

SUSQUEHANNA TIMES

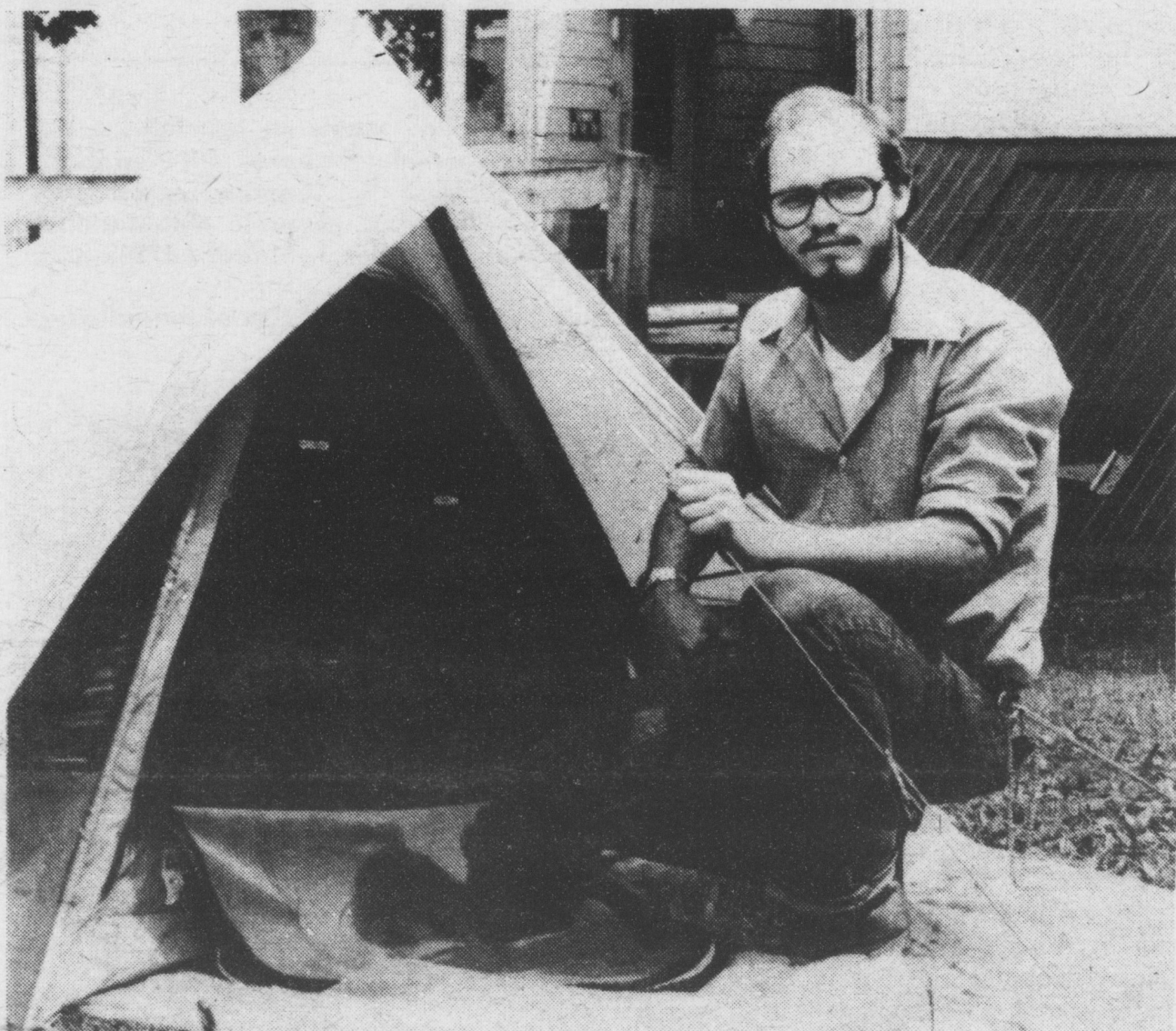
RALPH M SNYDER
R.D. 2 BOX 3040
MOUNT JOY, PA. 17552

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FIFTEEN CENTS

Jim Wert begins transcontinental anti nuclear power bike hike



Jim Wert with his new home—he'll be sleeping in this tent for the next year or so. The tent weighs only six pounds and folds into a bag the size of a shoebox.

This morning Jim Wert is meeting Governor Thornburgh. Jim bicycled into Harrisburg from Mount Joy last night to hand the governor a foot-thick stack of petitions—20,000 signatures—and 150 letters asking that Three Mile Island be shut down permanently.

Jim won't be bicycling back to Mount Joy, though, for about a year and a half. In the meantime he's going to every state in the Union to meet their governors and talk to them about nuclear energy.

"I'm not sure yet if I'll make it to Alaska," Jim told us. "I'd have to bike 1442 miles over a dirt road to get there. I'll concentrate on the lower 48 first."

Jim has sold his car and furniture and given away everything else. The day before he left, his apartment at 203 E. Main Street contained only a few boxes.

Jim's new Gerry tent was set up in the back yard. He had tried it out the night

before and found it just fine, which is good since it will be his home for a long time. He won't be staying in hotels. Everything he will need to live is going in his saddlebags or pack.

Jim had occasionally day-dreamed about taking off they way he is doing now, but it was only a dream until the TMI incident turned him around.

"I never thought about nuclear energy before," he says, "but since TMI I've really learned about the dangers, the Price-Anderson Act, the cracks in the pipes, and everything. I guess I'm a radical or activist or whatever you want to call me."

Jim evacuated to Tennessee during TMI week, and while down there decided he would take the 15,000-mile bike trip to protest nuclear power.

Jim told us that most of the people he knows in Mount Joy are pro-nuke,

"until I tell them a few of the facts."

You might be reading about Jim in the papers for the next year or so. He was advised by the SVA (Susquehanna Valley Alliance, an anti-nuclear group whom he is representing) to contact the UPI and AP reporters who are always on duty at state capitols. With any luck, he may even get a right-up in *National Geographic*. Jim told us he might send this paper some letters to the editor detailing his journey around the country.

Jim is originally from the Harrisburg area. He had lived here about two years. As we were winding up the interview, we asked him if there was anything else the readers should be told.

"Tell them to write letters," Jim replied, "to Thornburgh, Walker, anybody—and tell them how you feel about nuclear power."

85 miles per gallon!

Paul R. Gingrich of Mount Joy has an auto that gets 85 miles to the gallon.

It's a King Midget, made in the 50's and 60's by the King Brothers of St. Louis, MO. In 1968 it cost \$1025 in kit form.

Mr. Gingrich's King Midget was out last Saturday for the Memorial Day Parade in Mount Joy, in which his strange little vehicle is a regular entry. (Paul usually drives his '78 Futura, which only gets about 22 mpg.) Gene Bender rode with Mr. Gingrich in the parade.

The Midget is so light that a man can pick the front end off the ground, and a big man can pick up the rear. The engine is an 18-hp Wisconsin heavy-duty industrial model, air-cooled.

Power is delivered to one rear wheel through a rubber belt transmission and final chain drive and reduction gear. The tires are 5.7 inches wide on 8 inch diameter rims.

The Midget has a cruising speed of 40 miles per hour. Top speed on the level is 50.

Much of the bodywork is made of light-weight and rustproof sheet aluminum.

Mr. Gingrich also owns a 1958 model King Midget, which he is keeping in case he has to replace any hard-to-find parts. Most of the parts are easy to get, though, he says.

According to rumor, the King Midget may be produced again in the near future.



Members of the Air Force Drill Team hold Mr. Gingrich's car. Gingrich stands behind it.