Weird Tales of the Unexplained

issue 12, fall 1986

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Photo: Ron Delany

Feels like it might be all right...

Maybe you feel it, too—there's something in the autumn air. Cleansing winds of change are blowing through the Grateful Dead scene, stripping away ancient cobwebs and carrying in their currents the seeds of joyous rebirth. The past few months have tested us all and forced us, for the first time really, to come to grips with the mortality of the band. It has been a period of self-examination and introspection for many Deadheads; for others, the Dead's hiatus inspired them to reach outside the Deadhead community for new sources of magic and fun. It sometimes takes a cataclysmic event—like Garcia's near-death—to shake us off our treadmills. As blissful as the touring life at its best can be, it also exerts a physical and psychic toll: a lot of us are unhealthy and unequipped for dealing with a world outside the Dead. So this break from touring has offered a good opportunity to slow down for a moment and move out of the hurricane. Our bones patched, we can hit the road again with new energy and vitality. Relentless optimists that we are, we believe this whole strange episode will ultimately be positive, whatever changes may be in store. The excitement in the Deadhead community is building again as shows approach, and of course we share that. But we would also counsel people to be patient with the band as they get back into the swing of things and pursue new directions. Remember—it's a miracle we even have shows to go to.

Again we find ourselves apologizing for the lateness of our issue, but when we learned that we would be able to print a transcript of an October 14 interview with Garcia—his first since his illness—we felt it was worth stopping the presses for and delaying the mailing a week. We're sure you'll agree. The interview also forced us to cut our customary humor piece, so tell your friends an extra joke or two for us.

Those of you who received renewal notices or who've read our subscription ad know that we have, alas, finally raised our subscription rate by $2. This is to defray increased mailing and printing costs brought on by our swelling subscription rolls. In addition, our Back Issue price has gone up to $3.50 per issue. It's turned out to be more expensive than we'd figured to continually keep all the back issues in stock. (Our foreign rates stay at the old rates, however.)

Lastly, we hope all of you have a safe and happy holiday season. It's been a pretty weird year, but going into the last quarter we find ourselves still smiling. And three months ago, who'd have dared believe that we could close this introduction this way: See ya at the December shows!

— *BJ & RM*

The Golden Road

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FEEDBACK

No Summertime Blues Here

It's been a busy summer for Minnesota Deadheads, so I thought I'd write and let you know what we've been up to around here.

We kicked off the season by bringing The Radiators (every Deadhead's favorite bar band) up from New Orleans to play three public gigs and a private party. Several of our friends from California, Colorado and Connecticut zapped in for the occasion to help us boogie our butts off to the Rads' patented Fish Head Music.

Next, we all tripped out into the country to celebrate Mike and Teri's wedding, complete with a solstice ritual, a gourmet buffet dinner, lots of wine and champagne, drums, crystals, banners, a terrific thunderstorm and plenty of dancing with two live bands composed entirely of Deadheads. Again, we welcomed visiting Heads from both East and West coasts to help us party.

The following week saw Dylan and the Dead at the Dome, which was a little disappointing for the lack of parking-lot scene outside and poor sound inside. On the other hand, it was the first time that many of us Minneapolitans, who have driven, bused, flown, and/or hitched to Dead shows, were ever able to *bicycle* to a show. And the friendly hippies at the Seward Cafe once again supplied good, cheap organic food and a mellow place to hang out after the show.

Then we were off to Alpine Valley, where we hung our "Don't Tread On Me" flag from our favorite tree and were rewarded with a wonderful rendition of "Uncle John's Band"; where we filled seven motel rooms in Lake Geneva and had a wild drumming session in an abandoned railroad car in the middle of the night; where Ron Delany took a group photo of us on the hillside in the amphitheater, proving that there were at least 50 of us in attendance.

A few of us continued on tour and had good times in Akron, Buffalo and Washington. Returning home, we cruised through a lovely July, turning out in force for local concerts by Van Morrison, Sweet Honey in the Rock, David Bromberg and Joan Armatrading. And throughout the summer were various outdoor festivals, street dances and the like, offering free music of all sorts from classical and jazz to punk rock to reggae and salsa.

August saw us take off for Brainerd for a reunion with the Gorham clan, who had split off from the larger community of Twin Cities Deadheads a few years back to go raise their children in a less urban environment. They graciously hosted a couple dozen of us for a weekend of softball, sweet corn, swimming and singing round the campfire.

Closing out the summer were a late-August surprise birthday party for Stu (mainstay of the erstwhile Muskrat Flatt band), and the wedding of Crayne and Mary in early September. In the planning stages as of this writing are a mass camp-out on the Mississippi River bluffs around

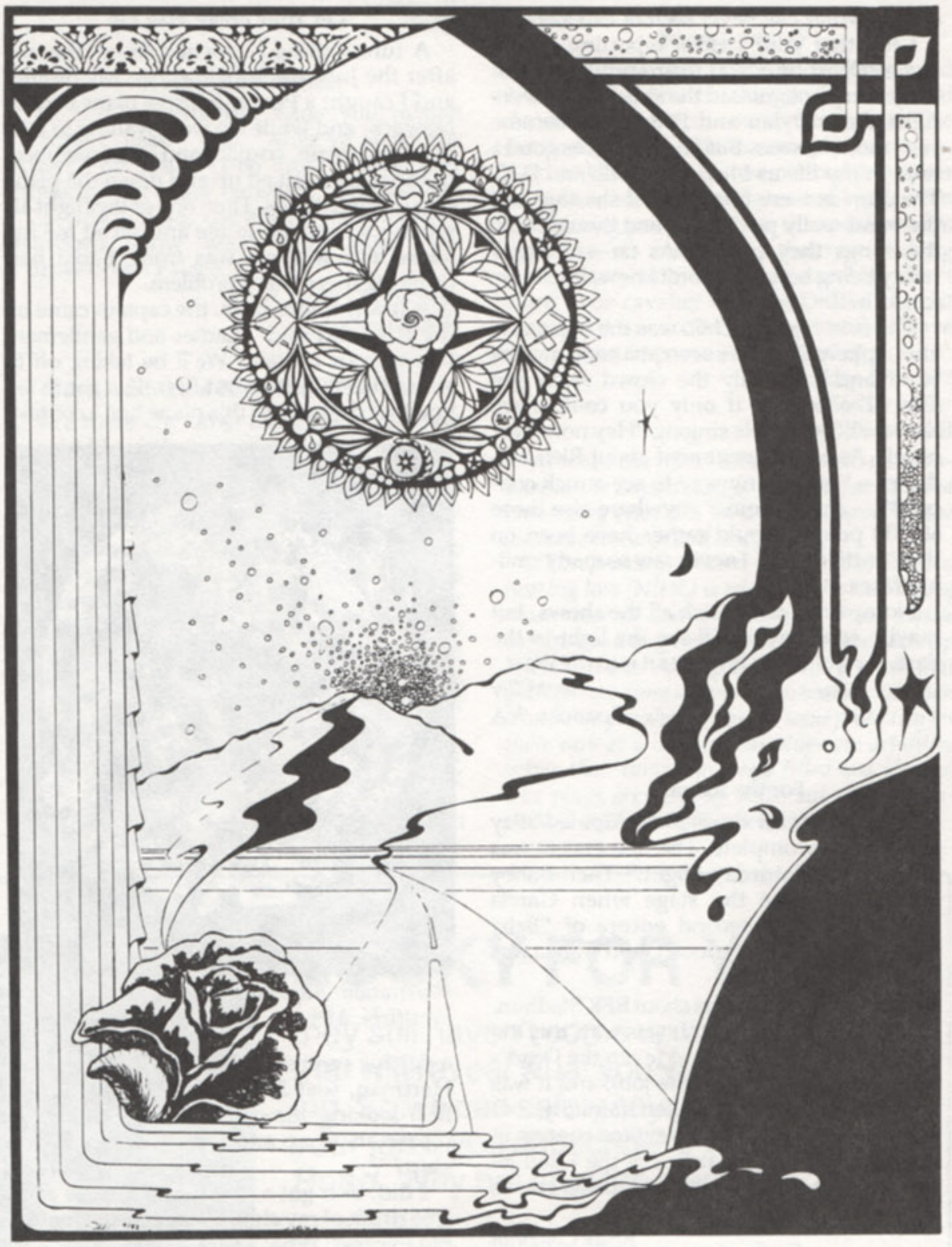


Illustration: Michele Wojcicki, San Francisco

equinox time, and a gala Halloween blow-out featuring (once again) The Radiators.

So, even though we didn't get to go to Kansas City or Red Rocks, you can see that we're keeping the beat alive here in the home state of Bob Dylan, Hubert Humphrey and Prince.

Smiles and hugs to everybody, and healing vibes to Jerry. Also, happy birthday to Mickey (9/11), Bob (10/16) and Brent (10/21). Maybe we'll see you at New Year's.

David Emerson
Minneapolis, MN

There's a First Time for Everyone

Thanks for some great reading. The magazine is evolving into something really special. However, I must take exception to your position regarding large venues.

Although your words ring true, you overlook the obvious. Many "first shows" are at stadiums. Obviously, the bigger the place, the easier to gain entry. Without these large venues the walk-in first-timer is virtually excluded from most shows, especially these days, with tickets being such precious items. Let us not forget just how lucky we all have been to have had the Grateful Dead cross our path. There are many, many potential Deadheads who haven't joined up simply for lack of exposure. To eliminate the large venues would effectively close the door to new membership.

Steven Benavidez
Chula Vista, CA

You Had To Be There

I'm tired of reading incorrect reviews of East Coast shows that you are reporting through the grapevine. I believe your opinions of the shows you see are very good and accurate; keep up the good work! But, not all East Coast shows are bad, and not all Eastern Deadheads are drunks. I find it hard to

FEEDBACK

criticize what I've never seen or experienced.

I felt that your lack of reporting on the Dylan-Dead tour was disgraceful, and I'm truly sorry you missed the shows. You were right about Dylan and Petty; they became very monotonous. But I never had as good a time in my life as I had in Buffalo and D.C. The crowds were friendly and sharing, and the band really put feeling and thought into the songs they played. As far as "bigger rarely being better," I don't know, but it was fun as hell.

The first night in D.C. was the best party atmosphere I've ever seen at a concert. The band and especially the crowd really got into "Iko-Iko" — if only you could have heard 60,000 people singing "Hey now! Hey now!" As for the comment about Rich Stadium — "Is this any way to see a rock concert?" — I don't know anywhere else those 60,000 people would rather have been on the Fourth of July. I never saw so many smiling faces.

I know you can't catch all the shows, but maybe someday you'll see the light in the East, for it's just as bright as it is in the West.

Tim Miller
Roanoke, VA

For the Record . . .

Your set list for the 6-28-86 Alpine Valley show was incomplete. The first encore was "One More Saturday Night." Then Bobby started to leave the stage when Garcia launched into a second encore of "Baby Blue." It was a great concert, and Garcia was especially animated.

As for your comments about RFK Stadium, I totally agree with you. It was way, *way* too big. There was bad sound (even the Dead's technology couldn't do the job), and it was way too hot (97° and killer humidity, but what do you expect at a daytime concert in D.C.?). Only the greatness of the Dead let you connect at all with them. Smaller shows are a must!

Bruce Coughlin
Natick, MA

Dome of Doom

Don't blame the people of Minneapolis for the Metrodome. The local big money interests rammed that stadium down our throats and succeeded in destroying football, baseball and now the Dead in Minnesota. If the Dead ever return there—and I doubt they will—I, for one, will not go see them there! Perhaps the Dead's logic the night they shared the bill with Dylan was that if one set sounded bad in the place, two sets would sound twice as bad, thus the abbreviated one-set show. Too bad.

Regrets to those out-of-towners whose first and only impression of a Minnesota Dead show was under the Teflon Tent. Not everyone can have a Greek Theatre in his back yard, but believe me, we've got far better venues than that!

Karl Bremer
Minneapolis, MN

Let Your Freak Flag Fly

A funny thing happened to me the day after the July 4th Buffalo show. My brother and I caught a People Express plane back to Newark, and while we were waiting to take off, the captain, co-pilot and other members of the plane walked up and down the plane two or three times. Then one of the flight attendants came up to me and asked me my name and where I was from. I told her, thinking there was a problem.

A few minutes later, the captain came on the P.A. and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain. We'll be taking off in about five minutes. But first, I've got to tell you that the crew of this plane had a contest,



Illustration: Augustus Trautweiler, Westfield, MA

a tie-dye contest that is, and we think Gary Hartman, seat 27-A, from Florida, has the best-looking tie-dye. Gary, would you please stand up and show the people your shirt?"

I did, and got a round of applause and a free drink of my choice. Let's hear it for People Express! What a trip!

Gary Hartman
Clewiston, FL

Can You Answer? Yes I Can

Like all Deadheads, I am constantly asked the question "Why do you go to so many concerts, traveling hundreds of miles, etc.?" I always found it difficult to give a meaningful answer until I ran across this quote from a book called *Where the Wasteland Ends*, by Theodore Roszak. He's speaking about Wordsworth, but I think it fits in with being a Deadhead.

"Presence Before Order. Where this priority is lost, it is always at the expense of visionary art. Here is precisely why art — visionary art — does not get beyond initial wonder. Because there is nowhere more important to be. Such art rests in the spell of the sacred. It does not lead to research. It is content to celebrate its revelations over and over again. It does not seek progress or accumulation, but repetition . . . or rather stasis: the still point, where we balance 'like angels stopped upon the wing by sound/Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.' For who would want to turn off and move on . . . to other things? Yes, there are other things worth doing. But not just as worth doing. Not by a long way. Either we know that, or there can be no discipline of the sacred to guide curiosity and learning."

Deb Martino
Cumberland, RI

The GD: Choice of Champions

Back in the fall of 1978, just prior to the release of the *Shakedown Street* album, *Sports Illustrated* featured Bill Walton on the cover. A letter from the editor explained that of all the pictures they shot of Bill, the very first was used for the cover because it captured his grinning expression as someone popped in a tape of "Uncle John's Band."

In the accompanying article, which is about ten pages long, Bill spends more time talking about the Dead than about basketball! At one point he tells a story about being recognized while he was doing some mountain climbing. The person could vaguely place Walton from somewhere, and then finally exclaimed, "Oh yeah, I saw you dancing onstage at the Red Rocks shows!"

David S. Einhorn
Chicago, IL

P.S. We have a surprise banner to hang in Chicago Stadium for Bill when the Celtics come to play the Bulls next season.

The Neat Beat for Turtle Meat

In my travels this year through the Pacific and Asia, I have carried with me a few vintage live Dead tapes, not only for my entertainment (and sanity), but also to try the music out with the local populace. The results have been mixed.

With the natives, the response is usually only polite interest. I think this is partly because the Dead's music is often complex, and thus initially less accessible than the standard-fare American rock 'n' roll available in the Third World. Also, perhaps to fully appreciate a Dead tape, one has to have experienced a Dead show. (Which brings up another issue: When are the Dead touring the Pacific and Asia? There are many hungry souls waiting.)

In the Pacific, the Dead were best received by some outer-island natives of Truk, in Micronesia. It was an unforgettable scene on our tropical paradise, to be devouring fresh roasted giant sea turtle to the beat of "Sugar Magnolia."

I was surprised to find the best response to date at my current place of employment —I am a volunteer at a Khmer Rouge refugee camp in Thailand. Yes, the Khmer Rouge (actually, mostly just civilian peasants who were under the control of the Khmer Rouge) really dug it! The occasion was a party celebrating the birth of a daughter to one of the medics, and the tape was Blossom Music Center 6-25-85, set II. "China-Rider" and "Sugar Magnolia" elicited much table tapping and foot stomping (the Khmers are

really polite), and even the "space" was well received. I plan to leave a tape or two with the medics when I depart. Perhaps it will add a touch of silver lining to the generally gray lives of these refugees.

Bennett Parnes, M.D.
Aranayaprathet, Thailand

More Friends

I have a few to add to the list of people who have played with the Dead.

Dickey Betts appears on several '74 tapes jamming on "Goin' Down the Road," including a Portland, Oregon, show.

Jorma jammed with the Dead at the 11-20-70 Rochester show that no one seems to have a good-quality tape of.

Janis Joplin sings "Lovelight" on a 6-22-69 Central Park tape.

Add to the "Memorable Occasions" list 6-17-82 New Haven Coliseum. The Jerry Garcia Band and Bobby & the Midnites played together for two songs: "Man Smart, Woman Smarter" and "Deal."

Ron Cowin
New York, NY

More Minutiae

"Knockin' on Heaven's Door," which made last issue's list of Dylan songs played by the Dead and solo bands, was also performed acoustic by "Bob Weir & Friends" (Weir, Garcia, Lesh and Hart) at a 1978 benefit at Loyola University in Chicago. Towards the end of the song, Garcia motioned for all of us to join in a sing-along. I'm not sure, but I think it was the highlight of my life.

K. Sysol
Chicago, IL

Keeping Us Honest

In the set lists last issue you missed "Brother Esau" and "Must've Been the Roses" on the 5-11-86 Frost shows; they came in that order between "Iko Iko" and "Cassidy." Also, the encore for the 4-3-86 Hartford show was "Baby Blue," not "Brokedown Palace."

Igor Dobrowolski
Rockville, MD

The Dead: Live From Lake Wobegon

Are there any other Deadheads out there who'd like to hear the band do an acoustic set on the *Prairie Home Companion* radio show? Sounds to me like a heckuva deal, you bet. After all, musical guests on *PHC* have ranged from folkies and bluegrass to ethnic music of all stripes, to church choirs to Brave Combo and Los Lobos. Why not the Dead? And the Dead have played some strange places. Why not Lake Wobegon? I'd like to encourage people to write the Dead office and Minnesota Public Radio to see if we can't make this connection.

Lee Agnew
Norman, OK

P.S. Too late, of course, I thought of a great bumper sticker for the Dead/Dylan shows: "I'll give up taping when they pry my cold dead fingers off the record button."

Sound Advice

Last summer our "Dead Kids" (ages 2 and 4) had a great time listening to the music and dancing in the 12th row in Cincinnati. The music/loudness didn't seem to bother them. At the Akron concert we noticed a number of kids who had their ears *bandaged*, even kids sitting pretty far from the speakers. I'm curious—do you know if that type of thing is necessary to protect kids' ears? We don't want to be cavalier with the Dead Kids, but wonder if an occasional concert will have much of an impact on their hearing.

Ron & Mary-Ellen and
Jesse & Cole Miller
Dexter, MI

We asked our friend Barb Treadwell, a pharmacist in the Department of Pediatrics at Stanford University Hospital, for a medical opinion. She did some research and told us:

"The primary concern is that noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is related to the total dose of noise received over a lifetime, so if you expose children to a large amount of noise, they develop NIHL earlier. Also, the possibility exists that children are more susceptible to hearing loss than adults. So you should provide some protection for their ears at a concert. Ear plugs are definitely better than cotton (properly fitted and inserted wax plugs are probably best), but the most important factor is that something *be worn."*



Congratulations, Gary, the test showed no trace of psychedelics *this* time.

LUCKY FOR YOU

they still haven't come up with a test that will reveal what you've been reading. So we can safely say you won't lose your job if you subscribe to *The Golden Road*. Why not take the plunge?

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DEADLINE

In this space last issue, we had only grim news to report about Garcia's health, and the future of the Dead was still unclear. But all of our prayers were answered, and Garcia's convalescence was quicker than everyone expected. He's already got a few Bay Area shows with the Jerry Garcia Band under his belt, and Dead shows are on the way in mid-December and, of course, at New Year's. The big Dead "comeback" shows will take place at the Oakland Coliseum December 15, 16 and 17, and then New Year's will be at the more intimate Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center in Oakland. No word yet on whether New Year's Eve will be televised again.

Since many of you have not had much access to information on Garcia's illness and recovery over the past few months, we thought we'd briefly bring you up to date. Garcia was really quite sick for the first couple of weeks he was in Marin General Hospital. For a while, his kidneys functioned only with the help of a dialysis machine and he was severely weakened. By the end of July, though, he had rallied, and on August 1, his 44th birthday, he went home!

From the first moment his illness was disclosed Deadheads flooded both the Dead office and the hospital with mail — literally thousands of cards, letters, tapes and gifts of all kinds from around the world. And in a statement released to the San Francisco *Chronicle* on the day of his release from the hospital, Garcia acknowledged the outpouring of concern and love: "I really want to thank all the well-wishers for the cards and letters and healing vibes. I felt them. I wouldn't be out of the hospital this soon if it weren't for the thoughts, healing help and all the stuff people sent."

Garcia spent most of August and September with his wife, Carolyn (better known as Mountain Girl), and children just relaxing and building his strength back. The family even took a trip to Lake Shasta and Oregon — Garcia's first real vacation in God-knows-how-long. His spirits were reportedly excellent during the whole ordeal of the hospitalization and recuperation. And though he initially had some motor problems resulting from the gravity of his illness, his recovery has been speedier than anticipated. In fact, even the Dead office was caught off-guard by the announcement of the first Garcia Band shows in early October. There should be no long-term damage



The wounded warrior backstage at Ranch Rock '86. Photo: Brett Pauly

from this episode, and hopefully Garcia will come out of this actually much healthier as he (necessarily) adapts to a more health-conscious lifestyle. He's already come out of it a lot thinner, and Robert Hunter happily tells us that Garcia "is absolutely clear-eyed. It's wonderful."

Garcia's illness was more than just a devastating emotional blow to the Dead organization; it was also a financial disaster. The Dead have a large payroll that depends mainly on income from touring, and with all the shows from Kansas City through Long Beach canceled, the Dead probably lost a few million dollars of gross income. Several people were laid off (at least temporarily) because of a serious cash-flow problem, and some projects-in-progress, including the band's new video, had to be put on hold for a while. Still, during this period we heard nothing but optimistic forecasts from staffers — everyone was confident that Garcia would bounce back and the wheel would keep turning. Hats off to all the office staff for keeping cool in a period of *extreme* adversity and maintaining some sense of "normalcy" in a decidedly abnormal situation.

Of course the shock waves of the event went far beyond the Dead organization. Ultra Sound, the Marin-based company that provides the Dead with their sound reinforcement equipment, found itself faced with stacks of unrented equipment and few prospects for hooking up with other bands, because most summer tours had been planned when Garcia was stricken. At the eleventh hour, though, they hired out to George Thorogood and some other acts.

More than a few Deadhead craftspeople took a bath because the summer tour was canceled. We know of a couple of folks who already had Red Rocks shirts printed up (not to mention Ventura), and one woman we heard about had to make an emergency call to Guatemala, of all places to stop her partner from spending thousands of dollars on clothing the two had planned to sell during the summer and fall tours. Deadheads are pretty resourceful, though, and in the end we heard very little grousing about the canceled shows; just fond hopes for *future* shows.

As most of you have probably heard, Garcia is not the only member of the Dead recuperating these days. Bob Weir broke his shoulder while riding a dirt bike (bicycle) in early August. Ever the trouper, however, just a couple of weeks later he went ahead with a planned appearance with Kingfish at Ranch Rock '86, an outdoor music festival at Pyramid Lake in Nevada. With his arm in a sling and strapped to his side, he was unable to play guitar, but he sang all afternoon, much to the delight of the 5000 or so on hand.

Mary Eisenhart gives us this report on the proceedings:

Ranch Rock '86, held September 7, offered music-starved Deadheads an all-day event featuring Bob Weir, Mickey Hart and Robert Hunter, all with different bands. The concert site, located in the arid high-desert country of the Paiute Indian Reservation, is considered a sacred spot by the Indians, and the event itself was billed as a sort of healing ritual for the ailing Jerry Garcia and the community at large. The 5000 or so intrepid souls who braved the arduous conditions — heat, dust and the long trek to a site accessible only by eight miles of dirt road — were rewarded with a generous dose of fine music.

After sets by Zero, who played unan-

nounced and free of charge (three of its members were playing in other bands on the bill), and John Cipollina's latest band Problem Child, Kingfish turned in an excellent, if overlong, performance. Bob Weir, who had somehow managed to re-injure his broken shoulder backstage, nonetheless joined the band onstage for the last half of its set, performing with such energy that many in the audience feared for his well-being. His injury was the focus of many witticisms during the course of the day — Weir himself interrupted the chorus of "Easy To Slip" with testimonials as to the accuracy of the song's title, and Robert Hunter commented that, given Weir's accident and Garcia's illness, the band had better exercise caution lest they become the Grateful Injured.

Hunter's long-awaited set (his last announced West Coast appearance was nearly two years ago) was the highlight of the show for most in attendance. Backed by the "Mystery Band," which included David Freiberg on keyboards and Mickey Hart on drums, Hunter delivered tight, energetic renditions of old and new songs, including several from his new album *Rock Columbia*. As an unexpected treat, the band cooked up a rumbling, smoldering "Fire on the Mountain," with Hunter taking the first verses and Mickey finishing it up with a reprise of his historic Hunter impersonation.

By the time Mickey & the Daylites (Barry Melton, Kathi McDonald, David Freiberg, Bobby Vega, David Jenkins and Cipollina) took the stage, night had fallen and Wavy Gravy had re-christened the band Mickey & the Sunsets. They, too, turned in a great set on a stage eerily lit in the pitch blackness, with songs ranging from "Piece of My Heart" to "The Shape I'm In."

The promoter, Isis Ventures, did an excellent job of putting the show together, insuring a plentiful supply of water and providing a nearly perfect sound system.

A few days after Ranch Rock, the first Night of the Living Deadheads gathering took place at Wolfgang's, Bill Graham's San Francisco club. The event was organized to get Deadheads together during this period of no shows, and to raise money for the Rex Foundation, the Dead's philanthropic wing. The night was a resounding success, drawing more than 500 Heads, who rocked to the music of two bands (The Reptiles, led by *Playing in the Band* author David Gans, and Stevie Bee & the Hornets), shopped at a bazaar featuring Deadhead-made crafts, watched Dead videos and generally partied it up into the wee hours. In addition to the money raised by the admission fee, another $700 was brought in from the sale of tickets for a raffle of such collectibles as books and records signed by band members and even one of Jerry's T-shirts! Eileen Law, Steve Marcus and Harry Popick were among those on hand from the Dead organization helping out with the auction. (Harry also mixed the sound for the bands.) The highlight of the evening for us, though, was the screening of an interview with Phil videotaped that afternoon at his Marin home.

