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GORP Guests

Ethan Gelber - Biker for Peace

GORP Guest from June 21 to July 11

The great pop singer Elvis Costello said it all – "What's so funny about peace, love and understanding?" In a cynical age, it's refreshing to run across somebody who not only believes the world can be a better place to live, but does something about it. That's one of the reasons we enjoy working with GORP editor Ethan Gelber. When he's not whipping articles into shape or strategizing about GORP's bicycling content, Ethan runs an organization called BikeAbout. BikeAbout is a simple yet wise idea – the kind of idea that can make a big difference. The BikeAbout folks, well, bike about the world developing greater understanding, and hence peace, through both face to face and face to tech interaction.



Ethan Gelber
preparing for lift-off

Four years ago Ethan was hanging with a group of friends in a Mexican restaurant. One friend fantasized about bicycling around the Mediterranean. His friend's jovial fantasy seized Ethan's imagination, and two years later hard-working Ethan had gathered a convoy of 4 other bicyclists, two men and two women, to travel the 10,000-plus-mile journey around the Mediterranean.

On September 25, 1997, the BikeAbout folks set out from Ceuta, a Spanish-controlled city on the Moroccan coast. On June 30, 1998 – nine months later – their journey ended at the coast of Gibraltar. Bicycling around the Mediterranean, the BikeAbout gang visited some of the hotspots that have been making the news lately: Israel, Palestine, Albania, Bosnia. And none of the other countries they visited exactly have a trouble-free recent history: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon

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January 8, 2007

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ree recent history. Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, France, Spain, and a fair heaping of Mediterranean islands. The group met with people wherever they went for the simple, yet profound, goal of trying to get to know them better. They kept a daily journal that was uploaded to the net, along with digital still images and videos.

In other words, these bikers were *wired*. As Ethan puts it, "We used the oldest technology in the world – human muscles – combined with the newest." Ethan's feature article, "[Honking Cairo](#)," is adapted from a journal entry posted to the [BikeAbout website](#).

Ethan has been concentrating on road touring since 1987. However, he's been at it for much longer than that. He went on his first bike trip when he was 13 – an American Youth Hostels trip to Pennsylvania Dutch Country. At 16, at an age when most kids are begging for the car keys to go to the mall, Ethan took his first solo trip, venturing from Springfield, Massachusetts up through Boston, Cape Cod, and the coast of Maine as far as Belfast.

Ethan was GORP's guest from Monday, June 21, to Sunday, July 11.

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