

# IN THE SKATE MAGAZINE

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## EXPEDITION UPDATE

In June of '94, Englishmen Jason Lewis and Steven Smith set out on a mission to complete the first human-powered circumnavigation of the earth. Their goal: To show just what human power and spirit are capable of. When the two set out from the Greenwich Meridian Line in London back in '94, they anticipated completion of the odyssey during the summer of '98. The duo successfully completed a 4,500-mile, 111-day Atlantic crossing by pedal vessel from Lagos, Portugal, to Miami. They then split up for the 4,300-mile trek across the United States: Steven took a southern route by bike while Jason opted for a Rocky Mountain route on inlines. Within three months, Smith made it to San Francisco without incident. Jason wasn't as fortunate: With half the US behind him, Jason was hit from behind by a car and suffered multiple fractures in both legs, as well as other injuries.

When *InLine* last reported on the Expedition (March '96), Lewis was recuperating in Pueblo, Colorado. The accident set the planned timeframe

back by one year. Since then, Jason has overcome medical odds. He not only recovered before anticipated, but after cycling from San Francisco to Pueblo to from Pueblo. Lamm, even though she had never ridden more than seven miles at any one time, kept up in spite of the 150 pounds of gear attached to her bike. The two averaged 75 miles per day to finish the 1,650-mile journey in less than four weeks.

In October, Lewis and Smith will cycle to Ecuador, where the pair will work with children through local schools. In addition to giving presentations about their voyage, Smith and Lewis will show videos by students from throughout the world that are part of a program they've started to promote cross-cultural understanding. They're currently in search of video camera donations so that wherever they stop, they can hand out loaner cameras to local children to make videos about their lives. The tapes will travel with the Expedition and will be shown worldwide.

When April rolls around, Lewis and Smith will climb back into Moksha, their 26' x 4' x 4' pedal vessel to tackle the most grueling part of the odyssey — an 11,000-mile, nine-month voyage across the Pacific to China. Then, in spring of '98, the two will cycle through India, Pakistan, Central Asia, Russia, East and West Europe, arriving back at the Greenwich Meridian Line in London late in '98 or early in '99.

Because Lewis' accident depleted the Expedition's barebones funds, Smith and Lewis are actively seeking any form of sponsorship. To make a donation or to receive information, contact the Expedition voicemail at 800-943-0114 or Nancy Sanford at 813-822-4783. For updates, check the Expedition website at <http://www.tach.net/public/orgs/pedal/pedalplanet.html>.

Jason Lewis would like to thank his inline sponsors: Kryptonics, Harbinger, Mike Margolis at Sportsman's Paradise and Kyttec.

—Natalie Kurylko

## BACKWARD BAN

Along the popular Lakefront path in Chicago, members of the city's skate patrol routinely skate backward to instruct novice skaters. So when a possible backward skate ban was being discussed by the city, the skate community got panicky.

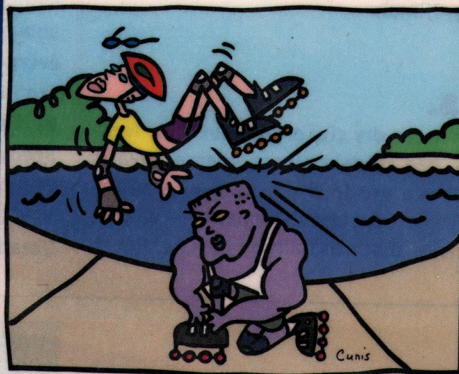
"There was never a ban," insists Joan Fencik, a deputy general counsel for the Chicago Park District. "But we met with the summer mobile unit [police on bikes], and they see most of the accidents. Skating backward came up as a frequent cause of accidents."

The plan, absurd as it was, never got past the proposal stage. Before it went to the Commissioners of the Chicago Park District, Michael Benham, executive director of Skate!Chicago, convinced Fencik to shelve it. "In the busiest areas, about 2,600 people pass through the path an hour, so the potential for contact is high," says Benham. "Ambulances wait out there on Saturdays.

But the backward ban would wreck the skating and not improve safety one bit."

The Park District can make changes to the Park District Operations every two years, so revisions could be made to the reckless skating clause. "All it takes is one spectacular accident. Then the crazy ideas float," says Benham.

This time, however, the crisis seems to have passed. "There's room for everybody," assures Fencik. "But if nine out of 10 accidents are caused by skating backward, then we'll have the ban."



Sweltering August temperatures and shoddy road conditions on Route 66 didn't deter Lewis' resolve as he worked his way across the country.

