

# R F N I

September - 2023

Issue No: 392



**Bryce,  
Bridget,  
Kieran, and  
New Baby  
Make 4!**



# Big Surprise for Big Al

By Bryce Sorem

Big Al recently visited Bridget, his favorite son (Me), and his glorious first grandson King Kieran. We had planned a trip to Maine to enjoy the majesty of nature, and a few rounds of golf with Bridget's blessing of course! Little did Big Al know, Bridget and I had quite the surprise for him when he arrived at our front door. I'm sure most of you know by now since we told Birdy weeks ago, BUT BRIDGET IS PREGNANT!!!!!! Due January 29, 2024. Big Al couldn't have been more surprised and jubilant of the news which started our trip off terrifically!



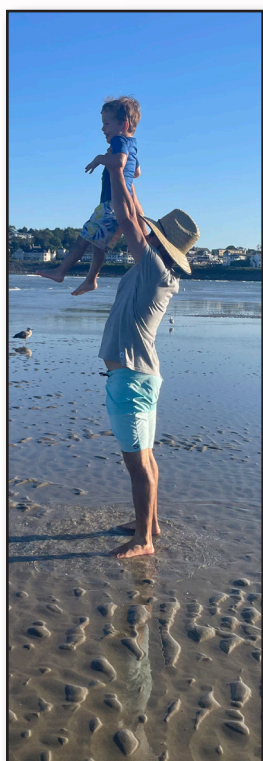
The next morning, we wasted no time and traveled to beautiful Portland, Maine. There was no shortage of Lobster Rolls and other fishy delicacies. We ate at Luke's Lobster, and Duck Fat (my fav), and sat down at many craft beer establishments. At the beginning of our

time in Portland, Kieran found out that not only can you eat lobster, but you can buy one in a stuffed animal form! So, after 4 hours of him asking for one, he got his wish and now has a cool Stuffed Lobster to add to the collection of friends back at home.



Leaving Portland was sad, but we traveled just a short drive south to Kennebunkport and Ogunquit. Both are small beach towns that are absolutely gorgeous!!! The Bush (of Iraq War fame) has a summer compound there and were actually staying there while we were in town! More lobsters were consumed, Big Al petted a lot of dogs, Kieran did a lot of running around till the wee hours of the morning, and pool and beach fun were had. Kieran was a big fan of chasing all the Seagulls, but unfortunately, we were unable to catch one.

Thanks to our lovely, beautiful, amazingly talented, glowing tour guide, Bridget, we had the best time in Maine! She scheduled a Lobster boat tour, where Kieran got to hold an actual Lobster!!! She also took us to an Oyster farm, Glidden Point, where we got to see the operation, and I got to give a nice little lesson in shucking oysters to the fam. We will definitely be back to beautiful Maine, and highly recommend you all visit as well, but you better come visit us first!



# Summer Vacation

# Summer Fun 2023

By Carol Benesch

Summers have always been a special time for our family. Longer days, warmer weather and vacation time lends itself to lots of good times and fun memories! Thanks to grandkids, summers are once again fun times! Having Jess, Miguel, Ben, Sofi and Matty here and the local grandkids make for fun-filled summers!





This Summer included, The Zoo, Scripps Aquarium, Science Museum, Comic Con Museum, Sea World, Sesame Street Water Park, Universal Studios, Hollywood star search, friends, trips to the beach with kayaks, paddle boards, and boogie boards, lunch with Aunts and Uncles, pickleball, lots of Lego building and arts, painting, crafting, costume designing, trampoline and dancing, and a special trip to Brett and Carinda's where Brett helped Ben build a skateboard and taught him some beginning tricks!! He loves his board and continues to practice his skills so that one day he can be a pro like his Uncle Brett, and lots of days swimming at Jason/Chavva's house! We all had such a good time it was hard when it was time for everyone to start school! It gives us all something to look forward to when summer rolls around again.

