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Lifestyles



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Rotary's annual Seniors Trek a huge success

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After several years of invitations and few years closer to senior status myself, I made plans to accompany 120 seniors and several Quesnel Rotary members on the annual trek to Barkerville.

Despite the very chilly early morning weather, the two buses were filled to capacity with eager seniors ready for a day in the historic town, lunch and theatre included.

Each year the Quesnel Rotary Club hosts this event where they treat the seniors to lunch at one of three restaurants of their choice, tickets to Theatre Royal and the camaraderie of their peers.

As a newcomer to this activity, I was struck by the buzz created from the very beginning. These are people who often see each other in the context of everyday life, but this was different, this was an adventure, this was a special sharing time and they were maximizing the experience.

There were seniors with walkers and canes, others hanging on to their friends arm, still more just keeping an eye out for anyone needing a little extra care. And together with the Rotary members who circulated through the crowd making sure everyone was taken care of, the journey got underway. The quiet hum on the bus with seniors catching up on their lives, sharing stories and enjoying the beautiful sunny day (now they were on a warm bus) made for a very pleasant trip to Barkerville.

Once we arrived, seniors

fanned out along the street heading into the heart of the heritage town, looking for their restaurant, peering in windows and helping each other explore.

For two of the travellers, Darlene Parkes and Helen Mickey, Barkerville is like an old friend, familiar, friendly comfortable.

"The first time I came to Barkerville was about 30 years ago," Darlene said.

"It was great with traditional old stuff, the things people went through was reality and that's more interesting than today. People really worked and appreciated things."

Helen Mickey said the first time she came to Barkerville was in 1953 and it was a ghost town.

"There were three families living here and it was amazing to think how many there were at one time," she said.

"It was pretty rough and tumble back then."

Over the years, Helen has watched the historic town grow and enjoys returning every year on this excursion.

Darlene said it's great they retained the authentic nature of Barkerville.

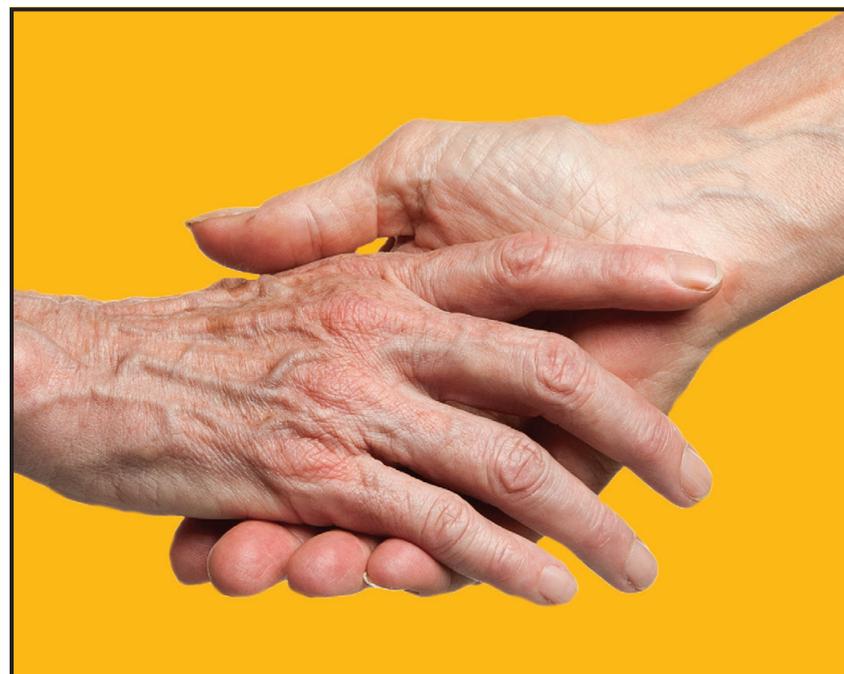
Before many could image, they were taking the mass picture in front of the iconic St. Saviour's Church and heading back to the bus, ready for the journey back home.

Talk was of the terrific vaudeville-style show at the theatre, the satisfying lunch and the glorious weather (when it finally warmed up a bit.)

Another triumphant trip thanks to Quesnel Rotary Club. Job well done.



Clockwise from top: The entire entourage gathered for the annual photo; one Barkerville interpreter stopped to check the garden for frost; Barkerville's school marm scoulds wouldbe students before they entered the school house; Jack Nelson has a saucy moment with Theatre Royal actress Amy Newman; Darlene Parkes, left and Helen Mickey; many seniors took a little to sun themselves on the various benches on the boardwalk. Annie Gallant photos



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