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A NEW
YEARS
EVE GIFT



INTRODUCING...

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BABY M BECOMES BABY EM

Both families of Michael and Ashley spent Christmas with them in Louisville Colorado. Ashley's mom, Judi left on the 30th. All of us were thinking Baby M would make it to 2014 but would arrive some time before the Jan 26 the due date. Michael and Ashley, alone for the first time in over a week, decided to go over the plans for going to the hospital packing all of the last little things so that they would be ready in the coming weeks.

Also on the 30th Judi had arrived home from Denver. Bud and Margaret had left Encinitas for a black tie and pearls celebration at a vineyard in Temecula. Megan was planning to drive her Mini Cooper with Justin and dog and cat back to San Francisco on the first.

Early on the 31st the news traveled quickly. Ashley and Michael were leaving for the hospital. The mad dash was on. Flights from San Diego were unavailable till evening. Judi checked Santa Ana airport and was off near noon. Margaret and bud made it back from Temecula and had a flight also out of Santa Ana at 3. Megan started the journey back to SF with plans to fly out in the early morning. As they approached LAX, Justin suggested she jump out and find a flight to Denver and he would drive car and pets to SF. She was on a flight 20 minutes after leaving the car.





Margaret had picked out roses for baby Em and Ashley had packed her first outfit and it had little rosebuds on the hat and top. So Baby M left the hospital Emily Rose Mehan.

Taking care if a very small baby adds one more bit of anxiety to an already scary process for new parents, but by midweek patterns were forming and milk was flowing and baby was growing. Emily sleeps and eats as she works her way to full term size. We have all fallen joyfully in love with this tiny rosebud baby.

With all this travel scramble none of us arrived in time for the birth. At 11:09am an exhausted Ashley and Michael became parents of a 5lb 6oz, 19" charming baby girl. The news traveled quickly through the family chats and everyone wanted name and pictures. Pictures appeared first but there was no name. Michael and Ashley had a number of possibilities but no clear front runner. They wanted to see their baby before they made the decision. Michael's colleague visited and talked about her child Emily. Both Michael and Ashley heard the name and looked at their baby and saw an immediate match and the name was written on the whiteboard. Later when she was called baby M, we realized that she has been Em for a long time.

Then the challenge was the second name. Judi suggested Rose because of her rosebud lips.





Riel Bowl XXIII Another Great Success!

This year's Riel Bowl was held on Saturday, December 28th at Bob and Listy Gillingham's home in San Carlos. Family and friends began to gather just before noon to kick off the event which is now in its 23rd year of existence.

This year we had a new event, slot car racing, thanks to Bruce and Birdy. The race track was set up just off the side of the patio and featured a 2 lane track with three separately controlled cars. Yes, that's right, three cars on two track (or on one if you wanted). It seems that even slot cars have come a long way since I was a small boy, now they are individually controlled and you can even cross over to the next track by a push of





a button on the controller. The racing was very spirited (this is a Riel event after all) and everyone really got a kick watching the third generation of kids playing with it.

After the usual getting caught up with the latest news and lot of picture taking, it was "time to eat" as Grandpa Frank used to say. There was no shortage of food and the feast included: Prime Rib, Ham, Chicken, Salads, Mash Potatoes, Beans, Brussels Sprouts (my favorite) and of course Carol's "World Famous" orange stuff!



The food and drinks were spectacular but there must have been something in the Prime Rib as some of the guest started to multiply as if being spontaneously cloned. As you can see the twins became more twins and Matthew developed into a basketball team! Fortunately the effect were only temporary and soon everything was back to normal.



Next it was time for the white elephant (only in name) contest. This year the rules required each participant to bring a “gadget” to the exchange. Now the definition of a gadget is: *a small tool such as a machine that has a particular function, but is often thought of as a novelty. Gadgets are sometimes referred to as gizmos.* The rules also allowed for either store bought or homemade “gadgets” to be used. There were plenty of very interesting items given away including: a self-decorating dolphin kit, a chesty (don’t even ask), a travel accessory that could be used to make your armrest more comfortable and what could only be described as a talking Gizmo. This event was a lot of fun and many people are already planning next year’s entries.



And then of course there was Annie’s big announcement, which was 100 times bigger than most would expect. But if you weren’t there I guess you will just have to ask her about it.

Riel Bowl is also the day we all wish Grandma Edith happy birthday even though it doesn’t take place until the 1st of the year. She was surprised with a new Golf bag and bag carrier, also she got a few new clubs as well. However as a real celebration of her birthday she was told that she would be taken to BINGO on New Year’s Day to more properly celebrate her 89th year in this world. See the article elsewhere in this edition of the RFNL for more information on that event.



