

The Best U.S. Olympic Team? You're Editor Says So.



1968 Olympians reassemble. How about this for longevity and camaraderie. The 1968 U.S. Olympic team had a reunion in St. Louis in October. About 45 athletes showed up, including 16 from track and field. That 16 included all six racewalkers. Let's hear it for the racewalkers with their perfect attendance. From the left, Larry Young, Tom Dooley, Rudy Haluza, Ron Laird, Goetz Klopfer, and Dave Romansky.. Larry Young won the first of his two Olympic bronze medals at 50 Km, with Goetz Klopfer finishing tenth in that race. Dave Romansky was sick on the day, but stayed the course to finish 26th. Rudy Haluza was a strong fourth in the 20, and would have also won bronze had the judges done their job on silver medalist Jose Pedraza. Dooley finished 17th and Laird, also under the weather, 25th in that race. Young, Dooley, and Klopfer were back on the 1972 Team, Laird was on his third of four teams, and Haluza was back from the 1960 team. (Photo courtesy of Rudy Haluza.)

The Ohio Racewalker is published monthly in Columbus, Ohio. Subscription rate is \$12.00 per year (\$15.00 outside the U.S.). Editor and Publisher: John E. (Jack) Mortland. Address all correspondence regarding both editorial and subscription matter to: Ohio Racewalker, 3184 Summit Street, Columbus, OH 43202. E-mail address is: jmortlan@columbus.rr.com. Approximate deadline for submission of material is the 24th of each month.

Some results.

Indoor 1 Mile, Hanover, N.H., Jan. 11—1. Christie Bernier, Maine RW 8:16.50 2. Abby Dunn, Maine RW 8:25.79 3. Nicole Court-Menendez, Maine RW 8:57.39 (Bernier is a high school junior, the other two freshmen). **Men**—1. Matthew Forgues, Maine RW (H.S. junior 7:01.41 2. Tyler Campbell, Maine RW 7:35.08 3. Evan Vincent, Maine RW 7:43.72 **Indoor 3 Km, Boston, Jan. 18**—1. Evan Vincent 14:55.06 2. Charlie Swerdlow (16), Maine RW 15:41.07 3. Stephen Peckiconis (49) 16:16.73 4. Larry Epstein (50), New England Walkers 16:50 **Women**—1. Erin Taylor, South Texas WC 15:41.07 2. Abby Dunn 16:18.82 3. Christie Bernier 16:23.94 4. Nicole Court-Menendez 16:49.44 **1 Mile, New York City, Jan. 9**—1. Curt Clausen 7:13.18 2. Erin Taylor 7:59.17 3. Lena Cruz 8:18.33 4. Rebecca Katz 8:28 5. Dan Ping He 8:45 6. Connie Cheng 9:01 **1 Mile, New York City, Jan. 4**—1. Maryanne Daniel 7:51.49 2. Erin Taylor 8:08.52 3. **3 Km, same place**—1. Connie Chang 18:01.36 2. Sandi Cheng 18:29.10 3. Lin Liang 18:41 **Men's 1 Mile, same place**—1. Mike Kazmierczak 6:52.81 2. Curt Clausen 6:54.78 **Girl's H.S. 1500 meters, New York City, Jan. 10**—1. Amy Cheung 7:11.98 2. Melly Josephs 7:19.12 3. Ashley Ward 7:20.42 4. Kim Slaguss 7:20.97 5. Tyeasha Savage 7:26.43 6. Christina DelSanto 7:28.12 7. Datie Davis 7:30.68 8. Destiny Lalane 7:37.26 9. Diana Quinde 7:44.63 10. Kristen Magliola 7:50.42 11. Jenn Mercouris 7:56.95 12. Amy Cha 7:57.59 (63 finishers) **3 Km, Rochester, N.Y., Dec. 27**—1. Mike Tarantino 12:38.08 2. Miranda McIlville (19) 14:54.0 3. Dan Erianni (18) 15:54.54 4. Rachel Zoyhofsk (17) 18:11.41 (7 finishers) **10 Miles, Asbury Park, N.J., Dec. 28**—1. Rich Luettichau 1:18:29 2. John Soucheck 1:23:39 3. Brce Logan 1:43:54 4. Curt Sheller 1:51:49 (7 finishers) **Women**—1. Panse Geer 1:53:47 2. Maria Paul 1:53:54 3. Susan Middaugh 2:01:58 (Course records: 1:11:43 by Ray Funkhouser in 1984 and 1:28:26 by Dorit Attias in 1991) **3 Km, U. Of Delaware, Jan. 11**—1. Art Lebofsky 17:58.13 2. Peter Blank 18:47 3. John Morrison 18:56 **Indoor 3 Km, Cedarville, Ohio, Jan. 16**—1. Seth Campbell 13:50.95 2. Evan Crowdis 14:30.65 3. Doug Johnson 14:33.09 4. Josh Wiseman 14:41.69 5. Mike Mannozi 15:01.19 6. Kyle Hively 15:01.86 7. Grant Bacon 15:44.83 8. Mike Meckhop 15:50.51 9. Chris Schmid 15:54 10. Paul Ikeda 16:23 11. Ed Fitch 16:48 12. Brad Sinick 17:08 (13 finishers, 1 DQ) **Women**—1. Tina Peters 15:24.07 2. Susan Randall 15:27.11 3. Amanda Johnson 16:05.00 4. Katie Malinowski 16:08.18 5. Teresa Amerman 16:23.16 6. Megan Rurnish 17:18.68 **High School 1 Mile, Cedarville, Jan. 17**—1. Jake Gunderkline 7:56.0 2. John Randall 8:19 3. Nick Niehaus 9:20 4. Josh Meadows 9:34 **Women**—1. Melissa Moeller 8:00.1 2. Allison Chin 8:10 3. Sarah Keney 9:00 (8 finishers) **Indoor 3000 meters, Marshall, Missouri, Jan. 11**—1. Jessica Ching 16:08.54 2. Emily Hansen 16:19.93 3. Keara Kenard 17:42.64 4. (6 finishers, 1 DQ) **Men**—1. Patrick Stroupe 12:21.63 2. Chris Tegmeier 12:53.59 3. Tom Stolee 14:50.31 4. Peter Muldron 15:00.52 5. Nathan Dreher 15:16.31 6. Chris Dehning 16:05.18 7. Jon Ripke 17:27 8. David Lindemann 17:31.20 (1 DQ) **50 Km, Houston, Jan. 11**—1. Alberto Medina 5:20:48 2. Juan Yanes 5:35:56 3. Duane Staley 5:56:27 4. Bruce Logan 6:00:24 **5 Km, same place**—1. Jose Luis Duce, Spain 24:00 2. Alex Chavez (15) 24:01 3. Claudia Ortiz 30:59 **1 Hour, Pharr, Texas, Dec. 27**—1. Tim Seaman 12,647 meters 2. Revor Barron (16) 12,207 3. Chris Tegmeier 11,334 4. Tyler Sorrenson (14) 10,933 5. Matt Forgues (16)

