

The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch The News

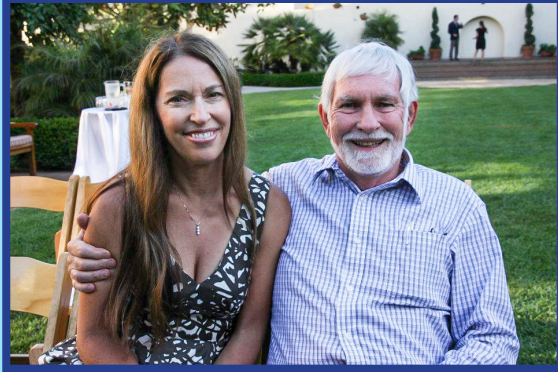
August 2012

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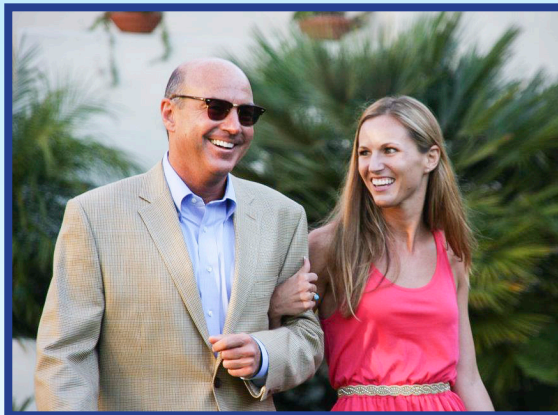
*Mike
And
Ashley
Mehan*

*Marriel
June 30, 2012*





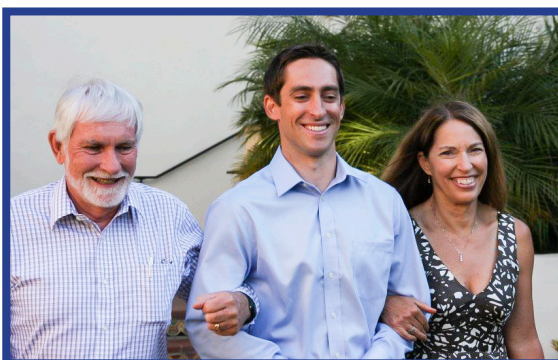
Practice Makes Perfect



Successful sporting events, theater productions, academic lectures require practice. So too, do weddings. Ashley and Michael gathered their wedding party at the Estancia Garden to practice entrances, positions, and exits. When the bride and groom (and the wedding planner) were convinced everyone knew what to do and when to do it, the group traveled across Torrey Pines Road to the UCSD Faculty Club where they joined family members who traveled from out of town and others who helped with the wedding.

Hors d'oeuvres and wine were served on the brightly sunlit patio followed by a dinner inside. The guests were treated to a slide show composed by Birdy Hartman that placed Ashley and Michael in context of family and friends. It opened with pictures of them as a couple followed by images of Gordon and Judi MacMitchell and Bud and Margaret at about their same age and sharing images of their weddings. This was followed by a series of early childhood images of each of them as they approached young adulthood. The final section included pictures of family and friends, many of whom would be attending the wedding the next day.

After a delicious meal, Margaret and Bud applauded the MacMitchell's for raising such a wonderful daughter, shared some stories about Michael and Ashley and expressed their joy about the impending wedding. Gordon spoke for the MacMitchell's expressing similar feelings as they welcomed Michael into their family as they again toasted the soon-to-be married couple.





*A Wedding By The Sea . . .
. . . With Love As High
As The Rocky Mountains*

Love does not consist of gazing at each other but in looking together in the same direction. – *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

Michael and Ashley wanted a quote to print on their wedding ceremony that expressed how they felt about love. Using the Internet, they searched through many quotes and settled on this one from the Little Prince. They did not know that this was the very same quote that Margaret and Bud selected to print on their wedding invitations in 1976. One of the couples who received this invitation was their close friends, Phil and Bev Davies. The Davies and the Riel/Mehan families have grown closer over the past 36 years traveling back and forth from California and England and

traveling together. Michael and Ashley visited Phil and Bev in Oxford and were thrilled when the Rev. Dr. Davies graciously agreed to perform the wedding ceremony.

The wedding that Gordon and Judi MacMitchell arranged for them was perfect in every detail. The Estancia Hotel setting was magical. The champagne flowed and the food was plentiful as the wedding party practiced and prepared for their roles. By 4:00 on June 30th, everything was in place and everyone was in position to start the ceremony.

