

Happy Father's Day to all Pedro Pan fathers.

Dear Pedro Pan Brothers and Sisters:

Last Friday we had the great honor of having another street named after our exodus. Hialeah's West 12th Avenue, between 44th and 49th Street was dedicated as Operation Pedro Pan Avenue and the Unveiling Ceremony was a very moving event. Hialeah's Major Carlos Hernandez, Dade County Commissioner Esteban Bovo, who spearheaded the effort, and BCC's Chairwoman Rebecca Sosa gave moving tributes; they were accompanied by the City's council members. Pedro Pan Father José Espino, whose parish is around the corner, gave the invocation and Maria De La Milera, our Second Vice President and a Hialeah resident who persistently sought this endeavor, gave a very eloquent testimony. The culmination was the actual unveiling which was well attended by many Pedro Pan proudly wearing our blue OPPG shirts.

On Saturday the eighth, the much anticipated Matecumbe reunion took place. It was a huge success that, by far, exceeded our expectations. Over 220 Pedro Pan and family showed up for an incredible day of fun and camaraderie. The Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by Father Sergio Garcia-Miró, MD, former instructor at the camp. Carlos Oliva, Edgar Garcia and Jose "Pepe" Lopez, also former instructors, participated in the emotional reunion.

The event's committee included Luis Lopez, member of the Matecumbe High's Class of 1963, who rounded his classmates from around the US and his children and grandchildren's choir delighted us with their music during the mass. Clemente Amézaga did a fantastic job of designing and making the name badges and his resourcefulness in finding photos of everyone was amazing. Frank "Paco" Echeverria received the reservations and kept track of payments prior to the event while Maria

De La Milera, Miriam Castro and Olivia Gonzalez manned the reception table, distributed the name tags and kept track of payments. Carmencita Romañach worked with me for weeks in anticipation of the event and finally for the three days prior to the event, Carmencita and I set up the “Chapel” and “Dining Hall” at La “Cabaña Grande” with the cooperation of Luis, Clemente, his cousin Manolo Amézaga, and Hector Fernandez. Belinda Phillips, from Miami-Dade Parks Disability Services opened up the camp for us and had staff at our disposal to help with set up and clean up.

Angel Cañete entertained us with his music to everyone’s delight. Testimony from Daniel Arco, Matecumbe High's Class of 1963 Alumni and Juan Pujol, Matecumbe veteran are included; look for them below and make sure not to miss the “Matecumbe” poem that Juan Pujol lovingly read at the celebration.

On June 19th we will celebrate our spiritual father, Monsignor Bryan Walsh's birthday, our heartfelt thanks and remembrance to him on that special day, today on Father's Day and always.

Love,
Carmen Valdivia

The official Pedro Pan Newsletter of Operation Pedro Pan Group Inc.

OPERATION PEDRO PAN GROUP, INC. (OPPG)

A National Charitable Organization

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June 16, 2013

Pedro Pan News



***A group of Pedro Pan celebrating the new Operation Pedro Pan Ave.
West 12th Ave. 44th St., Hialeah, Fl***

Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc.



Camp Matecumbe Celebration 2013

Links:

<http://www.clickeventonline.com/event/ong/130608-CampMatecumbeCelebration2013.htm>

<http://www.pedropan.org/events/130608-CampMatecumbeCelebration2013.htm>

Camp Matecumbe Celebration
Saturday, June 8, 2013 - 11:00am
Camp Matecumbe
13841 SW 120 St , 33186, Miami, FL

Click on the above links to see the videos and photo gallery of the event.

Matecumbe High School Class Reunion-June 8th, 2013
A 50 year reunion chronicle
by Daniel Arco Reyes

In the morning of Saturday June 8th, the grounds of Camp Matecumbe were visited by a crowd in excess of 200 people which included former residents of the camp, their spouses, children, grandchildren and friends as well as many other Pedro Pan kids that were housed at different facilities and their families. The large crowd included a Pedro Pan mother, Leonor Valdivia, representing the brave mothers of the 14,048 Pedro Pan children, the women that courageously chose freedom for their sons and daughters over oppression at the price of separation.

The gathering marked the Golden Anniversary (50 years) reunion of the first and only graduating class of Matecumbe High School. For this special and uplifting event several of the grads were reunited once again as they have done before. Guys travelled from different parts of the country to attend the festivities, to rekindle the friendship and brotherhood forged under the tents and on the shadows of the pine trees of the camp.

