



Operation 80 With a Full Mailbox and a Fuller Heart: Thank You!

polished by Gemini (Google's AI tool)

To my wonderful Comadres and friends,

"**Operation 80th Birthday**" was a resounding success—and the best-kept secret I've ever known! It is hard to find the right words to express the awe and appreciation I feel for all of you.

I have to share the "clue" I almost missed: The incomparable Maria Ferrer was with me in Austin for a comadrazo just days before the cards arrived. Since I don't check the mail every day, I didn't think twice when she first asked if I'd been to the mailbox. When she asked a second time, I finally caught on! I realized then that she must have been up to something, though I had no idea of the scale. She managed to sneak that "Operation 80th Birthday" message past me completely!

Our mailbox is quite large, but for several days starting on January 27th, it was packed to the brim. To receive over 200 cards, texts, and calls left me absolutely floored. I have read through your beautiful written messages and sentiments several times now; they have moved me to tears and filled my heart with so much joy.

The celebration continued past Tuesday, March 24th, with a stunning luncheon hosted by Comadre Adriana Vila-Rota. Seeing twenty-four mujeres and comadres gathered there was the perfect continuation of this milestone. The luncheon was followed by a tour of the incredible exhibition, [Run the Code: Data-Driven Art Decoded by Thoma Foundation X Blanton Museum of Art!](#) led by Adriana who is a docent at the Blanton. She very cleverly included references to my leadership in her description of the artistic works. It was utterly amazing and most gratifying to me.

A special thank you to Maria Ferrer for originating this beautiful idea, and to ALL of you who have enriched my life over the last twenty-five years. I am still working my way through thank-you texts, but please know how much your love and effort mean to me.

Con mucho cariño y gratitud, Nora

For more Golden Girls, see page 9.

OUR STORYTELLING EDITION



GOLDEN GIRL – NORA





EDITORIAL

Esperanza Beltrán | Jacquié Quiñones

Happy Spring! If we can call it that considering how cold the temperatures are here in NYC. Hope some of you are enjoying warmer days and bright sunrises.

Ever wondered what wine goes well with your meal? Well no worries we got you. Read suggestions for wine pairing from our very own Comadre Celeste Leon. In this edition, we also have gardening tips to help you get ready for planting season by Rose Costas Dietrich. Learn about how Mama Yuca restaurant in LA got popular and has been in existence for 50 years. And for the most exciting news we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of Las Comadres Bookclub in person in NYC on May 19! So pack your bags and come join us, the more, the merrier. More details are laid out in this newsletter below so read on. :)

Thanks to all of Las Comadres who submitted pictures for the Golden Girls club. Check out the pictures and see those who have been members for more than 25 years. If you are interested we also provide information on how to start a Comadres network in your city. We provide an orientation and help you with the details. Consider it and contact us for next steps.

The founder of Las Comadres, Nora wrote a special thank you to all who sent her birthday cards for the big 80. Last but not least, we can't miss any opportunity to show off our fur babies who give us unconditional love and make our lives complete. Check out Comadres who have sweet, beloved horses, cats, dogs and hens as pets. Enjoy this edition and Happy Mothers Day. May you continue to shine bright and be well. Sending love, hugs and well wishes for a fabulous summer see you next time for our fall edition.

OUR STORYTELLING EDITION

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you can expect

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Comadres Highlights / La más Destacada

by Esperanza Beltrán



ELIZABETH “LISA” LIANG
Actress, writer, producer,
and keynote speaker

What first inspired you to tell the story of *Alien Citizen*, and why did it feel important to bring this story to the screen now?

I created [Alien Citizen](#) because I had never seen a story like mine on stage or screen, and I knew I couldn't be the only person who yearned to see their intercultural experience reflected. Also, Third Culture Kids and multiracial people often learn to silence ourselves to survive socially and within our family dynamic. That was true for me and I was tired of feeling stifled. Finally, I was tired of being asked if I was from the Midwestern USA, where I have never lived and barely visited.

