



*2014 Easter eggs*

Special treat this tax day letter: two Easters. I don't believe that's happened before. Easter 2014 was just after last year's tax day letter. Spring weather was just hitting Alexandria, much like Easter this year, so we took the eggs out to the front porch to dye them.

In addition to the eggs, Sarah made a Peepscape of a medieval times jousting tournament and Robert built a Viking army out of peeps – the two civilizations later clashed and were eaten ([kayakero.net/link57](http://kayakero.net/link57)).

This year's Easter followed the pattern: egg dyeing and peepscape construction. The 2015 Peepscape themes

revolved around Robert's Social Studies in school: Columbus and the explorers, and early colonists ([kayakero.net/link58](http://kayakero.net/link58)).

Robert has continued with the saxophone in music at school. Last year, his fellow saxophonist was sick for the spring recital, so he got to lead the show off with a solo *There's Music in the Air*. And he did a great job! The Flutes and Clarinet joined him for *Bingo*; it was great to see him on stage doing so well. That may have started a trend; jumping forward in time again, Robert soloed last month as well. In spring 2015, he played *Kumbaya* (and this time knew he would be soloing). This practice photo really made the music teacher's day.



*Saxophone practice*

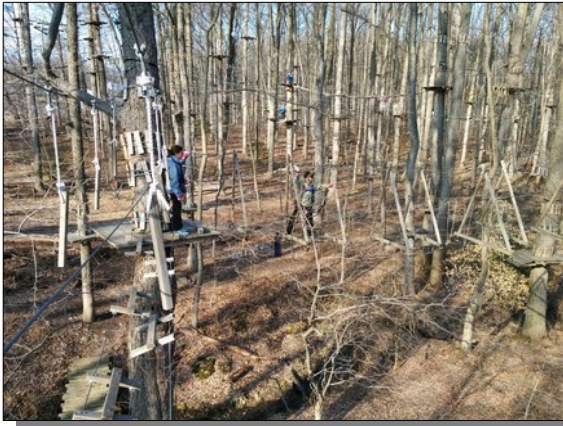
Over the last year, we've enjoyed our local river with lots of trips. We've done our favorite rapids, been swimming in our favorite stretches (when the water snakes were not in the way), had some fun on the flat water and even found a new rope swing. Two of those trips are especially noteworthy: For Father's day we paddled across the Potomac south of town to storm Fort Washington (again, we did the same thing several year's ago for Mother's day). The extra attraction this time around: the cannons blasting. Fortunately, they were firing blanks. And, the reenactors pointed out, with about half the black powder that they would use for real cannon balls ([kayakero.net/link59](http://kayakero.net/link59)).

Exciting though that was, the more exciting trip was Robert's first whitewater solo. Some of the great



*Robert running the feeder canal*

folks we met at Assateague (more on that later), had a Robert sized kayak that their kids and relations had all outgrown. So Robert now has his own boat (and it's scaled to him). That was plenty exciting to start with. Then he and David took his new boat to lock six and Robert ran the feeder canal rapid on his own. And not only on his own but with a cheering audience: It turns out, there was a boating summer camp practicing river rescues. The kids would swim out into the rapid and about halfway down, a guide/counselor would throw them a rope and pull them to shore. So when Robert came down the rapid, they all cheered. We're not sure it's good that his ego is stroked that much



*Sarah and Robert on the ropes course*

([kayakero.net/link60](http://kayakero.net/link60)).

As mentioned, another on and in the water activity for us included our annual trip to Assateague Island. This year, we made the best of it early because we were watching Hurricane Arthur heading up the coast. After a night of watching our tent ceiling getting blown lower and lower over our heads, the park ranger came around and strongly encouraged everyone to leave – not a mandatory evacuation – but strong encouragement. We decided to set the right example for Robert (and we really didn't want to be beach camping during a Hurricane) so we headed home early ([kayakero.net/link61](http://kayakero.net/link61)).

A positive side effect of leaving early was Sarah's discovery of Sandy Springs Adventure Park. A really fun ropes course a little ways beyond the beltway in Maryland. While not a water sport, it's been an excellent way to get outside and we've been back several times now. And after his birthday, Robert is allowed on the courses by himself.

