



Episode 1 "Life is Good"

A few weeks ago I began a Sunday morning ritual. Some of which I've shared here on Facebook. I've decided to record these Sunday mornings with all of you and call it the "Sunday morning Chronicles". So here I began

This morning I meant a friend at 8 am at the Golden drive thru Starbucks just off of highway 93 on the west edge of the city like I have done 3 of the last 4 weeks. For any of you out there that are motorcycle riders I intend to do this all summer and fall as the weather permits and all of you are invited. The ritual is we meet, enjoy conversation over coffee and go on a ride somewhere in the mountains for a couple of hours while my family, (a wonderful bunch who religiously enjoy their Sunday morning slumber), are fast asleep. I try to return by 11 to attend Church with my beautiful Wife Tiffany, something I also enjoy very much.

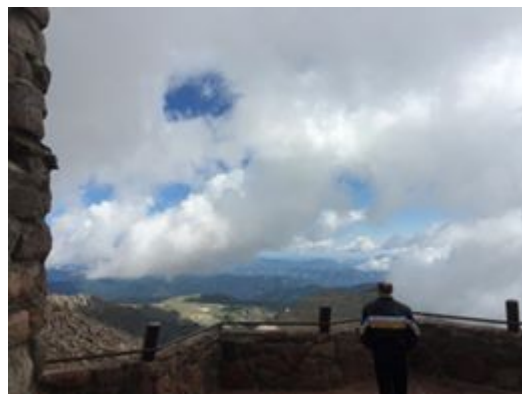
The first ride was a wonderful trip with my good friend Carlos Guerra. We rode up Golden Gate canyon, down in to Blackhawk, enjoyed a free coffee at Golden Gate casino and had an amazing conversation about life while we sat in the parking garage, and then it was back home to Mama and off to Church.

The next Sunday ride was with my friends Rob Brown, Dennis Craig, and Rick Nelson. Same route and this time the breakfast buffet at the Ameristar Casino on Rick. Thanks again for breakfast Rick. You are a wonderful friend. And I enjoy our relationship a great deal. That also goes for you too Rob and Dennis. You guys are truly family and I love you like you really were my blood brothers.

Last Sunday it was the same ride again. This time with Carlos, my dear friend Brian Stracher and my new friend Randy. Again we stopped at the gates Casino and had coffees as we sat and chatted on the park benches inside the parking garage.

And there was today. I invited many riders but only one showed up. A guy I'm just getting to know. An amazing guy named Desmond. Desmond I learned today is 69 years young. This guy has been swimming every morning at 5:30 am for 25 years. This guy works out everyday by running the steps over and over at red rocks and Des lives to ride his big blue BMW. Des is one of these guys who can sit in the saddle and ride for hundreds of miles without getting off the bike.

Today we ride up thru Morrison, thru Kittridge and Evergreen and then up up up all the way into the clouds to the very top of Mt. Evans. By far the most amazing ride I've ever been on. I am truly blessed to be able to live a life like the one I live with amazing friends. An amazing wife. An amazing career. And have these amazing experiences.





Episode 2

“Sunday morning with the Dukes”

Sometimes you have to appreciate the simple things in life. I had planned a motorcycle ride thru Deckers today but after a long week in the Sun at the dealership I needed to just sleep in today. After a double dose of Benadryl to make absolutely sure I got the sleep I was so looking forward too I woke up to phone calls and texts from friends. It was almost like God was saying "ok I have created a beautiful day for you. Wake up and enjoy it"! The calls were from my friend and employee Sherri Lorenzo, my poker buddy Bill Duran and my good friend an old roommate Darryl Wolford. Again I find myself blessed to have so many wonderful friends.

So today was way different than my typical Sunday morning. It began with a relaxing bath. Yes guys I take baths not showers. I'll let those of you that know me well figure that one out. I'll just hint by suggesting this. Next time you take a shower try doing it standing on one leg the whole time!

So while the kids and Tiff were still asleep my plan was to go outside and just enjoy the sun in some chairs I sat up under a tree in our front yard. Instead after I found my shoes in the living room, I ended up turning on the TV and found myself mesmerized by the incredibly stupid movie that just happened to be on the channel that was left on last night. A wonderful piece of cinematic craftwork called "the Dukes of Hazard". As a young boy I used to watch this stupid show every week mainly to see The General Lee and Daisy Duke. I've been a gear head all my life and I still get equal pleasure from either a cool car or a beautiful woman. (As I get older the cars get more attention).

