

Standing on the Moon
“But I would rather be with you...”
By Jill Matlow, Wall Street Dead aHead Family Member



Photo courtesy of pixabay.com

I knew something was wrong that day. I was sitting in my office at The Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia when I heard “Terrapin Station” being played on my radio. I was listening to WMMR, and it was no secret that Pierre Roberts, the beloved DJ, was a huge fan of The Grateful Dead and often played Grateful Dead music.

But this time was different. For those not in the know, “Terrapin Station” is over 15 minutes long. Not a song they would typically play on the station. When the song ended, Pierre Roberts came on the radio announcing the devastating news that would change Deadheads forever.

It was August 9, 1995. The day Jerry Garcia died.

Having been to my first Dead show in 1982, I was certainly not ready to “get off the bus” which I boarded so many years ago. And this seemed to be the sentiment shared by most Deadheads upon hearing this news. It was as though someone had turned out the lights that day and we all sat in darkness. We weren’t ready to let go yet.

I spent the next few years seeking out any and all Dead-related bands I could hear, while still taking comfort in knowing that some of the other members of the Dead were still touring. But it wasn't the same without Jerry on stage, and I was also missing a lot of the camaraderie I felt at shows and beyond.

That all changed in 2015 when I found out about Wall Street Dead aHead Networking Events® (WSDaH). Deborah Solomon, the founder of WSDaH, is the quintessential Deadhead. She identified a need to bring Deadheads together to continue the magic that Jerry started so many moons ago. What makes WSDaH so special is that we can all come together at various events and online throughout the year to share our love of Jerry Garcia and The Grateful Dead.

But the beauty of WSDaH is that we don't all come together to just talk about the music, even though that is a huge part. Deb has successfully 'recruited' Family members with different professions from all around the world and we are able to support each other both personally and professionally. Friendships and business dealings have been forged thanks to WSDaH.

To quote Jerry: *"There's a lot there to enlarge you. That's part of the value of being in an extended family is that it enlarges you. It makes you bigger. It makes you more"*

That has definitely been my experience as a Family member with WSDaH over the years. I've met so many wonderful people, whose paths I might never have crossed, even if we attended the same shows. It's added so much richness to my life. We all collectively mourned Jerry's death 25 years ago, but today I know my fellow WSDaH Family members are so grateful that we are able to keep the magic alive just by being together.

Here's what some Family members had to say about where they were on that fateful day, 25 years ago...

"Unbroken chain of you and me"

"The news of Jerry's death came from a salesperson I was managing in a busy and overcrowded office in NYC. In that environment, I couldn't react to this profound loss, but honestly wasn't surprised to learn of his passing. I'd known Jerry was in rehab and we'd almost lost him before in 1986. He hadn't exactly treated his body like a temple then or since.

In my years following the Grateful Dead, I'd seen over 100 concerts, including those we'd hosted personally during my college concert board years. Hard to pick a favorite, but loved the shows after the release of Blues for Allah in 1976, the Terrapin Station tour of 1977, especially Ithaca and Boston Music Hall, and the 15th Anniversary concert at Folsom Field in Boulder in 1980. Never saw Pigpen live, but did see every keyboardist from Keith Godchaux on and was also missing Donna when she left the band. Loved being on the road and meeting people, both familiar and new, along the way. Every trip was an adventure and no concerts were ever the same.

However, the music stopped for me with Jerry's passing. With Jerry gone and Phil departing, I took a hiatus, only occasionally catching Phil. Pitched my pile of set lists and went on with life, intently focused on business and family. Continued traveling and my career in enterprise technology sales took me to almost every city and State. Business was all consuming. I've sold computer software, business process outsourcing, software as a service, and have consulted. Today, I use my experience in the Fortune 500 space to help mid-sized and smaller organizations use technology to save money, improve efficiencies, and drive business.

Definitely gained confidence by being a stranger 'stoppin' strangers just to shake their hand' and lessons learned following The Dead carried over to my professional life. Life on the road made me more agile and adept at solving problems. Caring about others is a core Deadhead value and meeting so many people made me a better listener. When people know you have their best interest at heart and are vested in their happiness and success, they want to collaborate.

