

April 15, 2010

Last year's tax day letter left off with us hoping for a less eventful coming year and I'm glad to say that's what we got. Not to say that this year has been uneventful. In honor of one of those events, Robert moving into kindergarten and starting to count by twos, this year's letter is brought to you by the number two. Look out for these twos in this recap of our last year:

- two bikes
- two moves X two
- two jobs
- two weather records
- two X two feet of snow

Just after last year's letter went out, Sarah headed west to cheer on Ian at a regional Jazz contest in Lake Tahoe (Ian and his school band are heading to Lincoln Center next month for a national contest). Robert and David took out the canoe to scout a possible camping spot on the C&O canal while she was away.



In May, we drove to NC for a quick visit with SMom (David's mom), Steve, Helen and Aaron. Aaron showed off the now famous Mentos and Diet Coke trick; Robert has been studying the Mythbusters coverage of why it works. We came back from that trip to Jon Nordling and crew quickly demolishing our only bathroom during a remodeling project which Sarah was managing as part of her job keeping our family and home running smoothly (<http://kayakero.net/link19>). So we moved out rather than use the solar shower and the porta-potty, though Robert was psyched by having his own porta-potty. Thank you Hank and Sally, for putting us up with no notice. That move didn't stop us from enjoying the summer; actually it may have helped (see below). Over Memorial day weekend, we joined Evan and Sue at the Vienna Festival; the kids got a kick out the cotton candy and rides.

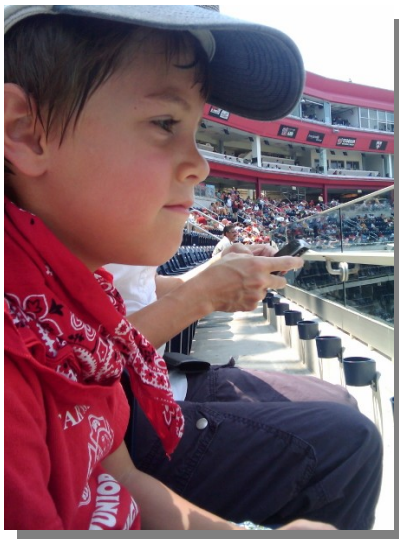


Robert finished up junior kindergarten in June and moved on to his first summer of camps—one of the camps was baseball/teeball and Robert had a blast. We also decided to get Robert his first bike. The apartment was pretty good for the bike, with long sidewalks and frequently empty tennis courts. And it was even more convenient to David's office (thanks to Sarah's excellent apartment hunting and provisioning skills). Another really nice feature of apartment living was the pool—Robert learned to be much more comfortable in the water and then started swimming last summer.

We moved back into our remodeled house in July. It was hard to say goodbye to the pool, but it was great to get back to our "new" home. Jon really did a very nice job; a little more warning on the bathroom demolition would have been nice, but it turned out really well (thanks to Sarah's excellent contractor hunting and renovation overseeing skills). And of course we had a birthday party in July (<http://kayakero.net/link20>). Actually we managed an extra birthday party during a quick trip to Atlanta to help swap out temporary furniture in SMom's new apartment. She moved down to Atlanta to a facility that offered more assistance than her Boone place. And Robert showed off his newly learned swimming skills.



We started August on a high (and, it turned out, hot) note: Robert's first baseball game. But life can't all be fun and games; later in the month, we took Robert for a tonsillectomy. The golf balls in the back of his throat were making it hard for him to sleep. And we didn't realize how much they deepened his voice until he started talking again after the surgery. It took a while for him to talk because his recovery was rough. Some kids may bounce right back; Robert took about 10 days and some of those were really hard days.



