



The Tolopka Tattler

Millennial Edition
"All the News It Gives Us Fits to Print"



You hold in your hands! the final Tolopka Christmas Newsletter of the 1900's! This is *sure* to become a collector's edition, so we suggest that you stash away several mint copies now (only \$14.95 each) so you can auction them off on EBay someday to pay for college tuition. It's even better to own the whole set; back issues from the 1990's are only \$19.95 each, and even the seminal 1981-89 issues are a mere \$24.95. Supplies are strictly limited,² so act quickly.

This year's top news is also its most unlikely: Steve was named a Distinguished Alumnus of the Purdue University School of Science. Steve believes this is incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Abraham Lincoln's well-known adage about whom you can fool and how often, although Dave Capka advanced a second plausible theory: "Some of us feel that a stronger case can be made for your being distinguished by your achievements 'standing out.' Like way out. Way, way out."

ing wife, who resurrected numerous scurrilous tales recounted at a Computer Science Department dinner solely to sully his reputation as a Serious Scholar and Dignified Individual.⁴

Actually, the dinner was wonderful – "up close and personal" time with Purdue Pete, followed by a whole evening of reminiscing. Dozens of letters from friends and family were read aloud sharing good wishes and stories of "the olden days," some of which left me pretty darned misty-eyed. It is undoubtedly the closest I'll ever come to hearing my own eulogy, and I'm incredibly grateful for having had the experience.



Purdue Pete – our hero!



Springtime on the Engineering Mall

So in April we hit the Midwest. We started with a whirlwind tour to see folks in Dayton, Cincinnati, Corbin, and Louisville, then finally headed for Purdue with Steve's parents in tow. Having left West Lafayette in 1981, Steve assumed

that a return visit would be relatively safe.³ However, he reckoned without the long memories of family, friends, and (especially) his conniv-

Naturally, we couldn't leave well enough alone. As dinner ended, Steve announced that years of summer softball had finally paid off; he was retiring from Intel because the Seattle Mariners signed him to a major league contract. Then Janet stood up: "That's funny, because they've also hired me to manage and coach the team." Seven minutes later



What's the name of the first baseman?

¹ Assuming you're not reading while polishing off the last of the Holiday Fudge with both hands.

² At these prices, only by how fast we can run the printer!

³ His former henchmen left town long ago and the statute of limitations on most escapades had pretty much expired.

⁴ Unfortunately, they also supplied documentation, photos, and videotape, making Steve's repeated denials somewhat less convincing.

we completed our version of Abbott & Costello's classic "Who's on First?" routine and sat down to thunderous applause.

The rest of the weekend contained numerous other treats and surprises, including lunch atop the campus in the Trustees Room with a special group of top students and a personalized tour aboard the Boilermaker Special.⁵ And to cap the visit, the actual Awards Dinner



Boilermaker Special at the Halsey Drive apartment

– which came with the biggest surprise of all.

To get the full impact, you have to picture the setting: big banquet room, Distinguished Alumni from each of the eight departments in the School of Science, couple hundred people dressed to the nines, brass and walnut plaques, deans and department heads, dignified remarks by the honorees. Yeah, they allude to some of my "extra-curricular activities" during the presentation, but basically I'm in the clear, right?

Then the Dean makes his concluding remarks: "As noted earlier, one of our honorees is a Purdue Band alumnus." And the doors open, and the Director of Bands troops in along with 15 or 20 band members. And *then* Janet⁶ pulls my



Wailing on "Louie Louie"

saxophone mouthpiece out of her elegant little beaded purse, and Dad pulls my neckstrap out of his jacket pocket, and my One More Time Around Again Marching

Band hat appears from Mom's cleavage or

⁵ Including a visit to our old married student housing apartment and a stop for Frozen Custard!

⁶ The wanton wench had been in constant contact with Purdue for six weeks planning all this stuff!

somewhere equally mysterious, and the gal carrying the saxophone is really a piccolo player with an extra instrument, and Janet's urgently whispering into my uncomprehending brain "same key, different arrangement, as written but feel free to improvise," and before I know it we're rocking the crowd with *Louie Louie* and *Hail Purdue*. Pure joy; the goofy look stayed on my face for hours!⁷

Musical adventures are a theme for us this year, possibly because we're spending so darned much time making beautiful music together.⁸ We still constitute one of the few clarinet/saxophone

duos you're likely to hear playing with a church choir. On the marching band front, Janet plays alto and Steve plays tenor⁹ with the One More Time Around Again Marching Band (our sixth



Saxes rule!

year) and Get A Life Marching Band (our second). Get A Life added a Pep Band this year, so we're now playing basketball games at Portland State University. For variety, we started playing with The Second Wind Ensemble this summer, a jazz/dance group with big band-style instrumentation. That makes five different groups if you're scoring.^{10,11} And oh! the places we've performed:

- Before a half million raucous people lining the streets for this year's Grand Floral Parade on a perfect Portland day.
- Before a few hundred soggy, apathetic people at



I'm forever blowing bubbles ...

⁷ Yeah, yeah, nothing new there

⁸ Not *that* kind of beautiful music – Get your mind out of the gutter!

⁹ Making us members of the opposite sax.

¹⁰ You might as well 'cause *we* are – Steve tinkers with arrangements and accompaniments for most of these groups.

¹¹ And you just did it again, didn't you? Get your mind out of the gutter!

Troutdale's SummerFest parade.

- The Fourth of July parade at the Molalla (Oregon) Buckeroo, which started in 1914 to celebrate the arrival of the railroad. After the parade we went whole hog at the pig roast and attended our first-ever rodeo!¹²
- One of last games for the now-defunct Portland Forest Dragons arena football team.
- From the Space Needle to the Kingdome through downtown Seattle in the SEAFair parade, the biggest nighttime parade on the west coast.