The interview, conducted by a friend of Phil's named Brian Connors, contained several revelations. Asked if the Dead were planning to return to a "jazzier" format, Lesh replied: "I think we're going to have a lot more flexible format. Some of the things that occurred in the first or second set may be switched around, and we might not take a break — I don't know. But the whole structure, the whole flow of the concert, is liable to be different when we come back."

Grateful Graphics


A


B



D

"all good things in all good time", words to live by lately, wouldn't you say? yes, we all need shows and with december fast approaching we can look forward to the shows as well as the holidays. though since i can't make it any easier for you to hit the shows, i hope this ad makes your holiday buying easier...

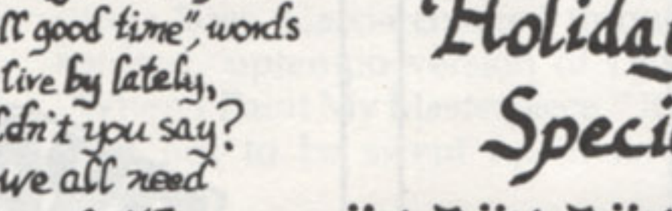
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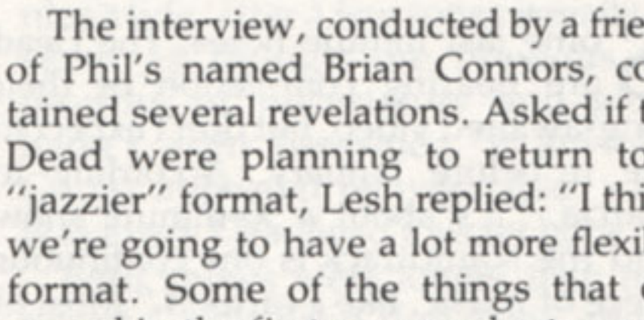
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T-Shirt (your choice)
Set of Notecards
Memo Pad
Bumperstickers (2)
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happy holidays ... jonathan


C



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DEADLINE

Most interesting, though, was his response to the question of whether there is anything Deadheads can do to help the band. "Well, when we get back on the road, it would be very helpful if Deadheads wouldn't bring drugs around anymore," Phil said. "We'd kind of like to ask everyone to look at themselves, and look at their use of hard drugs, and kind of reconsider it, because it's not a very good trip. We've all discovered that. . . . Personally, and that's all I can really talk about, I'm down on it. I'm through with it . . . forever!"

Some last minute notes: The Dead are nearing completion of their long-awaited video, but don't expect to see it before January. According to Garcia, "it's about a 50-minute show and the soundtrack is one continuous piece of music, like a cartoon." Most of the footage was shot live (with no audience) at the Marin Veterans Auditorium in the spring and fall of '85, though Garcia says bits from last New Year's were also used . . . Speaking of New Year's, look for the Neville Brothers to open each night of the forthcoming late-December stand at Kaiser Center in Oakland . . . The Dead's first shows of 1987 will likely be a pair of Chinese New Year's concerts at the San Francisco Civic in late January. We will be entering the Year of the Hare, so take a rabbit to lunch . . . Rumor has it the Dead have been looking into playing New Orleans for Mardi Gras in early March. If that acknowledged long shot doesn't materialize, they'll stay in the Bay Area, maybe at the Civic again. The East should see the band sometime in March, with rumored dates in Hampton, Philly, The Meadowlands and, possibly, Chicago.

We've gotten very favorable reports about Go Ahead, the latest band put together by Billy and Brent. Joining that dynamic duo are David Margen (the ex-Santana bassist who was also in the short-lived Kokomo), guitarist Jerry Cortez and Alex Ligertwood, the plucky one-time lead singer of Santana. The band draws heavily on tunes near and dear to Deadheads, including "Dear Mr. Fantasy," "Tons of Steel," "Gimme Some Lovin'" and others. A few of the dates on Go Ahead's lengthy East and Midwest tour paired the band with Robert Hunter.

The Psychedelic Solution is a new retail store and gallery in Manhattan that should be of interest to Heads. The store specializes in psychedelic posters, postcards, handbills and fine art. According to proprietor Jacaeber Kastor, "We won't be some kind of '60s revival store. We are not into exploitation products or trends, but wish to concentrate on original materials, quality reprints and, above all, *aesthetics*. We pay homage to rock and roll, but it's not our god. We are primarily into art and psychedelic consciousness." November will be a great time to check out the store: All month long the Psychedelic Solution will display new and vintage works by Rick Griffin, whose art is so well known to SF music buffs. The Psychedelic Solution is located at 33 West 8th St. in New York City. You can reach 'em at (212) 529-2462. □

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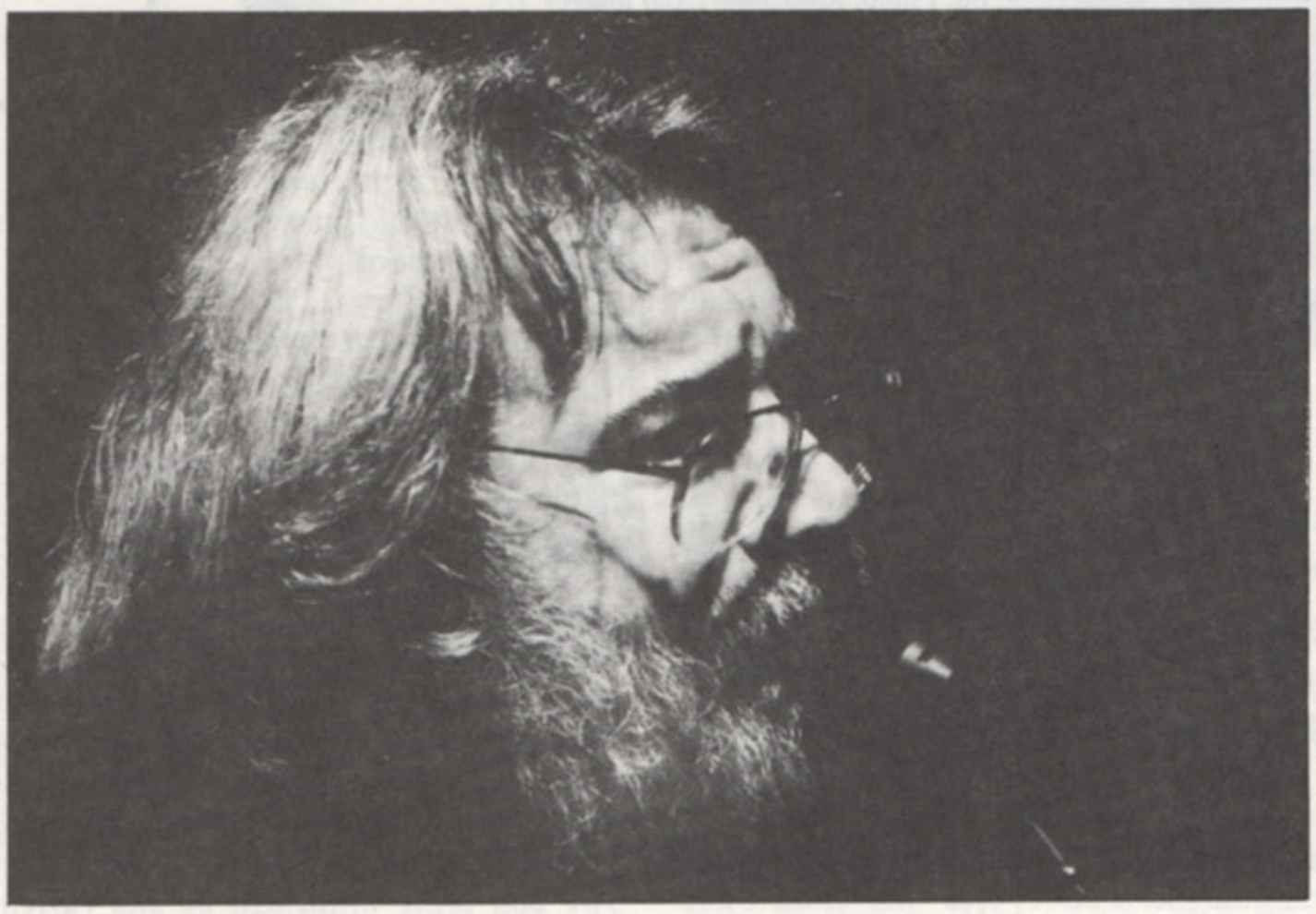
Jerry's Back and How Sweet It Is!

I'm sure Garcia wanted it to be low-key — slip into a club with as little fanfare as possible, dust off those rusty strings one more time and *hope* they shine; get back into the rhythm of playing for dancing bodies. But predictably, as soon as San Francisco radio station KFOG announced that Garcia would return to the stage with a pair of Jerry Garcia Band shows at The Stone, an 800-seat SF nightclub, the scramble for tickets was anything but low-key. Ticket outlets in the Bay Area were swamped, and all available ducats were snapped up in a little over an hour. Even the tickets themselves crowed about the momentous occasion: "THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF JERRY GARCIA!" they read. (A second set of shows two weekends later was added and sold out almost as quickly.)

Outside The Stone the afternoon of the first show, October 4, the scene was typically colorful. Hundreds of hopeful but ticketless Heads clogged the area around the club looking to score miracle tickets. Across the street, outside the Mabuhay Gardens, the city's original punk club, an uneasy mix of skinheads and heavy metal types (who frequent the pinball arcade next door) gawked in amazement and disgust at the sea of tie-dye and the battered tour buses. Out-of-towners passing through on their way to nearby restaurants and strip joints looked like disoriented denizens of the Twilight Zone.

The atmosphere inside the club during the hour before the show was positively electric — almost giddy. And when the curtain went up around 8:15 and a smiling Garcia eased the band into the funky groove of Allen Toussaint's "Get Out of My Life Woman," the crowd exploded in wild, ecstatic cheers. There had been a certain underlying tension in the air, but as Garcia confidently ripped into his first solo of the evening, apprehension turned into elation.

The choice of "Get Out of My Life Woman" as an opener seemed to me to be an attempt on Garcia's part to diffuse some of the emotion surrounding the event. So what happened after we all let our guard down and accepted that, "Hey, this is just another hot show"? He unleashed a version of Dylan's "Forever Young" (a first for Garcia) that was so heavy there was barely a dry eye in the house. The song is unquestionably one of Dylan's warmest (though it is still tinged with irony), and Garcia's rendering really brought home the beauty of the melody and the hymnal feeling of the lyrics. What a moving, *loving* way to talk about aging and mortality. And when, a couple of songs later, Garcia charged through a spirited, uptempo version of Dylan's "When I Paint My Masterpiece," it was hard not to be swept up in its life-affirming optimism.



Garcia at The Stone, October 4. Photo: Frederic Larson/SF Chronicle

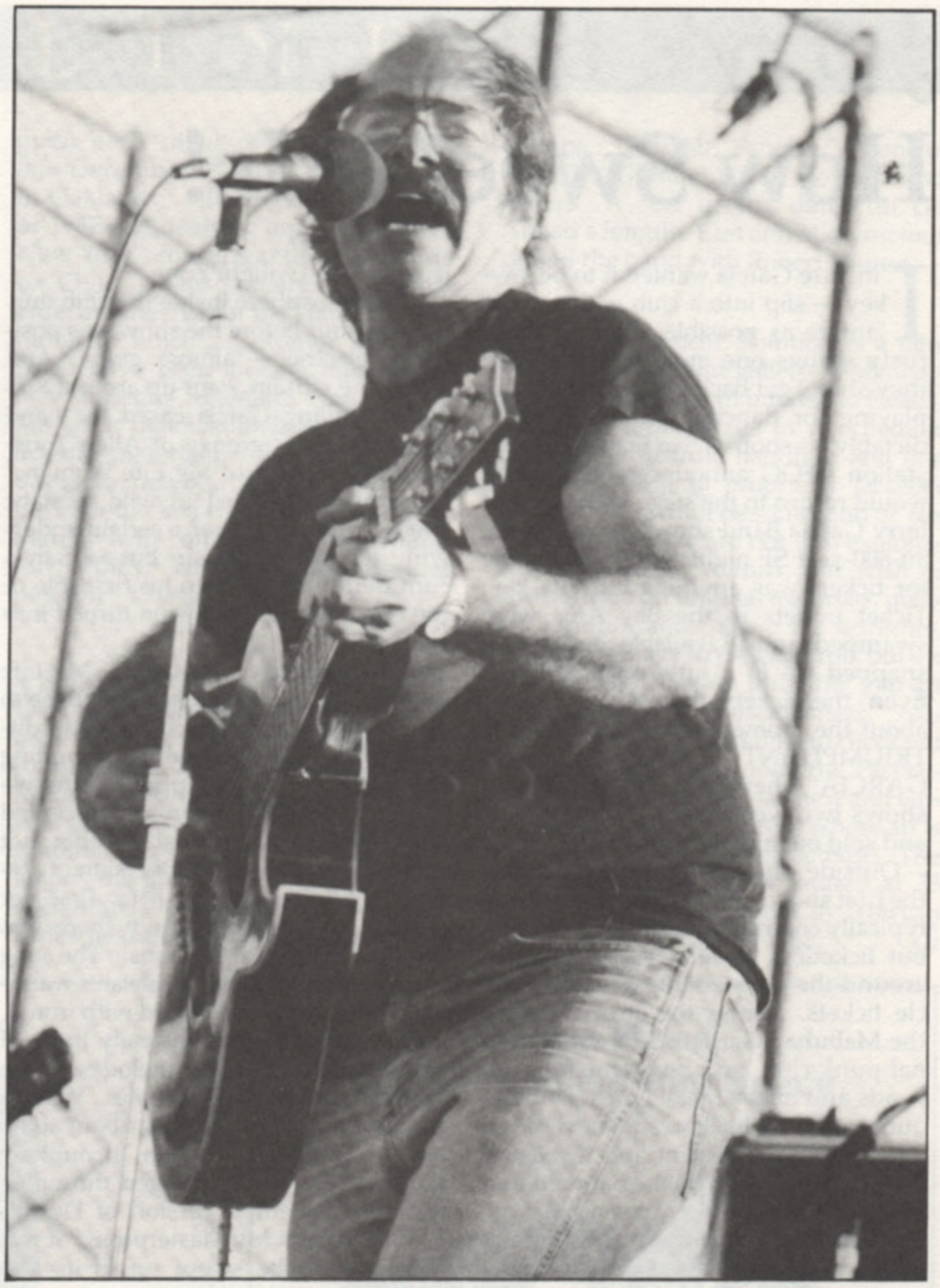
The real catharsis came on the song many believed would open the show, "How Sweet It Is." Normally the tune is just a simple, good-vibes rave-up, but in the context of this "comeback" evening, it gave the audience and Garcia the positive energy exchange that I think everyone was looking for. Garcia's guitar lines were crisp and confident, and his vocals sounded markedly better than they had before his illness. A series of rehearsals the week before the shows had paid off: the band was relaxed and incredibly tight. What amazed me most — and I think we all came with certain nervous expectations — was how *normal* it felt to be back at The Stone, dancing to the Garcia Band. Occasional lyric epiphanies aside, after a few songs it really did seem as though the previous few months of uncertainty and gloom hadn't even happened. If anything, Garcia appeared reinvigorated, which was every Deadhead's secret hope.

Both shows were longer than most recent Garcia Band club dates, and remarkably, Garcia never seemed to flag either night, even though The Stone was stiflingly hot. The repertoire had two other exciting additions (besides "Forever Young"): In the second set both nights he played "That Lucky Old Sun," a slow blues popularized in the late '40s by crooner Frankie Laine (and also covered by the likes of Willie Nelson, Louis Armstrong and George Benson). And in the first set the second night, Garcia devastated the crowd with a heartfelt version of Dylan's "I Shall Be Released." The three new tunes, all arranged nicely to showcase singers Gloria Jones and Jackie LaBranch on the choruses, and with plenty of room for Melvin Seals' churchy organ, added to the band's already strong gospel orientation.

Most of the standard Garcia Band material was executed with great passion and skill. Standouts the first night included "Mission in the Rain" (which remains one of my favorite Hunter-Garcia songs), "Rubin and Cherise" (stellar both nights), "Dear Prudence" and the show-ending "Tangled Up in Blue," the evening's third Dylan song. The second show's highlights (for me, anyway) were the opener, "Just in Case We Both Were Wrong," "They Love Each Other," a blistering "Deal," "The Harder They Come" (played at a more reasonable clip than usual) and the lilting "I'll Take a Melody." As the crowd howled its approval at the end of the second set, Garcia stepped to the mike and said, "Thanks. Nice to see you all again." And you could tell from the grin on his face, he meant it. Spread the word — Garcia's back. □

Catching Up With ROBERT HUNTER

By David Leopold



Hunter at Ranch Rock '86. Photo: Rob Cohn/Dead Images

It's been a busy last few months for Robert Hunter. In July, he put out his latest solo album, *Rock Columbia,* which is already being hailed by many Deadheads as Hunter's best in several years. His set with a small band at Ranch Rock '86 in Nevada in mid-August (see "Deadline") was one of the best received of the day. And most recently he completed a very successful solo tour that took him all over the country. Our Pittsburgh correspondent, Dave Leopold, talked with Hunter briefly during the first leg of the fall tour.

How has the tour been so far?

We stood Cleveland on its head. They liked it just fine. And that gave me confidence, because it's been a long time since I performed solo and I was a little bit nervous about it. I did a short first set just to get my stage wings back. They gave me a good response. And the louder they clap the better I play, so everything went off fine and I'm rarin' to go.

That's great. What can you tell me about the new album?

It's the cleanest thing I've put out as far as recording technique. We mixed it digitally. It's got a good clean sound, which you can really hear on the compact disc. The compact disc really blows me out. It sounds like what I mixed in the studio, and that's a new feeling for me — to have everything I put in come out. So I'm tickled with it. I like it.

I have fewer doubts about this than I do most of my albums. *Amagamalin Street* is definitely something to doubt. I wonder if it wasn't a little too intellectual in my concept. And *The Flight of the Marie Helena* [which was spoken-word with music] was very, very challenging. With *Rock Columbia,* I wanted to make a real record album instead of a concept album. This is sort of my make-up album for *Marie Helena,* because I just feel somehow that didn't get through. I have a feeling that record might have scared off some of my audience. People may *admire* the concept stuff, but whether they'll necessarily listen to it is another question.

This time I decided to make a record of individual songs that are not tied together in any particular way other than, hopefully, that they're programmed correctly.

On the previous two albums you seemed to be going for a more "epic" feel. Is there any particular reason for that?

Possibly I'm a frustrated novelist. [Laughs] I want to do a "big" work somehow or other. Perhaps rock 'n' roll is not the right way to go about it. Maybe I should just hit the typewriter and write a book.

Any chance of that happening?

There sure is.

Anything in particular? Fiction? Non-fiction?

Well, I'm doing a lot of writing lately, like *The Twilight Zone* [TV series], and I have a translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* due out next year. So I'm sort of easing towards it. I don't know what it's going to be, but at my age, if I'm going to turn out any great shapes of literary work I probably better get to it.

Are you being influenced by any current issues?

I suppose there are some. I've been living out there in the Dead Zone for so long I'm not sure what "current" means anymore.

Getting back to the album — some of the songs have been around for a while, like "What'll You Raise." I have a Go to Heaven *outtake of that from '79 on tape.*

Of "What'll You Raise"? I do remember I gave lyrics of that to Jerry many, many years ago, but I just thought that nothing had ever been done with it.

Well, it's just Jerry and maybe another band member going through it, getting the rhythm feel. What's your average gestation period for a song? You've had that at least a few years.

I wrote that song around the same time I wrote "Deal" and "Loser," back around the period we did Garcia's first solo album [1972]. I've had that around a long, long time.

Is that normally the way you do it? Write something and then leave it for a while?

Not necessarily. Like the other day Jerry's recuperated very well and he's ready to get back to work, so I decided to leave him with some lyrics. I just sat right down and bashed some out and laid it on him. So a song can take years,

"I've been out there in the Dead Zone so long I don't know what 'current' means anymore."

or it can take minutes. It depends very much on the quality of inspiration available. When Jerry says to me, "Hey man, let's write something"—

You take that as a good hint.

It happens. It can happen very quickly. And when he's sitting back, like he has for the last five years, pretty much satisfied with what he's gotten and not looking to go for more, then I sort of piddle off in my own direction, which is what I've been doing putting out my records and whatnot. Sitting around until opportunity knocks. It looks like we're going to try to get a bunch of brand new material together, though. The band has been talking about, "Why don't we surprise everybody and put out an album of stuff they've never even heard before?"

Is that likely to happen at the recording sessions scheduled for the Marin Civic this winter?

The Marin Civic recording will probably be to record the old stuff. More than likely to get "Touch of Gray," "Throwing Stones," "Hell in a Bucket," "West L.A. Fadeaway"—get that stuff down properly. And then I assume we'd go into a studio to record the new stuff, but none of it is absolutely for certain. We're still kicking it around.

How involved are you with the Dead's recording process? Do you basically just give them lyrics and let them do with them what they will?

Yes. During the making of *Go to Heaven,* for example, I was living in England. I was also living in England when they recorded *Mars Hotel.* But all the other albums I've generally had quite a hand in, except for live albums, which are primarily just mixing.

It seems the tone of your songs has changed. They used to be more metaphorical and now they're a little more straightforward. There's quite a difference between "China Cat Sunflower" and "Day Job."

There are a lot of Deadheads who hate "Keep Your Day Job." They don't

Continued on page 37

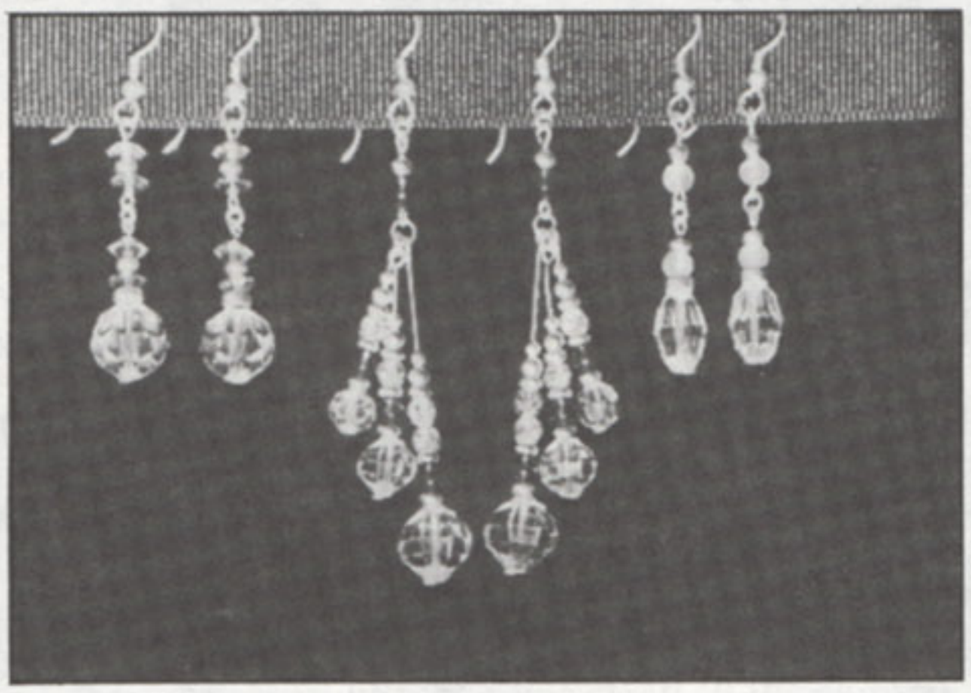
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Olatunji & Mickey



Brotherhood of the Drum

Even out in the hallway, on the other side of the soundproof door, you can hear the incessant rhythms emanating from the control room of Studio D at Berkeley's Fantasy Studios. Inside, the army of drums is positively deafening, but at least the subtleties of the intricate polyrhythms can now be heard. Above the wall of percussion, a guitar, channeled through synthesizers so it sounds flute-like, soars in a barely controlled flight. The feeling is unmistakably African, but traces of rock and jazz are readily detectable. Whatever you call this fascinating fusion, one thing is clear — its groove is irresistible, so much so that all three people in the control room seem to work to the beat of the music as minute adjustments are made on the Neve recording console.

"That's it! That's it ... *There!*" Dan Healy shouts at Mickey Hart above the music. "We'll start the fade right about there." He stops the tape, rewinds it a bit and plays the passage over again, as Mickey smiles and nods in agreement. Sitting at the console next to Hart, Nigerian master drummer Olatunji, dressed in a loose, flowing white and blue African robe, grins broadly.

Healy, Hart and Olatunji in Fantasy Studios. Photo: BJ

The mixing sessions for Olatunji's new album — his first in more than ten years — are just about complete.

The story of this remarkable record, titled *Dance to the Beat of My Drum* (just out on the new, progressive San Francisco label, Aspen Records) actually begins in Long Island, New York, in 1958, the year Olatunji's legendary first album, *Drums of Passion,* came out on Columbia Records. Mickey Hart was a budding high school drummer whose tastes were already becoming increasingly esoteric when a hip friend turned him on to Olatunji's record.

"I couldn't believe it!" Mickey says during a break from the mixing of the new album. "It was the first time I'd really heard a variable-pitch drum, and I was instantly impressed by its vocal qualities. The talking drum sounds like it's breathing almost; pumping. It sounds like a language, and it *is*. In parts of Africa it's used like a jungle telegraph. When one talking drummer communicates with another he has his own 'area code' and he knows who's receiving his message."

"Yes, it is actually based on language," Olatunji agrees in his thickly accented English. "But it's not like Morse Code or anything like that. It's a language itself."

"Messages have been sent hundreds of miles from village to village," Mickey continues. "When the message crosses over linguistic lines there are even drum translators." In the years since he first heard Olatunji and took up African percussion himself, Hart has become quite an expert on the music. Even Olatunji, who has taught workshops about his native music from his base in New York for some 30 years, is obviously impressed with the depth of Mickey's understanding of his art.

