

"...y la familia?"

Volume 20, Issue 2

Oct/Nov 2015

*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!*



The Last October Issue



Awww... I have to say that I am feeling a little sad and nostalgic, like I did when my annual Christmas parties ended several years back. I had been doing those for about twenty years, also. But all good things must come to an end.

In case you missed my announcement about the newsletter ending with the June 2016 issue, I am reprinting it on page 3. I didn't get **any** feedback about that after the August issue, which kind of confirms my suspicions that hardly anybody even reads the newsletter anymore. *Sniff!*

Looking through my past volumes of newsletters—I have three enormous binders full of them—I found an article to reprint from the very first October issue (October/November 1996) that makes my heart smile. It's a rosy remembrance of childhood fun playing with cousins in the basement of the San Francisco home in which I grew up. But other notable articles from October issues include one about Hurricane Georges devastating Puerto Rico (Oct/Nov 1998), Laurie Jimenez's miraculous healing from life-threatening blood clots (Oct/Nov 1999), Bryan and Cheryl Finch's wedding day (Oct/Nov '00), Kathy (Merritt) Caffey's mission trip to New Orleans to help victims of Hurricane Katrina (Oct/Nov '07), the July 27th passing of our dear cousin Raúl Rivera (Oct/Nov '09), my son Luke's trip to NASA as part of a student team (Oct/Nov '11), Angela (Stickle) Matlock's wedding day (Oct/Nov 2012), and Shanda (Peters) King's wedding day (Oct/Nov. 2013).

Just looking at that cross-section of October issues, one can easily see memorable snapshots of our family: René and Titi Rivera flying from Mississippi to Puerto Rico, arriving only two days after Hurricane Georges hit the island to assess the family situation since they were unable to get through to anyone there by phone; family gatherings for joyous celebrations of marriage and tearful tributes to lost loved ones; prayers that were answered; and proud reporting of family members helping others and of student accomplishments. It is also interesting to note that the abovementioned October stories represented the family tree branches of Guar, Elena, Anita, Delia, Oscar, and Tita.

Since the 2016 reunion will be in the San Francisco Bay Area, my binders of newsletters will be there so interested persons can look through 20 years of family history. ☺

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Our Prayers Have Been Answered

Helen Correa has good news:

“I am happy to report I am alive today (thank you, Jehovah) feeling grateful and beautiful. In conversation with my doctor, he described my status as a road trip from South Carolina to San Diego, California. For many, this road trip would have taken at maximum two years. I started this trip November 2012. By the grade of my Lord and a year later, I have only gotten to Dallas, Texas and my intentions are to stay there for a while. I have been truly blessed. Jehovah has answered your prayers and mine. Cancer is an illness with many twists and turns with a life of its own. I am grateful for each day because I don't know which one will be my last. My faith keeps me strong, but the love and support from all of you makes the hardships of chemo worthwhile. Thank you so much. I love you with all my heart. Read your Bible daily and keep praying for all of us.”



Guess
Who This
Baby Is?

The answer
is found on
page 7.

Your Prayers are Requested

Tío José Lino Medina passed away on October 6th and Tía Tita continues to battle gall bladder cancer.

The Medina family desperately needs our prayers during this very difficult time.

The December issue will be dedicated to Tío José.



At this time in our family history...

- Elena and Sinforiano (Guar) Rivera were born on October 1, 1913, according to their baptismal records.
- Rosita Hernández and Isidro Rivera were married on October 2, 1945.
- My niece, Angela (Warren) Barnes, passed away on Oct. 8, 2007.
- On October 10, 1815, José Santa Ana de la Cruz married Lorenza de Santiago in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. José Santa Ana was a great-uncle of Máximo Cruz Vilá. (See last entry for a reminder on who Máximo was.)
- Achilles George Nicholson was born in Elias, Greece on October 10, 1891. He was the husband of Auntie Marie, and the father of Jenny, Victoria, and George. He died on November 3, 1953.
- David Finch, husband of Aunt Delia, and father of Bryan Finch and Lisa (Finch) Warner, passed away and was laid to rest on Oct 31, 2007.
- Oscar Cruz García, second child of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García, was born on October 30, 1910. He was my father.
- Máximo Cruz Vilá was born on November 18, 1853. He and María Engracia García were married on November 3, 1877. Their daughter, Ana, was the mother of Adela, Oscar, María, Elena, Guar, and Anita.

