

Welcome
to the
family,
Cleo!



Baby Cleo Joins the West Coast Sorem Clan

By: Brett Sorem

On Sunday March 10th at 6:38PM, the playing field became level for Carinda and Brett. Cleo Catalina Sorem laced up her boots to join her big brother Aro Nash at a whole 21 inches and an unknown weight. Yes, you read that correctly. We actually don't know her exact birth weight, though it is somewhere between 8 pounds and 7 pounds 7 ounces. It's a whole story that is not as interesting as the facts so we'll leave it at that.



Baby Cleo and Momma C were both happy and healthy enough to be discharged the following evening. Before we left Rancho Springs Hospital Uncle Kendahl brought Aro in to meet his sister.



He was very excited and couldn't stop talking about it the entire day. He was very gentle with Cleo and as excited as he could be for a few minutes before getting sidetracked with a new Lightning McQueen race car toy that Baby Cleo purchased for her brother at Target on the way in to join her family.

We look forward to getting settled in our home for two weeks before, in typical Sorem fashion, we unroot our lives Easter weekend and move to our new home in Santa Clarita so Brett can be home during the weeknights. We are crazy, we know, and we can't wait to see what the next chapter brings as a family of four





The Wild Animal Park with the Lanes

By Birdy Hartman Hall



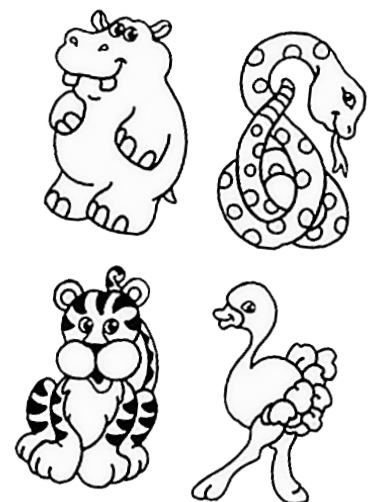
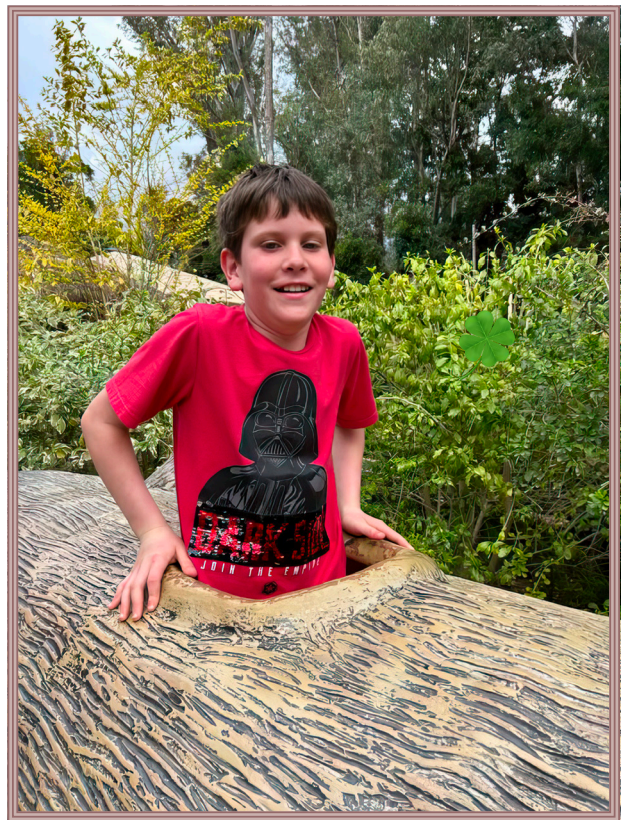
On a semi rainy day in San Diego, I picked up the Lane boys to head out to the Wild Animal Park in search of animals of all kinds. Rhys and Owen have a minimum day on Wednesdays, which gives this Grammy the perfect chance to take them out for the day without disrupting their school schedules. We were excited to be together because it had been a while since we had been able to do so. We put on our walking boots and started to explore the park.

