

Van Cortlandt Track Club newsletter

Our Tribute to

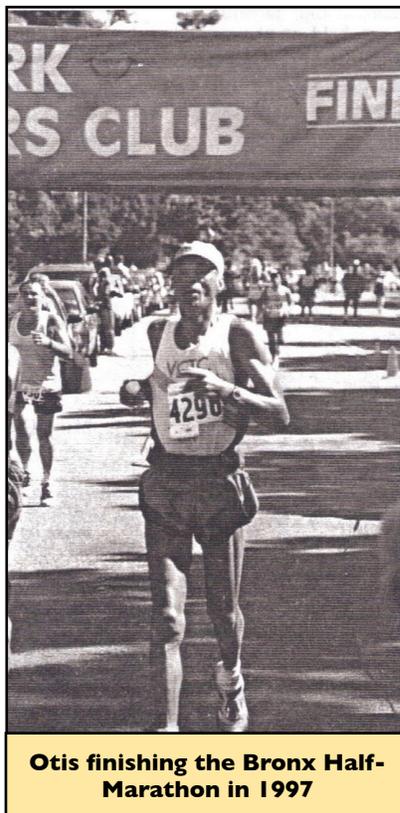
Otis Matthews

1936-2010

by Arnie Gore

In late May, long-time VCTC member Otis Matthews had a stroke and was hospitalized. He lived alone and was found by his mother. By the time she reached Otis, the damage had been done. He was hospitalized, but never regained consciousness. The stroke did severe damage and he could not speak or eat. He passed away on Saturday, June 19. His wake and funeral was held on June 24 and many club members and former club members were there.

I met and got to know Otis Matthews in the senior years of his illustrious running career in the 1990's when he joined Van Cortlandt Track Club. I began to get an insight into how many other runners he coached and inspired during his hospitalization. While Otis was in the Intensive Care Unit, they only allowed 2 people to visit at one time. Otis always had a line of friends waiting to see him, whom I got to know while waiting.. Most of these were people who had run with him



Otis finishing the Bronx Half-Marathon in 1997

and been inspired by his example and encouragement. This was only a prelude to the moving testimonials at the memorial service of the many family and friends whose lives he touched and guided.

I was one of the few vegetarians in the Club back then and I felt a little less different when I found out at one of our picnics that Otis was an even stricter vegetarian than I was. He was a purist and didn't eat dairy, but I did. He would bring his mother Julia to our picnics, where I first met her. She was always by his side when he was hospitalized. Otis also had listened to Gary Null, the alternative health broadcaster, and recalled running with Gary, Sid Howard, and Sam Skinner.

Otis never forgot his roots, growing up in the South Bronx. I remember going to a demonstration with him in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the mid nineties to protest the death penalty in the case of Mumia Abu Jamal. Family was important to Otis and he was a reliable tower of strength to his mother and extended family.

When I was Riverdale Ramble Director and we needed someone to pick up race applications in the East Bronx, Otis always volunteered, as he did when we used to supply volunteers for the Bronx Half Marathon.

Otis was a very gifted athlete and runner, winning many VCTC awards recognizing his accomplishments: Runner of the Year in 1996, and age group awards subsequently. His New York Road Runner history shows age graded times ranging up to 79.2% with a 1:31:48 for 2nd place in the 1997 Queens Half Marathon and a 33:23 for 2nd in the highly competitive Team Championships 5M race in 1998. He had a few more good years of running, his last NYRR race was in 2002. He was diagnosed with high blood pressure and was told by his doctor to stop running at that

time. He was no longer receiving accolades for his running performances, but he showed his strong reliable character, by regularly continuing to help out registering runners for our summer cross country series, and even giving me a muffin for volunteering in the back hills. Perhaps our greatest test, comes when we can't perform like we used to, and how we adjust to our limitations. Otis passed this test with true grace and a smile.
ed note: We all will miss Otis.

Otis Matthews

by Peter Coy

(Reprinted from the VCTC Newsletter Jan/Feb 1999)

His first name isn't really Otis. It's Arthur. His middle name is Theotis (please don't call him Theotis, though. We just thought you'd like to know).

