

Here is Your Special Invitation from Jean and Miguel Gonzalo



Decades-old Dream Comes True

TOP LEFT: The back view of Jean and Miguel's new home in Spain.

TOP CENTER: Jean and Miguel welcome you to their new home from the veranda attached to their house.

TOP RIGHT: Family and friends celebrate the completion of construction in the new dining room .

BOTTOM: Front of Jean and Miguel's new home in Spain just before completion of the construction.

Jean and Miguel Gonzalo have finally realized their decades-old dream. Construction on their new home in Spain has been completed!

Jean and Miguel have been sending funds periodically through the years to Miguel's brother in Spain to finance the construction of the house. They have just arrived home to Bakersfield, CA after celebrating the completion of the building with friends and family. Daughter, Teresa, and her friend, will be occupying the new house for two weeks in late July to hike the mountainous terrain and visit the historical landmarks.

In that spirit, Jean and Miguel invite all the Gardner family and friends to plan a visit there whenever it can be arranged with the hospitable couple. A visit would entail flying into Madrid, Spain.

Miguel's brother and his family would meet you at the Madrid airport and make arrangements to take you to León, Spain, the largest city nearest to the village where the new house is located. Miguel's other family members would escort you from León to the new home. Sounds pretty easy, right?

Contact Jean and Miguel at (661) 845-3331 to learn more about the area where their new home is located. You can also send an e-mail to Jean at JeanGonzalo@att.net.

Both Jean and Miguel, as they get ready to enter their retirement years, look forward to sharing their new home with family members and friends. Why not take advantage of this great opportunity to make your vacation an extra special one!

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The Metcalf Families Reunite for 2nd Generation Gardner Cousin Art Metcalf's Birthday

By: Dick Metcalf



06/08/2015 – The photo you see here was the direct result of mixing too much espresso with Afrin and a sugar-rush from the (early) B-day cake for my son Arthur Metcalf, I suppose.

Nutcracker Family Restaurant... Ruth and I visited there that evening for supper, and based on the excellent (and quaint) atmosphere (there's still an old-fashioned gas pump right next to the counter), I returned there the rest of the week for breakfast... if you (like me) dig establishments that still provide good, cheap food with great service, you'll want to hit this place next time you're out that way.

On Tuesday at noon, I was able to hook up with my old musical/spoken-word pal John M Bennett and

his wife Catherine... as per usual, John handed over a whole host of music and poetry productions for review, so you'll see those pop up in the Zzaj Review QUEUE very soon.

Great lunching together and talking about their busy musical schedule... they had just returned from a gig in Philadelphia with Jack Wright (& I believe John's son Ben Bennett was playing there, too – Ben's also in our Review QUEUE). Just great to hookup with these stalwarts of the mail-art and experimental

music scene!

On Thursday, the family went out to a ball-game... what absolute fun was had by everyone, as you'll see in the pix to the right of this article. I flew back out to Olympia on Saturday morning... glad to be back home, but thoroughly enjoyed my visit back to my roots.

I had been far too long since I visited my sisters Ruth and Geri (& her husband Greg), so a trek to Yo-hio (K'lum'bus, in specific) was definitely in order.

I flew out on the 6th of June... my son arrived a short time after I took the required morning nap (it was a Redeye flight, the first one I remember taking in a very long time), and my sister Ruth took us on a tour around her wonderfully quaint little town of Westerville; the town has done a lot to rebuild its' image in the ten or fifteen years since I was there last. One of my favorite haunts, and a place I would visit often if I ever moved out that way, was the Java Central Coffee-house – Arthur & I hit the doors as soon as they opened in the morning & did at least one cup the whole time we stayed at Ruth's

house.

Geri and Greg were on a short vacation to Florida and returned on the 8th, I believe... my son and I moved over there so they would have a night to tell stories and reminisce a bit... since he had to zoom back to his home in Alabama, we did the little birthday party the evening on the 8th... so cool to eat supper together, then share a bit of cake & ice-cream. Greg and I share an interest in all things musical, particularly blues and jazz, and he played several albums for me, most notably one by Bruce Hornsby in a jazz trio format... man, that thing KICKS... I've never heard anything from Bruce that good before!

