

JUNE 22, 1950 - DECEMBER 18, 2014



REIMUT LIEDER



REIMUT LIEDER WAS BORN IN
HAMBURG WANDSBEK,
GERMANY, ON JUNE 22, 1950

An Open Door, A Welcome Invitation to All

December 2014

by Franka Cordua-von Specht

IT'S 7:30 IN THE MORNING and Reimut, or Rye as some friends call him, is up and waiting. Smoke in hand, water boiling for coffee, he is ready to meet the day... and my dog Spice. For many months now Reimut has been looking after my young dog while I go to work.

Reimut lives next door in the red "coach house" in a heritage home at 2750 Pine Street in Vancouver.

Since Reimut's arrival, the coach house has functioned somewhat like a neighbourhood community centre, with Reimut welcoming passerbys. In his open-hearted-open-door manner, he's met a great number of the neighbourhood, a good number of whom find themselves sitting at his table sharing a story, a snack, a beer.

The coach house is a perfect pad for him, and he's organized it extremely well, able to instantly transform the living room into a professional photo studio or into a shop for his different woodworking projects.

On this morning, like the other mornings, his door is ajar and I walk right in, hand over my dog and then he wishes me a good day. "Remember to have some fun!" he tells me.

Since I first met Reimut, he has been good to me. Very kind, generous with his time, and willing to help. If there is something wrong with my apartment, car or bicycle, I turn to Reimut. The other day he came over and he fixed the door that wouldn't lock because of the cold spell.

After work each day I return to his pad, collect my dog and check in with Reimut. Much of the day he has spent working on the computer or in his big

easy chair, reading *The Vancouver Sun* or completing the the *New York Times* crossword. Only on Saturdays when his favourite CBC show, *Vinyl Cafe* with Stuart Mclean, is playing, do I know not to disturb him!

Age 64, Reimut is ever the entrepreneur. In the last few weeks he's had a run of luck. A number of the items that he posted for sale (photo equipment, books, etc) all fetched a decent price. But there are other irons he has in the fire: selling his online stockphoto agency (ImageMakers), advertising his photography services, pitching his book *Lead with Your Heart* to publishers, as well his writing, translating (German to English) and phone counselling. No shortage of possibilities!

One of Reimut's friends told how much he has helped her, simply by listening to her. I know he has helped many others

A Knowledgeable, Good-Hearted, Intuitive Man

in the same way, and the same is true for me. He has listened and offered helpful suggestions and I found his presence both comforting and healing.

And generous! He has shared what he has, whether half a beer, grapefruit and bubbly, his special salads, his burgers or fresh tomatoes from his garden.

If I'm making Reimut out to be an angel, well, that wouldn't be exactly accurate either. As one friend said, "Reimut is a good guy but we all know you can't tell him anything!" It is true. Reimut is a stubborn man who likes to be right! And he can point the finger rather quickly at anyone incompetent, government usually. Yet beneath all that is a big-hearted softie whose friendship has meant a great deal to me. Thank you, Reimut, with all my heart! You are a very good man, a great friend, and you've been a real rock for me!

INTERVIEW

Last spring I sat down and asked Reimut some questions about his life.

F: Reimut, what is your first memory?

Reimut: Being 15, driving a car. I have almost no memory before 15. Not sure why. My mother always suspected it

was because of the trauma of my father leaving.

I drove in the first year without a license. I never got stopped, a '57 Chevy. A collector's classic now but in those days it was just an old car. I bought it off one of the guys I was going to school with. Gave him \$50 for it, and it came with four bald tires! I learned how to drive in snow very quickly.

F: Where were you living? Reimut: That was at King George High School, down at the West End, off Denman.

F: What were you like as a 15 year old boy? How would you describe yourself?

Reimut: I was one of those wiz kids that breezed through classes. I was also short and rotund, about 5'4", the shortest kid in the whole damn school. I was thinking I'd be short and fat for the rest of my life, and when you're a guy that's not a good thing! It wasn't until 17 that I had a growth spurt. I hit 6'1" in one year.

My French teacher liked me. He skipped me a grade because my pronunciation was spot on.

F: What did you enjoy at school? Reimut: Science, shop class, Math. I did Grade 11 and 12 Physics and Chemistry all in Grade 12 but somehow I didn't have enough credits to graduate so I took a German course [distance] from Victoria.

F: Where were you living at the time?

Reimut: In the West End, a couple blocks from the school. [968 Nicola St]

F: Did you grow up there? Reimut: Yeah, That was where all the immigrants were. Remember "Robsonstrasse"? That was around 1965.

It was houses in those days, just a few apartment buildings. High rises hadn't been invented yet!

F: Tell me about a typical day. Reimut: I remember enjoying playing soccer after school. That was the beginning of the end with my mother. I think I mentioned that I was never "good enough" for her. "What was I thinking kicking a soccer ball around with other kids... That's not studying!" The fact that I never needed to study never fazed her. You remember the program "Reach for the Top"? I was on that in Grade 11 and Grade 12.



REIMUT LIEDER, AT HOME IN THE COACH HOUSE



THE GARDEN

F: It sounds like a difficult relationship with your mother... Reimut: She was on me. I wasn't good enough, fast enough, didn't make enough money...

F: Tell me about her. Reimut: She was born Luise Wolter (later Lieder) in East Prussia...when there was an East Prussia.

