

# **CHAPTER 8: CONTINUING TO CHANGE AND LEARN?**

## **2003 - 2016**

### **PRINCE MICHEL**

I closed out the previous chapter of these memoirs by praising the wonderful food, wine and service at the Prince Michel restaurant. This is possible proof that good things don't last, or that some things are just too good to last. By 2003, Prince Michel was gone; closed; no more. The principal reason for its demise was that Mr. LeDucq became ill and passed away, and his family decided to sell the vineyard to an American investor, who closed the restaurant. But before that happened, there had been a falling-out between Chef Alain and Mr. LeDucq that resulted in Chef Alain's departure, and the restaurant was nothing without him.

The good news is that Chef Alain and his wife Annie relocated to Richmond and opened a new French restaurant there, named Chez Max. In 2004, I made my first of many visits to their restaurant. The new restaurant needed to be profitable, so it was somewhat more expensive, and more crowded than Prince Michel, and the menu had been revised a bit to appeal to more traditional American tastes and expectations, but the food, the wine and the service continued to be excellent. This proved that great things can be salvaged and restored!

### **BUSINESS WAS BOOMING**

By 2003, the publication production had become much less labor intensive, and Lisa was able to manage it with only two or three other employees. I continued to handle all financial management and the websites, as well as maintaining the computer systems.

As the web and email became more generally used, including by our subscribers overseas, we made more updates to the website during the next few years. We added order forms so subscribers could complete an order form on the website and submit their credit card payment on the secure form directly to our staff who processed orders. And employers could submit their job ads on a similar form on the website. We started "mailing" our weekly publication on the internet. Rather than receiving a hard copy of the publication, subscribers could access it on our website, with a password. We would email our subscribers each week to let them know that the new edition of the publication was now posted on the web. Over the years, this greatly reduced the number of hard copy subscriptions, and that reduced the postage required to mail such publications.

The changes due to the introduction of the web and email resulted in changes in our staff needs. There was much less typing and phone work, and more editing, more website management, and more marketing.

## **PUBLISHING THE “COMMUNITY ADVOCATE”**

In a burst of optimism and enthusiasm, I undertook the effort to publish a new Newspaper in Greene County. My intent was to help the community by providing an inexpensive news service for all the community organizations in the county, such as the Ruritans, the Tourism Task Force, the Historical Society, the two political parties, the Lion’s Club, the garden clubs, and the Free Medical Clinic. I had volunteered with several of these organizations and learned that they all had difficulty getting information out to residents in the county. Most of these groups wished to invite more participation as volunteers, or to offer their services to those in need, or to solicit donations to their cause.

The local weekly newspaper had very limited circulation, with less than ten percent of the residences in the county receiving the paper, and the readers of that paper tended to be those who already were in the know about what was happening in the county. Therefore, that weekly paper was of little help in expanding outreach.

My idea was to publish a 24-page newspaper every three months that would be mailed to every postal box in the county, free of charge, and that I would charge the community organizations a small fee to publish their information. Such a fee would be much less than their cost for even a small newsletter sent to a very limited mailing list. By mailing my newspaper to every postal box I could get the lowest postal rate possible – basically the rate paid by junk mailers to “Postal Customer”. I calculated that I could produce, print, and mail an issue for about \$1600, assuming all volunteer staff in producing the paper. I would need only about eight organizations paying \$200 each to cover the cost; with more organizations participating, the cost for each would go down. With a 24-page paper, an organization could buy a full page for less than \$100. I decided to call it the *Community Advocate*.

I knew key people in many of the community organizations, and asked them to provide their news for publication, at no charge for the initial issue. I recruited a few community leaders to write articles to be included. I collected information from the county government regarding important public issues such as a proposed large real estate tax increase. I did research and wrote articles on a few general interest issues about the county. I had no problem filling 24 pages of the newspaper. Because the Carlyle Corporation was in the business of publishing newspapers, we had all the systems in place to lay out the newspaper and get seven thousand copies printed. I then delivered the newspapers to the four post offices in the county to be distributed to each postal route and to each set of postal boxes.

The *Community Advocate* newspaper was generally warmly received. It reached many residents who normally did not receive any county news, including a substantial portion

of the residents who only knew about the neighboring community of Charlottesville, where they worked, and had almost no knowledge of their own county. I received many thanks from members of the community organizations in the county. And I got only a couple of objections or complaints from government officials who didn't like the way the newspaper portrayed some government decisions or actions.

I decided to continue with a second quarterly issue at no charge to the community organizations, and then I would start charging them for coverage in future issues. I would cover the cost of the first two issues myself.

After the second issue, I began soliciting payment from community organizations for their use of the paper, and I solicited paid advertising from businesses in the county. For the third issue I received about \$700, or a little less than half the costs of publication. For the fourth issue I received about \$1000, but only half of that was from community organizations. In my discussions with the community organizations about payments for their use of the paper, I learned that they all thought they would like this inexpensive way to reach all the residents of the county, but they found that they had difficulty getting anyone in their organization to pull together publicity material to place in the newspaper, and they might only need to use the paper once or twice a year, depending on their activities. They were enthusiastic about the concept, but the reality was different.

I concluded that many of these organizations really needed someone to prepare their publicity material for them, and that was a very labor-intensive undertaking. And selling advertising to businesses also was very time consuming. It would require that I hire one or more assistants, which would greatly increase the cost of production. After carefully studying the options, I concluded that it would not be self-sustaining financially unless we could sell a substantial amount of commercial advertising, which was not what I wanted to do. I decided to discontinue publication unless there was a groundswell of financial support from the community organizations – which did not come.

It was an interesting endeavor, and I learned a great deal about the county myself, and met many interesting people in the county that I probably would not have known otherwise. I concluded that the benefits were worth my investment in the venture.

## **ENDING MY MARRIAGE**

The end of my marriage to EYB was inevitable, and I should have pursued it sooner. Note to society: ideally it should be more difficult to get married than to get a divorce, or at minimum it should not be more difficult to do one than the other. Unfortunately, it is too easy to get married, without adequate consideration of the consequences, and so difficult to get divorced that it is often necessary to hire a divorce attorney and other specialists who are expert at extracting money from their clients. In any case, in 2004, I asked for a divorce from EYB. She decided to try to make the divorce as painful as possible for me, and to try to take every cent she could. She told me she was going to make me regret that I ever knew her, and she did. She hired an attorney who had a reputation as being

the most likely to encourage his client to make the divorce process as difficult and costly as possible, and refuse to negotiate any kind of reasonable settlement, to maximize the attorney fees. Some unscrupulous person apparently informed her that she could get a court order to evict me from my farm if she could convince a judge that I had assaulted her. So without any basis, she fabricated a story and convinced a judge that I had assaulted her, and the judge, without any opportunity for me to contest, ordered me evicted from my own property. Now she had three houses, and I had none. Fortunately, after several months of delays by EYB's attorney, EYB dropped her charges against me. She obviously had no evidence to support her charges, and no witnesses who would collaborate her fabrication. After nine months, she left the farm and I had it back.

After being evicted from my farm, I temporarily lived in a townhouse in the Charlottesville suburbs, while I was dealing with my lawyer and her lawyer, going through depositions, getting appraisals of marital property, etc. We had relatively little marital property that was to be divided; most of our property had been acquired by each of us separately prior to the marriage. Her attorney apparently was misleading her into thinking that she was going to get a great windfall, thereby justifying his high hourly fees and dragging out the process as long as possible. She belatedly realized that her attorney was the only person who was getting rich out of the process, and she was finally willing to negotiate a settlement.

## **EVERYONE WORKING FROM HOME**

Being evicted from the farm actually had a benefit, because Lisa decided everyone could work from home rather working in the log house; we didn't need to all congregate in one office to do our jobs. All employees agreed, and we immediately began moving office furniture and equipment for each employee to their home. They all got a desk, office chair, a computer, file cabinet, and any other equipment or supplies needed. Lisa gave them all assignments by email or phone, and they all returned their work results by email or on the website. Employees no longer needed to waste time commuting back and forth to work, and they never had bad weather as an excuse to miss work. They could work whatever hours they desired, as long as they got their work done and were available to be reached by clients and customers when needed during business hours. It also ended any office politics and petty disagreements among staff.

Working from home became the standard operating procedure for the business for the next 12 years. It saved employees the time and cost of commuting, and it saved the Corporation the expense of office space and associated utilities. And there was no reduction in the quality or quantity of work performed.

## **FIXING THE MESS**

During my nine-month absence from the farm, almost no maintenance had been done, and the place was a mess. Upon my return, I spent a few months restoring the property, including repainting all rooms in the big house, repairing and painting the out-buildings as needed, restoring the gardens and lawn and pool to their previous neatness, and generally making the place look like normal people lived there.

Meanwhile, Lisa also was working to fix what had become the mess of her life. She had finally given up trying to save her marriage, after several years of marriage counseling. Her husband refused to get a full-time job, and spent more money than she could make, and continued to belittle her efforts to support the family. Apparently, her husband had also given up on saving the marriage, and he asked for a divorce. So Lisa moved out of the home. She rented a temporary place nearby to be close to her children while she worked through the divorce process. To expedite the divorce and to minimize the impact on her children, she agreed to give her share of the family home and most of its contents to her husband, and to pay him a substantial amount of alimony as well as child support.

She had thought about moving back to Kansas, but only if she could take the children, and it was clear that she would have a huge custody fight with her husband if she tried. So she began looking for a home nearby to purchase. She bought a home in Charlottesville, close enough to the family home so her children could easily spend time with her or their father, and they could attend their schools from either home.

Lisa and I were now both single, and we began spending more time together not involved with business, and we found we enjoyed spending leisure time together. We had common interests and beliefs. We agreed on almost all political issues, and never had any major disagreement about anything. Well that is a big change. In time, I started spending some time at Lisa's place, and she spent some time at the farm. We were concluding that we might even like living with each other, although we were both hesitant about making another marriage commitment.

## **ANOTHER GRANDDAUGHTER**

In 2004, Greg and Marsha had their first child, named Anna, my sixth granddaughter. Anna was born about two months premature, and there was much concern about her health for the first several weeks. I visited Marsha and baby at the hospital in the Baltimore area. This was my first experience with serious health concerns for a newborn family member. Fortunately, Anna grew strong and healthy over the next year.

In 2006, we hired my son Greg to work for the company, with responsibility for daily maintenance of the website, including posting new hot jobs on the web, and receiving and processing subscription orders placed on the website. This was an opportunity for him to be able to work from home while his child was very young.

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON THE FARM

In 2006, I decided to place my farm in a “conservation easement”. I had been studying the cost and benefits of such an easement for a few years, and now two of my neighbors were also considering this action. A conservation easement was a legally binding easement on the property which would prohibit or severely restrict subdivisions and related residential development of the property. The purpose of the easements was to prevent the continued growth of suburban sprawl into rural areas. Property owners could continue to conduct agriculture and some forestry related businesses on the farm, but not sell off a bunch of lots for residential development. The easement would continue in perpetuity, under the oversight of an independent conservation organization approved by the state. Therefore, future buyers of the property would be prohibited from subdividing the land.

To encourage rural land owners to enter into such easements, the Federal government had enacted legislation to permit land owners to claim a tax deduction for the “donation” of the reduced value of the land as a result of giving up the right to subdivide. And the state of Virginia provided a tax credit up to 50% of the amount of the reduced value; the credit could be taken over a period of five years. Land owners needed to obtain a licensed appraiser to determine the value of the property before and after the easement, which would serve as the basis for the Federal and state tax deductions and credits.

I joined with two neighboring land owners to place the three properties under easement. And our properties would join three additional properties already under easement, resulting in a contiguous area of land totaling nearly 1000 acres under easement to prohibit residential development. Below is a satellite view of the farm outlined in red.



The appraisal of my property resulted in a determination that the value after easement would be reduced by \$215,000. Therefore, I could deduct from my Federal taxes the full \$215,000 as a charitable contribution. The state of Virginia provided tax credits of \$107,500 (50% of \$215,000) which could be applied against any state income taxes I owed. I also was permitted to sell such credits to other Virginia taxpayers if I did not need them myself. I had five years to take these deductions. I sold \$82,000 of the Virginia credits to other taxpayers for a total price of \$62,300 (or for 76% of the face value of the credits). I used or transferred to family members the remaining credits. In total, the contribution deductions and the tax credits were worth over \$155,000 to me.

