



*Countdown
to a
Wedding*

A Riel Welcome to the Family Shower

NATE & LOGAN
EST
9-28



By Birdy Hartman Hall



On Saturday, August 17th, 2024, we embraced Logan Kirk to the Riel family by showering her with gifts for her upcoming wedding to Nate Riel. Logan did not feel like she needed gifts but was on board once we came up with the theme of "Getting to know the Riels" with gifts that were of a more personal touch. Everyone gathered at the home of Lyle and Birdy Hall. We feasted on pizzas, vegetables, and fruits provided by the Great Aunts. Then, Great Aunt Listy got the festivities going by creating a few fun family games for us to participate in. There were questions like, "Who is most likely to help Maise with a diaper change?" and "What is Nate's first car." There was also a true or false game based on getting to know Logan. We laughed as we discovered some hidden and not so hidden truths about Logan.



Then the gift giving commenced. There were so many thoughtful gifts given and I know that Logan was so touched. Her sweet mother-in-law-to-be, Jan Riel, presented Logan with two beautiful champagne glasses to be used in the wedding. I could see on Logan's face that she was delighted with this gift. Kristy Kieth used her Dect Hat talents to create a ball cap that said, "Riel'd Up." Logan's best friend also had a jean jacket designed for her that said, "All Riel'd Up" which is perfect for her bachelorette party to be held at a later date. It was adorable and stole the show! Great Aunt Margaret gave her three linked silver bracelets that she said were perfect toys for Megan when she was a baby, and for when they needed a quick toy to amuse her by. I can't remember every gift and who it was from, but I can tell you that it was fun hearing everyone share their stories of why they were presenting Logan with these treasures. It all felt very personal and loving.



September 28th 2024





I have to say Maise was a big hit at the shower. She and Avery Gillingham were the best babies ever as we watched the shower gifts flow. And Nicole's two girls were there helping Logan by selecting which gift she should open next. I loved that they were part of the fun!

Congratulations to Logan and Nate. We can't wait to celebrate with them on their big day on September 28th.





MICHELLE LANE PROMOTED TO COMMANDER!

By Birdy Hartman Hall

My daughter, Michelle Lane, was promoted to Commander! We've been waiting to celebrate this distinguished title for over a year. The Navy was quick to let us know that she would receive this rank, but they were slow to let her realize the honor. It is with great pride that I attended the ceremony that was held on Sept. 1, 2024, at the shorelines of the Catamaran Hotel. About 50 family members and friends gathered around her as retired Captain Amy Hartman (Michelle's step grandparent) swore her in. Commander is a senior-grade officer rank in the United States Navy. It is a pay grade of O-5 and it is above Lieutenant commander (O-4) and below captain (O-6). As a layman, I can just say that she is hot stuff and not to be messed with!



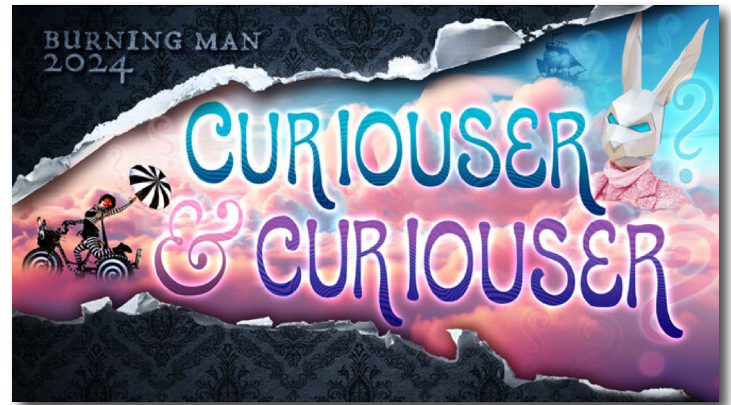
The ceremony was short and sweet. Dave, Michelle's loving and supportive husband, and I were given the honor of changing her boards (The boards on a Navy commander's uniform are shoulder boards that display their rank) for her new fancy ones. They now have three gold bands on them that signify her new ranking. Her sons, Owen





and Rhys were given the honor of awarding their mom her new hat. "Scrambled eggs" is a nickname for the golden oak leaf and acorn embellishments on the bills of Navy and other US Armed Forces dress and service uniform caps. The term refers to the fretting, or embellishments, on the caps. So, if you see this design on a cap, you know you are talking to someone important in the Navy. That's our girl! She is wearing those scrambled eggs with pride.

