

R F N I

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Giving Thanks for Family



The Riel Clan celebrated Thanksgiving at the Riel/Mehan as has been the custom for many years. The Riel Mehans provided the three main courses -the traditional turkey, Alaskan salmon filet and two Tri-Tip steaks. The guests provided the rest of the appetizers, salads, side dishes and desserts. Michael manned the grill cooking the Tri-tip to perfection. Margaret and Bud flatten the turkey trying a new recipe that almost worked. With a bit of adjustments next year should be wonderful. The salmon was baked with an Alaska-inspired sauce.

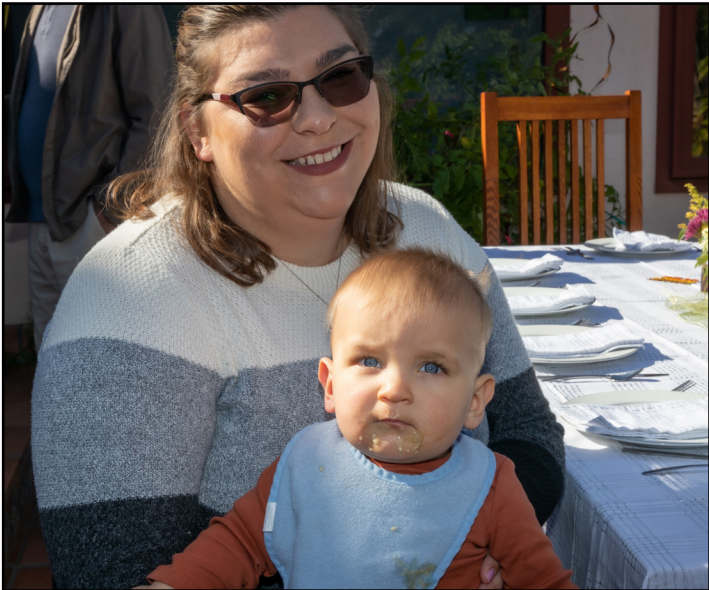
It was the first Thanksgiving without the Benesch family; however, they were all together celebrating in New Zealand. And while we missed them, we were happy to have most of the Sorem family back in California celebrating with us as well as most of the other Riel families.



The third generation built and played with a push car and played soccer carefully navigating around some newly dug tunnels from an uninvited gopher guest.

Robert brought his photography tools providing the accompanying photos as well as many more some of which, you may be seeing on Christmas cards. It was a wonderful afternoon, and it is always great when we have the opportunity to see the family. Next up...

RIEL BOWL XXXII







HAPPY
Thanksgiving





The Benesch's do New Zealand - Again!



By Jeff & Carol Benesch

Jason decided that 3 1/2 years was long enough not seeing his brother Dustin, Lauren and their 4 boys now settled in New Zealand. So as an early gift to Jeff and Carol, he bought airline tickets to fly us all to Auckland for the Thanksgiving holiday. So, on Sat., Nov.12th, we rented a van to drive us all to LAX for our long flight to New Zealand. The trip included not just Grama and Grampa, but Jason, Chavva, Noah, Madeline, and Camden.

Weirdly, even though we left on Saturday, we missed Sunday completely and arrived on Monday, Nov. 14th. The Benesch kids were great travelers as they slept for much of the 13-hour flight across the dateline, and the broad Pacific Ocean.

Upon arrival, Dustin picked us up in a rental van, this one to last us the entire 12 days we were there. We went straight to Dustin and Lauren's place in Snell's Beach, about an hour north of the Auckland Airport. After much greeting, cousin bonding, some snacking, and playing in their expansive yard, Dustin guided us to our nearby B & B, called a Bach in New Zealand. We stayed our first 6 days in this modern and lovely beach front home, which fortunately had a lot of lawn, a lovely view, and was only about 5 minutes from Dustin's home. We did some extensive grocery shopping and the next day, hosted both of the 2 families for a great evening meal and much merriment in the yard and beach.

Though our Bach's differed in their offerings and supplies for the family and kids to use, it is safe to say that our 2 weeks were filled with games of football, rugby, much baseball (Holden and Grayson play on organized teams in the Auckland area), kickball, cricket (quite popular in NZ), board games, hours of hide and seek, Jenga, jigsaw puzzles, NZ Monopoly, chess, boogie boarding, frisbee throwing and much, much more.





