

The Goff Gazette

Volume 26

Bradenton, Florida

December, 2010

Greetings and Best Wishes

Once again we come to you from the “Sunshine Coast” of Florida. We hope you had a very happy Christmas and New Year’s holiday and that the new year brings you prosperity and the best of health. As we embark on 2011, let’s all take a moment to reflect on the good in our lives and to share it through an act of kindness to a loved one and to a stranger. Be good to yourself and a friend to those in need. Be happy.

Sarah and Brian

We had another great year in suburbia, but it was our last. We bought some land near Gainesville, FL, and are quickly moving towards our goal of a big garden and orchard,
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Sarah & Brian

Barbara & Ed

Matt & Valérie

Barbara Active in 2010

Retirement is incredible. I have an active social life with almost daily meetings with at least one of my fourteen doctors. lol In short, most medical issues relate to former athletic injuries. To all you younger friends and family, I recommend taming your instincts to run, windsurf, and mountain climb. Instead, settle into a comfortable recliner, where you feed yourself grapes and read.

In between visits to the docs, I’ve been writing five books and attending my four writing groups. I wrote memoirs of overseas travels for two years. Recently one of my writing group friends asked, “Barbara, have you ever had any adventures that weren’t life threatening?” That gave me an idea for a second memoir of my quest to find the meaning of life, which continues. I thought by my age I’d be wiser. While attending the Florida Writers’ Association convention in Orlando this summer, I met with a NYC agent, who expressed some interest in my memoir if I rewrote it as a narrative rather

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Ed Kicks Back in 2010

When we retired in 2007, I thought that all we needed to do was sit back and relax. I didn’t expect to feel guilty about not going to work every day, and I didn’t expect to feel guilty about spending our savings. After forty years of teaching and saving, it was time to reverse direction. Well, I finally came to terms with reality and have really started to retire, kind of. In January we bought a 2007 Sun Tracker Regency Party Barge pontoon boat, and we have really enjoyed taking excursions around Anna Maria Island, up the Manatee River, over to Egmont Key, around Palma Sola Bay, and many other places in our area. We still have much more to explore.

I have discovered the joys of boat ownership along with the associated problems and expense. Barnacle issues along with the hassles associated with trailing the boat lead to a new boat lift which itself has barnacle problems. Oh, well, it is still a lot of fun.

Last year we adopted two of

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Matt & Valérie

Much of 2010 was devoted to working on the house we bought in August 2009— since it had been rented for many years before we bought it, there was a long list of minor things to fix and the yard needed a lot of work (not that it looks much better to the untrained eye yet). We also spent nearly six months working with a local designer, drawing up renovation plans to add a garage, expand the kitchen, and add a large rear porch. The plans are complete, so we’re hoping to pick a contractor and get started soon.

In October, we hosted a party celebrating the 100 year anniversary of our house’s construction. One of the original houses in our area, we’re trying to respect its vintage style as we renovate and preserve as much of the original materials as we can.

Travel-wise, we enjoyed trips to the Dominican Republic to visit Valérie’s sister Stéphanie and her family. We also had trips to Winston-Salem, NC, to see her parents, and

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Barbara...

than in episodes. After the holidays, I'll give it a try.

A member of one of my writing groups asked me to write with him because he thought our writing styles matched perfectly, which they do. He had a book idea that involved several female characters. He claimed the female mind was such a mystery, he needed a female partner. I agreed and we have it partly mapped out.

Meanwhile, since romance books are the bulk of books published in the U.S., we thought our best chance of getting published was a romance. We wrote one and have two more outlined. Before I met him, I was halfway through a middle school mystery, which went to the back burner as we wrote the romance. At a FWA conference breakfast, I happened to sit between two authors who wrote for that age group—the author of the winning library association book last year, *Fancy White Trash*, and the author of a series of books including *Crossing Jordan*. Both were amazingly helpful and generous with their time.

Wanting to get published is like wanting to be a rock star, so I'm realistic about my chances, but, meanwhile, it's great fun and may challenge my gray cells to cling to life a little longer.

