

From Behind Our White Picket Fence Week 160  
By Freddy and Eddy

### **Holiday Thoughts...**

“Black Friday,” supposedly the bellwether to holiday retail health, passed with its usual ho-hum fanfare regarding our own business. Luckily, store our model isn’t built upon loading up during specific yearly cycles, nor do most shoppers consider sex products appropriate stocking stuffers. Alas, we simply meander along, serving bedroom needs organically, which is to say whenever customers’ needs arise (which can be anything but predictable). Our day-after-Thanksgiving was mellow and quiet, with a few regulars stopping by for a warm café mocha and offerings of well-meaning wishes, as well as the sporadic shopper looking for a fun item to use over the extra long weekend. Saturday followed a similar pattern and we closed an hour early to cruise down to Dana Point in our RV for an impromptu dinner with friends Gary, Megan, and their daughter Rose.

Kealii and Rose became acquainted at four months old through a child rearing program called “RIE,” which stands for Resources for Infant Educators.” Founded in 1978 by Magda Gerber and Tom Forrest, MD, the approach is based on respect for infants and a willingness to let the child develop naturally, as opposed to most parents’ need to manipulate and control every aspect of their child(ren)’s world. Television is discouraged, as are devices that distract (pacifiers, as well as beeping, flashing, and/or noisy objects) and apparatus that assist in physical development, such as walkers and hanging swings. The best example we can think of to demonstrate a RIE point would be a park slide or swing. Many parents lift their children up and on to the slide and guide them down (if you’re at a park, check out the terrified looks on most of these kids’ faces); the RIE approach, on the other hand, would be to wait until your child is ready to crawl up the ladder him/herself, then slide down without assistance (putting the parent in the position of observer and safety monitor).

Kealii and Rose have developed phenomenally – in our opinions due in large part to the RIE philosophy and experience – and continue to enjoy a wonderful friendship, despite the pressure to push away and stick with their own gender groups as they mature. Now in fourth grade, our son rarely socializes with females at school, yet if asked to name his best friend Rose’s name tops his list without hesitation. For those parents out there looking for a bit of an alternative, visit [www.rie.org](http://www.rie.org) and [www.growingseeds.net](http://www.growingseeds.net) to learn more about RIE.

Anyway, we took off at 7pm in Hoe-NAY (our 1985, “Honey” RV), threading our way through the light Saturday evening traffic to Dana Point, disembarking in front of Gary and Megan’s home for piles of turkey-based leftovers, fine wine, and great conversation. As the evening wound down, we passed on the opportunity to utilize their extra bedroom, instead walking out to Hoe-NAY to enjoy some privacy (Kealii slept in Rose’s room). Predictably, we notched a sexual encounter, continuing our quest to make love in just about every neighborhood Hoe-NAY can squeeze into. There’s just something so sexy and naughty about doing it in an RV, and we’re looking to hit a semi-secret spot in San

Diego an attentive reader of this column shared a couple weeks back. In fact, driving back Sunday evening had us lusting even more mobile luxury as we passed several RV dealerships along the 405 North, and we may do a little bargain hunting early next year if the economy continues to drive prices down.

While camped behind the “Orange Curtain,” we resumed our tradition of visiting the South Coast Plaza mall in Costa Mesa to get into the X-mas spirit. Aside from the throngs of “beautiful people” inhabiting the place, their collection of shops rivals those on Rodeo Drive (but without the snooty attitude), and the mixture of high-end with accessible shopping (meaning broke people like us can actually buy things) makes South Coast our favorite holiday destination. Though news reports were touting an overall increase in sales, we were a bit saddened Sunday morning to see our favorite consumer pantheon scarcely populated, with plenty of parking and sales signs in virtually every store window. Even Coffee Bean was a swift in and out, with plenty of seating in all the restaurants and only the Apple Store showing any signs of robust business. Things started picking up as we wound down our visit, with a noticeable jump in noise and bustle, yet even a quick stop at Frye’s Electronics up the street – the epitome of anarchic shopping madness – was barely above a typical Friday sale crowd.

Alas, as we returned to work on Monday, we crossed our fingers and were glad to see plenty of online orders in the queue, a decent, if not spectacular start to our holiday season.

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