

♪♪ ♪ **Ordering from** ♪♪ ♪
A Deli at
Christmas

Bagels, we have heard, or rye;
Sweet hot mustard (or just plain).
And a pickle on the side,
Sauerkraut! (Do not refrain.)
Co-o-o-o-rned beef! That's a Reuben Sandwich!
Co-o-o-o-rned beef! That's a Reuben Sa-a-ndwich!

And *that*, we believe, is enough to make the 1993 Tolopka Newsletter a leading contender in the category of Lamest Parody of A Beloved Christmas Carol. This year's missive is coming to you on actual, honest-to-Pete Christmas Day itself; yep, we're running just a *leeeeetle* bit behind. Mind you, we're not making excuses—what with Steve's parents being here for a couple weeks after Thanksgiving, tree-trimming, baking cookies for our caroling party, shopping, having fun with Janet's Mom (who spent the last two weeks with us), checking out the lights in Roy, Oregon (including the animated Santa-being-bitten-by-a-dog and a spiffy locomotive), and Janet being out of town on audits for much of December, we're pleased to have gotten to it while the calendar still says 1993.

But enough of our petty quotidian cares—that's not why you read this newsletter! You read it for its breath-taking prose and enchanting use of metaphor. You read it to share vicariously in our thrilling lives.¹ So without further ado, the year's recap.

Janet celebrated a milestone with her 40th birthday in May. We marked the occasion by inviting friends for dinner and a Willamette River cruise aboard the *Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler*, then came back to our place for cake and champagne afterwards. The riverboat captain offered the Birthday Girl a chance to take the wheel for a while; we have photographic proof that Janet accepted the challenge.²

Despite her rapidly advancing years,³ Janet remains active. She's still the dependable right-fielder-cum-second-baseman of *Who's On First?*, her women's volleyball team (the imaginatively-named *Side Out*) finished second in the league, and she's dancing at two different schools plus taking classes from some of the world's greatest tap dancers when *Tappin' With Masters* comes to Portland in the summer.

In fact, her dance career is taking off. One of her tap classes did a number at the Dance Magic competition, winning the local competition and

¹You read it because it didn't come postage-due, the egg nog's gone, and you've already seen *It's A Wonderful Life* six times this year.

²The fact that you're reading this letter is evidence that it all worked out okay, despite what the Coast Guard is claiming in their lawsuit.

³I can talk like that since my 40th isn't until next year!

placing second in the regionals in a category called (I'm not making this up) Adult Novelty.⁴

Steve's still at Intel in the Architecture Development Lab (ADL), leading twenty-odd⁵ engineers in developing technologies to make PCs better communication devices. (For those of you who follow such things, the Microsoft/Intel Telephony Programming Interface, which will help unite PCs with telephones, had its genesis in our lab.) ADL is part of a larger organization called the Intel Architecture Labs that is starting to get some pretty good press for its work in the industry, including a major article in the *New York Times* this fall.

This has been a year of increasing responsibilities for Janet at TKW. Besides preparing some pretty hairy tax returns during "the season," she spent more time out of town this year on audits, running seven audits instead of last year's five. She's also reached a new high in audit clients; typically they've been school districts, transportation districts, small cities, but this year she has a nation—the Quinalt Indian nation on the central Washington coast.

The year's clear high point was our summer trip to Europe with Steve's parents and Janet's mother. We flew to Munich, spent ten days on a bus tour, and finished with a three-day "castle cruise" up the Rhine to Amsterdam. Some highlights:

Munich. The Glockenspiel in Marienplatz. Schloss Nymphenburg, home to 5 generations of Bavarian royalty. Nearby Schloss Linderhof, one of "Mad" King Ludwig's amazingly beautiful castles. Steve's Mom downing a full liter of the Hofbrau's best and looking for a second stein.

Salzburg. Mozart's birthplace. Riding the funicular railway to the fortress high above the town. Lunch during a downpour at the Cafe Tomaselli, which became sandwiches and pastries because "the kitchen is closed for a while—too many people!"

Danube River valley. The Abbey at Melk, where *The Name of the Rose* took place. A lovely lunch in a quiet garden and walking tour of Dürnstein, where Richard the Lion-Hearted was held for ransom.

Vienna. Riding the Giant Wheel with views 200 feet above the city. Climbing the 358 steps to the spire of St. Stephen's cathedral. A day of fun with Edith Fenz, an old friend from back in the days when Siemens and Intel jointly ran the Gemini project. Dinner and fresh wine at a *heurigen*, which means "this year". (Janet's Mom, about three bites into her *weiner schnitzel*: "Why, this is just a breaded veal outlet!") Getting the serenading

⁴Sounds more like something made of latex, doesn't it?

