

A collection of letters and articles sent to Mom (grandma/abuelita) and Dad (grandpa/abuelito) due to the write-up in the papers when Fabian graduated.

Table of Contents

Letters.....	3
W_R_Broussard: Anchorage, Alaska.....	4
Bill Lewan: Merrifield, Virginia.....	5
Ross Bright.....	6
Christine Kothe: Chevy Chase, Maryland.....	7
Eunice Darden, Roscoe Texas.....	8
Dillard and Fay Phillips, Midland Texas.....	9
Dixie Reeves, Bowie Maryland.....	10
Rigdon and Mary Emma Edwards: Sweetwater, Texas.....	11
Unknown: Hawaii.....	12
Tammie Halloway: Odessa, Texas.....	13
Beth Hudson – The Washington Post: Austin Texas.....	14
Jessie Wright – Agricultural Stabalization and Conservation (ASCS) Office.....	15
Mrs Jolley: Sweetwater, Texas.....	16
Virginia Martin: Loraine, Texas.....	17
Bill Sims – Texas Senator: Austin Texas.....	18
Joyce Triplett: San Angelo, Texas.....	19
Unknown: Unknown.....	20
Mozelle Vandever: San Angelo, Texas.....	21
Juanita C Woodle – Abilene, Texas.....	22
Newspaper Articles.....	23
Elizabeth Hudson – Anchorage Daily News: Anchorage, Alaska.....	24
Fabian Graduation.....	26
Other Articles.....	28
Catholic Student Center – Newman Center: San Angelo, Texas.....	29
Readers Digest.....	30
Hero For Today Certificate – Readers Digest.....	31

Letters

This section contains letters from people of all types such as past graduates, politicians, religious clergy, and strangers.

It is inspiring to read these letters and often times brings a tear to the eye when you think of the kindness and words of support and encouragement in these letters.

W_R_Broussard: Anchorage, Alaska

June 1, 1993

Mr. & Mrs. Anastacio Alvarez
Lone Wolf Mountain
C/O Postmaster
Lorraine, TX

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Alvarez,

I was so happy to hear of the graduation of your youngest child and the surprise presentation of honorary Loraine High School diplomas to both of you. You have certainly done well with all your children and it is fitting that this accomplishment should be printed in newspapers across the United States.

Your community and the entire state of Texas should be most proud to say that you chose to make Loraine your home.

It took me back a few years reading your story. I am a graduate of Bronte High School, class of '64.

I just wanted you to know your story made the front page of the Anchorage Daily News.

Best wishes to all of you.

WR Broussard

W.R. Broussard
Anchorage, Alaska

Bill Lewan: Merrifield, Virginia

P.O. Box 632
Merrifield, VA 22116
June 2, 1993

Mr. & Mrs. Anastacio Alvarez
c/o The Lorraine School
Lorraine, TX 79532

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Alvarez:

Congratulations on the high school graduation of your 18th child, FABIAN.

It was a pleasure to read about your family in the Washington Post. I AM enclosing A copy of the Article.

With so much bad news today it is good to know that there is some good news. You both should be very proud of your family.

By the way I AM a 1974 graduate of the University of Houston. I have degrees in journalism, geography, and history.

Also enclosed are some booklets that I hope your family will enjoy. Sincerely, Bill Lewan

Ross Bright

4-25-93.

Dear Alvarez Family -

The story in the Reporter News
was just beautiful! The pictures
tell a story of true family love and
happiness -

I just wish we could have more articles
such as this telling about all the
good people in our Country rather than
so many articles revealing the evil deeds
of humanity -

A Million Congratulations and Best
Wishes for Continued happiness and
days filled with God's Greatest Blessings.

Dincerely,
Mr & Mrs Ross Bright

Christine Kothe: Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Friends,
I do want to congratulate you
for such great parents. Enclosed is
a clipping from the Wash. Post. This paper
does tell us all we want to know about
the U.S.A.

again Congratulations -

Sincerely -

Christine Kothe

5100 Dorset Ave.

Chevy Chase, Md. 20815

Eunice Darden, Roscoe Texas

Mrs. Alvarez:

I am sending you this paper, I thought you may want to give it to some of your folks to keep.
I know you and Mr. Alvarez are so proud of your children. I am for you, not many people do this good work.

