

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

On Their Knees, Students Break Guinness Record

By Serena Longley

Columbia Daily Spectator

For Sean Duffy CC '06 and Leo Chau, a senior at UC Boulder, this summer brought more than just suntans and beach visits.

The two succeeded in their attempt this past June to break the Guinness World Record for longest continual crawl by travelling 32.26 miles around their high school track in Colorado Springs.

They began their crawl to raise money for AIDS research. In total, the students raised \$18,700 for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

According to Duffy, getting through the crawl was an up-hill battle.

"It was nasty. Everything went wrong." Duffy said about the 44-hour trial. During the crawl, Duffy

and Chau endured 10 minutes of hail and three separate thunderstorms that flooded the running track.

Even after prescription anti-nausea medication remedied the motion sickness that set in for Duffy around hour 24, his stomach still resisted the Cliff bars he had hoped would fuel him around the track 120 times on all fours.

According to Duffy the crawling was "too intense to focus on anything else," like the music and audio books the duo had prepared for the journey.

According to Duffy, the intensity reached its peak at hour 38, when Duffy began to hallucinate after 38 hours. "I mistook the ground for the Washington Post and tried to read it even though I've never read it before in my life," he said.

In spite of discouraging weath-

er, 2,000 spectators dropped by the high school track in Colorado Springs to catch a glimpse of the event, and hundreds stayed until the duo crossed the finish line until 4 a.m. on June 11th. Supporters of the crawl included family, friends, sponsors, and even a Speedo-clad high-school swim team.

Others weighed in on the trek online. The team, who amassed roughly a quarter of a million friends on the facebook, inspired intense debate on their facebook wall.

Attackers most commonly slandered the duo by calling them "fags." The crawlers routinely responded by asking the hecklers out for a date.

Some criticized the duo for interfering with God's will, which was interpreted as plaguing people with AIDS in order to punish them for being gay.

Other facebookers shot back support for Duffy and Chau. "I'm glad it happened," said Chau, "It was an eye-opener for me to see that regardless of what you try to do to make the world better, there is always going to be opposition."

But throughout the crawl, Duffy and Chau tried to keep the situation light. They began in carrot and stick costumes. "We wanted to make sure people realized that we thought it was funny," Duffy said about the crawl, "We didn't see anything wrong with having fun while making money for a good cause."

Duffy's mom, Robin, fashioned the costumes to spoof the Aesopian fable that advocates balancing punishment with reward as well as crawling towards an illusive ideal.

Duffy said the attention from

romantic prospects has intensified thanks to the crawl. "I think girls like it ... they definitely love it," smirked Duffy.

On the Columbia campus, girls perk up at the mention of Duffy. "The crawl turns me on," said Katelyn Beaudette, CC '06.

Despite the challenges, Duffy looks back on his crawl with fondness.

"The crawl was the best thing I ever did," said Duffy. But after peeling off a layer of Sean's skin along with his clothing after the crawl, his mother hopes he will not attempt such an extreme stunt in the future. "I know Sean and Leo will continue to serve people. They are always looking for ways to donate their time and services to help people. I don't think they'll chose another marathon event to prove that."



Sean Duffy and Leo Chau crawl around a track in Colorado and into the Guinness Book of World Records. The two raised more than \$18,000 for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

COURTESY OF SEAN DUFFY