

Presentation Level 3 Journal September – May 2019

THE LIFETIME LEARNER AND BELIEVER

6 March 2019

Interview with Aurelia Torres Rivera

Conducted by students Monica Gallegos, Guadalupe Alvarez, Fabricio Sanchez and Ana Castillo-Zardiely.



These level 3 students asked a variety of questions, practicing question formation and getting to know their favorite class member. Above, Aurelia joins our class Christmas caroling in Center classrooms.

G: What games did you play when you were little?

A: Jump rope with my sister

G: When you were a little girl did you have a doll?

A: I don't remember if I had a doll. I only remember that we were very poor; my parents, one brother, four sisters and I lived in a very small house. But my mother helped the neighbors. I remember my father went out of town selling his jewelry. Some days he came back and he didn't make any money.

Ana: Where did you live when you were a little girl?

A: I was born at home in Monterrey, Mexico. Then for about four years my family lived in a little village in San Luis Potosi in Mexico. I was very small when we lived there; I don't remember the name of the village, but I don't think it had a school. Then we moved back to Monterrey when I was five years old. Then I started school when I was six years old. Then I missed one year because I got sick in Sept and I missed the whole year. I don't know what sickness I had, but it started with a high fever.

M: How many years did you go to school?

A: Three years.

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PRESENTATION CENTER FIRST ANNUAL LOTERIA

As told by
Monday/Wednesday
morning Level 3 Students

ON Sunday, April 28, 2019 the Presentation Center held a fundraiser Loteria at Christ the King Church cafeteria, located two blocks from the Center.

A member from each English class was on the Loteria Committee. Monica Gallegos represented our class. The Committee members held planning meetings and went to the classrooms to collect the ticket money from the advance sales. Monica worked very diligently in the advance ticket sales.

In addition, the Committee members helped in the kitchen during the event and in the clean-up afterwards. Four worked the kitchen; six stayed to clean up the hall.

Other students helped make the event successful. Monica, Dora, from level 1 class and two knitting teachers helped serve the food. Guadalupe Alvarez donated the lettuce,
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Continued from Page 1, Col 2

M: Why did you only go three years?

A: My daddy took me off from the school. He didn't believe in school.

M: What did your dad do?

A: He made special fantasia or imitation inexpensive jewelry. I was a helper for him. When I was nine years old, he pulled me from school and I started to work for him.

Ana: Did you have many boyfriends when you were young?

A: Some.

Ana: Did you like to dance when you were young?

A: I liked, but, when I was living at home, my daddy wouldn't let me. Later, my sister-in-law wanted to take me but my husband didn't like to dance. He took his sisters dancing but not me.

Q: You told us last week you had been married. Where did you meet your husband?

A: In Monterrey. He was working in a hotel. He was a bellboy; he helped the hotel guests carry their luggage. Then from 1944-1949 he started to make candy in his house to sell. He made mueganos and different kinds.

F: How old were you when you got married?

A: I was 20 years old.: Did your husband speak English?

A: Yes. He was born in Mexico but when he was three months old, they came to the U.S. to Michigan. He went to school there. He went back to Mexico

before the Second World War so he wouldn't get drafted. When he went back to Mexico, they asked him, "Why do you come back here?" So, I met him during the Second World War. We got married in 1946 after the War.

F: How many children do you have?

A: Kids? I have 8; I had nine but my son was killed in 1979 in an auto accident when he was 25 years old. Actually, I had 11 children., two died as infants.

F: Were all your children born in Mexico?

A: When we lived in Monterrey, I got five children. But two died. The first child, a little girl, died when she was three years old. The other girl died when she was only one. She was sick. When we came to the U.S. we had three children, two girls and one boy. The others were born in U.S. They were born in a clinic, only one was born in a hospital.

Q: How many surgeries have you had?

A: I had only one – in Mexico in 1959. Gallbladder stones (gallstones). They fixed a hernia when they did that. (Note: Probably related to the fact that Aurelia was born at home.)

Q: Did your husband help support the family with money?

A: Not too much. So I had to go to work. I began in 1974 about 10 years after we came to the U.S. here in San Antonio. (I was cleaning at a restaurant for three years in Mexico before I got married.) Then I got

divorced after 35 years of marriage. I was 55 years old. I still had three kids living at home. The youngest one was 11. The two others were 13 and 15. One sister helped me.

Q: Why did you get a divorce?

