



The Tolopka Tattler

2012 Small Change Edition
"All the News It Gives Us Fits to Print"



CHANGE¹

One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching. —Unknown

Once again it's time for the annual,² sort of holiday, Tolopka Tattler! This year's theme is 'Change', and as Jack Webb used to say, "Just the facts, Ma'am ..."³



Ready to astonish a Nassau high school

CHANGE OF PACE

If music be the food of love, play on. —William Shakespeare

The Beat Goes On Marching Band (our all-adult marching band) takes a major out of state trip each year. For a change of pace, the band not only traveled outside of Oregon, but completely left the country on its first cruise road trip. In February we boarded RCCL's *Monarch of the Seas* in Port Canaveral and sailed to the Bahamas, gigging for nearly a thousand kids at a Nassau high school and then aboard ship.⁴ The high school performance was a blast; we finished off by



Snorkeling at Royal Caribbean's private island

¹ Buddy, can you spare a mime?

² Annual: From the Latin *annus* meaning "Whenever we get around to it".

³ Regular readers of the Tattler will immediately intuit that there's almost no chance we will adhere to this assertion.

⁴ A cruise ship may be TBGO's perfect performance venue; the copious food and liquor generate a stupor that convinces people we're terrific!

having the school band join us in *Louie Louie*.

In December, we tempted fate by leaving the U.S. a second time to march in the Rogers Santa Claus Parade in Vancouver, BC. We almost didn't make it to the parade because our bus got stuck in traffic, but Steve talked a sympathetic cop into letting us park and hop off. Whew!



Blowing Frosty the Snowman at kids in Vancouver

Besides the parade, we took in the two million lights of the Bright Nights display in Stanley Park, oohed and aahed at incredibly elaborate displays in a gingerbread competition, and belched gently after a fine dinner on Granville Island. In a clear demonstration of the growing laxity of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, ALL BAND MEMBERS WERE ALLOWED BACK INTO THE COUNTRY!



Bright Nights in Stanley Park

Over the course of the year, our doughy band of semi-certifiable lunatics met on 29 separate days for 37 performances. We played parades, Pear Blossom and Iris Festivals, solemn memorial services, raucous corporate parties, pep rallies, a haunted house, and a 100th birthday parade.



Janet joins Ron for some hot licks on the parade route

We got our name in lights on Broadway for the show at Portland Center for the Performing Arts. We even covered the state pretty well with shows in the east (Pendleton), northwest (Astoria) and southwest (Medford) corners.. Yowza, what a year!



Our name in lights!!!

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes.
 – Henry David Thoreau

When the marching band reorganized in September of 2011, the band was outfitted with nice logoed polos and mock turtlenecks. With the summer of 2012 upon us, the band needed a

summer look.⁵ So we developed a concept and crude sketch⁶ for T-shirt art and hired Designwise Art to improve upon it. Together, we came up with a really fun design. The front shows a marching band heading toward you through Small Town



"Born on the Fourth of July"

USA, while the back shows the the band heading away. The band members really love wearing the shirts. The shirts were ready just in time for the Hillsboro 4th of July Parade. We like to think the shirts were 'born on the 4th of July'!



TBGO in Astoria. See – just like the shirt!!!

We didn't have time to let any grass grow under our feet before we needed to think about winter wear. In the band's first year, we were lucky just to have the polos and t-necks, but what we really needed were jackets. So with the help of two local companies (Oregon Screen Impressions & Settlemier Award Jackets), we came up with a letterman jacket for winter wear that makes us the envy of all. The band is

⁵ Turtlenecks seemed a bit extreme.

⁶ No, it was just badly done – getcher mind out of the gutter!

definitely stylin'; seems like every time we go anywhere in these babies, people ask us about them.⁷ They're a great advertisement for the band.



Stylin' in our new TBGO jackets in Vancouver

STATUS CYMBAL

Anything not worth doing is not worth doing well. – Robert Fulghum

In summer 2011, NYT best-selling author Robert Fulghum (*Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* and many others) saw our marching band in the Seattle Seafair Torchlight Parade and wrote wistfully in his blog "*These old geezers and geezer-ettes have attitude If I could only play trombone ...*" Well, we can't

have unrequited yearning, so this year we contacted him and said "Wanna do the parade with us?" He accepted in a heartbeat and we turned him into a cymbal player. He's now completed two parades and plans to join us at the Calgary Stampede next July.



Fulghum practices at home with gusto and a neighbor

If you've ever wondered what it's like to be on the inside of what we do,⁸ we highly recommend Fulghum's three-part series of articles (find the links at www.tbgo.org/awards.htm).

One last Fulghum story: The dude spends part of every year at his second home in Moab, Utah. One day in September I got the following email:

You might be interested to know that my cymbals can be heard two miles away when crashed from my front porch into the silence of Pack Creek Ranch.

How do I know?

A neighbor who lives two miles away drove up in response - thought there was an automobile accident on our road.

⁷ Or quickly cross the street since they think they've encountered the world's most frighteningly odd street gang.

⁸ And joining a marching band for the first time at the age of 75!

DON'T CHANGE A THING

Use what talents you possess, the woods will be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best. -Henry van Dyke

This sentiment is a good one to carry around. We may not be on a par with the greats, but we're having fun playing music with our other



Second Wind Jazz and the 11th annual Monday Margarita Madness at the foot of our driveway

music groups (Second Wind Jazz, Treble in River City, Portland Community Wind Band, etc.). For something new & different, Treble played twice at the Stickman Restaurant in Lake Oswego, on their large back deck

right on the lake. Aaahhh! And on a different part of the spectrum, Treble also performed at Paradise Harley-Davidson (Gentlemen & Ladies, start your engines!).

