

## Family celebrates Easter Sunday at Lake Murray Park

**First outing for Grandma after surgery**

**Innocent Bystanders get awards, rival organization**

This Easter celebration was open to question because Grandma was home but still recovering from recent back surgery. However, she announced a day in advance that she was ready to celebrate, so the regular party was good for go. Grandma and Grandpa hitched a ride with Ed and Jan, and although we arrived a little later than usual, there still was plenty of food available. This year saw a diminished level of activity, and it was apparent that most of the family preferred to sit around and talk. There was little fun and games type of activity. However, Francie and Grandpa had arranged a special ceremony, the awarding of an Easter present for each of the family members. Each Innocent Bystander inscribed with the title "Innocent Bystander". In matching red mug inscribed with the title to oppose the Innocent Bystanders, the Riel these two esteemed groups will oppose each other, pointed out that Grandma was selected by Grandpa automatically becomes an honorary Innocent Bystander.



received a green mug filled with candy and addition, each Riel family member received a "Troublemaker". Thus we have a new group to Troublemakers. No doubt in future contests and fight it out to decide a winner. It should be unanimous acclamation as a "Trouble Maker",

The entire day was another fun one, with lots of good fellowship and laughter. As usual, we took lots of good pictures.





# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

April, 2004

Dear Family,

We traveled to Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri to watch our son, Curtis Hartman, graduate from basic training. First, all the families were invited to a Family Day briefing where they laid out all of the ground rules for our visit. The sergeants told us what to expect from our new soldier and we anxiously scanned the crowd of skin heads looking for our long lost son (from behind, wearing battle fatigues, they all looked alike). The soldiers were not allowed to turn around and if they did, they would lose their family day pass. So you can bet, not one head turned. After the briefing, they filed out into formation and began a fast paced march to their barracks, while chanting a cadence. It was all we could do to keep up the pace, with the wind chilling our bones! They change from their battle fatigues and waited, until finally, Curtis greeted him with big hugs from family. He was a sight for sore all of us. We then spent the rest visiting restaurants (boy that to the Super Wal-mart for Curtis didn't matter what we did, or we were all together. We could stories of his adventures as a appearance. His shaved beard, transformed him into a new man. his post at 9:45 P.M. with 15 an article 15- big trouble!).The graduation. Again, they attention. When it was time to held one hand high and recited head as a true soldier in the US Army. Finally, they marched out in formation and again we followed them through the post to their barracks. Unfortunately, we would only have one hour to congratulate him, before he shipped out to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona for his advanced individual training. The nice surprise for Curtis was that two buddies from his high school days flew out with their dad to attend the graduation. We could see that Curtis was deeply touched. Words cannot describe the pride we share for our son. Although we were not thrilled with his decision, we support and commend his determination. He is facing new challenges and discovering things about himself that college and home would never have shown him. He is brave beyond words and we want him to know how much we love him! Everyone is welcome to write to him. He says that letters from home are worth more than gold at this point in his life. His address is:

PFC Hartman, Curtis  
6th Platoon  
Echo Company 309 MI BN  
Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613

He may not be able to return a letter to you because his personal time is very limited, but he appreciates hearing anything. We are hopeful that he will be home for Memorial Day, and we want to invite all to a party at our yet unfinished home. So, stay tuned!

Birdy and Bruce



were dismissed to their barracks in order to into their class A dress uniforms. We waited, stepped out of his barracks. Hooray! We Mom, Dad, Susan (Curtis' girlfriend) and her eyes. It was a very emotional encounter for of the day trying to stay out of the rain by Curtis sure can eat), our hotel, and a fun trip to buy some additional toiletries. It really where we went; the important thing was that not get enough Curtis time! He shared many soldier and we marveled at his new shaved head, and slender appearance Our baby has grown up! We returned him to minutes to spare (so as not to be a target for next morning, was the long awaited assembled into the big auditorium and sat at graduate, they stood at complete attention, the oath. Then they placed their beret on their



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Thanks, Birdy and Bruce, for this account of your trip to see Curtis graduate. Like you, we are all very proud of his accomplishments, and we look forward to a great future for Curtis. When he comes home on leave we will be there for the celebration. In addition to many pictures, Birdy made a CD movie of the visit, and we want the whole family to see it. If not sooner, it can be shown at the Memorial Day party and also at the next Riel Bowl.

## Grandmat home and getting better

As we reported in the last RFNL, Grandma came home on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, after a ten day stay in the hospital. She still had some back pain, especially on standing up or sitting down. However, it seemed to get a little better each day, and she is taking less and less pain medication. She has been visited by physical therapists, who have outlined some exercises that will speed the healing process and rebuild her strength. She saw her regular doctor recently, and he reported that she is making excellent



progress. Her next visit is with the surgeon, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and we are looking forward to his progress report.

## Francie acquires her own salon

Recently, Francie and Lyle came across an opportunity to acquire the assets of a men's hair stylist facility on Balboe



Ave, in Kearny Mesa. They quickly decided to go ahead, so that Francie can set up her own operation. The current operator is moving to New York, and Francie and Lyle purchased the assets, mainly some furniture, a large screen TV, an aquarium, and a few fixtures. The facility (leased) consists of

three rooms, a large living room like entry plus two smaller rooms. They plan on some remodeling prior to opening, and as you can see from the following pictures, Robert and Ed are providing some expert assistance. We will keep you posted on the opening date.

