

# Chabad of Richmond Seniors

October 27, 2011

## Victoria Trip

Chabad seniors, in partnership with Kehila seniors, had a very successful bus trip to "Jewish Victoria" on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. Thirty nine seniors, plus Renee Kettleman, and Rabbi Baitelman all participated in this wonderful event.

We all met at Beth Tikvah synagogue before 7:30 am and everybody was there on time so we were able to leave on schedule. The bus took us to the ferry terminal where we got off and then, showing our senior's care card we went past the ticket booth and up to the loading platform. Everybody managed it – some with their canes, some with their walkers, some moving slowly and others moving at a good clip. We were all seniors on a mission to have a good time.

The ferry trip was enjoyable and it gave people time to socialize with each other.

At Swartz bay, the bus was waiting to meet us and to take us to our first destination: **Congregation Emanu-el**. This synagogue is 150 years old and has been designated a national heritage site. This synagogue is the oldest house of worship in BC and the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Canada. Initially it was an orthodox synagogue which was established to meet the needs of the Jewish settlers that came during the gold rush.

At the synagogue we were welcomed by **Shoshanna Littman**, who is actively involved in the synagogue and is also a renowned storyteller. She kept us entranced, informed and entertained with her stories about congregation Emanu-el and its history and stories about some of the congregants. My only complaint was that she finished too soon. I would have been happy to have listened for another hour. Afterwards we had a chance to go up to the Bima to get a closer look at the Sefer Torah, which is over 100 years old. With a few minutes left we also took a look at the gift store and then the bus was there.

Our next stop was **Chabad of Victoria**. Chabad house has a very interesting location. Their building is located on one of the local school grounds and may have been, at one time, part of the school. As we walked in the door, to the left was the pre-school, which was filled with young children having a lot of fun. To the right was the room where I believe they held their services and where we were to have lunch. **Rabbi Meir Kaplan and Rebbetsin Chani Kaplan** greeted us and made us feel welcome. After everyone got settled, Rabbi Baitelman said the hamotzi and then it was time to eat. There was a delicious and plentiful cold buffet, pastries and beverages. It was almost 1:00 p.m. and everybody was hungry. After lunch, Rabbi Baitelman thanked Pearl for all of her hard work and

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thanked Chabad Victoria for hosting us at lunch. Rabbi Kaplan then talked to us and told us some very interesting stories.

Since the bus wasn't picking us up until 3:30 p.m. we had time to enjoy the sunshine, to talk with the rabbis and take small walks around the area.

After that we returned by bus, ferry and bus finally arriving back at Beth Tikvah where everybody said their goodbyes.

What a successful trip. Everything went so smoothly. The buses met us on time and quickly got us to our destination and the weather was a glorious, sunny fall day. There were no glitches. A lot of that was due to **Pearl Feldman**, our field trip Chabad senior's chairperson, who a year ago suggested this trip at our Chabad committee meeting. I agreed with her and said "go for it". She made the arrangements with the buses, with the synagogues and even arranged, with **Rabbi Baitelman's** help, a grant from the **Vancouver Jewish Federation**, which then made it possible to have this trip and to keep the prices affordable for all of those who participated. It cost \$20 per person for the transportation, the synagogue visits and lunch. Even though it was a 12 hour day: 7:30am to 7:30pm nobody complained and many asked when can we do this again? A big thanks to **Kay Abelson**, the executive director of Kehila for all her help with this as well. She advertised in the e-Kesher, printed pamphlets and promoted it at the Monday sessions. And not only that, she came bright and early to Beth Tikvah to assist everyone and to see us off.

This was truly an outreach program with participants from Richmond, Vancouver, White Rock and Coquitlam.

I want to thank everyone who came, participated and added a "Hemish" atmosphere.

Report submitted by Marilyn Krygier (Chabad of Richmond Seniors Co-ordinator)