



**Riel Springtime
Activities**

With the onset of spring, a young Riel's fancies turn to...

Outdoor activities of course! And YOUNG Grandma Edith didn't even wait for spring as she and Eddie regularly take walks around Balboa Park. Eddie meets up with Grandma about once a week and they take a brisk walk while they catch up on the latest news of the family. Grandma Edith tells us that she would be "Very Happy" if more of her children and grandchildren would stop by and join her for a walk.

Next there is the Hartman clan, with what seems to be a never ending list of activities. This month was no different and with spring just around the corner it was time for opening day at Corbin's T-ball league. The whole family came out to watch Corbin play on his team called the "Nuts". Grandparents Bruce and Birdy joined Mom, Dad, big brother and little sister in rooting for the home team... I wonder if the team cheer is GO NUTS! GO NUTS! GO NUTS!



Corbin looked like a natural out there hitting the ball and running the bases. We are told that his field work is getting better every day and that Bruce has already offered to be his manager as soon as he hits the big league. Craig and Ana were very happy to have their whole family together for this special event.

As reported last month the Hartman family visited SeaWorld, well this month it was Knott's Berry Farms. I'm here to tell you that we (the first gen kids) totally missed out by not having grandparents local to us. If we were lucky we got to go to Disneyland once a year and maybe another trip to the zoo. But these Hartman's ... they really know how to have fun! We understand that Grandma Birdy had a wonderful time with Scott and Corbin, even if they did get put in jail for a quick visit. Good thing Snoopy came along and rescued them.



We also have news about Frank's pre-springtime activities. He has joined a 6 on 6 flag football league, which started last January. The league holds a preseason game and 10 regular season games with playoffs. We're not sure how his team made out but, we do know that Frank played very hard and had a great time.

The Benesch's (Jeff and Carol) took advantage of the unusually warm almost spring season to spend some time at the beach with Dustin, Lauren and Holden. This of course was a little better than the snow they left while visiting with Jessica, Miguel, Benny, and two grandbabies to be named (and birthed) later.

Grandparent's Bob and Listy spent some quality time with their grandkids at the zoo. While last Sunday, Karla and I went out to Borrego Springs to hike up to the palm oasis. We were hoping to find some wild flowers to take pictures of but it looked like they had bloomed early do to the mild winter. However, we did run into the little guy pictured below who was enjoying the unusually warm day, that is, of course, until he went off to hide under a rock.

Brian on the other hand, decided to take a vacation to Mexico (see the following article) and we understand that Annie is going back to Spain, but only for a month. That is about all we have for this month, stay tuned because we are just getting warmed up, pun intended!



Final Cut Hair Studio Gets a Makeover



The Final Cut, your haircare destination for all things beautiful



Instead of offering skin care we have changed our facial room into a hairstyling room to accommodate our two newest hairstylists. Jackie Madess and Kira Pinski join our staff of accomplished hair designers to broaden the depth of our staff.

With a little help from Sheryl and Lyle, my make it happen team the room has been transformed into a very workable space. For those of you who have friends getting married soon, or cousins, hahahaha, Jackie and Kira are wedding wizzes with hair and makeup.

Francie

Brian & Friends Cruise to Mexico

By Brian Riel



Back in October 2013 Pete, Daniel, and I decided that we needed to go on a cruise! We all had vacation time available and March was a cheap and convenient month for all of us. Also we asked our friend, Angelica from work, if she would like to join us and of course she said yes without hesitation. So we "booked the cruise" for the first week in March, to Mexico, on the Carnival Miracle.

The time finally came for us to get on the ship and start our party! We researched a little and found that Carnival had a program called "Cheers". You pay \$50 a day and receive 15 alcoholic drinks a day, bottomless soda, and 25% discount on bottles of alcohol and water. It was totally worth it!