10,494 6. Alex Chavez (15) 10,420 7. Bruno Carrier, Can. (16) 10,221 8. Rachel Lavallee, Can. 10,093 9. Nicolette Sorrenson (13) 9623 10. Christie Bvernier (16) 9412 11. Claudia Ortiz (15) 9155 12. Hannah Kisley (15) 9097 13. Allison Chin (16) 8800 14. Mercedes Mancha (18) 8766 (22 finishers, temperature 94F) **1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, Jan. 2**—1. Tim Seaman 6:11 2. Trevor Barron (16) 6:25 3. Chris Tegmeier 6:31 4. Tyler Sorrenson (14) 6:40 5. Bruno Carrier, Can. (16) 6:47 6. Robert Vergara (18) 6:53 7. Ricardo Vergara (18) 6:54 8. Matthew Forgues (16) 6:55 9. Alex Chavez (15) 6:55 10. Rachel Lavallee, Can. 7:04 11. Tina Peters 7:43 12. Molly Josephs (14) 7:50 13. Nicolette Sorrenson (13) 8:02 14. Hannah Kisley (15) 8:12 15. Claudia Ortiz (15) 8:18 16. Allison Chin (16) 8:26 17. Christie Bernier (16) 8:39 18. Mercedes Mancha 8:43 19. Sarah Kenney (14) 8:58 20. Steven Valdez (10) 9:15 (41 finishers) **5 Km, Pharr, Texas Jan. 3**—1. Im Seaman 21:22 2. Trevor Barron 21:40 Age 16 natioal record and second fastest high school time ever, excceded by Will Van Axen with 21:12.90 in 1991) 3. Chris Tegmeier 22:18 4. Tyler Sorrenson 23:10 (Betters Trevor Barron's National age 14 record of 23:40) 5. Rachel Lavallee 23:40 6. Matthew Forgues 23:54 7. Roberto Vergara 24:11 8. Ricardo Vergara 24:20 9. Alex Chavez 24:40 10. Bruno Carriere, Can. 24:54 11. Alberto Medina 27:01 12. Nicolette Sorrenson 28:00 13. Tina Peters 28:28 14. Allison Chin 28:34 15. Claudia Ortiz 28:53 16. Hannah Kisley 29:37 17. Christie Bernier 30:06 18. Sarah Kenney 30:27 20. Mercedes Mancha 32:38 . . 25. John Knifton (69) 35:04 (44 finishers) **5 Km, Boulder, Col., Nov. 16**—1. Mike Blanchard (47) 27:46 2. Daryl Meyers (65) 30:44 3. Marianne Martino (58) 30:48 4. Sherrie Gossert (56) 31:08 5. Rita Sinkovec (69) 33:49 (17 finishers) **5 Km, Devnver, Nov. 29**—1. Steve Gardner (54) 30:01 2. Daryl Meyers 32:02 **5 Km, Aurora, Col., Dec. 27**—1. Mike Blanchard 32:01 2. Daryl Meyers 32:40 3. Jan Hill (50) 32:47 **2.8 Miles, Seattle, Dec. 13**—1. Ann Tuberg (49) 29:00 2. Stan Chramisski (51) 29:00 3. Rebecca King 30:11 **3000 meters, Lithuania, Dec. 17**—Brigita Virbalyte 12:50.91 2. Neringa Aidityte 13:32.65 **% Km, same place**—1. Tadas Suskevisius 20:11.28 2. Richard Rekest 20:11.78 3. Valerijus Grinko 20:43.18 4. Vilius Mikelhonis 21:01.85 **1 Mile, Alytus, Lithuania, Dec. 23**—1. Neringa Aidityte 7:00 **Men**—1. Richard Rekest 6:18.4 **30 Km, Santry, Ireland, Dec. 20**—1. Francisco Fernandez, Spain 2:07:35 (43:40, 42:50, 41:20:00 on final 5. A step towards a possible try at 50 Km in the spring at the Spanish Championships.) **Under 18 5 Km, Sydney, Australia, Jan. 16**—1. Dane Bird-Smith (116) 20:58.36 2. Zhi Zhang, China 22:10.943. Blake Steele (16) 22:22.71 **Women's Under 18 5 Km, same place**—1. Yanxue Mao (14), China 23:33.83 2. Shannon Jennings 24:20.35 3. Kristie Goznic (16) 25:21.44

Meet Other Bright Faces At these Fine Walking Races

Sun. Feb. 1	Florida State 15 Km, Coconut Creek (B)
Sat. Feb. 7	H.S. Indoor 1 Mile, Cedarville, Ohio (M)
Sat. Feb. 14	2.8 Miles Seattle (C)
	Indoor 3000 meters, Greencastle, Indiana (Q)
Sun. Feb. 15	Ohio USATF Indoor 3000 meters, Ada, Ohio (M)
	USATF National 50 Km, Santee, Cal. (D)
	20 Km, Santee (D)
	5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sat. Feb. 21	Missouri Valley Indoor 3000 meters, Columbia, Mo (N)
	Indoor 3000 meters, Greencastle, Indiana (Q)
Sun. Feb. 22	New England Indoor 3000 meters, Boston (X)
	Indoor 3 Km Mall Championship, Milford, Connecticut ®)

