
Trails and Tales

Blacksburg Striders PO BOX 764, Blacksburg, VA 24063

June 7, 2006

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

President

Aaron Goldstein
231-3674 (w)
goldst@vt.edu

Treasurer

Beth Howell
231-2908 (w)
bethrun@vt.edu

Secretary

Ellen Rabun
951-9444 (w)
drabun@yahoo.com

Editor

J.P. Palmer
831-5308 (w)
961-5315 (h)
jpalmer3@radford.edu

E-Mail List

Arthur Snoke
snoke@vt.edu

Web Page

Arthur Snoke
snoke@vt.edu

Races:

Blacksburg Classic:
Maarten van Gelder
mvgelder@dirtheapemail.com

Draper Mile:

James DeMarco
james@runaboutsports.com

President's Corner

Aaron Goldstein

Summer is around the corner and we've got a lot of great events coming up. Set aside the morning of Tuesday, July 4th for the annual **Shawsville 5K** and the afternoon of Friday, August 4, for the annual **Draper Mile**. Our annual **Summer Track Series** kicks off on Tuesday June 13 and runs through August 8. These workouts will take place on Tuesdays at 6:30pm, at the outdoor track on the VT campus. Please contact me for more details. James DeMarco and the folks at *Runabout Sports* are getting ready for the third annual **Blacksburg Striders Summer Training Program**. The program, which will involve morning runs at different locations around the area (Monday through Saturday), starts at Smithfield Plantation on June 12 at 9am and is free for all striders members. Finally, *Runabout Sports* will be organizing the 3rd Annual **High Performance Distance Academy** at Virginia Tech, July 10-15. For more information check www.runaboutsports.com or call 552-9339.

We had a great **Blacksburg Classic** again this year. For the second year in a row, we had over 400 participants and my big thanks go out to Maarten van Gelder who organized the event. In addition, Arthur Snoke organized the fun run, Steve Miller handled the start and finish, Dale Pokorski handled the results, Cameron Patterson handled the course, and we had the members of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, Echo Company, marshalling the course. Clearly, I've left out scores of people who covered details like food, water, collecting finishing results, and cheering on the

runners. Me? I was hiding in the back with Dale trying to organize the results and catch all the glitches.

I saw John Hosner sprinting down the Huckleberry Trail one recent morning and it reminded that he recently set a new world record for the mile in his age group. Congratulations.

Hopefully you've seen me at some of the local races with the club race-clock. I was at the annual **Dash for the Cure** on Saturday April 15 and the Spring into Summer race on June 3. You might have also seen me at the Blacksburg Striders-sponsored rest stop for the **Mountains of Misery** (MoM) on May 28. MoM is an annual 100 mi/200K bicycle race along the mountainous highways of Giles and Craig counties that is organized by the New River Valley Bicycle Club. Somewhere north of New Castle Alice Nosse, Allie Keeley, Tony Gaglione, Chris Bashur, Cameron Patterson, Betty Segar, and I fed 400+ riders.

Take a look at our website for event updates, remember to stay hydrated, and I hope to see you out running.

Hope to see you out running!

◇ ◇ ◇

Virginia Creeper Marathon

Betsy Nardi: her first marathon

It was about 65 at the start with a little sunshine. Then the clouds rolled in and it became muggy. Then it cleared a little, clouded up and sprinkled, then cleared and remained mostly sunny. It was about 75 to 80 at the finish.

Several people spilled their gatorade/guts out. I did hike into the

Blacksburg Striders Trails and Tales

woods to relieve my bladder. Took time, but I felt better afterwards. I stopped at every stop and took water, a fig newton most times, and maybe a grape or two. I drank 2x 20oz bottles of my gatorade with salt and was done with that at about mile 22. I had energy left at the end but pretty much stuck to the same pace (10 min/mi) the whole time. (The guy that proclaimed at the beginning that he was going to do an 8:45 pace came in about 20 min after me.) Thought of the Grateful Dead tune, "Trucking" as I was "Creepin' down the marathon trail... living off goo, gatorade and fig bars...."

