



March 2018

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Engagement
Palooza Time!

KEVIN AND ANNIE

CHAMPIONS





Annie and Kevin's Engagement-Palooza!



The Urban Dictionary defines the word palooza as follows:

“An all-out crazy party; partying at one place with a ton of people like there’s no tomorrow”

And that is exactly what happened on the evening of Saturday, March 10th at Birdy's home. Even the steady rain that fell throughout the night couldn't dampen the spirits of the family and friends that gathered for this joyous event. Birdy (with some help from others) transformed her house into a beautiful venue, complete with decorations and events to match the theme of Annie and Kevin's upcoming wedding. What theme you ask? Why what else could it be but a Beer/Bar crawl wedding.



The decorations were all tastefully done with beer steins, bottles and even caps setting a very pleasant mood for the party. Birdy has added lights to her back patio and they looked great but unfortunately the rain kept most of the guest under the patio cover or in the house. But not to worry, Birdy had a really nice table heater (so nice that many of us planned to “borrow” it after the night was over) which kept us all warm outside. Inside, Birdy had several rooms

set up for fun events. There was the “Kevin’s Pick Up Annie sticks” area in the living room and in the garage she had a beer pong game set up (Beer... get it?).

The dining room table was transformed into a Ping-Pong table where many a party goer tried their best to beat “the Bird” but she was just too good on her home table. Birdy really does know how use a dinner table to her advantage!

The kitchen and family room were set up for, what else? Food and more importantly eating, which of course is the national pastime of the Riel family. Speaking of food, no Riel story is complete unless all of the food served is listed so here goes: Sliders (very good), Pulled pork soft tacos with avocado (Yummy), mini hotdogs baked in a wraparound roll with a mustard sauce (my personal favorite), small red potatoes flattened and baked with cheese, spinach triangle things (spanakopita? – it’s Greek maybe) and an assortment of breads, cheese and other condiment type things. Everything was really good! Oh! One more thing, for dessert there were cookies shaped as beer bottles, bottle caps and glasses of beer (there is that beer word again hummm) all of which I sampled more than once!

You really can’t have a “Palooza” without some form of entertainment, yes Seamus, beer is its own form of entertainment but for the rest of us, there were lots different games to play. Besides Ping-Pong and Beer Pong there was the aforementioned pick up sticks game and then one game that kind of tied everything together, BLINGO (BTW this has to be one of Annie’s inventions).

BLINGO is played just like bingo except, well OK it only looks and sound like bingo but after

that... In this case, there were 4 rows and 4 columns (no free spot) which gave you 16 squares, each with some form of task to accomplish.

One was “take a selfie with someone from the bridal party.” Another was “juggle 3 Ping-Pong balls for 5 seconds.” And many more.

But each task had some tie in to the other games going on at the party so to “fill” your card you had to really participate in every-



thing. BTW as far as I know Margaret was the only one to successfully juggle for 5 seconds, I guess all that education really does teach life skills!

Whew! Food, beer, Ping-Pong, more beer, Pick-up Sticks, still more beer, beer pong (played in the civilized manner with only water in the cups and beer on the side), what more could there be to celebrate the upcoming wedding of Kevin and Annie? Come on you know. If you have ever been to or read about our engagement parties then you must know that no party is complete without the Riel Singers performing a special song written just for the bride and groom. Master song writer Bob Gillingham didn't let us down and came up with a gem called "The Palooza Plan." Sung to the tune of what else? The Piano Man. See the following pages for the full lyrics and do your best to sing it the next time you are doing Karaoke.

After the truly heartwarming and perfectly choreographed performance the Riel singers (and friends) toasted the soon to be wed couple. OK, maybe there was like, a dozen toasts and lots of beer but what do you expect from a engagement-palooza?



Later, it became time to present the traditional gift given to every family member getting married, an engraved wine bucket, or in this case beer bucket/cooler/whatever the heck you want to call it as long as it keeps the beer cold! Also, they received a not so traditional, set of bride and groom champagne (beer) glasses.

