



# The Tolopka Tattler

2017 Band is Like a Box of Chocolates Edition



**Sordid lives of forbidden passion.** Hair-raising feats of derring-do. A roller-coaster ride unlocking the hidden doors of existential truth.

Dogs and cats living together. Mass hysteria. 2017 was none of those things for us, but hey – you’re still reading! Welcome to the 2017 Tolopka Tattler.



You won't see this every day!

## We Like to Party!

Thirty-eight. Thirty. Eight. That’s how many events The Beat Goes On Marching Band (TBGO) played in 2017, on average one every 9.6 days.<sup>1</sup> We started the year by leading a bunch of elementary school kids decked out in their Mardi Gras masks on a 200-yard parade through gently falling snow, followed by a dance party in the school gym. Many drummers were unavailable since this was a weekday event, so Steve became drummer-for-a-day and Janet jumped in to direct.<sup>2</sup>



Hanging out on Janet Drive

## Wearin’ o’ the Green

In March, we were off to the third largest St. Patrick’s Day celebration in the world<sup>3</sup> in (of all places) Savannah, Georgia.<sup>4</sup> Fountains flowed green and people were in a jolly mood, likely thanks to the omnipresence of green beer.<sup>5</sup>



Trombones among the palmettos in Savannah

The 2.6 mile parade featured 28 turns, which was

great since crisp, precision turns are the band’s specialty.<sup>6</sup>

([See us in Savannah](#))

We try to play something location-appropriate when we travel to major events, so for this gig our specialty was *I’m Shipping Up to Boston* by the Dropkick Murphys. Celtic punk by a marching band?<sup>7</sup> ([Listen!](#))



Trombones in tiny leprechaun hats amidst the Spanish moss

When not parading, we traipsed through Savannah’s Old Southern Charm and plunked our butts on the Forrest Gump bench in Chipewewa Square.<sup>8</sup> We also made a side trip to Charleston<sup>9</sup> that included a visit to Magnolia Plantation and boat trip to Ft. Sumter.

Since we were near Janet’s family in northern Florida, we tacked on a couple of days

and visited with her Aunt Bobbi, Uncle Frank, and cousin Kelly.

**Wearin’ o’ the Purple**  
Other new TBGO events

included performances for a couple of senior



Steve works the Savannah parade crowd

<sup>1</sup> Math was always our strong suit.

<sup>2</sup> That’s practically “dogs and cats living together”!

<sup>3</sup> In case you’re dying to know: Dublin and New York.

<sup>4</sup> Turns out there was a large settlement of Irish folks in the early days and there’s still a large contingent today.

<sup>5</sup> Truthfully, we’re pretty sure color wasn’t the main draw.

<sup>6</sup> This is a blatant lie.

<sup>7</sup> True! It’s also a favorite of numerous sports teams.

<sup>8</sup> See! That’s not a totally random edition title!

<sup>9</sup> South Carolina – a new state for us!



communities,<sup>10</sup> the Donald Hazelnut Festival,<sup>11</sup> a 98<sup>th</sup> birthday party,<sup>12</sup> and a wedding reception where the bride hired us to surprise the groom.<sup>13</sup>



Janet is sweet (and sour) on Dillon

We joined our first “progressive parade” at the Dafodil Festival, which features four back-to-back parades in four Washington towns.<sup>14</sup> At Multnomah Days (a long-time favorite event), we led the 6-block-long parade, circled around the back streets, and marched the route a second time as the last unit in the parade.<sup>15</sup> We also made our debut appearance at a Portland Pickles

game.<sup>16</sup> Guess what their mascot is? If you said ‘a giant pickle’, you win the cucumiform fruit.<sup>17</sup>

In September, the band made a little barnstorming tour through Southern Oregon including performances at the Florence boardwalk, in the Bay Area Fun Festival Parade in Coos Bay, and serenading racers at the Steve Prefontaine Run,<sup>18</sup> playing outside the Prefontaine family home.

Each year TBGO donates *pro bono* performances to various charitable events to add to their fun quotient. This year’s causes included the American Cancer Society, breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, Parkinson’s disease, and military veterans.



Doing the Happy Dance at the Breast Cancer walk

The band finished out the year with a holiday parade in Keizer and two concerts in “Portland’s Living Room”, Pioneer Courthouse Square. This was an opportunity to look for the brick in the square with the band’s name on it that had been donated by a band member.

