



Adriana Zylmans, Ed.D.
President's Report 2017-2018
Dutch Network (Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai')

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VanCoeverden Court, 1099 Sitka Square. Vancouver, BC

Introduction

Another year has passed quickly. The 2017-2018 year for the Dutch Network has been successful but not without a few challenges as is fairly common for any non-profit organization. Progress is known to fluctuate from year to year for most non-profit organizations that are highly dependent on volunteers and our Association is no different. As an example: the European Festival that usually takes place in May at Swangard Stadium was cancelled. Our e-newsletter struggled to get published in a timely way, and the dates of some of our bike rides had to be changed due to inclement weather. Our Dutch Koffie Club in Vancouver was suspended for a long period of time. Membership in the Association takes much administrative work. Overall, however, our hard working board members and Koffie Club leaders and special event leaders have done another super job and as president, I am truly grateful to have worked with such dedicated and committed Dutch volunteers.

Also, very special thanks to Barbara Buree for her conscientious work as Secretary and assistance with membership and to Peter Buree for keeping our financial reporting and records in good order. The board members are especially grateful for your dedication to the Association. Thank you sincerely!

Revision of Constitution and By-laws and use of the working name *Dutch Network*

A major focus of our organization this year has been the preparation of a digital file of our Constitution and By-laws as mandated by the Societies Act of British Columbia. The process to revise and update our Constitution and By-laws was challenging. Many hours were spent discussing the framework of our organization and its role in the Dutch community.

On July 11, 2018 we held an extraordinary member's meeting and approved our revised By-laws. Today, we are concluding the process with the approval of our revised Constitution and the digital filing with the BC Registrar of Societies. Our members may have noticed that our working name for the organization has changed to **Dutch Network**



to support a more modern, cross-generational and culturally friendly approach. We have created a new logo to provide a refreshing look both for our website and the organization. We have, however, maintained the registered legal name of our Association "Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai'". For fifty-three years our organization has had this name and for historical purposes within the community it has significances and it honours our founding members.

Monthly bike rides

Another objective this year was to create a few new cycling routes for our members. We hosted five bike rides and changed the Mud Bay bike ride to cycling the farm fields of Ladner and the surrounding community of Tsawwassen FN (First Nations) and Tsawwassen Mills Shopping Mall. The new route proved to be interesting and most enjoyable. As well, we made some slight modifications to the Fort Langley bike route. Unfortunately, the weather conditions in September were quite unfavorable and the scheduled cycling date for the Fort Langley ride changed three times. Our attendance at bike rides varied from 8 to 25 people. Thanks to Barb and Peter Buree, John van Rij, Rick de Loeff, Jeanette van Hattem and Bruce Melville for coordinating and leading the monthly bike ride. We hope more members will join us next year as we start our cycling program in May 2019 and continue to September 2019.

Weekly Nature Walks led by Jeanette van Hattem

Our weekly nature walks continued with special thanks to Jeanette van Hattem for organizing and hosting. Jeannette introduced four lunch gatherings at De Dutch in Surrey after nature walks. The attendance at these weekly walks varied from 5 to 10 people.

'Sjoerd's Craft Brewery Tour' a quarterly event.

Our quarterly Craft Brewery event continues to be popular with our members, families and friends. On behalf of the Board members, special thanks to Sjoerd van der Pal for organizing the 'Sjoerd's Craft Brewery Tour' every 3 months which has taken place in Vancouver and Port Moody. Growing in popularity, we hope that this event will continue to pull the young people into our organization.

Dutch Koffie Clubs

The Dutch Koffie Clubs continue to be successful and take place autonomously around the Lower Mainland. Some gatherings meet weekly and some gatherings only take place once a month. During this year, Gerhard Vandenbosch visited 6 of the 7 Dutch Koffie Clubs as our Liaison Director to acquire an understanding of their progress and function. Gerhard prepared a summary of his findings and it is available here today for your reading. Thank you Gerhard for your volunteer efforts as Koffie Club Liaison Director; your contributions have been much appreciated.

