

Trulys

accept prize money if I won! They finally allowed me to register as a guest runner.

After all the excitement of getting registered, I finally asked the distance of the race. My training at this time would get me through no more than a 10K (6.2 miles) race. I was shocked when I heard the words "1/2 marathon!" Not only was it extremely hot at 4 p.m. when the race would start, but

we were also in a very hilly area. These are two conditions you don't want, especially when you're running a distance for which you haven't prepared. Needless to say, I took my race number and never made it to the start of the race.

After the race fiasco, we drove further into the mountains and found an outdoor restaurant overlooking a beautiful lake. The scenery was

breath-taking and in direct contrast to the beach we had visited the day before. This 100-by-35-mile island has dramatic and beautiful geographic diversity ranging from rain forest to beaches, from sweeping plains to valleys to mountain towns.

Our last day in Juana Diaz began by visiting the graves of my aunt, uncle, and grandmother. We walked around the town and took pictures of houses and places that we remembered visiting when we were younger.

My father found the house where he and my mother rented a room after they were married. Because my father did not get permission from the Air Force to get married, my mother could not live on the base with him.

He told us how we would ride a publico (taxi) every day when he got off work to spend the evening with my mother. The publico driver would pick him up at the designated time to return him to the base. Today the house is abandoned and dilapidated, but very alive with memories.

After visiting my cousin's bakery and restaurant, La Sabrosa, and many tearful good-byes with our family, we left to explore San Juan and the northern part of the island. San Juan, the largest city and the capital, is a diverse city made up of distinct districts.

The first stop we made was in the suburb of Bayamon to visit my mother's childhood friend. We experienced more Puerto Rican hospitality while listening to stories of their childhoods and young adult years. We left there to settle into our hotel located in the Condado Beach District to spend the next few days as tourists.

We began the next day by relaxing on the beautiful beach and hotel swimming pool. That afternoon we went to Old San Juan, a 7-block, square mile city wedged between the San Juan Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

I convinced my family to ride the city bus to Old San Juan instead of taking a taxi so that we could have a true cultural experience. They were not very excited about waiting for the bus, but enjoyed visiting with the locals at the bus stop. The bus ride turned out to be a very inexpensive and exciting trip and much more interesting than riding a taxi.

Old San Juan is connected to the rest of San Juan by a narrow strip of

land named Puerta de Tierra, or "land gateway". Dating back to 1521, Old San Juan is a neighborhood of cleanly built Spanish colonial buildings with high ceilings and pastel-colored facades.

We spent the afternoon here walking, shopping, and enjoying all of the historical sites.

One of the more interesting places is El Convento, a hotel with a history. Commissioned in 1636 by King Philip IV of Spain, it served as a Carmelite convent until its closing 250 years later in 1903. In 1962 it was turned into the beautiful hotel that it is today. It has a beautiful courtyard where you can sit and relax after a day of exploring Old San Juan.

Before leaving Old San Juan that evening, we had dinner at La Mallorquina, the oldest continuously operating restaurant in the Caribbean, dating from 1848. This restaurant serves traditional Puerto Rican and Spanish food in an Old World setting. It is also a restaurant where my parents ate after they were married. The food was delicious and the indoor patio was gorgeous. We had a special treat as we were entertained by a singing group from the University of Puerto Rico.

The next morning, we headed for the Ocean Park area of San Juan to find the house where we lived during the

first three years of my life. We found the house and also the schools where my older brother and sister began their education. After much reminiscing and picture-taking we headed east to El Yunque, the rain forest.

The Caribbean National Forest, or El Yunque as it is commonly known in Puerto Rico, is very rich and interesting, dating back to the Taino Indians. The only rain forest in the National Parks system, El Yunque is a 28,000 acres forest preserve located about an hour outside of San Juan. There are 13 trails that can be hiked, each with breathtaking terrain and spectacular vistas. My sister, brother-in-law, and I hiked one trail which led us to La Mena Falls, a beautiful area where families can swim and picnic.

The rain forest is known for its diversity of flora and fauna. Not only are there over 240 species of native trees, we also saw the largest and most beautiful impatiens and other flowers. It is also the home for the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot.

While at the top of the Yohu Observation Tower, we met a doctoral student from Mississippi State University collecting data for his research on red-tailed hawks. He was tracking three of the hawks from the top of the tower. The observation tower also gave us a view of the island of Vie-

ques. Puerto Ricans have been protesting over the use of Vieques for U.S. Navy practice bombing. It looked like a beautiful tranquil island from our view.

After we left the rain forest, we detoured to Luquillo Beach, another place we remembered from our childhood. Next to the beach is a row of open air kiosks selling fresh seafood and traditional comida criolla. We ate lunch there before heading back to San Juan for our last night in Puerto Rico.

The family trip brought us closer to our relatives and family heritage and turned out to be, as my father called it, "a trip of a lifetime".

