

# The Bainbridge Blabber

**Holiday Edition**

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**December 2020**



## **Merry Christmas**

**Dear Friends and Family:** This has certainly been an unusual and depressing year for all of us. We hope that you, your family and friends have been relatively untouched by the Covid 19 pandemic, and we offer our sincere sympathies if any in your set of family or friends have been victims of this terrible virus. Like many of you, we are finding it challenging to get into the Christmas spirit this year. We hope next year will be brighter for all.

**Travel Report:** We decided that we would change our mode of travel to use Bed and Breakfast (Airbnb) or extended stay hotels with kitchen accommodations. We felt it would be more interesting and fun after so many years of dragging around our long fifth wheel trailer and being constrained in our route by needing to find RV parks. Been there, done that. So we sold our RV last Fall, and subsequently spent lots of time reorganizing our travel “take alongs” so that we could occasionally cook our own meals in the hotel or B&B since eating out all the time gets to be pretty tiresome after a while. Downsizing from a 38 ft RV to a van was a challenge, but we got it done. Primed to start to travel again in the Spring, we were anxious to go somewhere – *anywhere!* Then Covid hit and everything was either locked down, or travel was not recommended. Prudence indicated that we should just stay home and be safe, which is what we did. So, our grand plans for B&B’s, etc. will be on hold until life returns to some sense of normal – whatever that is going to be.



**Fishing Report:** This year was a sad one for Bob in that one of his fishing buddies of 15 years, passed away in the Spring after many years of battling cancer. He has many good memories, but still there is the absence of daily phone calls from his friend and fishing together.

**Health Report:** In July, Sandy followed up on a suspicious lump and was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had a single mastectomy in August, and started chemotherapy in October which will be finished by the end of February 2021. She decided to have her surgery and treatments in Springfield, MO – about a 2 ½ hour drive from our home. We are impressed with the level of care, and so far have only needed to make the drive every two weeks or so. The results of the pathology from the surgery indicated that the cancer, while a very aggressive type, had not spread, and the surgeon essentially got it all. The chemotherapy is preventative given the very aggressive nature of her cancer, but we are hopeful that the prognosis will be very positive for many more years of living and sparing with Bob. So far, she is doing well with minimal side effects and is blessed with many friends supporting her. She has been given some very good anti-nausea drugs so avoided that, however she did lose her hair (no she did not want to attach any pictures!). Well meaning folks have suggested how “fun” for her since she “gets” to wear a wig – perhaps a sexy one in some color other than gray! However, she does not regard this as a “fun opportunity”. She did get some bangs for her chemo hats, but has so far passed on the wig thing. With Covid, no one goes out much anyway, so vanity has been relegated to the back seat!



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**Health Report (cont.):** Bob has been suffering from terrible GERD pain for many years and has had to sleep in a recliner for most of that time. Medications did not seem to help. In June, desperate for relief, Bob consulted an expert GI doctor in Springfield to try to solve his constant pain/distress. After several specialized tests, it was determined that hiatal hernia surgery was suitable. We found a surgeon who specialized in this procedure and had the minimally invasive surgery in mid-November. The results were amazing. He has no pain for the first time in years. He had to be on a liquid and then soft diet for several weeks, but is back to a fully normal diet. Best of all, he now sleeps in bed all night. Hurray!



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On a more somber note, daughter Carla was diagnosed with rectal cancer shortly after Sandy's cancer diagnosis. While their cancers are different, they have been doing chemotherapy at the same time and compare notes on side effects. What a thing to "bond" over! Carla's journey is expected to be much longer with chemo and radiation preceding surgery. Full recovery may not be until early Fall of 2021. We have her in our prayers as her therapy and surgery will be harder and over a much longer period of time than Sandy's. Hopefully by next year's letter, we will have good news all the way around.

**Social Life:** Wait – what social life? Between chemo and Covid, the only places we go these days is to medical appointments and to pick up groceries at Walmart!

We passed on an invitation to Thanksgiving dinner. One of Sandy's regular side effects is to lose her sense of taste a couple of days after each Chemo treatment leaving everything tasting like "socks". Around Thanksgiving, Bob was recovering from his surgery and was still on a limited soft diet. So, between the two of us we were quite a pair for Thanksgiving. Bob did smoke a turkey of which he could only eat very small bites. Sandy could smell it but it tasted like cardboard. Fortunately, her taste does mostly return around the day of her next Chemo treatment—just in time for it to go away a couple of days later. She longs for a big gooey piece of chocolate – or of anything chocolate for that matter. But then she thinks -why bother – I can't taste it anyway. So, candy, cakes, cookies, etc. are on hold until the end of February when her chemo is done.



Christmas has been a challenge this year. Aside from having difficulty mustering up some "Christmas Spirit", Bob is still not supposed to lift anything really heavy until his healing is complete, and Sandy's energy level and stamina are low due to the chemo. The decision was made to not bring in the big 7 ft tree which takes Sandy two days to decorate. We opted instead for a smaller pre-lit tabletop tree and a few, select Christmas decorations. It's not quite the same, but we are doing our best to try to get into the holiday spirit.

In spite of the events of this year, we still feel incredibly blessed. Our wish is that 2021 will be a much better year for all of us – and for you too. Perhaps by this time next year, all of this, including the pandemic, will be mostly just a memory.

*We feel so blessed to count you all as family and friends . Let us all take time to reflect on the many blessings we have whether home, family, health, or whatever. We wish you all the merriest 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.*