

REFNILL

The title 'REFNILL' is rendered in large, colorful, 3D block letters. The 'R' is pink, 'F' is blue, 'N' is green, 'I' is yellow, and 'L' is orange. Each letter is accompanied by cartoon illustrations: a girl holding a plate for 'R', a boy for 'F', a dog and a girl for 'N', a boy for 'I', and a baseball player for 'L'. The text 'Catch The News' is written across the 'N'.

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Have you ever noticed that we have an inordinate number of teachers in this family we call Riel? Sixteen of Forty Nine in only two generations are educators representing a combined 291 years of educational excellence! Though many are guilty simply by association, and we call them innocent bystanders, they are nonetheless a part of this unruly clan and statistical anomaly. In this hard hitting, cutting edge, investigative report I will attempt to uncover the driving forces of nature that have created this educatory phenomenon.

At first glance most would simply call this a coincidence. After thousands of hours of research (well... an e-mail and an hour or so to write this anyway) our "team" of investigators has compiled compelling circumstantial evidence leading to the conclusion that there are at least three components contributing to this abnormality.

First, there appears to be a genetic component that was uncovered by the team. There is a huge preponderance of evidence pointing to Hugh (Bud) Mehan as the pathogenesis of this freakish genetic mutation. Dating as far back as (just shy of the stone age) Bud's name appears in ancient texts, Dead Sea scrolls and stone tablets as the leading sociologist of his time, teaching and preaching his sermons on Educational Equity, Access, and Teaching

Excellence while simultaneously holding a cache of awards and accolades large enough to grind Google's vast network of servers to its knees when his name is entered into the search line. The genetic theory is further reinforced with a look at the Bob and Listy Gillingham family where there is a 100% involvement in the field of education in two generations. Are they secretly conspiring to take over academia or perhaps the world?

The second element discovered by our team was that this mutation spreads as a bacterial infection through families via unprotected sex and through airborne particulates and becomes an incurable, terminal disease. Dr. Ouija, PhD. and leading expert in the study of "Where Shit Originates" (as told by dead people) determined through the extensive use of the leading scientific research tool, the Ouija Board, coupled with the bleeding edge technology of smoke, mirrors and incense, that this is an antibiotic resistant, incurable disease that simply has to run its course. Hand sanitizers, condoms and voodoo dolls simply won't

Editor's Note: We are honored and proud to announce that Bruce Hartman has joined the editorial staff of the RFNL. He has graciously accepted the position of "High Exalted Editor -Home Area or as we now call him Mr. Hee-Ha. As you may have noticed, Bruce has made many, major contributions to the RFNL and I felt it was about time to make him part of the staff. We are excited to have him join the RFNL and encourage everyone to welcome him to the staff by calling him by his new title.

protect you from this dreadful affliction. If you have a predisposition toward teaching, you're fate is likely sealed especially if you are in a family that has even one other teacher!

Lastly, our team has uncovered through scientific wild ass speculation and the extensive use of polling, wherein at least one person was polled with an error rate of plus or minus 99%, that there is also a political element to this oddity that has driven one third of this family into a life of education. In the more Liberal leaning households there appears to be a passion to teach and to bring education to those less fortunate and thirsting to learn. In the more right leaning, conservative households where concern for fellow man is overshadowed by the insatiable appetite for the dollar according to MSNBC, KPBS and NPR, they only teach for the outrageously fat pay checks. And we all know that must be true based on the long history of the shamefully high pay that teachers receive.

For many there is no escaping this dreadful way of life that offers three months of summer off, week(s) long breaks at every holiday, and in the case of the public sector teachers, delivers a lifelong paycheck. The only immunity from this affliction is that of a private sector job and to surround oneself with people from business and industry. Hang on to your 401K's and your two weeks per year vacation! Gird your loins for battle against this silent menace of academic mayhem that rears its ugly head anew every September. Does our next generation of (not so innocent by-standing Riels) stand a chance? Will they too be genetically shackled to a life in academia? Truth be known...This reporter remains hopeful! Hopeful that some of our grandkids do follow the examples of their grandparents and parents of selfless giving; educating those that might eventually run the world (or at least fix your cars)!

I'm happy you are all back at school and / or back in your classrooms starting a new year of lighting that little light inside our young people's minds. Bravo to the educators even though it's not completely your fault! You have chosen a venerable path!

NAME	POSITION	YEARS	GRADE	SUBJECTS	NAME of SCHOOL	CITY
Dave Gillingham	Teacher	2	8	Math & Physics	High Tech Middle	SD
Bob Gillingham	Principal	39	JK-8	3 R's	Francis Parker School	SD
Birdy Hartman	Teacher	31	SK	All	Francis Parker School	SD
Francie Sorem	Guest Artist	18		hair design	innovative styling options	Many
Kristy Kieth	Teacher	8	6 & 7	English	Francis Parker School	SD
Listy Gillingham	Principal	32	6 - 12	Math - All	De Portola - Patrick Henry	SD
Annie Gillingham	Teacher	1	1	All - Spanish Immersion	Winter Gardens Elem	Lakeside
Ana Hartman	Professor	2	College, Graduate, Law	Ethics, Contracts, Environmental, JD, MSL	Cal Southern U, Cal U of Mngmt & Science	SD & Irvine
Carol Benesch	Teacher	36	1 & 5	All	King, Green, Encanto, Dewey	SD
Margaret Riel	Professor	35 (SWAG)	University	Technology, Education, Action Research	Pepperdine, UCI, UCSD - more	Los Angeles, Irvine, La Jolla, San Jose
Curtis Hartman	Teacher	3.0	12	AP Art Hist, AP Gvrmt and Politics, Psychology, World History	St. John Bosco High School	Bellflower
Kevin Riel	Assistant Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations	3	Graduate	Grant Writing	Claremont Graduate University	Claremont
Bud Mehan	Professor	40	Under Grad & Grad	Sociology, Education	Indiana University, UCSD 38 years	Bloomington Indiana; La Jolla CA
Liz Riel	Teacher	35 (SWAG)	Primary	All		
Ashley McMichelle-Mehan	Teacher	5	3 & 4	All	Eagle Crest Elementary	Longmont
Megan Riel-Mehan	Teacher	1	Graduate	Introduction to scientific animation	UCSF	San Francisco
	TOTAL	291				

