

WHAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT MY PARTNER AND LIFE TIME WIFE

MARILYN VERIGIN (nee Verishine)

On December 23, 2021, our sixtieth (60th) Wedding Anniversary was quietly celebrated in Castlegar, B.C. with our immediate family.

The time has come for me to state a few things about my wife and partner, Marilyn, and our life together, to be posted in my blog.

The journey that took place prior to us meeting each other, needs to be visited first.



I was about six (6) years of age and living 2 1/2 miles on a farm NE of Veregin, Saskatchewan. My best love was my dog Sport.

Mother introduced us siblings to a custom brought over from Georgia (Russia) with the Doukhobor migration to Canada in 1899. On New Year's Eve, 1946, we would all gather at the entrance gate from the municipal road to our homestead. We took a loose-fitting boot with us. As we situated ourselves in the open gate, we flipped this boot in front of ourselves. However the boot landed, the direction of the toe would indicate where our future love was located.

Interestingly, my boot pointed to the West.



Meanwhile, Marilyn, unsuspecting what was happening and, of course, Elmer had no clue where Langham, Saskatchewan was located nor that Marilyn Verishine existed. There she sat playing with her doll. Probably, her best love at that time. I am not sure if perhaps, she could have been looking East at that time.

Destiny directed Elmer to attend University at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in the Fall of 1958. Feeling lonely, he decided to search out Doukhobor Youth, that he knew resided in that area. Having read Koozma Tarasoff's, Doukhobor Enquirer, it was therein it stated that there was a Youth Choir. A few phone calls established the location of the Doukhobor Prayer Home on Avenue I and it was confirmed that a gathering was to take place that one Sunday.

Elmer arrived by bus from his boarding place on Ewart Avenue and found he was too early and so stood there in the cold wondering if he had the correct address and date. Soon cars started arriving and young Doukhobors invited me into the Hall and we started introducing ourselves.

The group always went for cokes after the Singing Practice and I ended up sitting by this girl. She told me her name was Marilyn. That was the first time I met her.

We did not pursue an active friendship apart from seeing each other at Choir Practices that year. I had an ear operation later that Fall and Marilyn did come to see me at the University Hospital when my mother came to visit. I am not sure why Marilyn did that but Mother commented to my sister Mary when she returned to Benito Manitoba, "that's the type of girl Elmer should associate with".

It wasn't until I moved to Avenue H in 1960, with the Tarasoff Family and Keith was my roommate. Marilyn came to visit her friend Donna who was Keith's sister. Our friendship picked up and continued the winter while I was in Saskatoon.



It was in the Spring of 1961 that we started talking about a serious relationship. We decided that Marilyn would travel to British Columbia where I would be working with my brothers in the Kootenays. Elmer thought that he should talk to Marilyn's father about whether he would approve of an engagement with his daughter.

While Marilyn and I were visiting the Verishine farm prior to me leaving for the Summer, I went to talk to Marilyn's father for "her hand". This is not an easy task for a young man and so I keep searching for the "right moment" when I could get him alone and finally he went into this barn on the farm and I followed him in. So I blubbered in explaining what I had to ask him when he suggested "matters of this importance should be discussed in the house and not a barn."

So we continued to the house and there in front of my future father and mother-in-law and wife, I asked for Marilyn's hand in future marriage. At that time Marilyn and I had discussed a marriage in the Summer of 1962 after my graduation in Chemical Engineering.

What took place at that time was a crying session by my future mother-in-law, joined by my future wife and a handshake with my future father-in-law. No one said that they agreed and no one refused so I assumed that we had agreement to go the next step. In the Doukhobor tradition, this "promise to marry" is called a 'Zapoi'. Traditionally, the immediate parents would participate in this ceremony and the news would spread to the community.

I travelled to B.C. and advised my down". Brother Russel's father it came to pass that I ordered an Marilyn arrived in the Summer. I Verishine's farm in Crescent had borrowed for the occasion. A few days later, we went for a drive to Waneta Dam. Marilyn was all "decked out" and we enjoyed exploring British Columbia as it was her first time in B.C. She looked pretty good to me.



brothers and their families that Elmer was "settling owned a store and could buy jewellery wholesale. So Engagement Ring so that I could be prepared when presented her with the ring at her Uncle John Valley, B.C., while in brother Russel's truck which I

I returned that Fall after having a serious discussion with my two brothers when we decided to form a construction company after I graduated from Engineering. I was prepared to complete my last year in Chemical Engineering but we realized that that field would not compliment a Building Construction organization and so the decision was to change the field to Civil Engineering.

At registration that year, the head of the Chemical Engineering College was surprised and upset when he saw me in the line up for Civil Engineering and tried to dissuade me in making that change. I had made my commitment with my family and so the decision was not reversible.

I was very happy to see Marilyn again and missed her very much. We realized that Marilyn was "in family" early that Fall and decided we should formally marry at Christmas.



Plans were made and the wedding took place at the Marigold Restaurant in Saskatoon, Sk., on December 23, 1961. This was a difficult task as I had classes to attend and six (6) half class finals to write in early January 1962.

