



TREKKERS' TRAILS

The Newsletter of the St. Albert Trekkers Volkssport Club

September 2005

President's Notes

Even though the weather was cloudy, cool and windy, 74 people took part in the Triathlon and Marathon weekend on July 23 and 24. Special thanks to Ann and Joe Appelmann for hosting the barbecue on July 23. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the check point, registration, setting up and taking down the trail for the Triathlon.

If you have not done so, be sure to walk our new Year-Round Event at Beaumaris Lake (Castledowns YMCA). The scenery around the lake is very pretty.

It was wonderful to see so many Trekkers at the Alberta Centennial Mountain Majesty Walks in the Crowsnest and Waterton

Village areas on September 3rd to 5th. Magnificent scenery, great trails and perfect weather all made for a very enjoyable weekend, and I know everyone had a great time. A lot of effort and hard work go into putting a special event like this together. Hats off to all the organizers; you did a great job. It was truly a memorable weekend.

Coming up: Our Oktoberfest Walk and Bike at Dawson Park on October 1. See you there.

Happy Trails,
Phyllis May, President

Editor's Notes

First off, I want to thank Richard and Kathy Parr for printing the last newsletter in colour and bringing it for everyone to see at the Rousseau Farm walk. Since then I've had a number of people sign up for the electronic edition of the newsletter. I assume it's because the last issue had so many good pictures and they look so much better in colour than on black-and-white printed pages. My thanks also to everyone who contributed the pictures for the last edition—I received many comments about how much interest the photos added to the newsletter, so please keep them coming!

I prefer to get photos by e-mail, but if you'd rather mail them to me (the address is at the end of the newsletter), I'd be happy to scan them into my computer and return them to you.

Gordon Brandly



Member Achievements

Congratulations to the following Trekkers whose achievements were published in the July, August, September 2005 issue of *Volkssport Canada*:

Events

Kathleen Parr	1,350
Phyllis May	600
Charles May	575
Charles May	550
Arnold Lerch	275
Betty Lerch	275
Duane Spurrier	250
Duane Spurrier	225
Dave Luscombe	100
Iris Campbell	75
Iris Campbell	50
Aubrey Robson	50
Joyce Robson	50
David Hall	30
Aubrey Robson	30
Joyce Robson	30

Distance

Kathleen Parr	15,000 km
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Helen Rousseau	14,000 km
Jim Rousseau	14,000 km
Phyllis May	7,000 km
Perry Sokolan	4,000 km
Arnold Lerch	3,500 km
Betty Lerch	3,500 km
Ken Tappay	3,500 km
Duane Spurrier	3,000 km
Peter van Hees	2,500 km
Olga Footz	2,000 km
Iris Campbell	1,000 km
Dave Luscombe	1,000 km
Aubrey Robson	500 km
Joyce Robson	500 km

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New Members

Welcome to the following new members of our club:

Lorna Allen of St. Albert
Diane Dupuis of Morinville
Jacqueline Fortin of Wetaskiwin
Dianne Fuson of Edmonton
Henry Harks of St. Albert
Tracy and Randy Jackson of Edmonton

Linda Kilian of Morinville
Madeline Mann of Edmonton
Marlene McCorrister of St. Albert
John Northcott of Sherwood Park
Cathy Schreiner of Edmonton

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

Appreciations and Congratulations

Check out the latest issue of the CVF Newsletter. Three Trekkers made the front page: Chuck May, Jim Rousseau, and Marie Prout.

Kudos to the following people who did the Marathon on July 24, 2005:

- Mary Coutts
- Wendy Davidson

- Barry Duvall from Esquimalt BC
 - Evelyn Rogers
 - Ron Schneider
- Congratulations!

Special thanks to:

- Grace Newman for the muffins for the Spring Solstice Walk, June 21.
- Chuck May who donated the Timbits and cookies for the Triathlon and Marathon, July 23 and 24.

- Dagmar Leitz for the cookies for the Rainbow Valley walks on August 6.
- Olga Footz for the poppy seed roll and fresh fruit and Pat Sturges for the chocolate chip cookies for the Cooking Lake Blackfoot walks on August 27.
- Pam Luscombe for the peanut butter cookies at the Beaumaris Lake Group YRE walk on Tuesday, September 30.

Sampling the South

Editor's Note: My wife Janet 'volunteered' me for this Newsletter Editor job, so I threatened to make her my co-editor. Luckily for her, I haven't needed that kind of assistance, but perhaps she feels a bit of guilt since she's now submitted this article.

Gordon and I were unable to attend the Alberta Centennial walks this past long weekend due to scheduling difficulties, and, to be honest, the described level of the walks in the calendar was quite daunting. Instead, we decided to do a trip into southern Alberta incorporating several year-round events. We had experiences both good and not so good, and hopefully learned a few things along the way.

