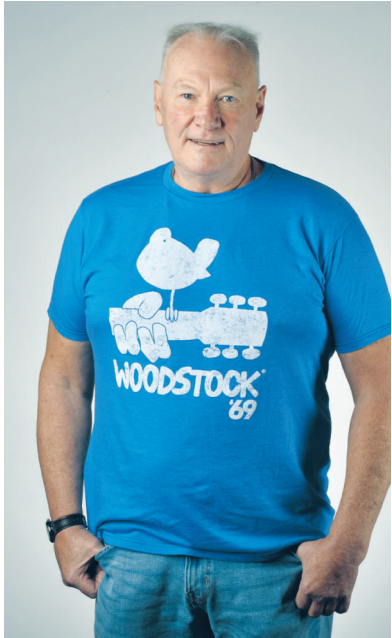


from the front page

A DAILY SUN SPECIAL REPORT

Villagers Recall Experiences at Woodstock

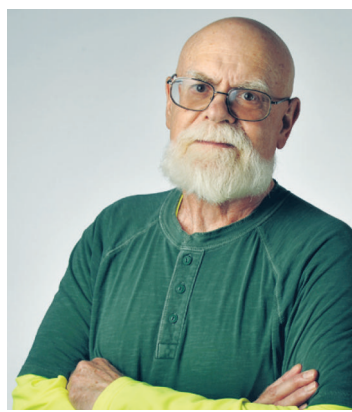
'What Do You Mean Where Are You? You're Right Behind The Stage!'



In the summer of '69, Peter Moeller, of the Village Palo Alto, was 16 and working at a department store in New Jersey with his brother. The two of them saved their money, bought a bunch of food, drinks and camping gear and headed out to Woodstock in their father's station wagon with two girls from school. When they got on the New York State Thruway, it was closed for traffic, so they got on a state road and came out onto a large farm. "The farmer came out with a shotgun and said, 'What are you kids doing?'" Moeller said. "We told him

we were trying to get to the festival." The farmer told them they wouldn't be able to get there that night, but he'd let them set up their tent on his property for \$10. In the morning, the roads were still closed, but the farmer said that for \$5, he'd draw them a map of the back roads the farmers used to cut their fields of corn. "So there we were in the station wagon bouncing up and down on the dirt roads," Moeller said. They were on the dirt roads for so long that they started to wonder if the farmer had tricked them. "But then we came out onto this cornfield and there was a state trooper with his back to us," Moeller recalled. "He turned around and said, 'Where the hell did you kids come from?' We thought we were going to get locked up. We said, 'Where are we?' and he said, 'What do you mean where are you? You're right behind the stage!'" So they parked there, walked around up a hill and set up right in front of the stage, which is where they remained during the whole concert. It was rainy and muddy, and Moeller lost a shoe, as well as the two girls they came with. People were hungry, so he shared his food, cutting hot dogs into fours to make them last longer. He remembers having a clear view of the muddy hill, which people were sliding down into the lake, and he most enjoyed Jimi Hendrix's performance. "The music was really a great part of it," Moeller said. "We didn't realize what it would turn out to be."

—Compiled by Kristen Fiore, Daily Sun



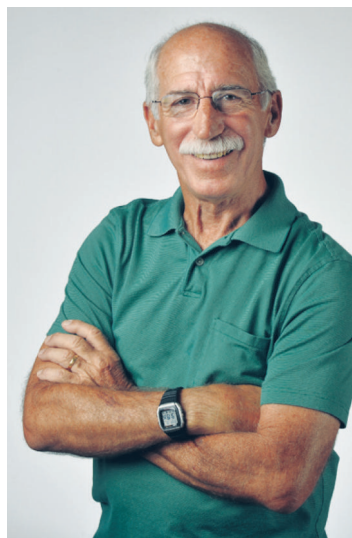
'We Enjoyed The Music. The Rest Of It Was Pretty Insane.'

