

## Grandpa wins tutoring award

Most of you are aware that Grandpa has been a volunteer literacy tutor, an activity he started in the fall of 1996. In 1998 he won the Rebecca E. Lytle Tutor of the Year Award, and as announced in the following letter, in 2007 he won the 10 Year Veteran Tutor Award. It was presented on February 1, 2008 at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Recognition Dinner, held at the Balboa Park Club Ballroom.

A large crowd attended the ceremony. Grandpa and Grandma were seated at a reserved table along with Grandpa's two Learners, Ruby Grays and Suzanne Cho, along with Ruby's guest, Carol and Jeff Benesch, and Betty Farnsworth. Many of the Riel children will remember Betty as our across the street neighbor when we were living on Lyndon Road. Betty operates a small book store, specializing in study aids for handicapped children. She has been a READ supported for many years, and is well acquainted and supportive of the adult literacy activities.

After a delicious buffet dinner was enjoyed by all the awards were presented. Grandpa was given a Certificate of Recognition from the California Assembly, along with an Aladdin's Lamp statuette. It was a great party, enjoyed by all, and we look forward to next year, and another

chance to recognize the literacy achievements of the many who are a part of the READ program.



  
 THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

December 21, 2007

Frank Riel  
5983 Cirrus Street  
San Diego, CA 92110

Dear Frank:

Congratulations! On behalf of the San Diego Public Library, I am pleased to inform you that you have been chosen by the READ/San Diego Annual Awards Selection Committee to receive the **10 Year Veteran Tutor Award** for outstanding volunteer service to READ/San Diego. This is the most distinguished award READ/San Diego bestows upon a volunteer.

As an honored recipient of this award, we will highlight you and your success in our quarterly newsletter, annual report and the media during 2008.

We will present this award to you at **READ/San Diego's 20th Annual Learner Recognition Dinner and Awards Ceremony at the Balboa Park Club Ballroom on Friday, February 1, 2008, 5:45 p.m.**

Please plan to attend and feel free to bring along your family members or a close friend. You will receive a formal invitation to the event soon. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Valerie Hardie  
Literacy Program Administrator

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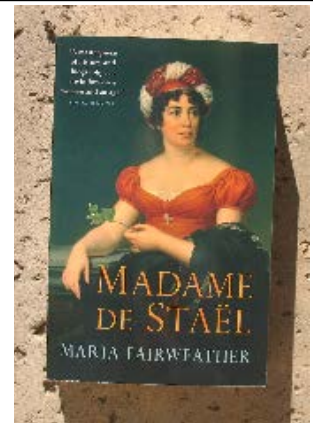
# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

February, 2008

## Some news from Grandma's niece Maria, in London

In the March, 2006 issue of RFNL we printed a story about Grandma's niece, Maria Fairweather, and her latest book "MADAME DE STAEL". In December '08 we received a letter telling us that she is working on another book and is seeking information from Grandma. We responded to that letter, and she sent along a second one, with more details. We reprint both letters (the first one retyped from long hand, to save space), which provide some more details on her latest project.



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Dear Aunt Edith, Uncle Frank 3.12.07

We have all much enjoyed your family newsletter which my mother passes on to me. One of these days we must come over and meet some of your enormous progeny, and I hope that any of them in England will come and see us.

I am working on my next book, our family history. I thought I would do a memoir of my first ten years in Iran 1943-1954 with historical flashbacks to how my grandparents came to be there and where they came from. The history is of the period 1890-1930, covering Russia (my mother's side) and Constantinople/Tabriz my fathers input. I would be hugely grateful to have any memories of life in Tabriz and in Tehran as you remember it, and how you both met and where.

My memoir will not be of the 'confessional' variety, but rather a history of the time and of all those migrations of which my family was a part, with the family as the central figure in the landscape.

I hope you are both well – you certainly look great in the pictures. Aunt Lilika (as I always think of her) is one of my first memories, and I so regret that the distance between us made it too difficult to know each other better. We were very glad to meet Margaret – more than 30 years till now!

I mean to come to California one of these days, to visit you and of course, my brother Michael.

Meanwhile much love to you both.  
Maria

9 January 2008

*Dear Aunt & Edith*

Thank you so much for your letter and for sending me a copy of Edith's interview which was very interesting and immediately put me right on some of the dates.

Thank you also for telling me about 'Persian Gulf Command'. I will certainly read it. My object with this book is really to write the history of the times in Russia, Turkey and Iran as much as of the family's migration. It would be wonderful to come to the States and see you and as many members of the family as are around. I have been promising to come to Michael and Linda's for ages but somehow life is so busy and there is always something in the way. Things are a little unclear as to timing just now but I hope it will be within a year.

Did I say in my last letter that Edith's departure for Egypt is my very first memory? I must have been 2 ½ and I remember her bending down to kiss me goodbye and the colour of her dress and her red nail varnish. I well remember a very pretty pink smocked dress you sent me when I was about 6 – the first time any of us had seen nylon. And of course for many years there were the Christmas cards from you with a new baby! I was always asking my parents what aunt Lilika (as I still think of her) had produced that year!

I am going to Greece to visit my mother later this month. I try to go every three months. She has had a bad time recently and I think Aunt Opho's death depressed her. It's very lucky that at least three of her five children are nearby and see a lot of her.

We can now email each other. I agree that it's so much easier.

Much love to you both and to Margaret and a Happy New Year to all of you.

*Maria*

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## Cousins meet on an airplane

Hi Grandpa,  
This last weekend I flew up to Berkeley to visit some friends. I took my seat on the plane and guess who was sitting in the seats in front of me? Kristy and Seamus! The Keiths! Below is the photographic evidence Hope you enjoy, Love, Megan



## A special reason to shop at Sears!!

Francie sent us the following, and we are a little late publishing it, but the suggestion is one we certainly support.

