

Couple foresakes jobs to bike across country

By Marybeth Bianchi
Feature Editor

It seems kind of crazy in this day and age, when good jobs are at a premium, that a couple gives up theirs to ride cross-country on their bicycles.

That's exactly what Tom and Jean Makris of San Francisco did and that's what brought them to Southport on a damp November day.

The couple took refuge from the rain at the Crow's Nest. Their 18-gear bicycles, laden with their belongings, leaned against the build-



Tom and Jean Makris of San Francisco put their jobs on hold and their belongings in storage and took off on a bicycle tour of the United States and Canada.

With little to tie them down -- no kids, no cars, no home -- they quit their jobs and put their belongings in storage and started their trek

ing as they sat inside writing letters to friends and family.

Earlier this year Tom Makris was working as a lawyer. Jean Makris was an accounting manager for a wine importer. They said after 15 years of office jobs they were ready for the great outdoors.

"We just decided we had to do something different," Tom said. "There will always be a job."

So in April, with little to tie them down -- no kids, no cars, no home -- they quit their jobs and put their belongings in storage in Denver, Colo., and started their trek.

This wasn't really an unusual whim for this particular couple, who met in Paris in 1979 and have been married 11 years. Jean had bicycled from Seattle to Maine two years before and had run in three marathons. Tom said he comes from a "most adventurous" family. His parents, who took off on a similar excursion

but on their sailboat, thought the Makrises' plan was great. Jean said her more conservative midwestern family "thinks I live on the moon."

But nevertheless, the couple spent the first two months traversing back and forth over the Continental Divide, crossing it a total of eight

times. "If there's a paved pass, we rode over it," Jean said. "We spent the first two months over 5,000 feet."

By August they were in Chicago, and then headed up into Canada biking around the Great Lakes.

All along the way they found friends who would put them up for a night or two, or else they found accommodations at campgrounds. On particularly inclement days they treated themselves to the comfort of a hotel room.

Although they followed their own itinerary eastward, traveling south the Makrises followed a route published by Bikecentennial, a bicycle travel association. Section two of the Virginia-to-Florida bicycle route brought them to Southport.

"You probably get a fair amount of bikers through here," Tom said, pointing out that the maps are well-used by bicyclists.

The brochure includes a detailed map of the Cape Fear area taking bikers across the ferry and right through downtown Southport. After the N. C. 211 straightaway, the route winds along back roads to Shallotte and south to Myrtle Beach and on to Florida, the final destination.

The couple said of all they roads they've traveled so far, they've really enjoyed those in North Carolina the most.

"One of the things we're doing is to decide where we want to live in the country. We've put (North Carolina) right at the top of any place we could possibly live," Jean said.

After wintering in Florida, the Makrises will begin making plans for their next adventure.

"The basic plan is to go to Europe and do the same thing next year.

"We've had a great experience," Tom said. "People ask if we're going to write a book, but there's not any exciting stories to tell."

Jean agreed. "We thought all this out" so there were few surprises along the way.

In service

Basic training

Airman Jason M. Novak has graduated from Air Force basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training the airman studied Air Force mission, organization and customs and received special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

He is the son of Gregory A. and Janet M. Novak of Winnabow.

Parker is honored

Army Capt. Daryle L. Parker has been awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal.

The medal is awarded to those individuals who demonstrate meritorious achievement or service while assigned to multi-service activities of the Department of Defense.

Parker, a port operations officer, is the son of Flossie S. Parker of Southport. His wife, Karen, is the daughter of Bennye N. Davis of Wilmington.

The captain was graduated in 1976 from South Brunswick High School and in 1978 received a bachelor's degree from North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro.

Bridge results

Oak Island Duplicate Bridge Club winners for November 23 were: first place, Dick and Pat Windon; second, Bill and Bea Montross; third, Georgianna Harmon and Ann Murphy.

Games are played on Mondays at 1 p.m. at the Long Beach Recreation Center. For information or partners, persons should call Mary Maker at 278-5771.

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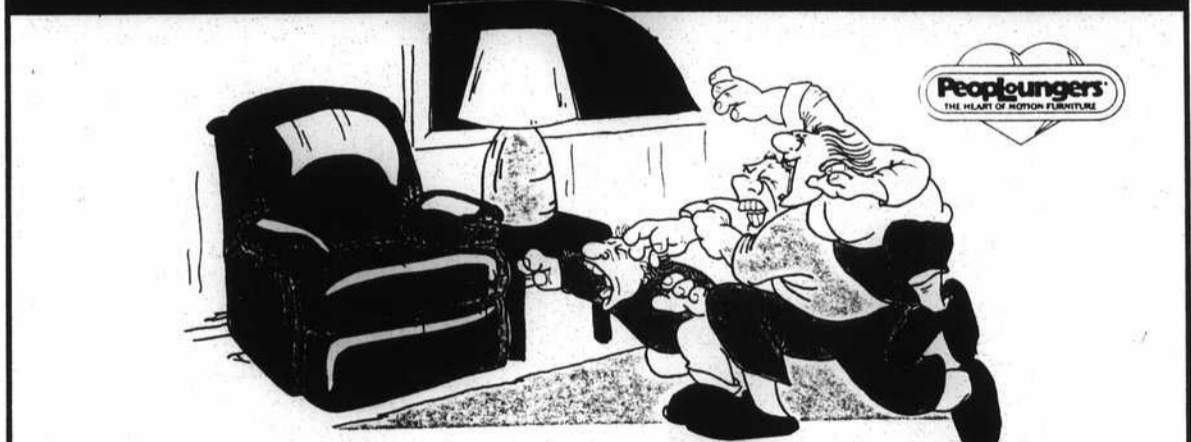
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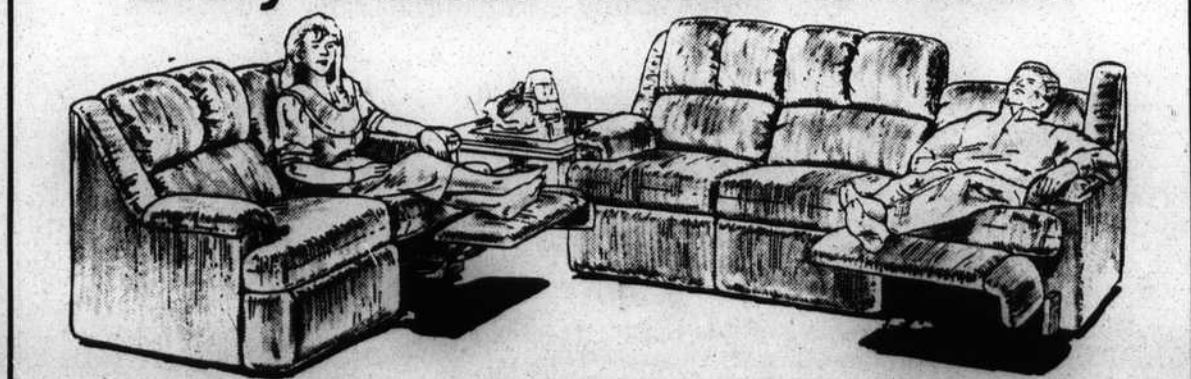


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