

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

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December 2015

Merry Christmas



Christmas Greetings to all! Time passes so quickly. We hope you all had a good year and that this greeting finds you happy and in good health. We are thankful for our continued good health and the friends and family with which we have been blessed. 2015 was a quieter year than most, still, we had our moments!

Potatoes, Hops and the Spruce Goose: In August, we dusted off the trailer and took a 5 week trip out to the Pacific Northwest. Hoping to escape the late summer heat of the South, we had not counted on the early wildfire season, nor highs in the 90's, but we decided to go anyway, and monitor the fire danger along the way.



We were surprised to see that much of southern WA and ID and OR are high deserts which are very desolate, but extremely productive when irrigated. We saw onions by the truckload in OR, trucks hauling apples in WA, and apple boxes piled high in the fields ready for the harvest. We also visited the Idaho Potato Museum and the Hops Museum in the Yakima Valley of Washington. WA grows more hops than anywhere else in the world and with good water; micro-breweries are a natural here. However, with all those potatoes nearby, where's the Vodka production????

The northern areas and the mountains were of course beautiful, but we did have some of the vistas obscured with smoke from fires sometimes hundreds of miles away. However, we did have several clear days with fabulous views on our visits to Mt. Rainier, and driving around the Olympic Peninsula. Even saw a bit of rainforest!



Coeur d'Alene ID was interesting and trendy; and we saw the famous floating green on the 14th hole of the CDA golf course. Seattle greeted us with rain (of course) and apparently typical traffic jams. We managed to visit the Gates Foundation Museum, and the Living Computer Museum, which should really be named the "re-living" museum as Bob waxed with nostalgia at the old computer equipment on display (which wasn't old when he used it!). We also took the Boeing tour and had wanted to visit Bainbridge Island (guess why), but Seattle traffic was so awful every day, that we decided it wasn't worth it.

The big points of interest in these three states seemed to be anything to do with the Snake River, the Columbia River, and all things Lewis and Clark. Seems Lewis and Clark were everywhere there, and there are many museums to prove it! Anyway, we did stop in Astoria, OR at the Columbia River Maritime Museum. Didn't know that the mouth of the Columbia River was known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific", famous for its shipwrecks. From there we went to Ft. Clatsop where Lewis and Clark spent the winter. Out of 106 days there, 94 rained. No wonder they were in a hurry to get back home! South of Portland, we stopped in McMinnville at the Evergreen Aviation Museum, home of the original Spruce Goose, built by Howard Hughes. Its size took our breath away! The highlight of the trip, however was visiting the Hells Canyon area of the Snake River where we took a fabulous 6 hour Jet boat ride on the river over some

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Bob and Sandra Bainbridge; 8565 Promise Land Road; Mountain Home, AR 72653
Phone 870-431-5140 or Email: rbainbridge@iyf-inc.com or sbainbridge@iyf-inc.com.

pretty impressive rapids. That part of the canyon is quite rugged and scenic and the excursion was a wonderful end to our trip.



Grandkids – not kids anymore! We traveled to Minnesota in April for the funeral of Sandy’s Aunt Vi who passed on her 90th birthday. While there, we enjoyed a wonderful brunch with our grandchildren, Loren (29) and Taylor (21). Taylor will graduate from Stout State (WI) next year and we are very proud. It was nice to connect with them in person, as we are don’t really do Facebook or Twitter. Hard to believe the grandkids are all grown up already!

Blast from the Past : In May, one of Bob’s associates from work was traveling through the area with his wife, and we met them for brunch in Branson. It was a wonderful visit. Bob and Howard had not seen each other for over 20 years and we all had a lovely time.

Garden Report : We opted not to have a vegetable garden this year, as we would be gone in August when the harvest was ready for picking. Additionally, Sandy’s flower gardens suffered after she injured her thumb from overly zealous weed pulling in April. She has been trying to get the resulting tendonitis to heal ever since, so her gardening activities have been somewhat curtailed.



Wildlife Report: As we write this letter, 39 wild turkeys are wandering through the backyard. This morning there were 8 migrating loons in the lake along with about 10 seagulls. Yesterday we spotted a bald eagle and earlier this year we had herds of up to 15 deer grazing in the backyard as well. We are blessed to have such abundance in our yard and enjoy the show!

Fishing anyone? Not so much... This year was disappointing for fisherman Bob. Surgery on his right hand in January delayed the start of fishing in the spring. Then, water levels in our reservoir remained high most of the year, due to potential downstream flooding. While fishing was good, catching was poor. Bob even went with a friend to Pomme de Terre Lake in Missouri to fish for muskies – twice - and got skunked both times! But trout fishing on the White River was pretty good, and Bob will smoke his catch this winter!

Bob gets a head! Two years ago Bob shot a 12 point buck and wanted to mount the head with the skull—an “English” mount. A neighbor advised him to bury the whole head in a pile of dirt in the yard (apparently microbes eat off the skin, etc., leaving clean bones). This year he dug it up and ‘Voila’ – clean antlers and skull! Apparently, deer don’t brush regularly as the teeth were quite stained. So, Bob took the jaw to the dentist to inquire about whitening! Fortunately, our dentist has a sense of humor! Bob is now testing Sandy’s sense of humor by teasing her by looking for a place to hang the mount in the living room!

Miscellaneous Stuff: After 10 years, Sandy hung up her Red Hat in January. It was time for new adventures. She seems to have found her niche at church where she is involved in ladies bible study, and the women’s group where she has already been recruited as treasurer and chair of one of the “circles”. As for Bob, he continues to brew beer and wine, and still enjoys grilling and smoking, boating, jet-skiing, riding his motorcycle and pestering Sandy in the kitchen!

So far, life is still good and we feel very fortunate and blessed. We wish the same for 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.