

2023 Holiday Greetings from Laurel and Brian

In last year's Holiday Greetings, we talked about growing older. Guess what? It happened again in 2023! That was a real bummer. Why doesn't time go backward when we want it to? Whatever produced the space-time continuum sure screwed that up.

But we know that hearing old people talk about how old they are is boring. Unless you're another old person, then it's fascinating. So we're going to be light on our advancing geezer'ness this year and mostly speak about cars instead.

Speaking of cars rather than bodies, Brian's "car" was built 75 years ago. That's a freaking long time for a car to be around. Think about it. Seventy-five years prior to his car's build date, 1948, is 1873, not long after the Civil War ended.

This explains why it's kind of astounding that his 1948 model is still functioning quite well in 2023. (Laurel's "car" is less old, but not by a whole lot.)

What we're finding is, not surprisingly, that the older our cars get, the more maintenance they require. So instead of zooming around Oregon and the wider world in our smoothly functioning vehicles, we're spending time wondering why the hell our cars won't move very well first thing in the morning.

Okay, also last thing at night. And during the night too. Which is a weird thing about these "cars" that bear so much resemblance to our bodies.

Our Subaru has never developed a problem while it was parked in the carport. We've never gone out in the morning and found a flat tire that didn't exist when it was last driven. But the cars we inhabit every moment of our lives now have an annoying habit of developing rattles, malfunctioning parts, and body defects while they're turned off and at rest during the night.

We used to have good stories to tell at a repair shop. "So when did this problem first appear?" "When I backed into a tree by mistake." Now it's more like, "No idea. Just woke up one day and there it was."

In the before times, we'd go to new places in our cars, since we weren't worried about them breaking down while we were out of town. Now the main goal is just to have the damn things held together with duct tape, glue, zip ties, and whatever else is needed to keep them on the road.

We totally understand why so many people believe that after their "car" stops working completely, they'll find themselves in a brand new one — either in a spiffy non-physical version or a fresh model here on Earth. However, since we accept that when you get your first and only car, you've got to live with that one until it totally falls apart, this consolation is closed off to us.

So we rely on gratitude to get us through the increasingly annoying job of keeping our cars in decent working order.

After all, lots of people have older cars than we do, in worse condition. Ours aren't as functional as they used to be, that's for sure. But they still get us around, and on a good day, the creaks, rattles, wheel shimmering, and instrument panel dysfunctions are pretty minimal.

None of us knows how long the "car" that's our body is going to last. That isn't a cheery thought. But we can make the most of what we have for as long as this is possible. And that's all anybody can do. Enjoy your 2024 driving, whether it's around the block or across the world. Life is too short to do otherwise.