

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

December 2002



Merry Christmas

A time for friends and family to reconnect and renew our relationships



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all. As we reflect on 2002, we are thankful for the blessings of the year, and continue to grow in the experiences of life.

An American Experience

Several years ago, we had the opportunity to sponsor a young man from Cameroon to immigrate to this country. Gideon was an attorney in Cameroon and licensed to practice in both the English and French systems that are used in his country. Shortly after arriving in America, he enrolled in Hamline Law School in order to take the necessary courses to obtain similar accreditation in America. Along the way, Gideon joined the Army reserves. Last year, he graduated from Hamline, this spring he got married. Within his family, Bob apparently has high status so he (Bob) wore traditional Cameroonian garments to the wedding and was an honored guest. But the greatest honor was being invited to Gideon's naturalization ceremony where he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. We who have been born in America tend to sometimes take our citizenship for granted. To watch the faces of the people who are becoming citizens at this ceremony is truly a moving experience. We are thankful for being part of Gideon's extended family and someday look forward to going to his homeland.

Tiptoe through the Tubing

Spring seemed to come late this year, but when it did, Bob was back in the garden with his latest scheme for raising bumper crops and defeating the local wildlife. If you remember, he always prefers new technology and gadgets as he tinkers with any endeavor. Prior years saw the installation of barbed wire, electric fence, motion detector activated lights, etc. This year it was to install an irrigation system whereby each little plant would have its own little spigot and drip water from tubing running between the plants. After much consternation about the most efficient layout, and frequent complaints about not having the right parts, it was finally finished. We planted our tomatoes, beans, peppers, squash, etc., put in the little spigots, hooked it all up to a timer and stood back. By summer's end, we had a bumper crop of everything and Bob proudly declared "Am I good or what?" Meanwhile, Sandy mused about what she was going to do with all of the "bounty".

We enjoyed our fresh produce until it inevitably began to ripen far faster than we could eat it. We canned over 250 tomatoes one day. Bob came up with recipes for pickled Jalapeno's, Sandy searched for ever new recipes for eggplant, and we both kept picking, canning or freezing beans from plants that just wouldn't quit. "Enough, already!" exclaimed Sandy. "Next year we're not planting this much!" Bob replied — "you know, I've always wanted to raise chickens". Sandy gave him "the look" and shook her head.

Life's a Beach!

One day last Spring, as Bob was looking through the local classifieds for deals he came upon an ad for houseboats. What a great idea, he exclaimed!! We have some property on a small lake on the back of our lot and Bob thought it would be grand to put a houseboat there and fix it up, use it for a guest house, or whatever. So on we went to our next adventure. We arranged with a local trucking company to move it over to our lake. After about an hour of inching the boat this way or that to get it lined up just right, we got it out of the water and were on our way! The truck slowly crept down the road with its extra wide load the 10 miles or so to our small lake. Then it backed down to launch the boat and got hung up in the sand with the boat only half launched because the lake level was lower than usual this year. A combination of brilliant ideas involving boards, chains and other macho notions proved fruitless. However, two more trucks and three hours later, the boat was in the water and the truck was unstuck and drove away.



Then, even though it had been running only hours before, the motor on the houseboat decided not to start.

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Undaunted, Bob got our small 14' boat with a 7 HP fishing motor and started to tow the 50' (5 ton) houseboat to our dock. We zoomed past the 350 feet of lakeshore between the dock and the boat landing in just over an hour! After some initial grumbling, Bob laughed as he mused about another one of his ridiculous adventures.

Bob and Sandy – Big time landlords!

This spring we found a couple of townhouses in Breezy Point that were for sale at attractive prices – just needed some TLC. That's real estate jargon for the fact that these places were quite distressed but they had great potential for rental properties. We bought them and started a long and arduous process of fixing them up. The two of us worked feverishly during June, July and August to get the units completed and on rent. The units turned out very well, but by the time we finished, summer was gone! No fun, no sun, just done!

Political Advisors – how to talk a lot and say nothing!

This year, one of our friends decided to run for State Senate because our district lines had been redrawn and the incumbent decided not to run. Before you knew it, we were part of her campaign committee. We put up a web site for her, and became her “issues” advisors -- doing research on the issues important to our district, crafting position statements that would offend no one, and helping her rehearse for debates. Along the way, we attended the endorsement convention, several debates, strategy meetings, and even did door knocking twice in Bemidji. We discovered that campaigning is really hard work and very time consuming. You have to really want the office to run. In the end, our candidate won!! We, in turn got a huge education in politics and Bob decided that he would never run for anything unless it were for king!



Hunter, Butcher, and Chef

Due to an overpopulation of deer in our area, the DNR allotted extra tags and Bob took three deer this fall. With the concern over Chronic Wasting Disease the local butchers who process deer doubled their price and we (Bob) decided that this was the year to learn how to butcher our own deer. He did his usual research on the subject and before long had drawings on how to carve the carcass, instructions on how to skin, and an exciting action packed video from a butcher in northern Michigan showing the entire process in living color. Bob, the “no problem” guy counter balanced Sandy's apprehension about the whole process. It proved to be easier than we had originally thought and the results were better than when we had the butcher do it.



Since that was so ‘easy’ Bob decided that he would like to make some deer jerky. After locating 91 recipes on the Internet he made up his own recipe and proceeded to make jerky. Even Sandy liked it.

You may recall that last year, Bob started brewing beer. Well, several batches later Sandy has to admit that his beer is pretty good. She even has gotten used to the idea of having her laundry located in the brewing room (formerly the laundry room!). This year, he has expanded his hobby to include making wine. Stay tuned...

Think about it – homemade beer and wine along with homemade jerky. Does it get any better?!

Bob and Sandy on the Go

Sandy continues in her activities as Treasurer of her church. She also commutes every three weeks to Minneapolis to check on her father. Sandy's dad continues to live alone and will be 89 in March. He remains active and in good health.

Bob continues to serve on the regional advisory board of MPR (MN Public Radio) Daughter Carla has started her own company and seems to be doing well. Our grandchildren are still the smartest and best behaved of any youngsters we know !

We celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary this year with a quiet, elegant dinner for two at Ruttgers Lodge. After a 20 year warm up of life with Bob, Sandy declared she thinks she's ready for another 20!

Other than our usual foibles, root canals, and normal aches and pains, we are otherwise fine and hope you are as well

Sandy & Bob



***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.***