



Joe Miller contemplates his next move in his Chicago warehouse, with some of his favorite parts of his everyday life: his kittens, Cortez and Bubbles, and his Peugeot fixed gear bicycle.

Another journey looms on the horizon for Joe

By Paul Miller

Staunton High grad and local artist Joe Miller is gearing up for another fantastic journey. His next artistic adventure will be a daunting physical challenge. He departs from Chicago on Sept. 15 headed for San Francisco — by bike!

A 2001 SHS grad, Joe earned his Associate Degree from Lewis and Clark in 2003, and his Bachelor's Degree in Visual Arts from the University of Illinois — Springfield in 2005.

He moved "home" to the Windy City, and in June of 2008 he received his Masters of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Chicago. "I went to the University expecting to find my artistic 'niche'," explains Miller. "I learned, however, that my most effective artistic expression is found in exploration and discovery."

Miller plans to document his journey as he rides with partner Brett

Tracy. Tracy also studied at the U of C, and hopes to return to his home in Davis, Calif. The two are riding first to Portland. "San Francisco and Portland are great biking and art communities," explains Miller. "The last leg south from Portland to San Francisco should be incredible."

"Neither of us owns a car, and we probably couldn't afford to drive anyway," muses Miller. "The pace of riding a bike cross-country is more compatible with the pace of our artistic development. Combining art with the physical challenge will be a unique approach."

In order to raise awareness of his project, Miller will visit Staunton just before he departs on this incredible journey. He plans to arrive on Thursday, Sept. 11. Staunton residents will probably see him cruising Main Street on his bike the majority of Friday and Saturday, providing an

opportunity to chat and understand why anyone would undertake such an adventure.

"We want people to have the chance to show their interest and follow our progress. Some may even want to provide financial support. It's not about the money — it's about the journey," Miller added.

A benefit will be held Saturday evening, September 13, at DeCamp Junction. Music will be provided by Mike Pintar, aka Mato and Friends, and Miller will be on hand to create and exhibit some recent works, discuss the ride and receive well-wishes. Miller will be there at 5 p.m.

For more information about this incredible journey, you can visit their website at www.illuminatedthread.com. There you can read a more lengthy explanation, see video of the training and preparation, and make a donation.