So here I sit in my Lazy Boy watching a remake movie of the classic weekly series. I'm a little ashamed to admit (just a little), that I seemed to get the same pleasure this morning that did as a young boy! General Lee (a bright orange Dodge Charger with 01 on the doors) and Daisy Duke, (this time played by the incredibly beautiful but not brunette Jessica Simpson) strutting around in short shorts with super low cleavage and a push-up bra. As I've aged I've come to appreciate a well done movie with a good solid plot and lots of special effects. This movie had none of that and yet I found myself riveted to the stupidity. I think it was some kind of Sunday morning Benadryl laced half awake coma. But I couldn't get up! It was magical! The General Lee would smash into cop cars in one scene, and the next scene it would be perfectly straight and clean! How is that possible? And then there was Daisy... And then there was the story. Boss Hog was going to turn Hazard County into a strip mine and Bo and Luke would stop at nothing to lead all the towns' people to the courthouse by noon to save the county! I'm sorry but that's just good entertainment right ? Right? In the end everyone made it and the Governor, coerced by Daisy's perfect white smile and, well you know....., pardoned Bo and Luke for all their crimes.



I wonder how many Chargers gave their life for this movie? They say the series used up a good portion of these cars which are now resurfacing at car shows as "actual General Lee cars".

My wife had perfect timing this morning and appeared in the living room right about the time the Duke boys received their pardon.

It's the little things in life that come unexpected. Thank you God for waking me up today.

All for the love of life,
Jeff Schnase



Episode 3

“Monkey Goes for a ride”

July 30, 2014



Sometimes life takes little turns. Simple little turns that turn out to be those moments in life that you never forget. I never saw myself as a creative writer even though I have written many songs as a musician. As I continue onward with this little project I find myself constantly thinking about what I will write next. This has created a wonderful new dynamic in my life. It seems like its been forever since I could find a reason to get myself up on Sunday mornings and do anything but veg in front of the TV. Now I feel like I have to live up to my own hype. So I spend a lot of my time contemplating the next excursion. They say “we make plans and God laughs” and Sunday was one of those days where God had a completely different plan for me. Tiffany and I try to find a few hours for our Grandchildren every weekend. Sadly some of them live in Fort Collins so we don’t get to see them as often but 4 of them live here in Lakewood not far from us so almost every Sunday afternoon we go get them and just have them at the house. Usually this is Jasmine, (a beautiful 9 year old who we lovingly call Monkey) and her little brother Jacob who we sometimes call “Stinky”. Jacob is your typical toddler boy who loves to do things like put a metal pot on head and beat on it with a wooden spoon.



We have been carrying on this tradition for several years and they love to come over and we love having them. Monkey is full of life with big beautiful brown eyes kind of like Bambi in the famous Disney movie. Monkey and I have always been very close in fact she has always been somewhat of a Tomboy and we have spent countless hours in the Garage together tinkering with my projects like the motorcycle I have we call Frankenstein. We call it that because it's been constructed from all the stuff I have lying around the garage like an old shopping cart and old computer cases. Sometimes I wonder if I'll ever finish that bike but that's a whole other story.

Monkey just turned 9 and Tiff and I were unable to attend her birthday party so we made plans to take her to The Boulder Dinner Theater this last Saturday night to see a live performance of "Shrek the Musical". We had a wonderful time together that night. I bought Shrek ears for all of us and everyone but my 14 year old son wore them thru dinner and the show. (Nicholus is a very socially conscious guy so I guess he thought Shrek ears were socially unacceptable) The show ended late so we planned to have Monkey stay the night and pick up her 2 brothers Jacob and Josh (our 13 year old Grandson) the next day.

So here we are. Sunday morning. I once again wanted to ride my new motorcycle with friends but everyone had something else going on so I decided to just stay home and see what the morning had to offer. I woke up about 8 and went downstairs to check on Monkey who likes to sleep on our big sectional couch and found her fast asleep with our beloved family dog Gigi. Whenever Monkey is over you'll always find Gigi right next to her. Gigi has been with us 12 years now in fact she's been in the family longer than me. Gigi absolutely loves Jasmine and ALWAYS sleeps next to her in fact Jasmine shared with me later that Sunday morning that Gigi and she shared the same pillow that night. So I began my day quietly admiring this scene. This beautiful little girl with her big beautiful eyes, her tanned skin from constantly playing outside, and my dog who does not have much time left with us laying there like some sort of Norman Rockwell painting. I thought to myself....."Well maybe this is it. Maybe this is my experience that I will write about". But it turns out that was only the beginning of something far greater. Gods plan for Monkey and I.

So I lean down and give my little friend a quiet kiss on the cheek and at first she just keeps sleeping. I was secretly hoping she'd wake up and that's exactly what she did. I said good morning and she smiles and says "good morning Gramps". For years she has called me that. A nickname she came up with that I love. I had some running around I needed to do so I thought why not take her and why not do it on the bike. Now Jasmine loves motorcycles and she has ridden with me before but it had been a long time since I had not owned a running motorcycle for a couple of years. I think it's been about 3 years now since Tiff and I lost our dear friend Guy Petersen to a motorcycle accident which left us both deeply wounded and both of us took a long sabbatical from motorcycle riding. In the past I would think nothing of putting my precious little Granddaughter on the bike with me but this time... this was entirely different. It took a long time to get



MYSELF back on a bike, Tiff was so upset that we sold her Sportster and to this day I ride with an entirely different approach. There are so many people on their phones talking texting, buying stuff on eBay. These are scary times for motorcycle riders. I have a simple rule. I am invisible. No one can see me. Even if I see a driver look right at me I pretend that they can't see me. The night before last I was riding home late at night dressed in black jeans, a black jacket, black helmet and the bike is all black as well. I'm at this stoplight and this guy pulls up next to me, rolls down his window and I'm thinking he's going to complement me on my bike. Instead he says "you know dressing in black is really cool and all but I can barely see you". I thought to myself yeah I know because I am invisible. Maybe not my best reaction but at least I didn't say it out loud right? Besides I refuse to be one of those guys wearing a goofy Day-Glo colored vest. I have an image I have to uphold. The bad ass biker guy. You know the one who cries when he sees a pretty rainbow?

