



The Tolopka Tattler

2021 Patrons of the Arts Edition



To slightly paraphrase William Goldman in The Princess Bride, “What with one thing and another, one year passed”. The drumbeat of apocalyptic craziness has made it seem like the sun is going to nova any day, but so far it’s still coming up like clockwork. In such times one retreats to one’s happy place to avoid hebetude and a certain *ennui*.² For us, that was fancying ourselves Patrons of the Arts. Here’s a recap of 2021.

Visual Arts

Picasso Part Deux:³ Remember that 3000-piece jigsaw puzzle Steve was assembling in [last year’s Tattler](#)? After having it sit on a table in the garage



Picasso graces the entry hall

for a few months, he finally wedged it in his BMW convertible (no small feat) and took it to be framed so we could hang it in the house.⁴ It’s now on a wall next to the family room where it lends our home a new air of sophistication, elegance,

and quiet good breeding completely at odds with our normal decor.⁵

An Incredible Find:⁶ While looking for something in the attic, Janet came across a rare piece of art we thought had been lost forever when we moved 20 years ago. As the sole work by this artist its value is incalculable.⁷ Janet painted *Cheval Perplexe avec Palissade*⁸ when she was 14. As you can see, the composition, line, and color are awe-inspiring.⁹ It’s now hanging in her office in an honored space. We’re thinking of commissioning

some reproductions for sale at only \$500 a pop; let us know how many you need so we don’t run short.¹⁰

Performing Arts

Taking It to the Streets:

The Beat Goes On Marching Band (TBGO) made it to six events in 2021. While that’s a far cry from the 25+ events we do in normal times, we were pleased that it was non-zero. Since musicians spew aerosols when they play, TBGO required proof of vaccination and held all 2021 rehearsals and events outdoors so members could socially distance from each other and our clients.



We’re having it authenticated

We snagged two Independence Day events (a mini-parade-plus-concert for a retirement community and a 2-hour show at a private party) on July 3 & 4. In August we

entertained crowds entering the stadium for a [Portland Pickles](#) baseball game¹¹ and then played the National Anthem at the pitcher’s mound.



You can almost see the rockets’ red glare

¹ We assume you’ve read *The Princess Bride*, S. Morganstern’s *Classic Tale of True Love and High Adventure*. If you haven’t read the actual book (not just watched the movie), put down this newsletter and grab a copy *right now*. HURRY!!!

² Turns out that’s NOT pronounced “EN-you-eye”.

³ French for “Oops, I did it again.”

⁴ Janet might have preferred to hang it in the garage where it wouldn’t see the light of day unless the garage door was up.

⁵ Pretty good work for a jigsaw puzzle!

⁶ Remember, “incredible” means “impossible to believe”.

⁷ Possibly greater than zero.

⁸ *Bemused Horse with Picket Fence*.

⁹ Sorry, typo. Should be “awwww-inspiring”.

¹⁰ The perfect gift for the discerning aesthete. Act now!

¹¹ Just one step below the minor leagues!



Catherding, er, directing at Pioneer Courthouse Square

In September, we *nearly* reprised a multi-day stint at the Oregon State Fair but canceled our contract when the Delta surge convinced us that playing lots of shows in close quarters with who-knows-if-they're-vaccinated crowds would be even more dangerous than chowing down on corn dogs and deep-fried Twinkies. October brought a real marathon performance -- the Portland Marathon to be precise. The runners weren't the only marathoners; we played for about three hours which was (ahem!) challenging given the shape of everyone's embouchure.

We closed the year with two high-energy holiday concerts in Pioneer Courthouse Square in the heart of downtown Portland.¹² TBGO was also one of the featured groups in the televised lighting of Portland's official Christmas tree. A few days

before the lighting, we met behind a local rec center where a television crew recorded the band playing Jingle Bell Rock. The recording was incorporated with holiday



Janet & Rodney Reindeer rock the virtual tree lighting

performances from other groups to create a [virtual tree lighting televised later on KGW-8](#).¹³

¹² During one of them it didn't even rain.

¹³ Click the link to see us in action!

¹⁴ This was recorded in 2020, but we've included this link so you can get the full experience of this classic piece.

¹⁵ We started to rehearse during the summer, but the delta variant put a damper on that.

TBGO also put out four virtual music videos where band members recorded themselves playing their parts and submitted them to the director (Steve) to be assembled into a fun video. Trust us, these are entertaining to watch. We have some zany, creative people in our organization.