F: And where were you born? Reimut: Hamburg Wandsbek, Am Hohenfeld 11. It was the family home.

One of my cousins still owns the same house, still lives there. Karl-Horst. He's my father's sister's son. I was conceived after my father, Horst Lieder, got out of POW camp [He was captured and taken to a camp in northern Canada]. Did you know that he didn't get out until a few years after the war? He got out in 1949. So I was born in 1950, on June 22nd.

F: Any recollection of Germany? Reimut: No, I was one and a half when I got dragged here! My father came here before my mother and me to set up camp and find a job. He found one as an electrical engineer at Westinghouse in Hamilton, Ontario. I remember growing up in this huge house. We'd rented the entire floor of the house. When I went back once, my then-girlfriend Singne went with me, I saw it was a tiny house! When you're two everything looks big I guess!

At the age of 8 or so we moved to Trois Rivières, Quebec. Westinghouse transferred him. That's my first memory when things fell apart between my mother and him. They were just totally mismatched. By the time I was nine, he took off. I don't remember the details. All I knew is that my mother tried to sue him for child support so he moved to the US. I grew up in poverty.

My mother took a look at the map of Canada and decided Vancouver was the best place. She just wanted to get away from him.



There's an early memory: the train trip across Canada! Talk about kid heaven. Running up and down the train in the dome cars!

F: What did your mom do to make money?

Reimut: She got bookkeeping work. I was told I had to make money, so I delivered papers. I saved up enough for a bicycle. With the little bit I was bringing in, I was helping out with the household finances. In those days *The Province* came out in the mornings and *The Vancouver Sun* in the afternoons. I delivered *The Province*. It wasn't a big paper route like later when I filled up the Chevy to the hilt. I had the two biggest paper routes in all of BC by then. I was making half decent money! And each of the paper routes was only three blocks long, but they had high rises, so I was delivering to those.

F: When did you graduate? Reimut: In '66. I graduated early because I'd skipped a grade. They used to do that to kids, make them skip a grade. That's why I graduated one year earlier than everyone else.

When I was 15, I moved out of the house. I couldn't take my mother anymore. I got a full one floor of a house for \$45 on 14th and Cypress, about three blocks from here. I've landed back at my old stomping grounds quite accidentally! I was living alone. I learned real quick how to look after myself. Never did get into macaroni and cheese.

F: Did you continue school?

Reimut: I went to BCIT and took electronics engineering. I thought it was the way of the future, but we were being taught vacuum tube theory. By the time we graduated everything we'd learned was obsolete! I never did finish BCIT. I finished most of it but then I thought, "This place is useless" after I figured out what they were teaching us. I could, to this day, build you a radio and TV straight from parts!

Hate to sound like an old fart but people used to fix their radios in those days. They didn't throw it in the garbage and buy a new one. And they were easy to fix! Can you imagine if your iPhone died, trying to fix it yourself?

I probably stayed at the place on Cypress for a year and then my buddy Garry and I rented a whole house. That was near BCIT. Another young couple had moved in with us, so there were four of us in this communal house near Boundary Road. One day Garry was gluing up a beach blanket. He had it out in the kitchen. Well, contact cement is highly explosive, so it did what it did best. It was a hot summer day and there was no breeze at all. All I remember was that the entire air in the whole room literally exploded. We weren't smoking and we'd turned off the pilot light in the stove. The fire marshal just figured it was too hot of a day without wind of any kind. Garry ended up crying on my shoulder, "I can't believe I burned down our house with all our stuff." It wasn't much stuff... but it was *all* our stuff.

I would have been around 19 at the time. Then I spent the summer camping in the woods north of Squamish, way down some logging road. I spent four months in the bush. I camped beside a river, not a big river, just a small one, but it was up in the mountains, so it was very fast and lots of boulders were coming down the river. It was quite dramatic going to sleep with the roar of

the river beside you. I started giving life a lot of thoughts and read all of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, her seminal book.

I wasn't going to overwinter in a tent so I had to get my ass in gear and move back to the city. I think that's when I started driving taxi. Off and on for ten years total. One of my paper-route customers told me about driving taxis. Funny thing. I didn't know what taxis did. I'd never been in a taxi!

I drove in Vancouver for the first little while, about four years, and then I went out to Ladner. At the time I was living in Richmond. Ladner was a small town and I was pretty much the only taxi. I covered Tsawwassen and Point Roberts as well. Back in the day, they just waved you through the border. I was in Ladner for the next six years. I ended up buying into the company, one of my mistakes. I thought if the driver made money, the owner must make more money! All that happens is that the owner gets to fix the cars and fill out the government forms, etc. There were about eight cars in one fleet and I had two of them, so I owned a quarter of a fleet. I sold out as soon as someone offered me money. I got \$25K for my share. I'd never seen so much money in one place! I invested the money at 20% and lived off of it for a while. That would have been in 1979, March 17th.

At the time I had a nice place out on Lulu Island in Richmond. On Lulu Island you could rent a whole house for \$300 and it came with a whole acre lot.

Here's a funny one. Every girlfriend (live-in) was 19. Singne was 19, Christine was 19 (and I was 25) and Joanne was 19 (and I was 30). I remember Christine's father took me aside, "What are your intentions with my daughter?" Well he gave me his blessings and I'm still friends with the family today. Christine had three kids and is up in Prince George.

