

R F N I

December - 2023

Issue No: 395



Turkey Athlete
of the Year

Happy Riel Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving Day Celebration at the Mehan's

By Margaret Riel



As has been the tradition for many years, the extended Riel family celebrated Thanksgiving lunch at our home. And for all the years we have been doing this, we are thankful that it has never rained on our celebration. But we were especially thankful that this year as it was warm, calm, and dry, making it less challenging to set up and decorate the three large tables.

You cannot have Thanksgiving without turkey, but over the years, the family has kept extending to the point that no one turkey was big enough. We experimented with other main courses and have settled on three main courses: a reasonably sized turkey, a large salmon fillet, and a couple of Tri-Tip Steaks. One of the benefits of a midsize turkey is that we don't have to get up before the sun to have it roasted for the midday meal.

The roasted turkey arrived at the table to cool, and then it was off to Team Jeff and Bud, our expert turkey carvers. Margaret brought the stuffing, gravy, and cranberries to the table. The marinated tri-tip steaks and salmon were off to the Grill Chef Michael, who managed the outdoor cooking.





Family members arrived bringing food, and soon, the main table became crowded with appetizers, salads, Carol's traditional orange salad, vegetables in the shape of a turkey, spicy mac and cheese, veggies, cornbread muffins, Tim's traditional olive spread with bread, and more.





Before beginning the feast, we took a few minutes to remember Mom and Dad, Francie, and Bruce, and all the gifts we had shared, the most important of which was family. Speaking of which, lived up to the motto of “the quick and the fed”, by serving up large helpings of each dish on to their plates and sitting down for a fantastic lunch with lots of great conversations.



As is usual for this group, desserts are a big part of any meal and this year’s offerings were very special. Creative Carol brought an art project dessert for the young ones; they decorated turkey cupcakes while the adults ate pie and second helpings of Carol’s famous orange salad.



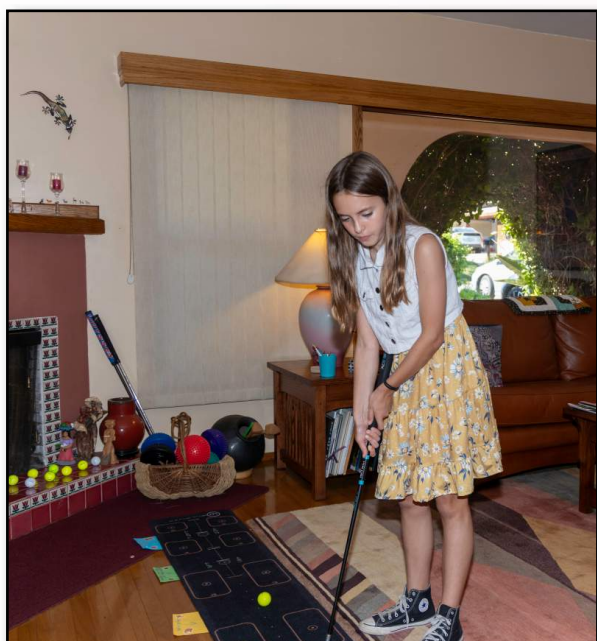
It is great to have a professional photographer in the family! Robert set up his outdoor studio and took family photos. Each family got a chance for group pictures with as many family members as could make it. Ed and Jan's family got the award for having the most members present (only missing one person.) Thanks, Robert, for all of the great photos.





In and around food preparation was the first Turkey Athlete of the Year Competition. There were four events, 10 points each for a total of 40 possible points.

- Pickleball Serving – Can you serve the ball over the kitchen (a regular space on the pickleball court) and into the turkey cage (not a regular space)?
- Soccer Ball shots –but to make it more challenging, there was a net with a circle and the ball needed to hit the circle.
- Golf putting around – Can you putt the ball over a hole?
- Hula Hooping rounds - Now the hoop is on you, can you make it spin? This was the most fun event to watch!

