

# UNBROKEN



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# Chain Reaction

Saw this article in the San Jose Mercury News somewhere around the last week of September, 1992. Found it quite interesting and thought others may as well. With such high possibilities of future-oriented and present-oriented implications, maybe this knowledge could help cut down even a little fraction of the rampant nitrous use in the parking lot. Even if it just reaches a few, that is still a few that it reached. I don't know what you think, but it sure did make me take a giant step back! The risk just isn't worth it! Thanks for listening, Sincerely, Jodi Harris

I'm sorry if I didn't get back to everyone who wrote me about my taping article. The cost of answering letters that didn't include SASEs became prohibitive - I did answer most of them anyway, at first. If you would still like a copy of my list, please write again and send a SASE. Eric Katchmar, 15 Westminster Bridge Way, Lutherville, MD 21093. *Editor's note: U.C. congratulates Eric and his wife Joanie on the birth of their son, Sean Matthew!*

With the decline of the *Golden Road*, I am convinced that your publication is the most informative and accurate. As of late, I have only been collecting tapes. Naturally, I was dismayed when I heard about Jerry's health condition, though I still flew out to Oregon to visit friends even though the shows were cancelled. I am particularly impressed with the coverage of "Native Son" Bruce Hornsby in your publication. As I am of the opinion that Bruce was the "best" thing to happen to the Dead in the last 10 years, and I appreciate the support U.C. has shown regarding his efforts and talents. It saddens me that he will no longer be performing with the band on a regular basis and it hurts me to read other publications that blast him for not being a "full-time member." What junk! One of the other magazines has been very nasty regarding Bruce's contributions to the band, as is their right, yet I find this brand of criticism to be offensive and distasteful. I am glad that U.C. has refrained from this sort of malicious attack strategy and as an alternative, offers insightful and engaging criticism regarding the Dead scene. (So sorry to get on my soapbox!) Anyway, please renew me - I enjoy U.C. and consider it to be recommended reading for all interested heads! Take Care, Dave Curtis, Berwyn, PA.

I'm writing to address what I feel is a pretty serious problem and at the least an irritating situation. I find it occurs at all shows that are general admission (specifically the RFK June 20th show). This problem arises when insensitive, ignorant people feel the urge to push and shove their way closer to the stage. In the interest of everyone having a good show at every show, can I just suggest to "these" people that they get to the show early enough to find a cool place. If you can't get motivated enough to perform this simple function, then obviously the show isn't that important to you in the first place and perhaps you should be somewhere else. If you arrive at the show late and end up securing a pretty crappy spot, then deal with it and realize that there's no one to blame but yourself. What is especially sad about this type of situation is that it has gotten to the point where some of us would actually prefer to do away with the general admission scenario and simply have a spot designated as ours. This is a pretty simple request. What it boils down to is - don't ruin somebody else's show. Herb Engman.

*Editor's note: I have found the above scenario to be in effect at many shows, general admission or not. At RFK in the summer of '91, it WAS reserved seating and people STILL crashed down to the field and managed to cram their way up into the reserved seats; seats which many people got through mail ordering their tickets many weeks in advance. It has something to do with the whole attitude of the crowd in general. When you get 80,000 people together who have been partying all day, it's going to be chaotic up front, like it or not. I say if you are uncomfortable, claustrophobic, or whatever, the best thing to do is go find yourself a space where you can move and are comfortable (most likely in the stands). You may sacrifice your perfect view of the boys, but in the long run you will come out of the show with a happier attitude. General admission is fun, but I've never been up front at a general admission show where people weren't packed in like sardines. And while I don't think it's fair for those obnoxious people to push and shove their way in front of the folks who got there early, I seriously doubt they will stop any time soon. Just my opinion, any comments welcome! lps*

## 'Laughing gas' linked to trouble getting pregnant

BY SCOTT THURM  
Mercury News Staff Writer

It's called laughing gas, but for hundreds of thousands of people who work in dental offices, nitrous oxide can have a very sobering effect.

Female dental assistants frequently working around nitrous oxide in California offices without ventilation equipment have a much tougher time conceiving children than those who are not exposed to the gas, according to a study in today's *New England Journal of Medicine*.

After adjusting for things like sexual activity, contraceptive use, age and cigarette smoking, researchers at the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences figured that women exposed to large amounts of nitrous oxide are 60 percent less likely to conceive in a given menstrual cycle than women who are not around the anesthetic.

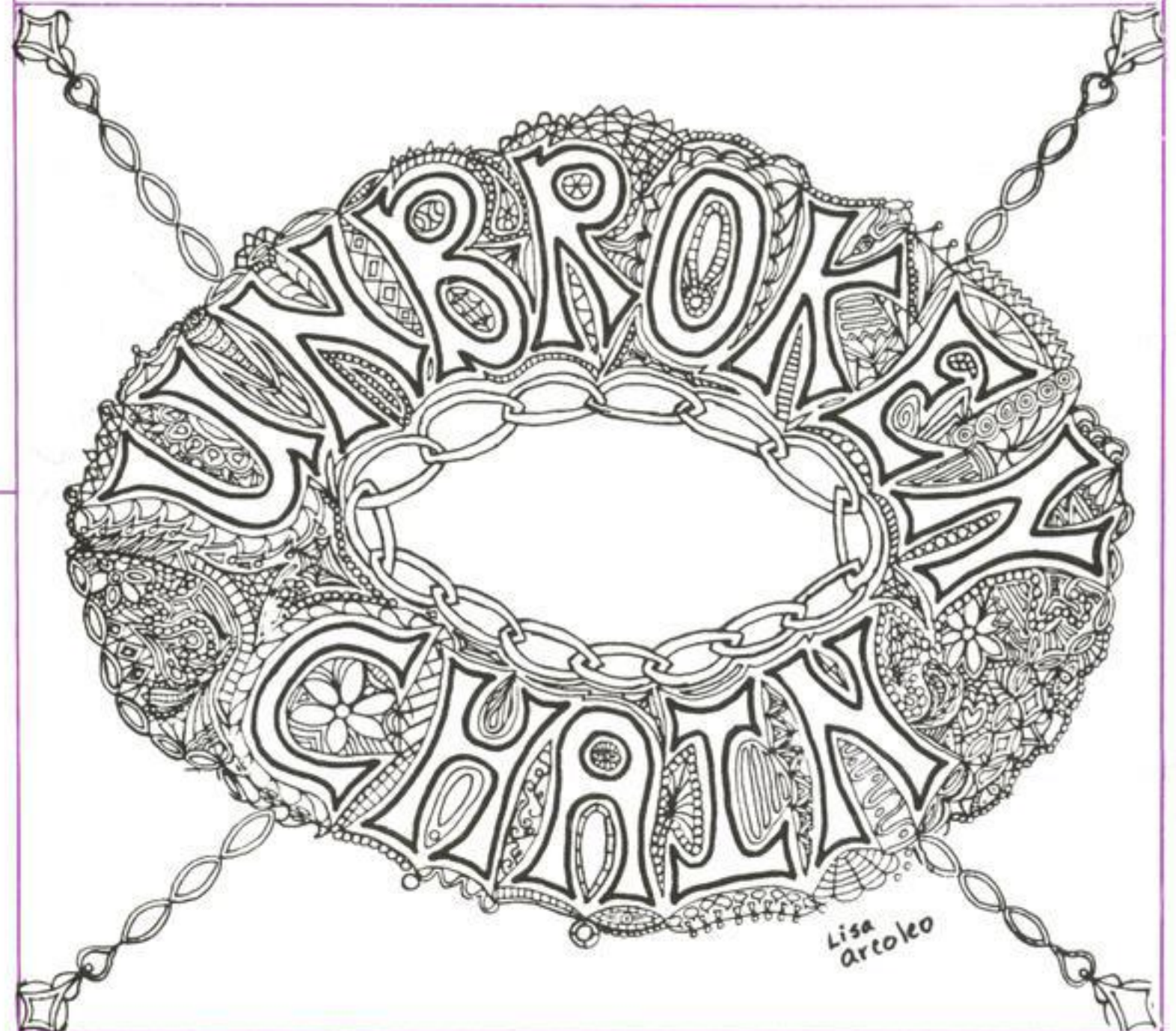
While married women not using contraceptives and not exposed to nitrous oxide took an average of six menstrual cycles to become pregnant, those working

