

"...y la familia?"

Volume 11, Issue 6

Apr/May '07

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

Marina Ramos in Italy

Olga's youngest daughter, Marina, is in Italy for three months on a study abroad program. She sent me the following letter and photos:



Dear Auntie Norma,

Ciao! Come stai? I'm still learning the basics but so far I'm doing well! I manage talking by doing a strange mix of Italian and Spanish but I'm picking it up

decently. I try, and usually someone speaks English. The first third of my time here in Firenze has flown by so fast! Everyday I look out the window and tell myself how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to be here. I feel so blessed I almost want to cry.

My first week here I went to Viareggio for Carnevale. It happens in Florence but they just started the tradition five years ago and the festivities are much larger in Viareggio.

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I Remember... Words of Wisdom

Today is Easter Sunday and I am feverishly trying to finish up this issue of the newsletter so I can mail it out to all 84 addresses on my mailing list. I had this week off of school (I teach Spanish at a middle school), but the week flew by with a blur of chores and projects, including painting a room, grading papers, gardening, and working on the newsletter.

It was while gardening earlier this week that something came to my mind. I was enjoying the warm sunshine, the twittering of the birds, and the bright splashes of color from the blooming garden flowers. I tried to push away thoughts of all the things on my "to do list" and just enjoy

those few moments of digging in the dirt while my senses were being tantalized by my surroundings. And what came to my mind was Auntie Helen's voice telling me, back in 1981 when I first moved back to California from Puerto Rico and was a busy single mom with a new career, that I needed to make sure to "stop and smell the roses."

Along those same lines, Joi says that she remembers her mother often telling her, "Take care of yourself, because if you don't have health you don't have anything."

Thank you Auntie Helen and mothers everywhere for your wonderful words of wisdom!

At this time in our family history...

- *Pedro José Rivera Maldonado was born on April 3, 1875. He was a brother of our family patriarch, "Papa Flor." Pedro only lived for 15 months, though, dying on July 10, 1876.*
- *164 years ago, on April 13th, María Inés Vilá and Marcelino de la Cruz were married. They were my father's maternal great-grandparents.*
- *On April 22, 1946, my parents (Oscar and Ana) were married in San Francisco.*
- *Florencio Rivera (Tío Guar) died on April 22, 1986.*
- *April 23rd makes twelve years since my father, Oscar Cruz García, passed away.*
- *Máximo Cruz, my father's maternal grandfather, married his second wife, Genara Maldonado, on May 5, 1909. He was widowed from his first wife, María Engracia García.*
- *Jesús Cruz Maldonado was born on May 20, 1896. He was my father's uncle, the son of Máximo Cruz and his second wife, Genara Maldonado.*
- *Elena Sevilla Rivera (Tío Guar's wife) would have been 93 years old on May 22nd.*
- *María de los Santos Cruz, youngest sister of María Engracia García was born on May 23, 1859.*



Above: Garnet and Auntie Marie. Oops, I didn't get a picture of Carlos or Barbara!



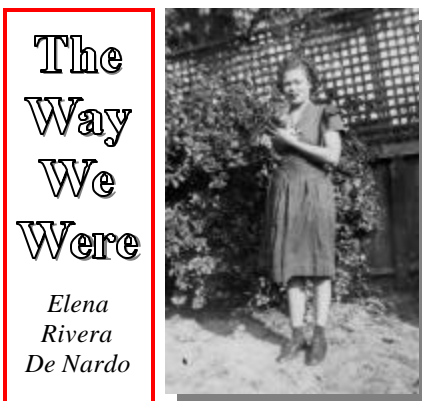
George Nicholson

María Nicholson's 95th Birthday

Well, technically this should go under "Other Family News," but...oh well! Carlos and Garnet Rivera stopped by to visit Auntie Marie on their way back home from Hawaii, and I went to see them and Auntie at her Brentwood condo. George and Barbara Nicholson had been staying with her while Jenny was on her trip to Europe, and her grandson, David Nicholson, arrived later.

We celebrated Auntie's 95th birthday with cake and ice cream. Auntie also opened some gifts from the Nicholsons and cards from the grandchildren.

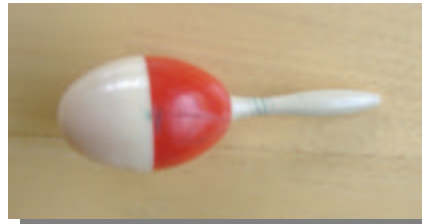
Auntie Marie was doing really well--bright, perky, charming, and delightful as always. God bless her!



