

Latin America Parents Association (LAPA) is a not-for-profit organization registered in the state of New York. LAPA is not an adoption agency. It is an all-volunteer organization of families who have adopted or who are in the process of adopting children from Latin America. Our mission is to provide accurate and timely information as well as support before, during, and after the adoption process. To accomplish our mission, we make accessible to our members: a frequently updated Adoption Source Kit; current information about sources and conditions within Latin America; networking with families involved in all phases of the adoption process; invitations to social, cultural, and educational events; and participation in international relief programs throughout Latin America. LAPA donates more than 80 percent of the monies collected through membership dues and adoption information source kits to child-caring institutions in Latin America.

Membership in LAPA is open to all those interested in Latin American adoptions. Yearly dues from June 1 to May 31 are \$50 for both full and associate members. Full members are those who have adopted; associate members are those who hope to adopt a Latin American child.

Reach LAPA:

P.O. Box 339-340, Brooklyn, New York 11234,
(718) 236-8689 (Outgoing message only).
On the web: <http://www.lapa.com>

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- | | |
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Maria Giurdanella
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Dorothy Marks |

¿Qué Tal? is the official newsletter of the Latin America Parents Association.

Submissions and Articles

Please make sure to include the names of the child, parent(s) and sibling(s), birth country, date of birth, and adoption date. Photos should be clear, mostly of the child's face. Make sure to write the child's name, birth country, your phone number, and any other information you wish to include on the back of each photo. We cannot return photos.

Send submissions to:

c/o LAPA
P.O. Box 339-340
Brooklyn, NY 11234
or by e-mail to: Maria Giuliani
bqdesign@earthlink.net

Authorization to reprint material from *¿Qué Tal?* is granted, except where noted for specific articles. Please give full credit to author and *¿Qué Tal?* We would appreciate a copy of the publication in which our material is reprinted.

Our next event:
February 27
Video Game Party

*
Latin Culture Night
June 5

Adoption Update:

Joan Giurdanella

Over the last decade, Americans have adopted about 20,000 children from other countries. Here are the State Department Statistics for October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008:

- Guatemala: 4,123
- China: 3,909
- Russia: 1,861
- Ethiopia: 1,725
- South Korea: 1,065
- Vietnam: 751
- Ukraine: 457
- Kazakhstan: 380
- India: 307
- Colombia: 306
- Mexico: 103

Hague Convention:

The following Latin American countries are parties to the Hague Adoption Convention: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Intercountry adoptions between the United States and the above "convention" countries must follow Hague Adoption procedures.

Guatemala:

As of March 6, 2009, the U.S. Department of State has advised potential adoptive parents not to initiate any new adoptions from Guatemala. See <http://adoption.state.gov/news/guatemala.html> for additional information.

Colombia:

According to LAPA members, adoptions from Colombia can now take as long as four years to complete.

Please be aware of this situation when you consider ordering an Adoption Source Kit from LAPA.

LAPA is in the process of preparing a Post-Adoption Source Kit, which will be available to LAPA members at a nominal charge.

Animals of Latin America
QUETZAL

Quetzals are solitary birds that are poor flyers. There are four species of quetzals; they live in South and Central American rainforests, and are in danger of extinction. These brilliantly-colored birds were sacred to the Mayans, and figured prominently in their legends and art. Quetzals do not survive in captivity.

Anatomy:

The male quetzal has tail feathers that are up to three feet (1 m) long. The female's tail is much shorter.

Diet:

Quetzals eat mostly fruit, but also eat worms, frogs, insects, larvae, and snails.

Reproduction:

Quetzals nest in rotting trees. The female lays 1 to 2 light blue eggs. The incubation period is 18 days. Both parents incubate the eggs and feed the hatchlings.

Predators:

Predators of the Quetzals include the kinkajou, the gray squirrel, the Ornate Hawk-eagle and owls.

