



July 2015

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**Wedding Bells are...  
Less Than 2 Months Away**

# Megan's Bridal Shower



By Listy Gillingham

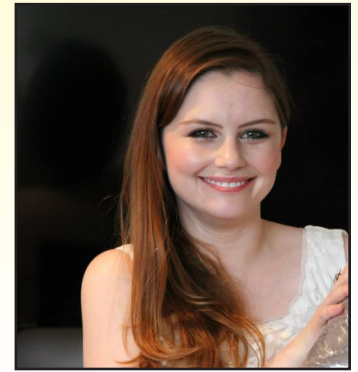
Kristy and Annie hosted a wonderful bridal shower for their soon to be sister-in-law Megan. We were especially happy to have Megan's mom (Chris Rehwald) join us from Spokane and Megan Riel-Mehan from San Francisco. The event started with a fancy mimosa bar set with various fruit juices and cut up berries to go with the champagne (can't you hear mom say "Oh, I would love some?") There was also a set of Jenga blocks where guests were encouraged to write words of advice to the couple on each block to keep their married life fun and blissful!



The weather was perfect for the event as Kristy had tables set up outside for everyone to enjoy their lunch. After lunch, Annie had prepared a "newlywed game" where David was asked a series of questions and we were going to test how well Megan knew him by seeing if she could match his answers. Megan did really well and everyone had an opportunity to learn a little bit more about each of them. The gifts were overwhelming and all wonderful. You could hear Megan happily giggle as she unwrapped each present exclaiming "that's just too much" and "thank you!" It was a wonderful event hosted at the Keith home with Riley in attendance just to keep things hopping! Hope everyone had fun and here's to about 52 days to the big day!

# Thanks for the Great Party!

By Megan Rehwald



This month I was treated with an incredible bridal shower, graciously hosted by my fabulous lady-in-laws-to-be Listy, Kristy, and Annie. Kristy spared no expense at Chateau Keith, preparing a decadent spread of treats and carefully crafted decorations that made the occasion simply perfect. The special touches provided – including a personalized bottle of wine, handwritten Jenga advice, and a fabulous build your own mimosa bar (which I frequented) – made me feel even more loved than I could have thought possible by my thoughtful, benevolent, amazing new family.



I was so delighted by the friends and family who came out to show their love and support, including my favorite pediatrician Audrey who came by on her lunch break, Cousin Megan all the way from San Fran, and even celebrity guest Chris Rehwald from Spokane Washington! I was so happy to see and spend time with familiar family faces too, and the company (and mimosas?) made the afternoon just fly by. I'm also pleased to report that I completely slayed at a riveting game of "How Well Do You Know David?" which just added to my excitement to get to marry the most wonderful Riel of all (I'm biased. Deal with it).



To say I was "showered" with love would be an understatement, and though I've always felt so welcomed into this crazy clan, this extraordinary experience made me very aware of just how lucky I am to get to call all of you my family. - PS T-Minus 52 Days!!!!

**#itsmyparty**





Another summer gone by, another Sorem Euro Trip conquered. This used to be an every other year escape, that seems to be changing into an annual event. Big Al is obviously not getting any younger, and Bryce & I's years of wander lusting without too much responsibility are probably numbered. Who knows what next summer will bring?

But enough about the future, the 2015 Sorem Euro Trip (#soremmeetsorem) idea started brewing around Thanksgiving. A fellow 4th cousin of ours who lives in New York, Maria Sorem, told us that her father wanted the American Sorem's to come to Norway for a visit, especially while his parents are still alive. He wanted us to come back and see where my dad's grandfather grew up. That is all it took to get Big Al's wheels spinning. Summer of 2015 to the motherland, Norway.

Fast forward 7 months June 13th 2015, New York, NY... The party starts, the amount of drinking over the next 3 weeks is by no means healthy unless you are a trained veteran, a gigantic 400 pound man with a mechanical liver, or possess the last name of

Sorem. The lovely Bridget McCarthy picked me up from JFK. I took her out to a nice dinner for taking the time to drive across two rivers & two states to pick me up. We went to Mercer Kitchen enjoying a nice dinner, with wine, then Peruvian avocado margaritas, and next, off to meet up at a friend's bar to wait for Bryce to get off work. Multiple beers and Jameson shots later, the Sorem brothers reunite!