The Way We Were

Elena Rivera De Nardo

Look What I Still Have!



...my mom's old darning egg. Does anyone darn socks anymore?

Marina Ramos in Italy

(continued from page 1)



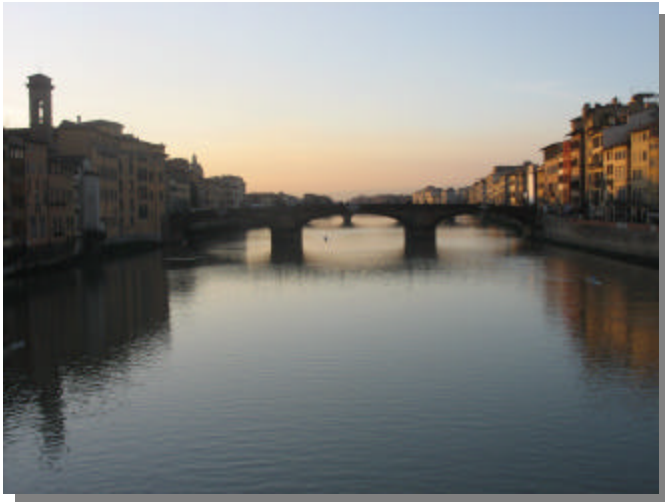
There the people create these enormous paper maché floats (some very political) and they compete for a very large cash prize.



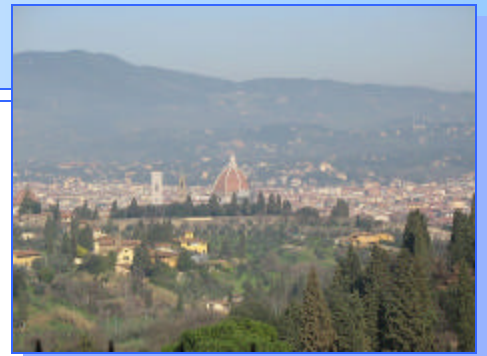
It was cold that day but we did so much walking it almost wasn't noticeable. At least it didn't rain! There was a float on Marcello, the coach of Italy's football

(soccer) team, one where they had a fat man in the center of all this food that he couldn't eat because it was bad (mad cow, bird flu...) and even the Adams Family was there! My favorite was titled Zapping: Brains that drift; it had people with TV's for heads. The meaning behind this was people are being brainwashed by what they see on television. Interesting, huh?

On the weekend of the 24 (of Feb) I visited Siena. It's a medieval town, quite lovely, where they have a horse race in their town center, Piazza del Campo, every July and August. From there we went to San Gimignano, famous for their white wine and gelato. I haven't tried the wine although I did buy a bottle, but the gelato was fantastic (and a lot cheaper than what I find in central Firenze.)



Last Tuesday I visited and actually went inside the Duomo. I've been outside it many times but never went in.



The main thing I love about this experience is how my group organizes all these tours with a guide. We receive much more information this way and can ask questions, better than traveling by yourself. Anyway, the dome was beautiful. I haven't trekked the 463 steps to the top, I'm waiting for a clear day. This is still only the beginning of my trip. A friend of mine is traveling here for a visit and we are visiting Rome next weekend and during my spring break I'm going to Sicily. So much traveling but I have to do it! Shanda is waiting for her passport so she can visit also. Such an exciting experience!



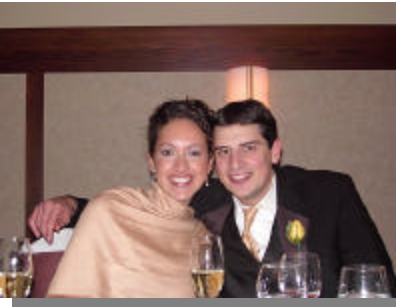
I miss you very much and I hope you are doing well. If I don't see you before then I'll be seeing you at the reunion—wild horses couldn't keep me away!

On a more personal note tomorrow is mom's anniversary. I have a picture of her in a hammock, taken in Georgia, by my bed. Every night and every morning I thank her and God for this wonderful life they gave me. I feel so blessed and one thing my life experiences have taught me is to always be thankful for what you have. I have a wonderful family, who are doing very well in Benicia and so much love that it's overwhelming. I will end my essay here (ha ha, sorry so long!). Take care and I will be seeing you soon!

