

"...y la familia?"

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

AUG/SEPT '03

*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*

Ruben's Budding Musical Career

Ruben Quiñones, my oldest son, has been developing a satisfying side-career in music during the past year, playing his guitar and singing.

Beginning with performances at open mics in San Francisco, where he lives with his wife, Lisa, Ruben subsequently progressed to having gigs in local caf  s. The Bazaar Caf   in the Richmond District of San Francisco afforded him his first opportunity to have a gig. Since then, he has had gigs in other caf  s in the City as well as in other locations.

On Friday, July 18, 2003, Ruben performed at his very first actual concert. He provided the opening set for an excellent musician, Bill Mallonee, at the Old Firehouse, on Waller Street in San Francisco. Of course, this was a BIG night for Ruben, and it went very well for him. In Ruben's own words, "I'm pretty sure it was my best performance over six songs. No dropped picks, no broken strings, no forgotten lyrics..."

On August 8th, Ruben had his first performance outside of San Francisco. He was at Espresso Roma Caf   on E St in Davis, California, with another super-talented musician, Damond Moodie. Family members that were there to support him were Tom and Olga Smith, and Norma and Tory Pettit. We had a great time!

A number of Ruben's friends from Davis and the Bay Area were also there to lend support. Damond Moodie was impressed by Ruben's fan club, and we were all impressed by his talented performance. Both Ruben and Damond were selling CDs right and left. ☺

About future gigs: Ruben has a special gig – breakfast and music—at the Bazaar Cafe on August 24th at 8 a.m. It's the Bazaar Caf  's 5th Anniversary Extravaganza, and Ruben has been invited to play. He will be unleashing his newest tune, "Only Love," an experimental love song for Lisa. Following that, he has a gig at the Sacred Grounds Cafe on September 13th.

While he doesn't depend on music for his livelihood, it has been an excellent creative outlet for him, as he composes the music and writes the lyrics for all of his songs.

Ruben has several CDs available for purchase, including a live recording of his concert at the Old Firehouse in San Francisco, which sells for \$4. The songs are A Scribble In The Margin, Yellow, Get Off My Case, Nonchalance & Apathy, Tragedy, and So Warm So Clear, and also includes a Super Bonus Track, the recently recorded "Brother Sister Heart." If you would like one of Ruben's CDs, e-mail him at rubenqnebur@yahoo.com and he will get one mailed to you right away. As he says, "They're selling like \$4 hotcakes!"

Ruben's Budding Musical Career.....	1
Needed for Future Issues.....	1
I Remember.....	2
At This Time in Our Family History.....	3
A Page Out of Our Family History.....	4
The Way We Were.....	4
Guess Who This Baby Is?.....	4
Student News	5
Other Family News.....	5
Frankie and Amy Valent��n's Wedding Album.....	6
Relatives Respond.....	7
Birthday and Anniversary Greetings.....	8

“¿...y la familia?”

I Remember..

JUAN BOBO STORIES...

In the last issue I recalled how my father used to tell us kids Juan Bobo stories. Juan Bobo is an authentic invention of the Puerto Rican culture. This first story is sad, and kind of crude, but I remember it well. It's the way it is, and I can't change it. It's Puerto Rican folklore.



One day Juan Bobo's little brother got sick. So he would get better, his mother made a promise to the Lord and to the Virgin that she would hear a mass on her knees with two lit candles in her hands. By the grace of God and with some tonics, the baby got better. That's why Juan Bobo's mother was anxious to fulfil what she had offered. One night, agitated by this idea, she told her husband, "I'm going to town alone tomorrow after I take care of the household chores."

"It's good to obey God. The bad thing is to leave the baby alone."

She explained that she'd make sure to come back right away from town; that the baby would be left in Juan Bobo's care, as in other times, and finished with this reflection:

"Even if the baby cries a little it won't harm him as much as if I don't keep my promise to the Lord and the Virgin."

They agreed, then, that she would go hear the mass on her knees at dawn the next morning. That's why she prepared everything before going to bed: she left her new dress on the trunk, some starched petticoats, a checkered handkerchief to put on her head and some low shoes with red stockings; she put the coffeepot on the cookstove with the strainer in its slot and covered well, with ashes, the live coals while she said,

Hormiga, atiza

Araña vana;

Que amanezca candela

Por la mañana.

The next day, the sun still wasn't illuminating the majesty of the nearby mountains, when Juan Bobo's mother leaped out of her cot. Her husband imitated her silently. With true companionship, they both got to work. He brought the goat from the corral to the door of their hut so that she could milk it and then went to the creek to fetch water. She uncovered and stirred the coals in the three-stone cookstove and started to boil water in a steel coffeepot to make coffee. While the water boiled, she milked the goat. While she strained the coffee, she heated the milk.

