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President's Report 2018-2019
Dutch Network (Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai')

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Introduction

The year 2018-2019 has seen a paradigm shift in our Association. We have grown immensely.

Our Dutch membership expanded broadly with new business sponsors supporting the efforts of our Association. Our Koffieclubs grew in numbers across British Columbia and attendance at monthly bike rides from May to September 2019 was up. With our dynamic website, popular e-newsletter, and diverse social media pathways including Facebook, Twitter and Social Media Communications, our Association continues to reach Dutch Canadian citizens across Canada, the United States and the Netherlands.

In Spring 2019, the Dutch Network, through the leadership of John van Rij, initiated a formal connection with the leaders of the Dutch organizations in the Lower Mainland to acquire a better understanding of the challenges and confrontations we face in serving Dutch-Canadians. The representatives included: 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; and Sinterklaas Committee Chairperson, Edith Hicks.

Dutch Network E-newsletter,

The publishing of our e-newsletter has become an outstanding success this year. We have an e-newsletter that has grown in size and content and its frequency and delivery has become streamlined. Thanks to the skilful efforts of Tony van Houten, our e-newsletter editor and producer. Tony is the major pillar in the success of our e-newsletter this year. From October 2018 to October 2019, Tony has produced 12 e-newsletters and four newsflashes. For those of you who don't know, Anthony (Tony) van Houten is a distant relative of the van Houten Dutch Cocoa brand.



In September 2018, we introduced two great short story writers -- Laura Davis and Francoise van Buytenen. A very special thank you goes to Laura and Francoise for their interesting stories and for contributing a short story to our enewsletter almost every month. As well, monthly, we feature a Dutch recipe and a biographical business story of a Dutch Canadian in the Lower Mainland.

In the July 2019 enewsletter, for the first time, we introduced Hollandse uitdrukkingen and gezegden (Dutch expressions and sayings) by Barb and Peter Buree. Thank you to Barb and Peter Buree for your entertaining contributions. On behalf of the Board, an outstanding note of appreciation is extended to Tony van Houten for his dedicated work in producing a fantastic enewsletter each month.

Dutch Network Website

The fact that our enewsletter has become a huge success, we must not forget the outstanding work that has been taking place behind the scenes by Noud de Rover, our webmaster, web designer and developer. We owe a HUGE thank you to Noud de Rover, owner of Data Roots and, in February 2019, a Dutch Network sponsor. As apparent through our website and that of the Dutch Business Club, Dutch Network, and Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society, Nouds' quality of work as a web designer and developer is outstanding.

Through our website, everyone can see Noud's remarkable work. His work has been monumental in improving our profile as an Association of BC's Dutch-Canadians. Through Noud's talents and skills, our Association is having visitors view our website from around the world. In turn, our Association is becoming known worldwide as a strong leading Dutch-Canadian organization. As we continue to grow our sponsorship base, we are beginning to be recognized throughout BC, Canada, the United States, the Netherlands and other parts of Europe, as an Association that is leading in the retention and promotion of Dutch culture in Canada and encouraging the connectivity of Dutch businesses around the world.

We are most thankful and grateful to Noud for his overwhelming contributions to our success. Noud is the life-blood and heart of our Association for his work has been most instrumental in creating the public image of our Association. Noud, thank you most sincerely for your time and effort; we are very lucky to receive your volunteer services. Noud, your tremendous dedication and commitment has shown the world that in Canada we have some of Dutch's best.

Also, a special thanks to John van Rij for handling our Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as the Whats App group for Dutchies in Vancouver, Meet-up Apps and other social media groups.

Joint meeting among the Leaders of the Dutch Community

The joint meetings proved invaluable in achieving the goal to better serve our Dutch-Canadian citizens in British Columbia and across Canada. Through communication and dialogue, we became more aware of each others' programming objectives. There is more



cross attendance at each others activities or functions, there is more cross-promotion of events and activities through our enewsletters and/or websites, and there is more effort to focus on activities that have a direct emotional and cultural connection to the Netherlands. For example, we coordinated the opportunity for Dutch-Canadians to gather at the Manchester Pub in Vancouver and the Starlight Casino when the women's soccer team of the Netherlands was playing in the 2019 World Cup. Overall, we have seen Dutch-Canadians become more interested in reconnecting with their heritage, traditions and native roots, no matter which Dutch organization members belong to in Vancouver. A goal the Dutch Network has been working to achieve for the last four years.

