

Riel Bowl XVII - January 1, 2008

Once again the family gathered at the Bob and Karla home in Alpine to celebrate the arrival of another new year. Some activities were like past celebrations, but some new changes occurred. The cross word puzzles used in the past to help determine the Jeopardy Game contestants were abandoned in favor of a quiz. Each Riel family team was given, upon arrival, an envelope containing a quiz which consisted of four old family photos. For each photo the contestants were ask to name the persons pictured, where the photo was taken, what the event was and when it took place. Each contestant received a different quiz and a perfect score was 56 points. The following scores are recorded for each team: Richard-12, Ed-33, Margaret-22, Francie-25, Carol-40, Listy-25, Birdy-20. Since there was a tie for third, Carol, Ed, Listy, and Francie were accepted as Jeopardy contestants. The usual meal was highlighted by Bob's prime rib roast (2), certainly one of the best ever. After lunch Listy showed a CD of the Kristy/Seamus wedding, as taken by our own movie maker, Brett Sorem. The presentation was much enjoyed and brought back pleasant memories. The Jeopardy game was played next. All of the questions involved photos that had appeared in the 2007 newsletters and there Events." The grand prize went to the Carol team, as shown in the question (devised by Robert) asked each team to write down a bet on came the family gift hand outs, followed by the White Elephant gift dine out certificates were the Bob/Karla and Ed/Jan families. Finally, Grandma turned 81, and received many special gifts. Alan celebrated his 60th birthday, and he received many gifts, mostly of the gag variety. His brother Richard Sorem, and wife Charmy, were special guests invited to help him celebrate. So the day ended another great Riel Bowl, and as usual we thank all who made it possible, especially Robert, Karla, Katy and Brian.



Riel family member that is described by the following formula.

$$9 = \sqrt{(\text{age} - \# \text{ of Children})}$$

were two categories, "Places and above picture. The Super Jeopardy solving the following equation. Next exchange. The winners of the RFNL there were two birthday celebrations.



The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

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A little more RB 17 - The rather fuzzy picture at the bottom of page one deserves a comment. As RFNL readers will note, it is a copy of a photo taken at Francie's home recently. The pictured item actually is a tapestry, woven through the wonders of modern technology. The message at the bottom reads

*Happy Birthday Mom
Love, from your
girls*

Needless to say, the gift was most appreciated and Grandma says, "THANK YOU!!"

Some Saturday lunch visitors

Saturday lunch at a local restaurant has become somewhat of



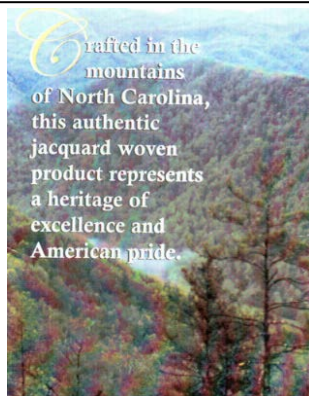
a family tradition with Grandma and Grandpa. The regulars are Ed, Listy, and Birdy. After lunch Grandma and the twins take off for some power shopping while Grandpa and Ed

return to the condo for various projects involving repair, gardening, and various light maintenance things. Anyone is welcome at any time, and in December we enjoyed several guests, including Annie and Michelle. This was our first chance to talk to Annie after her extensive visit to



Spain and Italy (see recent RFNLs for interesting trip reports). It was apparent that she thoroughly enjoys travel and the only thing keeping her at home is a lack of travel funds. Michelle is busy at graduate school at U. of Massachusetts. It won't be too much

longer



Crafted in the mountains of North Carolina, this authentic jacquard woven product represents a heritage of excellence and American pride.

until there will be a Dr. Hartman in the family. On another lunch day we were pleased to have the company of Jessica, her boyfriend Miguel and of course, Carol and Jeff. Miguel lives in Newark but is no stranger to San Diego, having spent several years studying at SDSU.

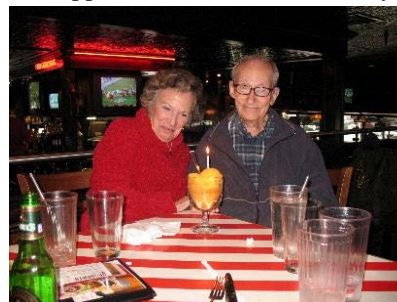
Grandpa celebrates 89th birthday!!!



December 6th was the official day, but there were several celebrations spread out over the month of December. First off was a Grandpa/Liz joint celebration; Liz's birthday is the 3rd and Grandpa's the

6th. We enjoyed dinner at the Outback Steakhouse on Kearny Mesa, thus avoiding early shopping crowds at the Mission Valley malls. We all enjoyed great dinners and a fun celebration.

