



Dividends of Faith

The Bryan Manson Story:

Enriched by family bonds,
invested in community service
and thankful for Christian values

A collaborative biography
with former North Bay Nugget
columnist Dave Dale.

From my heart for all I hold dear.

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Forward

Snapshots of time flash by like billboards on the highway.

Bryan Manson, with almost 80 years behind him, took one last road trip to Ohio on the 2019 Canada Day weekend. He was bidding farewell to a dear friend who would be arriving in Heaven before him.

‘Til we meet again ...

There was a lot of history to think about on the way home to North Bay. Many thousands of miles had been covered. Ellen, his “Bride,” and he had shared the driving through the best of their 52 years together. They didn’t bother stopping in Niagara Falls, where Bryan grew up learning the value of a dollar and what hard work means. His Grandfather had moved there from the East Coast, leaving his cod fishing boats behind. His Granny started the first taxi business in the iconic honeymoon tourist town.

Bryan left to find his own way as soon as he could but fond memories remain. There’s now a hotel where his Granny lived, a place he couldn’t walk by without going in for a hug on the way to and from school. Right beside that happy childhood refuge, Niagara’s first casino was built over the old mill where his father and grandfather worked.

With dreams of being a radio jock as a 17-year-old young man in 1957, he discarded the assessment of his boss and hitch-hiked to Toronto seeking a career on the airwaves. His gumption paid off. A few weeks

later he was on a train to Kirkland Lake, a year and four months more he was a morning man in North Bay.

Love, a family, community service and two more careers followed. Good days, challenging nights and great adventure throughout. All while living on borrowed time.

It was an honour to be part of sharing Bryan's story, as told in his own words.

Dave Dale

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The Manson Clan have a long history of recognizing opportunity when it knocks and embracing challenges when they come along. Entrepreneurialism is a common thread, stitched with Christian observance and duty to serve. Excerpts from two sermons conclude the chapter.

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Stepping off the Northlander train in Swastika in 1957, the dream of working in radio became reality working for CJKL Radio in Kirkland Lake at 17 years old. Transferred to North Bay for a six-month stint, the Gateway City becomes home with several career twists and turns along the way.

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Falling in love and raising a family doesn't happen without tests of character and conviction. Learning how to be a good husband, father and business partner.

Boiled down, life is about making choices, working hard and rewarding yourself with what gives you joy.

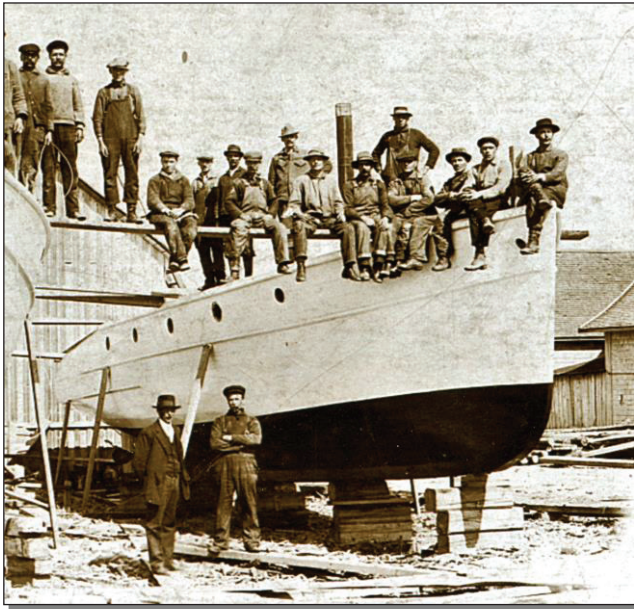
Understanding mortality, morality and having faith in the hereafter helps one appreciate life's blessings each day. (Page 58)

Masonic strength and spiritual structure supports the building of a better person over all else. (Page 72)

Living the dream of a three-generation business and relishing being a grandparent and Christian role model: always a salesman (whether ads for a business, financial plans for individuals or the Lord for Salvation). (Page 79)

Chapter 1:

Family Foundation



Captain Philip Girard, centre standing on plank, with his cod fishing boats and crew in Perce, Que., prior to the Great Depression and moving to Niagara Falls.

Neither of my mother's parents were born in Canada. I'm not sure who was born where but one was born on Jersey, the other was born on Guernsey, two separate Channel Islands. OK, so literally they were French rather than Canadian. And they both ended up going to Mal Baie, which is a tiny town just outside of Perce, and they met there and ended up being married, raised a lot of children.

My grandfather was a cod fisherman and he was a bit of an entrepreneur and he ended up having two cod boats and two crews and he was quite successful. That's big time. And then the bottom went out of the cod market during the Depression and he ended up moving to Niagara Falls and lived and worked there and ultimately, a few years later, he and four of his kids and wife moved to Buffalo and the other four stayed in Canada. And so we had an American branch of the family, right, that forks off. That's right. And he and my grandmother had eight children, eight children that survived. There were always two or three that died in infancy

And then they were living in Niagara. They did well. My mother ended up meeting my dad in a restaurant and they took a while but they eventually hit it off and started going together.

My dad was born in Scotland in Aberdeen and my grandfather moved from Scotland to Niagara in 1905 and got a job and saved enough money to bring his wife and eight kids over from Scotland in 1909. And he ended up being a millwright at a company called Dominion Chain. My dad ended up being a millwright at the same company. They were both

foreman in charge of the millwright shop. And the interesting thing about that factory is it was torn down and is the site of the first Casino Niagara.

I don't gamble but I went there once to make a donation and I was walking with ghosts and that trip we stayed at the Hampton Inn across the street from the casino. And the Hampton Inn was built on my grandmother's property. Oh well. And when I checked in I said, "You know, I don't feel good about paying to stay here." And I said, "You're probably not even going to tuck me in."



Jeanne Manson

My Granny ruled the household with an iron thumb. She was a typical Scottish matriarch. All of the boys and girls had to go to work and give their whole paycheck to her and she'd give them a tiny allowance. She was in charge but she was quite a person. She was a member of the Board of Trade of Niagara, which was the forerunner to the Chamber of Commerce. She started the first taxi company in Niagara Falls, Niagara Taxi. She lived on her own in her big house until four months before her 100th birthday. Well, she fell, broke a bone and of course at that age you don't come out of the hospital. She celebrated her 100th in the hospital and passed shortly after. But she was my best friend growing up. Oh really. I used to walk past her house to go to school and I couldn't walk past her house without going in for a hug.

I left home in Niagara when I was 17 but I would go home and visit regularly and one of the last times I went home to visit her was in the summertime and I had my movie camera and she was out watering her flowers. And so I parked and walked up and I yelled ‘Hey, Gran ...’

And she turned around and squirted me with the hose and laughed, and I laughed.



I know very little of my ancestors. Aberdeen, Scotland is where they lived. According to the material I have they came to Scotland as part of the Nordic invasion. They were Magnussons, originally, which became shortened to Manson. I don't know much about what was going on in Aberdeen, other than they were the only family of Mansons in Aberdeen.

Funny story, shortly after I came to North Bay I met a school teacher named Bob Manson who was from Sault St. Marie and was working in North Bay and we'd occasionally have a draft at the Empire.

And one day I'd made a comment about my dad being an Aberdonian.

He looked at me: "Who told you that?"

"What do you mean?"

"Who told you my dad was an Aberdonian?"

"Nobody my dad's an Aberdonian."

Apparently his grandfather left Scotland and went to the States and ended up in Sault Ste. Marie. My grandfather left Scotland and went to Canada and ended up in Niagara. And of course there were no communication in those days, no e-mail, no telephones.

Turned out we were literally related.



Sheryl Manson

My sister Sheryl was a problem child, health-wise. She had rheumatic fever, she had all kinds of things. Every time she turned around she had a broken bone and she spent a fair amount of time in Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. And this was in the days when you paid for hospitals. They weren't free the way they are today.

She was later diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Which is why she was a crybaby, because if you touched her it would really hurt.

And of course she had a big brother that would ... (poke her) ... and she'd, 'squawk' every time I poked her.

I just figured she was a whiny kid.

She probably learned she had fibromyalgia about 30 years ago. And I feel bad about bullying her.

She got married right after graduation. She graduated as a teacher. Then she left her husband and went back to school, went to the bar. And she became the chief lawyer for the Department of Justice. She was the lawyer that all of the different departments would send cases to for opinions.

Pretty smart cookie.

“If you want things, you have to work and provide them ...”

I had jobs since I was 12 years old.

Delivered papers. Rode a bicycle delivering for a drugstore. They were the primary jobs.

When I was working for the drugstore, I got \$10 a week and that was nine to nine on Saturday and nine to five on Sunday (50 cents an hour). Good-paying job back then. Any money coming in added up quickly. Expenses were lower.

And then Mom and Dad made me responsible for my clothes. They opened an account for me at a store that sold men's and boy's wear. And that's where I got my clothes and every week I'd have to go down and deliver some money.

If you want things, you have to work and provide them.



From left, Sam Fisher, Bryan Manson, John Fedor, Bob Green and Jim Bramburger (1957).

Now you talk about the formative years, I was an oddball growing up. I had a lot of fun. We did a lot of fun things but we also did a lot of serious things.

We got involved in forming a boy's club at the 'Y' down there. Bunch of us from school and we had weekly meetings, we'd do different things and then we got the idea, it wouldn't be a bad idea to become a mini service club.

So we had this club and we had two advisors. One was associated with the Y. And they suggested that we should try and give back to the community. So in those days you could make money collecting coat hangers. The dry cleaners would buy them from you. Right. So we collected what we could, we raised some money and we ended up doing some research and finding a needy kid and sending the needy kid to summer camp for a week.

