

# R F N I L

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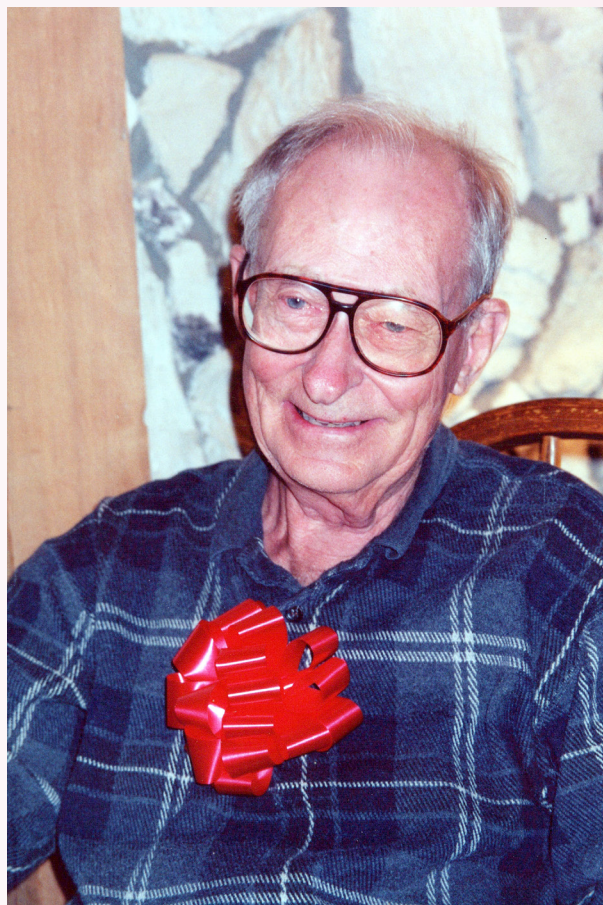
# 30 Years of RFNL



By Robert Riel

The year is 1991 and our father, Frank Riel who had been retired for some time now, decided to create a family newsletter. Now as many of you may know, he has never done anything like this before and his computer skills were well... let's just say not as good as a 10-year-old's is today. In fact, it had only been a few years earlier that he started using a computer at all. I think once he saw the benefits of a spreadsheet the computer went from a toy to a tool.

I remember just after he retired but was still consulting, he would hand draw complicated chemical compounds to attach to his hand typed reports. One day while I was visiting, I mentioned a program called DesignCad that would be extremely helpful in his work. I installed it on his computer, (yes it was a bootlegged copy) and showed him how to use it. The program was very intuitive, and he caught on right away. He soon realized that not only could he draw diagrams with it, but he could create these things called text boxes and actually type something in them. I should point out that the text boxes the program had were basic at best. In fact, you could do the same thing with a typewriter except on a computer you could use backspace and insert to do your editing. From that point on, Frank was producing his reports on a computer.



I'm not sure when he got the idea for a newsletter but somewhere around April 15, 1991, he published the first edition of the Riel Family News Letter. Every part of the one-page edition was created individually in the cad program. The title, header text area, and each story were created separately and then printed (on his old dot matrix printer that might print a line every few seconds). Next, he would cut all the parts out and past them on to a single piece of 8 ½ X 11 paper. Then down he went to the local copy store (most likely a Safeway back when they had a machine for use at \$0.25 a copy) and he would run off enough to mail to all of the family members. Keep in mind that at that time, he only had to send out 10 to 15 at the most.



As I mentioned above the first edition was a single sided, 1 page edition. It included stories on Margaret being published in a book about young writers, the first of many runny nose department reports, Vacations news from the Sorems, A birthday calendar and short blurb about the first edition which was as follows:

This is the first issue of what we hope will become a regular event in the Riel family. Our objective is to help everyone keep up on what is going on in the family. In order to be successful we need input from everyone. Happenings, events, etc, relayed by note or phone are solicited from all.

I'm fairly sure that if you asked him at the time if he thought it would still be published, every month, without exception, for thirty years, he would have said "no".

It should be pointed out that back in 1991 cell phones were not common and all they could do is make calls. Fax machines were just starting to catch on, email was nonexistent for the general public and there was no social media or internet as we know it today.

The second edition was a two pager! Well, it was a single sheet but printed on the front and back! It featured the first picture of any kind published by the RFNL and it was of Kristy, with an accompanying article announcing that she had earned the "Good Citizen" award from her school. Interestingly enough, the last few editions of this year's RFNL, announced similar awards for Kristy's kids.

What I really enjoy is that he kept everything that was submitted to him. He would pack them up with a copy of that month's edition in a large envelope, labeled with the edition number and date. I love the fact that I can still go back and read the handwritten reports submitted by family members or friends. The ones from Francie and Bruce are always among my most favorites.

