

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 10, Issue 1

Aug/Sept '05

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

## Our Incredible Family Reunion in Borinquen

June 24-26, 2005

**Borinquen: The Taino  
name for the island we  
now call Puerto Rico**

Photo taken at El Yunque  
by Tory Pettit

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*On Friday, June 24th there was a welcome at the home of  
Mon and Luz Elena in Punta Diamantes.*

Mi casa es  
tu casa.



Luz Elena



Norma and Auntie Marie



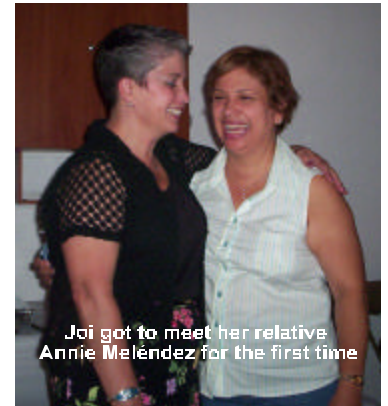
First cousins Olga and Hilda hadn't  
seen each other in over 40 years!



Uncle Isidro, Roberto and Edwin



René Jr., Luz Elena, Mary Lillian, and Papo  
gave the official welcome



Joi got to meet her relative  
Annie Meléndez for the first time



Papo's wife, Ada



Auntie Marie:  
"I came to see my people."



Joi and René's daughter, Vicky



Bill Roig and  
Mary Lillian Pérez



Olga,  
Aunt Delia,  
and Rosa  
(Annie's mom)





## Saturday Morning at René and Titi's House

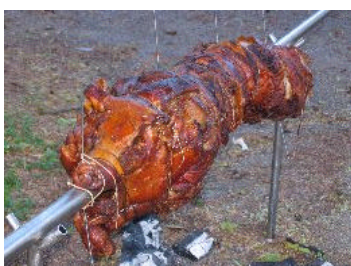
Enjoying a time of music, fellowship and traditional Puerto Rican breakfast foods are (clockwise, starting from top left):

- Delia Finch and Bill Roig
- María Nicholson and Isidro Rivera
- Delia, Joi & Vic Stenroos, and Evelyn Roig
- Isidro Rivera and Edwin's wife, Felita
- Dave, Delia, Tom and Edwin
- Dave Finch

*This picture at right is one of my favorites! Sister & brother happy in their homeland.*



After some last minute preparations (below) it was time to go to the rented hall to begin the great fiesta, dubbed "Christmas in June." The theme was planned so that stateside relatives who are unfamiliar with the Puerto Rican Christmas traditions could get a taste of this slice of island culture.





# The official fiesta

began with the Rivera-Sevilla cousins giving a welcome and then introducing Attorney Nelson Padilla, a representative of the office of the mayor of Ponce. Mr. Padilla read a proclamation from the mayor's office honoring Auntie Marie and Uncle Isidro and welcoming them back to Ponce. He then presented it to Auntie Marie to keep (1). Both Auntie Marie and Uncle Isidro gave short acceptance speeches (2 & 3), and then as a further surprise, they were given beautiful plaques from the 2005 host family, the Rivera-Sevillas (4). The wording on the plaques, with phrases such as "intelligent," "industrious," and "a survivor and a living success story," expressed the family's pride and admiration of the lifelong achievements accomplished by both Auntie Marie and Uncle Isidro. As a final touch, Papo and René presented a plaque for the mayor on behalf of the Rivera family (5). Photo #6 shows a close-up of Uncle Isidro's plaque. Auntie Marie's was very similar. In photo #7 Uncle Isidro and Auntie Marie show off the mayor's proclamation.

Cousin Papo (whose real name is Heriberto, by the way) pointed out the correlation between the reunion dates (June 24th and 25th) and the traditional Christmas celebration dates (December 24th & 25th). Since we were celebrating Christmas in June, we gathered for a family dinner on the 24th, and now on the 25th there would be more food, a gift exchange, and dancing to the beat of typical island music played by a trio of musicians. As an added surprise, the cousins had arranged for an *aguinaldo* to be sung (performed by the singer in the red shirt and white hat below). Note the fellow in the blue dress shirt and tie playing the *güiro*. He's not part of the trio; this is a musician cousin of ours from Peñuelas—Annie Meléndez's brother Emilio—who couldn't resist the temptation to join in with the other musicians. I'm actually surprised the Edwin, Awilda, and Neysha didn't do the same thing!