After years of admiring art and stamping, I've finally taken watercolor painting classes with Anne Abgott. Check out her website. An average five-year-old would produce better art, so you won't be seeing my paintings any time soon, but I love experimenting with colors and techniques. I've continued my stamping and every flat surface in our house

is another station of preparation for the Village of the Arts Old-Fashioned Christmas celebration. VA is a colony of artists in downtown Bradenton. I was invited as a visiting artist...quite a misnomer, but fun. Patient Ed didn't complain as I cov-

ered the dining room table, the living and family room coffee tables, and the kitchen nook table with stamping and painting materials.

It's been a busy year. I'm having fun and Ed is working on sainthood.

Ed...

Matt's and Valerie's kittens which have, of course, grown into cats. These two little creatures, Sweet Pea and Cutie Pie, have won our hearts and we enjoy their antics immensely. They are very affectionate and like

to jump up for a scratch under the chin and a nap in our laps.

After enjoying being homebodies for three years, we

finally did a little traveling. I took four short trips this year and Barbara joined me on three of them. In July we went to Missouri to visit Barbara's aunts and uncles, Wanda & Dick Ball and James & Barbara McClelland, and to meet up with our good friends, Larry and Carolyn Homan in Branson. In October we



traveled up to Franklyn, NC, to visit Sarah's in-laws, Richard and Dorothy Turk and to see the fall foliage. In November I flew up to Pittsburgh to spend a week with my brother, Dave, who had a lung transplant in October. Although he has had a few "bumps in the road", his new lung is doing very well and he expects to return to his home in Corning, NY, in January. Finally, in December we journeyed across the Florida peninsula to attend Dottie and Bernie White's annual holiday party. We had not seen Dottie in many years and I think it had been decades since we last saw Bernie. It was great to see them, some of their "kids", and grandkids. We also visited Carol (sister) and Bruce Beavers in Cocoa.

I haven't completely retired as our four rental units on Anna Maria Island keep me quite busy. Since we retired I have taken over management and do most repairs myself along with some of the renovations. That along with my running, now in my thirty-first year (without missing a day) help keep me in shape. I was very pleased with my Gasperilla run last year finishing the 15K (9.3 miles) with a 8:14/mile pace. I will have a hard time bettering that in 2011.

It looks like 2011 will start off with a bang, as we prepare to take possession of the birthday gift I gave Barbara.

Matt & Valérie...

two to Greenville, SC to see her other sister Nathalie and her family, most especially their new baby Chloé. We also spent a week at Sunset Beach and then Hilton Head, SC with Valérie's family.

In November, we traveled to



Matt & Valérie, Greenville, SC, Christmas, 2010

Peru. Starting in Lima, we flew to Puerto Maldonado where we spent three days in an eco-lodge (no electricity!) four-hours by boat into the Amazon jungle. We next flew to Cusco where we saw the city and toured the Sacred Valley, then hiked the Inca Trail to Machu Pichu, a four days porter-assisted trip. We had an amazing time and were lucky to avoid the rains common that time of year.

This Christmas we were lucky to get a white Christmas in SC, Matt's first! We also got to catch up with Jeannette, Jim, and Sam McConnell.

We expect to be focused on our renovations in 2011. But have several trips planned, especially to the mid-west where we are looking forward to attending three weddings this summer.

Happy 2011!

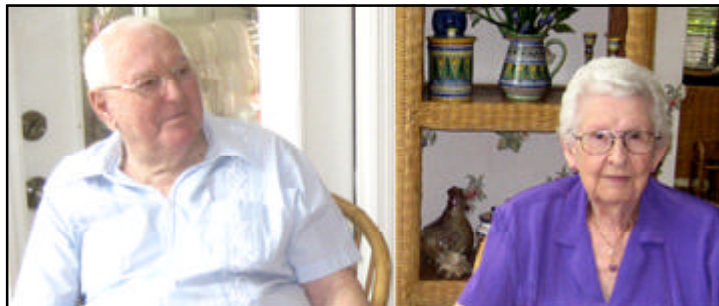
Here and There

Barbara's parents, Harold and Wilma Gardner, live about forty minutes from our house, so we visit them often and they occasionally come over to see us. Yes, at 90 Barbara's father is still driving, as is her mother who will be 90 in February.

