

From MIKEL ...

11:00 GDDY ASKED ME MAY 26 1983 BUT ... from MIKEL

Don't like to mix personal things with the DEAD, but it becomes necessary on a few accounts to write this. First, in explanation, as MIKEL is just me, and when I become incapacitated, MIKEL grinds to a halt. Second, to let my friends know just what is going down: often I'm tempted to write personal bits, but am stymied from time and a more important limitation, I want it to say just so very much, and I can never quite bring it off-so I say nothing. Third, philosophical questions arise (why do you presume, why do you sell things etc.) and I feel inclusion in issues of MIKEL would bring the spirit of it all (the DEAD!) down into muddy ruts. So here goes!!

This year has been something else for me. After a quiet Jan&Feb, business took me to Hawaii Mar 10-20 for my main job, bridge tournaments. This blocked out a few JGB and Bobby & Midnites concerts so it was with mixed feelings, but after all Hawaii is Hawaii, and the weekend after I got back there was the DEAD. Tempe, Las Vegas, Irvine then on to the Warfield. Well I drove to Tempe, which is North and East of Phoenix. Compton Terrace is a scaled down amusement park, Knotts Berry farm style, with a large lawn, sloping down amphitheatre-style. The best place to stay (= only place near-by) is a Motel 6, and that was sold out, but I had gotten there early, didn't look like a Dead head, struck up a conversation with the people about those awful hippies, was patient and eventually scored a room (OK - so I copped out, but there really was no other place within walking distance.) And the room clerk came out with a quip I'll not soon forget: "80's hippies never wash and pay their bills with crisp \$100 bills". My friend George flew in from NYC I picked him up at the airport, and then headed to the parking lot to give out stickers and MIKELS. I immediately ran into Liz from Vermont, who had her '82 songlist ready. Impressive! The warmth of the Arizona day vanished with the sunset, and the temperature plummeted into the low 50's, and thunderstorms floated around. So Cold rain and Snow seemed appropriate, if not provocative, and sure enough it started to rain. Jerry pulled out Dire Wolf ("don't murder me") and seemed to be pleading with the elements. Bobby seemed more aggressive, "We're gonna keep the tempo up until the rain stops," and Big Railroad Me&My Uncle, Big River, Tennessee Jed and Let It Grow followed. And what a finish! "We will not speak but stand inside the rain, and listen to the thunder shout I am I am" One of the most powerful renditions I ever saw, as the lightning crackled in the distance, the thunder growled, the wind swirled and the rain baptised.. "so it goes, seasons round, creatures great and small, up and down as werise and fall." It was Bobby at his best, and it ended a set that was not sure to be brought off, weather being what it was, and the DEAD did bring it off by evoking the magic of the seasons. The second set featured the Help on the Way/Slipknot/Franklin's Tower many times played since, but a complete joy it being heard unexpected. And it gave me a chance to make a nuisance of myself by asking for the name of the first 3 songs they played (about half left out slipknot- by the way how many DEAD jams have names??).

On to Las Vegas, took a newly met friend named Chris from Providence RI, and the drive was on a beautiful day, through the desert, 300 miles, the highlight of which is coming over a mountain to discover Boulder Dam, and there just above the dam was a large parking area, and there were nearly a 100 flower children out of time there, of course we stopped also and a small party continued. The DEAD at the Aladdin! They got second billing to Paul Anka, and their fans mixed as poorly as at a concert one time which featured Mott the Hoople opening for Grand Funk Railroad, maybe not as much violence, but there were some heavy scenes, particularly when a DEADHEAD won a jackpot and they wouldn't pay it out because of lack of ID. But aside from the seething undercurrent of hostility, things were kinda cool, and the concert featured an Other One with drum break in the middle which was kinda strange. But the bad thing was no refreshments! Ever hear of that? Just 5 drinking fountains, and the ensuant long lines. I kinda figure the Dead didn't want to subject their fans to \$5 soft drinks and themselves to Las Vegas ripoffs...

