

# ARE YOU GAME?

JOIN A HOST OF OREGON ATHLETES WHO ARE HEADED TO AMSTERDAM FOR GAY GAMES V

PHOTOS BY LINDA KLIEWER

## RIP-ROARING ALONG

BY PATRICK COLLINS

**R**ip Rupinski speaks of his upcoming trip to Gay Games V, scheduled for Aug. 1 to 8 in Amsterdam, in terms far more communal than competitive.

"In a race, once the first 10 come in, who cares if you're number 300 or 3,000?" asks Rupinski, who has been running off and on for the past 20 years and will compete—in his very own way—in the 10-kilometer race in Amsterdam.

The Gay Games feature a little something for almost everyone. Billed as friendship through culture and sports, the event is held every four years with the goal of enhancing the worldwide emancipation of the gay and lesbian community. This is achieved, according to the program, through the melding of non-competitive cultural and sporting activities in which anyone can participate.

"You don't have to be a world-class athlete to take part in this," Rupinski says, estimating he can complete his event in 49 minutes—not a bad time, especially for a 52-year-old, but hardly record-setting.

"There are some sports where you have to qualify in order to compete, but most of them you don't," he adds.

This year's games include 30 official sports, but the sports are only the beginning of a rainbow of activities planned for participants and spectators alike. Between the bound-to-be-fabulous opening and closing ceremonies, organizers have assembled an impressive array of performance artists, exhibitions, demonstration sports and tours of Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

"One of the special things about this year's games is the official addition of cultural programs," says Rupinski, who has traveled to the Netherlands three times in the past year on organizing missions.

He promises choruses galore, comprised of singers from all over the world who will assemble in Amsterdam and set the games to music.

"There will also be writers and painters and bands," he adds. "Somewhere you'll find something you're interested in."

Parties, for example. What the program lists as official parties, Rupinski breaks down more clearly. There will be parties for women, and parties for ballroom dancers. There will be a disco party, and a white party, as well as a black one—in other words, a leather party.

Amsterdam, according to Rupinski, is thrilled to host the Gay Games. The mayor and various tourism officials have hosted familiarization trips for the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, and the city has set aside its music center for a friendship village.

As owner of the Carlson Wagonlit travel agency in Portland, Rupinski has found himself at the nerve center of organizing the Oregon contingent.

So far, his group consists of 22 women and 16 men who will leave on July 30 and return

throughout August. While there is no official organization handling the logistics for athletes and spectators from the Pacific Northwest, Rupinski says he hopes some sort of umbrella group will form in anticipation of the 2002 games in Sydney, Australia.

But what Rupinski is really hoping for is a chance to duplicate what he experienced for the first time at the 1990 Gay Games in Vancouver, British Columbia. It was, in his own words, the most gay-positive experience he has ever had,

at the 1994 New York Gay Games.

Her hope, she says, is that Amsterdam will be more like Vancouver.

"In New York, I felt the games were just lost in the crowd," Carter recalls. "We were a minimal impact on the city.... I'm hoping [the Amsterdam Gay Games] are more like Vancouver. With a city that size we just took it over."

Carter says that the affirmation offered by the whole Vancouver Gay Games experience

One emotion has, however, crept in to Carter's pregame regimen: anxiety. Although she's put mind over matter and chosen to put herself in the arena, she admits she's "fighting the nervousness. Nerves are still an issue."

## THE SKY IS THE LIMIT FOR MARC WALTERS

BY PATRICK COLLINS

**M**arc Walters describes himself as a conservative climber, but a quick glance at his climbing log and his plans for the next several weeks might bring to mind a slightly more adventurous term.

He's climbed, for instance, El Capitan and the Half Dome, both in California's Yosemite Valley. Half Dome was a breeze, relatively speaking, but El Capitan, with its 3,000-foot vertical rise, was a five-day undertaking, requiring him to sleep on ledges—when there were ledges, that is—and on a hammock suspended from whatever was handy when there were no ledges to be found.

"I'm an insomniac," Walters says, "so I can't really say what it's like to wake up suspended in midair."

