

FEATURES



Andrea Kittle tries out a vintage Smith Corona electric typewriter at a "type-in" in Albuquerque.



John Lewis, a typewriter repairman, works at his shop in Albuquerque, NM, in front of his collection of vintage typewriters.



Joe Van Cleave, who runs a popular YouTube channel on restoring typewriters, speaks about one of his vintage typewriters at his home in Albuquerque, NM. — AP photos

## Old-school typewriters attract new generation of fans

Typewriter enthusiasts gather at an Albuquerque restaurant to experiment with vintage Smith Coronas. Fans in Boston kneel in a city square and type stories about their lives during a pro-immigration demonstration. A new documentary on typewriters featuring Tom Hanks and musician John Mayer is set for release this summer. In the age of smartphones, social media and cyber hacking fears, vintage typewriters that once gathered dust in attics and basements are attracting a new generation of fans across the US.

From public "type-ins" at bars to street poets selling personalized, typewritten poems on the spot, typewriters have emerged as popular items with aficionados hunting for them in thrift stores, online auction sites and antique shops. Some buy antique Underwoods to add to a growing collection. Others search for a midcentury Royal Quiet De Luxe - like a model author Ernest Hemingway used - to work on that simmering novel. The rescued machines often need servicing, and fans are forced to seek out the few remaining typewriter repair shops. "I haven't seen business like this in years," said John Lewis, a typewriter repairman who has operated out of his Albuquerque shop for four decades. "There's definitely a new interest, and it's keeping me very busy."

### Jails and prisons

Renewed interest began around 10 years ago when small pockets of typewriter enthusiasts came together online, said Richard Polt, a Xavier University philosophy professor and author of "The Typewriter Revolution: A Typist's Companion for the 21st Century." Since then, the

base of fans has dramatically grown, and various public events have been organized around the typewriter. "It's beyond the phase where this is just a fad," Polt said. It's almost impossible to gauge recent typewriter sales. Almost all of the original manufacturers are out of business or have been bought out and become different companies. The Moonachie, New Jersey-based Swintec appears to be one of the world's last typewriter makers, selling translucent electronic machines largely to jails and prisons.

But operators of thrift stores and estate sales say typewriters are some of the quickest items to go. "That's part of the fun: the hunt," said Joe Van Cleave, an Albuquerque resident who owns more than a dozen typewriters and runs a popular YouTube channel on restoring the machines. "Sometimes, like a little luck, you might find something from the 1920s in great condition." Doug Nichol, director of the upcoming documentary California Typewriter, said the interest stems from "digital burnout" and people wanting a connection to the past. That interest seems to transcend age, he said. "Kids who grew up knowing only mobile phones and the computer are excited to see a letter typed with your own hand," said Nichol, who owns 85 typewriters. "It's a one-on-one interaction that doesn't get interrupted by Twitter alerts."

### Vintage machines

In his film, set for release in August, Nichol interviews Hanks, who said he uses a typewriter almost every day to send memos and letters. "I hate getting email thank-

you from folks," Hanks says in the film. "Now, if they take 70 seconds to type me out something on a piece of paper and send to me, well, I'll keep that forever. I'll just delete that email." Hanks owns about 270 typewriters but often gives them away to people who show an interest. "No one is ever going to make the great typewriter ever, ever, ever again," he said.

One way the typewriter craze is growing is through organized "type-ins" - meet-ups in public places where typewriter fans try different vintage machines. Such events have been held in Phoenix, Philadelphia, Seattle, Los Angeles and Cincinnati. During a recent type-in at Albuquerque soul food restaurant Nexus Brewery, around three dozen fans took turns clicking the keys of an Italian-made 1964 Olivetti Lettera 32 and a 1947 Royal KMM, among others. Rich Boucher, a slam poet, spent most of his time on a 1960s-era Hermes 3000 crafting poetry and pausing while trying to figure out when to return the carriage for a next line.

"I haven't used a typewriter in forever," Boucher said. "This is a real refreshing way to spend a summer afternoon." After finishing his work, Boucher grabbed his phone and sent a Facebook status update about the experience. He then started looking online for a Hermes 3000. "That's the typewriter I want," he said. "I'm going to find one." — AP



Joe Van Cleave, left, and Rich Boucher, right, try out various vintage typewriters at a "type-in" in Albuquerque, NM.



Vintage typewriters are on display at a "type-in" in Albuquerque, NM.



Madelyn Deutch, from left, Zoey Deutch and Lea Thompson attend the Women In Film 2017 Crystal and Lucy Awards.



Photo shows a minidress, foreground, and an outfit worn by Jerry Garcia, top right, in the exhibit "The Summer of Love Experience, Art, Fashion and Rock and Roll" in Golden Gate Park at the deYoung Museum in San Francisco.



People look at 1960s music posters display in the exhibit "The Summer of Love Experience, Art, Fashion and Rock and Roll". — AP photos

## San Francisco celebrates pivotal time in US: Summer of Love

They came for the music, the mind-bending drugs, to resist the Vietnam War and 1960s American orthodoxy, or simply to escape summer boredom. And they left an enduring legacy. This season marks the 50th anniversary of that legendary "Summer of Love," when throngs of American youth descended on San Francisco to join a cultural revolution. Thinking back on 1967, Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead recalls a creative explosion that sprouted from fissures in American society. That summer marked a pivot point in rock-and-roll history, he says, but it was about much more than the music.

