

Adventure gone awry

Weather thwarts pedal boaters

SAN SIMEON

By Vern Ahrendes
Telegram-Tribune

Rough seas and some bad luck have stalled the California-to-Hawaii leg of an around-the-world voyage at least until April.

Casey Dunn and John Walker, two members of the Pedal for the Planet expedition, stood helplessly on the San Simeon pier Thursday morning as their 26-foot pedal-powered boat Moshka bobbed in the rising swells from a Coast Guard mooring.

The pair was rescued by the Coast Guard Wednesday after losing power and navigation in rough seas.

"We've been stuck in some pretty odd spots with this boat, but this is one of the oddest," Dunn said. "We feel helpless not being able to get out to it to brace it for the storm."

The crew did not attach a protective plexiglass canopy when the boat was moored 100 yards off of the pier in the darkness Thursday morning. They thought they would have time to retrieve it or protect it before an expected storm blows through the region today and Saturday.

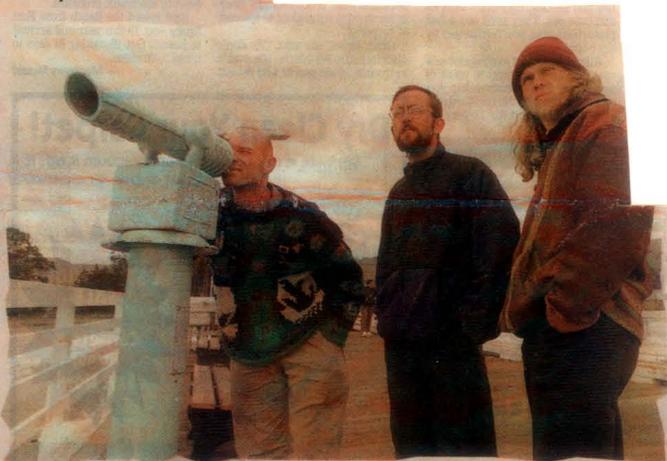
The two had hoped to navigate the Moshka to drydock Wednesday until they lost radio contact with the Coast Guard. Twelve to 15-knot winds and 3- to 4-foot swells kept the crew from reaching shore at San Cape Martin south of Plaskett Creek.

The second option Thursday was to prepare the Moshka for riding out the forecasted 10- to 12-foot swells and accompanying rain.

"The sea is just too rough to get out there," Dunn said, while eyeing the boat through a coin-operated telescope on the pier. "We don't have it covered and some of the tethering ropes are loose."

The two sailors were forced to seek cover on the coast of San Simeon after running into rough seas earlier this week 130 miles offshore.

"A couple of different phases of the trip went wrong," Dunn said. "We expected bad seas, you have to at this time of year. We got them, but not in a di-



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

ON LAND AGAIN: Steve Smith, left, John Walker and Casey Dunn keep tabs on the boat Thursday from the San Simeon pier. Walker and Casey were trying to pedal the boat to Hawaii.

rection we expected."

Dunn and Walker launched the Moshka from Monterey on Nov. 23. Within three days, the crew was adrift.

Seven-foot waves were crashing over the boat's canopy and the crew was unable to pedal in the 20-knot winds, unable to recharge their batteries, and unable to keep much of anything they ate down. The craft relies on solar power to recharge its batteries, but there was no sunshine because of the overcast conditions.

"The plan was to return to Monterey and stay a week before heading back out," he said. "But a new storm blew us south and the prevailing winds were

from the north. We were drifting at a clip of about 1 knot an hour, even with the sea anchor deployed."

It was hoped the sea anchor, a large underwater parachute, would stabilize the boat in the high seas and keep the crew from being blown back into land near Big Sur.

The rough weather continued, and the Coast Guard rescued the two men off of Point Piedras Blancas in 7-foot seas. A fishing vessel, the Margaret O, and a California Highway Patrol aircraft helped locate the boat when radio communication was lost.

With the current leg thwarted, the crew will trail-

Please see **PEDAL, B-2**

PEDAL from B-1

er the boat on Monday and send it to Los Angeles for repairs.

"When we were pulled alongside the Coast Guard boat, the front end nosedived and one of the prows was dented," Dunn said.

They hope to restart the voyage in more predictable weather conditions next spring.

The goal of Pedal for the Planet is to travel the world using only human power. In 1994 two team members, Jason Lewis and Steven Smith, pedaled the boat from London to Miami in 111 days. Other journeys have included pedaling from Miami to Monterey and from Monterey to Central America.

rescue

MONTEREY — The two men who set off in a paddle boat bound for Hawaii ought to pay the \$20,000 cost of their rescue, according to Pebble Beach yachtman said.

But the Coast Guard doesn't charge for saving people on the high seas, a Coast Guard spokeswoman said.

Casey Dunn and John Walker, members of the Pedal for the Planet expedition, pedaled the 26-foot Moshka out of Monterey Harbor before Thanksgiving.

On Wednesday they radioed the Coast Guard in Morro Bay for help and got a tow part of the way from a commercial fishing vessel before landing in San Simeon early Thursday morning, courtesy of the Coast Guard.

A California Highway Patrol airplane also helped in the search and served as a radio link for the drifting paddle boaters.

A Coast Guard spokesman estimated the cost of their rescue

SAILOR from B-1

at about \$20,000, but said they would not be billed.

Publicity stunts like the Moshka voyage are bad news to the boating community, said Bob Allen of Pebble Beach, a member — along with his eldest son and his daughter — of the Sailing Hall of Fame, and a longtime sailing instructor in Monterey Bay.

"There's something wrong when a couple of publicity-seekers are allowed a free rescue," he said, adding it appeared to be a patently absurd venture.

"In New Zealand they give you the choice of paying for a professional boat to come rescue you or working it out yourself. They only come and get you when you're in extreme danger.

"Off Catalina, unless you're on

the Naval Postgraduate School's sailing club.

"People from this very harbor have made long passages without incident," Allen said. "This wasn't an accident, it was a couple of people going out who didn't even prepare their communication before they left."

Unless the Coast Guard to a hoax or a false alarm, charge for its services, acc Petty Officer Shannon spokeswoman for the Co in Alameda.

"If someone's in an er we rescue them," she s don't send a bill."

In cases where the Co is alerted by false radio some other violation that a rescue effort occurs, sh

on bizarre sailing expeditions, though the Coast Guard does try to prevent 'manifestly unsafe' voyages.

"We can't tell them not to go," she said. "We urge anyone who goes on a long voyage to file a float plan."

PEDAL FOR THE PLANET ***PRESS CLIPPINGS***

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY TELEGRAPH
DECEMBER 1997