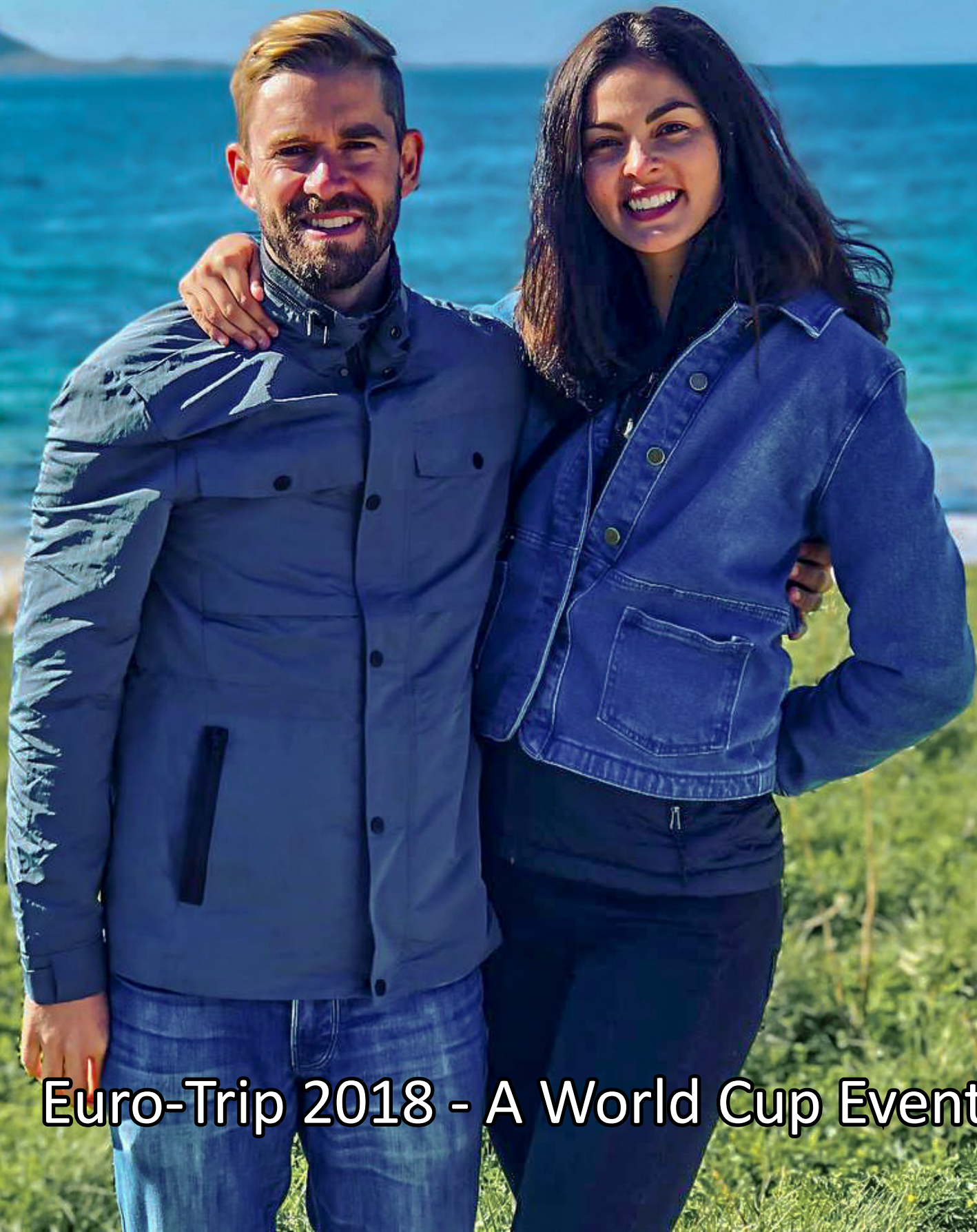




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**Euro-Trip 2018 - A World Cup Event**

# Sorem Euro Trip 2018

By Brett Sorem



The time has finally come! Yaaaaaaasssss!!! (in a Bridget tone) Summer is here! We all know when summer arrives, it's time to leave your homeland, take a bunch of selfies and post them on Instagram to remind all of your friends and family you are cooler than they are, only to experience that same sense of FOMO when they take their fall trips while getting the last laugh. #howdareyou #livingmybestlife

But, this is not just any summer, NO! It's that...you've been waiting for this summer from four years ago...summer! YES, it's a WORLD CUP YEAR. Which undoubtedly calls for a lengthy trip abroad, filled with travel woes, numerous flights, breathtaking sights, endless nights, all fueled with a diet solely relying on the nutritional benefits of beer and booze. Yes, it's Sorem Euro Trip time, take 4. ACTION!

