

A SEPTEMBER 13, 2023, TRIP TO THE LOWER MAINLAND

Marilyn and I had a “Bucket List” of visitations that we wanted to do in 2023. The Saskatchewan and Manitoba trip in late June, was an excellent experience, but we longed to also travel to the Lower Mainland, an area where we lived for over eight (8) years in Tsawwassen, while I administered construction of various projects in Western Canada from 1984 through to 1993.

We knew that traffic on the Lower Mainland would be a challenge for Elmer and so our daughter Nona “volunteered” to be our chauffeur, but it had to be “slotted” into her busy work schedule and so September 13 through 19, 2023 was finally selected. Like the Prairie Trip, an objective list was generated as we knew it would be virtually impossible to visit every person and place that we desired.

Try as we could to be selective, Nona’s pickup was filled with all the “necessities” that we considered “essential”, and left September 13, 2023, at 0800 hours on our schedule.

Our first stop was to see our friend Elsie Rezanoff at her Summer Home in Christina Lake for a coffee but Elsie alerted us that she would be back at her permanent home in Vancouver and so we opted for coffee and Bacon & Eggers from Castlegar, A & W.



Nona wanted to stop at Cawston to visit her son Garrett’s Hockey friend Brandon who now works with his dad, Randy Watson in Randall’s Craft Butcher Ltd. Garret was captain of the Osoyoos Hockey Team when he played with Brandon.

We had a great visit and purchased some excellent Elk Jerky and Sausage for our snacks. The selection was large and the taste unbelievable.

We carried on to Princeton and decided to have lunch at the Brown Bridge Pub.

A great menu selection of Pub Fare. The atmosphere was great and the food very tasty.



It had been some time since we had travelled the Hope-Princeton Highway which was in excellent maintenance condition all the way through Hope and then unto Highway 1.



At Abbotsford the GPS suggested an alternate route directly to 2293 King George Boulevard in Surrey and our chosen place to stay the Peace Arch Best Western.

The habits of octogenarians are special and staying in a house with friends, becomes a challenge, both for Visitors and Friends and so we chose a centrally located hotel for our stay on the Coast. The staff and facilities were equally very acceptable.

Then of course, there also was the snoring for which Nona brought ear plugs to deafen the sound,

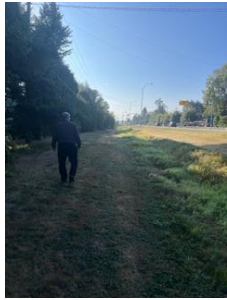
but the restlessness of her parents is another story.

We decided on a Chinese dinner at the Golden Lion located on 2377 King George Boulevard, just one block North.



It was a wise choice, within walking distance from the hotel and on the same side of the street.

On the morning of Thursday, September 14, 2023, we had a prearranged Breakfast with the previous Vice-President of Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA), Philip Hochstein, at the Roadhouse Grille located on 1781 King George Boulevard, just South of our hotel. We



decided to do a morning walk but soon realized that the five (5) blocks were “large Surrey blocks” but King George Boulevard is beautiful at this point. We were pleasantly surprised



to also have Mark Gauvin, a long-term member of ICBA and Gordon Stewart Assistant to Philip. Both Philip and Stewart have now retired from ICBA.

L to R, seated are Mark Gauvin, Gordon Stewart, Philip Hochstein, Nona Kucher, Elmer Verigin and Marilyn Verigin.



We swapped stories about the past years of ICBA history when all the Founders were active in the association. It was great to have breakfast with Phil, Gordon, and Mark. For Elmer it was déjà vu.

We attempted to connect with Elsie Rezanoff and Myrtle-Anne Rempel (wife of Edward Rempel) but both live in downtown Vancouver and it was difficult to find a suitable time to meet for dinner. Driving in the evening though downtown traffic was another consideration and so the decision was to “pass” this time. The group decision was to drive a short distance South to White Rock and walk the sandy beach as well as patronize the seafood establishments that we had enjoyed in the past.