ANYHOW.... I make what was an impulsive decision to invite her to ride with me. An invitation that once offered cannot be reversed. In invitation that I should have discussed with her parents and my wife before I invited her but never the less the invitation was already made and of course she instantly accepted. Before I knew what was happening she was strapping on her tiny little glittery sandals and being the safety conscious little girl she is, asking if I had a helmet for her. So I'm thinking well that's a sign. A sign I've done the right thing right? Right? On top of this the only thing she has to wear are a little pair of shorts. I instantly see this vision of her crying looking at me with this look of anger asking me WHY! WHY!!! Why didn't you tell me the pipes were going to scar my little leg forever. I could see her as a 30 year old showing her friends the scar that she got the day Grandpa took her on a ride when she was 9. So I'm instantly second guessing myself. Maybe I should tell her I'm sorry but you just can't ride with those little shoes and shorts. It was like the little devil and the angel on my shoulders. And the little red guy won the argument and I say "yea I got a helmet for you". "Just be careful so you don't burn your legs". I know I don't dare tell Tiff what I'm doing or she will veto the whole thing besides she's sleeping and it would be rude to wake her up right? Right?

Within minutes we are on the bike and away. I live back off of Kipling and the road into and out of the neighborhood is a fun one for a motorcycle enthusiast. Several long winding turns and a straight away where I ALWAYS open the bike up and then hit the brakes hard and throw it into the next corner. I'm sure there have been many times when my neighbors are saying "there he goes again, that guys going to get himself killed", but I promise you I am a very careful and deliberate rider and consider myself to be a kind of "Expert Novice Rider". No racer by any means but very good at driving my machine. So when I get on this bike and I go thru those turns something shifts in me. This teenager with this "need for speed" reveals himself almost without exception.

But not today. Today I ride slow. I have a super precious cargo onboard. And I do not want to scare her so I go thru my favorite turns at about 10% of the normal speed and even at that slow deliberate speed I'm worrying. I have a stoplight coming at the end of the road before we get out on to Kipling that is almost always red. This will be my opportunity to check in with her and make sure she is ok. It feels like it takes a



week to get there and I bring the machine to a stop and twist my head to ask “are you ok”? In her tiny sweet little voice she calmly says “yea”. I decide I will repeat this at every stoplight and at every light I get the same super calm response in fact I detect that maybe she’s even a little annoyed that I repeatedly ask the same question! The trip was to my office. A top secret trip to secretly sneak in 5 minutes of work on Sunday and the route meant that I had a choice when I got to the freeway. Do I take the normal route? The one where I blast the bike down the onramp (or what I like to call a legal dragstrip) bringing the bike up to 65 MPH as quickly as possible or do I continue down Kipling and take Colfax? So I ask her at the light: “Are you going to be ok if we go on the highway”? Of course she says sure and in hindsight I should not have taken her down the freeway but I knew the thrill of doing 60+ mph on a motorcycle would be something she would really enjoy. I have put thousands of miles on motorcycles over the years and it is still a big thrill for me. So off we go down the freeway for the 2 mile jaunt from Kipling to Sheridan. As we go down the dragstrip I am thinking NO JEFF. NOT THIS TIME and I ease the bike up to 60 very slowly. Within 3 minutes we are off the freeway and at my office in another 5.

Now here is the best part:

I shut the bike down and I carefully help her off as to not burn her legs. I have no idea what to expect but I remember the day I had the same experience as a young boy. Maybe the biggest experience of my life to that point. Being on the back of that bike, (I think it was my uncle’s Bultaco) was amazing! She pulls off her helmet to reveal a huge ear to ear smile and she says: “that was awesome Gramps”!

Did I do the right thing? Absolutely!!

All for the love of life,
Jeff Schnase



Episode 4 "My Amazing Wife"

I take great pride in "my recovery" and have not put and mood altering substance in my body since November 16th 1991. I attend Narcotics Anonymous to maintain this way of life and as a result have a huge network of friends. Many of these people have become integral parts of my life and without them I would not be the man I am today. Some of them actually are family because of my marriage to my amazing wife Tiffany.