And then we left the Y because they didn't like us stealing their thunder so we started meeting at guys' houses and we changed from a Y boys club to a high school fraternity. The Alpha Psi fraternity and we designed a nice jacket with the Greek letters and we got into other projects, we sold chocolates.

We'd go to the hospital Sunday afternoons and visit with elderly people that didn't have visitors, like I don't know what got us started on this. But it was the right road and we were also working at raising money to send kids to camp and then we decided, "Let's let people know about this." So every week I would type out a report and send it into the local paper and they would print it out. And it ended up, two of us were invited to go to a Rotary meeting. And we went to the Rotary meeting but we broke the rules. We wore our fraternity jackets. We knew their principles too. Yeah but you do what you feel you have to do. When we got back to school the vice principal called us in. "Don't ever do that again."

"Yes sir. Won't happen again." And it didn't. But we had accomplished what we wanted. He was, incidentally, the first principal of Chippewa Secondary School in North Bay, A.G. Bishop.

It was just a bunch of us kids were hanging around and we'd go to the Y and then one of the guys at the Y said "Why don't you form a club?"

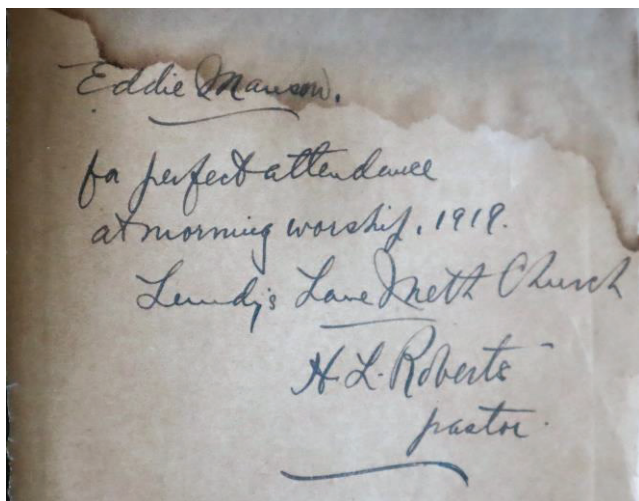
So once we got started to get publicity and we were known for doing good works. The biggest high school fraternity in the world was a fraternity called Gamma

Sigma. Gamma Sigma contacted six of us and said, "We want you to join."

All six said no.

A month later Gamma Sigma said, "We'd like you all to come in as a chapter of Gamma Sigma. So Alpha Psi became a chapter of Gamma Sigma at one high school, Niagara Falls Collegiate Vocational Institute.

That's pretty well it and we've maintained the friendship. Of those guys, I'm still in touch with a couple of them 60 years later.

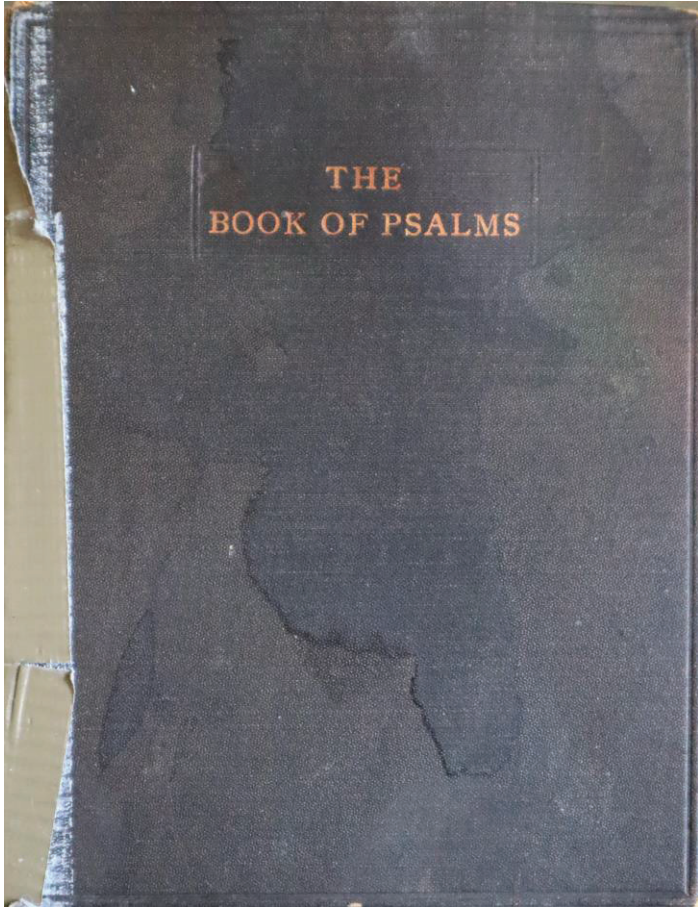


And then, as far as religion is concerned, my Book of Psalms is old and beat up, but the inscription (above) says it all. So it runs deep in our family ... that was given to my dad 100 years ago. And whenever I did something based on Psalms, I don't take my Bible, I take that because then both of my fathers were with me.

Basically, my parents tried to teach me the difference between right and wrong. My dad was always fair. My mom was always fair.

My dad was very thrifty. He was a Scot and he was born in Aberdeen and he used to tell me that Aberdeen was the only city in the world where a Jew couldn't make a living because the Aberdonians were so tight.

They'd give you the shirt off their back. If you were needy. But if you weren't needy, they would charge you a decent price for it, which is the way the world should be.



This Book of Psalms was given to a young Eddie Manson, father of Bryan Manson, for perfect attendance at morning worship in 1919.

It was 10 years ago I got a pacemaker for my heart. I know it's 10 years because a few months ago I had the nine-year battery replaced. So, I'm good for another nine years. While waiting for the pacemaker to be installed, I made my peace with God and indicated I was ready to go, but adding, "if there's still work to do I'd be happy to stay."

But I do like a bargain, whether it be a little one or a large one.

I'm a Scotch drinker and when I'm in Florida I buy a type of Scotch called Inverhouse Green Plaid and it tastes exactly the same as Glenmorangie, which is 750 ml and in Ontario cost \$70. A 750 ml of Green Plaid costs \$9.99 in Florida. You can't get it in Ontario because it's too cheap for the liquor board to make money, which is why it's not available.

It's nice when you get a bargain. But you also have to be fair.

Yesterday Ellen noticed the cheque that I had written out to go to church and said, "Is that how much you give every week?" I said, "Yeah, we were taught to tithe when we were growing up and it doesn't matter how much you're hurting you should never steal God's money because your tithe is supposed to go to your church.

John Templeton, who was the person who popularized mutual fund many, many years ago, was a Baptist minister. And he used to tell people, take 20 percent of your money, give 10 percent to me and I'll

make sure you live well later in life. Give 10 percent to God and he'll look after you in the next life.

And I always thought that that was a reasonable thing.

He became a very wealthy person. He set up a \$100 million scholarship in Africa to help people over there go into the ministry.

He was an American, but for his good deeds, the Queen knighted him. That was a long time ago and it was one of the biggest gifts that had ever been given at that time. Now Warren Buffett and Bill Gates have done comparable things and friends of mine in Toronto that are in the mutual fund business have done comparable things.

It's just wonderful to see people giving, not just taking.

Blessings of being a Christian

INTRO. - ILL.- Two men boarded a coast-to-coast flight and were seated next to each other on the commercial plane. After breezing through the on-flight magazine, the first man turned to the other and asked, what do you do? The man replied: "I am a pastor of a church."

"Oh," said the first man quickly. "I don't believe in that religious stuff. It's for kids, you know, like the song 'Jesus Loves Me This I know, for the Bible tells me so...."

The minister politely laughed and asked the other man what he did for a living. "I am an astronomer," said the first man.

"Oh, that stuff," said the minister. I thought it was just for kids, you know - 'Twinkle, twinkle little star....'"

Brothers and sisters, Christianity is not just for kids, nor is the starry universe! All have to do with God our creator.

Everywhere you look in our world you can see the hand of God at work. In the church and outside the church. God is the author of all good whether people realize it or not. Every good and perfect gift comes from above. If it's good, it's from God.

Of course, evil exists in our world and the evil one is behind it all, as in what happened at the Boston Marathon. John 8:44 The devil is a murderer and he is behind all murders and all evil. BUT GOD REIGNS

ABOVE ALL. And God can make good things happen even in the midst of evil.

*It is during times like what happened in Boston, like war, like death, destruction, and difficulty that people often see their need for God, Christ and the church.
SO BE IT!*

But there will be some people, however, who see little or no good in being involved in church and being a member of the Lord's church on earth. Many just think it's a waste of good time.

Today, let us think about how blessed we are to believe in God, Christ and be a part of the Lord's kingdom on earth which is the church.

Let us be thankful

My friends, there is not a doubt in my mind, that the reason I am able to stand here before you, is because God blessed me with two wonderful parents. There is something about my parents that I need to let you know. They believed in Proverbs 13:24, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”

Friends my parents did not hate me – they loved me and proved it by chastening me as I needed it. If you spare the rod you will spoil the child. My parents didn’t mind, every now and again, when I was out of line, reaching out and touching me, in order to let me know that I needed to get myself in order. A leather strap hung from a nail on our kitchen door. And I knew what it was for, and I knew what it felt like. I can remember my father, when I was just starting school, talking to the principal, Mr. Graves at a home and school meeting. He told him that if I misbehaved at school, he expected them to discipline me, but only under one condition. If I got the strap at school, the principal had to promise to phone my dad, and let him know, so that I could get the strap at home. Why at home? Well for embarrassing our family, of course. I had parents who taught me at a young age about “manners.” This may be a new term to this present generation, but I was taught things like:

- 1. If you want something from someone, you don’t say, “Give me!” You say, “May I have that please?”*

2. *If someone is talking you just don't butt in the conversation, you say, "Excuse me?"*
3. *If you step on someone's foot, you don't just keep on walking, but you say, "Excuse me, please!"*
4. *If someone gives you something, you just don't receive it, walk away, and act like they owe you something. You say, "Thank you!"*

I am glad that I had parents who understood if you train a child in the way they should act and behave, when they are old, they will not depart from that way.

