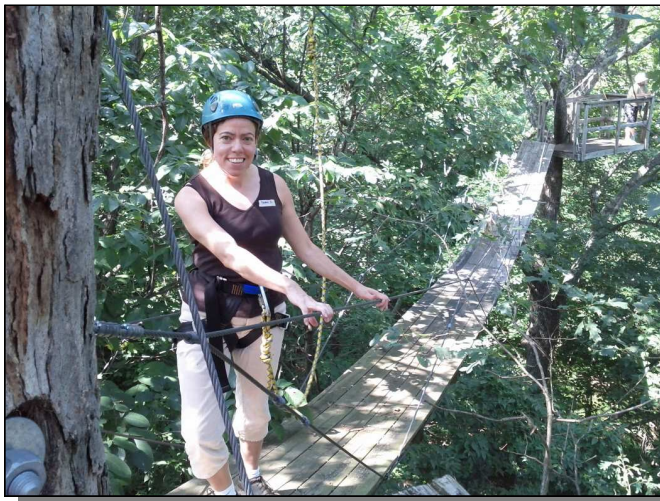


April 15, 2013

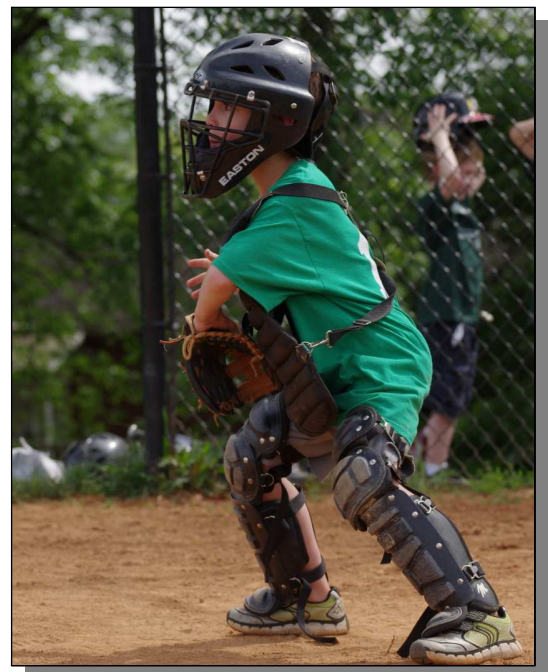
This year's tax day theme is fun and games at home and away, weather permitting. Robert continues to create lots of cool and interesting things with Legos; sometimes he lets us play along with him. The year started out last April with a visit to one of our favorite Lego haunts: the Building Museum (anyone who is not getting their first Tax Day letter will recognize this). Their huge Lego room has been a great draw ever since it opened, and jumping to the head of the line to get in was one of the reasons we joined the museum.



But, the universe does not revolve around Legos (though they figure prominently throughout). We enjoyed several visits to the West Virginia campus of Robert's school over the last year – including one trip last summer just for Sarah and David (thank you Hank and Sally for letting Robert hang out with you guys while we enjoyed our weekend away). Unfortunately, this year (with Robert in third grade), his class is only going once (David joined them on their fall trip); the

class's spring trip will be in the other direction to study the Chesapeake Bay.

Robert played baseball on the Hillcats team last spring – he'll be back again this year (with the same great coach), and while the league seems to randomly change up the team names, many of the players will be familiar. Last spring, with coach pitch, the catchers got to wear the full garb; Robert was in heaven. Along the baseball theme, Robert and David took Sarah on a pre-birthday cruise to see the Nationals play; the water taxi is a great, fun way to get to the game (especially in beautiful, spring weather). Later in





May, Sarah celebrated her actual birthday at the school's West Virginia campus with Robert and his second grade classmates. And for those not paying attention to the birthday news: Robert turned eight last July – we celebrated at his new favorite birthday haunt, the bowling alley.

We also got on the river without the water taxi's motor over the spring, summer and fall. It's a fun time for all and Robert is really enjoying swimming the smaller rapids – when the water is

warm enough (more photos: <http://kayakero.net/link45>). He also logged some time in a kayak; we may have to expand our fleet (Sarah would say trade in at least one adult-sized boat for a Robert sized-boat).

In the summer, with the temperatures in the low triple digits, the “Derecho” struck and took out our power for three days. With the help of a long extension cord and great, well prepared neighbors, we had a fan going and could charge our cell phones and laptops; but it was still plenty hot without the AC. Maybe that was getting us ready for what is now our annual trip to Assateague (thank you Seileen, Arainn and



Kenna) – also hot, but the wind and water help a lot: it was much nicer in our tent at the beach than our house in the city without AC.

