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Riel Family Visits Yellowstone National Park

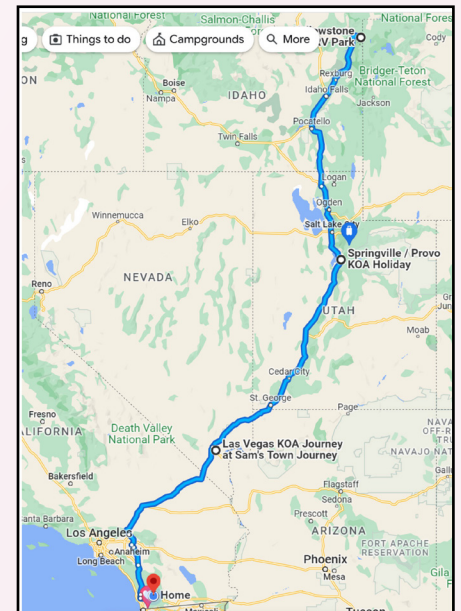


Yellowstone May Never Be The Same



As many of you know, Karla and I visit Yellowstone on a regular basis and since we didn't get to go last year, we planned a trip for 2023. During a pickleball session at Listy's house last November I mentioned that it would be fun for the family to join us. To my surprise, everyone was receptive to the idea. So, I made reservations for the trip and sent out our itinerary for others to copy.

As the weeks went on, travel plans started to firm up. Ed and Jan would take their trailer up following us in our RV. Carol and Jeff would ride with Ed and Jan. Margaret and Bud had a conference in Canada so they would fly in. Listy, who had to run in the Rock & Roll Marathon would fly in with Bob, Birdy and Lyle a few days later. Everything was set but as you all know, things change... Margaret's conference was cancelled so instead of flying Bud and her would drive with us.





A few weeks before the trip I published the [Riel Family Guide to Yellowstone and Teton National Parks](#) to assist in everyone's planning of the trip. Then on June 3rd it was off to Las Vegas for the first day of travel. Upon arrival and after setting up camp we all went to the casino for dinner at TGIF's. We toasted the start of our adventure and enjoyed a good meal. Mom, Dad, Francie, and Bruce were smiling down on us as they would have loved the idea of this trip. Carol even played a slot machine for Mom. (no, she didn't win anything).



The next day of travel took us to the Provo Utah area and then finally on Monday we arrived in Yellowstone. After setting up camp (cabins in the case of the Benesch's and Mehan's) we decided to make a quick trip into the park at around 5:00 in the evening. It was a really nice evening (sunset was at 9:00 pm) and we were treated to sunshine and bison with little babies in the west meadows. Everyone really enjoyed seeing the Bison up close and watching the baby bison play with each other.



We stayed in the park enjoying a beautiful sunset and by the time we got back to camp it was 9:30 and we had a lot of hungry people. No problem! Off to the Buffalo Bar (just a few blocks away) for a great dinner and plenty of drinks.



The next day and after a breakfast of scrambled eggs and sausage, we set off into the park for a day of hiking and exploring. Some of the group took a hike to Monument Geysers while others enjoyed Gibbons falls. Later we all met up at Norris to view the geyser basin there. It was a fun day, and everyone had a great time in the park. Later that evening we met up for dinner. Jan and Ed made hamburgers and we all ate at the RV.

On Wednesday, (the twins and company were due in that afternoon), we explored the canyon area with some hiking along the south rim and then viewing the Yellowstone falls from Artist Point. The area is called the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone for good reason because just like the one in Arizona which was carved out by the Colorado River, this one was carved out by the Yellowstone River. The river comes from Yellowstone Lake and flows north until it literally falls into the canyon. This happens right next to the canyon village area and from the many paths and overlooks you can view the falls drop over 400' in two steps (upper and lower falls) into the canyon below.





Oh yes, one other very important part about the canyon area. It has an Ice Cream Shop! Needless to say, all of the Riels smelled it out a mile before we got there so of course we had to stop. The excuse was there were nice bathrooms there and we could also fill our water bottles. And, there were some nice shopping opportunities but don't think for a minute that Ice cream wasn't the main attraction.

Meanwhile, Birdy, Lyle, Listy and Bob arrived at West Yellowstone and checked into their rented home. They spent the afternoon walking around the small town getting to know the lay of the land. It just so happened that their house was only a few blocks from the (now famous) Buffalo Bar and of course they wound up there to have a drink or two.

