

South Africans touring America by

by Djuna Jones
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A simple break from normal activities will provide two South African brothers with precious memories.

Physical challenge, harmony with nature and the opportunity to meet Americans provoked a vision for An-

thony Lawler, 19 and his sibling Greg, 22.

Both men work as computer programmers, but have vowed to also enjoy the finer things in life.

A potential route was researched and plotted by the pair, who hitchhiked across England, Scotland and Wales earlier this year.



Anthony and Greg Lawler, brothers from South Africa, visited with the family of Rev. Roy Spore at an overnight stop during a 3,200 mile bicycle trip from Florida to California.

Then, the wheels began to turn on May 28 as the duo embarked on a rigorous 3,250-mile bicycle trek from Miami Beach, Florida to Santa Barbara, California.

The task is no small feat for the athletes, who claim to have only biked a long-distance of 60 miles prior to this adventure.

The trip has been one of great pleasure for the Lawlers, highlighted by wondrous scenery and enthusiastic hospitality.

The state of Georgia created an extra challenge for the men, with 105 degree temperatures and never-ending hills.

The extensive travel is expected to take six to seven weeks, with riding maintained in the cooler portions of the day.

Anthony Lawler said, "We ride about 100 miles daily, five days per week. It has been fulfilling both physically and mentally."

Greg Lawler said basic necessities are carried in lightweight bundles at the rear of the bike.

He said, "We carry just a few changes of clothes, a sleeping bag, a tent and lots of water."

Added Anthony Lawler, "Part of the excitement is experiencing the sights and sound of outdoors. It just wouldn't be the same if you stayed in a hotel."

Thus, church yards have been

deemed as the safest place to pitch a tent for the night. This decision alone has offered new friendships to the cyclist.

They approached a pastor in Bogota (southwest of Paris) asking for permission to camp overnight. He offered them a place in his home.

A telephone call later, the Lawlers were scheduled to meet the family of Rev. Roy Spore of Whitesboro's First United Methodist Church.

Spore said, "Taking a stranger into your home isn't something you do every day."

The pair finally arrived about 7 p.m. on Friday, following 112 miles of travel, and a problems with a broken bicycle spoke.

Spore said, "It was a pleasant surprise when they arrived. We weren't sure they were going to make it that far."

He described the encounter as genuinely interesting. Spore said, "It was a real joy to be being able to spend time with people from a different culture.. You have the ability to explore both the differences and the similarities."

The Spore family provided the men with their first taste of true Mexican food during their stay in Whitesboro.

The brothers departure was early Monday morning after receiving a book

of stamps and instructions to write.

In turn, the Spore family promised to write to the parents of the Lawlers, providing assurance of safety and progress.

By mid-day Wednesday, the Lawlers should be nearing Amarillo, approximately 350 miles away.

Although the men have yet to re-

bicycle

ceive a family reaction on their trip, they noted that most people question their sanity.

Greg Lawler defended their decision stating, "This will be something I can always remember. When I'm 100 years old, I don't have to wonder why I didn't do things that interested me. This will be a vivid memory."

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