Burning Man



By Katy Riel



Burning Man Update #1: We upgraded to a bigger SUV and now we have a rack on top to better secure the yurt and bike! Let the packing begin!

Burning man update #2: the yurt is all patched up and wrapped. Loading the SUV and getting our final meal in. Getting closer.) (Brian)

Burning Man Update #3: the SUV is almost packed!! And we are all in awe of Daniel's packing/Tetris skills!

Burning man update #4: The SUV is all loaded. Everything is ready and we got the road in the next few minutes. It's for sure time to go home!! (Brian)

Burning Man Update #5: all loaded up and on our way! 20 hour drive, no problem! We got this!

Burning Man Update #6: So we thought we had everything tied down really well but there is this awful sound, a really loud flapping. We have gotten off at the last 4 exits to tape everything down. We have just completed the 4th attempt and getting back on the freeway. I'll let you know how it goes. Stay tuned in.

Burning Man Update #7: Well we are still trying, this makes attempt number 7. We have twisted the tie downs (apparently that's an old truckers trick) and now we are at Wal-Mart buying additional supplies. Stay tuned loyal listeners.

Burning Man Update #8: If you are still with us, loyal listeners, you have been rewarded! The noise had stopped! You have never seen four people in a car cheer so loud for silence!

Burning Man Update #9: Ladies and Gentlemen, there is a spider in the car! I repeat, there is a SPIDER in the car! We attempted murder but the little bugger had escaped and is now hiding. Watch men are posted and have been given the order to kill on site. Stay tuned loyal listeners

Burning Man Update #10: Well loyal listeners, I am "drunk" on Dramamine and about to drift off to dream land. God speed to our faithful driver, Brian. Tune in tomorrow morning for more adventures

The last week in August, I took a trip with my brother, Petey, and Daniel to Burning Man. For Brian, this was his third burn, but for the rest of us, it was our first. I think the reason it took me until Brian's third year to go is because of the way he described it; "you camp in the desert, it's hot, dusty, you have to take out what you bring in, no showers, and there is no real bathrooms, just porta potties". With that description, I don't know anyone who would jump at that opportunity.

What made Petey and Daniel go was listening to their friend Rachel (who went with Brian last year) explain it. I wasn't there so I can't tell you what she said that made them decide to go, but for me it was watching the videos and reading the articles from veteran burners. Hearing about this event where people come together to appreciate art, music, and each other was really intriguing.

There is a lot more that goes into going to Burning Man that I thought. There is meal prep, which is tricky because, again, you have to take everything back with you that you brought, including your trash, and the lack of a kitchen and cooking tools. Getting your costumes together, and figuring out the essentials that you will need while out there. All while trying not to pack too much. Brian was a big help because of his experience.

Getting there was an adventure, we ran into problems like noisy tie downs, flat tires, and rain storms, but we eventually got there. We got into the first line (where you turn off the highway onto a dirt road) about 9pm on Sunday evening and we didn't get to the front (where they split you into groups of those who have their ticket and those who need to pick them up at will call) until 4am. We probably only traveled 3 miles in that 8 hours. By this time the tail end of a hurricane in the gulf was reaching us and it began to storm, big time! We even got hail as big as marbles. Poor Brian got in the wrong line at will call and was told he had to go to the back of the correct line, which had an estimated wait time of 5 hours. Our silver lining, or so we thought, was that because of the rain no one was moving so we didn't have to worry about falling to far back in line to finally get into Black Rock City.

The next morning BMIR (Burning Man Information Radio) however informed us that our silver lining was also going to be the reason that

we were not getting into Black Rock City any time soon. The playa was drenched and driving on it was not only dangerous for us, but tore up the lake bed which is against the policy of leave no trace. There was no word of when we would be allowed into the city so we hunkered down in the car to wait. You would think that with as large as a SUV as Wanda (that's what we called her) was that we would be comfortable but with 5 people crammed in with all of our stuff there wasn't much room. We ended up being parked in "Camp Will-Call" for over 16 hours. We were the lucky ones though. People who had not gotten pass the highway to the dirt road were all turned around and sent back to Reno. Some reports we heard were that close to twenty thousand people were turned around and told to come back the next day.