**RIEL FAMILY NEWS LETTER**  
VOL. 1 NO. 2 MAY, 1991 PRICE 1 CENT THE COPY-FREE TO FAMILY

**EASTER CELEBRATION BIG SUCCESS**  
Easter Sunday 1991 was celebrated at home, starting at 11:00 am, and everyone was there except for the Hartman bunch, who were away in snow, hunting eggs. The usual buffet lunch was served, including turkey, ham, candied sweet potatoes, broccoli (Richard's special blend), several salads, bread, rolls and a lot of other goodies. Bob G. did an outstanding job of carving the turkey, and has been awarded that job on a permanent basis. After lunch was served the traditional easter egg hunt, organized by Carol, Margaret and the others was enjoyed. Children, and some adults lunched on the lower patio, and eggs were cleverly hidden in the bushes, under tables, and in Bob R.'s socks and grandpa's shirt pocket. Selected eggs contained two one dollar bills, (not new), and to the best of our knowledge no eggs were overlooked. As a matter of fact, some left-over eggs from last year were found. Francie and Jose had to leave early, but Uncle Alan took charge of Brett and Bryce. A good time was had by all, and we look forward to the next family party. We all missed Birdy and Company, but we received the following news flash on their Easter celebration.

Laguna Mountains - By RFNL Reporter Birdy Hartman - The Hartmans missed everyone on Easter day because they were away on their own little adventure to the snow peaks of Laguna Mountains. The kids were so excited to finally see snow for the first time. Michelle exclaimed, "It was fun! I liked making snowballs and snowmen." Craig said, "I liked snowball fights and sliding down the hill on my belly." Scott declared, "I thought it was GREAT! When I taste it, it tastes great, too!" Curtis reported, "I thought it was fantastic! My favorite part was the snowball fight. We covered the guy in the next camper in snowballs. He tried to get us with his shovel, but we were too fast. So he got back in his camper and surrendered." We were afraid that the Easter Bunny would not find us because we were so far away from home. Luckily, in the morning we awoke and found four Easter baskets, in the cab, filled with many goodies. We also noticed Bunny tracks in the snow, proving that he indeed had come! Curtis also thought it was important to report that the Easter Bunny must have first come to our home because when we got home, we saw bunny tracks outside our door. Thanks Easter Bunny... wherever you are!

**NEWS FLASH "DAD FINALLY GETS SNOWED APRIL 1ST"**  
Laguna Mountains - By RFNL Reporter Francie Castro - Although it took several years to "zing" Dad, it was well worth the wait. Remember all those years that Dad told us it was snowing every April 1st and we all fell for it (at least I did)? Well, this year I had him convinced I was snowed in, near the Laguna Mountains with no tire chains. It took a couple of calls and collaboration from Listy, when it was all said and done, revenge was sweet! I'm sure Dad would love to fill you in on all the details, (Editors comment - forget it) so give him a call soon! By the way, I am throwing out the gauntlet to any of you to pull off a similar stunt next year. (Editors comment - fat chance) One rule only, snow has to be a part of the April Pools joke. Good luck! (Editors comment - you will need it!)

**BUNNY NOSE DEPARTMENT**

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RFNL002

Bruce Hartman recently underwent orthoscopic surgery on one knee. This procedure is fairly simple, compared to the older methods, and Bruce was out of the hospital the same day. Get well soon, Bruce!

**KRISTY GILLINGHAM**



**GOOD CITIZEN AWARD FOR KRISTY GILLINGHAM**  
We learned recently that our own Kristy was honored by receiving the weekly school "Good Citizen" award. This award is given to the student having the best all around record of responsible behavior and good reports from all classes, during that period of time. She commented as follows; "Once upon a time there was a girl named Kristy, and she won the Good Citizen award. She got a blue one, her favorite color. Kristy had to stay in after school to get the award"

Like many others the newsletter was truly how I got my news about the family. I would look forward to its arrival in the mail every month around the 17th (mail took longer back then getting from mission hills all the way up to Mira Mesa where we lived). The whole family would read it as soon as it arrived. In many cases phone calls would start circulating around the family to further discuss the family news. I believe this was Frank's real gift to the family. It kept us connected and close at a time where it would have been very easy for the family to slip apart.

In coming editions this year, I will tell you more of how the newsletter got to where it is today but for now, I would just like to remember Dad and I believe he is happy knowing that the newsletter is still going strong but more importantly that everyone in the family is still supporting it and by extension supporting each other.



