

GARDNER NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020 ~ Volume 23 ~ Issue 90

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Here is a letter that Grandpa Gardner wrote to the Vermont Fish and Game Department when he was 90 years old. Please read it in its entirety so that you can learn and appreciate just what an intuitive conservationist/environmentalist he actually was. His knowledge of the land where he grew up and the animals who lived there is astonishing.

Read for yourself and marvel at how he advocates for new laws surrounding the bounties placed on fisher cats and the fisher cats' rela-

tionship with the porcupine.

"March 29, 1977

On November 5, 1976 I wrote a letter to Edward Kehoe, Commissioner of Vermont Fish and Game Department, explaining my trouble with fisher cats getting caught in my fox traps. Game Warden Dan Gregory had been here to pick up the fifth fisher that made the mistake of getting in my fox trap in closed season on fishers.

Fisher Cat



VS.



Grandpa Gardner opens his well-stocked freezer.

Porcupine



I received a letter from the Department saying that they realized a problem existed; but if they tried to remedy it, "The cure would be worse than the disease." Who could it be worse for? Not the trapper! As it stands (the law), the trapper who obeys this ruling

gets his traps sprung where he might have gotten a fox worth \$50.00 or \$60.00. The trapper brings the intruder out of the woods, calls the game warden who, I expect, turns it into the Department to enrich themselves substantially. (The last fig-

ures that were quoted to me on females was up to \$150.00.) My November 5 catch was a female. What could be more one-sided?

I took a real licking this year after I caught the fisher on November 5th. My experience has been that I am apt to get anoth-

er one in a few days. Not wanting to get another before open season, I turned all my fox traps over so nothing could get in them. I left them that way until December 4th, the open season on fishers. The winter has been especially cold; so, by then, all the sets but two were frozen up. Consequently, I lost a month I might have gotten other game. On the morning of December 27, the day after open season, I found a fisher had been



Above: A fisher cat in the wild.



Left: A taxidermised fisher cat displayed in the main lodge of the NorthWoods Stewardship Center in East Charleston, VT.

caught in one of my sets; but, as the pan sod had swelled on account of the cold, the fisher had been caught only by his foot, which he gnawed off and then got away.

In the last few years I have caught six fishers and have only been able to keep one. There is something wrong! I was brought up to obey the law; also to get unfair laws changed, if possible, which I am trying to do with this one. I will be 90 tomorrow, but my courage is still good.

I understand the fisher was brought into Vermont to kill the porcupine. I would like to give some observations on the porcupine. I live on a farm of over 500 acres, well-wooded, where I was brought up and have owned over 60 years, so I know by observation a lot about the porcupine. The few trees they damage compared to the total number in the forest are very few. The ones they work on the most are the beech tree, which is used mostly for stove wood.

I was talking last week with a man in our town, who is in his 97th year and has owned at one time over 2000 acres. He agreed that my observation was right. I can remember when the porcupine was protected as they were

the only animal that a lost person could kill with a club for food. In other words, it might save a life. You can't say that for a fisher. If it is necessary to get rid of the porcupine, put a bounty on them and let the school children earn a little spending money.

Now I would like to give some observations on the fisher cat. The fisher we know kills partridges, rabbits, birds and many other animals. I have a tree in my apple orchard that is not much good. The apples rot on the tree before they are ripe. Until the fisher began to show up in our town, partridges (as many as six at a time) would feed on the rotten apples as long as they lasted - but not anymore. I have a son-in-law (Editor's Note: Uncle Lyndol Ames) who has a sugar place. He says they used to get all kinds of rabbit tracks, but now he sees hardly a one. It seems to me that the cure, which is the fisher cat, is worse than the disease, which is the porcupine.

In my letter of November 5th, I made the suggestion that the Department pay back half of what they sell the skins for that the trapper turns in. Their reply was that the price of the skins was so high it still would be profitable for him to trap the fisher. My experience has been you don't have to set traps for them. They will get into any set trap regardless of what you use for bait. If not so, why did I catch so many with five or six traps? I think the plan is worth trying. The Department might be surprised. There might be enough more reported to make it fair

to both the trapper and the Department.

In my opinion, the most simple thing to do with the fisher cat is to have the same trapping season as the foxes, mink, muskrat and most other fur bearing animals. It might thin them out some, but we would have more small game; that is without question. As for the porcupine, if it is felt they do too much tree damage, put a bounty on them as I suggested before.