We finally were given the all clear about 5pm on Monday evening and made it into the city by 7. We immediately started setting up our yurt while we still had light. The city is set up in a half circle around the Man and the streets leading out were named after time and the streets going around were in alphabetical order. I can't tell you what the street names were because everyone just references them by the first letter. We were camping at 4:15 and A streets, which were very close to the playa and ev-



erything else going on! As we were just getting ready to put the roof on the yurt when Donna Ray (or D-Ray) grabbed Petey, Daniel, and I, telling Brian "we would be right back", and lead us out onto the playa for the first time. The sun had set, and all the lights had come on. It was simply breath taking. There was a moment when the three of us just linked arms and stared out into the night and drank in our new home. Surprisingly enough, it felt like home.

This amazing temporary city, which is set up in the

middle of dried lake bed, just emanates feelings of community, acceptance, and love. It really was overwhelming. People walking by would stop, give us all hugs and say "Welcome Home". At first I thought it was because we looked like newbies but I soon realized that for the first few days, that's just how everyone greets one another. Now, having experienced it myself and already looking forward to going again next year, I get it.

After a few minutes of standing there and taking in the view, also a short lesson from D-Ray on getting our bearings, we remembered that we left Brian sitting under the yurt's roof and went back to camp to help him. Once camp was set, we got changed and headed out to the playa to see the art. The art that is displayed at Burning Man is simply stunning. Most of the installations encourage your interaction with the piece, and I think that's my favorite thing about it. We stayed out till well after sunrise that first night, exploring all that the playa had to offer. Quick side note here: you ride your bike everywhere, and Black Rock City is 5 square miles. Now for someone who hasn't ridden a bike in well over ten 10+ years, all I could say when I woke up the next morning was: ouch! And when I say woke up the next morning, let me rephrase, it was almost evening when we woke up; but that's life at Burning Man.

One thing that takes a little getting used to is the fact that it is a cashless community (except for ice). Burning Man is based on a gifting community. Most people think it's bartering, but it is purely gifting. People will just give you something, whatever it is that they are offering, expecting nothing in return. It is hard to resist the impulse to give them something in return. There are several theme camps set up in the city that offer a myriad of different things. For example, the camp we were staying with was The Dusty Swan, which is an Irish Pub. When they were open you could walk in and they would fill your glass with Guinness on tap and offer you



Burning man update #11: Just a quick recap for those of you just tuning in or waking up from a lovely night's sleep that we did not receive. Exactly 12 hours ago we began a journey that was SUPPOSED to go smoothly, however, we spent 2 hours playing Sherlock Homes discovering the mystery behind an awful noise. After discovering what was going on we were on our way. Only to be terrorized by a rouge spider (which has yet to be found and killed) and now every time we fill a tingle on our legs we freak out. We arrived in Vegas around 2:30AM and took a drive down the strip and saw all the beautiful lights (and wasted people stumbling). Onward again! Thankfully nothing major has happened, we are currently in Tonopah NV. Thank you loyal listeners for staying with us in this journey. We love you all!! (Brian)

Burning Man Update #12: It has been unanimously decided that Brian is no longer allowed to post updates. However, Pete and his membership to AAA are saving the morning (as is the full size spare). As we wait for the tow truck, loyal listeners, we will keep ourselves entertained by trying or hand at henna. Stay tuned.

Burning man update lucky #13: Good morning loyal listeners, thanks to a scruffy AAA man, named scruffy AAA man, we are officially back on the road! While adrenaline has us feeling wide awake, I give it 30 minutes until it's just me awake on this lonely road to home. Stay tuned!

Burning Man Update #14: We finally made it into Reno. We are seeing if we can get the flat repaired, then it's off to pick up one more traveler and then we are headed to the playa! I'll try to get a few more updates in before we are off the grid for 8 days!!!

Burning man update #15:



Burning Man Update #16: We have just experienced playa magic, in its purist form. What is playa magic you ask? Well, my loyal listeners, it's kinda like Karma, Kismet, and Fate all rolled into one. After all of the "adventures" we have been through in the last 23 hours (remember when I said 20 hour car ride... yeah right) the lovely angels disguised as Pep Boys mechanics gifted us by not charging us for the flat tire repair. As I type this, we are securing Lyle's belongings to Wanda (the SUV), and then we need to gas up one last time before we start waiting in line for the entrance gate. Stay tuned for more updates as we attempt to make new friends with the cars (and the people who inhabit said cars) around us. Until next time....

several shots of good Irish whiskey. The camp next to us, Winner Winner Chicken Dinner, put on a good 'ol chicken dinner on Tuesday and Thursday night. Not all camps offer food and drink though, the camp across the street from us was a hookah lounge. Where you could find solace from the sun, sit around a hookah, and meet new friends.

The city is huge and there is no way that one person could explore enough in one week to see all that it had to offer, so when you enter the city, the greeters give you a bound book that outline everything that is going on each day, when and where it is. Other than food and beverage camps, there are plenty still who offer classes, or lectures on different topics. I was surprised to learn that there were even a few Ted talks happening.



I think I am the only one in our group who took advantage of this. I took a class on giving neck, head, and face massages. I gave an hour long massage and I got one in return. I went to a few others as well. My favorite one though was learning how to make a sock monkey! Silly I know, but I love them. So much so, that Brian usually gets me some kind of a sock monkey for Christmas most years. I will admit that mine ended up looking more like a pig than a monkey. I am chalking it up to the fact that I didn't bring long enough socks.

Most adventures we took together as a group, but there is one thing that most people choose to do on their own; visiting the Temple. Every year at Burning Man there is Temple where people can go to remember loved ones, get rid of something that has haunted them, or simply to meditate. It was indescribable, but I'll try. I went by myself on Friday afternoon during the first real white-out (sand storm) of the week so getting there was a little scary, not knowing exactly where I was going and not being able to see more than two feet in front of me.