Mrs. C.C. Darden

Eunice Darden
3418 FM 608
Roscoe, Texas 79545



Mrs. Lydia Alvarez
Laraine, Texas 79532

Dillard and Fay Phillips, Midland Texas

2809 Durant Dr.
Midland, Texas 79705
July 15, 1993

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez,

It was interesting to us to read about you while we were visiting in Alaska. You have an inspiring story. In fact, your story would make an interesting book or movie! In fact, you need to teach classes on child rearing to these modern parents!

It is refreshing to know that you believed in discipline and took your children to church. These, with the evident love that you gave them, plus their education, equipped them to be successful in life. What a great achievement!

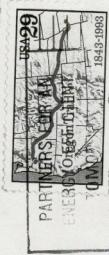
Congratulations!

Dillard and Fay Phillips

Dillard and Fay Phillips

Dixie Reeves, Bowie Maryland

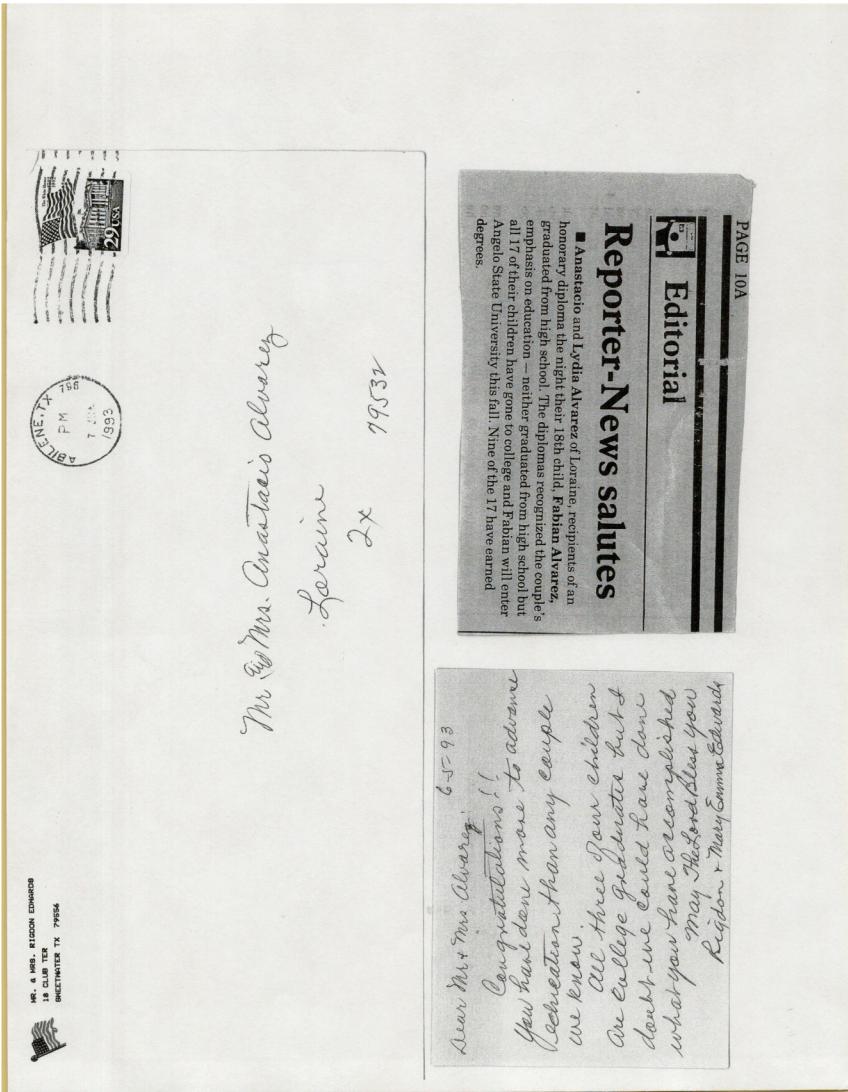
Dear Mr & Mrs Alvarez -
How proud you
must be of all
your children
and, they of you!
I'm a Texan and
thought you might be
interested in this for
your memory book.
Dixie Reeves



Dixie and Anastacia Alvarez
Laraine, Texas 79532

Mrs. Dixie A. Reeves
12914 Cheswood Lane
Bowie, Maryland 20715

Rigdon and Mary Emma Edwards: Sweetwater, Texas



Unknown: Hawaii

June 2, 1993.
10am Hawaii Time
Wednesday

Dear Alvarez Family:

A - L - O - H - A from Hawaii !!

