

Networking

80 years of ^ around the world

When on Sunday 21.12.1930 the family doctor, who had come off the icy road, knocked at the van Belle residence in Brussels, Jean-Jacques was just half an hour old. His Dutch parents, francophile and nature loving, had named him after Rousseau. An eye infection, caused them in 1932 to move to Kijkduin, a seaside village near The Hague.



To his parents' great relief the infection disappeared and JJ was able to see the Zepelin Hindenburg, with a passenger list emulating Who is Who, cruising towards its horrific inferno, just before landing at Lakehurst New Jersey! In May 1940, he witnessed a nasty, unfair match, Germany vs Holland, the outcome of which was overruled by the Allied Forces in May 1945. In 1942 JJ set fire to the Mookerheide, a stretch of heath, and famous battleground, of April 1574, against the Spaniards. The German FLAK had placed anti aircraft guns at a high point, and when an Allied plane, dropped on the house of JJ's class mate, he set fire in three directions, to the bone dry heather. All the guns were lost and the culprit was never found!!

The last 20 months of the war, JJ worked on a farm, seven days a week, just for food. After the war he went to work at AMROH, American Radio House, manufacturers and importers of radio equipment, going to school at night. In 1948 he was invited to visit his penfriend Paul Flemming, in Copenhagen. He sold his radio at an auction in Amsterdam. During the bidding, it played beautiful music, rather loudly, which might be the reason that it fetched 200 Guilders. Which was sufficient to finance his trip, and have a marvellous time in Denmark. Not knowing then, that his friend's father, who owned Soldat, Scandinavia's first advertising agency, was to be of great help 11 years later. Prior to being drafted for military service, in 1950, JJ spent three weeks in France. Hitchhiking to the Mediterranean and spending a week in Paris, he was back in time to start his two year tour of duty in the Regiment of the Grenadier Guards. At a parade in The Hague, not looking old enough to be in uniform, Queen Juliana, shaking his hand, inquired about JJ's age. Due to an accident, he was "released" a year earlier than his comrades. On his 22nd birthday JJ embarked upon a freighter to New York, with his entire fortune of \$ 200.- Through a bulb grower and exporter, where JJ had worked during a vacation, he got his passage at 50% discount. In New York he stayed at the YMCA, and found a job at Schraft's on Times Square, selling Ice Cream and Cookies. When the

last snow had melted JJ hitchhiked to the West Coast. In San Jose Calif. professor Lee Newby, who just lost his wife and only child, asked him to stay at his house, and helped him to do the State University entrance exams. Very happy to have passed, the blow was tremendous when he was picked up by the FBI and deported for having worked, which, with a visiting visa was against the law. In San Francisco he got a job on a Norwegian freighter and spent almost a year discovering yet another world. When signing off, the captain informed him that Hoegh Lines in Oslo was offering him a scholarship at the school of navigation. Much honoured, but, having seen enough water to last quite a while, he kindly turned down the offer. Back in Europe Lady Fortune smiled upon him; due to his Belgian birth he got his green card in only a few months. August '54 JJ was back in New York legally... Collected a bad debt in Brooklyn for a Dutch businessman, bought a car for his reward of \$1,800 and drove to the West Coast. The right connections and a portion of good luck enabled JJ to enter Stanford University. Sold tulip bulbs to people with big houses and large gardens, and lectured to Kiwanis-Lions-and-Rotary Clubs, with help from the Dutch Consulate in San Francisco. Fellow student Albert was unaware of the fact that he was the future King of Belgium. First prize at a public speaking contest ment breakfast with President Eisenhower and former President Herbert Hoover; the latter, alumnus of Stanford and donor of Hoover Library. Breakfast at the Cow Palace, where the 1956 Republican

