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FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2007

Hengelo family drama costs three lives

ARNHEM | Police found the dead bodies of a mother and her two sons (nine and 11) in a home in Hengelo on Tuesday. The woman's husband, an employee in a furniture factory, was brought to hospital badly injured but was released on Wednesday. The man has since been arrested and will be heard after this newspaper goes to print. Police suspects the man, who was found in the victims' home, of murder or manslaughter. No weapon was found in the house but police say "something" was left behind. The boys' school held a remembrance on Wednesday in addition to a condolences register made available by the city of Hengelo. Autopsies will be carried out on the bodies.

'TBS clinics must improve safety'

AMSTERDAM | Indefinite rehabilitative incarceration (TBS) clinics must, according to the Sanction Application Inspectorate (ISI), take more into account the security of their patients during treatment. The ISI says that when looking at treatment and security of TBS patients, especially when analysing the number of escapees, security comes in at second place. According to the ISI, security procedures can frequently go wrong because TBS clinics do not do enough work systematically. The ISI also says that even with the after-care, the treatment route is often found to be more important than monitoring the TBSers' direct security.

Women's Day in Holland

AMSTERDAM | Many activities took place on Thursday throughout the country to celebrate International Women's Day. In The Hague, Princess Máxima handed out the Joke Smit prize to which has helped improve women's positions in Holland. Iranian women from all over the world also demonstrated for their rights. This day, which symbolises women's world-wide solidarity, has been celebrated in Holland since 1978.

Permit request may be needed more frequently

THE HAGUE | According to the Cabinet, non-Dutch citizens who want to remain in Holland should request a residence permit more than once. The Cabinet refused a PVV proposal stating that non-Dutch citizens could only ask for a permit once. PVV leader Geert Wilders says such proposal would prevent the non-Dutch from unnecessarily staying longer in Holland. Wilders reacted with disappointment at the decision and has asked for a debate regarding the case. If that should produce no satisfactory result, the PVV will come up with another bill. He also finds it striking that the new Cabinet has once again scrapped a PVV proposal.

Coalition keeps majority in Senate



SP MPs Arda Gerkens (left), Agnes Kant (centre) and Krista van Velzen derive great satisfaction from the incoming results.

Photo: WFA

THE HAGUE | The Socialist Party (SP) won the provincial election on Wednesday and saw its amount of First Chamber seats increase from 4 to 12. Cabinet parties CDA, PvdA and ChristenUnie kept a majority, with 41 out of 75 seats.

By Tristan van Rijn
ChristenUnie was the only successful coalition party. Party leader André Rouvoet saw his total increase double to four seats compared to the provincial election of 2003. CDA lost a seat and finished at 22 seats, while PvdA was the largest loser of the election again and lost four seats, bringing them to a total of 15. A newcomer is the Partij voor de Dieren (Party for the Animals), who enter the first chamber with one seat. The political heirs of Pim Fortuyn lost their only seat, while Geert Wilders' PVV party was not eligible for the election. The VVD profited from that and saw its total neither grow nor drop. Mark Rutte's party kept its 15 seats. The electorate voted for the composition of the provincial councils, which have a total of 564 seats divided over 12 provinces. The councils are mainly burdened with issues concerning spatial planning, environment, nature and the approval of large projects such as the Tweede Maasvlakte project to expand the Rotterdam harbour. They also check upon the provincial executive and the College of

Deputies. The latter elect the 75 members of the Senate. Wednesday, the Dutch voters made it clear that they did not change their distrust of the new coalition accord and the leading parties behind it. The outcome of the provincial election was a remarkable continuation of the parliamentary election in November. Then, SP and ChristenUnie were also the big winners, while CDA and PvdA lost dramatically. Although the final results will be released on a

later date and the Senate will not be elected before 28 May, it has become certain that the Balkenende IV cabinet will not lose its majority in the Senate, something that was widely feared because it could have a delaying effect on decision making. Only 46.3 percent of the electorate voted on Wednesday, a fraction above the low point reached in the 1999 election. According to several polls, the voters mostly turned up in order to influence the composition of the Senate.

Privacy board inspects Stembijzer

AMSTERDAM | The Dutch Data Protection Authority (CBP), which supervises the fair and lawful use and security of personal data, will investigate the online electoral guide (Stembijzer).

By Fabienne Capostagno
The CBP is afraid that the interactive voting guide, that through the use of questions about parties' election programmes tests political preferences, makes people's private records public. The Inspectorate was made aware by experts that the online guide registers visitors' political preferences. If this is the case, the Stembijzer would breach the Personal Data Protection Law, that protects data on

political preference. The watchdog has, therefore, asked the Dutch Centre for Political Participation (IPP), which is responsible for the Stembijzer, for an explanation. The CBP wants to know what happens to the information collected by the electoral guide and why the website does not explain what happens to people's private records after the guide has been closed. According to the watchdog, it is unclear what information the Stembijzer keeps and how it is stored. The fear is also that agencies like the Intelligence and Safety Service (AIVD) could claim such information for investigations. IPP Deputy Director Eddy Habben Jansen, however, says that the Stembijzer does not pass on private information to third parties.

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Cabinet, Chamber face off on accord

THE HAGUE | The new Cabinet and the altered Second Chamber got a taste of each other's intentions on Thursday, in a fierce debate on Prime Minister Balkenende's government accord statement earlier that day.

By Tristan van Rijn

The first debate of the new cabinet saw a range of sensitive topics raised by the opposition. The ministers, new opposition parties D66 and VVD and the debating party leaders Pieter van Geel (CDA), Jacques Tichelaar (PvdA) and Arie Slob (ChristenUnie, CU) had to get used to their new roles.

The most controversial matter raised was the issue of double nationality. As announced, Party for Freedom (PVV) leader Geert Wilders issued a motion of non-confidence against the new PvdA State Secretaries, Nebahat Albayrak (Justice) and Ahmed Aboutaleb (Social Affairs), for a conflict of interest caused by their double nationality. Albayrak still holds a Turkish passport and Aboutaleb has a Moroccan passport. The PVV front man said that "A blind man can see that double nationality also means double loyalty."

Wilders fired his arrows mostly at Albayrak, who can theoretically distance herself from her Turkish passport, contrary to Moroccan law, in which it is forbidden. He questioned the fact that Albayrak will have to deal with the permits of immigrants, including Turks, and said that that situation is like "a butcher inspecting his own meat."

None of the other factions supported Wilders' motion, but VVD leader Mark Rutte argued that the issue of double nationality should be debated at a certain point. Prime Minister Balkenende, who called upon the chamber for a "constructive dialogue" with his Cabinet during his traditional statement, agreed, but added that there is no doubt about the integrity of the "optimally integrated" state secretaries. He stated that Article 3 of the Constitution, which provides all citizens with the right to fulfil a public function, will not be changed.

The issue seemed to echo towards Moroccan-born PvdA MP Khadija Arib, who also functions as an



SP leader Marjijnissen walks back to his seat (foreground), while ministers Donner (Social Affairs), Bos (Finance) and Prime Minister Balkenende prepare for the next question. Photo: WFA

advisor for the Moroccan Human Rights Council and has a double passport. Tichelaar announced Friday that her function would be investigated in order to rule out any conflict of interest. The PvdA decided on the issue on Thursday, after printing time. Tichelaar told the press on Tuesday that his party would most probably vote positively.

Afterwards, Tichelaar was asked by the leftist opposition to explain the unofficial coalition agreement that the decision making process towards the Iraq war in 2003 will not be investigated, although his party was a proponent of such an investigation when still in opposition. SP leader Jan Marijnissen said that the PvdA "made the most essential aspect of Parliament, searching for the truth, impossible." Tichelaar said that "we had to put more weight on other matters. We have accepted our loss." The SP and D66 will try to force the investigation through the Second Chamber, although the PvdA faction, who promised to respect the government accord, will not support it. If the motion does not pass in

Second Chamber, it may have a better chance in the First Chamber, where the PvdA senators are not obligated to follow the coalition agreement.

ChristenUnie's negotiation achievements were also fiercely debated. Rutte and D66 leader Alexander Pechtold criticised agreements on the medical-ethical level. The Cabinet plan to investigate whether the 'right to live' can become constitutional is, according to Rutte, "Dutch for: no abortion and euthanasia." The opposition also criticised the planned protection of municipal officials who have 'personal objections' against gay marriage. Many MPs argued that the concerning paragraph takes the country's liberalisation policy one step back.

New Interior Minister Guusje ter Horst's task was the last large matter to be discussed. The Cabinet aims at cutting 15,000 government jobs to sponsor the budget. Many plans are dependent on the success of the budget cuts, but Balkenende was forced to agree that no cuts be made in the police, investigation and judicial services.

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Suspected child abuser arrested

AMSTERDAM | Military police arrested Dutchman Gert V. on Tuesday in Schiphol, on suspicion of having molested children in Bangladesh. V. had established a home near the Bengali capital Dhaka for orphaned and disabled children. The man had already been reported for child abuse back in 2005 and was subsequently taken away from the children's home. At the beginning of 2006, the Public Prosecution Service had requested legal aid from Bangladesh. The suspect has been taken to Arnhem where he will be questioned.

Antilles allow Papiamentu as official language

WILLEMSTAD | The delegation of the Netherlands Antilles this week decided that Papiamentu will be the island's official language, in addition to Dutch and English. Papiamentu was already studied in schools for years, but had not been officially recognised until now. The language is a combination of African dialects, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch. It is also spoken on the islands of Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba.

Dutch-Moroccan men leave women behind

RABAT | Some 30 women were dumped in Morocco by their Dutch-Moroccan husbands in 2006. The Migrant Support Organisation (SSR) says the number of women reporting such incidents has been steady over the years. In the Dutch embassy in Rabat, in 2006, 10 reports were made from women left behind. This concerns mainly women whose husbands, under false excuses, take them to Morocco and leave them there, usually illegally. In 2004, the Chamber proposed to accelerate the return of women with children of Dutch nationality.

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Google search for sunken castle

NIJKERK | Cor Schipper, an amateur archaeologist, believes he has found a long lost submerged castle on Google Earth in the weekend.

By Andrew Balcombe
Kasteel Hulckesteijn was built in 1427 and is believed to have been destroyed in 1538. Cor Schipper has been looking for its ruins for the last 25 years but he is now 99% sure that his searching days are over. While scanning satellite images of the Nijkerkernauw canal that runs just north of Nijkerk, he spotted a 200 metre square shape under the water. This, believes Schipper, is his long lost castle.

In 1983 he used sonar equipment to scan a five kilometre stretch of the canal's bottom without success. On Monday, the quiet area around Nijkerk was invaded by television and news crews hoping to see if it really was the castle under the waves.

A scuba diver from the NOS news team plunged into the brown waters for a closer look with a camera but the silt was so thick, visibility was down to just 30 centimetres. Apparently, the wind was blowing in the wrong direction and pushing water



Google satellite image of Nijkerkernauw.

suspended mud into the search area. It was not clear if ten recovered pieces of stone were from the middle ages, either.

Kasteel Hulckesteijn dropped off the historical records when it was left outside the dyke system in the 17th century and submerged.

Dutch part of NATO offensive

HELMAND | Dutch air support and troops are involved in the largest offensive by NATO ever to be carried out against the Taliban.

By Andrew Balcombe
In the early hours of Tuesday morning an offensive involving 4,500 NATO troops and 1,000 Afghan army troops deployed in northern Helmand in Southern Afghanistan. The announcement was made by the current head of NATO forces in the south, Dutch general Ton van Loon. According to the Ministry of Defence, air support is being provided by Dutch F-16s and a reserve Tiger company of 80 to 100 troops from the Lucht Mobilie (Airborne) based in Kandahar are on reserve if needed. Apache helicopters based in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan, will also provide support when and if necessary for the offensive which is called Operation Achilles.

One NATO soldier has been killed so far after operations began. The nationality of the casualty is still unknown.

One of the aims of the operation is to tackle militants around the Kajaki dam - a strategically important



A Dutch mortar team in action in Afghanistan. Photo: Defense

hydro-electric plant that NATO wants to secure so that it can be repaired and put to work. Lieutenant Middell from the Ministry of Defence said "we don't know yet if Dutch troops are involved in direct fighting, it's too early to tell. Those troops stationed in Uruzgan, though, (next to Helmand) are on alert."

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Masturbation marathon scrapped

HILVERSUM | Channel Tien will not transmit a documentary on a masturbation marathon, which had been previously scheduled. The British Channel 4's documentary portrayed two American sexologists that were being followed during their preparation for the "masturbate-a-thon." The men to be portrayed masturbating are doing it for AIDS charity. CDA Chamber member Joop Atsma had called the programme "tasteless" and "totally absurd." The programme can, however, be seen next week on the internet site of the station.