Once we all got back, we had dinner together in the RV, BTW, 12 people can fit in the RV fairly comfortably. The next few days went by fast with lots of hiking, sightseeing and of course driving around as the park is very large and it can take an hour or two just to get to where you want to go. We also enjoyed lots of dinners, drinks, Ice cream and some really good fudge provided by Jan and Ed. There was even a day dedicated to shopping in the small town of Yellowstone which the sisters took full advantage of!



For the most part the weather cooperated with us but we had a few rain showers once in a while. All in all, we had some good sunny times mixed in with some clouds which added interesting skies to the pictures we all took. We visited all the main areas and even made it out to Lamar Valley to see the hundreds of Bison that call the valley their home. On that one day we saw 6 bears along with countless Bison and Elk. On the way home we went over Dunraven Pass (almost 9,000') with snow lining both sides of the road.



On Saturday, we stopped at the entrance to the park to take our group pictures. It was fun to get everyone into one picture and then we took some individual couples' pictures just for fun. We spent the rest of the day hiking in the park but cut it a little short as the rain came in and made for a wet drive back to camp.



On Sunday Lyle and Birdy had to fly home as Lyle had to work the next day. Speaking of Lyle it should be pointed out that he did a great job hiking in the park. He told us that on the Monday before he left, his watch told him he had about 270 steps for the day. On a single day in the park our hikes added up to over 27,000 steps for Lyle and he wasn't even sore the next day. Nice job Lyle!



Now back to Sunday. Listy and Bob also checked out of the Yellowstone area to relocate to Jackson, Wyoming for three more days. They took Birdy and Lyle to the airport there and then checked into their hotel. Later that day the rest of us drove down (about 125 miles) to visit the Grand Tetons and join up with List and Bob.

We met at the Lake Jenny area and hiked over 6 miles around the lake. We saw Moose and



even had an encounter with a Bear (see Margaret's article). Then we drove to an overlook of the Snake River Valley. It started to rain so we decided to go to Dinner in Jackson at one of our favorite places, Bubbas BBQ. The food must have been good because there were no leftovers. We all said our goodbyes to Listy and Bob then set off on a two-and-a-half-hour drive back to Yellowstone.



Sunday and Monday were filled up with more hikes and visits to the park. Carol and I even got up early (5:30 am) to see if we could catch the animals in the park as they started their day. We saw a Black Bear and some Elk along with the ever-present Bison.



On Tuesday, Jeff, Carol, Bud, and Margaret had to leave for Idaho, Carol and Jeff will go on to visit some friends and Margaret and Bud will be dropped off at the airport to fly over to see Megan. This left just Ed, Jan, Me, and Karla. We will be staying until Saturday when Jan and Ed will start the Drive home and I will drop off Karla at Jackson airport to travel home. Karla could only take two weeks off of work so I will continue on for a few weeks before I get home around the 4th of July.



However, on Tuesday Ed and I decided to go out on a hike that should have only taken a few





hours but turned into over five because we got stuck in a bison back which lasted for over two and a half hours. Undaunted, we continued on to our hike and really enjoyed it (even if I got us a little lost for a bit). A little over six and a half miles later we returned to our car just before it really started to rain.



That night we enjoyed hamburgers and chili with cheese and onion toppers (also sour cream for Ed and I). We then watched a movie while enjoying popsicles for dessert. Today (Wednesday the 14th) Ed and I got up early (6:00 am) and despite the heavy rain went into the park. We were rewarded with a sighting of two grizzly bears that were fairly close to the road. Yes, it was raining, but studs like us never let that bother us. We also saw pelicans, a heard of elk with newborns, Bison and lots of geese.



I want to thank everyone for coming as it has made this trip to Yellowstone my most memorable ever! It was such fun sharing my love for this park with my family. I hope everyone enjoyed the trip as much as Karla and me. Even though I have a few more weeks to go I know nothing will top this experience!



Bear Travails

By Margaret Riel

Robert, Bob, Ed, Carol, Listy, and I went on a glorious hike around lake Jenny in the Grand Tetons National Park. We had already been treated with a sighting of a female moose with her baby in the distance. Later, while we were on our way to see how the trail would transport us past the thundering waterfall that we had just viewed from a turn in the trail. Robert was leading, and we were all looking forward to the waterfall crossing.



