

"...y la familia?"

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 6

JUNE/JULY '02

*Needed for
Future Issues:*

*"Stuff" about
you and yours...*

Announcements

- *New baby*
- *Engagement*
- *Graduations*
- *Promotion*
- *New address*

**Upcoming
Events**

- *family parties*
- *Reunions*
- *Weddings*

**Article, Photos
and Fillers**

- *Nostalgic stories*
- *Photos and artwork*
- *Original poetry*
- *Vignettes on your immediate family*
- *Favorite family recipes*
- *Cute things your kids have said*
- *Funny stories*

Auntie Rosita's Birthday Celebration

On April 21st, Uncle Isidro and his sons, Carlos, Edward, Roberto and Orlando, hosted a surprise birthday party for Auntie Rosita. It really was more of a two-day celebration that began on Saturday night at the Lazy Donkey restaurant and ended on Sunday afternoon at the Bradley Street Fish House.

I was unable to make the trip to Carrollton, Georgia, but they had a wonderful turnout and great representation from the family.

Although I couldn't be there in person, I have some first-hand accounts from some of the relatives, and a lot of photos to share with you!

(continued on page 4)



A beaming Rivera family poses for what promises to be a new classic family photo. What a great looking family!

In the back row, from left to right: Edward, Auntie Rosita, Uncle Isidro, and Carlos.

Seated in front: Orlando and Roberto.

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A Page Out of Our Family History

By Norma I. Pettit

July is my mother's birthday month, so I want to share part of her story with you.

Ana López Maldonado was born on July 26, 1911 in Saltillo, a part of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. Her father, Juan Manuel López Irizarry (the son of Juan Antonio López and Inés Irizarry) was born in Pellejas, a *barrio* of Adjuntas, in October of 1867. Her mother, María de los Santos Maldonado (the daughter of Manuel Maldonado and Luisa Torres) was born in Adjuntas, P.R. in November of 1878. Juan and María de los Santos were married on February 5, 1898. Their union produced two children: Confesor and Ana María.

When she was two or three years old, a tooth got infected and the whole left side of her face swelled up. Little bags formed under one eye, which the doctor popped one by one. Some small bones broke down and the part under her eye remained sunken for the rest of her life. It was not terribly noticeable unless she was tired, but Ana was always conscious of her eye. In her wedding portraits she insisted that she and Oscar stand facing each other so that her left eye would not show up in the pictures.

At some point, the López family moved to Corral Viejo, and then to Ponce near the aqueduct. The move to Ponce was made around 1919, which was when Ana began attending school. Ana's mother, Santa, thought school would be too hard on Ana because of her eye, and she didn't put Ana in school until she was eight years old. Ana was always embarrassed to be so much bigger than the other girls in her class. She studied until the 6th grade and then, because she was a *señorita* studying with little girls, she dropped out.

When Ana was a little girl she had not dolls, but after school she would go behind the house and play with a log. It had a small branch protruding on either side, that to Ana's vivid imagination became the arms of a doll. She would dress her "doll" with pieces of rags. One day she came home from school to find that the log was missing. When asked about it, Santa told her that she had burned it in the cook stove. Ana was crushed, but realized that her mother hadn't known that she played with the log as a doll.

Ana began working at the age of 17 in the factory called Vidal Álvarez, pinning hems. She was very industrious and worked hard. She used to laugh when she recalled a house that she once bought for \$40. It was made out of orange crates, but she said it wasn't bad.

Ana's father, Juan Manuel López, died in February 1941, when Ana was 29 years old. Her father always used to play *la bolita*, which is an illegal form of the lottery. He had a favorite number, and there is a story that a day or so after he died, his *bolita* number came up and Ana collected his winnings with his ticket. It was something like \$500 and they used the money to pay for his funeral. Ever after, if Ana would see a number that reminded her of her father's favorite number (such as 242 or 424) she would say, "*¡Qué número más bonito!*" (What a lovely number!)

Ana continued living with her mother, working to support her, up until 1946, when she traveled to California to marry my father, Oscar Cruz García. Santa went to live with her son, Confesor, and his family. She died on Feb. 5, 1963 (on her wedding anniversary). Confesor died on December 9, 1966.