This euro trip began much differently than the previous. We had a newbie joining the festivities. For those of you who were able to attend Bryce & Bridget's wedding along the Hudson last year, you may



remember, in my lengthy best mans' speech, that the ultimate test for any potential bystander interested in the Sorem family, must attend a Sorem Euro Trip, return alive, sane, and with most of their dignity. Needless to say, Carinda was briefed, warned, even advised against if you will. Still, against better judgment, she decided it was worth the risk. HA HA HA

Carinda and I went out early. She has a friend who was getting married in Lecce, a small town in the Puglia region of Italy. If you don't know where that is, like I didn't, it's near the heel of the boot! Okay, now we are speaking my geographical language. My only worry was that the World Cup began almost 3 weeks after the wedding. I asked Carinda, "do we really have to go to the wedding, our trip is going to

be way to long. I don't know if I can stand being with you for 4 weeks straight." She said, "Yes we do, the wedding is for my best friend, it's in Italy, and it's in a Castle, we are going." "Wait you said Castle..."

That's not really how it went down but the important bits to take away from the fabrication are A) We left for Europe earlier than the rest of the Sorems, and B) We get to go to a Castle!

I have met Oda and Magnus a few times before, they are awesome peeps, also from Norway, so they must have good Sorem genes in there somewhere.

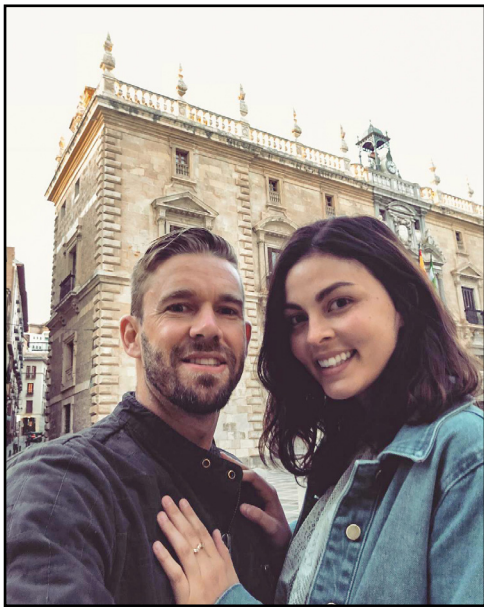
The wedding was like a fairytale. We bounced from courtyard to courtyard as the day went on, with each space outdoing the last. It was a dream wedding, and it was the absolute worst idea to go with your girlfriend. Why is that some of you may ask???

In short, some things in life are just not in the cards for us. Dusty and Jason are always going to be short, thanks to Jeff, the Riel boys will almost always lose to the Benesch's in Riel Bowl Fantasy Football, and Mike Riel will always be my older less handsome cousin. Some things are just not in the cards for us, and that's okay. So, a little piece of advice to the few Riel boys who are not married yet; if your significant other invites you to a wedding at a Magical Castle...don't go!!! They get all these ideas in their heads, you'll thank me later.

On to Spain. This marks Carinda's first time in Spain, and it being my favorite country to visit, I had to make sure she got the grand tour. Barcelona was the first stop, and if I'm willingly leaving behind my skateboard while visiting the Disneyland cities of skateboarding spots on our trip, you know I'm trying to give Carinda a good impression. We ate delicious meals, drank great cocktails, and walked around the narrow alleyways exploring all the beauty and architecture Barcelona has to offer. We hit up the usual spots, Park Guell and the Saragada Family Cathedral that never ceases to inspire. Highly recommend El Naccional and Llamber as places to go eat!

After a much too short two days in Barcelona we took our trusted Fiat we named Fifi out on the road to Peniscola. (Insert inappropriate Big Al joke here) Many of the modern cities in Spain have been built around the old castles from the 13th and 14th centuries, Peniscola follows that trend. Perched up on





