



Play it again, Sam

Sam Hyman puts his brain on rewind, looking back at his 50-year friendship with David Cassidy

By Mark Wyckoff

There was a time a decade ago when David Cassidy would hot-wire Bob Seger's "Hollywood Nights" and take the rollicking song out for a spin in concert. Cassidy used the tune to traverse the twisting, turning roads of his life, letting the lyrics hurtle him back to the '60s, back when he was a teenager growing up in what he called the "wicked, wicked city" of Los Angeles.

At the Greek Theatre in Hollywood, California, on July 21, 2001, he steered the song in an even more personal direction. On that night, under the stars, amid the high-rolling hills of his youth, this ex-New York boy used the song to pay tribute to one of his most enduring friendships.

"He headed west 'cause he felt that a change would do him good," Cassidy sang. "See some old friends, good for the soul."

As he finished that last line, about the soul-nurturing power of friendship, he paused for a millisecond and then said, "Right, Sam?"

The mid-song shout-out was directed at Sam Hyman, who was in the audience that night. He and Cassidy had lived the lyrics of Seger's song and then some. Pals since seventh grade, they came of age in mid-1960s Hollywood and were swept up together in the social tsunami triggered by The Beatles in 1964. Times

were a-changin', and these two middle-class lads were part of it all.

As the flower power of the '60s wilted away with the dawn of the murkier 1970s, these two friends would team up to



Courtesy of David Cassidy

'HE'S STILL LIKE MY BROTHER': David Cassidy (left) and Sam Hyman at the '70s Retro Ball in Las Vegas, June 2000.

give the world one last gasp of innocence. As the star of television's "The Partridge Family," and as a top-selling singer and concert performer, Cassidy became the face and voice of a generation. Hyman, his right hand man and trusted confidant, handled Cassidy's tour merchandising and, more importantly, helped keep the overwhelmed superstar sane.

In a wide-ranging interview, Hyman looked back at his life and his 50-year friendship with Cassidy — a friendship that will be celebrated Sunday, Aug. 26, with a pair of sold-out lunch and dinner events at Rim Talay, the Thai restaurant Hyman and his wife, Ponie, own and operate in Oceanside, California. Hyman and Cassidy will be at both seatings, catching each other up on their busy lives, mingling

with fans and noshing on chicken satay and Alaskan salmon.

In 1962, when Cassidy and Hyman first met, a celebration like this was the furthest thing from their minds. Back then, they had other things to attend to. There was a friendship to forge, waves to surf and, in Hyman's case, a gym to visit.

Wednesday's children

The future friends were born on opposite coasts, 42 days apart, in 1950. Cassidy came into the world on April 12 in New York City; his Irish roots ran deep. Hyman was born May 24 in Los

Angeles; he is of Eastern European Jewish descent. Coincidentally, both were born on a Wednesday — and both of their fathers were named Jack. Cassidy's parents were Broadway actors Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Ward. Hyman's dad was a businessman who worked in real estate and investments; his mom, Regina, was a longtime executive secretary for the American Technion Society.

Cassidy's parents divorced when he was young and he spent his first 11 years in West Orange, New Jersey. In 1961, four years after his dad moved to Southern California with his new wife, Shirley Jones, Cassidy followed with his mom. They moved into a small house on Crestview Court in West Los Angeles and Cassidy



Douglas Campbell
Tom Cantor
Kathy Carl
Candis Carlson
Mark Carter
Dave Cassidy
Pam Chambers
Andy Chenoweth

Sam Hyman
James Imes
Julie Jackson
Edith Jensen
Jimmy Jobe
Dale Johnson
Cornelia Jones
Cynthia Jones

SCHOOL DAYS: From Emerson Junior High School's 1965 Reflections yearbook comes these ninth grade photos of Cassidy (top row, third from right) and Hyman (bottom row, first on left). Classmates voted Cassidy most "youthful."

began fifth grade at Fairburn Elementary.

Hyman crossed paths with Cassidy a year later during their first year of junior high school. Hyman was enrolled at El Rodeo School and Cassidy was going to nearby Emerson Junior High. A boy named George, who Hyman knew from grammar school and Cassidy knew at Emerson, introduced them at a West Los Angeles gym where was Hyman was working out.

By no means was Hyman a gym rat; unlike Cassidy, who played Little League and was a huge Yankees fan, Hyman didn't care much for sports. He made weekly trips to Bruce Conner's Physical Services for one specific purpose: To strengthen his back muscles, which had been weakened by a mild case of scoliosis.

Their initial meeting was quick and low-key. "George just popped by the gym and said, 'Meet my friend, David,' " Hyman said.

Did they click right away and become instant best friends?

"No," Hyman said. "Becoming best friends takes time. As time progressed, our friendship with George drifted away and we

became closer. I guess it was similar likes. When you're that age, you congregate in groups of 'like.' "

As they hung out more and more, those likes drew them closer.

"We listened to the same music," Hyman said. "Music was a big part of it. Surfing. The embrace of the social revolution that was starting to happen with the introduction of The Beatles and the counterculture that was emerging. Obviously there were people that embraced it and people that didn't. You had the people that were really studious. You had the other people who were jocks. And you had the people who were more creative, who were embracing the changes going on at the time. We definitely fell into the latter group."

In the fall of 1964, as they were entering ninth grade, Hyman joined Cassidy at Emerson. By this time, following his mom's marriage to director Elliott Silverstein, Cassidy was living in a house on Glenbarr in Cheviot Hills. Hyman lived about a mile and a half away on Mississippi Avenue in West Los Angeles.

"It was a bicycle ride, not a walk," Hyman said. "And there was a huge hill between us."

The pals began high school together in the fall of 1965 at University High. While Hyman would graduate from there, Cassidy's scholastic career in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades was bumpier. When he bombed out of Uni, he went to Hamilton. When he couldn't cut it at Hamilton, he was sent to continuation school. He finally graduated from Rexford, a private school.

"David went to quite a few high schools — and not because he was recruited," Hyman said, laughing. "He wouldn't wake up in time to make it to class and they'd kick him out."

Surf's up

From 1964 to the summer of '68, Hyman and Cassidy basked in the free-spirited glow of Southern California. They hit the waves, got their first cars, steamed up the drive-in with their girlfriends and rocked out to the sounds of The Beatles, Buffalo Springfield and John Mayall.