The thing that galvanized me to finally write the script was: my brother let me know about a call for essays about growing up in different countries, for an anthology. I figured if I wrote an essay about creating a solo show about my life, that would force me to create a solo show—which it did! The essay was published and I kept working on the script in earnest.

As the solo show toured the country and world, it kept teaching my audience and me: we have more in common than we know. I decided to film it because I wanted to reach more people with that knowledge. I've been told that the film makes people feel seen and understood and has also inspired people to express themselves in writing, art, and performance. To my delight, it's now used as a teaching resource by college professors, and by school counselors where the students are intercultural in some way.

What was the most challenging part of creating this film, and what did that experience teach you as a filmmaker?

The tiny budget for the actual shoot raised serious challenges. Some of the camera work, and my first cut of the film as the first editor, required fixing. Fortunately, I was able to raise funds for a professional union editor, and he made miracles! The film had US and European premieres, won an award, and has been viewed in over 40 countries!

The lesson: don't try to DIY on a ridiculously tiny budget. Take the time to raise funds for a proper budget before you start filming so you can pay your team stipends that will encourage every crew member to do more than the very minimum! (Beware of hubris.)

What conversations or reflections do you hope viewers walk away with after watching *Alien Citizen*?

I hope they continue to recognize that we have more in common than we know. The film has resonated for people worldwide—something about the learned role of the outsider seems to strike the strongest chord, even in people who I never expected to recognize it. The show and film have inspired people to share their own experiences in some creative form, and I hope that continues.

I hope viewers are reminded that **telling our stories connects us**, and that's what we need.





Las Comadres & Friends National Latino Book Club marks its 20th anniversary.

Since its founding in New York City in 2004, the club has promoted Latino literature and championed Latino authors. Reimagined in 2006 as a nationwide organization, it now hosts active book clubs in 12 cities. All selections are English-language books by Latino authors. Membership is free and open to everyone—Latino and non-Latino readers of all genders.

On May 19 in New York City where it all began, the Las Comadres & Friends National Latino Book Club will honor its Leadership Team and longtime Friends for their advocacy for Latino literature. Among the honorees are Atria Books and the Association of American Publishers specifically, Tina Jordan, whose efforts in 2006 were instrumental in creating the national latino book club.



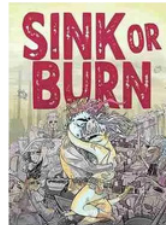
The esteemed Honorees are:

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Teresa M. Tobin
- Maria Ferrer
- Nora Comstock
- Dora Maria Abreu
- Karen Gonzales
- Nydia Marsella

FRIENDS

- Atria Books
- Association of American Publishers/Tina Jordan
- Julia Abrantes
- Johanna Castillo
- Adriana Dominguez
- Reyna Grande
- Marcela Landres
- Esmeralda Santiago
- Kirk Whisler



Books of the Month | *Libros del mes*

MAY

THE WHITE HOT
by Quiara Alegria Hudes

AFTER THE OCEAN
by Lauren Rico

JUNE

WHEN THE TIDES HELD THE MOON
by Venessa Vida Kelley

SINK OR BURN
by Cristy Road Carrera

For more information about the Book Club, visit

<https://www.LatinoLit.com>

#ReadLatinoLit



In the Spotlight | En el Centro de Atención

DORA & MARGARITA HERRERA: TACO MADNESS



In Los Angeles, March Madness isn't just about basketball, it's about tacos. Each year, Taco Madness pits some of the city's best taco stands against each other, and this year, YUCA'S is in the spotlight. The family-run stand, founded by Socorro Herrera and now led by Dora and her sister Margarita, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this April. All three women are long-time Comadres.

Their story began with their mother—known as Mama Yuca—who took a chance on a tiny 8x10-foot former shoeshine stand in Los Feliz Village. Despite being told it was “too small, too ugly, and too expensive,” Socorro dreamed of people lined up around the block for her Yucatan-style cooking. And line up they did!



