

Lazy, hazy days of Dead

by Tricia Romano

Deadheads. The Grateful Dead followers have survived twenty-some odd years. They've lasted through a major war and a minor skirmish. They've witnessed racial unrest, nuclear threats and the corruption of government.

They've weathered the storm.

Every year, legions of new, younger Deadheads join the family, and like their predecessors, they are prepared to last as long as the Dead, and then some. These days, the message is no different than it was in 1967. Love your neighbor. Expand your mind. Be real.

Zane Marshall, a 21-year-old sophomore biology major became a fan of the Dead, during last summers' week-

end festivities.

"Some friends talked me into going to the concert and I loved every minute of it," said Marshall.

Marshall doesn't fit the Deadhead stereotypical image. His centimeter short crew cut and his disciplined posture are more telling of his Marine Corps background than of his new found pleasure in the Dead.

Still the military man fit right in the crowd of long-haired, spinning hippies.

"Forty thousand people in one place, just having the best time," he said, shaking his head at the memory.

Another new inductee into the family includes junior English major, Samantha Reza. Her passion for the Dead is more intense. Reza and her boyfriend will be hitting the road for one month for the fall

segment of the tour along the East coast. This will be their first time following the Dead.

Reza admits to being converted to the Dead through her boyfriend, but after her first show experience, she knew that she belonged.

"There was this one guy dancing right in front of me at my first show ever. I was kind of feeling out of place," she explained. "I was kind of thinking, 'What am I doing here?'. This dude just turned around and smiled at me and just faced me and danced, smiling at me for the rest of the show."

It was the general friendly vibe that she felt, that drew Reza and many others just like her in.

"The Dead create an atmosphere where people can be themselves. Anybody who goes to the Dead concert is

just totally free. When you go there, it doesn't matter where you come from or what your background is...." said Reza.

Reza also asserted that it is certainly possible to go to a Dead concert without being under the influence of drugs, but added that drugs add something extra to the experience.

"In any counter-culture group, I think drugs play a role," she said.

"The thing with LSD is that it makes you feel the music. When your straight you just hear it," Reza explained. "The Dead know what their doing. They can tell when their audience is getting hairy. That's what 'space' is all about," she said.

As a five year fan and two-time "Tourhead," Geordie Gilbrook can consider himself a veteran. Having traveled with the Dead for two summers in a row, he knows what it's like to bum rides, hope for the "miracle ticket," and deal with

getting food on a day to day basis.

Gilbrook made a living, like many other followers, by selling jewelry at the shows. On a good weekend he made between \$100 and 300.

"The 'Weekend Warrior' hippies, the people who are hippies for a day, that's where you make all your money from," said Gilbrook.

With his bleached blonde hair, oversize jeans and T-shirt, Gilbrook more resembles a skater-punk than a peace-loving Deadhead. He looks hard-core. Only, his face betrays him. He possesses a "What me, worry?" look about him, a sure sign of the Deadhead legacy.

He does, however, admit to the somewhat trying times of traveling with the Dead.

"It was a really flaky experience. It was a flaky existence," he said of his travels. "You'd be hanging out with people for a week or two, and then it would be on to the next school bus or the next van," said Gilbrook.

Gilbrook acknowledged his occasional pangs of loneliness.

"You can get lonely, but not really, because there was always someone to talk to," said Gilbrook.

It was this kindness that has kept him going. This summer, he will be on the road, once again.

"It kind of gives you hope that there is actually real good people left."

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