¿...y la familia?

Volume 20 will be the final year of the "¿...y la familia?" newsletter

I will never forget the excitement with which I began publishing our family newsletter in August of 1996. For the past 19 years, it has been my pleasure to pass on news, photos, announcements, artwork, stories, memories, and family history in an effort to inform, educate and unify our wonderful family. With the passing of time, I feel that the widespread use of the internet (especially social media such as Facebook) has diminished the newsletter's purpose.

In discussing my feelings with cousin Carlos, he suggested continuing to provide family history information via a blog that he can add as a link to our family website, ylafamilia.org. I loved this idea as it combines my two favorite hobbies, genealogy and writing. So beginning with this issue, I will include family history information that will be duplicated in a blog linked to the website. After the June 2016 issue, I will only be producing the family

history blog, although past issues of the newsletter will continue to be available through ylafamilia.org, as well as other announcements and links.

To celebrate 20 years of the newsletter, in this last volume I plan to include a favorite reprint in each issue, especially from those issues that precede June 2002, as these are not available on the website.

If you have nostalgic stories, childhood memories, old photos, or even original artwork or poetry, I urge you to submit them for publication in one of these last four issues. It's now or never!

Nunca me olvidaré la emoción con la cual empecé a publicar nuestro periódico de la familia en agosto del 1996. Por los últimos 19 años ha sido mi placer informar, educar y unificar a nuestra maravillosa familia mediante "¿...y la familia?" Con el pasar del tiempo, sin embargo, debido a que casi todos usan el internet y Facebook, siento que el periódico ha perdido su propósito.

Al dialogar con el primo Carlos, él sugirió que yo siguiera reportando información acerca de la historia de la familia mediante un "blog" el cual él puede añadir a nuestro website, ylafamilia.org, con un enlace. Me gusta esta idea porque combina mis dos pasatiempos favoritos, la genealogía y escribir. Así es que, empezando con esta edición, voy a incluir información acerca de la historia de nuestra familia que va a ser duplicada en un blog. Después de la última edición (la de junio del 2016), solamente estaré produciendo el "blog," aunque podrán seguir viendo ediciones pasadas del periódico y otra información y enlaces en ylafamilia.org.

Para celebrar 20 años de "¿...y la familia?" pienso incluir un artículo favorito de años pasados en cada una de estas últimas ediciones, y también quiero exhortarlos a que me envíen historias, memorias, fotos, o hasta dibujos y poesía original para ser incluidas en estas últimas cuatro ediciones. ¡Es ahora o nunca!

"...y la familia?"
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1
AUGUST 27, 1996

Family Reunion

and once in a lifetime photo opportunity. That's what we called it on July 27th when much of the family got together at Olga and Tom Smith's house in Martinez, California. We were welcoming William, Evelyn and Wilnie Ruiz, who were

"It was a rare chance to get these three siblings together in a photo with their mama."

Joi, Sasha, William and Auntie Helen

For those of you who don't know, William, Sasha and Joi are Auntie Helen's children, and it was a rare chance to get these three siblings together in a photo with their mama.

Tom and Olga graciously opened their home for the occasion and a good time was had by one and all, the chief activities of the day being eating, talking, crowding together for pictures, and

visiting from Guaymas, P.R. In addition, Sasha Lovelace and Joí Stenosis flew out from Denver, Colorado to see their brother.

When we had visitors in our home (other than relatives), my mother would remove the potpourri with them in the living room. She'd sit on the piano bench with her legs crossed and her folded hands cupping her knee, chuckling at the visitor's little witticisms. And then, to break the amusing lull in the conversation, she'd invariably ask, "¿la familia?"