Here is Marilyn (the bag lady from Grandview) accumulating “treasures” protruding from the sand while the tide was out. The smile on her face suggests that she is in her “element” so to speak. She did take her shoes off just after this photo.





Meanwhile, Elmer was watching all the people walking by from the safety of a chair at Coney Island Fish & Chips as is witnessed by this “selfie”.

The weary Beach-combers returned so that we could plan our next visit / inspection.

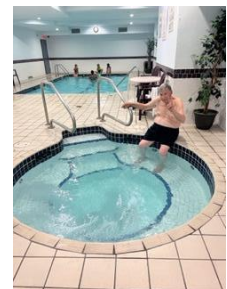
Fish and Chips was not in Nona’s interest and so we searched the internet and the “The Boathouse Restaurant”, was recommended. It was West on Marine Drive and we decided to move our vehicle.



We were fortunate to be seated on the patio with a stupendous view as in this promotional photo. We ordered fresh Oysters as appetizers and Alaska King Crab Legs as the main entrée.

Of course, a bottle of wine was necessary to complete the occasion. The service was exceptional in the early afternoon. We will remember the venue, for a long time as well as the tab!

We decided to enjoy the hotel facilities that evening with the Jacuzzi and Sauna. We relaxed and rested from our trip from Castlegar.



Marilyn and I are noticing that being an octogenarian has its limitations and rest periods are very much on our agenda at these times.

Friday lunch was already scheduled at the ICBA offices on the North end of King George Boulevard. This event is well documented in a special blog entry, already posted. ICBA has had a unique history in my life and a visit to the ICBA offices was on my “bucket list”, after being a founding president in 1975. Lunch was compliments of ICBA.

After some discussion, the decision was to try our luck at the “Element” Casino in Cloverdale. I spent my life “gambling” on construction project tenders and so my interest in this pastime is very limited. The rest of the “gang” wanted to try their luck and off we went. I decided to test my chances and “borrowed” a \$100 stipend from my “Banker”. It happens sometimes, as I was able to repay my loan and add \$200 to my wallet.

Saturday, September 16, 2023, was a very busy day that began with breakfast with our granddaughter Macy Verigin. We decided on Roadhouse Grille again. Macy drove in and joined us at 0830 hours.



Macy is in her third year at university where this year she is taking courses in Individual Activities and Games, Game Cantered Approaches, Fieldwork and Movement Education. She will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in physical education and coaching. With the costs of education

and living away from home, she works part time three (3) days a week.

It was great talking to this young lady who seems to know where she plans to be in her life. We are very proud of her.



Our next visit was for lunch at Milestone's in Surrey with our friends from the Lower Mainland Peter and Gloria Fominoff and Nick and Maxine Ozeroff. These people were part of a group that created the Lower Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society that developed a 48-unit seniors' residence (White Birch Manor) on the corner of 120th Street and 80th Avenue in Delta, B.C.

Seated L to R, are Peter and Gloria Fominoff, Nona, Elmer and Marilyn Vergin with Maxine and Nick Ozeroff.

The Fominoffs and Ozeroffs also participated in creating Whatshan Lake Retreat, near Edgewood, B.C., on 645 Whatshan Lake Forestry Road. We had much to talk about, and time went by fast.

Peter Fominoff donated his legal fees for both the Lower Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society and the Doukhobor Heritage Retreat Society #1999 as his contribution to both the White Birch Manor and Whatshan Lake Retreat, respectively.

Our nephew, Ron Khadekin had a prearranged afternoon and evening at Steveston in Ladner for the balance of Saturday. He drove in from Burnaby to chauffeur us and became, our "designated driver", so that we could enjoy the occasion better.

On our list was Fisherman's Wharf which we had favored during our former residence in Tsawwassen. We drove into Ladner and parked near the wharf



so that we could walk around and see all the Fishermen marketing their daily catch.

The activity on the wharf was intense and it was great to experience the atmosphere and smells of fresh fish. We decided to have a few appetizers while we sat for

a rest. The weather was very cooperative.

