Big bankroll, big heart make US Festival possible

By Jill Schensul The Arizona Daily Star

So here's this little guy, unassuming and all buttoned into a nice, heavy white shirt, who really isn't a rock 'n' roll freak at all, sitting here talking about making hundreds of thousands of people happy with the biggest rock festival this side of Woodstock.

Steve Wozniak, the 32-year-old brainchild behind the US Festival and chairman of the Unuson Corp., which is putting it on, is an odd person. Sometimes he doesn't laugh when other people do. Sometimes he's so outspoken — like when he talks about Bill Graham — that you just know he has quietly tightened the stomachs of everyone else in the room.

At last year's US Festival, he figured all the musicians he hired — whose rents he was probably paying for several months — were unapproachable. He was shocked when Jackson Browne said hi to him.

Last year he gave somebody a bunch of albums to have autographed. He never got the autographs. Or the albums back.

Wozniak at times seems a bit out of synch with the goings-on. In the middle of the makeshift dining room at the Tucson Community Center Arena a few weeks ago, with the musicians from Triumph and Foghat getting rowdy at the next table before their concert, he certainly seemed a little out of place. But Wozniak is a thoughtful man, and sincere. The features on his big, flat oval face, embellished with Cat Stevens-ish beard and mustache, move in subtle expressions that underline his openness.

He must've been quite a surprise to the people in the music business who helped him realize an idea that at first seemed overwhelming. But one senses from Wozniak that if he sets out to do something, he will. The way he did when he invented the Apple Computer — thank goodness. That little invention enabled about 500,000 rock fans to bake in the sun, sweat, dust and music of last year's US Festival. And it enabled Wozniak, who said he lost about \$10 million at last year's bash, to do it all again — with an even bigger budget — this year at US '83, which runs from Saturday through Monday at the Glen Helen Regional Park in Devore, Calif.

That this whole US phenomenon came about at all is pretty odd, considering Wozniak doesn't know much about rock music. He says he grew up on country. But, he eagerly adds, never quite breaking into a smile but with brown eyes flashing, that he knows more about the music this year: He has cassettes of most of the bands. He also is holding a country music day on June 4.

Wozniak said he did last year's festival because he was looking through the newspaper and felt that, although lots of concerts were being held, none was really worthy of major excitement. He decided one huge festival would be. And, because Wozniak's world was populated with computers, his vision included high-tech thingies like Diamondvision video screens, big sound systems, tents full of gadgetry. Once again, he did what he set out to do.

"I had no business experience. I don't know how to get money — but I've got it. Plus, I'm not the kind of person who has my money watched over for me. So I didn't have inhibitions about spending it."

And spend it he did: \$13 million of it.

Wozniak's lack of inhibitions about spending was, of course, also a drawback: "Everybody looks at the dollars



The Associated Press

Computer whiz Steve Wozniak lends a hand in preparations for the US Festival

and thinks 'How much of it can I get?' " And, as Wozniak says, everyone else says, "Woz's biggest fault is he doesn't know how to say no."

The portable-toilet people tried to soak him. The bands tried to soak him. But Wozniak surrounded himself with people who knew the business, and they managed to keep him at least slightly above the deluge.

And he's learned on his own, too, as evidenced by his observation of the music business: "It's one of the hardest, worst businesses in the world," he declared, as the

people from Feyline Promotions and Unuson public relations listened quietly, and the guys from Foghat shoveled food and acted boisterous. "It's nowhere near as ethical as the computer business. There's a lot of yelling to get things done."

Wozniak liked Bill Graham, last year's promoter, just because he could get things done. But the rest of Unuson didn't get along with the famed promoter.

"I sided with him (Graham), but I wouldn't force the Unuson people. That would demotivate them."

This year, Barry Fey of Feyline is booking the acts. The list is impressive, including groups like U2, the Clash, the English Beat, Stevie Nicks, John Cougar (Wozniak's personal favorite), Judas Priest, the Scorpions and David Bowie.

