

# "...y la familia?"

Volume 16, Issue 6

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## Masters Degree Graduates

*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 art-  
work*

*Original poetry  
Vignettes on  
your imme-  
diate family*

*Favorite family  
recipes*

*Cute things your  
kids have  
said*

*Funny stories  
Prayer Requests*



*Marina Ramos-Nelson*



*Ruben A. Quiñones*

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# A Page Out of Our Family History

By Norma I. (García) Pettit

## A New Discovery!

I had heard many years ago, perhaps from Auntie Marie, that my grandfather, Florencio Rivera Maldonado, had fathered a child when he was a young man, and that the mother of the child had died giving birth, and that the child had also died. I was not given any names for either the mother or the baby, and I didn't expect to ever find them out. In the past, in Puerto Rico, if a couple wasn't married, the baby only got the mother's surname and no information of the father was recorded. For a genealogist, this is very frustrating because a whole branch of the family tree can be broken off that way.

Recently, I saw that the family tree of my third cousin from Peñuelas, José Edgardo Velázquez, had Florencio married to a woman named Felicita Madera Medina, and he listed a child of that union – Andrés. José listed his source of information: *Registro Civil de Puerto Rico, Peñuelas, Nacimientos, libro 18, folio 187v, acta 544*. I looked this up on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), and confirmed that a baby boy named Andrés Rivera Madera was born on Nov. 20, 1899 in Barrio Macaná of Peñuelas, and he was the *legitimate* son of Florencio Rivera Maldonado and Felicita Madera Medina. This means that Florencio and Felicita were legally married. As further proof that this was *our* Florencio, the birth record names the baby's paternal grandparents: Manuel Rivera Maldonado and Dominga Maldonado Rivera.

After a little more research, I found the death record of Felicita. She died on Mar. 20, 1901 at 2:00 a.m. at age 23. The cause of death was listed as *enfermedad común*, or common illness, but most likely she died in childbirth. At least, that is how the story goes that was told to me. Felicita was the daughter of León Madera and Micaela Medina. I also found the death record for Felicita's mother, who died less than six months after Felicita, at the age of 66. It was not a good year for León, losing his daughter and then his wife, nor for Florencio, losing his young wife, and supposedly, his son not long afterwards. I have not found the death record for Andrés nor the marriage record for Florencio and Felicita...yet!

## Look What I Still Have!

### Comic books from the early 60's!

By Joi Stenroos

I can remember walking from Mom's house on Cutler Street the three long blocks to Taraval to the corner drug store with 25 cents burning in my pocket just to buy comic books. Would spend a long time trying to decide which ones to buy! What



memories from my early teen years! My collection also includes issues of

- Blondie
- Jughead
- Little Archie
- Archie's Pals 'n Gals
- Pep
- Archie's Mad House
- The Twilight Zone
- Teen Titans
- Wonder Woman

Ahhhh! Those were the days!

At this time in our family history...

- On June 8, 1893, Petronila Pacheco was born. She was a sister of Otilia (the mother of Nery, Isidro, Tita and Delia). Their other sister, Francisca, was born on June 11, 1887.
- Auntie Anita Merritt passed away on June 25, 1998 at the home of her daughter, Kathy Caffey in Nebraska. She had been suffering from emphysema for a number of years. Anita was the youngest child of the union of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García, and was only a week old when her mother died.
- On July 3, 1861, my great-grandparents, Manuel Alejo Rivera and Maria Apolinaria Maldonado were married.
- My beautiful and loving sister, Olga María (García) Smith, went home to Jesus on July 4, 2006.
- Angela M. Warren, Olga's second daughter, was born on July 15, 1969. She passed away on Oct. 8, 2007.
- Auntie Adele was born on July 22, 1909 in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. She was the oldest daughter of the union of Florencio Rivera and Ana Cruz García. She was not quite seven years old when her mother died a week after giving birth to baby Anita.
- Florencio Rivera ("Papa Flor") —our patriarch— died on July 22, 1941.
- My mother, Ana María López Maldonado, was born in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, on July 26, 1911. She was the daughter of Juan López and María de los Santos Maldonado. She had one older brother, Confesor.

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# Family Reunions 1999-2011

A review of 13 years' worth of family gatherings to get you in the mood for #14...

## 1999—California



Dinner in Sausalito, July 8, 1999

This is what kicked off our family reunions –in 1999 we had what we called, “The Great Cousin Reunion.” It started off with eight first cousins touring the Bay Area, using Olga’s house in Martinez as our base. Then we all drove up to Placerville, where we were joined for a BBQ by members of the Finch and Nicholson families. The only family (with children) that was not represented at this first reunion was that of Tío Guar, something they vowed to remedy for the next reunion.



