

ROARSHOCK PAGE

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In what, so far, must be known as an eccentric year, it may be too late for a June swoon. As the new roars and rattles through, also many important anniversaries are re-remembered. ROARSHOCK PAGE recalls 40+ years being followed around by the Grateful Dead. Yeah. Those guys!

JUST EXACTLY RIGHT BROTHERS BAND

It was Thursday, June 9, 1977 and I was hanging out in Berkeley with my phriend Phred Phalona, and he said, "Enough of this stalling. Everyone already knows you're a Dead Head so you better start going to their shows, starting tonight, you are going with me to Winterland." I tried to bow out. "I'm just not really into going to concerts." I said. "Besides I have to get back home to Martinez tonight." "No." Phred declared. "You are going to Winterland tonight to the Grateful Dead concert. You can stay at my house afterwards. Call your mom and tell her you won't be home tonight." So I called my mom and told her I was going to a concert that night in San Francisco and then staying the night at Phred's house. We would go direct from there to our high school on Friday morning. We walked downtown to Shattuck Avenue where we got on BART and rode to downtown San Francisco. On Market Street we boarded the 38-line MUNI bus and rode uptown to Geary and Steiner, passed the Fillmore Auditorium looming mothballed and shadowy at the corner of Geary and Fillmore Street. Next door was a marvelous looking building the history of which I did not know at the time. Originally, it had been the Beth Israel Synagogue, and later morphed into the Albert Pike Memorial Scottish Rite Temple. When I saw it that evening in 1977 the building was home to the Peoples Temple under its charismatic leader the Rev. Jim Jones — His career and his movement at that time at their zenith. Only 18 months later, he and his followers met their horrible doom, the Apocalypse of the Peoples Temple far away in South America in the jungles of Guyana. Over 900 people would die by murder/suicide in a sublime example of extreme megalomania and paranoia. They died by drinking poison Kool-Aid, and their lasting legacy ironically became the phrase "Drinking the Kool-Aid," meaning any person or group that goes along with a doomed or dangerous idea mainly due to peer pressure. Of course, another and unarguably more humanly positive meaning for the phrase

"Drinking the Kool-Aid" could be in reference to the legendary Acid Tests of the middle 1960s (including one at the Fillmore Auditorium) where was provided "Electric Kool-Aid" (spiked with legal LSD) served up out of great barrels. The Merry Pranksters were the group behind this and the Grateful Dead were the house band. Some egos may have died after drinking that Kool-Aid, many minds undoubtedly warped and culture was irreversibly altered (Sure enough the dominate cultural narrative would come to equate Kool-Aid drinking with pitiful paranoid death ahead of hedonistic, musical, mythical, mind-expansion). The old temple building was heavily damaged in the earthquake of 1989, torn down and replaced with a branch of the United States Post Office. Next building on that block was Meaders Cleaners, where I had no idea that years later I'd be running errands for the poet Margo Skinner. In June 1977, I never considered what actually came to pass, which was that I moved directly into San Francisco to live there for many decades. The Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet (which remained open at that location until 2015) ended the block and an elevated pedestrian walkway crossed Geary to the north side of the street. There was a grassy medium in the center of Geary Boulevard and two hippies were sitting there eating Kentucky Fried Chicken out of paper containers. Phred and I turned down Steiner and walked the block to Post Street and there we saw Winterland waiting for us. This was less than an hour before show time and there were not very many people hanging around out front, most had already gone inside. We approached the box office window, each of us paid \$7⁵⁰ for a ticket, and then we also went inside the old ice rink turned dance hall and rock-n-roll palace. It was warm inside and the big room smelled sweet with the heavy scent of marijuana. A large mirror ball was suspended from the center of the high ceiling. Phred guided us to a spot near the back of the floor and we settled in to observe the scene. The atmosphere buzzed in anticipation of the start of the show, many voices murmuring together as one voice in growing excitement. As the house lights dropped, Phred pulled out a joint and sparked it up. We passed the joint, getting higher and higher, as the band came out on stage and the crowd roared its adoring greetings. Phred pointed out the different musicians on the stage. All through the evening he provided a thumbnail description of the ways of Grateful Dead concerts, the Dead Head customs and show rituals, with a running commentary on the band,

what was typical and what was unusual in the performance that night. They tuned up and noodled, then Bob Weir announced he had been told everything was just exactly right and they could play. Jerry Garcia stepped up to the mike as they broke into *Mississippi Half-Step Uptown Todeloo* which just so happened to be the opening track from the first Grateful Dead record I ever bought, fished from the 50¢ bins at original Rasputin's Records, Telegraph Avenue & Durant, Berkeley...

