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The Crystal City Friday 5k, April 26, 2013.
Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

Cover:
Arlington County Police lead the runners at the 2011 Clarendon Day 10k.
Photo: Brian Knight/ Swim Bike Run Photography

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10 MILES D.C.'S DISTANCE

pg. 16



Page 40 **BEHIND EVERY RACE:**
HOURS OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING WE HOPE WE NEVER NEED



Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

Editor's NOTE

I used to blog. When I first moved to Virginia, I followed the lead of some training partners and started documenting my training on “Chazual Friday.”

My mom called it “kind of self indulgent,” but it helped me keep my mind fresh after days of writing about counties. Isn’t that what a blog is supposed to be? A diversion and an opportunity for introspection? Whatever readers I had seemed to like my descriptions of my favorite road loops, my struggles in the Washington summer weather, and the tale, “The [Redacted] Half Marathon is Decadent and Depraved.”

I look at my archives now and see my output fall from 36 posts in December 2009 down to 14 posts in all of 2012. As I turned my attention to this magazine and our website, I didn’t have time to blog anymore. I miss it, but its time had passed.

That’s what makes me appreciate the area’s bloggers so much. They come up with helpful, insightful commentary from so many perspectives on a consistent basis. Jamie Corey introduces a few of those bloggers starting on page 46. Furthermore, I hope RunWashington can serve as a gateway to the local running blogging community when we complete our website redesign.

When my then-girlfriend moved away a few years ago, I responded by running some of the best races of my life for months, including a 5k PR I worry I’ll never beat. Turns out I’m not the only one to go through this, and Jessie Biele talked to a few other runners who harnessed the pain of broken relationships to motivate themselves to new levels of commitment to running or achieve new personal bests. Check it out on page 60.

We also take a look at runners’ relationships with food, including Ashley Flick’s penchant for decorating creative cupcakes (page 24) and Andy Sovonick’s chicken dependency(page 54). My regret is that we did not challenge him to a “tender 10k,” akin to a beer mile.

Jim Hage tells the tale of Ben Beach, an unassuming Bethesda man who steadily built the longest Boston Marathon streak in history starting on page 12.

Speaking of Boston, I have to address the unicorn in the room. Despite the tragic loss of life at the finish line and the irreparable injuries that so many spectators suffered at the race this year, I am confident running and racing are as safe as they were before. That’s not to say I wasn’t terrified when I realized that my mother and aunt were supposed to be in the grandstands; luckily they were out on the course, cheering on my cousin. Our local police forces had comprehensive plans for all types of contingencies in place well before the bombing in Boston. Check out more about what they do on page 40.

Keep your eyes on the lookout and your feet on the roads and trails.

See you out there,
Charlie

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Be advised that running is a strenuous sport and you should seek the guidance of a medical professional before beginning an exercise regimen.

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LETTERS TO THE *Editor*

MORE FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE OF THE PACK

Run Washington Magazine could use more features about the middle of the pack runner, not the elite runners in the area. For most in this area, running provides not only a stress reliever, but a sense of accomplishment that cannot be achieved in other areas of life, whether it's parenting, work, or other stresses. These are the runners in the Washington area, and with all due respect, they should be a bigger part of your magazine.

Julie Sapper
Rockville, Md.

Julie,

Thanks for your feedback. We've committed to profiling runners of all different levels and I feel as though we're on the right track. In our most recent issue, we presented the stories about several people whose noteworthiness come from their unique stories, not the speed with which they run.

At the same time, elite runners absolutely have a place in the magazine. Regardless of an entrant's motivation, races are still about running fast and those who achieve remarkable feats are worthy of attention. If anywhere, this is the place where readers educated in the basics of running can appreciate a depth of examination that is rarely feasible in a general-interest publication. Also, readers have expressed interest in what makes these people fast, so there are lessons to be learned from runners who have successfully executed training plans to succeed on the track or the roads.

Regardless of where we finish in a race, there's more that's similar among runners than different, and whatever speed we learn, we can learn something from one another.

-Charlie

RUNWASHINGTON LOVES FEEDBACK!

Send your thoughts, suggestions, criticisms, love letters and hate mail to Editor in Chief Charlie Ban at charlie@runwashington.com.

GET WEIRD, WASHINGTON!

I really enjoyed reading the results of the Best of Washington Running. I'm not originally from DC and I would have loved to read an issue like this when I moved here and started running several years ago. It would be helpful next time to include more categories for Best Race - for example, best shorter distance (5k or 10k) and mid-distance (10 miler or half marathon), Best Winter/Spring/Summer/Fall Race. Some fun categories would also be interesting - Best Race Swag? Best Race for First-Timers? There are so many terrific races in the area that it would be a treat to recognize more of them.

Also, I don't mean to be that girl but I think the pictures presented with the Best of Washington story don't reflect the diversity of the runners of Washington. Having flipped through it a few times, it looks a little like, white guys running MCM, white guys running the GW Parkway Classic, guys running the Parks Half Marathon, white people running in Rock Creek Park, and white guys running with DC Road Runners. I understand that you have to work with the pictures you have but I know that DC runners are more diverse than that.

I love the choice for the winner of Best Running Personality. DC is a wonderful city for running but it's rare that people get weird. We're all a little weird but usually we're weird in private. I like weird. I'm happy to be weird. Runners are weird. Weird is saying aloud, "I'm tired. I'm going to go for a run." Weird is running in freezing rain in a trash bag. Weird is consuming gel instead of food.

Some of my favorite races are weird. The obvious winner in weird racing is San Francisco's Bay to Breakers. I also run the turkey trot in my hometown every year and last year my fellow runners included Santas, elves, turkeys, Star Wars characters and a guy carrying a canoe. So part of me has always felt a little disappointed that DC races are almost completely not weird. Sure, there's the juggler and occasionally there are people in tutus but we have nothing on Bay to Breakers. There are no salmon who run the race backwards. No vikings with ships. No centipedes. And never any Elvises.

I get it. D.C. is not San Francisco. But running is already sort of weird. And everything in D.C. is so serious. My husband has to wear a jacket to take me to dinner at 1789. The bowling alley in Chinatown has a dress code. Children have been arrested for eating French fries on Metro. A guy sued the dry cleaner for losing his pants. A man with Tourette syndrome was not allowed on a flight out of Washington National Airport.

I run because I think it's fun, because I enjoy it, because it's a celebration of life. I don't have a spreadsheet with my times on it. Spreadsheets are for work. Running is fun. For those reasons, I agree that runners in costume are the best running personalities and I hope to see some costumes at my next race.

Kat Zambon
Washington, D.C.

Kat,

Thank you for your suggestions, you can be pretty sure they will show up in next year's survey. It was our first time conducting such a project and on top of the logistical lessons to come out of it, making the questions more relevant and interesting will, I hope, keep the entire enterprise fresh and exciting, while reflecting the things people love about our running community in the Washington area.

Speaking of reflecting the running community, on second glance, I agree that the photos are too homogeneous to accurately represent the people who run around here. I think I became more focused on finding a lot of photos out of the multitudes that were available (thanks mostly to Cheryl Young, Ken Trombatore and Dan Reichmann and their skilled eyes and lenses), and ended up with a lot of white men running. I will make a more comprehensive effort to dig deeper to find more diversity in my photo selection. To be frank, I feel, in retrospect, lazy about how I handled that last time.

As for weirdness, I say do what feels good (within the boundaries of the law and good taste) and have fun out there.

-Charlie

OFF THE *Beaten Path*

PATUXENT RIVER PARK

By Maggie Lloyd

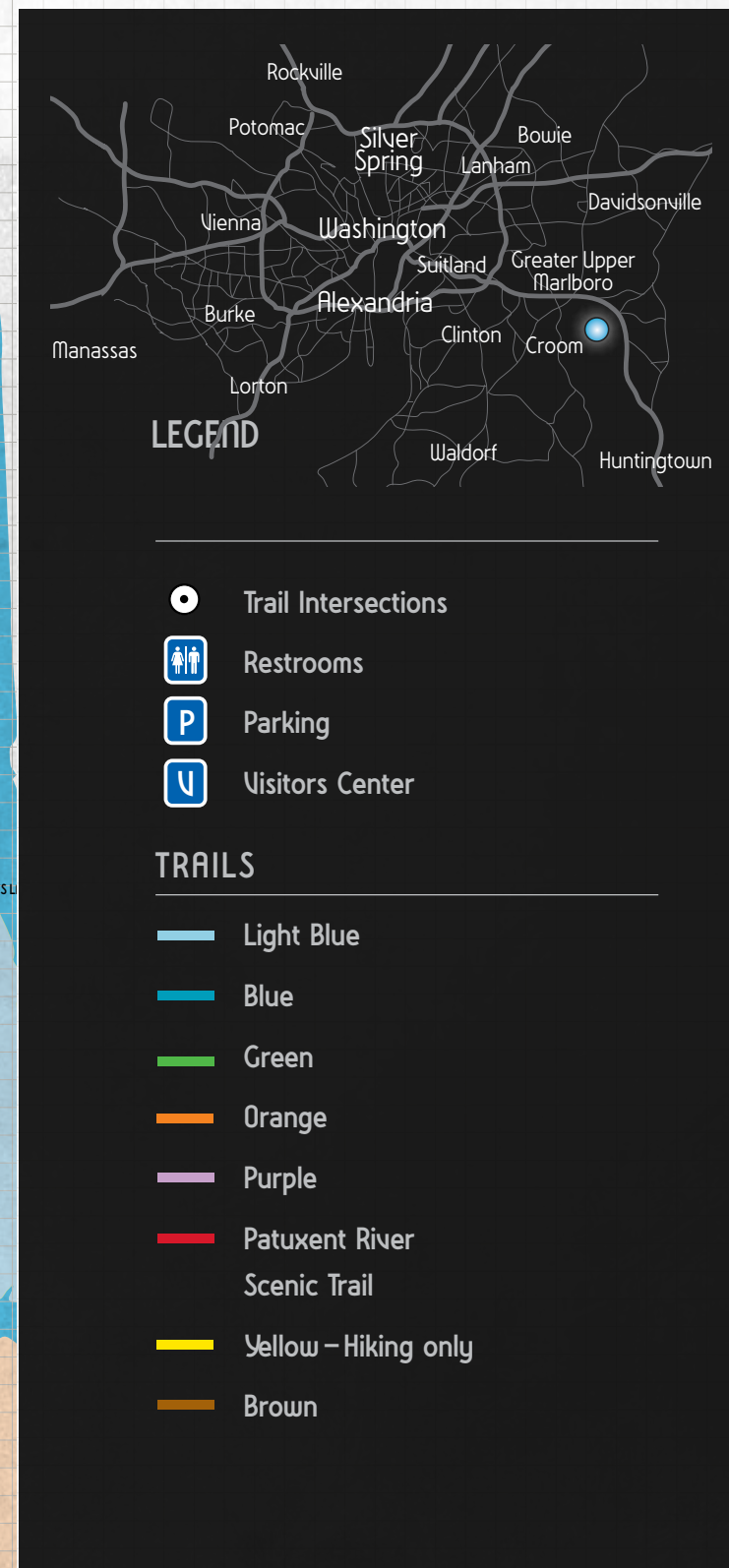
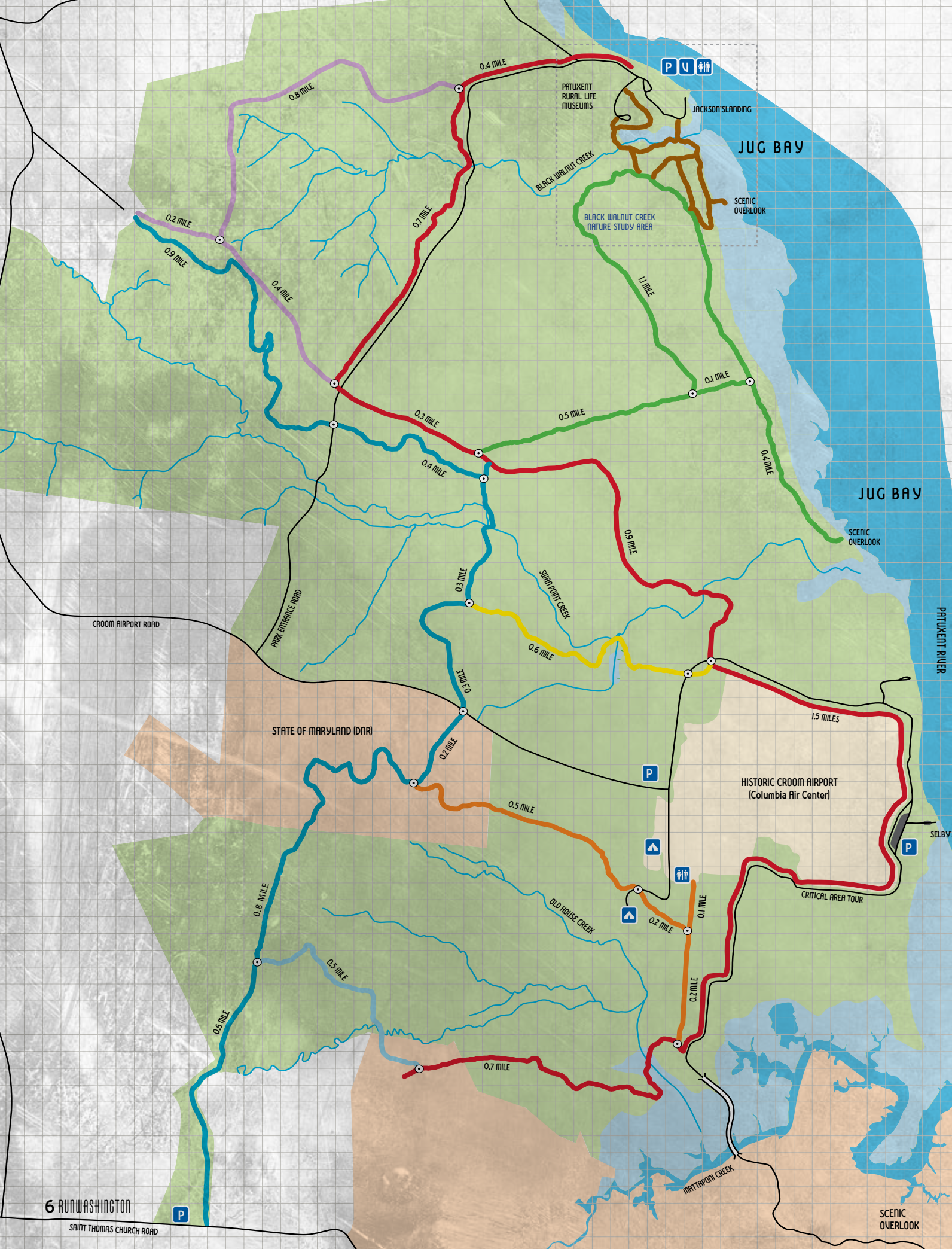
Fresh off the 50th anniversary of its designation as a protected area, Patuxent River Park in Upper Marlboro, Md. boasts more than 6,000 acres of nature trails and wildlife just ten miles off the Beltway. If you prefer a running soundtrack of croaking frogs to mp3 playlists, you'll be right at home, along with the wandering beavers and occasional snake.

