



*From Buck Rogers to Ken Kesey,  
UCR is into writing*

## Taking pride in authorship

CRWR HISTORY

By Wendee Streeter

**T**he bright-eyed, silver-haired man in a vanilla ice-cream suit, saucy red-rimmed shades and a tan fedora strode out jauntily onto the stage of the University Theatre. The packed-in audience of over 500 UCR students, faculty, and friends caught its collective breath, then burst into applause. His entrance made, Ken Kesey, the legendary author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*, paused...and with a wry smile greeted the crowd. Kesey, hero of the "turn-on and drop-out" generation of the 60s, and immortalized as leader of those hip vagabonds, the Merry Pranksters, in Tom Wolfe's best-seller, *The Electric Kool-Aid Test*, enthralled the crowd for over two hours with tales of his exploits and readings from his works.

As brightly as this literary star did shine here at UCR, Ken Kesey represented only one element in a growing creative writing program on and around the Riverside campus. Kesey's appearance marked the eighth annual celebration of Writer's Week at UCR,

a cultural highlight for both the university and the Southern California area.

Students, faculty and townspeople came out in large numbers to support Riverside's literary interests, clearly another tribute to UCR and its commitment to a high-quality, community-oriented writing environment. It is an environment which includes, in addition to Writer's Week, workshops in poetry and fiction, cafe and pub readings, a journalists' lecture series, an annual science-fiction conference and its own literary/arts magazine where students can explore the muse along with the pros. From Kesey to Buck Rogers, Riverside is into writing.

It was about writers and writing that Kesey expounded earlier that February afternoon at the University Theatre. He discoursed on creative genius and the values of reading the literary classics—on how a revolution can take place while reading Chaucer or Hemingway or Shakespeare, on how they can reach through time and speak to readers of today. "Writers know something that other people don't know," Kesey says, "and they want to give it to others. The physicist in the laboratory won't do that. Just the poet."