

Kevin and Nicole's Engagement Party

Clear skies chased away the rain of the pervious day to accommodate the wild and joyful party to mark the engagement of Kevin and Nicole.



The party, hosted by Francie and Lyle at the, now famous, Greyling Bar and Grill served up a potato bar with all the tasty fixings imaginable. Jan and I, as well as Kevin and Nicole, send all our appreciation to Frances for her all the work that does to make these family gatherings so special.



The warm mashed potatoes, of various flavors, were the perfect food for the cool evening and cold sparkling refreshments that fuelled the party.



The night was more special in that Nicole's mother, Karleen and her sister, Heidi could fly in for back east to be part of our festivities and give us the opportunity to enjoy this night with them as our new family members.

As the night progressed the engaged were toasted by Kevin's brothers and Ed & Jan.



And, of course, no Riel family engagement is complete without being consecrated by a Riel family song, authored by Listy. This one was sung to the tune of Leaving on a Jet Plane; making note of the plans for a wedding this August in Scotland.



Michelle wins PhD degree!

Hi Family!

Well, amazingly enough, after 6 long years of graduate school, they are going to let me graduate!! The commencement ceremony is on Sunday June 5th at UMass Medical School in Worcester.

I will officially be beginning the writing process in mid-March, though unofficially I've already started, and will have 3.5 months to write my dissertation followed by 2 weeks allowed for preparation of my presentation to the department and my oral defense, which will happen mid/late-July sometime.



Of course you are welcome to both if you wish, although I understand that cost is an issue... so if you have to choose

one or the other, it may be best to come to the commencement ceremony in June because it will be a bit more festive (and it's also the only firm date that I have since I've not yet scheduled my defense date). Although the defense is a bigger deal than the ceremony because it's the actual result of all the work that I've done over the past 4 years, but you might be sitting there wondering what the heck I'm saying! :) Not to mention it will be on a week-day so that can be a bit inconvenient.

You aren't expected to come to ANY of it, but ALL are welcome any time.

Love,

Michelle

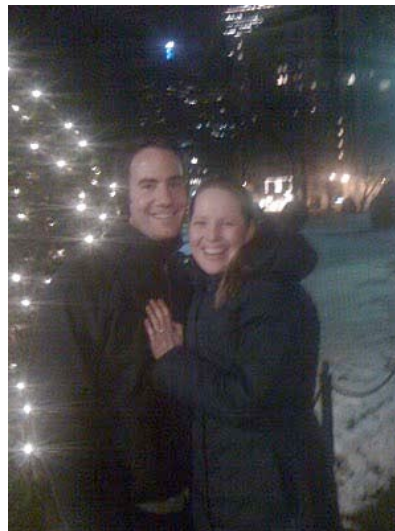
<http://sunnyhunnygirl.blogspot.com/>

The picture shown above was taken several years ago and shows the future Dr. Hartman hard at work in her laboratory at UMass. The classroom and laboratory work leading up to the degree award is long and hard, and we are proud and happy to see it come to such a great finish. CONGRATULATIONS!! ...AND THAT'S NOT ALL, as outlined in the next column.

More news on Michelle/Dave engagement

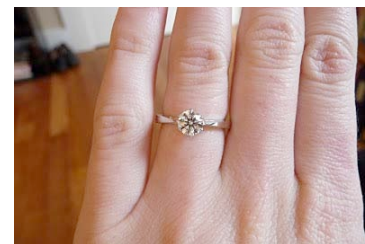
In the January, RFNL we printed a story on the engagement party held at Christmas time in San Diego. The story included an account by Michelle on how she and Dave first met. Dave was one of the instructors at a skydiving experience back in September, 2009, and safely guided Michelle to the ground in her first skydive. In this issue we have a story on the proposal event, as told by Michelle.

I'd like to announce- blog style- that Dave and I are officially engaged. To many this is old news, but I figured I should write up a little something. I did know that it was coming, but I didn't know *when*. I thought he was going to propose when we were home for Christmas, but it ended up being a day and a half before we left for the holidays. Overall, the evening was very low key. We went to dinner at Stephanies on Newbury for dinner and then cruised Boston Public Garden where there were lines of Christmas trees lit up with twinkle lights. It was when we were cruising the pretty, albeit cold, garden when Dave got down on one knee and said, "well Michelle Hartman..." and held



out the ring. He actually forgot to say the words "will you marry me" but that's OK because as it turns out, I forgot to say "Yes!" I just kept saying "I wasn't expecting this" at which point he stood up and said, "you haven't said yes yet!" haha... oops! We didn't have a camera and so I waited until I found someone who looked would take enough to ask to snap

a photo of us with an iPhone. I made a couple of attempts which Dave intercepted because he was worried that they looked too much like people who would want to steal my ring! haha... that made me laugh. I finally asked a friendly guy who was so excited for us! It was cute. He said, "Oh my gosh, Congratulations!! Can I give you a hug?" Who can say no to that!?! Hugs all around! :) He proceeded to take about 7 pictures, determined to get a good one despite the lack of light, and he went on his way. Well, that's the end of it! It was very nice. We went home and opened a bottle of champagne. All in all, a great time.