Party Convention was held, took less than an hour, but left a lasting impression... At Macy's San Francisco JJ successfully organised a mega Dutch Flower Show, sponsored by the Dutch Bulbgrowers Association, at no cost to the Department Store. His reward was to be a substantial order for imported bulbs to be sold in the autumn. The management vehemently denied ever having made such agreement. Instead, they sold bulbs grown in Oregon, and placed several empty Dutch bulb export crates and posters among the native bulbs on display... His landlord introduced JJ to a successful businessman who had acquired a franchise, of an English piece of agricultural equipment, in California and Latin America. \$10,000.- upfront to investigate the market was generous amount in those days. He visited a dozen countries South of the border, staying only at the better hotels. At a reception of the Dutch Ambassador in Guatemala, he met the importer of International Harvester. Invited for lunch next day, JJ sold one of the tractor-type machines, which was shipped immediately from Houston Texas. For a demonstration, a large sugar cane grower near the East Coast was selected. Only having seen the pamphlet and not being very technical, JJ appointed a young chap, who eagerly demonstrated the vehicle. A barbecue, with huge steaks from Uruguay and plenty of booze, generated a jovial atmosphere, and all but one of the invited potential customers, bought a tractor wagon. With nine sales the event was a genuine success. The English importer made a much larger deal for other countries with the Ame-

rican franchise holder and JJ was generously rewarded. With a strong urge to go back to Europe, he went to New York first. Called on Heineken Beer importer, Leo van Munching, and was told: "I don't like Dutchmen!" Having phoned from the lobby on the ground floor, JJ went up and walked straight into van Munchings office, to thank him for his kind remark. Flabbergasted, the other Dutchman listened to the "upstart" for five minutes and, not a betting man, did not go for JJ's proposal of a wager, but gave him a chance instead. \$300.- a week and \$500.- for expenses, was not bad! There were 36 salesmen, who had started a new account drive ten days earlier. JJ, working night and day, had twice as many new customers as number two. He had worked in four different States, opening 114 new accounts in two and a half months. The cherry on the cake was The Waldorf Astoria, were even Mr van Munching, who never showed JJ any sympathy, didn't get to first base! Quitting March 1959, he flew with KLM, his first of many Transatlantic flights to Amsterdam.



In April he met an old friend, who had recently become world champion Magic in Vienna. Tonny van Dommelen had an

engagement at Stockholms "China Variety Theatre" and asked JJ to join him on the rather long drive. With no definite plans JJ accepted and did most of the driving. Tonny fell in love with a member of the Show, a German Baroness, who became his assistant, wife, and mother of his son. JJ fell in love too, with Sweden! A couple of times, JJ had come across a copy of The Scandinavian Times, and phoned them in Copenhagen. Two U.S. naval officers from New York, had fallen in love and married (each) a Danish girl. They had started the English language newspaper. Eager to meet, they asked JJ to come to Copenhagen. During lunch next day, it was agreed that JJ would become junior partner. After a few days he was told confidentially, that, due to a very small circulation and insufficient advertising, the publication was about to fold. They had actually started "Operation Abandon Ship". The bottom of the kitty was in sight and there was only enough cash to last six more weeks. JJ kept his promise not to confront the Yanks with his findings, but was "on his guard". Never having sold advertising space, he decided to have a go at it, and left that same day for Odense, the city of fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen. His first day he had four clients, which put him in high gear. Next day he called on Marius Boel, manufacturer and exporter of Danish Blue Cheese. Marius was 84 years old and, hearing JJ's accent, spoke to him in Dutch. Around the turn of the century his father had sent him to Holland, where he stayed with friends in the cheese business. Finding out how they were

marketing their products world wide. When in 1914 they could no longer import Roquefort cheese from France, they just made it from cow milk and eventually became one of the world's largest cheese exporters... JJ spent the whole day, mostly listening to his new friend Marius, and, "not very busy" that weekend, delighted to be invited to the Boel mansion. There was a dinner party for 12 guests, some of whom were leading businessmen in Denmark. The dining room, with probably the largest panoramic windows ever built in a private home, allowed the "elite" cows to look inside with their noses pressed against the glass!! The CEO of Ford Motor Company invited JJ to his office in Copenhagen, but not before JJ, under pressure from Marius, had sold a long running advertisement to the Danish Blue Cheese Company. Ever so timely, on his way to Ford, an idea came to JJ which had a tremendous impact on the lives of a number of people. Ford bought 50,000 subscriptions of the Scandinavian Times for two years to be distributed to English language students all over the country. On the frontpage's upper righthand corner it said in red letters: "With our compliments, FORD". As JJ's idea "was not new" he did not get a bonus. Disappointed, but even more determined, he opened an office in Stockholm. Through golf he soon made new contacts in the business world as well as socially. On his first trip to Helsinki he had an unusual lunch with President Urhu Kekkonen. Discussing his foreword for a special insert on Finland, the president asked JJ to have lunch with him.