Rehearsing the halftime show

- This year's induction ceremonies at the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.
- Leading off the Salem Festival of Lights parade in December right in front of grand marshalls Woody and Buzz Lightyear.

Having gotten a taste of Purdue last spring, we headed back in October so that Steve could deliver a couple of talks at freshman and senior seminars.

Coincidentally,¹³ it was also Homecoming weekend so we stayed for the football game. In keeping with this year's theme, we watched the game in the company of 300 other souls who were "back home again in Indiana" to perform



Alumni Band boogies to Ross-Ade Stadium

with the Purdue Alumni Marching Band.¹⁴ Those guys are *organized*; we had only two 90-minute rehearsals (one off the field, one on) to prepare both a

¹² Janet was particularly fond of the rodeo "commercials" – cute cowgirls on horseback tearing around the arena at breakneck speed bearing flags with the sponsors' names.

¹³ Wink, wink, nudge, nudge.

¹⁴ Okay, *technically* we had never actually played with the marching band before, but we *had* played in a Purdue summer band and we *are* alumni. Besides, they invited us to come at the shindig in April.

pre-game concert and a halftime show. The latter included the traditional **Purdue Block P**, the world's oldest marching band formation. As an added treat, we played several songs under the baton of Bill Moffitt, a near-legendary¹⁵ conductor whose arrangements we've both played from high school to today. The game itself was exciting, the Alumni Band acquitted itself admirably on the field, the crowd cheered lustily for us, and a good time was had by all since we creamed Michigan State 52-28.

We did manage to squeeze in some non-musical visiting and traveling this year. In March we

took a long weekend in Vegas, where we saw Janet's Uncle Buddy and family and caught a couple of spring training games at Big League Weekend.¹⁶ Steve's parents and nephew Nick from Florida came for a few weeks during Rose Festival this summer (a great time to come if you're thinking of visiting!). Labor Day week-



Las Vegas baseball is different!

end we took the train to Seattle for the Mariners-Red Sox series in spanking-new Safeco Field; Griffey homered, Pedro Martinez tossed a 2-hitter while striking out 15, and the retractable stadium roof did its thing to musical accompaniment,¹⁷ so we went home satisfied.

Our big trip this year was a Caribbean jaunt

aboard a 170-passenger sailing ship with Steve's brother Dan. Since the trip was offered through the Purdue Alumni association, we got to chat about 40 or 50 years of campus history with other alums. The one thing we



Star Clipper ready to leave Antigua

¹⁵ At least in marching band circles!

¹⁶ We'll probably go again this spring and would be delighted to meet up with anyone who's interested!

¹⁷ It opens to *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (the "2001" theme) and closes to Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* (à la "Apocalypse Now").

all had in common? Ice cream cones at the Frozen Custard!

Parts of the trip were pretty idyllic – roaming a 400 year old fort, snorkeling in water so blue



San Juan, Puerto Rico seen from El Morro Fortress

you thought the Ty-D-Bol man had been there, sampling island cuisine,¹⁸ shopping in the duty-frees and open-air markets, betting on the crab races. There was just oooooone little catch; halfway

into the trip we attended an all-hands meeting where the captain basically said “We’re *here*, Hurricane Lenny is *here* and moving towards us, we figure we’ll skedaddle south for a while.” So we spent a lot of time driving the boat semi-randomly around the Caribbean staying out of harm’s way. The good news is that nothing untoward happened, although several of us didn’t find dinner all that appealing on a couple of nights. On the down side, we missed some ports of call, and ended up flying home a day late from Barbados rather than Antigua as originally planned. Still, in the grand scheme of things that’s pretty light penance!

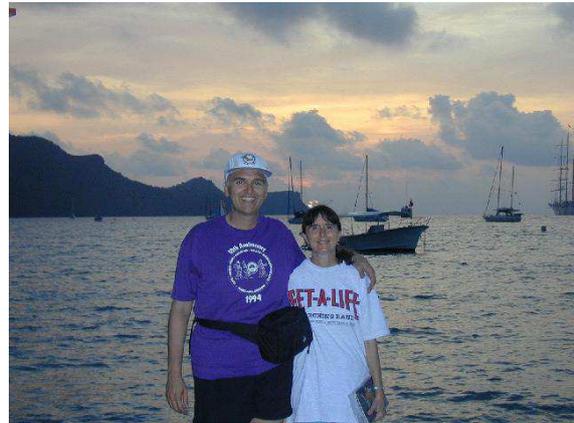
Oh, you’ve read this far in the vain hope that you’d actually get some real news? Well, Janet transferred to a new position in Regional Environmental Management at Metro this June, auditing reports from the tri-county area’s solid waste facilities. As an added bonus, she occasionally goes “down in the dumps” and performs hands-on audits.¹⁹ While the job’s quite different from her former accounting position, she likes it and her boss *raves* about her work. And she’s learning a lot – although she claims she still has “tons more to pick up.”²⁰

Steve’s still in the Intel Architecture Labs doing much the same job, so we won’t bore you with those details. We also won’t dwell on this year’s

softball team (mediocre), Janet’s tap dancing (still crowd-pleasing), or Steve’s excitement at registering his very first domain name as webmaster for the Get A Life Marching Band.²¹

Yes, all good things must come to an end.²² We wish you peace, health, and much laughter as that big odometer in the sky clicks over to 2000.

With love,
Steve & Janet



¹⁸ Believe it or not, Janet ate something called mofongo!

¹⁹ Although frankly, we pretty much treat her as “hands-off” after she does!

²⁰ Those garbage people have some wacky sense of humor, huh?

²¹ Although that probably is the best way to find out what we’re up to! Check it out at www.getalifemb.org.

²² And stuff like this newsletter does too!