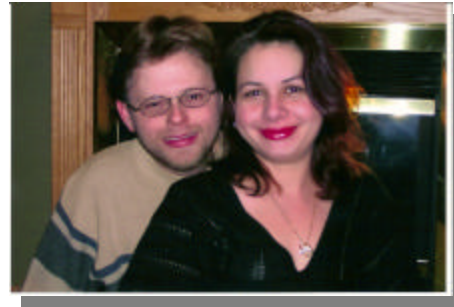
—Marina

¿...y la familia?

Engaged to be Married!



Alicia Rivera and Mike Tokar



James Frosheiser and Ericka Bond

Saturday, January 13th, 2007 marked the five year anniversary for Alicia Rivera and Michael Tokar. It also marked the night of our engagement! I had told Mike that I wanted to see the city for our anniversary and make the trip downtown. So, he surprised me by taking me up to the Sky Deck at the Sears Tower in downtown Chicago. At night, with all of the lights illuminating the city, he said, "You wanted to see the city, so here it is. You can see all the way to Indiana from here." As I was looking out the window at the beautifully clear view, he popped the question.

Mike and I met as young sophomores at Indiana University where he was studying finance at the Kelly School of Business. I was studying Communication and Culture and exploring my interests as a Dance Minor. Upon graduating college in 2004, I moved up to Mount Prospect, a northwestern suburb of Chicago and Mike's home town.

Mike works at Brunswick, a Fortune 500 Recreational company, located in the northern Chicago suburbs. He has been there for almost a year now working in their corporate finance Billiards division. I currently work for Closet Works, a growing closet organization company located in the western suburbs. At Closet Works, I am the Human Resources Administrator for 100 employees and am also developing training programs for the managerial staff. I also teach aerobics nightly as a certified group fitness instructor.

Only after a few short months, our wedding plans are well along the way. My parents, Carlos and Garnet Rivera and my mother, Corien White, have been amazing at assisting me with all the plans.

We have decided on a fall wedding, October 27th, 2007, in our current home town of Mount Prospect, IL.

The following article was sent in by Cousin Kathy (Merritt) Caffey. James Frosheiser is her son.

James graduated from Columbia College in Columbia, Missouri a long time ago since he is now in his thirties. He has a degree in accounting. He works for Midwest Web, Inc. as a Team Leader on the second shift, which makes it hard because he goes to work when everyone else is coming home. He also works a lot of hours - sometimes seven days in a row for several weeks in a row. He told me he would like to look for another job. Ericka's father was in the Navy and she spent three years in Iceland before moving to Puerto Rico. She said Puerto Rico was better. She lived there for three years before moving back to the States. She has three children from a previous marriage and James loves them all very much—Robbie (6), Kate (10), and Callie (13).

James and Ericka actually met at Midwest Web where they both were working at the time. She current is an underwriting assistant at State Farm. They bought a house last year that would be large enough for the five of them and their many cats. James loves cats. The last time I was there they had too many to count since one just had kittens.

The wedding will be at the Sunken Gardens in Lincoln, Nebraska, which is a beautiful flower garden with a beautiful wedding pavilion. The flowers are absolutely gorgeous. The wedding is set for May 26th at 11:00 am. The theme is garden tea party and they will carry that theme to the reception which will be outdoors at their home. Ericka's father will perform the ceremony and her aunt will be singing the opening song which is "Broken Road" since it was a broken road that led them to each other. Kirstin is writing the lyrics and music to the closing song, which is about family.

[For the June/July issue of "¿...y la familia?" I hope to have an article and pictures of the Frosheiser-Bond wedding celebration.—Norma]

Other Family News

New Arrival!



Baby Zachary is the son of David and Angela Nicholson, the grandson of George and Barbara Nicholson, and the great-grandson of María Nicholson. Welcome, Zachary!

*Congratulations to my brother-in-law, **Tom Smith** and his bride, **Flora**, who were married on March 11th in Reno, Nevada. Flora hails from Hong Kong. She and Tom were introduced to each other a few months ago by a mutual acquaintance. Tom and Flora plan to attend the family reunion in Des Moines this June.*



Tom and Flora Smith

Cousin Edith (Jimenez) Neitzel is home in the U.S.A. on a visit from Germany, where she resides with her husband, Hartmut. Edith is the daughter of Sasha Lovelace and was a granddaughter of Elena De Nardo. Here she is with her aunt Joi Stenroos and her sister, Vickie Jimenez, upon her arrival at the Denver airport on Feb. 27th.

