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PRICE SCORES ANOTHER ULTRA-DISTANCE WIN

Arlington, Va., Nov. 3 (From Bill Hillman)--Alan Price, 37 of Washington, D.C., continued his domination of the National long-distance race walking scene with his second National TAC Championship in the past 5 weeks. Alan's time of 10:48 for 100 kilometers on the Yorktown H.S. track left defending titlist Brain Sivilonis, 34 of Princeton, Massachusetts, a full ½-hour behind. Price was following up on his win in the National 100 mile reported last month.

Walking for the Potomac Valley Seniors, Price took an early lead that was extended to more than a mile by the halfway mark. Sivilonis was unable to close the distance in the last two-thirds of the race, and finished 3 miles back.

Bobby Wise, 45 of East Point, Georgia, finished third and won the TAC Master's title in 12:50:25. The women's open and Master's Champion was Marsha Hartz, 45 of Columbia, Maryland, in a gutsy walk of 15:52:40. The Potomac Valley Seniors Track Club won the team title with Price, Tim Good, and Hartz composing their team.


Results of the 100 Km:
1. Alan Price 10:48:00
2. Brian Sivilonis 11:18:09
5. Ralph Cardelli (52, Watertown, Mass.) 13:55:07
6. Tim Good (24, Silver Spring, MD) 14:43:43

Women:
1. Marsha Hartz 15:52:40

PAN-AMERICAN RACE WALK CUP

Bucaramanga, Col., Nov. 3-4—Jose Querubin Moreno excited the home folks with a decisive win in the 20 Km walk to feature the first Pan-American Race Walk Cup competition. Moreno, ninth in the LA Olympics, moved easily away from Canada's Guillermo Leblanc (fourth in L.A.) over the second half to win in 1:25:19. In the 50 Km, Mexico's second string swept the first three places, while Canada's Ann Peal won the women's 10 Km. The U.S. was represented by four women and two men (one in each race). John Kelly managed and coached the team and Elliott Donnan was the U.S. representative on the judging panel.

Kelly reports that the weather was very hot and humid and the course extremely hilly. Despite these conditions, the pace in the 20 was very swift at the start, with three Columbians (all named Moreno), four Mexicans, and Leblanc together in 20:07 at the 5 Km point. Ray Funkhouser, in his first international race, could not match this pace, but led the rest of the field in 20:34.
Although the pace slowed over the next 5 Km, Moreno was able to open a 10 second lead on Leblanc and Hector Moreno as he passed 10 Km in 42:47. The rest of the field was dropping away. Funkhouser remained in ninth with 44:42. When Jose Moreno accelerated sharply the other two had no chance. Moreno passed 15 Km in 1:01:22 (20:42 for the 5) with more than a minute lead. It was clear sailing for the Columbian ace from there and he maintained it nearly 2 minutes ahead.

Leblanc and Hector Moreno battled to the wire, with the Canadian finally taking second by just 3 seconds. Funkhouser, although slowing gradually, was able to move through to sixth at the finish, a very commendable performance in the conditions.

In the 40 Km, Carl Schueler took command of the race and by 30 Km held better than a 1 minute lead in 2:25:17, with Mexicans Pedro Arcohe and Victor Sanchez his nearest competition. Over the next 5 Km, Aroche caught Carl, who was beginning to fade in the heat, but the gap to third widened. Arcohe was able to maintain steady pace from that point, but Carl appeared to be in good shape for the silver, as he had nearly 40 minutes on Sanchez at 40 Km. However, Carl really hit the wall at this point, taking nearly 6 minutes for his final 10 Ks of that on the last 5. Sanchez was able to take an easy second, and Ignacio Tudrinda also caught the exhausted Schueler. Carl gave it his best shot, which on the day wasn't enough. After his gutsy sixth place in Los Angeles, he probably didn't need another race in such conditions so soon.


Results of the races:


have been added to the International Panel of Race Walking Judges and Gary Westefield will be as soon as a few application details are cleared up. This brings to 12 the total number of U.S. judges on the IAAF panel. Following the Los Angeles IAAF Congress and elections, the IAAF Walking Committee will now have at least one member from each world area. Members re-elected were: Palle Lassen (Chairman/Denmark), Bob Bowman (USA), Georg Prister (GDR), Jurgen Kramser (FRG), Alfredo la Palmas (Mexico), Bertil Sjoberg (Sweden), Peter Marlow (GB), Francis Jonevian (France), and Guilielmo Tosel (Italy). New members elected were: Mahmoud Iassen (Egypt), Mr. Artundungu (Columbia), Mr. Liu (China), Mr. Kangaspunta (Finland), and Ray Smith (Australia).