When the music started, guess who were the first three couples out on the dance floor? Awilda and Uncle Isidro, René and Auntie Marie, and — you can't see her because she's behind René— Aunt Delia and Edwin.

¡Echale Juana!



Reunion photos were provided by **Bill Roig, Carlos Rivera, René Jr., Joi Stenroos, Norma Pettit**, and by the official photographer of the **City of Ponce** (via CD). Coincidentally, the professional photographer was the same person who took the picture of Ponce's majestic new entrance, which Joi had sent to me via e-mail and I had used for the reunion ad on p.5 of the April/May 2005 issue of the newsletter. This same image was used by the Rivera-Sevillas on the plaques that they had made for Auntie Marie and Uncle Isidro (see photo #6 above).

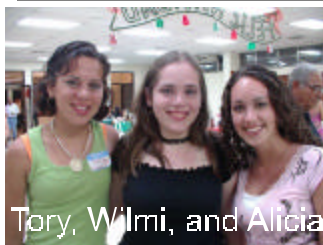




Roberto and Raúl



Left: These three girls are second cousins because



Tory, Wilmi, and Alicia

their parents (Norma, Bill Roig, and Carlos Rivera) are first cousins.

*This is just a sampling of reunion pictures from Saturday night's fiesta. In the next issue I will print more, I promise!*

*Left: Lilliam didn't rest for one minute during the reunion. Everyone raved about her cooking.*

*Top right: Annie and her daughters, Rosannie, Annette and Joanie.*

*Right: Felita opening her gift—a Christmas ornament from Colorado. Hmmm. Who brought that?*



*Left: We were thrilled to have a group of long-lost relatives from Peñuelas attend the reunion.*

*Right: Some of Olga's children and grandchildren. Olga traveled to Puerto Rico with 14 members of her family!! Huge thanks to Cousin Luz Elena who put up the whole Brady Bunch in her house.*



Did you notice how beautifully the hall was decorated? Mary Lillian spent *days* (with the help of one of Papo's daughters) making the hall look festive. Thank you to EVERYONE who helped put this event together. It was truly amazing, and a gift of time, money, and labor that we all appreciate from the bottom of our hearts! Thanks also to the Medina family, who although could not be present at the reunion, sent in a financial contribution to help defray the expenses.

Sunday morning, June 26th, breakfast was at the home of Cousins Edwin and Felita.

This was the official "good-bye" since many of the relatives had to return to their homes.



Garnet Rivera and (I think) the young son of Edwin Rivera Soto



I am so-o-o-o ready to go home!

I hear you, Sister, but I'm glad I came.

Okay, so the burning question is, where will next year's reunion be? Cousin Carlos spoke with his brother, Orlando, and Orlando graciously agreed to hold the 2006 reunion in his lakefront home in Georgia!!



Carlos' daughter, Alicia Rivera (on the right) and her sister, Sara, stayed with their hosts Edwin and Felita Rivera during the reunion. They had never met their relatives, but loved their caring and hospitality.



# Student News

## Raymond Cavino

(Olga's grandson) was inspired to compose the following poem while in Puerto Rico, which he dictated to his cousin Luke Pettit on June 26, 2005. Raymond will begin kindergarten this fall, and we can already fore-see literary success in his future.



### Raymond's Poetry



A bird doesn't fly

But is so high

I t got stung by a bee

Until his wings fell off the tree



A frog on a walk

That doesn't talk



A dog doesn't talk

But it jumps a lot



A river and a frog on a walk

Makes me wanna eat a lot of chalk

A jumping bean doesn't jump

But it lays like a lump

All the creeks go babbaly-bibble

But the water fall is more like a water dribble

Birds drink coke



But don't jump a lot

A shoe walks on a foot

But when the foot comes out

I t smells of phoo.

