

observant

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An aerial photograph of a city square, likely in the Netherlands, featuring a large, colorful roller coaster in the background. The square is paved and has several trees and buildings. A white circular logo with the word 'inkom' in red lowercase letters is centered over the image.

inkom

Who is Observant?



Maybe you're standing in line to register for Inkom 2014, or maybe you're chilling out in your new room for a moment when you read this.

• We are the editors of *Observant*, the independent weekly paper and website – in English and Dutch – for Maastricht University. From next week onwards, you can read a new printed copy of the paper every **Thursday morning**. Get your copy from the special trays at the entrance to your faculty building. It is full of news about the university, student life, background stories and columns.

- On our Dutch/English website www.observantonline.nl you can find daily updates of the news, a column by a recently graduated student about starting the first real job, stories about students' research, internship, thesis, et cetera.
- For the latest news and interesting info, check out www.facebook.com/ObservantUM or follow us on Twitter [@observantUM](https://twitter.com/observantUM).

Our team

Our team consists of five professional reporters, a secretary, a freelance team of columnists, students who are learning about the profession of

journalism from us, draughtsmen and a graphic designer.

Journalistic ambitions?

If you want to try and see what it's like to be a journalist, we can give you the opportunity to gain experience. You can also (at a charge) participate in any of our six journalistic/effective writing workshops that we have planned for this autumn. Keep an eye on Facebook and our website for more information.

You can also meet us during the Inkom, Monday 18 August at I'm International and the next day

at Day@The Uni.

Come right in

Whether you want to gain some experience, have questions or news, just e-mail us or visit us in person! Our editorial office is located in the centre of town. At the top of the Minderbroedersberg (side street to Tongersestraat) is the university's administrative building. Do not enter, but turn right and pass through the glass door of the red-bricked building. You will find us on the second floor.

Inkom 1988 was my Inkom. That's 26 years ago. To recover from the shock of that thought, I started googling some pictures and planned a quick visit of the Facebook page to refresh my memory. Yes, I know: silly plan. Force of habit.

1988 was the pre-digital era: The computer skills training at my faculty consisted of dragging documents to the recycle bin using a revolutionary new device called a 'mouse', mail was delivered by postmen instead of servers, and the World Wide Web and the first commercial digital camera would be introduced three years later.

My memory is of little help either. The only

moment I clearly remember was the chaotic start of the event. Out of the blue came a guy repeatedly shouting out loud the number on the sign he was holding. I moved away from this savage, evaluating the alternatives: running back to mum and dad, crying, smacking him in the face. Then I realised that his number corresponded to my Inkom registration number; this idiot was my mentor. My affirmative response, his subsequent manic hug and my clandestine joining of a random other group are the last known

Beer drinking galore

details of my Inkom; the rest is all a blur. So instead I checked the 2014 Inkom website. And suddenly everything came flooding back to me; what I saw there gave a fairly accurate impression of Inkom 1988. Besides, only one conclusion could possibly be drawn from the trillions of photos of posing, hugging, dancing and kissing students: Inkom is about beer drinking. Or, more precisely: Inkom is beer drinking galore. And it's no wonder. In a 'partyful' and brewery-sponsored environment, many

will be tempted to augment their socialising efforts with the brewer's products. Besides, in a massive crowd of excited but uncertain young adult strangers on the brink of an entirely new life, individuals tend to follow the behaviour of the majority. As a result, everybody will drink beer because everybody is drinking beer.

So here's my tip to all first-year students: take as many selfies as you can, as these will be your only memories of your Inkom 2014.

Thomas Thijssens,
lecturer at the School of Business and Economics

Colophon

Observant

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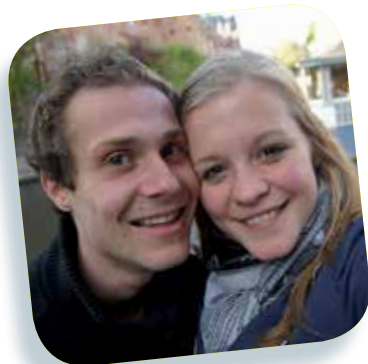
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“I’m not much of a lady’s man”

Was there any kissing during the Inkom and if so, how much beer did that take? Was it the “love of my life” straight away, or did it start out as a flirtation? Four Inkom couples tell all.