In my peripheral vision, as we approached the bridge, I caught sight of a black object on the top of a small hill about 25 feet to the left of the trail. Had I seen it move? I turned to face it expecting to see a black rock. At that same instant, a medium-sized bear raised his head, and I realized I was staring at the face of a bear. As we eyed each other, running through my mind was first, that I was now closer to a bear than I should be; second, how would I know if this was a timid black bear or an aggressive grizzly bear; and finally, what would I do if he charged at me. Gathering my wits, I screamed "Bear!" as loudly as I could and started to mentally review the instructions on how to deal with bear encounters.

Listy was next to me and staring at him with the same adrenaline-charged wonder and fear. A question I had been asking myself all day was could I play dead in the face of a charging bear? Carol hears me scream bear and does what every true photographer would do, she goes for her camera. Bob is ready to defend us if need be with bear spray, but he is struggling to find where on his belt the can was situated. Fortunately for all of us, no reaction was needed. The scream and parade of humans and maybe Carol's large camera focused on him startled the black bear who turned to the side and moved quickly through the bushes to find a better crossing point that would not require passing through this parade of noisy humans blocking his regular path.

Carol managed to snap a few pictures of a retreating bear. As we crossed the waterfall, we could look down to find that the bear had found a spot free of humans to cross the road and was now getting a well-deserved icy drink of water at the base of the waterfall. He would then find a way to return to the uninhabited part of the park where he would not have to deal with any more annoying screaming humans.

Editor's note: Since Carol and Jeff are still traveling their article will be in next month's edition

Listy Finishes the Rock and Roll Marathon for the 25th Time!

By Bob Gillingham



It's a safe bet Listy Gillingham had no idea in 1998 that as she was nervously awaiting the start of the very first Rock 'n' Roll marathon, she would still be running the event 25 years later. Though 1998 wasn't her first marathon, it was the inau-



gural race for the nascent Rock 'n' Roll corporation, soon to explode into cities and countries all over the world. In time, the RnR organization would recognize the unique physical and character attributes necessary to show up year after year, and the term "legacy" was coined to describe what has now whittled down to fewer than 52 runners.



So, no longer 40, but a robust hottie of 65, Listy lined up on June 4 of this year to face the 26.2 miles once again, including a brutal climb up interstate 163 at the 21-23 mile mark.

She and her good friend, Cory, had been training together, and planned to pace each other through the event. For 10 miles or so, all systems were go, but unfortunately, Cory has some stomach issues, and she really HAD to go. Being the friend that she is, and following a certain runner's code, Listy waited for Cory, encouraging her through the ensuing miles. It should be noted here that in the 2022 version of this event, Listy placed 3rd in her age division, and would have placed second were it not for stopping to kiss her adoring husband just yards before the finish line (it was worth it!). So, understanding the possibilities if she ran well, and being Listy (think competitive), it was a true act of friendship to slow her pace, support her very good friend (a charter member of the Running Club... but that's another story), and pass up the chance to podium.

Notwithstanding her assistance to Cory, Listy still finished with a very respectable time, looking like she could turn around and do it again. Interestingly, her daughter, Kristy, and her husband, Seamus, both of whom ran this year's half, have signed up for the 2024 marathon which will be their very first. There's something about that 40th birthday!

Finally, showing true grit, Annie Gillingham, Doug Farkas, and Kym Farkas all ran the half marathon despite not having had the opportunity to do much training. Their support of Listy and her amazing quarter-century accomplishment will be cherished by Listy forever. And yes, you might have guessed that Listy has already signed up for the 2024 race. Gotta love her!



I'm writing to ask for your help with my soccer team's participation in the AYSO National Games 2023. It is a 7-day tournament in Irvine where we play against teams from all over the U.S. We've been working hard to get ready for this event and we're super excited to represent our region. This is the first time that a team from our region is participating in the event.

The AYSO National Games is a big deal and we want to show everyone what we're made of. But it takes a lot of money to make it happen. We're looking for donations to help us cover the costs of travel, lodging, and registration fees. Anything you can give would be awesome!

Any money donated will be used towards lowering the cost for the entire team, which is important because we have families with multiple players on our team.

Please contact my mom, Ana Hartman, if you'd like to donate at anaRhartman@gmail.com or (619) 573-2345. Thank you for your consideration and support! - Corbin



By Listy Gillingham



Braeden and Liam Keith Earn Medals

It was a great way to cap off the little league season because this season the boys were all in playoffs for their baseball teams. A special awards assembly was scheduled to honor all the players from each team who demonstrated great sportsmanship for the entire season. No MVP awards or any other awards were given, only a medal to the player who showed enthusiasm for the sport, dedicated themselves to hard work ethics, listened to their coaches, and helped with their teammates. Both Braeden and Liam Keith got the medal for their teams.

