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Volume # 12 - Summer 2002

An Optimist's Outlook.

In case you don't already know this, I am an optimist. Some (actually many) have wondered recently how I am able to remain so cheery when there appears to be so much to be worried about. If the ongoing and certainly destabilizing threat from afar isn't enough, how about the newly emerging threat from within our own economy? In the wake of the Enron unraveling, it would appear we cannot trust our own corporate leaders. My response to this might surprise you. I'm not surprised. Does this mean I have resigned myself to living in world based on distrust and personal gain? Not at all. Like a true optimist I believe help is on the way. I can hear the hoof beats of the White Knights.

The fundamental principle upon which the western world's economy is built is self interest. Put more bluntly, greed. The basic assumption of every business, of every free economy, of every free market, is that each individual will act and continue to act first and foremost out of their own self-interest. "Greed is good. Greed is necessary." This is hardly the optimist's creed.

I often wonder how I found myself stuck in the middle of a business that would to most appear to be at the centre of this incredibly flawed concept. Greed, after all, almost always applies to material goods. And in our western society, material goods equals money. We no longer trade goats for dry goods. It's money we need. It's money we want. It's money that is a financial advisor's stock in trade.

I started my life on the idealistic perch of a teacher. I served, given what I

was paid in my first year arguably in the truest sense of the word. The good news (for me at least, and hopefully for many readers who are also clients) is that I believe I still do serve. The even better news is that so do a great many other businesses and business leaders.

Dramatic cultural change takes decades, and it does not happen without great angst and resistance. It isn't easy to give up on values that have been ingrained for generations. But the generation that holds an increasing share of today's power is the same generation that during the 60's tendered a new set of ideals for the North American establishment. Peaceful demonstrations, that often ended otherwise, shouted out freedom, love, and peaceful coexistence. Today, many of those same shouters are feeling a conflict that has only one resolution. Gut wrenching change. And unlike the teenagers and twenty somethings that had little real power, the 40 to 50 year olds they have become do have power.

It shouldn't surprise us to find corruption on Wall Street and Bay Street, in large corporations, and in government offices. In a system designed to allow each of us to become all that we can imagine, all that we dare to reach for, there will always be those who will equate that as a license for taking. But it's not.

The fact is, that while self-interest is undeniably a key principle of the free market world, it is not the only principle. What's at stake now is identifying those other key principles. And what's most encouraging, and most interesting, is that many of the "new" ideas, things like integrity, respect, trust, love, and giving, cut directly across the old corporate

dogma, and then land squarely in the laps of a generation that at one time, while shouldering great disdain for its innocent idealism, espoused these ideas, and most certainly still believes them.

The business of the future (and there are many examples of them today) is one that will see cooperation as more important than competition, adding value as more important than increasing profits, and trust as a foundational ingredient without compromise.

So yes, self-interest is an inevitable, and perhaps even important ingredient in our society. But not at all costs.

We can create "rules", and new laws. We can regulate and punish offenders to set an example for others. But so long as we focus on the rules and not the values, we will always have offenders to be punished. We need to send a message to those who believe in profits at all costs by supporting and elevating those leaders who believe in people at all costs. And this is happening. Our tolerance for the former is waning. Our appreciation of the latter is deepening. A dramatic change, a change that perhaps began in the 60's, is now at last staging its own brand of war on western society, and winning the battles.

So, despite the rather dark clouds hanging over our world in these past few years, I see sunshine ahead. The White Knights are on the way. I will remain optimistic, hopeful, and faithful. It is the only outlook that has consistently proven to be true. I am certain that it always will.

Bill Bell

Here come the 70's

I started grade 9 at Bradford District High school in 1971. Over the course of the next 5 years of high school and the subsequent 4 years at university, I developed friendships that would last a lifetime, discovered and rediscovered who I was, and who I was to become, realized my independence as I left home to attend university, and met and fell in love with my wife of 21 years. It would be difficult for me to deny that I am a product of the 70's.

While I do have memories prior to 1970, they are vague at best. But I have many vivid and exciting memories of the 70's. From the outset, the 70's were destined to be fast and futuristic as we grappled with new technologies and wrestled with the coming of age of Canada's largest demographic group. The television show "Here Comes the 70's" began with music by Supertramp and the image of a shapely and naked woman walking into the ocean. I know I thought, "If this is the 70's, bring em on!" And on they came.

In 1972 I got my first job (other than working for the family business), working on a local farm. I learned to drive in my sister's car (with a standard transmission) so that I could drive the farm vehicles, despite the fact that I wasn't yet of legal age. It was also in 1972 that I took my first trip to Stratford to see a Shakespearean play and began an affair with live theatre that continues to this day. During the early 70's I sharpened my skills as a hockey player, and while falling well short of the NHL, I lived in a dream world for a few years where that was a distinct possibility. It was during the 70's that I learned of my life's mission, although I would hardly have called it that at the

time. And of course, during the 70's I learned about the most personal kind of relationships, the joy of getting to know someone and the pain of letting them go.