Robert Altobello, of the Village of Amelia, and seven friends decided to attend Woodstock after seeing multiple advertisements for the festival. Altobello was 19 and living in Boston at the time. "We went in two cars, four in each car," Altobello said. "We left Friday evening. Then at about 2 a.m., the cars just stopped. Once we got into the traffic jam, we never saw the guys in the other car again." People were saying that the festival was just a little ways down the road, so Altobello pulled over and started walking. "As each hour passed, people would keep saying, 'It's just a little ways down the road,'" Altobello said. "It was 15 miles, and I was wearing moccasins. They had no bottoms by the time we got there." They got there at 8 a.m., soaking wet and exhausted. They slept in the mud and then woke up to watch the show. Altobello remembers enjoying Jefferson Airplane, the Who and Grateful Dead. "In the middle of the afternoon, I fell asleep and then a couple of hours later, I was awakened by the crowd just in a frenzy," he said. "I was laying on my back half asleep, cold and hungry and I was just like, 'Oh, my God.'" They ended up leaving Sunday morning, but Altobello said he had a good time considering the conditions. "We enjoyed the music," he said. "The rest of it was pretty insane."



'I Was Tripping, But Not On The Brown Acid.'

In the summer of '69, Maya Chillcott, of the Village of Silver Lake, was 24 and a hippie. She had recently moved out of Greenwich Village and was staying with a friend in New Jersey. When they heard about Woodstock, they hopped in a car and drove up. "When we got there, we didn't have to buy tickets," Chillcott said. "There were no more gates. And there were musicians on stage saying, 'Please don't take the wood from the stage, we need the wood to hold us up.'" Chillcott said she was thoroughly unprepared for the magnitude of the event, but was happy anyway. She found a piece of a Styrofoam cooler, sat on it and watched the concert. Chillcott remembers the atmosphere at Woodstock as being happy and celebratory. "People were having fun, sharing things and hugging strangers," Chillcott said. "It was ideal, just the absolute feeling of peace and happiness and good music. Of course, it was enhanced by the drugs, which I wouldn't touch nowadays." Chillcott said it was a welcome change from everything going on at the time, especially the Vietnam War and the Tate murders. "It was very free and relaxing," she said. "We could just be ourselves." Woodstock can never be recreated, Chillcott added. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime thing," she said.



'When You're Studying To Be An Electrical Engineer, You Always Have to Plan Ahead.'

Mark Lewis, of the Village of Pine Hills, decided to go to Woodstock at the last minute. At the time, he was 19 and attending Northeastern University in Boston. Compared to most, Lewis' journey there went smoothly. He and his friend left Thursday afternoon, got stopped in traffic that night and just waited until morning, when the road opened up again. They got pretty close to where everything was happening and parked the car and set up a tent next to it. "We never actually spent any time in the tent," Lewis said. "If anything, we fell asleep watching the bands. They went all night." There wasn't much food to spare, but fortunately Lewis brought some of his own. "And luckily I didn't need to make any phone calls," he said. "There was one little general store that had a pay phone outside. The police were there just letting a certain number of people into the store one at a time." Lewis also was happy not to bathe in any of the nearby ponds. "We brought water and that's how we cleaned up," Lewis said. "When you're studying to be an electrical engineer, you always have to plan ahead." Lewis remembers seeing Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Sly and the Family Stone, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. Lewis said he had been to many big concerts in Boston, but there was something about Woodstock that made him feel more comfortable and safe than any other concert he'd ever attended. "I didn't know it would be so historical," Lewis said. "If I did, I'd have brought my camera. It was a great concert to go see. None of the Woodstock concerts since then have come close to the experience we had."



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from the front page

A DAILY SUN SPECIAL REPORT



Photos by Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

'Yep, It Was Pretty Awesome.'

