



**Adriana Zylmans, Ed.D.**  
**President's Report 2019-2020**  
**Dutch Network (Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai')**

Presented at AGM, October 14, 2020 at 7:00 pm  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

### **Introduction**

The year October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020 has been unusually different because it has been a pandemic year with COVID-19. Since March 2020, the Coronavirus has significantly impacted the overall function of the Association. The technological advancements of social media kept board members connected. The goals and objectives of the Association were still paramount and much was still skillfully accomplished to maintain Dutch cultural connectivity among our members only differently.

Board meetings changed from meeting in person to meeting virtually through a variety of platforms from Zoom to Google Meetings. Many traditional activities such as Dodenherdenking and Koningsdag did not take place; however, the Vancouver Dutch Consulate hosted their first virtual Dodenherdenking commemoration service on May 4, 2020.

The annual family Koningsdag event was not held and the **Easter Egg Hunt for families** held at the home of a Dutch family in Vancouver did not take place. The **Craft Brewery Tour a quarterly event** gained popularity with our members, families and friends and was a recurring event every 3 or 4 months in various cities throughout the lower mainland, however, due to COVID-19, tours were not organized this year.

The Dutch Network monthly summer bike ride from May to September was cancelled. Our Dutch Library at Holland Shopping Centre has been closed since March. Koffie Clubs changed from meeting in a shopping mall or restaurant to alternative ways of keeping in touch such as meeting in a park or staying in touch by telephone. The Klaverjassen

groups have not been gathering to play cards. Our weekly nature walks with Jeanette van Hattem fortunately continued during COVID-19.

Although, many of our Dutch traditional activities could not be carried out due to COVID-19, the board did not remain inactive. We were very successful in trying some new activities, although some events turned out to be more expensive than anticipated. The Association tried to keep event participation costs for members low; yet the implementation of the activity was more costly for fewer participants were permitted due to COVID-19 protocols. Special thanks to our Treasurer, Peter Buree for his conscientious efforts in keeping our accounting affairs in order.

### **Birdhouse Painting Contest**

In April 2020, as people were locked up in their home, through the leadership of John van Rij, a birdhouse painting contest was initiated. The birdhouses that look like Dutch canal homes were created and donated by Dyan Davies and her husband Paulus Scholten. The Dutch Network initiated a painting competition whereby members and non-members were able to pick up a birdhouse, (one per household), paint it, and share a photo of their final painted version. Prizes were awarded for the most uniquely painted birdhouses. This most successful event was supported by 15 families and the Dutch Network had beautiful photos of imaginatively painted birdhouses to share on their social media platforms. Very special thanks to Dyan Davies and Paulus Scholten for the unique opportunity, Holland Shopping Centre for supporting the event and to John van Rij for leading this creative endeavour. The colourful birdhouses were twitted afar!

### **Dutch Network Magical Mystery Scavenger Hunt**

On September 26, 2020, the Dutch Network hosted their first Magical Mystery Scavenger Hunt Car Rally and Walking tour. The event marked the celebration of the 55<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Netherlands Association “Je Maintiendrai” (Dutch Network) founded in 1965, and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the commemoration of the Liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian forces in 1945. To honour these two very special, yet two very different milestones, the Dutch Network within the parameters of COVID-19 organized a unique activity. Sixteen groups participated and 43 participants enjoyed a fun filled magical day.

The Scavenger Hunt was divided into three separate Mystery Hunts: including a walking tour of Fort Langley, a visit to the Canadian Museum of Flight and an Art Mural Walk in the Historic City of Langley. Sixteen families registered. Many free gifts were given to all who participated and prizes were awarded for completing a worksheet for each Mystery Hunt; and overall bonus prizes were awarded to the top three families obtaining the highest points earned by completing all three mystery hunts and optional activities. The event was amazingly successful and fun was had by all.

Very special thanks to the BC Farm Museum and the Canadian Museum of Flight for sponsoring the event and for giving a large discount to the entrance fee, Vancouver

Maritime Museum for donating Family Passes to the Museum, Holland Shopping Centre for donating gift certificates to buy one Krokot and get one free Krokot, Downtown Langley Business Association for donating Langley Dollars, Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society for donating a \$10.00 silver coin from the Canadian Mint in honour of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dutch Liberation, Pure Orange for donating non-medical masks, de VINE Skin for donating bottles of skin sanitizers, Van Noort Bulb Co. Ltd. for donating Dutch Canadian Liberator Tulips, and Peter VanderKooy of Macdonald Realty, Sylvia Lanzl de Haas, Jette Warman, Holly Verchère, Adriana Zylmans, and Christie Molhoek for donating prizes. Very special thanks to Peter VanderKooy for his leadership in leading the Scavenger Hunt and to the committee members Chantaal Buschman, Jette Warman, Sylvia Lanzl de Haas, Noud de Rover, Erik van der Ven, Rachael and Sonya Marchinkow, Barb and Peter Buree, and Adriana Zylmans.