I met Joanne just after I sold the taxi company. I was living off the interest. I basically retired for two years, until interest rates started coming down. I didn't know 20% was just outrageous.

So I started dipping into the capital. Soon it was all gone and I was down to the last \$100. Retirement was over!

I then discovered the second best way to lose your shirt after owning a taxi company: start a photo studio! I'd made a deal with a friend Wolfgang who really wanted a pair of my speakers in exchange for his photo gear. I was thirty and hadn't picked up a camera. I got the camera gear, lenses, tripod, etc. I thought "There's got to be a way to turn this into money" so I started my own commercial photography business right from home. Joanne and I were living in a big six bedroom house, on a quarter acre on Lulu Island. I thought of the name "Image Makers." I thought it was the perfect name -- I make images!

Image Makers started off small. That never changed much! At first I thought it was a good idea to do insurance photos for people to prove their possessions in case they're lost. Ironically, the people who hired me were the insurance agents, who knew the value of photos. Saves lots of writing!

Then I got into mainstream commercial photography, everything except babies and weddings. Eventually a friend of mine told me about an ideal photo studio right downtown. And it was. About 1000 square feet at 337 West Pender, right by Homer Street. I lasted

about fifteen years there! It took a while to get the business going. I remember one time putting on a suit and tie and making sales calls. I went around and gave out flyers. I got a lot of work out of that. I made a living, kept up with the mortgage and studio rent.

F: Tell me about some of your shoots.

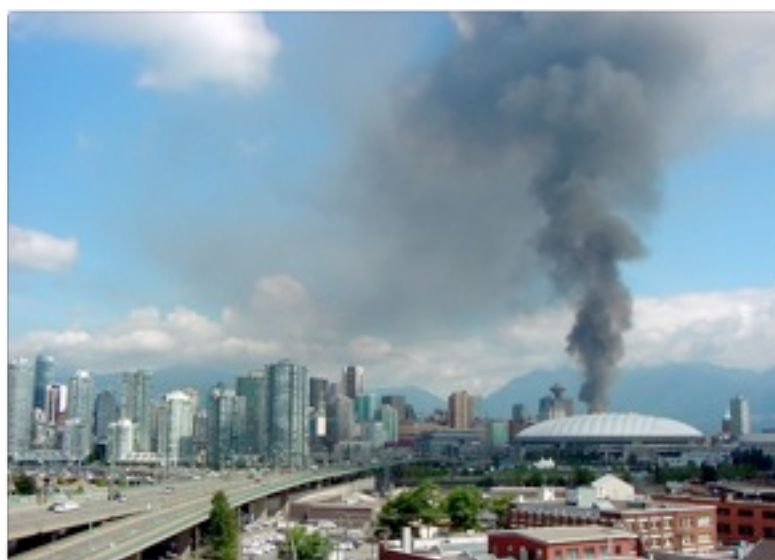
Reimut: One of the most difficult shoots was hanging out of a helicopter over Canada Place in the middle of the night shooting with three cameras. 3M had come up with some new reflective material. They lined the helipad, around the outside edges. 3M wanted pictures of the product. I got to hire a helicopter. The biggest problem was which exposure to use. You do your best to guess and you go either side of it. If I figure F8, then I'd also shoot F11 and F5.6. That was long before digital!

F: Did they turn out? Reimut: Oh yeah.

They went away happy. The whole time I was joking with the pilot about how strong the seatbelts are! That's important when you're hanging out of a helicopter, there's no door, no glass. The whole time you're leaning out you've got the downdraft of the rotor over your head.

F: What happened to the studio? Reimut: It burned down. On July 3, 2003.

F: How did it start? Reimut: A drug dealer cooking hash oil. We later found out



that she had a history of arson. A real arsonist. She spilled some on the carpet. She later claimed it was popcorn she was cooking. That was her official story to the cops.

We were at opposite ends of the building. I had no idea the place was on fire. Mr Mohammed Sheikh was the one that saved me. He ran the grocery store at the ground level. He had been a fireman in India and he knew that the first thing you do is run around and yell "Fire!" and get out. That's what he did. He was screaming so loud that I didn't

recognize his voice. I thought it was some drunk in the hallway. I opened the office door and a wall of black smoke came my way. I closed the door. Oh shit! At the same time the power went off. Before I left I closed the windows and I got the hell out, so fast that I didn't grab anything, not even the office rent I had collected from the previous month (I was the building manager). Usually I waited a few days to make sure everyone had it before delivering it to the owners.

So I got out with one shirt, one pair of pants and twenty dollars in my pocket.

At that time Joanne had kicked me out and Maura, my assistant, had offered me a mattress in her place. I camped on Maura's floor for a couple of weeks and then stayed with David, Singne's brother in North Delta. He gave me \$3K and said, "Go find yourself a place." I filled up my gas tank, drove around the Lower Mainland and finally found this place, and the rest is history!



REIMUT'S FATHER HORST LIEDER WAS AN EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHER.