"The whole reason this new record is turning out so well," Olatunji says, "is that this is the first time in many years that I've worked in the studio with someone who really knows what I'm trying to do. The average person — the executives of record companies — really only know about the business end. They have no knowledge of the artistic side. But somebody like Mickey has a real understanding of what the music means and a sense of belonging, adventure and curiosity. All of those things together bring about a thing like *Drums of Passion*. Of all my recordings, this is the closest we've come to capturing the magic of *Drums of Passion,* because Mickey reminded me of the fellow who signed me to Columbia, Al Hamm. We need more people like

Mickey."

Even though Hart completely immersed himself in Olatunji's music through the years and even became an accomplished talking drum player himself, the two didn't meet until the end of 1984. "I played at Wolfgang's [the SF club] with my group and Mickey came backstage and introduced himself and told me he had grown up with my music. I even played at his high school many years ago," Olatunji says with a laugh. "I had heard of the Grateful Dead, of course, and through the years I've had many students who have played me Grateful Dead music. Their fans have very broad tastes."

A year later, in November of 1985, Hart invited Olatunji to open for the Dead on New Year's Eve at the Oakland Coliseum. "It was a fantastic evening," Olatunji says of the gig. "We were greeted so warmly ... so *very* warmly." Performing with a huge troupe of musicians, singers and dancers, Olatunji played a stirring, emotional set that was the highlight of the evening for many at the Coliseum. (The power of that performance was expertly captured by the Dead's video director, Len Dell'Amico, who crafted a one-hour PBS special from the show.) Two days later, Mickey, Olatunji and the band began work on the record at Fantasy, recording digitally on the studio's Mitsubishi 32-track.

"They weren't intimidated at all by the technology," Hart says admiringly. "I wondered if they'd be able to capture the magic of their live performance, but it wasn't a problem at all."

"When we record," Olatunji interjects, "we just treat it like a performance. We have all the dancers there and everything."

Phil Kaffel, who has worked on a number of recording projects with Mickey, was the principal engineer on the sessions, and the man responsible for miking the large ensemble. "I was more like a traffic controller making sure it got onto tape clearly, Mickey says of his role as producer. "I'd produced Diga and I love to work with large groups, so it really was mainly a matter of keeping everything going smoothly. I've been recording drums for a long time, so I knew what I wanted pretty much. *Drums of Passion* was so real and so alive to me — and it is even today — and that's what I was trying to capture: that vitality. This was a big herd — 18 thundering musicians. I was in the middle just trying to keep it together."

Dance to the Beat of My Drum is Olatunji's first record in more than a decade. His last album, for the Parliament label, was produced by Miles Davis' former producer, Teo Macero, but never released. "It's hard to spend so much time on something and then not have it come out," Olatunji reflects. "That's why I am so happy to have the chance to express myself again. It's good to see that when you believe in something and persist, it can come alive for you.

"I've always said that in the U.S. you have a platform. You're given a chance to make your statement, and if it has any validity, if it has any quality, it's definitely going to be listened to and accepted by someone. For years I didn't get anyone in the business to be interested in what I was doing. I approached them and I said, 'Look, I can do it all. I can do traditional. I can do contemporary. I can do jazz.' [In the '60s he led groups or played with such jazz notables as Clark Terry, Yusef Lateef, Coleman Hawkins and Charles Lloyd. His records in that vein on Columbia are, alas, out of print.] But they weren't interested. What they call fusion today is what we started in the '60s. The basis for reggae, for bossa nova, for calypso, is African music. What's now being called world music is something we were doing years ago. Of course I know that things go in cycles, and now my time has come again. I'm just grateful for this man who knew me." He turns to Mickey and smiles, and Hart looks almost embarrassed.

Augmenting Olatunji's New York-based troupe on *Dance to the Beat* are such notables as bassist Bobby Vega, Brazilian percussionist Airto and guitarist Carlos Santana, who recorded two Olatunji songs, "Jingo" and "Shango," on the first Santana album back in '69. (It was Carlos' solo that I heard as I arrived at the studio.) A second Olatunji album featuring less fusion and more traditional Nigerian music has already been recorded, and will be released by Aspen this winter.

Certainly this is a fortuitous time to be putting out albums of African music. In big cities across the nation — particularly the San Francisco Bay Area — there is a groundswell of interest in the music of King Sunny Ade, Fela, Toure Kunda and other West African ensembles. And of course there are records by white musicians, like Paul Simon's *Graceland*, that show the heavy influence of African music.

"The whole thing about this kind of music," Mickey says, "is feeling. If you don't have feeling, you don't have anything. And this music is feeling." □



New Year's '85/'86. Photo: Ron Delany

GARCIA:
"The point is I survived it. Here I am."

By Steve Marcus

Editor's note: Bay Area Heads who gathered at Wolfgang's for the second Night of the Living Deadheads October 15 were treated to separate video interviews with Bobby and Jerry. The following is an edited transcript of the interview Steve Marcus did with Garcia at the GD ticket office. Sitting in front of a wall covered with letters and get well cards, Garcia fielded questions on a wide variety of topics, many of which, Marcus tells us, had been suggested by Deadheads.

Robert Hunter said he was looking forward to having some "musical conversations" with you, that he had some new songs in his head—

Very true. He left me a small bale of material before he went out on the road. Actually, not that many; like about four songs that he feels are done, lyrically. Hunter is like ten years ahead of me — minimum — in terms of his output versus mine. So there's possibly four things I've been going over and over and over and over, hoping to get maybe one or two good ideas. I see the possibility for maybe three or four new songs. When they happen, they happen in little bunches like that, so these are about to happen.

Is there any chance that we might hear these in December?

Yes, there's a good chance. Good chance.

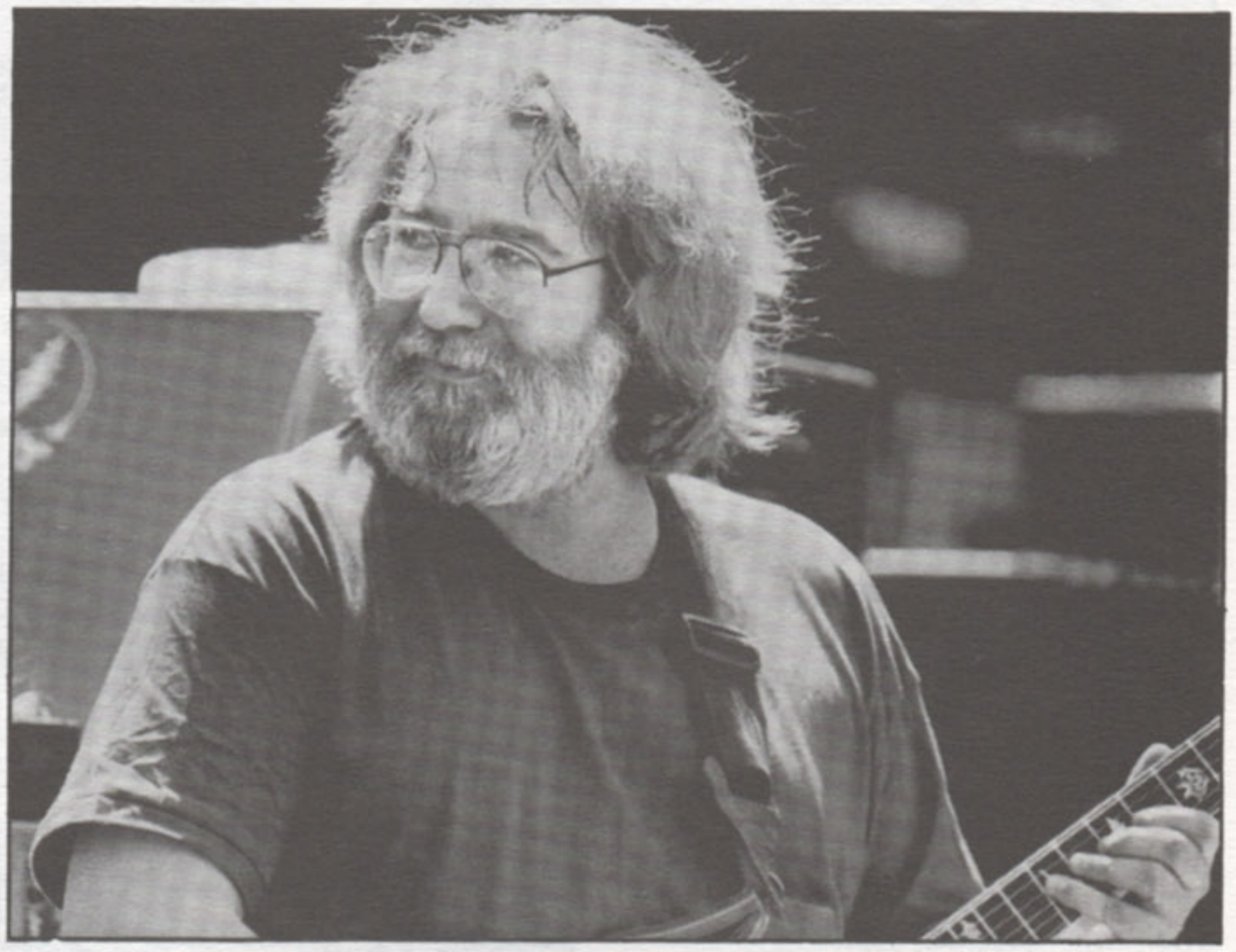
Do the Dead plan on recording a new album soon?

Well, yes, as a matter of fact. (Laughter) Actually, it's not a new album — it's the album that we theoretically started about four years ago.

Will you use any of the tracks recorded at Fantasy in 1983?

No. Our plan is essentially this: We're going to go into Marin Vets [Marin Veterans Auditorium] again in January with no audience and use it as a studio. It turns out to be an incredibly nice room to record in. There's something about the formal atmosphere in there that makes us work. When we set up at Front Street [the Dead's studio] to work, a lot of times we just sort of dissolve into hanging out.

Our records work out well provided we rehearse and actually make it happen. But since we don't tell each other what to do, it makes it hard for us to produce our own records. That means we have to cop a certain kind of attitude to do it. Going in there without an audience and playing just to ourselves was in the nature of an experiment, to see if there's some kind of situation that isn't performing live where we can get off. And we got off. We got off a few times. So it's possible we can get some tracks that have some punch.



Frost '86. Photo: Ron Delany

These things are subjective, y'know, so it's hard to talk in any kind of real terms, but we're goin' in there in January, and if we work hard and have some clear sense of what we're trying to accomplish, we may be finished by the end of February. We're sort of planning on that period to work on the record, and that could happen. We've done it before — we've delivered. If we create a deadline for ourselves, maybe we'll actually deliver a record within a certain space of time. Of course, on the other hand ... (Laughter)

And, of course, this will be "the big album," right?

Well, this'll be our last album for Arista, theoretically. We owe them this. So this is the record that takes us out of the music business.

And then you can go on your own?

Maybe. Or we can at least be open to something else. But we don't have to deliver a record to somebody at some hypothetical point in the future, thus tying up our ability to make decisions.

Are there any of the Warner Bros. albums you would like to see come out on CD? None are out on CD right now.

Sure: *Workingman's Dead. American Beauty.* I mean, they would sound nice, especially *American Beauty,* which is very nicely recorded. It has a lot of the kind of stuff that CD likes—a lot of textural stuff, acoustic instruments and that sort of thing. It has a very sweet sound, and the addition of that compact disc silence really benefits those performances. I would love to be able to remix everything we've ever done and do the vocals over and do everything over ... I don't want to get too involved in these projects.

In essence, maybe re-record some of your old songs?

Well, the temptation is always there, when you go back to the tapes, to say "Jeez, y'know, we could have done something." But it's just one of those things. It's like going into a museum and painting over a painting ... adding something.

There's always something you could add.

That's right. And at this point I'm more interested in what *new* there is.

How do you feel about people taping Grateful

Dead concerts and trading the tapes?

Hey, when I'm done with it, it's, y'know . . .

It's theirs?

Yeah, right. If somebody can find a use for music after it's been performed, fine with me. I used to be a bluegrass music freak, and I spent a lot of time taping bands. I loved being able to do it, and I loved having the tapes afterwards and being able to trade them around. I think that's healthy stuff. That's OK with me, as long as the people who are doing the taping aren't obnoxious about it. I have to see it from that point of view, 'cause at the worst, somebody will complain that there's too much hassling for the best spots and that kind of stuff. Those matters don't happen to me, but I hear about 'em. And if I hear that somebody in the audience is unnecessarily rude, or copping an attitude of some kind, y'know, it's . . . I don't want to be authoritarian about it. I don't care, y'know, really. Everybody who's doing it should just be aware of everybody else who's there, that's all.

And respect their space?

If possible, sure.

How about releasing CDs of choice live Dead from the vault?

I think it's a good possibility. That will happen sometime, but . . . See, the thing is that I've got to have the time to do this kind of stuff, and I also don't have the inclination. Every time I hear myself in the past I'm basically embarrassed, y'know. It's like, "Why did I do that?" I have that kind of hangup going with my own performances, just like listening to your own voice on the tape recorder. You don't want to be confronted with it. You already did it, it's over, y'know, it's like anything that happened in the past. I understand the value of it to people who are really [into it]. That's just fine. The whole thing is farming this stuff out to people who are interested enough to do it, because I don't want to have to deal with it. You can dig that, can't you? Sure you can.

About the Grateful Dead/Bob Dylan/Tom Petty tour: How'd it go for you — what were the highlights?

Well, I was *dying!* (Laughter)

Other than that . . .

Other than my decaying health . . . well, the rest of it was pretty fun, if I remember correctly. But, you know, hey, shit, I'm still a little mushy. I mean, I'm not really totally together.

Would you like to take that a little further? For example, maybe have a Dead/Dylan concert where the Dead actually back up Dylan for a whole set?

If we can get together and rehearse. Stuff like that always makes me paranoid. I found myself in the weird position of teaching Dylan his own songs! (Laughs) It's just really strange! It was funny. He was great . . . He was so good about all this stuff. Weir wanted to do "Desolation Row" with him, y'know, and it's got a million words. So Weir says, "Are you sure you'll remember all the words?" And Dylan says, "I'll remember the important ones." (Laughter) He was really great, he really was.

I don't know if you're aware of this, but right before he went onstage for the last show at RFK, he walked out in the audience and started shakin' hands. He said he wanted to check out the Deadheads, and he just walked right out in the audience and started shakin' hands.

Well, I'm glad nobody hurt him. (Laughs)

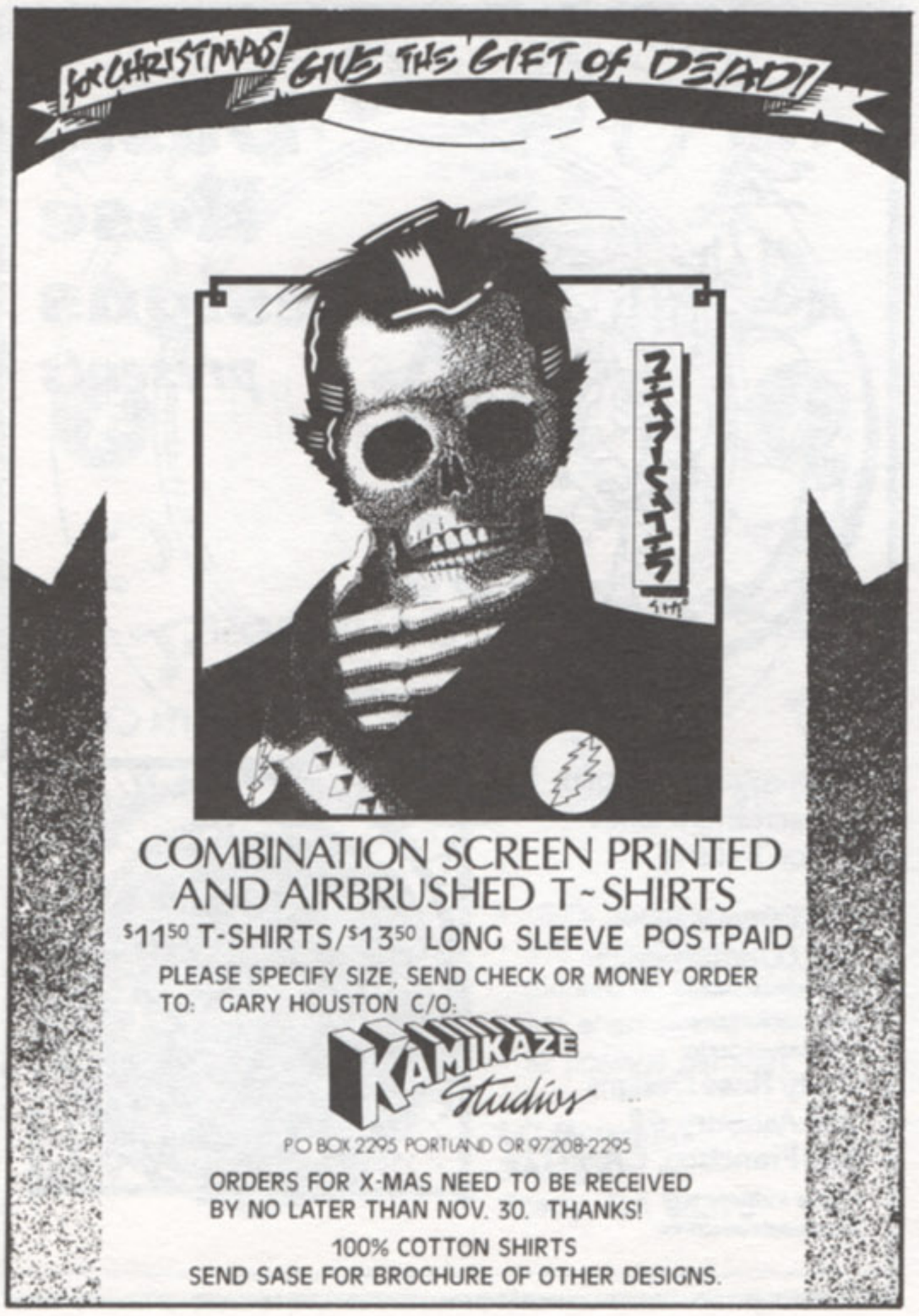
What about stadium dates next summer? Do you think that might happen?

Hey, I don't really like stadium dates. Sometimes the demand requires that we do a couple of them.

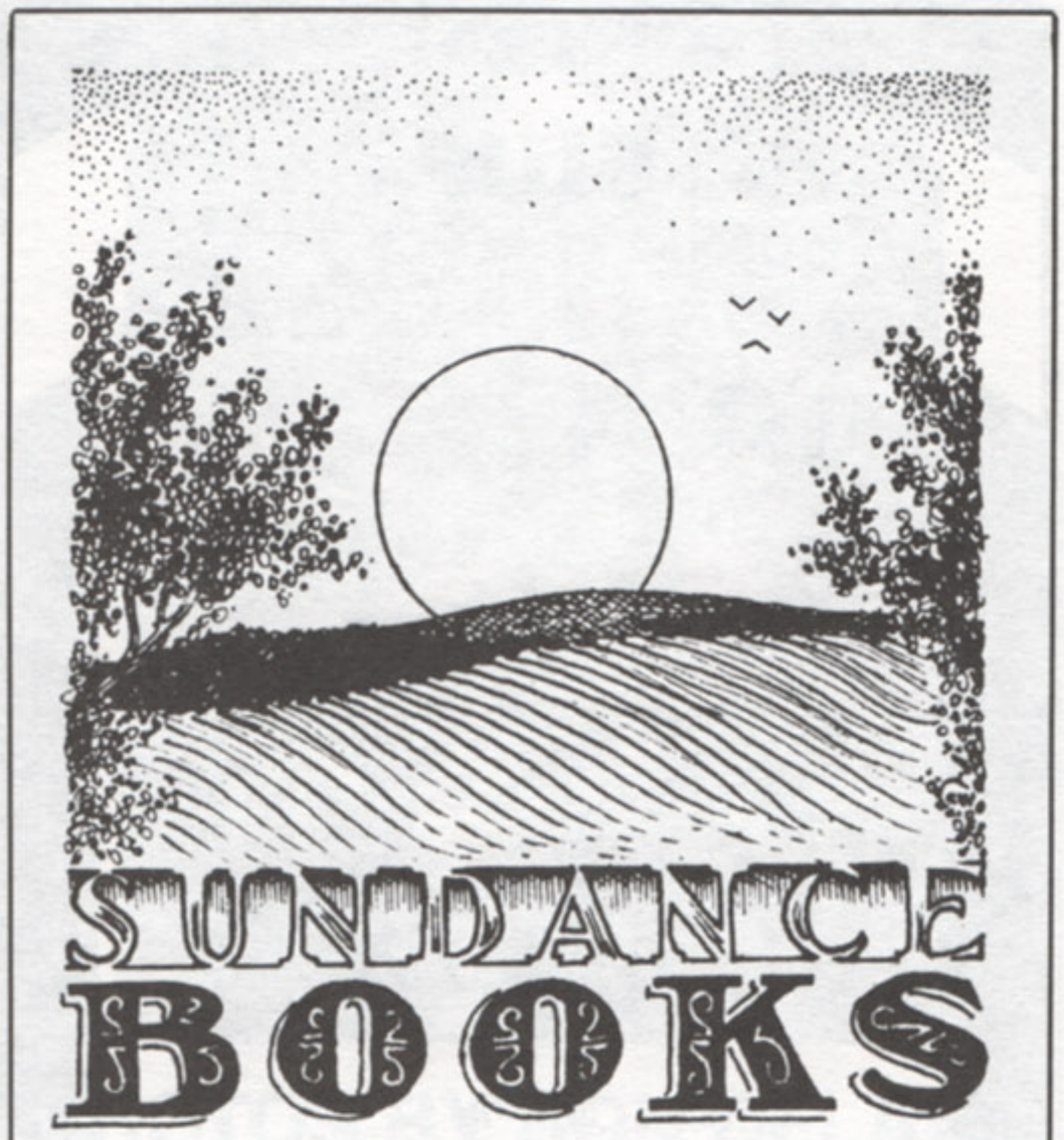
How about playin' with CSNY?

I don't know. Personally, I like playin' to our audience, and I would just as soon not subject anybody who doesn't want to be there. CSNY have a different constituency than we do. Our fans like 'em fine, I think —or maybe they don't, I don't know.

There are a lot of interesting musicians



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that I think it would be great to have open for us, for the musical value and the thing of being exposed to a different audience and stuff. Our audience is good for other acts if they put out; the audience appreciates it.

We've talked on video with both Phil and Bob, and they've both said that they expect some changes—

Those lyin' sons of bitches! (Laughter) I wouldn't invite them to a dog show. Shit. (Laughter)

—They both said that they expect some changes in the Grateful Dead's concert format, like maybe more improvisational stuff, changing songs around a little bit, maybe drums not necessarily occurring before space—maybe starting a show with drums, or starting with space. How do you feel about that?

The Grateful Dead is like a separate organism, y'know what I mean? There was a time when I used to worry about our arrangements and worry about minutiae, but working with the Grateful Dead is unlike anything else. Nothing else is like it—no other music is like it, no other group of musicians is like it, and it just doesn't bear any comparison to anything else. So for me, saying anything about *anything* we're gonna do, *ever*, is just bullshitting. I'm just lying, because I don't know. And one of the things that's great about the Grateful Dead is the thing that I don't know. That's the fun part. The fun part is that it's always surprising.

When you get up there you find out.

Or not. Whole weeks have gone by when I didn't know what the hell was going on. But you don't have a choice. You can't opt out, y'know? You can't say "Hey, fuck, man, I'm confused, I'm leaving." The thing to do is to stay in there and slug it out. And the Grateful Dead's music is successful on lots of different levels. Sometimes it's successful when we don't agree. When the band doesn't come to some understanding during the course of the evening, sometimes that music is extremely interesting. Sometimes it's not. But sometimes when we're playing and thinking that we're doing really great, it's terribly dull. It's one of those things that is way too personal for me to make any kind of honest generalizations about. And certainly to predict anything is hopeless.

Are there any old Grateful Dead songs that you would like the Dead to start doing again?

No.

None?

Not really, no.

Can't think of any?

Well, unless somebody reminds me of something that I haven't thought of for a long time. Most of the time we do songs to *death*.

"Cream Puff War"?

No. That's one of those tunes that's so old it's totally embarrassing. I'd just as soon everybody forgot about it.

Same thing with "Mason's Children"?

"Mason's Children" was an *almost* song. I guess it's got a famous underground reputation, but really it never quite collected itself into a song. I never was that happy with the lyrics.

"Viola Lee Blues"?

No.

"Alligator"?

No. I don't think we could do that.

"Here Comes Sunshine"?

Um . . . I could imagine a situation in which we would do that song. We never did perform it. I mean, we performed it maybe twice, three times, something like that.

More than that.

Really? Not very many, though. We never played it to the point where it became one of our songs . . . It's a formula song; it's an easy song to pull off. It might be a good song to do sometime, but I still think in terms of the songs that we *do* do, of straightening *them* out.

Getting them right?

Right. Getting them right.

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How about "The Golden Road"?

No, I don't think we could do it. It belonged too much to that moment.

There is a very determined Deadhead who for years has been running a "Cosmic Charlie" campaign. He has collected thousands of signatures on petitions and has encouraged thousands of Deadheads to send you postcards . . .

We've already brought it back once. It didn't work out too well. We brought it back once when Keith and Donna were in the band, and we actually worked it out with harmony — three-part harmony all the way through — and it sounded pretty neat. But the thing is that the regular groove part of "Cosmic Charlie" is OK, it works, but Hunter and I were inexperienced songwriters when we wrote the song, so the song has some problematic . . . It doesn't have any room to breathe, for one thing, and the other thing is it has this intense — these little bridges. There are two little melodic bridges in the chorus of the song that have words and everything, and they're harmonically really complicated. They're not easy, so trying to sing that song and actually play it at the same time is almost impossible. Now all I can say is we did bring it back, but it didn't work, it wasn't successful. The record has a certain (he roars) — it has a certain bigness to it, a kind of funky grandeur that we haven't been able to capture really in a concert yet. Someday we might pull it off, but really it's awful wordy.