### **Dutch Radio**

On September 19, 2020, the Dutch Network marked a monumental new undertaking. The Dutch Network launched a weekly on-air radio show called “Dutch Connections” from the radio studio of AKASH Broadcasting Inc., CJCN Connect FM 91.5. The radio studio is located in Surrey, BC. The range of frequency extends from Vancouver Lower Mainland to Chilliwack and Hope. The first two radio programs on Saturday September 5, 2020 and September 12, 2020 from 8:00 to 9:00 am commenced as a soft roll out of Dutch music only. The Association is proud to have Harma Volders Hill as the radio host for the Dutch program. A one-year agreement is in place with Connect FM and there is no cost to the Dutch Network for broadcasting “Dutch Connections”. Harma’s goal is to train a younger generation radio host to continue the program into the future. In the meanwhile, the focus of the radio program is to announce local current events/happenings in Vancouver, to interview Dutch entrepreneurs and artists on a variety of topics and to play some Dutch music for our Dutch listeners around the “Keuken Tafel”.

### **Membership in the Dutch Network**

Our membership is down somewhat from last year, as our usual membership drive did not take place this year. Members often renew their membership through Koningsdag activities. As an Association, we continue to strive to increase 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. Although the Association continues to acquire new members, our aging population is affecting the strength of our membership. 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. Thanks again to our Secretary and Membership Coordinator, Barb Buree, for keeping members informed of their membership renewal dates.

However, during this most troubling year, it has been our dynamic website, popular monthly Enewsletter, now referred to as the *Dutch Network Newsletter*, and diverse

social media pathways; including Facebook and Twitter, that has kept our Association constant and supporting the continuation to reach Dutch-Canadians across Canada, the United States and the Netherlands.

### **Stakeholder Meetings**

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. Unfortunately, our Stakeholder meetings did not continue in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the social distancing requirement. Yet, as of recently, there is a buzz in the area that renewed efforts are concretely underway to re-engage the idea with the support of the Vancouver Dutch Consulate.

### **Dutch Network E-newsletter,**

The *Dutch Network Newsletter* is amazing. We have a Newsletter like no other. Tony van Houten is our newsletter editor and producer. From October 2019 to October 2020, Tony has produced 12 newsletters and five newsflashes. Our newsletters have a monthly Dutch recipe, and a short story written by Françoise van Buytenen. Unfortunately our short story writer Laura Davis returned to the Netherlands in the spring. Occasionally a biographical business story of a Dutch Canadian in the Lower Mainland is profiled and for the second year, Barb and Peter Buree continue to provide Hollandse uitdrukkingen and gezegden (Dutch expressions and sayings). Each month, because of the dedication and commitment of Tony van Houten, the Association reaps the reward of monthly Newsletter that is exceptionally "*Above and Beyond*". Thank you Tony! Also thanks to Françoise and Barb and Peter for enriching the content of the newsletter.

### **Dutch Network Website**

Behind the scenes, on a daily basis, Noud de Rover, owner of Data Roots, our webmaster, web designer and developer is working his magic to keep our Association visible. Since February 2019, a Noud de Rover has been a Dutch Network sponsor. We are most grateful to Noud for his conscientious technological expertise. Thank you Noud!

Also, a special thanks to Sylvia Lanzl de Haas for handling our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

### **Business Sponsorship for Dutch Network**

Because of COVID -19, the board approved a six-month sponsorship extension (free of charge) to all our sponsors. Through the efforts of John van Rij, vice-president for

Marketing and Sponsorships, the Dutch Network sponsorship program includes Holland Shopping Centre, Tako and Francis Slump, a Major Sponsor since April 2017. Also, since August 2019, Glennifer Lake Travel Corporation, (Dutch Wolf Tours), Heleen Eekers, and Robert-Jan Vennik provide high quality travel tours throughout Canada for Dutch speaking tourists. Tours are available in Western and Eastern Canada. Email: [dutchwolftours@gmail.com](mailto:dutchwolftours@gmail.com), or visit their website at [www.dutchwolftours.com](http://www.dutchwolftours.com)

As of September 2019, Van Gogh Painting and Restorations Ltd. (Eric Hetteema) has been a sponsor. Van Gogh restores Residential and Commercial buildings across Canada by providing services in painting, roofing, and exterior and interior restorations Email: [contact@vangogh-painting.ca](mailto:contact@vangogh-painting.ca) or visit their website at [www.vangogh-painting.ca](http://www.vangogh-painting.ca).

As of June 2019, Macdonald Realty realtor Peter Vanderkooy, Macdonald Realty has been a sponsor. Peter assists 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](mailto:peter@petervanderkooy.com)

As of October 1, 2020, John van Rij, Pure Orange Holdings Inc. and Erin Chamberlain, Urban Aid Training and Consulting became new sponsors of the Dutch Network. Special Thanks to John van Rij and Erin for your support.

