather than the metro Train we ride most days to day care.



The fun really started in July. While the Williams grandparents were in Ireland, we were heading to Tuscany to join up with the Zapolsky grandparents and David, Lindsay and Ian from Seattle. Nick Conzevoy was going to join us as well but Air France got in the way. We stayed in a great little villa in Alto Pascio that Harry and Elle had used as a base camp the year



before. Between great meals and time in the pool, we took lots of day trips including another Train trip – this time from Alto Pascio to Firenze. We also took a trip on a "funicolare," a cross between a Train and a gondola that went straight up the side of a bluff (38.6% gradient in the steep part).

Our visit to Italy happened to be in the midst of a heat wave but we managed to stay cool and we all had a great time. And this trip coincided with Robert getting his walking legs. He wasn't ready to walk by himself on the cobblestone streets, but he was trying very hard.

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Tuscany was also the trip where we discovered one of the names on the terrorist watch list, "Robert Williams." The ticket agent at Dulles airport needed to take Robert's passport into the back room for consultation and approval to fly. We arrived at the airport with plenty of time to spare, so the extra delay was not a problem, and the thought that he was on the "no fly" list was kind of funny to us at the time. The more we thought about it, read about it and talked about it, the less happy we were. Sarah asked her favorite email list about how to get Robert off the "no fly" list and discovered you really can't be removed. Several journalists on the list read about our dilemma; that resulted in news stories around the world: from Aljazeera.net to The





Sydney Morning Herald. We're hoping the list goes away before he's a teenager and gets hauled off to a holding cell because of his name.

We returned from Robert's first international trip in time for his first birthday – that concept is still stunning to me, my first international trip was when I was 13 – years, not months.

In August (on a not too hot day) we took Robert to the zoo; we should really do that more often. I guess one reason may be that while the national zoo is great, it was built in the bad old days of zoos and has only so much space to expand and provide larger, more natural environments. We followed up the zoo visit with a long overdue trip to Long Island and Sarah's college friend Michelle and her 4 (FOUR!) kids.

Shortly after getting back from Long Island, Robert passed another milestone – his last metro trip in the Baby Bjorn. From now on it's a stroller until he's happy walking with the rest of the commuters. (This made Sarah a little teary but her back was grateful.)



In September, we headed south to Tybee Island, Georgia for a Hendry family reunion (David's family) and to introduce Robert to the ocean, up close and personal – it was plenty warm to get wet (not like Thanksgiving the year before on Ocracoke Island). Robert discovered corn-on-the-cob on this trip and it's been a favorite ever since.



For the fall leaves in October, Sarah arranged a Train trip on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad (complete with steam engine) for Robert, his parents and paternal grandparents. Once again, he liked the ride, looking out the window and walking up and down the aisles with one adult or another.

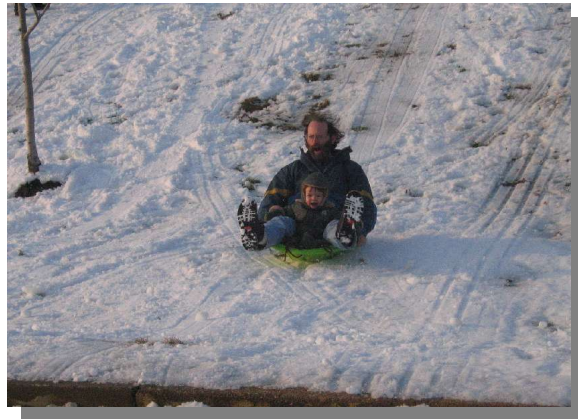


After our southern family reunion in September, we headed to New Jersey for Thanksgiving (driving, not on the train this time). Then we had a lovely, quiet Christmas at home.

January brought a model Train exhibit to the Botanic Garden that we all enjoyed. Robert really liked watching the trains coming and going at his level and over his head. Sarah was

very impressed by the scale model on the US Capitol made of all natural materials and adorned with acorns and wheat husks.

Robert's introduction to sledding came in February. We had an unusually warm winter with only a couple sleddable days, but having the Masonic Memorial in our back yard, we made the most of the snow available.



In March, Harry and Elle came down for a visit (and to enjoy our unseasonably warm weather). We all enjoyed the chance to hang out at the Blue park in the sun and wander up and down King Street. By happy coincidence, the Saint Patrick's day parade was gearing up as we were taking Robert to the Mall for his second ride on the carousel. He enjoyed the chance to see real horses almost as much as the chance to ride a horse on the carousel.

