imfstaffnews

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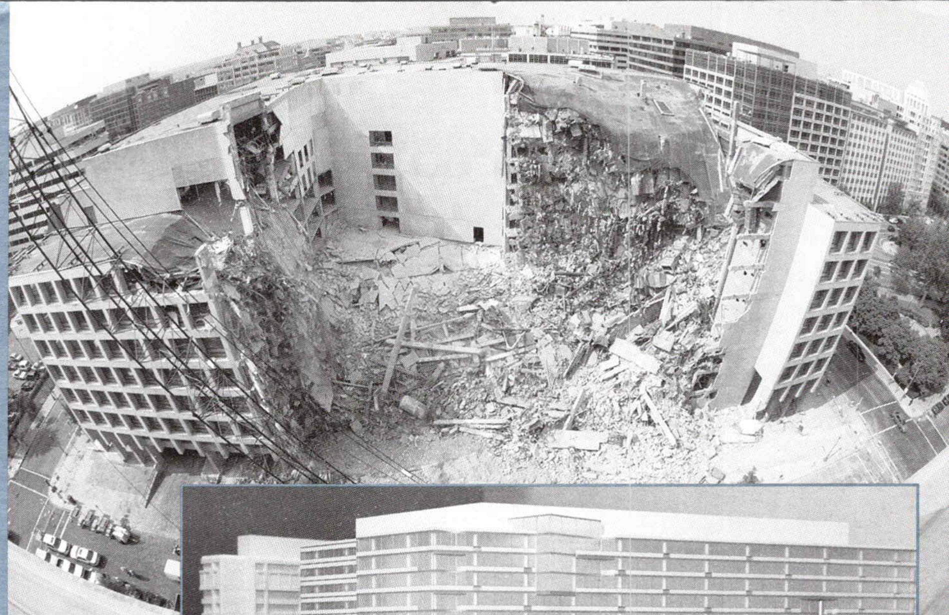

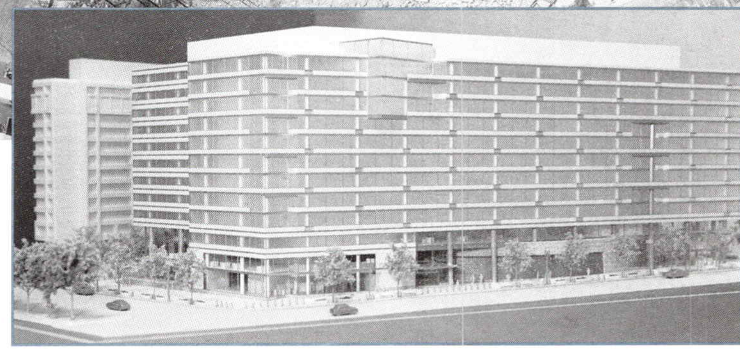

# The Fund's new architecture

*Though not of the international financial variety, the Fund's new architecture is about to take shape.* Staff News *talks with TGS's Inger Prebensen, Deputy Director, and Mary Beth Kelly, the project's manager, about the second IMF headquarters building, whose construction is scheduled to begin later this year.*

*When it became clear that the IMF would need another building and you'd be starting from scratch, what objectives did you set for the project?*

**Prebensen**: Our main goal was a building that would work well for our staff. We envisioned a nice, open, light-filled building that would reflect the image the IMF strives for—open to the public, transparent, and having a friendly face. This second headquarters building (HQ2) should also be in harmony with its surroundings—the parks, the World Bank, and its neighbors. And it has to be in harmony with our first headquarters (HQ1). You should be able to see a familial relationship between the new and the old buildings.

*How did you achieve this "familial relationship"? To what extent is the new building supposed to blend in with, or go beyond, the current headquarters?*

**Prebensen**: The design of HQ2 is subtly different on its different sides. If you look at the model, the side that faces HQ1 is more compact than the Pennsylvania Avenue side because our present headquarters is quite compact. You can see how the HQ1 architecture is brought into the new building on that side, and there is a relationship of materials—more stone, less glass—that harmonizes very well with our present building. As you go around the building to the opposite side, on Pennsylvania Avenue, there's more and more glass and the building is lighter and lighter. From Pennsylvania Avenue, HQ2 looks like a modern building.

*Will there be some similarity in the streetscapes that surround the two buildings?*

**Prebensen**: On H Street, we'll have a little bit of the same garden. We won't have fountains on H Street, but there'll be similar stone and plantings.


Inger Prebensen (l) and Mary Beth Kelly (r) with the HQ2 scale model.

Unfortunately, we don't have as much money for the HQ2 landscaping as we had for the other building. To build Phase III of the main headquarters, we took away a park from the public. To compensate, we agreed to place that park around the building. In this case, we had no such demand from the city. But there'll be benches with planters all around the building.

*What were you looking for in an architect?*

**Prebensen**: We wanted an architect with a good, solid reputation, an original design, and also a certain presence in Washington. Although it's a New York firm we chose, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, this firm works in cooperation with a local company, the Weihe Partnership, that will be here through construction. It's very important to have good follow-up from the architect throughout the construction of the building.

*The PEPCO building has already been demolished. How long will the next phase last, and how will staff be affected by it?*

**Prebensen**: The next stage is removing the debris, which is expected to take until October. Then we'll start digging down to add a third level of parking and then build up from there. We hope that staff won't be greatly affected by it. We expect to have the building ready by 2006, if not sooner.

**Kelly**: One thing that will affect staff is the closing of H Street, possibly until June 2003. We hope to have approval for this shortly. While H Street is closed, we will dig a tunnel between the two buildings. This will tie into the HQ1 building. This phase of construction may create some disruption on the red level and adjoining levels of HQ1.

**Prebensen**: With the tunnel, you will be able to walk all the way from the World Bank to the new building underground. We'll be encouraging people to use the tunnel between the two Fund headquarters buildings for security and traffic reasons.

*Why was the idea of having a bridge rejected?*

**Prebensen**: We posed the question of a bridge some time ago to the city, the architects, and the specialists. They told us that including a bridge in our design might delay by a couple of years the process for getting the necessary permits and zoning and that, even then, we might end up with a refusal. The city is very much against bridges. In D.C., there are only internal bridges between complexes that do not have public streets running through them. One exception is the bridge in Chinatown, which is very old and the only one of its kind over a street.

**Kelly**: There's also one in the convention center, but it was built under special circumstances. [Washington city planner] Pierre L'Enfant's plan is now a historic landmark, so city officials are very reluctant to change the appearance of the city's avenues.

*A lot of staff heard about the accident that occurred at the [non-IMF] construction site at the northeast corner of*

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*19th and Pennsylvania Avenue, where a steel beam fell on a car. What precautions will the Fund take for its staff during the construction phase?*

**Prebensen**: There will be a fence around the building, so if you don't trespass, you should be safe. The building you're talking about was very much exposed and very close to the street. It was a much more difficult construction situation than we'll have for our building. Safety is our highest priority during the construction period. There are some risks, but we are taking all the necessary precautions to keep everybody—both staff and the public—safe.

