



# The Tolopka Tattler

2016 All the News That's Fit to Print Edition  
(Yes Indeed, That's Our Newt Photo)



## *What with one thing and another, one year passed ...<sup>1</sup>*

... which kinda sums up 2016, so if you're pressed for time you can just skip ahead to the end where we offer Best Wishes for 2017.



Purple sequin hats ready for Fiesta

## The Eyes of Texas Were Upon Us

In April we headed to beautiful San Antonio, Texas to participate in the annual Fiesta Flambeau Parade. This was our first trip with The Beat Goes On Marching Band, although our 42<sup>nd</sup> lifetime appearance in this parade.<sup>2</sup> It's a great parade: lots of pomp and color (including our blinking purple sequin hats, carefully preserved from our 2014 China

trip), wildly enthusiastic crowds in excess of a half million people,<sup>3</sup> and you get to march right past the Alamo.

We also performed a few concerts while in town—including one in conjunction with the Royal Rosarians, Portland's Official Greeters and Ambassadors of Good Will. As is their custom, the Rosarians planted a rose bush (symbol of the City of Portland) with great ceremony and carefully watered it with Portland water – totally undeterred by the rain coming down *gatos y perros* at the time. While most of the band huddled on the porch of an adjacent building, Steve and the

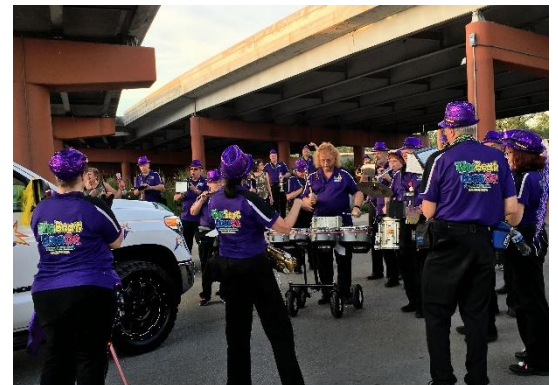
auxiliary units got drenched in the street<sup>4</sup> – the things we do for art. We also drank margaritas, ate Tex-Mex and BBQ,

rode to the top of the Tower of the Americas, had lunch in a bar where Teddy Roosevelt recruited Rough Riders, drank margaritas, visited the old Spanish missions (a

World Heritage site), and hung out at the Riverwalk. Oh yeah – we also drank some margaritas.



Didn't get to keep the umbrella once the show started!



Janet directs "Mighty Oregon" while awaiting the Flambeau Parade start

## We have Become Our Parents

We celebrated<sup>5</sup> our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last May, honoring the occasion with dinner at Andina's (a nice Peruvian restaurant) with close

<sup>1</sup> Well, actually more like 13 or 14 months because we're late as usual. Fans of *The Princess Bride* will recognize that this paraphrase was lifted from S. Morganstern's Classic Tale of True Love and High Adventure (the "Good Parts" version abridged by William Goldman) – last sentence, page 75 of the 1973 Ballantine paperback edition. And if you haven't already read the book about 4 times (the movie doesn't count), then for heaven's sake put down the *Tattler* and treat yourself immediately!!!!

<sup>2</sup> Okay, that could be a slight exaggeration. Or an alternative fact. But it was at least our sixth time on San Antonio's streets.

<sup>3</sup> Beer and margaritas are readily available for purchase at the parade, which explains a LOT of the enthusiasm.

<sup>4</sup> Steve is grateful that the twirlers employed their lightning rod batons to keep him safe.

<sup>5</sup> It beat the alternative of weeping quietly for lost youth.



friends. We brought our wedding album for people paw through and see what we looked like back before dirt was invented.<sup>6</sup> Steve also set up a nice slide show of pics from the past.



Alfajores for dessert!

### That's a Capital Ideal

TBGO added a number of new events to its résumé this year, including surprise birthday parties (70<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, & 90<sup>th</sup>), a 60<sup>th</sup>

wedding anniversary, some corporate events, Portland's Juneteenth Parade, a wine auction gala, and the Capital Lakefair Parade in Olympia, Washington. One birthday party included the band's rendition of 'Big Spender' complete with

a 'come hither' dance performed by Janet because the birthday boy and his wife met when they were in a performance of *Sweet Charity*.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately,<sup>7</sup> there's no video of Janet's gyrations.

