



# A.L.L.

November 2009

## *Newsletter from the Association for Light and Life*

Featuring our friend and brother,  
**William Jennings "Bill" Bryan, Jr.**

### "Children of Human Race"

A Hymn, sung to the tune: 'Aberystwyth'

Children of the human race,  
off-spring of our Mother Earth,  
not alone in endless space  
has our planet given birth.

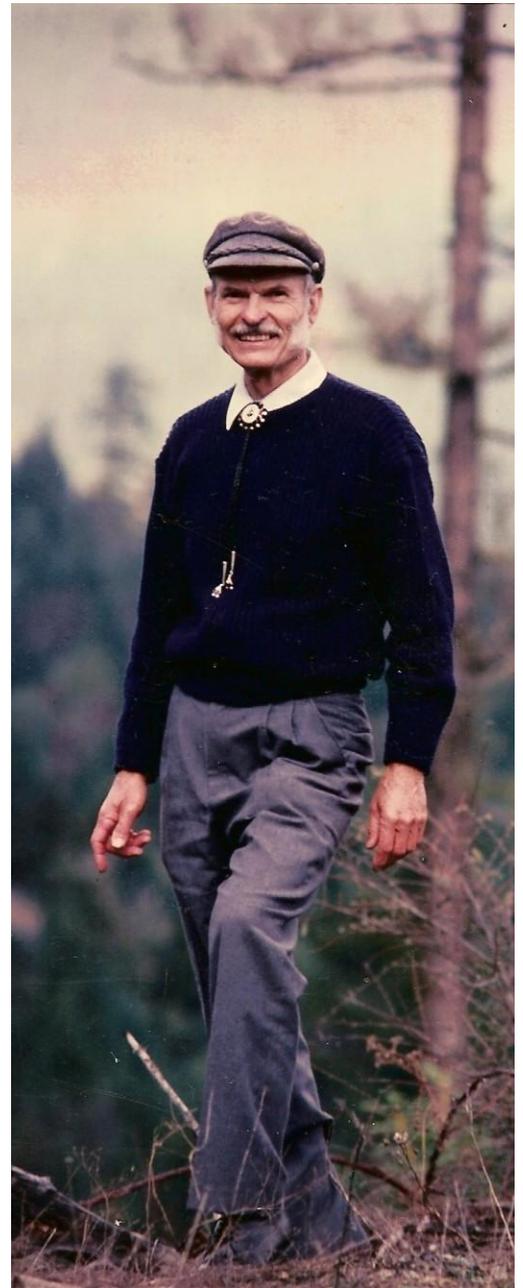
Far across the cosmic skies  
countless suns in glory blaze,  
and from untold planets rise  
endless canticles of praise.

Should some sign of others reach  
this, our lonely planet Earth,  
differences of form and speech  
must not hide our common worth.

When at length our minds are free,  
and the clouds of fear disperse,  
then at last we'll learn to be  
Children of the Universe.)

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=565>

references the poem that Bill so often recited. He found it in a Unitarian Hymnal but before this UUA Hymnal was published, i.e., before 1993 because he recited it for Eugenia in 1988. The lyrics are apparently written by J A Storey. These are the original words, which Bill slightly altered. Nevertheless it is his inspiration.



## **Personal History of Bill Bryan Contributed by his wife Eugenia**

Bill was born in Osage County, Kansas, August 14, 1922, the firstborn son of farmers, William Jennings and Sylvia Bryan. He had one sister and two brothers. His sister is deceased. He raised five wonderful children and they all appreciate him and are very supportive of me. He has four now living; his oldest son died in 2005. Daughters Rita Fincher and son Randy live in Medford OR, Lois Kershaw lives in Snoqualmie WA and youngest, Beth Dickson lives in Topeka. Their mother died almost two years ago after about three years of nursing home care for her Parkinson's-like dementia. Beth oversaw her care during this time so she is a pro at dementia relationships!

Bill was an Army Air Corps gunnery instructor for 4 years during WWII but did not serve overseas. He went to KSU on the GI Bill and graduated in 1949 with a degree in Industrial Arts Education. He loved anything mechanical and loved to design and build things. He could work with machines, wood, electrical and plumbing. He was a master gardener and loved to share his vegetables and flowers with people. He built his own home from the ground up when his boys were teenagers. He was a hot air balloonist. He was curious, complicated, enthusiastic, multi-talented and loved to tell stories, recite poetry and sing. He played the harmonica; people asked him to play often, but they had to keep track of the harmonica itself as Bill liked to put it in his pocket. Bill had some great poems.

