

2007 Holiday Greetings from Laurel and Brian



Yes, Brian looks old. That's because he *is* old, a not-quite doddering 59. But holding his granddaughter, Evelyn, for the first time sure made him feel a lot younger. The family resemblance is astounding. In Brian's utterly biased eyes, at least.

Actually, Evelyn looks a lot like her mother did at that age. People would say, "She looks like an Eskimo." Not that they had any idea what an Eskimo baby looks like, but the dark hair and chubby cheeks made Celeste – like Evelyn – Eskimo'ishly exotic.



Here's Evelyn more grown up, with Celeste outside of their Hollywood home. Brian's daughter has gotten comfortably into the whole mothering thing. Which isn't really a surprise, except to those (like us) who remember another side of her.

We'll never forget that magical moment during her senior year at the University of Arizona when Celeste phoned home with some exciting news: "Dad, I just got an award! My sorority honored me as *Biggest party'er!*" Just what a parent wants to hear after four years of paying out-of-state tuition and getting lackluster grade reports.

Well, now the Biggest Party'er is a mother who one day will be telling Evelyn, "It's a school night. You've got homework. No going out with your friends!"

The circle of life – beautiful.

As for us, Brian is still blogging and Laurel is still dogging. Pretty much every day another blog post goes up on HinesSight (www.thehinessight.com) or Church of the Churchless (www.churchofthechurchless.com). Where it's received with apathy, applause, anger, or however else the denizens of cyberspace react to Brian's thoughts. This keeps him humble, egotistical, and upset, complex conflicting emotions that spur him to write more blog posts that are received with apathy... .

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On the dog front, weekly Laurel continues to brave the barking canines at the Salem Humane Society as a volunteer dog walker. More exactly, dog walker and poo collector – activities that go hand in hand, so to speak. ~~–over–~~

Our own canine is about as old as Brian, adjusting for dog years, but Serena isn't nearly as gray. And is much cuter, though we never can get her to put those half-German Shepherd ears up when a photo is taken.

Serena is still highly mobile, especially when a squirrel decides to run down a tree trunk and taunt her with a non-verbal "Let's see how fast you are, old dog" challenge.

We're mobile too. After last year's Argentine Tango lessons, we've branched out into American Tango, Nightclub 2-Step, and Waltz classes. "Dancing With the Stars" is our favorite TV dance show, because some of the contestants are as bad as we are. (Thank you, Wayne Newton).



Speaking of television, we made it on the Portland news quite a few times, thanks to a Salem-based reporter for KATU who took an interest in our neighborhood's fight against a 217 acre subdivision that threatens local wells and springs.

Here we are on our deck last month, holding forth about the injustice of this development. Brian is trying to look interested and supportive of what his wife is saying, though he comes across more like a wino who needs a haircut and is about to fall asleep.

The subdivision fight, which we're leading, has consumed an awful lot of our time and energy since the fall of 2006. And we're still battling. Our side is looking strong at the moment. Hopefully our next Holiday Letter will include a victory declaration. The owners of the 217 acres then can do something else with their land, like sell it to a grape grower for a Pinot Noir vineyard. There's already at least one bedraggled gray-haired guy in the neighborhood who looks like he drinks a lot of wine, so the local market is promising.

We've been so busy with our land use activism, we decided not to put up a Christmas tree this year. But this Holiday Letter – that couldn't be foregone because we enjoy keeping in touch with friends and family. We're writing this on the solstice, Dec. 21. From now on, there's more light each day. May this be true for all of us in 2008: more light, more brightness, more energy, more love.