

1984

Listen!! Up on the rooftop!! Hear the pitter-patter of little feet? (No, silly, they're not repossessing your satellite dish.) It's Santa's reindeer, and that can only mean that it's time for another one of those outrageous Christmas newsletters from the Tolopkas.

Our hottest news right off the bat: We've moved!! (The more astute among you may have figured this out from the return address on the envelope.) A cast of elves started building our house in mid-September, and we moved into it on December 15. (We've included a true-life photo below.) The last-minute flurry of activity helps explain why you're reading the 1984 newsletter in 1985. (Actually, we're just reviving the charming old Ukrainian custom of sending cards for Little Christmas, which is January 6.) In case you've tossed the envelope, our new address and phone number are:

Steve and Janet Tolopka
9380 NW Murlea Lane
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 292-3996

Note that we've chosen to keep our names and zip code the same. Incidentally, moving to the new house has given Steve an exciting new hobby that should last through most of 1985: Figuring out how to install the automatic garage door opener.



Janet survived her year teaching 7th grade at St. Anthony's, finishing in June, and has once again reached the point where she can be civil to 13-year-olds. Although she contemplated joining the circus as a pony trainer for a while, she finally signed on to teach math classes at Portland State University and Portland Community College. Somehow, these "part-time" jobs seem to keep her adequately busy. The spring semester promises to be even more interesting: Janet's slated to teach 2nd semester calculus at PSU, and lots of those little calculus brain cells have started to atrophy from disuse. If, as Merlin says in *The Once and Future King*, "The best thing for being sad is to learn something", then this spring should be a joyful romp indeed!

Steve is still building an operating system for a project-you-can't-say-much-about at Intel. After 3 years on the job, he's finally getting to write and debug programs again, and loves every minute of it (well, maybe 53 minutes out of every hour). Debugging has

become much easier since Gumby joined the project in October. Our group now has a 6-inch bendable Gumby that sits atop the terminals in the lab; his pose tends to reflect the general mood of whoever is working at that terminal.

Intel was kind enough to grace Steve with an Individual Achievement Award this summer for "combining team-building and technical skills to help keep advanced systems development on track". (I kept *telling* my major professor that the time I spent arranging picnics and organizing intramural sports teams wasn't wasted!)

Speaking of sports: This may have been our most successful sports year ever, at least in terms of league standings. The co-ed softball team we play on finished first in the "F" league in the second half of the season this year, Janet's women's volleyball team finished second in their league, and Steve's men's volleyball team finished third. We also have a promising co-ed volleyball team just beginning play. (Incidentally, two of the VB teams carry Red Bricks as a team name, for you Purdue-ites.)

Janet's dancing again, tapping her way into your heart every Saturday morning with June Taylor. (Yep, June Taylor. Nope, not *that* June Taylor, but you have to admit it's a fortuitous name for a dance teacher.) Janet'll be appearing in Episode 18 of the new PBS series "The Wimberleys of the Kansas Moors" as Alice, the tap-dancing maid. Watch your TV Guide for showtimes in your area; you won't want to miss this one.

In his continuing effort to learn a useful trade someday, Steve has spent the year working on his juggling, both individually and with partners. Three-ball cascades and rainbows are now a snap, his four-ball juggle is respectable, and his five-ball cascade is beginning to show flashes of recognizability after 9 months of work. He's also taken up club juggling and passing, and is now able to trade clubs reliably with a partner. Practice time is usually the second half of the lunch hour at work, providing plenty of vicarious thrills for the rest of Intel. Janet has worked up a fairly reliable three-ball cascade, but seems fated to join the troupe primarily as the person who stands bravely in the middle while things whizz all about her.

As you can tell from the above highlights, it's been a pretty quiet year on the whole. Oh, we could tell you about the week we spent on Venus after being kidnapped (incidentally, the King of the Venusians prefers bib overalls), or ask your advice about the large pink and green thing that's threatening to overwhelm the backyard, but the holidays are no time to burden you with our problems. Instead, we'll close with the hope that your holidays were peaceful and memorable (if those aren't contradictory hopes), and that the coming year brings you health and happiness.

With Love,

Steve & Janet