

Of course, after so many years, memories sometimes differ, with the two of them having very different recollections of how they hitchhiked up to the unsuspecting town of Bethel, New York, in August 1969. Rob, now a psychologist in Tampa, Florida, sees this a lot in his work. "I'll have a husband and wife in my office and ask them what they had for dinner last night, and one will say steak and the other will say chicken." One thing that Bob and Fred, a physician in Los Angeles, agree upon is that thanks to the generosity of some fellow concertgoers, they never lacked for cold cuts. Lots and lots of cold cuts.

1. GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN: "GOING DOWN TO YASGUR'S FARM"

801: Fred and I were neighbors in Oakwood, which was the original section of what became known as Princeton Park. I was friends with a lot of people in his class, like Gary Malin, Moss Kaufman, and Mitchell Oppenheimer.

Fred: We had no idea of what we were getting into and the scope of Woodstock. Nobody did. There hadn't been many rock festivals



Rob Ehrlich

before. I thought we were going to hitchhike upstate, do some camping, and see a little rock & roll music there. That's what I told my mother.

My friends and I loved music. We always used to sneak into concerts at Westbury Music Fair. What we'd do is, at intermission, when security wasn't really paying attention, we'd walk in with some cou-*Continued on page 21*



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Fred Schlussel



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ple, pretending that we belonged with them. It worked. I saw Blood, Sweat & Tears there, and a bunch of others.

BS&T were going to be appearing at Woodstock, along with some of my other favorite groups, like the Who, the Band, Canned Heat, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

Rob: If anything, though, we were probably more excited about camping than the concert.

FT6d: We were always big on camping. Each spring, during the Easter-Passover break, Rob and I, and friends of ours, including Gary Malin, used to go camping. Bear Mountain State Park was a favorite. And later, once I got my driver's license, we'd go camping in Lake George, Lake Placid, the mountains north of Montreal. So it really wasn't anything new for us

Rob: That's why I told my parents that three of us me, Fred, and Gary Malin were going to hitchhike to Hither Hills State Park, near Montauk, and camp out there. It seemed like a *Continued on page 22*



Dig It: Play the "Where's Woodstock?" Game!



Object: Drive your VW van cross-country from Berkeley to the Wood-

stock Festival, only to find that the location keeps getting changed. Will you make it to Bethel in time for the first interminable drum solo? *Ruh-roh!*

Despite its name, the Woodstock Festival was never intended to be held in Woodstock, New York. Its original location was an industrial park in Wallkill. But the good folks of Wallkill didn't want no dirty, stinkin' hippies invading their

bucolic town and passed a law pro-

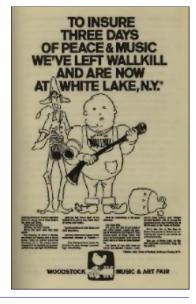
hibiting the three-day event. With only six weeks to go, the promoters pulled up stakes and moved the concert to the hamlet of White Lake, in the Catskills. The ad at right was run in counterculture magazines to alert the public of the new location.

But the site was too small to accommodate the roughly fifty thousand (!) attendees expected. With time running out, the promoters struck a deal with a local dairy farmer named Max Yasgur to stage the festival on a field on his six-hundred-acre farm in the town of Bethel, about three miles northwest of White Lake. He reportedly received a \$10,000 fee.

The town of Saugerties had turned down a similar offer, which is probably just as well. Can you imagine Joni Mitchell singing "By the time we got to Saugerties, we were half a million strong"? Neither can we.







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believable story. And this being 1969, they thought nothing of us going off to hitchhike. My parents dropped us off on the eastbound

side of the Long Island Expressway, next to the on-ramp. And as soon as they drove away and were out of sight, we ran across the overpass to the westbound side and hitchhiked upstate.

Fred: Nah, we took a train to New York. Then we took the bus from the Port Authority to Monticello, and then we hitched the twenty miles or so from Monticello to Bethel.

Rob: I remember that we didn't have to

wait very long for a lift. These two guys in a convertible gave the three of us a ride. I'll always remember their names–Jack and Bruce–because our favorite band at the time was Cream, with Jack Bruce on bass. They must have been in their twenties. When they heard that we were going to the festival, and they saw how young we were, they said, "You're too young to go to this! You shouldn't be out here by yourselves. Where are your parents? Well, you'd better come with us. We'll keep an eye on you."

