



TREKKERS' TRAILS

September 2001

Presidents Notes

By Keith Peters

The 2001 VM/Swim/Bike events were a notable success due to the tremendous effort extended by club members, and particularly the wonderful organizing job by the VP Millie Seitz who contacted/organized the workers. I take this opportunity to extend our "good job, well done" to the following persons for the duties they performed:

Trail set up - walk & bike - Richard Parr & Kathleen Charland

Start/Finish Desk- Grace Newman, Bruno & Dagmar Lietz, Anita Thomas, Gertrude Grieve

Swim Counters- Karen Marriott & Sylvia Fisher

Control Points- Eileen Fedor, Flo Miller, Jim & Helen Rousseau, Joan Rudyk & Bruce O'Neil

Trail Take down - Myrna O'Neil

The 78 individuals who participated in these events truly appreciated the effort of these volunteers and it once again show the support our members give the club.

The weather Sunday July 29th was not as favorable for the Marathon event, however, it was continued and 27 registered for the walk. I would again extend heartfelt thanks to those who braved the elements to make the event work, noting the first two on the trails were Ann Appleman and Evelyn Rogers who persevered despite flooded portions of Loop # 1 as well as later walkers who

endured wet clothing and footwear to complete their loops. Again the great organizing job done by Millie had a crew in place to operate the start/finish desk. The poor conditions and the lowered turnout resulted in a decision not to operate control points. On the control desk were Chuck & Phyllis May, June & Bill Hughes, Donna Channen, Dianne Fuson and Bruce O'Neil. Thanks to our Social conveners, Phyllis & Chuck, who provided us with water, coffee, oranges and TimBits.

Thanks again to Richard and Kathleen for setting up the great loops and providing maps.

Thanks to all the volunteers who once again made this year's events a great success.

New members

We have some new members to welcome to our club-

Marie Gauthier, Gordon Brandly, Zoeb Dungarwalla & Zaheera Jiwaji all of Edmonton.

May they find
"Fun, Fitness & Friendship"
on the trails

CVF CONVENTION 2002

COME ONE, COME ALL, to the Canadian Volkssport Federation Annual Convention 2002, May 3, 4, 5, 2002, in Medicine Hat. Mark your 2002 calendar for this eventful weekend!

This Convention is being organized by the Volkssport Association of Alberta and its 12 member clubs.

The convention theme is "Light your life to better health through Volkssport". This emphasizes fitness, friendship and the Gas Light logo of Medicine Hat.

In addition to the two convention walks, there will be eight events in the local area. (Map walks all day May 2nd, May 3, May 4, May 5, to Noon on May 6th. There will be a Meet & Greet Night, as well as a Banquet and Dance.

Watch your Walk Registration tables in early Fall, for detailed brochures.

For early details, contact:

Grace Newman: gnewman@connect.ab.ca or (780) 458-2592

Millie Seitz: mstz@hotmail.com or (780) 458-7902

Stella Melnychuk: stelmeln@oanet.com or (780) 475-6250



The Energizer Bunny lives on CONGRATULATIONS

Milestones achieved by the following volksmarchers as published in the July, August, September issue of *Volkssport Canada Volume 16, Issue 3*

Distance (in Kilometers)

Grace Newman	21000
Michael Alberti	13000
Bob Collins	11000
Billie Collins	11000
Mitch Melnychuk	9000
Stella Melnychuk	9000
Millie Seitz	7500
Robert Davis	7000
Kathleen Charland	6500
Arigje Davis	6500
Evelyn Rogers	6500
Karen Marriott	5000
Marianne Alberti	4500
Marlene Kubbernus	3000
Nancy Johnston	2000
Carson McDonald	1500
Olga Footz	1000

Events

Grace Newman	750
Billie Collins	650
Bob Collins	650
Robert Davis	575
Kathleen Charland	550
Michael Alberti	500
Mitch Melnychuk	475
Stella Melnychuk	475
Arigje Davis	450
Millie Seitz	450
Karen Marriott	350
Evelyn Rogers	350
Marlene Kubbernus	275
Nancy Johnston	125
Carson McDonald	125
Olga Footz	100
Vivian Rousseau	100
Sara Saxer	10

Wandering In Warsaw – And Other Polish Places

Submitted by: Bob Pass

Warsaw... a city of national pride, a city of tragedy. I spent the month of May in Poland, mostly in the capital, Warsaw. Although I did not attend any IVV events, I did do several walkabouts of about 10 Km. every weekend. What follows are my adventures and observations of this, my first trip to a European country.

