



The Strider

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Sun Country Striders, Ltd.

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Historic Downtown Walk Kicks Off

Although the Historic Downtown Las Cruces Year-Round walk had been available since 1 January, on the 12th and 13th of March, the Sun Country Striders and friends officially kicked off the event with a Hosted event. Although many of you completely missed the fun and exercise, those who participated sure enjoyed it. Yes, even without you if you didn't show up!!



In the photo above, the club's Vice-President, Elisabeth Johnson, chats with Tom Baltas, the President of the Double Eagle Hike and Bike Club in Albuquerque, Todd Sherman to the right of Elisabeth, Pauline Horne, and Louise Baltas, Tom's wife, on the right, after they finished the walk. Todd is a Sun Country Strider member who came to the event from Alamogordo.

The walk started on the Downtown Mall at the Coas Bookstore. On Saturday, everyone got to walk past and thorough all the Farmers and Crafts Market scattered between the six commemorative sculptures placed at several locations throughout the mall.

All the sculptures were done by Lea Anne and Tom Askman in 1998, and portray various aspects of the history of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.



The photo above shows one of the six sculptures in the mall, and depicts a Blacksmith working over a wagon wheel.

Shortly after leaving the mall the first time, you come to the Log Cabin, which was moved from the town site in Grafton, New Mexico in the Black Range. It was dedicated in 1976.

A little past the Log Cabin down West Lucero Street, at 167, is the oldest house on the street, built in 1905 for R. P. Porter. Here, you do a "U" turn and walk back to the Mall.



Black Range Log Cabin

After returning to the mall, the walk takes you to the south end of the mall, passing more sculptures and North & South Plazas. The plazas commemorate Capt. General Juan de Oñate. One view of the plazas is shown below.



At the south end of the mall, you make another "U" turn and proceed back to the North to Las Cruces Avenue and turn left (West). In the 4th block as you walk, you will come to 406 West Las Cruces Avenue, where the Thomas Branigan House stands. It was built around 1909. Captain Branigan was a former military scout and agent for the Mescalero Apaches.

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A member of the American Volkssport Association (AVA) in the
International Federation of Popular Sports (IVV)



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The Branigan home, shown above, is a two story Colonial Revival home constructed of faceted stone, an early form of concrete block. From this location, the Branigans traveled to their large farm west of town along what is now Valley Drive.

In the next block of Las Cruces Avenue, you see Pioneer Park on the right, shown below.



Pioneer Park is the first city park in Las Cruces and was donated to the city by the Women's Improvement Association. You walk along the South, West, and North sides of the park, before heading North to the North Alameda district.

After walking through parts of the North Alameda district, you proceed past the Albert Johnson Statue and Memorial Park, past the Branigan Library, to the Mesquite Historic district and walk through many areas of the district. As you are leaving the Mesquite district, along Lohman Avenue, you come to the Nestor Armijo house located at the North end of the Loretto Town Center.



The house was originally built as a single story, four room adobe house by Bradford

Daily and his wife Marcita around 1870. In 1877, they sold it to Nestor Armijo, who built a two-story addition with three-foot thick adobe walls onto the North side of the Daily house. There were six bedrooms downstairs and two parlors upstairs. The building is now on the Historic Register and is occupied by Grubbs and Ellis Real Estate. As some of the participants passed the house during the Hosted walk, they posed for a photo.



From the left, is Todd Sherman from Alamogordo, Tom and Louise Baltes from Albuquerque, and Pauline Horne from Las Cruces. They didn't know each other before, now they are friends.

For those of you who missed this opportunity to walk on the 12th or 13th of March, you not only missed these points of interest, you missed many more. Elisabeth Johnson has put together the outstanding Directions and Points of Interest guide for the Historic Downtown Las Cruces walk. There are a total of 55 points of interest with historic information about the place of interest and the people who were associated with them. This event will be available until the end of the year, so be sure to get out and walk the interesting course. ■

Sun Country Striders



Get your new Club Tee Shirt! Just \$15.00. Contact any club Officer or ask at the Start-Finish for the April walk.

Board of Directors

Elected members:

Walter Baker, President
Phone: 505-525-3990
E-mail: baker@newmexico.usa.com

Elisabeth Johnson, Vice-President
Phone: 505-521-7304
E-mail: elisabethcjohn@msn.com

Randy Ranel, Vice-President Trails
Phone: 505-525-0495
E-mail: ranlinranel@zianet.com

Louis Bevacqua, Secretary
Phone: 505-522-0411
E-mail: None

Doyle Piland, Treasurer
Phone: 505-523-7034
E-mail: dpiland@zianet.com

At-large members:

Carol Gaines, Member
Phone: 505-524-4203
E-mail: gjgaines90@juno.com

Robert Macklin, Member
Phone: 505-524-8032
E-mail: macklin@zianet.com

Joanne Poulos, Member
Phone: 505-522-3513
E-mail: watch4dog@zianet.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Below is a listing of our **UPCOMING EVENTS** for 2005. Mark your calendar and be sure to participate in all these events.

Apr 16 & 17, 8:00 - 4:00 PM ... Sonoma Ranch Golf Course, Las Cruces, New Mexico walk.

May 21 & 22, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM ... New Mexico State University walk.