# BACK TO SCHOOL



Ben, 7th grade - Maty and Sofia, 4th Grade



Cora Hartman is going to a new school. She is in the 4th grade at St. Cornelius.



Noah is in 4th grade, Maddie is starting 2nd grade, and Camden joins the Transitional Kindergarten program all at Hill Creek Elementary



Emily is in 4th Grade and Addy is entering 1st Grade at Skyline Elementary School



Evie is starting pre-school at St. Andrews



Corbin starts High School at High Tech High Mesa and Josie is in 4th grade at High Tech High, Mesa Elementary school.



Liam is in 6th grade at Marshall Middle



# CLASS OF 2023



Braeden and Riley are in 5th and 3rd grade, at Jerabek Elementary School.



Kenzie is starting pre-school at St. Andrews



Zeke is at the Museum school starting in 3rd grade



Kenzie and Eyie checking out the School



Michelle's kids: Rys is in 3rd grade and Owen is in 4th grade at Kate Sessions School



Blake is in the 4th grade, Quinn is starting 1st grade, and Coral is going to prekindergarten



- Holden 12
- Grayson 8
- Lawson 6
- Paxton 5
- Home Schooled



The Kieth Boys are ready for School



# Brian & Drew go to Burning Man



By Brian Riel

It's that time of year again, end of summer, when thousands of people make their way out to the Black Rock Desert in Nevada to attend Burning Man. Some of you may remember I have been making the trip since 2012 and I have taken various friends and family members with me to experience it. Drew first made the trip with me in 2019. Drew was hooked after his first visit and wanted to return. COVID halted the 2020 and 2021 burns, so no one could go, and our big move to Seattle in 2022 prevented us from going. So, this year was special as it was a big return trip for us. We also brought our friend Brandon along as he has been wanting to go for some time.

What many people probably don't know is that Drew and I don't just go for the party. Ever since 2017, I have been involved in a group called The Bureau of Erotic Discourse, or BED for short. We are a support group to the Burning Man organization under the Emergency Services Department. What we focus on is teaching consent to various burners and camps. Consent is very important because it not only focuses on adult interactions but also asking before borrowing people's things, giving a hug, taking a photo, or sharing someone's content to name a few examples. BED first got started in 2004 when someone was assaulted at Burning Man and the organization had no way to handle it. A group of people came together to help prevent these things from happening. Over the years it has grown, evolved, changed leaders, and still operates to this day.





There are 6 main leads, including Drew and me. We spend all year planning our camp, events, and outreach so we can educate as many burners and camps as possible. It's not easy and involves a lot of hard work, but as a thank you to all the leads, Drew and I got some fancy Dekt (Kristy and Annie's Hat Company) hats made for the 6 leads!



Our outreach has really changed over the years. The original way we reached out and still utilize to this day, is by placing posters on the porta-potties around the event. Everyone attending the event uses porta-potties so they will see our message, what better way to spread the message? BTW, Burning Man does not allow anyone to post anything on the potties except for us.

Our next method of outreach is to send our volunteers to other camps to conduct a workshop and teach the campers about consent, communication, boundaries, and rejection. But even with our 50ish volunteers we can only reach maybe at most 25% of people. So, to help reach more people we created the "BEDucator" program. This is where camps can have one person from their group sign up to take our free online course, then give their camp the consent workshop, as well as help the leads create a consent policy and problem/resolution strategy.

