



THE GIFT OF INSPIRATION:

a rock'n'roll fantasy

"If no one is barfing or bleeding, it's not rock 'n' roll!" Wow. Maybe the perfect words, spoken by rock 'n' roll musician, Michael Gerbino (more on him later) to describe the magic of a particular time and place — when you're 20. But what happens when you're 40? Or 50? Or even older? Though your kids might be nearly full-grown, they might also still live at home, so maybe living the rock 'n' roll fantasy isn't the best idea. After all, you're an adult now. You have a job, a stack of bills to pay, a life insurance policy, kids' sports schedules to adhere to.

But then the "becoming a rock star" dream you once had rears its head again, as powerful as ever. For many dads, and even some moms, thankfully, there's an incredible once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live out the rock 'n' roll dream, in real time, with real lights, a real stage, and a real rock star jamming beside you — all without the younger-days aftermath of brawling, barf or blood.

Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp, home-based in Las Vegas, is most certainly a mature-version, dream-like oasis for those who love music, once performed or dream of performing, or want to gain invaluable music technique education in a very short time. Though there are modified versions of this rock camp model, including day-long and business-style retreats, the most well-known format is the intensive four-day camp.



This camp is about music . . . it's about relationships between fathers and sons.



CAMP COUNSELOR PETER KLETT WORKS WITH 11-YEAR OLD SEASONED CAMPER BEN BLUESTEIN



ROCK ROYALTY — JANE'S ADDICTION DRUMMER STEPHEN PERKINS; FANTASY CAMP FOUNDER, DAVID FISHOF, MR. AND MRS. JERRY GREENBERG

This story is shared because we all have those goals, inspirations inside us that sometimes remain dormant. For a lot of (dare I say) middle-aged people, being connected to music is at the top of that list. We reach mile-markers in life where clues about time's marching orders could range from needing reading glasses to scan restaurant menus, to the loss of dear friends. Whether we gift someone with opportunities, or gift them to ourselves, something like Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp is an absolute dream come true.

The majority of camp attendees are men between the ages of 30 and 60, although there were several women participants at the session I attended, and even older kids. People from all walks of life participate in rock camp, to celebrate life (there was one camper who'd been diagnosed and beaten cancer, another who had served in Iraq); learn new skills (most were talented "closet" musicians); reinspire the creative fire inside (they'd reached an emotional juncture and rather than run off to Europe, they chose this); or even to bond with children and encourage their kids' musical interest. There were four or five dads attending with their sons and daughters (ages 11 to 16). These multi-generation campers share a love for music, or regularly jam together as a family in their respective hometowns.

Mark, a guitar player and investment advisor from Denver, attended the camp with his two sons, Max, 15 (bass), and Luke, 16 (drums). Mark says, "Luckily, we have similar music tastes. We play together at home in a band. I thought being in this accelerated type of situation, learning from some of the best, would be a great way for us to improve together. I also want my boys to be encouraged that with hard work, bigger dreams are obtainable." He chuckled and added, "The family that plays together . . ."

For four days, regular Joes (and Janes) get the complete immersive music experience, writing, rehears-

ing, recording and then performing with globally known rock stars such as Roger Daltrey (The Who), Slash (Guns n' Roses), Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) and Joe Walsh (The Eagles). Throughout the four days, over a dozen camp counselors who are also rock stars, such as Vinny Apice (Black Sabbath), Peter Klett (Candlebox) and Rudy Sarzo (Ozzy, Quiet Riot, White Snake) coach, guide, teach and encourage participants to write, play and perform. For a much-reduced fee, spouses, partners or parents of children who are campers can attend over the course of four days and during non-instructional hours, as "groupies."

Several weeks before you arrive, Fantasy Camp staff work behind the scenes to coordinate with campers. You're assigned a band based on skill level, and each band is provided a counselor and three or four songs to learn. Once at fantasy camp headquarters, you are immersed in all-day practices and training sessions with your assigned band, led by a rock star counselor. It all culminates in two separate live performances at the House of Blues in Las Vegas.

