

The History of Walking
in the
Tidewater Striders, Inc.
1972 – 2009

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Acknowledgments

The sport of walking in the Tidewater Strider organization is but a small area of concentration in the club's activities; however, its history is one that over the years has taken many turns. The body of research constituting Strider Archives from which the history is drawn consists of Minutes of Board of Directors meetings and general meetings, news letters and publications, and correspondence and race flyers covering a span of thirty-three years from 1972 to 2005.

The archives are maintained by Strider President Rich Hildreth, first elected president in 2006. He served in that capacity while the research was in progress and gave me full access to the archives. Without his assistance, the history would not have been possible. I am most grateful to him.

Ada Lester, Editor of The RUNDOWN, the official Strider publication, furnished most of The RUNDOWN monthly issues from 2006 through 2009. Cindy Williams supplied missing issues. As the research was winding down, they provided a vital link.

There is no way I can adequately give enough thanks to Steve Durant and Hartley Dewey, who were essential in setting the project in motion and never wavered in their support and enthusiasm for bringing it to a successful conclusion. Offering the wisdom of their experience, they contributed energetically and creatively to the text. Each ably proofread the history and made poignant recommendations. Errors of commission and omission were alertly brought to my attention.

When further explanation was required beyond recorded Minutes and RUNDOWN articles, I relied on veteran Striders for assistance, chief among them, Dr. Mel Williams. Also allowing me to probe the pages of their memory were Dick Kole, Cindy Williams, Pat Molnar, Curt Aasen, Steve Speirs, Rick Brown, Diane Zinn, Steve Durrant and Hartley Dewey.

Finally, I am indebted to a legion of faithful supporters who introduced me to the sport of racewalking. Without their encouragement through several injuries in two years, I might have tossed in the towel. To Dwight Kane and Maureen Ventrice with whom I took my first walks; to Cindy Williams and Paula Graham, who try in vain to keep me on a proper training regimen; to Nancy Hallingse, who proved to me I could walk twelve miles; and to Dick Kole and Bill Spruill, racewalking comrades who have demonstrated that a variety of injuries need not necessarily prevent a person from making a comeback, I give my sincere thanks for providing this seventy-six year old neophyte walker with the will to keep going.

Introduction

Interest in researching the history of walking in an established highly regarded running club began with a request from world class racewalker Dave McGovern, who learned about the success of Tidewater Strider walkers from men and women who had attended his clinics.

Under the direction of Steve Durrant and Hartley Dewey, Strider Walking Committee Co-chairs, a blueprint aptly titled, "Developing Organized Walking within a Running Club," was forwarded to McGovern in September 2009. I had a hand in writing the presentation.

While checking some of the information provided, I became aware of an interesting story yet untold, the history of how walkers came to be accepted in an environment featuring competitors in a different sport.

Throughout the text, the reader will find references to fitness walking and racewalking. Fitness walking can be anything as simple as parking one's car in the supermarket lot and walking in to shop, or taking a stroll in the park. Fitness walkers usually walk for general health benefits. A spin-off is the improvement of one's cardiovascular fitness, depending on how far and how often one wants to walk. Examples of fitness walks mentioned in race flyers in this history are "1 mile fun walks" and "1 mile health walks."

Novice walkers often associate racewalking with power walking or speed walking. Unlike the latter, however, racewalking has a prescribed technique based on controlled, precise movements. The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAFF) has established two specific rules: (1) The racewalker must be in contact with the ground at all times, and (2) the knee of the supporting leg must remain straight from the time of foot contact with the ground until the next leg passes under the body.

After a brief discussion of the developing years, the next thirty years of the history are divided into decades. The first month of each year in the decade in which a reference is made to walking will include the month and year. The year may not be repeated again until the first reference to walking appears in the next following year.

Quoted references are exactly as reported by board secretaries in Minutes of meetings or by editors in issues of The RUNDOWN. No attempt was made to indicate by "*sic*" that paradoxical words, phrases or grammatical errors are not mistakes and should be read as they appear.

Two histories of the Tidewater Striders have been written. "The Tidewater Striders Track Club, 1972-1990" by Charles Hester appeared on the Eighteenth Anniversary of the club's founding, corresponding to the Fifteenth Anniversary of its incorporation. "History of the Tidewater Striders Track Club, 1972-1997" by Raymond Ochs was written to commemorate the Strider's Twenty-fifth Anniversary. Ochs followed with "Tidewater Striders History (1998)" and "Tidewater Striders History (1999)."

The only reference to walking of any description - fitness walking or racewalking - in the Twenty-fifth Anniversary edition was four lines about Anthony "Cokey" Daman. Ochs wrote,

The December 1996 newsletter would have an article on “Cokey” Daman, a Tidewater Strider celebrating his 78th birthday. Cokey started running at age 58, and has set many records in the 70-74 and 75-79 age divisions in races. He is also a nationally recognized race-walker.

Neither Hester nor Ochs recognized walking as having a place in the Tidewater Striders past. Other than the reference to Cokey Daman, no mention of walking was made even though, as this study will show, sufficient evidence was already available to suggest walking would contribute to the history of the organization.

Ochs recalled how the club started out with a few individuals who had track on their minds, later expanded into road racing, began awarding scholarships, and added triathlons, biathlons, and wheelchair races. Concluding the history, Ochs pondered, “What will happen in the next 25 years is anyone's guess. Who would have imagined something like triathlon and biathlon or wheelchair racing in the same event as runners?”

Indeed! Who would have imagined? One is left to wonder had Ochs paid closer attention to signs already obvious about walking, he might have answered his own question. This is a study of how it happened with all its peaks and valleys.

The Formative Years: 1972-1979

Established in 1972 as Tidewater Striders Track Club, the organization met quarterly in the Old Dominion University Physical Education building. Announcements of meetings and news of upcoming races were in the form of typewritten mimeographed newsletters addressed, "Dear Striders."

Races included the First Annual Tidewater Cross Country Run at Chesapeake College (6 miles) sponsored by the Norfolk Central YMCA; Nature Trail Ten (10 miles); Virginia Beach Rotary Nature Trail Run (10 miles) and the NAS Road Race. Earliest recorded race results of the YMCA Cross Country Run at Chesapeake College on October 14, 1972, included information seldom seen today: "Temperature: 65 degrees, Wind: Negligible."

From a report dated March 17, 1973, we learn the Striders had an active membership of seventy-seven. In a letter to members, Strider President Jerry Bocrie announced a meeting of the Tidewater Strider Track Club would be held on June 23, 1973. "I hope many of the Striders will decide to attend this meeting as our attendance has only been 33% of our total membership."

The first marathon in Virginia was sponsored jointly by the Tidewater Striders Track Club and the Virginia Beach Rotary Club. It was held on St. Patrick's Day in 1973.

The Strider Constitution filed with the State Corporation Commission in October 1975 stipulated in Article II, Purposes, Section I, "The primary purpose of the Striders is to promote and encourage running, particularly long distance running through educational and charitable means." Section II specified, "A secondary purpose of the Striders is to promote other athletic endeavors normally encompassed in Track and Field." It would take fourteen years before walking was specifically added to Section II.

Original Bylaws listed nine standing committees: Race Course Certification, Membership, Women's, Shamrock Marathon, Program, Publications, Public Relations and Publicity, and Training. In addition, three president's committees were listed: Election, Awards and Banquet. Provisions were made for ad hoc committees as needed.

The earliest mention of walking in Strider records appeared in a flyer announcing the 1977 Tidewater AAU Jr. Olympic Track and Field Meet at Bayside High School in Virginia Beach on June 14, 1977. The entry fee was fifty cents per person. Jerry Bocrie and Karl Griffler served as meet directors. The announcement to members included a one mile walk for boys and girls in the Intermediate Division, ages 14-15, and in the Senior Division, ages 16-17.

An interesting notice appeared in the September 1977 issue of "Strider News."

The Tidewater Striders Track Club is going through a period of transition which will ultimately serve to benefit each individual club member. The club is in the process of changing its leadership organization from the current one to one of governing by council, much the way local governments are run.

The first meeting of the Strider Executive Council was held on December 22, 1977, at the home of President Bob Jennings. The council consisted of the president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, membership chairman, publicity chairman, women's representative, meet coordinator and assistant meet coordinator.

A proposed revision to the Strider Constitution appeared in the February 1979 “Strider News.” President Dr. Melvin H. Williams, Director, Human Performance Laboratory in the Old Dominion School of Education Division of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics, wrote,

The constitution is designed to meet the needs of an ever expanding membership. It is not perfect to cover all points of issue, but it does give us a better structure than the current constitution and is flexible enough to provide for action on matters not implicitly covered.

A hand written report of the minutes of the club meeting on March 3, 1979, consisted of five lines:

New constitution brought before
the members for discussion & voting,
passed with no dissenting votes.
Committee reports made.
Shamrock update.

Article II, formerly known as “Purposes” was changed to “Objects,” and were listed as follows:

A. The object of the association shall be the promotion and encouragement of running (particularly long distance running), and whenever feasible track and field participation.

B. In furtherance of objective “A” this club may hold championships, races and social events; print and publish newsletters, make awards; and do other such things as may be incidental to or conducive to the encouragement of running.

C. Other objective is to make known by appropriate means the benefits of long distance running and jogging and to coordinate with other agencies advocating running as a means of physical fitness.

Although walking was not specifically mentioned, “jogging” appeared for the first time in the language of the Strider Constitution. The door had been left ajar.

Lighting the Torch: 1980-1989

The “Strider News,” which ran from October 1975 - March 1979 was succeeded by the “Tidewater Strider Newsletter” from April 1979 - February 1981, which became “The Rundown” in March 1981 printed in magazine form. No reports of meetings of the Strider Board of Directors in the early 1980s were found in Strider archives.

Early editions of The RUNDOWN consisted of letters to the editor, race flyers and race results, news of the annual banquet and reports from Striders competing in major marathons. Articles on sports nutrition by Dr. Mel Williams greatly enhanced the literary quality of the publication.

The strong presence of women in the Tidewater Striders was evidenced by regular meetings of the Tidewater Strider Women. Men were invited to the meetings. Ads began to appear in The RUNDOWN in December 1983.

The first mention of an activity other than running or jogging in Tidewater Strider Minutes appeared in June 1986. President Dave McDonald welcomed two members from the Tidewater Triathlon Club, and a general discussion ensued about the possibility of merging the two clubs. A seed had been planted. Fourteen years after the Tidewater Track Club was founded, the Strider Board of Directors considered supporting another activity.

The following entry appeared in Minutes of the Strider board meeting on October 21, 1986, President Dave McDonald presiding: “Dave informed the board that Pembroke Mall is establishing a walking course. A walking group will be formed as part of the Striders. He spoke of the walking course at Military Circle. Pat Molnar said there was also one at Tower Mall.”

Pat Molnar became a competitive walker in 1986. He was the first Strider walker elected to the Board of Directors.

Dave McDonald was re-elected president at the January 1987 board meeting. Each board member spoke briefly about the new year. Minutes indicate McDonald spoke on “the need for walking programs, possibly dog walks.”

An eight month hiatus followed when no discussion of walkers or racewalking took place at Strider board meetings. The silence was finally broken at the board of directors meeting in October 1987. Minutes of the meeting noted, “Executive Director Charlie George talked about a walking brochure and the promotion of race walking.” Unfortunately, his remarks were not recorded. It had been ten months since Dave McDonald was quoted as telling the board, “A walking group will be formed as part of the Striders.” Could the momentum be sustained? It would not take long to find out.

At the March 1988 board meeting, McDonald stated, “The Trails Association of Virginia Beach wants to help promote trails for running, biking, and walking.” Two months later, program Chairman Ed Brinkley reported a running and walking clinic would take place at 6:00 p.m. on June 23 at Foreman Field, Old Dominion University, in Norfolk. When the board met in June, President McDonald elatedly reported 81 people turned out for the clinic at ODU. Pat Molnar, who assisted with the program, recalled, “It was a very successful evening. Everyone was enthusiastic about what they saw and heard.”

Clearly President McDonald, an elite Strider runner, was energized by the potential of a small but dedicated walking group within the Tidewater Strider Running Club. On August 15, 1988, he wrote to Strider board members urging them to turn their attention to the future and to consider programs or suggestions which have been “waiting in the wings.” Understanding diverse attitudes among Strider members to untried programs, McDonald was moved to write:

All of our members need to realize that we are all volunteers, and we do make mistakes. Criticism can be for the betterment of the club if those who complain are willing to pitch in. As board members we are the “doers” of the club. We are the leaders, but we can't do it alone. By cultivating sponsorship of our events, and by encouraging members to assist us with Strider programs we can continue to have a successful, innovative, and dynamic organization.

He went on to address issues and programs, among them, membership.

Membership should be a major priority. Everyone should pitch in. Growth can only happen through attracting

1. Walkers
2. Youth.
3. Military.
4. Triathletes.

While membership growth is important, attracting walkers topped the list.

