



Critic's Corner

by
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THE WOODSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL

The promoters of the Aquarian Woodstock Music Festival promised three days of "peace and music." What was actually given the streams of youths who poured into the White Lake area was the most chaotic, miserably planned event ever presented.

My wife and I went to the Festival not so much for the music, but to camp out with many old school friends. Our experiences at the grounds were similar to the experiences of other people who wanted to be a part of such an enormous undertaking.

In the first place, clutching our tickets costing \$18 for three nights of entertainment, we made the trip from Carmel to Bethel, New York in five hours, (three hours for the last ten miles). Unable to get to the grounds, we parked four miles away, and walked in with our equipment to the site. Arriving there, we found acres and acres of parking available to the multitudes, but unfortunately hundreds of poorly parked and abandoned cars blocked the roads leading in, and halted all traffic up. Many trucks and cars tried to make it up the road anyway, and ripped off chrome and paint from the parked cars in their ascent.

Through it all, some bright spots were found. The visitors to the area took the troubles in stride. Many of the bearded and weather-ruffled throngs passed around food and water they had brought with them. The New York State Troopers were superb. They alone were responsible for any traffic at all getting through. They were friendly and always ready to give directions. When performers could not be brought up the troopers provided helicopter service to bring them in. In comparison, the local police did not keep their tempers as well as the troopers, but they

were apparently under fire from local citizens who lined the roads to watch the parade of humanity.

The music was quite good, but even here the young promoters were at fault. Speakers were inadequate to reach all the listeners, and they frequently went out. When the young people tried to rent the tents that had been advertised for rent, they found them gone days before the festival started. To make matters worse, Mother Nature covered the area with heavy rains, turning the land into a quagmire. All were forced to sleep wherever they could find a spot. One boy camped in a muddy field, and lost his life when run over by a tractor while he slept.

Our experience at the festival as I said was fairly typical of what happened to many others. Upon arriving at the field where the music was presented, we learned that all could enter free of charge, and that we had erred in buying tickets. Unable to rent a tent, we were thoroughly soaked by the end of the first evening's entertainment. Calling fruitlessly for the friends we were supposed to meet, we trudged slowly back to the car, carrying our rain-soaked blankets. Finally arriving at the car, we fell asleep immediately upright in the front seats of our Volkswagen. About two hours later, we awoke to a strange jolting crunching sound, and found a Ford station wagon parked in our left rear fender.

Forgetting peace; neglecting music; forsaking humanity; abandoning the whole mess, we immediately started the car up and headed for Carmel. At the end of seven hours, we finally made our way through the crowds pressing their way toward Bethel, and arrived home for a welcome bath.