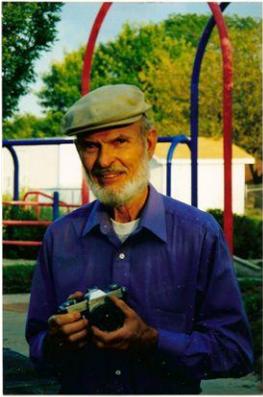
He earned his living in many ways -- always choosing challenge and interesting things to do. He worked for the KS Rehab Center for the Blind in the early years, building equipment to test skills that the blind might have for their employment. He worked for Coleman Industries on research projects regarding weightlessness and pilot trajectory devices that have been incorporated into NASA systems. He taught middle school math and science in Oregon. And he worked his final years as an Agricultural Chemist for KS.

**Partners:** Bill's first marriage was a result of a wartime romance that didn't work out. His second wife bore his children and left him after 23 years of marriage, a devastating experience. His third wife was diagnosed with cancer shortly after they married, rendering him a fulltime. I, Eugenia, was his fourth wife! I married him in 1989. We were very happy and had many very wonderful experiences. We traveled a lot, both in the USA and abroad, to Japan, Europe, Costa Rica several times. I enjoyed his adventuresome, creative spirit immensely. We worked so well together that much of our life together seemed "seamless" in terms of partnership.

**Health:** Bill and his brother Charles were enrolled in the research project that studies families exhibiting late onset AD (the LOAD study at Indiana U-Purdue U). In addition to genetic studies of their DNA, the project also collects and researches other members of the family to detect common genes associated with AD. Mayo Clinic is also including the Bryan family in their studies of the connections between AD and gluten intolerance-both Bill and Charles had celiac disease as do many of their mother's side of the family and some of their own children. Their mother was never diagnosed but did obviously suffer from both celiac sprue and Alzheimer's in her later years. Charles' wife Evelyn and I consented to have Charles and Bill's brains autopsied at Indiana U after their death. We await further information on that. Future generations need to know what they can about this condition that has come to be known as "the long goodbye."

**Religion:** Bill began life in a tight fundamental Free Methodist family (remember his ancestor was William J. Bryan who ran for president on the Populist ticket a century ago). But he was a seeker and explored many churches to find the right one. He became existential and believed mostly in the simplicity of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The Urantia Book suited him. His religion was based on a personal relationship with God. God dwelt within him and was always available. He found the Peace that Passes Understanding and he didn't want to miss anything on the way to the Resurrection Halls of Mansonia.

Here is Bill, with his camera, taking pictures of his life.



Then ... after a while ... he met and married Eugenia



Here he is as a Very Young Man



They lived in Lawrence, Kansas



Here he is with his kids on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday



Still Pretty Young



## Home on the Range

Many times the family would gather together, his grandson on guitar, Bill on harmonica, and family playing other rhythm instruments as we all sang songs, notably **Home on the Range**. The significant verse is this one:

*How often at night where the heavens are bright  
With the light of the glittering stars  
Have I stood there amazed and asked as I gazed  
If their glory exceeds that of ours*

*Home, home on the range  
Where the deer and the antelope play  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word  
And the skies are not cloudy all day*



(What IS that thing around his neck?)

As a child growing up on a farm with limited worldly interaction, Bill and family would lie on the hayrack looking up at the stars for simple entertainment, probably something every rural family did from the beginning of time. Bill, a curious child with many questions, would wonder about other planets, other living beings made by a wondrous God. "Are we alone in the universe?" was a burning question that his

family and church family could not answer to his satisfaction. He would ask and their answer was, "If God had wanted us to know, He would tell us." And that was enough for them but not Bill. His next response was, "If I were God and I had a little boy who wanted to know, I would *tell* him!" This signifies that he wanted to know more at a very early age. And he was so open to current revelation.

