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Welcome Addelyn Kate Mehan





## Mehans Get an Early Surprise

Addelyn Kate Mehan joined the world a month early just like her big sister Emmy. I guess, the Mehan girls just like surprising their parents or more likely, couldn't wait to be the center of attention. Weighing in at 5lbs, 11ozs Addelyn was born about 45 minutes after midnight on Monday, Feb 13.



Less than 24 hours earlier, (Sunday morning) we (Bud and Margaret) got the surprise call from Michael and Ashley telling us that they were heading to the hospital. We quickly got organized and were able to fly to Colorado to arrive at the Mehan home later that same evening. Ashley's mother, Judi, was in the house with sleeping Emmy. We took over the home front so she could join her daughter at the hospital.



We were all hoping that the birth would happen after midnight as all of the MacMitchell's (including Emily) have the number 3 in their birthdays. So, with some help from Ashely, Addelyn's birthday ended up on Feb 13, 2017, thus keeping the lucky "3" in everyone's birthday.

After the relief of the birth, Michael and Ashley were hungry. With nothing to eat at the hospital, we packed a quick dinner and made our way to meet this newest member of our family.



Seeing a newborn is such a treat -- so tiny and yet already their own little person. Ashley was lovely—radiant, serenely happy and so pleased that the natural birth was successful. At 2 am the room was a hive of activity as nurses and doctors moved around making sure all was good.

The next day we took Emily to meet her new baby sister who did not yet have a name. Emmy had taken the "big sister course" at the hospital which was designed to prepare her for her new role. She had learned how to hold a new baby and she was eager to meet and hold her new baby sister. Her eyes were huge as she engaged her; she kept saying her baby came out of her mommy's tummy. Michael got Emmy situated on the bed and then handed her the swaddled baby. She was so gentle and so excited every time the baby moved. The baby was smaller than her baby doll. She was the picture of happiness and while it might not always be what she is expecting, at least for that first touch it was.





The following day, the little one had gained enough weight to avoid going to the neonatal intensive care. Megan had flown in from Seattle and all of us returned to the hospital. There was time for Megan, grandparents, and of course Emmy, to hold the baby. This time when Emily took hold, the baby fussed a bit and Emily broke out into song, singing “Happy, Happy Happy” (See this on facebook). After much thought the name was finally chosen: Addelyn Kate Mehan. Michael and Ashley both liked Addy as a nick-name, and Emily approved because her best friend’s name also happens to be Addy. They chose Kate to honor a mutual friend who introduced them.

The hospital was incredible. They scheduled a massage for Ashley—knowing that life was about to get more stressful—and packed a large pan of lasagna, a family salad, and loaf of bread into the car so they would not go hungry while they figured out how to balance everything in their new life.







Emily had worked on a welcome home sign for Addelyn Kate and we had balloons and a small birthday cake to celebrate her one day old birthday. Emily was happy to sing, blow out the candle and open both Addy's gifts and her own. Addy slept through all of the celebration. Megan, Judi, Bud, Margaret, Michael and Ashley continued to enjoy the company of both Emily and now new little Addy.







The end of the week included a bit of work. We helped transform the guest room into Emily's "big girl" room. The last of the popcorn ceiling was removed, the room painted, new rug installed, a cozy bean bag chair and lots of books and toys were added. The nursery, Emily's prior room, is now ready for its new occupant, Addy. We are sure she will have many restful nights in this loving sanctuary and are looking forward to all the good time that are about to happen.







## Los Angeles Premiere of "The Road Between"

February 18th 2017 will go down as a day to remember for the Sorem family. As many of you know, I finished a short film last year that is just getting around to film festivals now. My film "The Road Between," has shown at two festivals so far, has four more confirmed in the next few months, and is patiently awaiting other notifications throughout the rest of the year.

We all know my mom has had one of the most difficult years of her life. I know the physical ailments have gotten to her, but it's the down time being quarantined in a hospital that bugged her the most. Originally, she was not going to be able to come to the premiere, however fate had its own plans. Her recovery was swift, and the moment she got out of Scripps Green Hospital she made plans to come up a few days later for the premiere with Carol as her roadie.

Francie was also very excited to come up to see my new house! Yes, that is probably news to some, I am a home owner! It happened pretty quickly. Over the last few years with rent prices rising, along with my intolerance for a subpar standard of living, the combination of those two don't exactly gel together when searching for desirable yet affordable living quarters to rent. Thus, I casually surfed the housing market in



Los Angeles and New York to break up constantly Instagramming my dog Messi, my last hope of luring an impressionable lady my way ;)

Then it all kind of happened at the same time. I started dating Carinda after she saw a photo of Messi on the cover of Americas Sexiest Shibas, she decided she would settle with me while Messi is still in his prime. A few months later, I came across this house on Zillow. It was small, but had 3 bedrooms, 3 decks, a garage, and hiking trails out the back. It also had a bay window in the master bedroom. As my mind went crazy with all of the possible angles I could get while snapping Messi pondering his life's purpose, I decided to go check out the property in person. That weekend I saw the house, and 48 hours later I was a home owner.

