

Long distance bicyclist pedaled way across Europe

By Paula Dittrick

"It's partly a sport. It's partly a mode of transportation," said Tim Fickenscher. He was describing long distance bicycling. "Not everyone is going to enjoy it," he said. The person who doesn't enjoy cycling but tries taking a vacation that way will probably find himself miserable, he warned.

Fickenscher, a senior, and Carrol Windrum, a UNL alumna, spent June and July of 1976 cycling in Europe. As art majors, their course ran from museum to museum while they pedaled across England, France, Germany and Switzerland.

Describing those months as a "fantastic time," Fickenscher said, "It was probably the only time when I didn't know what I was going to do the next day."

Although each day's activities were planned before leaving, Fickenscher said, the schedule was soon abandoned. Wind, rain and road conditions gauged the bicyclists' pace.

Fickenscher recommended that people should be in shape and should be accustomed to their bike before attempting such a trip in Europe.

He suggested individuals who would like to take a planned tour with a group seek information about the American Youth Hostel.

However, he said, if a person wants to travel at their own pace and plot their own course, they should plan their own trip.

He claimed his trip became more enjoyable after he quit worrying about traveling a certain distance each day. He said he got a different perspective of the sights and the people than many tourists see.

The pair traveled country roads and through smaller towns as much as possible.

"On a bike it doesn't make sense to go into a large city," Fickenscher said. "It's amazing we came out of Paris alive."

He said that if he bicycles in Europe again he will store his bike in a small town outside a large city and take a train into the city.

Calling it a lifestyle, Fickenscher said the bicyclist is always aware of his bike. The biggest travel problem is shifting between modes of transportation. He said he lost his bike for awhile when he left a train and got onto a ferry while the bike stayed on the train.

Bikes also are vulnerable because "the only thing keeping people out of your bags is a zipper," he noted. Although he said only a walking cane was stolen off their bikes he recalled glancing from a store window and seeing a woman hunched over the bikes.

Despite his suspicions, the woman was giving and not taking. She had placed

flowers on each of the bikes in accordance with a tradition that bicyclists should carry a plant.

The bikes made them appear less like tourists and helped them meet people, said Fickenscher. They met few hostile people. Only one person ever refused to let them camp on his land and another once questioned them so intensely that they decided to seek another campsite, he said.

Fickenscher said he knew some French. However, language differences posed few problems as most people spoke English.

He said people would become insulted if they refused an offer to use someone's bathroom or take some food. Fickenscher said their course included some commercial campsites as well as youth hostels so they would have access to a shower.

He said they carried an ice cream container to carry water, and use as a sink for

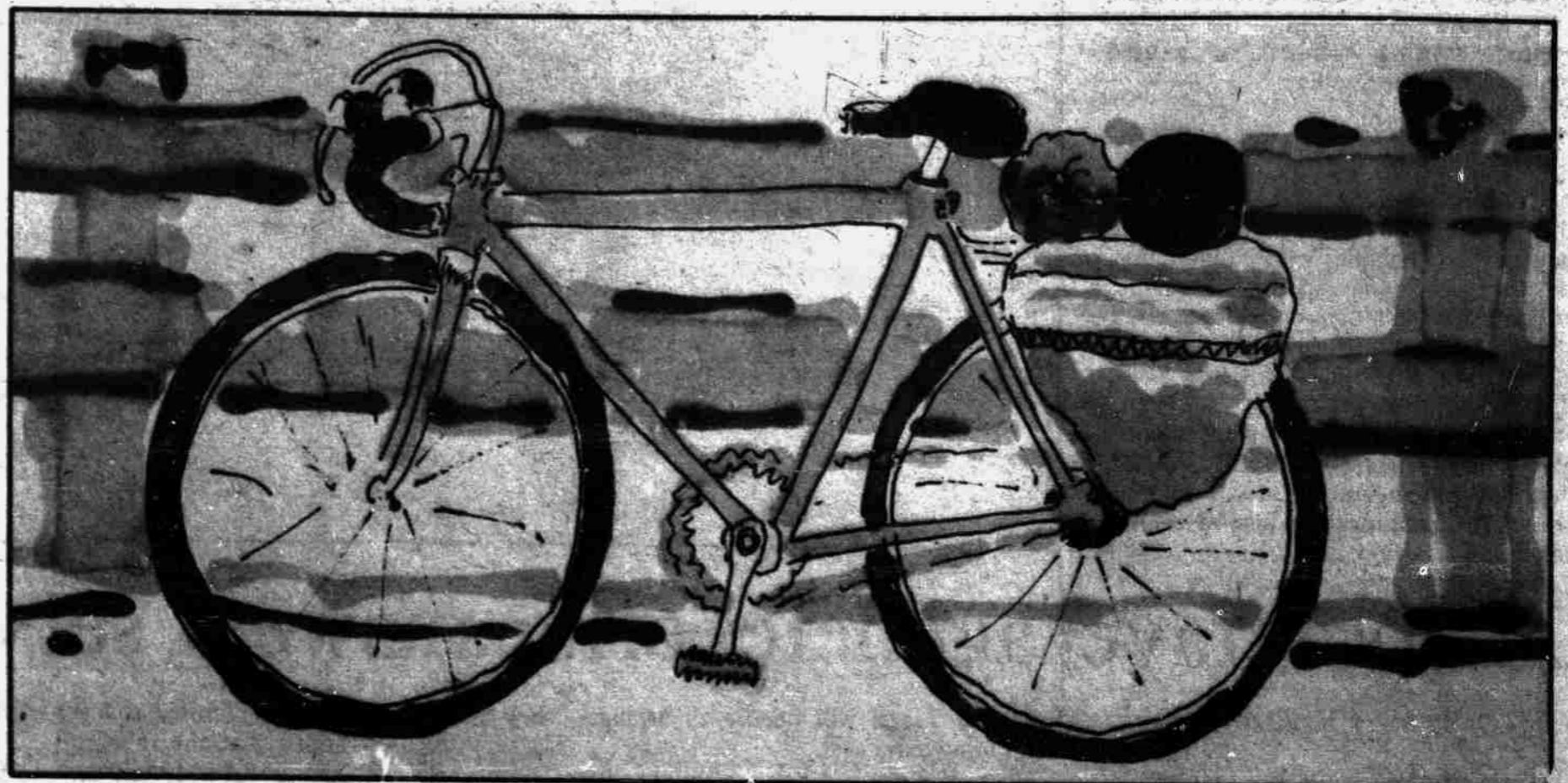
washing their clothes and hair. He said they also stopped at laundromats and washed their tent and sleeping bags.