YUCA now has two locations, a loyal following, and even celebrity fans like Leonardo DiCaprio. In 2005, it became the first taco stand to win a James Beard Award, and Oprah Winfrey later praised it on her show as having “the best burrito evah!” The stand also won the very first Taco Madness in 2009.

For Dora and Margarita, the biggest reward is the community support. “It's a great feeling when customers vote for you—especially in a city with so many taquerías,” they say.

Named for the family's roots in the Yucatán and the nicknames of Socorro's husband and son, YUCA'S is known for dishes like Cochinita Pibil, slow-roasted pork marinated in achiote and wrapped in banana leaves.

Though Mama Yuca has passed, her legacy lives on. From a humble stand once dismissed by others, YUCA'S remains a beloved L.A. institution—still serving tacos, still honoring a dream.



WINE PAIRING TIPS | El Arte de Combinar Vino y Comida

CELESTE LEÓN

In my job as a wine steward, one of the most frequent questions involves how to pair wine with food. A customer requests help for a wine for dinner or a party that night and I follow up with, “What wine varieties do you like, and what are you (they) serving?” Then I laugh and often ask, “Ok, then, what’s your address?”

First off, wine pairing is subjective and doesn’t have to be complicated. Wine makes food taste better and food makes wine taste better—perfect! Wine can make any meal a special occasion.

Four concepts are helpful. First, match body with body. A light salad with can be paired with a light white wine, Pinot Grigio, or a dry or off dry (minimally sweet) Riesling. The acidity in a sharp vinaigrette dressing pairs well with your favorite Sauvignon Blanc. But add a protein such as chicken with parmesan cheese, you can choose a heavier white wine like Chardonnay or with tuna, even a Rosé or a red wine, Pinot Noir or French Beaujolais, made from the Gamay grape. And a heavy meal with steak can be paired with a Cabernet Sauvignon or Bordeaux blend or ribs with a hearty California Zinfandel.

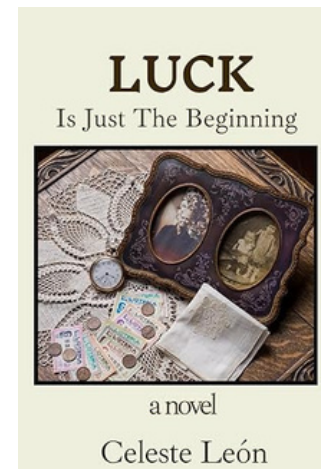
Secondly, match place with place. Culinary regions of the world have long traditions of food and wine. Pair Italian spaghetti and meatballs with Chianti Classico, vinified mostly with the Sangiovese grape. The crisp acidity in the food and wine complement each other. Another pairing is oysters or seafood comprised of scallops or lean white fish with Albariño, my favorite Spanish white wine from Northwest Spain.



Third, complement and contrast. Popcorn is buttery and can be complemented with a buttery chardonnay. Or contrast with a sparkling wine, the crisp acidity and the bubbles cut through the salt and richness of butter. My favorite choice is to enjoy a split (187 ml) of sparkling wine with movie theater popcorn—wonderful!

Lastly, think of the prep or sauce over the protein. A simple, delicate roast chicken can pair with a Chardonnay fermented in stainless steel but add some complexity to the chicken such as mushroom ragout or a dish with octopus with Gigante beans and Chorizo—a Pinot Noir is a good bet.

And my final advice, drink and eat what you like. Food and wine are meant to be savored with friends and family. Take your time over a meal and enjoy—that is the story of wine!