I trust by stating my sad experience as a trapper with the interferences of the fisher cat, it will help the Department to make some needed changes in the law.



W. H. Gardner
Island Pond, VT"

Have you thought
about the article
you're going to write
for the Summer 2020
issue yet?



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Makenzie Parenteau wistfully, fondly, and gratefully remembers “Dinner at Grandma’s”

Makenzie is Rod and Irene Ames' granddaughter. Her parents are Alicia and Yvan. Makenzie's sister is Kylee Parenteau who now lives in Florida. Kylee wrote the lead article in the Winter 2018 issue of the Gardner Newsletter. Makenzie's current article carries on that sibling tradition. Perhaps little brother Jaxson will contribute an article to the Gardner Newsletter sometime in the future.

Makenzie is a freshman at North Country High School and will be 15 on June 15, 2020. She is very active in soccer, track, wrestling and a very good student. Very social, extroverted, has a lot of friends and loves animals

I remember riding in the car all dressed up in my favorite dress on my way to a big white house on a hill. I called this place Grandma's house. I went to Grandma's house a lot as a child, but my favorite time to go was when we had family dinners. For family dinners, my aunts, my uncles, my brother, sister, mom, dad, and of course grandparents would all gather at

their house for a home cooked meal where we would share laughs and crazy stories. Most of the time the family dinners would be on Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter or another holiday, but sometimes we would spontaneously get together just because we felt we needed to.

As a young girl I was very shy and timid towards mostly everyone, but my Grandma she was an exception. I always felt safe and unusually comfortable around her. At these family dinners I remember right when I first arrived, I would immediately hug my Grandma. Her hugs were soft

and warm unlike everyone else's strong squeeze. I couldn't hug my grandmother for long because she was the one to do all the cooking. All her food was good, but her homemade rolls were the best; no one could ever get enough. My Grandma would cook for what felt like hours, but that was probably just my stomach talking. While my Grandma cooked, the rest of my family would prepare everything else like setting the table or just simply entertaining my siblings and me. My uncle would tell jokes that I didn't even understand, but my Grandpa would laugh, and his laugh is more contagious than the flu; so, one way or the other, I would start laughing.

When dinner was finally ready everyone would gather in the dining room. Everyone had their own seat at the table. I sat in between my sister, and of course my Grandma. However, my Grandma could never fully stay seated. She was always up getting more ice for someone's drink or some other absurd request. She always put everyone else's needs before hers. She didn't care if she got one bite of her delicious food. All she wanted was for everyone to be happy. Everyone was always happy. Before we started digging into the loads of food, we would say grace. We never forgot to thank God for the food and family. Everyone would hold hands and begin to say grace. I remember my Grandma's hands were as soft as velvet. I felt so safe holding her hand. I would say I never wanted to let go, but I was too eager to begin eating to wish for that. After grace we all began eating.

I was a very picky eater as a child, but my Grandma always made sure that I had something to eat that I liked. That was mostly ranch dressing and cucumbers. My Grandpa and I loved ranch dressing; so after I was done using it, I would always make sure to pass it down to him. After dinner we would all clean up, but mostly my Aunt Jackie and Grandma did that. During this time, I would patiently wait for my Grandma to come and talk to me. I spent most of my waiting on my Grandpa's lap looking at some pictures of old cars or an animal he saw in his backyard. Truthfully, these pictures never interested me, but I loved talking with my Grandpa, so it was worth it.

By the time the cleanup was finished, my parents had already decided it was time to leave for home. I was obviously sad because I wanted to stay and talk with my Grandma. A compromise of me coming back to Grandma's house the follow-



ROD AND IRENE AMES, MAKENZIE'S GRANDPARENTS

ing weekend was always made because I never wanted to leave. Their home made me feel safe just like I felt when I would hold Grandma's hand or sit on Grandpa's lap.

Now that I am older, and my Grandma has very advanced Alzheimer's disease, and both Grandma and Grandpa spend most of the year in Florida, I wish I could go back to just one more family dinner. Just one session of sitting on Grandpa's lap. Just one more prayer to God thanking him for all that He has given us while holding hands with Grandma. Just one more family dinner back when my only worry was if there was going to be enough ranch dressing for Grandpa after I was done using it. Every time an eyelash falls, or I throw a penny into a well, I wish to go back to a family dinner on a Friday night with the people who I love.

