

OHIO RACEWALKER



Ohio Race Walker
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Barron, Michta Earn Olympic Berths

Eugene, Oregon—In the U.S. Olympic 20 Km Racewalk Trials held here on June 29 and 30, Trevor Barron and Maria Michta prevailed to join John Nunn on the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team, bound for the London Games. No one else achieved the standard needed for qualification.

As reported by Vince Peters, National Chairperson, Barron (19), from Bethel Park, Pennsylvania scored a convincing win on June 29. In the process, Barron established a new U.S. record for 20,000 meters on the track with his 1:23:10 effort. On the way, he also established a new 15,000 meter record of 1:02:06.57. Finally, he broke the Olympics Trials record of 1:25:40 set by his coach, Tim Seaman, in 2004. Seaman was second in this year's race.

Barron, who just finished his freshman at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, picked up \$4,000 in first place prize money and an additional \$1,000 in travel reimbursement bonus money.

Seaman, who finished in 1:27:29.48, was not upset losing his record. At age 40, he was quite happy to see his protegee win. The huge smile and hug the two shared showed that the passing of the records to a younger generation was truly akin to keeping it in the family. And Seaman was a record setter himself, bettering U.S. 40-44 age group records at 5000 (21:00.07), 10,000 (42:25.20), 15,000 (1:04:36.04) and 20,000 meters..

In third place was another of Tim's athletes, Nick Christie. Just 21, Christie has exploded on the scene with just under two years of racewalking experience. Headed to Missouri Baptist in the fall on a racewalk scholarship, Christie improved his personal best at 20 by nearly 2 minutes as he finished in 1:29:47.39. Christie and fourth finisher Dan Serianni qualified to represent the U.S. in the NACAC Under 23 Championships in Mexico less than two weeks hence. Mike Mannozi beat 18-year-old Tyler Sorensen to the line by 12 seconds for fifth place. Sorensen, just getting back in top form following a sports hernia operation in February, had a new personal best of 1:34:24.52. He was slated to represent the U.S. in the World Junior Championships in Barcelona in July.

Ever-young Jonathan Matthews, who has represented the U.S. in World Championship and World Cup events, was tenth in 1:43:22.82, just a few days short of his 56th birthday.. Not only did he established a 55-59 U.S. age group, he also picked up records at 3000 and 15,000 (1:16:26.38) on the way. John Nunn, already on the team at 50, didn't finish and Josh Wiseman was DQ'd. Patrick Stroupe, who might beaten Seaman out of the runner - spot, was unable to start due to an injury earlier in the week that resulted in 22 stitches in his lower leg.

In the women's race on July 1, Michta had a much harder time earning her Olympic spot. For much of the race, Michta and Erin Gray, born and raised in Eugene, traded the lead. In the process, they drew steadily away from the rest of the field. Then, with eight laps to go, Miranda Melville began a charge and quickly closed the gap to make it a three-woman race. No longer able to match the pace, Gray faded over the final 4 laps, but Melville continued to press Michta for the sole Olympic berth (no one had an A standard). Gray hung on until the final straightaway before Michta opened a slight gap to win in 1:34:53.33 to Melville's

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1:34:56.92. Gray finished in 1:35:40.05. Following the race, Michta noted: "I knew coming on with my workouts, so that I was in the best shape I've ever been in. I was just ready to go. I wanted the A standard, but it didn't happen today. I don't really know why.

"When you are out there alone with the wind and all, it gets hard, but when you have someone else out there and keep going back and forth, it is good. It pushed everyone to their best. I didn't PR, but the two of them did with huge times.



Maria Michta. Winner of the Women's title. (AP photo)

"I was 10-years-old when I watched the Olympics on TV. Ever since I saw Kerri Strug stick the landing, I just fell in love with the Olympics and I wanted to be an Olympian."

Gray said; "I wasn't quite sure how much I had left in me, but I knew I had enough to be willing to push. I knew no matter what, I wasn't going to give up on this. . . Maria is a phenomenal athlete, she had a phenomenal kick in her, and she is my teammate. If anyone else could go besides me, I'm glad it's my teammate."

On her race, Gray said: "Every time I would take the lead, I would pick it up 4 5o 5

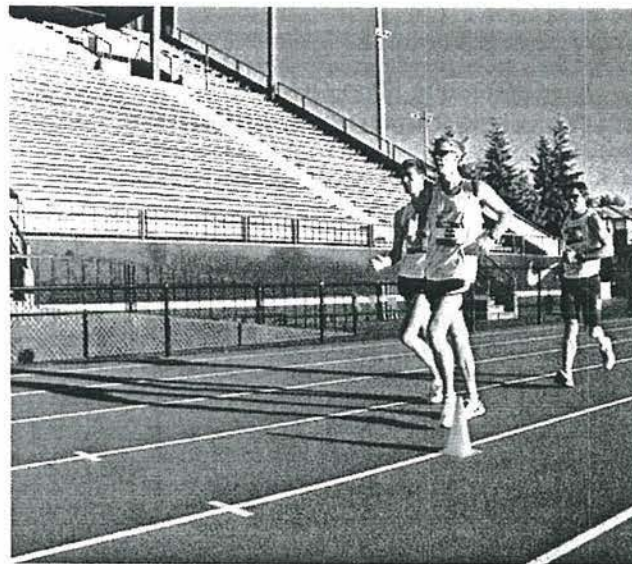
seconds a lap, then I would let Maria do the work, and she would lag the pace. I honestly felt that the slower laps made my stride inefficient enough that by the time it was time to go, I had gotten in to a really slow rhythm and just didn't have a response. It didn't happen today, but four years from now, I'll be stronger. I'm fitter than I've ever been. I've only been doing this sport for two years, and the other girls have been doing this for more than a decade."

It was a good meet for Coach Seaman, with Barron, Christie, Tyler Sorensen, Michta, and Melville all training in his Champions International group, although they represent various clubs.

