

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

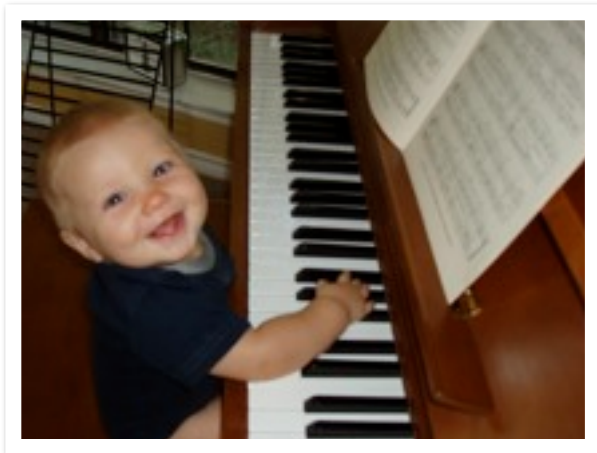
THE AITALA FAMILY ANNUAL - 2007

Aitala brothers team up to sleep deprive/exercise middle-aged parents.

New Year's eve, 2006 (Austin, TX) - Happy New Year! We're so glad it's here because it means we've had an extra week to finish the letter and hit the send button by January 1.

The year has been a short one. With our baby [Kole growing up overnight](#), he's been ticking off his milestones. Kole has earned several nicknames – the “tank”, “meatball” and “Dillon.” He fights back against second-child-syndrome and does do his part to get his parents' attention.

His special gift is “rock-n-roll.” Do not be alarmed if you see him “rockin” out against his crib or a couch. He finds the beat and bangs the heck out of his spinal cord. Experts confirm it's just a soothing rhythm, but if this is any glimpse of his future musical career, we're betting on heavy metal. He capped off his year with walking 5 steps to Mama on his 1st birthday.



Dillon's year has been a challenge in toddler psychology as he traded his pacifiers for a scooter at the binky store and said

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goodbye to diapers by announcing, "Mommy, I've got the feeling!" We are trying our hand at marketing the "terrific threes" to Dillon who had his birthday celebration at the Austin Zoo. He enjoyed taking friends and family on a train ride, feeding the animals and batting at a piñata.



He's a comic in training and is quick to laugh and play. Sara spends much of her morning discovering her inner-animal by answering to "wolf," "mommy bird" or "baby dinosaur." She's just happy there's no hidden cameras installed in the family room.

Mark is still employed at Apple computer, racking his brain to invent the iPod accessory that will bring overnight riches and allow him to hang up corporate cube-life to become a full-time travel agent for his family. He has mental health night on Monday nights when he [plays steel pan with a local group](#). He now plays bass, tenor bass and lead pan and hopes the teacher will arrange his favorite hit from the 80s "Take on Me." To his surprise, a Cayman drummer of-

ferred Mark a place to stay if he'd play drums in the upcoming Carnival celebration. We have not yet ruled this option out. Stay tuned.

After maternity leave with Kole ended, Sara returned to part-time writing and producing at [EnviroMedia](#) where she has been involved in many broadcast campaigns aimed at improving public health and the environment. Highlights included the 20th anniversary for Don't Mess with Texas which also won [America's Favorite Slogan contest](#) and also a water conservation campaign for North Texas. The fall has been busy with [tobacco prevention work](#) and planning for the company's upcoming 10th anniversary in 2007.

Other family highlights have included a trip to Seattle for cousin Courtney's

wedding, [a couple of doses of Shamu at Seaworld](#), [and a wagon debut for Kole in the July 4th neighborhood parade](#).



Dillon enjoyed playing with lots of cousins during the family reunion trip in July to Missouri where he not only learned to

come down a water slide but also learned how to "throw up" when he and more than half of his relatives got hit with a virus we fondly refer to as "The Edge." Luckily, the infected ones went down for only 24 hours and then we were able to return to family fun.

In September, Sara turned 40 and coped by planning a trip for her and Mark to NYC for a triple-night on Broadway seeing the amazing shows "The Color Purple," "Wicked" and "Jersey Boys." Mark also surprised Sara with a dramatic plot of his own – he secretly contacted friends and family and absconded with birthday cards so that Sara could receive them in NYC and [ring in "40" with "friends at her side"](#). It was a wonderful treat! So-called friends from EnviroMedia also arranged [a "private" meeting with the naked cowboy](#) in Times Square and made sure to send her home with a souvenir ☺ (see photo and movie of the event). We went rollerblading in central park, ate the best pizza at John's in the village, and took a walking tour at the World Trade Center run by survivors and families of survivors (www.TributeWTC.org).



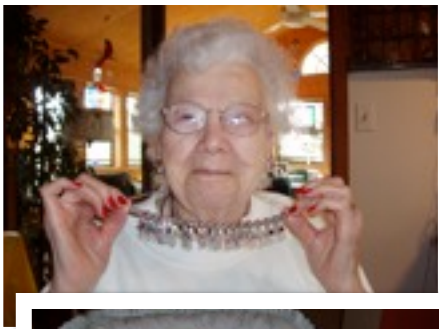
Mark turned 41 in September and now has to compete with his boys to lick the frosting. He enjoys bike riding (even dragging the boys in the trailer), swimming and introducing the boys to the finer things in life such as pizza, pool time and kayaking in Garner State park.



sdMark-N-Sara celebrated 5 years of marriage in November. We can hardly believe how fast the time has gone,

but we're lucky to have each other and an endless supply of laughter in the home. Our love and appreciation of each other grows every day as we realize how tough life would be as a single parent.

November 22 marked the 100th birthday for Sara's Grandma Beechner in Lincoln, Nebraska. Still living on her own and driving, she's the envy of all centenarians. With 19 great-grandkids under the age of 16, you can imagine what kinds of memories were made the week all 42 members of her family came together to celebrate around Thanksgiving. We are thrilled that so many of us can enjoy her wisdom and humor.



December was filled with holiday fun and sun. After Kole's birthday photo op and Austin's annual Jingle Bell ride, we joined Mark's family (Roger, Krystyna and Lisa) [in the Cayman Islands](#) and enjoyed snorkeling, swimming with stingrays and a visit to the turtle farm. A year after Hurricane Ivan hit the island, most homes and businesses are

back to normal. Our return on Christmas Eve allowed us to spend some time in Houston with Mark's



cousins and then return to Austin and enjoy a visit from Sara's family. What a great way to wrap up 2006, with family and friends by our side, waking each other up at midnight to say "Happy New Year" and stagger off the couch to our beds.

Love from Mark, Sara, Dillon and Kole