Sorry if this issue is arriving a bit late. See page 9 under the heading Derek within the Heel to Toe section.

Results


King Joins List of U.S. Centurions

Addison, Tex., Nov. 27 (From Dave Gwyn)—The winner of the Centurion Walk division of the Ultracentric Runs, which finished this morning, was Marshall King, 36, of Dallas. King covered 100 miles in 23:42.15 on the Greenhill Adacemy 404-meter track to become U.S. Centurion No. 61. As with the 2004 Centurion event, competition rules differed from race walking in that the contact rule was enforced but bent knees that did not appear to affect contact were not called. (Ed. That last phrase is mine based on how I understand the rules in force for the race.) Only two walkers toed the starting line alongside the participants in the 24-hour run. Using lane 5, Ollie Nanye of Illinois and King traded the lead repeatedly in the early miles. King took the lead for good after the first hour and walked a steady pace throughout. Digestive distress slowed Nanye's 6 hours, yet he logged a total of 70.53 miles. King went through 50 miles in 5:36. 50 miles in 11:21.02, 100 miles in 14:22.30, and 150 miles in 21:57.59. Nanye hit 50 miles in 12:27.29. In the future, the Houston Ultrarunning Weekend will include a competitive walk in 2006 for the first time, the directors announced yesterday. The race will be known as Centurion Walk 2006 and will be held together with the 24 Hour Run portion of the weekend, starting at 8 am on Feb. 25. The course is a flat 2,006-mile asphalt loop in Bear Creek Park. Centurion walks are conducted worldwide to give recognition to individuals who can walk 100 miles in 24 hours. Only 61 have earned the designation of Centurion in U.S. races. The rules are usually different from the racewalking rules used at shorter distances. The Houston walk will use the same rules used in the only two Centurion walks held in the U.S. in 2004 and 2005.

Southeast Texas has been without a competitive walk longer than 50 miles have gone without a Centurion Walk in U.S. and the U.S. generally has seen a dearth of long walking competitions for about the same period.

Interested walkers can contact Dave Gwyn at 6502 Briar Bayou, Houston, TX 77072, 281-544-7899, jseufin@houston.rr.com
(Editor's note: For many years, Columbia, Missouri hosted an annual 100 mile event and from 1978 through 1987 and in 1993, there was a National Championship at this distance, many of those title races conducted in Columbia. Alan Price won eight of those national titles and completed 23 100 mile races in his career, 14 of those in a six-year period, with a career best of 18:46:13. I last published a list of Centurions in Nov. 2003, when there were 57. It's my belief that most of all of those races were conducted under the rules of racewalking in force at the time (for sure the National title races were), so one might question the validity of adding athletes competing under "relaxed" rules to the Centurion list. Certainly not my decision to make and I imagine it has been discussed in ultra-distance walking circles. And, it's quite possible that judges chose to be somewhat lenient in many of those early races. Comments from Centurions are welcome. And now, more from Dave.)

Want to be the FIRST walker to qualify for the US 2008 Olympic Trials (if you disregard recent national champions, who can enter the Trials without a qualifying mark)?
Walk 50 Km on January 8 in Houston under 4:45 and you may earn that singular honor.
Sure, the John Evans in Houston is only five weeks before the national championships (Clermont, Fla., Feb. 12), but there are several reasons you might choose to walk at Houston:

- o If the February date is too close to indoor or other races important to you.
- o To get a feel for the distance before the race that selects the World Cup team (there's even a pretty good chance that the US team will include walkers who don't race at Clermont.
- o To go after a record or PR. The flat 1183-meter asphalt loop for Jan. 8 is about as fast a course as you'll ever walk on, and the John Evans 50 is overdue for a cool day.
- o To finish a 50. The Jan. 8 hours is available for 8 hours of racing if somebody on the course at the 6- and 7-hour points has been making progress toward a sub-8.
- o You want to be the South regional champion (male or female); there's no South region for masters. The South region is those points south of Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia.
- o To get a 50 under your belt as soon as possible, or to get you qualifying race out of the way so you don't have to do another 50 until the 2008 Trials.
- o To see if you can keep pace with the 20 Km racewalkers who start 2 hours after you do.

