

# OUTDOORS

Recreation and News

## Pedalboaters recount voyage

Kevin Costner's *Waterworld* cost him approximately \$172 million; Steve Smith's real-life version cost considerably less but was more harrowing than the 28-year-old Londoner had planned.

"We were so poorly adapted to the sea," Smith said last week. "It's like we were floating on top of the world, trapped above the clouds.

"Our world was lifeless above the water, but strangely enough we were sitting on something complex. It was like being in space."

Smith and fellow traveler Jason Lewis completed the Portugal-to-Fort Lauderdale, Fla., leg of their human-powered circumnavigation in 111 days on a pedalboat.

Unfortunately, they had food and supplies for only 100 days. Half-rations became mandatory.

"We are surprised that it was physically easier and mentally harder than we imagined," said Smith when in Houston. "Call it blissful ignorance."

Rousseau and his tenets of the noble savage aside, the two travelers had been going native before hitting Florida. Smith and Lewis left Greenwich on July 12 and cycled to Rye on the south coast of England. From there, they pedaled their boat over the English Channel to France and

then bicycled through Europe to Portugal.

On Oct. 13, they left Portugal only to make land again in Madeira to wait on some boat parts 11 days later. The leg then began again Nov. 5.

Rather than look at the massive task of pedaling 4,500 miles at two knots per hour, Smith said they concentrated on small goals: making it to the morning porridge, getting to afternoon tea.

They were burning 4,500 calories a day while pedaling in two-hour shifts for 24 hours. To allow for more regular sleep, they began four-hour turns in the pedals.

"It was very important to do what we do well and keep the mind occupied," Smith said.

Still, the constant pounding of the unforgiving sea was wearing them down. The morale of the crew of two was spiraling downward.

"Our moods became very black," Smith said. "There was a lack of sleep, and our judgment had been impaired."

Rest became mandatory. They tossed a coin to determine who would get the bed and who would have to sleep in the compartment where they stored the trash.

"It smelled worse than imagined," said Lewis, who lost the flip. "It was very uncomfortable."

Finally, on Feb. 17, Lewis and Smith made landfall in Fort Lauderdale amid an overwhelming rush of sensations. For 111 days, the voices they heard were their own and that of the ocean. As they made their way up the Intercoastal Waterway, strange, familiar sounds startled them back to civilization.

"It was an incredibly intense ex-

perience," Smith said. "The smell and noise of an urban area was overwhelming."

Smith and Lewis have been raising funds by lecturing. The United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization has sanctioned the project, called Pedal for the Planet. Donations can be sent to Nancy Sanford, P.O. Box 801, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 33731, or call (813) 822-4783.

From Florida to Houston, Smith was on a touring bike with panniers. Lewis was voyaging on in-line skates to Little Rock, Ark., on his way to San Francisco. Lewis will then navigate the Pacific on the pedalboat by himself to Alaska. He and Lewis will be reunited in 1997 in Hong Kong.

"It's better this way," Lewis said. "That way we won't be in each other's pockets."

Lewis will ride his touring bike to Alaska, where he'll kayak across the Yukon and cycle down the Bering Strait.

And what of life, then, Mr. Lewis? From an environmental research scientist, he has become a world traveler, something he wouldn't trade for anything.

"I find myself a different person," said Lewis. "This is incredibly fulfilling."

"I had a bicycle because I couldn't afford a car. But now, I can see the world without a glass window in front of me."

Mark Evangelista covers cycling for the Chronicle. His notebook appears on Thursdays. E-mail him at [mark.evangelista@chron.com](mailto:mark.evangelista@chron.com) or fax him at (713) 217-1315.



**Cycling  
Notebook**  
Mark  
Evangelista