



1989 has been an unsettling year for us. We began the year by flying to Miami on New Year's Eve because Janet's Dad was in the hospital. He died a few days after we arrived. Both Janet and her Mom (who subsequently spent two months with us this spring) are coping well, but it gets harder as the holidays approach again.

As we went to press last year, Janet had taken the CPA exam but didn't know the results. In February, we got the good news: she'd passed all four parts on the first try! Now all she needed was experience, and then she could apply for certification. And in fact, she'd been working at Ford Black since January. In March, they called her in and said "Gee, we like your work a lot but business stinks and we have to let you go". It turns out that fall is the big hiring season for new accountants, so Janet became a "woman of leisure" until firms started interviewing again in late September. She's been making the rounds for the last few months, and is currently considering new job offers. Tune in next year as the saga continues.

Steve also underwent a few minor job changes this year. In January, the manager of the Data Communications group resigned and Steve became the interim group manager despite knowing relatively little about datacomm ("Hey -- it's something I always wanted to know more about."). After a couple of months of total immersion in ISO, TCP/IP, SNA, TSAPs, and other acronyms too numerous to mention, he decided he knew enough to be dangerous and decided to keep the job for a while. This lasted until October, when a company-wide meeting notified us that BiiN's parent companies (Intel and Siemens) had decided that it was going to take too long for their investment in BiiN to pay off and that the company would be sold or liquidated. Two weeks later, the company (and the project Steve worked on for seven years) folded. Steve has returned to Intel and is beginning a new position in Software Technology Development (this newsletter is coming to you via his new Sun 386i workstation).

On a lighter note, we did manage to sandwich a sabbatical in between our job losses this year. After seven years of service, Intel/BiiN offer a sabbatical program that gives you eight weeks off (in addition to regular vacation) to "recharge your batteries". In late July, we headed off on a two-week driving tour of national parks. We hit Crater Lake in Oregon, then Lassen Volcanic in California before stopping in Concord to see Ed and Merry Sierecki (the former Merry Haworth). Then on to Yosemite, where we went on a ranger-led hike and laid on our stomachs with our heads sticking out over a sheer 3000 foot drop. We checked out the trees in King's Canyon/Sequoia National Parks, drove across the Mojave Desert in the dark (*boy, is it dark!*), and locked our wallet in the car at the Grand Canyon (normally not a problem unless you've just bought lunch and your car is parked at the far end of space and time). In Utah, we visited Zion and Bryce Canyon (an *incredible* fairyland), and stopped at Promontory Point, where they drove the golden spike completing the first transcontinental railroad. Janet bought her favorite souvenir of the trip at the Grand Canyon: a T-shirt with a nice silk-screen on the front that proclaims (in large letters) **I Hiked the Canyon** but on the back notes (in equally large letters) **I'm Lying**.

A few days later we flew to Albany, New York and then drove to New Jersey to see Steve's grandma, aunt, uncle, and various cousins that he hadn't seen in waaaay too long. From there, we headed back to Cooperstown, New York and the Baseball Hall of Fame, where Steve spent the whole day walking around with a goofy grin on his face. Then on to Cincinnati, where we spent several days with Chris and John Bebej before heading south to Glasgow, Kentucky to see Steve's parents. While we were there, Ken (Steve's brother) and his wife Sharon took us for dinner and a show on a riverboat ride through Nashville.

We finished off with twelve glorious days in Hawaii, on Waikiki and Maui. We even managed a one day side-trip to the Big Island and gawked at the volcanoes. Our tour

van drove up to a place where several feet of lava covered the road from an eruption a few months earlier, and then we got out and walked on rock that had solidified only two or three weeks earlier. We also picnicked on the beach and checked out the Dole pineapple plantation and swam and snorkeled and ate sumptuous dinners and hiked and shopped and drove the twisty road to Hana (50 miles, 3 hours one-way) and just generally had a marvelous time. It was the perfect way to wind up a sabbatical.

So there was some pretty good stuff this year in spite of everything. We're hoping that the coming year is a little quieter for us and is filled with health and happiness for you and yours.

With much love,

Steve and Janet Tolopka