

ENCORE!

The Oregon Daily Emerald's Entertainment Guide

Ex-Merry Prankster to recount '60s trip

By Layne Lakefish
Encore Reporter

The '60s live on in many minds. They were years of spirit, character, mystery and freedom, and the feeling of those years never died.

Now, in 1990, a glimpse back in time to that still-alive decade, may help the people of today to deal with the problems of today, said Ken Babbs, one of the Merry Pranksters of the 1960s.

In this spirit, Babbs will present the multi-media show *On the Bus*, which tells the story of Neal Cassady, one of the famous psychedelic folk heroes of the '60s. The show will take place at 8 tonight in the EMU Fir Room.

In the '60s, a bunch of literary men got together and decided to drive across the country in a van they appropriately named *Further*, because of the "Destination: Further" sign in the window. This group later became known as the Merry Pranksters, and among them was the famous Cassady.

"They were a group of poets and writers who were experimenting with psychedelic drugs and collaborating with each other and various other things," explained Michael Dieli, performing arts coordinator for the EMU Cultural Forum, sponsor of the show. "Cassady was one of the real movers behind the trip."

Babbs' show will make use of lecture, slides, film footage of the Merry Pranksters' road trip, music and a question and answer period to close out the presentation.

"People really want to know what actually went down then (the '60s)," Babbs said. "There's been a resurgence of interest."

Dieli said the show will be of interest to many people. "It will generate a lot of interest on campus because people are still interested in what happened in the '60s, and Babbs relates it in a real and accurate way because he was there," Dieli explained.

Why present a show about the '60s in the '90s? "The spirit alive in the '60s — freedom,



Courtesy photo

Ken Babbs, shown here in 1964, will present "On the Bus," a multi-media show detailing the story of psychedelic folk hero Neal Cassady, one of the Merry Pranksters.

joy, cooperation — is a spirit that's still alive in the '90s," Babbs explained.

"The secret is still the same today for how to get people together without all the confrontational stuff," he said. "Cassady had the ability to handle things in a positive way and that is the spirit we're still working for now in the '90s."

The story behind the Merry Pranksters, the road trip and the life of Neal Cassady promises to offer help and hope to the people of today. "Babbs wants to talk about how all that happened in the '60s relates to the youth of today," Dieli said.

The Merry Pranksters were a

group of men who did drugs, lived through the wild '60s and came out of it with impressive success.

"The people that were on that road trip are now doing phenomenal work," added Dieli, referring to the literary successes of both Babbs and Kesey.

"We were never alienated," explained Babbs. "We were given the freedom to move through all segments of society. Maybe you take drugs, but the you, the real you, is still alive and the drugs don't destroy that."

Babbs show will retell the

happenings and the lifestyles of the '60s and tie the spirit that was alive in the '60s to the spirit that is coming back in the '90s.

"The show will be entertaining with the music from the '60s," said Dieli. "The film coverage is really wild, as well as how they pulled this bus trip off. Babbs is a storyteller and he's good at it. And, on top of that, there will be a question and answer period at the end, so it will be really informative too."

Tickets are \$5 students and \$6 general and can be purchased at the EMU Main Desk.

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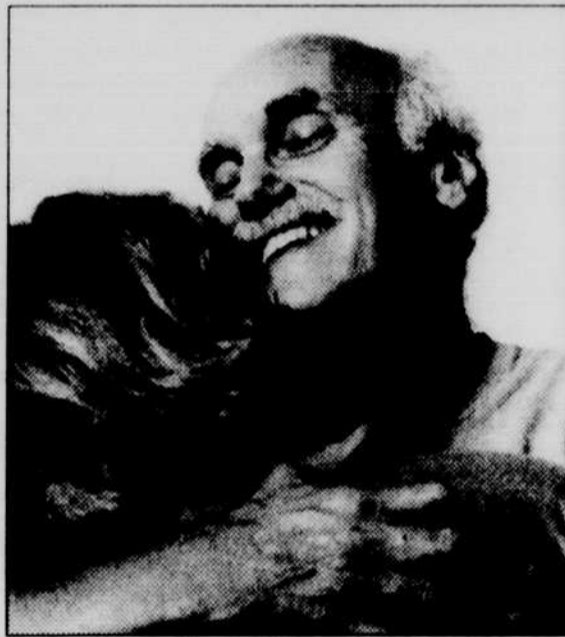
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