Youth against smoking ban

AMSTERDAM | Results of various research show that only 18% of young people are for a complete smoking ban in the hotel and catering industries, compared to the 48% who are against. The new Cabinet, however, wants a complete smoking ban in public places before 2011.

VVD wants speedy debate about Enschede shooting

THE HAGUE | The VVD wants an emergency meeting with Justice State Secretary Nebahat Albayrak regarding the fatal shooting in Enschede on Sunday. Shortly after the shooting, where a 44-year-old woman died and four others were injured, a 29-year-old sentenced to Indefinite Rehabilitative Treatment (TBS) is the main suspect. The VVD wants an explanation of how the TBSer, who had almost finished being treated by the Oldenkotte clinic in Rekken, could have committed such an offence. The man was living on his own, under the clinic's observation and in the last phase of his treatment. The PVV wants all TBSers presently on leave, to be locked up immediately.

NS fed up with Prorail

AMSTERDAM | Thousands of train passengers were delayed in and around Amsterdam and Utrecht last week, by Prorail computer malfunctions.

By Andrew Balcombe
Prorail is the company responsible for the management of the Dutch rails, signals and traffic control. In the last few weeks, it has suffered large IT malfunctions at Rotterdam, Utrecht and Amsterdam. This has resulted in massive delays leaving trains sitting still for hours. The computer gremlin that caused the delays around Amsterdam on Thursday, occurred after a single hard drive, controlling the changing of track directions, failed. According to *de Volkskrant*, Netherlands Railways (NS) has asked Prorail "where their priorities lie by using such outdated computer equipment." The watchdog representing public transport passengers Rover was slightly more critical, calling Prorail "clumsy rail." Rover also said on its website that it was astonished that such small computer problems can have such drastic effects, saying "one small defect makes huge waves that affect trains over a large area." Prorail has promised to work on the problems and say that a new computer system will be installed by 2010. NS is not satisfied, however, and are asking why the changes can not be made faster, "better today than tomorrow that these sort of problems are in the past," said NS.

Prostitutes try further afield



A sign at the old Hague tippel zone Waldorpstraat and a 'window' which are sometimes used by illegal prostitutes.



Photos: Dave van Ginhaven & Arne Doornebal

ROTTERDAM / THE HAGUE | Prostitutes who used to work in the closed down tippel or street walking zones, are now being found in uncontrolled and often dangerous environments. A study has also found that in Rotterdam, the number of illegal prostitutes is higher than those who are legal

By Andrew Balcombe
In both cities, one trend stands out; illegal sex workers are now spreading out and working from areas that vary greatly, such as condemned buildings and industrial zones to parks, Chinese barber shops and Turkish / Moroccan coffee shops. A report written in The Hague's *Straatnieuws* said that women are now working from the old rubbish burning facility near tram line 11 and industrial zones on Loosduinsekade. Also, since police have been clamping down on controls of drug addicted prostitutes in Transvaal, they have relocated and are working from Zuiderpark. *Straatnieuws* also said that the

women are finding clients in supermarkets and are reducing their prices because the customers must also take more risks. The conditions that they are working in are dangerous and degrading. None of the women can make use of the municipal health workers from the GGD who provided condoms and information about dangerous customers on black lists. Something that was available to them in the tippel zones before they were closed.

In Rotterdam, a survey from the Verwey-Jonker Institute in Utrecht has found that the harbour city has 400 legal prostitutes but also 450 illegal prostitutes working every day. These figures have surprised city officials who expected the number of legal sex workers to be much higher. In total, 5,000 prostitutes are working in the city. Many of these trade their wares from tanning salons, massage parlours, escort agencies, bars and night clubs. Since the closure of the Keileweg tippel zone in 2005, illegal prostitutes have spread out across the city and are harder for health services and authorities to control.

Court rules in favour of 'Angels'

LEEUWARDEN | The Harlingen chapter of the Hells Angels cannot be banned, says a Friesian court.

By Andrew Balcombe
The decision was handed down Tuesday in the case brought by the Public Prosecution Service (OM), alleging the chapter is a criminal organisation. The court in the Friesian town of Leeuwarden, found that the OM's case against the chapter was not convincing enough to warrant a ban being placed on the club. The OM tried to press the case against the Harlingen chapter, saying it was financed by criminal means and that the members discriminated against people of other races. The court case is part of a wider national attempt by the OM to close down all seven chapters of the Hells Angels around Holland. The Justice department accuses the club of committing murders, extortion dealing in drugs and weapons smuggling saying that it should not have a place in Dutch society. An Amsterdam court will rule on 11 April whether the rest of The Hells Angels chapters

will have bans put on them. In response, the lawyer for the Harlingen chapter told *de Volkskrant* that he did not believe the Friesian court's decision would affect the decision on the other chapters, "this is a separate case." The OM is, however, going to appeal the decision in a higher court. At the end of last year, 22 members of the Hells Angels were accused for crimes including murder, some of those accused were also members of the Harlingen club.

Hells Angels' members, who also belong to the military number in the dozens, said a Ministry of Defence spokesman to ANP. The spokesman went on to say that "commanding officers are trying to get the club members to give up their membership." Legal measures to enforce this are not possible yet because, "we have to wait until the court cases finish before we can move in that direction."

A 49-year-old Sergeant Major from Zwijndrecht who is an instructor in the Marines has been suspended from duty, confirmed the Ministry. The suspension follows an investigation into possible criminal activity currently being carried out on the senior soldier.

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AIVD mole appeals four-year sentence

ROTTERDAM | A Rotterdam court has sentenced Outman Ben A., a former worker of the General Intelligence and Safety Service (AIVD) to four years in prison for leaking state secrets to the Hofstad group. A's lawyer Britta Böhler, is set to appeal the decision at a higher court. Responding to the sentence Böhler said in *de Volkskrant* "everything about this case was a state secret. A. was condemned without knowing the judges' reasons why." Böhler went on to say that "there was a question of receiving an honest process in The Hague's court of appeal." She wants the case to be sent instead to the European Court of Human Rights in Straasburg.

Suspect of murdered Jesse to go to psychiatric ward

BREDA | Julien C., suspected of having murdered the 8-year-old Jesse Dingemans in Hoogerheide, will be sent to the Pieter Baan Centre in Utrecht next month. A court in Breda decided he will be examined by psychiatrists and psychologists. The Public Prosecution Service (OM) accuses C. of having stabbed D. on 1 December in a primary school classroom. C., however, continues to deny his involvement. The next court case will be held on 23 May.

Seal creche in Canada

AMSTERDAM | The director of the seal creche in Pieterburen, Lenie 't Hart, wants to set up a seal creche in Canada. Last year in Canada, more than 354,000 seals were clubbed. 't Hart wants to create this centre in the Prince Edward Island, where many seals are slaughtered yearly. The costs will amount to some €1 million. 't Hart will leave for Canada on 11 March.

Criminal Antilleans may stay

AMSTERDAM | The new Cabinet has rejected the controversial repatriation scheme to send young criminal Arubans and Antilleans back to their own countries, proposed by former Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk. Premier Jan Peter Balkenende said he will take another approach. The Council of State, the highest advisory board, had already strongly criticised the regulation twice. The proposal would, according to the Council, go against the European law concerning equal treatment. A new less harsh regulation, will, therefore, be introduced for the criminal Antillean youth. The VVD wants a speedy debate, while the PVV wants to know why the proposal has been withdrawn.

Holland not going to UN conference on human trade

AMSTERDAM | Holland is abandoning the widely supported UN conference in New York as requested by D66, on women and children smuggling. The reason is the meeting is being organised by the Russian Vladimir Naumov. He has alleged links with those responsible for the disappearance of such opposition leaders as Minister Yoei Zakarenko and politician Viktor Gonchar in 1999.

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- Amsterdam -

HISWA fare opens its doors to public

AMSTERDAM | The annual HISWA boat and water sports fare opened its doors to the public on Tuesday. Until 11 March, nautical fans can prepare for the soon-to-be opened water season at the Amsterdam RAI, with an immense variety of sloops, yachts, canoes and other water-related accessories.

By Tristan van Rijn

The HISWA fare is widely seen as the official opening of the water season and provides the public with something more than just boats. This year, the main attraction is the Water Fun Zone, a large basin with a ski jump, in which professional wake boarders from the Netherlands and abroad can show their jumping skills. Visitors can participate in small boat races to test their skills, watch a canoe versus kayak battle or keep their feet dry while entering a water ski simulator. The largest water sports fare in the Benelux countries will display a range of hundreds of boats from all classes: sloops, sports boats, RIBs, open sailing yachts, catamarans, motor boats and canoes, most of them in the RAI complex itself, but the largest yachts are displayed in the Boerenwatering, the canal behind the complex. The seven RAI exposition rooms will also show thousands of water sports accessories, displayed by some 375 stand holders. In 1933, the



Preparations for the HISWA in full action.

Photo: Esther Stobbelaar

one-year-old Dutch society of Trade and Industry in Shipping and Water sports (HISWA) organised its first fare on the Ferdinand Bolstraat in Amsterdam.

Due to its success in 1963, it moved from the Apollohal in Oud-Zuid to the brand-new RAI complex. This year, will be the 52nd edition.

'Info leak to Turkey undermines investigations'

AMSTERDAM | Because classified police information has been leaked to Turkey, several investigations on organised crime in the Netherlands and Turkey are in jeopardy, according to the *NRC Handelsblad*.

The newspaper revealed the contents of classified AIVD (Dutch Intelligence and Safety Service) correspondence in Saturday's issue. According to the AIVD, the information was leaked to Turkey by a Turkish translator. In the meantime

the translator has been fired. The investigations that have become compromised by the leaks are, among others, the search for suspects for the murder of real estate magnate Willem Endstra in 2004 and the alleged role in heroin trafficking of Nedim İmaç, the former president of amateur football club Türkiyemspor, who was murdered last week.

In both investigations, the AIVD cooperated with the Turkish authorities. A Turkish high police commissioner is quoted in the *NRC* as saying that "I know that there were problems with the translator, but the idea that he has illegally given classified

information to Turkey is new to me."

The AIVD confirmed that the translator's integrity was questioned by the service in 2005 and that he was removed from his function. The translator tried to fight the decision in court, but in vain.

The *NRC* also wrote that the Amsterdam police and prosecution services did, however, make use of the translator afterwards, because he could function as a link between Dutch and Turkish authorities. Neither the Public Prosecution Service nor the National Police Service could confirm the *NRC* findings.

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Islamic schools closed after crisis with management

AMSTERDAM | The three primary schools, which fall under the SIBA management (Amsterdam's Organisation for Islamic Primary Schools), will be closed down because new management can not be found.

By Fabienne Capostagno

The provisional administrative board is still in discussions with other managements regarding a take-over, but if these talks also fail, the closing will go ahead. This was stated by Education State Secretary Sharon Dijkzema. The approximately 600 children of the El Farooq Omar school, Abraham El Khaliel school and At Taqwas school will in this case be placed in other schools. It is also very unlikely that the Simon organisation, which manages eight Islamic schools in the east and mid-Holland, will also manage the SIBA schools.

The SIBA schools established in 1989, have been tormented for years by mismanagement, poor education and financial problems. Since 2005, the schools have been under strict supervision by the Inspectorate. Last year, the former SIBA chairman was sentenced to two years in prison and a €265 repayment for having inappropriately used the money. SIBA is, therefore, left with two options: a take-over or closure. The SIBA schools have had many problems for years. But due to the bad financial situation, there is no extra money available to invest for improving the quality of the schools.

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- Amsterdam -

FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2007

Milli Görüs linked to financial scam

AMSTERDAM | Former supporters of the Turko-Islamic movement Milli Görüs have objected to the construction permit for the Amsterdam Westermoskee. They accuse the mosque organisation of fraude and financial mismanagement.