Sat. Feb. 28	USATF National Indoor Men's 5000 meters, Boston 3:55 pm (D)
Sun. March 1	USATF National Indoor Women's 3000 meters, Boston, 4:30 pm (D)
	Indoor 3 Km, Colorado Springs, Col. (H)
Fri. March 6	NAIA College Indoor 3 Km, Men and Women, Johnson City, Tenn.
	Indoor 3000 meter and Under 18 1500 meters, Louisville, Kentucky (V)
Sat. March 14	2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
Sat. March 21	Indoor 3000 meters, Fayette, Missouri (P)
	10 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sat. March 9	Pan American Cup Trials, Men and Women, Pharr, Texas (T)
Sat. March 21	USATF National Masters Indoor 3 Km, Landover, Maryland (D)
Sun. March 22	Marathon and Half-Marathon, Virginia Beach, Va. (U)
Sat. March 28	5 Km men, 3 Km women, Raleigh, N.C.
Fri. April 10	Women's 3 Km, Men's 5 Km, Fayette, Missouri (P)
Sat. April 11	2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)

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2009 IAAF Racewalking Challenge Schedule

March 14-15	Chihuahua, Mexico, Men's and Women's 20 Km, Men's 50 Km
April 4	Rio Maior, Portugal, Men's and Women's 20 Km
April 18-19	Wuxi, China, Men's and Women's 20 Km, Men's 50 Km
April 5	Sesto San Giovanni, Italy, Men's and Women's 20 Km
May 30	Krakow, Poland, Men's and Women's 20 Km
June 6	La Coruna, Spain, Men's and Women's 20 Km

August 15-23	Berlin, Germany, IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Men's and Women's 20 Km, Men's 50 Km
Sept. 19	Saransk, Russia, Men's and Women's 20 Km

The 2008 Racewalking Challenge Series

(Excerpts from Paul Warburton's summary of the 2008 IAAF Challenge Series, which appeared in the IAAF Yearbook.)

At the beginning of the year Jared Tallent was a promising Aussie barely known outside his own country. By the end of September at the end of the sixth IAAF Challenge series in Murcia, he was making his way back to the hotel with kit bag over one arm and one of those giant mock checks for \$30,000 tucked under the other.

Down under, 12,000 miles away, he already had two Olympic medals in the family safe guarded by his new wife. Mrs. Tallent, aka Claire Woods and a fellow Olympian in Beijing, had joked about one of them having to stay home and earn some money. One hopes she was able to take a few days off when her husband arrived back on their doorstep with his cardboard check--and one very real improved bank balance.

The 24-year-old will look back at 2008 as his year--and rightly so. In two tumultuous months, the man who got married in Walkerville (where else?) Claimed Olympic silver in the 50 Km, bronze in the 20 Km--and overall first in the Challenge series on the very last day. The points earned in China set him up nicely to rain on Jefferson Perez's parade in Murcia.

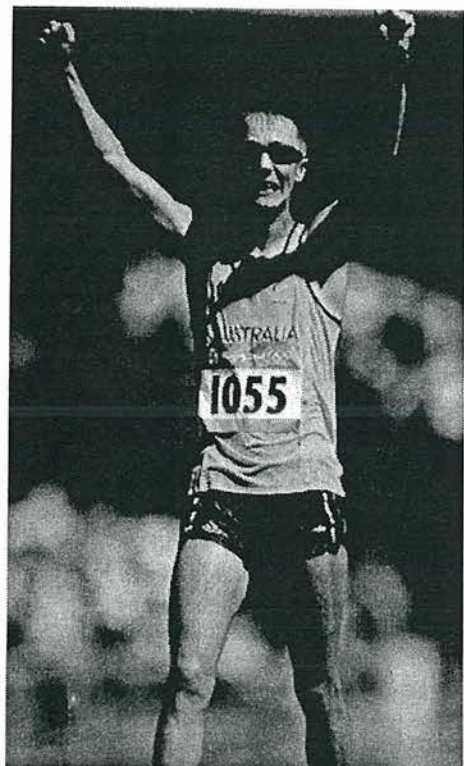
Just as one young walker made the breakthrough--another bid farewell to a sport that made him a national hero back in Ecuador. How many walkers can claim to have had a postage issued in their honor? But since Perez won Olympic gold in Atlanta 12 years ago, he's ridden a wave of adulation with a mixture of humility and gratitude that befits a thoroughly well-liked athlete. At the very end in Murcia, having been passed by Tallent for second in this 20 Km race, the Ecuadorean was still the object of affection for most of the 30,000 spectators in the southern Spanish city. So much so that as he lurched over the line offloading the contents of his stomach, Perez's fans were spilling over the course. The fact that Tallent's late charge reduced Perez's Challenge earnings by \$15,000 to overall second appeared to faze the hero of the hour not a jot.

Whatever it is Kjersti Platzer has mined for herself in determination the double Olympic silver medalist could make a fortune if she rented out directions to the mother lode. It's one thing to come up with a good season, but to be among the best for 22 years is just plain unfair to the rest of us mere mortals.

Last year, the 36-year-old had to be content with second in the Challenge. This time she made no mistake, although at the very end Athanasia Tsoumeleka gave her a run, sorry, walk for her money. Platzer made it four wins on the spin: Chihuahua, Rio Maior in Portugal, Sesto San Giovanni in Italy, and La Coruna in Spain, which probably have been five had she not attended her brother's wedding on the same day as the Krakow race in May. *(Ed. And probably is five now, with Tsoumeleka probably relinquishing her win in this race because of her doping charge reported elsewhere in this issue.)*

At the press conference before Murcia, Platzer broadly hinted that, like Perez sitting alongside her, she too was ready to draw the curtain on an illustrious career. Next season, without Perez and probably Platzer, the world of walking will have lost two of the great ambassadors of the sport, but like Murcia on a sunny September morning, the future's bright with the like of Tallent ready to step into the Challenge breach. *(Ed. Platzer's hint at*

retirement has not come about. She is now resuming training for another season on the Challenge circuit.)