June - August, HAVE A NICE SUMMER!

Sep 10 & 11, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM ... Zia Middle School, Las Cruces, NM walk.

Oct 15 & 16, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM ... Fort Selden, Radium Springs, NM walk.

Nov 19 & 20, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM ... Walk at the La Viña Winery in La Union, New Mexico.

Dec 17, 5:00 PM ... Christmas Lights Guided Night Walk (5:30 - 8:00 PM), Trails West Clubhouse, 1450 Avenida de Mesilla, Mesilla, New Mexico.

Meet and Get to Know Your Vice-President Trails! Randy Ranel



VP Trails (Trailmaster) Randy Ranel recovers the last course marker at the NMSU Walk in May 2004

Randy Ranel is a bona fide New Mexican having been born in Alamogordo, New Mexico in August 1941.

He attended schools in both, Tatum, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas and graduated from Ysleta High School in 1959. Working for the Southern Pacific Railroad as an engine-crew dispatcher, Randy put himself through college. Graduating from Texas Western College [now known as University of Texas at El Paso] in 1964 with a degree in physics and mathematics, Randy was commissioned as a 2LT in the Engineer Corps of the US Army.

Wanting out of the Fort Belvoir motor pool, Randy volunteered in 1965 for flight school to fly aerial, topological surveys in South America. Instead of fixed-wing school, his orders read helicopter training followed by a tour as a gun-ship pilot with the First Cavalry Division in Viet Nam during 1966-67. His family waited in El Paso, and upon his return, they moved to his new assignment with the 540th Engineer Group in Germany.

After surviving a deadly helicopter ac-

cident in Germany in January of 1968, Randy was told that he would never be able to walk again or fly a helicopter. While in the hospital, he refused to allow the amputation of his right leg. So, he was sent to William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso and started a regimen of therapy and exercise. A year later Randy was able to do both: walk and fly! The catch was that he was ordered back to Viet Nam for a second tour. This time he wound up as an instructor pilot teaching pilots how to fly the Cobra attack helicopter.

The last seven years of his military career were spent in armament research and development in three different locations: Fort Greely, Alaska; White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico; and Picatinny Arsenal in Dover, New Jersey. Upon retiring from the Army (*editor's note: as a Lieutenant Colonel*) in 1984 and returning to Las Cruces, Randy resumed Volksmarching and other outdoor activities in earnest as a way to stay healthy. In order to teach public school, Randy took several education courses while teaching math at Mayfield High School. As a recently divorced man, he met and married Linden, an English teacher at Mayfield High. Walking became a pass-time to "get away" from the classroom environment.

It was also natural for them to enjoy the peace and quiet of their 1-acre retreat north of Las Cruces. A huge, fenced-off garden was planted, and Linden had to start canning to contain the harvest. Now, after they both retired and reduced the size of their garden, picking pecans and grapes is more like the lifestyle of the not so rich and famous.

Oh, yeah! Randy is the county coordinator, and one of the drivers for the Disabled American Veterans Transportation System, a volunteer organization taking veterans to their Veterans Administration medical appointments in Las Cruces, El Paso and Albuquerque. He also serves on the Las Cruces Airport Advisory Board and sees the need for an airport that can support the rapid growth of the community. And, Linden? She is a coordinator for Project Linus, a volunteer group, which donates hand-made blankets to traumatized and seriously ill kids.

Randy and Linden have been members of Sun Country Striders since 1987. His first club position was recording secretary. Then he was trail master and later club president for two years. Having dealt with the club's paperwork, he decided that roaming the countryside, looking for new trails, and being the trail-master was more fun. But, after 15 years, Randy is more than ready to turn over the reins of "trail-meister" to someone else!

If anybody wants to take his place, there are many "happy trails" out there waiting to be discovered!! All it takes is ideas for new areas, time to explore and map-out the routes, and energy to mark and sweep our club events. Randy will gladly help and assist that person or a team of walkers who like the fun and adventure of Volkssporting.

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

The February/March 2005 issues of The American Wanderer lists the following IVV awards for local Volkssporters:

Distance (kilometers)

Joy Macklin: 4,500 KM

Event Awards

Elisabeth Johnson: 150 Events

James Ivey: 200 Events

Joy Macklin: 300 Events

Robert Macklin: 750 Events

Congratulations to each of you. Keep it up!

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome new members, Catherine B. Powers, as well as, Beth and David Janda.

And, to all of you who renewed your membership, thank you for your continued support.

new balance 
Official Shoe Sponsor of the AVA and its member Clubs. Quality, comfortable walking shoes at reasonable prices.



↑ Above, is a photo of the cake, which awaited participants at the Christmas Lights walk with the Start-Finish at the Trails West Clubhouse. In addition to the cake, there was coffee and warm cider served. So, after the walk, everyone sat, had refreshments and enjoyed a chat with their fellow participants.



At right, Elisabeth Johnson (right) and Joanne Poulos (behind Elisabeth) are registering participants (from left), Charlotte Hollis, Doug Rennert, and Randy Stone for the Christmas Lights Walk.



After registration, participants wait for their group's start time. At left, is Jim and Debbie Ivey. Robert Macklin is standing facing the camera, with his mother, Iva Stanford, sitting to the left, at the Christmas Lights Walk.

