



OHIO RACEWALKER

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From the ORW Archives

Since November is always a light month, newswise, I decided to feature something from the past in this issue. Here is how we prefaced the following article in the September 1989 Ohio Racewalker: The interesting notes by Ron Laird, four-time Olympian, continue in the Oregon Walking News. The nomadic Ron has now settled for a time in Springfield, Oregon, just outside of Eugene, and is trying to nourish the roots of the sport in that track crazy town. *(Note that Ron has now been in Ashtabula, Ohio for many years.)*

Rambling Ron: Racewalking and Concentration

by Ron Laird (Winner of 65 National Racewalking titles and member of 1960, 1964, 1968, and 1976 U.S. Olympic Teams.)

My first few years of National Championship wins were at the longer distances of 25 to 50 kilometers. This was largely due to having developed the ability to concentrate on what I was doing once the race or workout got underway. Many miles and hours of training or racing would pass with less strain and effort as I really got into what I was doing. Even when I physically fell apart out there, I could bear down and finish with a style and balance that kept me going at a decent speed. My desire to win was strong. I was willing to suffer more, even though I knew some of my rivals to be in better condition. You may already be good at concentrating, having practiced it in some other discipline. Fast walk workouts will also develop this necessary skill, if you work at it.

Sometimes, my mind would drift off onto other thoughts as I moved along those country roads where I first trained in upstate New York. This loss of concentration would annoy me once I came back to my senses, so I'd dash off on a two to three hundred yard sprint just to make up the ground I pretended I'd lost. This game was to help discipline me against future losses of concentration. Such daydreaming could not be tolerated in a race.

I was quite serious about all of this back then. It was necessary for me to commit myself to a cause early in my life. Just letting the mind wonder and daydream is, of course, a pleasant and easier way of getting through a slowish session. This relaxed type of training certainly has its place in our often stressful lives. Easy days can be used to up for a hard, long effort or to recover from one. I enjoy and need to practice easy racewalking at least once or twice per week, even when I'm in serious training. When not into heavy training, I'll do completely different, like going for a swim or roller skating. I still have my old skates and do enjoy grinding out lots of laps in a good rink now and then. Other times, when I'm feeling tired, I'll go out to a favorite restaurant, see a movie, or, if I'm working, go home to eat and watch TV. Being a couch potato has its place, when it comes to your rest and relaxation program. Wearing a small radio or cassette player can be a welcome distraction and educational experience. They make a three-hour session seem like only two. My favorite

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listening is good Christian lectures and music. I now have a strong desire to learn about these things. This Olympic body of mine is not going to live forever.

(Below, see that body as he won the 1964 Pan-American Games 20 Km in 1:33:05.2.)

Back in the early winter of 1980, I was living in Mexico City at the Mexican National Sports Center. While there, I got into doing three-hour sessions around the base of the 300-meter bicycle racing track with a small radio pinned to my t-shirt. I would get those laps in even when the smog was bad, which was nearly every day. That radio made it all a lot more tolerable. Perhaps this is why I can train around small loops in parking lots, and on baseball diamonds for an hour or two without getting bored. (Rd. 1, too, learned that discipline. For many years, the bulk of my training was on a secluded, one-lane, 188-yard blacktop circuit Doc Blackburn built outside his house. I went as much as 24 miles on it, and—most people don't want to believe this—I enjoyed it. A big Coca-Cola clock with a sweep second hand drove us forward!) Once I got used to it, doing lots of laps in an area of little or no distraction had worked well for me. You can always find a safe place to do your daily workout if you don't mind doing small loops. O

One must continually wade through verbal abuse when racewalking in public. This is a sorry fact of life we all have to cope with. It's tough enough to get out and train at times. We certainly don't need any discouragement from those we'll have to face once we're out there. Bear with it, for it only lasts for a few moments. During such encounters, I often throw in an acceleration and quickly leave it all behind me. It helps to sing or talk out loud to yourself so you can drown out whatever dumb remarks are being said about what you're doing. Just keep moving; a friendly wave and smile is

fine, if you can manage them. Some people are better at this others. I certainly am now that I'm older and racing isn't as serious to me anymore.

I don't get upset over the statements I hear children make. They simply want to know, "Why is he walking that way?" The only full conversation I ever understood during the 15 months I lived in Germany (1973 and 1974) was short and humorous. It took place in a lovely park as I swiftly moved past a mother and her young daughter. Correctly translated it went like this: "Look you, look you, mommy!" "Yes my child, a fast walker." Fully comprehending what they had just said gave me a nice sense of belonging. The year and a half I lived and worked there, I never did try to master their language. I simply didn't want to



spend the time and effort to learn something I thought I'd never really use. I'd rather do hundreds of stomach exercise and more miles in those lovely parks.

While I was training on a suburban street near Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1958, a young boy standing on his porch shouted at me as I strided by, "Hey mister, are you retarded?" The genuine concern and sincerity in his voice immediately cracked me up. At that moment, I realized this was the first time I'd actually laughed at a remark in the three years I'd been hearing them. The silly things people said had always bothered me. They gave me a strong desire to succeed. I wanted to prove to everyone that what I was doing would, in turn, do all sorts of wonderful things for me if I, in turn, would be faithful to it. Even if I never entered any sort of a race, the exercise benefits to my mind and body would always keep me healthy. Any sacrifice would be worth it. Racewalking looks silly to most people. To me, being overweight and in poor health was what was silly and dangerous. (Ed. In his remarks on "remarks", Ron has probably forgotten the time he and I were going around the perimeter of Central Park on a training spin before departure for Europe in 1965. We got the best remark I ever heard. Passing a very large woman, fat if you will, perched on a park bench, a cigarette in her teeth, we heard: "Hey faggot. With a swing like that I can make a whole lotta money offa you.")

After a few months of continuous development, I knew this was the activity and life style I had to pursue. Many acquaintances tried to discourage me about the amount of time and effort I was putting into my new sport. This made me work even harder. After a few racing and training highs, I was addicted. There was rebellion in me and this is how I ended up expressing it. Committing oneself to an endurance activity when it was not popular was quite a bold decision back then. There are many young men who go through rebellious years doing things harmful to themselves and others. If they must do this, they should have the common sense to take on an activity that will not destroy their minds and bodies. Better yet, find a cause that will develop what they are born with.

