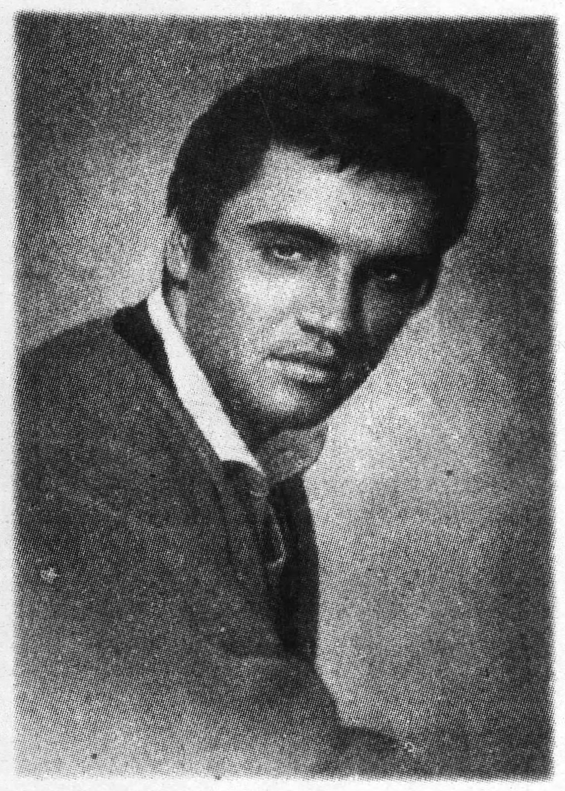
Teen Idols



By Renee Carrell
Special to The News

In 1970, I was at a Kmart in California with my parents. On one of the end caps of an aisle there was a $1 record sale. There were only two recent releases to choose from: Neil Young's amazing album, *After the Gold Rush*, or The Partridge Family Album. It is important to mention that I was 12 or 13 years old during this time. I would like to say that I chose Neil Young, (I ended up buying that very same album for $6.95 10 years later) but the fact is David Cassidy was a lot cuter then Neil Young and the Partridge Family, who were not even real musicians, won out — embarrassing.

That is the power of teen idols.

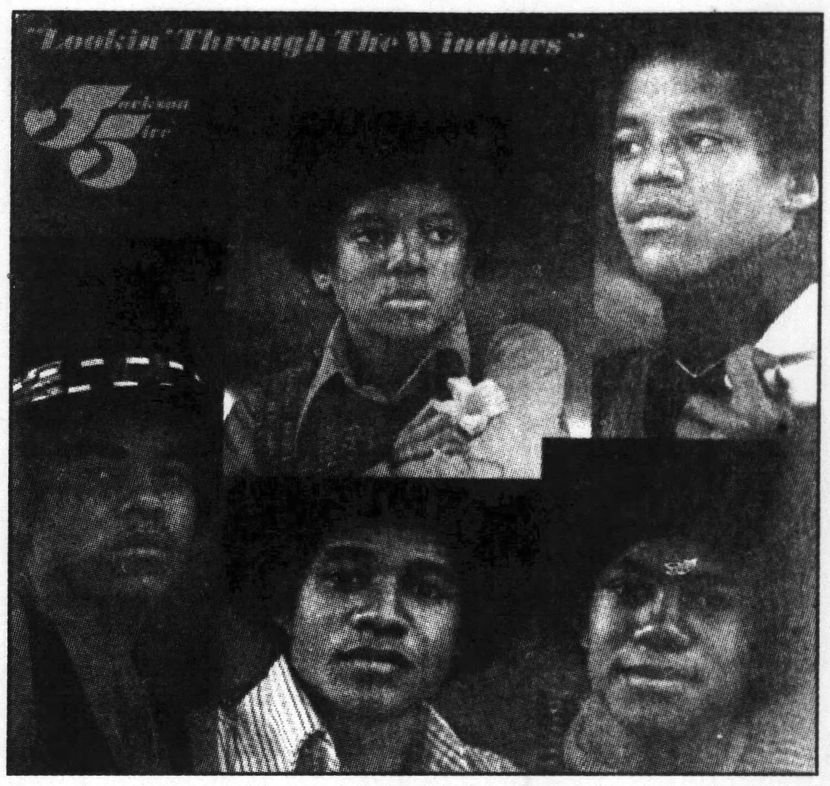
They have been around since Rudy Valentino. Frank Sinatra, who is considered the original teen idol, had a huge following of "Bobby Soxers." My mother had her idols from the 1950s: Fabian, Ricky Nelson and Troy Donohue, and let us not forget the King, Elvis. My generation had pictures of Bobby Sherman, Donny Osmond, the Jackson Five and David Cassidy plastered on our bedroom walls.

