
Trails and Tales

Blacksburg Striders PO BOX 764, Blacksburg, VA 24063

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President's Corner

Aaron Goldstein

It's been a great mild autumn for running and we've had a number of great local races this fall including Light the Fire, Gillette Ford, and the Fall Festival 5K. I've been taking our race clock to the local events and even had a chance to participate in a couple of them. The Fall Festival at the Virginia Tech duck pond drew hundreds of runners for the 5K, dozens of runners for the fun run, and raised \$1500 for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Among the runners that I recognized were Striders members Cameron Patterson, Maarten van Gelder, Erik Olsen, Brian Whitaker, and Wayne Sheppard. Mike Holland – our former Blacksburg Classic Co-Race Director – was down from Maryland for the weekend and brought his younger son out to do the mile run.

My six-year-old son Zach just started first grade and accompanied me to all of the events. I tried to get him to do the fun run at the Fall Festival, but he was intimidated by it. So we went out and did some practice runs on the Huckleberry Trail. When the Light the Fire race came along in October and I told him there was a 1-mile run, he got really excited. Even on the morning of the race he was up and dressed and ready to go before anyone in the house was awake. (Why can't he do that on school days?) He and I did the race and he didn't stop once along the way. Near the

end he started getting tired and was about to stop when we spotted the race clock. That was all the motivation he needed to finish the race.

Hope to see you out running!

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Recap of the Niagara Falls Marathon

Ellen Rabun

When is a waterfall not a waterfall? When it's a finish line, of course...and what a finish line Niagara Falls makes! The 2005 NIAGARA FALLSVIEW CASINO RESORT INTERNATIONAL MARATHON (try fitting that on a t-shirt) was held October 23rd in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada – a mere 4 hours away by US Air. A perfect destination for a husband who has supported me all those Saturdays I was away from home on a long run and a son who's good at pointing out the parts that jiggle in running tights. A great family trip.

There were plenty of hotels to choose from – including the ones with the honeymoon suites and heart-shaped whirlpool tubs. October is off-season, so rates are cheaper. The race expo is held in the Fallsview Casino complex, which has a tres chic modern galleria shopping center, a hotel overlooking the falls and of course, the casino. Michael checked out the tables – there

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was a waiting list for poker, no free drinks, and he described the waitpersons as “matronly”. The expo was very well organized – right down to the border patrol checking your passport when you pick up your packet. At the pasta dinner (Canadians are NOT good at noodles) I realized just how International the marathon was – we were surrounded by 6 tables of non-English speakers. German, French, Italian, Polish, Japanese, Romanian... and there were only 958 runners!

We took school buses to the start – short lines to get on the bus and a quick passport recheck stop at the border back into the US. This was the best start location of any race I’ve run – we were bused to The Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, NY. They opened the gallery early just for the runners – you could WAIT INSIDE where there were indoor restrooms (where I learned from some Canucks that if you coat your legs with baby oil the cold can be reduced from “freeze” to just “chill”), you could sit on the floor and benches, and there was an entire modern art gallery to explore. They had just opened an exhibit by some Chinese artists – one of them had just finished a piece of performance art the day before where he sat naked in a Plexiglas box full of wet concrete. Don’t ask. The day after the race the same artist stripped off his clothes and waded to within 40 to 50 yards of the brink of the falls. He tried anchoring himself with a rope to an unknown object, intending to stay in the water for 24 hours, but the knot came loose and so he began making his way back to shore. A tourist, concerned the man was attempting suicide, called park police, who took him out of the water. He was not one of the runners.

The weather was great, if you like 40 degrees and raining. Despite the weather the support was excellent – water and GU and port-a-potties at every other mile. The course is very flat with the exception of a little blip where you cross the Peace Bridge over the Niagara River into Canada at mile 6. I was warned by another runner at the start that it would be like “running on a treadmill in the shower with the air conditioner on full blast.” Hey! Rain...pain – they rhyme! It wasn’t quite that bad. The view was better than a shower stall – a beautiful river on the right and nice houses on the left for 20 miles. The rest – well, he was right. The rain did let up for the last 30 minutes and Sam, my 9-year-old son, ran in with me for the last 2 miles. He ran backwards part of the way, laughing at me and dancing in the street. This tells you about how fast I was going at that point.