What happens — the mutual creativity, support and inspiration — between the campers, counselors and staff over the course of four intense, non-stop, action-packed days is magical. Being able to interact one-on-one with people you once had posters of in your childhood room is amazing.

Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp is completely designed for, and focused on, the camper being the rock star. This experience is for people whose soul is inspired by playing, singing and writing music, no matter their skill level or professional experience. That is one of the many merits of Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp. Everyone is treated equally — like a rock star.

The counselors are not just famous people who have toured the world. They are all excellent teachers who have no issue with letting campers

take the spotlight. David Fishof, the camp's founder, does an incredible job of selecting counselors who are talented teachers and humble people — although it's apparent the selections are a perfect fit at least in part because Fishof is that same straight-shooting, passion-instilling kind of guy himself.

As a result of Fishof's past work, connections in the music business, his multi-faceted wealth of industry knowledge and his optimistic outlook on making people's dreams come true, over 3,000 people have had a part of the rock 'n' roll fantasy. That's 3,000 people with completely different lives, individual goals and unique roads leading to their time and place onstage, jamming next to a childhood hero.

When asked why he started the camp and continues to do this over 15 years later, Fishof says, "There's nothing that makes me happier than the happiest camper. It's great that they can meet and mingle with childhood heroes, but make no mistake, I want our campers to learn. I want them to gain insight, technical skills and knowledge they might not ever have access to. I want campers to have the full experience of getting a band put together, writing, rehearsing, recording and performing on stage. We can give people inspiration to go on and pursue their dreams in music. The most important thing is that the campers know that they are the total center of our attention. They are the rock stars when they are here."

Part of a camper's feeling of being the star derives from the effectiveness of the teachers. The counselors—there were 12 of them—all had worldly, professional lessons to share, and were very patient as a wide-ranging mix of musical ideas, skill levels and goals came together with the 60 people from across the country who attended our camp session.

Mikey "Bones" Gerbino is one such counselor. Gerbino is a jack-of-ma-

ny-musical-trades. He's performed over 4,500 live shows and recorded or jammed with Rob Halford (Judas Priest), Vince Neil (Motley Crue) and the Pointer Sisters, to name a few. He's even held the illustrious honor of fulfilling the role of Bill Wyman in the Rolling Stones tribute band Satisfaction, which had a three-year, nearly-800-show schedule.

For this particular camp, Gerbino was the counselor of the band dubbed "Tattoo Zoo." Band camp group members came from England, Texas, Oregon and Northern California. The skill level within this particular group varied from some musical band experience to a lot of prior band experience, which meant getting all the players to stylistically coalesce and be ready to perform as a band — a major task. Yet Gerbino was both patient and persistent. Strum by strum, note by note, drum beat by drum beat, he went over the assigned repertoire of Aerosmith's "Same Old Song and Dance" and Dokken's "Just Got Lucky," until the band could swiftly play the set.

Part of the excitement at our particular Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp session was that guitarists Brad Whitford from Aerosmith and George Lynch, famed Dokken guitar player, came to jam with the campers and perform songs with them on the third day of camp. Also making guest appearances were bassist Stu Hamm, guitarist Warren Demartini (Ratt) and drummer Stephen Perkins (Jane's Addiction). There was major incentive for the campers to get it tight. Can you imagine playing a song with the very rock star who created it?

Gerbino made sure the players in his band were confident, technically on the mark and attentive to every detail of each member's capacity and performance levels. Over the course of four days, the campers built huge trust with their counselors, talked rock shop, got tricks and tips to improve their skills and were immersed in a high level of inspiration.

Mark Cook, a dad camper from Portland, Oregon, guitar player with several local music projects and an artist with creative aspirations, says, "Mikey really made sure we each were clear on our parts, but he also wanted us not to forget to enjoy the experience." He adds, "I can't believe how incredibly patient he was, and how when we all jammed with George Lynch and Brad Whitford on stage, we could at least hold our own. At the end of the four days, everything came together for a pretty decent performance. What Mikey taught us was invaluable."