*Confesor and Ana López
May 8, 1924*

At this time in our family history...

- *107 years ago, on June 7, Petronila Pacheco was born. She was the sister of Mamá Otilia. Their other sister, Francisca, was born on June 11, 1887.*
- *On July 3, 1861, my great-grandparents, Manuel Alejo Rivera and Maria Apolinaria Maldonado were married.*
- *Auntie Anita Merritt died in Nebraska on June 25th, 1998.*
- *Auntie Adele was born on July 22, 1909.*
- *Papa Flor, my grandfather, died on July 22, 1941.*
- *My mother, Anita García, was born in Adjuntas, P.R. on July 26, 1911, and was the daughter of Juan López and María de los Santos Maldonado.*



"¿...y la familia?"

I Remember...

A LITTLE DOLL HOUSE

I remember a little dollhouse in the backyard. Funny that as a child I had always imagined myself having a tiny little secret place where I would live and it would have a little loft where I would lay and sleep real cozy-like. I tend to think that these images rose from a sense of having to protect myself from a bigger or larger world that as a child I couldn't quite understand and found threatening. So therefore I created a protective coating around myself, in the form of a dollhouse, a cozy little place where the world was make-believe, where it was I who was Mom-Dad, and where life was a funny game, without threats.

We as children were many times treated as rag dolls. We got thrown about without regards to our feelings, so we created a world of our own where we, if we wanted to, could throw dolls around and try to see how it worked, how it felt, and why grown-ups did this to us. Later, by the time we find out why things were the way they were, it's too late to do any good. There is no rewind button that one can press so one can run life over once more, edit it to keep only the non-threatening parts and dump the rest. Even then, I've seen how other people more "fortunate" than us have had a life full of all the good things and have ended up even worse than you or me.

By Bill Roig, Guaynabo, P.R.

So, what's the answer? Maybe it's poetry, where if you really look, you realize that nothing makes any sense, yet, who will leave a poem half-read? And when we finish reading it, don't we feel moved by the images of half-truths, strange word-play, unconnected connections, indefinable endings..?

Can we treat our own lives like we treat poetry? Can we make (or accept) sense out of the insensible? Can we say that the poetry of our own lives would have read better without the non-understandable? No. The poem of our lives we have read many times over in our own dreams, and it has made just as much sense now in our dreams as it ever did in our own early lives. But we cannot change anything, everything will remain there, fixed, for the rest of our existence.

The thing to do, maybe, is to write a poem for the future—one in which we will be careful not to include any of those things that we found scary, so that when the children of the future read the life-dream-poem that we wrote for them, their lives, their dreams, and their poems will always have a happy, cozy ending, like living in a little dollhouse.

To my dear family from
Bill Roig



The Way We Were

Ruben, Olga and Norma
in New York,
July 10, 1955.

Ruben was six years old,
Olga was almost eight,
and Norma was three.

Guess Who This Baby Is?

The answer is found on page

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“¿...y la familia?”

Auntie Rosita's Birthday

Hi Norma,

My mother knew we were going to have a birthday celebration for her, but she thought it was going to include only the local family. The evening before the party, we went to dinner at Roberto and Orlando's Lazy Donkey Restaurant. While we were there, the surprise guests starting arriving and my mother became both excited and confused. You know the experience: You see something unexpected that seems like it is taken out of context, and it takes a moment for your mind to process what you are seeing before it tells you it is real. That was my mother. She sat there with her eyes wide open, staring in disbelief, then realizing long lost relatives were showing up. She became quite excited. It was fun to watch.

It was also exciting for me as I got to see some relatives that I had not seen in many, many years. Cousins Olga and Joi especially were a treat since it had been.....what?.....30 years? since we've seen each other. It was a wonderful time for all. We had a lot of catching up to do and time was too short. Everyone had to return home the day after the birthday party.

I have fond memories of that day and many pictures to remind me of the good times we had.

My love to all,

Carlos

*Orlando Rivera,
George Nicholson,
and Edward Rivera.*



*Victoria
Nicholson
and Rosita
Rivera.*

*Standing:
Andrea
Rivera
(Edward's
daughter)*

Hey Norma,

Hope I'm not too late!!!! Just having a great time keeping up with all the projects and stuff...

