

2011 Holiday Greetings from Laurel and Brian

It isn't true that old dogs people can't learn new tricks. This year we discovered a marvelous stunt that keeps aging at bay: wear a mask. At first we felt a little funny doing this, particularly when we testified at a legislative hearing or had been pulled over by a cop for a traffic violation, but after a while the masks became a part of us.

We feel a lot younger now that we've transformed into Ageless Catwoman and African Chieftain. (Though Brian has to explain that he is an albino offshoot of his ancestors.)



Who needs objective reality, anyway? It's way overrated. Here's our granddaughter, Evelyn, galloping bareback during her Oregon visit this year. We love her confidence, her beauty, her princess'ish detachment from such mundane concerns as reins, saddles, and such. Evelyn is only four, yet she too is ageless.*



* Also, Photoshop'd a bit. Maybe. We could be kidding. Or, serious. Ha-ha!

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Serena, the family Lab/Shepherd mix, also enjoys getting a little help with looking younger and more alert -- like a purebred German Shepherd with proud upright ears, a dog who strikes fear into the UPS driver and anyone else who invades her territory without a biscuit tribute. In this pic she's posing ferociously on a Metolius River fishing perch. This year we kept on enjoying the unreal beauty of the Metolius, a central Oregon treasure, during regular visits.



We've also found that fantasy comes in handy when we're driving our new electric car, a Nissan Leaf. Here it is, getting its first feeding after leaving the dealership. A fully electric car is great, so long as you forget that if you run out of photons, filling up again isn't going to be possible with a can from a gas station. If there's ever a reason to drive around drunk or stoned (and we're not saying there is, so don't turn us in to MADD), owning an electric car would be at the top of the list. *Hey, we're coasting to a stop in the middle of nowhere...far out!*



Then, there's our dancing. After crazily jumping into partner dancing by taking Argentine Tango lessons five years ago -- a really tough style to learn -- we've reached the point where we can dance quite a few styles quasi-crappily. Waltz. Foxtrot. Swing. Salsa. Cha-cha-cha. Nightclub 2-step. Tango. Rumba. We can get out on the floor and screw up all of these dances with ease. But, hey, we have fun doing whatever the heck it is we do. We like to watch "Dancing With the Stars" and we love "So You Think You Can Dance." Do we think we can dance? Absolutely. Can we? Sort of. What counts, says our instructor, is how we feel while we're dancing with each other, not with how we might be compared with others. Good advice. For dancing. Also, for life.

Best wishes for a wildly *UNREAL* 2012. Remember: fantasies are *FUN!*