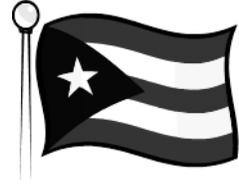




## GROVA-RICO, 2006

By: Penny Peters



Fess up fellow Grovers, let's all tell the truth, how many of us will admit  
That thinking about Puerto Rico this year, just didn't excite us one bit  
We envisioned a land full of cruise ships and rum, Westside Story with places to shop  
But not one of us had the tiniest clue Puerto Rico would be our best stop

Did we dream that Vieques, a little known isle, would be the BEST Grove retreat yet  
That it's welcoming charms would capture our hearts, with smiles we'll never forget  
That Mari Carmen's passion would spread to us all... "Party Rico" become our new cry  
[Especially true when we learned that PR... makes the whole world's Viagra supply!]

I suppose that deep down we all sensed something great, because none of us dared stay away  
Jane came from New Zealand, a forty hour trip...and Alison came for the day

And some of us came from the West Coast, and others from the wilds of O'Hare  
Because this Grove was gonna be magic somehow...and we knew that we all must be there

Ah, Vieques your beaches seduced us, made our cares of the world drift away  
[Although having a wifi link out by the pool, had us checking our email all day]  
Type-A tensions all faded in moments, we relaxed as we'd never before  
Could it be that we'd each had a spa overdose?...we booked two-hour massages galore

Perhaps that's why parties this year seemed more tame [yes, we managed to keep on our clothes]  
We instantly took up the spirit of fun with a true Grove-style "anything goes"  
We were truly laid back, left our "drama queens" home, opened up to new friends and new thought  
We laughed and we played, yet our minds stayed alert, we were ready to teach and be taught

Our panels this year, were the best ever yet, Edie's keynote got each of us thinking  
She challenged us all to see what lies ahead...though we managed to ponder while drinking  
As we wallowed in rum, and ate endless Chex treats, the emotile economy lay dying  
And the rise of the virtual era, I fear, had most all of us clueless... or crying

How might we survive, in this virtual world, in a workplace without human touch?  
Most of us are confused when the VCR breaks, and find wifi and blogs way too much  
And we don't understand, life in gen Y's new world...in fact it makes us feel quite dumb  
URL-dwelling kids are a mystery to us....they talk to their pals via "thumb?"

Life without real time... and with "digital love" ....we'd much rather go back to blind dates  
[Although we were intrigued when we learned match.com was the place where so many found mates]  
And the shoppers among us starting taking notes fast, when we learned about chic online stores  
"Shopittome.com can find just what we want..... and we never have to set foot outdoors?"

But when Claudia told us we each had three brains [up 'til now we all thought we'd just one]  
We threw open our arms to our virtual fate, and decided this world might be fun  
Perhaps virtual work and virtual life, mean new businesses we can invent  
And as true type A women, challenge makes us all thrive....status quo never leaves us content

We pondered the risks of rampant revision [picking facts just to make better news]  
In the virtual world, we'll be "markets of one," seeing truth as each one of us chose  
Then we really got into this futurist stuff, thinking fast high-tech life might be fab  
When Marion promised we could all hail a jet, the same way that we now hail a cab

And we perked up our ears when Mary made clear, that our sense of smell rules all the rest  
We envisioned new packaging, infused with great scents, [is vanilla or lavender best?]  
But we know to use caution, as Regan reminded, because fragrance amok can be bad  
If our A&P smells like spaghetti and Dove... chances are we'll be driven quite mad!