Your story has made the front page of the Honolulu Advertiser Newspaper and after reading it, I was touched by your story and thought of mailing it to you. Thank God for phone information service, I got in touch with them and they gave me your number.

Enclosed are two (2) articles, please give
one (1) copy to the Principal of Loraine High
School, Mr. Ken Kendall. ^{stationed at} Ft. Hood & Copperas Co
^{lived in Texas}

School, Mr. Ken Kendall, stationed at Copperas Co
He lived in Texas (Ft. Hood) & Copperas Co
back in 1974 to 1977. Texas will always be
apart of us and we do miss it. Hopefully,
one day we might be able to visit Texas again
and maybe meet the Alvarez Family. And if yo
ever think of coming out to Hawaii - were here
My husband and I both come from big

My husband and I both come from big families ~ Henry (41) has 17 in his family, the 4th oldest & the oldest of the boys and I come from a family of 12 and the youngest child of the ja. We have 4 children of our own (2 boys & 2 girls a 19, 16, 14 & 13) and one grandchild - 3 wks old fr our oldest son. It was the same way in our families ~ graduation atleast almost every yr we can relate to big families, and the discipline our Father's gave us ~ along with mom's good cor

Tammie Halloway: Odessa, Texas

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Alvarez,

How very proud and honored you must be.

I was so blessed by reading this article about your family. What great encouragements and examples your family has given all of us.

Your family is truly what God intended families to be.

Thank you for sharing your story.

Tammie Halloway

Tammie Halloway
2718 E. 21st
Odessa, Texas
79761

Beth Hudson – The Washington Post: Austin Texas

The Washington Post

SOUTHWEST BUREAU
THE LITTLEFIELD BUILDING, SUITE 645 202 W. 17th St.
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701
(512) 473-2291

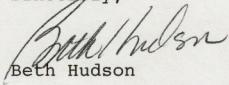
June 3, 1993

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez and Fabian,

Thank you again for the time you spent with me on Friday and for sharing your lives with me. I enjoyed writing this story and I hope I have done your family justice.

And congratulations, Fabian, on your graduation, and best wishes in your college work. Thank you all again.

Sincerely,


Beth Hudson

Jessie Wright – Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASCS) Office

Anastacio & Mrs Alvarez,
Enjoyed reading about your
fine family! - Sounds so
much like the one I grew up
in. Mom's good listeners,
"act up" & someone told Mom she
and a strong faith in God.
It is so nice to see this kind
of news in our papers - Those
who live a good life -
Jessie Wright (from the ASCS office)

Mrs Jolley: Sweetwater, Texas

Dear Alvarez Family,
I just thought you
would like to know
that my niece sent
me this clipping from
San Jose, Ca.

I want you to know
that I think you have
accomplished something
really great!

Mrs Jolley
(Sweetwater, Tex.)

Virginia Martin: Loraine, Texas

Sept. 12, 1993

To The Alvarez Family,

The enclosed article was in the Big Spring Herald last May and I cut it out to send to you but am just now finding it again. Nevertheless, I wish to express my congratulations to all of you. I am also a Loraine High School graduate, class of 1958, and I was especially pleased to see the LHS graduates receive recognition.

Virginia Martin

Bill Sims – Texas Senator: Austin Texas

The Senate of The State of Texas

BILL SIMS
STATE SENATOR
25TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ROOM 225, ONE CAPITOL SQUARE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068
512/463-0125
FAX 512/475-3732
TDD 512/475-3758
POST OFFICE BOX 410
SAN ANGELO, TEXAS 76902
915/658-5852
FAX 915/655-2255



COMMITTEE:
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN
FINANCE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

June 7, 1993

Lydia Alvarez
General Delivery
Lorraine, Texas 79532

Dear Ms Alvarez:

I was visiting the State of Alaska recently and I noticed the article in the Anchorage Daily News concerning the graduation of your eighteenth child from Loraine High School.

I just wanted to send you a copy of the article and say congratulations to you and to Fabian. Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Sims".
Bill Sims
BS/bfs



Joyce Triplett: San Angelo, Texas

121 N. Madison
San Angelo, TX
76901

May 10, 1993

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez,

You two parents are to be commended. Reading about your family in the Sunday Standard-Times thrilled me. I am a retired teacher and a mother of 4 (all college graduates) and grandmother to 12. I am sending the article to my schoolteacher daughter who teaches in Buckholts, not far from Temple. She has some students who don't care much about learning. I am suggesting to her that she at least fasten the article to her bulletin board or, hopefully, make copies for all the boys and girls.