Can a person sustain two 50s in a 36-day span? The answer will vary with the individual, but if you're in shape to walk one 50 hard, you probably can do them both in about the same time. By and large, it's wise to proceed cautiously in the first race when planning two long races near each other. Drop out if getting to the finish line will mean a serious injury, unless you have a good reason to let the first race take you out of commission for the necessary healing time.

So far the inquiries for the Jan. 8 race include two international entrants who seem to have the credentials to walk 4:45, and Texan with an outside shot at 5 hours, and three out-of-state returnees with solid chances of getting their PRs under 6 hours. With a small field likely, the ten men's and women's trophies should be beckoning to you.

While you're thinking 50, be sure to start laying the groundwork for a 50 in your part of the country. It can even be on the track (and notice that there are a lot of 50,000 meter masters records going begging or just asking to be lowered by a good athlete). If you want the race to have a little prestige, get it selected as a regional championship--there's never been a year since the four men's and women's regions were established that all four have had a championship at 50, and some of the seven master's regions have never had a single championship at 50.

(Ed. You want 50 km action, go back 26 years to 1979 when Houston kicked off a year of at least nine 50 Km races across the U.S. Houston on Feb. 18, Arlington, Vir. April 28, Detroit May 12, Acton, Mass. May 29, Walnut, Cal. June 15, Colorado Springs July 28, San Francisco August 28, Burlington, Vermont Sept. 16, and San Diego Dec. 10. All this activity led to 20 athletes going under 4:40 and 32 under 4:56. Marco Enonok and Dan O'Connor both contested five 50s that year--three of Marco's and one of Dan's being out of the country. Vincent O'Sullivan, Carl Schueler, and Wayne Glusker all had four 50s for the year.)

Race opportunities are here for ringing out the old and ringing in the new year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Race Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec. 3</td>
<td>USATF National 1 Hour, Jacksonville, Fla. (T)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec. 4</td>
<td>5 Km, Ft. Collins, Col., 9 am (H)</td>
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<td>5 Km, New York City, 8:30 am (G)</td>
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<td>Sat. Dec. 9</td>
<td>1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, 5 pm (AA)</td>
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<td>Sun. Dec. 10</td>
<td>South Region 5 Km, Pharr, Texas (AA)</td>
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<td>2.8 Miles, Seattle 9 am, (C)</td>
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<td>Sun. Dec. 11</td>
<td>1 Hour, Red Bank, N.J., 10 AM (A)</td>
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<td>5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)</td>
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<td>5 Km, New York City, 8:30 am (G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec. 17</td>
<td>5 and 10 Km, Los Angeles, 8:30 am (Y)</td>
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<td>Florida State 8 Km (N)</td>
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<td>Sun. Dec. 18</td>
<td>5 and 10 Km, Washington, DC (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec. 30</td>
<td>Indoor 3 Km and 1 Mile, New York City (G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec. 31</td>
<td>42nd Annual Polar Bear 10 Mile, Asbury Park, NJ (A)</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 1</td>
<td>5 Km, Aurora, Col., 10 am (H)</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 8</td>
<td>50 Km, Houston (L)</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 15</td>
<td>USATF National 30 Km, Chula Vista, Cal. (D)</td>
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<td>Sun. Jan. 2</td>
<td>South Regional Masters 15 Km, Clermont (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Jan. 22</td>
<td>1500 meters and/or 5 Km, Clermont, Fla., 10 am (B)</td>
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<td>Sun. Feb. 5</td>
<td>5 Km, Denver, 10 am (H)</td>
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<td>Sun. Feb. 12</td>
<td>5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)</td>
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<td>Sun. Feb. 18</td>
<td>USATF National 50 Km, Clermont, Fla. (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Feb. 19</td>
<td>1500 meters and/or 5 Km, Clermont, Fla., 10 am (B)</td>
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<td>5 and 10 Km, Laverne, Cal. (Y)</td>
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From Heel To Toe

About those photos. I'm sure our astute group of readers picked up on what was amiss with the photo captions in the October issue. In case you didn't (which, I guess means you aren't astute)--the editor goofed. Yes, I put the photos on the wrong pages so that the captions described what you saw on the opposite page. The printer was not at fault--I did it. Guilty as charged.