Regarding a separate matter of importance to the president, McDonald referred specifically to the Pembroke Striders.

Pembroke Striders should be a reality by the end of this year. This walking club, based at Pembroke Mall, should be the prototype of other Strider-related walking programs. The cost of joining will be \$15, with members receiving a club shirt and plenty of extras, including becoming a member of the Tidewater Striders. I see the potential for gaining a good number of new members. I could use some help here.

A general meeting was held on October 15, 1988, at the Holiday Inn Portsmouth to vote on proposed major changes to the Constitution. Present and voting were 43 out of a membership of 1,750. Among the changes, the purpose of the organization as set forth in Article II, Section II, would include promoting walking and triathlons.

On behalf of the Constitution Committee, Chairman Pat Molnar, a racewalking advocate, presented fourteen changes to the Constitution. Minutes of the meeting recorded by Strider Board Secretary Kathleen McAllister-Morgan noted the five member Constitution Committee “...spent endless hours revising, rewriting and updating the old Constitution to come up with these changes. Questions concerning the Constitution and other questions and remarks bearing no association to the Constitution were taken from the floor.”

At one point, Greg Eck asked the board to provide him with a membership list. Minutes note, "A lengthy discussion ensued." The vote to adopt the changes was 30 in favor, 13 opposed. A three-fourths vote in favor was necessary to adopt. Proposed changes failed by three votes. Walkers and triathletes would wait for another day and a kinder mindset.

If Jerry Bocris is considered the "Father of the Tidewater Strider Track Club," as the "Strider News" proudly suggested in November 1977, Dave McDonald is the esteemed "Father of Racewalking."

With unmistakable vision, Dave McDonald championed the cause for walking. His place in the history of Strider racewalking is firmly etched. Few Strider presidents, before or after, had to contend with stronger personality conflicts which, by the narrowest of margins, prevented walking from being recognized by the established running community. But that would soon change.

If there was any mention of the conflict at the general meeting in October, it was not recorded in the Minutes of the November Board of Directors meeting.

Although Patrick Molnar may have been disappointed with the outcome of the general meeting, he was not done in. Pat placed second in the 1 mile 1988 Turkey Trot, earning the distinction of becoming the first Strider racewalker to medal in the first legitimate racewalk in Strider history.

Nor would Cokey Daman stand idly by while Striders debated the efficacy of excluding walkers from the Constitution and Bylaws. At the Board of Directors meeting on December 19, 1988, Cokey announced a meeting for racewalk judging on January 8, 1989, at the Chesapeake General Hospital. He followed with a recommendation that 2 mile, 5K and 10K racewalks should be added to the usual 1 mile race in Strider events. Regarding Strider media coverage, Cokey suggested the word "racewalk" be substituted for "walk" and for Striders to begin considering racewalking as a sport instead of a casual "fun run."

In 1989, prior to becoming a walker, Cokey was voted the top runner in the United States in the 70-74 age group, an honor repeated again five years later in the 75-79 age group.

Oddly enough, Cokey became interested in walking while he was amassing records as a runner. It happened one hot summer day in a local race appropriately named "Too Hot to Trot." Cokey was 69 at the time. Midway through the race he decided it was, in fact, too hot to trot, and he walked most of the way to the finish line. Cokey then began reading about racewalking. The rest is history. He went on to win USA Track and Field National Masters Championships in 10K, 20K, 30K, 40K and 50K racewalking events. Cokey still holds the U.S. Masters National Record in the 70-74 AG for the 50K racewalk with a time of 6:18:14, set on March 5, 1989, in Atlanta GA.

Cokey's proposals represented a giant step forward for an organization that thirty days previously had rejected the addition of racewalking to its sponsored activities. Unfortunately for Cokey, however, whatever impact he may have made the night of December 19, 1988, was overshadowed by a major scandal about to boil over.

Following Cokey's recommendation, the audit committee presented its report to the board of directors. A shortage of \$20,852.80 had been discovered in the treasurer's books, and there was more to come. Details of the scandal rocked the Tidewater Strider organization, which bent but did not break. Minutes of board meetings for the next six months describe the subsequent turmoil in detail. Restitution of embezzled funds was priority number one on the

agenda of board meetings. Life did go on, however. Elections of officers were held. Committees worked. Races took place, and awards were presented.

Coming on the heels of the rejection of Dave McDonald's visionary plan for the future of walking in the Strider organization, 1989 was a pivotal year for walkers and racewalking.

Announcement of a free program, "Techniques for Racewalking" appeared in the January 1989 RUNDOWN. Distances included a 1 mile fitness walk, one-half mile walk for youngsters 8 and under, one-half mile walk for 9-12 year-old boys and girls, and a 2 mile Tidewater Strider racewalk event. Clinics were given before and after the walks and included slide presentations and videos. Becky Hanna served as walk director and Cokey as walk coordinator.

Also in January RUNDOWN, an article by Dave McDonald called walkers' attention to the kickoff of the Pembroke Striders Walking Club. "It has been on the drawing board for two years, but the Tidewater Striders are finally ready to unveil their walking club, the Pembroke Striders, on February 18th." McDonald continued:

The primary objective of the Pembroke Striders is to further support walking for fitness and competition. The club is an offshoot of the Tidewater Striders, opening the door for new members to join the Striders who are interested in walking, (a slow form of running). The members joining the Pembroke Striders will receive the same benefits as Tidewater Strider members. There will also be a new column appearing frequently in the RUNDOWN devoted specifically to walking, including walking events, walking tips, seminars and health screenings, and new happenings with the Pembroke Striders.

It was announced that on February 18th the first 200 walkers to join the Pembroke club, and members would receive discounts from participating Pembroke Mall merchants. The article concluded by naming the co-sponsors of the Pembroke Striders Walking Club: Etonic, Sentara Leigh Hospital, Hofheimer's Pembroke Mall, and the Tidewater Striders. Cokey Daman was listed as Walking Club Coordinator.

As luck would have it, on the morning of February 18, potential new walking members found themselves stranded at home by an overnight twelve inch accumulation of snow, which shut down the City of Virginia Beach and closed the mall. "Even still," reported Cokey, "a few die-hards, about 20 people, braved the inclement weather, became members, and were treated to a modified opening with a walking demonstration and a walk-thru of the one-half mile course."

At the board meeting on February 20, 1989, Dr. Mel Williams, Chairman of the Strider Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented the first major breakthrough for walkers. A draft proposal was set forth by the chairman for a slight change in the wording of the Constitution, Article II, "Purposes," Section II, to read: "Secondary purposes of the Striders are to promote participation in other athletic endeavors such as Track and Field, WALKING and TRIATHLONS."

Changes in Bylaws were also proposed. Article II, "Purposes," Section I, provided for the Striders to "undertake such functions in order to promote running, TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS, WALKING AND TRIATHLONS." Bylaws Article XI, "Committees," provided for six new standing committees, including a Walking Committee.

Dr. Williams conjectured the process of adopting the new proposals would take six months. At the March meeting of the board, he indicated additional proposals to change the Constitution and Bylaws had been received from several board members. A discussion ensued about input from the general membership. Dr. Williams stated that all Tidewater Striders may offer changes and suggestions.

A second draft of proposals to the Bylaws was presented by Dr. Williams in May adding Section XII, specifically setting forth the duties of the Walking Committee. "The duties of the walking committee shall be to promote and encourage walking, including race walking and walking for fitness through educational and charitable means."

Veteran racewalkers were quick to react to the heightened level of interest resulting from Dr. Williams' proposals. Cokey Daman and Becky Hanna wasted no time organizing monthly racewalking clinics and walks at the Lifestyle Plus Fitness Center at Chesapeake General Hospital. In the March 1989 RUNDOWN, Walking Coordinator Cokey reported on the results of the first clinic in February.

A group of about 50 people of all ages was present and shown the techniques and told of the many health benefits of racewalking. Regis Dandar, the area premier racewalker, conducted the clinic handsomely with the help of Bob Gailbraith and Wayne Talasky, both very gifted racewalkers.

A low key racewalk was conducted in the parking lot later and all had a chance to put their newly found sport into action. Much enthusiasm and interest was shown and I'm sure we will see them in future races.

Four upcoming walks were listed: March 18, Shamrock 5K Walk, Virginia Beach; April 8, KDH for Children 1M Walk, Norfolk; May 13, Point of View 1M Walk, Virginia Beach; May 27, Cancer Society 1M Walk, Portsmouth. Each subsequent RUNDOWN updated the list. With few exceptions, walks were 1 milers. Walkers were encouraged to bring their friends. It was only a matter of time before sponsors and race directors would realize there was a future for longer racewalking distances in Tidewater Strider events. In the meantime, Cokey continued to extol the benefits of a good walking program in each issue of The RUNDOWN. In May, Cokey reported, "... we now have over one hundred walking members and growing every day."

April 1989 board Minutes included the copy of a two-page press release on Strider letterhead announcing the official ribbon cutting of the opening of a half-mile walking circuit in Pembroke Mall. The release stated in part,

The objectives of the Pembroke Striders, a division of the Tidewater Striders, is to further support walking for fitness and competition for people of all ages. Members joining the Pembroke Striders will receive the same benefits as Tidewater Strider members. The Tidewater Striders will institute a special column in their monthly newsletter, the Rundown, specifically

geared toward walking. The column will include a schedule of walking events, walking tips, seminars and health screenings.

Cokey Daman and Dave McDonald were listed as contacts for additional information.

Advertised in the June RUNDOWN, Chesapeake General Hospital became the sponsor of the Lifestyle Fitness Center, "Too Hot to Trot" summer walking series. It was the first walking series in Strider history, and took place each Thursday in July. The cost was \$2.00 per walk and \$5.00 for all four walks. The race flyer advertised the series for "fun and fitness." Becky Hanna served as walk director, and Cokey, as Strider walk coordinator.

The following month, Cokey made the point of writing, "These are strictly fitness walks, not racewalks. We expect many veteran walkers to be in attendance who will be happy to assist anyone on the proper form for fitness walking so that one may get more health benefits and pleasure from your daily walks."

From May through August 1989, each issue of The RUNDOWN published results of a December 1988 general membership survey. Objectives of the survey were (1) to give members an opportunity to express their opinions, (2) to give Strider decision makers guidance for the future, (3) to give members an opportunity to provide directors with sensitive information, (4) create a better line of communication, and (5) give volunteers an opportunity to be heard.

The survey, authored by David W. Harrison, RUNDOWN Editor, consisted of four sections. Each section included a series of questions. Of particular interest for this study is Part 4 - "Constitution Section." Regarding the question of broadening the purposes of the Striders to include walking, 58.4% voted in favor and 26.9% opposed. The balance of the voters were "possibly" in favor (7.1 %) and 7.6% gave no response. On expanding Strider purposes to include racewalking, 64 % were in favor, 18.3% against, 10.2% possibly in favor and 7.6% remained silent. No indication was given of the number of surveys distributed, which were mailed with election ballots; however, the editor noted he had received 196 responses, which he considered a success.

Several factors undoubtedly contributed to the overwhelming support for walking. Foremost was the logical reasoning espoused by Dr. Mel Williams in making uncomplicated changes to the Strider Constitution and Bylaws. Cokey Daman, a prolific writer, articulated the case for fitness, walkers and racewalking with the running community by timely articles each month in the RUNDOWN. Together, Cokey, Dave McDonald and Becky Hanna devoted incalculable hours in the field with hands-on demonstrations, fitness walks, racewalks, videos and clinics. It must also be assumed that steady growth in membership of the Pembroke Strider Walking Club, reported by Cokey in the December RUNDOWN to have reached 130, was a contributing factor.

The front cover of the October RUNDOWN gave walkers a sense of immense pride with the announcement of the first 10K walk in a Tidewater Strider Grand Prix event. The occasion was the 12th Annual Burger King Turkey Trot at Mt. Trashmore with recognition for men and women in all age categories.

The race took place under adverse conditions. Reporting in the December RUNDOWN, Cokey wrote, "Cold, blistery winds greeted the brave, but enthusiastic racewalkers Thanksgiving morning, participating in the first 10K racewalk held in Virginia. I'm sure for many walkers it was their very first racewalk, especially at the demanding 10K distance."

He thanked the volunteers who made it possible, including the folks who served hot coffee, donuts and fruit before and after the race; the lap counters; course judge Bill Bernard; and race director Dave McDonald, without whose efforts “this race would not have existed.” Cokey concluded:

Walkers - we now know it can be done. The race was a positive move in the right direction and I now truly believe in a matter of time, racewalking will become bigger and better for all our members. Let your voice be heard-what we want from our club. My random talks with club members (walkers) is that they want more racewalking events, not just one (1) milers, but longer and more challenging distances as in our running events. Once a month racewalks, independent of the running events, have been strongly voiced.