The first stop was at the Bird Aviary. These boys seem to love birds of all shapes and sizes. They are both so sweet and good about giving these small animals the space they need to feel comfortable around people. At one point, as Owen was sitting on the ground, surrounded by birds, one got very close to him and seemed to want to nuzzle him (Owen's words). Truly, it looked more like the bird was searching his clothes for leftover food, but Owen was quite excited by the experience.

We loved watching the tigers' pace around their habitats. There are two new cubs that seemed quite playful and happy to have a buddy to poke and play with. They are only two months old, but they looked big to me. The mother was off seeking shelter in a log while the cubs explored their world. Rhys and Owen are good at taking the time to look at each animal and watch what they are doing. They were a joy to have as my company for the day.

I gave in and bought them some cotton candy as a treat. Who knew that cotton candy, while being a great source of sticky candy, could be so much fun! Those boys worked on making some interesting pink, sugar beards and mustaches. Ugh...all that stickiness was a bit much for me, but they loved having me take their pictures as they carefully molded the candy into the shape they wanted.

It was a great adventure, and we are all looking forward to next week when we go to the zoo. I am sure mom and dad were smiling down at me as we spent our day in a place that they so loved.



DANCING WITH CORAL

By Ed Riel



Editor's Note: I apologize to Ed and family for missing this article, it was submitted to me last July. Somehow it got lost in my inbox and I didn't know about it until Ed mentioned it to me a few weeks ago. But, better late than never, so here it is....



Coral Karleen Riel with her birthday in December is now three and a half years old; youngest of the Kevin & Nicole clan, with Blake and Quinn her older sibs.

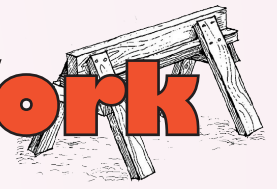
Perhaps I exaggerate this event in her life, but I remember her, not yet 2 years old, as part of our Covid family bubble, watching the 2000 winter Olympics' women's ice-skaters, seeing women moving as free as the wind, and noticing that Coral has been dancing, twirling, and pirouetting ever since. And this is to say nothing about how "Princess" movies have affected her lavish "Dress" collection; from Snow White to dragon and unicorn dresses. With it, she thinks nothing of a wardrobe change in the middle of the day as the mood of the moment requires it. As the youngest, it is hard to out-perform in a family of fun-loving performers, but she more than holds her own.

During the school year Coral spends 3 days a week at pre-school and Tuesdays and Thursdays with her Granny and Gramps. We have learned that eating, is not so big a thing in her life; her favorite food for breakfast is eggs and for dinner meat; and what she likes today is not necessarily what she likes tomorrow. But her stuffed animals are a big thing. With both the hand-downs from her older brother and sister, and an endless supply of new gifted "stuffies" from Granny, Coral literally has a zoo of every earthly creature, real or imagined. I will always remember the hours of conversations I had with Coral as we puppeted to each other with the likes of Mr. Red (the dragon) and Mama Lama.





Birdy Is Back To Work



By Birdy Hartman Hall

With Listy going to Hawaii, I needed some entertainment. So, Lyle sweetly offered for me to join him in UTC to look at a job site. We had to don our PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) which are our safety vests, hard hats, boots, and eye protection before we could enter the site. Lyle gently coached me by saying that we could not hold hands due to potential HR issues LOL!

The place was a buzz with tradesmen doing their jobs. We had to climb 5 story stairwells to get to the top. Man, that was a workout all by itself. Lyle was good at explaining to me what we were looking for and how it pertained to his job. There were air ducts and plumbing. Electrical wires were strung and on the top floor we got to see a crane lifting the glass panels that served as the outside walls. It was interesting to see how precisely that crane driver could place that panel without making it crash into the side of the wall. Lyle noted how far his guys were on the job and what was still needed to do. That helps him with the billing procedure on the job. After surveying the project, we left to go have a nice lunch before Lyle went back to work. I am always impressed with how hard my hubby works each day!


RFNL CONTEST



Do you know the grandchildren of Frank and Edith Riel??

