



The Tolopka Tattler

2022 It's Déjà Vu All Over Again Edition



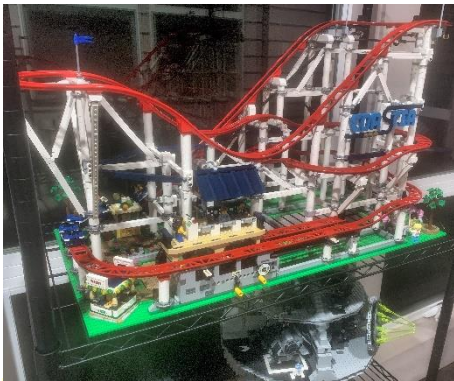
The 2021 Tattler opened thusly:

To slightly paraphrase William Goldman in The Princess Bride, "What with one thing and another, one year passed."

Well, our Vu has never been more Déjà. We're beginning to feel like dogs since a recurring topic is whether we've had our shots.¹ While things have started to return to a level of normality on some fronts,² overall it's been another low-key year with little real news to report. Needless to say, that won't stop us from nattering on anyway. Without further ado, here's a recap of 2022.

Hittin' the Bricks

One significant time sink this year was building Lego kits. Our *pièce de résistance*³ is a roller



Coney Island has nothin' on us!

coaster that's about 30 inches long and a couple feet high. The cool part is that it actually works: cars get dragged up to the top by a chain⁴ and then whoosh down via gravity, just like a real coaster. The park has a ticket booth, boarding area,

even a cart selling cotton candy. Best of all, it's motorized so you don't have to do all that tedious crank-it-to-the-top work by hand.⁵

Cool kit #2 is a jazz quartet – trumpet, bass, keys, and drums. The detail that Lego adds to these things is impressive – the inside of the piano is richly detailed even though most of it is hidden by the piano lid.

Having completed these brick masterpieces, the obvious question becomes "Now what?" Since we

already had a 16" diameter Lego Death Star and a replica of the first moon landing, we added a wire display shelf and now have our own miniature Legoland on the back porch. We couldn't be prouder.



We be jamming!

Hittin' the Streets

After two pandemic-imposed fallow years, The Beat Goes On Marching Band (TBGO)

ramped up to two dozen performance days this year, including a barn wedding out in Scappoose where we performed "Da Dip" as specially requested by the lucky couple. This song is just as delightful as you might guess from the title. Janet's alto sax part is an example of the tune's mind-blowing complexity:



After missing a couple of years, TBGO was back at the Oregon State Fair in Salem for all 11 days of the Fair. It's long days and a lot of driving, but on the plus side we get to visit the Oregon Dairywomen's booth for an ice cream fix every night between shows.⁶ We figured the odds of anyone in the band catching Covid were low since the Fair is all outdoors, but we still feel a bit lucky to have made it out of that petri dish of humanity unscathed.



Quarterbacking the band

¹ Yes, we are caught up on ours.

² We're not sure about the backs.

³ French for "wait'll you get a load of this!"

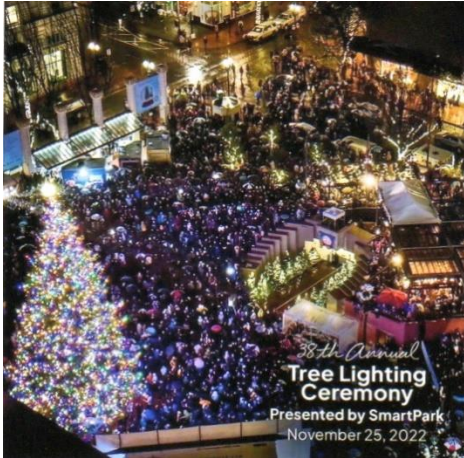
⁴ 127 individually hand-assembled teeny-tiny links.

⁵ Or at least you didn't when we first completed it. For some reason the chain started dragging on something and has now seized up in the mechanism, so we've got debugging to do.

⁶ Swirl cone, milkshake, or sundae? Hmmm

Hittin' the Big Time

One of the highlights for 2022 was playing at the annual Christmas tree lighting in Pioneer Courthouse Square. Despite heavy rain, a big enthusiastic crowd showed up. The main event was a sing-along performance by [Thomas Lauderdale and Pink Martini](#).



Janet's on stage near the 't' in '38th'

Thomas decided he wanted this to be a big event so he invited members from several groups to join them on stage, including a few folks from the marching band. Janet got to perform with them along with people from the 239th Army Band and a couple of local choirs. It was a hoot getting to play with so many excellent musicians.



Janet ready to play with Pink Martini

Your Hit Parade

The band also took its first out of town trip since the pandemic began to march in the Phoenix Electric Light Parade. As you'd expect, every unit in the parade is lit up to the hilt. Even though parade day was rainy, Phoenixians⁷ turned out in droves and partied all along the route.

While in Phoenix, the band toured the [Musical Instrument Museum](#).

If you're ever in or near Phoenix, this museum should be on your must-see list. The museum is a love note to humanity's desire to make music, with instruments from ancient times

to modern times and exhibits from every continent. If you can blow into it, bang on it, or otherwise make a sound with it, you'll find it in the MIM. One favorite exhibit was a "saxophone" with a player-piano roll.



