



# *Southern Maine Volkssport Association*

*February 2004*

## **President's Corner**

In the November/December 2003 newsletter, President Ann Stevens stated that she hoped that "new leadership will bring new members, ideas, trails, and enthusiasm to our merry band of walkers". I am Denise Macaronas, the newly-elected President of SMVA. I hope I can fulfill Ann's hope for the future. Her words will be an inspiration and a motivation to me.

First of all, I would like to thank all of the officers for the tremendous job they did:

- Ann for her positive, friendly attitude,
- Cheri Watson for her efforts in membership,
- David Cole for his accurate and prompt dealings regarding our money matters
- Ed Witherell for keeping the minutes and all his other duties associated with being Secretary.

These officers, along with the Board of Directors, moved the club forward in a positive way. I look forward to working with the Board in the year ahead as we face the challenges of 2004 together.

The slate of officers for 2004 are:

Denise Macaronas, President; Carroll Tiernan, Vice-President;  
Sharon LaChapelle, Secretary, and Wally Johnson, Treasurer.

Board members are Ann Stevens, Happy Jackson, Sandy Johnson, Alan Robitaille, and Marilyn Russell.

Who am I? What do I hope to accomplish as President of SMVA? I have been a member of SMVA for many years, but due to a standing commitment on the third Wednesday of the month since 1988, I have not been able to attend many meetings. However, I have been involved in coordinating a number of walks including Holiday Walks in Falmouth, a "Dental Health" walk around Back Cove, and a springtime walk on Peaks Island.

When the Nominating Committee first asked me if I would consider being an officer, my first reaction was, Of course not! Then I began thinking about it. One of my New Year's resolutions (for many years!) has been to get - and stay - in shape. What better way of getting in shape than by walking? Knowing my level of motivation, I thought the only way I would walk was to become President! My friends laughed at me - saying there were other ways to start walking, but to me, this made sense.

Now, I need your help. I enjoy meeting people - and would much prefer walking with other people than by myself. The very first walk I ever took as a Volksmarcher had a mass start. I started out with the fast group (I had great conversations with them), then decided I could meet "everyone" by walking the pace I was more used to. By the time the walk ended, I had met almost all of the walkers and the time had gone by so fast! I loved the opportunity to meet and talk to so many people.

In order for me to meet you, I plan on walking the year-round and seasonal events on a regular basis. I invite you all to join me. I am starting with the South Portland year-round on Monday, April 5. We'll have "sprung ahead" by then, so hopefully we'll get the walk done while it's still daylight. I will be there for a 5:00 pm start. I hope to see you then! Other dates will be announced in the newsletter. If another night is more convenient, let me know as I'm flexible - and want to get out to do lots of walking!

The board has discussed having an occasional guest speaker at our meetings. Topics could include a Yoga demonstration, historic talks, or travel nights highlighting communities hosting our special events walks.

If you have any ideas for guest speakers, please let one of the officers know. Your input is very important!

I thank all of you for the confidence you have in me. I hope to follow in Ann's footsteps and continue to make walking an important part of people's lives.

Looking forward to working - and walking- with you soon.

Denise Macaronas President, SMVA

## **SMVA Minutes for Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Ann Stevens opened the meeting at 10:10 AM at the Maine Audubon Environmental Center in Falmouth. 18 members were present. Ann presided over the meeting as the new slate of officers will be voted in at the next meeting on February 11th.

The Secretary's report for December 10, 2003, as reported in the January Newsletter was accepted as printed. The Treasurer's report as read by Wally Johnson was accepted: \$2,270.70 in checking and \$4,528.24 in CDs.

Ann requested that when anyone submits a bill to Wally (our new treasurer to be) please make a notation about what the bill is for. Wally picks up the SMVA mail so you can send it to our PO box.

As a reminder the rest of the SMVA meetings at the Walker Memorial Library will be on the second Wednesday of each month.

A vote will be taken at the February 11th meeting on the slate of officers submitted by the nominating committee. Again, the officers are: Denise Macaronis, President; Carroll Tiernan, VP; Sharon LaChappelle, Secretary; Wally Johnson, Treasurer; and Board members: Ann Stevens, immediate past president, Marilyn Russell, Happy Jackson, Sandy Johnson, and Alan Robitaille. Don Bolin is our webmaster.

Alan Robitaille went to a recent meeting of the Healthy Maine Walks. SMVA is now a participant in this program. You can look at their web page at [www.healthymainewalks.org](http://www.healthymainewalks.org). The SMVA year round walks will eventually be listed on their extensive list of Maine walks.

Please note that the Portland Year Round walks starting at the Double Tree Hotel in Portland has two walks. The traditional walk through Portland and a second walk where you have to drive to the Back Cove parking lot near the Hannaford on Forest Ave. to start that walk.

