

ARTS



File photo

Ken Babbs, author of 'On the Bus,' a collaborative book about the '60s counter-culture in San Francisco, will read from the book this afternoon at 2 and 4 in the EMU Ben Linder Room.



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Author promotes book

By Dave McMechan
Emerald Contributor

"Intrepid Traveler" Ken Babbs will be on campus this afternoon, reading from and signing copies of the new book *On the Bus*, a collaborative, historical documentary of the San Francisco counter-culture movement of the mid-1960s.

The event will take place in the EMU Ben Linder Room at 2 p.m. and again at 4 p.m.

Babbs, a writer, farmer and Merry Prankster, is the author of the "Flashbacks" chapters in *On the Bus*. He gives first-hand accounts of the metaphysical hijinks of legendary car and bus driver Neal Cassidy.

During the '60s, Babbs helped orchestrate several "acid tests" with the Grateful Dead as the house band. He reacted with characteristic, Dead Head optimism to the University's banning of the Dead from Autzen stadium.

"It could be a blessing in disguise," he said. "I think they sound too harsh at Autzen. They can find a better place. They're not banned from the Eugene area — they can play at Veneta again."

Before riding the bus with the pranksters, Babbs flew heli-

copters in Vietnam during the war. He thinks a war with Iraq would be another mistake.

"Any time you draw a line, you're in trouble," he said. "And when you draw it in sand, you're in bigger trouble because it's not firm."

Babbs was on Ken Kesey's bus, "Further," in 1964 when the pranksters drove from the West Coast to New York City for an awkward reunion with Beat writer Jack Kerouac and East Coast LSD guru Timothy Leary.

This year Babbs, Kesey and friends revived the bus with the Grateful Dead chipping in \$5,000 for a sound system. Last month Babbs and other veteran pranksters drove down to the Bay area.

"Things are just the same," he said. "And they've also changed tremendously. People reacted more timidly to the bus this time. Nobody in the '60s was afraid of the government."

"They rose up and stopped the war. Now, after Nixon, Reagan and Bush, people are scared to stand up and speak out," he said.

"But the little kids reacted the same," Babbs said. "I saw the same look on their faces — totally joyful."



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