Years ago there were a lot more confrontations with people while I was out training and racing. For some reason, these acts of hostility usually came from young males. They simply had to say or do something, especially if they had any of their friends around. Dogs react the same way. One will only bark but two or more will often encourage each other to attack. I learned to keep my anger and desire to retaliate to myself. If I said or did anything, they might in turn do something crazy right then or in the future. I even stopped a few times to chat over what fast walking was all about. The tactic always made friends out of potential enemies. Generally, older men, and nearly all women, would try to ignore me, though I could easily detect their strong desire to react in some way. The more affluent the neighborhood you racewalk through, the safer you are. If you went into rough areas, you could expect rough treatment. Telling people of my Olympic hopes always seemed to help. That word "Olympic" has the magic to soften many a hard heart.

I often felt like a bullfighter as I trained on roads with a lot of traffic. It's a must to always keep your eyes on the oncoming bumpers nearest to you. Some nut just might swerve at you during an instant of hostility. I was also cautious of all open, passenger-side windows, because you never knew what was going to come flying out at you. This is why I always train facing traffic. At least, you have a fighting chance if you can see it coming. If you're on the other side of the road, they can nail you good. You don't have eyes in the back of your head.

Always demonstrate good style. This will cause others to look upon you and our sport with favor. Often their curiosity will persuade them to give it a try. Nothing turns off potential converts quicker than watching someone with ridiculous style going down the road or around the track. Not only will that individual probably strain something; they are sure to suffer some sort of harassment.

I must admit, things along these line are a lot more calm nowadays than they were back in the '50s and '60s. Slow walking has always been acceptable with everyone, but not too many years ago anyone seen out running or racewalking was looked upon as a nut case. I've even been stopped by police who thought I was fleeing the scene of a crime. During the last 20 years, all of those slow runners doing their thing have gotten the ubulic used to seeing bodies exercising all over the place. Because of this, the general public, more or less, accepts or ignores racewalkers. It is getting so popular these days, classes are being offers all over the country.

Try to do you best a t being a worthy ambassador of the Olympic event, whenever and wherever you perform it. Be prepared to occasionally stop and answer questions about what you are doing. Don't be shy when instructing others. You'll have to do it sooner or later, and it might as well be sooner. There are many out there looking for a new and injury-free form of endurance exercise, so please have the patience to spend a few minutes giving out information or even a short demonstration. It helps to carry a few cards with the names and phones of local people who can get them started correctly. I sincerely hope that person will be you.

The older I get, the more positive I am of having made the correct decision to pursue health rather than wealth. So here I am, just over 50 (*Ed. Then. Just over 70 now.*), and still going at it. After all these years, I've found out that my health is my wealth.

And now, for some results:

Conn. 10 Km Championship, Nov. 1-1. Ginger Armstrong (47) 67:25 2. Janice Watkins (58) 72:26 Men-1. Theron Kissinger 50:54 2. Barry Fowler (51) 66:42 3. Andy Cable (44) 67:54 4. Bill Harriman (62) 67:58 5. Charlie Mansbach (65) 68:40 6. Bob Watkins (61) 72:04 7. Gus Davis (71) 80:00 **Virginia 1 Hour, Virginia Beach, Nov. 14-1.** Tom Gerhardt (58) 10,145 meters 2. Steve Durrant (70) 8310 3. Dewey Hartley (62) 8308 4. Richard Cole (69) 8023 (1 DQ) Women-1. Linda Janssen (48) 8440 2. Pala Graham (47) 8301 3. Rebecca Ganson (45) 8289 (5 finishers) **Florida 20 Km, Nov. 8-1.** Juan Yanes (59) 2:12:37 2. Gerry Gomez (76) 2:28:28 3. Peter Bayer (76) 2:29:30 4. Sondra Vladen (55) 2:31:27 **5 Km, St. Louis Park, Minn., Nov. 8-1.** Will Loew-Blosser (57) 30:14 2. Anita Macias-Howard (55) 32:52 3. Kathy Nelson (52) 34:02 (5 finishers) **15 Km, Tulsa, Okla., Oct. 31-1.** Margaret Looney (53) 1:49:37 2. Rachel King 1:51:20 3. Sheila Lauterbach (53) 1:52:23 (21 finishers) Men-1. Steve Cooper (57) 1:39:54 2. Mark Wedman (49) 1:40:28 3. Ron Fegaly (61) 1:43:56 4. Bruce Roderick (51) 1:45:52 5. Mark Plaster (51) 1:47:13 6. Dave Gwyn (57) 1:49:38 (19 finishers) **5 Km, Albuquerque, N.M., Nov. 15-1.** Patrick Collier 22:17 2. Mike Budnick (60+) 29:41 3. Peter Armstrong (60+) 31:43 (6 finishers) Women-1. Laura Draelos 31:19 2. Kerry Segell (50+) 31:38 3. Virginia Meyers (55+) 34:26 (6 finishers) **5 Km, Los Angeles, Sept. 20-1.** John Magnussen 28:55 2. Rick Campbell 29:12 3. Yoko Eichel 31:32 4. Carl Acosta 32:53 (12 finishers) **5 Km, Los Angeles, Oct. 31-1.** John Magnussen 29:01 2. Ray Billing 31:23 3. Mike Mizote 33:18 **1 Hour, Pasadena, Cal., Nov. 15-1.** Pedro Santoni (52) 10,560 meters 2. John Magnussen (57) 10,023 3. Rick Campbell (63) 9958 4. Wayne Wurzburger (67) 9189 5. Ray Billing (53) 8954 6. Carl Acosta (75) 8954 7. Bill Moremen (81) 8641 (15 finishers) **2.8 Miles, Seattle, Oct. 10-1.** Stan Chraminski (61) 25:47 2. Ann Tuberg (49) 26:41 3. Rebecca Kettwig 29:01 **Asian Championships, Guangzhou, China: Men's 20 Km, Nov. 12-1.** Jianbo Li, China 1:22:55 2. Yafei Chu, China 1:22:56 3. Chil-Sung, Park, Korea 1:24:51 4. Akihiro Sugimoto, Japan 1:25:00 5. Babubhai Panucha, India 1:25:11 6. Boon Lim Tech, Malaysia 1:32:39 (8 finishers, 1 DQ) **Women's 20 Km, Nov. 13-1.** Mayumi Kawasaki, Japan 1:30:12 2. Yawei

