

US Festival blares its message to the 'We Decade'



United Press International

US Festival security men, clad in "Staff" T-shirts, held back the crowd waiting to enter the grounds.

By Jon Bream
 Staff Writer

Devore, Calif.
 Awesome. Totally awesome, as they say in Southern California.

That's the only way to describe the US Festival '83, a four-day celebration of music and technology that began Saturday at Glen Helen Regional Park near Devore, a community of 1,000 in the San Bernardino Hills, about 65 miles east of Los Angeles.

If Woodstock was a Volkswagen van, this is a DeLorean, a real state-of-the-art Woodstock. No waiting at the portable toilets. Plenty of parking spaces, drinking fountains and even showers. But there were problems, including one death, crowd violence and a disillusioned festival organizer.

Festival founder Steve Wozniak, the computer whiz who made his fortune by designing the Apple personal computer, and his staff at UNUSON (Unite Us in Song) moved a mountain in the park to make room for an amphitheater and the US Festival last year. If the '70s were the "Me Decade," UNUSON proposed that the '80s could become the "We Decade," a time of unity. And the US Festival staged for three days over Labor Day weekend last year was the way to serve notice to the world.

This year, however, Wozniak said

he has had enough. "I will not bankroll another one myself," he told the Associated Press.

The 58-acre, horseshoe-shaped amphitheater Wozniak created for his festival is about the size of, say, six Hubert Humphrey Metrodomes. It slopes down to the biggest stage ever built—438 feet by 85 feet.

The sound system is totally awesome: 400,000 watts of power that provide arguably the best sound you've ever heard at any concert, outdoors or indoors. And there are two huge Diamond Vision screens with live video that give a majority of the festivalgoers something of a front-row view of the performances.

One Diamond Vision screen hangs over the mammoth stage and another is perhaps 100 yards away, around the bend where there is no view of the stage. The stage was decorated with the world's biggest scrim, depicting the United States on one side and Eurasia on the other. After dark, additional 60-foot movie screens flank the stage for phenomenal close-up viewing. With the big screens and reliable 95-degree systems, the US Festival is the almost-perfect meeting of live concerts and video.

The perfect festival? Well, no. UNUSON says no Frisbees, no food and beverages brought in. Come pay \$1 for a Miller beer, \$2 for a Mexican Tecate beer, \$1 for a 12-ounce Coke, \$1.25 for a hot dog, \$2.25 for a hamburger, \$1.75 for a slice of pizza and \$3 for a teriyaki beef sandwich. The water's free and just about everyone's carrying a water container with a sprayer. It's the best way to meet someone. Don't say anything, just squirt them.

Festivalgoers needed relief from the weather. Day One on Saturday was billed as New Music Day with the Clash, Men at Work, English Beat and others playing before 150,000 people. But it also was Smog Day, as here in the Smog Belt there were smog alerts, not to mention 95-degree heat. Day Two on Sunday was titled Heavy-Metal Day with Van Halen, Ozzy Osbourne, Judas Priest and other hard-rockers, but it might as well have been Dust Day as the sod laid since last year's Dust Bowl weekend quickly became trampled to uselessness by an estimated 300,000 people. Day Three, Monday, featuring established acts such as David Bowie, Stevie Nicks and the Pretenders, was Sun Day, as 200,000 people enjoyed sunny, breezy, near-ideal weather. An

US/3C



Associated Press

Angela, left, and Jackie Reems of Salt Lake City, Utah, enjoyed a shower *alfresco*.



United Press International

Guards struggled with a man who leaped onstage during Sunday's concert.

West Coast brand of rock festivals slides by without much feeling

By Jon Bream
 Staff Writer

Devore, Calif.
 Joni Mitchell commemorated Woodstock in song. It seems unlikely that David Bowie, Van Halen or even the Clash will write a song about the US Festival '83.

"Do you all have some kind of speech impediments?" Joe Strummer of the volatile, socially minded Clash asked a rather passive congregation of 100,000-plus at the end of Saturday's opening day concert. "I need some hostility. Use

some feeling of some sort." Momentary cheers evaporated into striking listlessness. It was hard to believe this was a rock festival. With practically all the comforts of a country club-like oasis in the middle of the desert, the US Festival has become a corporate, commercial festival. Like the slick, faceless, technically accomplished corporate-rock that has stifled radio airwaves for much of the past four years, the US Festival is a sterile, sanitized product devoid of feeling, spirit and any sense of community.