Sarah, ever the excellent planner, made sure the surgery was early enough for Robert to be fully recovered in time to start kindergarten in September. He's been having a great time at school and is now reading to us, which is just great. We went to a really cool thing later in the month: Box City. Imagine tens of thousands of cardboard boxes and lots of space (outside the Kennedy Center) to set them up, build towers, tunnels, walls or whatever strikes your fancy

(<http://kayakero.net/link21>). Also in September, Robert and his friend Evan got to play kickball in Alexandria's inaugural year of offering kids kickball (<http://kayakero.net/link22>). And we made our now annual pilgrimage to the NJ beach to meet up with Harry, Elle, Oriana, Tom and Sebastian (who now has a younger brother, Lucas—Robert's reaction on hearing the news: "Oh no, now I've to teach **him** everything...") (<http://kayakero.net/link23>). We're having to move that beach party sooner





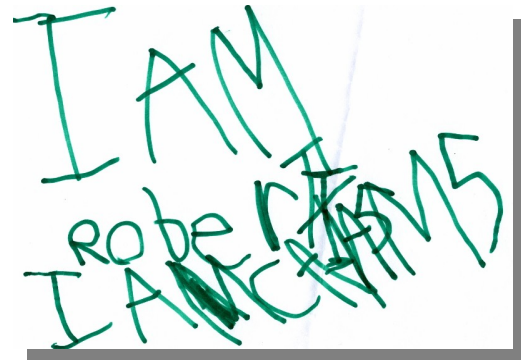
next year so Robert won't miss a week of first grade.

With Robert in kindergarten and us back at home, things started to mellow out in October. Robert helped Sarah with Bruno, the Jack-o-lantern, and then we benefited from one of the perks of his school when Robert brought home farm fresh eggs.

November saw us continuing the traditional Sunset Drive Thanksgiving. Harry and Elle came down from New Jersey, Nick came up from Florida and David Z. and Ian came over from Washington state. We had a great time visiting; Robert really loved the backyard baseball with Ian and Nick, but we all missed Lindsay. This year, David Z. and Ian prepared the meal (with a little help and supervision from Robert and fire

extinguishing support from Laurel).

December brought clear proof of Robert's new found scholastic skills: his first work of non-fiction (it says, "I am Robert I am 5). December also brought our first blizzard of the winter. Normally that 17 inches (the most snow in a single day for the DC area) would have been enough for the whole winter, but not this year. We celebrated Christmas at home then loaded up the car to drive down to Lake Norman in North Carolina to meet up with the Williamses and Clarks (<http://kayakero.net/link24>). We missed PopPop, David's dad.



We visited Fort McHenry in Baltimore on a beautiful January day (<http://kayakero.net/link25>) after Robert picked out a library book about the Star Spangled Banner. Later in the month he started karate, which he's been really enjoying.

Blizzards two and three came in February to make the winter of 2009/2010 the snowiest on record for DC: 55 inches. All the Williams - Zapolsky snow coverage is on the web: <http://kayakero.net/link26>. You know it's a lot of snow when you could build an igloo—not that we built a good one, but we could have (if we'd known what

we were doing). And to make the blizzard more interesting, Sarah zipped up to NJ when we had a bit of a scare from Harry going into the ER for a couple of days—he's now fully recovered.

We took another fun trip up to Baltimore in March; this time to Port Discovery (<http://kayakero.net/link27>); the water room served as a re-introduction to the liquid form after all our snow. We moved on from that tame re-introduction to a moderate flood (down by the river, not in our home, thankfully). We followed that with a trip to a water park near Williamsburg, Great Wolf Lodge (and realized we should have spent more time in the pool over the winter; I'm sure Robert's swimming will come back this summer). That was a spring break trip and several of Robert's classmates were there, which really made it fun. We rounded out the month with a new bike for Sarah in honor of her new job.

She started working for the Food and Nutrition Service just before the deadline for this letter. FNS is not too far away, but not metro accessible. Thus the bike (with electric motor assist). Earlier this April, we enjoyed another fun Easter (egg hunt at our house followed by another great dinner with Hank and Sally). Also, Loren and Steve coordinated a quick move of SMom into another assisted living facility that offers still more support. It's great to have all these options but sad to need to use them.

Our hopes for the coming year: time to spend with friends and family here and there and good health for all our clan.

(Did you find the twos?)



The reduced Lake Norman Christmas crew



Lake Norman