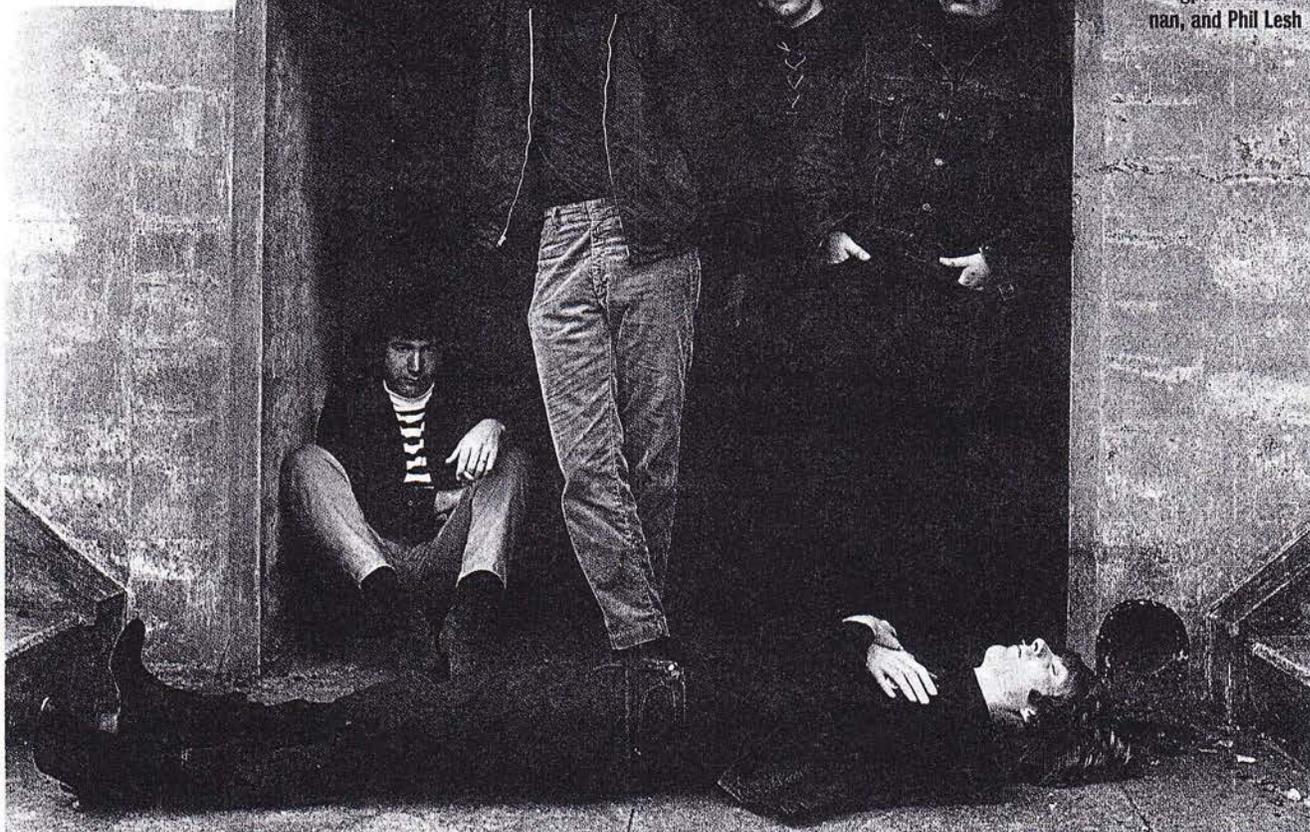


SPASSING

EDITORS MAY BE FINISHED
 BY THE END OF THE YEAR, BUT NOT
 MONTHS, BY BOTH.



RAISING THE DEAD
 Clockwise from left:
 Garcia, Bill Kreutz-
 mann, Bob Weir, Ron
 "Pigpen" McKernan,
 and Phil Lesh

Touch of Great

The first authorized biography of the Grateful Dead respectfully exhumes their skeletons from the closet. by Rob Brunner

MOST PEOPLE WHO love good music hate the Grateful Dead. They're wrong, of course, but it isn't hard to see their point. A flawed band even at its best, the Dead was capable of maddening laziness and ineptitude. Then there were the hardcore fans, a certain highly visible segment of whom formed an irksomely conformist cult composed mostly of obsessives and dysfunctionals.

But as many folks with open ears and an affection for eccen-

tricity know, the Dead frequently reached astonishing musical peaks. Jerry Garcia was—avert your eyes, music snobs—rock's greatest guitar improviser, and the band wrote innumerable songs of great beauty and joy.

To Dennis McNally's credit,

A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead manages to capture the entirety of the complex organism that was the Grateful Dead. A longtime Deadhead and the

group's publicist since the '80s, McNally is a band-trusted insider who is, therefore, a somewhat untrustworthy reporter. Fortunately, he doesn't dodge the tough stuff. The band—and its extended cast of family, friends, and crew members—

comes across as pretty erratic: smart, curious, generous, witty, paranoid, jealous, petty, and ill-tempered. "It amazed everybody," McNally quotes ex-keyboardist Tom Constanten saying,

"that anything happened, because there was so much sniping going on."

