

# The Annual Scarecrow

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All the Fits that Print, We News

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## A return to more normal times

Our Health Improves,  
So Travel Resumes  
On Limited Basis

ON TO WISCONSIN,  
N.Y. AND MAINE, TOO

Friends and Relatives Visit  
From U.K., Norway, U.S.

BY A STAFF REPORTER

We managed to return to our usual pursuits this past year, with some adjustments, after the surgeries and *tsouris* of 2006.

Both of us have been active in the community with the local park, from the issue of a dog pen (which divides the neighbors) and concerns over a park board election. This block of Woodstock Street continues to be a delight with thoughtful neighbors, sounds of kids and block parties; we think about moving to a condo but we do love this house. Bob spends much time when weather permits (anything over freezing) on the front stoop with a cigar and a whiskey “bringing down property values” but keeping up with all the news.

We returned to a bit of traveling this year, including two Wisconsin visits.

The first in April was a long weekend in Madison for a Daily Cardinal Alumni Association meeting (Jean Sue chairs the Scholarship Committee). We stayed at the Edgewater, a once-chic establishment which had fallen on hard times but has since been on the rebound; lovely view of Lake Mendota from our room.

Our car trip in May to Wisconsin included an SS Badger cruise across Lake Michigan from Ludington, Michigan, to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. We visited Aunt Marion Johnson and the cousins in Sheboygan (despite Jean Sue being off her arthritis medicine and almost unable to move). The highlight for



Photo by Rosemarie d'Alba

Bob was an old Sheboygan German butcher shop recommended by John Johnson, with excellent smoky hotdogs and a cherubic-faced butcher. We stayed nearby at a lovely resort, Victorian Village in Elkhart Lake.

From Sheboygan we drove down to Racine to see Marilyn, Aunt Helen, cousins Judy and Sharon (and daughter Bailee). We attended Jean Sue's 45th high school reunion where we caught up with a number of friends, including Frances and Bob MacGregor. (We brought back Leinenkugel's, brats and summer sausages).

Earlier in the year, Bob caught a few

spring training games in Arizona during a week-long solo trip.

In July we trekked to upstate New York to a winery (Hermann Wiemer) and restaurant (Dano's on Seneca) we love and thence to Old Forge in the Adirondacks for a summer party held each year by Sheila Brady and Peter Shannon at their A-frame, complete with live band. In town the next morning we viewed the Thunder in the Gorge motorcycle parade sitting on a bench in front of the drug store: small town America lives.

It's been two years since Bob was last in Maine; he got his fix in September when we enjoyed a week in Bar Harbor (staying at Snell House, a lovely in-town lodging

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complete with kitchen) where Bob was again inspired by the tides at Wonderland in Acadia National Park.

On our return trip via Marblehead, Massachusetts, we stopped for a few days to visit Susan Kuc, who arranged lunch over fabulous onion rings with another university press alum, Jill Bahcall and her husband Tom Mirabile.

On Thanksgiving we shared turkey in Red Bank, New Jersey, with Kathy and Richard Hall and Kathy's mother.

We hope the little trips and a return of Jean Sue's eye sight and stamina will mean we can do a big trip in the next year or two, either the West Coast or Scandinavia.

Among friends whose visits we enjoyed:

Neal Ulevich of Denver joined us for five days around his son Jake's commencement at Columbia University, where he received a graduate degree in business.

Cousin Lesley John Kvalheim, his wife Gyr and friend Helge visited from Bergen, Norway while traveling in the United States (we probably passed them in opposite directions along I-80 when we were returning from Wisconsin and they were heading to Chicago).

Bob's cousin Jim Greenwald, wife Renee and daughter Daliah were in town to see the King Tut exhibit and joined us for dinner one night in late summer.

Sarah Errington took some time off while researching a documentary (she's an independent producer, frequently for the BBC) so we could introduce her to Philly and Bob's lamb pastrami (the recipe was a big smash when she served it to friends back home in North Devon, England, this fall).

Cathy Halverson visited from D.C. before she moves to Sacramento where she'll direct operations of California Medicaid. Cathy and Jean Sue worked together in the 1970s.

We also frequently see Bob's cousins, Peg and Clem Schwartz, and their children and husbands Joan and Jeff Less, and Helen and Jim Hansen, regularly receiving photos of great-grandchildren Raya, Grace, and Dylan. (Between these three, the Johnson cousins' grandchildren and those of friends, our refrigerator is covered with pictures of babies and small children, held up by Green Bay Packer magnets.) At a February party hosted by Helen's son Brian and wife Victoria, we presented their children Grace and Dylan with Jean Sue's old rocking horse, Tony, built by her father John in the mid-1940s.

In addition to two orchestra series (one for the Philadelphia Orchestra, one for visiting orchestras) and a cabaret series, we've enjoyed other events. We saw two



fabulous two-person shows, one with Barbara Cook and Audra McDonald, the other Patti Lupone and Mandy Patinkin. We both laughed hysterically at *Spamalot* and Jean Sue took in *Wicked* for a third time. The evening we saw Garrison Keillor and *Prairie Home Companion*, Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall were at the Academy of Music a block away. Camilla and Jean Sue did not compare jewelry.

We've enjoyed TV watching baseball ("Go, Phillies") and football (Badgers, Packers, Eagles). We've also taken in author lectures at the Philadelphia Free Library including Jean Sue's favorite Jim Crace. Despite eye problems (improving) she keeps up on her reading. Among the books she particularly enjoyed this year: *Brookland* and

*The Yiddish Policeman's Union* (Bob liked that one, too).

Meanwhile Bob is doing superbly on a new diabetes drug, Symlin, which also controls appetite, but that hasn't stopped his blogging about the Reading Terminal Market at [www.bookschlepper.com/marketblog](http://www.bookschlepper.com/marketblog). Bob enjoyed the annual summer corn roast and pot luck hosted by Earl Livengood, one of the market's vendors, at his Lancaster County farm deep in the heart of Amish country, also visiting Earl's neighbor Sam Consylman, who asked us to test recipes for Yacon, a sweet South American tuber he's experimenting with.

2008 looks like it will be a good year for the Libkinds; we sincerely hope it is healthy and happy in your home, too.