It is not known to what extent the conservation easement actually reduced the value of my property. I later learned that a couple of potential buyers of the property had decided they were not interested because of the easement restrictions. In any case, I was happy that I was able to protect the property from future suburban development, and that I had encouraged other land owners to do the same, and clearly the tax deductions and credits were a significant part of the incentive for me and my neighbors to accept such a restriction.

## **LIVING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE PART-TIME**

Lisa had purchased a house in Charlottesville, on Brandywine Drive. It was a 1950s era split level that had been updated and expanded over the years. Lisa bought the place so her daughter Elizabeth and son William would have a home to come to nearby. The place was close enough to their school that Lisa could easily take them to school when they spent the night there.





I helped Lisa make several improvements to the property, including installing all new thermal pane windows, and renovating the recreation room on the lower level of the house.

The house was in a great location, within a short drive to downtown and the University of Virginia, as well as to all the restaurants in town. Whenever I was there, we enjoyed the best restaurants, eating out once or twice a week.

I continued to spend some time at the farm, and in the summer months we spent more time there. I spent time maintaining the pool and the lawn, bush hogging the pastures and hay fields, and keeping the place looking good.

I had noticed that real estate prices in the area had been increasing at a rapid rate in recent months, and the prices for country estates such as mine had reached unimagined levels. Some undeveloped acres had sold for \$15,000 or more an acre, which compared with \$3000 to \$5000 an acre just a few years prior. I decided to test the market and see what I might get for my farm. After interviewing a few real estate agents, I listed the farm with one of the agents, and he listed it with an asking price about six times what I had paid for it. The agent brought several potential buyers to see the property, and a few came back for second or third visits. But this was now in 2007, just as the bottom was starting to fall out of the real estate market, and buyers were becoming nervous about the market. As the economy fell into the Great Recession, I took the farm off the market and decided to keep it for now.

## **CLASS REUNIONS**

In 2006, I attended two high school class reunions on the same weekend. Lisa joined me on this trip. Battle Lake High School, which I attended my 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and through November

of my junior year, held its 50-year class reunion on a weekend in July, with the primary event of Friday evening, and follow-on events on Saturday morning and mid-day. Henning High School, which I attended for the remainder of my junior year and for my senior year, held its 50-year class reunion on the same weekend with the primary event on Saturday evening and follow-on events on Sunday. I was able to attend both reunions, and it was great fun.

The Battle Lake reunion was particularly interesting because I had not seen any of my classmates from there since I left the school in 1954 when my parents sold their farm and moved to Henning. In 52 years, most people change a bit. If you see them even every few years you get used to the gradual changes, but when you haven't seen them in 52 years, most of them seem to be complete strangers. I recognized a couple of my classmates – they still had some of their distinctive features that made them easier to identify. Some of them I recognized only after I was introduced. But some of them had changed so much I couldn't pull up anything familiar – I just had to accept that they were really who they claimed to be. One of the latter group came up to me and announced that she had known me longer than anyone there. I responded that she must be Elaine; we had been classmates in the first grade at the one-room country school. I was right. I recognized Margie who had been in my second grade class in Clitherall school, and Sharon who had been in my fourth grade class at the little school on the prairie. And I had a nice visit with Roscoe who had been one of our three-person livestock judging team when we won a trip to St. Paul for a judging competition there. I discovered that Lefty had grown about six inches since I had last seen him, and that Harold was still the tallest member of the class. And it was good to see Norm, Lowell, Jorgie, Chick, Darrell, and all the rest (I'm doing this from memory, and I don't remember all) I was disappointed that some of my friends from those days were not in attendance, including Clayton, Larry, Richard and Marlys.

On Saturday we all got a nice tour of the High School which has been almost entirely rebuilt and expanded, with greatly improved facilities, including an auditorium that would make many colleges proud. It was a pleasant and interesting blast from the past, but not enough time to try to catch up with what everyone had been doing for the past 52 years.

The Henning class reunion did not have as many surprises because I had attended the 35<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> year reunions, so I recognized most of the classmates, and I knew more about what they had been doing the past 50 years. We had a nice dinner and social gathering at Thumper Pond, a major resort near Otter Tail Lake, and on Sunday many of us met again for brunch in Henning, for more informal conversations. I was pleased to see many of those I knew well while in school, including Tweety, Phyllis, Joann, Ann, and Jackie, and Jim, Eugene, John B., Myron, and Merlin. But I was sorry not to see John T., Bruce, Pauline, Janice, David, Wes, Dale, Russell, and others; some had passed away, some were not able to attend, and some apparently just preferred to stay away.

Having the rare opportunity to attend reunions of two nearby high schools resulted in a few observations about a couple of striking differences in these two groups. These two

schools are located only about 15 miles apart, and their boundaries join, so one might expect that they would have very similar cultures. But these two classes indicated that they were quite different. The most obvious difference was the number of classmates who had obtained some type of higher education degree. According to my count, 19 of the 51 Battle Lake classmates had a higher degree, or 37%, while 7 of the 58 Henning classmates had a higher degree, or 12%.

A second big difference is the number who had passed away by the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion. In Battle Lake, four classmates had died, or 8%, while 11 of my Henning classmates had died, or 19%. I do not have any ideas about the causes of these differences, or maybe the samples are too small to be meaningful. The two communities seem to have almost identical ethnicity, almost entirely northern European ancestry, and the income levels of the parents back then were similar, based primarily on agriculture, small merchants and skilled trades. Maybe this would be a good social sciences study for a graduate student somewhere.

I note here that during this visit back to Henning and Battle Lake, we spent a few days at Oak Park Resort on Clitherall Lake. I had checked on getting reservations at Scenic Point Resort which was just down the road from our old farms, but they had no cabins available, and neither did Old Town Resort, so I checked with Oak Park Resort, which is located on the eastern end of the lake, just across the road from the town of Clitherall, and they had a cabin available for the few days we would be there. We discovered that it was actually the nicest resort on the lake, and this would become the first of many annual vacations at the resort.

The next June, my sister Phyl organized a reunion of my siblings in Williston, ND. The reunion was held there because my sister Joyce lived there and she had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was given only a few months to live. Lisa and I flew out to North Dakota to attend the reunion and spend time with Joyce. I had flown out there in March to visit her and spent several days with her when she had initially been diagnosed. Below is a photo of me with five siblings at the reunion. Joyce is seated in front.



After the reunion, we spent a few days at Oak Park Resort again, and we made reservations to come back the following summer.

## **SISTER JOYCE PASSED AWAY**

Joyce passed away in October, 2007. She had gone through the pain and misery of chemotherapy treatment, with no obvious benefits. She had a sarcoma cancer that develops in the bone, cartilage, fat, muscle or other connective tissues. Her tumor had grown primarily in the abdomen, and had quickly begun to crowd out her other organs. She lived only about six months after the tumor was discovered. She was only 61 years old. She was my second sibling to die of cancer.

Joyce was the baby of the family – actually one of the twins who were the youngest siblings. It was a shock to all of us to lose a younger sister. I attended the funeral in Williston. It was a sad affair. Too many people are dying an early death due to cancer, and too little has been done to find means to prevent, diagnose or cure cancer. The Center for Disease Control and other organizations hype the data that heart disease is the number one killer of Americans. But if one analyzes that data it becomes evident that this is true only if counting people dying over the age of 90. People in their 80s and 90s are more likely to die of heart diseases, or at least the reported cause of death is heart disease. But cancer clearly is the number one killer of people aged 45 to 80. For example, data for 2015, the most recent year available when this was written, shows that 420,329 people aged 45 to 79 died of cancer, compared with 283,169 in that age range who died of heart disease. Cancer was the cause of death of 22% of the people who died that year, while 1.6% died of suicide, and 2.9% died of diabetes. Cancer kills many people who otherwise are healthy and who have lived a healthy lifestyle.

As my siblings and I were awaiting the funeral ceremony, we had time for some reminiscing about Joyce. Judy talked about her twin sister and the fact that they were not identical twins and were really quite different, but were still best friends. Eileen mentioned the trauma of having two new sisters only about 15 months younger than she, who seemed to get all the attention. Wally recalled how he was just starting his first year at the Morris Agriculture high school when he got word that mother had given birth to twins, He hitch-hiked about 50 miles to Fergus Falls to visit them in the hospital. I recalled waking up on the morning of October 2 and discovering that mom and dad were not home – they had gone to the hospital, and then learning that I had twin sisters. Mickey, who was then 12 years old, was in charge until dad got back home, which in itself was quite scary, knowing Mickey at age 12. It was a cool but sunny day, with a little frost on the grass. I was excited about having twin sisters, but worried about where we would put them, in that little house.

Wally gave a nice eulogy for Joyce at the service. The minister tried to assure all of us that she was now in a better place, and we would all meet again in the hereafter, although not all of us believed that.

## **I MARRIED LISA**

In October 2007, Lisa and I got married. I know, it was getting to be a bit embarrassing; this was my third time. It was a small ceremony, at Lisa's house in Charlottesville, attended only by Lisa's children, Elizabeth and Will, and the marrying official.

I knew Lisa very well. We had worked together for over ten years, and had gone through some difficult times, and we still respected and admired each other.

Below is a photo of Lisa and me taken on our wedding day



Lisa was everything I wanted in a life-time companion. She was smart, a quick learner, and well educated. She had “street smarts”, or good “common sense”; she almost always correctly identified an issue or problem, and came up with workable solutions. She was not highly opinionated, and open to learning new things. She was the kindest, most empathetic person I knew; she always found something good in everyone she met, even right-wing Republicans! She had an even temperament, was not easily annoyed, and didn't hold a grudge. She had a great sense of humor, and we almost always found something humorous in even the most frustrating situations. She was physically fit, and worked to keep herself strong; she enjoyed hard physical work. She was a good cook and was interested in becoming a great cook. She was a political person and we agreed on almost all political and philosophical issues. She enjoyed meeting people and had an incredible ability to remember important information about their lives. She was beautiful, and knew how to keep herself looking attractive. And most importantly, she thought I was wonderful; it's hard to beat that.

I had learned much about Lisa's life, including her childhood. She told me about the hard times in her life with her mother and stepfather. How they lived in poverty much of the time due primarily to her stepfather's dysfunctional behavior and “rules”. He refused to allow Lisa's mother to work; he was the bread winner and it was a negative reflection on him to have his wife work. But he was not capable of supporting the family, not because he couldn't get a good job, but because he wouldn't stick with any good job. He was a very good brick mason, but would quit jobs for no apparent good reason, and they would go hungry until he tried something new.

Lisa Lynn Ousley was born in December, 1963, two weeks after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Her mother was still recovering from the shock of the Kennedy assassination. Lisa was born into a non-existing family. Her father had left her mother before she was born, and her mother believed she was incapable of caring for this baby. She was 20 years old, but thought she could not raise a child by herself. Fortunately for Lisa, her grandparents, her mother's parents, came to the rescue and took baby Lisa home with them. She was saved from being put up for adoption or worse.

Her grandparents had already raised eight children of their own, but they were doting parents to little Lisa, and took her in as one of their own. They lived on a small farm in western Missouri, and he was working as a maintenance crew member for the highway department. They didn't have indoor plumbing or central heating, but they had lots of love for Lisa. Lisa saw her mother occasionally during those early years, and rarely saw her father.

Meanwhile, Lisa's mother, Nadine, had been dating and had developed a steady relationship with a new man. When Lisa was three, Nadine decided she wanted to take Lisa to live with her. The grandparents agreed, provided that Nadine and her man got married first. A few months later Nadine informed her parents that she was now married, and she took Lisa away. It was only later that they actually got married. Lisa says she remembers the trauma of being taken away from the people she loved, and forced to live

with these strangers. She says she tried to remember the roads to take to get back to her grandparents' place so she could go back home.

