Seaman Easy Winner at 40 Km

Ocean Township, N.J., Sept. 12 (From Elliott Denman)--Tim Seaman and Curt Clausen, America's top two racewalkers at the Athens Olympic Games, put their talents on display in the 66th Annual USA T&F National 40 Km and came through with a one-two finish.

In their first competitive start since the Athens Games--where Seaman led all US walkers in the 20 Km event and Clausen was first US finisher at 50 Km--Seaman topped Clausen at Joe Palais Park with a winning performance of 3:20:14. Clausen came home in 3:32:45. Both were representing the New York Athletic Club.

The battle for the concurrent USATF women’s national 40 Km title was much closer, with Erin Taylor of New York City holding off Marie Woodland of Philadelphia’s Phast Club and Jennifer Marlborough of East Rockaway, N.Y. Taylor finished in 4:42:22, nearly 3 minutes ahead of Woodland with Marlborough another minute back.

The race was hosted by Shore AC of New Jersey, sponsored by Oxford Health Plans, and staged in cooperation with Ocean Township Recreation and USA T&F of New Jersey.

Shore AC’s John Soucheck of Little Silver, N.J. surged past Theron Kessinger of Waterbury, Conn. on the 20th and final 2-Km loop to snatch third place in 3:40:25.

"My only goal was to win, and I was happy to achieve that," said Seaman, 32. The Long Island product is a University of Wisconsin-Parkside graduate. The two-time Olympian lives and trains in Chula Vista, California. "I took a little break after Athens, now I have to figure out my future plans," he said. Seaman regained the title he had won in 2002 with a course record 3:06:17. "I'm at a crossroad in my life right now. I want to stay in the sport another four years, but I have to figure out a way to do it."

Today’s race was the 19th career national walk title for Seaman, who holds nine American records at assorted distances.

Three-time Olympian Clausen, 36, suffered through bouts of digestive tract distress this time, forcing at least four pit stops, and settled for a distant second place. The Stevens Point, Wisconsin grad was a 50 Km bronze medalist at the 1999 World Championships, finished seventh at the 2001 World Championships, and has the fastest 50 ever by a US athlete. His 3:48:04 at the 1999 World Cup. The winner of three national 40 km titles (1988, 1997, and 2003) is also at a crossroad. He's making the transition from full-time athlete to full-time student at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

In a concurrent 20 Km walk, Deb Huberty of Greendale, Wisconsin turned in a 2005 national qualifying time of 1:37:44, fourth fastest by a US woman this year. The results:

U.S. Juniors Top Canadians

Edmonton, Aug. 29 in a U.S. vs Canada Junior match, the Canadians took individual honors, but the U.S. won the team battles. Canada rejoiced as Rachell Lavallee raced to a decisive win in the women's 5 Km and Luc Menard edged Zachary Pollinger in the men's 10. Lavallee walked 24.57 to beat Maria Michota by 40 seconds. Menard's sparkling 45:36 found him 8 seconds clear of Pollinger in the finish. In the women's race, Michota was joined by Katye Hayes in third and Dana Vered in fifth, as the U.S. men won by 9 to 16 count. This was the 15th edition of this annual series of meets.
Exercise Your Heel and Toe Proclivity at These Events

Sat. Oct. 2  New Hampshire Marathon and 5 Km Racewalk, Bristol, NH ((Z))
Sun. Oct. 3  Sacramento Half-Marathon, Sacramento, Cal. (E)
Sun. Oct. 4  Detroit Marathon (W)
Sat. Oct. 9  USATF National 5 Km, Kingsport, Tenn. (J)
Sun. Oct. 10  Eastern Regional and Metropolitan 30 Km, New York City (G)
Sun. Oct. 16  5 Km, Columbia, Missouri (K)
Sun. Oct. 17  East Regional 1 Hour, Waltham, Mass. (X)
              1 Hour, Washington D.C. area (O)
              Midwest Regional 10 Km, Dearborn, Mich. (W)
              5.2 Miles, Interlaken, NJ, 12 noon (A)
              North American Masters and Florida 15 Km, Coconut Creek, FL (Q)
              Western Regional 1 Hour, Denver, 9 am (H)
Fri. Oct. 22  5 Km, Denver, 6 pm (H)
Sun. Oct. 24  1 Mile, Kentfield, Cal. (P)
              94th Annual Coney Island 10 Mile Handicap, Brooklyn, NY. 9 am (B)
              Marathon, Albuquerque (N)
Sat. Oct. 30  5 Km, Denver, 9:30 am (H)
Sun. Oct. 31  10 Km, Seaside, Cal. (R)
National USATF Masters and Womens 50 Km, Hauppauge, NY (BB)
Sat. Nov. 6  5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sun. Nov. 7  5 Km, Kentfield, Cal. (P)
              5 Km, Clarksburg, Cal., 9:30 am (E)
Sun. Nov. 14  National Masters 20 Km, Clermont, FL (Q)
Sun. Nov. 28  Ann. Grand Prix #1, New York City (G)
Sat. Dec. 4  10 Km, Roswell, N.M. (N)
Sun. Dec. 5  Ann. Grand Prix #2, New York City (G)
Sat. Dec. 11  South Region 5 Km, Pharr, Texas (T)
Sun. Dec. 16  Polar Bear 10 Mile, Ashbury Park, N.J., 10 am (A)