My first sight of Poland is from the air as the flight descends through the cloud cover that has blanketed Europe since my departure from London Heathrow. The aerial view reveals the flatness of the Polish plain, spreading in all directions, dotted with hundreds of long, narrow farms and then Warsaw comes into view. For a city of over two million residents, I am surprised by its compactness - no sign of urban sprawl here! (It is not until later, when I am flying back to Canada over Holland and can see major cities like Amsterdam spread below that I realize urban compactness is a hallmark of European cities.) The plane curves in from the west, over the neat southerly outskirts—consisting first of red-roofed homes looking much like any urban north-American city and then low-rise gray apartment blocks—to make a smooth landing at a thoroughly modern but small airport - about the same size as Edmonton's twenty years ago.

Disembarking from the plane, we are led through a "sheep corral" where we must first walk across a disinfectant soaked mat and then wash our hands in a smelly liquid. A hand-lettered sign explains that these measures are required to prevent the "Mad Cow" virus, that the hand washing stuff is "approved very safe" and that we should not worry about using it. Frankly, I am more worried about NOT using it - because

there's a BIG armed guard standing there, making sure that nobody gets by HIM with dry hands!

No problems going through customs and immigration except that I, like all others am required to fill out a form indicating how much foreign currency, gold, platinum and other monetary equivalents I was bringing in with me. There were stacks of forms in every language except English! I went through them three times before I discovered the one entitled "Deklaration" was in fact written in English, not German. No problems either navigating through the airport though as all signs are in Polish and English. I caught a cab after first enquiring of the driver if he spoke English. He said, "A little" and he was right - that was the last English I heard from him during the twenty-minute ride into the city! The cab ride was uneventful but I was struck by the contrasts. The streets were, wide, modern and in good condition. Many were boulevards lined with a wide variety of tree species and large monuments at nearly every major intersection. But the apartment buildings were universally dull drab gray boxes - a legacy of the soviet era and the rebuilding of the city after WW-II when shelter, and lots of it, was more important than architectural merit.

After settling into my hotel room, (very modern, large and comfortable) I scrounged a city map and tourist guide from the concierge and began to familiarize myself with the city layout and where various attractions were located. From what I can figure out, the hotel is almost ideally sited with many points of interest within what seems to be moderate walking distance. To test this theory, I head out for a short stroll north along Nowy Swiat (New Street) towards the "Old Town" area. The stroll turns out to be a modest five Km. that introduces me to the charms of this city. (Hey! I am jet-lagged, 20+ hours without sleep, and I had a gosh-awful route-march

through the rat-maze of Heathrow! I'm entitled to keeping things to just five Ks!)

The first charm is right across the street in front of the hotel, the Square Of The Three Crosses. At one end is a bronze monument to a turn-of-the-century hero of the peasants. At the opposite is the small, round St. Alexander's church that was bombed out during the war and subsequently restored. (Unlike other churches in Warsaw that are architecturally complex and heavily embellished, this church has a very simple but striking design that just seems to cry out, "This is a holy place".

The architecture of the buildings gets steadily better as I head north along Nowy Swiat. Once past the massive "Finance and Banking" building (later I discover that this is a euphemistic name - it is really the former Communist Party headquarters with a fancy name to disguise its real identity) I enter the reconstructed part of Nowy Swiat that forms the main shopping area of downtown Warsaw. This section, stretching for about 1.5 Km, was dynamited completely to the ground during the war. On this day, the street is closed to traffic and there is a street festival taking place. Lots of entertainment, traditional dancers in costume and beer gardens on every corner. Pairs of black uniformed police patrol the street. Although they try to be unobtrusive, their fluorescent yellow vests, which give them the nickname of "canaries", make them stand out from the crowd.