I met some really nice folks, and some that defined the word 'eccentric'. It was a very low key event with only about 110 runners. And they all just loved the *Marathon Control Kit* put together for me by Beth: gel pack, power bar from Eats (like a bagel), a beer, piece of chocolate — all in a paper bag with a handle on it and a homemade MCK label. I was intrigued by the race director, who sat at the finish line drinking a beer.



The SPROUTE Adventure Race

Linsey Marr

Would our first adventure race lead to triumph or tribulation? My partner Erich Hester and I competed in a "short course" race of 15 miles, advertised to take 3-4 hours, on April Fool's Day. We were team "Tarred and Feathered," Erich's name for our two mascots: the UNC Tar Heels and the Virginia Tech Hokies. The race involved running, mountain biking, canoeing, a ropes course, and most importantly, navigation. Adventure racing differs from others in that THERE IS NO SET COURSE. Given the famous battle between the sexes over navigation, I joked that the race might lead to divorce.

The race site, Pocohantas State Park, was not announced until the night before the event. Fifteen minutes

before the race start, we received topographic maps and a race booklet, which consisted of nine UTM (universal transverse mercator map projection) coordinates, each a "checkpoint." The booklet stipulated whether each checkpoint had to be visited on foot, bike, or by canoe. Checkpoints were marked by an orange flag hanging from a tree and a unique punch that competitors used to mark their "race passport," a piece of paper. When the starting gun fired, we went nowhere. Rather, we spent about 20 minutes plotting the UTM coordinates on a map.

We started out on bike, crossing a stream and then climbing a fire road for a mile before deciding to hike-a-bike through the woods with a compass to try to find the first checkpoint. By dead reckoning and good luck, we stumbled across it. Along the way, we saw teams riding in all directions on different trails.

An hour into the race, we began riding toward the second checkpoint. Along the way, we passed a team of three who jumped on our tails and followed our every turn. At the second checkpoint, we were supposed to drop the bikes and run to find the next two points. Because no other bikes were there, we thought we were far behind the field. Also, race officials conducted a "gear check" and penalized us for my not carrying the required whistle. For the second checkpoint, we had to locate a historic display in the park and copy down some information from it. We went to an intersection of trails and from there picked our way through briars, fallen trees, and rhododendrons to find the third point. Our compass navigation was solid, as it led us straight to the third point.

We returned to our bikes, rode on paved and gravel roads to the next checkpoint and then finally got to drop our bikes back at the transition area. We were now about three hours into the race. The organizers had expected the first teams to be finishing by now, but the ropes and canoe awaited us.

When we arrived at the ropes course, the officials told us that we were the first place team! The course

consisted of climbing up a narrow rope ladder hanging from a tree to a point about 25 feet off the ground. I completed the climb and then spent the next ten minutes coaxing Erich past his acrophobia to climb to the top. I was unwilling to incur a one-hour penalty if we did not complete this section.

Now, we had to grab a canoe and portage it 200 yards down to the lake. On the way, we crossed paths with the second-place team, who was running to the ropes course. I figured we were about 10 minutes ahead of them. We canoed across the lake, got out, and spent several minutes running around trying to find the checkpoint before realizing that we were in the wrong place. So we had to get back into the canoe and paddle several more minutes along the shore to find it. At this point, our nemesis team was landing on shore, too. We beat them to the checkpoint and back into the canoe. I thought they would catch us during the trip back to the starting area because they had an extra paddler, but they didn't. They did, however, pass us during the portage of the canoe back up the hill. Erich and I were exhausted, and we had to take several breaks on the way up to the finish.

We finished second out of 12 teams competing in the "short" course. The race directors later apologized for making the navigation so difficult, but the challenge probably gave us a competitive advantage against the other teams because of our strength with topo maps and a compass. We'll get them next time!



Blacksburg Classic

Maarten van Gelder

It was another great year for the Blacksburg Classic. We were once again fortunate with the weather. Being a winter race, there is no telling what it will be. It turned out to be a nice day. There was some light frost the night before, but by the 1 pm start it had warmed up to about 60 degrees, partly sunny, with a light wind. It

Blacksburg Striders Trails and Tales

stayed like that for the duration of the race. The nice weather brought out a large number of race day registrants, about 145 for the 5K and 10 Mile, and about 30 for the fun run. In all, 214 people finished the 5K, and 188 the 10 mile. It was the largest number of finishers in recent history.