The results of our joint meetings also indicate that Dutch-Canadian Associations have few paying members and it remains a challenge to establish the right membership price for an individual or family, it is difficult to get people to take on an executive role as a board member due to an extensive time commitment, and it is not easy to get ad-hoc volunteers to lead a specific event or help at a specific function. In the end, we can confidently conclude, the success of each non-profit organization is dependent on strong leadership from a few people and the momentum of an organization changes constantly. Like ebb and flow; sometimes the organization thrives and at other times it struggles.

Although dialogue among the associations continues to take place on an ongoing basis, a consensus has been reached to entertain the idea to offer a combined membership and to advertise each others events.

Business Sponsorship for Dutch Network

Through the efforts of John van Rij, vice-president for Marketing and Sponsorships, the Dutch Network launched a formal marketing and sponsorship program in 2019. Special thanks are extended to Holland Shopping Centre, Tako and Francis Slump for supporting the Dutch Network as a Major Sponsor since April 2017. Thank you sincerely.

Also, a thank you goes to Glennifer Lake Travel Corporation, (Dutch Wolf Tours), Heleen Eekers, and Robert-Jan Vennik for their sponsorship in August 2019. Dutch Wolf Tours provides high quality travel tours throughout Canada for Dutch speaking tourists. Tours are available in Western and Eastern Canada. Email: dutchwolftours@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.dutchwolftours.com

Van Gogh Painting and Restorations Ltd. (Eric Hetteema) is a new sponsor as of September 2019. Van Gogh has been restoring Residential and Commercial buildings across Canada. Their services of painting, roofing, exterior and interior restorations are available across the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and other parts of BC. Email: contact@vangogh-painting.ca or visit their website at www.vangogh-painting.ca.

Macdonald Realty realtor Peter Vanderkooy, Macdonald Realty became a sponsor as of June 2019. Peter can assist in Real Estate Trading Services including Residential, Commercial and New Developed Properties (including pre-sales). Peter also assists



people moving from the Netherlands to Vancouver. Contact Peter through email: peter@petervanderkooy.com

University of British Columbia, Linguistics Studies became an enewsletter sponsor as of October 14, 2019.

John van Rij, however, is most deserving of acknowledgement for his leadership initiative in getting three new Dutch Network sponsors this year. Thank you John!

Monthly bike rides

We hosted five bike rides in the cities of Vancouver, Richmond, Delta, Surrey, and Fort Langley. Attendance at bike rides varied from 8 to 25 people. Thanks to Barb and Peter Buree, Jeanette van Hattem and Bruce Melville for coordinating and leading the monthly bike ride. Next year, we hope to change the Barnston Island bike ride to a new ride in Maple Ridge and/or Abbotsford. We hope more members will join us next year, as we restart our cycling program in May 2020 and continue to September 2020.

Weekly Nature Walks led by Jeanette van Hattem

Our weekly nature walks continue to be a success through the leadership and hosting efforts of Jeanette van Hattem. Jeannette coordinated a few lunch gatherings at De Dutch in Surrey after nature walks. The attendance at these weekly walks varies from 5 to 10 people. Thank you Jeanette for your service, commitment, and dedication in leading the weekly nature walks.

Craft Brewery Tour a quarterly event.

About 2 years ago, Sjoerd vanderpol set up the very first **Dutch Brewery Tour in Vancouver**. Through the WhatsApp Group “Dutchies in Vancouver”, the Craft Brewery Tour was founded and in turn created its faithful followers. As it gained popularity with our members, families and friends, it became a recurring event every 3 or 4 months in various cities throughout the lower mainland. Dutchies and non-Dutchies alike come together to talk and enjoy each other’s company over some beers in new and old breweries. Participation in the event is free but beer and food is paid for by each participant. Each event takes participants from brewery to brewery, all in walking distance from each other, in and around Vancouver including Main Street breweries, Olympic Village breweries and Port Moody, as there are so many to explore! Thank you to Gilles van der Heijden, Laura Davis, and Eline Naaijkens for their continued leadership in planning brewery tours. For more information contact Eline Naaijkens at (778-323-6391).

Pub Nights

Our Vancouver Dutch Pub Night is held at the New Oxford Public House in Yaletown. On the third Wednesday of each month people gather to have a Dutch chat, experience some Dutch humor and/or have a drink with Dutch friends. The monthly gathering is becoming quite popular and attendance varies from 10 to 25 people. The Langley Dutch Pub Night held on the first Wednesday of each month is also gaining in popularity with people coming from as far away as Mission. The Dutch Pub Night is held at Montana’s



BBQ and Bar in Langley. The first Langley Dutch Pub Night was held in February 2017. The Association would like to institute a Dutch Pub Night in Abbotsford/Chilliwack, Victoria and Nanaimo in the coming year. If there are any volunteers that would like to be coordinator and host a Dutch Pub Night, please contact Rick de Loof and/or John van Rij.

