

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

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December 2024

Merry Christmas



Christmas Greetings! Time flies by faster and faster as we age, and more often than not we feel like the old saying applies: “The faster I go, the ‘behind’ I get”! Every year Sandy has more things on her ‘To Do’ list that turn into a ‘Whenever’ list – as in ‘Whenever am I going to get around to doing this’? Yet, while the ‘stuff’ in life comes and goes, it is the experiences with friends and family that are the most meaningful. We hope that this year finds you experiencing the love and joy of those experiences with those who hold a special place in your heart.

Time for an Upgrade: Early in the year, Sandy noticed that the vinyl clad cabinets in the kitchen and master bath were starting to peel. It was just the excuse she needed to get both rooms “freshened” up. What started out as just a notion to replace the cabinet doors, turned into a 3-month project where the master bath was gutted, the toilet was moved, and a new large walk-in shower was installed. The kitchen cabinets were replaced with a more contemporary style and color scheme. When it was done, both of us were well pleased. Bob hasn’t said anything, but is probably wondering “what’s next”? Sandy hasn’t said a word (yet)!

Health Report: Bob had a run-in with skin cancer and had Mohs surgery on his hand early in the year and later on his back for round two. All healed well but we will be watchful for the future. Otherwise, he is still hale and hearty for a guy about to turn 80 in January! Continued good news for Sandy – it has been 4 years since her cancer diagnosis and she continues to do well. While we continue to be very thankful for that, she is cautiously optimistic since for a cancer patient the fear of recurrence never really goes away.



Family – Joy, Concern and Hope: We were overjoyed by the news that our granddaughter is pregnant with our first great-grandchild. She is due on Bob’s birthday, January 10th. We are, however, concerned in that she is having some difficulty with the pregnancy and an early delivery is being contemplated. Yet, we are confident that she has good medical care and we are hopeful that all will go well. On a more serious note, our daughter, Carla learned that her cancer has returned. While this is disturbing news, she is doing all that she can to treat it and we are hopeful that she will beat it again as she did 3 years ago. We are praying for the best.

Garden Report – Squash borers and Morning Glories: This year’s vegetable garden did fairly well, in spite of the hot weather. One disappointment was that the Zucchini’s succumbed overnight to squash borers. We’ve never had trouble with them in the past, but it’s those challenges that keep gardening interesting, frustrating and rewarding year after year. On a lark, Sandy decided to try to grow eggplant again which she gave up on years ago due to flea beetles. She planted 6 plants to see if any would produce and applied pest control early in hopes they would thrive. Boy did they! Sandy had to figure out how to freeze eggplant and several packages are in the freezer with hopes of mid-winter Eggplant Parmesan or Moussaka. Along with the vegetables, Sandy always grows a few zinnias on one side of the garden to provide color and attract pollinators. She also planted a few Morning Glory seeds to climb the fence and bloom. MISTAKE!!! They proceeded to vine up **not** on the fence, but all over the plants next to them. What a mess to untangle and remove those invaders. Live and learn!



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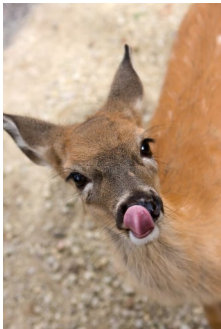
Bob and Sandra Bainbridge; 8565 Promise Land Road; Mountain Home, AR 72653
Phone 870-431-5140 or Email: rbainbridge@iyf-inc.com or sbainbridge@iyf-inc.com.

Travel Report – Georgia on my Mind: In November, we traveled to Atlanta to attend the retirement celebration of our friend Gideon who retired after 27 years in the Army. We sponsored Gideon 30 years ago when he immigrated to the U.S. from Cameroon. It was a wonderful party at the Hilton with military honors and speeches followed by a dinner of traditional Cameroon foods. Most of the attendees were from Cameroon or had connections to it. After the dinner there were many speeches and a Cameroonian ceremony honoring Gideon followed by traditional music and dancing. It was a wonderful cultural experience for us and we were honored to have been included in the celebration.



Following the event, we set out to tour parts of Georgia and South Carolina that we had not seen before. We went from Atlanta to Savannah to Charleston, SC returning through Augusta, southern TN and Northern MS. Along the way, we visited many Civil War related sites, museums and forts including Fort Sumpter in Charleston, and National Park battlefields at Shiloh and Chattanooga. We also visited the 700-acre working Boone Hall Plantation in Charleston dating back to 1681. In Georgia we visited a gold mine museum honoring one of the first gold rushes in the US. Who knew they had gold mines in Georgia? Nearby, Bob, had located a source for Bloody Butcher corn for one of his advanced beverage recipes. We drove way back in the ‘hollers’ to find a small firm that makes copper stills and also had the heirloom corn! Note: they just make the equipment, not the ‘shine’ -- truly a cottage industry.

Critter Report: This year we had 13 deer come through the backyard daily. One even gave birth while she was eating – right as Sandy was looking out the window! In Late June, we had a group of 10 bucks in the backyard – all with 6 to 8 point velveted racks. Apparently, the deer seem to like it here and feel safe. Often, they nap in the front or back yard, seemingly unconcerned at our presence. Sometimes that familiarity is not appreciated – like when they came right up on the front porch at night and ate off Sandy’s Caladiums, Coleus and Petunias. The plants would recover and the deer would eat them again. Sandy was not pleased.



Ongoing goings on: Bob continues to brew beer, make wine and has gotten into advanced beverage production. He often compares his results with commercial products and thinks they are as good/better than many. Don’t ask Sandy – it all tastes like furniture polish to her! As part of the process, we had to buy some toaster ovens to “toast” various kinds of wood to add color & flavor. Then we needed more shelving for storage in our pole barn during the aging process. As a side note, once the grain is processed and is ‘spent’, Bob dumps it outside near the woods and we wait for the deer come and eat – in fact they fight each other over it! No kidding!

Sandy continues to lead a weekly ladies bible study and feels blessed to have the friendship of so many women.

We have had another good year together. As we look toward the future and the changes and challenges of aging, we feel blessed to have each other and to have you as our family and friends.

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.