

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 9, Issue 1

Aug/Sept '04

Needed for  
Future Issues:

"Stuff" about  
you and  
yours...

Announcements

- New Baby
- Engagement
- Graduations
- Promotion
- New address

Upcoming  
Events

- Family parties
- Reunions
- Weddings

Articles, 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

## Family Reunion in South Carolina

The incredible 2004 family reunion in Lugoff, South Carolina has come and gone, like a dream. I have been left with an ache in my heart for the wonderful relatives that put this fabulous event together.

If I could go back in time and relive the entire thing a few more times, like in the movie "Groundhog Day," I would gladly do it (except for the plane trip—I don't like flying!).

Unlike "Groundhog Day," though, the events of our fantastic family reunion could not have been improved upon. It was perfect!

Come tour the following pages with me as I relive the most cherished moments of the *Rivera Family Reunion*.



For me, the reunion started upon our arrival at the airport in Columbia, S.C., where we were met by Mary Lillian and her son, Frankie. I rode home with them in their car, while the other five members of my family (Randy, Ruben, Lisa, Tory and Luke) followed in our rental car.

After a few stops here and there we ended up at Awilda's house, where after greeting the family there—Awilda, Alex Joel, Lillian, Edwin, and Lourdes,—my family and I took naps (we had been traveling all night). I didn't sleep long—I woke up and thought, "What am I doing sleeping? I've got relatives to visit with!" Within minutes I was being fed sumptuous *arroz con pollo*, *habichuelas*, y *ensalada*, which had been prepared by Lillian, the mother of Awilda and Mary Lillian.

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*Because this is a special reunion issue, we won't have space to print most of our regular features, such as "Guess Who This Baby Is?" "The Way We Were," "A Page Out of Our Family History," "I Remember," and "At This Time in Our Family History."*

The family reunion was officially kicked off with a formal dinner at Mary Lillian's house. By then, others had arrived: Tom & Olga Smith, Marina Ramos, Joi Stenroos, Milagros Curet, Helen González, Carlos & Garnet Rivera, Isidro Rivera, Roberto Rivera (of Ponce, P.R.), Robert & Myrna Rivera, Neysha Rivera, and Christian Rivera. We all got to meet Frank, Mary Lillian's husband, and their younger son, Alexis. There were others, too—like Frankie's wife, Amy, and her parents, some really close friends of Mary Lillian's, and Frank's niece and her children.



*Mary Lillian, here with her cousin Helen, her Aunt Milagros, and her mother Lillian, gave a welcoming speech and blessed the food.*

It really *was* a formal dinner. We ate off of real china, and there were tables and chairs set out with enough lovely place settings to accommodate everybody. Some ate in the dining room, but there were also tables set up on a back screened-in porch which Mary Lillian's brother built especially for the family reunion. The food was delicious (an Italian menu), and the desserts were melt-in-your mouth good (made from scratch by Mary Lillian).

Mary Lillian took a head-count, or rather, a plate-count, and determined that there were 34 people already present. Her brother, Tito, soon arrived with his four daughters, so that boosted the attendance to 39. The next day, there were a number of others due to arrive. What a great start!



*Cousin **Helen González**, daughter of Milagros (granddaughter of Tío Guar). Check your back issues of "¿...y la familia?" She and her family are featured in the Dec '98/Jan '99 issue as well as the Feb/Mar '99 issue, under "Meet Your Relatives."*



*Socializing: **Frankie**, who did an outstanding job of organizing and helping host the reunion. He even made a program which was handed out to all who came by Awilda's son, Alex Joel; **Joi** (intently listening to the conversation); **José Martínez** (Frankie's father-in-law); and **Marina Ramos** (Olga's daughter).*