For your listening and viewing pleasure, watch them all from [the TBGO video page](#) or use the individual tune links below:

- [Theme from Star Trek: The Next Generation](#)
- [We Got the Beat](#) by the Go-Go's
- [60s Spy Tunes](#) (Pink Panther, James Bond Theme, Secret Agent Man, Mission Impossible)
- [Jingle Bell Rock](#)



TBGO trombone kicks off Mission Impossible

Get a Holst of Yourself: Portland Community Wind Band (PCWB) also put out some virtual band videos:

- [First Suite in E-flat for Military Band](#), Gustav Holst
 - [Chaconne](#)¹⁴
 - [Intermezzo](#)
 - [March](#)
- [Solemn Ode](#), Boris Kozhevnikov
- [Dream Machine](#), Katherine Bergman

All That Other Jazz: Second Wind Jazz and our rock 'n' roll group (Treble in River City) are both shut down for now.¹⁵ Astonishingly, the smaller Second Wind Jazz combo has booked four gigs for 2022. We started rehearsing in our garage late in the year with the windows and garage door open and horn players sitting where they could blow their aerosols out into the driveway.¹⁶ One night it was so cold that it took Janet an hour to warm back up afterwards.¹⁷ We've since moved to our bonus room, well-spaced with all the windows open. Still a bit chilly, but better than the garage. Guess we'll see if those 2022 gigs actually happen.¹⁸

¹⁶ One night we collected a tiny audience for a while!

¹⁷ Where were those hot flashes when she needed them?

¹⁸ Spoiler alert: Gig #1 is already moving from January to June ...

Ornithology¹⁹

We have a few Anna's hummingbirds that hang around the yard. Janet is their goddess since she makes sure they get fresh nectar every week.²⁰



Stalking the wily hummingbird

With one feeder out front and one in back, we're always on the lookout for a Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom moment.

Literary Arts

We both continue to read more than normal. Janet has been reading books through the

Western Kentucky University Book Club. The book club was discontinued at the end of 2021 because there was not enough participation to make it worthwhile. She's also read a few books with a friend where they chat every couple of weeks about the books. So she's been reading 2-3 books at a time. Steve continues to be a voracious reader. Janet claims he reads about 47 books at once—well that may be a little high. But he reads well more than the average human.

Here are some of our favorites from 2021: ²¹

- *A Day in the Life of President Kennedy*, Jim Bishop
- *A Practical Way to Get Rich, And Die Trying*, John Roa
- *All the Light We Cannot See*, Anthony Doerr
- *Arc of the Scythe* trilogy, Neal Shusterman
- *Hail Mary*, Andy Weir
- *Hamilton*, Ron Chernow
- *Harlem Shuffle*, Colson Whitehead
- *How Magicians Think and Why Magic Matters*, Joshua Jay
- *Impossible Owls: Essays*, Brian Phillips
- *The River of Doubt*, Candice Millard
- *The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead
- *Unknown Quantity: A Real and Imagined History of Algebra*, John Derbyshire

Television Arts

Boldly Going: We finished watching *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and moved on to *Star Trek: Voyager*. We're enjoying the escapades of Captain Janeway and the crew as they try to find their way out of the Delta quadrant and back to

¹⁹ Actual birds, not the Charlie Parker tune.

²⁰ Unfortunately, they don't actually recognize her divinity.

²¹ For bonus points, guess who put each one on this list.

the Alpha quadrant. WAIT!!! This has a familiar ring to it. Delta quadrant!?! Aaarrggghh!!! Will the Omicron quadrant be next?

Culinary Arts

In Vino Veritas: When we were in Cortona, Italy a couple of summers ago we enjoyed a lovely wine-tasting at Enoteca Molesini and we're still ordering wine from them. This year they offered virtual wine tastings and we took them up on a couple. They ship you wines, you invite a few friends and lay in some snacks, then join a Zoom call to Cortona at the right time and Ecco!²² It was our largest purely social gathering of the year²³ and we'll likely do it again.

Philanthropic Arts

Janet continues to serve on the board and as treasurer for [The Immigrant Story](#) which features immigrants' stories in various formats (podcasts, videos, exhibitions, etc.) about obstacles overcome and successes of immigrants. The organization keeps her busy with weekly Zoom meetings, grant management, and of course accounting. And she was crazy enough to agree to another two-year term on the board.



Let's taste some Chianti!

In closing

We hope things will get better for everyone in 2022. With the new omicron variant,²⁴ it's hard to say what this next year will hold. In the meantime, you know the drill: Do the right thing for the common good of all. Put your big boy or big girl pants on and get your shots, wear a mask, and keep your distance to protect others as well as yourselves. The sooner we do what it takes to get past this, the sooner we can all get back to seeing our family and friends and getting back to the activities we love.

Wishing you the best for 2022!

The Beat Goes On,

Steve & Janet

²² Italian for "voilà".

²³ One couple!

²⁴ If they'd just named it the omega variant, we'd be done!