Since she was in sixth grade, Lisa had been active in political organizing, and knew that was to be her career. In the sixth grade she organized a campaign effort for Jimmy Carter. She organized the first Young Democrats club in her high school, and was soon attending Young Democrats functions in other parts of the state.

Upon high school graduation, Lisa had decided she would go to Pittsburgh State University in Pittsburgh, KS. She had saved some money from her various jobs, and would work full time that summer until she had to leave for college. When the day came for her to leave, she packed up her few belongings and loaded them into her old clunker car, a bright orange Hornet Sport. Her mother and stepfather asked her where she was going! They still did not believe she would actually go off to college. They wished her well, but it was clear that they expected her to be back in a few days or sooner. She never returned. And she never received any financial support from her mother or stepfather, and of course she never expected to receive any support. As Lisa drove away to college, she viewed it as an escape from a life of poverty without hope or purpose. She was going to make something of herself; she was going to help make the world a better place. She had \$400 in her pocket. She had her college admission letter. She was on her way.

In 1988, Lisa had worked her way through college and earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. She had twice been elected as President of the Kansas Young Democrats. She was on a first-name basis with all the Democratic movers and shakers in Kansas, including the Governor, Congressmen, state party officials, and many state and local elected politicians. Her political mentors in Kansas had asked her to plan to run for political office. They believed she had what it takes to win elections and serve constituents. Lisa was very interested in pursuing a career in Democratic politics, and she was sure she would do so at some point in the future. But her analysis of successful politicians in Kansas had convinced her that she did not yet have enough experience to honestly sell herself as a political representative of the people, and in particular she believed she needed to have some military experience. She made the decision to enlist in the U.S. Army for a four-year hitch.

Lisa made the most of her time in the Army. She made it through basic without any major problems. She was older than most recruits, and she was used to being away from home. Some of the Sergeants gave her a hard time because she had a college degree (and they didn't), but her top physical condition made basic training bearable for her. After a training period she was assigned to duty at an Army base in Germany, near Strasbourg, and only a few miles from France. She was promoted to the rank of Corporal, and was soon given responsibility for training the Army unit stationed there, taking over those duties from a Captain.

While she was receiving her advanced training in Georgia, she began dating a man named Bob who was there on a short-term training program with the Reserves. She was impressed with Bob, who claimed to have little interest in politics but had voted for Jimmy

Carter. They seemed to have similar political views. They dated for a few months, and as Lisa was about to be sent to Germany, they married. Bob joined Lisa in Germany as a dependent, and they lived in an apartment off base.

In the summer of 1990, Lisa became pregnant. She decided to resign from the Army in late 1990, before the baby was born. She planned to continue to live in Germany for a year or two while Bob continued his job with an Army contractor at the base. She really enjoyed living in Germany, and her knowledge of the German language was improving every day. She was looking forward to taking her baby in her pram for walks to the neighborhood shops and parks.

She had been offered at least two good-paying jobs herself if she decided she wanted to continue to work after the baby was born. But two days into her new civilian life, Bob informed her that he was being transferred to Saudi Arabia by his employer, to support the US military effort to push Saddam Hussain's Iraq out of Kuwait. A couple of days later, she received a phone call from her mother in Texas, informing her that her stepfather had passed away. He had a fatal heart attack while he was in surgery. And Lisa's mother was completely lost. She didn't know what to do; her husband had taken care of everything; she had no money; she couldn't drive; she needed help. So suddenly all plans changed, and Lisa was on her way to Texas. Why did Lisa feel it was her responsibility to change her life to go take care of her mother? Lisa was "miss responsibility"; it was her duty as a good daughter and a good Christian to take care of her mother.

Lisa immediately took charge of settling the affairs of her deceased stepfather. She lived in Texas with her mother for several weeks, awaiting the birth of her child, a girl, born in April. A few months later, Bob returned from Kuwait, his assignment there having ended. He soon received another assignment in South Carolina, so Lisa, baby, and Lisa's mother packed up and moved with Bob to South Carolina. But the job there soon ended. Lisa thought that now would be a good time to move back to Kansas. She knew that she could find a good job there; her Democratic friends had promised her they would have a good position for her when she returned. But Bob refused. He insisted on moving to a rural area in Virginia; in sort of an economic backwater in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in Greene County. Maybe that is one of the risks of marrying someone you meet on a military base.

The prospect of not going back to Kansas was a huge disappointment for Lisa. But fortunately for me, they rented my house at the farm, in that economic backwater, Greene County, and the rest is history.

### **Honeymoon in the Virgin Islands**

A few months after our marriage we went on a honeymoon / vacation to the British Virgin Islands for about two weeks. It was a great place to be in February. The beaches were white, the snorkeling was fun, and the restaurants were good. Breakfast was on an open patio about 100 feet from the ocean, with a view across the water to other islands, and

tropical birds chirping in the trees. Mid-morning was the time for exploring the water and neighboring beaches. Mid-day was the time for reading in the shade or swimming in the large pool, or just taking a nap after lunch. Afternoon was a good time for a drive around the island or a boat ride to a nearby island. Evening required a decision about which restaurant we would choose, and which seafood we would eat, and which bottle of wine to order, and after dinner we had to decide whether to listen to a Caribbean steel band, or a jazz band, or maybe just take a walk on the beach and look at the stars – decisions, decisions, decisions!

Below is the view from our porch.



## **GENEALOGY RESEARCH AND WRITING**

I had been curious about my family ancestry since I was a little boy, but I found that my parents were not helpful in answering my many questions about their ancestry. In later life I learned that their apparent reluctance to answer my questions was primarily due to their lack of information themselves about their parents and grandparents and other relatives beyond those they had known personally. Dad occasionally talked about his brothers, and sisters, and a bit about his parents, but he seemed to have almost no information about his parents' ancestry. Although his parents had immigrated from Norway as adults, my dad knew almost nothing about where they came from, other than his grandfather's first name was Isaac, and some of his dad's siblings had homesteaded near Velva, ND.

My mother had grown up with several of her extended family living nearby. She knew her dad's mother and her dad's two sisters who lived nearby. She knew her mom's father and mother, and her grandmother's brother and family who lived on neighboring farms, but she always seemed reluctant to tell me about them. One time she responded to my questions by telling me I should not be wasting my time learning about dead people.

I ignored my mother's advice, and started collecting information about my ancestors at an early age. While I was living in London, I traveled to Norway to visit my dad's relatives there, and to see where by grandfather Nils Hystad lived before coming to America. To make this visit I had to get information from Hystad relatives still living near Velva, ND, who had maintained contact with their cousins in Norway. My visit to Norway resulted in the collection of much information about my Norwegian ancestry, and spiked my interest in doing more research.

In the 1980s, while living in the Washington, DC, area, I spent several Saturdays at the National Archives, going through the census records and other documents stored there, to find information about my mother's ancestors. And I spent time at the Mormon library of genealogy in Silver Spring, MD. I also collected some key information from mom's cousins and other family members who had done some genealogy research also. This research indicated that some of my ancestors had come to America on the Mayflower, which encouraged more research to identify and confirm my mom's heritage in America.

In the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, genealogical research became much easier, as more and more information became available on the internet. It became possible to study all the released census data on the web, without spending hours and days at the Archives manually scanning rolls of microfiche. Some distant family members started sharing their genealogy data on web sites, and exchanging information by email. In Norway, many churches were digitizing their extensive records of births, marriages and deaths, and making that data available on the web.

In 2007, I started devoting several hours a week to pulling together all the information I had collected on my mom's ancestry, and doing more research to fill in the gaps that still existed. I presented that information in a book of over 100 pages. The book tracks my mother's ancestors from Europe to the British colonies in America, and then follows them as they moved from the colonies west until they settled in McKenzie County, ND in the early 1900s. Most of her ancestors were in America before the American Revolution, and several ancestral lines go back to the Plymouth Colony and to New Netherlands. Multiple ancestors came on the Mayflower, and one ancestor probably was the only person to have lived in the British settlement at Jamestown, returned to London, and then came to Plymouth on the Mayflower.

After completing that book, I continued to periodically find more information about these ancestors. (In 2019 I updated the book with the new and revised information, including information on my great, great grandfather's service in the Civil War, in the Indiana Militia.)

After completing the book about my mother's ancestors, I started on one about my father's ancestors and about the descendants of my great grandfather Isaac Hystad who came to America and those who stayed in Norway. This book was quite different because my father's parents came to America from Norway in 1887, so they had a very short history in this country. Therefore, much of the book is about their ancestors in Norway, and about the immigration and settlement of the Hystad siblings in the United States. Fortunately, the churches in Norway have kept birth, baptism, marriage and death records for several centuries, and many of those records are now available on the web, making it much easier to track family members back through generations. Also, some of my cousins in Norway had done a great deal of genealogical research which I was able to use and build upon.

I traced a few ancestral lines in Norway back to the Viking era, and a couple of lines back to Norwegian Kings. My two visits to Norway in 1965 and in 2001 permitted me to improve my understanding of the geography, economics and culture of the western coast of Norway where most of my ancestors resided. And I got to know several of my cousins whose families did not emigrate to America. I got to explore the village of Hystad, and see where my grandfather grew up on the island of Stord, and the church where he was married to my grandmother. His wife, my grandmother, was born and raised in Bergen, the second largest city in Norway (and its former capital city), and I visited cousins still living there.

This book also provides details about the Hystad immigrants to America; how they initially came to settle near Sioux Falls, SD, in a community where several immigrants from the island of Stord had already settled. From South Dakota, the Hystads moved on to homestead in North Dakota. My father's parents and three of my grandfather's brothers and two of his sisters and their families settled in North Dakota. The book shows how the descendants of these immigrants have spread throughout the country and have melted into the American culture.

These two genealogy books can be found on my website at [www.carlylehystad.com](http://www.carlylehystad.com).

## **HELPING CHRIS**

One day in 1995, Chris told me that he had attempted suicide. He had just been released from a hospital in Maryland where he had been treated after an attempted suicide. And for the first time he confided in me that he had been diagnosed as having bipolar disorder, by two doctors at different times. He had not told any family members about this problem previously. He said he had attempted suicide several times, starting when he was about 19 years old.

His most recent attempt was while he was fishing on the Potomac River in Maryland. While fishing, he noticed a rope hanging from a tree branch near the river. The rope hung almost to the ground; he didn't know why it was there, but he immediately started thinking that he could use it to hang himself. He found a large high stump nearby to stand on as he tied a slip knot high in the rope, placed it around his neck, and kicked away the stump.

He told me that as he was hanging there, he saw a group of Union soldiers marching along the river coming his way, and one of the soldiers came near and asked him why was being so stupid as to try to kill himself; if you want to die, come join us and at least die for a good cause. The next thing he remembered he was lying on the ground. He said he thought the rope broke, and he fell to the ground. Chris asked me if I thought he had really seen those Union soldiers, and did I think they had cut him down. I responded that I didn't know; we (humans) don't know very much about how the mind works. "But the soldier had a valid point – you could at least die for a good cause, rather than just waste your life. Maybe it was your subconscious telling you that."

Chris told me about some of the times he had tried to kill himself. Once he took what he thought was an overdose of pills, but it just made him vomit and gave him a bad headache. He tried to buy a gun once, but the gun store had a waiting period of a few days, and by time the waiting period was over he had changed his mind. Once he tried carbon monoxide poisoning – he attached a hose to his van's exhaust pipe and ran it into the van through a hole in the floor board, but it didn't seem to work and he gave up waiting after awhile.

He said he was now getting some prescription drugs to help with the bipolar problem. He seemed to be in a good mood, which probably meant that he was in the manic phase of the disorder.

I helped Chris financially when he was between jobs, or when Maria was complaining. I hired him to help me with projects around the farm, even when I really didn't need help. But he helped a great deal with some of the heavy lifting tasks in the renovation of the log house. He lived with me at the farm on and off for many months in the 90s, when he was between jobs, or maybe just escaping from his wife's parents.

In 2003 he completed training to be a carpenter and joined the carpenters' union. He was employed as a carpenter on several construction projects around the Washington area from 2003 into 2006. But depression overtook him again, and he gave up his work with the union, and came back to live at the farm for much of 2007 and 2008.