Celeste León earned her Level 3 Award from WSET, Wine from Wine and Spirit Education Trust, the largest regulatory body for wine in the world. She is a wine steward and wine journalist in Truckee, CA. Her novel, [Luck is Just the Beginning](#), earned a Mariposa award for Best First Book in the International Latino Book Awards. You can reach her at celesteleon@gmail.com or <https://celesteleon.com/>



Poem | *Poema*

by: Mireya Perez-Bustillo

All New



The chest is learning
to tell me
am ok
to just do it
in-out in-out
that's it don't think
just in-out
When the mind comes in
just tell it "Not Now"
So I go back "in-out, in-out"
It's all new like the pinkness
on the big tree on the corner

Gardening Tips | Consejos de Jardinería
by: Rose Costas Dietrich

- The plants that do best are those that are native or adapted to your area.
- It will take less water and less maintenance over time.
- Make sure you prepare the soil with good compost and to add fertilizer as needed in spring time after the cold weather ends and plants are not dormant.
- Plant each plant in the best location for its sun needs and give it plenty of room for future growth.
- Use mulch generously around plants to keep moisture in soil and not have to water as often.

HAPPY GARDENING!



Bringing Las Comadres to Your City!

¡Llevando a Las Comadres a tu ciudad!

By Nora Comstock (with the assistance of Google Gemini)

It is always exciting to learn when Latinas are ready to build a new Comadres network in their area. For twenty-five years, our process has helped mujeres build community, celebrate our culture, and create lasting support systems for ourselves and our families.

If you are interested in planting the seeds for a new network, here is how we grow together:

Phase 1: The Connection

The journey begins with a conversation. Please email or text Maria Ferrer or Nora de Hoyos Comstock to express your interest.

We will schedule a call with Nora to discuss your vision and ensure your local goals align with our mission. This is also where we discuss the training, expectations, and the "how-to" of our organization. While one person can start the process, we find it works best to build a team of 3-4 facilitators to share tasks and ensure the network stays strong if life "throws a curveball."



Phase 2: The Launch Checklist

Once we are ready to move forward, we focus on these five steps:

1. Identify a Hostess: Find someone willing to open their home or backyard for the first gathering.
2. Pick a Date: Set a time for the official Comadres Network Launch Potluck.
3. Build Your List: Gather contact info for Latinas (and mujeres with a corazón Latina) in your area.
4. Draft the Invitation: Create a warm message explaining who we are and what the potluck is about.
5. Send the Post: Spread the word!

Phase 3: Building Momentum & Membership

- **National & Local Connection:** To receive all official communication, every Comadre must be subscribed to both the National Network and her specific City Network.
- **Action Item:** Please have all members visit lascomadres.com/join-las-comadres to officially join.
- **National Support:** Once you are ready, we will add your city to our official subscription list so new local members can receive email or Facebook postings specific to your area.
- **Monthly Comadrazos:** These are the heart of our network. We aim for monthly events, rotating hostesses so everyone can participate. Often, one Comadre will offer her home as "Comadres Central" for the first several months.

And that is how the magic starts! We look forward to helping you bring this network to life.

The Golden Girls | Las Chicas de Oro



GLORIA CHAVEZ CASAS, 86

Harlingen, TX

12 grandkids & 25 great grandkids



VIRGINIA MARTINEZ, 76

Oak Park, IL

Retired attorney, now writing children's books: *Adventures with Abuela*. (Pictured at Garfield Park Conservatory in Chicago. One of my favorite places.)



CHRISTINE LUNA GONZALEZ, 78

San Antonio, TX



GLORIA GARCIA, 79

Brownsville, TX

Retired Teacher in Mexico for 27 years & in US for 28 years. Celebrates 52 years of marriage, 8 kids, 15 grand children, 1 great-grandchild. She is a past Mrs. Senior South Texas runner-up and was crowned Mrs. Congeniality!



DAHLMMA LLANOS FIGUEROA, 76

Bronx, NY

Writer, Memoirist, PEN Finalist
 photo credit: JLessuckPhotography



RUTH J RUBIO, 76

Austin, TX



The Golden Girls | Las Chicas de Oro



LUCINDA MAYO, 75
New York, NY
living in Guadalajara, MX



CLARA GALVANO RIVERA
New York, NY
Golden Girl of unspecified age
Writer / Journalist



LILIAN OROZCO, 75
Orange County, CA



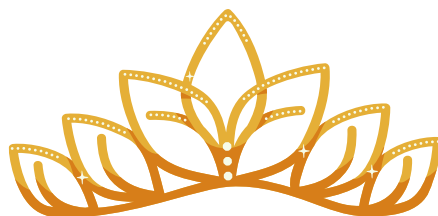
TISH LEON, 75
Lakeside, CA
Just hit 3/4 of century on
March 18!