Braeden's coach sent his comments about Braeden letting them know that he was selected, where Liam's coach left it as a surprise for them to hear about it at the event. Braeden's coach stated, "Braeden has a great attitude, and he is my team's winner of the Sportsmanship Award! He brings an awesome energy to the team, and he is always attentive and receptive to coaching. I love it." The baseball league's commissioner commented on the important role these players have on the team as they set the example of what a responsible athlete looks like on and off the field. We are so proud of the Keith brothers for demonstrating their fine leadership qualities! Kudos to Kristy and Seamus for their influence as well.





Twins Turn 65 in Hawaii

By Listy Gillingham

It's always fun to share a birthday, especially when it includes a week's stay in Hawaii! Lucky for us, Bob, Listy and Birdy (with Lyle's birthday date happening earlier in May), got to share a whole week of birthdays in Kauai!





We landed on May 28th which got us there early enough to gather provisions for the week at Costco and Safeway, which still left us enough time to laze around at the beach on the fancy cabanas Birdy and Lyle had reserved for the whole week. We had dinner out because we were certainly too exhausted to cook after a rough day of travel, shopping and unpacking.



Our second day got us out moving with a golf game scheduled in the morning at a beautiful course across the street. Lyle brought his new clubs and got to show us his new moves while playing with them. Bob and Listy brought Ed-sized bags (which were much easier to travel with) and managed to keep in the game with a limited selection of clubs. After that, we had some drinks and margaritas to celebrate the great round and then it was off to the beach to cruise again (our favorite pass time).



We hiked two days on paths that connected from various points. They were coastal hikes which made them both spectacular but included some walking through some high forests as well. We got to see a turtle farm, which was interesting, given you can see sea turtles in the water any time, but these were technically high desert tortoises which made them very special. Both hikes were long treks and tired us out enough to stop and sit at the beach and read again!





On Bob's real birthday (the 31st), we went golfing near Lihue, on a coastal course that was also very beautiful. We were lucky to avoid the rain for the most part and enjoyed getting a second day to play while we were on the island. We found time for sitting on the beach and celebrating a wonderful dinner while looking at the ocean. A perfect day for Bob!



Unfortunately, Listy and Bob had to leave before our actual birthday because of the Rock and Roll marathon, but with every day feeling like a celebration, it worked out just fine. Birdy and Lyle got a romantic date (which included going to a spa and another round of golf) on the 3rd and Listy got a day of leisure to help prepare her for the race. Special thanks to Birdy and Lyle for sharing their condo with us! It will be a birthday that we will always remember!







Father's Day June 18, 2023

By Rich Riel

Father's Day is a special day to celebrate the love between a father and his children.

The single greatest influence in my life was my father. He set the standard on how to be not only a great father but an even better grandfather. With eight children, Grandfather Riel had a set routine for Father's Day when he was a father. It began on Sunday by going to church at St. Vincent's. After mass Dad would decide what we would do to celebrate the day as a family. It was always a special day to me because I felt we were doing something dad wanted to do with us as a family.

I think that his favorite way to spend Father's Day was for all of us to go to Presidio Park have a picnic and play touch football. Every Sunday whether it was Father's Day or not, no matter how we spent the day there were three things we as children knew was going to happen; Church, a family outing and ice cream sundaes for dinner.

As a father and now a grandfather I can understand his choice. The real joy of parenting for me is experiencing childhood first as a child than as a father and if you are lucky as a grandfather.

Being a father starts with an onslaught of feelings, the most powerful is the love for your child. From the moment your child enters the world, your life is a roller coaster in a way that defies explanation. It is a Disneyland ride that starts with shock and awe. It is an adventure taking years that pass with highs and lows and ups and downs.

The best part of being in a family with a newborn child is coming home and immediately holding the baby. Holding my son I would often dream of what he might become. I was always afraid that I might not be good enough as a father for him. The most comforting part of being a parent for me was kissing my son good night. It meant another day had passed where I had been a father and nothing bad had happened.

Every Father's Day since Grandfather Riel joined God in heaven 10 years ago; I go to his grave side at Miramar and say a rosary for all of us. I am now bringing roses that I grow as a reminder of his love for all of us.