

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

The 2016 ultra racing calendar is filled with lots of challenging events for walkers. Some of the key dates are shown below. In addition, the AURA calendar shows quite a few additional Australian ultra events that may suit serious ultra walkers – check it out at <http://www.aura.asn.au/events.html>. I am pleased to see the number of 24H Track ultras on the Australian calendar growing.

Sept 17-18, 2016	Roubaix 28 Hours Walk	Roubaix, FRA
Sept 24-25, 2016	2016 USA Centurions 24H Qualifier Enter at https://raceroster.com/events/2016/7132/not-just-a-walk-in-the-park See also https://www.facebook.com/NotJustAWalkInThePark/?fref=ts	Owega, NY
Oct 1-2, 2016	New Zealand Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship 2016 New Zealand Centurions 24H Qualifier See http://nz.srichinmoyraces.org/races/auck/24hr	Auckland, NZ
22-3 Oct, 2016	Inaugural African Centurion 24 Hour Walk See http://www.africacenturion.com/ .	Robben Island, South Africa

With the Australian and Continental and English qualifiers done and dusted for this year, we have 3 centurion qualifiers remaining. Exciting stuff!

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OUT AND ABOUT

On the weekend of 19-21 August, **Rudy Schoors (C55)** and **Caroline Mestdagh (C56)** walked the second edition of the walk 'Through Flanders Fields'. I reported on their participation in the inaugural edition in 2014. The walk, 100 km in duration, covers much of the significant ground over which the First World War was fought, and 3 editions are planned in total (2014, 2016 and 2018). It's not a race but any 100km walk is still a significant feat. Rudy tells me that this time around was much better than two years ago and they are looking forward to the last edition in 2018. Wow, the 2018 edition might be one to bookmark as it is going to be a truly significant walk.

The amazing **Sandra Brown (C36)** has been busy this month with two further 100 mile+ walks, first in the English Centurions annual qualifier (21:10:06) and then in the 24 Heures de Wadelincourt (175.101km). There seems no stopping this amazing lady!

My wife Lois and I are only just returned from a month travelling in Peru and Brazil, culminating with 10 days in Rio at the 2016 Olympics. Of course, we did have a vested interest with our son Chris competing in the 50km racewalk as part of the Australian team. We were trackside for all 3 racewalk events and they were all exciting spectacles, but the 50km was the pick of the walks for drama and changing fortunes. Held on perhaps the hottest morning of the Games and on a course which lacked any shade, it was a torrid affair with the walkers giving it their all. One of Lois's work colleagues, who has never watched a walking event before, stayed up on the Friday night to see the start of the race and was so taken in by it that he watched the whole event, eventually getting to bed in the early hours of the morning. What better advertising could we want for our sport! As for Chris, he walked a superb race, finishing 10th out of the 80 participants (his best ever finish) and recording a 53 sec PB time of 3:48:40. It was his third Olympics and definitely his best.



Left: in the village with Chris in Rio



Right: Chris in action in the Olympic 50km

2016 SWEDISH FOTRALLY, SWEDEN, FROM THURSDAY 30 JULY FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES!

The Long Walk is a novel by Stephen King, published under the pseudonym Richard Bachman in 1979. It was collected in 1985 in the hardcover omnibus *The Bachman Books*, and has seen several reprints since. Set in a dystopian present, the plot revolves around the contestants of a gruelling walking contest, held annually by a totalitarian version of the United States of America. In 2000, the American Library Association listed *The Long Walk* as one of the 100 best books for teenage readers published between 1966 and 2000. According to Stephen King, it is the first novel he wrote, begun eight years before his novel *Carrie* was published in 1974, when he was a freshman at the University of Maine in 1966–1967. It's a ripper yarn that I first read many years ago and which I still have on my bookshelf. Of course, in the book, once you dropped behind, you were shot. Luckily that does not happen with Fotrally – you are simply out of the race but live to fight again another day!

So, just how far can a person go before he/she can go no further? Well, in 2009, Pontus Kylberg (pontus.kylberg@fotrally.se) decided to put the concept to the test and organised what is perhaps the ultimate ultra challenge. The walkers walk day and night, without rest until there is only one man left standing. Around 300-400 people start but only a few get beyond the 24 hour mark. From then on, it's a brutal war of attrition as, one by one, they fall by the wayside. All contestants walk together as a group at a speed of 5km/h. In the front there is a leading vehicle which the contestants may not pass and in the back there is a portable toilet which the contestants may not be passed by. Each contestant gets 25 minutes per 24 hours for toilet breaks (all the contestants are timed). You must carry what you need, with support zones only once every 6 hours where you can supplement drinking water and food stocks. But the race itself never stops, even for such refreshment points. You must get going before the rear vehicle passes. There is also a national team competition with Swedish and Norwegian walkers normally putting teams in.