From Heel to Toe

Facts aren’t always facts. Canada’s racewalking guru, Roger Burrows, sent me the following immediately after reading our August issue (well, a day after it arrived in his mail box) regarding my closing filler piece “Some Interesting Facts”, which I had lifted from Front Range Race Walker News. Roger says: “Now I am as big at meaningless trivia as anyone. I am also a trusting soul, and will usually read lists like Bob Carlson’s on the last page of the August ORW, somehow remember the stuff, and find myself regurgitating it at parties. (No, it’s true; I read it in ORW!*)

Nor do I make it a habit to check it all (32 muscles in a cat’s ear? Here, kitty, kitty, kitty). But on a Canadian two-dollar bill, the flag flying over the Parliament Building is American.” No way, eh? First, we haven’t had a two-dollar bill for some time. The last ones were issued in 1986, after which they were replaced by a shiny bi-metallic coin. Second, however, I dug out my souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a representative survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look. The engraving of the Parliament Building on the bill is pretty tiny. I had to get a magnifying glass to check the flag on the Peace Tower (less than a kilometer from where I write this now). The flag is most definitely the Maple Leaf. I can’t find a reference to an American flag on the Peace Tower in any previous edition of the bill. I can’t even find a souvenir survivor to take a look.
that I published about the Canadian two dollar bill? There ain't one.” And, besides, when one thinks about it, though strange things happen, how in the world would an American flag have gotten on the bill in the first place?...I'm in a race. My computer keeps telling me to run ScanDisc, finding trouble spots, and telling me the hard drive is on its last legs. I'm hoping to finish this before failure occurs and then I'll have a few weeks to address the problem. Apparently that will be through inheriting my son Derek's computer, which is only about a year old. He is moving to Morgantown, W.V. on a new job, which includes his own lap-top. He says Dad can have his PC, with scans more demanding, much more recent Windows, and a lot of nearly up-to-date stuff compared to my nine-year-old relic. If it fails before I finish this, I can always take my disc to his house and see how well WordPerfect translates to Word. In the meantime, I am running a hard copy of all that I have input to date, and will continue to do that as I add, so I will at least be able to re-input if need be. Time is on my side since I am running about a week ahead of my usual production schedule...Athens videos. Two-time U.S. Olympian (20 Km 1968 and 1972) Tom Dooley seeks videos of the Athens walks. If you can help, contact Tom at 2817 San Simeon Way, San Carlos, CA 94070. I would like to find videos of the 19890 Olympic walks in Moscow...Out of the Darkness. In July 2005, men and women will journey to Chicago from all over the country to walk 20 miles through the dusk until dawn. It's called the Out of the Darkness Overnight and it's designed to help shed light on the issue of suicide. It will bring together friends, family members, and loved ones whose lives have been touched by suicide or depression giving them a voice to issues that have previously been kept in silence. Each walker commits to raising $1000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Net proceeds will help fund research and education on depression and suicide. This presents an opportunity for those so moved to honor the memory of Al Heppner. Information at theoutofdarkness.org. Along this line, an item that got shuffled to the bottom of the stack when I intended to include it several months ago: With her renewal in April, subscriber Satya Miller appended a note: “On the weekend of March 13-14, I participated in a Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society and walked the entire 18 hours dedicated to the memory of Al Heppner.” Finally, a few days ago, I received a phone call from a person in Oakville, Ontario interested in subscribing to the ORW. (I have her name here somewhere, but can't find it now—but, I have sent her a sample copy.) In the course of our conversation, she mentioned that she had read the article about Al Heppner in Sports Illustrated, but neither she, nor her husband, could decide what actually had happened. She