Yang, China 1:34:11 3. Svetlana Tolstaya, Kazhakistan 1:36:42 **French 50 Km, Roubaix, Oct. 25-1.** Sebastien Biche 3:58:14 2. Bertrand Moulinet 4:04:13 3. Eddy Roze 4:09:23 4. John Augeron 4:10:06 (33 finishers, 15 DNF, 3 DQ) **Francophone Games 20 Km, Beirut, Lebanon, Oct. 1-1.** Davouz, France 1:25:05 **Women's 10 Km, same place-1.** Trabelsi, Tunisia 48:27 **Australian 50 Km Championships, Melbourne, Nov. 21-1.** Jared Tallent 3:38:56 (Personal best by 31seconds over his silver medal time in the 2008 Olympics. This despite atrocious weather conditions that had many huge puddles on the course.) 2. Tom Barnes 4:12:05 3. Duane Cousins 4:14:58 **Women's 20 Km, same place-1.** Jess Rothwell 1:34:22 2. Claire Tallent 1:37:47 3. Kelly Ruddick 1:46:49 **Men's 20 Km, same place-1.** Ian Rayson 1:29:50 2. Brendan Reading 1:30:42 **Junior Men's 10 Km, same place-1.** Rydian Cowley (18) 45:09 **Junior Women's 10 Km-1.** Beth Alexander (16) 50:34

It's Heel and Toe To and Fro

Sat. Dec. 12 2.8 miles, Seattle, 9 am ©
Indoor race, Ames, Iowa (R)
Sun. Dec. 13 1 Hour, Pasadena, Cal., 6:45 am (U)
5 Km, New York City, 8:30 am (G)
Sat. Dec. 26 5 Km, Aurora, Col., 10 am (H)
Sun. Dec. 27 5 Km, Denver 10 am (H)
46th Annual Asbury Park (N.J.) Polar Bear 10 Mile, 10 am (A)
Fri. Jan. 1 1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, 9 am (O)
Sat. Jan. 2 5 Km, Pharr, Texas, 7 am (O)
Sun. Jan. 10 Marathon and Half-Marathon, Mobile, Alabama (V)
Fri. Jan. 15 Indoor 3000 meters, Cedarville, Ohio (M)
Sat. Jan. 16 1 Mile, Cedarville, 10 am (M)
Sun. Jan. 17 Rose Bowl 10 Mile Handicap, Pasadena, Cal. (Y)
Fri. Jan. 29 **USATF National 1 Mile, Millrose Games, New York, N.Y. (D)**
Indoor 3 Km, Findlay, Ohio (M)
Indoor 1 Mile, Cedarville, Ohio (M)
Sat. Jan. 30 **National USATF 50 Km, Sunrise, Arizona (D)**
Sun. Feb. 7 Indoor 3 Km, Greencastle, Indiana, 9 am (W)
Sat. Jan. 13 Ohio Indoor 3 Km Championship, Ada, (M)
Sun. Feb. 14 Indoor Mall 3 Km, Milford, Conn., 9:30 am (E)
Indoor 3 Km, Greencastle, Indiana (12 am (W))
Sat. Feb. 20 50 Km, Houston (L)
Sun. Feb. 21 **USATF National 5 Km, Albuquerque, N.M. (D)**
Sat. Feb. 27 **ANIA Indoor Championships, Johnson City, Tenn.**
Sun. March 7 10 Mile, Yellow Springs, Ohio (M)
Sun. March 14 20 Km and 5 Km, Huntington Park, Cal. (Y) (The 20 will be National USATF Masters Championship, pending approval)
Sat. March 27 5000 meters, Cedarville, Ohio (M)

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From Heel To Toe

Trials. The U.S. trials for World Cup teams have been tentatively set for Sunday, April 11 at a site to be determined. The trials will be at 10 Km for Junior men and women (19 and under) and at 20 Km for seniors, both men and women. The 50 Km team will be selected at the National title race in February. The 2010 World Cup will be held May 16-16 in Chihuahua, Mexico. Also significant will be the National Track and Field Championships in Des Moines in late June, again with 10 Km races for juniors and 20 Km for seniors. National Racewalk Committee Chair Vince Peters has visited with Drake University staff regarding the course, which will probably include a start and finish in the Stadium with a sufficient laps on a 1 Km loop through campus to complete the 20 Km. (Likely the 10 Km races will be on the track.) Vince is also seeking to establish a 5 Km qualifying marks that would allow college students to qualify for the National 20, thus encouraging greater participation. . **Millrose Games.** The USATF National Indoor 1 Mile Championships (men and women) will be held as part of the Millrose Games in New York's Madison Square Garden on Friday, January 29. To qualify, athlete, men must have a sub 6:55 for 1 Mile or sub 13:30 for 23000 meters. Women need a 7:55 or 15:05. . **Team scores.** Here are some team results at recent USATF Nationals that we did not have when we reported on the races. In the National 40 in New Jersey back in September, the Shore AC team of John Soucheck, Dave Talcott, and Tom Quattrocchi had a combined time of 12:45:33 to edge out Pegasus AC's (Ray Sharp, Leon Jasionowski, and Rod Craig) 12:47:15. Pegasus, with Becky Benjmain, Debbie Topham, and Susan Fassett totaled 14:39:41 to win the women's team title, with no opposition. In the National 30 in October, Pegasus turned the tables on Shore AC in the men's race to capture the team title, but I don't have the details on that, although I guess I could add them up if I wasn't lazy). . **The status of elite racewalking in the U.S.** In reporting on the Chinese races in last month's issue I appended a note comparing performances in that single Chinese to cumulative U.S. results through the years. Later I posted that note on the Yahoo racewalk list

