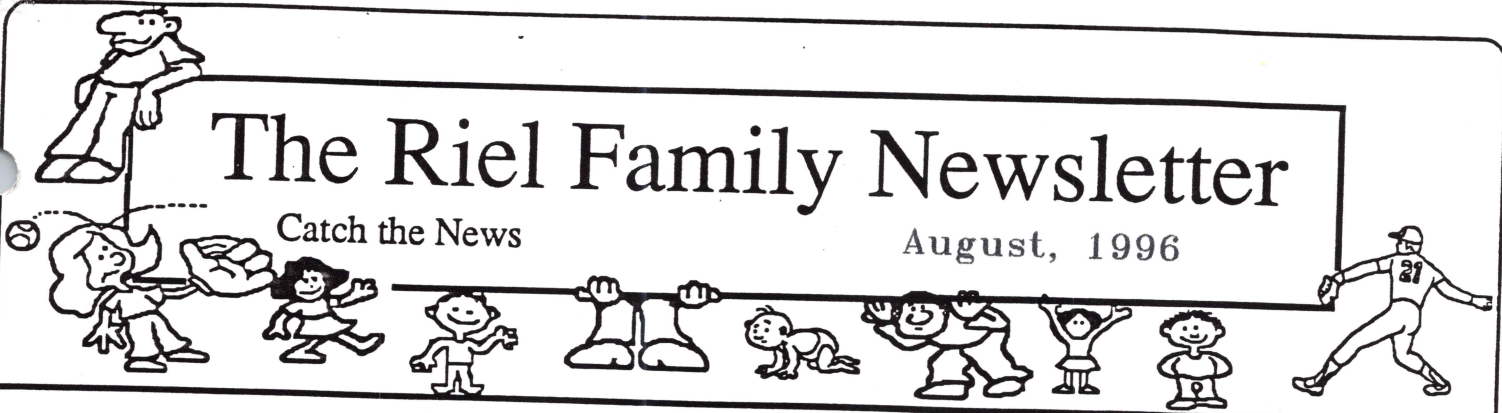


# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

August, 1996



## BRUCE EYE OPERATION SUCCESS !!

We have the following communication from reporter Bruce Hartman, his first hand report on the recent eye operation. We are very happy about the positive outcome he describes.

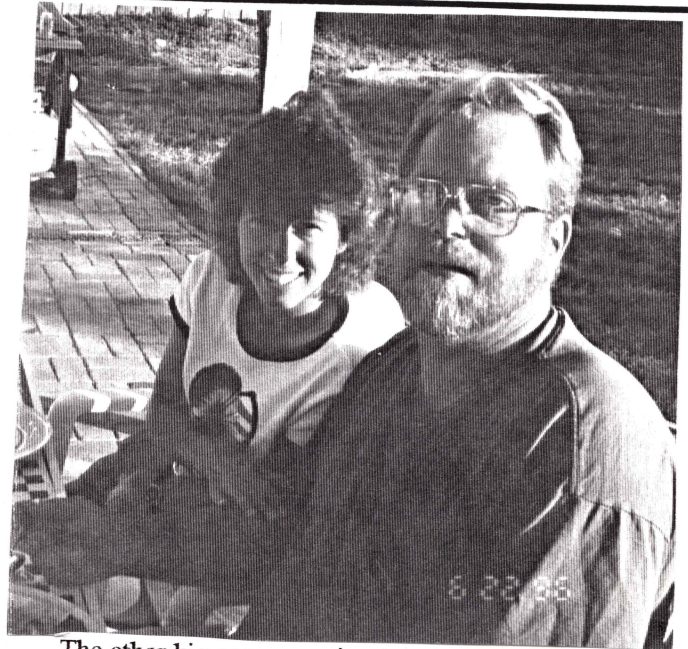
Dear R.F.N.L. readers,

### GOOD NEWS FROM THE HARTMAN HOUSEHOLD!

As you all know, from last months R.F.N.L., I had to have surgery on my left eye in order to save my sight. The thyroid disease "Graves" was causing the muscle and fatty tissues behind my eyes to thicken. This thickening was pinching off the optic nerve and had finally reached the point that blindness was only months away. Originally, the doctors had explained, the procedure would involve cutting around my eyelids and then removing my eyeball, thus gaining access to the part of skull needing to be removed. I was fortunate however, to get referred to a specialist who is skilled in a new procedure that was not so terribly invasive.

