

# Woodstock

By Shauna Garrison

When my mother, Christine Mary Collings, was just fifteen years old, she hitchhiked from her home town, Farmington, Michigan, to the Woodstock Art and Music Festival at Max Yasgur's pasture in Bethel, New York to see her favorite bands and musicians: The Who, Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, and Jimi Hendrix. Woodstock is called the "capstone of an era devoted to human advancement" by my mother. There were nearly 250,000 tickets sold, but more the 450,000 people came.

Mom went with her best friends, Sharon and Michelle, without parental permission. Mother described it as a "thrilling adventure," but she did think about her parents often. She thought there were so many people and such great music, and described it as "boisterous."

She and her friends slept in a tent, but it was very wet and cold because it rained a lot; yet the people didn't care. There was little violence for how many people there were, but they didn't have enough toilets or food.

Mom danced and sang along with the bands, and knew almost all the words to the songs they played. She saw Richie Havens, Country Joe McDonald, Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, Santana, Canned Heat, Janis Joplin, Sly and the Family Stone, The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Joe Cocker, Ten Years After, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Johnny Winter, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and Jimi Hendrix. She got to meet Joan Baez and some of the band members. Joan was around five months pregnant and gave my mom an autographed picture of her.

Mom stayed all four days and ran into her friends from high school, Wally and Tom, who were a year older than she. They gave her, Sharon, and Michelle a ride back to Farmington, Michigan. During the car drive they sang and talked to pass the time of a day-long drive.

When my mother returned home, she felt really guilty because her parents were so worried that they'd hardly slept at night. She was grounded for three months. Woodstock was in August so she didn't miss any school. She almost lost her job working at a convenience store. All of my mother's friends that didn't get to go envied her for going because it was really cool. Sharon and Michelle's parents blamed my mom for being the "master mind" of the plan to sneak away and go to a four-day-long rock and roll concert with hippies, but Mom said, "It was all of us together."

Thinking that she wanted to just go to concerts and sing, laugh, and dance throughout all of her life, living without a job, she said, "But that is not reality." My mother said it opened her eyes to different life styles people live and all the

possibilities in life. I basically envy her for getting to live in that time period and for her courage to run away from home, and for the fun she had at Woodstock.