

Nikki
FOX

Read a book

When it heats up outside, it's a good time to dig into some literature

FOX is a junior news-editorial major & and a Daily Nebraskan photographer.

As the summer gets hotter and merciless in its humidity, I have only to say congratulations! Congratulations for those who survive and thrive in this weather, like myself. I find that while others' laziness kicks in, I have abundant energy. It may seem that I am patting myself on the ol' back, but I reassure you that I'm not.

Let me get to the point. In this "summer madness," as Shakespeare would say, there lies a phenomenon. The phenomenon of being active.

Apologies for the tangent. Each person has his or her own interests for passing time.

I have taken up the habit of reading this summer.

Imagine this. A middle-aged woman with deep lines of character surrounding her eyes, mouth and brow. The creases are made from dif-

ferent aspects of life: the sun, a broad smile, tears of sorrow, endless thought and bold speech.

She's sitting in the park on a bench or under a tree's shade. Next to her is her mug of coffee and a huge bag stuffed like a pillow. Inside the tote bag are many books.

This woman is the type of person who can never finish a book when she sees another that she must start reading at that moment. So she'll carry them all around with her just in case she's in the mood for a different book.

In her mouth is a generic cigarette with a inch-long ash dangling from the end, and it is waiting for the slightest movement to break free. The woman seems not to notice since she's consumed in her book.

This will be me. Or is me, just knock off a few years.

Currently I carry five books in my backpack all the time, besides my usual class texts. Do you want to hear what they are? But of course you would!

First is *Black Elk Speaks* by John G. Neihardt. You can find Neihardt, a native Nebraskan, in the State Capitol building as a statue.

Black Elk Speaks is a spiritual book for all the Native American Indians, but especially the Ogalalla Sioux. Black Elk, the man interviewed for the book in the 30s, was Crazy Horse's second cousin.

Black Elk spoke of sacred things to Neihardt, such as how the pipe was important in prayer, the history of the Ogalalla when he was a boy, the visions he had his entire life, the importance of Mother Nature and the ways of the Native American.

This book is meaningful because it is a part of history sometimes too easily forgotten. Anyone wishing to follow other people's journeys and learn from them; read this book!

Second is a book of Jim Morrison's poetry called *Wilderness*. Much of the contents here are strange. Words that have no similarities are bunched together. And you,

the reader, have to figure the meaning out. But I think that is all part of the fun involved when tackling a book like this.

Third is *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* by Tom Robbins. A wonderful satire of reality, this fast-paced book makes you hate the time when you have to shut it.

Sissy Hankshaw is the main character and you follow her around in her life of hitchhiking adventures.

This book is filled with wit and laughs, and reminds me that everyone has a tireless spirit alive within them.

Fourth and fifth are by the same author, Jack Kerouac, the great man who helped start the beatnik era in San Francisco more than 40 years ago. And it hasn't died out yet.

A friend turned me on to his poetry last year. And I think that his description of Kerouac's writing serves justice. He said that Kerouac wrote with a stream of conciseness.

So, don't waste your long, hot days, sweat out a good book.

Anthony
COLMAN

Icy ending

People need to do something about global warming before it's too late

COLMAN is a sophomore general studies major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist

I've always been a worrier and a pessimist. I was a child of the Reagan era, growing up in constant fear of thermonuclear Armageddon. So, as a child I gave myself an ulcer worrying about the seemingly inevitable threat of a nuclear holocaust, or some similarly dramatic global disaster. When all the other kids were out playing, I was fretting about the end of humanity.

"Hey, Anthony, wanna play kickball?"

"No, thanks. Gotta go hit the Maalox."

So naturally, while everyone else just passes it off to El Nino, I'm terrified that the unusual weather we've been having is actually an early sign of catastrophic changes in global weather patterns.

Forget about El Nino, I'm terrified that we've triggered a process of global warming that will trigger the next ice age.

We've already done so much damage to the earth's atmosphere. For over a century, industrialized nations have mindlessly pumped extraordinary quantities of heat-absorbing gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and CFC's into the earth's shallow atmosphere. Since the industrial revolution, Carbon dioxide gases emitted into the atmosphere have increased by 27 percent. And the amount of methane has more than doubled.

Global warming isn't just something that could happen — it's already happening on a measurable scale.

If we don't act to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, it's predicted that global temperature could rise 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit in the next 100 years. Just a few degrees difference in the average global temperature can mean drastic and unpredictable climate changes.

Global warming isn't like turning on a heater. We can't just turn it off afterwards if the earth warms up too fast for comfort. Once we emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, most of them remain there for decades, continuing to trap heat. If we wait until all the consequences become obvious, it could be too late to do much about them.

Our forecasts of the effects of increases of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere focus on global warming and subsequent melting of the ice caps. However, we ought to consider that changes in weather patterns could, quite easily and rapidly, flip us back into another ice age.

Ice ages have occurred at widely spaced intervals of geologic time since the Precambrian period. During the last ice age, commonly referred to as the Pleistocene ice age, there were major global oscillations between glacial and interglacial climatic states on a time scale of about 10 to 100 thousand years.

The causes for ice ages and the glacial cycles within an ice age are most likely the result of a complicated dynamic interaction among many of the earth's systems.

Comparable degrees of change in the delicate balance of atmospheric gases such as what we're witnessing have triggered the onset and recession of the earth's ice ages for more than 2.5 billion years.

The temperature, sea level and carbon dioxide levels at the onset of the last ice age, 1.5 million years ago, were similar to what they are today, when abruptly, in a 100-year period, the earth's sea level shot up 20 feet, and then plummeted down 50 feet in a cataclysm that would be unimaginable to humanity today.

Perhaps as recently as a century ago, even a rapid succession of changes so drastic as the onset of a new ice age would have been merely inconvenient. Societies could have dealt with the changes, and with relatively small losses.

Societies were still largely, if not primarily agrarian. A much smaller portion of the population lived in and depended on cities. Societies were much smaller-scaled, and people were more independent and generally lived closer to the earth.

Today however, drastic changes in global conditions could be catastrophic, most especially in the developed nations, where only a very small fraction of the population would be capable of even supporting themselves without their economic system to rely on.

Perhaps for humankind to suffer such catastrophic events wouldn't actually be so bad, though. It seems we need to slow down a bit; to take a time-out and reevaluate our ways of doing and living, because those ways are rapidly destroying Spaceship Earth. Humans could reconsider the real values and costs of industrialization, materialism and unchecked growth. Perhaps people could reconsider what are the things that humans really require to live rich, fulfilling lives. For humankind to suffer catastrophic levels of destruction could allow us an opportunity to rebuild societies in a manner that would be more practical, less wasteful, and more attractive.

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