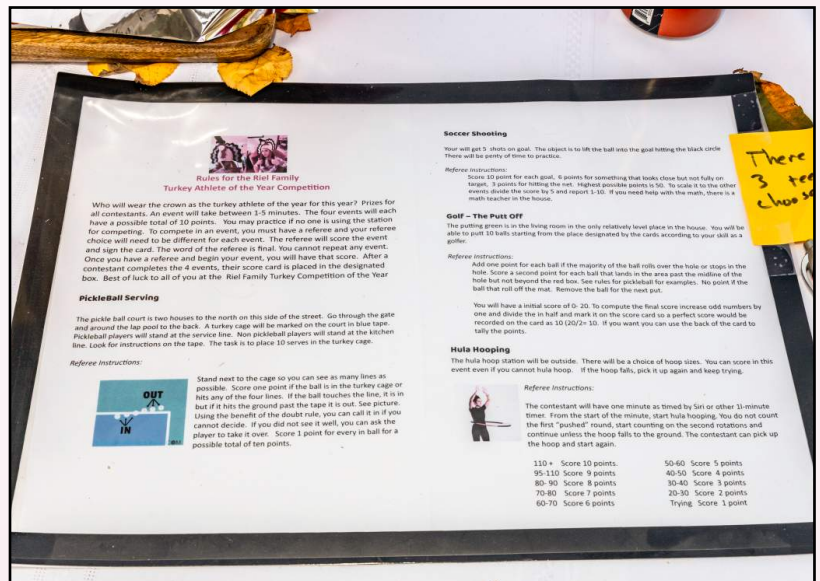




Each event had different expectations for adults and kids, making it likely that either could win. Contestants had to enlist four family members as referees who got a bit of math practice. Emily was very competitive, and she took the lead early on and managed to hold off Michael and Margaret (tied) as they tried to take the lead from her. Given the leaders, there may have been a bit of homecourt advantage but that's the advantage of hosting a family event. Emily Mehan won the Turkey Athlete of the Year with 29 points. Now, will she be able to successfully defend her title next year, or will someone else be ready to take the title from her? Only time will tell.



Editor's note: All of us in the Family want to thank Margaret and Bud for once again hosting Thanksgiving at their home. It has become a cherished tradition to be able to visit them in Encinitas and celebrate the day with family and friends. Getting all who can make it together for a few hours, is certainly the best way to celebrate Thanksgiving Day 2023!



Riel Bowl XXXIII

Is Just Around the Corner

Hosted by Bob and Listy
December 30th, 2023



Don't Forget the White Elephant Exchange
All Gifts Must Something You Have Owned
Not Something Bought for the Occasion



Kristy Joins the 40 Club!



On December 8th, Kristy officially left her 30's to join Seamus in a new decade of life. The occasion started with a stop at Kristy and Seamus' house for Listy and Bob to see the new backyard which was deemed as part of Kristy's birthday gift. The facelift included building a beautiful outdoor kitchen with their own Benihana-style bbq top and a huge island with heat lamps glowing all around the new pergola. They poured a large concrete pad and included a heat-element table with a nice outdoor couch that sits on the south side of the house and will be used for many events in the future. The boys got new sod planted so they can still play soccer and throw a baseball as well. Gifts were exchanged with a special gifting of Francie's famous country western boots which will surely make a few country concerts in the future (she would have liked that)! Listy made Kristy "The Game of Life" which included personalized cards documenting Kristy's life over the last 40 years, for her family to play and appreciate the making of this marvelous person they call their mom/wife.

We then moved the party to "The Public House" which is a nice restaurant down the street from their house where friends were invited to celebrate the big day. She had running friends and neighbors in attendance to cheer her on while a musician (Seamus hired for the night) played music for us to dance to as the evening progressed. It was the perfect evening for Kristy as being the center of attention has never been something she loved, but the quiet and calm atmosphere surrounded by friends seemed to fit the bill. The party will continue into next weekend where Kristy, Seamus, Annie, Kevin, with one other couple will take off for the BIG APPLE and do a weekend plus a few extra days in New York City leaving the kids with Grandma and Grandpa! Happy Birthday Kristy! We love you very much!



