

Merry Christmas 2021!

メリークリスマス 2021!

With the heralding of trumpets by heavenly angels and the televising of Billy Bob Thornton's cinematic triumph, "Bad Santa," one realizes the time has come to bid glad tidings to kith and kin this Christmas season.

Nearly two years into the pandemic, such tidings are virtual for so many, as so many have become, for all intents and purposes, hermits. Naturally, it seems fitting and proper to call to mind (if you haven't already) the naturalist recluse Masafumi Nagasaki, the famed naked hermit of Sotobanari Island.

The island, which is part of Japan's Okinawa Prefecture, had but one inhabitant, who had lived alone on that island for nearly 30 years. Apart from some flip-flops and a pink, terrycloth head covering, the naked hermit is just that...naked.

"In civilization," Nagasaki said, "people treated me like an idiot and made me feel like one. On this island, I don't feel like that."

His insightful words make me think of my reclusive year, and the freedom that comes with working virtually from home. Before your filthy minds wander too far astray, let me assure you that I have not become a naturalist. But my dream of wearing shorts each day, as opposed to stuffy work attire, has come true, and that's close enough for me. My work wardrobe consists of flip-flops, gym shorts, and a t-shirt when not on Zoom calls. For those on-cam moments, I'll pull a collared shirt out of the closet and slip it on, and for extra-fancy Zoom calls, I may even slip on a sport coat.

Had I dressed like that in the pre-COVID days, people would have treated me like an idiot. Now, on my own personal island on Garnett Street, not so! And what a gift that has been!

Nagasaki goes on to say, "I don't do what society tells me, but I do follow the rules of the natural world. That's what I learned when I came here, and that's probably why I get by so well." May this hermit's words be my gift to you this holiday season.

And so, let me strip away all reservedness and exclaim, "MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOURS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

