

2016 Holiday Greetings from Laurel and Brian

This wasn't a good year for us.

We've been suffering from bouts of serious depression, anxiety, and fear. Life appears increasingly uncertain, meaningless, without hope. Sleep is a respite, but soon after we wake up in the morning a blooming awareness of reality hits us over the head with a blunt hammer that *freaking hurts like hell*.

One bright spot in our dark fog: all of these feelings of doom and gloom hit us after November 8. The rest of 2016 has been pretty darn happy in the Hines home.

Hmmmm... what could have happened on that date to change our mood so much? We should Google this sometime. Wasn't there some sort of important election? Or was this just a bad dream?

With all our troubles, what's making our life a bit easier is embracing the 2016 Oxford Dictionary Word of the Year: *Post-truth*

This damn sure makes writing the rest of our annual Holiday Greetings letter easier.

ZuZu, the family canine, was on the cover of Dog Fancy magazine. Not once, but twice. She's getting lots of emails from Hollywood agents who want to give her big bucks to star in upcoming dog movies. ZuZu is so brilliant, as well as gorgeous, after we trimmed her toenails to better fit a keyboard she's handling all of the correspondence with fans and acting-contract seekers on her own.

One day Laurel, avid cook that she is, was fooling around creatively with some leftover ingredients when a friend fortuitously dropped by. Tasting what she'd made, he said "This is amazing!" He knew the top chef at Le Bernardin restaurant in New York City. After sharing the recipe with the chef, Laurel has been invited to fly first class to NYC for the unveiling of her dish — which naturally will be named after her. (Not just the dish, the entire restaurant!)

Not to be outdone, Brian won the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Blogging. His exposés of nefarious goings-on at the Salem City Hall garnered nationwide attention. Woodward and Bernstein have asked him to lead a week-long seminar at the Aspen Institute for top journalists from the nation's leading newspapers where Brian will speak about his unparalleled investigative reporting methods.

There's more we could share about our amazing year, of course. Can't remember where we heard the phrase, but we've appropriated it as *We're Making our Hines Lives Great Again*.

In our own post-truth minds, at least. Which still have a slight contamination of factuality in them, because we feel the need for some footnotes.* ** *** But here's some unvarnished truth.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2017!

* Dog Fancy ceased publication in 2014.

** Laurel doesn't like to cook.

*** There's no Investigative Blogging Pulitzer prize