# Carol Get's an Ace

By Listy Gillingham

The Riel Golfing family is moving along, and it seems every week we have a new triumph on one hole with a surprising outcome which makes up for the other holes, where we fumble through with a few extra shots. Regardless of the outcome, the Happy Hackers are getting better and slowly getting to a point where mom and dad would be proud. The faithful six (Listy, Birdy, Carol, Margaret, Ed, and Bob) have found a home at Mission Trails Golf Course. This article is about the triumph of the ever-elusive hole-in-one that everyone can likely cite a time they were close, but few ever sink the ball in one shot.

Carol broke the odds on March 29th having all of her golfing siblings around to watch it (unfortunately, Coach Bob Gillingham was stuck home

with a window replacement crew). Carol gives her detailed account below to explain exactly what happened:

“Hole number 7 is not a Carol-friendly hole. With a large patch of weeds at the bottom of the hill and halfway up the hill to the right a teeing area (thank goodness there is a net protecting people from me) and a putting green at the top of the hill across the path, makes for lots of potential errors. Yes, there is a fairway in the middle, but I have never hit that. I either hit the weeds, where Bob has miraculously found many of my balls, or hit the net, or once I even almost hit a player, ironically the player happened to be David Gillingham, (better to hit a family member than a stranger). I have hit it far enough to hit the pin, but never straight.



This time, while standing at the tee, I'm thinking...I'm not going to hit it to the right so I turned a little more left than usual, checked in with Listy on the club choice (BTW the club is a Listy hand-me-down and is my favorite one), Birdy made sure the tee was right, and I heard Margaret say, use your hips. I knew right away I hit it well, it sounded good, I was so happy it went straight I wasn't thinking anything else! Then I heard Listy say, that's going in the hole. It was hard to see up the hill, and I really didn't think it did, as I thought it went past the green, but I would have been happy just hitting the green. Which by the way, I don't think I have done that yet either. When we all got to the top of the hill, we couldn't see the ball on the green...it was in the hole!!! I really could not believe it, and still found it amazing. It was so fun having my family around me with mom, dad, and Francie looking down, could one of them helped? Ha-ha the only disappointment was my trusty coach Bob wasn't with us.

Me, being the least likely to hit a hole in one, makes me feel my loving sista from above was playing her April fools trick on her family!! Thanks Francie!! That one was your best one yet!!"

Carol got applause from the golfers finishing the first hole who saw it go in and reminded her that she had to buy us a round of drinks for everyone as tradition states. So, after the 9th hole, Carol stopped at the cart and bought us all a drink to help celebrate and seal the deal of making the hole in one official with the right fanfare! Congratulations Carol!



# A look back at our family 30 year ago.

By Robert Riel



30 years ago, Karla and I had only been married 8 years, but they were busy ones. We moved from Ocean Beach to a brand-new home in Mira Mesa. I remember moving and all I took was a stake bed truck from work, Eddies pickup and my pickup. I remember thinking all of our worldly possessions fit in three trucks. Katy came along shortly after we moved in and then Brian a few years later.

Work was good and I graduated from my electrical apprenticeship in '88 and by the time the newsletter got started I was running the service department. Karla, in part due to health reasons, became a stay-at-home mom and kept the kids in line. Unfortunately, she suffered from a virus during her pregnancy with Brian that left her heart operating at about 30% of normal. In fact, the doctor told me when I asked about the long-term prognosis (I specifically asked what it would be like 5 years from now) "she most likely will not be with us 5 years from now". Talk about your sobering moment! Fortunately, as we all know she is still here 30 years later. I once reminder her

doctor what he had said, and his answer was "really! I said that?"

Getting back to 1991 it was a rough time with Karla's condition. I can remember coming home only to find that she had been rushed to the hospital after collapsing in the bathroom (remember there was no instant communication back then.) Additionally, it was time to have Katy start kindergarten, but we found out that in Mira Mesa it only lasted a few hours, and the average class size was around 60 kids. This did not sit well with either of us. This was a very depressing time, and I knew I had to give Karla something to feel good about.

