

# The Herald

MONTEREY COUNTY

THURSDAY  
DECEMBER 4

Salinas Valley

COPYRIGHT 1997

## Pedal-boat sailors get a lift

### Coast Guard tows craft toward San Simeon

BY LORE LAWRENCE

San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune

The dreams of two sailors hoping to navigate their pedal-driven boat to Hawaii crashed with the waves Wednesday when they became stuck six miles off the Big Sur coast.

Casey Dunn and John Walker, members of the Pedal for the Planet expedition, radioed the Coast Guard in Morro Bay around 1 p.m. and asked to be brought in. Their craft, which left Monterey Bay last week, was offshore near the border of Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. The sailors were expected to arrive at San Simeon early this

morning.

"They were coming here, but weren't making any progress," said Petty Officer Craig Ross. Winds of 12 to 15 knots and waves reaching four feet prevented the 26-foot craft Moshka from reaching shore.

The Coast Guard sent out a 41-foot utility boat to pick up the stranded seamen and tow the boat to drydock. But at 1:30 p.m., the Coast Guard suddenly lost radio contact with Dunn and Walker.

California Highway Patrol aircraft were sent to pinpoint the Moshka's position; radio communication was re-established.

Dunn and Walker were especially lucky — a chance encounter with a commercial fishing vessel, the Margaret O, allowed them to be towed to shore while waiting for the Coast Guard's arrival, which did not occur for several hours.

Coast Guard Petty Officer John Howk said the Margaret O and the utility boat met at 6 p.m. Dunn and Walker left the Moshka and boarded the utility boat for the trip back to San Simeon, where they were scheduled to arrive at 1 a.m. today.

Dunn and Walker were to be taken to Morro Bay, where they

planned to be reunited with other members of Pedal for the Planet team.

The goal of Pedal for the Planet is to travel the world using only human power. In 1994, two team members — Jason Lewis, 29, and Steven Smith, 30 — pedaled the boat from London to Miami in 111 days.

Despite some near disasters — on one occasion Smith fell overboard, and on another a playful whale tipped them over — both crew members arrived at their destination safely. Other journeys have included pedaling from Miami to Monterey, and from Monterey to Central America.

For the past week, rough weather has troubled the latest leg of the voyage. Battery power weakened, breaking down communication and leaving Dunn and Walker unable to post daily updates at the Pedal Planet Web site.

Radio communication was finally re-established Sunday, when the pair said they wanted to abort the trip to Hawaii.

The sailors set course for Morro Bay, originally estimating they would reach shore Tuesday night or Wednesday morning. But the weather worsened, and by early Wednesday afternoon they were still adrift, forcing them to call the Coast Guard for assistance.

The cost of the rescue is estimated to be \$20,000, but Pedal for the Planet will not be required to reimburse the government, Howk said.