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APEP's anniversary event**



**Hopeful times?
Election Week blog**

WINTER 2009

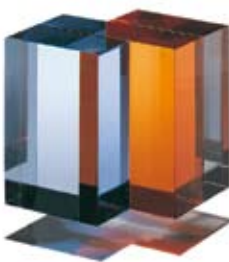
The Exchange



**Zooming in:
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ATLANTIC
& PACIFIC
EXCHANGE PROGRAM

25  YEARS

A word from the Managing Directors



Lia Rosenbrand and Elaine Springford

Another year has passed and what a year it has been! 2008 was an extremely busy year in which we realized many programs-at-request for our Members and managed to involve many non-Member organizations in our invitation-based programs. It started with the IPO Environmental Commission visiting Geneva in January and ended with a trip for 100.000+ municipalities to Strasbourg late November. In between we had programs on a wide variety of topics ranging from the retail market in London to financial policy in Spain, combating obesity in the UK, culture in Liverpool and renewable energy in Stockholm. We also ventured for the first time to Russia.

Highlights of the year include our Inside China program which took place in late spring, a mere two months before the start

of the Beijing Olympics, and of course our quadrennial Presidential Election Week which offered our participants a once-in-a-lifetime experience as close witnesses of Barack Obama's historic election victory. On pages 4-10 you will find detailed impressions of both programs.

On November 17 we celebrated APEP's 25th anniversary with a gathering in the Pilgrim Fathers' Church in Rotterdam Delfshaven (see also opposite page). A memorable evening where we listened to Jan Vayne on the piano and to keynote speaker Wim Kok, former Prime Minister and leader of the Election Week delegation, who told the guests how he found APEP's Election Week an extraordinary event, both for the insight and access to key policy and opinion makers it provided and for the level and quality of the delegation – words that we took as a great compliment.

As the high demand for quality study programs in 2008 has shown, there is after 25 successful years still reason for the Atlantic & Pacific Exchange Program to continue its work promoting international dialogue and understanding. By bringing together face-to-face (potentially) influential people from the Netherlands with prominent and knowledgeable individuals and organizations in other parts of Europe, North America and East Asia, APEP in 2009 will continue, in its own modest way, to work for international dialogue.

The agenda promises another year full of interesting and varied programs, starting with one in India. An invitation may have landed on your desk already for a program

in spring that will take the temperature in Washington after President Obama's first 100 days in office (see also back page). Also under development are programs on water management in China and climate change in the US, as well as our well-known Inside China and Inside Washington programs.

On a final note, we are sorry to see a good friend go. Lisette Tiddens decided it was time for new blood on our foundation's Board, of which she has been a member for the last 15 years, and resigned effective December 31, 2008. We would like to thank Lisette for all of the tremendous work she has done for APEP and wish her the very best in her continued role as secretary-general of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) in Brussels and any future endeavours. Her position as Treasurer has been taken over by Ton Nelissen. We are pleased to announce that Nurten Albayrak-Temur, director of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), has joined our Board as of January 1.

We would like to wish all of our readers a healthy and happy 2009!

APEP Scholarship 2009

In 2009, an APEP Scholarship will again be available for a young, talented professional nominated by an APEP Member organization. The recipient will be offered a two-week, tailor-made study trip to the United States or China, on a subject of the Scholar's choosing.

APEP Members are welcome to nominate a candidate for the Scholarship prior to May 1.

Last year's recipient was Selma Huizer of public sector bank BNG (see page 10 and www.apep.nl). We also offer two-week Scholarship programs in the Netherlands to young professionals from other countries where APEP is active. In early spring Ms. Deng Yingying of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries will be the next to arrive in the Netherlands at the invitation of APEP.

APEP 25 celebration

APEP Members, representatives of partner organizations and other APEP friends joined us on November 17 to celebrate our 25th anniversary with a dinner event in the Pilgrim Fathers Church in Rotterdam Delfshaven. We thank our guests and our keynote speaker, former Prime Minister Wim Kok, as well as stand-up comedian Wilko Terwijn and pianist Jan Vayne for their contributions to this special and enjoyable evening!



