

Chris Hystad

A Memorial

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To the memory of my son, Chris Hystad

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Prologue

This is a Memorial for Chris, who left us much too soon. It is a brief summary of some of the highlights of his life and character, with many photographs to enhance the words.

Chris died due to “complications” of bipolar disorder, at age 53. This Memorial attempts to show the adverse impacts of bipolar disorder on Chris’ life, as well as his ability to overcome much of that disability. It provides examples of the good and happy times in Chris’ life, about his optimism, his empathy and kindness, his ability to become friends with almost everyone he met, and his good heart.

Bipolar disorder is a mental condition that causes abnormal mood swings, between deep depression and mania, which frequently make it difficult for a victim to live a productive and happy life. To be diagnosed as bipolar, there needs to be at least one significant manic episode. People with bipolar disorder often go undiagnosed and suffer for years without treatment, as the condition worsens with age. Chris’ suffered from the disorder for about 20 years before he was diagnosed.

Through the years there has been much misunderstanding regarding Chris’ medical problem or whether he even had a medical problem. Some believed he had an addiction to alcohol. Some believed he was unduly influenced by friends who were leading him astray. Some believed his marriage was to blame. Some believed he was just irresponsible. And maybe some believed all of the above. One goal of this Memorial is to provide a more accurate view of Chris and the impacts of the disorder.

This Memorial may dwell on Chris’ disability more than many readers would prefer, but it dominated Chris’ adult life. It affected his relationships with others, his ability to study and learn, his success in business, his prospects as an employee, and his happiness with life. The impacts of the disorder probably were not very

different from the impacts of more visible disabilities, such as congenital heart disease, or repetitive strokes, or muscular dystrophy. It is not possible to have a proper description or understanding of Chris' adult life without understanding the impacts of bipolar disorder.

It is hoped that this Memorial will be of interest and enjoyment for members of Chris' family and his friends who can relive precious moments with Chris and maybe learn new information about his life, his hopes and dreams, and his challenges.

The first two chapters of this Memorial describe Chris' life up until he was about 21, while he was free of disease, and pretty much a normal happy, rambunctious, curious, and ambitious boy. The next two chapters describe his 32 adult years, when his life began to be dominated by his disability, but his basic nature still shone through.

The final chapter provides an overview of the best of Chris, speculation on what we might have missed, and a plea that his descendants will understand, respect and honor Chris and his life.

Chapter 1:

Early Youth, 1961 to 1973

Chris was born in Minnesota and then quickly moved with his parents to Chicago, then to Washington, DC, and then to London, England, before settling in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC .

Minnesota

Christopher Carlyle Hystad was born at 9:26 p.m. on August 18, 1961, in St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota. His father, Carlyle, was in Graduate School at the University of Minnesota at the time, and his mother, Jan, was employed by the Veterinary Medicine Department at the University. The family was living at 2071 E. Hoyt Avenue West, Falcon Heights, MN.

Chris was the second child and first son of Carlyle and Jan. He had an older sister, named Cheryl, who was three years old when Chris was born. His parents were 23 years old at the time of his birth.

Chris was an energetic and rambunctious baby, either on the move or sleeping. He was very curious, and as he became old enough to crawl or scoot around he needed to be watched at all times to make sure he did not explore something that would be injurious.

Chris was adored by his parents and sister. His father fantasized that he would grow up to be famous, maybe as a sports star, or government leader, or famous inventor. He had bright red hair and lots of freckles, taking after his mother who had similar red hair and freckles in her youth.



The photo above was taken in the yard of the barracks where Chris lived with his family, in married student housing of the University of Minnesota.

It is likely that Chris did not receive any “helicopter” parenting treatment during these months. His mother soon went back to her job at the University, and his father was taking a full load of studies in his graduate program, as well as working about 20 hours per week as Executive Director of the Student Project for Amity Among Nations. Cheryl and Chris were cared for by a babysitter who came to the family house each weekday morning to care for the children until Jan returned home from work.

The family lived in University of Minnesota married student housing, in what was called Grove East, that was located just across Cleveland Avenue from the St. Paul campus of the University. Jan was able to walk to her job at the University, and Carlyle rode the University shuttle bus that ran through the housing complex between the St. Paul campus and the Minneapolis campus where he was working for his Master’s degree in Russian Area Studies.

In June of 1962, Carlyle had completed his studies for his Master's degree, had completed the required Master's degree Thesis, on Industrial Management in the Soviet Union, and had passed the oral exam. He had been interviewed by several potential employers, and had also been offered a full scholarship toward a PhD degree, from the Ford Foundation and the University of Indiana. He and Jan decided he should accept the employment offer from the United States Atomic Energy Commission. He was to report for work at his first post at an AEC office near Chicago, IL, on June 29th.

Prior to leaving for Chicago, the family was able to visit their parents (and grandparents) in Watford City, North Dakota. The photo below shows Chris and Cheryl with both sets of grandparents, Duncan and Norma Campbell, and Esther and Carl Hystad.



The family packed up their few belongings into a U-Haul trailer hitched to their 1954 Ford car, and headed for Chicago.

Chicago, Illinois

Chris was ten months old when the family moved to a suburb of Chicago named Park Forest. They were able to rent a nice two-bedroom townhouse for the three months Carlyle would be working at the Chicago office of the Atomic Energy Commission. Chris had become expert at crawling around the floors and attempting to go up the stairs, and he was practicing walking, taking a few steps, usually near a place where he could hang on with at least one hand. The photo below shows Chris at the front steps of the townhouse, considering how he was going to climb the stairs.



Now that Carlyle had a real job and was earning a real paycheck, Jan could stop working outside the home. She worked taking care of Cheryl and Chris and the house, while Carlyle went off to “work”. His work was more like a vacation after the pressure of getting his Master’s degree. His work consisted mainly of watching movies and reading material describing the workings and history of atomic energy and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Park Forest at that time was an outer suburb of Chicago, farther south than Chicago Heights. The AEC office was located next to the Argonne National Laboratory, in a western suburb of Chicago, south of Downers Grove.

The family had several driving adventures around the Chicago area that summer, seeing the waterfront in the city, and learning something about Chicago. Chris and Cheryl were too young to appreciate or remember these months.

Washington, DC

In the latter part of September, 1962, the family moved on to the Washington, DC area. Carlyle would be working at the Atomic Energy Commission Headquarters which were located near Germantown, Maryland, which was then an outer suburb to the far northwest of Washington, DC.

The family found a two-bedroom apartment in Kensington, MD, which was quite a distance from Germantown, closer to the city. It was the nearest available rental apartments to Germantown.

Chris was now over 13 months old, and walking and talking and getting into things where he should not have been. He was an explorer who had to touch, taste or chew on everything new. His personality was now becoming more apparent; he was friendly, loved to meet new people, and was very energetic. He kept his mother busy when he was not sleeping, and he greeted his father at

the door as he came home from work, and always expected to have play time with him.

The family had barely settled into their new apartment when the newscasts warned that the Soviet Union was placing missiles in Cuba. The family lived through the Cuban Missile Crisis that October, but many residents of the DC area were wondering whether there was any chance of surviving a nuclear attack on the Washington, DC area. The family was learning quickly that the Washington area could be an exciting place, but also maybe a very dangerous place to live. During the next several months, Chris joined the family in many excursions in the Washington, DC area, learning about the Capitol city and the surrounding suburbs.

The photo below shows Chris as he was practicing walking in a field near Germanton, in the summer of 1963.



Chris caused the family a fright a few months later. One weekend a former classmate of Jan's was in town and came for a visit. He was playing with Chris, and swinging him by having Chris hang by his arms. Suddenly Chris started screaming in pain. Jan and Carlyle did not have any idea what had caused the problem, but it was clear that he had severe pain, and they rushed him to an emergency room. He had pulled his arm out of his shoulder joint. The doctor replaced the arm back into the socket, and the pain quickly disappeared. Forever after, there was no swinging or lifting any child by the arms.

The photo below shows Chris in the family apartment in Kensington, Maryland.



Here is another cute photo of Chris in the apartment in Kensington while he was pretending to be a perfect angel.



In September of 1963, Chris was joined by a brother, when Gregory Scott was born on September 3. Chris was excited about having a little baby in the house until he learned that he couldn't play with

him, and he had to listen to him cry when he was hungry or needed a diaper change.

In early November of 1963, Chris' father accepted an offer to work for the Atomic Energy Commission in the American Embassy in London, England. The family began to plan for the really big move to a foreign country. They would be in London for a minimum of two years, far away from relatives and friends in the states. They would leave in early December.

Jan's parents decided to come and visit the family before they left for London. On the early morning of November 22, Carlyle was at the train station in Washington, DC, to pick up Jan's parents, Duncan and Norma Campbell, who had traveled all the way from western North Dakota by train.

Later that day President Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas, TX, and all plans were disrupted. Jan and Carlyle took her parents to watch the funeral procession to Arlington Cemetery, and while there they heard the news that the alleged killer of Kennedy, by the name of Oswald, had been shot by a visitor at the jail in Dallas.