By Tristan van Rijn
In their official objection letter to city district De Baarsjes, five former Milli Görüs members linked the movement to a series of mala fide practices, ranging from illegal money exchange to housing several 'sinister companies'. Milli Görüs held its practices in the old mosque in a parking lot in De Baarsjes, which is now planned to become the largest mosque in the capital, de Westermoskee. The accusations were made public by *de Volkskrant* on Monday. The sinister companies mentioned by the former members are the so-called 'green funds', named after the colour of the Islamic flag. Turkish inhabitants of De Baarsjes gave millions of euros in cash to the funds in exchange for participation in investment funds. The investment funds promised returns of up to 40 percent. According to *de Volkskrant*, which interviewed the



The planned Westermoskee.

accusers, the money in the green funds has disappeared. President El Uzel of the Turkish foundation Turkeli was quoted as saying, "hundreds of Turkish families are ruined." The accusers issued their objection last Wednesday, the last day of the deadline to object to the construction of the new, ambitious Westermoskee. The mosque project has seen many controversies in the recent past. The cooperation between the city district, Milli Görüs and housing corporation Het Oosten was nearly broken off in December, because of an alleged change of ideological course at

Milli Görüs. The conservative, German headquarters of the movement replaced the liberal chairman of its Dutch branch with a more conservative, less integration-minded chairman. The three parties had agreed to a covenant, which provided a liberal course of the mosque in exchange for a construction permit.

De Volkskrant reported on Tuesday that the financial scam in De Baarsjes is probably part of a larger swindle of billions of euros on a European scale. Roughly 400,000 Turkish families throughout Europe are said to have been swindled for 5 billion euro. The information came from a Turkish parliamentary committee and a series of financial court rulings in Germany and Switzerland.

A spokesman of Milli Görüs Nederland said that the green funds were very normal in the Netherlands and that nearly all Turkish mosques and coffee houses participated in it. He denied, however, that fraude was involved in any way. It remains unclear what consequences the *Volkskrant* report will have on the eventual construction of the Westermoskee. SP MP Sadet Karabulut demanded that Finance Minister Wouter Bos instigate an investigation on the alleged mala fide practices.

Bos cancels royal decree Zalm on Schiphol privatisation

AMSTERDAM | The judicial battle between the city of Amsterdam and the State on the privatisation of Schiphol airport came to an end this week. Finance Minister Wouter Bos announced on Monday that both parties will sit around the negotiation table again.

By Tristan van Rijn
The PvdA Vice-Premier said in radio programme *De Ochtenden* that "the hatchet has been buried" and that the State, Amsterdam and Schiphol will soon be negotiating on the question of how the airport can get the money to strengthen its interna-

tional position without a privatisation. Bos also said that starting discussions was one of the first things he wanted to do as a Finance Minister. The Dutch state currently owns 75% of Schiphol and Amsterdam has a 21.8% share. The Finance portfolio deals with State ownerships. The issue of Schiphol privatisation has been hotly debated in the recent past. Amsterdam and former Finance Minister Gerrit Zalm (VVD) reached a stalemate on the issue in December. Zalm and the Balkenende III Cabinet wanted to privatise the airport for a large part, while Amsterdam Finance Alderman Lodewijk Asscher feared that the airport's large economic impact on the city

as, for example, an 'employment engine' would be jeopardised.

Asscher decided to use the city's veto in order to block Zalm's plans, causing a lengthy discussion about the question whether a local government body should be allowed to veto a State matter. After that, Zalm made use of his ministerial right to issue a Royal Decree and destroyed the veto.

Asscher confirmed in *Het Parool* that Bos has revoked the royal decree and that Amsterdam will get its veto back. The new Cabinet accord states that no state-owned Schiphol shares will be sold.

Bos expects that the share holders will have reached an agreement on the financing of Schiphol's ambitious future by the end of the year.

Suspects of Singer theft confess

AMSTERDAM | Three suspects of the theft of 7 bronze statues from the Singer Museum in Laren will be brought before an Amsterdam court in April.

The chief suspect, a 40-year-old man from Muijderberg, and a 23-year-old man from Huizen have confessed that they had a part in the theft of the bronze statues, among which was a cast of 'The Thinker' by Auguste Rodin, from the garden of the Singer Museum in January. The third suspect denied all charges. Shortly after the theft, the police recovered 'The Thinker' in one of the suspects' houses heavily vandalised. Later, bits and pieces of the other statues were recovered as well. It later turned out that the suspects had stolen the statues in order to sell the bronze parts. The theft

caused a public outcry because of the relentless way in which the irreplaceable statues were sawn in pieces, especially when considering the low value of bronze on the black market.

Afterwards, the police arrested three other suspects, which led to the solving of 21 other cases concerning stolen statues in the area between Amsterdam and Utrecht.



Rodin's 'The Thinker' after the vandalism.

Anti-terrorism practice in metro

AMSTERDAM | The Dienst Speciale Interventies (Special Intervention Service, DSI), a new national anti-terror unit of the police, held an exercise in the Amsterdam underground on Saturday night.

By Tristan van Rijn
One hundred DSI team members participated in the exercise and had to release 40 Amsterdam policemen, who played metro passengers, during the hijacking of a metro. It was the first major exercise of the DSI. A metro was halted between the Wibautstraat and Weesperplein stations in Amsterdam-Oost. "This is one of the scenarios the DSI can encounter," a spokesman of the National Police Corps (KLPD) told *Het Parool*. The exercise was a joint initiative of the

Amsterdam police, the Municipality, the KLPD and Amsterdam transport company GVB.

The DSI was founded in July as part of the battle against terrorism and heavy criminality. The government decided to set-up a new umbrella service after the advice of an independent research committee. The service was necessary to answer 'modern-day terrorism and extreme violence'. Regular police services only handle the arrests of armed criminals and are often ill-equipped for heavier offences, according to the committee.

The service officially handles matters concerning hostage situations, kidnapping, hijacking, sieges and extortion practices. They are also provided with the task to offer sniper fire when necessary. The KLPD, stated that the exercise was successful, especially concerning the cooperation between the different bodies involved.

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Bottom half of dead body found in canal

AMSTERDAM | Police found the bottom part of a body of a man in the Herengracht canal in the capital on Monday night. A passer-by notified the police after having seen something suspicious in the water. Divers of the fire brigade then removed the body from the water. According to a spokesperson, the body parts were in the canal already for some time. It is still unknown how the man died.

"Too much nuisance in the Transvaal neighbourhood"

AMSTERDAM | The capital's division of the VVD have asked Mayor Job Cohen to point out that the Transvaal neighbourhood in the east, is a problem area. The police must, therefore, have access to more possibilities to tackle the problems in that area. According to the VVD, there is especially a lot of trouble around the African and the Kruger squares. The party has also heard from police and inhabitants that in the Transvaal neighbourhood, there is still a lot of vandalism, threats and break-ins. Council member Marijn Ornstein says the police has insufficient capacity and competence to fight the nuisance.

Police arrest street robbery suspects

AMSTERDAM | Police have arrested 10 suspects who are possibly involved in some 30 street robberies in the city centre of the capital. A number of the suspects, all aged between 15 and 22, have already confessed to police. Others are still being heard. From research, it appears that six of the suspects could be linked to some 20 street robberies. Police have kept a close eye in Amsterdam's city centre lately, because the number of street robberies have been rising. Police do not exclude other arrests.

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The Times Restaurant Selection

visaandeschelde

Fish restaurant visaandeschelde proves that it is rightfully placed among the higher echelons of Amsterdam restaurants. In the heart of the southern Amsterdam business area, its services have adapted to the demand of the locals. Looking for a parking space in the busy RAI area will not be necessary. visaandeschelde offers a very welcome service: Valet Parking. Not only at lunchtime but also in the evening, so there you go: your first impression is one of sheer hospitality.

The second impression is the warm welcome you receive from the restaurant's staff, even if they are not aware yet that you're a Times reporter. After politely taking off your coat they guide you to one of the tables. If you're lucky, you'll get one that is in front of the open kitchen (a brilliant spot: from here you have a great view of the restaurant, the guests, the staff and the beautiful kitchen). The restaurant has a modern interior with a classical edge and looks crisp and fresh. Despite the chic look of the restaurant, the atmosphere is remarkably loose, even a little boisterous.

As an appetizer the well-informed staff present a small terrine of sea-perch, grilled on the skin, mackerel, sweet red peppers, horseradish-mayonnaise and on top a deep fried sprat: very light, slightly Mediterranean combination of beautiful fish and fresh vegetables. The dish is perfectly balanced by the Picpoule L'enfant Terrible, a spicy, but refreshing white wine. Although fish is usually associated with white wine, the sommeliers at visaandeschelde have managed to put together a fine collection of light red wines, some of which have actually won the prize for 'best table wine' in a competition held among the best restaurants in town.

The entrée presents langoustine tails with stewed fennel, a quail egg, floating in a small pool of delicious langoustine sauce. Perfectly advised by the staff, a remarkably fresh and dry Chardonnay proves to be this dish's best companion. As a main course the staff serves a grilled sole, lying on a bed of grilled Roseval potatoes, fried glasswort with stewed spinach and artichoke, and a lovely Tunisian Harissa sauce.

All in all, a visit to visaandeschelde is a treat for those who seek a combination of class, a laidback atmosphere, a perfect service and a playful kitchen of very capable chefs, who know how to treat the fruits of the ocean. visaandeschelde is most definitely one of Amsterdam's finest.

visaandeschelde is open for lunch from Monday to Friday and 7 days a week for dinner.

Making a timely reservation (one/two weeks in advance) is necessary.
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- The Hague -

FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2007

Projects put pressure on cheap housing

THE HAGUE | Two demolition and reconstruction projects have proven to be problematic for residents of cheap anti-kraak housing and the company who places them.

By Andrew Balcombe

Two hundred and thirty six residents taking advantage of cheap housing in unoccupied buildings-part of the system called anti-kraak (anti-squat) in the suburb of Mariahoeve will have to leave.

According to the *Algemeen Dagblad*, those occupying apartments in the Hongarenburg and Finnenburg have been set the deadline of 1 April to move out. In protest, some people have thrown their belongings out onto the street. The residents have been described as young people, students, artists and ex-squatters, who rent the space from Ad-Hoc, an anti-kraak company that rents out unoccupied buildings.

Ad-Hoc also rents out commercial and government buildings in Holland that are unoccupied or due for demolition. It is one of several companies set up to provide services between owners of vacant buildings and renters who can apply to a waiting list, and if they are lucky, rent the space to live in. This is often very cheap, but the disadvantage is that the squatters may have to move frequently and suddenly.

Other disadvantages of anti-kraak buildings are a lack of privacy, since the owner can visit with potential buyers to show off the dwelling. The advantages, are the large spaces that some buildings have which is a rarity for renters at such a cheap price. The 1960 apartment blocks in Mariahoeve are to be torn down to make way for roughly a hundred new



A vacant Hague house and the squatters symbol.



Photo: (left) Astrid Meijs

apartments and 88 family homes. More pressure has been on the cheap housing market because the last residents living in the Zwart Madonna building near Central Station must also leave by 1 July. These people will also be looking for cheap housing. Claudia Duinesvelt from Ad-Hoc told *The Times*, "clients who rent with us understand that they must leave the space they are renting at some stage. They pay €50 to €120 a month for the space but there is a limited timeline, that's the only disadvantage. The people living in Mariahoeve have been there for five years which is a pretty long time."

In regards to what happens next with the residents, Ad-Hoc say "it is normal for them to be put on the waiting lists, they also have an opportunity to live in the new places when they are built. It is difficult that two reconstruction projects are taking place so close in time to each other but we are trying our best to place as many people as possible." She did not say how long the waiting lists were though. Housing problems don't look like they will diminish soon in The Hague. In Den Haag Zuidwest, 8,000 dwellings are also due to be torn down in 2010.

Nuisance pigeons to be locked up in special cages

THE HAGUE | The city has announced a plan to reduce the number of feral pigeons in The Residence. The Alderman for city maintenance R. Baldewensingh (PvdA) has come up with a softer option of reducing their numbers. Unlike Groningen where pigeons are gassed, Baldewensingh want



pigeons to be locked up in special cages. The birds have been called 'flying rats' because of the harmful bacteria and parasites they carry. Their habit of excreting on public buildings and dwellings costs money to clean up as well as being unpleasant to live with. The Alderman says he has seen the plan work effectively in the German city of Aachen and wants to try it here. "We don't want to kill them, these enclosures are cheap to make and we want to work with The Hague's animal and bird protection authorities". He told the *Algemeen Dagblad*. If the plan goes ahead coups will be placed at three locations around the Hague, pigeons will be attracted to them by food and locked in. The birds will then stay in the cages and if they are breeding their eggs will be replaced with fake eggs.

Bike path Meijendel-Clingendael

WASSENAAR | After 50 years, cyclists can finally enjoy a bike ride on the robust path 10 connecting Clingendael park to Meijendel in Wassenaar.