To this day, whenever Olga, Ruben and I laugh about something, we'll often pause and then say, in unison, "¿la familia?"

How This Newsletter Got Its Name

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Needed for Future Issues:
"Stuff" about you and yours...
• Announcements (new babies, engagements, graduations, promotions, new home address, etc.)
• Upcoming events (family parties/reunions, weddings, etc.)
• Nostalgic stories
• Photos and artwork
• Original poetry
• Vignettes on your immediate family
• Favorite family recipes
• Cute things your kids have said
• Funny stories

This is a reprint from the Oct/Nov 1996 issue.

I Remember... Hide and Seek

By Norma I. (García) Pettit

The best fun was when cousins came over and we played in the basement. Sometimes it was the Rivera boys—Carlos, Edward, Roberto, and Roland (Orlando). Sometimes it was Esther's kids—Richard, Delma, Sylvia and Papo. Always, Joi was there, although we called her Joanne in those days.

The basement was fun to play hide and seek in because there were so many places to hide, and with seven other kids to look for, you could be finding one while another ran to the "safe" spot, so there was always action. For a while there was a huge bin in the basement which I think had wheels on it. Inside were cardboard boxes and other stuff. I remember hiding in there once and hearing the admiration in my discoverer's voice when I was found. I guess it was some feat for a little girl to climb into that big box, and no one else had thought of it yet.

On either side of the garage door there were two tiny rooms. One was where the breaker panel was, and where the garden tools were kept, and also the stacks of newspapers awaiting the next paper drive. The other room had a door that led outside, but this door was always kept locked and we were not allowed to open it. It had a mail slot in it, and the mail fell into a little bin that was attached to the door. We could hide in these two little rooms, but as soon as anyone opened the door you were discovered and there was no escaping without being tagged.



Then there was the *cuartito*, which means little room. It wasn't actually that little to us kids. It was used as a storage room and there was everything from boxes to furniture in there, with dark nooks to crouch in and all kinds of places to curl up behind, inside or beneath. In fact, it was such a great hiding place, that if you were the only one availing yourself of the *cuartito* and if the others took too long in finding you, the cold darkness would eventually drain out some of the thrill of fooling the others. After a while, when you heard several of the other cousins joining in the "it" person's search, and when someone would enter the *cuartito* again with a mumbled, "She mut be in here," you suddenly realized you were tired of the coldness of the concrete numbing your buns and the damp, musty smell of the storage room, and you would let out the tiniest noise...just enough to get the seeker's attention.

“¿...y la familia?”

Playing with the cousins was so much fun that it hurt. There was a big bubble that would grow and grow in my chest—a laughter bubble, a happiness bubble. We would scream and chase and laugh until Mom opened the door that led down to the basement and called out to us to be more quiet. At first we wouldn't even hear her until one of the older kids noticed and hushed the rest of us. Then we'd stand with heaving chests and sweaty upper lips until we all heard the reprimand, and then after the door closed, the noise would gradually start up again, with some moving around, a guffaw, a giggle, and finally back to the chorus of childish voices having fun.

Occasionally, out of sheer exhaustion from playing so hard, I would go upstairs to see what the grownups were doing. I would find them all crammed into the breakfast room, just talking, drinking coffee or beer, or sometimes sipping smelly anisette out of shot glasses. My heart went out to them...what a sad thing to be a grownup and just sit around a table and not be able to play in the basement like us.

Yet, they didn't seem to mind. Their faces would be smiling, there would be laughter and teasing, the Spanish conversations rolling and bouncing around the bright, cozy room, the smells of coffee, liquor and cigarettes mingling. Why once, unbelievably, I even remember them starting up some impromptu Puerto Rican band, tapping on glasses and the bottoms of pans with spoons, scraping the cheese grater with a fork, and singing some *jí-baro* ditty! And in the midst of it all was Mom's face with her cheeks all rosy and plumped out with laughter. *Gee*, it seemed like they were having fun, but how could that be? They were grownups! Then Mom noticed me standing there and asked, *“¿Qué quieres? Vete a jugar.”* (“What do you want? Go play.”)

