

Family Celebrates Another Easter

This year, Easter Sunday came late falling on the 25th of April and as usual Francie hosted the family celebration. A good crowd started to show up around 11:30 in the morning to enjoy the food and drinks.

Francie's garden was in full bloom and there were flowers everywhere. It made for a perfect setting for an Easter celebration. Everyone agreed that she certainly has the greenest thumb in the family.

One notable absentee, was Ed, who had signed up for a rush contract that had to be finished by Monday morning. Unfortunately, it took him the entire week-end to finish but this still beats previous years when jobs were scarce and hard to win.

Also notably missing were the Hartmans as they could not attend due to Bruce still recovering from his back surgery. Birdy reported that they had a very nice Easter at home with both the kids and grand kids coming over for dinner.

She also reports that Bruce is getting much better, he

is walking up to a mile a day and has even returned to work (half days).

As usual, Francie had laid out a lavish assortment of food and drinks for the guests to enjoy. Including many dishes brought by family members. A contest had been arranged by Francie and our newly appointed **RFNL** food and drinks editor, Listy Gillingham.

Listy filed the following report:

Francie challenged everyone to bring a dish to share that was new and something they had never made before. We were to judge it and the winning dish would be given a \$25.00 Amazon gift certificate.

The finalists were:

Francie's egg salad (which she withdrew from the contest as she didn't make it.)

Karla's baked, bacon wrapped, cream cheese stuffed, jalapeño peppers.

And Jason's breakfast burritos with eggs, bacon, cheese and a home made salsa.

It was a close vote, but Karla's appetizer won. They (Robert and Karla)



in turn, gave the certificate to Jason since it's a known fact that the Alpine Riel family does not like to shop. Jason was more than happy to accept the prize.

In addition to the food there were plenty of drinks, beer, wine, and soft drinks. And as a special favor to Grandpa, Francie shopped for non-alcoholic beer, and located a bunch of options for him to sample. Grandpa and Grandma both enjoyed the chance to try something besides O'Doul's. - Listy

It was a beautiful day, in a wonderful setting, with good food, drinks and conversation. Thus ended another Easter holiday, and as usual we thank Francie for her hospitality.



Margaret and Bud travel to NYC (Can you find Bud?)



We are trying to live up to the expectations for retired people. Last month we traveled to New Orleans, LA. to attend an education conference and enjoy the jazz and good food. This month it was off to New York City. It would be nice (but not entirely true) to say that Bud and Margaret went to NYC to have dinner with Brett and his friend, Amanda. It carries out the growing tradition of dinners with aunts, uncles and nephews or nieces in large tourist cities.

ention. We walked about 5 blocks to our hotel and sat in the lobby bar for another hour. Nothing was said about the end of the decade long manhunt or the President's speech.

We learned the news the next day and by the time we walked to Time Square there was nothing more than the normal traffic of tourists and a few news crawls that shared the news.

-Margaret

(P.S There is a phone app for taking banner photos like the one of central park---I will share what I have learned about camera apps in a blog this month)



However, there is generally a bit of work associated with Riel-Mehan travel and this was no different. Bud was asked to give the keynote address for an association conference but it just so happened to be on the same day as Kevin and Nicole's wedding. When he declined, they opted for the next best thing which was a tape of Bud giving his speech. So while in NYC bud spent about 3 hours of video taping before the both of us had the weekend to play.

On Sunday, May 1st, we visited the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and then walked to ground zero to see the missing twin towers. Then, at about 11pm, we went to the top of the Rockefeller Building and looked down on all of Manhattan sharing this view with dozens of others.

It was quiet, there were not sirens, no announcements, nothing that would alert one to the breaking news that was capturing the world's at-



Grandma's sister-in-law dies after long illness



Recently we received word from Michael Merica that his mother (Edith's sister-in-law) had passed away. She was the wife of Romulus Merica, (Edith's oldest brother (deceased)). She was a heavy smoker, and had been fighting throat cancer for many years. Several years ago her vocal cords were removed and she could no longer talk. However, she remained active up until recently, when her health declined and she died. She had lived in Athens, since leaving Tehran many years ago, and Michael was there for her funeral. We extend our deepest sympathy to Michael and his family over this loss. Isa had visited her son in Vista CA in 2000, and the attached picture was taken at that time.