This park's location on the Patuxent, overlapping the Star-Spangled Banner and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trails, is steeped in history. The park, which weaves 110 miles from Carroll County to the Chesapeake Bay, is named for the longest river located entirely in Maryland. John Smith traveled up and down the Patuxent in the early 1600s, and sections of the National Anthem were inspired by events from the War of 1812, which took place in the Chesapeake region. The system of trails is well-suited for runners seeking alternatives to routine Capital Crescent trail out-and-back runs and battling bikers in Rock Creek Park. Don't expect to lose yourself in a long run, though. While the entire Patuxent River Park offers about 10 different natural areas, they are dotted along the Prince George's County coast of the Patuxent, separated by roadways, and most areas offer less than 5 miles of official foot trails. But bikers will enjoy the tree-lined asphalt roadways throughout the park area, and you'll be treated to views of wetlands and woodlands in the same run.

If you want dirt trails with minimal traffic and relatively easy footing, you'll appreciate the 2,000-acre Jug Bay Natural Area, the park headquarters located off of Croom Airport Road. The red trail is your Old Faithful, providing a scenic, although sometimes uneven, path that sticks close to the main road. The blue trail is a narrow, winding path, and let's just say it's apparent that it's a favorite among horseback riders. Pink will give you a smooth dirt trail until it turns into a canal bed with bumpy footing. You won't find your next hill workout on these trails, but chances are you won't miss it once you start exploring the park.

What is striking about the area is the sense of escape. Even on a 60-degree sunny Saturday afternoon, I only encountered a handful of walkers on the brown trail and a couple bikers on the main road. The trails themselves are very easy to follow, thanks to their clearly marked and color-coded signposts every quarter-mile or so. The drive alone through woodlands and farmlands was reason enough to turn off the radio and just enjoy the peaceful scenery.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...





Ryan Stasiowski finishes the 2013 Patuxent River 10k.
Photo: Charlie Ban

Other promising areas for runners within the Patuxent system include Queen Anne Natural Area, an 18th century port town that has more than four miles of trails for humans and horses alike; the Fran Uhler Natural Area, with more than five miles of woodland trails; and the Marlboro Natural Area, which has more than 1,000 acres of woodlands, wetlands, and open fields. The Quantico Orienteering Club holds a 10k trail race in the spring, following the Blue and Purple trails. [You can read more about trail racing starting on page 26](#)


The park is open daily from 8 a.m. to dusk.

Across the river, Anne Arundel County has its own Patuxent River Park, but it features fewer nature activities and an entrance fee. The PG county side does not charge for access and offers PG and Montgomery residents a reduced price for camping fees and canoe and kayak rentals.

A stop inside the visitors center at Jug Bay will offer trail maps, historical and natural exhibits, and a live feed of the park's

resident osprey, which at the time I visited was quite pregnant. The enthusiastic park official proceeded to explain all I ever wanted to know about the bird's history. She also explained that the origins of Jug Bay's name are unclear. Some say the strip of land where rice grows is shaped like the handle of a water jug, but she reassured me that the more popular explanation is that fighters from the War of 1812 liked to dump their empty bottles and jugs into the body of water after a night of partying only early 19th century farmers could handle.

Patuxent is a place to enjoy "slow" running, not necessarily pace-wise, but in terms of the overall experience. If you want to get the family out of the house, there's something to entertain every age: fishing, kayaking, cycling, hiking, canoeing, and hunting are all offered by Patuxent River Park. Guided nature hikes are offered for the not-too-steep price of \$2 for non-residents, and a sunset boat tour will cost you twice that. What

can I say, life is a little simpler out here. 



MILITARY RUNNING

REFLECTIONS ON RUNNING AND MILITARY SERVICE



In a few months, I'll be retiring from the Navy. It's been a great career and one in which running has factored in significantly through my involvement with the All-Navy running teams. Being a part of those teams is something I am truly going to miss.

It all started when I was assigned to the USS Nassau in 2002 during a chance encounter with Senior Chief Brett Datke. Brett was a runner, too, only ten times more passionate about it than I was. In fact, he was a "streaker" and at the time was going on 16 years (and I think he is still going). I

remember one time when he was sicker than a dog, working crazy hours and barely getting any sleep, but somehow managed to get 3 miles in on the treadmill. He urged me to apply for the Navy marathon team when we got back from deployment in 2003, and the rest is history.

As I contemplated what I wanted to write about for my last column on the military running scene, I found myself reflecting on all the places I've run as a result of the various locations the Navy has taken me, and more importantly, the people I've met along the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10...

BY CMDR. SUE HIMES,
U.S. NAVY

THE COFFEE GALLERY RUN

One by one, two pairs of feet
Set out upon the North Shore street:
Fifteen miles lie ahead
While others slumber still in bed.

The pace at first is somewhat slow,
As o'er the mountain peaks aglow
Of rosy light to warm the air
That lingers, chill, with night left there;
But by the time they reach the Bay
And dawn becomes a brand new day,
The feet develop quite a pace –
The smaller pair behind in chase.
No time for slackers on this run,
No slowing down until they're done.

The conversation ebbs and flows
From small complaints of aching woes
To aspirations yet unknown
Save to the beating heart alone...
Of thoughts and feelings hidden deep
That cause the soul to laugh – or weep;
These are the times we'll keep in store
To bring back when they are no more.

So on and on the feet do fly –
The sun creeps higher in the sky –
Some morning surfers, boards in hand,
Eye the waves approaching land.
The promise of a great Sunday
Rides in among the crests at bay;
And as the town draws into view,
Adrenaline flows forth anew.
Through Haleiwa, 'round and back,
The miles click on with dwindling yak –
Each one's mind absorbed in thought,

Cherishing the time they've got;
Planning out a list to do
To fill the day ahead, still new:
To church and then the Gallery,
And then a mountain biking spree;
But last and likely best of all –
The Gathering to watch the fall
Of the crimson North Shore sun
As it sets when day is done...

Waimea Hill approaches fast
And shakes us from our thoughts at last –
The hardest part before the end,
Just up, then down, and 'round the bend.
The breathing labors harder still
From charging up the tortuous hill,
But then the pace flies even more
As though there is a prize in store
For the quickest pair of feet
To conquer that 'ol' North Shore street.

Alas, the runners, keeping stride,
Reach the end, still side by side –
Their hearts pound loudly, sweat drips down;
But none bears even the slightest frown.
No matter what is yet in store,
The runners yearn for nothing more;
For with the miles that they did meet,
The day had thus become complete.

SUZANNE HIMES, JULY 1994

way and logged countless miles with.

How could I forget the weekly “man style” runs with Pete Randazzo along the bike trails in Monterey; the Saturday morning long runs up the C&O canal towpath with Patti Stewart (who was also my midwife and delivered my fourth child!); the daily runs in and around D.C. with Bill Bray and Maureen Carr; racing through the backwoods of West Virginia with my Wilderness Challenge teammates; running into the original Olympic stadium at the end of the Athens marathon with none other than Joan Benoit Samuelson. The memories are endless.

I've run on the Isle of Skye, along the canals of Venice, to the Tower of Pisa, around the island of Diego Garcia, in the Japanese countryside around Misawa....As the Navy took me around the world, my runs served as my anchor, the way I learned my way around a new place, the solace I needed to think, the outlet to celebrate the good times, the means to meeting new people or reconnecting with old friends.

Of all the places I've run, though, nothing compares to Hawaii. I was stationed there with VP-9 (a P-3 squadron) from 1992 – 1995, and I look upon that time in my life, when I was just an Ensign and LTjg, as the childhood of my career. Everything was easy and carefree, and my running was no different. So many great training partners, so many fun races, such a beautiful place to run. I didn't think a whole lot about hard training runs – I just did them. When I broke three hours in the marathon for the first time in 1994, it just happened. Now when I shoot for the same goal, I think too much about it and it seems so hard.

My favorite runs of all time were the ones I did on the North Shore with an Army buddy of mine who was stationed at Schofield Barracks. No matter how late I had stayed up the night before, I would get up at 5 each Sunday morning to drive the 25 minutes to his house on the North Shore. As you would expect, the weather was always perfect. I was so inspired by those runs that I wrote a poem about it back in 1994 – one that has been buried in a folder in my home office all these years; but I wanted to share it here, in my last column for the military running scene, because it captured the essence of what I love about running – the satisfaction that comes from physical exertion, the opportunity to see God's world in full splendor, and the bonds of friendship that come from spending hours on the road with another runner.

I thank the Navy for giving me the chance to run in all those places and meet so many wonderful people. I know many of my shipmates who run feel the same and have similar stories. For those of you with whom I have logged some miles with, I hope our running paths will cross again as I now follow my husband around the world while he continues his career in the Navy. In the meantime, I wish you all Fair Winds and Following Seas. 🌊

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Phil Stewart and Ben Beach at the Boston Marathon's 40k mark. Stewart accompanied Beach for most of the race.
Photo: Carter Beach



Boston Benny

BY JIM HAGE

Don't feel sorry for Ben Beach.

Yes, his string of 45 consecutive Boston Marathon finishes ended on a closed course just miles from the finish line, where two bombs rocked the city and the nation. And yes, a 46th consecutive finish would have made Beach, from Bethesda, the sole record holder for consecutive finishes, an achievement he had worked toward all of his adult life.

But Beach, a man who embodies the tradition and ideals of the Boston Marathon, is defined by neither the race nor his remarkable streak.

"First of all, we're talking about a day on which three people lost their lives and 270 others were injured, many severely," Beach says. "So for me to talk about my run and the streak feels hollow."

Perhaps. But the Boston Marathon - before the bombs, anyway - was a nice little race in its own right, with champions - anyone remember Lelisa Desisa and Rita Jeptoo? - thousands of qualifiers and hallowed, not hollow, history and records. Beach was set to own outright a remarkable piece of that history with this year's run. Since his first Boston as an 18-year-old Harvard freshman in 1968, Beach competed in lockstep - albeit one year behind - with Pennsylvanian Neil Weygandt, each runner doggedly starting and finishing every year. But age and injuries finally caught up to Weygandt, who ended his streak by sitting out the 2012 race. Upon completion of the marathon last year, Beach tied Wygandt's record at 45 straight finishes.

As if it were that easy. The early decades featured a string of sub-2:40 finishes, including a Boston-best of 2:27 in the 1983 race. But 11 years ago Beach developed a hitch in his stride, diagnosed as dystonia, a neurological disorder related to Parkinson's Disease. The problem made training difficult and forced Beach to curtail his weekly mileage. In more recent years, pre-marathon long runs have been no longer than the Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run in Washington just prior to Boston.

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Beach during the 2013 Boston Marathon.
Photo: Marathon Foto

“At first we didn’t know how seriously to take it. Then we heard sirens, saw police motorcycles, trucks and cars blow by us. Something was clearly not right...”

Beach credits the streak’s current longevity to treatment at the nearby National Institutes of Health, where he is part of a long-term study and receives regular Botox injections that partially block spasm signals from the brain to the left hamstring. Beach walks with a slight limp and his training runs have grown necessarily shorter; these days he maintains most of his cardiovascular fitness through cycling and an elliptical trainer. Eight days before this year’s Boston, Beach completed his Cherry Blossom long run in 1:34:34. Would anyone be surprised to learn that Beach is the only runner to have completed every Cherry Blossom race since its inauguration in 1973?