Can you imagine a rock festival that bans Frisbees? What kind of Woodstock spirit would not allow a mother to bring in a bottle for her baby because of a ban on outside food and beverages? Why are there no major black performers on a four-day program of more than 50 hours of live music? Can you have an important rock festival without the Grateful Dead? The Dead made the inaugural US Festival last year, but the last bastion of hippiedom wasn't invited back. In fact, there were no warhorses around this time. And rock festivals have long

depended on institutions such as the Dead, Fleetwood Mac, Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones, the Who and the Allman Brothers to draw the lemmings to a grassy knoll somewhere. Of this year's US performers, only David Bowie was prominent prior to the late '70s, and most of the bands did not become widely known until the '80s. (Scientific-minded US Festival founder Steve Wozniak, 32, reportedly used surveys of California high school students to help choose the bands.)

All this may suggest the end of an era of rock festivals. But a tour of the mammoth parking and camping areas outside the US Festival's concert and exhibition area had the vibes of rock festival. The old Entrepreneurs hawked everything from sunglasses, posters and bootleg T-shirts to beer, clam chowder and just about any drug you could imagine. The message that "Jesus saves" echoed through a bullhorn as dozens of young people passed out pamphlets detailing the evils of rock and the good of Jesus's words.

Rock festivals/3C

Bunker gone but Lear's TV funny factory not about to close shop

By Steven Reddicliffe
 Dallas Times Herald

When CBS canceled "Archie Bunker's Place" earlier this month, the nation came to a halt. OK, not a halt. A pause. Television without Archie Bunker? Would it still be television?

Archie Bunker, the bombastic bigot of "All in the Family," the center of a stormy, raucous, tumultuous TV show, had come to represent . . . stability. And CBS just booted him out of its TV house, no pomp, no ceremony, no so-long-it's-been-good-to-know-ya.

Tributes were written. Farewells were delivered by newspapers. Archie was going away. There was a feeling that the demise of "Archie Bunker's Place"—the show that came out of "All in the Family"—signaled the end of the Socially Relevant Comedy, the end of the Norman Lear Era.

Producer, writer, all-around showman Lear gave television "All in the Family," "Maude," "Banford and Son," "The

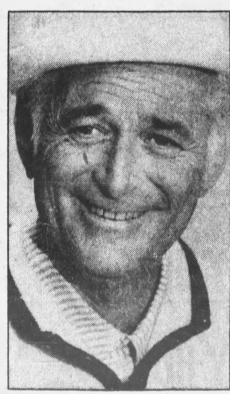
Jeffersons," "Good Times," "One Day at a Time," "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" and "Fernwood 2Night," among others.

In the 1970s, Lear's funny factory was running full-tilt. He was the king of comedy. And that decade was a golden age of TV comedy—the Lear series, and "M*A*S*H," and classy MTM productions such as the Mary Tyler Moore, Bob Newhart and Tony Randall shows. In the 1970s, there were all of those shows to see, shows that were smart and funny. It was a heady time to be a TV watcher.

And now? Now there are "Three's Company" and "Happy Days." On the positive side, there are "Cheers" and . . . and . . . well, there is "Cheers."

Is the Norman Lear Era over? Not according to Norman Lear. He is right now getting ready to do new TV series.

"I want to do a show on TV news," he said. And "we've never seen a Hispanic family on the tube. We're going to do



Norman Lear

that. I'm all set to go." He said that his shows will be ready at the end of the year, midseason replacement time.

Norman Lear has not exactly been sitting around the swimming pool for the last couple of years ("I've never been able to do that well," he said). He has devoted a great deal of time to his organization, called People for the American Way, a group formed in response to the New Right, the Religious Right, the Moral Majority.

In Dallas last week for a People for the American Way fund-raiser, Lear said that he and those who work with him have come up with a new TV commercial that tells people: "I can disagree with my president without being a bad Christian or a bad American."