*What interesting features will the new building have?*

**Prebensen**: The main feature of the building is transparency, you might say. It has a lot of glass, which makes it light and open. It also has "mini atriums"—internal staircases that connect two floors from the fourth floor all the way up on each side, one against the inside atrium and one toward the street, with a skylight at the top. You can walk up the building in these very nice staircases that are, at the same time, atriums. We hope this feature will encourage people to use the stairs more than the elevator. There is an open assembly area with some seating at the bottom of each staircase, where people can have informal meetings, coffee, or just a short break from their desks. The main atrium will also be impressive, although Fund staff are used to atriums.

Another important element is a large meeting hall that can accommodate up to 450 people. For security reasons, we didn't want to have glass or windows on that two-story wall outside the auditorium. That was a big issue with the city, because it looks a bit ugly with the straight stone wall out on Pennsylvania Avenue. So we made that big meeting hall into an ellipse, then along the outside wall on Pennsylvania Avenue there is a water wall, with water falling down along the side of the stone—not an extravagant water wall, though—a quiet and tasteful one.

*I understand that, unlike HQ1, the new building will house some public space.*

**Prebensen**: Yes, there will be public space in the building leased out to tenants. On the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 19th Street, there will be a space where we plan to have an international newsstand with a coffee shop. We may also have a gallery for cultural exhibits. On the other corner, we'll have space for a two-story restaurant. Exactly what type of restaurant it'll be, we don't know yet. At some stage it would be nice to get input from staff to learn what kind of food they'd like as an alternative to the food service. It will be leased out, rather than run by the Fund, but we'll get to decide who rents space there.

*Will the building also have its own Fund cafeteria and coffee shop?*

**Prebensen**: One of the most appealing features of the new building will be the beautiful cafeteria on the second floor, with views up toward Pennsylvania

"The main feature of the building is transparency, you might say," says Prebensen.

Avenue and a two-story glass wall facing the park. We'll finally have what we would have liked to provide staff with earlier—a wonderful, open, light-filled cafeteria.

*Will there be a penthouse terrace similar to the space at I-Square?*

**Prebensen**: Everyone would like to have a nice outdoor space at the top at the corner of 19th and Pennsylvania, and we are now in the fortunate position that the budget allows us to provide one.

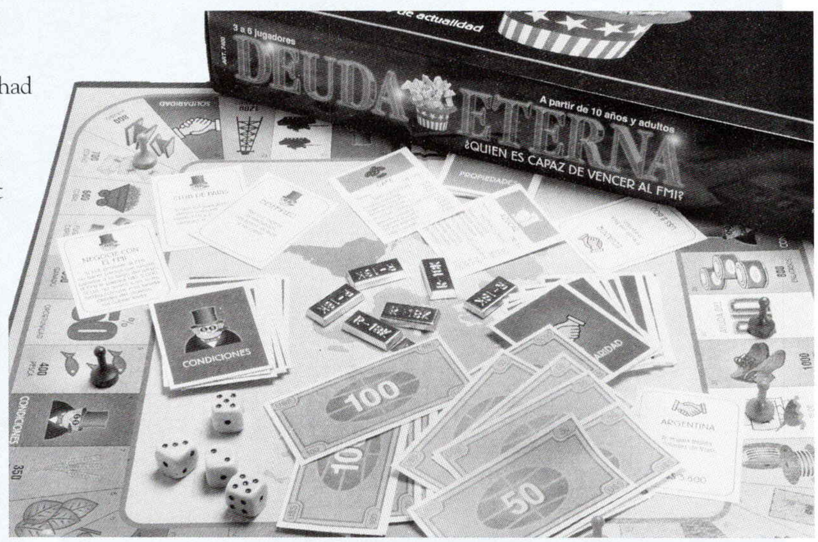
*Constructing a new building allows you to build in security features that you couldn't have with an existing building.*

**Prebensen**: One of the terrible things that happened with the Oklahoma City bombing is that the building partially collapsed. In constructing this building, we can secure it against progressive collapse. We've done everything within reason to make it very secure, but you can't build a bunker on Pennsylvania Avenue, and, certainly, the staff would not like to work in one. We have to have windows, and it has to be a functional office building.

*Any concluding thoughts?*

**Prebensen**: It's going to be a beautiful building, but more important, a great environment in which staff can work. That is essential. ◆

# We got game!




I lost everything to it—properties, gold, cash—but I had fun trying to "beat" the IMF. That's the challenge Juegos Ruibal's board game *Deuda Eterna: ¿Quién es capaz de vencer al FMI?* (Eternal Debt: Who Can Beat the IMF?©) poses to its players. Each player is a business owner in Latin America, and the entity that supervises all transactions and manages the cash is the IMF. Your job is to transform raw materials into products to be sold to the "big markets of the North." The capital is provided by the IMF, but you must meet its conditions—an almost impossible task.

As the instructions read, the objective is "to overcome the inconveniences and do without the IMF." If you are lucky, you will land on one of the "Solidarity" spaces and receive "gifts" from various countries: Chile can give you a wagon of copper; Peru, a boat full of fish; or you may hit the jackpot by having Puerto Rico invite you to the IDB space where you'll receive help for development! Most likely, however, you will fall on one of the "Conditions" spaces. Never helpful, these range from losing two turns as a result of "unemployment" or having to pay $300 to the IMF for the book *Debt and Its Benefits*, to more devastating ones, such as "devaluation," which forces players with debts to turn over half their money to the IMF or to pursue "import tariff reduction," which forces you to return one of your industries to the IMF due to bankruptcy.

Obviously, the game is not at all a reflection of what the IMF does, but I suppose its maker—not coincidentally an Argentine company—wants to beat the crisis by making a game out of it. Unfortunately, it was the IMF's turn to play the bad guy. Let's not let it affect our morale, though; after all, it's just a game.

Marjorie Henriquez

# Paper rules

Messy desk-ers of the Fund unite! The world has caught on to what we captains of clutter have known all along: there is a purpose—indeed a brillance—to be found in our imposing towers of paper.

A recent study by a pair of researchers from Britain should bring relief to those whose desks, jammed with piles of paper, have come to resemble nothing so much as a city skyline. And what's more, the researchers used the IMF as a laboratory for their study.

In *The Myth of the Paperless Office*, published this spring by the MIT Press, researchers Abigail Sellen and Richard Harper explore the reasons behind the persistence of paper amid the swirl of information technology and the rise of the digital document. They find that paper and computers are complementary; each has special qualities that support specific activities—or "affordances"—that the other does not. Paper facilitates authoring, review and comment, planning, collaboration, and "greasing the wheels" of organizational communication. Digital documents have their own affordances, but are a poor substitute for paper in certain phases of "knowledge work." Sellen and Harper find that paper still performs a valuable service.