The Challenge Series Winners...Jared Tallen, left, and Kjersti Platzer, right. (IAAF photos)

From Heel To Toe

Tsoumeleka tests positive. As noted above, Greece's 2004 Olympic Champion at 20 Km, Athanasia Tsoumeleka, has failed a drug test. From the Associated Press report: Tsoumeleka tested positive for the banned blood-booster erythropoietin (EPO) in a retest of a sample she provided two days before the opening of the Beijing Olympics. She confirmed that she was told that a retesting of the urine sample she gave on August 6 tested positive for EPO. But she expressed doubts about the second procedure and announced her retirement from competition, effective immediately. "I was informed that there is a problem with a positive test in a sample I submitted on August 6, 2008. I will not try to excuse myself, even though I have not knowingly made use of this substance", she told radio station Skai. "The fact that samples are tested more than once—that is, opened not in my presence—makes me feel uneasy about the whole process. My unfortunate involvement forces me to put an end to the high-level competitive sports I love so much and not wait to continue after the expiration of my expected punishment." We would assume that Tsoumeleka will lose her victory in the IAAF Challenge final and second place finish in the final Challenge Series standings.

Racewalking loses two more devotees. Last month we had to report the accidental death of Bob Fine at the National USATF Convention in Reno. Now we have the following from Elliott Denman: "With great sadness, the Shore Athletic Club announces the passing of its loyal and long-time racewalking star, Bob Falciola. After a long, courageous battle with cancer, Bob passed away on Friday, Jan. 9, 2009, in Florida. He retained his optimism and positive attitude to the very end. Bob competed at races all over the nation, and internationally, and gave it his best shot, whatever the distance, whatever the conditions, whatever the competition. He was a lifetime member of Shore AC and gained that status as a member of Shore AC racewalking teams that won National team championships on many different occasions, always turning in strong, gutsy performances. Bob lived in Sandown, N.H. for the past two decades. He is survived by his wife Julie, daughter Gwen, and other family members. Those who knew or competed against Bob are asked to write their recollections and reminiscences of Bob and send them to Elliottden@aol.com." We remember Bob as a very friendly, but competitive walker, always looking for advice that would help him improve. He competed in many National races through the '70s, with a top finish of third in the 1977 10 Km. A year later he walked his best 10 Km with a 49:50, finishing 10th. Through the years he had eleven finishes in the top 10 and many other top 15s. His best 50 was 4:35:39 when he finished ninth in the 1978 National. The same year he had a 3:36:50 for eighth in the 40. His last National race was the 10 Km in Niagara Falls in 1989. Jim Hanley reports the other death in the ranks of friends of racewalking, which also occurred at the Convention in Reno. On the last night of that meeting, Al Minturn died in his sleep. Jim reports: Al truly believed that sports built character and he spent his entire life shaping the lives of young people through track and field. After the leading the Los Angeles City Schools after school sports program in his professional career, Al became highly involved in USATF events. For many years, he organized the LA City Schools All-comers track meets, in which many top racewalkers first got started in the sport. He traveled all over the world to officiate such meets, most recently at the Masters Championships in Spokane, Wash. The World Masters in Italy, and the Olympic Trials in Eugene. As the Training Chair of USATF, Al set up clinics for the officials including racewalking clinics at the St. Patrick's Day and Rose Bowl races. Several new racewalking officials and judges came into the sport as a result of these events. Al was loved and respected by everyone in his extended track and field family. Like most great officials, he quietly did his job with very little notice by athletes or spectators." . . . **Haluza.** Rudy Haluza, 1960 and 1968 Olympian (see cover) had lung surgery last March, but is doing OK now, as attested to by the October photo. He had a malignant tumor and the upper left lobe removed and underwent nearly 4 months of chemotherapy. He reports he is still walking—slower and not as far—and swimming when the water is warm. He lives in Villa Park, Cal. . . **Two Finnish walkers slated for World Championships.** Finland has pre-selected seven athletes for its World Championship team in Berlin, including 50 Km racewalkers Antti Kempas and Jarkko Kinnunen. Kinnunen was 15th and Kempas 20th in the Beijing Olympics, both well under 4 hours. . . **The Aussie powerhouse.** Australia has long had some individual racewalkers able to compete well on the world scene—Noel Freeman, Robert Gardener, Willi Sawall, Dave Smith, and Simon Baker are ones that come to mind in the period from the '60s into the '90s. But over the last three or four years, Australia has developed cadre of walkers able to compete with the traditional powers of the sport—Russia, Mexico, Spain, Italy—although Australia is a much smaller nation. And as a result, their all-time lists certainly overwhelm what we have been able to do in the U.S.. At 50 Km, they now have two athletes under 3:40, four more under 3:50, and a total of 15 under 4:00. Six of the top twelve on their all-time list recorded their best time from 2006 to date. For the U.S., only Curt Clausen has broken 3:50, and his 3:48:04 trails the top six Aussies.

