



Vancouver Venturers Walking Club

Email: vancouverventurers@gmail.com

Website: <https://vancouverventurers.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/vancouverventurers/>

Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/Vancouver-Venturers-Meetup/>

Newsletter #99

July – Dec 2023

Nothing Ventured – Nothing Gained



2022/2023

**VVWC
EXECUTIVE**

President	Doug J.
Vice President	Jerry v. Z.
Secretary	Susan M.
Treasurer	Denise M.
Membership Coordinator	Arleen T.
Trail Master	Markku V.

WELCOME ALL NEW CLUB MEMBERS! As of June 27, our club had **418** members.

VOLKSSPORT AWARDS

From *Volkssport Canada* Jan/Feb/Mar 2023 and Apr/May/Jun 2023

Congratulations to **Verni B.** and **Sharon Ma.** for completing the BoardWalks Special Program

Congratulations to the Events award winners:

Steve P. - 250, 275 & 300 events

Sylvie P. - 250, 275, 300 & 325 events

Congratulations to the Distance award winners:

Dianna M. – 500 km

Doug J. – 6500 km

Linda C. – 500 km

Rita H. – 40,000 km

Steve P. - 5500 km

Sylvie P. – 5000, 5500 & 6000 km

Mail your completed *Event* and *Distance* record books to:

Marion Boom, CVF Awards Coordinator,
42 Billingham Crescent
Ottawa, ON K2K 2T7

Mail *Special Program* books (e.g., Walk 100, BoardWalks) to:

Canadian Volkssport Federation
204 Leather Leaf Terrace,
Ottawa ON, K2J 5Z7

Club President's Letter

by Doug J.

I am thrilled to address you all in this June 2023 President's Letter, reflecting on the incredible start we have had to this year. We have experienced a series of remarkable events and achievements that truly showcase the spirit and dedication of our club.

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude for the overwhelming support and attendance at our Members Appreciation Luncheon. It really was a fun event to attend. The large turnout really showed what a tight-knit community we have built together.

I must also extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the Vancouver Venturer members who participated in the Olympiad and IML in San Antonio, Texas. Your representation of our club at these events was outstanding. The enthusiasm and passion you displayed served as a shining example of what makes our organization so special.

Our recent Walk the Island bus tour was nothing short of exceptional. Thanks to the planning and coordination by the Victoria Pathfinders, we embarked on an unforgettable journey through scenic Vancouver Island. It was remarkable that this tour sold out in a mere 19 days, highlighting the eagerness and excitement of our members to embark on new adventures together. That we ran out of walk labels goes to show the tremendous success of our "walk challenges program" and the vibrant walking culture we have cultivated in Vancouver.

I have recently had the privilege of joining members from various clubs on their walks and events. From walking alongside the Surrey club at their Un Marathon to participating in the Ontario walking bus tour and walking with the Nord-Sud club, these experiences have reinforced my admiration for our organization. We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers who devote their time and energy to organize these events for our benefit and really sets our walking organization apart.

Now, it is our turn to shine as we gear up for WalkFest Vancouver 2023. If you haven't registered yet, **I urge you to do so without delay.** Your support and active participation will be invaluable in making this event a resounding success. Let us come together as a community and welcome those who are coming to WalkFest.

As I conclude, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for being an integral part of the Vancouver Venturers Walking Club. Your unwavering dedication, enthusiasm, and active involvement continue to elevate our club to new heights.



And a Tree Fell Down

by Marie H.

It is widely known that women may present different symptoms of a heart attack than men and so quite often it becomes overlooked. No, this is not a shock-and-horror story. Quite the opposite actually, but a heads-up for everyone in our club - men and women.

In February the Venturers were on a delightful walk in Confederation Park in Burnaby. I was really enjoying it as we rambled through the neighbourhood and on a very downward slope to the river where we were to go into the park and gently go back to the starting point at the top of it. However, Mother Nature intervened and had brought down a big tree across the path so the trail had been gated and closed. An unfortunate and unforeseen event that caused us to all turn around and start the very steep trek back up the hill to our starting point.

Halfway up this hill I started to feel awful with nausea and a pain that centred around the top of my stomach. So much for that 3-bean burrito I had for dinner last night I thought. My pace of walking slowed down a lot as I navigated the hill. I was regretting all the friends that came up to me to “TWALK” (our own club created word for talking while walking) but then passed me by as I struggled and encouraged them to leave me. I had to stop several times to get energy to carry on, all the while in discomfort.

