

**D**id you hear that Santa has stopped buying books for the North Pole Library? Seems he's running out of elf space .... Fortunately, there's still enough room to slip in his copy of the **1994 Tolopka Christmas Newsletter**.

**Late-breaking News:** Within the last hour, Janet changed jobs! Her new position will be as Assistant Management Analyst at Metro, which is the regional government for the local tri-country area (in fact, the only directly-elected regional government in the nation). Among other things, Metro operates the Oregon Convention Center, the Zoo, waste disposal and recycling programs, transportation, urban growth and planning, and public arts/theater and sports facilities. The job comes with new challenges<sup>1</sup> and Janet's excited about starting there in two weeks. (Now aren't you glad we procrastinated and got this letter out late?)

**Meanwhile, Back At the Lab:** Steve has finished 13 years with Intel and is looking forward to earning a second sabbatical next July. The department he manages in the Intel Architecture Labs had a successful year working on architecture and infrastructure<sup>2</sup> for Intel's ProShare™ Personal Conferencing product line, which allows you to see, hear, and do shared work with another person that you call up via your PC. The company continues to prosper,<sup>3</sup> and the Labs seem to be in the thick of much of the interesting work in the PC industry.

**Up, Up, and Away:** Last July, Janet arranged a special (early) outing in honor of Steve's 40th birthday. Steve was told what to pack and when to leave, but not where we were going! We stopped at



Drifting above the Willamette River

a motel in Newburg, a little town of no particular distinction about 30 miles away, where Steve discovered two things: We were not alone (a just-turned-forty friend was also being surprised by his sweetheart), and we were getting up at 4:30 the next morning! The surprise turned

out to be a hot-air balloon trip in the Oregon dawn. After helping inflate the balloon, we lifted off as the sun peeked over distant hills, drifted across geometric fields of wheat and hops as the swirls of morning mist cleared away, crossed a couple of rivers (and actually touched down on one, where a blue heron stared at us over his morning breakfast), and landed in an empty field after about an hour. After repacking the balloon, we were whisked by van back to the launch point where we feasted on champagne and little breakfast treats. A truly *memorable* birthday treat!

**Orlando and All That Jazz:** In May we finally



Just a little spacy, as always

made it to Orlando to see Steve's brother Ken and family. They took us out to Kennedy Space Center, EPCOT, and something that appeared to be Human Pachinko but was actually nephew Nick's Little League baseball game. All great fun. On the way home, we stopped in New Orleans for a few

days, where we toured the French Quarter at length, visited the Jazz Museum, inhaled beignets and chicory coffee at the Café du Monde as often as possible, rode the St. Charles streetcar through fashionable neighborhoods filled with mid-19th century mansions, gorged on delicious food (including breakfast at Brennan's—yum!), caught a Dixieland band, drove to a couple of antebellum plantations along the river, and watched a man stuff himself completely into a one-meter Plexiglas cube in front of St. Louis Cathedral.



Just me and you and a god named Poseidon at EPCOT

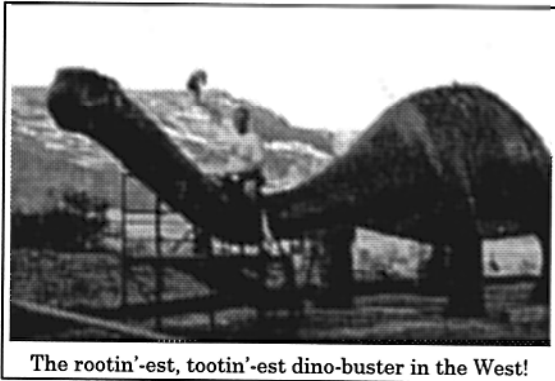
**1994 Tour of National Parks:** In the last two weeks of June, we drove over 4000 miles while putting in full days of sight-seeing and hiking at 9 National Parks, 2 National Monuments, and 2

<sup>1</sup> And a hefty pay hike!

<sup>2</sup> That's technical talk for "stuff you can't possibly explain to your Mom".

<sup>3</sup> Despite the recent Pentium™ processor uproar. And yes, we've heard most of the jokes by now! (My favorite: Check out the new Intel logo, "The Errata Inside".

National Recreation Areas ... plus a couple of dams, assorted scenic byways, and Temple Square and the Seagull Monument in Salt Lake City. Some highlights: Being chased out of Bryce Canyon at the end of a long hike by a fast-approaching thunderstorm; Natural Bridges at dusk; the 17-mile dirt road through the incredible formations<sup>4</sup> of Valley of the Gods; taking Canonical Stupid Tourist Pictures at Four Corners; climbing a 30-foot ladder to visit the 400-year-old cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde; Canyonlands shimmering in the 110° heat; petroglyphs creating an eerie bond to earlier people; walking under the monstrously large natural arches at Arches NP; marveling at a 200' x 50' wall filled with partially-exposed dinosaur fossils; the



The rootin'-est, tootin'-est dino-buster in the West!

brehtaking beauty of Going-to-the-Sun Highway and the vigor with which Janet regularly yelled "Hey, Bear!" on our hikes in Glacier NP; watching the laser light show on the 13-acre spillway of Grand Coulee Dam and getting a tour through off-limits parts of the dam when the elevator broke down; hiking over snow and watching the mating display of a blue grouse at Mt. Rainier. We'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

**You Can Go Home Again:** Probably our biggest single thrill of the year was finally getting accepted into the Miller Genuine Draft One More Time Around Again Marching Band. The OMTAAMB consists of over 500 players of musical instruments, twirlers, flag bearers, and dancers<sup>5</sup> who used to play in high school or college marching bands and never quite got it out of their systems. The flavor of the band can be reasonably determined from these facts: (1) instruments (and people!) are decorated for parades with tinsel, electric lights, flowers, tiny alligators, flamingos, etc., (2) one of the two dozen tubas comes with giant Mickey Mouse ears on top, and (3) the band's signature song is "Louie, Louie." Nonetheless, it's a magnificent sight when all 500+ members come stepping down the street in

<sup>4</sup> One of which Janet named "Babar the Elephant On His Throne While Aunt Jemimah Offers Him Pancakes"

<sup>5</sup> According to our director, the group breaks down like this: Band Members: 469; Auxiliary Units: 102; Musicians: 0

blindingly-white pants and gleaming yellow bowling shirts with the Miller logo on the back. And the sound—Wow!<sup>6</sup> During Rose Festival, we performed in the Festival of Bands plus two parades (one



Midway through the Grand Floral Parade

televised nationally on NBC) and had more fun by an order of magnitude than any other band there. We can't wait to do it again next June.

**I'm Bored; Can I Go Now?** Yes, you may (and thank you for hanging around this long). Since we ought to mail these before the postal rates go up, there's really no time to tell you about this year's sporting endeavors (still enthusiastic; still bad) or Janet's tap dance group repeating their 2nd place finish in the Adult Novelty category at the Dance Magic Show. Besides, we still have to make our New Year's Eve plans for tomorrow night (though we're pretty sure we can't match last year's, which consisted of cruising the bay at St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands while dancing, drinking champagne, and watching fireworks light up the island). In the meantime, we wish you and yours a happy, healthy New Year filled with small adventures and much humor.



They don't call New Orleans "The Big Easy" for nothing, you know!

With Love,

*Steve and Janet*

<sup>6</sup> It turns out that Seventy-Six Trombones (and 110 Cornets Right Behind) pack quite a wallop!