May God bless you. Only time will tell the extent of your influence.

Sincerely,
Joyce Triplett (Mrs. Lisa Triplett)

Unknown: Unknown

April 21, 1993

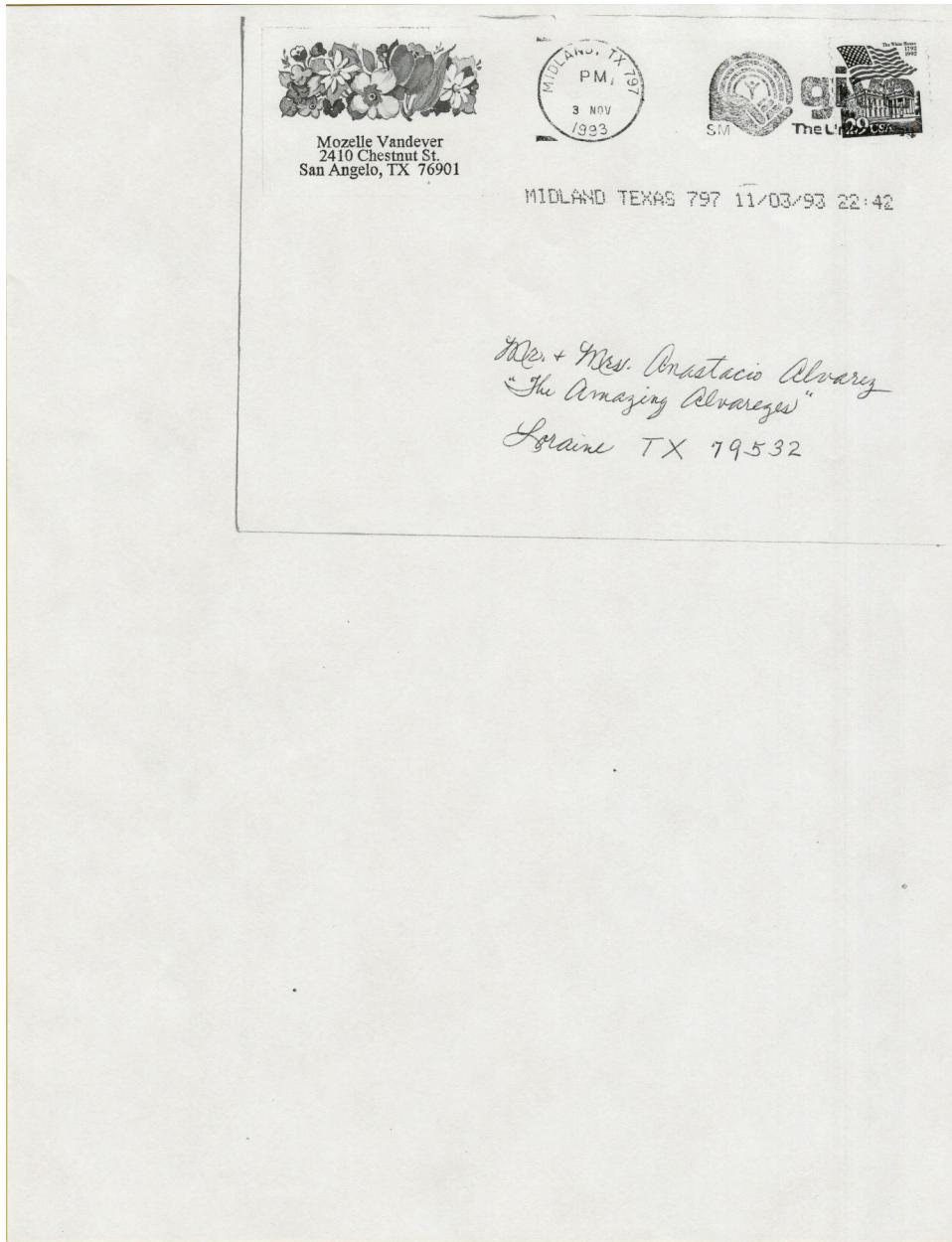
Enclosed is the most encouraging newspaper story we have seen in a long time! With your extended family you must be able to use one more copy.

