

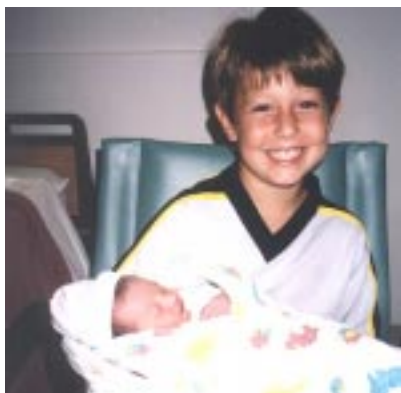
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The Manick Family Year in Review by Steve Manick

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Oy what a year we had! We were only a few days into the year when Darlene and I got the news: *Baby Manick, the Sequel* was on the way. It was obvious that Darlene's nesting hormones went into overdrive when she called me soon after and said she found our new house. "Since when are we looking for a new house?" Within a few days we were committed (as we should have been) to a traditional 5-bedroom house with a big backyard and a park across the street. Never mind that it adds more time to my already punishing commute. It was stressful trying to sell our old house and thankfully all went well in a very complex deal. The "move from hell" included our mover walking out on us because we had 5 extra houseplants, not securing a new mover until 4:00 PM on our last day, and Darlene ending up in the hospital with stress-related labor pains. Mother's Day morning was spent sleeping on a moving blanket in an empty new house, but by early summer we were settled in and enjoying our new home. ♦ Our beautiful daughter, Julia Rose, was born on August 30. Although Darlene was induced early due to a (misdiagnosed) condition, Julia was a healthy 7 pounds, 1 ounce and 20 inches in length. Darlene made the delivery seem simple (she didn't cuss me out once) compared to Adam's and was back to work within a few days. Adam beamed with pride while holding his hour-old sister and has since adjusted well to his new sibling. Julia (previously known as "Eve") has dark hair, a killer smile and resembles Adam as a baby. She has already mastered the art of charm and now controls the schedules and actions of everyone in the house. If only our little angel would sleep through the night. ♦ We had little opportunity to travel this year. We resumed our tradition of visiting Yosemite in winter and Adam had a great time playing in the snow and viewing the sights. Darlene and I had a few relaxing days waddling through La Jolla a few weeks before Julia's birth. Our summer was spent relaxing and entertaining at home and in the pool—barbecuing almost daily on the new BBQ island. Adam celebrated his sixth birthday in July and is now in first grade, where he towers over his classmates. He swims like a fish, loves our "engineering" projects, and has recently joined a basketball league. Following Julia's birth, Darlene relocated most of her therapy practice to her new office at home, where she is now occasionally seen by her family. In December she celebrated an unspecified milestone birthday. My job at LAX (now managing security projects) is going well and I expect some positive change soon. I'm still devoting much of my free time to publishing my wine, family, and porn (just kidding) websites. As of this year I am sports car-less for the first time in 27 years—just in time for my mid-life crisis. Sonoma (our Golden Destroyer) was adopted by our neighbors prior to our move, and now has full-time playmates and pool access. Two chewed-up houses and one broken foot are now only memories. ♦ Although the demands on us are greater than a year ago, I feel like we're in a good place. I don't expect any major life changes for a while—and no new houses! My favorite moments of 2002 were the birth of Julia and hearing Adam say "when I grow up I want to be a dad." And finally: consider the number of people you've met in your life and how few become friends. If you are reading this letter, you are *my* friend and I hope to see more of you this year. We wish you health, happiness, and the best of years.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
Steve, Darlene,
Adam and Julia 