Due to a traffic accident his appointment with another guest was canceled and he had already ordered sandwiches and milk for two... Back in Stockholm, JJ received a phone call from the Russian Embassy's third Secretary, of the Cultural Department, inviting him for lunch. With no connections in communist circles, or any other contacts with the Soviets, JJ was hesitant to accept. However, his curiosity had the upperhand, and two days later he had a very pleasant meeting with the still lowranking diplomat. Two weeks later the Russian phoned again, and as JJ saw no harm in the situation, after all, there was nothing like Mccarthyism in Sweden, they met again. Discussing iceskating, football, literature, Czar Peter's visit to Holland etc., but no politics, there was no reason for suspicion. But when Vladimir called a few weeks later for the third time, JJ decided to inform the Dutch Ambassador. It was alright, the Russians had explained the situation. Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader himself, had ordered his people in Sweden to find a neutral person, not a Swede and not a communist, to find out how he and first man in Space, Yuri Gagarin, would be received in Sweden on an official visit. Apparently, JJ, who had handed in his report in person after three weeks, had done what was expected of him, and was rewarded with an unofficial two week holiday in Moscow and Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) celebrating the New Year 1959-'60 twice, first Western style then Orthodox. He received a Ticket to join a group of 80 International Students from the University of Uppsala. The

journey went from Stockholm by boat to Turku in Finland, then by train to Vyborg and from there by plane to Moscow. In Moscow, JJ was the only one to get a room by himself, and was handed an envelope with a generous amount of pocket money. When after a week he got ill, angina with a rather high fever, he was in bed for eight days. The Dutch Ambassador came to wish him well and also a high ranking commie paid his respects. The time you were ill does not count, he said, so we owe you a week in Leningrad. With no ticket and no names JJ was told to go to the Lobby, where he was greeted by a driver who took him to the Airport. He got on board without checkin in, and was welcomed in Leningrad by a most charming Lady, who spoke fluent English and took him to, for Russian standards in 1960, a top hotel. After a marvellous week JJ was put on a direct flight to Stockholm. JJ had settled nicely in his comfortable apartment in a pleasant neighborhood, but nevertheless, answered a full page advertisement in Svenska Dagbladet. Volvo was looking for a young man with an international background to visit the importers in various European countries as well as the auto salons in the major cities. His application in English was shown to the top management and JJ got the Job. He was the only one asking nothing, but with a list of ten reasons why they should hire Jean-Jacques van Belle. Without remorse towards his "friends" in Copenhagen JJ went to work for Volvo in July 1960. After a four week training, JJ was set free, started his tour d' Europe and never

looked back. After about half a year, JJ met an American former Air Force Captain who was a Volkswagen sub dealer, selling tax free cars to the U.S. military in Northern Italy. Extremely interested in selling Volvo automobiles, the Captain did not try to hide his eagerness, and a whole new situation developed. After long discussions, JJ agreed to take the American to Volvo Head Quarters in Gothenburg. His plan was as simple as unusual. The Captain and JJ would become the new importers of Volvo Automobiles in Italy. JJ would quit his job, but would retain his generous expense account and get a new car when necessary, including fuel and insurance. Everybody thought to have the best part of the bargain, and to seal the deal, it was made official during a very unofficial lunch at the finest seafood restaurant in Gothenburg. JJ moved to Rome and found a charming place to live in Parioli. At a Christmas party, the Swedish Ambassador asked JJ on behalf of a Swedish Lady in Rome, to take a small package to a family just outside Stockholm. The family, one of the most influential in Sweden, was delighted with the Christmas present from their dear friend Vera. Baroness Vera (84) turned out to be a lovely lady, who treated JJ as a son. She taught him the elements of playing bridge and introduced him to a number of her friends. One of them, widower Frank Ruspoli, played chess with him, bought a Volvo without being asked and took him to Olgiata Golf Club, where he was accepted as a regular member at once. JJ, who didn't even know that a stick, as in hockey, was referred