Chapter 2:

Adventures



Don O'Neil, CKJL Kirkland Lake Program Director, looks on as rookie radio announcer Bryan Manson sorts through 45s in 1957.

In 1957, when I was 17 years old, I was going to high school but I had a part time job, which was really a full time job, working as a transmitter operator for the radio station in Niagara. Someone had to be there to read meters every hour and that sort of thing. And I thought it would be fun to be a jock and be an on-air star. I talked to the program director and he said, “No. You will never make it. Just keep doing what you're doing okay?”

But one of the announcers there, who was working his way down (he had been a star, he had been a newsreader for the CBC Radio) and he said: “You can get a job in radio. Go to Toronto, go to Northern Broadcasting. Harvey Freeman is the person to talk to and he'll give you an audition.” So, I phoned and made an appointment, hitchhiked to Toronto, went up to the 23rd floor of the Scotia Bank building, which was the tallest building in Toronto then, and he gave me an interview and then had me read some material. He said, “OK, we'll hire you, probably as a studio operator but we'll let you train for announcing. We don't know where it'll be but you'll hear from us within six weeks. Four days later I got a call saying, “Be in my office tomorrow, you're going to Kirkland Lake.”

So, March 7, 1957, I got off the train in Swastika and started my first job. I was in Kirkland Lake for a year and a third. I was transferred from Kirkland to North Bay for six months. And the six months aren't up yet.



Bryan Manson at the Englehart Fall Fair, first day as an announcer for CFCH in May 1958.

North Bay was a much smaller town when I transferred here from Kirkland Lake in May 1958. The bypass was under construction at that time. But basically there was very little beyond the bypass. There was a swamp area where Shoppers Drug Mart is now. There was very little past the jail.

Mancini and Camelot Homes came to town a few years later and built up that whole area in there. But from the jail to Dead Man's Cove there was no habitation but it was still the most favorite swimming spot in that area.

They've changed the name to The Cove now because it's in a residential area. I'm assuming there were a few drownings there.

There were the three towns and the three towns totaled about 25,000: North Bay, Widdifield and West Ferris. Niagara was a big city feel, a bustling tourist town. North Bay was more laid back, friendlier.

The most shocking thing that I found when I came to North Bay was probably two weeks after I came I went to the show on a Friday night. I went to the Capital and came out and I couldn't believe what was happening. Everything was covered with insects. My first taste of shad flies. And you couldn't walk, like, you were slipping on the sidewalk. It was that bad. And the cars were just slipping.

Now I'm happy because that means the lake is healthy.

I ended up being the morning man at CFCH and enjoyed that. And after a few years I thought to myself, "Do I want to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning when I'm 60 years old?" So, I went into radio sales in 1961 and I had an advantage because of the fact that I was able to do commercials for clients and they appreciated that. It gave me an edge.

And then there was amalgamation of the three communities and New Year's 1967 we went to a party at the Davedi Club and Don King, Mark's father, was carried into the Davedi Club in a casket. commemorating the burial of Widdifield Township. It was a great party no doubt. And all of the staff, it was quite funny. We had a good time and then, as we're ready to leave, Bill Mossup was the chief of police and Jay Cosgrove was the fire chief. And so Bill said: "OK Jay, let's go home and we can cry because we're not chiefs anymore."

They amalgamated three police forces, three fire departments, three city staffs. That would be almost impossible now but they did it and it worked well.

Peter Handley came to North Bay four months before I came here. He was from Kingston and we became friends and enjoyed each other. He was one of the most talented people that I've ever known. He could do an interview better than almost anybody. And I used to go up to the station and watch him interview all kinds of people like sports stars, everybody. Peter would do a wonderful interview and it would just be great. He also had an eclectic musical taste. He ran a show in the afternoon, a musical show with lots of thoughtful and interesting music called Potpourri.

Bruce Ruggles was the chief announcer. He was quite the guy, he ultimately ended up being a teacher up at Canadore, one of the funniest people you'd ever want to meet. He did a great job. George Barr was one of the people that was working at that time. And George was the first of the announcers at that time to move into sales and I followed his lead. He ultimately ended up in Toronto selling for CFRB and then later on managing the Thomson Station in Stratford.

A lot of good people, quite the clique. From what I could tell all the radio guys kept in touch for a long time.

When I was working in Niagara I had a friend. He was the guy that inspired me to want to become a jock and he became 'big time.' His name was Big G Walters and he was the top jock at CHUM when he died very young. And of course CHUM was the number one station in Canada at that time. I had sent him a couple of demo tapes and he said, "You'll never make CHUM but you could make CSL London and places like that."



The Hon. W. Ross Mac Donald, Lt. Governor of Ontario, shakes Bryan Manson's hand during North Bay Winter Carnival in 1973.

And I decided I'd rather go into sales.

You've got to have a certain type of voice to start with to get to one of the top stations. Like, you can always get a job in radio. But if you're not going to make a good buck, you might as well not. So, I felt I could be a star in North Bay by going into sales.

No, I did well. I enjoyed my time on air and it helped me.

Then I went and did other things because I got involved in the community. I ended up being the chairman of the Winter Carnival back in 1973 and

that was a big deal. We were the number two carnival in Ontario. We were getting close to Barrie ... but we were relying on weather ... we had a couple of deficits.

The Treasurer was the industrial commissioner for the city, Tommy McGuire. And I was the chair. Two years in a row, he and I covered the deficit by having a resolution passed that no revenue from the next year's Carnival can be paid out until Bryan and Tommy got their money. And we did it on an interest free basis. Right.

But when I was talking to some of the guys who were involved with the Summer in the Park, "You mean you covered the deficit? Well the city didn't cover anything in those days. We certainly put an onus on the organizers to work hard to finish the job.

Hopefully they'll go back to something similar to the Heritage Festival which was designed for North Bay residents initially. And it was wonderful.



Left to right: North Bay Mayor Merle Dickerson, the Hon. W. Ross Mac Donald, Lt. Governor of Ontario and Bryan Manson, chairman of the North Bay Winter Carnival in 1973.

Merle Dickerson

I'll tell you a materialistic story. Merle Dickerson was a legend. He was the most entertaining person you would ever want to talk to. I remember one day he came into the radio station down at the Main Gate Plaza. "Come on I want you to buy me a coffee." So we went down to Matilda's, sat down, had a coffee and he throws an envelope on the table. I pick it up. There's a thousand dollars. I said, "What's that for?" He said, "I want you to write my campaign speeches." I said, "Oh, that would be very nice. I'd like to but I can't."

“Why not?” he asked.

“I’m campaigning for Bruce Goulet. And I was knocking on doors and that sort of thing.”

He said: “Well, I don’t mind.”

I said, “Yes, but I do.”

I had to give back the money.

Goulet Golden Mile

Now, Bruce Goulet is the epitome of everything that’s good and decent and everything else. And Ellen and I have commented many times that we’d much rather spend a Saturday night with Merle and Vera in their house laughing. Just the way he was. I never voted for him. But I liked him.

I was lucky, I was at the Royal Room of the Empire Hotel the night that Bruce Goulet presented the Golden Mile concept to the Chamber of Commerce.

And I was thrilled by what I heard and the Chamber of course got behind it and started by buying a little tiny piece of property from CPR and then eventually expanding it. And I was also able to stand beside Bruce the day they unveiled the Bruce Goulet Golden Mile sign.

And I was so happy that they did that while he was still alive because usually we wait till people are dead.

There were cliques in local politics at that time but we had one chap on council whom I liked but I'd shake my head whenever he would talk.

Ed Deibel. He was the king of the 'motion of reconsideration.' Anytime he disagreed with something there'd be a notice of reconsideration at the end of the meeting. Every week there'd be a notice and then it becomes useless.

It's something that gets used occasionally now but only occasionally. There are too many cliques today and everybody seems to think that the city hall staff are the Oracle at Delphi. If the staff says this, we must do it.

And I'm not necessarily a believer in that.

I kind of think that Steve Omischl Sports Fields Complex is a terrible place to put the city's next twin-pad arena and community centre because it's so far from everything. If there had been enough property, the North Bay mall situation would have been ideal as far as a location.

If you're going to spend millions and millions of dollars, the economic impact to the area has to be part of the consideration. If you can get a new facility and help the area at the same time, you're foolish not to.

Selective voting

I voted for very few people. I've never voted for Mark King. Last election in October 2018 I lost two of my three votes. I voted for Gary Gardiner, simply because of the water bill, he got the city to reduce the water meter rates. Like, I watch city council every Tuesday. And I respected what he did. I voted for George Maroosis and I voted for another old timer simply out of friendship. And that was Billy. Bill Vrebosch. So I got one out of three.

I voted for friendship. He can't be any worse than some of them.

