

To our dearest –

The year's end provides the opportunity to look back, while anticipating the year ahead. 2019 was another good one for us, with just enough challenges to remind us that we are far from done evolving and growing.

In January, we once again embraced a cold weather destination, as we reunited with our outstanding photo buddies in Yellowstone. Thankfully, we have the layers (from the Antarctic expedition where we met) to keep us toasty warm. (Plus, heated gloves were a game changer!) It was an extraordinary experience to have the Park basically to ourselves - just the 17 of us and the bison. Even though the government was in "shut down" mode, the Park itself was open (thankfully.)



Bill had (successful!) shoulder surgery in March. So now he has a matching pair of improved shoulders.

We continued with our **Haley Jones** fandom, and got to see her shoot hoops in the McDonald's All- American Games in Atlanta later in March. Haley's grandparents are our very good friends, Jo Lynne and Fred Jones, and they came and visited us here (from Santa Cruz) after that tournament.

<https://gostanford.com/sports/womens-basketball/roster/haley-jones/16822>

Hinda also spent a lovely (and long overdue!) few days in Durham to visit her sister and brother-in-law (Barbara and Steve) and niece and family (Robyn, Jamie, Ava and Max).

We spent a week in Bonaire – the first time in quite a long while that the four of us were away together. Hinda had pneumonia (again!), so took it easy, and Bill, Zack, Emily got to SCUBA together. We had a make-shift (and meaningful) Seder while there.



In May, we embarked on a trip to Norway and Sweden, with our friends Susan and Steve. Not countries that had been high on our list, but we're very glad we went. We saw the fjords (of course) and expanded our horizons. Minimally, getting to see Socialist Democracy in action was quite interesting. The countryside was pristine and lush and we really liked both Oslo and Stockholm. And Bill discovered Swedish meatballs, which he and Zack have since made at home (with excellent results.)

Hinda's brother Doug and his girlfriend Nancy closed on a house in the Berkshires (near us) in September. It is a joy having them nearby, and to see them so happy with their new lives here in the bucolic Berkshires.

Hopper continues to be a delight. He doesn't turn 2 years old until April 2020, so he's definitely still a puppy. Thankfully, he's turned into a really chill dog, weighing in at 95 pounds and unusually tall. We thought he might be part horse (or part goat – if you saw him jump on the pool table, you might agree) but a DNA test confirmed that he is all Lab. Bill and Hopper took an agility training class together and both did quite well.



Don't worry, I shooed him right off - as soon as I took the photo!

Bill continues to do his woodworking and has made some really nice pieces, including a photo gallery display he designed for his metal prints. These will be easy to change out as he has new ones to add.



Berkshire Baby Box is running like a well-oiled machine and except for challenges finding outside funding, we feel like our non-profit is a huge success. Over 1,000 Berkshire Baby Boxes have been given out, as we began our 4th year as an all-county initiative. The first two years of this effort were intense and extremely busy, so we are glad things are going so smoothly now.

Hinda has become a bit of an anti-plastic activist and this past October helped facilitate a town-wide Plastic Reduction Challenge. Feel free to check out (and join?) her *Plastic Free 413* Facebook page.

<https://theberkshireedge.com/ways-to-go-plastic-free-in-the-413-this-holiday-season-and-throughout-the-new-year/>

We've visited and hosted, hiked and strolled, cooked and dined, traveled and reveled in our local surroundings, grateful to spend most of our time in our Berkshire bubble. If it wasn't for the current government and all the havoc caused by this corrupt administration, I could say we are truly happy.

But there is an undercurrent of worry and concern; for our country, humanity in general and for the future health of this planet. Trying to maintain some optimism . . . and at least try to do what we can to make a difference locally.

We said good-bye to Bill's cousin, Bruce, and two very dear friends in the past year; two quite suddenly and one after a long valiant fight – and of course, this serves to remind us, yet again, to cherish our loved ones and not take one day for granted. See you on the other side, Bruce Greenberger, Jim Bonner and Tony Aiuvalasit.

We send you love and all good wishes for a happy, healthy, and fulfilling year ahead,

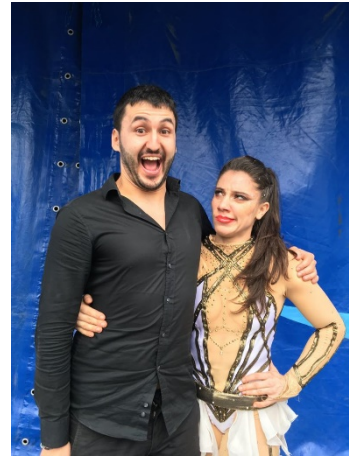
Bill and Hinda, and of course, Hopper



Hopper and Emily's dog Lucy, *Holiday Love*

From Zack:

As the decade draws to a close, it's fascinating to see all the unexpected places the last 10 years have brought me. 10 years ago, I was just starting university in Rhode Island and was getting accustomed to living in a shared dorm room. At the end of last year, I was living in the back of a truck with a traveling circus in France, getting ready to work in a circus competition with my friend, Kaely. We spent New Year's in Edinburgh with a troupe of Australian flying trapeze artists and attended a traditional cèilidh, where most people wore kilts and traditional Scottish social dances were performed to live music in a huge ballroom. After spending the start of January training at a circus studio in Edinburgh, we set off for Paris for the circus competition, where we eventually left with an award!