Then along came Agnes, our cheerful and happy long-time member and walks coordinator. Agnes was almost at the end of our large group of walkers and so she was “The Sweep” making sure that no one got lost or left behind. Agnes took one look at me and decided something was wrong. Although I encouraged Agnes and Diana to leave me behind while I took my time to get back to my car Agnes was insistent in not leaving me and wanted to make sure I got there OK. So we let the group go well ahead and we very slowly walked back to the start whereupon I became sick but then the pain disappeared, and I felt OK to drive home.

Cut to the outcome and happy ending. It was a heart attack. When it happened again at 4 in the morning I called 911 then spent several days in hospital as I waited for my turn to have an angiogram with a subsequent stent insertion for a blocked artery. The cardiologist told me there was no heart damage and my heart was actually quite strong, possibly from all the walking. With a new respect for my diet and the great exercise I get walking with the group I am making sure it doesn't happen again.

This was a mild cardiac event with a happy ending but I'm sure that everyone can see that it could have ended quite differently. Unlike most men I had no chest pain, no pains radiating down my arm and was not severely short of breath - the signs that we all know to be a heart attack. What looked like stomach pain was a different kind of symptom and quite often only in women.

The whole point of my story is to say that this can happen to anyone on a walk and thank goodness for people like Agnes who take responsibility to be there if and when needed. Had this been a much more serious event I know that Agnes would have taken the necessary steps and called 911. I am so thankful and appreciative of the friendships I find with the club and know that I'm safe when on a walk with the Vancouver Venturers. And when a tree comes down again - I think I will just go around it.

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We thank Nancy L. for contributing the following:

The Importance of Walking

Walking can add minutes to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a retirement home at \$7000 per month.

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. Now he's 97 years old and we don't know where he is

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing...

I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. I haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, she looks good doesn't she.'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years, just getting over the hill.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it

AND

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine.

If you don't forward this to 1 of your friends within the next 5 minutes your bellybutton will unscrew and your butt will fall off.

Really... It's true

A Recent Visit to Saskatchewan

by Verni Brown

In mid-June, I spent four days in the Regina area with Laurie Ross (the president of the Wascana Wanderers) as my host and trip organizer. Thursday evening, we did the Regina Heritage walk. The next day, seven of us drove to Weyburn for a 6K or 11K. On Saturday, Laurie and I took the "Rider Express" bus to/from Saskatoon for the 10K PT, and on Sunday morning, we did a 5K Downtown walk. It was a very full but enjoyable schedule.

It was great to meet and walk with and have meals with some of the Wascana Wanderers club members. I'm particularly happy to have gotten credit for some of the various Volkssport special programs which I'm working on.

	Regina PT #091	Weyburn PT	Saskatoon PT	Regina PT #289
Famous Canadians	Tommy Douglas	W.O. Mitchell	Joni Mitchell	Louis Riel
Public Art	Queen Elizabeth on "Burmese"	—	Statue of girl and dog	"Rusty the Elephant"
Moving Waters	Fountain in Wascana Lake	Fountain outside Court House	Kiwanis Memorial Fountain	Peace Fountain outside City Hall



