
Two pedal from tundra to Horn

Two Canadians have returned from a 17-month bicycling trip that took them from northern North America to the south end of South America, reports the *Canadian Press*.

Richard Nash, 26, and Carmine Militano, 27, of Winnipeg left in July 1979 from Inuvik, Northwest Territories, and travelled an estimated 25,000 kilometres to Ushuaia, Argentina, on Tierra del Fuego.

Mr. Militano, a geophysicist, said he learned that life in other countries is not always the way it seems in travel magazines.

Dr. Nash, a physician, said he learned how to get along with people 24 hours a day. He said the two learned enough Spanish to be able to read newspapers.

Voices for the voiceless

An artificial larynx developed by a Canadian researcher could return the power of speech to the thousands of people who have lost their voice boxes to cancer.

The human larynx consists of two taut tissue bands that expand and contract like naturally fretted guitar strings as air is pumped up through them from the lungs. The lips, tongue and teeth shape the ascending sounds into words.

The artificial voice box, which medical researcher John Frederickson developed in conjunction with the University of Toronto Biomedical Instrumentation Development Unit, is a stainless steel disc that, implanted at the back of the throat, compensates for the missing larynx by making its own sound.

One of the faces of the disc, which is 3.5 centimetres in diameter, is as taut as a drumhead and vibrates in response to an externally generated electrical signal from a battery pack carried in the user's pocket. The vibrating disc sends a tone up the user's throat, where his mouth shapes the sound in the usual way. The artificial voice sounds flat and metallic compared to a normal human voice and the device can provide only one tone in contrast to the many tones of the natural larynx, however, it does provide comprehensible speech.

A prototype of Frederickson's device, used for a year by two volunteers in

1978, was considered a success, the main drawback being that it was rather large and weighed 65 grams (2.29 ounces).

His new device, less than half the weight of its predecessor and only five millimetres thick, will be ready for a year's testing by six volunteers at the end of the year.

Captioned TV planned

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) have taken steps to open the world of television to deaf Canadians.

The CRTC gave the broadcasting network permission to transmit captioned television programs.

The system, known as closed captioning, allows people who have trouble hearing to follow what is happening on the screen by reading the dialogue at the bottom of the screen.

The CBC is initially making available to deaf people, who have decoders, the popular American series *Barney Miller* in captioned form. This will be followed shortly by two other American shows.

Terry Fox honoured

Terry Fox, whose Marathon of Hope raised millions of dollars for cancer research, was recently recognized by the *Canadian Press* and the *Toronto Star* for his accomplishments in 1980.

The young amputee from Port Coquitlam, British Columbia was selected as the



Terry Fox

top newsmaker of 1980 by editors of Canadian Press member newspapers, and radio and television stations served by CP's associated company Broadcast News Ltd. Fox is the first non-politician to win CP's newsmaker award since 1965.

Fox was also named winner of the Lou Marsh Award, which recognizes the outstanding athletic accomplishment of 1980 in Canada. He was the unanimous choice of a seven-man selection committee. The award, first given in 1936, honours the late sports editor of the *Toronto Star*. For the award *Star* readers nominate athletes and the committee votes on the nominations.

Fox, 22, covered more than 5,000 kilometres of a cross-Canada run, from April 12, when he left St. John's to September 1, when his one-legged cross-Canada run ended near Thunder Bay with the discovery of cancer in his lungs. He set out with the hope of raising \$100,000 for research; more than \$20 million has been pledged so far.

School planned to ease shortages

The Ontario government has announced construction of a school for machinists and tool and die makers in northwest Toronto as part of a counter attack against a growing nationwide shortage of skilled workers.

Called the Centre for Precision Skills Training, the \$1.9-million school is planned as a pilot project and will involve approximately 40 area employers. It is scheduled to open next September.

The project will have places for only 40 students initially. If the project works, however, plans call for rapid expansion of the program.

A major objective is to overcome complaints that traditional apprentice programs saddle employers with workers who are unproductive in the early stages of their training and who must take eight-week-long classroom breaks every year.

Students at the new centre will take all their classroom training before applying for apprenticeships in industry. Moreover, they will be provided with up to 2,000 hours of shop experience in a simulated factory setting.

It is expected that the combination will reduce the total apprenticeship period by as much as a year and provide employers with workers who are productive from the outset.