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ATLANTIC
& PACIFIC
EXCHANGE PROGRAM

A word from the Managing Directors



Lia Rosenbrand and Elaine Springford

Although 2011 has been under way for some time and while we are busy looking forward, we do want to look back in this issue of *The Exchange* on the past year. Not least because 2010 was a year in which we mourned the passing of Hans Dijkstal and Dave Gribbin – tributes to our dear friends are paid on the following page. Looking back on our activities, it was a year with two faces. On the one hand, as you would

expect from APEP, we organized study programs in eight different countries across three continents. Topics varied from food safety in the US, public accountability in Sweden and international law in our own ‘legal capital’ The Hague to innovation and infrastructure in Japan. At the same time, the year was quieter than normal as APEP unavoidably felt the impact of the financial crisis.

True to our mission of bringing business and government leaders around the table with decision makers and opinion leaders across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, enabling direct, informal and unfiltered exchanges of information and opinion, our programs this year have taken place in each of APEP’s core areas: North America (US, Canada), East Asia (China, Japan) and Europe (various countries). Some were tailor-made programs for APEP Members, some were thematic study trips with the mix of public-private delegates that turn APEP programs into such extraordinary networking opportunities.

Among last year’s successful theme programs were *Food Sustainability & Food Safety in the US* (April), *Inside Brussels 2010* (June) and *Japan, from Stagnation to Innovation* (November).

For all the diversity that is emblematic of APEP’s activities, some themes keep recurring, one of course being US politics. Our Political Week (May 7-13) in Washington DC, with participation of parliamentarians Han ten Broeke, Raymond de Roon and Stientje van Veldhoven, will expose participants to the latest trends in US politics as Washington is cautiously starting to prepare for the next election cycle that will culminate in the presidential vote of November 2012 – and, of course, in a new edition of APEP’s Member-only Presidential Election Week that many of you will be looking forward to.

We at APEP are looking forward to another year with interesting new programs and ideas, new countries and new Members. We extend a warm welcome to our first new Member of this year, TNO.

In these economically challenging times, we and our Members believe that continuing to ‘look over the fence’ is as important as ever – if not more important!

Welcome to our new Member:

TNO

TNO is an independent research organization whose expertise and research make an important contribution to the competitiveness of companies and organizations, to the economy and to the quality of society as a whole. TNO’s unique position is attributable to its versatility and capacity to integrate this knowledge.

Innovation with purpose is what TNO stands for. We develop knowledge not for its own sake but for practical application. To create new products that make life more pleasant and valuable and help companies innovate. To find creative answers to the questions posed by society.

We work for a variety of customers: governments, the SME sector, large companies, service providers and non-governmental organizations. Working together on new knowledge, better products and clear recommendations for policy and processes. As ‘knowledge brokers’ we advise our customers, moreover, on finding the optimum solutions that are geared precisely to the questions they have.

TNO has clustered a variety of disciplines into seven themes: Healthy Living; Industrial Innovation; Defense, Safety and Security; Energy/Geological Survey of the

Netherlands; Mobility; Built Environment; and Information Society.

TNO has established, together with universities, some 30 knowledge centres to develop knowledge in carefully selected fields. These knowledge centres function as innovation centres. It is not only universities but also companies that participate with TNO in knowledge centres.

www.tno.nl





Hans Dijkstal



David J. Gribbin III

Remembering two unique APEP friends

In 2010 APEP lost two extraordinary friends. We would like to take a moment to reflect on this sad loss.

Although it did not come unexpected, we were still shocked to hear on May 9 that our chairman **Hans Dijkstal** had passed away after a long battle with cancer. It was a tough battle towards the end, for Hans but also for his wife Anneke and for their children.

We had known Hans since the 1980s. At the time he was a member of the Tweede Kamer for the VVD party and its spokesman for healthcare. Together with a number of representatives of the healthcare sector, Hans joined one of our delegations to the USA. Since that trip he has always been closely involved with our activities. When at the end of 2003 we were searching for someone to succeed then-Chairman Harry Groen, Hans was approached. After he had studied the books and raised

a few critical questions, he accepted our invitation.

Hans chaired our Board meetings, as well as the meetings of our Netherlands and US Advisory Committees, with great skill and professionalism. But there was always room for moments of light-heartedness, humor was one of Hans' many good qualities. This is also how we will remember him: with a smile on his face.

