

# walk

BY LIZ LEVIN

## Best foot forward: WalkBoston shines during DNC

With so many national leaders and visitors, the July Democratic National Convention offered a wonderful opportunity to showcase Boston as America's Walking City. It also presented WalkBoston with an excellent opportunity to promote walking as a healthful, environmentally friendly, and efficient means of transportation. It was a success on both counts.

During the convention, WalkBoston had terrific on-the-street visibility, with our yellow shirts and banners promoting both walking and the WalkBoston "brand name." Our welcoming and helpful volunteers and our map played a great role in guiding visitors to the DNC and making their walk more pleasant. Our visitors will remember Boston as a walkable city.

Our high point was the July 27 walk to the DNC led by former Massachusetts Governor and WalkBoston member Michael Dukakis, his wife Kitty, and Representative Byron Rushing. The media, out in force that evening, accompanied us for the full walk. But with all the stops, and starts, Dukakis never hit stride, saying

"if I go any slower, I'll be walking backwards."

WalkBoston was mentioned favorably in press reports in the Globe and other local newspapers. Our volunteer orientation session with Mayor Menino and the Dukakis walk received widespread coverage, on NPR and WBZ as well as on television channels 2, 4, 7 and 38.

Some residual visibility remains through Sidewalk Sam's beautiful public art (with a prominent WalkBoston logo) on the Copley Square, Boston Common, and City Hall Plaza pavements.

Many people are involved in a cooperative effort like this. Our thanks go to Boston 2004, the DNC's host committee; the Coaliton for Environmentally Responsible Conventions (CERC); and the Mayor's Office. We thank the Whole Foods Corporation for their sponsorship of this public effort. And thanks go to Erik Scheier and his 120 volunteers who so ably put walking, Boston, and WalkBoston in the public eye.

BY ERIC SCHEIER

## Walking the walk

WalkBoston's proposal to visitors was "walk with us to the DNC." Our goal was to engage delegates and urge them to skip the taxis and shuttle buses and walk, and we certainly did that. We talked to many visitors as articulate advocates for walking as a healthy, environmentally friendly way to get around. And we not only talked, we walked; we escorted delegates from all corners of the downtown to the FleetCenter.

We lined the route with WalkStations staffed by over 120 yellow-shirted volunteers, easily recognized by their yellow banners. A delegate could not stay lost in the midst of our coverage.

We actually started Sunday night, escorting Iowa, Missouri, and Pennsylvania delegates from hotels to their welcoming parties and the Boston Pops concert.

On our two evenings "in the field," one of our strategies was to station volunteers at hotels. Their staffs were friendly and helpful, pointing out the best places for us to stand. We intercepted people as they left the hotel to board the shuttle bus. Many took us up on our offer.

Our route to the Fleet had two source points. Copley Square walkers followed Boylston Street inbound, and Park Square walkers strolled up Tremont Street. The groups converged on the Common at Tremont Street, and walked through Bowdoin Square, the West End, Bulfinch Triangle, Canal Street and ended at the Fleet Center. This route passed Boston landmarks old and new [Granary Burial Ground to the Zakim Bridge].

People liked our map [posted on our web site]. We gave away 8,500 copies, with the help of hotel concierges and Boston 2004 volunteers staffing tables in the hotels. We've got our first walk for our next book!

Even though traffic was light, walking still offered a time advantage. It is a 35-minute walk from Copley Square to the Fleet, and we heard of shuttle trips taking almost twice that long. We could have made a strong case that walking was the fastest means of surface transport from the Back Bay hotels to the DNC.



Walking to the DNC [left to right] — Kitty Dukakis, Liz Levin, Ann Hershfang, Michael Dukakis, and Byron Rushing

The DNC taught us valuable lessons about coordinating a large volunteer effort. Recruiting the volunteers is only the first step—then we learned how much effort it takes to motivate, organize, train, and support them. Future training should emphasize outreach, as we must approach and engage potential walkers; we can't expect them to come to us. Finally, we learned how critical visibility was to our success—people couldn't miss our shirts and banners. Despite all the activity, we stood out in the crowd.

## Healthy EPA funding

WalkBoston has been awarded a grant of \$30,000 from the EPA's Healthy Communities Program. WalkBoston will develop an environmental curriculum for grades K-5 that both encourages Massachusetts students to walk to school, and coordinates with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

The WalkBoston curriculum will extend the classroom activities developed in the Safe Routes to School Toolkit [walkboston.org/ToolKitManual.pdf]. These activities encourage elementary school students to walk to school, and trains them in safe walking habits. To date, the classroom activities have been well received by teachers. Preliminary evaluations suggest broader use if the activities became a freestanding multidisciplinary environmental curriculum, seamlessly integrated with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

# Boston

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES  
MORE WALKABLE

SUMMER 2004

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WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation, health and recreation through education and advocacy. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities.

