

Sam Gram #28

1. Some somber news:

An accident in New York has killed three volkssporters who were attending a weekly Wednesday walk. The following is from Doug Reynolds, the Northeast Regional Director:

“Although investigation is still underway, news articles being released by the media have been fairly accurate with the details (except they were 10K walkers). For additional information on the accident and photos of the area, the Albany Times Union (www.timesunion.com) would be one good source, or Google search phrases such as "Voorheesville Walkers Accident".

Three ladies, Carol Lansing, Rosemarie Hume, and Frances Pallozzi, were all paid members of the ESCV. They had car pooled to this weekly Wednesday walk as they usually did with a fourth lady who was not involved in the accident. Upon arrival at the Start Point, at the end of a long registration line, Frances told Jackie and me to go ahead of them. After they registered directly behind us, they went over to the church to the rest rooms. We keep asking ourselves, if only they had gone first, would that have made a difference?

However, this tragedy had given me new insights into Volkssporters. Of our AVA's three cherished “F’s”, Fun and Fitness both take a back seat to Friendship when a crisis occurs. I watched our walking colleagues, individually and in small groups, cooperating to get some very unfavorable tasks done, and also provide comfort to those in need of special attention. Their walking comrades do it best. This gives me added confidence that our international sport will survive, if we all follow our "friendship compass" that always points in the correct direction.”

The following is a letter from Heinz Johnson, AVA President to the president of the Empire State Capital Volkssporters:

Ms. Lea Darling, President
Empire State Capital Volkssporters, AVA-410
PO Box 5464
Clifton Park, New York

Dear Lea

On behalf of the National Executive Council XVII of the American Volkssport Association, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy on the tragic loss of three of your club members this morning.

This sudden, horrific accident that resulted in the untimely death of three people was an unexpected tragedy. Words cannot make the sorrow any easier to bear but they can show how others in the AVA Nation care and sympathize. May all of your club members find some comfort in the thought that others do care. It readily portrays one of the triads in the AVA tag line: Friendship!

I am sure that Carol, Fran and Rosemarie will be greatly missed by their many volkssporter friends.

Warm personal regards

//signed//

Heinz Johnson, President
American Volkssport Association

Further information:

News releases throughout the country have picked up on the tragic incident that killed three volkssporters at Voorheesville, New York this morning. In general, they all said that an out-of-control, runaway SUV drove onto a sidewalk and killed three women before crashing into a church with the vehicle finally coming to rest against the church's bell tower.

The driver was wearing-flops and apparently they interfered with the gas pedal and possibly the driver's foot got stuck on the gas pedal causing the SUV to accelerated and go off the road in front of St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church. The 2007 Toyota Highlander ran through part of a parking lot and hit the women as they waited near the church for their companion. The SUV continued 70 or 80 feet, dragging two bodies as it ran under a covered church entryway, smashed iron railings and crashed into the brick wall of the bell tower. It was a horrific scene.

The victims were 66-year-old Carol Lansing, of Green Island, NY; 79-year-old Rosemarie Hume and 81-year-old Fran Pallozzi, both of Waterford, NY.

For details you can go to the following web sites:

- 1) www.timesunion.com (Voorheesville newspaper release with pictures)
 - 2) www.google.com (do a search: Voorheesville NY, 3 women killed. There are scores of articles)
 - 3) www.wten.com/story/15242705/three-dead (This is a TV on-scene live report)
- Doug Reynolds, Director, Northeast Region, has been actively involved in all phases of this incident and it has been an extra long day for him as well as other club officials. He reported to me that:

“The three ladies, Carol Lansing, Rosemarie Hume, and Frances Pallozzi, were all paid members of the ESCV.* They had car pooled to this weekly Wednesday walk as they usually did with a fourth lady who was not involved in the accident. Upon arrival at the Start Point, at the end of a long registration line, Frances told Jackie** and me to go ahead of them. After they registered directly behind us, they went over to the church to the rest rooms. We keep asking ourselves, if only they had gone first, would that have made a difference?” (*Empire State Capital Volkssporters, **Doug’s wife)

“However, this tragedy had given me new insights into Volkssporters. Of our AVA's three cherished “F’s”, Fun and Fitness both take a back seat to Friendship when a crisis occurs. I watched our walking colleagues, individually and in small groups, cooperating to get some very unfavorable tasks done, and also provide comfort to those in need of special attention. Their walking comrades do it best. This gives me added confidence that our international sport will survive, if we all follow our "friendship compass" that always points in the correct direction.”

It has indeed been a sad and difficult day for all members of the ESCV. As one club member put it: “Please keep all our walkers at the scene of the accident and those involved members and the car driver in your prayers and thoughts. Such a tragedy of this enormity is unimaginable for our club.” Yes, it was a terrible tragedy but it was a freak accident that in no way had any relationship to the organization and conduct of the Guided Walk. According to my research, this is the biggest tragedy that has ever been associated with any of our events in the history of the AVA.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their lives and the members of the Empire State Capital Volkssporters.

This tragedy is a good reminder that safety is of paramount importance, whether at a traditional event or a YRE. Please be careful out there. Indeed, our prayers are with the Empire State Capital Volkssporters during this time of sadness.

2. Eleanor Borgardts of The Northwest Pathfinder has asked me to pass the following information to you:

"Beginning with the January/February 2012 issue, any clubs that do not send in their event ads on time will not have them published. It is the responsibility of the clubs to

get them in on time." - This information is also in the September/October issue.

I am willing to work with clubs, but if I don't get ANY information it is hard to do.

My email as well as telephone numbers are both in TNWP as well as the deadline date for event ads."

Eleanor has done an amazing job of getting your event information into The Northwest Pathfinder. Please assist yourselves and her by getting your event information in on time.

3. YRE Renewal. The deadline of August 31 is rapidly approaching. I have emailed a few clubs to remind them of the urgency of getting this information submitted on time. We are about half done.
4. I will be out of the area from August 23 through August 27 attending an NEC meeting in San Antonio, TX. I will still be available by email or by my cell phone.