

"...y la familia?"

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3

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*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 imme-
diate family*

*Favorite family
recipes*

*Cute things your
kids have
said*

Funny stories

*This is **your**
family news-
letter. Fill it
with things
about your
family!*

ROBERTO RIVERA SEVILLA

On November 13th at 12:05 a.m., another cousin from the Rivera Sevilla family left our midst. Roberto had been suffering from cancer for about three years and put up a brave fight, undergoing surgeries, chemotherapy and the works. He is now at rest, but for the Rivera Sevilla family it is difficult to grapple with the pain of losing two siblings in such a short time (in the last issue we reported the passing of Raúl).

Born on July 14, 1940 in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Roberto was the second child of Sinforiano (Guar) Rivera Cruz and Elena Sevilla. He is survived by two children from his first marriage (to Lydia Rivera), Elizabeth and Roberto Rivera Rivera, and nine children from his second marriage (to the late Elena Morales Ríos) - Luz Elena, Roberto, Rosanna, Javier, Johanna, Lourdes, Sonia Noemí, Rosa Evelyn, and Ada Iris. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, and nieces and nephews.

Reclusive by nature, in his later years Roberto went out of his comfort zone to connect and reconnect with family members. The first time I remember meeting him was at my father's funeral in 1995. He attended the 2000 reunion in Tequesta, Florida and also the 2004 reunion in Lugoff, South Carolina, where the above picture was taken. This picture shows the three Roberto Riveras that were not only all at the reunion, but all staying at the Holiday Inn Express. On the left is Roberto's son, Roberto Rivera Morales, and on the right is Roberto Rivera, son of Isidro and Rosita.



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The
Way
We
Were

This great photo, taken around 1945, was sent to me by Barbara Nicholson. It is of my father, Oscar García, Auntie Adele's husband, Frank Jimenez, and Uncle Isidro.

¿...y la familia?

At this time in our family history....

- On December 15th, 1852, María de Jesús García was born. She was a sister of my great-grandmother María Engracia García.
- Also on December 15th, but in 1884, my great-uncle Eugenio Cruz García was born.
- Timothy Michael Warren, son of my sister, Olga, was born on December 26, 1974. He died at the age of fifteen months.
- Juan M. García, a brother of the above-mentioned Maria Engracia García, was born on January 2, 1858.
- On January 15, 1907, my great-uncle Gilberto Cruz Maldonado was born. He was the son of Máximo Cruz and Genara Maldonado. He was the uncle of Adela, Oscar, María, Elena, Guar, and Anita.
- On January 21, 1820, my great-great-grandmother, María Inés Vilá de la Cruz (Máximo's mother) was born. María's father, Pedro Vilá, was born in Cataluña, Spain.

A Page Out of Our Family History

Recently, I was contacted by a man from Peñuelas through Ancestry.com, the website that I use for my family history research. His name is José E. Velázquez Rodríguez, and he is a great-grandson of Victoriano Rivera. Victoriano was a brother of Manuel Alejo Rivera Maldonado, and therefore an uncle of our Rivera family patriarch, Florencio Rivera Maldonado. Here in his own beautiful "Spanglish" words, is what José had to say about Victoriano and how he is related to him.

"The real story of abuelo Victorio, or Victoriano is as follows. He was born in Guayanilla; he was the youngest son of José de los Santos Rivera Rivera and Cipriana Maldonado Santiago. Soon after, José de los Santos, his father, died. Our great grandmother Cipriana got married again but I don't remember his name at the moment. Victoriano or Victorio—yo le digo abuelo Victorio como le decía mi mamá—antes de casarse con María Ortiz-Renta tuvo un affair with another woman called María Candelaria Rodríguez Ponce de Leon. They never got married, but they had three children and one of those was my grandfather. Unfortunately, because they were not married my grandfather did not carry his father's last name, Rivera. Abuelo Victorio y

Abuela Candelaria had three children from their relationship, Juan José, my grandfather, better known as Juan, 1874-1956, Juana Catalina, born in 1876, and Juan Antonio born in 1878. After Abuelo Victorio broke up with Abuela Candelaria he got married to María Ortiz-Renta and had Tía Juanita, as my mother called her. Abuelo Victorio después que enviudó de María Ortiz-Renta, vino a vivir a Peñuelas y aquí murió. Abuelo se vino a vivir a Peñuelas porque Papá Juan, Tía Catín, y Tía Juanita vivían en Peñuelas. Yo sé el área más o menos en que vivía Abuelo Victorio, pues mi mamá me enseñó. Después que murió Abuelo Victorio, Tía Juanita se mudó para Ponce y vivía en sector La Playa de Ponce y allá murió."