You might say Otis goes so fast now, to make up for all the years he had to go slo-o-o-w. Otis retired from a 33-year career with the U.S. Postal Service, mostly in the Bronx. One of his jobs was to accompany letter carriers to see whether their routes needed to be shortened or lengthened. Naturally, these civil servants were not interested in being given long routes, so they tended to walk very slowly whenever they were being clocked. Otis still remembers one fellow named Henry who seemed utterly befuddled about which letters went into which mail slots in a certain apartment building. "After a few minutes I said, 'Henry, how long have you been on this route?' He said, 'Twelve years.' After that he got a little faster.

Otis has been an athlete for as long as he can remember. "I excel at baseball, especially

Van Cortlandt Track Club

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Club workouts are held Tuesdays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 8 a.m. (roads/trails)

hitting,” he says. His main sport, though was basketball. He played hoops for the old Machine and Metal Trades High School on East 96th St. After finishing high school, he kept playing for church, YMCA and pickup teams until age 38, when the younger players started getting to be too much for him. He switched to paddleball, which was his main sport until the running bug bit him.

When he was about 40, Otis started jogging on the MaCombs Dam track, near where he lived, just north of the old Yankee Stadium.

”I was running 1-1/2 miles. One day, I saw a mail carrier. He said he was running 5 miles, and that amazed me.” It inspired him to run more, hooking up with several local runners. In two weeks, he was running 5 miles.

Soon it was Otis who was pushing the distance and pace. The group started running into Harlem, doing the Halrem 10K course, including the long, steep hill on Amsterdam Avenue. “The first three times I couldn’t climb that hill without stopping,” says otis. But he kept at it. He ran his first race in nearby Mt. Morris Park soon after. In his second race, he did the 1979 Harlem 10K in 49 minutes. “I was so proud,” he remembers. A year later, he

ran it in 41 minutes, and his times kept dropping. He ran several 10K’s in 39, and once, in New Jersey, went slightly under 39.

Otis also did marathons. He ran 3:43:27 in his first, the 1980 New York City Marathon. His fastest was 3:19:32 in the Dutchess County Marathon in 1984 at age 48. In that same race in 1996, he ran 3:30:12 taking first in the 60-64 age-group. In all, he ran 11 marathons.

For most of his running career, Otis was racing without the benefit of membership in VCTC, the Bronx’s second-finest athletic organization, after the Yankees, that is. What finally got Otis into VCTC was an invite by Bob Velez to join a group from the club that crashed at the home of Tony Thoman’s parents the night before the 1996 Boston Marathon. “Tony’s parents were so gracious. I’ll never forget that,” Otis says. “Ivan Mills was my roommate. I had a great time. We were gathering around, and Bob started throwing out these long-sleeve blue shirts. I said, ‘What do you have to do to get one of those?’ He said, ‘join the club.’ I said ‘Here. Boom.’ and gave him the 25 bucks, and I was a member.”

Otis was one of VCTC’s most enthusiastic partisans. “I’ve

met so many wonderful, positive people since I’ve been a member,” he says. At his first VCTC Awards Dinner, he won an age-group award. “When they called my name, I was so...so..I had such a wonderful feeling about that.” He won again in 1997. Otis became a regular at weekend practice runs. He twice ran the San Blas Half-Marathon in Puerto Rico in February. “It’s good clean fun. Why didn’t I do this years ago?” he said.

But Otis wasn’t into running just for good company. His weekly training totaled 35-40 miles, with speed and hills mixed in. Here is a typical week; ***Sunday-12 miles; Mon.-rest; Tues.-track or hills; Wed.-5 easy miles; Thurs.- 8-10 hilly miles; Fri.-rest; Sat.-5 easy miles.***

On the track Otis typically ran 8x400 at 95 secs, with a 200 meter jog. or 800’s in 3:20 with a 400 jog. He was also working out on a Nautilus machine and doing occasional swims and bike rides to supplement his running. Physical fitness was a big part of his golden years. “Sometimes I say, ‘where does the day go?’ It seems like its not enough.”

But the hard work paid off. Otis scored 37 points in the NYRR Grand Prix series by placing in major races. He won his age-group. He ran 1:34:25

in the Bronx Half in 1997 for first place in his age-group, 39:22 for the Bed-Stuy 10K, 1st place, 1:36:53 for the 1998 Brooklyn Half, 2nd place, 1:35:22 in the 1998 Queens Half for 2nd place. He was especially proud of his 1:10:11 in the 1998 Hot Chocolate 10-Miler. By joining VCTC, Otis greatly strengthened the club's older age-group participation in points races.