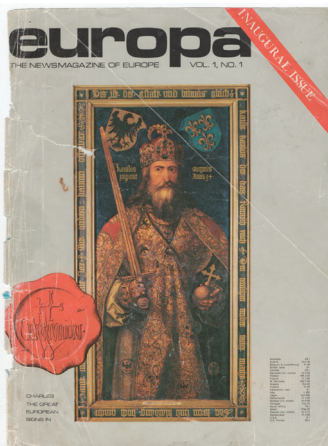
to as a club, took lessons from Burt Williamson, the head Pro. He got along very well with the aimicable Scot, and learned rapidly. After six weeks he was allowed to enter the Club's and his first tournament, which he won with handicap 23. It was a milestone in JJ's life and it instantly became his main hobby, playing on all continents, and meeting many many people he would unlikely have encountered otherwise... Once he was asked to play with a famous American moovie star, a guest of TWA's manager in Rome, who was called away. He played off handicap five and was of the likable sort. Then, with his six foot six, and very masculine appearance, he put JJ a bit off balance, when he asked for a good address to have a pair of red pumps and a silk dress made to measure. A few weeks later JJ received a thank you note from Beverly Hills; the goodies had arrived and the star was in seventh heaven. Meanwhile, JJ developed a Volvo dealer network in Italy. The accent was on Service, which was important for Swedish tourists. Due to a 100% duty on automobiles, it was nearly impossible to conquer the the Italian market. Eager mechanics were trained in Sweden and got large discounts on spare parts. In some cases they bought a car. When the big shots in Sweden were beginning to see a future, they TOOK OVER. Offered the Rome Dealership as a "reward", JJ declined kindly and returned to publishing. In 1965 he founded Holland Herald in Amsterdam, after first having been turned down by KLM's PR Director Rein Vogels, who said: "Young man, if this were a good

idea, I would have thought of it myself". Fortunately, the big shot was overruled by



Marketing Director Jan de Soet, who later became KLM's President. His printer, Kolff, was a member at Amsterdam Golf Club, and before the war, in Batavia, Dutch East Indies, one of the largest South East Asia, printing money and postage stamps for a number of small counties. With a circulation of a quarter of a million, Time Magazine labled it "the best magazine in the air".

On the occasion of the 1970 World' Fair in Osaka, JJ published a Japanese language edition of a million copies, and was VIP for a day in Japan. It led to many golf invitations. His Keizersgracht house in Amsterdam was as busy as a bee hive, where hard work went hand in hand with entertaining. Among his guests were Brigitte Bardot, with JJ's friend Thiery van Zuylen, Sarah Churchill, Freddy Heineken, Audry Hepburn, Ruth and Oscar van Leer, Josef Luns, Alex Orlov and Amy Vanderbilt. At a party at the Amsterdam Hilton, seated with Queen JIuliana and Prince Bernhard, JJ asked Her Majesty to dance, and the queen answered: "Mr. van Belle, I thought you would never ask". Prince Bernhard, who was sitting next to JJ, invited him



for a game of golf. Unfortunately, after five years, certain KLM interests forced JJ to sell Holland Herald, but fortunately, JJ already had other plans. He moved to Brussels and started Europa Magazine.

Irene, a dear friend in the publishing business introduced JJ to Freddy Rolin, who was building the magnificent Bercuit Golf Club on his own land. The kitchen was already famous before all the holes were finished. Even non golfers came from far to enjoy the excellent food in elegant surroundings and distinguished, yet relaxed atmosphere. JJ felt most fortunate to have been invited to become a member, and declared the steak tartare, not ground but scraped, the finest in the world! For family reasons he moved to London, where he opened an office near Fleetstreet. A few months later he bought an old house near Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, not far from a decent golf course and a railway station. Warning JJ that it would be very difficult to join, the local publican gave him some names of nearby golf clubs, and JJ set off immediately. The nearest, and on

top of his list was Temple Golf and Country Club, a 15 minute drive. His membership at Amsterdam Golf Club allowed him to go into the bar, where Sam Cowan Jumped up and said: "JJ, you sob, don't tell me you want to become a member". It just so happened that Sam was the recently elected Captain, who remembered having been beaten by JJ for third place three years earlier at a large tournament in the Algarve. The venue was the Penina Golf Club where, for many years head Pro at Temple, Henry Cotton, was in charge. JJ was invited to play because he had brought best wishes from Flory van Donck from Brussels, Henry's colleague and close friend for many years. Sam put on a serious face and explained the situation. A candidate member must be known for at least five years by five plaating members. Ordering another round, he got a brainwave and suggested he, himself, appoint five playing members, not the most jovial ones, each one of them to play 18 holes with JJ. Only if all five of them gave their OK, the Dutchman could become a regular member. It was definitely a stroke of good luck, the scheme worked and JJ played at Temple for almost three years... Isaac Newton's (apple) theory came to JJ the hard way! Despite a solid circulation among American Express Credit Cardholders in Europe, his Europa Magazine, first a high flying success, came down with a bang. The oilcrisis was to blame for a 75% drop in advertising. No gong or guardian angel came to his rescue. His share of good luck seemed to have run out. Probably long before Nietzsche, some one must have said: "falling down is