On Monday, July 22, at Kaiser Hospital, a team of two surgeons performed an "Endoscopic Orbital Decompression" on my left eye. This procedure was done under general anesthesia through my nose. Yes...through my nose. A camera (endoscope) was passed through my nose and after cutting through the sinuses, gained access to the part of the skull making up the eye socket. After that it's no more high tech than using a hammer and chisel. They broke out all of the bone under the eye and on the nose side of the socket. This allows the thickened tissues to drop down into two sinus cavities and relieves the pressure on my optic nerve. With my eyeball now sharing sinus space, infection is a concern, but we'll cross that bridge when we get there. For now, I can't blow my nose as that blows my soft tissues up like a balloon and cocks my eye crooked. Even sniffing makes me crossed eyed but only for an instant.

The procedure was very painful and so far there has been no improvement in my eyesight. Improvement was only going to be a bonus anyway, I'm just happy they were able to save what sight I do have. I will still have to do the other eye but hopefully not for a while.



The other big concern going into this surgery was my heart. Four weeks prior to the surgery I had a couple of scary episodes that made me go see my doctor. I have had funny things going on for years and have been on medication to regulate my heart but, as it turns out, I have been having heart attacks. The cause of these attacks is electrical only. I do not have coronary heart disease or blockages. It's just an electrical impulse problem. I am on drugs that block these impulses and carry nitroglycerin tablets just in case. It all sounds worse than it really is.

The doctor said four to six weeks recovery time but I think two will probably do it. After all, how much "Oprah" can a guy take?

A very heartfelt THANKYOU to all of you who were saying prayers and keeping good thoughts while I was in the hospital. It's a wonderful feeling to know that there is so much support and love out there for both Birdy and me. Thanks to Bob for keeping our kids for a couple of days and an extra special big hug and thanks to Listy who brought the 31 flavors to the hospital and made it a party, and to my brother Steve who stayed with Birdy the whole time until I was released. That's all for now...all is good !!

Bruce

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## TRAVEL NEWS (LOTS)

July was a big travel and vacation month. We had Bob Riel in Chicago and Margaret in Budapest (business trips) and Francie and family in Canada and Hartmans and Gillinghams in Big Sur (vacations). We have the following accounts, plus some general family news from Bob Riel.

Summer is certainly here and the pool is nice and warm so if anyone would like to come up just give us a call. Karla would enjoy the company.

See ya all,  
Bob

## BOB RIEL DOES CHICAGO

Hello all,

Well I'm back from my trip to Chicago, what a great town. Home of the second largest shopping mall in the western world, I couldn't help myself, I had to check it out. Then the next thing you know I am strolling down the "Marvelous Mile" thinking what is happening, why are all my trip business trips located next to large shopping malls. Even worse, why am I being drawn to them? Is it because of some deep hidden instinct, or have the Riel girls encrypted some subliminal message in their E-Mail? That must be it! Jeff, Help Me! There must be some intervention program that can cure this affliction. Wait, I know ..... FOOTBALL, it's just around the corner. If there is a cure, football will certainly do it.

Margaret, The science and industry museum was great! I wish my kids could see it, there were so many different thing to do and see, one day was not enough. I was really impressed by how clean the town was and how friendly everyone was. Although, I think the way they know you are a tourist is if you wait for a green light before you cross the street. I'm not kidding! You take your life in your hands every time you go out in the street. No one, and I mean no one, pays any attention to the street lights, it's so bad that they posted cross walk guards down by Navy Pier so the tourist would have a fighting chance.

Jeff, you're right it's a great town, the weather was perfect (low to mid 70's) and the food was great! We did go and see Wriggley Field but the Cubs were not in town. We saw both the Sears and Hancock towers, and we even took a boat ride out onto the lake. By the way sorry you were not getting all my messages, I just naturally thought Carol would share them with you, but that not being the case I have added you to the list.

With regards to mom and dads party I would propose a meeting out at our house and while the kids are all in the pool we could sit around and decide what to do (in the spa of course with plenty of drinks). This needs to be a family project with plenty of participation from ALL of us.

Family news.... All of us are doing fine with one exception, last Saturday, while in the spa relaxing I was bit by a red ant. I just figured no big deal, unfortunately, it turns out I am very allergic to them and my right arm has become swollen from my elbow down past my wrist. What's worse is that it feels very hot to the touch, so much so, that it tricks my sweat glands into action for just that area, pretty weird. The doctor has put me on Prednisone (Bruce and Karla know all about that) and some anti-biotics. Hopefully, things will get better in a week or two. The doctor now wants be to carry around a anti-venom kit in case I get bit again.

Brian had an ear infection last week while I was away, but is better now. The funny part about that is when the doctor checked out his other ear to see if it was ok, she found a small pearl in it. No kidding! We asked Brian how it got there and he said he doesn't know. So now I tell him he can grow pearls in his ear and would he grow one for me. I keep checking every day but so far no luck.

