

"...y la familia?"

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1

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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 immediate family
Favorite family recipes*

Cute things your kids have said

Funny stories

Family Reunion 2010



Inside this issue:

Family Reunion 2010.....	1
Needed for Future Issues.....	1
Family Reunion continued.....	2-4
Mission Trips to Guatemala and Mexico.....	5
Baby News.....	6
Other Family News.....	7
Birthday and Anniversary Greetings.....	8



June 23rd: Randy and I flew to Indianapolis, Indiana, stopping in Denver on the way, where we had lunch with Joi at the airport. We were excited to think that we'd be seeing each other again in just two days, at the reunion.

¿...y la familia?

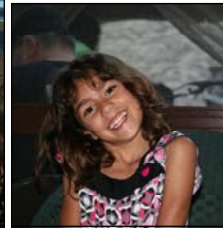


Carlos and Garnet's home was amazing—next year's reunion will be there!! Above

is Garnet's huge quilting machine and the inset is one of her quilts.



Such wonderful hosts! Carlos cooked every meal for us and they took us sightseeing.



Friday night's gala event was held at the East Chicago Marina, with elegantly decorated tables, a DJ, and a delicious catered dinner of guava pork, Mediterranean chicken, corn, salad and bread, plus an assortment of desserts. The locale had a huge deck with a view of Lake Michigan and all the boats at the Marina. It was truly lovely, and the Felicianos had everything so well thought out and planned, including an eloquent welcome by the core family of seven siblings, with Myriam as spokesperson. There was even an ice-breaker game prepared by Nellie, with trivia questions pulled from past issues of "...y la familia?" The idea was to mingle among the people sitting at different tables to get the answers. One young cousin, Jean Carlos Vázquez, went to every table and obtained all the answers. The answer to the question about which person had a "flamboyán forest" growing outside of Puerto Rico was Cousin Joi Stenroos, who sadly did not make it to the reunion. She and hubby, Vic, waited through four flights and didn't get on a plane. (Joi works for United Airlines.) We were all so disappointed about that! She was greatly missed and was inquired about all night long.

There is no way I can get everyone's pictures in here, and I can't identify everybody, but you can see that it was a wonderful setting with a fabulous view, and we all had a great time. Not too much dancing went on, although you can see that Meryem Merritt, Hayli Frosheiser, and Monica Shenkar showed off their moves. You go, Girls!



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Saturday, June 25th: During the day we were all on our own to do whatever we wanted. A group of us decided to go to Navy Pier. We drove to downtown Chicago, then took a trolley to Navy Pier, although some ended up having to walk. At right, we are lined up giving each other massages while waiting for the trolley. Meryem, *la muy lista*, cut to the front of the line so she'd get her shoulders massaged. Just look at that impish grin! At the Pier, we split up in groups and went our separate ways. Some had a leisurely lunch and a boat ride, others walked to Grant Park for "A Taste of Chicago." Kathy, Meryem and Hayli enjoyed the artwork and the gardens inside the buildings. I tagged along with Randy on his relentless quest of a famous Chicago hotdog. He got his dog, and we rode on the huge ferris wheel, but my only disappointment was that I didn't get to stick my toes into Lake Michigan. There was no place to get down to the water's edge. On the way home, some of us again had to walk, as the trolley was full.



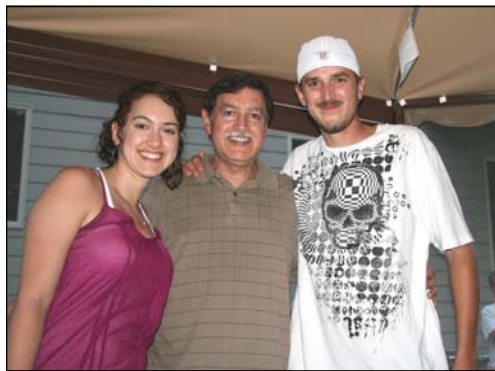
Saturday Night Party

Most of us agree that the Saturday night party at the home of Max and Carmen Carrasquillo was even more fun than the Friday night gala at the Marina, perhaps because of the welcoming, down-home atmosphere. The Felicianos had set up several tents with tables and chairs for our dining comfort. The food was fabulous and plentiful, featuring such Puerto Rican favorites as *arroz con gandules* and *pasteles*. Friends of the Feliciano family provided typical music, to which Uncle Isidro and his granddaughter, Monica, danced. There seemed to be just as many people on Saturday night as there were on Friday night, if not

more. I believe that the total head count was close to 90 people.