<sup>10</sup> The music we grew up with is now popular with folks living in senior communities. Huh. What does that say about us?

<sup>11</sup> 1,011 people. 60,000,000 hazelnuts.

<sup>12</sup> Book now for YOUR 98<sup>th</sup> birthday!

<sup>13</sup> Should be an interesting marriage, eh?

<sup>14</sup> We only did the middle two – we’re not that ambitious!

## Don’t You Play in a Thousand Other Bands?

Um ... yeah. The other groups we perform with aren’t as busy as the marching band, but we do stay busy. [Second Wind Jazz](#) Big Band played a senior activities center, two shows at a local winery, and our annual neighborhood concert; the Septet entertained at the Portland Art Museum for a conference dinner hosted by ACM and did a “ladies’ holiday luncheon” show at Rock Creek Golf Club.



Astoria (Oregon) Grand Land Parade

Our Rock ‘n’ Roll group ([Treble in River City](#)) performances included an outdoor graduation party along the Columbia River, a Fall festival,<sup>19</sup> and a charitable benefit walk.

[Portland Community Wind Band](#) performed its usual slate of concerts. The last concert featured works ranging from ballads to marches to symphonic pieces by a single composer (Julie Giroux). You may not recognize her name because she’s like a ghost writer, working on lots of stuff for Hollywood that she doesn’t get credit for.

Janet teamed up with the wind band’s soprano sax player to perform duets at a couple of senior communities. No, they don’t both play soprano (that would be like two cats howling on a fence in the back yard); Janet’s on alto sax and Henry has a really beautiful tone on his soprano, so they sound great together.



Our brick in Pioneer Courthouse Square

<sup>15</sup> Hey, maybe we ARE that ambitious?

<sup>16</sup> A “collegiate wood bat league” baseball team. Getting to the minor leagues is a promotion ...

<sup>17</sup> Kinda makes you want a hot dog right now, doesn’t it?

<sup>18</sup> Prefontaine is a storied Oregon long-distance runner from Coos Bay who died young.

<sup>19</sup> Got paid in tacos!



## Virtual Reality gets Real!

We have always been big supporters of education. When Portland State University decided it

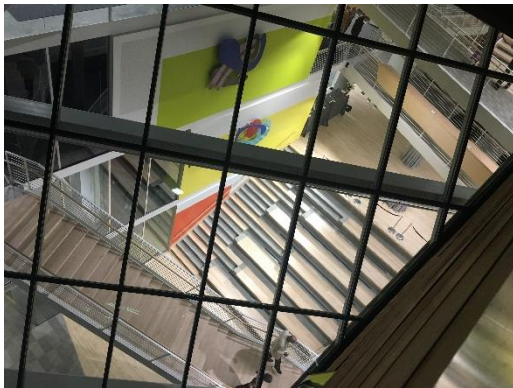


Which is more stylish: vests or hardhats?

was high time to upgrade their old, dark Business School building<sup>20</sup>, we helped support the project. The Business School is top-notch; it was recently named #3 Green MBA by *The Princeton Review*. While the building was still in progress, we were invited to stop by and see how it was going. The construction biz has come a long way! During the tour we got

the opportunity to view portions of the project through virtual reality goggles that showed how different areas were going to look upon completion. What a hoot!

A few months later, we attended the opening celebration and got to see the completed building.



PSU's own version of "Ascending and Descending"

Really nice! Very open! It reminds you of the Escher print with all the stairs going in different directions. We're told that even kids from a nearby

high school like hanging out in the building – maybe they'll be future students.

## Go Boilers! (Part 1)

The daughter of one of our music buddies graduated high school in May and made Purdue her



Celebrating the Old Gold and Black

higher education choice. This could not go unremarked, so we gathered bits and pieces of the band, trooped over to her graduation party, and surprised her with a rousing rendition of Hail Purdue.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Hey, that was a new building when Janet got her accounting post-bacc!

<sup>21</sup> The finest rendition west of the Mississippi this summer.

## It's Always Darkest Before the Dawn

Or...the sun didn't get eaten after all!

Portland was very near but not in the path of totality, so we headed for Corvallis to experience the solar eclipse with lots of other folks on a soccer field at Oregon State University. Spectacular!