Actually, no other U.S. walker has bettered 3:55, compared to nine Australians, and we have only nine under 4:00, compared to the 15 Australians mentioned above. At 20 Km, the fastest U.S. walker is Tim Lewis at 1:21:48. Ten Australians have bettered that, with five under 1:20, three of those coming from 2005 to date. We do catch up by the time we look at 1:30–42 U.S. walkers under that mark compared to 41 Australians. I'm not sure exactly what the significance is, but I find these interesting figures. . . **Ladany motors on.** Well, not in a car, but with whatever motor it is that keeps those strong legs covering many, many heel-and-toe miles. Each year, the Israeli ultra-distance ace recounts his activities in a letter to friends and relatives. Here are some excerpts from his December 2008 letter: In February, while walking home from the Omer 10 Km race award ceremony, with a trophy I won in my hand, I tripped over a stone suffering neck problems for a long duration. It caused the ending of my teaching at Rupin College and relieved me from its pressure. . . During the year, I had two undesired walker-bicycle encounters. In April in a 60 Km Ultra Run (I was the sole walker) *(Ed. And apparently ignoring his neck problems)* a bike bumped into me from the front, rolling me down a slope, and in October during a 65 Km Lake Tiberias cycling event, a bike knocked me to the ground from behind. Both times, it was at about midpoint. I was severely injured, but managed to complete my walks. It took two months to recuperate from chest and elbow injuries in the first event and shoulder and knee injuries in the second event. In April, I celebrated my 72nd birthday with a 75 Km walk (as I was walking in Omer on a 5 Km loop). It was followed with the Bilboa IML two-day march (I did it back and forth), and then the 65 Km Lake Tiberias circuit I organize. At the end of May, I completed for the eighth consecutive time the strenuous four-day, 300 Km Paris-Tubize (Brussels) walk relatively easily. The summer routine of the sequence of the 300 Km, seven-day Schleuswig-Viborg (Denmark), the 62 Km, four-day Nijmegen (Holland) marches, mountain training around Zermatt (Switzerland) with climbs to over 3000 meters altitude, followed by the Austrian mountain walks consisting of the 120 Km, three-day event in Knittelfeld, the 173 Km, four-day walk in Tauplitz, and ending with the three-day march in Moedling, were enjoyable during our seven-week outing in Europe. At the end of August, the English version of my autobiography *(King of the Road—From Bergen-Belsen to the Olympic Games)*, published by Gefen and available from Amazon and from www.israelbooks.com reached the market. A pre-publication book-review was published on July 13 in the *New York Times*. Excellent reviews published by the *Ohio Racewalker*, the *Pacesetter*, and the *Independent* (UK).

Beware Viagra. It has been reported that the World Anti-Doping Agency is investigating whether the diamond-shaped blue pills create an unfair competitive advantage in dilating an athlete's blood vessels and unduly increasing oxygen-carrying capacity. If so, the agency will consider banning the drug. Viagra, or sildenafil citrate, was devised to treat pulmonary hypertension or high blood pressure. The drug works by suppressing an enzyme that controls blood flow, allowing the vessels to relax and widen. The same mechanism facilitates blood flow to the penis of impotent men. In the case of athletes, increased cardiac output and more efficient transport of oxygenated fuel to the muscles can enhance endurance. "Basically, it allows you to compete with a sea level, or near-sea level, aerobic capacity at altitude," Kenneth W. Rundell, the director of Human Performance Laboratory at Marywood, said of Viagra. Some experts are more skeptical. Anthony Burch, the director of the Olympic drug-testing lab at U.C.L.A., said it would be "extremely difficult, if not impossible" to prove that Viagra provided a competitive edge, given that the differences in performance would be slight and that athletes would probably take it in combination with other drugs. Scientists have the same uncertainty about the performance-enhancing effects of human growth hormone, though it is banned. But some athletes do not need proof—only a belief—that a drug works before using it. Dr. Butch said, "I think it's going to be a problem." Several years ago, word spread that Viagra was being given to dogs at racetracks, said Travis Tygart, the chief executive of

the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency in Colorado Springs. Interest in the drug among anti-doping experts was further increased by a study conducted at Stanford University and published in 2006 in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*. The study indicated that some participants taking Viagra improved their performances by nearly 40 percent in 10 Km cycling time trials conducted at a simulated altitude of 12,700 feet—a height above general elite athletic competition. Viagra did not significantly enhance performance at sea level, where blood vessels are fully dilated in healthy athletes. A 2004 German study of climbers at 17,200 feet at a Mount Everest base camp, published in *The Annals of Internal Medicine*, found that Viagra relieved constriction of blood vessels in the lungs and increased maximum exercise capacity. At this point, there is no evidence of widespread use of Viagra by elite athletes, Mr. Tygart said. Yet, because the drug is not prohibited and thus not screened for, there is no way to know precisely how popular it is. *(Ed. Apparently it is quite popular for improving performance in another arena alluded to above, impotent or not, although its efficacy, beyond merely helping the impotent, may be as questionable as its effects on athletic performance.)*

Heppner Award Ceremony. The recipients of the 2008 Al Heppner Scholarships awarded by the North American Racewalk Institute were announced in our November issue. They were officially presented on New Year's Eve during the Training Camp in Pharr, Texas. The Scholarships are awarded annually from the Al Heppner Memorial Fund, established in the memory of Al, an outstanding athlete, journalist, and person. The award is made to young athletes who best meet the qualifications of the Fund's protocol. As National Racewalk Chair Vince Peters reports: "Following dinner last at Coach Jaime's home, the 22 athletes involved in this year's camp, along with the coaches, host families, and clinicians, listened attentively as Olympian Tim Seaman and Al Heppner's mom, Evelyn Heppner, reminisced about Al; the athlete, friend, and son. Then, on behalf of the NARI, Evelyn and Tim made the official presentations to Lauren Forgues and Chris Tegtmeier. Lauren, from Boothbay, Maine, and Chris, from Jansen, Nebraska, are both college juniors who qualified for and competed in the Olympic Trials last summer in Eugene, Oregon. Both are also excellent students and in recognition of their achievements received a scholarship grant of \$2,500." Past winners of the Heppner Scholarship are Anne Favoloise, U. Of Wisconsin-Parkside in 2004; Maria Michta, CW Post University in 2005; Patrick Stroup, Central Methodist University in 2006; and Maria Michta again in 2007. Al Heppner, during his career, which ended with his death in 2004, won four National USATF titles at 15 Km, holds the NAIA 5000 meters record of 20:07.38 set in 1995, and had lifetime bests of 41:36 for 10 Km, 1:26:50 for 20 Km, and 3:58:45 for 50 Km. Jack Bray, superb master's racewalker, and founder of the highly successful Marin Racewalkers in California, moved to Wisconsin last year, as we reported earlier. Jack, now wintering in Florida, will be seeking to establish a program in his part of Wisconsin to enhance the strong Wisconsin Parkside of Mike DeWitt. He can be contacted at racewalkjack@gmail.com.

