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An entourage of 106 of Quesnel's senior citizens traveled the Cariboo Wagon Road on Wednesday, September 11th on the Quesnel Rotary Club's annual Seniors' Trek to Barkerville. Rotarians Steve Vrolyk, Ron Paull, Sheila Pritchard, Cathy Walsh, Cheryl Scanlan, Paul Mednis, Tim Cawdell and John Higgins accompanied the fleet of three busses and private vehicles under sunny Cariboo skies.

Following an hour of fun and fellowship on the Gold Rush Trail to Barkerville, the group was treated to a sit-down lunch shared between the Wake Up Jake, House Hotel and Lung Duck Tong restaurants in Barkerville. The Barkerville staff was most accommodating by allowing one of the huge tour busses and the Dunrovin Park Lodge bus access through the narrow, winding back streets to Theatre Royal, where everyone enjoyed a fast-paced and fun musical menagerie of old time Cariboo songs and music in Lafont & Ward's Musical Revue.

So much energy expended with clapping and foot stomping in Theatre Royal called for a relaxing time following, as seniors enjoyed tea and sweets and poking about the old gold rush town. It was like old home week on Main Street, with so many smiling Quesnel faces savoring the sunshine, while others explored the shops and displays.

Shopkeepers were impressed that so many seniors, many with canes and walkers crowded the street, including the eldest participant, Paul Gauthier at 101. Of course, the usual loaf of sourdough bread from the Goldfield Bakery was high on many a shopper's list. The day was capped off with the annual group photo, with St. Saviour's Church as a backdrop. The bus ride home even included spotting wildlife alongside the highway.

Rotary's decision to host the event in mid-September instead of the usual late August was found to be of benefit, as Barkerville was less crowded and Rotary volunteers and care-givers found it much easier to move seniors around, especially in the restaurants and theatre.

Rotary is appreciative of the support of Barkerville Historic Town, Pacific Western Charter Bus Company, Dunrovin Park Lodge, Theatre Royal and the Barkerville restaurants for generous price breaks which helped made the project possible. The club gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the Province of British Columbia for a gaming grant that was used to fund the trek. Rotary also thanks the seniors themselves who "passed the hat" and took up a generous collection in aid of local community charities.

Tour organizer Ron Paull summed it all up by saying that the Seniors' Trek to Barkerville is by far the most enjoyable and rewarding aspect of his Rotary involvement.



Picture courtesy of Rotarian Ron Paull



Rotary Club of Quesnel acknowledges the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia