

PROFILE OF A BC NOTARY: SENAD SIJERCIC, ARMSTRONG

Timely Telephone Calls Lead to Exciting New Opportunity as BC Notary

Senad Sijercic was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of five new countries that originated from the former Yugoslavia in the period from 1990 to 1992. He lived in a small town in Bosnia until age 18, when he attended university in the former capital, Belgrade.

Senad's parents, now retired, still live in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His father is from Bosnia, his mother from Croatia, and his wife from Serbia. Senad has cousins and friends in almost all parts of the former Yugoslavia.



Brenda Hilde's Photography

In 1986 he graduated from Law School at the University of Belgrade. Before passing the Bar Exam, he articulated for a couple of law firms. In 1998 he started his own law practice, which made an international mark. His first job was to register an international organization for the region of former Yugoslavia. For his last task as a lawyer in that geographic area, Senad spent considerable time with a Canadian gentleman—a representative of one of major churches based in the USA—who was looking for a real estate property in Belgrade for their church.

Dispute among different parts of the former Yugoslavia, intolerance, and civil war brought difficult times for Senad's family. Although not in the war area, they did not feel safe and stable. In 1994 they applied for Canadian landed immigrant visas, which were granted under the condition that they have a sponsor. His sister, who living in Canada, did not have a job so she could not be a sponsor. She was, however, in contact with the Peace Lutheran Church from Vernon, which offered sponsorship for the family. They left everything behind, packed a couple of suitcases, and in May 1994, arrived in Vernon where they still reside.

Soon after their arrival, they started English classes at the Vernon and District Immigrant Services. People from all over the world attend these classes. They are still friends with their English teachers and classmates.

When the local newspaper ran an article about the family's settling in Vernon, Vernon Lawyer Robert Culos telephoned to talk to Senad; Robert gave him the idea of becoming a Notary Public, explaining that BC Notaries do most of the work that lawyers do; they just don't go to court. This looked attractive and Senad started to research the qualifications for becoming a BC Notary.

Finally in 1997, he gained enough confidence to send his application to The Society of Notaries of BC. At the end of that year, he had his interview with the Secretary/Executive Director and the result was positive; he was approved to start the BC Notaries Preparatory Course. Senad says that was his happiest moment in Canada. He knew that step would change his life.

All that time he had been working for a construction company based in Armstrong, spending a lot of time out of town, working in various places in BC. He always had his law books at hand so he could continue to study for his notarial Statutory exams.

Vernon Notary Phyllis Simon learned Senad was taking the Preparatory Course and invited him to her office to job-

shadow—observe the day-to-day activities of Phyllis and her staff as they helped clients. Senad says he found that experience really helpful.

Even though a Notary Seal was not available in Vernon, he took the final notarial exams. His plan was to move to Vancouver to take a Seal there, if he could not find one close to the area where he and his family were living.

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Senad received another significant phone call, this time from Armstrong Notary Daniel McKenzie, who was planning to retire. The two made arrangements; Senad started taking over Daniel's practice May 1, 2001, in the District of Armstrong/Spallumcheen.

Senad is glad he stayed in this community—the community that invested its support and help to him and his family. Although he lives in Vernon, which is 25 km from Armstrong, he spends most of the time in Armstrong, a small and friendly city. Along every street, he sees familiar faces. Senad feels at home in Armstrong.

The beautiful Okanagan Valley, where Armstrong sits, gives opportunities for various outdoor activities all year around. Senad enjoys taking long walks in local parks, swimming in the lakes, and playing tennis with his daughter Sanda. This winter his family is planning to do some cross-country skiing.

Music is Senad's other passion. He used to be a DJ in his high school. His collection of records, tapes, and CDs spans classical to rock music.

Senad enjoys each day working in his Notary office. Every day brings

something new . . . a new acquaintance, a new challenge. For him, the most rewarding aspect of being a Notary is to see a satisfied client.

"A client can feel right away if we are honest and sincere," says Senad. "There is no such term as a 'difficult' client. We create them if we are too busy meeting all kinds of deadlines. By listening and having patience, many problems can be solved; most are not at all related to the business part of our contact with our clients."

Senad has offered his help to the Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society. He is also involved in an innovative program called BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network, which is funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative. The Vernon and District Immigrant Services takes part in this program. The goal of this initiative is to lobby governments and regulatory bodies to consider their policies in terms of immigrants. Those interested may access their Website through www.bcitp.net.

Even before starting his notarial practice and especially now, Senad offered assistance to people with legal issues in the area of former Yugoslavia. Giving the right advice and having the right connections can solve a lot of problems. As a BC Notary, he is able to create documents in his own language (Powers of Attorney, affidavits, etc.), and do notarizations.

Senad married in 1990 and his daughter was born in 1991. His sister is an agrologist in Kelowna, a town fairly close to Armstrong.

The most important aspect of Senad's life is the well-being of his family with whom he spends a large part of his free time. They like to travel to see different places. Until now their visits have been inside Canada, except for one trip back to the "old country." They are planning some international travel, as well. They have friends and relatives all over the world. Finding time to do everything is always the challenge. ▲

Editor's

The magazine appreciates the ongoing and always interesting contributions of **Dr. Bernard Hoeter**, a former Secretary of The Society of Notaries Public.

FYI: in his Spring 2003 article (Vol. 12, No. 1, page 15), the typo gremlins changed a word. This sentence is correct: "The word 'mentor' originates from Greek *mythology*."

Next Issue:

Spring 2004:

Marine Matters



Daniel McKenzie

Powell River Notary **Leanne Rebantad**, Associate Member of UINL, is our Cover Story personality for the first issue of the New Year. The editorial is shaping up nicely, with articles on the *Streams Act*, foreshore leases, and delivery of offshore yachts.

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