

# Miss Katie's Kids Korner

## A Trip to Google

by Katie Taylor

There is a misconception about the month of August. Most people tend to think of it as a month when not much happens. It's hot. Everyone is on vacation. School and the fall season are very far away. Think again. Historically, August is a month filled with music, revolution, hope, and peace.

American Bandstand, the twist, and MTV all started in August. There is no coincidence here: it's good marketing. What better time to hook bored teenagers into watching something designed specifically for their entertainment? While the concept of American Bandstand started a few years earlier, it wasn't until Dick Clark took over as host that the show really started to make an impact. A crossover from radio to television, American Bandstand brought a handful of lucky kids off the streets of Philadelphia into a small studio and had them dance to records. American Bandstand was the first reality show where once a week thousands of 50s teens would watch their favorite "regulars" dance, fall in love, break-up and get back together. American Bandstand was also a precursor for music videos. The "hot" singers would be invited onto the show to "perform" their hit songs while the regulars danced The Slop, The Hand Jive and the very popular Stroll.

Alas, not everyone had a boyfriend named Chip or could be on American Bandstand, but everyone could do the twist. With the twist, Chubby Checker revolutionized the concept of dance. You didn't need a partner any more. You could do the twist all by yourself. Soon, thanks to the new media, television, people all over the world were twistin' the night away.

It's hard to believe that it took almost 20 years for MTV to come on the scene. MTV, an acronym for Music Tele Vision, was introduced on the cable networks in August of 1981. MTV followed the Top 40 radio format replacing mellow-toned DJ's (disc jockeys) with perky VJ's (video jockeys). The first videos themselves were crude, often clips from concert tours, with no thought given to film or sound quality. Very quickly the production standards improved as record companies saw the commercial potential in this new medium. The first video to be played on MTV was "Video Killed the Radio Star" by the Buggles (ironically Europe's version of MTV championed Money for Nothin' by Dire Straights as their first video).

Five days before Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech (August 23, 1969); 500,000 kids experienced a three-day lovefest on a dairy farm in a little town named Bethel. Named for a town where Bob Dylan and other musicians of the day had built homes, Woodstock brought together diverse groups: anti-war protesters and Vietnam vets; black militants and rednecks; anti-gays and gays and lesbians; legalized-drug advocates and ban-drug advocates; anti-government and pro-government advocates for "Three Days of Peace and Music."

Richie Havens started the festival at sunset on Friday August 15, and performed for three hours straight; the next act couldn't get there due to the 20-mile traffic jam on Route 17. Finally an army helicopter was used to fly in the next band. The irony of using an army helicopter was not lost on the anti-war crowd, but as one promoter said: "We're against the war, not the army."

And the music played continuously for three straight days with such acts as Joan Baez, The Grateful Dead, Santana, Blood Sweat & Tears, Arlo Guthrie, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendricks (who ended the event with his now-famous rendition of The Star Spangled Banner), and Country Joe and the Fish who retired soon after the event citing "there was nowhere to go after "Gimme An F!"

The popular music of the day has always been anti-establishment. Your children's tattoos and piercing are not that much different from the leather jackets and slick-backed hair of the 50s greasers. When asked what he thought kids would be listening to in 20 years, Dick Clark answered: "I have no idea what kind of music kids will be listening to in 20 years, but I guarantee the parents won't like it."

Parents are not supposed to like the music their kids like... that's the whole point. And, with summer in full swing, you're going to be hearing a lot of it. August is a month of music and revolution, change and the hope of peace.

On August 1, 1944, Anne Frank put her last entry into her diary. Three days later her family was found by the Nazis. And, on August 30, 1411, a conference of European leaders outlawed the crossbow thinking to end wars for all time. And the music plays on. ✨

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