

The Goff Gazette

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Bottom left – Valérie, Matt, Amélie and Xander, Bottom right - Brian, Sarah and Betsy, Top – Barbara, Grandma Gardner (Wilma), Ed, and Grandpa Gardner (Harold).

Better Late Than Never

It has been a busy time since our last Goff Gazette. We have added two new grandchildren and have lost one parent. Barbara's father, Harold, passed away in March of this year after a long, slow decline in skilled nursing, then the hospital and, finally, hospice. He was a good, kind, generous, and loving man and we miss him immensely.

On a happier note, Alexander (Xander) Thompson Goff was born to Matt and Valérie in March of 2014. And then in January, 2015, Georgia Jolie Turk was born to Sarah and Brian. We now have four beautiful grandkids! Matt, Valérie, Amélie, and Xander live only five miles away here in Bradenton. Sarah, Brian, Betsy, and Georgia live in Gainesville less than three hours north of Bradenton.

Barbara Recovering

While Ed is spending time trying to save Manatee County for its residents instead of the big-money developers, who plunder and leave, I've been trying to get out of my recliner chair and remember where it is when I want to get back into it. My return to the living has been incredibly slow, and I didn't know how bad I was until I've gotten incrementally better. Scary stuff.

Happily, I'm largely back from the Cushing Syndrome, which took away my short term memory, softened cartilage so I couldn't exercise or even stand or sit in a regular chair very long, caused extreme weight gain, bleeding, and adrenal exhaustion. I want to publicly thank Ed, who's been my hero. When I couldn't remember to turn off burners and was too exhausted to cook, he took over. He sat with me during pool exercise, my only activity, to keep me going and not drowning. He did all the grocery shopping and got me to doctor's appointments. Ed did all the financial work for my parents, no small task, as well as everything for us which required brain power. He's been doing all the

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Ed Stays Busy

For me 2014 was a year of projects, but the most significant event was the birth of Xander, our third grandchild and first grandson. We and his parents, Valérie and Matt, as well as big sister, Amélie, think he is the most beautiful baby in the world. At this writing he is almost ten months old and is mobile, not yet walking but getting there. He will soon be joined by grandchild number four when Sarah delivers her second baby in mid-January. We are all anxious to find out if we'll have a boy or girl but most importantly a healthy and happy little sibling for Betsy who can't wait to be the "big sister". Brian always contributes generously to family duties, but has been sharing even more during this especially busy time in their marriage. We are very proud of our kids, their spouses, and our grandkids. They are all perfect!

Projects around home included construction of a full-wall bookcase, redoing the swimming pool including a new high-efficiency pump, a number of car repairs, including new brakes on our VW van and replacement of the heater

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"Kids" Are Great Parents

Matt & Valérie and Sarah & Brian are fantastic parents. Their kids are their number one priority as it should be. They spend quality time doing family things every day. We are very proud of all eight of them.

Highlights of Matt's and Valérie's 2014 include the birth of Xander on March 10th. He is a perfect little baby (now a toddler) who looks like the Gerber Baby. Amélie turned three on November 14th. She is a very active beautiful little girl who loves going to school and speaking French to her mother and grandmother, Cathy Morgan, who moved to Bradenton recently.

Matt continues to stay busy telecommuting to his job with CBS Interactive and working on renovations of their one-hundred-year-old house. He recently finished converting a second-story sleeping porch into his office. His previous office will become the family room when they renovate their kitchen and add a lanai to the back of the house.

Sarah and Brian welcomed Geor-

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Barbara...

heavy lifting—literally and figuratively.

About a month ago, I started cooking some dinners. I've built up stamina from five minutes standing and ten minutes sitting (doing work from my chair) to almost an hour of standing and moving around to thirty minutes of sitting in my recliner. I've learned patience and to feel good about small improvements—although Ed has been a terrific coach—counseling me not to overdo and set myself back.

For Christmas he bought me gooseneck handlebars for my Kwaj-style bike, which will allow me to sit straight and not put weight on my shoulders. (Yeah, I still need to have my left shoulder and knee joints replaced, but I hope to put that off for another year, while I get fit.) I'm excited to bike around Robinson Preserve, and I have high hopes of being able to kayak there, too. My intermediate goal is to build up the biking so we can do the trails in Tampa and Gainesville.

Enough about health . . . no one, but Ed, has known about how bad it's been—even our children—so you are unaware of how much he's shouldered with good spirits and compassion.

Despite the Cushing and still remaining lupus, Ed and I have had a wonderful year. On March 10th, 2014, Valérie and Matt welcomed their son, Xander, to join big sister, Amélie. On January 17th, 2015, Georgia was born to Sarah and Brian and big sister, Betsy. Being grandparents is as wonderful as everyone has always told us. Watching our own children parent is fascinating. Ed and I are really proud of our family.