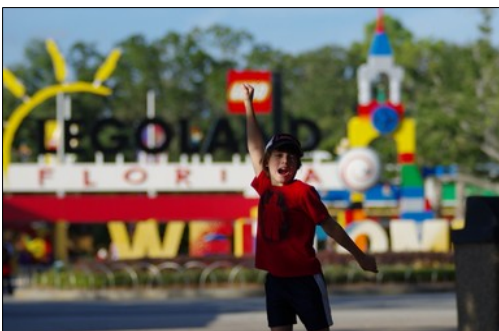
Speaking of Robert's birthday, he had one this year; he's now into double digits at 10 years old. We started the birthday celebrations with his friends playing laser tag. It was, as always, a fun trip. In addition to running around with a laser gun, he got several fun presents (many of them Legos) and capped it all off with the now traditional visit to the Lego Store followed by a Sushi-go-round lunch/dinner topper. Extra treat this year: the new metro Silver Line opened so we could take the metro to the Lego Store. Fortunately, it's a long metro ride so not tempting to go too often ([kayakero.net/link63](http://kayakero.net/link63)).



*Robert and his AT-TE*

On the subject of Legos, this year Sarah arranged advanced tickets to the big Brickfair show. The line was still long but not oppressively hot outside and the line did move, so we only had to wait about 45 minutes to get in. We saw all the crazy, cool stuff: Star Wars, super heroes, cityscapes, battle scenes, just about anything seems to be possible to recreate in Lego. That included a self-referential drive-in movie theater showing... *The Lego Movie*, of course ([kayakero.net/link64](http://kayakero.net/link64)).

Clearly, Legos are still a big thing for us (mainly Robert, but the adults can play too). So much so that in the fall, we arranged a day at Legoland during a trip to Florida to join in the celebration of Nick and Trish's wedding. Since we were more or less in the neighborhood, it really was a required stop and lots of fun.



*Robert lovin' Legoland*

However, the trip centered around wishing Nick and Trish CONGRATULATIONS! They chose the extremely auspicious date of November 28<sup>th</sup> for their wedding on the beach. It was great to see the whole, extended Zapolsky – Conzevoy family, have a bit of time to visit with them all and see them doing so well ([kayakero.net/link65](http://kayakero.net/link65)).

Also on the subject of visiting, we managed a couple trips to

New Jersey and New York this past year. In August we took Harry to the Math Museum, home of the square-wheeled tricycle (otherwise, underwhelming). We also took the ferry to Ellis Island – a first for both Robert and David. We found Isadore Zapolsky's name on the wall of immigrants – placed before the family realized that he actually crossed the Atlantic to Canada and came to the U. S. through Detroit ([kayakero.net/link77](http://kayakero.net/link77)).

And we headed up again in January to go to the Met. While the weather was a little questionable for the trip, we managed to avoid all the icy road traffic snafus through dumb luck and really enjoyed the museum with its *Arms and Armor* hall for Robert and the *Death Becomes Her* Victorian mourning clothes installation for Sarah.



*Flying Monkey in Oz!*



*The kicking rig with Robert*

Closer to home, one of the many summer camps Sarah arranged for Robert was a return to Synetic Theater. This year they were putting on *Oz!*, a take on *The Wizard of Oz*. His favorite role in *Oz!* was as a flying monkey. Robert has enjoyed that summer option for a couple years and is looking forward to this year's ode to *Star Wars*. We're all curious to see what they do with that story ([kayakero.net/link66](http://kayakero.net/link66)).

That camp marked the end of summer. And last September, Robert started fifth grade! His final year in elementary school! Sarah and David are watching him grow fast and coming to terms with writing next year about our middle schooler. But for now, he's still in elementary school, learning a lot, and enjoying being a mentor to a fourth grader in his mixed fourth / fifth class.

In school they just completed their science fair projects. Robert decided (after discarding several good ideas because human and animal subjects were not allowed) to investigate DeflateGate ([kayakero.net/link68](http://kayakero.net/link68)). He tested the theory that under or over-

inflating a football gives an unfair advantage. After giving it due thought, he designed a kicking rig (for consistent kicks) and measured how far balls at normal, under and over pressure were kicked. It was cool to see the data start to line up and he concluded that the NFL standard of 12.5 PSI is the best – at least for punting – the catching rig is still a gleam in his eye ([kayakero.net/link67](http://kayakero.net/link67)).