A: Because my husband had another woman. He had her a long time. My husband didn't want me to live in the house. "It's my house," he said. He barely gave \$5.00 a week for child support.

F: Why do you use oxygen?

A: I hurt my lungs in my work cleaning houses. I smelled too many chemicals here in sa. For 30 years. All I don't remember the chem names but my boss gave them to me and told me which ones to use for different jobs. had so many kinds that I used to the five families I cleaned for. They moved or passed. cleaned for a lady

Q: How much money did you earn when you were cleaning houses?

A: \$10.00 a day. For five hours.



Aurelia Rivera with a few members of her family.

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You are never too old to learn.

Learning is for a lifetime.

M: You had to quit school so young. Did your children finish school?

A: Only four finished high school. Others quit in 10 or 11th grade. The youngest one did not finish. Another graduated.

Another almost finished then took classes to finish in summer school. Others didn't finish.

About my children: One son worked 30 years with a state agency. He is retired now. My second child, my daughter, went back to Monterrey because she never liked it over here. She studied and became a doctor PhD. She studied science and mathematics. My son-in-law, her husband, is in biology.

Ana: Do you like studying English?

A: Oh yes. I started to learn English when I was working with American people in their houses. Many of them did not speak Spanish.

Q: You also write very well in English. How did you learn to write in English?

A: I studied with Brother Mike for three years here at the Center. I still study with him in class before this class.

G: How do/did you spend your free time?

A: I like working in my house, spending time with my children. I used to have plants like tulips, geraniums and begonias. Now I

only have Christo corona. I don't go out too much. I still knit. I crocheted for many years, When my kids were little I made sweaters and quilts. But I can't do it anymore because of my arthritis in my hands but I can knit. I learned here at the Center how to knit. I knitted a scarf.

Ana: If you could return to another time in your past where would you like to go back to?

A: I'd like to go back to finish school.



What Else Is Important to Aurelia?

Q: How many grandchildren do you have?

A: I have 17. I have 16 great grandchildren. I have one great, great grandchild.

M: What foods do you miss that your mom used to cook?

A: She made so many things. I never could do it. In Lent she made pipian, like molé, special for Lent. It's not only for Lent. It has shrimp and nopalitos in it. She made capirotada.

Ana: What do you like to cook?

A: I like to cook Mexican food. Enchiladas, chili rellenos, Mexican rice and beans.

G: What is your favorite color?

A: Purple. (She has on a purple

blouse.)

Ana: Would you like to travel and if you could where would you like to go?

A: I'd like to but I can't do it.

Q: But what if you could walk better, if you didn't have oxygen, if you had the money?

A: I would like to go to Monterrey to see my daughter. She comes here but I would like to see her there. I went to the Holy Land in 1996, thanks to my son and my daughter-in-law, who gave me the money. I went with my daughter who lives in Monterrey. So many beautiful things. You cannot explain how you feel over there.

Ana: What time do you get up in the morning?

A: I get up at 5 o'clock

G: What is your favorite place in San Antonio?

A: Church.

Ana: What days are you going to the church?

A: Every day except Saturday.

Q: How do you get there with your oxygen? Who takes you?

A: My provider takes me. Then she picks me up and brings me here to the Center. She works one hour in the morning and three and a half in the afternoon.

F: Who is your favorite saint?

A: Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.

Q: How important is your Catholic religion to you?

A: Very important.

Q: What year were you born?

A: I was born in 1925. I am 93 years old.

The class applauds. Δ

PRESENTATION CENTER FIRST ANNUAL LOTERIA

Continued from Page 1, Col 3

tomatoes and onions for the hamburgers.

Monica said that the people talked about how delicious the hamburgers were and for such a good price – only \$3.00.

They also served pizza slices, corn in a cup, chalupas, nachos and mangonadas, which is a mango-flavored shaved ice with chamoy sauce poured on top. Desserts included chocolate cake and gelatina mosaic, made by the knitting teacher. The evening Level 3 class provided cupcakes.

On the day of the event, Center Coordinator, Mrs. Stacey Merck, checked off those who had previously paid their \$15.00. The participants each received four cards. If they wanted a “Special Loteria” they had to pay \$2.00 extra. This card is a Bingo card with more valuable prizes.

Monica says, “While I was working in the kitchen, my children played my cards. My son, 11, won a basket with a jar filled with chocolate eggs, an insulated water bottle and a picture frame.”

