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The IDRC Alumni provides opportunities for former IDRC employees to maintain personal and professional links, and supports continuing dialogue on development issues.

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## Bulletin

No. 59 October 2019

**Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, November 12, 2019**  
**Honoring MENA (MERO in bygone days)**

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Digitized

Thanks to Michèle Wilson for Translation.

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Wish to support the IDRC Alumni Association? Contributions can be made annually or over a three-year period:

1 year	\$25
2 years	\$45
3 years	\$65

Cheques payable to the **IDRC Alumni Association**.

**Return to:** Kim Daley, 452 River Rd, Ottawa, ON. K1V 1E7

**Electronic transfer** is also possible for Alumni across Canada and in other parts of the world who have Canadian accounts. For details contact Gerald Bourrier <bici@sympatico.ca>

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**Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, November 12, 2019  
Honoring MENA**

Invitation sent through [Evite](#) – Please RSVP

**From the Chair**

Rob Robertson

**Y2K+ 20**



Would airplanes drop from the sky? Would banks fail to calculate daily interest? Would power grids shut down? These were just some of the doomsday scenarios as the year 2000 drew near, all of them based on the importance of two missing digits.

In the early days of computers, storage space was expensive and it was common to find ways to compress data, including storing just the last two digits of the year. This included financial and personnel records, and for IDRC project milestones. For example, if you wanted to calculate the service of an employee hired in 1995 and resigning in 2003 you wouldn't get the right answer by subtracting 95 from 03!

In early 1997 Ed Brandon raised the problem for IDRC in an [Echogramme](#) issue. Ed remembers, "This landed me in trouble; I became Y2K project manager," and a committee was formed to prepare for the big day. Carl Chambers remembers that among other things, "We sent letters to all our suppliers asking if their software would be Y2K compliant, and then a lot of them wrote back to us asking if ours would be."



Ed led IDRC's in-house testing both at headquarters and in the regions, informing them of our issues and contacting their own key suppliers. He remembers one visit to Kenyan telecom where he was asked if Canada could supply old-fashioned dial telephones to avoid computer-based phones. There were also discussions about how payments to recipients could be assured, and contingency plans were made to ensure continued operation of power, phones, elevators etc.

As New Year's Eve 1999 approached all of us on the responsible committee were issued big portable emergency phones not to leave our side as we greeted the New Year in Ottawa. But by then we knew that as the year 2000 swept into the Western Pacific and across Asia and African and Europe that little disruption had occurred. There were some glitches, but for the most part the world had prepared itself and avoided the disasters that had been predicted.



Now, twenty years past that date, Ed sums up the experience by saying, "Looking back, it is common to hear folks say that Y2K was an overblown event, or even a hoax. But it was very real, and IDRC had to ensure it survived the entry into the year 2000." And it did.

Y2K Image [World Atlas](#)

Alumni can take a trip back to 1997 with [Ed's Y2K article in Echogramme for 25 March 1997](#).

# Alumni News

## Kim Daley

### Celebrating Kim

The Alumni Association joins IDRC in celebrating Kim Daley's 42 years of service at the Centre. For many years Kim has served on the Executive as our liaison person.



At the reception celebrating her retirement, all speakers lauded Kim for her practicality, her knowledge, and her friendship. As Donna Bickford said, "She stood up for all of us."



Kim remembered travelling to regional offices as one of the highlights of her work. She said that "IDRC has been a great place for me to spend the last 42 years. It has really been the people that I've enjoyed, and it's the people that have made it difficult to leave, but it's time to move on."

Happily it's not time to move on from the Alumni Executive, where Kim will continue to serve as a regular member.

Congratulations Kim on all that you have accomplished for the Centre and for us.

Rob Robertson

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### Shafika Isaacs



We last heard of Shafika in the *Bulletin* No.50, April 2017, when she was recognized as both *Woman of the Year in Education* and *Woman of Stature 2017 Woman of the Year*, which ranks amongst the most prestigious awards in South Africa for women.