A little about the history of the home. It is a Craftsman house built in 1902. Because it is over 100 years old, almost older than Big Al, and the look of the home has not been changed, unlike Big Al, it is considered a historical building. While that sounds really cool, it just means that I cannot add on to the home as it would alter its original construction.

I moved in the end of January, got a roommate, and have spent more time in Home Depot, Lowes, Target, and Bed Bath and Beyond than in a local bar. THIS IS NOT OKAY!!!! Carinda, Big Al, and I spent the





first 4 nights painting the interior, and doing minor improvements around the home, like plaining doors, and minor functional tasks. While there is a never-ending list of things I want to do to the place, I also have to remember that it doesn't all have to be done now, as much as I'd like it to be.

So, that morning Francie and Carol made the drive up. I had four friends in town that weekend from the bay area, Joe, Phil, Will, and Mandi, for the festival, all staying at my place. Needless to say, Carol and Francie got a hotel room, and so did Big Al. Other friends came up from San Diego as well. We had a BBQ before the screening, which is the official way to cut the tape on your new home.

The film premiere was at the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles Festival. I have had both of my previous short films in their festival, and they are happy to have me around. The venue was Downtown, fifteen bucks to get in and free beer, wine, and cocktails all night...I can't believe our whole family did not come up for the price.

It was a great turnout. I think there were over 150 people in the theater, and maybe another hundred out in the party. Lots of my friends, new and old, from different walks of life came out to celebrate and support. Even though my mom couldn't party like I know she would have liked to all night, I know she enjoyed being able to be there and see it with so many of the cast and crew members in attendance.

It was a successful night. definitely one for the books. I'll keep you all posted if it gets nominated at the end of the year. But until then, Look out for The Road Between in upcoming festivals in the local region!

That's a wrap! - Brett





# Francie's Updates

Hey Everybody, February 17th, 2017

I know it has only been 5 days since my last email, but this is a quick update to keep you posted on my progress. For those of you that do not follow facebook, I am finally home and out of the hospital as of February 15th. The first few days I felt a little weak, but I woke up today like a new person!

As I told you in the last update (valentines wish letter, February 12th), I am in the process of waiting for the engraftment to take place.

## Engraftment and Recovery:

About 10 to 20 days following your transplant, we can begin to see signs that your stem cells are growing (engrafting) and beginning to produce blood cells.

I went into the hospital for a blood draw and presumably, a blood or platelet transfusion. But low and behold, my numbers were quite a bit better, all but one of those "C"s (Critical) were gone from my report card. And my WBC (white blood cells) are actually in the normal range, helping me to not be at such a great risk for infections. I am still on the low side of normal, but headed in the right direction!

My platelets went from 14 to 30, but they are still in the critical range, I need to move up to 150, so let's hope they keep doubling (optimist, that I am). I do not have to have a platelet transfusion unless I drop to 15 or below. Low platelets put me at a higher risk of bleeding so no soccer or hockey practice allowed, haha

My RBC (red blood cells) are 3.2 with 4.0 being the low side of normal, and my hemoglobin is 9.8 with 12 being the low side of normal. Low counts make you susceptible to fatigue and being out of breath. Can't run yet, but I am on the road to my usual energy.

My neutrophil's are at 3.43 the normal being 1.8-7.7. These are the part of the WBC that are the essential part of your immune system.

Dr. Hutchins, can I stop wearing that stupid mask yet?????" Never mind, I know the answer, hahaha.

Speaking of masks, I have bedazzled one so that I am not too big a geek at Brett's short film premiere tomorrow night in Los Angeles.



I really had to beg to get clearance to go, but some things are just too important to miss.

That's about all the news I have, I will continue having blood draws twice a week and seeing my Drs. once a week as well. Now we just wait for the next transplant (allogeneic, from a donor) in about a month. Hopefully I can get myself a new immune system and all will be good in my world.

Take good care, talk to you soon...

Hey Everybody, February 25, 2017

The time is just flying by, can't believe how each day disappears so quickly!! I am going to start with all the really good things I have to share and then we will get to the not so good stuff.

