

2001 Holiday Greetings from Serena Hines, the Wonder Dog



Me with Brian



Me with Laurel



Me with Me

(with just a little research over the Internet, I figured out how to clone myself; I'm so smart!!)

Like so many other people in these uncertain times, we've sought support from a higher power. We've searched our hearts, and realized that what we once thought was so important, isn't. So in 2001 we dedicated our lives to a supreme being around whom our entire existence revolves. Though we might be accused of some metaphysical dyslexia, this being is:

Dog

More specifically—Serena, the Wonder Dog. She is a wonderful successor to Tasha, the Psycho Dog, who, though she had some admirable qualities (none of which we can

actually recall at the moment), terrorized everyone she came in contact with, including her owners (if not physically, emotionally).

Serena, being a perfect blend of German Shepherdness, where she gets her markings, and Labradorness, where she gets her personality, has no discernable defects apart from a penchant for chasing deer, squirrels, and other cute/fuzzy/defenseless animals.

When Brian takes Serena for a walk at night, she wears a flashing red light that enables him to catch glimpses of her hyperactive bounding through the woods, across the pasture, around the lake, and back again.

It's like a endlessly repeating magic show: "Follow the little red dot, if you can. Is it here? There? No, it's circled all the way around and is *right behind you*. Whoosh!!, it's gone again. Follow the little red dot, if you can...."

Laurel gets to experience a doubledose of Serenaosity when she goes for a walk during the day with Wonder Pet and her clone. Words fail when it comes to describing the energy, speed, stamina, and sheer craziness of not one, but two, maniacal canines. Thankfully, only one serious injury has resulted so far, and that was to Laurel—who was innocently jogging when Wonder Pet I and Wonder Pet II slammed into her from behind, causing her to perform what would have been a graceful Aikido shoulder roll, if it had only been graceful, and she had rolled.

These tiny glitches in our relationship with Dog don't stop us from spending countless hours happily attending to Serena's every need: carefully cutting up bite-sized pieces of squash to add variety to her nothing-but-the-best Eukanuba diet, rubbing her furry little stomach as she lies spread-eagled on her back (her adorable Playdog centerfold pose), buying countless balls that light up and make sounds for her nighttime playing pleasure ("countless," because she is only one-half Labrador Retriever, and the half that got left out obviously was the retriever part).

In our ever-decreasing non-dog-devoted time, Brian continues to write—cantankerously—about subjects nobody wants to read about. His book about Plotinus looks like it will be published commercially, but will probably sell just enough copies to keep Serena's cupboard filled with dog food and play balls. Brian flew the Shotokan karate coop about a year ago, and now pursues an eclectic style of martial arts that ranges from Shaolin forms, to swords (wooden, so far), to Tai Chi, to jujitsu.

Laurel is still devoted both to enhancing the growth of trees and other living things on our five acres, and doing the same for the people in her psychotherapy practice. Increasingly, she's thinking that she'd rather do more of one than the other—you can guess which (hint: do trees need preauthorization to be watered?)

We're healthy and happy; we wish the same for you. **Praise dog!** Or any other higher power you believe in.