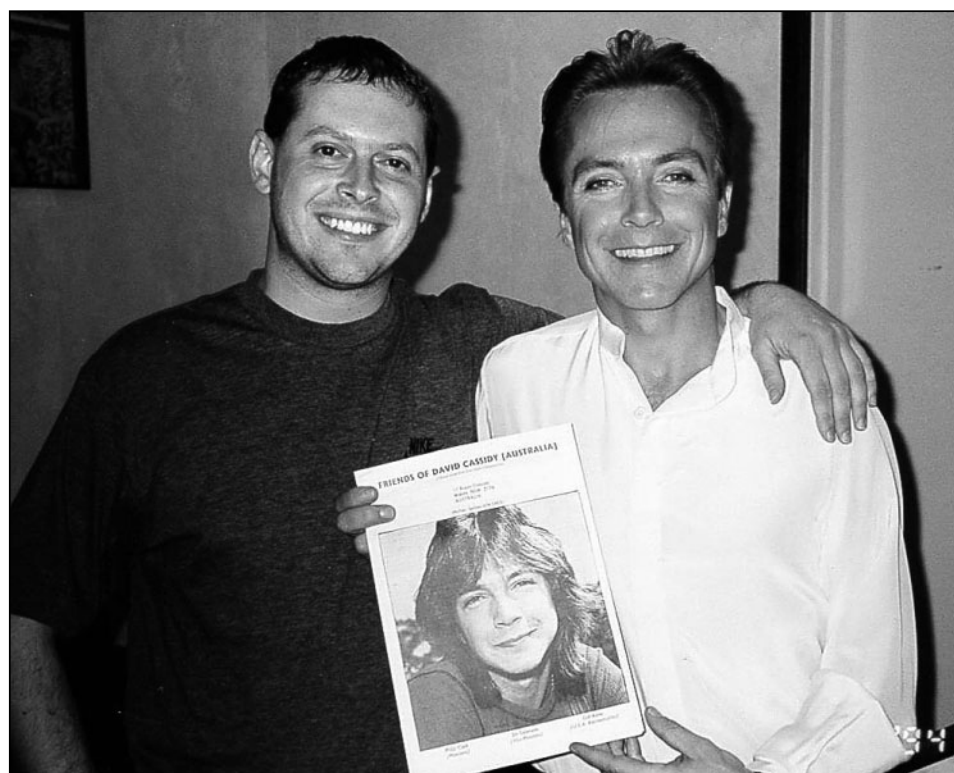


■ collectibles



Top of the popsters

Collectors look at David Cassidy memorabilia through the eyes of love

By David Sanderson

SHINE up your puka shells and press your bell-bottoms.

David Cassidy, former lead singer of the Partridge Family and the world's No. 1 advocate of the shag haircut, will be performing at Club Regent Casino Feb. 13-14. (Tickets are on sale now for \$49 at Ticketmaster; the Valentine's Day show is sold out.)

"I would love to be in Winnipeg for the show," says Scott Awley, arguably the only Californian who's currently Manitoba dreamin'. Awley, a resident of Los Angeles, is part of the brain trust at www.cmongethappy.com, a domain dedicated to all things Partridge. (A recent update touches on the ongoing Danny Bonaduce/Jonny Fairplay feud; in October, Bonaduce, who played Danny Partridge on the television series *The Partridge Family*, relieved the *Survivor: Micronesia* star of his front teeth during a Hollywood awards ceremony.)



Signed shots of The Partridge Family cast from Scott Awley's collection.



Who was the coolest kid in the lunchroom in the 1970s?



Jim Salamanis gets happy with his idol, above left, and his vast Cassidy collection, above.

There's no debating Awley is the right webmaster for the job. Not only was he parked in front of his TV on Sept. 25, 1970 — the night *The Partridge Family* debuted on network television — Awley has also amassed enough Partridge-related paraphernalia to pack the popsters' memorable, chromatic bus.

"I don't have an exact count, but it's definitely in the thousands, if you count every single piece," he says, noting that his interest in the band was piqued by chart-toppers like *I Think I Love You* and *I'll Meet You Halfway*. "I was just starting to get interested in music, and the pop sounds created for the series were just what a youngster would be drawn to."

During the series' four-year run on ABC, Awley kept an eye out for trading cards, comic books, posters — anything that played upon the cast's, and in particular, break-out star David Cassidy's overwhelming popularity. (Did you know that Cassidy's personal fan club still holds the all-time record for most paid-up members — more than the Beatles or Elvis?)

Augmenting Awley's assortment of board games, pencil cases and lunch boxes are many one-of-a-kind props and costumes directly related to the show itself.

Furthermore, Awley has toiled hard to unearth ultra-rare Partridge Family recordings. He claims there were close to 40 "lost songs" — tunes that turned up on the program, but not on any of the group's eight official studio releases. (That total doesn't include the subsequent glut of greatest hits packages.)