One thing that became prevalent to me on this trip is that family is the most important thing we have. It is easy to take that for granted, because we are all always there for each other, but spending time with old family and new, really brought a new perspective to it, but more on that later.

Big Al hit New York the following day. The Sorem trifecta has reunited for the first time since last summer's Euro trip. Now how should we celebrate such an occasion? Yes Yaya, you guessed it, we went to the oldest Catholic Cathedral in the upper west side and recited the Rosary. Needless to say, I am sure you can conjure up a guess as to what actually took place. I'll leave it up to your imagination, and I can assure you, it

lived up to your expectations.

First hangover of the trip, we all meet back up near Commerce in an attempt to retrace our steps and find our dignity & good judgement, which may or may not have been lost the night before. The next day and a half was spent seeing friends and anxiously awaiting what lies ahead, oh and yes, more food and beer.

It has been a Sorem tradition that something ALWAYS goes wrong during our departure. We are late and have to hurry, our bags get lost, we



can't check in right, you name it, it has happened. But for some reason, the God's of TSA were with us on June 16th. No long lines, everyone was accounted for, and bags got checked without a hitch. We get through security and board the plane with flying colors, ready for a great adventure. All that means is that SOMETHING will inevitably go wrong, it almost has to, it's a tradition.

### Oslo, Norway...

We arrive in Oslo, check into the hotel. The Sorems upgraded this year, staying in hotels most of the time, thanks to Big Al! Upon arriving we had requested that in the room that Big Al & I share have two beds. But I quickly found out two beds is not really two beds. They place two twin beds next to each other and create a frame around it. So it is really a double bed. So basically the whole trip I slept next to Big Al, who snores like a jack hammer. I was not too happy to find this out, but I was in Oslo, at the beginning of an adventure, so... let's do this.



Oslo has a couple cool areas, we went out in the posh neighborhood the first night called Aker Brygge, an old port that has been completely revamped into high profile condos, offices buildings with restaurants on the ground floors. We began to realize how expensive the Nordic countries were going to be. Ouch! The next day we visited the Viking Museum. There were 3 old boats that were used to sail around Europe and cause havoc,

definitely sounds like ancestors of the Sorem family! That night we went to the more Brooklyn/Portland-esk neighborhood called Lokka. Bridget and Big Al called it an early night as Bryce and I went to this outdoor terrace lounge we were at the previous night, and proceeded to make the Norwegians proud to have such upstanding American descendants.

### Tromsø, Norway...



Sorem meets Sorem! Definitely a huge highlight of the trip. Here is how we are all related. My great grandfather Hjalmar on Big Al's side had 4 brothers. Hjalmar had a twin brother named Anton. And Anton is our 4th cousin Maria's great grandfather. Hjalmar was the only brother of the 5 total to move to the United States. Now I can only imagine the interesting conversation my great grandfather had with the immigration officer on Ellis Island. Since I am a screenplay writer, I will follow suit to demonstrate what probably happened.

*INT - Ellis Island Immigration Building - Day - 1800's ... An incredibly handsome, intelligent, witty, and charismatic gentleman, Hjalmar Sorem patiently waits in the endless line of Norwegians. The Immigrations Officer, Frederick, middle aged, lumpy, with no time for flack, checks in a man in front of Hjalmar. The man steps through the gate to the right of the desk Frederick sits behind. He apathetically waves Hjalmar forward.*

*Frederick (Thick New York accent) - State*

*your name.*

*Hjalmar - Hjalmar Sorem*

*Frederick - What?*

*Hjalmar (speaks a bit slower) - "Hjalmar Sorem"*

*Frederick - "Um can you spell that for me?"*

*Hjalmar (enjoying himself) - "Yes I can spell it."*

*Frederick (doesn't find the joke funny) - "Would you care to spell it out for me then wise guy?"*