Our other storm of note, Hurricane Sandy, went north; fortunately for us, less so for them. With the storm expected to cause lots of mischief around here, we ended up with an extra day off and took advantage of that time visit the Apothecary Museum (where friend Lauren works); Robert was psyched by the concept of a mad science tour and loved the experiments.

The last year has not all been about Robert; David geeked out when we decided it was time to replace Sarah's aging MacBook Pro. Somehow, getting the data transferred to her new machine





involved gutting her old machine. And that turned into gutting a couple even older laptops to provide Robert with parts for his robot art project at school – maybe it really is all about Robert.

Throughout the past year, we all have enjoyed visits with friends; thank you Pete and Maureen for stopping by in the Spring. Thank you to Harry and Elle for hosting Thanksgiving with Ian and Evan joining in (the private pool hall

is way cool; more photos: <http://kayakero.net/link46>). Harry and Elle came down for Christmas (and brought Ian), and David Z., Lynn and Sam came east for the holiday, giving us a chance to get to know



her family better (more on that later). Then we headed down to Decatur for Christmas part two, catching up with Williams clan (more photos: <http://kayakero.net/link47>).

Another thank you to Hank and Sally for joining us in wishing Bob a bon voyage as he planned to drive west after retiring from AARP. And we enjoyed a too quick visit from Michelle and Noah in February – Sarah kidnapped Robert to jump on their train back to Long Island – well,

she and Robert made it to DC before hopping off and coming back home. A final thank you to Hank and Sally for hosting Easter dinner at their house again this year – always a fun, tasty time.

The highlight of the year (the most away fun) was the August wedding of David Z. and Lynn in Winthrop, Washington. The location was stunning, the drive there from Seattle spectacular (hard to beat the Cascades in the summer), the wedding, pre-wedding cowboy cookout with stagecoach ride and post-wedding shooting star and space station flyby parties were great. We had lots of fun and really enjoyed the chance to spend time both with Lynn's family and the extended Zapolsky clan.

From Winthrop, we drove to Yellowstone



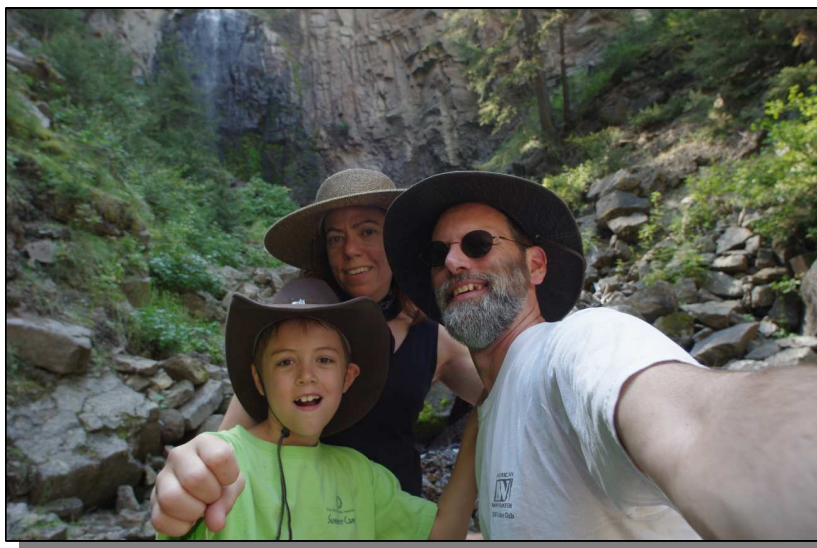


and spent a week in the park before taking the long way (via Grand Tetons) back to Seattle. Along the way we saw beautiful creeks, rivers, mountains, geysers, hot springs, bison, elk, coyotes and Harry and Elle. They were also touring around Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons; it was great to cross paths with them several times. Sarah really wanted to see a moose, but the moose sculpture in Jackson Hole

was as close as we came.

A tremendous trip and we really appreciated the great wedding event as the centerpiece (lots more photos: <http://kayakero.net/link48>).

As noted, fun at home and away best describes our past year. We hope that holds true for you as well. As always, you can keep up with us on the blog: <http://kayakero.net/link44> (mostly David's point of view), Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/szapolsky> (Sarah's point of view), and, new this year, Robert's blog: <http://robert.kayakero.net> (password protected – drop us a line for the password); he loves to read comments on his posts, and may post more if encouraged.



Better still, drop by and say, “Hi,” in person.