BONG! That June, *The Grateful Dead Movie* (filmed at Winterland) had been released and *Terrapin Station*, the album, would be released that July. The San Francisco Chronicle ran a big article on the Dead. Everybody around us was hooting and hollering and bouncing about with big happy grins, hair all frizzled out from static electricity. The energy from everyone blasting off to eternity on that Thursday night at Winterland. Phred delighting in Phil's BOMBS and shouting, "Hart's drumming in turned *way* up!" I remarked, this would be an amazing place to drop LSD." "Oh! We could have brought some with us!" Phred looked concerned. My reply, Oh, not necessary! Everything is just exactly right." The band was playing full-tilt ahead. When Donna Godchaux started singing *Sunrise* about half way through the first set, Phred motioned and muttered that this was our queue to walk around. We went out in the hall and then upstairs where we peered into the balcony bathed in bluish light and reflections off the mirror ball refracting further. The Grateful Dead continued raging through the first set. We checked out the upstairs tee shirt stand and there were some nice ones, but I didn't have enough money to buy any. Down the narrow hall we passed the bar, but we were too young to go into the bar. So back downstairs and onto the floor where we remained for the duration of the show, which was quite a long duration of crescendo after crescendo of mighty sounds. When at last the encores came, Jerry did a Chuck Berry style Duck Walk on the stage. The crowd howled. Phred turned to me in delighted laughter and said, "He *never* does stuff like that! He usually just *stands* there and plays!" Eventually, unbelievably, the show was really over and we all poured out onto the street. Phred and I jumped on the 38 bus back downtown to the old Transbay Terminal where we met up with some other fellows also coming back from the show. One guy's sister was our classmate and we knew them all from parties and good times in the South Berkeley/North Oakland scene of that day and age. It was too late for BART, so we had to take a late night AC Transit bus across the Bay Bridge to Berkeley. We walked from the bus stop to Phred's house and got a few hours sleep before rising early Friday morning, and grabbing big paper cups of coffee on our walk to high school. I didn't feel at all tired. I was 16 and energized, and embarked on a participatory activity with a group that would continue to have a large influence on the ongoing meanings and directions in my life.

— D. A. Wilson

JUNE ALMANAC

- 06/01 1857 Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* was published.
- 06/02 2006 Vince Welnick died.
- 06/05 1933 U.S. Congress abrogated U.S.' use of the gold standard, enacting a joint resolution nullifying rights of creditors to demand payment in gold.
- 06/09 1977 Grateful Dead @ Winterland, SF, CA.
- 2017 FULL STRAWBERRY MOON
- 06/13 1865 W. B. Yeats, poet and playwright, born.
- 06/14 1789 Whiskey distilled from maize was first produced by the Rev Elijah Craig in Bourbon County, Kentucky.
- 06/15 1648 Margaret Jones was hanged in Boston for witchcraft - the first such execution in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 06/16 1904 James Joyce first date with Nora Barnacle in Dublin (Bloomsday).
- 06/21 2017 SUMMER SOLSTICE NORTH EARTH
- 06/22 1870 United States Department of Justice was created by the U.S. Congress.
- 1942 The Pledge of Allegiance was formally adopted by U.S. Congress.
- 06/23 2017 NEW MOON
- 06/26 1945 The United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco.
- 06/27 1869 Emma Goldman, philosopher, was born.
- 06/28 1964 Malcolm X formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity.
- 1969 Stonewall riots began in New York City.
- 06/29 1975 Steve Wozniak tested the first prototype of his Apple I computer.
- 2007 Apple Inc. released its first iPhone.

<http://roarshock.net/june.html>

Calling for Contributions! ROARSHOCK PAGE invites submissions of art, photographs, poetry, and micro-prose, to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

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