Walking in you can feel the heaviness of emotion. The words written on every available surface, will bring you to tears, put a smile on your face, and then have you doubling over in laughter. There are a lot of I miss yous, a lot of I am sorrys, and just as many it's okay, you'll get through this messages. I of course added my own before taking a seat in the center. I was really hoping to make it a positive experience so I concentrated on sending out light and love to those I care about.

Burning Man Update #17: Well listeners, if you are still with us, we are currently 8ish miles outside of Gerlach (the last "town" before Black Rock City) where we sit in line for anywhere between 10-30 minutes and then creep forward a mile or two. To pass the time we are making up stories for the people surrounding us. Our most interesting couple is two cars ahead of us and every time we stop, the missus jumps out of the truck, runs to the trailer and frantically searches the cooler. We have decided that her sweet hubby has a hankering for the second half of his pecan pie that he is positive he packed. She is dutifully checking each and every time to no avail. Stay tuned...

Burning Man Update #18: We are about to lose cell service, so we would like to say thank you to all of you for taking this journey with us. I will be writing little notes down throughout the week so we have updates to give you on the ride home next week. So good night loyal listeners, we are signing off.

Burning Man Update #19: Believe it or not, listeners, we are STILL not at burning man. We finally got through the first gate, where they separate those who need to pick up their tickets at will call (us) and those who already have theirs. We were instructed to park about 4 o'clock this morning and Brian left us to go stand in line while the rest of us decided to catch some z's. About an hour later it had stated to rain, we even got some hail, and Brian comes back to the car, soaking wet and without his ticket. Apparently he got in the wrong line, and since he was at the back of line he wanted his coat. The estimated wait time... 5 hours. It continued to rain and Burning Man is officially closed for the day. We will be stuck in our car until the sun comes out and dries up the lake bed so we can drive again. This year's mantra is "We'll get there" and the lesson we are learning is patience. Stay tuned, cuz we aren't going anywhere soon.

Burning Man Update #20: ATTENTION ATTENTION! We are being allowed into the city!!!! It has been a day, let me tell you, but "camp will call" has a special place in our hearts. I don't have anything witty to say because I am too excited.

Burning Man Update #21: Good morning!!!! We are on our way home. It has been one amazing week and I look forward to sharing moments with you over the 20ish hour drive back to Phoenix. But for now I need to help keep Brian awake. Stay tuned.

Burning Man Update #22: I cannot express to you the joy of using a real bathroom and washing my hands under warm running water. Pure bliss. Now for some food and then maybe sleep...

I was doing really well until a lady somewhere behind me started singing Amazing Grace. It was at that moment when I lost it, and began to cry. For no particular reason, but it happened. I think I sat there for an hour or so before collecting myself and heading back to camp.



Saturday finally came and we spent the day packing up camp, which I am glad we did because there was huge wind storm that night that would have made packing impossible. Saturday is the day the Man burns. The excitement in the city is palpable. Brian had to leave us early to get ready for his fire spinning performance so the rest of us hung out at The Dusty Swan to help commemorate their last day on playa. The owners of the camp decided that this was their last burn, and had sold off the camps infrastructure.

Brian had instructed us to meet him at the 9:45 (street not time) side of the Man so we could get front row seating to his show and the burn. I am glad we did, even if your backside does get a little sore from sitting on the cold hard ground for 2 hours waiting for the show to start at 9. We were front row and center for everything! The groups in Conclave gave a 30 minute performance and they all did really well, given that the wind was so bad that it was constantly blowing out their fire, and drying up the gas before they could light up.



Once the performance was over, there was a quiet that crept over the playa, all of us waiting for the moment when the Man would burn. I cannot put into words how amazing a moment it is when they light the first of the fireworks that serve to light the Man. Sixty-eight thousand people cheering in unison. It will give you the chills. Sitting there with my brother and the boys, relishing in this moment that is the culmination of the week; definitely made my top five moments ever.

Shortly after that, we got our bikes, rode back to camp, strapped our bikes on Wanda and took off. Burning Man is not technically over until the following Tuesday but we all had real life jobs to get back to and if you wait until Sunday morning to leave, you can be stuck in exodus lines for over 12 hours. Leaving Saturday night meant only an hour and a half wait for us. The drive home was uneventful, thank goodness, and we made it back home to Phoenix in just under 18 hours and immediately started fighting over who got the first shower.

The whole week was amazing and I am so glad I got to experience my first burn with my brother. I am counting down the days until next year when I can go home again. If you are curious about Burning Man and want to know more, there is a great documentary on Netflix called Spark. I encourage you all to watch it.



Burning Man Update #23: Now that I am up from my nap and finished my driving shift I can start sharing some of our favorite moments from the last week. Since I'm the one writing the updates, I'll go first. It's hard to pick one moment as my favorite, but the first one I'll share with you is this: on Thursday night I went out with our host camp for a deep playa art tour and we came across this suspended pool noodle maze. And whether or not it was what the artist intended, there was a pile of noodles in the middle of the maze that we picked up and had a noodle fight in the maze. It was something special to see 8 people ranging in age from 22 to 60 embrace the 12 year old inside and play with such carefree abandon.