You were evidently very special loving parents that worked at doing things right and were able to instill special values in your children.

Thank the Lord for young people who accepted the challenges for a good education and adopted those same high values that have made them fine upstanding citizens.

I don't know you, but I do congratulate you and your children. We are proud of you! Hopefully your children will pass on this heritage to their children.

Mozelle Vandever: San Angelo, Texas



Juanita C Woodle – Abilene, Texas

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Alvarez -
I am a friend of Helma Joyce
from High School Days in
Colorado City and I have heard
about the Alvarez family
for years. I know how much
Mrs. Joyce and Helma have
depended on you all.
I was happy to see the won-
derful write-up in today's
Abilene paper and have sent
a copy to Helma. Sincerely
Juanita (Cook) Woodle

Juanita C Woodle
2657 S. 22nd St.
Abilene, TX 79605



Mr. & Mrs. Anastacio Alvarez
Laredo, Texas
19532

Newspaper Articles

Elizabeth Hudson – Anchorage Daily News: Anchorage, Alaska



their own — that an abundance of resources is not necessarily the foundation of a civilization, Limerick said. The ghost towns of the big Western states testify to the "illusion of abundance."

Limerick is the best-known of a growing cadre of scholars called the New Western historians. Their dispute with more tradition-

These deniers of the purple sage have been accused of being unduly negative, of attempting to expiate white guilt by drafting a "politically correct" version of Western expansion. Some scholars also seem concerned by what they see as glib self-promotion by popularizers such as Limerick. Journalists had a field day with

surrounded by menacing immigrants. Sen. Ted Stevens of R-Alaska, angrily denounced the exhibit and threatened to cut congressional funding for the Smithsonian.

"The controversy in Western history is still continuing hot and heavy," says state historian Jo Antonson.

The controversy came to Alaska in the person of Lim-

erick, who has written books on Alaska exploration and wildlife management. "I only wish she were a little more careful in her scholarship and a little less certain about the originality of her conclusions."

As is often the case in media-fanned controversies, there may be less to the battle over New Western his-

do
ap
sl
ev
be
S
w
bo
sh
w
th
ti

ALVAREZ: Texas parents watch 18th of their 18 children graduate from |

Continued from Page A-1

In 1967, Anastacio Jr. was the first Alvarez to graduate from the 200-student, kindergarten-to-grade-12 Loraine school. Daniel came next in 1968 and was the first in a procession of the family's valedictorians. There has been an Alvarez graduating nearly every year since.

"All of them were excellent students," said Mike Alvarez, a math teacher at Loraine school for 14 years. "But it's not just (due to) the fact that they're a large family that they stand out. It's just the way they are."

At a time when many parents seem to struggle to get just one or two children safely into adulthood, the people of Loraine proudly hold up the Alvarez family as the American dream come true. Echoing the sentiments of Chicanos, teachers point to the source of their success:

"Once their daddy told me that any trouble they got into at school, they'd get it again at home," said Joy Dickinson, a retired teacher who spent 27 years at Loraine. "Their parents knew those kids would behave."

Charlene Reily, retired after teaching fifth grade for 20 years, remembered her introduction to the family.

"Once Reiley was passing around in class I asked another teacher what to do about it. 'Just tell him you may have to talk to his daddy,' she told me. Well, that took care of it."

Despite his reputation as a stern disciplinarian with his 18 children, Anastacio Alvarez, 69, is a quiet, mild-mannered man who his children say taught more by example than fear.

"He learned to manage us, but he never spanked us," said Sammy, the third child, 41, who lives in nearby Sweetwater. "But he hung a belt over the doorway. That intimidated us," he added, smiling.

Lydia Alvarez, petite and fashionable after raising her 17 children, including once to twins, said the demands of childbirth and child-rearing challenged her.

"I think back now and I can't imagine myself with just two or three kids," she said.

Lydia and Anastacio, both natives of the area, live on their farm on Lone Wolf

Mountain, once a lookout point for the Indians who roamed the territory. She was a migrant worker and he a cotton farmer, both with little formal education, when they married in 1944. Education, they decided, was the most important gift they could give their children. As the family grew, hard work became an equally important virtue.

"As soon as they could do housework, they were doing it — and taking care of the babies," Lydia said. "There was not much to do at work, so they couldn't get into trouble."