site. One reply to my comment was:"It's a catch 22 situation. USATF will not support until we produce results and we cannot produce results without support." In reply, which refers just to the mea's side of the sport, I said: "I agree to some extent, but when results were produced in the recent past (three A qualifiers at 20 Km in 2004 and three at 50 in 2000, not to mention four under 4 hours in 1999) further support did not follow, rather the support for racewalkers at the training facility at Chula Vista disappeared. And, if we look way back we can see where much better results were obtained with no support. In 1979 there were 37 U.S. racewalkers under 1:40 for 20 Km and 32 under 5 hours for 50. Now we don't get such numbers even attempting those distances. In the 20, there were more than under 1:40 most years through 1993. And in six of those years there were from 11 to 15 under 1:30. The peak for elite participation (if we can define breaking 1:40 as elite) was 40 in 1987 and 43 in 1988. In the 50, that 1979 number was never exceeded (there were at least ten 50 km races in the country that year), but there were more than 20 under 5 hours most years through 1991. There was a training facility in Colorado Springs for a few years in the '80s, but other than that there was no more support than now and no prize money. I have never been able to put my finger on the factors that might have caused this drop in interest, maybe just changes in the culture, but I wish we could have bottled up whatever was in the water in those days." In the meantime, Bruce Leasure in Minnesota, has initiated a "brainstorming" project on the list to accumulate ideas and we will see what comes of that. And, the National Racewalking Institute's programs for developing youth racewalking hold promise. We can hope a few more like Trevor Barron and Tyler Sorenson emerge. . **And.** Here is a related thought from Bob Mimm, 1960 U.S. Olympic racewalker still going strong in the masters ranks at age 84, as printed in *News Afoot*, the Walkers Club of Los Angeles newsletter: "By now anyone (a compound word like racewalk) interested enough will have seen the results of the National 40 km for 2009. This was the 44th National conducted by Elliott Denman and the Shore AC. Elliott deserves an award fr this because Elliott and the Shore AC always do an outstanding job. Ray Sharp (49) was the first to finish. It's his fifth win at the 40 Km National. John Soucheck (44) was second. Erin Taylor (31) was the first female finisher. Erin was the only woman under age 40. None of the men finishers were under 40. Of the 18 men who finished, seven were over the age of 60. This stimulated my thinking. Are the masters competitors keeping racewalking alive? In the 50 Km National held earlier this year there were only four finishers, three men and one woman. The men were 37, 38, and 47. The woman was 45. There were two DQ's, Dorit Attias 9(7) and Ray Sharp (49). These two individuals usually have excellent style. In the National 5 Km held recently in Tennessee there were 58 finishers. Bobby Baker, who conducts this race, should be commended for attracting such a large field. But, in this race, of the 28 men to finish only three were under the age of 40. Of the 30 women to finish, only four were under 40. Tim Seaman, the first overall to finish, is 37. I must admit that my thinking also has me wondering about the rule change that went into effect a few years back. Controversy has always been a part of racewalking, but is there more now? Are those individuals right who said the new rule change would kill racewalking? If so, why are so many masters competing when the seem to have the biggest problem adhering to the new rule?" Bob suggests he might address this question in the future.

Twenty-five Years Enough For Platzer

by Tim Watt for the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations)

The culmination of 25 international seasons has left Kjersti Pltzer drained but satisfied, upon retaining her IAAF Racewalking Challenge title. "I'm empty but very

relieved,” said the 37-year-old Norwegian a week after the IAAF Racewalking Challenge Final in Saransk, and six weeks after being disqualified in Berlin (at the World Championships). “Now I can retire on a high which is so important for me.”

Such a long career has several beginnings—in Platzer’s case due to injuries and motherhood. With his coach, Stephan, also her husband, it may be a little intrusive to enquire deeply about some of their planning—but, what shines through is Platzer’s sense of enjoyment of competition and the love of a challenge.

The early international races of Kjesti Platzer nee Tysse whet her appetite for the long haul. “I’d say a highlight as a junior was fifth place in the 1986 World Juniors in Athens when just 14. It was a great experience and was really, really fun.”

After junior successes difficult years followed. With numerous injuries, Platzer competed but was only able to get back to full training from 1992. Progress followed life changing events, and walking became a way of life; she married Stephen Platzer in 1995, who became her coach the following year, and in 1997 they had a daughter, Kiara Lea.

“I think ninth in Budapest in 1998 was my start as a senior—it showed I was capable of good international results. We continued being patient, increasing my training a little each year and then came Olympic silver in Sydney (2000 Olympics). That was huge.”

But some hard years followed. “Stephen had a brain aneurysm at Edmonton in 2001 just before the World Championships. That made my DQ unimportant—my only concern was getting him well again.” Disqualifications followed in Munich in 2002 and Paris in 2003. “These DQ’s mixed up my head, and I had to work really hard to get back.”

A seasonal best at the Athens Olympics, although only for 12th place, but with no technical issues, showed she could focus. “That was a second start on the way to Olympic silver again.”

A break for the birth of Sebastian made her hungry and two fourth places—at the 2006 Europeans and the 2007 World Championships in Osaka—were encouraging. “I was sure I was in a position to win another medal but coming back and doing it after all those years, with the support of Stephan and my family, made it very special. Therefore, I’d put my Beijing silver at half a point higher as a career highlight. Achieving a result once was OK but doing it again needed courage.”

In Platzer’s opinion, the best thing that has happened to racewalking in the last 10 years is the IAAF Challenge. “I’ve had two second places and won it for the last two years. I feel I won the final this year too (as well as the overall title) as the Russian girls had their own race—they weren’t qualified. (*Ed. That is, had not competed in enough Challenge races for the year to qualify for the overall title.*) To finish ahead of Olive (Loughnane) and Elisa (Rigau) was the only issue.”

“After Berlin, I had a lot of pain in my gluteus area making it very hard metally to train—but two weeks before Saransk the pain went. I need to like what I do. I love competing. So it was such a nice feeling for it to become fun again, be able to look forward to the race and enjoy it! We focused on enjoyment and not thinking about it as my last race until afterwards. I celebrated—but two steps after the finish line out came a big sigh of relief!”