When Arthur was prep-ping to leave, we were talking about good (meaning old-fashioned) places to eat... Greg mentioned the



The Gardner/Metcalf Cousins: Siblings Ruth Anne Metcalf, Geri Rosser, and Dick Metcalf attend a baseball game.

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“Megan Ludgate Productions” produces award winning interview videos with two of the “Original Gang of Ten,” Aunt Lois and Uncle Raymond {see picture at right}

What follows is the transcript of a video that 2nd Generation Cousin Megan Ludgate shot of an interview with Aunt Lois. Megan, a student at Simmons College in Boston, MA, submitted the video entitled “Visiting my Great Aunt” to the Simmons College Movie Fest where it won an award and received special recognition.

[The video begins with shots through the front windshield of a car conveying Cousin Teresa Vasko, Cousin Raylene Ludgate, and Raylene’s daughter, 2nd Generation Gardner Cousin Megan Ludgate. They are traveling along Farrant Street in Newport, VT where Aunt Lois lives.]

Megan: What’s your favorite age been?

Lois: Favorite what?

Megan: Your favorite age?

Lois: Age? Oh, I don’t know.

Teresa: When were you the happiest?

Lois: Maybe when I was 53. That’s when I got married.

Teresa: Got married. Yes. For the first time.

Megan: For the first time.

Lois: We made, uh, 11th. We were married eleven years. He died.

Megan: Where did you meet him?

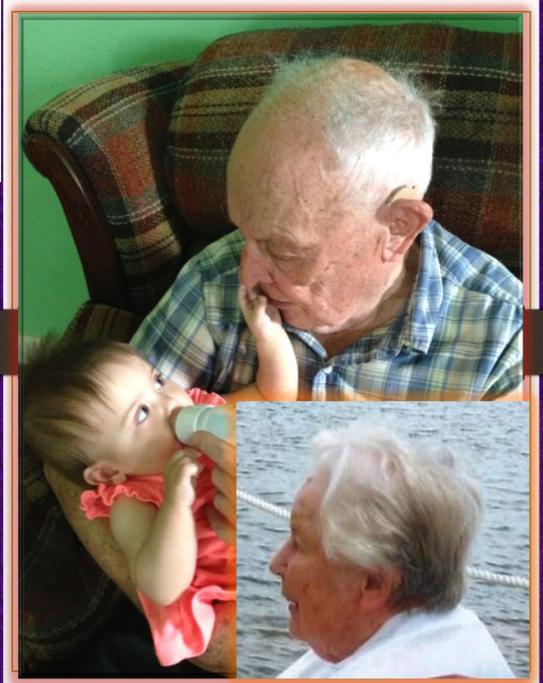
Lois: Out here. As a matter of fact, he had a cottage here.

Teresa: Right in front of their house was a river, but it was the tidal river. So, yeah, it would come and go.

Lois: Ipswich River.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Lois: When I got married, we tore that house down and built another house.



Teresa: That’s right. Then you did it again here.

Lois: Yeah. *[Everybody laughs]* Brooks, my husband, had died when he lived there, so I had to have this place built by myself.

Teresa: *[From within the car]* There. You can see the light green house. That’s hers.

[Another story about a former “beau.”]

Teresa: I heard that you broke up with him. You were only 14 and he was quite serious. When you broke up with him, he was heart-broken.

Lois: We used to go down to the house and play games. We used to play, uh, well, we had jigsaw puzzles lots of times. He took Ruth—Ruth and I, home one night. When he got up to the house, he said he was gonna kiss every girl that he took home. I kissed Ruth, but I got in the house before he could

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kiss me. [Everybody laughs] Well, actually, he was the one who showed me how to drive. I used to drive his big truck. He gave me \$3.00 for a license. That was a license then.

Teresa: Really!

Lois: I never got one.

Teresa: [Laughs] ‘Til later. Raymond taught you.

Lois: Yeah, Raymond. As a matter of fact, I got my license from his [inaudible]. I used to live in Massachusetts, so I used to know their family real well.

[Here old photos of Lois at work and at home are displayed]

Raylene: My Aunt Lois was a successful, single working woman in the 1950s and 1960s when the majority of the women stayed home to raise a family. She worked in a bank. Lucky for me, she matched her brother, my Dad, to my mother, who also had worked in the bank. All my Dad’s other sisters (and he had lots, six of them) got married and had their own families to take care of. But I’ve always felt that Aunt Lois was part of our family.

