

Bob G. and Ed remodel parent's condo

bathrooms For some time Grandma has been wanting to remodel the master bathroom at our condo, so last summer we started to seriously explor the project. After several rather unsatisfactory quotes (too expensive) it became apparent that business in bathroom remodeling was so good that work was being overpriced. At that time Listy volunteered that husband Bob would be glad to take over, with Ed's help, the entire job. We suspect that neither imagined that it would balloon from one simple bathtub replacement to extensive remodeling of two bathrooms. We got much help from Listy and Birdy in the selection of tub models, wall and floor tiles, plumbing fixtures, etc. The first tub arrived in October, and work commenced at once. What happened next is shown in the following picture sequence.



The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

February, 2007

(continued from page 1)

The above pictures cover the first installation, the bathroom used by Grandpa. The master bathroom is another story, is more complicated, and is now in work. The new vanity is due later this month, and we hope to finish everything soon thereafter.

Some thoughts from comedian/lawyer Ben Stein

We have Francie to thank for this interesting essay on the state of our society

Some things to not laugh about!

Something not to laugh about - What this really is about is changing America. If they know of him at all, many folks think Ben Stein is just a quirky actor/comedian who talks in a monotone. He's also a very intelligent attorney who knows how to put ideas and words together in such a way as to sway juries and make people think clearly. The following was written and recited by him on CBS Sunday Morning commentary.

Here with at this happy time of year, a few confessions from my eating heart: I have no freaking clue who Nick and Jessica are. I see them on the cover of People and Us constantly when I am buying my dog biscuits and kitty litter. I often ask the checkers at the grocery stores. They never know who Nick and Jessica are either. Who are they? Will it change my life if I know who they are and why they have broken up? Why are they so important? I don't know who Lindsay Lohan is either, and I do not care at all about Tom Cruise's wife. Am I going to be called before a Senate committee and asked if I am a subversive? Maybe, but I just have no clue who Nick and Jessica are. If this is what it means to be no longer young. It's not so bad

Next confession: I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are: Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, "Merry Christmas" to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away. I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution, and I don't like it being shoved down my throat. Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship Nick and Jessica and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too.

But there are a lot of us who are wondering where Nick and Jessica came from and where the America we knew went to. In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking. Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this Happen?" (regarding Katrina)

Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, "I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?"

In light of recent events...terrorists attack, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found recently) complained that she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK. Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about and we said OK. Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "WE REAP WHAT WE SOW." Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing? Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it. Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us. Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not then just discard it...no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.----Any questions?

San Diego area Citadel Alumni Club hosts General Rosa, current College President

On Thursday, February 8th the S.D. Area Citadel Alumni Club was honored to have as the guest speaker the current President of The Citadel. Most of you know that three Riels, Grandpa, his elder brother James (deceased) and Richard are graduates. Richard is the President of the local area Chapter, and presided at the meeting, which was held at the downtown Fish Market restaurant. Prior to General Rosa's presentation Richard invited each graduate to tell a short and humorous story describing his/her experiences while a cadet. Grandpa gave an accounting of how he and a fellow chemistry major carried out "spectacular chemistry" experiments as extracurricular activity. He described how he and his partner made thermite bombs, and explosives: TNT, nitroglycerine, and cellulose nitrate. Tear gas also was synthesized and accidentally was dispensed in the laboratory during a regular class session, causing much confusion.

(continued on page 3)

The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

February, 2007



in which John Mueller delivered a monolog one how things were back when the X-generation was growing up. It was well done, very funny, and enjoyed by all. We understand that the Theatre in Old Town will soon be retired, which gives us much sadness. Over the years we have enjoyed many performances, and will miss this long time fixture in Old Town.



However, the professor forgave us, assuming our extra experiments were all a part of the education process. Afterwards General Rosa described the Citadel as it is today, and the progress it has made over the years. Richard has sent me a more complete account of the General's talk, which will be reported in the next RFNL. It was a very successful meeting, enjoyed by all. Since this also served as the RFNL Riel Bowl dine out award, Liz and JJ were with us, and we all enjoyed an excellent meal along with the formal meeting proceedings.

Grandpa celebrates (again) birthday

In the December RFNL we reported on several celebrations, and the final one, arranged by Francie, took place on the 30th. On that evening we dined with Francie, Lyle, Bud, Margaret, Carol, and Jeff at the King's Fish house in Mission Valley. After an enjoyable meal we took off for Old Town to attend the show defined in the playbill shown at the right. It was a one man show



Jeff writes about his father

As you all know, Jeff's father died last November, and his obituary was included in the December RFNL. At that time we asked Jeff to send us his own recollections of his father, as he expressed them at the funeral.

Perhaps my Dad can best be remembered by what he was not:

He was not a rich man, yet he always provided, we never wanted. He was generous and charitable, to family, the temple, to those that had a need. He was a giver of his time, his advice, and his indomitable spirit.

He was not flamboyant, not one to ever toot his own horn, to draw attention to himself. Yet, Dad was not shy about being the emcee, or the announcer, or making sure things got done. And he ran the family Seder for over 50 years with fierce devotion to the Haggadah, at least as he interpreted it.