The Rev. Dr. Davies can speak in many accents and registers, but for the wedding it was clear that he spoke from the heart. He shared stories about how Ashley and Michael met, how their love for each other developed, and the meaning of marriage. It was a personal and moving ceremony. Rev Davies asked those assembled to vow to help and support Michael and Ashley to live their lives together embraced in love. Michael's sister, Megan, read *To Love is Not to Possess* by James Kavanaugh. This poem set the context for the exchange of vows.



Ashley's Vows To Mike

You are loving, honest, strong, humorous, brilliant, thoughtful, dependable and ridiculously good-looking. You fill my life with joy, laughter, balance, and love. You challenge me academically, socially, and athletically. You motivate me to be a better person through your examples of kindness and generosity toward others.

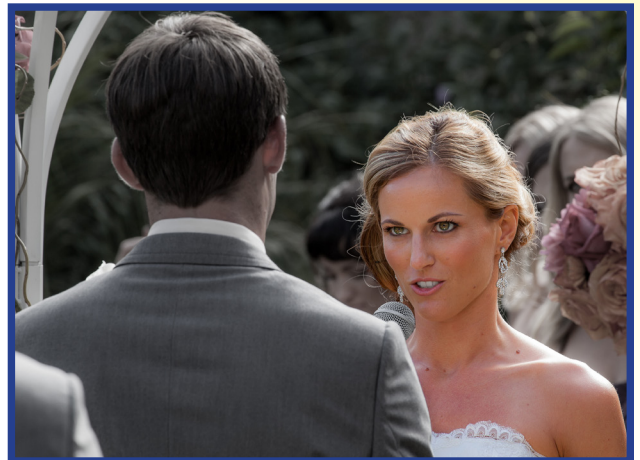
You keep me balanced and calm when I find unnecessary things to stress about, and give me guidance and support during times of struggle. Usually a simple "just go for a run", or "let's go to Starbucks" will suffice, but whenever I am really stuck you sit me down and help me map out a course of action and let me know that everything will be OK.

You can bring a smile to my face in an instant and make me realize how beautiful life really is. My life is enriched exponentially because you are in it. You are my best friend, team-mate, confidant and partner. You encourage everyone you encounter to be their best and greet each new day with enthusiasm. You make it easy to love you.

I look forward to the next stage in our life together, and to the many stages to come. Our families have given us a myriad examples of how happiness can thrive, and how love can grow stronger in marriage. They have also demonstrated how to overcome challenges. Their advice is always welcome.

In our marriage-

- I promise to keep laughing with you, learning with you, and growing with you.
- I promise to never take you for granted and always give thanks.
- I promise to help nurse your soccer injuries and to listen intently as you explain in great detail how it happened this time.
- I promise to listen.
- When you snowboard I promise not to leave you alone in the trees if you are stuck in powder at Blue Sky Basin.
- I promise to be by your side and support you.
- I promise to warm your toes on cold Colorado nights, or when our furnace breaks down, takes two weeks to fix, and it is 35 degrees in our house.
- I promise to practice patience.
- When we travel, I promise to let you take the map out of my death grip and enjoy getting lost with you.
- I promise to be open minded, adventurous, and more spontaneous.
- I promise my love for you will grow stronger with each passing day, and that it will never stop growing.





Mike's Vows To Ashley

I love how much fun we have together. Everything that I love to do I love even more when we do it together, even if you are better at than it than I am. I love that we share so much in common and that we have so many new things that we want explore together.

I promise to never let you lose your sense of adventure because it is one of the things I love most about you. I love that you are never afraid to pack everything up and try life in a new city simply because it will be something new. Your ceaseless desire to continue to experience new things and grow from those experiences is truly inspiring.

I promise to always bring you water when you're feeling dehydrated.

You are the most compassionate person I have ever met. I've never seen someone pour their heart out to so many people. You are constantly trying to make everyone around you happy, and I promise to spend the rest of my life doing the same for you.

