



The Tolopka Tattler

2001: A Spacy Oddity
"All the News It Gives Us Fits to Print"



Do Ya Think We're Saxy?

Voice 1: Hello, my name is Martin.

Voice 2: And I'm Mr. Bundy ... but call me Al. Nah, not the doofus from Married...With Children—Al's short for a completely different name.

Martin: What brass, calling someone else a doofus! Ahem. My esteemed partner and I have been charged with bringing you up to date on the lives of Steve & Janet.

Al: Hey, get off my case! Even though we don't do *everything* with Steve & Janet, we hang out with them a lot so we know 'em pretty well.

Martin: But first, a modicum of explanation. Mr. Bundy is Janet's saxophone. As you can tell from the urbane tenor of my discourse, I'm Steve's saxophone. The year 2001 was ...

Alto: Hey, my turn—yer not the only mouth-piece around here! Sheesh, a guy gets a pad job and he thinks he's God's gift to reeds. Anyway, VVVVWRRRRRRWVWVWRRRUUPPPPPP!
(Sound of needle being dragged across phonograph record) CUT! I thought I could write this whole thing from the perspective of our saxes, but I JUST CAN'T DO IT!!! (Aren't you glad?)

Take Two¹

What's one-third of 365? Turns out the answer to that question is "number of days we spent performing or rehearsing with bands this year." Coming up next: The year as seen by Alto Bundy and Martin Tenor. ☺

Getting a Life in San Antonio

The Get a Life Marching Band had its busiest season ever. We didn't quite make it coast to coast, but we did play seven parades including Astoria (Grand Land Parade), Seattle (SeaFair Torchlight Parade), and San Antonio (Fiesta Flambeau). San Antonio was a total



Struttin' our stuff in San Antonio

¹ And call us in the morning!

blast, with 400,000 parade-crazed² Texans lining the streets for the night-time parade past the Alamo and through downtown. The energy oozing from the sidewalk party was palpable; we rocked out with the crowd for four miles and were ready to go around again. Just a fabulous experience!

San Antonio was fun even when we weren't parading; we also found time to:

- Learn some new moves from high school kids performing in the Festival of Flowers band competition;³
- Prowl the shops along the Riverwalk;
- Get colorful new "hair-dos" when band buddies cracked *cascarones* (decorated confetti-filled eggs) on our noggins;
- Sip café au lait and nibble New Orleans-quality beignets as the San Antonio River slipped by on a bright spring morning;
- Float the Riverwalk with Yanaguana Cruises twice – once by day, once by night;
- Celebrate a friend's birthday with fabulous Mexican food and too many margaritas at Mi Tierra, complete with mariachi serenade.

A most satisfactory trip!

Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair

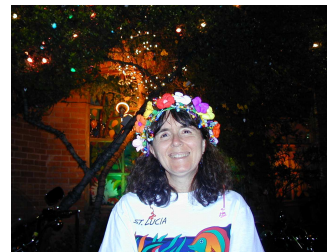
For Portland's Rose Festival in June, The One More Time Around Again Marching Band brought back the "Summer of Love"; we think we still look fabulous in tie dye and colorful

² It's possible that margarita-crazed also had something to do with it!

³ Unfortunately, at our ages we can only perform these moves once before medical attention is required.



Janet enjoys the Festival of Flowers as "the filling in a stud sandwich"



Ready to party at Mi Tierra



Peace, love, and saxophones

granny glasses. Wanna hear the show? Search for “one more time” at mp3.com.

We Be Swingin’, Too

The Second Wind Jazz Ensemble dramatically increased its tune list once Steve discovered the joys of buying old arrange-

ments on eBay. Great tunes, cheap! And Mr. Bundy is getting quite a workout as Janet’s improv lessons have really improved her skills.

The outdoor concerts we played in Scappoose and at the first-ever Beaverton Wine & Fine Arts Festival were a lot of fun, but the year’s highlight was the Mercy Corps⁴ benefit at the Aladdin Theater, a well-known Portland venue. Jim & Paula Hale organized the benefit and asked us to open for guitarists Robbie Laws and Dan Balmer — big news for our fledgling band! We held extra practices for weeks, then laid down a solid 45-minute set closing with “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.”⁵ We had a great time and helped raise over a thousand bucks for a good cause.

One more story we gotta tell: The nearby Oak Hills community throws a huge fireworks bash in its local park every July Fourth, and we agreed to be the pre-fireworks entertainment. When we arrived, much of the park was cordoned off in yellow Do Not Cross police tape — sensibly, since the place was full of mortars, mounted pyrotechnics, and other things waiting to explode. We were escorted *inside* the tape to set up. Hmmm. How long should we play? “Oh, stop around 9:45 so we can start the fireworks at 10.” Should be fine, we’re sure they can hold off a couple of minutes while we finish cleaning up. And where do we get power for amps, mikes, and lights? “Use that cord snaking across the

grass; just make sure you unplug your stuff at the end and connect it to that other cord since it’s used to ignite all the fireworks.”