The Pilgrim Fathers Church

APEP – non-profit, neutral and independent – was established as the Atlantic Exchange Program in June 1983 ('Pacific' was added to the name in 1989) by an American journalist, Bob Williams. It began arranging study trips that enabled first-hand exchanges of knowledge and opinion between

policy and decision makers, outside of the regular diplomatic and business channels, with the aim of improving mutual understanding between the Netherlands and the United States. APEP has since expanded its activities to (East and South) Asia, Canada, and various parts of Europe.



Wim Kok, APEP's Lia Rosenbrand and Marcel van der Linden (Li.Re Holding) listening to Jan Vayne...



... who played the piano...



... and the church organ (top right).



APEP chairman Hans Dijkstal

Welcome to our new Members:

- Caldic (www.caldic.nl)
- Chapeau Communicatie (www.denhaagmediagroep.nl)
- Corus Group (www.corus.nl)
- HDN Beheer (Hypotheek Data Network)
- Li.Re Holding
- MBO Raad (www.mboraad.nl)
- MKB-Nederland (www.mkb.nl)
- Nyenrode Business University (www.nyenrode.nl)
- Province of Limburg (www.limburg.nl)
- Public Matters (www.publicmatters.nl)
- WSW - Social Housing Guarantee Fund (www.wsw.nl)



Below is a compilation of excerpts from the weblog kept by APEP's Rick Bezemer on www.a pep.nl during the Presidential Election Week (November 1-7, 2008). The boxed texts are translated and adapted excerpts from PEW participant Peter van Keulen's weblog, which can be found in Dutch on the website of his company, www.publicmatters.nl.

Election Week 2008 Weblog Hopeful times, or 'Obama Bubble'?

Sunday November 2: An army of Davids vs. Goliath

Our prominent 2008 Presidential Election Week delegation, led by former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, has arrived to a Washington DC that is waiting with bated breath for Tuesday's elections. In this predominantly Democratic city, most of its inhabitants seem reluctant to even think of an Obama victory Tuesday, afraid of being disappointed. The polls give little reason for worries but worried they are nonetheless. Not so Democratic strategist (most recently

on the Edwards '08 campaign) Joe Trippi, one of our dinner guests this evening.

Trippi predicts a massive victory for Obama, with well over 300 votes in the Electoral College (270 are needed to win). He is surprised (even calls it a miracle) that the McCain campaign has been able to stay competitive, the Republicans having such an unpopular president and unpopular war. It is, however, the financial crisis that has worked the most favorably for the Obama campaign. After all, on economic issues the voters tend to favor the Democratic Party.

Also, the Internet and new technologies are a big factor in Obama's success – having caused an enormous shift in power. Whereas the Old Media used to tell people what to think, New Media have shifted this power to basically anybody. Trippi likens the old media to Goliath whereas new media are creating an army of Davids. What the Obama campaign has cleverly done is hand out slingshots to these Davids.

Our second guest of the evening is Terry Nelson, a prominent Republican strategist who served as National Political Director



Delegation leader Wim Kok with Congressman Chris Van Hollen

for Bush-Cheney '04 and lead strategist of John McCain's presidential campaign in its early stages in 2007. He admits that the Republican Party was always going to face a difficult election. Yet McCain was the only candidate who had a shot at winning: he was consistently Republican enough but also different enough to have a chance.

Responding to a question about Sarah Palin, Nelson argues that she has been an effective candidate, even one of the most significant candidates since World War II. The Republican campaign made a mistake in focusing too much on her being 'small town'; they should have focused more on McCain. Who himself had said he would pick the most experienced candidate and put 'country first', but instead put politics first. Nonetheless, had he picked anybody else, it would all have been over already. Palin was a risky choice, but a worthwhile risk. Trippi agrees and even calls her a 'brilliant pick', she appeals to exactly those people that are having problems connecting with Obama.

Monday November 3: Looking for the American Dream

There is a Chinese saying that goes: 'may you live in interesting times'. Rebecca Rimel, president of the Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes us by saying that we have indeed arrived in interesting times. Times, however, in which change is needed. In collaboration with several prominent think-tanks Pew, a nonpartisan nonprofit research center, currently runs the 'American Dream Project' which deals with various aspects

of economic mobility, including income inequality. Pew research has shown that the American Dream is not as attainable as it once was. Only 50% of all Americans believe that their children will do better than they. A staggering 70% believe that the 'rich get richer and the poor get poorer'.