We spent the first day at sea lounging by the pool, soaking up the sun (and drinking). Dinner was always a lot of fun, we had requested a table by ourselves so we could be loud and eat multiple plates of food without judgment. But as it



turned out, we were seated with 4 middle-aged women. Starting off everyone was silent, awkward, and just boring. But, by the end of the night we realized we were sitting next to some pretty fun people. So it worked out for the best (they also shared the interest of multiple dinner plates). We spent many of our nights after dinner in the Piano bar. The bar tender, Amphi, kept the drinks and jokes coming. She even let us make our own drinks!



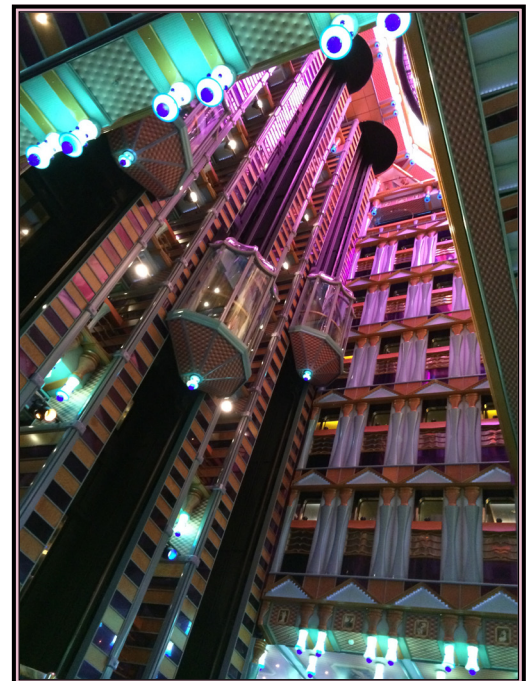
Our first day on shore was in Cabo San Lucas. We took a water taxi to the beach and found ourselves in Mangos, a beachfront restaurant and bar. Many beers and tequila shots later (don't forget we still had 15 drinks waiting for us on the ship) we made our way onto the beach. Swimming and relaxation took place, which was lovely! We started chatting to the guy next to us and we found out his name was Beytullah (Ben for short) and he was from Bulgaria and was in

the US for school. He joined our group and spent the rest of the cruise with us.

Our next stop was Puerto Vallarta. We took a tequila distillery tour and learned a lot about the agave plant and how tequila is made, we also learned a lot about Mexico's history. Of course there were tequila shots involved, why wouldn't there be (again, don't forget the 15 drinks waiting for us on ship) "MAS TEQUILA!!!"

The last few days were spent at sea lounging by the pool with drinks in hand, endless food, and lots of fun people. We got to see whales and dolphins from the ship, an awesome experience. During the cruise, we celebrated Pete's 25th Birthday, we secretly ordered a cake and an entourage of people to sing him happy birthday. We also brought cards and gifts, which were filled with sappy notes from loved ones. This resulted in both Pete and the women next to us, crying.

As the cruise came to an end we took pictures with our wait staff, who took such great care of us. We gave Amphi a thank you note, which we all signed, and contained a very rewarding tip. We sadly left the ship, but we had great memories and new friends to take with us. It was a great and much needed vacation! We are already looking into the future for our next cruise. We're thinking the Caribbean but you never know.





Keeping in Focus

Getting That Really Sharp Photo

By Robert Riel



With all the cameras / photo enthusiasts in our family you can be sure of one thing; if there's a Riel event, there will be lots of pictures taken. Many of which will be posted on face book within a few hours if not right away. Pictures in our family go way back, in fact, we have some that are over 100 years old. But it really wasn't until the point and shoot, 110, cameras or in some cases the 35mm, film cameras of the 1970's came out that taking pictures at our family events became a normal thing.

Even back then, there were plenty of cameras but unless you had a Polaroid camera you had to wait a week or better to see if you got the "shot". And sharing pictures was done by getting two sets of pictures made when you sent in the film for developing. Then along came 1 hour developing and those that didn't mind paying a little more could see their pictures on the same day they were shot.

