

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 19, Issue 4

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*Needed for  
Future Issues:*

**Announce-  
ments**

*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*

*Family recipes*

*Cute things  
your kids  
have said*

## *Isidro Rivera 1919-2014*

The Rivera family suffered a devastating loss with the passing of our beloved Uncle Isidro on December 28, 2014.

Born in Barrio Santo Domingo of Peñuelas, Puerto Rico on May 13, 1919, Isidro was the son of Florencio Rivera Maldonado and Otilia Pacheco Arroyo.

When he was still a young boy, his parents moved the family to Ponce. They were poor, but Isidro received a good education, graduating from high school in 1936. He joined the Army in 1940, where he was an MP, artillery man, bugler, and paratrooper, participating in strategic missions during WWII.

After the war, he married Rosita Hernández in San Francisco and was a wonderful father to his four boys.



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## *I Remember...* by Roberto Rivera

It was Saturday.

The morning started early with Dad getting up about six and putting on the coffee. Sometimes you could hear him in the kitchen, and listen to the sound of water running, or the door closing as he stepped into the garage. He would make a maintenance check on the vehicle, evaluating oil levels, amount of gas, and making sure the tires all had the proper air pressure...then packing the stove, utensils, and charcoal, the checklist clear within his head, marking off items as they were loaded in the car. At times, you could hear him mumble, "Got the charcoal, the matches..."

Of course, Mom would be busy in the kitchen, fixing breakfast for the crew, and in between time, seasoning the fresh meat, getting the rice, beans, and potato salad made, and cleaning...the early morning smell of fresh garlic, salt, pepper, and spices always bringing that expectation of hunger...looking forward to lunchtime, even though you might have just finished breakfast. It was, in fact, quite a procession, an undertaking that has taken a few years to realize what efforts were needed, considering there were four boys in the house who were always ready to horse around, hungrily looking for breakfast and maybe some hot chocolate, needing showers, clothes, or missing socks. And finally, by 10:30 in the morning, everyone gathered by the car, Dad still evaluating his checklist, with all the food, tools and toys. And so the morning progressed, everything packed neatly in a place, to be found later. Heaven help us if it wasn't there!!

The drive seemed long, and for a while the road yielded first small towns, then the foothills, and finally the ascent that brought a quiet excitement, the warmth of the sun penetrating through the windshield, then the coolness of shade as we passed under the canopy of the big trees, traveling up the mountain road, gyrating from one switchback to another...reaching deeper into the mountains until we were standing, gazing with awe, at those redwood giants.

The picnic areas were not too crowded by the time we arrived, and Dad found us a choice spot. It was then that Dad would begin the "Ceremony of the Unpacking." ("I know I packed the salt, it was right here...") and we helped transfer the goods to the directed locations until, by insight or desperation, mom finally said those magic words: "Why don't you boys go off and play?" It didn't take long for the message to settle in!

Carlos and Edward would be scheming on the freckled-faced, blossoming girls in the next campsite, and planning one of the "Hiking Trail Disappearing Acts," that normally extended about three miles and lasted at least two hours. If caught sliding out, they would take Orlando and me along, although sometimes it was more fun to just toss rocks into the woods or explore the woods ourselves. Meanwhile, back at the picnic table, mom would finish the salads, put on the rice and beans, butter the French bread...while anyone caught sticking around the camp would be immediately drafted into helping her set the table or do odd chores.

Once the fire was going and the meat was roasting on the rotisserie, Dad, with his eyes on the fire and his hands on the *cuatro* (and usually with some comment about the passing women), began his Puerto Rican love songs, singing, "Ay, ay, ay, ay, *canta y no llores*," and after finishing a verse would leisurely adjust the coals for a more even flame...the smell of garlic and oregano filling the cavities of the redwood forest, mingling with the sounds and words of his song. By now the juices of the meat were dripping religiously onto the fire and the aromas were arousing the beast inside anyone who passed by, until even the neighbor's noses would lead them to cast a hungry eye in the direction of our camp... "*porque cantando se alegran cielito lindo los corazones*." The tantalizing meat was almost ready for the table and now Dad would offer some to the neighbors, as a peace offering for the torment of their senses!

Carlos and Edward, racing back, timed their journey just about to the "T" coming down off the trail, decidedly ready for the victuals that abounded on the picnic tabletop. Eventually, the day's adventures were recounted at the table, and you just knew you had to evaluate and edit the details from within first, because too much enlightenment might get Mom and Dad to decide you needed to stay closer to camp!

