



Annual President's Report 2022/2023

Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai'

Tuesday, October 26, 2023

Dear Members of Dutch Network,

I am honoured to present to you the Annual President's Report for the year 2022-2023, a year marked by growth, challenges, and accomplishments for our esteemed association. Our mandate is to bring the Dutch community in British Columbia together, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to this goal. Hosting this AGM virtually is to ensure that those who are less mobile or live in other parts of our province are able to participate in this event.

In my capacity as the President of Dutch Network, registered under the name Netherlands Association 'Je Maintiendrai', it is my privilege to report on the various activities, achievements, and the general state of your association. Before we delve into our accomplishments and future direction, I would like to highlight that our Board's guiding principle has consistently been "Emphasizing Quality over Quantity." While we are responsible for fostering a sense of community throughout the province, we have always prioritized delivering exceptional events and services over maximizing membership or attendance figures.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their unwavering support throughout the year and their ongoing dedication to giving back to our community through their valuable time and efforts. Working with you as a member of your team has been a privilege.

Overview of Achievements

1. **Membership Growth** - As Barbara Buree, our Secretary and Membership Chair, will report later in this meeting, Dutch Network continues to see a steady increase in its membership base. Our unwavering commitment to providing quality events has led to a growth of interest in your association. We added new members across British Columbia, especially Vancouver Island and the Okanagan. This is a testament to the relevance and value our association provides across the community.
2. **Financial Stability** - The Board is committed to fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility and understands the importance of your trust in us to manage your association's finances. Although some of our events increased in scope, your association's financial position remains stable, thanks to prudent financial management by your treasurer and the ongoing support by members and sponsors. Peter Buree, our treasurer, will provide you with a comprehensive financial report, which one of our members audited. Our financial situation will allow us to continue to invest in improving our events for our members and reach our community in other parts of the province.

- 3. Events and Activities** - Your organization successfully organized numerous events and activities with the valuable support of sponsors and volunteers, fostering a strong sense of community among participants. We began our fiscal year by hosting our first inaugural Kumpulan event, an Indonesian dinner that celebrates Indonesian culture and the long-standing relationship between Indonesia and The Netherlands. This event, held at the Banana Leaf restaurant in Kitsilano, was attended by over 30 individuals, including the new Consul General of The Netherlands, Mr. Sebastiaan Messerschmidt. The event also featured a posthumous acknowledgment of military service by the Dutch government to a family member of one of our valued members.

Additionally, our Koningsdag event in April was a collaborative effort among all the Dutch organizations in BC. Throughout the day, we welcomed hundreds of visitors to our festival at the St. Patrick's gymnasium in Vancouver, while our annual Dutch Network ticketed evening party hosted approximately 250 attendees. The catering was coordinated in collaboration with the Indonesian community, and with the assistance of numerous volunteers, we successfully organized an exceptional and professionally executed event. Notably, this popular event attracted guests from Vancouver Island, the Okanagan, Alberta, and Washington State, as well as international attendees from The Netherlands and South Africa who happened to be in town.

Moreover, Dutch Network was requested by the Consulate to organize Dodenherdenking this year. Under the guidance of Erik van der Ven, we organized a remarkable and dignified ceremony, which will likely set a precedent for future years.

We greatly appreciate the dedicated efforts of volunteers, such as Jeanette van Hattem, Aryan Saed, and Jette Warman, who played a crucial role in organizing our summer bike rides. Additionally, we actively participated in the Eurofest at Country Fest in Maple Ridge, where we effectively promoted our organization and celebrated Dutch culture. The library in the Holland Shopping Centre is consistently maintained with a diverse range of books and CDs, well-arranged shelves, and remains highly utilized by many community members.

