

"...y la familia?"

Volume 8, Issue 6

June/July '04

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

Michelle's Quinceañera

Michelle Cabán, daughter of Roberto and Vicky (Rivera) Cabán, celebrated her 15th birthday on April 17, 2004.

"La Quinceañera" is a traditional coming-of-age celebration that is part of the Hispanic culture. The young lady wears a white dress and may have a crown or a tiara. She is generally escorted by a young man and has young ladies as attendants.

Michelle, who lives with her parents in Killeen, Texas, looks beautiful in her full-length white gown and her crown of roses.

For more on this story, see page 3.



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I Remember...By Norma I. Pettit

Wow, my youngest child has graduated from high school and has celebrated his 18th birthday. Vickie (or Tory) has just left for a month long mission trip to Greece (God bless those of you who helped her get there!). My oldest two are married and have long been out of the nest. Where has time gone? Wasn't it yesterday that they were small? (♫Sunrise, sunset, sunrise, sunset, swiftly flow the years...♪)

Up until they were five years old I referred to Vickie and Luke as "the babies." I didn't think anything of it until one time I called them that in front of my sister, Olga, and she exclaimed, "Babies?!" After that I made an effort to call them Vickie and Luke instead of "the babies," but it was a hard habit to break.

They were always together, since Luke followed Vickie around like a little shadow. Whatever she did, he did. Being the mischievous, spunky little girl that she was, Vickie sometimes got scolded and would put her head down on her folded arms, resting them on a table or countertop, and in a loud, dramatic voice would proclaim, "Nobody don't *like* me!" Luke, the shadow, would stand next to her doing the exact same thing even if he wasn't in trouble, lisping, "Nobody don't *yike* me!"

Speaking of trouble, one time particularly stands out in my mind. I was painting their bedroom and put my brush down to go answer the phone. When I returned a few minutes later, two yellow blobs streaked past me leaving golden footsteps all over our new brown carpet. I screamed, threw open a kitchen window, and summoned Randy on our "intercom system"—a bicycle horn that I beeped non-stop until I saw him striding up the driveway from the barn. When he reached the porch I all but hurled the yellow squiggly things out the door at him with a strangled cry, "Here—take *your* children!"

Around the time Luke started kindergarten he suddenly decided that he didn't want Vickie bossing him around anymore, and he stopped imitating her. That's when the battles began between them. They fought almost constantly for the next ten years or so. I remember wearily begging them, "Can't you guys get along for just *one day*?" Eventually, though, they outgrew that behavior and only squabble occasionally today. I knew that the tide had turned when they started teaming up against me and defending each other's conduct.

But even during those early years of battling, there were many times when they did play together nicely for a while. One game that occupied large chunks of their time was "Car Town." They constructed a set of roads in the dirt on the hill above our backyard, named them, made road signs, and happily played with their little cars for hours on end. How I loved it when they played "Car Town," not only because they were getting along, and were quietly entertained, but because it was an imaginative game, and so wholesome and innocent. I grieved when they stopped playing "Car Town."

Those distant childhood years, years of home schooling, mischief, and innocence swirl around in my memory and fade back into the recesses of my mind as I drift back to the present. Vickie's flight for Greece takes off in one hour and Luke is off with friends from his church's youth group. I pray for the safe return of my children, now young adults.



At this time in our family history....

- 109 years ago, on June 7th, Petronila Pacheco was born. She was the sister of Mamá Otilia. Their other sister, Francisca, was born on June 11, 1887.
- Auntie Anita Merritt passed away on 6/25/98 in Nebraska.
- On July 3, 1861, my great-grandparents, Manuel Alejo Rivera and Maria Apolinaria Maldonado were married.
- Auntie Adele was born on July 22, 1909 in Peñuelas, P.R.
- Papa Flor, my grandfather, died on July 22, 1941.
- My mother, Ana Maria López Maldonado, was born in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, on July 26, 1911. She was the daughter of Juan López and Maria de los Santos Maldonado.

More on...

Michelle's Quinceañera



Michelle's 15th birthday was actually on November 17th, 2003, but although she had her dress and everything else ready, she was adamant about waiting until her father returned from Iraq to take part in her "quinceañera." Her father came home on March 21st.

