



# **The Hitchhiker's Guide to Jack Kerouac: The Adventure of the Boulder '82 On The Road Conference - Finding Kerouac, Kesey and The Grateful Dead Alive & Rockin' in the Rockies**

*Brian Hassett*

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This is the only book written about "the Woodstock of the Beats" — the historic 1982 Kerouac SuperSummit in Boulder where, as John Clellon Holmes put it, "more of us were together than had ever been together in one place at one time before." And nothing on this scale ever happened again. Featuring scenes, anecdotes and transcribed conversations with the likes of Holmes, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, William Burroughs, Herbert Huncke, Kens Kesey & Babbs, Michael McClure, Carolyn Cassady, Edie Kerouac, Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner, Al Aronowitz and many others, the book is a fast-paced storytelling adventure straight through the heart of Beatlandia. Hitchhiking tales from a 3,500 mile journey, life among the Beats, and "following your dreams to the living rooms of your heroes" are some of the happenings in this On The Road "Almost Famous" with literary rock stars — from the debauched to the brilliant. Readers will learn what the whole "Kerouac thing" is all about — why he's so popular and has lasted so long — as reflected through the eyes of myriad people from famous novelists to students, filmmakers to poets, his lovers to his critics. The book also features the most extensive exploration in print of the connection between the Beats and The Grateful Dead. No other band in history has as close a relationship to particularly Kerouac and Neal Cassady as The Grateful Dead, or who more embodied the On The Road ethos that those two personified. In fact, it was the band who largely funded this historic gathering and scheduled their summer Red Rocks shows to be a part of — to which, of course, the reader is taken. Besides all the living Beats, there is also a significant focus on Ken Kesey — including many transcribed conversations — about his relationship with Kerouac's writing, Cassady's persona, The Bus's legacy and the importance of family. Plus, there's Abbie Hoffman and Timothy Leary in major supporting roles — each with very different reactions from those in attendance. Told as a first-person Adventure Story by an enthusiastic 21-year-old show producer, the narrative is both youthful in its wide-eyed sense of discovery, while balanced with decades of scholarship and perspective. Not only was the book meticulously fact-checked, but each section was run by the person who appears in it, or their estate if they've passed. This event took place at a time when Kerouac was at such a low ebb not even "On The Road" was in most bookstores. This gathering marked the biggest turnaround in his career other than the release of his defining novel. From here on out — and with the direct help of those in attendance — there would be a steady ascension of Kerouac's standing in both the public and literary worlds. The book has been described as "funny and informative" — two words that usually don't go together. Life-long Beat readers will learn much they didn't know before — but there are a lot of scholarly works that will achieve that end. What sets this apart is it's an entertaining, page-turning, light-hearted, Prankster-rich, playful romp in the land of words and ideas. And a funny thing is — it's actually a love story. You'll see. The book is printed in a large easy-to-read font, is extremely fast-paced, and comes with a rich "Dessert" offering tributes to both those still living and those who have passed, as well as details on the five different documentaries shot at the summit. The book also features 60 photographs of the various participants and activities, and an Introduction by Neal & Carolyn Cassady's only son, John Allen Cassady (who was named after Kerouac and Ginsberg).

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