

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL | SUNDAY | JULY 2, 2006 | SECTION G

MISSOURI



CELEBRATION CITY THEME PARK Branson Tourism photo



BROADWAY! THE STAR SPANGLED CELEBRATION
Branson Tourism photo



SILVER DOLLAR CITY THEME PARK AP photo

BOOM TIME IN BRANSON

The 'live country music capital' is courting Baby Boomers with new theaters, museums, hotels and shops — and a renovated Fabian.

BY TOM UHLENBROCK
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Fabian looked fabulous. Bobby Vee, too.

We did lunch. At Applebee's. They had salads, I had the quesadilla burger.

Both seemed a bit shorter than I remembered, but aren't we all?

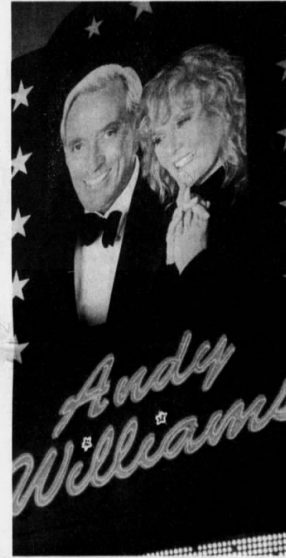
Dressed in a black warm-up suit with a Steelers cap pulled down low, Fabian Anthony Forte gave me a card that read "ex-teen idol" as he slid onto a stool unnoticed by the other restaurant patrons. When he's not riding the golden-oldie show circuit, Fabian lives on a 20-acre farm in Pennsylvania with his third wife and their dog.

"It's like here, country — no other way to live," he said. "I was in California for a while, but couldn't take the traffic."

Vee, short for Velline, and his wife have two sons, who perform in his backup band, and a daughter who recently wed. He got to sing one of his hits, *Take Good Care of My Baby*, at her wedding. Wasn't a dry eye in the house.

It was good to see the guys. After all, we go back a half-century or so, to when I and every other kid in the country would race home from school to watch them on *American Bandstand* with another old friend, Dick Clark.

Clark is recovering from a stroke and was unable to attend the debut this spring of his new venture in Branson, Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* Theater. Fabian, Vee and other



ANDY WILLIAMS THEATER
Chicago Tribune photo/Alan Solomon



JIM STAFFORD THEATRE AP photo

INSIDE

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