The news last October that **Dave Gribbin** had passed away did reach us completely unexpected. He too lost the battle against cancer. Many of you will remember Dave as APEP's first American participant. At the time he was Chief of Staff to Congressman Dick Cheney. In 1983 Dave visited the Netherlands with his wife Lori for a three-week program. Back then our exchanges were still on an individual basis and lasted for three weeks. We prepared such a busy program for them that they had to take time

out half way through the program in order to digest the multitude of new experiences and impressions... We often laughed about this afterwards. Dave was an amazing storyteller, as was on display on those occasions when he would explain in lucid detail the dynamics of US elections to the participants in our quadrennial Presidential Election Weeks.

Dave too, had a great sense of humor and was an amiable person. Dave was a member of the board of APEP from October 1995 until April 1998. We will miss both of our unique friends dearly. They have left behind a void in the APEP community.

Efficiency in governance

The Charter group for Public Accountability (in Dutch: Handvestgroep Publiek Verantwoorden, or HPV) marked its tenth anniversary in the fall of 2010. In HPV twelve public service providers are united, from nature protection agency Staatsbosbeheer, immigration and naturalization agency IND to Social Insurance Bank SVB.*

HPV was formed in 2000 when a number of public service providers signed the Charter, committing themselves to accountability not just vis-à-vis the government, but to their customers and to society. These public service providers occupy a position on the intersection of government and Dutch society, a position that requires a careful and profound public accountability strategy. Transparency, trustworthiness, attentiveness to the wishes and needs of stakeholders, availability of services and participation are central axioms in how we conduct our activities. These axioms are written down in *A Concrete Arrangement, a practical guide to achieving our HPV goals* ("Tastbaar Arrangement") and in our governance code ("Code Goed Bestuur"), giving public accountability a central position and real substance in our public services.

It was a cherished wish for HPV to visit a country that is comparable administratively and similar in how it organizes the execution of public policy. We visited Sweden in October of 2010 for a chock-a-block 48-hour working visit.

We wanted to meet, learn from and conduct discussions with our Swedish colleagues and share the insights of Swedish public administration experts. How are contractor-contractee relationships structured? How are supervision, governance and accountability organized? How do the Swedes view their own system? What can we learn from them?

Wearing giant's boots I'll run through my observations and conclusions.

Swedish politicians are not responsible for but also not interested in the management of public services, and little knowledge on the subject is shared between them. It seems that this is considered a given: it has always been this way and the politicians are comfortable with it. Vertical

accountability and supervision are perceived as burdensome and suffocating, according to associate professor Ahlbäck Öberg of Uppsala University. However, from a Dutch perspective these aspects of the Swedish system still seem worth striving for.

Because a standardized managerial report is handed to *Ekonomistyrningsverket*, a supervisory body of the Finance Ministry, only once a year, the Director-General of a government agency in Sweden meets with his/her minister also just once a year.

In the event of major policy changes, ex-ante and ex-post policy evaluations are performed. The policymaking process starts with a committee in which stakeholders, public service providers and members of parliament are represented. The committee works on draft laws and detailed impact assessments. Once a decision on the implementation has been taken and the task has been assigned to an agency, the agency will develop and perform this public service independently. If incidents take place that influence the system, an ex-post policy or business evaluation is performed by *Statskontoret*, the Swedish Agency for Public Management.

Ministries and supervisory agencies stay small. Ministries hire people from *Ekonomistyrningsverket* (185 employees) and *Statskontoret* (75 employees), if need be.

Hence, the Swedish system of supervision and governance is based on trust. It does not detract from the primary function of public service providers; it keeps only a relatively small number of civil servants busy and, rather importantly: it works.

In Sweden, as in the Netherlands, I see a complex government serving a complex society. It differs considerably in that management of public services is left to professionals. Policy decisions are left to politics – as it should be. Bad management



performance by the contracted public service provider has consequences, as it should.

What, other than pursuing a fiction of control and excessive busyboding, prevents us in the Netherlands from adopting a similar approach? The benefits would be considerable. Huge cuts in supervisory bureaucracy, in the volume of internal communication and in the number of regulations. First and foremost, it would create space to focus on public service providers' primary role: that of serving citizens and businesses by implementing the policies and achieving the goals set by politics as efficiently and effectively as possible. Strengthening this focus and monitoring progress is what HPV does.

Kaspar van den Ham,
Executive Secretary of HPV

* The twelve are CIZ, COA, CVZ, IND, DUO, Kadaster, KvK NL, Prorail, RDW, Staatsbosbeheer, SVB and UWV. See also publiekverantwoorden.nl.





Looking (further) East

Tokyo's Shinjuku district

*The following text is a translated and slightly adapted version of a log kept by **Siep Eilander**, Director of Facilities and Real Estate and Chief Procurement Officer for the Dutch Central Government, from November 7 to November 14, 2010.*

This week's log has a special subject: a study trip to Japan which I joined as part of a group of civil servants and representatives of companies operating close to government. The following is a compilation of my impressions from the trip, not a comprehensive report.