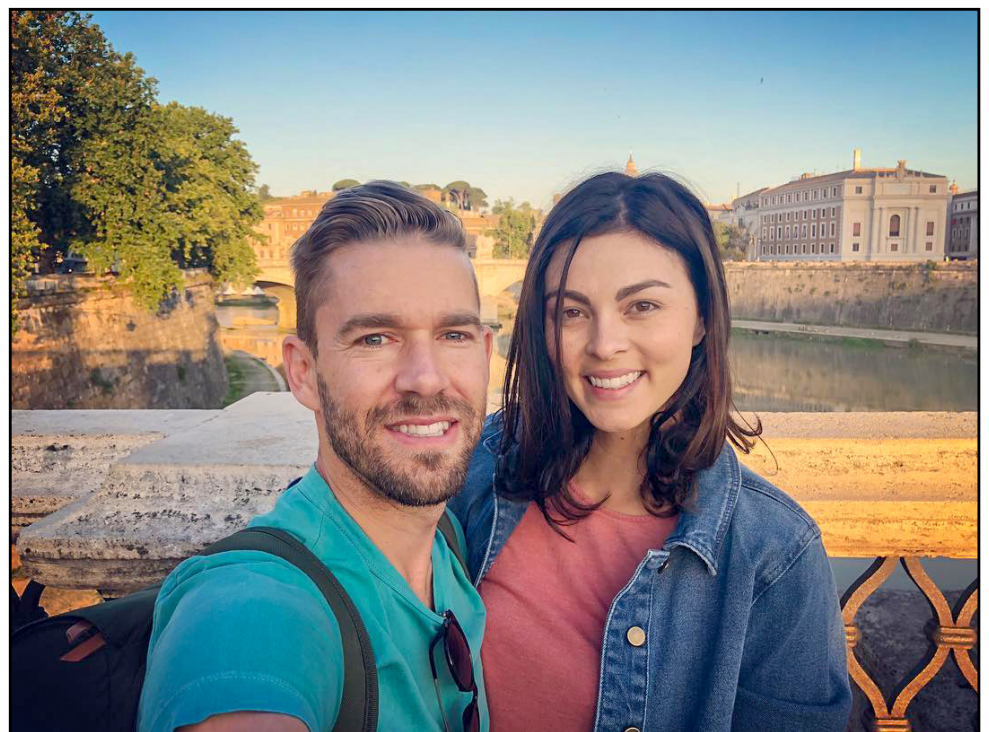
a hill in a tiny peninsula, the old town features lots of tiny shops, restaurants, and walking streets to explore. We loved this place so much we decided to change our return plans and bring back Big Al on our way up the coast.



Granada was our next stop. The old town in Granada was filled with tourists so we tried to steer clear as much as possible. We mistakenly found a restaurant with the absolute best Caprese I've ever had. So damn good we went back the next day for the same thing! Taberna Tofe was the name. Great spot! We also explored

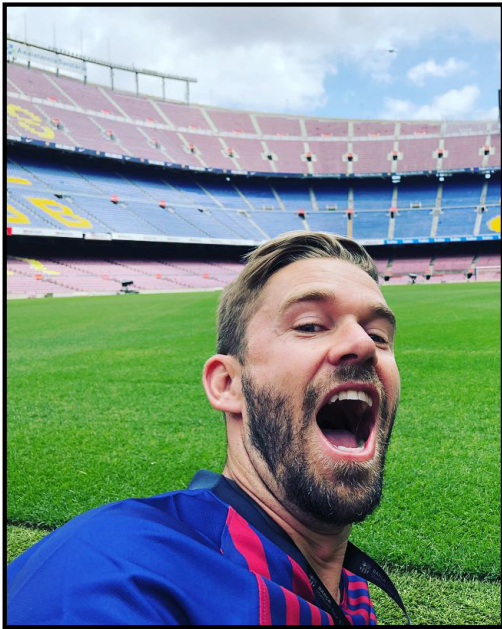
the Alhambra Park and the Hills of Sacromonte. We even walked up to the hills where actual Gypsy's still live in caves. We saw a naked one, don't have any photos though, sorry Big Al, don't get too excited.

Ronda was next, we had the best Airbnb with the view of the historic bridge that connects the old town to the newer town. We drank wine on our patio over-



looking the caves, hiked around the hills, and befriended a national geographic photographer in his store and talked soccer, photography, and how the local police scam many Korean tourists to pay tickets driving across the bridge during walking hours only. Among many other topics, good times!

Speaking of good times, unfortunately all must end. It was time to end our solo adventure and pick up Big Al from Almeria. Just kidding Big Al, sort of :) Big Al pulled one of those moves right out of The Son's handbook. On his flight out to meet us, he conveniently left his wallet in the Stockholm airport. So, for the next two weeks, you know who had to foot the bill for everything. Nice move Big Al. Also, for those of you who haven't gotten to spend a lot of time with him consecutively, he is notorious for telling the same jokes over and over again. His favorite thing to talk about was how he kept checking his credit card balance and it remains at zero despite being in Europe for X amount of days. Get a new joke Big Al.



Almeria was meh, I'll skip that place, the only city on our trip that I would have avoided in hindsight. Alicante however was very cool. Which brings us to our second speed bump. We booked our plane flights, hotels, and Airbnbs way in advance. Apparently Big Al got an email from the Airbnb host that the dates we reserved were actually going to be unavailable, the host just didn't block those dates out yet. We were asked to cancel for no fee and book with someone else. Of course, Big Al didn't figure that out and come the day before, the host pretty much was forced to let us stay there in hopes to not get a negative review. In the end after some emails back and forth, it was no problem, the place was awesome, and the host was great.

