



# TREKKERS' TRAILS

The Newsletter of the St. Albert Trekkers Volkssport Club

April 2010

## President's Notes

### CVF Conference

Sydney Nova Scotia will be host to the annual Canadian Volkssport Conference the last week-end of May. This great event usually has between 200 and 400 attendees from almost every province in Canada. For those of you have never been to one, try it - I am sure you would have a good time. There will of course be some great walks, a banquet, a meeting should you choose to attend, and lots of visiting and eating with folks from across the country and the USA.

At the current time a conference location has not been set for 2011. If no club from across the nation comes forward, then the tentative plan is to start holding the conferences every second year like they do in the USA. Ottawa has already offered to host the 2012 conference in Ottawa.

### USA Conference

Speaking of the USA, their next conference is June 18 - 26, 2011 in Des Moines Iowa. Here is an excerpt from the conference web site:

*The Greater Des Moines Volkssport Association would like to invite you to the 2011 American Volkssport Convention in Des Moines, Iowa. We are very excited about hosting the 2011 Convention and showcasing all the amazing things Iowa has to offer. We are working hard to provide you with a variety of walks and convention events that will be interesting, but most of all FUN! We want you to leave Iowa with that "What a great time I had!" feeling. We are looking forward to seeing you in June, 2011!*

A number of us Trekkers were talking the other day and maybe should try to get a big group of us to all head on down there and do some great walking in Des Moines and meet some fellow USA Volkssport-

ers. Talk this idea up while out on the trails and check out the web site:

[http://www.ava.org/clubs/ava2011convention/\\_help/2011%20Brochure%20for%20Volkssport.pdf](http://www.ava.org/clubs/ava2011convention/_help/2011%20Brochure%20for%20Volkssport.pdf).

Then who knows, maybe 50 of us will drive on down there in 2011!

### Conference in Turkey

Then for those who love to travel and also love walking, why not consider the world Volkssport Conference in Turkey scheduled for October 19 - 23, 2011? Here are some words from the conference chair:

*We are very excited for the IVV Olympiad to be held in 2011 in Turkey and waiting to host all of you in Antalya with great enthusiasm. The time is running fast and our hard work will continue till the end of the 2011 Olympiad to serve you in the best way providing you a pleasant organization in Antalya, Turkey.*

*We all know that you are wishing to make your bookings as soon as possible. We are very pleased to announce that our routes are determined and the small maps will be available on our web site [www.ivvturkey.org](http://www.ivvturkey.org) very soon.*

You might want to consider forming a group and going to this great event.

### Alberta Walks

Then closer to home we are so lucky to have approximately 50 self-guided all year round walks all over the province. So if you like driving, line up a few friends and walk Medicine Hat or Camrose or Jasper or Banff or beautiful Waterton. The Alberta calendar does an excellent job of outlining these walks and how to find the start point. If you have not tried one yet and feel nervous about doing so, contact me and I will walk with you on a few to get you started. Then you might be hooked - like me!!

*David Hall, President*

## New Members

Please welcome the following new members of our club:

Jim & Jane Dyck, St. Albert  
Diane Webber, Red Deer

Welcome back:

Stephen Hawker, Edmonton  
Serge & Pearl Lavallee, Morinville

May they find **“Fun, Fitness & Friendship”** on the trails!

## Member Achievements

Congratulations to the following Trekkers whose achievements were published in the April May June 2010 issues of *Volkssport Canada*:

### Events

Arianna Aubichon	10
Gailene Shaw	50
Henrietta Moes	75
Lou Arsenaault	225
Iris Campbell	575
Donna Channen	800

### Distance

Gailene Shaw	500 km
Sara McEwen	3,000 km
Lou Arsenaault	3,500 km
Iris Campbell	9,000 km
Donna Channen	10,000 km

Want to keep up with all the Volkssporting news in Canada? Why not subscribe to Volkssport Canada? Only \$15.00 a year will get you four jam-packed issues full of all the latest adventures in Canada’s Volkssporting world. Send a cheque or money order to:

