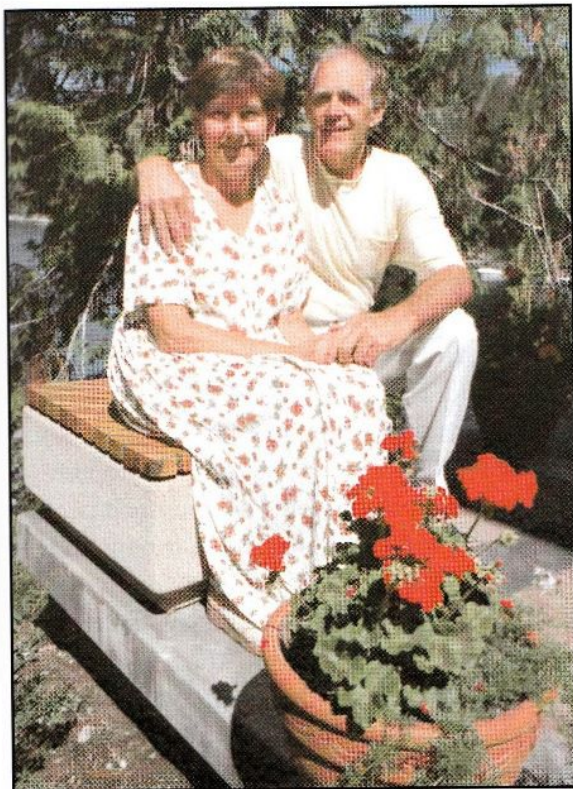


People's Builder and Cultural Mover

Today The Intertech Group is recognized as the largest high-rise builder on the West Coast of Canada. Its president Peter P. Rezansoff (1939-) still considers himself as a farm boy at heart and with his professional team oversees every step of the way to ensure that his company meets the commitments of his clients. Although Peter continues to work long hours, he enjoys family life, and with his wife Elsie participates fully in community activities such as singing, building a retreat centre, and helping construct an East-West Bakery-Restaurant complex in Russia. As a corporate citizen and an avid cultural supporter, Peter has a legacy and a reputation for being a model of excellence for others.



Elsie and Peter Rezansoff pose at their Christina Lake, BC property in July 1999. As corporate business people, they assist worthy community projects and still take time to 'smell the roses'.

For a fellow who began with humble beginnings (his parents Peter W. and Nellie were illiterate), how did Peter Rezansoff climb to such heights of excellence? The answer is complex. Born in the zealot community of Krestova, at the age of seven Peter moved with his parents to Hilliers on Vancouver Island for a small group experience in communal living. With only five years of schooling, Peter returned to the Kootenays for seven years before being swept up in a mania called 'a trek to the coast' in 1962. In Vancouver with his spouse and two children, Peter found himself blocked with finding good jobs because of lack of education.

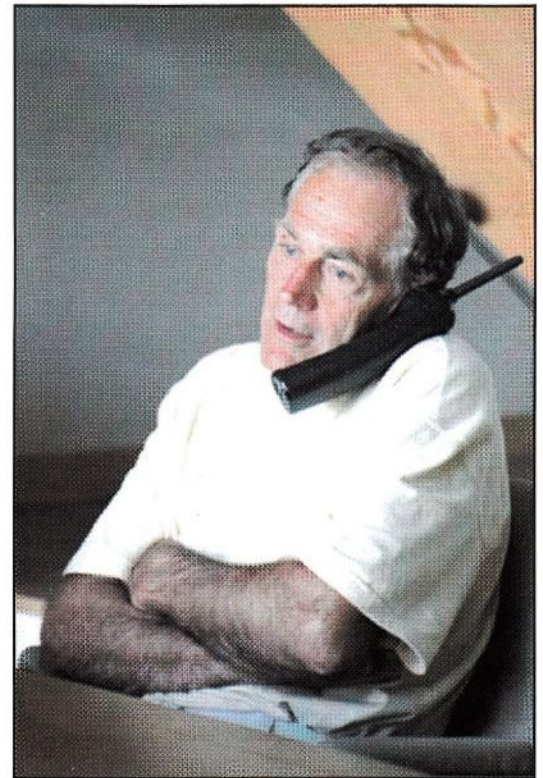
At the age of 25 Peter Rezansoff took a crash course in high school before being admitted to the British Columbia Institute of Technology as a mature student. He received a scholarship of \$2,000, and then worked for months day and night as a serious student in architectural engineering. 'I learned how to learn and how to work together,' admits Peter, as he successfully passed his courses and immediately got a job as an assistant superintendent in a high-rise construction project. 'Coming as an underdog, I was determined to succeed'.¹ And he did.