The results:

Men's 20,000, June 29—1. Trevor Barron, New York AC 1:23:00.10 2. Tim Seaman, NYAC 1:27:29.48 3. Nick Christie, Un. 1:29:47.30 4. Dan Serianni, World Class RW 1:32:16.26 5. Michael Mannozi, Miami Valley TC 1:34:12.48 6. Tyler Sorensen, un. 1:34:24.52 7. Ben Shorey, Shore AC 1:34:45.10 8. Richard Luettchau, Shore AC 1:37:53.68 9. Ian Whatley, World Class RW 1:42:21.39 10. Jonathan Matthews, Shore AC 1:43:22.82 DQ—Joshua Wiseman, Miami Valley; DNF—John Nunn, U.S. Army

Women's 20,000, July 1—1. Maria Michta, Walk USA 1:34:53.33 2. Miranda Melville, un. 1:34:56.92 3. Erin Gray, Bowerman AC 1:35:40.05 4. Jill Cobb, Miami Valley TC 1:37:00.97 (First major race since 2002 and second fastest time ever, though well off her 1:34:50 in 2000. She was Jill Zenner at that time 5. Joanne Dow, un. 1:38:20.20 6. Lauren Forgues, NYAC 1:39:48.06 7. Susan Randall, Miami Valley TC 1:43:26.94 8. Stephanie Casey, un. 1:47:31.90 9. Rachel Zoyhofski, un. 1:49:20.28 10. Solomiya Login, Southeasters PA AC 1:50:41.65 11. Nicole Bonk, Embry Riddle U. 1:54:17.35 CDQ—Erin Taylor, Shore AC and Katie Burnett, un. DNF—Teresa Vaill, un. and Erika Shaver, un.



2012 U.S. Olympians. John Nunn, slated for the 50, leads Trevor Barron in the 2011 U.S. National Championship race. (Justin Kuo photo.)

World Junior Championships

Barcelona, Spain, July 11 and 13—Colombia and Russia ruled in the World Junior 10 Km racewalks held here. In the women's race, Russia's Ekaterina Medvedeva and Nadezhda

Leontyeva were one-two, barely beating Colombia's Sandra Arenas, who took the bronze. The men's title went to Eider Arevalo, who had also won the World Cup Junior title in May. Russia's Alexander Ivanova was close behind in second, followed by China's Guanyu Su. Takumi Saito of Japan had to settle for fourth, though less than 10 seconds behind the winner.

The 18-year-old Medvedeva, only fourth in the World Cup race, produced a burst of acceleration over the final 600 meters to take the women's race in 45:41.74, well off her personal best of 44:30.49, which won the Russian title last month. But in the process, she beat her teammate Leontyeva, third in the World Cup, and World Cup winner Arenas.

The initial pace was slow, with Anezka Drahotova leading through 5 Km in 23:23.10. From there, the leaders were walking at just over 4:30 per kilometer. Medvedeva took the lead at 9 km and exploded a 4:09 on the final kilometer.

"I was disappointed not to get on the podium in Saransk as I was racing at home there. Since then, my training group were all joking that I have been sent to these Championships to get a gold medal", said Medvedeva. Her final burst left her teammate nearly 2 seconds behind at the finish, with Arenas less than a second further back in third.. It was the third straight World Junior Championship for Russia and the fifth since 2000.

In the men's race, Arevalo repeated his World Cup win over Ivanov, although the Russian was much closer this time. In May, Arevalo's 41:17 had left Ivanov 25 seconds back. Here it was just over 3 seconds at the finish as the Colombian blitzed the distance in 40:12.90. Su was only another 4 seconds back and two other were under 41 minutes.

Still only 17, Arevalo bided his time in the pack before taking command of the race at the bell. He put in a secondary kick with 300 meters to go and then produced a second and deciding burst 100 meters later.

"During the race, I didn't want to be the leader. This race could have been won by a lot of athletes," said Arevalo, who will now represent his country at the London Olympics. "Next week I will go to Newcastle to prepare for the Games."

Even though fading the last two laps, Saito the leader in 20:34.07 at 5 Km was rewarded with a Japanese record of 40:19.10. The final three kilometers went in about 3:56, 3:46, and 3:38. a pace all but a handful of the world's elite senior walkers would have found difficult to live with.

For the U.S. Tyler Sorensen, still coming back from surgery earlier in the year, finished 13th in 42:53.66

The results:

Women's 10 Km: 1. Ekaterina Medvedeva Russia 45:41.74 2. Nadezhda Leontyeva, Russia 45:43.64 3. Sandra Arenas, Colombia 45:44.46 4. Liudmyla Olianovski, Ukraine 45:53.50 5. Yanxue Mao, China 46:10.60 6. Anezka Drahotova, Czech. Rep. 46:29.95 7. Alejandra Ortega, Mexico 47:03.42 8. Nozomi Yagi, Japan 47:09.92 8. Angela Castro, Bolivia 47:09.62 10. Kimberly Garcia, Peru 47:42.49 11. Alina Hralchenko, Ukraine 47:49.92 12. Katarina Strmenova, Slovakia 47:54.60 13. Wendy Cornejo, Bolivia 48:00.03 14. Eliska Drahotova, Czech. Rep. 48:15.34 15. Anna Clemente, Italy 48:22.25 16. Dandan Duan, China 48:19.21 17. Jeong Eun Lee, Korea 48:40.61 18. Kate Veale, Ireland 48:50.20 19. Elena Poli, Italy 49:11.12 20. Emilie Tissot, France 45:13.95 21. Amanda Cano, Spain 49:18.27 22. Rachel Tallent, Australia 49:55.81 23. Sae Matsumoto, Japan 49:56.66 24. Laura Garcia-Caro, Spain 50:13.77 25. Yanelli Cabellero, Mexico 50:29.85 26. Gamze Osor, Turkey 50:53.64 27. Filipa Ferreira, Portugal 50:59.00 28. Coralie Mellado, France 51:14.84 29. Elif Koc, Turkey 51:44.86 30. Shahinaz Al-Hasri, Tunisia 51:53.22 31. Emma Prendiville, Ireland 52:41.51 32. Bariza Ghezalani, Algeria 53:50.36 22. Mara Ribeiro, Portugal 53:31.29 34. Erika Parvianiene, Finland 53:56.98 (2 DQ, 2 DNF)

Men's 10 Km: 1. Eider Arevalo, Colombia 40:09.74 2. Aleksandr Ivanov, Russia 40:12.90 3. Granyu Su, China 40:16.87 4. Takami Saito, Japan 40:19.16 5. Alvaro Martin, Spain 40:35.52 6. Jesus Vega, Mexico 41:05.59 7. Nils Brembach, Germany 41:19.12 8. Igor Liaschenko,

