

R F N I

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Shopping Sunday!





Did someone say SHOPPING TRIP?

By Birdy Hartman

Lyle was looking for a fun way to get the family together and do something different. So he put out an invitation to Francie's sisters for something that she would have LOVED to do and planned a little train trip up to Irvine for shopping, dining, and chatting.

It was a pretty good turn out. The shoppers included Francie's childhood buddy, Cindy (and her travel buddy husband, Boone). Margaret, Bud, Lyle, Carol, Jeff (even with his poor healing knee from a replace surgery just two weeks prior), Listy and Birdy (what's a shopping trip without the twins?)

Please don't feel slighted if you were not invited. I am sure if you have the slightest interest at all, Lyle would be happy to arrange a trip for you. He loves train travel and is happy to go anywhere that a train will take you.

The bravest of us met at the downtown train depot to get good seats for those meeting us in Solana Beach. Then we chug-a-lugged up the beautiful coastline enjoying the view and free munchies.



Curtis, Lauren and Cora met us in Irvine as a bonus for Birdy! We all went to a nice lunch at a place called, "Kona." Lyle decided that this place was a "meant to be" because Francie's cat's name is Kona!

After our wonderful meal everyone split up. Listy and Birdy opted out of shopping for a tour of Curtis' new school (I hope you didn't choke on your water with the thought that anything could keep the twins from shopping). I don't get near enough time with Curtis and his family, so having an opportunity to be with them was just too valuable to miss.

Meanwhile, Lyle bought out Nordy's with Boone. Bud and Jeff caught up on some great reading time. And the girls, Cindy, Carol and Margaret all found success in their shopping ventures.

Our next jaunt was a short one on the train down to San Juan Capistrano for dinner and dessert. We ate at a lovely Mexican Restaurant not far from the station (unless your name is Jeff and then you might beg to differ on how far that walk seemed).

We toasted Francie and each other for being such good adventure seekers. I think Bruce, Francie and Dad were with us. This is something each of them would have loved in their own way (Okay...maybe not shopping for Bruce and Dad but Francie would have gladly joined Lyle on buying out Nordstrom's!)



I want to thank Lyle for keeping the family together and giving us some good times to remember. As Bruce and Francie remind us, life is short. You have to live each day like it is your last and know that you have touched many along the way. That's what they did every day!

Team Francie Train Trip



By Margaret Riel



As some of you know, Francie was fond of train trips both as transportation and as an end in itself. When she could no longer fly because of the cancer, she and Lyle would take Amtrak and go up the coast, shop, have dinner and return home. Lyle needed to do some shopping and he suggested the train trip as a way to reconnect with some members of “Team Francie,” the support group that helped Francie as she fought cancer.





On February 11, Lyle and Birdy boarded the train at the Santa Fe Depot station. At the first stop in Solana Beach, Margaret & Bud, Carol & Jeff, Cindy & Boone, and Listy, joined the party. At the Irvine station, Curtis and Cora added special joy to the excursion. We made our way to the Irvine Spectrum Shopping Mall just in time to have lunch at the Kona Grill. The Hawaiian atmosphere seemed appropriate for the gathering as Hawaii was a favorite destination of Francie. We had fun sharing stories of Francie convinced that she was there with us in the 12-person booth.

Then it was on to shopping. After a carousel ride for Cora, the twins took off to see Curtis's new school but still made it back in time for some shopping.

In fact, all the women demonstrated their skill in shopping as each person went home with something. While the men were not quite as successful, Lyle did his part, on their behalf, by hauling large shopping bags from Nordstrom. Jeff recently had knee replacement surgery and managed the pain as best he could on a cane. He and Bud did not engage in much shopping, but instead used the time to catch up on UCLA, politics and family.



Early in the evening, we resumed the party on the train back to San Juan Capistrano. There we were joined by Bob Gillingham who drove up from La Mesa. We all had dinner at El Adobe, a Mexican restaurant in a historic building a few blocks from the train station. Then it was back on the train for the trip home. It was a great way to spend time together as family and, again, we have Francie to thank for bringing us together.



FAMILY SHORTS

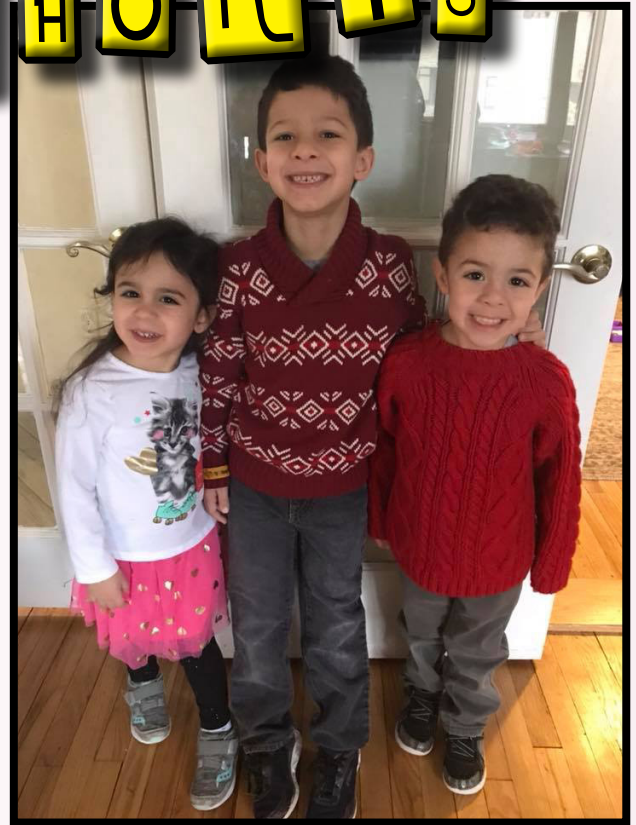


We were more than thrilled to team up with Toyota New Zealand and the Department of Conservation to share a little bit about the Toyota Kiwi Guardians Program that inspires Kiwi kids and their families to get outside and get into nature. Here's a little snippet of our adventure exploring Kiwi Guardian site Cape Rodney-Okakari Point Marine Reserve (don't miss the huge stingrays the boys say while snorkeling!).

To find a Kiwi Guardian location near you, visit www.kiwiguardians.co.nz and then, print a map, enjoy the adventure, locate the Kiwi Guardian sign post, write down the secret code word, and receive Kiwi Guardians medal for participating! - Lauren Benesch



Happy V-day to my babes! Thanks for all of the love, thoughtfulness, and even willingness to bail on our Vday plans when I'm sick! But no need for that, I'm gonna power through! Can't wait to see you tonight! - Brett



So... I wanted to refrain from giving my kids a ton of sweets for Valentine's Day today; instead I gave them a craft and a small plant with seeds we can plant together.

...Well, my darling children woke up at 5:30am. (They do that sometimes because they hate me.) I'm trying my very best to ignore them and go back to sleep when I hear from downstairs, "Mom!!! Thanks for the cinnamon cookies!"

I sit bolt upright, realizing what they are about to do. I made it downstairs just in time to prevent them from consuming the dirt that would have expanded 1000 times upon contact with their mouth.

Happy Valentine's Day! -- Jessica