Platzer now focuses on new challenges, as a sales manager for Adecco. “What I will miss the most is being with all my athlete friends and the close work with Stephan—and, of course, competing! I’m really thankful for what I’ve learned in my career as a racewalker. Competing when everything is easy is one thing but what makes it more satisfying is doing it the hard way. Racewalkers are tough!”

What is her advice for athletes wanting to emulate her longevity? “First of all, be patient—it takes time to get clean results. Have the courage to go on in hard times and stay clean—and don’t be afraid to become a mother in between! For 30 years of my life I’ve been a racewalker. It’ll be strange but at the moment I’m happy, relieved, and looking forward to

watching from the outside. But come the spring when the competitions start, I know part of me would like to go out and race.”

Exercising In Cold Weather

(As cold weather approaches, here is some advice for those of you outside of the sunbelt. This appeared in the December issue of Front Range Walker News published by Colorado’s Bob Carlson.)

Exercise in the cold can be safe and invigorating if done properly. For those who wish to engage in a winter sports conditioning program, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that lungs or internal organs are harmed by exercising in the cold. The slight burning often experienced in the chest is a result of the dryness regulating your body temperature. According to the Colorado Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, the biggest health danger while exercising in cold weather is over-dressing.

If your clothing is too heavy, you increase your sweating as your body heat builds. Perspiration collecting on your clothes increases your risk of hypothermia. The risk is greatest when you stop exercising, because the evaporating water rapidly cools the body.

Always dress using layers of clothing. As exercise raises your body temperature and you begin to sweat, you can remove layers. When you begin to cool down after an activity, put the layers back on to conserve heat. Do not replace clothing until your body begins to feel cool or you will trap perspiration against your skin and increase the chance of chilling.

To avoid frostbite, cover any place on your body where a pulse can be taken. These are the places where your arteries are close to the skin’s surface. Turtlenecks, hats, gloves, face masks, and sock are important cold weather gear.

To protect against hypothermia, a life-threatening drop in body temperature, always follow exercise with a cool down period. This will keep you body warm while the sweat rate slows.

My Personal Road To The Olympics

by Larry Walker

(We led this issue off with some reminiscing by four-time Olympian Ron Laird. Larry Walker was a teammate at Ron’s final Olympics in 1976 where Ron finished 29th in 1:33:27.6 and Larry 22nd in 1:34:19.4. That was Larry’s only Olympics and it was a long-time coming for him as he rose to national prominence beginning in 1966. This memoir appeared in a North American Racewalking Institute Holiday Bulletin published Dec. 1, 2006. It was taken from an address he gave to an audience of young racewalkers, coaches, and parents at the Youth National Road Championships held in Soouthern California over the 1988 Memorial Day Weekend.)

I am probably the most improbable person that I can imagine to make an Olympic team. In grade school I was the last one to get picked on any team. I was a perennial bench warmer. I carry a great number of splinters even today from that experience.

When I finally got a chance to compete, it was in baseball. I was always put in right field where the birdies sing because they figured that was the most harmless place to put me. For awhile in high school, it looked like things weren’t getting any better. Finally, I had some athletic success my first year in track. My coach told a friend of mine on the sly, “Walker runs like an elephant.” Well, that wasn’t very flattering. And when the Athletic Banquet

came around, my coach dug deep for something nice to say about me and came up with, "Well, Larry Walker doesn't have any talent, but he tries hard."

That was something of a rather minor, crushing defeat, but I went on and continued to compete through college and eventually got into walking. Then came 1976 and I decided if I was going to have a chance to compete in the Olympics, this was the year. When the day of the Trials came, I had no idea of how fast my competitors walked. Even to this day, I studiously avoid reading anything outside Southern California race walking news. So, as we lined up at the start, I hear that I was the 18th fastest in the field of 21 walkers.

Too late to panic! The gun went off and 42 legs and 42 lungs went heaving forward. The first few miles felt pretty decent. Then all of a sudden fatigue started hitting and I started cramping. I tried to hold on but the guys were getting farther ahead. I thought about it being my last chance and kept trying, but nothing was working. It really felt bad seeing it go away.

Then I started drinking ERG and started feeling better. At about 8 miles, I passed Tm Dooley who had already been on an Olympic Team (*Ed. Actually, two Olympic teams.*) And I thought "Son of a gun." Then I went a little farther and with two or three miles to go, I could see the three leaders ahead. I thought, "Wow, this is fantastic. I might not make, but it is not shabby," With one lap to go, about one mile, I moved by Larry Young. He already had two bronze medals so I figured he didn't need any more. I opened up about 45 seconds in the last mile and all of a sudden, my thoughts were of making the Team.

When Martin Rudow started shouting from a flat bed truck, "Here is your Olympic Team—Todd Scully, Ron Laird, and Larry Walker," it really sank in. The three of us entered the stadium and about 20,000 people were making a lot of noise. Fortunately, I stayed on the ground, but I felt like I was five feet off. I finished the race, saw Todd and grabbed his arm. We laughed and cried and I have no idea of what we said. All I remember was just before the race I went up to the Chapel and appealed to a higher authority. Scully said that he had done something similar.

Of my Olympic experience, I want to tell you a couple of things about the people I met. All the stereotypes that come from the media accentuate the negative. If someone is caught on drugs, it is splashed on the headlines. The 99 percent who are clean and working hard don't get any publicity. But I observed two things that are solidly true in my fellow athletes.

First, they are vastly more intelligent than they are given credit for. Probably not more than one or two people in this room are aware that Edwin Moses graduated from Morehouse College with nearly straight A's in physics and math. We had two doctors, one lawyer, and an engineer. There were more advanced degrees than you can shake a stick at, but who knows this? I think it should be known.

The second thing I found was the depth of religious feeling among the athletes I met. I talked with Mormons, Baptists, Catholics, and others and found that wherever I went, there was much more depth than I was ever led to believe from the accounts in the newspapers.