At 18, he left home under the tutelage of a blessed uncle who was a medical doctor; his dad's youngest brother had achieved the most education of all his aunts and uncles. This uncle pointed Bill in the direction of pursuing an education beyond high school and exploring his desire to learn. Then WWII intervened and with some college course work plus work experience at Boeing in Wichita with building airplanes, he was drafted into the Army Air Corps at age 19.

He wanted in the worst way to fly! And he started as a pilot trainee but realized that he did not have the killer instinct in him that would make him a successful warrior for his country. So he requested and was granted a different assignment: he taught other people to shoot guns from airplanes. He hated war and became a lifelong pacifist but not a pushover kind of guy. He did what he had to do and continued his quest for more and more. Spiritually, he was hungry for greater understanding. The UB led him to personal religion which was between him and God alone. Over time, he found that God resided WITHIN.

After the war, he married and started a family. He went to Kansas State U and tied his extensive mechanical skills to a degree in Industrial Arts Education. The GI Bill was a blessing for his future and he appreciated it as his reward for service to his country. He wanted to build his own family based on goodness. After college, he first worked in Topeka with the blind, helping them gain employable skills.

But he was restless, wanted more adventure and meaning in his life. He became a Mormon and took his young family to Utah so that they could live in the supportive atmosphere of a Mormon community.

He got a job with Coleman Industries, which was secret and of great interest to him. It was technically related to flying, and the research did contribute eventually to the beginnings of NASA. The research grant ended, he needed work and the Mormon friends he had began to advise him that his exploratory interests in UFO's that began with the Roswell incident were not to the liking of a person who was an Elder in the Mormon Church (he was an Elder by this time).

He decided that no one person or institution could tell him what he could or could not do or study. So he left Utah and the church pretty much at that point which was now around 1960. He had found the UB and was reading it alone. His wife was not interested. He eventually shared it with his brother Charles who became a reader too. But he was on his own for a long time reading and thinking "big thoughts".

He went to the wilds of Oregon where he and his sons built their own home from the ground up. He began his life again from scratch and eventually landed a job teaching middle school science. The UB had helped him settle once and for all that there was no conflict between science and evolution. His creative mind led to some amazing teaching methods which some of his students said inspired them (there was an article many years later published in an Oregon paper written by one of his former students, a journalist).

He studied oceanography in the Northwest summertime. He explored his UFO interests. He met hippies running from the draft passing through the wilds of Oregon. He once again met people in authority who disapproved of his activities. He despaired. Yet he came to terms with himself as a beloved child of God around this time. This was when all that he had learned through the UB and life experiences came together for him.

He bought his huge SEMCO balloon, a long time dream and learned how to fly it. It was called the Pride of Oregon. His wife did not like it one bit. It seems he was often a misfit but always an interesting person to those who would listen to him. He knew his interests were not

going to allow him to continue teaching in that small community or even continue to live there. So he came back to Kansas and landed a job as an Agricultural chemist for the State. He bought an undeveloped piece of land in Scranton and built another paradise from scratch.

## The Childlike Bill Bryan

Bill did not lose his music memory or skills playing the harmonica until the very last few months. He gave great joy to other patients and multiple caretakers reciting poetry and making music throughout his confinement of 2 years! He always got attention and gave out huge smiles and hugs as often as possible. He wanted interaction with people to the end, and his music and poetry were the vehicles. He was reciting Children of the Universe all the way up to the door. Where did this childish thought about a huge universe full of children of God take him? A long ways!



This is Bill with Zeke, the scarecrow he made in 1991. Zeke adorns the yard and garden every year. Neighborhood kids love Zeke. He has helped sell zinnias for the church and helped give out Halloween candy. We have had a lot of fun with Zeke over the years. Zeke is just one example of Bill's fun-making.

And that thing around his neck! A faux cobra!

## **I do. I do! I Do! I DO!!!!**

Bill had four marriages. The first lasted three months, a WWII disaster when he was about 20. The obit doesn't even mention this one.

His second wife, Elnor, shared a similar background to his when they met. According to him and his children, she was a wonderful mother, and I can confirm that she was a genuinely lovely woman because I met her years later. As oft is the case with young marriages, their interests changed; she left, they divorced and she remarried soon thereafter. I think his adventurousness wore her out, but in my case, it was an attractive feature in his character.