Text: Wendy Degens, Photos: interviewee’s archives



Lars van Iwaarden (19) second-year Arts and Social Sciences ♥ Tessa Verbeek (19) second-year Midwifery, Hogeschool Zuyd



Rick van der Westen (24) master’s IB student ♥ Bonnie de Beer (22) master’s student of Social and Cultural Anthropology, VU Amsterdam, secretary of the Working Group Inkom



Céline-Aimée van Bergen (21) second-year Teacher’s Training, Hogeschool Zuyd ♥ Eric Lundberg (25), air traffic controller and student at the University of Oklahoma



Michelle Joosten (21), master’s of Neuropsychology ♥ Mark Knoops (22), auditing accountant at EY accountants

After an evening of science fiction – they watched the first part of *The Hunger Games* in Tessa Verbeek’s student room – the korfbal player from Zeeland stayed the night with his blonde from Brabant. They had known each other six weeks, but love only came that night. Lars van Iwaarden met Tessa during the Inkom of August 2013. Butterflies in your stomach? Both shake their heads. They did “like” each other, though. Lars: “I didn’t have any plans, I thought: let’s just make a fun week of it.” Tessa: “When a number of kids left the group, some of Lars’s friends joined us, they were also from Zeeland. Great fun. After the Inkom we got together almost on a weekly basis to do something.” Tessa’s parents were onto it immediately. “Without realising it, I dropped Lars’s name in conversations quite often.”

It is Lars’s first serious relationship. And even though Tessa “liked him”, there were also doubts. “I was afraid that our close-knit Inkom group would break up, because of us being a couple.” But the power of attraction conquered all. What did Lars fall for? Looks or brains? “She is great company, chats a lot and is really sweet.” The couple have survived trips to Paris and Bruges, introductions to the in-laws is behind them, but what about Tessa’s future profession? Does Lars realise that a midwife often has to get up in the middle of the night? Tessa looks at him laughing: “He has been aware of that since the first day of the Inkom.”

3 January 2014: the day of “the talk”, the day when Bonnie de Beer and Rick van der Westen finally decided: we choose each other and everyone is allowed to know. Finally, because anyone who hears their story, will think: ‘Could that not have been easier, after months of mooching around each other, denying, advancing and retreating?’

The two became acquainted in the summer of 2012 during a joint session of printing and laminating. Both were members of the Central Post – the supporting team of the five strong Inkom Working Group.

Bonnie: “We had to create and laminate all the signs that you see at the Inkom events, such as ‘toilets’ and ‘First-aid post’. It took us two weeks. We had a lot of fun; after every hundred signs, we treated ourselves to *Soekeloekie*, a sketch by Dutch cabaret artists Droog Brood. Hilarious. We had the same sense of humour.” But no spark. Bonnie went to Istanbul for six months; Rick was selected for the new Inkom Working Group (as secretary), months passed. There was something in the air, they had dates, but their relationship came under the category ‘unclear status’, *Observant* concludes. Till ‘that day’. Bonnie: “We went to a party together and decided: we are *not* going to get drunk, we will stay away from each other.” That didn’t work. They both left together and went in the direction of Bonnie’s student room. “Rick is fun, our outlook on life is the same: positive and enthusiastic.”