Now going back to the old days, I voted for Mark's father, Don King ...once. The school board decided to close the school that my kids were going to as a kindergarten to Gr. 6 school and make it French immersion and they were moving that school into Centennial and turning Centennial into a K to 8. And that was fine. But the problem was Centennial was a district school with more school buses than any other school. And there were no sidewalks leading to Centennial. So I went to City Council and made a presentation. I didn't have to ask permission and hand in my material (unlike the restrictive procedure today). So I went and I talked about how foolish the school board had been in doing this so quickly. I think it was in April and this was to start in September. And so I said, "What I want you to do is provide for the safety of my children when they're walking to their new school. I'd like to see you put in a sidewalk on one side of one of the streets going to Centennial. And King started ripping the school board left, right

and centre. "We can't do that. The budget's set and everything else," he said, and then he finished off with, "But we'll make sure your kids get to school ok." And we got a sidewalk.

Next election I voted for him. I paid my debt.

Lack of vision

My biggest disappoint in local politics is the lack of vision. Nobody seems to have any vision but Al McDonald, but once Al says something, everybody else is against it. I don't mean he's always right. That's not what I'm saying. But there has to be ... if you're against something, what is your alternative solution?

It's easy to be in opposition too, I think there's a lot of that opposition mentality. Not enough of, "Well, if I was leading what would I do?"

I think there used to be more constructive criticism. There was more team spirit, I would think back in the days when Merle was leading the team. We had some pretty capable people on council. Dick Donnelly was Deputy Mayor many times.

When I was involved with the winter carnival in the late 1960s and early 1970s (chairman for one year), I used to hate going to council because you would be grilled by Dick and as a lawyer by trade, he was good at it. But he was fair. He would come through if you could convince him that what you were doing was worthwhile for the community.

It's not easy to be on City Council these days. I would think you have to be well-to-do to be on council because it's almost a full time job.... if you're going to do it properly. An average person couldn't get the time off and wouldn't have the resources to cover it.

I know the year that I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, that was 1973, I figure it cost me \$10,000 to be Chamber president, if you count the lost revenue and expenses. Because you didn't have an expense account. And it's fine, because that's part of giving to the community and ...even though when I talk about council I might sound a little jaded, North Bay is still a wonderful city to live in and we have to pay back.

I tried and ... I keep trying.

Gateway Casino

That's going to be an interesting experiment. It's going to be good for North Bay.

I had a hard time when the lady at the bingo hall was campaigning against gambling. But that was when she was the biggest, most consistent speaker. She is the wife of a very good friend of mine but I don't think gambling, per se, is a problem. Some people have a problem with gambling. Some people have a problem with alcohol. I don't think alcohol should be banned from the city because some people have a problem with alcohol. Maybe I'm too naive but...

The city is getting in the casino business because of the fact that if we didn't take it someone else would

take it and they would get the tax revenue. All the city gets is tax revenue and government grants. We don't have any other source of income.

With a casino we get a tiny amount of profit-sharing. But the big thing is the taxes. Which will be considerable. And of course we will have a number of jobs, which is important. We do not have an industrial base in North Bay. We need anything we can get that will provide tax revenue and provide jobs.

Let me back up on that. Somebody was complaining because there was talk of a smelter being put in Northern Ontario and we didn't bid for it. We don't want a smelter. We want something that is not going to destroy the atmosphere.

Do you want businesses that pay the tax or not?

We need a more diversified economy. This is something that I agree with completely. A casino is just a small piece of a puzzle I guess. But anything that will add to the tax base, I think, it's beneficial to the city. And if there is going to be some fallout, then we're going to have to deal with that fallout. But there are people now who are banned from Rama because of that type of fallout. The systems in place to keep people out of harming themselves and to help those that need it. We'll see.

I think Pinewood Drive is a great location. Number one it's visible from the highway. Which is important. Rama would have done much better if it had been visible from the highway. I've never been too far off the highway. If it had been visible from the highway I

probably would have pulled in and looked around. I wouldn't have spent any money. Because I don't believe in gambling. I never buy a lottery ticket. I never buy a 50/50 ticket. I donate to charity. I support charity but one of my beliefs is that you shouldn't gamble.

We went to Vegas for our anniversary one year, spent four days there. Ellen always wanted to go to Vegas, so I surprised her with a trip to Vegas and we spent a ton of money. We ate at some of the finest restaurants in the world.

We gambled every day ... every day I'd go in and get two rolls of nickels, one for her and one for me. And when the nickels were gone that was our gambling for the day.

Just to say, "Yeah, we were there, we tried different things." I think that was our 29th anniversary. Our 52rd anniversary is July 29. She's been tolerating me for well over a half century.

Chapter 3:

Stormy Seas and Lighthouses



I met my bride after going into sales. Ellen Allhusen was working for one of my clients, G.A. Whitman Jewelers. And she's tolerated me for 52 years.

Ellen worked there for many years as a clerk in the store. And then she left there and ended up going to Widdifield Township. And she was the mean person at the township. She was the one that would cut people's water off. They had metered water, North Bay didn't at that time. And if you didn't pay your water bill your water would be cut off. And so she would answer the phone when little kids would call up: "We've got no water!" She'd say, "Tell your mother to pay the bill and you can have that water man turn on the tap.

It was a tough job, really, it was. But you had to do it.

I met her shortly after I came to North Bay. And we saw each other occasionally. And it was a few years before we started dating. And once we started dating I knew that she was the one but I had a hard time convincing her because her mom died when she was very young and she had helped to raise her younger sister and was looking after her dad, who was working and she didn't want to abandon them. And so, during the courting period, I would keep trying to shorten the time and she'd keep trying to lengthen the time. Finally, we agreed on a time. And July 29, 1967, my life became complete. She is by far the best thing that ever happened to me.

I knew she was the one because we were able to talk. I felt better when I was with her than when I wasn't. Not scientific.

Her smile made me smile inside and out. It just seemed we were right for each other. We had some rough times. Everybody has some rough times.

I was drinking too much at one point in time. Probably was a borderline alcoholic. And once again she sat me down and said: "If you ever act like that again, I'm going away with the kids."

And I could have thought, "You've no right to talk to me like that, it's my life." But fortunately I didn't. I didn't touch a drop of anything for a year. And then I started drinking in moderation.

We used to enjoy going to different places. We'll never go back to Victoria, too much walking and I can't do it anymore. Florida we enjoy. Ellen has a girlfriend down there and the two of them spend five days a week together shopping and that means I don't have to take Ellen shopping, which is good. And then I relax. I go do my grocery shopping, I do my meal planning, I do all of the cooking and just unwind.

The nicest city I've ever been to was San Francisco. And we were only there once. And Ellen's sister moved to Victoria, so we went out to Victoria one year to visit and I found Victoria very close to San Francisco. So it was enjoyable, so we never went back to San Fran. We'd go there and she would be able to spend time with her sister. Well, we lost her sister this past year.

Basically, we only traveled in North America with the exception of one Caribbean cruise and 30 minutes out

from the dock at Miami, Ellen started to get seasick so we've never cruised again. I shouldn't say that; we've taken a couple of St. Lawrence River Cruises. And they were enjoyable. But you don't get the rough waters.

We used to drive a lot and we've driven through maybe a dozen states and stop at different tourist areas.

For the past 20 years we planned holidays based on dining. We have collected chefs. And we've been to top restaurants in several cities.

There was a restaurant in New York, Lutece, that was regarded as one of the hardest restaurants to get in. It was written up all the time and so we were in New York for a convention, I called this restaurant and said I'm from Ontario, I'm in New York for a week. I'd love to come to your restaurant.

“Oh that's ridiculous. We're booked.”

I said, “Surely you can do something.” So, the chef I was talking to, Andre Salzman, he left the line and came back on. “I can do next Tuesday at six o'clock but I must have the table back at 8... but you have to call me Tuesday at noon just to confirm. And by the way we don't take credit cards.” So we called and it was wonderful.

Another one that had the same type of reputation, six-month wait. I phoned six months ahead of time and I ended up talking to the owner of Le Cirque, which was the hardest restaurant to get into in New York.

We talked for a while, I got a table for seven o'clock on a Saturday night, our anniversary.

That was I think 1990.

We've gone to a couple of chef's tables where you're in the kitchen and they're exciting. And they fuss over you. Everybody fusses over you when you're in there.

The first chef we collected was at a restaurant called La True Normand in Toronto. And we had a good time there.

I've always been a believer in enjoying life, rewarding achievement. We don't do it every night. Like for example for Valentine's Day, I had a little house party here and I arranged for the 1886 Lake House Bistro in Callander to come and cook in our kitchen, cooking for Ellen.

There were two great chefs in North Bay for a while at the Kabuki House, Masa and Nick. I understand Nick is cooking at a retirement home someplace so they're lucky people. One of the Breckles boys is working for Sysco Sturgeon. He had a couple of great restaurants.

I love good food and then if I taste something that I enjoy I'll work at trying to duplicate it. I used to like going to Ed's Warehouse in Toronto, the roast beef house, and I was impressed with their Yorkshire pudding so I taught myself to make Yorkshire pudding. It took me a few years but I'm sure I make by far the best Yorkshire pudding in North Bay.

I've also deboned a chicken and stuffed it with a mushroom sausage stuffing and cooked it. And the beauty of that is you put it on the table and you just slice it on the plate. There's no bones you're just getting a slice of stuffing and meat. It's all about presentation.

Takes a lot of patience to cook like that. Your mind is not on anything else and it's fun.

Family first

My first child was born in October of 1971. My daughter Kimberly. John was born in May of 1974.

And it turns your world upside down. I had heart problems since I was young. I've been overweight since I was young.

I never expected to have grandkids. I didn't expect to be around that long. So I got involved with my kids. Kimberly got involved with the Widdifield Lions Majorettes. I became a worker for the Widdifield Lions Majorettes. John got involved in Beavers. I became a Beaver Leader. You know I figured if I can't enjoy grandkids, I have to enjoy these kids. And I'm really glad I did because I ended up being fortunate enough to enjoy grandkids. I have four angels, four granddaughters. Our oldest is working for me now in admin and within the next year she will have her license, so she'll be the third generation of planners and then my daughter's oldest has been accepted at Nipissing and she will be there for six years in the teacher's program.