So with family and friends scattered along the Boston course, Beach set out from Hopkinton with longtime friend, training partner and Cherry Blossom race director Phil Stewart. “We had planned on running in the 4:30 to 4:45 range, a time that would have put us at the finish a half hour after the bombs went off,”

Stewart said. “But Ben was nursing a calf problem, and at 10 miles he felt a sharp jolt of pain through his calf, reducing us to a quick walking pace. At 17 miles, two of his three kids and a daughter-in-law joined us – I felt as if we had a guided escort into town.”

But by the time the entourage reached the 21 Mile mark, it was past 2:50 p.m. and the area around the finish line had devolved into chaos. As Beach and his crew passed Boston College, volunteers joined hands in the middle of the road, halting the race and announcing a temporary suspension.

“We had heard something about explosions near the finish line,” Beach said. “At first we didn’t know how seriously to take it. Then we heard sirens, saw police motorcycles, trucks and cars blow by us. Something was clearly not right.... We were on pace to finish in less than six hours, which is the last official time recorded. When the course was sealed off, we gathered,

stood, sat and scratched our heads.”

The gravity of the situation slowly became clear. With a fading cell phone signal and before all such transmissions were halted, Beach’s son Carter accounted for Beach’s wife, brother, sister-in-law and friends waiting near the finish line. “That was a tremendous relief,” Beach said. “We had some close calls but overall we were very lucky.” But for an injured calf, Beach, his family and friends could have found themselves in the middle of serious trouble.

“It was a good day to be bad,” Stewart said. The unprecedented events of April 15 obviously left more than Beach and the business of the streak unsettled. Thousands of runners, including many with active streaks, finished short of their goal. Two weeks after the marathon, the Boston Athletic Association had not yet resolved the official status of those stopped on the course.

But again, shed no tears for Ben Beach. “I’ll abide by whatever [BAA officials] say,” Beach said. “Boston has been such a wonderful part of my life and the BAA is always so accommodating for those of us who don’t technically qualify anymore. No matter what happens to the streak, I’ll be back.”

Actually, when pressed, Beach admits he’s got his sights set on another Boston milestone – one perhaps even more Ruthian than consecutive finishes. The great Johnny Kelley started 61 Boston Marathons and finished a record 58 times; depending upon how the 2013 race is officially recorded, and, of course, what the future holds, Beach would be 76 when he lines up for what could be his 59th finish.

“Now I’m not comparing myself to Johnny Kelley,” Beach added quickly. “He was a two-time Olympian and twice won Boston. [His starts and finishes] are a mind-blowing pair of numbers, in a different era, with different shoes, different everything.”

Beach has already matched Kelley at 17 for the number of sub-2:40 finishes. “But I don’t expect to run an 18th,” he said.

Look for a ruling from the BAA that respects the efforts of consecutive finish streakers, perhaps one that resolves the issue with an asterisk. And look for Ben Beach at the starting line of next year’s marathon. And the one after that, and after that, and....

“My plan has always been to run Boston as long as I can do it,” Beach said. “It’s conceivable I’ll still be going but the body’s got to hold up. At each stage, you never know what’s going to happen.” 🐾

Photo: Jimmy Daly





The elite women lead the 2011 Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, at the height of Cherry Blossom season.
Photo: Jimmy Daly

A PERFECT 10

BY CHARLIE BAN

It might be the perfect racing distance, and the Washington region has certainly embraced it.

Ten miles.

Philadelphia might have a bigger race — the Broad Street Run crested 38,000 finishers this year — but there are more opportunities to race 10 miles here than in almost any other part of the country.

We're chock full of them, and they're popular. In the last year, ending in May 2013, 57,702 runners crossed the finish lines of 21 different 10 mile races in the Washington area. In 2011, the region's 10 milers had the second (Army Ten-Miler), third (Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run), eighth (George Washington Parkway Classic) and ninth (Baltimore 10 Miler) largest 10 mile races in the country, according to data compiled by Running USA. Cherry Blossom, Army and the Annapolis were all highlighted by Runner's World in 2007.

Have you entered a registration lottery for a race? Thank the popularity that drove Cherry Blossom to sell out in less than three hours back in 2009 (more than 17,500 finishers in 2013). Shut out of Cherry Blossom? Run the Cherry Pit the same day. If you'd like to run October's Army Ten Miler (more than 22,000 finishers in 2012), make that decision in May, specifically within the first 10 hours of registration opening, because that's how long it took to sell out in 2013. Wear your Annapolis 10 Mile jacket anywhere and you're sure to find a friend who ran the race with you that year. It's D.C.'s distance.

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“I think it’s a product of the running boom in the last ten years,” said Keira D’Amato, marketing manager with Potomac River Running stores, which manages the Reston 10 Miler in March and Perfect 10 in September. “People started running 5k races and are starting to mature into more serious runners and want to move up in distance.”

Alexandria-based journalist Steve Nearman has covered the Cherry Blossom race over almost 30 years and served on the race’s board of directors. He sees 10 mile races fitting well into chaotic Washingtonian lives.

“Your life doesn’t suffer from what it takes to race a 10 miler,” he said. “ Not everyone has time to train for 26 miles. Marathon training is a tremendous commitment, but 10 mile racing is still fulfilling.”

Jeff Horowitz said the distance’s combination of endurance and power is appealing.

“It doesn’t chew you up,” he said. “The marathon’s appeal is that it’s a journey, but you have to pace yourself. On the other hand, 5k is all power, you run your heart out the whole time.”

Nearman and Horowitz have teamed up to produce books of photographs chronicling iconic marathons, but along the way they are in the process of finishing up a book on Cherry Blossom, a testament to the race’s iconic status. The book follows a similar project depicting the Marine Corps Marathon. The book, The Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run - Unparalleled Beauty, will include more than 300 photos of the race over the years and the famous cherry blossoms.

“When you think Cherry Blossom, you think beauty,” Horowitz said. “We thought it would look so amazing in a picture book that you couldn’t do it in words.”

In a way, the distance itself is a throwback. When the British Invasion reached running with a metric system takeover, three- and six-mile races became 5k, 10k.

It means dissonance with most people’s training terminology, though. For those who train by distance, the mile remains the standard unit of measure, aside from a European here or there who insists on running kilometers.

Ten miles is clean. No decimal points, no fraction of a mile.

While you’re racing, if your mind wanders to figuring out what your splits are going to mean for your finishing time, it’s a lot easier than figuring out how much beyond that last mile mark you’ll be going.

It’s tidy. Nine-minute miles? You’re looking at an hour-and-a-half. Run six-flat miles, you get 10 miles. Ten miles per hour. When non-runners ask you how fast you can run, why not compare yourself to a speed they’re used to?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20...



Scott Gelletich and Jacob Custer run the 2013 George Washington Parkway Classic. Photo: Brian Knight/ Swim Bike Run Photography



The 2013 George Washington Parkway Classic.
Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

Brandywine, Md. runner Ronette Thompson is a 10 mile enthusiast.

"It's my favorite distance," she said. "That's about as far as I really like racing right now, though I'm planning on some marathons in the fall. They don't wear you out."

She's gone to Virginia Beach for the Surf 'n Santa 10 Miler in December, and recently did the Reston 10 Miler and the George Washington Parkway Classic (which changed in 2002 from being a 15k). She also loves the Baltimore 10 Miler, though she said that one gets a little warm, being in June.

The local 10 milers generally attract more women than men. Four of the top five largest races have more female finishers, with Annapolis the only race not following that trend.

The D.C. Road Runners partners with the Army Ten-Miler as the race's coaching program. Katie Finazzo coordinates the club's training programs.

"Hitting double digits is a big milestone for people," she said. "It's a gateway to longer distances and it isn't anything they can't do. The challenge is more mental than it is a matter of their conditioning."

The club's 10 mile training program starts in the summer at three miles (with an option for complete novices to start at one mile) and builds up consistently to 10 miles (some go to 11).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22...

RACE DATE
SUNDAY
OCTOBER 6
2013

START TIME
7:00AM

RACE LOCATION
GEORGE
WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT VERNON
to NATIONAL
HARBOR, MD



One of 27 best
Half Marathons
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“Five miles is a breakthrough for a lot of people, they know they will be able to finish when they get that far,” she said. “When we get to 10 miles in our training runs, we do a lot of running on the Army course. There’s always a lot of celebrating.”

Finazzo runs the race with her athletes and considers the overall experience to be inspirational.

The area’s 10 mile races attract fast competition. Running under 4:50 pace is a prerequisite for men to contend for the top spots at Cherry Blossom or Army. Daniel Salel ran 46:06 to win Cherry Blossom. For women, 5:20s or faster will give you a shot, but not guarantee anything. Cherry Blossom played host to the women’s 10 mile national championships this year, where Janet Bawcom set the national record— 53:28.

When timed right with the trees, the Cherry Blossom race shows off Washington, D.C. at the height of spring tourist season, another reason it is popular with out-of-town runners.

Alexandria’s Jerry Greenlaw made the Cherry Blossom his first race in the area. A few months before moving from Warwick, N.Y., he showed up to the 2010 race and was spellbound. Its reputation as a fast race was all he needed. And he got it, finishing 25th in 51:42.

“Cherry Blossom is my favorite race, hands down,” he said. “Everyone involved puts on such a great event and help everybody feel great on race day and out on the course.”

He credits race committee members Rob Wolfe and Chan Robbins, the latter now retired from the race, with cultivating an atmosphere that welcomes competitive runners and makes the race the highlight of the spring racing season.

Like Thompson, Greenlaw considers the 10 mile to be his favorite distance.

“You can run fast and hard the entire time,” he said. “There is no taking gels, taking a sip of water, or worrying about going too fast because the race is over before you know it.”

D’Amato said that the Reston 10 and Perfect 10 provide a balance to the high-profile urban races, and sees the races as a comfortable place for beginners to try the distance.

“For a lot of people, the Army Ten or Cherry Blossom can be a little intimidating,” she said. “Wow, there’s going to be 20,000 people there?” These races give them a chance to run on roads they’re familiar with and let them be comfortable with the race. 🏃‍♀️

Editor’s note: RunWashington follows Associated Press style, but the formal names of some races do not, so we recognize those names.

Daniel Salel and Stephen Sambu cruise along the Potomac River during the 2013 Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run. Salel won the race. Photo: Charlie Ban



Ashley Flick finishes the 2013 Myrtle Beach Half Marathon in a PR time of 1:28:27. Photo: Marathon Foto

COOKING

by the book

BY MOLLIE ZAPATA

Soccer player. Elaborate cupcake decorator. Sub-1:30 half marathon specialist. Engineer. U.S. Corporate Athletic Association track star. Mother of two. A 5:45 a.m. out-the-door multiple-days-a-week dedicated running club member.

This may sound like three or four or seven people, but really it's just one local superstar who excels at balancing it all.

"I don't sleep much!" Ashley Flick of South Riding, Va. admits.

Like so many adult runners, Flick came to running by way of another sport; in her case through the Lafayette College Division I soccer team.

"Everyone else ran a lot more during the games," the former goalie explains. "And at practice sometimes it was hard to keep up."

Not one to be left behind, she took matters into her own hands and started running solo outside of practice.

After college, she exchanged her cleats for running shoes full time and entered her first race, the Disney Half Marathon, in January 2004. She trained alone, had her parents come to watch and finished in a very respectable 1:46. Surprised and inspired by how well the race went — she was pleasantly shocked — she continued to run and improve at the half marathon distance.

Since moving to the Washington area five years ago, Flick has run 15 half marathons, plus three full marathons.

"I like the half because you can still run it pretty fast and the training is not quite as intense as it is for a full marathon."

Her half marathon PR is 1:29:23, and her full marathon is no joke, either — she earned her 3:23:36 PR in her third try at the distance in the 2008 Marine Corps Marathon.

"There are so many runners around here," Flick says. "And I love that there are a lot of big races — Marine Corps, Cherry Blossom — right here in our backyard."

In addition to road races, Flick's done a bit of track work. Before having kids, Flick competed two years in a row for Lockheed Martin and Booz Allen Hamilton at the Corporate National Championship Track Meet in California. She ran the 5k and 10k, running 19:35 and 39:30 PRs, respectively, impressing her co-workers.

"Training around here in the heat of July, then racing in California definitely helped," she says. "Now that I have a family it's too hard to leave, so I probably won't do that again. But I am hoping to get back down to those times."

As if running and kids and a full-time job weren't enough, Flick has developed a unique hobby. In the little spare time she has, she makes elaborate cupcakes, decorated to portray different animals or people or things. She started decorating mid-2008 shortly after moving to the area, and has created everything from aliens to shoes to pirates to hamburgers in frosting and candy.

"I'm an engineer in my full-time job," she said. "But it doesn't have a lot of creative elements, so the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26...



Ashley Flick whipping up a batch of cupcakes at home in South Riding, Va.
Photo: Jeremy Flick

cupcake thing is just a fun way for me to be creative. I enjoy the challenge of 'engineering' how to design the cupcakes to fit the occasion or party."

She had her son Kellen in 2010 and her daughter Addie in late 2011, which has added a wonderful but extra degree of difficulty to her lifestyle.