Canadian Volkssport Federation  
PO Box 2668, Station “D”,  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5W7

## Awards Winners



*Kathy Parr presenting Lou Arsenaault and Sara McEwan with their Walk Alberta Certificates.*

## 2010 – 2011 Executive Committee

At our March 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting we elected a new member and welcomed back some familiar ones:

President                      David Hall  
Past President                Dave Luscombe

1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Vacant
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Joe Sombach
Secretary	Kathy Parr
Trail Master –Marking	Vacant
Trail Master – Prewalk	Peter & Sonja Van Bostelen

Treasurer	Peter Van Bostelen
Membership	Sonja Van Bostelen
Historians	David & Vicki Robinson
Publicity	Lorna Allen
Social Convenors	Dagmar Leitz & Rose Ramsum
Care & Concern	Helen Rosseau
Newsletter	Joan Redman

Many thanks to our outgoing committee members Duane Spurrier and Janet Brandly for their contribution of ideas and time in making our club a suc-

success. And to Sara McEwen—for the countless hours you devoted as our Trailmaster—mapping and marking trails to meet CVF regulations, while at the same time ensuring our members enjoyed safe and interesting walks. We are truly grateful.

**Trail Blazer Marking:** The Trekkers still have this position open. If you are up for a challenge and would love to learn how to be our premier marker let us know! It is a very rewarding job.

## Upcoming Events

**HORSIN' Around at Horse Creek Ranch - Celebrating 25 Years of Volkssporting – June 25 – 27, 2010**

*Important Notice:* April 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for ordering Anniversary Golf Shirts at a reduced price and for bus/accommodation reservations is fast approaching. See pages 22 and 1 of the Event Calendar for details and registration form. To help the Barrhead club facilitate food preparation, meal requirements are requested by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

- **World Walking Day**, May 8<sup>th</sup> in St. Albert;
- **National Walking Day** being celebrated in Sherwood Park May 22<sup>nd</sup>;
- Tuesday evening **River and Ravine Program** which kicks off May 11<sup>th</sup> with a walk at the Clifford E. Lee Bird Sanctuary and continues every Tuesday until August 24<sup>th</sup>
- AND make sure to mark your calendar for the June 12<sup>th</sup> Morinville and Cardiff walks including the famous **Double Toonie Lunch**.

Our **spring walking season** is ready to take off. Check your calendars for details of the many upcoming events:

## Trekker Activities

### Potluck and Annual Meeting – March 20th



*48 walked the streets and trails of St. Albert building their appetites for another delicious potluck dinner, followed by the annual general meeting.*

The potluck included a number of interesting and delicious salads. By popular request Joe has graciously shared his recipe:

## Pesto Pasta Salad with White Beans, Cherry Tomatoes and Artichoke Hearts

8 ounces (240 g) pasta of your choice (shells or spiral are ideal)

¾ cup of pesto, home made or store bought

8 ounces (240 g) cherry tomatoes cut in half

1 can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained  
(substituted red kidney beans)

1 cup jarred quartered artichoke hearts

1/3 cup pine nuts

Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling water, according to package directions. Drain and refresh under cold water. Toss pasta with the pesto, cherry tomatoes, beans, pine nuts and artichoke hearts until well combined. (Serves 4)

Variation: Replace the cannellini beans with 1 cup of shredded cooked chicken breast and add sliced black olives.

Reprinted from: *The Mediterrasian Way*, 2007 by Ric Watson & Trudy Thelande

### Beaumont Walk – April 17th



31 came for our first *warm* walk of the season.



Henry says it was **HOT!**



Dave did his best to convince us this was a friendly Beaumont welcome. Looks like a lot of paper work to me!