Ukraine 41:21.60 9. Yosuke Kimura, Japan 41:41.52 10. Marco Antonio Rodriguez, Bolivia 42:05.91 11. Pavel Pershin, Russia 42:10.55 12. Vito Minei, Italy 42:51.79 13. Tyler Sorensen, USA 42:54.60 14. Andrii Hrychkovski, Ukraine 43:01.58 15. Naruys Savelskis, Lithuania 43:03.27 16. Kenny Martin Perez, Colombia 43:04.92 17. Blake Steele, Australia 43:04.81 18. Konstantinos Dedopoulou, Greece 43:07.11 19. Paolo Yuriviles, Peru 43:19.15 20. Edgars Gjacs, Latvia 43:10.59 21. Erwin Gonzalez, Mexico 43:11.21 22. Francesco Fortunato, Italy 43:13.27 23. Neeraj Neeraj, India 43:27.92 24. Dahin Senoduncu, Turkey 43:29.29 25. Yauhen Zaleski, Belarus 44:09.45 26. Oscar Villavicencio, Ecuador 44:25.12 27. Adrian Jionut Dragomir, Romania 44:29.12 29. Varya Sharber, Belarus 44:32.68 29. Marc Tur, Spain 44:42.41 30. Samuel Pereira, Portugal 45:06.34 31. Brian Pintado, Ecuador 45:13.84 32. Luis Angel Sanchrz, Guatemala 45:36.55 33. Tewfik Yesref, Algeria 45:38.36 34. Kuldeep Kuldeep, India 45:40.65 35. Peter Tichy, Slovakia 47:21.63 36. Joakim Saeken, Norway 48:50.80 (3 DQ'd including Benjamin Thorne of Canada, who led at 1 Km in 4:06.97; 1 DNF

5 Km, Long Branch, N.J., July 16-1. Panseluta Geer (65) 32:32 Men-1. Tom Wuattrocchi (61) 33:30 2. Ron Salvio (63) 33:5 3. Fred Linkhart (59) 34:12 (7 finishers) **5 Km, Long Branch, July 23-1.** Panse Geer 32:35 2. Maria Paul (47) 34:03 Men-1. John Soucheck 28:26 2. Ron Salvio (63) 33:26 3. Fred Linkhart (59) 33:54 4. Pat Bovina (73) (56 finishers, 1 DQ)35:13 **1 Mile, Yellow Springs, Ohio, July 11-1.** Jill Cobb 7:02.92 2. Reine Brickson 8:31.89 3. Emily Belovich (15) 8:P34.00 4. Taylor Ewart (10) 8:46.10 5. Charlotte Walkey (14) 9:03.38 6. Niki Worsham (17) 9:59:42 7. Michael Belovich (13) 10:02.54 8. Barb Hensley (68) 11:30.26 **1 Mile, Yellow Springs, July 19-1.** Jill Cobb 6:53.24 2. Joel Pfahler 7:16.49 3. Emily Belovich 8:14.84 (New Ohio HS record for the sophomore to be.) 4. Michael Belovich 9:51.52 5. Niki Worsham 10:24.54 6. Barb Hensley 11:38.31 **3000 meters, same place-1.** Cobb 13:51.92 (Betters National record for women 35-39) 2. Joel Pfahler 13:51.92 3. Erika Graves 19:50.67 4. Barb Hensley 23:20.74 **5000 meters, Waukesha, Wis., July 15-1.** David Swarts (47), Pegasus AC 24:32.82 2. Matt DeWitt (32) Parkside AC 25:37.76 3. Klaus Thiedmann (57), Chicago Walkers 30:26.64 4. Ali Bahr (39), Parkside 30:52.68 5. Mike DeWitt (61), Parkside 30:58.44 6. Gary O'Caniels (69), un. 35:18.18 7. Al Dubois (80), Parkside 36:57.68 **3000 meters, same place (3 hours later)-1.** Matt DeWitt 14:43.02 2. David Swarts 14:52.85 3. Al Dubois 21:32.75

National Youth Championships, Arlington, Texas, July 1: 30000 meters, Youth Girls-1. Janelle Zamora, Equalizers 19:45.75 2. Taylor Gonzales, Cougar TC 19:59.74 (5 finishers, 1 DQ) **3000 meters Youth Boys-1.** Andy Vasquez, Cornhuskers Flyers 16:42.79 2. Steven Berry, un. 17:05.03 (4 finishers, 1 DQ) **3000 meters, Intermediate Girls-1.** Morish Ciorelo, Cogar TC 17:12.09 2. McKayla Roberts, Cornhusker Flyers 17:3.14 3. Fione Dunleavy, Rockwall 18:24.77 (6 finishers) **3000meters, Intermediate Boys-1.** Dillon Berry, un. 19:53.41 **1500 meters Bantam Girls-1.** Camila Vicens, Track Houston 8:42.77 2. Melanie Zamora, Equalizers 9:21.53 3. Lily Stoneman, Northwest Flyers 9:24.09 (6 finishers, 1 DNF) **1500 meters, Bantam Boys-1.** Nikolas Toocheck, un. 9:23.39 1500 meters, Midget Girls-1. Marantha Weed, Northwest Flyers 9:04.23 2. Daija Jackson, Tru Speed 9:18.27 3. Priscilla Capuano, Averill Park 9:24.09 (10 finishers) **1500 meters, Midget Boys-1.** Ryan Thong, Euqqlizers 7:35.16 2. Nehemiah Cionelo, Cougat TC 7:35.83 3. Tyreh Parish, DFW All Star 9:11.15 4. Nicolas Santietevan, Albuquerque 9:16.48 (9 finishrs) **Colorado 5 Km Championship, Englewood, June 16-1.** Francisco Pantgoja 21:46.7 2. Gerardo Pantoja 27:34.4 3. Rita Sinkovec 35:33.4 4. Bob Smith 40:02.3 (The same Bob Smith who many years ago, while living in the Dayton area and competing with our own Ohio Track Club, was responsible for the design of our front page with the cute little racewalker. Bob was a commercial artist, but had someone else in his studio create the figure. Eventually, he disappeared out west, spent some time in a monastery and has recently reemerged in the Colorado and returned to the racewalking wars.)

