

## 2006 Holiday Greetings from Laurel and Brian



Take a last look at the youthful appearing man on the right. For by the time of his next Holiday Greetings, he'll be a *grandfather*. Which conjures up distressing images of...canes, codgerliness, and "eh, what'd you say?"

It's all the fault of the lissome Hollywood gal on the left, Brian's daughter Celeste. Along with Patrick, her husband, of course. But they'll be forgiven as soon as grandpa sees his grandchild for the first time, which should be in April.

A girl is growing beneath Celeste's no longer flat stomach. When Brian got a phone call from his offspring conveying the gender news, he blurted out "Oh, that's great! I want you to be driven crazy by a daughter, just as I was." Celeste is looking forward to sharing the insanity.

Visiting her in California in September, when these photos were taken, Brian told her he was eager to have a grandchild playing on their ten Oregon acres. "Wonderful," was the response. "The kid can spend the summer with you." Well, maybe. Got to get back in practice making pancakes that look like Mickey Mouse first.

We're preparing the ground for granddaughter visits in other ways. Literally. Laurel continues with her Janie Appleseed compulsion. At least thirty more trees got planted on our property this year. And countless blackberry & poison oak sprouts got sprayed into oblivion. We're ready for the sound of little running feet.

Not that Laurel lacks experience of such now. They're just called "paws." She's risen in the ranks of volunteer dog walkers at the Humane Society to an exalted Yellow Card status. (This doesn't mean that she risks ejection from a soccer match, but is authorized to handle difficult dogs like pit bulls.) Amazingly, we still have just one dog. The temptation to bring home a cute cuddly companion for Serena is strong, though.

(over)



But as you can see from this photo of Laurel with Serena and a shelter dog that she brought to the Salem Dog Parade, there might be at least a teensy-weensy bit of canine jealousy in the offing if the family pet had to share her current exalted Queen of the Realm status.

The humans in her life occupy a humbler position in the grand scheme of things. Each of us was emptied of our clothed dignity, not to mention just about everything else, when we had our first colonoscopies a few months ago. The virtual (CT) variety, thankfully, but we still wouldn't put the experience high on our Must Do Again list. If you've been putting one off, though, don't. Colonoscopies aren't fun, but they're a heck of a lot better than undiagnosed colon cancer.

It's tempting to include photos of the inside of our colons, but there's a limit on how much people want shared in a Christmas letter. And we've probably already passed it.

The thing is, Brian the avid blogger is used to writing about whatever is on his mind. Daily he sits at his ThinkPad laptop. Thinking. Emoting. And offering advice. Like, his urgent warning about the Wonder Pets, a Nickelodeon Jr. show featuring Turtle Tuck, Linny the Guinea Pig and Ming-Ming Duckling. So far he's gotten comments from 125 other people who also love the Wonder Pets.

See: [http://hinessight.blogs.com/hinessight/2006/03/urgent\\_warning\\_.html](http://hinessight.blogs.com/hinessight/2006/03/urgent_warning_.html)

On the other hand, a German translation of Brian's first book, "Wenn Gott flüstert, donnert es in der Schöpfung," hasn't attracted anywhere near as much attention. That's why he's turned to blogs rather than books. It's much more satisfying to get an instant "you're full of \_\_\_\_\_, you ignorant \_\_\_\_\_" a few minutes after putting a post up on the Internet, rather than having to wait many months to get that sort of thoughtful feedback about a book you've written.

We learned to Tango! Sort of. It's a challenging dance, being almost entirely led and followed with not many patterned steps. The ups, downs, and roundabouts of our Tango lessons have been blogged about (naturally):

<http://hinessight.blogs.com/hinessight/tango/index.html>

Lastly, our Save the World (or at least our neighborhood) passion is as strong as ever. Laurel is heading up a fight to stop a proposed 217 acre subdivision that threatens our area's water supply. We've got a bucolic acronym (KOWS—Keep Our Water Safe committee) and have raised enough money to hire a hydrogeologist and attorney. Next year, we'll tell you how the battle went.

Right now it's a cold foggy day in Oregon. But sharing some snippets of our life with people we care about warms our hearts. Best wishes for a smile-filled 2007.