It sounded like a fine idea to me...and I ran back down to the basement, to the shouts and shrieks of my own generation.



*San Francisco,
← California
Joi, Norma, Olga,
and Ruben,
June 12, 1955*

*Fun with Cousins
Celebrating Joi's
fifth birthday,
March 1955*



¿...y la familia?

Family History

This page will be reproduced as a blog entry with a link accessible through our family web page, www.ylafamilia.org.

Our Mystery Man: Florencio Rivera

The greatest challenge in my genealogical research has been the unraveling of the mystery surrounding my grandfather, Florencio Rivera Maldonado. By several accounts, he was said to have been orphaned as a boy and raised by an uncle and aunt, who supposedly took over the farm that Flor's father left behind. Reportedly, Florencio was also left with a slave, who he set free because he was afraid of him. I was also told that Florencio had only one brother (Juan), who died as a child.

When I first asked my dad what he knew about his father's childhood, it turned out to be very little. He did not even know the names of Florencio's parents. Uncle Isidro later told me that the names were Manuel Alejo Rivera and María Dominga Maldonado (information that he had gotten from his mother, Otilia Pacheco). However, I was faced with the question of whether these people were his birth parents or the uncle and aunt who had raised him. It became even more confusing when I began to discover baptismal records for a number of children of Manuel and María Dominga. Since I had been told that Florencio had only one brother, I was sure that these people must be the aunt and uncle and their children.

Then the mystery was solved (sort of) when I at last found the baptismal record for Florencio, stating that he was born on August 9, 1872, and was the legitimate son of Manuel Alejo Rivera and María Dominga Maldonado. Paternal grandparents were José de los Santos Rivera and Cipriana Maldonado. Maternal grandparents were Felipe Maldonado and María Polonia Rivera.

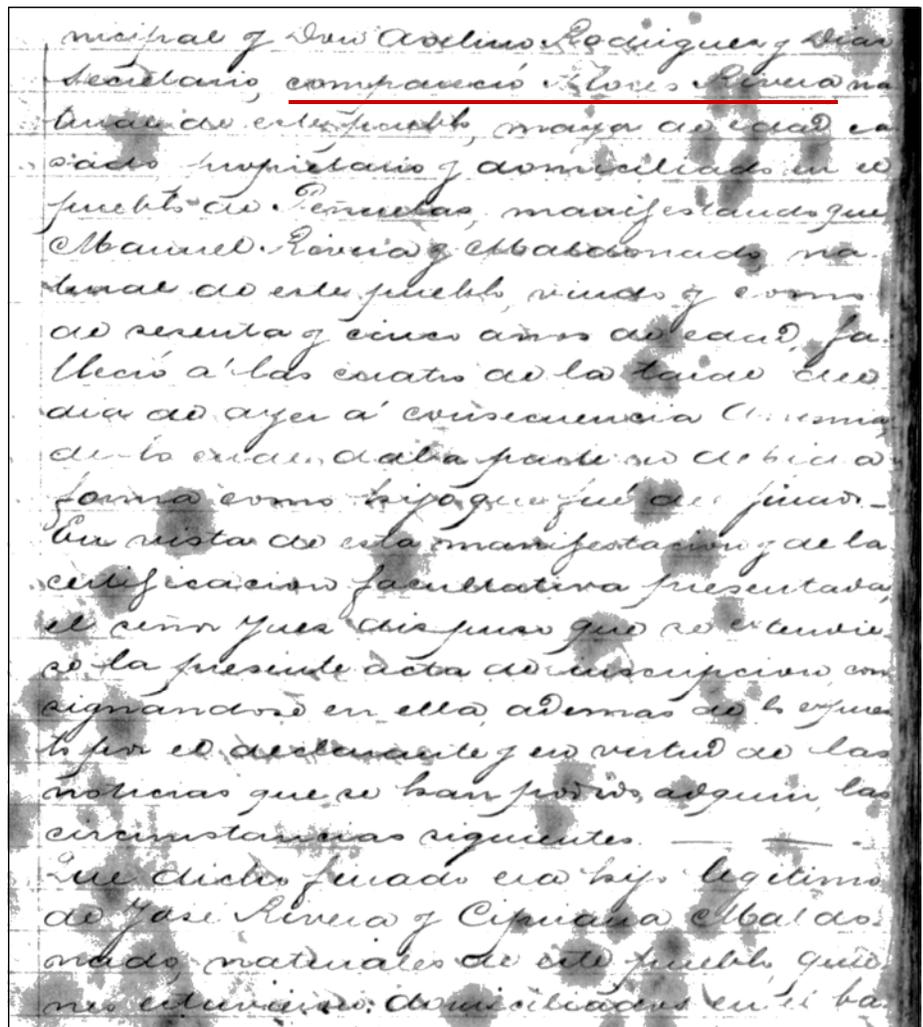
Florencio's siblings, then, were Rómulo (b. July 6, 1862; d. Dec. 25, 1878), María Soledad (b. July 15, 1864; d. unknown), Dionicia del Carmen (b. Feb. 20, 1867; d. Sept. 4, 1898), Juan Antonio (b. Oct. 7, 1869; d. unknown), Pedro José (b. Apr. 3, 1875; d. July 10, 1876), and Juan Julián (b. Feb. 28, 1877; d. Dec. 31, 1885).