Ellen and Sam in the last mile!!

After a warm shower and a fantastic Japanese dinner, we did the tourist thing — went to the daredevil museum and Omni-Max film about those who went over the edge (with their clothes on) took the Aero Car across the Niagara Rapids and gorge, went to the Butterfly Conservatory (excellent) and, of course, put on the recycled rain ponchos for the

Maid of the Mist (note: we didn’t realize that the boat stops in mid-October, we just happened to get on her last sail for the year!). Personally I thought the Journey Behind the Falls – where you walk in a tunnel behind the Canadian side — was the best part. The rainy weather hardly mattered near the falls where the spray kept everyone drenched anyway.

We were sorry we missed the seedier and tackier part of the city, the “Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show,” Spider-man The Ultimate Ride, the Incredible Hulk Encounter and the X-Men Bumper Cars – maybe next time.



PROS: Great start, excellent support, no crowds.

CONS: Very flat, weather iffy
PING: Entry \$80 CAD, very nice 2 room hotel suite \$100/night

BLING: Patagonia long sleeve running shirt. For 2006 a total bonus of \$10,000 will be awarded if the winners finishing times are under the course records of 2:10:19 for males and under 2:37:09 for females.

SUMMARY: I’d recommend it.



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Blacksburg High School Girls Cross Country Team 2005

Kimberley Homer

For some of the BHS girls who ran at Footlocker South, the cross country season started five months ago, at Coach James DeMarco's High Performance Distance Academy. James' idea of a fun day at running camp is to run the "Beauty" ten mile trail at Pandapas Pond, and then jump on a bus to get to the bottom of the Mountain Lake road, and run a mile straight up, as fast as you can. One Blacksburg girl claims that fellow camper Catherine White ran that last mile in 5:45. They didn't catch Catherine, but their hard work paid off: the varsity team finished the season with a 152-1 record. Their only loss was to the AA state champion Brentsville. Two of their top seven runners had never run cross country before. Senior Co-captain Ariel Burbey finished the season in the Footlocker South seeded race with a blistering 5K time of 18:32, and newcomer Laurel MacMillan ran it in 18:45. James figures that Ariel, Laurel, and freshman Allison Homer beat the top three from all other Virginia schools in the seeded race, including AAA state champs Midlothian and AA champs Brentsville. Co-captain Hannah Barrow, Abby Thompson and Sarah MacMillan all got personal records in the Footlocker Junior/Senior race, with Abby taking over a minute off and Sarah taking over two minutes off her previous best time. This time last year, the MacMillan sisters ran the Frosty 5K in just over 25 minutes.

The Blacksburg girls cross country team graduated three of their top seven runners last year, so no one expected them to be this good. The team had 22

girls, nine of them new, and some of them were running over 50 miles a week by the end of the season. You probably saw them running at Smithfield and Pandapas and the Brown Farm. Parents hosted 11 pasta dinners and cheered and took pictures at every meet. Athletic Director Jack Hencke and his son Brian had Lube Time put "Congratulations Girls Cross Country: State Runner Up" on their marquee. One girl said a stranger in a grocery store saw her in her Blacksburg warm-up suit and wished her luck in the next race. The girls had fun with secret pal exchanges and sleepovers, but they also ran at Smithfield at 6 a.m. many mornings, just like the Corps of Cadets.

The indoor track team should be good this year, with 500 meter state champ Cate Berenato and Devin Cass and Casey Carroll all in top shape from cross country. James says he will coach again next year, so tell any runner girls you know to come on out.

This is a picture of the team at Octoberfest in front of the Nike Truck. Who knows, next year they may go to Nationals.



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Upcoming Party!

Snake et al.

Plans are underway for a joint runners/bikers get-together: if anyone has suggestions or wants to volunteer, please contact one of the following

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folks: Liz Rucker (egrucker@vt.edu), Beth Howell (bethrun@vt.edu), or Aaron Goldstein (goldst@vt.edu). Possible dates include February 11, February 25 (the night of the Blacksburg Classic Race), but other dates could be considered also!

