

PART II

The Path Less Traveled

More and more city folk are hoofing it, for fun and exercise. Along the way, they're learning a lot about all five boroughs. Pages 4-5

Dance: Jiri Kylian Expects Nothing Less than Fearlessness. Page 7

Television: Kitman Relates the Facts About 'Dragnet.' Page 9

Part III / City Business: New York and Jersey Compete for the Big Fish.

What's Afoot In The City

As more and more New Yorkers are walking regularly for pleasure and fitness, the Shorewalkers do a 'Great Saunter' along the water: 32 miles of Manhattan shoreline

By Jonathan Mandell

BEFORE HE took "The Great Saunter," a 32-mile walk around the entire shore of Manhattan, David Hill figures his longest and most dangerous walk was the 10-day trek to the Annapurna Sanctuary in the Himalayas; the most exhausting was around the Buddhist holy island of Putou Shan, where his companion was hospitalized for heat exhaustion; the most fascinating was on the Great Wall of China.

But on none of these did he wind up standing on top of a cement mixer, chased by three German shepherd guard dogs.

"It's very different walking in New York," says David Hill, in that under-

stated way of the British. "It's constantly changing."

Two Saturdays ago, Hill was one of 100 walkers who started at 7:30 in the morning from South Street Seaport, and one of about 60 who finished there more than 13 hours later, sunburned, rain-drenched, bruised or bitten — or looking forward to the following day's 15-mile walk in Central Park. Nothing was televised, nobody was cheering. There were no winners and no prize money. This was not the New York City Marathon.

But the walk may become just as much a New York tradition. After all, the Marathon started in 1970 with just 127 people (and finished with 55) running 26.2 miles inside Central Park. It capitalized on the jogging craze, much as Cyrus Adler hopes to build on what he and the other members of his Shorewalkers club consider the latest fad, which is walking.

"In the last two years, the number of people who have turned to walking as exercise has exploded," says Susan



Photos by Sy Rubin

Above, Shorewalkers en route near Canal St.; below, Cyrus Adler, Shorewalkers' leader, instructing the group about the route.

Goldman of the Metropolitan Racewalkers Club. A recent survey determined that half the adult population, or about 100 million Americans, now regularly walk for pleasure or fitness.

There was a time, of course, when the world walked, and professional "pedestrians" could make a living at it. Edward Payson Weston began gambling in 1867 when he was 28 years old, winning a walking race from Maine to Chicago, and continued his career for 62 years.

Nowhere near as profitable, but perhaps equally obsessive were the efforts 14 years ago of Jesse Castaneda of New Mexico, who broke the record for the longest continuous walk, 302 miles, in 4½ days, without sleeping; and, two years ago, of Robert Sweetgall, who walked more than 11,000 miles through 50 states in 50 weeks. This was two years after he had walked 10,600 miles along the perimeter of the United States. "I am a walker," he begins in "Fitness Walking," the "Moby Dick" of walking books. "Walking is my hobby, exercise, medicine and profession. It is my life."

Walking has become a way of running for some politicians. Dan Walker walked across the state of Illinois in a campaign for statewide office, to be followed by gubernatorial candidates in both Kentucky and Tennessee. In New York, "our recent [assembly majority] leader we called Walking Dan Walsh," says New York State Assemblyman Edward Sullivan. "He walked all over his district."

Walking, though, is not limited to a few excessive people and their representatives. New York has long had the reputation as one of the best cities in the world to walk in, a place made for, and shaped by, its many committed walkers. Walking events occur every weekend (including some dozen by the New York Road Runners Club, organizers of the Marathon), and walking clubs cater to serious hikers, such as the New York / New Jersey Trail Conference, as well as to sightseers or dogooders, such as the walking tours of the New York Historical Society or the self-consciously naughty midnight strolls by the Friends of Central Park. As many as 25,000 people participated in the 17th annual Walkathon in April, an 18-mile fund-raising walk sponsored each year by the New York March of Dimes.

Ever since the subway strike of 1980 started many on the habit, more New Yorkers seem to be talking about their walking. And more have been putting their money where their feet are. Lately, shoe manufacturers have been promoting lines of walking shoes, publishers have been pushing new walking periodicals, authors have been writing walking books. There is even a new store on Amsterdam Avenue called The Urban Hiker, which outfits walkers from top to bottom, including walker's underwear and walker's socks. "For a store that's only been open six months, business has been excellent," says manager Raymond Rosario. "I know other people have walk-

ing stores in the works. I think it's going to be the new trend."