The bustling Westwood Village shopping district, jammed with shops, movie theaters and restaurants, was a favorite after-school (and sometimes during-school) hangout. They'd wander around, sip a frothy drink from Orange Julius, and check out the fairer sex. If one of them managed to charm a girl, the Mathias Botanical Garden at nearby UCLA was the perfect spot for a secluded make-out session.

Surfing was a mutual passion and they couldn't wait every month for the new issue of Surfer Magazine to hit the stands. They'd catch surf movies together at the Santa Monica Civic and on weekends they would take the bus down to the Santa Monica Pier. They owned boards and, for \$5 a month, stored them in a locker at Max's Surfboards. Plastered on the walls of the shop were photos of "Classy" Freddie Blassie, a professional wrestler who coined the term "pencil-necked geek." Max claimed to be Blassie's manager.

Skill-wise, Cassidy and Hyman were more gremmies than hard-core surfer dudes. On a good day, maybe, they could hang five. But any trickier moves were out. Cassidy, at least, sort of looked the part, with straight hair that "bleached out in the sun," Hyman said.

Who was better in the water? "Guess that would depend on who you talked to," Hyman said,

laughing. "At the time I probably thought I was better and he probably thought he was better. Looking back, I think we both weren't very good."

One problem: The boards were big, probably 25 to 30 pounds, and they were small.



SURFER'S RULE: Hyman and Cassidy shared a passion for surfing. Who was better at Santa Monica Pier? "Guess that would depend on who you talked to," Hyman says.

"I remember at 13 years old I was 4-feet-11 and I was probably taller than David," Hyman said. "We were so small, it took two of us to carry our boards. The boards were much heavier then. You couldn't just pick it up and carry it under your arm like the kids do today."

On land, there were other adventures to be had — especially as they got older. Hyman started shaving when he was 15, so it was up to him to procure alcohol.

"David had that baby face and I didn't," Hyman said. "There was a liquor store on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Westwood that would sell me beer occasionally. I didn't always succeed. If they

said, 'Lemme see your ID,' I'd say, 'Oh, my wallet is out in the car. Lemme go get it.' I'd go outside and tell David, 'Let's get out of here.'"

And then there was music. Cassidy became a die-hard Beatles fan the moment they exploded on the American scene via "The Ed Sullivan Show" on Feb. 9, 1964. Hyman, though, wasn't an immediate convert. When a local radio ran a popularity contest pitting The Beatles against Southern California's Beach Boys, Hyman sided with Brian Wilson's band. He even rallied his friends to cast votes for the "Surfin' USA" superstars.

"I remember how excited I was that The Beach Boys beat The Beatles," he said.

Soon, though, as The Beatles rolled out more hits like "A Hard Day's Night," "Can't Buy Me Love" and "I Feel Fine," he was won over by the Fab Four, too.

As the years ticked by, their musical tastes deepened. They started listening to Eric Clapton, Stevie Winwood and Jeff Beck. In 1968, Cassidy turned Hyman on to "Child Is the Father of the Man," the debut album by the Al Kooper-led Blood Sweat and Tears.

"I was so blown away by the horn section and the production of it that I remember driving from his house in Cheviot Hills directly to the record store and buying the album," Hyman said.

Their musical hero was Jimi Hendrix. They both saw his

show at the Hollywood Bowl on Sept. 14, 1968. Hyman paid \$6 to sit back in the upper reaches of the cavernous amphitheater with his girlfriend; Cassidy recalls watching the show “from the trees, to get the best view.” Hendrix kicked off the show with a blistering “Are You Experienced?” and Hyman was blown away.

“To this day, he is the most charismatic performer I’ve ever seen,” he said. “He was just able to draw the crowd in. ... He had total control of the audience.”

Hyman and Cassidy attempted to create musical magic of their own around 1965, but their group, the Pains of Glass, didn’t stay together long enough to shatter many eardrums. “We played one show that I can recall, some kind of social club event,” Hyman said. “It was pretty terrible. They didn’t boo us out, but I don’t think anybody thought we’d be the next Beatles.”

Cassidy played drums and sang, Hyman played rhythm guitar and a friend of theirs played lead guitar. “We called it lead guitar anyway,” Hyman said.

The band’s set was all cover songs.

“And we didn’t always play the whole song because we



SOMETHING GOIN' ON: After Hyman heard Blood Sweat and Tears' debut album at Cassidy's house, he rushed out to buy his own copy.

weren't accomplished enough musicians," Hyman said. "I think I knew five chords. I wasn't very good because I had a hard time keeping my guitar in tune. It was a cheapie guitar. A little electric guitar with a little tiny amp. If somebody had anything of us on video, I'm sure we'd be very embarrassed."

Drive my car

Hyman and Cassidy got their driver's licenses in 1966 and that gave them incredible freedom. "Gas was a quarter a gallon," Hyman said. "You'd pay \$2 for a tank of gas, go out and have a ball."

Their first cars were both hand-me-downs from their parents. "I think our parents just wanted us to be independent and out of their hair," Hyman

said. "It was like, 'Oh, you're 16 and have a license? Here's a car. Get out of here.'" Hyman drove a 1962 Chevrolet Impala his dad gave him; Cassidy's 1959 Oldsmobile convertible came from his mom. "The nice thing about those big cars was that they were perfect for drive-in movies," Hyman said. "You had a back seat that was like a living room, so you had room to make out with your girlfriend." Hyman remembers Cassidy's next car vividly. It was a '53 Volkswagen Bug painted Army green that had eight-inch turning indicators that flipped out of the sides of the front doors. The

car's small back window was oval.

"David taught me how to drive a stick shift on that car," Hyman said. "He took me to a Ralph's grocery store that had a two-story parking garage. Nobody was ever down on the bottom level, so that's where we went. It was nighttime, it was lit up, and he explained it to me: 'You let the clutch out, give it a little gas, blah, blah, blah.' I went around the parking lot a couple of times and he said, 'OK. Go out on the street.' And that was it."

Cranking up music in that car was a mind-blowing experience. They just about wore out their Everly Brothers tape.

"He had a four-track, not even an eight-track, tape player in the VW," Hyman said. "It was

a four-track Muntz stereo. That had one of the best sounds of any car I have ever been in, almost to this day. I don't know if it was the steel they made the car out of or how the speakers echoed, but we loved driving around in that car playing music."

Graduation days

As the '60s raged on, the Vietnam War was heating up. More U.S. troops were being sent over to fight and the casualties mounted. By the late 1960s, 500 American soldiers were dying every month. Given those numbers, it's no wonder the fear of being drafted was reaching panic levels among male teenagers like Hyman and Cassidy as they approached age 18.

"We were scared," Hyman said. "We didn't want to go to Southeast Asia to fight in a war we didn't believe in."

Teenagers and young adults at the time were starting to question authority. Instead of blindly following the government, they challenged it. They started to speak out and organize anti-war rallies.

"I remember there was a large war protest in Century City in 1967," Hyman said. "In the afternoon there was a big rally at Rancho Park. I'm sure David was there. I think we all kind of stopped by. And Muhammad Ali spoke. Then there was a march that night at the Century Plaza Hotel. I



PARANOIA STRIKES DEEP: Hyman and his girlfriend took part in this 1967 anti-war march. It made front-page news when things turned violent.

wasn't with David at the time, I was with my girlfriend. It was a protest against (President) Lyndon Johnson. He was at the hotel. And it turned semi-violent."

As the war weighed on their minds, so did the fast-approaching reality of life beyond high school.

Cassidy's career course had long been set: He wanted to go into show business.

"With parents like he had, that was pretty much a given," Hyman said.

Hyman had no concept of who Cassidy's parents and stepmom were at first. "My parents knew and they had to fill me in," Hyman said.

Both of their fathers died young. Hyman was 19 when his dad died of a heart attack in 1969; Cassidy was 26 when his father perished in a 1976 fire.

"There were a lot of similarities between our dads in terms of them not being able to share their emotions," Hyman said. "We shared a lot of that in common, as boys and as young men. As young men you're always looking for the approval of your father. And when you lose your father at a very young age there will be unresolved issues."

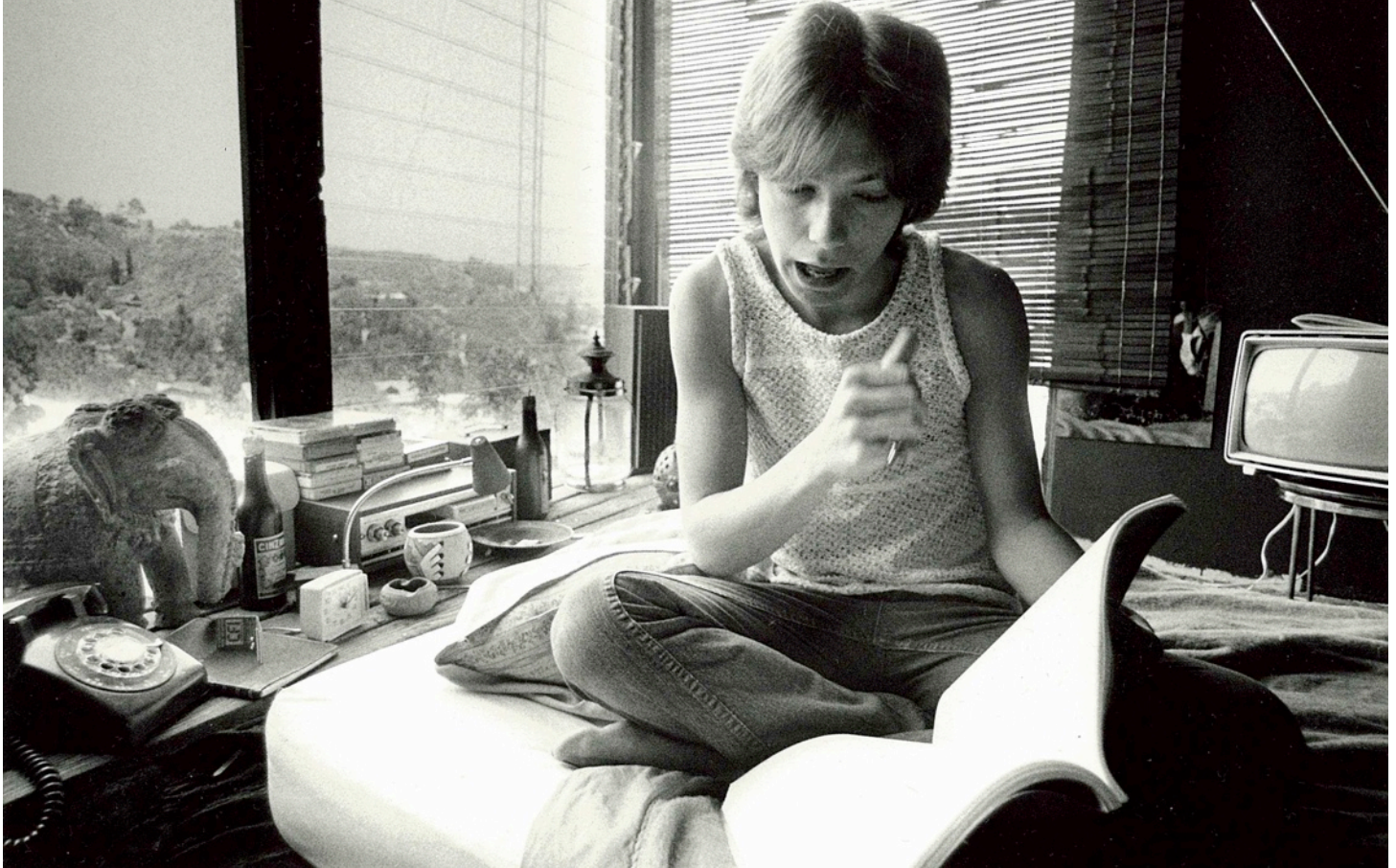
Jack Cassidy, Hyman said, had a "presence about him. When he walked into the room, you knew he was in the room."

What impressed Hyman most, however, was how put together the actor

always was.

"Everything was in place," Hyman said. "Every hair was in place. His socks matched the shirt. Everything he was wearing looked like it was from the same dye lot. There was never a wrinkle on him. I would see him come out of his shop, after he'd been in there tinkering with something, and he'd walk out immaculate. To this day I've never been that wrinkle-free — even when I was getting ready to go to work and had to wear a suit and tie. How did he do that???"

By the time Hyman and Cassidy graduated from high



ROTARY CLUB: Cassidy studies a script in the “master bedroom,” as Hyman jokingly calls it, of their less-than-palatial Laurel Canyon home in 1970. Rent was \$315 a month. Cassidy paid \$200; Hyman chipped in the rest.

school in the summer of '68, they had their immediate futures mapped out. Cassidy would move to New York and study acting; Hyman, who had a more casual interest in performing, would stay behind in Los Angeles and enroll in Los Angeles City College as a theater arts major.