CHANGE OF OCCUPATION

If work were so pleasant, the rich would keep it for themselves. - Mark Twain

Janet finally decided to join Steve in retirement. Why should he have all the fun? So as of August 31st, Janet left Metro after over 17 years and has never looked back.

She has found plenty to keep busy and added a couple of new activities. She took up bowling again after having not been in a league since childhood. Seems these new-fangled bowling alleys have taken all the fun out of scorekeeping by automating the process.⁹ She was never a good bowler, so her goals are modest. Step one: have fun (Yes! This is fun!). Next goal was to break 100 in all three games (Nailed it!). The

current goal is to have the pin total for all three games break 400 (FINALLY nailed it, but only once so far).

CHANGING GEARS

After just over 19 years, Janet finally



Janet and her new "puppy"

bit the bullet and traded in her 1993 Infiniti G20 for a 2013 Infiniti G37X. A lot of bells & whistles have been added to cars since 1993—from pushing a button to start the car to the rearview backup display to the navigation system.¹⁰ It's a little frightening to drive something so new with no scratches on it yet, but she'll get over that soon (she hopes!). She was really attached to that little G20. She compares it to getting a new puppy. The new puppy (G37X) doesn't know there was another dog in the house (G20) before it came along.

CHANGE OF VENUE

Besides our music-based peregrinations, we managed to get out of town for a couple of other trips this year. First up was a brief summer trip to Cincinnati for Janet's brother Jim's wedding, where we also squeezed in a lecture and book signing by science fiction author and blogger John Scalzi, Graeter's ice cream with band buddy Arlene Brill, good eatin' at Montgomery Inn Boathouse ("The Rib King"), and a Reds game at Great American Ballpark.

In October we spent a fun week in Baltimore. The trip was spurred by Steve's panel participation at the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, but we decided to go early and hang out since we'd never seen the city. A few highlights:

- Rooted for the home team at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, a new (and worthy) addition to our baseball park collection.
- Visited Edgar Allan Poe's grave in a nicely creepy churchyard (this is why Baltimore's NFL team is the called the Ravens).¹¹



Great seats at Oriole Park!



Yeah, they eventually moved him around the corner, but the original headstone is WAY cooler!

⁹ How's a kid supposed to earn quarters for the pinball machine????

¹⁰ Did you know they even have cup holders now? Amazing!!!

¹¹ Bet you didn't expect the Tattler to be educational!!



Janet marvels at some Visionary Art

- Toured the American Visionary Art Museum, which is chockablock full of oddball creations¹² dreamed up by seriously-disturbed artists, or as AVAM would put it “self-taught individuals whose works arise from an innate personal vision that reveals foremost in the creative act itself.”

- Spent a whole afternoon gawking at fish in the National Aquarium (and still didn't see all the exhibits).

- Steeped ourselves in baseball history at Babe Ruth's Birthplace, just a long fly ball from Oriole Park. The museum says “His mother Kate came to the home of her father to escape the lusty atmosphere of the apartment she and husband George lived in overtop the Ruth family saloon a few blocks away.”¹³ We had the place to ourselves on a rainy afternoon and even scored a comped pair of tickets to the Sports Legends Museum, where we raced through Orioles, Colts, and Ravens history that deserved a longer visit.



Striking the 15-star, 15-stripe flag at Fort McHenry at day's end

- Rode the water taxi to Fort McHenry, whose bombardment in the War of 1812 inspired Francis Scott Key to write new lyrics to a British drinking song. The fort still flies a replica of the

huge 15-star/15-stripe flag that Key saw at the twilight's last gleaming.

CHANGE OF LIFE

Life changes are inevitable. Some are good like retiring or buying a new car, but some you'd rather not experience. In October, Steve's mom passed away shortly after moving from Kentucky to Florida. Her passing was unexpected and we are still trying to cope with the idea that she is no

¹² Google “Baltimore pink poodle” for pix of the amazing Fifi.

¹³ Fittingly, the saloon was sited approximately where second base is now located at Oriole Park.

longer with us and that we can't just call her up to talk or go to Florida to visit her. She is still with us in some of the small everyday things. We think of her when we frequent some places she liked to go when she was here for a visit, when we're playing with the marching band (she was a big fan and followed our antics), when we pull out one of her recipes, or when we use something she gave us. Janet thinks of her when curling up in the cozy crocheted afghan Mom gave her when we were first married.



Our favorite photo from Mom's Bermuda honeymoon

We miss her tremendously. Life just isn't the same without her.

SPARE CHANGE

If you fear change, leave it here. – Sign on tip jar

Good and bad, 2012 brought about many changes to our lives. Through it all, we strive to focus what's good. As the song says:

*You gotta accentuate the positive,
Eliminate the negative, an'
Latch on to the affirmative –
Don't mess with Mister In-Between*

We wish you a 2013 filled with good health, good cheer, and good times.

Change is inevitable ... except from a vending machine. – Robert C. Gallagher.

The Beat Goes On,

Steve & Janet

Wanna see full-size versions of the Tattler photos? Just click the pix; they're all linked to (much better looking) full-size pix online. Back editions of the *Tattler* are available at www.tolopka.com. Our web page also has pointers to all the band websites, where you can get audio, video and more pix. And drop us your email address; we're steve@tolopka.com and janet@tolopka.com.

We'd be happy to keep you updated on our musical happenings BEFORE they take place – **drop us an email and ask to be added to the Friends of the Bands mailing list.** We'll send occasional email with all our upcoming events.