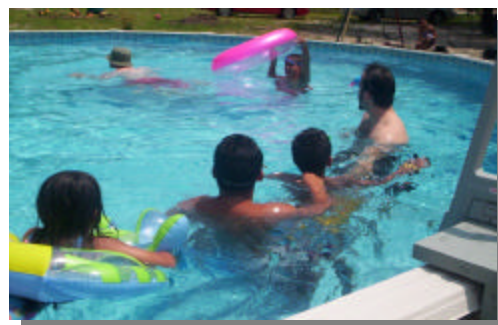


*Frankie's Program*

## *Saturday, July 24, 2004 Pool Party at Awilda's*



*Milagros Curet, Randy Pettit, & Olga Smith*



*Ruben Quiñones leads a "school bus" of young swimmers.*



**"Best Friends Forever"**



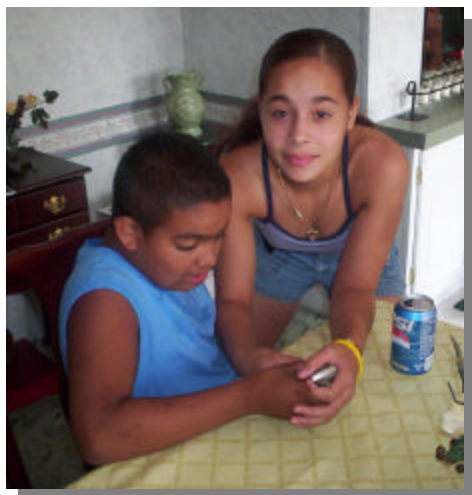
*Edwin, Olga, Isidro, Norma*



**Lisa & Ruben Quiñones**



**Brothers Edwin and Roberto review an old issue of the newsletter**



*Alex Joel and Neysha Rivera*



**The Rivera Reunion Band**



## Our Luau Celebration at Awilda's House



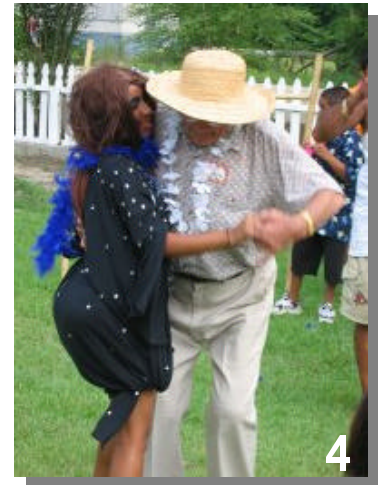
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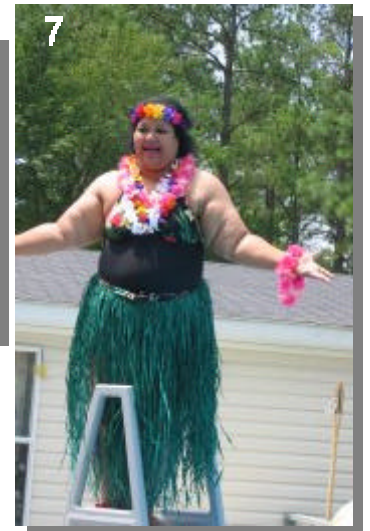
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1. The reunion banner
2. Frankie serving up piña coladas
3. Tory, Olga, Rachel, Luke & Ruben
4. "Fufa" dancing with Uncle Isidro
5. Doing the Electric Slide
6. Awilda: "The Party Animal"
7. Helen, the hula queen
8. Riveras galore!
9. Helen helps serve the delicious "pasteles" she made
10. Group picture

**MORE REUNION PICS IN  
NEXT ISSUE!!**



# Student News:

## Tory's Trip to Greece



**E**rin Paxton and I went to Greece this summer to help out with the Christian program, Crown of Life, for the 2004 Summer Olympics which are being held in Athens. These pictures do not even come **close** to capturing our experience there. We had an **awesome** time!

**I**n the background of this picture you can see the Parthenon, which was built during ancient times.

**O**ur ministry was not like the other mission teams. It was hard for the church to find a job for just two girls from California. So this became our ministry. For three weeks, we worked nine hours a day stuffing envelopes with tracts for the Greek people so that they can know Christ. Members of other teams came to help us for a few days at a time, but Erin and I oversaw the project of stuffing 80,000 envelopes.



**We** had so much fun and God taught us a lot; it was amazing. Everyone we met was so nice, and the Christians were **so** loving and joyful—praise God!



**We** made lots of friends and had plenty of adventures! The day after we arrived there we went to Ancient Corinth, which was a memorable excursion. I also visited the Areopagus, where the apostle Paul addressed the Greeks as recorded in Acts 17 of the Bible.

**Although** a mere “thank you” seems so inadequate, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who helped to make this trip a reality for me. Thank you and God bless!



# Relatives Respond



*From Cousin Joi, a few days before the family reunion:* I have been going thru the binders of my copies of the newsletters, reading up on the family that will be there, since you gave me an update from your telephone conversation with Mary Lillian. You're absolutely right in saying that they (the newsletters) are a wonderful "resource" of our family's history. I have been re-reading also about all of our past reunions, Golden Girl trips, all the family news, giggling at pictures of us growing up, seeing our own children develop and the announcements of their special accomplishments, memories/stories from other family members, and on and on. You're such a wonderful writer with a memory that won't quit! Also, the collection of pictures are some that I would never have seen otherwise. In addition, I must say that I have enjoyed seeing all the pics that I have taken which you have used. I kind of feel like your "roving" Lois Lane....or was that "Jimmy?" :-) Still have another binder of newsletters to review! I know that you've heard me say it before, but every issue is "PRICELESS"....and I do hope that everyone on your mailing list realizes the importance of this publication. I know you do this from the kindness of your heart and love of our family, heritage and for future generations which is such a loving and most special gift to everyone. Anyways, just wanted you to know that my "library" of newsletters is referred to over and over again and not gathering dust in a pile in my basement! :-)

*From Cousin Vanessa Braddock:*

Hello Norma! I received the newsletter yesterday and read through it right away ... as usual. While I was reading, I realized that there are probably a few things I have forgotten to inform you of ... changes ... etc. So here we go .....