NACAC Under 23 Championships, Mexico: Women's 10 Km, July 6-1. Maria Mena, Mexico 52:54.54 2. Rachael Tylock, US 53:16.59 3. Nicole Bonk, US 55:56.68 **Men's 20 Km, July 9-1.** Evan Dunfee, Canada 1;26:15.32 2. Adrian Ocha, Mexico 1:27:56.18 3. Maruicio Calbvo, Costa Rica 1:31:58.42 4. Nick Christie, US 1:33:45.85 DNF--Dan Serianni, US **5000 meters, Reins, France, July 7-1.** Yohann Diniz 18:47.45 2. Campion 19:05.18 3. Gregorz Sudol, Poland 19:06.07 4. Boyez 19:07.45 **20 Km, Bergen, Norway, July 8-1.** Erik Tysse 1:21:05 (one day afer his two-year suspension for doping was completed.) 2. Jakob Jelonek, Poland 1:22:42 3. Hasanin Sebei, Tunisia 1:23:35 4. Hatem Ghoula, Tunisia 1:23:58 5. Adrian Blocki, Poland 1:26:40 6. Damien Blocki, Poland 1:27:31 **Women's 20, same place-1.** Katarzyna Kwoka, Poland 1;34;04 2. Katarzyna Golba, Poland 1;36;20 3. Laura Polli, Switzerland 1;38;8 4. Anne Halkivaha, Finland 1:39:43 **10 Km, Kauhava, Finland, July 8-1.** Jarkko Kinnunen 39:53.09 **Central American and Caribbean Youth Championships, San Salvador, El Salvador, July 1: Jr. Women 5000-1.** Alejandra Ortega Solis, Mexico 23:21.72 2. Yaneli Garcia, Mexico 23:44.50 3. Yesnia Rivas, El Salvador 25:21.87 **Youth Girls 5000-1.** Mildred Raya, Mexico 25:02.71 2. Sonia Barrondo, Guatemala 26:33.70 **Jr. Men 10,000-1.** Jesus Vega, Mexico 42:03.68 2. Erwin Castellanos, Mexico 42:16.95 3. Luis Perez, Guatemala 43:25.61 **Youth Men 10000-1.** Jurgen Chaves, Guatemala 46:04.16 2. Jose Melendez, Puerto Rico 47:16.45 **Brazil National Championships, Sao Paolo, Je 29: Men's 20 Km-1.** Caio Binfim 1;21;36 2. Cristian Chcho, Ecuador 1;23;40 3. Moacir Zimmerman 1;25;55 4. Jonathan Riekman 1:27:04 5. Mario dos Santos Junior 1:27:51 6. Daniel Alexander Voight 1:29:52 (12 finishers, 4 DQ, 6 DNF) **Women's 20 Km-1.** Paola Squipaay, Ecuador 1:37:42 2. Jeanneth Guaman, Ecuador 1:38:57 3. Erica Sena 1;42;05 (9 finishers) **Jr. Men's 10, 000-1.** Bruno Fidelis, Puerto Rico 44:50.8 2. Max Batista dos Santos 45:28.1 3. Lucas da Silva, Peru 48:41.9 **Jr. Women's 10,000-1.** Larissa Bueno 52:10.3 **Irish Jr. Championships, June 24: Men's 5000-1.** James Treanor 22:27.30 2. Ryan Cleary 24:52.60 **Women's 3000-1.** Kate Veale 14:44.23 2. Alicia Bolan 14:58.61 **Italian 10 Km Men-1.** Giorgio Rubino 39:17 2. Matteo Giupponi 39:57 3. Jean Jacques Nikouloukidi 40:24 **Women-1.** Eleonora Giorgi 45:19 2. Sibilla DiVincenzo 45:25 3. Rossella Giordano 45:45

Some venues for your competitive outlets

Aug. 2-5 **National USATF Masters T&F Championships, Lisle, Ill. (D)**
 Sat. Aug. 4 5 Km, Dover, Delaware (T)
 Sun. Aug. 12 1500 and 5000 meters, Austin, Texas (G)
 Mon. Aug. 13 5 Km, Long Branch, N.J., 6:45 pm (A)
 Sat. Aug. 18 Virginia and East Regional 1500meters, Virginia Beach (N)
 3 Miles, New Orleans (G)
 3000 meters, Albuquerque, N.M. (Q)
 Sun. Aug. 19 1500 and 5000 meters, Austin, Texas (G)
 US-Canada Jr. Walks and Weinacker Cup, Toronto (K)
 Mon.. Aug. 20 5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. 6:45 pm (A)
 Sat. Sept. 1 5 Km Chestertown, Md. (T)
 Sun. Sept. 2 2 Miles and 10 Km, Houston (G)
 Sat. Sept. 8 5 Km, Felton, Del. (T)
 Sun. Sept. 9 **National USATF 40 Km, Ocean Twp., N.J. (A)**
 5 Km Lewes, Del. (T)
 Sat. Sept. 15 5 Km, Stoneham, Mass.(E)
 Sat. Sept. 22 5 Km, Dover, Del. (T)
 Sat. Sept. 29 **National USATF 5 Km, Kingsport, Tenn. (D)**
 5 Km, Millsboro, Del. (T)
 Sun. Oct. 7 **National USATF 1 Hour, Waltham, Mass. D)**
 Half-Marathon, Sandy Hook, N.J. (A)

Sun. Oct. 14 Half-Marathon, Seaside Heights, N.J. (A)
 Sun. Oct. 18 **USATF National 30 Km, Valley Cottage, N.Y. (D)**

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From Heel To Toe

Another perspective. Last month we ran Dave McGovern's perspective on the World Cup from his perspective as coach and manager. Dave commented on youth races he had witnessed in Saransk and how the athletes were seemingly unjudged as they rounded turns in what seemed a flat out run. Canada's Roger Burrows has offered another perspective on what Dave witnessed. Roger says: "Our coach (Gerry Dragomir) sent us a similar 'behind the scenes' account. But you can see that he has a different take on the 'kids jogging around the turns' observation in the Mordovian Youth Championships prior to the World Cup itself. Here's what he wrote: 'The first time they came around the turn nearly every athlete jogged around the turn with a judge nearby and no calls. We went down to the other end of the course and the same thing was happening down there. The technique on any other parts of the course was exceptionally good. What we found out later was that, at this age, the athletes are not required to walk these more technically challenging parts of the course as an injury prevention measure.' So it seems to be less judging laxity and more age-appropriate accommodations. With a tiny region of the country producing over 100 your racewalkers watched by two or three thousand spectators, maybe it's not such a bad idea. As Gerry said, it doesn't seem to affect the seniors adversely." I passed these comments on to Dave and he replied: "From what I saw that sounds reasonable. I hadn't heard that explanation." . . . **Junior Elite Training Camp.** Tim Seaman announces that the annual USATF Junior Elite Training Camp hosted by the South Texas Walking Club in Pharr, Texas is on again from Wednesday, Dec 26 through Tuesday, January

1. The North American Racewalking Institute (NARI) is providing an opportunity for those athletes who meet certain qualifications to get the camp fee waived. Go to www.eteamz.com/stwc/ for the qualifications, the application, and the power of attorney. Coach A.C. Jaime has extended an invitation of opening his home to anyone who wishes to extend their trip a day or so earlier and spend Christmas with his family or to extend it a few days into January. Additionally, Coach Jaime and the STWC are putting in a bid to host the Pan-Am Cup Trials for both Junior and Senior athletes, with a proposed date of Dec. 29. If that comes about, it will make for a very exciting week. . .