⁵Hey! That means "about two dozen"!

accordionist to play *The Yellow Rose of Texas* in honor of Don Dennis. Bozo-waving at a little girl with an ice cream cone in the back of a city bus, and watching her get the giggles.

Innsbruck. The Hofkirche, mausoleum of Maximilian I, with its 28 larger-than-life statues of his ancestors including King Arthur. The Olympic Ski Jump (jumpers see a local cemetery between their ski tips as they jump).

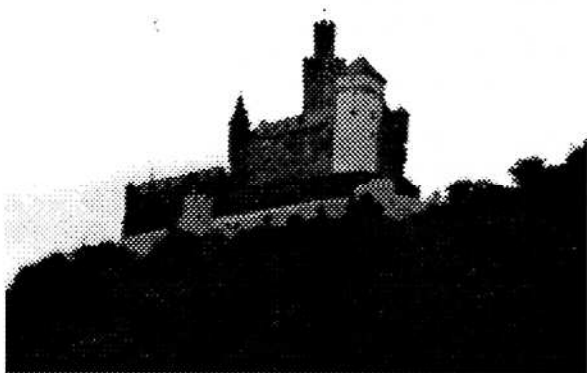
Liechtenstein. Buying stamps in Vaduz.⁶ Creating my own Royal Liechtenstein One-Quarter-Ring Circus by juggling below the fortress.



Interlaken, Switzerland

Lucerne. Swans all over the river. Seeing the 15th century Kapelbrücke (Chapel Bridge) just weeks before it burned. Taking the cogwheel railway and cable car to the top of the Stanserhorn, with its hillsides spilling over with wildflowers and the faint tinkling of cowbells from the valleys far below. The winner of the Swiss National Contest for Bugle-Blowing playing a 10-foot alpenhorn.

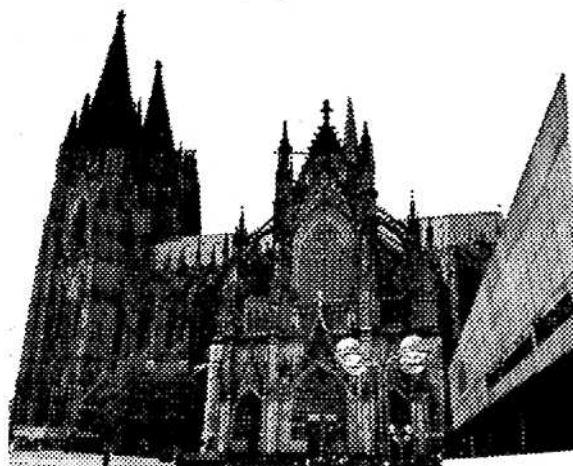
Strasbourg. The gorgeous cathedral with its intricate astronomical calendar that keeps track of time, date, seasons, ages of man, church holidays, phases of the moon, and more. Running into an Intel colleague in the plaza in front of the cathedral.



The Marksburg at Braubach (twelfth century), the only unreconstructed Knight's castle still standing along the Rhine.

Rhine valley. Heidelberg castle at dusk, and the 49,000 gallon barrel in the castle cellars. Vineyards lining the river. Literally dozens of castles, perched high above the river at every bend, with picturesque villages below.

Cologne. The magnificent cathedral, with its 515 foot towers, relics of the Three Magi, and a monumental oak crucifix from the year 975. The Früh Brewery during an "unofficial" evening tour, where the persistence of our guide and the playfulness of a waiter brought us (simultaneously) 21 glasses of beer for six beer drinkers, not counting the two additional buying rounds that new-found local friends insisted on buying for us.



The cathedral at Köln

Amsterdam. Crazy traffic everywhere, in buses, cars, taxis, bicycles, and on foot. The Rembrandts in the Rijksmuseum. Riding along the canals. A singing maker of cheeses and wooden shoes. Windmills, of course. Getting lost in the Red Light district at night in the rain (yikes!).

From Amsterdam, all the parents flew home while we went on to a meeting that Steve was attending on the French Riviera. Another four days of sun, topless beaches, good food, lovely villages, and speaking pidgin French—tough duty!

We're finishing the year with a week-long cruise in the Virgin Islands aboard a 100-passenger ship, and since we're leaving in the morning, I'd better close now and pack.⁷ Stay healthy and happy, and be sure to see us if you're in the Northwest.

With love,

Steve and Janet Tolopka

⁶It's believed to be a strict Principality Law that all visitors must purchase stamps.

⁷Check your postmark; a lot of these cards will be finished on the plane!