My numbers are pretty awesome if you consider that I received the transplant less than a month ago (February 2nd). My WBC (white blood cells) are not where I would like them to be yet because I am still in the easily infected by bacteria range. I hate wearing the stupid mask, but it is what I have to do right now. My vanity has taken a beating this last year and it is really just one more thing that is annoying, hahah.



I had so much fun at Brett's film festival this month, even though it was a little risky to go, Carol really helped me to make it a special occasion that it was. The funniest thing that happened was there was a guy next to me walking in, he was looking at me so I glanced over and smiled (not that he could tell with most of my face wrapped up like a ninja), and he said "I have been trying to get a picture of you all night, I figured you were a movie star all dressed up in a disguise so no one would recognize you". Ha Ha I should have asked him who he thought I was so that I could run with it, but it was pretty funny.

I am doing a lot of walking trying to keep my strength up, and it is good to get out and see the world. I can't tell you how much I miss traveling, it is a sad thing for me, but I know it is not forever.

I loved seeing Brett's new place in Los Angeles it is so cool and has a great view. You can see the Hollywood sign from his front porch! And

seeing all of his filming friends was a highlight as well. I love them all and they are so good to me! We had quite the celebration.

I love being home and Lyle is taking great care of me, my neutrophils are so good I can have salads and fresh fruit again, that is a happy occasion for sure.

Unfortunately I did get some sad news when I saw Dr. Mahindra, one of my transplant doctors, on Tuesday. First of all, There are no matches for me on the bone marrow registry ([bethematch.org](http://bethematch.org)). that was a big blow, though I should not be surprised there is no one quite like me, hahah. It makes the whole second transplant thing, that much more difficult. Here is how the whole thing works.

The reason my cancer manifested itself when it did, around my 64th birthday, is because it became too strong for my immune system to suppress. Hence the reason I need to get a stem cell donation from someone on the "younger" side so I have a better chance of their immune system sticking around for a while. Because my sisters, the twins, are so young (58) they are being considered to see if they are a better match than my kids, who are half of my DNA and half of Alan's. So the challenge is to find a young immune system that is strong enough to suppress the mutated gene from producing cancer, but is close enough to a perfect match that I will not reject it, (since I am sure my immune system will be picky about who it lets on board!!!) That was definitely disappointing news but hopefully all will be

good. They are planning the 2nd transplant to occur 90 days after the first one which was on February 2nd.

And that brings me to the really disappointing news that I will not be able to attend Bryce and Bridget's wedding in New York's beautiful Hudson

Valley. This was the biggest blow I have received since I first was told I had cancer. I always knew there was a chance that I would not be able to go, but somehow I just didn't believe it. Since this transplant is riskier than the other one because of the chance of rejection, I will not be going anywhere very far for about a year afterwards. It really sucks to be me right now, but after really thinking about it, I realize that it is for the best.

If I pushed back the transplant four more weeks, then I also would be risking getting sick while flying to NYC and spending a week of celebrating. We all know how physically and emotionally exhausting weddings are, and I am realizing it would not be a good thing for me. Even worse, I do not want to take away from the fact that this is the most joyous of days for the both of them and I do not need to be taking away anything from that day. Besides, with technology the way it is, I will be able to spend the day with them from the comfort of my living room. I just have to pray that I will be recovered and out of the hospital in one month. Listy and Birdy are staying home to keep me company and make sure I don't feel sorry for myself .

My sister Carol will be stepping in for me and dancing with Bryce, I am sure she will do a better job since she has so much practice marrying off her 3 kids! Bridget was adorable, as always, and wanted to come out and do a wedding here for me. I told her that I really appreciated the loving gesture, but what would make me most happy is that their wedding day be a more than rather than a less than.

I realized at that moment how lucky we are to have Bryce chosen not only the perfect wife, but the wife with the most wonderful family. I have heard behind my chair, many stories over the years of family fights and disagreements during and after the wedding. The McCarthy family is a

special blending of amazing personalities that will make me feel better even though I can't be there physically. And as I told Bridget, there are a lot of things in life that we cannot control, I cannot fix my cancer and make it go away. But I can decide each day when I wake up, if this is going to be a happy day or a sad day and I choose happy. So the Sorem's/McCarthy's/Riel's/everyone else, you included, will make June 2nd



a happy and wonderful day for me. I am the luckiest Mom and hopefully if this transplant works, I will be the luckiest Grandmom eventually! (you have my permission to start working on that right away, hahah)

To all of you who enrich my life by being a part of it I thank you.

Many of you have asked if I know how often you pray and think of me and I have to tell you it is my driving spirit. Thank you for being there for me and having my back, it is the greatest gift.

