

April 17th, 2007

This year started with a scare. David's dad took his mom to the Boone emergency room on April 28th because she was just not being herself. They quickly diagnosed a brain hemorrhage and moved her to Winston Salem where the doctors decided surgery was not the correct course of action. She was very disoriented but started to improve quickly with lots of monitored rest and some changes to her medications.

The hospital staff was impressed by her tenacity: she really wanted to show that she could get up and walk around on her own before the staff thought that was a good idea. When Karen, the physical therapist, did her assessment, David accidentally interfered by picking up the keys the therapist dropped -- he didn't realize until corrected that his mom's ability to bend over and pick something up off the floor without help was part of the assessment. It was an assessment she passed and was released from the hospital the afternoon of May 1st.

She returned home with a lack of awareness on her left side, some balance issues and some lingering disorientation. After a home visit from a local physical therapist, Helen was kind enough to do some work on the Seven Devils house to make it safer. She and Steve and Aaron have spent a lot of time the last year helping Loren and Sarah out and keeping an eye on Sarah as she has steadily progressed and returned to most of her pre-hemorrhage activities. An outcome which made her family and friends extremely happy.

A bit later in May, we managed to secure a slot in a new day care center after being on the waiting list for 2 years. Robert's first center, right around the corner from AARP, fell victim to the rising value of real estate in DC and could not afford to renew the lease. The flurry of activity and panic around the closing of Penn Quarter day care pointed out again how difficult it is to find quality child care. Robert's new center is beautiful, but we only managed to get in because of some co-workers throwing a fit and another young student out on medical leave. Robert adapted very well and really likes his new friends. David is still getting used to the metal detectors, X ray machines and guards which come with any government building these days.

At the end of May, we all drove down to North Carolina to visit David's folks. David had the silly idea that we should drive while Robert slept so we got in about 3:30 in the morning for a long weekend. The drive left us pretty tired but Robert was full of energy. It was good to see David's mom settling back into routines at home, but the brain hemorrhage still hindered many activities. We drove back during the day and Robert was fine with the trip (which even included a brief stop off in David's old neighborhood in Richmond, Virginia).





AARP had been keeping us busy and Sarah thought we could use a break. She found a great house in Maine for a week so we escaped some of DC's July weather. Robert was, again, a great traveling companion and really enjoyed playing in the ocean, watching the boats, reading *One Morning in Maine* and a couple trips kayaking in the ocean. We tracked down the house Sarah's family spent several fun summers in, and Robert enjoyed his introduction

to Sarah's favorite tidal pool.

Speaking of July, we invited a few of Robert's friends and their parents over for his 2nd birthday party. He enjoyed the balloons and the cake but really enjoyed showing his friends all his cool toys. There was a lot of tower building, chip stacking and truck driving going on. Sarah only got a little bit weepy thinking about how fast Robert and his friends are all growing up.

Later in July, Steve, Helen and Aaron came up for a visit. Robert enjoyed hanging out with a big kid, Aaron, and picked up a lot of tips on train track layouts from the original owner of his trains. We all enjoyed a fun visit to the Baltimore Aquarium.



Speaking of visits, we headed up to New Jersey in August to spend some time with Harry and Elle. (And to give Robert a chance to reacquaint himself with the extensive Tupperware collection there.) We all enjoyed the chance to relax together, play with trains and read books.

Later in August, we discovered a fun, local, mini-train in Burke Lake park. Robert was mesmerized as we made our way through the woods and past a scale model windmill. The next month, Robert climbed into his daddy's kayak at the slalom gates on the Potomac's feeder canal. He seemed to enjoy it, but that may really have just been the cheerios and raisins he was enjoying. We also took a couple trips to local farms in September and Robert enjoyed picking berries like Sal in *Blueberries for Sal*, one of his

many favorite books.

David's mom continues to improve and we went to Butler's Orchard in October when she and Loren came up for a visit. The orchard was celebrating the fall harvest and Robert enjoyed the slides, hay ride and hay jump but most of all the pony ride. Next year we'll investigate the pumpkin cannon.



We hosted Sarah's family for Thanksgiving. Everyone had a great time, and the meals were fabulous as everyone took turns in the kitchen. Robert really liked playing with another big kid, Ian, who, with

Sarah's brother David, started to work on Robert's baseball skills on this trip. (David Z. celebrated an Oriels victory before Robert's first birthday by giving him an Oriels tee shirt, glove, ball and bat.) Now, courtesy of Harry, Robert plays with a T-ball pitcher that David and Ian were very happy to show him how to use.

David's folks came up for Christmas and Robert had more fun being the center of the all the adult's attention. David thinks the coolest present was the pair of Corgi cars Robert got for him – Robert has been really enjoying the Corgis and other cars his cousin Sam passed on to him (many of which David passed on to Sam at about this age).

January was extra-special this year. While AARP keeps us busy, they also instituted a new program called “Renewal” designed to reward and rejuvenate staff with good performance reviews and at least 7 years employment. The program is a 4 week sabbatical and we both qualified. So we headed off to Costa Rica for 15 days. We spent a lot of time at the beach in Montezuma (where the Sano Banano folks still do a booming business); checked out Arenal volcano, and then found the CPI family doing very well. It was really great for David to meet up with Carlos and Jonle again, to meet their three sons: Nicolas, Diego and Julian (just about Robert's age and great fun to play with). Romy and Alfredo are doing well in



Heredia at the main campus that Lorena is managing (Carlos manages the Monteverde campus and Carolina, who was in high school when David was first there, manages the Flamingo campus).



Robert really enjoyed the time in the sun, playing in the ocean and pools, meeting new friends (he was less sure about the monkeys who wanted some of his animal crackers), a real horseback ride, hiking in the jungle and eating vegan nachos. Sarah and David had lots of fun relaxing and playing with Robert. David enjoyed being able to share some

old favorite spots with Sarah and Robert and catching up with Romy and the CPI family.

We came back to a little bit of snow but a generally mild winter, and dropped back into our routine much refreshed. (Homeland Security seems to have gotten the word out to the airlines that the ten and under set are not likely the terrorists they are looking for: we had no selectee list shenanigans on any of our flights this year.)

We hope your tax day was painless and the coming year treats you well.



As usual, many more photos are on the web site: <http://www.kayakero.net/per/>