After the short ceremony, Michelle thanked the people that got her there. Dave and the boys got the most appreciation because they must soldier on while Michelle has been deployed. There was also an expression of thanks to the members of her staff and fellow officers that shared deployments with Michelle. I really can't imagine how much sacrifice these men and women experience when they are far from their homes and families. After the ceremony concluded, we were treated to a lavish Mexican feast catered by El Indio! We ate, drank and were merry as we celebrated this wonderful family event. I had a great time reconnecting with the Hartman clan (Bruce's father, his wife Amy, Bruce's two brothers Steve and Allen and my sister-in-law Joanie). We all enjoyed seeing Michelle revel in her accomplishments and we look forward to her continued successes as a Microbiologist in the Navy with the name, Commander Doctor Michelle Lane.



Our Trip to Burning Man 2024

By: Brian Riel

As summer starts to come to an end it means it is time for Drew and me to head out to Burning Man once again. This time of year, is always busy for us. Not only are we preparing ourselves to make the trek out to the dry lakebed, but we are also doing a lot of work for our nonprofit. As I wrote about last year, our non-profit Bureau of Erotic Discourse aka B.E.D., goes to Burning Man every year to help teach about consent.

This year was no different and we worked really hard all year long to gather a great group of volunteers. Some were returning volunteers and others were new not only to our group but to the Burning Man event itself. We got everyone trained up, signed up for shifts, and started reaching out to other camps about taking our online consent courses. We help other camps create consent policies and problem resolution processes, so they have all the tools they need in case anything comes up. They can then call themselves a "Safe Camp". We were able to reach out to more camps than ever before with our online classes.





As we made our way into the event, we were surprised by the easiest entry we have ever had! Usually, we wait 3-4 hours in a line of cars to get in, but this year it took us 30 minutes to reach our camp, that is unheard of! The weather was beautiful! It wasn't too hot, no rain, and minimal dust. Perfect conditions for setting up and getting started. These conditions carried on the whole week and made the whole event really enjoyable.

Drew and I spent a lot of our time working in camp, helping our volunteers, hosting workshops, and also having great conversations with people from other camps. Many people came to visit us to learn more about consent and going through the process of becoming a "Safe Camp". We also had people stop by to ask for personal advice on how to communicate and use consent in their daily lives. It is always great to see people learning, growing, and working to better themselves. We also had a few visitors stop by to report concerns about activity in other camps and we were able to jump in and help resolve them quickly.