Only three families got the answer correct: Listy and Bob Gillingham, Jeff and Carol Benesch, and Annie and Kevin Mulholland. There were several of you that felt I had pictures wrong so along with the correct answers I have included the original picture to assist you in the proper identification of each child. Regardless, the rules stated that any errors would just have to be accounted for.

Speaking of errors, there was one where I used S6 instead of S5 but that wasn't a hard one to figure out. The three couples are now in a runoff with this month's contest (see page 16)... Good Luck!



C	U	R	T	I	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Photo A

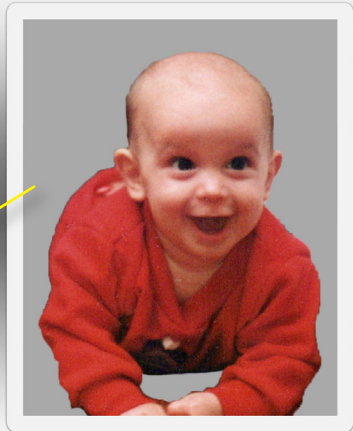


B	R	E	T	T			
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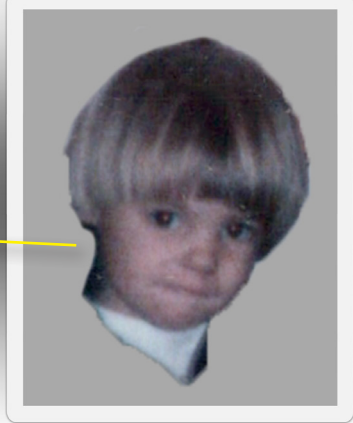
Photo B



C R A I G
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Photo C



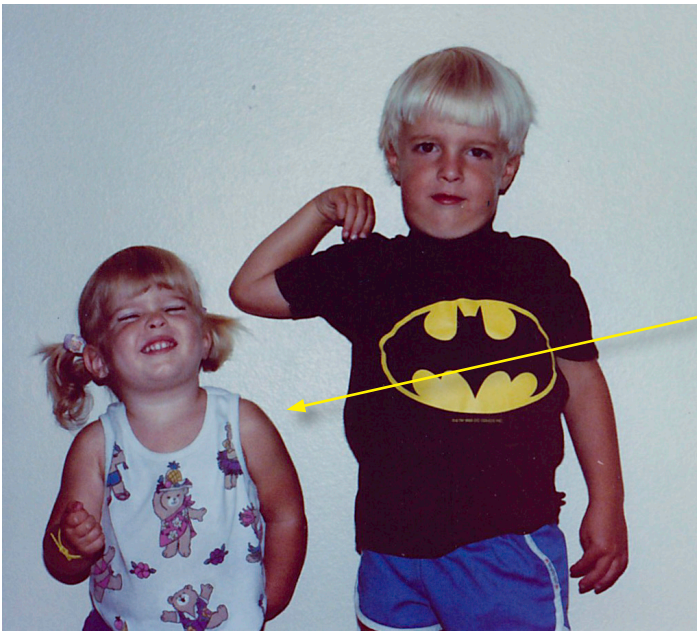
B R Y C E
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Photo D