The following days were a blur as the family prepared to fly to London. The moving company came to pack up everything they were taking to London, and another company came to take the family car to ship to London. For a few days they lived with friends until they flew out of Dulles airport, to New York City and on to London.

London, England

The family arrived at Heathrow Airport at about 6:00 in the morning, London time, or about 1:00 in the morning Washington, DC time. A staff member of the AEC office in London was there to meet the family, with a car and driver, to take them to a temporary apartment not far from the American Embassy.

The three little kids who felt like it was the middle of the night, and two tired parents, were happy to be able to have a place waiting for them, and they soon fell asleep. When they arrived in London, Chris was a little over two years old; Cheryl was five and one-half years old; and Greg was just over three months old. Fortunately, their parents were only 25, and almost had enough energy to keep up with them.

Chris knew almost nothing about what his father was doing at the Embassy, or why they were now living in London. He may have realized that this was the fourth place he had lived in his young life, and probably assumed that moving every few months was normal.

Christmas was approaching as the family arrived in London, and Jan and Carlyle did their best to discover where to shop for toys and where to find a Christmas tree, and how to find the ingredients for a Christmas dinner. There were relatively few toys available for the children that year.

In January, 1964, the family moved into a house out in a western suburb, named Hillingdon. The house had been built shortly after the end of World War II, only about 17 years earlier. Because of lumber rationing, much of the house was built of poured concrete, including the kitchen cabinets. The house was only about two blocks from a “tube” (subway) station that Carlyle could use to commute to the American Embassy on Grosvenor Square in London.

The family lived in London for two years. Carlyle and Jan were determined to take advantage of the time there to see as much as feasible of Great Britain and of the “continent” (the rest of Europe). Jan was able to find two mature housewives, Mrs. Bevins and Mrs. Burroughs, who were available to take care of the children when the parents were off seeing the world.

Chris and Cheryl's babysitter, Mrs. Burroughs, was very strict, much stricter than their parents, but she had two sweet Scottish terriers that they enjoyed playing with. The parents traveled to many places around Great Britain, from the south coast of England to the far north coast of Scotland, and many points in between, as well as multiple trips on the continent, including weeks traveling by car around western Europe, a long vacation to the Hystad family home in Norway, and long weekend trips to Paris.

Chris did enjoy many shorter adventures around England, with time at the beach on the English channel at Briton Beach, visits to the large zoo in London, and some play time in Hyde Park in London.

Chris and Cheryl loved playing in the backyard garden and hiding under a large weeping willow tree. The photo below shows Chris, Greg and Cheryl posing in the garden at the family home in Hillingdon. Note Chris' new hat, and his red hair.



Here is Chris with his dad in front of the Christmas tree in 1974 .



Christmas in 1964 was much more normal than the previous year. There were plenty of toys for the children. Chris got a small train set, with circular tracks and a train powered by electricity as shown in the photo below.



Below is a photo of Chris all dressed up with a bow tie, with Cheryl and Greg.



In February, 1965, the family received a horrendous shock upon the death of Chris' maternal grandfather, Duncan Campbell, at only 56 years of age. Jan was devastated by the news, and she was over seven months pregnant and her doctor advised against traveling back to North Dakota at that time.

In March of 1965, a fourth child joined the family, when Cynthia Joan was born on March 18. Chris was now rather blasé about babies joining the family and it apparently had little impact on his life. The house in Hillington was large enough that he and Greg could have their own bedroom, and he had his train operation set up in a spare room upstairs.

In late 1965, after two years in London, Carlyle received orders to return to work at the Atomic Energy Commission Headquarters near Washington, DC. The moving company came to pack up all of the family belongings to be shipped back to the States, and the family auto was taken in November to be shipped back to the port in Baltimore, MD. On December 10, a taxi picked up the family and delivered them to Heathrow airport for the flight back to Dulles airport in Virginia. The flight back to the States was much easier, even though there were now six people rather than five, but it was all in daylight hours rather than a miserable overnight flight.

Back In America

Jan's uncle Gene and wife Opel lived in Alexandria, VA, a close-in suburb of Washington, DC, and they had invited the family to stay with them in their house until they got settled in a new home. Gene and Opel probably regretted that invitation quickly, because with a five hour time difference, Chris and the other three children were wide awake at 2:00 am, which was 7:00 am London time.

Carlyle and Jan quickly found a place to live, in a new garden apartment complex in Gaithersburg, MD, only a few miles from the AEC Headquarters where Carlyle would work, and they could move

into the apartment in January, about the time their furniture arrived from London. They made plans to travel back to Minnesota and North Dakota to visit family and friends through the holidays. Carlyle also made his way to the port in Baltimore to retrieve the SAAB automobile that had been shipped back from London. By December 16 the family was all packed into the SAAB for the long drive west, with a couple days stop in Minneapolis and then on to Watford City, ND, for Christmas with Carlyle's parents and siblings and with Jan's mother and brothers.

It was fun to spend Christmas with so many family members after the small Christmases in London. Chris and Cheryl were very excited when they walked out of their grandmother's house on Christmas eve and saw Santa Claus coming out of the house next door.

On December 29th, we reloaded the SAAB to start the long trip back to Maryland. Jan and her mother Norma had decided that Norma would come back with the family to spend several weeks with the family in Maryland. The little SAAB contained three adults and four children, plus five suitcases, and several bags containing recently received Christmas presents, plus diapers and other paraphernalia for the nine-month old baby. Cindy sat in Norma's lap; Greg sat in Jan's lap; and Chris and Cheryl sat on top of suitcases on the back seat. The first day of the trip was through a blizzard on the plains of North Dakota, with an overnight stay in Grand Forks. The second day was driving on a sheet of ice for ten hours to Grand Marais, Minnesota, near the Canadian border, where they stayed with Carlyle's brother, Norris, and family, through the New Year's holidays. To this day, family members wonder how they all survived that trip.

Bayla Gardens, Gaithersburg, MD

On January 2, 1966, Chris and the crazy SAAB adventurers continued on the way through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois,

Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and finally to Maryland on the third day. Carlyle was able to go back to work, and within a few days the family belongings arrived from London, and everyone eventually got settled into the new three-bedroom apartment in Gaithersburg. Chris and Greg shared a bedroom, and were excited to have bunkbeds. And there was even a den for watching TV!

Chris was now over four years old, and would be five the coming August. The family lived in the apartment complex named Bayla Gardens, for about three and one-half years, until June 1969. Bayla Gardens was a very nice place for Chris to live. Unlike in London, here there were many other kids near his age, and it was safe for the children to play in the play areas and even in the streets. And there was a swimming pool open all summer long for residents. The apartment complex backed up to a creek and farmland that Chris and his friends loved to explore.

In the summer of 1966, the family decided they would take a vacation together, and a friend of Carlyle's from University days asked to join them in renting a beach house in Rehoboth Beach, DE, on the Atlantic coast. They spent a week there, with most of the days on the sand and in the ocean breakers. It was the first time any of the children had been to an ocean beach, and Chris had an exciting time fighting with the breakers coming ashore and attempting to ride a small breaker board.

Bayla Gardens was only about two blocks away from the Gaithersburg elementary school, and Chris started kindergarten there in the fall of 1966, where he met many others his age in the neighborhood.

In the fall of 1967, Chris started first grade at the school, and was now able to go to school full-time. Chris preferred to wear a collared shirt with a tie, like his father always wore when he went to work.



Here is a photo of the four: Cindy, Greg, Chris and Cheryl

Although Chris enjoyed going to school, summertime was special because the swimming pool was open, and he could spend much of the daylight hours playing outside. On sunny afternoons when his father came home from work he would take Chris and Cheryl and Greg to the pool. They were learning how to swim, or at least how to avoid drowning, as well as staying cool in the hot summer weather of Maryland. After the cool, rainy weather in England, the hot, humid summers in Maryland were particularly oppressive.



This is a school photo of Chris, taken in 1967.

In the summer of 1967, the entire family again piled into the SAAB for the long trek back to Minnesota and North Dakota. They were first going to Uncle Norris' home in Grand Marais, MN, where there would be a Hystad family reunion, and it was expected that the entire tribe of Carlyle's eight siblings, spouses and children would be there. They decided to try a different route to Minnesota, and rather than travel through Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin they would go

north into Canada at Sault Ste Marie and drive on the north side of Lake Superior to Grand Marais. They later agreed that was not a great idea; the road was fine and almost no traffic, but there were many hours with nothing to see but trees on both sides of the road. The children did enjoy a stop to climb on rocks in a cove on Lake Superior. Chris thought it was funny when Cheryl slipped on the rocks and fell in the water. He didn't think it was so funny when his mother made him give his shirt to Cheryl to wear since her shirt was soaked.

Chris got to meet many uncles, aunts, and cousins at the reunion, but was not happy that there were too many adults trying to tell the kids how to behave, particularly when it came time for family pictures. He was having so much fun playing in the woods with his cousins, and he didn't want to sit still for some dumb pictures.