Okay, no problem. We play a couple of sets and it’s fun even though the crowd is a



An unsuspecting Second Wind at Oak Hills

⁴ From their website: “A not-for-profit organization that exists to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities.”

⁵ Get it?

zillion feet away. Darkness falls. We finish on the dot of 9:45, reconnect the power cord, and start an orderly tear down. Gee, it’s kinda hard to see with all the lights out. And the PA announcements are making it increasingly clear that the show starts *promptly* at 10. Yikes! Now we’re frantically hauling random armloads of stuff⁶ to the perimeter and hustling back for more. “3-2-1...” and I look up to see Janet heading my way with the last two music stands as mortars hurl shells skyward behind her. Now *that’s* a finale!

Power to the Pep Band!

The Power Pep Band played a mildly-insane *thirty-two* gigs this year. We played for beer (Spring Beer Fest) and for milk (Alpenrose Dairy). We played Sands in the City (in Portland’s Pioneer Courthouse Square) and two days at the Clackamas County Fair. We played for big sports crowds (3 Portland Blazer halftime shows), little ones (Portland Thunderbolts semi-pro football), and almost non-existent ones (Portland Community College basketball).

We also added to the band’s collection of “celebrity photos” this year.⁷ In April, we joined GAL’s San Antonio trip and performed at the Riverwalk and at Hooters. Our recompense: mounds of surprisingly tasty buffalo wings and pix with the Hooters Girls. Before the Oregon–Oregon State “Civil War” football game, we played fight songs on KATU’s *AM Northwest* as hosts Cathy Marshall and Paul Linnman traded intercollegiate jabs. In an October fundraiser⁸ at our house, Harry Morrison (Dean of Purdue’s



Rockin’ the Clackamas County Fair



Janet pleads: Won’t you come home, Bill Bailey?



Chalk up one more for the PPB “celebrity” file

⁶ You’re right – that’s not *all* we’re hauling!

⁷ Previous celebrities included Rusty Nails (the Alpenrose clown) and Santa Claus.

⁸ Purdue grads: Hope you’ve all made multi-year pledges with lots of zeroes toward the new Computer Science building!

School of Science) led the band in “Hail Purdue” while Moira Gunn (Purdue grad and host of National Public Radio’s TechNation) sang along and wowed the band’s engineering geeks.

Lots of fun, lots of excitement – but the PPB’s most memorable moment was a good deal more somber. We’d been looking forward for months to playing Uncle Otto’s Oktoberfest at the McTarnahan’s microbrewery; two days of great crowds, non-stop music, free beer for the band, and general zaniness. The dates: September 15-16. Naturally, Oktoberfest was cancelled in the wake of September 11’s horrifying events. But McTarnahan’s decided to hold a memorial and Red Cross fund raiser on Saturday morning. They asked us to play a little patriotic music for the main program, then maybe some of our usual music if anyone cared to stay.

We met early to rehearse since we hadn’t played this music much lately ... Waiting as the crowd gathers. Usually everyone’s so loose and goofy you can barely get their attention to start playing; this time it’s dead quiet. This one matters.

Finally the program is under way. We play the *Star-Spangled Banner*. I shakily direct *Amazing Grace*. Another speaker or two, a couple more tunes. Then Janet steps to the mike: “PPB members played in college bands all over the country. At Purdue, there’s a speech used at the flag-raising before every home football game; it seemed appropriate to use it here today.”

“I am an American.” That’s the way most of us put it, just matter of factly. They are plain words, those four: you could write them on your thumb-nail, or sweep them across this bright autumn sky. But remember too, that they are more than just words. They are a way of life. So whenever you speak them, speak them firmly, speak them proudly, speak them gratefully.

Then, like the 60,000 people in Ross-Ade Stadium, the band roared in unison “I – AM – AN – AMERICAN!” and played a heart-wrenchingly

perfect America the Beautiful. The final chord built, and built, then rang in the silence. Not a dry eye in the house, including the band. Even writing about it still gives me chills.

Summertime in the Cradle of Liberty

In June, Janet attended the Governmental Finance



Trick question: Which one is cracked?

conference in Philadelphia while Steve tagged along.⁹ Despite having seen all the pictures, it was still a thrill to stand in the venues where American freedom was formalized and declared. We also added a new baseball stadium to our collection by catching a Phillies game.¹⁰ While Janet hobnobbed with her fellow accounting wizards, Steve skimmed the Philadelphia Museum of Art, seeing Monets, 10th century cloisters, 20th century sculpture, Shaker furniture, Picassos, and a huge collection of battleaxes in half a day!

