

Annie and Kevin Get Engaged




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Holiday Hoopla 2017

By Listy Gillingham

A man and a woman are smiling and posing for a photo. They are both wearing red and white Santa hats with pom-poms. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored top, and is holding a glass bottle of beer with a red koozie that says "Holiday Hoopla 2017 #snowfun". The man is on the right, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, and is holding a silver can with a red koozie that also says "Holiday Hoopla 2017 #snowfun". The background shows a home interior with wooden shutters and a wall-mounted clock.

Who would have guessed that when Annie and I were sitting a year ago on the beach talking about creating a Holiday tradition for our now adult families that it would become the venue for her own engagement?

Last year, Holiday Hoopla was coined as a way to accommodate the alternating celebrations for two families to share the traditions. We had agreed that every year we would celebrate our families all together (everyone spending the night at our house) for either Thanksgiving or Christmas, depending on the year, so that couples could easily alternate between their two families (not unlike Mom and Dad's decision to create Riel Bowl after Christmas).



So last Thanksgiving, after the turkey was consumed and all the guests had left our house, we hosted our original crew at home and began the new Holiday Tradition we now call “Holiday Hoopla!” Teams were formed and games were played to see whose name would end up on the Holiday Hoopla trophy. At the end of the event, we determined who would plan the following hoopla event for Christmas based on comments made during the night. Kevin and Kristy, for reasons I can’t remember, were deemed the planners for this coming year.



So after the Christmas presents and the big Christmas dinner, little kids (Liam, Braeden, and Riley) were tucked into beds and the adults divided into planned teams. Kevin's parents and sisters happened to be in town and were invited to join us for the Holiday Hoopla event this year. We played the following games:

- Red Solo Cup into a triangle with ping pong balls (not true beer pong but close enough)
- Name the Last Five Words to Christmas songs
- Boat Competition (designing boats that had to float across the pool)
- Throw the Ring onto the Horns of a Reindeer (inflatables)
- Survivor Jigsaw Puzzle



It was the last game of the night where the rules didn't matter because Annie was going to be picked to be the puzzle solver and she would lose as the other two teams would cheat. Kevin, with help from David and Seamus, created three large six-piece puzzles spelling out the sentence, "Annie, will you marry me?" Blindfolds were placed on each team contestant and the race began to put together a six piece puzzle with help from the other teammates racing to be the first. Annie remained blindfolded while the other contestants slipped their off to have their puzzles solved before Annie.



As soon as she finished and lifted off her blindfold, she noticed she was last (which hardly ever happens) and she noticed the message was a bit more personal. She turned to Kevin who got down on one knee and stated, "Annie, you are the piece that would complete my puzzle, will you marry me?"

(or something close to that). She quickly said yes and the champagne (which was secretly iced) was popped and ready to be served.

He produced a beautiful ring and Annie felt like a real winner until she realized that her team didn't win the puzzle contest in the end. The Holiday Hoopla points were counted and the winning team included Listy, David, Kevin Sr., Birdy and Britany (Kevin's sister).

Next year's planners were also named and will have to try to outdo this amazing event to keep the tradition alive. Note the Holiday Hoopla trophy started as a turkey and grew a layer with a Christmas theme that included some plastic engagement rings in the adornment to capture Holiday Hoopla 2017!





Riel Bowl 27

With New Year's Day falling on a Monday this year and with most people working the following day, it was decided to hold Riel Bowl 27 on Saturday December 30th. So just around noon time friends and family started to show up at Listy and Bob's home to celebrate the end of the holiday season and Grandma Edith's 93rd birthday.

As usual there was plenty of "munchies" to greet the early visitors (Riel Bowl is a great place to get rid of leftovers from holiday parties or other fattening foods that needed to be used up before the new year's diet plan goes into effect). As many of

you know our family has never been shy about sampling while talking and many a great conversation was held at "Gillingham's Island" (watch out for a 3-hour one). For those uninitiated soles it's the island bar in their kitchen. And only the older folks would pick up on the 3-hour tour... Get it? Gilligan's Island, you know bump, bump bada, bump, bump, baada, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, baaa... OK if that doesn't do it for you nothing will, never mind you're just too young! Try googling it some time. Any way's I digress...