Came back to the Grateful Dead fold in July 2015 for the Fare Thee Well Tour at Chicago's Soldier Field with Weir, Lesh, Kreutzmann, and Hart all together again. Jeff Chimenti played keyboards, Bruce Hornsby returned, and of course Trey Anastasio played lead guitar. I'd been a fan for 40 of those 50 years and wouldn't have missed it for the world. No coincidence that I joined Wall Street Dead aHead that same year which opened the door to me meeting fellow professional Deadheads from all walks of life. Now I am back seeing Dead & Company shows and the music that brought us together has created an 'unbroken chain of you and me'. Jam on my friends."

[Ellen Mednikoff](#), IT Advisor, Vice President, [The Avail Group](#)

"Nothing left to do but smile, smile, smile"

"From the first note I heard on Live-Dead in the summer of 1970, to my first live show August 1974, through today, the musical journey that started so long ago has been a source of focus and equilibrium. The Dead have provided an endless link to a musical community—an extended family of sorts—united by a shared love for the Dead. Every so often, I stop, listen to the music, and envision Jerry's smile. You know the one: it tells us that everything is alright as we hear the live tune, studio or cover rendition that suits any scenario. In these and other moments, Jerry's memory is invoked as if part of one long jam.

When the calls started to come in on August 9th asking 'Did you hear?', we gave voice to the disbelief in our mind and shock in our hearts. It was as if each of us unexpectedly lost a family member. In the following days, I realized that the message, music and community he created during his lifetime would live on in those of us whom he touched. I understood that Jerry was not gone, and that we all had the opportunity to continue on our Jerry journey.

Working in financial and other industry staffing and support, I have a broad network. Given my lifelong passion for music, particularly the music of Jerry Garcia, WSDaH Family members are always surprised when they find out that I have been a WSDaH Family member for less than two years. It surprises me, too! Someone once told me that there is nothing like a Dead show. Similarly, there is nothing like a WSDaH gathering. From my first conversation (interview) with Deb, I knew that WSDaH was unique. What else could one expect when you bring together passionate entrepreneurs, executives, artists, musicians, and professionals who grew up with Jerry's messages?

I look forward to reconnecting with those who I already know, as well as the opportunity to greet new friends at WSDaH. Once you're in the door, you aren't a stranger, just someone the rest of us have yet to get to know. Where else can you find a networking group where every conversation starts with the implied question 'What can I do for you?' Having successfully networked to do business with some WSDaH Family members, and assisted others with their own needs, I have found that WSDaH captures Jerry's socially-focused spirit in a positive, dynamic, and musical manner. WSDaH embodies Jerry's message that, collectively, we can make a difference in each other's lives, while protecting and making our planet a better place.

As fans of the Dead, we know that the jam continues through us all. For me, as I reflect back 25 years and beyond, I know that a piece of Jerry is in all of us. We work, play, enjoy, suffer, celebrate, and even jam together, with Jerry never far from mind, and every once in a while, we even smile that Jerry smile."

[Howard Ross](#), Senior Vice President, [The Panther Group](#)

“Fare Thee Well”

“I received the news of Jerry’s passing from my mother. I was working in Atlanta for a Japanese Bank at the time. No cell phones/emails/texts/tweets/FB. To receive a call at work back then was almost an emergency situation alert, which went through my head when it was announced my mother was on the phone. She simply said: ‘I’m sorry to share the news but Jerry has died’. I was stunned. I had just been in Chicago for his last shows. The rest of the day was a blur. I know conversations were had, friends phoned and sadness filled our hearts. I was young and wanted more time with the band, more music and more of the adventure.

My first shows were at Alpine Valley in 1989 which is now known as Downhill from Here. They were magical and I was enamored. I was fortunate to catch shows along the way with my family and friends. July 1995 with Sting was a favorite run. The Strip to Silver Bowl and back alone was a playground forever seared in my heart. We always sat on Jerry’s side. The Phil Zone appreciation came later in life.

Although the music never stopped, life took me in a different direction and the music of the Grateful Dead was a treat I grabbed when I had time to myself. I was back on the East Coast and my then partner was deep into a different music scene as a musician. Occasionally I could get in some GD. I did have outlets with the Allmans, Widespread Panic and Phish, but nothing filled my soul like a Dead show with Jerry.