*Hjalmar - "Of course Sir. H J A L M A R. And my last name is S Ø R E M."*

*Frederick - "Ok. So that is H J A L M A R and S U R E M."*

*Hjalmar - "No, there is no U, that is an Ø"*

*Frederick - "U?"*

*Hjalmar - "No, Ø!" Hjalmar grabs a pen and draws the letter. "Ø!"*

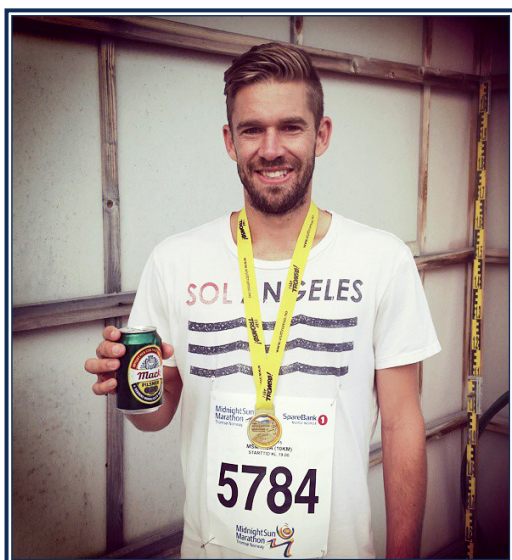
*Frederick - "I don't have time for this dilly dally. Your name is Hjalmar Sorem." Then stamps his paper with the official crest. "Welcome to the United States of America. Now get out of my face." END SCENE*

Hence you have just witnessed a credible story of how the Sorem's of the US became Sorem. Maria and her father Svein picked us up from the airport. Svein is a man of detail. Nothing is too small or un-important in his eyes, perfection and precision are words he lives by. He took us on a little driving tour on the island before we arrived at

his house, the house our descendants have lived in for many years. That night we meet around 12 Sørems. I met the grandfather and grandmother of Maria. They both possess the charisma and wit my great grandfather Hjalmar had according to the script above. Svein prepared an amazing meal for us all, and we drank wine and whiskey till the sun went down...so to speak.

Tromsø is the largest town in the northern region of Norway. In the summer time the sun does not go down. It just circles around you like a vulture awaiting its next victim. The sun's next victims were definitely the Sorems. We stayed at Svein's house until maybe 2 AM and took a taxi back to our Cabin across the river. It was bright as a summer day in Southern California. I was not even close to tired. But sleep we must.

Over the next few days we saw all the sights the town had to offer and I decided to run in the Midnight Sun Marathon. I ran the 10K since I have not exactly been training to do a half or a full like the Gillinghams have done! But I represented the family name well. 10K (6.1 miles) in 46 minutes and 54



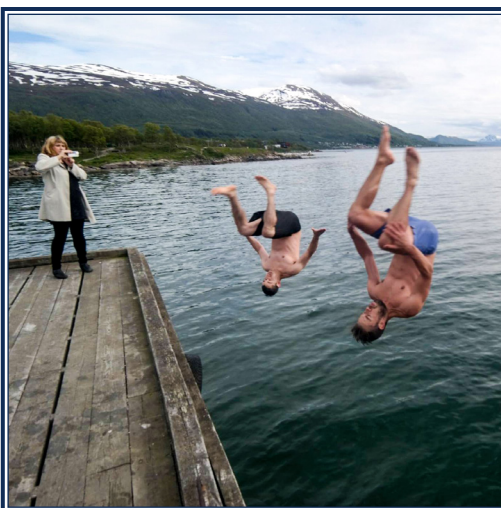
seconds. Fast forward to later that night, after dinner and copious amounts of Mack, the leading Nordic beer, at 2:30 AM we saw the last full marathon runner cross the finish line. She had to be in her late sixties. 5 hours and 30 minutes is the

time she finishes in. It was such an awesome moment to see, and it made me feel proud to be there, but also like a huge wuss for only doing a quarter of what that lady accomplished. I've still got time.

Oh yes, important info I almost forgot.

We coined a new nickname for Big Al, as if he needed another one. Maria's boyfriend Fenton who also came from New York to visit while we were there, was telling us the story about how moose would swim across the Fjord to Tromsø. The moose are very prevalent up in Tromsø and the Norwegian word for Moose is Elgan, which dangerously sounds like Alan. They both amicably wander the streets & frighten young boys. Thus "THE MOOOOOOSE" became Big Al's new moniker.

