Golden records don't always glitter

long time ago I heard for the first time the psychedelic band, Cream. I was so impressed I bought a guitar. The rest isn't exactly history but I still play. Now and then I manage a gig, usually with a few others who think it's ok to perform, among other things, Bob Dylan tunes.

I also used to do my share of daydreaming about becoming a star. Part of the reason for that was prob-

LONDON, ON (CUP) - A ably that I needed a little more acceptance than most of my peers. However, a good deal of it was that I really did like music. I could think of no more pleasurable way to spend huge chunks of time than to be sending notes pealing out of a Fender

I wasn't the last person to dream of becoming a famous musician. Bands and other artists still line up by the score for fame and fortune. The appeal is obvious.

But Bill Van Dyk, in an article titled, "The case of MP3 and the poor starving music industry" (Christian Courier, Nov. 15, 1999), reveals that not all that glitters is platinum. Some of it barely rates

Recording companies are, he says, well known for signing musicians and then fleecing them. For example, Public Enemy recently

selling \$72-million in merchandise. When they then tried to market their material on MPEG Audio Layer 3 (MP3) format, circumventing their record company by distributing their product via the Internet, the company's lawyers shut them down.

How can commercially successful recording artists wind up with barely anything, and why would they want to drop their record companies?

Van Dyk explains.

Record companies regularly hire a number of people like photographers, public relations consultants and session musicians to work with the artists they sign. The services provided by these people, however, are billed to the artist at inflated

For example, a manicurist suddenly becomes an "image consultant." Her or his services are billed to the artist at \$125 per hour. In this way, the artist is milked for every possible penny

According to Billboard magazine, an artist who sells 500,000 CDs will likely see only about \$20,000.

Understandably, musicians are looking for alternatives to being exploited by mainstream record companies. Annie DiFranco, for instance, records, prints and markets all her own CDs and is doing well.

With MP3 technology and the availability of inexpensive high quality recording equipment, we will probably see more artists produce and market their music without using the record company establish-

According to Van Dyk, record companies are frantic to squelch MP3 and to control the pool of art-

However, they are unlikely to succeed. Similar battles have all been lost by companies like Microsoft, IBM and CompuServe.

If there is a lesson here, it is that whatever businesses we may establish or become part of, it is important to treat people fairly. Businesses which succeed by means of deals which burn out their clients and require that new opportunities be suppressed are unlikely to earn trust and loyalty from those they claim to help.

In the case of the music industry, they even give justification to those who illegally copy industry merchandise. Uncopyrighted material in MP3 format is becoming available to every high school student in the country.

One of my children tells me he is bringing home an MP3 CD. Should I ask him how he got it? He'll probably tell me before I ask In any case, I better go lightly with him. I may need his help in manufacturing my own CDs in a last ditch reach for stardom.

Michael Veenema

Roast chicken muffins "The meal of winners"

Muffins can be a great convenience to anyone who doesn't have the time to prepare three meals a day. They can be healthy, filling, and all-around great.

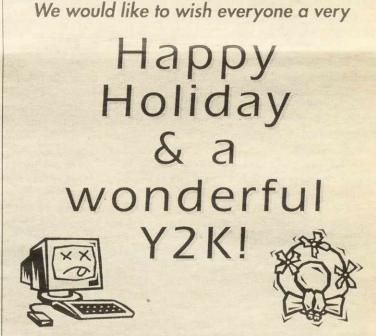
For these easy, delicious muffins, you will need;

4 cups flour 1 cup milk 1/2 cup oil 1 cup sugar 1/2 tsp. baking powder 1 cup chocolate chips 1 orange peel 1/2 ground roast chicken

Mix ingredients in a big bowl, putting chicken in last. Grease muffin tray, or the chicken will stick. Happy munching!

Note: For a festive holiday treat, substitute egg nog for milk and cherries for chocolate chips.





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