McNally also details the Dead's horrifyingly prodigious drug and alcohol intake, which early on involved a lot of LSD and later led some to cocaine and heroin. (Three members died from substance abuse or drug-intensified illnesses.) And unlike most sympathetic chroniclers of the Dead phenomenon, McNally resists romanticizing the caravan of partiers more attracted to the scene than the songs. "Dead Heads were not paragons," he writes. "An... annoying example of obliviousness came with every performance of 'Black Muddy River.' Night after night, Garcia would depict the agonizing 'dark night of the soul' as he sang, 'When it seems like the night will last forever,' and some Dead Heads would

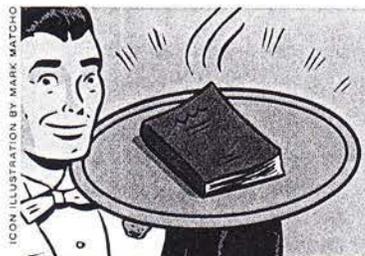
**A Long
 Strange Trip**

BY DENNIS
 McNALLY

\$30
 BROADWAY

Between the Lines

The inside scoop on the book world



NEW in Paperback

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire J.K. Rowling (Scholastic, \$8.99, first published in 2000) A magical boy wizard battles a wicked lord in the fourth book of an ongoing series that you may have heard of.

Leonard Maltin's 2003 Movie & Video Guide (Signet, \$8.99) Spider-Man gets two and a half stars and Jurassic Park III gets three? Leonard, what are you and your indispensable film reference thinking?

choose to cheer it as a reference to an unending party."

McNally's greatest achievement is untangling the Dead's knotty history. The band—then known as the Warlocks—played its first gig in 1965 and soon adopted the moniker the Grateful Dead (good thing they didn't go with Garcia's suggestion, the Mythical Ethical Icicle Tricycle). They quickly developed into a sort of house band for the hippie LSD parties known as acid tests.

At this point *Trip* briefly loses its way. McNally devotes far too much space to pre-Summer of Love San Francisco, cranking out page after page about the goofy antics of scenesters both bored and stoned. This is well-trodden territory (see Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*), and most of these anecdotes lack snap, filtered as they are through memories made hazy by time and LSD.

No doubt the Dead and their acid-scrambled friends had some giggles, but nearly 40 years later it's hard to share in the hilarity. Jefferson Airplane's light-show operator projected a film of fire onto the Dead's house, to pick one example, and a cohort shouted, "Fire!" "The occupants of 710 came flying onto Ashbury Street," McNally writes, "got the joke, and enjoyed themselves." Not so the reader. This is a crucial period in the band's development, of course, but the Dead's musical output from this era is, for the most part, not the stuff beloved by fans, and the book is more than half gone before it reaches 1970.

Over the next decade, the Dead would mature as songwriters and improvisers. They became the first rock band signed by Warner Bros.; released 13 studio albums; and played at both Woodstock and the pyramids. In the '80s they even scored a top 10 hit with "Touch of Grey." (Garcia's response? "I am appalled.") In 1995, Garcia died, and the Dead stopped touring. His descent into drugs and diabetes is profoundly sad, and unsparingly chronicled.

A lot of this will be old hat to serious fans, but *Trip* is the most comprehensive and reliable account out there, and it's nice to have it all in simple English without the dippiness that often mars Dead-related writing (one Garcia bio actually attached his astrological chart as an appendix). Like the Dead, *Trip* is imperfect, but McNally has documented this odd corner of the rock world with a lot of love and no less insight. **B+**

>> GETTING HIS KICKS ON 66 Filmmaker Barry Levinson, most fondly remembered for his Baltimore-set films *Diner* and *Tin Men*, is turning to a new medium to showcase his talent for dialogue: the novel. Tentatively titled *66*, his publishing debut is "a coming-of-age novel in the vein of his Baltimore movies," says Random House Inc. editor at large Peter Gethers, who will release the book next year under the Broadway imprint. The story, about a group of friends coming to grips with Vietnam and the counterculture, "is understated like his movies," adds Gethers, "but it's very much a novel."

>> BOW WOW! Before she wrote her own book—*Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports From My Life With Autism*—Temple Grandin was one of the subjects of Oliver Sacks' *An Anthropologist on Mars*, a collection of case studies on "differently brained" people. Now Grandin, who has a Ph.D. in animal science, is putting her different way of thinking to use in *Talking to Animals*, which attempts to decode animal intelligence and behavior. "What Oliver Sacks does in describing people like Temple, Temple does [in describing] animal feeling," says Grandin's agent, Betsy Lerner, who sold the book to Scribner for \$600,000, according to a source.

>> BEAUS ARTS Finding Mr. Right, and figuring out who the Messrs. Wrong are, has been a plot device since before Jane Austen. But journalist Susan Shapiro is putting a new twist on the old formula: She's tracked down her ex-flames to find out why they weren't right—and why her current husband is. "Every woman...will recognize one of her ex-boyfriends in these pages," says Bantam Dell senior editor Danielle Perez, who acquired *The Five Men Who Broke My Heart* (tentatively scheduled for next year).

>> HOT STUFF Disco diva Donna Summer has gone from churchgoing Boston girl to five-time Grammy winner to semiprivate citizen, and now she's writing all about it. "There's more mystery to her life than people realize," says Random House exec editor Jonathan Karp, who will publish the book under Villard next year. "And we know she'll work hard for the money." —Matthew Flamm

SUMMER'S HERE The singer tells her life story