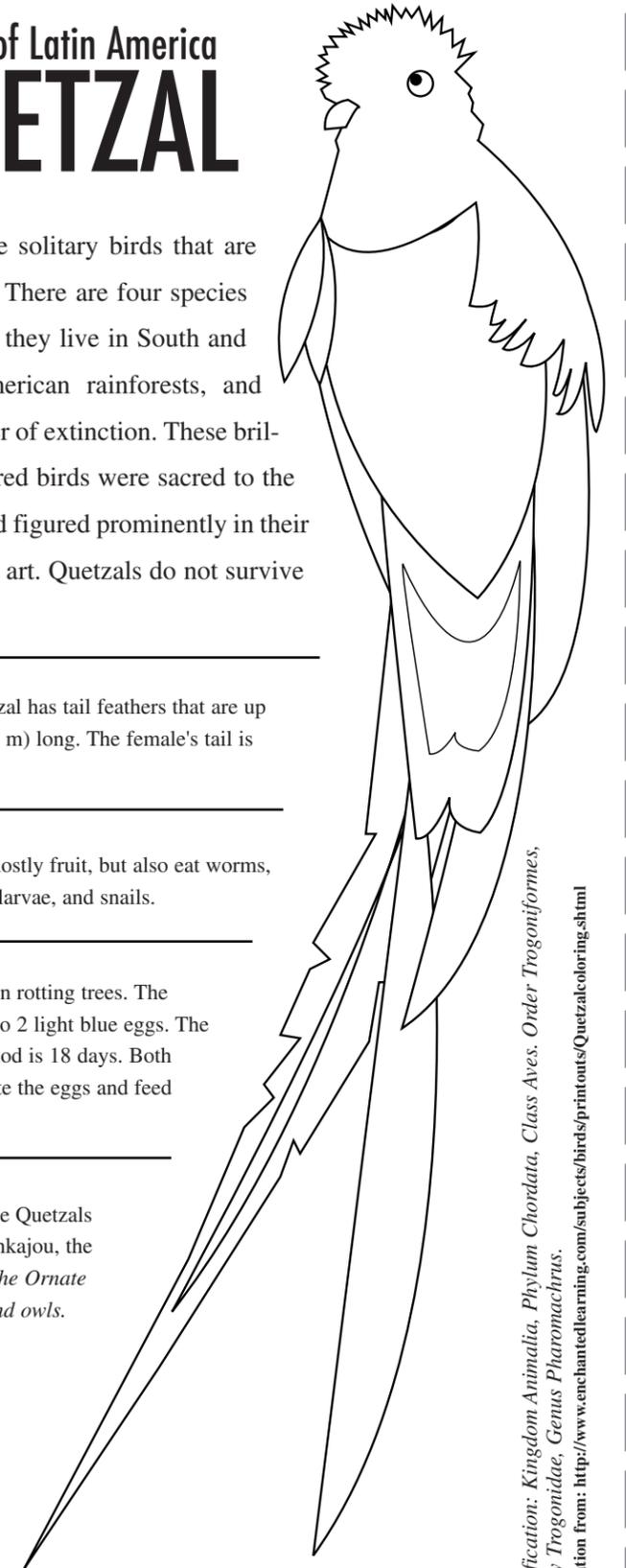


illustration by: Maria Giuliani

Classification: Kingdom Animalia, Phylum Chordata, Class Aves, Order Trogoniformes, Family Trogonidae, Genus Pharomachrus.
information from: <http://www.enchantinglearning.com/subjects/birds/printouts/Quetzalcoloring.shtml>



Upcoming Events for LAPA Members 2010

February 27	Video Game Party
June 5	Latin Culture Night
September	Picnic
November 19-21	Rocking Horse Ranch Weekend

LAPA New York

P.O. Box 339-340
Brooklyn, NY 11234

Dance, art, music and more in Spanish

If your New Year's Resolutions include brushing up on your high school Spanish skills, or helping your child learn what might have otherwise been their native tongue, you are in luck. There are numerous Spanish instruction programs in the metropolitan area that offer classes for adults and/or children. Some combine Spanish instruction with lessons in cooking, arts, dance, music, Latin culture and even yoga.

If you're interested in exploring the programs available, here are a few options:

www.spanishallyear.com

Spanish All Year, located in Westbury, NY, offers immersion Spanish programs in dancing, cooking and art for all ages, from infants thru adults. My family has been going there for 3 years now. We have taken mommy and me classes, adult language classes, preschool classes and the summer program (where children "traveled" to different Latin American countries each week.) Some of you may know of the school from LAPA's Culture Nights in 2007 and 2008 where they volunteered to provide entertainment for the evening.

www.musicaparami.com

Música Para Mi is a NYC based program offering music classes in Spanish for children ages 5 months to 3 years. A parent had recently written to the LAPA board that her son has been enjoying this program. Most classes are in Brooklyn, with some in Queens and Manhattan.

www.tallerlatino.org

El Taller Latino Americano offers Spanish instruction for adults and for children ages 4 to 13 years. They also

support the arts with workshops, exhibitions, concerts, etc. They are located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Other programs in the area include:

- www.brightsteps.com in Manhattan;
- www.languageworkshopforchildren.com with locations in Manhattan, Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey;
- www.spanishiw.com (Spanish Immersion Workshop) with classes in Long Island and Queens;
- www.lilanguagecenter.com in Suffolk County;
- www.musicalkids.net with classes on the Upper East Side; and
- www.holaplaygroup.com with Spanish immersion classes in yoga, dance, culture and other topics in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Low-cost instruction for adults is also widely available through local adult education programs, as well.

My family and I have personally found that our classes/school offered exposure both to the Spanish language as well as Latin culture, thereby offering multiple benefits.

If these classes might meet the needs for your family, do your research and have fun! And please consider writing an article for LAPA's newsletter telling others about your experience.

Please note that LAPA is not endorsing any specific programs.

by **Theresa Lacey Mackay**

Bring your family to LAPA's first VIDEO GAME PARTY!

See page 6 for information

VIDEO GAME PARTY!

