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Former Bay Street money manager starts new chapter with Canadian MoneySaver

By Rose Simone, Record staff

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KITCHENER — Peter Hodson spent 25 years in the investment business, much of it in the high pressure Bay Street environment in Toronto. By most measures, he thrived.

The 48-year-old Kitchener resident has been a bond analyst, stock analyst, mutual fund manager and hedge fund manager. He rose through the ranks at several companies, coming to Kitchener when he started his career at Mutual Life in 1994, and ending up as chair of Sprott Asset Management, one of Canada's leading investment firms.

But there was a problem: "I didn't really enjoy it that much," Hodson says.

Bay Street "wasn't my kind of place," he says.

"There are a lot of greedy people on Bay Street and they are greedy at the expense of smaller investors."

So last September Hodson left Sprott and turned his back on the Bay Street. He bought [Canadian MoneySaver](#), a 31-year-old magazine that is free of financial industry ads and is dedicated to helping individual investors with practical, common sense advice.

The magazine was started by a Kingston area couple, Dale and Betty Ennis, from their kitchen table in Toronto. Now, they are staying on the masthead and providing guidance to Hodson, who has moved the magazine's headquarters to offices on King Street in Kitchener.

Hodson also runs 5i Research Inc. in Kitchener, a company that provides stock advice on a membership basis that is "conflict free" in that it doesn't sell any stocks, but just provides advice.

With Canadian MoneySaver, Hodson says he is finally doing what he longed to do. "I just feel investors need help. With my background, I can help them and I don't need to charge them money other than for the subscriptions," he says. "I no longer need to manage their money and I don't want to sell them anything they don't need."



Rec-Canadianmoneysaver-27. Peter Hodson, former chair of Sprott Asset Management, now runs the Canadian MoneySaver magazine from an office in Kitchener. Robert Wilson/Record staff Source: Record staff

As he explained in his first column in Canadian MoneySaver, the financial industry can be ruthless. "I f all the sales gimmicks and poor products thrust down the throats of investors by aggressive brokers, ii bankers and fund companies."

Hodson says he liked the challenge of the working on Bay Street and the ever-changing fast-paced environment. But "let's put it this way: After 25 years in the business, there are not many people I kn who I would want to keep having beers with."

He was attracted to Canadian MoneySaver because it operates as an independent, membership-funder magazine, dedicated to the concept of giving people good advice in a financial world where common se doesn't always prevail. "Most of the writers just believe in a basic investment philosophy of do the righ don't do stupid things, do your homework and don't pay a lot of fees," he says.

The magazine, usually containing about 42 pages, carries no ads and is striking in its sheer simplicity. nine issues a year.

Canadian MoneySaver, which also has an online presence, currently employs five people, including Ho the founders. Hodson says he's thrilled to have the founders on board to help "until they are ready to loose."

For three years early in his career, Hodson wrote for a bi-weekly newsletter called the Money Reporter put out by MPL Communications. So he has "come full circle," except now he has to learn the publishir software used in today's computerized environment.

Writers contribute articles for free. They are financial advisers and experts who are interested in puttir names out there. But they are discouraged from becoming too self-promotional in the articles, Hodson

Subscriptions are \$24.95 a year for print or online versions or \$37.43 a year for both print and online . The magazine also sells for \$3.95 an issue at bookstores such as Chapters or Indigo.

Canadian MoneySaver covers a wide range of topics. The January issue, for example, included articles investing in emerging markets, estate planning, cautions about borrowing to invest, reverse initial pub offerings and a column on the costs of downsizing into a condo.

Hodson says the magazine tries to walk the line between not being too steeped in jargon, yet giving u: advice to seasoned investors.

The middle of the magazine consists of charts, listing the performance data on the top mutual funds in The charts are a lot of work to put together, but Hodson says readers love them and the founders wari "Don't you dare take that out."

The subscribers are mostly middle-aged and older. A lot of them might have advisers, such as stock bi financial planners, but they want to see what someone else saying, Hodson says. People look at it for 1 insurance planning, and "a lot of advisers look at it to keep track of what others in the business are sa

The magazine doesn't release its subscription numbers, but "it is growing," Hodson says. He adds that magazine is committed to never selling its mailing list, to protect its investor readers from unwanted advertising.

"We may be giving up revenue but what we get back is loyalty. We have customers who have been with us for 30 years."

Hodson plans to improve some of the marketing and update the magazine a bit, and he is considering events like educational seminars. But the magazine has worked so well for more than 30 years he will be careful about any changes.

Running the magazine is a far cry from the hectic Bay Street world and not nearly as lucrative, but Hodson is much happier. Even though he worked from home for one or two days a week when he was with Sprout, he has a lot of commuting to Toronto and is glad that's over. But more important, he gets satisfaction from helping individual investors save money.

"If I can save one person \$5,000 because they didn't do something stupid, that's my goal, and if I can help them more, that's great," he says.

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