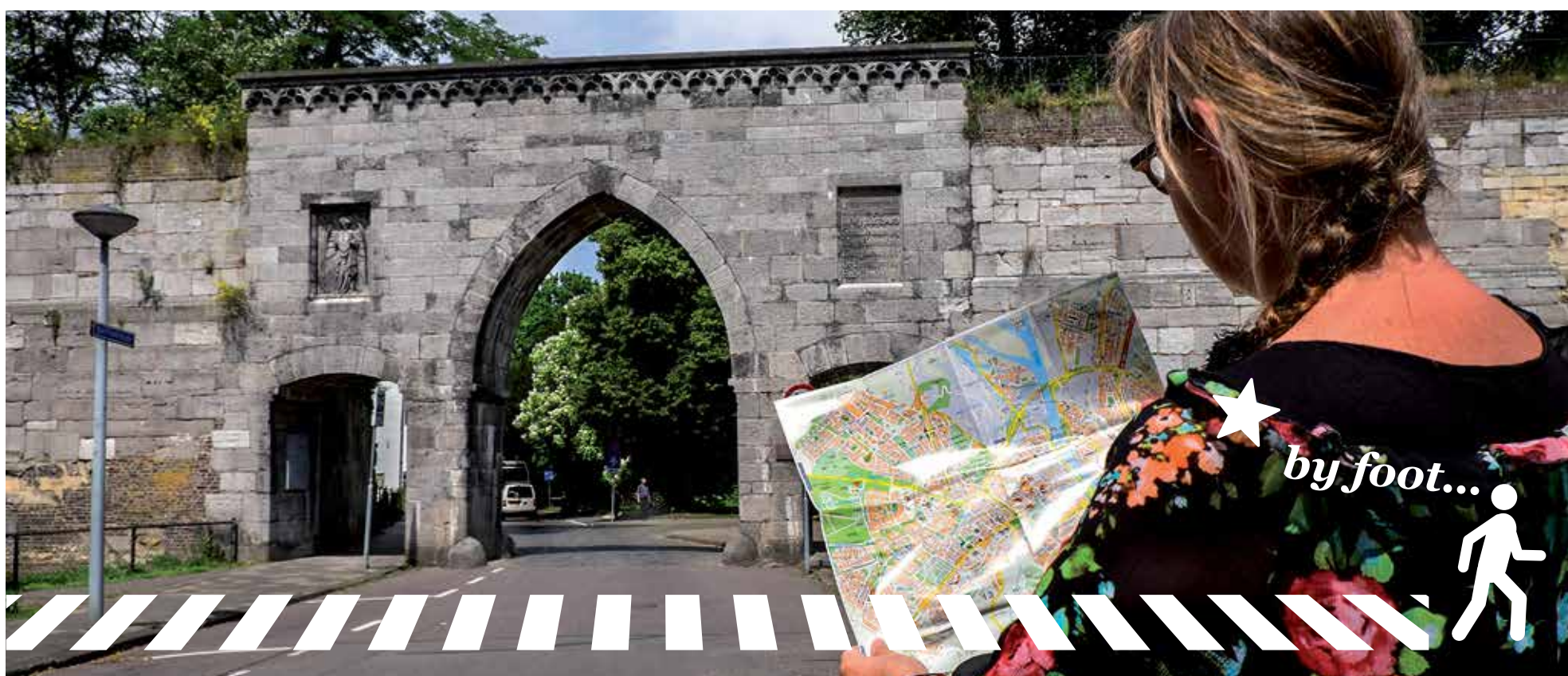
* Tip for those who don’t know *Soekeloekie*: check out YouTube.

This ‘Inkom couple’ is engaged. American Eric Lundberg proposed to his Céline-Aimée van Bergen on 25 February – one and a half years after their first kiss during the Inkom – on the Amorsplein. The proposal wasn’t a complete surprise for Dutch Céline-Aimée. “We want to move to the US together next year.” Eric will have to return to study (he is doing an online master’s in International Relations at the University of Oklahoma). “If I want to go with him then we will have to marry.” Cute detail: Eric asked her to marry him with a caramel. “The ring wasn’t ready on time. I have been his caramel since I once asked him why he had bought caramels. They turned out to be cashew nuts...”

Back to the Inkom of August 2012. Céline-Aimée was a law student in Maastricht. “I didn’t make the first year and chose to do teacher’s training.” Looking back on the first meeting: “I was talking to a girl; Eric interrupted us. He clearly liked me. I thought he was spontaneous, a little different, self-assured. We had a lot of fun that night.” Eric: “She was fun to talk to, fun to dance with, and fun to be around.” Eventually Eric asked on Saturday if Céline-Aimée would be his girlfriend. “We felt really quickly: this is very special.” Céline-Aimée: “I have always dreamed of living in the United States; I am dropping the teacher’s training and want to do an online course at Grand Canyon University to become a teacher of English.”