The festival was to begin on Friday, August 15. But since our original intention was to go camping, we arrived a few days early, fortunately. There was only one road leading to Yasgur's Farm, and we drove right in.

Fred: The concert area was in this huge pasture shaped like a sloping bowl, and behind the stage were woods and the lake. We got ourselves a prime camping spot in the woods and built ourselves a lean-to out of ponchos and branches.

Rob: We could see them building the stage throughout the week.

Fred: That was really quite exciting. We were maybe a hundred yards above and behind the stage, which was immense: longer than a football field. The night before the concert was to begin, they were still working away on it. With all the hammering and other noise, it was hard to get some sleep.

HIPPIES MIRED IN SEA OF MUD we were kids. We managed."-Fred By this time, the place was packed. We came across these kids who were trying to put up a tent, but it was

obvious that they didn't have a clue what they were doing. Since we were campers from way back, we put it up for them, and they were really grateful. One of them said, "Listen, my father owns a grocery store, and we have tons of food in our car. Whatever you can help us carry back here, you can have."

This was at something like two o'clock in the morning. Rob, Gary, and I went with them to find their car, which had to be two miles away. It had rained, so the ground was very muddy, and cars were stuck everywhere.

Rob: It seemed like miles and miles of cars abandoned alongside the road, three deep. And in some spots, they just left them in the road, because eventually there was no place near the festival site to park. I don't know how they ever got out of there when it was all over, because you'd have to wait for everybody else to return back to their cars. Like the biggest valet-parking mess you've ever seen. We were lucky to have hitched; having a car was actually a liability there.

Fred: I remember helping to push and pull people's cars out of the mud. It was just a communal effort.

Finally, we reached this guy's car: a big old Buick LeSabre. Just huge. He opens up the trunk, and the thing is packed with Styrofoam coolers full of food.



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Rob: Tons of cold cuts: turkeys, hams, corned beefs, loaves of breads, salads, loads of beer—all the stuff you couldn't get at Woodstock.

FT6d: Rob, Gary, and I each grabbed a couple of coolers, and we walked back to the campsite. They were really heavy, so we'd walk until we couldn't go any farther. Set 'em down. Rest. Pick 'em back up and keep on walking until we got tired again. We'd already come pretty well prepared as far as food goes, although we'd wouldn't have had enough to last the entire weekend. But thanks to these guys, we had everything we needed.

Rob: Those two guys whose dad owned the deli wound up trading their food for drugs, because everybody had drugs, but nobody had food! That's kind of the way it went. So many people had come already that before the music even began on Friday, all the concessions had run out of food. The Hog Farm commune was there, and they were cooking all day in order to feed people.

Fr6d: My kids don't believe me, but I was drug free. I may have had a few beers and a few butts at Woodstock, but I didn't take any drugs, although we were offered *everything:* acid for a hamburger. A bag of pot in exchange for a dozen eggs. Since we had a surplus of food, we just gave away a lot of it. It was that kind of communal atmosphere, with everybody sharing everything with their neighbors.

2. DAY 1: FRIDAY, AUGUST 15

Richie Havens, originally scheduled to perform fifth, volunteers to open the show because none of the first four acts is able to get to the concert site. He finally takes the stage just about five o'clock, to be followed mostly by other folk artists: Sweetwater, the Incredible String Band, Tim Hardin, Ravi Shankar, Melanie, Arlo Guthrie, and Joan Baez, with the music lasting late into the night.

Rob: Once the music started, we went back and forth between our camping spot and the concert area. We'd listen for a while, then go back to the woods for four, five, six hours to eat, sleep, go swimming, and then go back out there again to watch the show. The sound was good. Because the stage was at the bottom of the hill, it created this perfect natural amphitheater.



And then there was the music ...

In case you didn't notice, fringe was in that summer, as modeled here by the Who's Roger Daltrey and Sly Stone. Below, morning maniac music from Jefferson Airplane.