Bruce surgery update

Family;

This is the latest info on Bruce ...he sent it to the kids but I wanted you guys to know as well; wish us luck on St. Patty's day.

love, Birdy

Hi guys, Hope all my wonderful kids are happy and well!

Before Mom has an opportunity to rag on me about not communicating again I thought I would fill you in on my upcoming surgery scheduled for March 17th. I went to see the surgeon today for a second visit. It seems his original plan for operating only on my 5 lumbar spine vertebrae is out the window since they did additional MRI's of my cervical and thoracic spine. The neurologist met with the surgeon and convinced him that it is necessary to operate on four thoracic vertebrae and the five lumbar. The terminology is spinal decompression laminectomy at T-3,4,5,6 and L-1,2,3,4,5 for a total of 9 vertebrae. That doesn't get all the problem areas but it gets the most emergent and the ones causing me the most pain and neurological symptoms. Apparently the spinal cord in the thoracic spine is at some risk of being permanently damaged if left alone. That can lead to bowel and bladder incontinence, erectile dysfunction, paralysis, etc. - none of which sound like much fun! The lumbar spine is the cause of my standing and walking issues. Currently, standing more than a minute or walking more than 100 yards is excruciating so I am REALLY looking forward to some relief! The pain pills do very little for the pain and make me feel stupid so I don't like to take them and I can't white knuckle it much longer so timing is good as far as I'm concerned!

My overall health is of some concern to all the doctors involved with regard to a lengthy surgery, so the surgeon said today he is going to try to keep it to approximately a five hour procedure by having two surgeons do the work simultaneously. This is great news for me! He explained that a common laminectomy surgery involves doing one vertebra for a patient and he rarely does two on the same patient so this is crazy that he needs to do 9 on the same guy! (Lucky Me) He said in the exam room today that he would need to eat his Wheaties on the morning of the surgery because it was going to be a long, hard one! What a candy ass! Obviously he was never a truck mechanic! I actually got a kick out of his arrogant self confidence. He turned it into all about him! No thought

given to the fact that it might be a bitch for the patient! Typical surgeon! Oh well, I like it that he is cocky. I just hope it is not all talk and no action! He told me to plan on 3 days in the hospital depending on how well I do recovering and then six weeks at home before returning to work. I'm good with that, just glad there is light at the end of the tunnel!

Love to you all, Dad

Bruce Hartman, General Service Manager, 2011

Carol and Jeff join Grandma and Grandpa at READ Annual Awards Dinner

The READ Adult Literacy Program hosts annual Awards Dinner for all learners, tutors, volunteer office staff and permanent office personnel, plus guests. As usual, this year's celebration was held at Balboa Park, in early February. Grandpa joined Read in October, 1996, and after a series of training classes began his new career. He has worked with four different learners, one from Eritrea, one from Somalia, one from Hong Kong, and one (current) from Texas. All made good progress towards greater skills in English and science. In 1997 Grandpa won a Rebecca E. Lytle Tutor of the Year Award. As a part of the award presentations ceremony he was introduced to the audience for his many years of service. He was especially pleased to learn that one of his prior learners won a learner of the Year award, and has reentered the READ program, working on her GED.

We were joined by Grandma's current learner, Ruby Grayes and her husband, James. Ruby received a certificate for the progress she has made in the past year. When Ruby entered the Read program (about 10 years ago) she could not read or write. Now she can read anything, even though she is dyslectic, and is making great progress in writing.



