

Castañer Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION

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Castaner, Puerto Rico

November 1, 1947

A SPECIAL PROJECT FOR CHRISTMAS

Each year at Castaner it has been our practice to give a Christmas party to the children of the community through the Community Center, and we wish to continue that practice this Christmas season. This year, however, we would like to present a gift that would benefit the entire community instead of just the children. Rather than giving toys and clothes to the children as we have done in the past, we should like to have a party and program, with refreshments for the children, and then present to the community a new 16 mm. sound movie projector.

The Insular Government Department of Recreation and Athletics has a wonderful new selection of films on health, agriculture, science, sports, travel, history and general entertainment which we would be permitted to use free of charge for our educational and recreational programs, if we had a suitable machine with which to show them. (These films will no longer be given to us to use in our old projector.) The horizons of the people in the rural mountain regions of Puerto Rico are quite narrow and limited, and we feel that the use of these motion pictures would be a real asset to our work here.

If any of you either individually or through your Sunday School, Church, or any other organization, are interested in helping us to give this community a happier Christmas (and one that will not only last throughout the year, but for many years to come), we are certain that your gift will be appreciated by many people, young and old. Contributions may be sent to Elgin designated for Castaner movie projector.

DIPLOMA DAY

Graduation is an important event in the life of a Puerto Rican young person. And his diploma is of great value when seeking employment, as well as being a mark of some distinction. Seven young men satisfactorily completed the outline course of study on October 19th under the instruction of Miss Virgenmina Bobe, R. N. The course lasts for thirteen weeks, and includes one hour of class and three hours of practice in the hospital for five days each week during the course. During this time, all the regular hospital procedures are learned, and upon completion of the course and graduation the young men are well-trained, skilled hospital workers capable of taking care of the male patients and doing various jobs about the hospital.

The graduation exercises were conducted as part of the Fourth Family Night on Saturday, October 25th. Felix Lyzesuain, of the graduating class, gave a humorous summary of the class work. Those receiving their diplomas for completion of the Hospital Orderly Course were Carlos Claudio, Carlos Quintana, Antonio Quinones, Felix Lyzesuain, Herminio Cruz, Pedro Caraballo, and Juan Fermain Rios.

It is not possible for our thirty-bed hospital to employ many of these students, but instruction in Public Health, Home Care, and Personal Hygiene give sufficient reason to continue such an education program.

HASTA LA VISTA, DOCTORS HELFRICK

At high noon on Sunday, October 19th, after an unusually hot morning, during which there were some strenuous tennis matches between Claude Wolfe, and the doctors Helfrick, Myer, and Smith (Dr. John Smith of the Ryder Memorial Hospital of Humacao, who, with his wife, and son, John, were visiting the Unit that weekend), rain descended in torrents with its typical tropical suddenness. Nevertheless, at 12:15 the dining hall began to fill with people who had come through the rain from all parts of the Project--the director's family and the doctor's families from their houses--for this was a farewell dinner honoring the Drs. Francis and Sylvia Helfrick who were scheduled to return soon to the States, having completed their term of service. Visitors also attending were Mrs. Rachel Helfrick of Allensville, Pa. who is Francis' mother, and her friend, Mrs. Kay Metz, the postmistress at Allenville who had been visiting the Helfricks, arriving in San Juan by plane on October 7th. Also visiting the Project that day was George Furse, former Unit member who is now doing social work at Las Marias.

Almost needless to say, the weather did not dampen the appetites of the diners, for the dinner was unusually delicious, and was attractively served in a well-decorated dining room.

The Helfrick party had planned to sail from San Juan for New York on October 24th, but just three days before this their boat was postponed for two weeks, so they had to forego the eagerly-anticipated pleasure of an ocean voyage. They departed by plane for New York on October 27th.

The people here will long be appreciative of their sincere and valuable medical work. And we of the Unit join them in further appreciation for their active part in the life of the Unit, and wish them success and happiness as they continue their work in the States.

A SUCCESSFUL BAKET BALL SEASON

As a diversion from the popular sport of softball, a basketball team was developed last summer for the fun of playing together, and also to "take on" all comers. The squad consisted of four Americans (Royce Burke, Bob Stanley, Claude Wolfe and Andy Mathis), and six local Puerto Rican boys (Jose Maria Gonzales, Reul Montalbo, Alfonso Troche, Miguel Rodriguez, Claudomiro Camuy and Efrain Rivera).

The first game of the season, played here, with Lares, ended with Castaner winning 45-31. The large crowd that night was as interesting to watch as the game. The spectators did not always know when to yell, but they did plenty of it! At Lares for a return game the Castaner quintet lost two of its first-string players on fouls during the final quarter, allowing Lares to score their winning basket in the last minute of play. The final score was 37-36. The game here with Adjuntas gave us an opportunity to use our substitutes practically the entire game. Our boys won that evening, 43-17.