"I don't sleep very much, which I think is why my times have not been that great recently." Her family is a major part of what keeps her motivated, and the support of her husband Jeremy allows Flick to keep up with her training.

"[My husband] does not understand why I want to run at 5:30 or 5:45 in the morning, but he does understand that it is a huge and important part of my life and I am much happier because of it, so he helps make it happen."

Her kids are supportive too. "Every time I come in the house wearing anything other than work clothes, my son asks if I'm sweaty. And my daughter and husband cheer me on when I'm doing workouts on the treadmill, and if my son sees a runner he points and says, 'Mommy your friend!'"

To stay motivated and keep running fun, Flick regularly meets friends from the South Riding Running Club, getting up before her kids and work and the sun to squeeze in the miles.

"It's been amazing, I can't even imagine going back and running alone. My PRs have all come down since moving to D.C. and finding a running group. It's a lot easier getting up at 5:45 when you know people are waiting for you."

The balance of it all is a constant puzzle, and Flick doesn't hesitate to admit that "as much as I still love running and running competitively, work and family life has taken a toll on my racing." With work and kids she can't manage a strict high-mileage plan, so Flick focuses on quality runs by doing tempos, track workouts, and a long run every week.

"Only time will tell, so for now I will just keep training and see what happens," she said.

Her advice for other runners: "I am not great at following training plans - as much as I'd like to, life inevitably seems to get in the way and you have to be flexible. It's about finding a plan or general outline of a plan/schedule that works for you - not every plan works for every lifestyle."

Now that her daughter is 1 and setting a more consistent schedule for the family, Flick is adjusting her own lifestyle and hoping to go for some PRs. This year her goals include getting back under 1:30 in the half marathon and setting personal bests in the 5k and 10k. Most of her races are local for family reasons, and also because "we live in a great area weather-wise, with so many runners and such good races. Just think, people come from all over the world to run here, and we live here!" 🍷

CARAMEL FRAPPUCCINO CUPCAKES

Ashley Flick shares a recipe for one of her latest cupcake creations.

Cupcake:

- Box white cake mix
- Half Starbucks Caramel Iced Coffee VIA Pack (add more coffee for stronger coffee flavor)
- 1 1/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 3 TBSP Caramel Macchiato creamer
- 1 Cup butterscotch chips

1. In measuring cup, combine VIA coffee mix and water
2. Pour coffee mix and all other ingredients into medium bowl
3. Mix with blender for 2-3 minutes
4. Add butterscotch chips, combine with spoon
5. Portion batter into cupcake pan with 24 cupcake papers,
6. Bake cupcakes for 15-17 minutes at 375, set out to cool

Icing:

- 1 stick butter or margarine
- 1/2 stick Crisco stick
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 4 cups powder sugar
- 2TBSP Caramel Macchiato Creamer

1. Beat butter and Crisco,
2. Add vanilla and continue beating.
3. Slowly mix in powder sugar
4. On low combine sugar and butter mix
5. Add Caramel Macchiato and beat on high until fluffy and smooth.
6. Pipe on with icing bag and tip or spread with knife (OPTIONAL: Top with caramel sauce and green straw for full Frappuccino effect :)



RACING ON TRAILS

BY ALISON GITTELMAN

I stopped running and looked around. Trees surrounded me on all sides. There was no obvious path and I hadn't seen another runner for – how long was it? 10 minutes? 30?

I had no idea.

When did I last see a trail marker?

Not sure.

If I waited here, another runner would appear soon...unless I had gone off course. I felt time ticking by as I surveyed the area one more time. And then I saw it.

A slight breeze had picked up the striped tape hanging from the tree branch, the sunlight suddenly reflecting off it, showing me the way. I started running again, all the way to the finish of the Capon Valley 50k in Yellow Spring, W.V.

Ranking higher in importance than scenery, awards, and well-stocked aid stations, “well-marked trails” is the top item on the runner’s list of must-haves for trail races.

It makes sense. Getting lost is no joke, uses valuable time and energy, and can cost you a spot - or maybe even several - on the podium.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30...

TRAIL RACES NEARBY

We really are spoiled for choice when it comes to trail races in our area:

BACKYARD BURN 5 AND 10 MILE

www.ex2adventures.com

Five-race series (spring and fall)

LOCATIONS (ALL IN VIRGINIA): Hemlock Overlook, Clifton; Wakefield Park, Annandale; Prince William Forest Park, Triangle; Laurel Hill, Lorton; Fountainhead Park, Fairfax Station

NOTES: Ideal for first-time trail racers; Wakefield is the flattest; Fountainhead arguably the most challenging.

SPRING THAW AND FALL FOLIAGE 5K, 10K

www.rev3adventure.com/race/spring-thaw-1

March, April, October 19, November 3, 2013

LOCATION: Willowsford, Ashburn, Va.

NOTES: New race series, there's also a family adventure race Nov 2.

PATUXENT RIVER TRAIL 10K

www.qocweb.org/events/2013/3/2/patuxent-river-trail-10k

March

LOCATION: Patuxent River Park, Upper Marlboro, Md.

NOTES: Part of the Trail Runner Trophy Series. See Off the Beaten Path, page 6.

SENECA CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL MARATHON AND 50K

www.senecacreektrailrace.com

March

LOCATION: Start: Riley's Lock, Damascus, Md. Finish: Damascus Regional Park

NOTES: Very low-key event; \$10 or \$20 entry. The "marathon" is actually 29.7 miles.

BULL RUN RUN (BRR) 50 MILE

www.vhtrc.org/brr

April

LOCATION: Bull Run trail from Hemlock Overlook, Clifton, Va.

NOTES: Peak time of year for bluebells on the trail.

24-HOUR ADVENTURE TRAIL RUN

www.athletic-equation.com/24-HR_ATR.html

May

LOCATION: Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

NOTES: All proceeds are donated to charity.

CAPON VALLEY 50K

www.runcapon50k.com

May

LOCATION: Capon/Yellow Spring, WV

NOTES: Just over the border in West Virginia, about a 90 minute drive. Stay at the delightfully time-warped Capon Springs and Farms.

THE NORTH FACE ENDURANCE CHALLENGE SERIES – WASHINGTON, D.C. 5K, 10K, HALF MARATHON, MARATHON, MARATHON RELAY, 50K, 50 MILE, KIDS' RUN

www.thenorthface.com/en_US/endurance-challenge/washington-dc

June

LOCATION: Algonkian Regional Park, Sterling, Va.

NOTES: All but 50 mile racers must take shuttle bus to start.

JFK 50 MILE

www.jfk50mile.org

Nov. 23, 2013

LOCATION: Start: Boonsboro, Md. Finish: Williamsport, Md.

NOTES: Three entry standards and corresponding entry dates; \$200.

STONE MILL 50 MILE

www.stone-mill-50-mile.org

Nov. 16, 2013

LOCATION: Gaithersburg, Md

NOTES: Traverses Seneca Greenway and Muddy Branch trails; low-key event.

VHTRC WOMEN'S HALF MARATHON

www.vhtrc.org/half

Sept. 7, 2013

LOCATION: Fountainhead, Fairfax Station, Va.

NOTES: Only ladies need apply.

The Backyard Burn and Hemlock Overlook Regional Park in Clifton, Va.
Photo: Brian W. Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

What else are runners looking for in a trail race? Based on an informal poll, I compiled the Top Ten Wants from a trail racer's perspective. Race directors, take note.

1. WELL-MARKED TRAILS. As I've already noted, no one likes to get lost. At the Capon Valley 50k, the race in which I almost lost my way, we were shown the trail markers before the race. They were the standard ribbons used in most trail races, although they were white on one side and had orange stripes (think barber shop pole) on the other. Inside, they looked very visible. Outside, hanging from trees, with the sunlight shining through, they were much harder to find and sometimes completely invisible. I recommend pink or orange markers, or some other bright color than doesn't blend.

2. CREW/SPECTATOR ACCESS POINTS. In longer races, such as ultras, it's important that crews can get to their runners to provide support. But even at shorter distances it's nice to have points along the route where spectators can form cheering sections. Making that information easily accessible to spectators on a race website goes a long way. Having to tread lightly on National Park Service rules, the JFK 50 Mile warns spectators against parking their cars at locations other than those vetted for the website, lest the participant they are supporting may be disqualified.

3. WELL-SUPPORTED AID STATIONS. A well-stocked aid station is essential for longer trail races. One runner even said, "great aid stations can be the difference between an almost and a finish." Trail runners have come to expect that certain foods - from peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to pretzels, chocolate, crackers, gels, drinks, ice and first aid - will be available to them on the course. A hungry/thirsty/dehydrated runner can be a dangerous animal to have loose on the trails. Low-key (inexpensive) races may not provide such a smorgasbord, and usually state this on their web sites.

4. SCENERY. Trail runners want pretty things to look at, marvel over, and enjoy. After all, we left the road for a reason and one of those reasons was to be surrounded by the beauty of nature. Unique scenery is of particular interest. That's right; we want to see things we haven't seen before! I recall taking a detour on my usual route at Bull Run trail because the river was flooded and finding a waterfall I'd never seen before. Sure, it wasn't the first waterfall I'd ever seen, or the most spectacular, but finding it at that moment made the experience somewhat magical.

5. HILLS. Elevation. Challenging and unique (there's that word again) courses. Trail runners are looking for a challenge. They want hills. They want difficult. Don't make it easy. Make it memorable.

6. AWARDS. Runners like to celebrate their accomplishments and, while the responses I received indicate that most trail runners don't expect awards (at least not to the same degree they're doled out at road races), they like the fact that, when given, they tend to be unique. Think hand-carved wooden trophies, engraved river rocks, or recyclable/renewable items.

7. SMALL/APPROPRIATE FIELD SIZE. Trail runners don't want to be tripping over one another or stuck behind a crowd on impassable single-track. They don't appreciate crowded races (and the dangers associated with them). While packed road races have become standard fare in our area, this trend does not transfer safely to the trail.

8. SINGLE-TRACK. Water crossings. High percentage of trail. These are the features trail runners want to find at races. They don't want wide-open fire roads or more than a small amount of pavement. Keeping their feet dry and shoes clean are not priorities.

9. AFFORDABLE. With the increasing cost of many road races, in particular the "juggernaut" events that are more spectacle than race, many runners are looking to the trails for a less expensive option. Trail races are generally lower-key than road races and the associated lower costs can be passed on to the runners.

10. CLEAR CARRY-IN/CARRY-OUT POLICY. Unlike at road races, where volunteers usually clean up trash, in trail racing, littering can be grounds for disqualification. Trails should be left as they were found.

UPCOMING RACE SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Virginia Wine Country Half Marathon
Purcellville, Va.
7:00 a.m.
www.run4virginiawine.com

Springfield 15k/5k
Springfield, Va.
7:30 a.m.
www.runspringfield.org

ZOOMA Annapolis Women's Half Marathon and 10k
Annapolis
7:00 a.m.
<http://www.zoomarun.com/annapolis>

Latinas Leading Tomorrow 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
8:00 a.m.,
www.racewire.com/register.php?id=2942

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Finish 2b Fit 10k
Prince William Forest, Triangle, Va.
8:30 a.m.
www.finish2bfit.com/10kRace.html

Oakton Football 5k
Fairfax Corner, Fairfax
8:30 a.m.
<http://www.oaktonfootball5k.org/>

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Pride Run 5k
Congressional Cemetary, Washington, D.C.
7:00 p.m.
<http://www.dcfontrunners.org/#!dcfr-pride-run/c1v6>

Run with the June Bugs XC 5k
Derwood, Md.
7:00 p.m.
www.mcrrc.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Lawyers Have Heart 10k
Washington, D.C.
7:30 a.m.
www.lawyershaveheartdc.org

PRR Twilight Festival 4 Miler
Ashburn, Va.
7:30 p.m.
www.twilightfourmiler.com

Gaza Solidarity Run 5k
Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.firstgiving.com/unrwausa/2013-gaza-solidarity-5k

Yu Ying 5k
Catholic University, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.yuying5k.eventbrite.com

Crofton Kiwanis/Team Surlis Realtors 10k
Crofton Country Club, Crofton, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.croftonkiwanis.org

Run, Walk and Wag 5k
Philip Bolen Park, Leesburg
9 a.m.
www.prracing.racebx.com/events/register/51251bbc-74d4-4a32-a952-24c0c0a86524

Year of the Snake 5k
Brookland, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.yuying5k.eventbrite.com

Derek Sheely Lead the Way 4 Mile
Northwest High School, Germantown, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.thedereksheelyfoundation.org

Run Amuck 3.5 Mile
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Va.
7:30 a.m.
www.marinemarathon.com

5k Race to Stop the Bleeding
Quiet Waters Park, Annapolis
8:00 a.m.
www.hfmonline.org

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

PVTC All-Comers Track and Field Meet
Edison High School, Alexandria
7:30 a.m.
www.pvtc.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

DCRRC Women's Distance Festival 5k and
Run After the Women 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15

Baltimore 10 Miler
Druid Hill Park, Baltimore
7:30 a.m.
www.baltimoretenmiler.com

Purple Stride 5k Washington D.C.
Washington, D.C.
7:00 a.m.
www.purplestride.org/washington