Mark Knoops had had his eye on Michelle Joosten for some time, but he, she readily admits, had never crossed her radar. “I saw Michelle for the first time during one of the communal drinks held by the sports associations, in spring of 2012. I was chairman of Dutch Mountains, the student cycling association. She had joined Uros, the athletics association. I sneakily asked some people I knew from Uros about Michelle. She seemed like a sweet but also shy girl, that’s my type. At the same time, I realised that I shouldn’t expect her to make a move. And as I am not much of a lady’s man, it took quite some time.” It happened at the Inkom’s sports day, in August 2012. “He came over to talk,” Michelle says. “Love at first sight? Well, um... let’s call it a force of attraction.”

There was a click, but Mark left the country soon after that, for a six-month traineeship in Lausanne. Michelle: “I saw the potential, but I wasn’t one hundred per cent convinced. We had just been dating for four days.” The odd App message was sent during their ‘separation’ but no more than that. Still, they didn’t want to just leave it at that. He came to the Netherlands during the Christmas holidays; we arranged to meet a couple of times. “That’s when we decided to make it official.” They have been an item for 17 months now, still actively into sports and each busy with study and work. After his master’s of International Business Mark found a job in Maastricht. Michelle: “That was tense for a while. At a certain moment there was talk of a job in Eindhoven, but I would have found a weekend relationship difficult.”



mood, have to study hard or want to has something to offer



Exams- shed day

solid breakfast. For this you can
straat 23) between 8:00 and
e, and cake can be eaten at Taart
at the outdoor café that overlooks
15)
nda of Muziekgieterij
ne Alla (Leliestraat 5) or the



Run-until-you- drop day

- Through UM Sports, students can join the gym for fitness or participate in group lessons cheaply (Sportcentrum Randwyck)
- From the sports centre, it is only a short bicycle ride to Café Thembi (Dopplerdomein 20a) for organic 'bitterballen' or spelt pasta
- Are you more of an outdoor sports person, take a run or cycle along the Jeker, on the new footpath around the Tapijn barracks (Sint Hubertuslaan 12)
- Fancy a Chinese meal but without feeling guilty? Try Loving Hut (Scharnerweg 36), a completely vegan Chinese restaurant



I-am-culturally- responsible day

- Activities and free tours are organised regularly in the Bonnefanten museum (Avenue Céramique 250). The museum restaurant Ipanema is also worth a visit
- Students and recent graduates give talks on modern art in Kunsthuis De Ridder (Oeverwal 3)
- You can listen to music, attend lectures and watch films, participate in workshops and eat at the Landhuis (Maasmolendijk 24)
- For blockbusters, go to the Euroscop (Wilhelminasingel 39); for the latest art house film, go to the Lumière art cinema (Bogaardenstraat 40-B)

Text: Cleo Freriks



Extraordinary
Maastricht research

'My dog understands how I am feeling'

André Rieu is probably not someone you would link to scientific research just like that; the same goes for pets' emotions or the phantom ship the Flying Dutchman. And still it happens. In Maastricht, and it's not absurd. We have lined up a few remarkable studies.

Text: Wendy Degens, Riki Janssen, and Maurice Timmermans

encouraging pet owners to fill in his survey for months. He wants to find out whether people can recognise certain emotions in their faithful four-footed friends. According to the professor, animal welfare should be a central issue in the sustainability debate. "What do we mean to animals and what do they mean to us?"