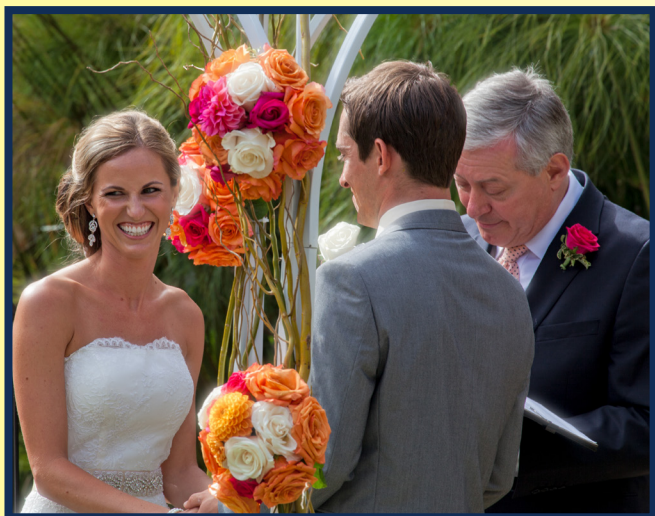
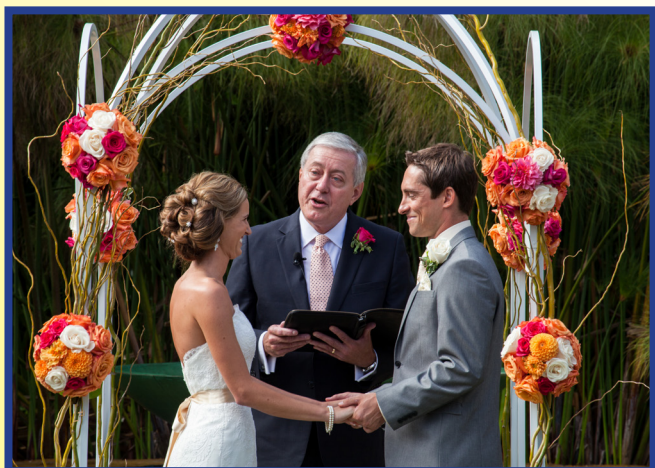
I love how good you are at staying positive, even when things go horribly wrong. Like when we couldn't find our friends in the mountains and we camped for two days in the cold without firewood. It is this undying optimism and unbreakable smile that first made me fall in love with you and it makes me certain that no matter what life throws our way, we'll get through it together because we know we can count on each other to make the best of it.

I promise to always let you pick all the good pieces out of my Ben and Jerry's ice cream, even if all you leave me is a refrozen pile of vanilla at the bottom of the carton.

I love how dedicated you are your students. You pour every last ounce of energy you have into making sure they have a great education and understand the importance of working hard. Watching you teach I know what an amazing mother you are going to be.

Most of all I can't believe how lucky am I that I get to spend the rest of my life loving you. I promise to always be by your side to laugh with you, to cry with you, and to support you as you do all the amazing things I know you're capable of. I love you and I promise to be yours with all of my heart for as long as I live.

Te amo





The smiles that radiated from Michael and Ashley when they were announced as "Mr and Mrs" were so sincere and lovely that everyone was ready to celebrate. The cocktail hour featured the slide show that Birdy Hartman had unveiled at the rehearsal dinner. Dinner was served in the Estancia's main ballroom, with elegant tables around the dance floor.

Gordon MacMitchell set the tone of

the evening by gracefully and graciously telling stories, giving advice, and welcoming all of us to enjoy the party. Michael and Ashley moved to the dance floor and performed a dramatic and beautiful dance that symbolized the playful, romantic and graceful way they live life together. This was followed by Ashley's dance with her father and Michael's dance with his mother.

Thoughtful and humorous toasts were offered by friends and family, but it was Megan's words to Michael and Ashley that moved Michael to tears.

Speaking for both of them, Michael shared these reflections:

Gordon and Judi, I can't tell you how wonderful this day has been so far and how much it means to us. This is truly an amazing wedding and better than either of us could have dreamed of. Everything has been perfect, and the all friends and family who have told me how they are thrilled to be here is a testament to what wonderful people you are. Thank you for always making me feel welcome in your family and for working so hard to make us happy.

I also want to take a moment to thank my family for a wonderful rehearsal dinner and for everything they have done for Ashley and me.

I was extremely fortunate to grow up with a sister that was also my best friend. To this day memories of playing soccer in the back yard, climbing our fig trees, and converting the entire upstairs into a giant blanket fort are among my favorites. And although we live farther apart, it means the world to me that we have remained so close and that you were able to speak at our ceremony.

Mom, I want to thank you for dedicating yourself so completely to raising me and making me happy. You taught me how to play, you taught me how to think, and you taught a wild and reckless kid how to be kind to his little sister and everyone around him. Just a few days ago we were listening to tapes of you reading books to me before I could speak and what I heard was a mother who from the moment I was born was laying the foundation for the happy man that I am today.



Dad, I think the best way to raise a man is by example, and I can say without a doubt that I am the man I am today, married to the girl of my dreams, because I followed your example. You are the most honorable, hard working, and truly admirable man I have ever met. You have given me an excellent blue print with which to raise a son of my own, and for that I thank you.