In 2008, his wife filed for divorce, and she got custody of the two children, Michael and Ashley. The divorce agreement stipulated that he would have visiting rights with Ashley, but Maria did everything she could to prevent Chris from seeing Ashley, until he finally gave up. The divorce settlement required Chris to pay Maria child support for Ashley (Michael had already turned 18), but Chris was frequently unemployed and had fallen behind in making payments. Maria filed a claim against Chris in the family court in Maryland. I advised Chris to inform the judge that he was unemployed because of medical problems, and ask for a reduction in the amount of child support, and more time to make the payments. Chris filed a written response stating that he was having difficulty working because of his bipolar disorder. But Maria had informed the judge that Chris' claim of having bipolar disorder was just another lie to avoid supporting his child (who continued to live with Maria's parents). Chris told me that the judge didn't allow him to

make any statement, and he was told he would lose his driver's license if he didn't make payment quickly.

Meanwhile, I decided to help Chris file for Social Security disability benefits. He clearly was disabled and unable to keep a job for more than a few months, and each time he was fired or quit a job, it became more difficult to obtain another job because of bad references from previous positions. I studied the application process, and got advice about how to get approved. Most "experts" (who were attorneys who specialized in helping people get disability benefits) recommended that people apply for benefits and when their request gets rejected, then come to the attorney for help in preparing an effective appeal. (The Social Security Administration would pay the attorney a set fee for such service, if the application is approved.) I decided to prepare an application for Chris and to do it in a way that would maximize the chances that he would get approved immediately, rather than going through that two step process. I prepared a detailed description of the disability, including doctors' reports, and a detailed description as to how the disability had made it impossible for Chris to support himself. Chris signed it and I helped him present it to the local Social Security office. The Office requested completion of an additional questionnaire, which I helped him answer, and they interviewed Chris at least twice, including a medical interview. In a few months Chris was informed that his application had been approved. He would receive a monthly stipend, as well as direct payments to his ex-wife to provide for child support, retroactive to the date of the application.

I hired an attorney (who required a retainer of several thousand dollars), to reopen the child support case to inform the judge of the Social Security decision and to request that all back payments in child support, prior to the date of the application, be removed. The Social Security Administration decision completely undercut Maria's argument that Chris was faking a disability. This time the court approved the request, and Chris was now free of that obligation and would not lose his driver's license.

Chris received just over \$900 a month in disability benefits, which was a few dollars more than his monthly rent and utilities for one of the least expensive one bedroom apartments near Charlottesville. I was charged by Social Security with the responsibility of handling his finances. His benefit checks came to me and I paid his bills, and I made a detailed report to Social Security on how the benefits were spent. Chris also received Medicaid benefits and limited food stamp benefits as a result of the disability finding. Therefore, Chris was largely independent financially, although I continued to pay some expenses that he could not cover.

This experience was an eye opener for me. It demonstrated clearly that people who are unable to support themselves have almost no support options available. There is no easy "safety net" for any adult who does not have dependent children. If they can convince Social Security that they are disabled, they can receive social security disability benefits that will permit existence at the poverty level, assuming they are living in a relatively low cost area. But it is very difficult for a typical low income person to get through the process

to apply for benefits, and the majority of those who apply are rejected. Those who are claiming a mental disability appear to have a higher rate of success than those who are claiming a physical disability; a person has to be almost completely unable to function physically to qualify for disability benefits. Social Security reports that approximately 33% of applications for disability benefits are ultimately approved.

There are no other Federal programs for adults without children that would keep a person alive. The Republican propaganda that the Federal government is creating millions of welfare dependents is a complete myth, without any factual foundation, and promoted as part of their efforts to continue to reduce Federal welfare spending for poor people.

Some time in 2008 Chris got a short-term construction job in Charlottesville. While helping another worker move large sheets of broken glass, a large chunk of glass fell and cut a deep gash in his arm. He was rushed to the emergency room, where the gash was stitched up, and the staff there told him that he was very lucky; if they had not got him to the hospital when they did he would have bled to death.

A few months later, in 2009, Lisa and I were visiting relatives in Arizona, and we were spending a few days bird watching near the Mexican border south of Tucson, when I received a call on my cell phone, from Greg. He was calling because he had received a call from Chris who was in a hospital in Charlottesville after having attempted suicide again. He had slashed the main artery in his arm, and had lost so much blood that he passed out, but the bleeding stopped by itself, and Chris regained consciousness and decided he wanted to live, so he called 911, and was air lifted to the emergency room. He was back on medication and seemed to have recovered from his depression. He told me that he got the idea to slash his arm as a result of the construction accident with that sheet of glass.

I began helping Chris find a medical specialist who could treat Chris' bipolar condition on a continuing basis. I contacted several psychiatrists' offices in the Charlottesville and Richmond areas, asking if they would accept Chris as a patient. Most of them were interested until I told them he had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and had Medicaid coverage, then they were suddenly completely booked. I did not find any private, qualified doctors in the region who were willing to treat Chris. So I turned to the University of Virginia medical center. They were willing to interview Chris to see if they could take him on as a patient. They did agree to accept him as a patient, but we were told that he would be treated primarily by psychiatrists who were still in training, and by medical students, and that he may be seeing different doctors or medical students each time he came in for an appointment. Having no other options, we accepted this arrangement, and Chris was prescribed medication to try to reduce the symptoms of his bipolar disorder.

It was very disappointing to discover the difficulty in obtaining quality medical care for those with mental disabilities. General Practice doctors are not qualified to provide mental care, and qualified mental care doctors frequently don't want to deal with patients who could be potentially dangerous, particularly those who don't have great insurance or who

are not independently wealthy. Poor people with mental problems are treated very poorly, or not at all, in this country.

Chris had been living in the big house at the farm during the previous several months. Now that he had disability income, he wanted to find a place of his own, closer to other people, and preferably in Charlottesville. I helped him search for a suitable place. We discovered that there were very few places available to rent that he could afford or who would accept anyone who was living on disability income. A few places categorically refused to accept him after learning that he was receiving disability (even though such discrimination clearly was illegal). We finally selected a one bedroom apartment in an apartment complex in the suburbs of Charlottesville, where his disability payment would cover the rent and utilities, with a little bit left over.

After Chris starting receiving disability benefits, and had an apartment of his own, his anxiety seemed to be more under control. I guessed that he was no longer worried about how he was going to keep a place to live, or afford food, or make child support payments. But it was usually not a happy existence for Chris. He did not have extra money for entertainment. He had time to do things, but he could only do things that didn't require much money. He could take long walks. He could visit his mother in Delaware and take long swims in the ocean in the summer, if he had money for gas. But he usually didn't have funds for movies, or bowling, or to play a round of golf, or to join a gym. Most of the time he stayed in his apartment or went on walks on a nice day. He would come to the farm to visit a couple times a month.

His medications did not always work well. They seemed to prevent his manic episodes, but they did not always prevent severe depression. The medical staff at the University would periodically change his medication to try to find something that was more effective, and some worked well for a few months and then stopped working well, and they would change them again.

## **MOVING BACK TO THE FARM FULL-TIME**

In 2009, Lisa and I moved to the farm full-time. Lisa rented out her house in Charlottesville to a family who was new to the area. She considered selling the property, but the Great Recession of 2008 had resulted in a large drop in house prices, and she decided to rent it out until prices hopefully recovered.

My grandkids were growing up and were at an age where they enjoyed coming to the farm whenever they could convince their parents to bring them.

In 2009, one more granddaughter came along, number seven. Greg and Marsha had a second child, named Claire, in August that year. Now all four of my children had two children each, and that probably was the end of the new grandchildren in the family.

Below are two photos of visits with the grandkids.



Above: Caroline, Julia, Claire, Amanda and Megan, with Anna in front, and stepson Will standing in back

Below: Megan, Amanda, Julia, Anna and Claire help grandpa celebrate another birthday



Lisa and I continued to manage the Carlyle Corporation. The business did very well during these years, as the cost of production continued to decline and marketing expenses were reduced. By 2010, sales had peaked and were declining slowly, but profits remained good due to our declining costs. Subscription sales revenue dropped somewhat because we reduced subscription prices as the cost of printing and postage declined due to subscribers switching to receiving the publications on the websites.

The number of subscribers declined slowly as more and more of the larger employers began listing their job vacancies on their own websites, and as more companies established their own sites. And some job seekers, particularly younger people with little spare money, decided they could do their own free searches of websites rather than pay to subscribe to our publications. But many employers still relied on our publication, and many still used our email alert services for the most difficult-to-fill positions.

### **Greene County Historical Society**

Now that I was back in Greene County full-time, I was being recruited to get back into community activities. I agreed to once again serve on the Board of Directors of the Greene County Historical Society. One of my contributions to the Society was to incorporate the Society as a non-profit corporation in Virginia. Because I had established the Carlyle Corporation in Virginia, and had established a couple of other corporations in Washington, DC, I knew the process. I had concluded that incorporation would be helpful for the Society in accepting tax exempt donations, and in establishing definitive By-Laws regarding the functions of the Board of Directors and Officers, and the process for electing and replacing board members and officers, etc.. I prepared the necessary application to the state of Virginia and directed the formal establishment of the corporation once it was approved by the state.

The Historical Society also had a wonderful problem to solve. The Society had received a bequest in the Will of a deceased former resident, which left to the Society most of the net proceeds of the sale of a farm located in the County that was owned by the deceased. The farm was on the market for several months due to the downturn in the real estate market after 2008, but it finally sold and the Society received its bequest of well over half a million dollars, with the stipulation that the funds be used to acquire a new museum and that part of the museum was to be used to display and/or store the extensive collection of wildlife artifacts of the deceased. Therefore, the Society now had the duty to establish the new museum.

At that time the Society had essentially no museum. The County had permitted the Society to use the old jail building as its office and museum. It was basically two rooms, with an upstairs room which was used for storage of historic records and artifacts, and the main floor which had a very small area for an office and a small area for displays and for genealogical research. The location of the old jail close to the court house was great, but the jail was too small to be of much use as a museum. So now we had an opportunity to build a real museum.

My thoughts immediately went to the Otter Tail County, MN, Historical Society Museum as the model for what we should do in Greene County. The Otter Tail County museum was without a doubt one of the best county museums in the country, because it had been built from scratch specifically to be a museum, and specifically to attract visits by local residents. It was inexpensive to build, it was ideal for developing and displaying exhibits, it was easy and inexpensive to maintain, and it was easy to update and expand as new exhibits became available. Like Greene County, it was an agricultural county, with timber, wildlife, small towns, etc. Most county museums are not attractive or very useful because they have been placed in an old building that has been donated to the Historical organization. They usually are old merchant buildings or old homes, without open areas fit for changeable exhibits.

As a result of my previous service on the Historical Society Board, I had visited numerous county museums around the country during my travels, and I had concluded that the most successful museums were the ones that focused on attracting interest and participation by the local residents, rather than trying to appeal to and attract tourists. In almost all cases there was not enough support from tourists to make a museum financially viable or effective in representing the county history. I calculated that if a museum could attract local residents to visit the museum just once in ten years, they would have a very busy museum. A county of 20,000 people would average 38 visitors a week, every week, just from local residents. Museums that are busy attract more volunteers and financial support; almost no one enjoys working for or supporting a museum that almost no one visits.

Unfortunately, I may have been the only member of the Board who visualized a new building built specifically to be a museum, and to attract local visitors. The Board eventually decided to buy an old house in the town of Stanardsville that was then for sale. It did not have any spaces good for exhibits, and will be expensive to maintain over the years. It was just a modest house on the main road through town that had been built in about 1900. It was not unique or particularly attractive. But Board members seemed to like its location on the main road, which might entice more visitors, if they happened to drive by very slowly in those few hours a week when the museum is open.

I had anticipated that the Board would take a year or two to get community input and ideas about what type of museum should be built, and what kinds of exhibits should be included, and that it would take several months to plan a new building, before making a final decision. And then it would require a few years to build the new museum and develop and install the exhibits. This was a once-in-a-century opportunity for the Society to build a museum that would be the pride of the county, and an attraction in the region. Instead, there was a quick decision to buy an old house, and that was it.

When my term on the Board expired a few months later, I declined to serve again. Nothing exciting is going to happen here.