In this photo, Roberto Cabán is leading his daughter by the hand and promenading her around the hall prior to the commencement of the ceremony.



On the photo to the left, Roberto is changing Michelle's pumps to heels, signifying her change from girl to woman.

At right, Michelle has exchanged her crown of roses for her "quinceañera" tiara.



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René Rivera on the steps of the García home in San Francisco, on 10/15/58. He was 17 years old here, and a die-hard Elvis fan.

When he was 17, Cousin René came to live with the García family for about a year. He is the oldest son of Florencio ("Guar") Rivera, who was Auntie Helen's twin brother. Michelle Cabán, the young lady featured in this issue of *¿...y la familia?* is René's granddaughter.



Surprise Engagement

by Meryem Merritt

Dale was so sweet. After he came home from Iraq and got somewhat settled in at his house (three months worth), we were sitting and talking about us and the world around us and he said to me, I want to wear a ring. Not sure what he was getting at I replied, "What, you want to wear one of mine?" He said, "Nooooooo!" Then I said, "Well, you have a ring in your drawer, why not wear that?" His reply was no again because it was a ring from a previous marriage. Then I started to catch on....so I said, "Oh! You want me to buy you a ring," and he said, "Yes." He wanted to have a ring from me on his hand (not through the nose) to let everyone know he was a taken man. :) You know, no longer marketable material. So as it were, I had looked at rings for him while he was in Iraq, without his knowledge, but did not purchase one because I wasn't going to be that presumptuous. Didn't want to scare him off, you know. Beware of women bearing gifts.....it might cause a man to stop and ponder, "What's up with that? Ruuuuunnnnnn!!!" Heck, he had been gone for over a year and we literally had to start from square one again. He said the entire time he was away, that he was going to make an honest woman of me, I just didn't know it yet and I thought to myself, he's just playing. Soooo, when he said that he wanted a ring, I was a little floored but I had just the one and I knew he was serious.

I took him to the jeweler and showed him what I had previously picked out and he loved it, so I purchased the ring. While I was with my sales person, and my back was turned he was with another sales person doing a bit of shopping himself. He had a plan. His plan was to present my ring to me at my office and ask me right then and there in front of my co-workers so that they knew how serious his intentions were. Hence the picture I sent to you earlier. He walks in the office with red flowers for Mothers Day with a little mylar balloon wishing me Happy Mother's Day and then hands me this tiny box wrapped in red glossy paper and a gold bow. I was shaking so badly I could barely get the paper off. Mind you this is not our first rodeo for either one of us. But...that doesn't make it any less exciting. Especially when you have gotten to a point in life when you know what you want out of life for the rest of your life and you are lucky enough to find the person to fulfill your dreams with because they want and have always wanted the very same thing. I have been engaged for a week and 4 days and I am still looking at this piece of ice that has been bestowed on my finger and still a little taken aback. The ring is gorgeous. And I am very happy. We both are.

Dale hinted to me that he was stopping by that afternoon...and no one at the office knew this was going to take place. It was a very fun and special day. The best part of the day was that Dale never really popped the question in the office. There was so much commotion that by the time he was getting ready to leave, my office was needing to get back to business. I'm walking him out to the truck and he begins to back out...stops the truck and sticks his head out the window and says. ..."Meryem...will you marry me?" I just stood there and busted up laughing. I told him I was wondering if he was ever going to get the words out. I told him yes, then I asked him the same question and he said yes. And they lived happily ever after.....Tah-dah! There now you have the story of how Dale Buck engaged himself in the proposal of marriage to Meryem Merritt. We have not even thought about a date. That is yet to be determined if ever. Thought maybe we'd just keep the romance going till the very end.



Student News

Angelica R. Stickles, daughter of Joanne McLaughlin (Cousin Pepa) and granddaughter of José and Tita Medina, graduated with honors from Boynton Beach Community High School on May 28th.