Wow! What a concept. The 2014 event was fought out between Swedish walkers **Silvio Cannavá** and Lena Jensen. Lena eventually had to call it quits after 55 hours of walking, leaving Silvio as the last man standing. In fact, Swedish walkers filled the first 25 places last year. Then the 2015 staging really upped the ante on what was possible with winner **Fredrik Forsström** walking for an amazing **87 hours and 45 minutes**, just over 32 hours above the previous record. Jonas Davidsson took second place in the same time (but obviously could no longer continue) while Silvio Cannavá, Pia Rosvall, PerOla Axelsson and Niklas Grebäck also shattered the 2014 record of 55 hours. For 44 year old Forsström, it was his 4th Fotrally – his previous placings had been 20th (2012 24:20), 3rd (2013 33:26) and 5th (2014 48:18). 5km/hr for some 88 hours comes out at around 440km of continuous walking.

The improvement in the event can be traced with the winning times from the 7 annual stagings held up till and including last year.

Year	Name	Location	Time (hh:mm)
2009	Thomas Gjutarenäfve	Tullinge, Sweden	9:45
2010	Maria Thomsen	Stockholm, Sweden	29:58

2011	Jonas Davidsson	Hägersten, Sweden	33:21
2012	Jonas Davidsson	Hägersten, Sweden	50:40
2013	Silvio Cannavá	Stockholm, Sweden	48:05
2014	Silvio Cannavá	Stockholm, Sweden	55:00
2015	Fredrik Forsström	Huddinge, Sweden	87:45

And what do you get for your efforts – the Fotrally medal – bronze for more than 12 hours, silver for more than 24 hours and gold for more than 48 hours of walking.



So the big question is – how did they go this year? The race started with 122 competitors in the Stockholm suburb of Gärdet and then went on a huge lap around Lake Mälaren, taking in as many cities as possible before returning to the starting point at the end of 3 days, ready to go into a second lap if required. The event website (<http://www.fotrally.se/>) lists the finishers in order – below are those 30 tough nuts who walked for 24 hours or more. By 30 hours, the field was down to 9, by 33 hours it was down to 5. by 38 hours it was down to 4 and then the mind games really started! The final faceoff came down to **Robert Johsson** and **PerOla Axelsson** but it was Jonsson who could not go on at the 72 hour, 12 minute mark, thus handing victory to Axelsson – total distance 361km! Obviously Axelsson could have gone on but he called it quits at that stage, content with being the last person standing. It was Axelsson's sixth attempt and gave him his first victory after 5th, 4th, 3rd and 2nd placings in previous years.

1.	PerOla Axelsson	Bandhagen	Sweden	72 hours 12 min
2.	Robert Jonsson	Falun	Sweden	72 hours 12 min
3.	Fredrik Holst	Stockholm	Sweden	55 hours 30 min
4.	Björn Ohlsson	Lidingö	Sweden	42 hours 26 min
5.	Daniel Vesterhav	Eskilstuna	Sweden	37 hours 50 min
6.	Martina Kulén (F)	Umeå	Sweden	32 hours 21 min
7.	Beatrice Lenkert (F)	Nacka	Sweden	31 hours 36 min
8.	Gerhard Fahlqvist	Malmö	Sweden	31 hours 31 min
9.	Tomas Sjölander	Bandhagen	Sweden	30 hours 57 min
10.	Lars Hagstedt	Örebro	Sweden	28 hours 45 min
11.	Anders Jungefors	Stockholm	Sweden	28 hours 23 min
12.	Anders Ganslandt	Klagstorp	Sweden	28 hours 11 min
13.	Jenny Lindberg (F)	Hägersten	Sweden	26 hours 00 min
14.	Ludvig Schlyter	Stockholm	Sweden	25 hours 46 min
15.	Fredrik Lindqvist	Åkersberga	Sweden	25 hours 31 min
16.	Olof Modin	Stockholm	Sweden	25 hours 24 min
17.	Tommy Swärdh	Lugnvik	Sweden	25 hours 08 min
18.	Stephen Claw	Tullinge	England	25 hours 00 min
19.	Richard Kindroth	Stockholm	Sweden	24 hours 27 min
20.	Mohamed AbuBaker	Linköping	Sweden	24 hours 24 min
21.	Petter Möllerström	Solna	Sweden	24 hours 24 min
22.	Patrik Thysell	Eskilstuna	Sweden	24 hours 24 min
23.	Marcus Edström	Enskede	Sweden	24 hours 20 min
24.	Noomi Grimstad	Skellefteå	Sweden	24 hours 20 min
25.	Ingrid Lindeborg(F)	Älvsjö	Sweden	24 hours 07 min
26.	Niklas Skagerman	Stockholm	Sweden	24 hours 03 min

27. Helen Sandeberg (F)	Johanneshov	Sweden	24 hours 00 min
28. Stefan Edström	Järfälla	Sweden	24 hours 00 min
29. Linda Nordmark (F)	Järfälla	Sweden	24 hours 00 min
30. Peter Skoglund	Basel	Sweden	24 hours 00 min

The moment when Axelsson learns he has won is priceless – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0sYGTg3oD8&feature=share>. And why wouldn't you react like that after 3 days of continuous walking.