On to Irvine (400 miles from LA to Tempe; 300 miles from TEMPE to Las Vegas; 250 from Las Vegas to Covina). Irvine Meadows is located at the intersection of the 5 and 405 freeways, and near lion country. Walking across the parking lot you could hear the lions roaring in the (I hope) distance. Now Irvine is fine if you get lower level seats, other wise you find yourself on a steep incline, no seats, looking down on the stage, the freeways and the refreshments. And it was cold. Jerry reappeared with his flannel shirt, and they played two short, but hot, sets.

Three for three, concerts and days. Most fans would have a day off, the Warwick Benefit shows not starting until Tuesday, but being a Los Angelino, I had a show at the Universal Ampitheatre Monday 28 Mar. Prince. Catch him if you get a chance - but enough of that I don't want to be accused of having Relix tendencies. This letter should establish that, I want to keep the MIKELS pure. Now the DEAD played the Ampitheatre the year it opened 1973 end of June. That was when it was open to the sky, now it is not only refurbished & covered but it has a state of the art sound system. Ten Years After and one would think the DEAD would play there again. What happened?

The Warwick shows. Or for me show. Business beckons and I need to be in San Diego Wed thru Sun. So I am limited to the Tues show. I get aisle seats from the "lottery" the DEAD set up, which is great for me as I can distribute MIKELS and stickers easily. Now I still don't know why the DEAD put their fans through such craziness for the Warwick and Greek shows. 3X5 cards filled out in a certain way. Complicated address (how many PO boxes are there in San Rafael anyway? Can't the DEAD have one with a simple #?). Then with the Greek shows, and additional twist, a "Ticket Troubles" routine if you missed getting tickets first time. I'd like to think this was a way to get more people in, but from the sound of it... and a lot of people didn't get into the GREEK shows. Go back to Bill Graham guys, there's a certain sanity and professionalism to everything he does...PLEASE! So for me it was 1)Fly up to SF on Tues; 2)Fly back to LA on Wed.; 3)drive down to San Diego to work and that takes me into April. Incidentally when in San Diego I hit a few old record stores, and there I found a Scripto (you know pen) promotion record form the early 60's by Bobby Darin (of Mack the Knife fame) called "The Sermon of Samson" Well I nervously put it on the turntable, and sure enough, "Samson & Delilah" came tumbling out in a very similar style to the DEAD's. Can somebody ask Bobby about that one for me? ~~WAR - not DARIN!~~

Now all I have to do is get ready for the upcoming East Coast tour. Which means process about 100 pieces of mail in my Covina box. Then put out a new issue of MIKEL for the East Coast. Then arrange for Reno & Greek stickers to be made in my absence. Then arrange to have the Official Book of the Deadheads, which is scheduled to come out during my trip East, available to my readers. And do a little living on the side. Ahead of me was a trip that would take me East April 11-27 for the DEAD; April 29-May 6 for a NYC vacation; May 7-16 for a bridge/backgammon tournament.

Based in NY, I would require a car to shuttle back & forth. I usually rent. And I arrange this through a travel agent. I strongly recommend this, do not walk up to a rent-a-car counter cold - you'll get the most expensive rate. As far as hotel accommodations, I usually play those by ear when I get there unless I know I want to stay in a certain place, which was not the case here. I take the overnight flight to JFK, and consider it a good omen when actor Al Corley erstwhile of Dynasty and most of the Philadelphia Philllies join me on the plane. At JFK, dawn I get a Mitsubishi car with 700 miles, and am off to Binghamton.

Cutting across New Jersey on Rte 80, into Penn and up Rt 81, I arrive at Binghamton early afternoon. The Chenango River cuts thru the town, and a parking lot away is the Veteran's Memorial Arena, basically a hockey rink, 5000+, and a parking lot away from that a 250 Room Holiday Inn. After learning the American Legion had a convention there tom'row, the vibes just didn't seem right to check in there. So I went across the Chenango to the Ramada, where I watched the Yankees lose their home opener, sleeping through the fight which was the highlight of the game and losing time. It now being 6PM, and me still