The organization of the study trip by APEP, in close cooperation with our embassy in Tokyo, was excellent. Our group of 15 – all Caucasian males; our party scored miserably

in terms of diversity – was led by Roel Bekker (former secretary-general for Central Government Reform, ed.) and included senior representatives of the Government Budget and Spatial Planning directorates and the Court of Audit, a board member of research institute TNO, the ceo's of a Regional Water Authority and public-sector bank BNG, and senior members of the Delta Commissioner's staff. As usual, the 'unofficial' program was as important as the official program.

Why to Japan (for heaven's sake)?

This is a good question, as I'm sure most people would say that whoever decides to travel to East Asia should go to China. That, after all, is where it all happens these days.

So why, for heaven's sake, did we visit Japan?

In preparation for the trip we were given a presentation by Professor Rien Segers, a Japan expert at the University of Groningen whose most recent book is titled "Japan and the irresistible Asianization of the world". From this book I distilled the following

topics, which together offered an excellent reason for taking a closer look at Japan:

- Important developments taking place in both Japan and the Netherlands tend to happen in Japan just a little earlier or with more intensity: the ageing of the population, financial problems, emergency management. It is interesting to see how the Japanese deal with these challenges, also because of the commonalities between Japan and the Netherlands: the Rhineland model is essentially closer to the Japanese than to the American approach.
- Japan has already experienced, and overcome, a credit crisis after the economic bubble burst in the 1990s.
- Japan is still the world's third-largest economy and a prominent player in the process of Asianization. (South-)Eastern Asia is becoming a global economic power and the region is taking the lead in challenging American domination. While we are still inclined to look westward, the 21st century may well become the century of Asia.



Delegation members Siep Eilander (at left), Thomas Meijer and Peter van den Berg meeting with representatives of the Japanese Court of Audit



Upon arrival in Edogawa City, a warm welcome by Mayor Masami Tada...



... acknowledged by delegation leader Roel Bekker...

- Japanese society's inherent resilience and the innovative power of its corporate sector are the foundations on which Japan – as it had done twice before – will re-invent itself as a global player.

Hence the study trip's theme: *Japan, from stagnation to innovation*. With this hypothesis in mind, I headed east.

The program

A significant portion of the program was dedicated to water and disaster management. Wim Kuijken, Commissioner for the Delta Program, had been involved in designing the program but was ultimately unable to join in person (he was represented by his chief of staff, ed.). We were given insight into political and especially economic developments through visits to the Bank of Japan, universities, the Dutch embassy and the EU-Japan Centre. Together with Thomas Meijer (Court of Audit) and Peter van den Berg (Ministry of Finance) I also spent one afternoon as a guest of the Japanese Court of Audit.

Overall impression

This was my first visit to Japan, and a week is definitely not enough to offer any authoritative opinions on Japan. However, I will gladly share some impressions.

My first impression: it's amazing how well 33 million Tokyans manage to live together in an area the size of the Province of Utrecht! Disciplined and friendly, they crowd a city whose streets feel absolutely safe and appear spotlessly clean – graffiti is nowhere to be found. This immaculate image is perhaps symbolic for the message this program seems

to be conveying: if we look for a partner or a basis for doing business in Asia, Japan is an obvious candidate. It has a decent rule-of-law society, a stable democracy and a reliable state with an excellent education system and outstanding healthcare. Japan also occupies a strategic position in close proximity to the emerging markets and, on top of that, it is still the world's third-largest economy!

At the same time, Japanese society seems to suffer from a measure of 'fossilization'. The Japanese find it hard to depart from old habits and traditions. Women hardly play an equal role in the labor process. Another employment-related example: the moment a director is promoted to the position of director-general, his fellow directors will retire to avoid the shame of being subordinated to their former colleague. Retirement, by the way, is often only partial; 'retirees' often continue to work in a different capacity, also because income from pensions tends to be low.

In general, there appear to be many obstacles in Japanese society to real modernization. One discussion partner with an outspoken opinion was Yoko Ishikura, Professor of International Business Strategy at Hitotsubashi University, who was invited by the Dutch government to deliver the 'Innovation Lecture' in The Hague last December. The limited number of Japanese who speak English fluently or who hold top positions in international organizations is symptomatic of a society that is not open enough, whereas openness should be a factor of success.

