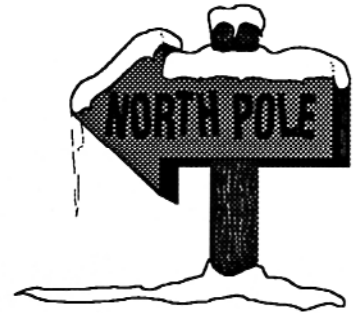




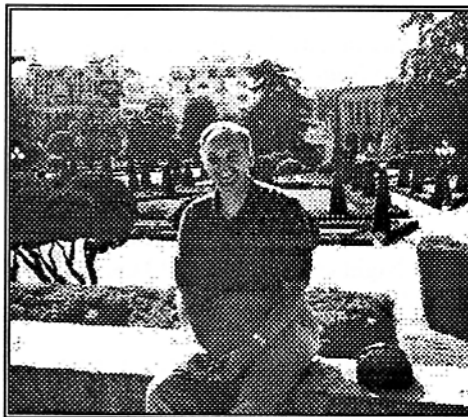
he lobby of our hotel was impressive: an airy, five-story atrium filled with plants, flowers, and gently gurgling water. We settled into comfortable chairs and ordered drinks from a passing waiter. Nearby, two chess players were deeply engrossed in a heated game. Moments later, one of the players cackled loudly “Hah! Mate in three moves! But then, the brilliance of a man who once defeated one hundred players in a simultaneous exhibition cannot be denied!” “Feh!”, replied his friend, “You forget that I myself once won *two* hundred simultaneous games, with a young Bobby Fischer as one of the victims!” “Gcc,” said Janet, “that sure feels like Christmas.” “Yup,” I replied, “I just love chess nuts boasting in an open foyer.”



Stop that groaning! You know what to expect from this newsletter, so you have no one to blame but yourself for reading it. And now, with no more goodbyes,¹ the Tolopka Happenings of 1995.

Janet finished her first year as an accountant with Metro.² Although the new job is not as technically challenging as her former CPA position, the major reduction in stress level has been a good trade-off.

Steve is still director of one of A mid-year reorganization to the Home Applications Lab, for home computers so that so that (surprise!) Intel sells processors. A nice side benefit first time in his Intel career, he explaining what he does for a



Parque del Buen Retiro, Madrid

Speaking of Moms, this was a Mom. While in Dayton for a she ended up in the hospital operation. Janet flew back and after the surgery—not her traveling, as you might expect.

to have come through it all fine and is continuing to mend back home in Miami, where we visited over Christmas (in fact, this is being written on the plane flight back to Portland). We feel somewhat fortunate to be *en route* home after experiencing a brake-screaming, car-slewing, barely-avoided multi-car fender-bender during the cab ride to the Miami airport. While it was great seeing Janet’s Mom and other parts of the Segda/Ison clan, the unquestioned focal point of the trip was Steve’s new culinary masterpiece, char-broiled pizza. Recipe follows:

Procure one take-out pizza in cardboard box. Cool for 20 minutes on car ride home. Place pizza (still in box) into a 275° oven to warm. Wait 10 minutes, or until box ignites and flames begin shooting from oven. Pizza is ready when bottom is a uniform black and ashes from box have adhered to pie. Remove flaming box with potholders and fling into nearby swimming pool, retaining as much pizza as possible. Serves infinitely many. Dieters note: acts as an appetite suppressant.

This year’s big travel news was the Tolopka clan’s fortnight in Spain and Portugal. Steve, his parents, two brothers, their wives, and one nephew toured the Iberian peninsula in October. Unfortunately, Janet was unable to join in since she had contractual obligations dancing at Carnegie Hall with Gregory Hines.³

¹ That is, without further adieu.

² No, she’s not a subway attendant; Metro is the local governmental entity that runs the zoo, solid waste sites, Civic Stadium, the Convention Center, city green spaces, etc.

³ Actually, she was saving up vacation for next year’s sabbatical trips, but likes this explanation better.

Highlights included the art of the Prado⁴ (brother Ken's comment: "I kept discovering that my mouth was dry because I'd been walking around with it open in amazement"); Steve's birthday party in a Costa del Sol hotel room with large gooey chocolate cake, no plates, see-through napkins, and a 1-inch pen-knife for cake-cutting; dinner at a little restaurant in Lisbon with a waitress whose only English seemed to be the words to "It's A Small World After All"; the candy-striped arches in the Great



Plaza de España, Seville

Mosque of Córdoba; *everything* about the Alhambra; the University of Salamanca, dating from the 12th century;⁵ nephew Nick charming double desserts out of every waiter in sight; the boulevards and fountains of Madrid by night, seen during rides with crazed cab drivers; dinner at *El Cuchi*, whose motto is "We don't speak English, but we promise not to laugh at your Spanish"; the beautiful cathedral in Seville, third largest in the world (behind St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London) and dedicated to Mary, which makes the world's three largest cathedrals Peter, Paul, and—oh, never mind; hundreds of years of buried Spanish royalty at El Escorial (sister-in-law Sharon's comment: "a basement full of dead guys"); and getting a return Bozo Wave from some kids playing along the Guadalquivir River. All in all, a pretty darned good trip.



Torre de Belém, Lisbon

Sports and such have carried on as usual; volleyball keeps us busy in winter, softball in the summer, and no one accuses us of being good at either. Our biggest sports success was this year's Football Pool, where Steve won the Monday Night competition and Janet finished second in the Weekend Competition, both winning free pizza from the rest of the gang.

Janet is still dancing regularly and is now taking tap from world-renowned⁶ hooper Terry Brock. Music continues to be a part of our lives; we're both playing regularly (saxophone and clarinet) with the church choir and we enthusiastically joined the One More Time Around Again Marching Band again this year.⁷ Our annual Carols and Cookies Christmas party got its 10th straight multi-part rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas", and people are finally learning the words to "What Can You Get A Wookie For Christmas? (When He Already Owns a Comb)."

Time to wrap this up since we ran out of material about three paragraphs back. Hope this finds you all happy and healthy, and hope your New Year is spectacularly great. Be sure to look us up if you're out our way!

WITH LOVE,

STEVE AND JANET



Janet's the Bozo at the upper right

⁴ Patron art museum of crossword puzzlers everywhere.

⁵ One old building was covered with the names of centuries-dead students, supposedly written with the blood of bulls killed to celebrate the completion of the students' doctorates. If only I'd known about this custom back in 1981

⁶ Honestly!

⁷ Those of you connected to the Internet can check out <http://pacifier.com/~akr/omtaamb/omtaamb.html> for a band photo featuring the two of us, plus recordings of the band's theme song, "Louie, Louie."