

Another Riel Thanksgiving



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By Margaret Riel



Thanksgiving at the Riel/Me-hans was a festive event with lots of people, food and fun. The family is growing in size. Despite missing two families--the Bob Riel family who visited Brian and Drew in Arizona and the Sorem/Hall group that celebrated Thanksgiving in New York--we still had 45 people.

The traditional turkey was joined by two salmons and 2 tri-tip beef roasts, as well as mac n cheese for the little ones. Chief Michael manned the grill overseeing the tri-tip and salmon, while the carving duo of Jeff and Bud worked on the turkey. With a bit of effort, all of the food made it to the table at about the same time and the hungry group made fast work of all of it. Of course, the table included

many of the family favorites, twice-baked potatoes and salads and vegies. The mushroom appetizer, a new favorite brought by Tim and Fernando, was voted the best new addition narrowly beating the kale salad brought by Kevin & Nicole. All of the food was wonderful!

Carol created an art table that kept the little ones coloring and creating. The chocolate turkeys were so sweet it was hard to gobble them up. And we had the first soccer game in a long time. The sad demise of our peach tree enabled us to open up the yard for soccer. Coach Michael brought some portable nets and soccer balls that keep the kiddos kicking and running all afternoon. Soon it will be the 3rd generation against the more mature Riels.

We missed Robert's picture's but Carol picked up the slack and took a few family photos as can be seen here and the following page.





Thanksgiving NOT Riel Style

By Birdy Hartman





It was a little hard for me to miss another Thanksgiving at the Riel-Mehans. Truthfully, part of me likes to be away at Thanksgiving because being there makes me think of Uncle Bruce. However, another part of me hates to be away because I miss making a memory with mom (even though she won't remember it) and all of my family.

This year Lyle wanted to be with the boys in NYC along with his son, Lyle Allen and Cindy. I know how rough the first year is and so I decided that whatever helped Lyle would be the right place for me to be. That place was NYC this year and I must tell you, it was fabulous. First, we got to see the Macy's Day parade in person. This is one of those bucket list things in life. Not only did we get to see the parade during a record long cold spell, we also got to enjoy it from a balcony of one of Brett's friends. That was a magnificent perk because as soon as you got too cold (we had an 8-degree wind chill factor) you could pop indoors and enjoy some wonderfully fresh baked goods!



For dinner, we were invited to Bridgett's parent's house to celebrate Thanksgiving. We got to enjoy all the Thanksgiving favorites of turkey and the trimmings. Bridgett's family could not have been more welcoming and loving as they included us in their family celebration! And we also love being served some fine whisky drinks mixed at their basement by Bartender Brett! That was one amazing Thanksgiving and we want to thank the McCarthy's for taking such good care of Bryce's west coast family!



Another highlight was shopping with Brett in the NY Macy's at 7:00 A.M. Lyle had never gotten up for this early morning tradition, but I have seen Brett and Francie on many of a Black Fridays. I was a little worried that I would not like all the crowds in NY but truly, it was not that bad. Apparently, New Yorkers like to sleep in as well. So, we enjoyed the hustle and bustle of NY without horrible crowds until about 2:00. That is when the day got crazy!!! The sidewalks were full, and I was tired. We tried to push our way back to Macy's, but the crowds were just too much! It was like cattle herding just to go down the escalator! We called it a day and got ready to go out to a fantastic restaurant that Bryce had recommended.

Eating with Bryce in any city is a true treat! We like to just sit back and let our chef take over on the orders. He always seems to know the best cuisine worth trying and none of us ever leave the table hungry! Dining with him, Bridgett, Brett, Carinda, Lyle Allen, Cindy and Big Al is never dull. We drank amazing wines and laugh the evening away. It is a magical experience for sure!



Our last day was spent shopping, walking the highline in the dead of winter and brunch at Harold's which just happens to be the kitchen where our favorite NY chef, Bryce, resides with our favorite NY server, Carinda! Bryce's dishes did not disappoint this group at all! We tasted some of delectable dishes that only Chef Bryce can serve up! It was another wonderful part of this amazing vacation!

It was sad to part ways at the end of our trip. I know that Lyle will be missing his boys. However, we all get some satisfaction in knowing that they will be together on Christmas. Big Al never misses a chance to hang out and I know it will be the beginning of some new wonderful family traditions for all!