Standing: Aunt Delia, George Nicholson, Orlando Rivera  
Seated in chairs: Joi (De Nardo) Stenroos, Norma (Garcia) Pettit, Olga (Garcia) Smith, Marlynn (Merritt) Krause, Kathy (Merritt) Caffey.  
Seated on steps: Bryan Finch, José Medina (Josy), Rosa (Medina) Meddaugh, Meryem (Merritt) Wright. July 10, 1999, Placerville, CA.

## 2000—Florida



This was such an amazing reunion and I have so many wonderful pics that just

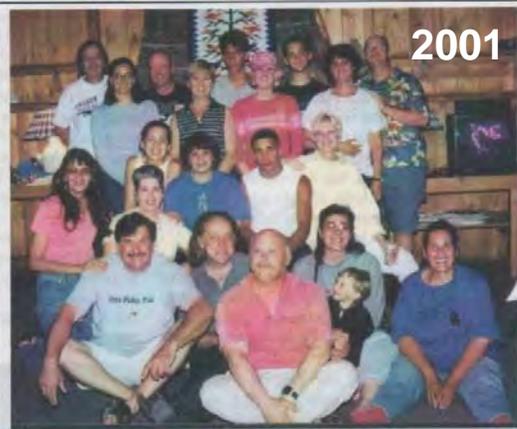
looking at them creates a nostalgic ache in my heart. This time there were lots of “island Riveras,” as I call them—the kids and grandkids of Tío Guar. The reunion was held at the home of Larry and Carol Wright.

**2001—Colorado** What a blast we had! That was the year we had the “Who’s the Poorest?” contest. I loved the coziness of all of us staying in the lodge together, and different families cooking each night. This reunion was efficiently organized by Vic and Joi Stenroos.

**2002—Georgia** This was really a surprise birthday party in April for Auntie Rosita, who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Because most people would not have been able to travel again just two months later, the birthday party served as that year’s family reunion. I was unable to go, but for those who were able to attend, it was a bitter-sweet reunion.

**2003—California** Also organized by the “Rivera boys” (Carlos, Edward, Roberto and Orlando), this one was held in Menlo Park. It was a smaller turnout, but memorable nonetheless.

## 2001



Standing in the back row: Vic Stenroos, Sonia Quiñones, Tom Smith, Meryem Merrit, Dustin Yager, Christina Krause, Luke Pettit, Norma Pettit, and Randy Pettit. In the middle: Olga Smith, Joi Stenroos, Vickie Pettit, Vicky Cabán, Felipe Rivera, and Marlynn Krause. Sitting in the front: George Nicholson, Frank, Jeff Miller, Laurie Jimenez, Julian Miller, and Sasha Lovelace. Missing from photo: Barbara Nicholson.

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**2004—South Carolina** Hosted by Awilda and Mary Lillian, this reunion had a Hawaiian theme and was a lot of fun with limbo contests, music, swimming, and great food.



**2005—Puerto Rico** This reunion was nothing less than incredible. We had about 150 people in attendance, and Uncle Isidro and Auntie Marie were presented awards by a representative of the mayor of Ponce. Since the dates of the reunion were June 24th and 25th, the “Island Riveras” created the theme of Christmas in June, with typical food like *pasteles* and *lechón asado*, and had a trio playing *aguinaldos* and other traditional Puerto Rican music. Just being in Puerto Rico was amazing.



**2006—Georgia** This one constricts my heart to remember. It was a huge celebration of life with Olga as the Queen Bee, since this was to be her last family reunion with us on Earth. There were probably about 100 people in attendance and everyone showered Olga with love, hugs, and attention. She soaked it all in and was all smiles the entire time. The “Rivera Boys” again did an outstanding job of hosting the reunion.



**2007—Iowa** Hosted by Cousin Meryem and her daughter, Vanessa, this was to be the last reunion for both Uncle Dave Finch and my niece, Angela Warren Barnes. Family, this is why it is so important to attend these family reunions. Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, and you never know if this will be your last opportunity to see a loved one alive.



**2008—California**

While this was not a huge reunion, it was nevertheless special because many of the attendees had never been to California before. The group pictured here, as well as Kathy and her granddaughter, Hayli, extended their visit so as to enjoy the sights in San Francisco.





### 2009—Puerto Rico

Hosted by cousins Annie Meléndez and her husband, Wilson García, this reunion was held in Peñuelas, the town from which our Rivera family originated. After the 2005 reunion in Puerto Rico, Olga had vowed that in four years we would return and go up to Santo Domingo, the mountainous barrio on which our father was born. The most thrilling part of this reunion—to me— was when a group of 21 persons fulfilled this promise in her memory.