This gets me to the last point and what it is all about. For any of us who have ever gone to the top of a mountain during a workout and looked miles down at the start point, or who have ever been in a race when it was just a pure, clear, beautiful perfect day, you know the great feeling. But this is not what makes someone an athlete. It's going out when it is too hot, too cold, too windy, too rainy, or when your muscles are aching and gust bursting. You feel miserable, but you still put on your track shorts and go out and do. This is what makes an athlete. It doesn't matter how old you are. It is the day-day-training.

Which gets me back to the question, "What is it all about?" I believe that our talent is God's gift to us. In the striving, in the racing, the losing, and the winning, and the

so-called agony of defeat, we somehow dedicate ourselves through our athletics back to the source of our talent so that our sport has meaning and ultimately our life has meaning.

(A personal note and a bit of guilt. In 1967 on a sweltering day in McKeesport, Penn., Larry Walker finished fourth in the National 20 Km behind Ron Laird, Larry Young, and Tom Dooley. In fifth, more than 2 minutes behind Larry, was your editor. That fall, the fourth edition of the World Cup was held in Bad Saarow, East Germany and for the first time the U.S. was sending a team, providing the members of the team could raise their own travel money. Since Larry Young was going to walk the 50, Larry Walker should have been the third member of the 20 km squad. I was contacted to see if I would be able to go since Larry had a teaching contact that would not allow him to make the trip. I accepted and was privileged to be a part of that team—the first U.S. athletes to compete in East Germany since the partition. As I later learned, Larry apparently was not contracted directly but it was assumed that he was unavailable and he was somewhat miffed at the slight. Whether this was really true and whether Larry would have gone if asked I am not sure. But I have always felt a little guilt over the situation and the great experience I had (the team selected me to carry the flag in the opening ceremony) perhaps at Larry's expense.)

About Walking Pace

by Mark Fenton

Mark Fenton has contributed to every aspect of racewalking as the Editor of the former Walking Magazine and as a contributor to the former Walk Magazine, as a national team member, a national coach, and a continuous promoter and supporter of our sport. In the following article, Mark discusses a subject of perennial interest to racewalkers: pacing. This article first appeared in the Front Range Walkers News edited by Bob Carlson and later in the Southern California Racewalkers Newsletter edited by Elaine Ward.)

Although myriad prescriptions are available for getting more out of walking—for instance, walk uphill, walk downhill, carry hand weights, bend your arms, walk in water, or walk on water—the most fundamental is simply to walk faster. The key is to accelerate naturally and comfortably to your top speeds. If you force yourself to go faster without thinking about your arm swing, step length, and step rate, you may injure yourself or tire yourself out and generally become disillusioned about the whole idea. Here, then, is a quick lesson on how walkers' bodies behave when they accelerate. We begin with the basics and use only one mathematical equation.

When humans travel on foot, their average speed is determined by only two things: how long their steps are (step length) and how quickly they take those steps (step rate). This leads to the formula: Speed=Step Length x Step Rate. So, if I take steps that are 0.8 meters long (about 2 1/2 feet) and I take two steps per second (120 steps per minute), then my speed is 1.6 meters per second.

Now, if I happen to have a friend who has long legs, she may be able to take steps that are longer than mine—say 0.9 meters long. However, because her legs are longer, it takes more energy to swing them forward on every step. Consequently, her steps are slower than mine—say 1.78 steps per second as opposed to my 2 per second. Friend's speed = 0.9 meters/step x 1.78 steps/second = 1.6 meters per second. From this we learn that my taller friend is traveling at the same speed than I am even though she is taller.

This equation applies to any form of bipedal locomotion. We could be strolling, fitness walking, racewalking, or running. But runners and walkers speed up differently so we must now distinguish between their gaits. Runners jump into the air on every step. Their legs act like springs storing energy in stretched tendons and ligaments when the knees bend, and giving it back when they straighten. The benefit of this stored energy is that people can run faster than they can walk, but the cost is the high impact every time the feet strike the ground. A walker's legs don't spring and thus the walker touches the ground more gently with each step.

It appears that because of the spring-like behavior of the legs, a runner tends to increase speed mostly by taking longer steps—pushing off harder and flying through the air a little farther. Runners increase their step rate very little, if at all, as they speed up. For a walker, on the other hand, step rate is ultimately more important than step length because step length is influenced by physical limitations such as the length of your legs and the flexibility of your hips when one foot is always on the ground. The only limitation to step rate is how rapidly you can pull the next foot forward.

Initially, however, the walker who is trying to gain speed increases both step length and step rate. One way of increasing step length is by lifting the toes of your forward foot just before it strikes the ground. This projects the heel forward slightly, which can increase the stride by as much as 2 centimeters (.20 meters) enough to make a difference in the speed equation.

As you walk faster and faster, you reach your most effective stride length. That's when step rate becomes more and more important—the only way to go forward faster is to bring your leg forward faster. One sign that step rate has become paramount is the change in your arms. As most walkers reach about 4 mph, they tend to swing their arms more vigorously by bending them at the elbow.

Since the arms and legs move in synchrony, bending the arm at the elbow shortens the arm pendulum, allowing you to swing your arms, and therefore your legs, forward more quickly. As you seek higher speeds, you also can find benefit in leaning forward slightly. Leaning aids you in bringing your foot forward faster partly because if you do not, you fall on your nose.

But most critically, you must take quicker steps as you accelerate beyond 4 mph. That means you should not take unnaturally long strides nor keep your arms straight or semi-bent. These things can limit the quickness of your steps. Concentrate on your rear leg. Move it forward as fast as possible.

The great benefit of an increase in step rate is that you will undoubtedly get a better workout. If you were to concentrate on step length rather than step rate, you might actually slow down a little. So keep the premise in mind that quicker steps, not longer steps, are the key to quicker walking.

