

Persons celebrating an Anniversary in August 2004

We start our midsummer birthday medley with chess friend **Henri Serruys** from Antwerp, he celebrated his 56th birthday on August 4. Above all he is a collector and he has particularly dealt with chess bookplates, recently he has published a nice book with numerous illustrations on this special field (see also our page [Publications](#)).

Best wishes go to the great collector **Jean Mennerat** who has settled in the French Alps: he looked back on whole 87 years on August 11. His exceptional collection of more than 27,000 volumes in 44 languages belongs without any doubt to the largest and most significant ones throughout the world. Even if he is - for health reasons - not able to contribute so actively to our bibliographical aims his spontaneous joining and his support of the KWA alone deserve our special appreciation. We have already pointed to his publication *Un Manuscrit Méconnu: Le Manuscrit de Chapais* [Chapais' unrecognized manuscript; by Dr. med. Jean Mennerat, Paris] in our page [Publications](#), you will find the text of the French original and its German translation at Harald Balló's [homepage](#). The recently published article on the first chess bibliophile Frédéric Alliey is a teamwork of Jean Mennerat and Harald Balló (*KARL* 1/2004, p. 20-23).

Only two days later our chairman **Jurgen Stigter** turns up on the birthday list, he's now 51 years "young" – surely quite a right statement with regard to Jurgen's travelling quota. Over the last decade a superb collection (of about 20,000 volumes) resulted from his collecting passion – and it is still rapidly growing by continuous purchases. Jurgen is in the remarkable situation being able to devote his time largely to his hobbies, so doing sport, the collecting, recording of chess literature in a bibliography and travelling to collectors and congresses world-wide constitute central activities. In addition he is active in further clubs as in the board of ARVES or as a member of the International Society for Board Game Studies and of the Lasker Society. Going at regular intervals to the near opera house in Amsterdam as well as the compulsory post-nocturnal football training on Sunday morning (substituted by cross-country skating in winter) belong to his non-chess passions.

As far as I know two short (typewritten) manuscripts have been published by Jurgen Stigter: as a declared Lasker enthusiast a bibliography on Lasker (*Emanuel Lasker: a bibliography*. Amsterdam, 1987.- 15 sheets) and somewhat later *The History and Rules of Rithmomachia: the philosopher's game*. (Delft, appr.1989.- 12, [18] sheets). At the moment he deals with the "Yuletide-Series" – the first issue ([no. 0](#)) is already available.

Again you may look up further biographical details on Jurgen Stigter in *KARL* 1/2004, p. 37.

Again our next greetings go in the direction of Amsterdam, **Tom de Gijzel** completed his 34th year on August 14 and by that he is the junior of the month. About his chess activities we only know that he engages himself in collecting too.

We still remain in the Dutch scenery and welcome a real jubilee, the world-renowned arbiter **Geurt Gijssen** completed the 7th decade of his life on August 15. Geurt Gijssen himself has summarized the early years of his youth in a few sentences: "As a Dutchman I was born in Germany where my father worked for a tobacco group. I have witnessed the war in Germany, in Emmerich and in Neviges [near Düsseldorf (? – better: near Velbert – MN)]. After our house was bombed on October 7th, 1944 we were evacuated to East Germany – at that time I have learned the rules of chess. After the war we lived for some years in Rotterdam and since 1952 I have lived in Nijmegen and I have also spent there my time working as a grammar-school teacher in mathematics." (taken from: Harald Steiner: Porträt eines Schiedsrichters, in: Schach-Report/Dt. Schachblätter/Dt. Schachzeitung 10/1996, p. 41-46; translation by RB)

After his retirement from school teaching in 1983 the path was cleared for a second career as an arbiter. Here he derived some benefit from the experiences he had acquired in the psychological field during his last 10 years of working as an advisor. Already in 1978 he had gained the qualification for a National Arbiter as required from the FIDE, only two years later he was an International Arbiter. In the Eighties things were rapidly getting better and Geurt Gijssen became one of the most popular arbiters world-wide – highlights of his career were among other things the world championship matches Kasparov – Karpov in Seville 1987 and in New York/Lyon 1990 as well as Karpov – Kamsky in Elista 1996. From 1990 to 1994 he was Chairman of the FIDE Arbiters Committee, then in Moscow 1994 he became Chairman of the FIDE Rules Committee. And "G.G." didn't get in the least tired over the years – let us remember only the last year when he led some top events as chief arbiter (Kasparov – Deep Junior in New York, Febr. 2003; Aeroflot Open in Moscow, 2003; Kasparov – X3D Fritz, Nov. 2003).

Geurt Gijssen became known to a large audience especially by his excellent column "An Arbiter's Notebook" appearing monthly since April 1998 at the Internet ChessCafe, here he entertains his readers with essays and anecdotes from the arbiter's practice and he replies to reader's questions on tricky disputes and borderline cases from tournament events. Apart from arbitrating another passion of Geurt Gijssen is the collecting of chess literature, as early as 1996 his collection had increased to respectable 6,000 volumes (the current number is unknown to us).