MARINA TAUREL, 84
(TURNS 85 IN JUNE)
Ramona, California
Retired



EVA SANDOVAL BONILLA, 77
Fort Worth, TX
I am very community-oriented and volunteer for HWNT & MANA de North Texas and Lead Volunteer for AARP Texas. I am a Bilingual Tour Guide for the DFW area and contract with many Destination Management Companies. I am also a Caregiver for my Tia in addition to other family members when they needed me.



My Fur Baby | Mi Bebé Peludo



ERICA MARIE LOPEZ
 AUSTIN, TX
William Louie, 6, was born on July 22, 2019 in the small community of Floresville, Texas. He was a very special gift to me and has brought an immense amount of joy and happiness into my life. William is puro Corazon!

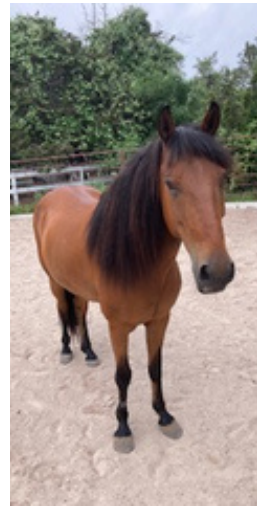
OLGA CAMPOS BENZ, TX
 My trio of fur babies (from L-R) **Bandit** (7 yrs), **Roulette** (11 yrs), and **Ace** (14 yrs). All of our dogs, and those of my twins, Corazon and Allegra, have always been rescues. This photo was taken in May 2025. Unfortunately, Ace passed away 3 months later, leaving a HUGE hole in our hearts, but also many wonderful memories.



TERESA LARA, CA
 I've been overjoyed with my new little pup, **Chica Lightning** (doxie mix). Well, she's not so little anymore. I've had her for over a year, and she is my little BFF/security/girl gang.



ROSE COSTAS DIETRICH
 Here are two photos of my horse, **Galán**, age 8. Paso gelding I have had for almost 3 years.



GLORIA CHAVEZ CASAS
Jill (female Yorkie). When retired, I was very restless and due to COVID, I could not go nowhere. I was going bananas. Therefore, my son gave me my beloved puppy as my companion. I love my Yorkie. She sleeps with me. She is five years old. I love my Jill.



TISH LEON
 San Diego, CA
Ebony is a rescue cat. Funny, talkative & loves to garden too.

My Fur Baby | Mi Bebé Peludo (Cont.)



A. NATALIE R. HENDRIX

My baby girl, **Little Feather**. She's 5 years old. I fostered kittens for Austin Pets Alive! for a few years. She was my last - considered a "foster fail" but really a win! She was pretty feral when she first came to me. It took 4 years for her to feel safe enough to sleep in the bed with me and hubby! Now, she never wants to leave the bed! She's sweet and sassy!!! I have two older boy cats (also rescues). She bosses them around. She's the princess of the house!

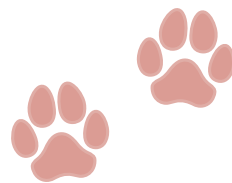


LISSINIA AGUILAR

Canela found us on one of the streets in my neighborhood one summer afternoon when my partner and I went out on our daily walk. She was a puppy hungry for love and care. We were empty nesters ready to love and care for someone. It was the perfect match!

