

A friend of mine at work points out that I'm kind of "earthy crunchy". I tell her it's a long family tradition.

Anyone who watched the Warren/Lane clan out for a walk in years past must have found us a pretty strange bunch. Some of us with our necks craned to look up in trees, some of us hunched over the ground, some of us staring intently into a clump of bushes. We were always examining some critter or plant nearby. Luckily there are a couple level-headed folks in the crowd who watch where we're going and keep us from walking off an embankment into the Schuylkill River!

There's a current of curiosity and lifelong education that runs through our family. Grandma has been a model of this for some of us. My Grandma in 1924 graduated high school in Mt. Joy and headed by train for Goucher College in Baltimore. I think that was an achievement for a young woman in the 1920s. She took her education farther. She studied at Woods Hole. And she attended Radcliffe, and achieved a masters' degree in 1931. She taught biology at Smith College and at Hood College. She taught until she married. But she kept an analytic view of the natural world in years to come. She's an intelligent woman, and curiosity has been woven into the fabric of her daily life.

There are probably lots of mischievous little boys who would get a big kick from finding a really creepy bug and saving it in a jar to scare the daylights out of their grandmother. Well, we saved those bugs for Grandma too. But we didn't do it to for the fright reaction (my mom was better for that). We did it because Grandma could tell us what the bug's name was. If she didn't know it from memory, she would have an Insect Field Guide ready. But lots of times, she'd not only know the common name, she'd give us the Latin name as well. And, if you stood still long enough she'd sometimes launch into a song about the bug that she had memorized when she was in college.

Anyway, that ability to tell a couple facts about a bug was pretty infectious for a couple little boys, and started us down a long path of interest in nature or science, as it probably did for her own children. But it was one case among many where Grandma led by example, by showing curiosity, studying topics in depth, challenging herself in her

reading, making these things enjoyable and a way of life rather than a chore.

I could go on about her other interests – she has been active in book and church study groups and probably has a book tucked in her wheelchair right now; she has researched an extensive family history through official records, family letters, and anecdotes, so that folks who lived 150 years ago seem like people we knew personally. She's always excited about what she's learned and shares it aloud with whoever is nearest, whether they are hanging on her every word, unsuspecting, or asleep.

I'm sure this seems to her like a lot of fuss about things that were just part of daily life to her, and that is exactly my point. See, these habits and characteristics that are part of your daily life, these are the ones that really influence. Maybe this curiosity and lifelong education are traits of her generation – I don't know. But what could be a better influence to have on your family? So on this occasion where we're so blessed to have great grandchildren, grandchildren, and children gathered to celebrate Grandma's 100th, what better way, I think, for me to reflect on her life than to think of this thread that connects us still today.

Here's to Grandma, as she enters her 101st year!