

Weather thwarts pedal boaters

By Vern Ahrendes
Telegram-Tribune

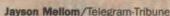
Casey Dunn and John Walker, two members of the Pedal for the Planet expedition, stood helplessly on the San Simeon pier Thursday morning as their 26-foot pedal-powered boat Moshka bobbed in the rising swells from a Coast Guard mooring.

"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 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 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."

"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-



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

"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

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.

With the current leg thwarted, the crew will trail-

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

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.

MONTEREY — The two men who set off in a paddle boat bound for Hawaii ought to pay the \$20,000 cost of their rescue, a noted Pebble Beach yachtsman 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 the week-end 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

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
five and six, then don't send 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 iv 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 Coast Guard in Alameda.

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

In cases where the Coast Guard is alerted by false radio distress signals or some other violation that requires a rescue effort occurs, shore-based personnel are not at fault in any way.

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."