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DECEMBER 27th and 28th, 1967

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TALKING ROCK
By Steve Grant

The following letter was reprinted from June 6, 1966, in San Jose, California on a 40-cent course.
Dear Steve,
You asked for some news of the Bay Area scene, so here it is.
Top local groups:
Big Brother and the Holding Company are the biggest group around SF now, but supposedly they're not long for this world. I talked to Peter Pais, the second man at the Avalon Ballroom. He said that Jerry Garcia is the group's powerhouse singer, is on an ego trip and the group is pretty unsettled.
Another big group is the Steve Miller Blues Band - acid-rock blues. They were a feature at the Avalon quite often this summer. The Avalon, run by the Family Dog, is a better place than the Fillmore.
Bill Graham, who runs the Fillmore, is far from being a hippie, and old-dreams go to the Avalon, leaving the Fillmore more for hip-hop boppers and tourists. The Fillmore, however, generally has bigger name acts.
One group from SF, the Blue Cheer, has three members and divides 11 (that's eleven) songs between the three of them. They aren't as musical as some of the other groups, but they have quite a following.

National groups
The Airplane has gained practical and commercial, but they still play in an appearance when they can.
The Grateful Dead got together about two years ago, a group of grass and some good hash in the place on Haight Street--so they're out for a while.
Incidentally, the last time I was at the Fillmore the Flies were on their last legs. So stoned he just lay down on the stage and refused to move. The fans voiced their disapproval so he threw his microphone into the crowd. They probably won't play the Fillmore much now.
Butterfield's new band is making something without the Fillmore, but they're still one of the best blues groups around. Also, I saw them, they had a trumpet and a sax player, along with the lead singer.
Max Naffall stays in the background most of the time, leaving the spotlight to Butterfield himself, but when he comes on with a keyboard solo, he really works out. Rumor has it that Butterfield's Electric Flag was bashed while they were in LA for a gig.

Groups outside SF
A group to watch with a lot of talent is Country Heat. Also from LA is Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band. Their 'San Francisco album should be good.
Captain Beefheart puts out some groovy acid music--he really has a strange voice. I saw them and the Buddy Guy Blues Band at the Avalon last Saturday. Buddy Guy is groovy blues, Chicago style--all spades.
A New York group that's been popular here is the Vanila Fudge. Their style is unique, and if they ever do an album of original songs, it should be good.
Al also watch another British group called the Pink Floyd, Charlie Musselwhite's South Side Band System is a good local group to watch. Musselwhite used to get sidemen billing with Gary Goldberg's old band. I guess you know that Goldberg is with the Electric Flag these days.

Movingsouth to Santa Cruz area, the big club is the Continental Ballroom, and the big groups are the Chocolate Watch- band and Mother-Flow's Mother Flower's Mod- crite Wagin. Moby Grape is number one in Santa Cruz, it's that's a long way from here.
Tone Cero is big in the Fillmore scene. I'm involved in starting a club in Presidio, and we'll let you know about it.

Tonight I'm going to the Avalon to see Van Morrison lead singer with the late, great Them.

If you are interested in starting a club in your area and want to know how to do it, write me at 3976 Bayshore Blvd., San Francisco, Calif.