The program was initiated inside the Gran Cabana with a Thanksgivings Mass officiated by Father Sergio Garcia-Miro, one of the four former camp instructors in attendance. Some of the members of the '63 graduating class participated in the liturgy. During the school year of 1962-63 Fr. Sergio was the instructor in charge of this group. Immediately following the mass, Carmen Valdivia, representing OPPG's Board of Directors with the assistance of the former instructors, presented each of the grads present a certificate commemorating the historical occasion.

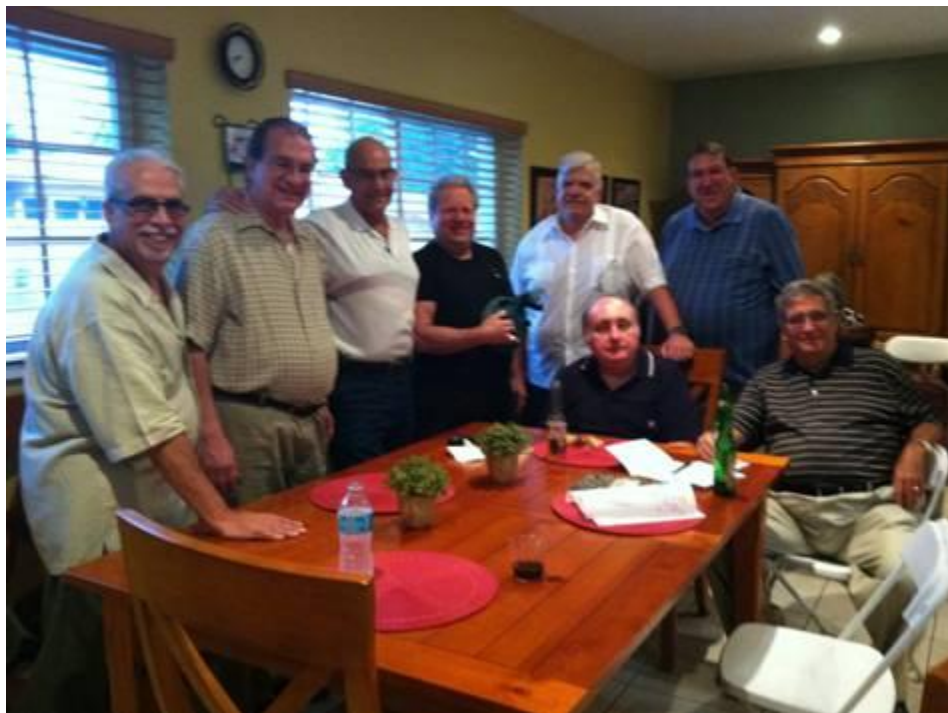
The attendees enjoyed a plethora of hors d'oeuvres before a delicious paella was served to everyone's delight.



Back row left to right: Leandro Alvarez (Hialeah, FL), Mario Naranjo (North Carolina), Roberto Balbis (West Palm Beach, FL), Ernesto Perdomo (New Jersey), Angel Carballo (Puerto Rico), Jesus Esteban Ramil (Miami, FL), Luis Lopez (Miami, FL), Porfirio Gramatges (Marco Island, FL), Daniel Arco (Texas) and Wilfredo Bracerias (Miami, FL).

Front row left to right: Rolando Crespo (Miami, FL) and Arturo Lara (Pennsylvania).

In the evening hours the group of graduates got together at the home of one of their classmates to continue visiting with each other in a more intimate environment, to recount events, to tell anecdotes, to remember their teachers and their classmates absent from this reunion, to relive their days in camp and to catch up with the happenings of each other. While the room was filled with laughter, joy and good times the group of wives (which connected equally as well as the guys) marveled at the strong bond these men have been able to create and maintain despite the passing of five decades. Though they are scattered throughout the country they have the ability to reconnect instantaneously with each other and carry on as if they have never been separated from each other for any period of time. As so aptly was said several times during the reunion *"fifty years have gone by and nothing has changed"*



MATECUMBE- by Juan Pujol

El sábado 8 de Junio estuvimos reunidos en Camp Matecumbe para celebrar el 50 aniversario de la graduación de la única clase de “seniors” de Matecumbe High. El calor y la humedad imperante no se podían comparar con el calor humano en los abrazos y saludos de todos los que allí estábamos celebrando con ellos. Como siempre que nos vemos en ocasiones como esta, tal parecía que nos habíamos visto recientemente, que nunca nos habíamos separado, aunque en muchos casos no nos habíamos visto más desde que nos despedimos al irnos del Campamento.