Guadalupe Alvarez went with her mother who was visiting from Zacatecas, Mexico. It was her mother’s first Loteria. “She says she had a good time She enjoyed visiting with other people,” Guadalupe reported.

For a minute Guadalupe was happy because she had won on her “Special” card. But someone else had also won.

Since only one person could win the prize, a king-size blanket, they drew numbers. The person who drew the highest number, won. “It wasn’t me,” Guadalupe stated sadly.

Brother James says, “It was a wonderful experience. The participation taught me a very valuable lesson on trust. Basically, I didn’t expect everyone to work so well together but they proved me wrong. The Loteria was an extremely successful event. Everybody left happy.”

Maybe it will become an annual event?? Δ

Recipe for Gelatina Mosaico



Ingredients

1. bowl or bundt pan; from 2 to 4 - 6 oz boxes of gelatin, colors of your choice like grape, pineapple, lemon and strawberry.
2. 14 grams* unflavored gelatin
¾ cup hot water
½ cup cold water
1/3 cup sugar
fresh fruit to decorate, if you want

For the Milk Gelatin Layer

- 28 grams unflavored gelatin
- ½ cup water
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 can sweet condensed milk
- 1 can table cream or 1 cup regular milk or half and half

Instructions

1. Prepare the flavored gelatin according to the package

instructions, put into shallow containers and refrigerate until they are very firm. Once completely firm, cut the flavored gelatin into cubes and combine in a large bowl.

2. For the clear layer, dissolve the unflavored gelatin with ¾ cup of hot water, ½ cup of cold water, and the sugar. Mix with a spoon until everything is combined. Add this mixture to the bottom of a pregreased bundt pan or a bowl and add fruit of your choice, if desired. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes, or until firm enough to add the cubes of prepared gelatin on top.

3. Separately, in a microwave safe dish, add 28 grams of unflavored gelatin to ½ cup of water, stir and let sit for about 10 minutes. Then put it in the microwave for 35 seconds until it is in liquid form again.

Add this mixture to a blender with the evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and table cream and blend until everything is combined.

4. Pour the milk gelatin mixture into the bundt pan or bowl, covering the flavored gelatin cubes completely.
5. Refrigerate for about 3 hours and serve right away with fresh whipped cream, if desired.

* [NOTE: 12.5 grams = 1 Tablespoon]

Serving, one slice = 133 calories and 19 grams of sugar

Directions are from Guadalupe Alvarez, who served this fabulous dessert in class early in May 2019. [Our teacher, Barbara, double checked ingredients from “My Latina Table” online.]

My Family's Easter

by Monica Gallegos

On Easter Sunday my family and I go to Church. After Mass, I fill plastic eggs with candies and money and put them in my back yard for my children's Easter egg hunt.

Later, my family and I go out to dinner and spend time together.

Last Easter Sunday my family came from Mexico to visit us. That was the best Easter Sunday.

When I was growing up in San Luis, on Easter after Church, the tradition was to eat "raspas" or shaved ice of different flavors and enjoy time with family.

My mother's sister bought the block of ice to make our "raspas." We all took turns with her raspador (ice shaver) to grate or shave the ice. My aunt also



brought, in glass bottles, the flavors like vanilla, strawberry, tamarind and guava.

My aunt has since passed away, and we now buy shaved ice already prepared at HEB but I still have those memories of Easter in my mind. Δ

April 8 2019

The class discussed organization in writing. We focused on how space is organized, using our classroom as our example. The class told this space story:

Our Classroom Space

First, when you enter our classroom you see on the right a map and a calendar on the wall next to the white board. A small plastic crucifix hangs on the wall above the whiteboard. In the corner is a small brown teachers' desk with a lot of stuff on it.

On the next wall to the left are two long rectangular windows, framed in white, covered with Venetian blinds.

A beige wooden sewing table sits in the corner. The top is covered with two small brown boxes and a green plastic container filled with pieces of fabric. Under the table is a folded green chair. Beside the table is a rectangular clear plastic bin filled with more craft stuff.

You can find another long rectangular window in the middle of the wall across from the whiteboard.

On the opposite corner from the desk is a large gray metal cabinet. On top of the cabinet is more craft stuff and a brown Bill Miller paper bag.