Gerbino adds, "I totally enjoy connecting with my counselor peers as well as the campers. We as counselors are here to help the campers. It's our job to give the campers the best rock star moments we can. They are the total focus. Being a counselor here has been one of the most gratifying things I've ever done."

Seven-time camp counselor Vinny Appice, legendary drummer for Black Sabbath and Dio, agrees. "I like the challenge and love the teaching part of it. There's something cool about assessing someone's skill level, watching them play music — and sometimes, *your* music — then figuring out how all the pieces of the band will fit together."

Appice adds, "I'm a technical guy. I take apart cars and computers just so I have to put them back together. Here in this setting, I can help everyone come together to make music. Plus, for a lot of these guys, I can give them advice about the hard work that goes into music and touring. Sometimes people think it's all about the glamour, but there is a lot of pressure, work, practice and a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff people can't even imagine. I'm happy to share those insights if they're helpful."

So while it may be the coolest, most surreal thing you can imagine to be sitting at a lunch table eating pizza with Vinny Appice, Rudy Sarzo



GUEST PERFORMER STU HAMM



DOKKEN'S GEORGE LYNCH WITH CAMPER MARK COOK OF TATTOO ZOO





CAMP COUNSELORS RUDY SARZO, VINNY APPICE AND JOE VITALE SHARING STORIES OF THEIR ESTEEMED HISTORIES.

and Peter Klett as your munchtime companions, talking about random bits of life or music (this really happened), two things are apparent: the selected counselors are down-to-earth people, and as far as opportunities to learn, it would be nearly impossible to find a better or more fun speed-education in music.

To solidify the education, Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp also gives campers access to music industry icons, such as Jerry Greenberg, the youngest president of any major record company in the recording industry. In 1974, at 32 years old, Greenberg became president of Atlantic Records. He was responsible for signing ABBA, Genesis, Foreigner, Whitesnake and Dr. Dre. He's worked with AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, The Eagles, The Rolling Stones, Aretha Franklin and Michael Jackson.

Greenberg was invited to be a keynote presenter at one of the camp lunches. To hear behind-the-scenes stories about some of rock's biggest stars, including Robert Plant, John Lennon and Michael Jackson — who they were in everyday life, funny things they did backstage — was incredibly exciting. Even the counselors, who've had their own fame and success, were riveted by Jerry's tidbits and recollections. In turn, Greenberg was honored to be in front of the campers and counselors.

"The whole concept of Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp is incredible. I'm a firm believer that rock 'n' roll will never die," says Greenberg. "What David Fishof is doing is remarkable. I witnessed some executives here who play as a hobby, yet they're talented and in their everyday life, they're doing other things. And for a short time, they get the dream. They get to trade places."

Greenberg adds, "This camp is about music, fans and maybe building careers. It's about relationships between fathers and sons. It's great to see a father and a son at the camp, both guitar players, to be able to play with rock stars, and enjoy a hobby with your son like that ... this is incredible."

Aside from the anecdotes, Greenberg also shared words about how to be in the music business, how to connect with industry executives and tangible words of wisdom about how to get your music heard. These were invaluable insights that aspiring Joes and Janes might not have access to in any other way—and they help make Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp uniquely complete.

For the campers, the experience is a refuge; a dream-like setting; a convergence of closeted talent; a pure, child-like love for the process of making music; a culmination of years of isolated practice and doubt; a chance to have more than just passing

conversations with some of rock's biggest icons and a chance to feel the heat of a spotlight.

For the counselors, it's a chance to give back in a way that touches the hearts and lives of fans they may never have come across; to share some of their new music and ideas, so they can showcase that they're evolving as artists; a chance to mingle with other icons they grew up listening to and are excited about meeting; and an opportunity to impart insight about the crazy business from the stage perspective.