Federal Reserve vice chairman Donald Kohn briefly explains the place of the 'Fed' in the U.S. political structure and goes on to talk about the current financial crisis. He admits we would not be in this situation if there weren't some flaws in the way the market is regulated. The whole regulatory system is going to be called into question. Upon leaving the Fed, we start preparing mentally for the big day ahead. In our first meeting of the day we were warned by advisors of the Albright Group (founded by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright) that although prospects are good,

a Democratic victory is most definitely 'not in the bag'...

Tuesday November 4, Election Day: It's the economy, stupid!

The big day has finally arrived. Hopefully, before we all go to bed, we will know who the next President of the United States will be. Dan Lucas of the 21st Century Democrats, a progressive group, believes we will know by 22:00 hours. One of the things 21st Century Democrats do is identify voters and get them to go to the polls. They currently have people in Montana trying to get Indians in particular to vote – around 95% of whom tend to vote democratic). In Montana, a state with many Indian reservations where you can register and vote on the same day, the Democrats have not won in over 40 years; now they are up by 1 point in the polls.

Pride and sacrifice

Much talking, many impressions on this exciting and historical day. Throughout the day we see Americans radiating pride. They are proud of their country, proud of their democracy, and proud that a bunch of Dutch people have come to witness it all. How Dutch is our first reaction – one of frowning amazement – upon seeing the long lines outside polling stations of people waiting for hours for a chance to cast their vote. I guess you could *frame* this more positively by emphasizing how extraordinary it is that people sacrifice so much time to exercise their fundamental democratic rights. A highlight was the briefing by a >



Polling station official

former chairman of the Republican National Committee, Frank Fahrenkopf, who used to work for Reagan and is now a vice-chairman of the commission organizing the TV debates. A unique and convincing analysis. Barack is going to win. Big time. Too bad, for now, but the larger the victory, the bigger the responsibility. And then let's see if they can live up to the expectations. In short, we've got to swallow this and hit back hard at the mid-term elections of 2012. An understandable take on these elections from a Republican... Next, a peek inside a polling station. In the Netherlands we tend to forget that Americans are expected to cast their vote not just for a new president, but on many other issues as well. As a result, some voters spend 20 minutes in their booth – no wonder lines are long.

From: Lobbyblog Peter van Keulen



Election Day was not only about Obama and McCain. Delegation members are seen here listening to campaign workers for Jack Evans and Carol Schwartz, candidates for the District of Columbia council.



Congressman Van Hollen (D-Md) has taken time out of his hectic schedule today – his House seat is up for re-election today in his home state of Maryland – to briefly meet with us. He has high hopes for today and has already spotted a very high turnout; in many places there are long lines at the polling stations. He predicts historic House elections. After the enormous gains made by the Democrats in the House of Representatives in 2006, they are expected to increase their majority this year – the first time Democrats would achieve this since 1934.

Yes, we can!

The delegation was part of history tonight as we witnessed Barack Obama being elected the next President of the United States at the official Washington DNC party. The crowd went wild when MSNBC proclaimed Obama the winner. The streets of Washington immediately filled with thousands of people and honking cars celebrating the victory. Thousands, most of them young, gathered in front of the White House to celebrate.

Wednesday November 5: A change has come

The thread running through all our meetings today is the question what President Obama's foreign and security

policies will look like. We go to the State Department and the White House (National Security Council), have lunch with former US Ambassador to the United Nations and former Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, and talk to Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution who advises Obama on foreign policy, before we head for a reception graciously hosted by the Dutch Ambassador.

Spoils system

The day after. Great to see how emotions settle down and how the historic election result is given over to analysts. At a day like this, the spotlight naturally turns to the *spoils system*. Many senior civil servants in the US are political appointees. By January 20 they will have to vacate their desks to make way for Democratic successors. Transition teams are being formed to facilitate the transfer of responsibilities from one administration to the next. A room for the Obama-Biden team has already been set up at each department. And the Big Speculation Game has begun – the guessing about who will be nominated by the President-elect for key posts will dominate the next few weeks.