## AT THE LAKE IN MINNESOTA

In 2008, we came back to Oak Park Resort on Clitherall Lake for a nice break from the heat in Virginia. That year, we brought along Lisa's son Will, and we stayed for two weeks at the lake, in a small two-bedroom cabin. This summer vacation at Oak Park Resort became a regular summer event – the same two weeks every summer, and it continues at the time of this writing. The resort consists of nine rental cabins of two or three bedrooms, with a large entertainment “lodge” that contains a TV area, pool table, ping pong table, pin ball machines, and a snack bar and eating area. The resort provides docks for guests who bring their own boats, and fishing boats with motors for guests like us who did not pull a boat all the way from Virginia. They have a nice little sand beach and a diving platform for swimmers and sunbathers, and several water toys including kayaks, stand up paddle boards, a paddle boat, and various floats.

We discovered that the same guests come back to the same cabins the same week every year, with occasional changes due to deaths or new offspring, or children growing up and leaving home. Most of the guests were from nearby states, including Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas. The guests spend time fishing, or water skiing, or tubing, or swimming, or sunbathing, or playing games on the lawn such as volleyball or badminton, or just sitting on the lawn chairs under the shade trees by the lake, gossiping and catching up with what's new with the other guests who they haven't seen since last year.

Lisa didn't do a lot of fishing, but she was proud of what she did catch.



William soon discovered that there were several other boys staying at the resort who were his age or a bit older or younger, and he soon was part of the group of about eight boys who had lots of fun enjoying every activity one could imagine at the lake. He was busy from the time he awoke in the morning until he finally collapsed at near midnight. He learned to fish, to operate a motor boat, to water ski, to kayak, to play pool, and he already was an excellent swimmer. Clitherall Lake became his favorite place to go, and he is still friends with the boys he met those summers. In 2017, he and all the other resort boys travelled to Morehead, MN, just before Christmas to attend the wedding of one of those resort boys. The photo shows Will with the lake gang.



I would spend a couple hours fishing early in the morning, when the weather cooperated. I loved getting out on the water just at dawn, when the Loons were calling, the Bald Eagles were finding fish to take back to their nests, and maybe a bit of mist or fog was rising off the water because the water was warmer than the air. If I caught a few fish, that was nice, but if not, I was pleased with the lack of disruption to my enjoyment of the quiet scenery. Some mornings Will would join me, and some mornings Lisa would join me (as long as she had at least one cup of fresh-brewed coffee with her). Below is a photo of me heading out for a few hours of fishing on Clitherall Lake.



Every summer Lisa and I would take several long kayak trips around the lake, some of them four or five miles roundtrip. On some of these trips we explored along the shore of the pasture where dad used to keep cattle in the summer time, and I found where the old fence came down into the water to keep the cattle in the pasture. I showed Lisa where my brothers and I would come to take a bath after a day pitching hay, or shoveling grain, or cultivating corn, or loading manure. We used to joke that we were so dirty we left a ring around the lake when we took a bath.

Lisa kayaking on Clitherall Lake.



Clitherall was where I grew up, and every summer we would spend a couple of hours visiting some of my old stomping grounds. We might visit the spot where the house and farm buildings used to be on the north farm; now there is just a grove of trees there. Or we might visit Henning, and walk through what used to be the restaurant where we lived in 1955-56, and make note of the fire escape stairs still there that I used to escape from home the day after high school graduation. Or we might climb to the top of Inspiration Peak, the highest point in the area, which rises about 400 feet above the surrounding prairies and lakes; no climbing gear required.

We also would enjoy the restaurants in Battle Lake; maybe Stella's with their excellent sandwiches, pasta dishes and pizza; or Stubs to get their full rack of barbecue ribs; or SteVellys for prime rib or fried shrimp; or the Boat House for pizza or pasta; or maybe the Shoreline on the lake, for a good breakfast with a view.

Battle Lake had been a typical farm town back when I went to High School there – the merchants there served the farmers in the area, with grain elevators, stock yards, farm equipment dealers, hardware stores, a hatchery, a lumber yard, a couple of clothing stores, a barber shop for men, and a beauty parlor for women, as well as a bank, post office, a liquor store, a couple of bars, and several churches. Now, almost all those businesses were gone, but Battle Lake had reinvented itself. Rather than fading away as so many farm towns have, Battle Lake now focused on the recreation business associated with the many nearby lakes. Summer residents and visitors to lake homes kept many merchants busy, including the restaurants, the ice cream and candy store, the bicycle rental place, the kayak sales and rental store, the fishing bait and tackle store, boat rental and service places, the antique shops, and stores selling paraphernalia for lakeside homes and for lake visitors. After Labor Day, many of the summer visitors disappear, and some of the merchants also disappear, or at least close their doors. Apparently, they have made enough during the summer to carry them until the next Memorial Day.

The boom in building or expanding lakeside homes also has provided a good business for many trades people in the area, including builders, renovators, plumbers, electricians, landscapers, painters, brick layers, roofers, and more.

On our annual trips to the lake, we always took time to visit places on our way to or from the lake, so we would usually spend close to four weeks on this summer adventure. One summer, we visited my sister Phyl in Madison, SD, where she had a little antique shop, and we visited Lisa's home town of Cedar in central Kansas, as well as her college town of Pittsburg, KS, and we visited with Lisa's mother and sister and family in Branson, MO. Another year we stopped for a couple of days in Minneapolis where I visited with my favorite professor from my University of Minnesota days, Dr. Theofanis Stavrou; we had a nice brunch where we caught up on lives over the past 45 years. I showed Lisa and Will around the University campus, and Lisa had a nice visit with a former college roommate who is now a professor at the University.

One summer, we visited my sister Val in Blue Earth, MN, on our way to the lake. On our way back home we visited my brother Norris and family in Duluth, and then traveled across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and crossed into Canada at Sault St. Marie and drove along the northeast side of Lake Huron to Toronto, and then viewed and toured the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, before heading back to Virginia.

We enjoyed the boat ride near the bottom of the Falls, and got very wet



Another year we visited Lisa's mother in Pleasanton, KS, and my brother Norris and family in Duluth. One summer we visited Lisa's college roommate at the University of Minnesota, and another year we spent a week visiting the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, and the Little Bighorn Battlefield National park, site of Custer's last stand, in Montana. And we visited with some of my cousins near Watford City, ND. On one trip we visited Lisa's brother Chuck, and spent a couple days with Lisa's mother and uncle Bill, in Missouri. On another trip we stayed at a nice B&B near Pleasanton, KS, while visiting Lisa's mother.

Driving from Virginia to Clitherall, Minnesota could be a bit tiresome, but flying was not feasible when going away for a few weeks at a cabin when it was necessary to bring along all sorts of equipment like fishing rods, life jackets, lawn chairs, and housekeeping items. And with three people it was much more expensive to fly than to drive.

The most direct route from Virginia to Minnesota by road is right through downtown Chicago – the Great Lakes get in the way and force all roads around the southern end of Lake Michigan. But Lisa hated driving through Chicago. For her, the shorter route did not offset the likelihood of several seconds of sheer terror in the Chicago traffic. Over the years, I have taken almost every possible route to and from Minnesota, going the far southern route through Kentucky, or the far northern route into Canada and north of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, or across Michigan and the Mackinaw bridge to the Upper Peninsula, or directly through Chicago.

Some observations from these trips come to mind. Our visit to the Little Bighorn Battlefield National park reminded me of the old saying that the victors get to write the history. But in this case, the native Americans were the victors and the European Americans are still writing the history. The Park Service there noted that they were working to present a more balanced view of the battle, rather than depicting it as savages killing the good American soldiers. But their “balanced” presentation stated that the battle was “one of the Indian's last armed efforts to preserve their way of life”. In fact, it was an effort to preserve their lives - period. The Park Service failed to note that General Custer led his troops on a forced march from North Dakota to the area for the purpose of slaughtering as many Indians as possible - men, women and children. He attacked a large camp of natives who were peacefully encamped along the Little Bighorn River, making no threats to anyone. There was no reason for Custer's attack other than to kill as many as possible, and then brag to the nation about his exploits. He hurried there to try to kill them before they could escape. I wondered if we will ever bring ourselves to admit the atrocities the European Americans inflicted on the natives.

In our visit to the Black Hills, we drove by the town of Sturgis, where thousands of motorcycles and their riders congregate for a few days each summer. The “bikers” were beginning to arrive when we were there. I noted that the average age of the riders must have been well over 50, and that many were on tricycles. I got the impression that many of these bikers maybe were no longer quite strong enough to hold up those monster Harley's, so they had opted for a tricycle. And I was told that many of those bikers had not been on the road for hundreds of miles to get there; they hauled their bikes there by truck. That made it a lot easier for them to sit around and admire those monsters which were designed to make as much noise as possible. I wondered how many of them had taken up biking only in their senior years when they could finally afford one of these bikes that cost \$40 - 50 thousand.

The year 2016 was the last year that Will was able to come to the lake with us, and even that year he had to leave early to get back to college. We took him to a nearby train station to catch the Empire Builder passenger train back to Chicago and then on to Washington, DC.

On all of these trips, Lisa and I took along our laptops, and continued to do the required tasks to keep the company running. As usual, I proofread and corrected all the material to go into the weekly publication, and Lisa laid out the newspaper for printing, using a

computer software called QuarkExpress. We also responded to business emails as needed, and I made any necessary updates to the websites.

## **POLITICS WITH LISA**

After we moved back to the farm in Greene County, I started attending meetings of the local Democratic Committee again, and invited Lisa to get involved. She quickly got to know the individuals who were then leading the Committee, and identified what needed to be done to make the Committee an effective force in political activities in the County. She volunteered to become Precinct Captain for the Stanardsville Precinct, which was vacant. In fact, all of the five precinct captain positions were vacant. As Precinct Captain, she began to organize activities to make the Committee visible and useful, including inviting Democrats to social events where they could get to know each other, and organizing an entry for the Democrats in the annual Independence Day parade in Stanardsville.

Within a few months it became clear that Lisa was one of the few people on the Committee who were getting things done and making things happen. She had recruited several more Democrats to come out of the closet and get involved publicly as Democrats. There had been a widespread belief among Democrats in the County that they were far out-numbered by the other party – that there were only a handful of Democrats in the County, and that it might even be dangerous to admit to being a Democrat. Lisa worked effectively to change that perception, by her own actions, as she participated in other organizations in the County including a garden club, a book club, and her church, where she proudly and quietly identified herself as a Democrat while working comfortably with Republicans in the organizations. It was not long until others identified themselves as Democrats, and were surprised to find that Democrats were a majority in some of these organizations.

Organizing Democrats was not new to Lisa. Since she was in sixth grade she had been active in political organizing, and knew that political organizing was to be her career. She had quickly attracted the attention of Kansas state Democratic Party officials, who were excited to have such an effective and dedicated young person organizing democratic events in that part of the state. She was being groomed to take on higher level positions after high school.

When she went on to college she immediately became involved in organizing a Young Democrats group at Pittsburgh State University. There had been such a group but it was inactive and ineffective. Lisa soon became a candidate to be President of the Young Democrats for the entire state of Kansas, and won the election handily. She reenergized the Young Democrats movement in Kansas, and was reelected for a second term as President. So her organizing work in Greene County was based heavily on her years of experience in Kansas.

In 2012, Lisa was elected as Chair of the Greene County Democratic Committee. She had been meticulous in organizing Democrats in the County to vote for her to serve as Chair, and she had recruited people for the other officer positions on the Committee. As Chair, she immediately began to restructure Democratic activities in the County, with the goal of increasing the number of votes for Democratic candidates, at the local, state and national level. As a former Chair of the Committee, I was able to provide a little advice about key people of both parties in the County and the District, and I assisted her in developing useful databases of identified and potential Democrats, as well as creating a new website for the Greene County Democrats.

Lisa organized regular monthly meetings of Democrats. She organized monthly potluck dinners, and found larger rooms for the potlucks as the number of attendees grew. These were intended to be fun social events, not boring business meetings, to encourage expanding participation to demonstrate that there were many visible Democrats in the county. She organized monthly morning coffee and pastry meetings for those who could attend a weekday event. Lisa used these meetings to present and hear from Democratic candidates for elected office, without taking away the fun features of the meetings.