I first met Tiffany many years ago thru a guy she was married to at the time we called Kimo. His real name was Kim and he was a good friend who I always enjoyed seeing. Kimo and I did not spend time together outside the program of Narcotics Anonymous but whenever I ran into him we would share a warm hug and it always felt good to tell him "its really good to see you brother" because Kimo had become one of those people that was important to me. A man who had earned the respect of others in the fellowship by staying clean and showing up to meetings to "share his recovery".

It was a few years after I met Kimo that I ran into him in the lobby of my apartment complex. It was weird that he was there and he explained to me that his father lived in the same building. I had stopped and chatted like this many times but this time I remember a woman standing behind him. She was very quiet and I don't remember if she said anything but for some reason that moment was locked in my mind forever. She was Kimo's wife and that woman would later become MY wife. My amazing wife Tiffany.

At the time I was in a long term relationship with a woman that I had been with for several years. I was a tough relationship because we had met in the rooms of NA and as I accumulated year after year of clean time she accumulated repeated relapses of my drug of choice, cocaine. I loved her very much but in the end



after 7 tough years I finally left her forever. I did not know this but Tiffany was going thru the same thing with her Husband.

The next few years were tough for me. I just couldn't seem to find my place in the world. After I left her I was forced to take up residence in a friends basement and ultimately ended up moving in to my parents basement. They had a big house and were glad to have me there but it was humbling to say the least. I was 40 something, had been clean for well over a decade. I was dating but couldn't seem to find the woman I dreamt of. I was playing a lot of music in those days and spent many nights out with my musician friends playing at open stages and performing at several different venues in Denver. Places like "Sweet Rockin Coffee" and "Angie's Place" were huge parts of my life. I performed mostly as a solo acoustic artist and enjoyed it very much. I did this for 9 years the first few being while I was still with my ex and the last few as an eligible bachelor. I had a decent following of loyal fans who would follow me from coffee house to coffee house as I poured my heart into my music. I wrote over 60 songs in those years some of which I am very proud of. Songs like "Mystery Girl", "The Puppet Strings" and "The Circle Game" were often requested from my intimate little audiences.

Tiffany I had became good friends thru the years and she began to come see me play a lot during the "basement years at my parents" stage of my life. I loved it when she would come because she would always bring a bunch of people with her. After all these years it was a big deal to fill a coffee house with bodies and Tiff would bring car loads of friends. Many of them mutual friends that I loved having there. In those days I would try to book a show every Saturday night somewhere in the metro area. I did this both for the love of the music and the medicinal affect this would have on me. I was struggling with depression and nothing felt better than singing and playing my guitar. I would sit on the stage and watch people and how they would react to the music. It became a study of life for me. I would break the 3 hour show up into segments my favorite being the "Blues portion of the program" where I would dawn a Fedora and perform songs like "I lick Toads". It was super fun and the audience would change in front of me. They loved it as much as I did sometimes singing along to the songs I had written which is the ultimate compliment to a musician. Tiff became my biggest fan and eventually showed up at every show with our friends. I began to notice this amazing woman that I hadn't seen before. These people loved her so much they would follow her wherever she went. They loved what she loved because she loved life. She loved life hard and she loved hard. If you were a friend of Tiffs you had someone in your corner that would do ANYTHING for you. The kind of person who would be at your side thru anything in life. The birth of a child or the death of a loved one. And she was beautiful. Usually adorned in some sort of leopard outfit with this amazing red hair. And when she would walk by the stage there was this current of wind that would swish across my face. You see she moves fast like a cat on a mission.



Every week I began to notice progressively nicer outfits and more of her attention turned towards me and less to her band of followers. They would try to redirect her back to them but there was no hope. She had set her sights on me. ME!!! I had finally attracted the woman of my dreams. A strong confident woman. A woman who saw something in me that I could not see in myself. It was thru this attention that I began to rise from my depression and find a new confidence. "Maybe I do have something to offer" I would think to myself. "Maybe even though I live in my parents basement, I could have a woman like her".

I don't remember how it happened or when but eventually I found the courage to ask her out and she did not hesitate to say yes. This was a divine union of two souls that God had pre-arranged and we both gave in to Gods plan quickly. Within a few weeks we became inseparable spending all of our free time together and I fell for her fast and hard. It didn't take long and I found my way out of the basement and in too my own little apartment. A HUGE triumph for me. The little apartment became our Sanctuary in fact we called it that. You see her house was a hotbed of activity. Tiff has 6 sons and 3 of them still lived with her. They were 4, 6 and 15. They were beautiful like their mother and I fell in love with them almost as quick as I fell in love with her. I spent most of my time at her house with the boys and occasionally we'd take the 2 little ones for weekend retreats to the sanctuary. I kept the place nice with comfortable furniture and lots of plants. I loved having them there and took great pride in feeding them breakfast and watching movies with the 3 of them.

Eventually I moved in to their home and regretfully gave up the apartment. All of us missed going there but it just made sense. The boys had to give up Mommas bed as a sacrifice to their new roommate which was tough. They loved her fiercely and sleeping in her bed was what they knew. They had their own beds of course but they wanted to be close to her. We all did. You see she was, and still is an amazing woman.