From: Lobbyblog Peter van Keulen

Mr. Pickering, author of *America's Role in the World, Foreign Policy Choices for the Next President*, at whirlwind speed outlines his view of what these new foreign and security policies ought to be. Top priority is the management of the worldwide economic system. Secondly, he names the development nexus: funding foreign aid and helping other countries build prosperity. Thirdly, energy, climate change and the environment will need to be dealt with as a whole and not separately. And lastly, there's the security question: disarmament, arms control and nuclear proliferation.

Ivo Daalder analyzes the election results for us and tells us what to expect in the coming 77 days until the inauguration. In his view, Obama achieved victory by turning out more African American voters than ever before (3 million more than in the previous elections) and by winning 75% of the young vote as well as two-thirds of the Hispanic and Asian vote. Important factors were also the impopularity of President Bush ("Quite frankly, anybody running for the Democrats should have won"), Obama's personality and the fact that he hardly made any mistakes. Whereas his opponent ran the worst campaign ever: focusing too much on Iraq, admitting to not understanding the economy and letting Palin strip him of the possibility of playing the 'inexperienced card' against Obama.

Thursday November 6: Hopeful times?

Some would say the IMF is 'back in business' considering the growth of its clientele in these times of crisis, but IMF director Age Bakker does not agree. The IMF faces a bit of an identity crisis and has just reduced its staff by 15-20%. Now stronger and more focused, the IMF, he feels, should play a larger role in the international crisis, as a coordinating platform for the national regulatory bodies rather than the regulator of the regulators. We are also joined by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the IMF who is not cheering up the group. He confirms that the world economy is not doing well, but thinks we could see a turnaround by the end of 2009.

After a private tour of the Capitol building we have lunch with Randy Moorhead, a lobbyist for Philips in Washington and active in the Republican Party (lunch location is the National Republican Club of Capitol Hill). He starts by placing today's political situation in a historical context. A big difference with Europe is that the US is based on an idea rather than a common ancestry. The US is, after all, a melting pot. The individual is celebrated more than elsewhere. This is because Americans descend from people who came here at great personal risk (many did not make it); self-selected people who made the individual decision to come here. The American entrepreneurial spirit was born that way. Also, many left Europe to get away from repressive governments which might explain the distrust that many Americans still have of the government. He also explains to us why 'Joe the Plumber' became such a big hit with the Republicans. Although Obama said 'it is a good thing to spread wealth around', most Americans don't like the idea of redistributing money from people who pay taxes, to those who don't. You have to deserve and earn it, not be given it.

In our final meeting of the day, Simon Rosenberg of the Democratic think-tank NDN (formerly New Democratic Network) identifies three important elements in these elections. In addition to the role of internet and the collapse of the conservative movement, he points out that America is going through the most profound demographic changes since the Europeans came to America. Currently, 33% of all American is not white. This number is expected to go up to 50% by 2042. After

Brazil and Mexico, the US has the largest number of Latinos in the Americas. The states that 'flipped' all had a large Latino population. He predicts that by 2012 Texas will become a battleground state. The influence of race in elections will decrease gradually. Rosenberg leaves us with an optimistic oneliner: these are hopeful times!

Friday November 7: Cultural Creators and the three D's

We begin our day with a good American tradition: a breakfast meeting. Our guest, Brian Wilson of Fox News, is shocked that Obama won the state of Virginia, the 'cradle of the Confederacy'. As a highlight of the Republican campaign he mentions the hubbub when Sarah Palin was chosen as Running Mate. Some conservatives really enjoyed and adored her. Securing the conservative wing's vote (the base) was the main reason for choosing her. But then the economy melted. Had McCain chosen Mitt Romney, very knowledgeable about economic affairs, Wilson believes the outcome may have been very different.



Dominique Strauss-Kahn

Obama has a difficult task ahead as a liberal politician who has been chosen by a right of center country. Wilson nevertheless expects a smooth transition. Even those who did not vote for Obama accept him as President; they will at least give him a chance. When asked whether Fox is unhappy with the outcome, Wilson merely states that he wants the country to do well. He does understand where the question comes from but points out the difference between news and opinion shows on Fox News. The two should not be confused. And, as a journalist he finds it all a fascinating story.