By Fabienne Capostagno

The official opening of the path was on Thursday. The new 2.9 km route, which winds through the dunes, is especially meant for Hague citizens who, without being stuck in traffic, want to go to Wassenaar riding as much as possible through nature. The path is extremely suitable for the recreational biker. One feature is that leisure bikers do not come into contact with groups of sport cyclists, since the path is intentionally narrow and has many bends. Further, the small stones on the road surface also reduce speed.

The construction of the missing part of the cycle path 10 in the Waalsdorpervlakte began in December 2006, although the idea of this new path had already been started in 1954. But for 50 years, new obstacles hindered the realisation of the bike path. One of the last bumps was a demand from the province of South Holland for the hundreds of parking spots near the Meijendel restaurant to disappear. Wassenaar, however, refused and the provincial towns decided to abandon the demand. But in 2003, the construction of the path came back on the political agenda. A year later, and the municipalities agreed on the new path.

The bicycle path runs from the Landscheidingsweg in The Hague to the back of the valley of Meijendel in Wassenaar. Meijendel is a dune area between the



Clingendael park.

Photo: Dave van Ginhoven

coast and Wassenaar's built-up area.

The largest part of the construction consisted of removing the vegetation from the new future path and replacing it with a hardened sand layer. The choice for this type of path was especially decided for preserving the present nature.

The Waalsdorpervlakte is part of the Natura 2000-area Meijendel-Berkheide. This area consists of nature monuments, which on the basis of national and international legislation, enjoy particular protection.

With regards to the Waalsdorpervlakte, it concerns mainly the valuable and dry dunes grassland. Meijendel-Berkheide is, however, part of the provincial ecological structure. In this respect, then, the province of South Holland has demanded that any eventual loss of nature value will have to be compensated for.

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Handicapped man injured after being hit by tram

THE HAGUE | A 42-year-old mentally handicapped man was badly injured on Tuesday, when a tram ran him over on the Kleine Loo in The Hague's district Mariahoeve. The man, who was accompanied by a guide, did not see the tram. A helicopter took the man to hospital. Police said there were two trams in opposite directions close to the footpath where the man was standing. Both trams hooped, but the man did not see one of the trams.

Wassenaar ram raid

WASSENAAR | The electronics store Dixons in Wassenaar was forcefully entered and damaged on Saturday morning. Unknown thieves used a stolen gray Mercedes to crash into Dixons in Wassenaar's street centre Langstraat. Parts of the shop's shutters fell against a glass showcase with expensive appliances. Unintentionally, the shutters blocked the showcase and the men are believed to have driven off in a light-coloured Opel, leaving the Mercedes behind. According to witnesses, three people were involved in the incident.

Neherkade flat cleared

THE HAGUE | Fifty inhabitants and a dog were evacuated from the Neherkade flat on Tuesday evening, due to a fire on the sixth floor. After a couple of hours, inhabitants of the sixth, seventh and eighth floors were able to re-enter their homes, except for the owner of the apartment on fire and the proprietor of the apartment above. The cause of the fire is still unclear, as is the extent of the damage.

1945 bombing remembered

THE HAGUE | Some 600 people showed up in the Hague district Bezuidenhout last Sunday, to remember the 1945 bombing of the suburb. Alderwoman Jette Klijnsma and a soldier from the British Embassy lay a crown near the Juliana van Stolberg monument. This monument is a symbolic place, because the statue, which lies in the middle of the Bezuidenhout, remained unharmed during the bombing. The ceremony ended with a concert at the Royal Conservatory.

German (26) kidnapped for a week

THE HAGUE | A 26-year-old German man was held prisoner for a week in a house in the Paul Krugerlaan in The Hague. The man's captors hoped that his 32-year-old cousin would pay an outstanding €200,000 cocaine debt in exchange for the younger man's life. The victim was kidnapped in the centre of the German city of Hannover on the Friday and brought in a delivery van to The Hague. He was held in a dark room from Monday until Thursday. And was deprived of food and water and beaten with a baseball bat. A police arrest team acting on a German tip-off raided the house and released the hostage. Four Turkish and Albanian men have been arrested, two in Hannover, two at the Hague house and a 30-year-old Turkish drug trafficker in Rotterdam.

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Dick Bruna

In the company of a living legend

Dick Bruna; creator of miffy

By Andrew Balcombe

On a snowy February day I stepped onto the pavement of the Randstad's fourth largest city in time to see the surrounding buildings bathed in sunshine. It was a welcome change to the temperamental weather of the coast. Walking through the narrow and quiet cobbled streets I soon came to a non descript door and hit the intercom. I was greeted by a friendly and familiar sounding voice. Waiting at the top of the flight of stairs was the man himself. Dick Bruna is small in stature but ones attention is soon drawn to his bright alert eyes. Within moments an easy conversation developed about Utrecht and how nice it is. As far as first impressions are concerned I felt like I had known Dick Bruna for a very long time.



Dick Bruna relaxing on his simple but boldly coloured studio couch

The beginnings of a young artist

Bruna was born in Utrecht in 1927, he started drawing, painting and making stories early in life, leaving little doubt about the direction in which he wanted to head. Strangely enough, this was perhaps even helped by the outbreak of World War Two.

"During the last part of the War my father was about 40-42-years-old and I was about 15 or something. We were both at the age where if the Germans got hold of us we would have to go and work in the factories in Germany. (At that time, many of these factories were being bombed into rubble by allied air raids) But we didn't want to go, so we had to hide. My family had a house out by the Vinkeveense Plassen wetlands between Utrecht and Amsterdam. From time to time the Germans would come and we had to hide. We had a little cupboard to go into, and sometimes we would jump in a boat and row to the other side of the lake and hide in the swamp. At that time my father, could not go to work nor I to school, we just stayed home and tried to find things to eat, because there was not much food around at that time. I had quite a nice time, I read a lot, the only art books we had were about Rembrandt (one book) and another on Vincent Van Gogh which I read about five or six times and in the meantime I wrote a little book for my mother about how I felt about her and what she was doing during that time. I also made a lot of drawings and paintings of flowers and animals. I had never seen any other artists, I had heard of Matisse and Picasso and I wanted to become an artists like they were. To do the same work and see that people are happy with it. I see that children use my books and I am very happy."

Living a simple life

It seems at first appearances that Bruna does leave a remarkably ordinary life. "I don't feel famous, there are lots of people I know who wave at me on my bike but I just like to come here everyday (to the studio) and work on my own, that is what makes me happy. The fact that I have a museum here in Utrecht, most artists only get that when they are a long time dead. But if you have that during your life it is like a dream."



The French artist Henry Matisse (1869–November 1954) was an inspiration for the younger Dick Bruna when he travelled to Paris. The artists use of cut out objects, aggressive brush work and bright colours is distinctive, some of these traits washed off in Bruna's work, particularly the bold simple images and colours. Matisse was also a draftsman, printmaker and sculpture.

Many of his works can be seen at the museum Dick Bruna Huis, just outside the centre of Utrecht. The Dick Bruna Huis is part of Utrechts Centraal Museum which was built in 1838. It holds five different sections that cover Old Masters, including works by Saenredam, modern art, such as pieces from Van Doesburg, design fashion and local history. Across the cobbled street lies Dick Bruna Huis. It is specially designed to entertain children with many of the exhibits being interactive to keep their wandering minds and hands busy. If you have a day in which to entertain your children it is well worth a look.

"About being an artist," Bruna says "if I have the chance to do that all my life and do drawings everyday, what more could you want? It started as my hobby and has always been my hobby and in the meantime I earned enough to raise three children and have a house and a car."

This prompts the question on whether the creative streak has been passed on to the following Bruna generations?

"My kids are very good at art, but my eldest son became a lawyer though, he likes to draw in his free time. My second son became a sculptor and the youngest one is still doing graphic design and that is what I feel I am too. I am a graphic designer rather than an illustrator or something. I couldn't make a very nice portrait of you" he points at me. "That is something I can't do. My portrait of you would be of a little round head that looks like something in one of my books."

I reflect on that for a moment and conclude that his description of my head was probably more accurate than I cared to admit. A change of subject at this point was probably the best strategy which brought us to the origins and birth of Bruna's miffy.

From humble conception to global icon

How was miffy first thought up as a character?

"It started about 50 or 60-years-ago," says Bruna, "for my son. We used to go to the seaside and rent a little house. And it was normal for me to tell my son a bed time story before he went to sleep. In the dunes I noticed lots of little rabbits running around. So I started telling him stories about the rabbits

hanging around in the dunes. I thought it would be nice to draw that little rabbit. And that is how miffy got started, the very first book was called "miffy at the seaside". I've done about 115 or 116 books of which 29 are about miffy, now why did she become famous instead of boris bear? Or poppy pig? I think because she is very very close to children, they like miffy because she is nice and soft and warm, they can take her to bed and cuddle and it is very funny that in all of the different countries of the world miffy is the most popular. The very first translation, one or two years later in 1956 or 1957 was made into an English translation. It was done by an English children author and I remember she talked to me about the name, the rabbit was called nintje here, but in England they couldn't pronounce that or in any of the other countries. So the author came up with the idea, wouldn't miffy be a nice name."

London, Paris and Matisse

We back peddle a little to the origins of the Dick Bruna phenomenon to gain some perspective of how success on this scale can somehow be created. The father of Bruna was a successful publisher who also owned the chain of Bruna bookstores found at train stations around the country. As the oldest child, Dick was expected to follow his father into the business.

"I went to London to gain business experience and to learn English. I worked at W.H. Smiths but I don't know about business, it is not interesting to me I just



miffy, Bruna's best known symbol picture:mercis

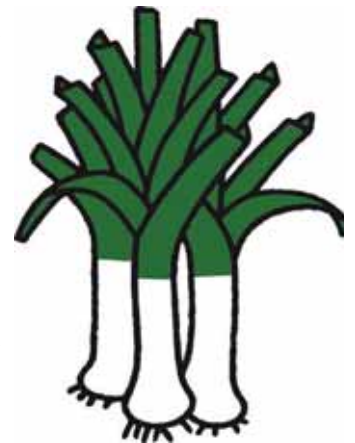
now, 52 years on, than she ever has been. Dick Bruna's empire is a well managed industry, nearly 85 million copies of the popular illustrated books have been sold in 40 languages to this day. Since 2003, miffy has been an ambassador for New York giving the troubled city a more friendly image. On the occasion of the first birthday of Prince Willem Alexander and Princess Máxima's first child Amalia, miffy was used on the website of the Royal House of The Netherlands.

miffy head quarters

Bruna's small well lit loft studio, which is the creative headquarters of the Bruna empire, is similar in style to that of his illustrations: the spaces and decor are simple, clean and very minimalist. In a corner next to a bright blue couch is a cupboard full of postcards. "These have been sent to me from children as far away as Japan," says my host. I look at him and he seems very happy about this as he points out the amount of work that has gone into the gifts he has been sent along with a never ending stream of letters from his admirers. In the same corner is a strange looking chair with two ears coming out of the top. "That's my miffy chair," says Bruna, "it's very comfortable too." Hanging on the walls are posters of miffy and her friends and some of his other characters such as black bear. Being in the studio was like visiting a favourite relative and I wanted to stay all day, surrounding by this man's creativity.

Bruna guides the proceedings over to a wooden table not unlike that seen in many kitchens and serves coffee. "It takes me about 15 minutes to come here every morning by bike," he says. It's good exercise because now I am walking less and less. Utrecht is very nice, I grew up here, everyone is friendly, it's not too big and you can get around easily on the bike."

It is hard to believe that this humble 79-year-old, is responsible for a global icon and has made simple brightly coloured images a trademark known to families stretching from Alabama to Beijing.



1980 leek illustration from the book 'poppy pig goes to market'.

Picture:mercis

like to draw and paint. When it comes to business now, I leave that to my son the lawyer."

From London, Bruna then travelled to Paris. "During my year in Paris I really got to know the art movement. And Matisse was a huge influence in my drawings."

Henry Matisse (1869-1954) is considered one of the most important French artists of the 20th century and with Picasso one of the most influential modern painters of that era. Known as the leader of Les Fauves, a group of painters, he too loved using bold, primary colours. Dick Bruna also admired the way Matisse incorporated cut out objects in his art such as those used in the book Jazz (1947).

Once this French love affair began, Bruna's father realised where his son's passions lay. Upon his return from France, he decided to make use of Dick's creativity and set him to work on illustrating covers for the books sold by his publishing firm. It began with black bear, which was well received and grew into two thousand more covers that included well known publications such as The Saint, James Bond and Shakespeare. Bruna also translated three of Simenon's Maigret books into Dutch.