An absolute strength of Japan, and great to experience, is what I will call a culture of

optimistic 'engineerability'. It is a country of true engineers. Every analysis is sharp and elaborate, every theory well thought out. I found this quest for perfection, the professionalism – a teacher is still a teacher – inspiring. There is a flipside, however. One example: At the Court of Audit we received an elaborate exposé of how they had conducted an investigation into the implementation of pension regulations. But asked whether they were concerned about, and perhaps considering an inquiry into, the system's long-term financial sustainability the presenters fell silent. Several of the people we spoke to pointed at an inherent weakness of the Japanese economy: there is much investment in research & development, but little in the 'immaterial' capabilities needed to make innovations pay off, such as software development, human resources and marketing. According to Tsutomu Miyagawa, a prominent professor of Economics at the prestigious Gakushuin University (traditionally the place where Japan's aristocracy and royal family are educated), this is the main reason why in some areas Japan is staying behind.

There is a useful lesson for the Netherlands in all this. Whereas we are often criticized for not investing enough in R&D, we are doing quite well when it comes to this type of immaterial investments. It is important to keep an eye on both aspects, in the realization that the Netherlands remains, above all, a trading nation.

A third thing that struck me, from the moment we arrived, was the apparent lack of efficiency. At every meeting or reception, a lot of low-paid employment was visible.



... followed by an exchange of gifts...



... and a photo op.

Personnel members were trailing officials with business cards on a tray or standing ceremoniously on the side, sweeping crumbs, serving coffee or tea, and so on. Should we view this as a reproachable way of hiding unemployment, or are these laudable small jobs that we, with all our rationalization, have unfortunately lost in our societies? You tell me.

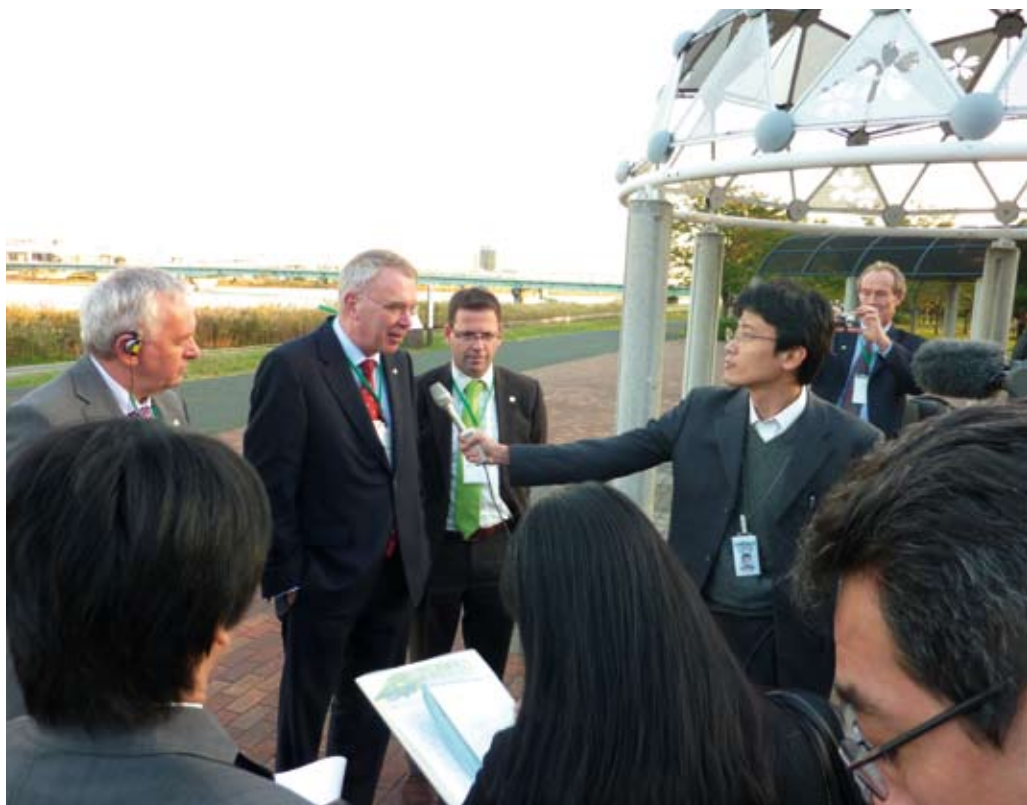
Threat 1: the economy (and politics)

The effectiveness of repetition as a didactic principle was proven beyond doubt during this trip, which turned us into experts on (the short version of) the history of Japan's economy. The essence is that Japan managed to accommodate, perhaps one should say mask, its 1997 credit crisis, not through policies or reforms of its own design but thanks to the exports of its engineering industry to countries that until 2008-09 experienced strong economic growth, particularly the US and China. Japan's national debt is multiple times that of the Netherlands, but has been less problematic so far because the bulk of it is financed domestically from excess household savings. It seems a ticking bomb, though, which could explode once interest rates go up. Still, cost-cutting is not on the agenda; instead, Japan is opting for a forward-pushing strategy with a central role for investments in R&D in areas such as green technology and robotics. One problem with this strategy, however, is that the engineering sector represents no more than 20% of GDP. Priority should be given to labor productivity in the services sector – see my earlier remarks on the efficiency factor.