Anyone can play the Playasax

We also liked a collection of instruments from the Philippines that look real but are made from bamboo and rattan because brass was too

expensive – all with kazoo mouthpieces! Most exhibits are hands-off, but there's also a hands-on gallery where we played a gamelan⁸ and a theremin.⁹ After we visited the museum, we headed to In-n-Out-Burger for lunch—yum! We were hungry and the burgers and fries were great.



Yep, they're really all oversized kazoos

The band finished off the year with a two-fer, beginning with a holiday concert in Pioneer Courthouse Square

– lots of holiday favorites including a rousing rendition of 'Nutmacker Christmas Parade' in which the tempo ramps up and we see if any dancers and twirlers are still standing at the end.¹⁰ After the show we

traipsed¹¹ over to the Council Chambers at Portland City Hall where we played a couple of tunes for the swearing-in of Portland



A gamelan orchestra

⁷ Wouldn't "Phoenixians" be more fun?

⁸ An Indonesian ensemble commonly including hand-played drums and metallophones played with mallets.

⁹ An electronic instrument played without contact, merely by waving your hands. It makes that "woo-ooo-ooo" sound you

hear at the end of the Beach Boys song *Good Vibrations* and every bad 1950's sci-fi movie you've ever seen.

¹⁰ Kinda like musical chairs without the chairs.

¹¹ We're very good at traipsing. Truthfully, we're better at traipsing than we are at marching.

City Commissioner Dan Ryan.¹²

Hittin' a Few Speed Bumps

Second Wind Jazz has started rehearsing again, but we're in a rebuilding mode because a few folks didn't return to the group (moved away, work priorities, etc.). Our smaller SWJ combo had a couple of gigs this past year at a local dance club. We'll see what 2023 brings for that group. Our rock 'n' roll group (Treble in River City) is still shut down and may not be revived.¹³

Hittin' the Books

We're keeping up our literary pursuits. Steve's 2022 list is longer (80 books), but we've both got favorites to recommend for your reading pleasure:¹⁴

- *Code Girls*, Lisa Munday
- *Saturn Run*, John Sandford
- *Medallion Status*, John Hodgman
- *You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: Crazy Stories About Racism*, Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar
- *This Time Together*, Carol Burnett
- *Fantastic Numbers and Where to Find Them: A Cosmic Quest from Zero to Infinity*, Antonio Padilla
- *Magpie Murders*, Anthony Horowitz
- *The Path to Power*, Robert A. Caro
- *The Perfect Predator*, Steffanie Strathdee and Thomas Patterson (about a man infected by a super bug and how he was cured)
- *The Arsenal of Democracy*, J. Baime (WWII and Ford Motor Company)
- *Shuttle, Houston: Life in the Center Seat of Mission Control*, Pat Dye
- *Bag Man*, Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz (about Spiro Agnew)
- *Hellhound on His Trail*, Hampton Sides (about finding MLK's assassin)
- *The Kaiju Preservation Society*, John Scalzi
- *The River of Doubt*, Candice Millard

Hitting a Happy Medium

We finished watching *Star Trek: Voyager* and *Enterprise* and moved on to *Star Trek: Below Decks* and *Picard*. We've also been enjoying *The Good Fight* (despite its increasingly gonzo story line) and *Hacks* with Jean Smart. Steve's brother Ken has been sharing his Plex video library from his home in Florida, so *The Orville* and *Only*

Murders in the Building have been on our watch list. Even though we realize that it isn't any different from any streaming service (bits from a server are all the same), there's something magical about sitting in our bonus room watching TV shows from his house. Oh yeah – we're nearing the end of our DVD set of *WKRP in Cincinnati*.¹⁵

Hittin' on All Cylinders

Janet continues to serve on the board and as treasurer for [The Immigrant Story](#) which features immigrants' stories about obstacles overcome and successes of immigrants. The organization keeps her busy with weekly Zoom meetings, grant management,¹⁶ and of course, accounting.

She's hoping she can find a replacement for herself or someone who'll take on grant management.¹⁷



WOOoooOOO!!! Therenin action!!!

Hittin' the End of The Tattler

During the pandemic, Janet has been zooming weekly with some of our good friends. These weekly zooms have been a great way to keep up with a few friends and maintain some sanity—especially when we were all hunkered down and not getting out. We're getting out a little more, but still haven't gotten all the way back to our past crazed lives. And we actually like not being quite as busy. Leaves more time for the *New York Times* Spelling Bee and Vertex puzzles. And of course, it leaves time for Wordle!

Like everyone else, we are done with Covid, but I guess it's not quite done with us. We hold out hope that things will continue to move to 'normal' in 2023. We're getting the itch to get out of Dodge and visit family – just need to feel safe getting on a plane for the long cross country trip.

Wishing you the best for 2023!

The Beat Goes On,

Steve & Janet

¹² Another invitation that arrived via Thomas Lauderdale. It's good to have friends in high places.

¹³ *Sic transit gloria mundi* (hmmm ... didn't Gloria Mundi used to sing with the Vandellas?)

¹⁴ For bonus points, guess who put each one on this list.

¹⁵ "As God is my witness, I thought turkeys could fly."

¹⁶ She really hates grant management.

¹⁷ Any volunteers?