Postal 1 Hour Corrections. Trying to match the ORW's record for errata, Elliott Danman has admitted to a few necessary corrections to the 2005 National Postal 1 Hour results, which we published last month. He notes: Millie Prihoda, Carolena RW walked 7619 meters and should be second in M75-79, not fifth in M65-69; Jack Starr, Phast walked 9085 meters and should be seventh in M70-74, not first in M75-79; Peter Coronelli SC walked 9088 meters and is first in M55-59, not first in M50-54.

Qualifying standards. Qualifying standards for the racewalk events for the 2007 World Championships in Osaka, Japan are: Men's 20 Km: A-1:23:00, B-1:24:30; Men's 50 Km-A:4:00:00, B-4:07:00, Women's 20 Km A-1:33:30, B-1:38:00. These have not changed from the 2005 standards. However, the way in which these standards are applied has changed slightly from recent Olympics and World Championships. Any nation can enter from 1 to 4 athletes who have met the A standard. Or, they can enter one with the B standard, along with 1 to 3 athletes with the A standard. In either case, only three athletes will be allowed to compete. (However, I assume that the defending champions are still granted entry in addition to athletes who have met the standard.) Ray Sharp has clarified the change succinctly. Previously, a nation's possibilities for competitors were A, AA, AAA, or B. Now they are expanded to A, AA, AAA, B, AB, or AAB. For the racewalks, qualifying performances must come in the period between Sept. 1, 2005 and Aug. 13, 2007. Performances must be achieved during an official competition organized in conformity with IAAF rules. Junior athletes (age 18 or 19 on Dec. 31, 2007) cannot compete in the 50 Km race and youth athletes (16 or 17 on Dec. 31, 2007) cannot compete in either the men's or women's 20 Km. And finally, here are the events that meet the criteria for achieving qualifying standards: IAAF Racewalking Cup 2006, European Championships 2006, African Championships, European Championships 2007, South American Racewalking Championships 2006, African Games 2007, IAAF Racewalking Challenges races in 2006 and 2007, competitions of the European Racewalking Circuit 2006 and 2007, and national and international events, providing the host Federation sends a request to the IAAF before Jan. 31, 2006 (for the 2006 season) or Dec. 31, 2006 (for the 2007 season).

Outstanding male--Ray Sharp and Paul Johnson. Outstanding female--Teresa Vaill; Outstanding male--Ray Sharp and Paul Johnson.

Raffle reminder. This from Elaine Ward of the North American Racewalking Foundation will remind you of and update you on the raffle's foundation is holding: A $20 American Gold Eagle coin was donated to the Institute to headlong a raffle to raise money for the Al Heppner Memorial Fund and for the Youth Development Fund. As the present value of the coin is close to $100, the donor requested that the first prize be $50 in cash. Second prize is two IAAF duffle bags. (Ron and Maryanne Daniel just donated another duffle bag filled with new and slightly worn USA uniforms for the World Championships et al. Gorgeous stuff. The clothing will be itemized in a separated list in g and sent to you for purchase for your own use or for young racewalkers you know. And again, money raised will go to the Heppner and Youth Development Funds.) Some may not be familiar with the difference between the Heppner and Youth Funds. The Heppner Fund is set up to be a lasting tribute to Al. Each year, 10 percent of its Treasury will go to a sophomore, junior, or senior college athlete with serious intentions of training to represent the U.S. internationally and in the Olympics. Presently the Treasury is near $23,000. The Youth Development Fund has been used to assist high school programs and most recently the Junior Camp held in Maine. The funds are not given to individuals, only to high school programs and often help with athletes' travel to major competitions. The Raffle runs from October 10 to January 10, 2006, $25 for one ticket, $50