The local race not to miss -- the Blacksburg Classic!

J.P. Palmer

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 25th at 1 p.m. for the annual Blacksburg Classic 10 Mile and 5K and one mile run/walk! Entry blanks are enclosed in your newsletter or can be downloaded from the web site at

civic.bev.net/striders/clssic.html

The course has rolling hills and water is available on both courses; mile markers at each mile, and a great post-race venue included free food, beverages, and many door prize drawings! Be sure to register by February 11th to save \$6 on the entry fee (\$14 before 2/11, \$18 through 2/24, and \$20 on race day). Striders members can receive a \$1 discount, and long-sleeved shirts are included in the entry fee.

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Runabout Sports is moving to University Mall!!

Aaron Goldstein

Runabout Sports is planning to move from its current location at 208 N. Main St to a larger location within the University Mall in February. The store opened in May of 2003 and is the local supplier of running and soccer merchandise. Runabout Sports has been a valuable part

of the Blacksburg community and have sponsored several Blacksburg Striders events. The weekly Wednesday night runs that Runabout Sports sponsors will also move to the new location, and the new course may include Glade Rd and Heritage Park.



Brush Mountain Breakdown is being Revived!!

Aaron Goldstein

James DeMarco and Aaron Saft are working to revive the Brush Mountain Breakdown. This race, originally organized by Wayne Howell and Chris Betz, was an annual trail race in the Jefferson National Forest from 1999 to 2001. The race is currently scheduled for the morning of Saturday, October 15 near Boley Field, and plans are underway to offer three trail lengths: short (3-5 mi), intermediate (6-10 mi), and long (13-18 mi). For additional information, contact James DeMarco at james@runaboutsports.com or at 540-552-9339.



Race Report: Mountain Masochist Trail Run 2005

Dave Hopkinson

Many of you have run marathons before and have experienced the 26.2 miles of pure agony that can break even the strongest runners at the end of the race. Every fall in the mountains near Lynchburg, Virginia 300 intrepid souls start running before the sun comes up to experience that agony for up to 12 hours. It's not the

government's latest interrogation technique for suspected terrorists; it's the Mountain Masochist Trail Run. The 'Masochist,' as it's lovingly referred to by the veterans, is a 50 Horton-mile trail race that climbs 9000 feet and descends 7000 feet. The first few warm-up miles are deceptively flat but after that it's all hills. As if that isn't hard enough, a Horton-mile, named for the race director David Horton, is just a little bit longer than a standard mile.

This year I chose the Masochist for my first ultramarathon because I wanted to run something that was so hard that I wasn't sure if I could finish it. Training for the Masochist was not encouraging. The key feature of my training routine was doing two long runs on the weekends. I was surprised to find out that double long runs are not as hard one might think. In fact, it's a little known secret that if you take so much ibuprofen that you can't feel your legs then you can run long every day. Double long runs are doable but my longest single runs were five hours and those were devastating. After five hours of running I barely had the energy to crawl back into my bed, and by my calculations five hours of running did not equal 50 miles.

On race morning we had a 45 minute bus ride from our meeting place in Lynchburg to the starting line. During the bus ride a Mountain Masochist veteran recommended that a good race strategy is to run the first half slow and then taper off for the second half. I decided to take his advice. Even at a conservative pace, though, the hills take their toll. By the time I made it to the halfway aid station at mile 27 my spirits were low and I was long-since ready to call it a day. But as every good runner knows,

cookies and fresh socks can put a whole new perspective on life and both of these items happened to be waiting for me there. As I left the mile 27 aid station, I entered uncharted territory. To my astonishment I put one foot in front of the other and continued running. For those of you who think you are incapable of running further than 26.2 miles, au contraire, you can.

The Masochist is more than just a really long, really hilly running race. It's a physical and emotional journey of highs and lows, doubt and discovery, to be shared with 300 comrades, not competitors. It's also by far the most fun race I've ever done. I finished the run in 10 hours even, and I didn't really mind doing those extra few Horton bonus miles at the end. On the bus ride home I had two questions for the runners I met on the trail that day. First and foremost, "What are they serving for dinner tonight?" And second, "What's a good first 100 miler?"