Passing the monument to Nicholas Copernicus (he was a scholar at the University of Warsaw) the architecture becomes monumental. Magnificent churches on either side are covered everywhere with beautiful stone carving and statuary. Finally, I arrive at the handsome gates of the University of Warsaw, and, believing that I have passed through Old Town, I head back to the hotel. Studying my map

once again that evening, I discover that, first of all, my evaluation that the hotel is well situated and within walking distance of many sites is accurate, and, secondly, that I had turned back about half a Km. short of Old Town! All those wonderful structures... and I had seen nothing yet!

The following weekend, I remedy that mistake. Departing the hotel early, I head out on a well-planned but ambitious, circuitous, walking excursion that will take me through Old Town and many other sites too. And this time, I have my map with me! First stop, just past the university is at the tomb of the Unknown Soldiers where I watch the changing of the guard and nearly get run over by a parade of goose-stepping soldiers. The tomb is actually the remaining remnants of a palace blown up by the Germans and contains the remains of unknown Polish soldiers recovered from the battlefields of the wars in which Polish soldiers fought and died over the past thousand years or more.

From the tomb, it is a short walk to Old Town, the ancient walled city of Warsaw. This area, also completely leveled during the war, has been faithfully reconstructed down to the last detail over the past fifty years. Foremost amongst the reconstructions is the Royal Palace, a magnificent structure that had been completely and deliberately destroyed by the Germans. To give an idea of the scope of this building, the demolition required the drilling of over twenty-thousand holes into the foundations for the placement of the dynamite. The building is now completely restored to its former condition including its unbelievable marquetry floors made from up to sixteen different kinds of wood, pastel frescoed ceilings and marble interior walls. The cost of rebuilding and restoring this edifice was born entirely by the donations of the Polish people, not the government.

From Old Town, I continue on my planned route into the Jewish Ghetto passing the three monuments to the children killed during the uprising, the "Heroes Of The Uprising" (ghetto resistance fighters), and to the Jewish people. I also walk the shaded length of Mila Street in the ghetto seeking out 18 Mila. This building was the focus of the Ghetto Uprising during WW-II and lends its address to the title of the novel by Leon Uris about the uprising. Unfortunately, the address no longer exists; the site occupied now by a large, up-scale apartment building. It is difficult to envision this peaceful tree-lined residential street was once the site of the worst kind of ugliness man can devise.

From Mila Street, my path turned south to the ruins of Paviat prison. It is not large and the mind boggles at the fact that this small place was where over 30,000 intellectuals of Warsaw were executed by the Germans. They were eliminated not because of what they had done but because of what they might do in opposition to the conquering forces. At the entrance to the prison stands an old, dead tree. It is covered with several dozen small enameled metal signs, each lettered with a person's name and date from the war years. At the foot of the tree burn several candle or oil votives with red glass chimneys and small bouquets of flowers. As I stand there, a car pulls up and double parks at the curb. The driver, a man in his late thirties, gets out, walks over to the tree, and places a votive at its base. After lighting it, he steps back, stares at one of the signs, then bows his head in prayer. As he leaves, there are tears in his eyes... and mine too. After more than fifty-five years, the reality of the horrors committed here are still fresh in the minds of the Poles, even those who, like myself, were not even born when they occurred.

From Paviat, I move onwards along my route to the Center of Culture and Science. This

is the tallest building in Warsaw and it dominates its skyline, much to the chagrin of its residents. Built in the early fifties, it is a "gift" from Stalin era Russia to Poland. Actually, all that was given was the Russian engineering and architecture - the materials and labor were supplied at Polish expense. The building's architecture is ugly and derided by all of Warsaw. But there is an open-air "Panorama" viewing gallery on the thirty-second floor that I visit to get a great view of the city. (The locals claim that it is the best view because you can't see this monstrous structure from it!) Except for the city's architecture, I notice how much Warsaw looks like Edmonton. The same flat geography, the Vistula river winding northward in its valley through the city core. In fact, the Vistula is a dead ringer for the North Saskatchewan - same size, same color, same current, but with a valley that is broader with much gentler slopes.