more than five hours a week around unventilated nitrous oxide took an average of 32 menstrual cycles to conceive, according to the research.

The study's primary author and outside experts said the results should prompt all dentists to install a ventilation system which routes nitrous oxide exhaled by patients outside the building and reduces indoor levels of the gas by 90 percent.

"There's an inexpensive and good method of reducing the level of nitrous oxide," said Andrew Rowland, an epidemiologist at the North Carolina-based environmental-health institute and the principal author of the study. "We're urging people to do that because it may be important in protecting women's health."

Rowland and others said the new study should add to concerns raised by earlier, less-rigorous research suggesting a link between exposure to nitrous oxide and birth defects. High levels of nitrous oxide have been shown to cause birth defects in laboratory animals.



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# It's a Boy!

Announcing the birth of  
*Robert "Taylor" Smith*

Born: 7/31/92

Weight: 9 lbs. 9 oz.

Howdy folks, and welcome to Volume 7, No. 3 of the *Unbroken Chain*. Please accept my apologies for the delay in getting this issue out. All I can say is that publication deadlines were pushed back due to the the birth of my son and to Jerry's recent collapse.

Taylor was born right on schedule on the 31st of July. He was a citation baby, weighing in at a hefty 9 lbs., 9 oz. I tried to wait until August 1 to give birth, but Taylor already had his mind made up. It was a good thing too, because I don't know if I could have made it another day.

Taylor is growing unbelievably fast. At the time of this writing he's three months old and weighs 16 lbs. He has two little teeth breaking through his bottom gum, and he has just learned how to suck his thumb. He laughs and coos and is sweet as can be -- and he eats like a horse!

Sarah, who turned three years old on November 9th, started pre-school and gymnastics this fall and seems to enjoy both activities quite a bit. We get stuck at home a lot more than we used to because of the baby, so she really enjoys going out and seeing other kids -- quite the social animal.

As for me, I'm beginning to think I might have bit off a little more than I can chew. Getting anything done, including publishing UC, has become a major undertaking. Hopefully as Taylor gets a little older and a little more independent things will slacken up a bit (yeah, right!). At any rate, I ask that you folks bear with me...I plan to continue publishing, but it may not be with the frequency you have come to expect! 1992 is rapidly coming to a close and we have only published 4 issues this year (counting 6/6 thru 7/3).

The big news is, of course, TOUR DATES! After the cancellation of fall tour, Deadheads all over the country (and world for that matter) have wondered about the health of our fearless leader, Mr. Garcia. Well, he's back with a vengeance, according to the folks who attended the Halloween JGB show at the Oakland Coliseum. A slimmed-down, tanned Jerry appeared happy and healthy, and enthusiastic to be back on stage. He actually spoke to the audience and was very animated during the performance. Check out page 13 for more details, a photo of 'the new Jer' and the set list. Denver, Tempe and Oakland Grateful Dead dates have been announced, and tickets are on sale at this writing. The bad news is that for the first time in 17 years there will be no New Year's shows this year. Word is that the Dead have been wanting to skip New Year's for some time now, but Bill Graham always talked the boys into it. Now, since Bill is gone, the driving force behind the shows is gone as well. We can always hope for next year, right?

Even with the fall tour cancellation, lots of Dead-related things were going on this fall. During mid-September, New York City proved to be a happening place for Deadheads. First of all, Bob and Wendy Weir held a book signing on Sunday, September 20th at Macy's to help celebrate the opening of their "Rainforest Department." That night, in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, Bobby appeared at a little nightclub called "The Barn." He sat in with a white reggae band called the Swirling Whales for a four song set featuring *Feel Like a Stranger*, *Mexicali Blues*, *Masterpiece* and *Cassidy*.

Back in New York City the following day, September 21, MGM held a press screening of Justin Kreutzmann's new video, *Backstage Pass*. After the movie was screened, reporters had an opportunity to interview Justin and Bob Weir. Justin said during the interview that the video started out being a "promo clip for the *Infrared Roses* record, but that <get this> since they couldn't make any money off of a promotional clip they had to come up with with another half hour of material to help sell it." All capitalistic reasoning aside, it's a great video which I highly recommend. My only complaint, one that is shared by most of the people who have seen it, is that the video is too short. That might be part of the beauty of *Backstage Pass*. It's short and to the point, without a lot of fluff, yet packed with interesting



Takin' a snooze: Taylor at 1 week old

Photo by Laura

footage spanning close to a 30-year period. One interesting note about the video is the fact that during *Hard to Handle*, for instance, the video does not match the audio. The audio is from April 1971 but Mickey, who wasn't in the band at the time, appears in the video. Also, the audio track on *Easy to Love You* is from the Spring of '90 yet the video is from the following summer. For more about *Backstage Pass*, see the review on page 4.

