

Randy's Ramblings 2023

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Welcome to another year of Randy's Ramblings. A tradition started by my mother when I was only 1 year old. Through the years I have found it comforting as I review the year and chronicle the life I've had . . . while I still remember it! I do admit that I have had CRS for decades, so it is good for me to review the year. If you don't know what CRS is . . . it stands for Can't Remember Shit!



This review of the year reminds me what a full and fun life I have actually had. It never ceases to surprise me about all the things I actually did during the year. I highly recommend everyone do a Christmas letter, or a yearly review.

As for why you get a copy? Well somewhere in my life you have made an impression. You may still get a hard copy because you have shown enough interest to write back. Occasionally, when I am late, some have called and asked, "Where are my Ramblings?" (It's always nice to hear that you look forward to them.) And now the internet brings old friends closer. All of these things and more have brought you close to me in some way. So whether you get a hard copy or one online from my webpage, I hope you enjoy this year's Randy's Ramblings.

For those that ask, "What is Randy's Ramblings?" It is the tableau of traumas, trials, tribulations, therapeutic tubs, talents (or lack thereof), trajectories, tracks, tears, and tears, toddlers, tense times, trips, thanks, tempests, tumults, trees, time takers, tailwaggers, tinkering, tourists, and toys that I take the trouble to tell you about in this text. All that, or I just tell you what happened this year. By the way . . . I am the one with hair in the picture. Don't we both look good? :-D

Last year's ramblings talked about how I had my nephew David live with me before he got married. It also mentioned that I had hung up some cane poles. This year I kind of went a different route. And things seem to move very fast this year. In the picture above is me with my great nephew Owen. He is David and Laura's first born. We will tell you more about him later since his birth didn't come until November.

Christmas last year was with my family at my sister Candy's home. I believe everybody had a great time.

January got things rolling quickly this year. We had lots of animals in the area, pelicans on the Lake, and lots of things to get done. Before the month was out I not only had my birthday, but had decided to buy myself the gift of a hot tub. So I had to work my tush off to level an area where I could put it. Then moving in bags of sand, and over 70 steppingstones to have a place to put my tub. By the time it got here I really needed it. And I even got it installed and running in time for me to enjoy it on my birthday.

But the hot tub was not all I was working on. I had chickens and I had to work on a place for them so I could get them out of the house when they got big enough. I made a small portable coop last year, and the critters ate all my chickens. So I had to reinforce it.

In February things were a little bit quiet. I did get to do some fishing. Between playing pickleball twice a week, and having the aikido club meet two nights a week, and going to Carl Junction two days a week, I stay quite busy. But those are my regular things. And unless something happens that's what I do every week. So it does make it hard for me to get out and be as busy with other things or get the work around the house done that I would like to do.

I believe it was in February when I actually found someone local who has a large field of real bamboo. I had so much fun with the cane that I couldn't wait to get this bamboo. Mitch and Fauna are a really nice couple and are actually trying to get rid of all of the bamboo. So they have said I could have whatever I wanted. I've gone a few times to get some, but I can never seem to get as much as I would like or find the time to work with it as much as I would enjoy doing. In return later in the year, I went over with my tractor and cleared a bunch of their land from some trash that was piled up. I hope they will let me get more in 2024.



On the few nice days we had in February, I got out on a boat ride or two. And I also got in some fishing, mostly off my dock. There are almost always fish of some sort around my dock. And big catfish are fun to catch wherever you are.

We started out March with a birthday for my friend Randy Oldham. After pickleball his wife, Lee, rented a room in the community center and we all got to come and have a good time with Randy and his wife. Go Randy. :-D

In addition, I was still raising baby chicks inside, I also went to the Renaissance festivals that came in March, found out about the local poultry swap, and found a new way to mulch leaves that were thick in places in my yard. It allowed me to clean up several areas so they would look good again instead of being covered with 2 foot piles of leaves that were so packed down you couldn't move them. By the end of March, I finally moved my baby chicks outside. And my greenhouse had finally started to grow something.

If you remember, in March of last year, I found a problem with my house in Carl Junction. In June of last year I hired someone to repair it and decided to go ahead and add on while I was at it. I extended the master bedroom and added another bathroom. By April this year they finally started to work on my house. I realized that construction was difficult, two by fours had gone to eight dollars apiece, and it was hard to get parts for anything. But I do believe one year is a long time to wait. Fortunately, I was able to wait and did not rush my contractors. They got a little done every month, and my 300 sq. ft. addition looks like it will be done by the end of this year. I'm like my Doctor . . . Lots of patients!

