



## Hillside Letters Program

### **History of Hillside Letters** (Hillside Letters A to Z by Evelyn Corning):

Giant capital letters adorn hillsides near many towns and cities in the West. These modern geoglyphs were well suited to this part of the country with many treeless hills and mountains. Letters were painted on rocks, made of cut-out letters, or were letters built of concrete or rocks. Letters were at least 10-15 feet high, sometimes illuminated at night, and were used for homecoming rituals at colleges or high schools.

Hillside letters have a respectable history dating back to 1905. The University of California's "Big C" on the Berkley Hills is the granddaddy of them all. Only 70 feet high, the Berkeley letter was followed by a U at the University of Utah and a Y at Brigham Young University. This spread to other colleges in the 20s and 30s. Many hillside letters are connected to a college or a high school. Several land-grant colleges originally made letters – "A" for Aggies, "M" for Miners, and "N" for Normal Schools. There are about 400 hillside letters still in existence. They continue to be the pride and joy of the school/community.

### **Purpose of the Program:**

At the local level, this program is great for our club's image/exposure and will encourage more walkers to come out to this part of the country. We are in the North Central Region and attempt to present walks and programs that will entice them to drive the extra miles.

The AVA's purpose in these special programs is to promote fitness and create public interest in volorsporting. The Hillside Letters Program is a unique, but eccentric feature of this part of the country. This western icon is slowly disappearing due to safety and environmental issues. It would be a shame to pass up the opportunity to experience these walks without learning some of the local history.

## Requirements of the Program:

1. Program requires 12 different sanctioned events. No walking or biking events are retroactive or can be repeated.
2. Criteria is a sanctioned AVA event that goes as close as possible or within sighting of the authentic hillside letter or letters. "Authentic" letters are painted on rocks, made of concrete or rock, or cut-out letters on a hillside.
3. Events will start Jan.1, 2010 and program will end Dec.31, 2012. Completed booklets can be turned in later if awards are still available. Insert cards can be used and must be attached to the booklet.
4. Participants who complete all 12 events in the program will receive a multicolored patch.
5. Books can be purchased for \$10 and completed books sent to: Beth Hendricks, 1031 Park Hill Drive, Rapid City, SD 57701.
6. Lists of sanctioned walks that qualify will be listed on the web site [www.ava.org/sd/bhva](http://www.ava.org/sd/bhva) and will be mailed with your booklet. If there are additional walks that we did not include or corrections that are needed, please let me know ([walkusa@rushmore.com](mailto:walkusa@rushmore.com)).
7. Black Hills Volkssporting Association in Rapid City, SD is the sponsoring club and thanks you for your interest in this special program. We hope you will enjoy the walks as you journey across the western United States.