Then as the hour of departing came closer, the packing began anew, with Dad's final roam through the campsite to assure himself nothing was left behind. The ride back was filled with a few of the secret parts of the stories that could be told with current impunity...and visions of that comfortable bed and a warm home loomed in the distance.

The day's activities ended with exhaustion, both for parents and kids, after unpacking the car for the last and final time, and placing everything back in their cupboards and boxes. The smells of the forest lingered upon our clothes and bodies, just as the memories of our childhood excursions remain in our minds.

It was Saturday night.



# Golden Memories

To the Rivera family:

Today I have lost my dear brother. My heart is broken. I have lost a part of my heart. I have wonderful memories of growing up as his little sister that he protected. He let me tag along with all his guy friends and he wanted me there. He took good care of us as I was growing up. I will always remember his kindness and his compassion for the whole family. He made sure we had what we needed in times of hardship. He was a go getter ever since he was a youngster. I will miss him very much.

—Tía Tita



Disneyworld, June 2013



Oct. 2, 1945

This is what I remember about Uncle Isidro. I remember World War II and when Uncle Isidro came home to San Francisco. I remember when Auntie Rosita arrived in San Francisco and how happy Uncle Isidro was and how the family planned their wedding. I remember how they got married at the Lutheran church on Kirkham street in San Francisco. Uncle Isidro and Auntie Rosita were always around. Viki and I would walk to their house on 22nd Avenue near Lincoln High school and visit. We had very fond memories. When my dad died, I was 16 years old and it was a terrible time for Viki, George, Mom and I. Uncle Isidro stepped in and helped us so much. When Ted and I got married, Uncle Isidro was the one who walked me down the aisle. I loved him so much and I am happy that he had a



good life, and I think he is back with his beloved Rosita. What a wonderful couple. What a wonderful man. Thanks for the memories.

—Jenny (Nicholson) Reinke

I am so saddened by Uncle's passing. He meant so much to me. I was a young boy when my dad, Achilles, died. Uncle filled in and provided me with surrogate "dad" experiences that I have not forgotten. My memories of Uncle are all good—a fun guy who loved to sing, dance, and light up the room. God bless the Rivera family. God bless Uncle Isidro. RIP.

—George Nicholson





*I'm sending this picture of Uncle Isidro at our daughter's wedding in 2003. He beat out all the young guys for the garter, ending up on his knees! Boy, I wish I had that picture! Family was so important to him. He drove all the way to Arkansas by himself to be at this wedding. (Being able to stop at the casinos on his way here and on his way home was a bonus.)*  
—Marlynn (Merritt) Krause

50 years ago, when George and I were newly married, Uncle Isidro taught me how to clean a fish. He said that if I was married to George, I'd need to be able to do that. It was like being handed an axe and told to kill a cow for that night's burgers. Uncle Isidro thought my horrified reaction was VERY funny! With four sons of his own, he always made time to do "dad" things with George after his father died when he was nine.

—Barbara Nicholson

*I loved my Uncle Isidro very much. He was always funny and positive in life. He would remember me every year and send me a card or a letter. He was my date to several functions. He will always be remembered. He will be missed.*  
—Meryem Merritt

*Uncle was a staple in our lives growing up, loved playing music and singing and always had great stories! His laughter will always be in our hearts.*  
—Joi (De Nardo) Stenroos

Uncle Isidro will always be in our heart! He was a great and lovely man, always with a great smile on his face. He gave us too much love!!  
—Felita Soto

What a sense of humor Uncle had! Every two weeks or so in the early 1970's, when I was a student at the University of Puerto Rico, I'd take a public car to Guaynabo and walk from the town center to Uncle Isidro and Auntie Rosita's house. Not having a phone, I never called ahead to say that I was coming. The sliding door at the front of their house was always unlocked, so I'd just let myself in *como Pedro por su casa*, as they say in Puerto Rico. (I acted like I lived there.) Sometimes, Uncle would be sitting in the living room and he'd hear my footsteps coming down the long hallway. He'd call out, "Is that you, Norma?" and then he'd holler, "*¡Ro-SI-ta! ¡Échale más agua a las SO-pas!*" ("Add more water to the soup!") It was just a joke. I was always welcome there, and I knew it.