Also this year, it seems everything will be bigger. More video screens! More tents! More port-a-potties! More grass, too, Wozniak reports, which should alleviate the dust problem that plagued last year's festival.

And, Wozniak adds cryptically, there'll be an unbelievable special-effects show. With the impishness of a kid who's just planted gum on his teacher's chair, he refused to elaborate, obviously enjoying one of his rare moments of secrecy.

Wozniak said Unuson got almost everyone and everything they wanted except for a reunion concert by the Eagles — "They don't get along," Wozniak said. They also didn't get the Culture Club — the sheriff, who had to approve all the acts, didn't want some guy who looked like a girl on any stage in his county. The biggest star is, of course, Bowie, who will be

making his first appearance on a U.S. stage in five years. Yet Bowie wasn't Wozniak's idea. It was his pal, sci-fi writer Ray Bradbury (who will appear at one of the technical booths), who wanted the former Mayjah Tom to So he will, even though it meant buying Bowie out of a

European date, plus paying for a whole new stage set to be constructed Stateside. And, on top of all that, there's a clause in Van Halen's contract requiring that band to get as much money as the highest paid group at the show. Well, they do call it the music business.

"By then the feeling was, without Bowie we wouldn't make a profit anyway. But if we're gonna lose money, we might as well do it right."

Spoken like a man of the people, huh? Well, Wozniak really is.

One of his biggest heartaches last year, he said, was that somebody abandoned a dog at the festival. He adopted it. The reason he decided to do it all again, after last year, is also indicative of this big heart.

Wozniak admitted that his wife was against it. There were tons of mail. And phone calls. The Wozniaks have a gate at their house now. And once people know you've got bucks, you leave yourself open to the possibility of kidnaping, Wozniak pointed out quietly.

"Also, I'm risking my own credibility," Wozniak said. "I can't enhance it. This year 300,000 people could have the day of their life. But two people could have a fight, and 10 years later that's what the public will remember."

Wozniak worries about these things. Maybe more than making a profit, although he says that if the festival loses money again — if they don't sell 800,000 tickets this will be the last one.

But he had to do it one more time. "The response we got last year took me very emotionally."

Woz couldn't say no to giving more people the chance to "walk away saying, 'This is most incredible thing I've ever seen.' "

Tickets to the US Festival are \$20 per day, plus \$1.50 service charge, at both Diamond's box office locations.

RETAILERS:

Expand your profits. Expand into Green Valley.