not awful, but staying down!” So, JJ got up with the idea to produce miniposters and calendars with the images of Olympic Posters. A friend in Hamburg had heard that Texaco Europe, head sponsor of the International Olympic Committee, was eagerly looking for a suitable item to distribute among their fuel customers. Two days later JJ had lunch with the Texaco CEO and staff, in one of the finest Seafood restaurants in Hamburg and sold them 25 million miniposters. The marketing idea was to give one poster with each twenty litres of fuel. Johnnie Walker bought 100,000 calendars unseen, and JJ was back in business. IOC President, Lord Killanin, did not want to get involved, because it was not done!. In 1984 it was a different kettle of fish. For a percentage of the sales, the US Olympic Committee in Golden Colorado, gave JJ the right to include the 1984 poster in his new calendar. He sold a million copies to the newly formed First Interstate Bank, the first under a new federal banking law, with branches in the 13 Western States. The IOC intervened and veto’d the operation, threatening with legal action. Jim Lund, a top lawyer of Swedish descend, JJ had met socially, handled the case (for a healthy fee) and the IOC allowed it “under protest” They sold half, gave the other half away, and had the most successful campaign ever at zero cost! JJ laughed all the way to the bank and moved to Mexico. Staying with Swedish golfriends in Cuernavaca, about 85 kilometers from Mexico City, he soon found a three parcel estate situation, of which he sold two and rebuilt one into comfortable place to stay.

Just under a mile from the new San Gaspar Golf Club, JJ was for the third time one of the early members. Contrary to Olgiata and Bercuit, however, the investors of San Gaspar needed the money, which was reflected by the “ambiente” in general and the membership in particular. Nevertheless, besides taking Spanish language lessons, he spent most of his time playing golf. The real estate he had sold was turned into a home for retired missionaries, and two of the US padres, in their seventies, were ardent golfers, and became JJ’s regular golf and chess partners. In September “85 JJ was invited to a society wedding in DF. The wedding taking place on Saturday, all guests were invited to stay at the century old Regis Hotel, which was booked entirely for that event, from Friday to Sunday. Except for the planned lunch/dinner in one, guests could eat and drink as it pleased them, but it was the hotel strictly forbidden to accept money, or make any kind of charges! On Friday JJ’s servants had cleaned his car, put his luggage, including a new white suit, a wedding present and gifts for the bridesmaids, and were sent home for a long weekend. JJ had taken a short siesta and was about to dress after his bath when something stopped him. He had absolutely no idea what for, but he did not go to the wedding, to which he had been looking forward. He emptied the better part of a bottle of whiskey and went to sleep much earlier than usual. Next morning he saw the water splashing over the pool side and turned on the TV. Early reports brought the horrific news, a severe earthquake had demolished

parts of Mexico City. Thousands of people were killed or missing and later JJ found out that none of the wedding guests had come out of the Regis Hotel alive...



Not long after the calamity, five armed men in battledress, came to his house. His servants gone, JJ had opened the gate himself and extended his unexpected guests a friendly welcome. Serving large portions of his finest alcoholic beverages, he hoped to put them out of commission. But the leader did indulge, he had a small drink and stopped his men before he lost control over them. Then he ordered them to load the entire contents of the house onto the moving van they had come in. Including the grand piano and six cases of gin, rum and whiskey, an old American lady, who was going back to The States, had dropped off spontaneously. The last act was the signing of some papers, "just a formality", but at gunpoint. Next morning, at the bank, his worst fears came true. Not only his safe, with valuables and documents, was empty, his current Dollar- and-savings accounts were stripped to the bone. The valuables in his safe included the total amount he had received for his house, which the