There is also a fun story that happened on the beach in Alicante... see Big Al's facebook for the details :)

We stopped again in Peniscola, showed Big Al around, tried to convince him to buy a summer home and had a great meal above the water. I took a great pic of my babes with the Iphone 8 plus portrait mode. I think it's a keeper. (Thanks Apple for the photo and you're welcome for the plug, checks in the mail, right??)

Our second stop in Barcelona was next. We visited Camp Nou, FC Barcelona Stadium. It was beyond awesome. We reserved a VIP tour, saw the locker room, walked down on the field, and toured the press rooms and private club sections including Pique and Shakiras room. It was so awesome, I kinda felt like I was in heaven. Sorry Yaya.





Next stop was Norway. We visited Tromso, where the sun never sets. Our family out there hosted us and were very well prepared. Lots of beer, and tons of shrimp. We took a day trip hike to Brosmentinden and hiked up to the edge of the earth, it was epic. Big Al did a great job hanging in there for an old fart!

Norway is full of incredible postcard views where ever you look. We stopped in Oslo for a few nights too, saw a distant cousin of mine as well as his direct family. It was great to slow down the pace a bit to prep our bodies for the arrival of the last Sorems

a few days later.

But before that, Stockholm was next. We spent a night hanging with my buddy Andreas watching World Cup games then passed out very quickly. The following night was Midsummer, the biggest vacation day in Sweden. We took a boat ride out to this small posh island. Just picture a bunch of young kids running around with boat shoes, Eddie Bauer shorts, and American Eagle sweaters tied crossways over their popped collar shirts, but everyone is blonde... and possibly named Todd. (sorry inside joke) Yeah, besides the obvious stereotype filling the island, it was a really great time. We all got pretty hammered and went out to the one local night club. Things happened there that no one wants to see, like Big Al dancing, you're welcome for no photos!

The next day was a tough one. Massively huge hangover, we took every mode of transportation possible to finally reunite abroad with Bryce and Bridget in Finland. We woke up and took a 40 minute boat ride to the main land, a 50 minute bus into central Stockholm, a taxi to the airport, a plane to Helsinki, and a train to the city center. That was a long travel day, but we landed 5 minutes apart from Bryce and Bridget!



That evening in Helsinki we hung out, got some pizza and watched the world cup game! The entire city was shut down because of the midsummer holiday. I could have sworn we were in the Walking Dead with all the streets deserted.

Next day we finally left for Russia, but the problems started immediately. We were supposed to take a four-hour beautiful train ride into Saint Petersburg, but instead since the "tracks were down" we had to take a three-and-a-half-hour bus ride to the boarder, sit and wait on the bus for an hour and a half to go through customs, then get on a train for the final 2 hours.

But, we arrived, the city was amazing. We did avoid getting tourist taxed by a local cab driver who tried to charge us the 60 dollar equivalent for a five minute taxi ride! We meet up with our Airbnb host where the problems continued. The evening before they let us know that the plumbing in the apartment, "had not been fixed in time," so they are giving us a new place. We walked into the new place and it looks like it had not been cleaned since it was built in the 14th century. The walls most definitely had mold inside them, the tub was almost worn through the base, and the consistency of the hard wood floors and the carpet were the same. Either way you interpret that, it was gross! Contracting bedbugs was the least of our worries.

After a four-hour conversation with Airbnb, Bryce finally got them to give us our money back plus some so we could book a hotel, since there was no way we would be able to book an Airbnb at 12PM at night, especially during the world cup, surprise, surprise. We found a great hotel around 1:30 AM, checked in, and went out for a celebratory drink at 2, sans Big Al. What a day.



Spent the next two days exploring the city, local restaurants, and vodka! We checked out the Fifa Fan Fest and watched the Russia Uruguay game. The place was packed with passionate football fans from all countries. The next day we went on a boat ride through all of the channels. Saint Petersburg is like a gigantic Amsterdam. After that we went to the first, of our two, World Cup games. Argentina Vs. Nigeria. Carinda and I got incredible seats in the 3rd row! We got to see a Leo Messi goal, and an Argentina win! The atmosphere of the place was unreal and will be one of the best games I will have been able to witness in person. Nothing I say will do it justice, just wait till the 2018 Sorem Euro trip video comes out. I know the director and can probably get you a discount, probably.