Where was I? Oh yes, Gillingham's Island. So as new guest arrived they would gather around the Island and the ones that had been there a while would make their way deeper into the party area. Eventually, as you worked your way through the areas you would find yourself outside in the back yard where Bob and Listy were giving tours of all the work Bob had accomplished since the last party.

There were the new gutters, nice, but not very sexy, the clearing of trees and branches from around the house, better, nice view now. But the real showpiece was the remodeling of the "pool house" AKA David's hang out. As many of you know David spent some time living there in his youth and now he and Bethany will be living there for a few months, so they can save money to buy a home.





As time went by and more people showed up, the amount and variety of food to be consumed also grew. There was quite a varied list of items including salads, soups, potatoes, veggies, ham (sliced of course), Prime Rib (carved as needed, never say sliced with prime rib it's just too pedestrian. I mean honestly, when was the last time you went to an "all you can eat", Indian casino buffet and they listed sliced prime rib on the menu? It's always carved, much more high class when you say carved) and even rolls to make your own slider sandwiches.



After lunch there was a round of ping pong challenges and air hockey matches with many of the newest generation playing with the "old folks". It really was very enjoyable seeing everyone playing together. It kind of reminded me of the good old days when we would watch the second generation of kids play games and generally just have a good old time together.

However, this is the Riel family and no game can compete with dessert so as soon as the ice cream cakes came out (yes for those of you who are reading this from the east coast, we have sunshine and warm weather in January, it was well into the 80's during the afternoon of this party) all attention turned to Grandma Edith as we all wished her a happy 93rd birthday!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Happy 93rd Birthday, Yaya! I am so proud to call you my grandmother. Thank you for teaching me to be a strong, independent woman and to live life to the fullest. I hope you had a wonderful birthday and many more fun adventures (especially golfing!) in 2018! I love you so much! Love, Annie

Another fun pastime of the day was congratulating Kevin and Annie on their recent engagement. Annie got to tell everyone how Kevin proposed to her and then showed off her new ring. It was a great event and we are very grateful that Bob and Listy have carried on this family tradition and still somehow, always improving it each year. Be sure to mention “Gillinghams Island” in your next social media post and see how many people are in the know about the best place in town to visit!





Francie's Updates

Hey Everybody, December 23rd, 2017

Here it is, almost Christmas and I keep getting requests for the update, so let's get it over with and move forward. I had a PET scan done a few days ago and the results were not what I was looking for. Here are the findings from the report:

The PET scan demonstrates significant interval change. Multifocal areas of increased Pet activity identified in the human bilaterally corresponding to areas of increased sclerosis (hardening of body tissue) on CT attenuation images. In addition, increased PET activity within the right scapula and right 5th rib was seen indicating new interval involvement in these bony structures. In addition, there is increased size of the left pectoralis minor muscle in the left anterior chest wall suggestive of diffuse soft tissue involvement.

Adjacent to the right lobe of the liver, there are focal areas of increased PET activity. It is possible that these are on the surface of the liver as opposed to being intraparenchymal as they appear to be in the periphery of the liver, however due to the mis-registration may be on the surface of the liver. Correlate clinically.