Grandpa Frank was our first "Family Photographer" going all the way back to his shots of family trips to Disneyland or maybe the traditional Easter dress picture. Come to think of it, he was probably the first in our family to do the "Sisters" shot that we now see

with regularity. The point is, I believe we all inherited a bit of his love for the ability to record a moment in time to share with others.

Of course today, and in fact the last 10 years, we have had digital cameras that allow us to see instantly if we got the picture we wanted. As we all know, most family gatherings looks like the paparazzi has joined us considering the amount of cameras going off all the time. Now with the next generation of Riels coming into our world, even more cameras are being used and on more than one occasion I have been asked for help in how to take "good pictures". We should get one thing straight right now, a good picture is a picture that you like not necessarily what others might like. Most of us take pictures to help remember a moment or share something with others. It satisfies our basic emotion of expression. In a very subtle way, we are allowing others into our minds, letting them know what's important to us, what makes us laugh, cry, be happy, and/or maybe even sad. With today's ability to upload / text pictures and instantly share them with the people you care most about; we have found a way to express ourselves without ever having to put our feelings into words.

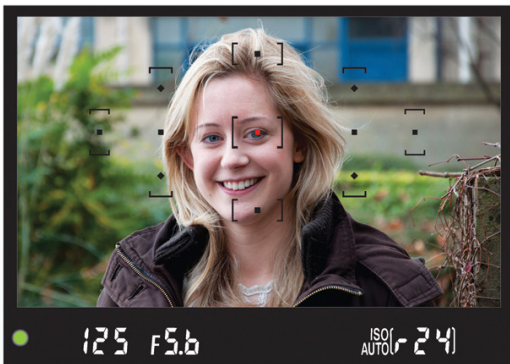
So with this in mind, I thought it might be useful if I went over a few things to help you make your picture taking experience a little less frustrating when you are trying get the shot you want. So for this article I'd like to talk about the number one thing that keeps a photo from being that great shot you wanted: sharpness.

How many times have you taken a picture that looked good on the small screen of your camera but when you got it on your computer screen you realized that it was fuzzy and/or out of focus? And it's really frustrating because you know your camera's auto focusing was on and you tried to hold real still while taking the picture, so what the heck happened? That's what I'm going to try to explain here without getting to technical or complicated. After all, these new cameras are supposed to do all the thinking for you, that's why they have a point and shoot (auto) mode right? True enough they do but... there are times that there are just too many variables for the camera to make the right decisions and you need to help it do its job.

So let's dive in and talk about focus because, even when you are in the automatic mode, the camera can only help

focus the shot, you have to decide what you want the camera to focus on. Most cameras today have auto focus (AF) points, in fact the manufactures make a big deal as to how many focus point they have. Does it make a difference? Well yes, and no, depending on what you like to shoot. My advice is unless you are going to be shooting a lot of high speed action, don't worry about if your camera has 9 or 50 AF points, it won't make that much difference.

For the purposes of this article we are going to deal mostly with stationary to semi stationary subjects, you know, "everybody don't move and say cheese". First let's deal with the AF point themselves. If you don't know what they are look at the picture below.



This should be something like what you see when looking through your viewfinder, notice that there are 11 AF points represented by, in this case, squares and diamonds. Generally speaking when you press your shutter release button half way down, you will see one or more of the AF point light up in red. What this tells you is that every point that turns red will be in focus when you take the picture. Simple right? We like simple, just point and shoot then BAM! Out comes a great picture. Except, when one of the AF points catch something in the background and you didn't notice it. Now you have a really sharp shot of a tree in the distance with some fuzzy people waving at you. Not a picture you want to post on face book right away.

So what happen here? Well the way

AF points work is that they look for contrast (you know dark against light). The camera analyzes the picture and looks for these points and selects the best one to focus on (Ok, there is other things going on but this is the non-technical version). The problem is that it may not be the point you wanted in focus, hence the tree not your friends.