HOW TO BUY SHOES FOR RACEWALKING

Racewalkers and runners wear similar types of shoes and many good brands are available. When you go to a store with a good selection, try several brands on. The most important considerations are comfort and support.

1. Is there adequate room for the toes? (The shoe size will be ½ to 1 size larger than your regular day-to-day shoes).
2. Is there good support or do the feet roll in or out?
3. Does the arch feel comfortable or can it be pulled out and new one put in?
4. Is the shoe flexible enough?
5. Is the sole comfortable? (Many walkers do not like big, bouncy heels)

Wear your shoes at home for a couple of hours. Then go on an easy half-hour, break-in walk. Prevent blisters by making sure your socks are not lumpy. WALK OUT.

(Reprinted from Golden Gate Racewalking)

IF YOU SEEK TO TEST YOUR PEDESTRIAN SKILLS AGAINST OTHERS:

 Fri. Dec. 14 – 1 or 2 mile Amherst College, Mass. (X)
 Sat. Dec. 15 – 5 and 10 Km. Washington, D.C., 2 pm (L)
 10 Mile, Columbia, Mo., 10 Km (L)
 Sun. Dec. 16 – 1 and 2 Mile, Arlington, Va., 10 am (L)
 5 Km, New York City, 9 am (F)
 10km, Los Angeles, 8 am (G)
 Sat. Dec. 30 – 20 Mile, Asbury Park, N.J., 10 am (A)
 Mon. Jan. 1 – 1 and 10 Km, Washington, D.C., 12 noon (L)
 Fri. Jan. 11 – 10 Mile, Amherst College, Mass., 6:30 pm (X)
 Sat. Jan. 19 – 10 Mile Handicap, Pasadena, Cal., 8:30 am (C)
 15 Km, Pine Mountain, Ga. (E)
 Fri. Feb. 12 – 1 or 2 miles, Amherst College, Mass., 6:30 pm (3)
 Fri. Feb. 22 – NATIONAL ATHLETICS CONGRESS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, 1 MILE WOMEN, 2 MILE MEN, NEW YORK CITY (D)

CONTACTS:
B. Hekeler, P.O. Box 1504, Amonia Sta. New York, NY 10023
C. John Ross, 1024 Third St., Santa Monica, CA 90403
E. Wayne Lunn, 3275 C Street Dr., Augusta, GA 30907
L. -Sal Corrallo, 5311 n. 37th St., Arlington, VA 22207
M. – Joe Duncan, 2930 Maple Bluff Dr., Columbus, OH 43220
P. Hovde Jacobson, 445 E 36th St., New York, NY 10028
X. Bob Kitchen, 122 Pine St., Northampton, MA 01060

Fresh from the mailbox:


LOOKING BACK

15 Years Ago (From the Nov. 1969 ORW) – In the Annual Ohio Track Club Distance Carnival, Gary Westefield beat Long Island AC teammates Steve Hayden in the 7 mile with a 33:56, but dropped out of the next day's 15 mile as Gerry Bacci beat Hayden with a 2:03:18. Steve had 34:40 and 30:35 in the two races. The women's 5 Mile went to Detroit's Mary Kefalos in 53:11.5 as Jeanne Bacci, 7-months pregnant, was talked out of trying to defend her title. On opposite coasts of the U.S. Tom Dooley and Canada's Marcel Jobin blistered 10 miles. Dooley had a 2:17:17 and Jobin a 2:29:26. Ron Daniel had a 1:61:33 and Ron Kulk a 1:37:13 in the latter. Young Todd Scully showed some potential as afuture great with 1:21:24. Westefield 1:20:24. The Junior National 50 K went to Dave Eidahl in 5:16:43.