It happened that Kevin was visiting from San Francisco, and both he and Robert were celebrating birthdays. Therefore, we decided to help them by all going to lunch at a local restaurant. We all had a good time, and wished both birthday boys many happy returns. For Robert it was his 48<sup>th</sup>, and for Kevin it was his 26<sup>th</sup>. We took a few pictures, as shown on page 4.



# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

April, 2005



## Carol and Jeff visit Jessica in D.C.

Recently we received from Carol and Jeff a nice report on their visit to Washington.

Subject: The Benesch's go to Washington

Recently, Jeff and Carol went to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress and the President about the No Child Left Behind education program. We met with Senate office staffers and toured the White House to get to the bottom of the funding shortage. Our personal tour of the Capitol Building featured a Senate session and a private meal in the Senate Restaurant in the basement of the Hart Senate office building. We were escorted to the offices of California Senator Dianne Feinstein where we were given gifts, met 6 or 7 of her trusted staffers and even went behind the scenes to Senator Feinstein's private mail room to study how the flow of information from constituents is filtered and channeled to the Senator. Our personal tour guide, a beautiful young intern from San Diego, California and recent Univ. of Calif., Irvine graduate, was most informative and helpful. She spent the better part of 4 days showing us the sights of our nation's Capital and even spent several nights with us at our hotel and ate most of her meals with us. We wonder if all lobbyists get this sort of personal service! We offered her a large tip at the end of our stay, and she gladly accepted. We landed late Wednesday night, got our rental car and drove to our Bethesda hotel, where despite the late hour; we were met by Jessica, the above referenced intern. She has learned to handle the cold and wind, something Carol could never fully adjust to.

All of our stay was dry, but mostly windy with temperatures in the 30's and 40's. Scarves and parkas were necessary garments. Thursday morning, we drove into Washington and met Jessy at Senator Feinstein's office. After a short wait while Jessy finished up some assignments, we took a subterranean tram to the Capitol Building. We received a super tour, saw a Senator give a speech to a largely empty Senate chamber, and learned the ins and outs, and a great deal of history about our nation's most famous building. Jessica is a seasoned tour guide, and is often asked to give similar treatment to visitors from California or other guests of the Senator. After much picture taking, we returned via tram (with Senator Horgan from North Dakota), to the Hart office building where we did, indeed, have lunch with Jessica and scores of other Senate staffers in the basement restaurant. Good food at very good prices. It was more like a food court, with many choices of cuisine, from Mexican to fish to Pizza, and lots of drinks and desserts. After lunch, Jessica returned to work and we went to the Smithsonian museums. We loved the Space Museum and could have spent much longer there, and also took in the Natural History Museum. The insect exhibit, along with the Hope Diamond, the entire gem and crystal exhibit, and the dinosaur and mammal wing were big hits with us. We soon met up with Jessy and had a great dinner in a cozy Georgetown bar/café. Friday, we ate a quick breakfast and rushed to the White House for a pre-arranged tour. After some waiting, and a thorough search of our belongings, we saw a portion of the East Wing, the Green Room, a small library, a nice hallway or two and were escorted out the back of the building, under the portico. It's some building, but evidently, Democrats are given the abbreviated tour. We did get a nice view of the Mall out the front windows and Lafayette Park at the back, where they were still dismantling the viewing stands from the inauguration. After dropping Jessica back at the Senate office building, Carol and I went to the Holocaust Museum, across the Mall and near the Jefferson Memorial. This museum tour was extremely graphic and thought provoking, and highly recommended for anyone visiting Washington. We then did the great Memorial walk, going from the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Wall, the WWII memorial and another for the Korean conflict. The Reflecting pool was dazzling, and throughout the area, thousands of Canadian Geese were taking a break from their migration to eat some grain and make some noise. Friday night, we took Rosanne and Ari out to dinner in Silver Spring, Md. Jeff's first cousin, Dan Klein played host to Jessica during her

entire stay in DC, and Rosanne is his wife, and Ari his youngest son. Dan was visiting his parents in Florida, and we never did see him, but we had a great visit with his family. Saturday, we drove north through Annapolis to Salisbury, Md. on the Eastern Shore, where we met up with Jeff's sister, Liz and her daughters, Jeanette and Kelsey. We got a tour of the whole town:



Salisbury State University where Jeanette is a student and Liz a recent grad, the mall where they both work, the town of Snow Hill where they live, and lastly, Ocean City, a resort town on the Atlantic seashore. Of note was the quaint and picturesque town of Berlin, Md., where they filmed the movie, *The Runaway Bride*. It is very near Snow Hill, and looks just like the movie. On the ride home, we had dinner in Annapolis, which we thought was a beautiful little place, with the State Capitol, the Naval Academy and the numerous restored shops and restaurants all close to the water. There must be more bridges and boats in Maryland than any other state. Sunday, we crossed the Potomac and visited George Washington's Mount Vernon, a very impressive estate. With a stunning view of the broad river from almost every spot, the large property featured not just their house, fully restored and filled with colonial furnishings, but all the other outbuildings that went with a large working farm and orchard. Mt. Vernon in it's heyday was 5 fully working farms, growing wheat, tobacco and many other crops and fruits, along with an entire stable, mill, meat curing house, food and wine cellars, a carriage house, slave and servant quarters, and much more. We also visited the tomb of both George and Martha and most of their close relatives. It was a full day, and one of the highlights of our entire trip. We lunched at a burrito place in Alexandria, Virginia, and after dropping our daughter at Silver Spring one last time, drove on the airport and caught our flight home.