This poem Raymond wrote.

Raymond kinda acts like a goat.



## Craig A. Burch

Son to

Michelle (Harrell) & David Fastenau  
mother & step-father

and

James & Shelley (Beeson) Burch  
father & step-mother

## Class of 2005

Adrian C. Wilcox High School  
Santa Clara, CA

Congratulations to my handsome great-nephew, Craig, who graduated from high school on June 17th. In his very sweet thank you note, Craig stated that he missed the visits to Placerville and the pink elephant parties, adding, "...it was always a lot of fun and I'll miss you as I'm schooling in Utah." Craig (or mom, Michelle), send me your address at college so that you can receive your own copy of the newsletter and keep abreast of family happenings. Best of everything to you!

My daughter, Tory Pettit, 20, will be leaving for Uganda on August 29th, flying first to Washington D.C., and then to London, and finally Entebbe. She will be participating in the Study Abroad Program. Please keep her in your prayers and ask God to protect her in her travels as well as during her stay in Africa.



## Other Family News



Congratulations to **Jacqueline Correa**, daughter of Milagros Rivera and granddaughter of Tio Guar. She is getting married to Christopher Brian Alley on September 24th in Newton, Massachusetts.

While many of us cannot attend due to the distance, we all wish you much love, health, happiness and prosperity in your new marriage.

Please send me pictures of your wedding so that I can include them in the next issue of the newsletter.

**RCT René Miguel Rivera**, son of René Jr., has graduated from the U.S. Marines' Basic Training. The ceremony took place in Parris Island, S.C., on April 22nd.





# Relatives Respond

At right,  
Vanessa's children:  
Austin and Anita



Hey Norma! I got the "Y La Familia" in the mail the other day and read it straight thru as soon as I saw it! I love receiving the newsletters and always look forward to them arriving in what I call my Cracker Jack Box ... my mail box! Ken always laughs at me because if he comes home for lunch and gets the mail before I do, I get a bit perturbed and tell him he just got into my cracker jack box and looked at the prize before I had the chance! Wow ... you can really tell that as a stay at home mom, I don't have too much to look forward to each day, can't you?! I have to tell you that Ken reads the newsletters too! I don't even have to tell him we got a new one and give it to him to read. He just reads it on his own, every time. This last newsletter you sent he picked up right when he got home from work and read it front to back before he did anything else!!! I am so happy that I am married to a man that takes so much interest in my family and being part of it! I can't wait for everyone in the family to meet him and for him to meet you all!!! We are both very sorry that we could not make it to this family reunion in Puerto Rico. I believe that we will be setting up a special savings account so that we know that we will at least have the money to attend the next one! As for unseen events that get in the way ... we obviously have no control over those ... we will just pray that we don't run into any "speed bumps" along the way! I have been dying to attend one of our family reunions for years now! When we do finally show up at one, we will have 3 children in tow with us as well! You know, "The Braddock Tribe!" Next year at this time, we will have Austin (11), Anita (22 months), and Logan (8 months)! Taking their ages into consideration, attending the next one may not be a smart idea, but we will make it to a family reunion as soon as we can!!! Plus, Ken has his 20th class reunion next year! Good Lord! I see a lot of traveling in our future! It sure would be nice to see you again, and Iowa is so boring, I don't suppose there will be a reunion here anytime soon! By the way, Auntie Delia wrote that story for the newsletter about her father, and I was wondering ... wasn't that my Grandma Anita's father as well? Is the picture in the "Y La Familia" my Great Grandfather? I would like to know so that I can keep his picture somewhere special so that I can share it with my children in the future! Thank you for all of your time, effort and love that you put into the "Y La Familia", if it weren't for you, a lot of us would have no way of staying connected!

Hope to hear from you soon!  
Vanessa

**New Home!!** The Braddocks have purchased this beautiful new home and will be moved in by the time you read this. Please note their **new address**:  
Ken & Vanessa Braddock  
6151 Pleasant Street  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

Norma,

I have been very busy moving the lab. Our move will be on June 24! I have been busy remodeling the new lab. I will be thinking of you all at the family reunion.