Burning Man Update #24: Okay all, here is Petey's moment that he would like to share: Wednesday morning, Brian, Daniel, and I woke up early packed a breakfast and rode or bikes out to the trash fence (the perimeter of Black Rock City which also collects any trash that blows away from camp) to watch the sun rise and listen to the sounds of the playa. It was a great moment for me spent with two of my favorite people.



Burning Man Update #25: We will return to your regularly scheduled programming of Moments from Burning Man in just a moment, but first a message from the road: Apparently Zonies have a hard time sharing the road with motorcyclists so they gave them their own lane.

Burning Man Update #26: We now return you to your regular scheduled programming; Daniel's moment that he would like to share: On the first night we were in the city, D-Ray took us all on a tour of the playa. We came across this art piece that encouraged you to lay down at its base and look up at it. It gave you the impression that you were looking up into the night sky. That is if the night sky had Technicolor stars. We all laid underneath it for what seemed like hours and it was the first moment that I felt like I was home.

Burning Man Update #27: Well listeners, we are home, Wanda is unpacked, and we are in line to shower. However we have one last

playa moment for you brought to you by Brian. Friday morning while everyone was still sleeping I took my bike out onto the playa in the first real white out of the week. I rode out to the temple, and it was beautiful. While I was sitting in the temple thinking about my someone special, a random stranger gifted me with a small token with the word "love" carved into it on one side and a heart on the other. It was perfect timing and brought a smile to my face.

Birdy and Bruce's Weekend in Napa

As I mentioned in last month's Runny Nose update, Birdy and I celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary this August 4th, as did Jeff, Carol, Bob and Listy within weeks of our anniversary...that was a very busy summer back in 1979!

Travel is getting to be a little harder for me than it used to be but I wanted to do something fun and different to celebrate this milestone with my bride of 35 years. We decided on a three-day weekend in Napa. Sorry Seamus, but Sonoma doesn't have a "Wine Train" so we had to go to the rival wine country!

We started out our trip on Friday morning with a nice surprise by running into Bud and Margaret at the Southwest Airlines departure gates at Lindberg Field. Bud was traveling to San Francisco to speak at a conference and Margaret was along for fun and to keep Bud in line. (I hear Bud can get a little frat boy crazy when he lets his hair down!) We chatted it up for a few minutes before we all boarded our respective flights.

Rex and Holly Panton, our three-time European travel buddies and very dear friends, were also celebrating their 33rd wedding anniversary and joined us on this weekend getaway. I am so happy they were along for the fun. Rex took charge of the driving. He found some routes and detours that ended up being highlights of our trip. One particular detour on Saturday took us to the Hess Winery where we were treated to our first glass of wine at 10:30 A.M. followed by a short tour and then an hour and a half in the tasting room where we sampled 10 of their 27 varietals (and then re-sampled a few of those 10 ...just to be sure!) It was a lot of fun and got us into the spirit of the wine country ...all before lunch! The remainder of the day was spent taking in some of the sights, lunch and an hour by the pool to decompress.

We all dressed for dinner and at 5:30 found our way to the Napa Wine Train, which was our main event and motivation for ending up in Napa...and it didn't disappoint!

The 1917 Pullman dining cars with their mahogany interiors, white tablecloths, china and silver made for an elegant atmosphere. An expert staff of waiters and waitresses served the four-course gourmet meal up while the train lumbered along at 15 mph through the towns and vineyards of the Napa Valley. Did I mention that this was called the Wine Train? Well...there was no shortage of wine! Appetizers alone called for a couple glasses for a warm up...then a bottle of the good stuff! Once the Entree was served, even more wine found its way to the table. I had to switch to iced tea at that point but that





didn't slow down the other three in our group. We were having fun and truly enjoying the evening! At 9:30 P.M. the train pulled back into the station and we found our way back to our hotel and in bed by 11:00....c'mon were getting old!



Sunday was a lazy day at the hotel and after check-out we drove the hour+ back to Oakland for the flight home. I can't begin to tell you how much fun we had and I can't thank Rex enough for all he did for me to make this trip doable. Rex folded my travel scooter every time we got into the car and reassembled it every time we got out of the car... and I thought the Bird was high maintenance all these years! She doesn't hold a candle to my level of high maintenance. Rex and Holly are a ton of fun to travel with and completely understand my limitations without needing explanations...we couldn't ask for better friends! So please join me as I toast them for being the best buddies in San Diego! Their kindness puts them in the front of the line for angel wings in our books.



Now, to be fair, we need to do a wine tour of Sonoma. Who wants to sign up for that fun? Rumor has it that if you stop at the Keith's you might even get to sample some of Seamus' Dad's wine cellar collection. Our own Bob Gillingham has made quite a reputation of biking while wine tasting... and sampling straight out of the barrel! We won't even talk about the dancing or the hangover, that's another story for another day. I say we get a limo and check it all out. Cheers to one and all!



News From Scott



Hey Mom! Of course I haven't forgotten about you, it's just been a little bit crazy this last week. I thought things were going to be a lot easier after our classes ended, but after receiving my teaching schedule, I am not so sure. I am teaching 12 different classes, each with different text books, and they are all at different businesses all over the city. Some of them are about a 45 minute trip each way to teach for 1 hour. I have some days where I teach 1 class in the morning and 1 in the evening, and other days where I am booked throughout the day at 4 different places with 2 hours in between each class to commute and prepare.