The trip to Ponce to play Colegio Percy was a big event for both the team and the 28 fans who crowded into the truck to see the double-header game. Castaner had the privilege of playing the preliminary game to an Insular basketball tournament game that night between the Ponce Lions and the Arecibo Capitanes. The flashy uniforms of these two teams were quite a sight, especially for some of our younger shoeless spectators who had somehow managed to get a "peseta" (25¢) in order to go. Because our opponents arrived late, and the second game was to be broadcast, we were allowed only 20 minutes of playing time, but we won, 18-11.

The final game of the summer season was during a play day at La Plata. The Mennonites had an experienced team of Americanos, and led us all the game, winning 44-31.

NUTRITIONIST LECTURES HERE

Dr. Esther Seijo, specialist in nutrition at the Agricultural Extension Department of the University of Puerto Rico spent the afternoon of Friday, September 26th at Castaner. She presented a number of movies on nutrition, and gave a demonstration on vitamized rice for the women of the community. Dr. Seijo is one of the few person who understand the nutrition problem of the Puerto Rican to its full extent. In her program she attempts to solve the nutritional deficiency within the present economic status of the people, without additional expense, but in many cases at less expense.

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x                                     HARBISON HEIR                               x
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x      On Monday, October 27th, at the Presbyterian Hospital in      x
:      Santurce, a son, STANLEY HOWARD, was born to Stan and Jean      :
x      Harbison, directors of the Presbyterian Project at El Guacio.    x
:      Like his father, young Stan is a regular husky, weighing in      :
x      at eight pounds and two ounces, and measuring 22 inches. He      x
:      already has a nickname--"Hipo". The Harbisons, formerly of      :
x      Castaner Project, plan to leave El Guacio early in December      x
:      for the States.                                                    :
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CO-OP CONFERENCE

Three Unit members, Knight and Dorothy Webster, and Bob Stanley, attended a three-day conference sponsored by the Committee on Cooperative Education in Puerto Rico, October 29th to 31st. The program consisted of a series of lectures by Peter Minnich of Copenhagen, Denmark on the folk schools and the cooperatives of his country. His topics were: The Folk High Schools of Denmark, Social Legislation in Denmark, Adult Education and International Understanding, and The Cooperative Movement in the Scandinavian Countries.

Mr. Minnich is the principal of the International Folk School at Copenhagen. This school is open for students from all parts of the world. Its purpose is to help bring about international understanding. From fifteen to twenty countries are represented in the student body of this school, which he told about in his lecture on Adult Education and International Understanding. The purpose of folk schools is largely character-building rather than academic, preparing people for cooperative living as good citizens rather than stressing business success as our schools do. The results of this type of education are readily seen in the fact that the Danish people have developed the cooperative spirit more than any other nation, while in America we stress personal success, forgetting the welfare of others. Over 90% of the Danish people are members of cooperatives. The schools do not teach cooperatives, but the cooperatives are an outgrowth of the schools because of the ethical and character-building natures of the courses offered, so that cooperatives are practical applications of these courses.

C Q--C Q, CALLING C Q--C Q

Through the past years more and more things have happened to put Los Rabanos, now better known as Castaner, on the map. One of the latest of these is the "ham" radion station, KP4FJ of Mr. Rafael Santiago Esbri, manager of the vanilla co-op's curing plant at Castaner. Rafeal took up radio as a hobby last summer, and by early fall had been given a Class B operating license which permits him to broadcast by code or phone on the 28-meter band.

Most of you may wonder what this radio ham station has to do with our work here at Castaner. Well, for those of you who have radio ham friends in the States, it makes it possible for you to chat directly with your friends here in the Unit. Rafael has made many contacts with hams in the United States and Canada. Occasionally he has contacted hams in Europe, South America and South Africa.

Due to his location in a narrow mountain valley, reception has been limited because the mountains absorb his signal. With the completion of a higher antenna he hopes to contact hams the world over . . . This is station KP4FJ now signing off, and inviting you to contact us between 8:30 a.m. and 12 noon, Atlantic Time.

FOR THE BOOK SHELF

PUERTO RICO IN PICTURES AND POETRY; an Anthology of Beauty, by Cynthia Pearl Maus. Published by the Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho (copyright 1941; second printing, 1947) \$3.00.

This is probably the first book on Puerto Rico which places emphasis on its spiritual culture and enrichment through descriptive poetry illustrated by photographs (45 full plates, plus three in color). These indigenous poems of Puerto Rico in her adopted language should prove of interest to all readers who travel afar in their imaginations.

