

Richard celebrates 60th birthday – surprise party given by family

Yes, the oldest member of the Riel family, Richard, has reached the magic milestone of 60 years of life. Actually, the date was September 29th, a Saturday, and Richard had told his wife that he wanted to spend that day at Disneyland. So, they took off early Saturday, and enjoyed just about every attraction the park offers. Since the family was aware of the Disneyland visit the surprise party was planned for the following day. This also happened to be a Charger football game day, at Qualcomm Stadium, and we knew Richard would want to be with his long-time friend, Gary Law, glued to the TV. Therefore, the party was scheduled for 11:00 am, and Liz told Richard that Dad needed help with his TV set, and he hoped that Richard could stop by at 11:00 to take care of the problem. The plan worked perfectly, as Richard showed up with a coil of co-axial cable in hand. After greetings all around the group enjoyed snacks and drinks. Dinner was scheduled for noon, with chefs Bud and Margaret in charge of the cooking. The menu main entrées were salmon and halibut. As you are aware (from the September RFNL) Robert brought back from his Alaska fishing trip lots of fish he had caught, and he generously provided Mom and Dad more than enough for the party. In addition, on the previous day he had been in charge of a Company golf tournament and he also donated lots of left-over beer, soft drinks, and snacks. On top of that, we also picked up some Chinese food, and that plus all the snacks, dips, chips, veggies the others brought; we enjoyed all the food everyone could eat. Afterwards, Grandpa and some of the others offered a few recollections of past events in their lives. Afterwards the Charger fans stayed to watch the football game (big loss) and the others went home, thus missing one of the worst games in Charger history. It was a great part, enjoyed by all, and we all wish Richard a big **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!** A few days later Richard sent us his comments on the event, as follows.

To Dad and Mom, Ed, Margaret and Bud, Jeff and Carol, Bruce and Birdy, Bob and Listy. Thanks for the surprise Birthday Party on Sunday. Robert and Karla, thanks for the fish and the bottle of tequila. For those of you who could not attend, I want to share Dad's advice to me and all of us for a long life: 1. Don't drink 2. Don't smoke 3. Don't abuse drugs 4. Stay physically active 5. Stay mentally active Dad also shared with us the story of how he and Mom came to San Diego. Dad interviewed in New Orleans, Michigan and Washington. Dad told us about meeting Dr. Havens and his family, especially their new baby son. Turns out years later they played golf with the now grown up baby who became a great golfer. Dad decided on San Diego and brought Toni Lane on the same day.

Toni Lane was a 3-bedroom 1-bath house next to a horse. We all laughed about how bad the flies here. We watched the Padre's and Charger's lose, oh well. Anyway thanks for all of your kind actions and thoughts of me on my 60th birthday; as Mom says so well, "God Bless all of you." Love to all richinspirit at 60



Instead of the usual party pictures of family members standing around talking, eating, and generally enjoying each others company, we decided on this occasion to search the extensive



RFNK photo file, looking for pictures of major events in Richard's past. As you can see we only have space for the major events.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RICHARD



The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

October, 2007

Annie tours Spain

Hi Dad, Annie wrote this note for the newsletter....you could probably use it instead of the other one I sent...
Listy

Hi!

