

Partridge Family Frenzy

Devoted fans sent Keith ducking for cover



1970 Time Capsule

- The Beatles call it quits
- Richard Nixon moves into the White House
- The average household income is \$8,734

David Cassidy sang "I Think I Love You" to millions of teenage girls in the '70s, but they didn't think twice about worshipping him.

"Those days were like being on a runaway horse," David, now 55, says of the fan hysteria for his show *The Partridge Family*. "I couldn't control it."

Hamming it up with harried manager Reuben Kincaid (Dave Madden).

On the series, which premiered on ABC in 1970 and has just been released on DVD,

David played dreamy big brother Keith, who hit the road each week with his family's traveling band in a psychedelic school bus.

The show, which costarred Shirley Jones (David's real-life stepmom), Danny Bonaduce and Susan Dey, was never a ratings hit, peaking at only number 16 during its second season.

But the actor became a bona fide teen idol: He launched his own worldwide concert tour on the weekends and found his face on the cover of teen fanzines, lunch boxes and T-shirts.

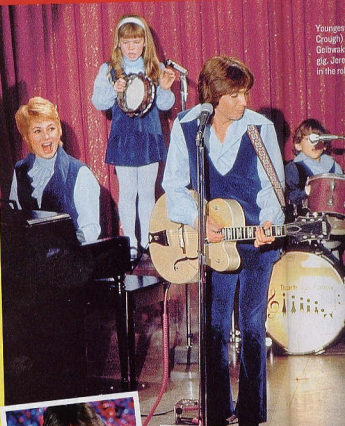
That constant attention forced the star to spend the height of his fame sneaking into his own concerts in laundry trucks and running away from overzealous fans who pulled his hair and ripped off his clothing. "I became paranoid," he says. "There were people all over me all the time."

When a 13-year-old fan was crushed at one of David's concerts in London in May 1974, David gave up touring and a fifth season of *The Partridge Family*. Rumors swirled that future '80s pop star Rick Springfield would replace him as Keith, but instead the show was canceled.

"I was 19 [when *The Partridge Family* began]," David says. "I wanted to pay my rent. I didn't want to become this god."

The show ended in 1974, after 96 episodes, and the heartthrob disappeared from Hollywood. He resurfaced in 1978, playing a cop in the short-lived series *David Cassidy: Man Undercover*.

Today he performs his classic songs around the country. ●



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&Then &Now

Married to third wife Sue Shifrin, David recently appeared in the VH1 reality contest "In Search of the Partridge Family." A racehorse enthusiast,

he's the owner of onetime Kentucky Derby hopeful Meyan King. "If I could win, there would be nothing on the face of the earth, other than the birth of my son, to compare with the thrill and high of it," David says.