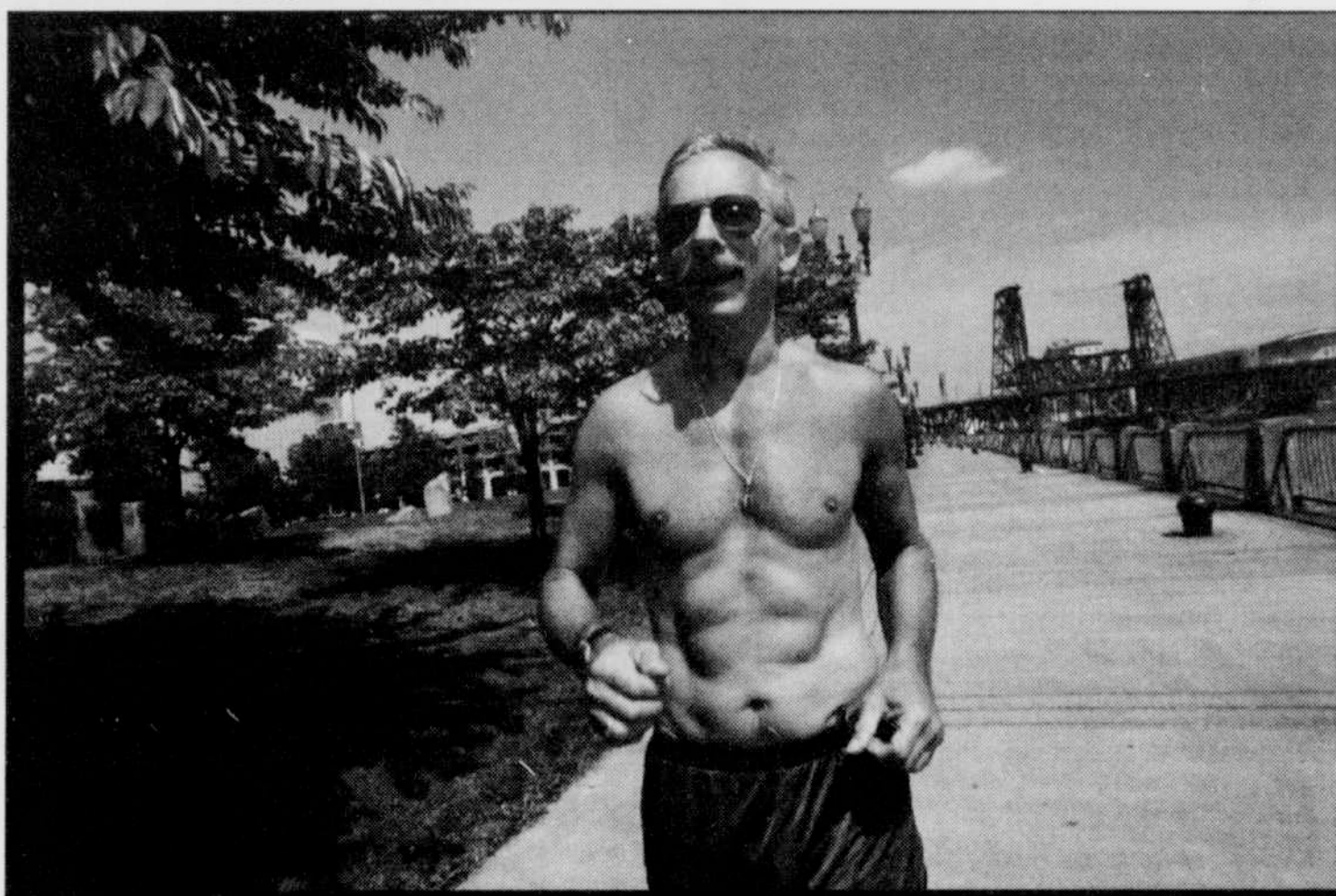
In July, he's off to Italy to climb limestone cliffs near the Italian Riviera. Then to France, where he'll tackle the granite spires of Chamonix, in the heart of the French Alps. Weather permitting, he and a friend will climb the Matterhorn in Switzerland before he arrives in Amsterdam for the August 1 opening of the Gay Games.

"It should be a good warm-up for the games," Walters says of his July itinerary, without even a trace of sarcasm.

At 41, Walters has 19 years of climbing experience, not counting the five or six years he took off to pursue another passion, windsurfing. With windsurfing, he says, you reach a certain point where the challenge wears off. Not so with rock climbing.

"It appeals to the analytical side of me," says Walters, who teaches anatomy and physiology

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Rip Rupinski getting in shape for the 10 kilometer race

and it is with hopes of sharing that feeling that he is bringing his partner of nine years to Amsterdam.

"The games provided an all-gay venue that was very different from anything I'd ever witnessed before," he says. "I hate to use this word, but I felt normal, like we were in the majority and there was nothing to hide, which has had a very positive effect on how I deal with the world."

## TWO TIME GOLD MEDALIST ELLEN CARTER IS IN TOP FORM

BY WILL O'BRYAN

**H**earing Ellen Carter choose her words cautiously, it's easy to get the impression she's modest and guarded. Maybe she is. But her sport, martial arts forms, is not.

Carter will present herself before a panel of judges in Amsterdam and perform a routine not unlike a gymnast's. The difference?

"A lot more kicking and punching," Carter explains. "I just go out and I'm judged and have no control over what the competition does."

It's a pretty vulnerable position for an athlete who's modestly reluctant to confirm she holds two gold medals from previous Gay Games. Nevertheless, Carter's desire to get out and compete has defeated her seemingly reserved nature. Carter earned a gold medal in softball at the 1990 Vancouver Gay Games and for martial arts

was very powerful for lesbians and gay men, adding that she and her traveling companion, fellow athlete and friend Dawn Collins, were misty-eyed as they drove out of the city.

But as far as Amsterdam goes, the emotion has yet to begin, and for the time being it's training, training, training. For the past nine months, Carter has taken two or three days of each week to practice forms. Other days she runs, and some days she lifts weights. Not a week goes by that she doesn't spend five or six days working out, Carter estimates.



Ellen Carter (right) practices forms with trainer Patty Olinger