padres had bought for their growing community. The bank manager had changed it into Hidalgo gold coins, two days earlier. Only his car, with California license plates, was found by accident... After hearing the news, the Dutch Ambassador, amazed that his countryman had survived twice in a matter of weeks, advised JJ, who could identify the gang to leave Mexico immediately. In Beverly Hills, his aunt Reepje, (81) who had bought Marilyn Monroe's first house, was happy to give JJ shelter. The \$10,000, which he had left in his account at First Interstate, was all of a sudden a huge fortune! At a cocktail party, a young man asked JJ permission to send him the manuscript of his children's book "What is God?" Art-gallery owner, Etan Boritzer, who came from Brooklyn and lived in Beverly Hills, admitted to have tried, in vain, to get his book published. Bernice Barth, teacher and head librarian at Hawthorne Elementary School, in Beverly Hills, advised JJ to shorten the text and find a good illustrator. He cut it by one third and had it set in universe, by a small printer in L.A. At the dentist, leafing through an old copy of Time Magazine, an article, illustrated by Robbie Marantz, drew his attention. He phoned VP International Charly Baer, whom he had met in Amsterdam, at Time Inc in New York, and was put through to the Art Director. Robbie, a freelance artist, just happened to be there, and agreed to meet JJ for lunch the next day. Robbie was living in Brooklyn, was an alumnus of the Beverly Hills School, and been a pupil of the same mistress who had advised JJ! Instead of a

share of the profits or royalties, Robbie opted for the cash offer of \$ 5,000 and JJ flew back to L.A. A golffriend from the Los Angeles Golf and Country Club had introduced JJ on the phone to the spiritual father and creator of “Dennis the Menace”. Driving to Canada to find a printer, JJ had made an appointment with Hank Ketchum in Monterey Calif. and was invited for lunch with one of the most successful cartoonists in the world... Hank was well informed about the book, and, to JJ’s pleasant surprise, had created a cartoon, with a personal note, especially for the book. It depicted Dennis kneeling in a corner saying: “Well, God, I goofed again”. For good measure, JJ was invited to play a round of golf on a very private golfcourse. It looked similar to other top courses on the Pacific Coast, however, it had no members, no greenfees and no where to spend money! Not even in the little golfshop, or for a delicious lunch. It belonged to a handful of “fairly well-to-do friends”, who could afford the luxury... JJ had the address of a reputable bookprinter in Winnipeg, and went there first. He was impressed by the modern printing machines and the friendly but businesslike management. Named Friesen, they were of Friesian descent with a religious background. They liked the book and made a very attractive offer for 5,000 hardback copies, which JJ accepted, and drove back to California. With no experience in book publishing, JJ did not know that bookshops did not place orders for a single title, and consequently didn’t sell any. At a very low point he got a phonecall from Canada. Lionel Koffler,

President of Firefly Books, had seen a copy of “What is God?” at the printers, and was interested in selling the book in Canada and the USA. Lionel had an appointment in San Francisco and asked JJ to meet him at the Airport for a quick bite. With sales reps in all Provinces and States, Lionel was optimistic about his chances and bought all the books, and the exclusive right to sell them. A cheque in US Dollars sealed the deal. JJ was saved and flew back to L.A. With a big sigh of relief. Over the years they sold more than 150,000 copies... Back in Amsterdam, a lady friend, well known in PR circles, offered JJ the basement floor of her canal house. After phoning a number of prospects, JJ got an appointment with the largest calendar producer on the Dutch market., Mercurius Printing and Publishing Company. They met over a sandwich and a glass of milk among the printers and office personnel. Kees Woudt, an amicable man, easy going and sharp as a razorblade, listening to JJ, eating his ham and cheese sandwich and greeting his workers, agreed, without haggling, to put up 150,000 Guilders for the start of a small sales unit, with its own legal status. It was named Mercurius van Belle, JJ getting 60%, Mercurius 40%. With a first class introduction from KLM President Jan de Soet, to IOC President Antonio Samaranch, JJ fled to Lausanne to get the publishing rights for the 1992 Olympic calendar. In the lobby JJ ran into Anton Geesink, he had met on one of his flights to Japan. Anton, who’s appointment was half an hour later, suggested going together. JJ got his signed contract and ma-