In the photo below, Chris is at the far right in the front row, pouting that the boys had to pose for photos.



From Grand Marais, the family continued on west to Watford City, North Dakota, to visit Jan's family. Chris was able to spend time playing with his three cousins, the children of his uncles Bob and Ralph. Chris was fascinated by meeting many of his grandmother Norma's sisters and their husbands and children. Many of them were real cowboys, just like in the movies. They rode horses and wore cowboy hats, blue jeans and cowboy boots.

The photo below shows Chris on the far right, with his grandmother Norma, and his three cousins, as well as Cheryl, Greg and Cindy.



A day or two after the above photo was taken, Chris and Greg got a special haircut. Their hair was getting a bit long, and Carlyle and Jan were good friends of the barber in Watford City, by the name of Vern Suelzle, so the two boys were sent by Carlyle to the barbershop, and their father told them to just ask the barber to give them a "crewcut", because that's the kind of haircut their father had when he was a teenager in Watford. The boys did not know what a "crewcut" was, so they obediently walked to the barbershop and

asked for a crewcut. When they got back to grandma's house they were two very unhappy boys who thought they had been bamboozled. They had almost no hair left. Vern had done as asked. Actually, they probably were not extremely unhappy, because there were still quite a few teenagers and adults around with crewcuts, and it did make them look older, more like they would someday be teenagers themselves.

The trip back to Maryland that summer was easier than in January of 1966, with only three days on the road and no blizzards or ice.

As Chris grew older, he continued to be very social, interacting with everyone, and he was very curious, always exploring and sometimes getting in trouble as a result. At Bayla Gardens, Chris became friends with several boys of a similar age, which made life fun, and sometimes not so fun. On one occasion a friend and Chris happened upon a package that had been delivered to the door of one of the apartments, and they decided to take the package and see what was inside. They were disappointed to find that it was just some flatware, just some forks and knives and spoons. Not wanting to keep these, and not knowing how to repackage them and return them to the doorstep, they buried them in the ground and hoped for the best. But their mistake was discovered, and they were both grounded.

This did not seem to deter Chris from future explorations. On another adventure he seriously cut his arm, almost to the bone, which caused substantial trauma for his mother who seemed to be the parent who was the first responder in such cases.

In the spring of 1968, Carlyle and Jan purchased a new automobile, an AMC Rambler station wagon. Now the four kids would have more room, and Jan would have her own car when Carlyle had the SAAB at work.

In the summer of 1968, the family decided to go on a new adventure. They were not going back to Minnesota or North Dakota this year;

they would go camping in upstate New York. Chris' father had recently traveled on business to upstate New York and thought it was similar to northern Minnesota, so they decided it would be a nice place to go camping. They rented a "pop-up" or "fold-out" camper trailer to pull behind the car. With the camper fully extended there were three beds, one on the trailer floor and one extended on each side of the trailer; it would sleep six little people with no problem. On a Saturday morning in July the family loaded into the Rambler and headed north. They camped the first night at a campsite not too far from Princeton, NJ, and the second day they made it to their destination in the Adirondack Park in northern New York state. The Park is managed by the state of New York, and is the largest geographically of any park in the country.

They found a nice campsite not far from the western shores of Lake George, and set up camp on a beautiful Sunday evening, with the smell of pine needles and campfire smoke in the air. Unfortunately, the weather did not continue to cooperate; by Monday afternoon it was raining and it became more steady and intense that evening, and then Chris and his siblings were tracking sand and mud into the sleeping areas of the camper. This was not their fault; there really was no other place to go to stay dry and warm. On Tuesday morning it was still raining, and about 34 degrees, and Jan insisted on going back home; she was not going to wait a day or two and hope that the rain would go away. We folded up the wet and sandy camper, and headed for home, driving into the night to get back home in one day.

The next day, Carlyle unfolded the camper and began the unpleasant task of drying out sleeping bags, mattresses, and tents, and sweeping up several pounds of sand. In a few hours the camper was habitable, and Chris and his siblings were raring to go again. Jan encouraged Carlyle and the kids to go try a closer campground, but she had enough of camping to last a lifetime. Carlyle and the four children hooked up the camper and went to the Catoctin State Park in northern Maryland, near Camp David, the President's retreat in the Catoctin Mountains.

This was the first time, and possibly the only time, that the four siblings had ever been off somewhere with their father, without the supervision of their mother, and it was an astonishing experience. Their father took them to a grocery store to buy food for the camping, and he permitted them to pick out some food for themselves – whatever they wanted. The five of them had a great time camping there on Wednesday through Friday night, including some hikes in the forest and playing in mountain streams.

Chris continued into the second grade in the fall of 1968. His older sister, Cheryl, was already in the fifth grade, and now little Greg was starting kindergarten. That fall, Chris joined a football team organized by the school, and he decided this was a great sport.



Moving to Stedwick in Montgomery Village

In June of 1969, Chris and his family made a significant change. Carlyle and Jan decided to buy their own home; the first time they had owned a home. There were only a small number of homes in the

area that they could afford, because the cost of raising four children did not leave much extra in Carlyle's paycheck each month. They discovered that townhouses were being built in the new town of Montgomery Village which was only a few miles north of Gaithersburg. They were able to purchase a three-bedroom townhouse in the community of Stedwick, for \$32,000, with only 10% down. The house had a full walkout basement, and Carlyle made a large fourth bedroom in the basement level for Chris and Greg. Cheryl, who was now 11 years old, got her own bedroom, and Cindy had the smallest bedroom to herself.

Chris was happy about the move to Stedwick. He quickly made new friends because almost all the families in the area had recently moved to the Village, and all were looking to make new friends. And the bicycle paths that ran throughout the Village made it easy to bike wherever he wanted to go. The move required that Chris, Cheryl and Greg attend Whetstone Elementary school, which was the only elementary school in the Village at the time. They would need to get to know different teachers and buildings and other students. Chris soon became involved with sports teams in the Village. He was on a football team, and a baseball team, and a basketball team. He was a very good athlete and enjoyed physical activity.

The family continued to go on outings in the Washington area. The photo below shows Chris, standing apart on the left, with his mother and siblings, in front of the White House after a tour of the mansion.



In early 1970, a new swimming pool and club house was built only about two blocks behind the townhouse, and some of the parents, including Jan, started organizing a swim team. Chris, Cheryl and Greg joined the Stedwick Swim Team where they learned new strokes like butterfly and breaststroke and became much better swimmers. Cindy was still too young, but joined the Team in 1971 when she was six years old.

Competitive swimming was not a favorite sport for Chris. He was already nine years old and just starting competitive swimming. Many of his competitors had started competitive swimming when they were six years old or younger, so he started with a disadvantage. He preferred baseball and football, where he was one of the best players on the teams. Chris liked to win; he didn't like to come in second or third in a race.

Swim team was fun for the whole family because it was one sport where all four kids could be on the same team. And summer swim team was focused on fun – cheering on your friends during meets,

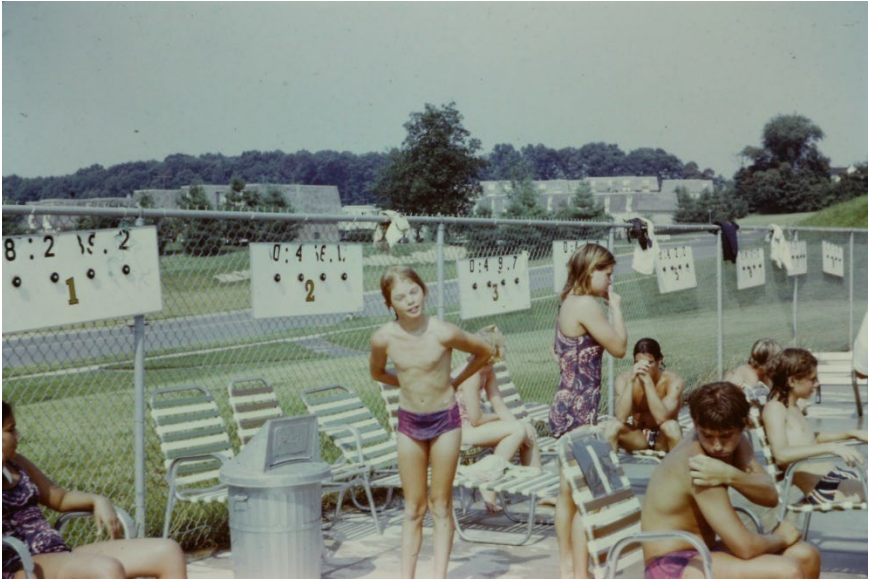
eating dry jello and other crazy snacks for energy, and going to Roy Rogers for fast food after the meets.

In the summer of 1970, the family went on vacation to Cape Cod. They rented a house on the beach on the south shore of the Cape, on Long Island Sound. There were only small waves coming ashore, nothing like the monster breakers at Rehoboth Beach on the Atlantic coast. Chris and his brother and sisters were able to swim and play in the water without fighting the big breakers.