I wish that I had known of José before the 2009 reunion in Peñuelas; I could have met him in person, and he could have attended the reunion! I asked him if he knew Cousin Annie Meléndez (not related to him since Annie is from the Cruz side of our family, not the Rivera side), and he said he did know our pharmacist cousin.

I loved making this connection and will continue corresponding with José. I'll keep you all posted as we unearth more pages of our family history.

This is our Christmas greeting to all who receive the "¿...y la familia?" newsletter.



*Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!
With love, the Pettit Family*

Jesus is the gift that perfectly fits the size of every heart.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,
and cometh down from the Father of lights." James 1:17 KJV

“¿...y la familia?”

Alexis Valentín Joins the Army



Alexis Valentín-Pérez, the younger son of cousin Mary Lillian Pérez, has joined the Army!

Alexis, who had been living with his brother, Frankie, sister-in-law, Amy, and niece, Kaylee Noemí in Kissimmee, Florida, had been attending their church and had recommitted his life to the Lord. Thus, he was first in “the Lord’s army”.

Several months ago, he decided to also serve in the U.S. Army, and he enlisted. After weeks of counting down his time, Alexis eagerly left for his basic training at Ft. Benning, GA on October 7th. He will graduate from basic training in December and will get to spend Christmas and New Years with his mother before reporting to Ft. Lee, Virginia on January 12th.

Please keep Alexis in your prayers for his safety as he serves our country.



Cousins Meet After 50 Years

By Carlos Rivera

I run a web design and hosting business and have been doing so for nearly 20 years. I’ve built up a fairly large base of customers, including relatives like Norma, Joi, Ken (Vanessa’s husband) and my brothers, Roberto and Orlando. Nearly all new business comes from referrals by existing customers. Recently, one such referral was the result of cousin Joi talking to her niece, Vickie Jimenez, about Vickie’s website needs. Joi suggested to Vickie that she contact me to see if I can help. Well, to make a long story short, Vickie called, we talked about her immediate needs, I told her I could handle the job, and so we agreed to work together. That was earlier this year.

Mind you, I have never met Vickie. I understood she is one of Sylvia Lovelace’s daughters, Sylvia and Joi being daughters of Auntie Helen. Vickie told me she knew my brother Roberto and that he taught her to drive stick shift with his old pickup truck in California.

Vickie and her partner, Robin Helm, are promoting a business to help entrepreneurs and individuals improve performance by empowering them to take self command and see the possibilities. They’ve published a book and are in the process of finalizing another book. They are expanding their business and setting up joint ventures with other experts. Their goals are ambitious, but attainable. We had been communicating by phone and email and it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to fully understand their vision. I felt a strong need to meet face to face so we could have a good discussion about their long-term goals so I could understand the interrelationship of all the facets of their business. Since Vickie and Robin lived in Colorado, Garnet and I thought it would be a nice opportunity to spend time with Joi and Vic in Denver. Additionally, I thought I could take advantage of the trip to also talk to Joi about launching her website. After juggling dates between Vickie and Robin and Joi, we agreed to arrange to meet in early September.

Joi later mentioned that her sister, Sylvia (they call her Sasha), would be taking a trip to Nova Scotia and she planned to stop by Joi’s while we were there. Joi lives very close to the Denver airport. I was excited when I heard that news. I had not seen Sasha since I was 12 years old.

Well, let me tell you, Joi and Vic are wonderful hosts! Garnet and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Continued on the next page.

Cousins Meet After 50 Years (Continued from page 3)

On the second day of our visit, Vickie and Robin came by, we had introductions, and the remainder of the day was spent reminiscing about the old days and getting caught up on each other's lives. Vickie is such an energetic person! I wish I had a tenth of her energy. On the third day, Vickie, Robin and I discussed business while Joi and Garnet shopped quilt stores. We had a very good discussion; it helped me tremendously. On the fourth day, Joi and I discussed her website needs. She got excited for the possibilities, though she realized the large amount of work she has ahead of herself to prepare her products for sale on the site. Later that evening Sasha arrived and after a joyous reunion after more than 50 years, the memories of our childhood experiences in the 40's and 50's just came pouring out. Sasha filled in some gaps for me and told us stories about her life that just kept us entranced the whole evening. She's such a great story teller and like Vickie, she's so full of energy.



