

# The Pueblo Chieftain

134th year . . . and still on the job

## ROUTE IN DOUBT

Amtrak's Southwest  
Chief faces  
budget ax. **10B**

## TRAVELING MAN

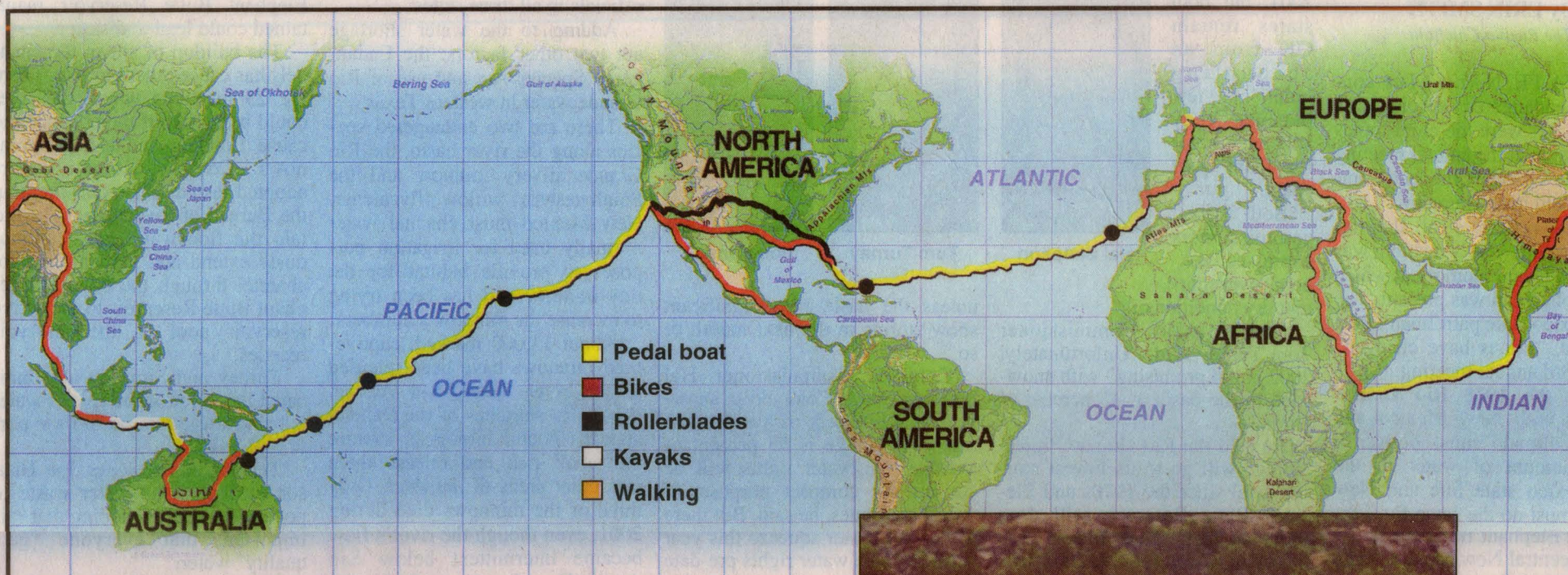
Round-the-world odyssey  
flavors 'Chicken Soup.' **8A**

## HE'S A PLAYER!

Perks wins fifth major in  
uncanny fashion. **1B**

M O N D A Y

MARCH 25, 2002



# WORLD CLASS

'Chicken Soup'  
series adds  
globe-hopping  
traveler to list

By LORETTA SWORD  
*The Pueblo Chieftain*

Excerpts from the chronicles of a round-the-world expedition that started in England and made an unexpected detour in Pueblo have landed in "Chicken Soup for the Traveler's Soul."

The book is the latest in a series of "Chicken Soup" books compiled by New York Times best-selling authors Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Steve Zikman.

The chapter "The Jennys and the Aprils" was written by Rye resident Jason Lewis, a transplanted Englishman who started out in 1994 with a friend to circumnavigate the globe entirely on human power.

Pueblo Chieftain readers met Lewis the next year, while he was recovering from two broken legs caused by a collision with a car as he was in-line skating through the Rocky Mountain West.

He used the hiatus from the road to share his journey with elementary students from numerous area schools. That's where he met April Abril, the "April" in his story, which now shares space with contributions from Charles Kuralt, Robin Leach, James A. Michener and Maya Angelou, to name a few.

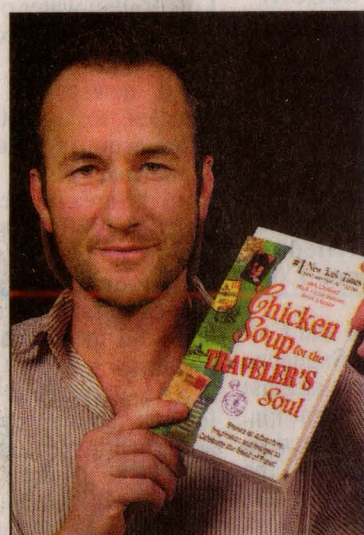
Abril was teaching fifth grade at Rye Elementary and was so taken with what Lewis had shared with her students that she decided — quite to the surprise and disapproval of many in the community as well as her teen-aged daughter — to join Lewis when he resumed his journey.

Chieftain readers met her in 2001, after she had spent a summer helping Lewis pedal a homemade boat across 1,200 miles of the South Pacific from the Solomon Islands to the Australian coast — and just before she departed for a three-month bicycle trek across Australia, landing at the northwest coast near Darwin.