The Seacoast Striders in New Hampshire is starting a New Hampshire county walk program. The SMVA Maine county walk program is still in effect, although we need walks in some of the remote Maine counties.

Barbara Weymouth came down from Bar Harbor and she was rewarded for her long drive by being awarded with the 2003 Volunteer of Year award for her heroic efforts for the October Bar Harbor and Camden walks. Thank you Barbara.

If you plan to do a walk, please send a copy of your walk map to Sylvia Allen, our walk historian. She has a file of virtually all the SMVA walks since our founding in 1983. You can send the map to our PO box and it will be forwarded on to Sylvia.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM. After the meeting 18 hardy souls did the Falmouth Walk Winter walk in sunny but frigid conditions.

Ed Witherell, SMVA Secretary

Congratulations to Ed Witherell and Brenda Gouen on their engagement. We wish you "every happiness."

Want to Walk? Hate Cold Weather? Don't Like to Walk Alone? Join our friends from Walk 'n Mass Club at their group walk of the Burlington Mall SEA scheduled for Leap Year Day. That's Sunday, February 29th, starting at 9:30a.m. See you there.

If you are making ANY transaction in the name of the club, be it a deposit or an order of any sort, PLEASE notify our treasurer Wally Johnson either by mail or e-mail at [sjohns1@maine.rr.com](mailto:sjohns1@maine.rr.com) Bills show up and deposits are made and he doesn't have a record of members financial activity for the club. This will make his job easier. Thanks.

**VOLKSMARCHING IN MAINE — Part I**  
**TWENTY YEARS IN MAY**  
by A. Nomad

It was in the fall of 1983 that four members of the faculty at Westbrook High School formed a volkssport club and sought membership in the American Volkssport Association. That was the beginning of Southern Maine Volkssport Association. Plans were immediately set forth to hold a first walk in the spring of 1984.

Very shortly after, the new SMVA was approached by Blue Cross—Blue Shield of Maine. That company wished to sponsor a volksmarch as part of its health promotion activity. The outcome was the first volksmarch in Maine, held in May 1984, and starting from the campus of the University of Southern Maine's Portland campus, co-sponsored by SMVA and BC/BS Maine.

The route of that first walk wandered from the campus, through Deering Oaks, up to the Western Promenade, then down through the peninsula part of Portland to the Eastern Promenade, and then back to USM. Although volksmarching was relatively new in the USA at the time, die-hard enthusiasts already existed and we had folks come from several distant states to take part in this first-in-Maine event. Thanks to the advertising efforts by BC/BS, the event drew over 1500 walkers.

In late September, 1984, SMVA sponsored Maine's second volksmarch — without co-sponsorship — a two day event at Old Orchard Beach. That event was held on a beautiful, sunny, last weekend in September and over 900 walkers participated.

SMVA and BC/BS joined forces for several years to sponsor a mid-May event. One of these was the famous "lighthouse walk" of 1985 in which nearly 3500 people took part. We ran out of walk cards and had to improvise! It was the largest participation in any volkssport event in the USA at that time. Quite a feather in the hat of a fledgling organization. Then, as health costs spiraled out of control, BC/BS withdrew co-sponsorship of walks.

Other very successful walks followed over the years, such as the first Seacoast Trolley Museum walk which drew over 1400 walkers. But, as the years went on, enthusiasm began to decline. The few people who had been doing most of the work began to say "enough," and new faces did not appear to take their places. With this decline in enthusiasm, came a decline in participation. To emphasize further decline, it should be noted that there had been nearly a dozen other volkssport clubs founded in Maine and all of them have fallen by the wayside. Today, there is still a small cadre of walking enthusiasts who keep SMVA going by organizing walking events. Will they eventually say "enough?" Will Maine enjoy another twenty years of volksmarching? You, the reader, hold the answer.

In subsequent notes, I will recall some of the activities beyond actual walking the members of SMVA, and their guests, enjoyed in the past.

Meanwhile, how will we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of our first walk?

**Wanted: Pack rat. Do you have any of these maps or brochures??**

Our club historian, Sylvia Allen, needs the following for our files:

1999 Tuesday night walks at Wells (6/15), York (6/29), Buxton, Hollis (7/20) & Gorham (8/3)

2001 SEAs of Augusta and Westbrook

2002 SEAs of Portland, Augusta and Bar Harbor 2002: July 14 Wells Aug 18 & 19 Auburn & Poland Springs Oct. 12 Downeaster week end.

SMVA Membership Application

Individual (\$12) \_\_\_ Double (\$15) \_\_\_ Family (\$15) \_\_\_

New \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_ Mo/day(only)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If new, who referred you? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to volunteer to work a walk? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

The SMVA Newsletter is issued 12 times a year. Please send materials for publication consider to Patty Collins: [pac567000@yahoo.com](mailto:pac567000@yahoo.com)



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