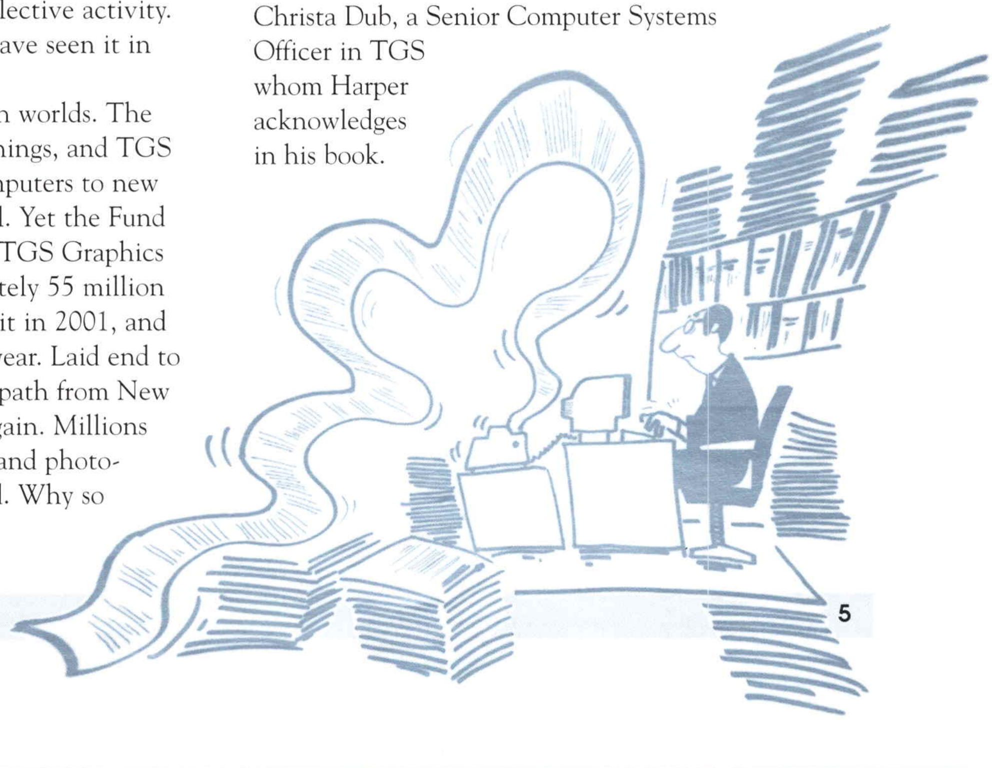
"It is easy to see who is engaged in intensive knowledge work: it is the person whose desk is strewn with paper," they write. "Find a desk littered with reports, written notes, and every inch of space used up, and you will find someone creating a document, planning work, or doing some sort of deeply reflective activity. We have seen it at the IMF, and we have seen it in so-called paperless offices."

The IMF has its feet planted in both worlds. The Fund relies on technology for many things, and TGS is bubbling with plans for putting computers to new and exciting uses. Computers are vital. Yet the Fund consumes more paper than ever. The TGS Graphics Section, for example, used approximately 55 million sheets of paper in its Digital Print Unit in 2001, and it expects to use more than that this year. Laid end to end, 55 millions sheets could paper a path from New York to Los Angeles and then back again. Millions more sheets are used in laser printers and photocopiers scattered throughout the Fund. Why so much paper? Because, as the book points out, paper's physical properties support the human interactions—drafting, commenting, and collaborating—needed to prepare reports and Executive Board papers, the Holy Grail of Fund documents.

"The IMF was ideal for our research for two reasons," writes Sellen, a cognitive psychologist with Hewlett-Packard Laboratories in Bristol, England, and Harper, the Director of the Digital World Research Centre at the University of Surrey. "First, it is knowledge-centered and document-intensive; and second, its staff members have all the technologies they could want to support their work."

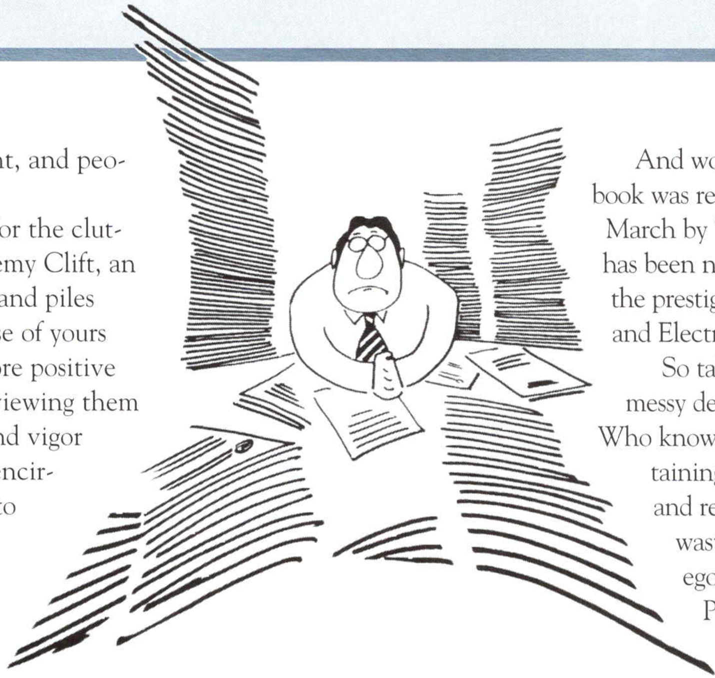
Harper first came to the Fund in the mid-1990s while a researcher at Rank Xerox in Cambridge, England—attracted not only by the Fund's business practices but also by the aura of secrecy surrounding the Fund. Instead of secrecy, he was shown an open door, establishing ties in the Secretary's Department and in what was then called the Bureau of Computing Services. He worked as an ethnographer, examining the IMF as a "tribe" with its own document-centered practices and culture, and accompanied one group of staffers on a mission. This work yielded a book specifically about the role of documents in the life of the Fund. He returned later with Sellen and other colleagues to conduct a study in which approximately 25 staffers were asked to keep a daily diary of paper and computer usage. Sellen and Harper drew on these two studies for *The Myth* book.

"He really made it easy for people to talk," said Christa Dub, a Senior Computer Systems Officer in TGS whom Harper acknowledges in his book.



"He was sharp and observant, and people trusted him."

So perhaps there is hope for the cluttered among us after all. Jeremy Clift, an editor in EXR whose stacks and piles compete in height with those of yours truly, might now adopt a more positive attitude toward his towers, viewing them as a sign of mental health and vigor rather than as a kudzu-like encirclement. "Paper here tends to pile up like a multi-headed hydra," Clift said. "You can cut it back, but the piles just grow some more."

