



The Tolopka Tattler

2013 "Them's the Breaks" Edition
"All the News It Gives Us Fits to Print"



Breaking Story!

This year, it looks like our goal is to be even later getting out our 'holiday' newsletter. Or should we call it our 'newslater'?

We have a pretty good excuse for being late yet again.¹ You might recall that a few years ago we used the excuse that we had just three weeks to

plan a trip for 100 band members to the Presidential Inaugural Parade. That was a pretty good excuse, huh? Well, this time our excuse is that The Beat Goes On Marching Band (TBGO) has been invited to participate in the Shanghai Tourism Festival. Yes, you heard right ... Shanghai ... China ... other side of the Pacific Ocean.



This year's Festival theme is "marching bands," and TBGO will be the sole band representing the United States.² The Festival's signature event is the Opening Grand Parade, traditionally attended by leaders from Chinese provinces as well as officers from foreign consulates located in Shanghai. Hundreds of thousands of spectators line the streets and the parade is broadcast to a live TV and radio audience of 200 million. In the days following the parade, TBGO will perform at two to three additional festival events taking place at major Shanghai landmarks. Around 9 million attendees participated in the events of the 2013 Festival. It's going to be an amazing adventure.

While the festival isn't till September, we have been busy with preparations that include looking for grants, sponsors, and lots of cold hard cash to

help with funding since our members come from a wide range of economic circumstances.³ Sure, it's unseemly to use your 10-weeks-delayed holiday newsletter to fundraise, but when have we ever been seemly?⁴ So please check out the band's website at www.tbgo.org (or see the attachments if you receive the Tattler electronically), imagine yourself as part of the band's adventure, and then write a check to the band travel fund.⁵ Donations are tax-deductible, and when you read the recap in next year's Tattler you can think "I helped make that happen."



Float from previous Shanghai Grand Parade

Breaking Away

Remember a movie called *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*? Last May we took a trip to Friday Harbor (in Washington's San Juan Islands, just barely across the Canadian border from Vancouver Island) and planned our vacation that way. We took 5 forms of transportation: cab to the train station, train to Seattle, seaplane to Friday Harbor, ferry back to Seattle, train to Portland, cab back home, on foot to get everywhere else!

We had a relaxing few days in Friday Harbor⁶ and then finished up in Seattle where we



Mmm...does this look yummy & inviting or what? The chocolate was perfect with the wine!

¹ But don't we always?

² Let THAT strike a proper note of fear into your soul!

³ Getting a tuba to China ain't cheap. Getting a tuba player to China is even worse. Bringing them BACK is a major undertaking!

⁴ Wednesday, July 14, 1982. Fortunately, it didn't last.

⁵ A little bigger than you meant to write would be perfect!

⁶ Highlight: a 3-mile hike around the island that became a 5-mile hike because Steve got overly enthusiastic reading the map.

took in a Mariners game. Since Janet's birthday was during this time, our friendly travel agent arranged for wine & chocolates at both hotels we stayed at. The offerings at the Seattle hotel were particularly tasty ... polished them off after the Mariners game and before birthday dinner at a nice restaurant.

Coffee Break is Over, So Get Back to Work!

Last spring, The Beat Goes On Marching Band (TBGO) had the privilege of being the first marching band to open a session of the Oregon State Legislature. We marched from the rear to the front of the chamber & played a medley of 'We're an American Band' & 'Louie, Louie.'⁷ It was cool watching our state legislators enjoy our music.⁸ (BTW, 'Louie, Louie' is the Pacific Northwest's anthem since the Kingsmen recorded the song here.)

Making a Break for the Border!

For the second year in a row, TBGO left the country AND was allowed back in! TBGO participated in the Calgary Stampede in July. This was an especially challenging year for the 101st annual event because Calgary was hit with torrential rains and flooding just before the event. Getting things dried out so the Stampede could happen took lots of volunteers, so 'Come Hell or



Don't squat with yer spurs on!
When in doubt, let yer horse do the thinkin'.

High Water' became the watchphrase for our neighbors to the north. Amazingly, they got it done; we were told that the street where the band staged for the parade had been under two feet of water only a couple

weeks earlier.

The Calgary Stampede Parade is one of the great parades in North America, and we had a blast marching the 3+ mile parade route.⁹ The parade was a judged event against really great competition¹⁰ and we proudly took home the fourth runner-up award. Besides the main event, TBGO

⁷ Thus lending a whole new meaning to "rocked the House."

⁸ Or at least pretend to enjoy it. Votes, ya know.

⁹ That is, once everyone got over gasping for air since Calgary is at 3400' elevation.

¹⁰ We would say "against stiff competition," but frankly we were stiffer.

also marched in the Bowness Stampede Parade (a small neighborhood in Calgary).