Express your views and desires, and with your help and participation walking programs can be a success, one we can all be proud of.

The 80s ended on a positive note. In an accompanying article captioned “Walking Through the 90's,” Cokey observed, “ ... As responsible adults, we must all be concerned about the physical fitness of our children (grandchildren), since the latest statistics show it is on the decline. This is my dream - that the decline in the health and fitness of our youth be turned around in a positive direction.” He called on walkers to work with elementary schools as early as first grade to start a walking program, because as kids develop they will become healthier, gain confidence and improve self esteem. “The torch is there,” he wrote, “lit and ready for someone to carry it so that our next generation and future ones will be healthier and better ones.”

Guarded Optimism: 1990-1999

Buoyed the previous year by proposed changes in the Constitution and Bylaws and completion of the first 5K and 10K racewalks in Strider history, the walking community approached the New Year with guarded optimism. After waiting fifteen years, it appeared walkers now had a place at the table. Becky Hanna was named Walking Committee Chair.

Appearing for the first time with an attractive glossy cover, the January 1990 issue of The RUNDOWN was a skillfully re-designed magazine. At the bottom of the front cover was the inscription, "The Monthly Newsletter of the Tidewater Striders, One of the Nation's Largest Running Organizations." Publications befit the club.

Racewalker results were published for the first time. The Jingle Bell two mile race for walkers in Chesapeake on Sunday, December 17, 1989, attracted fifty-four walkers ranging in age from 4 to 79, including nineteen men, thirty-two women, and three youngsters under twelve. Martin O'Brien, 33, finished first overall in 18:42. The cost to enter the race was \$3.00, or \$2.00 per person for a family of 3 or more. Interestingly, the 5K Jingle Bell Run in 1989 was held in Norfolk and had 437 finishers. For Strider walkers, at least it was a start, albeit a distance away from their running friends.

Announcing a 5K walk at Mount Trashmore on February 17, 1990, Cokey wrote to his fellow Pembroke Striders,

Medals will be presented to the various age groups winners (3 deep) starting at age 18 through 60. This is great! So please support the race and show Race Directors and future Race Directors that this is what we want and need to have for a good Walking Club.

We want to keep our Walking Club as an ongoing, thriving Club, so when you're notified by the Tidewater Striders that it's time for your renewal, please do so. We all need your continuous support.

At the February meeting of the Tidewater Striders Board of Directors, Walking Committee Chair Becky Hanna reported she was working on the status of the Pembroke Striders and would be contacting Sentara Leigh to determine if they have any interest in coordinating the effort. Becky also indicated her intention to speak with Cokey about continuing his waking column in The RUNDOWN.

Not everyone in the Pembroke Strider Club, however, was happy with club rules. The following month a letter to the editor from Terrell Johnson addressed his dissatisfaction. Mr. Johnson said he was a walker rather than a racewalker and had been walking "religiously" for two years. A Pembroke Strider for one year, he was considering not rejoining because he objected to paying \$6 - \$10 to participate in one mile walks which accompany the runs. "As far as rewards," he wrote, "I can not see paying \$6 to \$10 for a ribbon, maybe a T-shirt, but you don't get those unless you pay \$6 more or are participating in the runs."

Discontent followed, and apparently Cokey began losing interest in the Pembroke group. At the Tidewater Strider Board of Directors meeting in March, the secretary recorded, "Becky reported that Cokey is no longer interested in writing articles for the Rundown on walking. She is gathering information on the status of the Pembroke Striders group."

In the July RUNDOWN, Becky reported on her meeting with the Pembroke Striders. Notice of the meeting had been sent to the 125 group members. Ten members attended the meeting with representatives from mall management. The euphoria of the past two years had begun to ebb.

In her report Becky noted, “The general response from those in attendance was that they did not need the Striders to help organize their walking.” Undoubtedly, Cokey sensed a similar feeling among Pembroke walkers. Becky further informed the board that she will be focusing her efforts on fitness and racewalking and that she was assembling a committee to assist her.

Few Strider races in 1990 included walking events, and in those that did, the walk was a one mile walk for adults and a one mile “fun walk” for children.

Cokey continued to racewalk and report to The RUNDOWN. On July 9, 1990, he wrote to Rundown Editor Paul Steele that he had competed in the TAC/USA 10K National Racewalk Championship in Niagara Falls, New York, and won the National Championship in the 70-74 age group in a time of 1 hour and 42 seconds, setting a national record which had not been broken since 1980. The race attracted 128 racewalkers from 28 states.

Evidence that racewalking included younger members of the Strider organization appeared in the August-September issue of The RUNDOWN. On August 4, William-Jesse Leggett participated in the National TAC/USA Youth 5,000 meter racewalk championship in Durham, North Carolina. William-Jesse finished second in his age group (13-14) with a time of 30:29. Later the same day, he racewalked in the 5K open division and finished first in the 19 and under age group and 11th overall. The open division featured several members of the U.S. Olympic team.

The following note appeared in the September RUNDOWN from Strider President David W. Harrison: “Strider racewalkers Frankie Spurling, Pat Molnar and Cokey Daman assisted in the informal judging at the Too Hot to Trot Summer Walking Series. Though not connected under formal guidelines of TAC, the series was a great success for racewalkers and walkers alike.”

The races took place each Thursday in July at the Life Style Fitness Center at Chesapeake General Hospital and were the forerunner of the Summer Series at Norfolk Botanical Garden.

At the November meeting of the Board of Directors, Cokey presented information about course marshalling for walking events. Revised racewalking “Policies and Procedures” were approved by the board.

In December, Mitchell Broudy took over as Walking Committee Chair.

For the first time in Strider history, two announcements in the January 1991 RUNDOWN announced a 5K event for both runners and walkers.

Winter 5K RRCA Challenge

“Go for Gold”

A Tidewater Striders Grand Prix Event

and

Winter 5K Walk

Every runner received an award. For walkers, the top two finishers in various age groups received medals. Also, for the first time a race flyer included separate boxes for runners and walkers to check indicating their category of participation. A flyer for the race at the Jewish Community Center in Newport News featured a 5K run and 5K walk, the latter to be judged on a 1 mile closed loop course.

To most sponsors, however, 5K racewalks in 1991 appeared little more than a curiosity.

- The Blair Clipper Classic sponsored by Sentara Norfolk General Hospital featured a 1 mile fun run/walk and 5K run.
- Holy Trinity School sponsored the Annual Ocean View 5K run and 1 mile family walk.
- The 1991 Neptune Festivals sponsored by Virginia Beach General Hospital included a wellness walk at 8:00 a.m., 1 mile fun run at 8:30 a.m., and 5k run at 9:00 a.m.

The one exception was the 2nd Annual Race Over Water on the East Coast's Longest Fishing Pier sponsored by the Newport News Branch of the YMCA, which included a 10K run at 9:00 a.m., 5K run at 10:15 a.m. and 5K walk at 11:00 a.m.

The earliest published race results for multiple walkers appeared in the April 1991 RUNDOWN. A one mile walk took place on March 23 at Creeds Elementary School and drew seven male and five female walkers.

1st Place Male: Harry Watson, Age 49, Time: 08:54

1st Place Female: Lori Bartles, Age 33, Time: 11 :29

Oldest Male: James Hagler, Age 74, Time: 19:36

Oldest Female Mary Harper, Age 78, Time:15:18

Walkers could always count on Cokey Daman reporting to The RUNDOWN whenever he competed in a racewalking event out of town. Who better than Cokey to represent Tidewater Striders? Nationwide, his record as a racewalker only served to enhance the Strider reputation whose primary purpose was to promote running.

In October, an ebullient Cokey sent a note to RUNDOWN Paul Steele. It was published in a column aptly titled; "Striders on the Road." Cokey informed Paul he competed in the Carter's Grove "very hilly" 10K walk, setting a personal record in 59:49, breaking his national record by 53 seconds in 70-74 age group. "The time would not go into the record books," said Cokey, "because it was not a judged race."

At the November Board of Directors meeting, it was reported "Cokey Daman wants to conduct walks after several Strider race events. K.E. said this was up to the host sponsor. Striders will see what they can do to promote walking." ("K.E." was K.E. Morgan, Advisory Committee chair person.)

As 1991 came to an end, walkers had to be concerned that changes proposed to the Strider Constitution and Bylaws two years earlier had not been acted upon. In addition, Cokey's success in distance races notwithstanding, 5K and 10K racewalks in Strider sponsored events were still foreign to Strider thinking.

Signs in 1992 indicating the sport of walking in the Tidewater Striders was running out of steam gradually became more acute and continued throughout the balance of the decade.

Three different Walking Committee Chairmen had limited success in mustering support for walking in 1992. In January 1992, Bill Leggett, Secretary of the Strider Board of Directors, recorded, "Mitch Broudy will work with Cokey Daman."

It was a frustrating time. In a conversation with Steve Durrant reported in "Developing Organized Walking within a Running Club," Mitch related, "I'm not going to say walking was not tolerated. It just took time to integrate the Strider culture."

In May, Al Morris followed Mitch as committee chairman. After three months, Al was replaced by Dan Hurley.

At the September board meeting the secretary reported, "Dan hasn't spoken to Cokey Daman yet. He has spoken to his son. Dan wants to know how intent the Striders are in promoting walking. Striders must promote educational aspects of walking and physical fitness." Dan's report to the board the following month indicated a walk across the James River Bridge was under consideration.

At the November board meeting, Dan introduced Lillian Benson, who spoke on behalf of the James River Bridge Walk. Mike Kessler, an official with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation was also introduced. Mrs. Benson asked the board for assistance in organizing a walk across the bridge. She said she had participated in a walk on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in which 80,000 people were involved.

Strider Director K.E. Morgan suggested they might have a hard time closing both lanes of the James River Bridge, but said he will see what is involved "through his connections." Nothing more would be heard about a walk across the James River Bridge.

The year ended on a disheartening note for walkers. In the Strider service directory published in the December RUNDOWN, the position of Walking Committee chair was open.

Throughout most of 1993, the Walking Committee chair remained vacant, although periodically news about races open to walkers would appear in The RUNDOWN. Minutes of the March Board of Directors meeting indicate a "general discussion on walking" took place. No details were included.

Minutes of board meetings in 1993 were typewritten and are part of Strider archives. Editing of the Minutes by RUNDOWN staff was discontinued, and Minutes in newsletters are copies of actual Minutes recorded by the secretary at board meetings.

In the July, August, and September RUNDOWN, the following notice appeared:

The Striders are seeking someone to be a Teams Committee Walking Coordinator to keep area personnel informed of walking events of all types. If interested please call Ray Ochs at 496-9556. Anyone interested in becoming a walking official, Paul Chyria has IAAF and US Track and Field walking manuals to qualify you to become one of few and elite walking officials.

Reporting for the Walking Committee at the July board meeting, Ray Ochs stated, "The Junior Olympics needs volunteers. If anyone is interested in the AAU walking meet

(7/17/93), contact Bill Barco. Also, on 7/17 the youth walking championship and Senior Championships will be held.”

The September RUNDOWN included a special notice. “Attention runners and walkers. Mark your calendars for Saturday, Oct 16, 1993, for the Knights of Columbus 12th Annual 5K run and 1 mile walk.”

In October, the announcement of the 16th Annual Turkey Trot included a “1 mile Health Walk.” It should be noted that several subsequent race flyers included 1 mile health walks to attract fitness walkers. The December RUNDOWN made no mention of a Walking Committee chair. The year ended as it had begun.

Dennis Hughes was listed in the January 1994 RUNDOWN as Walking Committee Chair, although committee reports were not submitted to the board of directors for twelve months. In May, however, an article appeared in The RUNDOWN extolling the benefits of walking. The four column article, titled “Try Walking” was written by Dennis Hughes, *Walking Coordinator*. Hughes concluded by writing:

I hope I have aroused some curiosity and invite all walkers and wanna-be's to an informal clinic/workout at Salem Middle School on Lynnhaven Parkway on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. I will be more than happy to discuss all aspects of walking ranging from fitness walking to race walking and answer any questions you may have.

The invitation to attend Hughes' Tuesday and Thursday workouts was repeated in the June RUNDOWN. The turnout for clinics and workouts at Salem Middle School was not reported.

Throughout 1995, race flyers in The RUNDOWN continued to link walking with fitness. In rather confusing language the Shamrock Sportsfest publicized a 5K Fitness Walk at a cost of \$22. “5K Race & Fitness Walk offers you a chance to stretch your legs for 3.1 miles to the oceanfront and then back to the grand finish inside the Pavilion” exclaimed the flyer. “Race Walkers will be timed and judged.”

“The President's Corner,” a new monthly feature, was introduced in the March 1995 RUNDOWN. Betty Belknap became the first Strider president to submit a message. From the time presidents' messages began appearing, rarely have Strider presidents mentioned walkers or racewalking.

