

100 years young

Barons celebrates centenary with the help of two  
100-year-old friends

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Like his former community, **Edgar Dunning** has turned 100 years old. So the longtime newspaper publisher and CBC commentator was welcomed home Saturday, as the Village of Barons celebrated its century mark. **Dunning**, still writing columns for his former paper in Ladner, south of Vancouver, shared memories of his years as a boy in Barons, during a festive dinner in the community hall. His father opened a newspaper there in the village's earliest days, as the new Canadian Pacific Railway line drew more people to the wheat-growing area.

"I remember hearing the news the First World War had ended," in 1918, and realizing many men from the Barons area had headed into battle.

**Dunning** was one of two centenarians taking part in Saturday's events. Jay Murray, a Barons resident in more recent years, rode in the parade earlier in the day.

As a schoolboy, **Dunning** recalled his first horseback riding lesson, just west of town. His steed was a mule. The future broadcaster also remembered he and a school friend taking hours to wind wire around a long cardboard tube, in the early days of radio. Their reward, he noted, was picking up a broadcast from Los Angeles.

Barons wasn't the **Dunning** family's first stop in Alberta, he said during an interview. Though he was born in central Saskatchewan, his father moved the family to Medicine Hat - where he worked briefly for The News - before venturing out to another new railway town, Manyberries.

"That was a disaster," so they headed west to open the Barons Globe along with the Carmangay Star. "But we spent a lot of time in Blairmore," because that's where the papers were printed.

**Dunning's** father was later invited to open a paper in Ladner, a farming town near today's Tsawwassen. While **Edgar Dunning** took over those operations in the 1940s, his younger brother Eric opened papers in Maple Ridge and Coquitlam.

But Ladner's most famous citizen has been back to visit friends in Barons over the years, he told a crowd of about 500. And he saluted the many Barons volunteers who organized centennial year events.

That praise was echoed by Little Bow MLA Barry McFarland - who presented an official Alberta Municipal Affairs plaque to village Mayor Ron Gorzitza - and by Alberta's newly appointed lieutenant governor, Donald Ethell.

Paying his first visit to southern Alberta, the queen's representative also conveyed greetings from Premier Ed Stelmach and Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

One hundred years "is a fairly short time" in human history, he noted. But in Alberta, much has been accomplished by people living in communities away from the major centres.

Noting the village's role as "Smallville" in a Superman feature filmed in the 1970s, Ethell vowed to visit many more of Alberta's smaller centres during his five-year term as lieutenant governor.

They're "not small in community spirit," he's learned.

Centennial celebrations will continue today with an inter-denominational worship service 11 a.m. at the community hall, followed by historical displays in the Barons History Centre, in the school auditorium and in the seniors' drop-in centre. A chili cook-off is scheduled for 1 p.m.

A community dance, a street dance, a family softball tournament, a tractor pull and a show-and-shine on the town's main street were also part of three days of festivities.

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