Getting ready to march in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. Lisa and I are at far right



Because of her success in expanding Democratic activism in Greene, in 2013 she was recruited to be a candidate for Chair of the Fifth Congressional District Democratic Committee which covers 23 counties and cities in the state. Lisa agreed to campaign for the position, and she systematically contacted all the key Democrats in each of the 23 counties and cities to inform them of her interest in becoming Chair of the District Committee. She explained her goals if elected, and asked for their support in the upcoming District Committee elections. She was elected by acclamation, and quickly worked to expand the role of the District Committee in helping to elect Democrats, with priority to electing a Democrat to the House of Representatives from the Fifth District.

As Chair of the District Committee she automatically became a member of the Central Committee of the Virginia Democratic Party Committee, and a member of the Executive Steering Committee of the state Democratic Party. She participated in quarterly meetings of the state committees, and worked with the party leaders. She was able to interact with the former Democratic Governor, Tim Kaine, and later helped him win the election to become Virginia's junior Senator. She interacted with Lt. Governor Ralph Northam, and helped him get elected Governor. She interacted with Senator Mark Warner, and helped him win reelection as Virginia's senior Senator. Meanwhile, she also was reelected as Chair of the Greene County Democratic Committee in 2014. Once again, Lisa was in a leadership position in Democratic politics, not in Kansas, but in Virginia

I assisted Lisa in both her roles, at the County and Congressional District levels. I was her technical support guy. I brought the beer and wine for the potluck suppers, and helped set up chairs and tables. I was very good at that! But I also created a webpage for the County Committee, and for the Congressional District Committee, and maintained those websites. I also assisted in drafting rules to be followed in conducting caucuses and conventions, to ensure they met State Party requirements, and I conducted some of the County caucuses for the Committee. And I wrote Lisa's speeches and instructions to attendees for her use as Chair of the District Conventions.

I also undertook a major task to help teach the Democratic leaders of the 23 counties and cities in the Congressional District how to use the existing database of all registered voters in the District. This database, known as Vote Builder, provided the names, addresses, birth dates, phone numbers and some email addresses of everyone in each county and city and precinct who was registered to vote. It also showed in which elections they had voted, and it showed if they voted in any political party primaries. Virginia voting registration procedures do not provide for registration by political party, so the database was not as useful as it should have been, but over the years the party activists in each jurisdiction would add information to the database about the known or likely political allegiance of the voters, so party affiliation was known for many voters.

This database was extremely valuable for party leaders, but it was complicated to use and there was no entry level guidance, instruction book, or training available. My goal was to fix that. I developed a simple, step-by-step instruction booklet on how to use the database, showing exactly how to do all the most likely searches a county or city leader

would want to do, and how to print out reports, and how to enter new data and correct existing data. Anyone who followed my steps could immediately make good use of the database. Lisa set up training programs for Democratic leaders around the district, and I walked the attendees through the process of accessing the database, doing searches, creating files and lists, printing or emailing the lists, etc. Then I observed and assisted as the attendees used their own laptops to access and use the database. The instruction booklet and training were gratefully received by the leaders in the District.

## **TRAVELLING**

Although we were busy managing the business and with all our volunteer activities, we were not all work and no play. In addition to our summer adventures, we were able to get away for a few long vacations and several short breaks.

Although Virginia has a relatively mild winter (and it gets warmer every year), it is still nice to go someplace where the temperature is above 75 degrees most of the day. In 2009, we spent almost a month in Nevada and Arizona. Lisa and I brought along our laptops so we could continue to do our work for the company while we enjoyed warmer weather and new scenery. We first visited my sister Judy who lives in a suburb of Las Vegas, where she showed us the town. We also made a day trip to Death Valley over the border in California. From Las Vegas we headed southeast to see Boulder Dam, and then took a couple days seeing the Grand Canyon, before going south to Sedona for a few days. Then we were on to Tucson and visited with my cousins, Cliff and Clint Frazee and their wives, for a few days. They had grown up in North Dakota and now they were avoiding those winters, but maybe suffering a bit in the summer heat.

From Tucson we went southeast to Tombstone and Bisbee, and visited some parks noted by bird watchers as the only places in the continental United States to see species of hummingbirds other than the Ruby Throated Hummingbird. One day we were walking through a small canyon near the Mexican border, with our binoculars and bird books, when a Border Patrol Agent suddenly appeared. He did not interrogate us, but Lisa said she was ready to make a run for it.

We wandered through southern Arizona to Sienna Vista, Gila Bend, Yuma, and then north to Havasu City, before going back to Judy's home in Las Vegas. We were amazed to see hundreds of occupied RVs hooked up in RV parks in the western desert of the state, with nothing but more desert in all directions. I guess some people really hate winter weather.

In 2010, we were back in Las Vegas for several days for our Hystad family reunion in April. We explored more of the strip in Las Vegas, from our reunion hotel near the strip, and we enjoyed a nice picnic at Red Rock Canyon Park near Las Vegas. Norris turned 80 years old that month, and we took the opportunity to celebrate his birthday and gave him sort of a "roast". Judy prepared a very good video history of his life, with a good bit of humor thrown in.

In 2011, Lisa and I traveled south to Florida for a few weeks. We enjoyed Savannah, GA, on the way, stopped a few days in Cocoa Beach to take advantage of some warm sunny days there, then drove to explore some of the Florida Keys. We stayed in Florida City for a few days as a base for exploring the Everglades National Park. We saw thousands of birds in the Park, including many species that never or seldom make it very far north or very far from the ocean, such as the Flamingo, Roseate Spoonbill, Wood Stork, Great Egret, Anhinga, Scarlett Ibis, Sandhill Crane, Purple Gallinule, Brown Pelican, Great Cormorant, and Great Shearwater. In some areas one can see hundreds of these birds nesting in trees. It's a great place to bird watch. And, of course, we saw dozens or maybe hundreds of alligators, and a few crocodiles. We explored all the way to the southern end of the Park, where the Everglades disappear into the Gulf. If you want to see the southern Everglades you should do it soon, because in a few years it will have been reclaimed by the Gulf of Mexico as the ocean waters rise due to global warming.



We then drove west across the Everglades to Ft. Myers, and visited Sanibel Island for a few days. We enjoyed a guided kayak trip through the swamps and around the mangrove islands on the northeast side of the island, and we did the usual hunt for unusual sea shells on the lovely shell beaches on the south and west sides of the island.

A couple of years later we had another long vacation in Florida, with more time in the Cocoa Beach area, and more time on Sanibel Island. We also visited the western part of the Everglades National Park, including extended walks on the raised boardwalks through alligator-invested swamps.

We took shorter breaks of a week or so or a few days to places closer to home, including Virginia Beach; Williamsburg; several stays at Cindy and Ted's beach house in Bethany Beach, Delaware; a few trips escorting visitors to see the sights of Washington, DC; a few days in New York City; visiting Cheryl and David in Baltimore and Greg and Marsha in Arlington; attending the annual Thanksgiving Day event at Cindy's, and the annual family Christmas Day event at Cheryl's or Cindy's homes; a few trips to Wise, VA, where Will was going to college; and many trips to Richmond, VA, with the primary purpose of enjoying dinner at the Chez Max restaurant.

Thanksgiving at Cindy's home, with some of my girls



## FARMING

Although I never considered my 72 acres to be a real farm – that is I never expected to make a living by farming, or even to supplement my income by farming – I still performed many farming activities, and some of them actually made money. For a few years I rented out my horse stable and paddocks to a neighbor who needed more space for his horses. He kept two or three horses there, and paid a small rent and also maintained the pasture and fences.

When Will started high school, he decided he would like to use the stable and paddocks to raise a few beef cattle. His plan was to buy steer calves that had just been weaned, raise them for about 18 months, and then sell them at the local cattle auction house. He

had calculated that he could buy them for about \$400 each and sell them for about \$1200 each, and if he could use my pasture and hay land for free, he could build a good college fund. I agreed to let him try, provided that he would do the work and pay for any out-of-pocket expenses.

He bought two young angus calves at auction, and hired a local farmer to deliver them to the farm. They could live on the pasture grass during the summer and fall, but would need hay and some grain for the winter. I had plenty of hay land, and a hay mower and rake, but I had junked the old hay baler, so I said I would mow the hay field, and rake it into windrows, but Will would need to recruit help to pitch the loose hay onto my hay wagon and then pitch it into the hay storage area of the stable, or he could just buy baled hay. I warned him that it was hard work to pitch hay, and it had to be done quickly to get it under cover before any rain; rain on the hay probably would destroy it. He opted to pitch the hay.

About May 20 the grass in the hay field had full seed heads and was ready to be cut. With a weather forecast of three sunny days, I mowed the hay, and let it lay in the field for a second day to dry. On the third day I raked it into windrows, and then we pitched it onto the hay wagon, and hauled it to the stable and pitched it inside. Unfortunately, I was one of those pitching the hay, and I was the only one who had ever pitched hay previously. Lisa drove the tractor along the rows, while three or four of us used our forks to throw the hay onto the wagon. It was about 90 degrees, with a bright sun, and each load took over an hour to load and unload, and there were four loads. After the second load, some of the helpers had faded seriously. By time we were done, it was dusk, and most of the workers were ready to collapse. And this hay making process was repeated each summer while he had his cattle.



Will was lucky that the cattle did not have any medical problems, and grew to about full size, over 1200 pounds, without any major expense. He got them delivered to the auction house on sales day, and sold them for about \$1.00 a pound. He had made over \$700 each, after his expenses. He immediately purchased two more calves, and started the process over. When the second pair were sent to market, he bought a third group which he sold in 2017.

### **Maintaining the Farm**

Maintaining the farm was sort of like managing a small town. There was a street (a long driveway) to be maintained year around, including snow removal in the winter. There was a water supply system to be maintained, consisting of a well 300 feet deep with a pump at the bottom, and with water distribution pipes running underground to two houses and to the stable. There was a sewage disposal system to be maintained, consisting of two septic tanks and connecting waste distribution pipes in gravel ditches to disperse the waste water into the soil. There was an electrical power system with two separate meters and electrical wiring in four buildings, plus wiring for a swimming pool and several outdoor lights. There were six buildings, with roofs to be maintained or replaced periodically. There were three propane heating systems, and two propane storage tanks, to be maintained and filled as needed. There was a swimming pool that required daily care in the summer months, as well as several hours of work to open it in the spring and close it in the fall. There was a large “park” to be maintained for about nine months of the year, including mowing grass, pruning bushes and trees, maintaining flower beds, raking leaves, destroying weeds and lawn pests, and removing fallen branches and trees after wind or ice storms (with hundreds of trees). Photo below shows only a bit of the flower beds.



There was a pond to be maintained, including stocking it with fish, feeding the fish, eradicating undesirable weeds in the pond, unclogging the overflow pipe, fixing erosion of the dam, destroying or removing undesirable inhabitants such as snapping turtles and beavers, and periodically removing excess silt washed into the pond. There was over a mile of fencing to be rebuilt, repaired, or painted, There were foot paths and horse riding paths to be maintained through forests, along the river and across streams, including removing trees that had fallen across the paths, rerouting the path away from eroded river or stream banks, adding or replacing culverts on stream crossings, and unclogging culverts after floods or high water. There were about 30 acres of open hay or pasture land that needed to be bush hogged at least once a year to prevent the land returning to its natural forested state. And this was just the outdoor work.

The farm was an expensive place to maintain and operate. Monthly costs were averaging about \$2000, including real estate taxes, insurance, propane for heating, electricity, swimming pool maintenance and repair, hot tub maintenance, farm equipment maintenance, and maintenance of grounds, fields and forests. In addition, I was spending many hours a week performing many of the maintenance tasks, particularly in the warmer months, with lawn mowing, bush hogging fields, harvesting hay, maintaining fences, and keeping the pool ready for swimming.

