

TUESDAY

The Pueblo Chieftain

128 years...and still on the job

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World traveler shows boat that pedaled ocean

By YVETTE S. PADILLA
The Pueblo Chieftain

This weekend, Puebloans will have the chance to see for themselves the pedal boat that two Englishmen used to travel across the Atlantic Ocean earlier this year.

The Atlantic expedition was only one stretch of a 29,000-mile, human-powered trip around the world deemed "Pedal for the Planet."

With the trip still in progress, Jason Lewis and Steve Smith are the adventurous travelers.

The pedal boat will be on public display from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday behind Dutch Clark Stadium. A river mural in honor of "Pedal for the Planet" also will be unveiled.

Lewis has been in Pueblo since Sept. 10 when he was in-line skating through town and got hit by a car. Both his legs were broken.

Although physically unable to continue the trip, Lewis, sometimes joined by Smith, has since been visiting local schools telling students of the journey.

"We have visited 12 schools in Pueblo and three in Colorado Springs and the response has been incredible," he said.

The school visits were a planned part of "Pedal for the Planet" from the beginning. The aim was to "inspire, enrich and empower the minds of young people" and to encourage them to become more aware of international issues and their responsibility to protect the environment.

"The people of Pueblo is where the true value of this town lies."

Jason Lewis
world traveler

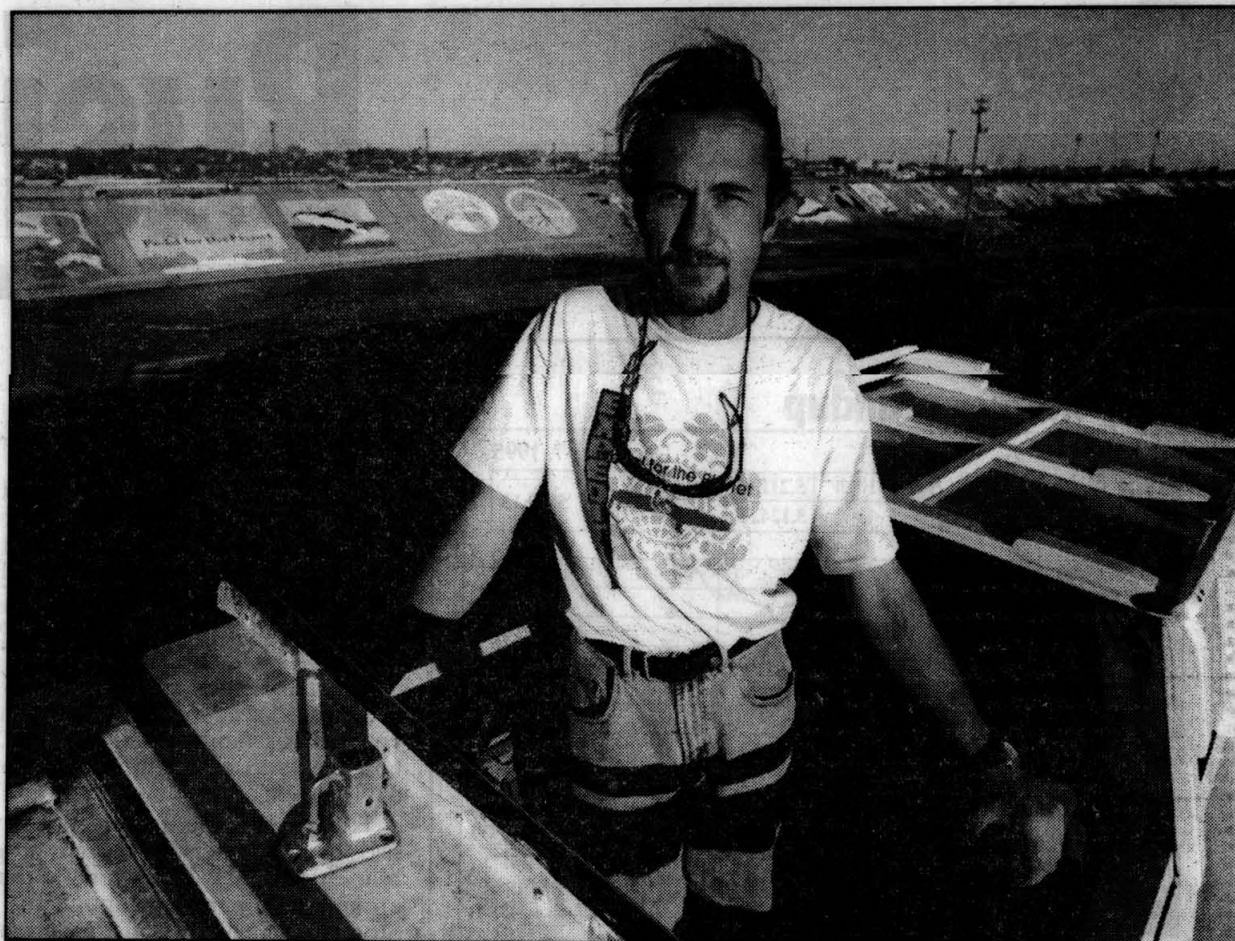
In October, the student body of Heritage Elementary School held a fund-raiser to raise money for the trip and presented Lewis and Smith with a \$250 check.

As a way to thank the students, the pair said they would try to transport their pedal boat from Florida to Pueblo for the students to see.

With the help of a car donated by USC student Scott Davis, the boat arrived in Pueblo on Monday.

"We gave a lecture at USC about two months ago and Scott came forward and donated his car to tow the boat from Florida," Lewis explained. "We put a hitch on it and used the \$250 from Heritage, along with another donation from Hyd-Mech Pueblo Inc., for gas money."

After getting the car in condition to travel, expenses totaled some \$1,000.



Chieftain photo by Bryan Kelsen

Jason Lewis in his pedal boat near the levee where mural is being painted to note his efforts.

"It would have cost us about \$5,000 to ship it," Lewis said.

Lewis and cameraman Kenny Brown made the trip from Ft. Lauderdale in 34 hours.

"As for the car, Scott told us to sell it when we were done with it and to put the money toward our trip," Lewis said. "That was pretty incredible."

Lewis' eyes lit up as he spoke of the 60-by-50 foot mural painted in honor of the expedition by some Pueblo students and Cynthia Ramu of the Pueblo Levee

Mural Project.

The mural depicts a map of the world that will keep track of the "Pedal for the Planet" journey. The pedal boat is painted underneath.

"The mural should be finished by Sunday so parents and kids can come and see it," Lewis said. "It's a way to keep the kids actively involved in the expedition."

Allowing ample time for his legs to fully heal, Lewis plans to go visit his parents for Christmas. He hasn't seen them

in two years.

"After Christmas, if my legs get better, I plan to take the boat to San Francisco and come back here in the spring and continue the trip," he said. "Without a doubt, Pueblo is the best town we've ever been to. . . . It was inspiring to get good feedback from the kids. They really got into it and that's what makes it all worth it."

"The people of Pueblo is where the true value of this town lies," he added.