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the November 1969 ORW)—The Ohio Track Club's annual Distance Carnival saw Long Island AC teammates Gary Westerfield and Steve Hayden finish one-two in the 7-mile race. Westerfield had 53:58 and Hayden 54:40. The next day, Gerry Bocci took Hayden in the 15 miles, 2:03:28 to 2:05:32. Westerfield did not finish. The women's 5-mile event went to Detroit's Mary Kefalos in 53:12 as Jeanne Bocci, 7 months pregnant, was talked out of trying to defend her title. . . On opposite coasts, Tom Dooley and Canada's

Marcel Jobin blistered 10 mile races. Dooley, in California, had a 1:12:17 and Jobin turned in a 1:12:30. Ron Daniel trailed Jobin with 1:16:33. . . A young Todd Scully showed some potential as a future great with a 14:00 win in a Collegiate 2 Mile. . . The Junior National 50 Km went to Dave Eidahl in 5:16:43. (As we often explain, Junior in those ancient days was not an age-related category, but was for those who had never won a National Junior or Senior title.)

35 Years Ago—(From the November 1974 ORW)—National AAU "B" titles (by this time, the "B" category had replaced the Junior designation and Juniors were indeed the youngsters) went to Bob Korn at 10 Km in 49:20.6 and Chuck Hunter at 100 Km in 12:26:40. . . The ORW's eighth Annual Dr. John Blackburn Award for the year's outstanding single effort in U.S. racewalking went to Sue Brodock. She had won the women's International 5 Km in a then world's best 24:16.2. (Widespread women's racewalking was still very much in the neophyte stages.) In the ORW's 5th Annual World Rankings, the USSR's venerable Vladimir Golubnichiy led the list at 20 Km, with Bernd Kannenberg, West Germany, and Karl-Heinz Stadtmuller, GDR, second and third. Kannenberg had set a world record, but was beaten by Golubnichiy in the European Championships. At 50, Christoph Hohne, GDR, was a clear choice, with a European Championship and world best ever of 3:52:53. Otto Bartsch USSR, and Peter Frenkel, GDR, followed. . . Jerry Brown, Floyd Godwin, and John Knifton topped the U.S. rankings at 20, with Larry Young, John Knifton, and Augie Hirt ranked 1-2-3 at 50. . . In a 10 Km race in England, a couple of Mexicans gave a preview of things to come as Raul Gonzales did 41:59 and Daniel Bautista 43:45.

30 Years Ago (From the November 1979 ORW)—In a late season race, Dan O'Connor defended his National 40 Km title in Long Branch, N.J., covering the distance in 3:23:10, fastest in the history of the event to that time. Not far behind, Vincent O'Sullivan (3:24:22) edged Tom Dooley (3:24:36) for second. Wayne Glusker was fourth and Ohio's Chris Knotts captured sixth. . . The first Alongi Memorial 20 Km in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, went to Italy's Carlo Mattioli in 1:26:38. Behind Italy's Domenico Carpiantier, Steve Pecinovsky edged John VanDenBrandt to be the first U.S. finisher. . . In Montreal, Daniel Bautista regained the world record for 20 Km, then held by fellow Mexican Domingo Colin, as he walked 1:20:07. Countrymen Felix Gomez and Ernesto Colin were not far back in 1:21:24 and 1:21:52. Italy's Mauricio Damilano was fourth in 1:22:59, but did better the next summer, capturing Olympic gold. Bautista had a gold from 1976 and Canto got his in 1984, so this was a golden race. . . Susan Liers won the Women's National 20 Km title at Kings Point, N.Y. in 1:52:59. Jeanne Bocci was more than 2 minutes back.

25 Years Ago (From the November 1984 ORW)—Ultra-distance specialist, Alan Price, then 37-years old, continued to dominate any pretenders to his throne, winning the National 100 Km title in 10:48:00. The race was held in Arlington, Virginia. Brian Savilonis was second in 11:18:09. . . In the Pan-American Cup, Columbia's Querebin Moreno excited the home folks by winning the 20 in 1:25:19. Guillaume Leblance, Canada, was second, with Hector Moreno, Columbia, and Jaime Lopez Lopez, Mexico, following. Ray Funkhouser was the first U.S. walker in sixth with 1:33:41. Canada's Ann Peel (49:41) and Janice McCaffrey (50:15) went one-two in the women's 10. Ester Lopez took third for the U.S. in 50:51. . . Francois Lapointe was impressive in winning the Canadian 50 Km title in 3:52:15.

20 years ago (From the November 1989 ORW)—Herm Nelson broke the U.S. 50 Km record on the track with a 4:04:24 in Seattle. It put him fifth on the all-time U.S. list for the event.

10 Years Ago (From the November 1999 ORW)—A track 50 Km in Springfield, Ohio went

to Mexico's Eitel Sol Maldonado in 4:22:40. Ioan Froman (4:56:57) and Doug Johnson (4:59:40) followed. . A quick 35 Km in Dublin, Ireland went to Robert Heffernan in 2:42:05, just 10 seconds ahead of Jamie Costin.

And how about 50 years ago. Here are the results of National Championship races in 1959.

Indoor 1 Mile, New York City, Feb. 21--1. John Humcke, NYAC 6:42.2 2. Jack Blackburn, Ohio TC 3. Ron Laird, NY Pioneer Club 4. Bruce MacDonald, NYAC

10 Km, Staten Island, N.Y., May 3--1. Bruce MacDonald, NY Pioneer Club 49:42 2. Bill Omeltchenko, NY Pioneer Club 49:54 3. Jack Blackburn, Ohio TC 50:31 4. John Humcke, NYAC 50:41 5. Alex Oakley, Canada 51:05 6. Fred Timcoe, NY Pioneer Club 51:07
Teams: 1. N.Y. Pioneer Club 6 2. Penn AC 15

30 Km, Los Angeles, May 17--1. Ferenc Sipos, Santa Clara YV 2:46:20 2. Leo Sjogren, Finnish-American AC 2:53:40 3. Jim Sebio, SC Striders 3:06:21 4. Doug Klann, Culver City AC 3:12:52 5. Risto Junovne, Finnish-American AC 3:22:08 6. Don Jacobs, Oregon 3:25:27
Teams: 1. Finnish-American AC 6