An annual task was to open the swimming pool and prepare the water for safe swimming. We all looked forward to opening the pool each spring, but it was sort of a nasty job. I wrote a song about it, to the tune of "The Green, Green Grass of Home":

### **The green, green pool of spring**

Oh the old swimming pool looks the same  
As I open it this spring.  
And there to greet me are the worms and dirt and slime.  
And across the lawn comes Lisa, in her bare feet,  
To see if the pool is clean and neat.  
Darn, it's still the green, green pool of spring.  
But we'll soon fix the green, green pool of spring.

Although the farm was much work and substantial expense, it was an incredible place to observe wildlife. Every spring we would have several Great Blue Herons come back to build their nests in the trees high above the pond. There were usually four or five nests, and each nest would usually result in two or three young Herons, which kept both parents busy hunting for food and protecting the nest from predators. One spring, we noticed a Bald Eagle hanging around near the nests with the young Herons almost full grown. And then one day the Eagle had an opportunity and it swooped in and picked up one of the young Herons and brought it down to the ground, where it proceeded to devour it, probably for food to regurgitate for the Eagle's own babies in a nest close by. Bald Eagles are known to be the most dangerous predator of Great Blue Herons, from eggs to full grown adults.



We also had one or more black bears visit the farm almost every year, to eat from the fruit trees, or tear open the bucket of cat food we kept in the stable, or demolish a bluebird house thinking it was a bird feeder. Below is a photo of a bear cub in the yard near the hammock; momma bear was watching nearby.



### **CHRISTOPHER'S ILLNESS**

Chris survived for about five years after getting disability benefits. One day in October, 2014, I was asked to check on him because his mother had tried to call him for a day or two, without an answer. I went to check on him in his apartment. His car was parked outside. There was no answer to my knock on the door. I had a key to the apartment, for just such possible situations. I opened the door and went in and called his name. There was no answer. There was a light on in the kitchen, but otherwise the place was quite dark. The window blinds and drapes were all pulled shut. I checked his bedroom; he was

not there and the bed was made. He was not in the bathroom or the kitchen. Then I noticed a note on the table, near several pill bottles. The note said: “Adios, au revoir, aufwiedersein, goodbye. Tell Mom I don’t hate anyone, except myself.” Then I noticed that those pill bottles were all empty – about six of them – all recently filled prescriptions, including at least one for valium. And I noticed an empty bottle of whiskey nearby. I thought, hoped, that maybe he had not taken those pills, maybe he just went for a walk or to visit a neighbor – he might be outside somewhere. I turned to go back out the entry door, and then I saw him, on the floor in the dark living room, neatly lying on his back in front of the sofa, on top of some blankets so as not to mess up the carpet. He was severely bloated, and clearly had been dead for many hours.

I was in shock. I thought I should call the authorities, but I knew there was no hurry now. And I didn’t know if I could actually speak. I first called Chris’ mother, who had been worried about him, and I was able to tell her that I had found him, but not soon enough. Then I called Lisa and asked her to call 911 for me. I waited outside the apartment until police and rescue squad people arrived. They checked for a heartbeat, interviewed me, took photos of the scene, collected evidence, etc. and took the body away, to be sent to Richmond to the state Medical Examiner’s office for an official determination of the cause of death.

I made arrangements with the Virginia Cremation Society to receive the body from the Medical Examiner, and arranged for a viewing of the body by his mother and siblings. By the time of the viewing, the bloating had disappeared, and he looked almost normal. The Society conducted the cremation, and placed the ashes in a sealed urn in preparation for inurnment at the Arlington National Cemetery.

My children and Chris’ mother planned and arranged for a family memorial service, which was held at my daughter Cindy’s home in Chevy Chase. The memorial service was attended by his mother, all his siblings and their spouses, and their children, and by Chris’ two children, Michael and Ashley, who had not visited Chris for several years prior to his death. The memorial service was tearful. I presented the following Eulogy for Chris, which I include here because it presents additional information about Chris’ life and his illness, and it may be the only written memorial to his life.

### **Eulogy for Chris**

*We are here today to celebrate the life of Chris, and to help understand his death.*

*Chris was our son, our brother, our father, our uncle, our step-son, our step-brother, our brother-in-law, and our friend, and he will be deeply missed.*

*Christopher Carlyle was my first-born son, and was given my name. If he had been born a few generations earlier, he would have been the first in line to be the head of the family and to inherit the family estate.*

*Chris died due to complications from treatment for Bipolar Disorder. You may have noticed that when doctors don't understand a medical situation, or they know they made mistakes in treatment, they state that the cause of death was due to "complications".*

*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.*

*But his behavior since he was in his teens is consistent with the most common behavior of those suffering from bipolar disorder. The symptoms most commonly begin to appear in the middle to late teen years. The changing moods make it difficult to perform well at school and at work. It is common for victims to self-medicate with alcohol and/or illegal drugs. Periodic feelings of deep anxiety and social phobia are common. Sudden onset of "mood episodes", particularly deep depression, is common. Manic episodes may result in impulsive behavior such as extravagant spending or reckless acts. Depressive episodes bring on feelings of utter despair and self-hatred.*

*We saw all of these characteristics in Chris.*

*Scientific research has not determined the cause of bipolar disorder, but it is believed to be primarily genetic rather than environmental. There also is no cure, and no common, effective treatment. The most common treatment is a range of drugs, including antidepressants, such as Zoloft, anticonvulsants which seem to work as mood stabilizers, and antipsychotics such as Abilify. There are several of these drugs approved for use, and each has different impacts and side effects. Doctors typically experiment with a mixture of these drugs to find something that works, and frequently what seemed to work last month is ineffective next month, so a different mixture is prescribed. Chris was taking five or six of these drugs at most times during the past six years or so. Common side-effects of the drugs include anxiety, uncontrollable muscle movements, extreme drowsiness or inability to sleep, change in appetite, and suicidal thoughts.*

*Unfortunately, most doctors don't recognize the symptoms of bipolar disorder or know how to treat it. Chris recently received advice from a GP who he has been seeing for several years; his primary advice was to stop smoking. Many psychiatrists refuse to treat bipolar patients, because treatment is never entirely successful, and some patients can be very difficult to deal with - some even become violent. So like Chris, many patients are able to obtain treatment only in public mental clinics such as the University of Virginia, where treatment often is handled by medical students, and with turnover of staff every few months.*

*The treatment Chris received appeared to prevent serious manic episodes, but clearly did not prevent all severe depressive episodes.*

*So let us all understand that Chris' sometimes undesirable or unpredictable behavior was the result of a mental disorder, beyond his control, without known cause and without effective treatment.*

*I was a bit surprised to learn last week that Chris was in fairly good health physically. In early October he had a general physical exam, including blood work. He received a report back from the doctor two weeks ago stating that his liver and kidney functions were normal; sugar level was normal; cholesterol level was in an acceptable range, and blood pressure was normal with the help of a prescription drug.*

**Now**, *I want to talk about Chris as he was before he suffered from bipolar disorder, and the good that shined through even with the disorder.*

*Chris was born on August 18, 1961. 8/18, which was very convenient since my birthday was 7/17.*

*Little Chris had bright red hair and an ample supply of freckles, and was soon letting us know that he was a very active, physical little kid, always on the move, always exploring, always testing his limits, and the limits of his parents.*

*In his early years he moved with the family frequently; when he was ten months old we moved from St. Paul to a suburb of Chicago; then to Kensington, MD three months later; to London, England one year later; to Gaithersburg, MD two years later; and then to Montgomery Village when he was about to turn eight years old.*

*When Chris started school in Gaithersburg he insisted that he wear a white shirt and tie, just like daddy when he went to work.*

*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.*

*When we moved to Stedwick and became involved with competitive swimming, Chris joined in, but was starting a couple of years too late to be a top competitor in his age group. Chris liked to win; he didn't like to come in second or third in a race, and he lost interest in competitive swimming. But he became a very competent swimmer, and in recent years he loved to go swimming far out in the ocean off the Delaware beaches.*

*Chris was earning his own money at a very early age. He was a delivery boy for the Washington Post in Fairidge, and got up early every morning to deliver the paper, rain or snow, or gloom of night. As a teenager he worked at the Amoco station in Gaithersburg, pumping gas, back when you could still get service at a gas station.*

*Most everyone knew Chris. He was very out-going; a natural salesman, who enjoyed bantering with people, including all the adults in the neighborhood.*

*I succeeded in making Chris an avid Vikings fan, and he continued to follow the team, through good and bad times, mostly not so good.*

*Chris loved fishing. He first learned to fish while we were visiting Minnesota on one of our annual visits. He would spend hours out in the boat by himself learning the best bait or lure to use and the best spots on the lake; he talked with all the local fisherman to get advice. He continued to fish frequently in Maryland and Virginia in later years, and most recently enjoyed fishing from the beach in Delaware.*

*Chris was popular with the girls in high school, and dated some of the most beautiful girls in school. On my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jan arranged a big party to celebrate, and Chris brought his girlfriend to the party. I don't remember her name, but I do remember that she was gorgeous. Later, some of the attendees shared their photos taken at the event, and when I looked at the photos taken by men, most of them just happened to include Chris' girlfriend, rather than me or the other guests.*

*Chris liked wheels, and the faster the better. After his tricycle and bicycle, he got a dirt bike that he rode often, and in my opinion, too fast on courses that were too dangerous.*

*And then when he was about 17 he bought a used Pontiac GTO, which back then was a classic muscle car, the ultimate car for a teenager. He immediately became a target for the traffic cops. After the GTO he decided to go with something more utilitarian. He bought a van that was a miniature home, with a bed, table etc. We worked to re-carpet the thing from bottom to top.*

*After graduating from high school, Chris decided to explore California, and drove his van all the way to the other ocean, where he lived for a few months before deciding he missed all the folks back home.*

*In late 1983 he enlisted in the Air Force, and started duty in February, 1984. He spent most of the next two years at Loring Air Force base in northern Maine, right up next to the Canadian border. He was trained by the Air Force to be an air conditioning and refrigeration specialist, and worked as part of a team providing service to homes, apartments and offices on the base.*

*While in Maine, Chris got another set of wheels, a motorcycle, on which he travelled around the Northeast. He was honorably discharged from the Air Force in March, 1986, after serving two years, and he rode his motorcycle back home to Maryland. During his time in the Air Force the bipolar disorder was already becoming a disability for him, and it gradually became a greater burden in subsequent years.*

*After the Air Force, Chris worked at a variety of jobs, first as an air conditioning mechanic, then he started his own lawn mowing business, and a painting business. He worked for*

*car dealerships as a mechanic's assistant, tire changer, and car washer. He worked for lawn care companies, and as a pizza delivery guy. In 2003 he completed training to be a carpenter and joined the carpenters' union. He was employed as a carpenter on several construction projects around the Washington area from 2003 into 2006. Chris also was a great help to me in rebuilding the log house at the farm, and building the stable.*

*In 1990, Chris married Maria, and they had two lovely children, Michael and Ashley. Unfortunately, Maria did not know that Chris had bipolar disorder - none of us did at the time - and she did not understand that his difficulties at work were caused by the disorder. Maria's insistence that she and the children continue to live with her parents, rather than with Chris, caused much unhappiness for Chris. He never had a normal family life with his wife and children. He loved his children very much, and I know that his inability to see them after the divorce was a continuing source of grief.*

*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 out 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 told us how Chris spent a lot of time trying to help boost his spirits after his girlfriend left him.*

*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 the rest of us in family events, it was not because he didn't care. We were all important to him. When Cheryl became ill a couple of years ago, 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 I was rushed to the emergency room last year, Chris was there almost before I 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". Since his death, I have heard several stories from people who are deeply saddened by his departure. Staff*

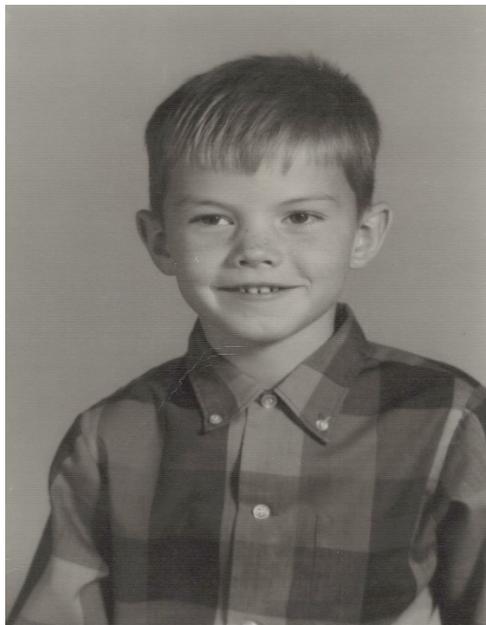
*at the apartment complex grieved the loss of a person who was always friendly and helpful. The receptionist at the psychiatric department at the University of Virginia was shocked and in tears after I told her what had happened. The physician's assistant at the medical clinic in Louisa called me back after I left a message that Chris would not be keeping his appointment, to tell me that everyone there was shocked and upset; they all enjoyed his visits and looked forward to seeing him.*

*A couple of years ago, 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 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 me and suggested that I could give it to David for Christmas. After looking at the size and the purple color, I decided it was even too big for David, which means it was very big. Lisa's mother 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 - 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.*

*We miss you Chris.*

A few months later, Chris was inurned at Arlington National Cemetery, with an honor guard salute and a military presentation, with family and friends in attendance.