naged to get back the same day. In spite of a very uncooperative marketing company, ISL had been overruled, and a limited amount of selling time, The Barcelona calendar business was successful. The Dutch PTT philatelic unit bought 350,000 copies of a version with Olympic stamps, which earned JJ a new Audi as a bonus. Unfortunately, Kees Woudt, who had become a good friend, died of cancer, and JJ discontinued his relation with Mercurius. Another Olympic idea, JJ's concept for a TV game, called Olympic Triviant, found an eager buyer at TROS. He had known Cees Wolzak its director, for many years, which made it a lot easier to get an appointment. When JJ brought in the head sponsor for the program, The State Lottery, who's director was a golf connection, it earned him a generous finder's fee. The term networking was not yet en vogue... Asked by the Dutch National Olympic Committee to join the organisation of the first Youth Olympic Days 1994, JJ moved to Arnhem, where the new event was to take place. Getting along splendidly with retired General of the Marines, Ties Rudolphie, JJ was introduced to Colonel Louis Timmermans, who was in charge of recruiting volunteers for



the Armed Services. Louis had a substantial budget, and sponsored the magazine JJ was publishing, in cooperation with De Telegraaf magazine division, to promote the event.



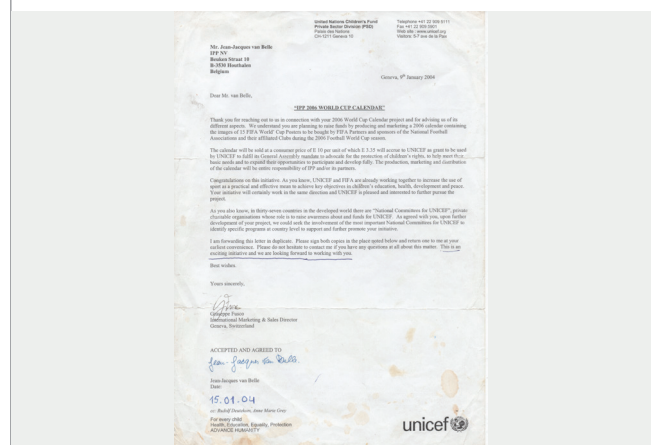
Antonio Samaranch wrote the prologue, and Corneille, JJ had met in Paris, created an eye-catching cover, which was so popular that a limited edition of lithographs, in seven colours, were made by Corneille, the old fashioned way, on a millstone. They numbered and signed by the Artist, and sold in no time! They caught the eye of mayor Scholten, who asked JJ to assist in the organisation of the 50th memorial of the Battle of Arnhem, Operation Market Garden in 1944. Lest we forget! Corneille, indicating not to be in the market this time, had to be outfoxed. JJ found out that his wife, a Russian Baroness, was going to be 60, so he sent five dozen extra large white tulips on her anniversary. Under such pressure Corneille capitulated and produced a dramatic work of Art, that included the severely damaged, five hundred year old Eusebius church in Arnhem, and would help raising funds for its restoration. For his effort JJ was declared "POORTER" of the City of Arnhem. He moved to Belgium and bought a house

in Houthalen, near Hasselt. It was an old house with a large neglected garden, whe-



re his green thumb would stand him in good stead. The main reason for choosing Houthalen was the beautiful golf course., where he would be welcome, the Secretary, had assured him. When his membership of Limburgse Golf & Country Club was initially turned down, JJ was inclined to to join another fine club in the area. But, he wrote a letter to the director, with a copy to the mayor of Houthalen, stating that they could contact the King for information. Two days later he was a regular member. Apparently, the waiting list was shorter for some than for others. Later, the mayor told JJ that the club was leasing the land, which was owned by the municipality, and that a provision said that residents of Houthalen-Helchteren will enjoy priority when applying for membership. An unexpected guest, with three legs, came out of the azalia bushes, and, having been treated to a decent meal, decided to change her status to permanent resident. It was Poosha, an an emaciated cat, uncared for and much too small for her age. But it was the cat that had decided to adopt JJ, not vice versa! The touching story which develo-

ped, might be illustrated and publised, some day... Meanwhile, working in his garden, quite industriously, the idea for an other calendar had managed to take posession of JJ's mind. The Olympic Posters had been replaced by those of the World Championship Football, which had started in 1930 in Uruguay. Harry Been, Secretary General of the KNVB, Royal Dutch Football Assn., who, as a collector, had received a copy of the Olympic poster and stamp calendar from the PTT, was very happy to write a convincing letter of introduction to FIFA's PR director, Guido Tognoni. Guido promptly invited JJ to come to Zurich to unfold his PR and Marketing concept. The idea of involving the entire FIFA network, and give clubs, worldwide, the opportunity of selling the calendar through their members, was met with approval. As FIFA's global sponsors were to finance the operation, it was an attractive concept for all parties involved. The hitch was that not FIFA but the National Associations owned, by far, the majority of the posters' reproduction rights. Ergo, JJ had his work cut out for himself.