Lois: As a matter of fact, they used to come down to my house in Ipswich. The children would stay overnight.

Raylene: I grew up with my Mom and my Aunt Lois as female role models. I know that Aunt Lois gave selflessly to our family.

“Megan Ludgate Productions” produced another video about Uncle Raymond, Megan’s grandfather, who lives in the “Blue House Restaurant” in Reading MA. What follows is a transcript of that video entitled “Caring Across Generations.”

[Music and fade in]

2nd Generation Gardner Cousin Katrina: I remember Grandpa [laughs] whenever we were taking a walk in the woods, he would be the last one in the row.

[Music]

Katrina: He would always find some way to get you. It would be like an acorn. Like he’d be throwing—he’d throw the acorn and, like, bop you right off the head. You’d be looking up, and think it was squirrel, until it happened four times in a row. Then you’d look back and he’d be laughing. Or, like, he would do a grass trick, you know, with like a really long piece of grass. He’d be tickling you, and you’d be like, “Hmm, what is that, a bug? I don’t know what it is. Why am I so itchy?” You’d look back and he’s like barely containing himself. You know, just dying laughing because he’s been getting you for, like, ten minutes before you even started feeling a change.

[Music]

2nd Generation Gardner Cousin Megan: When I first asked my grandfather if I could interview him for a school project, he said, “Yes,” but that he didn’t think his stories would be that interesting.

Raymond: Basic training. It was for 21 weeks. We started in—drafted in Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Went from there to Fort Hood. I got this scar at the Battle of Fort Hood. I got it at Fort Hood.

Megan: The Battle of Fort Hood. [Everyone laughs] What happened?

Raymond: Oh. We had “kitchen police” duties. We got the kitchen cleaned too quick. We were washing windows. I was hanging onto a rafter, uh, stud, a stud, reaching up and pulling a window. The window fell in. My hand went through it.

Megan: Oh no! Wow! Is that the only scar you have from the Army?

Raymond: Yeah.

Megan: [Laughs]

Raymond: I didn’t get a purple heart. I didn’t go overseas right away. I was in Fort Hood, Texas at the South Camp. I went from North Camp to South Camp. From there I went to Fort Ord, California. Fort Ord to Fort Lewis, Washington. Fort Lewis, Washington to get on the boat. [Laughs] Changed boats in Hawaii. Pearl Harbor, I suppose. I don’t know. Changed ships. Went from there to Saipan. Saipan to Okinawa. Okina-

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wa to the Philippines.

I was leaving Okinawa, headed for the Philippines, when the first atomic bomb fell. It was August 5th 1945. The war was all over soon after anyway, so they sent me to the Philippines. I enjoyed the Philippines at that time. I had an easy job and I used to talk to the Filipinos. I used to go in town and got to know some people, some Filipinos.

Megan: After his service in the Army, my grandfather came back to New England and started working for the U.S. Postal Service. He stayed with his sister, Lois, before leaving for his first job on the Railway Postal Office. It was during this stay that he met his wife-to-be.

Megan: You introduced him to his wife.

Lois: Oh yeah, she worked in the bank with us. We were going down to go to the beach, so Raymond came and stayed with me while he was learning how to do the mail. He was with me then and I said, “You might as well come down with us.” That’s where he met her.

Raymond: You know, that’s when I first went on the Railway Mail Service. I stayed with Lois five days; come Saturday, Lois tells me some of the bank employees are going to have a beach party, would I like to go? I went, and I was the only man there. *[Everybody laughs]* That’s how I got to know Margaret.

I got married. No money. Margaret didn’t have money. I didn’t have money. We bought this house, a 30-year mortgage. For thirty years or more, I was going from check-to-check. Six children were born, and *[laughs]* I never had money.

Raylene: My Dad is Raymond Gardner. He’s the coolest Dad! Six kids in our family, and he worked two jobs to support us all.

Raymond: Mostly at the “out” jobs; week on, week off. We’d work six days, and then have eight days off. It was scheduled that way, to get to your average of 40 hours, but you’d work long hours one week. On the

week off—well, I worked a number of places, but I worked with Margaret’s brother, Ira, as a carpenter.