And the fact that she chose Nipissing, she was accepted at Thunder Bay. And she chose Nipissing so that means we're going to be close.

My son in law is a teacher in Brampton and he will be teaching as long as he wants to. They build new schools down there because of the fact that the population is skyrocketing.

But discipline is the big thing.

We live in a terrible world, in my opinion. I grew up in the era where the belief was spare the rod and spoil the child. We had a leather strap hanging in our kitchen. And it wasn't just for show. If I misbehaved, I would get the strap. When I started in school, my dad went to school and talked to the principal and said: "If Bryan misbehaves you have my permission to give him the strap, but only if you promise to call me and tell me. So when he gets home I can give him the strap for embarrassing our family. That was the way of the world. And. I don't think it hurt me. Yes, it hurt my hands. Yeah.

If you've been disciplined for the right reasons in the right way, it's corrective trauma. If it's abuse, of course it's bad.

I was never strapped ... unnecessarily. And there were a few times I should have been but I wasn't. Yeah, but I can't think of a time when I was strapped that I shouldn't have been, right? I stole some stuff. Wait. Stop. I stole a ring of popcorn out of a drugstore and the drug store clerk caught me about a quarter of a block away and took it back and then called my

Dad. I was only probably six or seven and I didn't steal after that.

Now I lied. I did steal after that. In one sense. There were all kinds of wishing wells in Niagara Falls that people would throw money into. And we used to go down to the park and wait and maybe pick up a quarter, and a quarter in those days was a lot of money. So theoretically we were stealing from charity but we were stealing from the water ... We didn't think of it as stealing.

Well, the closest I got to being in real trouble was in Kirkland Lake. I was out with a few friends and it was winter. The road was slippery and I slid into a fence at the Hargraves Park in Kirkland. And so I told everybody to get out of the car, like nobody was hurt. And I got out of the car and I ran into town. It was about 30 below. I wasn't going to sit in the car that wasn't working about 30 below. I ran in, stopped at this restaurant, first restaurant in town, had a quick coffee just to take the chill off and then I ran into the police station and I said I wanted to report an accident. "Why did you leave the scene of the accident?" I said it's 30 below. So that's the closest I got to being in trouble. I took time for a coffee and I had to justify myself to the police.

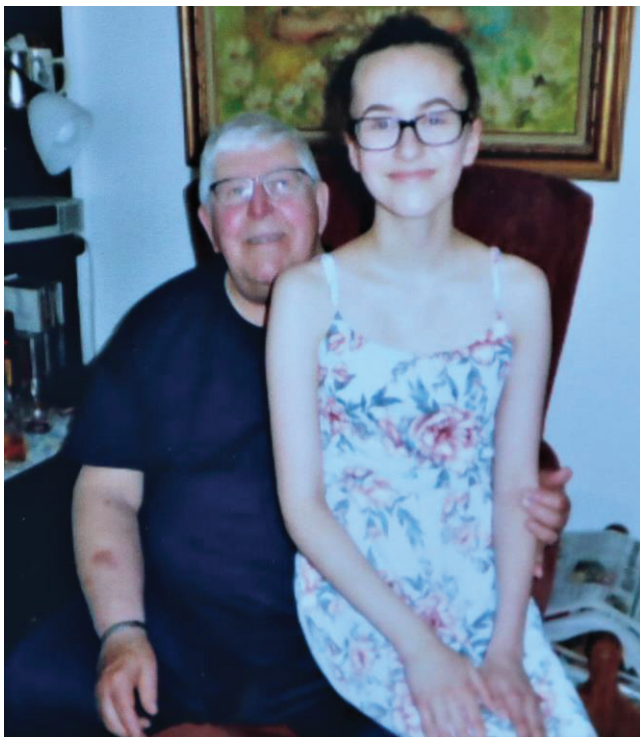
Balancing family duties and community service wasn't always easy. I learned my lesson when I was on the school board, North Bay Nipissing District Public. That was very, very demanding, time-wise. I was on the salary negotiating committee. Some of our meetings, negotiating meetings, went 20 hours.

And one day Ellen sat me down on that side of the bed and held up a couple of pictures. “I just thought you should look at what your kids look like.” And that got me to slow down. I had to have a responsibility here as well.

It was a good decision because I was able to be with John and Kimberly as they were growing up and now I have four super grandchildren, the oldest and youngest being John’s with Cynthia and Vanessa, and Kimberly’s in the middle, Sarah and Hannah. All of the grandkids are a pleasure to be around with each having a unique personality. Hannah, for example, loves to read and is already a computer person but she loves the art of make-up too and Vanessa is such a people-person, always cheery.



Vanessa Manson



Hannah Walker

And the one thing that I was happiest about with my time on the school board is I'd pushed something through one of the committees. And we ended up getting rid of the three special schools. There were schools for challenged children.

There was one in Mattawa, the Mattawa friendship school, one in Sturgeon and one in North Bay. And we managed to get those integrated into normal schools in the communities, which I thought was right because if you don't integrate, when they finish school, they'll never be able to do anything.

That's why I was so happy when companies like McDonald's started hiring challenged people. And they have been for years and years.

Made me proud. Every special needs child has different needs. One of my granddaughters, Sarah, has Asperger's and basically, she's a genius. She's also nice and she was accepted at Thunder Bay, Laurentian and Nipissing she wants to be a kindergarten teacher.

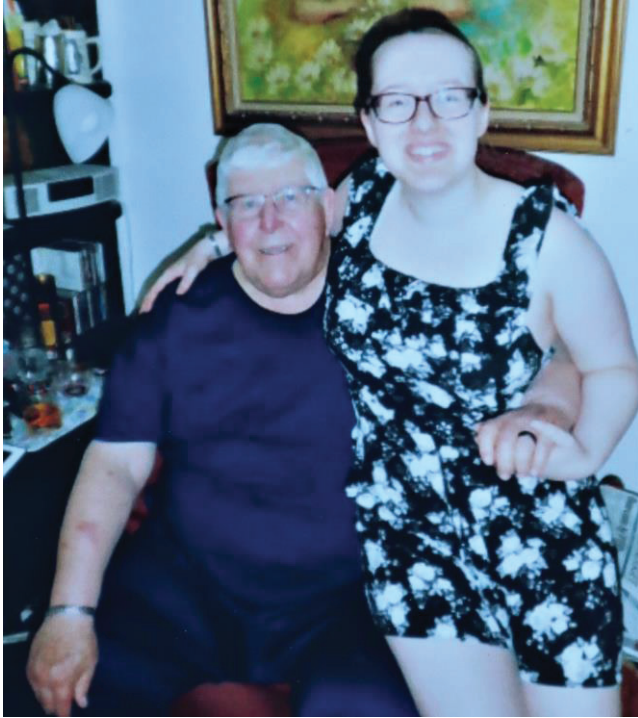
She's 17, just graduated from high school and she'll be at Nipissing this fall. She's in Brampton. Oh I think it's wonderful. She wasn't actually accepted at Nipissing, not at first. But she was accepted at the other two. Her dad is a grade school teacher, so he ended up calling Nipissing to see what's going on. Apparently she had the wrong math. It was good

enough for Laurentian and good enough for Thunder Bay but it wasn't a high enough math for Nipissing. So she was able to take a special short math course with the required one. And because of her marks, they didn't wait for her to complete it. They said OK, we'll accept her because her lowest mark in anything was in the 90s.

Asperger's can affect the way you feel, the way you react to touch. The way you react to noise, the way you react to anything unexpected. And I've since done a little bit of research and she's in good company. It's my understanding that Alfred Einstein, Bill Gates and Martha Stewart are some of the more renowned people.

One of the things that impressed me was my son-in-law, who has had a habit of having an extracurricular activity every year, his class puts on a Shakespearean play for the school. He's even been on the Andy Barrie morning show on CBC Radio talking about it. We were down visiting. He said I want to show you a video. And he put the video on and he came out from behind the curtain and talked about the presentation of the play and such. But first this musical interlude. And then Sarah came out from behind the curtains and did this beautiful jazz ballet performance.

Afterwards, I said, "I didn't know you'd taken jazz ballet lessons." She said, "I haven't." "Well, who orchestrated that?" "I did," she sang.



Granddaughter Sarah Walker

The Sears Drama Festival was going on across the province this spring and her school has an entry and the entry is a special entry. A whole bunch of the special needs children, autistic, Asperger's is a type of autism, they all got together and they were talking about different aspects and the person in charge of the play put their thoughts together. And that's basically what their entry was: "What it's like to be special needs." And they ended up putting it on at their school and it knocked everybody out. They went to

another school to put it on, and knocked them out again. They've been progressing.

For the second show they did at the school, she was wondering why all of these big wigs were coming in. Apparently the whole school board came in to see the play, which is big.

Without opportunity people can't show how brilliant they are.

My daughter Kimberly was a library technician when they started their family. She took a one-year leave to have Sarah, and then Hannah came along soon after. Her full time job became parenting to provide the extra support for Sarah.

It's too late now to return, you can't be away for 17 years and jump back in where she left off, so much has changed, and with the cut backs in education and schools, as well as libraries, there are not many jobs to be had.

Chapter 4:

Reflections



Bryan Manson, second from right in the front row, became a freemason in 1981, was Worshipful Master of Nipissing Lodge in 1988, and served as secretary for three years.