He got in touch with UNICEF and worked out an agreement, which took over a year,

whereby UNICEF would receive a fixed sum for its goodwill and use of its famous logo on the calendars. Meanwhile JJ contacted the National Associations, visiting most of them in person. They were very cooperative, but, in all fairness, it clearly was UNICEF's participation that made the difference. So far, so good, thought JJ, beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. However, Herr Blatter, of a different opinion, torpedoed the cooperation with Jean-Jacques van Belle, threatening with legal action for using FIFA's good name... This was worse than Mexico, much worse!!! Stern, one of the influential magazines in Germany, was planning a major story on FIFA and Blatter, and JJ's experience fitted in perfectly. Her was interviewed in his house Belgium, and several times on the telephone, and received a letter stating: "The article is in production". It was never published... An almost fatal heart failure stopped JJ in his tracks and coincided with his earlier decision to stop playing GOLF, his major hobby. The atmosphere at the club had become rather unpleasant, and when unsportmanlike behaviour, improving a bad lie, creative scorekeeping and using bad language, was becoming the norm, JJ was about to cancel his membership, when his physical condition ment the end of 40 years of much pleasure, and meeting lots of interesting people in many parts of the world! Selling his house at a very bad time, JJ moved to Germany where he rented a small apartment next to a very good lady friend, who lived in a house with huge garde. Much to the delight of Poosha, who settled without language

problems and became best friends with the lady who spoiled her. With much pain, but knowing that both were in very good hands, he left the two ladies and moved to Berlin. JJ had started a cultural/commercial project, Europa Art Selection. Choosing well known European Personalities, 26 women and 26 men, from different walks of life, who agreed to have their portrait painted for an exhibition in Berlin, of Artist from all over Europe. The portaits were to be auctioned by a famous, international Auction House. While on a visit to Berlin, he had met a VIP from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture ad Fishery, with extraordinary PR budget. He new Holland Herald well, and was, during his time as a very young man in Japan, impressed with the issue in Japanese. He invited JJ for a Dutch lunch of herring, smoked eel schrimps and cheese, to be accompanied by Heineken beer. There was plenty of time to explain the ins and outs of his concept for the European Art Event, and JJ "sold" his host the exclusive sponsoship.



52 Artists, from Athens to Iceland and from Lisbon to Moscow, would be invited at the vernisage/dinner in Berlin, for a generous Dutch Treat.

All expenses paid! Unfortunately, the VIP from the ministry went into retirement and, due to the comprehensive international financial crisis, his successor's halved budget caused, "most regrettably", the Ministry's retreat... For JJ the blow was devastating -



40 Artists had completed their works - including those of Queen Beatrix - Princess Margretha of Rumania - Christine Lagarde - Angela Merkel - Anna Netrebko- Joan K. Rowling - Margaret Thatcher - Tita, Baroness Thyssen-Bornemisza - Roger Federer - Boris Johnson - Peer Steinbrück - Eddy Merckx - Rafa Nadal - and Vladimir Putin.

The withdrawal had a boomerang effect, caused the event to be postponed indefinitely, and forcing JJ to return to Amsterdam. After ten years of less fortunate circumstances, he found temporary shelter in the Jordaan. The place was dark, damp, noisy and depressing; not particularly conducive to getting back on his feet. Having read an interesting article on the effects of severe frost on human beings, fallen asleep during a rest in the snow, at 30 below Celsius, JJ flew the end of 2012 to Haparanda, in the North of Sweden. He checked in a century old hotel where he had stayed sixty years earlier. The manage-

ment was overjoyed with the 150 tulips he had bought at Schiphol Airport, and treated JJ with utmost attention. Everything went according to plan, except the weather. The temperature around zero, and slushy snow as in April, most people had never experienced such conditions at that time of year. When it did not freeze after eight days, JJ gave up his plan and flew to Curacao in the Caribbean, for plan B. He had been there several times and expected to meet at least some business acquaintances. However, he found not one of them still alive.