Juan Bob's father soon returned with the water and Juan Bobo woke up with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee. The mother gave each one a cup of coffee with milk and half of the yam that she had left roasting in the ashes with which she had covered the hot coals the night before. The father drank his coffee in big gulps; he left most of his half of a yam to Juan Bobo. Then he got up and told them: "I'm leaving. It's getting late."

With a smile, Juan Bobo's mother saw him to the door. Then she gave the baby a bottle and left him sleeping in his little hammock. Then she picked up the dishes, straightened up the house and got dressed to go to mass. She put her rosary and two candles in the right pocket of her skirt. She kissed the baby and Juan Bobo, and told the latter, "If you take care of the baby and the animals I'll bring you *cucas* from town. If you hear him cry, check and see what's wrong."

Juan Bobo, when he heard mention of the *cucas*, perked up and answered, "Go without a worry, mama; I promise to take care of him."

The boy opened and closed his right fist, showing contentment and agreement. His mother, who knew him well, left for town satisfied. Her soul was fired up with faith, a faith that was like a bank of hope, the only thing that saved her from distress. When she thought of how generously God and the Saints responded to her humble petitions, her big black eyes of fading creole beauty got damp.

Juan Bobo, left alone, sat at the door to the front yard to contemplate the path that winded like a pink ribbon bordered by red poppies. He put a pinch of tobacco in his mouth that he had taken from his father's pants pocket. He chewed, dreaming of the *cucas*.

Some time passed. The sun was hot when Juan Bobo decided to enter the house. The baby was screaming, sweating and cold, with his fists in his mouth. Juan Bobo swung the little hammock the way he'd seen his mother do, but he moved it so abruptly that the baby shot out and hit the wall with his head before falling to the floor. Juan Bobo picked him up and rocked him in his arms. The baby whined a bit. He breathed easily at first, but little by little his breath became deeper and deeper and he'd stop breathing. At one point he stopped breathing altogether and Juan Bobo thought that the baby was better and had fallen asleep. He laid him back in the little hammock and went back to sit in the doorway again.

“¿...y la familia?”

I Remember...

JUAN BOBO STORIES... (continued)

No sooner had he sat down, the chickens that his mother raised came up to him and started to peep. It was time for them to eat. Juan Bobo scratched his head. He asked them what they wanted, and since he didn't get an answer from them he started thinking. After a while he smacked his forehead with the palm of his hand. Of course! The chickens were tired of walking and wanted to sleep. He got a rod and threaded it through the chickens from their tails to their heads. Threaded that way he hung them from a beam so that they could sleep. The pig that was tied near the house also started to grunt, getting Juan Bobo's attention. It seemed that the pig wanted to go to mass with Juan Bobo's mother. Juan Bobo dressed her up with his mother's best dress that he found in the trunk, put a beaded necklace around her neck, and tied a scarf around her head. He dragged the decked out pig to the path and loosed her, saying, "Now you can go to mass."

Juan Bobo's mother returned around twelve noon. After the mass she had gone to her clients' homes. These people had given her clothes to wash and some money for the clean clothes that she had returned to them. She passed the time buying some things for the house, but she didn't forget about the *cucas*. The godly woman walked sweating and panting. She carried the dirty laundry balanced on her head and bags of groceries in both hands. She felt at peace when she neared the house and didn't hear her baby crying.

Everything was peaceful. Juan Bobo slept in a ball on the floor near the door. Stepping over him, the mother went straight for her baby's hammock. Her youngest son was cold. There was a huge bruise on his left cheek. There were traces of a thread of blood that had seeped from his left ear. He was dead. Crazy with grief, she took the infant in her arms. She thought perhaps that the rats from the thatched roof had bitten the baby while he slept. In an anguished voice she called Juan Bobo to ask him if he knew anything about it. Juan Bobo, yawning from hunger and sleepiness, answered, "Mama, since you charged me not to let the baby cry I swung his hammock but he jumped out of it and fell to the ground. The chickens also started to cry because they were tired, so I made them go to sleep. Since the pig wanted to go with you to mass, I dressed her and sent her off. Did you bring me the *cucas*, Mama? Where are the *cucas*?"

