

## Prairie Regional Conference Highlights Edmonton October 4 - 6, 2013

As I write this I am 35000 feet above Fort Frances, Northwestern Ontario flying east and home. Two short hours ago I said farewell to Edmonton after a weekend spent sharing UELAC business and pleasure with members of the Prairie Region branches.

On Friday we gathered for an informal reception at the B&B that became our home away from home for the weekend. Calgary, Edmonton, Manitoba and Saskatchewan branches were all represented with some members travelling many miles to attend.

Participating Dominion executive included Regional Councillor and Membership Chair Joyce Lidster, Regional Vice-President Gerry Adair, Senior Vice-President Barb Andrew, and President Bonnie Schepers.



Barb, Bonnie and Joyce at the morning seminars

An informative schedule of seminars was planned for Saturday morning with Barb, Joyce, and me each heading up a presentation. I was asked by Gerry to provide an explanation and update on the UELAC process of continuance under the new Canada Not-for-profit Corporations legislation. It was titled *UELAC and the CNCA* and generated questions and discussion that resulted in a better understanding of the need for change and how it will affect branch representation at Dominion Council meetings.

Barb followed with a talk on the structure of UELAC and the duties and responsibilities that accompany each position within our organization. She emphasized using the resources available to us and explained the chain of communication built into the structure of UELAC. Joyce Lidster as Membership Chair provided an interactive session on how to grow our membership. The

morning ended on a positive note as everyone had the opportunity to openly share their concerns and offer suggestions.



Saturday afternoon there was free time to explore. We seized the day by visiting the Legislative Grounds where I hugged a tree - the Bur Oak planted in a joint project by Edmonton and Calgary Branch members to commemorate the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2005 and celebrate Alberta's 100th anniversary as a province.

No trip to Edmonton would be complete without a visit to the West Edmonton Mall where we saw the Ice Palace skating rink, the World Waterpark, Bourbon Street, and a Marine Life performance by California sea lions. Unfortunately there

was not enough time to try out the world's largest permanent indoor zip-line over the wave pool. It is high on the list for the next visit.

The Saturday evening gala included both history and entertainment. With the theme of *Loyalist Children Then and Now* we were treated to a variety of offerings by Edmonton Branch youth members. A highlight was a slideshow presentation on the Battle of Crysler's Farm by Betty Fladager and her two granddaughters. It was a pleasure to meet Earle and Betty Fladager and learn more about the early history of the Edmonton Branch. Len Thornton, President Edmonton Branch and his wife Val, Secretary outdid themselves in the planning and execution of an evening that included the presentation of a Certificate of Loyalist Lineage to Kristina Harrison UE who accepted it along with her two children, Skylar and Joshua.

It was my honour to represent the UELAC as President and guest speaker at the banquet.

Sunday morning found us at the historic First Presbyterian Church (founded 1881) where we were welcomed by Reverend Harry Currie who opened the service with memories of his childhood growing up on the Loyalist land grant settled by his ancestors. The music during the service was provided by the beautiful 1909 Casavant organ in the capable hands of Dr. Marnie Giesbrecht

and Dr. Joachim Segger with vocals by the First Presbyterian Church choir of which Heather Traub UE, Edmonton Branch is a member.

After photo ops and farewells at the B&B we headed home with invitations to get together soon and promises to keep the lines of communication open to put into practice the ideas shared throughout the weekend.



Smiling faces from the west

Thank you for the warm welcome to the Prairie Regional 2013! It was time well spent.

Bonnie L. Schepers UE  
President UELAC