

Gardner Newsletter

Summer 2016

Volume 19

Issue 75

Gardner Cousins Reunion Kicks Off Gardner Newsletter's Big 75th Issue!



Gardner Cousins - July, 2016
Can you name them all?

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd.

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THE AMES FAMILY

Jackie Patenaude, Ann Ames,
Marie Cargill, Dawnita Ames, Terry
Ames, Patty Ames, Sarah Dumas,
Rod Ames, Irene Ames, Alicia Par-
enteau, Adam Ames



UNCLE RAYMOND'S FAMILY

Sharon Gardner, Raymond Gardner, Gloria Parsons,
Steven Gardner

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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*COUSIN TERESA VASKO
AT THE GARDNER COU-
SIONS REUNION - JULY,
2016*



*COUSIN ROD AND IRENE'S IMMEDI-
ATE FAMILY*

Front row: Jackie Patenaude, Irene Ames, Alicia Parenteau

Back row: Adam Ames, Rod Ames

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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COUSIN RUTH ANNE METCALF AND HER HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND, DEBBIE COLE, AT THE GARDNER COUSINS RE-UNION



SARAH DUMAS, ANN AMES, AND MARIE CARGILL AT THE GARDNER COUSINS REUNION (AUNT NITA'S DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AND GRAND-DAUGHTERS)

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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*ALL THE GARDNER
COUSINS AT THE RE-
UNION*

Kneeling, first row: Rod Ames,
Becky Beaudoin, Diane Gardner
Second row: Ruth Anne Metcalf,
Sharon Gardner, Nancy Whitney,
Gloria Parsons, Teresa Vasko,
Sheryl Hosford, Sharon Manches-
ter, Dawnita Ames, Sandra Baraw.
Last row: Terry Ames, Adam Ames,
Steve Gardner, Jay Griffes



*ALICIA'S FAMILY (ROD AND IRENE'S
DAUGHTER)*

Alicia Parenteau, with children Jaxson, Kylee, Mackenzie, and her husband, Yvan.

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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THE GRIFFES FAMILY

The Griffes family was the best represented family at the Gardner Cousins reunion. Aunt Beulah is standing in the center, a little bit to the right.



BECKY BEAUDOIN AND DIANE GARDNER AT THE GARDNER COUSINS REUNION (TWO OF UNCLE ADELBERT'S DAUGHTERS)

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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GUESTS OF HONOR AT THE GARDNER COUSINS REUNION

Original Gang of Ten Member, Aunt
Lois Cardwell

Original Gang of Ten Member, Un-
cle Raymond Gardner

Original Gang of Ten Member, Aunt
Beulah Griffes



*IRENE AND ROD AMES WITH HER
SISTERS AND SPOUSES*

Pictures from Rod Ames' Facebook Page Showing the Gardner Cousins Annual Reunion on July 3rd *(continued)*

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SIBLING COUSINS TERRY AMES, DAWNITA AMES, AND ROD AMES



All the Gardner Cousins are very grateful to Rod and Irene Ames for hosting the first ever Gardner Cousins Reunion on July 3, 2016 at their home

in Derby. In fact, it was so successful that Rod and Irene have already extended the invitation for a 2017 Gardner Cousins Reunion.

Rod posted this invitation on Facebook. It looks like we have a brand new family tradition brewing, a Gardner Cousin Reunion every year! Be sure you take part in it. We will remind you of this event as it draws closer.



More from Rod's Facebook Page:

"Plan to attend next year's reunion on Sunday, July 2, 2017 at 1 pm. Should be a fun time as was the 2016 reunion. Missed all that could not attend."

"Hi Paul. We are planning on a reunion next year, the Lord willing. I just posted a video on

the Gardner Facebook site with an invitation. Can you help me get the word out? Hopefully you can attend if you are not gone to Spain."

Blessings. Rod

A Personal Message from Aunt Lois...



Hello Family,

I want to take this time to thank everyone in the family for the kind and thoughtful gifts that you have sent to me all throughout the year. Since I am not that great at sending thank-you cards, I made a telephone call to Paul on August 13th and asked him to write this note to everyone for me and to place it in the newsletter.

It warms my heart that so many of you are thinking of me as I approach my centennial year. It won't be this coming November, but next November. I hope to see many or all of you before then.

Thank you all again for your meaningful expressions of love and caring.

Love to all, Lois

Gardner Cousins reunion

474 Gore Rd N
Morgan, VT, United States

All-day

Starts Jul 2, 2017 1:00 PM

Ends 5:00 PM

Vacation of a lifetime in “Los Picos de Europa” in Northern Spain

By: Paul Gardner

Do you recall the Summer 2015 issue of the Gardner Newsletter? That was the issue where Jean and Miguel Gonzalo invited everyone to visit them in their newly constructed home in Posada de Valdeon, Spain. Well, this past June/July, I did exactly that. I recently returned from a four-week stay with them in the mountains of northern Spain. What a great time I had with Jean and Miguel and with many members of Miguel's family who live around there!

My friend, Kathleen, recently asked me, “What is your number one memory about your trip to Spain?” Unequivocally, it is meeting and getting to know Miguel's family. After all, this newsletter is all about “family,” right? What makes Miguel's family interesting is that their roots in the Valdeon Valley go back many generations. Unlike the “Gardners,” whose paternal roots sort of get lost in Nova

Scotia after Grandpa Gardner's father, Milton, left the family never to be seen again, the Gonzalo-Casares (Casares being Miguel's mother's side of the family) name goes way back many generations even before Miguel's great grandparents. In fact, there are so many “Gonzalo's” in the little villages that make up the Valdeon Valley that Miguel is probably related somehow to most of them either through his father's family (Gonzales) or his mother's family (Casares)!

Like the Gardner siblings, Miguel comes from a large family consisting of six brothers and one sister. Unfortunately, one of his brothers died at an early age. Miguel's father, Baudilio, owned quite a few parcels of land in the Valdeon Valley; and when he died, he left them to be divided up among his children. One of those parcels of land is where Jean and Miguel's new house now stands.

Not many people know about the Spanish Civil

War that took place between 1936 and 1939. (We'll talk about that war in another issue.) Miguel tells the story about how his parents were courting each other during those dangerous times. Apparently, they were separated for a time, one living in a house whose occupants were affiliated with the “loyalists” and the other living in a village whose inhabitants were “nationalists.” It was a time of great anxiety throughout the country.

Miguel grew up tending sheep, goats and cows, as well as haying on his father's many small properties some of which were high in the mountains. Many men older than Miguel had left the valley for economic reasons and had emigrated to Arizona (and other places) to find work and to send money back home. And so it came to be that when Miguel was 18 years old, he was sponsored by one of his relatives to come to the United States where he found work tending sheep. The rest is, as they say, “history.”



Jean and Miguel on the balcony of their new home in Posada de Valdeon

Miguel has a lot of stories recounting his many different jobs here in the U.S., how he met Jean, and how he became manager of the Ansonia Dairy in Bakersfield, California, the position he currently holds.

Perhaps you're secretly asking yourself, “What in heaven's name did Paul do for four weeks in that remote region of Spain?” Remote it is; but “behind the times” it is not! With the coming of the internet age, the re-

gion is really opening up to backpackers, hikers, tourists; and maybe, sometime in the near future, even ski resorts will be taking their place as a venue for travelers to enjoy!

Since the village of Posada is smack dab in the middle of a national park (Los Picos de Europa), the government of Spain is building a museum right next door to Jean and Miguel's property. That building might be completed two

Vacation of a lifetime in “Los Picos de Europa” in Northern Spain *(continued)*



years or so from now, but it will inevitably open up the area even more and increase land values surrounding it.

My four weeks spent with Jean and Miguel in their “palacio,” as some of the locals call it, simply flew by. Exploring the surrounding countryside and villages, socializing and dining with Miguel’s family, meeting new people in the several bars where people congregate to exchange news, play cards, drink, and eat

“tapas” made each day a brand new adventure.

Perhaps this next little anecdote will serve to illustrate how the villages in the Valdeon Valley are entering into the 21st century. One evening, Jean and I were at “Cumbres,” the relatively new hotel just across the street from Jean and Miguel’s new home. Since Jean’s house is not yet wired for internet, we used the wifi there at the hotel to communicate with everyone via our

phones. Miguel walked in while we were on our phones.

There were some other tourist couples there having drinks and talking. One couple was from Los Angeles and another was from somewhere in the Midwest. Miguel overheard them talking about how beautiful the area is; and Miguel, being the great ambassador for the area that he is, told them about how he was from the region and pointed out his new home just outside the window from where everyone was sitting.

That piqued everyone’s interest and soon a lively conversation began about the history of the area and its people.

