

DEAD

Continued from Page 1

Further, taping bits of Americana with their sound and movie equipment and having what were known as "acid tests." The Grateful Dead, just starting out in San Francisco, were invited to the acid tests, but were not a main attraction.

"The participants were the show," McNally said, "and as Jerry Garcia said, they were free to play or not play."

And so began a bond between Kesey's Merry Pranksters that has survived more than 30 years.

Members of the Kesey family were instrumental in the band coming to Eugene. Kit Kesey, head of Field Trip Productions, a group dedicated to bringing the band to town, has tried to arrange concerts since last year.

Originally the Dead were set to play in Veneta for the third Decadal Field Trip, a once-every-10-years reunion party for the acid test crowd and friends and families. Kit Kesey, who is Ken's nephew, obtained a mass-gathering permit for 40,000 people and built a stage and camping facility to accommodate them at the Oregon Country Fairgrounds.

"I had to work for about a year to make the concert in Veneta happen," Kesey said. And after all of the planning and building

was finished, the concert in Veneta did not happen because lead singer and guitarist Jerry Garcia fell ill and was hospitalized only weeks before the event.

A year before the canceled Field Trip, supporters hoped to book the Grateful Dead to play at Autzen Stadium in 1991. Yet Dan Williams, University vice president for administration, received some letters by community members who opposed the band's return because of a concern about illicit drug use.

Williams did not allow the band to return because he was concerned that a band with a reputation of drug using and selling fans would damage the University's reputation if the Dead were invited to play a concert in a University facility.

But after he received more letters that were angry about the Dead not coming back than letters that were angry that they were coming back, Williams decided to let them return. However, by the time that decision was made, the Grateful Dead had booked other engagements for the date.

"Lots of people think that we get banned, and that's not true," McNally said. "We ban ourselves, meaning, the Dead don't play in places that are too small to accommodate the large minority of Deadheads who don't listen and who will go to a show with no ticket."

If there is a show that seats 60,000, it's

'Going to Eugene is like visiting our country cousins.'

— Dennis McNally, publicist for the Dead

possible that 10,000 people could show up with no ticket, McNally said. That contingent is visible to the public and is perhaps the biggest nuisance for the band and residents of the town alike, especially if there is littering or obvious drug use apparent in the parking lot.

It wasn't always that way. Kit Kesey, who was a senior in high school when the band played in Eugene in 1982 for the second Decadal Field Trip, spoke of a "base Deadhead group" of 15,000. But the fans have become a "perpetual motion machine," Kesey said, and have grown to a base group of 40,000, a number that Kesey said, "dilutes the people who care down."

University archivist Keith Richard said there was community opposition to the band playing in the newly built Hult Center in 1983.

"People were concerned that the Deadheads would destroy the furniture,"

Richard said. "They've never really had a problem except what people imagined would happen."

One thing that opponents have imagined to be a problem is the sale and use of drugs at concerts. And Williams, who said he's enjoyed Grateful Dead concerts himself and has nothing against the band itself, wants to make sure that reality does not live up to imaginings.

In order to ensure that concertgoers are on their best behavior and that there are no problems Aug. 21 and 22, an agreement has been struck involving the promoters, Bill Graham Presents, Field Trip Productions, the University and the Eugene police department.

Field Trip Productions will recruit, train and supervise a 250-member citizens' patrol to create what they call the "Clean Scene." In addition, T-Shirt Security, the company hired by the University athletic department, will be a second security force, and a legal presence will be provided by the EPD.

"I'm not into having an event with my name on it to be a drug sales fair," Kesey said. "In this day and age you have to abide by the laws of the community."

"This event is happening under a microscope," Kesey said. "Best behavior is needed to make this happen again. So be smart and be covert."

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Tiger Trap
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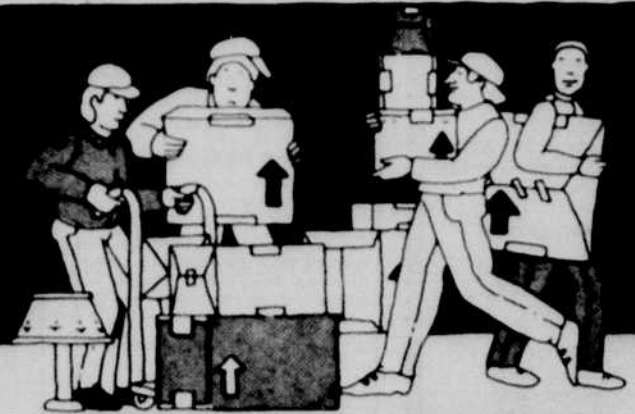
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