What can I say? It was a great party! It was delightful seeing so much family together. I know that if Mom could write it, she would say with all her heart how honored she felt and how much love she had for everyone. It was really a surprise birthday! Such long lost cousins! I did not realize how much the whole family meant to me, and how much I missed everyone until the day of the party. I have not been able to attend other family functions so that seeing everyone again was really a blessing. And Auntie Marie! What a brave woman to travel such a distance... Wow. Just a great gathering of great people. On Saturday night the party ravaged on at the Lazy Donkey, (although I was indisposed at the other restaurant), and I was told everything went well. Happy Belated Birthday Vic! I guess mom kinda figured it was her party, and as no one told her about anything, it was definitely excuseable! Then on Sunday, the brunch and Mom's birthday party. David Reid, the chef of Bradley St. Fishhouse and Orlando, turned out some fine grub with plenty of fixin's for everyone. The Legionairs came out with some of their wives and significant others, ate and then left like there was a fire! Some didn't even wait for the birthday cake! Oh well, their loss! Although he worked hard to put it together, Edward planned a slide show that had to be put on hold because of an early flight out of Carrollton...And thank you to Auntie Delia for writing such a wonderful story about mom, and also Carol Medina, who sent a present, even though she could not make it.

All told it was a total hoot! Thank you one and all for coming out and spending a little time in the Georgia back woods with us!!!

Love to all,
Roberto

*Roberto Rivera
And Olga Smith*



“¿...y la familia?”

From **Joi**

Dear Norma,

I thought the trip to Georgia was wonderful. Auntie Rosita's party was very well done. It was wonderful talking to all our wonderful cousins, their spouses and children. We should be very proud of our family. Orlando and family were so nice to have George and I spend the two nights with them.

Love,
Jenny

*The Nicholsons:
Jenny Reinke,
Auntie Marie,
Victoria,
and George*



Another family gathering proved to be very special and touching when we went to Carrollton, Georgia to celebrate Auntie Rosita's birthday April 19-21. Every single minute spent there was delightful and memorable. Our trip began with my meeting up with Olga in Denver (who flew from Oakland), flying to Atlanta, waiting for Vic at airport (he took a later flight after work) and then us three driving to Orlando's home in Temple.

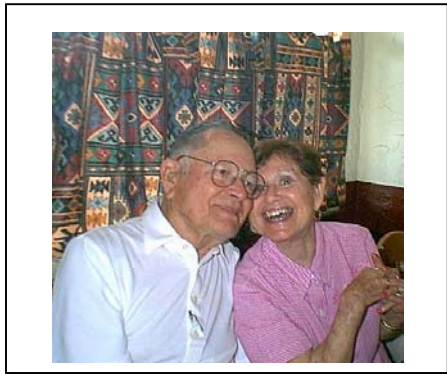
We were greeted with the warmest welcome by Orlando and Donna, and immediately we all fell in love with their beautiful home and surrounding area. So spacious, green and lush, and of course, that lake-view from his dream kitchen was breathtaking. We chatted continually trying to catch up on the past few years but we were headed into the wee hours of the morning and we needed our beauty sleep.

Saturday (while Orlando, Donna and family we gone and busy with prior commitments), Olga, Vic and I relaxed and enjoyed just sitting on the deck, exploring the area close to the lake, taking pictures and just being together.

Saturday's casual dining party at Orlando's and Roberto's restaurant, The Lazy Donkey, was the first major highlight of the family celebration. There was lots of meeting, greeting, hugs and kisses as family arrived. Seeing Uncle Isidro and Auntie Rosita, of course, was heartwarming. We hadn't seen them for a couple of years (Mom's funeral) Carlos and I hadn't seen each other in 30 years, at least, and it was wonderful to meet his wife Garnet, Roberto's wife, Carol, and family and others. The food was mouth-watering delicious--certainly showing the creative and special talents of Roberto and Orlando. Their success was very evident as the restaurant was packed and dozens of people waiting.

One of the main highlights of that evening was when Auntie Marie arrived with George and Jenny at the restaurant. There was not a dry eye in our crowd once Auntie Rosita and Auntie Marie met. The look of surprise, pleasure and love between them was so very special. We all chuckled when both were laughing at comparing their walking canes.