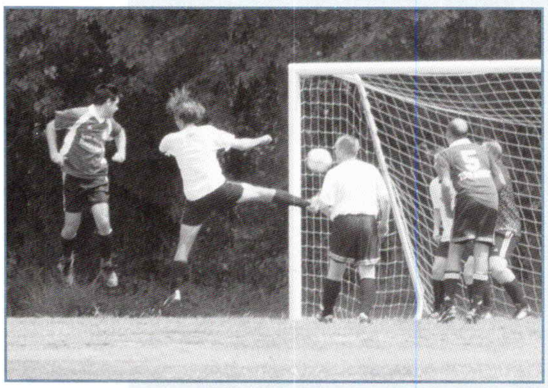


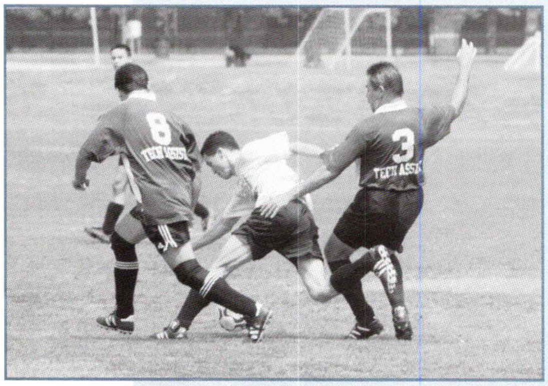
And word is getting out. The book was reviewed at length in March by *The New Yorker*, and it has been nominated for an award by the prestigious Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

So take that, neatniks—the messy desk-ers are ascendant. Who knows, maybe someday maintaining towering pillars of paper and regularly filling the wastepaper basket will be categories on our Annual Performance Reviews. ◆

Jeff Hayden

# Washington Consensus strikes back





The Washington Consensus came under further attack recently when it was the turn of local soccer teams to take on a (largely) IMF side of the same name in a masters' soccer tournament held at the Bretton Woods Recreation Center (BWRC) on August 24–25.

The tournament, for six local teams with players over 35, was organized by Washington Consensus captain Dino Merotto, Fritz Pierre-Louis, and Haroot Hakopian of BWRC. For the aging squad, it was a chance to reunite after playing in May in an international masters' tournament in Barbados (see July *Staff News*). The team managed a creditable third place after some keenly contested matches. The tournament winner was Kourosh, an Iranian team, which defeated Brasil Masters in the final.

Meanwhile, on the same weekend in Virginia Beach, former SAC chair Chris Jarvis was attempting to defend the national over-30s championship that his Hot Pink Panthers coed soccer team won last year. Although it fell short of maintaining its last year's standing, the team—like its Washington Consensus brethren—placed a respectable third.

Washington Consensus plans to take part in a Trinidad tournament in October and to return to Barbados next spring (first weekend in June). And an expanded Washington tournament at BWRC next summer is also in the cards. If you are interested in playing with the Washington Consensus (the chief qualifications being age and enthusiasm), please contact Dino Merotto, Kevin Barnes, Dennis Jones, Fritz Pierre-Louis, or David Hawley.

David Hawley

# A tribute to Larry Hartwig

Larry Hartwig

It was around this time nine years ago when a colleague in FAD called me and urged me to meet the new temporary assistant in our department's technical assistance unit. Curiosity had set in, and I wasted no time in going to see with my own eyes what all the excitement was about. When I got there, I was greeted with a lively and friendly, "Hi, I'm Larry!" I could not believe my eyes—a male assistant! Having been here for a few years, I knew that this was a rare breed in the institution.

Those of us who worked with Larry can understand why it took others no time to notice his many qualities. Larry possessed unusual initiative; was very organized, hard working, and punctual; and had all the skills that make an assistant outstanding. When he was finally offered a permanent job in the department, more than one division fought over him...mine won! Because many supervisors were accustomed to female assistants, some did not quite know how to approach him. But true to his nature, he took care of making them feel at ease.

I guess what we admired most in him, though, was his incredible wit, sense of humor, and ingenuity. These qualities were enjoyed by those who attended the IMF Social Network happy hours, where he gladly performed as the most active bartender, always making people laugh with his original remarks. There was never a dull moment when Larry was around, whether at work or in social gatherings. But it was not just his wit that we admired. There were times when we female colleagues wished we'd had the courage to voice our points of view the way Larry did. He was upfront, uninhibited, and honest in expressing himself when the situation so required.

Larry was an energetic participant in many Fund activities. A founding officer of the IMF–Globe (the Fund's gay, lesbian, or bisexual employee organization), Larry served as its treasurer from the club's inception until he went on disability leave. Even after going on leave, according to Globe Secretary Greg Vargas, he diligently continued to check bank statements and make sure the club's accounts were in order.

As time went on, some of Larry's original colleagues in FAD transferred to other departments, but we made it a point to stay in touch as much as possible. We took turns hosting a monthly gathering, which would always start with cocktails at Larry's and then continue on to the house where the dinner would be held. This monthly get-together was something we all looked forward to, not just because of our strong friendship bond but also because we so enjoyed Larry's keen wit.

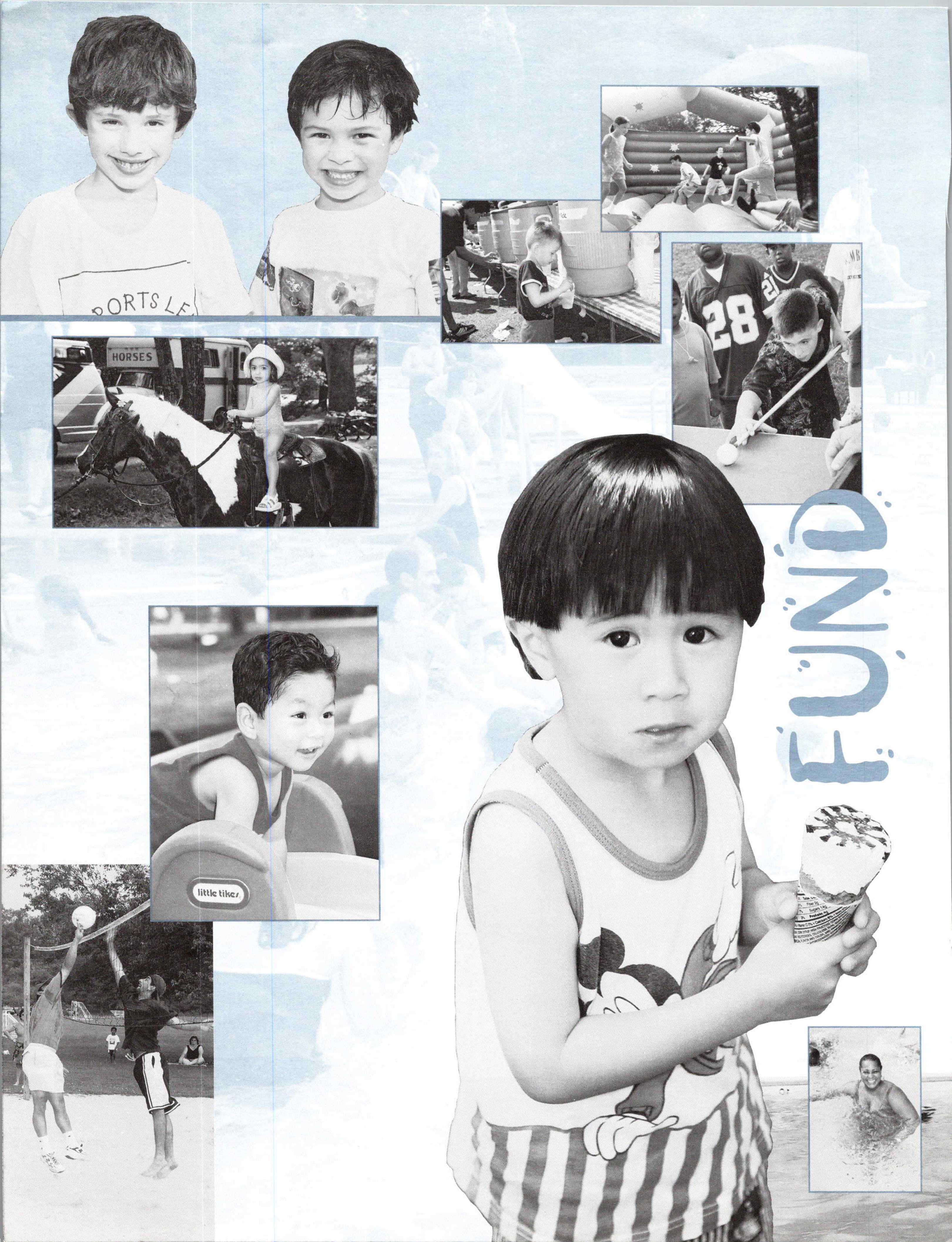
When the time came for Larry to go back to his cancer treatment, our monthly group was there for him. After his last surgery, when he was required to make daily trips to the hospital, we were aided by an amazing "rides network," started by one of his first colleagues in the Fund, Genevieve Labeyrie. She sent out a "cry for help" by e-mail, and thanks to INVOLVE, she received an overwhelming response from Fund staff, spouses, retirees, and others who offered their time to provide Larry with a helping hand.

