

MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR



Christmas Greetings to all

1995 has been a year of new beginnings for the Bainbridges.

Last December, Sandy embarked on a rather ambitious undertaking. She enrolled in an intensive accounting review course to sit for the CPA exam in May. The course work was very demanding and she studied into the wee hours most nights for six months while working full days as an independent contractor for a small CPA firm, and commuting 40 miles each way to work. According to Bob, she was tired, grumpy, unpleasant, unreasonable, stressed out, and generally not fun to be around. The hard work did pay off, however, as she passed all four parts of the exam with very good scores (Bob's note -- actually the second highest score in the state and top ranked nationally!). Apparently self abuse felt so good that she decided to take an additional four week review course and sat for another professional exam - the CMA (Certified Management Accountant) test. Again she easily passed all parts of this test. Needless to say, she is very pleased with her accomplishments. A reception was held in November and Sandy was honored, awarded a plaque and had her picture published in the CPA journal. It seemed to make all of the studying worthwhile.

Meanwhile, during all of Sandy's study, Bob was busy pursuing a new business venture -- laying the groundwork of market research, technical research, and networking to launch a new company. The concept involves developing a sophisticated computer on-line data access service with information that consumers could use and access from their own home. While this may not sound like rocket science to those of you familiar with existing on-line services, the features of this new service make it a truly unique offering which will have a high demand.

About the time that Sandy finished with her tests in mid-June Bob was ready to hire his first employee. He found a programmer with "the right stuff" and voila! - we had a business complete with an employee operating out of our basement. Bob has spent most of his time working on product development, presentations, research, networking, washing floors, and emptying wastebaskets. Sandy came on board full time in July and has been busy doing financial planning, developing cash flow forecasts, projections, tax planning, cleaning bathrooms, and all of the other mundane record keeping tasks necessary with starting a business. We hired a second employee in October and she has been an extraordinary contributor. Everyone is excited and enthused, sometimes coming to work at 6:30AM and not leaving until 8:30PM, and voluntarily working on Saturday and Sunday.

Bob and Sandy both agree that there are some drawbacks to working out of your home - particularly in the area of privacy and the ability to leave work behind. We are presently looking for a storefront sales office to rent, and hope to be open for business in January 1996. Taking on such a massive project is not for the faint at heart, as we have come to discover. Every day is long hours, and never ending projects and problems. But it should pay off with a solid business in the end.

Needless to say, with the new business, we did not take a vacation this year. Nor did we get to our lake place much. All such activities are on hold until we get the new business off the ground and stabilized. Bob did go hunting this fall, however, and got a nice sized doe on opening day. We like venison, so are always pleased when the hunt is successful.

Sandy's folks came to visit in September, and while they were here, they bought a house in Golden Valley - just four blocks from Sandy's Uncle Waldo and his wife. The folks have their home in Virginia up for sale and hope to move back to Minnesota in December or January. Their new home is near their old church, so they can get back in with their old friends that they left 11 years ago. It will be good to have them back again.

Carla and Scott, in an attempt to build a new home, got us involved in a land transaction involving estate issues, bankruptcy concerns and an unbelievable amount of tax and contractor liens. Bob, was able to pick his way through this legal minefield and now the kids are building their new home. As you would expect, our grandchildren are some of the smartest, best looking, best behaved(?) children and we enjoy watching them grow. Loren is in 4th grade and is excelling in math, while Taylor is 18 months and is developing into a charming, flirtatious little spitfire.



Bob's mother is 91 and is living in an assisted living facility about 3 miles from us. Last month she developed a bloodclot in her leg which extended from her lower calf to her navel. Miraculously the doctors were able to dissolve the clot with medication, and after 12 days in the hospital, she returned to her own place, and is doing well. She suffers from short term memory loss, and so while she is generally lucid, she doesn't remember from one moment to the next. But, at 91 she's in remarkable health and doing darn good.

Bob, as promised in last years letter, reports that his ongoing effort to fix our basement water problem has met with good results, but not a complete cure. We still get about a pint of water during prolonged rainy spells that extend over several days. He reluctantly acknowledges that he actually might have to listen to Sandy and put up gutters.

This year we planted our garden with the notion of making salsa. The local deer like to dine on our tomatoes, but were kind enough to leave some for us to process. We also grew cayenne, jalapeno, hot Hungarian and chili peppers in our garden. Surprisingly, the deer left the peppers alone! Sandy added onions, cilantro, and other spices for our first batch of homemade salsa. One taste and "Yip-Yip-Yip-Yippee" Ho boy was that hot!!!!!! The salsa is delicious, but is best diluted by at least one half with commercial mild salsa sauce.

Sandy had her annual physical and came back with a doctor's report that she had low iron, and that she was "mildly overweight". Both of these tidbits were regarded with some disdain as she had to endure Bob's kidding about "time to take Geritol". The truth is, working at home, both Bob and Sandy have put on the pounds. The accessibility to snacks, and the lack of exercise from sitting at a desk all day have really taken their toll (not to mention all of the chips that went with that hot homemade salsa)! And now its the holidays with more rich, fattening goodies which you only get "once a year". Looks like our New Year's resolution better be to not bite into anything except to "bite the bullet" and try to watch the waistline while we can still find it!



God has blessed us and we are happy and doing well. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Sandy and Bob Bainbridge