C H R I S
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 Photo E



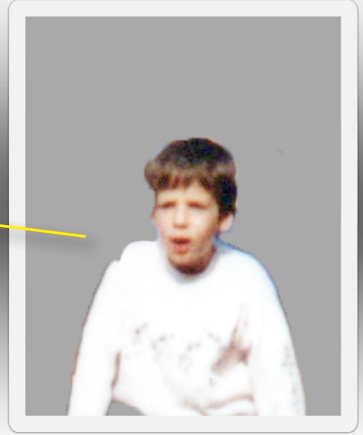

B R I A N
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 Photo F



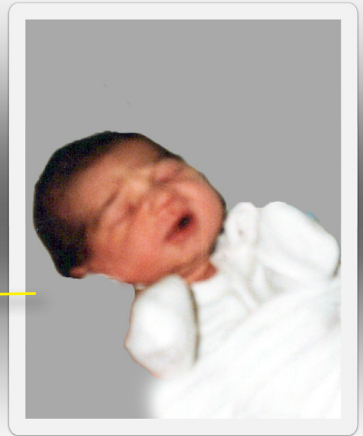

A N N I E
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 Photo G



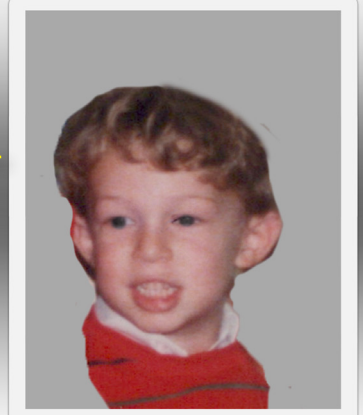

D A V I D
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Photo H



T I M
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 Photo I



F R A N K
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 Photo J



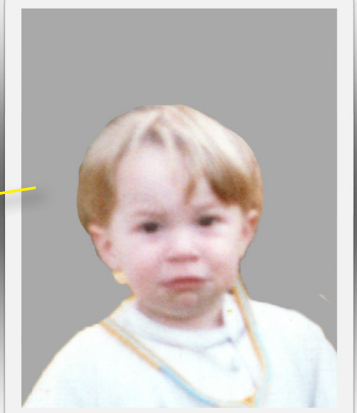
J A S O N
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 Photo K



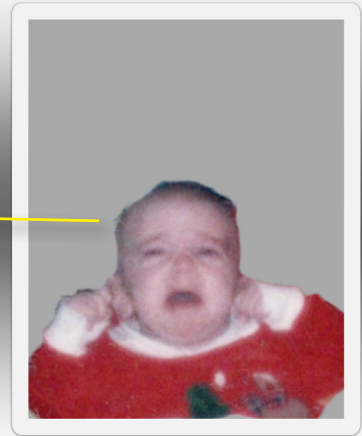
J E S I C A
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Photo L



K E V I N
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 Photo M



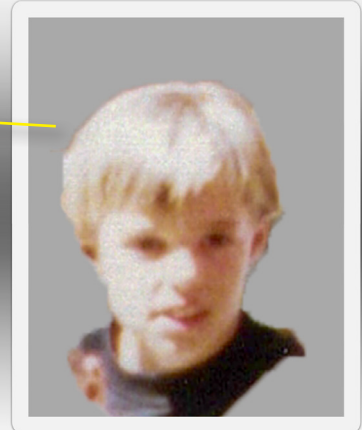
D U S T I N
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 Photo N



S C O T T
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 Photo O



N A T E
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 Photo P



M I K E
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 Photo Q



M I C H E L L E
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Photo R



M E G A N
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Photo S



K R I S T Y
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Photo T



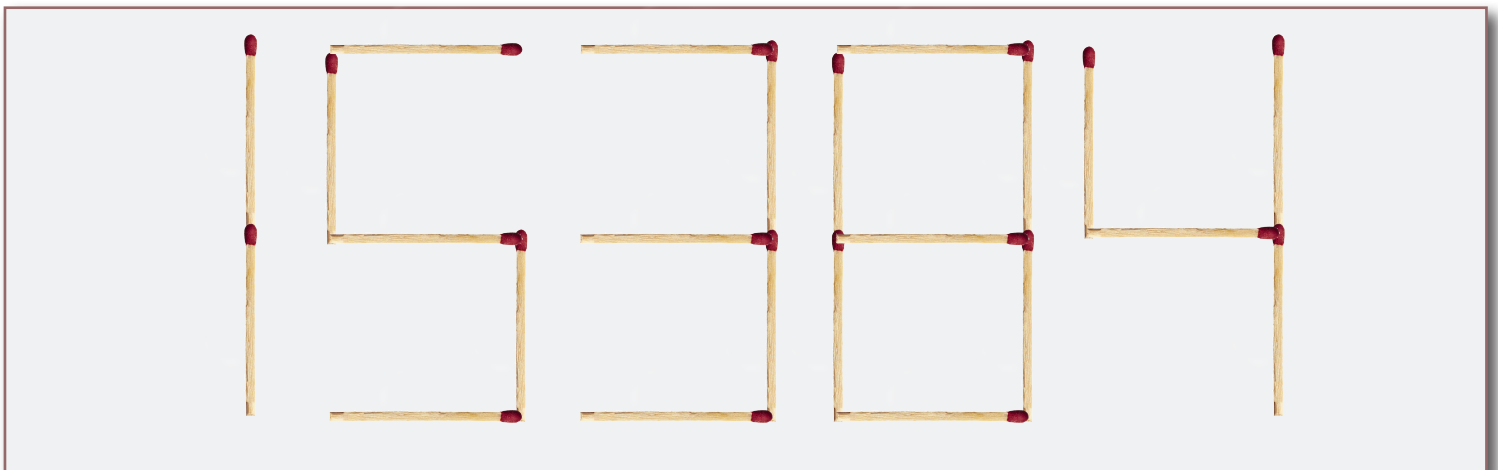
I I N S I S T L E T U S B U Y
 E4 A5 M5 K3 Q2 T4 U3 R7 L2 I1 N2 O1 D1 A2 U4