Uncle will leave a giant hole in the family. What an icon! I am so glad that he was honored at the 2005 family reunion in Ponce and given a plaque from the mayor's office, thanks to the Rivera-Sevilla cousins. —Norma (García) Pettit



*The quintessential family man—12/25/58*

*¿...y la familia?*  
**Funerals are a time to gather,  
to share memories and to lend support...**

*"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:  
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which has been planted  
...a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance..." —Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4*



*Edward, Chris, Andrea and Brett Rivera*



*Victoria Nicholson and Ed Rivera*



*Brothers and Cousins*



*Isidro's Grandchildren*



*The four brothers sharing stories about their dad.*



*Roberto and Ed*

*Photos courtesy of Joi (De Nardo) Stenroos*



*¿...y la familia?*

# The Story of Our Family

By Nellie Feliciano

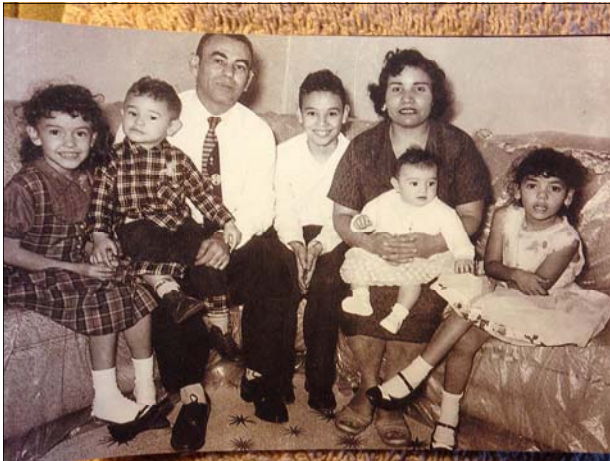
On October 31, 1974, Lydia Melendez Feliciano passed away due to thyroid carcinoma, in a hospital in Chicago, Illinois. A week after she was buried in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. Forty years later, her seven children, Hector, Myriam, Carmen, Epifanio Jr., Nellie, John and Michael gathered again in Puerto Rico to honor her memory and celebrate her life. Along with all of us came my husband, David Lopez, my mother-in-law, Alicia, my brother-in-law Max and two of my nephews, John and Angel.

Our story is about being “family” and learning to appreciate our culture. So often stories are forgotten, future generations may forget about the roots that have been established- it’s important for my family to know where we come from, to know where are roots truly started.

My parents, Epifanio and Lydia were both born and raised in Puerto Rico. They were married on November 9, 1947. This union produced 8 children, those already mentioned and Carmen Luz, who was the oldest and passed away as a young child in Penuelas.

My mother was one special lady- gentle, kind, patients and the necessary balance to my father, who was a disciplinarian, but also a very kind soul. Many may not have understood how these two opposites had a successful marriage but they did. Part of that success was the laughter that we heard every day – that sense of humor we often attribute to my grandmother, Mami Carmen (aka: Dona Mela). My mom was a good friend, a comic, a great cook, a party planner and a person who opened her home. She was sweetness!

Lydia, our mom, was a special lady who came to live in Indiana during the early years of their marriage. I admire



her strength in being able to leave her family to live in a very unfamiliar area, with no family or friends and very cold temperatures! But my parents formed several friendships with people who became our family, our godparents and their compadres. My parents chose their friends well because there are several who still are an important part of our life. They still share memories of our parents.

My cousins, Juan(Jr), Emilio (Millito), Annie and Ruth Myriam held a special place in my mom’s heart, being the children of her only brother, Juan. For my generation, they are the reason we go back to Puerto Rico. They help us to stay connected to this beautiful island. They help keep stories of my parents alive. Tia Rosa, their mom- she is sweetness too!

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back to Puerto Rico. They help us to stay connected to this beautiful island. They help keep stories of my parents alive. Tia Rosa, their mom- she is sweetness too!

I hope that as we continue to take trips to Puerto Rico and more of my nieces and nephews learn about their heritage, that they, too, will appreciate the beauty of our culture. I want them to remember that we are a strong family, we value tradition, we appreciate our heritage. Although many of them never knew my parents, I want them to remember that they are still a part of their lives and we will always have a connection to the beauty of the island.