In the fall of 1971, grandpa and grandma Hystad came to visit the family at Thanksgiving time. They stayed for several days and the family showed them all around the Washington area, before they left by train for Louisiana to visit Uncle Wally, Carlyle's brother, and his family.

In the spring of 1972, the family went on another major adventure, driving all the way to Lafayette, Louisiana to visit Uncle Wally and Aunt Ginger and their six children. It was a two day drive, through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and far into Louisiana, across the vast swampland called the Atchafalaya Basin. Chris had a great time with his cousins, particularly the three older boys, Kevin, Eric and Keith. Chris learned about eating crayfish, seafood gumbo, and jambalaya. The return trip went through Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee, but they did not see Elvis.

In the summer of 1972 Chris was on the Stedwick Swim Team again, as shown in the photo below. He had a lot of fun, and had a lot of friends on the team.



In 1972, Jan took a part-time job as a receptionist in the Fairidge Model Homes sales office. This was a new section of Montgomery Village with large, detached houses. Most houses had four or five bedrooms, and two or three bathrooms.

In the fall of 1972, Chris started the fifth grade. He played on the school football team, and on the basketball team. Carlyle and Jan attended “teacher’s conferences” to receive reports on how Chris was doing academically. It appeared that he was not very interested in academic work, but was an average student, fairly typical for a young, active boy.

Chapter 2:

Growing Up, 1973 - 1983

Moving to Fairidge

Jan was enjoying her part-time job as a receptionist in the sales office for the homes being built in the new Fairidge section of Montgomery Village. She was excited about the new model homes that had been constructed, and she convinced the rest of the family that they needed a larger house, and particularly one in Fairidge.

In the spring of 1973 Jan and Carlyle placed a contract on a new home to be built on Shrewsbury Court in Fairidge. It would have five bedrooms, two full baths and a half bath, as well as a basement and a two-car garage. Each of the children would have their own bedroom. Chris would no longer need to share a bedroom with Greg. The family moved into the new house in late June, 1973. The photo below is of Chris with his brother and sisters in 1973.



Chris was about to turn 12, and would soon reach the critical teenage years of puberty, acne, rebellion, need for speed, and a desire to learn all about adult things that have been off-limits. Chris was no exception. He explored, tested and pushed the limits. During the next six years Chris' father was in the most intense and time-consuming jobs of his career, working at the senior executive level in the Executive Office of the President of the United States, and in the US Department of Energy. He did not spend as much time with Chris as he should have during these years, and Chris' mother had to deal with more than her share of the parenting duties.

In November of 1973, Jan crashed the Rambler station wagon into a fire hydrant, accidentally, and it was a total loss. The family then bought a 1973 Ford LTD, which was a large boat of a car, with two long seats that would each seat three adults. They had concluded that a station wagon was no longer practical as the children were getting too old and big to fit into the station wagons available in 1973 (the minivans and SUVs with three rows of seats in vehicles of the 2020s did not exist in 1973).

In the spring of 1974, Jan helped organize a new swim team for the Fairidge area of Montgomery Village. It was known that a new Olympic-sized swimming pool was going to be built to serve the northern part of the Village, and the new team would represent the new North Creek area. For the first two years, the new pool was not yet finished, so the new team had to use other available pools in the Village in the summers of 1974 and 1975. Chris and his three siblings all swam for the new North Creek team. Chris was in the 11-12 age group in 1974.

After the competitive swimming season was over in early August, the family headed to Minnesota and North Dakota for a long vacation. They first spent a week in a cabin at Scenic Point Resort on Clitherall Lake, which was a half mile from the farm where Chris's father lived when he was Chris' age. Chris learned how to

fish with a rod and reel from a boat on a fresh water lake, and he caught his share of fish.

After a week at the lake, they went on to North Dakota to visit Jan's mother and brothers and families, and visit Carlyle's parents who were living that summer in an old ranch house on the Kellogg ranch near the Missouri River and Lake Sakakawea, which was a large lake formed by a dam on the River. The Kellogg ranch had a couple of horses available for Chris and the others to ride, and in a few days they learned how to saddle a horse, how to get in the saddle on a horse without falling off, how to "steer" the horse with the reins, and some knowledge of how to control the speed of the horse, or how to keep it from running wherever it wished. Below is a photo of Chris, Greg and Cindy with their borrowed horse, in cowboy country.



Below is a photo of Chris and siblings with their grandparents, Carl & Esther Hystad, in western North Dakota.



Back in Maryland, Chris had a new plaything. The house in Fairidge had a sizeable recreation room in the basement, and Carlyle built a large platform to hold Chris' train tracks and trains, and a long slot car track. The platform was built so that it could be folded up against the wall when not in use. The platform also was large enough for several miniature buildings and other structures such as bridges and tunnels. The long slot-car track allowed the slot cars to attain a high speed without flying off the track. However, Chris really enjoyed running the cars at high speed and had difficulty keeping them on the track. His father tried to explain to him that driving slot cars is good experience for driving real cars some day when he grew up, if he could learn to take the corners without flying off the track. But Chris preferred watching the cars fly off the track.

Chris was Mr. Popularity in Fairidge. Almost all the adults and all the children in the community knew Chris by name, mostly because

Chris stopped to talk with everyone, of any age. His popularity probably helped him get the job of delivering the Washington Post in Fairidge. He needed to be up and out the door by 5:30 in the morning to pick up his stack of newspapers and deliver them to each of his customers. When it was not raining hard or snowing, he could ride his bicycle to quickly deliver the papers. But when the weather was bad or there was snow or ice on the ground he needed to walk (or run) his route. On some mornings when the weather was particularly bad, his mother would get up with him and take him in her car around the route.

Chris made a good income delivering the papers, and he surprised his parents by usually getting up early in the morning to do his job, without much complaint. He saved much of the money he earned so that he would have the cash to buy what he wanted. His father had offered to match the amount of any savings he accumulated, which was a good incentive for Chris, and it also became unexpectedly expensive for his father.

A field bike was one of the major purchases by Chris with all of his money. A field bike was similar to a small sized motorcycle, built for rough use on dirt trails, including jumping over barriers, driving through mud puddles, and generally abusing the vehicle. He devoted many hours to riding his dirt bike. There were some field bike trails in the Village, and several of Chris' friends also had field bikes who would ride or race with Chris, sometimes in neighboring fields or other places not intended for motor bikes.

Chris' parents, particularly his mother, were concerned about the dangers of these field bikes. Serious injuries such as broken legs or concussions were not uncommon. And then one weekend one of the kids about Chris' age in the Village was killed as a result of a crash on a field bike. This was very traumatic for the parents of kids with field bikes, and even for many of the young riders who tended to believe they were immune from injury. Although there was

discussion of prohibiting Chris from riding the field bike, he continued to use the bike frequently and without serious injury.

High School Years

Chris joined the 10th grade class at the new Seneca Valley High School in the fall of 1976. Seneca Valley was a brand new high school that was built to accommodate the large increase in the number of high school students in the area. The old Gaithersburg High School had been seriously overcrowded.

Later that school year, Chris' parents were informed that Chris was being placed in a section of the Tenth Grade class that had been created for those students whose academic achievement was not up to grade level expectations. After gaining more information, it was clear that the school was placing all "slow" students and unmotivated students and trouble-making students together, separated from those getting better grades. And further discussion with teachers made it clear that there was little or no effort being made to improve the academic performance of these poorer-performing students. It appeared that they were just letting them slide through until they were given their high school diploma.

It was obvious to Chris' parents that this was a bad direction for Chris. He was not very motivated to study and learn, and the school was refusing to make any special effort to motivate him. He was one of many students, including several of Chris' close friends, who were unmotivated and believed that high school was a waste of their time. But it also was clear that the school was not going to change direction on this issue. Chris' father tried to convince him of the importance of a good education and that he would regret it later in life if he just wasted his time in high school.

This photo is of Chris and his siblings, taken in 1977



Despite Chris' lackluster grades in school, he got to go to Disney World. During Spring Break from school in 1977, Chris' parents took Chris, Greg and Cindy to Disney World where they were able to explore the wonders of make believe, stand in long lines for rides, eat a lot of bad food, and generally have a grand time. After Disney World they continued south to Fort Lauderdale for some time at the beach and a visit to the International Swimming Hall of Fame. Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals in the 1972 Olympics, was a highlight and a primary reason for the interest in visiting the Hall of Fame.

Chris' parents bought a new car in 1977, a Chevrolet Caprice. It was about as roomy as the Ford LTD. The LTD was already starting to fall apart, and the family was happy to be rid of it. Chris was looking forward to being able to drive that new Caprice when he got his driver's license in a few months. A principal reason for buying the new car was to provide a new set of wheels for Jan. She had decided to become a real estate sales agent and had completed all the required education and exams, and received a sales agent license in Maryland.

