

The Bainbridge Blabber

Holiday Edition

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Merry Christmas

Christmas Greetings! As we reflect on this past year, we are so thankful for the many blessings we have. Family, friends, and good health, are the most important things as we age. So, while the ups and downs of life come and go, it is the relationship with friends and family that are the most meaningful. We hope that this season finds you experiencing the love and joy of those who hold a special place in your heart, and that we remember to thank God for them all.

Family – Great Grandpa and Grandma: In early January, our granddaughter gave birth to a healthy baby boy making us great grandparents!!! He is, of course, the cutest baby ever – and that is, obviously, our objective opinion. We are thankful that all went well as “mom” had some issues during the pregnancy. Mom, Dad and Baby all look like a very happy family!

Boats and Bikes: This Spring, Bob decided it was time to sell his fishing boat. Fishing without his long-time fishing partner just wasn't the same somehow, so Bob elected to part with the boat. It was a bittersweet sale, but he has lots of great memories and got to be a fairly accomplished fisherman. He can still fish from the pontoon boat if he wants, so the fish are not totally safe! Of course, while all sales are final, the seller reserves the right to change his mind. Bob sold his motorcycle two years ago, but realized he missed riding once in a while. This Fall, he found a Honda Silver Wing 700cc “scooter” that fills that need. Riding down the road, he looks like a happy man once more!



Health Report: Bob's semi-annual visit to the dermatologist revealed some potential skin cancer anomalies on the top of his head which were treated with a couple of “blue light” sessions. Sandy called them the “K-Mart” special. The nurses told him that the bald spot on his head which was treated would be rejuvenated, soft and supple. The treatment was so successful that Bob wears a hat now out in public so that the “girls” don't go wild over his overly attractive bald spot. Sandy, meanwhile had another endoscopy to treat her recurrent swallow issues. The procedure revealed something called a “Schatzki's ring” which will need to be stretched every couple of years. While all women like rings, this was not the kind Sandy had in mind! Still, it's good to have a diagnosis.

Garden Report: This year Sandy's garden looked spectacular for the first half of the summer. Early tomatoes did great, but between the heat and the stink bugs, the later tomatoes ripened poorly. Sandy vowed to get the Sevin out to get at those nasty stink bugs earlier next year, but this year was sort of a bust. However, her eggplants overperformed. She had more eggplants than she knew what to do with, but was able to figure out how to freeze some of them. As for the poorly tomatoes and overripe eggplants, she would pick them and throw them into the burn pile where the critters would clean them up overnight. The eggplants, however, were not so popular – nothing wanted to eat them. Guess even the critters don't want to eat a purple vegetable!



In 'N Out: Last year we remodeled the Master bath and replaced the kitchen cabinets. This Fall we turned out attention to the outside the house as it was time for a new roof and exterior painting. Of course, all this major activity had the neighbors wondering if we were getting ready to move! We are still very happy with our home and life in Arkansas, and have no plans to move anytime soon.

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Travel Report – A Minnesota Quickie: In between doctoring, roofing and painting, we managed to squeeze in a quick trip to Minnesota in Early September. We went to see our new great grandson along with our granddaughter and her husband, and had a wonderful visit. On the way we stopped in Austin to see the “Spam” Museum – something on Sandy’s ‘bucket list’. Just sounded like one of those outrageous things to do! Bob was patient as always!



We also squeezed in a couple of hours at the Mall of America as Sandy wanted to see what had changed since we were last there over 25 years ago! Rest assured, all is well and still looks prosperous. While much of retail and space in other malls goes wanting, whatever vacancies are at the MofA, are cleverly disguised! Before heading home, we had dinner at Mallards Restaurant (no they don’t serve duck) with Sandy’s cousin – a nice chance to catch up a bit. We managed to do a lot in only a couple of days!

Critter Report: This year posed a couple of new challenges for us. Early in the year, Sandy noticed the dirt under one of her daylilies, starting to push up into a mound along with a preponderance of red ants. It was clear we had a fire ant problem. Fortunately, the mound was not near the house, so posed little threat. Later in the year, we had one or two armadillos who decided to hang around the yard. With the dry year, the dirt near the irrigation system provided easy digging for the grubs they like to eat. Seems, they must also like fire ants since when we saw evidence of their digging near the mound, the fire ants were all gone! The armadillos still did significant damage but they did get some extra points for fire ant extermination! Still, in the end, Bob’s gun and good aim shoed them into the woods and apparently, they decided not to return.



A Fair Day at the Fair: On a whim, we decided to drive down to Little Rock for the Arkansas State Fair in October. Of course, there is no comparison with the size and diversity of the Minnesota State Fair which we were used to. There was no “Machinery Hill” – not even a ‘machinery slope’. Horticulture and craft exhibits were also sparse. Just our luck, we went on a Monday when most of the weekend animals had left and the incoming animals were not there yet. We did see some cattle, and pigs, but no sheep, fowl, rabbits, horses, or goats. As for the food, the minimum charge for anything seemed to be \$12, and a turkey leg, albeit huge, was \$20. One visitor commented that you could buy a whole turkey for that! Otherwise, you could get just about anything you wanted “fried”. We passed on that as Sandy did not think she brought enough Tums along for the 4-hour ride home!

Bible study and brewing continue to be ongoing pursuits (guess who does what). All in all, we’ve 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.