



# GARDNER NEWSLETTER

This issue celebrates the mother/daughter team of Raylene Ludgate and her daughter, Megan. Raylene is the recipient of the prestigious award and Megan authored the article about Aunt Lois' birthday party. Megan is a sophomore at Simmons College in Boston, MA.

als or teams who have gone far beyond the standards defined by Cornell's Skills for Success.

"These awards go to staff who consistently go above and beyond the call in their day-to-day activities," Boor said, "and we are happy to highlight their dedication and accomplishments."

The service-minded award is given to the team or individual who consistently reaches out to be helpful in a timely and responsive manner, strives to satisfy internal and external customers; and is diplomatic, courteous, accessible and welcoming.

This year this award was presented to two individuals, including Raylene Ludgate, youth education coordinator at Cornell Plantations.

Ludgate has been at Cornell for more than 30 years. Always smiling and enthusiastic, she tirelessly works to create educational programs for area youth and their families. No matter the specific task, Boor noted Ludgate remains focused on one thing: teaching those around her about the beauty and wonder of nature.

In addition to the numerous day-to-day programs that she oversees, Ludgate is responsible for both the "Wildflower Explorations" program and the "Judy's Day Family Learning Festival," two programs that reach thousands of people. She has built an amazing team of community volunteers, Plantations staff and faculty from across Cornell to make these events work. Her programs are

## Cousin Raylene racks up yet another award in service to Cornell University

### Plantations Youth Educator Raylene Ludgate Honored

This past December, Cornell Plantations received the Town/Gown (ToGo) award from Cornell University as part of the *Kids Discover the Trail* program. The awards recognize collaborations between university staff, faculty, and students and not-for-profit organizations in Ithaca that have made significant contributions to the general welfare of the community. Kids Discover The Trail (KDT) was started by the *Ithaca Public Education Initiative* (IPEI), and members of the *Discovery Trail*, and was created to bring public school children to the Discovery Trail sites free of charge. Plantations' role in KDT is our spring "*Wildflower Explorations*" program led by Raylene Ludgate, which serves 600 third grade students in the Ithaca and Trumansburg School districts.

## Plantations Youth-ed Leader Ludgate Honored for Decades of Inspiration

On Nov. 10, Dean Kathryn Boor, Cornell Cooperative Extension Director and Associate Dean Chris Watkins, and more than 100 guests celebrated the College of Agriculture and Life Science's best and brightest at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Research, Extension and Staff Awards.

Part of the program was dedicated to the Core Value Staff Awards, created in 2010 and designed to recognize individu-

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These two photos are of Cornell University. The top one is a panoramic view of the campus and the bottom one is the College of Agriculture's "Quad."



Dean Kathryn Boor awards Cousin Raylene Prestigious Honor

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consistently ranked highest in satisfaction, quality and enjoyment; not only by participants, but also by those who assist her in running them.

Boor called her an excellent communicator who has a unique way of engaging people and seeking input that is genuine, supportive, responsive, and results in outcomes that surpass everyone's expectations. Even when volunteers offer up the wildest of suggestions for program activities, Ludgate responds favorably, sees a gem in the idea and works to bring it to fruition.



## What Do Teachers Make?



This article is taken from the book by Taylor Mali *What Teachers Make: In Praise of the Greatest Job in the World.*

**A searing retort puts a dinner companion in his place when he asks ...WHAT DO TEACHERS MAKE?**

*From: Reader's Digest, Feb. 2015*

## What Do Teachers Make?

*TEACHING, the chosen profession of many members of the Gardner Family: Grandma Gardner, Aunt Ruth, Uncle Clayton, Aunt Elinor, Cousin Gloria, Cousin Teresa, Cousin Jean and Second Cousin Rebecca Jacobs come to mind right now. (Let me know if there are others.)*

*Here is Taylor Mali's answer to a man who was denigrating the teaching profession during polite dinner conversation.*

**HE SAYS** the problem with teachers is: *What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?* He reminds the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers: *Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.*

I decide to bite my tongue instead of his and resist the temptation to remind the dinner guests that it's also true what they say about lawyers. Because we're eating, after all, and this is polite conversation.

*I mean, you're a teacher, Taylor. Be honest, What do you make?*

And I wish he hadn't done that-and asked me to be hon-

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## Never Too Old for Cake

By: Megan Ludgate

On September 22nd, 2014, Teresa Vasko posted on my Facebook wall: "Aunt Lois will be 97 on Nov 6th. Put it on your calendar to send a card." I did put it in my calendar, and wrote out a card to send in the mail. Then I heard a rumor that Teresa was organizing a surprise party for my Great Aunt Lois and I made plans to travel from Boston to Vermont to celebrate.

Great Aunt Lois is certainly a blessing in our family. Of ten siblings in my grandfather's generation, three are still alive: my Aunt Beulah, my Aunt Lois and my grandfather, Raymond Gardner. Years ago, Lois introduced my grandfather and my grandmother. They went on to have six kids, while Lois didn't have any. My mother remembers Aunt Lois coming to help her parents with chores, but remembers more fondly the time spent at her Aunt Lois' house playing on the salt flats and doing crafts.