*This photo represents the cousins.*

*My parents had eight children and my uncle (my mom’s brother) had four children.*

*We are the remaining children (RIP Carmen Luz and Ruth Myriam).*

*Family always first!*

# 2015 Reunion Information

Date: June 26-28, 2015

Place: Reading, PA

Hosted by: Edwin and Annie Rivera

Recommended Lodgings: Day's Inn or Candlewood Suites

The actual reunion party is going to be on **June 27th only**, at the Jim Dietrich Park Farmhouse at 4900 Stoudt's Ferry Bridge Road in Reading, PA. However, those of us who arrive on Friday can gather either at the hotel, at a restaurant, or at the home of Edwin and Annie, for an informal pre-reunion get together. Saturday is open for sightseeing (I want to see the Liberty Bell!), and our reunion party is from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the farmhouse.



Eddie and Annie have reserved a block of 10 rooms at each of two different hotels for June 26-28 so that family members can have a choice of lodging. Reservations need to be made by **May 20th**. After that date, whatever rooms remain unreserved in our room blocks will be released back into the hotel reservation systems.

At the Day's Inn in Reading/Wyomissing, your stay includes free hot Daybreak Breakfast, free Wi-fi, free coffee 24/7, access to their fitness room and business center with computer and printer. The room block rate is \$85 plus tax for a room with two queen beds or one king bed. There is no pool at this hotel.

The Candlewood Suites/Country Inn & Suites is currently under renovation to become a Holiday Inn Express. The special prices for our block of rooms are \$99 plus tax for standard 2 double beds and \$109 for a King Suite. Your stay there includes complimentary hot breakfast each morning, microwave and mini fridge in each room, free high speed Wi-fi, indoor pool, fitness center, and guest laundry.

Annie is going to visit both hotels to tour their premises and check out their actual rooms and facilities. We will have additional info and numbers to call for reservations in the April issue.

## *“¿...y la familia?”*

c/o Norma I. Pettit  
2426 Meadow Lane  
Placerville, CA 95667  
Phone: (530) 327-9361  
E-mail: [mamanony@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mamanony@sbcglobal.net)

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

## **Birthday Greetings**

**Eduardo Medero** (27) -  
Feb. 2

**Juan González** (54) - Feb. 2

**Katherine García** (50) -  
Feb. 4

**Brook Rivera** (36) - Feb. 5

**Angela Nicholson** (48) -  
Feb. 6

**Maritza Rivera** (52) -  
Feb. 11

**Alessandra Carrasquillo**  
(11) - Feb. 13

**Melissa González** (29) -  
Feb. 15

**Nicole García** (19) - Feb. 16

**Jaysli Barbosa** (13)- Feb. 17

**Nathaniel F. Vázquez** (2) -  
Feb. 17

**Ruben García** (66) - Feb. 21

**Felícita Soto** (59) - Feb. 21

**Leilani Isabel Sua** (2) -  
Feb. 23

**Heriberto Rivera** (63) -  
Feb. 24

**Gwendolyn Rivera** (13) -  
Feb. 27

**Jennily Oquendo** (17) -  
Feb. 27

**Dustin Yager** (30) - Mar. 3

**Adam Campos** (20)- Mar 3

**Miguel González** (22) -  
Mar. 3

**Matthew Hargraves** (15) -  
Mar. 3

**David Trinidad** (42) - Mar 4

**Marcel Antonio Quñones**  
(7) - Mar. 5

**Gabriel O. Rivera** (15) -  
Mar. 5

**Stephen Nicholson** (18) -  
Mar. 11

**Jayrick Barbosa** (14) -  
Mar. 12

**Karen Rivera** (36) -  
Mar. 15

**James Caffey** (73) -  
Mar. 15

**Jenny (Nicholson) Reinke**  
(77)- Mar. 17

**Joi Stenroos** (65) - Mar. 18

**Raynell H. Díaz** (34) -  
Mar. 19

**Veronica Nicholson** (17) -  
Mar. 21

**Michael Rivera** (16) -  
Mar. 22

**Mackenzie Eddy** (22) -  
Mar. 24

**Todd Anthony Springer**  
(13) - Mar. 24

**Sonia (Quiñones) Rambo**  
(37) - Mar. 26

**Barbara Nicholson** (69) -  
Mar. 26

**Julian Alexander Rivera**  
(5) - Mar. 27

**Milagros Rivera** (72) -  
Mar. 28

**Lisa (Finch) Warner** (49) -  
Mar. 28

**Jennifer Oquendo** (29) -  
Mar. 31

### *Anniversaries*

Sheila Andujar and  
Edwin Rivera (18)  
Mar. 15

Frankie and Amy Valentín  
(12) - Mar. 29

Sonia (Quiñones) and  
Jake Rambo (13)  
Mar. 30

**TRUE  
LOVE**