With all these methods we still also hand out buttons (the designs change every year, so they have become collectables), and have our info inside the official Burn-



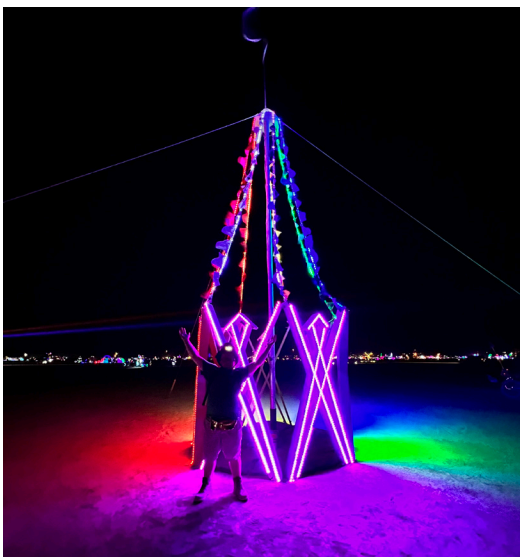
ing Man survival guide and event guide. We are also a “Safe Camp” so if anyone needs help, they can come to us and get the tools/resources they need. We can even escort them to Burning Man’s medical, law enforcement, or advocacy teams to get them what they need.

Doing all this at Burning Man has been very rewarding and successful! So much so that we have been taking it out to regional burns and soon to the regular world as well. We are an official non-profit organization and have started larger fundraising events and may even start applying for grants. Teaching consent at places like other festivals, colleges, and small communities has the potential to really change the world we live in.

This year’s burn was very hectic to get ready for as we had some major leadership changes within the group. Drew and I were also buying a house and moving while also helping to lead the group. But overall, it was a great success! We had our biggest outreach ever; we even had some people come to our camp asking for our help and we were able to step in and make some great changes for other camps. Our group of campers were enthusiastic and participated as much as they could. Even when it rained for the last few days, we all hung out in camp, playing games, dancing, watching movies, and sharing amazing meals. The art we got to see was beautiful and the experiences we had were fulfilling. Now we get to take a break and by January of next year, we will start the whole process over again!

For those of you who saw Burning Man on the news, don’t believe anything they say. We did not get Ebola and the CDC did not lock us down. We did not run out of food or water and didn’t need Biden to fly us in supplies. We also did not need the National Guard to dig us out. We as burners know that it may rain and that when it rains the playa turns to mud that you cannot travel through. We come prepared for this every year, and we were just fine. Spirits remained high, we had a blast, and we all made it out safely.

If you’re curious about BED please visit our website [www.bureauferoticdiscourse.org](http://www.bureauferoticdiscourse.org)  
If you’d like to donate to our group please visit <https://givebutter.com/BEDfundraiser>



# Blake Turned 10 on September 6th!

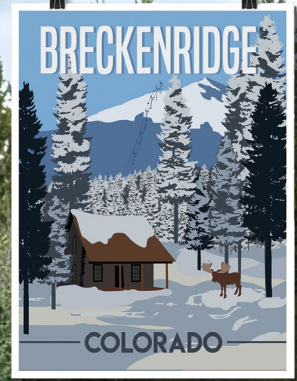


He is one of a kind! Loves being different, creative, artsy, crazy, and loud. He's into punk and hip hop, plays the drums and keyboard, skateboards, and boogies down in the ocean. He loves his tacos, burgers, fried chicken... his love for good food and cooking is impressive. I could go on and on... but I'll just stop and say how awesome he is and how lucky I am to be his mom. It's amazing watching you grow!



# Colorado Summer Trip 2023

By Listy Gillinham



We often find great travel deals as part of being Marriott Club timeshare owners that during the off-season are hard to beat. Breckenridge, Colorado is one of those places that shows up often during the summer as a fun resort place for a bargain of a price, so we decided to try it out with Holly and Rex Pantan.



