

Green Tortoise provides discount travel and memories

It's not the most pristine form of travel. No seats that recline to a nearly horizontal level. You won't find a complimentary bag of toothpaste, toothbrush, headphones and those carpet-grabbing thermal socks supposedly designed to keep your feet toasty, but are actually thinner than nylons. No curious little knobs and buttons to fiddle with, searching for their individual purposes, only to find there is no purpose at all.

No, you won't find any of this. But then, it's not like riding a camel either. While the camel may be a generally agreeable travel companion, it is not very hospitable to the backside of man.

Somewhere between British Airways First Class and a camel, lies the Green Tortoise, or more professionally known, the Green Turtle Adventure Line. As the name suggests, it is not travel for the weary. But those with a wee bit of clout and next to no money to spend on travel may find the Green Tortoise is suited to them. It's about the cheapest way to go, although Morris Air, with similar fares and destinations, tends to snatch up those travelers that are more reluctant to leap on board the Tortoise.

The Green Tortoise, the court jester of the bus line industry, enjoys more than one reputation. For some, it is the ultimate communal experience. For others, it is the ultimate nightmare. But those people who tend to believe the latter are usually those that have never ridden it.

"This is how I see it. A few chickens flying around. Everyone's



JEFF PASLAY/Emerald

smoking. They're playing the Grateful Dead. It's really ... interesting," said a senior from Southern Oregon State College. Upon being asked if she had ridden it, she replied with a curt "no."

Adam Brosamer, a University sophomore, is quick to defend the Tortoise. "It's really cool, really mellow," he said, "and it's quicker than Greyhound because it makes fewer stops."

Brosamer apparently knew he would be a Tortoise disciple long before last year when he took it for the first time. "I remember I saw it for the first time in Venice Beach when I was little," he said. "My parents took me on board and I looked

around. It was cool."

The Green Tortoise schedule changes readily throughout the year. Usually, there is a bus that runs twice a week to San Francisco from Eugene for \$39. It goes onto Los Angeles for \$20 more. If travel plans pull you to the north, a bus goes to Portland for \$10 and onto Seattle for about \$15 more. If your destination lies somewhere along the way, the driver will stop there for an insignificant supplementary fee.

Reservations can be made by telephone or by showing up when the bus arrives. Reservations for Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles should be made in

advance.

For the longer trips, the bus will stop for a seemingly interminable break in Southern Oregon at Cow Creek. The passengers can escape the confines of the bus to eat or contemplate life, love and the pursuit of happiness in a sauna that sits near the creek. Brosamer assures that the food is more than simply edible. He described the selection, which consisted of fresh organic fruit, a mysterious "potato thing," pies, pancakes, fish and plenty of coffee and tea.

Probably the most famous thing about the Green Tortoise is "The Miracle" which occurs on the longer trips. There is nothing mysterious

The Green Tortoise is an institution in Eugene, it provides students with inexpensive transportation and interesting experiences.

and divine about this miracle, however. The inside of the bus transforms into one huge mattress upon which the passengers can sleep for the night. Yes, it's the "get to know your neighbor in a more intimate way" portion of the trip.

Intimate, however, carries more than one interpretation. Brosamer considered it to be comfortable and only slightly intimate. "You can

Turn to TORTOISE, Page 7B

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