Raylene: He worked hard and I never heard him complain about having to go to work, or working the two jobs.

Teresa: In the Spring, each year, Raymond would get a month off from the mail train and he would come up to Lyndonville and work with my Dad and do carpenter work. He would bring the family, whoever the family was at the time. As the years went along, it was too much to have them at the house, so they would come and go up to the camp on the Pond.

Raylene: Our vacations were in Vermont. It was my uncle’s cabin that he often took us to. This vacation was not a vacation for my Mom or Dad. It was two or three miles in the woods. You had to carry in all your gear. With six kids, he worked hard, but always had time to teach and play with us. He taught us how to get spruce gum, fish and swim, of course, and clean the fish. We played cards and games. Since it was my uncle’s cabin, he also did projects for my uncle to help thank him for letting us use the cabin.

Teresa: I just remember after they would leave, my brother and I just loved to go up and see what your Dad had done. He would have found twigs and nailed them up for, like, railings, to go places. He would have found logs and cut them into chairs. It was like going into a motel and running around to see all the different things that are there. That’s what it was like after your grandfather left.

Megan: Wherever he goes, my grandfather always leaves something behind. Sometimes it is his time and his skill and that leaves something physical. But most of the time, he just leaves behind his essence, his humor, his gratitude, his generosity. Now, my cousins and I, are trying to emulate his generosity and give it back to him.

Katrina: “The Blue House Restaurant” was just a way

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for us to give the gift of time and love and as much good, homemade food as possible to our grandfather. My sister, Robyn and I, got sick of wracking our brains every year to give him something he inevitably didn't need for Christmas. *[Laughs]* So, instead, we decided to fill his house with laughter and grandkids and the smell of a big meal that he would never prepare for himself, because he's just one person.

The first year was so much fun. He loved it so much and bragged about it to his brother, Clayton, so much that we've been doing it ever since. Since Robyn and I both had kids, Grandpa has forbidden us to come to dinner without his great grand-

daughters. So, *[laughs]* even though it makes it a little harder, it's sort of wonderful to see them loving their Great Grandpa the way we love him, and playing with him. He's such a big kid at heart. Just watching him play with them is pretty wonderful, and remembering what it was like when we were little in that same house.

[Music]

Raylene: You know, Dad had a really—it was a hard life, because my Mom had some mental health issues.

[Music]

He never complained. He stuck by

my Mom, all that time with all those issues, and I don't ever remember him yelling at us. He is a very patient and a very loving man, and I love him very much.

[Music and fade-out]

You can watch both of these videos on the Internet by following these links:

<http://www.campusmoviefest.com/movies/41080-visiting-my-great-aunt>

http://www.gardnernews.org/Raymond's_page.htm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahlPtqzfnQ0&feature=youtu.be>

Are you ready to explore ICELAND with me?

Continue reading the rest of the newsletter!



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The Land of Fire and Ice

By: Megan Ludgate

On May 17th, at 9:30pm Boston Time, I got on an Icelandair flight. I was embarking on a 3 week long study abroad course titled "Sustainability and Cultural Ecology in Iceland" through The Center for Ecological Living and Learning (CELL). Traveling with me was Dave, the founder of CELL, Michael, a professor from Simmons College and 16 fellow students. We landed at 6:30am Iceland time, drove an hour to Solheimar, the place I would call home for 3 weeks, dropped our bags off and dived right into the day. Solheimar is an eco-village of about 100 people renowned for its international, artistic, and ecological atmosphere. Solheimar is the first self-sufficient community of its kind in the world, where people with special needs and those without live and work together in a community committed to environmental sustainability. We stayed in the guest house in the center of the eco-village.

We were able to visit many amazing places throughout Southwest Iceland. Most of our days were spent adventuring around Iceland or doing course work in the classroom at

Solheimar. We cooked most of our dinners ourselves, taking turns cooking the meal for the group. In the evenings, before we fell fast asleep, we would walk around the property or relax in the geothermally heated pool. There's a saying in Iceland, "if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes". We lived through



that almost everyday. It's light out 24 hours a day in Iceland this time of year, but some days it was either very sunny or violently hailing the entire day, switching back and forth about every five minutes. One day in Pingvellir National Park, we were spread out near a waterfall, reading our course book in the warm sun, when suddenly it started snowing so hard we couldn't see 10 feet.