Another stop was the daily visit to the markets. During the two months in Europe the pair only ate out five or six times, according to Fickenscher, who said he and Windrum tried to outdo one another's meals.

"We had a great time eating," he said, noting they never ate without a tablecloth and that they used cutglass wine goblets for every evening meal.

He said they tried to carry enough food for that day and always kept dried milk and soup along so they would not be caught without anything to eat.

Biking is a cheap way to travel Europe, according to Fickenscher, who said he and Windrum together spent about \$2,500.



Cather student has wunderlust, Afghanistan next on list

By Paula Dittrick

A sign which friends placed on his Cather Residence Hall door advertises "Everett Travel Agency." Andre Everett admits that he has some maps.

"I collect them like anything," he said, adding that he is happy to help anyone plan a trip anywhere; especially a bike trip.

His bed hangs from the ceiling above a shelf holding the file of maps and information brochures. Originally from Munich, Germany he said he can help the planning traveler plot routes across the United States, Europe, Africa and even Afghanistan.

"That's the one I plan to go to next," he said with a glance toward a pamphlet of Afghanistan.

He claims he travels to see both sights and to meet people. Attributing it to

wunderlust (the lust for wandering), he said he travels because "you've got to go."

With another glance toward the Afghanistan materials, Everett said "the primitive or underdeveloped countries where the people are not overly cultured have the noblest hearts in the whole world."

Claiming technology shuts people off from one another, Everett said he has heard that people in underdeveloped regions fight to have the traveler stay in their house.

He contrasted this with the experience he had bicycling in Kentucky where beer cans were thrown at him.

But he admitted he has met friendly people on these same trips. Everett has biked in 20 different countries and pedaled about 21,500 miles.

Although he speaks English, French and German, Everett said sign language and

crude illustrations can bridge any language gap.

"If someone can't understand you it's because they don't want to understand you," Everett said.

Obstacles such as a foreign language or money shortage make a trip more interesting, he added.

Everett plans to take a world tour five or six years after graduation. The trip he envisions will cost about \$1,500 a year and take between seven to 10 years, he speculated.

Noting he probably will not have the patience to wait until he has enough money saved to cover the total expense, he said he will leave with \$300.

"If you've got \$25,000 in your back pocket it's less interesting than if you've got 25 cents," he said with a smile.

Everett said he hopes to work along the way during this world trip and to get to know the people better by working for them.

He said he once took time from a tour in Norway to wash shrimp cases.

"I worked 23 hours and made \$100."

Everett said American bicyclists have more expensive, more streamlined equipment than most European travelers. He said his own bike is "falling apart but it's still going."

"If everything breaks and the bike keeps going then you didn't need all that stuff," he said. His own bike is a combination of American, German, Italian and Japanese parts as well as some string and tape he admitted.

Monday afternoon that bike stood in the bike racks under Cather Residence Hall still wet from Everett's trip downtown.

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