said the article ended saying that his feet left the bridge. They had been hoping that this didn't mean he had jumped from the bridge, but it wasn't at all clear, at least to them. Of course, when I read the article, I knew the full story, and it never occurred to me that the fact of his suicide was not explicit, but only implied. Is this true? I didn’t keep the article, so I can't go back to check it myself. Olympic 20. In our coverage of the Athens 20 Km, we noted that the Tim Seaman and Kevin Eastler had the two fastest times in U.S. Olympic history. With John Nunn not far behind, it was easily the best team performance ever. Of course, raw times aren't always a fair comparison between walkers of different eras—times in all events continue to improve with time, due to many factors, not all including the ability of the athletes. Another way of comparing athletes through the years is by looking at the margin of defeat—how far an individual finishes behind the winner. To be really fair, as Ray Somers has suggested to me, this index should be on a percentage, not a raw time, basis, but a simple subtraction is much simpler and in most cases, the rankings would probably not differ.) Anyway, using this index, Seaman, Eastler, and Nunn rank fourth, fifth, and thirteenth among the 30 U.S. performances in the Olympic 20 (23 athletes, with several on two or more teams). No other year has two as high in the rankings and no other year has more than two in the top 15. Plaudits to the 2004 20 Km team. The top 10 performers, according to the the Mortland index—1. Rudy Haluza, 1968—1:01 behind the winner 1. Marco Evoniuk, '84—2:06 3. Ron Zinn, '64—3:09 4. Tim Seaman, '04—5:37 5. Kevin Eastler, '04—5:40 6. Tom Dooley, '68—6:09. 7. Larry Young, '72—6:10 8. Jim Heiring, '84—6:44 9. Jack Mortland, '64—7:01 (As you see, this was all just a ruse to show that I have made a top 11 list) 10. Henry Laskau, '56—7:20--Let's go for 15–11. Gary Morgan, '88—7:29 12. Jim Heiring, '88 7:33 13. John Nunn, '04—7:58 14. Ron Zinn, '60—8:40 15. Ron Laird, '76—8:47. Rogge gives racewalking a boost. Elliott Denman was told (but he wasn't there to hear it) that at his closing press conference in Athens, International Olympic Committee President Dr. Rogge, who had seen all, had seen enough, of each of the 28 Olympic sports, was asked which athlete of all he had seen and moved him the most. As paraphrased by Elliott, Dr. Rogge replied that it was Robert Korzeniowski of Poland for, among other things, winning a fourth gold medal and a third in the very long and difficult 50 Km racewalk, for devoting years of his life to preparation for this event, for doing it all in an event that started at 7 in the morning and then finishing nearly 4 hours later in a stadium empty of spectators! Elliott states, “This is a wonderful statement and must always be remembered should the subject of racewalking's continued presence on the Olympic program ever be questioned!!! Which I sure hope it isn't. Critical, too, is the fact that Dr. Rogge is from Belgium, which, unlike many of its neighbors, does not have a strong and historic walking program” Elliott urges us "to remember that the three Olympic racewalks in Athens went extremely well, without any trace of the difficulties encountered at Sydney in 2000, and gained good marks from IOC observers. Please be happy that this was achieved and continue all your efforts worldwide to promote our great event!!!” In a further note, Elliott says: "As to the subject of why there were no spectators in the stands for the finish of the 50, that's another matter. Basically, this was a non-ticketed event, stadium gate-guarders were told that no one was to be admitted!! (without specific media or other credentials, that is) At least, that is what he was told. (For the information of the few who might not know who Elliott is, he competed in the 50 Km walk at the 1956 Olympics, is a long-time contributor to the sport in myriad ways, spent many years as a sportswriter for the Asbury Park (N.J.) Press, and since retirement has been well occupied as a free-lance sports writer, which keeps getting him back to Olympic Games. As a matter of fact, some of what Elliott is up to follows: an article on Curt Clausen's effort in Athens, as Curt perhaps concludes a brilliant career that spanned nearly 20 years among elite walkers (he won the Junior National 10 Km in 1986 with a 47:38:44 effort.)

