

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

December 2007

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 2007, we are thankful for the blessings of the year, and continue to grow in the experiences of life.

Travel Report:

Well, it seems that every time we go traveling, gasoline prices hit an all time high. Between Sandy's water pills and our gas guzzling truck pulling the RV, we seem to stop at gas stations more frequently than usual, and each time it seems the price of gas has gone up from the last time. Despite wearing out our credit card at the gas pumps, we did enjoy a couple of nice trips this year. Sandy had been bugging Bob for some time to take a trip focused on visiting public gardens. In March we embarked on what Bob referred to as the "Endless Gardens" trip. Sandy wanted to see the fabulous spring displays of Azaleas in the South, so off we went down to New Orleans, along the gulf coast to Florida and up into Georgia, and Tennessee. Sandy saw at least 9 great gardens and thanks to the digital camera was able to take endless pictures as well. Bob kept saying "Do you know what this would cost if we were using film?" Sandy loved seeing the beautiful gardens; Bob was polite.

Sandy wanted Bob to have a good time too, so she planned some non-gardening adventures. Bob has always been intrigued with the southern swamps or bayous and has been "hankering" to get into one. Sandy's opinion is that they are probably full of bugs, alligators, snakes and other slithering things and has responded to the topic with disapproving silence. In Louisiana, however, we found a "swamp" tour in a small boat that got us up close and personal with the bayou. Sandy discovered it was actually quite pleasant. Bob, who has always joked about bringing back a pair of breeding alligators back to our lake, actually got to hold a baby alligator while the mother hissed in disapproval next to our boat. Louisiana views gator "napping" fairly seriously, so Bob abandoned his quest for a breeding pair – at least on this trip. Later, we found a great roadhouse with an authentic Cajun food buffet. The owner showed Bob how to eat crawfish and local mussels. Bob was in his glory. Sandy was polite.



Since moving to Arkansas, we have missed the flavorful ethnic sausage products found up North. As it seems Arkansas sausage is typically made from possum and road kill we thought about the many German settlements in Texas as an opportunity for some great sausage. In November we traveled to Texas for the WurstFest sausage festival in New Braunfels, TX. We had a good time at the festival, enjoying the beer the food and the music. On another of our back roads ventures, we saw police car lights ahead and slowed down. Five sheriff deputies (some on horseback) were in pursuit of an escapee. A deputy twirled his lasso over his head and cast it into the brush. Out popped an escaped Emu (an ostrich sized bird). We laughed hard – so this is what Texas Rangers *really* do! As long as we were that far into Texas, we continued south to San Antonio and saw the Alamo and Riverwalk, drove over to Padre Island, and came up the coast along the Gulf. All beaches in Texas are public highways and Bob enjoyed zooming down the ocean front with the waves lapping at the tires. Sandy was polite (and nervous).

All in all, it was a beautiful trip, but our real adventures came in Laredo. Laredo marks the south end of Interstate 35. Being that we have traveling that highway 'multitudinous' times and have been to the North End in Duluth, imagine the thrill of seeing the south end of the freeway! Bob even hopped out of the car and took pictures! And to think it's not even mentioned in the tourist literature. The real frosting on the cake, however, came when we got locked out of our own country by the Border Patrol at the Laredo Community College Nature Trail. The nature trail goes right down to the Rio Grande and there is a fence and gate between it and the college. The gate is to remain open during normal business hours, but the BP ignores that and locks it whenever they happen by. We were on the trail for about 15 minutes and returned to find the gate not only locked, but locked with a new padlock. Needless to say, Bob had some choice words for the BP. Apparently they think that all of the illegals are going to cross the Rio Grande at one of the few places where there is a fence!

The Bainbridge Blabber is published annually for the enjoyment of a few select individuals. Any and all viewpoints expressed herein are absolutely the opinions of management. Comments are welcome and may be submitted to:

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Carla Visit:

Daughter Carla and our two grandchildren visited this summer. We were able to re-confirm that our grandchildren are the best looking and best behaved. Well, maybe your grandchildren are OK but ours are... We had a great time with lake activities and seeing local attractions. They came by car and experienced seeing a different part of the country up close and personal. It was interesting to watch their reaction to Arkansas, the Ozarks, and living out in the country with all of the "critters".



25th Anniversary Celebration:

We celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary this year and to mark the event went to Branson with a stay at the Chateau on the Lake resort with a romantic candlelight dinner, preceded by going to Yakov Smirnoff's show. We had a great time and reflected on how fast the years have passed.

Gardening Report:

Sandy kept Bob busy this year with her gardening and landscaping projects. He installed low voltage lighting, put in drip irrigation in all 8 of Sandy's flower gardens, and constructed a new vegetable garden built like a fortress to keep the critters out. The irrigation was a godsend and the gardens flourished. The vegetable garden produced tomatoes by mid May (unreal for us former Northerners). Not knowing how our first southern vegetable garden would fair we planted plenty of everything – tomatoes, beans, 'cukes', 3 kinds of peppers, eggplant and zucchini. By June it was starting to look like a jungle. Bob was making regular "tomato runs" to the neighbors to share our excess bounty. Of course with every so many tomatoes, they were obliged to take a zucchini!

Bob's Doings:

Bob turned 62 and got his first "fuddy duddy" (social security) check. There was cause for great celebration as he realized he was eligible to get a lifetime National Park Pass. Such a deal! He also decided to take up bow hunting since the bow hunting season is five months long. Sandy figures that now the deer have an even chance.

In February, our County became officially 'wet' – Bob helped orchestrate the election activity last year. Alcohol sale and possession are now legal and he is no longer a minor outlaw and can make and display his homemade beer and wine without fear of official sanction. He tried to orchestrate support for a home brew competition at the county fair but that was too much for the locals. A retired police officer friend, is encouraging Bob to get a still and make some genuine moonshine as an extension of his culinary skills. Why be a minor outlaw when you can excel!! Sandy frowns.

Along those lines, we made our first batch of homemade fruitcake for the holidays. Bob wanted a recipe that would include lots of rum or brandy. Sandy searched in vain for a recipe until she remembered that Julia Child put liquor in most everything. Sure enough, the proper recipe was found in her cookbook. The fruitcake is now aging with the first tasting set for Christmas.



Sandy's Doings:

Sandy continues to be active in the Master Gardener attended the International Master Gardener convention which was in Little Rock this year. This fall, her Red Hat group participated in a walking parade with over 150 other Red Hatters in Branson. It was a riot to see all of the different outfits and hats, and walk down the mall as the loudspeakers played "Pretty Woman, walkin' down the street"!

We continue to be enamored with living in northern Arkansas. Come visit us - our door is always open and the welcome mat is always out! Merry Christmas to you all!

Bob and Sandy Bainbridge



For those of you who are interested, we have posted some pictures of the Bainbridges, our travels and Arkansas life on a website that Bob has put up at <http://home.centurytel.net/b-s>.



May this Christmas Season be one filled with love and joy for all of you, and may you find the New Year filled with blessings and all good things for you and your loved ones.