REIMUT LIEDER: EARLY YEARS



TOP LEFT: REIMUT IN GERMANY, 1952

TOP RIGHT: REIMUT, WITH HIS MOTHER LUISE LIEDER AND GRANDMOTHER

MIDDLE LEFT: REIMUT, AGE 9, 1959

MIDDLE RIGHT: REIMUT'S GRANDMOTHER, JOHANNE WOLTER

BOTTOM LEFT: REIMUT, AGE 12, VANCOUVER, 1962

SINGNE PALMQUIST

Reimut was a very complex man - brilliant in his way, very independent in his thinking, anti-authority and unconventional, opinionated and eccentric, abrasive and tender.



BRUCE BLACK

Hey Riz!

When was it, were we twelve or thirteen, a life time ago eh? You remember climbing over the roofs of the houses around your place on Nelson Street in the West End, that was lots of fun! And the chocolate cakes your Mum made for us when I slept

over...and we slept under the kitchen table or on the balcony! The Monopoly games we played and those wild hockey games, boy, we had fun. And making those dopey tapes with Gunther at my place. Who would have thought, an English kid...and his three best friends

were German! Air Cadets was fun, we had a lot of good times there. Thanks for taking the photos of our wedding. I enjoyed coming over to your wee place for java, it was always good to see you Riz...we yacked over some great memories eh? I'm not keen on going down to the West End these days though; there are too many memories there now... Days of Future Past eh? And now there is one less reason for going there.

Prost Riz!

ELDO ENNS

A brew, a smoke, an animated discussion, invariably with answers to any possible problem being put forward. Every neighbourhood needs a prescriptive host like Reimut, who has the time of day for all who enter.



SABINA GALAY

REIMUT WAS A GOOD FRIEND. GOOFY, LOYAL, HOSPITABLE AND KIND. HE LOVED COMPANY AND SHARING FOOD AND TALKING ABOUT ALL SORTS OF INTERESTING THINGS. HE ENJOYED SHARING GOOD MUSIC AND COULD MAKE A CELEBRATION OUT OF A COUPLE OF PANCAKES. A CURMUDGEON OF THE BEST ORDER, HE ALSO GAVE HIS ASSISTANCE TO MANY PEOPLE WHENEVER HE COULD. I'M GOING TO MISS HIM GREATLY.



BRENT MATSUDA

I have not kept in touch much with Rye over the years, but he was always pleasant and willing to provide insight to me as an aspiring photographer and is the main reason I was even able to break into the industry to some extent. From the bottom of my heart I wish him well in his resting place.

HEATHER BURT

It will be so strange to pass by the big red house and not meet Reimut there, smiling, open, ready to spend all the time in the world talking about little and big things.

He gave a wonderfully expansive meaning to his Neighbourhood Handyman title. I especially remember a time when I was rushing to get somewhere, and my bike broke down (bungee cord knotted up in the chain) right outside our building. I was stressing out about not getting wherever I was going; Reimut came over, and in about three minutes he'd calmly fixed my bike, done away with my stress, and sent me on my way with a friendly wave.



CHRISTINE AND REIMUT

CHRISTINE DAVIS (NEE BROWN)

I met Reimut when I was just a teenager in the 70's and we ended up sharing a home for a brief period while I ensued my schooling to become a nurse. He introduced me to driving taxi and also ended up being my boss as he had owned the taxi cab. I have

some very fond and happy memories of those years. I will always remember that he had a "beat to a different drummer." He was never one to be complacent and always had a soft spot for women's rights.



CHRISTINE DAVIS, DAVID AND ANNE PALMQUIST WITH ANGELA.

MIRIAM DAVIDSON

I first met Reimut when I went to his studio in the mid '90s to get some head shots taken. He took other photos of me and supported me so much over the years. I really liked his sense of humour and intolerance for bullshit.

A measure of a person's wealth at the end of life is not his assets or his bank accounts but how many friends mourn his passing and his kindness throughout his life. Reimut was a rich man indeed.

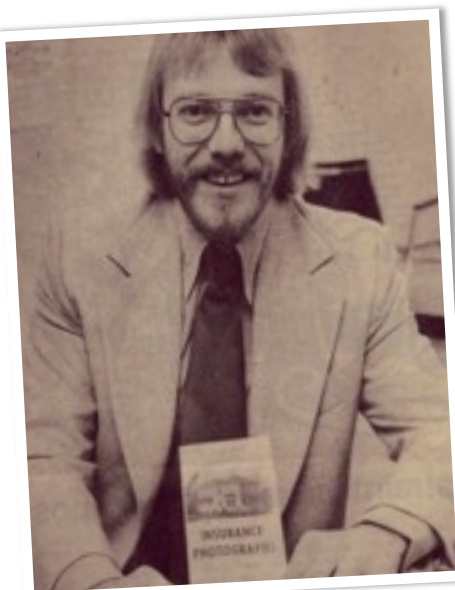
Just days before he was rushed to the hospital I received a phone call from him which was a total surprise. I recognized his voice immediately and we chatted about old times and caught up on what was happening in our lives. I am so thankful that we were able to share that moment in time. He took photos of my first born daughter and those pictures are still hanging up in her room. It is unfortunate, that Reimut and I did not keep in contact that much after I married and left Vancouver in the 80's. It is certainly a reminder that all of us are here for a short time.

KATHLEEN MAYES

I am told you are in the hospital, and that your care has been good. I know it has been a hard time, but I know you are strong.

Reimut, you are kind and compassionate. You are the most loving person I know. You are my dearest friend. Reimut, you are very special to me.

