

## Travel Travel Travel – Everybody is on the go this summer!!!

The summer of 2004 will go down in family history as the vacation summer. First of all, for the record, here is a list of the travel completed, in progress, or planned.

(1) Richard and JJ – Boy Scout Jamboree in Arizona (2) Ed, Kevin, and Tim hiking in Yosemite, and the whole family camping at Solana Beach. Also, Jan just returned from a school class trip to Philadelphia and Washington. (3) Margaret and Bud to Sweden in September, Bud working, Margaret vacationing (4) Francie and Lyle just back from Hawaii (5) Carol and Jeff just back from a Caribbean Cruise (25 anniversary) (6) Robert to Vancouver (business) and Karla and Brian, by camper, to Missouri (joined by Robert) and then home by going south to the Gulf of Mexico and turning right (7) Listy and Bob to Paris and London (25<sup>th</sup> anniversary) (8) Birdy and Bruce just back from Italy (25 anniversary) Not to be outdone, some of the grandchildren also are on the move. (1) Alan, Brett, and Bryce recently toured Spain, France, and Italy (2) Jessica is in London with Jeff's sister (3) Kevin will soon move back East, for graduate school (4) Michael starts graduate school at UC in the fall

We have various reports from those who have returned, which we will reproduce as space permits. First of all, we have a complete report from Ed on his camping trip to Yosemite Valley.

Yosemite! I know you have all been there, as I have myself, but when one of my boys talked about wanting to climb Half Dome, I got the wilderness reservations and, a couple months later, found myself driving with Kevin, the up the Owens Valley, through Bishop, and as the day was ending, up over the Picturesque Tioga Pass, Park Entrance to do just that. I still remember, but find it hard to describe, the emotion of adventure as we drove through that striking and alien landscape. The winter snow, still covering half the rocky hills beyond lakes and rivers, reflected brightly the red setting sunlight peeking under the threatening cloud cover. The ruby mountain snow contrasted eerily below the gathering thunderclouds and the even darker wet ground aside. I love that feeling of going into to nature not knowing which way she is going to turn.

We met Tim, who drove straight from SF, late that night at our site at the Wawona camp, just south of Yosemite Valley. The site is, a not very spectacular, car camp place for those, like myself, who could not get reservations in the Valley itself. The clouds had been short lived and the next beautiful day, besides assessing and testing our gear, and going into town for things forgotten, we drove into the Valley for one of the highlights of the trip, hiking up the Mist trail. The trail follows the Merced River, the river running through the Valley that, in the morning shadow of Half Dome climbs to the higher Merced water shed wilderness above. The two jewels of the hike are Vernal and then Nevada Falls. Those who have stepped up the well placed rock trail hugging the mist of Vernal falls, to where the trail gets its name, will remember this as one of the prettiest places they have ever walked.

While Tim and I enjoyed another night at the Wawona campsite, Kevin developed a cold, which would make wilderness stomping less than enjoyable, so unfortunately he took one of the vehicles back to civilization as Tim and I proceeded with our backpacking trip. In the commotion I forgot to exchange my paid wilderness pass for the permit; the formality would have provided important information, from the rangers, critical to our planned return trail. But with our blissful ignorance, and our way too heavy packs, we camped the first night next to the Illilouette River not but 4 miles from our car, which we left on the Glacier Point Road, about 10 miles South of Glacier Point at the southwest edge of the Yosemite Valley ridge. One of those perfect camp sites; overlooking a beautiful river, with an occasional visit from friendly deer, with a well built fire ring, with plenty of nearby fire wood, whose smoke floated straight up as the day slipped away. I slept well; Tim, not so well as he worried about bears that never came.

We started the next day with a no-pack hike to Glacier Point, which, be it by car, or by hike, should be a "must visit" point of any Yosemite adventure. Besides the panoramic view of the West to East orientated Valley 3,000 feet below, we viewed the two watershed areas, south of the Valley which we would travel in our looped journey around the wilderness area of the park. The first, the Illilouette river system, we would cross today as we hiked east along the Panorama Trail snaking precariously along the southern rim of the valley to where we pick up the Merced, the second river system just past Nevada Falls. We would then follow the Merced south and then west to a ridge that would put us back in the Illilouette range and bring us back to our car. Just above Nevada Falls is Little Yosemite Valley where we stopped for the next night. Since it is a popular campsite, there were bears. Tim, again got little sleep, but at least with some tangible cause; myself I dozed away to the sound of surrounding campers clapping rocks, blowing whistles, and all other loud activities in endless play with the bears.

# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

August, 2004

We have the following letter from Michelle, describing her travels in Italy.