Politically, Japan is somewhat at drift. After the popular dandy Koizuma, who was prime minister from 2002 to 2007, governments and prime ministers have come and gone. Yet keep in mind that in Japan, politicians are there mainly for the singing and the dancing. The real power rests with the bureaucrats, the study friends of the managers at Honda and other corporations (who, by the way, don't earn much more than their friends in government; even in the private sector salary curves are not very steep). This system does appear to be

in decline since the conservative Liberal Democrats have lost their majority and voters seem to have lost confidence in just about everyone.

Of growing importance to Japan are the emerging economies in its vicinity with which it is becoming increasingly intertwined. In China, nine million people work for Japanese companies. Tense bilateral relations remain a handicap however, in part because Japan has been slow coming to terms with its role in WWII.



Delegation leader Roel Bekker being interviewed by local media in Edogawa

Threat 2: Demographics

Clearly, this threat is closely linked to the first one. How can a country expect to grow when its population is at risk of halving within the next hundred years? An extraordinary increase in productivity would be required to compensate for Japan's low birth rate, which does invoke such a scenario. We in the Netherlands would better consider ourselves blessed with our relatively open society and immigration levels that, at a minimum, will help maintain the population at its current size. In Japan, with its closed culture, immigration is not a theme; it is almost taboo. Will robots have to fill labor shortages in health care?

Threat 3: Nature

The Netherlands and Japan have a long tradition of cooperation in water and disaster management. In the 19th century Dutch water experts helped dig canals and control river flows. The word 'krib' from the vocabulary of Dutch water managers was absorbed into the Japanese language. As a result of ongoing urbanization, water management has only become more important. Add rising sea levels and the ever-present threat of earthquakes (Japan suffers over 100,000 quakes a year, mostly small ones), and horror scenarios come to mind. One solution is the *superlevee*, a broad river embankment with a long back slope which in extreme circumstances can overflow (ideally in a controlled manner) without breaking, thus preventing severe floods. In the Tokyo suburb of Edogawa an interesting way has been found to combine this concept with urban renewal. Although the program offered an overdose of superlevee terminology for me, it is clearly a strong concept that has caught the attention of engineers of the Netherlands' Delta Program.

So what are the conclusions?

As I have noted earlier, a week in Japan does not make one a Japanologist. With that in mind:

- The Japanese, too, don't really know all the answers to the challenges of today. They have opted for a forward strategy which has worked in the past, but which offers no guarantees for future success.
- Somehow I find this observation comforting. It suggests that there will continue to be a need for knowledge sharing and cooperation.
- But who knows, the Japanese approach may prove effective. Japan is entering a third wave of modernization. The first

ended with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies, the second brought us superior Japanese quality and the Prius, and the third... who knows? After all, many of the parameters for Japan are positive.

- Still, a question mark is appropriate here considering Japan's three ticking bombs: the price for its national debt will have to be paid sooner or later, there is not even the start of a solution to the depopulation problem, and when will that big earthquake hit?
- Japan is a reliable beacon in a world that faces an unavoidable process of asianization in the 21st century. We have more in common with Japan than with the new super power China. It may be wise, in other words, not to focus our attention exclusively on China.
- On a more general note: we still look too much to the West rather than to the East. Our historical ties offer a good starting point for an intensification of Dutch-Japanese relations.

Does all this match the hypothesis with which Professor Segers waved us off?

In part. Do not underestimate the resilience, the discipline, the working ethos, the engineers' mentality of the Japanese! At the same time, the problems faced are colossal and it is possible to doubt Japan's ability to achieve real change and more openness in its society

and economy. The example of Japan also serves as a warning: not solving the problems behind the 1997 credit crisis (including bad loans) has contributed to a stagnation that still endures 14 years later. Hopes of leaving this behind through innovation-driven growth may prove too optimistic. Still, you never know. I am enormously curious. I will definitely continue to keep an eye on Japan.

Well well, what a fascinating and demanding program... did you have fun too?