## MARGARET DOES BUDAPEST

Margaret left the Riel/Mehan household to survive on her own for a record 10 days to go off to work in Hungary (July 4-13). This conference was kind enough to locate some entertainment during the middle of the conference so that those who come, work & leave actually get some time to sightsee. The I\*EARN conference brought about 250 teachers from 30 countries together to find ways to involve students in preserving the health of the planet and to work together as global citizens to solve common problems. These teacher teams, usually 5 teachers from each country, all worked together bridging languages and cultures. In the evenings we sang songs and joined in dances representing the different countries.

Budapest was a great city for a conference. It is a very pretty city with the Danube River running through the middle forming at one point a small island (Margaret's Island) and then later separating into a Y forming three regions that were once each separate cities, Buda, Pest and Obuda. We stayed on the Buda side which is the wealthier area. We stayed in University dorm rooms near the Gelhart Hotel which has the old roman baths. The city is located over a set of natural springs and these springs feed a number of warm water "medicinal" baths and spas. In addition to these spring baths, there were swimming pools and landscaped hills for sun bathing. It was a very pleasant retreat from the conference for those who didn't have meetings to go to.

On July 10th they took us on two tours. The first was a sweeping view of the city of Budapest followed by a sociological look at the problems that the city faces in the change from communism to capitalism. The second trip was to another small town outside of Budapest where there was a ranch with horseman and a horse show that was very different from any I have ever seen. There was a single rider standing on two horses (one foot on each horse) with reins tied to 5 horses and he raced around at breakneck speed with these 5 horses moving as if they were one. The horses were given commands with sounds and did tricks that made them look like large dogs. They rolled over, laid on their backs and sat up on their front legs like only a dog does when told to sit. They had whips that sounded like guns when snapped. The horses did not even blink when these whips were cracked.

They gave a few people a chance to use the whips (but not to crack as it is actually very dangerous if you don't know how to do it). They set up some bottles on a post and a few people tried to whip them off. Most people failed -- you get one practice then three attempts. When he asked me I came up and then lifted the whip. It was much heavier than I expected and suddenly standing there with so many

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people watching, I just held for a few minutes thinking about how foolish I was going to look. Then I just threw my arm into it and the bottle went flying. It moved almost by itself and I was the most surprised person to see it happen. I won a bottle of Hungarian wine to bring back to Bud. Bud also got a special t-shirt:

B U D A  
P E S T

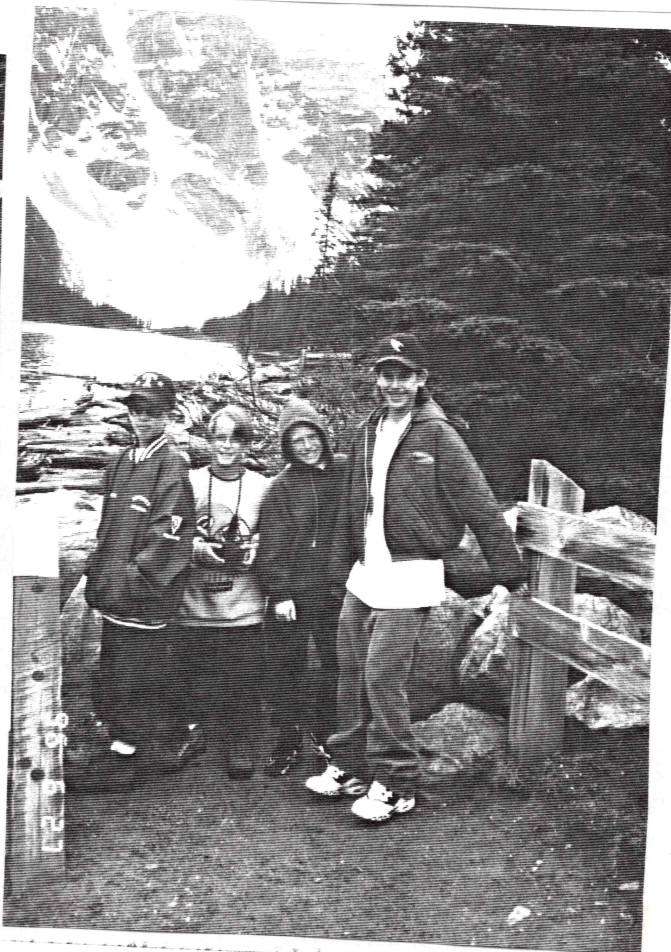
The many colors of Hungary  
(Francie wants to add an 's)

## FRANCIE AND FAMILY DO CANADA

Francie, Brett and Bryce returned recently from a tour of western Canada. They saw wild animals, snowcapped mountains, lakes, and a lot of other outdoor sights foreign to California. They stayed in some plush hotels, complete with bunk beds and hot tubs, and also roughed it a bit. It was a great vacation.