Corrected 2008 U.S. Lists

In the December issue, we published lists of the Top U.S. performers at 20 and 50 Km for 2008 along with our annual rankings. In a sloppy job by your editor, the lists were replete with errors—a few omissions, a few with the wrong best time, several failures on my part to round up when times were reported in hundredths of seconds, and some cases of just typing the time wrong (commonly known as a typo, for which the ORW is famed). Rather than enumerating all of these errors, we are simply publishing the corrected lists (with a nod to the help of Steve Vaitones), as follows:

Women's 20 Km

1:34:15 Joanne Dow
 1:36:19 Teresa Vaill
 1:39:02 Susan Armenta
 1:40:53 Sam Cohen
 1:41:48 Stephanie Casey
 1:42:05 Jolene Moore
 1:44:09 Solomiya Login
 1:45:02 Maria Michta
 1:45:19 Loretta Schuellein
 1:45:37 Sara Standley-Gonzalez

1:45:46 Lauren Forgues
 1:46:15 Kristen Furseth-Mullaney
 1:47:34 Susan Randall
 1:48:40 Carolyn Kealty
 1:49:53 Margaret Ditchburn
 1:50:33 Kelly Wong
 1:52:22 Christina Peters
 1:52:37 Lisa Marie Vellucci
 1:53:10 Cheryl Lemons

Men's 20 Km

1:26:22 John Nunn
 1:27:08 Kevin Eastler
 1:28:20 Matt Boyles
 1:29:17 Patrick Stroupe
 1:31:35 Tim Seaman
 1:32:04 Michael Tarantino
 1:32:13 Allen James
 1:33:16 Ben Storey
 1:33:52 Philip Dunn

1:34:03 Jared Swehosky
 1:34:23 Steven Quirke
 1:34:47 Chris Tegtmeyer
 1:35:00 Charles Collier
 1:36:07 Theron Kissinger
 1:41:46 Richard Luettichau
 1:42:41 Dave McGovern
 1:43:33 Ricardo Vergara

Men's 50 Km

4:05:10 Philip Dunn
 4:14:30 Matt Boyles
 4:18:46 Ben Shorey
 4:22:16 Stephen Quirke
 4:42:00 Ray Sharp
 4:53:39 Marco Evoniuk

5:04:07 Ian Whatley
 5:04:15 Theron Kissinger
 5:10:22 John Soucheck
 5:13:22 Mark Green
 5:17:10 Curt Clausen
 5:20:33 Alberto Medina

New Sub-committee formed

At the National USATF convention in Reno, a group of racewalkers convened to form a new Racewalking Sub-committee under USATF bylaws. Their announced mission is: To provide a dynamic structure for emerging and elite athletes who aspire to future Olympic status by giving a voice to their concerns, focusing on changing outdated procedures, and providing a vehicle for implementing advanced strategies and programs that will help these and future athletes achieve their goals. The announced goals are:

* Support Olympic potential athletes and the entire National Team in their efforts to make World Championship and Olympic Teams.

* Provide athletes quality coaching, housing, training facilities, ongoing medical services, conditioning, psychologists and nutritionists, all of which are the minimum necessary for success of elite athletes preparing for national and international competition.

* Provide up-to-date and current video and bio-mechanical analysis.

* Provide regular access to Olympic Training Centers.

* Provide/acquire international travel funding to gain experience.

* Conduct annual Senior Team camps.

* Utilize the prestige and fame of USA Olympic racewalkers to promote the event.

* Develop professional marketing and sponsorship relationships.

* Develop individual professional skills for benefit in post-competitive years.

* Be dynamic role models for America's youth by promoting an active healthy lifestyle.

* Conceptualize and implement innovative programming and new formats to generate appeal and excitement for sponsors, spectators, and competitors.

The committee has named Dave McGovern as Men's Development Chair, Susan Armenta as Women's Development Chair, and Chris Rael as the National Senior Team Coordinator. Other members of the committee are Philip Dunn, Phillipe Gonzalez, Allen James, Jolene Moore, Ed Richardson, Richard Robert, and Loretta Schuellein McGovern. For further information contact Chris Rael at rael2003@yahoo.com.

Ecuador's Flag Bearer Looks To Second Career

(At the IAAF's season-ending World Athletics Gala, three athletes received Distinguished Career Awards: Swedish high jumpers Stefan Holm and Kaisa Bergquist and Ecuadorean racewalker Jefferson Perez. Here is the IAAF's tribute to Jefferson.)

It is not too much of an exaggeration to call Jefferson Perez a living legend in Ecuador and the announcement of the racewalker's retirement in September led to tears from many of his compatriots. At the World Athletics Gala in November, it was the turn of Perez himself to fight back the tears as he received the Distinguished Career Award.

"This is a tribute to the perseverance, work, love, and constant support of the Ecuadorean people. I am the only representative to the world of a country and culture of extraordinary human beings who are working hard every day to do our best in whatever we do. We are only a small nation in terms of our physical size, but a big one in terms of our strength and love for what we do" said Perez in an emotional speech when accepting the Award.

Perez, 34, put the South American country on the sporting map when he won the 1996 Olympic Games 20 Km gold medal, Ecuador's first Olympic medal of any description in any sport. After finishing fourth in Sydney and Athens, he returned to the podium in Beijing when he got the silver medal.

Jefferson has also won three consecutive 20 Km gold medals at the IAAF World Championships, being first across the line in 2003, 2005, and 2007, and after seven consecutive appearances in the event since he made his debut in 1995, his absence will be sorely felt when the gun goes in Berlin next summer.

"My heart wants to go on but my body can't take another four years of hard work", commented Perez ahead of his last race, the IAAF Racewalking Challenge final in Spain on September 21, where he finished third. Perez has a clear vision of what the future holds for him now that he has retired.