I enjoyed it thoroughly. I did not get to see much of Japanese culture, but the visits to the Meiji Temple and the Nezu Museum certainly tasted like more. One lasting impression will be the highly dynamic character of the Tokyo metropolis. Our hotel was near the Shinjuku station, through which 1.5 million train and subway travellers pass each day. A giant flow of people which, especially after dusk, looks like a mass choreography in which every participant somehow manages to find his place, with the meticulousness of a swarm of starlings. I also enjoyed the company of my fellow delegation members, contacts that were worthwhile in their own right.

Anything else worth mentioning?

Definitely noteworthy was the bright-orange electric car of Dutch Ambassador Philip de Heer, with which he made a shattering impression on the delegation.



Dutch ambassador Philip de Heer (right) and his electric car



No California dreamin'

by: Marc Josten, current affairs editor for the KRO public broadcasting organization and an assistant professor of Journalism at the University of Amsterdam. This article was written in the summer of 2010.



From the very beginning we knew: this would not be a trip like any other. Not a band on its annual tour, no business as usual. No freewheeling either. This was a journey that held promise – an exciting promise: the opportunity to see our own near future. What is was all about? News media in the digital era.

On a rainy morning in June the participants of the study program – bored by excessive boarding controls – met in the waiting room of their gate at Amsterdam Airport: Karen de Bok, Hugo van der Parre, Carel Kuyl, Gijs van Beuzekom and me, all professionals with the Dutch Public Broadcasting Organization (NPO).

Armed with the knowledge that our industry is on a threshold, perhaps even in the middle of a revolution, but without even the faintest idea of what the outcome will be, we set out to learn more about developments in the US, a country always ten years ahead.

Thanks to the skills of Lia Rosenbrand, managing director of the Atlantic & Pacific Exchange Program (APEP), our schedule

was filled with visits to witty experts and representatives of famous media companies, mostly based in West Coast cities. Our first stop was Berkeley University. To be precise, the Berkeley Center for New Media. Ken Goldberg is the Center's director, as well as a professor, an artist and an internationally known robot scientist. As he puts it: "Robots are the ultimate translation of what media used to be: the interface between men and their environment." With the help of robot technology Goldberg developed a new model for audience participation on the Internet, initiated and sponsored by the Department of State. Named *Opinion Space*, the project is described as follows on its web site: *The U.S. Department of State is interested in your perspectives and input on a series of important foreign policy questions. Opinion*

Space is a new discussion forum designed to engage participants from around the world. Every participant chooses a 'point of view' on a global opinion map. Your position is not based on geography or predetermined categories, but on similarity of opinion: those who agree on basic issues are neighbors, those who are far apart have agreed to disagree. You can instantly see where you stand in relation to other participants; by reviewing their comments, you help the community highlight the most insightful ideas.

It was time to tell Goldberg about the harsh Dutch reality that poses a dilemma for all of us. We are already flooded with opinions, but they are mostly intimidating and rude, while we are desperately longing for fact-based knowledge. How could his system possibly be of any help to us?

“It’s not only opinions that we get”, says Goldberg. “What is more important is that people deliver new perspectives. For example, someone had an interesting suggestion on how the State Department could interact better with the Pentagon. And don’t forget; there are many facts hidden behind those opinions.”

And yes, Goldberg said that he has found the recipe for getting high-grade responses: give credit to your best comments. Not with money but with appreciation. “Call them, mail them and tell them how great they are.”

Next stop: Mountain View, CA.

By minivan we drove to the south side of the San Francisco Bay, into the heart of Silicon Valley. You can’t miss Google Campus. A huge dinosaur, filled with plastic pink flamingos, dominates the surroundings. This has to be the place where all nerdy kids of this world gather.



Google Campus

In a modern version of a cubicle Chris Gaither, senior manager news industry relations, showed the latest inventions of the online search mogul. The ultimate showpiece is called *Fast Flip*, which lets you scroll all major news sites on special topics as fast as you can. Take the oil spill in the Gulf. In the blink of an eye you can see the latest news on the disaster from a multitude of sources. This seems to fit nicely with the company’s mission statement. In the words of Gaither: “We never break the news, we distribute it, but then a lot faster and much more intelligently than others do.”



Olivia Ma

Half an hour later Olivia Ma, news manager of You Tube news & politics, took over the stage. With tremendous speed she presented an even more tremendous amount of data. She explained to us how the world’s leading web video broadcaster is moving faster and faster toward news.

Peak moments so far: the Obama campaign in 2008 (with 1800 uploads) and the uprising in Iraq last year.

