

## Far and away: people who just can't stay put

### Kerouac Remembered

## EARL BRAGGS ON THE ROAD

Earl Braggs has already collected \$500 for an unpublished chapter in a novel he didn't intend to write.

The UT Chattanooga English professor and author set out in the summer of 1994 to travel the country and turn his experiences into poems. Before long, he realized that his daily journal entries amounted instead to a novel.

A year later, Braggs, who packed a paperback edition of *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac as his spiritual, literary, and geographical guide, won the 7th Annual Jack Kerouac Literary Prize.

His submission, "After Allyson," was chosen from almost 400 entries of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. The entry is a chapter from Braggs' book, *Looking for Jack Kerouac*.

The chapter describes an encounter in Chicago between the novel's hero, Hudson Rivers, and Allyson, an alluring free spirit—both Kerouacian characters searching for themselves on rail-walk cars and big city sidewalks.

"Although the prize-winning entry happens to include explicit references to Jack Kerouac, I did not use that as a primary criterion in my judging," said James T. Jones, English professor at Southwest Missouri State University and

judge of the Kerouac contest.

"Rather I looked for evidence of Kerouac's influence. Not imitation Kerouac, either—literature needs only one of each kind—but writing that aspires to the foremost place in American letters: stylish, unselfconscious, innovative, autobiographic writing that operates in the lineage of Whitman, Wolfe, and Saroyan. . . ."

The praise from a Kerouac scholar and the prize attracted the attention of the Viking Press, which has *Looking for Jack Kerouac* under consideration.

The appeal of the novel doubtless has been heightened by a resurgence of interest in the Beat Generation period—the era of rootless cats and chicks, coffeehouse verse, and wine bottles encrusted with candle drippings.

After Kerouac's *On the Road* appeared in 1950, he became a Beat icon whose rambling lifestyle symbolized the alienation and rebelliousness of the generation.

No less an institution than the Whitney Museum of Art recently paid tribute to the era with an exhibit called "Beat Culture and the New America, 1950-1965" that will travel about the country after it leaves New York in February.

*Looking for Jack Kerouac* marks the first novel for Braggs, an award-winning poet, whose third collection of poems, *Walking Back from Woodstock*, will be released this spring.

A North Carolina native, Braggs says a word of praise from



UTC'S EARL BRAGGS TRAVELED,  
WROTE, WON A PRIZE.

his 10th grade English teacher on one of his papers motivated him to write professionally. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and received the M.F.A. degree in writing from the Vermont College of Norwich University.

Braggs made of his 1994 summer travels both an odyssey and a pilgrimage. He intentionally visited cities frequented by Kerouac.

From Atlanta to Denver, from Chicago to Salt Lake City, Braggs shifted between park benches and poetry reading halls. He hung out

with Israelis in San Francisco, old black men in North Carolina, and a preppie from Meridian, Mississippi, whose only luggage was a bag of golf clubs.

"I learned that I have the ability to infiltrate almost any circle," says the author, who joined UTC in 1990.

One night Braggs walked through the infamous Cabrini-Green public housing project in Chicago. "The most important thing I got out of the travel is not worrying about danger and death," he says. "I realized I couldn't do what I wanted to do and have concerns for my own safety."

## HealthCare

### EXCHANGE BROADENS PERSPECTIVES

David McReynolds' first impression of English health care was less than enthusiastic.

"I had this image of a government-controlled bureaucracy," he admits.

But that was before McReynolds (Knoxville '75), an administrator at Peninsula Hospital in Louisville, Tennessee, went to England on a two-week exchange program. He learned that England is moving to

ward a system similar to private managed care. He says organizations like Southampton Health Commission, where his host, Ian Marriott, is director of finance, operate a lot like HMOs, contracting with general practitioners and providers.

While English health care is still plagued by waiting lists and lack of access to specialized treatment, it is less financially burdened than the U.S. system, McReynolds says.

