

# Denmark man stops in Somerset during bike trip

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Philip Delff admitted to the Mary S. Biesecker Public Library staff that he couldn't feel his feet. That was an understandable confession, considering that he biked all day in the cold and rainy Somerset County weather before stopping by the library Friday afternoon.

The 25-year-old from Copenhagen, Denmark, who is traveling across the country on his bicycle, said that he had two intentions for the rest stop: to regain feeling in his limbs and use the Internet.

"I am going to e-mail my family," he said, as raindrops from his white helmet fell to the floor while he began typing.

It seemed the only thing Delff was not traveling with was a computer, for his touring bike was equipped with panniers that carry his tent, sleeping bag, camera, cell phone, food, clothing and other necessities.

Delff's biking challenge began Oct. 8 in Manhattan. Since then, Delff has biked 50-60 miles a day; at that pace, his journey across the United States is expected to last three months until he reaches his Los Angeles destination.

But getting from New York to California is not easy, he said. There are plenty of risks involved with sleeping in the woods or along the road in his tent, biking in bad weather conditions and trusting drivers who may not notice Delff pedaling in his bright orange jacket.

That was the case earlier in the



Photo by Kayla Pongrac

Philip Delff of Denmark is biking across the country. The 25-year-old made a stop in Somerset County on Friday afternoon and said he was impressed by the scenery.

week when he was hit by a car in York, Pa. He did not sustain any injuries, but he said, his bike was bent in some places from the ordeal. He got the bike fixed at a local bike shop and continued on the journey, traveling through Pennsylvania and admiring the scenery.

He described the weather as annoying, but Somerset County and the state of Pennsylvania as picturesque.

"It's really beautiful," he said. "In Europe, we don't have as much red trees. These mountains, though . . . they're killing me," he said with a laugh.

When Delff is biking through wet terrain and hills that build his strength and endurance, he said that he thinks about the route upon which he is traveling.

"I also think I spend a lot of time

motivating myself, telling myself to keep going. I pick up melodies from my mind."

He said that his favorite part of the adventure has been meeting gracious Americans.

"Getting helped by people is really inspiring," he said, adjusting the straps on what appeared to be a black snow-suit. "Nature is really inspiring."

Delff has vacationed in America

with his family, but this time he is alone.

"My main interests are water, food and sleeping. I'm always hungry, tired and thirsty," he said. "I'll eat anything that comes by."

By this time, he left the library to purchase some food.

"I got the idea to go bicycling somewhere. And then I thought of the United States," he said before taking a bite out of a 12-inch turkey sub.

In regards to his home country of Denmark, Delff explained that he graduated from Technical University of Denmark with an engineering degree. He now has a job in research.

Before he left Denmark for the U.S., Delff said his boss presented him with the idea of obtaining his Ph.D.

"I said, 'Yes, but can I have three months off first?'"

Now he finds himself facing some obstacles (the Rocky Mountains, especially), but Delff's training wheels came off a long time ago.

"Every day I have to keep going to the next day. I always know that at 10 a.m., I have to get going. Fifty miles a day is tough, but you get used to it," he said, swallowing his final sip from a large cup of hot chocolate before preparing to get back on his bike.

Delff plans to end his journey in Los Angeles before his 26th birthday on Dec. 17.

"That means I have less than 3,000 miles left."

For more information about Delff's journey or to view a collection of photographs upon his completion, visit [www.delff.dk/nycla](http://www.delff.dk/nycla)