The other highlight of the evening was at Uncle and Auntie's house where we gathered after dinner. Uncle showed a video that was a compellation of old Super 8 movies of our family. One thing for sure, our Puerto Rican family sure knew how to celebrate, party and have fun. We were a joyous group and sometimes dressed to the hilt. Everyone watching totally enjoyed this look into the past, remembering when, seeing those who are no longer with us, and laughing at ourselves in our younger days.



*Uncle Isidro and
Auntie Rosita:
Still lovey-dovey after
all these years.*

*At right:
Auntie Rosita,
Jenny Reinke,
Auntie Marie,
Victoria Nicholson
Uncle Isidro,
George Nicholson,
B.J. (Victoria's son),
And Bob (Victoria's
husband).*



*Left: Uncle Isidro
and Olga Smith.*

*Right: Olga,
Victoria, George
and Vic.*



"...y la familia?"



A good-looking couple!



Photos this page, courtesy Joi Stenroos

Uncle Isidro put on a compilation of old movies which everyone really enjoyed watching. Joi says that it was neat seeing how everyone dressed up to celebrate the holidays, and everyone laughed at how Auntie Marie had one of those long, elegant cigarette holders and looked like Audrey Hepburn. She said that the movie was priceless in remembering how our families always got together to celebrate, and there was footage of Uncle Angelo that she had never seen before.

In this picture, Auntie Rosita and Auntie Marie are laughing at the fact that they are both using canes.

Other Family News

Carlos, Garnet and daughter, Alicia, took Uncle Isidro and Auntie Rosita to Puerto Rico for a vacation following Auntie's birthday celebration (talk about fun on top of fun!).

While there, Carlos got in contact with Cousin Bill Roig, thanks to Joi's help. Bill, Evy and Wilmi were able to meet with Carlos, Garnet and Alicia while Uncle and Auntie were visiting relatives in Ponce.

Says Bill, "We had a wonderful time together and talked about everything imaginable. To start, I had him confused with Orlando, whom I had met at Uncle's Isidro's place here in Guaynabo way back when, so I started by asking him about the restaurant business. After we got that straightened out we talked and talked until real late in the evening.

All in all it was a marvelous experience to meet one more cousin, with the warm feeling of long lost relatives coming back together. They are a beautiful bunch and I went back home feeling rather proud of my new-found family. It goes without saying that we all have to be forever grateful to Norma and Joi for their efforts in making these meetings possible. To try and maintain our family ties as tight as possible is a job that merits our most grateful recognition."



The Stenroos family took a week's vacation to Cozumel in Mexico in early May. (1) Joi, Eric, and Vic relaxing. (2) Joi and Vic in front of the main pyramid at Chichen Itza, ancient city of the Myans. (3) Carol and Larry Wright were on a cruise to Cozumel, and the two families were able to meet for a fun evening!

Look up our new family web page, designed by Cousin Carlos Rivera!

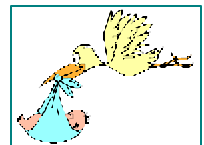
Go to

www.ylafamilia.org

for a current copy of the newsletter, family pictures, and other family information.

If you prefer to view your future newsletters online instead of receiving a hard copy, let me know.

Stork Announcement
From Jenny Reinke



Ted and I are very happy to announce that we have a new grandson. His name is Riley. He was born on May 22, 2002 at 8:05 AM. Riley weighed in at 9 pounds 1 ounce and 20 1/2". He has a wonderful sister Kelsey, 12 years, and Matt who is a wonderful, active 2 years old. What great fun! That makes 5 wonderful grandchildren for us.

Parents: Kimm & Scott Hargraves

"...y la familia?"

May 20, 2002

Hello Norma:

Relatives Respond

I received my copy of the newsletter this week while in London. I want to tell you thank you and how much it cheers me up to receive it. I know often we do not write in response to some of your requests for family letters and meet the relatives and you may even think of not doing the newsletter anymore. Yet, what I would like to say to you Normita, is that I LOVE getting my newsletter. I love receiving it more than any other thing I receive in the mail. I have learned many things about my family that I did not know. I feel a pride that I have not felt in my life regarding my heritage and culture. I am proud of my family and that is something your newsletter has taught me. Many of my friends come and look at it each month with me and often they tell me "Vickie, I wish our family did something like that."

