

# The Riel Family Newsletter

Catch The News

December 2012

RFNL 262

## GRANDPA FRANK SCORES THE BIG 94 !!!





# Grandpa Frank Turns 94

By: Birdy Hartman

As Dr. Seuss says:

"Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You."

Birthdays come and go for many of us without much fan fare. But when you have been around for 94 years, everyone wants to celebrate! So on June 6, at 6:00, all 8 children (plus various grand kids and innocent bystanders) came by to cheer dad as he tried to blow out the candles on this beautifully personalized cake that Carol had so sweetly brought for the occasion.

It was quite an event. If you came, you would have been treated to one of dad's most precious speeches where he tells us "Yes, it has been a rough year but I have a lot of people who help me. And I hope as the time goes by that I will just keep getting better and better!"

I can't tell you how much I love and admire this man. And as I looked around the room I could see that my sentiments were well shared. I tried to take many pictures because I wanted this warm memory forever burned into each of our hearts. Thanks to one and all for coming. I can't wait to put on the biggest party of all when dad hits 95!!!!!!





# Riel Bowl XXII

Are you ready? The countdown begins....

We're spicing up the party with a new theme and a new way to compete...

Theme: I know it's Riel Christmas...but we're centering some of our play around "a red solo cup" hmmm...everything you might think of and more (but no beer pong...it's too trivial)

Date: December 30, 2012

Time: 12:00 p.m. (a grandparent-friendly time)

Where: Bob and Listy Gillingham's House (8704 Robles Drive)

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## Agenda (A Riel Bowl Tradition)

- 12:30 The AMAZING race (you'll lose points if you miss it)
- 1:00 Lunch
- 1:30 A "Minute to Win It" (several rounds)
- 2:00 Stupid or Crazy Tricks
- 2:30 Presents (Round 1)
- 3:00 Musical Talent Show (again....don't want to miss out on the points)
- 3:30 White Elephant (see new rules below)
- 4:00 The Final Scoring and prize distribution

## White Elephant Rules:

1. NO steals, you get what you get!
2. You are being judged for receiving the crappiest "white elephant gift"
3. You are also being judged for giving the "most creative truly-white elephant gift"

Voting is final and tie breakers will be determined by team Gillingham

Disclaimer: Team Gillingham reserves the right to change up the games or time frame as needed (in other words... the spirit of the commissioner lives)

# A Riel Thanksgiving At Bud and Margaret's

**F**or the 18 year in a row, the Riel family once again celebrated Thanksgiving by gathering at Bud and Margaret's lovely home in Encinitas. As the guest of honor, Grandpa Frank and Grandma Edith were joined by many of their children, grand children and great grand children to give thanks for yet another wonderful Riel year.

And what a year it has been! Our family has been fortunate enough to have had three weddings (3 new members of the second generation of the innocent bystanders), multiple birthday celebrations, a few pregnancy announcements, lots of vacations, several awards, a few job promotions, and most of all; we were thankful that we able to spend another thanksgiving together as one big happy family.



The group started to arrive around noon with many bringing along their favorite dish to share with the rest of the family. There was a vast selection of salads, side dishes, main dishes, munchies, and of course deserts. Karla even made a cake with a big turkey on it!

With somewhat of a role reversal with his brother Bryce, Brett became the master chef by preparing the salmon filet perfectly! Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, Bud and Jeff began to slice the turkey which mostly consisted of one slice for the platter, then one slice for them. Fortunately it was a very big bird and there was still enough left over for the rest of the family.



With electric food warmers plugged in and crock pots bubbling, the food was set out for the massive hordes of hungry Riels to devour. Not being shy and following the rules and traditions of the Riel family (the quick and the fed) it didn't take long for the talking to stop and the eating to begin.