The day after the MGM screening of *Backstage Pass*, a press conference was held at the Tavern on the Green in Central Park regarding Lunatic Fringe's release of the *Panther Dream* ski (pictured at left). Lunatic Fringe is a division of K2 Corporation, one of America's foremost ski manufacturing corporations. A panel of seven people, including Bob Weir, his sister Wendy (co-authors of the book, *Panther Dreams*), and representatives from Cultural Survival, Rainforest Action Network, K2 Skis, and Not Fade Away Graphics, appeared to field questions about the ski. 12% of the total proceeds from the sale of the skis will be donated to the above-named groups and to the Africa NGO Environment Network (teaching African children about rainforest perservation.) A total of 1,500 pairs of the skis have been manufactured, and assuming all pairs of the numbered skis are sold, approximately \$50,000 will be donated to help preserve the world's rainforests and indigenous people. Tim Petrick, Vice President of Lunatic Fringe, noted that the *Dark Star* ski, of which 1000 pairs were released earlier this year, sold out within three weeks. This led to the idea of a "benefit" ski, hence the *Panther Dream* ski. Dubbed *Gravity Control Devices*, other projects by the company include not only an *American Beauty* ski but also a *Bertha Boogie* snowboard, and the possibility of a Dead-oriented pair of Rollerblades! Ah, capitalism. The funny thing is, we're suckers enough to buy this stuff!

The new *DeadBase* is out. I haven't had the opportunity to see it yet, but reports indicate it's looking pretty sharp. Sporting a bright yellow cover, *DeadBase VI* is packed full of statistics and other fun information that no true collector should be without. Write to *DeadBase - U*, P.O. Box 499, Hanover, NH 03755 for price and ordering information. And don't forget to tell them who sent you!

According to UPI reports, Vice-President Elect Al Gore wore one of the Garcia neckties during the recent presidential campaign. In other Jerry tie news, the second batch of his designer neckwear is available now in department stores.

Bob Weir and Rob Wasserman are at it again. After just playing here in Richmond at the Classic Amphitheatre back in August, they have announced a return date at Richmond's Floodzone, on November 21. The show is a benefit for "buffalo restoration on Native American lands" and Chris Whitley is opening the show. The following night they'll play again in Charlottesville, only this time Jorma will be there as well.

Well, I'm just about out of space. Our next issue should be packed with information about the December shows and hopefully some news about the upcoming East Coast Spring Tour in March! Until then!....

If you were stranded on a desert island and could have just one Grateful Dead show to listen to, what would it be and why? Please send us your replies and we'll put together a list of all-time favorites.

## Video Review:

### *Backstage Pass*

35-minute videotape

\$19.95 in stores or call

(800) 225-3323 (phone charge)

Review by Bill Melton

What a tape! There's something for everyone here.

Pigpen freaks get *Hard to Handle* from the early days, drummers a mystical duet, and space cowboys a blast of computer-animated star travel set to *Infrared Roses*.

We also have *The Other One* from the 1978 Egypt trip, an acoustic studio trio on Dylan's *She Belongs to Me*, and a tribute to Brent with *Easy to Love You*.

What makes it special is the insider's view provided by director Justin Kreutzmann, Billy's son, and producer Gillian Grisman (David Grisman's daughter.) With *Handle*, we roam the Haight alongside a mutton-chopped Jerry and climb aboard the tour bus. The video of Pig growling out one of those old blues standards is high quality. The Egyptian footage takes us through dusty street markets and up pyramids. The locals, people and camels, are part of the scene.

*She Belongs to Me* is filmed simply, in black and white, capturing an early Dylanesque coffee-house feel. The drum piece, *Fearless Groove*, features Billy and Mickey on exotic percussion as even the soundboard snakes along to the beat. Both performances are original, made for this tape.

The animation, whipped up by a company called Xaos (pronounced "chaos"), is well matched to the "Roses" excerpt, but I won't spoil it by telling any more.

It's all fascinating and well-blended. Look for cameos of Kesey, Townshend, Owsley, Walton -- and you. There are Deadheads and backstage scenes, candid home-movie shots and family vignettes -- and a few appropriately off-the-wall additions.

This videotape has been lovingly prepared. One wishes it were longer, but what is here is total quality. It is a must for any collection. If *Peace Tapes* shows the serious side of the '60s, *Backstage Pass* brings us golden vibes from the era that continue to resonate.

Animation by Xaos



## Video Review:

### *Peace Tapes*

60-minute videotape

Clear/Cut Teleproductions

\$19.98 (708) 253-8400

Review by Bill Melton



Subtitled *A Video Guide to Peace*, *Peace Tapes* provides plenty of ammunition to fight back against the forces of war and aggression.

*Peace Tapes* (actually just one tape) chronicles the U.S. peace movement from its beginnings. News footage is beautifully woven together with a backdrop of activist songs to fire the spirit.

Interviews with entertainers and activists add practical advice and idealistic hopes. Balancing Bob Weir, Richie Havens and Yoko Ono are pros like Bobby Seale and the late, great Abbie Hoffman, talking about the importance of community organizing.

The tape is an emotional appeal to people to get involved with their world's problems. If footage of the Cold War and Vietnam War seems dated, scenes of Persian Gulf War protests bring it into the '90s. And a major segment deals with environmental destruction, which could be considered an equal threat to peace.

If there is a flaw, it is that *Peace Tapes* attempts too much and just skims the surface. Because it is entertainment and information, it sticks pretty much to the basics, such as how to write your congressman. It seems aimed as a primer rather than a thesis, at the weekend warrior and not the veteran. But that's very worthwhile in itself.

Tunes include *Throwing Stones*, *Here Comes the Sun*, Country Joe's *Fixin' to Die Rag*, Havens' *Freedom*, and the Smothers Brothers doing *the Draft Dodger Rag* on their '60s TV show.

It's a noble effort, well executed. And 32 percent of profits go to worthwhile charities.

## Book Review:

### *Goin' Down the Road:*

*A Grateful Dead Traveling Companion*

By Blair Jackson

Harmony Books, October 1992

ISBN: 0-517-58337 \$12.00

336 pages

Review by Paul Fad



By my count, there are at least a dozen books available to those of us who wish to read up on our favorite musical subject. And until now, the great majority have had one thing in common -- they leave the reader wanting more. Maybe the authors share royalties or something, I don't know. But how many times have you finished reading a book on the Dead only to wish you had been given more background on a particular topic?