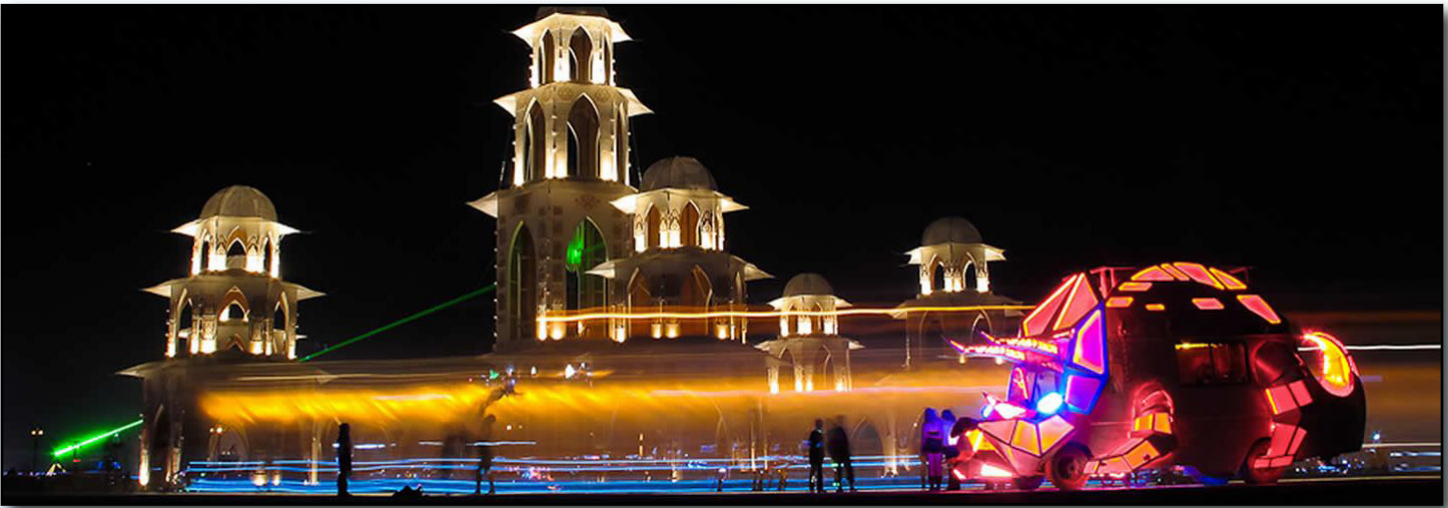


This year had the least number of reported issues, which is great to see! It shows that the community is taking what we teach seriously and actively working to make the event a safer place. Of course it wasn't all work, we did get to go out and enjoy the event from time to time. Some of our favorite moments were of course seeing The Man, riding around to camps and participating in their activities and seeing a plane fly overhead while firing fireworks and lasers from its wings and tail.



A really important part of the event for us this year was The Temple of Together. Every year a temple is built where people can go to leave memorials for lost loved ones, ask for forgiveness, or celebrate their own accomplishments. Earlier this year we said goodbye to our dog Kona and wanted to leave her a memorial in The Temple as one last send off. We left behind a picture of her with messages from both Drew and I written on the back, we tucked it away in a safe space that was easily seen and well lit. We spent some time remembering past memories and crying together but eventually got up to leave. As we did, we discussed that now we just needed to wait for a sign from Kona telling us she is ok and happy and that she is ok with us getting another dog to love just as much as we loved her. We rode our bikes away from The Temple to an art piece that was all metal, sculpted and bent to make large flowers. They were all lit up with lights and had smaller glass flowers attached to it, and inside each flower was a picture of someone. Hanging from one of these flowers was a small, quilted heart that said, "Give Me A Home". Drew and I instantly knew what it meant. On the last day of the event, we watched The Temple burn in silence as we said our final goodbye to Kona.

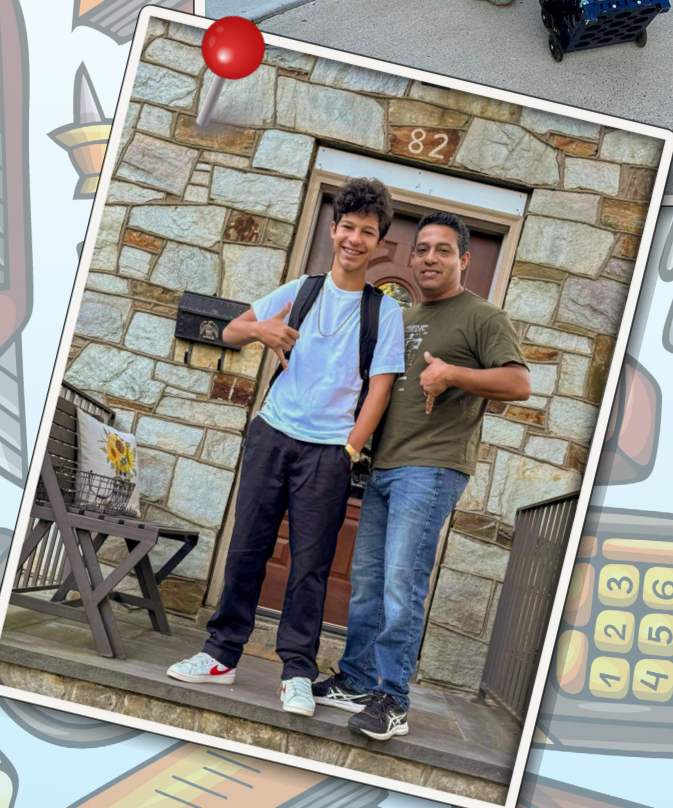




As the week came to a close, Drew and I packed everything up, and we started the long drive home. We were exhausted beyond belief, but we had a blast. This was one of the best Burning Mans we have been to. Next year, however, we won't be able to attend due to other things happening in our lives. So, this was a great year to end on as we take our break from next year's event.