Dear Grandpa,

Mom and Dad took Scott and me on a trip to Italy as our graduation gift. This trip was unbelievable!! The first week we stayed in a little town called Tscherms. The biggest city to us was Bolzano and that was our "hub" from which we took trains for side trips.

On one of the days we were just cruising around Bolzano, we took a sky gondola (in which they packed more people inside than was safe) up a very steep mountain. Then we saw this trolley car and so we asked where it was going. Well, the man that we asked was shocked that we asked him this and replied "Klobenstien of course". Clearly we should have known this. I think it was his enthusiasm in saying the town's name that convinced us that we should go see this place. It was a beautiful town and I was glad that we went.

The second day we went to Venice. This town was incredible. The waterways were fun for short jaunts around the city that is composed of 100 islands. We traveled around on boat buses, which were surprisingly efficient. A lot of the natives there traveled in their own motorboats. The Piazza San Marco was where the main church was. The details on all of the churches that we saw were incredible. This was the second most incredible church to the Vatican. We took an elevator ride to the top of the tower in the square and got an amazing view of the city.

The third day we took a drive on the Dolomiti pass. This took us through the local Alps. We took time to stop and marvel at the Lago di Carezza, which was a glacial ice melt with amazing turquoise water. I really liked this part because we got to see a lot of the countryside.

The fourth day we went to Milano. This is the home of the painting The Last Supper, the Leonardo de Vinci museum, the fashion capital of Italy and an awesome castle with the biggest moat I have ever seen. We did not see the Last Supper, which required reservations to see. However, we toured a huge castle, the local Duomo (really big church) and after taking a circuitous route to the de Vinci museum, we raced through that because it closed early. The museum here was pretty neat because they had built models of many of the things that Leonardo designed. For example telescopes, the perfect city and flying machines. This museum was amazing and the funny thing was nobody seemed to know where this museum was. It wasn't on our map and we don't speak Italian, so it took us a little while to find it. What blew my mind was the way that this city was set up. I thought it tied with Florence as the two most beautiful big cities that we saw.

Another day we went to Verona and saw an arena that was built in the first century. The coolest thing about this arena is that it is still used for concerts and events today. It was quite impressive. We mostly cruised the city and went to the top of another tower for a breathtaking view of the city. This town was one of the easiest to navigate because it was built by the Romans and had actual city blocks that connect and run north, south, east and west.

My favorite part of the first week while we were in northern Italy was one of the nights I went for a walk after dinner because earlier that morning when I went for a jog I had noticed a small little trail that went along a small river. This was in the small neighboring town to us called Lana. Well, when I got there I saw that there was a little festival going on with three different bands spread over a courtyard area with little shops. There was a German folk band, some cute college age guys playing their guitars and another stage with another group setting up. It was quite entertaining. It was mostly locals so it was fun to watch the people.

Another part of the trip was hangin' with my folks. It really impacted me to see how they are still madly in love with each other. That was pretty cool. Especially since they have been married for 25 years now!!

Hopefully I didn't butcher this too much. Words can't describe what we saw and experienced. It is such a different culture and the country is so much older than the U.S. Rome was also awesome (Scott will tell you more) but I really preferred the north. I loved the countryside and the slower pace of Tscherms.

Love, Michelle

Thanks, Michelle for this letter. Birdy took hundreds of pictures, and we have a few to show you, as follows.





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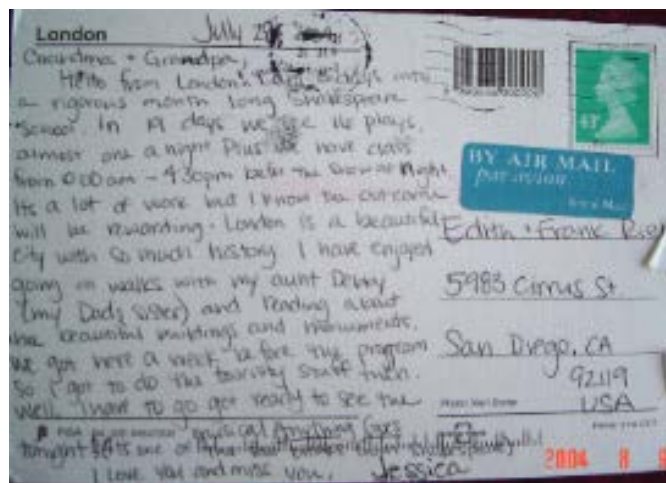
Listy and Birdy do Boston

Hi Dad,

Since our house is under-construction, our annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July party was put off this year. Thus, with nothing to do, I decided to fly to Boston with Listy's college room mate, Diane. We arrived on July 1 and had two days to explore Boston while poor Listy was stuck in classes. She was there for a principal conference, while we were there to play! We spent 4 days on the east coast, exploring and having a wonderful time. I won't bore you with the details but I will share some of the fascinating facts we learned while in Boston.