Robin, Carlos, and Vickie

Perhaps the most emotional story she told us was the one of my father's return at the end of World War II. As she tells it, tells it, my father had sent a letter and a package in advance of his visit. The package contained his parachute made of silk and the letter proclaimed that he wanted to marry my mother within three days of his arrival. Sasha said Auntie Anita García, Auntie Marie Nicholson, my mother and others used the silk from the parachute to create my mother's wedding gown. I recall seeing an old photograph of my parents' wedding, my dad in his uniform and my mother in her wedding dress. On the day of his arrival, Sasha remembers a knock at the door. Sasha was just a little child at the time. She recalled the door opening and at first seeing my father's military boots, then the pants which were tucked into the boots, then the rest of his uniform and finally his face. The date would have been near the end of September 1945. My parents were married October 2, 1945.



What makes this story all the more amazing is that for many years, unknown to many of us or simply forgotten, Auntie Helen had kept my mother's wedding dress in storage. After she passed away, cousin Joi discovered it and gave it to me and Garnet. Now, knowing the story behind the dress makes it even more special. I am so thankful to have it.

I must say that I am so overjoyed after this trip. Meeting wonderful family members I haven't met before and seeing Sasha after so many years.....it was a very emotional journey for me. I am so thankful for the opportunity. I hope our next visit will be soon!



Garnet, Carlos and Sasha...



...plus Joi.

“¿...y la familia?”

Other Family News

Mini Cousin Reunion in Nebraska



It started when I decided to hop on a plane and visit Cousin Kathy (Merritt) Caffey in Nebraska. Kathy had been sick for several months, and it was getting her down. She needed some cheering up!

After I booked my flight, Cousin Joi had to do some fancy fennagling to get people to trade days with her at work so she could make the trip, also. It was literally at the last minute that she got everything worked out, and even then we had to keep our fingers crossed to see if she'd make it on the plane (flying standby).

I flew into Denver on Friday, October 30th. Joi met me at my gate and we headed to the gate for Lincoln together. Good news! She got on, and we even got to sit next to each other.



Kathy picked us up at the airport and we stopped at a few shops in Lincoln—Joi is into quilting and Kathy and I are into scrap booking. We also enjoyed a nice lunch, and eventually made it home to Seward, where Jim was waiting to usher us into a spotless home.

That evening we had dinner out at a charming café, but over the next few days we were treated to some of Jim's spectacular cooking. Here he is preparing a breakfast casserole; we later begged him for the recipe.

Jim was a sport! Joi and I roped him into playing Peanuts after we heard that he was a wiz at Solitaire. Though reluctant to even try it at first, he caught on really quickly, and before the first game was over our battle cry was, “No mercy!”

Cousin Meryem Merritt arrived by car from Des Moines on Saturday morning, and the party was *on*!



“¿...y la familia?”



Meryem was our chauffeur as we headed to antique shops and craft stores. As you can see below, I found some wonderful antiques and old stuff!



Above: Hayli shows off some of her Halloween haul.

She was dressed as an accident victim, and she and Jim made her costume. You can't see it in this pic, but she had skid marks on her tee shirt, which they made by putting spray paint on Jim's tire and running over the tee shirt!



Kathy's son, James, and his wife, Erika, came to visit in the evening and their kids went trick or treating with Hayli and her friends. Later, I plugged in my karaoke machine and we tortured poor Jim with that for a while. Kathy is sitting on an antique potty chair (left), and at right, sitting with the Halloween decoration that we three gals pitched in to buy for her after she fell in love with it.



I think Kathy enjoyed our visit and we loved every minute of our time there. She and Jim were such good hosts! Thank you so much for your hospitality, Jim and Kathy!

Update on Dustin Cavino

I just spoke with my niece, Teena, and she says that her son, Dustin, is continuing to improve. He is walking and talking, although he still needs to make progress in those areas. He is currently being home schooled, and spends some time lifting weights every day to regain muscle tone and body strength.

It hasn't even been a year since the accident, so our miracle kid is doing astoundingly well! Please remember to keep Dustin in your prayers for a complete recovery.

2010 Family Reunion in Chicago

The dates for the 2010 Family Reunion have been changed.
Please make a note of the new dates: **June 25th-27th.**

The Felicianos requested the date to be pushed back one week because there was a conflict with the Puerto Rican Pageant/Parade, in which Cousin Myriam is heavily involved.

