

The Dead Will Never Die

SO THE LAWYER SAYS TO THE DEAD-head, "What are you going to do when Jerry dies?"

"I'm gonna go back to college, man!"

For years, it was only a joke — a way to poke fun at the thousands of enraptured souls who, led in song and spirit, interrupted their lives to follow the Grateful Dead.

What will happen to the tie-dyed students of Hamlin now that the Pied Piper has packed up his guitar and, to paraphrase one of his sweetest tunes, gone where the climate suits his clothes?

OFFBEAT

Michelle Striegel, a junior at Guilford College in North Carolina, couldn't even listen to the Grateful Dead after she heard of Jerry Garcia's death.

"I thought it was a cruel joke at first," she says. "Then I was really bummed."

But now that she's gotten over the initial shock of his death and has resumed listening to their music, Striegel says she'll start hitting the books again.

Susan Ranheim, a grad student at the U. of New Orleans, spent a week in a secluded cabin mourning Garcia's death.

"I was bummed when I heard about it," she says. "I wanted to call all my Deadhead friends, but most of them don't have phones."

Any professor in a Dead tour city will attest to the fact that the requests for extensions increased in direct proportion to the approach of concert dates.

Ranheim must have kept her professors guessing. "I ended up spending two weeks in the middle of my junior year following these guys around, making hippie jewelry and selling grilled cheese sandwiches," she says.

Some have suggested that other bands — Phish, for example — will pick up the Dead's following and keep alive the hedonistic life of parking lot parties, veggie burritos and universal kindness. Still, most heads hesitate to suggest that any band, even Phish, could replace the Dead.

"Phish is a followers' band — true — but they're not the Dead," says John Grant, a Tufts U., Mass., senior. "I don't think the following will transfer itself, because it's just not the same experience as going to a Dead show.... You can't duplicate that."

Grant still hangs on to the ticket that will never be. The untorn ticket was for Sept. 19, the last show on the Boston run and what would have been the last concert at Boston Garden before the building was razed.

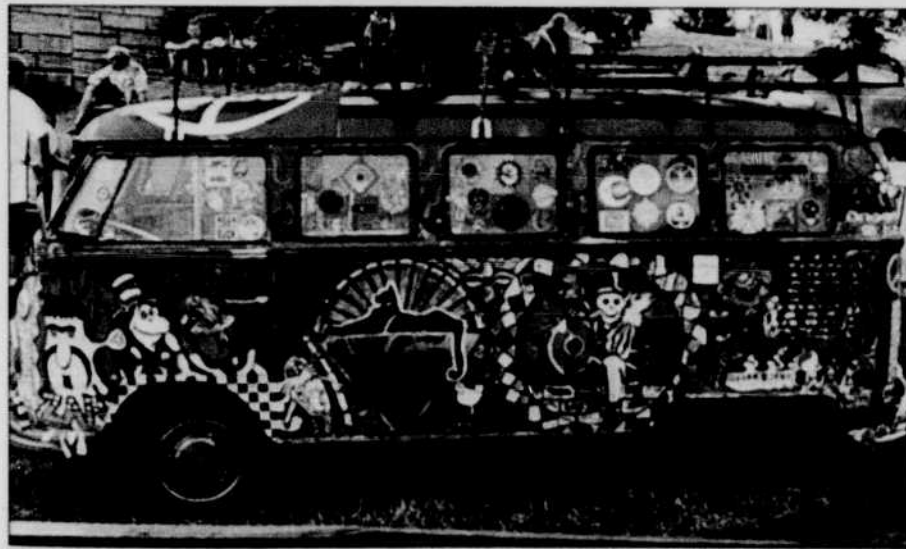
"Jerry made the Dead," says Eustacio Humphrey, a senior at Northeastern U. in Massachusetts. "The Dead can't be a band without Jerry's sound. It was so unique."

Jessica Ruzz, Tufts U./

Photos from the documentary Tie-Dyed



One of Jerry's kids.



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