

# The Bainbridge Blabber

**Holiday Edition**

**December 2009**



## **Merry Christmas**

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

**Greetings to you all!** Well, here we are again – writing our annual Christmas letter. No matter how hard we try, it seems there is always something crazy that's happened to provide fodder for another letter. So here we go again with this year's escapades.

### **Major Ice Storm Hits**

The year started out on a rather dramatic note as we had a terrible ice storm in late January. While most of the National attention focused on Kentucky, parts of Arkansas were worse. Everything was coated with a 2" - 3" thick layer of ice – roads, trees, everything. While this doesn't sound like much for you northerners (aka "flatlanders"), it was a huge deal down here. There was no travel where we live as cars couldn't get up the hills – and you were afraid to go down since stopping was not an option. At least 50 to 60% of the trees were either downed, split, or had the tops snapped off. The whole area looked like a war zone. The ice snapped off about 3,000 power poles leaving 65% of Mountain Home area without power for one to three weeks while crews worked 24/7 and brought in crews from out of state to help. We were without power or phone service for about 2 weeks during which time Bob hooked up the generator to the main feed so that we could have power for the furnace, water pump, appliances, etc. Between that and the fireplaces, we were able to get through it. Bob lent a generator to our very senior neighbors and watched over them to insure they were OK. Debris cleanup and tree trimming lasted all summer.



### **You can't keep a good tree down...**

In mid spring, Bob decided to take one of the tops of the cedar trees that had broken off during the ice storm and drop it in the lake to provide cover for the fish. In a reservoir like Bull Shoals, vegetation does not grow well due to constantly varying lake levels– hence the need to add cover. We tied a rope around the tree and hooked it up to the boat, then drove out into the lake to where the depth appeared to be around 30 feet. After much commotion, we were finally able to release the tree only to have it drop trunk end first (the heaviest end, obviously) and then have the top stick 2 feet out of the water! Not exactly what we had in mind! After a couple more attempts, Bob concluded he would just have to cut the bottom third off of the tree. Finally, it sank (or at least didn't stick out of the water. Picture Laurel & Hardy and then envision Bob and Sandy.

### **Hot Peppers Burn Bob**

Spring brought dreams of beautiful and productive gardens. Bob decided that you can never have too many peppers or tomatoes, so we planted 8 tomato plants, 3 eggplants, and about 25 pepper plants in addition to green beans, peas and lettuce. The peas and lettuce pooded out due to a cool, wet spring and the eggplants got attacked by flea beetles. Then the tomatoes and green beans got infested with blister beetles. The peppers, however, thrived!



The fall brought a HUGE harvest (picture bushels and bushels and bushels) of peppers – jalapenos', hot and sweet bananas, Anaheim, cayenne, and of course green bell peppers. Along with the harvest came a lesson in pressure cookers. We were canning our famous pickled hot peppers and Bob was using the pressure cooker pot for a hot water bath. While he didn't secure the lid for this purpose, in the midst of boiling the lid became attached to the pot. As Bob began to loosen the lid a fountain of built up steam and hot water came roaring out and splashed onto his shirtless stomach. He suffered 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns over an area about 12" by

12" and on his foot. He has recovered with some scarring and a new found respect for pressure cookers.

Between canning and freezing, Sandy doesn't plan on growing ANY peppers next year. Check out next year's Blabber to see how successful she was with Bob.

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## ***Travel Report***

After our venture to Alaska last year, we did not travel this year, except for a brief trip to Cleveland Ohio. Sandy's college friend lost her husband unexpectedly, and we went up to be with her for a few days. While there, Sandy was able to visit her cousin Julianne and various relatives. It was a good visit and Sandy was glad to be able to see them again after so many years. Sandy also managed to visit the Cleveland Botanical Gardens. Bob mutters that she would find gardens in the middle of a desert! At right is Bob's favorite part of these garden tours (zzzzzzz). Sandy is still active in Master Gardeners, having received her 5 year pin this year and also earned her designation as a level 1 Advanced Master Gardener. As part of her training, she made trips this year to Jonesboro, Little Rock, and Morillton, AR where she stayed at the Winthrop Rockefeller Conference Center.



## ***Something Fishy***

Last year, Bob started attending the local Walleye Club meetings. When the group decided to become a formal non-profit, they needed officers and recruited Bob as the secretary. He has spent much of the summer fishing with other group members and has spent several days driving around the lake taking oxygen readings. He also discovered lots of equipment that he needed and bought (he keeps eyeing those catalogs!!) Sandy is not sure if this stuff will help lure the fish, but they sure lure the fishermen! By the end of the year, Sandy had been recruited to be the new treasurer. Don't know if she will become a good fisherperson or not, but if Bob can hook 'em, she can cook 'em, and use the remains to fertilize her gardens!



## ***Wet & Wild!***

This summer, we hosted a summer outing for several of our Mountain Home friends. A fun day was spent at and on the water with almost all of the participants (most over 65+) taking their first Jet Ski ride. Bob drove and they all rode in back. Everyone left the dock looking apprehensive, but all returned sporting a big grin! Pictures of the process were provided for everyone so they could in turn show their children and grandchildren.

## ***Wildlife Report***

This year was especially challenging regarding the wildlife situation. The ice storm caused a severe shortage of acorns. As a result, our huge deer population foraged through Sandy's gardens eating things they have left alone for the past 6 years. The Forsythia and rose bushes all were stripped bare by the deer leaving only the leaves which were too high up to reach. The bushes all look like they got a Mohawk haircut. Sandy is not pleased, but the deer are hungry and are not to be deterred. We have had as many as 9 doe and fawns come through the backyard in early morning and late afternoon, followed by a group of 4 or 5 bucks. We watch them lick their chops as they check out the Bainbridge Buffet.

## ***Old Hippies***

This year, we were invited to a Halloween party and decided to go as '60's hippies. The unusual part of this was that while neither one of us was "into that scene" at the time, amazingly we were able to put together quite a bit of our "costume" out of our own closet!!! The results speak for themselves!



## ***News Update: Squirrels 15, Sandy 1***

The lack of acorns has left lots of hungry squirrels as well and they have found Sandy's bird feeder. These creatures are ingenious beyond imagination and absolutely fearless in their jumping and leaping. Bob, after numerous attempts to foil them is ready to give up, but Sandy's hackles are raised as she runs after the squirrels with a broom shouting "you should be ashamed of yourselves". Bob laughs a lot. So do the squirrels.

Arkansas had been good for us. We have made more friends, done more stuff, and had more fun than ever before. Come visit us - our door is always open and the welcome mat is always out. There's always something happening here in Arkansas.! Merry Christmas to you all, and God's blessings for the new year.

***Bob and Sandy Bainbridge***



***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.***