In August of 1978, Chris' grandfather Carl turned 75, and a family reunion was held at a lake near Alexandria, Minnesota. Most of Carl's children and many of his grandchildren came to help him celebrate. They stayed for a few days at resort cabins along the several lakes near Alexandria. Chris' family came for the reunion, and stayed in a small two-bedroom cabin on lake Mary. The family rented a boat with an outboard motor, and Chris spent much of his time on the lake out in the boat, either fishing or exploring the lake or talking with other fishermen to get their advice on where to fish and how to catch them. He greatly increased his knowledge and experience fishing on freshwater lakes.

Also, Chris created a family story and mystery with his fishing. He got up very early every morning to go fishing by himself, but came back either empty handed or with small catches. Finally, on the last day at the lake, he was very proud to show off his catch of eight to ten large walleyes and northerns. Some of the family were very impressed, but some of them suspected that Chris had been catching a few big fish every day and secretly keeping them out of sight until the last day. It was never explained how it was possible to keep fish alive in captivity for more than a few hours, or how it was possible that he could have caught that many large fish so quickly.

Chris started his senior year in high school in the fall of 1978. As had become his practice, he managed to devote most of his time to activities other than study. He was able to get a part-time job at the

Amoco gas station in Gaithersburg; this was in the days when gas station employees actually pumped the gas into the vehicles and did not expect or even permit, customers to pump the gas themselves. The gas station attendants also would clean the windshield and check the oil as the gas tank was being filled. The customer could just wait in the car and not get gasoline splashed on themselves. Those were the good old days for young people with little work experience; there was almost always a vacancy at one of the local gas stations. The pay was not great but the work was easy and the paychecks were reliable. Chris was a responsible and competent employee at the station and worked there for many months.

Chris had passed the tests to get his driver's license earlier that year, and he was ready to drive. He frequently begged to drive his father's SAAB or his mother's Caprice, usually explaining that he had an important date with a girl and he really needed to use a car. His father occasionally let him drive the SAAB, but his mother usually resisted letting him use the Caprice.

With the money Chris had earned from his paper delivery, and now from working at the gas station, he decided he needed to buy his own automobile. He found a used GTO, a "muscle car" of its day. His father helped him arrange and pay for the sale. Chris soon learned that it may have been a mistake to buy a muscle car. He discovered that the County and State traffic cops seemed to like to pull over such cars, particularly when driven by a teenager. On at least one occasion he was stopped three consecutive evenings for no obvious reason other than he was driving a GTO.

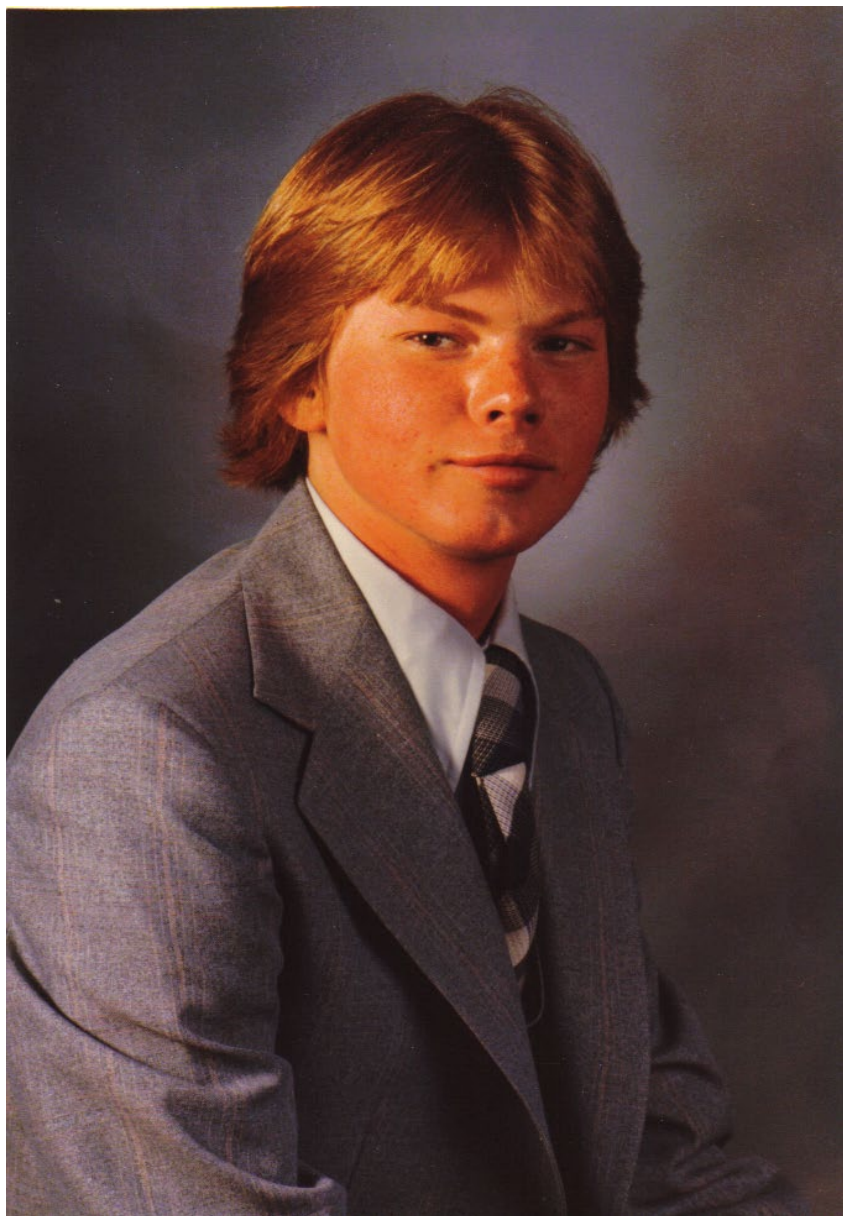
During his high school years, Chris seemed to have no problem attracting girlfriends. He introduced his parents to several very personable and beautiful young women who he was dating.

The photo below shows that Chris and Greg had become taller than their father.



Although Chris usually gave low priority to studying or getting good grades in school, he graduated on schedule in the spring of 1979.

Below is Chris' high school graduation photo.



Now that Chris was through high school, he had to face the realities of life. Would he get higher education? How was he going to make a living? Where would he live? Would he get married and have children? But Chris was in no hurry to move on with the rest of his life.

Chris knew he didn't want to go to college. He enjoyed working to fix or build real things, rather than more studying.

Here is the high school graduate without a care in the world?



Meanwhile, Chris decided to sell the GTO, which attracted too much attention of traffic cops, and he replaced it with a used cargo van that had been converted into a plush living room by a previous owner, several years earlier. With lots of help from his father, he stripped out the old, worn carpeting, seating and cabinets, and installed entirely new carpeting, seating and cabinets. Carpet covered the ceiling, walls and floor. It was a rolling “man cave”

before man caves were common. It obviously was intended to attract and entertain young women (or teenage girls) but it also could double as a camper for a guy on the move. Even without the draw of the carpeted Van, Chris always seemed to have his choice of young women to date.

In 1981, Chris decided he would go to California. He packed up the Van with some of his belongings, and headed west. He made it to the Pacific Coast, and found a job at a gas station in Santa Barbara, a coastal city northwest of Los Angeles. His parents talked with him by phone several times, and it was clear that he was homesick. He was missing his family and friends, particularly his friends, back in Maryland. A few months later he was back home. The van had made the return trip across the country.

After considering several options for learning a trade, he decided he would go to a trade school to learn to be an air conditioning specialist. He would be trained to install, service and repair air conditioning units. In the spring of 1982, he enrolled as a student in RETS Electronics School for a course in air conditioning.

In the summer of 1982, Chris' older sister was married in a lovely ceremony in a Baltimore suburb. Both of Chris' grandmothers came east for the marriage.

The photo below shows grandma Norma on the left and grandma Esther in the middle, along with Chris and his parents and Greg and Cindy. Note that Chris has his arms around both grandmothers.



Chapter 4:

Defiance & Frustration: 1983 to 2001

In the fall of 1983, Chris decided to enlist in the U. S. Air Force. After completing his basic training, he received schooling in installation and maintenance of air conditioning systems, building on his previous trade school work.

Below is Chris' official Air Force photo.



After Basic Training, he was deployed to Loring Air Force Base near the Canadian border in northern Maine. He worked with the crews responsible for installing and servicing air conditioning systems in Base buildings and in residential housing units for Base personnel and families.

While stationed at Loring, he purchased a motorcycle, right off the showroom floor. It was an attractive piece of equipment, but not practical for use for about six months of the year in northern Maine because of snow, ice and cold temperatures. However, it was a great toy for touring the roads of Maine on weekends in the summertime, and he and friends with motorcycles often traveled together on weekend adventures. His father visited him at Loring, and the two of them spent a few days vacationing at Bar Harbor, Maine.



By the time Chris was in the Air Force in 1984, he was having episodes of severe depression. He self-medicated with an excessive amount of alcohol, and was hospitalized for treatment. It was during this time that Chris was first confronted with the fact that he may have a problem with some form of periodic depression. The Air Force doctors concluded that he may be trying to self-medicate by consuming an excessive amount of alcohol. That diagnosis of depression apparently resulted in his early honorable discharge from the Air Force.