From being a project superintendent, Peter worked his way up the company. When the owner died, he formed his own in 1980 called the Intertech Construction Group. The company has since gained 'a solid reputation for cost efficiency, quality control and completing projects on schedule and even as much as a

month ahead of schedule!’² Even after graduation, Peter’s unique skills as an alternative professional architect were recognized and he was immediately asked by the BC Department of Education to teach several evening courses - which he did for seven years.

With annual revenues of approximately \$80 million, Intertech is strategically located in Vancouver to serve the needs of its clients both locally and internationally. As a diversified contractor, its projects have included new construction and renovation, convention centers, performing arts centers, hotels, retail centers, office buildings, health care facilities, educational facilities, laboratories, multi-family residential housing, manufacturing plants, and high tech projects. His repeat clients include Japanese, Chinese, Iranian, and British. These people recognize Peter’s skill and honesty as a person who ‘can get things done’. For example, Peter has personal relations with Japanese businessmen who fly into Vancouver each year and take Peter and Elsie to the Charlotte Islands for fishing salmon. ‘The Japanese enjoy it immensely’, says Peter.

The regular staff consists of 80 people, but with sub-contractors the team sometimes expands to over 400. A small core group is essentially ‘Doukhobor-based’ and includes the extended family members. Lorraine is the Contract Administrator as well as Editor of the company’s *Newsletter*. Nina is the Office Manager in charge of accounting staff, Harold is Project Manager and Natasha does part time work as a secretary. Peter’s wife Elsie is in charge of photography-promotion, office overload, special projects as well as Peter’s wardrobe as he is reluctant to set his foot into the department stores.³



Close up of entrepreneur Peter Rezansoff of Vancouver at his Christina Lake home near Grand Forks, BC, July of 1999.

Operating Principles of Interech

- * We strive to treat others as we wish to be treated.
- * We strive to create a safe, ‘injury free’ and mutually respectful work environment for all people.
- * We will set measurable goals and strive to achieve them.
- * We want to be fair, firm and consistent in all our dealings.
- * We listen to each other and strive to understand other points of view.
- * We strive to be timely, open and honest in our communication.
- * We discourage all self-interest behaviour.
- * We expect all people to take and share responsibility for their work.
- * We promote our Company with pride.
- * We are good corporate citizens.⁴

The success of Peter Rezansoff and his company begins with a Mission Statement, which includes ‘building a reputation based on knowledge, skill, integrity and lasting relationships within an organization that values trust, communication, and commitment to client satisfaction’. Using a ‘win-win’ approach, Peter and his staff routinely sit down as team players and work with the owners. For flexibility, innovation, and continuity, Peter brings together the older people with the younger work force

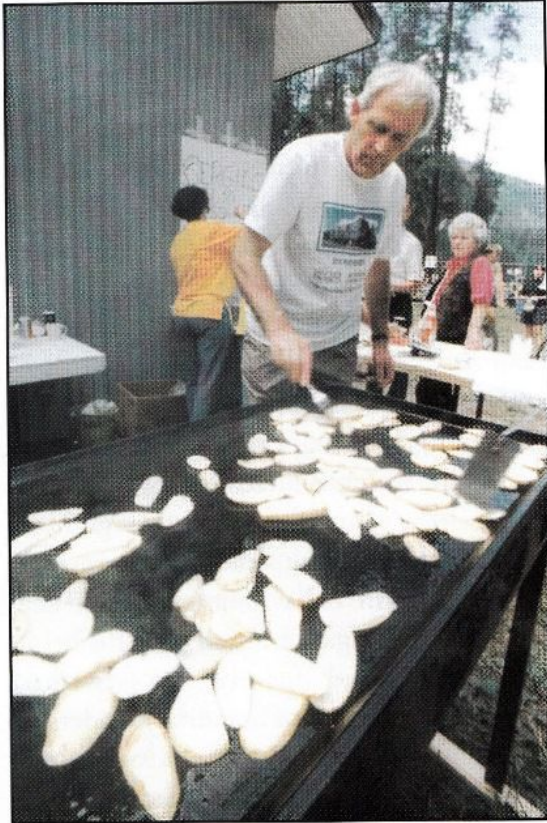
who are computer literate. The mix is important to train and equip future leaders and owners of the company.