The winning man and woman in the 10 mile did so decisively. Aaron Saft crossed the finish line in 54:09 and had to wait nearly 4 minutes to see the next finisher. On the women's side, the difference between Elizabeth Abbey's winning time of 1:01:51, and that of the second place Jennifer Dietz was even larger, with Elizabeth putting nearly 7 minutes on Jennifer. The 5K race was close on the men's side, with Brock Landers (16:10) finishing just 5 seconds ahead of Bryan McVey. Ann McGranahan didn't have to look back when she won in 17:41. Pamela Maldeis was still some 40 seconds back.

The race was made possible by the generous contributions of sponsors, and by many volunteers. I thank the Montgomery Regional Hospital for being the financial sponsor. I further thank Mish Mish, East Coasters, RunAbout Sports, Roanoke Bagel Company and Bogen's for their sponsorship. Many people were involved with the various aspects of the race. The Echo Company of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets provided all the course volunteers, who kept the course safe for the runners, and staffed the aid stations. Peter Lazar coordinated the course volunteers for the race organization. Course setup was performed by Cameron Patterson, with assistance of Tim Driscoll. Further, and in no particular order, and with excuses for anyone who was omitted: Arthur Snoke, Brenda van Gelder, Yuriko Renardy, Connie Bowden, Betsy Nardi, J.P. Palmer, Christine Haimann, Steve Nagle, James Rosar, Bruce Lund, Dale Pokorski, Greg Lemmond, Mike Holland, Marshall Overstreet, Steve Miller, Paul Farrier, Valerie Hardcastle, Carole Dellinger, Aaron Goldstein, Konstantinos Krampis, Liz Rucker, Geoff Saunders, Katherine Phillips, Peggy Leister,

Jerry Cross, and the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad.
Thank you all!



Why Run?

Arthur Snoke

One of our members wrote:

I am pretty new to running, so I would like to read about how people find time to run, and how they motivate themselves and each other to maintain their fitness.

We decided to poll the membership as a way to find answers. Here is what we learned:

Finding the time: You have to make time to run. You can get up early and do it before work or class. You can schedule it in your day just like everything else you have to do! When is the best time to run? Whenever it fits into your schedule that day. Try to have bags of running gear stashed in strategic places (car, office, locker, etc) so that you can go for a run when the opportunity arises. If you have an unpredictable schedule, or when your planned runs always seem to get way-laid by having to work late, finishing a project, or someone needing your time and attention, you have the option of running earlier or later and from where ever you happen to be. This does require you have a couple of running shoes at a time, but they do tend to last longer.

Motivation: Think of why you started to run, think about that whenever you need the reminder! (*i.e.*, when you want to just put it off until tomorrow) Also, run with a partner — having made the commitment to work-out with someone obligates you. We don't like to let down our friends!

Many things keep me motivated to run which include the camaraderie that I feel with the people that I am lucky enough to know and run with, the great "feeling" I get while running and after running, doing specific work-

outs to increase speed and strength and seeing improvements gradually, knowing that this is a healthy habit, being outside. (I hate the treadmill.) And working towards whatever marathon or triathlon is next on the schedule.

1. Look at myself in the mirror in my bathing suit.
2. Get up earlier and get it done before the day starts. Agree to meet someone to run!

Sometimes I make my husband run with me. Sometimes my mom makes me run with her. It's good to have a friend to provide encouragement and motivation. The best way for me to stick with it is to run or do some type of exercise (walking, pilates, etc) every day. The more you exercise, the more it becomes a part of your regular routine. I also try to sign up for an occasional road race, not because I'm very fast but it's good motivation to try to get in shape for a decent performance.

Racquetball was my sport, but when I went on sabbatical I couldn't play and got fat.

Set realistic goals (time, distance, weight loss), and if you make them that will provide motivation to find the time. Once you are "in it," not running becomes a problem — it's an addiction.

And finally, ... it's really a substitute for sex, so whenever the urge strikes...