Matecumbe es un lugar muy especial que a veces es difícil de explicar, yo viví allí casi un año de los tres que estuve en el programa. Viví en tres campamentos; pero ningún otro dejó en mi las huellas que dejó Matecumbe.

“No negaré que sufrí conociéndote aquel día...” como diría el poema sobre Matecumbe en el ultimo numero de Forja. (Publicación mensual de Octubre del 62 hasta Mayo/ Junio del 64).

Llegué una noche de agosto en medio de una tormenta tropical y al acostarme en la litera que me asignaron, sin sábana o almohada, me quedé dormido sintiendo las gotas de la lluvia cayendo en el techo de la carpa que me cubría, pero muy contento y agradeciendo a Dios el llegar a tierras de libertad.

Al otro día tuvimos un día bello y los rayos de sol se filtraban entre los muchos pinos que nos rodeaban, lo vi como una señal que mi pesadilla vivida en mi Patria en el último año, quedaba atrás como la tormenta de la noche anterior y mi vida comenzaba una nueva etapa llena de esperanza.

Después de vivir allí, yo estuve listo para todo lo que enfrenté más adelante, tal vez fue por aquello que oía de “me roza, me patina, me resbala y me pasa por el lado y ni me echa fresco” o los ratos que, solo con los pinos y los montes me ponía a hablar con Dios o el compartir con aquellos que tenían los mismos valores que yo y veíamos el tiempo en el Campamento como estar en una fragua forjándonos para el futuro.

Todos nosotros tenemos la responsabilidad de proclamar nuestra saga, de contar nuestra historia personal, de que se sepa que estamos orgullosos de ser llamados

Pedro Pan, de que estamos agradecidos a nuestros padres que hicieron el sacrificio de enviarnos a un futuro incierto; pero que ofrecía más tranquilidad y seguridad de lo que estábamos viviendo en Cuba.

Camp Matecumbe es el lugar ideal para mantener físicamente recuerdos de nuestra historia, vamos a unirnos todos, no solamente los Matecumberos, sino todos los Pedro Pan.

El Board of Directores de OPPG ha tomado la iniciativa en dar estos primeros pasos y les estamos muy agradecidos por su esfuerzo.

Hago un llamado a todos a trabajar unidos para conseguir que podamos decir MATECUMBE VIVE.

“Matecumbe, nombre indio, coraje y abnegación
Matecumbe, tu recuerdo, vivirá en mi corazón...”

Poema de Matecumbe

*Matecumbe, nombre indio
Coraje y abnegación
Matecumbe, tu recuerdo
Vivirá en mi corazón.*

*Sí fueron días felices
Aquellos de Matecumbe
Fueron días de pesar
Y también incertidumbre.*

*Lejos, pero entre amigos,
Lejos de mi patria amada,
Fuiste tú mi gran refugio
Mi novia nunca olvidada.*

*En ti encontré quien yo era
Brotó de nuevo mi Fe
Extrañé mi hogar querido
Al que pronto volveré.*

*Tú serás en mi recuerdo
Como un amigo de siempre
Como consuelo y abrigo
Como una madre paciente.*

*No negaré que sufrí...
Conociéndote aquel día....
Forzado me voy de ti
Pues dejarte no querría.*

*Adiós pinos, adiós montes,
Mi cabaña y mi capilla,
Parte de mi alma queda
Entre ustedes todavía.*

*Adiós a mis instructores
A maestros y empleados
A los hermanos queridos,
ADIOS, MATECUMBE AMADO.*

*Grabación en Youtube de Juan Pujol recitando el poema de Matecumbe, en
junio 8, 2013:*

http://youtu.be/xeD2LxIF_2w

Future Events Calendar:

Saturday, July 20, 2013 at 10 AM- Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, Fl

Saturday, August 17, 2013 at 10 AM- Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, Fl

Saturday, September 21, 2013 at 10 AM-Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, Fl

Saturday, October 19, 2013 at 10 AM-Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, Fl

Saturday, November 23, 2013 at PM- Annual Thanksgiving Gala

Place: Coral Gables Country Club, 997 North Greenway Drive, Coral Gables, Fl 33134

Saturday, December 21st, 2013 at 10 AM- Christmas Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, Fl

Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc

A National Charitable Organization of the former Children of Pedro Pan

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