



# MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR



As always, this year has been a busy and eventful time for the Bainbridge's.

In January we went up north to snowmobile with our grandson Loren just after a large storm. There was brilliant sunshine and about 12 inches of snow on the ground. The experience was unbeatable -- like driving through a Christmas card. It was some of the best snowmobiling either of us have experienced. It was also the last snowmobiling of the year because the next day both machines broke down.

Early in the year Sandy's folks were intimating that they might be moving back to Minnesota from Virginia. We knew they were planning on coming for Christmas and felt that we had better be prepared to have accommodations for an extended stay in case they went house hunting. Sandy suggested that Bob could put a bathroom in the basement and then there would be adequate room and privacy for all parties. Since this was not in our original plans for home improvements, Bob grumbled a bit before he escalated the task into a complete basement finishing project. Last year Bob, attempting to correct a basement water problem, regraded the ground near the house and placed poly and rock all around the perimeter. Sandy, however, insisted on saving the bushes in front of the house. Heavy rains in the late spring and early summer allowed water to leak through the holes in the poly that Bob had to leave for those bushes and made nice puddles on the basement floor. This allowed Bob and the carpenters to splash around during construction. Needless to say, Bob grumbled some more -- quite colorful in his description, alliteration, and adjective/adverb combinations. The bushes are now gone and the water problem appears to be fixed. This landscaping and basement construction activity lasted from Spring until late Fall.

Bob's family is quite old and is requiring more intensive care and management. His 91 year old uncle, Harley, passed away in June. He broke his hip in the spring and went into a nursing home for rehabilitation, but never got the old zip back. Bob's 98 year old aunt also went into a nursing home this year after a fall. Although she can't walk unassisted, she got her learners permit on a wheelchair before her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday in October. She seems to have accepted her new abode and her spirits are up once again.

This summer, Sandy's friends, Serena and Tom, came to visit from Cleveland. They stayed at a resort in Fairbault and invited us down for a picnic. Sandy decided to bring potato salad and cookies and Bob decided to take the motorcycle. Believe it or not, you can transport cookies and potato salad on a motorcycle and not have a disaster! Bob helped their 5 year old son Troy catch his first fish. We had a great visit, good food, and a beautiful day.



In late August, we decided to take a touring vacation and selected Nova Scotia as the destination. We drove the truck and finally got to use our camper which we have owned for three years but have never used. Sandy planned the itinerary with military precision. It was a lot of driving but we had a wonderful time. We drove through Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia and saw rugged coastlines, beautiful rolling hillsides, quaint villages, lots of churches, and met many friendly people. Campers, in particular, are very friendly folk. Sandy did not see enough lighthouses (her passion) and grumbled that they put them out in the ocean on islands rather than near the highway -- very inconsiderate! Coming back, we drove through Maine and stopped at Acadia National Park. The park is interesting, but Bar Harbor, the town nearby, is the most glaring example of a shopping mecca for yuppie tourists that we have ever seen. It was an experience all its own - which we drove through and gaped at, but did not partake of. In New York we followed the freeway which parallels the Erie Canal and stopped in Lockport to view some of the original locks. These inland waterways provide insight about the industrial revolution in America and its progress inland from the coast -- fascinating for Bob, the closet historian and civil engineer.

We went on to Niagara Falls. The Falls, of course were spectacular, but the town of Niagara Falls, Canada has become an overbuilt and tasteless tourist trap.

Driving back through Michigan, we happened on a small town of Frankenmuth which has 'Bronner's Christmas Wonderland' - 15 Acres of Christmas displays and the largest Christmas store in the world. Sandy loved it. Bob couldn't believe it! Don't miss it if you're in the area.

In October, Sandy went to Virginia to visit her folks. They are planning their move back to Minnesota from Virginia. They are coming for a visit during Christmas and will be looking for a home during that time.

Bob has just returned from his first trip to Japan on business. Sandy continues to travel for business and dreams of a different position which would not have so much travel. In the meantime, Bob still muses about early retirement, in which case both of us may just throw caution to the wind and start up or buy a business. But then, who knows????

We are pleased to announce that we will be Grandparents again next June. We are hoping for a girl, but obviously will spoil whatever we get! Just so it's healthy.

Hope you and yours have a wonderful Christmas and a joyous and prosperous new year!



*Sandy & Bob Bainbridge*