A 32nd degree Sottish Rite Mason, he petitioned St. John's Chapter #103 Royal Arch Masons in 1997 and Harington Preceptory #14 later that year. He is a past First Principal of St. John's Chapter and has served as Presiding Preceptor of Harington Preceptory while also appointed Grand Pursuivant of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada by the Supreme Grand Master in July 2006. He was elected Provincial Grand Prior of Algoma District for 2007-08.

Reflection 1:

Morality and Mortality

“When I went to Kirkland Lake, one of the things I did on a regular basis, every night I read two books: I read a chapter in the Bible and a chapter of Shakespeare. Can't get better reading than those.”

I had heart murmurs as a kid. Didn't have any severe problems after that. And then I changed doctors. Frank Armstrong retired and Dr. Senior became my doctor and the first thing he did was do an angiogram. He said, “Carry this in your wallet if you ever go to the hospital. Show them.” So, I'm down in Toronto having the workup for my hip replacement and they're talking about my heart attack. “What heart attack?” Well, you've had a severe heart attack. “No I haven't.” So I pulled the paper out of my wallet and, she said: “Oh, this is interesting.” So she showed me the other one, which was totally different. Apparently I had, I found out later, a silent heart attack, which destroyed half my heart ... and destroyed it in a sense that they couldn't do anything surgically.

And so they ended up doing the surgery and then went down and they put me through a nuclear stress

test. And that's when the head internist at Toronto Western talked to John and I, said this is what has happened and gave a complete report. And since then I've had another silent heart attack. And then my third heart attack in January 2010.

I didn't realize it was a heart attack. and I thought I had the flu so I called and made an appointment to go out and went out to NorthGate, walked up the stairs and went in. They called me in and Dr. Cowan sat me down, took my blood pressure and just grabbed me and yanked me out and put me on the gurney and gave me oxygen. My pulse was a low of 18 to 28 and so it was quite the flu. I didn't know. I wasn't hurting. I was just feeling terrible.

Early lessons

Having a heart condition early in life taught me a number of things. If I wasn't going to be around for a long time I should try and have an impact while I'm here in a variety of ways. Enjoy life. Be helpful. I've been a believer in community service. I've been close to God.

Because I knew where I wanted to go. It was just a question of a long-term plan.

I grew up as a kid going to Sunday school church being told you had to do that. That it was the proper thing to do and nobody has convinced me otherwise.

Now there was a long period of time where I wasn't going to church. I was sending my money but I was ... reading my Bible. And then, before I was going

down for some surgery and I had been involved with Habitat for Humanity. And David Lock was the pastor at the Church of Christ in North Bay. He was actively involved with Habitat for Humanity and he said: "Come to church on such and such a day and we will give you a blessing before you go down for your surgery."

I thought that was nice. So he called me the Sunday morning and said don't come to church today. The service has been canceled because of the blizzard. So then he called me the next day and said meet me at Twigg's, we'll do the blessing there. So we went to Twigg's and he did the blessing there. That was my first knee, and once I came back and I got mobile, he said: "OK, it's time for you to start coming to church." So I started going to the Church of Christ and became active and really enjoyed it.

And I was very happy there. I figured I would remain there permanently. And then one of my friends at church split with his wife and he didn't feel comfortable going back to church and sitting there with his wife and mother in law. And so I said OK. you got to find a new church. He said I've tried but I've sat in the parking lot a couple of times and I hadn't been able to get up the nerve to go in. Okay, next Sunday I'm going to take you to church. So I called a friend. We got details of service. And I took him up to Bethel Gospel Chapel about six months ago.

And I was shocked when I went in because a number of people came over to me and said it's good to see you again. That was the first church I had gone to in

North Bay when it was down where the Sands Motel is now ... 60 years ago.

And so at the end of the service, I turned to the friend who had brought us in and said, "I can't believe it. I've never felt closer to God than I do right now." It's just the way they conduct their service. They have a normal church service at 11:15 a.m. We went to the 9:30 a.m. service, which is a one-hour service. It's the communion service and it consists of impromptu prayers, songs, messages and the Lord's Table.

I said to Val Croswell, "I'm going to come back next Sunday just to see if it was a fluke." And I went back and found it to be the same thing. And at my age, since I'm closer to seeing God, I figure if I could feel closer to God, that's what I've got to do. Basically, when I went to the Church of Christ, one of the people got up and spoke and said, "Nobody is allowed to speak here until they've been here at least a year." OK. Rules are rules. I assumed Bethel was the same way. Back before Christmas one of the elders got up and said, "This is a message for the men. Everyone here has a duty to participate. You'll never be asked to, except by God." And so I started participating.

The Easter sermons were good. One guy always impresses me when he talks. He goes into a lot of detail. a lot of sincerity.

I spoke briefly. I just stood up and said: "It's the third day. The stone is rolled aside. The tomb is empty. He is risen. He is risen. Hallelujah." There's nothing more to say except that. The Resurrection.

Having family in town that weekend was special. The huge flow of love from the grandkids. They are nonjudgmental, the love just pours. It's so warm and just so ... Makes you so happy.

Too often we tend to remember the negatives and hang on to them. Whereas it's the positives that make life worthwhile.

Just the love of family. Nice healthy love all around.

I enjoy the Christian Radio Station and I've got to know a lot of people out there over the years. And Andrew White, the newsman, sat and had lunch with me. I enjoy him. He's in my church. He does the news and weather. And he's also one third of the morning show. And then John Entoff pastor from Callander (Lutheran Church), he's a third of the morning show and Dean Belanger, he's the other third. And all three of them are friends.

They are transparent. What you see is what you get. There's no phony, "I'm Mr. Nice Guy but I'm a rotten so and so at heart." You see too much of that in the world.

Sometimes it takes two or three meetings before realizing someone isn't the way they pretend, but they eventually trip over themselves.

Some people don't know when they're not telling the truth. They're so used to telling their story and eventually it will show up. I don't know how I know but it rings a bell.

One thing that happened over the Easter weekend that we really enjoyed was the North Bay mosque had an open house. And we decided we'd go down and we were really happy we did. They welcomed us. They had displays set up and they had brought a speaker in from Toronto to explain a number of things. And it was really neat. The place was packed.

That was Saturday. They had five sessions starting at 11 a.m. We got there about five to 11 a.m. and by the time the first hour was finished, the place was full, which is good and very interesting. All kinds of people.

Ellen and I were there. A young girl that I know came in, when I say young, she's about 30, some friends came in, people from the Masonic Lodge, Chief of Police came in. Just a cross-section, a number of business people.

When they attacked the mosque a number of years ago and the mayor and a bunch of ministers went to the mosque here to show support, I thought that was wonderful. We are all brothers.

I know very little about Islam today. I used to know a lot. I studied religion very carefully when I was young. I ended up belonging to the Book of the Month Club and there was a collection of books, religions of the world, and it was Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Protestantism Catholicism. And I studied them all because it was important to know what got me on the road that I was on. And I still retain snippets of that but it's not as fresh as it was 50 years ago. But when he spoke the other day he reinforced a number of the things that I recall and the fact that Jesus to them is just another Prophet. The only woman mentioned in the Koran is Mary.

They believe a lot of good things. It's not right for me. But it's right for them. I have to accept that.

We used to have religious studies in school when I was growing up. And then that became illegal, which is terrible.

I went to probably eight or nine different churches over the years just looking for information including, I used to go to services at the Sally Ann and St. Rita's church back in the days when the services were in Latin.

Someone asked about Islamic women being second class citizens and he gave a very good answer. He talked about how the women walk behind the men. It would be terrible if they were walking in front of the men and they saw something on the sidewalk and bent over, picked it up and the men's gaze would be transported to a place where they shouldn't be looking. It made sense.

And then they said that the husband was the protector, pardon, the father was the protector, and then he turned his daughter over to the husband who became the protector.

And our daughter and her family are living in Brampton. Our grand kids, every year, were the only white kids in the school class picture. And down there all you see is old men walking the streets and we were told, down there, that when the husband leaves the home to go to work in the morning, grandpa has to leave the house ... he can't be at home with his daughter or daughter in law if the husband is not there, and that sort of reinforced what he was saying.

And he was asked about the hijab and there were several there that had the hijab on, but none of them had covered their faces. And he was saying it's voluntary but it's not voluntary on the part of the girl or the woman. If the husband says it's OK, she doesn't have to wear it. She can't say it's OK. That's not the way he phrased it, but ...

It's because he's the protector.

And then another comment he made about the banning of the hijab was how would you describe the Lady Mary's hair? He said you've never seen a picture of Mary's hair, she's always had her head covered. And how would you feel if you saw a nun walking down the street in a bathing suit? It might be shocking. It made sense.

While there was a huge outcry 50 some years ago when the Roman Catholic Church removed Latin and started speaking the language of the people and people thought that was terrible because that's not the way they grew up. Change is quite often regarded as an enemy even though it might be for the good.



KFM Christian radio announcers, from left to right, Dean Belanger, Phillip Boucher, Andrew White and John Inthof. Their twice-annual fundraiser Share-a-thon provides a time to meditate and absorb good vibes.

Share-a-thon

I was at the Share-a-thon for the Christian radio station the other day and this guy spoke. And he spoke about two things: one, he was there representing Calvin Presbyterian Church, but the first part of his speech was he had just completed eight weeks of chemo for prostate cancer.

I had never met him. He came out of the booth and he's talking to a few people, I just motioned him over and he came over and I introduced myself. I told him I thought he had done a really good job and I just said, "I want you to know I'm a 15-year cancer survivor. God can cure anything." Like, I believe in being positive with people. I believe that it really helps.

So he stopped, he sat down and we talked for quite a while back and forth, so that was fine. And when he left, this girl that had been sitting beside me put her arm around me and said, "You are so good."