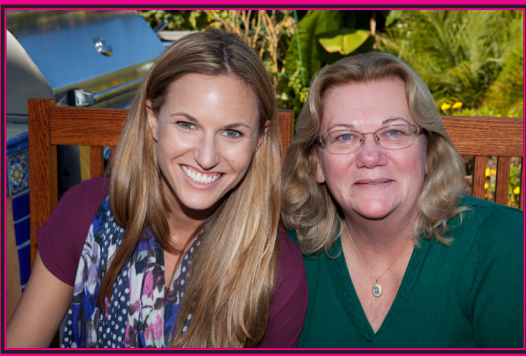




Everyone enjoyed the feast with many (including myself) going back for seconds and thirds. Everything was delicious and even with the wide variety of food and many different styles of cooking, it all went together wonderfully. For the culinary contest there were many excellent dips, spectacular salads, fruites, vegetables, and desserts. Francie collected the votes and Megan's 2-day process of making a range of pizzas with a range of cheeses combined with squash, shredded asparagus, and caramelized onions won by one vote (with a 5-way tie for second place). One wonders if there was some home court advantage operating, but Megan was thrilled with the colorful kitchen knives.

Of course anytime there is a Riel function the paparazzi are sure to be there. Let's face it, the Riel family has more cameras than Carter has pills (for you younger folks, Google it if you don't understand), which is a good thing because everything we do is very well documented.

All in all, it was a very successful celebration and we thank Bud and Margaret for hosting all of us every year. And now, who knows what the following acronym means? AAGTWHBA - Send your answers to the RFNL editors and maybe you too will be famous!



# PHHS Principal Prepared to Go the Distance

By David Ogul  
Reprinted from the Mission Times Courier

Anyone doubting the determination of Patrick Henry High School's new principal need look no further than last spring when Elizabeth "Listy" Gillingham was training for the San Diego Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

Three months before Gillingham was set to join 101 other runners who would have completed a 15th straight Rock 'n' Roll since its inception, the then-principal at De Portola Middle School in Tierrasanta broke her leg in a freak volleyball accident.

Gillingham finished the race, walking the entire 26.2 miles in a little more than 6 hours, 32 minutes.

"I'm a doer," she said in a recent interview. "I like to get things done."

Indeed. While she was at De Portola, the middle school consistently surpassed state and federal education goals and was named a national "school to watch" three times. Now she's settling in at Patrick Henry, a campus not far from her San Carlos home.

"She is a very, very strong principal," said David Lorden, San Diego Unified School District's area superintendent for the Patrick Henry, Serra and Scripps Ranch high school clusters. "She has the ability to build a cohesive team, and she does this by listening, leaning in, reaching out, being honest and investing in people."

Pacific Beach Middle School principal Ernest Remillard, who served as an assistant principal under Gillingham at De Portola, was more direct: "Patrick Henry is getting an all-star," he said.

Can she live up to the hype? Gillingham said she comes to Patrick Henry, a campus with an enrollment of about 1,900 students, with no preconceived notions of the school and no agenda.

"It's hard to jump into a new school and tell people what to do. I plan to go in, look at our strengths and work to make them stronger and look at our weaknesses and work to eliminate them," she said.

Gillingham, 54, is a native San Diegan who earned her bachelor's degree in liberal arts from San Diego State University in 1980. She earned a teaching credential from the university on Montezuma Mesa the following year, then taught algebra and geometry at Standley Middle School in University City for nearly a dozen years. In 1993, she went to Scripps Ranch High School and taught algebra and geometry there while also serving as a resource teacher.

Gillingham earned her masters degree in educational administration and secured an administrative credential from United States International University in 1998, then served as a resource instructor for San Diego Unified. She returned to Scripps Ranch as an assistant principal in 1999, and she was named principal at De Portola in 2003.

She quips that being a principal is "one day of problem solving day after day."

By all accounts, she was beloved at De Portola.

"Listy's vision plus her problem-solving skills, plus her people skills, plus her can-do temperament, equals one amazing leader," said De Portola teacher Carmen Munnelly. "Her ability, too, to deal with touchy teachers and calm blustery parents is nearly paranormal."

Ed Schmidt has been on the De Portola Foundation board for five years and has served as president of the group the past two. He, too, is effusive in his praise.

