

The

VOLUME XIV | DECEMBER 2018

KIMBER

CHRONICLES

AT the end of every year, we tend to say the same cliché, how time seems to go faster as we get older. The new year is knocking at the door and before you know it, Christmas is here again. I try to face live with a grateful heart – I don't want to face the end of any year, grumbling and not being thankful that I'm still granted another year of blessings and good health.

2018 has been quite an interesting year. It certainly has its share of achievements and low points. In the past, I usually prepared *Kimber Chronicles* before Christmas, but it has been an extra hectic and tiring end of the year. This is why you are reading my annual letter only now. So, what happened this year? Without further ado – put your feet up, get the tea or coffee ready and come along with me.

JANUARY was memorable, as the first [journal paper](#) from my PhD was published. I know now that the key rules of establishing a career in academia remain deeply focused on publications and research outputs – so I was extremely grateful that I could start the year with a personal bang. Whilst work kept me occupied throughout the year, looking back – I was also very much blessed with the opportunities to catch up with old friends who I hadn't meet for years and years. In February, I met Hassan van der Hoff and his family who were travelling through Australia. The last time I met Hassan was when I was still an undergrad student living in

Hampstead Centre International Students Residence – 23 years ago! Hassan was one of the Dutch exchange students from Universiteit Twente who also stayed at the same dorm.

YANI and I also started our [5:2 fasting](#)

this year. Knowing that I should lose some weight and that I should take my health more seriously, we decided to fast two days a week. Losing weight is a positive by-product of this programme, as we both do the fasting for its wellness aspect. I could have lost more weight by not indulging too much on chocolate and dessert on my off-days. *Haha*. However, the two days of fasting every week have helped me to lose around 5kgs – and keeping it under control. I'm not a spring chicken, anymore! *Ha!*

OLD age has also caught up with Burt, my 2001 PT Cruiser. I bought Burt in 2011 and had loved driving him around. There's a sense of camaraderie when I passed another PT Cruiser on the road, as each driver would give a knowing nod and smile. You can't find any other car with such a distinctive retro style anymore. Sadly, Burt was getting quite expensive and problematic to maintain. So, with a heavy heart I listed him on Gumtree, and after several near misses – I had a serious



offer from an elderly gentleman who wanted to buy the car for his wife. His wife was just learning how to drive – and he didn't mind Burt's scratches and extra care that he

needed, due to his age. It was quite a surreal funny moment when I realised that the buyer's name was ... wait for it ... *Burt!* It was just meant to be, perhaps! Burt's replacement is a 2015 Fiat 500X that I call Totò – after the main character from one of my favourite films, *Cinema Paradiso*. I thought since it's an Italian car, it should have an Italian name

too (*In the movie, Totò is just a nickname for Salvatore – I think calling the car Salvatore is just a bit too much!*).



Lascia che ti presenti... la Fiat - Totò!

WORKING in a world-famous Ehrenberg-Bass Institute also means that sometimes I am enlisted to represent the Institute in conferences or seminars. In March, I went to Brisbane to the *Conference of Major Superannuation Funds (CMSF)* to talk about advertising. In November, I also spoke at the Australian Marketing Institute event in SA, to be one of the panel members – discussing about Marketing trends and predictions for the new year and beyond. This year, I also went to spend three weeks in New York, to have a series of meetings with a number of corporate sponsors of the Institute – but more on that later!



I may look like a 'Jeopardy' contestant, but no, I was talking about advertising. Hand movements and all!

JUNE was a month to remember for me. I attended a conference in Toronto, Canada. Being so close to the Niagara Falls, I also joined a day tour to tick an item off my bucket list. However, the highlights of this trip are a number of reunions with old friends. I met Wishnu and his family, who live in Markham, just outside

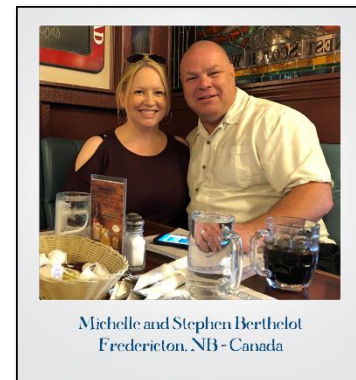


Meeting Wishnu and his family in Markham, ON. Wishnu, Theo, and Alex. Not shown here are Fari (Wishnu's wife), Nico, and Alyssa

Toronto. I used to work with Wishnu in the late 1990's in Citibank in Jakarta, Indonesia. I managed the customer database, and Wishnu was in charge of the Direct Mail activities. It has been a while since we saw each other! I also met a highschool friend, Daniel Lumanauw, who has settled down in Toronto – a high-flyer with the Bank of Montreal. There are Indonesians all over the world, that's for sure.