Journey to the 18th IVV Olympiad

San Antonio, Texas, USA – February 2023

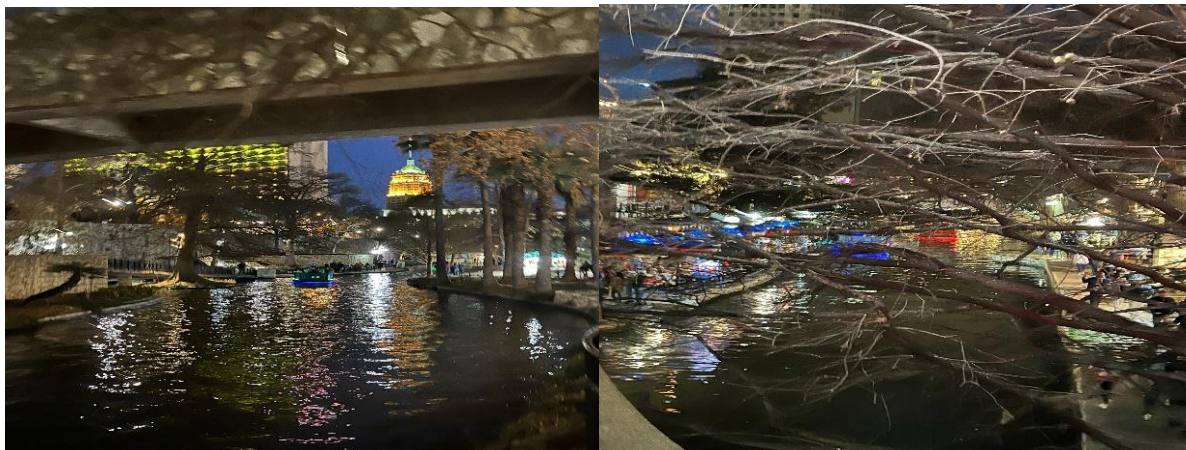
by Zoher A.

Did you know that IVV stands for *Internationaler Volkssport Verband*, meaning International Federation of Popular Sports? Volkssport means "people's sports", which include walking, swimming, skiing, snowshoeing, and biking. IVV is headquartered in Germany and comprises hundreds of clubs and associations around of the world. The Canadian Volkssport Federation was formed in 1987.

The IVV Olympiad is a Volkssport festival lasting several days and is held every two years in an IVV member country.

This year the Olympiad was held in North America for the first time -- in San Antonio, Texas from February 19 - 23. The Olympiad was attended by over 1,400 participants from 23 countries, including about 75 Canadians.

With great anticipation building up over the previous weeks, I landed for the first time ever in San Antonio. My taxi driver wanted to know my destination in the city. With a weary mind I blurted out "La Quinta Riverview Hotel". He gleefully replied immediately, there is no such hotel in San Antonio but the city has a La Quinta Riverwalk Hotel. Little did I know then that the word Riverview was not quite fitting for the area where the hotel was located. Needless to say that San Antonians are a bit conscious about the name of the beautiful part of their downtown area.



Having been in the air for the better part of the day, some fellow Venturers and I went to the nearby famous and vibrant Riverwalk area for food and drinks. The air was cool and crispy as some days are in the Texan winter. The Riverwalk was bustling with visitors and partygoers. I quickly witnessed how people in San Antonio party! From shiny wheel caps on "lowriders" (bouncing cars) to big, illuminated tires of over height tinted glassed monster vehicles to blaring music to gaudy Cinderella carriages. I thought, surely, there is an obscure law in Texas that will punish me for not having Margaritas on the very first day! So that was the first order of business for me and some other Venturers. To some degree I believed that "When in Texas do what Texans do." (Firearms not included!) I purposely hid my extra-large glass of Margarita in the picture for fear of possible reprisal on social media!



After our first walk, we all gathered for the Parade of Flags at King William Park. I had made sure that I had enough Canadian Flag tattoos to use for myself and for distribution to Canadians and a couple of enthusiastic Americans. With tattoos on my face, I wrapped myself in a large Canadian flag to jell with others in reds and whites around me. It was quite a spectacle to see all the nationals in strikingly patriotic colourful attire. The parade line-up was long, but we were safely escorted by the local police through the streets to La Villita where a Mariachi band welcomed us to the opening ceremony of the Olympiad. What a fabulous and unique experience for me and a lot of others!

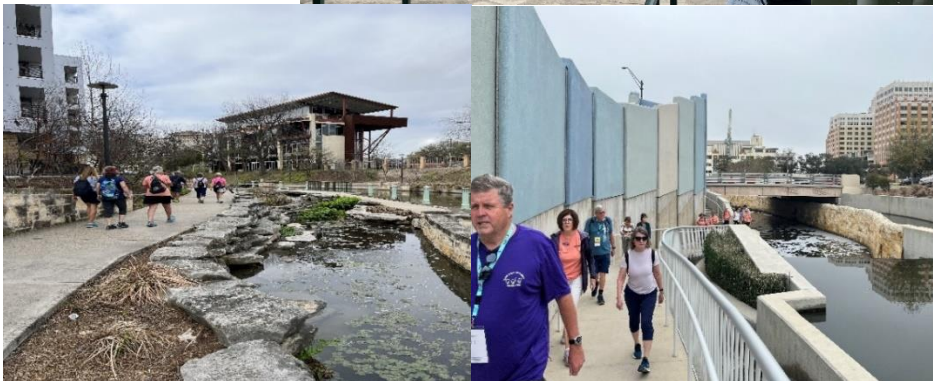


After the Opening Blessing by a member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation and a few welcoming speeches from the executive of IVV and AVA, the 18th Olympiad was formally declared open. Performances by Mariachi Estrellas de Oro Burbank High School, New Tricks and Travis Hudson (Elvis Tribute) followed soon thereafter to entertain all participants who could not have enough.





