

'Keep dreamin'

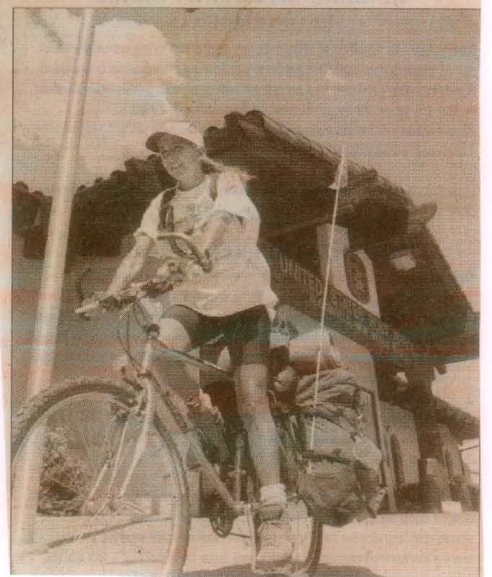


Jason Lewis (above) trails on his in-line skates as April Mann cruises on. The two are continuing their trek to San Francisco, Calif., after passing through Bloomfield. (Right) carrying sleeping bags, clothes, food and other items, escort April Mann prepares to depart from the Bloomfield Post Office after a short break on her cross-country journey.

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LOCAL





Jason Lewis enjoys a brief respite from his cross-country journey as he removes his in-line skates before buying stamps at the Bloomfield Post Office.

Man skates across America, carrying message for kids

For some people, a summer's dream is being out on the open road just rolling along, seeing the country from coast to coast.

It may sound like a carefree way to spend the summer, but it requires a lot of sweat when it's done on in-line skates.

Jason Lewis of England rolled through Bloomfield Friday on the second leg of his journey around the world using only human power.

Lewis started the journey in 1994 with partner Steve Smith. Lewis and Smith peddled a 26-foot boat across the Atlantic Ocean in 111 days to reach Florida.

Smith then bicycled to San Francisco.

Lewis will meet him there and then the two will use the peddle boat to cross the Pacific Ocean to Australia.

It's all being done with no corporate sponsors.

"We still haven't found a sponsor," Lewis said. "It's great in a way. We don't have to wear all this stuff and say 'I love Nike.'"

The team is sponsored by individuals who pay \$20 to be put on a mailing list for a newsletter.

"We have about 1,000 people making it happen," he said.

A company does supply Lewis with wheels to keep the journey going.

Every 300 miles it's time for new wheels to go on the skates.

So far, Lewis has gone through 220

wheels.

In an eight-hour day, he racks up an average of 50 miles.

By today Lewis and his companion, April Mann, should be leaving Shiprock on U.S. 64 and headed to Flagstaff, Ariz.

Lewis hopes they can speed the pace to 80-90 miles a day as soon as the mountainous terrain ends.

The journey hasn't been easy.

In September 1995 Lewis was skating to Pueblo, Colo., when he was hit by a drunk driver.

Both his legs were broken and he spent 10 months in Pueblo recuperating.

It was then he met Mann, a fifth-grade teacher in Rye, Colo.

Lewis is using the tour around the world as a way to motivate children to achieve high goals.

Lewis took the peddle boat to Mann's

school. She said it has become a powerful teaching tool.

"The kids could crawl all over the boat and see how it works," Mann said. "The world became a smaller place. There have been more neat programs I've developed with the expedition."

Mann believed in the concept of Lewis' project so much, she joined him on his journey to San Francisco.

She can be seen biking along behind Lewis with their camping gear.

Before this trek, Mann hadn't cycled more than seven miles at a

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April Mann

time.

"You don't need to be a world-class athlete to do this," Lewis said.

"If you want to do it, you can."

Although the first reason for the trip is to fulfill a personal goal, the second is to inspire children.

We're inspiring "kids to think about their lives," Lewis said. "Follow your dreams."

He said negative influences today make it difficult for children to believe in a dream.

Lewis and Smith have set up an

Internet address where schools can connect with other schools, even schools in foreign countries.

When Lewis finishes the expedition he wants to continue to work with children, but for now it's one mile at a time.

For more information on the expedition or to find out how teachers can use the trip for classroom activities call (800) 943-0114.