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The Manick Family Year in Review

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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It's again time for you to read how exciting our last year has been. (Okay, it's basically a repeat of last year.) Once again, our annual winter vacation in Yosemite put us in springtime conditions rather than our hopes for snow, however it did snow heavily the day *after* we left. In March, Adam led his school's team in this year's *Odyssey of the Mind* competition, where their entry was a full-sized electric vehicle with a face that could show emotion. The team made it to the state competition in the Bay Area, and our extended trip included winetasting in Livermore and six days in Concord and Carmel. This was the shortest school summer vacation I've seen, lasting only seven weeks. We took my nephew Ryan on our annual early-summer camping trip to Kings Canyon National Park, and had an enjoyable time with warm weather and a great campsite. Adam attended summer school for most of the summer and taught robotics during the few available weeks. And because we had so much fun in Hawaii last year, we chose to spend ("spend" is the key word here) our summer vacation in Maui once again. Unlike last year when we visited Kauai, Maui & Lanai, we spent nine days relaxing at Maui's Hyatt Regency on Ka'anapali Beach and did little else. Our usual Thanksgiving trip to Palm Springs was unusually hot, with temperatures in the 90's. ♦ **Adam** turned 16 in July and immediately launched a campaign to get his driver's license. He asked for "a new set of wheels" for his birthday so we bought him a new mountain bike. (Okay, he'll soon be driving the Jeep.) With some additional freedom, he's been exploring the city by bike and by bus. His junior year AP and Honors classes have been keeping him very busy, in addition to being the editor and photographer of his high school yearbook. ♦ **Julia** turned 10 in August and is now in her final year of elementary school. This year she performed in two plays: *Bye, Bye, Birdie* and *Seussical the Musical*, two piano recitals and a dance performance at Pepperdine University. In addition to being a very fine artist and writer, she's also good with technology. She was very excited to receive a cellphone for her birthday. ♦ **Darlene** surprised us all by suddenly starting a doctorate program in psychology at a school near Santa Barbara. For the next four years she'll be away from home for a four-day weekend each month (playtime for the kids and me) and pulling all-nighters. And this month she declined to acknowledge a major milestone birthday (although she kept her presents). ♦ **I** finally bought a new car after suffering seven years of automotive disappointment and frustration. My new Audi A6 has fewer features than my old Acura RL, but is far more fun to drive—and seems to be better built. I'm also trying to discover why mirrors (panes that they are) somehow make me look older. "Who is this guy?" And just in time for those big holiday meals, I had some of my wisdom (teeth) extracted. I'm considering an early retirement so that I can do something more enjoyable with my life--and do it closer to home. ♦ **My parents** celebrated 61 years of wedded bliss (my term, not theirs) this year. My dad is having difficulties with the reality of starting dialysis in the near future. My mom is having difficulties with the reality of my dad. Aaaah, love! **Those cats** (aka Tigger, Puma, Linus, Lucy and Lexie) spend considerable time gloating about how well they have trained their humans. ("All the world is a scratching post.") Admittedly, this is a self-inflicted situation. So that's about it. We sincerely wish you a happy, healthy and safe new year!

Steve, Darlene, Adam and Julia
...with Tigger, Luna, Linus & Lucy and Lexie

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