All in all, it was a wonderful event and Listy and Bob were, as always, very gracious hosts. We thank them for opening up their home to the 50 + family members and friends that attended the event. I understand that next year they are going to have to apply for a traffic control permit just to manage the traffic in and out of their neighborhood. Once again thanks to the Gillingham’s for a really fun day and we will always remember that “a good time was had by all.”





Birdy's Baby Brunch

By Birdy Hartman

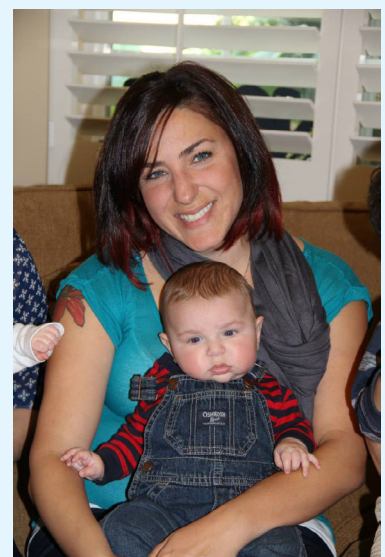
December was a crazy month, what with birthdays, work parties, Christmas, Riel Bowl and other events for one and all. Generally, in a perfect world, all the kids would be here for the Riel Bowl and we would not have to create any new reasons for a gathering.

Unfortunately though, Michelle and Dave could only be here until the 26th of December and therefore would be missing the 23rd Riel Bowl. Since we knew how much they wanted to see all the other families including their new babies, we decided to organize a "Baby Brunch." This would insure a chance for Cousins to meet Cousins, Uncles and Aunts to meet Nephews and Nieces and so on and so on.

The Brunch was held on the Saturday before Christmas, so that the lunch gang could just have a new meeting place (other than Merrill Gardens). We invited everyone and hoped that we could get a few good pictures of the babies born in 2013. It was so sweet to have so many folks show up. Michelle loved sharing Owen for the first time and it was so wonderful to see how all the great grand kids are growing up so fast.

We had a big spread of egg dishes, salads, bagels and buns. So we ate Riel Style and caught up with the cousins that live afar. Miguel Rios had a birthday approaching on the very next day, so we took the opportunity to surprise him with cake a la babies! Benny carried it out with the help of Grammy and successfully helped Miguel to extinguish the candles with just a slight spray of spit.

We were grateful to have so many lovely families in our home. Thanks to one and all!



ROCKET LAUNCH ON FIESTA ISLAND

By Birdy Hartman



Matthew attends High Tech High and is in 9th grade. One of his projects was to design and build a rocket as a team for launching on Fiesta Island on December 20th. Prior to this date, the students spent about a month on the rockets in class, building the noses out of wood and the tubular bodies out of cardboard. They designed the fins, which were cut with a laser at the school. They had to use their math skills to create the perfect formula to get their rocket into the air and have a parachute launch correctly to get the pieces back to earth safely. The only parts they didn't make or design themselves were the engines.

His team was one of the first to launch Saturday as proud parents, grandparents, math and physics teacher looked on. They were also required to create posters illustrating their projects and give presentations to explain them. I served as the paparazzi and took many photos of Matthew as he proudly held his rocket.

The air was thick with anticipation — and just a hint of smoke — as Matthew's team approached the lift-off stand. Once it was placed, everyone stood back as the official count down began. "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Blast off!" You could see the jet stream shoot straight up in the sky and then turned gently as it headed back to the ground as the parachute deployed. It was up and over fast but what a thrill to see it happen. There were many hoots and hollers! We were so proud to watch Matthew be a part of such an exciting day. And I couldn't help but think about how Matthew's great grandfather, Frank Riel, would have enjoyed seeing this project in action.

"The sky is the limit," said his teacher. "We do a lot of cool, interesting, innovative projects. It doesn't even feel like you were learning at the end of it. You're just having fun."

Talk about fun! That was not all. After each of the rockets launched we stayed until the sunset for another traditional launch. In celebration for the winter solstice, we also launched Chinese lanterns, which are a small hot air balloon made of paper, with an opening at the bottom where a small fire is suspended.

We want to thank Matthew and his family for inviting us! We loved being part of this cheering team of adoring fans! Way to go, Matthew!