Hard work aside, the Alvarez clan remembers home life as fun and lively.

"We used to load up on bikes, eight or 10 of us on two or three bikes to go get the mail," Fabian said, referring to the long, dusty driveway from their small brick house to the road.

Anastacio, though at the memory of piling into the station wagon, arms and legs spilling out of the windows, to go to church. If it rained and the road was too muddy, Anastacio would load his brood on the tractor to get them out, but they would never miss church.

"I always taught church," Lydia says, pray the rosary,

All the Alvarez college after high are nine bachelors degree and more will attend San the fall. There are who have grad

On Fabian's siblings and their attend took up a gym. Fabian, clas parents with a vi ceremony.

"Each rose is children," he told dabbed their eyes.

But the tears f past Ken, February 11, tacio with honor degrees, surprising abrupt reversal o dren stood and parents received



Fabian Graduation

Family finally sees final grad



Fabian Alvarez tries on his cap and gown for size as his sister, Pat, helps out. Fabian is the last of 18 Alvarez children to graduate from Loraine High School. In the early 1970s, there were 15 Alvarez children in Loraine schools.

MARTHA E. FLORES
Regional Editor

LORAIN - Growing up during the Great Depression when work came before school for many, Anastacio and Lydia Alvarez told themselves that their children's education would come first. Their dream was fulfilled Friday when their youngest, Fabian, graduated from Loraine High School, following in the footsteps of his 17 brothers and sisters.

With Fabian receiving his diploma, it will be the first time since 1955 an Alvarez child has not been a student in the Loraine Independent School District. In the early 1970s, 15 Alvarez children attended Loraine schools.

Beginning in 1967, an Alvarez graduated from high school every other year, and at times, in consecutive years. Anastacio Jr. graduated in 1967; Daniel in 1968; Sammy in 1969; Mary Ann in 1971; DeLores in 1972; Pat in 1974; David in 1975; Jimmy in 1977; Richard in 1978; Mike in 1980; Bene in 1981; Marge in 1983; Helene in 1984; Pat in 1985; Charles and Cheryl in 1988; Joe in 1989; and Fabian on May 26, 1993.

Like his brothers and sisters, Fabian's plans include college, majoring in psychology. Nine of the Alvarez children have earned college degrees, mostly in the social sciences and health field. Jimmy recently finished his master's work in psychology.

"I know if I had more education I could have had a better job," Anastacio said. "There was no question that everyone would graduate and attend college. My priority was to give my kids an education."

As children and young adults in the 1930s and 1940s, Anastacio and Lydia worked in the cotton fields along side their parents. They attended school only a few months a year - never able to keep up with other students and often left behind in classes. By the time they were young adults, they felt out of place in the middle school classes and chose to go to work.

"I was ashamed to be in class because I was so much older," Lydia said.

Anastacio and Lydia began a family. Anastacio was a farmer, and worked at the Loraine Gin. Lydia worked in the fields with Anastacio, as well as working on nearby farms.

She and her husband did not want their children to be ashamed to learn. An emphasis on education began shortly after the Mitchell County couple began their family in the late 1940s.

Spanish was spoken in the home until Anastacio Jr. began kindergarten, then English became the primary language spoken. As more children entered school, English was spoken throughout the house.

Finally page 8A

Iren to graduate from Loraine High School. In the

see FINALLY, page 8A

Finally

continued from page 1A

lish and Spanish were integrated into the household conversations.

"I learned more from my children than I did while I was in school," Lydia said. "I wanted my children to continue learning."

It was not easy with 18 children attending elementary, junior high, high school and college all at once. "There were a lot of hard-me-downs," Lydia said. "I made all the girls' clothes."

The family used the resources they had. Anastacio never purchased implements to work his land; he made them. Most - if not all - of their vegetables were grown in a garden near the house. The children would help with household chores, as well as work the fields with their parents after school, on weekends and during the summer.

As the Alvarez children were taught the importance of education, they also learned the importance of family, the rewards of hard work and religion.

"Some people don't realize what it means to live on a farm," Lydia said. "It's hard work, but it is rewarding."

Sammy remembers his wake-up call - his father sharpening hoes before the sun came up. "We all helped out," he said. "We cooked, cleaned and worked the fields."

When asked if they ever had to do without, Sammy quickly replied, "Dad taught us it is a matter of what you need not what you want. If you wanted it, save up for it."

