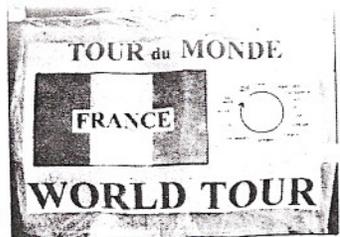


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'El Nino' to  
bring heavy  
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# The Inyo Register

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## Worldwide bike odyssey for two

Three years in the  
planning, trip is  
dream come true for  
couple from France

By Lynn Morra  
News Staff

A French couple is not waiting until they retire to see the world. For Parisians Valerie LeFranc, 29, and Fabien Maurice, 26, there is no time like the present. So after three years of planning and saving, they embarked on their two-wheeled world tour starting off the American portion of their 10,000 mile trek at Niagara Falls in the early part of May and pedaled their way across country at an average 50 miles per day into Bishop on Saturday, Aug. 23.

"It took us three days just to get through Death Valley last week in 120 to 130 degree heat at its worst," Maurice said. "We've never experienced such extreme heat so we camped at Furnace Creek and Panamint Springs to maintain our stamina."

Most travelers encounter some form of inconvenience or mishap when they cross foreign borders and these two adventurers had their own red tape hassle courtesy of the United States Immigration and Naturaliza-

tion Service. The INS personnel in Las Vegas refused to grant an extension on their 90-day visa in this country so they rented a car and drove to Mexico where they got another green card in the town of Tecate. They drove back to Las Vegas and they picked up where they left off after reoutfitting the 60-pound packs on their 24-speed bikes.

"Our reason for this journey is the desire to experience different cultures and share what we've seen with friends and family back home," said LeFranc. "We have a monthly newsletter we send via the Internet to keep everyone posted including an elementary class of 40 students thanks to the wonderful library system in America."

The duo plan to ride and camp their way to San Francisco via Yosemite with an estimated arrival date around Sept. 6 and do some sightseeing before flying to Japan on Sept. 15. From there they will travel through China, Thailand, India and Nepal which completes their 10 country-year-long odyssey sometime in May of 1998.

Anyone wishing to follow along the winding road and keep abreast of the world travelers can tap into their web site at:  
<http://www.club-internet.fr/perso/jpl>.



Fabien Maurice and Valerie LeFranc of Paris, France look forward to seeing more wonders of the world and making new friends along the international highway. Photo by Lynn Morra

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