This last brother, Juan Julián, is probably the brother that he mentioned to his children in later years, who died when Flor was at the impressionable age of 13. Why he never mentioned the other ones is not known. He would have been 26 years old when his sister Dionicia del Carmen died, but perhaps he was not close to her.

Recently, I came across the death record for Florencio's father, Manuel Alejo Rivera (see portion of record at right).* He died in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico, on Dec. 7, 1899. Florencio was 27 years old by this time, married to his first wife, Felícita Madera, and the father of a baby boy, Andrés Rivera Madera. In fact, Florencio was the one that reported his father's death—see where I underlined his name.

Why then did he tell his children that he had been orphaned as a child? The only possible explanation that I can come up with is that since his mother died on Oct. 21, 1882, when Florencio was just ten years old, maybe he told his children that he had been orphaned from his mother (*huérfano de madre*). Quite possibly, his father had sent him to live with an aunt and uncle because he had his hands full with several other children. If this was the case, history repeated itself a generation later when Florencio farmed out some of his own six children after the death of his second wife (my grandmother), Ana Cruz García.

*Source: www.familysearch.org;
Puerto Rico Civil Registrations 1805-2001, Guayanilla, Defunciones 1894-1911, Image 1512.



2016 Rivera Family Reunion

June 25, 2016

Tory Pettit created a Facebook page to keep us all informed and in communication about the next family reunion. Here is an excerpt from the most recent post written by **Marina Ramos**:

Hello, lovely family! As I'm narrowing down the choices for the event, it's looking like a home rental will be a best choice, given location to popular San Francisco spots and taking into consideration those flying in.

Our high contender is the below listing. Located in the Marin area, between San Francisco and Napa, next to an estuary, hiking trails, etc. Can be rented for 2-3 nights but checkout appears to be at 4 p.m., so no big rush that day. Can comfortably sleep 22 in beds but up to 28 with additional mattresses, blow up beds, sleeping bags and space. There are two master bedrooms with private baths, but I'd like one to be reserved for any elders that may be attending; otherwise, rooms will be on a first come/first served basis. If rented, I'm asking \$70 per adult [per night]. Price includes rental fee, taxes and additional fees, but not the refundable deposit.

There are hotels within 1-5 miles from the home, with nightly base rates ranging from \$85-\$110 a night. The owner also mentioned having a deal made with local hotels and providing a discount for those attending the reunion.