We completed several walks through different parts of San Antonio over the next couple of days, some with “Buffy” a very well-liked walk leader. I understand that she is attending WalkFest Vancouver later this year.



We dined and drank but did not make fools of ourselves. David Hall, President of CVF, organized a Mexican dinner at one of the best Mexican restaurants in San Antonio which was well attended by 65 Canadians. The food was fantastic, and the atmosphere was made by us quite Mexican Canadian! We celebrated being Canadians as well as Jim M.’s birthday and Ray and Mana’s 25th wedding anniversary. An awesome evening to remember!



Thanks to Doug, Nancy, Frank and Lynn, it became quite a tradition to gather in the hotel lobby every evening for drinks, fun and lots of laughter. We reminisced over each day and made plans for the next. Neither the hotel staff nor the hotel guests complained about our occasional boisterous outbursts.

A day before the closing of the Olympiad, a lot of us Canadians volunteered to man various checkpoints on the 21 kms trail. We worked in shifts. We encouraged walkers on this hot day with our maple candies, Canadian flags, cooler water, snacks and lively Canadian pep talks.



I decided to skip the last day of walks and the closing ceremony and took a ride on Amtrak to the capital city, Austin, with 5 other Venturers. Austin is beautiful, modern and interestingly walkable. In one day, we walked a lot to cram in Texas Capitol, South Congress, a sumptuous lunch at a seafood restaurant, Sixth Street Historic section, drinks at multiple bars and cowboy hat shopping. Skipping Austin's live music venues, I returned late at night to fly back home to Vancouver early the next morning.



The 19th Olympiad will be held in Tampere, Finland from August 14-17, 2025. Hope to see you there!

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Contributed by Verni B.:

18 THE VANCOUVER COURIER ♦ WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003

NOW: feet first

Though they may suffer the indignity of being "trod-upon" on a regular basis, feet are in fact one of the more important structures in the human body. Following are 10 interesting foot facts (one for each toe) from the American Podiatric Medical Association that are bound to make foot-owners everywhere step up and take notice.

1. The foot is an intricate structure containing 26 bones. Thirty-three joints, 107 ligaments, 19 muscles, and tendons hold the structure together and allow it to move in a variety of ways.
2. The 52 bones in your feet make up about one quarter of all the bones in your body.
3. There are approximately 250,000 sweat glands in a pair of feet and they excrete as much as half a pint of moisture each day.
4. Women have about four times as many foot problems as men; lifelong patterns of wearing high heels often are the culprit.
5. The average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day. Those cover several miles, and they all add up to about 115,000 miles in a lifetime—more than four times the circumference of the globe.
6. There are times when you're walking that the pressure on your feet exceeds your body weight, and when you're running, it can be three or four times your weight.
7. Walking is the best exercise for your feet. It also contributes to your general health by improving circulation and contributing to weight control.
8. Your feet mirror your general health. Such conditions as arthritis diabetes, nerve and circulatory disorders can show their initial symptoms in the feet—so foot ailments can be your first sign of more serious medical problems.
9. Seventy-five percent of people will experience foot health problems of varying degrees of severity at one time or another in their lives.
10. The podiatric physician (doctor of podiatric medicine, or DPM) is the health care professional trained in the care of your feet. He or she receives conventional medical training, plus special training on the foot, ankle, and lower leg.



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From Volkssport Canada:

WHAT A FUN TRIP TO THE OLYMPIAD IN SAN ANTONIO

By Doug Jackson

Seventy-two Canadians attended the 8-day walking festival in San Antonio in February 2023. What a great group it was. David our Canadian Walking Club President organized a Canadian night dinner for us, as a Meet & Greet. Fifty-three attended this dinner in the quite famous Mi Tierra Mexican restaurant. The private room booked was fantastic, as a bonus we celebrated Jim's 75th birthday, as well as Mana & Rays 25th anniversary. This was an excellent way to start off our very fun week of walking, talking, and exploring San Antonio.

