



## Harry Rezansoff 1935 - 2013

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Harry William Rezansoff was born on March 31, 1935, at Shoreacres, BC, to William and Emma Makortoff. Harry's Mother Emma passed away at a young age when Harry was only two years old. His grandparents Alexander and Tina Rezansoff, also of Shoreacres, took in Harry and hence he adopted the Rezansoff last name. The Rezansoff grandparents and their daughters Mary and Pauline (Harry's aunts) helped to raised Harry. Mary would take him with her to the Okanagan where Harry would earn enough to get his first bicycle. Mary would be the one to instill in Harry a solid work ethic and dedication to purpose that Harry was known for at his work and in the community. Harry never attended public schooling but taught himself to be literate and aware of the world and circumstances around him. As a youngster he would often sneak away to the nearest public school at Glade – walked there from Shoreacres and without any lunch or snacks – his devout Grandmother Tina discovered where he was and dragged him home several times and then one day she entered the school and undressed in protest. Harry never went back.

During his formative years in Shoreacres Harry loved to spend his time with his best buddies, such as Mike Strelaeff, Fred Samsonoff, John Fofonoff, Andy Makortoff, Jack Kalmakoff, the

Arishenkoff boys, and others. Their time was well spent in patrolling the Rover Creek water line (an engineering marvel in its own at the time), building rafts, fishing, picking huckleberries and making the odd batch of home brew.

Of course this also included visiting other Doukhobor communities nearby such as Glade. There he met Alice Sherstobitoff and the visits to Glade increased dramatically. Well, it was not long after that there were several couples including Harry and Alice that participated in a large meeting in Glade and this is where the community blessing event involving two couples took place. This was on October 01, 1961. Harry and Alice set up domicile in Shoreacres.

These were turbulent times in the Doukhobor midst. Many young men were involved in various unusual activities and Harry's active nature also prompted his participation. Harry was arrested along with others and eventually sentenced to 15 years in prison. This was at a time when Alice was pregnant with their first child - Harold was born in September, 1962, with his father in prison. While in prison Harry befriended a fellow inmate, Whistling Bill Narraway, who encouraged Harry to get into the electrical field. This relationship continued as a life-long friendship. Harry took

Whistling Bill's advice and enrolled in an extended electrical course and pursued this as a life-long profession.

Harry served enough time to become eligible for parole but his parole had conditions attached. This was a time when several Doukhobor men in similar situations were subjected to 'internal exile' in Canada. He was given a choice – to go either way up North or to Ontario, with the condition that he was not to return to BC. The Rezansoffs chose Ontario. Initially they settled in Toronto and after a few months moved to Galt, Ontario. There, Harry worked rewinding motors for Ray's Electric and then accepted a Maintenance position with the major manufacturing company Babcock-Wilcox. Things went along fairly well and the Rezansoffs began to establish a life but there was still the tugging for family and home in BC. Their second child Christine (now Chamaya) was born in May of 1967.

One time, after a spirited night with friends, Harry managed to escape with the keys to his Mercury and, with some divine intervention or Cosmic guidance, succeeded in finding an RCMP station in Galt, Ontario. He avoided getting arrested for driving there under the influence, and then stood in front of the constabulary and demanded to be returned to BC – or else – leaving the rest to their imagination. Well, Lo and Behold! The next morning, Harry's Parole Officer called and asked that they not say a word to any others (also in Ontario at the time) and would they be able to pack and be prepared for a move back to BC in two weeks? The next day Alice went to the local radio station and offered for sale their newly bought living room furniture, table, chairs and other items.

Harry and Alice, and their family, Harold and

Christine, returned to BC in the spring of 1969. This was a time now known as "The Summer of Love" and Vancouver was alive with music and colour. The family resided for a time with relatives - Fred and Helen Makortoff. Harry located work and after some months the Rezansoffs found a place to stay. Like many other 'flower children' at the time the Rezansoffs bounced around the Lower Mainland for a while until they acquired a more permanent residence in Surrey. Harry secured a solid job with the UGG (United Grain Growers) as a site maintenance electrician. He was always on the look out for opportunities as a way to slowly make their way back to the Kootenays and eventually found work at Brenda Mines near Kelowna. After a couple of good years in Kelowna, Harry obtained a job with Boundary Electric and moved back to the Kootenays –renovated an outbuilding on the Sherstobitoff family farm in Glade – finally closing the loop. After about 15 years – the Rezansoffs were home.

This was also a time with a sense of new beginnings –several families were moving back to the Kootenays and the Rezansoffs, along with the Sherstobitoff family, were invited to build on communal land in Krestova. In 1977, Harry joined the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical workers) and participated in the building of many major and small projects in Southern BC.

Harry and Alice still have their residence in Krestova. During that time in Krestova the Rezansoffs were blessed with the birth of two grandchildren, Jemma and Kai, and will soon celebrate anew and welcome a third grandchild to their family.

Harry immersed himself in his Doukhobor community and was a charter member of the Tri-Choir, a member of the Council of Doukhobors in

Canada, and the group of psalm singers, and was a general community supporter and often an organizer of community events.

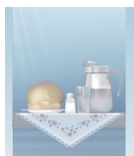
Harry was one of the few still left of the generation that managed to survive very dramatic and traumatic experiences through the choices they had made at an impressionable time in their lives. Although much has been discussed about those times – there are still many secrets and stories that Harry and friends before him took with them. In spite of a very tough attitude from the authorities and a challenging childhood, Harry was still able to emerge on the positive side of multiple dependencies with enormous support from his family, Alcoholics Anonymous, and many friends.

During his thirty odd years in Krestova, Harry developed and expanded his love of sea fishing and spent many enjoyable times in Georgia Strait and off the West Coast of Vancouver Island teasing Salmon out of the salt chuck. When Harry's boat wasn't in seawater, it could often be spotted just outside the Balfour Narrows on Kootenay Lake filled with a daily limit of Kokanee. Harry's other sporting passion was the Canadian Football League. Harry wrapped up his life enjoying a lovely evening with his wife Alice, a bowl of popcorn and watching two football games. The final score was his favourite BC Lions 26 and the Calgary Stampeders 22. And at five thirty the next morning at home, with a clear day ahead -

Harry took his last breath. He was born on Sunday and died on a Sunday.

He is survived by Alice, his wife of 51 years; son Harold, partner Lindsay, grandbaby-to-be, and granddaughter Jemma; daughter Chamaya (Christine) and grandson Kai; brother Bill Makortoff, sisters Sonia Ostrihoff and Vera Lapshinoff, many nieces and nephews and cousins. And many, many friends. May he rest in peace.

The family would like to thank everyone for their phone calls, visits, sympathy cards, flowers and food. To those who traveled from both near and far to attend Harry's funeral, please accept our deepest gratitude. A special thank you to Laura, JJ and Barry Verigin for their attendance and words of comfort. To Bill Strilaeff of Castlegar Funeral Chapel, we give immense gratitude for his exceptional and compassionate service. Many, many thanks to Fred Makortoff for officiating such a beautiful funeral service and for helping us to write dad's story. We cannot express enough appreciation and thanks to our community cooks for such a hearty and delicious meal, and to our grave diggers for laying Harry in his final resting place. And finally, special thanks to the psalm singers and the Tri-Choir, who with such powerful and traditional singing, helped sing Harry home. God bless all of you.



**In Memoriam**  
Vechnaya Pamyat

Preserving the memory of our deceased family members and friends