Outgoing World Bank director Herman Wijffels attributes Obama's victory not just to the oft-mentioned topic change during

the campaign, but also to the emergence in American society in the past 20 years of a group he calls 'cultural creators'. They have a different outlook on life and are strongly tied to the notion of sustainability. They are aware of the fact that what you do as an individual has consequences for the entire world. They make up about 25% of the electorate but are not yet organized in any way and can be found in all layers of society. They prefer 'dialogue' (listening to others) to 'discussion' (taking opposing views and trying to outsmart the other).

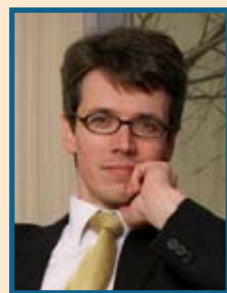
When it comes to the World Bank, Wijffels feels that it will need to look for a new role. It was once founded to help Japan and Europe recover with American money. Once that was accomplished it tried to use the same premise for developing countries. Now, the awareness is growing that more attention must be given to circumstances in, and to working with, the developing country itself rather than impose a model. We need to look beyond the 21st century and beyond sustainability; we are dealing with the survival of the species. Wijffels predicts the 'cultural creators' will become the dominant culture. A new Bretton Woods treaty will deal with these issues, drafted from a more global perspective. Wijffels himself has been appointed to a committee that will start thinking about these issues. As for the financial sector, he feels they need to reposition themselves as just a service providing and subservient sector. Two things should not be left to the market: food and money!

The week's concluding event is lunch with Steve Clemons of the New America Foundation, one of the larger think-tanks in DC with a nonpartisan agenda. Clemons writes one of the top 10 political blogs in DC, www.TheWashingtonNote.com. He warns us that following the 'dot.com bubble' and the 'housing bubble' we are now in an 'Obama bubble' which will be punctured at one point. Clemons gives a sober assessment of what can be expected of Obama but hopes he is wrong. He expects Obama to focus on infrastructure which is going to be very expensive, and predicts that the three D's will be at the forefront of Obama's foreign policy: diplomacy, defense and development.

With plenty to ponder, the delegation starts heading for the airport, already talking about a return to DC four years from now...



Delegation members in front of Mao's mausoleum on Tiananmen Square



Theodor Kockelkoren

Zooming in on China

Participant Theodor Kockelkoren, member of the Executive Board of the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM), looks back at APEP's Inside China 2008

Why go to China on a one-week study tour? For me it was mainly curiosity about a country that is of such obvious and increasing importance to the world. When the opportunity arose in the form of APEP's Inside China study trip, the decision was made in a split second. APEP had attracted an interesting group of people from different backgrounds, whom I learned from Hans Dijkstal, our delegation leader, to regard as 'senior, top-level executives from Dutch government and business'. This is how our delegation was to be introduced at the many official meetings organized for us by APEP director Elaine Springford.

APEP had also done an excellent job in preparing study documents. The bundle

was quite a read on the plane to Beijing, but worth skipping some sleep over. It revealed that the China we were accustomed to until recently – a closed-off, communist country, economically marginal despite its huge population, mostly known for its tea and the cheap food at the neighbourhood restaurant – was atypical when seen in a historical context of over 2000 years. Between dinner and breakfast, I learned that the Chinese empire was founded in 221 BC, just before the ascent of the Romans. It knew periods of unity and of disunity. The periods of unity brought China and the world culture, silk and porcelain, and crucial technological innovation such as gun powder.

In fact, the world could have looked starkly different had the Ming dynasty not decided against looking beyond China and exploring ties with the world. Confucianist influences are considered an important reason why the Mings did not expand China's borders. As the Dutch Embassy's background paper put it: "Unity and stability will lead to prosperity in the Empire" is a strong belief rooted in Confucianism and locked in the genes of the Chinese and their society. To our modern eyes they seem potentially at conflict with each other."

Physically somewhat tired, but in high spirits and loaded with questions, I left the plane. Our delegation was led along a VIP route through all the formalities

and received a warm welcome from representatives of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). Throughout the trip we were treated not only as VIPs but as friends indeed.