Do you have any favorite Grateful Dead concerts?

No.

None?

The last one. I don't remember much past the last one, anyway, and in fact the last one now was so long ago I don't even remember what — I mean, for me the Grateful Dead is a whole new experience now, so I'll have to see. But it's hard for me to be attracted to the past.

Like I say, if I don't stay on top of myself . . . I'm a lazy person and I tend to not practice unless I make myself do it, so if I'm not critical of myself I'll eventually bore myself to death, and I don't want to die that way.

Do you have a favorite facility to play in? Is there one that you like more than any other facility?

I like the feeling in the Oakland Auditorium [Henry J. Kaiser Center], although I don't know whether the sound is any good. *I've* never heard us anywhere, y'know what I mean? I only know how they feel. Madison Square Garden is a great place to play because it's so juiced. And the Bay Area also. But nowadays our audience is almost everywhere. Our Grateful Dead audience is in there real good, and most places are at least acceptable sounding. Actually, the easier question is, Are there any places I don't like to play?

OK, are there any places you really don't like to play?

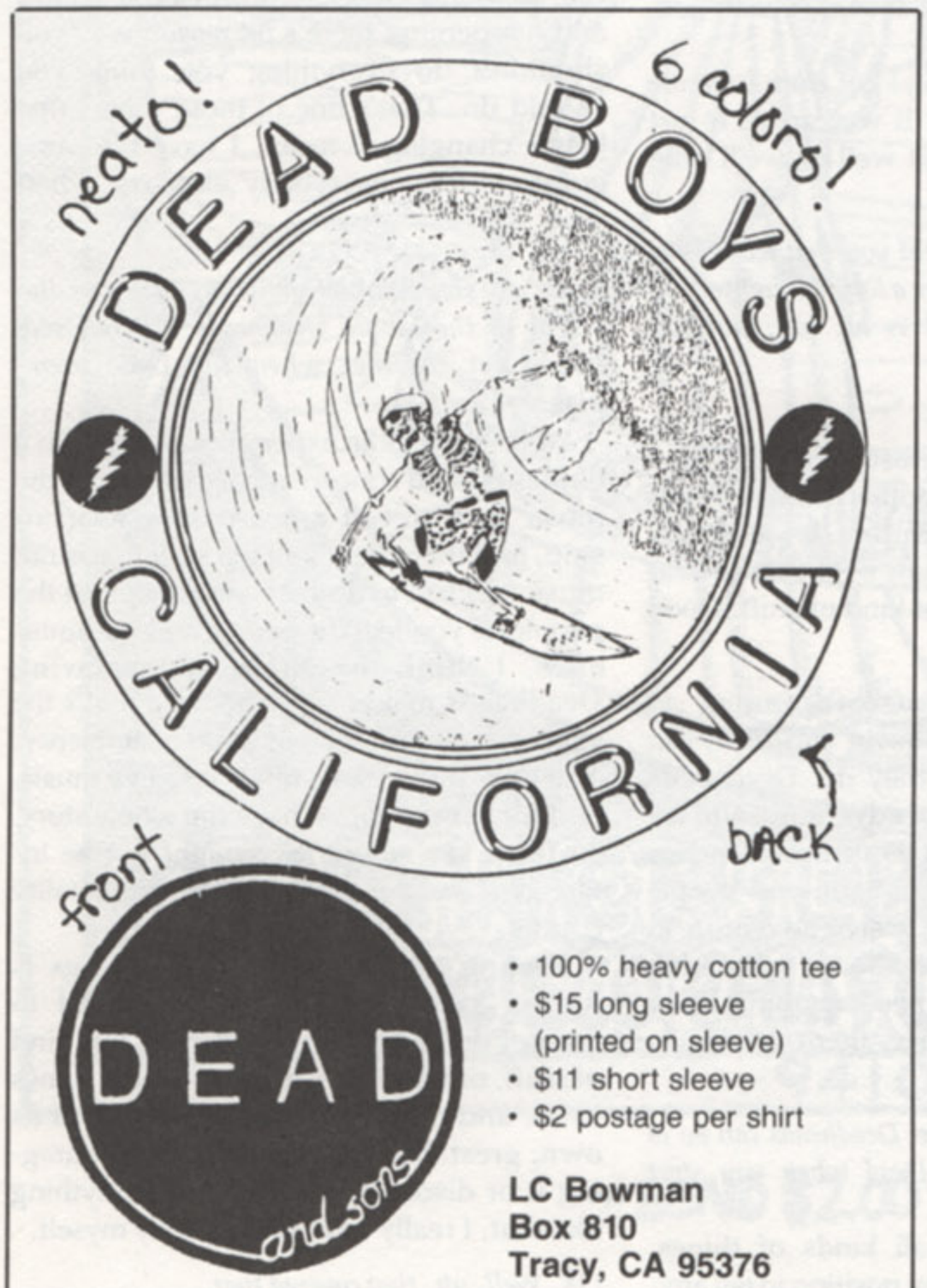
Yeah. There's a couple places I really don't like to play.

Would you like to name them?

I don't remember what they are. I only know that when we get into them I go "Oh goddammit, we're in this place again and it sounds like shit!" (Laughter) I don't retain those memories. It's on to the next one as much as possible. It's too hard to hold. When a place really sounds awful, when you're competing with yourself coming from the back of the room and everything is swimming and nobody knows what the fuck is happening, you just want to forget that as quickly as possible. I've gotten to be pretty good at forgetting the bad ones. There are one or two or three places maybe in the United States that are just dreadful — but we still play 'em! (Laughs)

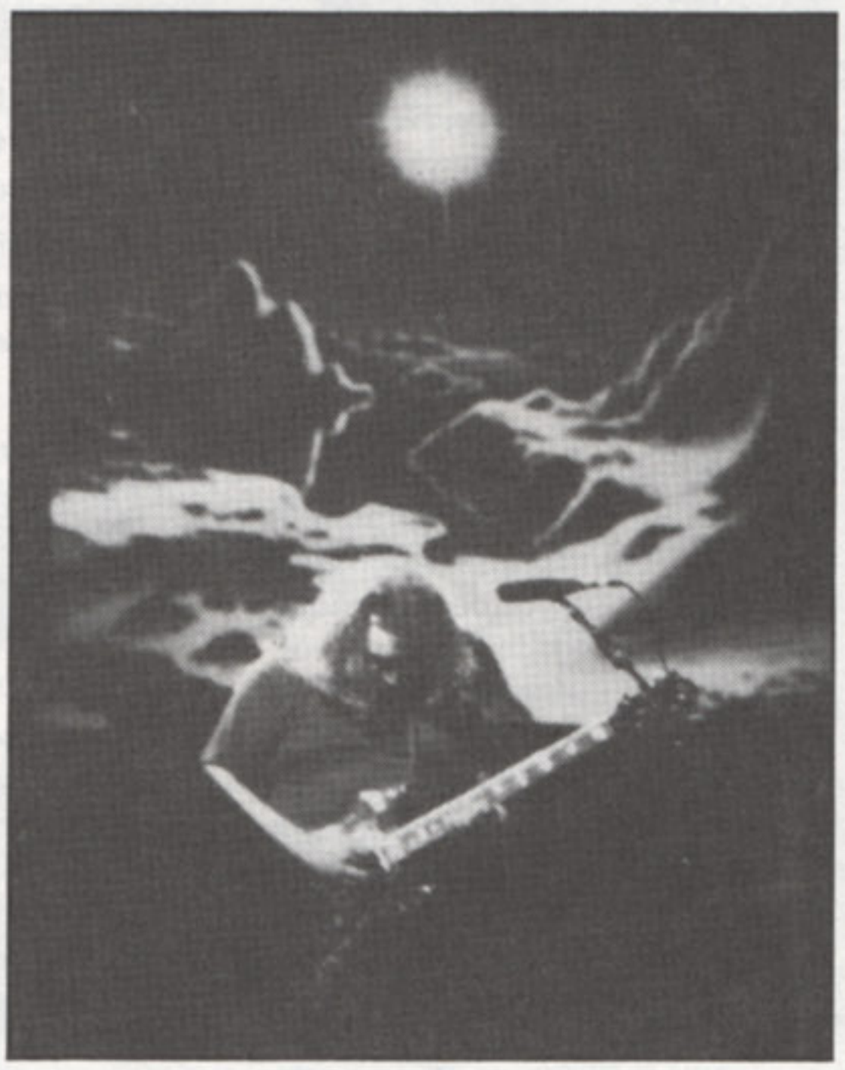
Do you think about the possibility of doing, say, 22 nights at Marin Vets for a live audience?

Um . . . I like doin' a run, and I like doin' theaters too, because the music gains an intimacy that you cannot get in a big room. When we were doin' acoustic stuff, last time we did our runs, it was tremendously suc-



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"I have the same questions that everybody else has: what, why, who..."

cessful just in terms of what it did to the music, in terms of detail. I love that shit, yeah, I can do that forever. I'd be perfectly happy to do that for . . . until they take me away.

Is there a chance of hearing acoustic Grateful Dead soon?

No, I don't think so. I depends on how everybody feels about it. Technically it's no problem, but nobody's really excited about doing it. I'd do it, because I like it, but I wouldn't want to force everybody into it.

You've made comments in the past about your legendary stage fright. How did you feel about your October 4th (comeback) gig at the Stone?

Well, it was a long time since I'd played, so naturally I felt nervous. But the Stone's really a familiar environment to me; that's one of the reasons I wanted to play there rather than someplace else. Even there, the pressure's on. But I wasn't really terribly nervous. I think doing stuff with my band is easier for me than the Grateful Dead. The Grateful Dead is a lot harder, and I'm much more nervous about the Grateful Dead.

Do you believe in aliens?

Well, I don't know whether I do or not. I don't believe in aliens in the sense that there's something out there that lives that's not like everything that lives everywhere. If there's anything that lives anywhere, it's probably a lot like everything that lives. It's a matter of conjecture, but I don't believe, for example, things like UFOs, that stuff, is alien. My feeling is that stuff is part of the environment and always has been, and that it's just some kind of carrot on a stick in front of the mule of consciousness. Something along those lines, maybe. I don't know. I keep changing my opinion about all metaphysical stuff. Every couple of years I go through some new change that tells me, or suggests, that maybe everything I know is wrong. Then I have to update everything, and then later I think, Well, maybe not. But there's always new information coming in, so for me it's an ongoing discussion. I don't know whether there's such a state as alien, even.

One recent newspaper article quoted a person close to the Dead as saying about your illness, "He danced as close to the edge as you can go and still get a return ticket." Was it really that serious, what went down?

I don't know, man, I wasn't there, y'know what I mean? I was out, y'know. But yeah, everybody says it was real serious. But what can you say? Any illness is serious, I guess. Any injury is serious. Any time you wake up in the hospital, something serious happened.

Obviously.

So that's what happened to me: I woke up in a hospital. I really don't know what happened. They tell me it was bad, but they also tell me that my recovery is remarkable. And I think that just the thing of lots and lots of Deadheads putting good energy into me while I was laid up really helped me come out of it. I really think that had a lot to do with it. I'm not a believer in that kind of stuff, but I feel I have some evidential proof that healing vibes have something . . . I mean, the doctors said they'd never seen anybody as sick as me who wasn't dead. So if that's any indication, apparently I was real sick. Although I gotta tell you, I didn't experience any pain or any discomfort, really, apart from being wired and having tubes and holes and all kinds of things in me. That's, of course, strange, but apart from that it wasn't painful. So what can you say about that? The point is I survived it, and here I am.

I guess you got hundreds and hundreds of cards and letters and stuff.

Oh, man, some soulful stuff. Good stuff!

Get anything that really kind of tweaked you, that you really liked?

Well, I liked the thing I got from Juvenile Hall in San Francisco. It was great. It just said, "Hey, Garcia, get well or we'll mug ya!" (Laughter)

I remember when I showed you that letter. You said, "Hey, I've been there a lot!" (Laughter)

Yeah, Juvenile Hall is an old, familiar friend.

Were there gifts?

All kinds of things. Mostly, I got this kind of brotherly, sisterly, motherly, fatherly advice that was all very heartfelt. It was mostly just good wishes, y'know—"Sorry to hear you're down," and that kind of stuff. Good stuff!

Is there anything Deadheads can do for you?

Yeah, they can keep havin' fun. They can just keep doin' what they do. Deadheads have a sort of a sense of adventure, and it's tough to come by adventure in America nowadays. It's a little uptight, and people who are strong enough to seek adventure in this new lame America already have what they need. They don't need anything. They don't need me to give them advice — they're doin' OK.

Is there anything you feel Deadheads can do to help out the Grateful Dead when you start touring?

Well sure, there's all kinds of things, probably, but it's not my position to tell anybody what they should do, to modify their behavior in some direction or other to benefit anybody. That's not what I'm about, y'know — I'm the very antithesis of that, hopefully. Everybody does what they want, and I'll try to stay out of the way if I get in the way.

That's in the nature of a personal decision, and I have no business talking about that shit. I'm not a cop. I'm not into tellin' people what to do, ever—*man!* (Laughter)

Have you changed your attitude about life in general, changed your priorities?

I don't remember what my attitude used to be, so I'm not really sure if I've changed it or not. There's a lot of things—like I say, I'm still a little mushy — there's things that I don't remember. But I don't remember what I don't remember (laughter), so I don't care. It's one of those kinds of experiences, like a zen experience or a drug experience, where something extreme happened to me and my psyche dealt with it, and the way it dealt with it was to say, "Hey, fuck it." I mean, whatever I don't remember, I don't remember, and who cares?

I never felt that I was suicidal, particularly. Possibly reckless, but not suicidal. So the thing of coming close to death, as far as I'm concerned, is one of those things that could happen to anybody at any time. That's the thing that it brought home to me, that life is this delicate little thread and you can just—boom—you can be gone in a minute, so what the fuck. As long as you're alive and happening, there's no reason why you shouldn't do everything you think you should do. That's one of those things that keeps changing. I mean, I have the same questions that everybody else has: what, why, who . . .

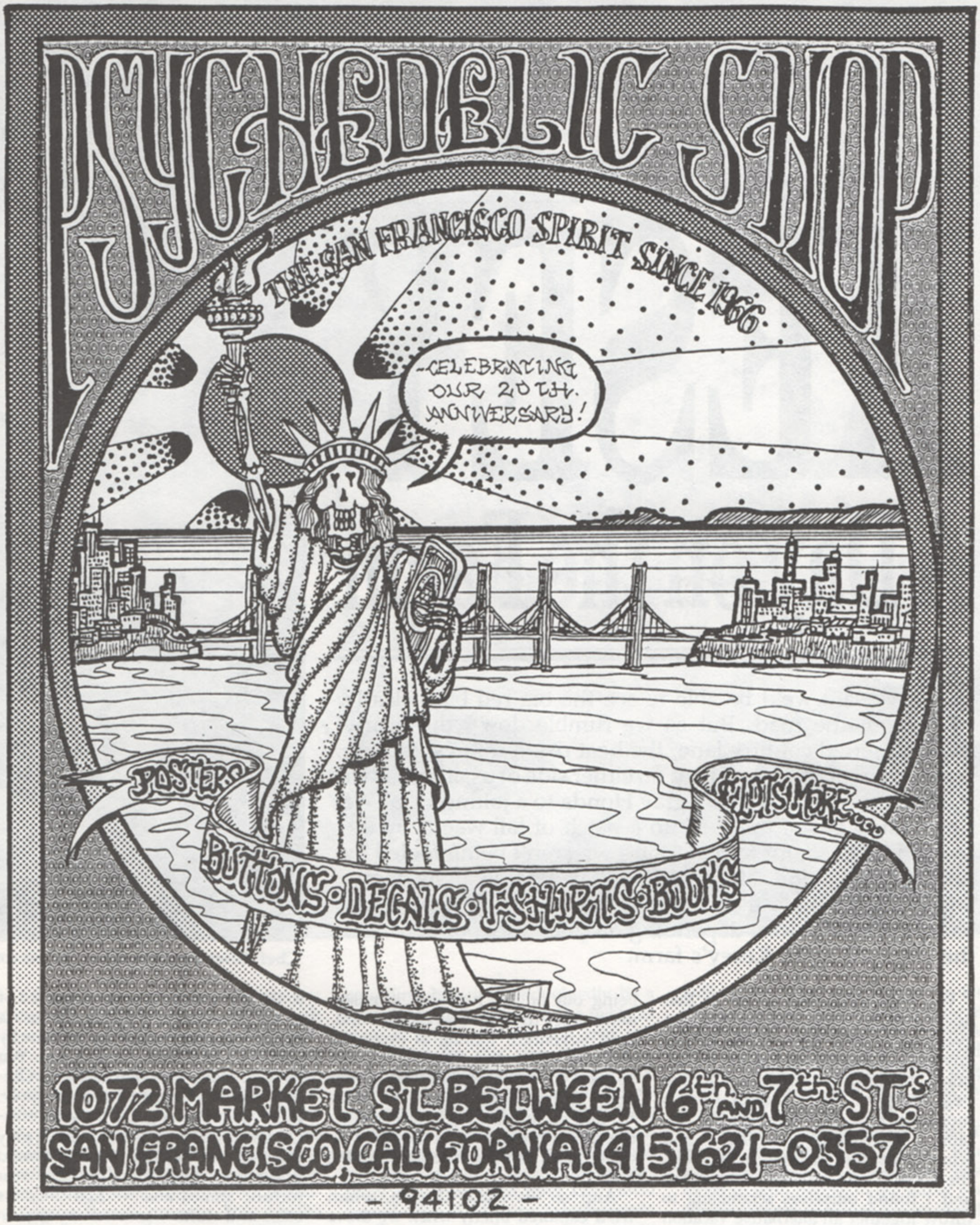
What do you think of gatherings such as this Night of the Living Deadheads, where Deadheads get together when the Dead aren't playing?

Well, there's the experience of going to a Grateful Dead concert and experiencing the music in a sort of a one-on-one relationship, and then there's all the stuff that is not music but has to do with ambience and the people. If you like the people and the ambience, I think the Night of the Living Deadheads makes sense because that's the same people and the same sort of ambience. The only thing that's missing is live music, and for some people that's the whole story, so I can see where they might not be interested. But for other people, the totality counts.

Dealing with these kinds of things is funny, 'cause there's power implied in there. I don't want to be directing this kind of stuff, or affecting it in any way. If it comes to life and develops some kind of life of its own, great. But as far as actively encouraging it or discouraging it or doing anything like that, I really have to disqualify myself.

OK. Well, uh, that covered that.

Hey, sidestepping is an art! (Laughter) □



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"I have the same questions that

KESEY

A Day on the Farm



Chef Kesey prepares dinner for his cows. Photo:

Faye said we'd be able to see the big red barn clearly from the road. But as we rumble down the nearly deserted country lane, the heat rising up in slithering waves from the arid farmland on either side of us, it's another sight that brings our dusty gray Honda to a jolting stop. We slowly step out of the car into a patch of tall weeds by the roadside and squint to make sure we aren't being fooled by some hallucination. No, it really is The Bus, in all its decaying, bubble-topped glory, sitting in an open field by a hay barn, eyesore or icon depending on your viewpoint. This is the place all right. Kesey's farm.

We were supposed to be at Red Rocks that day. This was the year that everyone — well, most of our friends anyway — was going to caravan to Colorado the third week of August for the beginning of the Grateful Dead's mountain tour. But nothing's for certain . . . it can *always* go wrong . . . and when Garcia was cut down in mid-July, the shows were scrubbed and Regan and I found ourselves scrambling to throw together an alternative vacation for our week off. New Mexico and Arizona for a pilgrimage to sacred Indian spots? Too hot in August. San Diego for a final summer beach fling? Too urban.

We wanted that tour hit — the rush of being out on the highway, a million mind miles from the workaday world, with adventure waiting at every dip and turn in the road, listening to a tape so good you can't help but sway in your seat, drum your fingers in crazy rhythm on the steering wheel, and accelerate unconsciously at the really exciting parts as the music becomes the fuel.

And so we chose Oregon, which we'd explored briefly when we drove up for the Dead's first shows at the tiny Hult Center in Eugene back in the summer of '83. Oregon is pristine, beautiful country for the most part, and the people are old-fashioned friendly, naturally nice folks who haven't succumbed to the paranoia that seems expected of us all these days. Of course there's a catch — or hell, we'd *all* be up there by now — and that's the weather. You have to really love rain to live in Oregon; sun worshippers need not apply. In '83 we hit rain right at the California-Oregon border and didn't duck gray skies till we headed out east toward Boise four days later. But this year fortune smiled and we had cloudless skies and warm weather every day. In fact the state was downright dry, all gold hills covered with blackish-green trees, and shimmering blue lakes low from lack of rain. As we'd hoped, Oregon proved to be a great place to relax and recharge.



BJ

So here we are, five days into our trip, already savoring memories of high moments at Lake Shasta, Lithia Park, Crater Lake, the Rogue River, Salt Creek Falls and a hundred other magical places, rolling up the dirt and gravel driveway that leads to the big red barn Faye Kesey had described. It sits at the center of a rustic 80-acre spread a few miles outside Eugene. Most of the farm is grazing ground for cattle, but in mid-August there's precious little for the poor beasts to chomp on, so they just stand motionless in the hot summer sun, dreaming of the hay bales across the fence stacked under the eaves of the other barn on the property. In autumn, when the rains come, the farm and surrounding hills will undoubtedly be a symphony of green, and the fields as tasty as beluga caviar to the cows and bulls, but on this day the land is parched, the heat unrelenting. We park our car next to a big American sedan and amble toward the open front door, passing by the garage, which houses a gleaming white Cadillac Eldorado convertible, the sort of brash and ostentatious boat I imagine Jerry Lee Lewis would drive at ridiculously high speeds on Tennessee backroads. Faye greets us warmly, ushers us inside and returns to her laundry preparation after explaining that Ken is elsewhere on the farm and will be along in a while. Faye, Kesey's high school sweetheart and wife of 30 years, is a women of few words, but she exudes honesty and inner strength and she has the unmistakable glow of a person who is naturally loving. After two minutes in her presence it becomes clear who keeps *this* household going.

I've found through the years that it's nearly impossible to predict what someone's home will look like; even more so with people in the public eye, whose private personae are frequently quite different from what they show the world. But *chez* Kesey is pretty much what you'd expect, even hope for. Since it is a converted barn, the interior is spacious, with a large, open central space that encompasses the liv-

ing, kitchen and dining areas, plus a couple of bedrooms and a bathroom/laundry room washroom built off the core. The walls are painted day-glo red and orange (that must have been fun!), but for some reason it isn't as rough on the eyeballs as it sounds. Maybe it's because the main wall is covered by Northwest Indian masks, so that side of the room takes on the personalities of the totems' frozen expressions — alternately crazed, peaceful, angry, smiling. The wall at the far end is more window than anything else, and the serenity of the vast scene outside brings a calm to the room. In front of the window sits an aluminum step ladder, home for a brightly plumed parrot named Talk-O, who evidently spends his days climbing up and down the structure, his claws scraping the metal in a grating cacophony. At least he confines his droppings to the newspapers under the ladder. A third wall is dominated by a huge carved antique oak breakfront covered with family pictures and various trophies, awards and school certificates. There's a dilapidated couch about a foot away from a color TV, and a funky upright piano, the kind of beat-up but still functional type you find in Everytown's public assembly hall.

A long counter separates the kitchen from the living room. It's a classic country kitchen, with jars everywhere, stacks of bowls inside bowls, the cups and glasses out in the open for easy grabbing. On the refrigerator is a large skull-and-lightning bolt sticker, always a reassuring sight. The dining area consists of a large round wooden table surrounded by a motley collection of chairs, a magazine rack where old copies of *The Golden Road* gather dust with an assortment of esoteric outdoorsy magazines, a low bookcase and a chest on which sits a huge frame filled with snapshots of the Keseys' late son, Jed, in various school wrestling battles. (Jed was killed in a wreck two years ago on his way to a school wrestling meet.) On the wall above is a shot of the whole Kesey clan cheerfully standing together outside the barn. Over the doorway leading from the dining area to the main bedroom are a grainy photo of the Dead playing beneath the Sphinx and a bizarre surrealistic collage that presumably made some sense to its creator.

It's a little stuffy inside, so we head out to the open back porch where we immediately find ourselves within spitting distance of several llamas who have had the good sense to sit in the cool shade next to the house. They're placid creatures with inscrutable faces, and frankly I don't trust 'em. I've heard tales of their amazing powers of expectoration and I'm not about to risk

> "Having to feed the cows every day, you know right where you stand."

being covered in milky llama-breath slime, so I keep my distance. The animals don't belong to Kesey, actually. They're temporary guests whose owner, Connie, is staying at the farm for a while. Why own a llama? Well, a good one is worth more than a Mercedes and, as Kesey would tell us later, it's the only animal besides man that shits in one place. I'll stick to cats, and there are a couple of those here, too—a cute stray who is campaigning hard to be adopted by nuzzling every leg that enters the house, and Mocking Word Maurice, a short-hair belonging to Connie's 8-year-old son, Mac. Heebie is a hyperactive dachshund who is constantly, if good naturedly, scolded for picking fights with bulls, llamas and other animals who could easily kick his ass in a fair fight. A couple of other pooches, Mary and Joe, seem considerably more comfortable with life on a farm.

At last Kesey steps into the house and holds out a huge ham hock of a hand. He's bigger than I remembered from the couple of times I'd seen him before, and that's definitely a farmer's grip he's got there. His muscular forearms and barrel chest are reminders that, like Jed after him, he was a champion college wrestler, but there is a softness in his eyes that belies his physique, and then there's his Santa Claus-red shirt and suspenders, a bit of the prankster-clown shining through it all. He has an easy smile and a voice rich with country character. Every time he starts to talk you half expect a folk tale to come spinning out, but this is Ken Kesey, so we aren't too surprised when one of the first things he says to us after we've exchanged pleasantries is "Let's go check out the Thunder Machine."