Tribal Pages

Prior to connecting with my new-found third cousin José Rodríguez (see “A Page Out of Our Family History on page 2), I made a connection with “a cousin of some cousins” on my mother’s side of the family, also through Ancestry.com. This “cousin”, Johnny Ortiz Olivera gave me some valuable information on my mother’s relatives and pointed out some errors that I had in my family tree. For those of you older family members who remember my mother’s cousins, Johnny’s mother, Ana Ida Olivera Olivera, is the sister of Elia, who together with her husband, Juanín Olivera, owned a plant nursery called Ponce Gardens for many years.

Anyway, through my subsequent correspondence with Johnny, he “let me in” to see his Tribal Pages, and I told Carlos about the program. Carlos checked it out and declared it to be pretty much what he had been planning to develop for our website. For a nominal yearly cost, he could acquire a Tribal Pages account for our family and eliminate hours of planning and developing his own family tree program for our “y la familia?” website.

The next step was for me to send him my Family Tree Maker file. In the past, we had tried this and it was a royal headache, but this time I followed some instructions that Carlos gave me that were on the Tribal Pages website and created a GED format file. A few clicks later, Carlos had my file, and our Tribal Pages account was born with over 1,600 names in it!

Carlos and I are very excited about this new development, and we hope you will take the time to visit the website, get familiar with it, and add information on your own family. One neat thing about this is that instead of me bugging you at family reunions for information, you can enter it by contacting the site administrator (Carlos) and giving him your information, which he will promptly upload. Another neat feature is that by clicking on the relationships tool, then selecting two different names from the family tree, you will be told how those two persons are related. Here is a message from Carlos:

*“In case you are not aware, Norma and I were able to upload and post our family tree online! This is fantastic because it now gives each family member the opportunity to update their own family’s data and even upload photos of family members! Previously, Norma has had to do this by herself and only after gathering information from each person. **Please visit <http://ylafamilia.tribalpages.com> and request an invitation.***

As administrator of the site, I will receive your request when it is forwarded by the website. As a family member, you will have access to private family information and be able to update yourself, your spouse and descendants.

This is exciting and a huge step forward for cataloging our family’s history! — Carlos”

Our Tribal Pages account can also be accessed via a link on our family website, www.ylafamilia.org.

Carlos, on behalf of the entire family, thank you for all of your hard work on the website!

“¿...y la familia?”

c/o Norma I. Pettit
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Phone: (530) 642-8960
E-mail: mamanony@sbcglobal.net

Visit us on the Web at www.ylafamilia.org.

Birthday Greetings



*Christopher Nicholson (40) -
Dec. 4*

*Emma Kathleen Thompson
- (6) Dec. 5*

*Yanelis Aisha González (8)
Dec. 9*

*William A. González (17)-
Dec. 14*

*Ryan Rivera (25) -
Dec. 16*

*Jonathan F. Segarra (12) -
Dec. 17*

Kelsey Pombo (20) - Dec. 21

*Arlene González (28) -
Dec. 22*

*Joshua Omar Cabán (4) -
Dec. 22*

Cama Klene (42) - Dec. 25

*Michelle Harrell (43) -
Dec. 30*

*Vanessa Braddock (37) -
Dec. 31*

*Oscar González (50) -
Jan. 1*

*Mary Lillian Pérez (46)
Jan. 6*

*Robert Paul Cavino (5) -
Jan. 9*

*Ada (Pacheco) Rivera (55)
- Jan. 10*

*Marlin R. Barnes (14) -
Jan. 10*

*Edward Rivera (61) -
Jan. 11*

*Bélgica González (29) -
Jan. 12*

*David Nicholson (45) -
Jan. 18*

*Sylvia (Atiles) Lovelace
(72) - Jan. 18*

*Amber Nicholson (14) -
Jan. 24*

*Zachary David
Nicholson (3) - Jan. 30*

*Larry Wright (61) - Jan.
30*

*William Roig (77) -
Jan. 31*



*Happy New
Year,
Everybody!!!*

Anniversaries

*Ada (Pacheco) and
Heriberto Rivera (30)
- Dec. 10*

*Felicita (Soto) and
Edwin Rivera (26) -
Dec. 23*

*Joi (De Nardo) and
Vic Stenroos (29) -
Dec. 26*

*Michelle (Rivera) and
Jason Su'a (3) -
Dec. 30*

*Ruben and Lisa
Quinones (9) - Jan. 6*

*Sephania (Krause)
and Scott Thompson
(9) - Jan. 6*