Holiday Hoopla Hits Temecula

By Listy Gillingham

The Gillingham, Keith, and now Mulholland family ventured off to vacation in Temecula to celebrate some holiday fun before Christmas. Three years ago, while sitting on the beach in Coronado for Veteran's Day, Annie and Listy came up with Holiday Hoopla plans where the entire family would spend the night together on Thanksgiving or Christmas (we alternate so that Seamus and Kevin can see their out-of-SD families). For the last two years, the slumber party was at our Lemon Ave. house but this year, we decided to take a small trip and stayed in a 4 bedroom house on a vineyard. We all came up on Friday night and stayed two nights to mark the start of the holiday season.



Every year, a new group is selected to plan the festivities and this year it was Bob and David. So Friday night became Holiday Hoopla night and they decided it was time to play the men vs. the women. We had five different tasks to complete. The first one Turkey-Polt where we had to be creative with rubber bands and felt to make the best Turkey-Polt that would lob a ball at a target. Turkey Tower came next where we built towers out of spaghetti and marshmallows. A round of Gobble Golf was also on the docket which included putting a bouncy ball into a cardboard corn hole target. Leaf Blower got the most attention as we had to blow, as a team and individuals, a leaf with straws across a path. We raced for time to find out

who had the best lungs on each team. The final game was Blind Turkey Hunt where we were blindfolded and had to find the plastic turkey while our teammates yelled "Gobble! Gobble!" as we neared it. We ended that with a surprise celebration for the soon to be married in 2020 David and Bethany team as they were the last to go on the hunt and we switched the plastic turkey to a bottle of champagne.



The next day we ventured for wine tasting. Kevin was in charge of finding wineries that welcomed small children and did a great job by finding ones that had playgrounds and petting zoos. We started by the playground where we semi picnicked at Wilson Creek Winery and watch the Keith boys play. We then decided to make our way up to a table near the live band where we ordered lunch for the boys and continued our sipping adventures. Listy brought some props for entertainment which included a trivia game and some Christmas photo captions for the boys to play with. Who doesn't love being a reindeer or Santa for a picture. The CEO, Bill Wilson, stopped by and offered to take a picture. Seamus quickly responded with a quick remark by saying he was sure he saw a sign that said free photos taken by the owner would include a free bottle of wine. The CEO smiled, went to the bar, and returned with a bottle on the house stating he loved seeing families together.

The second winery include an alpaca named "shaggy" for obvious reasons. He entertained us for a bit then the boys shifted to the playground and played chasing games with the other kids.

After a full day of wine tasting we ventured back to the house and had dinner and played several rounds of charades because we just love competing and the boys thought it was fun to "help us" with our silly antics. Overall, it was a great adventure and we loved spending time together as a family! Next up, Bethany and Seamus will be planning Holiday Hoopla 2019 for Christmas.





Rich with his good friend Dennis McConnell

News From Richard

By Rich Riel

This fabulous freeloading philosopher is presently residing in Oldsmar Fl., 2,461 miles from my home in San Diego. Here is how I got there...

Having left San Diego on Monday November 26th at 10:30AM, with Gary, my friend since I was 10 years old, we headed East for Prescott AZ. When I lived in Tahoe and worked in the casino's one of my roommate was Jon Leeson. Jon and I have kept in touch since we both departed Tahoe and I started my freeloading with him and his wife Dora. Gary and I arrived at 8PM where Jon and Dora were waiting for us with drinks and food.

The next morning, we got up and went for a hike in Constellation Park which is named after a plane that crashed there. I had forgotten about how much harder exertion is at a higher elevation. We were at 5,000 feet it was in the high 40's but the air was crisp and clean. Jon and Dora are vegans, so after the hike, Dora fixed a vegan chili for lunch. I have never had a vegan meal, but this chili was so good I asked for the recipe and plan to cook it again when I get home. Jon and I went to the local golf course and played a round of golf. While I played, Gary and Dora took in the library and other cultural sites in Prescott. Back for drinks we departed for downtown Prescott. The downtown is throwback to a western town in the early 1900's. There were lots of antique shops, western wear, bars and restaurants. It is a clean and friendly City and I enjoyed exploring it. We had a Pizza at a restaurant that serves not only Italian cuisine but a vegan pizza as well. I was not tempted to go vegan, so I ordered and enjoyed a classic pizza with anchovies on the side.

On Wednesday morning we reluctantly bid adieu to our hosts and drove 500 miles to El Paso. I booked a \$40 room for the night just outside downtown El Paso. In spite of a large dead cockroach outside our room it was livable.

Thursday morning another 500 miles and we were in Houston, where Brother Dennis demonstrated why Texas hospitality is legendary. I would be remiss if I did not comment on how much weight and how healthy Dennis looks. He opened his home to Gary and I and cooked a flank steak that words could not justify as to how good it was.