Also, our goal was to establish two new Koffie Clubs either in Tsawwassen or Chilliwack, Mission, or Hope. Although this did not happen, a new Koffie Club was recently started in Coquitlam by Piet Boudenwyn. The group meets weekly in the Coquitlam Centre Mall. Thank you Piet for taking the initiative to make this gathering of Dutch friends possible. Also, special thanks to all the leaders of the Lower Mainland



Koffie Clubs who volunteer their time and effort to make Dutch Koffie Clubs happen in their area including: Henja Sawchuk, Langley; Corina Baynton, Abbotsford; Tineke Schrandt, South Surrey; Rita Hopmans, North Surrey; Marina Wilson, New Westminster; and in the North Shore Koffie Club it has been a team effort in leadership with Jan Jansen and Nellie Oostindie (Organizers), Anna Burrige (Website and email manager) and Hans Oosterom, and Leopold van Mourik as organizational assistants.

Unfortunately, the Vancouver Koffie Club had a major set back this year. For over 30 years, the Vancouver Koffie Club met weekly at Sitka Square but last December the meeting location was temporarily suspended due to renovations. The renovations were to be completed within a reasonable timeframe but in fact the renovations took over nine months to complete, thereby significantly impacting the weekly gatherings of the Vancouver Koffie Club. Special thanks to Christie Molhoek and Janny Verheyl for their organizational and leadership efforts of the Vancouver Koffie Club for the past several years. The Vancouver Koffie Club recently reconvened on Thursday, November 1, 2018 with special thanks to Bill and Marion Stroet for their leadership.

Dutch Library at Holland Shopping Centre

Very popular for the Dutch community is the voluntary exchange of Dutch books at the Dutch Library hosted by Holland Shopping Centre. I would like to express special thanks to Jerry van Zuuk and his partner Markku, for carrying on this most onerous and responsible volunteer task. The Association is most grateful for your dedicated service and commitment. Special thanks to Tako and Francis Slump for providing the space in their store to host this library.

Marketing and Sponsorship of the Dutch Network

Through the efforts of John van Rij, vice-president for Marketing and Sponsorships, the Dutch Network has launched a formal marketing and sponsorship program. Special thanks go to Tako and Francis Slump for supporting the Dutch Network with their financial contribution as a Major Sponsor for the Dutch Network. Thank you sincerely. Also John van Rij is most deserving of acknowledgement for his leadership initiative in getting the Marketing and Sponsorship program off the ground this year! Thank you John!

Joint meeting among the Leaders of the Dutch Community

An effort was initiated this year to establish a formal connection with the leaders of the Dutch organizations in the LowerMainland. The representatives included the following: Dutch Business Club Vancouver, TJ Weidema, president; Esdoorn school, Sandra van Ark, coordinator; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies (CAANS) Annette Dorrepaal, president; Sinterklaas Committee, Edith Hicks, Chairperson; and the Dutch Network. The focus of our first meeting held in the Spring was to more understand the goals of each organization and to share challenges and frustrations as a non-profit Dutch organization in the LowerMainland. The group will continue to meet a few times a year. John van Rij coordinated the first meeting and a special thank you for a successful effort.

Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society – a new initiative

To commemorate the 75th Liberation of the Netherlands, a new non-profit organization has recently been formed in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion and registered with the BC Societies Registrar. The group is in the process of considering various activities to thank and to honour Canada and its soldiers. The major focus is to publically commemorate the lives lost and the efforts made by Canadian men and women who helped re-establish freedom in the Netherlands in 1945. At this time, a team of 15 volunteers is working diligently with the Dutch Consulate and the Royal Canadian Legion and members of the Dutch community to coordinate a program of events to take place in Vancouver and throughout the Lower Mainland from late April 2020 to May 6, 2020. A likely outcome of this new initiative is the increased dialogue among the various Dutch organizations around the world and in the Lower Mainland, and the possibility of profiling more interconnection among Dutch organizations and their activities in the future. Stay tuned for more specific details and information about this unique project in the coming months. If you are interested in contributing your talents by volunteering, please contact Adriana Zylmans at azylmans@telus.net or by telephone at (604) 816-3243 or check out the website www.dutchcanada2020.com that will be launched in late November 2018.

Dodenherdenking 2018

Members of the Dutch community greatly supported Dodenherdenking. The Dutch Consulate coordinated the event and the Dutch Network assisted in planning details. The commemorative service was held on May 4, 2018 at the Beatty Street Drill Hall, Vancouver with the participation of a youth choir. A special thank you is given to the Dutch Consulate for coordinating the event and for sponsoring and hosting a reception following the service.