Thank you for the newsletter this month. Congratulations to the newlywed couple. Thank you for the lovely photos of the wedding and time you spend every month to spread your love my way. I feel happier and comforted when I receive my letter. It is a lovely gift. Thank you for the newsletter and now we have a lovely website as well [*thanks to Cousin Carlos Rivera*]. Norma, if all the world loved family and the family history as you have, just think about how the world would be different. You are the pioneer of a new way that family can relate to one another in a positive and loving light. NOW print this in your next month's letter. I have sent also a poem that my business partner sent to me one day when I was losing faith. I hope it helps.

God bless us all

Vickie [*Jimenez*]

From Joi...

The baby pictured on page 3 is Lisa (Finch) Warner, the daughter of Dave and Delia Finch. Lisa lives with her husband, Scott, in Ankerly, Iowa.

Norma, got the newsletter...guess a couple of days ago. Didn't know about it coming until yesterday. Eric had it!!!! He hoarded it in his room downstairs. When he told me he had it, I dropped everything and read all the pages. A joy to read, as always. Like Olga always says, when you are finished reading...you're begging for more! A newsy issue this time: the pics of Sonia (professional ones) came out fantastic; a very nice article about your remembering Sonia as she was growing up (made me teary-eyed); I loved reading about other relatives and their visits, families; and the feature on Vickie on her book-signing was great!

You and God

People are often unreasonable, Irrational, and self-centered; Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse You of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some Unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies; Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere People may deceive you; Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating Others could destroy overnight; Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, Some may be jealous; Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, Will often be forgotten; Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, And it may never be enough; Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, It is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.

Mother Teresa

"Noah's Ark:

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark.

One: Don't miss the boat. Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat. Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. Four: Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big. Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done. Six: Build your future on high ground. Seven: For safety's sake, travel in pairs. Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs. Nine: When you're stressed, float a while. Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals. Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting." (source anonymous) [This was sent to me by Cousin Bill Roig]

Birthday Greetings

Isidro Rivera (83) –
June 8

Alicia Rivera (20) –
June 12

C.J. Burch (13) – June 14

Emily Medina (24) –
June 15

Garnet Rivera (57) –
June 15

**Kimm (Reinke)
Hargraves** (39) – June 16

Ken Reinke (39) – June 16

Nelson Rivera (39) –
June 17

René Rivera (63) –
June 19

Meryem Merritt (51)-
June 19

Enid Rivera (17) –
June 20

Norma (García) Pettit
(05) (Okay, so I'm
dyslexic!) – June 20

Laurie Jimenez (43) –
June 21

Tommy González (32) –
June 21

Scott Hargraves (38) –
June 25

Cindy Nicholson (32) –
June 29

Elizabeth Rivera (?) –
July 5

Eric R. Stenroos (19) –
July 7

Lilliam Rivera (59) –
July 11

José Medina (52) – July 11

Roberto Rivera (62) –
July 14

Angela Barnes (33) – July 15

Kayla N. Reinke (3) –
July 20

René Riera Jr. (40) –
July 21

Vickie Jimenez (42) –
July 22

Olga (Garía) Smith (55) –
July 22

Christina Krause (24) –
July 23

Ada Rivera Segarra (22) –
July 25

Rachel Nicholson (2) –
July 26

Fernando Vázquez (12) –
July 28

Paul Krause (57) – July 30

♥ Anniversaries ♥

René & Carmen Rivera
(41) – June 17

Jenny & Ted Reinke (42)
– June 18

**Angela & David
Nicholson** (5) –
June 21

**Angélica & José L.
Medina** (53) – July 8

Garnet & Carlos Rivera
(15) – July 14

**Cindy & Christopher
Nicholson** (9) – July 17

**Joanne & Robert
McLaughlin** (6) –
July 21

Sasha & Lloyd Lovelace
(24) – July 25

**Michael & Angela
Barnes** (5) – July 26

Randy & Norma Pettit
(20) – July 30