20 Km, Baltimore, June 6--1. Rudy Haluza, NY Pioneer Club 1:32:36 2. Fred Timcoe, NY Pioneer Club 1:33:31 3. Elliott Denman, NY Pioneer Club 1:34:57 4. Jack Blackburn, Ohio TC 1:35:20 5. Alex Oakley, Canada 1:35:45 6. Bill Omeltchenko, NY Pioneer Club 1:36:59
Teams: 1. N.Y. Pioneer Club 6 2. Ohio TC 21

3 Km, Boulder, Col., June 19--1. Elliott Denman, NY Pioneer Club 13:52.2 2. John Humcke, NYAC 14:06.7 3. Rudy Haluza, NY Pioneer Club 14:17.5 4. Bruce MacDonald, NYAC 14:31.1 5. Ron Kulik, Montclair State Col. 15:32.6 6. Wayne Yarcho, Dayton AC 15:33.5

50 Km, Pittsburgh, July 5--1. Elliott Denman, NY Pioneer Club 5:07:47 2. Bob Mimm, Penn AC 5:25:27 3. Lou Neishloss, Penn AC 5:26:32 4. John Wall, Baltimore Cross Country Club 5:30:45 5. Eric Waite, Penn AC 5:33:04 6. Bill Grandy, Canada 5:36:00
Teams: 1. Penn AC 6

35 Km, Seattle, July 25--1. Ferenc Sipos, Santa Clara YV 3:12:45 2. Rudy Haluza, NY Pioneer Club 3:33:08 3. Leo Sjogren, Finnish-American AC 3:34:25 4. Bob Hendrickson, Seattle OC 4:02:17 5. James Kiefer, Washington

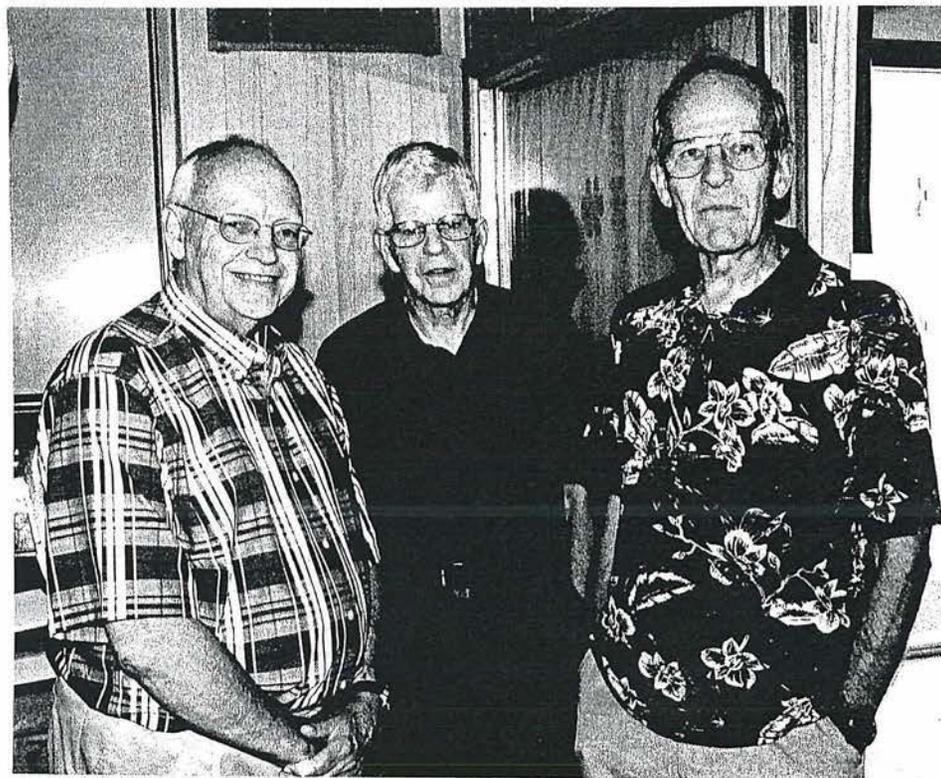
25 Km, Chicago, Aug. 30--1. Rudy Haluza, NY Pioneer Club 2:14:04 2. Ron Laird, NY Pioneer Club 2:18:27 3. Jack Blackburn, Ohio TC 2:22:25 4. Valdemar Grandy, Canada 2:24:18 5. Bruce MacDonald, NY Pioneer Club 2:28:17 6. Elliott Denman, NY Pioneer Club 2:31:13
Teams: 1. N.Y. Pioneer Club 7

15 Km, Atlantic City, Oct. 4--1. Bruce MacDonald, NY Pioneer Club 1:19:51 2. Ron Laird, NY Pioneer Club 1:21:12 3. Bill Omeltchenko, NYPC 1:23:10 4. Bob Mimm, Penn AC 1:23:43 5. John Wall, Baltimore Cross Country Club 1:24:23 6. Carl Kurr, Penn AC 1:24:27
Teams: 1. N.Y. Pioneer Club 6 Penn AC 19

40 Km, Asbury Park, N.J., Oct. 18--1. Ron Laird, NY Pioneer Club 3:53:23 2. Jack Blackburn, Ohio TC 4:02:44 3. Carl Kurr, Penn AC 4:03:15 4. Elliott Denman, NY Pioneer Club 4:04:07 5. Bruce MacDonald, NYAC 4:06:40 6. Bob Mimm, Penn AC 4:08:09
Teams: 1. N.Y. Pioneer Club 2. Penn AC

International races

U.S. vs. USSR, Philadelphia, July 18--1. Vladimir Golubnichiy, USSR 1:38:20.2 2. Anatoliy Vedyakov, USSR 1:39:38.4 3. Rudy Haluza, US 1:41:47.8 4. Fred Timcoe, US 1:54:01.2



The old guard of Ohio racewalking. From the left: Charles (Chuck, Charlie) Newell, John E. (Jack) Mortland, and John C. (Jack) Blackburn, names to be feared in the 1960s but distant memories today. The occasion; Chuck and Peggy's 50th Anniversary party last spring. Chuck did not carry that paunch in his racing days and we thank him for sending us this photo even though it might expose him to public ridicule. The two Jacks, of course, have not changed at all.