So how do you fix this and why does it happen? AF points look for contrast and many times the camera finds it in the brightest part of your picture which may not be where your subject is. You have to pay attention to the AF points that turn red and make sure they are on your subject and not something else. Also you may have multiple AF points and the camera is trying its best to focus on everything by selecting a higher aperture or "F-Stop" (more on this later). The problem is that a higher "F-Stop" means a slower shutter speed and then camera shake can lead to a blurry picture. OMG why does this have to be so complicated! Well, that fact is, taking a technically good picture (exposure and sharpness) is complicated, but the good news is that your camera will do most of the work for you. You just need to understand how to help it do a better job.

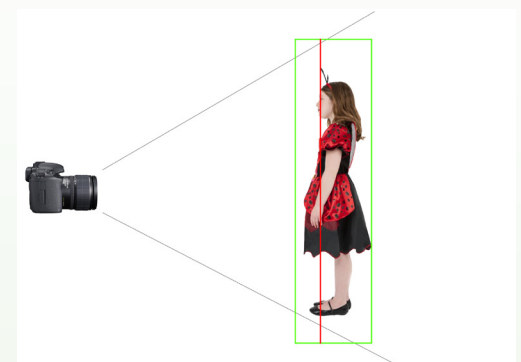
The first thing you can do is limit some of the decisions it has to make. When you are shooting pictures of mostly stationary subjects, change your AF system to use only one AF point. Usually the center one. All cameras have this ability, and it should be very easy to do. On my camera (Canon) there is a button on the back, top right, that allows me to set the AF point I want to use. I normally keep my camera in a single (the center one) AF point mode all the time as I find it allows me to better control where the focus is.

Speaking of setting the focus, where is the best place? If your subject is a person or an animal, always select the eye closest to the camera. Since the eyes have the most contrast on a face it is normally where one looks (uncon-

sciously) to see if the picture is "sharp". As you notice in the simulated picture above, the photographer, using only one AF point, selected the girls left eye, as her face was slightly aimed to the right. You should note that when someone looks at a picture their eyes are naturally drawn to the sharpest and brightest areas of the photo. By understanding this you can direct the viewer's eyes to the subject you want to highlight your picture.

Ok so I got it now, one AF point, set it on the eye closest to me, and shoot away, giving me perfectly focused shots every time, right? Well... mostly right, this works well when you only have one person in the shot but what about that group photo where you have two or three rows of people, how do you make sure that they are all in focus?

To answer this we need to discuss a term called "Depth of Field" or DOF. DOF can best be described as a box that goes around the focus point, as shown below.



The red line represents the focus point and the green box represents the DOF or the area that will be in focus. Notice that the red line is about 1/3 the way into the box from left to right. What this means is that, generally speaking, the sharpest focus (the focal point) will be surrounded by an area of good focus with 1/3rd in front of the focus point and 2/3rds behind it. Everything outside the box will be out of focus.

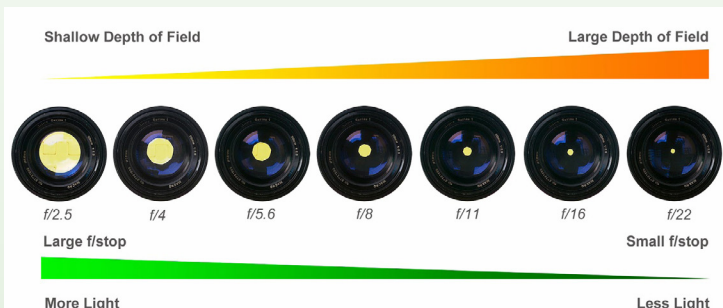
OK, so how do you make the box (DOF) bigger, because after all, if you have a really larger DOF then every-

thing will be in focus and all of your pictures will be sharp, right? ...RIGHT? I truly wish it was that simple. Yes, you can, and should adjust your DOF but only as big as you need it, because the greater you make the box the more light it will take to properly expose the picture. Wait! Now we're talking about exposure, you said this was about focus and taking sharp pictures, can't you stay on topic????