Our Olympians:

Racewalking is not without some good publicity these days, even with Bob Costas perhaps plotting to zap us again on NBC's Olympic coverage. But, we have three racewalkers on the 2012 Olympic team, and following are three recent newspaper articles giving each of them and our little niche of track and field a boost.

Loneliness of the Long-Distance Walker

by Ken Belson, New York Times

Rarely have so many done so much in front of so few. That is the dynamic that racewalkers face at the Olympic track and field trials. While hopefuls like triple jumpers and heptathletes vie for spots at the London Games in front of 20,000 admiring fans at Hayward Field, the male and female racewalkers started their 20 Km races at 8:30 am this weekend. Admission was free for the 50-lap races, which takes at least 80 minutes and often far longer. NBC Sports Network is televising the meet but skipping the racewalk. Free coffee is served

Racewalkers are accustomed to anonymity. They put in as many miles as marathon runners, yet take far longer to complete their workouts, which can consume hours a day on lonely roads. The least visible of track events, racewalking attracts almost no sponsorship and scholarship money, little news media attention and only a sprinkling of fans.

"I'm not sure there is any Hayward Magic for racewalkers," said Philip Dunn, a three-time Olympic racewalker, referring to the big crowds that know to inspire track and field athletes to try harder.

Eugene is known as Track Town USA, so not surprisingly, several hundred fans still turned up Saturday morning to see the men's 20 Km race. (The 50 Km Olympic qualifying race was held on a road course in California in January.) While the spotlight was dimmer than for the marquee events, there was still plenty of drama.

Most of it focused on Trevor Barron, a 19-year-old prodigy who those in the racewalking community feel will elevate the sport in the United States, where it is mostly an afterthought. Barron started racewalking at 9, became the fastest junior racewalker in American history and now holds many national records.

He took up the sport as a way to join his sister, Tricia, when she competed at the junior nationals as a jumper and hurdler. He was also a good swimmer but left the pool because he has epileptic seizures. Since having successful brain surgery at 13, Barron has been on a tear, earning a spot at the World Racewalking Cup in Russia at age 15.

At 16, Barron, who now studies computer science at Colorado College, moved to San Diego so he could train with Tim Seaman, a two-time Olympian. On Saturday, Seaman matched Barron stride for stride through the first few laps, trying to use his protégé to pull him toward an Olympic "A" standard of 1:22.

Barron was too good. He lapped Seaman and the other 11 walkers who started the race. Using long, languid strides, Barron won, going 40 seconds faster than Seaman's American record, also breaking Seaman's record at 15 Km

"When I saw him cross the finish line, I wanted to cry," said Seaman, who slowed during the race after receiving two warnings for lifting, or not having at least one foot on the ground at all times. "I'm happy to lose my records to him."

Barron said he did not feel his best, but racing on the track provided a consistent surface and more support from the fans. Still he prefers racing on roads. "Fifty laps is a lot," he said. Either way, "I do most of my training by myself, and when I'm out there, there's no stress."

Many of the fans at Hayward Field were captivated. Dexter Freeman, who brought his 17-year-old son, David, to Eugene as a graduation gift, dropped by the racewalk out of curiosity and left captivated. "We thought we'd last only five laps," the elder Freeman said, his eyes transfixed on lap 30 of the race. "I had no clue they would do this fast." Debbie Steinman of Eugene and her daughter, Bianca Barted, came to watch because they felt a kinship with the racers. "I love racewalking mostly because I think I can do it," said Steinman, who started a walking program to keep in shape.

American has not won an Olympic medal in racewalking since 1972, when Larry Young finished third in the 50Km event, and it is unlikely to end the drought this year. The Russians continue to dominate the sport, while Italians, Ecuadoreans and others have won medals at the Olympics in recent years.

Barron could break through. Most men peak between 26 and 32 years old, Seaman said, so there is time for him to improve. "I'd love to make racewalking a more popular event," Barron said, "but I need to be faster for that to happen."

John Nunn is a tough cookie who walks the walk

by Kevin Baxter, Los Angeles Times

America's best racewalker is standing in the corner of his kitchen kneading three bags of buttered microwave popcorn into a lumpy mound of yellow dough already thick with malted milk balls, peanut butter and toffee. But that's not the main part of this cookie recipe—or any of the others John Nunn has thrown together. Because standing beside him is the secret ingredient he says makes his unusual concoctions work: his pony tailed 8-year-old daughter, Ella. "She taste-tests it. She runs the show," Nunn says. "If Ella says no, that's the end of the cookie."

She recently nixed a bacon-flavored cookie that tasted just as bad as it sounds. But the popcorn-and-chocolate treats, a marshmallow-and-graham-cracker cookie and a butterscotch-coconut blend all made the cut.

Nunn will be the only athlete representing the U.S. in the 50 Km racewalk at this summer's London Games after winning a stirring duel with Tim Seaman in January's Olympic Trials. That is itself an achievement worthy of its own cookie, given Nunn's circuitous two-decade-long journey from high school distance runner to two-time Olympian and rising cookie entrepreneur.

Along the way, he served a Mormon mission in Las Vegas, got married, joined the Army, got divorced, was promoted to staff sergeant, learned to cook by working part time as a pastry chef at a San Diego diner and moved with Ella into a garage-sized guest house on a cousin's ranch in the hills above Oceanside.

Racewalking demands the same pain, sacrifice and dedication as long-distance running, but it comes with few of the benefits since the sport, popular in eastern Europe and parts of Latin America, is largely maligned and misunderstood in the U.S.. And if that's not bad enough, because competitors must maintain contact with the ground at all times, their gait looks off-balance and comical, with a circular hop rotation and an exaggerated arm swing that is frequently ridiculed. Until he perfected that technique, Nunn was among those who laughed the loudest.

"I thought it was ridiculous," says Nunn, whose mother and father were avid racewalkers in Colorado. "I couldn't do the form. I didn't know what it was. And it was painful."

Turned out he was good at it, though. So after Nunn peaked as a runner in high school, where he ran the mile in 4:34, his father talked him into enrolling at Wisconsin Parkside, one of the few colleges where racewalking is practiced. A couple of years later, he made his first U.S. National team, competing in the Junior Pan American Games in Cuba.