### Trekker Travels



## Iceland

Peter & Sonja Van Bostelen

Iceland held a fascination for us for several years and we had added a visit to this country to our list of things to do. During May 2009, Icelandair was offering some pretty good deals on flights from Toronto to any destination in Europe with a stop-over in Reykjavik. This was our chance to combine a visit to our son and his wife in Brantford, a trip to Iceland and then continue on to the United Kingdom and our Fife Coastal walk that we had planned with the Robinsons (see David's account in the January 2010 edition of *Trekker's News*).

We purchased a self guided tour package that included B&B's and car rental. And so we spent 9 days and 8 nights in the south-eastern part of Iceland.

Iceland is known as the country of fire and ice. The eastern part of Iceland sits on the European tectonic plate while the western part sits on the North American tectonic plate. These two plates are grinding together and pulling apart resulting in lots of volcanic activity, geysers and hot springs. The northern part of Iceland just touches the Arctic Circle. Yet its climate is very moderate because the warm Gulf Stream flows around it which also gives rise to a lot of precipitation. Hence there are numerous glaciers on the Island with Vatnajokull, located in the southeast, being the largest icecap in Europe. And it is huge!

Iceland has a population of about 300,000, of which 150,000 live in Reykjavik, the capital. Highway 1 is circle route around the island that starts and ends in the capital. This route is just under 1200 km which gives you a feeling of the size of the island. Iceland has its own language which is very close to the original Viking language. However, nearly everyone also speaks English so communication is not an issue.

It is a 5 hour flight from Toronto to Keflavik across 4 time zones. We left Toronto about 10 PM and arrived in Keflavik about 6:30 AM on May 28. We found our bus which took us to Reykjavik. The terrain was all black volcanic rock with virtually no vegetation. It turned green in Reykjavik with lots of grass and a few trees. The older part of the city is very European with narrow streets while the more modern part has freeways and wide streets. We walked through the city taking in the huge Lutheran Cathedral, built in the 1970s. We witnessed the government in session at the House of Parliament. Iceland has the oldest parliament in the world, dating back to 930 AD. We went swimming in one of the many public outdoor swimming pools dotting the city. The pools are open year round and are heated with naturally occurring hot water.

We picked up our rental car and left the city heading east along the coast. Our first tourist stop was at Seljalandsfoss, one of many waterfalls along the route. This one had a large bowl behind it and we could actually walk behind the falling water. Our next stop was Skogafoss, a much larger waterfall. 385 steps took you to the top of the falls and the plateau from which it fell.



Seljalandsfoss



Skogafoss

We left the main route at Reyiskverfi and walked to the seashore. It was a very windy day and huge breakers crashed onto the shore. The beach was beautiful black volcanic sand. Fantastically shaped columnar rocks stood out in the ocean. One great

big rock jutting out into the ocean had a large hole in it, reportedly large enough to sail a sizeable vessel through. Onshore there were hexagonal basalt spires. This was a truly enchanting place.



Up to this point, the countryside seemed quite fertile and we saw lots of farms with numerous sheep. The grass was lush and green and we saw numerous blooming flowers along the streams and blooming Alaskan lupines which had been imported to stabilize the soil. Interestingly, the spring was further advanced here than it was in St. Albert. Past Vik, the landscape changed. There were many kilometres of black rock supporting little vegetation and then kilometres of rounded rocks covered with moss, quite desolate. We arrived at our first destination, Kirkjabaejorklauster, where the terrain was again fertile. We made our way to Gierland just 3 km away, which is a working farm. This also had a hotel, several cabins and a first class eating establishment. The countryside was really pretty and we hiked along the rivers and falls in the area. One set of twin falls, Systrafoss, looked like a kamikaze water slide.

Iceland does not have any wildlife like rodents, deer, coyotes, or anything of the like. Apparently, a few Arctic fox reside on the island but these are few and far between. Hence it is a haven for birds. Every conceivable variety of duck, gull, shorebird, songbirds and loons reside and thrive here because there are very few predators to bother them.

