

April 15, 2019



New family room and kitchen

In last year's tax day letter we had decided it was time for an exhaust fan in our kitchen (and a few other little changes). That work went well. David, thinking back to work done on the house he grew up in, thought we might be able to stay in the house this time; the bathrooms were not scheduled to get any work so that seemed to be less of an issue.

That didn't last. Sarah, again, found us a great short term lease. This time in one of the high rises pretty close by with a lease that allowed pets :) We moved in to the empty apartment, dropped off Robert, Pinker and Panzer, and headed to his school's annual fund raising auction. That wasn't really the plan, but that's how it worked out. Then we got some rental furniture and borrowed a camp cot and inflatable mattress and settled in for three months (OK, more than just an exhaust fan). See kayakero.net/link109

With the work on the house complete and new furniture for the new space, Sarah learned about a program called Group Muse. You invite friends over for a small gathering and they supply the musicians. In our case a classical guitar and mandolin duo. It was a great way to christen the new space. See



Cool new faucet and exhaust fan

kayakero.net/link111

Another monumental change for us this year was Robert's graduation from Burgundy Farm. Until then, he had been going to the same school for ten years. There are several things the school does to help mark the transition out of middle school. The eighth grade musical is one right of passage. This year they performed *Peter Pan*, and Robert played the lost boy Nibs.

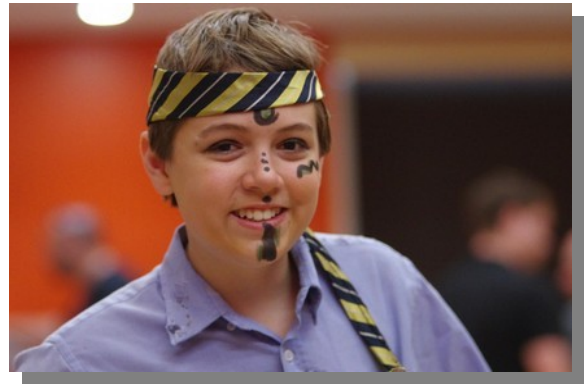
Robert took to heart many of the suggestions and recommendations about adjusting to high school. It took some time to catch on to a whole new scholastic rhythm and setting. Going from a graduating class of 32 eighth graders to a freshman class of about 1000 ninth graders was a shock.

But going in to the STEM program put him in a



Robert graduation night

more focused group of about 100 freshmen. As part of the STEM program, Robert had to prepare a project for the science fair. Sarah had just read about some MIT folks working on a challenge from the Navy to keep divers warm longer in cold water. They discovered that “soaking” a wetsuit (which is an open cell foam) in a denser than air gas improves the insulating property of neoprene. Robert took that experiment for his project and proved that keeping a wetsuit bootie in argon will allow it to



Robert as a Lost Boy

keep you warmer

longer. We just have to figure out how to take a couple tanks of argon with us on our dive trips. That was interesting enough to get past the school and the city science fairs, and into the regional science fair where he won a second place ribbon! See kayakero.net/link110



TC Volleyball Club

Robert heard about a volleyball club at TC and signed up for that, having really enjoyed volleyball in middle school. That also helped with the adjustment to high school: there was a small group of players in the boys volleyball club from across the school.

And while the volleyball season ended pretty early on, Robert has stayed busy after school with theater: first being asked to join the tech team for a community theater production of *Guys and Dolls*. We learned about the difference between

competitive tryouts for community theater versus the bonding and learning experience of all students in the class having a role at Burgundy. And then Robert joined the tech team for TC’s production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Beyond school and the work on the house, we were able to enjoy the beach at Asseteague again. It’s become a great way to celebrate summer ever since we were invited to join the crew as Robert went into first grade. (More great friends made over



Boogie boarding at Asseteague



David and Robert at Grayson Highlands

science fair), we flew down to Bonaire for a diving vacation. We stayed at Buddy's Resort, home of the drive through air exchange. Bonaire has great shore diving and our stay included a four door pickup (a Grand Tiger). You load up your gear, drive through the air exchange, pick up tanks and head to one of the more than fifty shore dive sites.