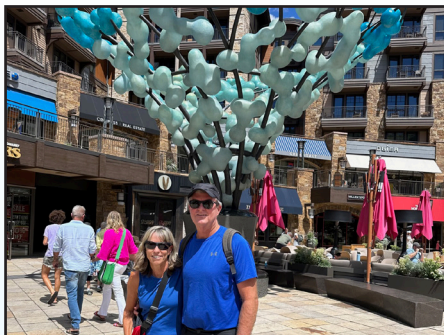
We flew to Denver and decided to go see Colorado Springs where Bob's family lived for 2 years, near his Grandparents at the time. We stopped to dine at the beautiful Broadmoor Hotel which is just as iconic to Colorado as the Del is to San Diego with many important celebrities staying there over the years. We then cut through the mountains to Breckenridge which is one of many beautiful ski cities in Colorado with a fun center city town and amazing hiking to be had all over the Rocky Mountains. We pulled up to the Grand Timber Hotel and couldn't be happier with our location and accommodations. Set at an altitude of over 9,000 feet, it took a few days to get our lungs ready to master breathing regularly as we climbed stairs or a hill, but we finally got used to it.

On our first hike of the week, we decided to start off right behind our condo, and trek up to a lake and along a brook that fed the lake. It was hiking at its finest as we found our way around a few of the ski lifts that service the skiers in the winter. Unfortunately, coming down the hill, Holly jerked her knee by accident which made all physical activities a little harder to manage from this point on. She did continue the walk and managed to put in close to 5 miles that day, but her knee was not a happy participant. We ventured downtown in Breckenridge and enjoyed shopping and stopped for lunch at an Irish pub to get us ready for our adventures next month in Ireland.





The next day, we drove to Vail where we stopped for shopping at the local Farmer's Market. Rex bought Holly a knee brace and some CBD ointment to help her with her injury which seemed to help her manage walking with us a little better. We then headed to Beaver Creek to check up on Bob's parents' old condo (a 4-story, ski-in and ski-out resort-like residence we used to travel to with our kids when they were younger). We stopped for lunch at Bob's Place, a pub near the famous "Bob Bridge" where it has posters of all the famous Bob references and people you can think of. Not sure why they missed Bob Gillingham next to Bob the Builder, Bob Cats, and Bob Denver (to name a few). Beaver Creek was as pristine and beautiful as it was when we were last there. We had fun looking through the various shops and restaurants that had increased by at least 400% and checking out what the area had to offer.

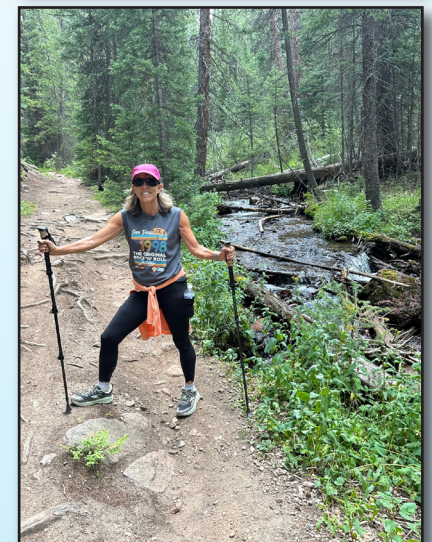
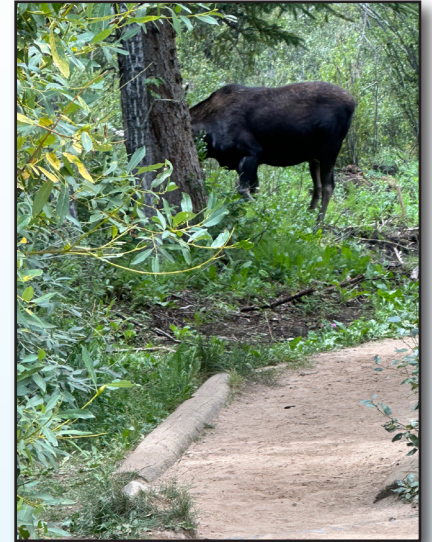


The next day, we decided to let Holly rest her knee, while Bob and I went hiking on the ski trails of Breckenridge. We found a trail that took us to lake and then lead to the very top of the mountain where the gondola would take you for free, if you didn't want to do the hike (It was about 8 miles round trip). At the top was another beautiful lodge and a trail that would take you to the next town (Frisco) which gave us our idea for our next hike. We met up with Holly and Rex after the hike and took the free shuttle into town for a lunch time break. We did more shopping (lucky Rex and Bob) and had a great relaxing evening at the resort sitting by the pool.