Saturday lunch bunch welcomes Scott Hartman home



The regular Saturday lunches with Grandma and Grandpa can include any of the family members, and we usually are joined by both regulars and others. On April 30th we were happy to welcome two relative strangers: David Gillingham and Scott Hartman.

Scott, of course, has had a good excuse for not showing up, since he has been living in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As you may recall he went there a year or so ago, with the intention of starting a new restaurant, along with some friends. Things unfortunately did not work out as hoped for, and that plan was scrapped. That left him in a city that has a climate somewhat less desirable than his home town. Last winter was especially brutal, with low temperatures in the -30 degree level, and lots of snow. According to Scott, that is REALLY cold. In the summer very hot and humid conditions are common. In addition, Tulsa is in the tornado belt, and although there were none during his stay the threat was always there.

David, on the other hand, since his graduation has been working for Doug Farkas, owner of Low Voltage Home Security Systems (also Robert and Listy's running partner.) Doug usually keeps him busy on Saturdays and he doesn't get much of a chance to join us for lunch. David also works part time at Francis Parker Lower School, in the after school program. But... He has just accepted a position at High Tech Middle School as Director of Extended Studies. This means he will be leaving both Doug



and Frances Parker later this month and we all wish him well in his new job.

We enjoyed a nice lunch with Listy, Birdy, Ed, ("The Regulars") Scott and David at the TGIF restaurant in Mission Valley. As a reminder if you're out and about on a Saturday before noon, give us a call to find out where the "Lunch Bunch" will be and join us for all the latest news!



FAMILY SHORTS



Annie continues to travel the world with her friends. Tours of Switzerland and Spain were some of her more recent adventures. Also Bob and Listy visited her over spring break. Annie's next trip home won't be until October.



Kevin and Nichole went to the LA Festival of Books 2011. Also Kevin is thinking of becoming a model, here is his promo shot (just kidding, but if you don't send in any news we will just make some up!)



Francie and Bryce dressed up as pirates and went out on the town in Milwaukee. According to Bryce, "we hit just about every bar in the town!"



Besides playing in the band, Nathan is going to school to become an electrician. He has finished his first of ten semesters earning a grade of "A". Also he received a outstanding evaluation from his employer.



IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT THE ZOO!

On Saturday, April 22nd Grandpa and Grandma were joined by the Benesch family (minus Jessica And Miguel) for a visit to the San Diego Zoo. Carol informed Grandpa that Dustin and Lauren were coming for a visit and wanted to go to the Zoo. Fortunately the scooters and trailer were charged up and ready to go. The only thing missing was Ed, who was tied up all weekend with a rush job scheduled to be done by Monday morning.

Fortunately, we had an expert trailer driver substitute in Dustin, who had experience in a former job. However, we did have a problem on arrival in that the Easter weekend had drawn a large crowd, and the double space parking slots in the lot were non-existent. We decided to try the overflow parking at the Roosevelt H.S lot nearby. Fortunately, on the way we saw a curb side two car handicapped space, which we happily took. It was a long walk back to the entrance, but the scooters took care of Grandpa and Grandma.

The first item on the program was lunch, and we decided to try the new Sabertooth Grill, located in the new Elephant Odyssey exhibit. It was OK, but just one more "food factory", with various hamburgers, French fries, and salads. We did enjoy lunch at the outdoor picnic tables, as shown in the pictures below.



After lunch we decided to split up, since the Benesch family wanted to take a bus tour, but Grandpa and Grandma had seen many bus tours. We agreed to meet at 4 p.m. at the exit area and we took off to see the sights.

We were especially interested in seeing the new Tortoise exhibit, since it

was partially funded by a major donation from a long ago Narmco employee and friend, Tom Fetter, and his wife Jane. The old exhibit was just a low fenced in dirt enclosure with a few rocks and desert plants. It was hard to tell if the tortoises were alive or dead. The new exhibit is beautifully done, with lots of plants, rock formations, water pools, etc.



As you can see from the picture it has even stirred up the tortoises to show a little life.

We also checked out the snake exhibits in the reptile house and the ever popular flamingo pool. By that time the bus tour had ended and we met at the exit for an uneventful trip back home. Dustin showed off his driving skills by expertly backing the trailer into its regular position in the garage. It was a fun day, enjoyed by all.