Well I am, in a way, you see your camera has to do a lot of things when you push that button to take a picture. First, it has to decide what to focus on, next it has to analyze how much light there is to take the picture, then how deep should the depth of field be, then adjust both shutter speed and the sensitivity of the sensor (ISO) to compensate for the perfect exposure. Finally it takes the picture and records it in memory all within a few tenths of a second. Truly remarkable when you think about it.

In photography everything is a tradeoff, if you want a higher DOF then you need more light or you have to use longer exposure times (shutter speed). Assuming for a moment you're not using a flash, there isn't much you can do about the available light unless you either turn on lights or move outside into the sun. So generally speaking if you want a greater depth of field it will require a slower shutter speed. Slow shutter speeds (less than 1/125th of a second) will lead to blurry pictures (due to camera shake) unless you use a tripod and the subject is not moving. Another way to shoot faster shutter speeds in low light situations is to increase the ISO setting on your camera. But the higher ISO you use the more noise (graininess) you put into the picture. Like I said, tradeoffs. But once you understand these tradeoffs they can be very useful in making quick adjustments that may be all the difference in getting a sharp shot.

Now let's talk about how the F-Stop or aperture setting affects the DOF. Raising the F-Stop to a high amount (F18 - F32) will gain you large depths of field but as mentioned before, will allow less light to hit the sensor. That's because with high aperture setting, the smaller the iris of the lens becomes and thereby blocking most of the light from the sensor as shown below:



One way to compensate is by raising the ISO setting of your sensor, effectively making it more sensitive to light. However high ISO settings can lead to noise as seen in the

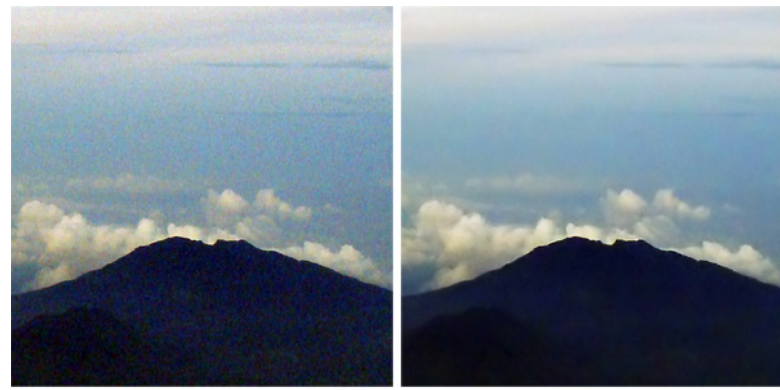
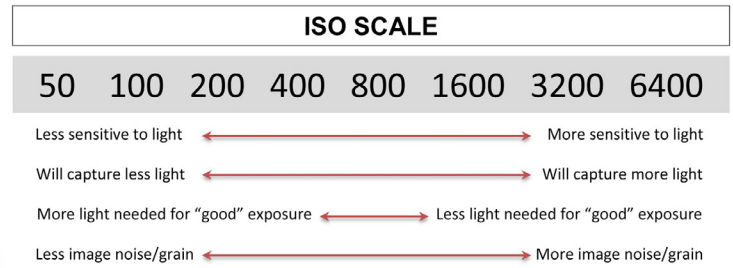


Image with noise

Image without noise

above example. While the chart below provides you with the pros and cons of using high ISO:



So why bring all this up if you are shooting in auto mode? Because, by eliminating some of the decisions you camera has to make, greatly improves the quality of your pictures. Start off by taking your camera's ISO setting off of auto and setting it to 200. This is a good compromise between light sensitivity and noise, however ISO speeds of up to 400 and even 800 can render pictures that are acceptable without the need to correct for noise. Anything above 800 will need to be cleaned up with some type of post processing program like Apple's Aperture or Adobe's Photoshop or Lightroom software (many camera manufacturers also provide their own software to adjust pictures).