People for the American Way is an organization that salutes, celebrates "the pluralistic nature of our society," to use Lear's phrase.

The idea for the group came from an idea for a movie.

After producing so many TV shows for so many years, Lear said, he came to the conclusion that he "needed to stretch in other directions, creatively. I was going to do a film called 'Religion.'" It was going to be about the Religious Right. He researched the subject, watched the TV evangelists.

And then "one morning I woke up with an idea for a 60-second spot that said everything I wanted to say." He talked about the commercial with various religious leaders, and out of those talks came People for the American Way.

Last year, Lear produced an ABC TV special called "I Love Liberty"—flabby and preachy and no fun—and also has produced commercials and a half-hour TV program for the group.

So, he did not leave television. He was doing a different kind of television.

Lear/3C

US: Soviet band played

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experimental fourth day of country music with Willie Nelson, Alabama and Waylon Jennings is scheduled for this Saturday.

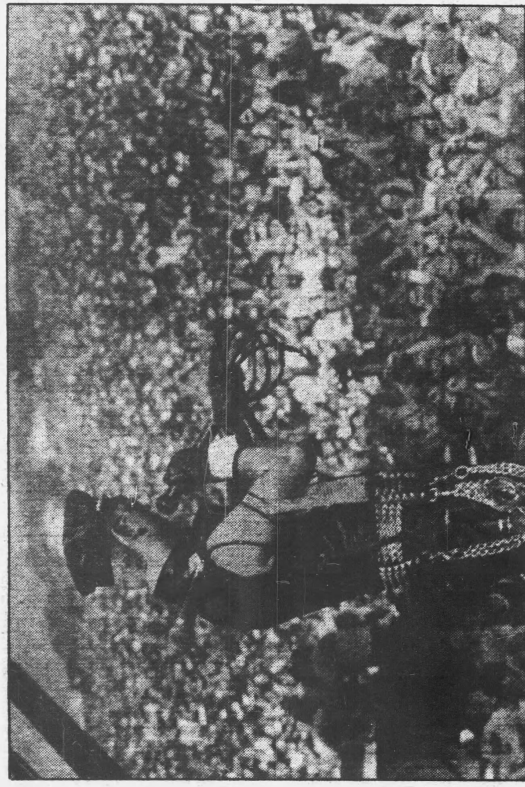
Of course, there was more to the US Festival than music. "It's a 10-Ring circus," said a disc jockey for KMET, a popular Los Angeles radio station. Picture Woodstock, the Minnesota State Fair and the Renaissance Fair rolled into one and staged in a California desert. Totally awesome.

The Clash, Bowie and Van Halen were here to sing in the main arena. But over in the Speaker's Tent about a half-mile from the amphitheater were esteemed science fiction writer Ray Bradbury and black activist Dick Gregory, talking in separate sessions about our future, socialistic-ness Bianca Jagger expounding on turmoil in Central America, and Robert Moog predicting the future of electronic music.

There was the air-conditioned art exhibit by the self-proclaimed artist of the '60s, Brett Livingston Strong, who created a statue of John Lennon for the festival site. In addition to Strong's works there were Lennon's Bag One lithograph series and some drawings by guitarist Nancy Wilson of Heart.

For \$2, you could venture into the Dream Dome for an ordinary video and laser experience. To get out of the sun and heat, some headed into the less-than-state-of-the-art technology and cameras tent. Last year, it was demonstrations and booths by Atari, Apple and other major computer firms. This year, it was Sequential Circuits, Inc., Synopsys Video, Cal State-San Bernardino, syn-drum demonstrations, video-game covers for \$2, and a linear powered automobile with the license plate "Whiztat."

Festivalgoers roamed around in the exhibits area, rode a Ferris wheel or met magicians, a flagpole sitter, one-man bands and Billy the Baston Twirler, who worried with fire and electronic flash pots. Others escaped into the Trager Tent and discovered a relaxation/massage technique from a doctor in Mill Valley, Calif. "It's movement reduction," explained Eileen Sadoff, formerly of Minneapolis, who has been



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The lead singer of Judas Priest gestured with a whip to the crowd Sunday.

administering Trager treatments in Los Angeles for the past two years. "People have said they come in here for some tranquility compared to what's out there (at the festival)."