Later that day Fenton, Bryce & I decided it was a fantastic idea to Jump in a Fjord off the pier. Right now it is



actually illegal to swim in the fjord because it is too cold. 4 Degrees Celsius, which is like 38 degrees Fahrenheit. Many Sørems came out to witness us make the plunge. At this point I think it is safe to say the Norwegian Sørems think the American Sorem's are crazy. Over our time in Tromsø we stayed in this campground cabin. The first one was awful. It was too small, and the oven didn't really work. The bathroom shower flooded every time, and the in-



ternet was horribly spotty since it was the furthest away from the office. That is the most devastating part because then I would have to wait to post photos to Instagram and Facebook in attempt to make you all feel jealous, and hate your lives while I am gallivanting the globe and you are at work. They finally switched us into a bigger place with two bedrooms that was much nicer. I still opted to sleep out on the couch so I didn't have Big Al snoring down my throat.

Our last night in Tromsø, we ate at Bardus Bistro and had Whale Steak. It was one of the best meals we had on the trip, obviously behind Noma, that is coming up later. Whale steak actually looks like regular steak and almost tastes like regular steak but the texture is slightly different. So damn good! We went to Svein's favorite local bar and proceeded to drink everything in sight. Which may or may not have been a great idea considering for some STUPID reason, Big Al booked our flights the next day at 6 AM. He should know better it is an awful idea to book early flights on Sorem Euro Trips. That is a recipe for disaster.

#### BERGEN/STOCKHOLM..

Here is where we parted ways. I opted to go to Stockholm early to hang out with my Swedish friends Andreas, Ludvig, & Per. From here on out they are called the Swedes. Big Al Bridget and Bryce went to Bergen. It looks like they had fun on Instagram.

In Stockholm the objective was to spend as much of my money as possible, well maybe that was not the initial objective, but that was the outcome of

all the events that took place. For some reason Andreas and I always end up going out to the fancy, hip, trendy spots. We did keep it low-key one night and took a trip to his uncles Fjord House, like a beach house, but on a Fjord. We took a boat ride to this awesome little island outside of the town. Quick fun fact, there are over 600 thousand island in Sweden. This particular island was kind of like a club. You had to be a member or with a member to be able to dock. There is a cool little picnic area and a wood fire sauna that was awesome! There the Swedes and I BBQed, drank beer, and kept it low key, except for one thing.

The Swedes are always making sure I experience what is typical, or "Very Swedish" as they say. So they made me try herring. But it was not regular herring, it was rotten herring that was kept in a can for a year. I opened it not know what it was and the smell was just horrendous. It is illegal in every country in the world, but Sweden. You can buy it at the grocery store, but you have to eat it outside because the piercing smell would seep into your furniture and walls, and there is no 409/fabreeze on steroids combination strong enough to eliminate that stench. It definitely smelled worse than it tasted, but it still tasted like rotten fish. So what did I do...I made sure when Bryce and Big Al got to Sweden they had to try it as well. The Moose almost stumbled over, and Bryce nearly vomited after smelling it the first time. I sat there and laughed, very entertained.

The highlights of Stockholm were Saturday night. The Swedes threw a pre-game party at Andrea's small 1 bedroom unit with about 20 people in attendance. The drinks are so expensive in Sweden most people gather at friend's houses before they go out, in order to attempt not to spend their entire paycheck out at Berch, Stockholm's fanciest nightclub. Somehow Emily, one of the girls we were with managed to get us all in the Club, including The Moose. Granted we all had to pay like 30 bucks, but in we went. There were multiple floors with different genres of

music, it really was an awesome place. I told myself, don't buy a round of shots for people when you get there, because you're going to have to mortgage the house you don't even have yet. But what did I do after 4 hours of pre gaming at Andreas's pad. SHOTS, SHOTS and more SHOTS. We ended up losing Big Al that night, but he ended up just going home around 1:30. I remember getting back to Andreas's around 5:00 to the aftermath of what happened earlier. Beer bottles everywhere, the floor was sticky, it smelled like stale cheese, though it was much better than the herring, so I couldn't really tell.

All and all, Stockholm was incredible. The other three B's missed out on a few things but I'm sure Bergen was worth it. On to Copenhagen.

### COPENHAGEN...

Technically we were staying in Sweden still just across the Fjord in a small town called Malmo. The first night we went out in this little square that had about 8 restaurants with large outdoor patios spilling onto the cobble stoned streets, packed full of people. We found out that most people in Sweden get paid monthly, pay day happened to be 2 days ago, so everyone goes out. Another fun night...and that was that.