The festival organizers asked if our group would volunteer to assist with the workload involved in this venture. Of course, we agreed and in Texas, on February 22, 2023 it was Canada Day in San Antonio. (Not July 1). 45+ Canadians volunteered to help at checkpoints, the start points and at the swim event. To make this even more "Canada Day" we brought maple candies, small Canada pins and small Canadian flags to hand out to all the walkers. The tables were covered with Canadian tablecloths, Canadian banners and some volunteers had Canadian tattoos on their face and arms. We did Canada proud. Here are some of the comments that were posted regarding our involvement.

Thank you for the Maple Leaf flag pin and delicious maple candy!

We appreciated your friendly welcome at the checkpoint on today's warm volksmarch!

Thanks for the lovely pin. You did great work. Always encouraging when we felt a little bit tired. You guys did great!!

Loved getting a cute little Canadian pin!

Thanks for your generous and kind service!

Festivals like this San Antonio Olympiad and IML are events that reassure us we are part of a great walking organization. Try not to miss some of our upcoming walking events. <https://walks.ca/walking-festivals-fetes-de-la-marche/>



San Antonio Olympiad & IML

by Bernadette B.



My trip to San Antonio for the Olympiad was a blast. Starting with the opening ceremony, it was a very good event. I laughed, made lots of new acquaintances either when walking, eating, or sightseeing, and got fitter as well. Everyone was upbeat and the officials and other volunteers were very welcoming and helpful. The event was well organized; the hotel where all the organizing happened was centrally located in San Antonio. The leaders of each walk always made sure we were not left behind. Our afternoons were left for us to either attend the free entertainment put on by the American Volkssport Association or see and shop 'til we dropped. I loved walking along the Riverwalk, a marvelous route along the river through the downtown and beyond. We took a boat ride on it, too.

The Parade of Flags was very moving for me and when the flag bearers walked up onto the stage accompanied by some very inspirational music, I was really happy to be a part of this wonderful group of like-minded people. There were representatives from 29 countries and for me, the highlight was meeting walkers from Luxembourg, my childhood home.

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IVV OLYMPIAD 2023*by Jim M.*

The San Antonio “Festival of Walks” was spectacular in every way. Those of us that had the privilege of going there experienced great accommodations, great dining and entertainment venues, wonderful walking and communication. Besides the official events, we enjoyed a multitude of get togethers, socializing, wonderful food, and great interactions at Happy Hours, etc.!

Did I mention “*Fun, Fitness and Friendship*” bonding?

Spectacular in all ways! San Antonio is a wonderful city that offers great walks, sights and areas to see, including the Alamo.



George and Sharon's "EXCELLENT TRAIN ADVENTURE"

by Sharon Ma.

Once the San Antonio festivities concluded, George and I boarded the Amtrak Texas Eagle to start our *Excellent Train Adventure*. The Texas Eagle took us from San Antonio to Los Angeles in 27 hours. We left at 2:45am and arrived in LA the next day at 5:45am. The trip across the bottom west of the USA is a bit desolate. The Texas ranches are HUGE and the go on and on and on....clickety clack, clickety clack...very nap inducing and after ten fun filled days and nights in San Antonio, naps were the order of the day. Life on board is very relaxing. There is no internet, cell service is spotty at best (we were told), everyone loves to chat about their train travels and you can learn lots from other travellers. Each sleeping car has an attendant who makes up the bunks, helps with anything you need and tells you about life on board.



Texan Wilderness

We were on an Amtrak SuperLiner train. The sleeping cars are double decker. We had a small roomette on the upper level. It was cozy, especially that upper bunk! Very adequate for a couple of nights. I would recommend a bedroom if you are going to be on board the same train for more than two nights.



Amtrak Superliner

All meals are included if you are in a sleeper car. The food is amazing! And forget about trying to walk off the calories! It is not very far to the dining car and back to your sleeper. This is breakfast; lunch and dinner were just as wonderful.