Outstanding female--Teresa Vaill; Outstanding male--Ray Sharp and Paul Johnson.
Different Judges have been sent to the Chief Judge, the athlete is disqualified and he shall be red-carded to the Chief Judge. " And Rule 6 reads: "(a) When three Red Cards from three judges, or a visible loss of contact or a bent knee during any part of the competition, the Judge shall send a Red Card to the Chief Judge." And Rule 6 reads: "(a) When three Red Cards from three different Judges have been sent to the Chief Judge, the athlete is disqualified and he shall be notified of this disqualification by the Chief Judge or a Chief Judge's Assistant by showing the athlete a red paddle. The failure to give notification shall not result in the reinstatement of a disqualified athlete. (b) in all competitions, either directly controlled by the IAAF or taking place under IAAF permit, in no circumstances shall the Red Cards of two Judges of the same nationality have the power to disqualify. (c) In track races, an athlete who is disqualified shall immediately leave the track and, in road races, shall immediately after being disqualified remove the distinguishing numbers and leave the course. Any disqualified athlete who fails to leave the course or track may be liable to further disciplinary action in accordance with IAAF Rules 22.1(f) and 145.2. (d) One or more Posting Boards shall be placed on the course and near the finish to keep athletes informed about the number of Red Cards that have been sent to the Chief Judge for each athlete. The symbol of each offense should also be indicated on the Posting Board. Thus, "warning" has disappeared in all cases. ... Another McGovern weekend. Dave McGovern will be in Los Angeles the weekend of January 20-22 to conduct another of his World Class racewalking clinics. Participants will benefit from lecture on modern racewalk technique featuring video from recent Olympic and World Championship competitions, individual video-taped technique analysis, and lectures of race preparation, racing strategy, and proper training methods. McGovern is an 11-time National champion, a member of the U.S. National Team, a USAF and IAAF certified coach, the author of three books, and a good fellow indeed. For more information contact Margaret Fields at 310-839-8235 or visit Dave's website at www.racewalking.org. ... Pole walking revisited. Back in the spring, we had a couple of reports from Dave McGovern on modern racewalk technique featuring video from recent Olympic and World Championship competitions, individual video-taped technique analysis, and lectures of race preparation, racing strategy, and proper training methods. McGovern is an 11-time National champion, a member of the U.S. National Team, a USAF and IAAF certified coach, the author of three books, and a good fellow indeed. For more information contact Margaret Fields at 310-839-8235 or visit Dave's website at www.racewalking.org. ... Good running. Junior racewalking ace Jared Svehlosky continues with his outstanding feats as a runner as well. Jared won the Oregon Division 3A state cross country championship with a time of 16:11 for the 5000 meter course. ... First 2006 National. This year will be the first for the "South Bay People's Walk 5 Km", a non-competitive event geared towards the recreational fitness walker. You can get more information about all the weekend's events at www.columbus.net/nowalwalk.html. Derek. Our saga continues. For recent subscribers, our son Derek, now 37, has been paraplegic since a motorcycle racing accident in 1997. He had moved to Morgantown, W.V. in January of this year, bought a home, and was prospering in his consulting work for a company that addresses matters of ADA compliance and architectural design for accessibility. In August, he got a very serious infection that got into his blood and his spine, leading to two surgeries in which his back was fused down to L5 (he was fused from T5 to T12 following his accident. After about five weeks in the hospital and three in a rehab facility he came back to Columbus, knowing that he faced further surgery since the rest of his spine was deteriorating due to a condition called Charcot spine, accelerated by the infection. By the time he saw Dr. Gabrielson at the Ohio State U. Medical Center on Nov. 2, his spine was completely separated between L4 and L5 and further surgery was needed very quickly. He underwent 13 hours of surgery on Nov. 8 to fuse his spine and install a rather intricate assembly of new hardware to stabilize the fusion. In the meantime, he had been fitted with a custom-molded back brace, which he needs to wear whenever he is up. Further surgery was required 9 days later to graft and fuse the spine from the front. That took about 7½ hours. Unfortunately, the night before that surgery, he had reached to the side from his chair to try and pick something off the floor and heard and felt something pop. X-rays and CAT scans following the next day's surgery showed that a screw had popped out of a nut on the backside. So he was back in the OR 5 days later to repair that. It turned out a screw on the other side was also out. That was a 5½ hour surgery. The surgeon is now convinced that everything is very solid, but it will be 3 to 4 months until bone growth has completely knitted the fusion. In the meantime, he will need to continue wearing the brace. Tomorrow, one week after that surgery (hopefully, the last surgery), he will be released from the hospital. The complication is that he now requires another 3 to 4 weeks of intravenous antibiotics for assurance that the infection is completely cleaned up. His only insurance is medicare and West Virginia medicaid, which he got during his hospitalization in W.V. As he learned during the first surgery, medicare will not cover home health care for intravenous antibiotics, which is one reason he was in a rehab hospital in West Virginia. (Inexplicably, they will cover the cost in a health care facility, which, of course costs a lot more.) The cost of two doses a day in home is astronomical when it comes to paying it out of pocket. Medaid does cover home health care, but only within 30 miles of the residence, which for Derek is Morgantown. So, tomorrow, we take Derek back to his house in Morgantown, and will them shuttle back and forth for four weeks so that one of us is always there with him. Of course, to complicate things further, he has to see his surgeon here next Wednesday, which means getting him back and forth between his two intravenous infusions. So, for the reader, what this means is that I'm not sure when this issue will go in the mail. I'll get it to the printer tomorrow and hopefully, will be back in time to get it in the mail this weekend. Sorry about the delay.