**Our new address:**

Ken and Vanessa Braddock  
632 12th Street  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

**Birth dates:**

Ken Braddock - May 5, 1968

**Name Corrections :**

Austin Bell should actually be Austin Miller. (I changed his last name to his father's per his grandmother's request when he was almost 2 years old).

I think that is about all I have for now.

I hope everyone enjoys themselves at the family reunion ... I am a bit upset that once again I will not be able to attend! We have about 4 1/2 weeks left until Baby Anita will be joining our family and we are very excited about this! I am incredibly uncomfortable and have gained 45 pounds so far! Wowzer! I was 115 lbs when I got pregnant and am now 160 lbs! I just hope I don't give birth to a 20 lb newborn!!! I am sure that you noticed her name above ... Baby Anita!? Her full name will be Anita Clara Marie Braddock. A little lengthy, I know, but I gave Austin 2 middle names and this was the only way to make things "fair" so to speak! You can tell that she will be named after my grandma ... your Auntie Anita ... so I had to allow for a family name from Ken's side of the family as well. Clara is his Great Grandmother's name on his father's side of the family. I have been told several times from various people that Anita is not a baby's name ... but, unless I am mistaken, my grandmother was once a baby herself. I think that Anita is a beautiful name, and you know how fond I was and still am of my grandmother, so I really don't care what these people have to say about it! We are expected to be delivering around August 4th and will get you pictures and all the info as soon as we can. This way you will have something to put in the "Meet your Relatives" section of the newsletter! Have a blast at the family reunion ... I can't wait to read about it! I promise, I will make it out for a reunion within the next couple of years ... provided I am not having babies every time we have one scheduled!

All my love,  
Vanessa Braddock

Thank you to Tía Tita and Tío José for sending a \$50 contribution to the newsletter. I appreciate it very much!!

## "...y la familia?

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## Birthday Greetings

**Christian Rivera Rosa** (11) -  
Aug. 3

**Chet Kline** (38) - Aug. 6

**Michael García** (12) - Aug. 8

**Timothy Teal Barnes** (13) -  
Aug. 9

**Leandro González** (10) -  
Aug. 9

**Yamil Williams** (18) - Aug. 10

**Rosa (Medina) Meddaugh**  
(53) - Aug. 10

**René M. Rivera** (19) - Aug. 15

**José L. Medina** (80) - Aug. 15

**David L. Finch** (64) - Aug. 15

**Carmen Rivera** (15) - Aug. 18

**Shanda Peters** (18) - Aug. 23

**Frankie Valentin** (23) - Aug. 26

**Hector González** (42) - Aug. 26

**Yuly (García) Springer** (32) -  
Aug. 26

**Evelyn Roig** (60) - Aug. 28

**Julian Miller** (6) - Aug. 29

**David Nelson Rivera** (22) -  
Sept. 5

**Luz Rivera** (56) - Sept. 6

**Iris L. Rivera** (22) - Sept. 8

**Miguel González** (41) -  
Sept. 10

**Leslie (González) López** (41) -  
Sept. 10

**Charice A. Rivera** (22) -  
Sept. 12

**Rachel Rivera** (24) -  
Sept. 14

**Kathleen (Merritt) Caffey**  
(58) - Sept. 15

**Craig Burch** (17) - Sept. 24

**Oscar González** (65) -  
Sept. 21

**Edie (Jimenez) Neitzel**  
(43) - Sept. 23

**Raúl Rivera** (11) - Sept. 24

**Carlos M. Rivera** (58) Sept.  
25

**Marina M. Ramos** (26) -  
Sept. 25

**Robert Rivera** (35) - Sept. 26

**Angélica Medina** (76) -  
Sept. 27

## Anniversaries



**Michelle & David  
Fastenau** (3) - Aug. 4

**Evelyn & Bill Roig** (33)  
Sept. 11

**Rosa & Brian Meddaugh**  
(15) - Sept. 16

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

If you know of anyone in the  
family who is not receiving the  
newsletter, please send me  
their address.

Please let me know if I omitted  
your birthday or anniversary.