“When we graduated,” Hyman said, laughing, “I remember saying to him something like, ‘David, you should get an education, otherwise you’ll never amount to anything — and I don’t want to have to take care of you when you get old.’”

In the ensuing months, as they toiled away on opposite coasts, they kept in touch by writing letters. Cassidy worked in the mailroom of a textile company, took acting classes and went on

countless auditions. Hyman was busy at LACC, taking classes, acting in a few plays and helping a professor there start a cinematography department at the school.

Near the end of 1968, Cassidy landed his first professional job, a small role in the Allan Sherman musical “The Fig Leaves Are Falling.” He quit the mailroom, dove into rehearsals and, by Jan. 6, 1969, just four days after the show opened on Broadway, he was out of a job. The “Fig Leaves” had fallen — fast.

All was not lost. A talent scout saw him in the show and urged him to fly back to Los Angeles to screen test for a movie. Cassidy didn’t get the part, but he did start landing guest shots on the top TV dramas of the day, from

“Marcus Welby M.D.” to “The F.B.I.”

When he got a little money in his pocket, he called Hyman with an idea.

“Let’s get a place,” Cassidy said.

Coming to the Canyon

They ended up renting a small house on Cole Crest Drive in the hills of Laurel Canyon, a rustic area that, in the 1960s, had been a hub for such musicians as David Crosby, Joni Mitchell, Graham Nash and Joni Mitchell.

“We rented a place so we could party,” Hyman said. “It was a house up in the hills, almost on stilts. It was a tree house almost. Trees were growing up from the mountain outside your window. It was two bedrooms and one-and-a-half or two baths. We had

mattresses on the floor to sleep on, orange crates for our end tables and night stands and lots of candles. The place was a mess because neither of us knew how to clean — or wanted to clean. It was the kind of house where you'd do the dishes once the last dish was dirty."

Rent was \$315 a month. Cassidy chipped in \$200; Hyman paid the rest. "He paid more so he took the bigger bedroom," Hyman said.

Keeping them company were two pets — Cassidy's dog, Sam, and Hyman's dog, Hashish. Hyman got his dog at the pound. "It was the first check I ever wrote," he said.

Sam wasn't a very well-behaved dog, which led to irritating conversations like this:

"Sam! Sam! Come here!," Cassidy would yell.

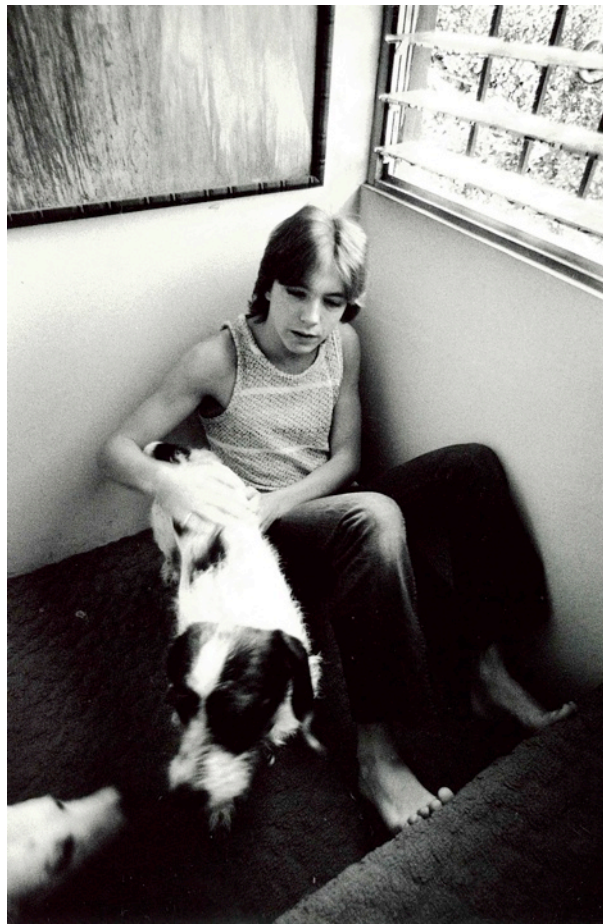
"Yeah, yeah ... whaddya want?" Hyman would respond.

"No, no — not you. I'm calling the dog," Cassidy would answer.

Exasperated, they changed Sam's name to Ricky.

While Cassidy continued landing high-profile guests spots in 1969, Hyman left LACC to join the Army Reserve. He had applied for entry while in high school, scored No. 2 in a statewide aptitude test for recruits, but there were no openings for him when he graduated. The Army Reserve was appealing to Hyman because its units were rarely sent overseas.

"You could not get into the reserve unless you were well-



CORNERED: Cassidy plays with Sheesh (left) and Ricky at the Laurel Canyon house.

connected, like a Dan Quayle or a George Bush, or had parents in very high places," Hyman said. "But by the time I was in college, there were some openings and they started recruiting me."

The timing was fortuitous, too, because by the end of 1969 a draft lottery system had been instituted. A low number meant you'd be drafted first; a high number meant you had some breathing room. Hyman ended up with 31; Cassidy drew 300.

"Had I not gone into the reserve I would have been drafted," Hyman said. "Going into the reserve gave me the opportunity to not go to Canada and not go to Vietnam."

Hyman trained as a medic in the National Guard and, for

the next four years, spent one weekend a month working at a local naval hospital. He was called into active duty just once, when a 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck California's San Fernando Valley near Sylmar on Feb. 9, 1971.

Now that he wasn't in school, Hyman picked up a job as an apprentice film editor at Syncrofilm, a Los Angeles-based company that did music and sound effects editing for TV shows and films.

Hyman's favorite client was Bob Hope. The legendary comedian needed his "Vietnam Christmas Show" specials completed in such a tight window of time that Syncrofilm employees had to work around the clock for two to three weeks at a time. That meant massive overtime.

As an apprentice, Hyman was in charge of picking up film from the airport, taking it to the lab for processing, cutting and coding it, and then handing it off to the experienced editors who were putting together various sequences.

"It was such a crunchtime that literally as each reel was done, I'd be on my way to the airport to ship it out to New York," Hyman said. "I was able to take my \$80 a week and get it up to \$800 a week."