Summer and Ice

In July, we flew to Anchorage to meet Steve’s brother Ken and family, then took the McKinley Explorer (train) north for a day in Denali National Park. This enormous park (10,000 square miles) has one, count it, one access road – and you mostly aren’t allowed to drive on it. The only way to get more than a few miles into the park is via the buses that shuttle the length of the 90 mile road. They’re fanatical about keeping human food away from the fauna and it seems to work; they have few incidents with bears and such. There’s *plenty* of fauna; we saw herds of caribou, half a dozen grizzlies, foxes trotting along the road, bald eagles. Pink, yellow, and white wildflowers everywhere. Endless vistas. Truly an American treasure.

Other cool memories:

- Panning for gold at Gold Dredge No. 8 outside Fairbanks – and actually collecting 6.7 grains of gold between us.¹¹
- Listening to Susan Butcher (winner of the Iditarod dog sled race in 1986, ’87, ’88, and ’90) and meeting her dogs. Bumpersticker: “Alaska: Where men are men and women win the Iditarod over and over and ...”
- Standing beneath the Alyeska Pipeline as it dove below ground. On permafrost, the pipeline stays above ground and sits on stanchions topped by low-boiling-point radiators to prevent the



Janet builds our retirement fund



If you squint, you can see the radiators in the background

⁹ Naturally, we took a red-eye flight out of Portland after marching in Starlight Parade that evening!

¹⁰ Unfortunately, this is more than the Phillies were catching!

¹¹ Before you get too excited, 480 grains = 1 troy ounce.

ground from thawing and thus cracking the pipeline.

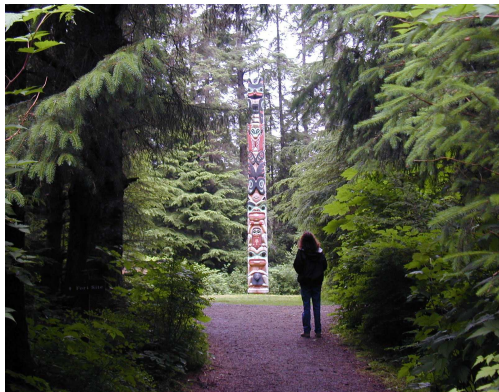
Eventually we boarded Holland America's *Veendam* in Seward and headed south along the Inside Passage, with lots more adventure in store:

- Our first-ever time paddling a sea kayak, in the Tatoosh Islands outside Ketchikan.
- A helicopter trip onto the Juneau Ice Field. We stood atop thousands of feet of ice peering down into narrow crevasses under a crystal sky.
- Sitka National Historical Park.



No tourists were harmed in the paddling of this kayak

We walked one block off a main street in Sitka and found ourselves in primeval forest



Discovering a totem pole in Sitka Nat'l Historical Park

- Whale-watching near Juneau and Ketchikan. We watched diving humpbacks give "great fluke" and loitered among pods of orcas.



Wrangling the rare cement-bellied whale in Sitka

atop the sea after midnight. Harsh duty, but we bore up well.

Family Visits, Part Two

Steve's Mom and Dad came out for a visit in September, flying right after the airports reopened.

A pleasant, quiet visit, capped by a stroll through the Classical Chinese Garden tucked into a square block of downtown Portland. Oh yeah – they also came to appreciate the pleasures of home theater! Now it should be Janet's Mom's turn; we'll work on getting her out here next.



Tolopka père and mère survey the Chinese garden

Everything Else

- We moved into our new place in February (address below). Note that our email address is new, too.
- We celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in May with a long weekend in Forest Grove at McMenamin's Grand Lodge while simultaneously closing the sale of our old house.
- Yes, we're still playing volleyball and softball. No, we're not any good.
- Yes, we still have jobs. Janet's happily completing another year at Metro. Steve's boss of 12 years retired in October and the labs are reorganizing under Intel's new CTO as the Corporate Technology Group – similar charter but with renewed focus on our core businesses. More news next year once we've got this figured out!



Our new rehearsal space

By Request Only

Unfortunately, the funniest story of the year is a bit naughty for a family newsletter, so I guess it's time to close.¹² As we head for 2002, we wish you peace, health, and more than your share of laughter in the year ahead. Come visit!

With love,
Steve & Janet

Our new address:

Steve & Janet Tolopka
10321 SW Todd Court
Portland, OR 97225-6959
Email: tolopka@attbi.com

¹² The prurient among you will grill Janet for the story of AM Northwest and the boxer shorts.