The new walking fanatics quote Hippocrates ("Walking is man's best medicine."), and claim that briskly walking a certain distance will yield the same health benefits as running that distance, without the same risk of injury. They point out that walking — race-walking, actually — has been an Olympic sport for 55 years. They boast of sharpened memories, more efficient heart and lungs, a reduced appetite, firmer muscles, even a greater sense of relaxation. They follow the elaborate routes mapped out in walking guide books. And they think of new ways of exercising their obsession.

Five years ago, Cyrus Adler started Shorewalkers, a hiking group with the curious goal of traversing the entire shoreline of all five boroughs. Why the shore? "My background is in oceanography. I've always been involved in water," he says. "When you walk along the water, you can really stride. Inland, you have to stop. You see things you wouldn't see otherwise."

Last year, Shorewalkers began the marathon Saunter with 22 people. Sixteen finished. This year's Saunter had almost five times as many. Most seemed to be New York natives, but not everybody.

IT WAS Mitchell Shron's last week in the city. "This walk would have been very difficult two-hundred and fifty years ago," Shron said. "We'd be in the water; this is all landfill." It was Beth Montgomery and Matthew Brown's first week in the city; the Saunter, they said, was the one affordable way they knew of getting to know the place.

Ursula Hahn, wearing a T-shirt that said Death Valley ("I walked through there twice," Hahn said. "The base camp is really quite luxurious."), had walked across the Brooklyn Bridge to get to the starting point. Bob Payne came from Boston — by foot. He walked for 11 days. "I came to New York for this walk," he said. "I wanted to walk from Boston to New York, and I needed a reason to do it." Payne is writing a story of his adventure for Walking Magazine, which is one year old and distributes more than 400,000 copies across the nation. "Jogging is a lot of money and energy. You can always get up enough energy to go for a walk."

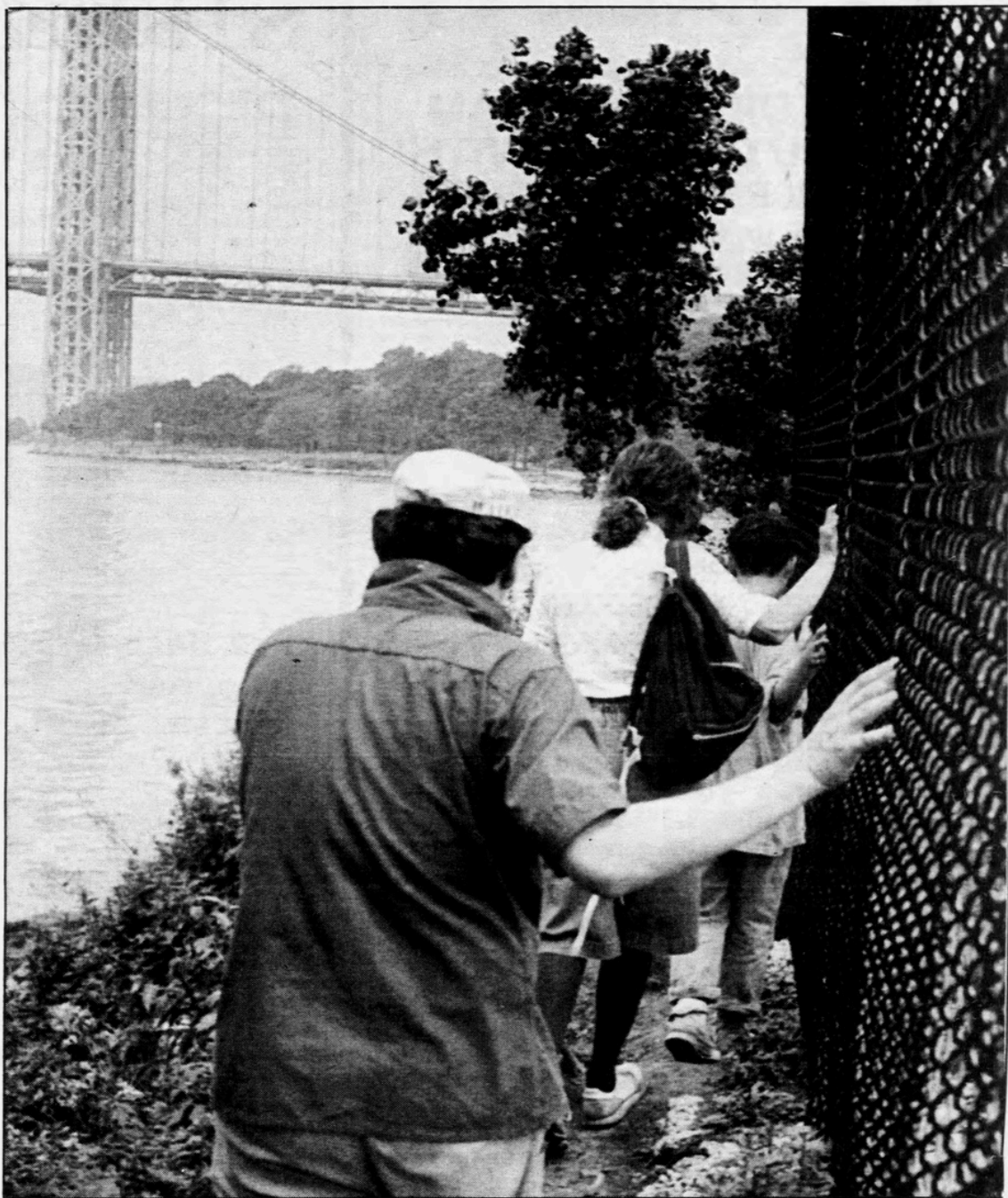
If there was a larger cause to the walk, it was not, as with the Walkathon, to raise money. "This is not only good for health," said Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, who joined the walk with his son and an aide for about five blocks. "It brings attention to the need for public use of the waterfront."