We also met and interacted with many

inspiring people during the trip. One of my favorite people was Hörður, a local farmer and a government representative. We visited his farm and enjoyed the fantastic view... not only was the property filled with wonderful barns, animals and lush green grass... not only was it lakeside property nestled next to Apavatn

lake, a geothermal heated lake... not only were there glaciers and mountains off in the distance... but we were also there during the golden 'hour' (the time right before sunset, hour being more like 4 hours this time of year in Iceland), absolutely perfect for photography. I wandered around Iceland with a backpack full of camera gear and a camera around my neck snapping away at every picturesque scene. Hörður found my camera gear wildly hilarious, so took to calling me "Fox News" for

the entire day. While there we were able to see lambs being born (there were 180 or so pregnant sheep in the barn), and to close out the day, his wife cooked us a splendid meal, consisting of lamb stew.

My other favorite moment on the trip was hiking Eyjafjallajökull, the volcano that erupted in 2010, located in Þórsmörk, South Iceland. We hiked a distance of 20km and an elevation of 1,666m to the top of Eyjafjallajökull, which was mostly hiking through the deep snow of the glacier that covers the volcano. As we hiked up the glacier, the sky was overcast, creating a black and white (mostly white) world. It was difficult to tell where the land ended and

sky started. Even stranger was looking around and seeing us, with our comparably obnoxiously vibrant colors. When we reached the crack where the lava flowed from about 5 years ago, the fresh red rock stood out against the white snow. The rocks were still warm from the lava below, melting the snow above them and steaming in the cold glacier air. On our way back down, after we had gotten off the glacier, we came to a flat-ish area over-looking the valley, where Pali, one

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By: Megan Ludgate

of our guides asked, "Is anyone afraid of heights?" A few people nodded yes or raised their hands. He looked around, smiled and said, "take a deep breath", as he turned and headed down over the edge of the cliff.

We spent one night in a traditional Icelandic turf house. Hannes and Christine, who study Icelandic turf houses, welcomed us into their traditional turf farmstead as well as their impressive exhibition hall. Both were extremely knowledgeable about turf houses and shared with us the rich history of the turf house we spent the night in, the very same place Hannes lived in until he was 10 years old. Christine was also an amazing cook, and lavished us with coffee, treats and delicious food throughout our stay. We helped repair one of the turf house walls. It was very cool to cut turf from the marsh and see it become a sturdy wall.

Another day, we planted 5315 birch trees with the reforestation project, Hekluskógar. Iceland used to be covered in trees, but when the Vikings settled, they began cutting the trees for lumber and fuel. In 1900, there were no trees

left on Iceland, and most Icelanders had never seen one. By 1920, a few people had begun to plant trees, but most people thought this a fool's mission. There was a belief that trees were not able to grow in Iceland. Today there are many young forests, most of the trees are small because they are young, not because they are not able to grow. The sheep also still graze freely across Iceland, making it difficult for young trees to start. Many of the reforestation projects are fenced off to keep sheep out of the newly planted forests. The main objective of Hekluskógar is to reclaim woodlands of native birch and willow to the slopes of the volcano, Hekla. This would prevent volcanic ash from blowing over nearby areas after eruption in Hekla and help to reduce wind erosion. It is the largest reforestation of its type in Europe and is estimated to cover 1% of the area of Iceland.

The time went quickly, as soon it was near the end of our trip when we would return back home. We spent one last day enjoying Solheimar. As you enter the dining hall at Solheimar, you can't help but look up and see the hundreds

of paper cranes hanging from the ceiling. For me, they were a symbol of hope. Paul Hawken, in a graduation speech delivered at the University of Portland in 2009, said, "Hope only makes sense when it doesn't make sense to be hopeful. The problems may seem insurmountable and daunting, but now is the best time to have hope and to take action". I'm am very grateful to have spent 3 weeks learning from and with the amazing people on this trip. Now we have left Iceland and headed our separate ways to take action in our communities around the issues that we are hopeful can be conquered.

I had so many more adventures while in Iceland, which you can read about and see more pictures from on my blog at megan-ludgate.com. Just click back to May 17th to the start of my trip.

SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