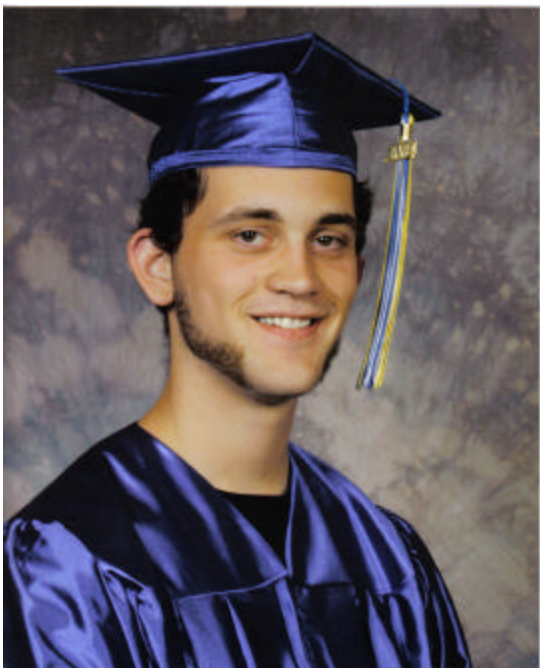
She will be attending Florida State University in Tallahassee, majoring in Fashion Merchandising, and has already begun the summer session there. Angie's aunt, Carol Wright reports that Angie received three private scholarships, a state scholarship which pays for 75% of her tuition, and one federal scholarship. She also has her entire summer session paid in full by the university, including housing, books, meal plan etc.

Carol says. "Mom and Dad gave her a going away dinner complete with all her favorite foods of rice and beans and we had a sheet cake with her school logo on it. Her dad, mom, Larry, myself, mom and dad, and Angie's boyfriend Leo were present."

Congratulations on doing such a fine job in high school, Angie! We'll be expecting periodic updates on your college experience,



Congratulations to our graduates!



Luke R. Pettit, son of Randy and Norma Pettit, graduated from high school through Horizon Instructional Systems (a charter home school) on Sunday, May 23rd. The graduation ceremony was held at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium.

After the ceremony, all the family members who were in attendance (there were ten of us) had a wonderful celebratory meal at the Spaghetti Factory in downtown Sacramento.

Luke, who was home schooled from first grade except for two of his high school years, chose to return to home schooling for his senior year. He has been working in construction for the past year and has no plans to attend college at the present time.

Family Reunion Plans

How many of you received a cool flyer in the mail from Mari Lillian about the reunion? In it she reminds us to follow our reunion tradition: Bring a wrapped gift (not to exceed \$5) for Saturday night's event. FUN! FUN! FUN!

Heads up! Mari Lillian and Awilda are planning a Hawaiian theme for the big Saturday night fiesta (or should I say luau?).

So dig out those Hawaiian shirts/dresses from the back of the closet!



This reunion is going to be **awesome!** It is going to be a wonderful opportunity to meet new relatives and reconnect with family we haven't seen in a long time.

When: July 24 & 25, 2004

Personally, my family is flying out of Sacramento on Thursday evening and arriving in South Carolina on Friday morning. We wanted to have an extra day to visit with Mari and Awilda and their families, and to be there to greet all the rest of you as you arrive. We already made our reservations on Delta Airlines.

Where: In Lugoff, South Carolina

Part of the time it will be at the home of Cousin Mari Lillian Pérez and her family—

190A Leaning Tree Road
Lugoff, South Carolina
Phone #: (803) 438-4214

And the rest of the time it will be at the home of Awilda Rivera (Mari Lillian's sister) and her family—

1824 Baughman Rd. Lot 4
Lugoff, South Carolina

Both sisters live near each other in double wide mobile homes surrounded by lots of property. There is room to stay in their homes (your spot reserved on a first come, first serve basis), or you can reserve a room at a nearby motel (see below).



Frankie Valentin has reserved a block of ten motel rooms in the **Holiday Inn Express**, a very nice place that is close to Mari Lillian's house.

To reserve one of these rooms in your family name, call 1-803-419-3558, ext. 7324, and ask for the sales manager. The rooms are blocked in the name of *Rivera Family Reunion*.

The Stenroos, Smith, and Pettit families already made their reservations there. Call soon to reserve your space!

Relatives ^{hardly ever} Respond anymore

Well, gee, out of the 60 or so addresses that I mail the newsletter to, I only got one response after the April/May newsletter. Faithful Cousin Joi was the only one who wrote to say that she had found the hidden Easter egg. Here's what she wrote: "Hi there, Whoa...you thought I'd miss it, eh? Well, it's on little bear's hat (pom, pom) on LAST page, you sneak! After searching all the pages over and over, I thought I was going to go crazy. Clever you! Now I can go and read the newsletter in it's entirety.