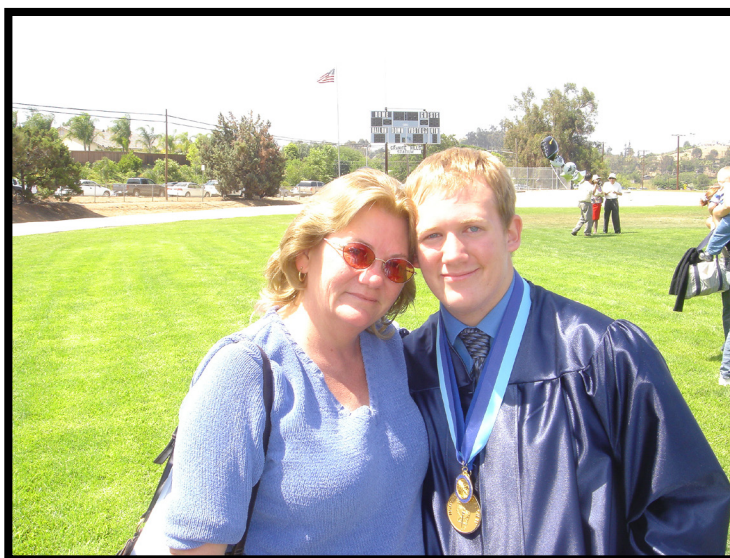
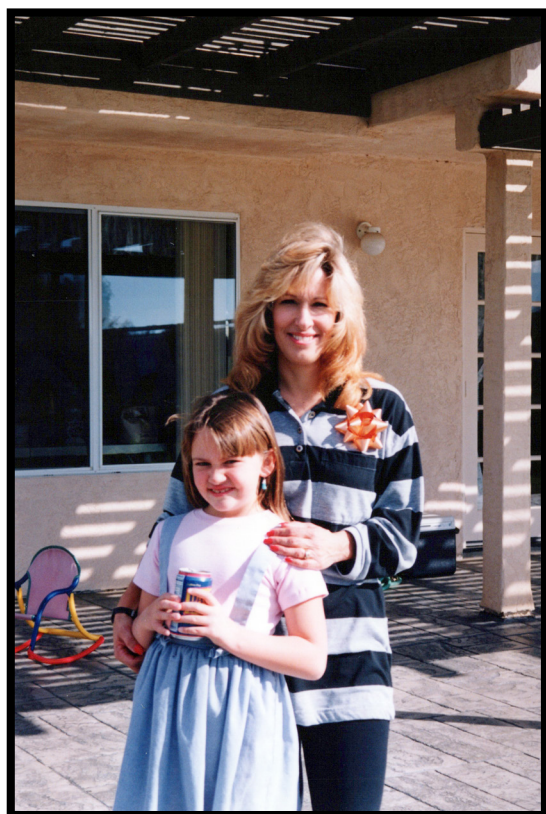




So, why not buy a new home in a better school district? We agreed and started looking. At first, I didn't want to move east of Interstate 15, but everything was so expensive that we expanded our search to the east county. We learned that Alpine had a very highly rated school district and would soon be building a new high school. Although we went out to look at one development, we stumbled upon the home we live in today and made an offer within a week. The October edition (#7) of the RFNL reported our move to Alpine and in September we will have lived up here for 30 years. Guess what? They are still talking about building a high school up here!

It should also be noted that in January of 1991 the first of what has become many, Riel Bowls was held at Frank and Edith's home on Lyndon Road. (If it were not for COVID, this year would have been the 30th Riel Bowl.) I think once Dad saw our new home, he got a great Idea because he asked me to host Christmas that year, which as many of you know turned into a 20 year run of Riel Bowls.

I can't even imagine the last 30 years without the newsletter. This truly is a gift that keeps giving. Thanks to Dad we have a history that can be shared over and over again!



## Birdy Reflects on the RFNL

I cannot believe that the RFNL is 30 years old! Funny thing is that I also cannot remember a year without it. It has been such a fun addition to the story of the Riel Family that I have always looked forward to reading what is new in the lives of my siblings, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews, children, and my own grandchildren.