A door on the next wall opens into a closet. A clock in the middle of the wall tells you it's almost time for the students, sitting at their tables in the middle of the room, to go. Δ



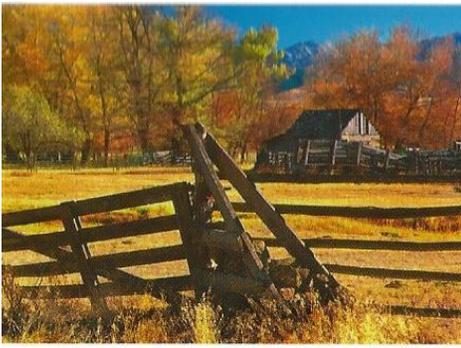
Prayer to the Holy Family

Heavenly Father,
help us to live
as the Holy Family,
united in respect and
love. We want to live
as Jesus, Mary and
Joseph, in peace
with you and one
another. Amen

Jesus, Mary and
Joseph, Pray for us.

NOTE: What is a HAIKU?
 It is a form of poetry
 introduced by Bashu in
 Japan over 500 years ago.
 The subject is about
 nature. This simple form of
 three lines with
 5, 7, and 5
 syllables
 provides students an
 opportunity to explore
 pictures from nature and to
 count syllables as they
 compose their poems

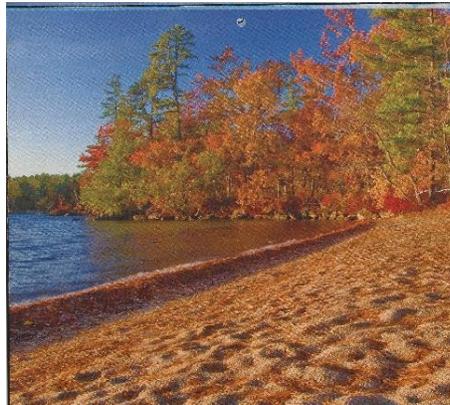
Sept 25
HAIKU



Old brown cabin rests
 Behind a falling wood
 fence
 Near orange fall trees

By
 Claudia Tovar, Aurelia Rivera
 Gregoria Cruz , and Monica
 Gallegos
 [From Oct 2016 Oregon Calendar]

Oct 31
 Two HAIKUs about
 One picture of nature



Transparent water
 Leaves orange, yellow
 and brown
 Autumn has arrived

By
 Ana Castillo-Zardiely,
 Gabriela Sanchez and
 Mary Teresa Ramos

Meditation scene
 Water reflects fall
 colors
 Near peaceful lake
 shore

By
 Claudia Tovar, Aurelia Rivera,
 and Monica Gallegos
 [From November 2014 Landscapes
 of America Calendar.]

“Abe” is by Fabricio Sanchez,
 Monica Gillegos, Olga Garcia and
 Aurelia Rivera

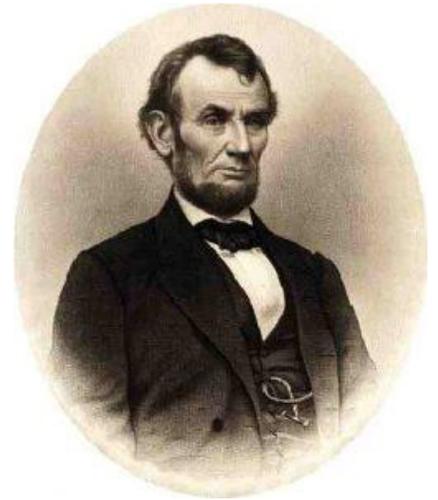
Writing Cinquains

A cinquain has five lines. Each line has a focus, beginning with the subject line. One line has three verbs. Cn you guess which line that is? “Cinq” is French for “five.”

November 5
 Cinquain in memory of
 Ana’s baby girl

Dulce
 My angel
 Protecting, playing,
 smiling
 My only daughter
 Playing with Jesus

February 11
 Cinquain for Lincoln’s
 210 birthday



ABE
 Compassionate,
 intelligent
 Freed the slaves
 I feel grateful
 admiration
 Lincoln



Surprise Visitors

by

Level 3 instructor Barbara Bir

Early in May, Stacey Merck, the Coordinator at the Presentation Center, poked her head in our open classroom door and asked if we could have two classroom visitors.

The two visitors walked in wearing big smiles on their faces. Surprise! It was my daughter-in-law, Noemi Carmona-Diaz Bir and her oldest son, Johnny Bir, 19.

