Dear Whoever,

Just wanted to let you know that Brian and Laurel Hines are in a quandary. We've always sent out a Holiday Letter with a card, but we're not sure what to do this year. Maybe "talking" it out with you here will help us decide.

Geez, it's 2014, not 1914. Between us, we've got two Facebook feeds, two blogs, and a personal Twitter account, plus a Strange Up Salem Facebook page and Twitter account to go with Brian's column in Salem Weekly.

So if you don't know all about us, you're not trying very hard. Or have gone all off-the-grid and are holed up in the Idaho wilderness waiting for the end times.

That's one reason we're leaning toward junking our Holiday Letter. Another is that we detest how other people brag about themselves and their lives in an end-of-year Look At How Great We Are blab fest.

We're so far beyond that.

Yeah, we could write about how many tricks our dog, Zu Zu, knows, after Laurel has taken a bunch of Humane Society training classes. But how are people with ordinary dogs going to feel when they read that Zu Zu is learning how to put her toys away in a box? Shitty.

Likewise, since most folks live barely-known lives, it'd be tasteless of us to mention that a story in the New York Post about hippie retirement communities featured us, complete with a photo taken at the oh-so-cool Oregon Country Fair and copious quotes from one of Brian's blog posts.

Our boundless humility prevents us from doing that.

Then there's the whole health thing. Senior citizens around our age talk incessantly about their operations, ailments, bathroom habits, and crap like that. Boring!

Geez, who wants to hear details about Laurel's rotator cuff surgery on her right shoulder, where she spent six weeks in a sling, having to ice the shoulder several times a day, not being able to drive, limited in her ability to do many ordinary things, during which time her husband Brian performed astounding good works of Mother Teresa'ish/Buddha-like compassion that are best kept secret and not trumpeted, as the Lord Jesus who we atheists don't believe in advised.

Definitely another reason to not talk about this stuff in a Holiday Letter.

Here's another thing that bugs us about other people's Christmas letters: how they go on and on.

Hey, you verbose jerks, write a freaking autobiography and publish it on Amazon where nobody has to read it if you want to subject friends, relatives, and acquaintances to endless multi-page blather about your life and how you feel about this and that.

Nobody gives a shit. Really.

Especially about your long-grown children. Sure, it's cute to share tales of the little ones when they're adorable five year olds. But there should be a statute of Christmas letter limitations that prevents old geezers from sharing boring updates on how their forty-something offspring are doing.

Fortunately for you and other past recipients of our Holiday Letter, we're strongly leaning toward not doing that anymore.

Nope, if you want to know that Brian's daughter, Celeste, and her family now live in Valley Village, California, a place they prefer to call "close to Studio City" because they used to live in Hollywood and swore they never would live in the San Fernando Valley, yet now not only do, but have an address that has "valley" right in it, you'll have to get on Celeste and Patrick's Christmas letter list.

Or our granddaughter Evelyn's, since she is so damn smart now that she is in second grade. Evelyn goes to a private school, Campbell Hall, where she is learning computer, science, writing, art, and other stuff that makes our elementary school experience seem, well, elementary.

Again, though, talking about how amazingly talented, precocious, and beautiful Evelyn is would make anyone with an average granddaughter feel bad — one more reason to ditch our Holiday Letter.

Oh, almost forgot about another subject that would annoy people if we brought it up: how healthy and fit Brian is. After all, the only thing worse than being forced to listen to an old person talk about his or her health problems is hearing, "I'm 66 and I really don't have any."

YET, YOU S.O.B! is an entirely appropriate reaction.

Which we'll avoid by not mentioning how Brian's doctor calls him her senior citizen "poster child." Tai Chi, daily dog walks, red wine, and an outdoor elliptical bike are some of his fitness secrets we won't mention.

Another topic we'll avoid by not having a Holiday Letter is making people feel like they live in a loser-state if they aren't Oregonians like us. Especially liberal people. This year Oregon legalized recreational marijuana, instituted gay marriage, and expanded Democratic control of the state. But don't worry, everyone who lives elsewhere, because...

Thinking out loud like this has made us decide to skip a 2014 Holiday Letter. Sorry we couldn't tell you this year about ourselves and all the things we've been up to. Maybe in 2015.