Just another day on the farm.

* * *

Ken Kesey occupies a singular place in the pantheon of Deadhead heroes. After all, he was there at the beginning; it might even be argued that he *was* the beginning, for in a real sense, he and his band of Merry Pranksters were the link between the Beats and the hippies — intellectuals who stepped out of their minds (literally and figuratively) in search of the purity and clarity that only comes from experience. Whether Neal Cassady was that circle's most inspiring figure (as Kesey himself has acknowledged) or Ken Babbs the real power broker (as is debated), is not important, for Kesey was the catalyst and motivator, not to mention the de facto patron, of the early acid scene. While the musicians who would become the Grateful Dead were still playing strange, stoned jug music and blues, Kesey and the Pranksters were making their psychedelic assault on America, tripping through the heartland in the day-glo 1939 International Harvester schoolbus called "Further" (after its destination sign) in search of better and bigger FUN. The Bus was just the most visible symbol of this anarchy, and a pretty mellow one at that, considering what was going on inside the *heads* of its inhabitants. By the time the Dead (The Warlocks, actually) became involved, the scene was centered around Kesey's house in the tall redwoods of La Honda (west of Palo Alto). What had begun as a small group was growing in seemingly exponential bursts, especially after the formless, multimedia LSD parties went public as The Acid Tests—in Garcia's oft-quoted remark, "the prototype for our whole basic trip."

The Acid Tests would probably be little more than an obscure (though significant) part of Grateful Dead lore were it not for *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Tom Wolfe's best-selling account of life with the Pranksters. The popularity of that book has turned out to be a double-edged sword for its main character, Ken Kesey. On the one hand, it has served as a lasting historical document of Kesey's importance to a movement whose repercussions are still being felt. But more insidious is that it has also unfairly frozen him in a tableau he left long ago. One forgets that he was never really a part of the scene that evolved from the Acid Tests. Rather, he went back to Oregon ("back to the land" before it was fashionable) and has lived the quiet life of a farmer, writer, father and husband for the past two decades. He never aspired to be the underground hero he became; in fact, he has never participated in the mythologization of his character that began with Wolfe's book. He is still looked upon as a guru of sorts by counter-culture types—especially Deadheads, I'm afraid — yet he has never really espoused any cohesive philosophy or alluring world-view. To the contrary, he has studiously avoided opportunities

to make grand pronouncements on The Meaning of It All. He's too busy still asking the questions to pretend that he knows any answers.

"I don't like the sound of me answering too-hard questions," he told Paul Krassner in *The Realist* more than a decade ago. "I sound oracular, like I know more than I do. My words have a disproportionate weight.... But I'm easy; some kid with big eyes and a notepad could come up and ask me how the universe was created, and if he looks like he thinks I know, pretty soon I think I know and I'm running it down to him like the gospel. I'm easy, but in *no fucking way qualified.*"

What he is qualified to do is write, and since his grand fiction successes in the early '60s with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*, he has primarily written short pieces of fiction and actual or veiled autobiography—vignettes of a life that has all the ups and downs the rest of us go through. The particulars may be different and some of the locales more exotic, but the life-spirit he captures so well — both in the articulation of his own feelings and in his descriptions of others — rings true. His writing is deceptively simple and straightforward, and the topics he addresses frequently mundane on the surface, yet his stories radiate a gentle folk wisdom that is born out of an underlying humility and his unshakable faith in the notion that humans are essentially good and loving, and that if we conduct ourselves accordingly perhaps we fulfill our function during our brief moment on the planet. Fortunately for all of us, however, Kesey would never put it so heavy handedly.

If you want to find out where Ken Kesey's "at" these days, the answer is on every page of his new book of collected writings, *Demon Box*. Kesey's first "mainstream" book in more than 20 years is a rich, vibrant patchwork quilt—a beautifully assembled hodgepodge of reminiscences, ruminations and ramblings that take us to the four corners of the earth (Egypt, China, etc.) but always come back to the farm, which, along with his family, seems to provide Kesey with an unending energy source, as well as metaphors for nearly everything. Rather than just throwing the assorted articles and stories together haphazardly, he has assembled them into something of a narrative, reworked some passages and given new names to all the characters, effectively blurring the line between fiction and reality and allowing us to appreciate the characters—especially his own, Devlin Deboree — without the possible distraction of Kesey's own celebrity. "Passing off what-might-be-true as fiction seems a better vocation to me than

> "The owls and the witches and the leprechauns and the Deadheads are all in it together."

passing off what-is-quite-possibly-fiction as truth," he once said.

no further than the large circle of like-minded friends and the growing legions of Deadheads who have embraced the unwritten tenets of what is, essentially, a tolerant peace-love, flower-child philosophy. Whether by intention or not, his art — and his life, which *is* his art, really — has made him a most eloquent spokesperson for ecological humanists. In various stories in *Demon Box*, drugged-out seekers accost Kesey to ask "What *is* it?" But now the question has become "Are we gonna *make it*?" Probably, but it's never going to be *our* world, like most of us believed in the '60s.

"I thought we were going to change the world; I don't think that anymore," Kesey said earlier this year at a symposium celebrating ten years of the *Co-Evolution Quarterly* (now reincarnated as the *Whole Earth Review*). "I don't even think we're going to change the United States anymore. Most people are pretty much exactly like they were 20 years ago. Stewart [Brand, of *Whole Earth* fame and moderator of the symposium celebrating ten years of the *Co-Evolution Quarterly* (now reincarnated as the *Whole Earth Review*). "I don't even think we're going to change the United States anymore. Most people are pretty much exactly like they were 20 years ago. Stewart [Brand, of *Whole Earth* fame and moderator of the symposium] and I are balder, but we pretty much think about the same things. We've learned a few things on how to keep from gettin' into trouble.

"But I no longer think that we're going to win. I believe we are the losers. I believe we're a very select group of losers, and we have to understand that. I knew I wasn't going to be elected student body president. Or the most popular kid in college.

"I wanted to be powerful. That was more important to me than influencing enormous numbers of people. I wanted to influence the correct number of people. I think this correct number of people is getting smaller and more elite and tougher. But I don't expect all of a sudden to have the bad guys die off and a bunch of good ones take over, because they're training bad guys just as fast, and harder, as we're training the good guys...

"When I say that we are losers, I don't mean that in any way but in a glorious way. When [Allen] Ginsberg and I get together, we argue this same argument—he wants to blame the government, and I say, 'No, Allen, it's the poets' fault. It's never the government's fault. You can't expect the government to provide the vision for people to live by. It's always our fault.'

"When we start trying to say 'It's their fault, they won't let us do it,' then we give over the only power that we have, which is the power to describe our vision and try to get other people to join in on it. But we still ain't in the majority and we never will be."

But there's always a glimmer of hope, and there are some of us who even believe that our side is getting stronger and more cohesive every day. (Yes, I do believe it's "us" and "them.") "You who choose to lead must follow," it says in "Ripple" (and the *Tao*), and Kesey has led as a sort of enlightened Everyman. What he is and what he believes are manifested in the life he has chosen, and on this hot Wednesday afternoon in August, Regan and I have become observers of this lifestream. And so we find ourselves following Kesey's long, purposeful strides as he heads down the driveway, past the blind cow and on into the hay barn, where the Thunder Machine awaits its afternoon workout.

* * *

How can I possibly describe the Thunder Machine so that it makes any sense? Constructed from the mutated shell of a 1962 Thunderbird, it's a giant musical instrument that combines elements of stringed instruments, horns, percussion devices, whistles and a bunch of electronics in a frame that looks a little like a 19th-century one-man submarine. Except for the wheels ... and the Edsel grille on the front ... and the trombone, the Radio Shack speakers and the car fender on top ... and the day-glo paint job. OK, it doesn't look *anything* like a submarine. Take my word for it, though, it's wiggy to the max, definite mad inventor stuff. Musically, the noises it's capable of producing fall somewhere between "Space" and the Rhythm Devils, if you want to translate it into familiar Dead vocabulary. "What makes it unique among in-

struments is that the machine itself is a resonating body," Kesey says as we step into the barn. "The only thing I can think of like it is when the Yakima Indians up at the Pendleton Roundup [Oregon's famous rodeo and Wild West Days] sit around inside these giant garbage cans and just *whang* on them."

Kesey's son Zane, a ruggedly handsome blond lad in his mid-20s, is sitting inside the Thunder Machine when we arrive, plucking what looks like a cello string that is strung across one of the instrument's openings. With all the echo and weird effects, it sounds a bit like a whale cry. Kesey then starts drumming rhythmically on the side of the Machine, and now the sound is more like a train putting its brakes on. Overhead in the rafters of the barn, which is stacked floor to ceiling with bales of hay, several large families of sparrows chirp incessantly and fly about so fast that they are just bat-like blurs against the yellow hay. And in the center of it all is this peculiar object that looks like the acid version of H.G. Wells' Time Machine.

The Thunder Machine has been around in one form or another for some 20 years now, and has even popped up onstage at Dead shows during the Rhythm Devils' segment a few times. (The last time was at the Hult Center in '84.) "You can see how it would fit in with that," Kesey says with a twinkle in his eye. "But we've never had the right amplification for it to compete with the drummers. They're pounding away and it's goin' through 450 watts or whatever. And then when Mickey gets bored with his drums he comes over here and . . . wait a minute. Come over here and look at this." He's excited and sort of half-laughing now. "The last time he played on it look at the dents he put in it! He beat the shit out of it! What a guy!

"This thing's been through a lot of changes over the years," he continues in a more serious tone. "It's been taken apart and put together a number of times, but it's only now getting to where we can play some real stuff on it."

Let there be no mistake about it. Kesey takes his Thunder Machine very seriously. That's why he and Zane tinker with it constantly over the course of the next half-hour, adjusting a tuning peg here, re-patching electronic gizmos there, coaxing the machine to squawk, belch, boom and screech. "The difference between this and the usual Moog synthesizer sounds is that this requires more muscle," Kesey says. "It's a physical thing. We have to strain and work to find the note. There's no buttons you can push."

Is it predictable from time to time? I ask.

"No, and that's a problem," Kesey admits. "To really play it at its full capability, we'll have to get it to where we know how we did something and then do it again." He's not kidding. The instrument is untameable.

That has Kesey a little nervous, because in just a few weeks the Thunder Machine is going on its first tour. You see, Kesey didn't want to do a standard promo tour for *Demon Box* — chit-chat with Phil Donahue and a different newspaper writer in every town — so he arranged to do readings from the book in select cities, backed up by a neo-beatnik aggregation called the Thunder Machine Band. (The group consists of Zane in the Machine, Steven Schuster on reeds, John Swan on guitar, Arzinia Richardson on bass and Art Maddox on keyboards.) As we're standing in the barn listening to father and son put the Thunder Machine through its paces, Richardson and Maddox pull up outside the barn.

Immediately the four players cluster around the Thunder Machine and begin tapping and plucking everything in sight. Art Maddox plugs in a little Casio keyboard and lays down a rhythmic chord pattern that serves as a foundation for the others to play off. Kesey puts on a cassette tape of himself singing/reading a poem from *Demon Box* in time to the music. I can't quite make out the words because the tape is distorted by the Thunder Machine's electronics, but the combination of the voice and the Casio is reminiscent of Allen Ginsberg and his harmonium, and the song recalls Dylan's "You Ain't Going Nowhere." (I can almost hear Kesey singing "Strap yourself to a tree with roots, 'cause you ain't goin' nowhere.") It's wild music—dissonant, funny, twisted stuff that definitely will blow a few minds, or at least give 'em a tweak. "Instead of leaving the poetry lying on the page," Kesey explains, "we use all this, which is like the Greek chorus to the poetry."

Aristophanes never had it so good. Or so strange.

* * *

Kesey leaves Zane, Richardson and Maddox with the Thunder Machine and leads us out behind the barn to where his ancient tractor is parked just a few feet from The Bus. It's our first close-up glimpse of "Further" [the original "ur" became "er" somewhere along the line] and I have to admit it's an exciting moment, since I'd read about it and seen pictures of it *forever*. Kesey is letting nature have its way with Further, so it's remarkable that it's exterior is in as good shape as it is. It's hard to distinguish the particulars of the paint job at this point because the many different layers have decayed at different rates. It's still very colorful, though, particularly in the late afternoon when the gold of the sun brings out the reds and yellows. The inside has been completely gutted, but if those walls could talk! I think it's cool that Further is there at all, proudly displayed like another Kesey family heirloom.

It's feeding time for the cattle, so Kesey loads bales of hay onto a small flatbed hooked up to the old tractor. He instructs us to sit on a bale and then takes us through the gate and out the front drive toward the fields. On our way we encounter a car heading down the drive and out of it spill two women, Connie and Erica, Connie's son, Mac, and a pair of dogs, Mary and Joe. At Kesey's insistence they all hop onto the flatbed with us, and all of a sudden we find ourselves part of an old-fashioned hay ride. As the tractor starts rolling again, Heebie, the irrepressible dachshund, comes yapping up from the rear, makes a heroic leap into our midst and sits down right on my foot. Once we're among the cattle, we hurl the bales (except the one that has served as our seat) off the flatbed and then roll back to the barn (once we get Heebie to stop terrorizing the poor beasts).

Kesey is in his element out in the fields. He handles the tractor like he's been around one all his life — and I guess he has, since he's from a farm family. You can tell that the day-to-day life on the farm puts a needed order into his life. To him, farming is a sort of yoga.

"This hay is a real fact of life," Kesey says, wiping the sweat from beneath his red wrap-around sunglasses with one of his huge leather gloves. "Whatever else happens, books and shows notwithstanding, this hay's gotta be brought in. If you leave it standing out there it becomes a fire hazard and it causes weeds. Because we haven't hayed that field over there . . . see the foxtails comin' in? It's terrible. You've got to care for the land, and having to feed this hay to the cows every day, you know right where you stand. You know how much hay you've got, how much time you've got, how many cows you've got.

"There's nothing in the world more *macho* than farming. You can drive past a field and never see the guy who farms it — you don't know what kind of cologne he wears; he probably doesn't work on a Nautilus or anything. But when you look out there and see the ground split open in its absolute fecundity . . . and the seed goes into the ground . . . and the sprouts uproot . . . you see real masculine power where it's supposed to be in relation to the earth, and not just in relation to other human beings.



Flute in hand, Kesey sits atop his magic bus as it cruises through Union Square in the heart of downtown San Francisco, April 26, 1967. Photo: Joseph J. Rosenthal/SF Chronicle





Above: Kesey and John Browning as they appeared to narcotics agents raiding the author's La Honda home, April 25, 1965. Photo: Bob Campbell/SF Chronicle. Left: While on the lam following his dope bust, Kesey dropped in for an Acid Test at San Francisco State in early October '66, and even granted an interview or two. Neal Cassady is seated at the top right, Stewart Brand is in the vest. Photo: Bob Campbell/SF Chronicle



Kesey and son Zane make adjustments on the Thunder Machine in preparation for Ken's six-city book promo tour. Photo: BJ

"I know exactly where I stand in terms of other farmers — I'm a real wimp! These other farmers, you go by their places and look at the way they keep their fences and the way they keep their trees pruned and you know this man is more a man than I am. He's digging deeper into himself for a more primal yang way of dealing with it."

Kesey pauses momentarily, looks skyward and then continues.

"There are these big old thunderheads over yonder, right over Oak Ridge. These thunderheads loom up and it's like I know 'em by name. They're like big ol' burly drunks. They say, 'Hey, look at him! Let's go down there and rain all over him!' And then they blow a little lightning and settle back down. The last two or three weeks I've been seeing them. They'll rear their heads and look down over the Willamette Pass. Big ol' bald tops of their heads and big, bulgy cheeks. So far they haven't come down, but one night, in about two weeks, those thunderheads'll all get together and swoop down like a bunch of *bikers* — blowing, crashing, booming around —and then it'll rain.

"But if you don't get out in the field, you never see 'em. They're just in relation to the farmers. You can almost see them up there going 'HAW, HAW, HAW!' slapping their thighs and pointing their fingers. I learned a lot in jail. [Kesey served time for possession of marijuana in the late '60s.] The main thing I learned was that the heavens are important—having the sky above you. If they give you a choice in jail — you can get out on a work crew or lie in jail for six months—you'd cut off your left finger to get outside. You want to be outside, on the ground. Jail really is like you think it is. You're *in jail*! Bummer!"

He laughs heartily and hops off the tractor. Back at the Thunder Machine there's lots of activity. A gleaming white truck—one of those sturdy types like you rent from U-Haul—has pulled up and the musicians and two more of Kesey's friends are in the midst of a discussion about how the Thunder Machine could be loaded into the truck. As a joint — the first of many — passes around the group now standing between the barn and the truck, there is animated discussion about whether Kesey should buy the truck to transport equipment for the upcoming tour. Faye is off somewhere looking into the money end of it and Kesey is there with the tape measure to see if it's feasible. You can tell he likes the truck; he has the glint in his eye of a kid coveting a new toy. Finally he hops in the cab with Zane and takes it out for a test drive.

By the time Regan and I get back to the front door of the house, all we can see of the truck is a trailing cloud of dust. We retreat to the cool of the back porch once again, mindful not to disturb the llamas, who *still* look sinister to me.

* * *

Half an hour later, Kesey returns. He makes himself a gin and tonic and then heads over to the hay barn again. After putting in a tape of Bob Marley music and talking more with his friends about the logistics of Thunder Machine transport, he rolls out the largest ball of string I've ever seen — made from collected hay bale twine, it's more than two feet in diameter — and plunks himself down on top of it as if it were an ottoman. Another joint goes around the circle, which no longer includes Maddox and Richardson, and Kesey just raps:

"You remember four weeks ago when you heard about the secret head of Solidarity [the Polish union and resistance movement] getting busted? Well, my two translators had come up here from Poland then. They're like 30 or 32, really sharp, intelligent, caring people, much better read than any of us right here. On their way here this guy got busted in their apartment and they found out and that really put them under the gun. They were coming here to translate 'Little Tricker the Squirrel' [a wonderful children's story/parable in *Demon Box*] because we want to go to Poland and do it there. I love the idea of doing something about *a bear* and a squirrel in Poland! It will play so well there," he adds with a mischievous Prankster smile.

"But suddenly people weren't into that idea at all. We were getting calls from the State Department a few times a day. The translators were supposed to have dropped out of sight, so we sort of shielded them from the press. This was hot stuff over there. Finally, the father of the young woman was arrested over in their apartment and then two of his colleagues, one of whom subsequently died in jail. So this young couple was really scared, and they were *right* to be scared. It was very intense.

"Anyway, I felt like we were offering them sanctuary. What we were offering them sanctuary *from* didn't make any difference. When somebody's on fire, you don't say, 'Who lit you on fire?' You put it out. Offering sanctuary is a statement. There are no real political statements left to make. Making a statement about marijuana doesn't do it because that swings back on yourself. The real statement of the '60s was the civil rights movement, because you said 'I'm putting my life on the line for something.' Well, I'm putting my life on the line for this one [sanctuary]. I don't care if they're persecuted by this government or that. When all this happened I'd just seen *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* the night before, and I remember ol' Quasimodo shouts 'Sanctuary! Sanctuary!' and then he picks up the girl and protects her. Anybody can do that if they'll just *do it*. I think it's the punching movement of the '80s.

"If everyone hooked into this —" he stops and turns to Regan and me. "Think of the Deadhead network for the Underground Railroad, if all of a sudden we start to pass Nicaraguans

and El Salvadorans and Chileans back and forth. They'd *never* find them.

"The sanctuary movement is the only thing I can think of that hooks into that civil rights thing," he continues as, appropriately enough, Marley's rebellious "Get Up Stand Up" blares from the tape player. "Drugs don't. When my Uncle Ed sees me standing up for my right to smoke grass, as opposed to hiding a Nicaraguan over here and possibly going to jail for it, two different things come into his mind. You see, they're hemming us in. This whole grass thing [the crackdown on growers and users] is a way of creating Jews. We're becoming the Jews, the people who are going to be blamed somewhere down the line. The fascist government always has to have somebody weaker than itself who it can blame, and then they sell it to the press. They're gonna blame a bunch of shit on us dopers. And the truth of it is, we've never done nothin' bad. The dope smokers aren't doin' bad things. Most of us are just sittin' around listening to music."

He stops and sips the last of his drink.

"You know, when Marley died they buried him with his pants stuffed with ganja. No kidding. Just in his old tattered Levi's stuffed with ganja. I bet one of these days they'll dig him up and his corpse'll have a big old smile on his face!

"I got a call a while ago from the people who put together *The MacNeil-Lehrer Report* [the popular PBS news program]," he continues, without missing a beat. "They wanted me to be on a panel talking about drugs with something like eight other people, and I said, 'Well, how is the time going to be allotted?' and they said, 'Both sides'll get equal time.' And I said, 'Who else is for drugs?' And they said, 'Well nobody's *for* drugs.' So I said, 'Well, then I should get *half the time!*' They didn't call me back."

For the record, while Kesey is a pot smoker and still swears by psychedelics, he is adamantly opposed to hard drugs such as coke and heroin because "they have blood on them." But Kesey being Kesey, he would never tell anyone what to do or not to do.

* * *

Inside the house, Kesey takes over the kitchen area and starts cutting up fresh peaches. National Public Radio is turned on loud in the dining area; soon the drone of the NPR newscaster is drowned out by the whir of a blender. Kesey sips the concoction in progress, adds some vanilla ice cream and more rum and hits the blender switch again. A few seconds later he turns it off, dips a wooden spoon into

> "It's like there's a little map and you'll hear a little bit over there and that's part of the map."

the blender and slowly draws some of the liquid to his lips. "Aaaah," he says with a satisfied smile. "Peach Rambo!" It's smoother than its name implies, but it definitely has that unmistakable rum kick. It's mainly laughter and small talk as we down Dixiecup after Dixiecup of the potent stuff, with Kesey holding court in the dining area, rapping about a number of different political issues. Kesey likes to talk all right; when he really gets going, everybody just sits back and listens.

At about 6 or so, the Peach Rambo party breaks up, and Kesey goes off to another part of the farm to complete a radio interview with an NPR reporter who, like us, had sort of tagged along on this Day in the Life of Ken Kesey. Faye, Erica and Connie clear Kesey's mess from the kitchen and begin preparing the evening's meal. Erica goes into the garden and picks a cornucopia of fresh veggies, and Faye hacks into a huge piece of meat, carving bite-sized chunks for burritos.

The meat is simmering in sauce when Kesey returns. In the late afternoon sun, he, Erica, Connie and Mac go down to the field behind the house and sprawl out under a tree next to a little cottage that was built years ago by Kesey's closest Prankster ally, Ken Babbs. With the drainage pond nearby taking on the gold of the sun and the wind chimes in the trees tinkling gently, it's an idyllic scene from our vantage point on the back porch — the Oregon version of a French Impressionist painting. After fixing another gin and tonic, Kesey leads Regan, Mac and me on a sunset tour of the farm's back 40. Kesey has an amazing rapport with Mac — he treats the 8-year-old like an adult, basically, and it's easy to see that Mac appreciates that.

As we walk towards a big clump of trees beyond the pond, carefully sidestepping piles of llama dung, we walk by Jed Kesey's grave. The site seems more beautiful than sad in the intense late daylight, though at that moment I'm hit by the weight of something Kesey said in a recent issue of *Esquire* that we had read just two days earlier: "With Jed's death, what I finally came to grips with was that love and grief have to be united. You can't separate them. As soon as you really love somebody, at some point you're going to grieve. And that's why people move away from each other, so they don't have to be there to experience the loss."

Kesey leads the three of us into a heavily wooded area, across a plank stretched over a dry creek bed and finally into a secluded, overgrown meadow, a large stretch of grass and weeds surrounded by tall trees. He cups his hands and howls so the sound echoes through the glen. His dream, he tells us, is to bulldoze through the thicket, put up a stage down yonder at the end of the field and present small concerts. "I'd bring in people like Taj Mahal, maybe Garcia and John Kahn acoustic, people like that, just small shows." In his fantasy he even books musicians like Itzhak Perlman here. "You guys know what a Deadhead crowd does to the performers who play for 'em," he says. "Imagine some other kinds of music in a setting like this with a lot of Deadheads there." It's hard not to be swept up by his enthusiasm, though the reality is that it would be a mammoth undertaking, to say the least. But Kesey is nothing if not a dreamer.

On the trip back to the house we pass the crumbling shell of a boat that's in even worse shape than Further. It's name? "Deeper," of course. No doubt there's a story there, but it'll have to wait until another day.

Inside, dinner is served — burritos and bushels of fresh vegetables, all cooked to perfection. The dinner conversation is mainly small talk — Kesey asks news of his daughter, Sunshine, a student at the University of Oregon, and talks at length about the great production of *Guys & Dolls* playing up in Eugene at the Hult Center. "If you want to see it," he tells Connie, "I'll go see it again in a second," and he launches into a fair version of "Can Do" from the musical. Kesey has been in the Dead family and associated with youthful causes for so long it's easy to forget that he is 51 years old and that *Guys & Dolls* was probably near and dear to him in his younger days. The meal reminds me of the big family dinners I enjoyed during my summers in North Carolina as a youth: there's so much food that there's more chewin' than talkin', and most of the talk is centered around the food — "Pass the corn, please." "Erica, d'you get enough

salad?" Country folks know how to eat a meal.

After dinner, Kesey announces that he's going to drive down and rent a couple of movies for the evening's entertainment. There's talk about picking up *Red Sonja*—"the one with Sylvester Stallion's girlfriend," Erica notes — or maybe a kung fu movie. Kesey invites Mac to come along with him on the mission, but before he leaves he pops in a copy of *Sunshine Daydream*, the unreleased film of the Dead's 1972 concert at the County Fairgrounds in nearby Veneta [discussed at length in *GR* #9]. Zane is trying to study for a chemistry test the following day, but his eyes are drawn to the screen, and then Erica joins us on the couch. "There's Babbs!" Erica says excitedly, and that's just the first of about 50 people in the film she recognizes. Erica "came out here on Further's last trip, from Woodstock," she tells us. She's been "family" ever since, so it's not surprising that she knows virtually everyone in this amazing home movie. "Everyone's so much skinnier!" she remarks with a laugh. It was 14 years ago. Where does the time go?

