

## Grandma undergoes back surgery on March 8<sup>th</sup>

### Surgery successful, but recovery room complications cause much pain

On Monday, March the 7<sup>th</sup> the family held a pre-op party at the Black Angus restaurant on Sports Arena. Many family members came to wish Grandma well in her back operation scheduled for the following day. As you can see from the accompanying pictures we had a great celebration, and all enjoyed a good meal and wished Grandma well and a speedy recovery.



On the following morning Grandma and Grandpa arrived at Sharp Memorial Hospital, and shortly after 10:00 checked in and were shown to the pre-op holding area. Francie and Robert joined us and kept company until about 12:30 pm, when they came to take Grandma to the

operating room. Robert went off to work, but Francie stayed with Grandpa through the day, mostly in the hospital waiting room. Francie had brought along her lap top plus some programs to demonstrate for Grandpa. We then played hearts on the lap top, as the afternoon wore on. By 6:00 pm other family members arrived to help wait out the hours until we got some word on the progress of the operation. We were joined by Carol and Jeff, Listy, Birdy and Bruce, Robert, and Margaret. By 7:30 we were beginning to get anxious, and we began to ask questions at the front desk. We were told that Grandma was in the recovery room, and that we could go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to see her. She was in a lot of pain, and we were told that administration of



pain relief medication had caused an alarming drop in blood pressure. As the hours wore on they tried to get a safe balance of pain relief and blood pressure level, but there were problems. After things appeared to be under control (about 10:00 pm) Grandpa went home, but Birdy, Carol Listy, and Margaret remained. About an hour later Grandpa got a call to come back to the hospital, because



Grandma's condition had worsened. Ed and Jan kindly volunteered to drive Grandpa, and by the time he got there the worst was over. Although Grandma was in still in much pain she had stabilized so that at 1:00 a.m. she was moved to the intensive care unit. During her stay in the recovery room she received some extra special care from the head nurse, Chrystal, who comforted her as best she could, and remained on duty until Edith was sent to the intensive care unit. Also,



she visited Edith on the following day, to reassure her that she was getting excellent care.

# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

March, 2005

The next day, Wednesday, was a tough day. Because of the blood pressure problem Edith had only marginal pain relief, and suffered all the time. Margaret, Carol, Listy, Francie, and Birdy did great service in comforting her as much as possible and Carol stayed with her throughout the night.

Thursday morning was another story, since she had improved pain control. However, we had another brief scare. She was taken by wheel chair for some diagnostic tests, and returned with a long face. She announced that she had heard someone

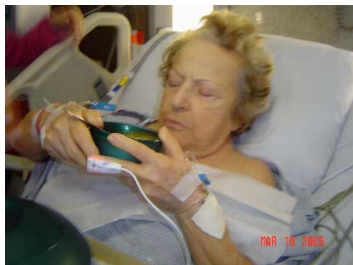


say that she had a blood clot. This caused the nurse to say that Dr. Manos had to be contacted at once. A few minutes later he came in, and said that he had not been informed of any blood clot problem. He immediately checked, and returned to say that there was no blood clot, hence no problem. Obviously, this was a great relief for all of us.



On Friday another problem surfaced. She seemed worse, and complained that she did not feel good, no matter what pain level she was experiencing. The cause was revealed by some blood tests, which showed a low potassium level. This situation was relieved by medication, and she was told that bananas and baked potatoes were good sources of potassium.

As the healing process continued she was encouraged by the physical therapy staff to begin to walk. This was a painful process, but important for helping the healing process. Distance and frequency walks were increased, and she welcomed the chance to move around.



On Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup> we held a discussion with Dr. Manos, and it was decided that instead of going home on the following day she should transfer to a convalescent facility for a few days. He



recommended the Kearny Mesa Convalescent Hospital, which is just across the freeway from Sharp Memorial. The transfer took place on Tuesday, via ambulance. It is a nice facility, with excellent care and activities. All went well, with good progress, and the physical therapist decided that she could come home at 3:00 p.m. on Friday. However, she had told Grandpa that she had experienced a black bowel movement. As a precaution Grandpa passed this information along to her regular physician. His reaction was to order some additional blood work, which had to be done by the Sharp Memorial lab. This decision was made at about 1:30 p.m., and we were told that it would take 4 – 5 hours. This obviously moved the release time back, with the possibility of an overnight stay. After some frantic phone calls the doctor agreed to release her as soon as

the blood sample had been taken.

About that time we were told that her doctor had not been informed that she recently had been given ferrous sulfate tablets, because of a low hemoglobin count revealed in a recent blood test. This was the cause of the black stools. The doctor said that had he known about the iron medication he would not have ordered the additional blood



work, which delayed the release time to 6:00 p.m. Since Grandpa was at home making phone calls to the doctor, Grandma was taken home by Birdy and Carol. This ended the hospital treatment, and the home care and treatment commenced. That story will be told in the next RFNL.



Throughout the entire stay in the hospital the Riel children were absolutely magnificent in their devotion to Grandma. They simply took over the responsibility for being with their mother throughout the long ordeal, all of every day and night. Words cannot express how grateful she is for the love and devotion they expressed by their faithful service.

During her stay Grandma received numerous expressions of support, including flowers, get well cards, e-mail messages, and visits by in-laws and grandchildren. She thanks the entire family for all the love and support they provided. On the following pages we have reproduced many of the messages she received.



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March, 2005

Dear Grandma,  
I am so sorry you aren't feeling well, it's not fair! I miss you so much and I'm sorry I couldn't come over to visit you but I have a little cold and wouldn't want anyone to catch it. I hope you feel better very soon so my mom has someone to shop with! I love you! Feel better soon!  
♥ Annie

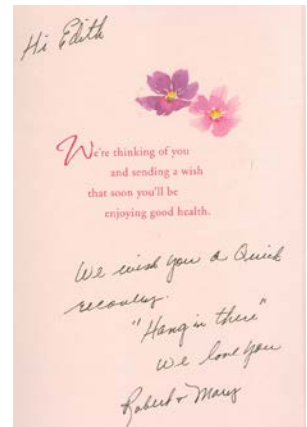
Dear Edith,  
I was so glad to hear from Frank this morning but so sorry to hear about your back surgery. However I'm sure when you recover from the surgery you will feel so much better. You and Frank too will be in our thoughts and prayers. We're doing pretty well. It is so nice to have the sunshine after all that rain. Lots of love,  
Marilyn

11 March 15, 2006

Dear Edith  
Praying that you will be graced by the Lord's healing touch... comforted by His spirit... and encouraged by His love

Marilyn & Jack

P.S. Had you enjoyed the letter, it's fun to think back on our good times at Purdue.



Because I love you so much



Marysue

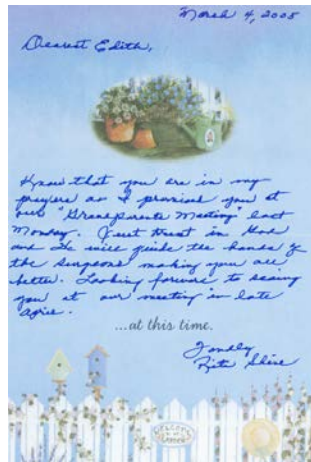
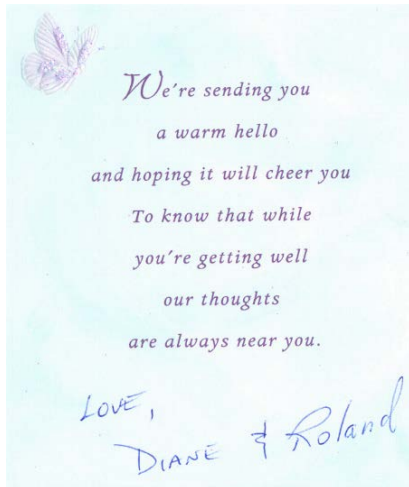
Thinking of you with Love. Get well Soon!