In hindsight, Chris' behavior in his early adult years, in 1981 and beyond, matched many of the common symptoms of bipolar disorder, and his recollection of his personal history also indicates that he was a victim of bipolar disorder starting when he was about 20 years old. He recalled that he had an episode of serious depression when he was in California in 1981, at age 20. At the time, he attributed it to being homesick and worried about being able to support himself.

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a mental condition that causes abnormal mood swings, between deep depression and mania, which frequently make it difficult for a victim to live a productive and happy life. To be diagnosed as bipolar, there needs to be at least one significant manic episode. The majority of victims have many more episodes of depression than of mania, and in some cases the manic episodes are mild, making it difficult to recognize or make a bipolar diagnosis. People with bipolar disorder often go undiagnosed and suffer for years without treatment, as the condition worsens with age.

Symptoms of bipolar disorder most commonly appear in the late teenage or early adulthood years, with the average age of diagnosis in the US being 25 years of age. It has been diagnosed in about 2.6% of the US population, or about 5.7 million people. However, there is substantial evidence that many victims are never diagnosed. There

is no cure for bipolar disorder, and treatment includes medications and talk therapy.

Because at least one episode of mania is necessary for a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, it is important to recognize the symptoms of mania. They include:

- Excessive happiness or excitement about otherwise routine events;
- Sudden changes in mood, such as from joyful to very angry or aggressive;
- Racing thoughts and rapid speech;
- Increased energy and less need of sleep;
- Impulsivity and poor judgement such as suddenly quitting a job;
- High risk-taking behavior, such as excessive gambling or spending;
- Feeling unusually important, talented or powerful.

There also is the “mixed state” of mania and depression, which is the most likely condition to result in a successful suicide attempt, including “suicide by cop.” In this mixed state the victim may be highly energetic with impulsive behavior, but also very depressed with feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness.

Victims of bipolar disorder often refuse to accept the diagnosis, and refuse to take prescribed medications or follow any plan of treatment. Some victims enjoy the feelings they have when in manic episodes, and intentionally avoid medications intended to prevent such episodes.

The most common aspects or impacts of bipolar disorder include:

- Failure by medical personal to diagnose the condition, resulting in no treatment, or mistreatment; for example, antidepressants alone may contribute to more severe manic episodes;

- Unwillingness of the victim to share a diagnosis with family members and others who are important in helping to treat the condition;
- Failure of family, friends, employers and others to learn or understand the behavior of victims of bipolar disorder, resulting in blaming the victim rather than the condition, and failure to help the victim;
- Those closest to the victim are the most likely to assign other causes for the victim's behavior, such as lack of ambition, alcohol or drug abuse, irresponsibility, and similar personal failings;
- Marriages often end in divorce due to failure of spouses to understand or tolerate the behavior, particularly manic behavior such as excessive spending, gambling or quitting a job;
- The victims are likely to lose their jobs or fail in their businesses because of bipolar disorder; depression may result in victims being unable to go to work for several days or to perform their jobs every day; mania can result in excessive risk taking, arguments with bosses or clients, and impulsively quitting a job; such behavior is likely to contribute to financial problems, resulting in more stress, possibly causing more depression or mania.
- Repetitive failure in education, jobs, business, marriage and other relationships contribute to feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, and thoughts of suicide.

Back In Maryland After the Air Force, 1985-1990

Chris was living with his father in Chevy Chase, MD, in a small apartment in the walkout basement, for a few years after leaving the Air Force. He first worked for an air conditioning company in the area, using his Air Force training and experience. He was not able to keep that potentially good, long-term job as an air conditioning mechanic because an episode of depression caused him to be unable to go to work for several days. Several months later he decided to

start his own lawn care business which he worked at for one summer.

Later, he started a house painting business which was successful until Chris was forced to quit because of an attack of depression. He then took a position as a mechanic's helper and customer assistant for a large gasoline station in Northwest Washington, where he worked for several months. The photo below catches Chris in front of the house where he was living during this time.



Here Chris is posing with his sister Cheryl on the beach in Ocean City, MD.

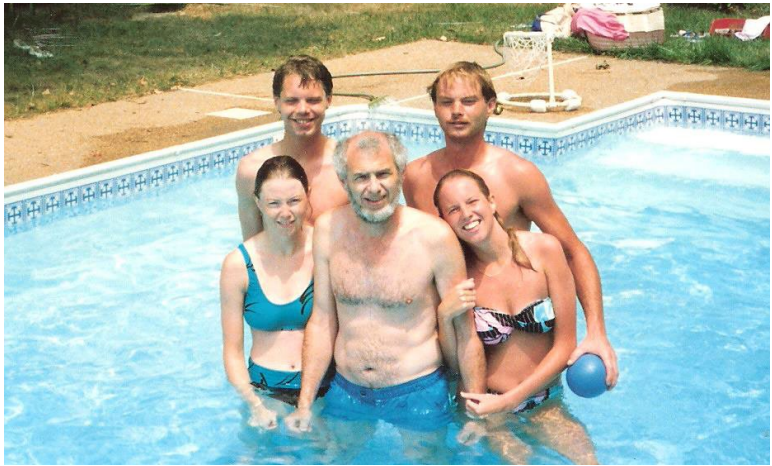


Chris is with his mother and siblings in the photo below.



There were periods of weeks or months when Chris was not in a mood swing, and he was his usual, sociable self, as reflected in the photos on these pages. Unfortunately, the occasional mood changes made it impossible for him to have a long-term success as an employee or in business.

Chris was having a good time in his father's pool in 1988.



Here is Chris with his sisters, Cheryl and Cindy.



Getting Married; Becoming a Father, 1990 - 1995

In about 1989 or 1990, Chris met Maria Saponara, who was a friend of a friend of Chris. Chris had enjoyed many parties with his friends, that included Maria, and they became good friends and started hanging out together.

Chris' family first heard of Maria sometime in 1990 when Chris informed them that he was going to get married. On October 26, 1990, Chris married Maria at the Montgomery County License Department in Rockville, MD, which had a nice room for conducting marriage ceremonies. His brother Greg was his best man, and all of his and Maria's family attended, as well as some of Chris and Maria's friends.



Chris and Maria cutting the cake at the wedding reception.



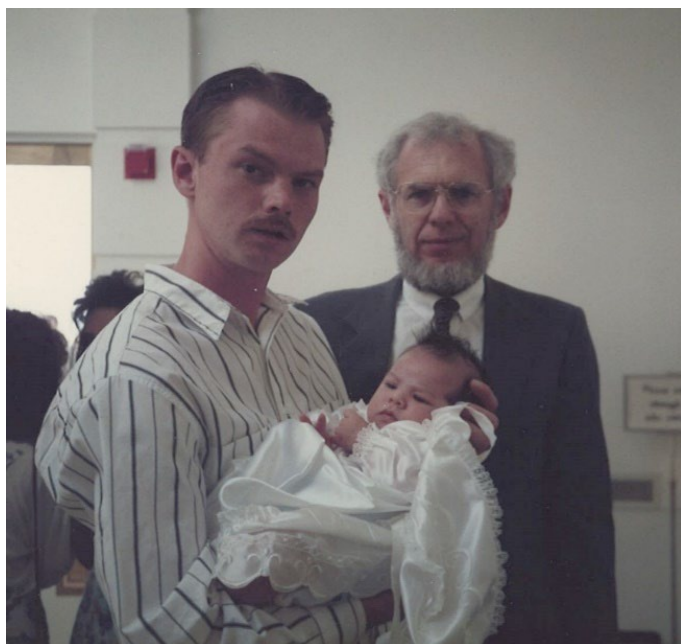
Chris seems to be quite proud of his new family situation, as he poses after the wedding reception.



Chris' son arrives

Initially, Chris lived with Maria in her parents' home in Olney, MD. On February 26, 1991, Maria gave birth to a son, who was named Michael Christopher Hystad. They lived with her parents until about mid-1992, when they rented their own apartment. They lived in this apartment until 1995.

Chris is preparing for the baptism of his son Michael. His father is observing, in the photo below.



Below, Michael is baptized. Chris is on the right.



In the period of 1992 to 1995, Chris was admitted to a hospital on several occasions, usually because of demands from his wife that he get treatment. In most of these cases it was because of excessive drinking or depression or both. On most of those occasions the presiding doctor advised that he had mild to moderate depression, and did not have suicidal ideations, and his problem was deemed to be due to alcohol. Chris failed to inform them of his suicide attempts. The hospital would put Chris through a standard detox program and discharge him.

In 1995, Chris suffered from an attack of severe depression during which he attempted suicide with an overdose of medication, and he was committed to a hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, the medical people at Montgomery General Hospital failed to diagnose bipolar disorder, or to be concerned that he may be suicidal. They assumed that his problem was caused by abuse of alcohol. He was treated for withdrawal from alcohol, and provided medication for depression, and released. The anti-depression medication may have increased the risk for a manic episode, which happened later.