### A Piece of the Rock

We also made a (barely) international road trip to the White Rock Sea Festival Torchlight Parade in British Columbia, stopping along the way in Seattle to play a joint show with The



Nearly showtime at the Space Needle

Original Awesome Second Time Arounders of St Petersburg, Florida. White Rock is a sleepy resort community near Vancouver (BC).<sup>8</sup> On the morning of parade day, we took our bus into a



Steve takes on the White Rock

pretty much deserted town to wander around and amuse ourselves. Little did we know that by afternoon the streets would be chock-a-block full, making it almost impossible for our bus to reach us so we could return to the hotel to change into uniform. On his way to get us, the driver got too close to a telephone pole and WHAM! Right side bus mirror gone. When the bus finally arrived, we scurried aboard and then tried to turned around to head back in the right direction. "Hey," says our driver, "that mirror costs

two grand to replace. Maybe we can find it as we drive along." Eyes peeled, we keep watch. Aha! There! In the bushes! The bus stops, Steve leaps out, grabs the giant metal hulk, and off we go with prize in lap.

We eventually made it back to await the parade. The parade judges come by in the staging area, we play a couple tunes. After a while they came back. "You're our winner!" Best Band? Most Likely to Leave Gasping Marchers in the Street? Nope – Grand Overall Winner, top unit in the whole parade. Once we finished giggling in amazement, we collected our prize,<sup>9</sup> marched the parade, and had a blast.



Got it!



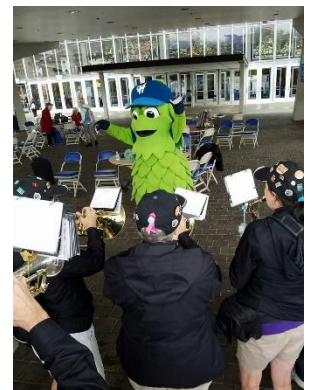
The glamor of a presunrise gig in the rain on St. Patrick's Day



July 4<sup>th</sup> in St. Paul, Oregon with Mongolian pilots making a special guest appearance



Our name in lights on Broadway!!!



Hillsboro Hops mascot Barley directs the band at a Parkinson's fundraiser

And because It Is Our Life: a few more band photos from events throughout the year.

### National Lampoon's European Vacation?

Well, not exactly. We did go on a Viking River Cruise in Europe for two weeks in October. Steve's brother and wife were there, as well as

<sup>6</sup> Steve's yellow polyester leisure suit with the blue flowered shirt and white shoes is still a showstopper.

<sup>7</sup> Fortunately?

<sup>8</sup> Primary attractions: the Promenade on the Pier, shops/restaurants, and of course The White Rock.

<sup>9</sup> A lamp made from a big seashell. See it in the Awards section of [www.tbgo.org](http://www.tbgo.org)!



some of their friends. It was great to share the trip with them and to meet some of their friends.

Our trip started in Budapest, Hungary – a whole new country for us. Our vessel was parked practically below the Chain Bridge, so we had ample opportunity to stroll along the Danube seeing the sights. In the Grand Market Hall we tasted half the goodies in Hungary: sausages, cheese, pastries, pickled things,<sup>10</sup> even honey. We also learned to make *palacsinta*, Hungarian pan-cakes served with sweet or savory fillings.



Makin' pancakes under Janet's watchful eye

In the "music city" of Vienna, we attended a Mozart & Strauss concert at Palais Ausperg and visited Haus der Musik where we learned more than we wanted to know about Austrian composers, played with some very strange sound illusions, and experienced what it sounds like if you're still in the womb. In Passau's St. Stephen's Cathedral we



Wertheim's castle in the rain

heard a noon concert played on one of Europe's largest pipe organs. We passed through a zillion locks on the Main-Danube Canal, drove through the huge parade grounds in Nuremberg where the Nazis held their party rallies, ate a splendid lunch at Alte MainMühle in Wurzburg, spent a full day gawking at castles sliding by on the Rhine River, and climbed around Wertheim's crumbling castle in the rain.

In Cologne we searched for the Mustard Museum,<sup>11</sup> stuck our nose into the Chocolate Museum (too



Everything's looking good in Koblenz

crowded), spent a couple of hours with art dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and of course marveled at the cathedral where we saw the tombs of the Three Wise Men.<sup>12</sup> We also tripled Janet's lifetime beer consumption on an evening kolsch-tasting pub crawl.<sup>13</sup>



Prosit!