On Amélie's birthday, I put a sticker in her card. She squealed with joy before a cloud passed over her face. She looked back in the envelope, looked up at me and said, "Where's Xander's?" Chagrined, I told her I'd only put in one since it was her birthday. She nodded and immediately took hers to Xander, which made me so proud of her, Valerie, and Matt, for guiding her through the tricky transition of being an only child to a sibling.

Betsy proclaimed she was having a sister as soon as her mother had a baby bump. When Georgia was only five hours old, Betsy, aged 2, wanted to hold her. Her parents wisely told her

she'd have to wait until Georgia was older because exuberant Betsy didn't know her own strength and thought picking Georgia up by her head was a good idea. A week later, we got a picture of Betsy with a satisfied look on her face, sitting on the king-sized bed, holding Georgia on her lap. I noticed Sarah's hands at the edge of the picture—for Georgia's rescue, if necessary.

Amélie and Betsy are athletic, perpetual-motion people. Xander and Georgia seem more mellow—though their parents, who get up with them in the night, might disagree. We look forward to seeing the younger ones grow and develop their own personalities.

Sunday, February 8th, was Mom's 94th birthday. Dad's 94th was last November 13th. Dad needs skilled nursing, while spritely Mom races around after her second hip surgery with her red, wheeled, walker. After seventy-three years of marriage, we never dreamed they wouldn't be together, but Mom lives at a facility about twenty minutes away which fits her needs. We recently moved Dad from a hospital-like setting about an hour away to a new, homey place only five minutes from our house. He has good and bad days both physically and mentally. I'm glad I can visit often now.

Reading has gotten Mom and me through these sedentary days. She loves looking out at a beautiful rose garden and giant fountain in front of a wild preserve. She rereads her old favorites and I take her a constant stream of new books. She has the gift of gratitude and enjoys her life and the people around her. I feel blessed to have my parents nearby.

In addition to best sellers from our terrific county library, I've been reading books on watercolor painting and writing, which I hope to get back to doing since my memory has improved. Now that I'll be getting out more, I plan to write and visit my critique groups. I miss the lively exchange of ideas and the creative people. Since many artists winter in Florida, I have the opportunity to study with a wide range of water colorists. I plan to take classes with them and paint more on my own.

My best times are getting together with family and friends. We are blessed with many good people in our lives—near and far from us. Life is good.

Ed...

core on my Volvo V70. I also set up a weather station, KFLANNAM2, out at our rental on Anna Maria Island, something I've wanted to do ever since I set up a webcam out there several years ago. Of course routine maintenance at home and our four rental units and investment house (aka Barbara's "craft house" and "guest house") has also kept me busy.

We made a couple of trips up to Gainesville (with our kitties of course) to visit Sarah and her family and do maintenance on our house up there. The second time I also helped with the Repurpose Project (Sarah's non-profit business) by doing some electrical work in their new building which is much larger than their old facility. Other than those trips I didn't travel at all but Barbara did.

I have been VERY involved in local politics again this year. I won't go into the details, but things haven't improved since last year, but we are hopeful for 2016 (election year). In a more positive effort I have been working with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails Advisory Committee on promoting bicycle trails and safety. In November I was bowled over by good news from the Florida Department of Transportation which released new bicycle lane requirements which closely parallel proposals I made over a year ago and which were endorsed by the BPTAC. I also set up a Facebook page that promotes bicycle trails in Manatee County, <https://www.facebook.com/manateetrails>. Now we just need to get some funding...

As PoA for Barbara's parents I have taken over their finances which involve all aspects of their financial management including their health care, taxes, house maintenance, and bill paying. That plus managing our property including all the paperwork associated with rentals and taxes have kept my desk stacked with paperwork and file folders. Barbara has been a real trooper this year and has had what I would call major improvements in the state of her health. She has a great attitude about continuing to improve, and I'm sure 2015 will be another great year for her. She is a wonderful person and I love her a lot.

So, on we go. I feel very positive about the New Year and look forward

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to all the adventures and challenges that face us. I hope you have a fantastic year, too. Oh, I almost forgot again! Yes, I'm still running every day, slower and shorter, but still averaging under 10 min/mile and 25 miles/week.

Kids...

gia to the world on January 17, 2015. She is a happy, smiley baby who was born at home on their land in Gainesville which pleased Sarah immensely. Betsy, who is a very active and joyful child turned two in August. She loves being the "big sister".

During her pregnancy Sarah was involved in moving her non-profit, The Repurpose Project, from a 3,000 sq. ft. facility to a 13,000 sq. ft. building. That was a huge endeavor.

Brian continues to tutor UF athletes to help insure their education is not neglected while they play football and other sports for the University. He also is a "practice patient" for medical students. In addition, he plays bass in several groups and does his share as a stay-at-home dad.

They are in the process of finalizing plans for the home they will build on their ten beautiful acres of land. They, of course, will use as much repurposed material as possible.

We are very proud of all of them.