## mission

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## walk to school

On October 6, millions of children, parents, teachers and community leaders will walk to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day, part of International Walk to School Week, October 4-8. This energizing event reminds parents and children alike of the simple joy of walking to school. It also serves as an opportunity to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety, air quality and walkable communities.

You can visit the U.S. site for International Walk to School Week at <http://www.walktoschoolusa.org/>. There is also a wealth of information on Safe Routes to Schools programs across the country available on this site.

## recruit & receive

Want a bright yellow-orange WalkBoston T-shirt—free? Or how about the perfect walker’s gadget—a pedometer? The choice is yours if you enroll two new members this fall.

We have something new for renewing members, too. **WalkBoston members who join Zipcar will receive a \$25 driving credit**, good for 60 days. And all new and renewing memberships are valid through December 2005.

We need to grow so we can continue to speak with a single voice on issues of concern to us all: Safe Routes to Schools, trails and greenways, walking for health, and more. So help us to recruit new members. You’ll look great in your WalkBoston T-shirt!

## fall walks

There are six Saturday walks scheduled this fall, three in Boston and three nearby. As always, walks are free for members and \$10 for nonmembers. All walks start at 1:00, with the day following as the rain date. Watch for a separate mailing with all the details.

**Sat. September 25: Looking at Boston Scandals: Disasters, Dirty Deeds and Debauchery in Boston.** The Great Fire. The Hanging Tree. Scollay Square. Erik Scheier visits these sites and more.

**Sat. October 9: Exploring Anne Hutchinson’s Boston.** Exploring the city of a 17th century dissenter who questioned Puritanism, enraged the town fathers, and was banned from Boston for her beliefs, with Eve LaPlante, author of *American Jezebel*.

### **Sat. October 16: Seeing Results: Neighborhood Traffic-Calming.**

Viewing safety measures in the Salisbury Road/Corey Farm district at the Brighton/Brookline Town Line.

### **Sat. October 23: Urban Evolution: the East End of Watertown.**

Tripping though a relatively unknown but culturally diverse neighborhood, with Pam Pinsky.

### **Sat. November 6: Understanding the Design of the Zakim Bridge.**

Exploring the unique design features of Boston’s newest bridge, with architect Miguel Rosales.

**Sat. November 13: Remaking Downtown Malden.** Looking at Malden’s plan to move its city hall and reopen Pleasant Street from the MBTA station to Converse Square’s Victorian treasures, with Richard Vacca and a representative of Mayor Howard’s office.

## membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to: WalkBoston, Old City Hall, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.  
T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | [info@walkboston.org](mailto:info@walkboston.org) | [www.walkboston.org](http://www.walkboston.org)

name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

phone: daytime \_\_\_\_\_ evening \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ fax \_\_\_\_\_

check one:  STUDENT / SENIOR [ 65+ ] \$15  SUPPORTER \$50  
 MEMBER \$30  FRIEND \$100  
 DUAL / FAMILY \$40  ORGANIZATION \$250 | \$500 | \$1000

circle committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)

membership  advocacy  communications  
 legislative  development  programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

## legislation

The State Legislature was good to pedestrians this year. WalkBoston worked to earn five 2004 legislative victories, thanks to Reps. Ann Paulsen, Alice Wolf, and Tim Toomey, and Sens. Pam Resor and Diane Wilkerson.

**The Safe Routes to School bill** authorizes \$5M in grants to cities and towns for safety enhancement projects in and around school areas.

**A Registry of Motor Vehicles** commission will recommend changes to RMV policies and programs to ensure the safety of all roadway users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Recommendations are due next June; WalkBoston will be represented on the commission.

**Motorists must now stop ten feet from a crosswalk** (not five) when a pedestrian is within it, and the fine for failing to yield to pedestrians will double to \$200. Further, motorists who cause bodily injury in a crosswalk accident can be cited for “operating to endanger.” WalkBoston has lobbied the state legislature for four years for this win.

**Seven pedestrian advocates were added** to the state’s Bicycle Advisory Board (and no doubt changing its title to “Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board”).

**Funding was approved** for the North Point, Belmont to Alewife, Bike to the Sea, and other trails; the legislature also acted to limit liability for property owners giving land for use as trails.