Left: The final two – Axelsson and Jonsson
Right: Placegetters Robert Jonsson, PerOla Axelsson and Fredrik Holst

105TH ENGLISH CENTURIONS 100 MILE QUALIFIER, REDCAR, TEESIDE, 7-8 AUGUST 2016

The annual English Centurions qualifying walk and National 100 Miles Championships were held on the weekend of 7-8 August in Redcar in the north of Yorkshire. Wins went to Dutch walker **Frank Van Der Gulik** (20:30:56) and Surrey's **Sandra Brown** (21:10:06) who was only a few minutes behind her 2015 time. Sandra, now aged 67, continues to amaze with her performances. Second placed **Colin Vesty** was the first of the new Centurions (C1167) and won the accompanying RWA 100km championship. Overall, 10 walkers completed the full 100 miles in warm and trying conditions. Of these 10, 6 were first timers and are now awarded badges C1167-C1172.

Special mention to USA walker **Rob Robertson** who added the UK Centurion badge to his Australian badge earned earlier this year (and his USA badge earned in 2015) – and to cap it off, he walked a PB time of 22:19:37. As usual Rob has produced his own race report blog and it's a beauty – <http://www.walk100miles24hours.com/2016/08/08/105th-british-centurion-qualifier/>.

Finally well done to Dave Jones and the organising team – this sort of long timeframe event is amongst the hardest to organise.

Full results and comprehensive race report at <http://www.centurions1911.org.uk/2016-redcar-100-miles.html>. Photos at https://www.facebook.com/mike.palmer.7186/media_set?set=a.10153597042671755.1073742044.626631754&type=3

100 Miles Walk		Age	Club	Time	Dist	Cent No
1.	Frank Van Der Gulik	M	38 s.v. De LAT	20:30:56	100	C1022
2.	Colin Vesty	M	51 Leicester WC	20:39:44	100	C1167 *
3.	Jimmy Millard	M	56 R. W. V.	21:02:25	100	C1168 *
4.	Sandra Brown	F	67 Surrey Walking Club	21:10:06	100	C735
5.	Kevin Marshall	M	56 Ilford AC	22:02:15	100	C1001
6.	Rob Robertson	M	53 USA	22:19:37	100	C1169 *
7.	John Borgars	M	70 Loughton AC	22:31:52	100	C1170 *
8.	Martin Fisher	M	53 Yorkshire Race Walking Club	23:10:31	100	C788
9.	Kim Reed	F	52 Tring RC	23:25:11	100	C1171 *

10.	Gino Masto	M	52	WT Beveren	23:46:53	100	C1172 *
11.	Richard Kok	M	46	unattached	21:12:42	82	
12.	Jannie Bos	F	61	s.v. De LAT	18:11:30	78	
13.	Frans Leijters	M	40	R. W. V.	21:40:47	78	
14.	Sandra Van De Wyngaert	F	31	Wandelclub al Kontent	18:18:32	76	
15.	Dale Farquhar	M	36	Manx Harriers	16:26:25	72	
16.	Richard Brown	M	69	Surrey Walking Club	14:21:34	66	
17.	Mickey Campaniello	M	63	unattached	14:25:55	62	
18.	Richard McChesney	M	48	Hutt Valley Harriers	21:54:28	62	
19.	Jack Bertrums	M	52	R. W. V.	11:52:29	56	
20.	Miles Wilson	M	43	unattached	12:11:32	56	
21.	Ap Van Gelderen	M	57	CWSV Prinses Marijke	13:02:35	56	
22.	Albert Bos	M	69	unattached	12:47:42	54	
23.	Sarah Lightman	F	46	Leicester WC	11:56:37	52	
24.	Adrian Walker	M	53	Settle Harriers	12:31:10	52	
25.	George Smolinski	M	64	Leicester WC	12:00:00	50	
26.	Edmund Shillabeer	M	77	Ilford AC	9:14:07	40	
27.	Roy Gunnett	M	69	Lancashire Walking Club	7:08:52	32	
28.	Christopher Flint	M	71	Surrey Walking Club	8:27:42	32	
29.	Suzanne Beardsmore	F	45	Aldershot, Farnham & District	8:30:45	32	
30.	Graham Jackson	M	47	York CIU Race Walking	5:51:30	30	
31.	Alf Short	M	73	Lancashire Walking Club	5:59:33	26	
32.	Gerda Stoevelaar-Engelkes	F	61	s.v. De LAT	7:12:53	26	
33.	Dick Stoevelaar	M	59	s.v. De LAT	7:13:07	26	
34.	Susan Clements	F	62	Cambridge & Coleridge AC	5:27:11	24	
35.	John Bellwood	M	71	unattached	5:54:24	24	
36.	Ann Wheeler	F	60	Leicester WC	4:27:24	22	
37.	Daniel King	M	33	Colchester Harriers AC	2:55:33	20	
38.	Tony Mackintosh	M	44	Isle of Man Veteran AC	3:36:10	20	
39.	Karen Lawrie	F	42	Isle of Man Veteran AC	3:47:37	20	
40.	Herwin Weststrate	M	32	LAAC Twente	3:55:46	20	
41.	Richard Cole	M	61	York CIU Race Walking	4:08:59	20	
42.	Mark Byrne	M	55	Redcar Race Walking Club	4:28:21	20	
43.	Judy Howard	F	59	Abingdon AC	4:32:11	20	
44.	David Hoben	M	63	Surrey Walking Club	4:34:02	20	
45.	Karen Davies	F	55	Birchfield Harriers	4:35:32	20	
46.	John Constandinou	M	44	Birchfield Harriers	4:35:48	20	
47.	Amy Davies	F	33	unattached	4:44:24	20	
48.	Lee Corkill	M	39	unattached	5:58:01	20	
49.	Kerry Martin	F	38	unattached	5:58:01	20	
50.	Jonathan Hobbs	M	23	Ashford AC	2:10:29	14	
51.	Davd Jones	M	67	Redcar Race Walking Club	2:57:12	14	

