

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

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December 2023



Merry Christmas

Christmas Greetings to all: We hope this finds everyone well and looking forward to another New Year. As we age, it is always good to find yourself on the right side of the sod, so we are pleased to be able to celebrate another year of good health.

2023 was a quiet year for us. We didn't take any major trips, see any UFO's or ostriches, didn't have any major projects, but seemed rather contented with being homebodies for a change. I think we all had Covid mask fatigue and it was just so nice to see faces and not worry about masking up, or where you could or could not go, etc. The year was tempered a bit with the sobering reality of having 2 family members and 2 friends pass away. All lived fairly long lives, yet we are reminded that life is fragile at best and we will celebrate our good health and active lifestyle as long as we are so blessed to do so.

The End of an Era: Bob sold his motorcycle this Spring and has decided to bring that chapter of his life to a close. It was a bittersweet parting, but the right thing to do as hip, leg and back complaints made riding less enjoyable than in the past. As we all know, the less you ride, the more your skills get "rusty" (not to mention your bones), and you are more prone to having an accident. So, Bob said "good bye" to that part of his life. It was a good, long, enjoyable run, but time to hang it up.



The Garden Party: Last year the deer jumped the fence and got into Sandy's vegetable garden defoliating all of the cukes and damaging many of the tomatoes. We had strung some rope above the existing wire fence to discourage the deer from jumping over and thought we had it solved. But this spring, they found the one vulnerable spot, got in, and proceeded to decimate 5 out of 6 tomatoes and 3 of 4 pepper plants. Not to be outdone, Sandy got out her wildlife netting and she and Bob strung it above the existing fence another 3 feet high. Bob was concerned that the deer wouldn't see it and might get hurt if they tried to jump over it. "So, what", murmured a disgusted Sandy. To placate his concerns, we bought some party flagging and hung it at the top of the netting. It was very festive and looked like a "grand opening". The next day, Sandy told Bob – "I have some bad news...the deer got into the garden last night and really had quite a time – they left cigarette butts and beer cans all over!" A great joke, but the netting and flagging worked – no more deer in the garden.



Sandy-the Persistent Gardener: Once the deer were under control, and the destroyed plants were replaced, the vegetable garden did reasonably well, although with the hot summer, production was not great, except for the peppers. Sandy did some major redo's on some of her flower gardens but has found that no plants are totally 'deer resistant', and those that are, seem to be bunny favorites. She used more small fencing and garden netting to discourage or stop the deer and the bunnies with good success, although some rabbits did wander into the garage mid-summer apparently to complain. Even though she vows every year that this will be the last year she plants a vegetable garden, she always relents when the garden catalogs arrive in spring, thinking 'this year will be different'.

Doing the Can-Can: Last year, knowing that we would never do canning again, we sold all of our canning equipment, jars, lids, etc. They were taking up lots of room and it was time to clear them out (we thought). Wouldn't you know, Bob got a hankering for pickled jalapeno peppers. He has a great recipe and we had been eating from the last batch of a few years ago, but alas, we were down to our last

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jar. Sandy had planted four jalapeno pepper plants that were supposed to produce extra-large fruits. However, the plants were late in producing and the peppers were on the small side. Not to be outdone, Bob boogied down to the farmers market and proceeded to buy 5 gallons of extra-large jalapenos! In case you don't know, 5 gallons is A LOT of jalapenos. Needless to say, at this point we had to go out and buy several dozen pint jars since we no longer had any! Bob spent a full day trimming, slicing and removing the seeds to slice them into long strips (not rounds). Even with open windows, two fans, masks and gloves, the capsaicin fumes were pungent enough to wilt a cactus! The next day, we processed over 3 dozen pints! They turned out gorgeous and really tasty since removing the seeds leaves them just mildly hot. Hopefully we have enough for a couple of years – but at the current consumption, they may not last that long!



A Tree Story: This fall we were saddened to lose a huge legacy oak tree. It was over 80 feet tall, more than 50' wide and had a trunk at least 4 ft in diameter at the base. Needless to say, we hired it done!



Based on the rings, it was well over 100 years in age yet still in remarkably good shape with few rotting limbs. The tree crew cut the trunk into large cross sections and we got it moved down to our pile of wood for fireplace burning. Bob is now splitting the wood with a log splitter, but based on the size of the tree, this will be a several weeks project. How he will handle the huge cross sections remains to be seen as each weighs well over 600 pounds. Since recent winters have been relatively mild and we don't burn much wood, perhaps Bob should take up another hobby like barrel making – since he has such a good supply of oak!

Vultures in Love: As we were cleaning up the debris from the tree removal, we noticed a pair of vultures in a nearby tree. They seemed to be watching us intently. People engage in birdwatching, so why not birds doing 'human watching'? I can only imagine what they must be thinking – if not laughing at the antics of the humans doing unnatural things to trees. Still, we noticed that the pair seemed to be quite attentive to each other – grooming each other, etc. So, we figured they must be in love and came here on a 'date' to be entertained by all the commotion and the people watching. Why not?



Health Report: We continue to be blessed with pretty good health. Sandy is 3 years past her cancer surgery and regular 3-4 month checkups have been good so far. She has now "graduated" to only having to see the oncologist every 6 months. Yippee! Bob is doing great with the exception of hip pain which he was hopeful to get rid of with a hip replacement. But the doctors told him he just had arthritis and was not a candidate for hip replacement. While that was good news, the bad news is just having to live with the pain and discomfort – like so many other older people. Bob grumbles that he doesn't think he's that old but complains that he can't work as long or hard as when he was 37!

Activities: Due to the hot weather, fishing and boating were at a minimum. Bob continues to brew beer and wine, and Sandy continues to garden and lead a weekly ladies bible study at church. She even took a group of them to Branson this summer to see the Queen Esther production at the Sight and Sound theatre. An awesome experience as always.

We look forward to another year together and hope that you are likewise blessed.

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.