

Holiday Greetings 2004
from Brian, Laurel and Serena—who this year became...
Citizens of Hinesland!

Yes, we've declared our (psychic) independence from the United States of America and have formed our own ten acre nation. In September we were able to buy the nicely treed and creeked five acre lot next door, which the photo shows us standing in front of. And in November, the 2nd of the month to be precise, the time seemed right to establish an enclave where truly wise environmental, cultural, and spiritual values—namely, our own—could be practiced.

Taking this positive step was better than wallowing in the post-election depression we found ourselves in. Kerry had lost! And we had gone door to door canvassing for him. Well, actually Laurel would go up to the door and Brian would stand several steps behind, prepared to pull her to safety if a cranky conservative loosed his guard dog on us. Such didn't happen, but the election results made *us* feel like snapping and growling, that's for sure.

Oregon's land use laws were significantly weakened after Measure 37 passed. Laurel worked her vocal cords off trying to defeat the measure, making lots of phone calls in the days before the election. Brian selflessly supported her activism by lying on the couch and watching TV with the volume turned *way* down. Her efforts went for naught, but we're planning to put a conservation easement on Hinesland so no one ever will be able to develop our realm in an unGreen way, even if we're dead and gone.

Gone where? Uncertainty still reigns on this question, notwithstanding our daily meditations and reading of Deepak Chopra's newest book. The one thing we *are* sure of when it comes to spirituality is that not being sure of what to believe is the wisest belief. Fundamentalism of all stripes—Christian, Muslim, whatever—is idiotic, since there isn't any proof that any religion is more true than any other. Well, except our own Hinesland creedless creed, because it is founded on that very lack of proof. Check out our faithless faith at the newly-formed Church of the Churchless (www.churchofthechurchless.com).

One of the nice things about having your own country is that it is easy for a writer to have a national best seller. Brian's new book about the Greek mystic philosopher Plotinus, "Return to the One," was published in July and has stayed at the top of the Hinesland charts due to the two copies he excitedly bought when the Amazon listing first appeared. Unfortunately, the rest of the world hasn't yet caught up to the literary acumen of our local citizenry.

Defense of Hinesland should require minimal resources, given that a one-half German Shepherd already is patrolling the borders. Our main concern is that word will get out about the other Labrador half, which dominates Serena's serene personality. If it does, Hinesland will counter by publicizing the black belt that Brian earned in April. He's recently started taking Tai Chi classes in an effort to balance his yins and yangs.

Laurel continues to cut back her already reduced psychotherapy practice. We're figuring that, given the way the political/cultural winds seem to be blowing in the not-so-good-old USA, mental health needs to start at home: Hinesland.

May your personal realm blossom and prosper in 2005 as we hope ours will. No matter what craziness blows in the world outside, it always is possible to stay warm and cozy in your own inner home.

If you want to keep in touch with what's happening in Hinesland, our official national weblog continues to be the finest (and not coincidentally, only) source of Brian, Laurel, and Serena news. Publishing regularly at <http://hinessight.blogspot.com>