"I also started selling my drawings and paintings at the art market in Utrecht. The parents didn't really like what they saw, they said the pictures were too bright and too simple. But the children loved them and those children are parents themselves now." Bruna has been compared to the Dutch 17th century masters of the Golden age because of the broad influence that his art has had. Some critics have placed him among the greats of Dutch modern 20th century art such as Piet Mondriaan, best known for his transition into modern art with the Victory Boogie Woogie painting being his most famous work, in neo plasticism. And the designer Gerrit Rietveld who was influenced by 'De Stijl' movement and worked with simple geometric forms. How does the artist find inspiration from day to

- Interview -

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9

Dick Bruna

day life? Bruna does not shy away from the serious issues either, such as immigration and death.

"I try to make my books as simple as possible, very ordinary stories for children going to school, or to the seaside or the snow. But miffy became so close to children that I thought it would be nice to talk about something more serious and so one day some years ago I made a little brown friend for miffy called nina (melanie). At that time I did lots of readings for school classes and I noticed that half of the class was white and the other half not, so I decided it would be nice to give miffy an African friend. First of all she was a pen friend and then she moved here and they become friends. On another day I thought that death is an important issue in every family. And maybe I could make a book in a very simple way so that the children understand how that happens and what it is. So I made a book about miffy's grandma. The book was called "lieve oma pluis" or "dear grandma bunny" in English [the book won the Zilveren Griffel (silver pencil), a highly esteemed children's literary prize in 1997]. I drew it so that miffy saw that her grandma was lying in bed, but she wasn't really there anymore and her grandpa was crying and then it goes into a normal funeral, all the family is very sad and there is lots of crying and dad tells a story about grandma and how nice she was. Then they got a little grave stone and later on, because I try to give my books an open end, that life goes on, miffy puts some red flowers on the grave and talks with grandma. I have never had so many reactions to a book. Many



Dick Bruna carefully painting the contour of a new miffy illustration. "The hardest thing is keeping the drawings as simple as possible" says Bruna.

photo: mercis

it round. We worked very hard to make sure it has the same simplicity and also that everything like the trees and the house are the same. The miffy and other figures are made of foam and about 30 cm high and the people who work on it are very good. About once a month I go to the studio near Hilversum. The amount of work that goes into each scene is unbelievable. It takes a whole day to shoot three seconds of footage of stop motion animation. They stop, adjust, film, stop, adjust and film and there are a lot of people working on it, real artists, a lot of them are English people too. I think what comes out at the end is very close to what I have created with the books."

Balancing semi-retirement with work

As Bruna comes to the age of semi-retirement does he plan on slowing down at all? Has it become easier for him to find the balance between professional obligations and enjoying a slower pace of life? "Well my art, it started as a hobby and it still is. My wife often tells me that I am not married to her but to my work. And it is very much like that, she is right. I come to the studio everyday, seven days a week. Not all day, but for a few hours and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon I am at home and my wife tells me "I can just go to the studio and it has always been like that. It is wonderful to make something new and not repeat yourself, to make a new world that is a little bit better. When I make miffy she only has two little eyes and a little cross for a mouth. I work very hard on that to get her a little bit sad or a little bit happy. And that takes me a long time, but I still enjoy it. I also have three children and six grandchildren and



illustration from the book kitty nell (poesje nell) the 10th childrens book by Dick Bruna and still published today picture: mercis

parents said that they now had a book to use when someone died in the family. They could show it to their children and the children think it is the most normal thing in life. Children are very wise. That makes me happy. Sometimes I do books like that, but normally I make them about things that I see, I have six grandchildren now and if I see them play in the water, that gives me ideas of course." So what does a renowned and successful graphic designer with such a full life, still look for in life to

gain satisfaction? "For people to like my work, it still has to be the best that I can do at that moment. Quite often people say to me 'oh, it must not be difficult for you to draw miffy' but I still find it difficult to draw her, I try to do it better today than yesterday. I must work, to make my stories and drawings better. I always work on my own. There is never anyone around me, sometimes I work on a book for two or three months to get everything nice and simple and as I want it. It takes a lot to get twelve drawings to hang on the wall (for a book) that are good enough and to get the text right.

Yes, so it takes me a long time. And when I'm finished I always make it into a little draft of a book. First of all I show it to my wife, she has seen everything and knows everything about my work. Although she is not a designer herself, she is interested and she comes here to the studio. I feel like I have to pass an exam. She is very critical when she looks at it and I see on her face whether it's a yes or a no.

Sometimes we talk about it and she thinks the story is not good enough and I put it away and come back to it a month or two later and I think yes she is right I need to make alterations and change that. You need someone like that, someone who is really critical. I thought as I get older I would be more certain, but it is not the case at all. I still wonder, is this piece okay or not okay?"

Adapting to the video age

One thing that has changed in the Dick Bruna product and style is a spin-off television and DVD series that has proven to be a huge success. The transformation to video did present the artist with some initial concerns when it was first made. "It is true to say that when it first started I found it very difficult to conceive. I had always worked in two dimensions on flat and now they were making



Toddler looking over the edge. A typical black/white Dick Bruna illustration showing less is more.

Picture: mercis



The artist with his earlier creation (left) black bear.

Photo: Andrew Balcombe

we have a wonderfully normal life. Sometimes I think about when my own children were growing up. At that time I didn't see them that much. My wife tells me I was always working and I only saw them when I was putting them to bed but these days now I have grandchildren I take more time. When we go on holidays I can watch them play. Sometimes it gives me ideas but I spend more time with my grandchildren than with my own children.

Back in the early days when I was working on those book covers I hardly saw my children. I always thought that I must finish my projects on time. These days I do think I work a little bit less than say when I was forty. Sometimes after lunch I just have a little snooze and then I wake up and I'm ready to start again."

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Rotterdam Orchestra in with the new

ROTTERDAM | Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (RPhO) welcomes the 31-year-old Yannick Nézet-Séguin as new Music Director from 2008.

By Fabienne Capostagno

The young Canadian will succeed the Russian Valery Gergiev, who led the orchestra since 1995. In his first four-year tenure, the Canadian will be working with the orchestra for an average of eight weeks per season, excluding tours and opera productions. Apart from presenting a wide range of repertoire, Nézet-Séguin looks forward to becoming closely involved in the orchestra's community arts and educational projects.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin made his debut in the Netherlands with the RPhO in October 2005 conducting two different programmes. Rotterdam was one of the first major orchestras outside Canada to invite him to remain longer in the country, following the success of his European debut in Toulouse (France) in November 2004.

The new conductor has been since the year 2000 Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain in Montreal (Canada). Before taking up his position as Rotterdam's new Music Director in September 2008, Nézet-Séguin will lead the RPhO for several concerts, including special events organised for the orchestra's 90th anniversary since its founding. He will also lead a major tour with concerts in South Korea, Japan and China. Since Gergiev's leadership, the RPhO – the musical heart of Rotterdam, considered the second most important orchestra in Holland after Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra – has gained a worldwide reputation. It was founded in 1918 by several musicians as a private "Society of Professional Musicians for Mutual Cultivation of the Arts." It had paying members and the aim was to make music for personal pleasure.

Rotterdam investigates suspected causes of death

ROTTERDAM | Next month, specialists will examine people who have died from unclear circumstances. The specialists will carry out autopsies on people aged between 18 and 55 years old, whose causes of death are not entirely clear. Currently, the cause of death is not always determined due to poor information, the fact that forensic doctors do not recognise murder or other indictable offences. The test will involve forensic doctors, police, justice and the Erasmus Medical Centre.

Problems with food banks

ROTTERDAM | Holland's Organisation for Food Banks in Rotterdam, wants an end to the situation where dozens of organisations, which are in fact nothing more than distribution points, call themselves food banks. Further, Rotterdam's division, by far the biggest of the Netherlands, is experiencing trouble with the new Federation of Food Banks, in which seven regional branches have united. Clara Sies from Holland's Food Banks Organisation, says it is not feasible that there are 77 food banks registered at the Chamber of Commerce. According to Sies, only one food bank division should remain, and that is the one in Rotterdam.

'Rotterdam is the worst place to grow up'

ROTTERDAM / UTRECHT | A study has found that Rotterdam is the worst place in the country for children to live. Other cities across Holland were also judged for their child friendliness.

By Andrew Balcombe

For the second year in a row, out of 467 municipalities judged, Rotterdam scored the most poorly when it comes to living conditions for children. The factors taken into account during assessment were the amount of child abuse, crime, income levels, education and space for children to play.

The second edition of *Kinderen in Tel*, a study conducted by Utrecht's Institute Verwey-Jonker in cooperation with seven organisations including Unicef, has released its findings. A summary of the findings said that since 2005, there has been no real improvement for children in Holland.

In large cities such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, 60% of children are living in neglected neighbourhoods. This is opposed to the national average which is 17%. The survey also highlighted problems in the northern provinces of Groningen and Friesland, particularly the municipalities Pekela, Reiderland of Bolsward, which are said to be



Rotterdam's Philharmonic Orchestra being conducted by Valery Gergiev.

Photo: Marco Borggreve

Valery Gergiev became the orchestra's permanent guest director at age 36, following other young conductors such as Eduard Flipse, Edo de Waart and James Conlon. Gergiev has conducted major world famous symphony orchestras, like the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna's Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra. In 1996 he also founded the Gergiev Festival Rotterdam, which this year will take place from 5 to 15 September. But the most important event in his career was in 1988, when he became Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Kirov Opera, now the Mariinski

Theatre (Russia). Currently, he is a permanent guest conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in New York and since this year, he is principal conductor of London's Symphony Orchestra.

Gergiev is described as a charismatic conductor, particularly renowned for his passionate, almost rough, conducting style. His drive and determination is said to produce pieces of great drama. His successor is very highly regarded in Canada, has worked with almost all of the main orchestras there and has conducted many opera productions. With his appointment as new director, the orchestra continues its tradition of young outstanding talents.

New beavers soon to be living in the Beverbos

DORDRECHT | The Biesbosch nature and recreation wetland area near Dordrecht will soon have two new beavers to replace the pair that died after an accident and suspected loneliness.

By Andrew Balcombe

A new breeding pair of beavers will be soon living in the enclosed beaver observatory at the Biesbosch centre, which is going to be re-named the Beverbos (beaver forest).

The animals will replace the last beavers, Makker and Mienke who died in 2005 and 2006. Mienke was the victim of an accident when she was hit by a falling tree that the beavers had chewed through. Her mate Makker died a year later.

"We think that Makker may have died because of loneliness but he was also 19-years-old," said the spokeswoman.

The new breeding pair and name for the observatory also coincides with a €200,000 upgrade of a beaver look-out at the recreation area called De Merwelanden.

The Biesbosch first released five beaver pairs into its waters in 1988 as an experiment to see if they



A wild beaver.

would breed. By 1993 there were 42 new beavers and the area now boasts 150 animals. The new animals destined for the Beverbos will, however, have to come from captive stock, said the centre. "We cannot transfer the wild beavers from the open Biesbosch into the enclosure because they are wild and would not adapt."

Next month, the Biesbosch is appealing for sponsorship and if enough money comes in, the Beverbos will be soon open to the public.



Rotterdam's skyline

Photo: Creative Commons

one giant neglected neighbourhood. Holland does have municipalities that do not have impoverished areas, 296 to be exact. The town of Rozendaal in Gelderland near Arnhem was judged as the best place for children to grow up. The Hague, which has a large number of neglected areas, was judged as being the third worst municipality in the country for children. Amsterdam did not fall in the worst ten cities category, however. The four best municipalities after Rozendaal are (2)Naarden (just east of Amsterdam), (3)Bunnik, (province of Utrecht)

(4)Midden-Delfland (between Rotterdam and The Hague) and (5)Terschelling (a Wadden Island).

In an effort to improve some aspects of a child's life in the city, the Rotterdam Municipal Council are spending €160 million on keeping children at school longer during the day. The aim of the programme, which is called 'More learning time for children,' aims to increase school days by six hours a week for 45 primary schools. Also, 25 high schools will be opened from 8:00 to 17:00 twice a week and 80% of three-year-olds will attend a pre-school it is hoped, by 2010. In 2009, all children from grade 3 will attend an hour extra of sport and recreation, said the municipality.

These measures were presented as part of the Municipal Council's programme for 2006-2010 to improve the quality of education for school children between three and 23-years-old. It is hoped that more cultural, recreation and sports activities along with better learning will make a difference. Rotterdam's minority populations have suffered from poor schooling in the past. Many of the children's parents also have had a poor education and have been encouraged by the city to attend Dutch language classes in order to improve employment prospects and to integrate with society.