I would be remiss in not including playgrounds and play structures as part of our almost daily routine, as New Zealand has many of them, and the kids played many hours at 6-8 different playgrounds, some very elaborate, for hours at a time. Some were near the beach, and others in nearby towns and communities.

We also spent some great times at several local beaches where boogie boarding, body surfing, football playing, picnics, and bird chasing were enjoyed by all.

NZ has millions of birds, of many different variations, and being near water most of the time, we viewed dozens of different shore and wading birds. New Zealand also has more sheep (millions of them) and cows than people, by a large margin. We saw many cows, sheep and lambs up close and personal. We spent an entire afternoon at Sheepworld, a close-by attraction, where we witnessed sheep shearing, baby lambs, sheepdogs doing herding, alpacas, donkeys, pigs and newborn piglets (so cute!), miniature horses, emus, deer and much more. The kids all got to help feed the baby cows and sheep, and other animals. It was a great deal of fun for all.

Carol led lots of hikes along with beach and trail exploring, particularly at our second Bach, where we stayed in the northern coastal town of Matapouri. It rained (really hard) for much of our stay there, but we had a lovely house, about a 100 yard hike to the dunes and the beach, and there was lots of exploring to do. Shell gathering, and some crab capturing were parts of many of our beach excursions.

On our way back from Matapouri, we stopped at Big Cats Wildlife Sanctuary, a large place of about 8-10 fenced enclosures where we saw a variety of big cats, mostly lions, up close. Some other cats were tigers and leopards, though the lions stole the show.



We also spent a day at the lovely Auckland Zoo, which the kids enjoyed greatly, even though we had to dodge a bit of rain. Not quite the San Diego Zoo, but we did get to see kiwis, cheetahs (literally leaning on the viewing glass so we were inches away), many monkeys, birds, giraffes, rhinos, ostriches, and some other amazing animals. Camden loved the monkeys as they are his favorite! We finished the day at Charlies Gelato, a Snells Beach favorite and certainly enjoyed by the entire Benesch clan.

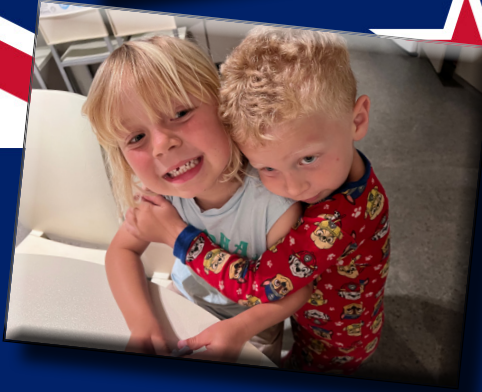


We spent the last three days at our large bach in Omaha Beach, a beach front community of large expensive homes, not unlike some parts of Del Mar. We again were just steps from the beach, but this home is where we had our great Thanksgiving feast and day of play. Marked by baked turkeys that would have made the Riel Clan jealous, we also had sauteed beans, cauliflower, cranberry sauce, twice-baked potatoes, yams, salad, and ice cream and Chocolate chip bars for dessert. After dinner, jigsaw puzzles, backyard ball games, board games, monopoly and other diversions lasted well after dark.



It was a great way to end our New Zealand adventures, and the next morning we headed for Auckland, stopping downtown for some fun sightseeing and a picnic lunch and other amusements, and then headed to the airport for the long flight back to California.







By Listy Gillingham

November is a great time to visit other cities if you travel before the Thanksgiving hustle and Tahoe is a wonderful destination given the ski season doesn't really begin until the end of the month either.

We booked a trip with our good friends, Kym and Doug, and enjoyed a stay at the Ridge in Tahoe which gives you a comfortable villa to enjoy as your home away from home for a week. It is a ski in and ski out hotel, but it also has other amenities which included indoor tennis facility which we used several times as it was a huge, heated tent where you could play quite comfortably both Pickleball and Tennis. There was also a great sports bar in the lodge which is where we enjoyed our first dinner, after making the 8-hour drive from San Diego. And each building had an indoor jacuzzi which we also enjoyed in the evening.

We loved hiking in the snow! Our first adventure was walking around South Lake Tahoe, admiring the lake the views with the crunchy snow and checking out the shopping area. It was a quiet setting and getting a seat around the fire pits was easy given there weren't many tourists in the area yet. We enjoyed seeing snow everywhere and getting accustomed to our new setting.