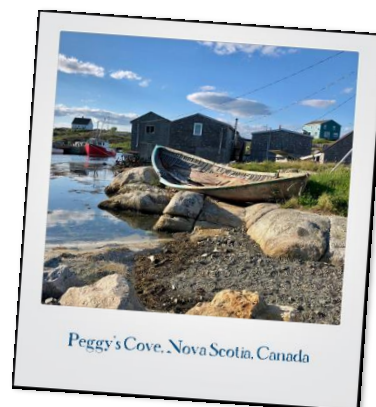
ANOTHER reunion was with an online friend, Stephen Berthelot, who I have chatted with for

years who lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. I mentioned that I would be in his neck of the woods, and that I could go on a detour to visit him and his family once the conference was over. I also threw an idea of going to Nova Scotia during my trip to New Brunswick – to which he kindly agreed! Let me give you some background story – I have always been the kind of person who is less interested in sandy beaches, turquoise water, and palm trees. Craggy, rugged coastlines or even fjords interest me a lot more. I don't think I have seafaring ancestors – but there's something about the moodiness and the melancholy that strikes me as beautiful. So, along with Norway (*tick*), New Zealand (*tick*), southern parts of Argentina, and Scotland, Canadian maritime provinces have always attracted and intrigued me. So, Stephen kindly drove us to Nova Scotia to see Peggy's Cove, after I landed in Fredericton.



*Michelle and Stephen Berthelot
Fredericton, NB - Canada*

It was as magnificent and as breathtaking as I thought it would be. Just my kind of spot on earth. It made me want to see New Foundland next – but then again, once you're married, you have to get a consensus from the missus, right? *Haha.*



Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, Canada

THE final memorable reunion during my trip to Toronto happened at the airport in Los Angeles. You can read how I got to know Kevin from my blog post [here](#). I had been trying to find him – and it was quite hard because there are so many Kevin Rogers



Reunion at the LAX Airport with Kevin Rogers. After all these years!

around the world. Maybe it's because I'm in the same hemisphere as him, but when I googled his name at LAX on my way to Toronto – I found *the* Kevin Rogers. I quickly messaged him via Facebook – hoping that he would read the message (as I wasn't his Facebook friend then) –

asking him whether he'd want to at least meet at the airport on my way back to Australia from Toronto. So, after coordinating the logistics, in the waiting area between the check-in counter and the security area, we met. We had a quick chat about life, a quick selfie, a big hug – and then we went our separate ways again. Sometimes, it's the simplest acts of kindness that really leave a mark on somebody else's life. Kevin did it in 1995, and I've never forgotten that.

In July, Yani and I also had a holiday in Indonesia so I could be with the family when Mama celebrated her 78th birthday. We also went to Surabaya to visit Yani's family – and differently this year, I also included a little bit of work during this holiday (*I know, it's a bad habit!*). I spoke at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia about our research at the Institute. It felt a bit surreal – knowing that the University is considered prestigious nationally. Being given access to the key staff was certainly a humbling experience for me – they even gave me a plaque as their token of appreciation. *Whoa*. My wee contribution to the relationship between the University of South Australia and the University of Indonesia! Yani and I also managed to catch up with some old friends in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Malang. I met with a friend who I last saw before I left Adelaide at the end of 1995 – Satriya Tanuwidjaja, who is now a Director of Sales at J.W. Marriott in Surabaya. Perhaps 2018 is a year of reunions for me!

