



Relay runners carry the torch into Bezanson

GP's Bennett kicks off run

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Eighty-nine-year-old Ada Bennett of Grande Prairie kicked off the first leg of the 1,054-kilometre Blue Flame Torch Relay from Grande Prairie to Vermilion, where the cross-country relay ends and the 1988 Alberta Seniors Games will begin.

The white-haired Bennett braved windy weather Saturday morning to carry the torch from the Golden Age Centre to the Herald-Tribune building, marking the first kilometre of a trek which will take 20 days to complete.

While the wind wreaked havoc with the flame — organizers were unable to light it as planned — a stiff breeze didn't extinguish Bennett's high spirits as she held the torch firmly aloft.

Bennett handed the torch on to the second runner, Molly Patrick, in front of the Herald-Tribune building.

Accompanied by her children and grandchildren, Patrick declared she felt "good" after her kilometre.

By the time the relay torch arrives at its final destination in Vermilion it will have been passed through 800 different pairs of hands.

Running alongside this year's torch bearers are three of the four grandmothers who ran the very first torch relay to Grande Prairie two years ago.

Vicky Samel, 66, of Walsh; Sue Crozier, 69, of Glenevis; Florence Waters, 70, of Gunn; and Myrtle Maine, 64, of Edmonton made the cross-country trek in 1986 to open the games in Grande Prairie.

This year three members of this original quartet are along as "hostesses", hopping out of the van every once in a while to walk along with the torch bearer. Maine was not able to come because of heart troubles, Crozier explained.

Crozier, wearing a red sweatsuit, jumped out of the van several times to join the torchbearer.

She says this time around it's a lot easier.

"Well there are more people of course," she said. "In 1986 it was just the four of us."

In 1986, the four torch bearers shared the entire distance between themselves.

Crozier said it was good to see the seniors out running, noting that it was the second time she had met Ada Bennett.

"Ada came out and walked with us when we came through in 1986," said Crozier.

From her bird's eye view in the hostess van, Crozier sees how the run affects the torch bearers.

"They are always excited. There haven't been any tears yet. Their whole face lights up."

Some of the runners find the three-pound torch quite heavy, said Crozier. There was a lighter version, made of stool leg available.

The torch will cover 50 km a day. There will be stops in communities along the way. Golden age centres and drop-in centres on the route will be providing lunches and dinners for the participants.



Meryle Patterson lights the cauldron

Flame lit for first time in Bezanson

The Golden Years Club of Bezanson was the first to play host to torch bearers en route to Vermilion — and because of technical difficulties in Grande Prairie — the first to see the official flame of the Blue Flame Torch relay lit.

Ten of the club's members started work at 10:30 a.m. Saturday in the West Smoky Legion hut preparing the lunch for five dozen, including torch bearers and the accompanying support team.

By 12:30 p.m., the homemade soup and sandwiches were ready to go. Everything, includ-

ing the fresh flowers on the tables, was donated.

"There's never any problem getting food," said Edna Anderson, secretary of the Golden Years Club. "It's been fun and a little bit hectic."

The unexpected funeral of a local resident meant some last minute rearranging, but everything seemed in order as the cry went up: "They're here!"

Meryle Patterson, president of the Golden Years Club, carried the flame in and lit the cauldron, which had been used in the last games.

About 60 people, including the torch bearers

who would carry the torch on to DeBolt, stopped for the brief ceremony prior to lunch.

Preparing the meal was the second go-around for the club, which prepared supper for the original relay team when they ran in to Grande Prairie for the 1986 games.

This time, five of the club's 50 members are torch bearers.

As she waited for lunch, Mary Patterson contemplated the walk ahead of her.

"It's somewhere between here and DeBolt. I hope it's not up the (Smoky) River hill," she said with a chuckle.

In Loving Memory Of

MERYLE (BUSTER)

PATTERSON

April 15, 2009

It's been a year since God took your hand.

Our hearts were sad and full of sorrow,
we loved you so much.

You were a loving husband, father,
grandfather and our best friend.

You were all of that and more.

When we needed someone,
we could always count on you.

We remember the good times,
and all you meant to us,

and how your presence we miss more
than words could ever say.

And although our family chain is
broken,

we know that someday we will meet
again and the chain will link once more.

Loving you always
Forgetting you never

Love Polly, Billy, Sheryll, Danny,
Brenda, Leslie, Cindy and families.

In Loving Memory Of

MERYLE

(BUSTER)

PATTERSON

April 15, 2009



We took our vows together
Said, "Till death do us part",
But when God came and took your
hand

My whole world fell apart.

No one knows the heartache

I try so hard to hide,

Only God knows how many times
I've broken down and cried.

When I look back upon our lives

One of the things that makes me glad,

That you chose me to share with you

The precious years we had.

Love Polly