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Sunday Goodbye Brunch

Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and so it was with the 2010 Family Reunion. We gathered at the Carrasquillo home again for a hearty and delicious meal prepared by Myriam, Carmen and Nellie. I watched in amazement at how the trio of Feliciano sisters worked together so harmoniously, weaving in and out in Carmen's kitchen with not so much as a bump, a cross word, or a dropped piece of fruit, all the while keeping up a steady stream of conversation. They were the East Coast Counterpart of the Golden Girls (Olga, Joi and Norma), and a beautiful sight to behold.

While eating my breakfast, I seized the moment (and my laptop) to enter more information into my Family Tree Maker program. With me are Jean Carlos, Carmen and Michelle. Below right, the only group pic taken at the reunion, with the 25 or so “die-hards” who stayed till the end of the Sunday brunch.

I am sure that I speak for everyone who attended the 2010 Family Reunion when I say the Feliciano's provided us with an awesome experience. We are grateful for all the planning, time, effort, and expense that went into this memorable time of meeting new relatives, renewing family ties, and sharing lasting memories.

Next year's reunion will be in the Indianapolis, Indiana area, and will be hosted by Carlos and Garnet Rivera. The exact date will be announced in due time, but it will most likely be on either the third or the fourth weekend in June. As a matter of fact, we have the locations for the 2012 and 2013 reunions as well—South Carolina and Orlando, Florida respectively!



Reunion photo credits: Kathy Caffey, Nellie Feliciano, and Norma Pettit



Following on the heels of our wonderful family reunion, the three Feliciano gals took a sister trip to Guatemala as part of the Hearts in Motion Team. Cousin Nellie sent the following article and photos about their trip.

We had a great time in Guatemala. Lots of work but also daily miracles. It was amazing to see the spirit of these people who often have so little in comparison to us. I want to share a particular story. We did a home visit to a grandmother and her two grandchildren, a 9 year old boy and his 4 year old sister. We had visited a few days earlier to provide the grandson a wheelchair (he is unable to walk due to meningitis when he was younger). We had to return to visit this family because the wheelchair needed a harness to keep him secured safely. When we arrived the grandmother was not there, she was shopping with the 4 year old. When they arrived, the little girl came in with a box which had 5 baby chicks and she was very excited about her purchase. She and her grandmother had gone shopping to buy the little girl a pair of shoes but the shoes were too expensive so the grandmother instead purchased the baby chicks to keep the grand daughter entertained. Lo and behold we had put together a little bag for the girl, which included clothing, toys and guess what....four pairs of shoes....Doesn't the Lord work in mysterious ways? We had those types of stories all week. Either wheelchairs were the perfect fit or foot braces fitted as if custom made for the children. When we ran out of wheelchairs, a family came in with a wheelchair they could no longer use because it was too small and wouldn't you know it, the next child that came into the clinic, the wheelchair appeared to be the perfect size with no adjustments needed. Carmen and Myriam did more physical labor. They helped lay down pavers for the sidewalk at the nutrition center as well as making side tables (sanding/repairing/varnishing) for a hospital which did not have tables for the patients to put their personal belongings. We also went to a tent city to distribute food. So many grateful but happy people.

Myriam was the most hesitant about his trip and she is probably one who is already planning her next trip or at least the next fundraiser to help this organization (Hearts in Motion). We were truly blessed during this trip. Although we go in thinking about the "good" we do, it is us who are blessed to be there. I came back with such a spiritual awakening - which is always a good thing to have. My faith in God is increased to a higher level. We are truly blessed!

Photos at right: Carmen and Myriam learn how to set pavers, and the three sisters enjoy a little R & R after an exhausting week.



*Bryan and Nellie.
The chair was a perfect fit.*



My (Norma Pettit) own mission trip to Mexico was amazing. Whereas last year we were part of a larger team that worked alongside Ensenada's *Cristo Vive* church doing VBS in the morning, and did various construction projects in the afternoons, this year's group consisted of only 13 people and focused more on ministry. We still did Vacation Bible School at Cristo Vive in the mornings, helping to show God's love to some 180 children. In the afternoons we visited a variety of other places: a juvenile hall, a men's rehab center, and a home for severely disabled children. At the juvenile hall and at the men's rehab center, members of our group gave their testimonies (their stories of how God has worked in their lives), and we had opportunities to pray for the teens and men. The response was tremendous. At the home for severely disabled children, the ministry consisted of talking to the children, showering them with love and attention, and taking them out for walks along the dirt road in their wheelchairs. These were children with muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and AIDS, and as heart-wrenching as it was to see them—there were three sisters from the same family all with muscular dystrophy (a fourth had already died last year)—their smiles were beautiful to behold and I know that our visit brought them joy.