As part of the Syncrofilm team, Hyman also worked on the film "Five Easy Pieces" with Jack Nicholson and "The Last Movie," director Dennis Hopper's follow-up to "Easy Rider."

For Hyman, trying to make sense of “The Last Movie” was nearly impossible.

“Hopper went down to Peru to direct it and he would shoot a whole roll rather than yell ‘cut!’” Hyman said. “It was unbelievable. As an apprentice, I had to code all this film, and as you’re coding it you’re breaking it up by scene. And I’d be

doing that going, ‘This is a 10-minute take.’ It was kind of bizarre. I guess they were partying a bit while they were working.”

As Hyman settled in at Syncrofilm, Cassidy was ending 1969 on a high note: He had just landed a starring role in a sitcom — a sitcom that would star his step-mom, Shirley Jones.

Ready or not, 1970 would be the year of “The Partridge Family.”

Hello world

As far as Cassidy and Hyman were concerned, the series wasn’t an immediate game-changer in their lives. With the sitcom’s fall premiere date a long way off, Cassidy spent his days filming episodes of the show and some of his nights recording “Bandala,” “Point Me in the Direction of Albuquerque,” “I Can Feel Your Heartbeat” and other songs destined for the “The Partridge Family Album.” His schedule was busy, but not overwhelming.



LIFE ON THE FRINGE: When Cassidy hit the road for his first weekend of concerts in 1971, he pulled in more than \$37,000.

But as the show’s Sept. 25 premiere date inched closer, the intensity ramped up. There were newspaper interviews to do, press parties to attend, and countless photo sessions for countless teen magazines.

When the show finally made its Friday night debut on ABC and struck ratings gold, Cassidy went from zero to hero almost overnight. His popularity soared to the stratosphere a month later when “I Think I Love You” topped the Billboard Hot 100 for three weeks.

“The first time we heard ‘I Think I Love You’ on the radio, we were driving on Pacific Coast Highway and all of a sudden it came on,” Hyman recounts in Cassidy’s autobiography, “Could It Be Forever?” “We both kind of looked at each other, eyes getting real wide and we were so stoked.”

Could things get any better? Or any busier? Yes, they could.

They could go on tour.

Cassidy live!

The local disc jockey was trying, in vain, to plug his station. But the deafening screams inside Seattle Center Arena were overpowering him. Mercifully, someone finally told him, “You’d better give up.” Knowing he was beat, he cut to the chase.

“You know him as a boy named Keith,” the DJ said.

“Ladies and gentleman ... the REAL David Cassidy!!!!!!”

When Cassidy bounded on stage, white fringe flying, to the pounding beat of “I Can Hear Your Heartbeat,” 5,000 girls shrieked, a blinding sea of flashbulbs popped and two lives were changed forever. The date was Friday, March 26, 1971.

The Seattle show, and another sold-out gig in Portland, Oregon, the following night, proved Cassidy had enormous drawing power as a live act. His total haul for those two shows, *Variety* noted, was \$37,000. That was big money in those days.

Hyman was there that weekend, but not just as a friend. He was there in his newly minted capacity as Cassidy’s merchandise manager.

“We had pitched the idea to his manager of me handling the merchandise and traveling with him as his trusted ally,” Hyman said.

The idea made sense. Hyman got to realize his

dream of seeing the world and, in turn, Cassidy had a friend with him on the road to keep him sane as the hysteria around him grew more and more intense.

Actually, he had two friends: Steve Ross, another old pal from Emerson Junior High, was playing lead guitar in Cassidy's band.

"I was glad to have Sam and Steve as friends, especially when I toured," Cassidy said in his autobiography. "I trusted them implicitly. It helped having them around to share experiences with me."

Cassidy's workload was crushing. He was simultaneously filming a TV show, cutting both Partridge Family albums and solo albums, and doing concerts around the world. The experience, Cassidy has said, was like going through a soul-sapping tunnel.

"For me, it didn't feel like a tunnel," Hyman said. "It was almost the opposite. Did I come out differently? Yes, because of what I was exposed to ... both positive and negative. For him it was a tunnel because he had to stay focused on one direction, where for me it was omnidirectional. I was soaking a lot of it in. ... Once he was in his hotel room, if he didn't feel like hanging out, I could go



THE MERCH MASTER: In the early '70s, Hyman spent Monday and Tuesday of every week working the phones and hammering out tour merchandise contracts.

out and enjoy the city a little bit. He couldn't."

Cassidy filmed the show during the day, recorded at night and then, on Friday nights, he, Hyman and the rest of the entourage would make a mad dash to the airport so they could fly off for a weekend of concerts.

"David was notoriously late, and I was a very fast runner," Hyman said. "Many times we would get to the airport and I'd jump out and just take off running down to the gate to tell them he was a minute behind me. If I ran through an airport like that today they'd

chase me down and arrest me."

As merchandise manager, one of Hyman's first duties was designing a 2-foot-by-3-foot poster that could be sold at concerts. It became the biggest seller at Cassidy's shows, outpacing luv stickers, tour books and other items. "We were partners with Tiger Beat on this, to a degree," Hyman said. "They gave me access to thousands of photographs and I looked through them all until I found one with the look and feel I wanted. I can't even remember what the image was. We sold it for \$2. Tiger Beat paid the printing costs and the shipping costs and I coordinated the rest." Hyman soon quit his job at Syncrofilm.

Handling the merch was now his "full part-time job." Around the same time, Tiger Beat started running a monthly "Living with David" column credited to Hyman. "I didn't actually do the writing," he said in Cassidy's book. "I'd tell the writer something like, 'OK, this month we did this.' ... After a while it was pretty lame."

As merch manager, it was Hyman's responsibility to finalize merchandise contracts with each venue, then determine how many posters and tour books to ship out.

"I had a formula down," he said. "I'd go by ticket sales. It was 25 to 50 percent. So if there were 10,000 tickets sold, I'd send the venue anywhere from 2,500 to 5,000 posters. Probably 60 percent of what we sold was posters.

"My life was beautiful," Hyman continued. "I worked my tail off on the weekends, did my phone negotiations with future venues on Monday and Tuesday and then, once I was done, I got in my little yellow Volkswagen and headed up to Big Sur to backpack for two days. Then I'd come back and be ready to leave again on Friday."

Hyman's favorite spot in Big Sur was one he found completely by accident.