There are two dinners for the Masochist, one the night before and one after the race. At the dinner the night before the race I met a man named Robert who began his running career six months before the Masochist, inspired by two of his coworker who ran the Boston marathon earlier this year. Robert's longest race ever was a 10K and his longest training run ever was 17 miles. Each year about 80% of Mountain Masochist participants finish within the 12 hour cutoff. During the race the other runners that I talked to about Robert agreed that he would not be among the 80%. Robert completed the run in 11 hours and 22 minutes. If you thought that you'd never be able to run an ultramarathon, it's time to think again.

(Editor's note: For a comprehensive list of ultras

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across the country check out www.ultrarunning.com, or for other trail running events see www.trailrunnermag.com.)



Running a "Split Marathon"!!

Peg Leister

Running to fight
Leukemia & Lymphoma
<http://www.active.com/donate/tnva/BBurgPeg06>

Y-Hikes Coordinator

That's the way I like to think about this year's running – I ran a split marathon!

It seemed like a fit – I can run, I get training and I raise money for a worthy cause. My imagination went wild and I signed up for two events. First, I would run the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon Virginia Beach. Then, I would "kick it up a notch" and run the Nike Women's Half (there is a full) Marathon in San Francisco.

Virginia Beach was a great place to run my first half marathon. We gathered at the Convention Center and Starting Line! They had a wave start which meant that we were released in corrals of 1000 runners at approximately 90 second intervals. I had a great time running those 13.1 miles. There were bands, cheerleaders as well as locals to entertain and encourage us along the way. I knew I was doing the right thing between mile 8 and 9 when a fellow runner asked if I had a spare Power Gel. When I turned to hand it to her, her purple singlet said "SURVIVOR". I had to hold back tears, and knew I could ignore the blisters and proudly finish the race.

John "the Penguin"

Bingham told us we wouldn't sleep and I didn't – just rested. October 23rd is race day and TNT VA met in the lobby at

4:30 a.m. From there we headed to Union Square for our 7 a.m. start. We kept hydrated, stretched, and did our Fed Ex bag check. Runners were spread out by pace around Union Square and along Post Street. Our run took us from the Financial District to the Embarcadero & Fisherman's Wharf, through the Presidio with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge, up a killer hill past The Cliff House, into Golden Gate Park and finished at the beach. Running was a joy! There was music, there was an Oxygen Bar after the 180 ft. climb from mile 6-7, and they fed us Luna bars, Gatorade, bananas and Ghirardelli chocolate. At the finish, men in tuxedos handed us our finisher's medal – a Tiffany & Co. sterling silver "Run like a Girl" necklace.

As a Team in Training participant, I raised over \$6000 for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The New York Times and my children tell me that "running for charities" is the "hip" thing to do. Hip or not, when I learned that TNT and the Nike event raised over \$14 million for LLS, I felt grateful to be a part of something so grand. If money provides us with the resources to find a cure, we have made a leap toward that goal.



Report from the Star City Half Marathon

Steve Nagle

Just a brief report from the Star City 1/2. It was cold at the start as we all, JP, Kate, Liz and I, began with long sleeves, tights and gloves with various under layers. Two of us stripped off a layer early in the run. The course was good, same as always, and yes the tree is gone

and just a traffic barrier, big orange barrel, in its place. Not quite the same as a 100+ year-old tree. We all finished well and a good time was had, especially by our random prize winners, Kate – a new pair of shoes from Foot Locker – and Liz – a gift certificate from Foot Locker.

Times were as follows:

Steve	1:31.06
JP	1:55.08
Liz	1:59.45
Kate	2:02.41
Betty	2:46:50

This year was the 20th anniversary of the race and we got a nice wind shirt in lieu of a T-shirt/sweatshirt. Barry and the Star City Striders did a very good job as usual.



