

65 Take a 32-Mile Manhattan Saunter

Oscar Wilde's story about the selfish giant who chased the children out of his garden and pined away as the flowers withered ends happily when the giant takes down the wall and opens the garden again.

So it happened on the West Side last week when Cyrus Adler, founder

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

of the Shorewalkers, who had pleaded for eight years with giant developers, finally won permission to lead the annual Great Saunter through the former Penn Yards on the Hudson shore between 59th and 72d Streets.

Donald Trump, the real estate giant who lost a little of his stature in the economic downturn, and his civic-sponsored partner, Riverside South Corp., agreed to allow Adler and his group of urban hikers through the property on May 2 on their way around the 32-mile shoreline of the island of Manhattan.

Kathryn Cary, Executive Director of Riverside South, opened the gate at 10:05 a.m. at 59th Street, trumpeted the virtues of the development plan and bid farewell to the walkers at 72d Street as they left the old rail yards and entered Riverside Park.

"It's sort of the seventh or eighth annual saunter," said Adler at the beginning of the walk in the cool of the morning on Fulton Street at the

South Street Seaport. City Council Member Kathryn Freed read an official City proclamation, signed by Mayor David Dinkins, lauding the Shorewalkers' promotion of water-side walkways in Manhattan, and the group set off at 7:35 a.m., a half-hour off schedule. At the Battery, as the chimes tolled 8 a.m., new hikers joined the march.

Some participants were experienced, like Henry Lucander, a resident of Lower Manhattan who described himself as "a Wall Street guy." He usually "does it in the wilderness — the Pine Barrens, Appalachians, the Adirondacks, the Amazon, several years ago," he said, as the Shorewalkers passed the nightclub on Pier 25 known as The Amazon. Robert Johnson, a tall, lean Shorewalker from Newark, N.J., set a blistering pace as leader, and the troop sped up West Street, Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, arriving, only 10 minutes behind schedule at 9:40 a.m., at 42d Street, where State Assemblyman Jerrold Nadler read a

proclamation signed by Governor Mario Cuomo. The walkers set off again, 15 minutes behind schedule, and the day grew warmer. Ted Gabay, a retired garment industry cutter and a longtime member of Shorewalkers, walked the "sweep" position at the very end of the group to make sure no one was lost. Barbara Batcheler, an organizer of this year's Great Saunter and a resident of West 108th Street, made the trip with her daughter and son-in-law from Philadelphia. James Connor

and his brother, Michael, joined at 125th Street and the Hudson River.

Miner Bishop, an architect and longtime member of Shorewalkers, joined the group at Inwood Hill and so did Marty Mahler, a blind man celebrating his 73d birthday. He walked, with his wife as a guide, as far as 86th Street on the East Side. Mary Delany, from Kilkenny, and Fran Roberts, from Cork, were among the 14 people who made the trip from beginning to end.

"There were 65 people on some

part of the Great Saunter this year," said Adler. "There would have been more if it weren't for the riots that followed the Rodney King verdict," he added. The walkers were reminded of that event on West 146th Street as a bottle tossed from a window brushed Bishop's hat. Aside from that incident, the Shorewalkers drew smiles and curiosity from people in the parks and streets along the route. For more information about the group phone 663-2167.

—Al Amateau

— A 32-MILE MANHATTAN TREK

Islanders

The Great Saunter, a 32-mile trek around Manhattan, is more than a publicity stunt and more than an endurance test. It is a way of getting people to see that Manhattan is an island, that visual contact with bodies of water is a great healer of the spirit, that parks along the water such as the Battery, Riverside and Inwood are urban treasures that must be preserved, and that too much of Manhattan is cut off from public use.

Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger recently released a draft of a Comprehensive Manhattan Waterfront Plan. This reports on each stretch of the waterfront and what should be done to make it more attractive and more accessible. The two overriding themes are that the entire Manhattan waterfront should be available to bikers and walkers and that though each section may be developed separately each section has an impact on the whole.

Now that both the State and the City have balanced their budgets, there is talk once more of the Governor and the Mayor signing a memorandum of understanding that would allow the creation of a Hudson River park that would extend from the Battery up to 59th Street and eventually would

connect with Riverside Park. The most essential part of this stage of development is that there be set up some entity or agency that will be able to create the park. There has to be a committed group of pro-park people whose sole concern is making sure the park is built.

Progress has been made in spite of the State and City fiscal problems. A strong consensus for how the waterfront is to be planned has developed. Plans for Riverside South and the Hudson River Park have evolved. The time taken to plan and complete these projects is frustrating to even the most seasoned and patient Government observers. Consolation must be found in the fact that a world class park will be created and a priceless heritage passed on to future generations. Yes, we will see and enjoy a Hudson River park in our lifetime.



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