The rest of the year felt like a blur – filled with project works, research, writing, dealing with disappointment, and striving to keep my nose above the water. I hope you don't read that and interpret that I'm being negative – on the contrary, I appreciate the dark days as reminders for me to enjoy the bright moments to the fullest. Some of these bright moments are related to work as well – the business trips to Melbourne and Sydney,

where I got to meet senior management of various well-known companies so I could give them advice and share some of the learnings from the Institute. Tiring – but fulfilling! The 'Big Kahuna' of these work trips happened in October, when I spent three weeks in New York. Somehow, I had always felt a bit intimidated by New York – but when I was approached to spend three weeks there as a test whether I would like the city or not, I took the challenge. I went alone – as I thought it would be too difficult for Yani to be away from work for an extended period of time – besides, she's still travelling on an Indonesian passport, so she would have to face the hassles of arranging visa and all the related bureaucracy in Melbourne.

NEW York turned out to be more endearing than I thought it would be, and less intimidating than I had perceived. New York is like a

third-world city in a first world country. It's busy, it's hectic – and everybody would just take any given opportunity, without the orderliness that one would expect. I just had to reapply my years of living in Jakarta, and everything was just hunky dory. I spent

long hours in front of the computer in the apartment. It's not a holiday trip, after all. During the weekend, and for a couple of hours every day when I didn't have any meetings, I would walk around the neighbourhood to release some tension. I caught up with a highschool friend who now lives in New York – Yen Lukman. The last time we met was in early 1990's! Time has changed both of us – but it was great to catch up with an old

friend. I also managed to join as an audience member to *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* (and sat in the front row!), went to a Joey Alexander concert, and saw *The Band's Visit* at Broadway. After all, it would be disappointing for me or to the folks at work as well, if I didn't use my opportunity wisely! It was magical to walk through Central Park and recognise the spots that I saw in the movies – or walk through streets whose names I knew



Central Park, New York



The boy from Kiaracandong, Bandung - in New York Times Square!



The Statue of Liberty, with Manhattan Skyline in the background

from the movies. I also didn't think I would be emotional when I saw the Statue of Liberty. *Liberty* was also the name of Papa's old stationery shop in Bandung, my hometown. Papa never spoke any English – I would never know why he choose the name. So, as I saw the statue looming across the waters, I had to fight back tears – perhaps Papa also wanted to travel and explore the world. However, taking care of eight children and ensuring everybody was well-educated were his priorities. Perhaps my being in New York, being there – means that Papa's unspoken dreams did come true after all.

HOPEFULLY I haven't bored you with my stories. It's my longest *Kimber Chronicles* compared to the previous editions. So many things that happened this year – and I want to share some of the highlights with you, if you're still reading this. Life is very fleeting. Every year I hear news about highschool friends passing on, or different aunts or uncles departing. Who knows what would happen in 2019, eh? Despite the illogical nature of faith, it's my faith in God that anchors me this year and gives me shelter when my mind is too tired to compute anything anymore. Philippians 4:6,7 sums this up nicely, *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."*

IT's time that I launch this annual newsletter into the Internet. Let's see what 2019 brings Yani and me. Work will undoubtedly continue to keep me busy

– and the new year will also be my seventh year in chronicling each day with a photo on [Instagram](#). I used to write more blog posts as a way to keep in touch and to share what I experience on a day to day basis. A photo a day seems a more practical way – some of the days are just mundane and low key, some are just full of excitement. I want to capture each day as a reminder to be thankful always. There's a beautiful quote from *Kodachrome* – a movie I watched during the flight to Canada. Ed Harris plays a dying photographer who wants to travel from New York to Parsons, Kansas – so he can have his film rolls developed, by the last functioning Kodachrome photo lab. I won't divulge much of the storyline, in case you want to see it – the story may be a bit predictable, but the delivery and the packaging of the plots make the movie very enjoyable. Back to the quote that I want to share with you – Ed Harris' character in the movie says, *"We're all so frightened by time, the way it moves on and the way things disappear. That's why we're photographers. We're preservationists by nature. We take pictures to stop time, to commit moments to eternity. Human nature made tangible."* How very true.

AS Christmas for 2018 has passed, I hope you had a great Christmas celebration with your loved ones – and even if you don't celebrate it, I hope the season has given you joy and peace. I hope 2019 will find us all – along with our loved ones – safe, healthy, blessed, and strong.

God bless.