Many of my classes are one on one and I have really only trained for a larger class so I am not sure exactly how to go about them, especially since some of them don't have any text book or anything. So I am a little nervous about the whole thing overall, but we'll see how it goes through this first week.

Karen and I moved in to our new apartment, which is only partially furnished but it's a big place and quite nice for the price. We even have a separate living room and kitchen! It's so nice to be on our own. We can finally use all of the refrigerator without considering other peoples need to store stuff, there are no dishes piled up in the sink, and everything is immaculate. Having to feed myself for every meal is so expensive; I definitely miss the cafeteria at the ol' Bahia. I have cut more vegetables in the last 5 weeks than in my whole life aside from when I worked at Submarine. So far I have mastered making pasta dishes, various salads, lots of different sausages (the main food staple here), chicken, hmmm... I guess that's about it.... This week's adventure will be tacos. Oh and I made one-eyed monsters for breakfast today! See, I really did learn everything I would ever need to know in kindergarten!

We have met several really fun Czech and Slovak people so our free time is full of outings. They are an extremely social people and want to go out almost daily. We spent much of today with Krystina, Honska, Jana (YAH nah), and Romans at the 4th annual Prague Burgerfest, then to a local amusement park for some bumper cars and a small rollercoaster. We've been out to tons of bars and clubs with them and to a nice park by the river where they have beach volleyball courts set up.

Next week we are going to Berlin for the weekend and one of our Czech friends, Honska (the Czech equivalent of John), is going to drive us and stay the weekend there too. I have a friend in Berlin, but as it turns out he is getting married on Wednesday and is leaving for his honeymoon in Greece on Friday, so we will have to find a cheap hotel or hostel. He actually called me on Friday to invite me to his wedding, but earlier that day I got my teaching schedule and agreed to it, so I can't go. It was so nice of him to offer though, and we will surely go to Berlin again to visit him once we have figured out how the teaching thing works.

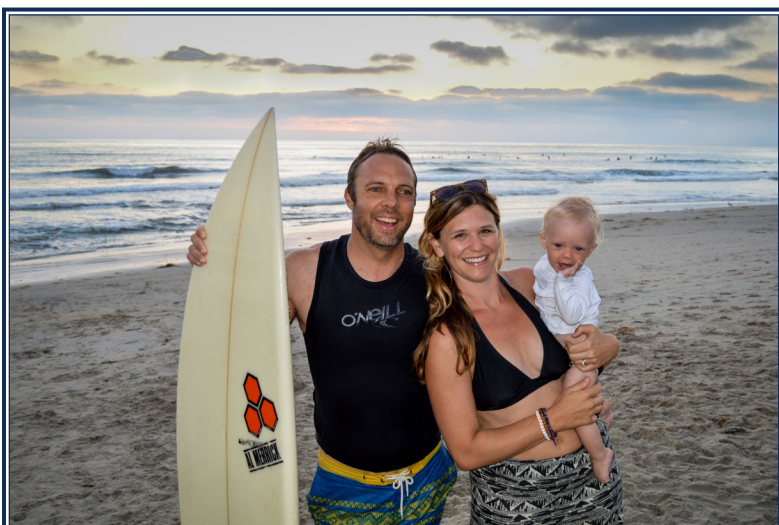
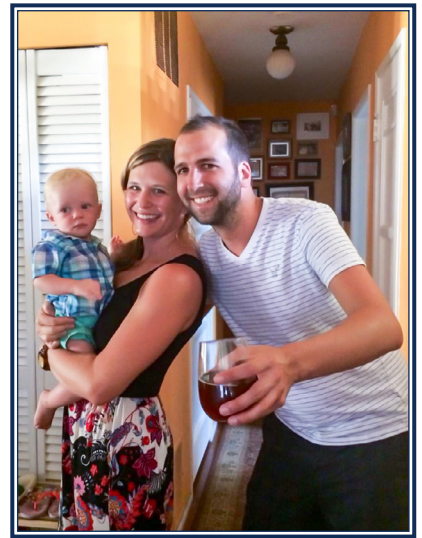
That's all for now. I will post some pictures of our new flat (they don't use the term apartment here) soon. Tell the Pantons congratulations for me! What great news. And good luck to Annie! Where is she teaching? I would guess she is teaching Spanish, right? Love you! Scott-

Happy 1st Birthday Blake!!

By Kevin Riel

Seeing as how Nicole and I happened to have two weddings, it seemed only appropriate that Blake should have two first birthday parties--one in San Diego and one up here in Claremont. The first took place during our annual week-long "camp trip" to San Elijo State Park in Encinitas. The party was a blast, capped off by a sunset beach-party and surf session. The party was also Blake's first experience with refined sugar. He liked his chocolate cupcake so much simply eating it seemed insufficient, so he rubbed it ecstatically all over his body--in front of cameras no less.

The second party was at our house. More good times were had and more cake was eaten, or otherwise enjoyed. And if we didn't have enough toys or baby products before his birthday, rest assured that we could now probably open a Baby's R Us franchise out of our garage. Mucho thanks to everyone who came to the parties or sent gifts!





Bruce Hartman



For all of you twenty-something's and thirty-something's in this family that have had the great fortune of growing up in homes full of love and some of the best modeling of family life on display every day of your lives, the advice herein may just fall on deaf ears.