Edith is staying in Crestone with Sasha and her other sister, Laura, until the end of summer (I believe). Joi says that Edith has already been busy helping Sasha in her real estate office and painting a room in Sasha's house.

It would be nice to see Edith at the family reunion in June, wouldn't it? *Hint, hint, hint, Edith!*



Look for the following stories in the June/July 2007 issue of "¿...y la familia?":



Tory Dettit's college graduation!



Carlos and Garnet's 20th wedding anniversary trip to Kauai in the Hawaaiian Islands.



Ruben and Lisa's trip to Japan!

Thank you to Cousin Josy for his continuing financial support of this newsletter!

¿...y la familia?

Family Reunion-June 22-24, 2007--Des Moines, Iowa

9-9-07

Ken Braddock has reserved a block of 50 rooms at a hotel for the reunion. The rooms are at the new Motel 6 near Ken and Vanessa's house, Meryem's house and the new mall. The best rate he could get was \$57.99 per night, and he made sure to reserve some smoking as well as non-smoking rooms. You can get all kinds of information for this motel, including directions for those who are driving in, at http://www.motel6.com/reservations/motel_detail.asp?MotelId=1408. The rooms are being held under "The Rivera Reunion" as well as under "Ken Braddock" and the lady Ken spoke with said to make sure **anyone who calls to reserve their room mentions both Ken's name and The Rivera Reunion**. HOWEVER...Vanessa says (and I checked this and it's true) if you go online, the rates appear to be cheaper than the rate that Ken got, so you might just want to make your reservations online.

Cousin Meryem says that she has room for 15 people at her house (although they won't all be on beds), on a first come, first serve basis. Well...make that 13 people, since Joi and I have already reserved our spots. ☺



This is Meryem's house. We will convene here on Friday night. On Saturday we will spend the day at the Raccoon River Park Lodge which Ken and Vanessa reserved from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. (See more info below.) Afterwards, we will come back to Meryem's house to continue our partying. Meryem has a large backyard with plenty of space for our reunion. She also has a jacuzzi and a basketball hoop. While at her house, we will have the opportunity to work on the reunion quilt. Meryem will have muslin squares available so people can write messages or sign their names. No sewing required! ☺ See more about the quilt on page 7 of this issue.

Meryem asks that we all pitch in with the food and drinks. We can buy ready-made food at nearby stores and/or we are welcome to use her kitchen to prepare some delectable Puerto Rican food, although we do plan to have *pasteles* already made. I am going to Des Moines on June 18th to help Meryem get things ready and also so that we can celebrate our birthdays together. Meryem's birthday is on June 19th and mine is on the 20th.

Meryem Merritt's Address:
1047 Belle Mar Drive
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266
Cell Phone: 515-669-8313

Raccoon River Park Lodge

Overlooking the 232 acres of water from the northwest shore of Blue Heron Lake, the Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge will provide a relaxing setting for our 2007 Rivera Family Reunion.

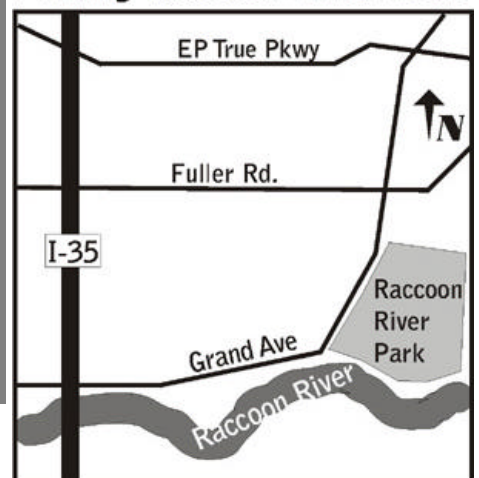
We have this lodge rented for eight hours on Saturday, June 23rd.

The Raccoon River Park's facilities include swimming, boating, fishing, playground, and hiking.



For more information and photos, visit the following website: <http://www.raccoonriverpark.com/>.

Finding Raccoon River Park



FAMILY QUILT PROJECT

In lieu of a souvenir gift exchange, this year we want to have people bring fabric squares which Meryem will later piece together into a quilt. Then at the 2008 reunion she will raffle it off!

