

# The Final Four

## Grand Island YRE

May 13 to May 17, 2015



**Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>** ...first of the FINAL FOUR...joining the Peters and Bethany Bob (who requested a mid-week walk, as they could not work the Sunday walk into their schedule) are from left...Jim McGahan, Sandy Spaulding, Mel Bohn, Jim Goeltz, Butch Spaulding, Bob Kruger, Ellen & Dan Peters, Sheila Goeltz, Karen Dix-Johnson, and Martha McGahan. Let's call this "The Walk of the Foreigners." The McGahans, Mel, and Karen are Nebraskans. The others hail from surrounding states...South Dakota, Iowa, and Kansas. They had us badly outnumbered. As you can see...great weather for a walk around Grand Island. The **SKAGWAY** store was already closed, so we had the huge parking lot to ourselves...no problem finding a parking space.



**Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>...**Not content to say “Goodbye” to **SKAGWAY** just once, the Peters and Bethany Bob got up bright and early the next morning and motored back to the parking lot to complete another 10 km route. Martha selected an old MNTS trail map and instructions from the file so that they could see some new sites and sights. She accompanied them as they followed the route that took them through Stolley State Park and to the campus of Central Community College.

Someone in the group must have a connection with the Lord because the overnight rain ceased just an hour or so before their planned start at 8:30 a.m. Note the puddles in the background. Also note how the rain bleached out the **SKAGWAY** sign. Just kidding...actually the first photo was “edited” to make the sign look shiny and new. You just cannot believe your eyes anymore when photos are involved.



**Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>...**Posing in a little park just west of St. Francis Medical Center are Jean Nothern, Margalee Thomas, and Ella Epp. They, along with Martha, walked the third iteration of the **G.I. YRE FINAL FOUR**. They decided on a Friday afternoon start. They, too, were looking for a different trail for their final G.I. volkswalk. Going the other direction from the itinerary taken by the Thursday group, this little band of volks folks went northwest from the Edith Abbott Memorial Library, over the Union Pacific main tracks, and past the St. Francis Medical Center complex.

Jean is a past-president of MNTS, and Margalee and Ella were long-time officers in the neighboring club, the Wellness Wanderers in York. They were also active members of MNTS until its dissolution.



**Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>**...The date originally picked for the final walk because it was about a week before the projected closing date for **SKAGWAY**. Merchandise flew off the shelves at the two **SKAGWAY** stores ...especially when the management cut the prices down to 25% of full price. The employees were invited in to a hastily arranged meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May and were informed that the doors would be locked for the final time at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. Thus the reason we had the parking lot to ourselves for **THE FINAL FOUR**. Note that we didn't have distracting cars or shoppers in the background of our group photos.

Shown in the Final final G.I. YRE volkswalk photo are from left: Bill & Gloria Schlachter, Jeanne Miller, Joe & Bonnie Watkins, Martha McGahan, Dave Brown, Sandy Spaulding, Mary Ann Brown, Butch Spaulding, Karen & Jerry Dix, and Jim McGahan. This is Jeanne's photo. Unlike me, she is organized enough to bring a tripod, so she can click the self-timer and make a run for the group. She doesn't have to spend a couple of hours cloning herself into the photo like I did on the first photo. Again...note the great weather. Someone in the group must speak directly to God, and be on better terms with him than am I.

# Fleeting Moments During **THE FINAL FOUR**

**Note:** The people in the photos will not be identified as everyone has been identified in the four large group photos above.



**Killing Time:** The South Dakota and Kansas contingents are registered and swap some stories while they await the arrival of the eastern Nebraska and western Iowa walkers on May 13<sup>th</sup>. It was NOT a long to wait.



**The NWFT Walkers Arrive:** Ferried to join in **THE FINAL FOUR** in the Spaulding's van, our NWFT friends get registered so that we can gather for the group photo and hit the volkswalk trail. Some walked the 10 km and some walked the 6 km version. All were invited to Tommy's for friendship and food at the completion of the volkswalking experience.

**Improvisation**: When you register in a windy parking lot, you learn to make do with whatever surface you find to get the start card completed. In this case...the back window of a 2004 Ford Focus.



**Eager To Eat PIE**: Nobody doesn't like **PIE**, and Tommy's has some of the bestest **PIEs** in the world. So we hurry through beautiful Pier Park thinking about **PIE** all the way.



**Reaping Our Reward:** Checking out the menu at Tommy's...burgers, chicken, pancakes (all day), omelets, BLT's...and of course...**PIE!**



**Fast Forward to Number Four...**Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>...the van is back from Council Bluffs with a new subset of the NWFT club members. Jeanne Miller gets registered as others await their turn and relax before the final FINAL walk of the G.I. YRE. Jeanne will shortly bring out the tripod so that the final FINAL group can be recorded for posterity. Martha was more focused on walking than photo-taking in walks #2 and #3, so we will just have to imagine what happened on those walks. (Other than the group photos.)



**Taking a bit of Liberty:** The final Final group spends a moment with Lady Liberty in Pier Park. Photo by Jeanne Miller sans tripod. (Bonnie Watkins and Gloria Schlachter were burning up the trail. They were Sooooo far ahead of the rest of the walkers that we couldn't "yell" them back for the Liberty shot.)



**WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, BUTCH!:** Just a problem caused by the photographer taking photos from both sides of the sidewalk. Both groups are headed west along the park at Suck's Lake.