A surprise visit from David Z. may have been a trigger for Robert's interest in DeflateGate. He came to town in October for a Supreme Court case that happened to coincide with a Redskins – Seahawks game. Being the fan that he is, he arranged tickets, and so we all watched the Seahawks tromp the Redskins (well, not tromped as much as some had hoped and others feared). And we managed to keep our trash talking clean – it was a little tough to be sitting in our stadium, watching our team with David Z. and friends wearing their Seahawks jerseys.



*The drone fly-in*

Shortly after school started, but before the science fair, we



*On the skipjack Sigsbee*

headed in to DC to visit the Building Museum for their *Big Build* day. The Building Museum remains our favorite local museum and the big build lived up to its billing with an attempt to get into the Guinness Book of Records with the largest toy structure. While the construction neared the 60 foot target that afternoon, we heard later that they missed the record ([kayakero.net/link69](http://kayakero.net/link69)).

We returned to the Building Museum in January this year to watch the drone fly-in. We now have our own fleet of drones because it was so interesting and the pilots so nice and helpful to point out (in an enabling

kind of way) that the small drones are pretty affordable and just plain awesome. As the spring weather improves, we'll get them out of the house (when it's not too windy). And we've even introduced several friends and family members to how entertaining they are to fly around ([kayakero.net/link70](http://kayakero.net/link70)).

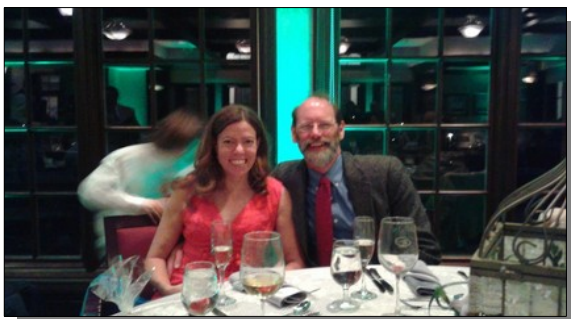
Between visits to the Building Museum, late last September, one of the Johns Hopkins programs Robert has been participating in featured a skipjack trip on the Patapsco River – and we all got to go. It was a beautiful day and we had an excellent time sailing around Fort McHenry. We also enjoyed learning more about the Chesapeake Bay and Patapsco River biology – but Robert did not enjoy the oyster dissection ([kayakero.net/link71](http://kayakero.net/link71)).



*Smom and the grandkids*

We decided (after Thanksgiving with the Zapolsky – Conzevoy clan in Florida) to head to Atlanta for Christmas and enjoyed catching up with the Williams clan. They, too, are all doing well. We brought David's mom over for some of the festivities and she seemed to enjoy herself and the company ([kayakero.net/link72](http://kayakero.net/link72)).

And David and Robert spent Robert's spring break on a fun, burger-filled train trip to Atlanta and back. They visited the Aquarium again and made it to Stone Mountain for the first time. About the burgers: after a burger on the night train down, and a Brickstore Pub burger the next night, Robert decided he was on a quest and managed (with some parental help) to have a burger-a-day until he and David were back in Alexandria. The night train was not as restful as they were hoping. It is amazingly convenient to walk a block to the train station, and great not have to worry about driving or dealing with the crowds, lines and tiny seats of flying, but the sleeping car is the way to go for overnight train trips – they didn't spring for those tickets, unfortunately ([kayakero.net/link73](http://kayakero.net/link73)).



*Robert blur, Sarah and David*

And that takes us right back to the beginning and our second Easter of this tax day letter.

We hope you all are doing well and staying healthy. Let us know if you happen by our neighborhood (we're close to metro, Amtrak and the airport). And you can always keep up with our exploits from Sarah's Facebook page ([kayakero.net/link76](http://kayakero.net/link76)), or David or Robert's blog ([kayakero.net/link74](http://kayakero.net/link74) or [kayakero.net/link75](http://kayakero.net/link75)).