This is very interesting and cool.....lets all buy something at Sears this holiday season....

**Subject:** Fw: Sears' Treatment of Soldiers

**Subject:** Sears - Christmas shopping has already started. See link at bottom - verified at snopes.com.

I know I needed this reminder since Sears isn't always my first choice. Amazing when you think of how long the war has lasted and they haven't withdrawn from their commitment. Could we each buy at least one thing at Sears this year? How does Sears treat its employees who are called up for military duty? By law, they are required to hold their jobs open and available, but nothing more. Usually, people take a big pay cut and lose benefits as a result of being called up. Sears is voluntarily paying the difference in salaries and maintaining all benefits, including medical insurance and bonus programs, for all called up reservist employees for

up to two years. I submit that Sears is an exemplary corporate citizen and should be recognized for its contribution. I suggest we all shop at Sears, and be sure to find a manager to tell them why we are there so the company gets the positive reinforcement it well deserves.

Pass it on.

I decided to check this before I sent it forward. So I sent the following e-mail to the Sears Customer Service Department:

*I received this e-mail and I would like to know if it is true. If it is, the Internet may have just become one very good source of advertisement for your company. I know I would go out of my way to buy products from Sears instead of another store for a like item, even if it's cheaper at that store.*

This is their answer to my e-mail:

*Dear Customer:*

*Thank you for contacting Sears. The information is factual. We appreciate your positive feedback .Sears regards service to our country as one of greatest sacrifices our young men and women can make. We are happy to do our part to lessen the burden they bear at this time.*

*Bill Thorn*

*Sears Customer Care*

*[webcenter@sears.com](mailto:webcenter@sears.com) 1-800-349-4358*

Please pass this on to all your friends. Sears needs to be recognized for this outstanding contribution and we need to show them as Americans, we do appreciate what they are doing for our military!!!

It's Verified

By [Snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com/politics/military/sears.asp) at: <http://www.snopes.com/politics/military/sears.asp> (shows the entire article)

## Sunday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> - bad news from Birdy

Hi Dad and Mom, I don't want to worry you but it is hard not to turn to you when things go crazy. I don't expect you to do a thing...I just have to tell you that Bruce had a massive heart attack yesterday at noon. Not his usual angina but a heart attack that has to do with blockage in the veins. He is in the hospital (amen!) and will have surgery on Monday if all goes well. They have him on massive amounts of nitro to open up his veins for the surgery, which has caused a major headache for him. He is miserable but he is here....so

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that is good. I am pleased because maybe they will finally fix that ticker of his because...as you both know...he has scared me tremendously over the years. He is at Sharp and getting good care (they refuse to send him to Kaiser....yeah!). So that is the latest and I wanted to let you know. Don't worry....I am fine. Please don't come to the hospital. He is not up for visitors right now. Call Listy if you want any updates. You know she will be with me or close by. Just put Mom on prayer duty. I have always felt that she has a direct line to God, which is why we have all had good health all these years....Just wanted to give you an update. I will write if I hear anything else.....but add a prayer for Bruce when your day winds down.

love Birdy

**Monday, Feb 10<sup>th</sup> AND SOME GOOD NEWS !!!**

**Bruce Hartman takes a much needed vacation at Sharp Resort in Kearny Mesa!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



As many of you know, Bruce is a very hard working guy, and refuses to take any extra time off. So, on Saturday, February 9th the powers that be provided him with a little R and R, (via a heart attack), at the special getaway that Grandma took advantage of after her back surgery three years ago, When the fine doctors at Sharp sent Bruce in for a photo shoot, they noticed a vein that was 85% blocked. Knowing that Bruce would not settle for anything but a perfect diagnostic check up they proceeded to clear out the vein and insert a stint in it to make it

perform as a brand new engine. Bruce will be going home on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> where I am sure the Bird will make sure that he follows all of his doctor's suggestions. In the photo above, you can see that Bruce looks fabulous as always, surrounded by those who love him and some rather beautiful flowers courtesy of Francie's garden. I am sure his sparkling personality and determination to thrive will make him the ideal patient for Birdy to take care of. Love to you Bruce, you are amazing!!!!!!

The above rather upbeat report was provided by Francie, as soon as the operation was over and the doctors reported on the successful repair of the blocked artery. There was a great big sigh of relief heard throughout the family. The one down side is that Bruce's mother is a patient in the same hospital, with some sort of an internal problem. So we will keep the prayers going on her behalf, hoping she will soon be able to go home. In the meantime, we thank all who rallied round Bruce in this scary time, helping bring it to a happy end.

**Tuesday, Feb 11<sup>th</sup> AND SOME MORE GOOD NEWS**

Hi there, - Bruce is fine. They did a cardiac catheterization where they pump dye into you to see where the plug is and then they go in and fix it. He only had one blockage but it was 85% blocked. His doctor thought that he also had a blood clot because of the severity of the heart attack. However, all the thinners that he has been on since Saturday has taken care of that. However, he had a very scary moment in recovery. While applying pressure to the artery in his groin area, they accidentally cut off blood in his vagal vein....which is not good. Apparently, your brain thinks that you are bleeding out and reacts violently. His vital signs all dropped and sirens began to ring and it was something like a scene in ER. Luckily, I was not there to see it. Bruce said that he was on the verge of passing out and it felt like eminent death....no fun. Ask him about it...he tells the story much better than I do...I am just glad that they fixed him and all is well. He is coming home tomorrow (Tuesday) and I am one happy camper. Thanks for all the extra thoughts and prayers. Love - Birdy