

Don't call her a groupie, but she's retiring at 22

By Alan Cartnal
The Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — "Hi there, I'm the Miss International Butter Queen." You'd had the feeling she was no ordinary slab of margarine.

In fact, in the world of high rock, this aging Lolita—she's 22—is considered a groupie high priestess.

The Rolling Stones call up this chick who's standing like a Peter Max version of Mae West at the door of her apartment here and tell her to come up and see them some time.

DAVID CASSIDY, the current sun god of rock royalty, in a recent Life magazine interview is quoted as saying, "I'd rather spend an evening with her than in the living room of the Partridge family." Rock magazine gave her the supreme

honor that comes to a handmaiden of the groupie scene—the front cover of the June magazine and the center spread (Hugh Hefner, bite your wheat germ).

And boy, does she know it. Her apartment is not exactly Hearst castle—but she kicks aside a few of her Vogue magazines (the ones turned to the page with the ads saying "Love your skin"), some of her teddy bears and her laundry bag and offers you a seat on the floor.

"I've never given an interview," she says, giving you the look that Miss Kitty gives Marshal Dillon when she doesn't like what he's up to.

Her accent is thick Bonnie and Clyde Texas.

"I want to get something straight, right off," she says, hands on hips, at her bedroom door. "I dislike being called a groupie. In fact, I'm giving it up."

"It's just not the same old scene anymore, man. The Stones concert here is going to be the end of an era. Things are dead now. I'm just going to retire until there's a whole new shipment coming in."

"LOOK," SHE SAYS, trying to find herself another cigarette on her bureau. "I dislike being a freak in a circus. That's what people think I am. They think—ah ha, a groupie, a camp follower. But it isn't so. I'm just a friend to the rock stars. The reason I'm at the top—and man, this is a very competitive field—is that I treat them as a friend. And I always have a lot of young girls and drinks around for them."

"There's no top maaaaaan anymore," she shouts. "I mean there's no status to anymore. And there's no fun. Why in the old days—and I've been in it since 1965, in Dallas—there used to be a challenge."

It started in 1965 at the Memorial Auditorium in Dallas. "I didn't care about average boys—I just wanted to meet musicians," she says. She came to the West Coast and began following groups here. Traffic took her on tour across country; then Jimi Hendrix.

In 1970 she toured with Joe Crocker. In the 1971 film of that trip, "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," there's a seven-minute sequence of her.

"We used to have to sneak up fire escapes and get by the fuzz but today any weird little girl can get up to see a rock star. It's just not worth it for me anymore. I mean, who needs it?"

"Do you want to see what I'm wearing to the concert?" she squeals.

A few minutes, then out the door she comes, blushing.

"I get embarrassed," she says shyly. "I mean I like people to live what I wear."

She is wearing a satin antique '40s dress and along with it she produces a picture of her idol—Mae West.

"Don'tcha think I look like her?" she says, adjusting a feather near her plunging neckline.

THE BUTTER QUEEN reaches for another cigarette.

What contribution does a groupie make to the world of music?

"Lots," she screams, getting uptight at the question. She grabs a white wedding album and starts turning the pages of autographs and photographs. "Look at that, the New Riders of the Purple Sage. . . The Stones. . . George Harrison."

"We give them companionship. We understand their music. We give them support when they're down."

She sits and takes a long drag on her cigarette. "Whew, I never knew an interview was like this, man. I mean, can't you ask me anything nice?"

"Love," she says, and she warms to the subject. "I don't mind when they get married to someone else. I know someday he'll come along and I'll marry him. Hell, I been married once. During my motorcycle period. Got a son. Just sent him back to Dallas."

"Dallas?" she says. "That's where I'm going after the concert. This place L.A. is just too weird. Everybody's 13 out here."

Is she retiring because she's fading, is the younger competition getting her down?

"Fading?" she says. "Man, I just keep re-entering."

"Do you know who you are talking to? I'm in the new Stones album—they sing about me in that album. The Led Zeppelin got up in a concert and dedicated a song to me. I am a lady!"

IF SHE'S NOT a groupie (which she defines as a friend to rock stars), what is she?

"Being a groupie," she says, "that's just not where it's at anymore. What I am is me. Like anybody else. I don't want to give nobody no messages, no church sermons to take home. I just want them to be and let me be. I just want to be me."

She takes a long drag on the cigarette

and shuffles to the door.

"Another thing," she says, "please don't use my real name in the paper. Call me the Butter Queen. It's not my mother—hell, she's groovy, she goes with

me to concerts. It's just hard to be in this life, people calling you and trying to take advantage of you.

"Take care of yourself," she says, hands on hip like you-know-who.



'YOU NAME THEM, she's befriended them: the Stones, Jimi Hendrix, David Cassidy, Traffic, Joe Cocker, George Harrison—a regular Who's Who of rock. She

calls herself "Miss International Butter Queen" and here she's wearing her favorite Mae West-inspired rock concert regalia. (Photo by Gordon Gianninoto)

se call keeps ips in politics

her in history of the Democratic Party State Executive Committee.

"I was surprised," the South Charleston High grad says. "He told me he thought I could contribute and I said yes."

She was the first under-21 West Virginian to declare for public office when she became eligible earlier this year, PHILLIPS filing as a hopeful Muskie delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

Unelected, she enrolled in summer school and has been so busy with mid-term exams she hasn't had opportunity to follow the televised Miami proceedings too closely.

Can she transfer her allegiance to George McGovern?

Speaking early Wednesday evening, she replied: "No comment."

But seriously . . .

"Well, I'm taking a position as an advocate of party unity."

Sure enough, that's the Maine senator's position.

Her impression of the convention to that date?

"I think it shows that the party is going to rid itself of machine influence. The unseating of Mayor Daley shows that. Hopefully what has started in the national party will trickle down to our West Virginia party."

Debbie will devote her rare spare time to some politicking this fall. One of her burdens is the Kanawha County Court. "I'd like to see that cleaned up."

Her job, as she sees it, with the State Executive Committee will primarily be helping take notes when the group meets.

While not taking exams these days, Miss Phillips is busy helping put together a program for the Democratic Youth Camp at Buckhannon Aug. 6-12. She says this year's camp will be better-organized than in the past, highlighted by a strip mining debate.



PHILLIPS



oked at the big barn by the Elk 0 and the Allman Brothers fol- 4.

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