"We have an expression in my country: 'if you're famous you can go to bed', but I'm not like that. This is the start of my work with kids and other important projects. I have a foundation to help children with difficulties. I will also continue with my business. Many people in my country also want to see me in politics, but it might take me some time to be ready for that challenge. Coaching though will not be for me. I was very hard on myself and I know I can't inflict that attitude on other people", added Perez.

* * * * *

Flashing back to the beginnings of this magnificent career. Here is how the Ohio Racewalker described Jefferson's gold medal race in Atlanta 1996.

In an event that launched the 1996 Olympic track and field program, Ecuador's Jefferson Perez won his country's first-ever gold medal in any sport, overcoming a strong field to win the 20 Km racewalk. The 22-year-old Perez, 1992 World Junior Champion at 10 Km, moved away from Russian Ilya Markov in the final 400 meters to score a surprising win in 1:20:07. His effort left Markov, the 1990 World Junior champ, 9 seconds back. Mexico's world record holder, Bernardo Segura, took the bronze, another 7 seconds back.

Perez was not a complete surprise. Certainly, a top-ten finish seemed quite feasible. But a medal was not predicted. A close third behind the Mexicans in the 1994 Pan Am Cup stamped him as one to watch, but he disappointed last year, finishing only 33rd in the World Championships. Earlier this year, he was 11th in the Eisenhüttenstadt race that included most of the world's best. But here, Perez was the only walker among the leaders, if not in the entire race, to better his personal record, which had been 1:20:21....

Chief Judge Martin Rudow describes Perez as a smooth walker in the Mexican mode with lots of shoulder and hip flexibility and a good low arm carriage. Perez reports that in preparing for the Games, he trained alternately in the mountains and the hot beaches near his home. "I was ready for anything the weather could offer", he said. That weather was not as bad as expected; humid, but not as hot as many summer days in Atlanta.

Love of Racewalking

by Jonathan Matthews

(Jonathan Matthews turned from running to racewalking in 1991 at age 34 and quickly found his calling. By 1993 he was on the U.S. World Cup team at 20 Km and the World Championship team at 50. He was the leading U.S. athlete in both events, finishing 41st in the World Cup with 1:31:28 and 19th in the World Championships with 4:02:52. He was also on U.S. World Cup teams in 1995, 1997, and 1999, as well as the 1995 Pan American Games team and 1998 and 2000 Pan Am Cup teams. His best times were 1:24:50 and

4:01:36. Jonathan now lives in Montana and ventures out occasionally to conduct clinics. He wrote this interesting take on the joys of our sport for Elaine Ward's Southern Cal Walkers newsletter.)

Whenever I'm racewalking, I am striving for perfect form. It is one of the things I love about racewalking: there is the athletic-technical challenge of manifesting perfect form while in the midst of the usual envelope-pushing physical exertion found in distance running. The legal requirements of racewalking are literally a source of joy for me, as they establish the exact criteria within which I strive to perfect my craft. Without the rules, there are no criteria for achieving or judging perfection. It is analogous to a particular poetic form, where insight and beauty must be created within the frame established by a certain syllabic structure. It is a gratifying achievement to maximize expression and performance within the bounds of rules and restrictions.

Because of my embrace of the challenges of the racewalking form, I am often more grounded than my competitors, and I have heard that I would be even faster if I were more flighty. However, when I observe the artistry of Jefferson Perez, one of the greatest champions in racewalking history, I know that the fastest racewalking can also be the most legal racewalking. So, when I enjoy the high-quality photo essay that Jeff Salvage has shared I am not surprised to see images that show athletes an inch or few from contact. I don't believe that they are attempting to be slightly off the ground, attempting to gain an unfair advantage. They're simply falling a bit short of perfection. They are striving to go as fast as they can within the constraints of the racewalking form. But if they get too ragged, if they stray too far from perfection, the judges will spot it and their races will end early. While we should all strive for perfection, we cannot, unfortunately, all walk like Jefferson Perez or write sonnets like William Shakespeare. When a walker strays too far from the ideal, the athlete is disqualified; when a poem strains inelegantly against its form it is abandoned or ignored.

By the way, after eight years of retirement, I raced again this year, at age 52, motivated by the fact that the Masters Track Nationals were in Spokane, just a 4-hour drive from home in Helena, Montana. Not having much of a base before I started speed work, I tweaked my right hamstring and wasn't able to do any hard workouts for a month, recovering three weeks before the races. I was able to walk 23:30 for 5 km and 48:30 for 10, the latter being the exact pace I maintained for about four 50 km races in the period between 15 and 10 years ago. It was great fun to be around dozens of racewalkers again. What a great community we have, but not where I live! There are only three other racewalkers in Montana; Steve Gardiner in Billings, a 26-minute 5 Km, my marvelous wife Stephanie, 44, who walked her first 10 Km under an hour at the Nationals, and Steve Harper, 57, a fellow professor at Carroll College—computer science—whom I taught to racewalk and who had a 10 Km PR of 57:51 at the Nationals. See some of you soon!

Knee Straightening Advice

by Bob Carlson, respected editor of the Front Range Walker News, Denver, Colorado

There's no middle ground with the knees in racewalking—they are either straight or bent. If you want to compete, you can't have soft knees, almost straight knees, or only one straight knee. Nor are any excuses such as, "but, I'm over 55 and my knees don't straighten," acceptable. If you want to be a competitive racewalker, USATF rules must be followed. That is, the leg must be straight (not bent at the knee) as the foot makes contact with the walking surface.

There are very few walkers, even older ones, who are unable to straighten their knees while standing still. If there is no structural problem and they can do this, they can train themselves to do it while walking if they are willing to put in the time to do the training that's required.

There's the problem. Some masters walkers are unwilling to take the time and make the effort required to learn knee straightening, so they blame it on bad knees, bad judging, or bad luck. Most likely, it's none of those things. Here are some tips to help straighten your knees.