I hope you feel better very soon, and remember that this lady from Ottawa, Kathleen, treasures you and really cares about you.



EHREN SALAZAR

I was a lost art student when we first met, and you helped me photo doc those paintings of mine with your expertise. As well as provide a sense of calm perspective in art practice. Something I will always appreciate.

I live in Victoria nowadays. Living with my girlfriend Kate, she's a pretty special lady. I wish you could meet her.

I remember the first day I met you as you unpacked your things into the coach house. I offered you an ice cream cone - and you seemed to be taken aback by the offer. It was an unusual first impression I know. But I do remember that

sunny day, enjoying ice cream on the front grass of our respective apartments.

I miss you buddy.

Full respect, and much love.



DORRIT ZAROBA

I met Rye, as he was called then, in 1992 when I was a photography student at Langara College. Reimut had a studio and ran a stock agency which I subscribed to. We had a lot of fun doing shoots together and generally talking photography. Alas his studio burned down along with a lot of slides. However, we still kept in touch. I moved to Alberta 6 years ago and lost touch. I'm sorry his illness has landed him in dire straits. My prayers are with him. Please let him know this. You may read this email to him. He may like to know that I am now a watercolor painter as well as photographer.

CORINNA TOPNIK

Reimut, my dear friend,

Thank you for all the tea we shared and for always having your door open to me and to Tyara. She is 12 now, and is quite the young lady. I know that I keep you pretty updated in our lives, and I want you to know that we are well. You are in my heart, Reimut, and will always remain there. Thank you for your friendship and may you be the Peace and the Love that you are, always.

ROBERTA POWER

Hope Reimut makes a positive turnaround as he has helped so many countless others make positive turnarounds. All my good feelings and prayers.



TOP LEFT: REIMUT WAS A ROYAL CANADIAN AIR CADET

TOP RIGHT: UNCLE HEINZ LIEDER AND WIFE HEIDI IN ONTARIO, 1974

BOTTOM LEFT: GUDRUN AND WOLFGANG EWERT AND DAUGHTER KATHRIN IN REIMUT'S GARDEN, 1992

JUNE 22, 1950 - DECEMBER 18, 2014

MY FRIEND REIMUT

by David Palmquist

Reimut passed away on December 18 after 9 days in the intensive care unit of Vancouver General Hospital. He was my friend since high school in Vancouver's West End. We were part of a close-knit, small group of kids from single parent families who played in the school band and hung around together, making music, delivering papers, playing board games, solving the world's problems, etc. as young people do. Reimut was my sister Singne's boyfriend, and he and Mom liked each other.

Since Reimut died, I've learned a lot that I didn't know, so I've been thinking about the nature of our friendship. We enjoyed each other's company, we did things together, we helped each other when the need arose but didn't generally talk people or politics. We shared memories, joked about things in the paper, talked about his business and his troubles. We were just a couple of friends who'd have the occasional coffee or beer together, shooting the breeze rather than talking about anything important. Usually he talked and I listened and

offered advice, most of which he should have, and probably did, ignore.

We first started hanging out when we were in the King George band, and I suspect we wouldn't have become friends if he hadn't been interested in Singne.

Reimut and Mrs. Lieder lived in a basement suite at 968 Nicola St. Reimut's bedroom and probably the bathroom were to the left of their

entrance and the kitchen was on the right. The living room was straight ahead (I only went in that far once that I recall), and I think the master bedroom was on the left, opening to the living room. Reimut's room was small, maybe 6' x 10', but his bed was "cool," a plywood board hinged to the wall on the long side so it could fold up out of the way. He had a small window and closet at the far end of his room, where I think he had a small desk or table.

The small bottom window to the right of the building entrance was their kitchen, the bigger window was the living room. The building had a back yard just a few steps from the door to their suite. The two of us spent most of a summer out there building an 8-foot punt which we never got into the water. That was the year the Beatles released *Hey Jude*; he played his transistor radio constantly out there. A bunch of us used to sit out there playing Monopoly or Clue those summers. Mrs. Lieder kept a gallon jug of Calona red wine under the kitchen sink, and Reimut poured me a snort once. He liked German food, and often ate open-faced sandwiches of pumpernickel covered with cottage cheese and corn syrup.



REIMUT AND DAVID PALMQUIST



968 NICOLA ST, VANCOUVER

Reimut had a few cars and always did his own maintenance and repairs. We did a lot of cruising in his '57 Chevy BelAir, which he drove into the ground. He only had a learner's licence when he bought it in, I think, 1966, but we went for a spin that evening across the Oak Bridge, running out of gas on the freeway on the Shell Road overpass. A police car pulled up behind us, making Reimut sweat because he didn't have a valid licence or any insurance. He got through it by telling the cop we were out of gas. Instead of asking for papers, the cop just told us to leave the lights on and walk to the gas station over on the Airport Causeway, a mile away. By the time we trudged over and back with a jerry can, the parking lights were very dim, but the car did start, so off we went.

Singne had a summer job with the telephone book distributor a couple of times, so Reimut was hired to deliver phone books and I would help him. He picked routes out in the toolies because they paid more. We'd load the car down, filling the back seat and trunk with the books and bottoming out his suspension. I'd ride on the back bumper holding on to a rope strung through the back windows, jumping off and leaping across a ditch at each stop to drop a book on the doorstep, then race back to the car and on to the next address along these dirt roads. Lots of fun, and we made what seemed like good money, but that poor Chev took a beating. I think a spring broke, but I may be mixing his cars up in my mind. In any event, we replaced the springs and added risers to one or two of his cars in those years, if not the Chev, then certainly his third, a Riley. He usually did the work while I passed him the next tool or held a light for him.