It is at times like this when we realize the goodness, warmth, and unselfishness that exists among our colleagues and so many others who, without even knowing Larry personally, were there when he needed them most.

One of his friends said that she had never seen another human face death with so much dignity and peace. Larry was a fighter: he wanted to live and followed every treatment that was given to him, no matter how painful. Yet when his doctors said there was nothing else they could do, he accepted it peacefully. He found the strength to write thank-you notes to those who helped him, to take care of his paperwork, and to prepare for his final moments.

We wish to thank every one of those wonderful people who so quickly responded to our plea. Although perhaps Larry never got to meet you, he was aware of your kindness and wholeheartedly thanked you all. ◆

Leda Montero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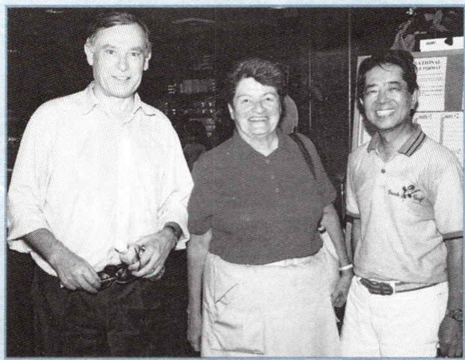
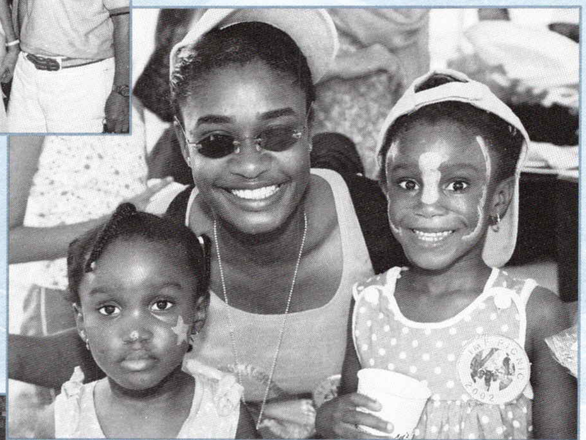
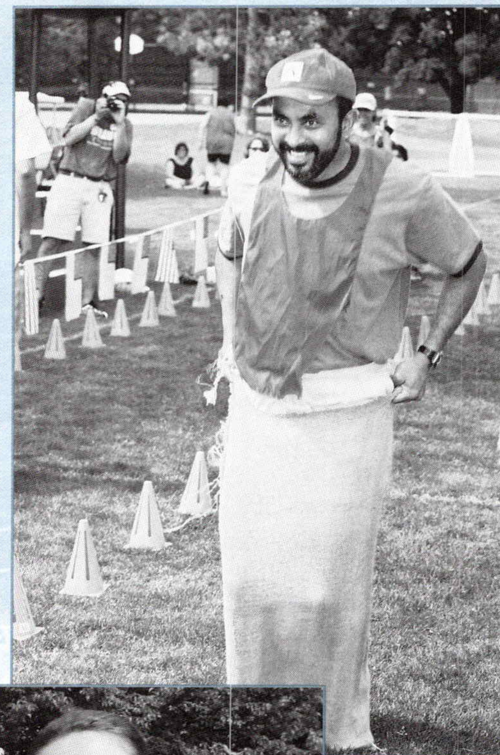
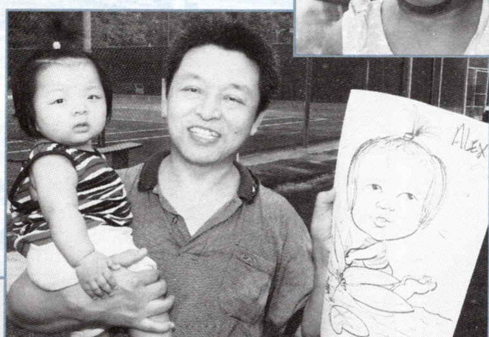
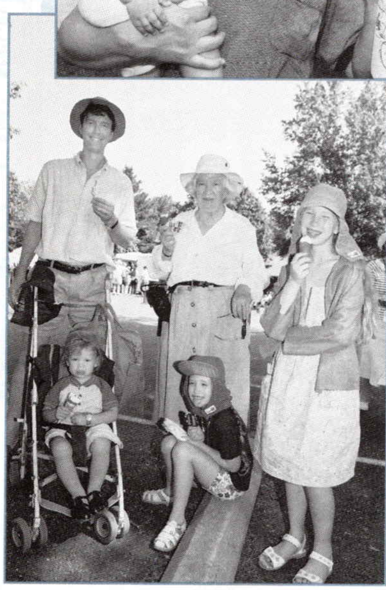


