

THE

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KIMBER

CHRONICLES

it's crazy to think that I've been writing my annual newsletter for twelve years. A lot has happened within the period – when I started **The Kimber Chronicles** in 2004, I sent it along with a *handmade* Christmas animation that I made using Adobe Flash. That changed when I didn't have the time to create the cards – besides, the online community have pretty much moved on from Flash animations, so in recent years, I only sent the newsletter with a static Christmas greeting on my website. This year, I decided to detach my newsletter from my Christmas greeting and send it at the end of the year. Progress, *eh*?

in a way, 2016 has been quite a strange, off-centred year for many people. We said our goodbyes to many famous artists and actors – including those who I grew up with, whose music and films I identified with my younger years. I also said my goodbye to a dear friend, **Hershel Strickland** from the US who passed away in December 2016. Hershel was one of my first online friends when I discovered the Internet in the early 1990's – he became a good friend, a mentor, a confidant, and a brother in Christ. In the 22+ years of friendship, we had great long distance conversations and discussions – and although we had some issues we disagreed with (mainly related to his political views), we remained good friends until I discovered that he had passed away from a message that one of his friends posted on his Facebook page. I know that it is just a circle of life, that my mentors are slowly bidding their *adieu*, paving the way for me to become one of many mentors for the next generation. One of my favourite quote is a statement that is attributed to Kevin Spacey – *"If you're lucky enough to do well, it's your responsibility to send the elevator back down."*



personal losses aside, I was actually blessed beyond measure this year. This is the year when I ended up somehow making two trips to Singapore, two trips to New Zealand, two trips to Indonesia, and one trip to the US – along with numerous domestic flights for work. Come to think about it, I travelled way more than I did when I was still an up-and-coming yuppie. Next year is shaping to be another year of awesome adventures as well, but more on that later.

although I said goodbye to a dear friend, in 2016 I was also way overjoyed to meet another good friend in person. Many years ago, when I was still a student in Bandung, Indonesia, I joined a penpal service called *International Youth Service* out of Turku, Finland. IYS connected students all over the world so they could write to one another and build their friendships – this was the time before email and Facebook. I would eagerly asked Papa whenever I returned home from school whether there were any letters for me – and it was such a magical period when I eagerly waited for letters about lives half-a-globe away. I ended up having a number of friends from Europe and the US – although only a handful of those friendships remain.

One of such friends is **Jim Verst**, from Kentucky, in the U.S. We sent each other letters, exchanged gifts and pictures – and I was informed when he got married to his lovely wife, **Jenna** and when they had their boys – **Stephen** and **Robbie**. So, when one of the Associate Directors asked me whether I would be interested to go to Cincinnati, OH in February 2016 to help with a number of corporate workshops, I said YES – although I was warned that there was nothing touristy in Cincinnati and that it was going to be cold. I was eager to go, as it was a great opportunity to learn and also a chance for me to travel back to the U.S. The last time I was in the U.S. was in 2001 – fifteen years ago!

it only clicked some weeks beforehand, that being in Cincinnati also meant that I could say hello to my friend Jim for real! We had been friends for 25+ years, and we hadn't even met one another. So, in between the workshops, I managed to meet Jim, Jenna and the boys. We got to spend a day, tasting Cincinnati's glorious contribution to the world of gastronomy (*ha!*): the famous Chilli (i.e. chilli topping on a plate of spaghetti) – and then visiting their home in Northern Kentucky, including a ride around the neighbourhood on his neighbour's Kubota in freezing temperature, and having a Cajun dinner to top off a great day. Meeting Jim and the family is certainly one of the highlights in 2016!

the year is also memorable for the silver reunion with my highschool friends. It was interesting to see those who I considered as 'the catch' way back when, and how they have morphed (just like me) into middle-age folks. Haha. It was great to meet old friends and to reminisce – even for just a couple of hours – how things were when everything seemed so much simpler.



so, I have now finished my PhD, what is next on the horizon, you ask? Well, I am now part of the academic staff and a Senior Research Associate at the School of Marketing, coordinating courses and lecturing – and doing more research at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute. It's great to be part of an organisation that keeps me thinking and sharpening my knowledge. I also appreciate the friendships and the opportunities at the Institute – as mentioned, I think I got to travel much more now than when I was a yuppie banker! One of the great opportunities available for me is to be posted on a three-month pop-up office in

London, England next year. So, from February until late-April 2017, I will be stationed in the U.K., with various trips to other cities and countries in Europe. That also means that I will be away from Yani and Indy for an extended period, unfortunately.

However, Yani will accompany me in the last week of my pop-up office, before we travel together to Paris, Portugal, Spain and

Amsterdam. Yes, I know I'm mixing cities and countries – but editing it further makes the list too contrived. ☺

there is still a lot of mojo left in my system, so although I am keeping my finger on my career pulse, I am also mindful that Yani and I need to focus on building a family as well. So, let's see what 2017 (or beyond) brings, eh?

all said and done, I am thankful of 2016 – yes, it has been quite a rocky year with Brexit, wars, and calamities, including the prospect of having Donald Trump as one of the leaders in 2017. However, I have had a great year – I remember saying this before I entered 2016, that 2016 would be like riding a rollercoaster, with the dizzying twirls, ups and downs, however, as long as we hold on tight, we'd be fine. Well, the year has certainly been a rollercoaster, indeed! 2017 will be a year when we need to be courageous with its tougher challenges – I am holding on to this verse from the Bible. *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* – John 14:27 (NKJV).

I hope you had a good **Christmas** and a relaxing period (after all the hooaha related to the season), and I'm sure Yani joins me in wishing you all **a great 2017** – full of achievements, peace and prosperity.

God bless.



apart from appreciating friends, I will always remember 2016 for the year when I received my doctoral degree. My thesis was passed forthwith by two international examiners, so my PhD could be conferred in June 2016. My

graduation ceremony was in September – I finally reached the 'floppy hat' stage! As mentioned in my acknowledgement, this achievement was also attributed to my wonderful team of supervisors, friends and advisors within the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute – as well as to my friends and family. I wish Papa were still around to witness my graduation – he would've liked it a lot. Indy – our beloved staffie – also got a mention in the thesis, for being with me when I analysed my research data and wrote my thesis. Even now as I'm typing these words, he is resting in my study – probably waiting when I will be off my computer so we can go for a walk!