After returning to the states at the end of January, I caught up with friends in New York. In Brooklyn, my cousin Pam introduced me to her friend Sophie, and we started dating in February. I spent my birthday with friends in San Francisco and ended up housesitting for a friend a block away from the beach in Pacifica for 2 weeks before heading to Boston in March to see more friends. In April, I went on vacation with my parents and sister to Bonaire, where we went scuba diving, caught up on some reading, and had a Passover seder. Just after returning to New York, I flew down to Asheville, North Carolina, where I stayed with my friend Mike, who I hadn't seen in 8 years!



Mike is building a permaculture farm on land he shares with several friends; while I stayed with him, I helped put up electric fencing for new ducks they bought and poached the eggs they laid every morning. We had a big party to celebrate Beltane, the first of May, where we jumped over a fire pit and gave thanks to the beauty of nature. We went on hikes, played poker, and I read a lot. After a week living with Mike, I met up with my friend Gabby, who had planned a trip to drive across the country and had invited me to join her for part of the trip. We drove from Mike's in North Carolina to Slade, Kentucky, where we camped out of tents right next to Red River Gorge, one of the best sport climbing locales in the country.



Gabby and I climbed for a week together, made some new friends, played cards, and enjoyed many cans of Kentucky's own brand of ginger soda: Ale-8. From Kentucky, we drove to Kansas, where I got breakfast with my friend Lucia, who is in grad school for writing. From Kansas, we drove to Denver, where I stayed with my friend Caroline and caught up on some sleep. After Denver, I flew to San Francisco, where I went camping with my friend David in Butano state park. Sleeping in a forest of redwoods under the stars was a wonderful way to end my cross-country trip before heading back east.

After flying back to New York, I visited my friend Andrea in Vermont to see her end-of-year performance at a circus school she attended in Brattleboro and then came back to New York for a few weeks until the end of June. I started July with a big party at my parents' house, before moving to Montreal for the 2nd summer in a row. Living with circus performers right next to a park was fantastic; I spent a lot of time doing acroyoga with friends, eating poutine, and practicing my French. As the summer ended, I spent a week in Hawaii for my friend Ariana's 30th birthday, where we hiked, swam, and ate our way through the north shore of Oahu.



During all of this, I was still dating Sophie, who works in Brooklyn. In October, I moved into a sublet in Crown Heights to give New York living a chance. I'm still living there and have enjoyed getting back into climbing, teaching flying trapeze, and finding new favorite spots to visit in my neighborhood.

As 2020 approaches, it's unclear exactly what it will hold for me, but I can say that I'm sure I will continue to take whatever twists are thrown my way and I can't wait to see what's next. Happy Holidays!

Me and Sophie:



From Emily:

Hi all! –

I was fortunate enough to welcome in the New Year (2019) with cousins up in the Berkshires.

In February, I moved into my new house! The house is in a newly developed part of East Haven, 10 minutes from downtown New Haven. I'm a 20-minute drive from work, 10 minutes from the beach, and between 10 and 30 minutes from more than 5 state parks. Lucy and I are *loving* our new space.



In April, my parents, my brother and I returned to Bonaire, 10 years after our last family visit there! Bonaire is a beautiful island known for its reefs right off its shores. It felt amazing to scuba dive again. I saw my first shipwreck (2!) and felt so comfortable under the water. It was like I'd never left!



The school year finished up and I said goodbye to my 3rd and 4th graders for the summer. I was offered a position for the following school year in the middle school as a Behavior Technician. I gratefully accepted and spent time over the summer obtaining the credential required for the position. I completed the 40-hour online course, the assessment by a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), and passed my exam. I'm now a Registered Behavior Technician (registered through the BACB – Behavior Analytic Certification Board).

In August, I developed a life-threatening food allergy to citrus! It was stressful before we figured out exactly what was causing my reactions, but with medication and avoiding citrus, it's under control.

Family visits:



The new school year began in September and I am working with 6th grade boys with severe emotional disturbance and behavior problems. It's hard to say that I "like" my job, but I am good at what I do and love the team I work with. I'm grateful to work in a district with such great support for the students.

Some Lucy pix:



Overall, the year was filled with fun times with friends, Lucy-and-Hopper playing, time outside appreciating nature/hiking, and settling into my new home. Looking very much forward to what 2020 has in store!

Best wishes!