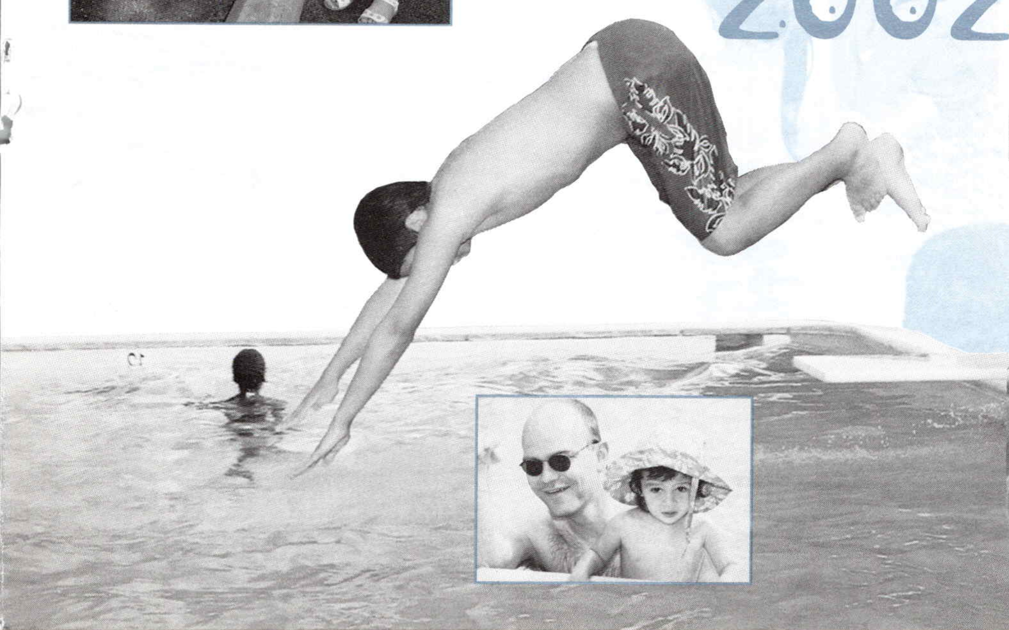


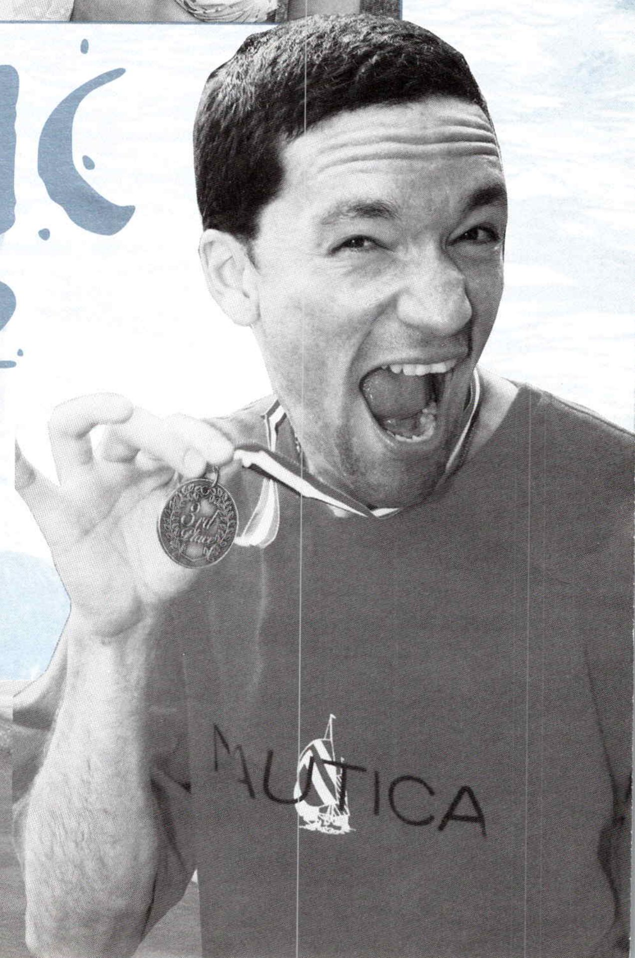




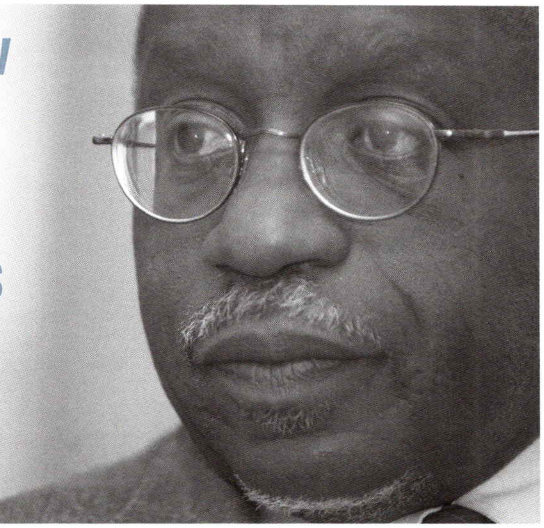
# PICNIC 2002





*Ewart Williams, Deputy Director of WHD, recently retired from the Fund after a long and fruitful career. In his 31-year tenure spent mostly in WHD, he rose to be the most senior Caribbean staff member ever. Before leaving to take up the post of Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago on August 1, Williams met with* Staff News *to reflect on some of the highlights of his experience here.*

# Interview with Ewart Williams



*You joined the Fund staff in 1971.*

I came here for two years thinking that under no condition would I survive or much less want to stay longer than two years, and I've been here for 31. Something must be wrong with my math!

*At the time you joined, you were one of just three Caribbean economists at the Fund.*

Yes—there was Sam Stephens and the late Victor Callendar. There weren't too many people from the region who'd heard much about the IMF in those days, and not many people, perhaps, would have been eligible to be considered to work here. I joined as a member of the Economist Program. For some odd reason, Fund recruitment officers decided to make a trip to the Caribbean, and I was one of two people selected to come to the Fund.

*How did it feel being part of a small minority of people from that part of the world?*

I certainly felt out of place. I'd studied in the Caribbean, not in any of the large universities abroad, so it was a whole new experience for me. Acclimatizing to the Fund and to the United States was initially a challenging experience.

*Why?*

Everything was larger than life. Before coming here, I'd gone to a small university at home and I had worked for a year in the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, a small institution with perhaps 100 people at the time. I hadn't seen anything of this size—everything was overwhelming. Most of the people in my group had studied in the United States or in Europe, but the atmosphere was a welcoming one, so I settled in rather quickly.

*What are some of the significant changes you've seen in the Fund during your 31-year tenure?*

The biggest change, I guess, is how management is now much more accountable. I spent a long time in WHD, where you had a particular kind of management style: strong directors, with a rigidly structured and results-oriented style. It was a rather tightly run department, as was the Fund as an organization. There was much less managerial accountability. If you were told to do something, you simply did as you were told without asking questions. It's amazing how the managerial practices have improved over time.

*With the diversity movement, we hear a lot about efforts to hire more people from developing countries. Is the Fund succeeding in its efforts to hire economists from underrepresented regions?*

I think the diversity programs have been partly successful. We've succeeded in hiring staff from a wider cross-section of countries, but that's only the first step. We need to continue to work on giving the staff who have been hired all the best opportunities. It's a complicated topic. Certainly no one wants affirmative action, but there needs to be much more follow-through in ensuring that the staff all have equal opportunity to advance through the institution. There's still some concern by underrepresented staff about getting high-profile assignments and opportunities for promotion. The Fund is clearly a very competitive place, but there's a tendency for supervisors to feel comfortable with people they studied with and knew even before they came to the Fund. That said, the Fund is making a genuine effort to broaden opportunities, and it needs to continue to do so.