This was a great party and we all thank Birdy for allowing us to take over her house on a rainy Saturday night. We all wish Kevin and Annie all the joy in the world and can hardly wait for the Summer event to happen!



Kevin and Annie
(Sung to the tune of "Piano Man")

It's one a.m. on a hoopla night,
The games have now all been played
There's a blindfold for dear old Ann-Banan
It's a vision so now long delayed.

With the puzzle pieces in front of her,
She's not really sure how it goes,
But it's so very sweet as we watch her compete,
Her future so brightly it glows.

La la la, di da da
La la, di da da da dum

Chorus:

Sing us a song, you're our Ann and Kev,
Sing us a song tonight
Well, we're all in the mood for a wedding now,
And you've got us feeling alright

Now Annie is a traveling tumbleweed,
And hopes all the world that she'll see,
She's opened Kev's eyes to the universe
A blissful journey their coupling will be.

He says, "Annie, I want you to marry me,"
As the last puzzle piece falls in place.

"You're the one that I have been searching for,"
And I've found through heaven's good grace.

Oh, la la la, di da da
La la, di da da da dum

From all the bars in old Normal Heights,
Bands played and bright lights were shone
And they cheered and offered a hearty toast,
Celebrating this bond of their own.

For they know their days are all numbered now,
And they'll bid adieu to the crawl,
Cuz Annie and Kev will be moving away,
And bar hopping will surely then stall.



Chorus

Sing us a song, you're our Ann and Kev,
Sing us a song tonight
Well, we're all in the mood for a wedding now,
And you've got us feelin' alright.

It's a pretty good crowd for a Saturday
And the thought of these two makes us smile
'Cause they know that it's them we've all come
here to see
To congratulate them for a while.

And the engagement feels like a perfect fit,
And Birdy's house now smells like a beer
And we laugh and we sing with great merriment,
Cuz we know these two have our good cheer.

Oh, la la la, di da da
La la, di da da da dum

Chorus:

Sing us a song, you're our Ann and Kev,
Sing us a song tonight
Well, we're all in the mood for a wedding now,
And we know that you two are just right.





Jeff Gets a New Knee!

By Carol Benesch



Jeff has been living with Knee pain for about 2 years. He had exhausted just about every pain management, Physical Therapy, shots, experimental drugs, that were available. It was time to see a knee Surgeon. An x-ray showed one bone on top of the other with no cartilage left in between, it was time to make the move to get a new one.

On January 21, Dr. McBride did a total knee replacement which replaces the damaged bearing surfaces in his knee. At the lower end of his femur (thigh bone), the bone was trimmed to accept a specially shaped metal component and the upper end of his tibia (shin bone) likewise was trimmed to accept a metal tray. Into this tray was fitted a bearing. This required a 3 day stay in the hospital and a very long recuperating period.



He began this recuperating journey with a walker, moved to a cane and now is walking unassisted with a limp, but getting closer to a normal gait. His best friends were his pain killers, his worst, his Physical Therapists. He still goes to PT twice a week, the gym 7 days a week, and spends hours at home trying to get his knee to bend and straighten out again.

It's been 7 weeks, but can take up to 12 weeks or even longer to completely heal. Nights are still long and the days are full of painful workouts but each day he is getting closer to a normal life!! I know all the hard work will pay off and by June he will be dancing through the streets of Europe pain free with all this behind him!



The Benesch Bunch

By Carol Benesch

Lawson turns 1, Madeline Turns 2, and Grayson turns 3!!

Maddie loves Minnie Mouse or “Mi Mi” as she likes to call her and so for her 2nd birthday she had a day filled with Minnie Mouse fun and friends. She had a great time being the birthday girl and eating cake! And in Kiwi news Grayson Celebrated his 3rd birthday with his love, Lighting McQueen and brother Lawson celebrated his 1st birthday with his first popsicle.