Santana, whose first album was released the same month as Woodstock, were one of the surprises of the festival. "Nobody had ever heard of them before," says Rob, "and they were just incredible."

FT6d: We could hear the music all the way from our camping site, too. Gary Malin's older brother, who was living in Oregon at the time, was there, and we put out a couple of blankets next to him. When we'd come back from the woods, they were still there, exactly where we'd left them. In retrospect, that seems amazing: six hundred thousand people were there, and everyone respected one another's space.

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3. DAY 2: SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

The second day's bill featured mostly hard rock from well-known groups like the Grateful Dead and Janis Joplin, but also relative newcomers such as Santa-

na and Mountain. In order of performance: Quill, Keef Hartley Band, Country Joe McDonald, John Sebastian, Santana, Canned Heat, Mountain, Grateful Dead, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Janis Joplin, Sly and the Family Stone, the Who, and Jefferson Airplane.

80: I stayed awake for all of the music, except that I fell asleep during the Grateful Dead's set. But they played so long that when I finally woke up, they were still onstage!

FTG: Everything was behind schedule, not that anyone cared. The Who finished just around sunrise, and they were followed by Jefferson Airplane. I fell asleep in the middle of their set but woke up in time to hear Grace Slick say, "It's so fucking hot!" and take off her top. The crowd went wild.

Rob: For me, the most memorable performance was Santana. Nobody had ever heard of them before, and they were just incredible.

There was a big lake and several ponds. That was



pretty freaky, to be fifteen years old and to see all of these adults in their twenties swimming naked. We were definitely corrupted, but what a blast!

Fred: We didn't quite hit Woodstock at our ... peak. Let's just say that if we'd been a little bit older, things would have been different.

4. DAY 3: SUNDAY, AUGUST 16-WHEN THE RAIN COMES, THEY RUN AND HIDE THEIR HEADS

The lineup: Joe Cocker, Country Joe and the Fish, Ten Years After, the Band, Johnny Winter, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Sha-Na-Na, and Jimi Hendrix. It had rained on and off the first two days of the festival, turning the grounds into a sea of mud. On Sunday afternoon, as opening act Joe Cocker finished performing, Mother Nature took center stage, whipping up a torren-



tial downpour and furious winds for the next two days.

FTGd: The other times it rained, Rob, Gary, and I rode out the storm under our lean-to. We got wet, but we'd grin and bear it. The days were hot, so we'd dry ourselves out and then start over again. After day one, we were never really dry. But we were kids. We managed.

When it rained on Sunday, all the people started taking off their clothes. We were just sixteen and fifteen and weren't as bold as maybe today's kids are. But I do remember this one girl.

Somehow we all wound up taking cover from the rain in this guy's car. And this girl from Queens, who had to be stoned, climbed into the car and laid across the laps of the three of us sitting in the front seat. I had her upper third, and, for whatever reason, was compelled to caress her. She had her clothes on, but she was drenched.

And we just started kissing. Let's just say that over a short period of time, we became good friends. It was so strange, because she wanted me to go back to Queens with her. She was an "older woman": all of eighteen. Me being a loyal friend, I said, "No, sorry, I've got to go back home to Long Island with my friends." Which, in retrospect, was probably a big mistake!

5. YOUR MOTHER SHOULD KNOW ...

FTGI: Somehow, on day three, I got my hands on a newspaper, and the headline said something like "Woodstock Declared Disaster Area." I kind of freaked out, thinking, *Uh-oh, my mother is really going to be worried.* Because, like I said, we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into, and she certainly had no idea of what we were getting into.

I made my way down behind the stage, where they'd put up banks of phones. Now, it wasn't a bunch of phone booths; it was a bunch of phones nailed to two-by-sixes stuck in the ground. Right behind us was the medical compound and also a huge, fenced-off area for helicop-*Continued on page 28*

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WOODSTOCK FROM & COUNG WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

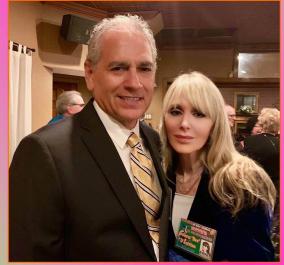
It was a miracle my father let me go to Woodstock. (Yes, I was nineteen and still had to ask permission.) It had been billed as an arts and music festival being held somewhere in the middle of nowhere. And I talked my dad into letting me and a girlfriend go by ourselves. This was like an adventure. We bought our tickets at Bleecker Street Records in the city. I still have my tickets, although I can't find them. They were \$15 each.