"I have been in business myself for 20 years and I am greatly impressed

with how Listy juggled budgets, funding and school priorities each year. She had a goal of providing the students with broad academic and extracurricular opportunities while maintaining high standards of student achievement. In doing so she worked closely with the Foundation and the PTA to maximize the 'bang' from Foundation grants," he said.

"Listy would be an amazing addition to any business or company, but thankfully for our kids she has chosen to use her skills and talents in public education."

Gillingham, who said she's "passionate about education," emphasized that a good principal requires myriad skills. "You have to be a good sales person. You have to be someone who can relate with students, staff and parents and keep everybody happy. And you have to love what you are doing."

She said her strengths include "having a belief in what you're doing is the right thing and getting people to have that belief, too."

At De Portola, Gillingham said, "We worked very well as a team."

"We never took 'no' for an answer. We were always looking for ways to do better. And we had a very collaborative, strong staff."

That combined to make the campus among the better performing schools in the district.

Remillard said Gillingham excelled at "listening to her staff and the people around her."

Lorden pointed to Gillingham's leadership when a growing number of students began blowing off homework assignments. She instituted a "three strikes" policy that ended with homework-less students being sent to the office. There, they had to phone a parent or guardian, guaranteeing family intervention. Then they had to complete the missing assignment before leaving.

Lorden also pointed to a Circle of Friends program at De Portola that teamed disabled and non-disabled students, providing support groups to both.

"She's also very high on student and staff recognition, and I think that makes students and staff want to do more," Lorden said.

Gillingham, however, is not a miracle worker. There is only so much a principal can do.

"I don't want any child to fail, but we all have students who, no matter how hard you try, will sometimes fall through the cracks," Gillingham said.

She once told KPBS radio: "I don't know one school principal that doesn't pull they're hair out trying to figure out how to do things better, I don't know one teacher who doesn't look at every student in that class and try to help them succeed."

What drove Gillingham to spend a career in a profession that often finds itself under attack from politicians and parents? She said it was her time as a YMCA camp counselor, where Gillingham met her future husband of 34 years. She said she realized then that helping kids and helping kids learn was her passion.

The couple has three children, 29, 27 and 25. One is an English teacher in Spain. Another is teaching English at Francis Parker Middle School. A third is director of extended studies at High Tech Middle School in San Diego.

Gillingham's vision for Patrick Henry? "To help get us to the top of the charts and create a school where all our kids can get accepted into any college they want to go to."

Said Munnelly: "Patrick Henry High School is the luckiest school in the nation."



# JULY 15, 2012 MARK THE DATE 3 NEW BABIES!

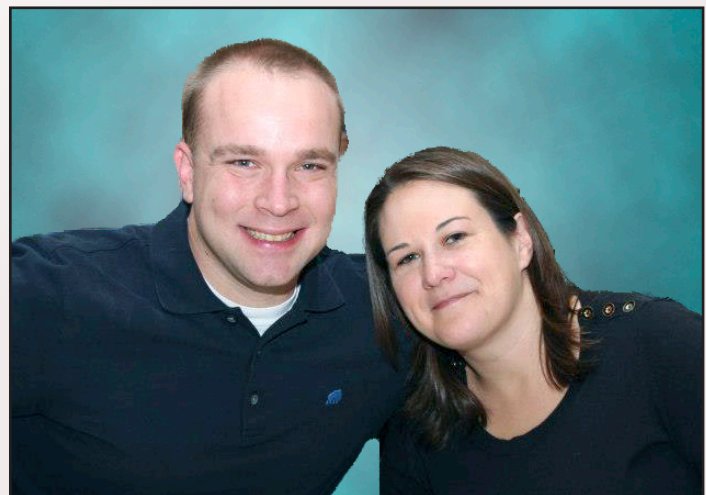
**Yes,** you're reading the headline right we have three more expectant couples in our family that have announced the same due dates! Michelle & David, Curtis & Lauren, and Craig & Ana all are due on July 15, 2012!! Just what was in the water (or other more potent drinks) a few months ago?