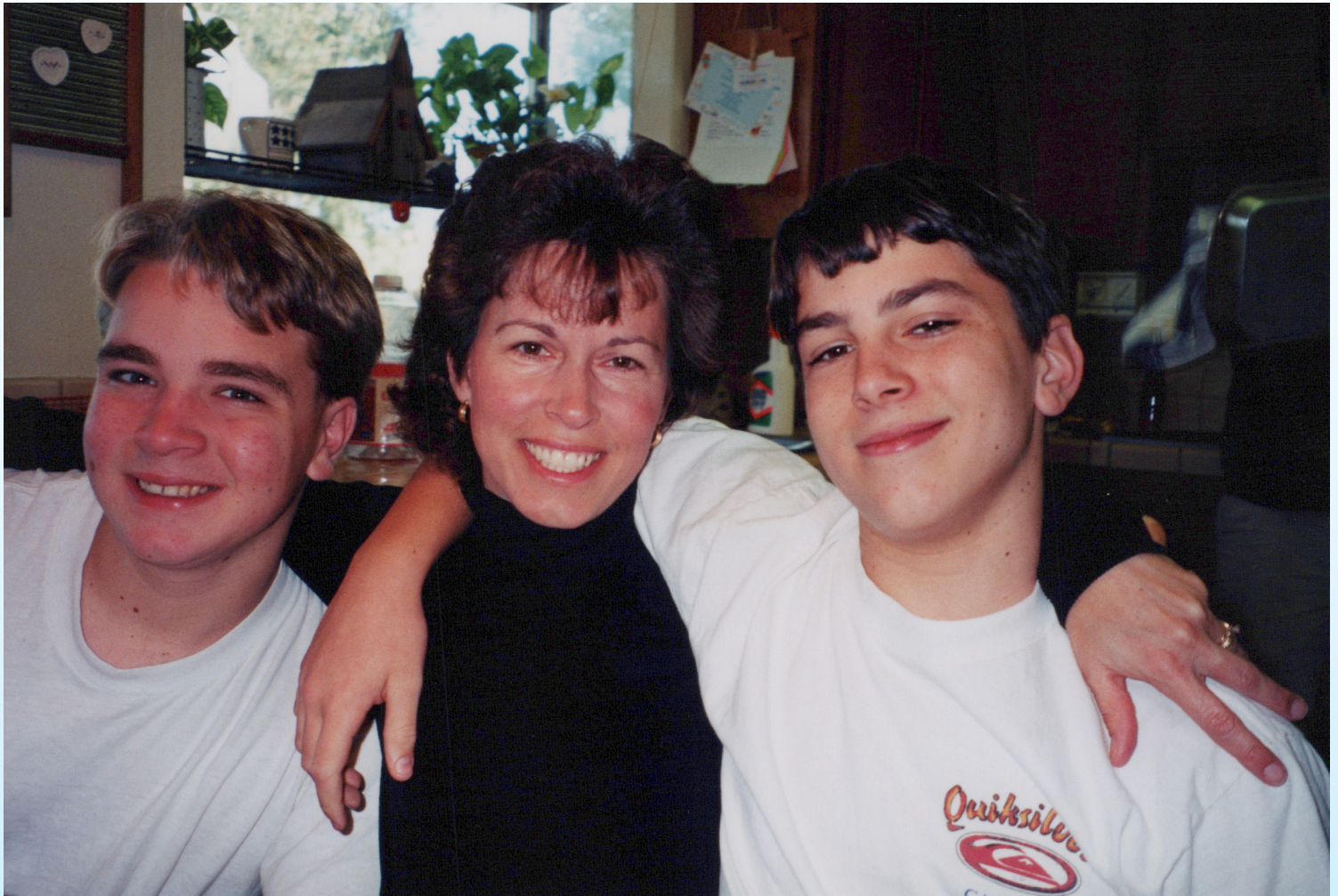
As our family has continued to branch out, these newsletters connected us with rich stories and proud moments of accomplishments. Some of my most treasured memories were sitting with my mom and dad at lunch coming up with ideas for future articles. He was like a hound dog looking for the next bone to bury. And it was always so special when our dad would call and say that he wanted to interview you for a story. He would carefully record each interview and then craft the article into something that made us all want to read.

My dad became a wiz on the computer, adding photos and cell blocks. It was never an easy process as he aged. But he kept pushing his brain to learn new techniques and computer challenges. There were times he was ready to kick that computer to the curb as it failed to produce the look that he was trying to create. But my dad was never one to give up. I can remember stopping by his house on my way home to show him how to find a photo he had lost or place the words in the right spot for his for-



mat. When you walked in the door, he would be in his office with that frustrated look. And then you would show him how to cut, paste or move that stubborn box and his mood would instantly melt like chocolate. Then he would dismiss you, and he got back to his work with the sense of urgency for his deadlines.

He never missed getting the newsletter out by the 15th and Robert so expertly has continued his dream with the same commitment to excellence. I can remember carrying my newsletter to work to show them to people. It was with such pride that I would explain how my 70-, 80- and 90-year-old father was the editor and creator of these monthly masterpieces. I love how our families' histories are well documented and cherished by all. Thank you, Dad, for loving us so much that you wanted to keep us together as a family with this amazing document of stories. Thank you, Robert, and Margaret, for keeping the dream alive. Not many things get to last 30 years. You continue to make dad proud, and we love you for it! Cheers to 30 years!!!



# What the 30th Anniversary of the Riel Family Newsletter means to us:

By Carol Benisch



Catch the News celebrates so much more than the simple idea of family tidbits and pictures! It's more of the Greater Riel Family Space-Time Continuum, Back to the Future 4!



Little did he know when he began to mail out little monthly black and white newspapers to each family 30 years ago, Dad was actually tying together generations of this huge, diverse and fascinating group in an ever expanding universe. What started as family updates of little kids playing ball, starting school, getting awards, acting in plays, acquiring pets, having minor accidents and illnesses, vacations, new homes, construction projects and numerous HUGE holiday get-togethers, now continues with our own children, grandchildren, great nieces and nephews, cousins, and other relatives, these far flung segments of family overseas. Some moved to another city or even on another coast or continent. We've connected with and visited with family members all over the state, the country and the world!