Grandma,  
I know how terrible sitting in bed is. I hope this little note cheers you up a bit and brightens your day. Feel better soon yaya. I love you and miss you.  
Love, Jessica

A bouquet of warm wishes for a speedy recovery.

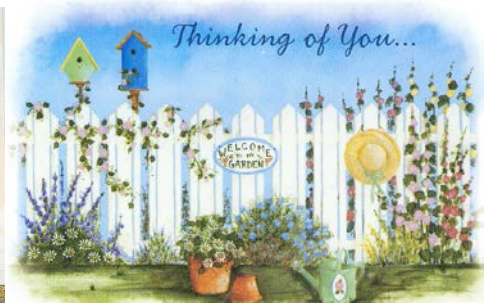
We love you!  
Get well quick so we can go shopping!  
Much Love,  
Lotty, Bob, Kristy, David, & Annie



Dear grandma,  
Good luck with your recovery! I'll keep you in my prayers!

...with WOTS of love.

I love you!  
♥ Kristy



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Hi Dad

This publication came out recently, and I thought you would get a kick out of it. Bruce is no longer the truck service manager for Hawthorne. He is now general service manager, but this interview was done when he ran the truck shop. I told him he was famous. ☺ Love Birdy

**"I Feel Like I'm Their ONLY Customer!"**

Bruce Hartman manages Truck Services for Hawthorne Power Systems, the big yellow CAT in San Diego. He talks about the value of a customer-oriented attitude in his suppliers.

"It's worth its weight in gold, period," he said. "Other suppliers offer most of the same parts that Fleet Services does, sure. But they don't bring the same value-added attitude to the table.

"Bottom line, Fleet Services cares. They care a lot. You call them, and they go to work for you. They aren't just order-takers. They're very persistent. They ask the right questions and spend the time necessary to get you the right part.

"That's very important, because here at Hawthorne, our bumper-to-bumper truck service department is growing fast. A wrong part would be more than just embarrassing. It can be devastating, considering customers lost, other work impacted, morale, and shop profitability.

"We just don't have the time to do the research Fleet Services does for free, just because we ask. I can't put an exact value on their contribution, but I know it's high.

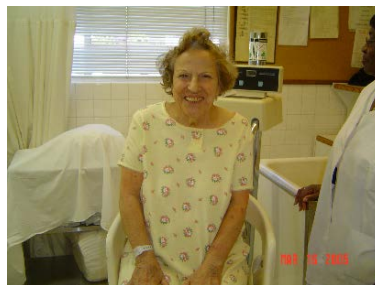
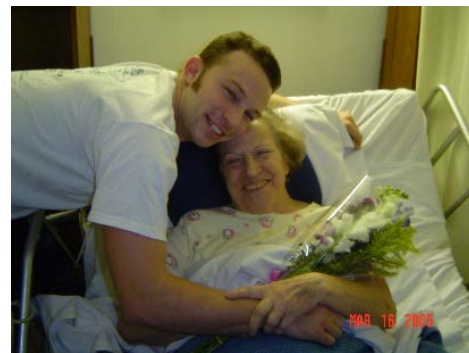
"They're even willing to look at a repair situation creatively, to help us make the sale.



This article appeared in the first quarter 2005 issue of **Rolling**, a newsletter put out by Fleet Services, Inc., in Anaheim, California. It was the page one feature article, and they obviously have an excellent working relationship with Bruce.

## Some photos of Grandma's brief stay in the convalescent hospital

On page three of this issue we described Grandma's 3 day stay at the Kearny Mesa Convalescent Hospital. We have some pictures taken before and after she graduated.



**Hartman, from first page**

"Once, we were looking at a failed brake spider the manufacturer said would take 10 weeks to replace. We called Fleet Services, and they had a repaired part in just a few days.

"When I call them, they make me feel like I'm the only person they ever talk to. They listen. They act - fast. They make me feel like I'm their only customer."



**On the way home!!**

**Home at last!!!**