We went a day early and actually had a motel room. On Saturday I saw a copy of the *Daily News*, and it had a picture of a topless girl with flowers in her hair riding on a guy's shoulders. The headline read something to the effect of "Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll." All I could think of was, *Oh my God, when I get home, my father's going to* murder *me!*" Because this was not what I'd presented to him. I wasn't being sneaky—I didn't know what Woodstock was going to be. Nobody did!

It started to get out of hand on Saturday, when the rain began pouring, and the field became a giant mud hole. Everything was pure chaos. Our motel got overrun with people, to the point where we had strangers in our room. Although it was fun, and I loved the music, and as much I wanted to be a cool hippie, I was starting to get scared. And the drugs—I never was into drugs. I mean, I smoked a little pot: a bunch of us would go to the Fillmore East, get stoned, and it was the greatest night of



(Above) Dee D'Acierno Mason (JHS '68) at twenty-one and (below) almost fifty years after Woodstock, with classmate Nick Pellicoro at the October 2018 Return to Polyester-Year Reunion.



your life. But I wasn't into the harder stuff that the people around me were doing: LSD, all kind of mushrooms. I wasn't judgmental; it just wasn't me.

Anyway, we decided to leave on Sunday morning because everything had gotten so out of control. Still, the experience is something I've never forgotten.



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tering in rock & roll stars and flying out people who were sick or injured.

So I get on the phone with my mother, and she's hearing the pulsing of the rock & roll over the phone and the whirr of these big helicopters. I said, "Ma, listen, whatever you've heard, I'm fine."

She goes, "Are you dry?" I said yes.

"Are you safe?" "Yes." "Are you eating enough?" "Yes."

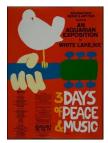
I told her, "Ma, don't worry, I'll be home tomorrow night in time for dinner." I think about that scene often, because it was so ironic: she was hearing this absolute cacophony of sound: the music, the helicopters, the people, and I was wedged into this space, maybe three feet wide, between the stage and the fenced-off perimeter. And yet she totally believed me.

By the way, I *did* make it home in time for dinner, as promised.

80: I also called my parents, who, remember, thought that we'd been at Hither Hills State Park this whole time. When I told them that we'd heard about this great festival and decided to camp up here instead of on Long Island, they actually took it rather well. Never grounded me or anything. But then, I'd never really gotten into any trouble as a teenager, so my parents didn't have any reason to worry about me or not to trust me. I wasn't wild and crazy, or skipping school, or into drugs, or anything like that.

I was amazed that they were so cool about it and took it right in Continued on page 41

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stride. But this story might explain why: my father worked for NBC-TV, and the year before, he'd been at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago doing video and audio production. Up until then, he'd always been con-

servative. Not an Archie Bunker-type of conservative, but kind of like that about hippies.

Well, being in Chicago and seeing kids getting brutally beaten by the city police totally turned him around. He became more anti-establishment after that, and more accepting of hippies, and peace and love, and all that kind of stuff. So I think we may have caught a break!

6. DAY 4, MONDAY, AUGUST 18-1'M GOING HOME (IN DEFERENCE TO ALVIN LEE, NOT BY HELICOPTER)

Because of the rain delays, Sunday's performance lasted all the way into Monday morning. By the time Jimi Hendrix walked out onstage, most of the crowd had

Caryn Buchner

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about two dozen solo and group exhibitions, and I was recently published in the books *CP Treasures Vol. II*, and, along with Sheila Eisenberg-Fein's artwork, in the book Peace, Love and Understanding 2013. I also had work featured in the publications CP Hidden Treasures and the Colored Pencil Society of America's To the Point magazine (January 2014). I am a contributing artist in the



Now it's Mom's turn: Caryn and her mother at Port Washington's Dolphin Book Store. Those are Phyllis Buchner's paintings on the wall behind them.

gone home, leaving only about thirty-five thousand stragglers in the audience.