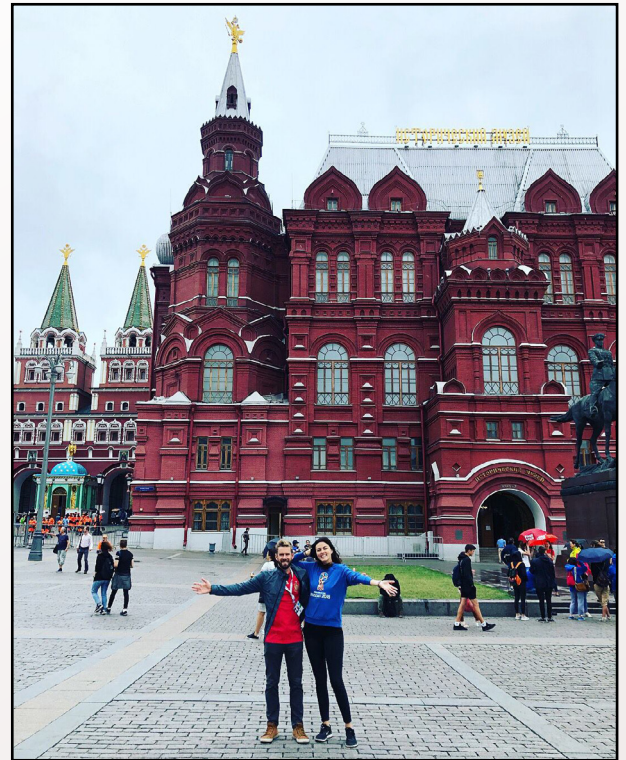




The last stop on our trip was Kaliningrad. The city was alright. Our Airbnb was nice, but out in the middle of nowhere. If it were not for our unlimited plan and google maps this entire trip, we would have had a problem. Thanks Sprint (I'll email you our forwarding address) We played a lot of Monopoly Deal, the card game till the wee hours of the morning. The following day we went to the England Belgium game. Unfortunately, nether team needed a win so they rested all of their starters, so we didn't get to see any big names like Harry Kane or Eden Hazard.



The next day was our flight out, Bryce and Bridget had another night in Kaliningrad as Big Al, Carinda and I were to depart back to the states...so we thought. Our flight out of Kaliningrad was originally departing at 11:55 AM to Warsaw, which is where we would transfer to our flight back to the states. We booked all of these flights back in January in order to get cheap tickets. Apparently on June second, Big Al got an email notifying him of the departure change to 9AM, which he confirmed. HOWEVER, he forgot to mention that to us or reprint the itinerary. I had all of our documents on the app Tripit, and Big Al was old school and printed everything out. So, without knowing about our flight change we show up to the airport around 9 just to be sure and our flight is taking off. Kaliningrad is a small airport, there were no other flights out that day.



Long story short we were able to look in Big Al's history to find out he did respond. So, we took a cab back to the hotel where Bryce and Bridget were staying and booked a room for the night. Three hours and WAY too much money later, we booked our flights home, which consisted of a flight to Moscow, overnight layover, a flight to Barcelona, overnight layover, and a flight to LAX. The downside, we miss out on seeing our doggies early, the upside we got to spend another night with Bryce and Bridget, got to see Moscow and spent another night in Barcelona again, our third time on this trip.



That night we blew off steam, had an incredible meal, lots of beer, margaritas, vodka shots, and hookah. We met some locals, shot the sh!t, and had an awesome night. The next day we started the long road home. We landed in Moscow late and passed out. The next day we only had time to see red square and grab a quick bite. Bryce and Bridget slept in, so we missed seeing them there. We flew to Barcelona and went to El Naccional and had our last meal!! The Iberian Ham, YUMMMMMMY. Woke up the next day, Carinda went on a little shopping spree, and we were off!

34 days 16 cities, 14 flights, 6 countries, 4 trains, 3 buses, 2 boats, and 1 rental car. We had an incredible time. I want to thank Carinda for being my copilot. Big thanks to Big Al and Bryce & Bridget for joining in on this trip and making it one for the books. (next time no planning for Big Al) On the trip Fifa

announced that the 2026 World Cup will be played in the US!!!! I have already notified my future employer I will be out of the office for its duration. Traveling during and to the World Cup has always been the highlight of our vacations. From meeting people across the world to sharing an excitement for the game, if you haven't gotten to travel for the Cup, we got it coming to our home turf. I'm starting to save now!



Hi Family!

Quick update from the Kiwi Beneschs:

Lauren's brother, Phillip, recently got engaged to his long-time girlfriend, Holly. Phil lives in Sydney, so we took a quick trip across the Tasman Sea to celebrate with him and his new fiancé. It was our first time traveling since Lawson was born, and Lauren is very much pregnant (34 weeks), but everyone had a great time even with flights and all. Lauren is writing a travel article about our trip in a Kiwi magazine, so we were able to stay in an amazing hotel, eat some good food, and check out some fun activities for the kids.

