

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

December 2011



Merry Christmas

Greetings y'all! Here's hoping you all had a pleasant year. We are thankful for our good health and the many friends and family with which we have been blessed. Please bear with us as we once again share some of the highlights of our year with you.

Stuff Just Happens...

In January, our travel trailer was broken into and all of the electronics were stolen. By the time we got it all repaired and squared with the insurance company, the weather had turned so cold, snowy and icy that we couldn't get the trailer out of the driveway! We cancelled our winter trip to the southwest, fed the fireplace and grumbled about the weather instead.

Nature didn't cooperate either...

A colder, snowier winter was not welcome by those of us who moved south to avoid such things. This was followed by record spring rainfall. Our lake, a reservoir controlled by the Bull Shoals dam, went up over 49.9 feet in elevation and was actually 1 ½ feet above flood pool. Talk about trying to put 6 gallons in a 5 gallon pail! This mirrored the entire Missouri/Mississippi watershed floods. The dam finally started to release the excess water in late May. Lake levels didn't fall to normal until October.

The Hatch, the catch, and frozen fishermen...

Bob and Sandy continued to be active in the local Walleye club as club Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. In March, the group took a trip to a walleye hatchery in Missouri where we saw a demonstration of extracting, and manually fertilizing the eggs which are then hatched in incubator jars and transferred to rearing ponds. Sandy was fascinated and produced a PowerPoint presentation for the group to memorialize the trip.

This year the Walleye club decided to have its annual fish fry/picnic in May, rather than June, because last June was so very hot. While the June heat was avoided, a cold front came through resulting in weather so cold and windy that folks showed up wearing winter parkas! While the food was hot, the fisher folk were not! Still, the fish was tasty and everyone had a good time.



Garden Report – Wanted: Bobcat

Between the unseasonably cold spring and record rainfall (most in 60 years of local records), it was too wet or cool to plant in March/April so Sandy's gardens went in later than usual and fared poorly as a result. Summer brought unrelenting triple digit highs which fried everything despite regular irrigation. What did grow was eaten off by an overpopulation of hungry deer, punctuated by a few rabbits and a possible woodchuck. Neighbors have reported seeing a bobcat in our front yard. Sandy has put out the welcome mat for the bobcat to hopefully discourage the critters!



High Tea on the High (?) Seas...

As part of Sandy's Red Hat group, she had to host a "tea" for another member. Wanting to be unique, she decided to have a "floating tea" and cruise, aboard our pontoon boat. Due to the hot summer weather, the "tea" was delayed until early September. Bob served as the captain, and the weather was beautiful. As you can see, the ladies had a splendid time!

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Travel Report – Nothing could be ‘Finah’ than to be in Carolina...

In Mid-October, we hooked up our RV and took off for 3 weeks to go to the Carolinas and the Outer Banks. Neither of us had been there before and we had a wonderful trip. The weather was perfect and the colors through the Smoky Mountains were awesome. Highlights included seeing the Chapel at Duke University, and touring colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown, in Virginia. Along the way we learned how tobacco built the economy of the early settlers and revived the post-civil war economy of the South.

Just south of Virginia, we drove onto the Outer Banks (OBX) of North Carolina. We started at Kitty Hawk and Kill Devil Hills where we saw where the Wright Brothers made their historic flights. The Outer Banks are barrier islands that reminded us of the Padre Islands in Texas with many well developed areas of rental condos and beach homes along the coast. Debris piles and damage from Hurricane Irene were still visible along the way. We drove the entire length of the OBX including a stop at Cape Hatteras, where Sandy got to see a great lighthouse (one of her personal passions). As a bonus we saw how they moved the entire lighthouse (intact) ¼ mile inland to avoid the eroding shoreline caused over time by hurricanes.



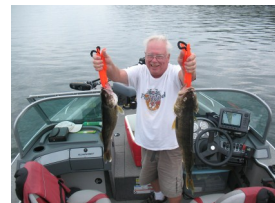
We continued south to Myrtle Beach SC and down the coast to Charleston where we saw many lovely historic homes, Ft Sumter, and visited the only tea plantation in the continental U.S. Then it was on to Hilton Head Island where we saw lots of gated residential communities. Sandy expected to find some great shopping opportunities, however, apparently all of the upscale shopping is housed within the gated resort/golf course areas as the rest of the island had the usual value and discount stores such as Kohl's, dollar stores, and outlet malls. Both of us were somewhat disappointed as the reality did not match our expectations of Hilton Head. From there we headed inland to Columbia SC as Bob had traveled there occasionally and had raved about "Maurice's Piggy Palace" BBQ restaurant with its mustard based BBQ. He also remembered eating at the "Lizard's Thicket" whose name alone gave Sandy pause as to what might be on the menu! We managed to eat at both places, which was a real treat (and neither served lizards). Our last stop was in Atlanta where we had a nice visit with some special friends we sponsored when they immigrated to the US.

Changing Times...

This year marked the passing of an era in Bob's life – he sold his motorcycle. He determined that since he spent more time these days in his boat fishing than he did riding his motorcycle; it was time to sell the bike with no regrets and move on. Recently, Carla, our daughter, chided Bob about the wonderfulness of an iPad and how he needed one. Bob, not wanting to be considered irrelevant (i.e. an old fuddy-duddy) finally purchased devices for both Sandy and himself. Much to Bob's surprise he is impressed with the iPad and its technology, and is now busy shopping at the "app" store! Sandy (the late adaptor), is just plain mesmerized and is now using her iPad more than her computer.

Life goes on...

Bob continues to enjoy improving fishing success thanks to helpful advice from his fishing buddies plus **LOTS** of new equipment, lures and accessories. He also continues to make world class batches of beer and wine that get better every year (per Sandy). Sandy is also thankful that our climate is not suited for growing either grapes or hops as she is sure he would have her stomping grapes in a barrel for wine production! Sandy continues to enjoy her gardening, Red Hat group, and the ladies bible study at church. She is hopeful that next year she will learn how to fish as well.



We wish you a Merry Christmas, and may God bless us all in 2012..

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.