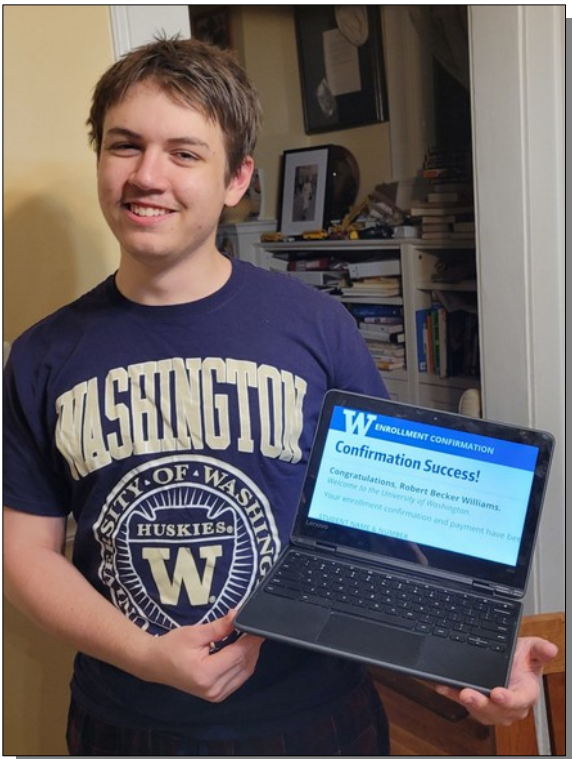


Tax day 2022

It's good to have choices. After research, discussions, tours (virtual and in-person both self-guided and grouped) Robert believes the University of Washington will be a perfect next step in his education. And while he was accepted to several schools, he was overjoyed to be able to accept an offer from UW. We have a Husky in the family now (strange for cat people).

We're ecstatic to see an easing of Covid restrictions which allowed us to choose to visit those colleges. And our travels were not completely focused on school options for Robert.

We spent nice days on the Potomac (each in our own choice of watercraft). And even initiated a newbie into the "storming the castle" paddle across the Potomac to Fort Washington (<https://kayakero.net/link127>). Sarah P. was one of the key folks in Alexandria's response to Covid; she designed the system for signing up for



Robert accepted his first choice admission offer: University of Washington

vaccines and went on to join our Sarah in the Points of Distribution (Pods), the mass vaccination events. It's great that there are no more large-scale Pods, another good sign.

We traveled to look at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh (<https://kayakero.net/link128>), and Princeton in New Jersey. And we extended the trip back from Space Camp (more later) with a visit in Atlanta to say, "hi!" to Kate and Sean's daughter Addy, the newest member of the Williams clan, and check out Georgia Tech and Virginia Tech on the way home.



Sarah and David with their favored watercraft



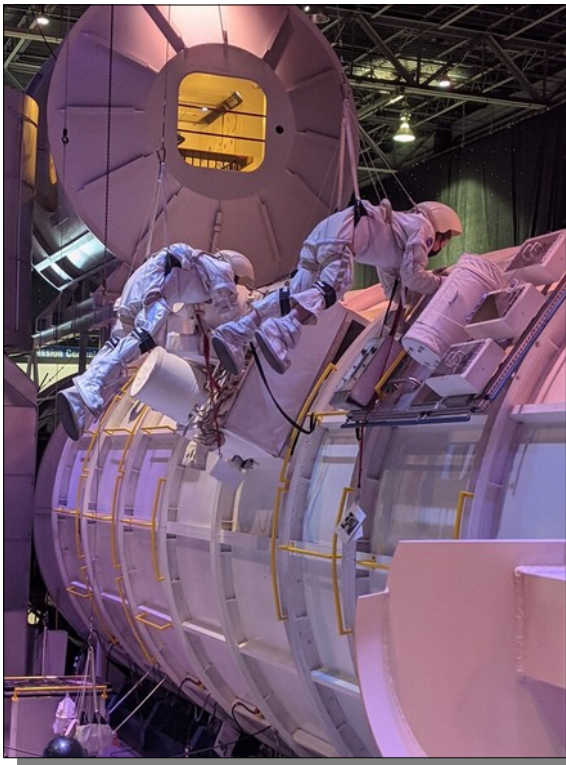
Robert, Sarah and David Z in Puget Sound

It was fantastic to see the Atlanta crew in person after so long. For our visit, Addy was showing off her mobility and mad skills at getting around grandparents(!) Loren and Susan's house. Of the two "Techs," Robert was more interested in Virginia than Georgia, much to Loren's chagrin (<https://kayakero.net/link129>).

Robert's interest in engineering has branched out to encompass both aerospace and racing. We continue

to follow F1 after getting hooked on Netflix's *Drive to Survive*. And Robert has introduced us to both dirt track (<https://kayakero.net/link130>) and NASCAR racing. Sarah was so intrigued with NASCAR that she arranged for a surprise treat: a ride-along at the Richmond Raceway (<https://kayakero.net/link131>).