For leasing and market information, contact Mike Stilb 791-2866



10-oz. Peralta cut OTHER SPECIALS \$5.95 English-cut prime rib

mahi mahi soup or salad

rainbow trout

choice of potato • fresh hot breads



Also featuring fresh fish daily

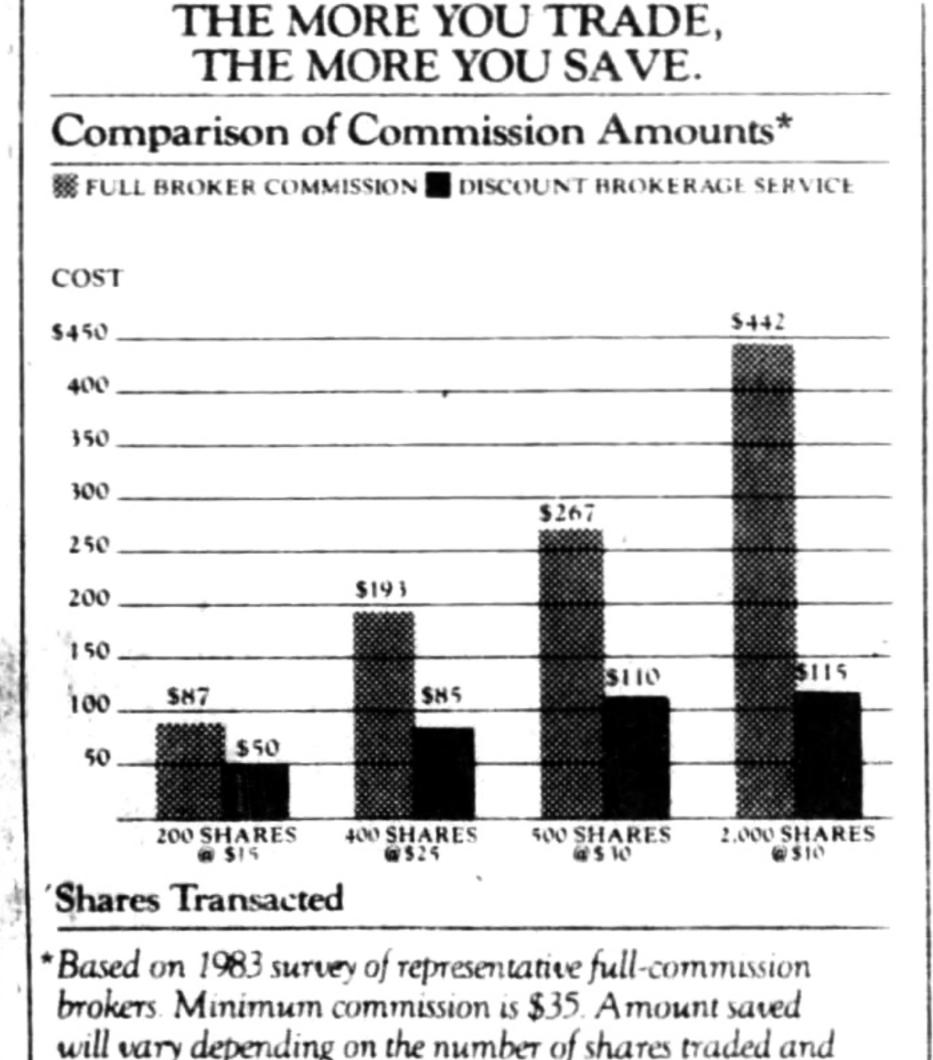
BARON'S

reservations 747-3503 2401 S. Wilmot at Golf Links





The Arizona Bank can now help vou saveup to 70% on brokerage



will vary depending on the number of shares traded and the value of the shares. Smaller trades and certain unusual trades may not generate any savings. Details available upon request.

INTRODUCING THE ARIZONA BANK'S DISCOUNT BROKERAGE SERVICE. If you're capable of making your own buy-and-sell decisions on stocks, options and bonds, The Arizona Bank's new Discount Brokerage Service can save you up to 70% on

The chart shows you just how much you can save compared to a full commission stockbroker.

brokerage commissions.

The bigger your trades, the bigger your savings. JUST CALL A TOLL-FREE

NUMBER AND PLACE YOUR BUY/SELL ORDER. With our Discount Brokerage Service, making a buy/sell transaction is as

easy as calling a toll-free 800 number. The phone will be answered by an experienced brokerage professional

who will promptly execute and confirm your transaction. Deposits or payments for the transactions THE

will be made using your savings and checking accounts at The Arizona Bank. As a result, you won't have to worry about whether your payment checks arrive on time. And you'll have faster access to settlement funds.

That same toll-free number can also provide you with the latest market information or the status of your account.

A NEW LEVEL OF SECURITY FOR SECURITY TRANSACTIONS. Our Discount Brokerage Service is offered in association with Gruntal & Co., a member of the New York Stock Exchange and other principal

exchanges. So you'll enjoy the assurance of dealing with securities industry professionals. Combined with the convenience and confidence of dealing

with The Arizona Bank. For more information, stop in at any of our offices throughout the state and pick up our free Discount Brokerage Service Investors Guide.

It'll show you how you can start putting more of your money into stocks. And less into stockbrokers.