The reader (being able to speak German) will find a more detailed portrait of our jubilee in the a. m. literature. We wish Geurt Gijssen many happy returns of the day to continue his hobbies!

We are awaiting a further jubilee in the Swedish town of Tyresö (near Stockholm), our deputy chairman **Peter Holmgren** will look back on half a century there on August 18th. Peter, like his (fatherly) friend Rolf Littorin is particularly active as a collector – even if we are not able to give a more detailed information his collection has to be classified as a very significant one. Apart from his commitment to the KWA Peter Holmgren also gives some assistance to the Scandinavian chess history group Schackets Kulturhistoriska Sällskap (publishing the online magazine [Meddelandeblad](#)), he is holding there the post of the treasurer. Increasing business commitments (in the marketing department of an IT company) involve extensive travelling - unfortunately his remaining free time for family and hobbies is shrinking more and more: we hope very much that this will not have an all too dramatic effect on his absolutely desirable co-operation with the KWA. We wish Peter every good fortune and success for the second half of his life!

Robert Coffman from Minnesota is receiving congratulations shortly after his joining the KWA – he turned 46 on August 20. As a collector he has focused on the field of problem chess, we hope to hear a little more about him and his chess activities soon.

Further birthday greetings go to Lauterberg, a small village beautifully situated in the national park Hoher Vogelsberg: the same day (August 20) chess friend **Wolfgang Remin** celebrated there his 51st birthday. We also got to know him primarily as an enthusiastic collector of earlier German chess literature (tournament books, magazines), he has recently extended his interests a bit to problem chess which we (zealous to chess culture) like to encourage.

So there is already a transition to our next candidate who has largely devoted his life to problem chess – particularly to fairy chess: **bernd ellinghoven** (he always writes in small letters) celebrated his 51st birthday at Aachen on August 24. For 30 years now **-be-** (so his initials which found their way into the specialist literature a long time ago) has dealt with the heterodox chess problem, at first in the *Schwalbe* (starting as a specialist in 1974), later on (since 1989) as the editor of *feenschach*, the *zeitschrift für märchenschach* (magazine for fairy chess) – we have already shortly appreciated the latter at our page [Publications](#). His further activities in publishing shouldn't be left unmentioned (in cooperation with Denis Blondel, Paris): the black FEE=NIX book series which is unparalleled in the quality of its production and

therefore is a pleasure for each collector's eye, and the "FIDE Alben" (together with additional Annexe volumes) which turned into usable reference books only by a reformation and modernization under his patronage. In addition -be- is active as a FIDE delegate and as a printer for the Schwalbe as well, not forgetting his numerous activities as a judge in problem tournaments: in view of all these merits it is nearly no wonder that he was already in his forties elected a honorary member of the Schwalbe, an honour which is generally given to only (about) eighty-year-old "swallows". Even for composing some time is still left occasionally - then -be- often tends to cooperate with other renowned composers, there resulted many a masterpiece or prize problem from such co-productions. Worth mentioning is also his most interesting account of a journey and research report "Kambodschach – Work in Progress zur Geschichte des Schachspiels in Kambodscha" (... on the history of chess in Kambodscha) in *Kambodschanische Kultur*, Heft Nr. 8, Berlin 2003, S. 90-122.

Those who wish to hear something more about -be- should read the excellent laudatory speech written by Hans Gruber on the occasion of the 50th birthday of our "Jack-of-all-trades of fairy chess" (*Schwalbe* 202, August 2003, p. 184-186).

Chess friend **Éric Ruch** reached his red-letter day on August 26, he turned 43. Éric has played chess since nearly three decades; after starting a family 15 years ago he finally lacked the time to continue devoting himself seriously to OTB play and he changed completely to correspondence chess. He became French CC champion in 1998, afterwards he concentrated more on the international CC scene and the IM title followed in 2001. In the meantime he got promoted to a SIM ("Senior IM") and during the ICCF Congress 2003 he was elected Qualifications Commissioner. Éric is particularly interested in the French CC history, we are awaiting full of curiosity his publication on this subject which is still in preparation.

In closing our birthday greetings we will go again to the Netherlands, this time to the city of Utrecht – our friend **René van der Heijden** celebrated there his 53rd birthday on August 29. He is not in the least related to his namesake Harold v. d. H. what many a person may suspect, but he is also a formidable collector, we could convince ourselves of that during several (also spontaneous) visits to the very hospitable Biltstraat. His collecting passion has not only focused on chess literature but also on music CDs of any provenance, he has a huge collection of the latter in his shelves comprising probably all that is available in this field. René is still a bit active in playing in his Utrecht chess club but after all his great commitment to his family and his job (lecturer in mathematics and physics) is limiting his time, too.

Congratulations to all!