> Oh my gosh, this has already been an incredible experience! I don't even know where to begin. Spain is a lot different than I had imagined. It's classy-like everyone told me, but only in the way that they dress up daily. The girls are extremely stylish, more than I am when I make an effort to be, so I've given up and reverted back to jeans and T-shirts. I feel like Spain as a country is pretty contradictory...although everyone dresses up and appears to be classy, the streets are sooo dirty. I feel like I am in Mexico sometimes. Dogs and cats roam without leashes and poop in the streets and no one picks up after them! If I wear sandals my feet are black by the end of the day from dirt and such, it's gross! The buildings are gorgeous though. The sidewalks are filled with shops and then on top they built all the apartment complexes so the streets are surrounded by ten story buildings, it reminds me of Italy~ not that I've been to Italy! What else...The food. The food is not my favorite. I don't like it at all. They say the Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest but if that's the case, then I'd rather be fat. They drench their food in oils, salts, and garlic - excessive amounts of garlic-. They stick with one flavor and nothing else, so I get really tired of the food. The one thing I do LOVE is the paella. It's like a rice mix dish with all kinds of seafood- clams, mussels, calamari, shrimp, and crab, and the sauce is amazing! The problem, however, is that once you say you like something, they just keep feeding you till you don't like it anymore! Actually, you don't even have to say that you like it, they feed you too much anyway. Don't be surprised if I come back a much bigger person. Haha, no I'll be fine- we walk EXCESSIVE amounts here, it's weird. Everyone in Spain walks. I like it but I also don't because I feel like I waste so much time walking! Enough about that. So far, we've only been in Spain, no other countries. We went to Ronda, famous for bullfights, Almunecar, the beach! (first time in the Mediterranean!), the Alhambra (very famous palace/fortress), and Cordoba! We have seen some amazing historical sights. I leave on Friday for Barcelona and then on Oct 1st for Italy for a week! We're going to stay in Barcelona for a few days then fly to Venice, train it to Florence, and train it to Rome, then back to Granada. I hope we survive this backpacking adventure. We're just going without any real plans...I hear its fun! haha. We plan on going to Portugal, Greece and Africa as well, this semester. It's crazy what you can do over here! I've meet so many cool people from all over the world. That's the one thing I really like about Spain- the diversity. There are so many travelers and such. I live with a family here, a mama and her son Fran who's 21. They are both really nice and we get along well. Our family is fun, interesting, but fun. They talk really loudly and sooo fast and sometimes I can't tell if it's an argument or just a conversation. So far, I can understand pretty well except for when they talk to each other because they reach record levels of speed and bad pronunciation. I never realized how hard it would be to actually become fluent in another language. There's so much that you have to learn just by living the language, stuff that you won't pick up in books. Hopefully I will pick up enough of it while I'm here. I like my school so far but we're only doing grammar right now. I decided that I like Mexico better than Spain though, mostly for the previously mentioned reasons. There are a lot of customs that I just don't get, but it's good to learn. Overall, in spite of my complaints, I am really enjoying myself. I almost enjoy the stuff that I don't like more because it makes me appreciate home. I definitely miss the luxuries of the US, like food I like that is quick and easy, my car! and I dunno, family! Oh, one more thing that's definitely different is the going out scene. These Spanish kids are crazy! They go out till 8 in the morning on a regular basis! It's fun but definitely hard to do. The clubs don't close till 7 am so everyone stays out and then goes to breakfast! haha. Oh and the adults go out till late too. It's not unusual to see adults, even grandparents (!) at tapas bars till one a.m. I even see a lot at clubs!! One thing I love about Granada is

that it's the only city in Spain where tapas (appetizers) are free with drinks! So if you order a drink, they will bring out an appetizer- anything from nuts to chips to mini sandwiches, meatballs, bread and cheese for free! It's really nice! I love what's happening here and am also at the same time excited to come back. It's a weird balance. So far, a month down and three to go. That sounds so long but I know it will go by fast. I hope that I have given you some idea of my life here in Granada. Pretty normal...haha.



The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

October, 2007

Jessica in Italy

Cari Nonni (Dear Grandpa and Grandma),

Greetings from Italy and New Jersey! I hope that all is well in sunny San Diego. The temperature on the east coast is getting colder everyday unfortunately. I just thought that I would drop you a note to let you know how my travels have been. I'm flying mostly to Rome and Milan now which is wonderful. I also got to spend a week in Tuscany recently with my boyfriend, Miguel. And what a splendid vacation it was! Two of the highlights from the trip were taking a cooking class in Siena -- the food as you can imagine was delicious -- and going out to dinner with my host parents with whom I lived a few years back. I was so nice to see them and catch up. They were very impressed with how much my Italian has improved. The most hair-raising part of the trip was driving in Italy. Miguel and I had the genius idea of renting a car and driving from Milan to Siena and since we ended up flying out of Rome, (with a connection through Brussels -- a novel of a story to be told some other time) we drove all the way down to Rome to drop off the car. Actually, a word of advice, when you get the chance to meet Miguel, this is not something I would bring up. Although the view of the country roads of Italy are incomparable, between getting lost, terrible road signs, and far to many cute "just over that hill" towns, we ended up driving more than 1500km (over 900 miles). I'll stick to planes and trains from now on.