10 Years Ago (From the Nov. 1979 ORW) – National AAU "B" titles went to Bob Korn at 10 Km (42:20.6) and Chuck Hunter at 100 Km (12:26:40). The ORW's 8th Annual Dr. John Blackburn Award for the outstanding single effort in U.S. race walking for the year went to Sue Brodock. She had won the women's International 5 Km in a then world's best of 24:15.2. The award has since been discontinued. In the ORW's 5th Annual World Rankings, the USSR's Vladimir Golubichy led the list at 20 Km with Bernd Kammennb, W.G., and Karl-Heinz Stadtmuller, W.G., ranked second and third. Kammennb had set a world's record on the track, but was beaten by Golubichy in the European Championships. At 30, Christoph Hohne, of East Germany, was a clear favorite with a European Championship and a stupendous world's best of 3:32:57. Otto Bartsch, USSR, and Peter Selzer, E.G., followed, Jerry Gonzales did 41:59 and Daniel Bautista 41:45. Otto Bartsch, USSR, and Peter Selzer, E.G., followed. For the 50 Km, then held by Italy's Carlo Mattioli in 1:26:18. Behind Domencio Carpentiero, also of Italy, Steve Pecinovsky edged John Vandendam as first US walker. In Montreal, Daniel Bautista regained the World Record for 20 Kms, then held by fellow Mexican Domingo Collin, as he walked 1:20:07. Countryman Felix Comes

5 Years Ago (From the Nov. 1984 ORW) – In a late season race, Dan O'Connor defended his national 40 Km title in long Brunich N.J., covering the distance in 3:25:12. Fastest in the history of the event to that time. Not far behind, Vincent O'Sullivan (3:28:36) edged Tom Dooley (3:26:36) for second. Wayne Glasker was fourth and Ohio's Chris Knotts showed his potential with a sixth place. The first Along Memorial 20 Km in Greens Pointe, Mich. went to Italy's Carlo Mattioli in 1:25:38. Behind Domencio Carpentiero, also of Italy, Steve Pecinovsky edged John Vandenberg first US walker. In Montreal, Daniel Bautista regained the World Record for 20 Kms, then held by fellow Mexican Domingo Collin, as he walked 1:20:07. Countryman Felix Comes
and Ernesto Canto were not far back in 1:21:24 and 1:21:52. Italy’s Maurizio Damilano was fourth in 1:22:59. Certainly a gold medal, with Damilano taking the 20 in the 1980 Olympics and Canto and Gonzales the 20 and 50 respectively in the LA Olympics. Bautista already had his gold from the Montreal Olympics. Susan Liers won the National Women’s 20 Km Little Lakes, Point, N.Y. in 1:32:59. Jeanne Bocci was just over 2 minutes back in second.

Since our attempt to give proper recognition to behind-the-scenes Olympic heroes pictorially fell somewhat short, here is a letter from John Kelly that we had intended to publish a couple of months ago.

Dear Jack,

May I take some exceptions to the Olympics reporting by Henry Laskau and Howard Palsamruch in your August issue. Laskau gives due credit to Ron Daniel’s fine work with respect to the putting on of the two racewalk competitions, however, he goes on to give credit to a group of people, only one of which, Jim Hanley, gave freely of his time to the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee in both cases. 

In addition to Hanley, several others not mentioned at all contributed greatly of their time, talent and money during the 6 months or more preceding the Games. They were: Hal McWilliams, who, virtually singlehandedly, laid out the course with one of the smallest degrees of error ever recorded. (He laid out two other courses, both in partial shade, but was turned down by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee in both cases.) Diane Urie was behind the scenes and up front in the management of lap counting. Roland Veon superbly managed lane control in and near the Coliseum. Ed Gilroy (a paid employee) steered us all through the LACOC maze. In his absence, both races might have gone the way of the 50 Km in the Montreal Olympics. John MacLanhan provided the logistics package of tables, chairs, stopwatches, delivery buckets, sponges, and a myriad of other necessary materials. The walkers managed the aid stations, provided a leaderboard for press, Mexican TV, and spectators, and obtained the two (not one) sprayer stations. Incidentally, the doctor in charge of medical and support for the both the racewalks and the marathon stated that the sprayer stations plus the sponging were necessary to keep the athletes’ temperatures below 105 degrees, admittedly only partly successful.

