

# Marathon crawler's creep feat

By DENNIS ROSENBLUM

Jim Puro stood up and said he was going to play a game of racquetball. But he was just kidding.

Puro had just broken the official record for continuous crawling — 24.7 miles in 24 hours and eight minutes.

It's a record that will likely stand for awhile. Most of the world's population is quite content, of course, to stand on its own two feet or sit back in the driver's seat.

The remainder of mankind — the portion that finds a need to stand out from the madding crowd — is usually satisfied to climb a mountain, ford a stream or read a good book in bed.

None of this for young Jim.

"WHAT DAY is this? I'm really lost," he said in his room at the Detroit Plaza shortly after completing his hands-and-knees hike from Livonia's City Hall to Hart Plaza on the riverfront downtown.

"I can't believe I did it."

But not only did he do it, he far surpassed his own expectations.

Puro, a 27-year-old Livonian, had been practicing for weeks for the big crawl, averaging a mile in 40 minutes. He left Livonia at 10:21 a.m. Monday, after strapping on an assortment of pads and smiling for all the cameras.

"My mind is at Cobo Hall. Now the body has to catch up to it," he said before departing.

Puro said he'd had all his second thoughts about the trip sometime last week.

**"Once you take that big bite, you gotta swallow it, right?"**

— Jim Puro

month. "Once you take that big bite, you gotta swallow it, right?" he said.

Girl friend Sandy King, who helped Puro get into all his padding, was convinced he'd make it. "If he doesn't do it, it can't be done," she said while relaxing on the city hall steps.

Was she excited about seeing him attempt such a feat?

"I would have much rather had him

kiss 8,000 girls," she admitted.

ALLOWING FOR fatigue, Puro figured on making it to the finish line (he never figured on not making it to the finish line) sometime Tuesday afternoon.

But even after a night of rain and an unfriendly curb that met up with one of his knees, Puro did better than he thought. And better than the rest of us would even consider.

He predicted beforehand that when it was over he'd be delirious from the loss of energy.

Not so. After 24 hours of crawling, he seemed to be doing at least as well as the downtown office workers who had closed up their bars the night before.

THE ESCAPEDE was officially intended as a fund-raiser for the March of Dimes. With pledges and donations still rolling in, the event raised over \$1,500.

Doris DeDeckere, publicity director

for the charity, said she knew he'd make it.

"I'm not surprised. He makes everything he tries," she said.

"He just has this little wire hanging loose in his head making him do these outrageous things."

Puro said he met hundreds of people on the trip, many donating money and walking with him for part of the way.

"It went very easy up to about Schaefer Road," he said. Then, about 200 feet before he was to break the old crawling record of 12½ miles, "it started crawling cats and dogs," he said.

The encourage retreated to a donut shop for about 10 minutes before continuing. Puro just stayed on his hands and knees through it all.

He credits the people with him for his victory.

"If it wasn't for my little following, I never would have made it," he said Tuesday.

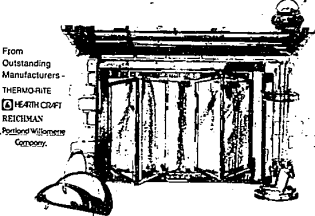
"It's funny. People can be really nice."



All 24.7 miles on his knees was Jim Puro's goal — he made it. (Staff photo by Bill Bresler)

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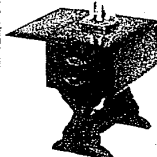


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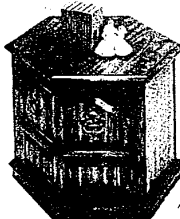
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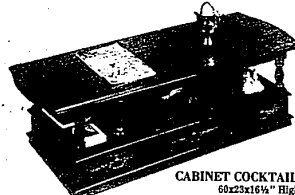
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