The only unscheduled event was having to switch ships in the middle of the cruise due to low water in the Rhine. The plan was simplicity itself: Pack your bags, hop a bus to tour the day's sites, get back on another ship further down the river while the folks from the other ship did the same things except in reverse. Since both ships had the same floor plan, it was like being in another dimension in space & time.<sup>14</sup> The staff & crew on the ships did a great job of making the switch and made the process as painless as possible.



Celebrating "All Things Dutch" with tour director Maryann

Last stop on the trip was the Netherlands, where we spent an afternoon at Kinderdijk (a UNESCO World Heritage site with the country's largest concentration of windmills) before boarding our return flight in Amsterdam. Good times!

### Busy Hands are Happy Hands!

Last Christmas, Santa brought us a Lego Star Wars Death Star kit. Off & on throughout this year, we worked on our Death Star, finishing it December 16. Would have been done sooner, but the kit was missing a couple of pieces

<sup>10</sup> Much like an old Portlandia episode, Budapest's motto seems to be "we can pickle that!"

<sup>11</sup> Found it but didn't recognize it!

<sup>12</sup> Uh, sure ...

<sup>13</sup> She is now up to three sips. There will likely not be a fourth in the next decade.

<sup>14</sup> Doo, doo, doo, doo...doo, doo, doo, doo—for those too young, think Twilight Zone.

and we had to wait for replacements. We also bought a Lego Christmas Train set and completed that as well. So now, it's happily sitting under



*Nothing like being your own Space Tyrant!*

our Christmas tree<sup>15</sup> ready to be played with. Those Lego designers are so clever. One of the train pieces has a Christmas tree that rotates when the train moves! Way cool!

### **Seven is our Lucky Number!**

For the past couple of years, we have been doing a few performances with a subset of our jazz band—seven instead of eighteen—which gives us more options for performance venues. One special event we played this year was the wedding of a former percussionist with our jazz band. He even sat in on one number while his new bride sang with the band.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Rest of the Story!**

Our jazz Big Band performed at a couple of new venues, and we're optimistic that at least one of them (a summertime winery gig) will turn into an annual event. Our rock 'n' roll band has added a female vocalist and we're working on adding music to our repertoire that she can belt out. She does a really great version of 'Love Potion #9'.

Steve continues to do a lot work on music, including writing a few arrangements that the marching band performs. One of the arrangements we performed in Texas was a medley of Texas songs. He also arranged a medley for TBGO's holiday parades called 'Overjoyed' which includes 'Ode to Joy', 'Joy to the World', and Three Dog Night's 'Joy to the World'. We used this piece in a nighttime holiday parade and Janet swears that the only times Steve called for the band to perform this piece (which is a little more difficult than the others we use) was when the street lighting was at its worst.

Our softball team muddled through this summer with a so-so record. The best part of the games is when the team goes out to eat afterwards and

pumps each other up over great plays we made<sup>17</sup> during the game.

Janet is still bowling. Early in 2015, all her teammates quit<sup>18</sup> and she moved to another team with two men. A few months later, one of those men on the new team quit.<sup>19</sup> So this year she invited a couple of friends (Don & Eric) to join the team. So the team still has the one guy from before along with the three of us who have known each other since grad school. When we bowl badly, we keep reminding ourselves that we're there to have fun...

We were delighted to discover that a nearby apartment complex features a giant white gnome; visiting it is our idea of good entertainment. Steve still makes a mean paska (Ukrainian Easter bread) in the spring. We've finally managed to attract hummingbirds to the feeders on our front porch, and Steve has become adept at finding hummers by their song when we take walks.

We hope you had a great year and wish you the best for 2017! (It's still 2017, right?)

The Beat Goes On,

*Steve & Janet*



*(Almost) Just like the Old Country!*

<sup>15</sup> Or at least it was when we wrote the first draft of the Tattler six weeks ago!

<sup>16</sup> She sang "L-O-V-E" to her new hubby. Awwwwwww ...

<sup>17</sup> Or imagined.

<sup>18</sup> Hey, it happens!

<sup>19</sup> Gee, is it something she said?