Certainly an important clue to my future that emerged in the 70's was the fact that I started by own business (in addition to holding summer jobs). I bought some equipment and a stack of 45's and went to work finding gigs as a disc jockey. The coveted position was that of DJ for the local "Teen Dances" that had been running for as long as I could remember, and continued to run throughout the 70's on a biweekly basis. I earned that position quickly and not only got paid to come out to my favourite party, but I also got to personally choose the music. What more could any teenager ask for.

For many of us, music defined our youth. It spoke to us, and challenged us, it cried for us, and yelled for us, it made us feel. Music was the backdrop of everything that was important. And gathering with friends to talk, to laugh, to dance, perchance to hold someone close, this was important.

No one could be more excited about the upcoming 70's Dance in support of Big Sisters of York than me. I will be there, "with bells on" (no pun intended), and will no doubt be swept away in a tidal wave of fond memories triggered by the sights and sounds of my defining years. If at the end of the night you find me in the parking lot looking for a bright yellow 1971 Pontiac Astre with a sound system to die for, please remind me that it is in fact 2002. But be gentle.

Bill.

"That 70's Dance" Saturday September 21, 2002. Newmarket Lions Club.

After 2 successful years of running charity golf tournaments, we have decided to turn our efforts to a different cause and a different venue. And so, we are pleased to invite you to our 70's Dance with all net proceeds going to Big Sisters of York.

We have rented the local Lions Club hall, where many a dance was held in the 70's, recruited a DJ to play nothing but 70's music, hired a caterer to put together a late evening buffet (yes, beef on a bun will be served), will offer a "70's prices" cash bar (or close to it), and are busy planning other fun activities for the night. All that remains is to get you there!

Tickets at \$50 per person, can be purchased by calling us (905-713-3765) or sending an email to

mail@bellfinancial.ca. We will be selling 200 tickets only. Call now!

Want to win a pair? Name the artist or group who popularized each of the 5 songs listed below. Send your responses by email, or fax (905-713-2937) before July 15th. We will randomly choose from among the correct responses and one lucky winner will get a pair of tickets!

Name the artists who popularized each of these songs during the 70's:

1. "Comfortably Numb"
 2. "Long Time"
 3. "That's the way I like it"
 4. "China Grove"
 5. "Night Fever"
- Good luck!

It is September 3rd, 2002. Do you know where your child is?

Ok, it's actually May as this is written, but it did just snow, and the rapid passing of time and the flip flopping of seasons reminds us that September isn't far away. And if you have teenagers and didn't start saving shortly after they were born, you are probably wondering what, if anything, can be done now to assist in funding their post-secondary education, whether that starts this September or in a not-too-distant September.

Here are a few suggestions taken from the book 'Your Child's Financial Future' written by Benjamin McLean. For more information I recommend picking up his book from your local bookstore.

1. If you have at least 24 months before the end of your child's high school term you could try and help your child get the high grades that open scholarship doors. Is tutoring required?
2. When looking for a college or university, take a look at which ones deliver the best financial aid package of scholarships and bursaries, co-op and work-study programs, and local part-time employment opportunities.
3. Look for the percentage of the operating budget that is channeled into scholarships and bursaries. It can vary from 8% at the University of Toronto to 1% at Ryerson. This is free money and worth seeking. Most awards are in the \$500.00 to \$2,000.00 range, and are awarded on the basis of academic performance, community service, financial need or special skills.

4. More than 30 universities in Canada offer work-study programs. Semesters in the classroom alternate with paid employment (salary & benefits) in the field of endeavor. Approximately 40% continue to work for their co-op employers after graduation.

5. Cafeterias, libraries, bookstores, campus stores, gyms and swimming pools hire students on a part-time basis. Your child might also find part-time work as a research assistant funded by a department research grant. Your child can find more out about these opportunities from the campus employment office. An estimated one-third of Canadian university students balance their studies with part-time work. A 1995 York University study has shown that those students working up to eight hours per week perform just as well as those who do not hold down a part-time job.

6. Last but certainly not least, if you are counting on a government or private student loan for your child, find out if they qualify. Then apply early, and if anything goes wrong, you've both got time to deal with it.

If your children are young and you have years to prepare for continuing education here is a thought for you: Only \$50.00 a month at 8% average annual rate of return over 18 years will grow to \$24,014. Only the cost of a coffee a day.