Please take a look at the below listing. Let me know if you are interested in staying at the property or a hotel and how many adults/children may be attending. I have already been in contact with the owner and has tentatively placed it on reserve for me so the sooner I hear back from interested parties the more likely we can solidify the arrangements, if desired. Any other feedback is greatly appreciated and I can be reached via Facebook, email or phone/text [925-207-2686]. Thank you!

*www.vrbo.com/745829 Title: 17 room estate in exclusive green point neighborhood
Nearby hotels: Courtyard Marriot, Best Western, Holiday Inn*

In the two weeks since Marina wrote the above post, only Vic and Joi Stenroos have committed to staying at the 17 room estate. Due to the apparent lack of interest, Marina is also exploring other options, such as renting out a locale for a one-day event like we have had in past reunions (Ponce, Chicago, Peñuelas, Laurens, Reading). Considering that many who are traveling to California will want to spend several days sightseeing in San Francisco and visiting other landmarks along the Pacific coast, this may be an appealing option. They will then be free to stay at different places that are close to the areas they want to visit.

Tory Pettit is also creating a survey that will help her and Marina assess family members' preferences with regard to lodging and other aspects of the reunion. Keep checking back on the Facebook page "2016 Rivera Family Reunion" for further updates.



“¿...y la familia?”

c/o Norma I. Pettit
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Visit us on the Web at www.ylafamilia.org.

Birthday Greetings

Teena Warren (44) - Oct. 3

Christine Rivera (19) - Oct. 3

Roxanna Rivera (45) - Oct. 6

Eric J. Montalvo (38) - Oct. 7

Austin J. Rivera (2) - Oct. 7

Ruben A. Quiñones (39) -
Oct. 12

Felipe René Rivera (32) -
Oct. 13

Lourdes Rivera (42) - Oct. 13

Edwin Joel Rivera (18) - Oct. 14

Jackie (Correa) Eddy (51) -
Oct. 15

Sonia Rivera (41) - Oct. 15

Austin Rivera (21) - Oct. 17

Annalise L. Nicholson (13) -
Oct. 17

Javier Rivera (42) - Oct. 18

Virginia T. Feliciano (26) -
Oct. 21

Sierra Campos (19) - Oct. 21

Tito Shenker (18) - Oct. 22

Vicky (Rivera) Cabán (51) -
Oct. 23

Brandi Klene (46) - Oct. 24

Randy Pettit (60) - Oct. 27

Victoria Nicholson (76) -
Oct. 28

Madeline Rivera (49) -
Oct. 28

Joanne McLaughlin (68) -
Oct. 29

Julie Rivera (23) - Nov. 2

Alex Joel Rivera (20) - Nov. 2

Lisa Quiñones (39) - Nov. 3

Adalberto Rivera (32) - Nov. 5

Orlando Rivera (60) - Nov. 6

Stephanie Feliciano (26) -
Nov. 6

Matthew Thompson (10) -
Nov. 7

Lydia N. Carrasquillo (36) -
Nov. 7

Rosa M. Rivera (92) - Nov. 8

Austin Miller (21) - Nov. 8

Joannie García (35) - Nov. 9

Neysa Rivera (25) - Nov. 12

Juan Meléndez (70) - Nov. 12

Lilliana Charice Cruz (13) -
Nov. 15

Joseph T. Springer (19) -
Nov. 15

Esmeralda Rivera Delgado (11) -
Nov. 16

Carol (Medina) Wright (63) -
Nov. 17

Michelle (Cabán) Su'a (27) -
Nov. 17

Amanda Knox (28) - Nov. 22

John Feliciano (53) - Nov. 22

Rose A. Segarra (15) - Nov. 23

Marcantonio Williams Jr. (8) -
Nov. 25

Kaylee Noemí Valentín (7)
Nov. 25

Hector L. Feliciano (63) -
Nov. 26

Solimar Delgado (26) -
Nov. 28

Anniversaries

Kimm and Scott
Hargraves (19) -
Oct. 18

Muñeca (Osorio) and
David Simon-Baker (9)
- Oct. 21

Alicia (Rivera) and
Mike Tokar (8) -
Oct. 27