The unidentified remark about the sitting of the races on the track at midnight was all but impossible. The athletes all wanted the change to come into the Coliseum and hear the roar of 90,000 spectators who gave their cheers freely to all walkers. Luis Campo of El Salvador on March 17, 1956, was cheered enthusiastically as Canto and stated to the press that he was deeply moved by the reception. Likewise, the remark about directing the races through “one of L.A.’s low income and run down areas,” those of us who dealt with the residuals of the neighborhood found those whom we talked to friendly and hospitable.

* * * * * * *

A BIT OF HISTORY

The top U.S. walker of all time, if we are to believe his records, is Bill Mihalo, who as a professional in the 1950’s recorded such times as 1:10:5 for 10 miles and 1:28:24 for 20 Kms. These records were set when Mihalo was 39 years old. November 1994

and over, after a successful career as an amateur. During the 1940’s and early 1950’s, while representing Thompson Products of Detroit, Mihalo won 20 National AAU titles at distances from 7 miles through 50 Kms. All but three of these were at distances from 25 Kms and up. He was on the 1948 Olympic team, but in 1952 finished 8th in the 50 Kms Olympic Trial at 4:15:502 and fourth in the 10 Kms Olympic Trial at 3:52:32. He won championships that year at 35 and 40 Kms with times of 3:23:14 and 3:45:50.

Sometime during that year, Mihalo turned professional. I am not sure what circumstances surrounded this move—whether he was barred as an amateur for some infringement of the rules, or just decided to see if there were any money in this, his record as an amateur did not indicate the ability to walk world class times and he was 37 years old when he turned pro. This was in Detroit, and he immediately started claiming professional records, although I don’t have the history of these early marks. Sometime, not long after, he moved to California. The following capsules give testimony to his prowess as a professional walker from that time.

- On December 20, 1994, Mihalo won the World’s Professional Association 5 mile race at Griffith Park in Los Angeles with a 1:03:51. This broke the world’s record of 1:04:29 set by Frank Donavan of New York in 1892 and marked the 43rd time Mihalo had broken a record.

- On January 29, 1955, he broke the world’s professional record at two races with 1:02:41 on the Hollywood High School track. The old record was 1:03:14 by John W. Baby of Lilie Bridge, England in 188. John Peters of Detroit was second in both of these races, times not given. However, in the 2 mile race, Mihalo was listed as about 200 yards back, which would put him under 14:00.

- A couple of days after the 2 mile record, he claimed his 45th record with 100 yards in 15.01.

- On May 1, 1955, he claimed a 3 mile record with 20:01 in Los Angeles, breaking Baby’s 1883 mark of 21:11.

- His 60th breaking mark came on March 17, 1956 at the Hollywood H.S. track with a 1:09:01 for 10 miles. This was in a WPWA Championship for which he won $50. Petro's second was and Al Larson of New York third. The old record was 1:10:02 by Dan Donavan of New York on August 10, 1997.

- On September 27, 1955 in San Fernando, Cali., walking in 101 F heat, Mihalo claimed another 5 mile record with 1:05:01. This put Fred Kazasako, secretary of the WPWA, reported that this broke the old pro record of 1:11:11 set November 19, 1882 by James League of New York. I don't know what became of Mihalo's earlier record, or Donavan's for that matter, in the meantime.

- On February 15, 1957, Mihalo won the world professional walking championship by breaking both the 10 and 5 mile races, giving him 20 points. He had a 1:10:4 for the 10 mile, reportedly breaking his 1952 record of 1:10:02. (I guess the pros didn't keep records too well.) For the 5 mile, he had 1:09:01 on May 1, 1957, which put him over the Donavan's record of 1:09:22 (listed as 1:09:24 earlier, as mentioned above). No mention was made of Mihalo's earlier record of 1:09:24. Peters of Detroit was second with 16 points and Lassev third with 12. Mention of their times, or other competitors, or of whether the races were on the road or track.

- At Griffith Park on May 20, 1958, Mihalo claimed a 1:26:01 for 20 Kms listed as breaking the World Record of 1:27:30.6 set by Grigorii Panichkin, USSR (amateur) earlier in the same month.

- On September 2, 1958, it was 25 miles in Griffith Park in 3:20:10, a
modern world record. The temperature was 100 for this one. Good old Peters was his usual second and Larson third.

Finally, on November 12, 1958, Mihalo roared over the Griffith Park course for a 12:40.20 Km. This was again listed as breaking Panichkin's record, with no mention of Mihalo's own earlier effort.