Leaving the monument to Soviet graciousness, I detour through a supermarket. The produce is plentiful, fresh and priced similar to produce in St. Albert as are all the other grocery items. The meat counter is remarkable as to the selection of chicken, pork, sausage, fresh fish and the complete absence of beef. I also discover those wonderful, made in Poland, sesame snaps. The only place I have seen them other than in Canada.

After six and a half hours, I arrive back at my hotel completely exhausted. Although I have walked only an estimated twelve or so kilometers, I am beat! Why so long? Why so tired? Why so footsore? Well, stopping to read every English sign at each of the tour points and snap two rolls of film accounts for the length of time and the tiredness. As to the aching limbs, try walking twelve kilometers on cobblestone sidewalks and I think you will be footsore too!

The following weekend, I have another ten Km. route laid out to the south of the hotel. This one takes me past the Polish senate building - did you know that Poland was one of the first countries in Europe to have a written constitution and that at one time it even elected its Kings? - and several handsome embassies. It also leads me past the restored armory (now an arts center), past the site of the Gestapo headquarters (just a rock now with a bronze plaque), and on to the immense, forested, Lazienki Park. This park contains a large variety of huge hardwood trees including a linden trees with trunks eight to ten feet thick, chestnuts, oaks and maples. Here there is the magnificent "Water Palace" in its fairytale setting. Its beautiful architecture is marred only by the hundreds of holes bored into its foundations in preparation for its destruction that, thankfully, the Germans didn't have time to complete because the Russian army was too quick. In this park too is the house-sized bronze monument to Frederik Chopin, destroyed by the Germans and since replaced by the appreciative Poles honoring the exquisite music of one of their own.

Another week goes by and this time I travel by efficient, high-speed, and comfortable train to Kracow (pronounced by the Poles as "Kack-ooove"). From there, I continue fifty Km. west to Oswiecim (Auschwitz) and Birkenau which is just three Km. further on. The walking tour of Auschwitz is more of an emotional than physical challenge. Entering one of the rooms in a barracks building, a young woman just ahead of me peers into an exhibit case, bursts into tears, and runs from the room. The case holds the clothing of Jewish infants recovered from the warehouses at Auschwitz. Leaving that room, I enter a one-hundred-foot long hall. Its walls on both sides are glass. Behind the windows, on both sides, stacked from floor to ceiling and extending back for fifteen feet are thousands upon thousands of shoes. The monstrosity of Auschwitz

begins to sink in. But at Birkenau, the magnitude of the monstrosity hits home. No pictures—or words—of this place can convey its size... ruins of the encampment stretch into the distance... it is the size of a city! A city designed for just one purpose.

From these places of horrors, I travel back, bypassing Krakow to Weiliczka, for a walking tour of its huge underground salt mine. The mine is remarkable for its seven-hundred years of continuous production, its 300 Km. of tunnels, and for its hundreds of statues and embellishments carved into the salt by its miners. Most remarkable of these is an enormous cathedral almost a thousand feet underground complete with alters, stations of the cross and sparkling chandeliers, all carved from salt.

Returning to Kracow, the place where the nation of Poland arose, I spend what is left of the afternoon at Wawel castle. In its unbelievably magnificent chapel—complete with a roof of gold—one can find almost the entire thousand-year history of the Polish nation. Here, in the entry, is the sarcophagus of its first bishop, a seven hundred and fifty pound coffin of solid silver raised on black marble columns. To left and right are the sarcophagi of ancient Polish kings intricately carved out of white marble, brown granite, or red jasper. Below Wawel castle lays Kracow's Old Town, which is even more intriguing than Warsaw's and includes the church where Pope John once held mass each Sunday.