After hugs, they sat in on the classroom lesson for a short while. Then **they** became the lesson as students began interviewing their guests. In English.

Noemi's Journey Learning English

The students learned that Noemi is from the Dominican Republic. She is one of 11 children. She met her husband John Bir, a Spanish speaker, when he was in her country as a member of the Peace Corps.

At that time, Noemi, a college graduate, had studied English at home and could read it but had little opportunity to speak English, so they mostly spoke in Spanish.

After she moved to San Antonio, she lived for a while at our house with my husband and me and our daughter, Celine.

John, at that time was a first year high school science teacher in Crystal Springs, Texas and came home only on weekends. And my husband Tom and I were English as a Second Language instructors at the Defense Language Institute at Lackland AFB. So she had to speak and listen to English only. As a teacher, I must report that Noemi is a quick learner.

Noemi enrolled in English classes, eager to learn English. But first, she had to learn how to get around San Antonio by bus because the whole family had jobs.

“In one of my first beginning level English classes,” Noemi said, “the teacher spoke mostly in Spanish. I didn’t need to learn Spanish,” Noemi said, “so I quickly quit that class.”

Noemi continued to study English even after she and our son John got married. She made many friends from different counties during her time as a student.

Many of them formed good friendships and still get together. Most of them come from non-Spanish speaking countries, so they had another motive to learn to communicate in English.

Noemi eventually graduated from North Vista College here in San Antonio. She is a part-time substitute teacher in the North Side School District.

The John and Noemi Bir Family



Noemi and John have four children. Johnny, 19, is the oldest. He graduated from the Science and Engineering High School at John Jay last year. His sister, Johanna, is 17 and will graduate from the same high school in June. Benjamin, 15, attends John Paul Stevens High School. He plays the cello in the high school orchestra.

The youngest, Nicole, 13, attends Pease Middle School and plays the saxophone in the school band. She loves to play basketball, volleyball, soccer and run track. She was just enrolled into the Junior National Honor Society.

Interviewing Johnny Bir

Johnny told the class that he is a freshman at UTSA, studying architecture. The students asked Johnny if he had ever been to the Dominican Republic to meet his Mother’s family. He said, “I’ve been there twice. And some of Mom’s family have come here. We’re going this summer. It’s fun to walk around and talk to the people there.”

“What is your favorite food there?” a student asked.

Johnny said, “Rice and chicken.” Δ

Early April, 2019

Cinquain

Bluebonnets
Bi-colored beauties
Dancing with the wind
They bring us peace
God's spring gift



Class Field Trip

On March 28, two members of Level 3 class, Monica Gallegos and Aurelia Rivera, came early



to travel in

teacher Barbara's van in search of Texas bluebonnets, fully in bloom in late March and Early April. This year, they were so spectacular.

The week prior, we had discussed the word "bonnet." Students found good examples of this 19th century head cover worn by pioneer women to keep the sun from off their faces. (In 1901 the Texas Legislature named this legume, the state flower.) Once we arrived at our first bluebonnet site, we looked

carefully at one single bluebonnet petal to discover it did indeed look like a bonnet.

Some students noted that bluebonnets look more purple than blue.

On April 8 we repeated our tour for those students who could not attend the March class trip. These include: Guadalupe Alvarez and her shy 3-year old, Daisy, our little class mascot, Fabricio Sanchez, and (a repeat trip for her), Monica Gallegos.

On this trip we did a little bit more climbing and exploring to locate spots good for photographing. One such spot: the entrance of Sea World.



Students were impressed with the size and beauty of the campus of Northwest Vista Community College. We found many patches of wildflowers.

We then drove to and had a picnic at the Duck Pond located on Ellison Drive not far from the College in the far Northwest side. Ana brought her home-made tacos filled with taco goodies.



May 8, 2019

Fairy Tale Writing

The class first read "The Princess and the Pea" a Danish fairytale. Then they watched on Monica's cell phone the musical version: *Once Upon a Mattress*. Now we were ready to write a classroom fairy tale. They began their story this way:

Once upon a time a princess named Daisy lived in a castle in a big forest. She was lonely. She wanted to escape from the castle. One night, when everyone in the castle was fast asleep, Daisy snuck out of the castle. She walked silently to the king's stables. She walked up to her big black horse, Prieto.

Now it is your turn to finish the fairy tale. Don't forget to end it with these words...

and they lived happily ever after.