The board of directors heard little from the Walking Committee in 1995 or 1996. Generally, race flyers did not include walking as part of the event. A notable exception occurred in the July 1996 RUNDOWN in a notice addressed to race directors. The notice was repeated in the next four consecutive issues.

The Tidewater Striders would like to get a list of all the area races which have walking events so that a schedule can be produced for those club members interested in walking. If your racing event is planning on having a walk or race walk, please contact Dennis Hughes. Races with walks:

8/3 Norfolk - Run for Sight, 1 mile

9/21 Portsmouth - Maryview Medical Center,

Knights of Columbus, 1 mile

10/11 R.A.T. Race, 1 mile

10/19 Virginia Beach, 1 mile

The malaise for walkers continued in 1997. For the first five months of the year no mention was made of a Walking Committee at board meetings or in The RUNDOWN. Results of a survey announced in the May RUNDOWN added insult to injury. Members were asked how they felt about membership fees, the newsletter, Grand Prix awards program, races (number and variety), programs/general meetings, banquets, socials, teams, trash pickup/community service, marketplace, scholarship programs, and youth programs.

Regarding the number and variety of races, 51 % responded they were “good,” 28% were “satisfied,” 14% thought races “needed work,” and 7% were “undecided.” An article about the survey made no reference to walking or racewalking.

At the July board of directors meeting, Secretary Pearl Ibarra stated no one had stepped forward to chair the Walking Committee. Three potential candidates would be contacted and a notice put in The RUNDOWN. Members of the board questioned the merits of the Walking Committee. The Minutes recorded:

It was noted that there was little or no participation and walking as a competitive sport has declined for various reasons. Pearl pointed out that the Walking Committee was a standing committee prescribed in the constitution and to eliminate the committee would require a vote from the general membership. Pearl submitted the Walking Committee Policies and Procedures.

In the December issue of The RUNDOWN, a list of coordinators and volunteers needed included the following:

Walking Committee Chair

Qualifications: Enthusiastic walker desiring to promote the benefits and fun of walking. It can be a very fulfilling task that is appreciated by the club. I will provide assistance in any way that I can. If interested contact Paul Steele or any board member.

Pearl Ibarra was elected vice president of the board of directors in January 1998. At the board meeting in January, Pearl reported she had talked to Jim Resolute who expressed an interest in “being the club contact for any interest in the area of walking.” Pearl said she had mailed Jim a copy of the committee's “Policies and Procedures,” and called attention to the Gator Volksmarch, a local walking club that sponsors walking events. Resolute was listed as chairman of the Walking Committee in the service directory of the February RUNDOWN.

Minutes of the April board meeting report the following brief exchange: “Pearl asked about the possibility of having more competitive walking events, RP (R.P. Kale) responded that we would need more judges to make the results official.”

In 1999, a disclaimer appeared in the every issue of The RUNDOWN stating it is “published monthly by the Tidewater Striders, a non profit educational and recreational organization for running and triathlon enthusiasts. Opinions expressed in The RUNDOWN are not necessarily those of the editor or the Tidewater Striders Board of Directors.”

The RUNDOWN disclaimer had ignored the Constitution and Bylaws of the very organization to which it was beholden. Seven years earlier, by establishing a standing committee for walkers and defining the duties of the committee, Striders had officially recognized walking in its governing documents as an endeavor worthy of promotion and participation.

Minutes of board meetings in Strider Archives indicate there was only minimal opportunities for walkers in 1999.

The Rise to Prominence: 2000-2009

Writing her first message as new Strider President in the February 2000 RUNDOWN, Bee Andrews announced the appointment of Deanie Eldridge as Walking Committee chair. “Deanie Eldridge will be heading up our Walking Committee this year and you can be sure the energy and enthusiasm she put into Membership will now really benefit this fitness area. Stay tuned for training tips, group walks and more races that will include walking events.”

Deanie did more than live up to the advance notice. She became an articulate writer on fitness, racewalking, and marathons. In the March RUNDOWN, Deanie introduced a new column, “Pedestrian Crossing,” and set the standard for what would follow.

Hi, I'm Deanie Eldridge, Chair of our new Walking Committee. I've probably met many of you through my past involvement as Strider Membership Chair, or through Strider volunteering. For those I haven't met yet, I look forward to seeing you on the trails and keeping you posted on what's going on with Strider walkers!

She went on describe how a core group of walkers had been walking for over a year in the cold, rain, wind and snow. “What we do may be deemed power walking, racewalking, or just plain 'ole walking for hours on end to keep in shape, meet our training goals, and believe it or not, having fun.” She named a Walking Committee to include Rose Holloman, Jim Murphy, Bill Spruill, Doreen Roadman, Rhonda Poole, Jim Resolute, Dianette Stokes, and Becky Jones, and invited anyone interested in getting involved to join them in training each Sunday morning at 6:30 a.m.

When there was no report from the Walking Committee at Strider board meetings, more likely than not Deanie reported the latest walker news in her “Pedestrian Crossing” column. Steve Durrant recalls that he became a walker the same year Deanie was appointed committee chair, and she put forth an extraordinary effort to promote walking.

The following month in the April RUNDOWN, Deanie described how five Tidewater Strider walkers had trained together for the Myrtle Beach Marathon. No Strider walker had ever before competed in a marathon. Recalling the event Deanie wrote,

Beginning the marathon in the wee hours of the morning was a neat experience. The darkness gave an air of mystery to the proceedings and when the starting gun went off, the scene opening up before us was like the final moments of the movie “Field of Dreams.” Thousands of runners and walkers could be seen weaving their way from the start area to the access road by the glow of street light. Another great feature of an early start was seeing the sun rise over the ocean as we moved down Ocean Boulevard.

In her May RUNDOWN article, “All I Ever Needed to Know About Life, I Learned at the Shamrock Marathon,” Deanie credited her training partners with much of her success. “They were,” she wrote, “her best supporters, coaches, cheerleaders, and motivators,” and emphasized the importance of setting goals; knowing when to say “no” because it’s just not your day; and playing by the rules of competitive racewalking.

Fellow walkers also contributed to Deanie’s columns. In June, Doreen Roadman, Rose Holloman, and Cokey Daman made poignant observations. “Walking can be tranquil and

soothing and at the same time beneficial to your mind and body, all with very little risk of injury,” penned Doreen, referring to participating in a marathon. “I could not have done it (walked a marathon) without the tremendous support of my husband, the camaraderie of my raining buddies, and the support of the running community,” said Rose. To champion racewalker Cokey Daman, “being consistent is the key to anything in life. Stick with your program and don’t get discouraged.”

In the July RUNDOWN, Strider President Bee Andrews reported, “The Tidewater Striders Relay for Life 2000 effort, a 24-hour walking event to benefit the American Cancer Society, was a tremendous success Over 50 Striders participating on four different teams, raised \$11,489 for this important cause.”

Also in the July RUNDOWN were articles by Strider Pat McCarthy on the Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk and Deanie's Walking Tidbits in “Pedestrian Crossing.” As she did frequently in her columns, Deanie reported receiving calls from walkers interested in becoming more active in club. Three articles on walking had never before appeared in the same publication. In August, Deanie described her first coaching experience for Team Diabetes in the Kona Marathon on the Big Island of Hawaii.

A memorandum dated September 18, 2000, to President Bee Andrews and Tidewater Strider Board Members from Bill Hollaran was found among miscellaneous documents in the archives. The subject of the memorandum was “Critical Issues for Strategic Planning Retreat.” Six acute key areas were designated. Regarding area # 4, new programs/initiatives, Hollaran noted, “The Tidewater Striders need to expand their fitness and training programs. Training and walking are not a race or program emphasis of the Tidewater Striders.”

After Deanie had called attention to the Norfolk Half Marathon on October 7 and the Marine Corps Marathon on October 25 for which walkers had been training, it must have been disheartening to see only running results published in the December RUNDOWN.

Reporting on the planning retreat in the January 2001 RUNDOWN, President Bee wrote, “For the first time ever, the Board of Directors and a few other members in key areas of the club (membership, web site) participated in a professionally run two-day strategic workshop.” Regarding the six key areas, Bee stated, “We are committed to work on each of these areas in the year(s) to come in an effort to ensure we do all we can to make a positive impact on our organization.”

At the January board meeting, Deanie reported the walking contingent is doing the Distance Series in preparation for the Myrtle Beach Marathon in February and Shamrock Marathon in March. She described both races as “walker friendly.”

Strider runners who suffered injuries turned to walking as an outlet for pent-up energy. Some never returned. Others who took up walking were motivated by the challenge to conquer a new sport. Cokey Daman was among them.

By the end of 2000, Deanie had assembled a core of experienced walkers who welcomed injured Strider runners to the group. In the February 2001 RUNDOWN, Deanie made the case.

Recently we’ve picked up a couple of wonderful walking partners, both runners with injuries hampering their routine. While they’re not able to run at their normal pace, they are able to continue training through walking. We know we’ll lose them

back to the running world eventually, but in the interim, we're enjoying our new companions on our 12, 14 and 16 mile training walks.

It's really a good message for all of us; sometimes an injury may prevent us performing at levels we're accustomed to, but we still may be able to get out, pump up our heart rates, and limber up those leg muscles.

Although Deanie had no way of knowing at the time, she guessed wrong! The two injured runners, Bill Spruill and Steve Durrant, became tenacious racewalkers and never looked back.

Bill became the leading Strider walker in the over 60 age group, and among the first runners turned walkers due to injury to finish first in a Strider walk. The occasion was the 1st Annual Tom Bashara Memorial Scholarship 5K Walk in September 2000. Twenty-nine men and women crossed the finish line. At age 65, Bill won first place overall with a time of 40:11. Sondra Bashara finished first among women in 40:43. She was 30 years old. The race netted \$2,635 for the scholarship fund. Bill would later undergo full knee replacement surgery, but return to racewalking at age 75.

For Steve, it was the beginning of a continuous link with walking and racewalking. He would become a local and national racewalking competitor, national level USATF certified official and racewalking judge, Strider Walking Committee Co-chair, race director for two Strider races and regular contributor to The RUNDOWN.

Beginning in February 2001, Deanie's personal contact with Tidewater Striders diminished considerably. In February and May, she provided reports to the board indicating the formation of walking groups during the summer. Her monthly column, "Pedestrian Crossing," did not appear in The RUNDOWN for three months. In September it reappeared.

Unknown to anyone, except possibly Deanie, this would be her last contribution to The RUNDOWN, and it was classic Deanie. Her absence, she said, was due to "a combination of a hectic work schedule, business travel and forgotten deadlines." She warned about dehydration and overheating in September and October, the necessity to exercise with caution, the importance of proper diet, and the exciting schedule of fall walks and marathons, especially charity walks. "Charlie Johnson, a Strider board member," she wrote, "is hoping to get together a walking group this fall." She suggested that folks interested in longer walks should contact Charlie or her because the walking group's training schedule had become more varied.

A column by Dr. Mel Williams and David Branch, "In Their Own Words," also in the September RUNDOWN, connected the dots. The column was a lengthy interview with Deanie.

The writers broke the news that Deanie was expecting her first child in February 2002 and was looking forward to the Chicago Marathon in the fall 2002 as her comeback event. The interview concluded with the following comments from Deanie.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to participate in this column.

It's wonderful to know that the Tidewater Striders recognize and appreciate the training that's involved in racewalking and marathon training. It means so much to us as walkers, when in an

event, we're greeted, encouraged, and celebrated by the runners we see along the way – thanks to each of you for your support.

I'm delighted to see that many of the local Strider races are now either "walker friendly" or offer a separate walking competition. As our population ages and hopefully turns more to fitness, there will be many more walkers out on the roads and trails. I'm glad the Striders offer a wonderful home and support system for us.

That was Deanie's way of saying "good-bye." Overtaken with family and work commitments, and other obligations, Deanie moved away from her involvement with walking, although she remained in the Tidewater area.

In 2002, three different Striders served as chairman of the Walking Committee. Little news about fitness walking or racewalking surfaced from board meetings.

An announcement appeared in the March RUNDOWN for the "Fit for the River Training Program – 2002."

If you or any of your friends or neighbors (who need not be Striders) who wish to train for a road race, here is your chance. Nearly 30 coaches/trainers have committed their expertise to the 2002 Fit for the River Run 10K Road Race on May 4, 2002. The program is particularly designed for walkers, non-runners, or novice runners.

In a conversation with the writer on October 21, 2009, Dr. Mel Williams explained the program started off trying to get boys and girls in public schools interested in running and walking. When organizers realized the program was not working, they went to the community for support.

Striders recruited their friends, neighbors, and business associates. They, in turn, recruited others interested in improving their fitness through running or walking, folks who may at one time thought about fitness, but never got around to do anything about it. The program was not designed to teach racewalking technique. It lasted for three years and was highly successful.

