

*T*was the week after Christmas, and all through the town
The merchants were taking their Christmas Stuff down.
The carols were gone; no more Mathis (Johnny)
Singing "White Christmas"; back to the old Montavanni.

*And Janet in her dance togs, and I (overwrought)
Had just settled back to give New Year's some thought.
When out on the lawn there arose a great clamor,
Like full-armored knights playing catch with a hammer.*

*And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
A Squish! and a Thud! and a voice that cried "Oof!"
"Why, that's Santa," I said, "And his sleigh that went thud,
And it sounds like he's driving his Giant Slug, Bud."*

*Then Santa appeared in the midst of our den,
"Gee, Santa", asked Janet, "Why're you here again?
The presents you brought last week made a huge stack!"
Said Santa, "Those presents will have to go back."*

*"Oh no!" we both cried, "Oh no, this can't be!
We handled our Christmas-time chores to a tee!
We left platters of cookies, and milk by the jug,
And tasty house plants for your eight Reindeer Slugs!"*

*"All true", quoth St. Nick, "But there's work yet to do,
And until you have finished, no presents for you!"
So to get our gifts back (and to make us feel better),
Here's the '91 Tolopka Christmas Newsletter!"*

Happy Holidays, Gang! Actually, we're not late with this newsletter at all — we're simply returning to Steve's Ukrainian roots (fashionable now!) and sending our greetings in time for Little Christmas on January 6.

Life Imitates Art Dept: Up until mid-May, Steve co-managed a group of software engineers at Intel with Don Dennis (an old Purdue friend) in an arrangement that Intel calls "two-in-a-box". Imagine our surprise when we discovered that international affairs sometimes mirror Intel org-charts — Gorbachev and Yeltsin were running the Soviet Union as "two-in-a-box"! Thankfully, we've not had to deal with any coup attempts, and the hallowed halls of Intel are still relatively free of armored attack vehicles

Architecture: It's Not Just for Buildings Any More Dept: In May, an Intel re-organization (an event that occurs with the regularity of the swallows returning to Capistrano) split Steve's software team into two groups (he and Don each manage one), both part of the Architecture Development Lab. ADL works with other Intel groups and major companies throughout the PC industry to set future directions for personal computing. This lets us work with a lot of exciting new technologies; for example, we're currently doing work with scanned images (electronic versions of paper documents and photos, like the snowflakes around this page), audio and speech recognition (for things like voice-driven menu selections), and digitized video stored in the computer. It's also meant more travel for Steve; some has been to pretty neat places (Las Vegas, Squaw Valley, a resort in Scottsdale, Arizona), but there are also day trips to Santa Clara, California (Intel's home base). We still find the concept of "commuting" to a job 700 miles away to be pretty weird, but maybe we'll get used to it.

While There's No Accounting For Taste, There Is A Taste For Accounting Dept: Janet's also been working out of town, but is way behind on the glamour meter. Example: She spent three weeks auditing the city of The Dalles, Oregon (about 80 miles from here), and she complains "I have never *once* gotten a mint on my pillow!" Unlike a lot of smaller accounting firms, Talbot, Korvola & Warwick has a large auditing practice as well as a tax practice. While this lends variety to Janet's job, it also means the "busy" season lasts at least nine months instead of the usual three or four, so she's been kept hopping most of the year. TKW had a good year and is growing (about 30% more staff accountants this year). But the highlight of Janet's work year is that she has now passed her probationary period: by the time you read this, she'll have filed her application to become a gen-u-ine, dyed-in-the-wool, pencil-pushing, ledger-toting CPA.

You Can Go Home Again Dept: 1991 was also the year for our 20-year high school reunions. Once we got over the initial shock (how can it possibly be *twenty years*!!!), we decided this was a great idea. Unfortunately, our trip to Miami got aborted at the last minute when Janet got a pain in her abdomen that the doctor feared might be appendicitis. Ultimately, those fears proved groundless, but Janet's still pretty ticked off about the whole thing. We did make it to Glasgow (Kentucky) during Thanksgiving week for Steve's reunion; Steve enjoyed seeing old faces (*easy* to see now that there was such a paucity of hair to hide them!), and Janet got to meet some folks she'd only seen in Christmas card photos.

Travels Without Charley Dept: Our other pleasure trip this year was a week's vacation in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. Steve's parents went with us (their first driving tour out west), which was fun. We had never seen the Tetons before; they're so awesome that you think it must be a fake, like a Hollywood matte painting. Yellowstone is still marvelous (we were there ten years ago when we moved to Oregon from Indiana).

We had excellent luck geyser-watching and saw lots of wildlife; on one occasion, we found a dozen bison lounging around a thermal area about fifty feet off the boardwalk we were on. Steve *still* doesn't understand why Janet got upset when he began singing "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight?".

Who Is That Behind Those Foster Grants? Dept: Mom and Dad also got to share one other treat while they were here. We had arranged a (belated) dual 15-year anniversary dinner with Kevin and Suzi Kahn at Nick's Italian Cafe (a terrific little restaurant) in McMinnville (40 miles away) right after our Yellowstone trip. We were all dolled up and ready when Janet announced "OK, it's time to leave." While Dad was heading for the garage, Steve noticed the enormous limousine parked out in front of the house! Turns out that Janet and Suzi surprised us all by arranging a chauffeured limo trip, complete with champagne and lots of snazzy back-seat gadgetry. It was a dinner we'll all remember for a long time.

Sports Shorts: While we continued to participate in our usual sports endeavors, there's not a lot of encouraging news to report this year. Steve's volleyball team won its first match this fall, then dropped the last nine. Janet slipped and twisted her knee in the year's first softball game; she missed the rest of the season, and eventually had arthroscopic surgery to help "tidy things up" (although she's still not completely healed, she's back to dancing and playing volleyball again). Probably because we lost Janet (NOT!), our softball team went into a long slump that ended only when Steve promised to take everybody to Haägen-Däzs for ice cream if we won. In fact, we won the last three games of the season (often coming from behind in late innings), with ice cream after each. Steve's pretty sure he knows how to motivate the team to win the championship next year — but it's gonna cost him a fortune in fudge sauce!

Minor Triumphs Dept: In very-late-breaking news from 1990, Janet was the (co-)winner in the Sunday Competition of the Football Pool for the second consecutive year. Her streak was broken in 1991, but she finished a more-than-respectable third. (Incidentally, we've expanded the Pool software so that it now runs on PCs as well as Unix machines, and TKW joined the Pool this year for the first time.) After twelve years of trying, Steve had his first-ever perfect score in the Great Maltese Circumglobal Trophy Dash (a round-the-world map competition with participants from across the country and around the globe), earning a spiffy wooden plaque.

When You've Gotta Go, You've Gotta Go Dept: All of which pretty much brings us up to date. Janet's Mom was here for the Christmas holidays, which was great; Christmas is always just a little bit better with family around. As always, we're pleased to have family and friends drop by; do give us a call if you're in the neighborhood. And in any case, we wish you and yours a Healthy and Happy New Year.

With love,

Steve and Janet Tolopka