1. Did you know that Boston is the home of a National Park? When we got out of the subway, the first thing we saw was the Park Ranger Station. (It was like camping all over again). It was there that we took our first tour on the historic Freedom trail. The Freedom trail is a 2.5 mile long path that runs through downtown Boston and passes 16 of the city's historic landmarks. It is marked by a path of red bricks that wind around the city. We loved relearning our country's history while gazing at these national treasures.
2. We also visited Harvard and found that campus to be a breathtaking place for academic study. However, my favorite Harvard fact was that young John Harvard, whose father founded the campus, complained to his mother that ice cream was not served at every meal. So to remember him, the dining hall serves ice cream daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Had I known that growing up, I may have worked harder and pushed myself into Harvard! Awe... what a life!
3. On our third day, we decided to take a road trip to Newport, Rhode Island. Wow! It was much like a visit to Coronado, except for the mansions that we toured while taking the cliff walk. Holy smokes, this was the place for the rich! It actually is quite sad to think that these homes were built in such a lavish way and were only to be used for 2 months over the summer. I won't bore you with the details but these homes are rivals to many castles I have seen in Europe.
4. We ended our visit in Salem, Mass. We had a good time hearing about the history of the witch trials and enjoyed some wonderful lobster while dining on the coast.

The fireworks were fun, the history was fabulous but to tell you the truth, I enjoy spending my 4<sup>th</sup> of July best with my family and friends. I can't wait to have this house completed so that we can celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> as it should be!  
Boston Birdy



Jessica sent us the above post card from London.

Recently, Francie sent us the following e-mail.

THIS ONE IS FABULOUS!!! It was written by an 8 year old, Danny Dutton of Chula Vista, CA, for his third grade homework assignment. The assignment was to explain God. I just wonder if any of us could do as well.

## EXPLANATION OF GOD

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers."

"God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off."

"God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy, so you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said."

"Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church."

"Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K."

"His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important."

"You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time."

"You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church or do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway."

"But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And that's why I believe in God."



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## **SURPRISE Carol Ann's Island PARTY!!**

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale  
A tale of Birthday woe  
That started from this tropic port  
Some 50 years ago.

Her mate is a mighty sellin' man  
Her 3 kids are young but wise  
Carol Benesch sets sail today  
For a birthday lunch surprise, a birthday lunch surprise.

The decades started slipping by  
Her confidence was tossed  
If not for the visits to the fitness club  
Her waistline would be lost, her waistline would be lost.

So join our journey and celebrate  
The memories we've got  
The ship sets down at noon today  
At some uncharted luncheon spot.

With Gilligan, the Skipper too,  
The millionaire and his wife,  
The movie star

The professor and Mary Ann  
Here on Carol Ann's Isle.  
**CAROL ANNE'S ISLAND-THE TOUR**

**PART ONE**  
When Carol was born in '54  
Mission Valley was cows and not much more.  
One shopped at Sears and Walker Scotts  
Del Cerro was mainly empty lots.  
There was no 8 or 805,  
The Boulevard was the route to drive.

So as you navigate from mall to mall  
Remember Carol outdates them all.  
Some rules to follow to speed you along,  
To go North of Friars would be all wrong.  
Stay off the freeway, and North of 8  
And getting a ticket will make you late.

In fact, you'll never be more than 2 miles  
From this starting point, look out for Riels!  
There's a place about 1.5 miles East  
That predates Carol by 2 Centuries at least.  
Your Mission, should you yearn for more  
Will be found next to the nearest convenience store.

**PART TWO**  
Remember this is not a race  
You should be driving at a leisurely pace.  
3/10's South brings you to a T,  
Turn West until stores are all you see.  
2.3 miles should be in order  
Until you feel like your on the border.

Gilligan should be in your sights  
Cold drinks are waiting, Island Punch on ice  
Get out, relax, pose with your crew  
Your tour is barely halfway through.  
Before resuming your owlsh quest  
Getting a copy of part 3 would be Best.

### **PART THREE**

A half mile west towards your destination  
Go North where a bank is currently stationed  
Now look out for Hazards, don't sail too crazy.  
A left past the trolley will take you to FraZee.  
A North turn again, steady as she goes.  
Search for Crustaceans, all of them Joe's.

A turn to the port should get you in close  
The smell of food cooking will fill your nose.  
Find a Crew member, you've seen her before  
Ginger will direct you to the right door.  
A luncheon awaits, if you're not too tardy  
Welcome to Carol Anne's Birthday Party.



**And a great big HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!**