Please say hi to everyone for me and Donna, and tell them why we couldn't be there.

Great newsletter. Love as usual.  
—Josy [Medina]

*Editor's note: Thank you, Josy, for your faithful contributions to the newsletters. They are so very appreciated!*

6/3/05

Hi Cuz!

Hope this little donation helps you out this month. Realized that we hadn't sent you anything in a while. You know how much we appreciate your continuous efforts and dedication in producing the family newsletter! Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU! Am tickled and pleased that you always find my pictures worthwhile to include in the newsletter! ☺

Much love,

Vic, Joi & Eric

Thanks for the \$25 check! -NP

From Aunt Delia...

"...We received the La Familia Newsletter yesterday, and really enjoyed every bit of it. Dave was trying to find out what were some of the goodies mentioned we will be having there in P.R. I explained to him what they were, and suddenly he did remember them all."



**Cousin Edwin Rivera Ramos** (son of Edwin Rivera Sevilla) sent in these photos of his wedding last year to Edna Velázquez. He has been unable to attend any of our reunions thus far, although his brother Edwin Rivera Soto attended this year's reunion. Maybe next year in Georgia?



## "¿...y la familia?

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Visit us on the Web at [www.ylafamilia.org](http://www.ylafamilia.org).

## Birthday Greetings

Anita C. Braddock (1) - Aug. 3

Christian Rivera Rosa (12) - Aug. 3

Brian Pineda (29) - Aug. 3

Chet Kline (39) - Aug. 6

Michael García (13) - Aug. 8

Timothy Teal Barnes (14) -  
Aug. 9

Leandro González (11) -  
Aug. 9

Yamil Williams (19) - Aug. 10

Rosa (Medina) Meddaugh (54) -  
Aug. 10

René M. Rivera (20) - Aug. 15

José L. Medina (81) - Aug. 15

David L. Finch (65) - Aug. 15

Jennifer Campos (31) - Aug. 16

Carmen Rivera (62) - Aug. 18

Shanda Peters (19) - Aug. 23

Zuleymi Cruz (1) - Aug. 23

Frankie Valentin (24) - Aug. 26

Hector González (43) - Aug. 26

Yuly (García) Springer (33) - Aug. 26

Evelyn Roig (61) - Aug. 28

Julian Miller (7) - Aug. 29

David Nelson Rivera (23) - Sept. 5

Luz Rivera (57) - Sept. 6

Jerry Feliciano (29) - Sept. 6

Iris L. Rivera (23) - Sept. 8

Serena Campos (8) - Sept. 10

Miguel González (42) -  
Sept. 10

Leslie (González) López (42) -  
Sept. 10

Charice A. Rivera (23) - Sept. 12

Rosanie García (28) - Sept. 13

Rachel Rivera (25) -  
Sept. 14

Kathleen (Merritt) Caffey (59) -  
Sept. 15

Craig Burch (18) - Sept. 24

Oscar González (66) -  
Sept. 21

Edie (Jimenez) Neitzel (44) - Sept.  
23

Raúl Rivera (12) - Sept. 24

Carlos M. Rivera (59) Sept. 25

Marina M. Ramos (27) - Sept. 25

Robert Rivera (36) - Sept. 26

Angélica Medina (77) -  
Sept. 27

Did I forget someone's birthday  
or anniversary? Please inform  
me of omissions or errors.

## Anniversaries

Michelle & David  
Fastenau (4) - Aug. 4

Nellie (Feliciano) &  
David López (17) - Aug. 6

Jeremy & Sheila  
Carrasquillo (4) - Aug. 11

Luz Rivera & Ramón  
Trinidad (14) - Aug. 14

Evelyn & Bill Roig (34)  
Sept. 11

Rosa & Brian Meddaugh  
(16) - Sept. 16

Yuly & Todd Springer  
(11) - Sept. 17

Christina (Krause) &  
Stan Darnell (2) - Sept. 27