I was with Reimut the first time he drove in snow. We made it as far as the hairpin turn at Stanley Park where he fishtailed and smashed us into the cliff face, pushing the front fenders back over the doors. Forcing the doors open bent the fenders, so they flared a bit until he got rid of the car. Another time, when the back of the front seat broke and flopped back, he propped it up with a length of 2 x 4 braced

against the back seat. He probably sold it for scrap, certainly nobody would have wanted it for anything other than spare parts, but we all loved that poor battered old Chevy.

Reimut's third car was an old Riley 4/Sixty-eight, a smaller grey English sedan with red leather seats and a wooden dash, probably a 1960 or 1961 model. We took it to Prince George and back in one day, a thousand mile round trip, just for something to do. I remember tumbleweed following us down the Cariboo highway on the way back, so it must have been near the end of summer. I think Singne was with us, because I think I rode in the back. We stopped at the O'Keefe Ranch so Rye could take pictures; one is in the BC Encyclopedia. They paid him \$75 for it and gave him a first edition copy of the book. When the publisher recently learned his book was lost in the fire, it gave him a new one.

Another time he took us up the Thompson Highway, then across to the Fraser Canyon on a dirt road past Little Fort. It was full of potholes, and there was lots of snow on the hillside below us.

Reimut's next car was a sports car, a white MGB. I think it had red leather seats like the Riley. Also like the Riley, its fuel pump would cut out often, so he'd have to hop out in traffic and run around to the trunk to tap the pump to get it going again, and off we'd go. More

than once I heard him complain about "Lucas electrics"! I had an MGB too, and when we took both cars to Long Beach on Vancouver Island, we kept in touch with walkie-talkies.

Reimut and Singne drove across Canada in his MGB in 1974, getting a cool reception from my disapproving aunt in Lethbridge, and I've just learned they visited Reimut's maternal uncle Heinz in Ontario. After the MGB, Reimut bought the one he has now, a 1970s vintage Dodge.

So who was Reimut? A complicated man, smart but unsophisticated. Singne described him as "Brilliant in his way, very independent in his thinking, anti-authority and unconventional, opinionated and eccentric, abrasive and tender." That's a very fair description.

I saw his tenderness through his love of pets. He always had a cat, either his own or various mooches who would wander in through an open door or kitchen window. I remember his dogs, too. My favourite was Hansie, a huge German shepherd he first met when he had a basement suite in east Vancouver in 1973. I remember the dog was with him in his second Lucas Rd. house, but I think it belonged to a young relative of his east Vancouver landlord. Later, he and Joanne took in an abused dog when they lived on Number 9 Road, and this fall he told me he



ANNE AND DAVID PALMQUIST, SINGNE PALMQUIST, REIMUT



had been dog-sitting in his place on Pine Street for a neighbour.

Reimut was very young looking in his grade 7 class photo, but he'd skipped a grade and was probably only 12 in that picture. In high school his blond hair was short, but he later let it grow (long hair for men was common by then). He often wore "J.C. water walkers" (open-toed sandals) and loose shirts in the 1970s, and I seem to recall he usually wore thick wool socks with the sandals. He may have worn a tie-dyed shirt from time to time, Singne did a lot of tie-dying when they lived together. I understand he tried pot but didn't care for it, and he never experimented with hallucinogens or hard drugs. Alcohol killed him, but I don't recall ever seeing him blotto or even tipsy. When we were younger, he usually drank beer, but later he took to Ouzo, a Greek liqueur. When he lived on Pine, he made you-brew beer, and I sometimes had one when I dropped by.

Reimut was a good student, skipping a year of elementary school and representing our high school on the CBC Television show *Reach for the Top*. He went to B.C.I.T. after high school, and I think he liked it, because his glowing description made me decide to go there myself.

Before Anne and I married, we shared a house at 701 Lucas Road with Reimut and Singne and six tomcats. Singne still lived at the nursing school residence but spent her time off at the house. The toms fought a lot and marked territory inside the house. Anne and I didn't stay long, moving out soon after our wedding. Singne took leave from nursing school when Mom was dying, bringing her to live in Reimut's house where they cared for her until she died five weeks later, that was the summer of 1974.

Singne returned to nursing school after Mom passed away. I think that was when her close relationship with Reimut ended, although they remained good friends right to the end of his life.

Reimut's parents grew up in Germany under Hitler and Reimut was born in Hamburg. He didn't tell me much about his parents, except being bitter about his father.

A few years ago, he told me how cruel his father was to his mother, giving me the impression the father hadn't returned from the war until 1948 or 1949, in time to father Reimut and abandon them. This appears not to have been entirely correct. I've been told in the last few days that the family came to Canada together when he was two, first to Hamilton, Ontario, and then to Trois Rivières, Quebec, and Mrs. Lieder brought Reimut to Vancouver when he was nine, after his father left.