You're probably asking "what the hell does Uncle Bruce know about marital advice?" Good question! I am certainly not the authority on this subject. I'm still learning myself everyday! I only hope to share what little I have learned so far with the Bird. You have all heard it: "Marriage is difficult" "Marriage takes a lot of work etc." I can't agree that it is difficult but I can agree that it takes work, especially if being thoughtful is considered work. My only credentials are 35 years of true marital happiness that gets better every year and four seemingly well adjusted, happy, independent and productive kids. If all of you can say that in 35 years then your parents have done an awesome job and you have done well paying attention to their examples!

There are so many important things that could be brought up here but there are only so many lines Uncle Robert, editor in chief, will let me fill with my mindless dribble in the RFNL! Please indulge me as I offer up a few tidbits of advice to help you "keep it together!"

- What do you absolutely hate to do? Whatever it is: Laundry, yard work or painting, do it together and it won't be so awful. I'd say do it together naked but I doubt you'd buy in to that fun idea. For Birdy and me it was cleaning the house and grocery shopping that we both hated to do alone. We learned early on that if we did these things together it was a lot less painful. To this day we still grocery shop together!
- How many times have you found yourself getting pissed off over your spouse leaving you at home with the kid(s) while he or she is off with friends, shopping, golfing or ????. This is a simple one! Give each other the day off...one of you on Saturday the other on Sunday... completely guilt free time to focus on projects, friends, golfing, football or whatever. Be home by 5:00 and don't be late...you still have to be there for dinner, bath time, homework assistance etc.
- Any weekend that there isn't a project or another one of those damned Riel function to attend, do something fun together like the beach, the mountains, Sea World or the Zoo...whatever... but don't just sit around reading quietly or doing work crap that could wait until Monday! Your 60+ hours at the office last week was enough! Spending your time in that way quickly becomes little more than two people cohabitating rather than sharing lives together. Invest your time in each other and the family...it pays dividends!
- Who should stay home with the sick kid? If you answered anything related to who makes a fatter pay check or who has the more important job, you have completely blown it... Not sure we can help you! Please call: 1-800-FAST-DIVORCE! Staying home with the sick kid should be a shared responsibility. It isn't about who makes the bigger pay check it is about respecting each other's responsibility and commitment to their work. Look at it from the perspective of which of you is in a better place today with work load to be able to afford the time off. If it is always the same one staying home it starts to create tension and animosity. Neither of you are more important than the other... get over yourself!
- "Boredom in the bedroom"... Really? Don't buy into that hype that sells magazines! All that crap in the magazines about spicing up your bedroom is just that...a bunch of crap! There is no secret, especially for men! Talk to each other and enjoy each other... Bed head, bad breath middle of the night, first thing in the morning...who cares! Give it up often, give it up freely, no strings attached and most of all... have fun! DUH!!!!
- Money, money, money! Did that send a tingle down your spine? Money is a tough subject for a lot of couples. Some like to spend it and others like to save it. The challenge is respecting each other's needs and wants. Saving is admirable and the right thing to do but if you are always the miser and constant "NO" there will always be some tension in your relationship. The opera-

tive word should be “balance.” The discussion or thought process needs to be; can we afford it and still meet our goals of saving, paying the bills, vacation fund etc. If the answer is yes, don’t guilt the other into feeling bad. Shop for it together and figure out how to enjoy it together! If the answer is no, use the necessary restraint today and set it as a goal for a later purchase. The key is communication and mutual respect! “You can be right or you can be happy”...choose your battles wisely!

- Confrontation, squabbles, fights, whatever you call them there will always be something you disagree on. Think before you say it! Once words are out there they can’t be taken back so there is never a place for hurtful words, they can be incredibly damaging and last a lifetime. Think of like this: With every confrontation you enter into you hold a bucket of water in one hand and a bucket of gasoline in the other. It is completely up to you as to which one you throw on the fire. Sadly, common sense is not so common anymore...

- “Happiness is an inside job” Every day you wake up in command of whether you are a happy person or a miserable SOB. No one can make you happy... That is 100% on you! Money can’t do it, toys can’t do it and other people can’t do it. You make the conscious decision daily to say “my life is awesome and I’m happy” or conversely, “my life sucks and I’m unhappy about it.” ... That whole lemons to lemonade thing! If you are unhappy you need to fix it! Get Happy or it will slowly deteriorate your entire life and infect your family.

- “Happy Wife = Happy Life” sounds hokey but I’m telling you, if you live by it you too will see 35+ years of marital bliss!

There you have it. You’re fixed! Life all neatly wrapped up in a couple pages. There is absolutely no reason for any of you to ever struggle again with keeping it together after all this incredibly sound advice!

Since most all of you have parents with as many happy years of marriage as Birdy and I this likely holds little value for you, but what the hell...I feel better!

Frank started a wonderful thing by establishing the RFNL so many years ago to help keep all of us in touch with the goings-on in each other’s lives. He was way ahead of his time with the likes of Facebook and Twitter. He worked tirelessly at it and to my knowledge never missed a single edition. I think everyone can agree that Bob Riel has truly taken up the gauntlet as the RFNL editor and works as hard or harder to keep the heart of this living document beating.

Recently I contributed a little to help ensure there would be something to publish and in doing so learned that from month to month Bob is struggling to get enough input from everyone to put together a great newsletter. We are so blessed to have an incredibly diverse family with so many viewpoints, political affiliations, great educations and all with the gift of gab and ability to write well. There is so much to tell and Facebook doesn’t get it done! Especially with old farts like me that don’t like, or do well with Facebook. It’s a pain to navigate and I find I’m lost most of the time! It is blocked at work by my IT department and is a parasite as far as being a time killer!