I had the occasional issue that needed medical attention, but nothing major. At least not until later in the year. More on that as we get there. My other nephew Kevin Kooy suggested that I need a better mower to get the yards done on my rentals. Since he is doing them to basically pay me back for a loan years ago, I told him I

would do the major investments. So I bought the kind of mower he wanted. I also helped rescue a few guys who were stranded in a nice boat on the water. They were very grateful that I helped.

In May I got to do a little fishing. This is a good time of year for crappie. The water is still a little cold for me to want to get in, but the crappie seem to love it. David Kooy and some of his new family came out to help me wrangle a few crappie out of the Lake. David you can pay me later for showing everyone how much bigger the fish you caught was.



Nice weather in May brought some boat rides and of course more fishing. The white bass started to come in, and the crappie were still around the dock. My friend Diane had brought some of her family and joined us for the day and early May. The water was too cold for me to get in, but they jumped in and had a great time.

May seems to provide wonderful weather, and this was no exception. Everybody seemed to have a great time. I also finally got some of that bamboo that I was hoping to get. I learned how much you can actually do with bamboo. It is an amazing product. One man with a few simple hand tools and some rope can build almost anything. I learned how to treat it so that the bugs won't eat it, and I started making a few things with it. It works great as a walking stick. I made quite a few of those, I even built a bamboo rack to hold my bamboo.

I also saw my first harvest of potatoes in may. They were tiny, but at least I had a harvest of something that I actually grew. I also got a fair harvest of Pinto beans. I didn't know that animals can't eat beans, unless they are cooked. I finally found something that keeps the deer and other critters at bay. Next year . . . Beans next to corn!

June saw them continue to work on my house in Carl Junction, slowly but surely. And while they were busy I went and helped some of my friends. I managed to help one friend cut up old tree limbs so they could get rid of the limbs that fell in the yard.

While working with my battery-operated chainsaw I decided to step over a few branches and almost tripped. It was just enough that I bumped my knee on the chain as it was moving. If I had been smart and let go of the trigger it would've been no issue at all. But since I kept the chain moving it took a big gash out of my knee. I hope no one is squeamish. But this gash took about 10 stitches. I thought it needed 15, but the ER did it in 10. As you might imagine, I was not playing pickleball for several weeks. I went through an awful lot of bandages. It was a good thing they sold 10 packs of 2 inch wide bandages, and gauze at Dollar Tree. Okay, yes I am cheap.



As you might imagine, the rest of June went by without a lot of change or not too much happening. I didn't want to stress my knee or pull the stitches. Fortunately, the ER said there was no major damage, no arteries or bones damaged.



By July I was a bit more active. I got out to see the fireworks across the way for their Independence Day celebration. It was a beautiful night. Earlier in the year I had made a new friend, and Aaron joined me out on the boat to see the show. It was a beautiful evening and the moon rise was spectacular.

I even went out and helped a friend with a different tree, before the wound from the last tree work had healed. No one ever said I was all that bright. But I guess you can imagine I was a lot more careful. I dropped a widow maker her tree still had so no one walking by could get hurt. It's amazing how much you learn when you get out of the city! I have feel trees, build chicken coops, remade steps and decks,

and the list goes on!



Diane, her new boyfriend Eric, and a few more family members managed to come out and go fishing with us in July. We also got to entertain Adam and Mariah again when they came out and we went fishing with their boy. We put quite a few white bass in the boat on both trips. I believe everybody had a great time.



As you can see from these pictures there are lots of smiles all around. But sometimes we really slay the fish and don't just put a few in the boat. Adam and Mariah came out again and this time Mariah said she was going to fill her freezer. I think they almost did.



Since I only go out in the boat to catch white bass once it cools down, about two hours before dark. By the time we get back it is dark. Which puts the time between 8:30 and 9:15 in the evening. So when you have a really big catch, you are up quite a while cleaning fish. But it's always worth it.



And those weren't the only fishing trips. My friend Marguerita and I invited my new friend Arron to get in on catching some of these fish. Where were you?

By August David was back out again with more of his new family to hook up more of these White bass. They spent the day and did a little swimming before going out and bringing home 13 fish. By then I was back at Pickleball twice a week and doing Aikido twice a week. Have I mentioned I stay busy?

For quite a while I had been driving just two of my trucks because the one that was in the accident last year had a radiator that blew out after less than 1,000 miles. It blew a big hole in the side of the radiator and the truck overheated, so it was back in the shop! I don't buy expensive trucks, but I am glad I have more than one! Rental fees would have been more than the repairs. . . Which were not cheap.



Each week when I go to Carl Junction, I spend some time with my friends Bob and Mary Wesson. In August we went to my Sisters since they were in town. Yes they travel as much as they can. (You don't think they are trying to get away from me do you?) My Brother in Law Bob Kooy showed off his Dune Buggy and took Bob Wesson for a ride. He loved it!

