

# Gardner Newsletter

Volume 25   Issue 100   Fall 2022

*It's our*  
**100<sup>th</sup>**  
**ISSUE**

Happy Thanksgiving  
Merry Christmas  
Happy New Year  
See you in 2023!

# Unforgettable Trip to “Picos De Europa” and Posada De Valdeon in Northern Spain

By: Ruth Anne Metcalf



A few years ago, at our 2019 GARDNER Cousins Reunion before COVID 19 hit all of us, I was talking with our cousin, Jean Gonzales and her husband, Miguel. Jean very enthusiastically told me that, “I just HAD to come over to visit she and Miguel in Spain. I said that I would look into it. She said, in her usual ebullient way, that “I SIMPLY HAD to come over!” How could I possibly refuse!!?? Of course, then the pandemic hit all of us and this put all of our plans on hold for almost 3 years.

Well... this last summer in July, 2022, I decided to travel from Columbus, Ohio to the Gardner Cousins’ Reunion. Once again, I met Jean and Miguel. Jean was

even more enthusiastic this second time – I think because COVID had put things on hold for SO LONG!

While we were talking, I looked up the round-trip fare from Columbus, Ohio to Madrid. I said to Jean, “I think I can do this...!” So, this is when I seriously

began planning to visit Miguel and Jean in Spain.

You may recall that in our 2015 Summer Issue of the *Gardner News*, Paul shared a special invitation from Miguel and Jean to visit them in Posada de Valdeon, where their long-planned dream to build a home had come to fruition. Paul visited them in the Summer of 2016 and wrote a lovely article about his travels. He

included the history of the area and its current status as a part of the Picos De Europa National Park.

In this article, I will share more anecdotal information with you. I hope you get a sense of the wonderful warm spirit of the people in Posada De Valdeon. All of Miguel’s family welcomed me with open arms.

Of course, getting there was very interesting. Many of my friends here at home, said, “Are you traveling alone?” I said that I was to which they replied, “You are brave!” I don’t know about that, but you did have to be very aware of your surroundings and really listen. My “*dos anos de espanol*” were not enough to bridge the language barrier; but we managed to communicate!

I arrived in Madrid from Boston on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Iberia airlines informed me that they had lost my luggage, which was not great. But once again we managed for the next five days.

From Madrid I took the bullet train to Leon, Spain and I sat next to a very nice young woman, Maria, who had lived in Scotland for a few years. She was very excited to have me as her seatmate. A few hours later I arrived in Leon and Miguel, Jean, and Miguel’s Brother, Honorino, picked me up. It was about 3 p.m., the dinner hour in Spain. So, we went to a very nice restaurant where Jean and Miguel instructed me in



Two of Miguel’s brothers with their wives along with Jean and Miguel



Miguel’s brother, Honorino, Miguel’s brother-in-law, Casamiro, Miguel’s sister, Teresa





## Unforgettable Trip to “Picos De Europa” and Posada De Valdeon in Northern Spain *(Continued from Page 2)*

the customs for dinner in Spain.

Miguel

and Jean were so excited and wanted me to see and hear everything, but I was

so tired from my long trip that eventually, I took a nap while they all went grocery shopping.

After I rested up, the next day Miguel took me for a walk to the center of Posada de Valdeon. Miguel grew up here, so I told him that I thought he was related to EVERYONE!

He kept introducing me to this cousin, that uncle, etc. However, it was wonderful to meet them!

That evening, we drove to a small town called “Cain”, pronounced, “Cah een”. We drove along a very narrow road which wove through the mountains. The pictures I took don’t give you the complete picture of the ruggedness of these mountains. They are part of the Pyrenees mountain range and they are INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL!

Along the way, Miguel shared some of the history of the area. One thing he talked about was the “El Chorro De Los Lobos.” Miguel explained that back in the day, the wolves were a real

problem for the sheep farmers, so they created a run through the woods where they enticed the sheep to run down the mountainside. Of course, the last stop for them was a pit that



they fell into and were killed. I asked Miguel if they still do this, and he said “No, he didn’t think so...”

We took many excursions for the remainder of my stay there. We went to the Covadonga Shrine a

little south of Posada de Valdeon And, also to a town nearby called Cangas de Onis. All along the way Miguel, Jean, and his family offered information on the area. We also went to Potes, a city further east of Posada de Valdeon, which is not too far from the ocean or the Bay of Biscayne.