On Friday, after VBS was over and one lucky boy and girl had each won a bicycle, our team plus a group of fifteen people from Cristo Vive drove about three hours to an area called Vicente Guerrero. This is a Triqui Indian settlement. The Triqui people, originally from Oaxaca, a state in southern Mexico, migrated to Vicente Guerrero to work in the tomato harvest, and many of them have now made Vicente Guerrero their permanent home. Poverty and need abound.



Working with the pastor of a tiny chapel, we fed sandwiches, cake and milk to some 130 people on Friday night and held a church service. On Saturday we divided the 120 or so children into three groups that rotated between a craft station (the children worked on the rough-hewn church benches), a sports station (playing relay games and soccer with balls that we later donated to the chapel), and a teaching station (where I gave the lesson in Spanish and a member of Cristo Vive led the children in songs). Afterwards we fed a spaghetti lunch to approximately 150 people, the children broke open a piñata, and every single child there received a bag with three toys in it.

I was thoroughly blessed by every part of this year's mission trip and would do it all again in a heartbeat.



Eric's side of the family present included his Aunt Sasha (seated front and center), his cousin Vickie, front left, and me (Norma). I traveled the farthest!

¿...y la familia?

Baby Shower

For Eric and Donna's baby boy
June 12, 2010
In Thornton, CO



Donna admires a baby quilt handmade by Grandma Joi. Lots of love went into every stitch!



I made 36 bootie nut-cup holders and brought them from CA in my suitcase. Joi made the "Ethen" wall plaque.



Eric shows off his "man bag", a diaper bag for daddies, as he poses with Donna.

and then the Arrival of Ethen Ryan Stenroos!



Bonding with Mommy.



Madison is a big sister now!

Born: Saturday, July 31, 2010
at 11:27 a.m.
in Thornton, Colorado
Weight: 6 lbs. 10 oz.
Length: 20 3/4 inches



Proud Grandma



Eric holding his son for the first time.

Other Family News

MtDna testing results are in! If you recall, in the April/May issue I mentioned that Cousin Joi was going to do the cheek swab and send the results in for analysis. The MtDna strictly traces the maternal line, with no influence from any males along the ancestral line. Men and women both receive their mtDNA from their mother, but only women can pass it down to their children. I wanted to trace the mtDNA of my paternal grandmother, Ana Cruz García, but since my father could not pass it down to me, I had to have a female cousin do the testing. Any one of the daughters of María Nicholson, Elena De Nardo, or Anita Merritt could have taken the test and had the same results, but I asked Joi first and she agreed. The results: Haplogroup A. The following explanation is taken from the FamilyTreeDNA website:

"Specific mitochondrial haplogroups are typically found in different regions of the world, and this is due to unique population histories. In the process of spreading around the world, many populations—with their special mitochondrial haplogroups—became isolated, and specific haplogroups concentrated in geographic regions. Today, we have identified certain haplogroups that originated in Africa, Europe, Asia, the islands of the Pacific, the Americas, and even particular ethnic groups. Of course, haplogroups that are specific to one region are sometimes found in another, but this is due to recent migration.

Haplogroup A is found in eastern Eurasia and throughout the Americas. This haplogroup was present in the populations that initially colonized the pre-Columbian Americas, and dates to at least 30,000 years ago. Future work will resolve the issue of how many distinct colonization events there were in the original peopling of the Americas, and the origin and role of individuals bearing haplogroup A."

The bottom line is that the maternal ancestral line of Ana Cruz García has been traced back to the Taíno Indians. So, if you are a descendent of Oscar, María, Guar, Elena, or Anita (children from the union of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García), then your Taino ancestry has been established. Again, this does not take into account any influence from the males along that tree branch. With continued research and possible future contact with people whose direct ancestors connect somewhere along our family tree, we may be able to determine what other elements are in our family bloodline. The search never ends! ☺

Your Prayers are Requested



Cousin **Helen Correa González**, daughter of Milagros Rivera, is undergoing treatment for colon cancer. In early March, she had surgery to remove half of her large intestine and part of her small intestine.

When I spoke with Helen a couple of weeks ago, she said she was having a good week because it was one of her "off" weeks from chemo treatments. She has two weeks of treatments and one week off. She has been having the chemo treatments for three months now and still has another three months to go. The chemo treatments leave her weak and sick, but she says she has a lot of support from her church group and from family members, making special mention of her "angel" and sister-cousin, Mary Lillian. She was in good spirits and is trusting in God for a full recovery. Please remember her continually in your prayers. We look forward to seeing her in good health at the next family reunion.