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the November 1965 ORW)—In the Ohio Track Club's Annual Distance Carnival, Jack Mortland won the opening event, a 7-miler in 55:45 with Chuck Newell second in 60:21 and Wayne Yarcho third in 61:32. A couple of hours later, Jack Blackburn was looking for a 14-minute effort in the 2 mile, but fell 12.3 seconds short. However, he left Mortland 44 seconds behind, with Newell third in 16:38. Canada's Bert Life edged Wayne
Yarcho for fourth, with both at 17:12. On Sunday, Jeanne Bocci was an easy winner in the women’s 5 mile in 48:38. Mortland had little trouble in the 15 mile, as Blackburn had finished a-mile run only about 15 minutes before the start. Mortland had a 2:09:10 to Blackburn’s 2:24:57, with Yarcho third in 2:22:44. Ron Laird won his seventh National title of the year, taking the 35 Km in Detroit in 3:07:09. Ron Daniel was 5 minutes back and Dan Calfee third in 3:14:47. Elliott Denman took 28th in the annual London-to-Brighton race (52 1/2 miles) in 9:32:14, 3:18 off the best ever by a U.S. walker (Paul Schell in 1963). The race was won by Italy’s 1964 Olympic gold medalist, Abdon Pamich, in 7:37:42 ahead of 1960 Olympic 50 Km winner Don Thompson (7:45:04). Laird also won the 25 Km national in Seattle in 2:01:42, better than 12 minutes ahead of Karl Johansen and Bill Rainey.

35 Years Ago (From the November 1970 ORW)–Goetz Klopfen walked an American record 2:34 for 20 miles in Seattle. On the way, he set records at 15 miles (1:54:47), 25 Km (1:58:52), 2 Hours (15 miles 1192 yards), and 30 Km (2:23:14). In the annual Thanksgiving Day 6 mile (short) in Cincinnati, Wayne Yarcho edged Doc Blackburn (48:45 to 49:10) with Dale Arnold and Clair Duckham following. Gerry Bocci won two races at the OTC Distance Carnival with 1:25:40 for 10 miles and 15:44 for 2. Dave Romansky beat Ron Daniel in a short 15 mile (certified courses weren’t in vogue in those days) in Long Branch, N.J., 1:56:55 tyo 1:58:33. East Germany’s Christoph Hohne won the Lugano 100 Km race in 9:26:31, missing his own course record by 10 minutes.