*Do you have specific suggestions?*

It's important to take all the steps to ensure that the processes are transparent—to make sure all positions are advertised, and, when positions are advertised, that candidates are interviewed—and if they are not interviewed, that reasons are given why not. I think we are achieving broader diversity in the Economist Program right now, and that needs to continue, including efforts to include more African candidates. In the Caribbean, it's less of an issue; if anything, some of the countries in the Caribbean are now overrepresented in relation to their very small quota.

*You led the Fund team in the Mexican crisis of late 1994. That was a very high-profile assignment.*

Yes. It was a great professional experience, not without its controversy.

*What it was like to work under the pressure of such close international scrutiny?*

We were under tremendous scrutiny because there was no blueprint as to how you resolve the crisis. It was a question of working your way through various options. The process was helped by the Mexicans, who were committed to taking whatever action was necessary to resolve their problems. I was really amazed at the amount of dialogue, of give-and-take, that was involved. They recognized that their economy was in dire straits, and they were prepared to work with the Fund. They didn't agree with all we had to offer, but they were prepared to listen and try options.

It was really a collaborative effort—I was in charge of the team, but I had a lot of help. Claudio Loser was the WHD Director, and he was always there on the missions, looking over everything. Stan Fischer was involved; the Managing Director took a hands-on position. The U.S. government also contributed a lot, in terms of both financial assistance and policy formulation.

*The Mexican crisis was the first big bailout of a member country in crisis. In retrospect, was the large aid package to Mexico the best course of action, or could you have pursued other alternatives?*

Well, in Mexico, it worked. The large package—together with the commitment of the authorities to take difficult decisions—calmed the markets and helped reestablish credibility. I'm one of those who still think that there's a role for the Fund in terms of providing financial assistance when it's needed. Clearly, though, this assistance has to be accompanied by the commitment of the authorities to take the right measures.

I recognize the moral hazard arguments of those opposed to offering large packages of financial assistance. I also recognize the arguments of those who want the private sector creditors to bear their share of the burden—although it's not always easy to get the private sector to stand up when they're required to. The move to have the private sector contribute to resolving crises is the right one, but I think the Fund's leadership will continue to be important.

*You were also deeply involved with the recent establishment of the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Center (CARTAC). What was the background to that?*

The idea originated just after the world had come through the 1997 Asian crisis. Some felt that the Caribbean countries were being neglected because they were not among the larger emerging market economies. It wasn't a sexy part of the world. It was small, doing fairly well, and didn't need Fund help in the conventional sense. The issue was, what could the Fund do for the Caribbean? After a lot of discussion, we came up with something called the Caribbean Initiative. This initiative had a number of aspects. First, we proposed to have more direct dialogue with the region through seminars, conferences, and so on.

A second aspect was the realignment of the countries within the WHD divisions. Previously, these small Caribbean islands were in divisions with larger emerging market countries. So you had Brazil in a division with, say, St. Kitts and Nevis, and you had Mexico with St. Vincent. The economists typically saw working on Mexico as being beneficial to their careers but working on St. Vincent as not that significant. So we realigned the department to form two Caribbean divisions and to try to convince the economists that working with these Caribbean divisions also had merit.

The third element was that we could help the Caribbean countries by providing technical assistance, since they were unlikely to be borrowers. We took a cue from a similar experiment in the Pacific—PIFTAC—and tried to fashion the same type of technical assistance center.

"CARTAC has gotten off to an incredible start," says Williams.

*What obstacles did you face in establishing CARTAC?*

It was an enormous task, because it meant first convincing the Fund that it was worthwhile and, second, convincing the countries that it was in their interest. The Caribbean has traditionally been suspicious of the Fund, and there was a tendency to see this as another Fund intervention. We also had to get the resources. I thought it was a great feat to do these three things: convince the Fund, persuade the region, and obtain the resources—all within the space of two years. CARTAC was finally established in November of last year, with the support of other multilateral agencies, such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and the IDB.

*How has CARTAC done?*

It has gotten off to an incredible start. The agency, located in Barbados, provides technical assistance on demand for the English-speaking Caribbean, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. A Fund staff member, Nigel Bradshaw, coordinates the office, with a staff of five experts hired by the Fund, in the areas of public finances, monetary and financial sector issues, statistics, and offshore issues. So far, they've received lots of requests. The region has bought in to the idea.

*As the new governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and an "alumnus" of the Fund, what will you do to improve relations between the Fund and the Caribbean?*

Perhaps I'm biased, but I'm not sure the level of suspicion toward the Fund in Trinidad and Tobago is as deep as it is elsewhere in the region. More generally, the relationship between the region and the Fund seems to have improved significantly. And I think the Caribbean Initiative has a lot to do with it. We're prepared to talk to each other rather than shout at one another. I don't see a big challenge for me in this respect; the improvement was there even before.

*What are you most looking forward to about this career change?*

Working back home. I had gone back home to Trinidad and Tobago on a leave of absence in 1988–89, working at the central bank as advisor to the governor, and I really enjoyed it. Economic conditions in Trinidad at the moment are pretty comfortable—the situation is solid, the macroeconomic fundamentals are strong, and the economic prospects are very favorable. It's therefore not a bad situation to be going into—and certainly my experience here should help me.

*You've been described as someone with a truly Caribbean style. How would you characterize that style?*

Relaxed, not overly worried, with an easy-going interpersonal style. We in the Caribbean are famous for bringing life down to our pace and trying to look at the bright side rather than to see the difficulties.

*I guess the rest of the world has something to learn from you.*

I hope so! ◆

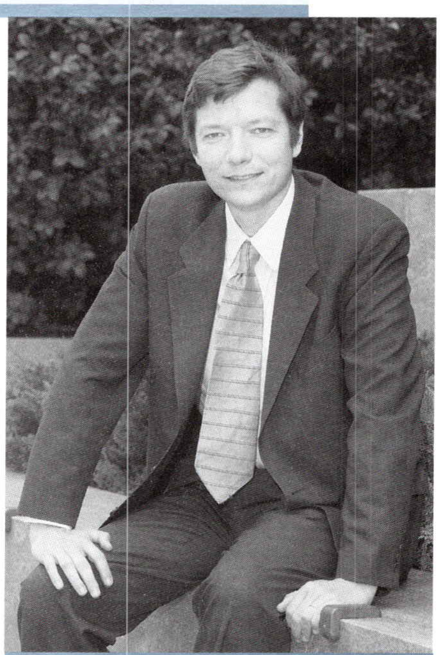
# RES economist named finalist for prize

Olivier Jeanne, Economist in the Research Department, was recently named one of six finalists for the 2002 Best Young Economist of France prize, awarded to a French research economist under 40 years of age. Sponsored by the French newspaper *Le Monde* and the *Cercle des économistes* (a group of economists working in academia, the government, and the private sector), the prize was established in 2000 to encourage distinguished young researchers. While the top prize went to joint recipients Philippe Martin and Thomas Piketty, Jeanne and three other economists received special commendation and were invited to give a presentation at the May 16 award ceremony in Paris.