Where will China go? What will it bring us? Many of our questions at the outset of the program could be grouped under these two. Let me be honest: we did not find the answers in the course of this one week, at least I didn't. Instead, back in Holland we got off the plane – passing through the same procedures as all other travellers... – loaded with even more questions. But that in itself was quite a bounty to bring back, I would say. And there was more.

Several meetings, such as one at the Dutch Embassy that included a reception with Dutch professionals active in China and for the World Bank, gave us an impression of the size and diversity of China and therefore of the complexity of ruling it. China as a state is hard to define – is it a communist society or an empire? An oligarchy or a meritocracy? It was impressive to see how Embassy and World Bank staff work actively with all levels of government (state, province, district and townships) throughout this vast country.

Chinese government obviously functions differently from EU governments. We learned that industry around Beijing would be shut down as of July 1 and traffic severely reduced by August 1 in order to reduce air pollution. A blessing perhaps to Olympic visitors, however, it raised new questions for us Inside China participants. What will industry workers and their employers think? What will the people of Beijing think? China is not a democracy, we knew that. Will it ever be? Can it go on for another 2000 years without democracy? In ancient Greece Athenians created democracy initially to protect themselves against failing rulers. Along the way, it offered new opportunities for all of Athens's citizens, not only the aristocracy. Something the Romans did too, however – without democracy. But of course, the Hellenistic world and the Roman empire are history whereas China is, uh, well: China *is*. Whenever in Chinese history the elite failed to provide prosperity, stability and unity, another group from within or from outside of China seized power.

The current party certainly does a better job in terms of offering prosperity than its demi-divine predecessor, Mao, not so long ago. One only needs look at the economic statistics to see the enormous upward jump China has made in the past decade. Of course, distribution of this prosperity is uneven, and will remain so in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, many citizens profit directly, and many more indirectly, thanks to improved state services. How will China develop in the future? What impact will the rapid aging of its population have on the economy? Will environmental and social issues be addressed sufficiently?

In the here and now, it is interesting to see to what extent and how the current

financial crisis will impact China. The Chinese seemed somewhat amused by this crisis. It was the 'Americans' who, through the World Bank and IMF, lectured Asian governments in the wake of the crisis in this part of the world a decade ago. Asian governments were told to reform their banking sector in order to improve lending practices, regulation and supervision. And now, these very Americans are at the center of the current financial crisis with *their* bad lending practices and regulation and supervision failures.

So today's Party leadership performs well on prosperity. How will it do on stability and unity? The government certainly has handled the Sichuan earthquake well, which took place just a few weeks before >



Enjoying the breeze in an Eco Park outside Shanghai



Partners in promoting international dialogue: APEP chairman Hans Dijkstal and CPAFFC president Chen Haosu

our arrival. Naturally, the catastrophe was the focus of media attention and of everyday discussions. It had resulted in some changes, but no significant ones, to our program.

A Chinese newspaper commentary seemed genuinely surprised by what it regarded as stark differences between the western media's coverage of the earthquake and its reporting of the Olympic Torch relay. Coverage of the Tibet-related torch relay disturbances "made the average Chinese wonder how the Western world can be so opinionated as to interpret riots, arson and murder as 'peaceful protests' and the governments reaction as a 'crackdown'." Regarding coverage of the earthquake the commentary noted that "to the surprise of many Chinese, the western media this time reported the Chinese government's rapid response and efficient disaster relief efforts with unprecedented acknowledgement". Indeed there seems to be "a vast gap in the political, cultural and social backgrounds" of the Western and Chinese worlds.

APEP's Elaine Springford and the CPAFFC made an excellent choice in arranging for us to meet with two farmers, one rich and the other poor. These people were somewhat puzzled by our presence and at times by our questions as well. Both farmers fared well as both of them had served in the army and received a soldier's pension. In fact, the rich one has a bigger TV than I have at home, and the poor one a bigger bed. This last fact, though, reflects the decline of the average

household size (100 years ago 20 persons, now only 2) more than anything else. The children of both farmers (each has one) had moved to the big city, Beijing. It was difficult for us to grasp the social impact of the one child policy. How do Confucian values relate to the inverted pyramids that Chinese families have become? How will the large generation gap play out over time? And what will its impact be on society at large and on the country's stability?