"We called it Lucky Left Hand Turn City," Hyman said. "A friend of mine and I were riding up there, looking for a place to explore, and he said, 'Turn left here.' We took a little road and drove until we found a place to park. It was magical. It's like you were in the Hobbit rain forest or something. After that, I'd go there every week. I'd find it just by feel. Seventeen miles south of Carmel I would look at the odometer and I knew I'd be getting close to it.

"Going there created balance for me. David didn't

DAVID'S WILD WILD WEEKEND!

Fasten your seat belts and get ready for another lightning tour! This time David and I traveled to Dayton, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, and Canton, Ohio, and met thousands of the nicest people ever. In fact, in some ways, it was nicer than the first concert tour!

The evening before, despite our good intentions about getting to bed early, we were too excited to sleep, and we sat around with some friends and played music until about one-thirty in the morning! It wasn't quite the same as the first tour—we knew more or less what to expect—but there was still a lot of nervous anticipation, especially on David's part. He told me the next morning that he was awake for a couple of hours after we went to bed, just thinking about all the things that could go wrong!

FEARS CAME TRUE

The next morning, it looked like all those bad thoughts might come true. We crawled out of bed at 7:30, feeling like we'd barely closed our eyes. I mixed up a nice health food breakfast—nice things like milk, wheat germ, honey, yeast, banana, strawberries, etc., all mixed in a blender. David stumbled in, looked at my glass, said "yeech," and fixed himself a bowl of Life cereal. Our new roommate, Steve, sided with me and had a health-shake.

We left Sam and Sheesh (the dogs) with a friend, and departed for the airport—and then the fears that had kept David awake started coming true! We had no sooner gotten aboard the plane when it started to taxi down the runway, and then gave a terrible lurch and shook madly! We backed right back into the hangar and every-

By Sam Hyman, David's Best Friend



DAVID AND I ALWAYS GET into crazy moods whenever we're backstage at an arena. You see, David is really nervous inside, but to cover his nervousness, he starts making jokes. Then I join in and before you know it, we're acting like two "nuts"! Below, David eagerly answers questions asked of him at a big press conference in Detroit. No matter what he's asked, David gives his honest opinions on everything!

THE WRITE STUFF? NOT QUITE: Hyman didn't pen the "Living with David" columns that appeared monthly in Tiger Beat. He merely fed ideas to the magazine's writers.

get that balance. That's why it burned him out."

Meanwhile, back at the ranch

Once the "The Partridge Family" debuted, it didn't take long for fans to discover the Laurel Canyon house. That meant they had to move. Quick.

For \$1,500 a month, they ended up renting a fully furnished home designed by architect Robert Byrd. It was on Haslam Terrace, high up in the Hollywood Hills above Sunset Boulevard. Ross moved in with them, too.

"It was a bachelor pad," Hyman said. "It was very seductive. It had beautiful views, a swimming pool. It was kind of like a dream for a couple of young guys."

Ricky and Hashish made the move, too. But due to Cassidy's fame, and the squeaky-clean image that had been cultivated for him, another canine name change was in order.

"I couldn't be writing for Tiger Beat and say, 'We took Hashish — no, no I mean the dog Hashish,'" Hyman said, chuckling. "So I just started calling her Sheesh."

Near summer's end in 1970, when they were still living in Laurel Canyon, Hyman freaked out when he saw the two

dogs running around the house "stuck together." They were butt-to-butt and looked for all the world like one of Dr. Dolittle's pushmi-pullyus.

"I called the vet, frantic," Hyman said, laughing. "To this day, I'll never forget his tone. He said, 'Do you want them to breed?' And I said, 'Yes, doctor.' And he goes, 'Well son, that's what they're doing.' You know, here I was, I thought I was some young, hot stud bachelor, and I had to be explained the birds and the bees by a vet."

Sheesh ended up having six puppies, and they were

given away in a contest that ran in the December 1970 issue of Tiger Beat. The magazine received more than 20,000 entries, Hyman said.

Ricky died in 1971 after he got into a vicious fight with a neighborhood dog.

"Ricky had a lot of terrier in him," Hyman said. "He thought he was tough. He was always getting into fights. After this one, he just couldn't fight the infection. David wrote 'Ricky's Tune' not long after."

For Cassidy's birthday in 1972, Hyman went to a breeder and got Cassidy another dog, this one a beautiful, red and beige English setter. He named her Kula, after the district in Maui, Hawaii, where he wanted to build a house.

"She got distemper and died," Hyman said. "That devastated me. I couldn't even be in the room when they put her down. They had to give me a tranquilizer. This year, I took my wife to Maui for a few days. We drove around the island. And when we drove through Kula, I teared up."

After several months on Haslam Terrace, the chaos of Hollywood started to get to them. "We realized we were more earthy and wanted more privacy," Hyman said.

They ended up moving 30 minutes away to a house on White Oak Avenue in Encino,



IF ONLY I COULD HAVE A PUPPY: When Sheesh (standing) and Ricky mated, Cassidy and Hyman gave the puppies away in a Tiger Beat contest.

a suburb of Los Angeles. It was a Spanish-style ranch house, built in 1925; from the street, all you could see was its driveway.

"We were able to have some peace of mind and seclusion," Hyman said.

Goodbye blues

The nonstop film-record-tour grind was burning Cassidy out and, in 1974, he announced he was quitting "The Partridge Family" and retiring from the road after a one final world tour.