FUN-TAZIA is an English speaking nursery playgroup for children from 2 to 4 years of age. Our nursery's curriculum provides a full range of pre-school activities. Toddlers are welcome at **Fun-tazia** on Monday, Wednesday & Friday between 09.00-12.00 am. **Fun-tazia** is located in: Anthonie van Dijklaan 1 2661 TP Bergschenhoek mob: 06 2283 7121 www.funtazia.nl

Internet Marketing and the Viral Image

By Patrick Petersen

Hard thinking on your image in Internet marketing immediately brings you to the most exciting instrument in online marketing: 'the viral'. The digital form of word of mouth advertisement strengthens the fact that word of mouth has been the best kind for years.



It starts with forwarding

You know them. Colleagues, friends and acquaintances who forward all kinds of stuff from their workplace. It is the nightmare of every network administrator. But then...YouTube comes in. The source and the cradle of the viral commercial. Nice clips, funny commercials and extraordinary home videos are amply present at Google's most expensive asset. In the old days, we had the barber, the lady-next-door or the gossiping secretary and now we have the Internet in all of its appearances.

The infectious form of online marketing

Viral marketing is the most infectious form of online marketing. Word of mouth advertising is a term used in the marketing industry when non-members of a company have a conversation about the company's product or service. The receiver also becomes the sender. This idea is contrary to the mass marketing theory applied by marketers in the 1980s. The contemporary consumer is a lot more difficult to tempt and often changes his or her focus towards informal communication. Examples? The growth of web initiatives such as Google, Hotmail, YouTube, Marktplaats and GeenStijl.nl. It is widely known that Marktplaats had a budget of several hundreds of euros per year for a 'marketing campaign'. The concept was promoted word to mouth, which made all further advertisement unnecessary. The web introduction of Apple's iPhone, the trailer of the newest James Bond film placed on a weblog and the Transavia buzz mailings for €4.99 euro tickets. These campaigns are all set up by marketers. Less marketing strategic but certainly viral are: the newest downloadable Star Wars film, the design of the newest Apple computer and the videos of Saddam.

From mass to man

Through terms like 'buzz marketing', 'hype' or 'viral marketing', modern marketers try to get this type of advertising up and running. Organisations see that this can be more effective than to push that 'mass message' through everybody's throat. In the US, we see initiatives such as Procter & Gamble using a group of especially selected women to communicate with, online.

Conditions to the viral campaign

To sum up some important focus points for a successful viral campaign: give a satisfactory, simple and swift answer to needs; the message should have a credible format and offer if you want people to talk about it; an offer, a nice commercial, but also a joke, a good recipe or article should give both the receiver and the sender a good feeling.

Positive effects of word of mouth are that it gives a positive change to your image, that it shows that you are well-aware of current affairs and that you can be provided with the appropriate information of your target group.

Patrick Petersen is teacher/coach and author on Internet marketing and the owner of A1Most.nl and CCIC.nl.

- Economics -

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NedCar staying open another year or two

BORN | The Limburg car factory NedCar will remain open for another one to two years longer than expected. The FNV Union were notified of this by their members at the factory. NedCar, which produces Mitsubishi Colts, was only meant to stay open until 2010 but this may extend to 2012. NedCar employs 1,350 workers.

OM investigates fraud with organic mushrooms

THE HAGUE | The Public Prosecution Service (OM) is investigating the possible fraud with organic mushrooms. A grower and trader from Gelderland claimed the normally-grown mushrooms he brought onto the market were organic. If the OM can prove fraud, the company will no longer be allowed to trade organic mushrooms.

CityCargo replaces trucks

AMSTERDAM | CityCargo will replace its freight lorries with trams, because it claims the trams can reduce the heavy traffic by half in the centre of the capital. On Wednesday, the company started with a trial run, lasting until the end of March, with two freight trams per day running on the normal tram lines. CityCargo wants the freight trams to replace 2,500 lorries per day. The company claims the trams will be able to transport all goods, except for heavy construction materials, fruit, vegetables and garden garbage. Normal passenger trams will be converted into freight trams, with extra door space being made for large containers. The tram seats will remain unchanged. The project should create some 1,200 new jobs.

Nuon lowers gas prices

AMSTERDAM | The energy company Nuon has announced gas prices will drop by 7% to 8% from 1 July. The amount of savings that home owners will receive is estimated at between €50 to €80. The Central Bureau of Statistics says gas prices rose 85% between 2000 and 2006 and electricity rose by 40%. Gas and light prices rose €150 in 2006.

ABN Amro-TCI duel



AMSTERDAM / LONDON | The battle between the global Dutch Bank ABN Amro and British hedgefund TCI cranks up a notch.

By Andrew Balcombe
ABN Amro has been busy this week, acquiring 93% of Prime Bank in Pakistan, and hiring experts from investment banks Rothschild, Lehman Brothers, Morgan Stanley and UBS to advise it on strategic options in the fight against The Children's Investment Fund (TCI), who wants to split and sell ABN. The Dutch regulatory body that investigates business information (SOBI) has sided with

ABN and notified the Financial Market Authority (AFM) to investigate TCI for manipulating the stock rates. ABN Amro stocks lifted in value by 6% when TCI sent a letter with its complaints to the bank's board of directors last week. Media coverage of the battle has also reflected a two-sided affair, with some English financial papers explaining that TCI, which holds 1% of ABN shares, wants the bank to start giving greater returns to investors and that other shareholders are starting to agree. Dutch coverage, however, has painted TCI as aggressive, encouraging shareholders to cash in by selling the bank off piece by piece. A shareholders' conference will be held at the end of April.

Highway levy coming from 2011

AMSTERDAM | The Cabinet wants to introduce a kilometre levy for vehicles on highways, beginning in 2011.

By Fabienne Capostagno
Transport Minister Camiel Eurlings said that in the first stage, the kilometre price will perhaps only apply to a restricted group of a maximum of 200,000 vehicles, like the freight carriages. The introduction is expected to take place in four years time and not in 2012, like it was initially intended. The investment costs will amount to €3 billion while the yearly operational costs will be €1 billion, ex-

ceeding the maximum €350 million decided by the Second Chamber. In this respect, the Minister has said that "this amount has yet to be reached." Eurlings claims that the kilometre levy is not only aimed at improving traffic problems, but that it is more honest that people pay for using their car and not just for owning one. The idea is that the levy will be put into practice throughout Holland in phases. Now, the Minister says that the costs of the system are still too high, although they have been decreasing. Traffic experts say traffic problems have increased by a quarter during the previous Cabinet, despite their aim to reduce traffic jams by a third. Eurlings wants to reach the target of reducing congestion by 40% in 2020 and to guarantee that 95% of travellers have a reasonable travel time. He said that solving traffic jams can be achieved with new roads, more constructive road usage and paying per kilometre on highways. It is expected that car mobility will be reduced by 10%.

Walking aids off insurance list

AMSTERDAM | Walking canes for invalids and blind people, rolling walking frames and crutches will soon disappear from the basic health insurance packet.

By Fabienne Capostagno
This was proposed by the Board for the Health Insurance (CvZ). Elderly, disabled and chronically ill will, therefore, have to pay some hundred euros more out of their own pockets. The CvZ will, with this new law, save some €10 million. The interest groups for the disabled, elderly and chronically ill (CG-raad) reacted angrily, saying that everyday walking devices belong in the basic health insurance. This also goes for medical treatment and care. The CG-raad finds this proposal alarming not only for disabled people, but also for the other insurers. One out of ten insured people makes use of such walking devices, which cost between €100 and €300, while the more upgraded ones can go up to €600. According to the CG-raad, the proposal of the CvZ will only lead to an extreme increase in costs for the needy. The organisation also believes that the next step will probably be that walking appliances will become part of the additional insurance. The CG-raad will soon meet with the CvZ to discuss the new proposal for the health insurance packet.

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Dress to Impress

By Rick Moorman

The burden of a retailer in fashion is the same every season. By the time the new collections come in, just after the clearance sales are finished and the sales in general have reached a low point, we have to start stocking up for the coming season. In other words, we are spending virtual money on new collections and we have to pay for the incoming collections while the revenues are lowest. But believe me, if a retailer does not complain, business is going really bad.



One advantage of the purchasing period is that we need to study what you are going to wear in the near future. At this moment, we are very busy with the purchase of this year's autumn collection. We derive our information from international fashion fairs and from visiting manufacturers in various surrounding countries.

I have just returned from Italy to see and learn about what you are supposed to wear. But the things the Italians present us with certainly promise the fashion adopts a really strange winter. Grey is the leading colour in all collections in combination with purple and black.

The fact that we praise the Italian man in the Netherlands for always looking smart is true, but those who look closer will see the other side of the coin. Are they really masculine? Many Italians are quite feminine in their behaviour –and in the way they dress. Sometimes I need to watch carefully to see whether the displayed fashion is really meant for men. Fashion is getting tighter, but I can hardly envisage an international businessman wearing it.

The sloppy suits worn by many of your colleagues are 'not done' anymore, but the too tightly cut suits worn by others are completely over the top. A self-respecting businessman makes sure that the clothes he wears really fit, not only in terms of size, but also in terms of personality. That has nothing to do with fashion, but everything with respect for your environment and yourself.

You should, just like I regularly do, ask yourself every so often if a colleague, who wears a very tight suit, has chosen to wear it or if he has just followed the advice of a magazine without realising that his business environment wonders if something changed to his weight. No, the best clothing advice still is: respect yourself and your business environment. And if you do that, chances are very small that you walk around like a Marcel Marceau.

Have your colleague across your desk read these remarks, maybe he will understand the message and you won't have to have a tough discussion with him on his choice of suits.

Rick Moorman has stores in Holland and Belgium. He gives advice and readings on clothing in the business world.



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José de Boer is Master of Financial Planning (Erasmus University) and affiliated with *The Netherlands Authority for Financial Markets and the Social and Economic Council (SER)*. As managing director *WV* she has grown De Boer Financial Consultants into an organisation known both for its diversity and personal approach.



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Friday 09 March

CLASSICAL

Residentie Orchestra @ Muziektheater Amstel 3, Amsterdam, 20:00

Brahms @ de Doelen

Kruisstraat 2, Rotterdam, 20:15

DANCE

DANScombinatie 2007 @ Fortis Theater a/d Schie Stadsersf 1, Rotterdam, 20:15

OTHER

The English Breakfast @ Radio Wereld FM
Cable 104.6, ether 99.4, 07:00
www.salto.nl/streamplayer/radio/live_wereld.asp
Listen to Dutch & International News in English & find out what is going on in & around Amsterdam. Great music variety & hot gossip from around the globe!

Tanya Stephens @ Melkweg

Lijnbaansgracht 238, Amsterdam, 21:30

PIV Speciaal @ Flex Bar

Oazzanistraat 1, Amsterdam
With Ebony Bones (UK) & Pivkids-dj's



Image from Buiten exhibition.

Saturday 10 March

CLASSICAL

Organ recital @ English Church
Begijnhof 48, Amsterdam, 15:15
Recital celebrating the church's 400th anniversary

DANCE

Monisa Nayak @ Tropentheater
Mauritskade 63, Amsterdam, 20:00
Young kathak dancer from India

JAZZ

Laura Fygi @ de Doelen
Kruisstraat 2, Rotterdam, 11:00

OPERA

Rusalka @ Rotterdamse Schouwburg
Schouwburgplein 25, Rotterdam, 20:15

OTHER

Arctic Monkeys @ Melkweg
Lijnbaansgracht 234a, Amsterdam, 20:30

The Earlies @ Rotown

Nieuwe Binnenweg 17-19, Rotterdam, 21:00

Sunday 11 March

CLASSICAL

Harpischord Recital @ English Church
Begijnhof 48, Amsterdam, 15:15

JAZZ

Erasmus jazz price 2007 @ de Doelen
Kruisstraat 2, Rotterdam, 11:00

OPERA

De Impresario @ Amsterdams MarionettenTheater
Nieuwe Jonkerstraat 8, Amsterdam 15:00

OTHER

Charity Auction @ Hotel The Grand
Oudezijds Voorburgwal 197, Amsterdam, 14:00

De Kerk met Rednose Distrikt @ Flex Bar
Pazzanistraat 1, Amsterdam

Illicit @ Sugar Factory
Lijnbaansgracht 238, Amsterdam, 21:00

Monday 12 March

CLASSICAL

Residentie Orchestra @ Muziektheater
Amstel 3, Amsterdam, 20:00

Tuesday 13 March

DANCE

Pallas's Ballet Workout for Adults & Dance & Ballet Classes for Children @ The Theatre aan de Haven
Westduinweg 230, Scheveningen

OTHER

The Karnatic Lab @ Badcuyp
1^e Sweelinckstraat 10, Amsterdam, 20:30

Wednesday 14 March

CLASSICAL

Talich String Quartet @ Concertgebouw
Concertgebouwplein 2-6, Amsterdam, 20:15

Asko Ensemble @ Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ
Piet Heinkade 1, Amsterdam, 20:30

OTHER

Workshop: Reinventing yourself @ Women's Business Initiative
Laan Copes van Cattenburch 86, The Hague, 09:30

Film: The Mark of Cain @ Tropentheater
Mauritskade 63, Amsterdam, 20:00
Opening film of Amnesty International Filmfestival

Soundclash @ Paradiso
Weteringschans 6-8, Amsterdam, 21:00

Michelle David & Boris @ Exit
Mauritsstraat 173, Rotterdam, 21:30

Thursday 15 March

CLASSICAL

Residentie Orchestra @ Muziektheater
Amstel 3, Amsterdam, 20:00



Image from Weitenberg's exhibition.