Just think of how Birdy and Bruce must feel, the joy and elation of knowing they will soon have three more grandchildren and then finding out they are all due on the same day! Let's see one will be in San Diego, another in the LA area so... hummm yes it's possible to be at both. But Michelle and David are on the east coast. OK a six hour flight. So if Ana delivers let's say right after midnight, then Lauren

around 8 am Birdy and Bruce will have time to drive up and be there, then hop on a plane and fly out to see Michelle deliver around... oh 11:30PM. Hey it could happen!

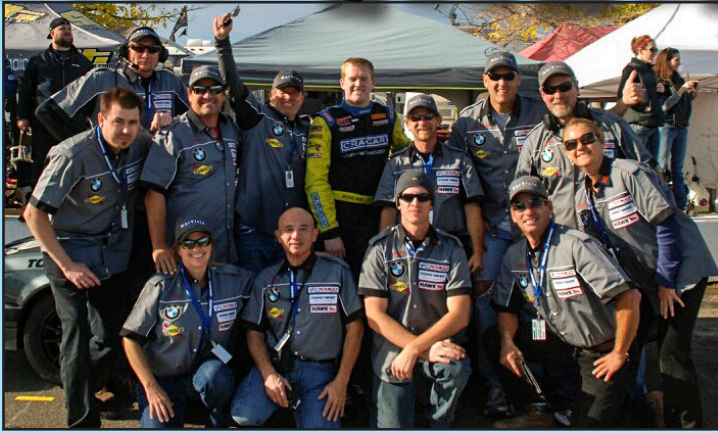
No way, says Birdy and Bruce who have already booked a trip to the Netherlands, Switzerland and Paris that leaves on July 11th and wont return until the end of the month. So unless someone is real early or really late we will be "skypeing" in to see our new grandchildren.

One more thing for everyone to consider, we may end up with three birthdays all on the same day! Dear God spare us all!

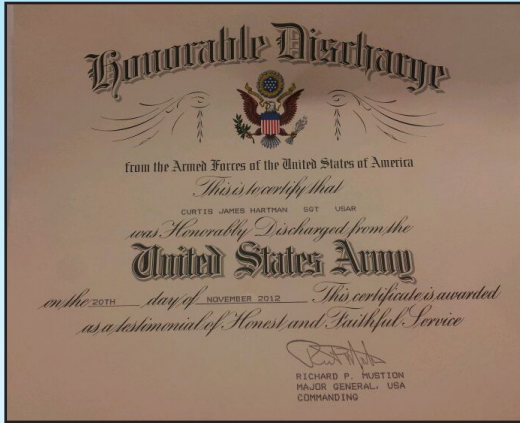


# FAMILY SHORTS

Lyle and his team mates from Mar Vista Construction just finished competing in a severe endurance race called the 25 Hours of Thunderhill held at where else? Thunderhill Raceway Park. His team



did very well finishing 12th in their division and 36th overall. We asked him if NASCAR in his future? His answer, "Only if I buys tickets to a race!!!"



Curtis recently received his "Honorable Discharge" from the US Army as a sergeant. But congratulations are also in order as he has secured a new teaching job at St. John's Bosco Catholic high school providing instruction in religious studies. Curtis, you are now officially Grandma Edith's favorite grand kid!

David reports that he has a new car to replace his last one that... well let's just say he has followed in his father's footsteps and they don't call his Dad "Crash" Gillingham for nothing!



Congratulations to Brett as he adds his latest award, "The American Experience Award" to his vast collection for his recent short film "Pablo on Wheels"



Francie, Jason, Kathleen Connolly, Alan, Craig, Brett, Robert, Mandy, Carol, Chavva, Ana, Karla, Jeff, Lyle and Dan Henny all tailgated at the Charger vs. the Bengals game. And while the Chargers didn't do too well on the field, all these Charger supporters had a great time before (and after) the game. Everyone met at Robert and Karla's RV early to watch the morning games on the Red Zone channel and enjoy grilled short ribs, potatoe salad, Carol's famous orange dessert, Congo bars and much more. Then after the game... leftovers of course!



Benny is showing his dad how he handles the controls of a fire truck and telling him it won't be long before he can reach the pedals and actually drive it! Who knows, maybe we will have a father and son fire fighting team soon!