

Eugene prepares for

Sunday: the day of the living Dead

Stories by
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Of the Emerald

To dedicated fans, a Grateful Dead concert in their home town is a luxury — a luxury Eugene Dead-Heads will have Sunday for the second time in five months. The Dead will headline a day-long show at Autzen Stadium that includes Santana, The Outlaws and Eddie Money.

The Dead have carried the torch of the San Francisco experience since the mid-60's. One of the first groups to form in the Bay Area, the band was among the last to sign a recording contract. In the early '70s, the band hit the big time.

It began filling up caverns like Portland's Memorial Coliseum and as the auditoriums increased in size, the band developed an awesome sound system. Lead

guitarist Jerry Garcia described it as the physical embodiment of sound.

"In other words," Garcia told BAM, a California music magazine, "the lowest note on a bass is 32 feet high. That's its real size. Clearly, nothing that's any smaller than that can produce a sound wave that's that big in the air."

But the sound system was cumbersome, a clumsiness that began showing up in all aspects of the Dead's playing. Crowds grew and grew and the money it took to keep the monster going grew with them. Finally in '73-'74, concerts quit being fun.

"It had turned into a thing that was out of control," says Garcia. "Nobody was really doing it because they liked it. We were doing it because we had to."

So in October '74 the band took a vacation and went out with five

concerts at Winterland. Those five concerts provided the footage for the Dead's movie.

Members of the band began touring with splinter groups but in the Spring of '75, *Blues for Allah* was released. The Dead was back. The album combined the spontaneous jams of early releases with the polished style of *Wake of the Flood*, producing a kind of vector music: energy with a direction.

In June '76, two Portland concerts kicked off a tour of the other side of the country, Micky Hart in tow. Hart, a percussionist, had left after *American Beauty*. Exchanges between Hart and drummer Bill Kreutzman give the group's sound life.

That heartbeat accompanies the mellow tones of Phil Lesh's bass and Garcia's and Bob Weir's guitars. The group is rounded out

by the Godchauxs, Donna singing and her husband Keith on keyboards.

"Either you're alive or you're not," says Keith, "and there's only one side of that that matters."

Early releases, many of them live, were rambling and sounded much like the Dead's concerts. Weir says the group didn't utilize the special sounds offered at a studio. With *Ugly Rumors from the Mars Hotel*, that utilization was there.

After an attempt at running its own record company, the Dead signed with Arista, the label that released the band's last album, *Terrapin Station*.

The band plans to be back in the studio over July and in September is scheduled to fly to Egypt to play under the pyramids. The concert will be a benefit arranged by Anwar Sadat's wife to help chil-

dren in Cairo.

Sunday also offers a chance for Eugene to hear Santana, one of the Bay Area's most popular groups. When the Fillmore West closed, Santana headlined the last show. Lead guitar player Carlos Santana has gone through a number of changes in the last 10 years, leaving the group for awhile to play with John McLaughlin. Rhythms are a big part of the band's sound.

Also scheduled for the show, which starts at 11 a.m., are the Outlaws and Eddie Money. The Outlaws are an intense rock band into extended boogies. Money is a Bay Area act with a current FM hit, "Two Tickets to Paradise."

Tickets for the event cost \$10, available at Meier and Frank, the Athletic Department and at the gate. The parking lot opens at 7 and the doors at 9.

Reliable promoters bring music to field

Aside from a YMCA-sponsored show, there have been no concerts held at Autzen Stadium. Just what damage 40 thousand screaming rock fans would do worried the University. Sunday it'll find out.

"We believe our facility should be used by the community and in offering a rock concert," University Athletic Director John Caine told the Register-Guard, "we offer a show that appeals to a certain group of people, particularly young people."

The athletic department plans to get 10 percent of the gate receipts, which could be \$500,000. The show is produced by the Athletic Department, Concerts West and Bill Graham Presents. Caine said he feels comfortable working with Graham and Concerts West. They've done similar events before.

"We turned down an awful lot of people who wanted to get into this field," said Caine. "We turned them down because if we wanted to do it we wanted to do it right."

One of the people turned down was Sue from the Springfield Creamery. She tried to bring the Dead to Autzen a number of summers but she's in the business of making yogurt, not producing rock shows. She says her conversations with the University were cordial, but her lack of experience amplified the University's concern.

In 1972 the Creamery did sponsor an outdoor show. The concert offered the music of the Dead and the New Riders and happened in a large field near Veneta. Sue describes the event as a "good time" and it made the Dead want to play under Oregon's sun again. The last four or five years it just hasn't come together.

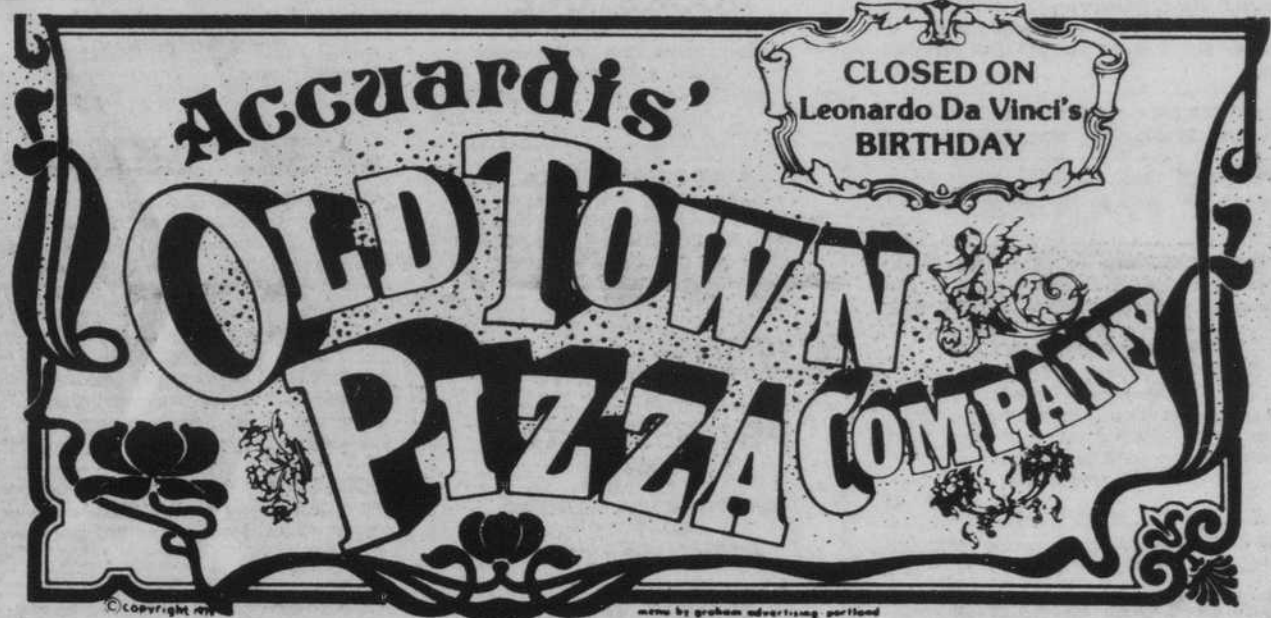
But Sue doesn't see her efforts as a waste.

"The interest that's been expressed in the band coming here over the years is the reason it's happening now."

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