Breakfast on Board

Once we arrived in LA we headed to the Metropolitan Lounge where first-class passengers can hang out with snacks and drinks and wait for their next train. Ours was the Pacific Surfliner, taking us to San Diego. It was just a couple of hours south down the tracks, along the coastline and it was a beautiful ride. We stayed in a terrific place on the beach in San Diego, saw the sights, beautiful sunsets and watched the aircraft come and go from the base. More well needed R & R.



San Diego Sunset

A few days in San Diego then we were back on the Pacific Surfliner north to LA, a little wait in the Metropolitan Lounge and then onto the Coast Starlight to Seattle. We had the same type of roomette accommodation with meals included. We boarded the train at 9:00am and arrived in Seattle the next evening around 8:00pm. It was a stunning trip. We woke up in Oregon as the train was pulling up the winding tracks in the Cascades. It was a loooooong sloooooow climb and the scenery was amazing. There was so much snow in the trees, sheer drop offs and vistas to the east where all you could see were snowy mountains. Once we crested the pass, we chugged our way down the mountains into a lush green valley with not a flake of snow to see.



Oregon Snowy Cascade Mountains

We overnighted at a hotel in downtown Seattle to finish off the trip the next morning on the Amtrak Cascades. This is a coach train with no sleeping accommodations. We arrived in Vancouver around noon, cleared customs, walked over to the Main St/Science World Skytrain station for our last train ride of the trip. It was a fantastic experience and one of my more lovely train trips.



Ah, my favourite skyline—Home!

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‘Passions of Portugal’

by Joan J.

Portugal is deservedly finding its place in the sun with its recent popularity as a travel destination. I jumped at the opportunity to join a guided hiking tour exclusively for women, offered by **Women With Wings** adventure tours. Last October I made my fourth visit to Portugal, remembering well my fond impressions of my previous visits, most recently, thirty years ago.

And the good news is that, due to popular demand, this Vancouver travel agency is repeating the trip this October 2023. The recent itinerary Zoom presentation recording can be found on their website (www.womenwithwings.ca). I have enthusiasm for promoting this exceptional tour, facilitated by Portuguese adventure travel company, A2Z Walking and Biking Tours. Our congenial and capable tour guides treated us to many cultural, historical, exploratory and culinary adventures, including wineries and local markets, boat and train excursions, specialty spirits tastings, and many other perks, including a surprise ‘toast’ of Portuguese ‘bubbly’ at a coastal sunset viewpoint! Their pride in showcasing so much of Portugal’s experiences, destinations and products made for a truly memorable tour.

We were a group of eleven women; a fortunate size that allowed us to bond as a group, and for flexibility in our itinerary, with travel by mini-van and SUV.



The tour was of two weeks duration, and I chose to arrive a week early in order to more fully explore Lisbon and Porto on my own. I stayed at a well-located Airbnb in Lisbon and booked a Rick Steves (travel guidebook writer) recommended old character hotel located near the heart of the historic riverfront area of Porto. Both cities’ historic hearts are easily explored on foot, though the elevation changes are extreme at points.

Through my trusty Rick Steves Portugal guide, I learned of a local company offering free walking tours of Lisbon and Porto. By chance, I stumbled upon the start of a tour, both in Lisbon and Porto, and joined groups led by entertaining and knowledgeable local guides....THE best way to get an inside track on history, architecture, culture, politics, stories, characters....a highlight of my solo travel there! And it facilitated a spontaneous post-tour drink and dinner with a tour participant from Iran, looking to relocate from New Zealand to Europe, and work virtually, as so many young people are doing! Solo travel invites engagement with others, as happened many times during my tour.

In Lisbon, I took a coastal train out to the seaside resort towns of Estoril and Cascais, having lunch in an unpretentious and excellent, family-run seafood restaurant, sourced by talking to some expats on the street. I walked the broad sea promenade two or three kilometers from Cascais to Estoril to get the train back into town.

In Porto, a high pedestrian bridge, designed by famed structural architect, Eiffel crosses the Douro River, connecting Porto with Vila Nova de Gaia, the original port for the transport of Port wine to England and beyond, centuries back. Along the riverfront are the Port wine establishments, where I sat with a young German woman I met on the walk and we shared a charcuterie board and sampled a flight of five types of Port, from White to Ruby Red. My first awareness of white Port!