That is where my record of the mighty Mihalo ends. This was first printed in the February 1970 Ohio Racewalker. We didn't have then, nor do we now, any details on how much Mihalo was making for his efforts (other than the $50 mentioned in one case) or on who might have been judging the races or measuring the courses. But most of the reports came from the prestigious New York Times, so everything must have been up to snuff. Right?

While delving in the past, we have dredged up some old limericks, written at various times by none other than your editor. Shortly after Ron Laird won his 100th National AAU race walking title (both individual and team), we published this one:

Devoting his life to the race
Training to keep up the pace
Adds to 100 gold
And memories untold
For Ron Laird, who others still chase.

A few others:

Walkers from yore I recall
Allen, Deni, Karl Kurr, and John Wall
Omelchenko and Hanson
Huske, Rasmussen
Weinacker, Reinhloss, Casper, al. etc.

The Ohio Racewalker you see
Is done by a guy I call me
The typos are many
Organization—any?
These things just aren't my cup of tea.
Some readers may think I cheat
When all this old stuff I repeat
But if I think its good
Then I certainly should
Give my readers a nice repeat treat.

Walking judge is a job that I won't
Anytime in the future much want
Quote: "A red flag for me?"
Or, "Look at him with bent knee!"
You are damned if you do or you don't.

Fourteen, Haluza of the U.S. got a bronze, we penned:

Pedraza sort of trotted by the USSR's Nikolai Smaga to take the silver.

A few years after the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, in which Mexican Jose Pedraza sort of trotted by the USSR's Nikolai Smaga to take the silver medal (he couldn't even run fast enough to catch Vladimir Golubnichiy),

The temperature was 100 for this one. Good old Peters was his usual second and Larson third.

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When all this old stuff I repeat
But if I think its good
Then I certainly should
Give my readers a nice repeat treat.

Walking judge is a job that I won't
Anytime in the future much want
Quote: "A red flag for me?"
Or, "Look at him with bent knee!"
You are damned if you do or you don't.

Before going out for a stroll
Head this advice rather droll
Put some grease where it's needed
Let this not go unheed
Lest your skin pay a terrible toll.

A buxom young las e from West Teacup
Who ran past the Russian, ole.

Made the judge hide his face
But for the natives, he sure made the day.

For Ron Laird, who others still chase.

And memories untold

Training Ace Walkers

Wang Kui

INCE last September, some of my trainees have made a series of outstanding achievements in the women's walking events. These include:

- Xu Yongjiu, Guan Ping and Yu Heping took the 10km team title at the 1983 World Cup Walking Championships held in Bergen, Norway;

- In the same race Xu Yongjiu clocked 45:13.4 to surpass the world's best individual performance;

- Yun Hong and Xu Yongjiu broke the world 5000m record in Bergen on May 5, 1984 by clocking 21:30.03 and 21:41.00 respectively;

- Seven days later in Copenhagen, Xu Yongjiu and Guan Ping improved the world's best performance for the 5km road event by timing 21:47.02 and 21:57.00 respectively.

- On the next day, Yan Hong set yet another world record in the 10000m event with a time of 45:40.

After each triumph, many reporters came up to me and asked how I had trained these girls.

12-Year Plan

I entered the Shenyang Physical Culture Institute in 1986. Two years later, I captured the 5km and 10km walking titles at a provincial meet. After my graduation in 1981, I became a physical teacher at a middle school and then at a spare-time sports school in Fu-xin, a coal mining city in northeastern China's Liaoning Province. Many of my pupils won high honours at the provincial athletic meets.

In 1978, I was engaged by the provincial athletic team to coach walkers in preparation for the Fourth National Games to be staged next year. Thinking that a coach should always see far and aim high, I worked out a 12-year plan to be carried out in three stages:

The first stage: Break national records and capture national titles in 2-3 years;

The second stage: Break Asian records and capture Asian titles in another 3-4 years.
The third stage: Reach the world level in another 4-5 years.

I was then 48 years old. I was determined to fulfill the whole plan before my retirement at the age of 60. I announced it to my colleagues, so that I would not be able to fulfill the public opinion of public opinion and I would have no way for me to retire. The response to my plan was quick and fervent. Some said that it was an excellent idea, while others thought it was too ambitious.

"It may fail through," I reflected, "If it does, people can still benefit from my experience of failure!"