Very special thanks to Rick de Loof and John van Rij for their enthusiastic support in coordinating and hosting the Dutch Pub Nights in Vancouver and Langley. We appreciate your conscientious commitment in keeping the social event a lively and fun gathering. Thank you Rick and John!

Dutch Koffieclubs

Dutch Koffieclubs continue to be popular and take place autonomously around the Lower Mainland. Some Clubs meet weekly and some gatherings only take place once a month. Two relatively new Koffieclubs were founded this year. One club was started up in March 2019 in Coquitlam by Piet Boudenwyn. The group meets weekly in the Coquitlam Centre Mall. Thank you to Piet Boudenwyn for taking the initiative to make it possible for Dutch friends to meet for a coffee and a social chat.

Another Koffieclub was also started in Nanaimo by Laura Kristiansen on March 1st, 2019. Their first two meetings (March and April) were held in the coffee shop at Quality Foods. But Laura shared in an email that: “so many people showed up they mobbed the coffee shop! With all these people speaking Dutch at so many tables it intimidated regular customers”. Since May 2019, the group meets at an ABC Restaurant on Mary Ellen Drive on the first Friday of every month. The group also organized a successful “Koningsdag Garden Party” at the home of one of the members. Attendance at meetings has remained fairly even with 25 to 30 people attending monthly. They usually have a table with Dutch books and puzzles that people bring along and now they even have more Dutch books than they know what to do with. They are now talking about organizing a “games afternoon” with games like “Mens Erger Je Niet” Sjoelen, and other Dutch “spelletjes” but no definite date has been set yet to follow through on this idea. Very special thanks to Piet and Laura for taking the initiative this year to build Dutch connections in their communities!

Also, special thanks is extended to all the leaders of Lower Mainland Koffieclubs who volunteer their time and effort to make Dutch Koffieclubs happen in their community including: Henja Sawchuk, Langley; Corina Baynton, Abbotsford; Tineke Schrande, South Surrey; Rita Hopmans, North Surrey; Marina Wilson, New Westminster; and for the North Shore Koffieclub 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. We still hope to establish Koffieclubs in Tsawwassen, Chilliwack, Mission and Hope. Anyone interested in establishing a Koffieclub in their community is invited to contact a board member of the Dutch Network.

Unfortunately, the Vancouver Koffie Club had a major set back. For over 30 years, the Vancouver Koffie Club met weekly at Sitka Square. In December 2017, however, the



meeting location was temporarily suspended due to renovations. The renovations were to be completed within a few months. The renovations in fact took nine months to complete and significantly impacted the momentum of weekly gatherings. The Vancouver Koffie Club reconvened on Thursday, November 1, 2018 with very special thanks to Bill and Marion Stroet for their leadership, time and dedication. In September 2019, members of the Vancouver Koffieclub decided to meet on the last Thursday of each month. At this time, however, the meeting time and frequency for the Vancouver Koffieclub is under review.

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. Special thanks to Tako and Francis Slump for providing the space to host the Dutch Library in their New Westminster store “Holland Shopping Centre”.

Very special thanks to Jerry van Zuuk and his partner Markku for carrying on a most onerous and responsible volunteer task as our librarians. The work you do to catalogue and cull books people donate, to pick up books from Holland Shopping Centre that are dropped there by donors, and to monitor and keep the book shelves full with books at the Holland Shopping Centre is truly appreciated. Jerry and Markku, the Association is most grateful for your dedicated service and conscientious ongoing commitment. Thank you!

Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society

In August 2018, through the united efforts of the Dutch Business Club, Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies (CAANS), the Dutch Network and the BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion in the lower mainland, a new society was formed “The Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society”. The Society is planning events and activities to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of European liberation from April 2020 to July 2020 throughout the lower mainland and across British Columbia.

During the last few months with business support from Carl van Noort/van Noort Bulbs (Florissa), the Society has sold almost a million red “Canadian Liberator” Tulips to cities, schools, branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, and garden centers in British Columbia and across Canada. The tulip promotion and planting program is intended to create a visual reminder in May 2020 that Dutch Canadians want to thank and to honour Canada and its soldiers one more time, for the many sacrifices made to liberate Europe and in particular the Netherlands.

