Hopes Are High for First Walkathon

With SHARE's first Walkathon less than a month away, those in charge of the fundraiser understandably have a lot on their minds. Has every detail been taken care of? Will the unpredictable New England weather cooperate?

But even with perfect planning and sunny skies, SHARE volunteers know that they will need the support of the public to make that day worthwhile.

"If we have two- to three-hundred walkers, I'll feel it was a success," says Pat Janiak, Chairperson of SHARE's Ways and Means Committee.

Such success hinges both on the number of people who participate in the walk and on the amount of money these walkers collect in pledges from their sponsors. Janiak says that preregistration is encouraged so that walkers have ample time to fill their pledge sheets before the day of the Walkathon.

SHARE president Les Cory is quite pleased with the public response toward the event thus far.

"One youngster has already gotten pledges of eight dollars per kilometer," Cory proudly reports, "and he's not done yet."

All proceeds will be used "to purchase equipment and services to benefit disabled people," says Cory. He invites anyone interested in either walking in the Walkathon or sponsoring a participant to contact SHARE at 617-999-8214 or 617-678-7521, Ext. 8482.

Set for Sunday, October 26, the Walkathon will begin and end at the Francis L. Tripp Athletic Center on the campus of Southeastern Massachusetts University. Three student groups there--the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the Society of Women Engineers--are co-sponsoring the charity event.

On the day of the fundraiser, participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt before beginning the ten-kilometer trek through the Dartmouth countryside. Tired and hungry walkers can look forward to free refreshments upon their return, says Janiak.

Janiak says the six-month-old project is going "very well" thanks to the dedication of the many volunteers who have helped to organize the event. She credits much of the smoothness of the preparations to the assistance of the Telephone Pioneers, a fundraising organization skilled in running yearly walkathons for their own causes.

Given such behind-the-scenes cooperation, SHARE needs only sunny weather and spirited walkers to make their effort a success. And if the two turn out in force, you can bet on a SHARE Walkathon in 1987.

"We hope that it becomes a yearly event," says Janiak.

Share Volunteer Dovetails Expertise and Enthusiasm

Come March, SHARE may have a pretty hard time tracking down Robin Singer. For while most New Englanders will be about ready to pack away their long johns and snow boots, Singer will just be starting to pack them up for her journey north. And that's not end-of-the-season-skiing-in-New Hampshire north. Not quite.

She'll be flying to Nord, Greenland to catch a helicopter headed for the marginal ice zone--a region of ocean which is sometimes water, sometimes ice. Singer is hoping for the latter, as she and her Arctic group will erect an ice camp there and call this no-man's-land home.

For those three to five weeks, Singer, along with her fellow scientists from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI), will collect meteorological data by deploying instruments from a 300-meter cable dropped through a hole cut in the ice. Above the surface, giant (continued next page)
Share Volunteer Dovetails Expertise and Enthusiasm

(continued from Page 1)

tripods will support buoys rigged to suspend the cable and relay information to a satellite.

"It's going to be fun," says Singer, an ocean engineer at WHOI. "It's going to be cold and fun."

But usually Singer doesn't have to travel as far as the Arctic to fulfill her love for engineering. She finds a closer outlet for her enthusiasm through volunteer work for SHARE.

"I think that it would make a lot more sense if a lot more engineering were applied to things that help people rather than destroy people," says Singer. "SHARE is a perfect example."

In fact, it was such a perfect way for Singer to apply her own expertise to bettering people's lives that SHARE became one factor in her choosing the position at WHOI. She recalls being offered jobs in Northern Massachusetts and New Hampshire but opting for the sea town of Woods Hole to be nearer to SHARE headquarters.

Since that decision, Singer has joined SHARE's efforts on two fronts. Initially, she worked with Lois Floyd, one of SHARE's newer clients, designing for her the first of a series of computer programs which eventually will allow her to communicate on her own (note inset). More recently, Singer has delved into the challenge of fundraising for the organization. And this past August she saw her pet project, Galaxy of the Woods Hole Stars, become a successful reality.

"I loved every single bit of it," says Singer of the benefit concert which brought together the talents of jazz and classical performers.

A four-act show, the event raised $2500 for SHARE and raised community consciousness for the organization's endeavors as well. Singer says she found ready support both from the musicians and vocalists who volunteered their talents and from close friends who enlisted themselves in the time-consuming project. Despite "minor crises" like finding the right-sized auditorium and changing the show format at the last minute, Singer recalls proudly watching as the music festival finally came to life before an enthusiastic crowd.

"I couldn't believe it," she smiles. "It was too smooth."

Singer admits that, given her inexperience at fundraising, the show's success stemmed from cooperative effort and a lot of luck. Even the notion of a jazz jamboree came to Singer just by chance.

"If I sat down to think of a fundraising idea, a concert wouldn't necessarily be the one that I would think of off the top of my head," she says.

But through her work at Woods Hole, Singer became friends with scientists and programmers who were gifted musicians as well. One fellow worker, Eddie Scheer, plays piano for a "top notch" jazz group who performs at chic clubs in Boston and on the Cape. Another friend, biologist Jelle Atema, has studied under Jean Pierre Rampal, "the foremost flutist in the world." Singer's desire to hear them all in concert sparked her plans to feature musical entertainment as her fundraising enterprise.

Although Singer says she is delighted with the show's outcome, she admits that it has been difficult to devote herself equally to her many priorities--her husband and their new home, her work at Woods Hole and SHARE, her favorite hobbies.

"I haven't played bridge in about a year. My tennis game is falling. My flute abilities are decreasing," she laments with a laugh. "I need another me."