without a ticket! One thing about being MIKEL is that you go to DEAD concerts for your own reasons: meeting people, passing out stickers & MIKELS. Getting in isn't the name of the game. But sure enough, 15 min to showtime some guy excitedly thrusts a ticket in my hand, tells me he digs what I'm doing. Now I believe in paying my way, but I told him to contact me & I'll send him a record he needs (PS: you need a first name & amount of \$ I gave you to claim your record, but please do--I promised & I'll come through). It was a steambath inside, floor over hockey ice, everything covered with condensator. Ran into Ethan, the sticker ETHAN. And Glenn who accused me of being a wimp by telling people not to go to Burlington & Orono without tickets. The show was special: after Help/slipknot/tower came Lost sailor/Saint of Circumstance and that segued into Terrapin Station. Something about the juxtaposition of three major suites of music was just totally special--now after the drums they did other one wharf rat and not fade away, and here's where all this magic caught up with them: the crowd took over chanting NOT FADE AWAY at such intensity that the drums did a sort of duet with the crowd, which set them off even more: and when it came time for Jerry to go into Going Down the Road, they could not bring it off! The guitars left with a shrug of the shoulders and there was more drums & crowd until the energy dissipated. Jerry & the boys returned did BABY BLUE, the only time I've seen that one in the 2nd set to close the concert under most strange circumstances. My hotel decision was reinforced when I noticed a line of police and many official cars ringing the Holiday Inn--much hassling there. But across the Chenango, I got hassled too: pushed out of the way as Bobby cut in from a side entrance and darted to the safety of stairways! Later that night I hit on a SPOT to eat (that was the name of the restaurant and I recommend it) where I came across a few dozen deadheads + more chances to pass out stickers & MIKELS.

True to my advice, I passed up Burlington so this meant driving back to NYC spending a day and then back up to Rochester the nite before the concert. Now a Holiday Inn was again the choice proximity-wize, and since a PsychicFair was scheduled there I decided this was good vibes & checked in. And the DEAD were there again! The night before the concert I watched the Binghamton Whalers play the Rochester Amerks for Hockey Championship of some minor league. Rochester won, went on to play New Haven. Try Trebor's for great Roch. food! Later that night I did my income tax. Attended the psychic fair which was basically a rip-off, except that some 9-year old drew my aura by scrawling with colored markers around a head drawn in outline. "You have no red, he told me, no anger" And indeed I felt mellow. The concert was notable for Bobby's stepping up to the mike with his "as long as we get to be together, as long as we're around let it be with style--hang it out and let it shine" Someone's rumor had he made up shaving earlier that day. But except for the Not Fade Away-Going Down the Road...Baby Blue repetition which made me think that was the way it was supposed to be in Binghamton, the show was put down by many who saw it. I left early (something I recommend) & watched Jerry run out the back door into his limo & fly away. Then came the ride back to the city. It Started TO SNOW around Syracuse, and at Binghamton things were so flaky we pulled off to recover our composure. When all of a sudden I said "I know a good SPOT to eat!" and a few carloads of deadheads descended on this restaurant again!

Deadheads were here last ice cream!
I was not prepared for the Meadowlands. I drove through Secaucus & the swamps many times over the years when I lived in NJ & commuted to NYC, so I thought nothing good could come of them, but OH MY SURPRISE! Even though I had good seats, I spent the concert at the very top circling & circling, and at the concession level where I met green dots & many others. I hadn't heard Black Queen since the WNEW-FM 70's days of greatness. Steve Stills fit effortlessly into the band--a real pleasure. Could BLACK PETER be far behind? Yes, but not until IKO IKO and OTHER ONE! A fine show, but the DEAD saved their best salvo for the next day. A magnificently transcendent Help/Slipknot Franklin's Tower that lifted the roof off the place, that led eventually into my favorite type DEAD concert --where they play PLAYING IN THE BAND and then later come back into it at the end usually after WHEEL & other goodies (My ultimate recent example of that is Hartford April 18 82 where they squeeze Playing II in between Sugar Magnolia and SSDD--get a tape of that one!)

overheard after Providence
"Oh, just a rebuke of Irving Berlin"

Had a lead on a ticket, and wanted to see the DEAD in a small place so trucked on up to Orono Maine, near Bangor, on the banks of the flooding Penobscot. Now it's nice the DEAD play small venues, but not so nice all the nonsense you have to put up with due to poor local organization. But the sound was good, their stage grazing the ceiling in spots, and they did go On the road again and a personal favorite, Sugaree. Met George from KS who got me my reviews on Jamaica World Festival and that made it special.

