

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

December 2001



Christmas Greetings!

Once again it is time to update our friends and family on our comings and goings.



A Big Holiday Hello to friends and family. As we reflect on the year, we celebrate the good stuff of life, and learn to cope with the inevitable. We hope that 2001 had more plusses than minuses for you and yours and that you'll once again forgive us for sharing our foibles and adventures.

Surfboards and Ukelele's

Last year, Carla gave us tickets to Hawaii. So off we went in January to beautiful Hawaii. It was a lovely trip and we visited four islands during our three week stay. Unfortunately the weather was rainy and cooler than we expected. Bob enjoyed snorkeling and became hooked. He even got Sandy to try a couple of times. Sandy's romantic notions of lying on the beach peeling a Mango, soaking up sun or watching the sunset from a seaside table at a fine restaurant collided with Bob's notions of snorkeling and more snorkeling. We drove/toured extensively on each of the four islands and saw a lot of local culture that many tourists don't see in Waikiki -- McDonalds fish and noodles, puu-puus (raw fish appetizers) at Safeway, abandoned sugar mills, canned squid at Walmart, unmapped roads across lava flows, cliffside beaches, etc. Sandy sputtered as Bob blissfully went where she thought they should not go.



Coming back, we flew Fish class! Two nights before we left, we were driving near a deserted beach and spotted a large glass fishing float drifting offshore. Bob thought it would make a great souvenir. At almost 12" in diameter we decided we could stuff it into a carry on bag. The float had clams and other small shells attached to it. These apparently were occupied by little sea critters that proceeded to die and smell. When we opened the trunk to pack it, we got a whiff! Peeyeuou! Determined to get it home, Bob bought some air freshener cakes and packed them with the float which we wrapped in several layers of plastic bags. We got it through security and onto the plane. It just fit in the overhead. The air freshener barely lasted the several hour flight home. We drove the 200 miles home from the airport with open windows. It stank up the garage for several more weeks. Ah the fond memories!!

A Baleful Look

Back at the ranch (so to speak) spring awakened the urge to plant our garden. Sandy, having read lots of stuff in her gardening magazines, declared that we should put a layer of mulch down between the plants. She said that a couple of bales of hay would do the job -- she envisioned the small square bales you see on truck commercials. Bob, being the compliant husband, called a local farmer that he knew and arranged to buy a couple of bales. He brought home two round bales (6' tall, 2600# each). Sandy said something like "holy cow...what the.." when she saw them. Well, all you can do is laugh. We now have 5,000# of hay -- enough hay to keep the plants happy for several years.

Brewmaster Bob

Daughter Carla gave Bob a beer making kit for his birthday. What was supposed to be a hobby has now turned into a passion requiring the acquisition of bottles, devices, chemicals, doo-dads, and gismos that "you really need" for beer making. The results are excellent but Sandy is unimpressed since she lost space in her laundry room for the equipment and only likes the flavored beers that don't taste so "beery".



Hot Babes at 50

Sandy turned 50 this year. Bob publicized it on the Internet. Sandy was good natured but fumed a little about the publicity. If you have a computer, visit www.uslink.net/~bain/Sandy and see the results.

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Wildlife Scoreboard:

Deer 3, Bob 5

Woodchuck 8, Bob 0

The deer continued to be what can most accurately be called an attractive nuisance this year. Sandy would walk to the garden or to the storage building and a deer would peer at her from around a clump of trees. The more she shook her finger and scolded them the friendlier they became. Any day we expect them to start ringing the doorbell asking for a handout.



Sandy's still trying for a giant pumpkin so we planted some zucchinis, squash and pumpkins in an unfenced garden thinking that the deer wouldn't bother the plants with prickly leaves. HA HA! Bob again recognized that the application of technology and brute force was in order so he installed an electric fence suitable for a five mile distance around the 30'x30' garden. Voila- - stuff started to grow.

Meanwhile, a local woodchuck decided that burrowing under the raised part of the other fenced in garden would be a prime location for his summer lake home. While it was "cute" to see his little face peer out of the hole when we'd visit the garden, we were concerned that it might burrow up into the garden for a feast of fresh anything. Now, this was the Osama Bin Laden of woodchucks. It was not to be defeated or captured. Bob even blocked one hole using cement, but (just like the cartoon) the woodchuck dug another – right next to the plugged hole – openly showing its defiance. To compound the insult the woodchuck expanded his underground lair coming up in the middle of the garden with the electric fence around it! Bob was furious and after his requisite research on controlling woodchucks, bought enough traps for every woodchuck in the neighborhood. To date, nothing has sprung the traps. So, while we don't know how much wood a woodchuck can chuck, it can sure put away a heap of yummy garden plants! More importantly, we get to see Bob sputter!



Fitness Update

Last year we reported that we were making an effort to become more physically active with walking, rollerblading and biking. Well, as they say, that was then, and this is now. In spite of very nice summer weather, we seemed to not get out and do what we should to get some exercise. We converted an extra room into an exercise room with a stair-stepper, ski-machine, and exercise gym. Boy do we feel righteous now! All we need to do is commit the time to go in there and do something. We now find really creative excuses as to why we can't find the time to exercise – too busy, too tired, too hard, no time, whatever. Well, as they say in sports – there's always next year!

Bob and Sandy on the Go

Sandy took on some additional responsibilities this year. In June she took over as public relations and communications chair for her local Zonta club. This keeps her busy writing press releases, arranging programs, writing a monthly newsletter and keeping up the website which she created for the club. Additionally, she was elected Treasurer of her church. They have just undertaken a building addition program so there's lots of extra stuff going on in addition with the regular accounting stuff that she is handling there. She also commutes every three weeks to Minneapolis to check on her father.

Bob continues to serve on the regional advisory board of MPR (MN Public Radio). They changed their meeting location this year from St. Cloud to Bemidji, so he gets to see a different area of the state on his quarterly travels. He also got involved this year with a very hotly contested local school bond referendum issue. He even became somewhat of a local celebrity with TV, radio, and newspaper coverage. In the end, our position was defeated by a 3% margin, but it was really quite an education in small town politics.



Family Notes

Bob's mother passed away this spring at the age of 99 ½. She lived a long life, and the last year it was really difficult to watch her deteriorate. Fortunately she didn't suffer, which was a blessing.

Sandy's dad continues to live alone and will be 88 in March. He remains active and in good health. He is a testimony to the benefits of years of hard work and physical activity.



***May all of you have a wonderful Christmas with the blessings of home, family and friends.
And may the New Year bring happiness, health and prosperity to all.***