Lydia said, "I didn't consider us poor. It was a way of life for us. It seemed normal."

No matter how many children were in school or what kind of harvest was picked, the family went on vacation each year. "I remember all of us in the car driving to Galveston or other places in Texas," Sammy said. "We always had vacations. I remember when it got late and we were on the road we would pray the rosary."

As the children graduated from high school and began attending college, they would work for their father in the summer to save money for tuition and books.

"There was no such thing as a free ride," said Daniel, the family's first high school valedictorian. "I received a \$100 scholarship to a private school with outrageous

tuition." Daniel attended Howard College for two years, receiving his mechanical engineering degree from the University of Houston in 1972.

Fabian, graduating third in his class, received two scholarships, totaling \$1,250. He will attend Angelo State University in the fall. For the next few months, he will travel Texas with a Catholic missionary group, conducting retreats for junior high students.

The Alvarez children are all involved in the church. They are lectors, catechism teachers and on the parish council.

"We taught them to go to church," Lydia said. "We prayed the rosary every night around 10 p.m. It didn't matter who was around."

Religion, work, education and family have an equal footing in the eyes of the Alvarezes.

Fifteen of the children came home to see the youngest graduate. Most of them come home for either Christmas or New Year's Eve. Some come home for both.

All of them live in Texas, except Joe who is stationed in North Carolina with the Marine Corps. Mary Ann, David and Helen live in Loraine; Anastacio Jr. in Snyder; Daniel outside of Houston; Sammy in Sweetwater; DeLores, Margie and Cheryl in Dallas; Robert in Breckenridge; Richard in Round Rock; Mike in McKinney; Rene in Mesquite; and Jimmy, Pat and Charles in San Angelo.

Upon earning his degree, Fabian plans to live nearby, working as a school guidance counselor.

With the last of 18 children graduating, the Alvarezes have become celebrities in their own right. An early article published drew more attention to the modest family. Numerous newspapers were granted interviews, including a reporter from the Washington Post.

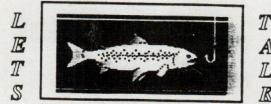
"Forty-five years ago, I would not have dreamed that I would be interviewed because I had 18 children," Lydia said.

Some of the Alvarez children said they felt awkward and slightly embarrassed with the publicity. The idea of everyone graduating was natural, Sammy said.

"I am very proud of all of them," Lydia said, her tears welling. "I am going to miss the school activities. Some years back, I thought I wished it was over, but now that it is over, I am going to miss it."

Other Articles

Catholic Student Center – Newman Center: San Angelo, Texas



TUNA

Issue No. VII
August, 1994

CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER Newman Center

2451 Dena
San Angelo, Texas 76901
915/949-8033

The Amazing Alvarezes

In 1967, Anastacio Jr. was the first of the 18 Alvarez children to graduate from the 200-pupil school in Loraine, Texas. Daniel came next, in 1968, and was the first of the family's two valedictorians. There has been an Alvarez graduating nearly every year since.

"All of them were excellent students," said math teacher Mike Chunn. "It's not just because they're a large family that they stand out. It's the way they are." Adds retired teacher Joy Dickenson, "Once, their daddy told me that any trouble they go into in school, they'd get it again at home. Their parents knew those kids would behave."

At a time when many parents struggle to get just one or two children safely into adulthood, the people of Loraine proudly hold up the Alvarez family as the American Dream come true.

Lydia Alvarez was a migrant worker and Anastacio a cotton farmer, both with little formal schooling when they married in 1947. Education, they decided, was the most important gift they could give their children. The kids helped by getting jobs, student loans, financial aid and grants.

All the Alvarez children went to college after high school. At last count there are nine bachelor's degrees, one master's, and more degrees coming. And there are 22 grandchildren, four of whom have graduated from high school.

On commencement night last May, 14 siblings and their families who were able to attend took up a large section of the school gym to watch as Fabian, the youngest of the Alvarez children, got his diploma. Fabian, the class president,

surprised his parents with a vase of 18 roses during the ceremony. "Each rose is different, just like your children," he told them as family members dabbed their eyes with tissues.

The tears flowed even more freely when Principal Ken Kendall presented Lydia and Anastacio with honorary Loraine High School degrees, surprising the entire family. This time the Alvarez children stood and proudly applauded as their parents received their diplomas.