LAPA will be hosting a video game party on Saturday, February 27th at **Play N Trade Video Games** located near Union Square in Manhattan. Admission is \$5 (children under 10 get in free) and non-members are very welcome. The party will run from 3pm to 6pm and will feature free play on all video game consoles including Wii, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and many vintage consoles. Pizza and soft drinks will be served and attendees are encouraged to bring treats and desserts. Since space is limited, reservations via email to info@lapa.com are recommended.

“LAPA has been helping families before, during and after the adoption process since 1975,” said long-time LAPA member Joe Tartaglia. “We find that events like this enable kids that were adopted to get together and connect with others that have shared similar experiences. We have been finding that adoptive teens especially face unique problems both in and out of school. Getting them together really helps them realize that they are not alone.

“The parents always have a great time and get a chance to share war stories too,” according to Joe.

Play N Trade Video Games is conveniently located at 137 East 13th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue in Manhattan.

They are a very short walk from the following subway lines (14th Street/Union Square Station): 4/5/6 /L/N/Q/R/W/PATH

From Long Island: LIRR to Penn Station. Walk one block to Broadway and take the N / Q / R / W downtown to 14th Street/Union Square. (One stop on express.)

From Westchester: Metro North to Grand Central Station. Lexington Avenue subways (4/5/6) downtown to 14th Street/Union Square. (One stop on express.)

From New Jersey: Take PATH to 14th Street/Union Square. Walk 5 blocks east along 13th Street. Store is located just west of 3rd Avenue.

For further directions or information please call Joe Tartaglia at Play N Trade at 212-674-0200

3 Kings Celebration

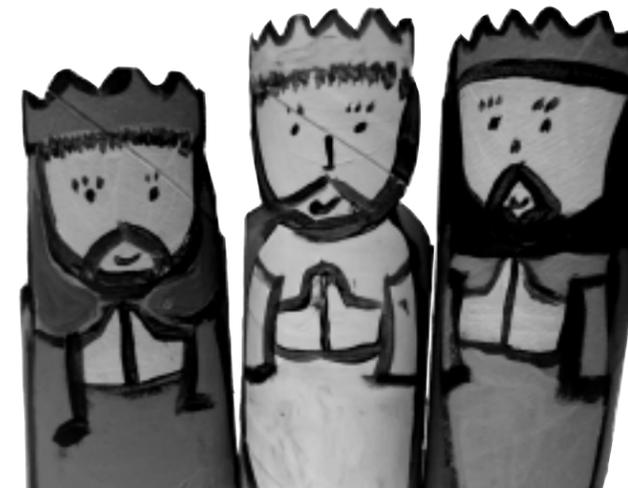
by Brian Mulligan



Every year on the night of January 5th, I go outside with my two older boys, now 9 and 7, and search for a little bit of leaves and grass. We put what we find in shoe boxes and place them on the floor in a corner of the living room. We place a bowl

of water next to the boxes. Miraculously, the boys wake the next morning to find the leaves and grass gone and a small gift for each in its place. This is a sign we were visited the night before by the Three Kings (*los tres reyes*) of the East. Their camels, hungry and thirsty from their long trip through the desert, snack on leaves and water while *los reyes* leave gifts for the hopeful boys and girls. The kings bring gifts to the children just as they brought gifts to the baby Jesus over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

That scene is repeated each year in homes throughout Latin America. The Three Kings day marks the Feast of the Epiphany in the Christian tradition.



According to the church, it was on that day that the three kings or wise men from the east followed a star to Bethlehem to visit the baby Jesus. They brought valuable gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for Jesus in recognition that he was the savior. It is a second holiday less than two weeks after Christmas. Children receive presents, people are off from work, and families get together for big meals

My family has been celebrating this holiday since our boys were small. We often spend the first week in January visiting my wife's family in Puerto Rico. Gathering the grass and leaves and preparing the boxes is a fun thing to do and a nice way to teach the children about the birth of Jesus. The kids of course love getting presents. But we try to keep it simple. One small gift for each to symbolize the kings' love for Jesus. I'll admit it was a little harder this year to go out in the freezing weather here in the Northeast to gather leaves than it is in balmy Puerto Rico. And I'm sure *Los Reyes* and their camels didn't much like it either. (You may be wondering why we waited till after the holiday to publish this article. If we had done it before, you too could have celebrated the holiday this year with your little ones. The answer is with an all volunteer organization like LAPA, everything happens a little slower than we would like.) But just like Santa Claus, on the night of January 5th each year, *los tres reyes* travel to all the homes in the world where the hopeful children leave a box of grass and a bowl of water for the thirsty animals.

LAPA

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To accomplish our mission, we make accessible to our members:

- A frequently updated Adoption Source Kit containing current information about sources and conditions within Latin America
- Networking with families involved in all phases of the adoption process
- Invitations to social, cultural, and educational events and
- Participation in international relief programs throughout Latin America.

LAPA runs a *Latin Culture Night* in the spring, an annual picnic in the fall and various other events including adoption workshops, parenting nights, and a weekend get-away. Check their website at www.LAPA.com for more details.

2009-- A great year

Rocking Horse Ranch

Latin Culture Night

Picnic