Will our companies thrive? Will we all work alone? How will outsourcing businesses fare?  
As Grovers we've got our priorities straight... we care most about what we will WEAR!  
We learned denim is in, and outerwear too, and that pants may be shorter this year  
And that online boutiques have a place in our lives, ebay wardrobes without any fear

And speaking of "glam" ....those Sabelhouse twins [Barbie and Kiwi, I think]  
Reminded us all that flair keeps us young...and that glitter's the new shocking pink  
But their tres high style moment, just couldn't compete, with the fashion aplomb of the week  
The twinkle-light boas the new Grovers wore...now that was a moment of chic

In fact, this year's whole Grove was a glamour event...a fashionatta extravaganza  
While the post-breakfast panels expanded our minds, each night was a style bonanza

On the beach we were graced with some wig-wearing 'Ricans named Tittie and Tatti and Tutti  
Who all trilled their R's, waved "Mari-Carmen arms"...and were experts at shaking their booty

Then the Tara's [who mirror us] put on wigs too...and treated us to Tina Turner  
[We know Edie as Tina...but she better look out, because Erin is sure a fast learner]  
And Vieques society, won't be the same now that Grovers have been on the scene  
Someone in our group, but I daren't say who, turned into a pole-dancing queen!

But pole dancing Grovers, began to seem tame, the next night when the wild hand of fate  
Brought hoards of Grove "wannabes" down to the pool... including TWO Catherine's the Great  
And two lady pirates, and two Julia Childs, and two Annie Oakley's to boot  
And a Holly Golightly, and one Auntie Mame, and a Lucy [who looked very cute]

And a Palm Beach sorority with Jackie O, and a trio of togas as well  
And Lot's second wife [who was carrying salt], and Ben of the Liberty Bell  
And two queen bees in gold [did we see them last year? those Atlanta gals always do shine]  
And a queen of the east, and a queen from Japan, and a grape-wearing goddess of wine

But our fashion parade really turned on its ear, when that synchronized swim team strode in  
Those virtual Olympians, led by Michelle, "rocked" us all with their zeal to win  
Clad in spa resort robes, plastic bags on their heads, they became quite a show-stopping sight  
And their "Vive Bhutan" [in Japanese and Chinese]... kept us in stitches all night

Grovers know how to party, and know how to play...even when things are running amok  
[Like when Vance tried to salvage our trip on the bay, she's got endless diplomacy pluck]  
And when kayaks tipped over, and Grovers got dunked, not one soggy survivor seemed glum  
Instead they raced back to our "villa on the hill"... and warmed up with all four kinds of rum

But while parties and costumes and silliness reigned [someone sure was in love with that pole]  
What makes the Grove special is not zany fun...but our unending sharing of "soul"  
Each of us does our part to give back to the world, but together we do so much more  
Because using our clout to give others a chance, is the value that's at the Grove's core

So with wide open arms, we welcomed our sisters....Puerto Rico's great women from Meet  
They inspired us all with their passion and warmth...and their cookies [we do love a treat]  
And through Rita's connections, Vieques' great kids wowed us all with their dreams and their grit  
Despite a childhood of bombings, and a land with no work...they have courage, and pride...and great wit

They each shared a vision, they each shared a dream, one spoke English for the very first time ever  
We were all so inspired by their talent and hopes, they are joyful, hard-working, and clever  
They're Vieques' tomorrow, it's future, it's leaders...and as Grovers we'll all do our part  
Beyond just our donations, we've reached out our hands...these kids found their way to our heart

And it's heart that the Grove is really about...that and a big dose of soul  
Grovers never need fear the new virtual world...'cause our limbic brain's in full control  
It's our human connection that makes the Grove work, something much more than smell, taste or touch  
It's a chemistry thing we don't quite understand, but we all value ever so much

There's a reason grown women with homes of their own, become "roommates" ...we all want to "share"  
That we stay up all night giggling like little girls.... help each other decide what to wear  
We truly are "sisters" ....forever connected... virtual lifestyles can't keep us apart  
The "virtual economy" can belong to the men...our economy is "of the heart"!

Thank you Susan, again, for all that you do to see that Grove keeps on going  
In the virtual world you're our "Intel Inside" ...your magic keeps everything flowing

Without your devotion, we never would know, what new delights each Grove might find  
Party Rico is proof... the very best yet...An Adventure of HEART and of Mind!!!!