We checked out the casinos while also remembering our visit there with mom and dad back when I was in the 9th grade. We camped not too far away from where we were (mom and dad stayed in a hotel while Carol, Birdy, and I roughed it at a campsite). I still remember mom being excited about the dessert table and taking extras for “daddy.”



We brought our golf clubs hoping to get a round in, but the snow made that venture next to impossible. We were able to get a tee time in Carson City, but once we arrived, we were told they were not able to honor the reservation. So we spent some time on the range hitting a few practice balls and competing with Bob as he likes giving everyone a challenge to see who can get closes to whatever spot he picked on the range.

We drove through Genoa, the oldest settlement in Nevada and stopped at a bar which boasted to be established at the same time the town was conceived. It had several relics from the past that made you feel as though they really were authentic.



The next day, we head for Emerald Bay as we loved hiking there last year and wanted to see what it looked like with the snow. We grabbed our hiking poles to help keep us from slipping and got to walk through the trails covered in snow. The temperatures were a cool 35 degrees, but with the sun out, it made it quite comfortable.

The water was crystal clear and showed elements of looking green with the sun providing contrasting on the lake as we hiked through the forest. It was also beautiful to see the pier covered in snow showing off the lake in the distance.





On Thursday, we drove over to Reno for some shopping while Doug did a job and then headed back coming from the North side getting beautiful views of the lake as we returned.



Our coldest hike was in South Lake Tahoe on a nature trail that dropped you onto Nevada Beach. The temperature was about 19 degrees with a nice wind to keep it especially cold for us. We bundled up as best we could and followed the icy and snowy path towards the beach. Though it was cold, it proved to be worth the effort as the views were amazing and seeing snow next to sand was something I'd never seen. We stopped at the fire pit and had lunch while listening to a local singer play on the stage behind us.



The next day's hike was a similar experience, but we ventured west from South Lake Tahoe. We found a fun hike around Camp Richardson which led us to another beach that took us east towards the canals which I never knew existed prior to this hike.



We ended the week with a visit to Harvey's for a night of dueling pianos and gambling for Doug at the craps table. Doug thought it was funny to put in a birthday request for me "from Bob" to dance to Chuck Berry's "My Dingaling." In good spirits, we were called up to the stage and we got to do our own dance in front of everyone to our favorite love song. It was a great way to end the vacation and we look forward to our next adventure which will likely happen in December.



Kevin and Annie Visit New York

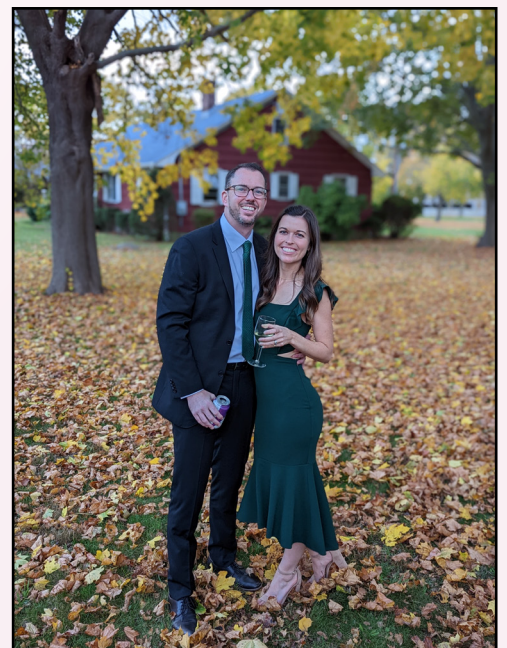


By Annie Mulholland

Kevin and I escaped to New York in November for a friend's wedding. We are SOOOO grateful to the grandparents and Keiths for taking on our two babies so we could be free and fun people again!

We spent the first two nights in New York City doing sightseeing, walking the neighborhoods, eating all the delicious food, and enjoying nights out without children! Some highlights included walking the Brooklyn bridge, exploring Greenwich Village and SOHO neighborhoods, grabbing delicious bites from Chelsea Market and, of course, pizza! We also got to explore a new spot on the Hudson River called Little Island. It's a floating park and was just sooo beautiful to walk around.