The only Fund staff member nominated, Jeanne says he was "a bit surprised to be in this group," since he has been at the Fund since 1998 and is thus somewhat removed from French academic circles. Nominees are chosen by a committee, which makes an initial selection of 40 or 50 young economists based on their academic credentials and reputation, and then invites each of these economists to submit three papers representative of recent work. The committee chooses the winner on the basis of both the research submitted and the candidates' perceived contribution to the economic policy debate. Jeanne was named a finalist, in part, for his research on the role of the international lender of last resort in financial crises.

Although the prizewinner receives 2,000 euros, the money is not the main appeal. Since *Le Monde* publishes a short biographical note and photo of each finalist as well as an interview with the winner, the award provides uncustomary visibility for research economists. And, says Jeanne, it's great for family and friends. "For my parents and my in-laws, who are not quite sure what I'm paid for," he says, "it's sort of reassuring to see that somebody knows what I'm doing and values it. That's the real prize, I would say."

One aim of the prize is to foster greater participation by economists in the French economic policy dialogue. "In France, economics as a discipline has probably less influence than in the Anglo-Saxon countries," explains Jeanne. "Many academic economists in France tend to do theoretical work. Some are at the top of the profession in their branches of economic theory, but they're often very far from applied work, even applied theory, or participating in the policy debate." Their "ivory tower" position contrasts sharply with that of economists in the United Kingdom or the United States, where there is greater cross-pollination between academia and government, with noted economists moving freely between the two worlds and publishing regularly in the op-ed pages of major newspapers. In France, economists would generally enter the government bureaucracy at the beginning of their career. Mid-career transfers to government are difficult, if not impossible.



Olivier Jeanne

"Things are changing," says Jeanne, "in particular since the Jospin government created the *Conseil d'analyse économique*, which is a group of academic economists advising the government on policy issues—much like the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers. Academic economists have also started to write a bit more in the newspapers." The Best Young Economist of France prize, he explains, could be viewed as part of a larger effort to get good research economists to think more about how their work can be applied to real problems.

At the Fund, Jeanne works in RES's Strategic Issues Division, a new division created by Kenneth Rogoff. The division studies the reform of the international financial architecture and the Fund's role in it. "We think about this question in somewhat fundamental terms, in a less operational or practical way than other departments do, with an eye on the long horizon and how the Fund might be 20 years from now," Jeanne says. Putting aside short-term considerations, the division looks seriously at "things that may sound impractical now, but could happen on some horizon. And even if they don't happen, it's useful to think about them to understand better what we currently do."

Headed by Eduardo Borensztein, the Strategic Issues Division comprises just four economists. Given this constraint, Jeanne and his colleagues have to select carefully the topics they study. "We try to come up with ideas that are relevant and useful for the Fund and not just nice things to publish. We talk with Eduardo [Borensztein] and Ken [Rogoff], but it's more of a bottom-up process."

Jeanne, a graduate of *l'Ecole polytechnique* and the London School of Economics, previously taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and *l'Ecole nationale des ponts et chaussées* in Paris. His current work seems to strike a good balance between the theoretical and applied sides.

"I enjoy working in RES, in part because there is a temptation in an academic environment that doesn't exist here. In academia, one can get obsessed with a question just because it's difficult or beautiful, and one can do so without paying much attention to relevance. Here, you are bombarded with questions—that's not always comfortable, but it's one reason why I enjoy this environment." ◆

# A Tribute to Suzanna Bechara

The simplest way to describe Suzanna Bechara is to say that she was beautiful in every way. She was warmhearted, generous, caring, soft-spoken, and a touch shy, with an abundance of energy and a positive attitude both in and out of work. She was wonderful and caring as a daughter, sister, and mother; and with her combination of Lebanese and Swedish ancestry, she was a beautiful woman with great style.

Suzanna touched our hearts, and a little bit of all of us was taken away when, tragically, she was killed in a case of domestic violence on July 1.

Suzanna joined the Fund as a Facilities Officer in TGS's Facilities Management Division in June 2001. In her time here, she became an integral part of the design and construction team, and was known for her competent, caring, professional, and always upbeat approach to her work. She made many friends within the Fund, not least with the staff of EU2, ICM, MAE, MED, RES, and STA for whom she was the Facilities Client Representative.

As much as we appreciated Suzanna at work, it was at a recent conference that we really got to know her. She was always one to have a laugh and a smile, but her face would truly light up when she was sharing a joke with us. We will always treasure the time that we were able to have together in Chicago and the opportunity it gave us to get to know her better.

Suzanna is survived by her beloved daughter Sophia. In quiet moments and over lunch, she would talk to us with obvious love and pride about Sophia and what they were doing together. Her office was covered with photographs of Sophia as well as her daughter's artwork. Those of us who are parents can honor her memory by striving to be as loving, supportive, caring, and proud a parent to our children as Suzanna was to Sophia. Sophia is now in the care of her aunt and uncle and will continue to be in our thoughts.

At her memorial service, many members of her family spoke, and we should take heart from their many comments about how happy Suzanna had been at the Fund, and how her time here had made her a stronger and happier person.

Those who knew Suzanna all say how lucky they were to have known her. Despite our sense of loss at her death, we have gained so much from knowing her. Suzanna is, and will continue to be, greatly missed by her family, friends, and colleagues at the Fund.

Suzanna's friends and colleagues

# newimfstaff

**Katerina Alexandraki**
Greek, is in the Economist Program, EU1. Previously employed by the European Commission, she holds an M.A. in international trade and investment policy from the George Washington University and an M.S. from the London School of Economics. She enjoys photography and horseback riding.

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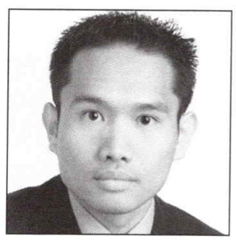

**David L. Chu**
A U.S. national, is a Senior Computer Systems Officer, TGS. Formerly a CIO with Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, NYC, he holds an M.S. from the University of Southern California. He is interested in good wine and cheese, skiing, different cultures, and Asian/Pacific Islands/American civil rights initiatives.

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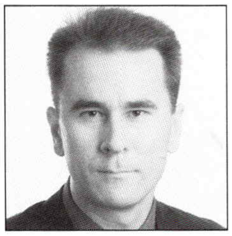

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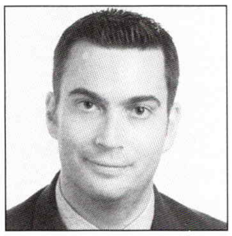

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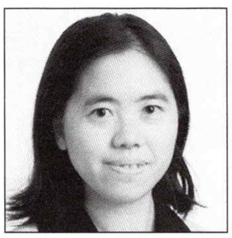
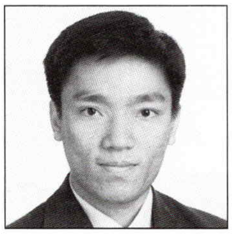


**Zhiwei Zhang**
Chinese, is in the Economist Program, PDR. Previously an economist at the Bank of Canada, he holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, San Diego. He includes soccer, squash, and reading among his interests.



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