

Danny Bonaduce says come on, get happy again

By Leslie Gray Streeter

Cox News Service

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — We think we love him.

Danny Bonaduce, who originated the role of money-minded middle kid Danny Partridge on "The Partridge Family," has come a long way since his days of drug addiction and all-around tabloid shenanigans.

Now a married family man and morning personality on Los Angeles' Star 98.7 FM, the ginger-haired Bonaduce, 44, acted as sort of a goodwill ambassador to the passel of potential new Partridges in Orlando last weekend.

The search for the cast of the new show will be aired as a seven-episode reality series on VH1 in September.

On a break between auditions, he philosophized about what it takes to be a Partridge, the allure of David Cassidy and committing grand theft by stealing the Partridge bus.

Q: Is it surreal watching all these young look-alikes and re-living your Partridge experience?

A: The only thing that would be surreal would be if I ran into one of the kids that looks like me. I'd just be sad for the kid.

Q: Do the young kids seem to know who you are?

A: I'm sure the parents have beaten it into their heads — "You need to recognize this guy." Now I look like Danny Partridge's dad.



Paul Hawthorne / Getty Images

Back on the bus: Danny Bonaduce was on hand when VH1 held auditions for its new reality show "In Search of the Partridge Family."

Q: Do you have any advice on what it takes to be a Partridge?

A: I don't have any say whatsoever in the selection. But if you're going to be me, you need a good legal defense team. I'd like to see a hideous kid get the part, because I like being the 44-year-old who played Danny Partridge, and I'll be damned if I'll help hire a cute kid to replace me.

Q: How about the others?

A: To be Keith, I've got to tell you — as talented as David Cassidy is as a musician, as good an actor as he was, you really need to be the cutest guy on your block. And you'll need puka shells. And Shirley Jones, she

was an Academy Award winner for "Elmer Gantry," so these are huge shoes to fill, big clown shoes to fill. You really need to be able to sing and act — and be able to drive a multicolored bus. That bus was the seventh Partridge, the Peter Best of vehicles.

Q: What's your favorite "Partridge Family" memory?

A: When David Cassidy and I stole the school bus. We had no idea how fast the whole thing had spread, so we found out you can't drive a multicolored bus with "The Partridge Family" written on the side of it down Hollywood Boulevard and not get noticed.