"It was amazing," he remembers. "You get these uniforms, you get all this cool stuff. I was like, 'I want to make the Olympic team.'"

That took seven more years, with Nunn finishing second in the U.S. Trials to qualify for the 2004 Athens Games, where he placed 26th in the 20 Km event. The next four years were a struggle, though, with Nunn narrowly missing out on the 2008 Beijing Games while dealing with the acrimonious breakup of this marriage.

"That was a hard time for," says Enrique Pena, a former Colombian racewalker who has coached Nunn for nearly a dozen years. There were times, Pena remembers, when Nunn would simply stop in the middle of a workout and sit down in the middle of the road, exhausted physically and mentally. "For the racewalker, the most important thing is a very strong head," Pena says. "If you're weak in your head, you are not going to do well."

Looking back, Nunn, 34, considers the episode a defining moment—and not just in his racewalking career but in his life. Because the divorce was proceeding, Nunn often busied himself in the kitchen, something he continued even after his ex-wife remarried and relocated to Washington state, leaving Ella to spend the school year with her father.

The girl was 3 then, too young to be around a hot stove. So the two turned to baking first with breads and cakes and eventually moving on to the cookies, where they soon began blazing their own trail. "All the recipes were horrible," Nunn says. "So I just started messing with different stuff. And people started liking them."

Over the next two years, Nunn estimates he gave out more than 1,200 cookies, mostly to friends, and the feedback was all positive. So he started passing them out to strangers, hoping for unbiased opinion. When those came back positive as well, "Ellas's Cookie Co: Decadent Cookies by Daddy and Daughter" was born.

"He makes the best cookies in the world," says Swedish racewalker Andreas Gustafsson, who pushed his training partner into selling boxes of cookies on the internet. "The recipe he has and the way he makes them, nobody beats them. They're a little more dense, not so airy like regular cookies. It just tastes gourmet." . . .

From start to finish, a 30-cookie box takes about 20 minutes to make—which makes it a cakewalk compared with what Nunn will be attempting in London. The 50 Km racewalk is the longest and most grueling event in Olympic track and field—and it's one in which the U.S. isn't particularly good. Larry Young, who finished third in both the 1968 and 1972 Games, is the only U.S. walker to win an Olympic medal at 50 km—and that isn't likely to change this year since Nunn's winning mark at the U.S. trials 4:04:41, is nearly 26 minutes slower than Russia's Sergey Kiryapkin, a two-time World Champion.

Longshot or not, Nunn didn't want to go to London without Ella. But taking a daughter and baby sitter on a two-week tour of Europe can be expensive for a single father living on a military salary. So Ella took matters into her own hands last spring, donning a red apron and chef's hat before hoisting a sheet of cookies in front of a video camera to record a YouTube plea to talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, her favorite TV personality.

"Every day Ella would be like 'Did you hear back? Did you hear?' Nunn says. "No, Ella, I didn't hear from Ellen. She didn't call."

Nunn's mother eventually came to the rescue, volunteering to make the trip with her granddaughter. When the Games are over, though, the focus will go back to cookies. A new lemon treat—grown with fruit gathered from Nunn's front yard—is already in production. And

there is talk of taking the entire operation into a brick-and-mortar bakery.

"Racewalking breeds weird people," Nun says, chuckling at the irony of a world-class athlete with 6 percent body fat hawking sugary, high-calorie cookies. "This is just fun. It would be really fun if all of a sudden it took off and it's like Mrs. Field."

Olympics and a Ph.D., Just a Walk in the Park

Aimee Berg, Wall Street Journal, Feb. 25, 2012

A frigid dawn had just broken over the east side of Central Park when the unmistakable silhouette of Maria Michta appeared; feet briskly skimming the pavement, hips rolling forward, arms pumping. Almost every day for the past 3 ½ years, the Long Island native has been training in Manhattan with the goal of making her Olympic debut in London this August.

Michta is a two-time national champion at the 20 Km racewalk, and on Sunday she will try to win her third consecutive U.S. indoor title over 3000 meters in Albuquerque. But that's not all. As if training for the Olympics in Manhattan wasn't challenging enough, Michta also spends about 60 hours a week in a lab en route to a Ph.D. in biomedical science. By mid-morning, Michta had swapped her Smurf-blue hat, vest, and tights for a pair of skinny jeans and a cable-knit sweater and was busy manipulating pipettes, solutions, cells, and solutions at the microbiology lab at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine to investigate how the hepatitis C virus uses the protein occludin to infect cells.

It was a project she never imagined. Not because the oldest of four children, whose father worked at the Brookhaven lab, lacked the grades. The C.W. Post valedictorian had never earned less than an A in college. In high school, she was one of 40 national finalists in the 2004 Intel Science Talent Search for her project on radio detection of meteors. "I had no interest in hep C," she explained. "I was fascinated by the 1928 flu epidemic."

Michta changed her mind during her first-year rotations, and her fellow scientists soon discovered her other talent. "Numerous times I've come into the lab wearing spandex pants, a tank top, and my fuel belt to prep an experiment at 7 or 7:30," she said. (It helps her office, training ground, and student housing are all within a three-block radius on the Upper East Side.)

And her lab mates love it. One year, 15 of her colleagues bought tickets to Madison Square Garden to see her compete in the Millrose Games. Among them was Matt Evans, an assistant professor of microbiology who runs the lab.

"It was impressive—not only her physical ability but her mental toughness, a mental toughness I'm happy to take advantage of in the scientific world," he said. "Science is hard. The vast majority of experiments fail—and not due to lack of design or technical ability. It can be mentally damaging. A drive to succeed and compete is critical as a scientist."

Further illustrating her resolve, Michta trains aloe and is coached from afar. Yet in just two years under the guidance of Tim Seaman (a two-time Olympian based near San Diego), Michta cut six minutes 36 seconds off her personal best 20 Km time. In lay terms, she went from sustaining an 8:10 mile pace to 7:38 mile pace over 12.42 miles.

Although Michta struggles with "hip drop", an inefficent habit in which she twists slightly and loses forward momentum, Seaman doesn't worry about her form while coaching her blindly from California. "We're a judged sport," he explained, and her natural style is to keep her feet so low to the ground that it doesn't draw the attention of referees who are looking for two violations that can lead to disqualification; lifting both feet off the ground simultaneously or a bent knee in the advancing leg between the time it strikes the ground and is perfectly vertical.

Michta, 25, was first exposed to racewalking during a four-mile fun run on her 14th

birthday. After one mile, a man passed her with an unusual stride. "I remember thinking, 'if someone taught him better biomechanics, he could be fast'" she said.