Curt Clausen 50 Km

by Elliott Denman
Gannett News Service Published in Stevens Point (Wis.) Journal

It was Curt Clausen's third—and possibly last—Olympic Games and he had a finish he won't call memorable. The Trenton, N.J.-born graduate of Stevens Point H.S. and Duke University, 36, has been America's best racewalker for most the last decade and had hoped to break into the top 10 of Friday morning's Olympic 50 Km racewalk with a time well under four hours. Family and friends from Wisconsin and around the nation had come to Greece to cheer him on—but it wasn't to be. In a field of 53 walkers gathered from 28 nations and 5 continents, Clausen wound up 32nd in 4:11:31.

The 50 Km event—longest and toughest footrace on the Olympic Games program—proved absolutely brutal to Clausen and all but a few others. With temperatures moving gradually into the low 90s, the race, which began at 7 am, became downright hellish.

Even Spiridon Kastais, the lone walker from Hellas—Greece, that is—couldn't get past the 35 Km mark, one more victim of typical Athenian summer conditions.
It was one of the very few recent times in Clausen's brilliant career—topped by his third place at the 1999 World Championships and seventh at the 2001 World Championships—that he finished 50 Km in over four hours. His five-year-old American record stands at 3:48:04.

"There was a lot of pain," Clausen said. "In the 50, that's just something you have to be willing to cope with. Three or four years ago, I'd have been able to be up there with the leaders, and stay there. I know what it would have taken to be up there, years upon years with no major injuries to do the training you'd need."

Thanks to an assortment of injuries and some surgeries, though, he'd missed some vital time in previous years and was unable to recoup the lost ground. "The mental part was tough, too," he said. "When I got those two red cards early (for technique violations, before he reached the 20 Km mark), I had to back off. That was hard. But you know there's no place I'd rather be than right here. Competing in the Olympic Games for your country, there's nothing greater than that."

Clausen had placed 22nd in the 2000 Sydney Games 50 Km and 50th at the 1996 Atlanta Games 20 Km, but the 2008 Beijing Games may be a long shot. "It's time for me to go from being a full-time athlete to being a full-time law school student (at University of Wisconsin-Madison)," he said.

Just as expected, Robert Korzeniowski of Poland—the man they call "king of the roads"—was at the front of the pack virtually from start to finish. The 36-year-old icon of the walking sport covered his 24 loops of the outside 2 Km course, plus the remaining distance in and out of Olympic Stadium in a scintillating 3:38:46.

It was his third consecutive victory in the Olympic 50 Km and he finished just 17 seconds off the Olympic record of 3:38:28 set by Vyacheslav Ivanenko of the Soviet Union in 1988. More importantly, he became the first four-time gold medalist in Olympic racewalking history, which dates back to 1908. "Dr. K." had also won the 20 Km walk at the 2000 Sydney Games to complete an unprecedented double.

The four-gold total also made him the most successful track and field athlete in Poland's history. In racewalking, Ugo Frigerio of Italy had taken three walking golds, in the 1920 and 1924 Games, plus a bronze in 1932. (Ed. And the Soviet Union's Vladimir Golubnichiy had two golds, a silver, and a bronze over four Olympic Games—1960-1972.)

Philip Dunn, Clausen's workout partner at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California and the other U.S. representative here, had moved up dramatically to pass Clausen in the final 10 Km. But Clausen, who had been as far back as 45th place at the 30 Km mark, fought back to pass Dunn and many others. Dunn wound up 32nd in 4:12:49.

Ronald Weigel Speaks

Ronald Weigel was one of two dominant East German walkers in the period from 1980 to 1992. He won silver medals in both Olympic walks in 1988 and a bronze in the 50 at the 1992 Games. He was World Champion at 50 in 1983 and World Cup winner at 50 in 1987. At 50, he was ranked number one in the world in 1983 and 1984, number two in 1987 and 1988, and number three in 1992. At 20, he was ranked second in both 1984 and 1988. His best times were 1:19:18 (track) and 3:38:17. For several years he was national coach in Australia. Now back in Germany, he was the German Team Leader for the World Cup racewalks earlier this year. Steve Vaitones has provided the transcript of an interview with Ron, conducted by a writer for the DLV (Deutschland Leichtatletik Verbund) following the World Cup. As translated by Steve's brother, here are excerpts from that interview. (Incidentally, this is the second interview with Weigel published in the ORW. Several years ago, he and teammate Hartwig Gauder, who was equally, if not more successful at 50 during the same period, were in New York City for the Marathon. I believe it was Stella Cashman who arranged for them to speak with me on the telephone. Weigel, who had better command of English, did most of the talking.)