With his father in Virginia, in 1995

As Chris was recovering from the bipolar episode in 1995, he went to live with his father at a country place in Virginia. This was a time for him to get away from the stress of the Washington area and enjoy a more relaxed pace and fresh air. Chris helped his father take down and rebuild an historic log house on the property that had been built by slaves owned by James Madison's first cousin. Chris had a fun time disassembling the log house, one log at a time, marking the logs for its location in the house, and then helping to reassemble the logs and rebuild the house. They had built a wooden crane from trees found on the property, to use to lift the logs, in a manner similar to what had been used by the slaves in building the house. Chris learned how to make and insert wooden spikes to hold the door and window frames to the logs.

The photo below was taken in the early stages of disassembling the house, after removing the roof and attic. They were now ready to start removing the attic floor and the logs of the walls. Chris is posing on the attic floor.



The second photo on the previous page shows the reassembly of the log house, with the logs in place and the roof being installed. That's Chris in the photo preparing to add more sheeting to the rafters.

Living With Maria's Parents, 1995-2000

After a few months at the farm in Virginia, Chris moved back to Maryland, joining his wife and son Michael who were living in her parents' home. Living in Maria's parents' home helped minimize the stress of a full-time job to support a separate residence. And the house was large, with room for separate space for Chris and Maria.

During these years Chris worked at several jobs to help support his family. The longest employment was with a car dealership in Virginia, where Chris worked as a Mechanic's Helper and also washed cars. In the summers of 1996 and 1997 he worked mowing lawns, as an employee of a landscaping company. And he worked for several months as a tire changer for a Tire Center.

In 1999, Chris became the proud father of a daughter, named Ashley, born on December 11.



The following pages show some photos of Chris enjoying himself. The photo below was taken when Chris, Maria and Chris' niece Julia were helping Michael celebrate his fourth birthday. Since Michael and Julia enjoyed playing together, Chris and Cheryl would meet up frequently at Cabin John Park and other parks so the cousins could play.



The following photo is from a birthday party for Chris in Rock Creek Park, in 1997.



Chris was a lifelong Minnesota Vikings fan, having been brainwashed by his father from a young age to love the Vikings.



In the above photo, Chris, his siblings and father are prepping to watch a Minnesota Vikings playoff game.

Below, Chris is fulfilling a childhood fantasy of being a cowboy, riding Skippy at his father's farm.



Chapter 5:

Understanding & Maturity: 2001 to 2014

Living With His Mother, 2000-2002

In 2000, Chris had another bipolar episode, which contributed to problems with Maria's parents, and Chris moved to live with his mother in Bethesda, MD, for a couple of years.

In May of 2001, Chris had a severe "mixed state" manic and depression episode. He called 911 and told the operator that he was going to kill himself. When officers responded to the call, Chris repeatedly asked the officers to shoot him (he did not have a gun himself). He said "he was tired of living and wanted to die" according to the officer's report. Fortunately, this time he was taken to a different hospital, Suburban Hospital, and was examined by a different set of doctors than those who had seen him at Montgomery General Hospital. Psychiatrists interviewed him, evaluated his condition and history, and concluded that he had bipolar disorder, as shown by his depression and his current episode of severe manic and "mixed state" behavior.

At last, Chris was properly diagnosed with bipolar disorder, only because he came to a hospital when he was in a manic episode and the hospital had a doctor trained to recognize bipolar disorder. Because of the diagnosis, he was given a different set of medications which would help prevent severe depression and would also help prevent manic episodes. This was a major change in his life. For the first time he was receiving treatment for his real medical problem, rather than just assuming he had a problem with alcohol.

During these years Chris worked at a few jobs in the area, including a job pumping gas at a gasoline station, and a job delivering pizza for a pizza restaurant. One of the highlight of his pizza delivery job

was delivering pizza to Maryland basketball coach Gary Williams several times. And being the friendly outgoing person Chris was, he enjoyed chatting with him.

While living at his mother's home, he spent time with Maria every week, but he did not see much of his children, who were growing up. Below is a photo of Michael and Ashley.



A Long Period of Mood Stability

From mid-2001 until 2009, Chris was able to function without severe depression or severe manic episodes. He had some periods of mild mania, and some with mild depression, but without suicidal ideation. His work history during this time improved, and he was able to work at several construction jobs successfully.

Unfortunately, Chris continued to see the doctor he had been seeing prior to his diagnosis of bipolar disorder, and that doctor continued to give Chris prescriptions for valium and some other medications requested by Chris. It is not known to what extent Chris followed the medication plan provided by the Suburban Hospital doctors, but it is clear that he was also taking medication from the Montgomery General hospital doctor without the knowledge of the Suburban doctors.

Buying a Condominium, 2003-2007

In July of 2003, Maria decided that she and Chris should purchase a condominium that was available under a low-income housing program in Montgomery County. They could finally live together as a family, and he could have time being a father to Michael and Ashley. Unfortunately, Maria decided to continue to live at her parents' house, with Michael and Ashley, and Chris lived alone in the condo. He saw Maria about once a week, but rarely saw his children.

During these years, Chris worked extensively as a carpenter or construction laborer on several major construction projects. He became a member of a construction labor union during these years. As is typical in the construction business, most jobs were for a specific construction project, such as building a warehouse or a strip mall, and the work would end when the project was completed. He worked for Sumner Carpentry Corporation for over a year, for Allstate Installations, Inc., for Washington Woodworking, and for

companies that were managing their own construction projects, such as Giant of Maryland, LLC. In the latter project, Chris worked on a crew that hung huge sheets of drywall on the walls of a new grocery store. It was obvious that his new medication regimen was helping Chris avoid serious bipolar episodes.

Chris often helped his siblings with various projects when he had some spare time from his regular jobs. He painted the outside of his sister Cheryl's house, renovated her basement, helped her move several times, assembled furniture, and fixed plumbing issues. He helped his brother Greg finish his basement, and he helped his sister Cindy with numerous odd jobs. After his mother moved to Delaware, he helped her with jobs around the house and took care of car maintenance for her.

The photo below was taken at the wedding of Chris' brother, Greg, in 2003. Here Chris poses with his brother and father, all dressed up in tuxedos.



Chris enjoyed visits with his family, in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. The photo below shows him with his parents and siblings, at Cindy's house in Chevy Chase.



Back to Virginia, 2007-2014

In 2007, Maria decided they should sell the condominium, and Chris agreed because it was clear that Maria was not going to move there with the children. In August of 2007, Chris moved to his father's home in Virginia where he rented a room in that large house.

During 2008, Chris worked for much of the year for Labor Ready, a company in Charlottesville that provided day labor on construction jobs in the area. He was forced to stop work there after he was seriously injured in an accident on the job. He had been working on a large demolition project that included many broken windows. One of those broken windows fell and hit Chris on the inside of his arm, causing a deep cut and severing the major artery in his arm. He was

rushed to the emergency room as he was bleeding profusely. He was told later by emergency staff that he probably would not have survived if he had arrived ten minutes later.

In mid-2008, Chris received a Complaint for Divorce from Maria's attorney. Chris had not initiated this, and did not want a divorce. Later in 2008, Chris received a Court Order to pay child support to Maria, and by early 2009 he was several thousand dollars in arrears on paying child support. The state of Maryland was threatening to revoke Chris' driver's license unless he paid promptly. Chris was unemployed at the time as a result of his serious accident at work, and he had no money to pay the child support.

In early March of 2009, Chris again had a severe episode of depression and attempted suicide again.. He was evaluated by staff of the psychiatry department at the University of Virginia, and given a new set of medication intended to prevent or moderate the depression and manic cycles of bipolar disorder.

After this episode, he finally told his father and other family members some of the details of his long battle with depression and mania. His family learned for the first time that he had been diagnosed as having bipolar disorder. Family members also learned more about the many times he had been "laid off" from his jobs because of the impacts of his medical condition.

In reviewing Chris' experience over the years, it became clear that many doctors who had treated Chris were prone to blame alcohol for the cause of his problems and failed to identify the medical problems that contributed to alcohol use. There seemed to be a widely held belief that excessive use of alcohol was a moral failing rather than caused by a problem to be treated medically.

When his father learned this new information, he and Chris agreed that Chris should apply for medical disability support from the US Social Security Administration. Only a small percentage of

applicants are ever approved for disability, but Chris had a solid case now that he was willing to disclose his bipolar diagnosis, and his difficulty in getting and keeping a job.

On October 5, 2009, Chris was informed that the Social Security Administration had determined that he was totally disabled and he would receive disability payments from the Social Security Administration. Also, his dependent daughter could receive child support payments.

He no longer had the stress of finding and keeping a job to pay for his living expenses and child support. Although the amount of the disability payments would not cover all of his living expenses, it was enough so that family members could supplement the assistance. Now Chris was free of the stress of trying to maintain employment to earn enough money to support himself and help support his dependent daughter. It was hoped the reduced stress would lessen the chances that he would have further serious episodes of depression and/or mania.