By ninth grade, she was excelling at the discipline. In just her fourth competitive racewalk, she qualified for the high school indoor nationals. As a senior, she placed third at the 2004 junior nationals while missing her high school graduation ceremony. Michta also missed her 2008 college graduation to compete in Russia and gave her valedictory speech via videotape. "I promised my parents that I'll attend graduation when I get my Ph.D.," she said—ideally in 2013.

But first, the Olympic trials. In 2008 Michta placed eighth despite an upper leg injury to her iliotibial band. To prepare for 2012, Michta is taking a six-month leave from the lab—her first extended break since she joined Mt. Sinai in 2008. It is a risk because science is also a race, and other researchers could scoop her discovery and publish their results first.

But training full time—for the first time—should pay dividends on the road. "I'm so happy," Seaman said of Michta's decision. Now, instead of 10 to 12 hours in the lab without naps, sporadic meals, and dinners past 10 pm, she can recover properly and focus on racing.

If she succeeds (*and now we know that she did*), Michra would likely be the lone American scouring virology and hepatology publications and the PLoS Pathogens journal in the athletes village, but she is not favored to claim a medal. Michta's best 20 Km time is three minutes off the American record set by triple Olympian Michelle Rohl a dozen years ago, and is one minute, 22 seconds slower than the international "A" standard for the Games.

Nonetheless, she will continue trying to pick off runners during her workouts and explain to those who ask: Why walk when you can run? "It's not about being the fastest; it's about being the fastest with a certain technique," she said. "Michael Phelps has multiple medals in different strokes, not just freestyle, which is the fastest. Racewalking is just a different stroke in the sport of track and field."

Steps To Success

How a dedicated racewalking coach transformed the life of his protege

Cristina Rouvalis, AARP The Magazine

A.C. Jaime fidgets nervously in the bleachers. The normally easy going coach, 75, has traveled from Texas to Ohio to root for one of his former high school stars, Alejandro Chavez, in the sport of racewalking. The starter's gun blasts. Jaime focuses on the 18-year-old athlete. "No te esperes! 'Don't wait!'" he bellows as Chavez hangs back in second place. Chavez gains speed, grabbing the lead, and Jaime raises his arms as his protege—the new National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics indoor 3000 meter champion—crosses the finish line. A grinning Chavez rushes to hug Jaime, "I call him coach, but he is more like a grandfather," says Chavez, a freshman at Missouri Baptist University.

A married father of six grown children, grandfather of 21, and former mayor of Pharr, Texas (where he coaches his South Texas Walking Club), Jaime sees himself in youths like Chavez, whom he has mentored for the past decade. A second-generation Mexican-American, Jaime grew up poor and lost his father at age 5. He became a successful CPA partly because of the mentoring by his own high school football coach.

Currently retired, Jaime has taught hundreds of kids—mostly Latinos from low-income households—to compete. He annually donates about \$20,000 of his investment earnings to buy supplies and train 30 local kids throughout the year, and train another 20 to 40 from around the country for his annual winter camp. They need his guidance. Racewalking is harder than running, Jaime says, because of two rules. A racewalker must keep the lead leg straight at the point of contact, and one foot on the ground at all times, or risk ejection by judges. Elite walkers go to the Olympics. But even non-athletes can enjoy the sport, says

Jaime, who started racewalking in his 50s to lose weight.

Chavez began training as a chubby fifth grader, and eventually Jaime coached him to a speedy 6:19 mile, which boosted his self-esteem. "He helped me to see the leader in me," Chavez explains. Today he is on a racewalking scholarship and is training for the 2016 Olympics. Without his coach, the 5-foot 10-inch, 144-pound racewalker says, "I would probably be over 200 pounds, not in the sport." Instead, he holds a first place plaque. And he knows he'll see Jaime in the stands. "It's so nice that he supports and encourages me," says Chavez of his coach. "he changed my life."

LOOKING BACK

50 Years Ago (From the July 1962 American Race Walker, published by Chris McCarthy in Chicago)—A blazing sun on a shadeless course took its toll on competitors in the National 20 Km in Chicago. Ron Zinn finally prevailed over John Allen in 1:43:59 (compared to his 1:36:02 on the same course 8 months later on a cool March day when Ron Laird did 1:34:52—just to let you know what affect the heat had). Allen was 31 seconds back. Usually tough in the heat, Jack Mortland faded badly the final third of the race and finished a lonely third in 1:47:20. His consolation was leading the Ohio Track Club to the team title, with Jack Blackburn fourth 1:49:09 and Jeff Loucks ninth (1:52:06). Early leader Ron Laird managed only fifth, nearly a minute behind Blackburn. Canada's Felix Cappella came sixth. Only 15 of 37 starters managed to break 2 hours. . . Two weeks earlier, Zinn had won the National 2 Mile in Walnut, Cal. There he beat Laird 14:35.8 to 14:40.6, with Mike Brodie third in 14:47.2. John Humcke, Akos Szekely, and Bob Bowman followed.

45 Years Ago (From the July 1967 ORW)—Ron Larid scored an easy victory in the Los Angeles Invitational meet with the British Commonwealth in 1:36:29. A promising young walker, Larry Young, also beat the Commonwealth with a 1:40:47 in second. The Commonwealth suffered noticeably in the heat and smog, with England's Ron Wallwork third in 1:43:47. . . Two weeks earlier, Larid had walked 1:32:24 in Santa Barbara to beat Don DeNoon (1:34:25), Young (1:35:30), and Tom Dooley (1:35:50). . . Another promising newcomer, Steve Hayden, won the National Junior 2 Mile in Buffalo in a record 14:55.2, with teammate Howie Jacobson (now better known as Jake) second in 15:07. (Junior in those ancient days was not an age category, but a category for those who had never won a Junior or Senior National or been on an Olympic team).

40 Years Ago (From the July 1972 ORW)—The U.S. Olympic Trials were contested in Eugene, Oregon and Larry Young won both the 20 and 50. In the 20, on July 1, the times were much slower than expected. With heat not a factor, some suspected a long course. Nevertheless, Larry pretty much controlled the race, leading by nearly a minute at 10 Km and winning in 1:35:56. Goetz Klopfer (1:38:03), Tom Dooley (1:39:10), and Todd Scully took the next three spots. Two-time Olympian Rudy Haluza finished in 1:38:00 only to find he was disqualified. In the 50 on July 4, Young toyed with the field through a 2:08 first half and then accelerated the rest of the way to win in an uncontested 4:13:05 on a hot day. The surprises were in second and third with both Bill Weigle (4:20:09) and Steve Hayden (4:23:23) making massive improvements on their personal bests. A solid favorite for the team, Bob Kitchen, had to settle for fourth in 4:25:06. . . In Erfurt, E.G., Hans-Georg Reimann and Peter Frenkel broke the world record for 20 with a 1:25:19.4 on the track. Gerhard Sperling also broke the old record (1:25:50) with a 1:25:37.8. . . Young also won the National 15 Km in Northglenn, Col. on July 15 in 1:10:22. Jerry Brown and Bill Weigle were 2 and 3 minutes back in second and third. . . Jeanne Bocci set an American women's record with a 7:35.3 for 1 Mile.