More later, Sherlock Holmes

From the rest of you, as they say in Puerto Rico, "¡No oí ni jí!"

Well, okay, I did receive an e-mail from Cousin Meryem, along with the picture that appears on page 4. She had such exciting news to tell! Of course, you've probably already read her wonderfully detailed account of her engagement, but this is the original announcement that she sent me:

Hi Cuz:

I am at work and Dale (my honey) has just left my office. He came in with a bouquet of flowers for my Mother's Day gift and had a little box wrapped in red with a beautiful gold bow. He presented me with an engagement ring in front of all my office colleagues. I was like a little nervous kitten, shaking so badly I couldn't hold my hands still. But still enough for him to place the ring on my finger. Thought I'd send you a real time picture of the event.

I think I am the happiest woman on earth. Ummm, no.....I know I am. I know have my man back safe and sound from serving his country for a very long 13 months in Irag/Baghdad. And now to top it off, knowing that he pledges his honor, trust and loyalty to me. My heart has forever been stolen by the hero in my heart. My Knight.

I hope all is well with you and your family. I hope you have as wonderful a Mother's Day. Think of you often. Take care,.

Love, **Meryem**

Did anyone notice that there is no "Guess Who This Baby Is?" in this issue? Folks, I need you to e-mail me baby pictures (or send by regular mail and I will return them). I also need contributions for "I Remember" and "Meet Your Relative". It's been ages since I have written a "Meet Your Relative" article for lack of material.

When you guys send me things to put in the newsbttter, writing it is a breeze, but when I have to hunt and search for what to write about, it really makes it difficult! I appreciate all the articles that family members have submitted—it gives the newsletter variety and greater intrest. So do everyone in the family a favor and submit pictures and stories, etc. For ideas of what things you can send in, read the sidebar on page 1.

Los que no pueden escribir en inglés me pueden enviar información para el periódico en español y yo lo traduzco al inglés. ¡No hay problema! ☺

Thank you to Cousin Joi for sending a \$25 contribution to the newsletter. I appreciate it very much!!

"...y la familia?

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

Birthday Greetings

Isidro Rivera (85) - June 8

Alicia Rivera (22) - June 12

C.J.. Burch (15) - June 14

Emily Medina (26) - June 15

Garnet Rivera (59) - June 15

Kimm (Reinke) Hargraves—
(41) June 16

Ken Reinke (41) - June 16

Nelson Rivera (41) - June 17

René Rivera (65) - June 19

Meryem Merritt (53) - June 19

Enid Rivera (19) - June 20

Norma (García) Pettit (52) -
June 20

Laurie Jimenez (45) - June 21

Tommy González (34) -
June 21

Scott Hargraves (40) - June 25

Cindy Nicholson (34) -
June 29

Elizabeth Rivera (8) - July 5

Eric R. Stenroos (21) - July 7

Lilliam Rivera (61) - July 11

José Medina (54) - July 1

Roberto Rivera Sevilla (64) -
July 14

Angela Barnes (35) - July 15

Kayla N. Reinke (5) - July 20

René Rivera Jr. (42) - July 21

Vickie Jimenez (44) - July 22

Olga (García) Smith (57) -
July 22

Christina (Krause) Darnell
(26) - July 23

Ada Rivera Segarra (24) -
July 25

Rachel Nicholson (4) - July 26

Fernando Vázquez (14) -
July 28

Paul Krause (59) - July 30

Anniversaries

Kenneth & Vanessa Braddock (1)
June '5

René & Carmen Rivera (43) -
June 17

Jenny & Ted Reinke (43) -
June 18

Angela & David Nicholson (7) -
June 21

Angélica & José L. Medina (55) -
July 8

Garnet & Carlos Rivera (17) -
July 14

Cindy & Christopher Nicholson
(11) - July 17

Joanne & Robert McLaughlin (8) -
July 21

Michael & Angela Barnes (7) -
July 26

Randy & Norma Pettit (22) -
July 30