We played pickleball at the local park nearby which proved to be fun even though it involved waiting 10-15 minutes after each game due to the popularity of the game. We met many other travelers (mostly from Texas to escape the heat) and enjoyed hearing about their experiences as we waited for our paddles to make their way into the next game. We enjoyed it so much, we decided to play another morning as well, and returned on Thursday for another round.

The hike to Frisco proved to be a fun adventure. We walked down to the Gondola (which offers free travel during the summer) and rode it to the fancy resort at the top. We then hopped off and started what was labeled as a 8 or 10-mile hike (depending on the trail you took at the end). I thought it was all downhill, but it turned out to be rolling up and down hiking, until the very end. We loved the trees and waterfall features as we hiked on a trail that was not very crowded at all (we saw a few trail runners and bikers). As we just passed the Rainbow Lake, which was close

to the finish, we met up with some hikers who told us there was a moose in the middle of the trail which meant no one could go on. We got within 75 feet of the moose, so we could see it, but not really too close so that we weren't safe and didn't disturb it (hence our pictures aren't great) but he had a full set of some dangerous looking (you wouldn't want to duel with him) antlers. Thus, after a few minutes of oohing and aahing, we turned around and went an extra mile or so, to take another trail to get us into the town of Frisco.





Once we got into town, we met up with Rex and Holly for a well earned lunch. The hike ended up being closer to 11 miles, and we were very happy to sit down and enjoy a few beverages and food with our friends at the end. Frisco was a fun old mining town with lots of rich history and of course, some fun shops and restaurants. We were really lucky with the weather, although we got a few sprinkles in the middle of the walk. We mostly enjoyed our temps. In the low 70's.



On our last full day, we decided to go for a bike ride around Lake Dillon. We rented some great bikes that had lots of gears to help us climb in the higher elevations. It seemed like a perfect day, but as we headed south around the lake, we noticed the collection of a few dark clouds and some strong winds picking up.



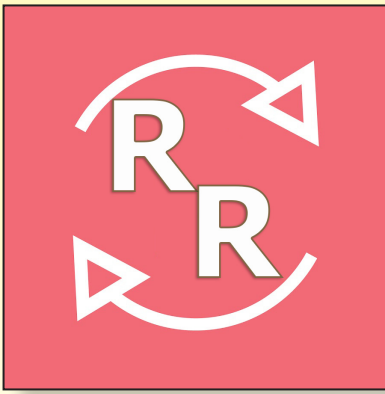
We forged ahead and to our surprise got hit hard with a rainstorm that dumped a lot of big drops (not like San Diego) in large quantities all



at once. We stopped and pulled over to change into rain gear and be under some trees, hoping it would stop soon. After waiting about 10 minutes we decided to head back north in hopes of moving out of the storm to a drier part of the lake. That worked, and we continued riding to the town of Dillion which was not too impressive, but the lake was beautiful. We finished our ride, and though we were slightly soaked, we all agreed it was a great adventure, especially due to the rainstorm!

Friday was our travel day, which meant getting back to Denver. We decided to add a stop in Boulder, Colorado to see where Ashley and Michael set up in their first home. The area of Boulder was beautiful, and we loved walking down Pearl Street to enjoy their downtown neighborhood. After that we headed to the airport where we managed to return our car and checked in quickly. Unfortunately, we had a roughly a two-hour delay which wasn't so fun, but we did make it back before the tropical storm that was coming to San Diego, so we were happy about that! All in all, it was a great trip, and we hope to visit Breckenridge again next summer!