A Brief on the Chicago Marathon

J.P. Palmer

Two Blacksburg runners were fortunate enough to qualify for Boston at the Chicago Marathon in October this year; one for the first time (Steve Nagle in 3:28) and myself (in 3:47) for the 5th time. Guess all those long runs at Pandapas, all those fartleks, speedwork, and yoga classes paid off!! Many Striders have done Boston and we're just following in their footsteps!!

While Boston is such a great race that once you do it, you always want to go back (at least that's the case w/ me), Chicago is very similar in that it is an awesome race, organization is great, and the crowds are unbelievable!!! Anyone who is interested in a flat, fast marathon that traverses through 15 neighborhoods, many different ethnic areas, lots of landmarks, and having 1.5 million

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spectators should reserve Sunday, October 22, 2006 on their calendars!!

Another great part to the Chicago Marathon is the expo; I've done 19 marathons and Chicago is at the top of the list as far as expos go! Lots of great deals, lots of charity booths, and great opportunities to buy Christmas presents for others!!



How I Spent the Last Day of 2005 (as did James DeMarco)***

Tim Driscoll

***(Editor's note: for a complete version of the race, please visit <http://www.molvisions.com/weblogs/tim/> Due to space limitations, only several sections are included in his race report.)

PERSPECTIVE--I am thirty-six years old and have been running long distance for twenty years. I ran competitively in high school and Division III college, with PB of 15:18 for 5k (1990), ~34:00 for 10k (1990), 1:12 for the half-marathon (Lake Placid, 1998), and 3:03 for the marathon (Rhode Island, 1999). In the past two years, I have developed an intense love of trail running, caring less about speed and time and more about pure endurance - which is just as well, as I continue to slow down with the passing years. This is a personal account of my first ultra-marathon, Dec 31 2005.

THE DAY--The last day of 2005 was an absolutely gorgeous day in Blacksburg, VA. The temperature was in the 40s and the skies were clear and calm. At five minutes until eight in the morning, with the sun just rising orange over the Blue

Ridge Mountains, a handful of runners started up the Appalachian Trail (AT) for the first ever Craig's Creek 50k Run. It was my first ultra-marathon, and my first organized trail run.

THE COURSE--The run was an out-and-back course, with all but the last 8k on the AT. Runners were shuttled six at a time from the parking area in Caldwell Fields to the trail head. The course started at the intersection of Rt. 621 and the AT (1520 ft elevation), ran north on the AT to the Audie Murphy monument (10k, 3050 ft), descended to the first aid station on Rt. 620 (16k, 1610 ft), ascended to the summit of Dragon's Tooth (22k, 3080 ft), then descended to the turn-around in the Dragon's Tooth parking area (27k, 1530 ft). Runners then retraced their steps along the AT south to the start, turned left, and finished with 8k on the road to the finish at Caldwell Fields (62k).

THE START--Some of us, eager to be out on the trail, jumped into the first shuttle. I guess none of us were thinking clearly, because we ended up loitering in the cold morning air while the shuttle went back for more runners. So we sent word back, started our watches, and headed out. This was not a matter of gaining an advantage; the only true competitor here was the trail, and you can't cheat the trail.

THE WAY OUT - AID STATION 1 TO DRAGON'S TOOTH--From the aid station, we climbed up to the summit of Dragon's Tooth. The three of us drifted apart and back together as the trail kicked up and eased off. The footing grew steadily worse on the climb, and then worse again as we rolled along in preamble to the summit, until I found it impossible to run

more than a few minutes at a time. My resolution to avoid walking broke down about halfway up to Dragon's Tooth, and I resigned myself to hiking the steepest and rockiest stretches.

As quickly as I found the trail down, I lost it again, and ended up sliding down the mountain about 600 ft before realizing I was hopelessly off-track. I spent about fifteen fruitless minutes trying to locate the trail again, circling the ridge, looking for anything resembling a trail. Eventually, I heard voices coming from above me, and in desperation, I climbed hand-over-hand all the way back to the top of Dragon's Tooth. There I found five other runners, canvassing the summit, looking for the trail down. After a while, someone found it and we all headed down. I was relieved to have escaped with only a few scratches, and about thirty minutes lost.