### 2010—Chicago

The Feliciano clan hosted this well-attended reunion partly at the Marina and partly at the home of Max and Carmen Carrasquillo. The food, the atmosphere, and the attentiveness of the Feliciano family made this a memorable reunion. For many of us it was our first time touring Chicago, and we had great time visiting Navy Pier.

This photo was taken at Max and Carmen’s house during the goodbye breakfast on Sunday morning. Most of the people had already left, so this was only a part of the group that as there on Friday and Saturday nights.

### 2011—Indiana

The beautiful home of Carlos and Garnet Rivera was the setting for last year’s reunion. Tables and chairs were set up under a huge backyard tent, and Cousin Orlando prepared a fantastic Puerto Rican spread, with the help of *sous chefs* Jana, Carlos, Garnet, Joi and Norma. Another fantastic collaborative effort by the Rivera Boys!



*So there is the recap of our reunions to date. Sorry for the poor quality of some of the pictures. Since my computer crashed last January, I lost many original pictures and newsletters. Some of these pictures were scanned from printed copies of the newsletters. But just preparing this review has me itching to get to South Carolina to meet, greet, eat, play Puerto Rican music, dance, take pictures, and hug loved ones. Our family is a huge, loving bunch with big hearts and warm, caring spirits. Let’s celebrate life and family! See you in South Carolina, June 22nd-24th.*



## New Arrival

Congratulations to Carlos and Garnet Rivera on the arrival of their latest grandchild, a little girl born to their daughter Alicia and her husband, Mike. Many blessings to baby Alicia and her wonderful parents.

*Liliana Marie*

Born April 21, 2012 at 4:57am  
6 pounds 8 ounces and 19.5 inches

Proud Parents,  
Mike and Alicia Tokar

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# Graduations

## Marina Ramos-Nelson



I graduated from the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), a San Francisco based leading-edge educational system that offers bachelors up to PhD. I loved this school because they offer an integrative “wholistic” approach to well-being, and blend all forms of healing into their philosophy while applying it to westernized standards. My degree was a Master’s in Integrative Health Studies, with a certificate in Integrative Wellness Coaching and Wellness Management.

My program was designed around offering an in-depth look at complementary therapies, wellness coaching, health equity and promotion. Wellness coaching is not a new technique but it’s newer to mainstream and allopathic healing. The short version is a Socratic-based design of promoting wellness and wellbeing. If I get my CHES (Certified Health Education Specialist) certificate later this fall, it will be just another form of saying that I can assess individual or groups and design/manage wellness programs for each. With my education I can obtain careers in healthcare that arrange from personal to corporate settings, research to program design and management.

My last “job” was a research grant through the Aetna foundation, to examine how wellness coaching can assist to improve the wellbeing of low-income populations in the San Francisco area. I hope to obtain a career in healthcare, either doing wellness program management or wellness coaching. I’ve applied for a few but since I’m so close to my expected due date I’d hate to start a job and then take maternity leave.

In October I’m participating in the 2012 Science and Nonduality Conference, held in San Rafael, presenting my topic on “Consciousness, Nonduality and Wellbeing in America.” I had an idea of turning this into a book so that’s what I hope to start on, with hopes to have something somewhat substantial by then.



With her grandmother, Myrtelina.



With her uncle, Tommy

**Daisha Marie Caristo**, daughter of Diana (González) del Orbe, and great-granddaughter of Oscar Cruz García, graduated from high school and will be heading off to Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina this fall. You can tell from these pics what a sweet, affectionate girl she is. You will have a chance to meet and congratulate Daisha in person when she and her parents attend the Rivera Family Reunion in Laurens, S.C. in just a couple of weeks. Congratulations for a job well done, Daisha, and God’s blessings for a wonderful college experience.

## Ruben A. Quiñones

On May 5, 2012, Ruben received his diploma from University of the Pacific for completion of his Master’s Degree in Education. This degree was completed while working full time as a high school teacher at Mount Diablo High in

Concord, California and serving as Department Head for the Foreign Languages and English Language Development departments of his school. Add to that his responsibilities as husband and father, his participation on his church’s worship team, and the weekly Bible studies that he and his wife, Lisa, conduct from their home every Tuesday, and it makes his accomplishment all the more amazing. Many congratulations to Ruben. Randy and I are very proud of him!



## 2012 FAMILY REUNION



We are honored to host this year's Rivera Family Reunion in Laurens, South Carolina on June 22, 23 and 24, 2012. Our theme is "I love you forever". Jackie, Waleska, Mom and I have been busy planning and organizing this grand event with what represents what our family is all about—LOVE. We love forever and celebrate every day the love that was passed on by those we have lost but still remain in our thoughts and hearts. We want this Family Reunion to be a joyous event to pass our love on and to be remembered forever. Make your reservations; call Wally to order your t-shirts! (864) 872-1070. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON!

