

He also spent stints managing Belleville Opticians — owned by American Optical — at the Bay View Mall and later, Imperial Optical at the same mall.

Fry went out on his own in the early 1990s by contracting his services to various optical companies in an area stretching from Trenton to Brockville.

"I filled in for opticians whenever they needed me," he recalled. He did that until decided to call it quits last month.

"My 51 years in the business have been really satisfying. I've always looked forward to going to work," said Fry.

With a half-century in the optical business, Fry has seen a lot of changes.

Perhaps the biggest innovation was the move to plastic from

glass lenses.

"When they (plastic lenses) first came out some 30 years ago, they were prone to scratch easily. But they're now much safer lenses because of all the fantastic improvements made to them over the years," he said.

Automation has also changed the way Fry prepared prescription lenses.

"When I started in the business, everything was done by hand, like grinding lenses to fit the frames. That's all done now automatically by computerized automation."

Another advancement has been the introduction of progressive bifocal lenses which don't have the distinguishable line.

Technology has been a big boost to anyone needing to wear glasses, said Fry.

"It's expanded the capabilities of lenses so that you can customize lenses to whatever purpose the person needs it for."

As for retirement, Fry said he plans on keeping busy.

He's spending a couple of days a week helping with the restoration of the Halifax bomber at CFB Trenton. He's also involved with community policing, United Way and the Probus Club.

He has one other passion besides woodworking.

Fry has given blood 113 times at local blood donor clinics and plans on continuing with that tradition for a few more years.