Hawaiian Thanksgiving

By Birdy Hartman Hall

Aloha! The Halls are happy to report that our trip to Hawaii for Thanksgiving was a huge success. We were a little worried at first because we were peppered with relentless downpours as our vacation began. Needless To Say, it is kind of difficult to golf when you are being pounded with showers. But on the upside, if it is raining on the North side, you can just drive to the south side, and sunshine will prevail.

The absolute highlight of this trip was enjoying our timeshare with Brett, Carinda and Aro. Aro wakes up smiling and finds delight in everything. The chickens that are a part of everyday life in Kauai were a fun sight for this delightful two year old. He loved digging in the sand and made Brett fill endless buckets of water for his personal pail pool.



We took a great train ride in Lihue to see farm animals! Aro loved using his throwing arm to feed tortillas to the pigs and alfalfa pellets to the horses.

Thanksgiving was a little small when you compare it to our traditional family get-togethers. We spent the day on the beach at Hanalei Bay. While Aro napped, Lyle and I drove into town to pick up our Safeway Thanksgiving feast. We enjoyed ham, potatoes, green beans, salad, and spiced apples. It was not the tastiest as far as feast goes, but it was an easy way to celebrate while not having to spend the day in the kitchen.

We know that the Riel's had some fierce games being played this year at Bud and Margaret's. Not to be outdone, we played a competitive game of Mexican Train! Whoohoo! Carinda and Brett had never played, and it was fun to introduce them to the game.

One evening, Carinda and Brett enjoyed a date night while we watched little Aro playing games of Hide and Seek with a mouse named Squeaky. He sure is delightful and never missed his parents while we were in charge.



Lyle and I were excited to try out the newest hotel restaurant in Princeville. It is called The One and their sushi restaurant did not disappoint! The views of Hanalei Bay are amazing and the open air restaurant and friendly staff made the dining experience so enjoyable!

On our last day in Hawaii, it was reported that there were 50-60 foot waves! So, we hopped into our rented car and sped down to Hanalei to check them out. From afar, they looked big, but once you got to sea level, they were the biggest we have ever seen! We saw two surfers getting towed into the giant waves by jet ski so that they could catch the wave! It was quite a sight and the best way to end our trip!

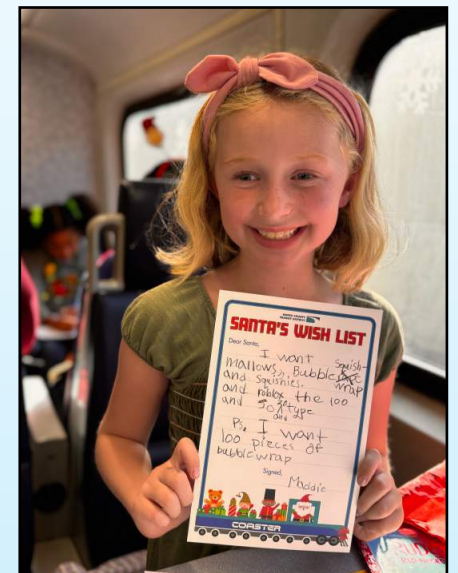
If you ask Lyle or me, what was the best part of our trip? Hands down it was spending time with Brett, Carinda and Aro! We look forward to the next time they come out as a family of 4!



News From the Benesch Family

By Carol Benesch

On December 3rd Jeff, Madeline, Camden, (Noah had a soccer Tourney) Margaret, Bud, Emily, Addy, Jan, Nicole, Kevin, Blake, Quinn, Coral and I, boarded the North County Holiday Express Train. The train went from Oceanside to Solana Beach and back to Oceanside. There were Carols sung, A story read, visits from Santa, elves, and Ana and Elsa. The kids got a letter to write to Santa and then a visit from Santa to share the letter with. After the trip, we all enjoyed lunch together in Encinitas. It was a lot of fun and put us all in the Christmas Spirit!!