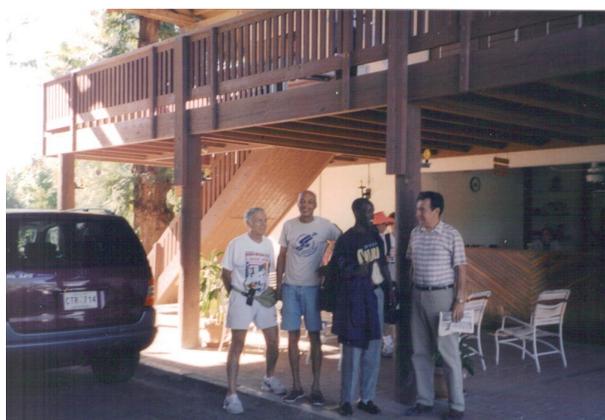
So, Theotis, ...oops, Otis... thanks for becoming part of the Van Cortlandt Track Club family.#



Otis(standing, 8th from left) at Luquillo Beach, P.R. with the VCTC contingent there to run the San Blas Half-Marathon in 1996



Susan Epstein, Arnie Gore and Otis at a VCTC picnic, late 1990's



Arnie Gore, Otis and Leo Hernandez chat with a runner at Los Banos before San Blas 1996



Otis before a recent race



Susan Epstein, Otis and Earline Smith at the VCTC picnic

5 Simple Training Tips

by Dr. Steven Y. Park

Most smart runners know that how well you treat your body even when you're not running can greatly affect your performance during training and races. It's also common knowledge that a healthy diet and good sleep are needed for your body's healing and restorative functions.

Tip #1: You Are When You Eat

During my weekly training runs with other runners, I was quite surprised to find that many VCTC runners have a very bad habit that can significantly diminish performance levels: eating too close to bedtime. You may be sleeping long enough, but if you eat late, your deep sleep quality can be significantly impaired.

We know from numerous studies that lack of deep sleep can affect memory, concentration, reaction times, endurance and various other athletic performance measures. Studies out of Stanford University showed that tennis and football players significantly improved their reaction, accuracy, and endurance times just by sleeping a little longer. (continued on page 6)

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There are a number of different explanations for why eating late is bad for you, but what's most important is that it diminishes the quality of your deep sleep by causing more frequent obstructions and arousals. Most modern humans are susceptible to breathing problems at night due to our ability to talk. Due to the position of the voice box below the tongue, the back of the tongue can easily fall back and obstruct your breathing, especially if you are on your back (due to gravity) and when in deep sleep (due to muscle relaxation). Furthermore, due to additional dental crowding and jaw narrowing in modern humans due to a radical change in our eating habits, there's even less space in our mouths for the tongue.

If you normally stop breathing during sleep once in a while, a vacuum effect is created in your throat, which suctions up your normal stomach juices into your throat. If you just had dinner or even a small snack, more juices will be lingering, and more likely to come up into your throat. What comes up not only includes acid, but also bile, digestive enzymes, and even bacteria. It's even been shown that your stomach juices can reach your ears, sinuses and your lungs.

This is also why many people can't sleep on their backs. Sleeping supine aggravates more frequent obstructions and arousals. Most people compensate by sleeping on their sides or stomachs. The problem is that it's not good enough, especially if you eat late.

Having a bit of acid lingering in your throat also causes chemical sensors in your throat to wake you up from deep sleep to light sleep so that you can swallow. This is thought to prevent aspiration of gastric contents into your lungs.

This may seem like a long-winded explanation for why you shouldn't eat late, but if you can stick to this advice for a few weeks, I'm confident that not only will you sleep better, but your running performance can be greatly improved.

Tip #2: Skip The Nightcap

There are many pros and cons to drinking alcohol, but having some alcohol within 2-4 hours of bedtime can significantly worsen your sleep quality. Due to alcohol's relaxing properties on your upper airway muscles, although it may help you fall asleep a bit easier, you'll stop breathing much more often at night. Even mild amounts of alcohol once or twice a week, as long as it's close to bedtime, can definitely lower your sleep quality.

