



Jessica in Italy Yes, Jessica took off for Italy on March 25th, and arrived safely. We have lots of news from her by e-mail, and we will reproduce it as it comes in. No doubt it will be a continuing story, which we will print as time goes on. Here are the first few chapters, as transmitted by Carol.

Hi everyone! - I am forwarding Jessica's notes to us from her first few days in Italy. We talked with her on her cell phone yesterday for a long time, and she is having a blast. Even had time to fit in a trip to an Irish Pub in Siena with a large contingent of friends from her school. (It seems there is no drinking age limit in Italy) Here is her address with the family with whom she lives:

Jessica Benesch
Presso Girloami Rino
Zia Cavour 166
53100 Siena, Italia

Phone: 011-39-329-1907824

You can email her anytime at: justsmile172001@yahoo.com.

Dad and Mom,

I hope you are both doing well. I just wanted to drop you a quick note to tell you I am well. I am having a great time so far, I have met a lot of friends already. Classes start on Monday, and I was placed into a higher level beginning class, so i should be able to pick up the class pretty easily. How is everything there? It is still undescribly beautiful here, I can't wait to visit more of Italy, but I am going to explore here first and get settled. Can you guys send me jason, Aunt Deb, and Grandpa Riel's, email addresses so i can send out a group email. Thank you. I looks like I won't be able to hook up my digital camera here unfortunately, so i will look for another place and see if i can. Either way, I am sure i will be taking plenty of pictures. OK that's all for now, I love you guys, see you soon in Europe.

Ci vediamo,

Jessy

Hi mom and dad!

I am doing very well. How are you doing? I can't wait to show you guys his place. It is more beautiful than I could ever explain. My family is an older couple and they are so nice. They have a three year old granddaughter named Julia who is the cutest thing you have ever seen and they live close so I will get to play with her a lot. Figlio, the husband, took my on a walk today to show me around the town it was very nice. they live about a hlf hour walk from the university so I might take the bus, but it is a nice walk so I will walk a lot too. I have my own room and bathroom which is nice, and they gave me keys so I can come and go as I like. They don't speak any english, but we are able to communicate. They say I speak well compared to the other students they have had. I went into the Duomo today, the big cathedral here, and it was the most incredible thing I have ever seen in my life. I can't wait for you guys to see it. Oh, I got a phone today too. BUt the instructions are in Italian, so I haven't figured out how to use it yet. I will soon though. My number is 329.1907824 So you can try calling if you want to. I love you both so much aND i MISS YOU. Ok I have to go to a dinner now with the rest of the students. I love you and i will call you soon.

Ciao,

Jessy

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The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

April, 2003

Hello Everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well. Sorry about the delay in the first message, Things have been pretty busy here, getting settled in and figuring my way around in a new country. I am in Siena, Italy. It is about an hour south of Florence and 3 hours north of Rome. It is so beautiful here. Everything is so old and really beautiful. Most of this city was built around the middle of the 15th century. Like you said Aunt Birdy, I cannot begin to explain how breathtaking the art is. The main cathedral here, the Duomo, it more incredible than I ever could have imagined. It is so emotional and powerful; by far the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life. I had no idea what it felt like to walk inside a historic monument and piece of art as magnificent as it is. To update everyone, who doesn't know, I am studying in Italy until June, then traveling around until July. I am taking Italian classes every day from 9-12, and am in some other mandatory courses include a cooking class and a large research project, in which I must travel to other cities. I am living with a host family. They are an older couple, Teresa and Girloami, and they have two children who live close and a three year old granddaughter, Giulia, who I get to see a lot. They are very, very nice, and they cook great food for me. They don't speak any English but we are communicating pretty well. It will sure help me learn Italian faster. They love hearing about my home and my family and they are often very surprised by the things I tell them about America. (The furthest from home either of them has been is Spain.) It is hard to go back and forth between Italian and English, and even harder to type because the keyboards here are different :-p. But I am sure it will all get easier with time. Last night I went to the theater for the first time. I saw a dance production that was wonderful (molto brava!). It was in a beautiful little theater with a lot of boxes on the side, which is were I sat, because they are the cheaper seats. On Tuesday I am taking some of my friends back for a play about Don Quixoti, (I think it is about that but if is hard to tell). So that should be a lot of fun. The food here is great, as is the wine. Today in the University dining hall, I had wine out of a little juice box. It was pretty funny. There is some anti-American sentiment here because of the war. The war is all over the news here too. But there have been no problems, and it has mostly been very interesting. There are millions of banners that say Pace, or peace. In Rome, almost every other house has one. It is very inspiring. As for my host family, They just say it is a big tragedy, but place no blame. On a lighter note, Francie, you might be interested to know that there are a lot of ISO products here. I see them often advertised in windows. Overall this city is amazing, and I am so happy to be here. You can email me back any time, I will try to respond promptly. (In English if you are lucky). But that is all for now. I love you all! Buon Giorno.

