

April 15, 2011



Last year's letter (<http://kayakero.net/link28>) was brought to you by the number two; there were several twos to look for throughout the letter. This year we have a repeat of two of those twos (which is very confusing): In what may become an annual tradition, we have two new bikes this year. Robert left his training wheels behind and moved on to a bike that's a better fit for him. And Sarah realized that the motor assist on her bike did not make up for the uncomfortable upright position; her new bike is a slightly smaller, lighter weight version of big red (<http://kayakero.net/link29>).

Sarah had two jobs in last year's letter (now two years ago): first, managing our remodel. Which seems like a really long time ago; I think that's a good sign that the work turned out well and we quickly settled in to our remodeled home. And then, just as that letter was going to press, she took a position with the Food and Nutrition Service. This last year, David took a new job—still with USPTO—managing the web team (and not entirely sure it was a good move for him).

One major theme in last year's letter as been pleasantly absent this past year: we've been blizzard free (I should be safe saying that even though this has been a very cool spring so far).

With that recap out of way, here is our past year in 4 pages or less...

April saw us settling back into two working parents mode. Robert adjusted quickly to spending more time in after school activities, and he and David managed to take up most of the household running slack with Sarah's new responsibilities.

We must have adjusted quickly in order to take on such a busy May. We started the month with an unscheduled visit to the eye doctor for a look at Robert's eye—scratched in a Nerf gun accident. That slowed down his Tee Ball schedule, but not much. He really enjoyed the games and mostly enjoyed the practices (<http://kayakero.net/link30>).

We also took a quick trip up to New York to see Ian play piano in the "Everything Ellington" jazz festival. The Garfield High School band ended



up winning the contest; we missed the big evening show at Avery Fisher Hall, but did get to see his band (and several others) playing Lincoln Center. And we took advantage of the opportunity to check out the penguins at the Bronx Zoo and celebrate Mother's Day (<http://kayakero.net/link31>).

Father's Day, in June, we celebrated more locally: a great day on the Potomac River at Violette's lock. June was also when Robert had his big Tee Ball game. Not a championship or anything (they don't really keep score in Tee Ball); it was the game against Estee's team—a schoolmate in another class. Apparently they had been trash talking it up on the playground and Robert was clearly more focused on her than the game. She had a great pop fly catch, later Robert was too busy giving her the evil eye to notice a ball coming to him at first base (<http://kayakero.net/link32>). They both loved it.

We celebrated lots of birthdays in July. We started with a Fourth of July (the nation's birthday) trip to Assateague with another of Robert's classmates. It was billed as a big camping party to celebrate the birthday of one of their friends (they do the trip every year). It turned out to be not so much big as HUGE (<http://kayakero.net/link33>). We followed that up with the City of Alexandria's birthday and fireworks down by the river.



Then we celebrated July's most important birthday: Robert's! For Robert's pirate party, we built cardboard pirate ships in the back yard, set up a plank and generally said "Argh!" a lot (<http://kayakero.net/link34>). We all had a great time and it was fantastic to have so many mateys enjoy it with us.

In August we re-discovered the Building Museum. We'd visited before, and it's one of our favorites. But this year they had a great Lego exhibit. Lots of lego versions of famous architecture (it is the "building" museum after all), and even more cool was the huge room of Lego blocks for the visitors to build with. When David and Robert first went, it was spur of the moment and getting late. Tickets were already sold out for the weekend. But museum members could still get in. So we now have a family membership to the Building Museum—which we've used several times over the last year (<http://kayakero.net/link35>). It's going to be sad when the Legos finally leave (but we're glad they extended the exhibit a year).



We moved our trip to the New



Jersey beach earlier to accommodate the school schedule so we were there during the season this past September. It was a little more crowded and there were life guards this time (who worked hard to keep people out of the water when Hurricane Earl was threatening). But it was just as much fun to hang out and enjoy the sand, sea and stories (<http://kayakero.net/link36>). This coming September, we'll be doing something different (not sure what yet): Harry and Elle (the keepers of the beach house connections) will be in Italy cheering on Ian as Garfield's Jazz

band plays the continent.

Of course the big change was after we came back and Robert started first grade—he's a grade schooler now. He continues to thrive there and surprise us with the things he's learning. After a couple weeks, his teachers started on routine homework assignments. Robert was so excited: he and Sarah came home and some of the neighborhood kids swarmed the car as he was getting out. But he called out, "No time, gotta go do homework!" He was really proud of that new responsibility. That lasted about two weeks. He's very good about doing his math homework, but it's hard to get him to focus on word study or his handwriting (which he's inherited).

October's big news was taking the training wheels off Robert's bike. We practiced one afternoon and put them back on. Then we took them off again, practiced a bit more and left them off. Sarah and Robert rode home from our practice course and had a great time. Robert executed an excellent leaping self rescue the one time we thought he was headed towards a disastrous crash downhill into the side of building—hopping off was the perfect solution.



The traditional Zapolsky-Williams Thanksgiving was lovely as usual this year. David Z. and Ian did the cooking again with lots of help from Robert and no need of a fire extinguisher. We all were able to enjoy the fruits of their labor. And we had a great game of Calvin ball (photo next page) between cooking and eating. Then some of us headed down to Monticello that weekend to tour around on a beautiful fall day (<http://kayakero.net/link37>).

December was busy as usual. We started the month with Robert's first loose tooth. The timing



was a little vexing for him: he worried what would happen if the tooth fairy ran into Santa Claus. Fortunately, that tooth came out before Christmas so the potential calamity was averted.

We drove to Atlanta for Christmas; it was a long drive but not too bad—and probably only a little longer than the whole get to the airport early, check in, wait around, get delayed, fly down option. And driving let us bring Robert's bike so he could show off his two wheel skilz (<http://kayakero.net/link38>). We even caught some of the Christmas

festivities with David's mom; she's holding mostly steady and with some extra help, seems to be happy. While there were no blizzards this year, it was fun to enjoy a little bit of snow in Atlanta for Christmas.

We did have full blown snow day in January; Sarah was already on the hook to tour prospective new students around Robert's school, so he and David tagged along for some sledding on the school's excellent sledding hill (<http://kayakero.net/link39>).

We took advantage of a lovely, warm February day to visit the National Zoo (<http://kayakero.net/link40>). The bad news we learned later was that Robert's favorite part of the Zoo, the pizza playground, is likely to be closed (pesky recession).

March was another busy month: Harlem Globetrotters (huge belly laughs from the six year olds when the player's shorts were pulled down at mid-court) and a return to the Lego exhibit (with cousin Sally, we built a bridge across one of the aisles—<http://kayakero.net/link41>); Robert competing in Destination Imagination (his group invented a play given the title, "Big Bug's Bad Day"—<http://kayakero.net/link42>), and a fun spring break trip to Great Wolf Lodge and Williamsburg (a very nice follow-on to Monticello—<http://kayakero.net/link43>). Sarah and Robert continued north to play tourist in New York City and visit with Harry and Elle.

We enjoyed spending time here and away with friends and family and look forward to more of the same for next year.