Tip #3: Push It Forward

If you have small jaws, by definition, the space behind your tongue will be more narrow than normal. This means that every time you forcibly inhale, negative pressures will tend to collapse your upper breathing passageways, especially in the space behind your tongue. The only thing that's preventing your throat soft tissues from collapsing is a combination of muscle tension and your jaws that the soft tissues are tethered to.

Anatomically, by thrusting your lower jaw forward, your tongue is pulled forward, opening up your airway significantly. This concept is commonly applied in oral appliances for treating snoring and obstructive sleep apnea. Even elite athletes are using similar technology to improve performances.

You don't need to invest thousands of dollars to gain the same results as sleep apnea patients and elite athletes. The next time you're sucking wind at the end of a race, or during short track workouts, try pushing your lower jaw forward whenever you inhale. The maneuver opens up your breathing passageways significantly. Try it. You'll feel a difference.

Tip #4: Keep Your Chin Up

Contour pillows are routinely marketed for their orthopedic advantages. These are memory foam

pillows that are higher under the neck and lower under the head, gently tilting your head back. What the pillow industry doesn't know is that by definition, when you allow your head to be tilted back slightly when you're sleeping, you're actually opening up your breathing passageway. Whenever I look at the space behind the tongue with a patient on his or her back, even a very slight head tilt back can open the airway dramatically, whereas a light tilt forward can close the airway significantly.

Using this anatomic concept, try gently tilting your head back while you run. Notice how some elite runners seem like they're almost looking at the sky while running.

Tip #5: Avoid Flimsy Nostrils

When you're running or exercising, there are two opposite forces acting on your nostrils. One is the vacuum effect that's created when you're inspiring through your nose. It's like sucking through a flimsy straw. If the tips are flimsy, it'll collapse. You also have muscles that can pull your nostrils open. Animals have much more developed naris dilator muscles. Most runners breathe in and out through their mouths, but it's a good idea to breathe in through your nose as well as your mouth, since your nose produces a gas called nitric oxide, which increases oxygen uptake in your lungs by 10-20%.

But because of your nose's relatively small airway, along with collapsing nostrils, it's difficult to inhale forcefully when running, especially when you're going faster than a jog. One way to increase inspiration through your nose is to use nasal dilator strips, such as Breathe Right strips. By keeping your nostrils more stiff, it counteracts the forces that tend to collapse your nostrils. You can also use it at night to improve your sleep quality. #

The Latest News, Isn't

by Kevin Shelton-Smith

I was thumbing through a 1997 copy of Runners' World last week and came across one particular article. Apparently, running barefoot can decrease your risk of injury and boost your push-off power. Running shoes change the natural motion of feet, etc. So, all this latest talk of minimalist shoes is just "old hat" and all the new news isn't news at all – who knew? So what else were they saying in '97?

- The quickest and most effective way to rehydrate after a run is to add some solid food.
- Bounding is the surest way to increase bone density in legs, hips and pelvis.
- Taking in carbs during a long run, will make it *feel* easier after 60 minutes.
- Hi-tech foot support usually causes more problems than low-tech solutions because they generally overcompensate and are not needed. The medics are often too quick to prescribe orthoses.
- Motivation is easier for more short runs than for fewer long runs, even if it leads to higher total mileage.

OK, so these were the less usual articles with some good info, but the rest was the same stuff that we see going around today, but one piece that caught my eye was this. From 1998, the Achilles tendon would be renamed the tendo calcaneus. This followed eight years of discussions to replace proper names with Latin to standardise medical terms across countries and languages that can cause misunderstandings between doctors. The Adam's apple was to become the laryngeal prominence! RW reckoned that old habits die hard and suspected it would be many years before runners greet their doctor with the words, "My tendo calcaneus has gone again." Well they got that right! #