Blair Jackson, editor and publisher of *The Golden Road*, has filled a large number of gaps with his new book, *Goin' Down the Road*, subtitled "a Grateful Dead Traveling Companion". The bulk of the book is a collection of reprinted stories and features from *The Golden Road*, with updated editor's notes, but the value of the book goes much further than a simple "greatest hits" compendium. The selection process for the items included indicates that Jackson wants to take the reader off the beaten path and shed light on areas which have previously been hinted at or glossed over. A prime example of this is an in-depth interview with Donna (Godchaux) McKay six years after leaving the band, fittingly titled "the Greatest Story Never Told". Donna has a totally different ideology than in her days with the band, yet her story is fascinating and long overdue.

There are, of course, interviews with the band members, and in all honesty, the majority of the book is comprised of these discussions. But even in discussing topics we may be familiar with, Jackson's passion for his subject elicits some excellent tales. He is a favorite writer among the "long-dead", and it is easy for the reader to understand why.

The book concludes with two chapters that will provide the book with a long shelf life. The first is a complete "Roots" section (which should be familiar to *Golden Road* readers) that provides a in-depth history of virtually every cover tune performed by the Dead through 1991. Included are chronological notes on the performance history of the song, and biographical information on the author or authors. It boggles the mind to think of the time it must have taken to compile this information. Finally, Jackson, along with the *Dead Base* crew have amassed a list of the "Top Ten" tapes from 1966 to 1991, based on the quality of play and set lists. It is a good reference point for those just starting their collections, and a sure conversation (argument?) starter among veteran tapers.

One thing for sure; there is something for everyone in the pages of *Goin' Down the Road*. You really need to buy this one too!

# Chain Reaction

Continued from page 2

As a third-year law student and Deadhead, I have been following your discussion of the constantly-changing laws on search and seizure with great interest. All of us, and Deadheads in particular, need to be aware of our ever-diminishing rights as citizens of this nation.

I thought you'd be interested to hear about a July 14 opinion out of the Virginia Court of Appeals that deals directly with the search and seizure issues you explored in your last issue. The case involved two black men, Anthony Grinton and Arthur B. Treadwell, who were driving south on Interstate 95 in a rented car. I mention their race only because the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond ruled several years ago that police could not conduct "profile stops." The state police had been using a "profile" of black men driving rented cars from Florida on the interstate as the basis for suspecting they were drug dealers. The court said the police needed a better reason than race and car rental to zero in on the driver as suspected criminals. After that ruling, Virginia's state police began camping out at the I-95 toll booths and asking drivers passing through if they would consent to a search of their vehicle.

When the two men went through the toll gate, a trooper noticed what he suspected was a radar detector, which is illegal in Virginia. The officer asked, "Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?" and the driver agreed he could. The trooper asked a number of questions about where they were going, who owned the car, how they knew each other and whether there was any contraband in the car. Treadwell fielded all of the questions and said there wasn't any contraband.

Then the trooper asked if he could "look at the contents and containers" in the vehicle. Treadwell said he could. The officer then said, "If you don't mind pulling over to the shoulder, I'll take a quick look and have you on your way in a couple of minutes." Treadwell drove over to the side. Again at the officer's request, the men got out of the car while the trooper conducted the search. The officer asked Treadwell for the trunk key and Treadwell said he hadn't gotten a key when he rented the car, and further that there was nothing in the trunk.

So the officer went to his patrol car, got a screwdriver and other tools, and unbolted the back seat so he could get into the trunk, where he found shopping bags filled with clothes and small pieces of luggage, which Treadwell and Grinton claimed they knew nothing about. The officer then pulled everything out of the trunk and spread it out on the ground. When he started pulling out marijuana and 14 baggies of crack cocaine, the two defendants bolted. They were arrested a short time later.

Relying on another Virginia case, Baldwin v. Commonwealth, the Court of Appeals ruled that the trooper went into the car trunk during a consensual search. "In this case, the defendants consented to remain stationary at the toll booth in order to answer the officer's questions and consented to moving their automobile to the shoulder of the road. They also consented to have the officer look at the contents and containers in the car. No evidence in the record contradicts the consensual nature of the encounter," Judge Barrow wrote.

Judge Barrow said Treadwell consented to the search both verbally and by his action of pulling the car over to the side. "The officer did not coerce the defendants, did not draw his gun, make any threats or deceive the defendants as to the identity or purpose of the search. The defendants got out of the vehicle upon request and did not ask that the search be terminated at any time. Although they claimed not to have had a key to the trunk and asserted that they had nothing in the trunk, they did not withdraw consent to search the trunk."

On that reasoning, Judge Barrow upheld the conviction of Treadwell and Grinton saying there was no illegal search and seizure because "their encounter with police was consensual in nature" and they gave the officer permission to search the car.

In other words, if Treadwell had known enough about the law to tell the officer at the toll booth, "I'm sorry, but I'm in a real hurry and can't stop right now for you to search my car," he probably could have driven away. Police must have a reason - a suspected violation of the law -- to stop you and then search your car. An empty beer can could be all they need. But if you keep your car properly registered and have no illegal or suspicious items in view when a police officer randomly stops you and asks to search your car, you probably can give them a polite, "No, thanks," and be on your way. Of course, we no longer have toll booths on I-95 in Virginia, so the police probably will now have to pull you over on the pretext of an actual traffic violation.

I hope this helps some of your readers. Reagan-Bush haven't left us many rights after 12 years of Republican rule, but we still have the right to "Just Say No" when the police come fishing for a drug bust. Name withheld by request, Charlottesville, VA



Bob Weir, Michelle Shocked, Bruce Coburn "Spoonful"  
8/5/92 Richmond, Virginia Photo by Kriss Wilson

## TRAVELING TIPS

By Pat Jordan

Here are a few tips for motorists. Some I picked up from a conversation I once had with a California Highway Patrol Officer on how to act when pulled over. Other tips are from personal experience:

1) **Perform regular walk-around inspections of your vehicle: Check all lights.** This avoids many 'fix it' ticked stops and is one less reason to be pulled over and hassled. On tour, do this at every venue.

2) **If you are being pulled over, roll down the driver's side window before stopping to 'freshen-up' the air, but don't drop all the windows in a panic.**

3. **Don't Panic.** Furtive actions such as stashing your stuff under the seat, looking for registration, etc. is probable cause for search. Cops want to watch you find the papers and dig out your wallet.