We drove to Red Deer on Friday night, planning to do the year-round walk the next morning and then proceeding on to Medicine Hat. However, when we arrived at the Black Knight Inn (the starting point for the year-round walk) no one either at the gift shop or at the main desk claimed to know anything about a walk or a walk box. We had been to Red Deer two weeks earlier to attend a guided walk at Heritage Ranch, so we repeated that walk instead. Although the walk was pleasant, we had

done it before and so unfortunately didn't get any credit for the distance.

In Medicine Hat, our experience was much more pleasant. We did two 11-km walks that started at a Fas Gas station. The walks were very well designed with excellent directions. The surroundings were scenic with an interesting variety of plants, birds and insects. *[I thought all the exotic insect sounds were especially cool. –Gordon]* We even had a young buck deer stop to watch our progress. He must have been used to people in his territory, as he didn't seem at all upset by our presence. To her credit, my dog Ariel behaved like a real professional and didn't react to his presence. As a matter of fact, if Gordon hadn't mentioned that the deer was there I wouldn't have known about it. Now that's a sign of a well-trained Seeing Eye dog! Congratulations to Pauline Mann and her team for setting up such great walks!

After completing the two walks, we drove on to our next destination. Unfortunately, we again experienced difficulties with the Year Round walk in Lethbridge. Locating the start point of the walk was somewhat confusing, and when we arrived we discovered that the small shop hosting the

walk was closed. Since the walk was described as consisting of a loop repeated twice around a lake, we did that and hoped that we had completed the required distance. Again however, without any credit.

I realize that in theory we should be walking for the sake of fitness and enjoyment, but getting credit for doing 42 km would have been nice, and quite an accomplishment for Gordon and me. Needless to say, when we got home we did contact the various walk organizers to let them know about our experiences, both good and not so good. The staff at the Black Knight Inn have now been reminded about the location of the walk box and the information has been put into their staff information book. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem that much can be done to change the location and access to the Lethbridge walk. The shop is scheduled to be closed on Sundays and statutory holidays. This is unfortunate, as these are times when many people are free to walk. We were told that other (possibly better suited) facilities in the area aren't interested in hosting such an event. This makes me wonder what clubs can do to make hosting a Year-Round walk more inviting to the hosting venue. When we thanked the owner of the Fast Gas station in Medicine Hat for being a host, he mentioned that he really appreciated the increased business that having the walks brought in for him. Could something like this perhaps be used as a marketing tool? Another thought: do clubs send out thank-you cards to hosting venues? Another selling point is that the locations hosting our year-rounds do receive some free publicity in the VAA calendar. Maybe some of these points could be further developed in

the future as ways to encourage facilities to host our year-round events.

Okay, enough ranting. What good is a description of a trip without mentioning The Food? The Holiday Inn in Red Deer and the Ramada Limited in Medicine Hat each had good, reasonably balanced continental breakfasts that gave us the energy we needed for our walks on those days. The cost of these meals was included with the room price, so they were the next best thing to free! We were able to buy a good lunch at the Fast Gas in Medicine Hat, including of course some tasty chocolate, and we enjoyed it in a nearby park before our afternoon walk. The highlight of our trip in the food department was an excellent Italian dinner at the Coco Pazzo Italian Café in Lethbridge. The food and service were excellent, but what was most memorable was an outstanding chocolate dessert (yes you read right, chocolate again) and watching pizzas and bread being baked in an open wood-burning oven. Sadly, we had to leave for home the following morning.

So, all in all, our treks in southern Alberta were enjoyable. The weather co-operated and we enjoyed some great walks and food. What did we learn along the way? I suppose the most important thing is this: though the year-round walks can supposedly be done relatively spontaneously, some planning and a few phone calls to the walk contacts would have saved us a deal of trouble. Also, sometimes it's important to just relax, take things in stride and enjoy the fun, fitness, and of course the food, which are what Volkssport is all about.



The Four Days March

Here's an interesting report by Johanna Snoek on the recent trip she and Willem made to Europe:



This year marked our return to the picturesque city of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. This ancient Dutch city hosts an annual walk called *The Four Days March*—the largest walking event in the world. My husband and I began our married life together in Nijmegen, so it was with pleasant memories that we returned to join in the walking fun.

With the help of my brother-in-law we were sponsored by a Dutch health insurance company. This meant that we were provided with a team to walk with, housing, food, medical attention and a nightly massage. Not all the walkers in this event were so lucky. Many camped or stayed with local host families just so they could take part in the event.

