

Seasonal Greetings,

After watching a theatrical reading of Oscar Wilde fairy tales and enjoying eggnog cut appropriately, I'm finally in the mood to write this. My procrastination abilities are improving every year and my cards are becoming more like Japanese nengajo new year cards (see: [www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/calendar/december/nengajo.html](http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/calendar/december/nengajo.html).) However, nengajo are supposed to be artistic, and mine are anything but. Being busy is the usual excuse for getting things done late. I've been taking a Japanese language class at a community college (after the stock market took its dump I'm skipping the high tuition at UCLA extension) and that's been sucking up a major chunk of time. I also got back into tutoring this semester and I may restart mentoring next year. In fact, I haven't had time to take any dance classes nor attend meetings of the UCLA animation club. I still help run the Hughes Social Dance Club ([www.hughessocialdanceclub.org](http://www.hughessocialdanceclub.org).) The Japanese class I need to take next is not being offered next semester, so I have a breather and I can catch up on my skiing. I got an invitation to speak at a friend's engineering class at Cal Poly Pomona next year. I hope it doesn't end up like the time Dilbert paid a visit to a schoolroom.

A major change this year was quitting my job-I wanted to beat the rush before the layoffs started-and having to sell myself to a potential employer. I know that other people have changed jobs several times, but I'd been at the same place for 26 years, although the names kept changing. I think I've figured out where all the coffee machines and bathrooms are at the new place, so maybe I can even start doing some work soon.

For a vacation from work I flew to London, took the Chunnel (Hey, it's dark outside!) to the Continent, and continued via train to Switzerland where I was a guest of a friend's family who were staying in the Alps. I did get some good hiking in, but it was in July right as the big storm was just starting to hit Europe, so I experienced a lot of rain. My most precious possession on the trip was my umbrella. I made the classic mistake of taking a pair of hiking books I hadn't really checked out before the trip (ouch!) Pictures from the trip are at [dkikemi.www9.50megs.com/mytravel.html](http://dkikemi.www9.50megs.com/mytravel.html) as well as pictures from other travels. I didn't make it backpacking this year since I had a nasty sinus infection that lasted from September till November.

My family is okay at the moment. After scoring out with DirecTV I found that the most successful scheme for entertaining my parents was setting up a series of hummingbird feeders. Hummers are probably some of the nastiest, most territorial birds on a per weight basis, spending as much time dogfighting as feeding. Flashy little performers

Best wishes for the New Year.

If by some chance you want to contact me:

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