Ma: “Our philosophy is that everyone with a cell phone or a flip camera is a reporter. Not a journalist. Journalists have to provide context to their subjects, Reporters only report.”

Chris Gaither walked us back to our van. As we spotted Richard Branson’s first commercial Zeppelin on the roof of the main hall, we couldn’t resist asking Gaither, a former journalist for *The Los Angeles Times*, why he gave up his position as an independent news getter to become a Google employee.

“Imagine a spaceship landing in your backyard”, he smiled. “Could you imagine staying inside your house? Maybe you can. Not me.”

From San Francisco we moved to LA (a flight of less than an hour that takes half a day due to security procedures). We talked with a writer of the online publishing network Indymedia and with the deputy bureau chief of CNN Western Region. Interesting conversations which, however, revealed nothing new to us.

A real powerhouse of new media thinking we encountered at the Annenberg School for Communications & Journalism, one of the five outstanding master studies in journalism in the US (which, by the way, has its price: an annual fee of \$40,000). At the entrance of the campus we met world-famous journalist Marc Cooper, also

an associate professor at Annenberg. Cooper is the shake-all-things-up kind of guy.

He compares the transition of the media nowadays with the situation at the time when Gutenberg invented the art of book printing. Everybody watches and senses change, but nobody knows where it is all going to go. “Could you imagine Gutenberg predicting the Enlightenment, the French Revolution or the rise of democracy? No he couldn’t. What we all see and know today is that there’s no limit anymore on publishing, everybody can be his own publisher. But you still don’t know what the future will bring. The only thing you know for sure is that the past has gone. The papers are dead. There will never be readers again who are willing to pay for their information.”

A reason for hope is that Mr. Cooper foresees a future for in-depth research journalism, albeit in a completely new fashion. He loves to give the example of the so-called OffTheBus project, for which he was hired as a curator. Together with four professionals and 150 amateur journalists (recruited after an advertisement in web journal *The Huffington Post*) Cooper worked through all of the files on the 2008 campaign financing of both Democrats and Republicans. The project’s masterpiece achievement however was something completely different. Late in the campaign Cooper got the buzz that Obama was preparing a canvassing blitzkrieg on the Iraq war. The Annenberg professor sent his amateurs all over the country that day to try to follow the Obama canvassing team going from door to door. The outcome was surprising: the voters weren’t interested at all in the Iraq war, but in their income situation. *It’s the economy, stupid* – revisited. Offthebus.net published about this turning point in the campaign way ahead of the traditional media.

Cooper’s mission statement: no subsidies to papers, but to broadband! When we told him our next visit would be to *The LA Times*, he started laughing out loud. “Of all papers this one easily qualifies for being the biggest Dinosaur. Watch out! You’ll be entering Jurassic Park.”

Within half an hour we entered the colossal *LA Times* building at Spring Street, downtown.

Cooper didn’t exaggerate that much.

photo: jelastic/Flickr

photo: kvox/Flickr





photo: Kansas Sebastian/Flickr

LA Times building

The newsroom looked very much like the one Michael Connelly described in *The Scarecrow*, his thriller on new media: dark and dull. After the recent near-bankruptcy the newsroom had been diminished to 600 journalists – still not that small – with more and more editors switching to the online edition. So far, so good. But when the managing director explained the most recent earnings model, we were in shock. If this was the future of journalism, there will be hell to pay. “Our online readers have made it clear that they don’t want to spend their dollars for using our site”, said the director. “So we decided to let them pay with data. We sell the data submitted by our readers on the market.” As a result, Walmart or Nike will pay the online version in return for the fine-tuned data of the online-readership.

Not much later, the catharsis came. Our hopes were rekindled and dreams returned in a city where we expected it the least.

Sin City. Las Vegas. Located a few blocks away from the strip, in a district ominously called Paradise, are the headquarters of the *Las Vegas Sun*. There Rob Curley, the president and executive editor of the new media division of the *Las Vegas Sun*, gave us a mind-blowing presentation. If there was anything that came close to seeing the future of

journalism, we all decided afterwards, its name is Curley.

No kidding.

Just on the day of our visit Curley received the award for best news web site in the USA. And that’s not all. He was also awarded a Pulitzer Prize for a report on the high death rate among the builders of a new casino. And he may well get



photo: jclastica/Flickr

Pioneering journalist Rob Curley

another one for a report on the misuse of water in Las Vegas, a city of two million in the middle of a desert.

