

Celebrities

Where are heartthrobs now?

Let's visit with some of yesterday's teen idols — Cassidy, Sherman, Osmond, Fabian, Avalon.

By JENNY VOGT
COX NEWS SERVICE

Just when you think the world's becoming a safer place, 10,000 screaming Florida teen-agers mob teen idol Luke Perry of "Beverly Hills, 90210."

Such anarchy is nothing new.

In 1959, Fabian got his fans so overwrought that police had to use fire hoses to cool them down when he appeared at the grand opening of a New Jersey doughnut parlor. And David Cassidy's world tours inspired such mass hysteria that in 1974 a 14-year-old fan suffered a fatal heart attack at a London show.

"I think the main appeal is a certain look, something young girls can fantasize about without feeling too freaked out about like someone with more of an edge," said Pamela Dell, entertainment editor of "Teen" magazine in Los Angeles, at 34 one of the oldest and biggest teen publications with 1.4 million subscribers.

"It's that horrible American ideal that Prince Charming is going to come along and make your life perfect . . . It's completely unrealistic, but no one is realistic if they're 14 years old and growing up in this society."

Here's what has happened to some of those Prince Charmings:

David Cassidy

Fifteen years after his last concert tour, David Cassidy is back on the road with new music, a new wife and a new image.

Cassidy, 41, the former cherubic-faced star of "The Partridge Family," is seeking to distinguish his cur-

rent musical style from the bubble gum rock he played as character Keith Partridge in the hit 1970s television series.

"I was always more of a hippie than Keith was and was genuinely more into a progressive, harder-edged music than he was," Cassidy said in a phone interview. But when asked to describe his current musical style, he said simply, "successful," referring to his 1990 album "David Cassidy, which spawned a Top 40 single, "Lying to Myself."

A lot of people were surprised by how well-received his album was, said Cassidy, who bristles at the "former teen idol" label. "I think for the first time I got real critical acclaim for my writing."

Although Cassidy promises to play some of his old hits such as "I Think I Love You" while on tour, he stresses it is not a nostalgia tour.

Cassidy took his first big image-breaking step in the mid-1970s when he posed for a semi-racy "centerfold" in "Rolling Stone" magazine (the photo was cropped a few inches below his navel). These days, public relations photos show a slightly stubbly face, the formerly full cheeks looking more trim than in the old days.

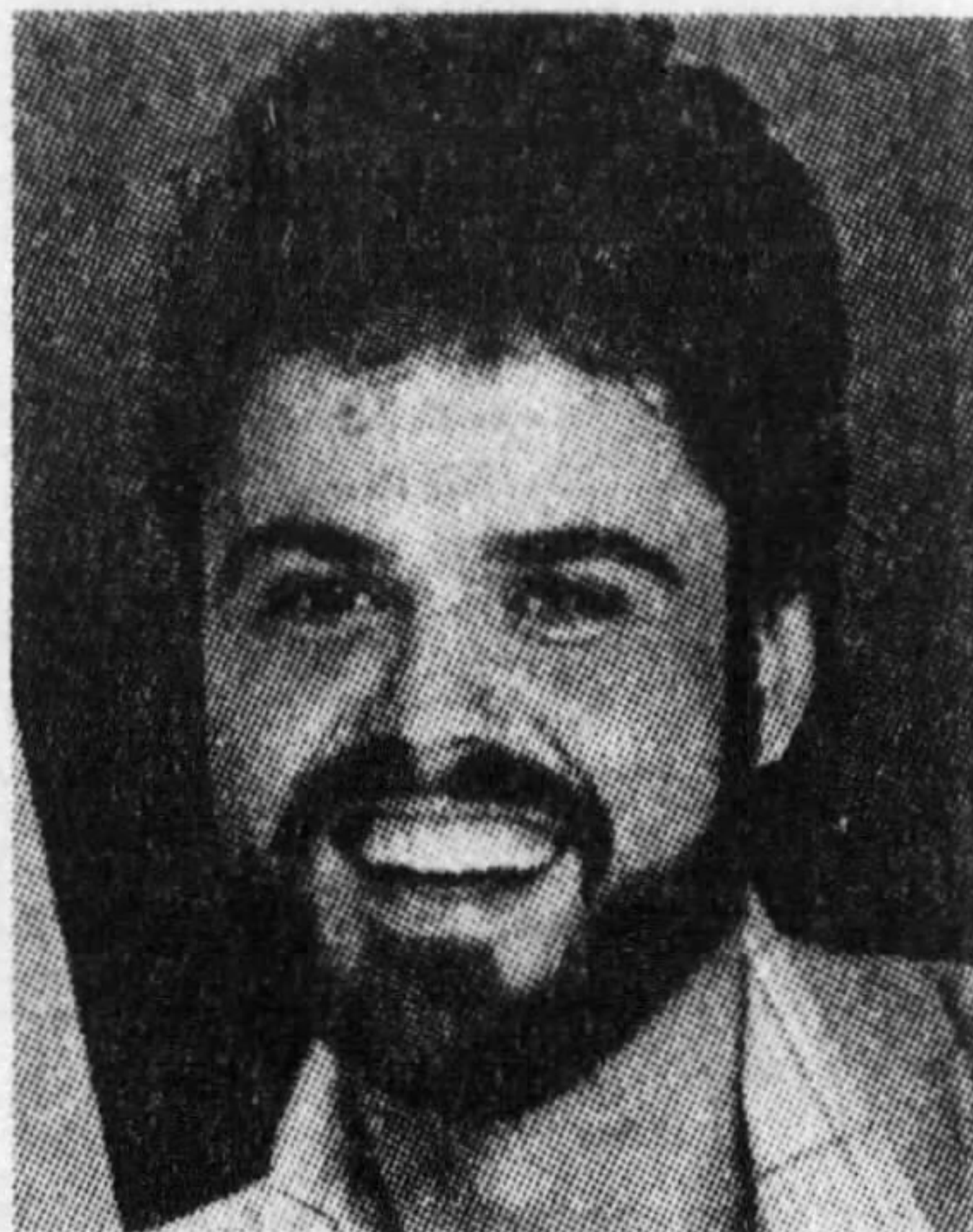
Cassidy married his writing partner, Sue Shifrin, last year and they have a 7-month-old son, Beau Devin.