We all seemed to adjust to life under one roof without much of a struggle. The 15 year old was not as easy to love as the little ones but we had our moments. Their dad had been in their lives on Wednesday nights and every other weekend for awhile now as the divorce decree declared but the 15 year old, Joseph, did not spend much time with him as this was not his bio Dad. Joe needed a father figure and I did the best I could with his teenage angst. He was an amazing kid who never really stepped out of line. He went to school, did his best and was quiet and reserved. He was totally against cussing, drugs and smoking. I unfortunately had come along at the end of his sports career but I'm told he was an excellent baseball player. I did get to teach him how to drive and bought him his 1st car and then got the privilege of teaching him about having a work ethic, saving money and later helping him buy his 1st car, a Ford Mustang. Joe took to these teachings with incredible commitment in fact he paid that car off early from the money he saved from his 1st job at the local Dairy Queen down the street from our house. (Joe is 25 or 26 now and just bought his 1st home!!) Way to go Joe! Your mother and I are so proud of you. To this day Joe does not cuss, smoke, drink or use drugs and is in amazing physical condition.



Austin 6, and Nicholus, 4 were a lot of fun in fact Austin is still mad at me because I convinced him I was a Ninja. His brother and him were both easy to convince that the guitar picks I always had in my pocket were "Ninja Picks" and could be used to kill a man with the right training. They would run around the house throwing them at each other but a kill was never quite successful. Those were simple days and I miss them. Today Austin and Nick are 14 and 16 and Austin turns 17 in just a few days. all of us have been together for 10 years now and the love runs deep. The love that their mother has taught us all.

This woman is unlike any other. She is still beautiful. She still has that red hair and she still moves like a cat on a mission. And she has many missions. Sometimes many missions in a single day. A day in the life of Tiff is like 10 days in most peoples lives. On any given day Tiff might take a dozen calls from a dozen different women or even men who rely on her to help them thru this maze we call life. She somehow finds time for all of them and they are all grateful. As am I. I am the benefactor of all of her. The ups the downs the exhaustion and the exhilaration. She is deeply spiritual. She has a connection with God that most of us dream of. She knows that there are Angels and I know that she knows. Sometimes she sees them and when I am worthy she tells me about them. She loves to play. And she plays like a child on a playground. Her playground is a poker table and she is fiercely competitive. She is an expert at the game and we respect her for that. She loves it so much that she works for the World Poker Tour as a tournament director in fact as I write this she is in her element running a tournament and when she runs a tourney people flock to be there because she makes everyone feel like they are her best friend and they are. She loves everyone and everyone loves her. She is brilliant and well spoken. She is deeply committed to her recovery as am I and is frequently asked to share her experience as a speaker at Narcotics Anonymous events. She sponsors dozens of women in NA and works a solid program

built from years of doing the 12 steps over and over. She is super passionate about doing service in NA and is well known and respected throughout the program for her experience, strength and hope that she brings to the table of any service position. She has held dozens of service commitments in the program and has served on over 20 CRCNA committees. (Colorado Regional Convention of Narcotics Anonymous). She took meetings into the women's jail at Jefferson County every Thursday night for well over 12 years. She has attended the birth of most of the teenagers that frequent our home today and I have sit next to her at dozens of fallen addicts funerals over the years. Once we got a call that one of her sponsees' mother was about to die. The woman had terminal cancer and her daughter needed Tiff when her mother finally passed. Tiff went there, cleaned up her mother and got the woman dressed for the coroner so she did not have to leave her home in shame. The most amazing part of this: Tiff had never met her.

I am truly blessed to have this incredible woman as my wife. Today we live together, work together and play together and I love her deeply. She taught me how to love like that. We have been to more places and done more things in these 10 years than I could total up in the other 43 years of my life. It is because of her that I



am who I am today. Today I too have many friends. I am clean 22 years now and am too put a lot of time and effort into maintaining this way of life. I am a father too these boys, and a better father to my daughter because of her. I have 7 beautiful grandchildren that I love dearly. I own my own business and I am successful. She believed in everything I ever came up with. The internet thing, the marketing thing, that car thing in the garage, selling life insurance, and junky cars at Papa Franks Auto Plaza! No matter what I did she was right there and now because of her I have found my place in the world.

Thank you Tiffany. I love you.

All for the love of life,
Jeff Schnase



Episode 5
“Family is everything”
August 18, 2014





I am part of a huge family. My father Alfred Theodore Schnase Jr. (Ted) married my mother Carol Sue Ryan well over 50 years ago and my mother was one of 7 children. The Ryan clan has always been a close group and a very large group that has gathered once a year or so for as long as I can remember. According to the elders of the family the get togethers have been happening since the 30s. I personally have wonderful memories that go back better than 40 years. As I write this I am at one of those "Ryan Family Reunion's" on the porch of a very old lodge pole Cabin that sleeps 20 people. There are 26 of us here and all of us love each other very much. The cabin is at The YMCA of the Rockies up above Estes Park, Colorado. The porch is wonderful with a picnic table at one end and a view of the Rocky Mountains that could easily be on the cover of a magazine. I'm settled in under the Ryan Family Reunion banner we fly at every reunion that I myself made well over 15 years ago. (I used to be a sign painter). There is a wonderful cool breeze blowing and it's a nice cool 66 degrees. After weeks of 90 degree plus weather 66 is a welcome change.