DC Running Club 5 Mile Disco Roll & Run
Hains Point, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.dcrunningclub.com

MCRRC Women's Distance Festival Run for
Roses 5k
Wheaton Regional Park
Wheaton, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.mcrrc.org

Losing to Live 5k
Annandale, Va.
9:00 a.m.
www.capitalbaptist.org

Adam's Angels 5k
Robinson Secondary School, Fairfax
8:00 a.m.
www.adamsangels5k.homestead.com

Fort Meade Run Series Army Birthday 5k
Fort Meade, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.ftmeademwr.com/events/RunSeries/RunSeries.php

SUNDAY, JUNE 16

Father's Day 8k
C&O Canal Towpath, Washington, D.C.
6:30 p.m.
www.fathersday8k.com

ZERO Prostate Cancer Run
Pentagon City, Arlington
8:30 a.m.
www.dc.zeroprostatecancerrun.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1049237

Run with Dad 5k
South Lakes HS, Reston
8:00 a.m.
www.prraces.com/runwithdad

Run Amuck 3.5 Mile
Quantico, Va.
7:30 a.m.
www.marinemarathon.com

Fathers Helping Fathers 5k
Burke Lake, Va.
8:00 a.m.
www.metrorunwalkspringfield.com

BRRC GPS 5k
Baltimore
8:00 a.m.
www.brrc.com

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

Tidal Basin 5k, 3k & 1500 Meter
Washington, D.C.
12:00 noon
www.racepacket.com/tidalbasin

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

Hugh Jascourt 4 Miler
Fletcher's Boathouse, Washington, D.C.
7:00 p.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Run for Hope
Arlington
10 a.m.
www.prraces.com

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

ACT Run for the Rain Forest
Arlington
8:00 a.m.
www.actrunfortherainforest.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Birthday Bash 5k
Fairfax Corner, Fairfax
8:00 a.m.
www.prraces.com/birthdaybash

Wednesday, June 26
Annapolis Striders Summer Track Meet Series
Annapolis High School, Annapolis
6:00 p.m.
www.annapolisstriders.org

BRRC Summer Track Meet Series
Goucher College, Baltimore
6:30 p.m.
www.brrc.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

Run for Independence 8k
Leesburg
7:15 a.m.
www.prraces.com/independence

DC HBCU Alumni Alliance 5k
Howard University, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.dchbcu.org/5krunwalk.htm

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

PVTC All-Comers Track and Field Meet
Edison High School, Alexandria
7:30 a.m.
www.pvtc.org

REV3Glow 5k
Aldie, Va.
8:30 p.m.
www.rev3adventure.com/race/rev3glow-5k-wf

THURSDAY, JULY 4

Let Freedom Run 5k
Fairfax Corner, Fairfax
8:30 a.m.
www.pacersevents.com/race/let-freedom-run-5k-kids-dash

Firecracker 5k
Reston Town Center, Reston
8:00 a.m.
www.prraces.com

DCRRC Age-Handicapped 4 Miler
Carderock, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

Austism Speaks 5k
Potomac, Md.
8 a.m.
www.events.autismspeaks.org

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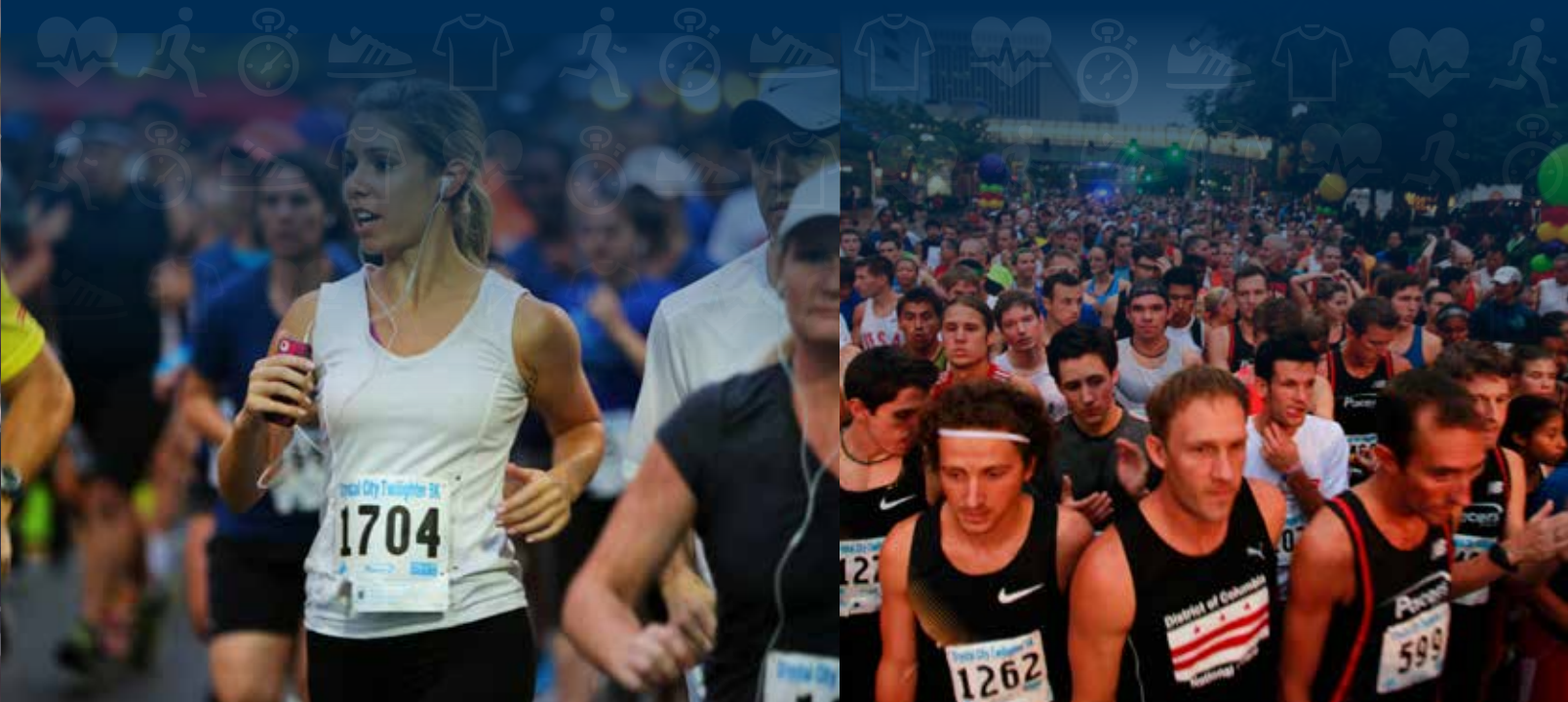


CRYSTAL CITY TWILIGHTER 5K

**SATURDAY,
JULY 27, 2013**

Crystal City, Arlington, VA

8:30 PM RACE START



REGISTER AT **RUNPACERS.COM**

UPCOMING RACE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, JULY 4

Go Fourth and Run 8k
Centennial Park, Vienna, Va.
7:00 a.m.
www.pvtc.org

SUNDAY, JULY 7

Abebe Bikila AESA ONE 5k
RFK Stadium, Washington, D.C.
4 p.m.
www.safetyandhealthfoundation.org/aesa

WEDNESDAY JULY 10

BRRC GPS Meet of Miles
Goucher College, Baltimore
6:30 p.m.
www.brrc.com

FRIDAY, JULY 12

Midsummer Night's Mile
Rockville High School, Rockville, Md.
7:00 p.m.
www.mcrrc.org

SATURDAY JULY 13

Strong Hearts Ethiopia 5k
Georgetown Waterfront Park, Washington, D.C.
7:00 a.m.
getinet@strongheartsethiopia.org

Mission 5k
Leesylvania State Park, Woodbridge, Va.
8:00 a.m.
www.events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e77pyjvee618a52a&llr=poo5ibcab

Annapolis Striders Women's Distance Festival 5k and Run After the Women 5k
West Annapolis Elementary School, Annapolis
7:30 a.m.
www.annapolisstriders.org

SUNDAY JULY 14

Bastille Day Four Miler
Fletcher's Boathouse, Washington, D.C.
7:00 a.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

The Biggest Loser 5k/10k
RFK Stadium, Washington, D.C.
9:00 a.m.
www.biggestloserrunwalk.com/Washington-DC-5K10K-KidsRace-2013

Grant-Pierce Indoor Marathon
Thomas Jefferson Community Center, Arlington
9 a.m.
www.racepacket.com/tidalbasin/marathon

Sweatfest 3.75 Mile
Giles Run Park, Lorton, Va.
8:00 a.m.
www.metrorunwalkspringfield.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

Tidal Basin 5k, 3k & 1500 Meter
Washington, D.C.
12:00 noon
www.racepacket.com/tidalbasin

Bluemont 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
6:30 p.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

BRRC Summer Track Meet Series
Goucher College, Baltimore
6:30 p.m.
www.brrc.com

SATURDAY, JULY 20

Rockville Twilighter 8k
Rockville, Md.
6 p.m.
www.rockvilletwilighter.org

PVTC All-Comers Track and Field Meet
Edison High School, Alexandria
7:30 a.m.
www.pvtc.org

WEDNESDAY JULY 24

D.C. Road Runners 1 Mile/3k Championship
Washington-Lee High School, Arlington
6:30 pm.
www.dcroadrunners.org

SATURDAY JULY 27

Crystal City Twilighter 5k
Crystal City, Arlington
8:30 p.m.
www.pacersevents.com/race/crystal-city-twilighter-5k

Friends of W&OD 10k
Vienna, Va.
6:30 p.m.
www.mc-coop.org/friends

Catoctin 50k
Gambrill State Park, Frederick, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.ultrunr.com/Catoctin/catoctin.html

Blue Crab Bolt Trail Running Series 10k
Seneca Creek State Park, Gaithersburg, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.ex2adventures.com/md-10k-trail-runs.php

BRRC Two Person 10 Mile Relay
Loch Raven High School, Towson, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.brrc.com

Endless Summer 6-Hour Run
Annapolis
7:30 a.m.
www.ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=18750

SUNDAY, JULY 28

The Dash 10k
C&O Canal Towpath, Washington, D.C.
8:00 a.m.
www.capitalsprints.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

BRRC Summer Track Meet Series
Goucher College, Baltimore
6:30 p.m.
www.brrc.com

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

Lost Dog 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
6:30 p.m.
pacersevents.com/race/lost-dog-5k

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

Blue Crab Bolt Trail Running Series 10k
Schaeffer Farms, Germantown, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.ex2adventures.com/md-10k-trail-runs.php

Summer Strides 5k
Fort Hunt Park, Alexandria
8:00 a.m.
www.racepacket.com

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

Riley's Rumble Half Marathon
Boys, Md.
7:00 a.m.
www.mcrrc.org/races/RileysRumble/index.html

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

Steve Thompson 8k
Lake Accotink Park, Springfield, Va.
6:30 p.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

Lost Dog 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
6:30 p.m.
pacersevents.com/race/lost-dog-5k

Going Green Track Meet
Walt Whitman High School, Bethesda
7:30 p.m.
www.mcrrc.org/going-green-track-meet

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

D.C. Road Runners 3 Mile xc
Landon School, Bethesda
5:30 p.m.
www.dcroadrunners.org

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16

Lost Dog 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
6:30 p.m.
pacersevents.com/race/lost-dog-5k

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17

Comus Run Cross Country 5k
Comus, Md.
5:30 p.m.
www.mcrrc.org/comus-run-cross-country

Blue Crab Bolt Trail Running Series 10k
Little Bennett Regional Park, Clarksburg, Md.
8:00 a.m.
www.ex2adventures.com/md-10k-trail-runs.php

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

Leesburg 20k/5k
Leesburg
www.leesburg20k.potomacriverrunning.com/race-results-posted-a952

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

Paul Thurston 4.5 mile
Burke Lake Park, Va.
www.dcroadrunners.org

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

Tidal Basin 5k, 3k & 1500 Meter
Washington, D.C.
12:00 noon
www.racepacket.com/tidalbasin

FRIDAY AUGUST 23

Lost Dog 5k
Bluemont Park, Arlington
6:30 p.m.
pacersevents.com/race/lost-dog-5k

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

Eastern County 8k
Martin Luther King Park, Silver Spring
7:30 a.m.
www.mcrrc.org

SUNDAY, APRIL 25

South Lakes 10k
Reston
7:30 a.m.
www.prraces.com

Annapolis Ten Mile Run
Navy Marine Corps Stadium, Annapolis
7:30 a.m.
www.annapolisstriders.org

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

Potomac Valley Games Track and Field Meet
Edison High School, Alexandria
7:30 a.m.
www.pvtc.org

BREAKING

THE TAPE

BY CLAIRE HALLISSEY

I have often had the pleasure of being the first lady across the line in local races, being the outright race winner is something that has mostly eluded me.

Though rare, several local races have featured a female champion. University of Maryland track coach Danielle Siebert took the overall win in the AOL Spring Into Summer 5k in Dulles on May 5. She led two other women — Natalie Young of Dumfries, Va. and Emily Dusen of Ashburn, Va. — across the line to sweep the top spots from the men.