Teen idols are not just boys. There are and were some girls, too. Annette Funichello of the Musketeers and beach movies was very popular. Marilyn Monroe is considered a teen idol. Susan Dey (Partridge Family) and Marsha Brady (The Brady Bunch) were the girls most teeny-boppers wanted to emulate in the late 1960s and early 70s.

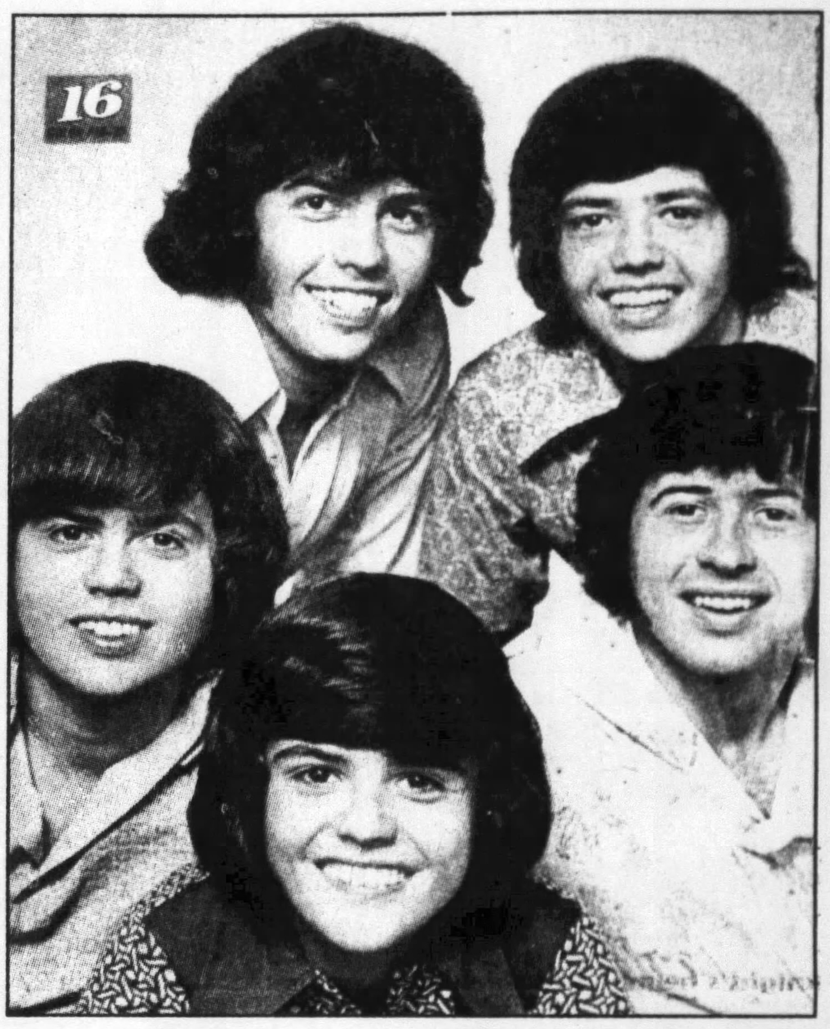
Teen idols are usually musical performers or child actors. Sometimes they are adults. It is very important that male teen idols have a young, sweet image and not be threatening to the adolescent girls worshiping them. This is why some idols had to shave there chests as chest hair was considered too manly. Teen idols must also be available, so girlfriends and wives were hidden from the media as long as possible. An idol needed to be cute, young, clean cut, approachable and at least appear to have some talent.

The merchandising for these idols included lunchboxes, record players, dolls, T-shirts, watches and posters. The most popular venue was teeny-bopper magazines like Tiger Beat. These magazines had posters, interviews and articles giving fans more tidbits about their fantasy boyfriends/girlfriends such as what their favorite colors were, or the name of their pets. It all looks rather ridiculous now, but to an adolescent it is very serious and that can mean serious money for promoters.

I looked up a few teen idols from the 1970s on eBay. David Cassidy's highest-priced item was a CD titled *Romance*. It had an opening bid of $139. There was also a tour program for $89.95. Bobby Sherman (Here Comes the Brides) had a rare CD that was going for $49. It was originally from 1971 and entitled *Getting Together*. Jack Wild (H.R. Pufnstuf) had a scrapbook starting at $36.



PHOTOS BY JOEL BECKER/DUNN COUNTY NEWS



Jackson 5 or The Osmonds? These family groups were major players in the teen idol market and fans usually picked one group or the other. The Jackson Five (above) included Michael, Marlon, Jackie, Jermaine and Tito. The Osmonds (right) included Alan, Jay, Merrill, Donny, Wayne and Jimmy (bottom, right).

There was a Davey Jones (The Monkees) signed leather jacket with a $1,000 opening bid.