It was our first time in Sydney, and we did not realize how big of a city it was! It has around 4-5 million people which is the same as all of New Zealand. It reminded us a lot of San Francisco, even down to the buskers in front of the ferry terminal.

We took ferries, saw the Opera House, rode a Ferris wheel, checked out an aquarium, saw Bondi beach, and took a ton of trains and busses (more fun for the kids than us). It was great to see Phil and to congratulate him and Holly. They are thinking of having a Kiwi wedding which was great news for us, as we will have 4 little ones when he gets married, which complicates the travel arrangements...

Speaking of child #4 (Kiwi kid #2) Lauren is progressing well. We were a little worried the last few weeks because the little guy was breach which would have meant a C-section and couple weeks of recovery, but our latest scan this week showed that he has turned head down! Lauren is currently 36 weeks, baby looks healthy, and now we are just waiting for his arrival.

Our present 3 kids are all great. Lawson is talking up a storm (at very loud volumes), Grayson finished his first term of horseback riding lessons on a pony which he loves, and Holden is midway through his first soccer (football) season.

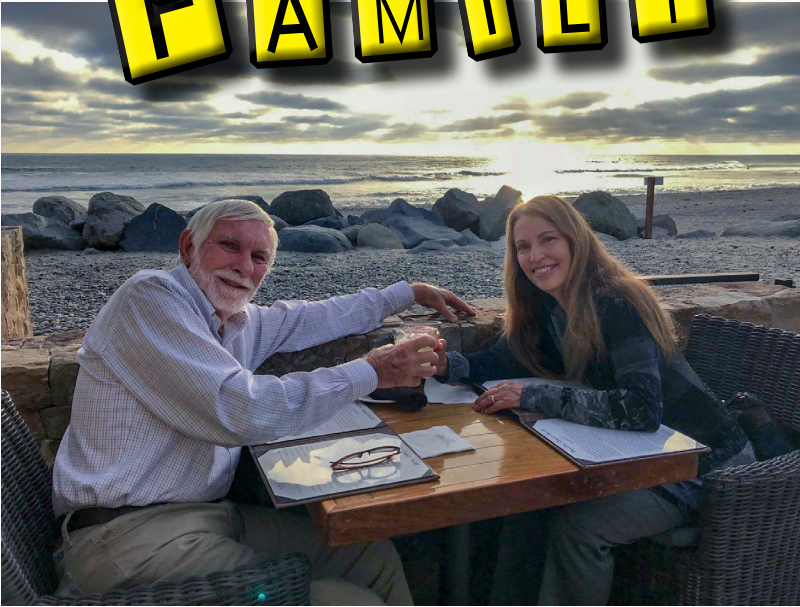
We hope everyone is doing great. Enjoy your heat-wave; it's currently winter over here, and we are jealous of all the beach pictures! love and miss you all!

Dustin, Lauren, Holden, Grayson, Lawson, and TBD



# FAMILY

# SHORTS



## **Bud and Margaret Celebrate 42 years of Marriage**

Yesterday we celebrated our 42 years of Marriage. I have to say that I am enormously lucky to wake up every day next to the person whom I most want to be with at day, and every day. Now if we could just figure out how to remake the country so that those who live here, or want to live here, can find that same joy and security.

## **Karla's New Car Adventure**

Karla has been driving the same car, her trusty old Honda Accord, for over 12 years and well, let's face it, a few things weren't working well. Like her AC unit, sure she had 480 AC (4 windows down and going 80 on the freeway), but it really was time to get her a new car. So, on Saturday July 7th, we bought her new, 2018, Toyota Avalon with only 60 miles on it with all the bells and whistles.

Fast forward to Saturday July 14th Mileage: 285... We had to make a trip to Home Depot and Karla suggested we take her car, so I could finally drive it. As I entered I-8 from tavern road I marveled at how smooth the acceleration was. And as we drove down the hill in the right lane, doing about 65 with a car next to me in the left lane, I was checking out how well it drove and then it happened... BAM!!! A car decided to try to pass between us and the car to our left (kind of like those annoying motorcycles do). Unfortunately, he completely side swiped us ripping off the side mirror. Once I realized what had happened I looked to see if he was pulling over, nope he never even stepped on the brakes.

I yelled "he's running on us" and stomped down on the gas to give chase. I told Karla to call 9-1-1 and she yelled "go get that A\$\$ H\*!!" as she dialed for help. We chased him at speeds of 100MPH for a few miles before traffic slowed him down and we got close enough to tell the 9-1-1 operator his license plate number. Even then he tried to get around traffic by forcing another driver into the median.

Fortunately for us, a few drivers saw what happened and blocked him from running. He finally pulled over and said he was sorry, but he hadn't slept in four days and that he wasn't really running from us. The good news is he did have insurance and we traded info. After about 15 minutes, the CHP showed up but since they didn't witness it there was nothing they could do but take a report.

