

1983

Merry Christmas

Hi, everybody! Yes, another year has gone by, and once again it's time for (dare we say it?) The Christmas Newsletter. Settle yourself into a comfortable chair, fasten the seatbelt of your mind, and off we go.

Janet is teaching at a grade school -- mostly sixth and seventh graders, jots and tittles of math, science, reading, religion, and seemingly dozens more subjects with which she has a passing acquaintance. After teaching at Purdue, the maturity level of the kids continues to bother her, but she's sure that she can adjust to the new, higher level with time. In October, Janet helped chaperone Outdoor School, in which a bunch of sixth graders go live in cabins in the woods for three days while they learn about nature and beauty and responsibility and how to make s'mores. As a result, we now have a fascinating new collection of Indian-style necklaces.

Speaking of responsibility, Janet's new status has resulted in Steve's assuming more responsibility around the house. (Steve has always been a responsible person. Mom: "Who messed up the bedroom like this?" Brother Ken: "Steve's responsible!") Dinner hasn't yet become poisonous, but it *has* become a lot more festive. It rarely occurs to Steve that there might be a good reason that he's never seen anyone eating nachos made with leftover Sloppy Joe's and Doritos before. (Well, it *looked* like nachos, anyway!)

Steve is still engaged in Becoming A World Famous Software Engineer for Intel. He's also become the Purdue University recruiter in Computer Science, which produces twice-yearly trips back to the old stomping grounds of West Lafayette, Indiana. However, perhaps the most newsworthy work-related item this year was his participation in a smash performance as one of Gladys Knight's Pips (the others being Don Dennis and Dale Boss) at a Fifth-Year-At-Intel Anniversary celebration for his boss, complete with color-coordinated outfits and choreography by Janet. You had to see it to believe it.

We've thrown ourselves into sporting events (sometimes quite literally) with the same fervor as always. Janet tried auditioning for a Wheaties commercial during summer softball with a spectacular head-first slide to avoid a double-play. All of our men's, women's and coed volleyball teams consistently finished in the bottom half of the league. We also took our first shot at downhill skiing this year. Now *here* is a subject with which we could fill reams of paper, but suffice it to say that skiing down those little ramps off the chair lifts is *not* a trivial operation, no matter what they'd have you believe. It's also amazing how fast you can get moving on a snowy hill simply by strapping two boards to your feet. We did handle the lunch break very well, however.

We'll be spending Christmas in Miami with Janet's parents this year. Since the rainy season has set in here in Oregon, we're looking forward to the sunshine. At one point in November, we had measurable rainfall on thirty-two consecutive days; Steve started rounding up partners for Gertrude and Alice (our gerbils), and Janet did some serious research to answer the question "Exactly how big *is* a cubit?"

Well, the Captain has illuminated the Fasten Seat Belts sign, so it's time to bring to a close these flights of fancy through the windmills of your mind. Have a terrific holiday season -- Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Happy New Year, and All That Jazz from both of us.

Much love,

Steve and Janet Tolopka