* * *

"Looks like Hagen shot this part of the movie," Erica chuckles as the screen fills with one image after another of naked women grooving to a very acidy "China Cat." (John Hagen was a member of the Dead's equipment crew for many years.) As the song eases into "I Know You Rider," the bouncing breasts are replaced by vintage footage of Neal Cassady commandeering Further on one of its trips. He hops and bops in his seat as if he can barely stay at the wheel, and though the soundtrack is music, you just know Cassady's talking even faster than he's driving. As the Dead hit the second chorus, Kesey comes dancing into the room, his eyes fixed on the screen, a broad smile on his face. He sings along for a moment, does a little twirl in the center of the room and all of a sudden he seems like Joe Deadhead, the sort of good-vibes guy I always hope will be dancing in front of me at shows. Kesey doesn't see many Dead shows these days — he generally hits New Year's and maybe a couple of other Bay Area dates — but he seems as much a part of the Dead scene as anyone who works more directly with the band. The attitude is the same, the concerns the same. Kesey was one of the first people to visit Garcia after he was hospitalized a month earlier, and over the course of our afternoon he expressed concern over Jerry's health several times. He also made some jokes about the Dead

> "I saw the Dead as the main afterburner to a spaceship that was going to leave this dimension."

incorporating a dialysis machine into the rhythm section; we laughed nervously at the remark, but he says Jerry laughed *heartily* when he told him. "Then I quit makin' jokes," he said, "'cause I could see it hurt him to laugh, lying there in his bed."

Mac is hot to see the movies they've chosen, so we surrender the set. *Red Sonja* was taken, Kesey informs the group, so in its stead he picked up some action flick with Charles Bronson and Toshiro Mifune, and a comedy sci-fi thriller called *Morons From Outer Space*. Let the brain rot begin.

With Mac, Connie, Erica and Zane planted in front of the TV (Faye is still tackling the dinner dishes), Kesey bounds up a flight of stairs, through his study and out onto a second story porch, where Regan and I join him for a quiet chat. It's a breathtakingly beautiful scene, with a perfect half-moon illuminating the fields below us and the hills in the distance. We hear crickets and occasionally the piercing cry of peacocks that live on the farm, but in general the night is quiet and still — quite a contrast from the noisy activity of most of the day. The evening finds us all in reflective moods.

In Christopher Lehman-Haupt's review of Demon Box *in the* New York Times *he compliments your writing but attacks you for not renouncing your '60s world-view. Why are people so virulent about the notion that '60s ideas are outmoded?*

Well, the *New York Times* had the same kind of thing to say about *Cuckoo's Nest* when that came out. It's not that the ideas are outmoded, it's that in a way they're radical. In that Lehman-Haupt review, what he really gets on me about is the way I deal with psychiatrists and that I shouldn't pass judgement on those people. This is a guy who's gone through a lot of analysis! And so has his family. [The reviewer's brother, Sandy Lehman-Haupt, was one of the Merry Pranksters.] So when you spend that much money on analysis you're going to defend that camp, just like a Baptist.

Look at that review again. Let's use it as a template. He was looking for me to repent. He wants me to repent, and until I repent I'm not going to get a good review. So that gives you an idea and you start to think, "Repent from what?".

Right, what's the issue?

What *is* the issue? One has to do with a magical universe and the other has to do with a closed system. The magical universe that comes out of the '60s believes that we're not alone. There's stuff helping us and we're helping the other stuff. The owls and the witches and the leprechauns and the Deadheads are all in it together and there aren't very many of them, but they have something that they agree on. If you were to give them a test they'd all finish the test pretty good. They didn't vote for Reagan — neither the owls nor the Deadheads. They don't believe you have to enforce your will with bombs. They don't think you can always come up with the answer to something by going through a computer system. They believe in magic and ritual and the input of spirits.

When you talk to Deadheads about what it is they're after . . . They go to Dead concerts asking questions and sometimes the Dead provide the answer. It's not the same reason you go to a Barry Manilow concert, or even a Harry Belafonte concert. Going to a Harry Belafonte concert, as good as he is, or going to an Ella Fitzgerald concert, as good as she is, still has to do with enjoying nostalgia. But *the question* is still being asked by the Deadheads, and the Dead are still trying to provide the answer. And the answer has something to do with trying to make it through the spiritual impasse we've gotten ourselves into without self-destructing and going crazy and bombing everybody.

It's like there's a little map and you'll hear a little bit over there and that's part of the map, and you'll find something else over there and that's another part of the map. You hear these twisted pan pipes off in the ghettos and you follow it a little ways and the pan pipes drop out. Then you'll hear something at a concert in Red Rocks, when the stones begin to ring in a circle, and you'll follow that a little way. It's part of a map that's trying to show a certain number of people how to make it through a harsh time and survive.

This is a very apocalyptic time and we're trying to find a way to peace without getting mired in all the traps

people have set for the peaceniks, including the ones the peaceniks have set for themselves. It's a way to get through, and it has to do with a way of using your mind that is different from the way you ordinarily use it. Every so often, listening to a Dead gig, you shift into another gear. It's what everybody goes for, and the Dead work hours and hours and hours trying to provide it. They'll work and work and work and — WHAM! — they'll finally throw it into gear and your mind will hit that thing where you realize this is the area where the solutions lie. Everything else is in the areas where the problems lie. No matter how hard you look at the problem of ecology, the problem of acid rain, the problem of the war on drugs and stuff like that, what you're doing is using a conventional mind frame to look at them. But solutions do not exist there. Never have. It's going to take a creative shifting of gears to jump out of that spiritual and cultural cul-de-sac off into an area of creativity where we can solve some of the problems we have to solve. They're not going to be solved by plugging along in county administration. We're too deep into it, and we're going to have to find some kind of inspiration, some kind of vision, beyond what we've got.

And not only that, there's a huge force that's saying "There *is* none but this. We want Baptists coast to coast, and anything that's not Baptist is not American." That force is stronger this year than it ever has been in the United States. The labor movement is at its weakest. The manifestation of the vision of American mercy instead of American force is at its weakest since back toward the Civil War.

When Garcia was down, everybody could feel . . . "Oh *nooooo*." Because the Dead are a way through. There's a gap there. Without that gap, boy, our choices are cut down and it's harder to make it through this river, because the Dead lead us through a certain part in the rapids.

It's made people look around a bit, though, assess whether they've put too much energy into this one vehicle. We're here in Oregon instead of Red Rocks this week, and it sort of seems like we've just shifted the space of where we're looking for new and special experiences.

Yeah, you can't just put it all in one thing. It's like the thing I mentioned earlier about the sanctuary movement and the Deadheads. Imagine if the same [Deadhead] energy could be related to other areas. It really just has to do with revolution. It has to do with new ways out of a sticky situation. Every time I encounter this idea of sanctuary — people passing Nicaraguan and El Salvadoran refugees,



The Bus in 1986. Photo: BJ

keeping them out of the way of our own government — I think, "God, what a network the Grateful Dead could form for passing illegal aliens from Oshkosh to Muncie." There's no place in the world you go that you don't run into Deadheads. Anywhere in Africa, Egypt, New Zealand, among the aborigines, you'll run into this little bunch of people—not a big bunch, and it doesn't need to be a big bunch — who really reach out to other people . . . One of the things about Deadheads is they are polite. They have made a point of not doing what everybody thought they were going to do. The scene out in the parking lot at a Dead show is like the Fourth World. It comes together in ritual form and maintains itself and watches out for itself and tries not to cheat itself. It's got kind of a solid beat of ethics coming down through it. That same kind of beat can shift over into something else.

We're really good at this, at being a network. And it doesn't really need Garcia to work. The current of ethics and integrity — that's what Bob Weir calls it, and he's right, because it goes down to the *integer*, the basic what-it-is that makes it go; how far down can you boil it and still be "it"? I think it can be boiled down to where it doesn't have Garcia and still be *it*. And I think Garcia believes that, too. And I think everybody is trying to remove that weight from his shoulders and still keep the momentum going.

[Long pause] I was surprised how strong old Jerry felt in that hospital room. I went and felt his foot. He's got a foot just like Annabelle's [Jerry's daughter]. It's a short, round, hard very strong-feeling foot. This is the foot of somebody who's stood on his feet and worked steady, as long as a cannery worker, as somebody screwing in bolts on an assembly line in Indianapolis. There's a real workingman's feel to that foot, and it encouraged me. I thought, "This is a stronger guy than people give him credit for." And that's 'cause he's just a working man.

The band has always cultivated that image — the working band. Garcia once described the Dead as a "saloon band," and that seems sort of apt in a way.

It was funny. When we were in Egypt [in '78 for the Dead's shows], this guy that lives over there came up; he'd taken a bit of Murine [the acid supply was kept in a Murine eye dropper bottle] and he said, "I can't believe I'm hearing this — these twisted cowboy songs. Marty Robbins coming out from between the paws of the Sphinx! I can't understand it! *Nobody* could understand it. [Laughs]

The Egypt trip was an example of real unity in the Dead family. How important is it to have the continuity of a lot of the same people in the scene for a number of years?

The people are important, but more than that it's the loyalty to the continuity. Do you know Burroughs' new book, *The Place of Dead Roads*? I thought a great name for a novel about Pendleton [Oregon, in the eastern part of the state] would be *The Place of Dead Roadies*. Ramrod's from there, Johnny Hagen, Rex Jackson, Sonny Herd. Anyway, it's their loyalty to each other and the band, and the loyalty of the band to these people, and this roadie's old lady is friends with *this* guy's kids, who knows *these* folks over here . . . . And it's not the people so much as the integrity of the system that makes it stand.

And that's carried over to the Deadhead world.

Sure, that's what it's all about. The band members have remained remarkably loyal to each other for a band of this size and importance. Their personal woes have been ironed out by the integrity of the music. When it gets going you can tell it gets them healthy just like it does us.

Would you have predicted when you met them that what they were creating would extend 20 years and spread out like it has?

I had higher aspirations than that. [Laughs] Higher by quite a bit! I saw them as the main afterburner to a spaceship that was going to leave this dimension. I wasn't thinking about them in terms of how many record albums they were going to sell.

Were they still pretty much a bar band when you first heard them?

I don't remember when I first heard them. All I know is we went to The Beatles' concert [at the Cow Palace in San Francisco in 1964] and we suddenly found ourselves all coming back on the same bus. I don't remember their sound.

They're members of a team that includes the Hog Farm, and included the Diggers, the Angels for a period. And the team existed a whole lot before the notion of rock and roll at that level existed. I can remember after the Muir Beach Acid Test, Garcia was talking about "Midnight Hour" and he said, "Yeah, 'Midnight Hour' could be a hit!" and I said, "Yeah, and six months later you'll be singing 'Things go better with Coke.'"

They've never had a lid on their aspirations. They've never aspired to sell this many albums or to be on this many magazine covers or play to this number of people. That's not what they regard as success—those are by-products, not what they're after when they're playing.

Success seems to scare them even. And that may be because success in the music business is conventionally measured in dollar terms, and they don't condescend to that level of thinking.

That's because on the elevator they didn't push the button for the mezzanine, they just pushed "UP," and they're not going to get off at a floor because they're still going up. They didn't say, "We're going to keep going until we're as successful as the Rolling Stones, or as immortal as the Sons of the Pioneers." They just pushed "UP."

You've had the chance to observe a generation of kids growing up around the Dead. What are your observations about them?

I had a great idea for a horror movie called *The Dead Kids* about these kids who hang around backstage and are in strange covens—pull the heads off jujubears and stuff like that. I think my kids and all the kids I know feel they've benefited from being around the Dead scene. Everybody I know who went over to Egypt thinks it was the best thing they ever did. Chuck [his brother] and I both took our kids and it was great. We were away from television, away from the possibility of making a connection with the other world. We had our own little world with us, but nobody there knew the Dead from us. We were just part of whatever it was that had descended on these people.

As they were playing there between the paws of the Sphinx, the moon began to eclipse and all these Nubians who had come there with Hamza [El-Din] to open the show would be there whenever the Murine bottle went around, saying [he rattles off something in Egyptian and points into his open mouth]. And we said, "No, no, no." And they said [he repeats the Egyptian] as if to say, "Hey, we can take whatever you guys take." So they did, and they just rocked and rolled and had a *great* time. They couldn't speak our language, we couldn't speak theirs, and it's too loud to talk at a Dead gig anyway. There were only about 700 paying customers, yet the dunes, as far as the Dead's sound would carry, were covered with camels and horses and Bedouin and little families of people who had come up there to see American music at its farthest out. [Laughs] They were all kind of digging it.

And so the moon eclipses and pretty soon everybody's getting on to it and noticing it. The Dead kept playing and *bonnnging* around and kids started running through the streets nearby with beer cans filled with pebbles stuck on sticks making this great noise: *shaka-shaka-shaka-shaka-shaka*. And you could hear it as the Dead went through this space jam, and then pretty soon the moon started coming back.

You know, the Dead were playing with equipment rented from The Who because it was easier to bring it from England to Alexandria and then truck it over from there. And we later learned that while the Dead were playing that night, during the eclipse of the full moon, [Who drummer] Keith Moon OD'd and died in a hotel room in London. And you can't help but look at that and think, "What does this mean?" [Laughter] Well, it doesn't mean anything, but it's one of those things that has importance.

There it is.

Right. There it is. You can't really hook it into anything. Where you gonna plug it in? "Yeah, this proves this. Hmmmm. Playing on the full moon . . . Keith Moon?" You can't plug it in. Yet everybody was aware of it and everybody felt the whole thing. Here's the Sphinx, the Grateful Dead, the whole thing of where the band's name comes from. What it means is that all of this means more than we know. That's all it means.

But when we came back from Egypt, everybody thought they'd been part of a pilgrimage to a holy place and had conducted themselves very well, and were treated well by the people in the holy place and shown the holy secrets. The Dead had had a kind of reverence for the whole Egyptian scene before they got there—you know, picking a name like that; did they pick the name or did the name pick them? You really felt like the whole thing sort of sucked you over there to it. 'Cause you'd earned it.

What sort of cultural stereotypes did the Egyptians have about Americans or music?

I don't know. It was *way* too high for that. We had 20 Nubians who didn't even speak Egyptian, who'd flown up from Nubia with Hamza, and they're all ripped. Their faces are nothing but black with the eyes and mouth and they're wearing these pastel blue turbans and pastel blue *gallabias*. You go backstage and they're just swaying to the music, that same ol' Dead sway. Finally this ubiquitous big titted, braless Deadhead hippie, blond, suntanned, *loaded* woman jumps up on this big ol' rock thing and goes, "Yeeeeeeaww!" and pulls off her shirt. And all these Egyptians start to shout, "Yeeeeawww! Yeee-awww!" And finally they did that thing that Egyptians can do where they use their tongues—uvulations—while they made that noise. And pretty soon the Dead girls began to do that back: "Lu-lu-lu-lu-lu." It was a thing where everybody knew what it meant and behaved themselves according to the height of the occasion. Wonderful stuff.

It must have been culture shock coming back.

Mountain Girl said it was "unbearably slow." [Laughs]

Are there other places you think are primed for the Dead?

Oh sure. I think they could really play the hell out of Moscow. 'Cause they cut such a clean edge. They're not going against America, for America, or anything like that. They can go there and the Russians can like them as much as anybody. They'd love 'em. You know, they published *Cuckoo's Nest* in all the communist bloc countries because they think it's anti-American. The Dead have a little of that in them—the thorn in the side of America, with

the Captain Trips business. I think the underground would take them as they are and love them, and the overground would probably try to get them to defect!

It seems like there have been a lot of books looking back at the mid-'60s recently. What do you think about the vision of that time?

I think every year somebody says this: "It seems like people are starting to really recognize the '60s this year." Every year I can remember from as far back as I remember, people have been saying that. Even back in the '50s! [Laughs]

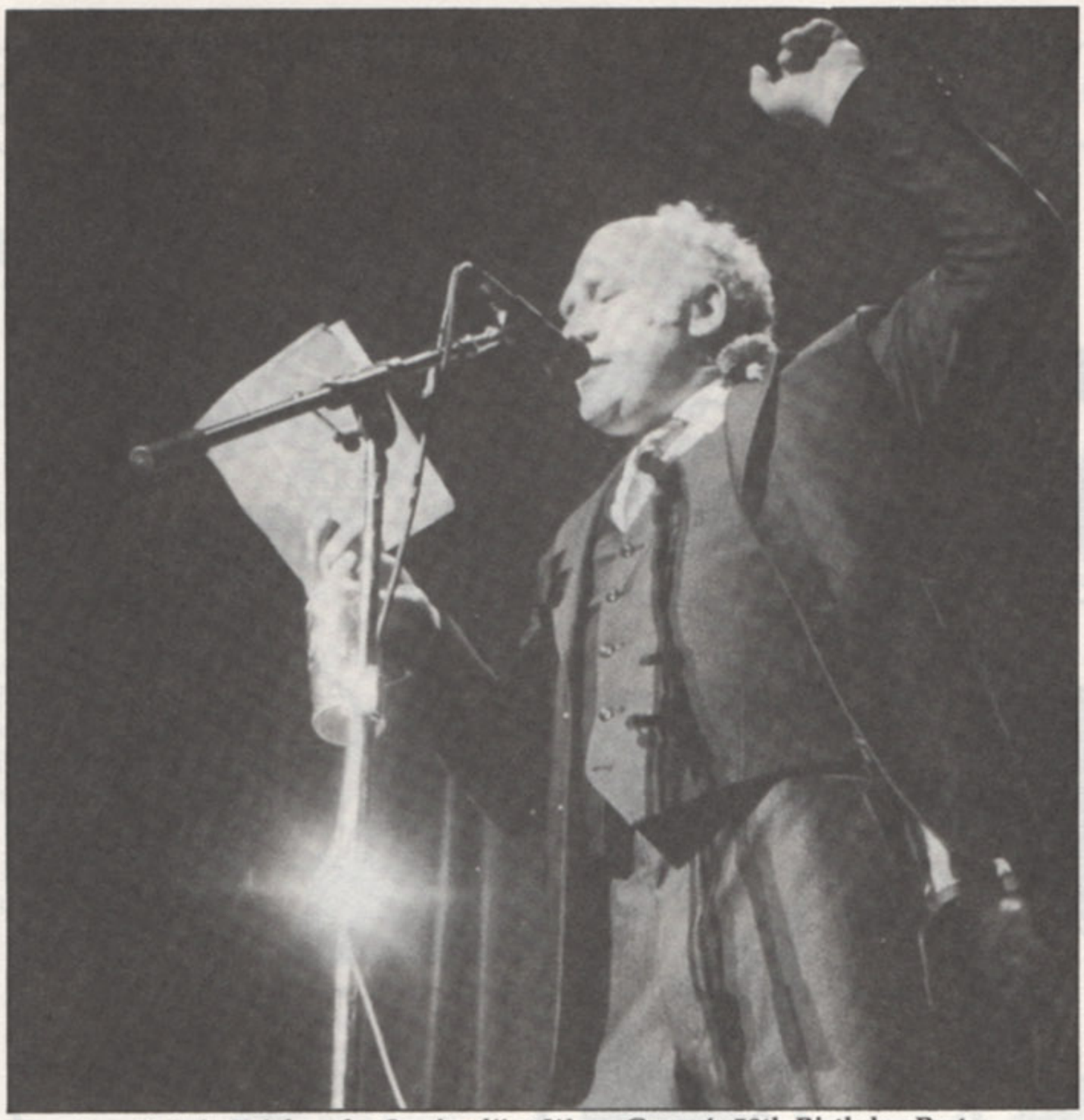
Nothing has stopped. People are still doing what they're doing. Some people weren't in on it, some people won't get in on it.

There don't seem to be many good documents of the period, apart from Wolfe's book and a couple of others. We keep hoping that somebody who was on the right wavelength will do something.

But why? It sounds like you're talking in terms of numbers of people, and this is the trap that everybody gets into. Thinking in terms of numbers instead of How many Pythagorases do you need? How many Bachs do you need? How many Gary Snyders do you need? As they say, you can count the number of seeds in an apple, but can you count the number of apples in a seed? It doesn't take a big bunch of people. It just takes potent people salted around the earth in little pockets. The idea that from this seeding they're going to seed a whole lot more and everybody's going to come to this thinking—it's never going to happen.

We're not going to win this dope election in Oregon—the OMI [Oregon Marijuana Initiative]. It's taken many years and a lot of effort to get it on the ballot, but we're not gonna win it. But it's not important that we win it. It may be better that we *not* win it and just fight from not having won it. To win it might ruin us. It would be a real convenient thing to be able to grow and smoke your own dope without worrying about those cops flying over in airplanes. But the truth of it is, whether we can smoke grass or not isn't the issue any more than whether Garcia is there to play or not. That's gravy. That's not the meat. The meat is, what is it that makes us go, that makes us different from the other people? It's not just the fact that we like Grateful Dead music. That's part of something else.

It has to do with that test I was talking about. It has to do with the possibility of world peace. It has to do with the belief that we're dealing with a benevolent universe that's trying to help us spiritually and we're trying to work out some kind of spiritual destiny that comes from ancient Egypt and from Stonehenge and from Hugh Romney [Wavy Gravy] and those guys doing Camp Winnarainbow. Same bunch of people working at the same effort.



Reading "Little Tricker the Squirrel" at Wavy Gravy's 50th Birthday Party. Photo: Mariah Healy

And that whole Deadhead feeling — you'll go to scenes where there's more energy in the parking lot than at the gig! So it's not just the music exactly. It's the gathering of the people that care about something. Music draws them like these lights will draw the moth. Light isn't what the moth is really after. It's *the wool*—stuff they can really get their little choppers into. Music just happens around it like lightning around an earthquake — you'll find lightning storms run along where an earthquake is. That's the music. The earthquake is moving. The Dead are the musical manifestation of the movement. They don't lead the movement. They manifest it. It happens in a lot of other smaller ways, too. If you ever go and watch Taj Mahal deal with 200 people, those people leave differently. If you've ever watched Willie Nelson do a really good concert, he reaches in there and adjusts something in the redneck mind that turns it away from "Let's beat up the old lady after getting drunk on Saturday night" to something that's peaceful, that's acid-head, old-fashioned, flower-child baloney. But it's the only baloney in town.

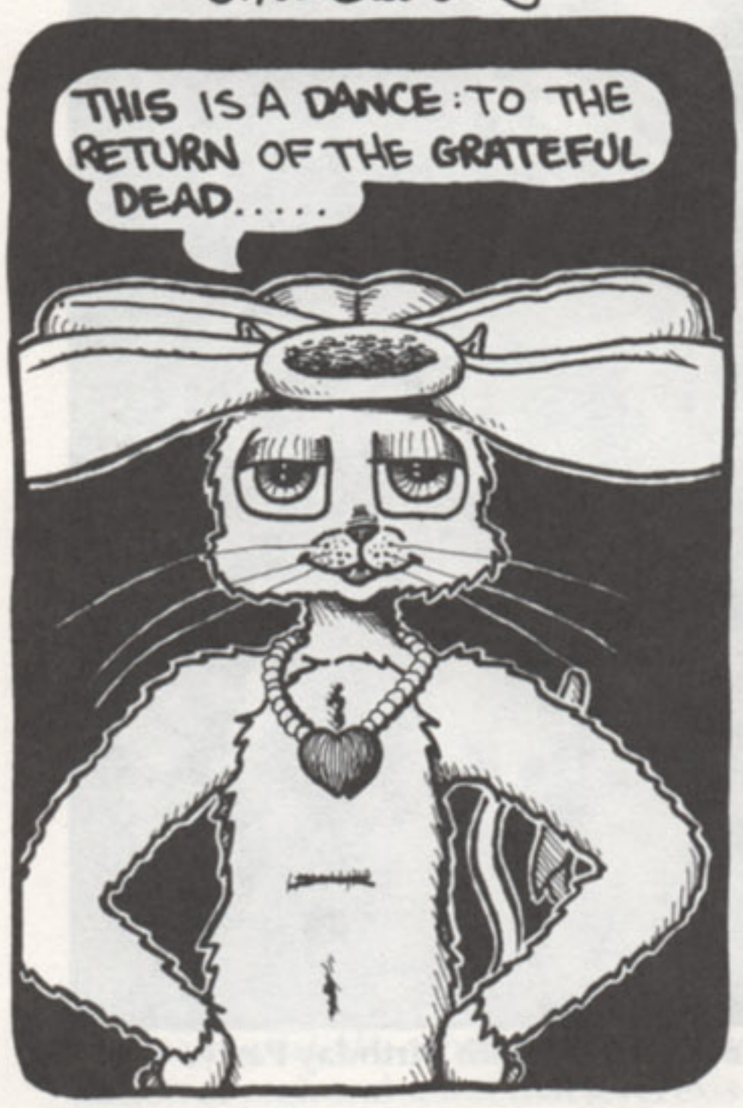
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"Let's go watch the movie!" Kesey says cheerfully, bringing our discussion to an abrupt close. It was threatening to get heavy up there in the moonlight and we could tell he wasn't into that this night—didn't want to be pushed into the wise-man role he and his pal Hunter Thompson half-joke about. This little whack of the master's stick is well taken and we head down to TV world again. It's past 10 p.m., though, so Regan and I decide it's time to move out to find a motel. Kesey kindly offers us the floor if we have sleeping bags, but alas, this is our Best Western Motel Tour '86 so we're traveling bagless. As he walks us out the front door, into the calm night, he becomes serious once more, as if it's the moon that makes him talk. "There are two roads," he says in a whisper, and we instantly know he's not talking about street directions. "There's this road over here . . ." His voice trails off and then his face lights up in a smile. "And then there's the acid-head road."

The last we see of Kesey this night, as we back into the driveway, our headlights shining into the still-open front door, he's walking into the living room to watch the final half-hour of *Morons From Outer Space*. □

ON THAT ROAD AGAIN...

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The Grateful Dead Book of LISTS

CHARTBUSTERS!