4. **Don't get out of your car unless asked.** Police are most often shot or attacked when approaching a stopped vehicle and are always nervous. Put his mind at ease. The ideal way to be when a cop walks up is to have the driver's side window down, the engine off and your hands on the wheel.

5. **Keep the paperwork on the car in a handy place, such as a clip on your visor.** If you keep it in the glove box, don't put anything stupid in glove box.

6. **Always have some kind of identification.** No ID, even for passengers, is probable cause for search. However, trunk area and luggage belonging to people with proper ID requires a search warrant.

7. **DO NOT sign consent to search forms.** Politely say your dad is a lawyer and told you not to. If the cop says he'll call a dope dog, let him call a dope dog. They will tell you that they can "just go get a warrant." Call their bluff. Warrants take over an hour to get. In that time, there is likely to be a real crime or an accident. Not only that, but tying up two patrol cars, one to get the warrant and one to stay with you just isn't going to happen.

8. **Be nice. Smile. They have guns.**

Remember that all roads are dangerous. Some are worse than others, but people who fit the DEA's "drug profile" list, which many highway patrol and other police agencies have adopted, need to be extra careful. The list includes hispanics, blacks, long-haired whites and young people "with too much money." Don't speed. Don't have open containers or roaches in your ash tray. Drug dealers know to be careful. But even casual users with a few grams of pot, not to mention a few hits of LSD, can not only land you in jail but you could lose your car. Stickers are for Wharf Rats. Cops on tour routes know what Deadheads are. In fact, rumor has it that in some states "Steal Your Face" stickers and the like are probable cause. If you want to be flagrant, fine. Just be flagrantly careful. Beware means BE AWARE, of your rights and reality. Drive Safely!

unbroken brain

Unbroken Chain, Vol. 7, No. 3



## AIN'T IT CRAZY

My First Time – March 15, 1973

by Bill Melton

"She's in Canada," he explained.

Nat had planned this for a long time. He had mail-ordered for tickets to the Grateful Dead show in Nassau Coliseum on Long Island. He had a date lined up, someone from a nearby women's college. He had high hopes for his first Dead show and for this woman. The day before the show, she called to say she was in Canada for the week with another guy. Dejected but determined, Nat offered me the other ticket.

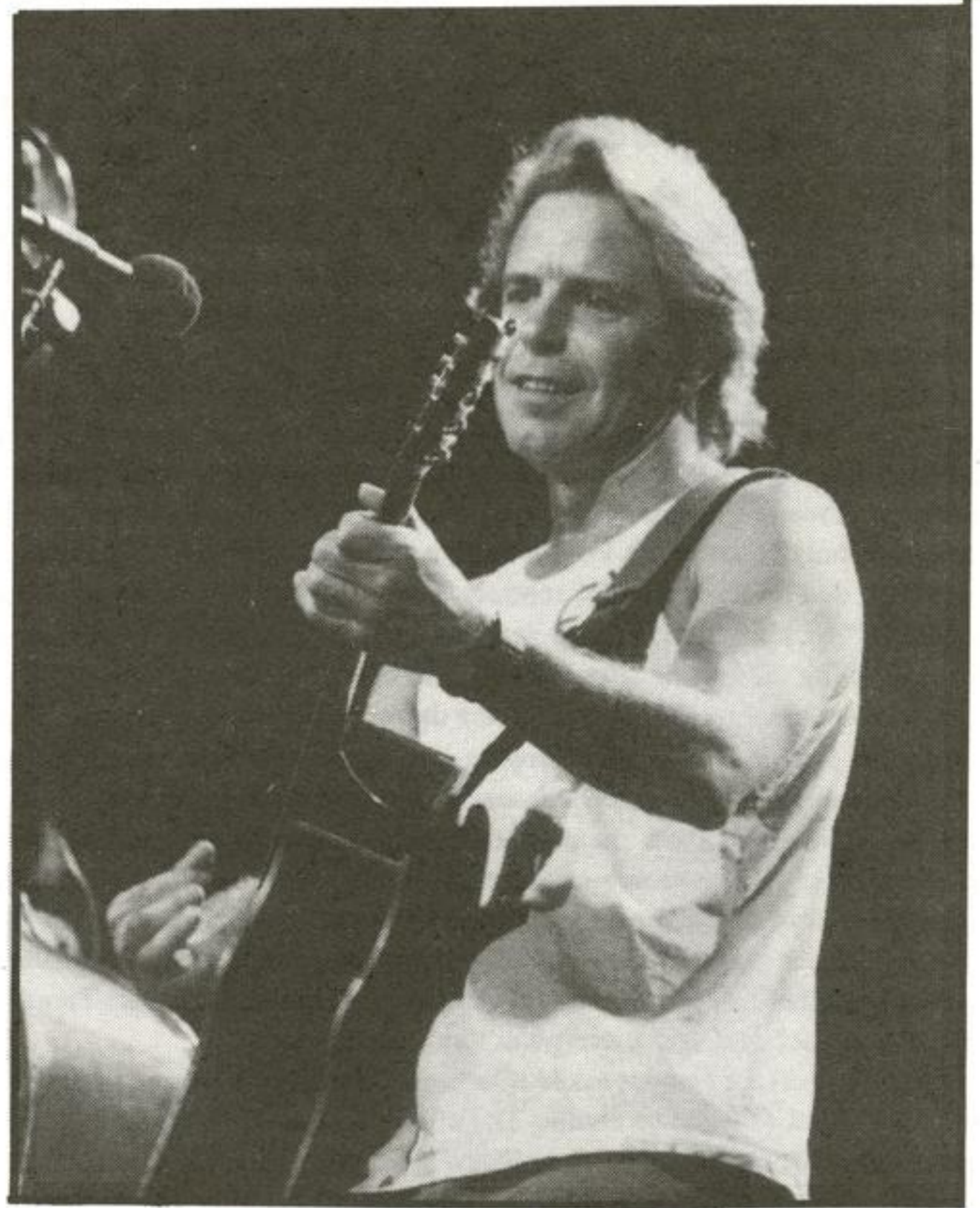
"I don't know," I said. "It's a long drive. We'd have to miss a couple days of classes. And I'm not sure I care that much about the Grateful Dead."

All semester, Nat, who was into the Dead, had been helping me gradually cultivate a taste. He would lure me into his room, which I had to pass to get to mine, with seductive sounds from *American Beauty*, released a few years earlier.