André Rieu's success

André Rieu is world-famous: in Maastricht, but also in Toronto, Beijing or Vienna. Who are the fans of this conductor and violinist? Does Rieu contribute towards Maastricht's reputation? What is the secret behind his success? Maastricht researchers, supervised by arts and social scientist, professor Maaïke Meijer, take a closer look at this phenomenon. In addition to scientific publications and a conference, there are also plans for a documentary and a book for the fans. Published in Dutch, German and English.

subjects (they did have climbing experience!), six doctors and seven guides to travel with him, is extraordinary. Only a year ago, UM biochemist Bas de Laat and his group climbed the 4,164 metre high Breithorn. "It cost me five years of my life with all the stress that was involved." De Laat carried out a thrombosis experiment, and what everyone thought was true: a lack of oxygen increases the chances of blood clots and thus thrombosis in the veins. And those who move more, run a greater risk. If you wish to see the adventure with your own eyes, Google the documentary of his trip, called *Red meets White*.



Overweight

On some islands in the Pacific Ocean, more than 90 per cent of the population is overweight. Obesity researcher Anna Marie Hendriks, who herself did modelling work and is therefore as thin as a rake, went to Fiji to see what the government is doing to set this problem right. More than you think: an import ban on unhealthy western products (a major cause of the epidemic), tax increases on soft drinks, and free Zumba lessons. Excuse me? Yes, twice a week the central square in the capital city of Suva is filled with women (and men) dancing to the beat. It is a resounding success! Not because the women want to lose weight, but because they just love doing it. Whatever, as long as they are exercising.

Incomprehensible

It took mathematician Bert Gerards fourteen years to prove Rota's Conjecture. Completely incomprehensible mathematics, even for colleagues in the field. And what did Gerards reckon

in *Observant*: "The worst is still to come!" You just cannot imagine it, but what do you think: writing the whole darned thing down is even harder than proving it. Think of the thousands of pages spread out over twenty articles. "That is not something you can ask your secretary to do." Understatement of the year!



Flying Dutchman

Who doesn't know the legend: the Dutch ghost ship that is doomed to sail the oceans forever, because the captain insisted on travelling to Indonesia for spices at Easter. This captain of the Flying Dutchman came from Terneuzen, the citizens of Terneuzen think. But not a word of it is true. City marketing at its best! Terneuzen didn't have a Dutch East India Company harbour. Cultural historian Agnes Andeweg wrote a book about it. And where can this book be purchased? Yes, that's right, at the Tourist Information Office in Terneuzen.

Kwakwaka'wakw

Anthropologists used to spend as long as a year among the Indians in the depths of the inlands and then they would write a book as thick as a fist about it. That is not what Maastricht Arts and Social Sciences researchers do. Hein Schoer spent two weeks with the Kwakwaka'wakw in Canada. And what was the result? A soundscape. Excuse me? A composition of more than an hour with a wide range of sounds: local song, street conversations but also (Canadian) sea gulls and cars racing past. Intriguing. But what it feels like to be a Kwakwaka'wakw? You will have to look that up yourself. In anthropological literature.



Animal welfare

My dog understands how I am feeling: agree or disagree? My cat has feelings: agree or disagree? When I am upset, my pet stays close to me: agree or disagree? Pim Martens, professor of Sustainable Development, has been



Yodel-Ay-Ee-Oooo

The fact that a scientist travels to the Alps on his own: unusual, but okay. Getting thirty test



The Working Group Inkom in 10 propositions



From left to right: Bonnie, Elsemieke, Maron, Cécile and Jeroen

President Elsemieke Hoet (UM Dutch law, has nearly completed her bachelor's)

Finally I can be boss Even if I wanted to, it wouldn't work. We are fairly democratic; the chairperson is absolutely not the boss. I didn't want the chairwomanship for that reason, but because of the tasks assigned to that role, such as sponsoring and acquisition, internal and external communication. That is why I applied for it.

A WGI year looks good on your CV Yes, but that is not the reason I chose to do it. What was? I experience things that I would otherwise never experience: dealing with stress, contact with a lot of different parties, working towards a deadline together with your team, organising events for thousands of students ... I am learning a lot from it. You grow, on a personal level as well.