I grabbed some Furthur and Ratdog along the way which helped bring that taste but it was Fare Thee Well that brought me fully home. Reunited with my best friend, who I had been at Jerry’s last show with, was an energy and connection I do not have words to describe. That magic opened me up and lightness was restored. The beauty of the music and the community and my family kept growing. I went back to go forward. WSDaH popped up in my sight and Deb and everyone else opened even more connections, music and opportunities. I am grateful for the business and for the pureness of this group. I miss the jam sessions!

I have learned so much from the family and I continue to learn. In our current situation of so many unknowns, I know the music will never stop. Thank you for keeping us together with all the creative outlets and streams. Thank you Jerry and the Grateful Dead for being part of this journey. My appreciation grows stronger as ‘The Wheel’ continues to turn.”

[Constance Houghton](#), Global Real Estate Advisor, [Engel & Völkers NYC](#)

“Such a long long time to be gone and a short time to be there”

“August 9, 1995 is an important date in Grateful Dead history. Most Deadheads know where they were and what they were doing when they got the news. Every year social media lights up with stories of that misfortune.

That Wednesday started out a little differently than most days for my wife and me. After dropping our son off at his daycare, we proceeded to the hospital, where we had a scheduled appointment for a Cesarean section. The procedure went smoothly and once again I marveled at the miracle of birth - we now had a daughter. My wife and baby were doing fine.

I went with my daughter upstairs to the neonatal unit to be settled into, then returned to see my wife in the recovery room. I walked to my wife’s bedside and she said to me, ‘I have some horrible news for you’. My mind raced, what was wrong with my wife or daughter? She continued, ‘Jerry Garcia died, I heard it on the radio’.

Shocked, I thought to myself, well that is not as bad as whatever I thought you were going to tell me. Still under the effects of the anesthesia, she asked me if I wanted to name our daughter after Jerry. She suggested Sugar Magnolia or Scarlet Begonias. I really liked the name we had picked out if it was a girl, Corley - named after my wife's grandfather's family from Ireland. Corleys on the Crossing was the town they were originally from in Ireland.

Later that day, I started to call my friends to share the good news. Almost every conversation went the same way, my friends would cut me off and say, 'Have you heard the news? Jerry died'. They would go on and on about the last time we saw The Grateful Dead together and reminisced about the fun times we had shared. When they stopped talking and I was able to get a word in edgewise, I would finally tell them the good news, my daughter had arrived, and both mother and child were doing well. In their grief they had forgotten about when we were expecting. Many commented on the cosmic nature of one soul leaving and another soul arriving. Analogies to 'The Wheel' were common.

For many years after Jerry's death, I sought out a business oriented Grateful Dead social group and then finally found the Wall Street Dead aHead group on LinkedIn. I was thrilled to speak with Deborah Solomon who emphasized the networking opportunities that WSDaH creates. My business is very niche as we specialize in Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). I was hesitant to join WSDaH initially thinking who in the group could possibly need our services? I went to the WSDaH meet up at CitiField in June of 2019 and was very happy to meet so many new friends.

I was finally able to attend the WSDaH annual event in October 2019. And what a great event and good time it was! So many friendly faces. As it would turn out, 2 of the people I met that night knew what EDI was and used it in their businesses. I left the event brimming with excitement for the next.

When I was considering joining the WSDaH group, Deb pointed out to me that although there may not be many in the group who need my technical and business expertise, there were still opportunities to network. That maybe they would know someone who does need my services. Time will tell, but I will take this opportunity to network for my daughter. As an economic victim of the Covid19 pandemic, she has lost her job and is looking for one in Production/Development in the TV/Film industries. Business is always better when it is with another Deadhead!"

[Todd Miller](#), President, [The Camry Group, Inc.](#)

As we reflect on 2020 coming to an end, we realize that the sadness from 25 years ago might never go away, but I think in our hearts, we all feel that Jerry is looking down at us from above:

"Standing on the moon, with nothing left to do, a lovely view of heaven, but I'd rather be with you"

And we'd rather be with you too Jerry.