We really liked three: Salt Pier, Oil Slick and Bachelor's Beach. Salt Pier was a cool location and the pilings were interesting to swim around. Oil Slick had a really fun jump off the cliff entrance. And Bachelor's Beach had an actual beach (most of the shoreline is rocky) and a food truck selling great burgers!

A special treat: they are restoring the coral in Bonaire and Robert took the coral restoration class so he is now a certified coral



Robert working on a coral tree

the course of our time with Burgundy.) See kayakero.net/link112

Later in the summer, David and Robert headed to Grayson Highlands state park, one of David's favorite parts of the east coast; a great spot for camping, hiking and backpacking. The weather was not ideal until the last day but we did have a good time hiking, meeting the ponies, enjoying the view, and not minding the rain. See kayakero.net/link113

Before starting high school (and the



Sarah and Robert doing the underwater dab at Salt Pier

restoration diver (the only one in the family). The practical part of the class was working on these coral trees. The coral needs to be cleaned as it grows on the trees and then is transplanted onto natural rock where it will grow over time. See kayakero.net/link114

In early November, David and Robert drove down to Winson-Salem to check in on Aaron. We enjoyed some games of *Equate* and *Settlers of Catan*. But we were really thrilled to happen to be there for Aaron's discharge from the hospital. Steve's medical updates have now dropped to about every

other week as Aaron is well on the recovery path after his marrow transplant.

For Thanksgiving, David Z. and Lynn came east. David Z. had run into the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Seattle and so arranged a private tour for the family. It was awe-inspiring first to see the fantastic space, and then to learn about the collection, including 82 first folios – more than any other library. And finally, to get to see one of those first folios and several other rare volumes they brought out based on the various interests of the family. It was an astounding time. See kayakero.net/link115

While high school is taking up a lot of time; we managed to get some sledding in on our favorite hill – introducing new neighbors to the spot to carry on the tradition.



Shakespeare library



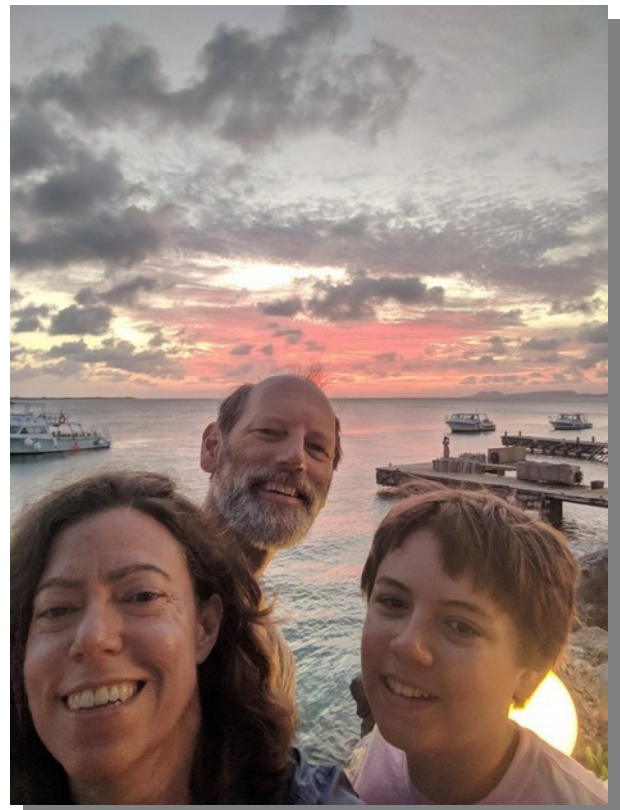
Catching a bit of air

help Elle with her packing up for a move to Florida. Getting paid by HUD after the fact made the whole shutdown seem even more pointless, but Sarah was glad for the time.

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

And, of course, if you're in the neighborhood, please stop by for a visit.

And while Sarah was impacted by the government shutdown, USPTO kept running on their reserve fund. That gave Sarah time to



Sunset in Bonaire