

THE VERLEYS - 2001

January



During the month of January, we welcomed a new member to our growing family: Joshua Alexander was born to Janice and Danny Guckenburg on January 15, 2001, at 9:08 p.m. at Scottsdale Osborn. He weighed 6 lbs, 15 oz, and was 19.5 inches tall. Here is the proud papa with his brand new son. ←

Cousins Mary & Joshua →



February

ARIZONA HIKING TRAILS

&

Naked in the Woods

Clockwise from top: Jeff Dement, John, Jimmy Freegard (filling in for Jim Sowden), Tony (video), and Doug Smith.



On February 14 - Valentine's Day and Arizona Statehood Day - our new web site, ArizonaHikingTrails.com, went live! While I created a lot of the graphics that we used as titles, John moved all of our web pages to the new site - and just in time, too, because Deja.com got acquired and shut down our old site a month later!

Mary turned six months old on February 8 - and immediately thereafter, she learned how to sit on her own, without falling over! We were happy to see her accomplish such a major milestone.

John also competed in the Valentine's Money Meet on February 16 & 17. His 8-Way skydiving team, 8 In Time, took the silver medal, and his 4-Way team, Fast Track (←pictured here), took bronze!

March

As springtime came to Arizona, John and Mary and I found ourselves getting back in the outdoors. We backpacked in both the Superstitions and in Sabino Canyon. John purchased "The Limo" - a Kelty backpack that holds all of the backpacking gear and a baby up to age 5. Mary now travels in style on the trail...but John gets shorter by the mile!



Springtime also meant Spring Training, as we took the kids to their first baseball game. Here are Mary and Joshua, wearing their official AZ Diamondbacks clothes, at Phoenix Municipal Ballpark, where we saw the Oakland A's play.

Mary also cut her first tooth, on March 9, at 7 months old!

April



In April, we were fortunate to have another visit from "Omi" and "Opa" Chakowski - Mary and Joshua's great-grandparents. The whole family enjoyed a nice Easter picnic at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The next day, Opa turned 87 years old! Here he is enjoying his great-grandchildren. →



At the end of April, it was time again for the Rocky Point Skydiving Boogie. This was Mary's first trip to Mexico, as well as her first time on the beach. She enjoyed splashing in the seawater, but it was just a little too cold for Joshua! →

We also made a side trip through Organ Pipe National Monument, which was absolutely beautiful...but unfortunately, it was too hot for hiking!



May

In May, ArizonaHikingTrails.com was featured in the Arizona Republic, in an article about West Valley hikes!

With his promotion to Payroll Manager official, John went on his first ever business trip: to Fargo, ND. While he was there, he made one memorable jump at Skydive Fargo...and had a reserve ride!



Mary cut two teeth during the month of May!

I celebrated my first Mother's Day with a fun backpacking trip to Fossil Springs. ← Even though we all came down with the stomach flu, a nice time was had by all!

During Memorial Day Weekend, John and I bought a new Gateway computer! It also came with a scanner, so we began to add pictures to our web site!

June



We learned a valuable lesson during the month of June: babies get sick...often! Mary gave us a good scare when she came down with pneumonia and had to be hospitalized for 24 hours, on her 10-month birthday (June 8). Fortunately, she recovered quickly, and we were soon back to doing what we love to do: HIKING! Here we are in Wildcat Springs, June 24, 2001. →



July

The goal for July was keeping cool! On July 4, Mary celebrated her first Independence Day by swimming in her grandparents' pool. As you can see, she had a ball! →



We also went on a number of hiking adventures on the Mogollon Rim and in Flagstaff, including a "luxury" backpacking trip in Kinder Crossing, with the whole family.

John and I celebrated two years of marital bliss on July 17. We had a lovely dinner at the Salt Cellar and went on our first backpacking trip without Mary!

August

August was an exciting month for us - we celebrated Mary's first birthday on August 8! We had a birthday party for Mary at our home that following Saturday, August 11. Mary made out like a bandit - and, on top of that, she started *crawling* that same day!



AND, in August, we purchased a new vehicle - a 1996 Jeep Grand Cherokee, with 4WD! We love our new Jeep!

We also went on vacation to San Francisco, CA, to celebrate my best friend Suzanne and Todd Daggert's ten-year wedding anniversary. While we were there, we hiked and backpacked in Point Reyes National Seashore, the Muir Woods, and the Mendocino National Forest! What an adventure!

September

On the heels of our San Francisco vacation, and only days after the tragedy of September 11, John and I, along with Bill and Erika, took another vacation, to hike the entire forty-mile length of Paria Canyon! Although we had planned for four, we accomplished this feat in only three days! Meanwhile, Mary got to stay with Janice, Danny and Joshua for five days! And did I mention that Mary has separation anxiety?



October



October was another busy month for us, as we were visited once again by Grandma and Grandpa Chakowski, as well as Aunt Lotte and Uncle Richard. John and I even had a chance to go hiking with Lotte and Richard (and Bill and Erika) on Mount Graham. Here is our group at the trailhead! ←

Mary celebrated her SECOND Halloween, dressed as a lion - she was even cuter than Simba (from *The Lion King*)! →



November



In November, John and I discovered the joys of owning a four-wheel drive vehicle - the most important of which is that we can go places that we could never get to before. Here we are in two of those places: the Tortilla Trailhead (left) and Reavis Ranch (right), both of which are in the Superstition Wilderness Area. We had some fun adventures there!

We had a very quiet Thanksgiving at home this year - John and I hosted a lovely dinner for his parents. This was Mary's first Thanksgiving dinner - and she discovered that she loves cranberry sauce!



December

In December, we went on a different kind of adventure - we drove to Los Angeles to pay a visit to my father. We went to Universal Studios and to Skydive Elsinore (at Lake Elsinore) so that John could make a jump. What a nice vacation!

And so we come to the end of 2001. From our house to yours, we bring you Seasons Greetings and our best wishes for a Happy 2002!



With Lots of Love,



John and Heather and Mary Verley