They raised five very wonderful people. There are two sons and three daughters (see obit for names and note that his oldest son died in 2005 of kidney failure). He built playgrounds for them and taught them how to work (you should have heard his kids' tribute at the services as they mentioned how hard and how disciplined they were). They basically practiced a Mormon family lifestyle as Bill and Elnor converted to Mormonism as a young couple. Why was Bill attracted? Simple. They believed in on-going revelation from God. He was on such a quest at an early age.

His marriage disintegrated. His kids were pretty much grown up. He eventually met Marie, his third wife, who certainly needed him at that point in her life. Shortly after their marriage, she was diagnosed with cancer and for 8 of their 11 years of their time together was mostly looking for a cure and accepting the inevitability of her death and dying. The UB helped him greatly with all of this but Marie could not overcome her Catholic beliefs, though she tried valiantly. She read the book with him and was also a Charter Member of the Heart of America Urantia Society which formed in 1988. She died shortly after that. And I came into his life.

I first met Bill at the visitation for her services! I kid you not. The reason I was there is that one of her daughters was a former roommate of one of my daughters and she had sort of adopted me as

another mother. Elizabeth, his step-daughter made sure that we saw one another again soon thereafter -- she was the only one who knew us both rather well and saw the possibilities! That's my story anyway. Bill always said that he met me "not a minute too soon" and laughed. We both had recently lost a spouse, which was the common thread in the moment, but, it was more complicated than that. We had many common interests including our spiritual natures. Bill had been reading the Urantia Book for 30 years. He came with it tucked under his arm, so I got what I call a "package deal." His story is in How I Found the Urantia Book by Saskia Raevouri.

Anyway, he found the Book, a first edition, at Giant Rock CA at a UFO meeting, 1957 or 58. He read it alone for around 10 years before he found another reader. It changed his life and, ultimately, it changed mine, but I'd never heard of it until he, with knees knocking, showed it to me very soon after we met. He asked me what topic I wanted most to know about. No problem! I looked up atonement on page 60, and saw in print what I already knew but I was never able to speak such heresy to anyone for probably 30 some years because I felt I had no authority or ability to defend what I just "knew." I wasn't instantly hooked on the rest of the book, but I decided right then that if this book meant that much to him and it had helped him arrive at such peace, I sure ought to take a look. Soon after, I met his Urantia friends at meetings and study groups. The rest is history. I can now say that I was ready for the book but didn't know I was looking for it at the time!

Bill and I had talents that made our marriage a real partnership from the start. We lived 45 miles apart; one of the first weekends he visited me, he brought beautiful veggies and flowers from his garden, fixed my rattling door knob, and then said after lunch, "Hmm, if I'd brought my chain saw with me, I could take that dead branch out of your tree for you." I thought, "This is the man for me!!!" My first husband had let that danged door knob rattle for years. That was my first clue that I could actually WORK with this guy! Indeed, we did work well together. WE did what WE decided WE could do -- but with God's help, of course.

**The Obituary of**  
**William Jennings**  
**“Bill” Bryan, Jr.**

1922 - 2009

**Memorial services** for William “Bill” Jennings Bryan Jr., 87, of Lawrence, Kansas, were held at 2:30 p.m. Oct. 11 at Trinity Episcopal Church. Graveside inurnment services were at 1:30 p.m. Oct. 12 at Penwell-Gabel Memorial Park Cemetery in Topeka. Mr. Bryan died Friday, Sept. 11, 2009, at Brandon Woods at Alvamar. He was born Aug. 14, 1922, in Osage County, the son of William and Sylvia Faye Sell Bryan.

He graduated from Carbondale High School. Mr. Bryan received a BA degree in Industrial Arts from Kansas State University in 1949. He served in the Army Air Corps during WW II. Mr. Bryan worked at the Kansas Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and, later, at Coleman Industries. He was a math and science teacher at the middle school in Cave Junction, Oregon. Mr. Bryan worked as a chemist for the State of Kansas Department of Agriculture in Topeka before retiring.

Mr. Bryan was an active member of The Lions Club and had been a City Commissioner for the city of Scranton. He was a charter member of the Heart of America Urantia Society and also a member of the Kaw Valley Organic Garden Club. Mr. Bryan was the first licensed hot air balloonist in the State of Kansas. He was an avid gardener and woodworker.