Chris was also able to become a regular patient of the Psychiatric Department at the University of Virginia where the staff provided assessments, advise and medications for his bipolar condition. His medications were periodically assessed and revised in order to try to control the cycles of depression and mania. His father had made an extensive effort to find private psychiatric doctors to accept Chris as a patient, and many were very interested until they were told he had bipolar disorder, after which they concluded they were really too busy to take on any new patients.

In 2009, Chris rented his own apartment in Charlottesville, VA, where he was close to activities in downtown Charlottesville, and only a few minutes by car from his father's farm. He was able to enjoy the apartment pool and other recreational facilities where he lived, and was able to walk around town and on trails in the community. He frequently drove to his father's farm to enjoy the outdoors, and he made many trips to his mother's house near the Atlantic beaches in Delaware, where he could fish and swim in the

ocean. Chris loved fishing in the ocean and spent many early morning hours fishing at the beach.

Chris loved sports, had many natural athletic abilities, and as a kid in school he excelled as a baseball pitcher, a football quarterback, and as the tallest kid on his basketball team. He won many trophies for his accomplishments in sports. Chris continued to enjoy a pickup game of basketball throughout his life. He later took up golf, with a used set of clubs for left handers, and enjoyed playing golf whenever he could find a course he could afford. Although Chris had lost interest in competitive swimming, he became a very competent swimmer, and in his last years he loved to go swimming far out in the ocean off the Delaware beaches.

Below is a photo of Chris hard at work changing the oil in his car, and enjoying a brief nap on a warm October day while waiting for the oil to drain.



Chris helped his father celebrate his birthday in 2011, with time in the pool, and playing with his nieces. The photo below shows Chris in the swimming pool taking a break after playing with his nieces (he is holding the red float)..



Here is Chris holding his youngest niece, Claire, in 2011.



Chris celebrated his 50th birthday in 2011, at his sister Cindy's beach house in Delaware. Cindy's daughter Megan is with Chris.



Chris continued to have episodes of mild depression and mania during the five years he lived in Charlottesville, but most of the time he was in a satisfactory mood, although often more subdued than Chris' younger temperament. And it was known that Chris continued to obtain medications from his doctor in Maryland who was associated with Montgomery General Hospital, including an ample supply of valium.

Chris passed away in October, 2014, during an episode of bipolar disorder.

Chapter 5:

Perspectives

What if Chris had not had bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder dominated the major decisions and direction of Chris' adult life. Without that medical problem, his life would have been very different. Speculation about what might have been can never be proven, but there are millions of examples of how people live their life when they do not have a major disability.

Without his disability, it is likely that Chris would have successfully completed the air conditioning school he attended in 1982. He would have done well in the school and would have been recommended to heating and air conditioning companies as a prospective employee.

He would have become a successful air conditioning and heating mechanic for a company in Montgomery County, and within five years he would have learned most everything he needed to know about the technical aspects of installing and servicing heating and air conditioning systems.

Because he was a natural salesperson, he would have taken on an increasing role in customer relations in the company, including a major role in maintaining relations with important clients.

After ten years or so working for one or more companies, it is likely that he would have started his own heating and air conditioning company, or bought out an existing company, which is very common in that business. Or he may have continued with a company as the senior operations person or as a co- owner.

If he had purchased or started his own business it would have grown and would have been quite profitable, in part because of the rapid population growth in the area. By the time he was 40 years old he would have been making well over one hundred thousand dollars a year, either as an employee or owner. As an owner, he would have expanded the business into related areas such as geothermal systems and solar systems, as global warming concerns, and government subsidies, grew.

He would have purchased a middle-class house in the suburbs when he was still young, and would have upgraded it significantly over the years. He probably would have moved to a larger house as his family and his income grew.

He would have been living in his own house with his wife and children, rather than with in-laws, or in his father's basement, or in his mother's house. His children would have grown up in a normal family arrangement, with their real parents taking care of their needs.

In 2021, Chris would have celebrated his 60th birthday, with his wife, children and grandchildren with him. He would have a net worth of at least a million, and would have turned over much of the day-to-day operation of his business to his employees, but would continue to handle marketing and sales for major clients. It is possible that at least one of his children would have joined him in the business, and was being prepared to take over the business.

He and his wife might have a second home in a warm winter climate, where he might entertain some of his best clients, and he might even invite his parents, his children, and other family members for a brief visit.

He would have continued to play golf over the years and would now be an important supporter of at least one major golf course. He would continue to play pick-up basketball games, although most of

his regular competitors would have given up the sport because of age. He would have continued his interest in fishing, in both freshwater and oceans; he may have purchased a cabin on a nice lake in Minnesota. He would have continued his interests in fast automobiles, and would have a collection of a few of the best, including a restored GTO.

He Missed His Children

A continuing source of pain and grief for Chris was the lack of time he had with his children. He never was able to live in a household with his wife and children, and Maria's parents continued to act as the parents of Chris' children. After the divorce from Maria, there was almost no contact with his children. Hopefully, his children and grandchildren will gain an understanding of Chris' life and the reasons he had a very limited role as a father.

A Good Samaritan

Throughout his life Chris was a very generous and caring person. He was truly a Good Samaritan. Even though he seldom had any extra money, he would help friends who were in need. He would pull over to the side of the road to help someone whose vehicle had broken down. He would help cheer up those who were despondent. A neighbor of his in the apartment complex in Charlottesville told how Chris spent a lot of time trying to help boost his spirits after his girlfriend left him, and he considered Chris to be one of the nicest people he had ever met.

Chris was always considerate and supportive of those who some might call the "little people" - the people who wait on you at the grocery store, or the fast-food place; the people who collect the trash and deliver the mail; the people who repair the leaky toilet and fix the AC. Chris made friends with all of them.

Chris enjoyed interacting with people. He knew most of the people in his apartment complex. He knew some of his mother's neighbors before she did; he knew the lifeguards at the beach, and many of Cindy's neighbors.

Chris was tolerant of and accepting of all races, religions, appearances, disabilities and personalities. One of his best friends in high school and afterwards was an African-American guy who was seriously overweight and who obviously was avoided by many in his school, but Chris focused on his personality, not his appearance. Although Chris worked with many people who were rednecks and racists and intolerant of anyone who was not white, Christian and a native English speaker, Chris always rejected that mindset.

Although Chris often did not join his siblings at family events, it was not because he didn't care. All his family members were important to him. When Cheryl became ill, Chris called her every day to check on her progress. He called his mother daily when he was not there helping her scrub her kitchen or polish her wood floors. When his father was rushed to the emergency room in 2013, Chris was there almost before he was.

It's too bad Chris did not have the opportunity to see what a difference he made in people's lives, like George Bailey in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life". After his death, his family members heard several stories from people who were deeply saddened by his departure. Staff at the apartment complex grieved the loss of a person who was always friendly and helpful. The receptionist at the psychiatric department at the University of Virginia was shocked and in tears after learning of his death. The physician's assistant at the medical clinic in Louisa where Chris received treatment called to tell us that everyone there was shocked and upset; they all enjoyed his visits and looked forward to seeing him.

A couple of years before his death, Chris saw a homeless man at a shopping mall in Charlottesville who was trying to sell a sweater and a pair of socks to get some money for food. Chris wanted to help, and asked how much he wanted for them. The man said \$5.00. Chris said he only had \$3.00. The man said that was fine, it was a deal, and was very happy. The sweater still had the price tag on it, but it was too large for Chris, so he brought it to his father and suggested that he could give it to Cheryl's husband, David, for Christmas. After looking at the size, it was obvious that it was even too big for David, which means it was very big. But a relative was visiting at the time, and she thought that her brother who lived in West Virginia would like the sweater, so she boxed it up and gave it to him, and she was very happy. But the sweater was too large for her brother, so he gave it to his friend Fred and asked him to find someone large who needed a sweater. Fred gave the sweater to his boss at work, who apparently was very large, and the boss loved it and wore it to work a few times a week, and was very happy. The boss was so happy with the sweater that he gave Fred a \$50 gift certificate in return, which made Fred very happy.

And that is an example of the good that Chris did, without even trying.

Epilogue

Chris' remains are inurned at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

His niche is shown in the photo below. Family members who want a special pass to visit his resting place should contact his brother Greg for a pass and directions.



Chris' son Michael turned 32 in 2023. He has a Bachelor's degree in cyber security from the University of Maryland Global Campus, and has worked for large computer consulting firms since then, including as a Cyber Security Analyst at General Dynamics Information Technology. He and Brenda have two sons, named Michael and Liam. Michael was nine years old, and Liam was two, in 2022.

Ashley turned 24 in December, 2023. She received her college degree in May, 2022, in Public Health, from the University of Maryland, and is now working on getting an MPH from the same University, as well as working full time as an administrative assistant to the President of a public health consulting firm.

They are shown in the photo below taken in October, 2022, with Chris' father. Liam is on the far left, next to his father, and young Michael is next to Ashley. Chris would be very proud of his descendants.