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 • "Makenzie's great grandma (Aunt Nita) and great great grandma (Olive Gardner) also made wonderful and memorable dinners! Can you sense a pattern here?"
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Ed Kehoe named “Outdoorsman of the Century”

Nearly everyone today benefits from his leadership and vision

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Here is a character portrait of the legendary Ed Kehoe to whom Grandpa Gardner addressed his November 5th, 1976 letter. This blurb celebrates Mr. Kehoe's entry into the Vermont Sports Hall of Fame and lists many of his great achievements.

VERMONT SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Edward F. ‘Ed’ Kehoe

Rutland/Montpelier

Outdoors

Inducted 2013

Nearly every one of the more than 100,000 Vermonters who hunt and fish today continue to benefit from Ed Kehoe’s leadership and vision. His many achievements are difficult to quantify, but their cumulative impact cannot be

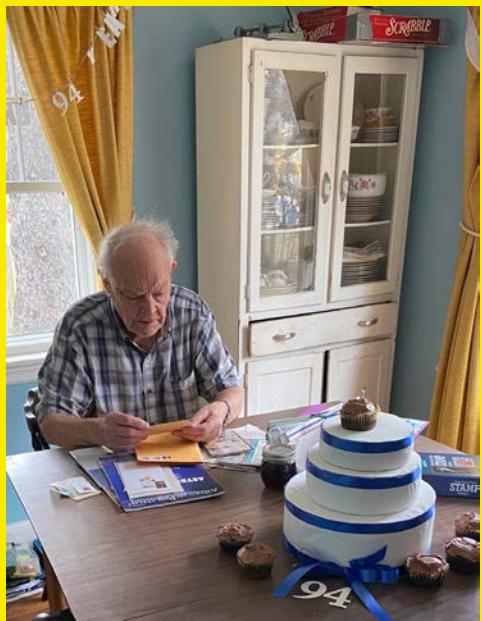
overstated.

The native of Rutland County served 17 years as the commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. His leadership directed the agency through changing times, including the transformation from primarily a law enforcement and fish-stocking agency into a modern, science-driven fish and wildlife management agency. Among the new or revamped programs Kehoe spearheaded were: starting conservation camps for young Vermonters; introducing the mandatory Hunter Education Program; overseeing reintroduction of wild turkeys, perhaps Vermont’s greatest wildlife success story; starting the Lake Champlain trout and salmon restoration programs; and pioneering fish habitat improvements.

Kehoe started the Green Mountain Conservation Camps at Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and Buck Lake in Woodbury. The camps have introduced tens of thousands of young Vermonters to the outdoors and wildlife conservation, and have since been emulated by other state wildlife agencies in

the Northeast. The Lake Bomoseen camp and conservation education center were posthumously named in Kehoe's honor.

He was named "Outdoorsman of the Century" by the Rutland Herald in 1999 for his many contributions to Vermont's fish and wildlife resources and its hunting and fishing traditions.



Uncle Raymond reviewing all the "old" and "new" stamps he received as birthday gifts.



Cousin Gloria Parson's home-crafted masks, part of her contribution to the COV-19 crisis.

Happy Birthday to Raymond Gardner who turned 94 on March 23rd

Uncle Raymond celebrated his 94th birthday by "sheltering-in-place"

As a sign of the times we are now living in, Cousin Gloria Parsons informed the **Gardner Newsletter** that her Dad, Uncle Raymond, celebrated his 94th birthday by "sheltering-in-place." Family, friends, and well-wishers gathered in front of his living room window to sing "Happy Birthday" and to present him with a cake.

In a particularly touching gesture, Uncle Raymond's next door neighbor, Beth-Ann Witkowski, posted this message on her Facebook page.

"My neighbor's 94th birthday party was supposed to be tomorrow and it has been canceled. He is a great person, a WW2 vet, enjoys playing chess at the senior center, and he worked on the postal service trains. It is not unlikely that you have seen him walking around Reading on his daily walks. He has remained an avid stamp collector and it was his only birthday request. If you would like to donate one or more stamps, old or new, I will put a box out tomorrow on my front porch. Please PM me for my address. I will hold on to them long enough for the risk of viral spread to pass, put on my gloves and bring them to him. It would be a great way for him to pass his social distancing while he misses seeing his family."