So now pick up your camera and let's talk about some very simple things you can do to get that sharp picture. In the auto mode, with the ISO set to 200, compose your shot on a simple nonmoving subject like a tree in the back yard. Press the shutter release button half way down and pay attention to the red AF points. Did they select the tree, the tree and some other items like the fence to the right, or did the camera focus on something like a chair in front of the tree? Just paying attention to what is going to be in focus is a big step in getting that really sharp shot. If your camera is picking up to many other things try changing to a single AF point and see how much easier it is to select what you want to focus on.

Here's a hint: Many times the subject you want to focus on is not in the center of the picture, do you need to change the settings on the camera to a different AF point? What a pain! No, just place the AF point on the subject you want in

focus, press your shutter button half way down until your camera focuses where you want it to (red square lights up), then without releasing the button (keep it pressed half way down) move your camera to recompose the shot you want and continue pressing down until the shutter fires. In effect, this allows you to set the focus point on something that may be off to one side of the picture.

Another hint: Most pictures look better when the subject is not centered in the frame. Placing the subject slightly to one side usually results in a more pleasing look. More about composition in a later article.

So before you take the shot look in your viewfinder to see what settings the camera has selected for the shot. Notice in the example below, the camera has been set to an ISO of 100, used an F-Stop of 2.8 and a shutter speed of 1/1500th of a second. Notice that the pigtails behind her head and even in front, are not as sharp as her face is. That is because the camera has used a very low F-stop resulting in a very shallow depth of field. In this case it is very effective as your eyes are drawn to her face and the entire background is too blurry to even tell where she is (maybe a beach). Note also how she is not centered in the photo but slightly to the left. One other thing, it looks like the focal point was not her eyes but possibly the hairline on her forehead. What was the first thing you noticed in the picture? Was it the detail in her hair and pigtails? See how our eyes zero in on the sharpest part of the picture? I would guess that the depth of field in this photo is not more than 8".

The point here is that, using the standard automatic mode would most likely not have resulted in using these settings. Most cameras software is setup for larger depths of field and sacrificing shutter speed unless it falls below 1/125th of a second. But just because you are using auto mode doesn't mean that you can't easily change the settings to something more in line with what you want to use.

Most cameras today allow you to scroll through the different settings while you are looking through the viewfinder. The scrolling control is usually very close to the shutter release button so you can scroll through the choices after depressing the shutter release half way down and letting go. On my camera there is a wheel next to the shutter release that allows me to scroll through the different F-stop/shutter speed combinations for up to 10 sec-

onds after I release the shutter button. For example you might find that a particular shot can be properly exposed with an F-Stop of F2.8 and a shutter speed of 1/1000th of a second. But that it will be equally as well exposed with an F-Stop of F11 and a shutter speed of 1/250th of a second. If you are taking a group shot you will need a larger depth of field so F11 is far superior then a F2.8 and the shutter speed is still fast enough to not have to worry about camera shake.

However if you are shooting a picture of your kid jumping in the air you might want a high shutter speed and sacrifice some DOF. Additionally, if you should need even more shutter speed or DOF then the camera selections allows, then adjust up the ISO to get the shot you want. The point is, you can now help your camera to make the right decisions based on a small amount of input from you.

In summary, when your camera is in the full auto mode the only thing you have to do is literally point and shoot. And this is successful about 75% of the time when shooting with plenty of light. Your camera, by using multiple AF points will try to determine the subject, and DOF needed (F-Stop), then will adjust the shutter speed and ISO to get you the best hand held photo possible under the circumstances. But you can increase your odds of a really sharp picture by fixing the ISO setting, taking a moment to pay attention to the AF points then scrolling through the possible F-Stop and Shutter speed combinations to get the best picture for the subject you are shooting.