# Riel Repurposing

Do you have books, toys, or clothes that your small ones are finished with? Is there a fondue set, pasta machine, or kayak begging for more regular use? Here is the place to help them find new homes. Speaking of homes, let's start with some toy homes currently looking for new lots. The following items are currently at the Riel-Mehan home. But we would like to make this a regular column so if you have possessions that need new owners--this is the place to list them and hopefully they will make some other family members happy. You can also post requests...like my child is walking and could use some push toys... or looking for some size 5 boy jackets.



The first house is a lovely vintage Playmobilie Victorian 2-story doll house looking for a family to move in. Ignore the pink cup--it was holding small parts



Maybe you are looking for 26 alphabet block puzzles (one sq. foot each). The letter squares can be snapped together in any order and the letters can be taken out and put back. A great game for a preschooler learning the alphabet. It can also protect a rug or floor during messy activities that kids like to engage in. Or it can mark off an area for reading or tumbling. It is perfect for any toddler's home.



This is a Vintage Playmobil Set #3770, Colorado Springs Station is just the toy you were looking for. It is a retro Playmobil set missing some parts, but if you are into playmobile, you might already have connecting parts and Playmobil people to arrive at the station. It would love to have some kids to play with it. I have seen the parts for sale on eBay.



If you don't already have a toy family, this 2-story doll house might be perfect for you. It comes with family members and much more-- a swing, a sandbox or water play area, a car, furniture, and even a six-pack of soda in the kitchen. Everything you need for hours of play. It also features outside light, a ringing doorbell, and the sound of a flushing toilet (note the doll on the toilet). This is the perfect play station for a kid or grandparents' home. The front and back platforms slide in and out for more compact storage. It stands about 2 feet high. It is very cute!!!



## BIRTHDAY THOUGHTS

By Rich Riel

This month Frank and I will have birthdays. Frank will be 33 and I will be 76.

Every birthday is special. It happens only once a year. From the moment we are born we move forward in time by celebrating annually the achievement of living another year. A birthday is a shared experience. It is a time to be with the ones in your life that have been there since you were born. I can't remember when I was born, but I will never forget Frank being born.

Frank was a miracle baby. He was born after science told us we were incapable of having a child without artificial insemination. We had given up the idea that we were going to be parents. We decided that after years of fertility clinics and egg timers that we were going on a thirty day vacation to the east coast.

The vacation started in September of 1989 by attending my Citadel 20th year reunion. We stayed in Charleston with Gail Baker. I met Gail at a tea dance at the Citadel in September of 1965. She and I are still friends. Liz and Gail bonded and we stayed at her home in the guest bedroom for about a week.

While I was at the reunion one of my brothers, Al Jacobs, from "O" Company invited Liz and I to spend a few days in his antebellum southern mansion that survived Sherman's civil war stroll to the sea. Instead of renting a car we decided to take a bus. We

left Charleston on a greyhound bus bound for Macon Georgia. It was late October, the South was preparing for winter. The Spanish moss was everywhere and the trip was as pretty as it was uneventful.

We arrived in Macon and stayed in the home of Al and his first wife. There was not much to do in this small southern town so we walked in the neighborhood. Al was remodeling the house and it was a tremendous project. Liz enjoyed all the antiques that are everywhere in the South. Taking the bus back to Charleston we stayed a couple days more with Gail before renting a car to continue our trip up the coast.

Going up I-95 we stopped at Colonial Williamsburg. It is a living history museum in Williamsburg, Virginia. It preserves and interprets the colonial-era city of Williamsburg, which was the capital of the Colony of Virginia from 1699 to 1780. The museum covers 301 acres and includes over 600 restored or reconstructed buildings, as well as 30 gardens. It was like walking into the past. The employees were dressed and trained to create Williamsburg as it was in the 1700's. It was like a walk in the past.

We visited New York City and continued on to Washington DC. We stayed with friends that owned a town house in the suburbs of Washington. The best part of the trip was visiting the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.