Results of a membership survey commissioned in the Fall 2001 to assess member satisfaction with the Strider organization, involvement, needs and concerns was released in the Spring 2002. An ad hoc Strider survey committee worked with a consultant at Christopher Newport University to design and conduct the survey.

Forty-one questions were asked. The answer to question twenty-three in the eighteen page report is of interest to the walking community.

The majority of respondents said they primarily run for fitness; there was only limited evidence of involvement in other activities such as biking, aerobics, and swimming. We did not ask about lifting weights, but that may be one of the additional activities that contribute to the hours per week working out reported by members.

The growing popularity of fitness walking and races of shorter distances notwithstanding, to the Survey Committee racewalking remained an ancillary consideration.

Race results for the Tom Bashara Memorial 5K Walk in May were reported in the April RUNDOWN. Cokey Daman's performance continued to raise the eyebrows of his racewalking companions. At age 83, Cokey finished third in a time of 36:05. Twenty-one walkers - 9 men and 22 women - participated in the race.

A notice in the 2003 January RUNDOWN requested the help of 50 volunteers to coach novice walkers and runners for the 3rd Annual Fit for the River Run. The contact was Dr. Mel Williams, a runner who continued to be the walkers biggest fan among Strider runners.

Victoria Nichols took over as Walking Committee chair in March. She described herself as a "back-a-da-pack" person, so slow that she walked a mile in half the time it takes others to complete a 5K.

At the outset, Victoria set reasonable goals: Promote walker friendly events and establish Tidewater Striders as the major contact for the events, promote competition between Strider walkers and walkers in similar clubs, establish a separate Web site and forum for walker news and information, establish a Grand Prix for walkers, and contribute articles to The RUNDOWN promoting fitness and racewalking.

Victoria thanked Jerry and Amy Frostick for enabling walkers to compete in the 2003 Shamrock Marathon by keeping the course open. She was particularly grateful to the volunteers on the course for supporting the walkers and the runners who vocalized encouragement to walkers while the race was in progress. She congratulated the five Striders who completed the Shamrock Marathon walk:

Tom Gerhardt, 3rd overall
Steve Durrant, 6th overall
Dwight Kane
Catherine Reade
Victoria Nicholls (first marathon)

Tom Gerhardt was the fastest racewalker among Striders. To see a third place finish by his name was an oddity. Steve Durrant observed, "although there was a walk division in the Shamrock, there were neither judges nor race officials who cared if walkers ran." As long as race flyers continued to promote events as *run/walk*, runners could register as walkers and run in the race without fear of disqualification. Work still remained.

Concerned that race participants could wittingly or unwittingly register as walkers and run in sanctioned Strider events to improve their performance, Victoria addressed the issue in the September RUNDOWN. "If you are going RUN ANY portion of a race," she wrote, "please do NOT enter the walkers division. The walkers division is NOT for the following: slow joggers, people who are going to run and walk, slow runners, and people who do not want to finish last in the race/their age division when walkers start before the runners."

In their RUNDOWN columns, Victoria, and Deanie Eldridge before her, frequently referred to the rules of racewalking. Strider walkers were gradually paying more attention to proper technique, reading available literature on racewalking, and raising the bar on the conduct of folks who registered as walkers in Strider events.

Curt Aasen, past president of the Strider Board of Directors, recalls, “Victoria was energetic and pro active in working for the club, and she came along at a time when we didn’t have much going for the walkers. She was a complete walker. There was no running in her background. She got a lot of change put in place that would not have happened if she had not been there, and a lot of things are happening today that would not have happened without her leadership.”

Tidewater Strider webmaster, Steve Speirs, wrote, “Victoria pushed to have a dedicated ‘Walkers’ page on the Strider website. Although content has grown in recent years, it still retains much of its original format.” Steve referred to Victoria as a “walker pioneer.”

With each passing month, Victoria seemed to warm to the job as Walking Committee chair. In RUNDOWN articles she reached out to novice walkers who had never dreamed of competing in a Strider event. She continued to develop the Walker Grand Prix program for 2004. Modeled after the runner’s program, the most notable differences, she indicated, were that walkers will receive overall awards and races will be of shorter distances.

Tidewater Strider walkers began entering more competitive races. The 2003 National Senior Games were held in the Tidewater Virginia area. Results were published in the September RUNDOWN.

Men’s 1500 Meter Racewalk, Norfolk State University

Tom Gerhardt, 8:07.72	5 th place	Age Group 50-54
Harry Watson, 8:26.55	7 th place	Age Group 60-64
Paul Madden, 10:09.66	5 th place	Age Group 75-79

Men’s 5K Racewalk, U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA

Tom, Gerhardt, 29:59	4 th place
Harry Watson, 31.24	7 th place
Paul Madden, 36:22	3 rd place

The Tom Bashara Memorial Scholarship 5K Walk continued to be the most popular local walking event. Under a separate heading, complete race results for 22 participants (13 women and 9 men) were also published in the October newsletter.

Chris English, a leading USATF walk judge, came down from Richmond in October to demonstrate racewalking techniques. He was assisted by Strider walker Harry Watson. Ten walkers attended the session held at Old Dominion University, including Steve Durrant and Dick Kole. For most, it was their first opportunity to receive instruction from a racewalking expert.

A complete list of walker Bylaws changes was published in the December RUNDOWN. Checkered Flag became the first sponsor for a walkers Grand Prix event. Victoria reported that walkers Janie Mirmelstein and Gus Ormrod walk weekdays from the Final Kick store but hadn’t had much success in getting anyone to walk with them on Saturdays at 7:00 a.m.

Victoria attended her first meeting as a member of the Board of Directors in January 2004. She was pleased to inform the board that first race of the Walkers Grand Prix, the Jennifer Braun Memorial Race in December, had attracted 38 walkers, a record number. One-third were Strider members.

During the next twelve months articles by walkers received more space in the RUNDOWN than in any previous year. An article by Steve Durrant in February described the inaugural 7.5 mile walk in the 22nd Annual Seaside Half-Marathon on December 5, 2003, in Wachapreague, Virginia.

Steve had been running the Seaside race since 1989. Describing the experience, Steve wrote, "It's the type of race that reminds me of what road running was like many years ago when I first got into competitive running. Not a lot of participants compared with what we see here in Tidewater."

After numerous hamstring injuries requiring extensive neuromuscular rehabilitation, Steve began walking full-time in 2002. He convinced the race director to include a walkers division in the Seaside event. Thirteen walkers entered the race. Steve finished third, behind Striders Harry Watson, Suffolk, Virginia and Steve Shapiro, Hampton, Virginia.

Common to all Seaside Half-Marathons, the race is conducted without computers. Clip boards, stop watches, and pencils are the tools of the day. A small cannon starts the race. The course takes walkers in a Northeast direction from Wachapreague before turning off from half-marathon runners on two lane country roads. Generously supported by local residents and folks from small neighboring towns, hot clam chowder, chili, and apple cider await the finishers. Steve recalls race director Vernon Bell changed the walk course to 7.7 mile when Strider racewalkers suggested the course was longer than 7.5 miles.

Victoria welcomed Janie Mirmelstein to the Walking Committee as walk coordinator and Gabrielle Miller as committee co-chair. In the February RUNDOWN, Victoria reported that 40 walkers were turning out for races. Walkers were urged to pre-register for races so they could be scored in the walk division. Changes to the rules and guidelines were evolving from each race. The information was readily available on the walker forum of the Strider Web site.

The Penguin Classic 5K in Virginia Beach on February 14, 2004, drew more walkers than any previous race. Of 350 finishers, 57 were walkers. Tom Gerhardt finished first overall among male walkers in 29:37:00. First overall among female walkers was Dawn Richt (35:43:00).

Walking Committee Co-chair Gabrielle Miller introduced herself in the March RUNDOWN. She congratulated Steve Durrant, Dianette Stokes, (and herself), who completed the Distance Series 25K and Steve Shapiro, Steve Durrant, Bob Curtin, Jr., Dianette Stokes, (and herself), who completed the 30K. The RUNDOWN reported only the runners' results in the Distance Series.

In April, Victoria reported that 38 walkers entered the first Grand Prix race. The second race in the walkers Grand Prix series, the Angel Flight 5K at the oceanfront, attracted a record 58 walkers. "Many of our walkers took home prizes," she reported.

First referred to in September 2003, the problem of a few walkers bending the rules to gain an unfair advantage in race results remained a challenge to Victoria. The problem continued, and eight months later she would take a harder line.

We have some people who have been witnessed blatantly cheating. If you are a Strider member entered in a walk division, you must follow the rules. This means absolutely NO running, jogging or anything else other than walking. Starting with the next race in

June, races will be monitored for cheaters and you will not receive Walker Grand Prix points. Some of the race directors I've talked to will also disqualify you for awards if you are caught. So please don't do it. It's not worth it.

Eight Strider racewalkers attended a one-day racewalking clinic in Williamsburg in May 2004 presented by National Master Racewalk Champion Ray Funkhouser.

As Strider Walking Committee Chair, Victoria recognized the necessity for a Web site that reached out to different categories of walkers. In the September 2004 RUNDOWN column, "Walking Committee Update," she wrote, "Please note that we are adding a lot of new links for fitness walkers, not just racers. I would appreciate anyone who is willing to be a walker group leader or creating a group of walkers to contact me with your information. I have had people contact me wanting to walk in a group, but I need leaders."

Walker Grand Prix standings were published for the first time. The September RUNDOWN listed the overall standings for 18 males and 22 females. Final Grand Prix standings for the year appeared in the December RUNDOWN.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
First:	Steven Shapiro	First: Barbara Rasmussen
Second:	Tom Gerhardt	Second: Linda Walker
Third:	Patrick Molnar	Third: Gabrielle Miller
Fourth:	Richard Kole	Fourth: Victoria Nicholls
Fifth:	Steve Durrant	Fifth: Patty Russell
Sixth:	Paul Madden	Sixth: Nancy Zikmund
Seventh:	Grove Calvert	Seventh: Brenda Barfield

In the December RUNDOWN, Victoria wrote, "Since our goals are not included in the strategic planning phase of the Striders (I have asked that this be amended, since walker support is a secondary goal of the Striders), I am listing them here and I would like some feedback from people on what they think."

Victoria began by listing group walking and sponsorship as target areas. She was interested in forming fitness groups to walk together on weekends or after work on weekdays, individuals to walk as a group for 10K distances or more, and groups interested in short distances, 5K or less. Having already lined up Checkered Flag as a sponsor, she proposed to find additional sponsors and sources of revenue.

Next, she referred to motions she had already sent to the board, starting with a requirement for 20 points to receive a Walker's Grand Prix award. Points would be given for volunteering as a judge at Strider judged racewalks, volunteering as a group leader for fitness walks or as a member of the Walking Committee, and for submitting three articles to The RUNDOWN of at least 150 words on walking, racewalking, or fitness walking.

To receive Grand Prix points a walker had to be a Strider in good standing prior to the race. Grand Prix races would vary in distance from 1 mile to 6.2 miles (10K), and races equal to or longer than 10K not designated as Grand Prix races would be added at the discretion of the Walking Committee. Twenty extra points would be added for completing the Shamrock

Marathon in addition to receiving credit for the Shamrock 8K Grand Prix. Points would be awarded to the first five male and female finishers in each race.

She then listed events that were not Grand Prix races and would not qualify for the six races required of walkers to receive a Grand Prix award. However, if completed within the time limits specified, walkers would receive up to 50 Grand Prix points.

Minutes of the January 10, 2005, board meeting set forth the above items in proper motion form adding or modifying existing walker Grand Prix rules and included the rationale for each. Minutes also indicated Dick Kole had replaced Victoria as Walking Committee chair. Although Victoria was still listed as a director, she had fallen out of favor with members of the board. Victoria remained on the board to complete her term, but her byline did not appear again in The RUNDOWN.

Dick Kole's vibrancy was evident from the outset. He recognized shortcomings with the walking program, and building on Victoria's system, recommended further changes in policies and procedures to add or modify Grand Prix rules, which he presented at the January board meeting. However, motions by the Walking Committee to amend policies and procedures and to approve the 2005 Walking Participation schedule were tabled when the board met in February.

In March, the board of directors was ready to act on the committee's recommendations. The following changes in the Walking Committee Policy and Procedures were passed unanimously at the board meeting on March 7, 2005:

- Tidewater Strider Grand Prix races will vary in distance and must be at least one mile long.
- To be eligible for walker Grand Prix awards, a walker must volunteer for at least one Tidewater Strider function.

The following additions to the "Policies and Procedures" were enacted:

- The Walking Committee shall attempt to select as many Strider sponsored or contracted events for the walking Grand Prix as possible.
- In addition to earning points in Grand Prix walking events, walkers may also earn points in participation events. Each is a separate series of events with its own point system.
- Specified the number of points a walker may earn based on distances in races identified by the Walking Committee as participation events only. Qualifying races must be longer than 5K distance.
- Participation events will generally not be held closer than two weeks apart.
- The number of participation events will be determined by the Walking Committee.
- Walkers must walk in a minimum of three participation events yearly to qualify for an award.
- The Walking Committee must provide race directors of selected events with sufficient information to enable the race committee to determine who completed the race in the time allotted.