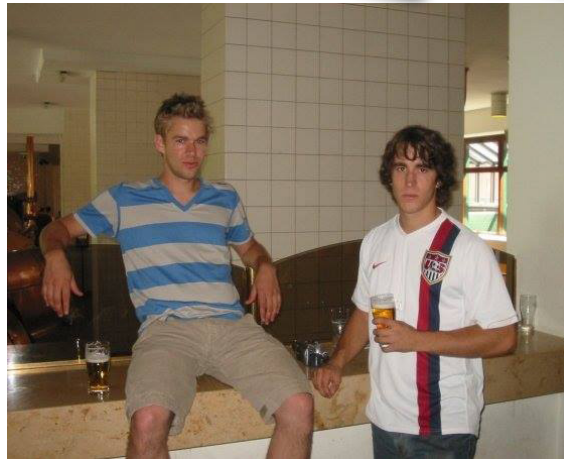
In my next article we will talk about Exposure, until then enjoy and share the moments!



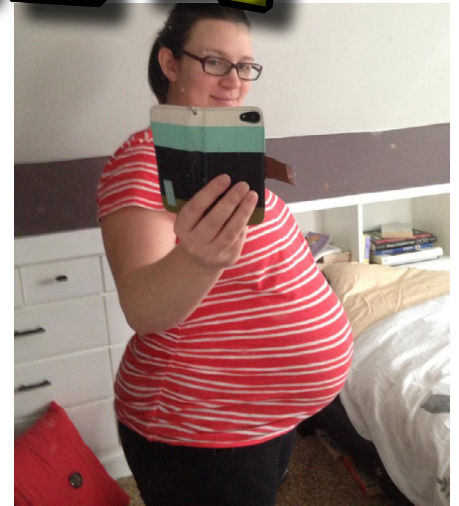
FAMILY SHORTS



Little man is a 1/2 year old! So blessed to have this tiny being in our lives.
Nicole-



Brett and Bryce are planning another trip to Europe with "Big Al" so it's a good bet we will see a new film next fall... "Our European vacation 2" starring the boys and Alan. I think Riel Bowl XXIV would be a great place for the premier!



Jessica is getting close to 30 weeks (this photo is at 26 weeks) and the storks who have been training all winter are starting to circle the block. In just a few more Months we should be reporting on the arrival of two new Riel family members!

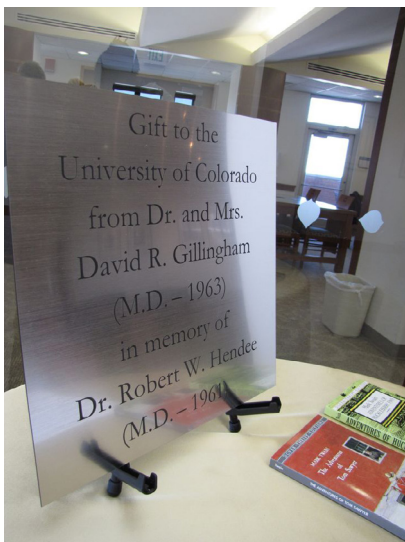
Birdy tells us that Curtis and Lauren just put in an offer on a house and they GOT IT! Their new address will be:

3614 Faust Ave
Long Beach, CA
90808



This is what happens when your almost 7-month old "feed himself". Which he 100% insisted on. First, I just gave him the spoon while I fed him with a different one... But, one thing led to another & he insisted on dipping his into the bowl and then putting it into his mouth. Mr. Independent!! Thank God for Oxy!!

Michelle



Dr. Pamela Laird, Chair of CU Denver's History Department, presented a lecture, "Poignant Humorists: Mark Twain and Norman Rockwell". Afterwards there was an Exhibit of Rockwell Prints Based on Twain Classics that was kindly donated to the University of Colorado by Dr. and Mrs. David R. Gillingham (M.D. - 1963, Bob's Father) in memory of Dr. Robert W. Hendee (M.D. - 1961, Bob's Grandfather)