This is my second reunion in this old cabin. The last time was 39 years ago. It was one of my favorite reunions. I was 14 and my world was all about girls. I'll never forget several of my female cousins asking me to come to a secret meeting in one of the upstairs bedrooms where they all lined up and one of them said "We all think you're cute and we all want to be your girlfriend so please pick the one you like the best"! On top of that I had to choose the rest in sequence from my favorite to my least favorite. The last one hung her head in shame and I felt awful. It was that weekend I began a torrid teenage long distance love affair with my beautiful cousin Lori until our parents got wind of it and put an end to it a few short months later! Remember how blind love could be at that age?

Back then our reunions were much bigger then and I think there were about 45 of us at that reunion. It was held in the winter between Christmas and New Years so we went skiing, and sledding. We still talk about the toboggan incident where a bunch of the cousins piled into a 6 person toboggan and crashed hard at the bottom of the hill leaving one of them with a broken leg.

It always amazes me how far some of us are willing to travel to be here for example My Aunt Tracy and her Husband Johnny just arrived having traveled all the way from Omaha Nebraska. Also in attendance are my Aunt Beverly and Uncle Steve who traveled all the way from the southern edge of Texas! Most of us got here yesterday afternoon and we had a blast playing board games and cards late into the night. The reunion will end at noon on Sunday and I always wish it would last a lot longer. I lead a very busy life these days and I can feel my heart beating slower the longer I am with this wonderful bunch. There's always a bunch of kids and I spend most of the reunion with them. I've always loved kids and seeing these kids grow up is one of the greatest things I've ever witnessed. Some of the kids have large families of their own now so now we all get to enjoy all these beautiful little souls. One of the best parts of the reunion is being able to bring your kids and just let them run wild. The second you get here you turn them over to the group and all of us watch the kids together. Today I watched about half a dozen kids running and playing for hours until they were



covered in dirt and slap happy with joy. I was one of those kids many years ago and I can remember how fun it was to just play hard till you had nothing left and then snuggle up next to my Dad or my Grandpa Ryan and eat lots of good food until I passed out staring into the camp fire. The family has always been full of lots of talented singers and musicians so the best part is always Saturday night where one by one we entertain each other with songs and stories late into the night. A few years ago I dressed up my entire family in Hee Haw garb and put on a show that culminated in a pie in the face to my fun loving father. We laughed so hard that night that my sides hurt the next day.

When I was young the events were always organized by my Grandfather John Ryan. Grandpa was a wonderful man who had a huge impact on my life. He too was all about the kids and I loved spending time with him as often as possible. All of us would look forward to the events he would plan especially the reunion. He loved to cook and would spend hours in the kitchen cooking up these wonderful feasts.

Grandpa Ryan was full of life. I have so many memories of him. It didn't matter what you were doing if you were with him he had a way of making it fun. My family, (Mom, Dad and my Sister Janet) would travel to see The Ryan's in Colorado Springs as often as possible and without exception these visits were always fun. His house was awesome. We would all gather in the kitchen together and eat, draw pictures, play games or just talk. I can still remember the big art deco table and chairs that sat in that kitchen, the webbed back yard fence, the incinerator where we would burn the trash, and this special place where me and his sons would build forts or dig a swimming pool or just play with our toy trucks. That house on Lancashire St. was a magical fun house where he raised this huge family for what seemed like forever. For some weird reason I still know the phone number there. 598-2958. Sadly cancer took Grandpa early in life and all of us miss him a great deal especially when we have these reunions.

There are so many stories behind this group. Even the facts are astounding. Like this one: My mother was the eldest of the 7 kids and had moved out of the house and had her first son (yours truly) a few months before her mother had her 7th child, Tracy. So when Tracy was born she was my Aunt. Tracy and I grew up together and we used to talk a lot about which one of us would get married and have kids 1st. Well Tracy won that race by a monstrous margin. She married a wonderful guy named Johnny McCoy. Johnny lived on a Cattle Ranch and the wedding was held on that Ranch. It wasn't long and they had their 1st child Beau McCoy. Beau now has several children of his own and just lost the race to be the Governor of Nebraska. He told us from a very young age that someday he'd be President and he is well on his way! You don't dare enter into a conversation about politics with this guy. He will chew you up and spit you out. (In a very polite way)! Soon after Tracy had triplets. One of those triplets was at this year's reunion and had his whole beautiful family of 5 with him. The other 2 have several children each and continue to multiply at an alarming rate. Shortly after the triplets Tracy had her 5th child who also has a family. The entire clan is now 28 strong! Me... I have 1 daughter and she has 2 children with a third on the way, HOWEVER I married Tiffany



who has 5 boys. Sean has one child, Jason has 4, Joe is soon to be married, Austin, well Austin has his very own very special story, and Nicholus is a 170 pound 14 year old who just started High School and will play football for The Green Mountain Rams this year!! So the score is Jeff 14 and Tracy 28. I concede Tracy you win!!