Of all the teen idols I researched, Donny Osmond (The Osmonds) seems to be getting the last laugh. He was once ridiculed for his squeaky clean image (to the point that it caused him stage fright). Now, a Donny Osmond Las Vegas ticket can go for as high a $399, and that's just the opening bid. An autographed photo goes for $49. Still performing and more handsome then ever, Mr. Goody-Two-Shoes is laughing all the way to the bank.

So, should you save every scrap of teeny-bopper merchandising you come across? Sure, if you want too. I have not found a real big demand for teen idol posters, books or records. Some of the merchandising items may be worth something on eBay. Autographs are always worth hanging on to. I find that most idol stuff is usually bought as a gag gift for women having a monument birthday. I gave up my [illegible] for David Cassidy when I saw him make a guest appearance on Malcolm in the Middle. I don't know what happened but, it's over, David.

•••

March 30 will be the last day Johnny Lunchbox will be open. We will no longer be a bricks-and-mortar business, but we will be on the Internet. You can find us on eBay as J.Lunchbox and our eBay store as Johnny Lunchbox. We will also keep our Web site, *http:/www.Johnnylunchbox.com*. Big thanks to all of you who supported the shop over the last five years. It was a blast, and we loved being part of the main street Menomonie community. Please keep shopping our downtown — it's the jewel of Menomonie!

•••

RENEE CARRELL *owns Johnny Lunchbox, located at 335 Main St. in Menomonie. She can be reached by calling (715) 231-3325 or check out the store's Web site: www.Johnnylunchbox.com.*

Many heart throbs were teen idols in the 60s and 70s, including Bobby Sherman (above), Elvis (top, left), Brady Bunch cast members, Shaun Cassidy and David Cassidy (on book covers) and Shaun Cassidy records (records) and Henry Winkler as The Fonz (top, right).

DUNN COUNTY TAX SERVICES

Thorough Tax Preparation for Reasonable Charges, Three tax preparers with accumulative experience of over 50 years Farms, small businesses, personal taxes
CALL TODAY
for an appointment
(715) 235-2879

ADVERTISEMENT

KNAACK:

What's the news?
That seems to be the #1 question.
Here's what I've got.

The board is still crunching budget numbers, so at this time I believe that the thought of a referendum before we have a solid plan is premature. I want to give the ladies on the board an extra ode of thanks. They have been working relentlessly on options to best suit the community and our schools. I'm hopeful that the rest of the board will have a true understanding of the time these gals have spent on this project.

Hats off to all the ladies of the world.
That's all I have for today.

Sincerely,
Randy Knaack
1419 Tainter St. • Menomonie, WI 54751
E-mail: randyknaack@wwt.net
715-235-7521 • 715-235-7721 - Fax
Or stop me on the street that's OK too!
HAVE A GREAT DAY!

NEW!

Family Answer™ PLUS

The Money-Saving, Minute-Sharing Plan with All the Extras

- **Unlimited** 7:00 p.m. night & weekend minutes
- **300 text messages** each month
- ***FREE*** Motorola flip phone *(After mail-in rebate)*
- ***FREE*** activation *(Save $35)*

Starting at Just $18.99 Per Month*

MIDWEST WIRELESS
We Answer To You.

MidwestWireless.com • 800-829-TALK

Midwest Wireless
Junction Mall, Menomonie • 715-231-2345
Midwest Wireless
1589 Paulson Road, River Falls • 715-425-7710
24-7 Telecom
Menomonie • 715-231-2000
Baldwin Telephone Inc.
Baldwin • 715-684-4204
Nelson Telephone Co.
Durand • 715-672-4204
JohnsonStar Computer Service
Menomonie • 715-235-5141
JohnsonStar Computer Service
Colfax • 715-962-3171
Jo-Jo's Jewelry & Gifts
Ellsworth • 715-273-5171
Relco Company
Menomonie • 715-233-0060

*Limited time offer. Free Motorola W315 phone offer requires a $15 mail-in rebate and 24-month service agreement. Free activation with 24-month service agreements only, a $35 activation fee is applied to all 12-month service agreements. Unlimited night and weekend minutes can be used from 7p.m.– 7a.m. Monday through Friday and 7p.m. Friday through 7a.m. Monday. Family Answer Plus is only available with Tri-State calling plans priced at $39.99/month or higher. Family Answer Plus lines are $18.99/month on calling plans $49.99/month, or higher and $25.99/month on all other qualifying calling plans. Family Answer Plus includes unlimited night and weekend minutes and 300 text messages per month. Additional text messages, including all sent and received messages, are billed at 10¢ per message. All phone offers are subject to availability and prices may vary. A regulatory surcharge of $1/month is added to each line to help partially recover the costs incurred due to regulatory mandates. Other taxes, fees and surcharges may apply; see store for details. ©2007 Midwest Wireless Holdings, L.L.C. AA/EOE