Cousin Meryem says, ***“I have seen that others have made family quilts, and quilts actually tell a story. What a great way to be able to reach out and touch your family members by laying your hands on something they have personally made from their heart. Plus the spirit of that special someone they are making it in memory of is in the quilt. All these pieces get pulled together to tell one big story. It is a very emotional and personal thing. Those who want to contribute to this project are to build a 9 x 9 block (instead of a 12”) using the Friendship Quilt Block pattern (see below). Pieces are cut and sewn together and then when everyone comes to the reunion, they can show their block and explain what it’s all about. I want signatures to be placed on the quilt also, using indelible ink. If you don’t make the reunion and still want to contribute you can mail me your completed piece and I will add it to the rest. Then after all is said and done and the quilt is done, I can bring it to the next reunion and everyone can hunt for their square. Depending on how many squares we get, I may have to make two quilts/wall hangings. I’m so very excited about this!”***

Everyone will be able to participate in this family reunion quilt!



If you know how to quilt the instructions for the “Friendship Quilt” are below.



If you know how to do basic sewing but have never quilted before, we will have a “build a square workshop” at Meryem’s house. Bring your own material for the quilt square that you want to make. We will have the pattern. If you want to put a picture as your square, you need to have that picture transferred to muslin fabric before you come. Any craft store will be able to help you with that.



If even that is too much for you, Meryem will have muslin squares for you to sign or write a special message with indelible ink. She will later piece these muslin squares into the quilt.

Materials:

light and dark fabric
rotary cutter and mat
permanent/washable ink pen
embroidery floss - optional

Steps:

Cutting instructions (one 9-inch block)

From light fabric cut:

- two 3-7/8 inch squares to be cut in half to create corner triangles
- one 3-1/2 inch center square
- four 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangles

From dark fabric cut:

- two 3-7/8 inch squares to be cut in half to create corner triangles
- eight 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangles

Basic construction

1. Sew the units together according to the picture to create nine completed units
2. Next, stitch combined units together to create three strip units. Press each strip in the opposite direction to create a nesting. This will help the pieces to lay flat during the quilting process. Stitch the three units together to create a finished block.

Signatures

Traditional signatures were completed with a running or chain stitch using two to three strands of embroidery floss. Another alternative to embroidery floss would to use be a permanent/washable ink pen.



Meryem is afraid that no one will want to come to Iowa for the family reunion or participate in the family quilt project, so RSVP to Meryem at 515-669-8313 to calm her fears!

"...y la familia?

c/o Norma I. Pettit
2426 Meadow Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
Phone: (530) 642-8960
E-Mail: mamanony@sbcglobal.com

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



Birthday Greetings

Michael Barnes (44) - April 1

Emilio Maldonado (76) - April 1

Michael A. Feliciano (41) - April 3

Catherine Rivera (30) - April 4

Dustin Cavino (16) - April 4

Wilma E. Roig (22) - April 6

Marlynn (Merritt) Krause (59) - April 6

Tiana J. Rivera (13) - April 6

Ana V. Pettit (22) - April 8

Maria Nicholson (95) - April 9

Edwin Rivera (35) - April 10

Tom Smith (69) - April 13

Carly Diaz (22) - April 14

Elienith Dessus (19) - April 21

Vic Stenroos (59) - April 22

Dalie Delgado (16) - April 23

Naiome Campos (3) - April 23

Raymond L. Cavino (8) - April 25

Haley Frosheiser (11) - April 26

Luz E. Sánchez (1) - April 28

George Rivera (34) - April 29

Nicholas Rivera (17) - May 5

Ted Reinke (70) - May 13

Roberto I. Rivera (56) - May 13

Ken Braddock (39) - May 5

Ryan Reinke (11) - May 12

Helen Correa-González (45) - May 12

Ted Reinke (70) - May 13

Alexis Valentin (22) - May 17

Riley Hargraves (5) - May 22

Heriberto Rivera (20) - May 26

Ada I. Rivera (30) - May 26

George Nicholson (62) - May 27

Daniel Campos (13) - April 27

Lucas R. Pettit (21) - May 29

Stephanie (Krause) Thompson (30) - May 29

Cristina Cruz (4) - May 30

Anniversaries



Monica (Rivera) and Mike Shenker (10) May 10

Carmen (Feliciano) and Maximino Carrasquillo (32) May 16

Cathy (Rivera) and Eric Montalvo (10) May 24

Marlynn (Merritt) and Paul Krause (37) May 30