Miguel was more than happy to oblige with stories of his upbringing and how he had come to the U.S. Some people had noticed the group of rather non-descript elderly men who regularly gathered outside the bars or in the village square and sat around talking and socializing with each other. One member of the group asked, “Just what do these men who live here do for a living?”

I’m sure they were expecting answers like “farming,” “shepherding,” “growing crops” and things like that. Little did they realize that most of those men, like Miguel himself, had emigrated to America, sent money home over the years,

built several homes, and live in Posada only during the summer months. Many of them flee to Leone, the capital of the province, or return to Madrid during the harsh winter months. They have left a legacy of new homes, bed and breakfasts, and hostels for their descendants to manage as the area really opens up in the next twenty years or so.

Keep an eye on this area of Spain! You might want to visit it soon to experience its breathtaking beauty and unique charm. Staying at “El Palacio” where Jean and Miguel reside during the summer months may very well be the highlight of a most memorable vacation!

Miguel’s sister, Teresa, holding a picture of him when he left Spain at the age of 18 to emigrate to the United States.



Local Peace Corps Volunteer Shares African Adventures

Home From Uganda, JJ Vasko Presents at Cobleigh Library

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By: Amy Ash Nixon, Staff Writer at Caledonian Record

JJ Vasko grew up in the Northeast Kingdom, but the past few years he's been living far away in the African country of Uganda, where he is a volunteer with the Peace Corps.

Vasko, 40, came home to Vermont for a recent visit, and shared his experiences – like living in a hut and teaching Ugandans to read – during a program at the Cobleigh Library.

His mother, Teresa, a retired Lyndon Town school teacher and longtime volunteer at the library and in the community, wore an African-printed fabric blouse brought home by JJ.

The evening program was standing room only, with about 50 people of all ages in attendance. A handful of young people had the most questions for Vasko. He works in a Ugandan school and was patient in answering every question

Vasko offered a brief history of Uganda, spoke about the civil war that tore the country apart before he arrived for his Peace Corps service, and taught those at the library program several words and phrases in the language spoken in the north of Uganda.

Apwoyo means I'm grateful, thank you.

Ben means good, nice, etc., as well as you're welcome.

Ayela pe means no worries.

Wa Cito means we go, let's go.

Wa nen means we see, see you later.

Wot Maher means travel well.

Many people were brutally killed during the civil war, and people still are apprehensive to sit outside in a village around a fire and tell stories as was the custom before, explained Vasko. He said villages were raided and the adults would all be killed and the children would be taken by the attackers.

"There's still quite a lot of animosity



JJ Vasko, a Peace Corps volunteer in Uganda was at the Cobleigh Library in Lyndon recently sharing stories of his experiences in Africa. To his left here is Martha Ellis along with other library patrons listening to Vasko.

over this," said Vasko of what he said was "a 20-year gruesome, brutal civil war."

Vasko shared stories of the beauty of Uganda, of the spirit of the people, of the animals and landscape and the lack of opportunity for work there. He said there is not a lot to incent people to do more to change their plights. Farming is difficult as there is no irrigation, and many times farmers lose what little they have when plants die due to the lack of rain, he explained.

Many of the questions from the group gathered at the Cobleigh Library centered around the exotic foods that

Vasko, who wears his hair wrapped in a turban-style manner, talked about, and showed photos of.

With the civil war behind them, things are relatively peaceful in Uganda today, said Vasko, though the lack of opportunity presents a meager existence for most people. "There are not a lot of jobs," he said.

The money of Uganda also drew interest. One U.S. dollar = 3,500 Ugandan schillings, said Vasko, who said with 2.5 million schillings in his bank account, he is a "schillionaire," drawing laughter.

A meal in the village where he lives costs on average 2000 schillings, Vasko said, and a beer in his village costs even more than a meal. He said cell phone technology has radically changed communications abilities in rural African villages and most everyone has a cell phone.

Many of the meals in Uganda are made up of a starch, such as a root vegetable called posho, and beans and

sauce, said Vasko. He said meat costs more and is eaten less often. There is a type of small bananas that people frequently eat, and Vasko drew a lot of questions when he talked about eating fried grasshoppers and flying ants.

"I'm really happy when I see a carrot at the market," said Vasko. "That's a nice day!" he said of the simple pleasures he once took for granted. There is very little refrigeration, too, in the village where he lives, he said.

People set out a few chairs and cook extra food and that qualifies as a small restaurant in his village, explained Vasko. He said there are about 20 such