How the Dead's Albums Have Fared on the *Billboard* Charts

No one in the record business believes the *Billboard* Top 200 album chart is a completely accurate barometer of sales performance, but certainly it is marginally indicative of how a given LP is doing nationwide. The following was extracted from a wonderful reference book called *Joel Whitburn's Top Pop Albums 1955–85,* published by Record Research Inc., Box 200, Menomonee, WI 53051. Lists like the one below are printed for every artist who made the charts over the past 30 years.

Album	Release Date	Peak Position	Weeks On Chart
The Grateful Dead	4/67	73	28
Anthem of the Sun	8/68	87	17
Aoxomoxoa	6/69	73	11
Live Dead	1/70	64	15
Workingman's Dead	6/70	27	26
American Beauty	11/70	30	19
Skull & Roses	10/71	25	12
Europe '72	11/72	24	24
Bear's Choice	7/73	60	11
Wake of the Flood	10/73	18	19
Mars Hotel	7/74	16	20
Blues for Allah	9/75	16	20
Steal Your Face	6/76	56	9
Terrapin Station	8/77	28	16
Shakedown Street	11/78	41	19
Go to Heaven	5/80	23	21
Reckoning	4/81	43	16
Dead Set	9/81	29	11

MISSING IN ACTION

15 Songs From Dead Albums That Have Been Played Fewer Than a Dozen Times Live

"The Golden Road" (first album)
"Cream Puff War" (first album)
"What's Become of the Baby" (*Aoxomoxoa*)
"Rosemary" (*Aoxomoxoa*)
"New Speedway Boogie" (*Workingman's Dead*)
"Till the Morning Comes" (*American Beauty*)
"Operator" (*American Beauty*)
"Let Me Sing Your Blues Away" (*Wake of the Flood*)
"Money Money" (*Mars Hotel*)
"Unbroken Chain" (*Mars Hotel*)
"Pride of Cucamonga" (*Mars Hotel*)
"Blues For Allah" suite (*Blues for Allah*)
"Sage & Spirit" (*Blues for Allah*)
"If I Had the World To Give" (*Shakedown Street*)
"France" (*Shakedown Street*)

DARK STAR CONNECTIONS

While researching his fine book *Playing in the Band,* David Gans compiled a list of all the songs that "Dark Star" has been connected to through the years. A quick perusal of the song titles shows that almost any style of music can lead the band into or out of the uncharted realms of "Dark Star."

Songs Out of "Dark Star"

"Playing in the Band"
"Cryptical Envelopment"
"Me & My Uncle"
"Wharf Rat"
"Weather Report, Part I"
"The Other One"
"The Seven" (Mickey & the Heartbeats)
"Sittin' on Top of the World"
"Truckin'"
"El Paso"
"Let It Grow"
"Warp Ten" (Lesh-Lagin jam, '74)

Songs Into "Dark Star"

"The Main Ten" ("Playin'" without lyrics)
"Cryptical Envelopment"
"Me & My Uncle"
"Wharf Rat"
"Weather Report Prelude"
"Bertha"
"Sugar Magnolia"
"China Doll"
"High Time"
"Bird Song"
"Comes a Time"
"Stella Blue"
"Casey Jones"
"China Cat Sunflower"
"St. Stephen"
"The Eleven"
"Sittin' on Top of the World"
"Truckin'"
"El Paso"
"The Other One"
"Death Letter Blues" (The Heartbeats)
"He's Gone"
"Morning Dew"
"Attics of My Life"
"Me & Bobby McGee"
"Brokedown Palace"
"Eyes of the World"
"Not Fade Away"
"Born Cross-Eyed"

Roots



This issue we look at the origins of the cover tunes on Garcia's second album, Garcia, *released in 1975.*

"Turn on the Bright Lights" — This is perhaps the most famous song of a little-known R&B artist named Albert Washington. Born in Georgia in 1939, Washington moved to Cincinnati with his family in 1945. He toured the Midwest with various gospel music groups throughout the '50s as a guitarist, keyboardist and singer. In the early '60s he turned to secular music, recording a number of blues and R&B songs for various small labels. He was also in several Cincinnati bands. "Turn on the Bright Lights" was recorded in the late '60s for the Fraternity label, with Lonnie Mack on guitar. Though the song is credited to Washington on the Garcia album, it was actually written by Harry Carlson, who also produced Washington's record.

"What Goes Around" — The actual title of this song is "What Comes Around (Goes Around)," and it was written and first recorded by Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack, the great New Orleans writer/singer/instrumentalist. Dr. John's version appears on a 1974 Atlantic album titled *Desitively Bonaroo* (gris-gris slang for coolsville, I think), which still is available as an import LP. Also, the best tunes from that record and its immediate predecessor, *The Right Place,* were culled for an LP on the Edsel label called *HooDooed.* It's New Orleans R&B at its funky best. (Also worth noting is that what many regard as Dr. John's best post-Night Tripper LP, *Gumbo,* has recently been re-released by the great Chicago blues label Alligator Records. That album contains "Iko Iko," "Junko Partner" and a slew of other classic tunes rendered in big, full arrangements.)

"Russian Lullaby" — Irving Berlin, the author of this song, is arguably the most prolific major songwriter in U.S. history. Born in Siberia in 1888, Berlin emigrated to New York City with his parents at the age of 4 and grew up in a Jewish section of Manhattan's East Side. He began his music career as a song plugger (or "busher") but showed so much promise as a songwriter early on that he was put under contract by a song publishing firm before he was 20. His first hit as a writer was "Alexander's Ragtime Band" in 1911. A year later he wrote the songs for the *Ziegfield Follies.* From that point on his career ascended rapidly. He scored numerous Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, including *Top Hat, Follow the Fleet, Annie Get Your Gun, This Is the Army* and *Holiday Inn.* He wrote "Russian Lullaby" in 1927, and it turned up in his 1946 movie musical *Blue Skies,* sung by Bing Crosby. While not one of his best-known songs, it has been covered several times by jazz players, including John Coltrane (on *Soultrane*), Dizzy Gillespie, Lew Tabackin and Benny Goodman.



Irving Berlin

The Hunter Gets Captured by the Game" — This tune was one of the last hits (1967) scored by the Motown girl group The Marvelettes. Originally named The Casingnettes (for "can't sing yet"), they became The Marvelettes when they signed with Tamla Records and cut their first record, "Please Mr. Postman," in 1961. Though never as popular as either The Supremes or Martha & the Vandellas, they did score a few other hits, including "Beachwood 4-5789" and "Playboy." Smokey Robinson was the primary writer of "The Hunter..."

"Mississippi Moon" — Let's see a show of hands from everyone who remembers Seatrain. Hmmm. Not too many. Seatrain was an underappreciated early '70s band noted for its eclecticism; they combined elements of country, rock, jazz and bluegrass into their sound. They were excellent singers and instrumentalists, and in the group's ranks at various times were two players who connect to the Dead scene — Peter Rowan and violinist Richard Greene. (Rowan was in the Rowan Brothers, whose first LP was produced by Garcia, and later he was a member of Old & in the Way. Greene played fiddle on the album version of "Mississippi Half-Step" and also played a few shows with Old & in the Way.) "Mississippi Moon" was written by Rowan and appeared on Seatrain's best album, *Marblehead Messenger* (1972), which is long out of print.

"Let's Spend the Night Together" — You all know this one, a Stones classic written by Mick and Keith in late 1966. The song was considered very sexually explicit for its time, and when the Stones performed the song live on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in January of '67, Jagger was ordered by the network cen-

sors to mumble the title line, which he did. The Stones' version appeared originally on *Between the Buttons*, but is also available on any number of hits packages.

"He Ain't Give You None" — Between his days with Them in the mid-'60s and *Astral Weeks*, his first masterpiece for Warner Bros. in 1969, Van Morrison cut a number of compelling songs for Bert Berns' Bang Records label. This cut comes from an exciting, visceral album on Bang titled *Blowin' You Mind*, released in the fall of 1967. The LP also contains "Brown-Eyed Girl" (his first solo hit) and the chilling "T.B. Sheets." Actually, Morrison didn't like the album at all, as it consisted of some random tracks and even a demo or two, but it remains a gripping document of Morrison during a raw, tortured period.

"Let It Rock" — A decidedly minor Chuck Berry tune, "Let It Rock" was only a modest success when it was released near the end of 1959. The Chess album on which it originally appeared, *Rockin' at the Hop*, was most notable for the track "Bye Bye Johnny," Berry's sequel to "Johnny B. Goode." As with all of Berry's popular material, "Let It Rock" is available on many anthologies and hits packages.

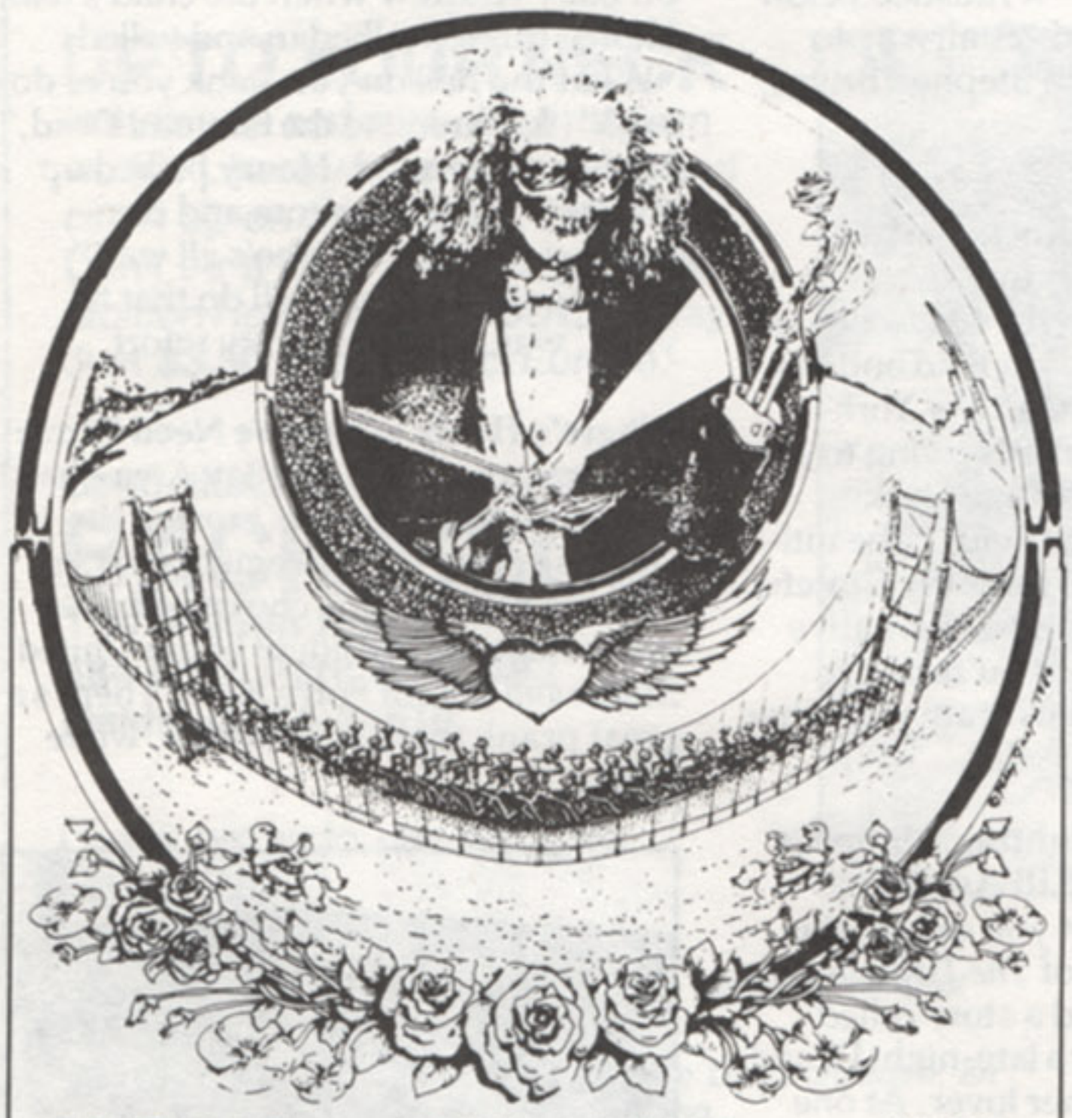
"That's What Love Will Make You Do" — Another relatively recent R&B cut, this tune was originally cut by Little Milton (Campbell) for Stax Records in 1972. Like so many blues and R&B greats, Campbell grew up in Mississippi and had his first musical experience singing in church choirs. He was already playing guitar by the age of 10 and was gigging at 14. He recorded for Sam Philips' Sun Records label in Memphis briefly, and later switched to Chess, for which he recorded dozens of sides, many in the style known as "jump blues." His tenure at Stax began in 1971. Little Milton's version of "That's What Love Will Make You Do" is available on his Stax hits compilation and a live LP titled *Grits Ain't Groceries*.

Special Bonus Cover!

"Run Rudolph Run" — Since Christmas is just around the corner, this is the perfect issue to discuss what is, to my knowledge, the only holiday tune the Dead ever performed. "Run Rudolph Run" was a little novelty song written and recorded by Chuck Berry at the peak of his popularity in the late '50s. It came out in early December 1958, on Chess Records, and was a mild success. (The flip-side was a version of the great yule blues "Merry Christmas Baby," a much stronger song in my opinion.) With Pigpen on lead vocals, the Dead



performed "Run Rudolph Run" at least three times that we know of in December of '71 — at the Felt Forum in New York City (12/4); at the Fox Theater in St. Louis (12/9); and the following week at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Michigan (12/15). Chuck Berry's version of his song appears on *Rarities*, a fine album of unusual tracks and alternate takes of his hits that was released earlier this year by MCA Records (new owners of the entire Chess/Checker catalog). □

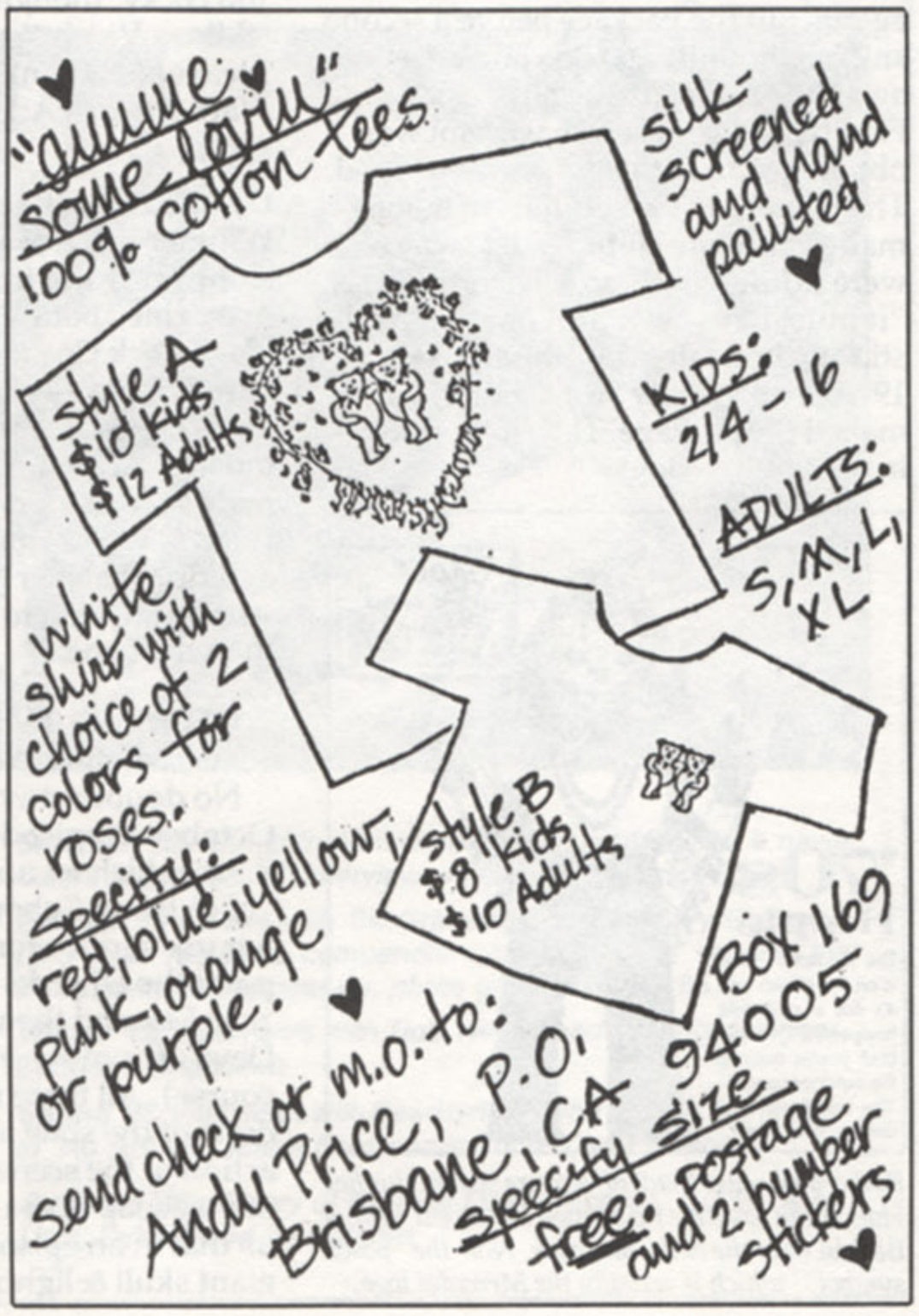


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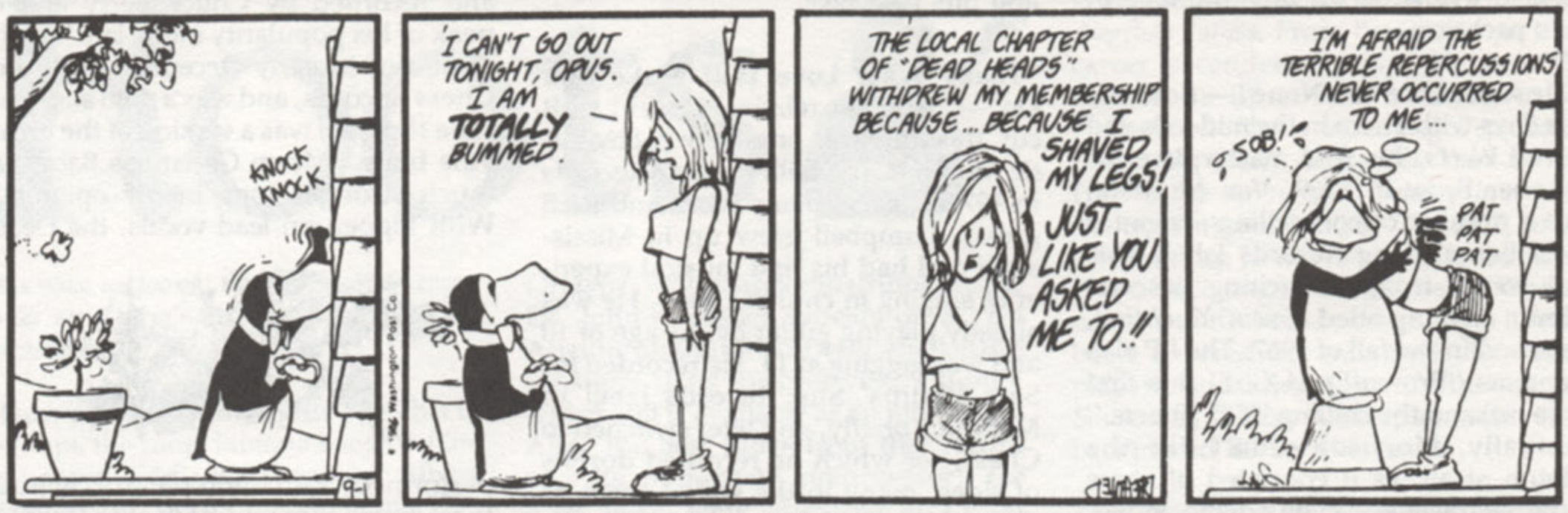
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FUNSTUFF



Opus and Lola Granola face a crisis in the August 1 edition of our favorite strip, "Bloom County."

Stop the Presses: We knew that somewhere, someone would use a headline like this in a story about Garcia's health: "Dead Guitarist Improving." *GR* reader Missy Bowen spotted that in the Aspen Daily News, July 14 edition.

Another "Dog Joke" for Weir: In a widely reported story, Buddy, a dog that sniffs packages at Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C., zeroed in on a package that had been mailed from Marin County to Virginia Beach. Customs agents put the package before a second sniffing hound, Starsky, and once again the canine barked like crazy. Finally, a federal search warrant was obtained and the package was opened. The contents? Two pounds of homemade chocolate chip cookies, which were dutifully sent to a lab for analysis. "It must have been the Grateful Dead stickers I put all over the box," said 19-year-old Cindy Hunsperger, who mailed the package. Time to stop starving the search dogs.



Barbara Wunder Black of Ventura sent in this hot Halloween costume tip printed in a recent issue of Barbie *(like the doll) magazine. Note the "peace symbol," which is actually the Mercedes logo.*

Wave That Flag: In late July, USA Today, the national newspaper, conducted a poll to see how readers felt about the National Anthem: should we keep "The Star Spangled Banner" or change it? Well, by nearly a 2 to 1 margin, the unsingable current anthem won, but we were pleased to see that way down the list, below "America the Beautiful," "God Bless America" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic," the Dead's "Truckin'" was a vote getter. Don't get too cocky, though—it finished below "Like a Virgin" and "Stairway to Heaven." (Thanks to Stephen Briggs, Harnsburg, VA.)

Dead Talk at Black Rock: Barbara Wunder Black of Ventura, CA, sent along an article from the May *Musician* magazine about Vernon Reid and his Black Rock Coalition, a New York-based organization that's trying to get more exposure for "fringe black music." According to Reid, "The ultimate success story to me is the Grateful Dead—when you can be alternative and do whatever it is you're doing without having to satisfy anyone other than the band."

GD Film & TV Sightings: Stop Us Before We Kill Again!

No doubt many of you caught the October 11 episode of *The Twilight Zone,* which featured a story called "Nightsong," about a late-night DJ and her mysterious former lover. At one point the DJ picks up a copy of *Steal Your Face* and then plays "Friend of the Devil" (from *American Beauty,* of course). All three minutes and 20 seconds of the song are heard under the action of the scene . . . A whole bunch of you soap opera hounds wrote to tell us that in an episode of *Santa Barbara,* a giant skull & lightning bolt poster was tacked up in the bedroom of one of the show's characters. But was it an actual poster or an evil twin? . . . Mark Posner of Somerville, MA, reports that in the film *Carny,* stars Robbie Robertson and Gary Busey get in a brawl in a diner with a group of truckers, one of whom is wearing a Grateful Dead hat . . . Bob Seki of Gardena, CA, was watching *Too Close for Comfort* when the Dead came up in an on-screen conversation. Monroe had put Walkman headphones on baby Andrew when the child's dad, Henry Rush, walked in and yelled, "What the hell do you think you're doing?" "Listening to the Grateful Dead," Monroe answered. Henry picked up Andrew, felt his bottom and complained, "Look, now he's all wet!" "The Grateful Dead will do that to you!" was Monroe's witty retort.

Where's Healy When We Need Him?: Meyer Sound Labs, the Bay Area-based company that provides most of the Dead's sound reinforcement gear, is also the number one choice of none other than the President of the United States *and* the Air Force Band. There's a great prank there somewhere, we're sure.



In the Strangest of Places . . . John Morello of Arlington, VA, spotted this bar in New Orleans. We'll have many more next issue.

Continued from page 11

like the message, but I stand four-square behind it.

Hey, I think it's great sometimes. They play a great show and then they play "Day Job" and it's like you can take this good energy back to your day job and do something with it.

Yes, get those lazy Deadheads who think they can sit around and enjoy Grateful Dead tapes the rest of their lives. I mean, let's use [the Dead] as maybe *seasoning* in life. It's hard to make a full-time occupation out of loving a band unless you're writing and playing with that band.

It seems that with this break from touring, people have rededicated themselves to things outside the band, which is good to see.

Well, that's also happened within the band. Mickey and I formed a little band and went out and did Pyramid Lake [Ranch Rock '86] a couple of weeks ago. We had a whale of a time. We had such a good time, and it was such a good band, too. We had Bobby Vega on bass, and boy, is he solid! And we had David Jenkins, the former lead guitarist of Pablo Cruise—he was just exquisite. It was a good little quartet.

I hear you did a pretty wild "Fire on the Mountain."

Yeah, Mickey finally got to the microphone and sang a bunch of verses. When we originally wrote "Fire on the Mountain" we had some very funny verses, but when the Dead did it, Jerry took the more serious verses and he cut the ones like "Fireman, fireman call off your dog/ That isn't a blaze, it's just a hog on the log." It doesn't mean anything, but it sounds good.

There's an old tape of the song circulating that sounds like you, but I'm told it's Mickey.

I'll tell you exactly what it is! I put down the first vocal on "Fire on the Mountain," and then Mickey redid it and he did my style and phrasing on it. When he played it back, it sounded like me, and I said, "Mickey, you can't do that!" He said, "No man, that's not theft. You're my vocal guru." I said, "You can do a lot better, Mickey." [Laughs]

You don't play "Fire on the Mountain" in your concerts now, do you?

No, I won't be doing it in my solo concerts. It needs drums. My show is kind of pared down to what works solo. A lot of Grateful Dead songs need a band. Back when I was playing with The Dinosaurs a couple of years ago we used to do "Fire on the Mountain."

Do you have any sort of songwriting relationship with Brent?

No, I haven't written anything with him. I gave Phil Lesh some lyrics a month or so ago and he said maybe he'd work on them with Brent. I'd love to work with Brent. He has a lovely voice when it's in good form. He's finally made the Grateful Dead sound like a reasonable vocal entity. The harmonies over the years have started to happen in a way they never happened before, and that's very satisfying for a writer. I hear songs sounding the way they should, when they never quite did before.

What are your plans when you finish this tour?