It's a curious phenomenon, once we truly begin implementing the pursuit of a dream. Things happen. The dream takes on a life of its own. Do we seek to fulfill certain dreams when we reach midlife points because we're afraid it's now or never, and the big clock only ticks louder? Or are we wise enough, at last, to not care about justifications that have been holding us back? In other words, are we free to fly, to try, because it's time and we can?

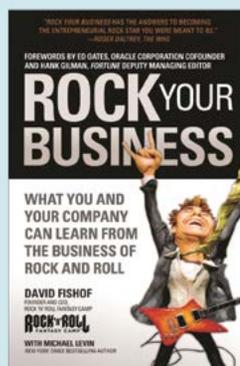
What are your dreams? Do they include a rock 'n' roll fantasy? ●



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For great resource information about general business success drawn from the music industry, check out David Fishof's extremely easy-to-read book, "Rock Your Business," available at amazon.com. From [We don't normally think of the music business as a source of entrepreneurial insight, but we should. The best bands have longevity, a depth of customer loyalty, and a level of profitability that puts most businesses to shame. And what they know — about marketing, partnerships, the power of bartering, and overcoming obstacles — isn't taught in any business school ..."](http://amazon.com's book description:)



Janna Lopez is the mother of a 14-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son.

by Janna Lopez

THE ROAD FROM ROCK STAR to fatherhood

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Much of what we listened to growing up derived from our own Northwest backyard, including the rock band, Candlebox. A radio dial couldn't be touched without hearing one of their two major hits, "You" and "Far Behind," off their self-titled debut album, "Candlebox," released in 1993. While at Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp, we were lucky to chat with Candlebox guitarist, 46-year-old Peter Klett from Bellevue, Washington, who was one of the featured camp counselors. Between classes, Peter could be found chatting online or Skyping with one of his "precious baby girls," his wife Jessica or his daughter Averi. He's still making music with Candlebox and his other group, Lotus Crush (featuring 2012 "The Voice" runner-up Terry McDermott). We thought it would be fitting for Portland Family readers to hear his thoughts on rock stardom and of course, being a rock star daddy to his 20-month old daughter.



All photos courtesy of Peter Klett.

JANNA: How long had you been playing guitar when you got your first record deal?

PETER: Candlebox was signed to the record deal in 1992 when I was 23, so that would make it 12 years.

J: Did you ever imagine that Candlebox would get to be so internationally recognized?

P: I think we all knew Candlebox had something special as soon as we started writing for the first record. I already had a few song ideas that became what they are today ("Change," "Arrow," "Cover Me," "He Calls Me Home") when I joined up with Kevin and Scott. When we wrote "Far Behind" and "You"

from some bass lines Bardi was playing the week he came to play with us, we knew it was gold.

J: Describe some aspects of your first world tour that people would be surprised to learn?

P: How about the fact that we almost died in the van on one of our first runs? We had a single-axle trailer that when the brakes were applied at high speeds it started rocking back and forth. We were headed down I-5, passing a semi at about 75 mph, when the thing started rocking badly. Eventually it swung the whole van around 180 degrees across the medium. We ended up in the opposite

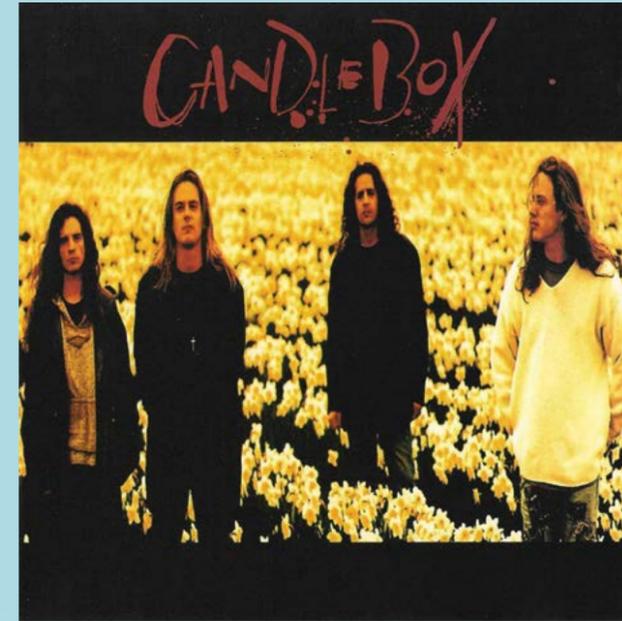
lane going the other way!! What a way to wake up from a nap!!