Victoria

Welcome to our newest additions!

There are some changes afoot at Bell Financial.

First of all, congratulations to Zoe Weller and her husband Ian as they welcome Rebecca Lynn, born on Monday June 3, 2002. Rebecca is a sister to Kaitlyn, who is 2 years old.

This of course means that Zoe is now on maternity leave, and we are pleased to welcome Dawn Cramp who joined us in late April to assume Zoe's responsibilities. Dawn is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, and has spent the last couple of years gaining valuable administrative experience with another small financial services firm.

Sonia Colhoun and her husband Rob are also expecting (we are looking into this apparent endemic problem), with a due date in late July. Joining us on June 3 and assuming many of Sonia's responsibilities is Ingrid Kulbach, who comes to us with an extensive background

in financial services and all of the necessary licences and courses.

We are pleased to welcome all of our new additions, and are pleased to see our "family" growing in such positive ways!



John appears to be ready for summer at the recent company picnic.

He Must Be Compensating For Something

He approaches his prey stealthily, his breathing slow, his movements deliberate. Remaining unseen and downwind, he maneuvers ever closer. His fingers twitch, his legs coiled, ready to pounce. At that moment, he senses another predator closing in on his target. He must attack now or the opportunity will be lost. He darts left and lunges forward, an explosion of sinew and bone. It is over in an instant. He stands momentarily over his prize, catching his breath, savoring victory. He then gathers his spoils, its weight considerable but manageable, and heads for the checkout counter.

Ever since I saw the Canadian Tire commercial promoting the power washer, I knew that I had to have it. Although I am not one to collect a garage full of the latest gadgets, this was different. This product spoke to me on a subconscious level, to a part of me pre-wired into my being. My pulse quickened as the T.V. actor pulverized dirt and stains from wood fences and boat hulls, rendering them like new. The fact that I have neither a wood fence nor a boat was irrelevant. The possibilities were seemingly endless! I rushed over to the nearest C.T. and grabbed the last one off the shelf (it turned out that there were about 250 more power washers being arranged in a gigantic display at the front of the store, but I *did* snatch the last one off the shelf). Later that day, I casually informed my brother of my purchase.

"You bought a power washer?", he blurted out, suitably impressed.

"Yup. Got the last one off the shelf".

"Whoa".

Today is the big day. I have found something that absolutely must be power washed. Our brick patio is filthy. It is amazing that something so shockingly self-evident had escaped my notice until now. No matter, I possess the means to set things right. I should call the Canadian Tire film crew over to make their next commercial: Mild-mannered suburban homeowner obliterates years of patio dirt and grime with the flick of a switch and the wave of a wand (which, coincidentally, looks a bit like a shotgun). I open the box and pull out the various components. Not bad, only a few parts to assemble.

Two hours later, I'm ready. I plug it in, connect the water hose and turn it on. I push the trigger on the wand and I'm thrown back by the force of the spray. "Recoil", I think they call it in the movies. I regain my balance and direct the

stream at the first gray brick. Within seconds, the pounding water has stripped layers of dirt to reveal a pristine red brick. Red! This cannot be. I quickly take aim at the next brick and fire: Red again! I excitedly call the family over. Out of breath and gesticulating wildly, I demonstrate for them. I feel like an art historian who has removed layers of paint from an old canvas to expose a priceless work by a Renaissance master. My wife smiles and says, "That's nice" and returns to something trivial. My sons ooh and aah for a moment before resuming their video game. I am unfazed by their reaction to my discovery. They don't understand, they *can't* understand, because they don't feel the power that I feel in my hands.

I return to the task at hand, attacking brick after brick, transforming them at will. I am "in the zone", blocking out all that is not immediately relevant to my purpose. I think I hear Elizabeth asking me when I'll be finished, but the washer's generator is so loud that I can't be sure. Almost half done. Mud is beginning to form in murky puddles, I assume from the dirt blasted from the gaps between the bricks. Apparently, the ground beneath the patio has become saturated and the water is no longer draining. Even as the water level rises, I keep firing away, spraying myself with muddy backwash. Elizabeth appears again at the patio screen door. I can make out the words "going swimming" and "maniac", and wonder what those two ideas have in common. No matter, the patio will soon be gleaming and I will be the envy of the neighbourhood, just like the guy in the commercial.

After supper I return to inspect my handiwork. The water has finally subsided, leaving behind a thick coating of mud over most of the bricks. Elizabeth joins me outside. She is less than impressed, I can see that. But what she fails to grasp is that beneath the brown ooze lies red bricks that once were gray. Tomorrow I'll sweep up the dried mud and she'll see the fruits of my labour... or perhaps this would be another job made easier with the power washer...

Definitely.

David Frank.

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