I didn't realize she was hearing what I was saying. I wasn't talking to her. But I impressed her. I wasn't trying to.

I don't stand well, so I go out and I grab a chair and I sit the whole time I'm there. Earlier, a couple of kids were sitting. Little kids. And one of them looked familiar. And so, after a few minutes, I turned to the mother and I said, "Were either of your kids in the Christmas pageant at Bethel?" She said, "Yes he was." I said, "I thought so!"

At the Christmas pageant, there was all of these kids this big. And there was this little one. And of course the little one takes your eye right away. And that was the one that was sitting across from me. I came home and told Ellen that I had lunch with him and she thought that was great.

The older I get, the more I realize how unimportant I am. It's a hard lesson to learn. The world revolves around you when you're a teenager. You're the sun and the moon.

The service I go to is a one-hour service and it is strictly the Lord's table communion. There is no pastor, there's no sermon. There's nothing. We start off with one of the Elders reading from the Scripture to get it started and then we'll meditate and as people get the urge they stand up and propose a particular song or they will give a prayer or they will make a statement.

Before Easter, I talked about the fact that this was the most important week of the year for Christians because of the fact that on the Thursday we were taught to celebrate the Lord's table of the Last Supper, on the Friday our Lord was crucified and buried and on the Sunday, the stone was rolled away and he had risen ... all of that just so that I could be saved. And, I think I struck a few chords because three people that were talking later on made reference to what I said. But you know, one of the guys came up to me afterwards and said it's obvious you talk from the heart.

There are a lot of liars. Cheaters. I'm old fashioned. I don't like them. I'll pray for them and hope that they might get better. But it saddens me because if you just go back to the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments, that tells us what we're supposed to do. Pretty simple.

My son isn't a church goer. But he's as moral as anyone I know. I'm very proud that he's my son. In this case, I'd say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. But he's very deeply into meditation. So if you can get inside your head and get that straightened around, that's a good place to start. And he's been very active at that. He's gone to a 10-day retreat in Barrie. He's done the Burning Man and he's got tickets again this year. He's been to see Ram Dass in Hawaii.

Ram Dass and Timothy Leary were partners and they did LSD experiments at Harvard where they were professors of psychology. Timothy Leary ended up going to jail. Ram Dass didn't. He did a lot of meditation and became world famous. John really thinks he's great and he likes to be exposed to him, and he comes back with a better feeling.

When John was in high school he did a few things that made me unhappy. Because I was acting like a dad, an unreasonable dad. He shaved part of his head and I told him what I thought. And he didn't appreciate it.

Then I happened to go to a seminar. And the guy was talking about how we have to put ourselves in the position of other people. And he used the illustration of a haircut, if any of your kids did something to embarrass you. Maybe a bad haircut. I stuck my hand up and he said, "And I'm sure you told him that haircut was embarrassing to you when your friends saw it ... and I'm sure you told him you wanted him to have his haircut the way yours was ... So that he could be embarrassed when his friends saw him."

I came home that night and apologized to John.

It's important that we open our ears when life is telling us we were wrong. I guess it's humility.

The hardest thing for me in life was learning that I was responsible for everything that happened. It was always my fault, whether I liked it or not. And once you realize that then you have an opportunity to maybe improve.

No regrets

We've all experienced regret over the past. It takes many forms ... regret over broken relationships of all kinds. Regret over mistakes you made raising your kids. Regret over bad career moves, missed opportunities, poor vocational choices. Regret at not following God's call to the ministry, or His call to become a missionary. In general, regret over all kinds of sins and their consequences. We can fill in our own blanks.

I have been a professional salesman all my life. I started in the radio business, selling products to people who were listening to the radio, through commercials. I worked hard to become good at it. Then I started selling radio advertising to business people and I worked hard at that. I took many courses.

One of the best sales trainers I had was Zig Ziglar, perhaps the world's best salesman. On one of the tapes I listened to, Zig talked about going on a call with a salesman and his sales manager. The product was pots and pans. After the sales call was over, they were out in the car and the sales manager said, "OK, let's talk about all of the things you did wrong." And he started with a long list.

Zig interrupted and said, 'He doesn't need to concentrate on the things he did wrong. He already knows how to do them ... Let's have him concentrate on the things he did right, so he can build on them.' That's right, don't concentrate on regrets, concentrate on the good.

Reflection 2:

Community Service

I was president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1973 and did a lot of work with the chamber.

Mike Harris and I started in politics at the same time. We were both elected to the school board. I was defeated after my first term, fortunately he carried on.

I was one of the founders of Habitat for Humanity in North Bay.

I've always believed that we should leave things better behind us after we pass. We live in a wonderful city in a wonderful country.

I had dinner with a chap from my head office one time and he was telling me about one day when he was walking home from school. When the two classmates he was walking home with were machine gunned. He grew up in Uganda. I've never seen any of my friends machine-gunned.

I just saw Canada was ranked number one in a number of worldwide rankings for places to live and that's probably because we have a low rate of machine guns.

Now, one of the scariest things that ever happened to me. Oh, it's ironic. We were down in Ohio. We went

out to dinner. We went over to this friend's house for coffee afterwards. And he comes out of his bedroom and throws something at me and I put my arms up and God, it was an Uzi.

I am a Mason and our Masonic Lodge in North Bay has been twinned with the William Farr Masonic Lodge in Girard, Ohio. This year will be the 50th anniversary of the first joint meeting. And there were three people involved in the founding, two from Ohio and one from North Bay. I'm one of the lucky ones. I've been friends with all three of the founders. The North Bay founder passed a few years ago. Lloyd McClanahan.



And two guys from Ohio were up fishing and Lloyd and his family ran the White Owl and Lloyd worked for Ontario Film Labs. So they were up for a fishing trip and they weren't doing too well and two nights in a row they saw this guy walk down Sunset toward the point and walked back a little while later with three or four pickerel. So they went out and talked to him and he was a Mason and they were Masons and that's how it started. Every year a bus load comes up from Ohio to North Bay and a bus load goes down to Ohio from North Bay and we've built friendships.

The Masons are builders. And in the old days they were building temples. Now the idea is to build better men, to help a good man become a better man. And we work hard at it, so the bonds between us become strong.

Among the Masons from Ohio, Bud Graham and I became very close and he drove up with his wife for my son's wedding. Unfortunately, she died on the dance floor. She was dead almost instantly. The good news is there were people there that could be helpful because Patricia's father was a paramedic, so there were a bunch of paramedics there, but she was gone instantly.

I took him up to the hospital. And took him back to the hotel to pack a bag and said I'm going to pick you up and bring you over to the house. And then I went back to the Legion to tell Patricia and John.

Dick Draves, my best friend, came up to me and said, "Do you want me to drive to Ohio and bring you back?" I hadn't said I was taking Bud home but he just assumed I would. And of course I did.

And 10 years later, Bud asked me to come down and be his best man when he remarried.

So much love but it's love that you could talk to your wife about.

I was very active in Freemasonry. Not so much now because I can't sit that long in lodge. Two weeks ago there was a very special thing in North Bay, the Grand Lodge of Canada in the province of Ontario held an official meeting in our Masonic Temple. And it was a six-and-a-half-hour meeting. I would have loved to have been there but there's no way I could do it. I also have a hard time getting up and down. so if I go to lodge I'll get an exemption so I don't have to get up and down. But there's no way I could not get up and down in front of the Grand Master.

No exemption would be good enough for me. He'd let me. I wouldn't let me.

I knew what the topics were. It was a typical grand lodge meeting. And anyone in Ontario could go and it was quite a good meeting. I've talked to a few people that were there. It's very enjoyable.

Basically, as a Mason you're taught from the very first day that you must be an honorable person. You must respect your fellow man. Three of the most important tenets are brotherly love, relief and truth. You must

believe in a supreme being. And no matter what that supreme being is, that's the book that you will take your obligation on. A Jew will take it on the Torah. The Koran for a Muslim. There are other bodies in Masonry that once you join you can go up the ladder, so to speak. And I've gone up the ladder. I'm a Scottish Rite Mason. I'm a York Rite Mason. I am a Knight Templar and the Knight Templar is an unusual branch of Masonry. It's the only branch of Masonry that you must be a Christian to belong to. A Jew or a Muslim cannot join. Craft Masonry, The Grand Lodge of any province, they're in charge of all branches of Masonry. If there's going to be a York Rite annual meeting, the Grand Master of the jurisdiction must be there.

I went to a meeting in B.C., in Richmond B.C. for Knights Templar. The Grand Master of Masons for B.C. was there and I noticed he was wearing a yarmulke and I sort of smiled to myself. He had to be at our meeting to make it legal. But he wasn't eligible to join our organization. You must be a Christian. We go back to the Crusades. And one of the things you do in Perceptory, or Sovereign Great Priory, is you take an oath that you will be a Soldier for Christ.

And of course I find that a wonderful thing. Yeah for sure.

A good friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago and he had moved to this area and he decided he was going to move back to Calgary because that's where his wife's family was and he figured it would be easier for her after he had gone to be close to family.

So, I was e-mailing back and forth. And I knew it was getting close. This one day I talked about how enjoyable it had been working with him. And I said, “The interesting thing, John, is that you're going to be going from being a soldier for Christ to being a soldier with Christ. A few days later I got an email back saying thank you. “You're right. And I know I will see you again.”

That's a special bond, special brotherhood.

And you can get the same thing (from other service clubs, such as Lions, Kinsmen, etc.) You know, you've got to be doing something that helps.

You can't just take. I think it's immoral not to give. I am my brother's keeper. I'm supposed to share. I'm supposed to help. If I can't do those basic things I'm not a very decent person.