Since the 6th fell on a Thursday, Grandpa and Grandma decided to have their own celebration, so they took off for lunch at the Red Lobster. Grandpa decided to splurge and order a lobster, only \$30.00 on the menu. It was somewhat of a disappointment, as it was not very big, and was tough and



chewy. However, we had a pleasant time. On a Saturday we met with Carol, Jason, Birdy, Listy, Grandma, and Ed at TGIF. We enjoyed a nice lunch, and birthday greetings from the serving staff,

as well as the family. The final birthday celebration was organized by Margaret and Francie, and took place at University Town Center. We enjoyed lunch at the?????????, a restaurant specializing in Cuban cuisine, something new to us. Afterwards, we visited the "Body" exhibit. This very interesting exhibit consisted of a series of human skeletons, each one augmented with various synthetic replicas of the various body systems. Some showed how the muscular systems were attached to the bones, some showed the nervous system, some the blood circulation system, etc. Some also included replicas of the various organs, in their true locations. Each of the major exhibits was labeled with a key number, and hand held remotes keyed to that number prompted a description of that exhibit. There also were many individual item side exhibits, such as a normal lung and that of a smoker (black). Unfortunately, picture taking was not allowed, so we have no exhibit photos. However, we do have some taken at the restaurant and afterwards at the frozen

yogurt stand, a nice place to end a special day. (See page 3)

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Christmas celebrations Christmas Eve with Francie/Lyle and Christmas day with Birdy/Bruce

The Christmas Eve celebration started at 11 am, when Lyle picked up Grandma and Grandpa. This was all a part of a clever plan to surprise Grandma with her gift, a new HDTV set. Robert had already made the pre-arrangements, including installation of a new cable box. Grandma had walked into the living room as Robert was working, but he fast talked her into thinking it was just a routine maintenance thing. The final installation was to take place on Christmas Eve, but Robert had tickets to the Chargers game, starting that afternoon, hence the 11 o'clock departure with Lyle. While Robert and Ed were busy with the TVs Lyle drove Grandma and Grandpa out to visit his mother, who lives in Ramona along with his sister's family. After meeting the family and touring their lovely home, we headed back to Francie's to join the party going on there.

After a delicious lunch and some relaxing conversation, we went to the early (4:00 pm) service at St. Columba Church. Afterwards Grandma and Grandpa decided to call it a day, so Francie drove us home. As we entered the living



Christmas day was a little less hectic, since we slept in and got up just in time to arrive at the Hartman home by noon. The party already was in full swing, with lots of drinks and snacks set out for everyone. Lunch was served at 1:00 pm, with ham, potatoes, veggies, salad, and followed by desserts. Afterwards we gathered in the living room for the handing out of Christmas presents. The most unique present was one Bruce gave Birdy. It was wrapped in a cardboard cylinder and labeled Rx for shopping, Inside was \$500 in twenty dollar bills, each rolled up in a tight cylinder so as to pack the cylinder full. A TEMPORARY CURE FOR SHOPPING !!!!!

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Some Christmas pictures at Hartmans

Megan comments on December RFNL Christmas Message -

I don't think that I speak for the Riel family, but I don't believe that Ben Stein does either. The beginning of his essay contains a nice sentiment about crossing boundaries and displaying not only tolerance but also acceptance for people of other faiths. That being said, I take issue with the rest of the essay. Firstly, this notion of an embattled believer in a secular nation is a falsehood. Americans are around 80% Christian according to the US census, a Gallup poll, and polls done by Newsweek and CBS. Four percent of our population is non-Christian, and only about 14% of Americans describe themselves as atheist or do not affiliate with a religion (which is less than Israel's 37 percent). And although we have no religious test to be president, we have never had a non-Christian president, and our current President regularly gets messages from God. So, although Mr. Stein is right that atheism isn't in our constitution, it's clearly not in our culture either. What is in our constitution is the separation of Church and State. It is true that this was to ensure religion stayed out of politics, but it is also true that our Founding Fathers, with varying religious views, all had the same mistrust of the tyranny of government. The separation of Church and State was for some, protecting our most holy places from our most corrupt. What Mr. Stein perceives as secularism being rammed down his throat, is instead an expression of what I believe makes this country great: even though only 15% of the population could possibly be offended by overt religious expression, we are still considerate to that 15%.

Mr. Stein refers to Anna Graham's statement about Katrina as "profound" but if all we can learn from that horrible tragedy that we need more prayer in schools, then I can see why God is sad. Katrina should teach us that we aren't taking good enough care of the planet that God gave us, and that we don't love our neighbors as ourselves, and that when levies are in a state of disrepair around a city that is below sea level, we should repair them. Taking earthly issues and making them have supernatural causes is a way of avoiding accountability for the problems humans have caused and humans can solve. Mr. Stein then goes on to throw in Terrorism and the general ills of the world as all stemming from our lack of religiosity. I think it's much more reasonable to see the problems we face in the Middle East a result of overzealous religious fundamentalism, the very thing Mr. Stein is advocating our country return to.

As he is chronicling our descent into the darkness and depravity as a nation he points out that "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)." I'm not sure if he's saying that we should spank children because Dr. Spock's son committed suicide, but it seems that way. I think our move away from corporal punishment is an improvement on our society and bringing his son into the argument is a misuse of a personal tragedy.

Mr. Stein seems to take issue with the fact that we believe the newspaper more than we believe the Bible. Whatever argument he is trying to make by juxtaposing these is a frail one. The newspaper doesn't ask for "belief" and the Bible asks for skepticism. If coming to one's faith was as easy as reading the newspaper than faith wouldn't be worth anything. And anyone who has studied the Bible realizes that we have no way of ever being sure what was originally written down, and that what we refer to as Bible has been changed and edited and translated many times over the course of hundreds of years.

Mr. Stein beautifully bridges the divide of belief in the beginning of the essay, and then proceeds to undo this inclusiveness with the rest of it. If we believe that God gave us reason and a large brain then we should use it to fix the problems we see before us, and educate ourselves instead of being paranoid about the onslaught of atheism in one of the most religious countries in the world.

It should be pointed out that we learned, after publication, that the approximate second half of the message was not written by Mr. Stein, but added on by an unknown person.

Free TV – Grandma's new TV has displaced her old one to Grandpa's den, thus making his old one surplus. It is a 21 inch set, in perfect working condition.