MARGARET HITS THE BOTTLE IN BUDAPEST



TRICK RIDERS SHOW OFF THEIR SKILLS

### KAMLOOPS, B.C. N. THOMPSON RIVER

The city of Kamloops was originally settled along the banks of the Thompson rivers. This view shows the N. Thompson river making its way into the city, where it will join with the S. Thompson. The moderating effect of the rivers provide Kamloops with a pleasant climate, promoting relaxation amidst a western style setting.

Photo Credit: Mel Basaraba

Dear Mom + Dad -  
Having a great time  
seen elk, deer, big  
horn sheep, bears +  
Moose - none wilder  
than Brett + Bryce -  
See you  
soon  
Francie



Frank + Edith Riel  
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USA 92103

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Address: Box 4002, Williams Lake, BC V2G 2V2  
Ph: 392-4988 Fax: 392-7099

L-9569

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## HARTMANS AND GILLINGHAM'S DO BIG SUR

### Big Bash In Big Sur

The Hartman's and the Gillingham's (along with one other family) spent a week in the middle of July, amongst the Redwoods at Pfeifer Big Sur National Park. Bruce and Birdy drove up a day early, spent the night in Monterey, so to be poised to grab the two best camp sites in the whole park. It paid off! We were but a short walk to a beautiful creek. It was deep enough for some great swimming (if you could stand the cold). The beach was a 4 mile drive. Big Sur has a beautiful sand beach set in the typical rugged California coast line. Craig and Scott enjoyed the rugged terrain so much that they decided to make a dangerous climb to the top of a rock face. It was a little scary coming down (especially for Bruce and Birdy as they watched from below) but they made it all in one piece. Bob and Listy, got in a lot of running (even on vacation...go figure). Birdy and Listy also got in some good old shopping with all of the girls in Carmel (it may not have been Nordy's but we toughed it out!) We all enjoyed sharing meals and singing around the campfire. We got in some whittling and lots of time to relax with a good book in hand. The Bobmobile made it home in a record 8 hours, while the Hartmanmobile made it home at a snail pace 12 hours. Can you guess who ran into car troubles??? Luckily, we travel with our own mechanic who guarantees to get us home and he did!!



### KRISTY GILLINGHAM ART WORK

Recently we had a chance to review some of the art work Kristy is doing at school. We were very impressed with the progress she is making, and borrowed one of her sketches, which is reproduced above. She has done many more, and all are very impressive. We hope she will continue to develop this talent.

### AUGUST BIRTHDAY CALENDAR

Carol Benesch	August 2	42
Nathan Riel	August 13	15
Christopher Riel	August 13	15
Annie Gillingham	August 13	9
Jason Benesch	August 30	15

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

There were four birthday celebrations in July, Kevin Riel, Chris Riel, Nathan Riel and Tim Riel. Kevin's was late, due to work schedule problems, and the twins were early, again for scheduling reasons. Unfortunately we do not yet have the photographs, and that plus space limitations in this issue cause us to postpone the details until the September issue. You can read all about it then.

### JULY 4TH CELEBRATION AT HARTMAN ESTATE

Grandpa and Grandma celebrated the 4th at the Hartman annual celebration, with Birdy and Listy in charge. The guests included friends of the family, and there was much swimming and socializing. The food was great, and the complete story with pictures will be in the September issue.



BIG SUR

Photo by Peter Lik

Dear Mom + Dad,  
 we are having a  
 great time camp  
 with my favorite  
 twin sister. We are  
 surrounded by the  
 Redwood trees. It's  
 beautiful. We are  
 only 4 miles from  
 the beach and only  
 10 miles from the  
 shops. It's heaven  
 Birdy + Listy



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CALIFORNIA  
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 THIRD WEEK 29 USA

Post Card

The Riel's  
1875 Lyndon Rd  
San Diego CA  
92103



Kristy Gillingham 1996

Hello all,

Well I'm back from my trip to Chicago, what a great town. Home of the second largest shopping mall in the western world, I couldn't help myself, I had to check it out. Then the next thing you know I am strolling down the "Marvelous Mile" thinking what is happening, why are all my trip business trips located next to large shopping malls. Even worse, why am I being drawn to them? Is it because of some deep hidden instinct, or have the Riel girls encrypted some subliminal message in their E-Mail? That must be it! Jeff, Help Me!

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Summer is certainly here and the pool is nice and warm so if anyone would like to come up just give us a call. Karla would enjoy the company.

See ya all,

Bob

0.75 reduction

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N. THOMPSON RIVER**

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See you  
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Love  
Frank + Edith

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**BIG SUR**

Photo by Peter Lik

Dear Mom + Dad  
we are having  
great time camping  
with my favorite  
twin sister. We are  
surrounded by the  
Redwood trees. It's  
beautiful. We are  
only 4 miles from  
the beach and only  
10 miles from the  
shops. It's heaven

Love  
Birdy + Lissy



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**Post Card**

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\* 90 reduction