THE WAY OUT - DRAGON'S TOOTH TO TURN-AROUND--My relief did not last long - about thirty seconds, in fact. I thought the trail up to the summit had been difficult, but it was nothing compared to the trail down to the turn-around! Scrambling over boulders, down sheer rock faces, crab-walking several steep drops - I did very little running in the first 1-2k of the descent, and when I was able to run, I ended up turning my ankle twice - the second time hard enough to send me face first onto the trail. But what is a trail run without a little face time? After a descent that left me wondering why this was billed as a trail run and not an adventure race, we finally made it to the turn-around (27k). There were two of us now, myself and **James (DeMarco)**, the four other runners having somehow descended with a

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grace and velocity that totally escaped me. Our time at the turn-around was unmentionable; for me, it was all about surviving to the finish now. I still felt reasonably strong, I suppose because I hadn't done much actual running over the past 10k, but I was getting hungry, and my knees were starting to ache from the rough terrain. James and I spent about four minutes at the station, where I refilled my Camelbak and took on some Gatorade, orange slices, and fig newtons. I have now concluded that fig newtons are one of the best tasting foods ever.

THE WAY BACK - TURN-AROUND TO DRAGON'S TOOTH--

After some conversation with the aid station volunteers, James and I realized that we had come down the wrong trail - especially since we had only passed two of the four leading runners on their way back up. Going up the right trail this time seemed to be shorter and quite a bit easier than our descent, but perhaps that was just wishful thinking, or a trick of the trail. Going up I started to run low on energy and felt very hungry, so I downed one and a half Clif Bars, a Power Gel, and a fair amount of water.

On the way up we found the RD (Michael Holland) jogging back down, and a short while later we ran into the reason he had been up there - a full jug of fresh Gatorade, perched on a boulder like it had just fallen out of the sky. The air was calm and fairly warm, and I was fairly dehydrated. So I downed a few huge swallows, and hoped that my CamelBak would last another 10k to the aid station. After hiking, climbing, a bit of running, and several more ankle turns despite the pace, the two of us made it back to the summit of Dragon's Tooth. We were well beyond caring about elapsed

time now, and it began to occur to me that I might not make it back before dark. We passed a handful of other runners on their way down to the turn-around, and I was pretty certain that they would be out past sunset.

It was past noon when we climbed the final rock face to the summit. The sun was bright, and the temperature was comfortable. We had survived the worst descent and ascent, and I for one still felt in control of my body. And so we paused. The visibility from Dragon's Tooth was simply breathtaking. We could see the entire Catawba Valley laid out some 1500 feet below us. With the trees bare for winter, it was easy to follow the fire service roads and trails, meandering along mountainsides and across ridge lines. Houses and farms clustered together in the valleys, as if somehow forced there by gravity, like so many streams that flow down from the mountains. The sky was so clear that it felt like we could look south all the way to North Carolina, or west into West Virginia.

THE WAY BACK - DRAGON'S TOOTH TO AID STATION 3--

Somewhat reluctantly, we abandoned the vista of the winter ridge line for the painful hike/run back down to the aid station (1/3). By this time, after so much time playing stop-and-go, I was itching to run. But first we had to pay our dues to the mountain for the beautiful views, which meant another few kilometers gingerly picking our way off of Dragon's Tooth, sometimes going down, sometimes up. step on the way back.

THE WAY BACK - THE MONUMENT TO THE ROAD--The start of the last descent was marked by a bench on the jeep trail (49k). That

bench became my beacon, my focus of concentration across the rolling hills of the ridge line. I kept my eyes on the trail ahead of me, and hoped that every turn would bring that bench. When it finally appeared, I gave an involuntary shout of joy! The climbing was behind me; from here it was only about 12k to the finish. After nearly 50k of running, this seemed like a distance barely worth mentioning. Almost single digits, and about half of it pure downhill with good footing. I would worry about the road later; for now, I wanted to enjoy the descent.