There were many more meetings. Some with top-level officials in formal settings, with Hans superbly captaining our delegation, such as our meeting with the Executive Vice Mayor of Shanghai (a city the size of the Netherlands in population terms: 16,7 million people). Others were more informal such as those with the Euro Chamber in Beijing and Fortis in Shanghai. At least as important were the meetings of minds and hearts that took place among the members of our delegation – on the bus, at the omnipresent rotating Chinese lunch and dinner tables and at the bar. It is fascinating to discuss national issues while being immersed in a completely different society. Ideas such as the construction of an island in the sea are suddenly seen in a different light. (Naturally, opinions still varied widely...)

Prior to this trip, it was as if I watched China from the moon. Now, having experienced the Inside China program, I feel as if I can watch it from a lower orbit.



Villagers in the Beijing area



Glowing spider by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei at the Liverpool Biennial.

2008 was a busy year for APEP, with much demand in particular for tailor-made programs. Following is a selection of programs arranged upon the request of APEP Members:

APEP Scholarship recipient Selma Huizer (Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten) visited the **US** for two weeks in early spring. Her tailor-made itinerary took her to Washington, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Los Angeles in search of new ideas and concepts for financing healthcare and affordable housing. Selma's report *Senior Living and Health Care in the United States: common good or privilege?* can be found on www.apep.nl under Programs/Reports and impressions.



APEP Scholar Selma Huizer flanked by president Rick Grimes and vice president Maribeth Bersani of the Assisted Living Federation of America.

A senior delegation of **ENECO Energie** set course for the Swedish capital of **Stockholm** in June to talk to local experts and learn about recent developments in the field of renewable energy and climate change.

Also in June, APEP arranged a program in **the Netherlands** for **American and Canadian integration experts**, upon the request of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. The participants were introduced to Dutch integration policies through

From seniors community to cultural capital: APEP in 2008

meetings with policymakers, politicians and opinion leaders and visits to neighborhood initiatives in The Hague, Amsterdam and the provincial town of Oss.

Secretary-General Richard van Zwol and a strategic adviser of the **Ministry of General Affairs** spent four days in **Washington DC** in August looking at the role of strategy in decision-making on a central government level.

Senior Federal and State judges from the **US** visited **The Hague** in September to participate in the annual **Sir Richard May Seminar**, an initiative of the Washington-based International Judicial Academy which aims to educate participants about international law and the activities of the various international courts and tribunals. APEP once again assisted the Academy in organizing the seminar.

Representatives of government ministries (Health, Education) and food companies that have signed up to the **Covenant on Overweight and Obesity** traveled across the Channel in September to examine what is being done in the **UK** to tackle the looming obesity epidemic. They met with legislators, researchers, medical and nutrition specialists, consumer groups, the food industry and retailers.

In the course of 2008 we arranged a number of short study trips for the interprovincial consultation body **IPO**, to destinations in central, south and western Europe. One city visited was **Liverpool**, where IPO's Cultural Affairs commission explored the regional impact of the city's stint as the 2008 Cultural Capital of Europe.

With the help of APEP, **Proudfoot Consulting** (headquartered in London and Atlanta) on September 24 hosted its annual dinner event for top-level business executives in **The Hague**. Keynote speaker was former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, who shared his view of the **US**



Sir Bob Scott, president of the EU Capitals of Culture International Judging panel, and leader of Liverpool's 2008 bid, talks to a visiting IPO delegation at Town Hall.

presidential election and its meaning for Europe.

At the center of a study visit to **Washington DC and Boston** by the **Government Communication Council** in October was the question how online and other 'new' media can be used to establish two-way communication with the public and improve citizen engagement. The opportunities offered by blogs, social networking sites, video and text messaging were explored, as was the role of the traditional media in the rapidly evolving multimedia landscape.



Government communicators Joop Veen (center) and Jeroen Sprenger and their colleagues are escorted through the corridors of the Pentagon, where they met with DoD counterparts.

In the same month, while the election season was approaching its climax, **18 young political talents** from the Netherlands traveled to the **US** to witness the campaigns in action. They spoke to political strategists and joined campaign teams – Republican and Democratic – as observers for a few days to learn how the political handwork is done.