In other results

- Tony Mackintosh won the Men's 20 Miles in 3:36:10, followed by Herwin Weststrate (3:55:46) and Richard Cole (4:08:59).
- Karen Lawrie won the Women's 20 Miles in 3:47:37, followed by Ann (4:03:28) and Judy Howard in (4:32:11).
- Mickey Campaniello won the Men's 50 Miles (11:19:50) and took the option of continuing to 100km, officially verified, in a time of 14:25:55.

The teams results saw the Dutch walkers take the first two places, such is their current depth in longer walking.

1.	R.W.V. (NED)	37 points	6.	York CIU
2.	s.v. De Lat (NED)	45	7.	Lancashire WC
3.	Surrey WC	48	8.	Isle of Man Vets AC
4.	Leicester WC	49	9.	Birchfield H
5.	Ilford AC			



Frank Van Der Gulik (1022), Sandra Brown and Rob Robertson (photos Mike Palmer)

3RD 24 HEURES DE WADELINCOURT, WADELINCOURT, BELGIUM, 27-28 AUGUST

Last weekend saw the 3rd edition of the 24 Heures de Wadelincourt (it is held in even years) in Belgium. Wadelincourt is a rural village of 3500 people and the event sees you walking alongside fields with cows and with horses. This meet hosts one of the five qualifying races for the 2017 Paris-Alsace classic

Les 24 heures de Wadelincourt, Belgium	27-28 August 2016
Les 28 heures de Roubaix, Roubaix, France	17-18 Sept 2016
Les 24 heures de Bourges, Bourges, France	2017
Les 24 heures de Château-Thierry, Château-Thierry, France	2017
Les 24 heures de Dijon, Dijon, France	2017

Emmanuel Tardi was there and reports for us as follows

The initial lap was 5.122km, followed by laps of 3.514km, to enable an exact 100km split. In the final hour, laps were reduced to 641m. The lap was flat except for a hard hill (50m long, 10% incline) at the 1.5km point. This year the biggest problem was the sun. At the start time of 1PM on Saturday, the temperature was around 35°C and everybody was worried. Yet, in spite of that, Eddy Roze and Remi Bonotte started fast and led for the first 6 hours. It goes without saying that they did not feature in the final results. **Mathieu Olivares**, who start at a much slower pace, came through to win the men's race with 180.426km while the unstoppable **Sandra Brown** won the women's race with 175.101km. The Belgium 100k championship went to veteran (born 1953) Daniel Vandendaal with a time of 13:06:52.

Full results can be seen at http://pointage.larondedesducs.fr/?page_id=24. Clicking on an individual name expands to show laptimes.

Wadelincourt 24 Hour Walk	100km	Final Distance	
1. OLIVARES Mathieu	12h16.02	180,426 Km	24:00:00
2. LANGLOIS Patrick	12h54.50	177,535 Km	24:00:00
3. BUNEL Pascal	12h18.19	175,808 Km	24:00:00
4. VARAIN Cedric	12h58.52	175,117 Km	24:00:00
5. BROWN Sandra (F)	13h30.43	175,101 Km	24:00:00
6. BIET Christophe	14h44.25	155,860 Km	24:00:00
7. SONNOIS Martine (F)	14h54.20	155,566 Km	24:00:00
8. TILL Jacques	13h56.25	150,176 Km	24:00:00
9. JACQUEMIN Mickael	14h18.04	148,064 Km	24:00:00
10. BIZARD Claudie (F)	16h52.50	144,282 Km	24:00:00
11. ARNAULT Françoise (F)	16h52.32	125,995 Km	24:00:00

12. SAKESYN Olivier	20h22.55	116,835 Km	24:00:00
13. RASSAIND Andre	19h54.57	114,257 Km	24:00:00
14. CRILLEY Kathy (F)	23h02.48	105,842 Km	24:00:00
15. LANDRU Noelle (F)	23h18.12	104,119 Km	24:00:00
16. LHOEST Daniel	23h00.18	103,574 Km	24:00:00
17. LETOURNEAU Florian		99,586 Km	24:00:00
18. ARNAULT Jacques		94,369 Km	24:00:00
19. AUVRE Alain		87,207 Km	24:00:00
20. QUINQUETON Bernadette (F)		73,630 Km	24:00:00
21. BONNOTTE Remi		53,186 Km	24:00:00
22. MAUNY Claude		52,568 Km	24:00:00
VANDENDAUL Daniel	13h06.52	107,028 Km	14:15:46
GEORGELIN Serge		89,458 Km	12:36:25
ROZE Eddy		71,888 Km	09:09:59
HARTMANN Emmanuel		71,888 Km	20:26:05
FAUQUEUR Raymond		61,346 Km	08:28:11



Claudie Bizard, Celine Deiller, Mathieu Olivares Patrick Langlois and Florence Pierre (photos Emmanuel Tardi)



Daniel Vandendaul, Martine Sonnois, Pascal Bunel and Sandra Brown

Ancillary events included a 6 Hour walk (individual and team) and a 2 x 6 Hours (1pm to 7pm, then 7am to 1pm), with both events won by women. Emmanuel was content to do a 20km training session, stopping after 6 laps and then manning the camera.