If one were to stick pins on a map as the family grew, moved, or expanded, it would be quite the spider web by now! And due to Dad's many hours and years devoted to this all consuming project, and then to see it continued by Robert and Margaret and their many helpful contributors, all we can say is THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, and here's to many years more of this fabulous family and their exploits.



# The Ocean Beach Riels

By Ed Riel

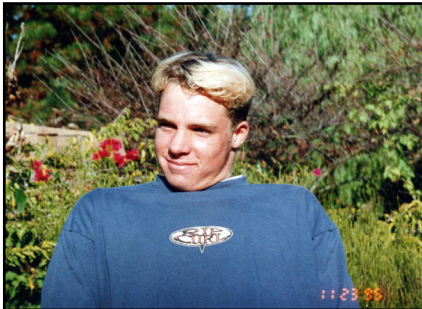
30 years ago, were in what might be called our mid-family life. living in our almost completed home for over a half dozen years. A home that was to be the first I ever started and perhaps the last I will ever complete (if it is ever completed). All four of our boys were at OB Elementary where Jan worked at the library as she went to night school for a library tec. degree. Beach, camping, zoo and sea world; whatever extra time was found, there were enjoyable ways to spend it.



When Dad first started talking about a monthly news letter it seemed I never had time to finish anything, "and you want to do a newsletter every month always being completed on the 15"? Yes, and Dad would often admonish, "no, we cannot put it off to the 16th or later". So. thanks solely to his pestering it happened every month, with or without help from us adult children.

But as the years rolled on it was nice to have a place we could show our children how proud we were of their achievements in school, sports and theater. We could recount our family times; birthdays, anniversaries, trips and even runny noses. It was our Facebook before there was a Facebook. And it is better than social media because it does take time. Time that shows we care about each other and our ever-growing family.

Thank you, Bob and Margaret.





In 1991 Frank "JJ" Riel was eight months old and as new parents we were beginning to understand what parenthood was all about. Liz was back at work as lead teacher at Oak Park elementary School and I was the CFO for Contreras Brothers Construction Company.

We lived on La Marque Street on Soledad Mountain with our two black dogs, nibsy a 12 year old cockapoo mix and Betty a pure bred debarked English Cocker. I was just starting to play racquetball again. I was also playing softball on the San Diego Housing Commission's team.

It was a brave new world with a child that was a gift from God.



# The Gillinghams

By Listy Gillingham

Hard to believe that we have been reading family news about each other for over 30 years! I bet you if you had told Robert, that he was going to take over this task for Dad someday, he would have likely responded with a definite NO answer, but here we are, and the newsletter lives largely due to his hard work and professional publishing skills that helped move the newsletter into the next century with its own website. Margaret also appeared on the horizon as an active member who helped manage the circulation among friends and family that Dad had included over the years.



The Gillingham clan was complete in 1987, so by 1991 we were as follows:

Bob Gillingham turned 35 and Listy 32  
Kristy turned 8  
David turned 6  
And Annie was 4.



We were living in San Carlos and all of our kids were attending Francis Parker School. Bob was the principal and Listy was a math teacher at Stanley Middle School in University City. At the time, getting the newsletter was a great way to keep track of the growing family. It also brought Dad into the family mix more as he became the editor for almost every article. The runny nose section was always about kids who were staying home sick and got to spend the day at Grandma YaYa's. Those sick days typically included treats and special surprises. But everyone knew never to ask for mom's help on Tuesdays as that was golf and bridge day which she never missed out on.

Dad was newly retired and began the newsletter as a new hobby. To help support his news gathering, he started joining Birdy, Listy and mom who met on Saturdays for a day of shopping and lunch on some occasions that would eventually lead to a special weekly Saturday gathering with many siblings down the road.



I think I'll always remember getting a rare call from Dad telling me that I was needed to write a story about something he heard about that I was doing (or someone in our family had done) that included a rather short deadline as the newsletter date was never missed. Saying you were too busy with work was never allowed and if you didn't produce it quickly enough, you got another phone call from Dad that usually included using your formal name "Elizabeth, where's my story?" I also will never forget the day he decided to interview me when I was appointed to be the vice principal at Scripps Ranch High School. Most news article information was taken over the phone, but this one had to be done in person and included a tape-recording device and prepared questions prior to the interview. He set it up a time to meet prior to our lunch meetings so he could have my undivided attention. Walter Cronkite would have been proud of Dad's approach to get the news right while adding a personal touch.

