

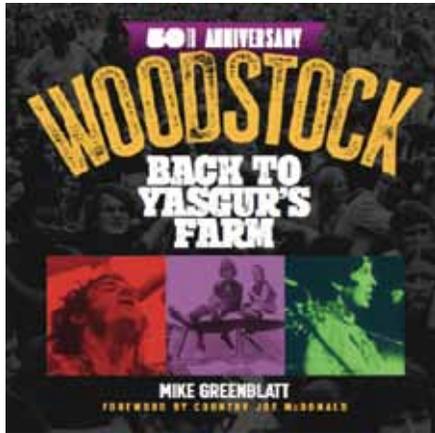
Helen Marketti's Music Corner

Woodstock 50th Anniversary: Back to Yasgur's Farm



August 15 - 17, 2019 will mark the 50th anniversary of Woodstock '69. Mike Greenblatt was an 18-year-old kid from New Jersey when he and his friend Neil decided they would embark upon a journey of peace and love. This event not only changed their lives but the history of music by the sheer magnitude of the crowd.

In his recent book, "Woodstock 50th Anniversary: Back to Yasgur's Farm" (Krause Publications, 2019), Mike Greenblatt takes the reader on a journey when the counter-culture generation was not settled by any means but did come together for three days of music and peace. There are interviews from many of the original artists who performed at Woodstock such as Graham Nash, Carlos Santana and Country Joe McDonald. Readers will enjoy first-hand accounts of what it was like through Mike's eyes as he relives the experience. "I didn't realize at the time that I was part of a historical event. We were used to seeing artists one at a time at a venue but with Woodstock, it was three days worth of seeing some great artists who were all there at the same time. We almost didn't go, however. We were thinking about going to see Led Zeppelin at Asbury Park."



"I had bought tickets for Neil and I. For all three days of Woodstock, the cost was \$17.50 per ticket. Woodstock officially started on a Friday. Neil and I drove to Bethel, New York on Thursday. The event was held on Max Yasgur's dairy farm. Neil and I had tickets but no one was taking them so we threw them away! We were directed to a parking area that was available. We were prepared to set up at Woodstock as though we were camping. We brought a tent, sandwiches, water, a bag of pot and a change of clothes," remembers Mike. "We decided to leave everything in the car, walk to the site, find a spot and then go back to the car to get our stuff. We didn't want to carry everything with us as soon as we got there. As it turned out we should have because we never made it back to the car for those three days!"

He continues, "On the first night, we were playing Monopoly by flashlight. We had secured a spot very close to the stage and fell asleep. The next morning when I woke

up, I stretched, stood up and looked around and I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. I saw an endless sea of people everywhere I looked and everywhere I turned. It was unbelievable. At this point we had no idea where to find the car!" (laughs)

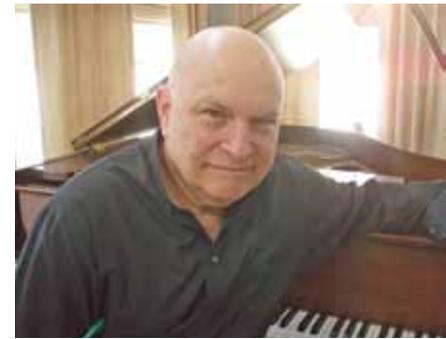
"We were so close to the stage that we could actually see the facial expressions of the artists," said Mike. "It was something to realize the enormity of this situation. There were 500,000 people packed together. There wasn't enough food, not enough water and not enough bathrooms. The weather was horrible. It gently rained off and on for the first couple of days then on Sunday it poured, the wind blew and it was cold. We were in the same clothes all three days. My friend Neil stayed sober the entire time while I was stoned out of my mind for most of Woodstock."

"There was no security, no police, no one of authority and yet everyone behaved themselves, enjoyed the music and then went home. Everything stayed peaceful which probably would not happen today," said Mike. "Neil and I didn't stay for the remainder of Sunday. We missed seeing Jimi Hendrix, Sha-Na-Na and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. You have to remember we were still in the same clothes since the first day. We were tired, cold, wet, hungry and had to use the bathroom. I wanted to stay but Neil had enough. It was amazing to see Johnny Winter and The Band. Out of 32 acts we missed three of them which isn't too bad."

"Woodstock was a cosmic happening. There wasn't any violence. It was the coming together of like-minded people. Everyone that was there came for the music and looking for people of the same ilk. It was an iconic event in the history of the counter-culture. We were brothers and sisters in arms who thought the same way. It was a generational ban together."

Mike referred to a quote of dairy farmer, Max Yasgur when asked what we have learned from Woodstock.

"I'm a farmer. I don't know how to speak to 20 people at one time, let alone a crowd like this. But I think you people have proven something to the world. Not only to the town of Bethel or Sullivan County or New York State. You've proven something to the world. This is the largest group of people ever assembled in one place. We have had no idea that there would be this size group and because of that, you had quite a few inconveniences as far as water and food and so forth. Your producers have done a mammoth job to see that you're taken care of.



Mike Greenblatt

They'd enjoy a vote of thanks. But above that, the important thing that you've proven to the world is that a half a million kids, and I call you kids because I have children older than you, a half million young people can get together and have three days of fun and music and have nothing but fun and music. And God bless you for it." (Max Yasgur, 1969)

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