

community

Giant Colon Tour lands in Inuvik

Entertaining model presents serious message about colorectal cancer

by Andrew Rankin
Northern News Services

Residents arrived at the community hall in bunches Tuesday for their chance to walk through a rear end to learn all about colorectal cancer.

Actually they took the Giant Colon walking tour that had an artificial anus for its entrance.

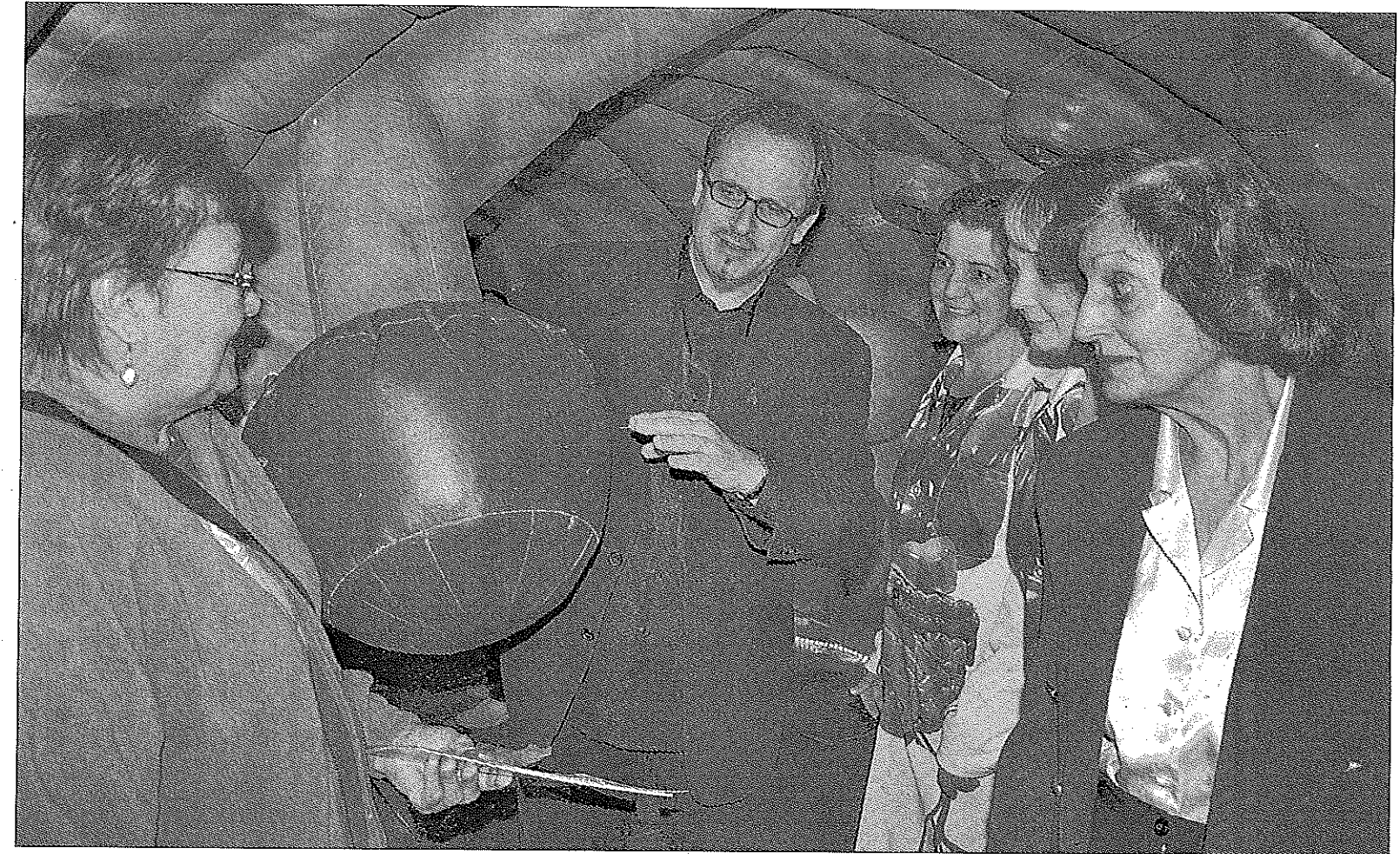
Attached to the pink walls of the inflatable model clung fascinating artificial growths meant to represent all kinds of ailments of the colon including hemorrhoids, polyps and cancer. Bram D. Eisenthal, National Director of Exhibits for the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada (CCAC), brought the model to town as part of his cross country tour. He travelled on to Yellowknife on Wednesday.

Providing guided tours throughout the day, Eisenthal said the Giant Colon project is designed to be humorous in an effort to erase the embarrassment some people have for the subject.

"When I'm giving my tours I tell kids that they're entering through the anus they laugh and it's on their Facebook page a half an hour later," he said. "It's funny and cute and worth giggling about, but when you think about it and you realize that this isn't really funny and we have to be able to talk about, especially with our doctors."

Colorectal cancer is in fact the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the territory for both men and women. The death rate due to colorectal cancer in the NWT is among the highest in the country.

The message Eisenthal wants to get out is that if detected early the disease is "preventable, treatable and beatable." Everyone aged 50 or older should be tested. The doctor also hauls around countless information pamphlets on the disease.



A group of onlookers listen intently while Bram D. Eisenthal gives a tour inside the "Giant Colon" at the community hall on Tuesday afternoon. From left, Shirley Rabey, joins event assistants Debbie MacDonald and Crystal Navratil, along with Gulshan Esmal.

"If you wait till there's bleeding in the stool, which is the last sign of colorectal cancer, you're going to die," said Eisenthal. "If you can live another 10 years or 20 years in good health, is that not worth the trade-off of getting tested?"

On the road with the model for the past few years, the Montreal resident said he knows he's making a difference.

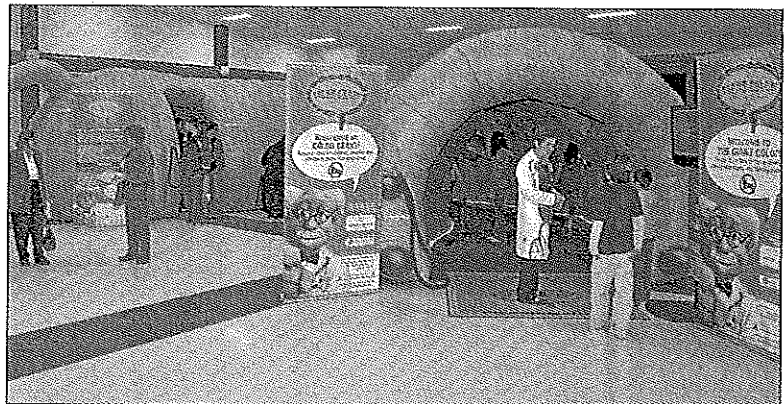
"Sometimes when you're in a place where there are hundreds of

people coming through they come out and say, 'God bless you,'" he said. "They tell you about their experience with colorectal cancer. It's really a humbling experience."

Gulshan Esmal, 77, of Inuvik did the tour on Tuesday afternoon. Having had her screening done in 2006, she said the model is great way to teach people about the seriousness of the disease but in a creative and entertaining way.

For more information on The Giant Colon or CCAC visit www.colorectal-cancer.ca

**COFFEE
Break**



The giant colon was on display at the community hall on Tuesday.