
Trails and Tales

Blacksburg Striders PO BOX 764, Blacksburg, VA 24063

Apr 1, 2003

<http://civic.bev.net/striders/>

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President's Corner

Aaron Goldstein

Something happened the other day that surprised me: the cherry trees that line the enormous parking lot on the north end of Virginia Tech blossomed: a friendly hint that the long cold winter may be finally coming to an end.

Last month we nearly succumbed to Old Man Winter. A week before our annual Blacksburg Classic 5K and 10 mile race we had 6 inches of snow, but the rain on the night before melted the snow and turned the trickling creeks into torrents of muddy water. It was 45 °F and in the steady morning rain Matt Kreke and I were in Merrimac setting up orange cones to mark the racecourse. That's when we noticed that Slate Branch – the little creek that parallels the Huckleberry Trail from mile markers 3.5 to 5 – wasn't getting through the culvert at Merrimac Rd., and had flooded the trail from the 4 mile to 4.5 mile markers. Maarten van Gelder, who originally measured out the route was out on his bicycle hurry-ingly measuring a new course that would avoid the flooded-out sections of the Huckleberry Trail. He was thoroughly soaked and shivering.

We had 300 people pre-registered for the race and nearly 100 didn't show, likely due to the weather. That was a shame because the rain stopped at noon, the temperature rose to about 55 °F, and when the race started at 1pm the only wet spot was a puddle near that start of the Huckleberry Trail.

A big thanks from me to the more than 70 volunteers that came out – despite the rain – to help out with the race.

Hope to see you out running!

Shamrock Marathon and Thoughts on Running

I have one piece of advice from my experience...if you run a marathon 5 ½ hours from where you live and you have to be back that eveningTAKE SOMEONE WHO CAN GET YOU HOME AFTERWARDS!

I ran the Shamrock Festival Marathon on March 15, 2003 in Virginia Beach. This was my first marathon, and something I had wanted to do for a long time. As a perpetual student, I never could seem to fit a consistent training schedule into the flood of daily homework assignments and weekly tests and papers, not to mention juggling my duties as a teacher assistant. Then, low and behold, I finished the course work for my master's degree last summer, and was left with two whole semesters to write my thesis.

Although thesis writing is a very time-consuming process, my time was suddenly much more flexible than before.

The idea of running a marathon came from my close friend and running partner, Russell Shock. Running a marathon was one of the things Russell wanted to accomplish before he turned 40, so we decided to train for the marathon together. I got on the internet and started looking at marathons in the spring. I felt we needed a good 9 months to train, and I had no desire to run 26.2 miles in the cold of winter or the heat of summer. I also thought our first marathon should be one with a relatively (if not completely) flat course. I hoped that training in the hills of southwest Virginia would give us an advantage on a flat course. So, the Virginia Beach Shamrock Marathon it was.

We spent the summer and early fall getting into a regular running routine. I had always been a rather haphazard runner prior to my marathon training. I ran what I wanted when I wanted. I would often run 7 or 8 days in a row without a day off. Listening to my body, and watching my hydration level or what I ate was not something I was used to doing. But, I quickly learned that marathon training required attention to such details. I did some reading and consulted training schedules on a number of marathon websites, and I created a training schedule that was realistic for my life style. The schedule went through some alterations along the way, but one of the things I am most proud of is that I was able to stick to it.

Russell injured his ITB in November, and decided this was not going to be his first marathon. I hadn't considered running the race alone before. Russell had always part of the deal. But now I had a dilemma. I

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was up to 18 mile runs on the weekends and feeling really good about my training. In my heart, I really wanted to run the race, but I felt guilty continuing without my running partner. That is when I discovered what a true friend and running partner Russell was. He insisted I continue without him.

As race day drew closer, other challenges reared their ugly heads. I live by a saying that if everything goes the way you want, you don't have any good stories to tell when you get back. My marathon experience proved to be a quintessential example. First, I came down with tonsillitis and a sinus infection a week and a half before the race. Friends and family told me I shouldn't run. Maybe if I had broken my leg, I would have been able to admit that I couldn't run the race, but I couldn't bear the fact that a glorified sore throat and stuffy nose could keep me from doing something I had spent almost 8

“30 seconds to start ... those in the port-a-potty line, take your time...your race chip will start timing you when you cross the starting line.”

months working for.

I decided to run anyway, and I drove down to Hampton Roads the night before the race to stay with friends. I woke at 5:30am the next morning, stealthily dressed and ate breakfast, proud that I had managed to do all this without waking everybody up. My glory was short-lived, however, as I managed to lock myself out of the house (and my running stuff in the house) as I went out to start my car. My stealthy activities were instantly terminated by my use of the doorbell at 5:30am. But the door was opened, and that's when you know you have true friends.