It was full of family, memories and adventures. We truly experienced firsthand the charms of the place that Puerto Ricans call *la isla de encanto*, or "the enchanted island."

We truly experienced the spirit and exuberance of the Puerto Rican people. They are friendly, unpretentious hosts who can dazzle their guests with the tastiness of their local cuisine and their strong tradition of art and music.

We are already planning another trip in a couple of years to celebrate Three Kings Day, Jan. 6, with our relatives in Juana Diaz.

VBS

Friday afternoon with the SonCreek Round-up, an afternoon party with games, food and fellowship for children and parents.

"The missions project this year netted over \$350 in offerings during the week, all of which will go to help Chris and Donna Mooney, medical mission and relief workers in Central America, who lost virtually everything in a fire in May," said Pastor Fling. "Living Hope keeps no part of these offerings. We provide VBS for the kids and the kids' offerings all go to our mission project each year. This was one of the most pressing projects we have ever done. Thanks to all in the community who gave to this need."

Amy Cullitt's class of second and

third graders won the prize for bringing in the most money and were treated to watermelon for their Friday refreshment.

Living Hope provides a continuing program for children every Wednesday evening at 7 at the church education building. The program is under the direction of Cherrie McCain and features fun, food and games centering on the same themes of discovering God's truth that highlighted the VBS. Children ages five through 13 are invited to this continuing program.

As with all programs of Living Hope Church, you may contact the Flings at 234-5536 or McCain at 234-6648 for more information.

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Market Report for June 28, 2001

Animals on hand: cattle, 1496; two goats.

Number of sellers: 263.

Packer cows: higher dressing utility and cutter cows, 47-53¢ per lb.; lower dressing utility & cutter cows,

41-46¢ per lb.; thin cows, 35-40¢.

Packer bulls: heavy weight bulls, 57-64¢; utility cutter bulls, 51-56¢. Head tested: 275.

Stocker/Feeder - Calves/Yearlings
Steers #1: 200-300 lbs., \$1.35-1.48; 300-400 lbs., \$1.24-1.34; 400-500 lbs., \$1.05-1.12; 500-600 lbs., 95¢-1.05; 600-700 lbs., 88-94¢; 700-800 lbs., 80-85¢.

Steers #2: 200-300 lbs., \$1.20-1.30; 300-400 lbs., \$1.05-1.15; 400-500 lbs., 93¢-1.01; 500-600 lbs., 84-93¢; 600-700 lbs., 79-86¢; 700-800 lbs., 74-79¢.

Heifers #1: 200-300 lbs., \$1.18-1.28; 300-400 lbs., \$1.08-1.16; 400-500 lbs., 97¢-1.07; 500-600 lbs., 88-95¢; 600-700 lbs., 80-87¢; 700-800 lbs., 76-80¢.

Heifers #2: 200-300 lbs., \$1.05-1.15; 300-400 lbs., 92¢-1.00; 400-500 lbs., 85-95¢; 500-600 lbs., 78-85¢; 600-700 lbs., 76-79¢; 700-800 lbs., 68-75¢.

Good stocker cow/calf pairs, \$750-850 by the head; med. cow/calf pairs, \$625-700 by the head; good stocker cows & heifers, \$550-650; medium stocker cows & heifers, \$475-545.

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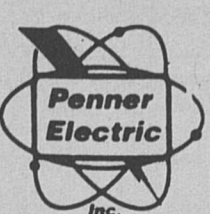
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Rice Leadership Class holds second session

The 2001 Rice Leadership Class participated in an extensive session examining rice production, milling, promotion and marketing in the Mid-South rice region. The class also attended personal development workshops on communications, business etiquette and public speaking.

In Arkansas, the class met with Dr. Neil Ruger, director of the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center, and Dr. John Robinson, resident director at the University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center, to learn about the latest advances in rice

research in the Mid-South. The class observed production practices on several rice farms and also met with executives at Producers Rice Mill and Riceland Foods Inc.

The week-long session also took the class to Moline, Ill., to meet with executives at John Deere Company and then to Chicago for a session with the Chicago Board of Trade.

The leadership class will meet again in Sept. 2002 in Calif. to examine rice issues in that state. Their final session will be held Feb. 2003 in Washington, D.C.



Members of the 2001 Rice Leadership Class visiting the Chicago Board of Trade were, from left, Danny Gertson, Monty Bohanan, Kyle Sonnier, Paul Combs, Vicky Boyd and Dane Hebert. Not pictured was Bert Manuel.

Photo Courtesy of Rice Federation

Awards

Continued from Page 1

arship ever awarded to a Rice High School student.

By receiving this scholarship, Jacob has compiled over \$40,000 in winnings from HLS&R during his high school FFA career. Congratulations Jacob!

Group

Continued from Page 1

Smithville, Travis County, Wharton and Wharton County.

In addition, Austin and La Grange participated in the charter process and are to consider signing the interlocal agreement in the near future.

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Applications are now being accepted for the 2001-2002 school year.