

Woodstock Spirit Shapes Trend-Center Region

An outdoor epic concert planned for next summer near Woodstock, N.Y., will focus global attention once again on the town and its environs, which are a major source of trendworthy inspiration. (See also "The Woodstock Watch," 1992 Spring Issue, page 2.)

The concert, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the famous music festival, is scheduled for Aug. 13 and 14, 1994. The original event was held Aug. 15 to 17, 1969.

Its promoters, who handled the first jam too, promise to offer an event for the 90's, not the 60's. But they also promise it'll provide an atmosphere that evokes the same kind of spirit — a unifying feeling of peace, love, idealism and freedom of expression.

They expect 250,000 people to attend.

That this event, like the original, will take place near Woodstock, not in it, speaks less to the politics of planning boards than to the fact that the entire Woodstock region — the Hudson River Valley — is a place where people go for artistic, spiritual, educational and, yes, even business inspiration.

Geographically close to New York City, but emotionally remote, the makings of the Hudson Valley run the spectrum from high technology to high spiritualism.

SOFTWARE TO DHARMAWARE

A long-time home of IBM, the Hudson Valley has attracted and grown scores of large and small technology companies — and spawned one of the fastest-growing airports in the nation, Stewart International. Stewart is also poised to become the site of a U.S. magnetic-levitation railroad demonstration project.

The bucolic area is also the location of more than two dozen seminaries and monasteries, from Roman Catholic to Zen Buddhist to the Unification Church.

Its fertile riverbanks and nearby hills are dotted with farms, orchards, wetlands and woodlands, along with a host of nationally known learning institutions, from Vassar and Bard colleges to the Institute.

The county in which Woodstock is situated boasts the largest concentration of artists in the state. And the region overall has a magnificent array of museums, galleries, bookstores (including one with the finest stock of out-of-print books in the country), and centers for crafts and the performing arts.

These resources as well as the region's natural charms have made the Hudson Valley home or a retreat for artists, musicians, intellectuals and celebrities — even top editors of

Business Week and Forbes!

This richly diverse atmosphere — maintained by a common love of place — will find a global audience during the Woodstock festival.

Note: *To acquire groundbreaking trend knowledge, key into this region's ferment, and into details relating to the upcoming Woodstock event. This exurban region — whose unique features are attracting one of the most diverse, leading-edge populations in the country — will prove to be a model for 21st century development*

Buy-Local Trend to Accelerate

A trend toward hometown protectionism is causing large, national retail chains to face increasingly stiff opposition as they seek to make inroads in untapped urban, suburban and rural markets.

Local retailers are joining with environmentalists and preservationists to implore residents to fight the mass-discount invaders that are "hastening the death" of their Main Streets.

The buy-local trend is seen as a way of saving local economies because the money would stay in the community rather than be exported to Bentonville, Ark., Troy, Mich., or some other corporate-headquarters city where disproportionate amounts are assumed to go to faceless executives at the expense of local minimum-wage workers.

Many hometown holdouts may initially use such arguments as zoning requirements and environmental impact in their fights. But if these prove unsuccessful, some will develop the same vengeance and use the same tactics that proved successful in stopping construction of nuclear power plants, waste incinerators and garbage dumps.

WAL-MART WARS

The trend's emotional component is based on a discomfiting local feeling that the Wal-Marts and Home

Depots of the world are philistine goliaths whose power and size unfairly drive out hometown merchants and sap the character of a community.

By holding out the carrot of jobs, these giant retailers will find less opposition in financially strapped areas. But even these communities will display some level of backlash as residents express a growing wish to "preserve the hometown flavor."

Indeed, as the 20th century ends, nostalgia will grow, leading to a resurgence in historical preservation of towns. People's emotional strings will be tugged as they try to hold onto elements of the hometown past that they fear will be lost. (See also "New Trend in Collectibles," 1992 Fall Issue, page 6.)

Note: *Major national chains will continue to attract local shoppers with low prices, but they'll improve their shares of market by becoming involved in the community. As economies and society lose their individuality, it'll be increasingly important for retailers to show they respect the beliefs of the communities in which they operate.*

CORRECTION

The "Trend Inquiry" article on page 8 of the Summer Issue misstated the number of new jobs created in the health-care industry. The number is 1,000 jobs a day.