"Every one of those songs was pressed onto an LP for the cast to have; they would take the records home and practise their vocals so when it came time to film, they'd know what they had to sing. Over the years, I've been fortunate to find these songs and have them remastered."

A set of Partridge Family cigar bands from Europe is the strangest collectible Awley has encountered. A pine record cabinet, meant to house a fan's albums, is the most expensive.

"(The cabinet) can go upwards of \$1,500, if it's still unassembled and in its original box," Awley says. "There was also a Partridge Family bus, released by a company called Remco in 1972, which included Fisher



And a Partridge in a parody

Through the years, the Partridge Family has been satirized its fair share of times. Here are a few noteworthy instances...

■ *Mad Magazine* dubbed the group The Putrid Family in its April 1972 edition. In the lampoon's first panel, Teeth Putrid (a.k.a. Keith Partridge) informs his mom, Shrilly, that he's "too pretty to drive" when she begs somebody else to take the wheel of the family bus.

■ In 1996, the MTV Video Awards spoofed both *The Partridge Family* and the Keanu Reeves blockbuster *Speed*. In the vignette, Shirley Jones, Danny Bonaduce and Dave Madden (band manager Reuben Kincaid) work hard to ensure the family bus's speed remains above 50 miles per hour.

■ The fifth episode of *The Simpsons'* ninth season was entitled *The Cartridge Family*. Named the fifth-best episode in the show's history by the *Florida Sun-Times*, the show centered around Homer buying a gun to protect his family, despite Marge's disapproval.

■ The DVD *101 Unforgettable Saturday Night Live Moments* includes a 1992 *Battle of the Bands* sketch that pitted the Partridge Family against the Brady Bunch. Quelle surprise: Susan Dey (Laurie Partridge) was SNL's host that week.

■ The initial episode of *The Ben Stiller Show*, which aired on Fox in 1992, included a sketch featuring Reuben Kincaid (Dave Madden). Titled *U2: The Early Years*, it portrayed Bono (Ben Stiller) as an original member of the

Price-type family members and musical instruments. That can fetch over \$500, if all the pieces are intact."

Jim Salamanis was only six when David Cassidy performed before 65,000 people at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1974. Sixteen years later, Salamanis formed the Australia-based fan club Friends of David Cassidy.

"I can't recall his 1974 tour, but what I vividly remember is my older cousins loving David, and having his posters all over their walls."

When reached at home in Melbourne, Salamanis says: "My own passion started in the early '80s, when my cousin found David's solo record, *Cherish*, for me at a used record store. As soon as I heard him sing, I was blown away by his breathy vocals."

Like his California counterpart, Salamanis has a wing in his home dedicated to Cassidy/Partridge Family memorabilia. Among his most prized possessions are a Laurie Partridge doll, official Partridge Family newsletters and 90-odd scrapbooks — some that he purchased, others that he compiled using shots from fanzines.

Salamanis also lays title to one souvenir that Cassidy himself may want back this week, should the temperature in Winnipeg plummet.

"I own David's original red dungarees — the ones he wore at his Perth concert in 1974. They are quite heavy and are currently in a glass cabinet."

Salamanis purchased the sequined overalls — they're a size 10 and no, he's never tried them on — on eBay for \$300. Quite the bargain, considering Cassidy staged his own auction last year, netting as much as \$4,500 each for his vintage '70s get-ups.

Salamanis has met Cassidy in person in Melbourne and Las Vegas.

"He has also called me twice at home, which was the biggest thrill of my life," he says.

Salamanis also counts Cassidy's mother, Evelyn Ward, among his acquaintances. "I've been lucky enough for Evelyn to take me out for lunch on several occasions; she is such a sweet lady and full of interesting stories about David."

One of Salamanis's ambitions is to pen a book detailing the plethora of Partridge Family collectibles available. His second goal is to persuade Sony Pictures to release the final two seasons of the TV show on DVD. (Seasons 1 and 2 have been available since 2005.)

"Also, wouldn't it be nice to get a vintage concert of David's on DVD?" Salamanis asks. "Children of all ages should be introduced to the Partridge Family and David's wonderful music. The melodies were perfection and still stand the test of time. They just don't write music like that anymore."

For more information on David Cassidy, visit the singer's official fansite at www.davidcassidy.com.

If you'd like to share the story of your collection with our readers, contact David Sanderson at david.sanderson@freepress.mb.ca. His column appears bimonthly.

Partridge Family.

■ In 1995's *The Brady Bunch Movie*, the Partridge Family bus can be spotted parading past Marcia and Greg's high school.

■ In moviedom's undisputed Best Chick Flick Ever! (that would be *Four Weddings and a Funeral*), Charles (Hugh Grant) quotes the Partridge Family's most famous song to Carrie (Andie MacDowell). "In the words of David Cassidy... in fact, uh, while he was still with the Partridge Family... uh... I think I love you," he stammered. (And OK, so what if the scene wasn't a satire, per se. Because any opportunity we get to celebrate *Four Weddings*, we're gonna.)

☞ david.sanderson@freepress.mb.ca