Y O U R D I N N E R S!
 T6 O3 N2 B2 H5 C4 J4 S5 P4 F2 A6

This month's contest is a continuation from last month. As previously noted, there are three couples eligible to win. That doesn't mean others can't join in on the fun. There are two challenges to complete. The first one is fairly straight forward: Move only two matchsticks in the numbers shown below to make the largest number possible. No breaking of matchsticks is allowed, and all numbers must keep to the size proportions shown.

The second challenge is also a simple one, in recognition of Saint Patrick's day, count the number of shamrocks that appear like this in the newsletter (size may be different in most cases):

All the rules from the previous contest apply to this month's as well. Have fun!! BTW this one should not be counted



A Whale of a Tail/Tale!!

Jeff, Carol, and Friends go whale watching in Baja



On Sun., Feb. 4th, Jeff, Carol and camping group friends Tom, Jane, George, and Jennifer boarded a Volaris flight out of Tijuana and landed in the Baja Sur capital city of La Paz.

The biggest two takeaways from our initial landing were that Jeff left his phone on the plane, and that our two night stay in this lovely port city was going to be noisy! Our hotel was right on the malecon (embarcadero), near downtown, and was the center of a very large car exhibition, where the participants, hundreds of them, drove by our hotel with speakers blasting music that challenged our eardrums, and our fondness of modern banda, mariachi, norteno and ranchera rhythms! Needless to say, our initiation was full of hope that this was a Sunday night only event!

We spent the next couple of days walking and biking up and down the lengthy embarcadero, with some quite beautiful beach and harbor views, some great food and drink, and got a real feel for the locals, their businesses, and how much La Paz families enjoyed their waterfront.





Before we left La Paz to cross the peninsula to Magdalena Bay and the Pacific Gray whales, we drove 45 minutes North to what many people consider the most beautiful Baja Beach, Balandra Beach. It's basically a natural state preserve, which is a couple of miles across, and so shallow and blue that you could practically walk across the entire bay. There were lots of pelicans and other shore birds, and unique caves and rock formations that lined the wonderful sandy beach.

We then drove 3 ½ hours Northwest to Hotel Isabela, our rustic but clean home for our 2 days of gray whale watching. While the town of San Carlos is very impoverished, the people in our compound were welcoming, warm and very good cooks. We ate (and drank) very well at this little oasis.





The next day (Wednesday) we were up early for our private panga and a tour of Magdalena Bay, the Southernmost home to the migrating Pacific gray whales. Unlike our last visit with Margaret and Bud, the water was a bit rough, so petting whales was out of the question. We were able however to see dozens of whales, got some great pictures, and even saw a couple of breeches, with these 40 foot long behemoths leaping out of the water.

On the way back to port, we stopped and had a fish lunch at a little fishing village and welcomed the public facilities available there. Our evenings, as were most of our nights in Baja, were filled with card games, a lot of beer and wine, and always a gourmet meal. And we laughed a lot.