"There was a spirit in the air," said Weir, who dropped out of high school and then helped form the Grateful Dead in 1965. "We figured that if enough of us got together and put our hearts and minds to it, we could make anything happen." San Francisco, now a hub of technology and unrecognizable from its grittier, more freewheeling former self, is taking the anniversary seriously. Hoping for another invasion of visitors - this time with tourist dollars - the city is celebrating with museum exhibits, music and film festivals, Summer of Love-inspired dance parties and lecture panels. Hotels are offering discount packages that include "psychedelic cocktails," "Love Bus" tours, tie-dyed tote bags and bubble wands.

### Haight-Ashbury neighborhood

The city's travel bureau, which is coordinating the effort, calls it an "exhilarating celebration of the most iconic cultural event in San Francisco history." One thing the anniversary makes clear is that what happened here in the 1960s could never happen in San Francisco today, simply because struggling artists can't afford the city anymore. In the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, which was ground zero for the counterculture, two-bedroom apartments now rent for \$5,000 a month. San Francisco remains a magnet for young people, but even those earning six-figure Silicon Valley salaries complain about the cost of living.

In the mid-1960s, rent in Haight-Ashbury was extremely cheap, Weir, now 69, told The Associated Press. "That attracted artists and bohemians in general because the bohemian community tended to move in where they could afford it," he said. During those years, the Grateful Dead shared a spacious Victorian on Ashbury Street. Janis Joplin lived down

the street. Across from her was Joe McDonald, of the psychedelic rock band Country Joe and the Fish. Jefferson Airplane eventually bought a house a few blocks away on Fulton Street, where they hosted legendary wild parties.

"The music is what everyone seems to remember, but it was a lot more than that," said David Freiberg, 75, a singer and bassist for Quicksilver Messenger Service who later joined Jefferson Airplane. "It was artists, poets, musicians, all the beautiful shops of clothes and hippie food stores. It was a whole community." The bands dropped by each other's houses and played music nearby, often in free outdoor concerts at Golden Gate Park and its eastward extension known as the Panhandle. Their exciting new breed of folk, jazz and blues-inspired electrical music became known as the San Francisco Sound. Several of its most influential local acts - the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, which launched Joplin's career - shot to fame during the summer's three-day Monterey Pop Festival.

### Fantastic music

One song in particular served as a national invitation to hippies across the land. "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)," written by John Phillips of the Mamas & the Papas and sung by Scott McKenzie, came out in May 1967. It bolted up the charts and was used to help promote the Monterey festival that June. "Every fantasy about the summer of '67 that was ever created - peace, joy, love, nonviolence, wear flowers in your hair and fantastic music - was real at Monterey. It was bliss," said Dennis McNally, the Grateful Dead's longtime publicist and official biographer who has curated an exhibit at the California Historical Society that runs through Sept 10.

The exhibit, "On the Road to the Summer of Love," explains how that epic summer came about and why San Francisco was its inevitable home. McNally uncovered 100 photographs, some never seen publicly, that trace San Francisco's contrarian roots to the Beat poets of the 1950s, followed by civil rights demonstrations and the Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1960s. The national media paid little attention to San Francisco's psychedelic community until January 1967, when poets and bands joined forces for the "Human Be-In," a Golden

Gate Park gathering that unexpectedly drew about 50,000 people, McNally said. It was there that psychologist and LSD-advocate Timothy Leary stood on stage and delivered his famous mantra: "Turn on. Tune In. Drop out."

"After the media got hold, it just exploded," McNally said. "Suddenly, a flood descends on Haight Street. Every bored high school kid - and that's all of them - is saying, 'How do I get to San Francisco?'" An exhaustive exhibit at San Francisco's de Young museum, "The Summer of Love Experience," offers a feel-good trip back in time. There's a psychedelic light show, a 1960s soundtrack and galleries with iconic concert posters, classic photographs and hippie chic fashions worn by Joplin, Jerry Garcia and others. It runs through Aug 20.

### Free speech debate

But that summer's invasion carried a dark cloud. Tens of thousands of youths looking for free love and drugs flooded into San Francisco, living in the streets, begging for food. Parents journeyed to the city in search of their young runaways. An epidemic of toxic psychedelics and harder drugs hit the streets. "Every loose nut and bolt in America rattled out here to San Francisco, and it got pretty messy," Weir said. The long-timers saw it as the end of an era, but one that shaped history. "We created a mindset that became intrinsic to the fabric of America today," said Country Joe McDonald, now 75. "Every single thing we did was adapted, folded into America - gender attitudes, ecological attitudes, the invention of rock and roll."

Half a century later, McDonald, who lives in Berkeley, feels the rumblings of history repeating itself. UC Berkeley is again at the center of a free speech debate, albeit of a different nature. Discontent with the US government and President Donald Trump has stirred the largest protests he's seen since the Vietnam War. In the women's marches across America, he felt echoes of the Summer of Love. "I think there's a similarity," McDonald said, drawing a parallel to the massive anti-Trump turnout marked by nonviolence, playful pink protest hats, creative signs and a determination to change the country's political course. "Both were about saying goodbye to the past and hello to the future." — AP



People take pictures outside the exhibit "The Summer of Love Experience, Art, Fashion and Rock and Roll".



People sit on bean bags and watch abstract images by light show artist Bill Ham in the exhibit "The Summer of Love Experience, Art, Fashion and Rock and Roll".