I was especially encouraged when my pupils said to me enthusiastically, "Go on with your plan, Coach Wang. We'll do what you tell us to do!" "There's no success without adventure!"

Breakaway from Conventions

From the books and journals I've read I realize that to create something new in sports one must be bold enough to break away from conventions in training. Instead of dividing a year into some training periods, I think of a walking athlete should train every day all year round. As for the daily training load, it is usually divided into three categories: large, medium and small. In my opinion, such divisions are only relative. My trainees have a heavier load than ordinary middle- and long-distance runners, but so far as I know, it's smaller than that for Mexican walking athletes. All qualitative changes come from quantitative accumulation and only through intensive training can a walker improve his performance. Of course, heavy load training should be conducted on a scientific basis and under proper medical supervision. For my trainees, a daily quota of 25-30 km for men and 15-20 km for women has proved to be quite suitable. Walking is an aerobic event. In the whole process of training stress should be laid on staying power rather than on speed, although the results of a race are given in terms of speed.

Some people think that race walking is quite easy and simple. Just move your legs alternately at any pace short of breaking into a run. Actually it is a demanding exercise and requires high techniques. A competitor must maintain an unbroken contact with the ground, with the leg momentarily straightened while a foot is on the ground. One who fails to do this in a few steps is liable to receive a warning or be disqualified. It often happens that a walker keeps to the right mode of progression in the first phase of a race but breaks the rule unconsciously when he gets exhausted in the last phase. This was the case with Yan Hong, who finished first in the women's 10 km road race at the 1983 World Cup but was disqualified because of her violation of the rule. So we make a point of improving the walkers' basic skills constantly, in combination with quantity training. For this we prefer the "S" route (two circles 10 m in diameter) to the conventional "S" route used by the Soviet and other ace walkers.

Another problem with walkers is that they often feel their arms aching and enfeebled in the later stage of a race. At first we used barbells and dumbbells in arm-swing exercises. Later we substituted them with steel balls, each weighing about 1 kg, while increasing the number of reps and sets.

The result has been quite satisfactory. Now our walkers have considerably strengthened their arm muscles for energetic swings to maintain good speed in progression.

Strict Training

There's a common saying in our athletic circles, "Talents picked is half the success." It may appear strange that the girls on our team are mostly small, thin and shorts- legged. Yet there are many ace marathoners of the same body type. This is because in all stamina events fortitude is of primary importance. Yan Hong is only 1.51 m tall and she placed only fourth at a provincial meet in 1982. But she showed real mettle in the race. I decided that given more training she would make a good walker. Now she's more than lived up to my expectations.

A coach must be strict with his trainees and, first of all, with himself. He must set an example in everything he requires them to do. To adapt them to cold weather, I ask them to walk in thin clothes and without gloves in winter. They never complain about this, for I do it myself. Sometimes they do whisper among themselves that I'm a bit too "stern" to them. I don't care much about their grumblings, knowing that someday they'll say thanks to me for my "sternness."

Lastly I'd like to say a few words about how to learn from others. As a coach I've benefited a lot from the advanced training methods at home and abroad. As a matter of fact, the training methods we're using now contain many useful things in others' experience. However, learning doesn't mean copying. We often say that a hundred coaches use a hundred different methods. This means that there's no ready-made training programme for all athletes, that every coach must think out his own plans, turning into account a great many factors which may vary from place to place, from person to person and from time to time. Without this spirit of striking out new paths, new progress is out of the question.

Sports Weekend/SPECIAL

(Reprinted from the Milwaukee Journal, June 28, 1984)

By Mary Schmitt of The Journal Staff

Los Angeles, Calif. — If the University of Wisconsin - Parkside racewalking program ever planned to hold a reunion, this would have been as good a place as any.

The past, the present and the future of the program, its brains and its superstar, were all at the Los Angeles Coliseum the past week for the US Olympic track and field trials.

Mike DeWitt was there, the school's first racewalker and its first All-American in the sport who is now the coach of the program.

Jim Heiling was there, the first true superstar of the sport who has set indoor world records in the 1,500 meters and two-mile walk and has won more than 20 national titles. He qualified for the 1980 Olympic team in the 20-kilometer walk and did so again in 1984. In 1982, he set the American record in the 20-kilometer
walk and was named the US walker of the year. It was Heiring who elevated Parkside's prominence in racewalking to its present state.