That month I got to go to some other fun places for work as well. My favorites were Hamburg and Berlin, Germany and Lisbon, Portugal. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll be returning to Brussels any time in the near future. The only other piece of news I have is that I recently bought my first car! Because a flight attendant's salary is so extravagant, I was able to buy a stunning 1994 Dodge Shadow! And let me tell you, she is a beaut! Only 78,000 miles and she purrs like the neighbor's old cat that limps a little and has been fed one too many cans of Purina. In actuality, she is perfect for

me and if I don't drive her very much, she hardly causes me any problems. I hope to be able to see the family soon as I miss everyone very much.

I love you, Jessica

CORRECTION

In the September RFNL we reported on the death of Ophelia Merica, Grandma's sister-in-law. In listing her children we forgot to include her other daughter, Nicole. Of course, we know Nicole from telephone conversations, and it was she who informed us of her Mom's death. Nicole visited us many years ago. We are sorry for this omission.

Katy unhurt in car accident – car totaled

Recently Katy sent us news (bad and good) involving her car being totaled. We are, indeed, happy that there were no injuries other than the car. The good news is moving to a new apartment, and we hope to get some more details on that subject. Thanks, Katy. For keeping us informed on your activities.

Hey Grandpa,

I wanted to give you an update on the new and exciting things going on right now, but I guess I have to start with the bad news. Last month while driving home from work I was in a pretty bad car accident. I am happy to report that no one was badly injured but my new car (new to me anyway) is totaled. The accident was not my fault and the lady that hit me and the BMW are at fault and even though it took a while to track down the insurance I finally am getting things settled with them. Because of my age I was not able to get a rental car, and with Annie in Spain Uncle Bob and Aunt Listy were kind enough to allow me to use her Jetta. And though no time is a good time to be in an accident my timing was particularly bad. You see, I just moved into my new apartment. My new address is 3499 Ruffin Rd 1B San Diego CA 92123. It has been an adventure, to say the least, trying to coordinate everyone's schedule with the moving date and truck rentals and all the fun stuff that goes into moving. My roommate and I are very excited and can not wait to get everything set up and looking like a home and not just some big empty space. I met my roommate, Janine, at church and then she became my co-worker. We were both looking to move out at the same time and had the same budget. We spent the last 4 months or so looking at different places and trying to decide when was a good date to move. The complex that we are in is beautiful and spacious, with 5 pools and 6 laundry facilities. We look forward to have you over for dinner so that you can see the place. I will have pictures for you soon.

All my love,

Katy



TOSCANA POETICA

Siena

The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

October, 2007

Andy home from Iraq

We have the following story from Andy (written from Iraq), in which he relates the good news that he is scheduled to return from a long tour of duty. Subsequently, Eloise has reported that he now is back home, safe and unharmed.

Dear Friends,

Please forgive me for not writing to you sooner. Things have been busy the past couple months with an increase in counseling and briefings. Most of the counseling is dealing with marriage issues, marriages that are either on the brink of falling apart or already falling apart. The briefings are the good news. We have started the redeployment briefings, the mandatory briefings that must be finished prior to us going home. Yes, next month we will be going home. I can't say exactly when I will be going home but I should be home sometime around the middle of the month.

As we get closer to the end of our tour, I would ask that you pray that my soldiers not get too anxious and make mistakes that could get themselves or others hurt or killed. My battalion has been blessed so far this deployment with only three serious injuries and I pray that God continues to watch over us these last days and weeks. I would also ask that if you have letters or packages to send you send them prior to 15 September. We have been told that mail needs to be sent by then to make sure we receive it prior to us going home.

One more prayer request is for patience. Patience in dealing with others, the weather, and all the little things that build up and slowly over time just wear on us. I know personally it has affected me and I do not want to take that attitude home to my wife and girls. This type of attitude is widespread over here largely due to the fact that there is no separation from work and to the fact that we are with the same people every day, seven days a week.

I thank God for all of you and for the support that you have given me and my troopers. I know that you have prayed for me and for all my guys on a continual basis and I know that your prayers have kept us safe and given us the strength to go on.

Thank You Peace CH Andy Nix

INTERNATIONAL FILM & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Recently Brett's film *LOADED* was featured at the Temecula film festival. It was shown in two different time spots and was well received by those who attended. Brett and his crew members were



driven in a vintage car to the red carpet where they were interviewed by local media. It was a great experience and we are looking forward to attending the film festival in NYC this coming February. As you can imagine, the selection process is definitely competitive, Congrats to Brett for this honor of his work.