J: When did the lure of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle take hold?

P: I think it always had a hold on me once I thought I could actually do something with my guitar playing.

J: When and how did you meet your wife?

P: I met Jessica at the House Of Blues Showboat in Atlantic City. Her brother is a fan of getting autographs. They went to the show together so she came through the line with him. Of course



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has made me
a better man
by a mile.

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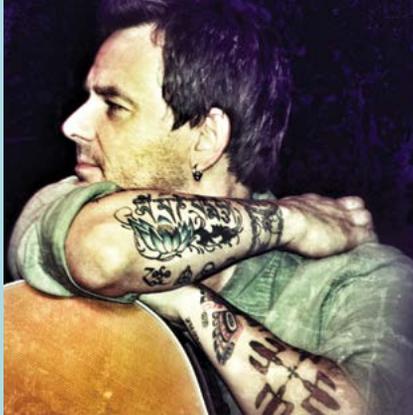
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I thought she was gorgeous and started flirting with her. I thought she was gone for good when they moved on through the line. To my surprise, she plopped down her number right there in front of me. We never stopped talking from then on. Now she's my amazing wife. She's also an amazing mother to Averi.

J: How did discovering you were going to be a father impact you?

P: I was elated. What a blessing. I thought for sure I wanted a boy, but soon realized that I LOVE having a daughter. Being a father has made me a better man by a mile. My days are never dark with Averi and Jessica in my life. Our renewed walk with God has lifted our lives up as well.

J: What were some of the emotions you experienced with the birth of your daughter?

P: Of course I cried. A man who says he didn't cry at the birth of his child is not being truthful. I was also terrified! Me a father?! I still can't believe I'm a dad some days. I look at her sometimes and panic. "How am I going to do this?" I ask myself. What a wonderful experience, though. Truly fulfilling

J: What were some of the changes within yourself that resulted from having a child?

P: I truly became more of a man and less the rock star boy I had been. Everything I do is for her and Jess. Video games and the like really don't exist anymore for me. My mind is always thinking about her future and how I will take care of my family. I'm much more patient than I used to be. It's also made me a more empathetic person.

J: What's a typical day with your daughter like?

P: Jess and I get up and brew some coffee. We get some milk for Averi and go get her from her crib. We like to sit in bed as a family in the morning. She has her milk and we have our coffee. It's awesome. After that we eat breakfast and start the day. What happens in the day really depends on whether I'm in the studio. Jess and Averi also go on play dates with other moms while I work. I'm currently mixing the Apollo Under Fire record, which is the band I'm in here in Florida. We love to take her to the park and run around with her.

J: What are some of the things you like to do with her, teach her, show her?

P: I like to play guitar for her while she sits in my lap. She loves to pluck the strings. Lately she's been grabbing a microphone and singing. It's so cute. Jess and I sit and we say letters and numbers while she repeats them back. We like to go on little walks around the neighborhood. Anything we do with her is fun.

J: What do you think kids have to teach adults? What are a few of the things she's taught you?

P: Patience. You also know the true feeling of love when you have a child. She's taught us to not sweat the little things and just enjoy our time together. The simple things can be so amazing through a child's eyes

J: How is life on the road different as a dad when you go touring now?

P: When she was really young it wasn't as hard to be away, although it was for my poor wife. But now that Averi's older and aware of me being gone, it's tough. I don't like to be a FaceTime father. Hopefully Lotus Crush or Apollo Under Fire will hit it big and I can bring my girls on the road.

Janna Lopez is the mother of a 14-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son.