Juan Bobo's mother didn't answer him. She cried while she rocked the last of her seven children. Six had already died. All she had left was Juan Bobo. She sat down on the floor, next to the door, while Juan Bobo ate his *cucas*. She stayed there until her husband returned to the house. He made her get up and she told him everything that had happened while he was gone. He took pity on her and didn't say anything about her insistence on making the trip to town that day. They both agreed that they would tell the neighbors the same story that she had at first believed to have happened—that the rats had bitten the baby. Still drained, Juan Bobo's mother gathered enough energy to milk the goat and put some yams to roast. She and her husband did not eat, but Juan Bobo drank almost all the milk and ate their share of the yams.

At this time in our family history...

- Auntie Anita Merritt would have been 87 years old on August 8th.
- Florencio Rivera Maldonado was born 131 years ago, on Aug. 9th. He was my grandfather—the father of Adela, Oscar, María, Elena, Guar, Anita, Neri, Isidro, Angélica, and Delia.
- On September 11, 1917, Vicente Neri Rivera, son of Florencio Rivera and Otilia Pacheco, was born. He would have been 86 this year.
- María de la Cruz Vilá was born On Sept. 14, 1817. She was a sister of my great-great-great-grandma, María Inés.
- In August of 1916, my grandmother, Ana Cruz García, died. She died a week after giving birth to our Auntie Anita.
- Dolores De Nardo, daughter of Angelo & Elena, would have been 57 on Sept. 25th. She died in infancy.

Family Reunion 2004 Family Reunion 2004

Wow! We already have a location for next year's reunion. Cousins Mari Lillian and Awilda want to host it in South Carolina during the month of July. We will keep you posted as details are developed, but start making your plans now to attend this one!

A Page Out of Our Family History

It's been a while since I have written this column. August is the month in which my paternal grandmother died. I never met her since my father was only 5 years old when his mother died, just one week after giving birth to our Auntie Anita Merritt. This article is actually a reprint from the Dec '99/Jan '02 issue of the newsletter. It is Part III of the transcript (translated from Spanish) of a recording I made of Tío Agripino (my father's uncle) in July of 1990. In this part of the interview he is talking about his sister, Ana (my grandmother). That recording was the last and probably only recording of the voice of Great-Uncle Agripino. He died just two weeks later, at the age of 97.

Norma: And how old were you when your father died?

Agripino: Oh, I was young.

Oscar: Who died first, Mother or Grandfather?

Agripino: No, Anita died first. Yes, sirree!

Oscar: Mother died before Grandfather.

Norma: Yes.

Oscar: Because I remember that they had Grandfather in a bed and his legs were curled up.

Agripino: Yes.

Norma: Tia Carmela remembers that when your mother got angry she was feisty.

Agripino: What?

Norma: That Ana was feisty.

Agripino: What?

Norma: Carmela says that Ana was feisty. That she'd get mad and leave.

Anita: Anita was feisty.

Agripino: Oh, Anita? She would fight. She would have dances.

Oscar: She'd charge 50 cents.

Agripino: God forbid!

Oscar: Or 25 cents, something like that.

Norma: How much did they pay?

Oscar: 25 cents?

Agripino: Uh-huh.

Oscar: 25 cents.

Besides that, there was coconut candy for sale, and a shot of rum this big for three cents.

Norma: They say that when she was mad at Flor she would take all of the kids and the

animals and she would go to Máximo's house.

Agripino: Oh, yes. Anita was feistier than hell. She would fight. She was red. Oh, my. Blue eyes.

Oscar: Dad was the one with blue eyes. Mother's eyes were black. Mother was white.

Agripino: White, white.

Oscar: A white woman with black hair.

Agripino: And she would give dances.

Norma: Did Anita ride on horseback?

Oscar: Eh! The horse that wouldn't run she'd *make* it run!!

Guess Who
This Baby
Is?

The answer is found
on page 6.



The
Way
We
Were

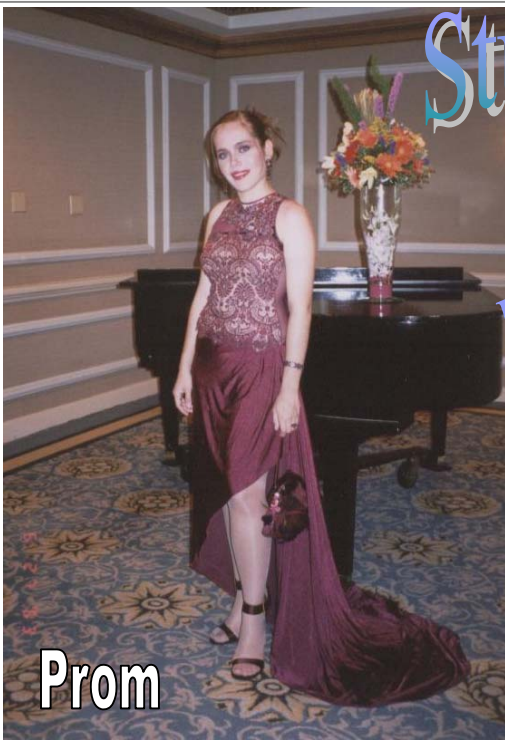


September 6th makes 12 years since my mom passed away. I miss you, Mom!! Here she is with Dad, Ruben and Olga in 1952.