Heidi Vasko, of the Village of Charlotte, was only 15 when she attended Woodstock with her sister. They drove there from Detroit and parked about 15 miles away because of the traffic. "By the time we got there, it was a free concert," Vasko said. Vasko didn't sleep much because there was so much excitement going on. She and her sister hung out at different campfires and shared whatever food there was. "I had a lot of oatmeal, watermelon and PB&J that was shipped in," Vasko said. Everyone shared blankets and tarps, and there was a general feeling of peace, according to Vasko. If someone got mad at someone else, people would gather around and shout, "Peace! Peace! Peace!" There was a lot going on in the late '60s — the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the push for women's rights and birth control. "I was just observing it all and making decisions on what it meant to me and what I wanted to do about it," Vasko said. Vasko is excited that it's the 50th anniversary of the event. "I rarely run across anyone that went," she said. "It's fun to find someone who did. There's a camaraderie. You look each other in the eyes and realize, 'Yep. It was pretty awesome.' It can never be repeated. It was very spontaneous."



'Everybody Got Along'

Charlie Sheiner, of the Village of Tall Trees, remembers paying \$18 for a three-day Woodstock ticket. He was 18 and had just graduated high school. Sheiner and two friends drove up from Long Island in Sheiner's old beat-up Ford Falcon and got there around 4 p.m. on Friday. "There was one main road going in and people were parked for miles and miles," Sheiner said. "So we went as far as we could. We drove up the hill, parked and then we were by the stage. Most people parked and walked the rest of the miles. Having the car close came in handy because it was rainy." Sheiner and his friends laid out a blanket in front of the stage and watched groups like Santana, the Who and more. "When Sly and the Family Stone was on, it was at night," Sheiner said. "There were thousands of people there and everyone took out lighters and lit up. That was amazing." Sheiner ate PB&J sandwiches until they ran out. "Everybody got along," Sheiner said. "We just sat on the field listening to music." Sheiner still has his original ticket, and it's displayed proudly on his wall.



'It Was One of the Greatest Years of My Life.'

Roy Schwartz, of the Village of Summerhill, was 17 and living in Queens. He and a friend got the friend's dad to give them a ride to Woodstock. The weather was terrible, but Schwartz was elated. "I never saw so many naked people in my life," he said. "Nobody had tickets, because they knocked the gates down. It was like the third- or fourth-largest city in the country by the time everybody showed up." Schwartz remembers Max Yasgur, who owned the dairy farm where the festival took place, coming out and saying, "Look, I don't care what you do, just leave my cows alone." There was a makeshift hospital for people who had overdosed or had a bad trip. Schwartz remembers seeing groups like Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young but admits he was a little stoned. "Half of the people were naked, which was pretty cool, as far as I'm concerned," Schwartz said. "It was total freedom. We didn't sleep much." Schwartz will always remember the summer of '69. "It was one of the greatest years of my life," Schwartz said. "I graduated high school, then there was the moon landing, then the festival, the Mets won the World Series. It was insanity. '69 was a wonderful year."



'There Was Nothing On The Shelves. You Couldn't Even Find a Can of Beans.'

Paul Schloder, of the Village of Hillsborough, had just graduated high school in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. A musician friend invited Schloder and two other guys to go to Woodstock, so they took Schloder's car and left early Thursday morning. When they got to the gates, they were down, so the group drove through, pulled over and slept in the car. "We had wine and beer, but I don't think we took any food with us," Schloder confessed. When the festival started, they heard a lot of the music, but mostly from afar due to the miserable conditions. "One day, we decided we were hungry, so we got back in the car and drove to some of the small towns," Schloder said. "We went into the grocery stores and there was nothing on the shelves. You couldn't even find a can of beans." But helicopters soon came in with PB&J sandwiches. When Schloder thinks back to Woodstock, he remembers the rain, the mud, the music and all of the different types of people who were there. For years after the event, Schloder kicked himself for not bringing a camera to the event. "And then maybe 10 years ago, one of the guys who went with us was sitting in the doctor's office and picked up a book of Woodstock pictures. And down in the bottom, he saw a little white tepee. He and I remembered walking by the tepee," Schloder said. "He took a picture of the picture and blew it up, and there was us walking by the tepee."

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