Poland is a wonderful country that reminds me in many ways of Alberta. Its treasures are its land, its history, but most of all, its people and culture. If you have an opportunity to visit this country, then I urge you to do so and experience some of the places—and people—that made this country so memorable for me.

BUS FOR OUT-OF-TOWN TRIPS

It has been suggested by Bill Hughes that we think about doing some bus trips to places such as Calgary, Camrose, Red Deer and Hinton in the coming year. This would perhaps encourage people to go to out-of-town events and year rounds and also good for folks who don't wish to drive alone. We could get a 47 seat coach with comfortable seats but would have to have a full bus to make it a reasonable cost for the day. We would like to have some response from our members. Please call Phil at 459-5054 and leave a message if you are interested.



Bill & June Hughes, Jim & Helen Rousseau, Ted & Marie Prout and Jacqueline Fortin

ARE YOU DEHYDRATED? TAKE THE PINCH TEST

Doctors recommend we aim for eight(8-oz) glasses of water a day, and now there's a simple way to tell if you need more: pinch the skin on the back of your hand, then release it. If it immediately goes back down, congratulations; you're fully hydrated. If it takes a moment, grab a glass of water



Congratulations to Millie Seitz on the official opening of the St. Albert Celebration Garden. Millie initiated the project during the International Year of the Older Person and has seen her dream fulfilled with the official opening on August 18.

Note the new fountain and sculptures when visiting the garden as you walk along the trail across the Sturgeon River from St. Albert City Hall
Great Work Millie!

Upcoming walks

October 6 long weekend - walks in Vermilion Prov Park, Wainwright and Fabyan sponsored by the Wainwright Walkers Volkssport Club
October 20- Stony Plain - Because the winery is closed the start point for the walk will be the Safeway parking lot
October 21 - Black Gold Centre, Leduc
November 3 - St. Albert guided walk at St. Albert Minor Baseball Association clubhouse
December 15 - Christmas Lights walk
Meet at Gateway Village Shopping Centre



Back from the marathon vacation. 43 walking events in 3 states and 2 provinces in 2 weeks.

We started out Friday 31 August and did the **Bashaw & Erskine** walks then camped in Fort McLeod. Saturday we completed **Cardston & Whitefish, Montana** home of the Big Mountain walk. There is some very spectacular scenery to see at the top of this 7000 foot mountain. Here one has the option of climbing 10 km up & riding the gondola down or taking the gondola up and walking 10 km down. Guess which one we chose? The campground we stayed at (Moose Crossing campground) was being the host to some good ole mountain boys, I thought that these people were Hollywood's creation, but I now know that they do indeed exist in the back woods of Montana.

Sunday was **Sandpoint & Farragut State Park, in Athol Idaho** along with **Deer Park, Washington**. Monday saw us in British Columbia and doing **Penticton & Peachland**. Then we visited with Kathleen's parents, Monday night till Wednesday morning. Wednesday saw us doing **Kelowna, Hope & Cultus Lake**. Excellent food at the pub (start point). We stayed in Cultus Lake Provincial campground for 2 nights, a very nice & peaceful area. Thursday was the **2 Chiliwack walks & the 2**

Abbotsford walks. Clayburn Village - the 2nd Abbotsford walk, turned out to be the most scenic walk we did. Mostly in the trees alongside the salmon spawning streams. Bring your camera on this one and enjoy the pristine beauty of the nature walk and listen to the countless birds heralding your passage through their home.

We moved to the most peaceful and remote campsite ever, Hazelmere in Surrey and stayed here for the duration of the trip. Right beside a salmon spawning stream, there were mink, deer, cranes and numerous ducks to greet us upon our return from the days adventures. Friday saw us doing **Crescent beach, North Surrey (Bear Creek) & North Delta (Burns Bog)**. This is the now famous machine eating bog, (a city tractor was swallowed up by the bog a few years ago and has been interned here ever since). This is another beautiful walk taking you through the Delta Nature Reserve. Do not step off the floating boardwalk on the bog, as you may never be seen again.

