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Open road, miles of ocean free the mind

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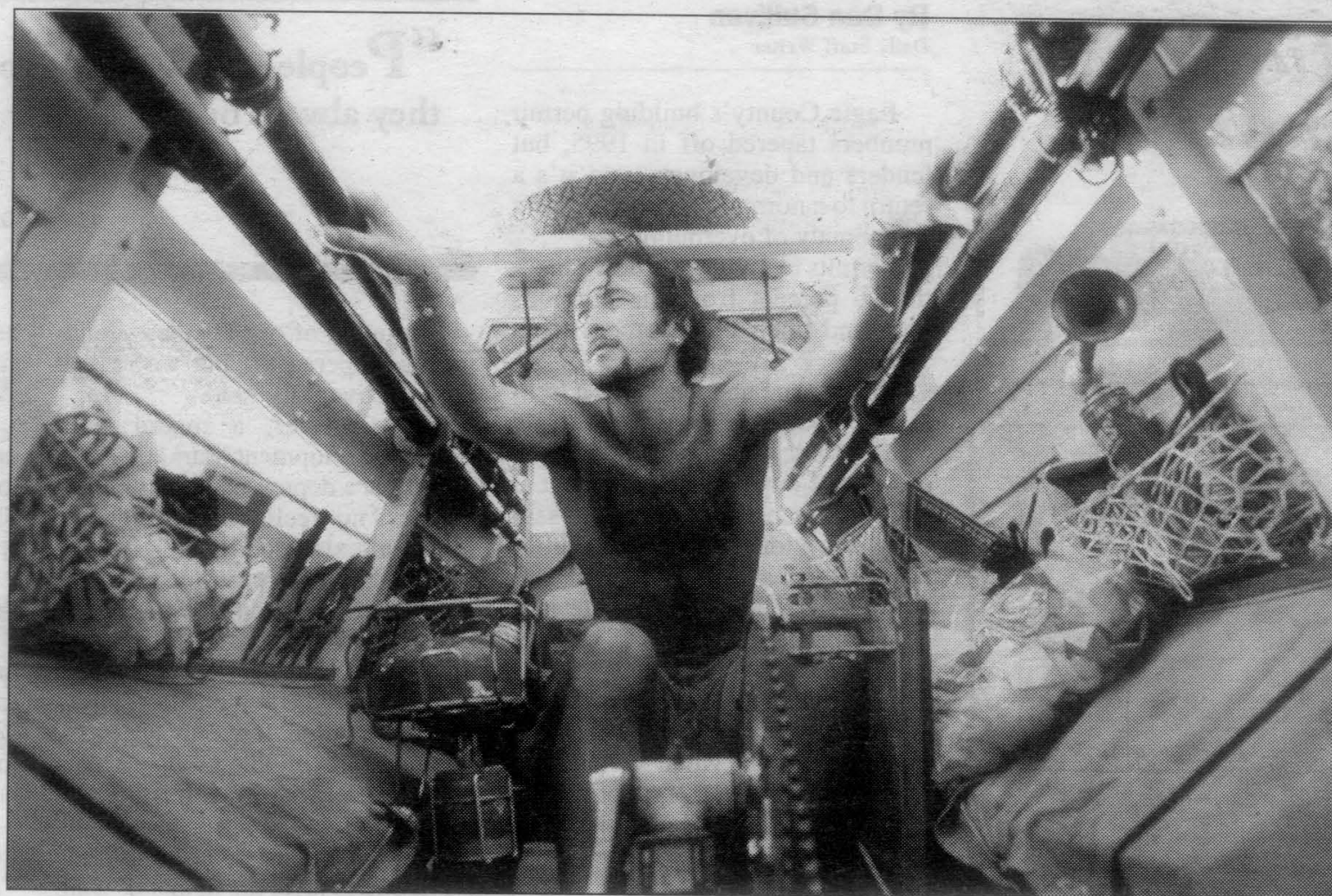
There is a certain peace that comes with traveling, a solace discovered as miles of road and ocean blend together. No one knows that more than British travelers Steve Smith and Jason Lewis.

For Smith and Lewis the ultimate adventure is to see the world, live simply and share their experience with anyone they meet. But the duo has taken that dream one step further, traveling with nothing more than their own power to sustain them. Their trip is the first human-powered circumnavigation of the planet.

Smith, who stopped in Vail to visit friends and present a slide show of the progress of their epic journey, came up with the idea. While working in Paris in the summer of 1991, he decided he wanted to travel the world without the benefit of motors or sails, using only human strength and perseverance.

The journey, which has become more of a pilgrimage than an expedition, would take them over land and sea with what Smith describes as "nothing more than the power of our minds and bodies."

To make the trip across the Atlantic Ocean a special watercraft named Moksha, a Sanskrit word meaning "freedom," was designed using bicycle pedals for power and ropes connected to a rudder to guide them. The craft, made entirely of wood, took 13 months to construct. Just 26 feet in length with a width of a mere 5 feet, this sea craft would



Jason Lewis takes his shift on the pedals of Moksha somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. Lewis and travel partner Steve Smith are circling the globe — on boats, bikes and blades.

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become their home.

After three years of planning and raising money, the British duo began the first leg of their journey on July 12, 1994, cycling from London to the English south coast. The following day they put Moksha to the test, pedaling across the English Channel. They spent the next six weeks cycling south through Europe, stopping in France, Spain and Portugal until they

reached the Algarve port of Lagos in September '94, where they would begin an unprecedented journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

"It was one of the last great adventures which has never been achieved before," Smith said. "I had never done any tour cycling before we left. It was, in every respect, totally new to us. We never spent a night at sea before, so it was a nervous moment

for us. By 5 p.m. that evening, it was a very lonely feeling."

Smith and Lewis began their journey across the Atlantic Ocean on Oct. 13, 1994. Their destination: Miami, where they would begin the second leg of their extraordinary journey. The 4,500-mile Atlantic crossing lasted 111 days, averaging 40 miles a day at a maximum speed of 3 knots. With 107 days of dehydrated food, a

system for purifying sea water to drink and nothing but miles of ocean, Smith and Lewis learned a lot about themselves and each other.

"The most important thing we learned early on was not to think of Miami," Smith said. "We thought of the next hour or two ahead. We looked forward to breakfast or our next break but that was as far ahead as we thought. After three days on the water you get used to the motion but it took about five weeks, mentally, for me not to get angry with the sea for knocking things over. "The most demanding thing was dealing with someone else in such a cramped space for so long, the mental clash of egos. So we did have some silly arguments about nothing."

But dealing with each other was only one obstacle the duo had to face. Storms and rough seas would wipe out an entire day's effort, sometimes putting them 50 miles from where they began. Then there was the occasional visitor.

"We swam every single day of the trip and never saw a shark," Smith said. "But one night we had a whale banging on the hull. He lifted us up, out of the water, and then there were dolphins who would stop to take a look before moving on."

Then there were the salt sores. The constant presence of salt on their skin created painful, blistering sores with no relief. But no matter what hardship they faced, Smith and Lewis were focused on reaching Miami by themselves.

"If we had to be rescued by something that wasn't human-powered we

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