Your editor proved it pays to read your Alumni magazine.... Reading *Falmer*, the University of Sussex Magazine, I learned that Shafika and I are graduates of the same Master's Programme, though 25 years apart and with a name change!

Shafika was featured in the magazine because in 1996 she was in the Science and Technology Policy Masters as a Mandela Scholar; chosen for the work she was doing in improving the education for black students disadvantaged by apartheid restrictions and celebrated now for the remarkable contributions she has continued to make to Education in South Africa. Shafika recalls her work with IDRC's support for SchoolNet Africa and outlines her next challenge:

"Our President has announced that every child should be given a tablet computer and it worries me because we need to learn the lessons from similar experiences across the world, some of which have tanked badly because they were techno-centric, failed to take account of local conditions and failed to address inequality. We're talking about the fourth industrial revolution which holds huge risks of deepening inequality."

The full article is found [here](#)

## AFNS Newsletter 2019

In the last issue of the Bulletin, Paul Stimson called for word from the AFNS Alumni. He assembled the newsletter and shared it. I enjoyed the read and thought others from the time of those first IDRC Divisions would like a ‘Whatever happened to?’ moment.

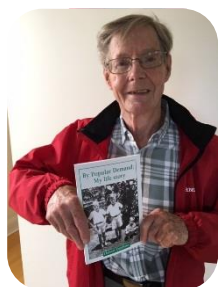
Here’s the list of names, in order of appearance: Hubert Zandstra, Cherla Sastry, Roger Kirkby, Greg Spendjian, Hugo Li Pun, Brian Belcher, Gerry Bourrier, Ozzie Schmidt, Michael Bassy, Howard Powles, Brian Davy, Chris MacCormac, Ron Ayling, Jose Valle Riestra, Gordon MacNeil, Doug Daniels, Geoff Hawtin, Donna Bickford, Paul Stinson, Ken Riley, Ken MacKay, Paul Eastman, Bruce Scott.

You’ll find good thoughts about their time with AFNS and proof that there is a life after IDRC!

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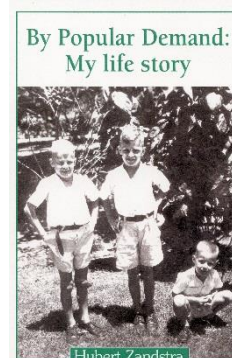
### **Alumni in Print**

#### **Hubert Zandstra**



**By Popular Demand, my life story** -- Follow the adventures and misadventures of a boy, who with his mother and two older brothers, suffered internment during World War II in a Japanese camp in Indonesia. After the war, and the loss of his father, the family repatriated to the Netherlands in 1951 only to find it difficult to fit in. As a young adult, Hubert decided to emigrate to Canada to pursue a graduate degree in agriculture. After earning a PhD in the United States, Hubert lived and worked in Colombia, the Philippines, Canada and Peru where

he conducted and managed research in agriculture for the benefit of developing country farmers and their families.

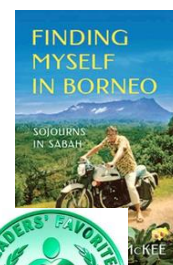


Available from Hubert at a nominal cost.

#### **Neill McKee...Prize Winner**

Neill’s book *Finding Myself in Borneo* was featured in the Bulletin, No. 56, January 2019. The book won an Honorable Mention Award in the Non-Fiction—Travel category of the Reader’s Choice international book awards contest.

“Neill McKee weaves strong themes into the narrative, including friendship, education, personal growth, adventure, love, and family. At times wry and at times filled with humor, *Finding Myself in Borneo: Sojourns in Sabah* is a memoir that is told in an honest voice and will inspire readers to think about how they relate to the world they inhabit. It’s simply brilliant.” —Christian Sia for Readers' Favorite. [See award info and full review.](#)







[A video](#) made of the book event in Kitchener, Neill’s home town, is a wonderful summary of a life in international development beginning with CUSO, on to IDRC, UNICEF, and Johns Hopkins University.

**Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award**

Doaa Hammoudeh

Doaa, a Palestinian, is a doctoral candidate in Social Policy at St Antony’s College, Oxford University. Her research focuses on young Palestinians’ experiences and practices of citizenship in a context of displacement, focusing specifically on Jerusalem areas physically dislocated by the Separation Wall. She is also affiliated with the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, in the occupied Palestinian territories, where she was previously a researcher prior to beginning her doctoral studies. Much of her research has explored the lives of vulnerable and marginalized subpopulations (with a specific focus on women), primarily through the utilization of qualitative methods to extrapolate contextually-relevant themes as they relate to health and social policy.



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**The David and Ruth Hopper and Ramesh and Pilar Bhatia Canada Fund**

Alec Gabrielle Fernandez



Ms. Fernandez, a graduate assistant in the Department of Environmental Science at Ateneo de Manila University is the recipient of this year’s Hopper-Bhatia Field Research Fellowship. She is working towards her Master of Science in Environmental Science with a thesis on *Flooding in Urbanizing Cities: Examining the Effects of The Increase in Impervious Areas in Cagayan de Oro City on Flood Intensities*.

**Gallery**

[Erin in the Ottawa Citizen story: “Ottawa ridings among top 10 in provincial hunger map”](#)



Sheldon Shaeffer one-time Associate Director of the Education Programme in the Social Sciences Division was in Ottawa in August and lunched with Gracia Chiasson, H  l  ne Mongeon and Marg Langill.





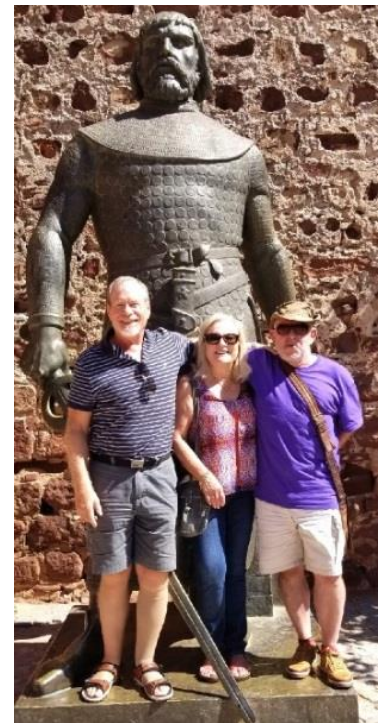
Later in the day Sheldon had dinner with colleagues, Eva Rathgeber, Richard McLure and Amitav Rath.

And on to Oxford for a meeting with Ken and Pravina King



Father Dr. Stuart Brown... in collar and kilt...officiating at the marriage of his son Timothy to Arielle in September.

A highlight of travel to Portugal was a reunion of uppermost camaraderie, Shaun Bona visiting Merle Faminow (retired Program Manager for IDRC's Rural Poverty and Environment Program) and his wife, Bea. Sancho I of Portugal did not work for IDRC.



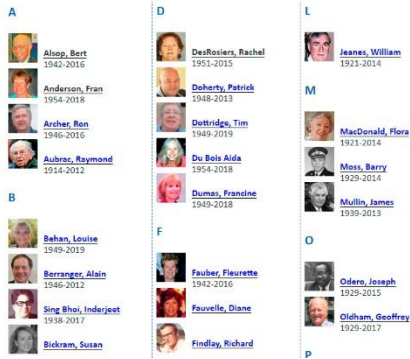
### Letter to the Editor

Many thanks for the excellent Alumni News. That is not just because you managed to give me two pats -- one with dear Flora, and the other about my Kentucky book -- but for the remembrance of the Air India massacre with a fine profile of the Board member. I have often walked through Commissioners' Park, and pondered the tragedy.

Clyde Sanger

## The IN MEMORIAM book on line

The Alumni IN MEMORIAM feature has been digitized.  
[Click](#) here to find photos and remembrances.



## Bulletin Archive on Line

[Past issues of the IDRC Alumni Bulletin](#), from the first edition in January 2003, are available on the [IDRC Alumni website](#).  
Bulletins for 1 to 26 are either English or French. From 27-39 they are bilingual and from 40 on, either English or French.



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