

# Merlefest Adventure



EVERYONE NEEDS A SANDCASTLE masterpiece at a music festival.

I found myself, with the help of friend Robert Brown, backstage in Doc Watson's private dressing room. Doc is my personal favorite writer, singer and musician at the festival, or maybe in the world, and lucky for me, a personal friend of Robert's. I was star-struck from 40 rows back the day before, so being next to him and his good friend Dr. Jim Rouse of Tennessee as they prepared the next set, put me in a tizzy.

Photographs of Doc with every respected musician imaginable, taken by Robert Brown, cover the walls of the legend's dressing room. I could have stayed

there for the remaining days of the festival but understood they needed some privacy and stepped into the hall.

I was lucky enough to get to talk with Earl Scruggs who let me take his photo and couldn't have been nicer. I was just awed that these people, who I have enjoyed my whole life, were so gracious and open.

I felt that my good fortune was surely overflowing and would have been happy to go back and enjoy these masters from the audience when I thought about my three beautiful nieces and how they were counting on me.

On my way out I noticed a "roadie" standing in the hall holding what I cleverly decided was Vince Gill's mandolin, so I sprang into action.

"Have you seen Vince Gill," I asked him as a well-versed reporter should.

He said he had.

"Do you play with him?" I asked with hope growing for my nieces' autograph possibilities.

He said he did.

"Do you think you can help me get his autograph?" I persisted.

"You really like him do you?" he asked me, just to be sure it would be worth his while to hunt Vince down, I suspected.

I told him yes, he was one of my favorites and so he asked for my photos and pen. Thank goodness I was such a prepared reporter and had it all together.

He then took the photos out of the manila envelope, signed them and said, "So you really do like me, huh?"

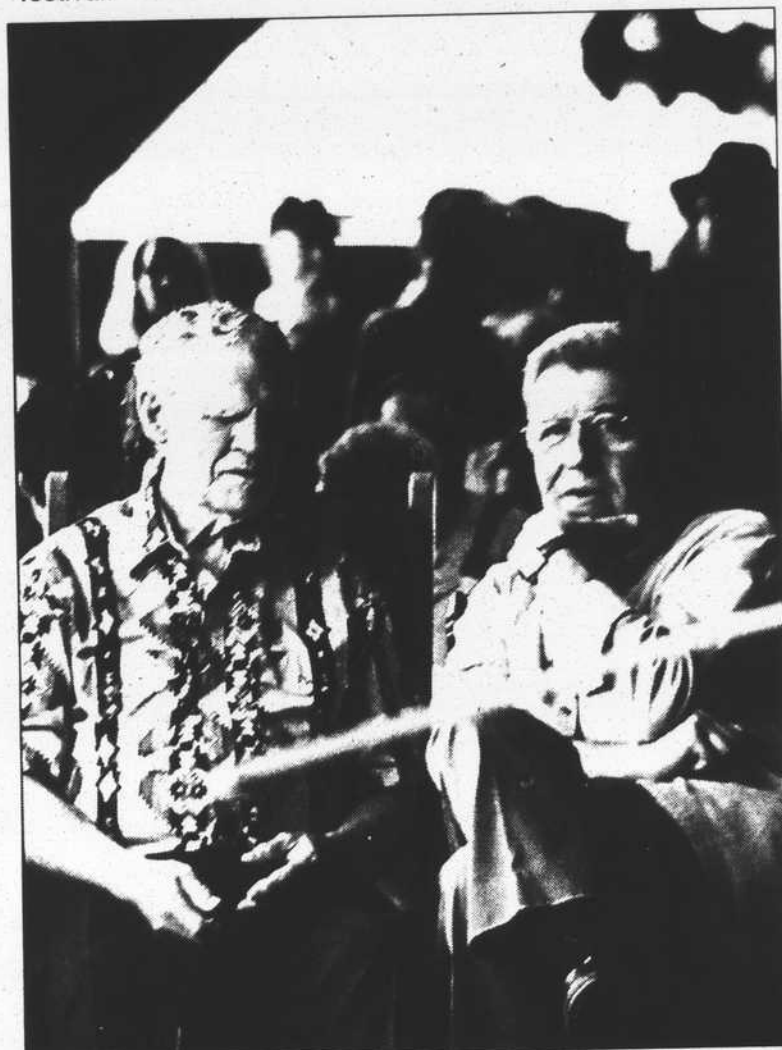
"Well, uh...duh..." I said with finesse.

Next time, along with my mission, my pen, camera and my writing pad- I'll research my subject a bit more.

I can report that Vince Gill has a very good sense of humor, even at my expense.

After graciously autographing all three photos and a bit more teasing, he took to the stage in his T-shirt and jeans and played some mighty fine tunes.

In all my excitement - I know it would really matter to my new pal Vince, I never got to tell him that I really do like him- especially now!



DOC WATSON LISTENS to Patty Loveless with his friend Dr. Jim Rouse.



EVEN THOUGH IT WAS pouring rain, Rosanne Cash drew a large crowd of new and old fans.



DOC GETS down to work.



DOC WATSON TAPS to the tune his good friend Dr. Jim Rouse has written in memory of Doc's son Merle.



EARL SCRUGGS HAD THE CROWD ON THEIR FEET when he played his famous theme from The Beverly Hillbillies.



ROBERT BROWN, official photographer for MerleFest, stands next to some of the photographs he has taken over the years. The outfit is one Merle Watson wore often while performing.



THE CROWD as seen from the stage.



VINCE GILL IN ASPEN with Leah, Becky and Kate Dillsaver. He was gracious enough to sign a photo for each of the girls at MerleFest.



PATTY LOVELESS and her band perform on the main stage.

Maggie Shoobridge/CITIZEN