Copenhagen was a great city, full of bike paths, great architecture, canals, and culture. Picture Amsterdam mixed with the west village in New York City. We walked around the city the first day to get our bearings, then

went to the Carlsberg Brewery. It was quite an impressive campus. We took the tour, tasted the beer and learned a thing or two about the Danish history. Fun Fact, ALL of the profits from Carlsberg sales either go directly to science or the arts. There is an arts col-



lege on campus and a science lab where scientists around the world can come and stay, very cool stuff. I have long waited for the day to go here, ever since Amanda went on one of her trips a few years back. But it was the following day we all were truly waiting for. Lunch at Noma!

Noma has been rated the number 1 restaurant in the world numerous times over the past few years. And yet, we got a reservation, which is almost impossible to get. Fortunately, with Bryce being a chef in New York, I think they pulled some strings for us. HOWEVER... here is where our normal travel disaster caught up with us.





We decided we were going to drive into Copenhagen instead of taking the train. Problem number one, we could not get our car out of the garage because they were working on the door. Bryce started to get stressed out. They told us there were signs posted that warned of the repair...unfortunately all of them were in Swedish...that was very helpful! So we had to run to the train station to take a train in. No worries, we planned to leave a little early in case something happened. We get to the train station and board the train. It is a 29 minute ride into Central Station, which would put us there at 11:45 giving us 15 minutes to jump in a cab to get to Noma, the perfect amount of time. Until...

As we are crossing this four mile bridge, the train suddenly comes to a stop. OF COURSE!!! A few minutes go by, Bryce is losing years off his short life expectancy due to stress. He emails the restaurant in attempt to hold them from giving up our table. Finally someone over the loud speak says that our emergency breaks had malfunctioned and they are waiting for the word from headquarters, stand by. We sit there for another 8 minutes-ish but it seems like a half hour has passed. I am doing the simple math in my head, we are going to be late, and there is no two ways about it. I tell everyone to be calm and that we are going to get there, we have to, the universe won't spoil this for us.

The train starts moving, but at a quarter of the speed. It finally picks up. We lost about 18 minutes. Jump in a cab, and arrive by 12:10. To our surprise we are greeted out by the cab, by all of the restaurant staff, Head Chef included, everybody smiling and welcoming us. We have arrived, and boy are we in for an experience I will NEVER forget.

18 courses, almost all raw food from the earth, locally picked or caught, no meat, pristine presentation, impeccable service, it was like the Sorem's were Royalty for an afternoon. 418 dollars a person, 4 hours later, it was worth every penny. Bryce got to meet the Head Chef and creator, we took a tour of the kitchens, and learned about the history of the place, it was quite an experience.

#### **HORTON...**

Our last stop on the trip, a small town called Horton. We met another 10 Sorem's out at a local restaurant. It was a bummer the visit was so short, as they were great people. A few of them took us out to a bar afterwards. At that point, 17 days in a row of eating and drinking had finally caught up to us. We called it an early night maybe around midnight.

#### **NYC...**

**BACK HOME!!!** As much fun as the trip was, I could not wait to get home and be in a place where I didn't have to search for the closest Wi-Fi, where

dollars were dollars not Kroner, and where it got dark outside at a respectable hour. It was a trip for the ages, but there is never a better feeling than getting home.

I want to thank Big Al, Aka THE MOOSE, Bryce and Bridget for going on this adventure with me. This has been an incredible bonding experience. There are always ups and downs, on trips, as in life, but one thing I have learned recently, is to think from a perspective that "All Shall Pass." The idea behind this is simple, everything comes to an end. Whether you are talking about your vacation, a job, a relationship, a Vegas weekend, everything has to end. People usually refer to this frame of mind when going through tough times. We have all been there, and we look for comfort knowing that there are "good times ahead" as they say. However this perspective is normally overlooked when things are great, because we are, in a word, happy. But I think it is important to always remember the idea that "All Shall Pass," because even the good times will come to an end. And if you come from that frame of mind, you will truly appreciate what you have in front of you.

Now I will leave you with a funny story. It is July 4th, Big Al's last day in New York. We all meet in the city and have brunch at Barbuto; the last place where the Sorem trifecta will all be together (until next time that is). Though, the Sorem travel luck still has one more trick up its sleeve. Bryce heads back to Hoboken to relax, Big Al and I decide to walk around a bit, he needs to leave in about 3 hours for his flight, which works out perfect because I wanted to watch the Copa American Final between Argentina and Chile that started at 4.

