

Happy 125th Anniversary State of South Dakota



South Dakota's three volkswalk clubs: the Capital City River Ramblers, the Prairie Wanderers, and the Black Hills Volkssport Association joined together to offer volkswalkers a special three day walking treat in and around the state capital – Pierre. Following below are images of the fun and fellowship enjoyed by all during last weekend.



Ready for Action: The registration table was staffed by one member from each club...Sam Vaughn, PW; Judy Kjar, BHVA; and Cheryl Kjar, CCRR. (Left to Right)

Ken Kjar, BHVA, who was POC for Sunday's Pierre city walk, checks on Friday to make certain that the process is ready to roll and to run smoothly. Each walk attracted approximately 50 walkers...mainly South Dakotans with a few Iowans, Nebraskans, Minnesotans, and Coloradans mixed in. Maybe some walkers from Wyoming? Not certain. The distance winners hands down were Harry & Hope Nichols all the way from Alabama - by car no less. (You'll meet them later.)

Our Ft. Pierre Walking Group: Three Minnesotans and a couple of Nebraskans. Friday afternoon's walk took us over the Waldron Bridge and into Ft. Pierre, Pierre's little sister city. Shown in the photo in downtown Ft. Pierre are Bonnie Johnson, AVA secretary, Jane & Ken Legaard, and Martha McGahan.



Old Familiar Faces: At least to many of you receiving this transmission. Butch and Sandy Spaulding from Council Bluffs...two very important cogs in the NWFT organization. The Spauldings were on their way back to the Pierre Chamber of Commerce starting point as our little group was on the outbound trail.

The Spauldings made a passing comment about the "hill," and I figured if these walkers who are used to wandering around in Western Iowa's Loess Hills were impressed by "THE HILL," we flatlanders from Minnesota and Central Nebraska would find the trip up from the Missouri River to this scenic vista a bit challenging.



The Rewarding Vista: This is the view from the Verendrye Monument in Ft. Pierre. One of the walkers' smart phones indicated an altitude increase of over 150 feet by the time we were viewing the Missouri River Valley from the monument. That's Ft. Pierre with the Missouri River heading downstream in the distance.



Meet the Ft. Pierre POC:

So...when we returned from Ft. Pierre, we happened upon Chip Elverud, the guy who set up the trail in Ft. Pierre. I could tell that he was not sympathetic to the complaints of us flatlanders. After all, he and the other BHVA walkers regularly navigate trails that have multiple hills that are much more challenging than that single Missouri River Valley hill.

With Chip are Doug Kapaun from BHVA and Dan Peters from PW. We see Dan regularly, but it has been a long time since we have crossed paths with old walking friend Doug.



The Last MNTS Possession: The Mid-Nebraska Trail Seekers had one bit of unfinished business before we could permanently close the books of our local AVA club. We had a new “walk box” that we purchased a few years ago as a replacement for one of our walk boxes when needed. Since the MNTS group decided to disband, we no longer had any use for the box. The Spauldings seem pleased to have a backup box for one of their dozen or so YREs. Butch and Sandy have just finished dining on the pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, and chips supplied by our SD hosts on Friday after the Ft. Pierre walk.



Plotting Strategy: Saturday morning...quarter to eight. The Farm Island checkpoint people and POC Duane Neugebauer from the Prairie Wanderers discuss the finer points of the volkswalk trail that Duane plotted around the campgrounds and onto wooded Farm Island. The attentive checkpoint folks listening to Duane are Ken & Jane Legaard and Martha McGahan. Having so many souls attending the checkpoint allowed a relay system so that while some cared for the visiting walkers, others could be out completing their trip around the circuit at Farm Island.



The Walking Automaton: The first customer at the Farm Island checkpoint...Charlie Gentile. Listening to Charlie are Dan Peters and the Legaards. They were pumping Charlie for information about any difficulties he was having on the first half of the twin loop trail. Charlie's only complaint...the sun shining in his eyes because of the early morning hour. The Walking Automaton aptly describes Charlie. He has walked over 200 volkswalks so far in 2014. His lifetime total listed in the current issue of *The American Wanderer* is 3700 walks.



Apples for the Trail: Ellen Peters displays a basket full of the Peters' fall crop of Lennox, SD apples. Juicy and sweet they were. And...not a worm in sight. The Peters supplied apples for both the Farm Island walk and the Oahe Downstream walk on Saturday.



**Check in and then...
Back out on the
Farm Island Trail.**

Half Done: Jo Ponder and Jay Glanzer from the BHVA are half done with the Farm Island V. walk, and are validated and ready to see how wild the wildlife are on Farm Island in the middle of the Mighty Muddy Mo.