I loved reading about everyone's travel adventures and seeing pictures shared over the years. It's like Dad was on the verge of creating a Facebook account for all of us to view each month. We heard about play productions for Tim or the Benesch clan, sporting events for the various grand kids, a recap of a family holiday event (always written by Dad), new job opportunities or awards someone was being honored with, classroom accomplishments (like science fair entries from Megan or Michael or writing awards from a school assignment), and trips that took the family across the world to some very exotic places. I remember looking forward to the annual crossword puzzle where I would gather all my old copies so I'd be ready to win the competition by answering all of Dad's obscure puzzle questions.

I also remember shopping with Dad to pick up an endless supply of printer ink as he would complain about the costs going up and what a rip off "cheap printers" were as they lured you into becoming a consumer of these expensive cartridges. I also remember trying to help out by asking people to supply Dad with stamps and envelopes for the year, to help ease the distribution. The newsletter popularity was growing which meant he was busy printing and stuffing many envelopes which he addressed by hand for many years. Doing Christmas cards once a year gave me some insight into this task and made me wonder how he kept doing it for so many years. When I asked innocent bystander Bob what he liked most about the newsletter, he responded "I loved hearing about everyone's personal accomplishments because it helped keep the family together!"



Bruce Hartman was a lover of the newsletter, because as his health began to falter, he used the newsletter to help him cope with his own journey. He shared his personal health struggles, but he also created special stories by inviting a nephew or niece over for a special dinner interview that he would prepare (he was an amazing chef). He shared new hobbies and showed us his creative side through his humor and special way of putting his thoughts on paper. Francie followed suit with her stories as well. It was a unique club to be part of but it served its purpose in sharing some news that wasn't always positive to share but important for everyone to know.

Thirty years later, and we're still holding our family together, during a pandemic that forced family gatherings to a halt, through this newsletter. I'm excited to host a family reunion this summer with the family as we all get vaccinated up. But I'm also appreciative that I know more about our family than most people do. I have a sense of everyone's birthday month, I know what almost every grandkid does for a living, and how many kids they each have. I feel connected to everyone because of everyone's effort to share a story or two over time. My hope for the next 30 years is that our next generation of kids feels the same love of the newsletter that we felt growing up. I appreciate every story written by them and hope it continues over time.



# The Family News...

By Margaret Mehan Riel

For thirty years, the Riel Family news has rolled off the presses. I often wondered what started Dad on this mission. I remember a folder that he shared with me many years ago. It contained a number of yearly reports by the Southam family (Great Grandma's family) following a large family reunion written by Frank Riel, Sr, his Dad. According to the pages, Frank Riel, Sr. served as the secretary to the Southam Family Reunion Committee. There were three things that I remember from these yellowed sheets which now are over a hundred years old.

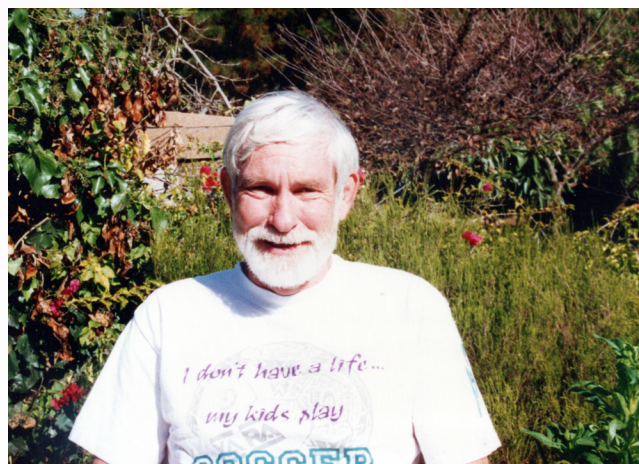
Frank Riel, Sr reported on a game where kids played against the adults with adults winning, again. Then he said that, of course, the adults always won as he, an adult, was the one writing the report. This sounded so much like something his son would write so many years later that I had to laugh.

There was a listing of the expenses for the meal that was shared by the family and he said that some questioned the expense of six cents for ice cream for the kids but he thought it was fine. Clearly ice cream has generations of history in our family

The last thing I remember was the announcement of the birth of his second son... our dad, Frank J. Riel, Jr in 1918.

I don't know how many more years these family reunions continued and if Dad had any personal memories of the gatherings as he would have been very young. I did know that he valued the family memories of them. I can't help but think that he may have been conjuring up the memories of his own dad when he became the editor of our family newsletter in 1991.