I haven't seen Bob and Mary at the lake much this year, but they have 7 kids and even more Grandkids, so I understand. They are really busy! But I know

that soon they will need the break and I will see them here.

In September my friend Leah brought some of her family out and we took a trip in the boat to the dam and back. It was a cloudy day, and a bit windy, but it was still a nice trip.

I also had one of my rentals here in Grove come vacant. The family had been good tenants, but they didn't get the place as clean as I had hoped. I spent hours on my hands and knees scraping the floor to get what seemed to be grease off the laminate flooring. I also had to get it



And that was after they had paid to get it

cleaned. They were not happy that they didn't get their entire deposit back, but the place cost me a lot more than I charged them. It seems you can never please everyone. I'm sure some of you out there would have paid good money to see me scraping floors myself.



I mentioned earlier about David and Laura having a baby, well, the first baby shower was in September and in Tahlequah Oklahoma. I went and nearly got lost! My phone died, my chargers were not

working and I wasn't sure how I was going to find anything or anyone. Boy have we all become slaves to technology!

I finally stopped at a gas station and got a new charger, removed the cover off my phone and got it to work just as it told me I was already there! They said they thought they saw me drive by, yet no one flagged me down! Seems David married into a good looking family. But he doesn't seem to know how to wave his arms!

I also decided near the end of September that my chickens needed a nicer place to stay. I had to replace several of this year's birds because they died of unknown reasons and I wanted to blame the small coop. It was hard to clean and quite small. Since I found out about the Poultry swap, I no longer have to buy chicks and raise them. So I can buy full grown birds for just a few dollars more. About 4 birds died due to unknown reasons. Who knows? They are just chickens. Or so I keep saying.

David said I could have his old 10 x 10 Dog pen, so I thought I could save some money. So what did I do . . . I spent hundreds of dollars to build them a really nice coop and used David's pen as a run. To put it where I wanted it I had to dig down and make a level place. Then I found bedrock in one corner. So to make a level place I had to build it up! That meant hundreds of dollars in landscape bricks to build it up! Of course the coop took a couple more hundred. All for a few \$10 birds!



Of course the question was . . . When would I ever find time to build it myself? Life seemed to solve that for me. In October I was walking down the stairs of my front porch to get some wood for the fire stove when my heater stopped working. About 3 inches of the stairway broke off and I fell down. My left knee went under me, and it pulled something around my knee. So I decided it was not a good idea to overstress that knee. So that meant I wasn't going to do pickleball. Without doing pickleball I had more time to work on my Coop.

I still only got to work on it a little at a time. So I didn't get it usable until November. I ran into one problem after another. First twas the level ground. Then building it up, adding over 100 landscape blocks. I did a dry concrete pour for the floor and that meant moving 3600 pounds of concrete in 80 pound bags in one afternoon. More tractor work was needed, and moving the dog pen, finding a net for the roof, setting up the interior, making roosts for the birds, getting a light for them, and the list went on.

I have been taught to do a little bit of everything, but I have never built a structure all on my own. So this was a learning experience as I went along. It's still not finished the way I planned, so I will do a few more things to it as the weather gets better. But all in all my chickens seemed very happy with it. I even went to the Poultry swap to buy them some more friends. I now have 7 hens and one Rooster. They tend not to lay eggs well in winter, so I hope to get a bunch this spring.

October also brought the second baby shower for Laura and David. This time was in Webb City at my sister's home. There was a huge crowd and I believe everybody had a good time.



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By November I was helping with trees again, I moved giant logs left from having a tree cut down. This time without a major incident. Which means no trips to the ER. I won't say I didn't need the hot tub after moving about a thousand pounds of logs, but what else new.

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Also in November Laura and David had their first son. The first child for both of them is a healthy baby boy. We were given a little bit of a scare, a few days after giving birth Laura was back in the hospital. But she was doing well enough by Thanksgiving to join everybody at my sister's for Thanksgiving dinner. My sister Candy always throws a good feed, and everybody had a good time again. Of course Owen was the center of attention. If he couldn't sleep while being held he would have been up all day! But, he slept just fine as he was passed around. As you can see from my first picture . . . Even I got to hold him. Doesn't he look just like me? :-)

It has been an amazing year, and I've been surrounded by wonderful people. I thank all of them and of course all of you who are reading this. You help make my life wonderful. I wish the same for all of you. My home is always open to my friends, like you. Come on out and spend some time at the lake.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year's, and may your life be as wonderful as you want it to be.

Randy Karst

Happy Holidays from:
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