- The Walking Committee must provide the board of directors with a schedule of races for the ensuing year by the November board meeting.
- The first five walkers, male or female, who have the most participation points will receive standard awards. All walkers completing at least three participation events will receive a certificate.
- The committee shall provide an article to The RUNDOWN before the first race of each walker participation series explaining the rules, listing the races in the series, and the points associated with each race.
- Walker participation standings will be listed quarterly in The Rundown and published on the Striders Web site.

The 2005 Distance Series schedule approved by the board in March is of particular interest to walkers. Held on two dates in January and one in February, walkers were given the choice of participating in 20K or 10K in the first race, 25K or 10K in the second race, and 30K or 10K in the third race. All 10K races were assigned 8 points and the 20K, 25K, and 30K races assigned 14, 16, and 18 points respectively.

On motion of the Strategic Objectives Committee, Objective 2, was amended as follows:

MISSION

In general, the purpose of the Tidewater Striders, as documented in its constitution and articles of confederation, is to promote and encourage long distance running, walking, multi-sport events, track and field, and other similar endeavors through appropriate educational and charitable means.

VISION

This should be the main principle underlying the club's mission and the development of our visionary statement, or guiding principle, as to what we hope as a club to accomplish over the next five years. In essence, the club should attempt to retain its reputation as the premier running-related organization in South Hampton Roads and to maintain its reputation as one of the best and most active running clubs in the nation. The Striders' vision includes (1) the promotion and conduct of races and (2) conduct of educational programs to promote running and related exercise endeavors for health, fitness and sport.

The motion passed unanimously.

Two months later, the board of directors moved to implement "related exercise endeavors" in its vision statement. The secretary recorded the following item in the Minutes of the May meeting:

Motion by the Strategic Objective Committee, goal 1, objective 10:

Evaluate the need for walking only race competition. Walking may be an excellent approach to encourage people to exercise, and walkers only competition could provide motivation for individuals and intensify such a fitness program. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Seventeen years earlier Strider President Dave McDonald had recognized the relevance of walking in promoting fitness. Subsequently, the promotion of walking became a secondary purpose in the Tidewater Strider organization.

Dick Kole understood, however, that walker only race competition would not become a reality until the number of active walkers increased dramatically. In May 2005, the walking community consisted of thirty-five, and Dick was still asking for volunteers to serve on the Walking Committee.

Addressing the Strider walkers in the May RUNDOWN, Dick referred to an issue that had long been a sticking-point with Walking Committee chairpersons, and indicated change was in the works.

Some races do not present awards to walkers nor do they have an entry on the registration form to differentiate between walkers and runners. I know most of you but I don't always know if you are running or walking in a particular race, so please let me know if you think there might be a problem. As we get further into the year the separation of walkers from runners will become less of a problem as many registration forms will include a space to designate how you will participate in a race.

The 2005 National Senior Games/Senior Olympics were held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in June at Carnegie Mellon University. Competing in the 1500 meter racewalk, Steve Shapiro, 51, won the gold medal, finishing in first place in 7:33.10. He also took the gold medal in the 5000 meter racewalk with a time of 28:33. Steve competed in the 50-54 age group. At the January 2006 Annual Strider Banquet, he received the Tidewater Strider's Outstanding Male Performance Award for 2005.

On December 5, 2005, the board unanimously approved the revised Walking Committee "Policy and Procedures." In addition, the Walking Committee asked the Tidewater Striders Board of Directors to consider permanent representation on the board for walkers and an increase in the committee budget for walker awards.

In the January 2006 RUNDOWN, Dick wrote, "The Walkers Grand Prix rules for 2006 are different from 2005. The Walkers Participation Series is now combined with the Walkers Grand Prix Series." The revised Walking Committee "Policies and Procedures" was published in its entirety.

Dick's preparation was so thorough it provided the foundation for whatever adjustments were necessary going forward. All agreed it was a masterful piece of work, not least because it has stood the test of time with only minimal tweaking required in the intervening years between its adoption and the conclusion of this study, December 2009.

For the most part, Walkers GP races were a mirror image of the Runners GP series. To differentiate between the two, the walker series of events became known as "WGP," Walking Grand Prix. The Walking Committee would determine the number of WGP events each year.

It became the responsibility of the Walking Committee to promote walking, fitness walking, and racewalking, and to disseminate information about walking to Strider members and to the community at large. The committee became the liaison with directors of racewalking events. In the event of a cancellation, the committee reserved the right to substitute for the cancelled race.

Double dipping for awards was eliminated. Walkers who qualified for an award in the competition series would not receive an award in the participation series. To qualify for an award, walkers were required to participate in a minimum of six events. The committee was responsible for presenting the Strider Board of Directors with a proposed schedule of Grand Prix events by December of the year preceding the proposed races.

The first five walkers crossing the finish line accumulated competition points in overall male and overall female divisions (20, 15, 12, 10, 8). All other walkers completing the race received participation points. Separate records were maintained by the committee. One participation point was awarded per kilometer of the race. To receive points, walkers were required to walk the entire distance of the race. Running or jogging was prohibited, and violators would be removed from the walk division of the race in which the violation occurred.

Initially, to qualify for a WGP award, walkers were required to participate in at least one Strider function. Awards were presented to the top five male and top five female finishers in the WGP and participation series.

In 2006, finish times of walkers began to appear in The RUNDOWN under separate male and female age groups. However, so few walkers entered smaller races that they were lumped in a single age group, 1-99.

The Angel Flight 5K in Virginia Beach on February 11, 2006, was the first race in which walkers' race results were reported by separate age groups for male and female participants. Results appeared in the March RUNDOWN. Hartley Dewey recalls that overall and age group awards were presented to walkers.

Race results for the Striders Tune-Up Series at Fort Story in February did not distinguish between walkers and runners, who were included together by age groups. Strider racewalkers who entered the events turned in credible performances in their age groups. The men included Steve Durrant, Hartley Dewey, Jim Lyons, Bob Curtin, Jr., Steve Shapiro and Tom Gerhardt.

Race directors were becoming more walker-friendly. The race flyer for the Chesapeake Bay 10K included a 10K walk and a 10K run, another first. The flyer for the POMOCO 15th Annual Running Crab race in Hampton, Virginia, included a 5K walk. The flyer for the Run for Holiday House of Portsmouth sponsored by the Knights of Columbus included a 5K for runners and a 5K for walkers. The Flyer for Riverside Harvest Festival in Williamsburg included an 8 mile racewalk. The 8th Annual ODU race included walkers and runners in its 5K event.

Kendall Tata resigned as a director in March, and Dick Kole took her place on the board of directors. Dick was now a member of the board and chairman of a standing committee, not unusual in the history of the Strider organization.

Steve Durrant is an articulate writer and every walker's best friend on and off the race course. In his capacity as a USATF official and certified racewalk judge, he cares about maintaining the integrity of the sport.

The history would not be complete without mentioning Steve's article "Racewalking for Runners?" in the August RUNDOWN. It is a human interest story of how he became a competitive racewalker in his age division following recovery from hamstring injuries first in one leg and then in the other. Here, in part, is how he tells it.

I gradually worked my runs back in with my walks until I was running full time again. However, at age 62 during a training run the symptoms of a pending hamstring disaster flared simultaneously in both legs. That was my last day of running. I was not going to let myself go through another several months of physical therapy on my hamstrings again just to be a runner.

I told myself that I would be a “speed” walker or “power” walker, but not one of those “racewalkers” that looked like drunken ducks swinging their hips and bent arms all over the place. I soon realized that those drunken ducks moved a lot faster than other types of walkers, and I got over it.

I’ve been a racewalker for the past five years and have maintained myself relatively injury free compared to my running days when an ice pack and 800mg of ibuprofen were my constant companions.

At the December meeting, Strider President Rich Hildreth welcomed Anita Keegan and Dwight Kane to the board of directors. For the first time two walkers had been elected to serve on the Strider board. He thanked Dick Kole for developing walker policies and procedures and said that although Dick was retiring from the board, he would continue to maintain Walker Grand Prix records for the club.

Dick’s most recent makeover, Walking Grand Prix and Walking Participation schedules for 2007, was published in the January RUNDOWN. Races were listed on two lines as A and B. Eleven races were listed on line A and 9 on line B. Grand Prix points were awarded to the first five Striders completing the race. First place walker received 20 points; second, 15; third 12; fourth 10; and fifth 8.

If two races were listed on the same line, only one would qualify for points. The fastest male and female in Race A earned 20 points for the race, and no points in Race B shown on the same line.

If the same individuals (i.e. the ones who won Race A) complete race B shown on the same line, they will be ignored for Grand Prix points for Race B. The remaining fastest walkers in Race B will each earn 20 points for Race B. The next fastest male and female walkers in Race A, excluding those earning 20 points for either Race A or B will earn 15 points for Race A. This will continue until all available points are awarded.

“Hair of the Dog,” a walker-friendly 5K race appropriately named, is held each year in Virginia Beach on January 1, and is a favorite of Strider walkers. Top finishers in 2007 were:

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>
1 st place	Steve Shapiro (27:49)	1 st place	Anita Keegan (37:32)
2 nd place	Tom Gerhardt (30:53)	2 nd place	Karen Williams (38:51)
3 rd place	Scott Stakes (31:06)	3 rd place	Mary Ann Calvert (47:14)

Prior to 2007, two outstanding female walker/writers, Deanie Eldridge and Victoria Nicholls, published almost every month in The RUNDOWN while they served as a member of the board of directors or Walking Committee Chair. Anita Keegan became the third, taking over the committee when Dick Kole retired at the end of 2006.

Separate race results for male and female walkers began appearing more frequently in The RUNDOWN beginning in January 2007.

Anita's first article "You Can Walk a 5K, 10K, Half or Full Marathon!" appeared in the March 2007 RUNDOWN. She wrote about making the transition from running to racewalking, and recalled what it was like being a convert to walking and overcoming her own "self-imposed stigma" of embracing the sport.

Clearly, Anita was highly motivated to succeed in every aspect of walking and racewalking, and she set out to remove lingering doubt among folks who had never dreamed of walking distances of 5K, 10K, and longer. "Yes. YOU CAN!" she wrote. "You walk every day, don't you? Truly, unless there is a physical or health reason why you can't walk for extended periods, then you can complete an endurance event."

Recognition of walkers' race results in 2007 was a mixed bag. Some race directors did not recognize walker finishes. Others included walker finishes with the appropriate age group for runners. Separate listings of walker finishes were rare. The Angel Flight 5K in March and Elizabeth River 10K in May were two notable exceptions.

The Angel Flight 5K included a separate listing for male and female walkers. Tom Gerhardt, age 55, finished first among seven male walkers in 31:12 and Karen Williams, age 41, finished first in a group of twenty-five females in 39:15. Of 140 finishers, over 20% were walkers, their best turnout of the year.

Results of the Elizabeth River 10K, which listed 674 finishers, including six male and seventeen female walkers, included a separate listing for walkers. Steve Shapiro finish first in the men's division (58:00) and Kelly Garcia-Smith finished first in the women's division (70:31).

In the May RUNDOWN, Anita began the first of a two part series titled, "Etiquette: Common Courtesy, Order and Safety on the Course," issues her predecessors seldom discussed in RUNDOWN articles. In Part I, she covered etiquette before the event - race entry, lining up, and disposing of excess clothing, food, and beverage.

In Part II, appearing the following month, Anita talked about courtesy during the race - keeping to the right, knowing who is near you, and water stops - and courtesy after the race. Although her audience was the walking community, Anita's advice extended to runners as well.

She completed the series with this friendly admonition, "It sounds like a lot to remember when you're on the course or training path. Just as with the physical aspects of training, it becomes second nature as you put in the miles. We all make mistakes now and then. Just remember the basics...common courtesy, order, and safety." Anita had established her versatility as a writer on all aspects of racewalking.

Hartley Dewey, who had been working with Dick Kole for two years refining the Grand Prix system, became responsible for scoring in March 2007. He had been a racewalker for 3 years, and knew the system well. Two years later Lori Sherwood would take over. Nothing was lost in the transition. Lori is a conscientious walker on and off the course.

An anomaly occurred in the June issue of The RUNDOWN. Strider President Rich Hildreth devoted an entire paragraph to walking in his column, "President's Corner." After the editors of the publication invited Strider presidents to contribute a monthly article, only Bee Andrews had devoted as much as a single line to the Strider's secondary purpose for existing.