“¿...y la familia?”

Student News

Wilmi Roig



Prom



High School
Graduation

Other Family News

From the Roigs:

Wilmi will start at Carnegie-Mellon the 22nd. of this month. We will be attending an "Orientation Weekend" for parents and students. We'll probably stay a few extra days to visit the museums and antiques. We just received notification that she had been granted the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship, which grants \$1,500.00 per year for 4 years. This is a Congressional grant in honor of Senator (you guessed it) Robert C. Byrd, a self-made man who started in the coal mines of West Virginia and ended as Congressman for that State. He proposed this scholarship as a modest aid to exceptional high school students who plan to attend college. He himself graduated from HS a Valedictorian and wished he had had that type of help for his studies back then. Help or no help, he graduated from college with high honors and went on to a successful political career.

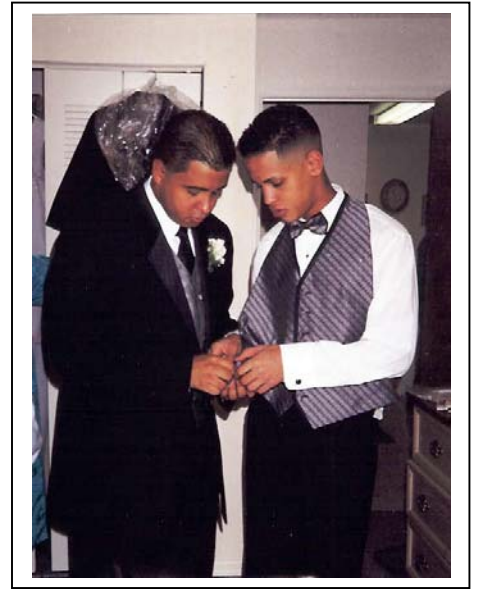
Our stay in Orlando was great. We visited with Cousins Carol & Larry, met Cousins Rosa and Brian, which we hadn't been able to see last year because of Brian's health problems, were treated to a nice Puerto Rican dinner at Tía Tita and José's. Brian and I had a great time together. His humor is a shade darker than mine so, with great effort, I was barely able to keep up. It was a challenge, believe you me! Larry took us in his boat on a trip to the drydocks about 15 miles from the house. With Larry, Brian and me trying to outdo each other, it's a miracle somebody didn't fall overboard! The water was a wee bit rough and it was kind of a bumpy ride all the way. I suggested to Larry that he should have the boat's shock absorbers checked. He looked at me kind of funny so I dropped the subject.

Then next day we went back to Orlando on Hwy 1 stopping at every antique shop and mall on the way. We left early and arrived late. We couldn't see them all in one day so we went back to Melbourne two days later and took in a bunch of other shops and malls in the area.

We are now back where we left off 6 weeks ago and getting ready to leave for Pittsburgh in a couple of weeks.

Love to all!
Bill, Evy & Wilmi.

“...y la familia?”



Frankie and Amy
Valentin's
wedding album

March 29, 2003
Kissimmee, FL



Clockwise, starting with the picture immediately above:

♥ Amy and her dad, José Martínez

♥ Proud parents of the groom:

Mari Lillian and Francisco Valentin

♥ Frankie's grandmother, Lillian, and her brother, Roberto

♥ Frankie and his brother, Alex (Best Man), getting ready

♥ Presenting Mr. and Mrs. Frankie Valentin!

♥ Alex giving the toast

Relatives Respond



Kathy Rivera Montalvo sent this photo of her daughter, **Joyce**, celebrating her 2nd birthday. Holding Joyce is Kathy's niece, **Julia**, the daughter of Cousin Raul Jr. Seated in the chair is **Michael**, Raul Jr. and Maritza's son who learned to walk at Cousin Carol's house during the Florida family reunion. Now she didn't identify herself, but I guess that's Kathy down there next to Michael. The last time I saw her in person she was just a young girl, but she hasn't changed much.