"England spends less of its gross national product on health care than does the United States or Canada," he says. Part of the reason may be that English general practitioners have more control over patient care than they do in the U.S., he says. "In the United



States, if you want to see a specialist, you make your own appointment. In England, you can see a specialist only after referral from a general practitioner. The general practitioner acts as a gatekeeper to the rest of the system."

In addition to giving him new ideas about financial management,

England provided him with a fresh cultural perspective, McReynolds says. One of his favorite moments was a banquet at the home of Sir Francis Drake, which featured actors in character, court jesters, jugglers, and musicians playing period instruments. Another was a night spent exchanging ideas in an English pub.

"We discussed the same things that always interest people—taxes, family, social problems—but there was such a different perspective."

This summer, it will be McReynolds' turn to host his exchange partner. "I'm really disappointed that it isn't the right time for a UT football game," he says. "But maybe we'll get in some baseball."

## Outdoors

### LONG WALKS TOGETHER

Kathy Wyatt took her first hike with Joel Zachry in 1986, when she was a student in his field biology course at Roane State Community College. The 120-mile stint on the Appalachian Trail was a course requirement, and although Kathy had taken several training hikes, "I thought I was going to die," she confesses. But she lived to hike again. The two began hiking together regularly and eventually married.

Now Kathy (Knoxville '92, '95) and Joel Zachry lead hikes for the Smoky Mountain Field School, a series of outdoor adventures in the Smokies offered through UT Knoxville's Division of Continu-

ing Education. During the 1995 Smoky Mountain Field School season, the Zachrys led a February overnighiter in the southern Appalachians, an October overnighiter in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, and a weeklong trip on the Appalachian Trail in June. In years past, they have led trips to Alaska, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Colorado, and Maine.

Both also have active professional lives. Joel Zachry is an associate professor of biology at Pellissippi State Technical Community College in Knoxville and serves on the board of directors of the Bozeman, Montana-based Great Bear Foundation. Kathy Zachry is a biomedical engineer and vice president of marketing and sales for Microtek Medical Inc. in Columbus, Mississippi. One might think that their commutes from their home in Kingston, Tennessee,

would be adventure enough, but the Zachrys still make time to lead backpacking trips.

"We have always had an interest in adventure and being sensitive and responsive to nature, and we believe in working hard and playing hard," Joel says. The two also enjoy the people they meet on their trips. Ages of participants range from 12 to 80, with some of the liveliest being on the high end of the scale, Kathy says.

"Some have gone on several trips with us over the years. We have one lady from Georgia who can outwalk and outski most 18-year-olds. She'll drop out of sight for a few weeks, and then we'll get a postcard from Switzerland saying she's over there skiing or saying she's rafting the Snake River out West."

The Zachrys point out that most participants "are totally capable of doing these hikes by themselves. They continue to return to the UT courses simply because they like the people they meet. Also, somebody else is taking care of the details."

Details that the Zachrys handle include providing tents, stoves, cook sets, and food and instructing participants in the type of backpacks and other equipment they need. They determine the number of miles to be covered each day; plan menus; buy, prepackage, label, and distribute food; test equipment; and prepare for emergencies. They also take along a complete first aid kit, although so far they have experienced only minor mishaps.

Although the logistics of leading these trips seem formidable to the average person, the Zachrys concentrate on the rewards.

"I think there are probably three reasons to do it," Kathy says. "We want to share a particular place with people and then to educate them about that place. And finally, we want to pass on the preservation instinct in people, so that they will say, 'I see why nature is so important, I see how to get out in it and enjoy it safely, and I see what we need to do so that others will be able to enjoy it too.'"





**A**DRIENNE WALLS-BRUNNER BASKS IN CARIBBEAN WATERS.

## Tennessee Traveler

### ISLAND IDYLL

High-priced camping.” That’s how Adrienne Walls-Brunner (Knoxville ’85) describes her stay at the Ladera resort hotel on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia.

“Ladera has three walls; the fourth is open to the Pitons, the twin mountains that St. Lucia is famous for. There is no glass or screen; just a low railing along that open side. Ladera is between the

two peaks, and your view is of the ocean and the Pitons,” Walls-Brunner says.