And the other Benesch's

Holden is becoming quite the swimmer, surfer, kayaker, snorkeling kid, Benny is designing his pine wood derby for cub scouts, and is sporting a new cast from falling off the jungle bars at school (2 days after Miguel did a great Ju-jitsu move, but didn't land as gracefully as he could have and tore his ACL) Noah is starting Tee Ball and loves it, Sofie loves ballet lessons and Matty loves playing outside. Jessica has had enough of the snow and is hoping to have a little sunshine this weekend for her birthday!! And if you haven't heard grandchild number 9 will arrive in August in New Zealand. We can't wait to get back to see them!



Hi Family,



Quick update from NZ. We've celebrated two birthday's recently; Law-son's 1st and Grayson's 3rd. Law has turned into quite the personality. He recently took his first steps and now can't stop walking. He is very vocal and loves being around his older bros. For his birthday, he got a water table, a trip to the petting zoo, and a sugar-free carrot cake baked with love by Dad.

Gray was next up. He is an independent 3-year-old, always trying to keep up/compete with Holden. He loves the water and over the summer learned to swim. For his birthday he asked to go to the Auckland aquarium and check out the penguins. For gifts he got a new Lightning McQueen toy car, Lightning McQueen bed sheets, a Lightning McQueen chocolate cake, and an apple tree (he really wanted a tree). Both kids really enjoyed their birthdays and are growing up way too fast!



Last month, we also enjoyed the Auckland Waka (Canoe) festival, a Maori heritage festival. There were folks practicing traditional Maori wood carving, people giving traditional Maori tattoos, a Haka performance, and the kids favorite: temporary tattoos. You can see Holden sporting the full ta moko (face tattoo) and giving his best haka impression.



We miss you all and send our love.

Dustin, Lauren, Holden,
Grayson, & Lawson



News from the Merica Side of the Family

By Gerard Legrain (nephew to Edith Riel, son of Edith's only sister Marylene (Xanthippi) and cousin to the Riel 8)

My wife Katrin and I, will leave our home in England, to travel to Greece to attend the christening of Alexander, the second son of Ira and Yannis Kostikiades. The christening will take place on the the spectacular island of Santorini on the 6th of June. The island of Santorini is a remarkable place because traditional villages are perched on the top of a very rocky volcano. There are breathtaking views into the submerged crater of the volcano. Margaret and Bud visited Evy, mother of Ira, and grandmother of Alexander in their recent trip to Greece. They also visited Santori and have provided the pictures with this story.



So how is Alexander related to all of us? Ira, mother of Alexander, is the daughter of Evy. Evy is the daughter of Romulus Merica who, in turn, is Edith's Riel oldest brother, my uncle. So Evy is Edith's niece and Evy and I are both cousins to the first generation of Riels, but from different Merica families.

Edith would be the Grand Aunt to Ira. We along with the original eight Riel kids would be second cousins. I give up figuring out how children of second cousins are linked. But the good news is that we all are family and we invite you to celebrate with Ira and Yannis, both the birth and the christening of their son, Alexander. We will have more pictures in June. - Gerard

FAMILY SHORTS

To the friends and family of my mom, Francie:

Some of you may know that my mom's doctor, May-Ling, has been so gracious to put together a fund in Francie's name. This is the final link in making a research paper in Francie's honor happen. May-Ling will dedicate this \$50,000 research portfolio for multiple myeloma in Francie's memory.

Anything that you could spare to donate would be greatly appreciated. Your support and love have already helped my family so much. This will just be one more way to honor my mom.

Here are the links:

<http://pages.mwoy.org/sd/sd18/fsorem>

short link: TinyURL.com/FrancieFund

Thank you so much, everyone. Please feel free to forward this message to anyone you'd like. Here's to Francie!

Much love, Brett and Bryce Sorem

PS: For people making large donations, May-Ling has some "thank you gifts" to offer... \$1000 donation can get you a full-page promo ad for your company in the LLS program brochure for the finale gala... a \$2000 donation can buy a table for 10 people at the grand finale gala...