This is the Chris I remember



## **GREENE CARE CLINIC**

The President of the Greene Care Clinic (the county's free medical clinic) asked me to serve on the Board of Directors of the Clinic. The Clinic had been established in 2005 to provide free medical care for County residents who were uninsured and had income below 200% of the Federal poverty level. There were a large number of such people in the County, and many of them were using the free clinic. The clinic was managed by an Executive Director, and there were usually three or four medical doctors who provided pro bono medical care, and usually a nurse or two and one or two part-time support staff. Nurses and support staff might be volunteers or paid staff. The Clinic received substantial annual grants from the Virginia Health Department's Charity Funding program, and from the Virginia Association of Free Clinics, and it received contributions from local organizations and individuals. It also held an annual fund raiser.

The Directors were usually local community leaders and one or two medical doctor volunteers. The Board was to establish and oversee the overall goals, budget and staffing of the Clinic, primarily through reviewing actions or recommendations of the Executive Director. And an important function of the Board was to help raise funds for the Clinic.

One of my first tasks for the Board was to develop a new website for the Clinic. I also helped publicize and organize the annual fund raiser. I had noted that the Clinic had developed a substantial balance in its checking and savings accounts, which seemed to be far in excess of the amount needed for normal operating cash flow or for an emergency fund, so I did an analysis of operations, income, expenses and the normal size of emergency funds for similar organizations. I recommended to the Board that the Clinic should use a significant portion of its current cash surplus to assist patients in need, and to establish a Reserve Fund which would be invested so as to provide earnings for the Clinic. In 2015, the Board passed a resolution to establish a Finance Committee reporting to the Board, and I was appointed as Chair of that Committee. The Committee was tasked with developing recommendations for establishing a Reserve Fund and to oversee the development of the annual budgets of the Clinic.

I prepared an analysis showing the Clinic could invest \$70,000 in a Reserve Fund, and presented recommendations for investing in stocks and bonds to provide attractive earnings without unreasonable risks. The Finance Committee approved the recommendations, and so did the full Board, and the Reserve Fund was created. I also set up a new structure for reporting income and expenses that would track the approved budget, showing any variances on a quarterly basis. This structure was used in establishing and tracking the budgets in the coming years.

I also proposed and implemented a plan to publicize the Clinic's services more widely in the County. With the Board's approval, I prepared an 8x5 inch slick postcard to advertise the services of the Clinic, with information on who qualified, what services were provided, and how to receive services. A postcard was proposed because it could be read without

opening an envelope, and it was the easiest to mail. I proposed mailing the card to all Postal Customers within selected postal routes in the County, initially focusing on the lower income areas of the County. By sending the card to all Postal Customers, the postal cost per card was only 17.5 cents. I ordered 10,000 copies of the card for mailing, and for possible distribution at community events such as the county fair and July 4<sup>th</sup> events in Stanardsville. The initial mailings went to about 45% of the postal customers in the County.

Note: I resigned from the Clinic Board in the spring of 2017 as I was preparing to leave the County. In 2019, the new Democratic majority in the Virginia legislature voted to expand Medicaid in Virginia under the Affordable Care Act. The Greene Care Clinic changed its focus to providing assistance to those residents who did not qualify for Medicaid but could not afford other health insurance.

## **MORE PROJECTS AT THE FARM**

As described in the previous chapter, I had made several major improvements and changes to the farm in the 1990s, and I continued with some projects in later years.

After a particularly cold winter in Virginia, I decided to replace the propane furnaces and AC units in the main house with a geothermal heating and cooling “water furnace”. The existing propane system had two furnaces and AC units, one for each level of the house, and the new system continued this dual zone design. The geothermal system uses the temperature of the earth to heat and cool the house. I didn’t attempt to install this new system myself; I hired a firm specializing in geothermal systems to do the job. They brought in a backhoe to dig ditches in the front pasture near the house, totaling 300 yards long, and about six feet deep. They then placed black hose in the ditches, first at the six foot level and then returning in the same ditch at about the four foot level. This made about 1800 feet of hose in the earth. The hoses were connected to a manifold and joined to hoses running to and from the house furnace room, where the new “furnace” was installed. The hoses were filled with water mixed with a small amount of antifreeze. A small pump circulated the water through the hoses and into the furnace.

The water temperature underground remains about 55 degrees year around, permitting the furnace to extract heat in the winter and cold in the summer, with no combustion, and minimal electricity use. It is much more efficient than a heat pump, that attempts to get heat from cold winter air, and cold from hot summer air. The initial installation cost was about twice what I would have paid for new conventional furnaces and AC units, but a Federal tax credit covered about half of that added cost, and my savings in propane and electricity costs covered the remaining costs in only three years. Anyone building a new house, or replacing an old furnace should consider switching to a geothermal system. It can save money, and it greatly reduces CO2 gas emissions which add to global warming.

## Laying tubing for the “water furnace”



My last major project at the farm was to build an open stairway between the two levels of the big house. The existing stairway looked like it had been built for servants to use; it was hidden away in the back of the house, near the kitchen, and exited downstairs at the entry to the utility room. It was attached to an exposed concrete wall, and it was not feasible to make it an attractive stairway. I decided to move the stairway to the front of the house, where it would be visible and open to the guest areas of both levels. This required cutting an opening in the upstairs living area floor, moving and reinforcing some floor joints, and building new stairs into the living area of the lower level. I installed oak railing around the opening at the upper level, and along the stairs going down. All the oak wood was stained to match the oak wood in the rest of the house.



I converted the space where the old stairway had been. On the upper level the stairwell had been next to the kitchen, so I converted that space into a butler’s pantry, with

extensive shelving and counter space for storing all sorts of dishes, pots, pans, utensils, etc. that were used less frequently, as well as supplies of canned and dried foods. Lisa loved it. At the lower level, I replaced the old stairwell with a large storage area for pool supplies and other summer outdoor equipment.

As part of this project, I expanded and renovated the kitchen on the lower level, with new appliances, cabinets and a new bar area.

## **ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY PARTIES**

After our return to the farm full-time, Lisa and I began hosting a New Year's Day party, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, to which we invited friends and neighbors, including many of those we had served with through the year in the Democratic Committee, the Historical Society, the Book Club, the Free Clinic, the Episcopal Church, etc. Lisa prepared a wide range of food, including spicy sausage dip, shrimp, quiche, veggie sticks, and several sweet items. I purchased and served the drinks, including champagne, wine, mimosas, soft drinks, and coffee. Each year it seemed that the number of guests increased, with several invitees bringing along their house guests or relatives, until the final year we had over 100 guests. It had become a bit too big; in later years Lisa and I spent most of our time greeting guests as they arrived and then saying goodbye as they left, and making sure there was enough food and drink. We had little time to actually visit with anyone. But it was a fun tradition for us, and it had become a "go-to" event for our friends.

## **CLOSING THE BUSINESS**

In 2016, we had been producing the *International Career Employment* publication for 25 years. It had been very successful in providing information to individuals striving to work with international programs, and it had been an important service to several hundred employers who were recruiting employees for their important programs in international development, education, healthcare, disaster relief, and more. But as the internet and the Web and Facebook and LinkedIn and other communications systems became more widely used throughout the world, the need for our unique services declined. Job seekers had several other possible sources of information on the internet, and employers had other effective methods for recruiting qualified staff. In 1999, our website was one of only two or three useful sites for international jobs, and our site usually came up number one on a Google search. By 2016, there were page after page of listings for international jobs, and our site sometimes didn't make the first page of listings on Google.

Probably most importantly, a United Nations agency started and promoted a service to do what we had been doing, to connect job seekers with employers doing international work. Called ReliefWeb, job seekers could access job listings from around the world, and employers from anywhere in the world could list all their international job vacancies, at no cost to the job seekers or to the employers. This service was in direct competition with our service, and was well managed. It is difficult to compete with a well-run free service.

The Corporation's revenue from job seekers and employers began to decline faster than the decline in our operating costs. For several years our operating costs had declined rapidly as we converted from hard copy to electronic publications. Staff costs declined due to less need for typists and phone order-takers, lower printing costs, and reduced postage costs. In the last years, printing and postage costs dropped to almost nothing as most job seekers received the publications on the web. But by 2015, it became clear that net income would not be enough in the future to continue to support the four remaining staff at an attractive income level, and we did not see any viable options to reverse that situation.

We considered the option of making the websites essentially automatic, with employers posting their own jobs, with a minimal charge per posting. But there were already several such sites, and they almost always were bad. Many postings were old and already filled, some were not international, and some were just scams. An effective site required frequent monitoring and maintenance, and the amount we could charge employers, while competing with a free UN site, probably would not make it financially viable for us.

We concluded that we did not need to keep working. We could retire and live happily ever after.

Accordingly, Lisa and I agreed we should start to wind down operations, with the goal of stopping publication by the middle of 2016. With good planning we could continue to meet all of our obligations to our employees and to our subscribers and clients while we shut down. I discovered that it was almost as much work to close down a business properly as to start the business. Our subscribers paid in advance, so we needed to reduce the time span of new subscriptions to minimize any refunds once we stopped publishing, and we needed to be ready to provide refunds for undelivered issues for all subscribers remaining when we shut down – mainly for universities and other long-term institutional subscribers. We also needed to work with our regular employer clients to ensure that we could publish their job listings, without unnecessarily stopping our services early, and to provide time for those employers to switch to other sources for their job candidates. In early 2016 we started curtailing the length of new subscriptions. We stopped all publications at the end of June 2016, and in the following few weeks we provided refunds to subscribers for all undelivered issues.

During the following months, we stopped numerous services and closed numerous accounts that we had used in the business, including telephone lines, long distance services, internet satellite services, two web sites, several email accounts, two bulk email delivery services, website security certification services, computer security services, multiple charge-card services and related card security services, and two bank accounts. We submitted final payroll tax reports, provided final workers compensation reports and payments, closed multiple insurance policies, submitted final state and federal corporate income tax returns, closed or sold website addresses, and terminated the Corporation.

By the end of 2016, we were almost entirely retired from the work of the Corporation.

## **FEWER VISITS BY KIDS AND GRANDKIDS TO THE FARM**

By 2016, several of my grandchildren had become adults, or had reached an age when they were fully involved with school, friends and their activities, and had little time or interest in visiting grandpa at the farm. Julia was 25. Caroline was 22 and had moved to Los Angeles. Amanda was 18 and in college. Megan was 16 and always overbooked with activities, and would soon be going off to college. Anna and Claire were in elementary school, and were busy with all their activities and friends.

And Chris' daughter Ashley never came to visit me at the farm after Chris and her mother divorced in 2008. Chris son Michael came for a short visit once after Chris passed away.

My kids and the other six grandkids almost always made it to the farm for a day or two on the weekend of my birthday. But otherwise I would go visit them.





Also, Lisa's son Will was in college and had little time now to spend at the farm, although he still had three steers being fattened up on the pasture.

I began thinking that maybe it was time to start planning to sell the farm and moving to a place that was not quite so demanding. I had owned the farm for 28 years, and I wasn't quite as young as I used to be.