Sometimes I look around and see this huge family that surrounds me and I can't help but think wow! You're a very very blessed man. How many people get to experience the deep love of that many people? If I add my recovery family the list is hundreds of people long! When I married Tiffany we sent out 250 invitations and somewhere around 400 showed up. Life is good. Life is very very good.

All for the love of life,
Jeff Schnase



Episode 6
Sunday, August 24th 2014

"Nicks big day"



I am a native resident of Colorado and I think it was about 1970 when I watched my first Bronco game. I do remember that in those days the Broncos were awful. I'm sure that I will get arguments on this opinion but the way I remember it it wasn't until we signed Craig Morton in 1974 that the Broncos had a chance at appearing in a Super Bowl. And with him they did. It was January 15th 1978 and Morton and his Broncos suffered a demoralizing loss to Roger Staubach and the Dallas Cowboys 27 to 15. I can still remember feeling like it was all slipping away at halftime as we watched the Tyler Junior College perform "from Paris to the Paris of America". Man the halftime shows are a little different now aren't they? I heard last week that the NFL has now decided that whoever plays halftime from now on has to pay them! So far their "invitations" to perform have been declined by several artists! I was 16 that day and I think I had started watching regularly at around 12. Bronco fever was already deeply embedded in me and that loss hurt as if I was out there on the field myself. If only Craig could of run? He, much like Elway was not a scrambler. Oh my god I just realized that we are carrying on that tradition with Manning. The perfect



quarterback? Manning's brain fused to Tebow's body with Elway's arm sewed on. In the future we will genetically engineer these guys with old left over pieces of these tired old quarterbacks. I can't wait!

So I am a dyed in the wool, hard core Bronco fan. I don't watch other football teams play. Why would I do that? I watch the Broncos religiously. In my house Bronco football literally is a religion and I will preach the gospel to anyone who will listen. In the days of Tebow I accepted him into my life as my personal savior. And I successfully saved many Bronco souls who had given up hope still mourning the loss of the great one. John Elway. Tiffany and I have been preparing our home for the 1st game of the regular season by erecting an alter to the Broncos. An entire wall in our living room. Something we are very proud of and during these games Tiffany will carry on her tradition of requesting locks of the viewing audience's hair to present to our "Bronco Buddha". You see we all believe, and we have proven it over and over, that these sacrifices WILL change the outcome of the game. GOD I LOVE THAT WOMAN! This is top secret information but now I'm telling the world. Tiffany, having relocated herself here from Los Angeles, was once a Raider fan and the collective Colorado love of the Broncos has saved the sinner from the depths of evil. Praise the Denver Broncos! Can I hear an Amen?

Nicholus is our 14 year old and we've dressed him up in Bronco gear since he was a little boy. Like myself he really started paying attention to football a few years ago. Right away he started begging us to let him play football which I was all for but his mother was afraid he would get hurt so year after year the answer was no until finally this year she finally gave in.

This year is a big year for Nick. His first year in high school and he has been begging us to let him go to Green Mountain High even though we moved to the Bear Creek district earlier in the year. He could almost walk there from our new home but he kept after us because not only did he want to play football for Green Mountain, (the school system that not only he but both his older brothers all have been in all their lives), but his girlfriend also lives in the Green Mountain area and goes to Green Mountain high. This is the love of his life and he has loved her since 2nd grade. They are the perfect couple, she being a beautiful petite blonde on the softball team and he the handsome brunette running back/ linebacker for the football team. They are like the teenage version of Barbie and Ken and they are deeply in love. I have admired this relationship for years and we all agree. These two are soul mates.

And so early this summer we begin the football dream of this awesome kid. A kid who is worth the effort. A kid who is smart and respectful. A kid who we are very proud of. Is he perfect? No. But when he makes a mistake in life he takes the advice he receives from us and the other adults in his life seriously and he makes the appropriate changes to right the ship and keep sailing.



I played football myself as a young boy and I never realized the incredible commitment it took on my parents part, the coaches, the schools and myself. In the little town I grew up in playing football is just what everyone did. I don't have any memory of the fees, the expense of the equipment and I never really got what a big deal it was that my mother was in the stands of every sporting event I ever played in. I didn't just play football. I played baseball, I was a member of the competitive swimming team, I played basketball, I was on the track team and I was a member of the Burlington Cougar wrestling team. I did this every year thru 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade and I played baseball from the time I was old enough to swing a bat. Pee wee, little league and babe Ruth league.