Calling attention to the approach of hot weather, the possibility of dehydration, and that "all our races are the same length," Rich offered,

This could be why walking is obviously becoming more popular and why more folks are taking it up. Anita Keegan, Dwight Kane, and Steve Durrant organized a great walking clinic that's discussed in more detail in this issue. However, the number that grabbed me was 53. On an otherwise perfectly nice Saturday afternoon, 53 Striders came out to learn more about walking technique. That by the way included two former very accomplished runners and one former president of the Striders. Walking is obviously a way to continue being active, while being less stressful to joints and muscles. As we age it sure looks like it may be the future of our sport.

Minutes of the July board meeting included an encouraging announcement from the Walking Committee. "Shamrock is going to have a major walk division including judges." In "Developing Organized Walking within a Running Club," explained how it happened.

In 2007, Hartley Dewey, Steve Durrant and Dwight Kane approached the race directors of the Shamrock Sportsfest, an event which attracts 16,000 participants to its Marathon, Half-Marathon, 8K and two children's races. They asked the directors to bring back the walk division in the 2008 Shamrock Marathon, which had been discontinued in 2005.

They further stipulated they would be personally responsible to the race directors for all walk division race management functions, including providing walk judges on the course and handling walker complaints.

The 2007 Summer National Senior Games/Senior Olympics were held in Louisville, Kentucky in July at the University of Louisville. The 1500 meter racewalk was held on the university track and the 5K meter racewalk at the City of Louisville's Iroquois Park on a modified two loop out and back course on a rolling paved road.

Steve Shapiro bettered his 2005 gold medal performances in each race. He improved his time in the 1500 meter racewalk in 2007 by eighteen seconds to finish in 7:14:18, although he finished second in the race and won the silver medal. He bettered his time in the 5000 meter racewalk by a full minute and ten seconds, and finished in second place in 27:22:56 to win a second silver medal. Steve competed in the 50-54 age group

Participating in his first National Senior Games, Steve Durrant in the 65-69 age group had a personal best of 9:35:61 in the 5K meter race, finishing 11th in a field of 23 racewalkers. In the last 1000 meters of the 5000 meter race, his legs "rubberized," and he crossed the finish line in 12th place with a time of 34:46:65.

At the September board meeting, Anita reported volunteers at the Strider booth in the Virginia Beach Coliseum for the Rock 'n Roll Expo saw a great deal of interest in walking.

Anita's article in the September 2007 RUNDOWN, "Overtraining, Overhydrating, Overdressing" was another enduring example of her versatility as a walker oriented writer. "Listen to your body," she began. "All days are not equal. Your schedule may call for six miles, but you know your body has reached its limit. What do you do? Swap your training day for a rest/recovery day, or rest an extra day. The investment in rest will pay off in the long run (literally). Don't be a slave to your training schedule." She continued with a discussion of avoiding dehydration during a race by "drinking to your thirst," and the value of wearing light layers of non-cotton clothing for training in cold weather.

Of twelve race flyers included in the September RUNDOWN, seven included events for walkers. Without ever inserting his byline, Hartley Dewey continued to submit updated Walking Grand Prix and Walking Participation results for publication.

Results of Strider racewalkers in out-of-town marathons made the news. In the December RUNDOWN, "Striders on the Road" reported Hartley Dewey completed the Portland Oregon Marathon on October 7 in 5:44:01.

In her walking committee report at the November board meeting, Anita stated there are currently in excess of 100 walkers, which is "about 10% of the club."

Paula Graham's name appears for the first time in the December edition. According to results of the November Turkey Trot 10K, Paula completed the race in 1:15:25. Wasting no time she embarked on a program to improve racewalking technique and develop a proper training regimen to include diet and exercise. Within a year, Paula had become an elite racewalking competitor and student of the sport.

Tidewater Strider racewalkers were introduced to a new challenge in 2007 by Steve Durrant, the One Hour Postal Racewalk.

While trying to locate awards for the 1500 meter racewalk, an event held in conjunction with the Strider Mile, Steve learned about a national racewalk competition held by clubs throughout the United States sponsored and promoted by the Shore Athletic Club in New Jersey.

The race is judged by USATF certified judges on a measured track in accord with USATF rules governing racewalking. Individual lap sheets for each walker are maintained to record the cumulative lap time for each lap. At the end of sixty minutes, a horn sounds, walkers stop, and using a measuring wheel, the distance is recorded for each walker's last lap. Added to the distance covered in the number of completed laps, the total distance for each competitor is sent to the Shore Club where national rankings are compiled by age groups.

The inaugural One Hour Postal for Strider racewalkers was held on December 22, 2007, at Tallwood High School in Virginia Beach on a newly resurfaced rubberized track. A stiff wind from the northeast and temperature in the mid 40s did not hamper performances.

Steve Shapiro, 54, placed first overall in one hour for male competitors and fourth nationally in the men's 50-54 age group, walking 10,141 meters at a pace of 9:30 per minute. Rebecca Garson 43, from Afton, Virginia, led female competitors, racewalking 9,588 meters, at a pace of 10:02 per minute, and finished first nationally in the women's 40-44 age group.

As the year came to a close, the walking community was saddened to learn their long time friend and mentor to many, Anita Keegan, had resigned for personal reasons as Walking Committee chair and member of the Strider board. Attempts to contact Anita for the history were unsuccessful. The president announced Diane Zinn would take Anita's seat on the board.

Anita had been an efficacious advocate for walkers. Her articles in the RUNDOWN each month were articulately composed gems of wisdom not given to hyperbole or excess. In short, Anita "walked the walk and talked the talk."

Anita was never too busy to converse with interested folks about the benefits of walking. On a full page in the RUNDOWN each month listing Strider training sites primarily for runners, Anita invited walkers of all ages and levels of experience to meet her for friendly training walks every Wednesday in the K-Mart parking lot in Virginia Beach at 6:00 p.m. where "the distance is up to you."

Recalling how she became a walker, Diane Zinn said, "I remember Anita was the reason I started. She and Dwight Kane were so positive and happy to be walkers. Anita led the first walker training session I went to at Mt. Trashmore. She met me at the finish line cheering at my first Neptune 5K. I felt a big loss when she left."

On January 1, 2008, eight racewalkers were ready to go in the Hair of the Dog 5K in Virginia Beach. Steve Shapiro led the men with a time of 26:02, and Karen Williams finished first among women in 39:20.

Strider President Rich Hildreth welcomed new board member Lori Sherwood to the January meeting.

At an annual banquet in February, Tidewater Striders award competition and participation winners from the previous year, recognize outstanding high school athletes, and present special awards for exemplary service to the organization. In February 2008, Steve Durrant was presented with the Striders Race Director of the Year Award for 2007. Steve had been race director for the Strider Mile and 1500M VA-USATF Racewalking Championship and Strider One Hour Racewalk. The events are judged races and require an incredible amount of preparation.

The front cover of the March RUNDOWN included pictures of Lori Sherwood, "Overall Female Walker 20k/25k/30k" and Carl Mallet, "Overall Male Walker 10k/15k/20k" in Distance Series at Fort Story.

Dwight Kane established an electronic newsletter for one hundred walkers to whom he sent e-mail whenever anything of interest to walkers came to his attention. According to Cindy Williams, "Dwight was successful in getting everyone in contact with each other and communicating. If he hadn't started collecting e-mail addresses, we would not be where we are today. Dwight's personality is perfect for bringing in new members."

Since March 2008, the information source for Tidewater Strider walkers has been Cindy Williams' "Bullet Mail." It began as an electronically distributed weekly newsletter. A year later "Bullet Mail" switched to bi-weekly distribution. The newsletter is not limited to Strider members. Interest generated in fitness walking and racewalking through the newsletter has enabled the Tidewater Striders to attract new members.

Content of the “Bullet Mail” increased as its readership grew. By the end of 2009, over two hundred people were receiving the newsletter, which has a staff of one, compiler and editor Cindy Williams. A typical newsletter includes messages of upcoming local walker-friendly races and races in neighboring cities with special instructions that might apply; news of racewalking clinics; list of Grand Prix events; Walker Grand Prix rules and Participation Grand Prix rules; schedule of weekly training sites, including fitness walks with Strider group leaders; racewalking Web sites; and the latest walking publications.

Race flyers continued to be an enigma for walkers, and it had become clear walkers could not always rely on flyers for information about walking events. Most races support worthy causes. Race flyers are all about attracting folks to support those causes. The ambiguity of race flyers, however, made it difficult for walkers to know which races were walker-friendly. Had it not been for “Bullet Mail” many walkers would have been left in the dark.

In April, an interesting story titled “From Last to First in One Race” came out of the Lions Journey for Sight, a 5K walker-friendly race sponsored by the Lions clubs of District 24-D. Lion clubs are encouraged to bring the vision impaired and legally blind in their communities as guests for a morning of fun, exercise, and good food. Guests have the opportunity to participate in a one mile or 5K race assisted by Lions club members. Once in a while, a vision impaired person enters the 5K race; however, most participate in the one mile walk/run. Many awards are given.

Dr. Karen Gearreald, the only totally blind entry in the race in April 2008, was accompanied by her friend, Strider racewalker Jordan “Buddy” Levitin. Both were past presidents of Norfolk Host Lions Club.

Born blind, Dr. Gearreald has an older sister and two younger brothers, all sighted. She was the first blind student to enter first grade, advance through elementary, junior high and high school in the Virginia public school system, which occurred long before special education classes were introduced into the system. An act of the Virginia General Assembly made it possible.

After graduating second in her class at Maury High School in Norfolk, Dr. Gearreald received a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Agnes Scott University in Atlanta, Ph.D. from Harvard University, and LL.B. from Duke University School of Law.

Dr. Gearreald and Buddy practiced walking together for three weeks prior to the event. On race day, they lined up in the back of the pack and were the last to cross the starting line. With arms linked they set out to complete the race in less than 60 minutes.

Still outbound on the Fort Story course, they encountered runners and walkers headed back, who shouted words of encouragement to the blind lady and her Strider racewalking companion. As a matter of courtesy, Strider walk judges remained on the course until the last two competitors had passed, although there was little danger either would do anything to vary the pace. It was a touching moment as they passed the last judge, Heide McGill Sleasman, who applauded the two walkers, jumped on her bicycle and followed them to the finish line.

The only totally blind person, the last to start the race, was the first to cross the finish line. The clock showed 57:25. Their goal had been achieved.

Under “Tidewater Training Sites,” an announcement appeared in the summer editions of The RUNDOWN welcoming readers to contact Cindy Williams or Dwight Kane for informal meetings and walks at various distances, including an introduction to racewalking. “They love the sport,” read the announcement, “and just want to share their knowledge. During the session, the walkers demonstrate proper walking technique and also discuss what is and isn’t a legal walking step.”

In April, following five days under the watchful eye of Dave McGovern at the National Training Center in Clement, Florida, Paula Graham and Lori Sherwood traveled to Orlando for the USATF National Masters 20K Race Walk Championship for what Paula referred to as their “final exam.” Both admitted to having misgivings about being judged in a 20K race using a newly learned racing technique.

Racing as part of Dave’s World Class Racewalking Team, Paula’s team won the gold medal. In her first ever USATF meet, Paula was a National Champion. Lori, who was a certified USATF judge, received the dreaded red paddle for three rules infractions and was retired from the course. As National Race Walk Champion Ian Whatley has observed, “Every racewalker at some time in their career will get DQd in a race.”

The course for the Chesapeake Bay 10K in April was out and back on Ocean View Ave. Eleven Strider racewalkers competed. Scot Stakes was the first male to cross the finish line in 1:05:21. Tom Gerhardt was two seconds behind. Linda Janssen was the fastest female (1:13:03) followed by Robin Land (1:16:34).

Eight days later, the rivalry between Scott and Tom would be renewed on the boardwalk in Virginia Beach in the 5K walk division of the JFS Run, Roll or Stroll. The 5K walk attracted 103 finishers, of whom 31 were walkers. One second separated first place Gerhardt (31:04) from second place Stakes (31:05).

The 10K Elizabeth River Run in May 2008 through downtown Portsmouth included nine male racewalkers led by Scott (1:04:40) and twenty-five female racewalkers led by Linda (1:11:26).

The VA-USATF 3000m Racewalk Championship held in August at the Strider Mile, is one of two Strider events judged by certified USATF judges. Conducted in heats with different judges for each heat, the race gives all racewalkers an opportunity to compete. Overall male winner was Steve Shapiro (17:13:29) and overall female winner was Rebecca Garson (17:55:66).

The St. Mary’s Home 5K, a favorite event of Strider racewalkers, is held at Fort Story in October under ideal weather condition compared to occasionally brutal weather at Fort Story for the Distance Series in January and February. Nine male and twenty-nine females completed the 2008 race. Scott Stakes led male walkers (31:18) and Patricia Howell finished in first place among female walkers (37:25)

The One Hour Postal Walk was again held at Tallwood High School in November at near freezing temperature made to seem much colder by the wind chill factor. Paula Graham won the 1st Place medal in Most Improved Women’s Category, having improved her distance from 7,254 meters (4.51 miles) in 2007 to 8,558 meters (5.31 miles) in 2008. Nancy Hallingse finished second, completing 7,481 meters (4.64 miles) and Lori Sherwood finished third, completing 6,800 meters (4.22 miles).