As Robert has been winding down his years as a Titan (the school name has changed to Alexandria City High School but the teams remain the Titans), he's gotten his first taste of employment: working for several months at a local laser tag spot. The money was nice, the management not so much. So he refocused on



Simulated EVA repair from Space Camp

Origin's offices outside of Seattle (thank you David Z. and Lynn for arranging that), it was a very interesting tour. We were also treated to a Seahawks game, ferry ride, trip up the Space Needle (where we looked for David Z. and Lynn's house), visits to several museums and the Chihuly Garden of Glass; seeing the glass in Seattle's spectacular sunlight edged with dark clouds was stunning. That was such a jam packed trip that it really cemented UW as Robert's first



Robert ready for a tour of Blue Origin school
to finish strong. Which he is doing, including joining the National Honor Society and looking to have a 4+ GPA!

We remain extremely fortunate. Robert was able to return to Space Camp last summer and he has really enjoyed his time in Huntsville. This time he was able to leverage his scuba certification for low gravity training in the dive tank – including using a bowling ball to play underwater basketball. And a simulated EVA to repair the space station.

His enthusiasm must show because he was invited to the Elite, invitation only option this summer. In a small world story, we may get to say, "hi" to Aaron as he recently moved to Huntsville to work (not at Space Camp) – starting his post-collegiate phase of life.

In the fall, as part of our college tour of UW (on a beautiful day), we were able to take a tour of Blue



Sarah, Robert and David on Space Needle



choice. Robert knows that his time at UW won't be that full of touristy things to do – but will still be a fun, fantastic and educational experience (<https://kayakero.net/link132>).

We connected with the Williams clan for Thanksgiving on Ocracoke Island. It was great to see everyone and spend a week relaxing at the beach. While the weather was cool, Sarah couldn't resist the water and eventually convinced Robert to join her. The rest of us marveled (and took pictures).

Also on the beach, we wrote welcome notes in the sand to the new, newest addition to the Williams clan: Gwen. She is Sam and Rachel's daughter, born in Flagstaff the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Michael and Paula let the family use the Flying Melon (closed for the season) for Thanksgiving dinner. That was a real treat: plenty of space to spread out, no worry about having enough matching place settings.

Robert before his NASCAR ride-along And lots of options to finish off or reheat the food everyone brought to the table (<https://kayakero.net/link133>).

We do have sad news to share this year, Pinker, our softest ever kitty, passed away after a bout with cancer. We were very sorry to see her go. Panzer is adapting to the loss of his sister.

For Christmas, we headed back to Seattle with the Zapolsky-Hubbard family. We really enjoyed that trip with more museums to see, a showing of *A Christmas Carol*, a Blind Boys of Alabama concert and yet another (snowy, this time) Seahawks game. It was great to be able to catch up with the Hubbard side of the family again.



Brave Sarah and Robert Thanksgiving

And the Yankee Trader game, which Ian helped us define the house rules for, was a very fun way to spend Christmas day (<https://kayakero.net/link134>).



Thanksgiving in the Melon

Both family vacation trips also had time for fun indoor games. We continue to enjoy *Catan*, a sometimes cooperative building game. On our trips to Seattle, we were introduced to a couple of secret guessing games for different numbers of players. They involved varying amounts of deception to make them more challenging and the outcome more surprising.

Our fun was not limited to trips, Sarah and David were able to return to the Birchmere after two years for a great Marc Cohn concert. And then we all went to the Kennedy Center to see the latest version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Though the audio was harsh so Robert had some trouble following along, David loved the 40 year old memories.

And football was not the only professional sports we've seen. We rode Metro in to DC to watch the Washington Capitals play the Seattle Kraken (the newest NHL team). Robert had only slightly mixed feelings about the Caps winning. He's decided he'll root for the Seattle teams as long as they are not playing the Other Washington's teams. When the Caps, Commanders or Nationals are playing, he'll be a supporter of his first home teams.



Robert as defensive specialist



Christmas brunch in Seattle

We're not professional sports snobs: Robert finished out the season with the Titans boys volleyball team. And has more recently taken up Ultimate Frisbee – something that we're expecting will easily carry over to UW (where he may also find a volleyball club).

As we see things opening up again, we hope you'll stop by when you're in the neighborhood. We miss the visits we had pre-pandemic and have been enjoying making up that deficit. Sarah was able to celebrate college roommate Michelle's son's wedding in New York and Hank and Sally stopped by Alexandria on their way back home after months wandering the southeast with their RV.

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Sarah retired from federal service; she left HUD to join the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, where the impact of her work is clear and immediate. David continues to enjoy his walk to USPTO.

If you can't come by in person, you can keep up with us through David's blog (<https://kayakero.net/link74>), Sarah's Facebook page (<https://kayakero.net/link76>) or Robert's Twitter feed (<https://kayakero.net/link126>) – see how nice it is to have choices :).



Robert, Sarah, David overlooking Pittsburgh