On Monday, November 3rd, I mailed Aunt Lois' birthday card. On Friday, November 7th, I got on a three hour bus from Boston to Hanover, New Hampshire, where Uncle John picked me up. We drove another hour north to Teresa and John's house in Lyndonville, Vermont. During the ride, John and I chatted about photography. I had recently started and 365 day photo project (I'm posting a photo everyday for a year here: <http://365project.org/ludgate/365>) and John was interested in astrophotography.

Teresa Vasko had spent weeks organizing a party for Aunt Lois. Event reservations at the East Side Restaurant are tricky to obtain, decorations needed to be planned and people needed to be contacted.

Saturday morning, November 8th, Teresa, John and I were bustling around gathering the decorations for the surprise party. After weeks of planning, the day had finally arrived. On our way, we stopped at a local flower shop and pick up the flower arrangement Teresa had ordered. We arrived at East Side at 12:30pm and began setting up flowers and decorations. Soon there was a room full of over twenty family and friends gathered to surprise Aunt Lois.

Aunt Beulah was in charge of getting the birthday girl to the restaurant. At 1 o'clock someone on look-out duty shouted, "She's here!". As she walked about the corner, expecting a quiet table with her and Beulah, she could see the room full of people. I held up my camera and snapped a photo of her expression as she realized we were all there for her.

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We all ate a delicious meal, and then turned our attention to the two beautiful cakes the East Side had made for Aunt Lois. The restaurant attendant lit some candles, and I snapped a few more pictures as Aunt Lois blew them out.

It was a wonderful afternoon full of family, friends, laughter and catching up. During the afternoon gathering, Lois said, "You could have waited for my 100th for this!"

We will celebrate then also, Aunt Lois!

To see the pictures of Aunt Lois' 97th birthday party that Megan took with her cell phone, go to the Gardner Newsletter website at this URL: [http://www.gardnernews.org/lois'\\_page.htm](http://www.gardnernews.org/lois'_page.htm)



Above: Megan Ludgate's Facebook Profile Photo

The Gardner Newsletter is delighted that the second generation "Gardner Cousins" are taking an interest in the newsletter.

Megan's article about Aunt Lois' birthday party (which we celebrated in our last issue) is a great start to that end. Let's hear more from Megan's cousins!



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## Letter from Aunt Ruth

By: Paul Gardner

Rifling through some old Gardner Newsletter clippings the other day, I ran across a letter that Aunt Ruth had written to me in March, 1998. That was a month after the very first issue of the Gardner Newsletter had been published, the Winter 1998 edition. Back then it was called Gardner Family Forum & Gazette.

Aunt Ruth wanted to contribute something to the next issue, so she sent this letter to me:

Island Pond, VT, March 1998

Dear Paul,

I've been intending to get to you and give you something for the Gazette.

Remember when you, Jean and Linda stayed with us up in North East, Ox Bow Road? Dick and Ruth Anne were with us, but Geri came to us the next February. Dick slept upstairs in the attic that was unfinished.

I had to get after Jean - she worked and helped so much I thought she needed to have more time to play and have some fun. Linda and Ruth Anne played with the guinea hens and they tried to fly off the roof like they did!

Have been trying to write about the Gardner family. One funny incident happened when I came home from somewhere and washed the kids' hair. The boys had built a crazy cart with big wheels. They all got in the cart with their hair not rinsed and bunched up on their heads at ridiculous angles. There used to be pictures of all this, but can't be found now.

Another quite funny incident took place when your father and a neighbor wired the toilet seats in the old back-house out in the shed. They they set the power on when Grandpa and Grandma Gardner were sitting there! Earl did a lot of crazy things that kept excitement going.

Guess this is all I can write today, but will try to get some pictures tucked in.

With love, Ruth



Here is a great picture of Aunt Ruth in a reflective mood. You can see this picture with high resolution by going to Ruth's memorial page on the Gardner Newsletter website using this URL:

<http://www.gardnernews.org/RuthAmyMetcalf.htm>



## What Do Teachers Make?

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est- because, you see, I have this policy about honesty and ass kicking: If you ask for it, then I have to let you have it. You want to know what I make?

I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor and an A- feel like a slap in the face. *How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best.*

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. *No, you may not work in groups. No, you may not ask a question. Why won't I let you go to the bathroom? Because you're bored. And you don't really have to go to the bathroom, do you?*

I make parents tremble in fear when I call home: *Hi, this is Mr. Mali. I hope I haven't called at a bad time; I just wanted to talk to you about something your son said today. To the biggest bully in the grade, he said, "Leave the kid alone. I still cry sometimes; don't you? It's no big deal." And that was the noblest act of courage I have ever seen.*

I make parents see their chil-

dren for who they are and what they can be.

You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them write. I make them read, read, read. I make them spell *definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful* over and over and over again until they will never misspell either one of those words again. I make them show all their work in math and hide it on their final drafts in English.

I make them understand that if you've got *this (a brain)*, then you follow *this (a heart)*, and if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you give them *this (the finger)*.

Here, let me break it down for you, so you know what I say is true: Teachers make a *difference*.

Now, what about you?