To all the friends and family that are here today, Ashley and I are absolutely thrilled that you all are here to celebrate this day with us. Thank you so much for coming, it means so much to us.

The reception and a number of "after" parties helped all of us hold on to the joy of Ashley's and Michel's wedding through the night and well into their first morning of married life.



TIMOTHY RIEL CELEBRATES HIS 30TH BIRTHDAY WITH AN ELABORATE FLASHMOB/BAR CRAWL IN THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO WITH A SLEW OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

By Tim Riel



It was a dream come true for me. I have spent a good amount of time enviously watching numerous flash mob videos on YouTube, and longing to partake in one myself, but I never really knew how to get involved with one. As my 30th birthday approached, I knew I wanted to do something big - something that not only I, but everyone would enjoy doing. To make that happen I knew drinking had to be involved.

I went through a mental list of things I would think people would want to do while drinking - obviously a flash mob, right? That immediately became the idea.

Picking a song was a bit more difficult. Initially I thought I would put together a mash-up of famous over-the-top gay songs. You know the ones: "Y.M.C.A", "Dancing Queen", "I'm Coming Out", "I Will Survive"...the list included 26 other flamboyantly gay pop songs. The tricky part was mashing them together. I spent a month trying to teach myself how to mash 30 songs together. It was irritatingly difficult. I didn't have the patience or the skill for it.



I thought my flash mob idea was doomed until one night, at a local video bar, on Musical Mondays, the ideal song began to play. The song was Dirty Dancing's "I've Had The Time Of My Life". It was perfect! Not only was it a film and song that everyone was familiar with, it summed up how I feel about my twenties and how grateful I am for all the good friends and loving family I have in my life. I'm truly blessed.

With the song picked, I was able to convince two friends of mine to work together in choreographing the routine and putting it up on YouTube

for everyone to learn. I decided we'd perform the flash mob 5 times and have a drink before and after each dance. I picked and contacted five bars within walking distance and created a rigorously-timed schedule for the day so everyone would know the itinerary. I rented a generator and speakers that I would drag along in a utility cart.

With everything on such a precise schedule I expected it to be a somewhat stressful event, but somehow everything went incredibly smoothly and with no hiccups (I think the alcohol helped).

It was great watching everyone getting into character before the start of each flashmob, especially for the last performance at Union Square. Aunt Margaret and I had a moment where we were privileged to notice some true acting talent. Some played the part of tourists (Uncle Jeff especially dressed the part) trying to read maps. One friend dressed as a jogger, another friend as a chef, and one friend even brought crutches all to give the impression that there was no way they were part of the flashmob. I'll never know how Aunt Francie survived - and with grace - in those heels of hers (kudos!).

Watching my aunts and uncles boogie down with their fancy-good moves (did you see that pic of Aunt Carol boogieing it up, I posted on Facebook? Amazing!) Other highlights included: Kevin and Nicole killing the couple's routine like they had practiced it for months, when in fact, they only really learned the routine the day before; Nathan drunkenly waving his shirt up in the air and Chris rocking out with some pretty impressive solo dance moves. Clearly there's some real dancing talent in our family. It was great having Dustin, Lauren, baby Holden, and Megan show up to join in on the party as well.



With each flashmob, we got better and better and drunker and drunker. Special thanks to my mom who made sure to keep everyone's glass full at each bar. The crowds loved us, and we were having so much fun we decided after the first two flashmobs we would play some dance songs and try and get the audience to join in an impromptu dance party to Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" and Footloose's, "Let's Hear it For the Boy." The audience loved it, and it was clear they too wanted to join in on the fun. As I rewatch the videos I see little things that bring pure joy to my heart. Watching Aunt Francie try to teach Uncle Bud and herself how to dance to the couple's part - hilarious! Watching my dad with the biggest grin on his face with every move he made - priceless. It was a magical day of dance, drink and fun!

If you've seen the videos you can tell everyone had the time of their lives. I know I did. I would like to thank everyone who came up to SF and helped make my 30th birthday one the best moments of my life.



Francie Celebrates Her 30th Birthday (times 2) with Two Parties!

By Francie



It happens to everyone, you either die or turn 60, and I am the latest casualty in the family. To turn 60 that is, but as usual it was with craziness and frivolity. Thanks to my amazing husband Lyle, 9 of my nearest and dearest joined me on a train trip to Seattle. As you can see from the pictures it was a fun filled 36 hour trip after travelling to Los Angeles union station via the train.