When Danielle made a last-minute decision to race, she didn't think she had a chance to win. This changed when she looked around at the lead group of three ladies and two men, one mile in, and realized that the win was a strong possibility. Because she shared the lead with another woman one of the top male finishers initially, Danielle ran her standard race until moving into the lead and experiencing the atmosphere at the finish, where the spectators were rather excited to see three women crossing the line first.

This experience contrasted that of Vienna, Va.'s Boriana Bakaltcheva in the Brambleton Ribbon Run 10k in April. Judging from last year's results, Boriana had assumed that there would be a few men ahead of her and so was slightly concerned when she found herself taking a comfortable lead early in the race. As she pulled farther away from the second place runner, she had to adapt her intended strategy as the race became more like a tempo run. Although she was worried that her time would suffer because of this, Borianna actually finished the race over two minutes ahead of the first male runner and within ten seconds of her 10k PR. Borianna received a great confidence boost from this as she realized that she didn't always need other runners, either male or female, to push her through to a good performance.

Barbara Fallon Wallace of Alexandria had the same experience at the Red Shoe Run 5k a day later. She felt a little pressure because she relies on following other runners.

The rarity with which women win races overall highlights a gender disparity that goes beyond the simple fact that, on average, men are faster runners than women. Although there may be a lead pack of runners to help push them along, the overall winner has to employ different tactics to someone farther back in the field and must set the pace for at least part of the race. Because the lead woman is usually not the overall winner, they can often take advantage of having men around them to help them to stick with their race pace. Additionally, because women don't necessarily view male runners as direct competitors, running with men can make for a more relaxed and possibly successful racing experience.

Personally, although I am a fairly competitive person and do like to beat as many people as possible in races, in some ways I actually prefer running in

mixed races in which I am not too near the front, as that then tends to ensure that you have a nice pack of runners to race alongside. When I am not in heavy mileage marathon training, I like to incorporate a fairly high number of low-key races as part of training for a few major competitions. As I am currently mostly training alone, having men (or other women) around and ahead of me in these races helps me to push myself that little bit harder so that I can head to the big competitions in better shape.

Many male runners are hugely supportive of women in races, and many have spared some energy to give me a few words of encouragement even while I have been passing them. Boriana has particularly fond memories of a 10k race last year in which she was tiring going into the last two miles, but after she got some encouragement from a man coming up to overtake her she was able to stick with him and maintain a decent pace. Alexandria's Samia Akbar (recent winner of the Nike Women's Half Marathon) agrees that having men around in a race can be useful to help you to maintain your pace and keep pushing for a good time, but notes that male competitors can also sometimes be an unwelcome distraction. Some men cannot face being beaten by a woman and will sacrifice sensible racing tactics in the attempt to stay ahead of them. Akbar left them behind at the Run for the Schools last September in Falls Church, Va.

Even if women do not view men as their competition and are more focused on beating the other ladies in a race, there is some additional satisfaction that can be obtained from beating absolutely every runner, male or female. Indeed, Samia actually says that she views all her competitors on the starting line equally and simply wants to beat as many of them as possible regardless of their gender.

In addition to the satisfaction of the win, one of the fun aspects of being at or near the front of a race is that you attract a different kind of attention from the spectators. Although most races that I have personal experience with have had very supportive and vocal spectators, there is always a bit of extra excitement when the leaders come past. People may also notice when the lead woman comes through, but they are not always so obviously visible and can get lost in the crowd. All-women or women-dominated events such as the recent Nike Women's Half Marathon provide a chance for women to enjoy that experience of being at the front of a race without having to beat many male competitors. The same is true of races such as the Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run that have a separate elite women's start ahead of the mass field.

Nobody argued that it isn't a nice feeling to finish on top in a race, there was a general agreement that there is a bigger drive to run a great race in a fast time than there is to simply go out and beat everyone. Boriana says that she sees herself as her biggest competitor, and that her biggest goal in racing is to achieve a PR. If running with, and beating, a few men helps us women with the achievement of that goal then that is just the icing on the cake. ■

Samia Akbar won the mostly-female Nike Women's Half Marathon in April in a time that would have won many races with a larger male contingent.
Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography



Police escort runners at the Crystal City Friday 5k.
Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

RACE DIRECTORS, POLICE, EMS WORKERS- THEY HAVE...

A PLAN FOR EVERYTHING

BY DICKSON MERCER

The usual plan for the George Washington Parkway Classic calls for securing a 10-mile, point-to-point course that starts at Mount Vernon, proceeds along George Washington Memorial Parkway, and finishes in Alexandria - a short walk away from Oronoco Bay Park. This means, on one hand, that some sort of barrier must stand between every driver and every possible opportunity to unknowingly or knowingly enter the race course. On the other, it means that course marshals and police officers must be ready to stand by and enforce these barriers; and, should the unthinkable happen - a vehicle on the course - the plan includes being ready for that, too.

There is the job of safely transporting 6,000-or-so runners from an area near the finish - where many park - to the start. There is the readiness for any on-course injuries. There are risk management strategies. And yes, there is water, and sports drinks, and gel packs, and clocks at mile markers.

That's not it - not even close. But two more things: The Alexandria Police Department, for this year's race, wanted to honor a colleague who was seriously injured in a shooting, and, on a related note, make the last mile special for participants.

Twenty-five year force member Sgt. Joseph Seskey and the members of his special events unit envisioned - with about a mile to go - a line of police officers there to greet the runners, many of whom wore honorary bibs for Officer Peter Laboy, the man injured, on their backs. "So you turn that corner," Seskey said, "and it kind of grabs you: everyone coming together to support Peter."

Six days before the Parkway Classic, tragedy struck the Boston Marathon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42...

A PLAN FOR EVERYTHING



Security was tight at the Crystal City Friday 5k.
Photo: Brian Knight/Swim Bike Run Photography

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An hour later, Seskey was on the phone with Kathy Dalby, founder of Pacers Events, which organizes the race.

The officers scheduled to stand strong for Peter Laboy were reassigned to other race day duties. Contingency planning for “enhanced security,” years in the making, quickly took shape.

“We knew we had to make some changes,” Seskey said, “and be out in front. Within an hour from Boston ... everybody was thinking alike. We all just knew what we needed to do.”

In addition to Alexandria police and Pacers Events, “everyone” included U.S. National Park Police, whose jurisdiction covers better than three quarters of the course, fire and rescue units, and additional local and federal agencies whose services were suddenly in high demand.

Sanitation was called in to cover trash cans. Emergency management, intelligence, and special operations performed unseen jobs. The finish area was closed off to spectators, a mobile command center situated nearby.

Staffing was increased for specific locations, Seskey said. Extra bomb-sniffing dogs were present. Snipers manned rooftops, while extra police teams observed the crowd.

“We have always understood that any place that a lot of people assemble could be a possible target,” said Seskey, whose team is handling safety and threat assessments plans for an ever-increasing

number of road races. “You just have to always be prepared. We kind of operate on that level without even knowing it, just because we have been doing it for so long.”

What if there is a huge thunderstorm, or a gas leak, or an attack? How would you re-route or cancel the race? What’s the evacuation plan?

When the police forces, fire departments, emergency services, and race organizers meet at the planning table months before an event, all these scenarios are on the table, Dalby said.

Twenty years ago, Marine Corps Race Director Rick Nealis remembers one thing that weighed heavily on many race directors’ minds was whether to put four or six ounces in the Dixie cups Marines would hold out for runners.

September 11 was a “game changer,” he said, explaining the increasing emphasis placed on safety and security, as opposed to, say, water, Vaseline, and bananas.

As if September 11 wasn’t enough, the D.C. sniper shooting was the following year, in October. The year after that, America entered a second war, making MCM a potentially more inviting target, Nealis said.

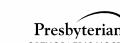
There was a time when MCM runners could park in the Pentagon parking lot, a time when race day logistics didn’t include security checkpoints. There was also a time when the race didn’t sell out in less than three hours.

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Charlotte, North Carolina
November 16, 2013

www.runcharlotte.com





The Metropolitan Police Department's bomb squad was out en force at the Nike Women's Half Marathon in April, less than two weeks after the Boston Marathon.
Photo: Brian Knight / Swim Bike Run Photography

While you run MCM - through seven police jurisdictions - emergency crews are on standby, security alerts are taken and processed, police officers stand guard over barricades.

Some situations require quick decisions. During last year's MCM 10K, which is held during the marathon, debris left over from the Army Ten-Miler, Nealis said, blew onto the course, taking the appearance of a suspicious package. The race came to a halt. Once authorities determined there was no risk, the race resumed.

Afterward, while you analyze every last detail about your performance, so do they.

"Each year," Nealis said, "you sit back and you say, well, we could do this better."

Jean Arthur remembers how quickly one driver's irritation turned to anger.

She was standing beyond the sidelines of a local road race, a volunteer course marshall. The road was closed for the race, Arthur explained to the driver. The only option was to turn around. The driver started yelling. So a police officer, who heard the yelling, approached the car, and suddenly the driver seemed to have no problem at all.

Arthur is now the race director for the Pikes Peek 10K, a point-to-point, super-fast race, held this year on the same day as the Parkway Classic.

She took over the job in 2007. By now, she knows all the police officers she works with on a first name basis.

For Pikes Peek she works with several police departments and two fire departments.

The traffic control plan is 50 pages long. And in the early morning, as a race truck heads out on the course to lay down cones, a police car follows with flashing lights.

Going back to her experience, Arthur has learned that police bring more than manpower to an event, but also a sense of legitimacy. Drivers encountering a truck going really slow on Route 355 in the early morning would easily become annoyed. Having a police officer at her side provides "general protection."

After the attack in Boston, Arthur wasted little in opening up lines of communication with her event partners.

"Hey, Jean," one police officer wrote her in a text message. "I got you covered. We'll take care of you."

Bomb sniffing dogs were at the start and finish, sniffing vehicles, bags, and portable toilets. An extra police officer roamed the course on a motorcycle.

Police officers at Pikes Peek are typically free to report to their next assignment once on-course assignments are complete. This year all of them reported to the post-race festival to provide extra security.

"I think from here on out we have to take these extra precautions," Arthur said.

Even so, how much will really change?

When you run a race, say, in the District starting in front of Freedom Plaza, you probably aren't thinking - are you even aware? - of the hundreds of cameras watching you, of "mass casualty" pre-planning, or reports of a suspicious car near the course.

Enhanced security, much like regular security, is both seen and unseen. And as race organizers and police officers, post-Boston, re-evaluate these plans, now is good time to recognize how much safety and security infrastructure is already in place on our behalf. This is the time to recognize all the planning that goes into closing roads so we can race in the middle of them, and the already essential role of police and fire crews and medical staff and emergency response units in allowing us to celebrate our sport.

The Parkway Classic was U.S Park Police Sgt. Ari Wong's first race as head of the force's special events unit.

"Coming into this job," Wong said, "you really don't have as much appreciation for what goes into it."

For big races like the Parkway Classic, the planning begins many months in advance. Thus, by race day, every assigned officer's tasks should be clear. "I do my job well," Wong said, "if I don't have very much to do on race day."

Given the sheer volume of road races in the area, the job, Wong said, comes with its fair share of super-early weekend mornings.

But Wong, and Seskey, said they enjoy the work, and working with each other, on races that cover both police forces' jurisdictions.

"There's no lead agency," Wong said. "We work together from day one."

He added: "For all us in law enforcement, the people running are our neighbors, our friends, our colleagues' husbands and wives. We want it to be a special event for them. We want it to be safe. 🇺🇸"

Amanda Hicks
Photo: Jimmy Daly

BORN TO BLOG

BY JAMIE COREY

Amanda Hicks had just three miles left in the Rock ‘n’ Roll New Orleans Marathon—right when she usually feels like giving up. But she thought about her accountability, the goals she had written on her blog, “Amanda Runs.” How could she justify taking the easy way out to the friends and supporters who were pulling for her?

Instead of counting down every last step to the finish, she spent those minutes writing a victory blog post in her head. Her triumphant recounting of her 3:07, more than two minutes faster than her original goal, made the pain worth it.

Amanda Runs is just one of thousands of ruminations on running open to anyone with a Web browser. A growing local community of running blogs is providing invaluable resources for readers looking for insight and writers eager to share their highs, lows, and thoughts on that pastime.

But why would people read what a stranger writes about running? In the end, those strangers become regular readers, and in some cases, friends.

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Amanda Hicks
Photo: Jimmy Daly



"I used to post about running on Facebook and it got a pretty good reception," Hicks said. "I think a lot of people saw their own story in what I was writing about — a four-hour marathoner getting faster."

Gaithersburg's Chris Sloane started blogging to motivate himself and has evolved into "Chris Sloane's Distance Running Project." He trains with hopes of qualifying for the 2016 Olympic Marathon Trials, races on the =PR= Elite team, and works at Potomac River Running's Rockville store. His blog has served as a racing and training log, allowing him to analyze his performances.

"I can reflect on poor races or negative feelings but then see my progress and get a tangible sense of accomplishment," he said. "It's valuable for me to keep a record of my physical and mental experiences on training runs and races, and hopefully learn from those experiences. I think the journey of running is very important, and I wanted to capture and share my own journey."

He dabbles in training theory and explores how he can apply his own coaching concepts. He may even create a separate blog on coaching.