Despite her good-natured complaints, Singer is accustomed to making sacrifices in order to reach her goals. Originally an administrator who addressed housing, health, and legal issues for the elderly on the Cape, she initiated a career in engineering when she responded to a newspaper ad inviting women to study the field through Boston University's Late Entrance Accelerated Program. That change has paid off for both her and SHARE.

"It's quite a challenge when the fields are human services and engineering," says Singer, "but they can be dovetailed, and something like SHARE is the perfect way to do it."

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What's in a name?

Remember that old whatsumacallit that didn't sell at last summer's yard sale? And how about that dusty thingumabob you found hidden beneath the cobwebs in the attic? Well, don't throw any of them away...because one man's trash is another man's treasure. And SHARE is looking for any whatsumacallits and thingumabobs you can spare.

Here are just a few items that we need:

- a postal scale
- a modern 50-MHz oscilloscope
- a digital multimeter
- a wire wrap gun
- a shrink tube heat gun
- a Polaroid camera
- a hand-held vacuum cleaner

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A Publication of the Society for Human Advancement through Rehabilitation Engineering Foundation, Inc.
Viall Steps Into the Limelight

"Now I've got to buy a new pair of shoes," thought Philip Viall as he smiled and listened to the caller who announced the long awaited news. Inside, he knew exactly what the happy message meant.

If only for a day or so, he would leave behind his homey laboratory for a moment in the Hollywood limelight. Coca-cola would be traded for cocktails, rolled-up shirt sleeves for a formal suit. And once there, foreign worlds would meet face to face.

On June 24, 1986, Professor Philip Viall stepped into his new shoes and into that other world when he accepted a national Jefferson Award for his outstanding public service to local communities as evidenced through his work for SHARE.

"I feel very, very flattered," says Viall of the honor presented to him in the East Conference Room of the United States Supreme Court.

Viall admits to becoming "really nervous" when he rose to receive the signed, gold-plated medallion and address the families, friends, and dignitaries who applauded him. His acceptance speech, which "was a lot easier to do than expected," highlighted his reasons for continuing his efforts through SHARE—the "joy" felt in watching people speak "who have never spoken before," the "inspiration" grown from his newly make friendships at the awards event.

And judging from his encounters there, others were just as inspired by him. Viall recalls his introduction to Ross Perot, chairman of the board of the EDS Corporation.

"The night before [the awards ceremony] when we were standing around with drinks in our hands...I didn't see him when he came in the room," recounts Viall, "but my wife did. And she says he looked around, saw me, and came right over to me. He said, 'Hello Dr. Viall—I wanted you very much to meet you.'"

Although that evening they talked amidst the sounds of mingling guests and the strains of serenading violinists, Viall was surprised to find himself singled out by Perot again the next day.

"On the day of the ceremony as we were filing out to meet with our hometown reporters, he physically grabbed me and said, 'Don't leave here until you talk to me,'" Viall remembers.

What Perot wanted to talk about was the possibility of lending his expertise to SHARE. Viall responded to this offer by explaining the organization's need for a business consultant who would draft a five-year plan for managing SHARE's finances. Soon after, Perot sent a colleague to look into the matter and report his findings back to the corporate leader. Viall says he is anxiously waiting to hear from Perot.

"I've got my fingers crossed," he smiles.

Viall also is keeping his fingers crossed that a big-time movie producer will make good on a film idea involving SHARE. Tony Bill, producer of the motion picture The Sting, approached Viall during his visit to Washington D.C. and expressed an interest in someday doing a movie on the professor's work for the organization.

"I don't want to be in the movie," jokes Viall, "but a movie about me is good."

Despite the thrill of such recognition, waiting for a call from Hollywood won't interrupt his work at SHARE. Spending most of his time in the organization's headquarters, Viall builds and programs communications systems suited to the specific needs of disabled clients. Although Viall finds designing computer equipment of particular interest to him, he also "plays with bookkeeping and check writing" as SHARE's treasurer and sometimes works directly with disabled people to determine their needs.

Nonetheless, Viall foresees a day when a rehabilitative therapist will join SHARE's staff, and he can return to solving the technical problems that frequently spill over into his nighttime sleep.

"I have literally awakened nights and said, 'Yeh, that's how to do it. If I change that resistor to a capacitor, it will work,'" says Viall of his early morning brainstorms. "I like the end result."

Evidently, so do others. Recently having won a local Jefferson Award this past March, Viall progressed to the national level where he soon ranked within the top 15 out of 300 nominees considered by the American Institute's Board of Selectors. With his newest honor, Viall accepts such personal recognition as the congratulatory remarks made by Representative Gerry Studds which are documented in the 99th Congressional Record.

"Professor Viall has touched the lives of countless individuals," said Studds, "and by his efforts, he has significantly improved the quality of life for many people."

While Viall appreciates such high level praise and covets his award as a glittering symbol of his work for SHARE, he remains overwhelmed by the splendor of that other world into which he stepped so humbly.

"In some ways," he says, "it's still difficult to believe."
SHARE WALKATHON

Date: Sunday, October 26, 1986

Time: Walkers may register and begin walking anytime between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Place: Francis L. Tripp Athletic Center, Southeastern Massachusetts University, North Dartmouth, MA

For more information: Contact SHARE at 617-999-8214 or 617-678-7521, ext. 8482 to register and obtain pledge sheets.

An Invitation to Readers
We would love to hear from you--your responses, your experiences, your ideas about articles you'd enjoy reading in SHARE Notes. Write to us and convey those thoughts! We'd like to include them in our next newsletter.