Mild PET activity is identified involving the right and left ilium bones of the pelvis. In addition there are areas of increased PET activity seen adjacent to the right iliacus (The iliacus muscle is found in the lower portion of the trunk, covered in a thick fascia (connective tissue). This muscle is shaped like a triangle, flat, and an exact fit of the iliac fossa — the curved surface of the largest pelvic bone. Together with the psoas major muscle, it is also called the iliopsoas muscle.) posteriorly in the muscular soft tissue, as well as adjacent to the great trochanter (The greater trochanter - A powerful protrusion located at the proximal (near) and lateral (outside) part of the shaft of the femur. The greater trochanter is also called the major trochanter, the outer trochanter, and the lateral process of the femur, the bone of

the thigh or upper hind limb, articulating at the hip and the knee.), as well as, along the obturator muscle of the left side of the pelvis. These are the areas of FDG avid disease. (A PET scan uses a small amount of a radioactive drug, or tracer, to show differences between healthy tissue and diseased tissue. The most commonly used tracer is called FDG (fluorodeoxyglucose), so the test is sometimes called an FDG-PET scan. FDG is the radioactive tracer used in PET Scans. It stands for Fluorodeoxyglucose. When used in the sentence FDG avid, it means that the nodes or tumors takes up the FGD, also known as Hot nodes. This means cancer.)

In addition, multi focal areas of activity in the femurs are identified bilaterally corresponding to sclerotic bony lesions in keeping with bony involvement. There is also a nodular soft tissue PET avid focal area seen involving the right gluteal musculature region suspicious for additional disease. Multi focal areas within the tibia (shin bone) bilaterally and left talar bone correspond to sclerotic changes and are also suspicious for additional bony disease. In addition, soft PET activity is identified posteriorly in the right calf region suspicious for additional soft tissue site of involvement.

1. So let's summarize:
2. Involvement in scapula
3. Involvement in femur
4. Involvement in tibia
5. More involvement than I would like to have, hahaha

I think we can all agree at this point it is not looking good, so here is the plan

1. Start up with IVIG infusions. (Intravenous immunoglobulin: A sterile solution of concentrated antibodies extracted from healthy people that is administered directly into a vein. Abbreviated IVIG. IVIG is used to treat disorders of the immune system or to boost the immune response to serious illness. Also known as intravenous gamma globulin (IGG).

2. Have a fabulous Christmas with my family and friends.
3. Check back into hospital for a little cocktail of my own stem cells, not as big a deal as the last time.
4. See if I am eligible for the CAR-T experimental testing for immunotherapy.

This sounds a little dismal, but I have decided to go back to my living one day at a time attitude. It's Christmas, a fun time, lots of presents, decorations joy and all that good stuff. And lots of good food. We knew from the beginning that this was a pretty difficult journey that I am on, so I will keep it going and see what happens. I still trust and feel my Doctors are some of the best, and that is what I need right now!!!

I am going to wish for all of you, a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year. Each day is another gift to open and I can guarantee you I am looking forward to opening more than a few!!!

May God bless you all and hold you in his heart,
me



Birdy Braved the Bitter Cold to Hang out with Michelle, Dave and the Kids

By Birdy Hartman

I don't know how Michelle and Dave do it, but somehow, they manage to live in the coldest place ever! And not only that, but half the time they barely put on sweaters! Dave was in shorts when the temp outside was below 20. And he never puts away those Californian flip flops. I am certain he is from another planet because I stayed bundled up the entire time I was there!

Michelle and Dave were so good to me. We went out to our favorite Mexican Restaurant on my first night there. Whoever says you can't get good Mexican on the east coast hasn't tried this place. We all love the fajitas and soon sizzling pans were headed our way.

We also got to drive into Baltimore to go to one of the coolest kid's museums I have ever seen. It was a themed Dora the Explorer and had room after room of activities for kids. You could strap on a spacesuit and pilot a rocket ship or pretend to sail the high seas as a pirate. There was a water room where kids could channel the waterways and let their boat cruise on down or don a raincoat while you squirted instruments to make an unusual sound. Owen and Rhys were most taken with the animal rescue room. They loved x-raying the stuffed animals and bringing them back to life. But it is only in Baltimore until mid-February, so if you are interested in going, you better get out there soon!



We did some other fun things but really, the best part of the trip is just reconnecting as a family. I got to watch the boys open gifts, reenact Rhy's 3rd birthday, played Harry Potter Clue with the adults and wined and dined with everyone. It was a good way to fill my cup and I thank them for always making me feel so welcomed!

