

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

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December 2014



Merry Christmas

Christmas Greetings to all! Life is never really dull at the Bainbridge house – quiet maybe, but never dull! This year, while quieter than some, still did not disappoint. We hope you will once again indulge us in looking back at a few of the highlights of our year.

Tulips, Coal Mines and the Jersey Shore: Our travel escapades this year included a trip with the 5th wheel to Pennsylvania and the Jersey Shore. Bob had raved about Longwood Gardens lily pads for years so in early May we took our trip. The tulips were spectacular, but alas, it was a bit early for lily pads or many other plants. Still, Sandy was in gardener's heaven and enjoyed it with a friend from college, Serena, who joined us at Longwood. The next day, we wandered into Delaware, where we toured the historic DuPont family settlement. The DuPont's made their first fortune manufacturing gunpowder. Seeing the 18th century water powered machinery and noting the constant risk of explosion was fascinating. Sandy decided that as long as we were in the neighborhood, we should go next door to New Jersey and meander down to see the Jersey (Joisey) Shore, Atlantic City and Lucy the Elephant! We saw the remnants of the glory days of Atlantic City -- several of the casinos were still operating, but closed a few months after our visit. The boardwalk was just as "kitschy" as we had imagined. Sandy bought some salt water taffy and hummed the song "Under the Boardwalk" as we strolled along.



Coming back through PA, we visited the typical sites -- Gettysburg battlefield and cemetery, Philadelphia and Independence Hall, Hershey's chocolate attractions (Sandy's favorite) and Amish/Mennonite settlements in Lancaster County. We were charmed by the sight of teams of horses pulling farm equipment across the fields until we noticed that the farm equipment was motorized John Deere balers! Apparently, gasoline engines are bad for transportation, but OK for farming? We learned that many Amish families have electricity from home gasoline operated generators, but cannot have power from the electric company. Confused? We are!

Our need to understand the economic history of an area drove us to tour a coal mine and the oldest remaining cast iron furnace/forging facility in America as well as the incline canal system that transported people and goods westward by water *over* the Appalachian mountains until the railroads figured out how to get around and through the mountains. The canal boats were actually taken out of the water and hoisted up and down the mountain on rails until they could be placed back into the canal on the other side. Of course, no trip would be complete without appreciating a good brewery or distillery. We toured the Yuengling Brewery in PA, the oldest still operating in America (since 1831), and also visited Maker's Mark distillery in Kentucky. "Home brewer Bob" noted the process is still the same as his—just bigger batches!

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Paris or Cow Patties? In early June, one of Sandy's friends said "Let's go to Paris", and one of Bob's friends said "Let's go to Nebraska"! It was tough to judge who would have the better trip. Actually, Paris turned out to be Paris, Arkansas. Side trips to area wineries and other points of interest were also included. Bob, lover of beef, but not so much of cows, accompanied a friend to a cattleman's seminar where he got a mini-education on beef production. As usual, he pumped the good ole' boys for information about the industry and while proffering his naiveté about the industry, was told "somehow, I don't think this is your first rodeo, fella".

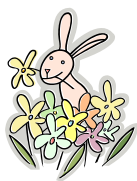


Smokin' Chef Bob. One of Bob's extravagances this year was the purchase of a Kamado style ceramic cooker, so he is learning a whole new style of grilling and cooking. Sandy got him a book of techniques for the cooker, and he found a section on smoking cheese. Then a friend suggested smoking cashews. Soooo, last year we were smoking fish – this year it's cheese and nuts. Sandy will draw the line if he wants to smoke cake next!

Big Brother is watching you. Since we spend lots of time in the lower level, Sandy is always running up the stairs to see if someone is at the door. Finally, she asked Bob to install some cameras to see who was at the door to save her some steps. Now we have a security system that shows a live view on our computer of who's there. Sandy mused that perhaps now we need a sign at the door: "Smile and don't pick your nose – you may be on the Internet"!

"What'd he say?" No one really embraces the onset of the aging process and we are no exception. The best one can do sometimes is develop what the audiologist noted as "adaptive behavior" – sounds a lot less negative than "that's what you have to do as you get old". We both noted that we could no longer discern some conversations on TV from the background music. Our "adaptive behavior" was to get headphones for those programs where we have a problem. We love them and highly recommend them to friends who are also may need "adaptive behavior"!

Bob Gets a Grip: Sometimes adaptive behavior is not enough. Bob's increasing hand pain and the inability to grip things caused him to seek out a surgical solution. This fall, he had surgery on his left wrist to remove an arthritic joint and replace it with a tendon. He was impatient in his recovery, but the results have him considering the same procedure for the right wrist.



Those "Wascally Wabbits". In the ongoing saga of Sandy and her gardens, this year she decided to redesign her gardens for lower maintenance. Accordingly, she did an assessment of each plant's needs (light, water, soil, etc.), and also which plants were deer or rabbit favorites. To her surprise, many of the plants she blamed the deer for eating were really bunny favorites! Where's Elmer Fudd when you need him?

Life in the Same Lane. In general, life here in the Ozarks is still good. Bob continues to enjoy his fishing, and cooking escapades, while Sandy has her gardens, bible study, and social activities. We hope all is well with you too. If y'all are ever in the neighborhood, please drop by, and set a spell. We'd love to see you. *Merry Christmas to you and yours.*

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.