Holiday Lake Ultramarathon

Beth Howell

Back in late 2004, as I recovered from a stress fracture on my foot, I dreamed of running long and slow again ... and perhaps even doing Holiday Lake again. You see, the first time I did Holiday Lake in 2002, the

Blacksburg Striders Trails and Tales

stars aligned, and the weather and trail conditions were perfect. I should have known better ... as the stars aligned again in late 2005, and training long went well week after week, I should have known better ... but, instead I got to thinking about Holiday Lake ... dreaming of Holiday Lake in February ... the perfect first Ultra ... it would almost be like having a **FIRST Ultra** twice since it had been 4 years since my first.

And truly it was like a **FIRST**. Unlike the 2002 race, the 2006 edition of Holiday Lake was about as extreme as it could be. Imagine the start, for example ... The start of Holiday Lake is always at 6:30 am, which in February is **DARK**. Well, this time it was dark and 30 degrees and raining. Looking back, I don't know what I was thinking. The forecast was for rain changing to snow ... and that's exactly what it did. About 25 minutes into the race, just as it began to be daylight and the trail opened up onto a dirt road, we all noticed that it was snowing, a light snow that continued steadily all day long. Fortunately, the ground was a bit warm, so the snow did not pile up. Instead it just began to form a wet, wet slimy red mixture on top of the red clay that exists over in that part of the State.

Holiday Lake normally is a really wonderful Ultra. It's a 50K++, which most people agree is around 34 Dave Horton miles instead of a precise 31.2 miles (Dr. Horton, the Race Director, is famous for his long miles). The race takes place over near Appomattox, so it's not terribly hilly,

Local Holiday Lake Results:

place	name	time	age
3	Steven Baker	4:22:56	21
10	Michael Stratton	4:43:16	22
11	Jordan Chang	4:43:43	18
12	Daniel Villarreal	4:44:04	21
13	Michael Esbach	4:46:55	19
21	Brian Mayer	4:58:22	20
83	Beth Howell	6:12:46	50
96	Elizabeth Glusica	6:23:40	21
127	Dustin Flannery	6:42:24	20
163	Michael Holland	7:15:29	M

and the footing is mostly really good – more dirt roads than technical, rocky trails – but some of each. There are even a few spots where you run on asphalt, but not much. You run around a huge Lake, and the course is one loop that you run counterclockwise back into the start/finish area, and then turn around and run the whole loop the other way. The aid stations are well spaced out, and I found myself not even noticing that miles were noted at the aid stations. That is one of the things that really appeals to me about Ultras – no mile markers and no clocks. I left my watch on the time function, and hardly looked at it all day.

To say the least, on the second loop the footing was atrocious. Rather than think about it, I just plodded along at a pretty even pace. I ran 3:03 for the first half, and finished in 6:12. Each loop has 3 creek crossings, one that is hardly wet, and 2 that are unavoidably wet. Wading through cold water on a cold, wet day was intense, and we had to do it 4 times. My feet were swollen for 2 days from being so cold. It was so cold that my Hammer Gel would not come out of the bottle. The night before, the Race Director had suggested that we wear a water bottle and drink Conquest (energy drink) at each aid station. That totally saved me. In the whole 6 hours, I did very little Gel, and the Conquest worked wonderfully.

In spite of the conditions, the race was peaceful and I did feel like I had it under control. The other runners were great. Every time I came up on someone, we would run a bit together and chat. At one point, I was struggling up a steep, really slimy hill under some power lines, and I totally slipped and fell backwards ... the runner behind me just caught me and helped me along ... everyone that passed anyone had nothing but encouragement to offer. And Blacksburg runners did really well. The results and numerous race reports can be found at www.extremeultrarunning.com including a great write-up by Jordan Chanr. You will also find there details of other events, including Promise Land 50K, which I ran on April 22.

(But that's another story...) I'm hooked at least for now on these Ultras. I suggest you try one!!!



Planned Huckleberry Trail Extension

Arthur Snoke

On February 28, an article on the Virginia Tech Web site began as follows: “Virginia Tech, the Friends of the Huckleberry, and the Town of Blacksburg have worked out an agreement that allows for the expansion of the Huckleberry Trail ... Virginia Tech will be granting a property easement that allows for the trail to be extended across university property.” The article also appeared the next week in the *News Messenger*. I contacted Bill Ellenbogen, president, *Friends of the Huckleberry*, to clarify some points in the article.