Six Decades of Love: That's correct...they have been married for over sixty years. Here are Hope & Harry Nichols from Alabama, the winners of the Came from Furthest Away contest. What indicates deep, long-lasting love more than making sure your lifelong mate has his scarf properly adjusted so that he will be around for another sixty years?

The Nichols (spelling?) are famous for showing up at events like the 125th celebration where they can walk several events in a weekend. We have run into them at the Sunflower Sod Stomper weekends in Kansas, too.

Dan Peters indicated that they do NOT do YRE or seasonal events as they travel around. Seems that they are only interested in events where they can enjoy the crowd.

Harry is famous for always having a cigar. I caught him at the wrong angle in this photo, but take my word for it...the other hand away from the walk instruction hand had a big stogie in it.



Oahe Downstream R.A.: Downstream of the Oahe Dam is the Oahe Downstream Recreation Area State Park. Oahe, the fourth largest man-made reservoir in the United States, is 231 miles in length and connects the capital cities of South Dakota and North Dakota. The Recreation Area is a beautiful, peaceful place to walk. This walk was set up by the Peters, and was scheduled for Saturday afternoon. It makes walking life sooooo much easier when one can travel with the trail experts. You have met the entire cast of characters here, so I will hold my peace. Other than to say the six volkswalkers in the photo have a combined lifetime total of over 14,000 events. Bonnie J. was listed in the latest *The American Wanderer* at 3000 events and the Legaards clocked in at 2500 events each.



Checking In: Janet Gerjets, PW member, mans the checkpoint at Oahe Downstream R.A. *Service with a Smile* must be Janet's motto.



Sortin' Out the Event Books: Back at the C of C starting point, Cheryl Kjar waits as Doug Kapaun riffles through his multiple AVA books to decide which ones need stamped for his two Saturday walks.

Let Them Eat Cake!: So...Saturday afternoon after the second walk was done and while Doug riffled, the rest of us made our way to the dining area to share the South Dakota 125 cake and a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Shown with the cake, before anyone laid a knife to it, is Karen Elverud, President of the BHVA. I know it is sinful but I LOVE that thick, creamy frosting. I had to have a second piece. Guess I could have skipped the second walk, if I had been willing to skip that second piece of cake.





Where's the Sidewalk?: On a perfect Sunday morning for a 10 km walk, Ken Kjar, POC for the Pierre City Volkswalk, explains to the Nichols that there used to be a sidewalk here before the Great Flood of 2011. They are on the causeway to LaFramboise Island by Pierre. The island was an important part of the Pierre walk. It is historically significant as one of the places that the Lewis and Clark party camped and met with the Teton Sioux Indians during their journey upstream on the Missouri River.



A Bunch of Horses' XXXs: At the left is the Fighting Stallions (George S. Mickelson Memorial). This memorial, dedicated to Governor Mickelson and the other seven men who perished when the state plane crashed, is near Capitol Lake south of the statehouse.

After I took the shot, Ken Kjar mumbled something about five horses' asses in the photo. I counted and came up with SIX. I surmised that Ken was just being gentlemanly and not including Martha. His response when I asked him was that the one horse was facing away from us. Guess he was including Martha. Oh well, if you run in a male crowd, you get what you deserve, Martha.

Side Note: Ken Legaard was raised in N.E. South Dakota, but he had an uncle who lived in Pierre. As a youth, he spent some summer time in Pierre. One of the summer pastimes was baseball. One of the Pierre baseball players on his team was little Georgie Mickelson, son of Governor George T. Mickelson. Ken said that the team used to go over to Georgie's house for Kool-Aid and cookies after a game. He further stated that he had noticed Georgie's house was a bit fancier than the other houses around, never knowing that it was the Governor's Mansion, and that George, Jr. would someday be the SD Governor.

Shown in the above photo are Don Vanneman from the BHVA, and three others you have already met.



And Last But Not Least: One meets the nicest people on the volkswalk trail, and a couple of the nicest of the nice are Ken & Judy Kjar. I suspect I am not telling you anything you don't already to a person know.

Ken is a special kinsman of mine because he is the only volkswalkers crazy enough to participate in the Five Walks in Five States in One Day marathon...not once but TWICE.

Our first "50 km pentathlon" was on May 5, 2005, starting at 5 a.m. (05/05/05 @ 5) at Wahpeton, ND, and ending at around 9 p.m. at South Sioux City, NE. We repeated the 50 km day again in 2006 following the Valley City Dakota ½ Dozen, with a different cast of characters...starting in Moorhead, MN, and again ending in South Sioux City.

We have both agreed that it will never happen again. A decade of life changes many things. We have our fond memories, and we will have to be content with that.

**HAPPY
125TH
ANNIVERSARY
SOUTH
DAKOTA**

