



# Curtis is home !!!

Yes, after many years stationed at far away places Sergeant Hartman is back in the USA and in a few more weeks he will be Mr. Hartman once again. The entire family is proud and pleased of the way he has served his country in South Korea and Iraq, but is very happy to learn that his military career is finished and he now will be starting a new career. We are confident that he will be successful in whatever he chooses to do. Bruce, Birdy, and girlfriend Lauren met him when he arrived at Fort Hood and was welcomed in an impressive military ceremony and his loving family. We have the following from Birdy.

I wonder if you felt a surge of overwhelming calm in your life on November 2, at about 7:00 A.M. I know I did because that was the moment when I saw Curtis' plane land in Ft. Hood, Texas after his yearlong deployment in Iraq. I cannot even describe to you the long standing cloud that has hung over my head with his absence. The looming feeling that something unthinkable could happen to my son was now gone forever! After his landing, we (Birdy, Bruce and Lauren Cooper- Curtis' (wonderful girlfriend who accompanied us on the two day trip drive in Curtis' car to Texas) waited two painful hours as the army processed them to be released into our loving arms. It was quite a sight to see them marching double time into the gym, with smoke surrounding them from a smoke grenade that was set off in celebration, where we had anxiously awaited. It created quite a blur as they marched in formation, but perhaps more of that blur was caused by the tears in my eyes as I spotted my arms. Fortunately, the army held a very short for their service. Soon, they were dismissed and throughout the gym. We all funneled out of that families. We were lucky to get to relish Curtis' real world. He will be stationed in Ft. Hood, Texas until Dec. 13.th and if we are very lucky, he may travel homeward to enjoy his first Thanksgiving in San Diego in 5 years! I, for one, cannot wait!!! Birdy



# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch the News

November, 2009

## Tragedy at Fort Hood

By now you all know the bare facts surrounding the killing of 12 Marines about to ship out from Fort Hood to the Near East conflict. It happened on November 5<sup>th</sup>, shortly after noon. You also know that Curtis Hartman had just returned from Iraq and was stationed at Fort Hood, preparatory to release from the army. Fortunately he was off the Base at the time of the event, but there were some scary moments for close family members until his safety was assured. Birdy gave us the story of that stressful day.

### FT. HOOD TRAGEDY

I know that you are all well aware of the news that hit Ft. Hood but I want to thank my family who called to check on Curtis' safety after hearing about the news of the day. It was David Gillingham who came to my classroom around noon on Thursday, Nov. 5, asking me where Curtis was stationed. Once he confirmed his suspicions, he explained to me that there was a shooting on that base and wanted to know if I had heard from Curtis. Quickly, as the blood drained from my heart, I unsteadily texted both Curtis and Lauren. In my mind, I was fairly certain that Curtis was fine because I knew he only had to report for half the day on Thursday, but that lingering, haunting feeling of fear prickled my skin as I awaited an answer from Curtis. He called me instantly and to my great relief relayed that he and Lauren were safe and enjoying lunch while this tragic event occurred. It was a double edged sword for me at that moment, for I was instantly relieved for Curtis but I still felt miserable for the families that had lost their own children, spouse, or parent. My heart goes out to each and every one of them. I am sure that they were completely caught off guard! The horror of knowing that they were harmed on American soil is beyond comprehension. Unfortunately, now my world remains rocked and the calm I felt for Curtis' safety while in Texas is no longer there. My looming cloud is back and will not disperse until Dec. 13th, when he is no longer on any base, in any foreign country, but safely home where he belongs. Birdy

## Margaret undergoes eye surgery

Recently Margaret had to have eye surgery to correct a problem. One eye was operated on some time ago, and this procedure takes care of the other one. Here is her description of the procedure.

Hi Dad

The pterygium (caused by UV radiation from the sun) are now gone from both eyes! Think of a pterygium like a callus formation on the skin, but the eye is less tolerant of imperfection which is why my pterygium

(caused by UV radiation from the sun) are now gone from both eyes! Think of a pterygium like a callus eyes have been so red so often. While the picture looks pretty scary, the doctor is VERY pleased with the results. He says this looks more like two weeks after surgery than one week. In fact he said he wished he knew what he did to have it turn out so well. That is good news even through it still is a bit uncomfortable but nothing like it was when I had it done to the other eye. This time, instead of taking tissue (autograph) from my upper eyelid and stitching it on the eye (which was done last time), a skin graft was made from amniotic membrane (human placenta) which attached to the eyes without stitches. So hopefully in another few weeks my eyes will be back to normal and I will see well. Surfers beware as water sports increase the changes of developing pterygiums. Wear sunglasses!