Rob: This whole part of Woodstock is a blur for me. I honestly don't remember how we got home!

FT6d: We left while Hendrix was playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." By this point, it was cold, and everything was muddy. We took the same hitch back to Monticello with Jack and Bruce.

Because we left on Monday, we missed the really bad traffic

jam out of there. The scene in Monticello was surreal. All of us kids who'd come to Woodstock had basically overrun the town. It was a bunch of elderly Jewish men and women in their retirement, and they'd sent in truckloads

book *Masterful Color* by Arlene Steinberg.

My mother and I have had three exhibits together. Mom now lives in an apartment in Garden City. Although she's taken some colored-pencil classes with me, she mostly does oil painting. Our very first show was at the Jericho Public Library back when I was still in high school. Well, forty years later, we exhibited there together again. We called it "Phyllis Buchner and Caryn Coville, Mother, Daughter: The Second Time Around." It's very special being able to exhibit with my mom and share our love of art.

See Caryn's artwork on her website at <u>www.caryncoville.com</u>. of food. Without that, a lot of people would have gone hungry.

When we got to the Greyhound bus station—this small little place—the buses were all parked in back, and they had tables lined up. These sweet little old ladies were calling to us, "Have a sandwich! Have a cup of coffee! Eat what you want, drink what you want."

The bus driver said, "We're not going to leave for a couple of hours, but I'll let you on so you can sleep." I climbed up into the bus, and I was so exhausted that promptly conked out. The next thing I knew, it was five hours later, and we were pulling into the Port Authority in New York City. I must have slept for two hours plus the three -hour bus ride down. Just like that, it seemed, we were home. Continued on page 42

Headliner Jimi Hendrix went from closer to mop-up man, playing to only about 35,000 festival-goers.



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7. WE ARE STARDUST, WE ARE GOLDEN

Rob: A year later, Fred, Gary, and I went to see the movie *Woodstock* in Times Square. I thought it was very realistic.

Fred: Very accurate.

Rob: That too was a memorable experience, because after the movie, we got attacked by a gang of Puerto Rican guys who chased us for, like, ten blocks. Eventually we got away from them, made it to Penn Station, and scooted on out of there.

I'm sure, though, that some of my memories from the actual festival are mixed in with scenes from the movie, which I've seen a few times. In psychology, we call these "learned memories."

I didn't realize until twenty years later or so that a lot of people were so distraught about not having gone to Woodstock that they fantasized about it and told people they went there and actually talked themselves into believing that they'd gone. In fact, *I've* been accused any number of times of making it up, probably because people can't believe that I was just fifteen at the time.

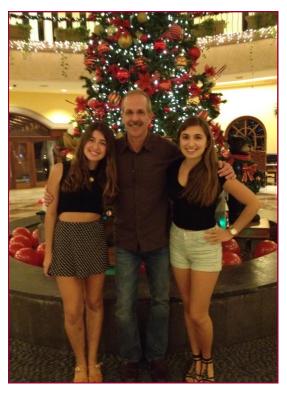
8. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

Rob: My two sons, who are in their twenties, have heard me tell other people about what Woodstock was like so many times that when the subject comes up, they leave the room. I don't know if they truly realize the significance of it.

Fred: I have two daughters: Lauren, who's eighteen, and Tara, who's twenty. They don't recognize the names of any of the groups that were there, except probably Santana. They're interested in the legend of it. And, like I said, they don't believe that I was straight there; they think it was just some big wild, crazy hippie party.

I never went to another festival again, but I took my daughters to something we have out here every year called the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, in Indio, California.

Fred in Cabo, Mexico, with daughters Lauren and Tara.



When I compare it to Woodstock, I have to laugh. They had great gourmet food concessions at Cochella; my kids couldn't stop talking about how good the food was. And although it's hotter than hell in the desert, you can go cool off in these big air-conditioned tents. At the end of the day, they and their friends came back to this five-star hotel suite I'd reserved for them.

It's just a totally different experience. We went from this completely chaotic, spontaneous event to something that is totally orchestrated and controlled.