Before describing the planned expansion, these are some relevant facts about the existing trails: The Huckleberry trail starts at Miller Street in Blacksburg and ends at the New River Mall, and is 5.762 miles in length. At about 1.75 miles, the trail goes through a tunnel under the US-460 Bypass and then takes a sharp turn left (south) towards Christiansburg. There is also a bike path that starts at the Virginia Tech horse barns (near Smithfield Plantation), runs through a second tunnel under the US-460 Bypass and ends at Plantation Road (the road that runs from Prices Fork Road at the Carilion clinic to the Pig Barns). Coming from Virginia Tech, if one turns left (south) on Plantation Road and goes up the hill (a couple of hundred yards), one can turn right on a paved spur that connects to the Hethwood bike path. The up-hill on Plantation Road, the paved spur, and the first couple of hundred yards on the Hethwood bike path completes three sides of a rectangle — going around a field (that often has burros) that is bounded on the north by Stroubles Creek.

The currently planned expansion will take part in two phases. Phase I is

Blacksburg Striders Trails and Tales

a short spur that is not related to the Huckleberry Trail. It starts at Plantation Road and runs through the field just described along the south bank of Stroubles Creek. Phase I cuts about 1/3 mile off the distance to Hethwood, takes runners, bikers, and walkers off of Plantation Road. Ellenbogen says Phase I should begin very soon and will take about two months.

Phase II will connect the Huckleberry Trail to the Hethwood bike path. The new spur will begin at the gravel road on the east side of the tunnel (where the Huckleberry Trail passes under U.S. 460) and will wind north — paralleling the Bypass and connecting to Phase I at Plantation Road. (The spur will essentially be a tunnel-to-tunnel connector, although one intersection will actually occur at Plantation Road due to the creek being in the way.) Due to safety concerns about negative encounters between trail users and agriculture equipment, a bridge may be constructed to separate agricultural traffic from trail traffic at the south end of the spur.

Ellenbogen closed his comments with the following: This phase of the Trail extension will be a critical link in creating a Huckleberry Trail that extends from Christiansburg to the Jefferson National Forest. Friends of the Huckleberry is working with Dean Crane, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Blacksburg, and several departments at Virginia Tech, including the College of Agriculture

and Life Sciences, the Transportation Office, and the Office of Real Estate Management to facilitate the trail connections. The trail easement has been granted by Virginia Tech. We hope to develop our final plans this year and begin construction in 2007.

A Web page, with maps and links, can be accessed from the Web version of this newsletter.



Draper Mile

Aaron Goldstein

Plans are underway for the annual running of the Draper Mile race. The race is scheduled for the afternoon of Friday, August 4. This is a fast race (almost all downhill) from Country Club to Jefferson St that coincides with the first day of the Step'in Out Blacksburg street festival. Historically, we have limited the entries to 150 – and it always sells out. Application forms and more information to come, but keep the date in mind.

Brush Mountain Breakdown

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 Fall 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.



Summer Track Series

Aaron Goldstein

The best way to build speed is through track workouts. We will be holding our annual Summer Track Workout Series. This will consist of eight workouts at the outdoor track on the VT campus (Spring Rd and Southgate). Runs begin June 13 and continue through August 8. (No event on July 4.) Warm-up starts at 6:30pm. For liability reasons the Athletic Department at Virginia Tech requests that workouts be restricted to Striders members.

Hosner Sets Record

Arthur Snoko

In a Masters meet in Durham, NC on May 6, 2006, John Hosner, age 81, ran the mile in hopes of breaking the outdoor record for 80-year-old males. The record he was trying for was 7:51.9, held by Harry Sypniewski (U.S.) in 1980. Even though there was a strong wind, John ran 7:36.33, cheered on by wife Tenna. At the 2006 AEP "Festival" Run on June 3, John won his age group with a 25:13.1 5K -- not a world record, but still very impressive!

Regular Blacksburg Running Groups

<u>Day/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tue/6:00pm goldst@vt.edu	Across from 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 drrabun@yahoo.com	Blacksburg Library
<i>Call ahead</i>	<i>Times may change</i>