He was not a ladies man, yet he was devoted to the woman of his life for nearly 60 years. He doted on his 3 daughters and his granddaughters and filled their every whim. In fact, his fierce loyalty to family was always his top priority.

He was not a gambler, always erred to the side of caution, was more of a nickel slots player than anything, yet he loved a good game of poker or bridge. Dad was forever "breaking even".

(see next page)

The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

February, 2007

He was not a Crocodile hunter; we never had exotic pets, turtles, snakes or lizards. Dad was simple in his tastes. He loved our succession of family dogs, our horses when we had them, and put up with the occasional stray cat that my sister would leave behind.

He was not a musician, didn't ever play an instrument that I can remember, yet instilled a love of music that most of his kids still share. We always had the stereo going, or a radio blaring in the car, even if it was the Mexicali Brass. Dad was frugal when it came to buying music.

He was not a preacher, yet instilled in us a hatred of intolerance, of bigotry, of prejudice, and of neocons. He was impatient with idiots, self-serving politicians, racist ideologues, and passed on his truth seeking to us all.

He was not a Macho man, wasn't particularly athletic, yet he was extremely competitive. You didn't want to be playing Dad in a close tennis match. Loved his sports, Dad did. He even liked watching golf on TV. Dad was a great swimmer and loved all water sports, and to this day, much of the family is into swimming, skiing and other competitions.

He was not a gourmand, but loved a good meal. BBQ's were a lifelong event at the Benesch's. But I always found it ironic that Dad was married to a woman who hasn't eaten dessert in 25 years, yet he had to have a milkshake at every meal, and a dish of ice cream before going to bed every night.

He was not a Cadillac or Continental kind of guy. We had mostly Fords or Plymouths, and that suited Dad just fine. In fact, he arranged for each of us to have a nice used Ford, Dodge or even Rambler as our first cars, and insisted that WE pay for them, of course. That was Dad, making sure we worked hard for what we wanted, and then didn't spend our money needlessly. Heck, we even thought the Pinto was a cool looking car.

He was not a cheerleader, yet always supported us however he could in all our endeavors, sporting or otherwise. He did love his Bruins, a 60 year fan, and I know he'll be there in spirit tomorrow rooting against the hated ones in Cardinal and Gold

And my Dad was not the life of the party, was never the funniest, the loudest, the riskiest, the drunkest, or the most outrageous. Dad was happy to be curled up with a good book and the LA Times Crossword Puzzle. He was the rock, the dependable one, the one you could count on to be there for you. He was the most ethical, principled man I've ever known. That was my Dad. I want to be like him and I'll miss him. We'll all miss him.

Jeff

Grandma and Grandpa attend READ/San Diego Awards dinner Grandpa's learner wins Antoinette Mosley Adult Learner of the Year Award

As most of you know, Grandpa has been a volunteer literacy tutor for many years, and this year one of his two learners was one of ten who won the above award. We enjoyed seeing the many awards given out as a part of the READ program. The photo shows



Grandma, Suzanne Cho, Grandpa's other learner, Ruby Grayes, the winner, and her daughter.



A history of waste disposal in San Diego

Back in November of 2004 (RFNL1774) we published the start of a report on the above subject written by Curtis when employed by the SD Environmental services Department. Finally, we have some space to add another segment, as follows.

Early Days

San Diego was the first of the mission settlements. The economy of mission-era San Diego was nearly non-existent, with few of the missions existing above the subsistence level. Often the missions were forced to send some of the natives back to their tribes after baptism, because of a poor harvest or a lack of overall food stores. The only major export from the Missions came in the form of cattle hides.

San Diego failed to realize its geographic potential under Mexican rule as well. Internal conflict destabilized California and Mexico after 1821. Revolution and counter revolution shook the country. As a result, the resources of San Diego remained untapped and the population stayed relatively small. When San Diego was chartered as a pueblo the population was documented at 432 persons, a number which changed little through the 26 years of Mexican possession of Alta California. A population of that size in a pre-industrial area produced limited amounts of garbage in comparison to the amount of land that was available for disposal. As a result, any form of organized collection was unnecessary.

Manifest Destiny

Following the U.S. seizure of California in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Americans began pouring into California in search of gold and land. Early land speculators attempted to move the center of San Diego from Old Town into an area closer to the harbor. These adventures failed because of a lack of interest on the part of the local population and the inability to attract investment from abroad.

After several of these failures Alonzo E. Horton arrived in San Diego with the intent of making it into a major city to rival San Francisco. Horton had moved to California during the gold rush after making a considerable sum in the founding of the small Wisconsin town, Hortonville. He arrived in San Francisco and saw that a huge need for furnishing the homes of all of the new low income residents in the boom towns in that area. So Horton opened a large used furniture shop and made a small fortune. After hearing a promoter talk about the geographic potential in San Diego, Horton sold his furniture business and traveled south to build a city.

That is all the room we have for now, and we will try and continue with the story in the near future.