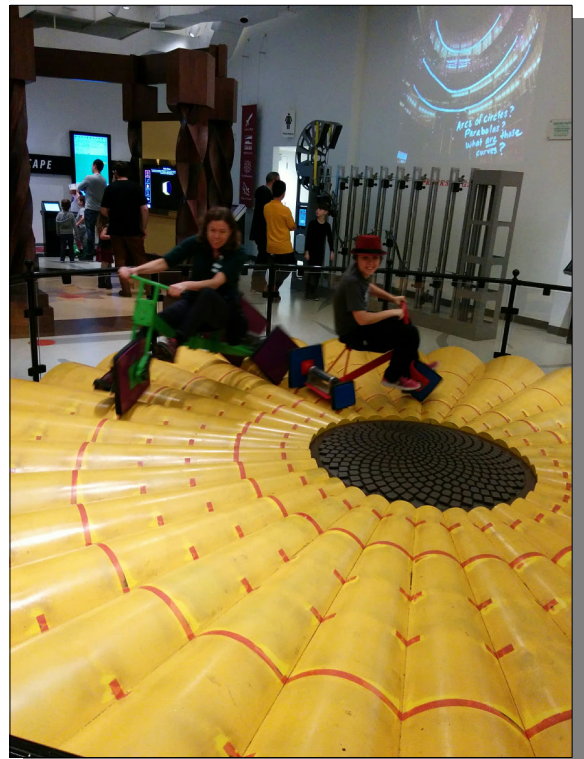


A busy year but fortunately for us, little direct impact from the bad news flowing around.

Last spring, we enjoyed the National Math Festival in D.C. It's a very nice way to spend a day. We met up with a friend from Robert's school, together they enjoyed the Oobleck Olympics: running across a non-Newtonian fluid, making huge bubbles, and firing an air cannon at a stack of plastic cups. There were lots of other interesting games and cool things to look at (<http://kayakero.net/link99>). Following on heels of the Math Festival was USPTO's take your kids to work day (politically correctly, "Take our Sons and Daughters to Work Day"). At PTO, that meant more sciencey stuff: Robert and team programmed a Lego car using Scratch to follow directions for driving it to a virtual Patent Office.

Later in April, we headed out to the West Virginia campus of Robert's school to help open the place up for the season. This has become an annual tradition where we get out of DC and do some physical work in a pretty place. And it's not all work, this year the weather was great for romping around (<http://kayakero.net/link100>). Of course we got out on the Potomac, closer to home, to enjoy the spring weather as well.



*Sarah, Robert on square-wheeled tricycles*

In May, we joined the Seattlites in New York for Mother's day (<http://kayakero.net/link102>). David Z. took the whole bunch of us for brunch to celebrate the mothers in the group: Elle, Sarah, Lynn and Sophie's mom, Boyana. Not to diminish the Mother's day celebration, but we also saw *Hamilton* – a real treat in a year full of treats. In addition, we visited the Cloisters, the Math Museum and the M&M store while we were in the big city. If you're not familiar with the Math Museum, they have proven that with the right shape to your floor, tricycles with square wheels work fine.



*Robert coming down off the bald*

We celebrated Sarah's birthday later in May with our tradition: dining at *Los Tios*, where they treated us well, and Sarah got to wear the big sombrero, as we all did celebrating our birthdays this year (<http://kayakero.net/link103>).

Robert and David were back in West Virginia on his class trip to take advantage of our earlier work there. The Seventh Graders (this was last spring) hike up to the bald and spend the night in tents – which David got to do as well. It was damp, but lovely and perfect weather for S'mores (<http://kayakero.net/link101>).



*Robert and our root beer*

also met our guides for the trip from ROW Adventures. We had David, in his canoe, Loren and Tim in kayaks, Steve in a ducky and ROW provided oar and paddle rafts along with a couple more duckyies. And then there was Felicia, the inflatable flamingo and Klawboautoman the lobster. We kept the inflatable flotilla on the rafts for the bigger rapids, but they were lots of fun around the campsites, in the current and in the smaller riffles.

Highlights were only two swims for David



*Robert riding Felicia*

The Summer brought the first big news item of this past tax year: our 2017 Salmon River trip. A decennial tradition David's brothers started in 1977. Sarah joined in 1997 and while Robert was a bit young for the trip in 2007, he had a great time this year.

