

Going Greyhound changes life

It was a dark and stormy Greyhound bus ride — when suddenly, a passenger cried out.

Critical readers may argue that I am being unfair, linking the beginning of a horror novel with Greyhound bus rides.

But I can't be silent any longer. While people in so-called Third World countries are still able to travel by bus, "First World" nations like the United States appear to no longer be able to afford such luxuries.

I remember a time, long, long ago, when I could buy a bus ticket and expect to arrive at my destination. Now, when I arrive at the desk, I tremble, praying to the Greyhound gods that the bus has not broken down.

However, my suffering has made me stronger. I am a wiser and a better person for having these experiences. Traveling Greyhound has, despite the hassle, improved my reading skills and enriched my love life.

The inconvenience has been worth it.

In my capacity as a Daily Nebraskan columnist and Greyhound connoisseur, I'd like to offer my own travel tips and special memories to help make your own future Greyhound trips as memorable as mine.

The biggest challenge in traveling Greyhound in this budget-cutting era is actually boarding the bus.

Provided that the driver and/or the bus does not break down, or arrive hours behind schedule, you may actually make it on board.

Once you board the bus, life becomes even more exciting, depending upon your choice of Greyhound Reading Material.

Many people might think that your Bus Book is a trivial choice, but that is simply not true. As a



Debra Cumberland

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veteran of many Greyhound trips, I am here to tell you that the book you take on board can determine the quality of your trip, if not your love life. (Yes, Greyhound is the hot new singles scene.)

Last year, for instance, when traveling to Nashville, I brought along Marion Zimmer Bradley's science fiction novel, "Thendara House."

A young, greasy, middle-aged man with a big belt buckle and a small mind swaggered down the aisle, twirling his mustache. Seeing that the seat next to me was vacant, he plopped down, stretched out his long, lean, cowboy-booted legs and proceeded to tell me the gripping blow-by-blow story of his life.

When I only grunted in reply, he leaned forward and asked in a slow twang what I was reading.

"Thendara House," I replied, with a sweet smile. "It's a feminist utopia about a society of free

Amazons."

The Greasy Man sat back in his chair, drumming his fingers nervously. A moment later he was gone, heading to the back of the bus. It hurt to see him go.

Next year, I received two marriage proposals on a trip from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Lincoln.

I was reading "Journal of a Solitude" at the time. I think they saw it as a cry for help.

The first proposal came from a distinguished looking Peruvian man with an expiring visa, and while I was tempted to take his millions and run, I resisted.

The next came from a scruffy young British chap who also had an expiring visa. It seems to be a common problem on Greyhound buses.

"I say," he said, plopping down beside me. "I see you're reading."

"Yes," I said, showing him the cover. It was a bleak view of an elderly woman sitting alone at a desk, with the sun setting beside her. I could tell he wondered why anyone would read anything that depressing looking.

"I say," he said again, coughing nervously. "Do you know anyone who might marry a chap?"

"No one I know," I replied, turning pages.

"Oh, but I say," cried the British chap. "You American girls are so wonderful, and my fiancée just kicked me out, and my visa's running out, you know. What do you say?"

As a good student of Nancy Reagan, I just said no.

So you see, reading — and public transportation — really does have the capacity to change your life.

I'm begging all of you out there. Go Greyhound before it's gone.

Cumberland is a graduate student in English and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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Giving up yesterday's glory

Tonight, a piece of America's glorious past will give way to the present.

This evening, Cal Ripken Jr. will break one of sports' most hallowed marks as he surpasses Lou Gehrig's record of consecutive games played.

Writes Ben Walker of the Associated Press: "Gehrig's record has been a treasured piece of history once thought to be so untouchable that his plaque at Yankee Stadium, placed more than 50 years ago, praises him as a man whose amazing record ... should stand for all time."

Yet, by tonight's end, Gehrig's long-time record will have become just another one of professional baseball's many statistics, overshadowed by Ripken's more impressive, more modern figure.

But giving up yesterday's glory isn't always easy for some.

Ripken has reported that he has received death threats throughout these last days in which the record has belonged to Gehrig. The situation isn't unique.

Hank Aaron, the great Braves slugger, endured death threats as he approached Babe Ruth's seemingly unreachable record of 715 career home runs. So vicious, so numerous were the threats that by the time he hit his 700th, Aaron needed bodyguards in the dugout and at his home.

Pete Rose also received threats on his life as he closed in on Ty Cobb's career hit record.

As sad as it seems, these threats occur for a reason. Baseball, unlike any other sport, is a ghostly game — a game of nostalgia. Players of today are constantly compared with those who have gone before them.

In baseball, those who close in on age-old records of past players are oftentimes seen as imposters, villains threatening to replace the heroes of another generation's childhood.

Gehrig would be a hard one to replace.

Gehrig's now infamous streak



Jamie Karl

"Let us remember, tonight, when the Iron Bird walks onto the diamond, that the art of living lies in a fine mingling of holding on and letting go."

began in 1925, in his third year with the New York Yankees. In the first few seasons of the string, the "Pride of the Yankees" was hardly taken seriously.

Even his old pal and teammate, Ruth, said Gehrig should forget about his silly streak. Yet, he refused to quit.

By the time an incurable disease, which now carries his name, forced him to retire, Gehrig had played every game in the seasons from 1925 through 1938.

Overshadowed his entire career by teammates like Ruth and DiMaggio, Gehrig was proud of his streak. Even as he stood in the midst of a filled Yankee Stadium on July 4, 1939, to officially announce he was leaving the game he loved, Gehrig humbly proclaimed: "Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

By 1941, the "Iron Horse" had passed on. But the 2,130 games he had played in the seasons before earned Gehrig the reputation of being the most durable man ever to wear a major league uniform.

Then along came Cal Ripken Jr. The fans who don't want to see Gehrig's record broken are good baseball fans who love the game and its romantic, nostalgic qualities.

Gehrig, a modest, painfully shy man, symbolized a drive so typical of the America he lived in. He represented the spirit of determination, which said that with a little hard work, anything can be done.

Some say, that along with Gehrig, those days are gone forever. But Ripken proves that spirit is still alive and well.

Gehrig played in a day when baseball was strictly fun — one of life's essentials. Today, it has an image tarred by greed and profit.

When Gehrig played, players came to the park early to chat with fans over low-cut fences as swarms of children gathered around them. Today, fans are greeted with middle fingers from pitchers coming off the mound or pokes in the eye from batters in the on-deck circle.

Yet, Cal Ripken Jr. is one of the last remaining hopes of the great national pastime.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Ripken has played his entire career for the Orioles. His fans have watched him grow from a 20-year-old rookie who played for his father to a future first-ballot Hall of Famer. Yet all along, he claims to have just been doing his job.

In a day when critics say there are no more heroes, Ripken stands out from the crowd.

Those fans who are sad to see Gehrig's record go need to see Cal Ripken in the right light. Ripken is Gehrig's second chance — his next effort, if you will.

Let us remember, tonight, when the "Iron Bird" walks onto the diamond, that the art of living lies in a fine mingling of holding on and letting go.

Surely Gehrig is somewhere hoping we will do both.

Karl is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan wire editor and columnist.

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