BACK TO SCHOOL





Meeting Ronan Sorem

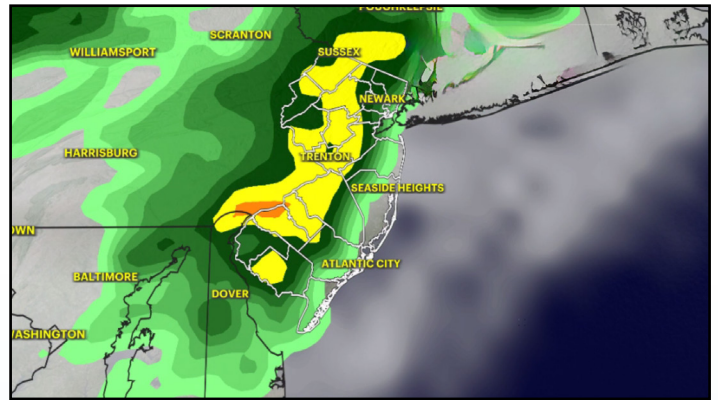


By Birdy Hartman Hall

It was with great joy in our hearts that we finally were able to schedule a visit with the New Jersey Sorem's to meet Ronan. We were so excited because we had planned for a long weekend of fun with the kids. Unfortunately, our travel plans were destroyed by some bad weather and plane delays.

Friday night was meant to be an evening of delicacies created by Chef Bryce at his restaurant in the city. We look forward to watching Bryce command a kitchen and savoring every bite that he sends out for us to try. This is always a highlight of our trip. But alas, this was not to be. When we arrived at our plane, there were NO pilots ready to jet us away. We waited and waited. Finally, they located a crew, but it would be another hour before they would be able to take off. This put a major setback in our plans, but it still seemed doable if we could just get to New Jersey. Unfortunately, the long wait put us in the eye of a storm that was brewing, and it was not safe for us to land in New Jersey. We were forced to go to Baltimore to refuel but then our plane ride was cancelled until Saturday morning. We decided to rent a car and tried to muster through the storm. It was with heavy hearts that our Friday night splurge of a dinner went from dreams of Chef Bryce to a small Applebee's in the middle of nowhere. Ugh.

Saturday morning, we arrived early at Bryce and Bridget's home. We loved being reunited with Keiran and meeting sweet, 6-month-old Ronan. He has eyes of blue and the happiest smile you could ever see. He shares a lot of Bridget's beautiful face and coloring. We just know that he is going to be one handsome Sorem for sure.





We packed our bags and headed out for a little vacation with the Sorem's at Chystal Springs Golf Resort. This beautiful hotel boasts of the top ranked public golf courses in New Jersey. The course features Robert von Hagge's signature challenging design, with rolling mounds that line the fairways and greens, providing beautiful contrast between the cuts and encouraging you to make your shots. The course also features an important piece of the Resort's history — the clear waters of the natural springs formed by old limestone quarries, particularly on the 11th hole, gave the course (and the Resort) its name. Lyle, Bryce and Bryce's brother-in-law Mike, enjoyed Sunday morning with a golf game.

That left Bridget and Birdy to entertain the kiddos. No worries there. The hotel had such beautiful grounds to explore. And they offered free pony rides which delighted Keiran! He proudly hopped upon his steed and trotted away from his adoring paparazzi. We were able to catch a few photos and beaming smiles.



The hotel also has an amazing pool and slide that young Keiran gleefully enjoyed as he rocketed down the flowing water. Bryce and Grampy Lyle took turns flying down the slide with Kieran who was fearless. Baby Ronan was the perfect pool-side buddy. He even took a nice long nap atop Grampy Lyle's soft belly!

This hotel also has a world-renowned Wine Cellar that we got to tour. We were dazzled by this architectural marvel which houses 6,000 labels featuring an extensive collection of 100-point wines spread out among nine chambers, as well as two opulently appointed dining rooms. Lyle took us out to dinner afterwards and we enjoyed some very tasty wines.

Unfortunately, we discovered that our return flight had been cancelled due to us not finishing the last leg of our trip to New Jersey. Ugh! So, we had to rebook for the next day. Truly, it was not too bad because it gave us a little more time with the kids! We were able to enjoy a local Italian restaurant before we had to dash off. The trip was a great success, and we are already looking forward to our next New Jersey adventure!



FAMILY



Brett and Carinda spent some time in San Diego recently and from the looks of it, they might even have attended a Padres game

SHORTS



Listy and Bob Gillingham recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary! Congratulations and here's to another 45!



Kevin Mulholland has lately been working as a Project Manager for Sempra Energy in Mexico. This means he has to spend a lot of time there overseeing the project. This also means that Annie and the girls get to visit and stay with him while there is no school. Maybe there is a permanent Mexican vacation in their future, who knows?



Avery Riel is showing his dad Frank how he can beat him in almost every computer game. Sam tells us that in reality he is just learning his way around a computer, but we have no doubt he will exceed his dad's skills in no time!