

THIS STORY IS ABOUT PHILIP SHERSTOBITOFF, CARPENTER EXTRAORDINARE

My association began during the Summers when I travelled by bus from our family farm in Pelly, Saskatchewan, after being invited by my two brothers, Lawrence and Russel, who operated a small Building Construction Company in Trail, B.C. The idea was to earn money to complete my schooling which was not available from farm income.

This photo was taken in front of the second full house under construction in Warfield, B.C.

Standing from left to right are: brother Russel, Phil, Elmer and Lawrence, with his daughter Patricia who had come to visit her father. All are Verigins for the exception of Phil, a Sherstobitoff.



It is an interesting note that Phil's father and Russel's mother-in-law shared the same father and perhaps the invitation to work together followed that relationship. We can provide a 'loose' generalization that it was a 'family operation'. The photo was dated circa 1958 when all workers in the carpentry trade wore overalls as in the photo. They were equipped with pouches for nails and 'holsters' for hammers and tri-squares. Note the prominent carpenter pencils in the chest high slots.

The work philosophy was to provide the utmost of skills for the best construction. Starting from formwork, which used shiplap boards and studs that were later used in the final framing. All measurements had to be exact. Measuring the diagonal to 'square' the formwork or later the framing needed to be accurate and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " discrepancy was not 'goodinoff'. Because all on site were born Doukhobors, the joke was that 'Goodinoff' was also a Doukhobor that was not allowed on the project but 'Exactly' was always his replacement. There were giggles every time the measurements were taken. 'Exactly' was the full-time employee.

Professional use of all equipment was a strict practice with safety the ultimate objective.



Sports occupied most of the discussions at Coffee Breaks and Lunches. All the original Verigin Workers had played ball and here Phil demonstrates his throwing style while playing with the Castlegar Cubs Fastball Team.

It followed that when the Doukhobor Union of Youth organized a Fastball League that 'pitted' one Village against the other. Phil and Russel organized a Team from Castlegar with all the Workers at that time playing together with others. At one game, Phil was instrumental in completing a 'Triple Play' against a team from Poupour.

We were playing on a field in Ooteschenia. The star player from Poupour

was not impressed and became vocal with “I have never heard of a Triple Play in my career” as he hung up his spikes on the backstop and dissolved the Poupour Team in this same instance.

Both Phil and Russel were blessed with sons and so it followed that they had them playing on Castlegar Hockey Teams where they also assisted with coaching. The games were replayed at coffee breaks and lunches as well. Their diligence resulted in some Hockey Scholarships to United States Colleges.

This work environment was extended to assisting each with the decision to help construct their personal homes. In some instances, this was extended to family members. This aided economics in achieving home ownership for all.

Social gatherings included families to the enjoyment of all where the children became playmates and friends.

Phil was raised as a Vegetarian in his parents' tradition. The Verigins loved to prepare Shishliki (marinated cubes of Lamb cooked with skewers over hot wood coals). This caused a diet problem for Phil as he needed to overcome his aversion to meat. Gradually he achieved a tolerance and would cook a wiener for a hot dog! Eventually he found an appetite for meat which followed with Barb-B-Qs, etc.

In 1958 Russel took me aside and announced that “we all tried so hard to make a carpenter out of you, but we failed. So, you might as well be an Engineer.” I was sent away for the winter seasons to acquire this much needed education that would be required by the company.

Phil's home in Blueberry Creek was able to receive the growing family when partially constructed. Completion was targeted to availability of funds. The Sherstobitoff family was close-knit and it so followed that Phil's continuing interest in sports, extended to golf. Soon we heard stories of Mildred joining Phil on the golf course. It was natural that the sons' interest was established and the Sherstobitoffs became a golfing family. Here Phil keeps a close eye on the scores submitted to him by his sons. The stogie is definitely a show of seniority.



Phil was never late for work and became a valued employee. Whenever a project would enter into minor disputes, the solution was to send Phil there. Within a short period of time, completion was satisfactorily achieved with the Owners happy and a successful project, the result.

An opportunity for Verigins became available to become involved in major

projects in Vancouver, but Phil was not enthusiastic in moving away from the Kootenays at first. Verigins also developed a Millwork business at their plant in Trail. Major Millwork for Hospitals, Schools and Public Buildings were constructed there and then shipped to sites around British Columbia. At this point Phil became interested in installation of these contracts, which were a great asset. There were never any deficiencies after Phil left the project.



Phil eventually retired to a Townhouse in West Kelowna where he continued with his personal services to select clients after the Verigins retired. Phil surprised me by inviting Joe Fedosoff over during one of our visits at Kelowna. Joe was originally from Tolstoi school near Veregin, Saskatchewan and a graduate Chemical Engineer from the U of S, my graduating College as well.

Here, Phil is with friends at a Retirement Home in Kelowna after Mildred passed away. Phil is looking forward to the largest portion of that

cake.

As a longtime Employer, Phil was not known as a 'clock-watcher'. He was the most honest person and always had a joke and a smile on his face.

This is a short article on my association with Phil Sherstobitoff and his family. We enjoyed mutual Love and Respect.

Our sincerest CONDOLENCES to the Sherstobitoff Family from the Verigins.

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