Ed's sister and brother-in-law, Judy and Jim Garen, live in Palmetto about fifteen miles from us so we see them regularly, too, but not as often as we would like.

We had quite a few visitors this year. I guess we should have a guest book. Now that we have been retired three and a half years, we find that the years seem to run together. After discussing who journeyed our way this year, we decided that it was safest not to mention anyone thus avoiding omitting someone...

It was nice living in government housing or off base rental units



Barbara's parents, Harold & Wilma Gardner

for thirty-seven years. If something broke we just called the "Trouble Desk" or the landlord and everything was taken care of. It seemed like everything in and around our house decided to break this year. Chinch bugs destroyed our lawn, the pool sprang a leak, the dryer motor burned out, the car needed major repairs, and the list goes on...

Ed's brother had a lung

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Sarah & Brian...

goats, chickens and bees. The land is just what we were looking for. It is 10 acres, half woods, half cleared with a spring fed swamp and beautiful big oak trees. It's right on the edge of Gainesville and a quick bike ride to the rails to trails bike path that goes into Gainesville. It was a very



Brian & Sarah on their land near Gainesville, FL

complicated situation and sale, but we got a great deal because of it. We feel very lucky. We will miss lots of things from south Florida like our cute little house, being close to Brian's family, our friends we have made down there, and Trash to Treasure... but we are excited about our new life in the woods and hope our friends and family will come visit us. And we hope everyone likes camping(it's vacant land)!!

Bunny and Ojus, our two greyhounds, continue to be our pride and joy. They have been such good sports...letting us drag them around everywhere in the car, camping in 20 degree weather, etc...hardly a peep. They are the best. I guess that's about it! Brian, my lovely husband, and I wish you a wonderful 2011!

Webcam

We have a rental property on Anna Maria Island that is located on a small bay within the island, Bimini Bay. It occurred to me that having a webcam facing the water might be a good addition to the property website. It also would satisfy my need to tinker with technology, a big motivator. Anyway, if you are interested in seeing "live" pictures click this link, <http://goff-club.com/510A/webcam.html> . If that doesn't work for some reason you can copy the link and paste it in the address block of your browser.



Sunset at Bay Haven, webcam picture.

Here and There...

transplant in October and continues to recover in Pittsburgh. His other siblings: Nancy, Judy, John, Carol, and Connie are all "hanging in there" and are in various states of well being.

Barbara's brother and sister-in-law, Gary and Renie Gardner, are preparing for son Nick's wedding in the spring. We all plan to fly up to Indianapolis for the big occasion. That should be a fun time.

As they mentioned in their articles, Matt & Valérie and Sarah & Brian continue to stay busy. Matt and Valérie have embarked on major renovations in their 100 year old house. Sarah and Brian have moved from suburbia in Pompano Beach in south Florida to rural Gainesville in north Florida. They purchased ten beautiful acres where they plan to build a new home and live their dream of becoming goat farmers.



Ed & Barbara at Matt's and Valérie's wedding last year.

The Little Copper Tub

A number of years ago we started putting Christmas cards we received into a little copper tub that sat on the floor in our living room. Each year when we would start receiving cards for the new year we would remove the old cards, read them again, and put them in a bag marked with the year. I'm not sure what we will eventually do with all of them but it is fun to grab a bag once in a while and revisit your thoughts and wishes.

We have noticed that more

and more people are sending eCards so now we have a folder on our computer called "The Little Copper Tub" where we store the annual eCard greetings.

As I recently read last year's cards from the little copper tub, I was reminded of an incident that caused us to relocate the tub for a while. You may recall that we were kitten sitting last Christmas (2009) when Matt and Valérie were away so we had Momma cat and her six kittens. It was quite entertaining to watch the kittens explore and learn as they grew larger every day. One evening we noticed one of the kittens sitting in the little copper tub among the



cards. Then we noticed she wasn't exactly sitting, she was kind of squatting.

"Oh no, she thinks it's the cat box." I jumped up but it was too late. At least it was only "number one" and at least she was a kitten so the damage was small. Some of the cards escaped, but for those that didn't, it made it more interesting because we had to try to avoid touching certain areas as we opened and read the cards again this year.