For many runners with a demanding schedule, training with a club or running group that would regularly hold them accountable may not be an option. But some runners are finding that their blogs can serve as motivation. Amanda Woerman blogs about balancing running, doctoral work and indulging in her love of waffles and peanut butter. Woerman said that her Running on Waffles readers have been cheerleaders through all of her endeavors.

"It can be easy to burn out during training, but I think knowing my readers were supporting me and cheering me on kept me pushing through some of my tougher training runs," Woerman said. "Whether it was finally beating Oprah's marathon time in November, or, as I am now, preparing for my dissertation defense, I have found the strength to keep pushing as a result of my incredible readers. And really, I think that is pretty awesome."

Beyond training, Woerman's blog has paved the way for her to explore other opportunities. Out of 500 other applicants, Woerman was one of two social media experts selected as a "Social Runner" for the 2013 Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run. She interacted with other runners through Facebook, Twitter and blog posts. It earned her an entry into this year's race and enrollment in the =PR= Running Training Program. The raffle she organized raised \$1,300



Photo: Jim Daly

for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

"Throughout the process, I met a lot of really inspiring runners and some truly incredible people. I had the opportunity to work with the race sponsors and learn more about the behind-the-scenes aspect of road racing," Woerman said. "I was able to talk to Dick Beardsley, Bill Rodgers, Arturo Barrios, Caroline Rotich and several other elite runners. It was a humbling, but also very motivating, experience."

Other bloggers in Washington have landed opportunities beyond their own domain. Mary Doman can attribute her bylines at Thrive.com and ActiveLifeDC.com to her blog, Minutes Per Mile. Her blog's success has even allowed her to sample running products. But despite the many doors her blog has opened, nothing tops the personal connections that she has made through it.

"Blogging has led to a bunch of opportunities to meet people," Doman said. "I've explored D.C. fitness studios and met other crazy runners all for the sake of my blog."

This sense of camaraderie among runners as they connect through blogs and social media was perhaps most profound during the wake of the tragic 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. Hicks used her blog to take readers inside of all her deepest feelings, thoughts and fears after the catastrophic events.

"I should be writing about a great race today — one where I ran remarkably consistent splits on a sunny day when the road between Hopkinton and Boylston Street was lined with great

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50...



Doug Hay
Photo: Jimmy Daly

friends,” Hicks wrote. “I should be writing about the way the wind felt as I cruised down Boylston and recounting silly things from along the route. Instead I’m writing this post.”

Her blog reflected the tone many others took worldwide: bringing runners closer together.

“I go from mad to sad to a little freaked out to see cameras trained on places I spent my whole weekend. My favorite weekend. If this had happened yesterday during the men’s mile, I would have been right across from the explosion.”

Many running bloggers say the natural flow of creativity and thoughts also come more naturally and effusively during their runs.

“Being outside and running every morning is incredibly inspiring and invigorating,” Doman said. “My thoughts wander the most when I’m outside in the quiet, before the city wakes up – on a run, thinking of everything running- and non-running related. I usually blog right when I get home from my jogs, so my brain is

overflowing with ideas.”

Some runners may just feel like another number as they wind through the overwhelming crowds of runners taking up trails, but their blogs create a virtual network.

Running-blog veteran and coach Adam Lesser has made virtual and “real life” friends writing Lesser is More since 2007. He got his start as an avid fitness blog reader, which helped him faithfully stick to his workouts, and he wanted to become part of the same community that had been motivating him with hopes that he could do the same for others.

“Even if you train alone, having a blog allows you to share your story with a community, so you feel like you are part of something bigger,” Lesser said. “A community of support can hold you accountable, provide advice when you need it, and share in your successes and failures, all of which help broaden the benefits of simply participating in the sport.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52...



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AMERICA'S BEACH
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BLOGS WORTH READING

Included in this story:

Amanda Runs
www.amadaruns.com

Rock Creek Runner
www.rockcreekrunner.com

Running on Waffles
www.runningonwaffles.com

Chris Sloane's Distance Running Project
www.chrissloanestraininglog.blogspot.com

Minutes Per Miles
www.minutespermile.com

Lesser is More
www.lesserismore.blogspot.com

Also good:

Miles to the Trials
www.milestothetrial.com

Well, I'm TRYING to Run...
www.wellimtryingtorun.blogspot.com

The Red Fox
www.jakeklm.blogspot.com

RunWashington contributors maintain some blogs, too:

Jamie Corey www.dcrunster.com
Alison Gittleman www.racingtales.com
Mollie Zapata www.eatrunread.com

Lesser has increased his blog's exposure by tweeting new posts.

"Because of the massive sharing efforts most users partake in through social media channels, a quality blog post or one that really grabs readers can get quite a lot of exposure very quickly," Lesser said.

Social media has also allowed readers to instantly connect with the authors of the blogs they follow. Rock Creek Runner author Doug Hay said social media was one of the best ways he could connect with readers.

"You can ask a simple question or share a photo not worthy of its own blog post and get great responses and feedback from readers," Hay said. "They get to know you a little better and you get to know more about the people reading the blog."

In addition to providing race reports, product reviews and the latest tips on foam rolling, blogs have taken on another very important role in the D.C. running community. The D.C.-area running blogs continue to fill the gaps for information-hungry area runners, giving the term "blogger" quite a bit of credibility.

And runners don't have to look far to find information about any and all topics. On a near-daily basis, runners can find all of that information within seconds on the Internet. The days of querying for race coverage or scouring a newspaper for a resourceful story, usually found in a small column, are well behind the running community.

"I love nothing more than hearing from a reader who used information from my site to check out a new trail in Rock Creek Park or try a workout I just posted," Hay said. "It has given me this running community I never could have dreamed of."

Following a long run, Hay sits down in his sunroom and begins writing a piece for his blog — local running, general training and racing tips, and his own experiences, which have led him to publishing great resources for trail runners in the area, including recommended trail routes throughout Washington.

"Blogs are magical things," Hay says. "You can share your thoughts on any topic and people actually take time to read them." 📖



EARNING HIS TENDERS

Andy Sovonick stood waiting in front of the Green Cactus Grille in Gaithersburg with the look of a man who was getting away with something.

BY COLIN RAUNIG

It was 11 a.m., and because the adjacent restaurant, Fingers and Claws - the best restaurant in town - was not yet open, we'd have to refuel from our run with the town's best burritos.

His favorite food is verboten in his own house. His wife, Martina, is a vegan and native of the Czech Republic. She tolerates his large collection of Godzilla movies, posters, and figurines, but forbids meat of any kind. Andy attempted to abide by her strict diet, but after a couple of weeks found he could not live without his favorite food: chicken tenders.

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Andy Sovonick eschews gels for chicken tenders when he needs mid-race calories and electrolytes.
Photo: Jimmy Daly

That forces him to make excuses and sneak out of the house for the occasional bite of breaded poultry, upon which he will critique the quality and compare among the others that he has eaten. His dedication to this meat has earned him the nickname “Chicken Tender Runner,” and has prompted his wife to smell his breath for signs of “fowl” play.

So it took me by surprise when Andy walked up to the counter of the Green Cactus Grille and said, without hesitation, “one steak burrito grande.”

Yes, Steak.

We sat down at a booth in the corner as I tried to assess the meaning of this transaction. Maybe Andy’s wife only knows when he eats chicken, even if it is not a tenderloin, which caused him to order beef instead. Or maybe Andy is reforming.

Andy, 26, is trying to regain the momentum he lost in 2012 when he focused on triathlons, which he felt diluted the quality of his running. “I’m trying to reverse that trend now,” he said, “Putting in the hard work for the 2013 Rock ‘n’ Roll USA Half-Marathon (where he ran 1:15:49),” and hoping to match his time at the Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run in 2011, when he ran 54:20. If only his calf would improve. He hurt it running cross country last fall.

His back against the restaurant wall, he propped up his leg on the seat, rolling his leg with a massage stick, which seems to be helping matters. He wore a black, long-sleeve polypropylene shirt from the 2011 USATF Club Cross Country championships, black warmup pants, and a black knit cap, which covered the top of his head but not the hair and beard growing underneath. He’s been known to fashion a formidable mustache on request. “Now it’s just an annoyance,” he said of his calf, between bites of his steak burrito. “It’s always making noise down there. I’m always feeling it. But it really hasn’t stopped me from running.”

Even with the mild injury, he doesn’t regret moving away from triathlons. “I guess I realized how much I missed running. Just running. And that’s what I’m focusing on this year.”

His training regimen is at least 60 miles of running a week, with a down week once a month of 45 miles. Monday is a day off, Wednesday is a long track workout with 10K to half-marathon paced efforts totaling up to eight miles, Friday is hills or a short fartlek if he is feeling good, and Sunday is a long run of 15 to 18 miles. The other days are easy maintenance runs. “I’ve found that it gets me into shape pretty quick,” he said, speaking to the success of the program, “though I need to race to find out.”

He feels ready. Over the past three months he has run the most miles of his life, peaking with a lifetime high of 72 miles in one week. “I can feel the benefits already,” he said, “Every run is more fun. Once you get that endurance and strength, you want to run more, and that’s sort of what I’m learning.” Running only 30 miles a week while training for the triathlon, “I never really felt like going for a run, but now I’m looking forward to my runs and disappointed if I have to take a day off.”

Michelle Miller, a friend and local runner, is helping Andy put together a training plan for the Philadelphia Half Marathon in the fall. She thinks some rest could be beneficial. “He doesn’t ever schedule time off. He’s hitting a wall,” she said. “He’s not getting better, and he doesn’t know why. I think that’s why.” She also thinks improvement at shorter distances will help with his longer races.

Another shift Andy has taken is from training in a group to training by himself, a choice that is as much personal as it is physical. “Running by myself, it’s a way to get away from everyday life and focus on just running. For someone like me who doesn’t like naps or have much quiet time, I view running as my time to meditate.” His occasional running partners help to break up the monotony.

Jordan Snyder, a training partner and friend of Andy’s, thinks Andy will improve if he could catch a break, citing the Triathlon he had to quit in 2012 when he crashed into the back of a car and the 2013 Rock ‘n’ Roll Half-Marathon, when he was stuck in line at the bathroom, forcing him to start in corral 3 and play catch up with the other competitors. Jordan and Andy attended the WWE Smackdown on April 1, Andy’s idea.

“I know he has a favorite, but I don’t know the guy’s name,” Jordan said.

Despite this preference to solo running, he served as a guide for Amy McDonaugh, a 36-year-old legally blind mother of three, at the 2013 Boston Marathon. He ran the last 20 miles with her in her effort to qualify for the 2016 Olympic Trials. The B Standard is 2:43. Currently, Amy’s personal record is 2:49. Amy initially had trouble finding a guide, but found Andy at the 2012 Woodrow Wilson Bridge Half Marathon, which served as the national half marathon championships for visually impaired runners.

“He’s so kind,” she said, “It takes someone special to do all that running and get none of the glory, to do something totally for someone else. I have to rely on him for help.”

Andy ran right in front of her, asking what she needs at water stops and pointing out any obstacles.

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Andy Sovonick is eating chicken tenders by Union Jack's.
Photo: Jimmy Daly

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TENDER LOVIN'

The Chicken Tender Runner's top picks in the Washington area

- 5. Applebee's
- 4. Rock Bottom
- 3. Fingers and Claws
- 2. Glory Days Grill
- 1. Famous Dave's

Andy pours out some honey mustard in memory of Bennigan's

.....

"I had to be Amy's eyes not just for water stops, course hazards and people, but also her eyes for competitive purposes, as I let her know where other women were around her," he wrote after the race. "I felt the same frustration when she got upset at the thought of women passing her late in the race or on hills." The pair fell short of 2:43, running 2:52. Amy nonetheless was the top visually impaired competitor, and now she and Andy are hungry for another collaboration. Amy's guide for the first 10k couldn't handle her pace.

When asked of his own marathon plans, Andy hesitates. "That extra 10k is legendary, so I don't know if I can handle it just yet."

Andy comes from D.C. blood and would like to continue the Sovonick tradition of carving out a life within the Beltway. He attended Sidwell Friends School, ran cross country, and returned to Gaithersburg after graduating from the University of Maryland. Every summer he and his wife visit his in-laws outside of Prague, and with every visit comes new experiences. In 2009, he won a cross country race and a 2 mile race around a lake, which earned him a banana with the number one written on it, and at the other race, a bottle of wine and chocolate. At the race where he won a banana, the race director also fed the race participants with crock pots full of cinnamon pancakes.

Outside of visiting his wife's family for two weeks every summer in the Prague version of Bethesda, he likes it here. "I don't have to venture far to eat well," he says of his burrito and its adjacent establishments. "But my wife wants to move to Paris," he said, referring to her pursuit of an online degree in fashion design. "I might have to move there one day."

Maybe Andy is ready to extend his boundaries. After all, he did eat a steak burrito. And he will be running the full 26.2 with Amy on their next go-round. 🍷



Joe Wiegner
Photo: Jimmy Daly

IT'S NOT YOU. IT'S ME, GETTING FASTER.

Joe Wiegner's running shoes weren't logging many miles last year.

The accomplished Maryland runner traded in laps of the track for chasing a two-year-old he hoped to help raise. He planned his future with a woman he loved. Early morning wake-ups for road races made way for trips to see Thomas the Tank Engine and for visiting future in-laws. Evening runs were scrapped for dinner and family time.