After a great time in the city, we drove out to a winery on Long Island for the wedding. It was such a beautiful setting in a barn amongst all the fall foliage. We also couldn't have asked for better weather- 70 degrees all weekend! Needless to say, it was a wonderful getaway with friends and reminded me of life pre-children. While we love being parents, there is something so refreshing about getting to travel and explore with no schedules, snack bags or carrying 20+ pounds of humans on your hips! I cannot thank our baby-sitters enough for the gift of the weekend away and am so grateful for the love and care they gave to our girlies! Who's ready for round two?!?





*The following article was sent to us by Jeff and Carol and appeared in the **Sydney Morning Herald** a few days ago. Congratulations to Dustin on being recognized as a leader of his profession!*

Fully loaded mind is the ultimate business tool, says the ‘MacGyver of finance’

Sponsored by CPA Australia December 12, 2022 — 9.58am

Described by his colleagues as “the MacGyver of finance”, Dustin Benesch is proof that there is no such thing as a traditional accountant – nor is there any one career path.

Benesch, who recently started as director of product operations for Visa in New Zealand graduated from university with a degree in psychology and a burning ambition to become a research psychologist – a plan that didn’t survive contact with the real world.

“After working in the field for a few months I quickly found that research was not for me,” he says. “But I really enjoyed the statistical analysis that went along with the research. From that experience I was able to gain an entry level position as a data analyst for a US domestic airline where I analyzed onboard catering sales performance.”

Over time the position grew to include profitability analysis, budgeting and forecasting, and eventually P&L ownership, he says.

After the airline he joined a start-up for a few years working to automate bookkeeping processes for restaurants, then a move to New Zealand, where he landed a job with Vodafone NZ as a finance manager. After six years at Vodafone, he left to take on his new role with Visa New Zealand.

“While my professional experience has been quite varied, accounting has always been part of what I do,” says Benesch. “Every position I’ve held required me to communicate financial performance to a diverse range of audiences. This required an understanding of accounting principles. I had to be able to explain profit margins, to forecast future earnings, and above all to communicate these topics to key stakeholders. “If I encountered something I didn’t understand, I would seek out advice from colleagues and supplement my knowledge with online learning.”

With the varied experience Benesch has it's tough to narrow down one specialty he possesses. "I was referred to as the 'MacGyver of finance' at Vodafone due to the varied roles I played. At a high-level, I help to align strategic direction with financial ambition," he says.

He says he "largely stumbled" into accounting. "It's been a product of the professional opportunities I've had and the continuous learning I've pursued. A previous mentor referred to my career as logical incrementalism - continuing to progress in my career with the next logical opportunity.

"Given my non-accounting degree and diverse experience, I've always had to explain and justify my accounting acumen and financial experience."

Benesch says his well-rounded experience outside his profession, as well as his rock-solid practical knowledge of business gave him an ideal springboard for entry into the CPA Program, which provides accounting professionals with a globally recognized designation.

"I've always found practical learning easier and more rewarding than theory," he says.

"Not only does the business experience provide context to the CPA Program, the material directly applies to my professional roles.

"I've learned things through my CPA studies that I've immediately applied in my role. It's a much more rewarding learning experience; much more so than I remembered from my university days."

He says continuing study throughout his career has been vital. "With the pace of change in today's world, especially with the advances in technology, I've found that continuous learning is one of the only ways to advance in your career.

"Whether it's becoming an expert in spreadsheets or obtaining an advanced degree, I've found that organizations reward those who work to gain practical skills relevant to their roles. "This has definitely been my experience, and the CPA Program has been a great and relevant incremental skill."

Benesch says a lot of people "associate CPAs with taxes". "That's the naive view I had at university, and one of the reasons I didn't pursue accounting in school. "Through my experience, I've found accounting and the understanding of financial information key to every aspect of a business, at least to every role I've had."

He says business leaders who understand accounting are the most successful, regardless of their position.

FAMILY SHORTS



From Mayor Jonathan M. Busch, Metuchen, New Jersey

Ribbon cutting today at Lotus River Studios located at 325 Main Street, which doubles as a yoga and karate studio. The owners, Miguel and Jessica, and their children were such gracious hosts and are so proud to be part of our Metuchen community.

Before the event, they took the time to explain how their business aims to provide a refuge for our community as people continue to bounce back from the pandemic. I was so impressed by their focus and dedication. Go get 'em guys!

From the Whole Family to Jessica and Miguel

Congratulations on this great endeavor. You are to be commended on wanting to be a vital part of your community and add to the positive and creative business ventures that will contribute to everyone's benefit.

