

# The Prague Times-Herald

*Oklahoma Certified City - Home Of The Kolache Festival*



**Around-the-world traveler:** Jason Lewis of England stopped in Prague last Tuesday to rest. He was roller blading to Oklahoma City as part of his journey to travel around the world by leg power.

## Around The World Traveler Stops In Prague

By: Sharon Maggard

You may have seen him resting on the corner of Main and Broadway or rollerblading down Highway 62. He is a young man on a mission to travel around the world who made his way through Prague, Oklahoma, on Tuesday, August 22.

Jason Lewis, 27, of London, England, left Miami, Florida, five weeks ago by way of in-line skates. "I average 60 miles a day on the skates," Jason stated. The way he arrived in

Florida is another story.

Jason and friend, Steven Smith, age 28, pedaled the Atlantic Ocean in a 26-foot craft. The 4,500 mile sea voyage took 111 days using only their leg power to pedal through high tides and thunderstorms on a voyage from Portugal to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Their world expedition began in London on July 12, 1994, when the two set out on a bike ride across Europe.

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## World Traveler

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Steven had quit his job as an environmental research scientist in Paris and asked Lewis, a musician and singer in a band, to join him. Steven's decision for the trip was brought about when he became restless in his job and went through a period of not feeling happy with what he was doing with his life. He felt he should be doing something more worthwhile.

It took three years to plan the trip, including one year building the boat. After they built their 5 foot wide boat, "Moksha", they gathered supplies and began looking for sponsors. "Neither of us had experience at sea. If we had, we probably wouldn't be doing this," Steven is quoted as saying from a Miami newspaper. "Ignorance is bliss." The two quickly learned the dangers of pedaling through the ocean around big ships.

They took turns pedaling the boat on two-hour shifts, knees aching from traveling against the wind and rain. Between the shifts Lewis played his guitar and wrote poetry to pass the time. Smith read and wrote in his journal. Days would pass without the two having a conversation. Sometimes they wouldn't utter more than 'pass the salt' to each other. There were two close calls during the sea voyage. A whale came up directly under their boat and an oil tanker missed them by only 20 feet.

Theircircumnavigation of the globe using only leg power has been called "Pedal for the Planet" and one of their sponsors is UNESCO, which is United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization. Another sponsor is The Council for Education in World Citizenship (C.E.W.C.).

With the aid of these two institutions the team will visit forty schools

in fifteen countries to raise funds for their expedition. Students will be encouraged to share their interests, opinions and concerns for the future with other young people around the world. The students will also help put together a time capsule to be opened in 2094 to show our way of life. The capsule will contain many items including art work, drama and music.

Pedal for the Planet aims to encourage people to become more aware of international issues and each individuals responsibilities within a shared environment.

Jason was passing through Prague on his way to Oklahoma City where he will visit some schools. He has a slide presentation and videos and speaks to students about environmental and cultural issues. Jason hopes to broaden the understanding of how people live in other parts of the world and to stress the importance of tolerance of other people.

"I have no time schedule, I am not on a race. My main interest is meeting people," Jason said. "I had never skated before. I purchased the roller blades in Florida and started skating from there. I want to stress to students they don't have to be an expert to achieve things

in life. The right attitude is more important than big muscles. I want to let kids know they can achieve anything they want out of life."

Jason and Steven split up and went their separate ways after they left Florida. Steven is traveling by bicycle. The two will meet up again in San Francisco, California, in October where they will leave on their boat for a 6,000 mile journey to Japan. Their around-the-world trip is expected to take 3-1/2 years.