LIXANDRA URRESTA NEW YORK, NY Ellie, age: 9

Ellie spent the first 7 years of her life as a breeder dog, confined to a cage until she was retired and brought up from Georgia by Waldo's Rescue in 2024. I adopted her soon after, and over the past two years, she has slowly blossomed into a dog who plays with toys, enjoys belly rubs, and joins me for daily walks. Ellie is still a work in progress—but then again, aren't we all?



ROSA BEATO BOSTON, MA

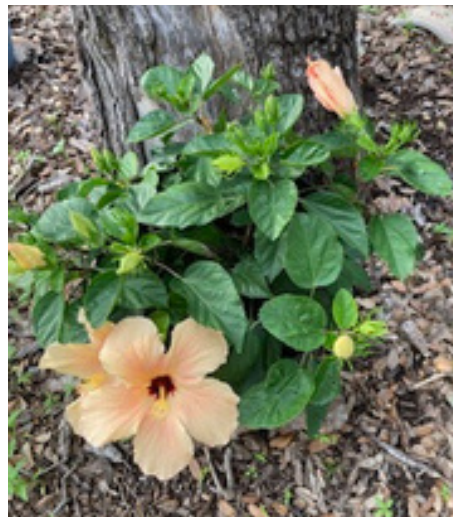
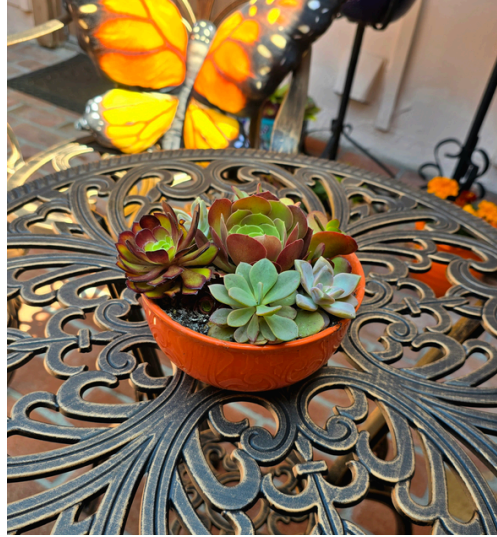
Grand-Dog, **Zorro** (9 yrs old). Hiking the trails at Blue Hills Reservation, MA

NORA COMSTOCK & HER CHICKS AUSTIN, TX

From right to left: **Scrambled, Henrietta, Olive, and Sweet Pea :-)**

STORIES FROM MY GARDEN | Historias De Mi Jardín

DARLENE TENES, CA
In full bloom



ROSE C DIETRICH
Puerto Rico
Hibiscus, shrimp plant rose, and
rose varieties

TISH LEON
San Diego, CA
Her favorite photos of her garden



STORIES FROM MY GARDEN | Historias De Mi Jardín

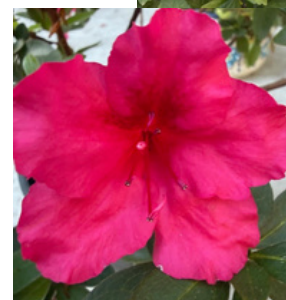
LINDA CAMARDA, BROOKLYN, NY

Would like to think that I am doing my small part to keep the "tree grows in Brooklyn" a real thing! My front yard has a small cherry blossom tree that blooms in early spring, photo attached. My backyard has a Kousa Dogwood tree that blooms in mid-June through July. I love both our blooming trees so much. With each year that passes, some flowers come and go.



DORIS SELVA
 Southern California

SONIA MARTINEZ





Announcements | Anuncios

Farewell from Jacquie

It's been a pleasure to serve you as one of the editors of las Comadres newsletter for the past 4 years. I have learned and grown so much in this role. One of my bucket list items this year is to write a book of short stories. For this task I will need to dedicate some time on my writing therefore I'm going to take a break from the newsletter. Thank you for your readership Comadres. A huge beso y abrazos to Maria, Rosa and Esperanza who will continue as editors of the newsletter. Las amo Comadres gracias por su apoyo, creatividad, paciencia y profesionalidad.