The wedding party, starting from the left is Michael Ozeroff, Donna Tarasoff, Allan Verishine and his future wife Betty Strelaoff, Elmer and Marilyn Verigin, Nadia Chernoff, Nick Strukoff, Donna Maloff and Alfred Kabatoff.

Marilyn and I moved into an apartment in the house owned by Marilyn's Aunty Strelieff. Interesting, the exams I wrote were the highest marks of my university career.

Marilyn reluctantly stepped down from her teaching career in Perdue, Sk., at Christmas and did not get to teach again and became a "stay at home" mother.

Well, Marilyn and I had a major decision to make in my graduating year about February, 1963. Dr. Forsberg approached me with an offer to continue my studies for a Masters Degree in Sanitary Engineering. I would be employed at the University of Saskatchewan and teach for the two (2) years that my studies would take. The courses would all be paid for and I would receive a salary for teaching.

This was a complete surprise to me as I was not an "A" student but I did have an undergraduate year in Chemical Engineering and the University had determined that combination was sufficient to conduct research in Sanitary Engineering.

This was the first major decision we needed to make that would challenge our resolve to develop a Construction company with my brothers as well as pass on my commitment to take employment upon graduation, with Columbia Cellulose Co Ltd, a Sulfite Pulp Mill in Prince Rupert, that Spring.

Our final decision was to pass on the university offer and continue with our plans (there is more detail in my blog "My Journey Through a Life of Opportunity").

So our first travel experience was for the first time in our lives to, find Prince Rupert on a new 1963 Valiant with our family that now included our daughter Nona.



Marilyn and I made friends easily and soon Marilyn started a much needed Boarding House for young Engineers and our house became a hub of social activity with all the new friends at the Engineering Office.

Another major decision came about in the Spring of 1965 when the commitment to my brothers was to take place and I was scheduled to return to the Kootenays and begin the Construction career. The Pulp Mill made that decision very difficult with new opportunities in Engineering. Other companies also approached me when they knew I was making a change.

At the end of April 1965 we bid adieu to all our new friends and travelled to the Kootenays. Our family had now expanded with Nona having a sister Lori. It was a major financial adjustment as Verigin Industries Ltd., could not afford an Engineer at that time. My beloved brothers Lawrence and Russel, their honesty and commitment to hard work included our challenge to succeed. A few months later, one of my fellow Engineers travelled to Castlegar to try to convince me to join a new Consulting Company being headed by the General Manager of the Prince Rupert Pulpmill.



Marilyn and I passed on this offer as well.



Meanwhile, we were joined by another member of our family just after we settled down in Castlegar. We were blessed with daughter, Tamara. It seemed like this was now the complete family. The girls played all kinds of unique games with their father and it seemed where often that this question came out "when will we get a brother?"



It was hard to explain to these youngsters that brothers just aren't something that is ordered and so lo and behold it happened. Kimball came to us, Dad's back is still sore as Kim did like horseback riding but so did his sisters. We also played Shiny with a tennis ball on our miniature hockey rink, our hallway. There was plenty screams and enough shouting that caused mother Marilyn to try and settle us down.

The children were registered in Figure Skating and Kimball in ice hockey while Marilyn and I were active in the Doukhobor Cultural Association (DCA). Most of the DCA activities included all of our children so we referred to the approximately 15 families of DCA as a "family".

Marilyn would work for the company at times when there was need in the office but the company activity is all outlined in detail on my blog and need not be repeated here.

Our family dreamed about travelling Europe as a complete family and so in 1980, we augmented our meagre savings with a major loan as Nona had just graduated from Grade 12 and it was necessary to take action while we still had her with us. Again this trip is well documented on the blog but here is the family just as we rented this Volkswagen Motor Home in Munich, Germany long cruise in the Mediterranean. for four (4) weeks as we toured, Monaco, France, Belgium to return bouts of "cabin fever" and learned "harried" mother took a nap from



holidaying to rejuvenate her body. No matter how enjoyable a vacation can be, the airport signs at the Frankfurt welcome and we all rushed to



Airport leading to Air Canada, was most get on board.

The time had come for another major decision and that was an the opportunity to construct projects at Expo '86 in Vancouver, B.C. This decision was easier to make as there just was not enough work in the Kootenays at that time for the growing Verigin organization. Marilyn and I discussed the situation. Elmer would get the project organized in 1984 and determine whether it would require a move for the family.

Construction started with the erection of twenty-nine (29) International Pavilions followed by a successful tenders a Main Expo Kitchen and ten (10) Restaurants. So it was decided to move with just our one and only son, Kimball, to Tsawwassen, B.C., on 4959 2A Avenue, which was within 4 blocks of the USA / Canada border.



Marilyn enjoyed those years as she became the official Courier for our construction and would deliver tenders as part of her job description. She also became a member of the Beta Sigma Phi, a sorority Club within our new community and made some life-long friends.

There were countless Shopping Centers and after eight (8) years, Marilyn started enjoying the urban way of life.

We had never planned to finally settle on the Lower Mainland, albeit that we had many offers to change my job and locate there. So this decision to return to Castlegar was difficult for us. We still had great friends in the DCA and the decision to build a Retreat at Whatshan was pending.