When Dad started the newsletter, our family consisted of Bud and Margaret, and our two happy, curious, and energetic kids, Michael (10) and Megan (7). Now in 2021, our family has grown. Michael has gotten married enriching our lives with his running, soccer and life-mate, Ashley who brings with her wonderful ties to the MacMitchell family. And Michael and Ashley have



created two of the most wonderful grandkids we could have hoped for, Emily (7) and Addy (4). Megan brings Alan, her salsa dance, and bike riding partner to the family. And then there is Megan's dog, Andy--always a favorite with Emily and Addy.

We enjoy each of the new editions of the newsletter and the stories that circulated in the family. In the beginning, it was a struggle for Dad to move from his CAD program to MSWord but after years of phone calls and tech visits from a number of his kids, he mastered the technology and published, printed, and mailed the four 1-page files each month documenting the growing pains and joys of a large clan. At Christmas, Francie and I collected Jan-Dec and made 22 copies so that each grandkid would each have their own copies of the newsletter. First, they were in binders and later on CDs, and then we found ways to save copies online, and later Robert would provide server space.

Over the years Dad called on different family members to help in different ways. I helped with the writing; Ed was the page 4 Editor; Bruce stepped up to help as Associate Editor interviewing people and running a special column; Annie had a regular travel column. When it became too hard for Dad to continue, Robert became the new editor and expanded the RFNL from 4 pages to many more pages with studio-quality photos and engaging family stories. We are all so grateful to Robert for his dedication.

As the 15th of each month approaches, we feel the pressure from the heavens to print the Riel Family Newsletter. A lovely tribute to a family that values its connections.





By Brett Sorem



To predate the infamous Riel Family Newsletter is to know your pretty darn old. There are those of us who are B. RFNL and those lucky ones who come after. I honestly cannot remember what happened in my life before Frank put ink to paper with the first edition. I just consider that period a casualty of predating inventions that could remember my past for me.

Speaking of inventions, The RFNL also predated the tech boom, which has changed the way we read up on our families' current adventures. Rumor has it that Mark Zuckerberg got his hands on a black-market copy of the 10th year anniversary edition of RFNL which inspired him to create Facebook. One of you are the guilty culprits of breaking the 5th rule of RFNL; Thou shalt not make duplicate copies of the RFNL. I have my suspicions, though I will keep those close to the chest until proof is discovered. Or maybe I'll make a movie about it in the vein of Knives Out.



My most treasured article was from the early years. One of the parents caught an ESPN Top Ten play worthy catch in Robert's yard. Though I don't have the photo, it is evident I left my sibling in the shadows and completed an acrobatic catch to win the game. I was then given a trophy by all the aunts and uncles and selected as the most promising of all the cousins to succeed in the real world. Some of you seem to be turning your heads as if to say that's not really what happened, well good luck trying to sift through the dense history of our family's past, I can never remember my damn Riel.org password.

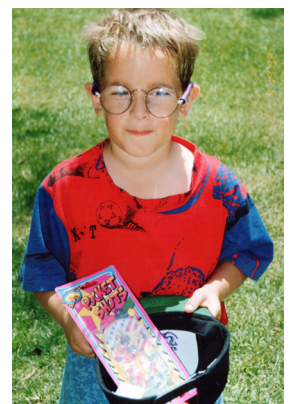


As time passed, and I actually started reading the newsletters instead of just quickly scanning for photos of me, it gave me a sense of pride being a part of the family we all are together. I won't mention at what point in my life I started actually reading them, but let's just say college in my rear view window and slinging long islands to Bay Area Boomers who still thought they were hip took up most of my waking hours.

Now that I am old, wrinkled and married, and am tired of scrolling through Facebook, I can say that the RFNL continues to remind me how lucky we are to have such a great family. At the break of dawn, when I get that email notification, I'll crack it open. The fresh smell of the PDF file brings a grin to my face. Fresh with anticipation, I'll take a sip of last night's bedside water and squint through the newsletter. These days I'm not flipping for photos of me dusting my brother on the football field. I enjoy a dive into each of your lives detailing your families' latest milestones.

I am thankful to Grandpa for starting this tradition and for the aunts and uncles who work hard to keep it alive. We may not get as many readers as the Tribune, but if I had to put money on what publication will outlast the other, I'd go all in on the RFNL every time.

Proud picture looker-atter(and reader)  
Brett Sorem





Happy 30 years, RFNL!! I feel beyond blessed to be part of a family that keeps tradition alive, reminding us the importance of family and connectedness. I cannot thank Uncle Robert enough for the time and energy he has put into keeping Grandpa's vision alive. I know many contribute regularly to the newsletter but at the end of the day as Aunt Francie once told me, "There might be a lot of people in the car but there has to be a driver." Thank you for being the driver, Uncle Robert! The work you and Grandpa put into the RFNL is priceless for Evie and all the great grandkids to stay connected to their roots. I love you and love this large, crazy family that Grandpa and Grandma started way back when. Annie