I liked Mrs. Lieder, and we often had long talks when I was a teen. Well, she talked, sometimes for hours, and I listened and nodded and tried to reassure her that he was a good fellow and would turn out okay. She was very strict in her thinking, very Teutonic, very caring, very insecure and very suffocating. I never heard Reimut speak civilly to her; he disliked her very much, but she loved him, she could not understand why he rejected her and she worried about what would become of him.

I don't know when Mrs. Wolter, Reimut's maternal grandmother, came; Singne tells me she had a place nearby, but I remember her name on the name card on their door.

Reimut played trumpet and sousaphone in our school band, and I'm told he played bugle in Vancouver's Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Cenotaph when he was a Royal Canadian Air Cadet. In 1968 and into the early 1970s, he played sousaphone in the Delta Community Band in Ladner. It was full of dents because it had fallen off a fire truck, but he enjoyed playing it anyway.

While most of our group had paper routes after school, Rye delivered rubber stamps for B.C. Stamp Works on Seymour Street. Once, my old battered bicycle was stolen from the basement of my building, Reimut found it in the alley behind Stamp Works and brought it back for me.

When I was in grade 11 or 12 we both had *Province* routes, each delivering 350 or 400 papers each morning in the apartment towers between Denman Street and Stanley Park. I think he used his car; I did my route with a bike. Collecting was the worst part of papers. We had to collect door to door every month and we'd often be walking around in the West End with pockets full of small bills and coins, hundreds of dollars. That was a lot of money in those days, but Vancouver was safe and we didn't really worry about robbers. I don't recall what a monthly *Province* subscription cost in the late '60s, Singne thinks it was \$1.80 a month. Each month *The Province* sent us a bill for the wholesale cost of our papers, \$1.40, and our profits were the difference between the



subscription price we collected and the wholesale price we were invoiced. Unless a customer skipped or was a deadbeat, if we didn't collect, the shortfall came out of our profits. Collecting from so many people was tedious and usually took 5 or 10 evenings every month, but Reimut was very organized, right down to leaving a bill when a customer wasn't home.

After B.C.I.T., Reimut worked as a draftsman for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and he left home, moving into a basement suite somewhere near 15th and Burrard. There, he became good friends with Garry, who lived in the other basement suite. After a year or two, Garry, Reimut and another buddy rented a house near Rupert Street, which they, oops!, burnt down. I'm not sure when Reimut left CMHC, but he spent all summer after the fire in a tent beside the Cheekeye River just west of Alice Lake Park, collecting Unemployment Enjoyment.

Returning to Vancouver that fall, he took a basement suite with a German family in the East End, and became friends with their young relative, Wolfgang and their dog, the aforementioned Hanse. Sometime in 1973 he asked Anne and me if we would share a house with Singne and him, and we moved into an old farmhouse at 701 Lucas Road, Richmond, at the corner of Gilbert. We moved in in October or November, and the rain was pouring down. Reimut backed the rental truck up to the porch so we could

move Singne's upright piano into the house without carrying it up the stairs. We used a couple of 2x12 planks, but they sure bent under all that weight.

After Mom died, Reimut moved to a bungalow up the road at 768 Lucas. He made a model train railway on a full sheet of plywood which he suspended from his living room ceiling with pulleys. He and Singne were still together.

Reimut never liked working for anyone else, and for most of the 1970s he drove a taxi, eventually buying his own cab in Delta. An aggressive driver, he had half a dozen accidents when he was driving for MacLure's, but he always said these weren't his fault. Once a cop pulled him over for some reason and ended up taking him to jail for an unpaid parking ticket. Airport trips were the best, so he spent long hours out there, in "the weeds", waiting his turn to take fares into the city. I worked night shift in a hotel out there in those days, so he'd stop in once in a while to shoot the breeze.

After Reimut and Singne broke up in 1974, he continued living at 768 and Christine entered his life. She writes

"I met Reimut when I was just a teenager in the 70's and we ending up sharing a home for a brief period while I ensued my schooling to become a nurse. He introduced me to driving taxi and also ended up being my boss as he had owned the taxi cab."

When I first met Joanne, she was living with him at 768. They bought an old shack on a large property near the north end of No. 9 Road in east Richmond. The land behind the house was strewn with huge chunks of broken concrete rubble several feet deep. Reimut did a lot of work fixing the place up. Their home was beside a CN track, and CN wanted to expand its sidings across No. 9 from their house, it had a huge amount of rich, fertile soil to remove. Joanne arranged for CN to dump its dirt on her property, covering the rubble to make a field for planting, gardening and raising chickens.

I think it was during these years, the mid to late 1980s, that Reimut's drinking increased, and their relationship ended probably around 2000 or 2001.

Reimut enjoyed woodwork and tinkering with cars. He made Anne a coffee table once for her birthday, and he made me a chess table. He also built furniture to order, and he built us a matching pair of cabinets for drinks and our sound system. In recent years he made some money doing renovations and this summer he told me he'd built somebody a butcher block. I think we hired him to build our sundeck 25 or 30 years ago, but usually he just came round to help me with things because we were friends and he enjoyed doing that sort of work. We built my picket fence together, and it's still standing. He often helped me with my car, too, and by that I mean he did most of the work.