DLV: Ronald Weigel, in your position as team leader, how do you view the results that the German walkers demonstrated.

RW: There were mixed results, in the one sense that all athletes who were good in the past year fulfilled their expectations. My praise goes to the Juniors who achieved excellent results. I'm very pleased with the new German record of Melanie Seeger and with Sabine Zimmer who went under 3:30. And likewise with Andre Hohne, who proved himself by attaining the standard for the Olympic Games. It was sad that Andreas Ern wasn't in Naumburg because of an infection.

DLV: Andreas Ern, as already mentioned, had to withdraw on short notice because of an infection. What is his overall condition?

RW: He has trained better than last year, and would have finished near the front in Naumburg (ed. And in Athens, had the judges not decided he didn't deserve to finish.) That is why it is so unfortunate that he couldn't start. However, the main race is the Olympic Games. From that perspective, I have no worries about him.

DLV: Melanie Seeger was the most impressive German athlete in Naumburg with her new German record.

RW: Melanie proved that she belongs to the best in the world. With some other tactics she might have been even better, but it is also a learning experience. The competition in Naumburg gave her a lot of self confidence and she can be successful in Athens, too. (Ed. Ninth at the World Cup, she improved to fifth in Athens.)

DLV: What could Melanie have done better tactically? What are her chances now for her next effort?

RW: She has trained well, better than last year. That also results in a higher level of expectation. She wanted to try out something in order to see where she stood at the moment. Now she knows. If one is clever, then one can use the positives in the next international competition. So, we can build on her performance in Naumburg.

DLV: To conclude, a look at the Games in Athens. Which goals do you have?

RW: Naumburg has not changed our goals. We will compete for a medal, which means in the range of third to sixth, and also look for two further placings in the top eight. We are holding to these goals. Athens is not Naumburg. Completely different conditions rule there. We have four more months time to prepare. A lot can happen in that span. I tell myself: everything is possible.

As performance-enhancing drugs continue to command a good deal of the space the media are willing to devote to track and field athletics, racewalking has had very little involvement. The article below relates a recent incident that did involve a racewalker—unfortunately, one of those incidents where one wishes common sense could prevail. The article appeared in the Houston Chronicle this past summer as part of an Olympics Notebook series by David Barron.
Byrd Likely Won't Outrun Amphetamine Ban

In the larger scope of cases facing the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, Dominic Byrd is a footnote, albeit one that merits explanation. As it does in each case that results in penalties or sanctions, USADA issued a brief release this month reporting that Byrd, 18, of Houston had tested positive for amphetamines.

He is serving a provisional suspension while it is determined if he should face sanctions for the positive test, which took place April 4 in Overland Park, Kansas, at the U.S. trials for the IAAF World Race Walking Cup.

Byrd and his mother, Elizabeth Bazan, would like it known that the positive test resulted from an illegal substance, but prescription medication that Byrd takes to treat attention deficit hyperactive disorder.

"It's a medication that was prescribed to me that I've been taking for years," Byrd, who recently graduated from Hastings High School, said Saturday. "It helps me focus and achieve my goals."

Bazan said her son, a member of the Lightning Track Club in Houston, took a 20 milligram dose of the drug on April 2, a Friday, as he does every school day. He raced two days later, finishing fifth in the junior men's 10K racewalk, and was selected for post-race drug testing. Even though the violation was inadvertent, and Bazan said her son told race officials before he was tested that he had taken the drug for treatment of ADHD, she is not optimistic that the potential two-year suspension can be overturned.

"They tell me that the international people don't believe in ADD. They think it's an 'American disease,'" Bazan said. "Byrd doesn't disagree with USADA's mandate to police the rules against use of performance-enhancing drugs. But he thinks the fact that he did not take the substance to improve his performance should be taken into consideration.

"I can understand if it was something I took for the race, but the amount was small, and I took it two days before the race because of school," he said. "I know that I'm innocent and shouldn't be suspended."

Bazan, meanwhile, said she wants to let other parents know to be vigilant when dealing with young athletes taking similar medication. "People need to be aware of the fact that there are serious ramifications and that you may be tested if you're at the elite lever," she said.