What makes the *Las Vegas Sun* tick so well? The answer that we were given was straight and clear-cut: while they largely eliminated print, they did not cut back on the quality of their journalism. The paper edition of the *Las Vegas Sun* is nowadays not more than an eight-page insert distributed with its main competitor, *The Review Journal*. This step gave the *Sun* the time and space to invest in its online version. On its web site the *Sun* focuses on popular items, like the history of the *Las Vegas Strip* (a great visual experience!), the sports most popular with the locals (wrestling and highschool basketball), celebrity watching and other wacky items.

The paper edition is used for the profound, award-winning journalism, with no pressure from reader evaluations etcetera. Curley: “With online reporting on wrestling and boxing we have to please the millions, with our in-depth journalism we sometimes don’t get more than 800 pageviews in total. But that’s the journalism we win our prizes with.”

After having been shown an iPad that is presented to all visitors of Vegas hotels (a very personalized, tailor-made *The Daily Me*-kind of virtual paper), we left the building. Thrilled and confused we entered the desert heat.

On the last day of our journey, over breakfast in a greasy Seattle hotel diner, we gave each other a glance that confirmed what we all felt: mission accomplished.

Mission accomplished? So far. Now we have to keep up the inspiration. To bring the fresh ideas to life. The virtual reality has become the main reality. one that we must face together. And that’s no California dreamin’ at all.

APEP in 2011

APEP continuously develops new programs: both tailor-made (exclusively for APEP Members) and thematic, invitational programs.

Theme programs organized by APEP in 2011 will include:

- **Combating and preventing 'football hooliganism': the English approach** (April 6-10)
A study trip for senior Dutch officials (government, police, football authorities, academic experts) interested in how football hooliganism is combated by clubs and authorities in the UK. As a recently adopted law on football disorder and public safety is being implemented in the Netherlands, experts and authorities are eager to learn from experiences with the UK's Football (Disorder) Act and to see how clubs, police, government and football authorities cooperate to improve the atmosphere and safety around football matches.
- **Washington Political Week** (May 7-13)
The Washington Political Week offers participants a close-up look at current trends in U.S. politics and a look ahead to the 2012 Presidential elections. The program will consist of face-to-face discussion meetings with senior representatives from politics, government, business, lobby groups and the media in the US capital. The mixed delegation will be joined by several Members of Dutch Parliament.
- **Inside Brussels 2011** (June)
By submerging them into the Brussels machinery for some 50 hours, this APEP program allows corporate executives, civil servants and NGO managers to gain insight into the institutional makeup, decision-making processes and lobbying scene of the EU.
- **Financial Reform in Brussels & Washington** (August/September)
The reform and strengthening of financial markets regulation and oversight on both sides of the Atlantic will be the focus of this week-long study trip in late summer. We will take senior government policymakers, executives from the financial sector and members of Parliament to the EU and US capitals for a first-hand look at post-crisis financial and economic policies, with special attention for the role of newly established or reinforced regulatory bodies.
- **Asia: Japan/China/India**
Following the success of our programs in India (2009) and Japan (2010, see pages 5-8), APEP is working on ideas for new programs in both countries. It goes without saying that we will also continue to build upon our long-time experience with tailor-made and theme programs in China.

More information?

Would you like to find out more about any of these programs? Drop us a note at exchange@apep.nl and we will be happy to provide you with further information or to send you an invitation!

Also, if you are interested in what else is being planned or if you have other questions about our activities, do not hesitate to call or e-mail us (full contact details can be found below), or visit our web site at www.apep.nl.

Member requests

Serving APEP Members with programs-upon-request is our priority. Is your organization a Member and do you have ideas or requests for tailor-made study trips, or are you wondering whether your organization is an APEP Member, please call or e-mail us; we welcome your suggestions and enquiries at any time!

We warmly recommend
our travel partner:



www.atpi.nl



Participants in a 2002 visit to the Golfech nuclear power station in France

APEP Alumni Network

A novelty in 2011 will be the initiation of an APEP Alumni Network. In the nearly three decades of its existence, nearly three thousand influential and talented civil servants, politicians, business people, academics and journalists have participated in APEP study programs. With many we are still in touch; of others we have lost track. The APEP Alumni Network aims to stay connected or re-connect with former participants and to connect our alumni with each other.

Were you a participant in an APEP program in the 1980s or 1990s, or are you a recent participant who has changed jobs since? In that case we may not have your current e-mail address. Please drop us a note that includes your name and year of participation at exchange@apep.nl, or connect with the "APEP past participants" group on LinkedIn, and we will make sure that you will be invited to join the Alumni Network and keep you informed of events that we will be organizing exclusively for APEP Alumni. Among the special guests at the first such event, to take place later this year, will be Ivo Daalder, the US Ambassador to NATO.

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Colophon

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