Ultimately, the ‘Operating Principles’ guide the attitude, character and behaviour of all Intertech people and express their commitments to the way they do business and treat people. The Principles are in tune with the Doukhobor principles of co-operation and treating people as equals and above board.

Peter and Elsie Rezansoff have been living in Vancouver for almost 40 years. In an interview, Peter said: ‘We do not forget our children. We do not hide our own Doukhobor background. Our clients know all that and we are proud of that’.⁵ In the 1980s, the company built a 48-dwelling Seniors Home for the Vancouver Mainland Doukhobor Benevolent Society, with a space for *sobranie* meetings. This was the site where the Doukhobor Centennial Coordinating Committee met twice in the 1990s while preparing for the Centennials of the arms burning (1895-1995) and migration to Canada (1899-1999).

Peter and Elsie devoutly believe that ‘our forefathers took a monumental step when they burnt their firearms in Russia’. In paying a tribute to them, they participated in the *Voices For Peace 1995 International Tour* featuring the United Doukhobor Choir and drama ensemble that toured across North America and visited Russia. In preparation, Peter and Elsie commuted every month for over a year to the Kootenays for choir practices.

Peter's grandmother lived to be 103. She once told him she was seven years old when the arms burning took place in the Caucasus of southern Russia. From a distance she saw the fires and the severe whippings by Cossacks that followed right after. She saw 'the water red when these people washed themselves from this horror'. Those people 'were real pioneers', observes Peter.



Above, Peter Rezansoff makes Sergie's potatoes at the Doukhobor Sports Day at South Slokan, BC, in June of 1994.

When the Whatshan Retreat Society officially opened in July 1999, Peter and Elsie were there singing in the choir and participating in the evening folk singing with accordion and guitar accompaniment. Peter learned to play the accordion at the age of 14 when he first acquired a button version from an old Baptist. For Peter, Whatshan symbolizes 'A place to tell stories. A place where people will listen.' Peter and Elsie have generously helped construct this new venture for Doukhobors and others.

With the same sense of generosity, Peter today is helping to create the Bakery-Restaurant complex at Tolstoy's Yasnaya Polyana near 'Iula, Russia. For Peter this international venture is another opportunity to give thanks to Lev N. Tolstoy who generously helped the Doukhobors come to Canada over 100 years ago. 'It is a token of our appreciation', he says, 'and it will help nourish ourselves and our children in nonviolent values'. As a beacon to the future, Peter hopes that the new generation will find alternative ways to deal with violence in society by building nonkilling human capabilities.

In 1995 Peter and Elsie Rezansoff built a second home at a beautiful place by Christina Lake near Grand Forks, BC. This was the home I interviewed them in 1999. Bigger than a regular house, the new residence has enough bedrooms for all the children and grand children. It is the place where they spend much of their summers relaxing on the patio or having a refreshing swim in the lake. It is a place where they entertain up to 100 people, as they did with the

Centennial Choir members. It is also the place where they read, sing, and think about their industrious pioneers who overcame so many hardships, but were able to survive miraculously as if they were blessed with 'certain survival genes'.

1. Koozma J. Tarasoff tape-recorded interview No. 479, Christina Lake, BC, 26th June 1999. Tarasoff's Notes, pp. 5971-5988.
2. John Livingstone, Publisher of *On-Site Magazine*, June/July 1994; 3. This issue was devoted almost exclusively to Interitech Construction.
3. See Web Site: <http://www.itc-group.com>
4. *Ibid.*, Corporate Introduction, 23rd March 2002.
5. Interview No. 479: 5974.

Suzuki on Doukhobors

'I have always been grateful for the generosity of the Doukhobor people to the Japanese during the war. As a child in Slokan I well remember the vegetable wagons that were our only source of fresh food. I also remember a beautiful Doukhobor girl who was one of the few white children who would talk to me. Needless to say, I had a mad crush on her.'

Letter from David T. Suzuki, Vancouver, BC, to Koozma J. Tarasoff, 1 February 1993.