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## Cassidy's respite from rock

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Except for the stable hands who play their transistor radios around the clock, most folks in Kentucky horse racing are pretty dumb when it comes to rock-n-roll music. Your basic millionaire owner and breeder probably doesn't know Elton John from John Lennon.

What this means to David Cassidy, the erstwhile king of the bubble-gum set, is that Keeneland race course is one of the few public places where he can be reasonably anonymous, where he can walk around and look at horses without fear of being ambushed by a mob of screaming, fainting, clawing females.

"It's kind of nice, really," Cassidy said here yesterday. "Oh, sure, some people recognize me, but the people in Lexington are more involved with other things. It's an older crowd, and they're not caught up in show business and rock-n-roll."

"I did have some girls recognize me the other day at the Keeneland sales. I had on my cowboy hat and my sunglasses, so they must have thought I was trying to be incognito or something. They followed me around

giggling, and I finally went up and said, 'Look, if you want to chat, let's talk.'

"They couldn't believe it. They couldn't believe that I walked and talked just like other people. There's a certain mystification about being a rock star, but I try to de-mystify myself. I'm just a human being who happens to do rock-n-roll for a living."

In the early 1970s, David Cassidy was the heart-throb of sweet young things around the world. He and his step-mother, actress Shirley Jones, starred in a popular TV program called "The Partridge Family." His records, such things as "I Think I Love You" and "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do," sold by the millions. When he appeared in concert, girls fainted and screamed and went berserk. Once, at Manchester, England, a teen-ager suffered a heart attack and died at a David Cassidy concert.

But a couple of years ago, Cassidy dropped out. No more records, no more concerts, no more interviews, no more "Partridge Family." For the last couple of years, he has traveled,

played music for fun with some friends, gotten deeper into the horse-racing business, and thought a lot about what he was, is, and wants to be. At 25, he sounds worldly beyond his years, which he is.

"I'm not bitter or resentful about my experiences, because it was great for me," Cassidy said. "It's just that I needed to stop, to think about what I wanted to do with my life and my career. I intentionally stopped to avoid the stigma of the screaming girls and all that. I just felt I had done that long enough."

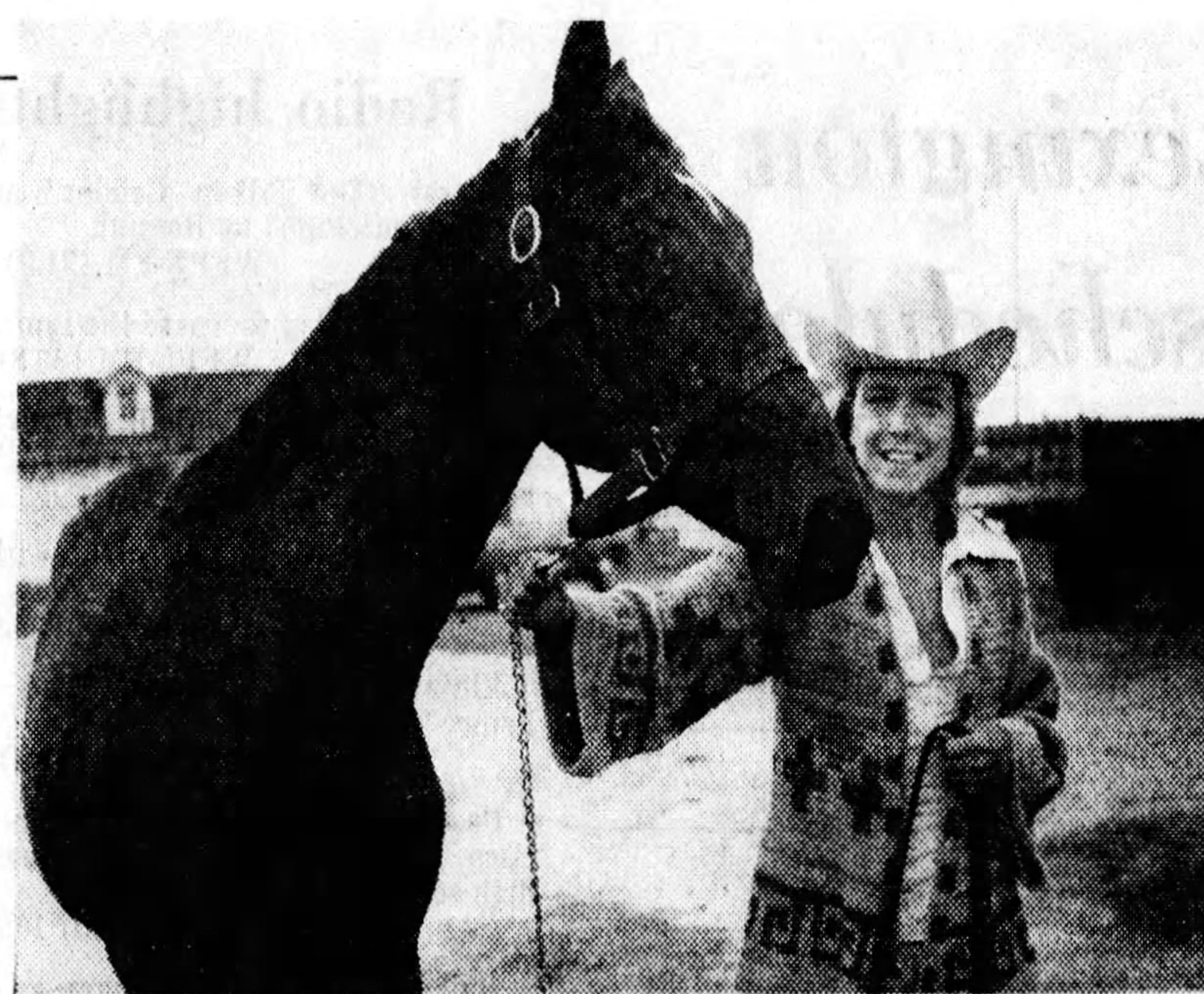
"The music that I was doing was part of an act. The whole rock-n-roll scene is an act, with the guys on the stage playing their part and the audience playing theirs. As long as you realize it's only entertainment, that's fine, but when you start to take it seriously, well, that's something else. The feedback when you're on stage is incredible, but you shouldn't equate that with a power. If you get into that kind of thing, it can take you anywhere you want to go."