DANCE

Postscript @ Lucent Danstheater

Spuiplein 150, The Hague, 20:15

JAZZ

Surinamese-Portuguese Impro-Jazz @ Badcuyp
1^e Sweelinckstraat 10, Amsterdam, 21:00

OTHER

What's next party @ Melkweg
Lijnbaansgracht 238, Amsterdam, 21:00

Thunderdays @ Waterfront
Boompjeskade 10, Rotterdam, 21:00

DAILY

09 & 10 March
English-language theatre: One @ Theater de Cameleon
3^e Kostverlorenkade, Amsterdam, 20:30



Image from English-language theatre One.

10 & 11 March
Ballet: Falling Angels @ Hef Muziektheater
Amstel 3, Amsterdam, 20:15

10 & 11 March
Emigration Fair @ Home Boxx Exhibition Centre
Symfonielaan 1, Nieuwegein (near Utrecht), 10:00

14 till 18 March
Amnesty International Filmfestival @ various locations,
Amsterdam & The Hague

13-25 March
English-language theatre: Play Strindberg @ KEK
Living Outlet
Prinsstraat 85-93, The Hague, 20:15

15 March till 11 April
Homage to Isabelle Huppert @ Filmhuis Den Haag
Spui 191, The Hague

Till 15 July
Blue Man Group @ Theaterfabriek Amsterdam
Czaar Peterstraat 213, Amsterdam

TO LOOK OUT FOR...SO GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

18 March
Ballet gala @ World Forum Convention Center
Churchillplein 10, The Hague, 14:30

19 March
Asko Ensemble @ de Doelen
Kruisstraat 2, Rotterdam, 20:15

21 March
Commemoration of South Africa's Human Rights Day
@ Embassy of South Africa
Wassenaarseweg 40, The Hague, 08:30

24 March
The Wedding Experience 2007 @ Heavy Studios in

Hilversum, 17:00

29 March
Conference: The future of the Global Workplace @
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Thomas R. Malthusstraat 5, Amsterdam, 18:30

04 & 05 April
Ilse deLange @ Heineken Music Hall
Arena Boulevard 590, Amsterdam, 20:30

Till 21 April
Turkey Now Festival @ Amsterdam & Rotterdam

Till 25 April
Latinjam @ World Music & Dance Centre
Piet de Hoochweg 125, Rotterdam, 19:00

May
Cavalia @ ArenaA
ArenaA Boulevard 1, Amsterdam

11 June
Bryan Adams @ Ahoy
Ahoy'-weg 10, Rotterdam, 20:00

EXHIBITIONS

Siebrand Weitenberg @ Pulchri Studio
Lange Voorhout 15, The Hague
Till 09 March

People of the 20th Century @ Foam
Keizersgracht 609, Amsterdam
Till 21 March

Bert Verhoeff @ Galerie 32-34
Keurenplein 32-34, Amsterdam
Till 24 March

Four artists from Kalmykia @ Gallery art Korner
Bezuidenhoutseweg 47, The Hague
Till 01 April

Marinus Fuit & Jan Jacobs Mulder @ Pulchri Studio
Lange Voorhout 15, The Hague
10 March till 01 April



Image by Jan Jacobs Mulder.

The Stability of Truth @ SMART Project Space
Arie Biemondstraat 105-113, Amsterdam
Till 05 April

Buiten @ Vonkel
Anna Paulownaplein 13, The Hague
Till 17 April

Luminous Buildings, architecture of the night @ NAI
Museumplein 25, Rotterdam
Till 06 May

Jesper Just @ Witte de With
Witte de Withstraat 50, Rotterdam
Till 06 May

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Acquisition is not appreciated.

The art of Arturo: bringing legends alive

The illustrious Italian artiste, Arturo Brachetti, is bringing his latest inspired production to the Luxor Theater Rotterdam from 24 April 13 May. In an astonishing homage to the spectacular art of 'transformation,' Brachetti brings to life hundreds of characters, each created in a blink of an eye. These include the likes of James Bond, Julie Andrews, King Kong, Scarlett O'Hara, Darth Vader, and Humphrey Bogart along with aquatic starts such as Esther Williams and even Jaws. I had the chance to speak to Brachetti while he was Italy, prior to his arrival in Holland.

By Kim Chandler
The Turin born fifty-year-old is known as the 'greatest quick change artist of the century' in the international world of transformation – an art form that has been favoured in Italy for over 500 years. His multi-lingual performances include acting, comedy, music, magic, Chinese shadow-play, story-telling, stunts and caricature. It is no wonder that Brachetti's ostentatiously unique show has been likened to Versace on speed. With more than 350 costumes in his repertoire Brachetti is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the fastest quick-change artist in the world.

This charming and gregarious man was a shy child who was sent to a seminary on his father's orders. It was here that he had the great fortune to meet the young priest, Father Silvio Mantelli, who introduced Brachetti to his hobby of magic. As a young man most of his time was spent in the priest's magical storehouse learning tricks before, at 15, performing his first quick-change routine using costumes borrowed from the seminary's stock. He 'went pro' in 1978 at the Paradis Latin in Paris and has continued to illuminate international stage, film and television productions ever since, with highlights such as: The Covent Garden Christmas



Gala in the presence of the British Royal Family and co-presenting both The Best of Magic for Thames Television and Disneyland-Paris' A Night of Magic show, which was transmitted globally. It must be said, however, that Brachetti came to the full attention of international audiences with his tour de force production for the 1999 Just for Laughs festival in Montreal, Canada, which eventually toured internationally garnering copious awards.

Behind the mask

I was fascinated to learn that there was a theatre in your Seminary.

First of all, I was not in a Jesuit Seminary, I was in a younger order and part of their education is to use the theatre to make young people do something intelligent. All of the seminaries and religious houses of this order have theatres and costume warehouses, so it was very normal for us to do the theatre; like football and so on, theatre was part of the education.

Those costumes must have been a fantastic playground for you.

It was fantastic. I was a very shy boy; thanks to those costumes I had the strength to go on stage and do my magic tricks. There was a priest there who was also a magician...

That's unusual isn't it?

No, it's not very strange. During the past centuries, the only people who had the time to write books about magic were religious people. One of the first books written about magic was done in the 1500s by a religious man. It was a way to expose the tricks against the fake miracles.

Like a form of science text book.

Yes, for them, it was like saying, "If somebody wants to show you miracles, bear in mind these tricks and artistry."

When you began to get the confidence to go on stage, did you begin thinking of a career solely in magic?

First I learned magic tricks, and then I put them together with costume changes when I was 15. My magician/priest/friend, gave me a book about a famous quick change artist of the last century, Leopoldo Fregoli. I read about the wonderful style of life of this man, a star 100 years ago. From that point I began rehearsing my autograph hoping that one day somebody would ask me for one. And in

show there is this surprise, but there is a poetic story about an adult of about 40 who goes up to the attic of his childhood to throw everything away. But, by doing that, he becomes a child again. At the end of the show, when the attic is really empty, he realizes that in order to be alive, happy and awake as an adult, you have to keep a bit of child in yourself. Federico Fellini, the Italian movie director, has said that it is important to be eight and a half in your head sometimes. This is the will, the force that makes you inventive, even when you are seventy.

To be juggling a myriad of costumes changes, a vast array of characters and a full storyline is quite a feat.

That's why the show is very different. There are three different levels. One is a childish surprise towards the magic and quick changes. Then there is the second level, which is cultural, in which you can recognize famous painters, movies, and intellectual innuendo. And the third level is the level of emotion; you go to the theatre in order to be moved. You know, sometimes people write me letters, saying that they came to see the man with a 1000 faces but they went back home with a high heart. They thank me for giving them back two hours of their childhood. Even better, they've said, "Your show should be paid for by the social security because it's therapeutic."

Do you have favourite characters within your repertoire?

No, not at all, I feel as though I am the puppet player. They last for a minute – a minute and a half. They are not deep. The most difficult part of the show is when I am playing myself, in a jacket, just telling the story.

It must take an amazing amount of energy to do what you do, not just the touring, but then the work you do on stage. How do you prepare and keep yourself so fit for this, at fifty?

First of all, I live my work like my mission. When I left the seminary my friend, the priest, told me, "If you don't have the vocation to become a priest, it's important that you have a vocation in life, a call. If your call is to make people dream and smile, just follow your call!" That's what I'm doing. I think that my job on earth is this one.

But of course, to do this, I have cut away many other things from my life. I am doing a very boring diet which is the 'nun's diet'; white rice in the day time and red, bloody meat in the night time. I never eat fried foods and creamy stuff, but the pleasure to be on stage is so much greater, so, who cares!



fact, my autograph, which is very complicated, is the same as when I was 16. Through this book I realized that I could do much more with my life, but I didn't find any tricks; so, I invented some systems and ideas myself, and I'm still using them now.

Keeping it up

Was it a surprise to you, as a shy person, to realize how much you enjoyed performing?

When you are on a stage or on a set, you are living a dream, a projection of yourself, something that you would like to be. The Arturo that I would like to be is the one on stage, a magical being that can be a man, a woman, a child, that can fly or disappear.

This show is a collection of my best acts, but it's not just a sequence of changes because that would be very boring like a fashion show. In fact, it has a beginning, middle and an end. Sometimes magic shows are sterile, after ten minutes you know what it's about. You know that you're going to be surprised and after a while the surprise wears off. In our

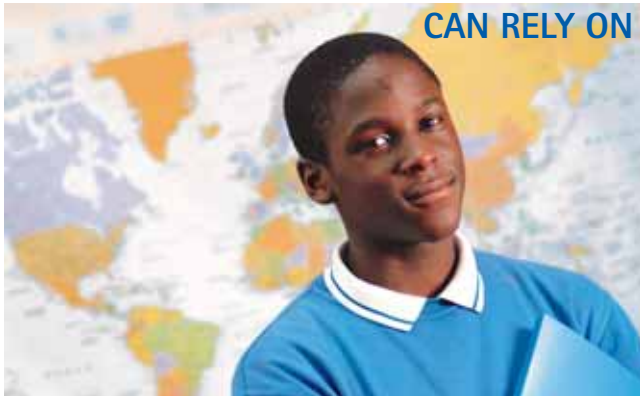
You're a very lucky individual to have found your calling, which very few people are able to do, but you're also able to use it, enjoy it, and see other's enjoy it.

I very often think that if I should die today, I could say that I am happy because I, more or less, followed my star. It gave me wonderful moments. In the gospel there is the story of the talents. And I think that I was lucky to have this talent and to do it, while a lot of my colleagues, they have talent, but they don't have the chance to perform. Sometimes they have to work in an office and yet they want to be a singer... I consider myself very lucky!

For more information about Arturo Brachetti, visit www.brachetti.com. For further ticket information call: TopTicketLine on 0900 300 5000 (45 cpm) or the Nieuwe Luxor Theater on 010 484 3333 or visit: www.luxortheater.nl.

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Editorial

The power of the Senate

Apart from the amply described political matters debated upon last Thursday, like the issue of double nationality, the Iraq war and the unstable cabinet budget, the legislative theatre of the Netherlands saw another old, but still extremely lively debate reach its boiling point this week: the necessity of the existence of the Senate.

The debate was sparked by the upcoming provincial election – the road towards which you may have missed because of the government's lack of interest to explain the issue to a broad public, which resulted in a turnout of 43.6 percent, a disappointing average that has become a rule rather than an exception since the 1990s. The ideological composition of the 12 provincial councils reflects the division of seats in the Senate, as the chosen provincial deputies elect the Senators.