So we walk up to the meat packing district, stroll by little bar on west 12th street, and a thought comes into my head, "why don't we just poke our heads in and see who is there, maybe have a beer." Of course I knew Arturo, my old "barback" co-worker and





friend, who started bartending in the well for brunches was there and here is a short script how this encounter AC-TUALLY went.

*INT - REVEL - DAY - 1 PM... An incredibly handsome, intelligent, witty, and charismatic gentleman, Brett Sorem, rounds the corner of their bar followed by Alan Sorem, middle aged, lumpy, with no time for flack. Brett sees an old friend behind the Bar, Arturo, who is Hispanic, short and stalky. Brett reaches over the bar and gives Arturo a hug.*

Brett – “Hola pendejo, Como estas?”

Arturo – “Muy Bien Whey, donde esta tu hermana whey?”

Brett – “I don't have a sister, but I know where your mother is at!”

*They both laugh, reminiscing old times of talking s#!t. Arturo turns around and grabs three glasses and three bottle of Jameson. He pours 3 GIGANTIC shots. Big Al grimaces as if he is reliving the taste of the rotten herring. Brett takes a breath.*

Arturo – “For you my friend.”

Brett – “It's great to see you man, Cheers!”

Big Al – “I'm not drinking all of this at once.”

Brett – “that's fine, CHEERS!” They all drink. END SCENE

Now that was not really the end of the scene, that same scene probably happened 3 or 4 more times, Big Al only had the one, but when I am at revel, for some reason, reason does not exist. We have a great time, meet a table full of English girls, and get them to meet Big AL, who was an instant hit.

Time to leave. Back to our friend's

house, grab Big Al's bags and put him in a Taxi. I look at my watch, 3:55 PM, perfect! Then all the boozing starts to catch up to me, I decide Amotz's couch is a better option to watch the game than out at a bar. The second I turn on

the game and hit the couch, I am out, I mean BLACK OUT, the entire trip has caught up to me, it was if I was hibernating after a season full of hunting. It was a coma like sleep.

I don't know how many of you have had this kind of sleep but it is as if you wake up and forget how you got there, all relative time is lost. You wake up somewhat quickly and have the, “What the hell happened” feel. I finally come to. It is light outside, looks overcast. I look at my phone 7:52. The time hits me like a ton of bricks. I have only been late to one flight in my life, that flight was from New York, after sleeping in too long on the very same couch I am on now, and there is a possibility it is going to happen again. My flight leaves at 10 AM. I should be able to make it pending traffic, but then again it is the Fourth of July weekend that I just slept through and people are going home. I pack my stuff, leave the keys, lock the door, hurry down stairs and flag down a cab. Very fast, feeling a little better about my odds.

Then my phone beeps. It is a text message from my buddy Elya, “Yo where you at?” My first reaction was that it was kinda weird to be getting that now. Meanwhile the cabby is out of his car about to grab my luggage. I look at the time stand of the text message, it reads 7:58 PM. Then it hits me. It is not the next morning, I did not hibernate through the night, and I did not have a coma, just a deep cat nap. It was still July 4th, Independence Day, and I am standing out catching a cab thinking it was the next morning. I reply, “You know what? I am actually not going to catch a cab, thanks.” I quickly walk off in the other direction to avoid seeming like a stupid tourist. Then, the worst part hits me. I left the keys to the apartment in his apartment. Amotz and his girlfriend are in long island city till late tonight and I am stuck out on the street with my bags, stranded. A normal person might have a panic attack but I actually start to laugh at myself, literally LOL, people on the streets probably thought I was crazy or had an invisible blue tooth on.

SO what do I do? What Sorem's do best. We roll with the flow. I jump in a new cab, head back to my old work at Revel. Have Arturo & Jorge put my bags behind the bar, go out and meet up with my brother and friends and celebrate the independence of this country, and I couldn't have been happier.





*Emily's First Trip to the  
World Famous San Diego Zoo*



Following closely in a Riel family tradition, Emily shared her first trip to the zoo with the Rios Trio (Benito, and twins Josie & Mateo) and an adult for each kido (Jessica, Carol, Miguel). Bud and Margaret found it challenging to plan for all that was needed for one kid but Jessica, Miguel and Carol had to plan for three! Carol, the constant teacher, was helping Benny create a zoo journal on top of everything. When the kids were out of the strollers, just keeping track of them was quite a challenge.