So, Karla's new car will be in the shop for a while getting repairs. All this excitement on just one tank of gas... What will the next fill up bring?

# Picture a cell: New 3D visual guide can help

*Reprinted news from the Allen Institute*

Last month, Allen Institute for Cell Science researchers debuted the Visual Guide to Human Cells, a 3D interactive tool that aims to help scientists see what a human cell looks like.

It's a deceptively simple goal with a complicated backstory: The new guide relies on thousands of images and years of scientific work for its existence.

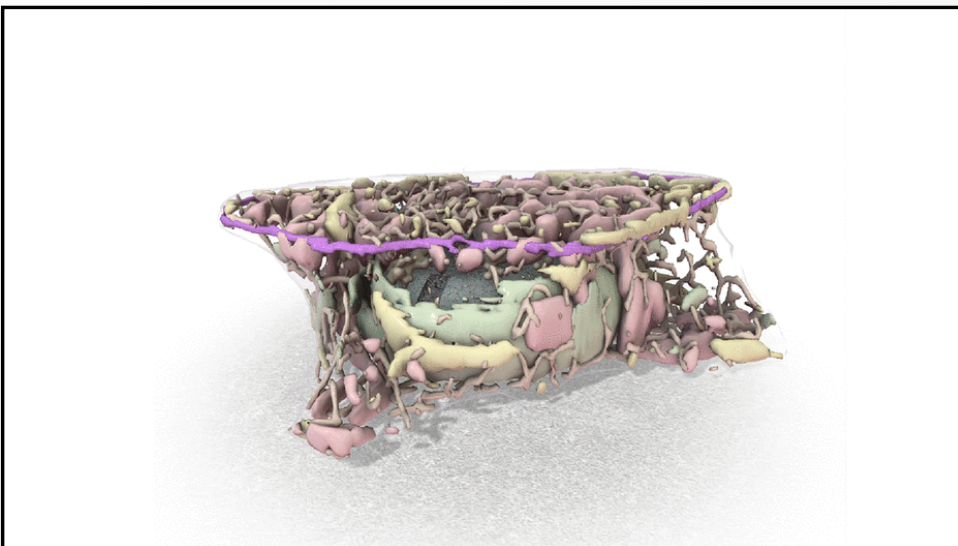
The Visual Guide to Human Cells lets users rotate, zoom in and out, and highlight different structures inside a 3D model of a human stem cell.

The visual guide frames much of the data that the Allen Institute for Cell Science generates in its quest to better understand human cells into the context of an interactive 3D cell viewer. Users can explore a curated collection of cells from any angle, and they can view snapshots of what happens to a human cell's innards as it grows and divides using visual models based on real data.

The guide consolidates information about human cells that had previously been scattered across multiple pages and different web-based tools on [allencell.org](http://allencell.org), the public platform that contains all the data, tools and models produced by the cell scientists, said Graham Johnson, Ph.D., Director of the Animated Cell team at the Allen Institute for Cell Science.



*Graham Johnson, Ph.D., director of the animated cell team at the Allen Institute for Cell Science*



Humans are visual creatures, cell biologists included. Seeing what the cell and all its components look like - what they really look like, as the guide is based on thousands of microscopy images of fluorescently labeled human cells - will provide a platform to help scientists better understand how the whole cell works, Johnson said.

"That's why we've structured the entire visual guide around cell function and the relationships between function and structure," said Megan Riel-Mehan, Ph.D., a visualization scientist at the Allen Institute for Cell Science who helped develop the guide along with other software engineers and



*Megan Riel-Mehan, Ph.D., a visualization scientist at the Allen Institute for Cell Science*

scientific illustrators at the Institute. The scientists combined computational modeling with detailed illustrations to capture all the different components of the cell in one interactive model.

The guide can be navigated by selecting different categories of what cells do, such as "sense the environment," "produce energy" or even "die." Within each category, users can choose individual cell structures to highlight in the 3D view and see how those molecular machines change in shape and position as the cell moves through the regimented stages of cell division, or mitosis.

The guide was created in part as a response to user feedback, Riel-Mehan said. Scientists attempting to navigate the Allen Cell Explorer were having a hard time knowing where to start among the mountains of data, she said. The animators envisioned the visual guide as a portal to all that raw and curated data - once a user picks a structure to explore in the 3D model, they can click through to access the original fluorescent images.

"We're trying to give an entrance both to our data and to the cell itself," Riel-Mehan said. "You can start at a high level and dig your way down."

### Capturing the dynamic cell

Johnson and his team also envisioned another audience for the guide: students. As a textbook illustrator and author, Johnson understands the limitations of a flat, unchanging depiction of the cell. The visual guide is new enough that it's not yet in use in classrooms, but Johnson hopes that's where it might soon have an impact.