Belgian 100km Championship

1.	VANDENDAUL Daniel	100,000 Km	13:06:52
2.	TILL Jacques	100,000 Km	13:56:25
3.	LHOEST Daniel	100,000 Km	23:00:18

2 x 6 Hours Walk

1.	PIERRE Florence	91,711 Km	24:03:35
2.	LAGABE Corinne	87,556 Km	24:00:26
3.	ANXIONNAT Claudine	86,274 Km	24:00:57
4.	ALEXANDRE Alain	84,042 Km	24:04:35
5.	DAUMERIE Cedric	80,528 Km	24:00:19
6.	MOUGENOT Patrick	77,014 Km	24:02:29
7.	BERTHAULT-KORZHYK Annie	75,732 Km	24:02:08
8.	BURLOT Pascal	60,395 Km	24:03:29

6 Hours Walk

1.	LE DUO DIJONNAIS Relay Team	48,245 Km	06:01:28
2.	DEILLER Celine	45,372 Km	06:03:31
3.	PLAYE Christophe	44,731 Km	06:03:16
4.	BEAUMONT Didier	41,217 Km	06:03:59
5.	DUCRUET Nadia	41,217 Km	06:03:59
6.	LOUKKAD Karim	30,675 Km	06:00:12
7.	TARDI Emmanuel	25,880 Km	06:00:27

NEW COORDINATOR, WEBSITE AND BADGE FOR THE AMERICAN CENTURIANS

The Centurions Club of America was formed by the Columbia Track Club in 1967 and held an annual 24 hour walking event each year for nearly 20 years. Nearly all the early events were held in Colombia in Missouri but as time went on, other venues were used in places such as San Diego. Their last event was held in 1983 and the books stood closed at 48 Centurions.

It was with great excitement that the Centurion world greeted the news that this group had reformed in 2000 under the auspices of Ulli Kamm and his wife Traudl. That same year, Ulli organised a qualifying race in his home town of Golden in Colorado and 9 new members overcame snow and freezing conditions to reach the 100 miles mark and qualify as American Centurions. Since then, further new members have been added year by year.

In 2016, Ulli stepped down from his job as American Centurion coordinator and the baton was passed to American Centurion **Rob Robertson**. We take this opportunity to thank Ulli for his work over so many years and to welcome Rob and thank him for taking over the mantle.

The first thing Rob has done is setup a new and dedicated American Centurion website and is now busy adding pages and functionality. You can check it out at <http://www.unitedstatescenturionwalkers.com>. Rob has reviewed the current American Centurions badge and is keen to refresh its design - see http://www.unitedstatescenturionwalkers.com/?page_id=2. Well done Rob, great initiative. If any readers have contact with any of the older U.S. Centurions, forward this link to them so that they are in the loop.

And while I am on the American Centurions, I have been meaning to do an article on **Augie Hirt (C18)** for some months now and this seems the perfect time. I hope you enjoy the read.

AUGIE HIRT AND THE 1976 AMERICAN CENTURION WALK

Augie Hirt became the youngest member of the USA Centurion Club when he won the 1976 National 100-mile championship in 19:55:16 but there is much more to his story than that one feat. From 1973 through 1979, Augie was named to 13 USA national teams and won seven national racewalking championships at distances from 30km to 100km.

But let's start the story with his centurion qualification in 1976. This particular event was recognized by a feature story in Sports Illustrated and it is still to be read in their archives at <http://www.si.com/vault/1976/10/18/626652/long-days-journey-into-night>. Here is how it goes

Long day's journey into night
SUN UP AND SUN DOWN, THE 100-MILE CHAMPIONSHIP WALK WAS AGONIZING
By Anita Verschoth
Sports Illustrated, Oct. 18, 1976

Around noon, with the race still an hour away, the walkers began to arrive at the red crushed-shale track of Hickman High School in Columbia, Mo. They carried blankets and extra clothing: sweatsuits, hats, shoes. Some brought oilskin ponchos because rain had been forecast. Before getting into their socks and track shoes, sneakers or Hush Puppies, they rubbed Vaseline between their toes to prevent chafing and put moleskin on areas likely to get sore or blistered. Some taped the gap between shoe rim and sock or slipped on spats cut from old stockings to keep the small sharp shale pebbles out of their shoes.

Wives and children, the only spectators on hand, set up a couple of tents and a table to serve as a feeding station. They produced sandwiches, honey, coffee, unfizzed Coke and special energy drinks like BP (not a fuel, but Body Punch) and E.R.G. (Electrolyte Replacement Glucose, a "Gookinaid"). Six judges sat down under a canopy, ready to record and announce everybody's quarter-mile splits.