The Society is also planning to support and publically commemorate the lives lost and the efforts made by Canadian men and women who helped re-establish freedom in the Netherlands in 1945. On May 2, 2020 at cenotaphs and cemeteries across British Columbia a public commemorative service will take place at 8:45 pm. Everyone is invited to attend and participate in the candle light vigil. For more information, view our website at www.dutchcanada2020.com.



An outcome of this new initiative has been the increased dialogue among the various Dutch organizations around the world and in the lower mainland and the profiling of more interconnection among Dutch organizations through cross promotion of events and activities resulting in seeing an increase in attendance at respective functions.

If you are interested in contributing your talents by becoming a volunteer with the Society for the events in 2020, please contact Adriana Zylmans at azylmans@telus.net or by telephone at (604) 816-3243 or check out the website www.dutchcanada2020.com. Very special thanks to Noud de Rover who has done an exceptional job in designing, developing and maintaining the website. The website is excellent, informative, and colourful. Thank you Noud!

Dodenherdenking 2019

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 Duke of Connaughts' 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 2019

Koningsdag was a huge success! Celebrating at De Dutch on Burrard Landing was great fun. The first 100 Dutch Network members registered to attend the celebration received a \$5.00 gift certificate from De Dutch restaurant. As well, we distributed 100 books titled "Dutch Old Ways" a momentous souvenir on the historical culture of the Dutch and their unique idiosyncrasies. On behalf of the Dutch Network, thank you to De Dutch restaurant for their generous support and to Albert van der Heide for making it possible for us to purchase the book, at a discounted price, "Dutch Old Ways" to give 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 2020 for a very special event. Stay tuned for details for Koningsdag 2020 will celebrated in style!

The second annual family Koningsdag event was held. 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. Members of the Dutch Network and Esdoorn received a discount for the price of their entrance ticket. Special thanks go to Sandra van Ark and her committee for coordinating another very successful event. Stay tuned for next year!

On another note, in September 2018, the Esdoorn School was acknowledged by the Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as the first Dutch language school in Canada. Congratulations Sandra van Ark for your leadership initiative in being the founder of a Dutch language school in Vancouver, British Columbia!



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 2019

The Dutch Network does not take 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 2019, we will provide members with 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. Sinterklaas 2018 was a very successful event held in Cloverdale.

Membership in the Dutch Network

As an Association, we continue to strive to increase our membership. Barb Buree is our membership chairperson and has been working diligently to keep membership records up-to-date. The Association has approximately 90 members and we seem to be stable for the last five years. Although the Association continues to acquire new members, our aging population is affecting the strength of our membership. Even though our membership fee has not increased for the last ten years at \$35.00 a person, it is unfortunate that non-members still feel the price is too high. We encourage our current members to communicate to young families and friends the benefits of belonging to our Association to keep Dutch cultural activities most visible in our community. Very special thanks to Barb Buree for her outstanding work in maintaining our membership records.

Financial Reports

Peter Buree is our Treasurer and he has been keeping us on track financially. Peter has done another great job in balancing the books. Although our Association has not appointed a formal auditor, Peter does a great job maintaining our financial records. Very special thanks to Peter for skillfully handling this enormous task.

Dutch Heritage Day

On April 14, 2019, through a private member's bill, from Chatam-Kent-Leamington MP Dave Van Kesteren, Parliament declared May 5 as Dutch Heritage Day. From now on, annually, May 5th will be recognized as Dutch Heritage Day in recognition of the many contributions the Dutch have contributed to the fabric of Canada. The Day is also intended to help commemorate and honour the sacrifices made by Canadian veterans who gave their lives fighting for the Liberation of the Netherlands on May 5, 1945.

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 and to thank new members for their membership in the Association. As well, this year, copies of *de 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!

As a board in 2019 - 2020, we will continue to strive to work closely with the Dutch/Canadian population to provide events and activities that enrich the traditions of the Dutch culture in Canada. Our goal this year is to focus efforts on providing more information on the website that may assist newcomers to Vancouver.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of our board members and their commitment as volunteers whom our organization depends on daily. Through their time as volunteers, our organization is striving. Their contributions and many hours of hard work are making a difference in the lives of our Dutch Canadian community. Thank you everyone!

Lastly, our Koffieclub 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. As a result, the 2018-2019 Dutch Network board and special event leaders have managed, once again, to accomplish much in coordinating social activities for Dutch-Canadians in British Columbia.

Lastly, thank you to the Dutch community for your membership and support this year. Thank you as well, for supporting me as your president. For me, the year has been extraordinary. With much appreciation, I thank you!