Secretary Bonnie de Beer (is doing a master's of Social and Cultural Anthropology at VU Amsterdam)

The media is more than welcome at the cantus this year Phew, tough question, well no, we will stick to the same policy that we adhered to in the past. There are certain aspects that could be

exposed negatively by the media. Let me just say, soft drinks are not very popular. And then it seems as if it is all about the alcohol, while it's about solidarity, singing songs together with 3,000 people.

A WGI year like that, I would never do it again On the contrary, I would, towards the end of the year you realise why you did it. Everything is falling into place, it is going to happen and you arranged it all. I would recommend it to anyone.

Vice President Maron van der Krieken (International Business Zuyd Hogeschool, bachelor's graduate)

What a load of crap, under-eighteens not being allowed to drink It is the law and we uphold it. As vice president I have no opinion. We have green and red armbands, you can't get alcohol with a red one and if you cut them off you won't get them on again. Without a band you can't get anything to drink, not even soft drinks. A system is never watertight, we are not going to check whether someone is drinking from someone else's glass, but they won't get anything from us.

The WGI is bad for your relationship Ha ha, not

at all! We were warned about that but I started a relationship during this period, so did Bonnie, Cécile moved in with her partner, things are going well for Elsemieke. It makes a difference that our partners all have board membership experience, they understand. It's just Jeroen who is single. We are trying to help him, as his wing women, but without success. Anyway, we say, he already has four women. He is learning how to deal with women from us. If a girl asks: what do you think, can I wear this? Then you say: of course darling! Or: do I look fat in this? Not at all, nooooo!

Logistics manager Cécile Vliex (is doing UM master's of European Politics and International Relations)

We didn't want The Rolling Stones, they were too demanding Ha ha, our budget couldn't handle them, so one big fat No, and they would not be ideal for our target group. They are just a bit too old. I don't think that students who are 17 and 18 know very many of their songs. I don't either, just a few, and not enough to sing along.

I'm sick of Fabrizio I'm never sick of Fabrizio. He

really knows how to create an atmosphere. He is a local hero, isn't he, in Maastricht, we have to keep him if we want Maastricht and the students to bond. But he won't be here to perform, he is on holiday, so we've arranged for another local act.

Treasurer Jeroen Custers (is doing a bachelor's in Built Environment, Zuyd Hogeschool)

That girlie chatter drives me mad It's not so bad, no really, I'm being honest! I learn a lot from the ladies. Soon I will be the perfect boyfriend, I know all the female things, all the aches, it's all dealt with here. Besides, plenty of men come into the office here with enough time to chat about men things.

I only do the WGI because of the trip at the end No! Besides we pay for that ourselves, it is not included in the budget, all the money goes to the Inkom. By the way, it is an often asked question, so a good thing that I can explain. We are going to Crete this year. And I am actually not in the mood for it, because when it is time to go, well, that means that it is all in the past. It will all be over.

Wammes Bos





I felt like a rock star. I was walking along the alley towards a crowd of people. Standing on the left and right behind the gates were rows of young people, screaming, smiling, trying to get my attention. They were longing for me, trying to touch me. I put my hands up to shield my face from the many arms reaching towards me like tentacles. I was not a rock star. My experience differed from that of a real rock star in several key ways. First, there were no security guards protecting me from all the arms. Second,

A Red-Carpet Welcome

my 'groupies' did not want to touch me for the sake of it. Rather, they wanted to cover me in stickers. Tragos, Circumflex, SV Koko and more. By the end of the alley I looked like a running billboard for student associations. Third, I was not the only one getting so much attention. There were 2249 others walking with me along the ally,

sharing in that rock star feeling. We were the new students, 'freshers' in Maastricht, ready to embark on our studies in this small Dutch city. Students from higher years had prepared a week of activities, parties and fun for us before we had to start our new lives for real. Walking along the alley, I knew no one. But

by the following week, I had learned how easy it was to make friends with 2249 rock stars – or at least some of them. Our exuberant red-carpet welcome would stick in our minds the whole week. Our 'groupies' were showing us that they were pleased to have us here. And they took us in with open arms, welcoming us into the wonderful world of student life.

*Catharina Rudschies,
Alumna European Studies*