The Riel Family Newsletter

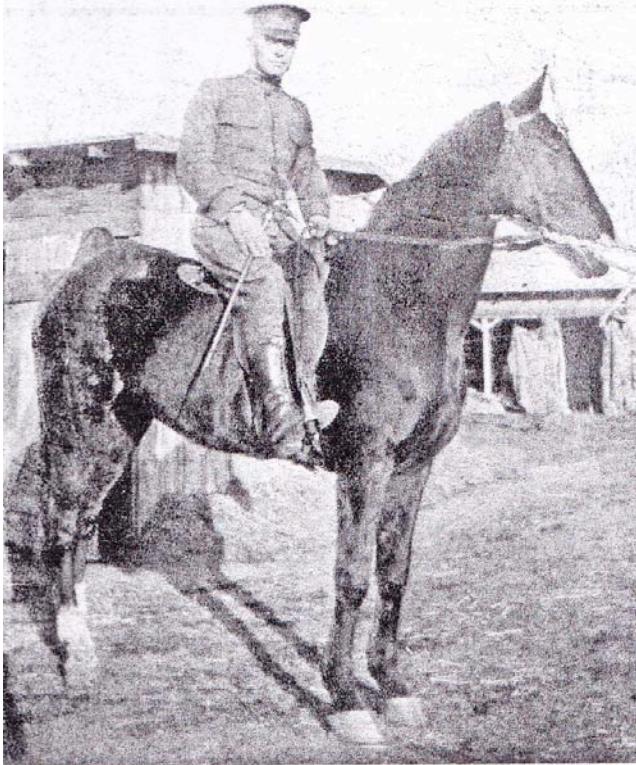
Catch the News

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March, 2011

Some family history – a famous relative

Recently Grandpa received from Dan Southam a loose leaf notebook containing about a hundred pages of family history of the Southam family. Grandpa's mother (Edna Southam Riel) was a daughter of Edwin Southam, who had 10 children. (Plus two adopted). One of Edna's brothers was John Southam. He joined the National Guard while still in high



John R. Southam

school, and rose to the rank of captain. In 1916 he commanded National Guard troops on the U.S. – Mexican border during General Pershing's expedition against Pancho Villa. When war with Germany was declared in 1917 Southam was promoted to major, and commanded a battalion that was sent to fight in France. He was seriously wounded in the fighting, and the following quotations from local newspapers tell a little of the story.

Major Southam Dies in France

A message has been received in this city from the government announcing the death of Major John Southam of Berea, brother of Corbitt Southam, of this city. The date of his death is given as December 4th. Some weeks ago he was reported to have been wounded while in action on the western front in France. His death occurred in one of the base hospitals in that country.

(Source: *Elyria Evening Telegram*, 9 December 1918)

Maj. Southam, Reported Dead, is Alive, Brother Gets Word

Cablegram Received Here States He Expects to Undergo Operation Soon

Major John Southam of Berea, and a brother of C. E. Southam of this city, who is reported to have died from the results of three wounds sustained while in action on the western front in France, is *not* dead but is still among the living. The report of the government a week or so ago that he had succumbed to his injuries was a mistake. C. E. Southam has received a cablegram from him, stating that he has been wounded and was in a hospital and expected to undergo an operation soon. A letter was also received from him which was dated November 21. Relatives of the popular and well known officer cannot understand how the government made the error.

(Source: *Elyria Evening Telegram*, 16 Dec 1918)

Tells of His Narrow Escape and Pays Tribute to Maj. Hultz

Major Southam Who is Still in Hospital in France, Writes Interestingly to Brother Here

Major John Southam, in a letter to his brother, Corbett Southam, 344 Ninth Street speaks briefly of his remarkable escape from death and tells of his rescue by his orderly, Corporal Ralph Caruso, who lives in Berea, which is Major Southam's home. The major pays a fine tribute to Major R. E. Hultz of this city, recently given a deserved promotion. Southam says: "Major Hultz is the nerviest and bravest man I have met on the battlefield. His coolness and bravery in action brought him his promotion."

Major Southam was saved from death by his orderly, Cpl. Ralph Caruso, also of Berea, Major Southam's home. When the latter was gassed in the Argonne Forest drive the orderly carried Major Southam to safety and then collapsed. He was four hours in regaining consciousness.

Seven Killed

On November 4, two days before German plenipotentiaries left to negotiate for a cessation of hostilities and seven days before the armistice was signed, a high explosive shell burst near the army headquarters. Seven were killed and five others were seriously injured. "It was my most sincere sorrow to find my faithful orderly among the dead," writes Major Southam.

Major Southam Arrives Safely Is Now in a Hospital in Detroit – Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel

Major John Southam, of Berea, brother of Officer Corbitt Southam, of this city, who was reported killed in battle overseas, has arrived in the United States and is now in a hospital in Detroit recovering from two fractured legs which he sustained while in action. It is believed that he will be able to return home by the first of July. His many friends will be glad to learn of his safe arrival in America and will also be pleased to learn that he has been promoted to lieutenant colonel.

(Source: *Elyria Evening Telegram*, 31 May 1919)