Mostly, I'd listen to Ripple, settled back in mellow reverie on the shag carpet in Nat's room, drifting along as the music meandered through the gentler reaches of my brain. He would then use that wine to hook me on other exotic delights: Skull and Roses, Europe '72 (recently out), New Riders' *Powerglide*, Leo Kottke's incredible armadillo album, and Mike Auldridge's power dobro version of Tennessee Stud -- cranked.

I had grown to love Ripple and liked a few other tunes, but still wasn't sold on the Dead. Several years earlier, I had been coaxed into buying *Anthem of the Sun*, which I played maybe once and declared it electric noise. So I was still suspicious. Was this the same band?

(continued on page 18)



Bob Weir 8/5/92 Richmond, VA Photo by Tim Ashbridge

## An Evening with Carlos Santana

By Allyson Hansen

On Tuesday, October 27, we were fortunate to have Carlos Santana and Third World play here in Richmond at the Classic Amphitheatre. Third World opened the show with a set that was full of excitement and inspiration. Though most of their material presented was non-stop reggae, they chose to surprise us with an orchestral number for a closing treat.

Following a very brief equipment reorganization, Santana came out and played a mixture of new and classic material. Inviting Third World on stage to perform together, a spiritual version of Bob Marley's "Exodus" emerged. Both bands kept the crowd up on their feet and dancing, an essential element in keeping warm on the exceptionally chilly October evening.

But the real excitement of the evening occurred later, through a simple twist of fate, when I was able to speak with Carlos Santana. Though an accomplished musician, long recognized among his peers as one of the best guitarists around, I found him to be intelligent, kind, humble and very amusing.

We discussed his work with native Americans and the recent awareness-raising concert at Shoreline Amphitheatre. Steve Miller, Ry Cooder and many other musicians donated their time to this worthy cause along with Santana. Viewing video footage of the concert, stage resplendent with fully costumed Native Americans from many different tribes, I too was truly touched by the plight of these strong peoples. Pleading for "clean air, clean water, and clean conscience" doesn't seem to be too much to ask; especially from the people who were here first.

Musically, Carlos said his band is a group of individuals who each play their own way and style. Under the right conditions these fuse musically and spiritually to form "one heartbeat." Anyone who has ever witnessed this band in one of their finer moments can attest to the truth of this. Carlos has a God-given ability for pulling the audience into this "heartbeat" and allowing us to explore this fusion in a way that is usually reserved for musicians only. Carlos thinks it doesn't matter if you play tutti-frutti, or something classical. "If you feel it, the audience is going to feel it too."



Carlos Santana 10/27/92  
Richmond, VA

Photo by Kriss Wilson



# An Interview with *By Marc Apple* Rob Wasserman

To Deadheads, his name means a summer tour with his good friend, Bob Weir. To Lou Reed fans, he is the man who changed the way Reed thinks about music and his voice. To bass players, he is the one who has taken their instrument to new levels.

As a boy growing up in San Mateo, California, Rob Wasserman was exposed to many types of music. But his journey to bass began when he was 18 and spotted a 200-year-old German upright acoustic bass. He still plays that upright today.

For an audition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he played *The Marriage of Figaro*, which he had memorized because he couldn't read music. He pulled it off, but soon decided the orchestra wasn't for him.

*Solos*, his 1983 release, showed he was like no other bass player. One instrument provided rhythm, harmony and melody. Then, with 1988's *Duets*, a cult following grew into critical acclaim for what he describes as a "musician's record." It featured a spectrum of artists, from Rickie Lee Jones to Dan Hicks, Cheryl Bentyne of the Manhattan Transfer to Lou Reed. *Stardust*, with Aaron Neville, is on the LP and the *Rain Man* soundtrack. His cut with Bobby McFerrin won a Grammy.

With help from Jerry Garcia, Branford Marsalis and Bruce Hornsby, Wasserman developed and produced the music for Levi's 501 TV commercials for 1991-92. He is working on *Trios*, an album with, among others, Edie Brickell and Garcia, Paul Simon and Michelle Shocked, Elvis Costello and Marc Ribot.

He is also working on a Weir-Wasserman album, produced by bassist friend Don Was with all original music. On their *Scaring the Children* tour, the duo play mostly cover tunes.

Q: How did you get started playing the upright bass?

A: I think it was an instinctual thing. I always loved music, but I didn't really have an instrument. I fooled around on guitar as a teen-ager, like everyone else, played the standard three chords. I remember seeing a string bass in a funky used music shop, and they would let you fool around, and I really liked it. I ended up buying it and that's one of the basses I still have. Once I started playing it, I realized it clicked.

Q: How did you go about choosing the people to play with you on *Duets*?

A: I just think about people I like and try to reach them. I had a strong concept, and most everyone really liked it. There's a story behind each person. A friend of Rickie Lee Jones told her about the project and then I got a call from her. She flew up to San Francisco a few days later, we started recording, and we've been friends ever since. It wasn't easy. It took four years, and I didn't have a record company when I started.

Q: Besides Bob Weir, Lou Reed is the only person you really work steadily with. How did that friendship come about?

A: I was on the road with Rickie Lee, and I was trying to finish my *Duets* album. I wanted someone who was really different. I ran into him in a hotel in Copenhagen and I gave him what was truly my last tape of what *Duets* was at that point. I didn't expect him to listen to it right away, but he called me like twenty minutes later, flipped out. Said it was the best thing he ever heard. After he did *One For My Baby* with me, he said it really changed his way of thinking about music. It was a radical departure. He didn't realize how great his voice could sound without synthesizer and drum machines, and all that shit he'd been surrounding himself with. I thought it was a very simple idea. He had never thought of it. He took it a little farther and turned it into *New York* and *Magic and Loss*.

Q: Your next project, *Trios*. Tell me about that.

A: Aside from the title, it's a lot different than *Duets*. On *Duets*, I allowed anything material-wise that anyone wanted to do that I liked. On this thing, each trio has to have an original song. I'm a firm believer in the material often makes the record, no matter who's on it.



Photo by Kriss Wilson

Rob at the Classic Amphitheater in Richmond this summer.

Q: I know that there's one tune with Jerry Garcia and Edie Brickell. What kind of song is that?

A: That's a song that came out of two days of jamming, and she made up lyrics spontaneously, like free association or something. It's a very sad song, supposedly about a dog that's lost at sea and has lost its master. It's very complex psychologically, but it's simple on the surface. The fun thing about it is that Jerry played piano sort of by accident. We were in his living room, and he started playing, and it felt right for that song. We decided someday we're gonna have at least a one-shot band of people, hopefully the three of us, that play a whole show without practicing and knowing what they're gonna do.