High School Football is an American tradition. I really never saw it like I do today. There is an incredible amount of time and money put into this sport on every level. The program at Green Mountain High School has everything the pros have or at least it seems like it. They have "trainers" who are responsible for the well being of the kids and the coaching staff is huge with what appears to be about a dozen coaches. So we do it. We signed him up early this summer and it all began with a special meeting to educate us on how all of this works. Nicholas was super excited to be there and as I sat there with him listening to the coaches and the trainers break it all down I realized this was a great way to keep a kid in line. A great tool for the community and parents to keep a kid like Nick off the streets and focused on something super positive. It was amazing to listen to these people so dedicated to the sport talk about the rules, how they kept track of all the kids grades and helped the kids to stay on the straight and narrow path. When I was a kid no one told me that if I was caught smoking I would never be allowed to play Burlington Cougar sports. Maybe if they had I would have made better choices.

Nick began a routine almost right away of daily weight training classes and mini camps. Suddenly we were shipping him off to the High School every day. There was a huge list of things he needed. Cleats, gloves (expensive gloves), training shoes and running shoes. It was crazy. And just when we thought he was done there was more stuff he needed. He needed a "girdle". My mom wore girdles when I was a kid and this was nothing like her girdle. When he brought the thing home it was so cool I wanted to put it on and run around the house and slam into things to see if it really would insure me of being able to create more of these food eating, sports playing machines I have in my house we call sons. Do you know what it cost to feed a 170 pound 14 year old? I do. Its \$14,000 a month. But he's worth it. So I do it. I'm thinking of buying a grocery store to save money.

Nick worked hard and he took his fitness very seriously. At one point he had decided to participate not only in the weight training everyday but he was also going to join a boxing gym 2 nights a week. The 1st day he had to do weight training and boxing in the same day he changed his mind thank God. So the summer was filled with transporting him back and forth from home to the High School, from there to his summer job at our car dealership where he would work with me till 7 or 8 every night. I put him to work on a landscaping



project at the dealership and he worked hard in the heat of every day to get it completed. By the time the first practice came around in August Nicholas was in great shape. The coach, in his infinite wisdom decided that day to try and weed out the weak and I'm sure there were more than a few kids who considered throwing in the towel because he ran wind sprints until these kids had nothing left. I arrived to pick him up that day at 5:30 as instructed and the coach still had them on the field and kept them there for another 30 minutes. It wasn't until it was all over that I picked Nick out of the crowd approaching me with a limp in obvious pain mentally and physically. He left it all out there on the field and after a visit to the trainer's office we learned that he had a deep groin pull and would not be allowed to practice the rest of the week! He was devastated. To add insult to injury he was also singled out by the head coach and the Varsity quarterback and accused of faking his injury in order to relieve himself from the grueling workout. It was his older brother's birthday that day and so we went straight to Red Lobster from the High School. He was so shook up it took a couple hours before he could really even begin to display normal behavior. I really had no idea how to console him thru this ordeal but I tried and there was really nothing but time that could heal this emotional wound he had suffered.

Our Family reunion was scheduled for that upcoming weekend so Nick did not participate in practice until the following Monday. He refused to admit that he was still hurting because the 1st big scrimmage was coming up in 3 days and he desperately wanted to play. And play he did. The whole thing was amazing. The field was just like the new state of the art artificial grass fields the pros play on. In my days of football a scrimmage meant the Burlington Cougars played each other and no one showed up to watch. This scrimmage was at "Trailblazer Stadium". They had referees and even the Green Mountain Cheerleaders showed up to cheer on their team. Nicholas only played a few plays before he unfortunately reinjured his groin but it might as well have been the Super bowl for me. Me and the other parents, some of whom I've known for years from sitting in the stands watching our older son play Green Mountain Ram baseball all sat and watched our children play. My friend David was so proud of his son Jessy who being the smallest player on the team got the call to be the 1st string quarterback and he was awesome. Weighing in at maybe 100

pounds and standing about 5 foot tall meant that he had to throw or run UNDER the other kids. It was awesome to watch.

So the big moment comes..... Nick lines up behind Jessy as a running back. I couldn't help but marvel at his big strong legs and his muscular body that stood out above the other boys. He took his 1st snap and lumbered around the right end being hit at the line of scrimmage and shaking the kid off. A couple more steps and he shakes off the second tackle. Finally 3 kids all grab him at the same time and it took all three to bring the big man down!! A simple 7 yard run that might have been the greatest moment of his life and it was almost as big for me. Apparently one of those kids planted his helmet right in the middle of Nicks groin injury which quickly put his night to an end. He ran a few more plays but it was obvious that he needed to



be removed from the field before things got worse and that's exactly what the coach did.

Nicholus is not happy that he has reinjured himself and has been sitting out of practice all week. He most likely will not play in tomorrow night's season opener against Greeley High School but there is one thing for sure. He will be fun to watch. And I will be there religiously just like my Mother was for me.

Thank you Nicholus Jones for giving me the son I always dreamt of. A son who shares my love for so many things like fast cars, Football and Tiffany Schnase. I love you.

All for the love of life,
Jeff Schnase