I am excited to inform you that our Dutch Pub Nights have successfully experienced growth this year, expanding from three to five locations. I thank Haydee Oord for arranging a monthly gathering at the Spinnakers Pub in Victoria. Additionally, I appreciate the efforts by Rene Sloos for hosting our fifth monthly Dutch Pub Night, which now takes place every month at Browns in Nanaimo. Since its inception, both pub nights have consistently attracted numerous attendees and brought Dutch Network to the Island.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Tony van Houten, Sylvia Lanzl-de Haas, and Harma Volders for their invaluable contributions to our communications endeavours. Thanks to their efforts, we created exceptional monthly newsletters, maintained a solid social media presence, and developed a growing weekly radio show. Many individuals,

including those residing outside of BC, actively engage with Dutch Network through our communications.

4. **Collaborations** - The Board has always prioritized fostering growth through partnerships. In the past year, we have strengthened our collaborative efforts with various organizations and partners deeply rooted in Dutch culture and society.

Our partnerships with De Esdoorn and the Dutch Business Club, local ambassadors of Dutch heritage, are solid and enduring. Together, we have successfully collaborated on Koningsdag, promoted each other's events, and supported one another when assistance was needed. This relationship is highly esteemed by our Board, and we remain committed to safeguarding it.

Unfortunately, CAANS BC was discontinued in 2021. In response, Dutch Network proactively reached out to CAANS National to offer its support in expanding their reach in British Columbia and promoting their future events. They now have a dedicated space in our newsletter. We provided the same opportunity to Stichting Nederlanders Buiten Nederland (SNBN).

Additionally, we have maintained strong alliances with the Indonesian community in BC and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Vancouver, and we have recently formed a new partnership with the Belgian Canadian Association of British Columbia. These long-standing collaborations will empower us to offer our valued members enhanced (joined) events and services.

Through our relationships with the Vancouver Police Department, the Canadian Royal Legion, CRL Branch #60 in West Vancouver, Mountain View Cemetery, and the Ministry of Defence, we have successfully ensured the continuation of high-quality Dodenherdenking ceremonies for the upcoming years.

Japanese writer Ryunosuke Satoro once said, "Individually, we are one drop, but together we are an ocean."

Challenges and Outlook

As we move forward into the following year, our organization remains committed to enhancing the calibre of our events and services and reaching out to community members who may not be familiar with our association. We will further strengthen our financial situation by seeking additional sponsorships and grant subsidies for our events.

Our annual Indonesian event has grown considerably, with ticket purchases increasing from 30 in 2022 to 80 this year. This event is now organized with the involvement of four Indonesian community stakeholders, including a donation and the direct participation of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia.

Dutch Network will also launch a new committee, the Liberation Committee. Funded through separate grants, this committee will be overseen by Erik van der Ven and Adriana Zylmans. Their responsibilities include planning and coordinating the Dodenherdenking ceremony in the morning, distributing tulips to care facilities throughout the day, and organizing a dinner at the Royal Canadian Legion in West Vancouver in the evening on May 4. Moreover, the committee will oversee maintaining and preserving the Dutch liberation monument at the Vancouver Law Courts.

I am specifically excited about the nomination of two new Board members, Axl Cozijnsen and Almar Davids. Their passion and new ideas will bring valuable contributions to our governance team. The Board is enthusiastic about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, and we are confident that we can achieve great success together.

Appreciation

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for your trust in me and the Board. A special thank you to our volunteers whose tireless efforts have made our association's achievements possible and to our members for their unwavering support. I would also like to express our gratitude to our partners, sponsors, and all those who have contributed to the success of our association in 2022/2023. Without their hard work and commitment, Dutch Network would not be what it is today.

Finally, I thank Eva Mentz-van Gunsteren for her valuable contributions as a Board member over the past three years. Unfortunately, she had to step down this year due to personal reasons.

Dutch Network is a collective effort; your involvement is essential to our success. We encourage your continued participation and welcome your suggestions and ideas as we work together to shape the future of your association. I am filled with optimism, and I look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and achievements. Together, we will continue to make a positive impact in our community.

Sincerely,

John van Rij
Voorzitter/President, Dutch Network