After checking out of the B and B, we drove an hour North to Puerto Lopez Mateos, a site Carol and Jeff had visited pre-pandemic, and took a two hour lagoon tour to see mama grays and their calves. While this was in smaller, shallow lagoons, and there were loads of whales and their babies, the weather was still windy and the water a bit rough. While we saw some whales close up, it wasn't until we were headed back in that we experienced one whale spy-

hopping, a couple of times. This is where the whale goes vertically to check out their surroundings, and in this case, one of them was only about 20 feet from our boat. That made the whole morning worthwhile.

After our lagoon excursion, we drove the couple hours back to the Gulf side to one of our favorite Baja towns, Loreto. We stayed at a very cute, very clean small patio hotel which was a 5-minute walk to the center of this colonial gem of a town. After many more walks along the malecon, some great shopping and souvenirs, and the now obligatory wonderful Mexican restaurants for memorable dinners, we flew home to Tijuana, where Jeff was reunited with his iPhone! Yes, it's possible to survive for a week without one's phone! (At least as long as your spouse still has hers!)

Benesch Shorts

Jason breaks his finger playing flag football. The good news was there was no need for surgery, the bad is they had to reposition his finger back into place OUCH! And the worst, at least for me, no Friday golf games!

In the first full game of the season, Noah got a 2-out single that started a rally with 5 runs! They won the game 9-1. He was given the game ball!



Carol walks/runs the Hot Chocolate race. She gets 4th place in her division. It's not a marathon but makes me happy that I can still run a bit and walk at a good pace!



Off to New Jersey for a week with our grandkids!!

I hadn't been with the Rios grandkids since December, and we were missing each other. Sofi's Global Cheer Competition was Feb. 23-25 which was a good reason for a trip to the east coast. The competition was held in Atlantic City, and I was happy to venture into a city I have never been to.

We stayed at Harrah's Hotel, a big, beautiful Casino with lots of gambling and plenty of activities going on all night long. Sofi's actual competition day wasn't until Sunday, so we spent Saturday exploring the area. It was pretty cold outside so walking the boardwalk was mainly done to get from one hotel to another. The pool in our hotel was only for 21 and older. It was more of a bar area than a family swimming area. The girls on the team were staying in different hotels so we went to one of the hotels that had an indoor swimming pool and game room. The kids all got to swim, while the adults enjoyed some beverages and a little gambling. I opted out of swimming and enjoyed walking on the boardwalk taking some sunset pictures. After a few hours in the pool, we enjoyed a fun dinner at Margarita Ville and then went back to our hotel to try and get the kids to bed early for the big day ahead.

The competition was at the Tropicana Hotel. Sofi had to be there early in the morning. The rest of us got ready, had breakfast, and checked out of the hotel. The Tropicana is very similar to the Venetian in LV. High ceilings with clouds, very expensive stores, and lots of great places to eat. Sofi was going to be on stage at noon. We got our seats and nervously waited. The girls were all on and did a close-to-flawless cheer. This was the entire group of girls in an under-13, large cheer group. There were a lot of good groups! It was pretty exciting to hear them call out the winners starting with 4th and moving up. We knew when they didn't get second, they were the winners! There was a whole lot of yelling and lots of happy cheerleaders. They were presented with Champion rings and a medal. We had a celebratory dinner and headed home.

I was there for the rest of the week and got to help out with Sofi and Maty's science fair project and attend the actual fair. It was fun to listen to all the kids explain their projects. Sofi and Maty did a great job and Sofi ended up winning the raffle in the end.

Jessica is working full time now but took a day off for me and we were able to get in a little shopping and lunch! It was a fun week for all of us!

FAMILY



Bringing back a tradition started by Grandpa and Grandma years ago, Ed suggested we all meet for lunch because pickleball was out due to rain. So we all met at a nice place called Off Shore on Morena Boulevard. It was a very nice place with good food and service, we all enjoyed each other's company and traded news and stories. As Grandpa would say... A good time was had by all!

SHORTS



Lyle and Birdy decided to participate in the Hot Chocolate Run (5K). This should come as no surprise as Birdy will do anything if chocolate is involved!

Complete Family Photo from Grandpa and Grandma's 50th Wedding Anniversary (1996)

