

How To Conduct A Successful Border-Crossing Volksmarch

First: Find a proper state border to cross. In this case the border between South Dakota and Minnesota... on U.S. Hwy. 12 between Big Stone City, SD, and Ortonville, MN.



Shown in the photos are Martha and Jim McGahan as they begin their volkswalk from the Big Stone City Fire Department and reach the border between South Dakota and Minnesota.

Second: Find a good, willing volksmarch club to sponsor the cross-border event. In this case, the club was the Prairie Wanderers Volkssport Club from Brookings/Sioux Falls, etc.



At left are the Prairie Wanderer members handling the registration process at the Big Stone City Fire Hall, registering Martha.

From left: Gary Lofswold, Ellen Peters, Betty "Sam" Vaughn, Dan Peters, and Jennifer Nathem. The middle three are long-time members of the Prairie Wanderers. I understand that Gary and Jennifer are very welcome, recent additions to the Prairie Wanderers.

Third: Find some reliable checkpoint help.



The two guys in the middle of the photo (taken by Sandy Spaulding) are satisfied customers...Bethany Bob Kruger and the Maine-e-ack, Butch Spaulding. The couples on either end are the checkpoint managers...Ken & Jane Legaard and Jim & Martha McGahan. The checkpoint was in the Ortonville City Park, overlooking Big Stone Lake and just down the road from the weekly farmers' market.

And...Fourth and most important: Serious volkswalkers from across the country. NINE STATES were represented...MN & SD (duh!), IA, ND, NE, CO, KS, VA, and WV.



Representing Nebraska...Martha McGahan and Jim & Diane Fenlon. The Fenlons motored up I-29 from Omaha to join in the cross-border fun.



Three states are represented in this photo taken at the Ortonville checkpoint...Ken & Jane Legaard (checkpoint monitors) are from Bloomington, [Minnesota](#). Bob Kruger is from Lindsborg, [Kansas](#), a Bethany College grad, thus the Bethany Bob moniker. Sandy & Butch Spaulding are [Iowa](#) citizens. I suppose if we are allowed to delve far enough back in Butch's life, we could count him as a Maine walker (but we didn't for our purposes here). This area is Ken Legaard's "old stompin' grounds." He was raised on the other side of Big Stone Lake in South Dakota, but we don't need to use Ken to have a SD connection because all those Prairie Wanderers registering people in the second photo are from [South Dakota](#).



Here's another Jayhawker...Sarah Gregory Long from Topeka. Along with her is our long-distance champ for this walk, Regina Overholt from Arlington, [Virginia](#). Regina and Sarah are long-time walking friends. All one need do is hold a volksmarch in a county that either of them hasn't "colored in" yet, and they will be there with bells on. The "new" county was Grant County, SD. Many walking years ago, a YRE was sanctioned in Milbank, SD, which is in Grant County, but that memory is faint at this point. Many county-collectors didn't catch the county that long time ago.

Regina showed us her three-ring notebook in Colorado a couple of years ago. She has a page for each state. Each state's map has the counties shown, and one can quickly see where Regina has walked and where she hasn't yet set foot. She had the fun of coloring in Grant County, SD, last weekend with the bonus of getting the cross-border stamp for Don Vartanian's border-crossing book. Rest in peace, Don.

There she is...the recently retired AVA Secretary, Bonnie Johnson, from Fridley, MN. As she walked the trail from Big Stone City to Ortonville, she told us that it suddenly dawned on her that she had plotted her own volkswalk trail out in Ortonville when she set up Big Stone County for her Minnesota Counties walking series.

The Minnesota Counties walks have been a labor of love for Bonnie. She is within a year of having sanctioned walks in all 87 MN counties.

In the background you can see the checkpoint people waiting safely in the Kiwanis Shelter for their next walking guest. Fortunately, although it thundered a bit and spit a bit, the morning was a near perfect walking morning...cloudy, cool, and light breezes blowing off of Big Stone Lake.



Another Minnesotan...from Comstock, MN...Verna Lohse. **If you are a purist...looks the other way while I do this.** Although Verna resides across the Red River from Fargo (about 15 miles southeast), she is a member of the Red River Volkssport Association which calls Fargo its home. Thus, we shall call her the walker from the seventh of the nine states represented...[North Dakota](#). When you get to Fargo, make certain to do the South Fargo Volkswalk...Verna's baby.



Two more Kansans...Romona's shirt kinda' gives it away. Leon Graves and Romona Broxterman were on the road picking up new counties, too. Leon has been a serious county collector for some decades now. He ran into health issues a few years ago and had to quit moving around the U.S. picking up counties for a number of years.

Romona is a relative new-comer compared to Leon. Her first volkswalk was the Sunflower Sod Stomper's traditional event in Osawatomie, Kansas, two summers ago. Now they scour the countryside for new counties for Leon's book of states/counties.

This shot of Leon and Romona was taken as they walked north up the main street in Ortonville. County collecting is SO MUCH FUN!

So...there it is...my photo essay. So you say, "That's only SEVEN states!" "Well," I say, "I didn't come up with the idea of putting in photos of someone from each state UNTIL I got back to Grand Island." Who did I miss? Well, to begin with, I let the big ones get away...the guys who have enough walks to ring the Earth at the Equator about four times. Interestingly, they both hail from [Colorado](#) at this point...Charlie Gentile and Dave Hooker. They slipped through while we were completing our walk and then driving back across to the Ortonville checkpoint. Catch you next time Dave and Charlie.

And last but certainly not least was the woman who came through who hails from [West Virginia](#). She said that she was a native of the Hawkeye State and had returned to Iowa to visit her father. She saw the opportunity to pick up a border crossing walk, and voila...there she was. Brain fart on my part for not snapping a photo of this long-distance volks-person.