She fell in love with Ladera after reading an article about it in a travel magazine. Walls-Brunner, a mechanical engineer in Huntsville, Alabama, and her husband have their own system for planning their annual travels: “We decided to take turns picking where we’d go on vacation. It was his turn, and all he would tell me was that we were going someplace tropical. He didn’t tell me we were going to Ladera until we were on the plane to Miami!”

The hotel is constructed so

that rain and wind aren’t likely to blow into its open side, Walls-Brunner says. But she did get up close and personal with other aspects of the environment. “The beds are covered with mosquito netting. And my husband didn’t care for the lizards that came in, although I thought they were part of the ambiance!” They both enjoyed the winged wildlife. “It was wonderful to wake up in the morning and see and hear the birds singing in the trees,” Walls-Brunner says.

Besides enjoying the view from the hotel, the couple took in some of the island’s other natural

beauty, including botanical gardens and the beach.

“That was the first black sand beach I had ever seen,” Walls-Brunner says, noting that the island is volcanic.

Mostly, however, they enjoyed the luxury of relaxing amid the stunning surroundings. “My favorite part of the day was breakfast. We would go down to the restaurant and have muffins with jam and fresh fruit juice. The pineapple and other tropical fruits were the sweetest I’ve ever tasted. There was classical music playing and beauty all around us. It was just perfect.”

**M**ARK  
VANE  
AT THE  
TOWER  
BRIDGE  
IN  
LONDON



**Tennessee Traveler**  
**GRAND TOUR**

After completing his undergraduate degree at UT Knoxville, Mark Jason Vane spent six weeks foot-loose and fancy free in Europe.

Equipped with Eurail passes and 60-pound backpacks, Vane and two friends, Michael Guidry and Greg Mann, visited the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and England.

Their traveling destinations were usually decided on the spur of the moment, Vane said: "We just looked at a map and picked where we wanted to go." One destination, however, had been planned well in advance. Vane and his friends made sure they were in Pamplona, Spain, for the annual run with the bulls.

"Pamplona is a small town, but it was absolutely packed for the run. The hotels were completely filled, and people overflowed onto

the streets. Nobody slept the night before. The run started at 8 a.m. in front of the mayor's house. A rocket was fired and the bulls were released. A second rocket was fired, and that was the signal to start running. The streets were very narrow and full of terrified people and the bulls. You run as fast as you can for half a mile," Vane says.

Other events were less dramatic, but still memorable, Vane

says. He and his friends camped on a beach in Barcelona; visited the Houses of Parliament in London; and took in Paris' "must see" sights such as Notre Dame and the Louvre. Vane was particularly taken by the town of Bayeux, France, home of the Bayeux Tapestry.

"Perhaps that impressed me so much because I was a history major. The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of William the Conqueror's Invasion of England in 1066 A.D.

It's about 100 feet long."

Vane also visited the American cemetery in Normandy. "It overlooks Omaha Beach. When you look down at the places where the Americans had to land, you wonder how anyone ever made it up alive," he says.

Now a UT Knoxville law student, Vane says he may eventually tour Europe again. But would he get out there with those bulls again? "Sure I would!" he says.

*Here's to Tennessee*

This year's Alumni Summer College, August 7 through 11 in Knoxville, will sing the praises of the state of Tennessee.

There'll be sessions on the Volunteer state's music, agriculture, religion, writers, cuisine, celebrities, and even a look at how Tennesseans talk. And as always, there'll be good food, entertainment, and

the opportunity to meet alumni and friends from across the country.

Summer college will begin with a reception and dinner on Wednesday evening, followed by classes Thursday and Friday, a field trip on Saturday, and a farewell brunch Sunday morning.

If you want more information, call (423)974-5432 or 3011.

If you've been somewhere intriguing, uplifting, exotic, remote, or outrageously decadent and expensive, send a note with your phone number and a brief description of your trip to Vicki Johns, Publications Center, 107 Communications Building, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-0315 (or via e-mail, vjohns@utk.edu). You could be the next "Tennessee Traveler."