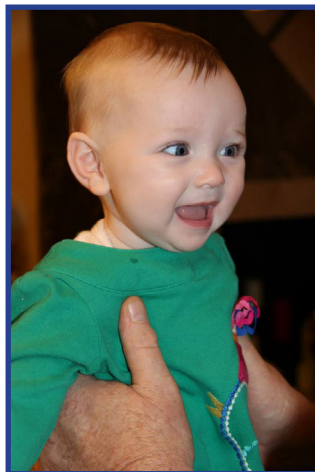


In Asia and elsewhere around the world, sky lanterns have been traditionally made for centuries, to be launched for play or as part of long-established festivities. Once you light them, the hot air fills up the balloon and slowly lifts up into the sky. You make a wish and hope that your wish will be granted as you watch your Chinese lantern disappear in the sky.

I was a little uneasy at first, over the dangers and impact on the earth, so I did Google them when I got home. They burn for about 12 minutes and then float back to the earth. They are biodegradable and collapse in a day or two. You do not need a permit to fly them and they look spectacular when they are all floating above your heads. It was indeed a fabulous display for all to see. I just hope that all of our wishes come true!



FAMILY SHORTS



OK, so this month's Family Shorts has a lot of baby pictures in it... so what! They're Cute, they grow up fast and besides how could you not want to see more pictures of Riel Babies?



Francie's Frosty Shopping Trip

Francie took off just after the New Year to enjoy a little shopping at a quiet, little, out of the way, shopping mall called the Mall of America. OK, so it's not so little, but it defiantly is out of the way. Also January in Minnesota can be a bit chilly. So it should come as no surprise that the temperatures while she was visiting dropped below 0 degrees F.

But being the trooper that she is, (and the mall is heated after all) off she went shopping, where she found a store called Gadgets to Go. This could prove to be costly as most of you know Francie is defiantly a "Gadget Girl." I am sure that we will see plenty of new toys around her house soon.

Next she was scheduled to visit Washington DC and tour the White House (I'm sure it was a personal request from the President) but her flight was canceled due to the weather. After getting several different flight times she finally made it to Washington a day or two later, unfortunately her luggage decided to go to Detroit. But the good news was that she had time to visit with Michelle, David and little Owen.

After that, it was off to visit Brice and Bridget in New York where she got to see the Letterman show as well as... What else, more Shopping!





Grandma Edith's 89th Birthday Bingo Surprise!

As part of Grandma Edith's Birthday presents given to her during Riel Bowl XXIII she was promised a birthday bingo party at Viejas casino. So it was planned that on her birthday, January 1st, a few of us siblings would take her to lunch and bingo.

Listy, Birdy and Carol picked up Grandma Edith at around 10:45 so they could meet Karla and Robert at the casino around 11:30. Francie was out of town that day and Margaret, who was also planning on joining the fun, had to make a mad dash to Colorado to see her new grandchild Emily being born. Once at the casino the plan was to have a nice lunch at the buffet and then leave some time for Grandma to play the slot machines before the 2:00 Bingo session.

We were seated at a nice booth and our waitress turned out to be Anna, who was the same waitress that had always served Grandpa Frank and Grandma Edith when they would come up for bingo on their own years ago. Anna took good care of the group and even took our group photo as seen above.

After a few rounds of food it was time for dessert, a Riel favorite. Grandma selected, among other things, a slice of pecan pie. For those of you who don't know it that is her favorite pie of all time. She has always had a thing for pecans and I can even remember back to when we were on our trip to see Richard graduate from the Citadel, she would always get the pecan divinity from Stucky's whenever we stopped for gas, but I digress...



After lunch the plan was to let Grandma play the slot machines until 1:30 then play bingo at the 2:00 session. The twins, not being the gambling type, decided to go shopping at the outlet stores next door and join the rest of us during bingo. So While Grandma was testing her luck at the penny slots I went over and tried to get us all a good spot to play Bingo.

The first thing I noticed was that it was really busy and there were no spots available in the main room. It looked like we would all have to use the overflow room, but that was OK as there was plenty of space to spread out. Finally it was time to play Bingo and Grandma, who was so excited to be there with her children, could hardly wait to buy her cards. Once at the counter however, we noticed that there was no one there to help us purchase our cards. After asking around, we found out that because it was New Year's Day, there was a Bingo marathon going on which had started at noon and would not be over until 6:00 that night.

Needless to say Grandma was very upset about not being able to play bingo. But we all promised to take her there again sometime this month. Which actually was a better surprise as she will now have two trips to the casino with her kids! She wasn't too upset because after all there still were plenty of penny slot machines available to use. It was a very nice afternoon and we all look forward to Bingo once again this month.