2005 marks Nijmegen's 2000th anniversary, so this summer the city was busy with celebrations. *The Four Days March* was being hosted this year for the 89th time. The event began in 1909 as an endurance test for the military with just 306 participants. It has grown throughout the years to become the world's biggest walking sport event with a **limit** of 47 500 people. This year alone 52 000 people signed up, so you can

consider yourself very lucky if you are chosen to participate.

To qualify for the finishing medal you would have to complete one of the following requirements:

- Men between the ages of 19-50 must walk 50 km a day.
- Men 50 to 65: 40 km a day
- Men over 65: 30 km a day
- Women between 16–60: 40 km a day
- Women over the hill: 30 km a day

The military have additional weight and distance requirements.

The medal you earn at the completion of the four days of walking is an officially recognized Dutch medal. Military men are permitted to wear it on their uniforms both in the Netherlands and in a number of other countries. The Vierdaagsekruis (Four Days Cross) is recognized and revered by the Dutch people.

Each of the four days start and finish in the same location, but the trails are like a cloverleaf; every day a different direction in and around the city. Each day began with a strict start time for the walkers: the 50 km began at 3:30 AM, 40 km at 5:30 AM, and 30 km at 7:30 AM. We started at 7:55 AM, which was lucky for us because it took a while before we could pass the starting gate where they scanned our barcode cards.

Over the four days it was fantastic to see in the far distance all the slowly moving heads of the thousands of people in front of us. It was also amazing to see how every neighbouring town or village participated with arches of flowers, welcome signs, flags, music bands and the whole village population standing on the sidewalk. It is

difficult to describe the experience—whole villages, including mayors, dignitaries, seniors in wheelchairs, and even children in hospital beds—all turned out cheering and clapping.

Walking 30 km a day is difficult enough, but at a much slower pace than normal it is even more so. This was especially true where the old roads narrowed or where the 30-, 40-, and 50-km trails merged. A vivid memory we will always have of walking on the old European streets was the half hour it took to pass through two blocks of old Nijmegen, the area of nightlife for the gay society, with pubs, bars and restaurants. The sidewalks there were full of people, pressed against the walls, dressed in the most crazy and hilarious costumes having a great party with lots of loud music. They danced, cheered and clapped and in every hand you saw a glass of beer or two.

The end of the walking event was the most spectacular. During *The Four Days March* the last 5 km of street is renamed “Via Gladiola.” An estimated 100 000 people sit on balconies and roofs to cheer and clap, or line the street to hand each walker some gladiolas. In addition to all the music from

the sidewalks, 25 music bands walk along at the end.

The Four Days Walk is not for the faint of heart—it’s a truly strenuous experience. At last, though, a childhood dream has come true for me.

Johanna Snoek



A New YRE

Here’s the scoop on the club’s newest Year-Round Event at Beaumaris Lake:

Edmonton, AB YRE - Walk
July 15, 2005 – December 31, 2005

SPONSOR St. Albert Trekkers Volkssport Club
START POINT Castle Downs YMCA Family Community Centre, 11510 153 Avenue, Edmonton
DISTANCE 10 km
TRAIL The trail goes around a beautiful lake and through some residential areas.

RATING 1A
AWARD IVV Credit only.
REGISTRATION Dawn to dusk.
MISC Washrooms are available inside the YMCA. Parking is available.
DIRECTIONS From Edmonton: Take Yellowhead Trail, then north on 127 Street and east on 153 Avenue.
From St. Albert: Take 127 Street south, then east on 153 Avenue.
CONTACT Dave Luscombe
(780) 475-7211
luscombe@telusplanet.net

Seen at the CVF Convention

And now for some pictures from the Canadian Volkssport Federation convention in Quebec City on May 27 to 29, 2005:



Trekkers at the convention: Helen and Jim Rousseau, Chuck and Phyllis May, Arnie and Betty Lerch, Vicki Robinson, and Phil and Pat Sturges.



Some more conventionneers: Marie Prout, Marilyn Keller, Aubrey and Joyce Robson, Flo Miller, Olga Footz, and Phyllis Wright.



Whale Watching on the St. Lawrence River [I hope this was taken *after* a walk!]

Newsletter Info

Submissions

If you have any articles, walking adventures, pictures, notices, or anything else you'd like to see in this newsletter, please submit them for future issues. I'd prefer to have your submission e-mailed to:

StAlbertTrekks@shaw.ca

...but you are also welcome to mail your submission to me at:

Gordon Brandly
12147 51 Street NW
Edmonton AB T5W 3G8

The Newsletter in Electronic Form

The e-mail version of this newsletter has several advantages for both you and the

club: You get the newsletter faster, you get to see the pictures in colour, and you help save the club some printing and postage costs. If you'd like to receive your newsletter by e-mail in PDF or plain text format, just send a message to the e-mail address above and tell me which format you prefer.

Thanks for your submissions, and see you all on the trails!