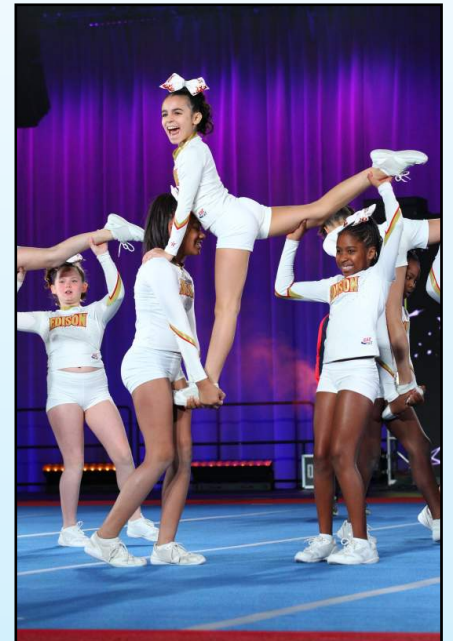


News From the Benesch Family

Continued...

Sofia's Cheering squad went to Nationals in Florida held at the beginning of December. To qualify they had to come in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, at Eastern Regionals. They didn't but were added on because they only missed third by a few points and the judges felt they had an excellent routine and had just made a few errors.

They practiced a lot the next couple of weeks, and it paid off, they took 3rd place at Nationals!! They did an excellent job and have qualified to go to Globals in Atlantic City next March. Congratulations to Sofi and her squad!!



News From the Benesch Family

Continued...



The same week, Maty and Ben were both promoted to the next level in their Karate journey! And, Noah was picked to play on an All-Star Crusaders soccer team and played in 2 tournaments and will be playing another one this weekend. Good Luck, Noah!



Palm Desert in the Winter!

By Listy Gillingham



We used to love visiting Bob's parents in Palm Desert and since they moved and his passing last April, we still find ourselves missing the calmness of the desert. We found a nice deal (which is the BEST part of retirement) and decided to take a break from our already great lives, to spend some quality time together. We got a nice condo in Cathedral City and spent time reading and relaxing, while letting Bob heal up from his scrapes from constantly trying to get into tight spots of an engine he seems to love to work on (which is a whole another story).

We golfed a couple days and did a few hikes as well. One of the hikes included 3600 feet of climbing up Murray Hill (they must call it a hill because it's dwarfed by the San Jacinto Mountains, but it felt like a mountain with many switchbacks and other hilltops to conquer). Regardless, it was a desert beautiful hike, and we loved every minute!



Christmas time is always a fun time to visit a new city and Palm Springs likes to really go out of its way to celebrate the season with lights and decorations. Bob admitted to never going to a Christmas Parade, and since they were having a lighted parade, he thought that might be fun. We gathered with thousands of other desert goers along the parade route in downtown Palm Springs and watched over 100 floats, bands, and large balloons soar by. He got an authentic parade with Santa proudly seated at the end of the event. It was fun and now he's a full-fledged parade-going person!

We had a great time and luckily for us, beautiful weather, which allowed one day for sitting by the pool and reading! A perfect way to celebrate another day of retirement!



FAMILY SHORTS



Dave, Michelle and the boys spent a week up in San Onofre enjoying the sand surf and some really nice sunsets. From the looks of it everyone had a really great time!



I painted my studio! It's inspired by my summer travels: the colors are from the Mediterranean and the implied molding line is from Georgian houses in Edinburgh. I learned painting ceilings is hard work. Now I get to decorate it! -- Megan Riel-Mehan



2 MONTHS already!!! She's still so little but getting so big!!



We feel so much gratitude for what we've built, and there's just one more reason to be thankful this year...A Baby girl arriving in March of 2024! -- Brett, Carinda and Aro