Bryce flew in on Thursday night from NYC, Brett hopped on the Coast Starlight with us in LA and Carol and Jeff, representing the Riel family, joined the train in San Jose. We managed to eat, drink and laugh our way thru California and Oregon thru the beautiful Pacific Northwest and finally arriving in Seattle. Thanks to my Lylie for the wonderful Hawaiian theme and decorations, Jeff definitely won the award for most festive costume design. I wore my fab birthday tiara and toasted everyone on the train several times.

After hanging out in Seattle for a few days I returned to work three 12 hour days with just enough time to jump on a plane and take a 24 hour trip to San Francisco to help Tim celebrate his 30th flash mob style.



Then, after a quick flight home, I jump in the car, and head to palm desert for a party that Cindy (Gonzalez) Hellmann had put together for me with my friend Ellen Tallman. Carol and Margaret joined us too, which gives Carol the award for attending the most Riel birthday parties in one month, two for me and one for Tim. Nice going Carol! Are you trying to take my partying crown away? Ok, at the least you can have my birthday button to wear in New Jersey when you go see Jessica.

Thanks to all, Ed and Jan, loved dinner last night, is my birthday finally over, hahahahah.



Chavva's Bridal Shower Hosted by Francie



As if Francie's July was not busy enough she still managed to find time to host a bridal shower for Chavva. With help from Carol and several of Chavva's friends and family, Francie's famous "party patio" was transformed into a beautiful venue for the affair.

There were plenty of things to munch on including deviled eggs, sliced avocados, salads, seven layer bean dip, veggies, fruit, cheese, salami, and a large assortment of other dips. There were also plenty of drinks available including special bottles of wine that had Jason and Chavva's picture on it.

With three generations of women (no men were allowed) in attendance you can just bet Chavva got plenty of good advice for her upcoming nuptials. On the other hand, with that many women, so close together, how could anyone hear anything? (Just one man's opinion) Regardless there were plenty of great conversations along with some interesting stories told and of course lots of toasts being made.

Next came the opening of the gifts, of which there were plenty! Chavva got a lot of... shall we say, interesting things. But you will have to ask her to get the full run-down. Needless to say it was a wonderful afternoon, one that Chavva will remember for the rest of her life. She is very grateful to Francie, Carol, her friends and family for making that afternoon a very special moment.



FAMILY SHORTS



Listy and Bob, along with their good friends Doug and Kym recently spent some time in Spain visiting Annie. We look forward to a full report in next month's RFNL.

Brian is on the move with a brand new car, a Ford focus. As he has recently been promoted to manager of the deli at Safeway; he now works full-time and also earned a raise. So to celebrate, he traded in his almost ten year old car for a new one. Congratulations Brian!



NEWS FLASH! Grandpa Frank and Edith have decided to move to an assisted/Independent living community in Hillcrest. They moved in on the 11th of August with the help of Ed, Margaret, Carol, Robert and Birdy (Francie and Listy were on vacation). More information will be published in next month's RFNL.



A Message From Bruce

All-

I really appreciate all your well wishes...

The heart thing is over with! The procedure was a piece of cake. They called me at home early on July 30th and said there was a change in the schedule and could I come to the hospital now. I agreed and we were off. They prepped me and moved me right in. By 10:30 the anesthesiologist injected me with a cocktail and I was gone! It was a full knock-out not just a sleepy pill this time.

They went up the vein from my left groin area and into the left side on my heart. He closely inspected the site of the previous ablation and found nothing had changed. He mapped the nerves and was unable to bring on the atrial fibrillation or the supraventricular tachycardia that I have been experiencing.

Since there was nothing there, he regrouped and decided to check the other side of my heart. He went into the femoral artery in the right side of the groin area and entered the right ventricle of the heart and began the mapping process. He discovered the problem area and was able to replicate the attacks I have been experiencing almost daily. He called it a "hidden" problem area, I suspect because he doesn't want anyone to think he should have found it the first time he performed this procedure on the other chamber of my heart. Regardless...he found it and burned it out of there! I was only in the cardiac catheterization suite (aka Cath Lab) for just over three hours.

I was moved to recovery and then to a hospital room where I had to stay flat and pretty much motionless for six hours with mechanical pressure on the insertion sites to ensure the bleeding would stop. At around 8:30PM they released me to go home and wheeled me out to the car! Yeah! Long day... but happy I didn't have to stay overnight... But it was an even longer day for Birdy, since she didn't get the cocktail like I did.

I just have to take it easy a few days and all will be good. The cardiologist also said he will release me so that I can get the foot surgery in two weeks. I am looking forward to a foot that doesn't hurt with every step I take...this has gone on for nine months and I am really tired of it!

That's it! Thanks again to one and all, Bruce.