Thomas Martinez, a biology teacher at Glenbard East High School in Lombard, Illinois, has used other tools from the Allen Cell Explorer website in some of his classes. Next fall, Martinez wants to incorporate the visual guide into a class segment focusing on how cells use energy. For many students, working with interactive visuals can help them better understand the material, he said.

"I can talk to them until the cows come home; they go to Disneyland in their heads in about five minutes," Martinez said. "But if they sit down with tablets and search on their own to see what they can find, that's when it really brings it home for them."

The visual guide could also help students understand a cell's true shape, said Jan Chalupny, Ph.D., biotechnology outreach manager at Shoreline Community College in Shoreline, Washington.

"It's hard for students to imagine what cells are like in 3D with available tools," she said.



Dear RFNL Readers,

Hola from the rain forest of Mexico! This is a letter to you from the traveling crew of David, Bethany, Annie and Aunt Birdy. We headed to a resort called the Mayan Palace which was about 30 miles from Playa De La Carmen and an hour from Tulum, Mexico.

The resort was crazy amazing! Pools literally were everywhere! Also you could find any restaurant you might crave from laid back beach style to extremely fancy! We saw lush, green trees and birds that squawked like crazy. It really felt like we were in another world.



On our first day, we hit the pool. That's a great way to start any vacation. It was 87 degrees for the day but in the shade it was quite comfortable! The hotel rooms were nothing to write home about. The couches looked old and the kitchen was not updated. But it was nice because we had two bedrooms with a living room suite between us that was a big size. The beds were comfortable and we were just



happy to get to hang out like vacationing people. We had fun as we lay around the pool and said, “Margarita, margarita!” It seems like it was always happy hour and you get two drinks for one...what could be more fun? Audios!

## Day 2

We were getting ready for our bus tour (which they called a high-class transportation on a sky luxury cruiser...but it was truly a bus) of all of the cool areas out here. It is called the Chichen Itza Tour (which is one of the 7 wonders of the world). Our trip began at 7:00 in the morning and we traveled about an hour before we stopped in a small village that served us a cafeteria styled breakfast of pancakes, eggs, tacos, rice and beans. We were a little nervous to eat this fair for fear of improper cooking, but we came to experience Mexico...and so we ate it.

Then we drove another mile and stopped for shopping, a dip in Ik Kil Cenote, which is a natural sinkhole of 200 feet in diameter and 130 feet deep. We walked down a steep staircase to the turquoise pool that awaited us. The ceiling was covered in stalactites and you felt like you were entering a forgotten cave. We all put on lifejackets and prepared to swim in the crystal-clear waters that awaited us. We were certain that once we got out, our youthful complexions had returned. The water had that spa like feel to it. Then we went off to have lunch in another cafeteria styled Mexican Restaurant.

Our next stop was to see the ancient Mayan ruins called the Chichen Itza that we had all wanted to enjoy. It was such an impressive structure that seemed to rise up towards the clouds. Speaking of clouds, as our tour guide gave us wonderful insight into this ancient cities history; lightning began to crackle across the sky. It was certainly hard to focus on our tour as the skies turned dark and began to dump rain on top of our heads. Luckily, David thought fast and purchased 4 ponchos which we quickly donned. We completed our tour without missing a beat. We even got to walk over to another cenotes without any other tourist around because they had abandoned the tour to escape the rain.

Our luxury cruiser then took us homeward with an open bar of beer, margaritas and tequila shots. Some of us got some good shuteye as we returned to our resort at 9:00 P.M. that night.



## Day 3-4

Today we had to change our planned trip to Tulum because everyone got hit with Monty's revenge but me (which is weird because Annie and I have shared everything). So we decided to relax poolside today. This honestly was okay by me because this resort is seriously amazing. We were sitting by another pool and it is like a whole new resort feel. One pool flows into another. I think you all would love this place.

We spent the next two days reading and relaxing. Annie and I walked 3 miles around the resort and I don't think we ever saw it all. There was a flamingo island, a pen for crocodiles and we saw many wild iguanas creeping by us. There was also a cute coati (animal that looks like a lemur) on the grounds but they moved too fast for us to get a picture of them.

The trip was marred slightly by the upset tummies of my traveling buddies but they never complained. We just took it easy on the food and drinks while enjoying our vacation mode week. Annie good naturedly called it her wedding diet plan. Nonetheless, I want them all to know how much I loved taking a trip with them to this part of the world. Uncle Bruce was never willing to travel down here because of the heat. And I could not have been happier reading with my fellow travelers poolside! I want to express a huge thank you to these wonderful people for sharing a little slice of Mayan paradise with me.

Love Aunt Birdy