Q: What about the Hornsby and Branford tune?

A: Bruce jammed with me, and we came up with this Leon Russell kind of groove, and he went home and wrote some lyrics. Yet another sad and funny song, about some guy that cheats on his wife on their wedding day. It's called "White Wheels Limousine;" it's a real story. He likes to write about people in his town. It has a heavy jazz influence, with Branford playing some great solos. It's hard to describe my own music. It's very catchy, but not too slick.

Q: How come not a live Bob and Rob album?

A: That's just too easy. We could have had a live album out two years ago. I just heard a tape of the other night, and we're really sounding good. I just don't believe in the easy way.

Q: Your bass solo this time, what songs are you throwing in?

A: Right now, I change a lot. I don't want to do the same thing the whole tour. I'm playing "Spoonful" a lot. That's really fun to improvise around, and it's a Willie Dixon song. I've thrown in some Beatles songs, "Over the Rainbow" -- it's a strange mish-mash of grooves.

Q: So whatever you're feeling for that night, right?

A: Well, I try to work out some motifs every night before I go on stage, so I just won't blank out. Then I just improvise around that, or sometimes they're things I've written.

Q: I don't think I've ever heard you sing before.

A: I used to do a comedy kind of thing on Bobby's "Young Blood." That was just funny, people used to crack up. Now I'm actually singing, and I'm still a little nervous 'cause it's like a new instrument. That's one thing Willie Dixon suggested to me. He figured that anyone that had a nice talking voice should sing. He kept bugging me to do that, and he wanted me to do it with him on "Trios." I was too nervous, and I now sort of regret it. He did get me going on it, and Bobby's now sort of my vocal coach.

# An Interview with *By Marc Apple*

## Bela Fleck

"You have me at a disadvantage," is how Bela Fleck responded to a fan who called him over as we were about to exit a restaurant in downtown Athens, Georgia. But for Fleck, Howard Levy, Victor Wooten, and Future Man, everything they do has certainly worked to their advantage.

Fleck, who is 34, is a rarity in the music industry. He will openly claim "The Beverly Hillbillies" and "Deliverance" as primary influences, and he also plays the electric banjo. For Fleck, attending the High School of Music and Art in New York City was cool, but playing banjo was not. So, after dabbling with the guitar, Fleck just couldn't shake his first love. Soon he was being tutored by one of banjo's pioneers, Tony Trischka, who has many records out, but has never hit the true notoriety that Fleck has.

Bela Fleck joined a band straight out of high school, but his big break didn't come until he joined the New Grass Revival in 1981. He would eventually refer to New Grass Revival as family and couldn't fathom ever leaving the band. However, in 1988, PBS's Lonesome Pine Special asked him to perform on the show. No problem, except they wanted Fleck to play with people he had never played with before.

They became the Flecktones. Howard Levy, with whom Fleck had played with at various Festivals, was first to join. Victor Wooten was auditioned over the phone; that was all Fleck needed to hear. Hanging around Nashville together, the two would frequently go out to see drummers play. After each one, Wooten would reply in a manner as to suggest, "he's good, but you've got to hear my brother." So his brother, known as Future Man, joined the band. Each member was already an accomplished musician in their own right. Levy's playing style -- forcing jazz licks from a blues harmonica -- mirrors Fleck's. Wooten slaps and throws his bass around to make sounds that ring in the hollow part of your head. Future Man plays his synth-axe drumitar, an array of touch-sensitive drum pads on a guitar-like body. This is a rhythm section that can hold its own.

After the PBS special, the band decided to get back together and do four gigs, which eventually led them to recording an album. Fleck then chose to fulfill a dream and left New Grass Revival. Now, with three records behind them and an equal number of Grammy nominations, the Flecktones are at it again, playing a seemingly unending tour of over 200 dates per year.

Recently I had the opportunity to discuss with Fleck the serious stuff, everything from his high schools days, his years in New Grass Revival, to finding the band of his dreams:

**Q:** First off, congrats on another fine record. For the first time I think you've finally made a "Flecktones" record, where in the past the other two records were more "Bela Fleck and the Flecktones."

**A:** It's really an equal situation, except that I write a little bit more than everyone else and that someone has to make the decisions. With a band, a total democracy can get real complicated. It's simpler if somebody handles some of the decisions. Everything is up for discussion, but we seldom discuss it. It seems most of the time, everyone is pretty happy with how I handle it. And with anything that is at all sensitive, like where we eat or what we record, we talk about it. I try to deal with a lot of the jive for everybody.

**Q:** It sounds like the whole band has come full circle. In the past, with "Hippo" and the debut, it was like The Flecktones featuring Bela Fleck.

**A:** Well that's OK with me. I think of it as a team. The music, featuring myself, is always the hardest part. It's easy because I bring in the songs, so I can just play and everyone else can just go wild on them. And by the end of the thing, I haven't learned anything. So I have to make sure that I force myself to be featured too. And I learn more playing with the other songs the other guys bring in. But since most of the songs are written by me, mostly I'll hold it down and let them...

**Q:** Just improv around what you bring in?

**A:** Yeah, so again I have to make sure that I'm featured at least equally. It's just trying to keep a balance. That's always my goal, to keep a



*Photo by Timothy White*

balance because any one of these players could dominate, including myself. The thing I like is balancing out. You get a sense of four individuals playing together and being a team. That's the concept of the band.

**Q:** About the term "jazz banjo," most of your press has been in jazz magazines, and you play a lot of jazz festivals, but since the very beginning I have never thought of the music as jazz. When I listen, it really never occurs to me that there's not a guitar playing, it's just good music.

**A:** It's whatever it is to you. There is a lot of jazz in the music, but it isn't strictly jazz. It's very improvised music, but so is rock and roll and so is bluegrass. We don't really care what it is, except that it's good. I've always been attracted to jazz, and originally thought I might start my own band and would play jazz, but what ended up happening was better than a banjo trying to play jazz. I probably could have done that if I had dedicated myself to it. Instead of just saying, "I'm gonna fit into this mold of what this kind of music is," I was able to find guys that could play all kinds of music and blend a lot of the things that I was already good at into it. Like the bluegrass elements -- the roots; to take those and blend them with the jazz, funk, classical, and world beat elements as well as Irish music and Indian music. To just find ways to make music that sounded good to all of us, sounded complete.

**Q:** It's as if you have found three guys exactly like you except they play different instruments.

**A:** Exactly. It's amazing. A once in a lifetime situation.

**Q:** Is that the main reason you decided to stick with the Flecktones and leave New Grass?

**A:** Yes, I would not have started this group at that time if it weren't for these people. They inspired me, because then I realized that something totally new could be done. It was a stroke of luck. I always considered it a great gift.