When I get back, I'll probably work on finishing that translation of Rilke—get that happening. Then I'll sit down with the Grateful Dead and see what we can do towards new material. I'd also like to get back into the studio myself. I just love being in the studio. I'll just keep working. □

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Check below to see if you've missed any.



Winter '84: *Interview with Mickey Hart, complete songlist of 1983*

Spring '84: *Interview with Phil Lesh, the Dead on video, an in-depth look at the Dead's stage lighting*

Summer '84: *Interviews with ex-Dead keyboardist Tom Constanten and artist Alton Kelley*

Fall '84: *Interview with Robert Hunter, survey of professional Deadheads*

Winter '85: *Interviews with Dead soundman Dan Healy, the Garcia Band, a look at Dead cover bands, Tall Tales 1965–70*

Spring '85: *Interviews with Garcia about film and video, Donna Godchaux, Tall Tales 1970 – 75*

Summer '85: *The 20th Anniversary press conference, a never before published '67 interview with Garcia, tales of Egypt*

Fall '85: *Interviews with Bill Graham, animator Gary Gutierrez (The Dead Movie), a compendium of other artists' records that Dead members appear on, photo gallery 1980 – 85*

Winter '86: *Interviews with Bob Weir, Dead lighting designer Candace Brightman*

Spring '86: *Interviews with Dead lyricist John Barlow, the roots of 'Iko Iko' and Mardi Gras music, more Dead videos*

Summer '86: *History of Grateful Dead Records, GD Book of Lists, Dylan/Dead tour photos*

TAPE TRADERS

This is a free service for* Golden Road *subscribers only. Please keep your ad to 10 words plus your address. No phone numbers! Deadline for the next (Winter) issue is Dec. 1. Note:* The Golden Road *is staunchly opposed to the sale of tapes.

Looking for my first show: Spring 1977 Springfield, MA. Bob Dampf, Minglewood Construction, 120 East Ave. Q-7 #4, Palmdale, CA 93550

Searching for hi-qual McNichols '77 (1st show) and all 4 Red Rocks '78 shows. Many quality tapes for trade. Donna Littlefield, 1310 College #1267, Boulder, CO 80302

Digital masters to trade for same. Dead & others. Matt, 2848 Appling Way, Kennesaw, GA 30144

Have 375+ hrs. Dead. Need recent tapes. Igor Dobrowolski, 525 Meadow Hall, Rockville, MD 20851

"7/20/73, 10/23/73, 11/1/73 and 11/25/73 were never taped." 1200 hrs says you can't prove me wrong (but please do!). Steve Thomas, 14515 Ivanhoe, Warren, MI 48093

Have variety of PRIMO 69-86 tapes! Send lists. Greg Sullivan, 5772 So. Lansing Ct, Englewood, CO 80111

Let's trade GD, especially early shows. Exchange lists. Doug Riblet, 334 East 26th St, NY, NY 10010

Have 300 hrs. .Want 85-86. Mateo, 9476 Aldabra Ct, San Diego, CA 92129

Need '86 shows esp. 3/27 and RFK. Also live Nevilles. Have 400+ hrs. Nancy Sluys, Rt. 2, Box 349-A, Pinnacle, NC 27043

Wanted fast! Portland 3/28/86, BCT 4/22/86, Greek 6/22/86 simulcast. Send list. Mark Binks, c/o Solar-Kist Corp, Box 273, LaGrange, IL 60525

Have 500 hrs. Your list gets mine. Dave Manley, 1872 Commonwealth Ave, #12-A, Brighton, MA 02135

"I got mine and you got yours." Let's trade. Greg Gillis, 2555 W. Winston Rd, #102, Anaheim, CA 92804

Looking for 10/11/80 Warfield. Have 1000+ hrs. Paul Steinberg, 67 Lawson Ave, East Rockaway, NY 11518

Wanted: Tapers with 2 Naks. Exchange SBDs. Backstage Productions, Box 522, Stratford, CT 06497

Wanted: GD, Neville Bros, Radiators, Dr John, etc. Will trade audio and video. David Linton, 2500 Ridge Ave, Evanston, IL 60201

Trade hi-qual GD related tapes. Serious traders send lists. Dan Gale, Box 4656, Arcata, CA 95521

Looking for 6/30/79 Portland. Let's trade. Jim Seaton, Box 7, Warner, SD 57479

Dancin' in Chicago. Have 150+ qual hrs, need both Alpine 86 shows. J.D. Auxier, 60 E. Beech Dr #107, Schaumburg, IL 60193.



Wanted: Video and/or audio simulcast recording of HBO Dylan/Petty True Confessions Tour broadcast and any of the outdoor concerts. Any Neil Young audio music/interviews and video of Austin City Limits performance. GD video recordings. Video recording of parts one and two of PBS program 'Vietnam: A Television History.' Sharyn Knudson, 407 Gamble Dr, Sparks, NV 89431

Wanted complete: Seattle 7/21/72, Portland 7/25, 26/72, 6/24/73 and Missoula 5/14/74. Mark, Box 27085, Seattle, WA 98125

East Coast, Midwest taper with many masters wants West Coast '85 and '86 shows. Stephen Porter, Wesleyan Station #1094, Middletown, CT 06457

Need tapes of William & Mary '73, 2 nights plus any other dates. Danny Redford, 3321 Beechwood Ave, Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Have 350+ hrs for trade. Send lists. Peter Sienkiewicz, 55 Winfield Rd, Princeton, NJ 08540

Need complete '86 Berkeley stand 4/18, 19, 21, 22 . Will send blanks or trade. T. Taconetti, 3 Wing Dr, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

Wanted Nevilles/Santana/Baez Amnesty set. Have 250+ hrs to trade. Brad, 2623 Cross Country Rd, Matthews, NC 28105

750 hrs, many rarities. Need qual SBDs, especially 85-86 and Garcia. Adam Hauser, 8 Cheryl Rd, Pine Brook, NJ 07058

JGB, Dylan, Bruce, Floyd. Have 63-86 tours, want more. Paul Moliken, 12 Tatlow Lane, New Castle, DE 19720

Desperately seeking Houston: my first show, 12/21/78, the Summit, Houston, TX. Have lots of West Coast shows and some non-Dead. Walter Keller, 444 Noe, SF, CA 94114.

Deadhead stranded in Turkey needs help ... Desperate! Trade GD, reggae and digital bootlegs. Doug Nicolaisen, PSC #4, Box 44, APO, NY 09294.

Need help starting new collection. I am in prison with no Dead tapes. I can send blanks. Peter L. Roe #316353 Box 336, 3201 Hwy 85 SW, Los Lunas, NM 87031.

All right, who's got it? Folsom Field 9/3/72, any quality. Vern Uri, 1348 Pine, Loveland, CO 80537.

Starting tape collection. Want all years from Alpine Valley, WI. Ken Fredrich, 3727 N. Central Park, Chicago, IL 60618.

Let's trade! Write to Steve, Box 687, U of Richmond, VA 23173.

Beginner wants to trade qual GD tapes. Send list. Mike Selcovitz, 9884 Bonner St, Phila, PA 19115.

Wanted: the usual. Naomi Pearce, 12752 Crestwood Cir, Garden Grove, CA 92641.

Wanted 4/4/86, 11/16/85, 9/12/85 and recent Buffalo and Washington shows. Many to trade. J. Mathews, Box 515, Johnson State College, Johnson, VT 05656.

Let's trade! Need Cleveland 3/3/81, Dayton 11/30/81, Indianapolis 12/5/81, pre-76. John Hayward, 9 Cosway Ct #11, Fairfield, OH 45014.

Wanted: hi-qual acoustic 1970 Dead, NRPS, other 67-74. Have 400 hrs. Stephen Briggs, 1325-D S. Main St, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

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Reading this black & white ad for our multi-color, hand crafted batik shirts is like listening to a 29th generation audience tape on a bad deck! Write or call for our *new, free color brochure!* We use only top-quality, all-cotton shirts–either choose from a wide selection of designs in stock, or design your own & we'll be happy to work with you on it. *See ya on the road!*

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In keeping with our anti-bootlegging stance, we reserve the right to not accept ads for products that blatantly violate the copyright of logos and designs controlled by the Grateful Dead.

Deadline for the Winter Issue:
December 1

The Golden Road
484 Lake Park Ave., #82, Oakland, CA 94610

Let's trade: Hex Hollow Music, Barto, PA 19504

Have 125+ hrs GD. Esp. want Alpine '86 shows. Exchange lists. Dan Ferries, 5735 Charles St, Racine, WI 53402

600+ hrs SBD to trade for same. Jim McDonald, 2426 Poplar St, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Looking for hi-qual pre-78 masters. Chris Geller, Box 7276, Mission Hills, CA 91346

Have ex. Jorma & Jack acoustic on the pier NYC '86 & Jerry acoustic at the Ritz NYC. Jim, The Center, 711 Broadway, Bayonne, NJ 07002

Need closing of Winterland video. Will trade great tapes from vast collection. Bob and Marian Winters, 499 Colusa Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530

Deadhead in the Promised Land seeks tape trading & correspondence. Joel Schneier, Kibbutz Sde Yoar, D.N. Sde Gat, Israel

Need 1st show: 6/27/76 Chicago. Also 8/15/81 Portland, 8/24/80 Grand Rapids, 1000 hrs to trade. Brian O'Connell, 10335 Elizabeth, Westchester, IL 60153

Desperate for Dead Farm Aid video from Buffalo 7/4/86. Have 700 hrs audio, 50 hrs video. Steve Marsh, 1926 Grand Ave #1, St. Paul, MN 55116

Have East Coast '86 to trade for West Coast and Summer '86. Pat Whalen, CRH, Wallingford, CT 06492

Need 11/19/72, 8/28/72, 5/7/70, 5/6/70, 8/1/73, 9/28/72, 4/17/83, 6/18/83. 300 hrs. Gus Trautweiler, 74 Crescent Cir, Westfield, MA 01805.

Looking for 73-74. Send lists. Paul Morrill, 5 Cambridge Rd, Great Neck, NY 11023.

Want any video of Dylan set from 86 concerts. Can trade ex. Grateful Dead Rockpalast video and convert onto NTSC digitally. Dave Dingle, PO Box 2, (North PDO), Manchester, M8 7BL, England.

Want Allmans, QMS, JA, NRPS, pre-75 Dead, etc. Have 150 hrs Dead. Ray Rivers, 1304 Elm Ct #2C, W. Springfield, MA 01089.

Need GD, Dylan, CSN, Allmans, Bromberg. 150+ hrs GD to trade. LB Tape Exchange, 3712 N. 52 St, Omaha, NE 68104.

Wanted: Baltimore 73 and summer tour 86. Have 200+ hrs. Kristin Schroeck, 13606 Peacock Farm Rd, St. Louis, MO 63131.

Wanted hi-qual Merriweather 7/1/85 and Philly 4/20/84. Let's trade lists. J. Fraimow, 12 Belair Ave, Providence, RI 02906.

Help! 42 and finally saw the light! Looking for GD/Joplin. Have some GD, as son is DH. Karen Salin, 331 S. Locust St, Appleton, WI 54814.

I'd love to trade, esp. pre-79 and 86 tapes. Gary, RR2 Box 18B, Pawling, NY 12564.

Send lists to George Clark, 3 Hemingway Dr, Dix Hills, NY 11746.



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For free color flyer, send 22¢ stamp to:
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Nevada City, CA 95959

Wanted: 11/4, 5/85, 2/1/86 JG. Trades only, 750+ hrs to trade. Grateful Traders, 982 Pine St, Winnetka, IL 60093

Wanted: 6/27/85 SBD, 9/7/85, 10/31/85, 12/30/85 and 1/30/86 Jerry & John. Pat Guiney, 11-D Clubhouse Circle, Storrs, CT 06268

GD, Thunder & Lightning, Dinosaurs, etc. Desperately needed in Northwest. Bob Hagen, 20308-97th St. E, Bonney Lake, WA

Need VH-1 cable broadcast of Dead, Dylan, Petty at Farm Aid II. Jonathan Mitchell, Rt 1 Box 102, Ulmer, SC 29849.

ZAPPAOLOGIST, 250+ hrs, seeks more. Trade tapes, don't buy bootlegs. Den Simms, 1793 Hardman Ave, Napa, CA 94558

Looking for 6/30/79 Portland, OR. Let's trade. Jim Seaton, PO Box 7, Warner, SD 57479.

2500 hrs, quick response. Rich, 41-35 45th #4A, Sunnyside, NY 11104.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads are $3 for 25 words or less; 10¢ for each word more. Only taper ads are free.

Happy big 30, Hardware Man! We wish you much love, happiness and killer tapes. Love, the Haddonettes.

Thanks to everyone who made Ranch Rock '86 the unique (hot) day that it was: all the bands, crew/staff, organizers and Deadheads. We locals who were there are grateful that you came. Special thanks to Zero (you were great!) and to Roxanne for accepting a check. May the Deadhead spirit live forever!

Guitarist looking for musicians to jam with. Mike Brozovich, 2107 Harbor St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Any correspondence welcome.

Bumperstickers that say DEAD HEAD and resemble state license plates. Now available: California, Colorado, Pennsylvania and New Jersey; silk-screened on heavy duty vinyl. Send $2.50 for one, $4.50 for two and $5.50 for three (includes postage). To Joe McCullough, P.O. Box 583, Pinecliffe, CO 80471.

Tapers and Traders: Custom cassette cards available. For sample and info, send SASE to David Allen Jensen, 3904 E. 34th, Spokane, WA 99223.

Moving to Paonia, CO, area this fall. Looking for DH's in vicinity for trading, etc. Donna Littlefield, 1B10 College #1267, Boulder, CO 80302. Thanks.

My dearest friend Cheryl: Thanks for sharing love, life and the boys! Happy 30th! We love you. Vicky, Brandy & Kobe.

Wanted: To know if anyone else goes to shows, talks to Jerry, etc in their dreams. Wake up and send your stories to: Dead Dreams, 718 N Columbia St, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Thanks!

Davenclare! Summer's here, & the time is right — Welcome to the Golden Road. We know you're enjoying the ride . . .

30-yr-old male Jewish Deadhead w/liberal political and environmental concerns interested in meeting a female w/ similar background and interests. Write to Randy, Box 90035, Atlanta, GA 30329.

To BLT: From your friends at the printing company, Mutt & Jeff.

All I need, All I really need is . . . a photo of Jerry (alias Rocky) at the Greek. Can you help me? Nancy Wagner, 609 Alamo Ct #11, Mountain View, CA 94043.

Cheers to a brown-eyed woman who is interested in ivy. Happy December 18th, Sweety-face. Love hugs, weird Gramma and Gramps.

Deadheads, thanks for you T-shirt orders and support! Wear them shirts in good health! Gary Houston, Kamikazi Studios, Box 2295, Portland, OR 97208.

Keyboardist/vocalist wanted for Dead-influenced band in Central Virginia. 'It's not to sound like 'em — it's to do what they do.' Paul Honeycutt, Rt. 7 Box 208, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

"Leave Star Wars at the Box Office" and other very original T-shirts. Send SASE for catalog. Peaceful Productions, Box 5365D, Babylon, NY 11707.

To Bonnie: I love you more than words can tell. Always Grateful. Ron.

Happy Anniversary, Tahitian Lovebirds. May your love never change — only your address! Love, Your Lakeside Pals.

Bayou, Bayou, we miss your bad old self, Banana Slug Breath. Love, the J2.

Hale & Annie: See you at the New Year's shows! Get your dancin' feet ready to rock! Love, R&B.

Seeking footage of "20/20" TV show aired summer '85 re: 20 year anniversary. T. Stack, 228 Shrader St, SF, CA 94117.

Grateful Gatherings in Jamaica 10/25-11/1/86; 5/23-30/87 Seven days, from $399 per person from Chicago. Write: Dead Tape Search Service, Box 554, Monroe, WI 53566.

Dead Tape Search Service, Box 554 Monroe, WI 53566. Locates Grateful Dead concert tapes from 1970 to present. Trades only. No tape sales.

'60s Rock Concert Posters & Handbills bought, sold & traded by serious collector. Many very rare & early original items featuring Dead & other SF bands. 2-3 lists yearly. Paul Getchell, Box 36, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Help on the Way! Are there any Deadheads out there working a 12 step program? Please write. Thanks to you beautiful Ohio sober Deadheads and to the Dead Set L Bus for a real good time on the summer tour! We will survive — one day at a time. K.S., 13606 Peacock Farm Rd, St. Louis, MO 63131.

I'm looking for the words for "Rosemary" and "What's Become of the Baby?" Auraham Daniel Heller, Meskaz Klitah Gilo "B", Rechov Aryeh Ben Eliezer 88/38, Jerusalem, Israel.

Amy & Doug Odie from South Georgia: We really enjoyed meeting you (your brothers and friend) at RFK. (We'd previously met at Frost.) If you ever need a place to stay in the Bay Area, let us know: 27 Rutherford Ave, San Anselmo, CA 94960. Karin and David.

Wanted: Cabbage Patch Jerry Doll. To girl at Cincinnati show 6/25/85 who was selling Cabbage Patch Jerry's (or anyone else who knows where I can get one), I have a day job now and can afford one! Write: Ronald Callahan, 2375 Lake Park Road #404, Lexington, KY 40502.

Mint 1977/78 mags featuring the Grateful Dead. Rolling Stone, Nov 78 on Dead in Egypt/colour pic, $10; Guitar Player 10/78, major Garcia interview, $10; Creem 12/77 with 2 pages on the Dead, $8; all available in multiple copies, *Not* an auction. Prices include postage and packing. Payment must be in cash (insure letter if you're worried!), or via International Postal Money Order payable to My Back Pages, Box 2, (North PDO), Manchester, M8 7BL, England.

Dead License Plates! These silk-screened, 4-color, embossed aluminum plates feature a skull & roses design. Just $7 postpaid. Send check or m.o. to: Carl Mink, 35 Liberty Pl, Weehawken, NJ 07087.

Desperately seeking Volkswagen/Lightning Skull window sticker. Carl Mink, 35 Liberty Place, Weekawken, NJ 07087.

Wanted: Celtics, Cubs and Bloom County motif GD T-shirts. Also, GD rear window decals with rose. Shenandoah Valley Tape Exchange, Box 654, Winchester, VA 22601-0654.

Dearest Norm and Sandy: and Tasha makes five. We love and need you. May we keep on growin'. Love ya, Duaine, Laura and Jerilyn.

Sacramento Davis Heads: Newly transplanted Head has got the post-college, new-job blues. Wants to meet friends for shows, tape trading, backpacking trips, experiencing California. Write or call Greg at 9087 Clendenen Way, Sacto, CA 95826.

Central PA Heads Unite! Hi Becky and Mike. Write Steve and Cheri Petrina, Rd #1 Box 464, Lilly, PA 15938.

Getting Married? Why not have a band that performs a wonderful Dead show as well as traditional wedding music. Hex Hollow Music, Barto, PA 19504.

Wanted: Filmmaker seeks used D5 (or possibly D6) recorder in good or better condition for location work. Call Ken at (415) 843-2919.

ALLIGATOR



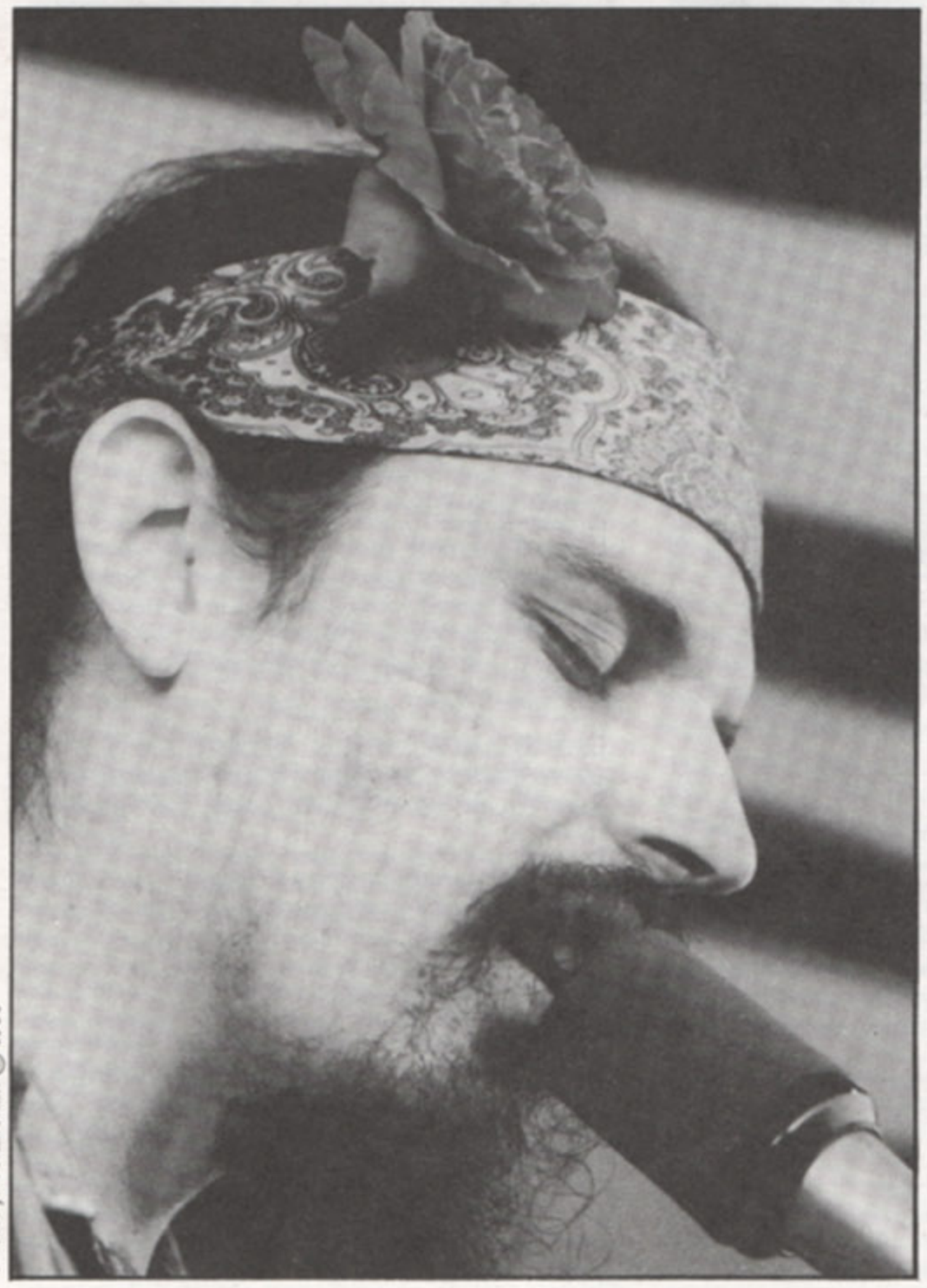


Photo: Jim Marshall © 1986

Music by Phil Lesh and Ron McKernan
Lyrics by Robert Hunter and Ron McKernan

Sleepy alligator in the noonday sun,
lyin' by the river just like he usually done.
Calls for his whiskey; he can call for his tea.
Call all he wants to but he can't call me.

Oh no, I've been there before,
and I'm not comin' back around there no more.

Creepy alligator comin' all around the bend.
Talkin' bout the times when we was mutual friends.
I'll check my mem'ry and I'll check it quick; yes, I will
I'll check it runnin' some old kind of trick.

Oh no, I've been there before,
and I ain't comin' back around there no more.

Ridin' down the river in an old canoe;
a bunch of bugs and an old tennis shoe.
Out of the river all ugly and green,
the biggest old alligator that I've ever seen.
Teeth big and pointed and his eyes buggin' out.
Contracted union, put the beggars to rout.
Screamin' and yellin', he was lickin' his chops.
He never runs, he just stumbles and hops.
Just out of prison on six dollars bail,
mumblin' bitches and a-waggin' his tail.

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"Alligator" stands as the only original Grateful Dead composition performed by Pigpen in the late '60s; the rest of the songs he sang were blues and R&B covers. ("Caution" was more a jam than a song.) "I must've written it in late '65 or early '66," Robert Hunter told us recently. "I wrote 'China Cat' and 'Alligator' when I was living on Ramona Street in Palo Alto, and then I went off to New Mexico for a while. I remember playing those songs to people down there. Before I went off to New Mexico I went over to 710 Ashbury [the Dead's Haight pad] and gave it to the guys. Then, when I got back, they told me they were doing those tunes and I was more or less invited to be 'The Writer,' so I went down to Rio Nido and wrote 'Dark Star' down there."

The Dead's version of "Alligator" was changed considerably from Hunter's demo. "My melody was a lot different," he said. "I was just writing a blues." His original melody sounded a little bit like the jug-blues of "On the Road Again." "Pigpen wrote some of those lines in there, too," he added, "like that line 'contracted union . . .' You can tell which ones are Pigpen!"

As for the music, according to Phil, "There's not much to tell—that is to say I don't remember all that much, except that Pig and I made it up at the Russian River [a bucolic resort area north of SF] in '67 just before our first trip to New York. I don't even remember whose idea it was to use kazoos. Sorry!"

Actually, "Alligator" shows up on tapes nearly half a year before the band's first trip to New York in June of '67; it was a key part of their repertoire for all of '67 and most of '68, a showcase for both Pigpen *and* the band. The version of "Alligator" on *Anthem of the Sun* combines live and studio recordings. The basic tracks were cut in Los Angeles at RCA Studios with producer Dave Hassinger in the fall of '67; the vocal, piano and kazoo overdubs were layed down later at Columbus Recorders in San Francisco. Parts of the jam following the final verse were drawn from live performances.

Perhaps the most legendary "Alligator" of them all came at the Straight Theater in Haight-Ashbury in mid-'67. Not only was this one of Mickey Hart's first shows with the Dead, but the "Alligator" that night supposedly stretched on for nearly two hours and even included a rap by Neal Cassady! They played the song for the last time at the Dead's final show at the Fillmore East, 4/29/71 (truly one of the best shows they ever played). However, it continued to be one of the most *shouted* audience requests at Dead shows up until Pigpen's death.