The next day we headed out to Skaftafell National Park. We started to see Vatnajokull, the huge icecap and followed at the foot of this for 70 - 80 km. The highway is at the foot of the mountains and tongues of the glacier come down to road level, which is at sea level. There are numerous river crossings and near the National Park entrance, there is a 1 km long one-lane bridge with periodic pullouts where you can wait for oncoming traffic. There had been a volcanic eruption in 1996 under the northwest part of the icecap. This had melted the ice forming a lake under the icecap which eventually resulted in a huge mass of water rushing out from under the icecap destroying a large part of the highway and a number of bridges. We spent a fair bit of time hiking through the park, enjoying the waterfalls and

marvelling at the ice flowing from various directions forming a river of ice. Currently, a volcanic eruption under a tongue of the icecap is causing a lot of grief for air travelers to Europe.

We continued on to Jokulsarlon, a glacial lake which was loaded with icebergs. The lake flows into the ocean through a stream less than 1 km long. All sorts of birds and seals were in the lake and stream and some large chunks of ice with fantastic shapes were stranded on the beach.



We returned to Gierland for another night and then started back toward Reykjavik. Throughout Iceland there are numerous little church buildings, mostly located in farmyards. Many are no longer in use. We stopped at a pretty little one at Vik and listened to the organist preparing for a service to be held late in the afternoon. We then moved on to Dyrholaey. The road was closed so we wandered off around the road block and started to walk down the road towards the beach. We hadn't gotten very far when a person in a small car came up behind us and demanded in Icelandic, if we couldn't read signs. We answered in English and then he repeated himself in English. We pleaded ignorance and when he found out we were Canadians he relented and invited us to come into the car with him. The area we were in was a bird preserve and the road was blocked to prevent traffic so that the nesting birds would not be disturbed. There had been much vandalism in the area necessitating this move. Well we got a guided tour from this person who was a part time warden. He showed us the eider duck nests, pointed out the plentiful Arctic terns who no longer nested here because their nests had been raided by the locals. We got to the seashore and noted the numerous gull nests and Fulmer nests on very narrow crags in the cliff. We saw oyster catcher chicks, the adults have orange legs and beaks but the

chicks are brown and completely camouflaged. He pointed out a cave in a cliff which formed a natural amphitheatre which had been used as a meeting hall by the local council up until 1900! This unscheduled and unauthorized guided tour was one of the highlights of our trip.



We moved on from there and passed mount Helka, an active volcano which erupts every ten years or so. Here we witnessed an Icelandic pony roundup. The ponies were herded along the ditch by mounted "cowboys". We made our way past a large modern hydro installation and arrived at Fludir, a prosperous and rather busy little place. We again stayed at a B&B on a working farm, one which had a small dairy herd and some pigs and a field full of rhubarb which was ready for picking (May 31!). There were lots of greenhouses in this area.



The next day we left for Geysir. This is a fabled place where Strokkur, a geyser erupted every ten minutes or so, shooting hot water some 30 to 40 feet into the air. There were bubbling mud pots and deep hot pools. Near here was Gollfoss, an impressive waterfall that looked like a combination of Niagara and the Hell's Gate.



We made our way to Thingviller National Park. This park straddles the two tectonic plates. The two plates are moving away from each other at a measurable rate of 2 cm/year, pulling Iceland apart.



The North American Ridge forms a natural amphitheatre. The Icelandic Vikings first met here in 930 AD to shape the government for the region. The parliament decided for Christianity at this place in 1000 AD and this anniversary was celebrated here in 2000. When Germany invaded Denmark in 1940, the Icelanders took advantage of the event and declared independence on 17 June 1944 at this place. The king of Denmark was under house arrest but he managed to send off a telegram of congratulations to the Icelanders. The site was used again in 1994 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.

We returned to our B&B via Skalholt. Skalholt was the ecclesiastical and cultural center of Iceland from 1056 to 1875. The Icelandic Bishop moved to Reykjavik then. In the meantime, the church suffered many mishaps burning down several times. Archaeological digs unearthed many interesting things which are housed in the cellar of the current church building. The most interesting piece was Bishop Pall Jonsson's sarcophagus, a stone casket carved out of the local volcanic rock. The fellow had died in 1211.