* * *

And while on the subject of drugs and sport, Bob Steadman in Australia sent me a copy of the following article—one observer's solution to the problem. Bob, who lived and raced in both the Canada and the U.S. for many years, will be remembered by long-time subscribers for the series of letters he supplied to the ORW over a period of several years, purportedly received from a racewalker in Outer Mongolia—T.S. Gumbojab. (I'm relying on a fading memory for that name; if I have it wrong, some reader with a sharper mind, perhaps Bob himself, will let me know. All of which has nothing to do with the subject at hand. Bob describes the article below as "the most enlightened I have read."

To Win Drugs War, Let Side Effects Sort Out the Losers

Louise Evans
The Australian, July 20 2004

Instead of spending million of dollars doing all that testing to deter athletes from taking performance-enhancing drugs, why not let them use whatever they want—providing it's legal.
Notorious Italian doctor Michele Ferrari, formerly team doctor to the Gewiss-Ballan cycling team, infamously claimed that EPO, if used properly, was no more harmful than orange juice. Add some champagne and you'd have a drug cocktail. Ban it and everyone will want some.

Disclaimer: In the preparation of this column, I took two shots of caffeine, a vitamin C tablet, several glasses of merlot, an unknown amount of nicotine (from passive smoking), two capsules of paracetamol and one beroca tablet. That's all. Honest.

LOOKING BACK

35 Years Ago (From the September 1969 ORW) – With altitude a definite factor, Bryan Overton won the National 50 Km title at Lake Tahoe in 4:56:07. In a very small field with few elite walkers present, Bob Kuchar, in only his fifth walking race, took second. After finishing in 5:06:29, Bob reportedly donned his backpack, strolled off into the woods, and, perhaps, has not been seen since around walking races. Bill Ranney was third in 5:12:28....Ron Laird was an easy winner of the National 25 Km at Kings point, N.Y. Ron finished in 2:02:32, followed by John Knifton (2:05:05), Canaan Marcel Jobin (2:07:17), Gary Westerfield, Steve Hayden, and Ron Daniel. Great Britain's Paul Nihill won the European 20 Km title in 1:30:41, with Caroanofogli of Romania surprising Soviet ace Nikolai Smaga to capture the silver in 1:31:06. East Germany's Christoph Hohne won the 50 as expected in 4:13:32 with his teammate Peter Salzer second. ...Colin Young covered 129 miles 1155 yards in an English 24-hour race and Nihill won the 20 Km in a match with France and Czechoslavakia, finishing in 1:28:18.

30 Years Ago (From the September 1974 ORW) – Two-time Olympic gold medalist, 38-year-old Vladimir Golubnihiy, won the European Championship at 20, upsetting West Germany's Bernd Kennenberg by 8 seconds in 1:29:30. Hohne won again at 50, this time in 3:59:07, 3 1/2 minutes ahead of Otto Bartsch of the Soviet Union. Salzer, and Italy's Vittori Viani were close behind. Mexico's Raul Gonzales made his big splash in the sport with a 1:27:53 20 Km in a dual with Canada. Daniel Baltista, the Olympic champion two years later, was left more than 4 minutes back. ...In London, Roger Mills bettered the world best for 1 Mile (3:57:14) captured third. No one else bettered the 5 hour mark. ...In England, Bryan Adams covered 100 miles in 17:29:28, with John Soucheck (18:29:15) followed by Steve Hayden, and Ron Kuchar in only his fifth walking race, took second. After finishing in 5:06:29, Bob reportedly donned his backpack, strolled off into the woods, and, perhaps, has not been seen since around walking races. Bill Ranney was third in 5:12:28. ...Ron Laird was an easy winner of the National 25 Km at Kings point, N.Y. Ron finished in 2:02:32, followed by John Knifton (2:05:05), Canaan Marcel Jobin (2:07:17), Gary Westerfield, Steve Hayden, and Ron Daniel. Great Britain's Paul Nihill won the European 20 Km title in 1:30:41, with Caroanofogli of Romania surprising Soviet ace Nikolai Smaga to capture the silver in 1:31:06. East Germany's Christoph Hohne won the 50 as expected in 4:13:32 with his teammate Peter Salzer second. ...Colin Young covered 129 miles 1155 yards in an English 24-hour race and Nihill won the 20 Km in a match with France and Czechoslavakia, finishing in 1:28:18.