I tiptoed through the few snowy spots at the top of the descent, and then let the trail take over. I felt like I was flying. I bounced off a tree in the first switchback, so hard that I bruised my hand. My calves quivered with every step. I don't remember much of the trail, or the view; I just remember falling down the hill in a rush, right on the edge of control. It was a completely surreal moment. The fact that I had already gone 50k was not even in my mind.

THE WAY BACK - THE ROAD TO THE FINISH--

I took on some orange slices and Gatorade at the station, and stretched my legs a little more. I didn't know how I was going to make it to the finish, over 8k of rolling hills. I knew only that I was not going to quit. I set ever smaller goals for myself. First, I had thoughts of running nine minute mile pace. After about 15 minutes, I knew that was impossible so I looked for the spot, a little past halfway, where the paved road turned to dirt. Not long after, that goal seemed out of reach as well.

I finally found myself simply trying to survive each small upturn of the road. The stretch from 55-58k were the absolute lowest point of the run for me.

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My legs were in full rebellion. I was forced to walk even on some of the flats, as sudden leg cramps threatened to send me to the ground on my face. (again.) I was afraid that if I fell down, I would not know how to get up again. I had hit the wall in the marathon before; to me, this was the wall on steroids.

But, after a few kilometers at the bottom of the barrel, I started to float back up. I found myself able to run the final series of up-and-downs without walking. My legs reconsidered their defection, and rejoined the effort to the finish. Maybe I was through the wall, or maybe I just knew that the finish was close. Whatever the reason, I made it to the finish running, lucid enough to realize I had just accomplished something that I had never done before. And it seemed perfectly fitting that, when I arrived at the finish, I was alone.

RETROSPECTIVE--I have always looked upon ultra-marathoners with a strange mixture of feelings. Certainly awe, and a touch of envy, for anyone who can endure so many hours of running - not only the race itself, but the training that comes before. And I think it is complete truth to say that until you have finished an ultra, you can never really understand the motivation behind starting one.

At the end of this, my first ultra-marathon, I feel a powerful sense of accomplishment. I have

tested my physical endurance and mental fortitude in a way that few people ever do, and I came out as I went in - running. I discovered within myself a capacity to endure that I never knew existed. I imagine that I am not alone in this self-realization, that everyone who finishes an endurance event of this magnitude feels something similar. Of myself, I can only say this: I am proud that I have finished, and I am eager to do another. And my admiration for endurance athletes, far from being diminished by piercing the veil, has increased tenfold.



TNT J.P.

Team in Training is gearing up for summer and marathons. This is a great organization that raises money for leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma research, and is a two-fold program: you raise money AND get to go to an event at a great venue!

As a former coach of the Gateway Chapter (Missouri/Arkansas), I can attest to the powerful emotions which first-timers experience after months of training and finally completing their event, while also knowing that they raised thousands of dollars for their honored teammate (usually a child with leukemia or lymphoma). The program provides coaching and inspiration for people wanting to complete a marathon or half-marathon, a triathlon, or a century (cycling). Some of the TNT events include the San Diego Rock and Roll Marathon, Walt Disney Marathon, and many more!

The long runs are typically scheduled on the weekends so all can find a running partner for those long 20-milers, and the coach/mentor attends and sets up water stops along the route (no sneaking into convenience stores necessary!). For more information about this organization, 1-800-766-0797. http://www.teamintraining.org/hm_tnt/.

Regular Blacksburg Running Groups

<u>Day/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tue/6:00pm goldst@vt.edu	Front of Bollo's
Wed/5:00 pm james@runaboutsports.com	RunAbout Sports
Sat/7:00 am jhosner@vt.edu or smyers@vt.edu	Front of Bollo's
Sat 7:30 am drabun@yahoo.com	Blacksburg Library
<i>Call ahead</i>	<i>Times may change</i>

Blacksburg Striders Trails and Tales

Upcoming Races:

Please look at the following web sites for complete event listings:

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

<http://www.starcitystriders.com/calendar.htm>

<http://active.com>



Team Special Kaye

In support of Kaye Kriz who is currently battling cancer. If you are interested in a t-shirt, please email drabun@yahoo.com A special display will be at the Blacksburg Classic.