In 2005, I joined with a group of people who wanted to bring Habitat for Humanity to North Bay. I was co-chair of the Fund Development Committee and was pleased to attend the dedication for the first home we built in October 2008.

You know what my favorite charity in North Bay is? The Sally Ann.

Because they are the ones that you don't have to give a pound of flesh to get something out of. They help the ones that need it, no questions asked. And that goes back. My cousin used to tell me how they would love to see the people from the Sally Ann coming

during the war because they gave him a dry pair of socks when the worn and cracked socks were maxed out.

This is trite but I believe an optimist and a pessimist are both right the same number of times. The only difference is the optimist has more fun.

My glass is always half full. I woke up this morning. That's another bonus. Yeah. He smiled on me.



Reflection 3:

Investing in Family



Bryan and Ellen Manson, front, with children John and Kimberly.

Family bonds pay big dividends

By Dave Dale

Bryan Manson's dreams are unfolding before his eyes as investments of hard work, patience and faith pay priceless dividends.

A month before his 80th birthday, the long-time North Bay resident continues his work as a certified financial planner, cooks meals for his "Bride" of 52 years and enjoys time with their children and grandchildren.

The cherry on top is nurturing a family business with three generations making up the Manson Team at Assante Wealth Management.

On a beautiful June day with brilliantly coloured light streaming through a Bea Lockhart stained glass creation in his fourth-floor window, Bryan beams with pride describing how much it means.

"I've been sitting behind this desk for 35 years. And for the past 23 years I've been so proud to be partners with my son John," he said. "And now that my granddaughter Cynthia is on well on her way to being fully licensed (on schedule for achieving designation in 2020), we have three generations on the Manson Team."

Bryan's third career followed his radio days, which brought him to North Bay as the 'Morning Man' for CFCH in 1958 before becoming an advertising salesman in the early 1960s.

“I left the radio business in 1983, joining Ted Thomson Investments and have been having fun ever since,” he said while looking back on a full working life.

As a prudent money manager living up to the traditional Scottish stereotype of frugality, Bryan knows how pennies add up to dollars.

“The key to being a financial investment advisor is to try and instill patience,” he said, noting others have different approaches. “I have never been able to time the market. I’ve never been able to say, ‘This is the best time to buy. This is the best time to sell.’ My philosophy is the best time to buy is the day that you have the money. The best time to sell is the day that you need the money. And other than that, leave the darn thing alone.”

It’s a strategy they feel comfortable with because it works.

“That’s what John and I preach to our clients. Long game. Don’t mess around with it or it’s going to cost you money,” he said.

In the United States, studies have been done showing that people who deal with planners have 45 percent more assets at the end of their working timeframe than people who do it on their own. The statistics in Canada are similar, Bryan said.

“I act as a safety brake. In many instances people want to get out. Panicking. And if they need to get

out, because they can't sleep, because they're worried, I'll get them out. I shouldn't have put them in in the first place if they're that way. But if they're just being a worry wart today, I'm going to try and help them.”

Getting to know their client’s objectives is key.

“What are the goals? I want to get in their heart. Find who they are. Why they are,” he said.

“Right now we're working with, in many cases, the third generation of the same family. People are more knowledgeable today because of social media and the Internet is available to sort of research things. They can be impatient. And if we sense that they're going to be too impatient, we'll try and cure them of that or suggest that they might be better off elsewhere.

“You can say, ‘All right you've got so much money that you want to invest. Take 20 percent of it and do it your way. Give me 80 percent and I'll compensate for what you've lost.’”



The Manson Team: Bryan Manson, front and centre, granddaughter Cynthia, back left, and son, John.

“Financial planning shouldn’t be gambling with your future. It’s not a casino. I think if you want to gamble, visit Rama. Or next year, down by Pinewood.”

Working in partnership with your son, or with your father or grandfather in this case, is challenging but rewarding when it works out.



“John took the business course at Canadore College and said maybe he might like to work in the business. We decided to try it for three months. After a month, he indicated that he didn’t think it was going to work. He said, ‘I can’t work with my dad. You can’t be my dad in the office.’ And he got through to me. So I had to start

working to be a co-worker rather than a father. And when Cynthia started with us I had to do the same thing, to not be her Poppa but to be her employer.”

There’s a big difference to what role you must play depending on the circumstances.

“So you have to pretty well take that hat off when you walk in the door. And I can now say John and I have we’ve been working together for more than two

decades. It's the second best thing that ever happened to me. Ellen is the best.

“And over those 23 years, John and I have become friends. That's something,” he said.

Not all fathers and sons get to say that and it's given Bryan a unique perspective on John.

“He's a very caring person. He is as heavy into all types of meditation as I am into religion. Like spiritual doesn't necessarily mean religion.

“You know, I said to John last week that I wanted to take a day off or a half a day off towards the end of April. And that was the day that I was scheduled to be in the office so I asked if he would cover for me. And at first, he said yes. And then he said, “Why?” That's a good order. And I explained that the Share-A-Thon for the Christian radio station is that day and I want to go out and sit there and meditate for two or three hours. I said, ‘That's my form of meditation.’ He laughed and said OK.”

Bryan considers his involvement in the Share-A-Thon part of his investment in both community and himself.

“They promote the fact that two days a year they're going to ask for money and the money is designed to keep them operating for the next six months and they do it at every station in the network. And I've been involved and going out there for many years. I could send a cheque but it makes me feel good to be out there.

“Dean Belanger is a spectacular guy. He's the Christian morning man. And I consider him a friend. His wife Lana is spectacular. Whenever I go out there I get a hug. And then, two years ago I had the most the most amazing experience I've ever had. I'm sitting there at a table, Lana comes over to me and said, ‘Would you mind if the children prayed for you?’ Four little girls came over and took my hands and prayed. I was like bawling like a baby. Wow. It's so uplifting. Unbelievable.



“I guess the next big thing I'd like to see is Cynthia, my oldest granddaughter, complete her licensing so that we'll have three generations of Manson's licensed as part of the Manson team.

“It's wonderful having her working for us in admin while she's working on her license. She

completed her second securities course in June and then she has one more thing to do before she can apply for her license. So probably another year.

“The big thing was her getting the two-year business course at Canadore as a foundation. When John took that course, he was the first person ever to pass the

Canadian Securities Course through the college. No one had before and no one has since (that option no longer exists through the college program).

“OK, now mind you, I gave him a little help. I sent him to a special tutorial before the exam, which I went to when I was doing it, because the more help you can get the better.

Bryan and John have reduced their number of clients significantly over the last few years to create a portfolio that works for them.

“As I get older, the more I value peace, happiness, contentment ... our business used to be much bigger about four years ago.

“We have a joking phrase that we use, ‘John and I sold a couple of hundred clients to the bank.’ And we just kept the ones who we enjoyed dealing with and we got rid of the ones that, when they would walk out of the office, you'd shake your head: “Why am I dealing with that person?” He would or she would upset you for the rest of the day. And we decided the money wasn't important enough. The people we deal with now, it's a pleasure to see them.”

John said it's been a good fit once they worked out the relationship and roles they play in the business.

“We sometimes don't agree but that's rare because I think both of us genuinely try to put the other person's perspective first when we're making decisions or proposing changes,” John said, noting they both

evolved and matured with each other's best characteristics as examples.

"I think he was a workaholic in his early years. And when I joined I think I've encouraged him to strike more balance in the workplace."

"So I guess I kind of pushed him to take more holidays and slow down the hours which he has done over time. Which is, I think, great for him. And I think it's great for me, you know, to have a balanced work life."

"As a partner he's an asset with tremendous experience. I'll have a problem or an issue, something I'm looking at to try to find a resolution that's work-related here and I'll think I've seen all sides and I'll ask him and he'll quite often throw something at me that I wouldn't have come up with on my own. So it's good to have that experience, that other set of eyes."

"And it's the same having Cynthia working with him, providing another generational perspective."

"Just recently, I asked her two different questions and she surprised me by answering in a way I would not have expected. So I guess having the three of us here gives the business a full spectrum of insight."

"Cynthia does a lot of stuff already that we wouldn't have done, specifically taking over the social media role, writing articles and finding articles and distributing them weekly."



They don't get a lot of new business from social media but those efforts provide a "reinforcing touchpoint" with existing clients, he said.

Bryan says he's content and at peace with himself and those around him.

"If you wanted to put everything in one picture, I would compare myself to a Cheshire cat. I'm content," he said, evoking the image of cartoonist Carol Tyler's iconic feline image.

"And a life lived well is one where you are content and appreciate where you've been and where you've gone. Which is probably the most important thing, being able to be at this stage of life and be at peace on that front.

"And I know where I'm going. That brings peaceful certainty."

Beauty is in Trust

The Bible teaches us that the things we can see are only temporary. The car you ride in is temporary. This building, the pews on which you are sitting, all are temporary, all are subject to decay.

A man about my age is walking through the field on his farm and he heard something. He looked down and saw a frog, which said, "Pick me up and kiss me and I will turn into a beautiful woman." The man just stood there with his mouth open and the frog said again, "Pick me up and kiss me and I will turn into a beautiful woman."

The man reached down, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket. The frog said, "I told you to pick me up and kiss me and I'd turn into a beautiful woman."

The man replied, 'At my stage in life, I'd rather have a talking frog.'

Nothing lasts forever, we look in the mirror and see our aging bodies and realize that they are temporary, too. All the things you can see and touch are only here for a little while and then are gone

But the things you can't see last forever.

This is a hard lesson for us to learn, isn't it? Yet it is an important lesson, because when we face troubles and difficulties in life, we need to remember as Christians that Jesus has promised: "I will be with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you. Trust in My presence."