Bobby Sherman

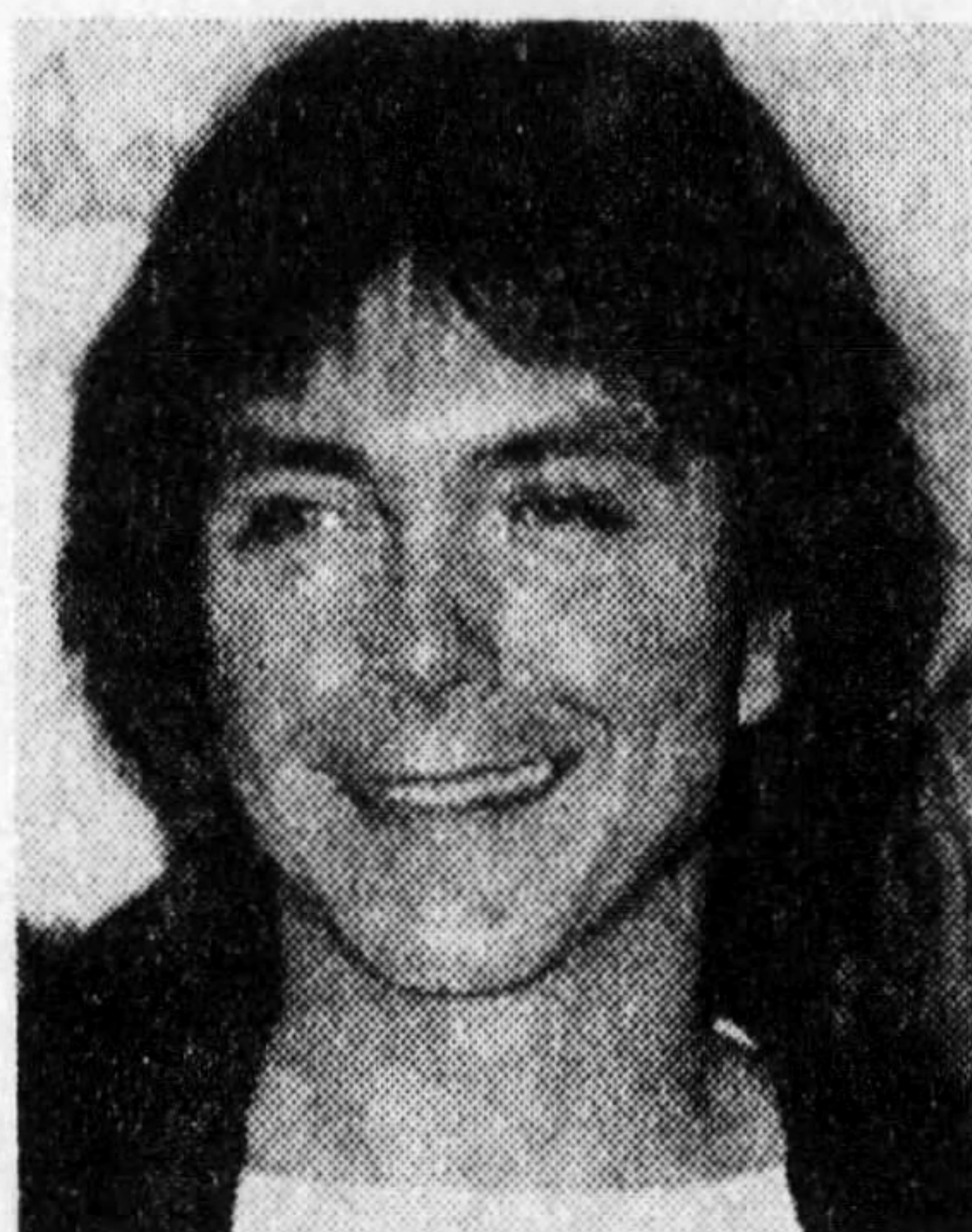
Bobby Sherman still receives more than 500 fan letters a month.