30 Years Ago (From the November 1975 ORW)–Larry Young easily won the National 30 Km title in 2:25:36, with Paul Ide nearly 13 minutes back and Augie Hirt in third. Two weeks later, John Knifton edged Young in the National 35 Km in Pittsburgh. John had 2:53:04 and Larry Young 2:53:56. Ide was third. Bernd Kamenborg (West Germany) set a World 30 Km record on the track with 3:56:51, and Italy’s Vittorio Visini bettered the 20 Mile record with a 2:27:38.

25 Years Ago (From the November 19780 ORW)–In San Diego, Paul Hendricks walked brilliantly to beat Allen Price and Price’s American record in the National 100 mile. Paul finished in 18:49:52. Price was also beaten by surprising newcomer Jonathan Rem (has he ever been heard of again?), who did 19:19:46. Allen stuck under 20 hours and five others finished the distance. The National 40 Km in Long Branch, N.J. went to Don O’Connor in 3:24:21. Ray Sharp led with 10 Km to go, but trailed by more than 4 minutes as the finish. Randy Minn was third. Nikolai Vinetschenko cruised to a 1:21:47 20 Km in the Soviet title race as 13 walkers bettered 1:26. Another Soviet walker, Boris Nakolyev, won the 9-day, 9-stage Tour de Romandie in Switzerland, covering the 289.7 Km in an elapsed time of 23:28:27.

20 Years Ago (From the November 1985 ORW)–Sweden’s Bo Gustafsson was the first walker home in the New York City Marathon with a time of 3:15:55. Marco Eroniuk was next in 3:23:56 and Sweden’s Ann Jansson led the women, finishing third overall in 3:39:43. Tom Edwards edged Curtis Fisher in the Metropolitan 10 Km Championship, 45:35 to 45:36. Fisher won the Henry Muskat 5 Mile in Mineola, N.Y. in 36:51. Mexicans swept the first four places in a Los Angeles 10 Km, Bidaulte Andavio had 39:57 and Martin Bemudes 39:58. Paul Wick was the first U.S. walker in 41:46 and Larry Walker led the masters division in 43:51. In Czechoslovakia, Josef Pribiluinee did a track 10 Km in 38:02.6. Roman Mrazeck was a full minute behind.

5 Years Ago (From the November 2000 ORW)–Viktor Ginko, Belarus, walked 100 Km in 8:43:30 to win an Italian race, ahead of Latvia’s Modris Liepins (8:59:14). In an accompanying women’s 50 Km, Natalia Bruniko did 4:52:29. The Italian 50 Km went to Francesco Galbenzi in 4:01:34 and the French 20 to Denis Langlois in 1:23:20.


15 Years Ago (From the November 1990 ORW)–Mexican walkers were dominant in the Pan American Cup races. In the women’s 10 Km, Graciela Mendoza (46:07) was well clear of Canada’s Janice McCaffrey (46:41). Teresa Vail was first for the U.S. in 47:18. Led by Ernesto Canto (1:21:46), Mexico swept the first four places at 20 Km, with Canada’s Guillaume Leblanc (1:23:26) finishing fifth. Carl Schueler had 1:28:12 in seventh. And at 50, Martin Bemudes (5:31:30) beat teammate Francisco Reyes by 8 minutes. Gene Kitts was fifth in 4:19:27. Mexico won the team races in all three events, with the U.S. third in each, behind Brazil at 20, Guatemala at 50, and Canada at 10. Canada’s Tim Berrett was the first walker in the New York City Marathon in 3:24:12. Following were Carlos Mercenario, Mexico 3:26:28; Bo Gustafsson, Sweden 3:30:31; Ronald Weigel, Germany 3:35:11, and Stefan Johansson, Sweden 3:36:05. Tim Lewis was eighth in 3:45:37.