One of Miguel’s nephews, Felix, is a park ranger. He let us ride in his land rover and took us along a road around the Fuente De mountain. It was very rough and rugged and there were no guard rails. Miguel grew up in these mountains and he LOVES the animals and the fauna of the region. While we were bouncing along, he and his cousin became

extremely excited because they saw deer or rebeco (actually a Spanish wild goat) in the trees below us. Jean and I could see nothing, but they insisted they were there! And they were!!

We also went to look at some of the land that Miguel’s Father gave him.

Tradition and family are key to this area and the people are very self-sufficient and inventive!

We had many feasts with Miguel’s family at their beautiful home!

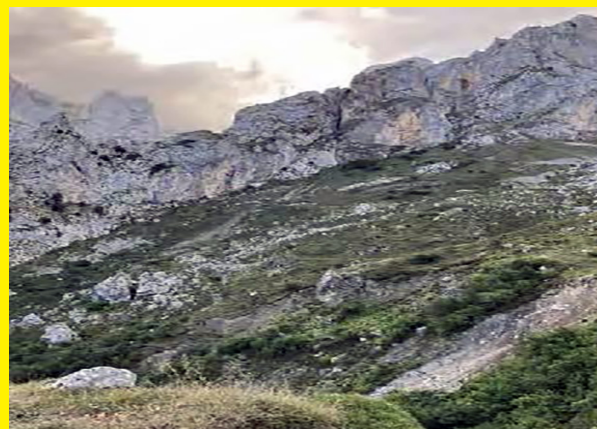
The last day of my time with

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Miguel and Jean and their family we traveled to Leon, Spain so that I could catch a train to Madrid for my flight out on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September. Jean and Miguel were hopeful that we would be able to get into the Leon Cathedral. Thankfully, we had about a half hour before my train trip. I was SO GRATEFUL that we were able to get into Leon Cathedral and I took 25 pictures in a half hour.

Miguel and Jean go over to Posada de Valdeon every summer when they are able. They are very interested in having family come to visit and have extended an open invitation to anyone who might like to visit them. I have to say that they were FANTASTIC hosts and shared the bounty of the area with me in many ways! I LOVED the people, the astounding beauty, and the warmth of Miguel's family.

It was a trip that I will long remember with a deep fondness in my heart!



Honorino Gonzalo, Miguel Gonzalo, Jean Gonzalo





## CONGRATULATIONS!

**M**egan Ludgate (daughter of Raylene Ludgate and Mike Ludgate, granddaughter of Raymond Gardner) married George Brooks Eaton in a small ceremony on August 12th, 2022.

The wedding took place at the Cortland City Court house with brother of the bride Bryan Ludgate and his girlfriend Michelle “Meesh” Contreras as witnesses.

They celebrated with pizza and cake afterwards with Megan’s Parents, Mike and Raylene Ludgate and Megan’s grandfather Raymond Gardner and a few days later with Brooks’ parents in Alexandria, Virginia.



Left to right: Michelle “Meesh” Contreras, Bryan Ludgate, Raymond Gardner, Raylene Ludgate, Megan Ludgate, Brooks Eaton, Mike Ludgate

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## Patty Ames' Inspirational Facebook Message to Everyone

It's been a year and three months since Terry Ames went home to be with Jesus. He was the love of my life who led me to Jesus before he asked me to marry him because he wanted to be sure we would be together in Heaven when our time came.

Words can't express how much I miss him. I have such peace in my heart knowing he's in Heaven, but my head misses him so much. It's been a difficult year. I've grown so much.

I am so blessed to have such a wonderful family, friends, and the greater Orlando wedding vendors helping me through this difficult time. I love each and every one of you. The words of encouragement and above all the prayers are so much appreciated.

I didn't realize it at the time, but the greatest gift Terry gave me was leading me to Jesus. I remember that night so clearly. I asked Jesus into my heart and asked Him to forgive me of my sins. I wanted my name in the Lamb's Book of Life, so I would know that when I die, I'd know I'll go to Heaven and will be

reunited with Terry for eternity.

Jesus has carried me through this last year and He has blessed me in so many ways. When I've needed something, He has put the right person in my life at the right time to help me.



My advice to you is to ask Jesus into your heart, to cleanse you of your sins so you can spend eternity in Heaven with Jesus and your loved ones.

Tell your spouse several times a day how much you love them. You never know when it will be the last time you'll get to tell them that. I got to tell Terry before he passed away how much I loved him, and he told me in return how much he loved me.

Thank you, Terry, for choosing me to be your wife and life partner. Savannah and I miss you!