David and Robert drove out across the country (carrying David's canoe) with Robert navigating by the paper atlas Sarah provided – no GPS tricks to get across the country. We stopped at traditional and new places along the way: visiting the Indianapolis 500, The Wisconsin Dells (Waterpark Capital of the World), an A&W root beer restaurant, the Corn Palace, Wall Drug Store, Mt. Rushmore, the Crazy Horse Monument, Devils Tower and the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

And that was just the trip out there.

In Lewiston, Idaho we met up with the Williams clan and many friends: six from the first trip in 1977, some from later trips and some new to our group. We



*David dropping into the hole at Snowhole*

(he was expecting about one a day): Upper Bunghole and Snowhole; beautiful weather and a fun celebration of July birthdays (thank you ROW for helping to pull that off). The great constant was having the opportunity to hang out together and spend time with folks we'd not seen in years while meeting new friends. Many more details and photos here: <http://kayakero.net/link104>.

After the trip, we spent a day wandering around Lewiston and drove up to Moscow to pick up a



ducky of our own – they are fun watercraft. Then David took Sarah and Robert to the airport (Sarah was short on leave time and Robert’s presence was requested by one of his favorite Smithsonian camp counselors) and David started the drive back east. It was very different solo; he missed Robert. But it was also reminiscent of his college days driving between Olympia, Washington and Clayton, Georgia (with an extended stopover in Richmond, Virginia). Robert enjoyed *Dinos and Dioramas* at the Smithsonian as a quasi-YTA.



*Sarah, Robert and David off the coast of Belize*

After the summer, Robert started his final



*Robert and the Saturn V*

And for a school science experiment, Robert (with some adult supervision) built a rocket sled to try to gauge the benefit of an aerodynamic nose versus a blunt nose. There were some issues, but it was fun to try some of what we’ve all been watching since Robert hooked us on *The Mythbusters* (<http://kayakero.net/link106>).

Later in the fall, we took a quick trip to Belize to finish up Robert’s scuba certification. Last year, we headed to Grand Cayman but Robert had issues clearing his ears and was not able to get his final certification dives done. This year, no ear issues and Robert is happy to show anyone who asks the scuba sign for nurse shark – we saw a lot of them (<http://kayakero.net/link107>).

We spent Christmas at home (we’d seen the Williams clan over the summer and the Zapolsky clan was gathering on the East Coast). We had a lovely dinner with the Zapolskys and Hubbards in Springfield and in the process, learned that cooking a goose on the grill is the way to go. One of Robert’s

year as a middle schooler and our last year at Burgundy Farm. The realization that he’s had one school for 10 years and that those years are winding down, has been a bit sobering. But that takes nothing away from the fun, educational things they get to do. David was able to join Robert’s class on their last trip to the West Virginia campus. For the eighth grade, they camp both nights in tents on the bald – it was not as damp but sprinkles or rain seems to have been pretty common there (<http://kayakero.net/link105>).



*Expanding the addition a bit*

favorite presents was a Lego Saturn V rocket. It should have taken days to build, but he did it in hours (<http://kayakero.net/link108>).

More fun with Robert's school started out 2018: the annual Shakespeare Festival at the Folger Theater. This year, his class rocked *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's great to see how much Robert puts into theater and how much he enjoys it. And his effort paid off: he won the Brian Cabe Award for spirit of the festival.

We took advantage of our great location and saw several concerts this past year: Shawn Colvin, Stanley Clark, Sweet Honey in the Rock and the Subdudes.

Finally, 2018 is the year of a kitchen improvement: putting an exhaust fan in the kitchen (after almost 20 years). And, since we had guys working on the house anyway, they are expanding the back room, adding a powder room, refinishing the floors and replacing some windows as well. The work should be wrapping up a couple weeks after you get this (fingers crossed – <http://kayakero.net/link109> more photos over time).



*Sarah on paddleboard, Robert in ducky, David in canoe*

short on leave time.)

An exciting and fun year for us; we hope for you as well. Please come see what we hope will be a nicer, more spacious kitchen and visit us whenever you are in town.

As ever, you can keep up with Sarah on Facebook: <http://kayakero.net/link76> and David on his/our blog: <http://kayakero.net/link44>. And give Robert some grief for not keeping up with his blog: <http://kayakero.net/link75>.



*Robert taking a selfie at Wall Drug Store*