Ken and Vanessa Braddock have a new address: **1601 N Oceanshore Blvd., Flagler Beach, FL 32136**

Vanessa writes, "We love the small town atmosphere here! The people are so friendly ... and the beach is right out our front door!!! I feel so much better here. A lot more relaxed. We have gone to the beach every day since we've been here, after dinner of course, so that I can go too. I can't take the heat here, but after dinner, it's perfect!!! Ken fishes, the kids swim and body board, and I read my books. :) There really isn't anything like FRESH CAUGHT FISH for dinner!!! Yummy! The farmer's market out here is really nice & I also belong to a local organics club! Other than fishing in the ocean, Ken and Austin also go behind our place to the inter-coastal and fish there!!! Austin and I catch our bait. Austin uses the cast net in the ocean to catch live minnows for he & Ken to fish with, then uses it in the inter-coastal to catch live fish and shrimp for fishing. Ken keeps the "bait" alive with a live bait bucket that he immerses in the water & when he's done fishing, he throws the bait fish back in the water and brings the shrimp home to freeze, or cook and put in our salads. I use the Sand Flea catcher at the ocean and catch the sand fleas to bring home and freeze for the next day's bait. Last night at the inter-coastal, we caught some little fiddler crabs and Ken will be using those for bait as well. :) We are really having fun as a family here! There was nothing for us to do like this in Vegas. We all know here that after dinner, we will be heading to one body of water or the other. The kids are having a blast!! "

“¿...y la familia?”

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

Birthday Greetings

Anita C. Braddock (6) - Aug. 3

Christian Rivera Rosa (18) - Aug. 3

Brian Pineda (34) - Aug. 3

Chet Cline (44) - Aug. 6

Michael García (18) - Aug. 8

Timothy Teal Barnes (19) - Aug. 9

Leandro González (16) - Aug. 9

Yamil Williams (24) - Aug. 10

Rosa (Medina) Meddaugh (59) - Aug. 10

René M. Rivera (25) - Aug. 15

José L. Medina (86) - Aug. 15

Jennifer Campos (36) - Aug. 16

Carmen Rivera (67) - Aug. 18

Andrea Rivera (21) - Aug. 22

Shanda Peters (24) - Aug. 23

Zuleymi Cruz (6) - Aug. 23

Héctor Burgos (44) - Aug. 24

Angelica Stickles (24) - Aug. 26

Frankie Valentín (29) - Aug. 26

Héctor González (48) - Aug. 26

Yuly (García) Springer (38) - Aug. 26

Evelyn Roig (66) - Aug. 28

Julian Miller (12) - Aug. 29

Zulena Delgado (22) - Aug. 29

Taelyn Darnell (5) - Aug. 31

Nelson Rivera (28) - Sept. 5

Luz Rivera (62) - Sept. 6

Jerry Feliciano (34) - Sept. 6

Iris L. Rivera (28) - Sept. 8

Serena Campos (13) - Sept. 10

Miguel González (47) - Sept. 10

Leslie (González) López (47) - Sept. 10

Charice A. Rivera (28) - Sept. 12

Rosanie García (33) - Sept. 13

Rachel Rivera (30) - Sept. 14

Kathleen (Merritt) Caffey (64) - Sept. 15

Craig Burch (23) - Sept. 17

Monica (Rivera) Shenker (30) - Sept. 21

Amy Valentín (28) - Sept. 21

Oscar González (71) - Sept. 21

Carmen E. Delgado (26) - Sept. 23

Edie (Jimenez) Neitzel (49) - Sept. 23

Raúl Rivera (17) - Sept. 24

Carlos M. Rivera (64) - Sept. 25

Marina M. Ramos (32) - Sept. 25

Johanna Rivera (38) - Sept. 26

Robert Rivera (41) - Sept. 26

Angélica Medina (82) - Sept. 29

Joseph Montalvo (5) - Sept. 29

Logan A. Braddock (5) - Sept. 29

Anniversaries

Michelle & David Fastenau (9) - Aug. 4

Nellie (Feliciano) & David López (22) - Aug. 6

Jeremy & Sheila Carrasquillo (9) - Aug. 11

Luz Rivera & Ramón Trinidad (19) - Aug. 14

Evelyn & Bill Roig (39) - Sept. 11

Rosa (Medina) & Brian Meddaugh (21) - Sept. 16

Yuly (García) & Todd Springer (16) - Sept. 17

Carol (Medina) & Larry Wright (23) - Sept. 26