When he bought into Delta Sunshine Taxis, he noticed there was no Car 1, so he appropriated that number over the protests of the other fleet owners. He was not a conformist by any means; he was probably the first Vancouver area cab owner to use a 1975 Volkswagen Rabbit as a taxi; all the taxis in those days were big cars. He was still at 768 Lucas during these years; his bedroom was a few steps up from the living room, above the garage which was his woodworking shop. He kept his taxi (s) at home, and his drivers were his friends, particularly Bob and, I think, Sean or Shawn, who were often hanging around when I'd drop by.

After selling his taxi business, he hired himself out to haul junk and rubble in a big four-wheel drive pickup with high plywood sides. I think he had it before leaving 768, and I remember he had it at No. 9 Road.

It may have been around this time that professional photography became his primary business activity. He did a lot of commercial photography, including a series used as poster ads in B.C. liquor stores, and he made big photo murals for office building lobbies and such. He did a lot of what he called boudoir photographs, nude and semi-nude pictures for young ladies to give their partners. The bedroom in the No. 9 Road house doubled as a studio, but to get there, customers had to drive several miles on the Fraser River dyke from either east or west, and there were no buses. This led him to rent a two-room studio in a turn-of-the-century commercial building on West Pender St. in Vancouver. The studio was on the third floor and had a massive steel door. His desk, filing cabinets and such were in the reception room, and the studio proper overlooked the street. A fashion designer's workshop was down the hall, so there were lots of young ladies passing his door every day who were potential photo customers and models.

In July 2003 the Pender St. building was destroyed by fire and Reimut

lost everything: personal possessions, cameras, photography equipment, business records, his enormous image bank and even an antique Courtois cornet I had just given him. He was devastated and I don't think he ever recovered from the trauma. The fire was caused when a tenant on the main floor ignited some spilled hashish oil, he told me, and he was very critical of the firemen, who he was sure would have been able to save the building if they had only followed his instructions.

While I mostly have good memories of Reimut, sometimes he was a jerk. When I bought my first new car, a '74 Ford Maverick, I took it over to show him. Instead of the normal nice things you say to someone with a new car, he kicked the front bumper and said, "Five mile an hour bumpers, eh?" He probably had no idea how that made me feel but it's been 40 years and I still remember. I don't think Reimut was deliberately unkind, but he just didn't understand how his behaviour made others feel.

We took Reimut in after the 2003 fire, but he was not easy to have as a house guest and he wasn't going to be able to get his photography business going again unless he lived in the city instead of 45 minutes away. He found a hut on Pine St. between 10th and 11th Avenues which appealed to him. He later told me he picked it because it was not attached to the main building,

so he wouldn't have to worry about another fire. In any event, I gave him a little money to cover rent, smokes, booze, groceries, and gas for a couple of months until he could get back on his feet, and we fixed him up with a cellphone.

He outfitted the downstairs room as a studio, with backdrops, light umbrellas, and so forth, but the photography business has changed dramatically in the last 10 years with the proliferation of digital cameras, and his business never recovered. It is probably during this period that he began offering his services as a "professional intuitive serenity counsellor" with over 30 years experience in counselling and coaching others." I'm told he has helped people, and I know he also made good friends during these years.

Our lives went in different directions after my family and I spent a couple of years in Ottawa. We would often have him over at Christmas or Thanksgiving and I'd drop in to see him when I was in Vancouver. We often spoke on the phone and kept in touch by email until 2010. That spring, I was worried about upcoming surgery and a member of my family was ill. When he called to tell me about his counselling venture, I told him I didn't like what he was doing. He was taken aback and pressed me to explain, but I couldn't articulate my reasons and I hung up. That was unkind, and it wasn't until his hospitalization this spring that I called to apologize. He accepted right away, and our friendship started anew. We spoke often this spring and fall, and exchanged jokes by email. I regret never making it into town to see him again before he ended up in hospital again, when it was too late.

It's hard to lose my oldest friend. He's been a big part of my life for the better part of 50 years.

David
December 2014



RON HART



Reimut was one of Ron Hart's closest friends. Ron, an introvert, preferred to spend most of his time alone but Reimut was unconditionally welcoming, and Ron visited Reimut almost daily. Of the same generation, the two had a lot to share. Their conversations touched on politics, literature, music, religion, philosophy, every part of life, and, of course, both being well-read and intelligent, the pair solved the world's problems each day! Someone has to! PS Ron's mother Virginia always called Reimut "Rheingold." I always liked that! -- Franka



Genevieve inspired Reimut in many ways. One of the inspirations was the sweet garden, which many passerbys admired!

GENEVIEVE BISSET

Reimut Lied: Tiger

FIXED SEASON...SPRING
FIXED DIRECTION...EAST
FIXED ELEMENT...WOOD

ASSOCIATED SUN
SIGN...AQUARIUS (Aside: I always thought we shared the crab sign of the zodiac)

- Magnetic
- Self-possessed
- Born leader
- Air of authority that prompted others to fall inline, just the way he liked it
- Magnetically charming
- Fun to be around, but liked to be alone
- Main interest...to follow his ambitions
- Maintained control
- Courageous
- Noble
- Warm-hearted
- Natural appeal
- Ever on the side of right for a worthy cause
- Caution is good around tigers as they may pounce without warning
- Often Tigers feel more intensely than others...can react poorly under stress...are prone to emotional outbursts...have a bristling sensitivity...centre focused

The last four years I have known Reimut I saw considerable of his energies devoted to the good cause of *supporting and encouraging* all to walk serenely through life. I feel he accomplished much.