Ciao,

Jessica

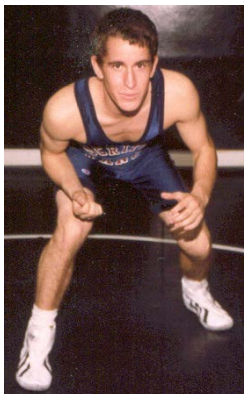
Thanks, Jessica, for all the news from Italy. We still have your "funny little story", which will be a part of chapter 2 of the "Jessica does Italy" story, to appear in the May RFNL. In the meantime, be careful, be good, study hard, and keep the news coming in.

Bryce Sorem competes in citywide wrestling tournament

We have the following e-mail report from Bryce, along with two pictures.

Hey grampa,

well i guess i should tell u about the conclusion of my wrestling season. In the city tournament at point loma i went 4-1 and got 3rd place, and my high school scripps ranch got 1st place in city. And at the CIF tournament at mar vista i went 3-2 and got 4th place. My team got 4th place as well. Since i got 4th place in CIF i qualified for masters. that means i'm one of the top 24 kids in the san diego/san diego county area. unfortunately i went 0-2 just showing how hard it is. but even though wrestling is over i'm still hard at work getting better so next year u can report that i went to the state tournament. well I look forward to seeing the story in the paper and if u want new pictures of my city or CIF medals call me mom and i can bring them over to our house one day.



Bryce



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Martha and Dave Gillingham celebrate 50th anniversary

We received the following report from Listy, along with some pictures, as follows.

Martha and Dave GILLINGHAM
~~are~~ are honored for
their 50th Wedding
Anniversary at
Bob & Listy's House

We celebrated Dave + Martha's
December Anniversary with a
surprise family gathering at
our house. We decided to
do the official festivities
in S.D. so when we take
the Gillingham family trip
(all 28 of us) to Hawaii
we can relax & enjoy the
fun in the sun. Bob was
the master of Ceremonies
and did a great job roasting
Dave & Martha by displaying
significant items that have
played an important role in
their 50-year old relationship.
Listy presented them with the
family gift of a scrap book
highlighting + documenting
the many memories shared
by everyone with Dave
& Martha. It was a
wonderful ~~event~~ event
and gave us all a reason
to get together & enjoy the
Gillingham family.



A big CONGRATULATIONS to Martha and Dave on this big milestone. We wish them well and many more happy years to come!

Update on Grandma's neck/back problems

In the March RFNL we reported on Grandma's problems with neck pain. Although that problem has decreased in severity, we had another mild crisis. On Wednesday March 26 she woke up with very severe pain in the right leg. We took her to the urgent care facility, and they prescribed some medication. The next day things were worse, and Grandma was in so much pain that she could barely walk. On the advice of her doctor, we took her to the Sharp Memorial Hospital emergency room. Five hours later she was released to come home. The discharge diagnosis was *LUMBAR RADICULOPATHY*, and some medications were prescribed. The ER doctor also mentioned the sciatic nerve, which runs down the back of the leg. Its irritation causes the kind of pain she was experiencing. She was told that complete rest was essential for the next few days. This seemed to make a big difference, and most of the pain gradually subsided. However, she was told to be very quiet for a few weeks (no golf). A follow-up visit to the regular doctor resulted in more of the same advice, plus some additional X-rays, to establish the cause of the nerve inflammation. In addition to the medication, the doctor recommended physical therapy for the neck and leg problems, and she has been taking that approach. It seems to provide some relief, and we are hopeful that by the end of April things will be much improved.

The physical therapy expert described some home exercises that are supposed to help, and on the next page she is shown exercising and resting at the same time. We hope it helps a lot.



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Hartman family news

Recently we received the following from Birdy
Hi Dad

You were asking for some Hartman family news. Machille has a new job so I asked her to e-mail you with the information. I hope you got that. Craig dropped by in his



ambulance, so I thought you might enjoy

some pictures of him in uniform by the big truck. He is hoping to apply for

medic's school this summer, or next fall. Hopefully the state cutbacks in education will not affect his program.

Scott, David, and Annie were recently honored at the Sport's Banquet. Scott received a plaque for "Intensity" on the field in soccer. He is noted for his unending amount of energy when playing soccer. David received the Coaches Award. It is given the player who the coach feels exhibits good sportsmanship and is a leader on the soccer team. Annie received a plaque for the Most Outstanding Player on the soccer team. All three of these students were recognized in the San Diego Union for being all academic scholars.



Annie is currently on the softball team. Anyone interested in watching softball, e-mail Listy.

Scott and David are now working at a new Submarina Sandwich shop located near SDSU. All of you Cousin Aztec's be sure to stop by and give them a bid tip!



Jason for president!!!

Yes, Jason is running for the Associated Student Government President at UCSB. The campaign kick-off was in the form of a fundraiser held at Chevy's in Santa Barbara on April 3rd. Jason handed out buttons and hats advertising his candidacy. On the week-end he will be painting signs and posters all day, and hopes a lot of volunteers will show up to help. On April 8th and 15th he will be involved in a debate with the other three candidates. It will be at the UCEN HUB, and he hopes a lot of loyal supporters will be there to cheer him on.

The elections will be held on April 21st through April 25th and will be on line. To keep up on the latest campaign news, see the web page at www.fightforyourrights.info. Jason promises to keep it up to date. We wish Jason GOOD LUCK in the election!!