9. GOT TO GET OURSELVES BACK TO THE GARDEN ...

FTGL: It took a couple of years for the full impact of Woodstock to sink in—how important, how *epic* it was. The world has changed, but in certain respects, I'm the same. That period is just frozen in time, and I appreciate it more as time goes on.

You know, it's a shame it's never really been repeated. Because there were six hundred thousand people at Woodstock, and there was no violence. Everybody got along. If you needed something, you got it, whether it was food, water, or a drug.

At the time, I thought it was a new beginning. I had no idea that it was really the beginning of the end.

fred Schlu//el Today

The fall after Woodstock, I was entering my junior year in high school. I didn't know yet that I wanted to go into medicine. That came years later. But I was always interested in biology and science.

My original plan was to become a veterinarian. While still at Jericho High, I visited Cornell University to learn about the requirements. And you know what the person from *Continued on page 43*



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admissions there said to me? This is pretty unbelievable, He said, "We don't need another Jew-

ish poodle doctor from Long Island." You wouldn't hear that today, of course, because it would lead to either an instant admission or a lawsuit. But he had no qualms about saying that in 1971.

Being a physician, you're in school a long time, so I didn't settle in California until 1987. I spent my freshman year of college at SUNY Cortland and the next three years back on Long Island at SUNY Stony Brook.

Then I went to UCLA for my master's degree in public health (sort of the sister science to medicine); came all the way back east to the University of Vermont for medical school; then did my medical residency at George Washington University in DC; and *then* returned to New York for my fellowship in gastroenterology at New York University.

I'm a physician of gastroenterology and hepatology, partner physician at Southern California Permanente Medical Group, in Los Angeles. It was in LA that in 1988 I met my wife, Gita, who had emigrated from Iran during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. (Jews had to get out ASAP.) We immediately fell in Iove. She is a beautiful, bright woman with a PhD in psychology and is soon to receive a second PhD in psychoanalysis.

We have two beautiful daughters, Tara and Lauren, in college: one at the University of California at Berkeley and the other at UC Santa Barbara. Gita and I ended our marriage after twenty-one years, but we remain good friends

Wood\$tock Nation Inflation

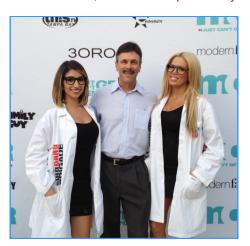


Woodstock tickets cost \$8 a day. "In 1969," says Fred, "we thought that was *way* too much money, so we bought tickets for only two of the three days; we had originally planned to leave Saturday night. But by then, of course, it had been declared a free concert.

"I took out an inflation calculator and discovered that in today's dollars, we actually paid \$64 a day. So it was kind of expensive, although Coachella, for example, costs \$125 per day this year."

Robert Chrlich Today

From Jericho, I went to the State University of New York at Cortland and majored in psychology. The research and clinical work I did there lead me to Penn State, where I completed my



That's Robert posing with a couple of models outside Tampa's hockey arena. They were there for some local TV promotion. Didn't want you to think he travels everywhere escorted by a female posse. master's and doctorate degrees under a fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health.

Afterward I headed down to Florida for the sun and water, and also my residency training. I loved the Tampa Bay area and have been here since, with a clinical psychology practice together with a family medicine group, and a corporate consulting practice that has focused on criticalincident management and threat assessment on a national level, and providing employee assistance to major employers locally.

On the personal side, I have been married for twenty-nine years and have two sons, both who majored in business and are doing some cutting-edge stuff out in the corporate world.

Michael Sammis

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want him to lose it." So he went. Every time he had a break, he'd fly home and rehearse with the band. In January 2012 Bryan went back for his second semester. Well, he had to withdraw from Loyola because the band was really heating up. Six weeks after our son came home from Louisiana, the Neighbourhood signed a recording contract.

Although he lived with Susan and me, we didn't see much of Bryan because the band was off on tour for the last two years. Bryan and the Neighbourhood parted ways in January 2014. He is now writing his own music and preparing to release an EP in a few months. He is not sure what will happen with that, but he is very talented and very driven. We are extremely proud of what he's accomplished in the music business thus far and are sure that you haven't heard the last from him musically. Ο