There were only 30 walkers at the start on that last Saturday in September (as compared to 2,180 runners in this year's Boston Marathon), and only a few of them could realistically expect to finish the race, for this was no weekend stroll. The distance was 100 miles, a staggering 400 laps around the track, to be completed within 24 hours. The contestants would have to walk at least at a 14-minutes-per-mile pace, which would allow 40 minutes for "pit stops" in the restrooms at the top of the stands, clothing changes in the cold of the night and perhaps a brief nap in a tent.

This was the 10th National 100-Mile Walking Championship, which is billed as the toughest track event in the U.S. Race Director Joe Duncan calls it "the ultimate madness." Columbia was a fitting site. Besides being the home of the giant killer football team of the University of Missouri, it is a sanctuary for some 20 serious race walkers. Larry Young, twice an Olympic medal winner, lives there; so does Augie Hirt, who ranks second to Young in the 50 kilometers and works as an accountant for a CPA. Hirt returned from the 50 km. World Championship in Sweden, where he finished 27th, just in time to enter this year's 100.

It was another Columbia resident, Bill Clark, who conceived the 100-mile championship in 1966. He had been inspired by the Centurion Club of Great Britain and its 100-mile walks that had been going on since the turn of the century and by the feats of three American amateur walkers who in 1878 completed a 100-miler within 24 hours on an indoor track in New York - the country's first centurions. But when Clark sent out invitations in 1966, nobody came.

In the fall of 1967, however, five competitors did show up, and off they went. After 64½ miles, 60-year-old Larry O'Neil was the only survivor and on his way to what still stands as the record - 19:24:34 - churning along at an incredible 11:40 pace. Only Larry Young has gone faster, but his record of 18:07:12 was set indoors in 1971 when the Hickman track was flooded by rain.

O'Neil, now 69, revered as the dean of the event, was back for his ninth try after having completed four of the previous eight. A trim, bright-eyed man, he trains eight miles a day in the mountains near his lumber business in Kalispell, Mont., wearing shorts whether it shines or snows. He will don a sweatsuit only when the temperature drops below zero. "I was very happy when I finished my first race," he said, "even though my feet were covered with a bloody scab from the crushed shale on the track and all my toenails had fallen off."

John Argo, a little 62-year-old timber feller from Mattawa, Ontario, a town of 2,600, was also back. He had entered the Columbia walk in 1970 and 1973 and the British one in 1971 and finished all three. He is also renowned for having paddled Canada's three-day, 122-mile canoe race from Ville Marie to North Bay six times and for winning the snowshoe competition at the North Bay Winter Carnival nine years in a row. In 1970 he traveled 43 miles on snowshoes to the Winter Carnival because its organizers, who viewed him as a special attraction, had promised to pay his way to the Columbia walk if he made it.

The pre-race favorite was Chuck Hunter, the defending champion, a 39-year-old air traffic controller from Longmont, Colo. He had entered three previous races and gone the distance each time. Built like a football player, he is often asked whether his size—6', 180 pounds—is not a handicap. "It's just like a Clydesdale horse against a quarter horse,"

he likes to answer. "You get more work out of the former, but in shorter distances it is an advantage to be the latter." The work Hunter does stomping along the hilly roads near his home amounts to 5,000 miles a year.

Another of the old regulars was Chris Clegg, a 59-year-old security doorman for a Los Angeles department store and still very much an Englishman though he became a U.S. citizen 22 years ago. He had walked 100-milers in England, at Columbia and in Australia. Others in the field included an executive of Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, a professor of anthropology at the University of Missouri and his colleague, a professor of political science, a vegetarian from Springfield, Mass. who is notorious for a fast shuffle that fills other walkers' shoes with pebbles, and a prisoner from the Fordland Honor Camp - Albert Van Dyke - who is serving a sentence for second-degree murder. Van Dyke arrived with a broken jaw. "Showed off doing calisthenics," he said.

To keep youngsters out of the race - in the past they would start it as a lark - the age limit is 19, but the most serious competitors are to be found in the over-40 bracket. "At that age," explained the anthropology professor, Rob Spier, "man should be mature enough to handle boredom. The older competitors in this race seem better disciplined than the younger ones." Augie Hirt, who is only 25, said, "This race is not important to us. We are race walkers, not survivors." Three years ago Hirt entered the race, and after 57 miles he had to be carried off the track. Last year he completed 62¼ miles (100 kilometers). This year he said, "I wish I could finish it once, so that I would never have to try it again." How do they manage to pass the time? Humming a song, perhaps, but mainly counting laps, keeping track of their splits. "After a while," said one walker, "the mind can't handle more than that anyway."

The race was a jaunty affair as long as daylight lasted. The walkers chatted; one listened to the Missouri-Ohio State game on a transistor radio. Enjoying his brief freedom, Van Dyke led the first mile in 9:48, then Hunter took over. His first 25 miles were the fastest ever recorded on the track - 4:26:13. But Hirt, who had set out at an 11-minute pace and had kept an eye on Hunter, caught him after 48 miles.