## Long time family friend Sr. Mary dies

When Grandma was in college at the University of Dubuque back in 1946 and before she was married, she befriended a nun located in Dubuque. They became friends, and many years ago Sr. Mary and another nun visited us in San Diego. Other than that visit, she never had personal contact with any of the family until Margaret and Grandma attended her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2007. However, she enjoyed reading the RFNL every month and frequently responded with letters to Margaret and Grandma. It is with great sadness that we must report that she passed away shortly before her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday, in October of this year. Her prayers and good wishes bestowed on our family have helped us survive the many trials and tribulations associated with growing up and being successful. Grandma is sure that her prayers from heaven protected Curtis during the recent disaster at Fort Hood. We wish her well, wherever she may be.



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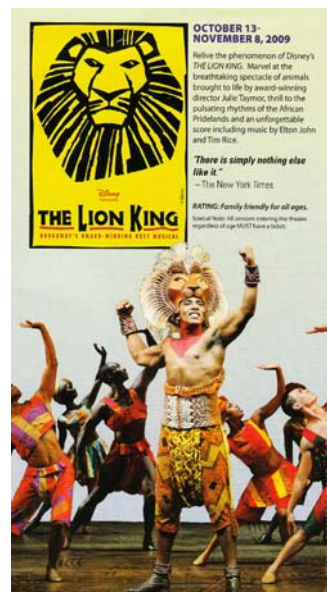
## Some birthday celebrations

October the 15<sup>th</sup> was a Saturday and Listy, Birdy, and Ed had arrived for the regular lunch. As usual, the question of where to go came up, and Birdy reminded us that it happened to be Scott's birthday. Someone spoke up and suggested that we go to the Bahia, where Scott works, and surprise him with a lunch celebration. Fortunately, he was there and available to join us. We enjoyed seeing him, and learn about his plans for the future. It seems that he and a friend have decided to open a restaurant and microbrewery in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Why Tulsa? – Because it doesn't have one. Plans are still in the formative stage, but they both think it represents a great



opportunity for a new business. We wish he and his partner every success in this venture, and look forward to seeing it a reality. In the meantime we wish Scott a happy birthday, and many more exciting ones.

Ed's 61<sup>st</sup> was on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we were casually planning some sort of informal celebration when the sad news about Jan's mother Catherin came along. This put a temporary hold on routine celebrations, but after a few weeks we were able to plan a proper celebration. We chose to dine at O'Bistro's in Ocean Beach, partly because Nathan and girl friend Brooke were working there, and Nathan is the manager. We dined outside and enjoyed a most pleasant evening wishing a happy birthday and many more for Ed. After the dinner we adjourned to the condo for some more celebrating and-what else? Ice cream, of course! It was a fun evening.



## Grandpa and Grandma take in Broadway show

This hugely popular musical has been playing at the Civic Theatre for many months, and recently Jan got tickets to take her mother. When Catherin died Jan decided she would prefer not to go, and gave us the tickets. Also, Ed and Jan kindly offered to drive us to the theatre and wait downtown until the show was over, to take us home. It was a spectacular performance, and we enjoyed it very much.

## A new car for Birdy

As soon as Birdy and Bruce returned from their summer



vacation in Germany they bought a new Honda for Birdy. We always like to record this happy experience and the smile it brings to the face of the new owner.

## Marston House reminds us of the Lyndon Road Home

The Saturday lunch group, at the end of last month, decided to tour the Marston House at the north end of Balboa Park. The craftsman style of the Marston house is different from the mission hills home the Riels grew up in, but both buildings were built in the same era. The plank wood floors, lights on the walls, the large molding, and the hinged windows with the push pole openers were standard mansion fair.



## New exhibit at the Mingei



The pre museum lunch group.