Saturday saw us doing **Horseshoe Bay, Downtown Vancouver & Stanley Park**. In Stanley Park, I did not think that it was possible to get that many colours of hair all on one head, nor that many piercings all on the same head. Sunday we did the **Fort Langley**

walk, and it was the only regular event that we did in B.C. It involved doing a 0.5 km race to the ferry, then a 9 km fast walk on the other side of the river, then back to the ferry and the 0.5 dash back to the start point. There were no slow walkers here, we had a difficult time keeping up and were no where near the front of the pack. This was a race walk unbeknownst to us out of towners out for a leisurely stroll, or so we thought. After this race there was enough food at the start point to feed a small army. Then we did the **Langley & Tynehead Park** walks at a much slower pace. On the Tynehead Park walk we heard splashing from behind the shrubbery, and upon investigation were privileged to observe about a dozen or so spawning salmon thrashing around in the shallow stream.

Monday was **Vancouver (Kitsilano) , Vancouver (False Creek) & Vancouver (Shaughness)**. Some rather large mansions are on this walk with some beautiful gardens. Tuesday was the **3 Richmond walks** , Wednesday was **Munday Park, Rocky Point & Coquitlam Trans Canada** trail walks. Thursday was **New Westminister, Ladner & Burnaby (Central Park)**. Central Park is the home of litterly thousands of professional begging squirrels, not asking for food handouts, but demanding them, and

loudly chastising those that do not feed them.

We ended up doing all the YRE's on the lower mainland and returned early Friday morning. Saturday we

did the **2 Athabasca walks**

participating in these scenic and historic events, as they are not being held again. Finishing up the day with the **Barrhead YRE**.

Up to this point the vacation was mostly enjoyable.

Sunday morning was a disaster as **Pembina** had not been prewalked and the route maps were drawn from memory. The map issued had 1 bench drawn in as the turning point, we passed 1 bench near the start, as we knew or figured that this was not the turning point. We turned at the 2nd bench, Evelyn found the group scattered & in disarray here and got us back on the right track. As apparently we were supposed to turn at the 3rd bench, but part of the trail in the park was closed with an orange plastic snow fence across it, just past the 2nd bench. Since only 1 bench was drawn in on the map, and the trail was closed down, one could not get to the 3rd bench nor even know of its existence.

When we got to the town, whole blocks were not drawn in, this nice white house was supposed to be a feed store, 2 blocks later we finally found it. Upon the return behind the school, the whole landscape had been changed with construction, new

roads, gravel piles etc, and the map was worse than useless here, there were people everywhere. Sunday afternoon nobody by now trusted the maps, and we all agreed to go as a group so we could see where we ended up. Lo and behold a bridge had been removed, and there was this rather large gap in the road. A rather nasty detour through the brush, hopping a stream and climbing a mud hill to get back on the trail. This 10 km route became a 12 km endurance test. Evelyn did a remarkable job with a definite lack of support, trying to make good a bad situation, with the walk organizers missing. We finished it all off with the **Lake Isle** walk.

43 walking events in 3 states & 2 provinces compiling 438 km. What an experience.

Submitted by Richard Parr



Volkmarchers sporting the T-shirts of the 2002 CVF Convention in Medicine Hat. A real deal at \$10.00 ea

NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL

Advantages - Receive your newsletter much quicker
See the pictures in color
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The newsletter is done using Microsoft Word so anyone having this program will have no problems. If you do not have MS Word then I can save the document as a PDF file and you will need Acrobat Reader in order to view the document. Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from www.adobe.com for free.

I encourage as many as possible to receive the newsletter via email for all the above reasons. It would also save me time as well. To those of you who have already contacted me regarding this, if you have any problems receiving your newsletter please let me know by e-mail (sylfish@home.com) or telephone 458-5299(home) or 460-5531 (work)

Thanks to all of you that have contributed pictures and articles for this newsletter. They are very much appreciated and make my job much easier.
Sylvia