By that time the race was becoming a nightmare. Heavy showers had made the inside lane a muddy river and the back-stretch a lake district. The walkers were forced to weave around the deeper puddles, covering added distance each lap. On the dimly lit track Hunter and Hirt battled for the lead, and Hunter sprinted to a personal best for 50 miles. But eventually the quarter horse pulled away from the Clydesdale.

In the early-morning hours Hirt lapped Hunter with 20 miles to go, and Hunter told him, "These are going to be the hardest 20 miles of your life."

"They were," said Hirt later. Soon he had to shorten his stride because of a twinge in his left hamstring. "At one point," he said, "my body was hurting in six places. It was trying to convince my head that I should stop."

The rain had claimed its victims. O'Neil developed a blister on his left foot and had to retire after 64½ miles, 13½ hours. Clegg, the security man, stopped to rest after 75 miles and got so chilled in his wet clothes that he was unable to start again. When dawn finally came, gray and unfriendly, only seven of the 30 starters were still going for the 100-mile mark.

Hirt, now leading the vigorous Hunter by a mile, resembled a suffering Biblical figure. His eyes were half closed, his feet dragging. His wife Joan walked with him for a few laps, but he could not talk. Leonard Busen, a St. Louis newspaperman, was in third place, and next behind him was Jack Blackburn, a 40-year-old counselor at a drug-control center in Springfield, Ohio, a newcomer to the event. Blackburn had tried out for four Olympics - without success. "I think today I'm going to make the team," he said, walking on like an arthritic old man.

Hirt won in 19:55:16, beating Hunter by 10½ minutes but missing O'Neil's record by half an hour. "I don't believe I did it," he mumbled, sinking onto a bench. When Joan and a nurse led him away, he began to cry softly. Each of the seven still walking at dawn finished the 100 miles in the allotted 24 hours.

"You feel like a baby," said Blackburn after he crossed the line. "You ache so much that you have to show it. You just can't be manly."

Two days later Augie Hirt was feeling much better. In fact, he was able to walk again.

For the record, there were 7 finishers, with Augie winning overall to become American Centurion number 18.

1.	Hirt, Augie	USA	C18	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	19:55:16	25	01-Jan-51
2.	Hunter, Chuck	USA	C11	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	20:05:50	39	01-Jan-37
3.	Busen, Leonard	USA	C15	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	21:49:21	46	16-Mar-30

4.	Blackburn, Jack	USA	C19	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	22:11:57	40	21-Nov-35
5.	Spier, Rob	USA	C16	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	22:35:01	54	12-Jun-22
6.	Gragg, Bob	USA	C17	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	23:37:30	51	19-Aug-25
7.	Argo, John	Canada	C5	25-Sep-76	Columbia, MO	23:43:10	62	29-Apr-14

The following photos shows Augie walking in the race, being helped from the track at the end and then at the presentations. They say a photo is worth a thousand words and that is certainly the case here.



And now let's hone in on Augie Hirt's wider walking career which reads impressively.

Augie was born in Piqua, Ohio, on 1st January 1951 and studied at McPherson College, a small liberal arts school in central Kansas. During his competitive days at McPherson College, he showed that he was a fine all-round athlete, winning six varsity letters in three sports, cross country (three times), track (twice) and baseball (once).

It was during his time at McPherson College that he started racewalking. He was a long-distance runner then, a good one but not great. "I was improving gradually, but I had so far to go to keep up with guys like Shorter," he said. "In my senior year, a guy on the track team placed in the national racewalking championships. I had always had it in the back of my mind that I could be a good race-walker so I asked him to show me how. Then I raced him, and I beat him. I found I could do better at walking than running. There were a lot of good runners so before a race I would think, 'Will I finish fifth or eighth'. In racewalking, I knew I could finish first or second. You push more for first than fifth. For me, walking is something special. If you find something you are good at, you will work harder and harder to be good."

Yes, Augie was good and he worked hard, developing into a fine international walker in his post-collegiate life. "Once I got out of college, I discovered they had longer races.". He moved to Columbia to train with Larry Young, the U.S. racewalker who won bronze medals in the 1968 and 1972 Olympics and remains the only American to medal in the sport. Another of his racewalking friends was Shaul Ladany, an Israeli racewalker and Holocaust survivor who escaped out a window during the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre of 11 fellow team members at the hands of Palestinian gunmen.

His training was consistent and planned - 15 miles a day during the week (4 miles in the morning between 5:45 and 6:15 and 11 miles in the evening from 4 to 5:30 after he got home from his job as a lease accountant with Continental Illinois Bank), with weekends affording an opportunity for a long 20 mile walk on one day and a race on the other. As a matter of interest, his work at the bank at that time was part of a program to help promising American athletes earn money and further themselves in their careers while giving them time to train and compete. It is their small answer to government subsidy of athletes in other countries.