25 Years Ago (From the September 1979 ORW) – Mexico defended its World Cup title in Munich despite the absence of one of its top competitors, Domingo Colm, and a subpar performance by Raul Gonzales. Daniel Baltista left the 20 Km field at the starting gun and proceeded to record solo splits of 19:21, 39:05, and 58:52. Slowing only slightly, he finished in 1:18:49, 57 seconds ahead of second place Boris Yakovlev of the Soviet Union. The Soviets also captured the next three places (with Mexico's Ernesto Canto sixth) and led Mexico by three points after the race. Jim Heiring led the U.S. effort with a 1:28:31 in 31st. Trying to repeat his teammate's tactics, Gonzales overdid it in the 50. With 10 Km splits of 42:47, 1:25:03, and 2:07:29 (a 3:32:30 pace), he left the field well back, but only succeeded in killing himself. But teammates Martin Bermudez and Enrique Vera came to the fore, finishing one-two in 3:43:36 and 3:43:59. Viktor Dobrovski was third for the Soviets and Gonzales hung on for fourth in 3:46:26. Mexico finished 5 points ahead for the two races. East Germany was third, Italy fourth, and the U.S. 13th. Vincent O'Sullivan (4:12:15) and Marco Evoniuk were 34th and 35th for the U.S. Britain's Marian Fawkes won the women's 5 Km in 22:51 to lead her nation to victory over Sweden. Susan Liers came 10th in 2:05:02 to lead the U.S. to fourth place. ...Marco Evoniuk won the U.S. 50 Km title in 4:15:07, followed by Dan O'Connor, Carl Schueller, and O'Sullivan. ...The European Junior 10 Km title went to Czech Josef Pribilince.

20 Years Ago (From the September 1984 ORW) – With no chance of Olympic glory (boycott), East Germany's walkers took out their frustrations with a 50 Km race in Berlin. Ronald Weigel finished in a startling 3:38:31, better than 2 1/2 minutes under Gonzalez's world best. Hartwig Gauder was less than 3 minutes back, just missing the Mexican's mark. A week later, Weigel did 20 Km in 1:19:56, leaving Gauder far back this time. Mexico's Carlos Mercenario, World Cup Champion 3 years later, won the Pan-Am Junior title at 10 Km in 48:52, with Troy Englehardt of the U.S. second in 50:49. ...In England, Brian Adams covered 100 miles in 17:29:28, with John Cannell also under 18 hours. There were 11 under 20 hours in the race. Sarah Brown won the women's race in a superb 18:36:29.

10 Years Ago (From the September 1994 ORW) – Russia's Valeriy Spitsyn was an easy winner in the European 50 Km Championship. His 3:41:07 effort led France's Thierry Toutain nearly 3 minutes back (3:43:52). Giovanni Pericelli, Italy, was another 63 seconds behind. Early leader, Jesus Garcia of Spain, the 1993 World Champion, faded to fourth in 3:45:25. ...Irina Stankina, Russia, and Jorge Segura, Mexico, emerged as World Junior Champions. Stankina won the women's 5 Km in 21:05:41, 6 seconds ahead of Susanne Feitor, Portugal. Segura (40:26:93) had the same margin over Russia's Evgeniy Shevlin in the men's 10 Km. ...Kerry Saxby, Australia, won the Commonwealth Games 10 Km in 44:25, with Anne Manning, Australia (44:37) and Janice McCaffrey, Canada (44:54) following. ...The Goodwill Games 20 Km St. Petersburg, Russia went to Mexico's Bernardo Segura in 1:23:29. Allen James came seventh for the U.S. in 1:27:48. Olimpiada Ivanova of Russia won the women's 10 in 42:30:31 with Yelena Saiko, Russia, and Sari Essayah, Finland, also under 43 minutes. Michelle Rohr was ninth in 44:42.

5 Years Ago (From the September 1999 ORW) – The National 40 Km, contested in Ft. Monmouth N.J., went to Steve Pecinovsky in 3:29:15. John Soucheck (3:44:53) was well back in 2nd and Ian Froman (3:57:14) captured third. No one else bettered the 5 hour mark. ...England's Sandra Brown walked 19:14:36 for 100 miles in Australia, beating second place Roger Miller by nearly 2 hours. Brown went through the first 50 in 9:05:04. Led by Michele Dildon's 39:03:2, four Italians went under 40 minutes in a 10 Km race in castelnowo Monti. Elisabetta Perrone won the women's race in 43:03:7, 12 seconds ahead of Erica Alfidi.