*Tenemos el honor de hospedar La Reunión Familiar Rivera este año en Laurens, Carolina del Sur el 22, 23 y 24, de junio 2012. Nuestro tema es "Te quiero para siempre". Jackie, Waleska, Mami y yo hemos estado muy ocupadas planeando y organizando este evento que representa el gran "AMOR" de nuestra familia. Nos encanta celebrar cada día el amor que fue transmitido por aquellos que hemos perdido, pero aún permanecen en nuestros pensamientos y corazones. Queremos que la Reunión Familiar Rivera sea un acontecimiento feliz para pasar nuestro amor y que sea recordado para siempre. ¡Realiza tus reservaciones; llama a Waleska (864) 872-1070 para su pedido de sus camisetas! ¡ESPERAMOS VERLOS PRONTO!*

### **HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS**

\$50/night Economy Inn - (864) 681-1153

120 Bolt Drive, Laurens, S.C. 29360

This hotel is a 2 min. drive to Helen's house and we have initially blocked 10 rooms. Owner has agreed to cut us a deal if additional rooms are scheduled.

\$87/night Comfort Inn - (864) 963-2777

I-385 & Fairview Rd, Simpsonville, SC 29681

This is on the interstate about 26 min. away, close to Wal\*Mart, restaurants, etc.

### **ITINERARY**

DATE: Friday, June 22, 2012: LOCATION: Helen's House – 514 Church Street, Laurens, SC 29360

Welcome dinner Southern style with a Puerto Rican twist.

DATE: Saturday, June 23, 2012: LOCATION: Waleska's House – 709 Church Street, Laurens, SC 29360

WEAR YOUR T-SHIRTS!!!! Breakfast will end at 10am. Sharing our love at the Pool, Music, BBQ and RUMBA! Until 3PM

6:00pm I love you forever Dinner, Dancing, and more Loving. Directions will be provided.

DATE: Sunday, June 24, 2012: LOCATION: Waleska's House – 709 Church Street, Laurens, SC 29360

Morning Breakfast.

Family Trip and Tour.

Left over guests over Helen's House for RUMBA!

# “¿...y la familia?”

c/o Norma I. Pettit  
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Visit us on the Web at [www.ylafamilia.org](http://www.ylafamilia.org).

## Birthday Greetings

Jayden I. Feliciano (10) - June 5    Meryem Merritt (61) - June 19    Lilliam Rivera (69) - July 11  
Máximo Carrasquillo (36) - June 5    Enid Rivera (27) - June 20    José Medina (62) - July 11  
Jeremy Carrasquillo (35) - June 5    Norma (García) Pettit (60!!!) - June 20    Kayla N. Reinke (13) - July 15  
Nellie Feliciano (52) - June 9    Laurie Jimenez (53) - June 21    René Rivera Jr. (50) - July 21  
Annette García (29) - June 10    Tommy González (42) - June 21    Vickie Jimenez (52) - July 22  
Aluna Howell (1) - June 11    Jason Pineda (35) - June 22    Christina Krause (34) - July 23  
Joyce Montalvo (12) - June 12    María L. Feliciano (29) - June 24    Annalise Cruz Rivera (8) - July 24  
Alicia Rivera (30) - June 12    Scott Hargraves (47) - June 25    Cynthia Feliciano (34) - July 25  
Julia Cruz Vilá (86) - June 13    Cindy Nicholson (41) - June 29    Ada Rivera Segarra (32) - July 25  
Leslie Feliciano (27) - June 13    Alura G. Barnes (19) - June 30    Rachel Nicholson (12) - July 26  
C.J. Burch (23) - June 14    Angel Feliciano (17) - July 2    Fernando Vázquez (22) - July 28  
Emily Medina (34) - June 15    Elizabeth Rivera (16) - July 5    Paul Krause (67) - July 30  
Garnet Rivera (67) - June 15    Eric R. Stenroos (29) - July 7    Ethen R. Stenroos (2) - July 31  
Kimm (Reinke) Hargraves (49) - June 16  
Ken Reinke (49) - June 16  
Nelson Rivera (48) - June 17  
Carmen Nydia (Feliciano) Carrasquillo (56) - July 7

## Anniversaries

Jenny & Ted Reinke (51) - June 18  
Angela & David Nicholson (15) - June 21  
Angélica & José L. Medina (64) - July 9  
Edna & Edwin Rivera (8) - July 11  
Garnet & Carlos Rivera (25) - July 14  
Cindy & Christopher Nicholson (19) - July 17  
Joanne & Robert McLaughlin (15) - July 21  
Marina & Dennis Nelson (1) - July 23  
Randy & Norma Pettit (30) - July 30



8 ¡Feliz Cumpleaños!