According to Cousin Gloria, many people responded and he is now happily ensconced at home pursuing his favorite hobby - stamp collecting. It's still not too late to send him some more stamps!

SHOULD WE POSTPONE THE 2020 GARDNER FAMILY REUNION?

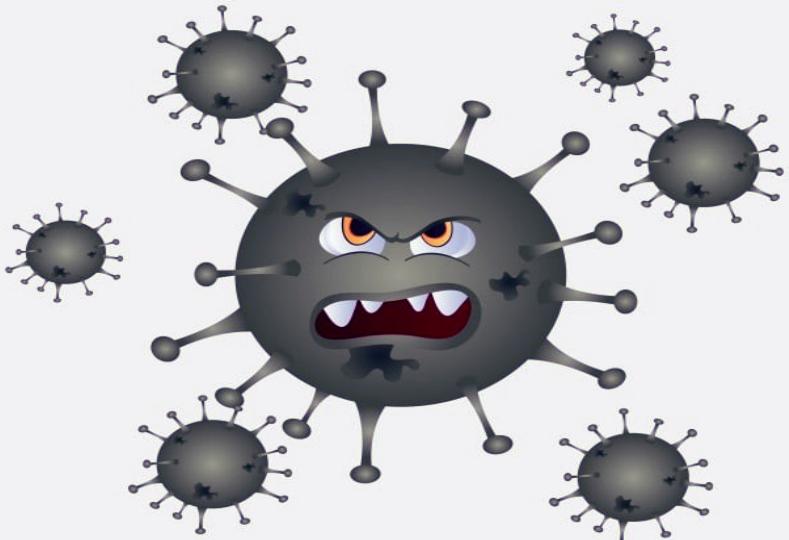
VOTE FOR YOUR OPTION!

OPTION 1: Postpone the Gardner Family Reunion until Labor Day Weekend subject to the NorthWoods Stewardship Center's availability.

OPTION 2: Postpone the Gardner Family Reunion until July, 2021.

Post your preferred option on "The Gardners" group page on Facebook or contact Paul Gardner or Rod Ames directly.

Lorraine Shelton says ... When the Coronavirus finally exhausts itself and the danger is over, let's do something good for our country. Let's spend our vacation in the USA, eat in local restaurants, buy American products, buy local meats and veggies, and support local businesses. These businesses are going to find it very difficult to get back on their feet and survive without our help. They're suffering badly now. Our products are some of the best in the world. This country is one of the most beautiful.



Facebook Cogitations on Covid-19 Coronavirus

Arthur Metcalf says ... Sorry bub, but the buck has to stop somewhere! Not certain who flubbed the response, but the response has not been bigly. I don't know who decided that the WHO protocols weren't good enough, but ours were NOT better. We succeed and excel at plenty; but when history looks at this administration's strategy, future generations will give the Caesar's thumbs down. I give two with two extended middle fingers.

Cindy Gardner says ... When your 8th grader finds out no more school for the rest of the year, the tears start to flow. She's bummed. She will miss her last band concert, last chorus concert, last softball season, and last dance recital at the school she has gone to for 10 years now. I know it's to keep everyone safe and healthy. It just sucks! I feel bad for all the 8th graders and seniors. I told Abby we will make it special one way or another. Even if it's in August!

Donna Griffes says ... As the signs of the times lead us to believe, the return of Jesus could be soon. I believe we need to get the Gospel message out! My name is [Donna Griffes](#) and until the Good Lord calls me away from this world to come home, I want to make it clear that I believe in Jesus Christ as the True Lord and Savior. Despite the fact that I am human and I fail sometimes (a lot), I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, sacrificed on the cross and died for our sins. He loves us all dearly (far more than we deserve) and forgives our sins. His Word says "whoever believes in Me , will not perish, but have everlasting life.

This is the best challenge I have seen on Facebook; so, if the Holy Spirit moves you, just copy, replace my name with yours, and make this your status update.

Can I get an Amen for being a believer in The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Emily Nuse says ... Self-quarantining is forcing us to use up what we have and get creative so we can limit grocery store trips as much as possible. I made a venison roast and home-made bread the other day. Today, I made sandwiches with that bread and thinly sliced venison, caramelized onions, a little pepper jack, & Dijon mustard. I used the waffle iron to toast/press them. Yum!