Kathy says that Raul Jr. made the cake and it turned out delicious, just like everything that he cooks.

This picture is from June of 2002. Kathy says that if she is able to borrow someone's scanner she will send a photo of Joyce's 3rd birthday, for which the little girl wore a beautiful dress made by her grandmother.

This was an e-mail from Cousin Kathy, daughter of Cousin Raúl.

Hola. Se que hace mucho que no te escribo pero bueno, aquí estoy diciéndoles ue no porque no te escriba no quiere decir que les he olvidado. Quiero que sepas que me gozo cada vez que recibo el folleto “y la familia” que con mucho esmero y sacrificio preparas. Y como siempre te queda super. Quería tansolo decirles que les mantendré delante de Dios en mis oraciones, para que les de mucha salud y les cuide siempre, como así lo ha hecho conmigo. Bueno te voy dejando que estoy trabajando. Les amo muuuucho.

Dios les bendiga rica y abundantemente y recuerden que...”Todo lo puedo en Cristo que me fortalece.” Filipenses 4:13

Kathy y familia

***Translation:** Kathy says that although she hasn't written in a long time, it doesn't mean that she has forgotten us. She wants me to know that she is overjoyed every time she receives the newsletter which she knows that I put a lot of effort and sacrifice into, and which she says always comes out super. She just wants to say that she will keep us in her prayers asking for God to keep us healthy and in His care, just as he has done for her. She was at work, so she had to go. She loves us a lot. She says, “God bless you richly and abundantly, and remember...” “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13*

Thank you to my sister, Olga, for her contribution of 3 books of stamps for the newsletter!

Out of the blue, **Cousin Meryem** sent me an e-mail to let me know she is alive and kicking. And boy, is she! Here she is with her new Harley Davidson, which she calls her midlife crisis. Get out! She must be drinking from the famed Fountain of Youth. Jeepers—she doesn't look a day over thirty.

Anyway, it was good to hear from her and to find out that she is well, albeit very busy working full time plus taking care of her own home as well as her boyfriend's home, since Dale has been deployed to Iraq. Another person to add to our prayer list! Dale is due to return to the States at the end of October. Only 2-1/2 more months to go, Cuz!



“¿...y la familia?”

C/o Norma I. Pettit
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Visit us on the web at www.ylafamilia.org

Birthday Greetings

Christian Rivera Rosa (10) –
Aug. 3

Chet Kline (37) – Aug. 6

Michael García (11) – Aug. 8

Timothy Teal Barnes (12) –
Aug. 9

Leandro González (9)-Aug. 9

Yamil Williams (17)-Aug. 10

Rosa (Medina) Meddaugh (52) –
Aug. 10

René M. Rivera (18)-Aug. 15

José L. Medina (79)-Aug. 15

Dave L. Finch (64)-Aug. 15

Paul A. Wright (19)-Aug. 17

Carmen Rivera (60)-Aug. 18

Shanda Peters (17)-Aug. 23

Frankie Valentin (22) – Aug. 26

Angelica Stickle (17) – Aug. 26

Héctor González (41) – Aug. 26

Yuly (García) Springer (31)
Aug. 26

Evelyn Roig (59)-Aug. 28

Julian Miller (5)-Aug. 29

David Nelson Rivera (21) – Sept. 5

Luz Rivera (55) – Sept. 6

Iris L. Rivera (21)-Sept. 8

Lloyd Lovelace (74)-Sept. 8

Miguel González (40) – Sept. 10

Leslie (González) López (40) –
Sept. 10

Inés (Baez) Rivera (49) –
Sept. 10

Charice A. Rivera (21) –
Sept. 12

Rachel Rivera (23)-Sept. 14

Kathleen (Merritt) Caffey (57)
– Sept. 15

Craig Burch (16)-Sept. 24

Oscar González (64) –
Sept. 21

Edie (Jimenez) Neitzel (42) –
Sept. 23

Raúl Rivera (10) – Sept. 24

Carlos M. Rivera (57) –
Sept. 25

Marina M. Ramos (25) –
Sept. 25

Robert Rivera (34)-Sept. 26

Angélica Medina (75) –
Sept. 27

♥ Anniversaries ♥



**Michelle & David
Fastenau** (2) –
Aug. 4

Evelyn & Bill Roig
(32) – Sept. 11

**Rosa & Brian
Meddaugh** (14) –
Sept. 16

**Yuly & Todd
Springer** (9)-Sept. 17

If I omitted your birthday or anniversary it's because I don't know it! Please send me info on your family! ☺