

# CONTEMPORARY COLLECTIBLES



by Linda Rosenkrantz, Copley News Service

## The incessant enchantment of two TV families

We've commented before about how often things in popular culture seem to come in pairs — from magazines like *Family Circle* and *Woman's Day* to TV shows like "Bewitched" and "I Dream of Jeannie." Another television pair from the baby boomer past, which has since been brought back to life and introduced to a new generation by such phenomena as "Nick at Nite" and "TV Land," is that of "The Partridge Family" and "The Brady Bunch," two shows that are great favorites of collectors of TV toys and memorabilia.

The latter is particularly strong as it has had a considerable afterlife, including an animated series, a 1981 sequel ("The Brady Brides"), verbatim stage versions which have drawn a cult following, and two full-scale satirical theatrical movies, "The Brady Bunch Movie" and "A Very Brady Sequel."

But although they were almost exactly contemporaneous (the Bradys running from 1969 to 1974, the Partridges from 1970 to 1974) and both revolved around families with several siblings — and are therefore lumped together in many people's minds — there were also significant differences between them. The Bradys, except for a few group vacations, were essentially a homebound suburban family; while the Partridges were a musical show biz clan that spent a lot of time in its bus on the road.

"The Brady Bunch" was a completely ensemble show, with nine (can't forget Alice!) almost equally featured characters, while "The Partridge Family" soon found its focus on David Cassidy, who played Keith and became a mega-popular teen heartthrob. What the two shows did have in common was a massive merchandising presence, with types of products that were not dissimilar. There were, for example, "Brady Bunch" books, activity, sticker and coloring books, paper dolls, board games, guitars, lunch boxes, puzzles, dolls, costumes, view master sets, trading cards and records. And there were "Partridge Family" books, activity and coloring books and comics, paperdolls, guitars, lunch boxes, puzzles, dolls, costumes, view master sets, trading cards and records.

And speaking of records, not only were there the expected ensemble albums ("Meet the Brady Bunch," "Merry Christmas from the Brady Bunch," "The Kids from the Brady Bunch"), but also by individual Brady portrayals Barry Williams, Mike Lookinland, Christopher Knight, Eve Plumb and Maureen McCormick (what happened to Cindy?). Their musical counterparts produced even more recordings, including "The Partridge Family Album," "The Partridge Family Shopping Bag," "Up to Date," "At Home With Their Greatest Hits," "The World of the Partridge Family," many David Cassidy albums and others featuring Shirley Jones, Danny Bonaduce and Ricky Segall.

What are the most valuable collectibles from these two shows?

For the Bradys, they are:

1972 Fan Club Kit by The Laufer Co., offered through *Tiger Beat* and *Fave* magazines, containing a record, autographed photos, etc., \$200-250.

Marcia costume by Collegeville, 1969, \$150-200.

"The Brady Bunch Game" board game by Whitman, 1973, \$150-200.

1973 record of "Chris Knight & Maureen McCormick," Paramount, \$100-150.

A toy tea set by Larami, 1973, with an illustration of the Brady girls, \$75-100.

And for the Partridges:

Toy Partridge Family bus by Remco, 1973 boxes, \$1,000, loose, \$400-500.

A full-size Partridge Family Record Cabinet by AFT Furniture Co., 1973, unboxed \$400-500, boxed, \$800-1,000.

David Cassidy costume by Kusan, 1973, \$300-400.

Two clocks by Time Setters, 1972, one of the whole family, the other featuring David Cassidy, each clock, \$250-300.

A 19-inch Laurie Partridge doll by Remco, boxed, 1973, \$250-300.

Pin-on button Partridge Family Family Tree by Merry Motion, 1971, \$250-300.

David Cassidy radio by Philgee International Ltd., 1970s, \$250-300.

There are several books out that offer visual identifications of baby boomer TV collectibles, as well as values. The most up-to-date of these — with sections on both the Bradys and the Partridges — is "Collector's Guide to TV Toys and Memorabilia, 1960s and 1970s," second edition, by Greg Davis and Bill Morgan (Collector Books).

Linda Rosenkrantz edited *Auction* magazine and has authored nine books, including "Auction Antiques Annual." Letters cannot be answered personally.