The author is an art and poetry anthologist of established reputation. Her book, Christ and the Fine Arts is widely used, and her most recent work is The Great Madonnas. She spent the winter of 1939-40 in Puerto Rico giving a series of Fine Arts Institutes in every evangelical educational institution on the Island, during which time she travelled over the entire Island, including its mountainous interior. She writes, therefore, with an intimate knowledge of Puerto Rican beauty and culture, coupled with her exceptional appreciation of poetry and art.

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OCTOBER PERSONNEL NEWS:--Nurses Edna Eller and Virgenmina Bobe went to San Juan to take the Puerto Rican Board Examinations for Nurses, October 7th to 10th.

On October 7th Mrs. Rachel Helfrick, mother of Dr. Francis Helfrick, and Mrs. Kay Metz, neighbor of Mrs. Helfrick in Allensville, Pennsylvania, arrived in San Juan by plane from New York to visit with the Helfricks until their departure for the States at the end of their term of Service on October 27th. (see page 2).

About October 25th Norma Roesch took the job of Superintendent of Nurses upon the resignation of Edna Eller from that post.

At the most recent Unit meeting new committees were elected as follows:
Religious Life Committee--Claude Wolfe, Andy Mathis, Mary Kay Rohrer, Dale Roesch, and Thelma Strite, chairman.
Education Committee--Maurice Click, Everett Myer, Dean Rohrer, Josephine Wolf, and Cecil Wickline, chairman.

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HALLOWEEN

There are as many witches and ghosts in Puerto Rico as any place in the States--and any innocent by-stander around the Unit could have proven it to you on Friday evening, October 31st, about 7:30 o'clock.

Into a dimly-lighted, spookily decorated Community Center arrived nearly fifty Puerto Rican and Continental masqueraders to enjoy an evening of hilarious Halloween fun. After the unmasking it was discovered that Dorothy and Knight Webster were the team of horses, June and Claude Wolfe were the two big "little men", and that the two mummies propped against the wall were Alys and Walter Haag.

Making paper hats, knocking down milk bottles, having fortunes told, and playing Bingo was the informal recreation for the first part of the evening. The group was then divided into four sections--Witches, Ghosts, Owls and Pumpkin-Eaters, and a jig-saw pumpkin treasure hunt was the first contest. There were also Halloween relays, and a balloon volley ball game. Then followed a dark session of ghost stories. Howard Wolf, Edna Eller and Thelma Strite offered their "skull and bones" tales.

For a tasty climax the party-goers were served pumpkin pie, orange juice and popcorn.

Committee heads for the fiesta were: Decorations--Jo Wolf, Informal play--Norma Roesch and Andy Mathis, Planned games--June Wolfe, and Refreshments--Alys Haag. Charlotte Wright was the chairman in charge of planning the whole party.

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CASTANER VISITORS DURING AUGUST:--Mr. and Mrs. Reinaldo Royo, an engineer for the Standard Oil Co.; Margaret Hatton, a teacher at Robinson School in Santurce, whose home is in Alliance, Ohio; Andrew Rice, a graduate student in Far Eastern Affairs at Harvard University; Bob Pope, and his father, mother and fiance--Bob is an architect for the Insular Planning Board and drew the blue prints for our three new houses; Jose Beauchamp of Arecibo; Prof. A. S. Crafts, and his wife and two children--he is on sabbatical leave from the University of California College of Agriculture at Davis, and is stationed now at the Agricultural Experiment School in Rio Piedras; Dr. Paul Work, and his wife--he is now working in Puerto Rico with Prof. Crafts, and is also on sabbatical leave, from Cornell University. Dr. Work's special study is gardening, and he has taught many Brethren missionaries at Cornell. Prof. Crafts is a weed-control expert. Both of these men showed us a number of colored slides and movies of their work and travels.

CASTANER VISITORS DURING SEPTEMBER:--Rev. and Mrs. Donald Dodd and four children of the Presbyterian Project at El Guacio. Rev. Dodd will replace Stan Harbison as Director of their project when the Harbisons leave for the States early in December. He preached at our morning service on Sunday, September 14th. Other September visitors were George Furse, ex-Castanerite, now social worker at Las Marias; and Jean Alexander and Roy Walsdorf both of El Guacio.

CASTANER VISITORS DURING OCTOBER:--Mrs. Rachel Helfrick and Mrs. Kay Metz of Allensville, Pennsylvania (see page 2); George Furse, Rafael Morales of Yauco, Wanda Brown, freshman at Polytechnic Institute in San German; Ruth Idleman, special student and school nurse at Polytechnic; Miss Helen Fitts, house mother of the guest house at Polytechnic; Dr. and Mrs. John Smith and their baby, John--Dr. Smith is from the Ryder Memorial Hospital at Humacao, and will soon become its Medical Director.