

# Teen idols endure throughout the years

By Jenny Vogt  
New York Times

Just when you think the world's becoming a safer place, 10,000 screaming Florida teenagers 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.

"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 over the years:

■ **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 current 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. Still, former "Partridge Family" co-star Danny Bonaduce is opening for Cassidy with a stand-up comedy act at some venues. The tour stopped in Florida this past week.

"People ask me, 'Why, now that



**FRANKIE AVALON** starred in beach party movies with Annette Funicello.

you have this credibility going would you do that (include Bonaduce)," Cassidy said. "But I have a unique knowledge of how funny he is and he has not disappointed me."

Bonaduce, 32, has been in the news for more than his comedy career. He recently had some scrapes with the law, and was placed on probation in August for beating up a transvestite prostitute in Phoenix.

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. He is divorced from actress Kay Lenz.

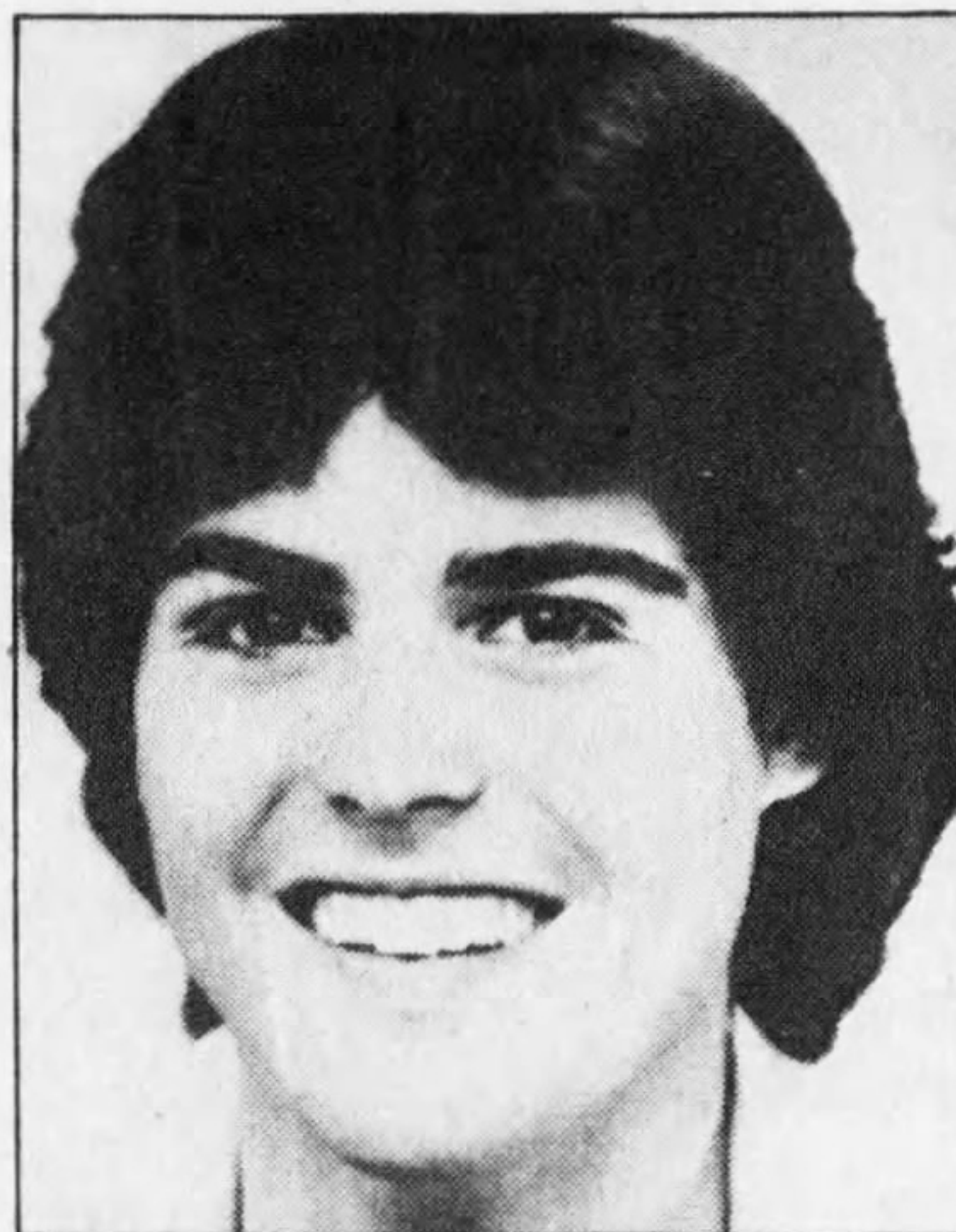
Becoming a father for the first time, "is the greatest experience I've ever had in my life," Cassidy said. "Now I understand why people go gaga over their kids."

■ **Donny Osmond** — Since he first appeared as the youngest Osmond brother on the "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," "Puppy Love" and "The Twelfth of Never."

And more than 20 years later,



**DONNY OSMOND** shed this image for shorter hair and razor stubble to try to become hip.

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," Osmond told *Rolling Stone*, "the name Donny Osmond is starting to become hip again."

A devout Mormon with strong moral values, Osmond lives with his wife and four children 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 still is 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, who is 50, and his wife, Kay, live in Los Angeles with their eight children, ranging in age from 17 to 27.

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