 Been a while since I have run any of the old cigarette cards that Shaul Ladany sent me copies of a few years ago, so here is another; the style looks a bit iffy from this shot.
Due to some time constraints brought on by our family situation (again see p. 9, Derek), I am going to flat out steal something from Bob Carlson’s Front Range Walkers News, Dec. 2005 edition, that he lifted from Coach Howard “Jake” Jacobson. I’m not sure when Jake wrote this as Bob didn’t note a source in his newsletter.

SOME TIPS ON RACE WALKING TECHNIQUE
By Howard Jacobson (For folks trying to increase walking efficiency)

It has been said that if Sir Isaac Newton were a race walk coach, he would have been a good one. By applying his Law of Motion developed in the late 1600s, his pupils would have faster and more injury-free performances. The Newtonian Law of Reaction states that: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. For example, when a person walks across a floor, the feet push back against the floor with the same amount of force as the floor pushes forward against the feet. Therefore, it is important to maximize the thrust forward at the propulsive stage of the foot stance. Keeping this in mind, we must also understand the Newtonian Law of Acceleration: Acceleration of an object is directly proportional to the force causing it and is in the same direction as the force. This means that the floor pushing back against the foot is pushing it and the leg and the body forward (same direction) with the same force that the foot exerted against the floor in the first place. So, in order to maximize the thrust forward, which obviously can only be done at push-off, the direction of the foot placement should be such that will allow the toes to push straight back. When the swing leg is reaching out with the hip pushed forward and the knee and the heel reaching out, the toes should be pointed straight ahead so that when heel contact is made, the foot will roll across the outside edge, onto the ball and toes for a straight back push-off. The acceleration can thus be concentrated to the maximum in a straight-ahead direction.

There are some people who walk in a duck-like fashion called out-toers. These people usually pronate (foot rotates outward) excessively. Now that is bad in and of itself, considering the injury rate for over-pronators, but in addition, the energy of their push-off is at an angle to the direction of the walk so that maximum forward propulsion is not completely achieved. Some of the force is diffused off to the side, thereby wasting energy. In addition, .8 to 1.0 inches can be lost on each stride. This can be equated to approximately a 100 meter loss over 5 km or a 200 meter loss over 10 km. To a competitive race walker, this can be extremely important. To the average fitness buff, it certainly is important to know when you are doing anything incorrectly in order to be able to correct it and receive maximum benefit and avoid injury. How about one foot compared to the other. The following study of foot placement in relation to gait width is for beginner and recreational race walkers.

Gait width is the lateral distance between the limbs upon foot placement during a complete stride (two steps). If you have ever noticed the way some fat people walk with their feet far apart it is because their fat thighs are in the way. Their stride is short and they sway from side to side. At the speeds at which you will be moving you should have the feet no more than 2 inches apart. Any distance 3 inches or more will tend to produce both an undesirable side-to-side sway (restricting forward fluidity) and a shorter stride.

Experiment with the other two placements and determine for yourself what is comfortable for you. If your thighs are on the heavy side, your gait width will be a bit wider than it will be as your thighs become slimmer. The wider child-bearing pelvis of the female may also feel more comfortable with the slightly wider gait width.

At this point, you have all the components necessary for putting together a smooth, efficient style. The movements just described are neither complicated nor hard to do. There are no movements which you cannot do as is proved by the very fact that you all walk already. This is just refining your movements to best advantage.

FOOT PLACEMENT

Pointing the toes straight ahead and pushing straight back during the propulsive phase of the stride are musts for maximum acceleration and minimum loss of distance. Desirable gait width varies with the walker’s speed and balance. For competitive race walking, a narrower gait width than heretofore mentioned. Near-uptimum and optimum gait width are additional elements enabling the race walker to achieve maximum stride length. In the near optimum, the feet just overlap the line of direction. Optimum foot placement is when one foot is placed directly in front of the other. It is necessary to have good hip flexibility to achieve this, and it is hip action that makes race walkers seem odd to some spectators who have no appreciation or understanding of what is going on. They’ll learn, and even if they don’t, you already know.