In the old, Roman age, the Emperors were the ones who feared the Senate, which claimed to speak with the voice of the people, the majority. Nowadays, it seems that those who rightfully claim to be the voice of the people fear the Senate the most. Some even want to ban it entirely.

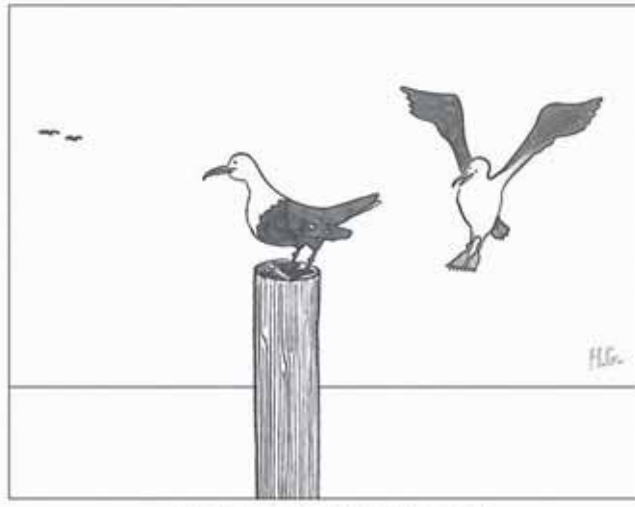
In the Netherlands, the Senate has not only the power to delay, send back or review law bills, as in the American Senate or in the British House of Lords, but also the power to obstruct and veto legislative proposals. The current coalition feared that Wednesday's elections would result in a Senate minority. The sheer impact of such an outcome would have been profound; it could have brought the country to a standstill. Former D66 Minister of Governmental Reform Thom de Graaf suffered from the concussion that a stubborn Senate can cause in March 2005, when his party's proposal for an elected mayor was rejected by the First Chamber. De Graaf stepped down and vanished from the political spectre soon after.

In last Thursday's debate, the other side of the coin became perfectly clear. If the opposition wants to succeed in forcing an investigation of the decision making process towards Dutch support for the Iraq war through the country's legislative labyrinth, its only chance is to go through the Senate.

That some politicians fear the power of the Senate is understandable. But to ban it, would have an unwelcome impact on the political checks and balances. The Senate's role is ambiguous. It is a monolithic hurdle in the decision-making process, but can also serve as the only way to make sure that process remains open and reliable.

Tristan van Rijn
Editor-in-Chief

Toon Times by Harry Gijsberts



"Any change in sea-level yet?"

Help Wanted

Argo Press is a young and dynamic organisation that publishes **The Holland Times in and around Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague**. For this newspaper we are rapidly seeking a:

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t.vanrijn@argopress.nl

Reader's Say

Reader feedback is absolutely essential to making a publication like *The Times*. We would like to hear what you think about the issues we cover.

Last week, we reported on the attempts of Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom to ban dual citizens from serving in the national Cabinet. This is what Oana E. Vorniceasa had to say about it:

Dear Editor,

About the controversial problem of double nationality, we should be in favour of it, as there is no doubt that we live in a cosmopolitan and open system. The matter addresses individual freedom of choice and personal identity.

Many newcomers in any country experience an unclear self-perception and some of them even have an identity crisis because of the social-psychological effects caused by the pressure of integration.

To cut off the possibility of keeping two nationalities has the opposite effect on those people and will not help them mentally with a better and faster integration into Dutch society.

And, frankly, it is one of the human rights to belong here and there, to combine two cultures and lifestyles, to express yourself in many ways and to be free to choose.

Distancing from your original nationality voluntarily is the only acceptable manner, not when it is imposed by the 'state authorities'.

Yours sincerely,

Oana E. Vorniceasa
Amsterdam

So, if you have something you would like to say, about an issue in the paper or the paper itself, send us a letter. All letters are considered for publication, subject to space.

Contact our Editor at: t.vanrijn@argopress.nl and see your name in print.

Rectifications

– In **16 February's** edition, the head characters in the *All along the waterfront* piece on the Entertainment page were miss-spelled. The author of the book is called Sabine Lebesque instead of Labesque, and the bridge pictured is called the Han Lammers bridge, not the Hans Lammers bridge.

– In **2 March's** edition, we forgot to credit the photographers of the pictures published in the Entertainment piece on the Tusk Theatre. The credits should go to Joris Jan Bos for David Krügel's picture, to Roy Beusker for Ellis van Maarseveen's shot and to Lucia Contreras for the group photo.

– Also in **2 March's** edition we made a mistake on the front page photo story. The man pictured with Queen Beatrix is not Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, but Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Gül.

How can I get with *The Times*?

The Amsterdam / Hague Times, The Netherlands' only English-language newspaper, is widely distributed throughout The Hague and Amsterdam. You can pick it up every Friday at

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Controlled Circulation: International institutions, the Diplomatic Corps, captains of industry and epicentres of the Netherlands' international and expatriate communities.

Brave PSV survive Arsenal barrage

LONDON | PSV reached the quarter final of the Champions League on Wednesday by keeping Arsenal at 1-1 in the Emirates Stadium. The Eindhoven club survived a first half siege by the Gunners, but boldly enforced the London upset in the second.

By Tristan van Rijn
Welcomed by an angry cacophony of 60,000 fans PSV got a sense of what the night could bring. They needed to defend a 1-0 home win. The statistics of the nailbiter speak for themselves. Arsenal aimed at the goal 14 times against five times for PSV. Only one offside against 9 for PSV showed how the Gunners' offensive finesse resulted in a continuous threat to the PSV goal. In the first half, PSV was completely stunned by Arsenal's fire power. Emmanuel Adebayor, Kolo Touré, Julio Baptista had multiple opportunities, but failed to score due to a lack of sharpness and some brilliant saves by keeper Gemes.

After half time, the stampede continued and PSV looked helpless, especially when defender Alex tapped a dangerous corner into his own goal: 1-0. But then it became clear that the crowd had booed PSV before the match not because of their dislike, but because of fear of what might come.

After the opening goal, PSV started taking the initiative, although Fabregas and Henry fired a few blanks at the PSV goal, which petrified the PSV



Alex 'the Tank' in heaven after his equaliser.

Photo: WFA/Reuters

fans again. Still, PSV revived and took control. Alex, the best PSV player on the pitch despite his own goal, proved to be that one piece of artillery PSV needed to seal Arsenal's fate. Not called 'the Tank' for nothing, Alex stormed into the box after a free kick by Edison Mendez and nodded the ball decisively passed keeper Lehmann, 1-1, and the

'London upset' was a fact. PSV achievement is a good step for the continuation of Dutch success in international club football and may prove to be decisive in a future UEFA decision to grant more Champions League tickets to the Dutch competition. The quarter final draw is held today, after this newspaper comes out.

Feyenoord management presents findings on club health

ROTTERDAM | The prospect for the Feyenoord supporter legion does not look bright. At least, not in a short term. Feyenoord technical manager Peter Bosz concluded in his report on the club's current position in the Netherlands and Europe that the club should not expect to win the national title before 2009 or maybe even as late as 2011. Bosz stated that the Rotterdam club, which has been burdened by a financial downfall in the last few years, lacks a 'top sport mentality' and that the club has been standing still for years. The supporters may hope that Feyenoord will play for the title and reach the knock-out phase of the UEFA Cup within three years, but winning the title and playing the Champions League knock-out phase will take at least five years, according to Bosz.

Football competition, 27th round

Results:
Ajax-SC Heerenveen 0-1, FC Utrecht-AZ 0-4, Feyenoord-Roda JC 1-1, Heracles Almelo-ADO Den Haag 3-1, PSV-RKC Waalwijk 2-0, FC Groningen-NAC Breda 3-1, Vitesse-Excelsior 2-3, Willem II-Sparta Rotterdam 0-0, NEC Nijmegen-FC Twente.

Overall standings:
1.PSV 27-66, 2.AZ 27-58, 3.FC Twente 27-57, 4.Ajax 27-56, 5.Feyenoord 27-47, 6.Heerenveen 27-41, 7.Roda JC 27-41, 8.NAC Breda 27-41, 9.FC Groningen 27-38, 10.FC Utrecht 27-36, 11.NEC 27-34, 12.Vitesse 27-33, 13.Sparta 27-29, 14.Heracles 27-23, 15.Willem II 27-23, 16.Excelsior 27-20, 17.RKC 27-19, 18.ADO Den Haag 27-15.

More gold for Dutch ice skaters

CALGARY | With the World ice skating distances Championship in Salt Lake City in sight, the Dutch skating caravan gained confidence this weekend by winning several events in the finals of the IUC World Cup series in Calgary.

Sven Kramer and Ireen Wüst will travel to Salt Lake City to finish their first year of ice skating dominance with even more prizes, in order to put fear into the minds of next year's adversaries. So far, they seem to be doing a good job. Kramer has not lost a 5,000 metres since the Olympics in Turin. He proved why in Calgary, when he won the distance and improved his own world record by more than a second to 6'07"48. A few fine

rounds of world cup matches and with 550 points in the classification, he finished before Carl Verheijen and the Italian Enrico Fabris. Wüst could tell her family a double success story after the finals. She proved to be the overall best on the 1,000 and the 1,500 metres. On both distances in the finals, she broke a Dutch national record. She will look towards Salt Lake, where the final prizes of the season will be fought for, with confidence and focus on winning the same distances plus the 3,000 metres, which she skipped in Calgary. Erben Wennemars paid tribute to his already flourishing career by winning the classifications of the 1,000 and 1,500 metres. His achievement at the kilometre was particularly exciting, because he kept the Korean rocket Lee at a minor 30 point distance.

Okken, Sedoc win gold at EC indoor

BIRMINGHAM | Dutch athlete Arnold Okken won the gold medal at the European Indoor Athletics Championship in Birmingham on Sunday. 60 metre hurdles specialist Gregory Sedoc also won the head prize, to the surprise of many.

Okken, the 24-year-old athlete, had already symbolically put a definite end to a long-term period of injuries by winning the national title in Gent, two weeks ago, but the European title on the 800 metres was hailed in as the deserved crown after years of hard work. Okken, who was deemed to become the winner of the event, seemed only to become aware of his victory during the Dutch national anthem, when he fought against his tears. Okken had reached the finals before, in 2002 and

2005. In Madrid, in 2005, he came close to victory but was a victim of the turmoil in the last few hundred metres in the last round. This time, having become wiser from that moment, he dominated the entire race, only to see the Spanish Miguel Quesada come close, but not close enough. Okken finished his race in 1'49"92. Gregory Sedoc surprised even himself when he saw that he had won the 60 metre hurdles. During World Cup indoor in Moscow, last year, Sedoc and his Dutch colleagues completely failed in the first round and were warned by the Dutch athletics federation for their insufficient training methods. The fiasco led to a break-up between Sedoc and his coach, Ineke Bonsen. The training methods improved, and maintaining contact with Bonsen made Sedoc confident enough for Birmingham. And suddenly, he won.

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Sleep Better, Feel Better

By Marcel van Dam

The image of a bed salesman

From a communicative perspective, we have a self-awareness, an identity, an image. If those things are all in line, we speak of a strong personality, a strong brand and something that can be seen as 'real' and reliable. The image of a salesman is not too good, unfortunately.

Looking into the mirror

When we look in the mirror, we can see the external part of our person. Whether we've slept well or not. The outside consists of the things we say and of non-verbal communication, our body language.

My mother-in-law as my image builder

When I visited my mother-in-law for the first time I had planned to come forward with a strong impression. No-one is as critical about a first impression as a mother-in-law. Dressed in a suit and driving in my father's race car I enthusiastically arrived at their house. I was on time, well-dressed, had visited the hairdresser and had studied their interests. I had picked up my girlfriend at her work. A week later, our relationship was over. I heard that her mother had said I looked too slick and that I had been exaggerating my friendliness. 'A real salesman,' was her last remark. This anecdote has made me think ever since. My mother-in-law was rigorous, but also right.

The economic interest of a salesman

Simply put, the salesman is the heart of any economy. Without sales no trade. Without trade no economy. A self-respecting salesman therefore has to take the following demands into account:

- Consumers are more critical and the image of the salesman strengthens that. The salesman should therefore become an advisor instead of someone who tries to force the decision to buy;
- Clients dictate, they are in the driver's seat;
- Customers show 'convenience behaviour': a purchase is no longer unique or special and a customer can rely on years of purchasing;
- Internet is no longer a place for orientation, but also for purchasing. This should make the salesman more focused.

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