La despedida de Jacquie

*Ha sido un placer servirles como una de las editoras del boletín de *las Comadres* durante los últimos cuatro años. He aprendido y crecido muchísimo en este rol. Uno de los objetivos de mi lista de deseos para este año es escribir un libro de relatos cortos. Para llevar a cabo esta tarea, necesitaré dedicar tiempo a la escritura; por ello, me tomaré un descanso del boletín. Gracias por leernos, Comadres. Un enorme beso y un fuerte abrazo para María, Rosa y Esperanza, quienes continuarán como editoras del boletín. Las amo, Comadres; gracias por su apoyo, creatividad, paciencia y profesionalidad.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS | CALENDARIO DE EVENTOS

APRIL

- 1st** Las Comadres & Friends Book Club announces Books of the Month
- 16th** Mind, Body & Spirit: Sound Healing
- 22nd** Las Comadres Kitchen
- 27nd** Live Author Chat

MAY

- 1st** Books of the Month announced
- 19th** Las Comadres & Friends Book Club's 20th Anniversary Reception (New York City)
- 25th** Live Author Chat

JUNE

- 1st** Books of the Month announced
- 10th** Las Comadres Kitchen
- 29th** Live Author Chat



- [Las Comadres Para Las Americas](#)
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- [Las Comadres Tshirts](#)
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Newsletter Editors | Las Editoras del Boletín



ROSA A. BEATO

A long-time resident of Boston, originally from the Dominican Republic, Rosa is the youngest of 7 siblings and mother of one child (Johnny) and grand-dog (Zorro). For more than 10 years, has been the co-facilitator of the Boston Las Comadres Network along with Debbie Bonilla. Loves to line dance with NE Soul Line Dance Network where dance is part of building and connecting communities and wellness. I love the outdoors, hiking, fitness and LIVE, LOVE to TRAVEL.



ESPERANZA BELTRÁN

An editor for over two years and is currently in search of an agent for her debut novel, *OFELIA: AN ORCHID IN THE SIERRA*, a story based on the life of her grand-mother with whom she had a complicated love-hate relationship. She also has a newsletter of her own, *The Unpopular History of Mexico*, in which she shares her findings on Mexican history. Esperanza is also the creator of our coloring pages.



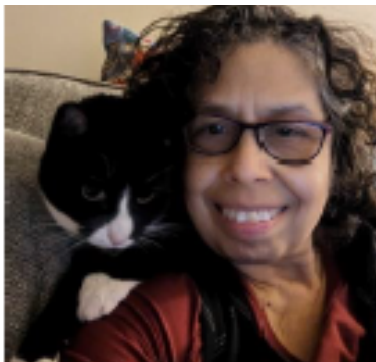
NORA DE HOYOS COMSTOCK, PhD

The National/International Founder of Las Comadres Para Las Americas. She is the mastermind behind all things for Comadres. She has also graciously agreed to proofread the newsletter before it goes out.



MARIA FERRER

She is Executive Director of Las Comadres Para Las Americas and part of the Leadership Team of Las Comadres & Friends National Latino Book Club. In her other life she is a globe-trotting meeting planner who has visited 25+ countries and counting. When not organizing events, Maria is reading, writing and learning to paint watercolors.



JACQUELINE QUIÑONES

It's been 10 years since I joined Las Comadres after I attended a writers' conference. I enjoy going out with friends, dancing, passionate about cooking and having opportunities to demonstrate my creativity. This is a picture of my sweet boy *Bonito*. He was a stray in my backyard that I rescued. He now lives with me and gives me a reason to get up every morning.

Contact us / Visit our websites

Comadresconnect@gmail.com or info@lascomadres.com
www.LasComadres.com and www.LatinoLit.com

Support Las Comadres Para Las Americas
Donate Today!



Happy Mother's Day

DESIGNED BY: ESPERANZA BELTRÁN





¡Feliz! Día de las Madres!

DISEÑADO POR: ESPERANZA BELTRÁN