He married Elnor Tooley in Hastings, Neb., in 1945. They were married for 26 years. He later married Marie Goodman in April 1977. She preceded him in death in July 1988. Mr. Bryan later married Eugenia H. Leasure Sullivan on May 28, 1989, at Danforth Chapel. She survives, of the home.

Other survivors include three daughters, Rita Faye Fincher and husband Neil, Medford, Ore.,

Lois Louise Kershaw and husband Kobi, Snoqualmie, Wash., and Beth Ellen Dickson, Topeka; a son, Randall Ray and wife Linda, Central Point, Ore.; a daughter-in-law, Abbie Bryan, Medford, Ore.; a brother, James D. and wife Laurel; a sister-in-law, Evelyn Bryan; seven stepdaughters, Lauren Sullivan, Santa Cruz, Calif., Genie Marie Sullivan, Lawrence, Martha Sullivan, Prague, Kathy Frazer, California, Patty Duke, Bolivar, Mo., Elizabeth Miles, Dragoon, Ariz., and Deborah Cox, Lancaster, Calif.; five stepsons, Kevin Sullivan and wife Connie, Hiratsuka, Japan, David Farrington, San Pedro, Calif., Michael Farrington, Reno, Nev., Tim Schwartz, Sparks, Nev., and John Schwartz, Sparks, Nev.; eight grandchildren, Neil, Steven, Challan, Korbin, William, Jon Paul, Andrew and Luke; and two step-grandchildren, Rowan and Mika. He was preceded in death by a son, William B.; a brother, Charles E.; and a sister, Nina Mae Kieffer.

The family suggests memorials to the Nature Conservancy of Kansas and Foxhall Endowment Fund, <http://www.foxhallfund.com>, sent in care of Warren-McElwain Mortuary.

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Eugenia and Bill at Canossian UB/TeaM  
Retreat, February 2005, Albuquerque, NM

## How to Create a Successful Organization

For those in service mode, here are some pointers on how to create a successful organization:

- Develop and build a mailing list, both members and prospects. The latter are arguably more important.
- Have a continuing membership drive.
- Send regular news and information re members and projects, be a vital organization. Have a website.
- Network with similar groups; publicize each other and try to develop joint projects and sponsorships.
- Have a lively and sharing online community. Facilitate sharing.
- Continuous call for donors. Solicit business plan proposals for spirit projects at the same time in a coordinated approach.
- Find and use new venues: Cross fertilize with peer groups to foster good will and relationship with the greater community.
- Advertise the website, a vital key.
- Show up, step up, and speak up. In keeping, the ALL Newsletter has

## A NEW FEATURE

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.** Can we talk? Let the dialog begin! Let's hear from you. Get interactive. Complain. Praise. Spread the word. Break down the barriers. Build community. Mail yours to ALL Newsletter Editor [Gerdean@cableone.net](mailto:Gerdean@cableone.net).

**ALL is about associations** – which includes friendships as well as organizations. The Association for Light and Life benefits from your input, especially in terms of your service projects. Let us know what you dream of doing, what you plan to do, what you are doing, and what you did. We are eager to hear from the readership and would *really* love some photos!

## Our Loss, Heaven's Gain

**Mary Jo Colegrove**, known to us in the Teaching Mission as Esmeralda, primary hostess of the Rio Rancho Teaching Mission, left on October 21 for the Resurrection Halls of Mansonia. She had fallen on October 15, breaking several ribs and puncturing her spleen. The doctors were confident she would rally and recover, but Mary Jo seemed determined to use this as her ticket to ride into the Mansonia receiving station.

Her brother is Hal Bynum, husband of Rebecca, of the Nashville TeaM. Her daughters, Dorenda (known in TeaM transcripts as Elena, the gal who plays the piano) and Deborah (known in TeaM transcripts as Miriam, attends the Woods Cross group) tended to their mother round the clock during that final week. The three women were Very Close, and it will be a real loss for both daughters, indeed a loss for us all.



Mary Jo was a wonderful woman, a great hostess, an avid sports fan, a loyal Democrat, a good friend, a thoughtful neighbor, a loving mother, an enthusiastic student of the Teachers, especially Ham, Abraham, Tomas and Merium, and close to her personal teacher Celene, who carried her over the threshold. Bon Voyage!