



Mary Hilaire Tavenner in Caguas, Puerto Rico.

Local author takes 3-week island tour of Puerto Rico

By **MARY HILAIRE TAVENNER**

Lorain

Last month I visited Puerto Rico for three weeks. I went there because I am a writer and I plan to write a book about this island nation.

Lorain, Ohio, and Puerto Rico are bound by generations of relationship and family ties.

My guide in Puerto Rico was Lourdes Bermudez, the writer. She went out of her way to drive me around.

Lourdes and I are both members of the International Writers Association, and one of the fun things we did with writers in Puerto Rico was climb the "300" stairs in Gurabo.

No one spending any time in Puerto Rico can miss the breathtaking Caribbean beaches because they surround the island. White, clean sand, clear, warm water and tropical palm trees along the coastlines make water activities of every sort fun. Then, your eyes will naturally feast on the luscious green vegetation covering the countless mountains throughout the center of the isle.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Cordillera Central Mountain chain, prominent throughout the entire island, but I wasn't always crazy about the curvy roads, which scale them. The 80-degree temperatures and cooling tropical breezes makes weather something Puerto Ricans take for granted, as it is fairly moderate all year round.

I saw plenty of the tapons (traffic jams). Muertos (speedbumps) are wisely found on nearly every side street, and in barrios (neighborhoods).

the microscopic creatures (dinoflagellates) in Phosphorescent Bay. They glow when the water in the bay is disturbed by swimmers

I visited the tropical rainforests of El Yunque (the only United States National Park with this tropical flora and fauna). I also saw Aricibo Observatory, the largest radar/radio telescope in the world. I visited Spanish forts more than 400 years old, including El Morro In San Juan.

I enjoyed seeing the campuses of the University of Puerto Rico, Sacred Heart University and the University of Turabo. I toured at least a dozen museums (especially enjoying the seven museums of Caguas, which includes their history, cigar making museum, music, art, as well as the "Pink House"/Casa Rosada).

I think my most pleasant surprise adventure was spending several days at Tony's Restaurant and Hotel in Joyuda in Cabo Rojo. Tony and his wife treated me as if I were royalty. Gloria Estevan likes the place too, as she left a large photograph mentioning their delectable cheesecake. Tony made sure I got some of it. He also insisted I enjoy a pina colada.

Every guest who eats or sleeps at Tony's will undoubtedly relish the hospitality, beautiful accommodations, gracious warmth, amazing food, ocean view, and family-like rapport.

Puerto Rico has more than 500 years of recorded history and a mix of white, Black, Hispanic and indigenous (Indian) cultures.

Mary Hilaire Tavenner, Ph.D., is an author, educator and public speaker. Her Web site is www.dutchink.com.

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