SUPPORTING LEG ACTION

The forward leg at the end of its swing is fully straightened. The foot is at a 90-degree angle to the leg, anticipating heel strike. As the outside corner of the heel makes contact with the ground, the leg becomes the support leg. On contact, the ankle should be locked at an angle just wide enough to permit rolling along the outside edge of the shoe until reaching the ball of the foot for toe-off. The leg should simultaneously straighten immediately on contact, almost to the point of locking the knee so that the locked ankle and locked knee make a rigid lever of the leg. As a rigid lever, the leg is used to pull the body forward over the leg to mid-stance. This will also be helped by considerable forward momentum. Once the body is over the leg, the leg can continue rolling onto the toe for propulsion (toe-off). By rolling right up onto the toe rather than leaving the ground at the ball of the foot, you gain a precious 2 or 3 inches. To achieve maximum acceleration, it is essential that some top and very flexible race walkers—like former elite racer Tim Lewis—can achieve a hyperextension (bowing out at the back) of the driving leg as it thrusts against the ground, creating even greater propulsion. The emphasis on hyperextension and on the roll right up and off the toe are recommended for competitive race walking.
SWING LEG ACTION:
The rear leg, upon leaving the ground, has now become the swing leg. The knee begins to drive forward. The trailing foot leaves the ground in an almost vertical position after toe-off and is swung forward as low as possible. As the opposite leg reaches mid-stance, the swing leg begins to straighten. The hip is pushed forward and slightly downward, and the knee and the heel reach out for the ground.

HIP ACTION:
As the leg swings forward, the hip on that side comes through also, sinking slightly downward. At the completion of the stride, the hip rises again to its normal position. The competitive race walker should take particular note of this next refinement of technique. In the middle of the stride, there is an opportunity to lengthen the stride: by pushing the swing hip forward as the swing leg is passing the supporting leg. This can add 4 to 6 inches to the stride. Therefore the emphasis in hip action should be forward so as to eliminate lateral sway. If done properly, it won't look strange.

POSITION OF THE TORSO AND HEAD
An upright posture with the feeling of “growing tall” from the back of the neck is ideal for race walking. Presenting a higher center of gravity will also help to achieve a longer stride. Just beyond mid-stance, when the leg is braced against the ground and beginning to push, there should be a resultant slight forward lean of the torso but this should be no more than 5 degrees. Too great a forward lean can present difficulties in bringing through the rear leg or cause bent-knee walking which can result in disqualification. Too great a backward lean limits a walker’s stride length and also causes a loss of power. Carrying the head too far forward or too far back, because of its weight (about 10% of body weight) and distance from the center of gravity, is likely to affect the whole body’s balance.

ARM ACTION:
The arms swing back and forth like a pendulum bent to 90 degrees, synchronized with the opposite leg. The loosely clenched fists cross the body slightly at mid-chest, elbows just skimming the rib cage. When the hip reaches out, it causes the hip girdle to face one plane, while simultaneously the trunk twists to accommodate the shoulder girdle, coming through with the opposite arm to face the opposite plane. This opposite rotation keeps the body’s center of gravity stable, establishing good balance. The shoulders remain perpendicular to the line of travel. The arm movement helps to maintain the walker’s stride and tempo.

One way to practice accomplishing the “in tight” feeling of the very short arm stroke is to walk quickly with both palms placed directly on your breastplate, elbows close to your sides. You must concentrate on moving your hips quickly. Now, close your fists and keeping your same hip action, synchronize your “in tight” arm action with your legs. You find that you are using short piston-like strokes. You have to experiment to find that control.

Do not swing the hands too high in front—the danger of having too high of an arm swing is that it could tend to pull you upward rather than forward. If it pulls you off the ground it breaks one of the rules of race walking and can get you disqualified from a judged race. There is a fine line here and you need to learn to stay just below it.