

1994

# MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR



Dear Friends, Once again it has been an eventful year for the Bainbridges with at least an equal share of negative events balancing out the more pleasant occurrences.

Early thawing in February caused water to collect and refreeze near the cabin up North. As we were leaving, Sandy slipped on the glare ice, fell and broke her wrist. It was a fairly bad break with much splintering. But after two settings, (one surgical) and seven weeks in cast, she recovered with full use of her hand and only a slight deformity at the wrist. Since then, Bob nags at her to walk with arms out and feet apart for better balance. Sandy protests to this "Frankenstein" style of walking as it certainly isn't in keeping with the Emily Post method of proper carriage for a Lady - but then again, its better than another broken something.

Late Spring and early Summer found the Bainbridges the victims of the economy and corporate restructuring. Both Bob and Sandy were laid off of their jobs of many years - within six weeks of each other. Following the initial shock of the circumstance, there has been a sense of relief of not having to travel for Sandy, and a bittersweet sense of parting for Bob. He had been with his company from its startup days until it was acquired by NCR and finally by AT&T. Contemplating the future has brought about a period of reflection for both of us followed by a sense of renewal as we examine our skills and strengths, and explore the opportunities for new ventures in our quest to get back on our feet. We have sent out enough resume's to choke a horse, but find almost universally that we are deemed to be overqualified (too old), out of the price/salary range (too old), or just not being the right fit for the position (too old). This would be depressing as the dickens if it were not that we know of so many other people in the same boat. Fortunately, the two of us are fairly resilient and are determined to turn all of these lemons into lemonade.

We have evaluated many businesses (50+) as potential buyers -- all of which were represented by the seller or broker as being "just ready to take off" (so why are they for sale?). As we are looking, we are getting fairly good at examining these businesses and what to look for, as well as how to value them. This in itself is almost more fun than buying the business! But, as they say, that doesn't pay the rent.

We have been told that it typically takes 18 months to find the right opportunity so we are exploring other possibilities. We have decided that perhaps more education would give us some advantages. Sandy, being intrigued by business valuations, is going to begin a CPA refresher course in hopes of taking the CPA exam in May. She has already started to do some part-time work for a CPA, and eventually hopes to establish a business offering accounting and business valuation services. Bob, just finished a course on computer network engineering -- no, don't ask what that is--Sandy just waves her hands and her eyes glaze over when Bob starts to talk about technical stuff. Anyway, that knowledge will aid him if he decides to do some consulting work. Bob, who likes to keep several balls in the air at once, is also seriously beginning to work on an idea he has for a technology related start-up company. It will be interesting to find out what next year's Christmas letter will tell about this coming year!!

Early this Spring, Sandy caught a bad case of gardening fever, caused by the annual influx of garden and seed catalogs in the mail. Much to Bob's chagrin, she ordered dozens/hundreds (the quantity depends of who is telling the story) of perennials to plant in new gardens she established in front of the house. Since we removed the landscaping plants and bushes last year due to water problems in the basement, she has been fretting about the fact that the foundation looked bare. Having your hands in dirt is wonderful therapy, especially when you're out of work! Anyway, most of the plants bloomed and even looked pretty good. The catalog company discovered a good repeat customer in Sandy who kept ordering more merchandise. She promised to swear off buying anything more after each order. She also became enlightened about such things as slugs and root rot in the back yard shade garden. Given that our yard is primarily clay, she has done well in getting her gardens to grow!

In our last Christmas letter, we reported that we had fixed our basement water problem. In late April, we had some heavy rains and the water started seeping in at one spot and then marched across the floor with a vengeance covering almost the entire basement floor. Similar to last year, Bob grumbled and was able to keep up his reputation for colorful description, alliteration, and adjective/adverb combinations. He developed a new theory about why the water was leaking in and hired a "mudjacker" who drilled holes in the existing driveway, garage, and front porch and pumped concrete into the hollow spaces underneath. Although we've had no more water problems during the summer we will wait until next Spring. Stay tuned for an update next Christmas.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, we became the proud grandparents of our second grandchild - a girl named Taylor Lorraine. Of course she's beautiful. Sandy is the most doting for now, but once Taylor can walk and babble, Grandpa Bob is sure to be wrapped around her little finger!

Sandy's parents put their home in Virginia up for sale this summer in an effort to move back to Minnesota. With no more family in Virginia, its lonesome for the folks out there. Sandy went out for two weeks this summer to help her mom clean, and have a garage sale.

Summer found us visiting the lake as usual, and feeling somewhat carefree, and guilty for not having jobs to go back to on Monday mornings. One advantage is that it allowed us to get closer to nature. We got so close to nature, in fact, that a deer ran into our van as we drove down the road to our cabin. Normally, people run into or hit the deer with their vehicle, but instead the deer ran full tilt into the side of the fender. This didn't make either us or the deer feel particularly good. However, the deer seemed to recover, and after some costly repairs, so did the car.

This fall, knowing that Bob's mother was losing weight and becoming more and more isolated and depressed, we convinced her to move into an assisted living residence. She's in a brand new building just three miles from us. She gets her meals, has activities, and her own apartment. She has gained weight, made friends, and seems to be enjoying herself again. Her short term memory is still poor, but at least her health and spirits are better.



In the meantime, being would-be wheelers and dealers, please note that we have converted our old phone number to a fax line. So if you need to call us, please use the new number:

Regular Phone	612/628-0015 (new phone #)
Fax line	612/628-4034 (old phone #)

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.!

*Sandy and Bob Bainbridge*