We "retired" from our construction company in Vancouver. Marilyn found a two storey house by the Columbia River which was as close to my dream of a "bubbling brook". We move and renovated. But by ended up with 3,800 square feet of living space. Yes, difficulty finding each other.



cabin on an acreage by a this time we were alone yet we there were times we had

Our lives were the busiest at this time with the decision to create a Retreat at Whatshan Lake as well as conduct renovations on our house in Genelle, B.C. Every relationship has its limits and so we started a serious search for a retirement house and found a simple 1,000 square newly built house in Castlegar, close to all our needs. We completed the "half" basement which became our lower storey and allowed us to finally display all our books and Marilyn's growing collection of "must keepers".

We were now down-sized and essentially retired for exception of a small personal consulting activity that I was continuing with a select clientele. Castlegar friends and at times we would B.C. in this photo Marilyn had a job as hostess bartenders mixing Irish Coffees.



We enjoyed our lives with our "volunteer" at Green City near Salmo, in a Casino with a dangerous duo of

The volunteer efforts of our Doukhobor Heritage Retreat Society #1999 had achieved a basic construction level and we could complete our retirement while still participating in the project. Here Marilyn takes a break in one of latest project being built at Whatshan, a Baunya



This same group (DCA), started discussions to construct a retirement home which they could utilize and retire. This resulted in the Grandview Project under the Kootenay Columbia Seniors Housing Society. Again Marilyn and I took a very active part but we were well settled in our house on 6th Street, Castlegar and I was sure that was a project for our friends.



The time had come to determine who was going to live in this project and from my position of "Chair", I saw a familiar hand rise and we were committed to the Grandview Project. This is where we live today. Marilyn demonstrates our pleasure.

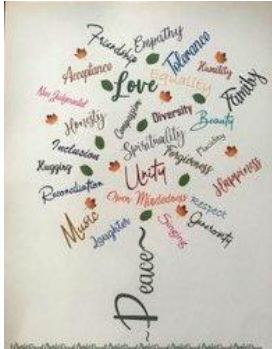
Our 50th Wedding Anniversary "snuck up" on us in December 2011 as we resided at Grandview. So we decided to take our entire family with us to Maxatlan, Mexico. Since Marilyn and I missed out on a Doukhobor ceremony in 1961, our children blessed us with this ceremony in Mazatlan. The actual ceremony is on video in my blog.



The rules for family attending was that only legally married couples from our family could attend. Standing on the beach just below the resort standing left to right at the back row, we have Garrett Kucher (Nona's); Sean Chahley (Lori's); Kimball, Nigel (Tamara's) Kyle Burk (Tamara's husband) Rick Woodhouse (Lori's husband); Lori Woodhouse; Nona Kucher.

Second and front row, we have Abby (Kimball's) Lora (Kimball's wife), Macy (Kimball's); Kayla McKinnon (Nona's) Malcolm Burk (Tamara's); Marilyn and Elmer Verigin; Solomon Burk (Tamara's); Kara Chahley (Lori's); Allie Kucher (Nona's); Tamara Verigin-Burk

Yes, our family had expanded. Marilyn and I were humbled by family, especially when the entire gang sang Daraheeya Mennotee for us. The ceremony was complete with kneeling on a rug that Marilyn purchased in Turkey while on our trip in 1980. So it was special!



Marilyn was deeply moved by a "game" that the family played at our recent camping holiday at Whatshan Lake Retreat. We were in a circle and everyone was to provide a word that could be associated with Peace. This very interesting final chart displays the results of that effort.

Our four year old great grandson Zane Heddle, was the first to shout "hugging".

The design of the chart was the work of Lori

December 23, 2021 marked our 60th wedding anniversary which was quietly celebrated at Nona's house in Castlegar. Some of the children were not able to attend so now the plan is to travel to Las Vegas at the end of April where we can jointly celebrate Nona's 60th birthday and our 60th anniversary.

Marilyn's special joy shared by Elmer is our great grandchildren:



In August of 2021 this photo is where the grandchildren gathered at the Burk residence in Castlegar, B.C. From left to right:

Zander Burk (Tamara grandson); Daxx Heddle (Nona Grandson); Sloane Hlookoff (Lori Granddaughter); Great Grandfather Elmer Verigin; Weston Szmata (Nona Grandson); proud Great Grandmother Marilyn Verigin; Ashton Hlookoff (Lori Grandson); Zane Heddle (Nona Grandson); Haden Szmata (Nona Grandson)

But then our children grew up with this photo taken at Rick and Lori's new house but then so did Elmer and Marilyn



From Left to Right:
 Elmer and Marilyn Verigin
 Nona Kucher
 Lori Woodhouse
 Tamara Verigin-Burk
 Kimball Verigin

We still try to keep in contact with the friends we made in Saskatchewan, Prince Rupert, Castlegar and the Lower Mainland

This story continues as we bless our health and mobility at this stage.

We love our family.

Thank you Marilyn for all your sacrifices to make this family whole.

Dated January 21, 2022 by Elmer Verigin