If you found a spot to share the totality experience, you know what we're talking about; it's COMPLETELY different from any partial eclipse.<sup>22</sup> It was interesting watching how the light changed as the moon moved across the sun and hard to describe how odd the light and shadows looked as it got darker. Totality was jaw-dropping: an eerie black hole appeared in the sky with the sun's corona flames shooting out from 'behind' the moon. Easy to see why people chase eclipses!



Awaiting the dragon who eats the sun

## Other High(?)lights

We had the pleasure of attending the Simon Benson Awards dinner this past Fall where the guest speaker was Captain Chesley Sullenberger (the guy who did the emergency landing in the East River in NYC.) Turns out he's not just a cracker-jack pilot, he's also a spellbinding speaker.

We all know the definition of excitement is "watching paint dry". After living in our house for about 16½ years, we decided it was time for a paint job. So we hired a nice young house painter to git 'er done! But wait, here's the thrillin part:

we changed the trim color from plum to green. Be still my heart!

## Busy Hands are Happy Hands!

Santa brought us an early Christmas present—a Lego



The Christmas tree spins when the train moves!

kit to build a bus, railroad crossing, and train station complete with melting 'snow'. We got it done just in time to put it under the tree. And we got extra train tracks so we can run the Lego train we built last year all around the tree. Whee!

<sup>22</sup> Our favorite comparison: It's like the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.



## Go Boilers (Part 2)

In September we headed east for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the opening of the Computer Science building at Purdue University. Lots of fun activities: food, speechifying by profs and distinguished former Purdue folks, catching up with folks we haven't seen in a few years,<sup>23</sup> more food, and a football game from the "fancy seats" with yet more food.



The All-America Marching Band, fabulous as always

## Kansas City Here We Come

Since we were already schlepping to the Midwest, we added a few days to our itinerary and headed to Kansas City.



There's even an old police patrol car waiting nearby!

En route to KC, we visited the Dana-Thomas house built by Frank Lloyd Wright in Springfield, IL. We weren't too crazy about the house plan, but it was interesting to learn about the folks who lived there. Later, we needed to stop for gas. We pulled off the freeway near Clarence, MO, turned into a gas station near the intersection ... and found that it wasn't selling gas. It was a replica of a [gas station from the 1950s](#)

complete with vintage cars with crash test dummies in period clothes.<sup>24</sup> More than a bit creepy!

While in Kansas City, we explored the [American Jazz Museum](#) (with its Charlie Parker memorial out back) and [Negro Leagues Baseball Museum](#) (thoughtfully co-located with the AJM); explored the immense Union Train Station; absorbed a lot of



"Bird Lives"

sobering information at the World War I Memorial; rooted for the Royals in Kauffman Stadium;<sup>25</sup> and ate excellent BBQ as often as possible.

We made the short trip to Independence to visit the Harry Truman home, his Presidential Library,<sup>26</sup> and other sites in his home town. You would expect a president's home to be grand and exquisitely decorated. But Harry Truman's home was very modest, like your grandma's kitchen. He lived walking distance to his library and walked there every day, and we made the trek in his footsteps.

## The Rest of the Story!

We finally hung up our softball cleats—sort of. Janet subbed for two games over the summer. She figures the run she scored in one of the games was likely her last. The team did pretty well this year after a slow start. They probably weren't used to having younger players ... ha!

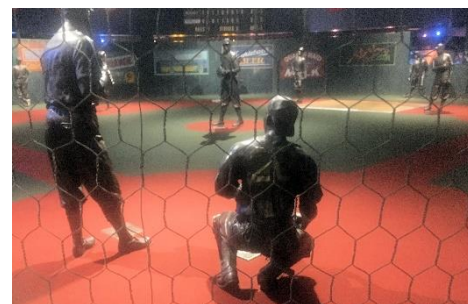
In 2003, we started keeping track of all the books we each read and how many pages they contain. Steve hit 1,000 books this year and celebrated by buying still more books.

Tuesday is still Janet's bowling day. When the team bowls badly, they keep reminding themselves that they're there to have fun...

We hope you had a great year and wish you the best for 2018!

The Beat Goes On,

Steve & Janet



Josh Gibson and other Negro Leagues greats



Someone's wild about Harry ...



Shakes at Clinton's Drugstore, site of Harry Truman's first job

<sup>23</sup> Or a lotta years; we're lookin' at you, Bob Mead!

<sup>24</sup> This is where they retire after their careers are over.

<sup>25</sup> Steve is now up to 16 team bobblehead dolls.

<sup>26</sup> Steve is now up to 1 Presidential bobblehead doll.