Emily and the Rios Trio are still too young to appreciate that all of those animals they saw are the “pets” of the Riel clan. Dad’s (Frank Riel) response when we wanted a pet was to say that we had hundreds of pets and the best part, hundreds of people to take care of them. We could visit them weekly. We read the Zoo News and made sure we knew the names of all of them. I particularly remember when the polar bears had twins I did feel connected to them.

Carol is a practiced zoo visitor and she moved us skillfully from one enclosure to the next with a good idea of what would impress kids. Trying to negotiate the sleep time and play of little ones is another constraint. Fortunately the twins and Emily slept while we ate.

Emily woke in time from her nap to see the giraffes. She was so excited to see them.



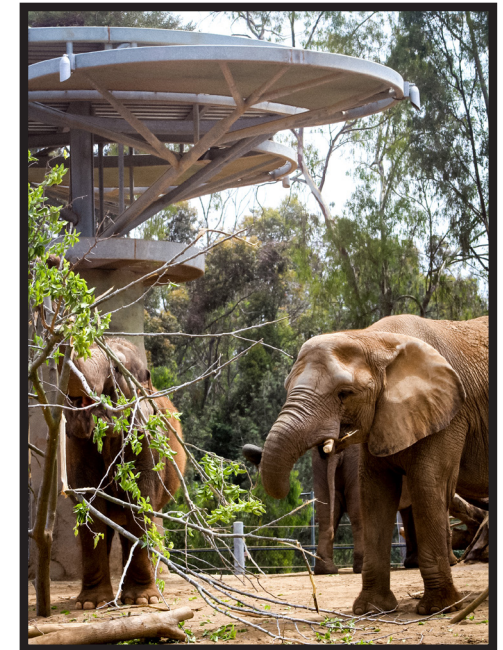


Her eyes were like saucers fixed on the baby (1-year old) giraffe and she did not want to leave. We did make it to the edge of the elephant enclosure but by then it was time to go home. Carol took a group picture as we were leaving but unfortunately she is missing from the photo.

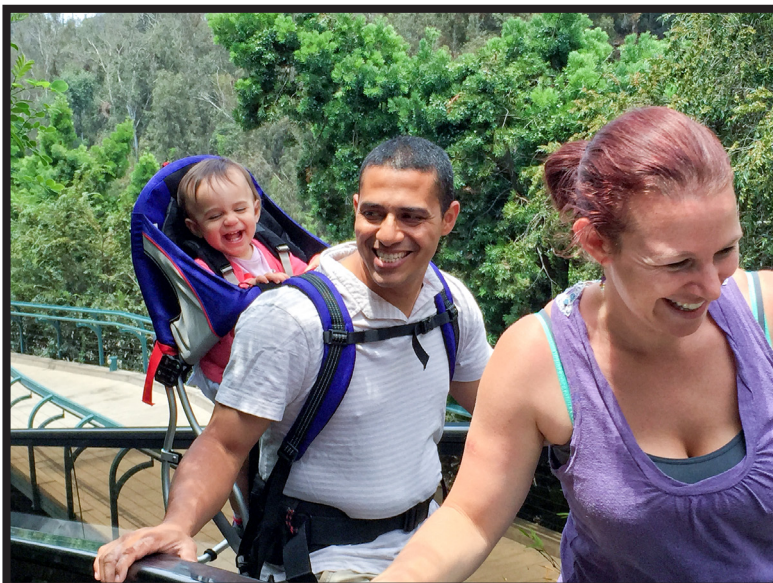


On the way home we visited YaYa and Emily was very excited to show her the mommy and baby giraffe we bought for her.

Ashley and Margaret took Emily back and we headed right to the giraffe enclosure. The baby was not as active this time, but she still enjoyed watching all of them. Then we got to see how extensive the elephant enclosure really was. We circled the whole area and loved seeing the mechanical trees that Robert had designed. I felt a sense of joy that they had all of that space, remembering that they had been in an area the size of the giraffe enclosure. But then it made me feel bad for the giraffes. Maybe they will get the next upgrade.



In the gift shop we found a daddy giraffe to complete Emily's giraffe family. I can't wait 'til she comes back to town and we can return to the zoo. Fascinating, isn't it, how these activities cross generations?



# FAMILY SHORTS