Also beamed on the big screens was a live satellite hookup Saturday with Arsenal, a Russian jazz-rock band playing from Moscow. The group performed a couple of tunes, then keyboardist Joe Sharino, playing in a US Festival tent, offered the Russians a couple of tunes about brotherhood. Next Arsenal jammed, via satellite, on an instrumental with Sharino, who happened to also have performed at Wozniak's wedding.

No matter where they came from or what their age, people have been herded around like cattle, with startlingly tight security for a rock festival. There were 450 sworn police on the grounds, 60 on horseback patrolling the perimeter and 175 non-uniformed support personnel. As of yesterday afternoon, there had been 125 arrests, including two people for suspicion of murder of a 23-year-old California man over a supposed drug deal in a festival parking lot Sunday.

"They were wild when they came out after the heavy metal show," said Capt. Philip Schuyler of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. "They were tearing down fences, throwing rocks and bottles at us and each other, hitting our cars with tires. They even hit a horse."

"It's an absolute zoo," said Sheriff Floyd Tidwell. "All things considered, though, things are going pretty well. We're not upset by it. There'd be more crime than this in a

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There were potential gatecrashers and hundreds of folks simply willing to pay \$3 for parking, camp by their vehicle and enjoy the music that seemed to carry throughout the Glen Helen Park.

Like the US musical lineup, the panhandlers sang a song of the '60s instead of the '60s; they didn't ask for spare change but for "spare bills."

The times, indeed, are a-changing for rock festivals. They were born in June 1967 at the Monterey International Pop Festival, at which 7,000 people were expected for three days of music but 50,000 turned out to discover Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, the Who, as well as the already established Simon & Garfunkel and the Mamas and the Pappas.

What Monterey suggested, Woodstock began to realize. Rock had become a big business and a force that appealed to many different levels to millions of baby boomers. Moreover, Woodstock, with its three days of peace, love and music on a farm in upstate New York, helped define the counterculture. The subsequent movie and album of the magical event cemented the romanticized concept of the Woodstock generation in American history.

A movie of another rock festival in 1969 forever gave rock festivals a black mark. While the Stones were giving a free concert at Altamont Speedway in northern California, a man was stabbed in front of the stage by Hell's Angels working as security guards. However, the site of Wight Festival in England in 1970 and several smaller events in North America proved that festivals were still viable and manageable.

Then came the Watkins Glen Jam in 1973, featuring the Dead, Almans and the Band. More than 600,000 people trooped to an upstate New York race track for this one-day, unwieldy party in the rain, which was one of the few profitable rock festivals of the '70s. Willie Nelson followed with a series of annual Fourth of July picnics of country music in Austin, Texas, and the California Jam was a staged-for-TV event for a few years in the mid-'70s. But the same problems did in just about every rock festival: a shortage of portable toilets, water, food and



Steve Wozniak

medical facilities combined with inadequate sound systems.

In 1978, the Canada Jam tried to prove that rock festivals were viable again, but a Woodstock 10-year anniversary event the following year never happened. Promoters took a huge bath on a Toronto new-wave festival in 1980 with the Talking Heads and Elvis Costello, and reggae festivals in Jamaica in the past couple of years have been marked by countless logistical problems.

Then enter Wozniak, who heard a string of hit songs on the radio one day and wondered what it would be like to experience that in a concert. So he decided to throw a \$12 million, three-day party last year, and he had a good enough time losing \$5 million to try it again this year.

But his West Coast brand of rock festivals seems so unlike the happenings on the East Coast. "Out East, there's much more to it," said Jonathan Gross, rock critic for the Toronto Sun, who has attended festivals on both coasts. "You can't just gather the kids together for no apparent reason. You have to have some sort of aesthetic."

Californian David Lee Roth, 27, doesn't agree. He's the lead singer of Van Halen, the biggest attraction at this year's US Festival. He doesn't think a rock festival has to have any real significance, aesthetically or sociologically. He doesn't take it all that seriously.

He viewed the US Festival quite simply: "This is the biggest, greatest back-yard party we've ever had."

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