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Singlets Available

We still have a few male and female singlets with the Blacksburg Striders logo. \$15 for members. Katherine Phillips (540)-231-9960

My final mistake came when I consulted an old map for directions to the race start at the Virginia Beach convention center. I am a geographer. If anyone knows how easily maps become outdated, it should be me, right? Well, route 44, the Norfolk Expressway, is now interstate 264, but not on my map. I drove around for an extra half hour until I realized my mistake. I arrived at the convention center with only minutes to spare. I like to joke that I ran 27 miles that day because of the distance from the starting line I was forced to park. The advantage of showing up 5 minutes before the race starts, however, is that you don't have to wait in line to check in! The starting line came into view as I heard an announcer say “30 seconds to start” followed by “those in the port-a-potty line, take your time...your race chip will start timing you when you cross the starting line.” Race chip? I had forgotten about these nifty inventions...whew!

Needless to say, after being sick for a week and a half, and not being completely healthy on race day, the race was a struggle. Port-a-potties along the way became a tissue oasis, as I was constantly blowing my nose. I had also lost a good deal of cardiovascular fitness while being sick, and I noticed this right away too. Finally, my knees started hurting much earlier in the race than I expected. But I really enjoyed the race. Maybe it was everyone decked out in St. Patrick's Day paraphernalia. Maybe it was the fantastic weather. Maybe it was the awesome race support. Maybe it was the chronology-

cally gifted gentleman I passed around mile 22 that yelled “Damn, you are the best looking red head I’ve seen all day!” (I think he spent a little too much time at the Hasher’s “water” station!) Maybe it was the moment I crossed the finish line and a wave of emotion, a mixture of pride, relief, a feeling of accomplishment, exhaustion, and hunger, swept over me that I have never experienced before.

Looking back, now two weeks after the race, I wish I had been healthier, but maybe the slower pace I was forced to take gave me the opportunity to observe those around me, to talk to the guy in the wheel chair, to thank the wonderful volunteers who handed me orange slices and Gatorade, and to enjoy the weather and beautiful scenery. Would I change anything? Yes, I would definitely get someone to drive me home afterwards.

Sara Beth Keough



Blacksburg Classic 5K and 10 Mile

Despite torrential down-pours, 200 runners participated in the Blacksburg Classic on February 22. Flooding on the original 10-mile course led to last-minute efforts by Maarten Van Gelder, who braved the cold rain for 20-30 miles of bike riding to plot a new route (thanks, Maarten!!). Such adverse weather has not been encountered since the mid-1980’s, when the race was known as the Foxridge Classic and run in about 8” of snow! A good time was had by all who participated, with reports of kids enjoying jumping through the puddles on the Huckleberry Trail, and plenty of pizza and door prizes after the race.

Alexis Sharangabo (Blacksburg) was the overall winner in the 5k men’s division

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with a time of 16:03, running (along with the second place male) an extra 200-300 yards due to wrong turn near the finish! Erin Alexander (Salem, VA) won the 5k women’s division with a time of 20:39. Glen Mays (Washington, DC) and Moriah O’Brien (Blacksburg) took the top spots in the open division of the 10-miler, clocking 54:27 and 1:09:24, respectively. Full race results can be found at www.civic.bev.net/striders/racelist.htm

Many thanks go out from me to all who helped with the race, for truly it requires a group effort before, during, and after the event. Volunteers included co-director Heather Esteban; course volunteer coordinator Mike Fisher; course planners Marshall Overstreet, Aaron Goldstein and Maarten VanGelder; race day registration and packet pick-up leaders Cathy Lally, Erika Langford, Cyndy Graham; Fun Run director Art Snoke; and finish-line coordinator Steve Miller. Other volunteers too numerous to mention included the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, Alpha Phi Omega, Yuriko Renardy, Cindy Webb, Sue Caruvana, Leslie Graham, Deb Young, Matt and Michelle Kreke, Anne Jones Thompson, Maria Weese, Lon Weber, Earl Kline, and the Blacksburg Rescue Squad.

We are grateful to our financial sponsors, Montgomery Regional Hospital, New Town Fitness, and Joe Prudhomme, M.D. for their generous donations, and to our sponsors: Mish Mish, East Coasters, Bogen’s, The Weight Club, Gatorade/Propel, Bear FM105.3, Papa John’s, TCBY, Five-Borough Bagels, Runner’s World, and Netrition.com, for contributions of food, door prizes, discounts, and other items.