**Q:** Tell me a little about New Grass Revival. I was reading an article where you said something to the effect that New Grass was an alternative band that was turning toward country music.

**A:** (laughs) Yeah, that was a drag. New Grass was truly an alternative band. It was a very intense, powerful band. The band rocked, the vocals were incredible, the playing was amazing. It was always tense. If there was a flaw, that was it. With the Flecktones, people would say, "It's nice, you let me off the hook with a ballad or you did something beautiful, you let me get it back together." In some ways, I felt with New Grass it wasn't always a complete musical picture. It was one thing that was done as best it possibly could be done. That's



what kept me there so long. Four individuals, everybody was the best at what they did. And there was a huge audience that loved the band. I couldn't imagine anything but those fans and that band, it was family. Leaving NGR was like breaking up a marriage to go out with some other girl. It was a horrible feeling. But at least I gave it a good long run. And the direction the band was going in was not my speed. I didn't want to be a country star. I could see we were trying to get country air play, and that's OK if you get people and you turn them on, and then take them to your thing. But trying to please the country disc jockeys was really pissing me off. We were starting to gradually change the songs to songs that would be on country radio. I don't like country music. I can listen to country radio, to see what guys are doing, but I want to do something creative. The other guys were starting to get older and were thinking in terms of more security. We were making good money as a cult band. Everywhere we played we sold out, and we were headlining bluegrass festivals. It was frustrating when the band was trying to break into country music. At that point I thought, if I stay in the New Grass Revival, what's gonna happen? I knew we would eventually crack country music, we'd find a hit single and then what would we be doing, playing at Opryland? The band was too hip to be that. So, I just decided to...

Q: Take a gamble on yourself?

A: Exactly, to make a commitment to my own music, for the first time in my life. I had always made my own records on the side, and I always had the safety of being in New Grass. I didn't know if I had that kind of confidence in my own music, that it would be that strong, powerful enough...

Q: What about the acceptance of it?

A: It wouldn't have worked out if it weren't for these people. At least for getting started. I imagine now that since my confidence in my own music is established, if we ever split up and I go find other people to play with, I guess I'll have an easier time having already done all the groundwork.

Q: I don't think you could have three other guys like you have now in the Flecktones.

A: The thing is, you don't try to imitate what you did before. There are guys out there that I would like to play with, but I'm not looking to do that right now. I'm not going to leave the music business if this band breaks up. I'll find something cool to do. But we don't seem to be in any danger of breaking up.

Q: Tell me about high school and playing Led Zeppelin on the banjo.

A: It was just really wanting to be accepted and just playing along with whatever people were playing. I was kind of shy, and when people were jamming with their guitars I wanted to play with them. They would play "Stairway To Heaven," and I'd learn it and play with them. They wouldn't be playing folk songs - they would be playing rock songs of the day. They would play "Angie," or whatever, and I would just try to find a banjo part.

Q: What did the guitar players think of that?

A: They thought it was pretty natural, and they got used to it. They got to know me, and they knew I was trying and would give me a chance to take a solo. They were a good bunch of people. That's what I've always done. I always wanted to play, and I didn't want to sit out because they weren't playing a banjo song.

Q: Which brings us to your latest talent, playing slide on the banjo.

A: Making a stab at it, anyway. There's something you can do on a banjo with a slide that are really cool. I've got some other things going right now with it. Sort of delta blues, Bonnie Raitt kind of thing.

Q: What does she think of the tune? ("Bonnie & Slide" from UFO Tofu)

A: I heard she really likes it. I asked her if it was OK to tell people about it. She said she was really complimented by it. It was a real thing that happened. She was into it, and she likes the band a lot. She likes the fact that we are different.

Q: Let's continue with the present here, opening for the Grateful Dead this past new year, how did that come about?

A: That was interesting. Bill Graham started to dig the band and had booked the band for a few gigs. We were at Squaw Valley when Jerry Garcia played there. The very day Bill Graham died, our manager had mentioned that the band would love to do New Year's with the Dead. Bill was a real friend, not like buddies, but a guy that really liked us and had given us some shots. We were saddened by his death, but, I have to say, he lived a great life. It's sad, but you celebrate his life because of what he achieved, and you know he loved every minute of his life. So, then we got a call a week later from Bill Graham Presents, saying he had wanted to get the Flecktones on this show. It seemed to happen independently. It felt really cosmic. Like... did he reach out of the grave, or did he make a note that they found in the helicopter wreckage? No one was very specific about it with us. It was a little spooky, kind of sad. We did it, and it went great. Jerry's a real gentleman, and he likes the band a lot. We talked about doing some stuff with him in the future.

Q: You had known Bruce Hornsby before that, though. You were on two cuts on his last record.

A: Bruce came to Telluride, and the first thing I said to him was, "I'm your biggest fan. I love your music." One of the main things I wanted to do with New Grass Revival was open for Bruce Hornsby. That would have been perfect. And he said, "Why don't you just play with

*I was able to find guys that could blend bluegrass with jazz, funk, classical, and world beat as well as Irish and Indian music...just find ways to make music that sounded good to all of us.*

me then?" He knew me because of New Grass, because he wanted to do some of the stuff that New Grass did with Leon Russell. When I told him I was a big fan of his, he said, "Well, anything you want to get up and play on, just come on up." I said, "Are you serious?" That was like a blank check to me. While I was there, I gave him a rough tape of the first Flecktones album and we really hit it off, and he recently sat it with us. We did about three songs that stretched into about 40 minutes. It was really out there.

Q: Looking back on the H.O.R.D.E. tour, let's hear your reflections on that.

A: Well, it was a great deal for all the bands. Maybe none of those bands could do their own production in a shed tour. But by teaming together, they could. And the audience got a great deal for their money. Each person was the star. We were treated with utmost respect. We drew audiences. The bands interacted with each other. It was a total win for us. The more things like that we can do, the better.

Q: Were you familiar with the other four bands before the start of the tour?

A: I was familiar with the Aquarium Rescue Unit, which I'm a big fan of. I knew who Blues Traveler was from a couple cuts on the radio, but I wasn't prepared for how hot they were. I had never met the Spin Doctors or Widespread Panic, But I enjoyed them both a lot.

Q: That was great tour.

A: It was too short. So now they're gonna try to put together a major H.O.R.D.E. tour for next summer.