*Skalholt*

The next day was going to be a travel day. We headed west via Thingviller park stopping at a series of three volcanic craters. The largest one was readily accessible and we climbed to the rim. The crater was a perfect oval and was filled with water. The terrain was very rugged and picturesque. We drove beside Iceland's largest lake. Reforestation had taken place along here. We passed over a ridge to Hvalfjordur, a fiord on the coast, making our way around this and went to Reykholt. There was a large church here in a very pretty community with trees and lawns; a very lovely town with a population of about 50 people. We stopped by Dieldartunga, reputedly the world's largest hot spring, delivering 180 l/sec of boiling hot water. This water is harnessed and piped to several coastal towns for heating. Indeed all of Iceland's heating requirements are supplied by geothermal energy.

We continued our journey to a massive lava flow field which dates back to about 800 AD. At Hraunfossur, water flowed from underneath the lava for a distance of more than 1 km. Stopped at Barnafoss which translates into Children's Falls. Some 900 years ago, two children wandered away from home to the natural bridge that spanned the falls. They tragically fell into the falls and drowned. The mother was so stricken that she ordered the natural arch to be destroyed so that the same tragedy would not occur again. We made our way across a high and dry area, rather reminiscent of the Kamloops region, and then over a far higher region passing through some old snow patches and down to Hvammsfjorour, another fiord. We continued along the seacoast to Stykhisolmur, a coastal fishing town of maybe 500 people and our next B&B. Stykhisolmur sports a very impressive large church building and a large hospital. We walked about the town, around the harbour and climbed up

the hill to the light house and watched the fishing fleet come home.

The next day we explored the Snaefellsnes peninsula, described as a volcanic museum. There are a number of settlements on the west shore with much spectacular scenery. Grundarfjordur was a particularly beautiful community, very clean and neatly laid out. There were cliffs of volcanic rock right alongside the highway with nesting gulls occupying every little ledge. The famous Snaefellsjokull glacier is at the end of the peninsula. This glacier is on an active volcano and was the starting point for Jules Verne's novel, "Journey to the Center of the Earth". There are fantastic rock shapes along the sea shore and thousands of birds nest among the rocks. The east coast of the peninsula is barren with virtually no settlements, so we crossed over back to the west side over a high ridge and came down on 10 - 12% grades. We returned to Stykhisolmur, swam in their lovely outdoor pool and then attended the graduation exercises for the local high school held in the impressive church building.

It was time to return to Reykjavik. We passed through more lava flows, saw swans with 4 cygnets strolling near the road. We stopped at Borgarnes, a sizeable town and strolled along its streets and around the harbour. We decided that we would take the shortcut to Reykjavik by travelling through a 6 km tunnel under Hvalfjorour. The tunnel is an impressive bit of engineering, as it goes down very deep. The initial entry is an 8% grade. The tunnel cuts off 60 km of coastal driving. We returned to our original B&B for our last night in Iceland.

We managed to get an IVV stamp, meeting up with Jona Hildur who works for the Icelandic Sports Federation.

On our way to the airport, we stopped at the famous Blue Lagoon. Dropped off our rental at the airport, spent some time in the VIP lounge, (apparently we were flying "comfort class" so this was an extra perk) and finally boarded the plane for a short 2 hour flight to London. We said farewell to Iceland, a truly unique and fascinating place.

## Newsletter Info

### Submissions

Many thanks to those who contributed articles and pictures for the April newsletter.

The next newsletter is scheduled for July. Your assistance in making our newsletter interesting would be greatly appreciated. I would love to receive photos or stories of your walking adventures or any other news items you wish to share with others. Preferably, forward your submission/ideas by e-mail to: [trekkernews@hotmail.com](mailto:trekkernews@hotmail.com). Or, if you prefer, approach me at a walk or give me a call at 780-433-0282.

I look forward to receiving your input. See you on the trails!

*Joan Redman, Editor*