Katherine Phillips



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Mountain Masochist 50 Miler, October 19, 2002

This was to be the 20th running of the Mountain Masochist 50 Miler. For one entrant, it was his 20th; for me, it was only number 4, having previously run the race in '94, '95, and '96. So it was about time to return to the race. I was a bit out of the long stuff, but running the Catawba Run-Around in March 2002, had given me the confidence that I could spend many hours on my feet. The Run-Around is a fun run of some 34 miles over the AT and North Mountain Trail, with a side trip to take in the views from Dragon's Tooth. It had taken me close to 7 hours and 50 minutes, only a couple of minutes less than my PR at the Masochist.

The Masochist course is mostly on forest service roads and jeep trails. There is some single track, but not enough or difficult enough to make the run masochistic from that perspective. The forests at their peak in fall colors make the run almost pleasant. There are well-stocked and frequent aid stations, also a plus. Yet somewhere in the second half of the run, I lost appreciation for the scenery; lost taste for food, and nausea set in. It was all about keeping going, not falling on the single track, and above all not giving in to the urge to quit. I’d DNF-ed a 50 mile race before, but not this time. I finished my 4th Masochist in 8 hours and 40 minutes, 1 hour and 38 minutes after the overall winner. There were 243 other that finished out of 278 starters. Many of them were first timers on the ultra scene. In '94 I was one of them. As 50 milers go, this one is not a bad choice for a first go at the distance.

Maarten van Gelder



New Rules for Races at Virginia Tech

Over the past decade the 5K footrace has emerged as an excellent charity and fund-raising event. Here at Virginia Tech there are probably a dozen events per year. However, in response to recent litigation regarding a tragic event that occurred 2 ½ years ago the university felt it necessary to more stringently regulate races. A set of rules has been approved recently and may be obtained from Event Services 221 Squires Student Center.

Two *campus-only* courses have been defined that both begin at the uphill side of the duck pond. One runs around the golf course, and the other runs out onto the cross-country course behind Smithfield Plantation and back. In addition footraces are permitted to cross university property where the Huckleberry Trail crosses Tech Center Drive. Bicycle races may cross campus property here but may not use other portions of the campus.

These course restrictions do not apply to the Corporate Research Center, which is considered town property.

Aaron Goldstein



Striders Sponsor HAE Mile Run

Each year, for the past 3 years, the Blacksburg Striders have joined with others in the community to sponsor The Mile Run at Harding Avenue Elementary School (HAE) in Blacksburg. The Mile Run is part of the national battery of physical fitness tests that third, fourth, and fifth grade students are required to complete each Fall and Spring. The way it is

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handled at HAE, however, is a little different, as described by Lisa Euler-Perry:

"It is easy to see during each mile run test who the best runners are. These children are often athletically gifted, and are motivated to improve by competition among their peers. The remaining 90 percent of my students do not feel good about their running abilities and often view this test as a time to fail because even their BEST time will not qualify them for National or Presidential designation according to the standards of the testing system.

Two years ago, a parent suggested that I challenge each student to improve on his or her OWN mile time, and find a way to reward that individual improvement. My students designed a t-shirt that said "I Beat Myself in the Mile Run!" and each student who improved their own time by even one second had the opportunity to buy a t-shirt with the logo for \$4.00. The remaining cost of the t-shirt was covered by some generous individuals who believed that focusing on personal improvement in physical fitness is just as important as achieving some nationally-recognized standard. Unfortunately, only 40 of the 115 children who improved in 2001 were able to purchase the well-earned t-shirt, even at the low price.

Last Spring, the Blacksburg Striders running club and several individuals donated enough money to cover the entire cost of the t-shirts for each of the 119 students who improved. (Last year, 126 students were involved in the mile run.) Improvements ranged from one second to nine minutes. The smiles on the faces of the students who improved were worth all the Olympic Gold! Students who didn't improve were offered opportunities to re-run the mile,

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and each student that chose to try again improved his/her time as well. One young man tried four times before he ran his best time, but he finally did it!!"

This Spring, HAE will offer students the opportunity to improve their physical fitness as compared to their Fall testing. Instead of seeking out individuals to support the Mile Run endeavor, however, Ms. Euler-Perry has successfully obtained four or five corporate sponsors, once again including the Blacksburg Striders. For this commitment, sponsors will have their logos displayed on the t-shirt and our club will be recognized in letters to parents and press releases to the local newspaper. Blacksburg Striders members are also invited to participate (as runners or supporters) in The HAE Mile Run on April 24 at the BHS track. Anyone wishing to participate should contact Lisa Euler-Perry at HAE (951-5732) or Beth Howell (231-2908).