* Slow down initially to practice correct straight leg technique. Use the pace in which you can straighten your knees perfectly and work from there. If racewalkers would be willing to slow down initially, they would find that they would eventually be faster with good technique than with bent knees.

* Take the time necessary to stretch and work on flexibility of the hamstrings. Tight hamstrings are a limiting factor in knee straightening. As we age, we become less flexible, it becomes a challenge to continually work on flexibility. However, it can be done.

* Stop overstriding. Planting the heel closer to one's center of gravity will result in a straighter knee. Far too many new racewalkers (especially former runners) tend to overstride to the front making it difficult to have a straight knee as the heel contacts the ground.

* Drink enough water! Most walkers do not understand that dehydration is a factor that limits flexibility. Muscles are about 75 percent water. As we age, we need to drink more water to keep up with hydration needs.

* Don't save good technique for the races. Practice knee straightening every time you racewalk at any pace. Some racewalkers think that good technique is important only for the races. Neuromuscular learning is taking place every time you train. Therefore, if you practice with sloppy technique you are teaching your body to get better with sloppy technique. Do all drills, warming up and mobility exercises with good technique and straight knees.

* Above all, stay as relaxed as possible. Body tightness is probably your biggest enemy as you try to attain legal technique. The quadriceps should be flaccid as the heel lands. Looseness in the joints and muscles is the true road to natural and legal technique.

LOOKING BACK

40 years Ago (from the January 1969 ORW)—We boldly predicted that some time before the year 2000, racewalking would get more play during actual sports programming time than in the commercials. I guess that has come about, but probably primarily because there is less use of racewalkers in commercials. During 1968, we had seen a lot more walking with the Winter Olympics (on various commercials) than we did during coverage of the Summer Olympics where Larry Young copped a bronze medal and Rudy Haluza missed the bronze by one spot. . . Young won an indoor 1 Mile in Los Angeles with a 6:41. . . Jim Hanley took a San Francisco 1 Mile in 6:53 and Dave Romansky turned in times of 6:31 and 6:28 in East Coast mile races.

35 Years Ago (From the January 1974 ORW)—John Knifton edged Ron Daniel with a 13:59.6 in the Met AAU 2 Mile and Ron Kulik won a 1 Mile race over Dan O'Connor in 6:46.

30 Years Ago (From the January 1979 ORW)—The National 1 Hour Postal Race was won by Neal Pyke with an American record performance of 8 miles 1021 yards. Toddy Scully wasn't far back, covering 8 miles 807 yards. . . Larry Walker went beyond 8 1/4 miles in third, and Bob Hendrickson also exceeded 8 miles in the hour. . . Scully broke the American indoor record at 1500 meters while winning the Olympic Invitational in New York with 5:40, the third year in a row he had bettered the record at this meet.

25 Years Ago (From the January 1984 ORW)—Canada's Guillaume Leblanc, ranked number 10 in the world in 1983, got the new year off to a fast start with a 1:26:12 for 20 Km in Santa Monica, Cal. Dan O'Connor was just a second behind at the finish and Marco Evoniuk did 1:26:59. Vincent O'Sullivan was fourth in 1:31:43.

20 years ago (From the January 1989 ORW)—Rene Haarpainter covered 13,440 meters in 1 Hour to win a Santa Monica, Cal. Race over Larry Walker (13,019). . . Tim Lewis won a 4.3 mile race in Denver with a 31:24, which was probably a pretty good time and quite likely the fastest ever recorded at the distance. . . In England, Roger Brown won a 100 miler in 17:00:35, nearly 10 minutes ahead of J. Cannell. Sarah Brown won the women's race in 21:11:14. (This was a late-arriving report on a July race.)

15 Years Ago (From the January 1994 ORW)—The Annual ORW World Rankings saw Finland's Ari Essayah on top at 10 Km, Spain's Valentin Massana at 20, and Spain's Jesus Garcia at 50. At 10, Ilcana Salvador, Italy, and Yan Wang, China, were second and third; at 20 it was Daniel Garcia, Mexico and Giovanni deBenedictis, Italy following Massana; and at 50 Valentin Kononen, Finland, and Carlos Mercenario, Mexico, were second and third. . . The U.S. rankings were as follows; 10 Km—Teresa Vaill, Debbie Lawrence, and Debbie Van Orden; 20 Km—Allen Jamcs, Jonathan Mathews, and Doug Fournier; 50 Km—Jonathan Mathews, Herman Nelson, and Andrzej Chylinski. . . Indoor 3 Km races in New York City went to Curtis Fisher in 12:16.58, with Sean Albert less than 2 seconds back, and Tim Seaman in 12:02, followed by Al Heppner in 12:21.2.

10 Years Ago (From the January 1999 ORW)—Gary Morgan was the first racewalker to cross the finish in the Disney Marathon in Orlando, Fla. With a 3:45:35. Cheryl Rellinger won the women's division in 4:12:44. . . Morgan also turned in a 12:20:29 indoor 3 Km effort in Chicago. . . Curt Clausen won an Indoor 3 Km in San Diego with a quick 11:22.4, followed by Tim Scaman in 11:33.7, Al Heppner in 11:37.9, and Philip Dunn in 12:05.6. Margaret Ditchburn won the women's race in 13:15.6. . . Nathan Deakes had a 1:20:15 for 20 Km in Australia, beating Nick A'Hern by 44 seconds.

5 Years Ago (From the January 2004 ORW)—Kevin Eastler and Michelle Rohl won National 30 Km titles in Chula Vista, Cal. Eastler covered the distance in 2:14:44, 2:08 ahead of Al Heppner. Following were Curt Clausen 2:19:07, John Nunn 2:19:39, Sean Albert 2:23:50, and Philip Dunn 2:25:50. Rohl had a 2:38:01 and was the only finisher of four starters in the women's race. . . A week later, Heppner beat Albert over 10 Miles in Pasadena, 1:13:42 to 1:14:03. . . High-schooler Zach Pollinger blistered 1 Mile in 6:27:08 in Providence, R.I.