Hyman, who didn't handle merchandising on Cassidy's

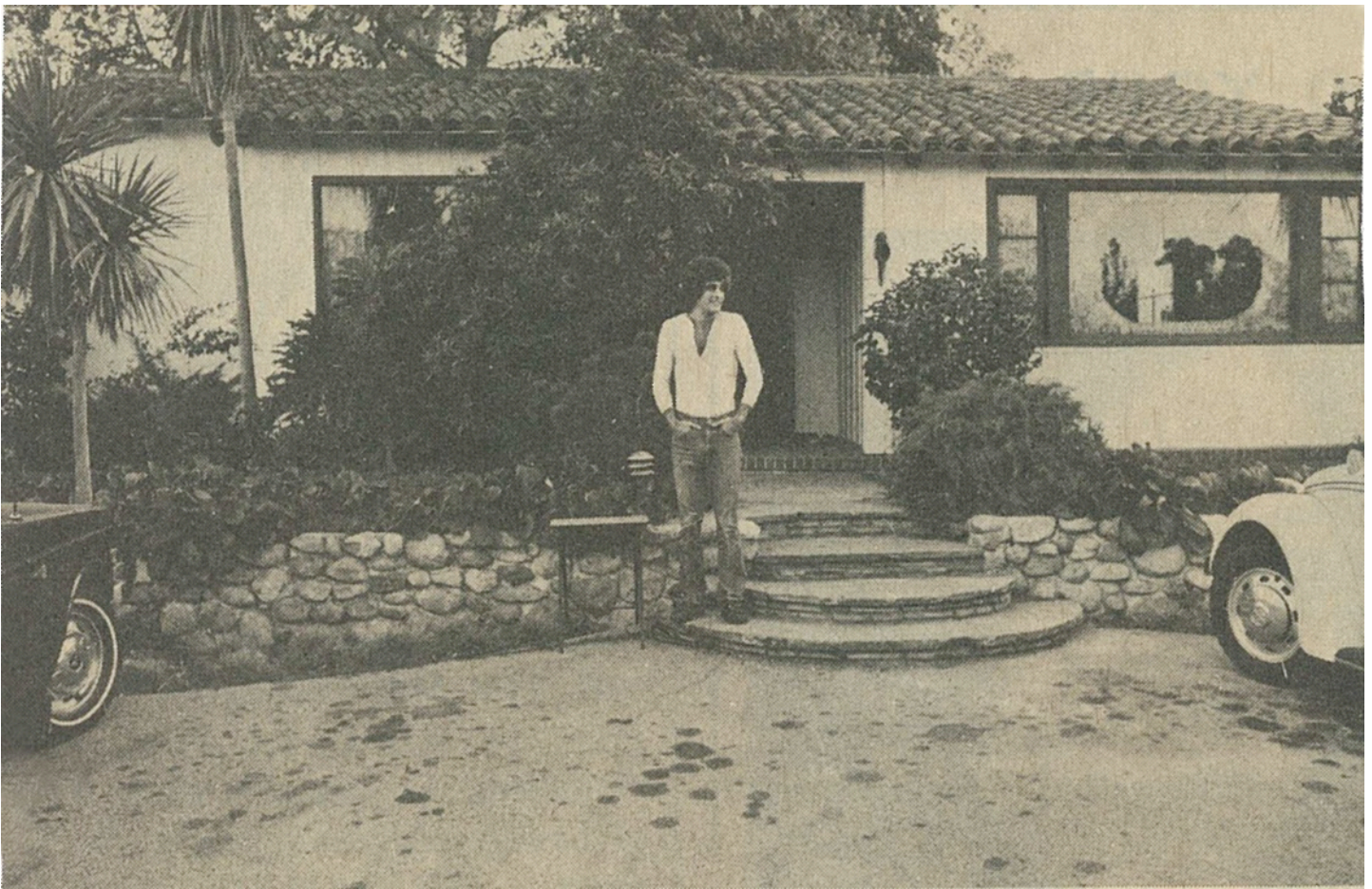
overseas trips, tagged along anyway on the first leg of the trek, which went to New Zealand, Australia and Japan. The first several days were spent in Auckland, where Hyman had the time of his life. It was like stepping back into a simpler era. If he asked someone for directions, they wouldn't just help him consult a map, they'd drive him to wherever he was trying to go.

A stewardess he had met on the plane ride over took him sightseeing. They ended up visiting the Waitomo Caves. It's accessible only by canoe, and visitors must stay totally still and completely quiet when they enter, lest they disturb the

thousand of glowworms dotting the cave's ceiling.

"They look like stars," Hyman said. "After the canoe stops, and the water settles out, you have this 360-degree view of tiny points of light. You feel like you're floating in space. It was this existential moment where time stood still."

The tour's first leg wrapped in Tokyo on March 28 and Hyman elected not to head back out with Cassidy when the jaunt resumed in May with concerts in Switzerland, Germany, Scotland and



THE HARDER THEY FALL: Sick of watching Cassidy spiral out of control, Hyman moved out of the Encino house in 1976. Cassidy would soon follow.

England. He would miss the tragedy at White City and Cassidy's poignant final show in Manchester, which ended with a haunting version of Dylan's "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue."

Short on cash now that there was no merchandise empire to oversee, Hyman took a job waiting tables at Chuck's Steakhouse in Marina del Rey. After three years of jet-setting, it was hard to get used to.

"I remember calling my mom and telling her about the job," Hyman said. "She said, 'I don't care what you do, just be the best at what you do — even if you're sweeping streets. It's more important that you work and have self-esteem. And the fact that you've traveled around the

world, and eaten in great restaurants, will probably make you a very good waiter. You know what it requires.' And I was. I was an excellent waiter."

The same year Hyman started doing construction work for Envirotech, a groundbreaking company led by maverick designer Carey Smoot. The company specialized in elliptical domes and other one-of-a-kind structures. Smoot didn't need ordinary carpenters; he needed guys who could brainstorm, problem solve and think outside the box. Hyman fit the bill. Working with Smoot and the firm's other architectural artisans, Hyman helped construct everything from the Krishnamurti Foundation building in Ojai to

the first elliptical dome in Los Angeles.

"You weren't just building a building," Hyman said. "It was a matter of creating art ... and trying to be socially conscientious at the same time."

As 1976 dawned, Hyman was growing increasingly worried about Cassidy, who was stuck in an emotional free fall. Feeling robbed of his own identity, and haunted by insecurity, Cassidy was turning to ever-increasing amounts of drugs and alcohol to numb the pain.

"It was the drug use that I couldn't handle," Hyman said. "And the type of people that it attracts. I wasn't comfortable with it. It was too destructive for me. Not to say that I wasn't destructive myself, but

it was more than my threshold of destruction.”

At wit's end, Hyman moved out of the Encino house and headed for Colorado. He needed to clear his head.

He prayed Cassidy would do the same.

Go start anew

As the 1980s dawned, Cassidy had begun the long, arduous task of rebuilding his life and career.

Progress came in agonizing fits and starts over the next decade and a half. A brief high point came in 1981 when he landed the title role in the

Broadway-bound revival of George M. Cohan's 1904 musical "Little Johnny Jones." He didn't end up going to New York with the show, but he spent six months on the road, singing classic songs like "Give My Regards to Broadway," and he brought Hyman along for the ride.

Hyman acted as both wardrobe assistant and personal assistant. The experience wasn't as intense as Cassidy's rock days, but it was physically demanding: eight shows a week was no piece of cake.

Some things, though, hadn't changed a bit: Cassidy, ever the night owl, was still nearly impossible to wake up.