Bob Lawson was there. Lawson was the track and cross country coach at Parkside when DeWitt, then a struggling cross country runner, wanted to start racewalking and asked for some advice. Lawson didn't have any at first, but he started to research the sport and has become one of the most knowledgeable coaches in the country.

Andy Kaestner and Mark Manning were there. Kaestner, the 1983 national The Athletics Congress junior champion, and Manning represent the new generation of racewalkers at Parkside. They have the benefit of DeWitt's experience and Heiring's fame and hope to further enhance the program at Parkside.

So, all in all, it would have been quite a party. Everybody who was anybody would have been there. In fact, almost everybody who was anybody in the Parkside program was there, and, even if it wasn't an official reunion, the significance was lost on no one.

It was the fall of 1970 when a slightly discouraged DeWitt went to Lawson and asked about racewalking.

"The first time I walked was at a Thanksgiving Day cross country race in Chicago," DeWitt recalled. "I had run really bad. There was a novice race walk after the cross country meet, and I got first."

At which point, of course, DeWitt was hooked. He really didn't know anything about the sport, though, other than the fact that American Larry Young had won a bronze medal in the 50 kilometers at the 1968 Olympics — the last time an American won a medal in racewalking. He didn't know how to train for it; he was still running during his workouts. And he really didn't know where to turn for help. So he went to Lawson. Slowly, the two of them groped their way around.

Not much literature

"There still isn't very much literature out," DeWitt said, "but 10 years ago there was hardly any. And the stuff there was was from like 1938."

At any rate, the two of them got down the basics: Competitors have to keep one foot in contact with the ground and straighten each knee as it passes under the body. Two infractions equal a disqualification. To be fast requires pumping both arms while rotating the pelvis front to back, not side to side, and taking three or more strides per second. It is a much more demanding sport than running because in addition to their times, walkers must also worry about their form.

"Racewalkers are the most dedicated guys you'll ever see," DeWitt said. "Once they get going, they do the training all the time."

Under Lawson's watchful eye, DeWitt trained and competed for a couple of years and by the time the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics added racewalking to its national meets, he was ready. As a senior, DeWitt finished third in the NAIA national indoor meet and second in the outdoor meet to earn two All-American honors.

By that time, another young Kenosha native was developing some interest in the sport. Heiring, then a junior at Kenosha Bradford High School, had started racewalking in the summer, just for fun. Some fun. He got thrown out of his first race after about 100 yards for not keeping one foot on the ground at all times. One walk official told him to give up the sport because he'd never make it.

Saw potential

DeWitt, however, saw some potential. "His build is so much different than mine," DeWitt said. "Most guys are tall and skinny. There's only a few muscular guys like me. He really has more of a body for racewalking."

DeWitt asked Heiring if he would like to train together. Two weeks later, Heiring finished fourth in a mile race and earned his first medal. The next week he cut a minute off his best mile time and won the Wisconsin state title. He went on to finish fourth in the national Junior Olympic meet that summer. After graduating from high school one year later, he finished second in a national meet by walking a mile in 7 minutes 24 seconds.

Heiring, who would become a six-time All-American racewalker at Parkside, and DeWitt continued to train together, and DeWitt, said, through 1973 they were about equal. "We'd take turns beating each other," DeWitt said. "But at the end of that year, he started pulling away a little bit. He's about the best in the country right now. He's right there."

Meanwhile, back at Parkside, the circle has been completed, and the program rolls on.

DeWitt, who teaches at an elementary school for gifted children in Racine, is now the Parkside coach. The program, which was started with local kids, then expanded to include kids from Racine and finally other parts of the state, has gained a national reputation. Racewalkers from Parkside finished first, second, third and sixth in one recent national meet. DeWitt speaks at lots of clinics, and Parkside sponsors a couple of high school racewalking meets around the state, which, in spite of Parkside's success, still has not taken to the sport in a big way.

Most of the racewalkers Parkside attracts have competed — without much success — in high school track or cross country. "Those five-minute milers," DeWitt says, smiling. "Like I was."

Like Jim Heiring was. Probably like Bob Lawson was. And like all those who came before them and all those who will follow them and become part of the great tradition that is Parkside racewalking.

It would have been a heck of a reunion.