

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

December 2013



Merry Christmas

Greetings! Another year has flown by, and it is once again time to regale friends and family with the crazy escapades of the Bainbridges. This year, while quieter than some, still did not disappoint. We hope you will once again indulge us in looking back at our adventures, foibles and follies.

Personal Losses:

In January, Sandy decided to go back on her diet, and for reasons that are still a mystery, Bob decided to go on a diet as well. Over the past several months, Sandy lost 25 pounds and Bob lost 45 pounds. Now if we can just keep it off over the holidays. Those cookies are calling!

Bob – the new Jack Lalanne!

Shortly after he started to lose weight, Bob got serious about exercise. He mutters occasionally (about growing older) “I am **NOT** going peacefully into the night!” He got a SciFit machine, heart monitor, specialized spreadsheet tracking system, and faithfully exercises aggressively. After a while he decided that resistance training was important so he got a bench and weights. Of course, Sandy is now being constantly harassed about the goodness of exercise and how she too, would be better off if she ‘got with the program’. While she’s not quite ready to commit, perhaps next year’s letter will sing a different tune on Sandy’s fitness level. Stay tuned...



Big Red Hat Event:

This past April was the 15th anniversary of the start of the national Red Hat organization. To mark the event, Sandy’s Red Hat group decided to sponsor a “tea” and luncheon for the other Red Hat groups in the area. As part of the “entertainment”, donated Red Hat items were auctioned off with the proceeds donated for the local “backpack program” which provides weekend food to hungry school children. Several of the items were auctioned off in a “live” auction which was lots of fun and very entertaining! There were also 40 silent auction items. Sandy was in charge of researching and describing each item, setting the starting prices, setting procedures, etc. and spent over 100 hours on the project. A great time was had by all and a tidy sum was raised for the program. Sandy was exhausted, but it was worth it!

Vroom-Vroom:

As you may recall, Bob had a Gold Wing motorcycle “trike” (3 wheels) for a few years, but didn’t really enjoy it that much and sold it in 2011. This summer, with the increased muscle tone from the diet and exercise, he decided to get back into riding again. So, he purchased a Yamaha motorcycle and is really enjoying it. After a few years with a trike, he had to spend a little time getting used to 2 wheels but he is back and Sandy is riding “shotgun” with him once again! While the bike is grey, we “kicked it up a notch” with new candy apple red helmets! Woo Hoo!



Bob’s Folly:

Every year, Bob seems to get himself into some projects that starts out innocently enough, but ends up in some sort of near boondoggle. This year, he decided to build a shed to store odds and ends down by the lake. No big deal—right?. For convenience, Bob decided to build the shed inside the garage and then move it into place when completed. He and a friend built a first class, wood frame 8 x 10 building with a shed roof, nice door, siding, etc. Then came time to get it OUT of the garage. Sandy was sure that it

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was a bit too tall and wouldn't fit through the garage door opening. When it "eeked" through with 1/2 inch to spare, Bob bombastically proclaimed "No problem – I knew it would clear." The next issue was how to move the shed down our hill to put it in place. Several of Bob's friends, Sandy, and of course Bob, all had ideas on the best way to do this. Bob decided to test using our flatbed trailer by backing it (empty)



down the hill. For some reason, he neglected to secure the hitch and midway down, the trailer gave way and proceeded to roll down the hill and over a small ledge! This required much consternation, several neighbors, and two tractors before the trailer finally came up the hill. That episode ruled out the trailer option to move the shed, and in the end, Bob and some neighbors used a combination of two tractors and some skids to get it down the hill. Victory at last – but not without a few laughs along the way!

Sandy throws in the Trowel:

Another year of hot weather and drought took their toll on Sandy's gardens – both flowers and vegetables. She finally decided to just redo the gardens with more shrubs and drought tolerant plants. It will take several months (years?) to rework all but the goal is a more consistent look, some seasonal color, and less maintenance (every gardeners dream)! Like all gardeners, she has difficulty ripping out perfectly good (but poorly behaved) plants and just throwing them away. Stay tuned to see if she can hold her resolve!

A Trip to No Man's Land:

Sandy, the resident travel coordinator here, suggested a Fall trip to Ohhhhhhhh – kla--homa – you know – "where the wind comes sweeping down the plains..." Indeed, there was a lot of wind, and a lot of plains— in addition to lots of museums, interesting topography, and some great state parks! Traveling in late September, we skipped the Oklahoma City and Tulsa areas and explored the other areas of OK in addition to southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. Trip highlights and adventures included a wrong turn in the OK panhandle (no-mans land) that left us pulling our 5th wheel 10 miles down an unmarked, narrow, one-lane dirt road with no sign of life for miles in any direction (even with the GPS)! Then there was running into snow at the top of a mountain pass in CO, and the herds of deer (looking for handouts) that welcomed us to our camping spot in several OK state parks. The Fall colors in the



mountains of Southern Colorado were spectacular. We also visited 3 National Parks: Great Sand Dunes, The Black Canyon of the Gunnison (both in CO), and Mesa Verde in NM. Also, there are 39 different Indian tribes in OK and each one has its own cultural center. We chose to see just one and picked the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur, OK. The museum, displays and grounds were fabulous – Sandy even participated in one of the tribal dances!

Cooking Channel – Stand Aside!

This year, Bob decided to learn to smoke fish. A new smoker and some internet suggestions made it easy and the fish was delicious. Then, he decided it would be cool to make pickled fish. Having a seemingly never-ending craving for pickled herring, and having a virtually never-ending supply of fish in the lake, it seemed like the best of all worlds. We are presently in batch two or three of the pickling experiment. So far, the sauce (brine) and fish get pretty good reviews but as one of the reviewers commented "I think for it to taste like pickled herring, you need to actually use herring"!



Who left the door to Canada Open?

As we are writing this, we have had a winter storm that started with freezing rain followed by 8 inches of snow! It's beautiful and reminds us of Minnesota. However, ice covered hilly, curvy roads are treacherous and no one is traveling. We are sitting home with the fireplaces going. In a few days, the snow will melt and all will be back to normal for Arkansas, again. In the meantime, it is a good time to remember the season and to wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

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.