



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MORRIS RICHARDSON II

LONG JOURNEY — Jason Lewis waves traffic by as he waits to cross Rodney Parham Road in west Little Rock on Saturday afternoon after traveling 1,200 miles from Miami. Lewis and a companion are making an around-the-world trip using only "human power," pedaling or skating.

Pedal for the Planet passes through state on way around world

BY MARION GAMMILL
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Nellie Bly's concern was making it around the world in less than 80 days. Jason Lewis, however, doesn't care how long it takes him to circle the globe — as long as he does it on his own steam.

Lewis, 27, skated into Little Rock over the weekend, about four weeks after he left Fort Lauderdale in early July. Before that, he and his traveling partner, Steve Smith, 28, had bicycled across Europe and crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a pedal-powered boat.

But Pedal for the Planet, the name that Lewis and Smith are using for their self-powered expedition, isn't just for fun.

Their avowed purpose is to inspire young people by talking to them at schools or other gathering places and to demonstrate that "each of us has the power to accomplish anything we wish."

"I think that if the world is going to be better, we've got to start from the bottom up with young minds," Lewis said Saturday at Rollersports, a Little Rock in-line skating store. "I'm interested in listening to them and what they want to

do."

Smith, who is currently using a bike, passed through Little Rock about a week ago. The two plan to meet up in San Francisco in October and continue across the Pacific Ocean from there.

Lewis stayed at Rollersports, one of his many sponsors, Friday night. He said, however, that he usually sleeps on the side of the road in his sleeping bag, despite the ever-present mosquitoes.

"He called ... just yesterday," Rollersports owner Sheldon Smith said. "It's such a cool endeavor that we (wanted to) help out."

Pedal for the Planet is subsisting on donations from various sponsors, but funds are tight, Lewis said. While he has been eating dinner in restaurants on the road, the in-line skater said that he can no longer afford that and plans to start cooking his own food.

Lewis, from England, says that he is getting used to the summer heat. "I have to say that Arkansas is the hottest state I've been in," he said. "It's so hot at the moment that the blacktop is melting and sticking to the skates."