OK, we are all done being sappy and sad, my life is good and I am going to keep it that way as long as I have that choice. I love you all and appreciate your kindness and your support!!!!!!!

**Hey Everybody,            March 7th, 2017**

I know I am behind on sending out my updates, I guess that I just have been feeling so good it seems unnecessary! I am of course at a great place right now, 5 weeks post transplant, and getting stronger every day. My labs continue to improve, I don't have to wear that stupid mask except for perhaps at the zoo, where we all should probably be wearing one, haha, lots of fecal matter in the air along with fungi and spores from all the dirt and plants. But it is a great place to walk and view the animals, I am headed there this morning as a matter of fact.

Here is where I am sitting right now. As I explained to you previously, the reason my cancer manifested itself at this time in my life, is because the cancer was stronger than my immune system. Our immune systems lose the ability to protect us as we get older and our defenses are weakened. Perhaps if I had not taken such good care of myself, I would have manifested the symptoms sooner. What I need now is a new immune system to fight off the cancer as it develops from the gene mutation I carry, hence the transplant that I will have in the next couple of months. Unfortunately, since they have not found a match for me that is 100% they are looking at 4 donors. My two sons carry half my DNA, so they are at least half matches. My two youngest sisters are being tested as well. It is a difficult decision to pick someone with an immune system almost as old as mine (the twins are 6 years younger), but if they are a better match, I have a greater chance of not rejecting their immune system, which is the biggest drawback of the next transplant. My chances of keeping that immune sys-

tem varies, and at best, is not a sure thing for certain. But, it is the only option to keep my cancer from growing back again. So we will keep our fingers crossed, our prayers going and good positive thoughts all the way around.

Meanwhile, I am enjoying my recovery and feeling fabulous. Next week I will be having a bone marrow biopsy to see how much cancer is still left

behind. Hopefully the percentages will be very low given the fact that my doctors have thrown several very strong chemos in my direction. The aftermath has been pretty good and I am feeling more like my normal self.

I asked my Doctors if they might do the transplant any sooner than 3 months from the last one (Feb. 2nd) and they said they might. I will assume that will be decided when we get the biopsy results. But, until then I am enjoying every day I have, walking and exercising to increase my body strength and enjoying hearing from all of you. I have accepted that I will not be going to see Bryce and Bridget get married, it is a huge disappointment, but I am also happy I will not be a distraction to take away from that gloriously happy day. I am so happy that this day is coming soon and that it will bring me a daughter for the first time. I could not have picked a better one than Bridget, she has been so kind to me and I feel the love from her every day! I am going to bring Bryce and Bridget out to San Diego around Easter so that I can enjoy their company outside of a hospital, where I was when they last visited. I can't wait to have both my boys home again.

This Saturday, I am going up to see Brett on the train so I can attend another film festival and visit with the Sorem family side in Los Angeles for the opening of Doc's Pie shop in Seal Beach. My niece Karin is having the grand opening on International Pi day (hahah, gotta love that sense of humour!!!), a week from today. I so wish I could stay up there for the opening but I need to be back in San Diego to have the maintenance done on my catheter in my chest area to keep it blood clot free. Congrats to her and it will be good to see her folks as well. I am so lucky to be surrounded by so many family members, I so hope all of you feel the same about yours.

On the next page there is a picture from the soft opening of Karin's place, all of you in the Seal Beach area are very lucky as I know many of our LA Taco Tuesday participants are very well aware. The apple pie cookies are spectacular and something you should check out. <https://www.docspieshop.com/>





Nice job Karin, best wishes for success. And to all my friends and family, same to you, love each day and each person in it, thanks for being a part of my world!!!

Me.



# FAMILY SHORTS



Rich and Liz were in New Orleans during the last week of February enjoying some post Madi Gras festivities along with a few thousand other people whom just happened to be visiting at the same time. But rather than hanging around too long in all that madness they went on a Mexican cruise with some of their closer friends and enjoyed the peaceful seas off the coast of our neighbor to the south.



Madeline Benesch turned 1 year old this month and the Benesch family had a small family party to mark the occasion. Grandpa Jeff and Grandma Carol were especially happy to be able to enjoy a day with their oldest son's family. Carol took plenty of pictures and posted them on face book so be sure to check them out soon!



All right, so what the heck is going on here?? We know that Brice proposed to Bridget back in October of 2015 so why does it look like he is doing the same thing again? We've heard of renewing vows but renewing a proposal? Is that what happened here and if so, why? Well to get the full scoop you will have to click on the following link and find out for yourself:

<http://www.hudsonriverblue.com/2017/3/14/14917904/nycfc-scar-eng-hunt-winner-dc-united-chicken-bucket-proposal>