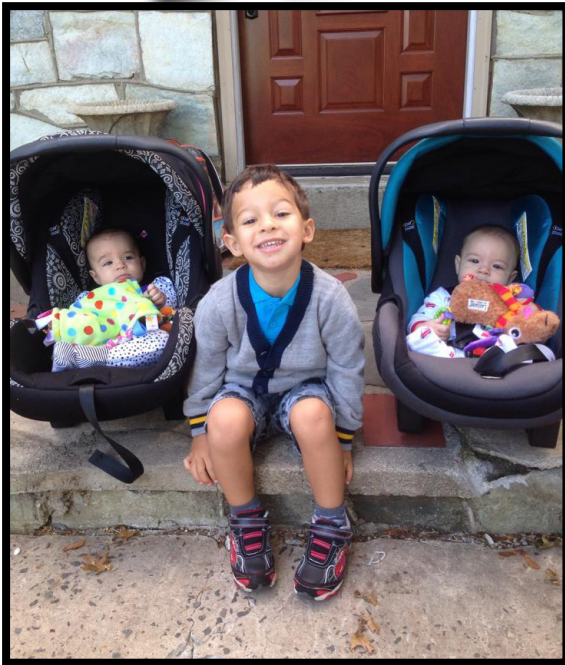
When I have a little down time I promised myself I would try to do more to help Bob by banging out an article here and there. I have time on my hands today so I thought I would throw something together for an upcoming edition just to get ahead of things. I’m sitting here in the hospital, bored out of my mind, doing my monthly five day run of chemo so I thought I would write something humorous (but real) about why we should all get out to vote in the upcoming election and, for that matter, all elections.

That topic quickly put me on a slippery slope with some charged but funny comments stereotyping the hell out of people and their politics. After abandoning all of that idea (out of fear) I went down the path of discussing the high percentage of liberals in education...I had some really funny stuff but again found myself on very thin ice. This family gets VERY passionate over their politics, so again I retreated. Lastly, I started down the path of stereotyping everyone in the family linking them to the types of cars they drive. There is a lot of real data out there on this topic, but screw that... because when you broad-brush, embellish and take a little literary license...this can be friggin hilarious!

After a couple paragraphs that included comments like “take that Birkenstock clad, hairy leg and press the accelerator of that damned Prius and see if it will actually achieve freeway speeds” I decided this was not a wise choice since I would never want to offend anyone. That is when I decided it was safer to stay away from anything to do with politics and instead change directions with it all and simply make a plea to all of you in the family to write something and send it in to the RFNL. That way I wouldn’t have to struggle with coming up with a topic and possibly face an angry mob with clubs and pitchforks!

All of you gen2 types with babies have a ton of things to brag about! Most of you have great jobs, but we don’t really know what you actually do for a living...send in a short article about what you do, why you like it or hate it etc. Brag about your babies, your life, your spouse or significant other. Talk about plans for the future, upcoming vacations...essentially share your lives a little with us all. We are all very interested! All you gen1’s need to encourage your kids to write something! Out of all of these scientists, chefs, movie producers, engineers, teachers, professors, technicians, lawyers, psychiatrists and more there must be a good story or two out there! So...Honor Frank and get off your dead asses and write! That goes for you old farts too!

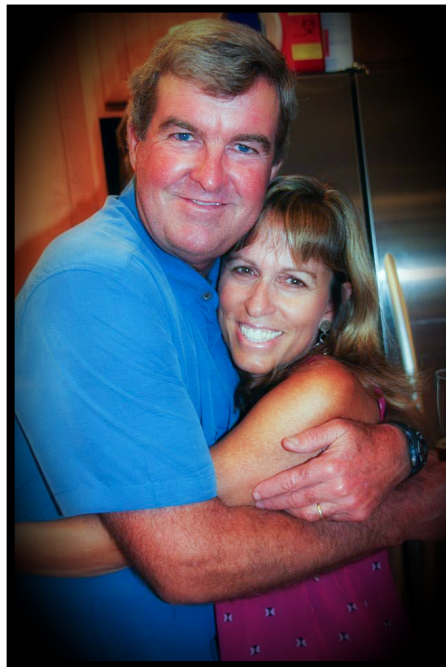
FAMILY SHORTS



It's hard to believe Benny is already starting school as we see him ready for his first day. But big brother will now assume the greater responsibility of higher education. Well higher than just learning from Big Bird (no not his Aunt, the yellow one). Soon it will be reading, writing, math, driving a car and off to college, they do grow up fast after all!



David tells us that he got the "Best gift ever from my beautiful fiancé Megan Rehwald and my awesome mother in law to be Chris Berscheid-Rehwald. I could not be happier about my new chargers bathroom! I'm ready for Chargers season!"



Bob and Listy, along with Bruce, Birdy Carol and Jeff all celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary over last few months. It doesn't seem that long ago where the rest of the family went through the summer of 3 weddings in 6 weeks. Maybe this is why we are all so good at throwing parties!



It's been a while since I posted any pics of my handsome men. Some favorites from today. As per usual, Ginny's bed is a constant attraction. We also had an awesome time at the park. Owen wanted nothing to do with the "little kid" playground. He's clearly inherited his daddy's sense of adventure and after only 2 times down the slide with dad, he was ready to go it alone. I'm doomed.