Koningsdag 2018

Koningsdag was a huge success! Celebrating at De Dutch on Burrard Landing was great fun and enthusiastically received by all who attended. The first 100 Dutch Network members registered to attend the celebration received a \$5.00 gift certificate from De Dutch restaurant. As well, Albert van der Heide donated 200 books about the Royal Family "*When Canada was Home: The Story of Dutch Princess Margriet*" by Albert VanderMey, a momentous souvenir on the history of the Dutch Royal Family spending their time in Canada during the war. On behalf of the Dutch Network, thank you to De Dutch restaurant for their generous support and to Albert van der Heide for providing a complimentary book to each attendee at Koningsdag. These gifts for our members clearly exemplify the benefits of being a member of the Dutch Network. Special thanks to John van Rij, Rick de Loeff, Barb and Peter Buree, and Noud de Rover for coordinating a most outstanding event! Thank you as well to the many volunteers who helped on the day of the event. Join us in May 2019 for another great evening of fun and Dutch treats.

For the first time, a family Koningsdag event was held in a Coquitlam park. The weather was great and the event attracted many families and friends. With a Dutch food truck on site and many games and activities organized, the children had a great time. This was a

joint event with the Esdoorn, a Dutch school for children. Members of the Dutch Network and Esdoorn received a discount on their entrance ticket price. Special thanks go to Sandra van Ark and her committee for coordinating this unique outdoor event. Stay tuned for next year!

Easter Egg Hunt for families

Again, thank you to Sandra van Ark for coordinating an Easter Egg hunt at the home of a Dutch family in Vancouver. The event was attended by eight families.

Sinterklaas 2018

The Dutch Network does not take the leadership in coordinating Sinterklaas in the Lower Mainland. A committee, independent of the Dutch Network has taken on this role. However, as an Association we support the event and for Sinterklaas 2018, we are providing our members with three complimentary food tickets for attending the event. Members are invited to visit the Dutch Network table at the event to collect their complimentary food tickets.

Dutch Network E-newsletter, Website, Facebook, Twitter and Social Media Communications

We have been struggling this year with the consistent publishing of our e-newsletter. Our e-newsletter editors, Noud de Rover, vice-president Technology and Website and Saskia Zeedijk, Director for Communications have been trying to produce an e-newsletter but have been confronted with a variety of unforeseen challenges and circumstances. The Association produced 11 e-newsletters and three newsflashes from November 2017 to October 2018. In the coming year, we will strive to streamline the frequency and timing of our e-newsletters. On behalf of the Board, a special note of appreciation to Noud de Rover and Saskia Zeedijk for their efforts and contributions. Also, special thanks to John van Rij for handling Facebook and Twitter and to Rick de Loeff for his assistance with formatting and sending out our recent e-newsletters.

Membership in the Dutch Network

As an Association, we continue to strive to increase our membership. Although the Association continues to acquire new members, our aging population is affecting the strength of our membership. We encourage our members to communicate the benefits of belonging to our Association to keep Dutch cultural activities for families and friends most visible in our community.

Closure

Throughout the year, the Dutch Network (Netherlands Association “Je Maintiendrai”) has continued to receive several complimentary copies of *DUTCH the magazine* and copies of Maandblad *de Krant* from Mr. Tom Bijvoet publisher of Mokeham Publishing Inc. Copies of the newspaper and magazine have been very useful for the Association to distribute to new members as a promotional tool to thank new members for their membership in the Association. As well, this year, copies of the Krant were available to all attendees at both Koningsdag celebrations. The Association is most grateful to Mr.

Bijvoet for supporting our Association and we hope to continue to have the benefit of the relationship in the future. Thank you!

In 2018-2019, striving to work closely with board members in hosting more frequent board meetings to immediately identify challenges for our board members is a need. Seeing increased participation by the Dutch community attending our events, actively recruiting new members to take a leadership role on our board, and/or becoming a volunteer for the many functions we organize are additional objectives for the coming year. Lastly, to provide more information on the website that may assist newcomers to Vancouver is another expectation.

In closing, my report provided an overview of the activities our Association organized for our Dutch community in the Lower Mainland during 2017-2018. Most important above all, however, is to acknowledge the work of our board members and the commitment of our many volunteers whom our organization depends on daily. Our volunteers make this organization what it is today and without their contributions and their many hours of hard work this organization would not exist. Thank you everyone!

Finally, thank you to the Dutch community for your membership in the organization and for your support this year. For me, the year has been most fulfilling and purposeful. With appreciation, thank you!