After my self-guided and self-time regulated touring, I was curious as to how I would adapt to an organized tour, once I met up with my group in Porto. Turns out I was ready to sit back and enjoy our planned itinerary and all the special experiences it offered. I had chosen to travel by train from Lisbon to Porto, and again from our final destination in the southern, Algarve region back to Lisbon to fly home: easy, inexpensive (half price for seniors) and scenic.

The first week was touring the northern regions, our first destination taking in the famed Douro Valley, the world's first designated wine region. Port and other grape vines are grown on steeply terraced vineyards along the river, terraces first created by the Romans. In one day we enjoyed a brief, riverside train ride, gourmet lunch and tour at a winery, and boat excursion before driving to our next destination. We stayed in and visited historic cities and towns on our way south to Lisbon. Highlights were the second oldest (1290) university in Europe in lively Coimbra; the mighty Monastery of Batalha; famed world's largest surfing waves by Nazare, a picturesque coastal town; and tiny, fortified, walled town of Obidos, where we sampled a sour cherry liquor, Ginja, served in chocolate shot cups!

Arriving back for one day in 'Lisboa' as it's called in Portuguese, felt a bit like coming home. Our hosts ensured that we didn't miss the legendary pastry of the country, treating us to the custard tart, pastel de nata, best sprinkled with cinnamon! We stopped at the riverfront Casa Pasteis de Belem, where the original and secret recipe was created, and there, the tart is called Pastel de Belem. (I'm a huge fan!) In Lisbon I enjoyed further exploration with the group and our guides, culminating in a complementary dinner by Women With Wings at a famed Fado restaurant. Fado (fate) is the national folk music and song, accompanied by guitar, a melancholy expression of longing, yet beautiful.

The second week of our tour was one of hiking the dramatic high cliff coastline south of Lisbon. We started our hikes from a small coastal town in the Alentejo region of Portugal, mid-way between Lisbon and the southern Algarve coast. Our ultimate destination in a series of day hikes was the southwestern tip of Europe, once considered the 'end of the world' at Cabo de St. Vicente, near Sagres. Prince Henri the Navigator, a driving force in the 15th Century Age of Discovery, established a navigation school in Sagres.



Stationed at three character hotels in different towns along our route, we started each day with a reliably lavish buffet breakfast. This offering of an impressive range of pastries and hot and cold items, catering to European and North American tastes seems to be a standard in Portuguese hospitality. We were fueled for the day, and a bag lunch was always included from our tour guides. Our hikes ranged from 10 to 12 kilometers.

The stunning and rugged coastline of Portugal in this region is truly jaw-dropping. Our sandy and dirt trails took us mostly along the tops of these craggy cliffs, a gently undulating network of unobtrusive trails through scrubby vegetation of aromatic wild plants and rocky outcroppings. Not a tree in sight in most places. To traverse the uttering headlands, we occasionally had to descend through some more challenging passages, which left us with some interesting stories to tell. We descended to only a couple of the inviting crescent stretches of sandy beach.

The non-profit foundation, Rota Vicentina SW Portugal (rotavicentina.com) has developed and maintains these trails, some for walking, some for cycling. Comprehensive signage, local ecological information and maps are posted along the routes. The organization offers information on accommodation, trip planning, transfers, restaurants, shops, villages along the way. We stopped at their headquarters in a town where our guides had arranged a presentation. This coastal route is considered “one of the most beautiful coastal trails in the world”. Even with my limited exposure, I would enthusiastically concur!

Our tour guides arranged fantastic group meals at their favourite restaurants where we would experience some of the best regional cuisine and wine, including all sorts of seafood. Not all the gals were culinarily adventurous, but I sampled octopus, bream, prawns, squid and other regional dishes. On the tour, we visited villages and small-scale entrepreneurs, getting demonstrations and samplings at a chocolatier, and a Medronho distillery (harvesting the strawberry like fruits of a small indigenous tree of the Arbutus family, called Madrona in the States). At the distillery on the hilly plantation, we were treated to a charcuterie picnic on a canopy-sheltered terrace, while our host prepared a cocktail with the smooth, whisky like liquor. Opportunities to purchase special Portuguese products.



Cork production from the indigenous cork oaks is an expanding industry, with products ranging from hats, shoes, sandals, purses, eyeglass cases, wallets, etc.

And of course, we stopped by a roadside cork tree, getting a lesson on the typical seven-year cork bark harvesting rotation.