Beth Howell



Springing into the New Season

It's always a happy day when you can go into a race with a gloomy disposition and low expectations and emerge a few hours later surprised with yourself and reassured that maybe you're not so terrible after all. That's the situation in which I found myself March 15 with the runnin' of the green, that is, the Shamrock Marathon in Virginia Beach. I finished up my 2002 running season with a stinker of a performance in the Marine Corps Marathon in D.C. After resuming running in early November, the idea emerged: why not train through the winter and take a shot at a spring marathon for the first time. So that's how I found myself, often

accompanied by running friend Craig Hill, trudging through snow or sleet or bitter cold winds on Saturday morning long runs on the Huckleberry Trail in January and February. But there were setbacks: illness that knocked out a week of training; a poor performance at the Blacksburg Classic 10-miler that seemed not to bode well. Still, after living in Blacksburg for nearly a decade, Virginia Beach is an attractively flat place. And March 15 turned out to be a fine day for a marathon. Cool temps, reasonable winds, no rain. The result, I ran a 3:43:06, my best marathon in more than two years. Not a PR, but a great way to get the 2003 campaign under way. For more about the race, which drew about 1,100 marathoners and more 8K runners, go to www.shamrockmarathon.com.

Also, special kudos to Craig Hill. As some of you may have read in Roanoke Times columnist Joe Kennedy's March 26 piece, "A marathon is about more than running," Craig didn't get down about the cancellation of the D.C. Marathon because of the start of the war in Iraq. Instead, he held his own marathon on the Huckleberry, and was joined by friends for all but about seven miles of his trek. I went out to Warm Hearth to see him cross the finish line March 22 with his sons, wife Kim and other friends cheering him on as he broke the "tape." What a great moment!

Brian Kelley

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Regular Blacksburg Runs

<u>Day/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
M-F/6:30a	Front of Gillies'
Sat/7:00a	Front of Gillies'
	jhosner@vt.edu / smyers@vt.edu
Tu/6:00p	Front of Bollos's
	goldst@vt.edu

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Race Calendar

Select events from

<http://starcitystriders.com/calendar.htm>, <http://active.com>, & <http://civic.bev.net/striders/calendar.htm>

April 5, 2003

10th Annual Queen's Lake 5K Williamsburg, VA. Contact Rick at (757) 229-7375 or Amia at (757) 890-3888

Charlottesville Ten Miler; Charlottesville, VA; Info: (434)293-3367

April 12, 2003

Charlotte South End Half Marathon & 10k, Charlotte, NC; <http://www.charlotteracefest.com/>

7th Annual Hospice Hope 10k Run, 5k fitness walk; Winston-Salem, NC, Info: Ann Gauthreaux, (336) 768-3972

April 19, 2003

Charlottesville Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5 K www.charlottesvillemarathon.com or Gill, Race Director <mailto:rungillrun@adelphia.net> - (434)293-7115

April 26, 2003

Vinton Baptist Dogwood Classic 5k; Vinton, VA; Info: Vinton Baptist Church (540)343-7685

25th Annual Dofferstack 10 Km Classic. Flint Hill, VA. Contact Jean Lillard 540-675-7171 (work) 540-675-3670 (home). (Flint Hill is 12 miles south of Front Royal on RT522)

May 3, 2003

The Sunset Stampede. 5 p.m. start 10 mile and 4 mile courses, 1 mile kid fun run. City County Plaza, Asheville, NC. Contact Becky sunsetstampede@hotmail.com

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or visit website

www.sunsetstampede.com

May 3, 2003

5th Annual Dr. Ed Dannelly New River Trail 10K Run. Galax, VA. Contact the Galax Recreation Department at 236-3218 or website www.galaxparks-rec.com

MATS 5K Run For Shelter. Rose Center, Morristown, TN. Contact John Smyth at 800-264-7594 or JFS328@aol.com.

May 26, 2003

Heritage Classic 5k and 1 mile fun run; Rocky Mount, VA. Mark or Kathy Griffith (540)-483-1287 or Cindy Spencer 540-483-5855 trinity@swva.net

6th Annual Central Virginia Kidney Association Memorial Day 10K; Lynchburg, VA Contact Leah: <mailto:lmcpfatter@lynchburgnephrology.com>

31 May, 2003

AEP Festival 5 & 10k, Roanoke, VA. Info. Virginia Amateur Sports (540) 343-0987 www.commonwealthgames.org

14 June, 2003

Claytor Lake 5k; Claytor Lake, VA; Contact Cliff Myers (540)674-4758

Ranger Run; 5k, 10k & 1 mile fun run; Marion, VA; Hungry Mother State Park; Info. Kevin Wilson: Park Office (276) 781-7400

21 June, 2003

5th Annual Run to Read Races: 15K, 5K and 1.5 mi. Fairmont, WV. Registration at SignMeUpsports.com, and info at 304-366-6055 or by email at run2read@yahoo.com

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Membership Dues Reminder

On your address label you'll find a date. If you have not paid your dues for the year please do so. Thanks!

Individuals: \$8

Family: \$12

**Blacksburg Striders
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