Tom Gerhardt finished first in the men's division completing 9,672 meters (6.00 miles), Hartley Dewey finished second completing 8,657 meters (5.37 miles), and Bill Lipford came in third completing 8,567 meters (5.31 miles).

Referred to earlier in the history, one of the best kept secrets on the race schedule is the Seaside Half Marathon and 7.7 mile walk in Wachapreague on the Eastern Shore of Virginia held annually in December. The 2008 race drew 97 participants, including 66 runners and 31 walkers from Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland. Thirty-five Tidewater Striders, walkers and runners, crossed the Chesapeake Bay to make the hour-long trip to the race site.

Top four male and female finishers in the 7.7 Mile Walk

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1. Tom Gerhardt 1:18:02	1. Lori Sherwood 1:35:07
2. Scott Stakes 1:19:07	2. Gladys Sopko 1:44:32
3. Steve Shapiro 1:21:22	3. Jennifer Jeffers 1:52:26
4. Hartley Dewey 1:28:43	4. Elaine Jeffers 1:52:28

The Walking Grand Prix schedule and Walking Participation rules for 2009 were published in the January RUNDOWN. The schedule was full. Twenty-two races were planned, eleven each in Group A and Group B.

Several changes were made for 2009. Only the top nine races were scored for the final Grand Prix standing, and all races counted for participation points. Participation rules changed. Volunteers were required to judge at least three Walking Grand Prix races to record the bib numbers of registered walkers who violated their status by running or jogging. Beginning in 2009, walkers counting laps at USATF judged races would earn participation points.

At the Strider Annual Banquet in February 2009, Dick Kole received a Presidential Award for his work in making Tidewater Striders a walker-friendly organization.

In March, ten Striders attended a one day USA Track and Field Officials Training Clinic sponsored by the Virginia Association of USATF at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. The clinic is held each year between January and March to certify new officials and update currently certified officials on USATF rules and new rules changes. In addition to USATF rules, clinics review changes in existing rules relating to the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and NFHS (National Federation of High Schools).

Cindy Williams, Judy Paschall, Diane Zinn, and Bill Lipford were certified for the first time. Recertified were Hartley Dewey, Steve Shapiro, Kathy Nash, Steve Durrant, Dick Kole and Lori Sherwood.

Also in March, thirty-one racewalkers ranging in age from 12 to 75, including thirteen Tidewater Striders, attended Dave McGovern's weekend racewalking clinic in Williamsburg, Virginia. McGovern is one of the country's leading authorities on racewalking. He is a USATF certified coach, has been a member of the U. S. National Race Walk team and an assistant coach of the U.S. World Cup Race Walk team in Russia in 2009.

McGovern was assisted at the clinic by Ian Whatley, a past national and international racewalker living in South Carolina and Rebecca Garson, a popular competitor in local

racewalks from Afton, Virginia. Rebecca is the reigning Shamrock Half-Marathon Walk women's record holder.

McGovern's weekend clinics are intense. Before dinner on Friday, he filmed the pace of each racewalker. He would later show videos commenting on each one's strengths and weaknesses with recommendations how the individual could improve technique and proficiency.

At any time during sessions on the track, it was not unusual for Ian to walk alongside a racewalker and offer advice based on what he was observing in the individual's form. Stretching exercises, drills, and classroom discussion of the physiology in types of workouts in a racewalker's routine were introduced. Lactate thresholds and VO2 systems were discussed at length.

As Cindy Williams observed following the clinic, "So much goes on and there is so much information to absorb, it's impossible to get it all the first time you attend one of Dave's clinics."

Although the International Association of Lions Clubs no longer includes the Lions Journey for Sight among its numerous programs to assist the blind and vision impaired, the race has been supported by clubs in Lions District 24-D for twenty-three years and has become a Tidewater Striders Grand Prix event largely due to efforts of Dan Hurley, a Strider and member of the Churchland Lions Club.

The 2009 race had 194 finishers, including 30 female and 8 male walkers. Overall female walker results were (1) Linda Janssen, 34:31; (2) Paula Graham, 35:37; (3) Nancy Hallingse, 36:36. Overall male walker results were (1) Scott Stakes, 31:19; (2) Bill Lipford, 32:16, (3) Hartley Dewey, 33:50.

Separate male and female walker results were reported in the May RUNDOWN, the work no doubt of race director Dan Hurley in conjunction with Rick Brown, legendary Strider who provides instantaneous electronic race results from a van parked in the vicinity of the finish line. The top five male and female walkers plus Master walkers 40 and over received a total of sixteen awards.

The contribution from Rick Brown to the Strider organization is immeasurable. In 2008, as economic conditions worsened, newspaper advertising dropped off considerably. Responding accordingly, "The Virginian-Pilot" reduced the number of pages in each section of the paper. With the exception of the Shamrock Marathon and the Rock 'n Roll Marathon, detailed results of local races disappeared. However, thanks to Rick, complete results of local races are posted on the Strider Web site usually within 48 hours, and subsequently appear in The RUNDOWN.

Tidewater Striders turned in commendable performances at the Virginia Senior Olympics in Richmond, Virginia, on May 9, 2009, at Sports Backer Stadium. Three Striders won five gold medals, including two each by Debra Hovatter and Jordan Levitin and one by Bill Lipford.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>
1500m	55-59 (F)	Deborah Hovatter	11:21	1
1500m	75-79 (M)	Jordan Levitin	12:28	1

5000m	55-59 (F)	Deborah Hovatter	38:22	1
5000m	50-54 (M)	Bill Lipford	31:51	1
5000m	75-79 (M)	Jordan Levitin	39:13	1

Certified USA TF officials, Striders Cindy Wiliams, Lori Sherwood, Steve Shapiro, and Steve Durrant judged the 1500m and 5000m racewalks. Between the races, they judged the women’s discus.

Jordan Levitin was invited by the board of directors in July to fill the seat through December vacated by Tommy Neeson. Buddy’s term was short-lived as he ran for a two year term in December, but was not elected. While engaged in research for this study, Buddy recognized the need for a Strider historian, and addressed the matter at the November Board meeting. Comments from the board were less than favorable. The larger picture had escaped the directors.

Recorded by Strider Secretary Sharon Rodier, Minutes of the August board meeting indicate Steve Shapiro had assumed the duties of walk team coordinator for the Teams Committee and taken on the responsibility of setting up walking teams for local, state and inter-state events. A request for funds had been received. The walking team will receive a minimum of \$500 from a budgeted line item for teams.

A report received from the Walking Committee revealed,

There is an issue of runners not respecting the right of walkers to be on the same course. During a recent race, walkers were being pushed off the path even though they were staying to the right with enough room on the left for all to pass. A suggestion was made that we write something up for the Rundown “Ms Manners” and spread out the start time more on tight courses.

Results of the VA-USATF and SE Region 3000m Racewalk Championship were posted in the September RUNDOWN.

<u>Male overall results</u>		<u>Female overall results</u>	
1	Bill Lipford, 45	16:16	1 Rebecca Garson, 45 18:40
2	Tom Gerhardt, 58	17:42	2 Paula Graham, 46 20:33
3	Scott Stakes, 46	18:05	3 Linda Janssen, 47 20.33
4	Hartley Dewey, 61	19:45	4 Heidi Sleasman, 37 24:49
5	Carl Mallett, 67	25:45	5 Judith Paschall, 69 24:51
6	Robert Curtin, 56	26:27	6 Diana Hinshaw, 28 31:45

At the September meeting of the board, Buddy informed the directors that in March 2009, Dave McGovern asked the Striders to produce a handout on developing walking in a running environment for him to distribute at racewalking clinics throughout the country. The work had been completed and was posted on McGovern’s Web site.

Tidewater Striders continued to distinguish themselves in major racewalking events throughout the year.

The Strider Walking Team of Steve Shapiro, Hartley Dewey, and Bill Lipford, assisted by Steve Durrant and Linda Janssen, traveled to Ocean Township, New Jersey, to compete in the USATF National 40K Championship on September 13, 2009. The team finished in 3rd place. Steve Shapiro finished 2nd in the men's 55-59 age group. Hartley finished 4th in the men's 60-64 age group.

In October, competing in the USATF National 5K Racewalking Championship in Kingsport, Tennessee, Paula and Linda placed 2nd and 3rd respectively in the women's 45-49 age group behind Olympian Teresa Vail, and Bill Lipford took 3rd in the men's 55-59 age group. Steve Durrant won the 1st Place medal in men's 70-74 age group.

Replacing the Shore Athletic Club of New Jersey after fifteen years, the 2009 One Hour Postal racewalk was organized by Walk On! Minnesota. Local competition was held on November 14 at Tallwood High School in a cold drizzle.

Steve Durrant served as race director and sent the results to Walk On! Minnesota.

Distances traveled by individual racewalkers on measured tracks in all 2009 One Hour Postal Racewalks were merged by Walk On! Minnesota and published by the organizer according to distance traveled, overall place, gender place, and age group place.

Results of Tidewater Strider racewalkers in the One Hour Postal were outstanding:

Distance (in meters)	Name	Overall Place	Gender Place	Age Group Place
10145	Tom Gerhardt	11	M10	M55:1
8440	Linda Janssen	5	F:23	W45:3
8310	Steve Durrant	65	M:39	M70:5
8302	Hartley Dewey	66	M:40	M60:5
8301	Paula Graham	67	F:27	W45:4
7211	Lori Sherwood	134	F:69	W45:9
7105	Jordan Levitin	136	M:67	M75:2
6768	Desiree Haubner	170	F:91	W40:13

Results of the 28th Annual Seaside Half-Marathon in Wachapreague on December 5, 2009, were released in a letter from Race Director Vernon Bell. The race attracted 71 runners and 23 walkers on a cold, rainy day, with a stiff wind blowing from the north in participants' faces.

Of the first five finishers in the walking division, four were Striders: Tom Gerhardt (1:16:32), Paula Graham (1:32:17), Dwight Kane(1:41:20), Haley Smith, non Strider, (1:43:50), and Jordan Levitin (1:47:22). Altogether, 94 participants completed the race, including 71 runners and 23 walkers. Strider racewalkers were sad to learn from long time race director Vernon Bell that after thirty years, the Seaside Half-Marathon and 7.7 Mile Walk would end in December 2011.

Throughout the year, Steve Durrant furnished individual walkers competing in the Walking Grand Prix Series with World Association of Veteran Athletes (WAVA) age graded results of the individual races. The North American Racewalking Foundation describes age grading as “a subjective process based on careful analysis of ‘world best’ times at each age for both males and females. It is NOT an exact science. At the same time, it provides one of the best-available tools for evaluating, forecasting, and comparing walker and/or running performances.”

Information gathered is based on tables compiled by the WAVA. Adjusted finish times are based on what finish times would have been if walkers were in their prime years, 20-29. In one 5K race this year, the 46 year-old walker with the best actual race time (31:06) finished second in age graded time (28:31) to the 75 year old walker who crossed the finish line in 39:57 and finished first in age graded time (27:10). The realization is that as walkers grow older, age graded results become “braggin’ rights.”

The year ended with the announcement of Walking Grand Prix (WGP) and Walker Participation (WP) winners. Age graded results for 2009 WGP events were furnished by Steve Durrant, with the following caveat: “They are strictly for historical use since the Walking Committee decided that Age-Graded Awards would not be included in the WGP Series at this time.”

WGP

<u>MEN</u>		<u>WOMEN</u>	
<u>Place</u>	<u>A/G Place</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>A/G Place</u>
1 – Tom Gerhardt	1- Tom Gerhardt (Tie)	1 – Linda Janssen	1- Linda Janssen
2 – Scott Sakes	1 -Steve Durrant (Tie)	2 – Lori Sherwood	2- Lori Sherwood
3 – Steve Durrant	3 –Dwight Kane	3 – Paula Graham	3- Paula Graham
4 – Dwight Kane	4 –Hartley Dewey	4– Kathy Nash	4- Kathy Nash
5 – Hartley Dewey	5 – Scott Stakes	5 – Heidi Sleasman	5- Heidi Sleasman

The top ten finishers in Walker Participation competition were,

1 – Richard Kole	6 – Nancy Hallingse
2 – Bill Lipford	7 – Charlyne Gibson
3 – Jordan Levitin	8 – Bob Curtin
4 – Cindy Williams	9 – Desiree Haubner
5 – Judy Paschall	10 - James Wolfe

Looking back on the first decade of the New Century, one can safely say, “The Rise to Prominence” was in full swing. Tidewater Strider walkers had the feeling the best is yet to come.