

Photo by Dan Garson '72



Back to the garden

Remembering Woodstock – and Dan Garson '72

Dan Garson '72 (photography) was a 17-year-old Connecticut high school kid when he saw an advertisement for an outdoor music festival in 1969.

He contacted the organizers and received credentials to photograph the Woodstock Music and Art Fair for his school newspaper.

He shot some 300 images, but only a handful were published.

Until now. The 40th anniversary of the legendary happening on Yasgur's Farm is being commemorated with an elaborate, \$650 compilation, *Woodstock Experience*. Garson's photos were selected for the edition by the noted

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British company, Genesis Publications. His images were also featured in "Woodstock at 40: The Rise of Music Journalism," an exhibit this fall at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

Sadly, the photographer did not live to

see the book or museum display, or hear the many accolades his work is receiving. Daniel Garson died of melanoma in 1991 at age 40.

After graduating from RIT, Garson moved to Toronto to study film production and cinematography at Ryerson University. He stayed in the city and founded Fabulous Footage, which produced film for movie companies and TV. Brad LeMee first saw the Woodstock photos when he was a young photographer working for Garson.

The two became good friends and LeMee never forgot the extraordinary photos, which show the many now-famous musicians but also capture the essence of the experience shared by 400,000 young people.

It occurred to LeMee that the 40-year anniversary of Woodstock might present the opportunity for the

photos to at last see the light of day. He got in touch with the Gladys and Harry Garson, who now live in Massachusetts. They had held on to their late son's legacy through the passage of years and family moves.

LeMee contacted several publishers on behalf of the family, ultimately scoring a home run with Genesis. The publisher decided to devote one of the two volumes comprising *Woodstock Experience* to Garson's photos. The other volume includes stories from Woodstock organizer Michael Lang and more than 60 performers, as well as photos by official photographer Henry Ditz. The set also features a drawer full of festival artwork by Peter Max and Shephard Fairey and, a vinyl record with performances by Santana and Jefferson Airplane, and an actual event ticket. Only 1,000 sets are being sold. For more information, see www.genesis-publications.com.

LeMee's efforts didn't end with finding a publisher. "There were some real technical challenges in creating digital files for over 220 selected images," he explains.

The images were in a variety of formats and many had deteriorated. "There were original black-and-white 35mm negatives encrusted with mold from being in a damp environment for decades," says LeMee. "The original 35mm Ektachrome slides were badly faded and the colors had shifted dramatically. Then there were the images which now only exist as original and vintage prints with the negatives nowhere to be found.

"It was a big project," says LeMee. "But Dan's photographs are American cultural history and there is no better way in the world to showcase these important images than in the pages of a Genesis publication.

"Dan was a true artist," adds LeMee, who is happy to have helped bring his friend's lost work to light. "I wish he was around to tell the story."

Kathy Lindsley



'Woodstock Sky' by Dan Garson '72. Brad LeMee, who restored the image, explains that the original negative is lost and a 4x5 inter-neg had been cropped. After scanning and cleaning, he 'stretched' the image to its original format.