

Trip to the Prairie Regional Mini-Conference: 21 – 23 September 2012

My wife, Grietje, and I arrived at the Prairie Regional Mini-Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan, hosted by the Prairie Regional Vice-President, Gerry Adair UE, and Prairie Regional Councillor, Barb Andrew UE, in time for the evening Meet and Greet in the Arlington Room at the Travelodge on Albert Street. We were met at the airport by Ken Fader UE, President of Saskatchewan Branch, who



introduced us to the members from three of the four Prairie Branches in the Region.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast with conference participants, Barb Andrew UE, Prairie Regional Councillor and Membership Chairperson presented a

workshop. She talked about the continuing problem of distances to travel that challenge membership growth and attendance and welcomed our online resources as a way to reach our membership in a timely fashion. Senior Vice-President, Bonnie Schepers UE, then gave a power point presentation about the UELAC Finance portfolio, including graphs to show where the money goes when it is given to the Association. My



presentation was about the relationship between the Branches and the UELAC. We rarely talk about the inter-relationship between the Branches, the Regional Vice-Presidents, Councillors, and the President but we are a team and we need to help each other. We then broke into two groups: one to study and report on membership challenges and another to brainstorm projects. Each group reported their findings. We agreed that visibility is important and the fact that the Saskatchewan Branch built their Loyalist Cairn under the leadership of Logan Bjarnason UE certainly stands out as a visible project.



In the afternoon, following a visit to the Loyalist Cairn at the Provincial Parliament Buildings, we toured the RCMP museum with Saskatchewan President, Ken Fader UE, as our very experienced guide and came away with a huge respect for the training and dangerous work that Canada's special police forces do on a daily basis.



Following the superb buffet at the hotel, Bonnie Schepers UE gave a power point presentation about her Loyalist ancestor, Abraham Pastorius UE. This remarkable story demonstrates the value of persisting in tracking down family records and is a tremendously interesting story of Bonnie's ten year quest to find her Loyalist roots. This presentation also demonstrated the power of sharing our family stories with others.

On Sunday morning members of the Prairie Region attended the Knox United Church service with Reverend Robert Kitchen. I was asked to outline who the Loyalists were and how the UELAC promotes our goals of preserving the memory of our Loyalist ancestors.

Every Region is unique and has challenges specific to itself. Distance seems to be the big challenge in the prairies. The fact that there likely are no original Loyalists buried in the Prairies makes research more difficult for a number of reasons. Perhaps the Prairie region has the most to gain in the internet age of communication! Team work and sharing ideas for projects, and membership is something to be encouraged.

I would like to extend a special thank you for the hard work and energy that Gerry Adair UE, his wife, Pat, and Barb Andrew UE put into organizing this event just months after hosting the UELAC Conference and AGM in Manitoba in June.

Sincerely and loyally,

Robert C. McBride UE
UELAC Dominion President
2011 – 2012.