"This is a process of discovery," said Martin Gallant, who for 16 years was a member of the City Planning Commission. "I took members of the Manhattan office of City Planning around the waterfront. We didn't do it all in one day," he said quickly. Gallant walked only for the first six hours, until the lunch break at Inwood Park. "It's my wedding anniversary," he explained apologetically.

Once the Great Saunter began, it became clear quickly that it was neither a saunter — more like a steady charge — nor was it around the entire shore. Maybe half the time no water was even in sight, with access blocked by abandoned railroad tracks fenced off from public view, or garages or garbage barges or general debris. In the near future, some say, even less of the shore will be accessible.

But the walk provided a dramatic view of Manhattan, 10 parks for scenery and more.

There was sex: the prostitutes at



At a narrow part of the route within sight of the George Washington Bridge

8:30 in the morning at 30th Street and 12th Avenue; the nude sunbathers at Fort Tryon Park at noon; the sidewalk condom salesman at 145th Street at 3:30. Through it all, the Shorewalkers marched on, seemingly oblivious, with their Dutch boy "Shorewalker" caps and their backpacks, maneuvering in between the dumpsters and around the people like ants with a mission.

There was violence. "Quick, a Band-Aid," somebody said at mile 20, and the crew rushed to help Benjamin Miller, who admitted sheepishly he had worn a sneaker with a hole in the bottom. "I'm not quitting," Miller said with mock determination. "Nothing's making me quit."

There was redeeming social value: at the "pit stops," experts lecturing on the history and future plans of various areas, and neighborhood groups offering petitions to protest one waterfront development scheme or another.

There was suspense. At Inwood Park, the group was joined by Robert

Arnold and Bob Goetz ("I've gotten nothing but jokes since December 22, 1984"), two New York City Urban Rangers. After many minutes of weaving through neighborhood streets and up forbidding hills under the hostile sun, Bob gathered together the wearying group. "There's been a lot of confusion over the route," he said, and we waited for his words to clear it up. "We're free-lancing it," he confessed, none too satisfactorily. "We hope you have a sense of adventure today."

There was indeed adventure. Shortly afterward, Bob and Robert led the group to a waterside parking lot for cement mixers. Some chose to walk on East River Drive instead, walking alternately on the curb facing onrushing Plymouths, or on the shoulder inhaling nose-high ragweed bushes. "I'd rather get run over," said Beth Montgomery. "Cars are more familiar than cement mixers."

David Hill led the advance party, which is where he met the dogs. "I can see the headlines now," Ranger Bob

said, upset. "Rangers Lead Hikers to Death by Mauling."

And, for some of this drama, there was even an audience. Strange stares, smirks, words of encouragement, some of it backhanded ("Good luck to you, you're way behind."), questions from children ("Do you all live on a mountain?").

By late afternoon, politicians and experts were gone, and there was nothing left but reaching the destination, the South Street Seaport, the place where it began. "I could easily stop now," confessed Ursula Hahn, the Death Valley woman, flushed, sweaty and in pain. "I just hope I can walk back."

Timothy Hadel, a dancer, took the end in stride (what else?). He had tickets to a show. It had started to pour. The South Street Seaport was still not in view. Hadel did not mean to make a decision that would disappoint the other walkers. He just felt he had no choice.

For the last three miles, he ran. /■