



BILL KENNEDY/Sun-Journal

Bob Michaud, left, and friend Kevin Savory, relax following the conclusion of a 3,000-mile bicycle trip across the country. They graduated from college in June and decided to take the trip before settling down into nine-to-five jobs and two-week vacations.

Pair bicycles 3,000 miles across U.S.

By DAVE BOARDMAN
Sun-Journal Staff Writer

AUBURN — An Auburn man and a friend from New York last week completed a 3,000-mile bicycle trip across the country as a last fling before settling down to a less carefree world of work.

"It's been something I always wanted to do and figured it was the only time I'd have this kind of time on my hands," Robert Michaud said Monday, three days after completing the ride from Seattle to Buffalo, N.Y.

Michaud, a 1986 graduate of Edward Little High School, made the five-week trip with Kevin Savory, a Grand Island, N.Y., native. Michaud and Savory graduated from Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y., this spring.

Both mechanical engineering majors with jobs set to begin soon, the two said they saw the trip as a last chance to explore the country for an extended period before starting a life of two-week vacations and limited chances of taking off for longer periods of time.

Michaud will begin a job at Boise Cascade in Rumford later this year.

The cross-country trip began as talk in September when the two started their final year in college. They began planning in March. But they said their training didn't really begin until they headed east from Seattle.

"The first week and a half of our trip was really our training," Michaud said.

While the scenery of the Washington mountains proved to be one of the highlights of their trip, it was the people along the way who gave their journey meaning, they said.

From a young Montana couple who helped Michaud and Savory when one of the bikes broke down 100 miles from a repair shop to the people along the way offering lodgings or pointing them toward attractions, it was people who made the experience worthwhile.

"People like that really make the trip because you do run into problems," said Michaud, whose bike was plagued with flat tires and other mechanical problems along the way.

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"That was really the whole gist of the trip, to see America, to see what the people are like," Michaud said.

Michaud and Savory both said Minnesotans top honors as friendliest, and said Wisconsin drivers — along with Washington truckers — proved to be among the rudest on the road.

While the two cyclists may be getting ready to start more regimented lifestyles in a working world, neither has given up the prospects of future trips. Next, Michaud said, is Europe.

That's a plan his mother, Ruth, said she and her husband, Richard, haven't heard of yet. It sounds as though they might still be recovering from the past five weeks.

"I was scared to death," Ruth Michaud said, but she admitted, "This was the time to do it."

Robert Michaud said he knows that after an experience like this, he's just getting started on what could become a series of bike trips.

"Once you get bitten with a bug like this, you've got to keep doing it," Michaud said.

Deadline extended on signs

LEWISTON — The deadline for removing signs on buildings owned by Lincoln Street Associates and occupied by the F.W. Webb Co. has been postponed by a month to July 16.

Lawyer Ron Lebel, who represented the city of Lewiston in its legal action to have the signs removed, said a Maine Supreme Judicial Court decision regarding the signs did not award the city attorney's fees for the appeal. Processing Lebel's motion to get the approximately \$2,000 took about a month, meaning the Androscoggin Superior Court decision the law court upheld did not become final until May.

Delay seen on free use of road

By GLEN CHASE
Sun-Journal Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — Turnpike officials are worried that delays in granting state environmental permits could bar Lewiston traffic from free use of the Maine Turnpike's Exit 13 interchange once construction is completed.

But Deborah Richard, director of the Bureau of Land Quality Control, said the Maine Turnpike Authority's request to install a new barrier toll system "is a fairly simple one" that is being reviewed along with a Maine Turnpike Authority plan to widen the southern end of the turnpike from two to three lanes.

MTA Executive Director Paul Violette said Monday that permits needed for two new toll barriers planned for West Gardiner and New Gloucester have yet to be approved by the state Department of Environmental Protection. Without the two new barriers, tolls will continue to be collected at the Lewiston interchange, he said.

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Protection holds a public hearing Aug. 8 on the turnpike widening project.

While the DEP isn't involved in the barrier project, Richard said, "The issues are too related to separate them."

But Richard noted that given the nature of the new barriers being proposed, described as "fairly insignificant changes" by Richard, she expects relatively fast action. The basic request involves adjustments to the roadway at the points where the barriers would be installed, according to Richard.

By installing the New Gloucester and West Gardiner barriers, the current ticket system would be eliminated north of Gray, according to Violette.

For Lewiston, that means the roadway leading to the turnpike will be open to local traffic.