35 Years Ago (From the July 1977 ORW)—Neal Pyke became the first U.S. walker to win the 20 Km in a US-USSR dual T&F Meet. He did 1:28:18 in Sochi, leaving Yevgeniy Yesyukov 2 minutes back. (However Tikonov of the USSR, walking as a guest, actually won the race in 1:27:50). Todd Scully was fourth in 1:34:48. . . Neal also won against West Germany beating Scully 42:23.5 to 42:33 in a 10 Km race. . . Dan O'Connor led all the way to win the National 25 Km in Washington, D.C. with a 1:05:12. Carl Schueler, Dave Romansky, and Bob Kitchen took the next three spots.

30 Years Ago (From the July 1982 ORW)—In Niagara Falls, Todd Scully won the National 30 Km in 2:28:45 and Susan Liers-Westerfield the National 15 Km in 1:18:11. Andy Liles won the National Junior 15 Km (by then age-related) at the same site. Well back of Scully were C Glenn Sweazey (Canada), Ray Somers, and Martin Kraft. Pat Moroney was second to Liles. . . Jim Heiring finished a close second to Yevgeniy Yesyukov in the US-USSR dual meet in Indianapolis. Yesyukov had 1:26:42 for the 20 and Jim 1:27:05. . . A week later in East Germany Jim was faster (1:26:13) but finished third behind Werner Heyr (1:24:45) and Michael Boenke. Ray Sharp, after struggling in Indianapolis, had a 1:29:49 in this one. Mexico's Ernest Canto won the Prague-Poedbrady 50 Km in Czechoslovakia with a 3:51:10

25 Years Ago (From the July 1987 ORW)—The titles went to Tim Lewis and Maryanne Torrellas in the National Championships in San Jose. Lewis won his third straight 20 Km title in 1:24:12 breaking his own meet record by more than a minute. Carl Schueler (1:26:10), Ray Sharp (1:27:00), Gary Morgan (1:27:31), Mike Stauch (1:28:15), and Paul Wick (1:30:06) followed. Torrellas broke away from Lynn Weik in the final 800 meters to win the women's 10 Km in 47:23.8. Lynn finished in 47:36.5. Debbi Lawrence (48:31), Teresa Vaill (48:58), and Sara Standley (50:54) were next in line. . . The Junior National 10 Km went to Reggie Daveport in 48:54 with Jon Jorgeson (49:07) and Lennie Becker (48:58) second and third. The Perez girls, Cindy (25:23.5) and Cybil (25:30.6) went one-two in the Women's Junior National 5 Km. Norma Commans (25:46) was third..

20 Years Ago (From the July 1992 ORW)—At Niagara Falls, Andrzej Chylinski grabbed the National 10 Km title in 41:07. Canada's Martin St. Pierre was just 14 seconds back. Gary Morgan (43:30), Ian Whatley (44:03), and Curtis Fisher (44:10) took the next three spots. Canada's Janice McCaffrey won an accompanying women's race in 46:13, just 14 seconds ahead of Debby Van Orden. 60-year-old Max Green blasted a national age group record of 51:36. . . On the track in Fana, Norway, Sweden's Stefan Johansson broke Ernesto Canto's World Record for 20 Km with his 1:18:35.2. Mexico's Carols Mercenario had a 3:48:06 for 50 Km at the same site.

15 Years Ago (From the July 1997 ORW)—Curt Clausen won the National 10 Km at Niagara Falls, but finished only third in the race. His 42:04 effort was no match for Ecuador's Jefferson Perez (41:21) and Canada's Arturo Huerta (41:43). Another Ecuadorian, Juan Rojas, was fourth, with Al Heppner and Jan Klos taking the next two spots. . . U.S. Junior titles went to Emma Carter and John Nunn, Carter finished more than a half-minute ahead of Liza Kutzing in 25:52. Nunn did 48:53 to beat Brian Colby by nearly a minute.

10 Years Ago (From the July 2002 ORW)—In the World Junior Championships in Jamaica, Japan's Fumi Mitsumura won the women's 10 Km race in 46:01.51, nearly six seconds ahead of Chian's Siqi Liu. Maryna Tsikhanava, Belarus, was third and another 7 seconds back. In the men's 10 Km, Russia's Vladimir Kanaykin blasted the final 2 Km in 7:46 to edge China's Zingde Xu by just 3.6 seconds in 41:41.40. Brazil's Rafael Duarte was third. Benjamin Shorey finished 17th in 45:22.42 for the U.S. . . In the Irish Championships, Gilliam O'Sullivan zipped

to a world record 5 Km in 20:02.6 and Robert Heffernan won the men's 10 in a swift 38:47.66.

5 Years Ago (From the July 2007 ORW)—In the Pan-American Games, held in Rio de Janeiro, Ecuador's Jefferson Perez won the 20 Km in 1:22:08, 1:08 ahead of his teammate Roland Saquipay. Matt Boyles (1:30:07) was fifth and John Nunn (1:32:37) seventh for the U.S. The women's 20 went to Cristina Lopez of El Salvador in 1:38:59. Jolene Moore and Teresa Vaill were both DQ'd. Ecuador's Xavier Moreno won the 50 in 3:52:07, just 28 seconds ahead of Mexico's Horacio Nava. Philip Dunn was eighth in 4:15:47. Kevin Eastler was third at 25 Km in 1:57:27, but was DQ'd before he reached 30. . . In the World Youth Championships, Russians prevailed with Tatyana Kalmykova winning the women's 5 in 20:28.15 and Stanislav Emelyanov the men's 10 in 41:49.91. There were no U.S. walkers involved.



1932 Olympic 50 Km winner Tommy Green. Tommy Green was one of the three racewalkers (along with Jim Hewson and John Kelly) featured in our "Trip Down Memory Lane" in the May issue. Tommy was 38 years old when he won his gold in Los Angeles.