He had a lot to catch up on and wasn't wasting time.

"Running was pretty much my lowest priority," he said. "At 30, I figured I had been running since I was 14, it was time to hang them up. I owed it to the people I was close to to spend as much time as I could with them, grow our relationships."

In December, though, it suddenly became apparent that new life was not to be. Taking refuge on his buddy's couch while he gathered himself, he turned back to his shoes. He laced them up and pounded eight miles, harder than he had run in more than a year, though that wasn't too difficult. Made it back home, stopped for a minute and went out for two more.

"It's therapy for me," Wiegner said. "I've had hard times that running's helped me get through. I was depressed, but being back out there again, everything was back the way I needed it."

A few months later, he was back to racing, setting a personal record at the Pike's Peak 10k, where he ran well under 31 minutes.

Washington's Laura Lammers saw a similar effect when she and her boyfriend broke up in February.

"It was one of those things that was completely out

of left field," she said. "One day we were planning the rest of our lives and the next day he said 'I can't do this anymore.'"

She didn't wallow in a pint of Ben and Jerry's. She ran with her friends the morning after, and found her running had changed for the better.

"I ran better that morning than I did the last six months," Lammers said.

Soon, she was hitting times she hadn't been able to run since she'd been with her boyfriend.

When they were together, she was running 8:30 to 9 minute miles. Soon after, her pace improved by a minute and a half and now hovers in the 7 to 7:30-minute mile range. She says the improvement is "a big confidence booster."

"Running is my passion in life," Lammers said. "It makes me feel good, it keeps me sane and it's what I turn to when I don't know what to do."

About a week after the breakup, she turned to a close friend and mentioned that her running improved drastically after the breakup. Her friend weighed in and said it was because Lammers was no longer in a stressful relationship. She took it as a sign, she says. In the meantime, a few of her runner friends went through the same thing.

Breakups, separations, and divorces often have a negative effect on the mind, body, and soul. And it appears that more people are turning to running and exercise to get over them.

But can running really help people heal from breakups or divorces? Absolutely, says Washington, D.C.-based psychotherapist and personal trainer

BY JESSIE BIELE

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Joe Wiegner
Photo: Jimmy Daly

Jane Baxter, who created PsychFit, a program that combines psychotherapy and fitness instruction.

She says psychotherapists have known for a long time that running and physical activity helps people process and work through heartache. In her program, patients talk out their problems while working out on a treadmill and doing slow-motion weight training in her combination office-gym, which Baxter says helps the mind work more efficiently.

“Cognitive rational thinking of working through it creates a whole chemical process in the brain to help it work better,” she said.

During exercise, your muscles contract and release a chemical called BDNF (Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor) that enhances the growth and connection of your nerves. Baxter describes it as a form of “Miracle-Gro” for the brain. When people try to solve problems, their neurons group around the problem they are paying attention to; and if people are trying to work through a breakup, their neurons group around the thought of it, she explained.

Studies have shown that physically active people recover from mild depression more quickly, and physical activity is strongly correlated with good mental health as people age. It’s why many people begin running after a breakup in order to cope with the heartache and begin a path of healing.

In August 2011, Matt Gallagher of Woodbridge broke up with his girlfriend of two years. They were planning their futures together when it ended “pretty fast and ugly,” Gallagher said. Gallagher was never an avid runner, but decided to sign up for the Veterans Day 10K in D.C. to try to get his mind off the breakup.

“I found a lovely stretch of Prince William Parkway to run on in Woodbridge (the stretch between Woodbridge and Manassas),” Gallagher said in an email. “It’s a nice long stretch without having to cross any roads and nothing to worry about so I could just put my headphones in and run.”

Gallagher started out by running until he got tired, then turning around and heading back, usually around three to four miles per run. Now, he’s worked up to seven- to eight-mile runs and can run a 10-miler without a problem. He describes his runs as “therapeutic.”

“Running brought me from a bad point in my life to a new beginning of sorts,” Gallagher said.

Baxter has seen a variety of clients of different physical fitness levels. She has seen clients who are runners whose running times have improved post-breakup, as well as clients who want to channel their feelings through running and exercise. She says her clients who are driven by pain have improved moods and outlook through exercise.

“Whether you want to break up or not, it’s a type of change that can feel a little out of control,” she explained. “When you’re running, you have control over that, in a race especially because

you channel a lot of feelings of loss and hopelessness into strength, which is really powerful. It’s not just about your muscles; it’s about drive and determination and all that good stuff.”

Teryn Evans of Hyattsville, Md. agrees with Baxter. She is currently going through a divorce and credits running with keeping her sane through a particularly difficult time in her life.

As a child, she was an avid runner and ran with her father frequently. She wanted to pick up running as an adult, but could never find a willing running partner. She had wanted to run with her husband during their marriage, but he always refused, she said.

It wasn’t until after the beginning of her divorce that she decided to run again and found a running partner through mutual friends on Facebook and began training for the Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run in April. She said the race was a great experience. She credits running for helping her put things into perspective and helping her through a tough time in her life.

“I’m just loving racing,” Evans said. “I always said I was a runner and now I’m a racer, which is different. It’s not what I would have thought it would have meant if I wasn’t racing. I’m competing with myself, trying to increase my pace and do things I never thought I’d do.”

Evans has set new goals for herself. In June, she will conquer her first half marathon in Annapolis.

“I’m proud of myself,” she said. “I think going through a divorce or breakup hurts and messes with your self-esteem. Running balances it out a bit because it makes me feel good about myself.”

Ironically, after months of trying to convince her husband to pick up running, he started running after the divorce, Evans said.

“In a way I inspired him as well,” she said.

Gallagher says he met a lot of new friends through running, and was exposed to a new social scene as a result.

“It has taught me that there’s many different scenes out there that I didn’t know about before. I used to be the type of guy where if I didn’t meet someone at a bar or work, I probably didn’t know them,” Gallagher said. “Now I know more people through running than I do meeting them through the nightlife. It kind of re-opens your eyes to let you know that not everybody does the same things as you, so if you’re still looking for Mrs. Right, then broaden your horizons and look in more social scenes.”

Lammers, who hopes to qualify for Boston this year, said that as a result of the breakup and improvement in her running, she has higher expectations for a potential new romantic partner. She says she and her single friends have one common goal – to find a partner who will push them to achieve their goals.

“I’m just so happy to see...how much better we’re doing and we’re keeping an eye out for someone who will not only help us maintain our pace, but push us to do better,” Lammers said. “It’s one of the best things that ever happened to me.”



CELEBRATE RUNNING

BY CHARLIE BAN

It only takes a few steps into Celia Riley's Capitol Hill studio to realize she's a runner. It's not a pile of shoes that gives it away, it's the wall. She has 15 different race bibs framed and hanging by her kitchen door. They represent the triumphs and trials of her running career, which began in college when she forced herself to run a 12-minute mile.

"People come in and think it's intimidating that I run so much, and I guess it used to be intimidating when I started, but now running four hours is normal to me," she said. "I don't even feel warmed up for 12 miles."

The bibs represent all kinds of milestones: her first race in Washington, her first road relay, the first races she did on consecutive days, the first race she ran while sick. She prizes her Girls on the Run bib, from the race that culminates weeks of training for elementary and middle school girls.

"Watching those girls run their first 5K, I saw the same kind of expressions from them that I feel when I do a race," she said. "They're nervous, excited by what they're accomplishing, thrilled to see their parents at the finish line, and happy they did it."

She hasn't framed her newest bib yet. She wore it at the Right to Movement Marathon in Palestine. It was her first international race, but not her first trip to the Middle East.

"I like to combine my running with a social cause if I can," she said. "They didn't even have 26 miles of continuous land for the race; we had to do two loops. So many people ran the race in non-running shoes. It was amazing to see their will to compete even when they didn't have the equipment." ■

Contributors

Jessie Biele is an editor for Patch.com in Northern Virginia. She has been running for approximately half her life and will tackle her first half marathon this spring. She can be found running and rocking out on the Mount Vernon Trail. Her work has appeared on Amstat News and in The Long Island Advance.

Jamie Corey has been running since kindergarten. After making the move to the District to pursue a career in politics, she began training for marathons and hasn't stopped. When she isn't trying to find the best bagel in town, she is usually blogging at www.dcrunster.com and enjoys tweeting at @DCRunster.

Alison Gittelman is a freelance writer and editor and an RRCA certified coach from South Riding, Va. She is a huge fan of mud, single-track and water-crossings on her trail runs and writes about running and triathlon at www.racingtales.com.

Jim Hage, of Kensington, Md., has been running, racing and writing in the D.C. area for 40 years.

Claire Hallissey moved to Arlington three years ago for her husband's work after she finished a doctorate in immunology. She was named to the British Olympic team in 2012 after finishing first among her countrywomen in the London Marathon.

Maggie Lloyd just moved to Washington from Boston, which means she got a lot of strange looks from DC residents this winter whenever she ran in shorts and a t-shirt. She's a science policy nerd by day and is always on the lookout for the opportunity to practice her steeplechase skills, primarily by jumping over park benches to get around tourist groups.

Colin Raunig began running in high school and began writing once the internet made it fun to do so. If he can put a few months together of uninterrupted training, you might see him in a local road race or two. He's a 2007 graduate of the Naval Academy and lives in Arlington.

Interested in writing for RunWashington? Contact Editor in Chief Charlie Ban at charlie@runwashington.com.

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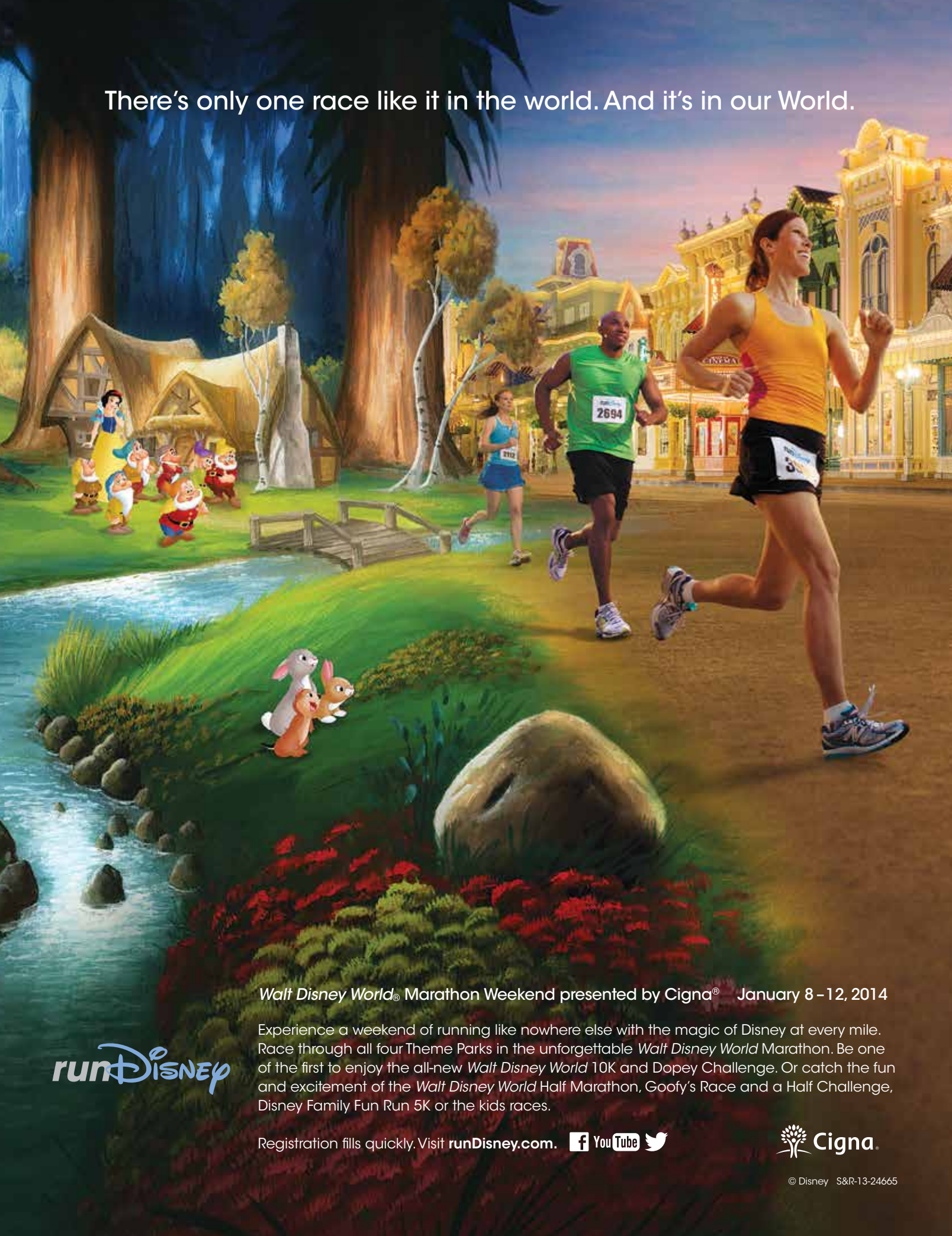
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