Among the more unusual places where APEP was active for its Members were **Moscow**, location of the 2008 edition of the **NHG Masterclass** for prominent players on the housing and mortgage markets (October), and **Strasbourg**, destination of a short study trip for **municipal finance experts** of public sector bank BNG and '100.000+' cities (November).

A group of **Twynstra Gudde** consultants visited **New York** late October to study a range of Program Management-related issues, with a special focus on PlaNYC2030, a plan presented by Mayor Bloomberg and drafted with input from regular New Yorkers that offers a comprehensive roadmap towards a sustainable future for the city. A report by TG on this trip, *PlaNYC 2030 – A greater, greener New York*, is available via www.apep.nl (see Programs/Reports and impressions).

APEP Agenda

Update: January 2009

This agenda features only a selection of APEP programs. APEP continuously develops new programs: tailor-made study trips (exclusively for APEP Members) as well as thematic programs (on an invitation basis). Interested in what else is being planned? Questions about our activities? We welcome your suggestions and inquiries! Please find our contact details below.

- January 31-February 7 Twynstra Gudde delegation to India**
A group of Twynstra Gudde consultants together with some of their clients will travel to Bangalore and Delhi for a study program focusing on "Innovation, Collaboration and IT". They will visit successful Indian IT companies as well as local operations of western high-tech firms.
- March 4-5 UK Department of Health delegation to the Netherlands**
British policymakers will spend two days in the Netherlands to learn what the Dutch government is doing to battle and prevent obesity and alcohol abuse among youth.
- March 4-7 Provincial delegation to Copenhagen**
At the request of interprovincial consultation body IPO, APEP arranges a study visit for executive directors of the twelve Dutch provinces. It will focus on the results of local government reform in Denmark implemented in recent years: how is the new system viewed by the various government levels and what are the lessons learned?
- March 7-12 Public Communication Commission to Canada**
An interdepartmental delegation of public communication experts will look at the progress made by the government in Ottawa in implementing its federal identity program, as well as at approaches to thematic cross-government communication and citizen engagement. Organized for the Government Communication Service (RVD).
- March 30 - April 10 Chinese APEP Scholar to the Netherlands**
The first recipient of an APEP Scholarship in 2009 is Deng Yingying, who works for the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Beijing. Ms. Deng will be offered a two-week study program in the Netherlands.
- May 13-15 HDN program in London**
Traveling to London, a delegation assembled by HDN (Mortgage Data Network) will study best practices of organizations in various branches that have made, or are in the process of making, the transition from physical to digital distribution.
- May 23-31 Community Colleges in the US and Canada**
For the MBO Raad (the Netherlands Association of VET Colleges) APEP will put together a program offering insight into the role of community colleges in the US and Canadian education systems. Special attention will be given to strategic and administrative issues faced by institutions for vocational and adult education on both sides of the Atlantic.
- 2009 Forthcoming theme programs:**
A program in the US for young civil servants and junior consultants developed in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior (June); Inside China (October); Inside Washington (November); a program in the US for Public Affairs and Corporate Affairs specialists (autumn).



Coming up...

The First 100 Days (May 16-21, Washington DC)

When US voters elected their first African-American President in November, APEP was in Washington with a large delegation of its Members to witness this historic occasion first-hand. On January 20, the day of President Obama's much anticipated inauguration, invitations went out to our Members for another APEP program in Washington, one that will look back at the first 100 days of the new administration.

Planned for May (arrival Saturday 16th, departure Thursday 21st), the program will take the temperature in Washington three months into the Obama presidency. Will the euphoria that followed Obama's election last? What actions will the new administration have taken to combat the crises at home and abroad? Have early successes or failures changed expectations?

The program will feature meetings with politicians, policymakers, pollsters and political commentators from think-tanks and media. It will also include college and grassroots groups that were instrumental in getting Obama elected, to gauge their level of enthusiasm and engagement after the First 100 Days.

It will be designed for mid-level managers and policymakers in the public and private sectors. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given and reduced participation fees available to APEP Members organizations.

If you are interested in participating, or if you want to find out if your organization is a Member, please contact our Rotterdam office.

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