We returned home in November leaving from Washington National Airport with connecting flights to San Diego.

In December Liz told me she thought she might be pregnant. Because of our medical history we did not tell anyone about the pregnancy until after the first trimester.

Being a father starts when you understand that your wife is going to bear a child. You will never treat your wife the same after that moment. As a man you must watch your wife suffer the pain that will eventually result in your child. As the months past I reflected on this thought almost daily.

In the final week before Frank was born, San Diego was experiencing weather that was almost perfect. Earlier in the week Liz experienced false labor and she spent an overnight in the hospital coming home disappointed.

On Friday the start of Labor Day weekend, it was in the seventies with a slight chance of rain on Monday. Liz was physically exhausted. Frank was going to be big and Liz was uncomfortable for a variety of reasons among them Frank was overdue. I tried to be as helpful as I could. She slept in the bedroom downstairs as it was the coolest room in a home that did not have air conditioning.

Friday morning started as the sun burned away the morning mist in record time. San Diego was lit by a sun undiminished by clouds. I was home and Liz was trying to sleep. Tim Sturtevant (who was later to become Frank's Godfather) and I played backgammon at noon on the deck of the Soledad house.

Just as Tim was leaving Liz was called by her Doctor and told to come in. We pack her overnight bag and we drove to the hospital. Friday night we stayed at Kaiser Zion. At 4AM Liz sent me home.

Saturday morning was even better than the day before. The sun burned away the cloud cover and by 9AM when I left for the hospital it was in the high 70's. It was like San Diego wanted this special day to have special weather. I arrived at the hospital with roses and high expectations our son was going to be born. Liz was beginning to have contractions around 10:30AM. Dr. Chavez was called and the vigil began.

Dr. Chavez was a wonderful doctor. Frank seemed content to stay inside but Liz and everyone in the room were praying that he would come out.

At about 11:45AM Frank made his appearance with his bald head stretching his mother so much that the Doctor used forceps to pull him out. It was amazing to watch the precision that resulted in Frank being born. The doctor was straining to pull Frank out, when all of a sudden. Frank burst into life like a rocket leav-

ing the silo. Dr. Chavez in one smooth motion dropped the forceps, so that with both hands free he caught the speeding JJ short of hitting the Dr. in his stomach.



At that moment I felt the presence of God and the miracle that every father experiences when their child is born.

Having attended all the parenting classes I knew what to expect starting with the Apgar assessment. The Apgar score was a quick assessment of Frank's health as soon as he was born. It is scored on five factors: heart rate, respiratory effort, muscle tone, reflex irritability, and skin color. A score of 0-3 indicates that the baby is in critical condition, 4-6 indicates that the baby is in serious condition, and 7-10 indicates that the baby is in good condition. Frank was a screaming 10 and weighted over 10 pounds.

One of the things I learned in parenting class was to pack a kit with items I might need at the hospital. Among the items I packed were a glass, lime juice, tonic water and Tanqueray Gin. Using the ice that was in the delivery room I mixed myself a drink to toast my new born son and his mother. As he was being taken to the nursery, I raised my glass in a toast and said, "thank you Jesus for a healthy son and wife may both of them live long and well."

There are moments in life that are with me forever, getting married and than having a son are among those for me.

# FAMILY SHORTS



Emily Mehan's Soccer Team won the Girls under 11 La Jolla Labor Day Classic 2023. They beat the second place team from Arizona 5 to 0. They also only allowed three goals across four games.



My work team threw me a surprise baby shower and it was SUCH a surprise. It was SO PRETTY and AWESOME and I feel so lucky!! I just happened to be wearing my pink floral dress which is the dress I was wearing in the last photo my mom got to see of me. She had messaged me back that the flowers were expanding over my pregnant belly, which was her last message to me, it seemed so fitting that I had that on today and they are DEFINITELY expanding now Thanks to everyone for making me feel so special!