### **Dutch Koffie Clubs**

Dutch Koffie Clubs around the Lower Mainland continue to be popular and are autonomous; some Clubs meet weekly and some gatherings only take place once a month. However, due to COVID-19, many Koffie Clubs did not meet regularly but still stayed connected by telephone or by meeting in a park. Jette Warman initiated a new Koffie club in Chilliwack in January 2020 but due to COVID-19 has been temporarily suspended.

Also, special thanks is extended to all the leaders of Lower Mainland Koffie Clubs who volunteer their time and effort to make Dutch Koffie Clubs happen in their community including: Henja Sawchuk, Langley; Corina Baynton, Abbotsford; Tineke Schrande, South Surrey; Rita Hopmans, North Surrey; Marina Wilson, New Westminster; Laura Kristiansen, Nanaimo, and for 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. The Vancouver Koffie Club was suspended in March 2020 and will most likely not re-open in the near future as Sitka Square is unavailable due to COVID-19. Special thanks to our Koffie Club leaders for you have done a great job in keeping the Dutch – Canadian community alive, especially during COVID-19.

### **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. Jerry van Zuuk and his partner Markku, decided to retire in spring 2020. The Association is most grateful for the contributions of Jerry and Markku. Today, Sylvia Lanzl de Haas is the new coordinator. She recently got TPI Travel Agency to host a Dutch Library in Langley. Special thanks to Tako and Francis Slump for providing the space to host the Dutch Library in their New Westminster store “Holland Shopping Centre” and to TPI Travel Agency.

### **Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society**

Blooming tulips in May 2020 created a visual reminder that Dutch-Canadians were thanking and honouring Canada and its soldiers one more time, for the many sacrifices made to liberate Europe and, in particular, the Netherlands.

The Society had planned a candle light vigil on May 2, 2020 at cenotaphs and cemeteries across British Columbia for the public to attend at 8:45 pm 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. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 all public candle light vigils were cancelled. Instead the veterans and front-line workers in more than 35 care homes were presented with a bouquet of tulips to commemorate the occasion. Also, in working with Faces to Graves in the Netherlands, tulips were placed at 2338 Canadian graves at Groesbeek cemetery.

Today, at the Vancouver Maritime Museum there is a fourteen-panel storyboard display on the Liberation of the Netherlands as developed by the Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society Committee. The developers of the exhibit were Mr. Erik van der Ven, vice-president Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society and Dr. Adriana Zylmans, president, Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society, Dr. Richard Unger, Professor Emeritus, UBC Department of History and Dr. Peter Moogk, Professor Emeritus, UBC Department of History. The exhibition titled “Celebration 75 years of FREEDOM” will be on display until November 15, 2020.

The Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society has acquired an impressive reputation among the people in BC, across Canada, and around the world! For this reason, although the Society achieved the mandate established in 2018, the Society is now planning to maintain its presence in the community as a legacy society. The Society’s mandate was to say “Thank you to Canada”, to educate the young, and to commemorate fallen soldiers and the many sacrifices made by Canadian families to liberate Europe from Nazi occupation. With COVID – 19, activities and projects were altered and as a result some of these events are continuing beyond the Society’s fiscal year end. Therefore, it is the wish of the Executive that the Society continues at least for a few more years. 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!

### **Sinterklaas 2020**

At this time, the Dutch Network does not take an active leadership role in coordinating the celebration of Sinterklaas in the lower mainland. A committee, independent of the Dutch Network has taken on this responsibility.

### **Maandblad de Krant**

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. 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!

### **Closure**

As a board for 2019-2020, we continued to stay focused on the needs of the Dutch-Canadian community and were cognizant of our sponsors during COVID-19. Therefore, through our Newsletter, Newsflashes and special activities we tried to profile our sponsors. For it is, through the financial contributions of our sponsors, our Association is able to thrive. We are, therefore, most grateful for the ongoing support and we hope, as an Association, we have not let you down during COVID-19.

As president of the Dutch Network for the last five years, our Association has grown in “leaps and bounds”. Sometimes, it felt we were moving five steps ahead and three steps backwards. We faced obstacles with opportunities and accepted challenges with dedicated perseverance and hard work. Together, as members of a board, most importantly we were united in our understandings and approach. Together, we learned to understand each other, to appreciate that everyone had the best at heart, and we were alert to the fact that the needs of our sponsors and the satisfaction of our members was foremost.

I am proud of all board members who took on the challenge with me, five years ago to give the Netherlands Association “Je Maintiendrai” new life. For the board members who joined the board and left the board over the years, everyone was important for each contributed something to the positive direction of the Association.

I especially like to thank the Dutch – Canadian community for trusting in me and supporting the vision I tried to articulate. I hope that through the hard work of our board members that we have made an affirmative difference in the lives of the Dutch-Community. The Association has come a very long way in building a foundation that will serve it well in years to come.

Thank you everyone for all that you have given me over the years. I have learned much. I have met wonderful people along my journey and the opportunity has brought me much fulfillment and joy. The journey has been amazing and a special blessing! I wish the Association well in the years to come and I am proud of the present board members that will continue to serve. Good Luck and thank you!