Augie Hirt in racewalking mode, circa mid 1970s

From 1973 through 1979, Augie was named to 13 USA national teams and seven national AAU racewalking championships. Five of his national championships came in the 100km event. He competed in three straight IAAF World Championships between 1975 and 1977. He was the United States' top finisher in the Lugano Cup 50km walk in 1975 and America's second finisher in the 1977 Lugano Cup 50km. His 14th place finish in that event was his top finish in World Championship events. "Nobody expected me to finish that high, and I was sort of surprised myself". His 3 IAAF representations read as follows

1975	Lugano Cup 50km, Le Grande Quevilly, France	21 st	4:31:19
1976	IAAF 50km Championship, Malmo, Sweden	27 th	4:28:35
1977	Lugano Cup 50km, Milton Keynes, England	14 th	4:20:06

In 1975, he raced the 27km leg for the United States in the Airolo-Chiasse 5-man International Relay in Lugano, Switzerland, leading the USA to a second place finish, still the highest finish ever by a American team. He also competed in USA dual meets versus Canada, Mexico, Sweden, England, and Germany. It's a very impressive resume.

But his forte was in the longer distances where he set 11 American racewalking records over 75km, 50 miles, and 100km. He lowered the 100km record for five straight years, from 1974 through 1978, to a best of **10:19:00**, a record that still stands. His American Records for 75km (7:05:46) and 50 miles (7:39:39) also still stand today.

In 1976 Augie finished 2nd in the USA Olympic 50km racewalk trial, but his Olympic dreams were soon dashed when the IOC dropped a number of events from the Olympic program, including the 50km racewalk. The IAAF came to the rescue, scheduling its own 50km world championship in September in Malmo, Sweden, and Augie was selected to represent America there, finishing 27th in 4:28:35. But it wasn't the Olympics!

Just days after he returned home from that race, still jet-lagged and in recovery mode, he decided to enter the AAU's National 100 mile Championship racewalk around a track in Columbia, Mo. Planning to walk just half of the race and catch up with friends, he was goaded into finishing by the jibes of another competitor and the rest is history.

The 50km racewalk was reinstated by the IOC for the 1980 Olympics and Augie qualified once again. But he was dealt another huge blow when the U.S. announced it was boycotting the Moscow Olympics as a protest against the Soviet Union's incursion in Afghanistan. For a second time, his Olympic dream had been denied. At that stage, he announced his retirement from the sport.

Augie has continued his involvement in our sport over the intervening years. After he retired in 1980, shoe companies and athletic clubs hired him to teach clinics. "For a while, I made more money from racewalking than I made accounting. For 30 years, I didn't have to buy shoes." He figures he's taught more than 70,000 people (including television personality Oprah Winfrey) the racewalk technique, which he says is great exercise and easier on the joints than running.



Augie takes a racewalk clinic in Sth Bend, Illinois, in 2011

His frame, a half-inch above 6 feet and 166 pounds, is just 8 pounds heavier than it was during his Olympic trials. He walks four times a day with Rose, his 11-year-old golden retriever/border collie mix and also takes her on his longer racewalks. He doesn't enter racewalking competitions. "I've moved on. I just do it for fitness," he says. He does, however, participate in local running events and marathons, racewalking the course and still beating many of the runners.

"I really don't have any regrets. Things aren't fair, but everybody's things aren't fair."

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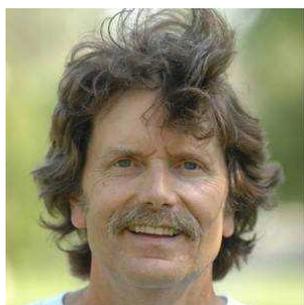
Addendum

Now I find the above story a bit spooky as it almost exactly parallels my own story. Consider

- Augie was born Jan 1951 and I born in Nov 1950 – so nearly the same age.
- Both of us were decent runners but chose walking instead as the better long term sporting option.
- We each made our respective 1976 Olympic 50km team, only to have the event removed from the Olympics.
- Both were then selected to walk in the IAAF World 50km Championship in Malmo, Sweden, Augie finishing 27th in 4:28:35 and me finishing 23rd in 4:20:23.
- Both of us returned home from this event and qualified as Centurions (USA for Augie and Australian for me) the following month.
- Both of us competed in 2 Lugano Cup World Racewalking Championships (Augie in 1975 and 1977 and me in 1979 and 1981, once Australia was finally eligible to send a team).
- Both of us qualified for the 1980 Olympic 50km but both were denied the trip due to USA and Australian

boycots.

- Both of us have kept up our involvement with the sport in the intervening years.
- And finally and most importantly we are both really good looking!!!



I rest my case!

Tim Erickson
Monday 29 August 2016

FINANCIAL NEWS

A quite month for us on the financial side but all good.

Income	Nil	
Expenditure	Postage and photocopying	40.00
	Annual centurions website hosting fee	83.88
Balance		\$984.34

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Another big issue with lots of news, along with a bit of history.

Our weather in Melbourne is finally on the improve as we head into spring here in the southern hemisphere. So perfect weather to strip down, don the walking shoes and head for the bush!

But I'm not suggesting we should go as far as 1908 Olympic racewalk champion George Larner who had some eccentric training habits indeed: "*When time permits, all clothing should be removed for a run round a secluded garden, especially it if be raining at the time*" (The Official Centenary History of the AAA, Peter Lovesey, 1979, p138).

While he was a wonderful walker, finishing his career holding British records for the 1 mile (6:26), the 3 mile (20:25), the 4 mile (27:14) and the 5000m walk, his training ideas might raise an eyebrow or two even today!

Yours in Centurion walking

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