--Elizabeth Hudson in *Washington Post* and reprinted in *Readers' Digest*

P.S. We, at the Newman Center, are pleased to claim two of these young adults as members. Charles is a senior and Fabian a freshman. Both are most welcome additions to our family.

Believe and Be Satisfied

Everyone longs to give themselves completely to someone, to have a deep relationship with another, to be loved thoroughly and exclusively. But God to a Christian says, "No, not until you are satisfied and content with living, loved by me alone, with giving yourself totally and unreservedly to me; content to have an intensive personal and unique relationship with me alone."

"I love you my child, and until you discover that only in me is your satisfaction to be found, you will not be capable of the perfect human relationship that I have planned for you. You will never be united with another until you are united with me—exclusive of anyone or anything else, exclusive of any other desires or longings. I want you to stop planning, stop wishing, and allow me to give you the most thrilling plan in existence, one that you cannot imagine."

Readers Digest

city in America has its own
rage, kindness and decency.
There are four...

ROES TODAY®

mouth to block out the smoke." King threw the woman over his shoulders and carried her downstairs.

King quickly explained to the first firefighters on the scene what had happened, then went on to deliver the pizzas—which got to their destination on time.

—Michael E. Smith in Medford, Mass.
Transcript

Giving Pays the Bills

ANNE BROWN paid her doctor's bill despite having no money or health insurance. She spent three hours volunteering in a school cafeteria, thanks to a program that uses the age-old practice of barter to ease the modern-day expenses of health care.

The program is the brainchild of Dr. Timothy T. Jones, a family practitioner in Whitney Point, N.Y. For two hours on Friday afternoons,

Jones offers medical care to anyone who comes in. Patients, in return, agree to do two or three hours of community service, such as washing school buses, sorting cans and packages at a food pantry or volunteering at a day-care center. They also get credit for work with churches or community organizations.

—George Basler in Binghamton, N.Y.
Press & Sun-Bulletin

The Amazing Alvarezes

In 1967, Anastacio Jr. was the first of the 18 Alvarez children to graduate from the 200-pupil school in Loraine, Texas. Daniel came next, in 1968, and was the first of the family's two valedictorians. There has been an Alvarez graduating nearly every year since.

"All of them were excellent students," said math teacher Mike Chunn. "It's not just because they're a large family that they stand out. It's the way they are." Adds retired teacher Joy Dickenson, "Once, their daddy told me that any trouble they got into at school, they'd get it again at home. Their parents knew those kids would behave."

At a time when many parents struggle to get just one or two children safely into adulthood, the people of Loraine proudly hold up the Alvarez family as the American Dream come true.

Lydia Alvarez was a migrant worker and Anastacio a cotton farmer, both with little formal schooling, when they married in 1947. Edu-

cation, they decided, was the most important gift they could give their children. The kids helped by getting jobs, student loans, financial aid and grants.

All the Alvarez children went to college after high school. At last count, there are nine bachelor's degrees, one master's and more degrees coming. And there are 22 grandchildren, four of whom have graduated from high school.

On commencement night last May, 14 siblings and their families who were able to attend took up a large section of the school gym to watch as Fabian, the youngest of the Alvarez children, got his diploma. Fabian, the class president, surprised his parents with a vase of 18 roses during the ceremony. "Each rose is different, just like your children," he told them as family members dabbed their eyes with tissues.

The tears flowed even more freely when Principal Ken Kendall presented Lydia and Anastacio with honorary Loraine High School degrees, surprising the entire family. This time, the Alvarez children stood and proudly applauded as their parents received the diplomas.

—Elizabeth Hudson in Washington Post

A Friend in Phoenix

FRANCES LUSK, 69, a retired nurse from Amarillo, Texas, was scared and feeling alone. Told by her doctor that she might have a malignant brain tumor, she was referred to Barrow Neurological Institute in

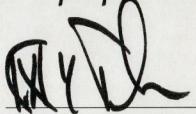
Hero For Today Certificate – Readers Digest

HERO FOR TODAY

Featured in Reader's Digest

Anastacio & Lydia Alvarez

*In recognition of your kindness, courage and decency,
and for being an inspiration to people everywhere.*



Kenneth Y. Tomlinson
Editor in Chief
Reader's Digest

The Digest and Pegasus logo are registered trademarks of the Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

Nov 1993