On to Providence, a place I've never seen a bad show, and this was no exception. Cumberland Blues out of Me&My Uncle in first set; Morning Dew out of Stones in second. Before the show Eric, Mark and Tom were outside juggling fired-up clubs. Later inside they put on quite a show with their showers, doubles, trips, chops and other juggling feats.

On to New Haven, where some real friends came through. In response to a request to a stranger (except thru a letter he sent to get MIKEL) for tickets, I got two 4th row center floor tickets, the same seat even! When I found out how good they were, I tried to give him one back, but Jim refused. I really felt guilty, for a little while at least. The highlight of that show was the rarely performed SPOONFUL, willie dixon classic Clapton popularized on Cream and his own albums. New Haven is a hockey rink with a parking lot that towers into the sky. Two of my fav eating spots are there: Elm City Diner, a misnomer since they play jazz & there's a minimum; Mamoun's Falafel, open till 3 where 30 or so flower types had congregated and One More Saturday Nite wafted out onto the street from someone's ghetto blaster inside. Both places are near Chapel & Howe and are highly recommended. Alan from Bayside shared the experience with me. New Haven has youngest DEADHEADS anywhere.

By now I had gotten a bad cold, and there was still Philadelphia ahead. As I developed a fever, I decided to can the last nite head back to LA for sun. So I had well over a 1000 stickers to give out, and I spent the nite plastering as many people with them as I could. And if you were at that concert you may have noticed a lot of them Ran into David of Printknot. Someone hands me a flyer about the DEAD with the notation "Reprinted without permission by MIKAL (sic)" Which gives me a chance to address a problem. Not everyone appreciates what I do. For every hundred letters, I get one piece of hate mail. One read, "We're gonna rip your lungs out at Oakland" Another, "We think MIKEL is getting out of hand. We're gonna dose you real good. Don't worry we know how to find you" (Unsigned) I attribute these to 1) Jealousy -(this guy's getting glory I could have gotten); 2) Concern about the DEAD (the DEAD are very VERY special to a lot of people and misuse or abuse of their name can bring blood to boil); 3) General rowdiness. Let me say in defense 1) a LOT of work is involved - in fact MIKEL is evolving into something bigger than me I can no longer keep it all going; 2) I take the responsibility of being quasi-DEAD quite seriously-there are many ways I could rip-off the band and their fans- I have no intention of doing it 3) I popularize the band further, now it is moot whether this is good or bad (I've had letters saying "don't give all our time proved secrets away-pretty soon DEAD concerts will become teeny-bopper overrun") Well, I disagree, new blood keeps the band fresh; 4) Commercialism. It hurts purists to see stuff for sale in MIKEL. Well the calendars, books, songbooks are all DEAD promulgated. If I help people obtain them, or records that are out of print it is done for the greater glory of the DEAD and their fans. As far as the stickers, they are so right that I bend the rules a little & use the Grateful Dead name. I'll stop if they want me to. Right now, MIKEL is little beyond making its expenses, and the point of selling stuff is not to make money, but make people happy and glorify & magnify the magic of the DEAD. 5) And I never sell anything at DEAD concerts- just give away.

All of this was written as I recover from double pneumonia (maybe they dosed me anyway!) If I am late in filling an order, that is the reason. People get so excited about the dead, it grieves me knowing the waiting going on out there. But I'm attempting to process the nearly 1000 pieces of mail gotten since I fell sick, and maybe send a few extras out to keep the faith. I do need people to be MIKEL for me at various shows until I get my health back, so if you want to plug into an energy source, and can be faithful to the name and image of the DEAD, please write. See you at Ventura!