Not bad for a guy who was propelled to teeny-bopper heartthrob status more than 20 years ago on the hit television show "Here Come The Brides," where he portrayed a shy, stuttering lumberjack in 1870s Seattle. (Back then, he received more than 20,000 letters a month.)

"I didn't stutter in real life, but at the same time I was pretty much a shy person," recalled Sherman, 44, in a phone interview. "I was pretty



Donny Osmond
Becoming hip again?



David Cassidy
No nostalgia

much to myself, a loner, and I think I've pretty much stayed that way all my life."

The teen idol-cum-loner is back in the spotlight again with the August release of his first greatest hits collection on CD by Restless Records. The package includes four of Sherman's million-selling singles: "Little Woman;" "La La La (If I Had You);" "Julie, Do You Love Me?"; and "Easy Come, Easy Go."

"It was a tremendous surprise to see it's (the CD) doing very well," Sherman said. "If it continues to do well, there's a lot of talk about going in and cutting a new record." As for acting, he said, he is poised to jump into a sitcom if the right one comes along.

Sherman and his wife, Patricia, had two sons, Christopher, now 18, and Tyler, 17. He and his wife were amicably divorced in the late '70s.

Donny Osmond

Since he first appeared as the youngest Osmond brother on the Andy Williams Show in 1962, Donny Osmond has to varying degrees remained in the spotlight.

First, he did it as the youngest, toothiest member of a Mormon singing brood.

Then, he went solo at age 13, carving out a niche as a squeaky-clean teen idol with hits in the early '70s that included ballads "Go Away Little Girl" and "Puppy Love."

And more than 25 years later, Osmond, now 33, has reinvigorated his career with image-breaking albums in 1988 ("Donny Osmond") and 1990 ("Eyes Don't Lie"). Oh yes, and his publicity photos are more evocative of George Michael than Donny Osmond as he stares intensely into the

camera, his hair tousled and his face covered in stubble.

"You know," he told "Rolling Stone" magazine, "the name Donny Osmond is starting to become hip again."

A devout Mormon with strong moral values, Osmond, his wife and four children live in Irvine, Calif.

Fabian

The Fabulous Fabian was one of the first real teen idols. He epitomized the '50s teen heartthrob with his dark good looks topped by a wet-look pompadour — and a smooth singing voice that was reputedly boosted with the help of echo chambers.

Fabian, born Fabiano Forte in Philadelphia in 1943, was propelled to pop stardom in 1959 with three Top 10 songs: "I'm A Man," "Turn Me Loose" and "Tiger." All this after being discovered sitting on his front steps in Philadelphia.

But by 1961, when he was only 18, he bought out his recording contract because he was fed up with control-minded managers. He sought an acting career and over the next few decades appeared in 30 movies with such legends as John Wayne and on television shows including "Laverne and Shirley" and "The Hardy Boys."

Fabian currently appears in a national testimonial ad for Nutri/System weight-loss program in which he says he lost 30 pounds.

Frankie Avalon

He is known for his beach party cavorting with Annette Funicello, his dreamboat voice and his tightly curled black hair.

And more than 30 years since he attracted national attention with his first hit "De De Dinah," Frankie Avalon is still traveling the world with a nightclub act.

Avalon, originally a trumpeter, is among several "golden boys" who grew up on the south side of Philadelphia — including Fabian and Bobby Rydell. The three toured together for the first time in a 1985 show called "The Golden Boys of Bandstand," although Avalon and Rydell had worked together in the same bands before either started recording.

In 1987, Avalon reunited with Annette for "Back to the Beach," a sequel of sorts to the popular '60s movies "Beach Party," "Beach Blanket Bingo," "Bikini Beach" and other beach classics. In 1989, he and Annette were well-received when they performed throughout the country with "The Frankie and Annette Live Concert Extravaganza."

Avalon, 50, and his wife, Kay, live in Los Angeles. They have eight children, ranging in age from 17 to 27.