

JAPAN'S HIDDEN TREASURE

LEAVE THE BUSTLING CITIES BEHIND AND EXPERIENCE THE ANYTHING-BUT-ORDINARY **YAEYAMA ISLANDS**, JAPAN'S OASIS AWAY FROM HOME



› JANUARY 01, 2013

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(pg. 12)

Youthful Exuberance

HOW IN THE name of Father Time is it already 2013?

Just the other night I was watching *Ghostbusters II*, which was playing on one of those nosebleed-high cable channels, and there was one scene that completely dated the movie. By association the movie dated me, and it also dated the date. Here's the scene:

Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) is having dinner on New Year's Eve with his ex-girlfriend from the original *Ghostbusters*, Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver). Peter asks Dana if she has any New Year's resolutions. She says she wants to stop getting involved with men who aren't good for her. Peter responds by saying he's not even good for him, and that's why they're perfect for each other. She compliments him, saying he's so much better than he knows.

"Thank you." Peter says. "If I had that kind of support on a daily basis, I could definitely shape up by the turn of the century!" Dana, clearly feeling the effects of Champagne, says, "So why don't you give me a jingle in the year 2000?"

Ghostbusters II premiered in 1989. The joke worked back then because 2000 was so far away. Now, it just makes me feel old. And so does reflecting on where I was when the year 2000 finally arrived.

Kimberly and I had been living together for three months. We had graduated college in May 1999 and she moved home with her parents in St.

Louis while she looked for her first job. I moved to New York to work for free at *P.O.V. Magazine* (now defunct) to cut my teeth in the real world of magazine journalism. When I ran out of money, I moved to St. Louis to be near Kimberly. I took a job at the *Riverfront Times*, the city's weekly paper.

By the time I got to St. Louis, Kimberly had landed her first job at a Norwalk Furniture store. We were very much in love, and we decided the next logical move was to move in together. But Kimberly was working on commission (and she'd just started) and I was making \$500 a week at the *RFT*. Since I had depleted my savings account in New York, we moved into the only apartment we could afford, on the corner of Delmar Boulevard and Interstate Highway 170.

Our first few months together were happy ones — the kind I'm sure most of you had when you got your first apartment with your sweetheart. We had a bunch of battered college furniture (except for a very nice couch from Norwalk, which Kimberly bought with her discount and her first paycheck). Our silverware was plastic from the neighboring Subway; drinking glasses were plastic Harpo's cups from that bar in Columbia, Mo.; and our TV was a whopping 11 inches. It got only three channels, but we had a VCR that was well used.

In the run-up to New Year's, all three of our channels ran two recurring stories: the Y2K virus and the enormous police presence in New York City for the turn-of-the-century ball drop.

Kimberly and I would cloud-talk about how fun it would be to be in Times Square at the stroke of midnight. "It's something we can tell our children one day," I remember her saying. But it was impossible to book a last-minute flight to the biggest party in the world. Besides, we never would have found a hotel, and my New York friends didn't exactly live in luxury. No, Y2K would be spent in our tiny apartment with our plastic dishware, our shaggy cat and our 11-inch Sony.

I don't remember what happened — call it youthful exuberance or just a desire to break what was becoming the all-too-real post-college working-world mold — but in the wee hours of Dec. 31, 1999, we decided to get into my old Jeep Cherokee and drive 950 miles from St. Louis to New York City for the millennium. Kimberly's best friend, Katie, was already there. And, heck, we could make a stop in Columbus, Ohio, and pick up my best friend, Rocky. Might as well make this as memorable as we possibly could, we thought. As for lodging? If we had to, we'd sleep in the car. Isn't that, after all, what youthfully exuberant people are supposed to do?

That was 13 years ago. How in the name of Father Time has it been 13 years?

At *American Way*, we're committed to making this a banner literary year. We're going to take you around the world and into the lives of extraordinary people like never before in our history. And it starts right now: Come along as we island-hop Japan's Yaeyama Islands (page 50); get your adrenaline pumping with a bungee jump in New Zealand (page 32); understand the psychology of reconsumerism (page 36); learn about the man with one of the most beautiful voices in the world (page 42); and see what else is dropped on New Year's Eve (page 90).

Welcome aboard. And welcome to the 14th year of the new millennium, and the 48th year of *AW*. We're here to serve, so let us know how we're doing. And if you're a Hollywood producer heading back to Tinseltown, how about you get cracking on *Ghostbusters III*? We've been waiting for 24 years, and Father Time ain't slowin' down.


ADAM PITLUK
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