Friday Morning Dennis greeted us with his world-famous breakfast tacos and maintained his reputation as a five-star chef. The rest of the day was spent working on a computer that Gary

and I built for Dennis that mines bitcoins. Part of the reason for this trip was to move some of our miners out of California where energy rates make it unprofitable to mine and move them to the south where there is a lot of cheap energy.

Mining bitcoins is a game not an investment. The machine I have modified is a Dell T3500 with two super high-resolution graphics cards that have been customized to mine bitcoins. The best way to describe how the game works is to think of the video cards as white-collar slaves (WCS.) The WCS happily work for you as long as you feed them electricity. As they work in the plantation, they perform calculations that are paid for in bitcoins. Your WCS, love to work, they never get coffee breaks, never complain and are happy to work as long as your feed them electricity. As the master of your WCS you collect the bitcoins that are the earning of the WCS. Bitcoins go up and down in value, but your cost is limited to buying the machine and paying the electric bill.



Saturday, we went to a car show called “Guitars and Cars.” I saw a 2-million-dollar firebird. What made this car so valuable is that when it rolled off the production line the paint scheme was red white and blue. This was a special run of hard top firebirds created for the 4th of July and was for hard tops. But this particular firebird got the paint scheme even though it was a convertible. It was a mistake and not supposed to leave the plant. It got out of the plant listed as a hard top with a differ-

ent color scheme. The guy that bought it did some research and the plant confirmed that the convertible’s original paint was red white and blue and that it was not supposed to have been sold. Lots of great cars and good music. After the show I had dinner with Dennis’s daughter Kim and her husband.

Sunday was church in the morning and immediately following we went to a NFL football game at the NRG Stadium. Dennis has season tickets to the Texans home games. The stadium is a reflection of Texas, it’s big, sprawling and reeks of money. Walking around and people watching is almost as much fun as watching the game. We watch an indigenous entrepreneur surreptitiously selling t-shirts that said “f*** dilly dilly” on one side and “I’m a Texan, Bitch” on the other side. We did not see him sell anything, but it was not from a lack of trying. Eventually law enforcement showed up and he left with his inventory. We sat in the director’s club sampling chili, nachos, pulled pork and a multitude of good eats. The Texans’ slaughtered the Browns and continued a nine-game winning streak.

Monday Morning, we packed and depart for Biloxi where we had reservations at Harrah’s. In Tahoe I was a high limits craps dealer and I always stay at Harrah’s when I can. We arrived about 8PM and decided to explore Biloxi for a restaurant. We settled on Bubba Gump’s in the Golden Nugget. It was a really great dining experience. All of the people working in the restaurant were friendly and always stopped by our table to ask how we were doing, and they always had a smile. We went back to the hotel and I spent a couple hours playing craps and 21. The next morning we were on the road to Florida to stay at Gary’s son and daughter in law at their home in Oldsmar.

FAMILY SHORTS

Words of Wisdom from Carinda



A quick thought I'd like to share...

The past six months have been such a ride for me. The word "CHANGE" is what can best describe what my life has been like during that time. I changed my career, we moved, I became a fiancée, etc. We know that change is really hard sometimes to face because it's the unknown, but I've learned that change is the way of life. Without change we cannot grow. Without change we cannot experience life to the fullest. Without change we are left with the "what if" thought.

I'm not saying that I wasn't stressed about things because I was, but I always had to put myself in check when I had those feelings. It's not healthy for you. I had to trust myself and I trusted my partner too. Brett and I had to work together to embrace this new life that we are experiencing and so far, so GREAT!

Instead of making change my enemy I had to make it my friend. Embrace the change. It's now or never.

In the spirit of giving, Megan Riel-Mehan has started a fund at UCSD to help students from challenged backgrounds to pay for books, educational materials, tutors, travel home or to educational events, and other college needs that might not be included in a scholarship. If any of you want to contribute to this fund, here is the information.

Friends and family can support the Riel-Mehan Helping Hand Award by supporting The Hub – Basic Needs Initiatives by one of the following convenient methods:

Checks can be made payable to "UC San Diego Foundation" and mail it along with a note indicating the gift will go to support the "Riel-Mehan Helping Hand Award F-6578," started by Megan Riel-Mehan.

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To make a gift by phone, they can call me, Luis Murillo, Director of Development for Social Sciences, at 858-246-1812. Gifts can be made using MasterCard, Visa, Discover, or American Express.