Thousands of students around the world have followed "Expedition 360" via a Web site, either on their own or through formal classroom exchanges.

Abril has used her experiences and Lewis' to teach her own students about their connection to the world at large, and to help them see how similar they are to children thousands of miles away.

One recent class of hers assembled a photo album and scrapbook about themselves and their lives that Abril carried with her



Chieftain photo/Chris McLean

Jason Lewis writes about some of his exploits in 'Chicken Soup for the Traveler's Soul.'

on her last leg of the expedition. They also made a map of the trip for students at the Denver School for the Deaf and Blind, using dried peas, beans, macaroni and other items to mark the route and certain landmarks along the way.

She and Lewis also visit foreign classrooms as they traverse the globe. They've visited more than 400 so far, she said.

"As an educator, it's important for me to bring the big picture to my students and to help them realize they're world citizens," Abril said during an interview last week.

While in Australia, she said, she learned much about the methods, values and importance of agriculture to many small communities and has incorporated that into her own lessons and subsequent postings on the Web.

"Agriculture plays a very similar role in those Australian towns and cities as it does all throughout Southern Colorado," she said.

Abril said she was drawn into taking part in Expedition 360 because of what she could do with it as an educator.

"I had thought some about traveling, but never really had any big dreams about it. I approached it at first totally from an educator's perspective," she said.

But she came back a changed person, and she treasures the education and growth she experienced as a human, and a woman whose life has been transformed by that growth.

Taking risks on such a journey, traveling beyond the known and the expected, she said, is more than an adventure.

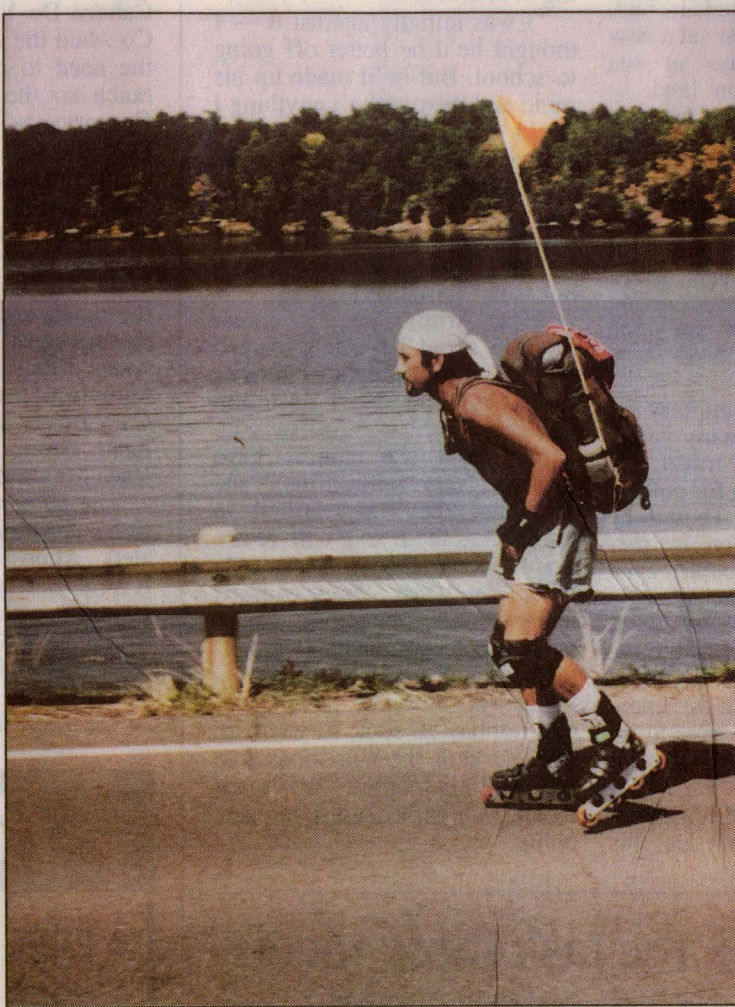
"It's a pilgrimage of the self. No matter what you initially set off for, there are things that are going to happen that will impact you as an individual. I have been strengthened by my experiences, and that is the most amazing thing."

Lewis said he decided to focus his "Chicken Soup" story on the unlikely participation of April and Jenny, a California woman who briefly joined the tour before



Courtesy photo/Expedition 360

April Abril takes a break from bicycling through Arizona in 1996 en route to San Francisco.



Courtesy photo/Expedition 360

Jason Lewis roller blades through Arkansas in 1995.

taking off on her own adventure after biking through Mexico. He said his own undertaking of such a journey is not all that remarkable, but theirs was life-changing and out-of-character in the minds of those who know them.

"I'm 34, I'm single, I have no children and nothing else to hold me back, so to say, so it's relatively easy for me to do something like this," he said.

But for a married woman, a mother and school teacher, taking such a leap took more courage and blind faith, he said, and probably resulted in deeper growth on all levels — physical, mental and spiritual.

As he says in his "Chicken Soup" story, Abril eventually showed her critics, even her

daughter, the importance of following one's own desires to "change the world from the inside out. She proved that you don't need to be an expert. You just need to begin."

Abril said her daughter eventually came to appreciate that "she has a mother who marches to a different drummer."

Anyone interested in following the expedition may do so by logging onto its website at [www.goals.com/expedition360/](http://www.goals.com/expedition360/).

Lewis hopes to return to Australia to begin the last leg of the journey sometime late in April or early May, if his fund-raising efforts have produced sufficient cash. Abril will join him after school is out, probably as a "base camp" operator this time.