I found it emotional to complete our final hike to historic Cabo St. Vicente, seeing it looming closer in the distance as we hiked the coast. Arriving at our destination, a group picture taken, our hosts commemorated the event with a toast of icy Portuguese Moscatel, a light, Muscat type wine.... surprising and delighting us to the last day!

Not in a hurry to return home, having reached the traditional tourist region of the Algarve coast, I had prebooked a guesthouse room in the town of Salema, close by along the coast, recommended by Rick Steves. He devoted twelve pages of his guidebook to Salema, so I thought it worthwhile to check it out. I enjoyed two slow-paced days in this modestly tourist-developed and charming fishing village, with a safe beach and enough amenities. A satisfying end to the tour, with time to reflect on the abundance of the previous three weeks, relaxing on the terrace with the resident cat. Perfect!

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From Volkssport Canada:



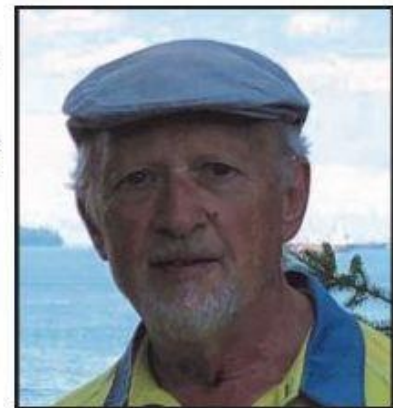
In Memoriam



TOWNSEND, Gillian - On Wednesday, January 4, 2023, Gillian Townsend passed away peacefully, following a year-long battle with lung cancer. As per her wishes, very few people knew that she was ill. As her main caregiver, Christine P (a neighbour and Vancouver Venturer), visited regularly and drove her to many appointments. Gillian had walked a number of Volkswalks over the years before joining the Vancouver Venturers Volkssport Club in 2012. She was Treasurer from 2013 to 2019 and was often involved with pre-walking a new route. Her first Volkssport event was actually in April 1993 when she walked 20K in Chilliwack with Verni B and another friend – in the rain. She always enjoyed exploring the trails in Stanley Park both with the club and other friends. Gillian was one of the participants in 2000 on the only snowshoe event which the Vancouver Venturers has held! Gillian had other interests too: working in her rooftop garden, reading, knitting, sewing clothes and crafts. She loved making greeting cards and in the past few years, spent much time learning and working on watercolour paintings. In addition, Gillian was an avid bird-watcher who was often seen on walks with her binoculars at the ready. Originally from England, she loved travelling and went with Adventures Abroad to many foreign countries (such as Bhutan, Jordan, and Malta). Gillian and Linda M did a bus tour in Eastern Europe; she took a Tater Tour to Eastern Canada; went on a two-week trip to ON and QC with Linda M and Verni B; and spent a week with some Vancouver Venturer and Surrey Trekker friends doing many of the Permanent Trails in Portland, OR. Many Vancouver Venturers will have their own memories of Gillian and a donation to Knowledge Network is one way she could also be remembered.



FRIESEN, Darcy - March 31, 1952 – December 26, 2022 It is with a heavy heart that the family of Darcy Earl Friesen announces his passing on December 26, 2022. Darcy is remembered by his wife Teresa, his son (Christopher), his stepdaughter (Gwen), and his grandchild (Mia). He leaves behind many other dear relatives and friends in Canada and the United States. Darcy was a loyal friend and a devoted family man. He was a car fanatic and in his opinion, Audi's were the best cars to own and drive. He loved to golf and used the game to improve himself, often channeling Tiger Woods. Darcy was a lover of all animals and especially loved dogs. He is fondly remembered as having an acute attention to detail and used his talents in model building, drafting, and building functional things. His great fund of knowledge and fantastic memory always gave him an advantage when watching Jeopardy! In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Darcy's name to the BC Cancer Foundation (www.bccancerfoundation.com). Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.vancouvercrematorium.com for the Friesen family.



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We thank all club members who contributed content to this newsletter.

If you have something that you would like to share in our next edition, please email your articles, travel stories, photographs, and web links directly to the editor at jerry@vancouverventurers.com.

Please be advised that:

- * Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.
- * We will publish your first name and last initial, unless you ask us not to.
- * Our newsletters may be cross-posted to Facebook and elsewhere on the Internet.
- * Not all submitted material will be published.