We were waiting for our reservation for the "Catch" at 6:00 P.M., as well as to meet Mary Gagnon, brother Russel's sister-in-law.

It was therapeutic to observe families of many backgrounds wandering around and enjoying the freedom and safety this area.



It was time to move on to the “Catch” and join Mary Gagnon who was already waiting for us.



Seating L to R has Ron Khadekin, Mary Gagnon, Marilyn and Nona.

Ron announced that his mother, my sister Mary, had provided funding for this evening and so we were to order whatever we wanted. Nona and I opted for the Lobster dinner. What a great choice!

Thank you, sister Mary, it almost felt that you were with us the entire evening.

Sunday was our last day of our planned visit. Lunch was to be in Langley with my cousin Mary (nee Verigin) Strocen. Her daughter Karen and Doug Krasnikoff were able to join us. Mary had a spacious and comfortable Condo in a gated community.

This photo was a “selfie” taken by Karen with those seated from L to R around the table: Mary Strocen, Marilyn, Elmer, Nona and Doug Krasnikoff. It has been at least thirty (30) years since we visited with each other and so we had much to “catch up on”, so to speak.



Nona enjoyed refreshing her relationship with Karen which dated back to their teenage years.

The last visit of our planned trip was with my Engineering friend, Jim and his wife Judy Holloway who own a training horse stable near the International Border and also in Langley.



Seated L to R, are Jim Holloway, Marilyn, Judy Holloway and Elmer.

Jim was part of the “Fearless Four” that I had posted a dated blog article some time ago, that included Jim (Civil Engineer), Ron Ross (Electrical Engineer), Robert Miller, (Mechanical Engineer) and myself as Civil Engineer. We were recruited by Columbia Cellulose, Co., Ltd., a Sulfite Pulp Mill in Prince Rupert, B.C., back in 1963, “fresh” out of university.

We just came together as a team and learned all about making pulp and how to operate a Sulfite Mill. We also established a life-long friendship. Under skip, “Bob” Miller we were able to win the grand aggregate in the Marine Bonspiel in Prince Rupert in the Spring of 1965.

We all had an excellent opportunity to learn Engineering by a “hands on” approach but we all agreed that after two (2) years, that operation was not in the future for us and all resigned at the same time for individual reasons and separate futures.

Jim and Judy are retired and operate this beautiful rural estate where they continue to train horses on their well-constructed estate. It was very nostalgic and sentimental for the “bear hugs” we gave each other on parting as we both knew those maybe not repeated.

We decided that we would patronize the Roadhouse again for dinner and we were not disappointed.

Although the hotel complimentary breakfasts were very substantial, we decided that we would have a hearty breakfast in Chilliwack after visiting Kerkhoff Construction offices. Bill Kerkhoff was perhaps the youngest “pioneer” at the time of ICBA incorporation in 1975. Our friendship continued over the years. Bill asked me if I could visit their offices in Chilliwack and meet his son Leonard as Bill and Nell would be overseas at the time of our visit.



Here is Leonard in front of some of the 3,700 projects that Kerkhoff has constructed. Leonard explained that most of the current projects are “development” projects for clients and for Kerkhoff.

We then searched for an AHOP restaurant as our choice for breakfast but were advised that AHOP had left Chilliwack recently and chose a WhiteSpot instead. The substitute was equally enjoyable, and the service was just like we remembered.



We were on our way home as we looked forward to “Hope”.

We remembered that Cawston had the best price for canning tomatoes at \$10 per 20-pound box. This could not be matched and so we purchased six (6) boxes.

On reflection, Marilyn and I were fortunate to live in over thirty (30) homes and districts over our lifetime. We experienced many genuine friendships that still are cherished to this day. We do not know if we will be able to undertake our 2023 journeys to the Prairies and the Lower Mainland again but we are very thankful for what took place.

Yes, there are many that we did not visit as the time was such that we needed to get back to our regular lives.

Thank you to all who we did meet for the short visits and hospitality.

We hope to see you again sometime.

Written by Elmer Verigin September 29, 2023.

Posted October 05, 2023