Breakfast

It turns out that breakfasts are a big tradition at the Stampede,¹¹ and huge outdoor breakfasts (always free) are all over the city throughout Stampede week. TBGO had the honor¹² of being asked to perform at the Premier's Breakfast



Janet, Justin Trudeau, and a couple of band buddies

hosted by Alberta Premier Allison Redford.¹³ Steve wandered up to some guy in an apron to thank him for putting on a great breakfast and discovered that he was Alberta's Minister of Energy, and Janet hung out with Justin Trudeau (yeah, Pierre Trudeau's son and leader of Canada's Liberal Party). Way cool!

Sticks & Stones May Break My Bones, But...

Well, no sticks or stones were involved (the closest stick was still at home plate), but the rest was pretty accurate. As many of you who have known us for eons are aware, we have been playing co-ed softball since right after dirt was invented so it could be put on the ball diamond. Last July, Janet broke her humerus¹⁴ about as close to the ball & socket as possible (proximal humerus fracture).

One could blame Steve for the whole thing.¹⁵ Janet had a great hit to the outfield to easily make it to first base.

Steve came up next and hit the ball to the shortstop. Since Janet was out at second before she arrived, she was bailing out. BUT the shortstop wanted to go for the double play. The two of



Still have the whole softball shirt, but it's in pieces from when the ER doc cut it off. They don't give you a choice on that...they just cut before you can object. Glad I wasn't wearing something expensive!

¹¹ Believe me, they've *always* been a big tradition with band members!

¹² Sorry - we were in Canada, so that's 'honour'.

¹³ For those of you not up on your Canadian governance, a provincial premier is the equivalent of a state governor.

¹⁴ Yeah, not really that funny.

¹⁵ Only ONE of us does. Ahem.

them collided and Janet hit the ground hard. This kind of break is too high to cast and only a sling is worn while the break heals and you get to sleep basically sitting up for 2-3 months because lying down hurts too much. There has been A LOT of physical therapy and she's still trying to regain flexibility & strength in that arm. Life Lessons? 1) Old people don't heal as fast as kids. 2) Old people don't bounce. 3) Don't fall!

Breaking Ground

No actual ground was violated, but after years of talking about it we finally remodeled our little screened-in porch. Even when it was pretty warm outside, our porch was often too cold to enjoy because not much sun reaches it. We replaced the screens with windows, changed the skylights so they can be vented, added a thermostat and little heater, and had the floor sealed. Now we can enjoy our sun porch almost year-round!

Hit the Brakes!

Our rock 'n' roll band seems to have become the



Treble in River City, ready to rock! (That's our backyard)

official band for Paradise Harley Davidson as we performed for them a few times this year—including at their

holiday party. They like us and we really enjoy playing for their Saturday 'ride-ins'. The holiday party was a hoot with the owner joining the band for a vocal.

Taking a Break

We decided to get away from it all during Thanksgiving by spending time with family. We spent a couple of days visiting with Janet's family (Aunt Bobbi, Uncle Frank, his wife Janet, & Cousin Kelly). Then we spent a couple of days with Steve's brother Ken & his family (wife Sharon, kids—Nick & Kris). It was great to get away from the cold weather and even greater to spend time with family. Thanksgiving dinner was

¹⁶ By now you must be dying for the anticipated "Breaking Bad" pun. Ain't gonna happen, but here's a footnote gratuitous reference so you can rest easy.

¹⁷ A French word meaning "man, you guys are lazy."

amazing. Almost as amazing was the amount of baking—after the fact! We think Nick & Sharon must have baked about 47 different kinds of cookies in about a day and a half! OK, maybe there were only about 9 kinds of cookies. But still a crazy amount!



Uh ... I'll bring the trash can in later ...

When you think of wildlife, it's usually not right outside your front door. This 'little' guy was at the end of Ken's driveway with Mom & bro nearby.

Christmas Break¹⁶

The Christmas holidays were very quiet for us. We stayed at home in our PJs all day! Imagine having an elegant dinner with your good china but you're still in your PJs; that's the epitome¹⁷ of taking it easy. We did manage to finish our 4-D puzzle¹⁸ of NYC. Since the puzzle came from Ken's family, Steve sent pictures of our work in progress to them as we built.¹⁹



"We built this city ..."

We had a great year (except for that whole arm thing) and look forward to an amazing rest-of-2014.²⁰ Hope yours is filled with health & happiness!

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 happen-

¹⁸ After finishing the puzzle base, you add the buildings in the time order in which they were constructed, so 4-D.

¹⁹ We're pretty sure those photos are now family heirlooms.

²⁰ We plan to skip that whole arm thing.



Yer breakin' my heart: Steve likes to play to a tough crowd, and All Time Best was a hard sell.



Sometimes you've just gotta weed out a bunch of those leftover containers! Janet got a wild hair and decided it was time ... even though reaching for things with her left arm was still challenging.



(Not) Breaking the ice: We had quite a cold snap. These are the bubblers in our back yard creating their own ice sculptures. Wow!



Break a leg: TBGO performs for the Festival of Flowers at Pioneer Courthouse Square, "Portland's Living Room." Steve is directing. Janet is the sax player on the left.