"I was a TV actor who also had the

fortune, or misfortune, of being a musician. A lot of people said my music was bubble-gum music, or soft rock, and I guess it was. Some of it was good, but a lot of it was mediocre. The music wasn't a representation of my tastes, but of what the studio felt should represent the TV show."

During his two-year retirement, Cassidy began to write his kind of music. Recently he cut his first album in a long time, entitled "The Higher They Climb, The Harder They Fall." He thinks it's the best thing he has ever done. Right now, he's in the midst of a second album. He's cutting some of the songs in Los Angeles but will take his band to Wales sometime soon to finish up.

"I'm not going to do tours and concerts again, though," he said. "If I ever do, it'll have to be completely different from before. This time people will come more to listen than to be a part of the act. I've got some good musicians in my band now, a couple of the old Beach Boys and guys like that. Now I'm playing music that is representative of me, music that I en-



Rock singer David Cassidy with the \$11,000 filly he purchased Monday night at the Keeneland fall sale.

Staff Photo  
by Billy Reed

joy. "I might not sell as many records as I used to, but number of units sold is not how I equate success anymore. To get people to listen to an album they normally wouldn't listen to because of their preconceptions of me—that's my goal now."

Thoroughbreds play an important part in Cassidy's new life-style. A lover of horses since his childhood days, he got into racing while he was doing "The Partridge Family," going into partnership with a studio cameraman on a couple of horses.

That led to a visit to Kentucky to tour Calumet and some of the other farms, and that visit, inevitably, led to the sales pavilion at Keeneland. Now Cassidy owns 15 thoroughbreds, mostly broodmares. He keeps five here on the Thomas Asbury Farm, including a filly that he purchased for \$11,000 Monday night at the Keeneland fall sale. The others are in California, where Cassidy plans to break into racing with his own stable and silks sometime soon.

"I'm real pleased with this filly I bought," said Cassidy, sounding like

a veteran horseman. "She's pretty rough-looking, with some scrapes and cuts, but she's straight-legged, she doesn't toe in and she's got good bone on her. I stole her, really. I bought her late at night, after almost everyone had gone home. I looked at 50 horses that day, and she's the only one I really liked."

On his visits in Lexington, Cassidy stays with the Asburys, who are his advisers on horse matters. Mrs. Asbury says Cassidy fits into the family like one of her own children. In fact, she spent the last couple of days nursing Cassidy back to health. While communing with nature the other night on the farm, he was overcome by ragweed and spent Wednesday in bed.

What do her children think about having Cassidy for a buddy?

"They love him as a human being," said Mrs. Asbury, "but to tell you the truth, I don't think they ever followed his career much. They didn't watch 'The Partridge Family' and stuff like that."

"Thanks," said Cassidy, smiling weakly. "I think."

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