"He never liked mornings, not even in high school,"



THREE MEALS A DAY, A WHOLE LOT TO SAY: When Cassidy hit the road in "Little Johnny Jones," he took Hyman along.

Hyman said. "If he was really asleep I'd have to go into his room, grab his shoulder and shake. ... If he were a fireman, it'd take a three-alarm fire to get him out of bed. Kiss your house goodbye if you were waiting for him and the truck to leave the station."

Sporadic successes followed for Cassidy: the play "Tribute" in 1981 in Canada, which Hyman saw, and a stint in the musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" in 1983, which Hyman missed. In the fall of '84, Cassidy married for the second time and moved to England to write and record "Romance." "The Last Kiss" single went Top 5, the album went Top 20 and Cassidy

mounted a hit British tour.

Then his record company went bust, his marriage went bust and, by 1986, he had less than \$1,000 in his bank account. He ended up crashing on Hyman's couch, then spent six months living in the guest bedroom of Hyman's sister's two-bedroom apartment.

"I told him that as long as I have a roof over my head, he has a place to stay," Hyman said. "It was a scary time, because we were in our thirties and didn't know what to do with our lives. "Somebody finally told me, 'Sam, you'd better grow up.' And

I did. I grew up."

Over the next decade, these two friends, who had grown up together, now had to grow up all over again.

Hyman started by getting a \$5-an-hour job at a Sinclair's paint store in West Los Angeles at Pico Boulevard and Prosser Avenue, not far from the record store where he bought that first Blood Sweat and Tears album all those years before.

"By having a steady paycheck, I was able to get out of debt, work my way up into sales and then into management. I ended my career as vice president of sales at Frazee Paint Company."

Cassidy, meanwhile, did the musical “Time” on London’s West End; reactivated his music career; went into analysis; married songwriter Sue Shifrin; and then landed the role of a lifetime: Mickey Johnstone in Willy Russell’s “Blood Brothers.” He was back. Big time.

Hyman caught the show in 1993 in New York, and was blown away. He saw it again in March 1995 when the tour stopped at the Wilshire Theatre in Beverly Hills.

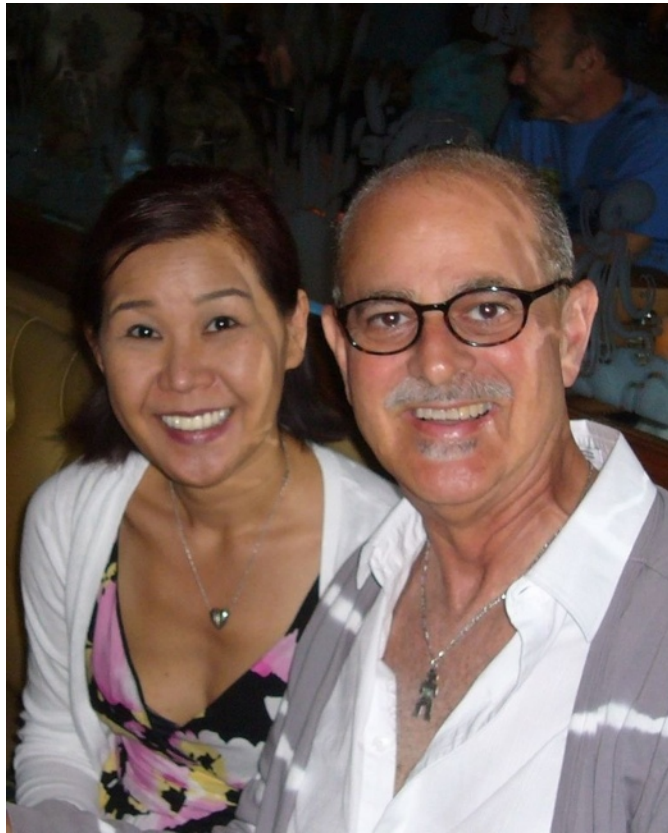
Cassidy knew Hyman was coming that night. Instead of driving to the theater as he normally did in his white, tour-issued Lincoln Town Car, he left that ride at home in Sherman Oaks and drove his silver Mercedes instead. It was obvious he wanted to take Hyman out in style.

Hyman, though, didn’t need a flashy night out. He just needed Cassidy’s ear.

“That was the night I told him I was divorcing my second wife,” Hyman said. “It was just him and myself in his dressing room. Nobody else. I had a real nice heart-to-heart with him. He was being a good brother. That night was more about me than him. I was not emotionally in great shape and he was there for me.”

Beyond the sea

Hyman and Cassidy are each in the midst of their third marriages. Hyman met his wife, Ponie, in the late 1990s,



Courtesy of Sam Hyman

GLOBAL IMPACT: Hyman’s wife Ponie grew up in Laos, but still knew who David Cassidy was. “Her sister had posters of him up on her wall,” Hyman says.

when Cassidy was starring in “EFX” at the MGM Grand. They married in 2000.

Ponie is a native of Laos, a communist country in Southeast Asia. With the help of a friend who could swim, and a bunch of inflated balloons, she managed to traverse the Mekong River and seek asylum in Thailand, her mother’s homeland. Eventually she sought asylum in the United States.

In Encino, her husband’s old stomping grounds, she helped start the Good Earth restaurant. After moving to Oceanside with Hyman, she spent five years as a library assistant. When that job ended, she decided to get back in the kitchen. This time, though, she wanted to be in complete control.

Rim Talay, which means “by the sea” in Thai, opened in March 2010. It specializes in authentic Thai dishes that fuse flavors from every corner of Thailand. Located just two blocks from the beach in Oceanside, you can sit on Rim Talay’s intimate, four-table patio and stare out at the Pacific.

Cassidy hasn’t visited the restaurant yet and Hyman is excited to show him around. The day, he said, will be a low-key celebration of their friendship.

“As you go through life and get older, you can count your true friends on one hand,” Hyman said. “You realize how special it is. David and I are not the kind of

friends who talk everyday. We’ll get on the phone when we want to share something good, or something bad — the trials and tribulations of life. We always connect on the important milestones of our lives. I don’t care if he’s rich and famous. It doesn’t matter. If he loses his fame and fortune, we’re still friends. And I know he feels the same about me. To have a friendship so enduring is remarkable.

“We will remain friends until the end.”

Rim Talay is at 508 Mission Ave., Oceanside, California. It’s open Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sundays through Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. For information call 760-435-2007 or visit <http://rim-talay.com>.