

Update 2008:

By Davi Mondt Lowman

I am sure you all remember sharing our senior year with Carmen Amendola, the AFS student from Uruguay. The Mondt family was blessed to have her live with us that year and become another "Mondt girl". she was something very unique and wonderful.

After graduation, Carmen returned to Uruguay and, after a couple of years, our family lost contact with her. We knew she was actively involved in the political unrest that Uruguay was experiencing. We knew she had been jailed for expressing her views on fair treatment and civil rights. What we didn't know and did not find out until seven years ago, was that Carmen had been imprisoned and tortured for four years in deplorable conditions. (if interested, [click here link](#) where you can read more about the imprisonment).

Seven years ago, Carmen attended an agronomy conference in Spain (she was very well known and respected in this field) and met a man from the Jefferson, Iowa, area. She introduced herself and asked if he knew where Boone, Iowa, was - and, of course, he did. Carmen gave him her contact information and asked that he contact my parents. He did and we were thrilled to have found her! or vice versa!

So, happily, she and I became immediate email penpals, exchanging years of photos and stories and family information. We telephoned at Christmas and made plans to meet in Mexico City at her brother's house.

But, sadly, in 2005, Carmen told me she had cancer and was undergoing treatment. Sometime in 2006, the emails I sent to her started to come back with the "failed permanently" message. I knew there was no way she would stop talking to me, and I knew what had most likely happened to her, but I just did not want to face it.

A few months ago, I started thinking about her all the time and finally decided I needed to know. Attempts to contact her by phone were unsuccessful. Further attempts to find her husband or children through google failed also. Three weeks ago, I went on facebook and typed in her daughter's name and guess what? There she was - Andrea, 24 years old. (Carmen's son is "Nico" - 28).

Carmen died in 2006. She and her husband, Humberto, had traveled to Miami shortly before her death to try other treatments, but nothing worked. This is all quite bittersweet. We've lost this funny, smart, wonderful person, but I've gained connections with her husband, daughter, son, and brother (Ricardo).

Please let me know if you have memories of Carmen so I can share them with her family. They have told me how much she loved her year in Boone, Iowa, and about her friendships with classmates and how welcome you made her feel.