On The Run

by President Bette Clark

On this hot and humid day, 28 VCTCers ran a 4 mile Club Points race in Central Park. Despite the sweltering conditions, our team did remarkably well, with our men's open division finishing 11th, our men's 40 plus team finishing 4th, our men's 50 plus team finishing 3rd, and our 60 plus team finishing 2nd. Only a small group of women competed today in comparison—and our women's 50 plus team came in 5th. What is remarkable here is that our men's team in particular, has risen rapidly up the competitive ranks—and this is due to a combination of factors—some speedy members, some aging member, some new members, some returning members, and probably most importantly, a great showing of club members at the team points races. All of these factors are contributing to a new energy in our club, and it is a very exciting (albeit too hot) time to be running races altogether. Please continue to sign up for the club points races—please



make these a priority in your training schedule. It energizes and encourages all of us to train and push harder in races when we see that our efforts really make a difference as a team!!! The next team points race is the dreaded Teams Champs 5 miler (dreaded because it is usually the hottest day of the summer—though it is hard to imagine anything worse than today!) on August 7th. This year, we will also make a team effort to have a VCTC picnic afterwards in Central Park—so we will have a chance to eat and socialize as well as run (something we do well too..)

Our summer races also appear to be increasingly popular as the season progresses. Neither the heat nor the ongoing Van Cortlandt Park construction have deterred runners from taking part in our summer cross-country series. More and more popular, this year's 2 x 2 relay on July 8th fielded over 80 teams. I believe this is the largest number ever. With our new clock this season and an ever efficient scoring system (designed and implemented by Fred and his loyal cohort), the races have taken place seamlessly. With three more to go (and remember the last on August 18th is followed by a party at McGoos), we are likely to have a record year of runners,

Also coming up is the Bronx Half marathon on Sunday August 15th. We think of this as a Club race and many of us run it every year. I hope this year is no exception!!

Whether you are out there racking up the miles for fall marathon training, working the hills for strength training, or doing tempos and speed workouts to get speedier, remember to stay well hydrated and listen to your body. Enjoy the long days of summer running and keep telling us about new running adventures and favorite routes. #

Coach's Corner

by Ken Rolston

The best part of looking at the upcoming race schedule is the realization that eventually we will be preparing for runs in c o o l w e a t h e r.



For now it's best to keep cool, run shorter races and somehow figure out a way to manage the humidity. Some tips from RW:

Pre-hydrate before a run/race in this heat- Drink 8-16 oz 1-2 hours prior to your run. If

that's not possible go for 4-8 oz half an hour beforehand.

Drink cooler drinks- hold off on the coffee or tea before a long run. A study of cyclists showed they performed better with cool drinks. Nothing like a lower body temp !

Track workouts will veer from 5K training up to marathon training as we progress through the summer. Some ideas from my guy Ed Eye-stone:

- 1) Stride-out often not just on Tuesday night workouts but also at the end of long runs.
- 2) Faster intervals- Best way to keep fast is to run 3-4 miles of interval 800, 1000, 1200's at 3K-5K pace. Recovery should be equal to time run. Marathon pacing will feel comparatively easy.
- 3) Speaking of marathon pacing there will be that magic moment when the cool air arrives and you feel like you can run forever. You may be able to throw down a 13-15 miler at marathon race pace, like a really long tempo run.
- 4) Finally for our 5th Avenue mile crew, we are ready for 8-10 weeks of speed work designed to

create the muscle memory for you to achieve your September goals. Get ready for many 200's !

Upcoming Races

Jul 22-Thu- VCTC Summer Series 5K 7 PM

Jul 25-Sun- Escarpment Trail Run 30 K- Windham, NY 9 AM

Jul 27-Tue- Westchester Twilight Races- Somers, NY 6:30 PM

Jul 31-Sat- River To Sea Relay-92M- Milford NJ 6 AM

Aug 5-Thu- VCTC Summer Series 5K 7 PM

Aug 7-Sat- Jan Peek 10 K- Peekskill 8 AM

Aug 7-Sat- NYRR Club Champs 5m Central Park 8/9 AM

Aug 8-Sun- Catskill Mountain Road Relay 100K 6 AM

Aug 15-Sun- NYRR Bronx ½ Marathon, Lehman College 8 AM

Aug 19-Thu- VCTC Summer Series 5K 7 PM

Aug 21-Sat- Harlem 5K 8 AM

Aug 29-Sun- Henry Isola X-Country Classic VC Park 4m 11:30 AM

Sep 6- Mon- Dobbs Ferry 5K 9 AM

Sep 12-Sun- South Nyack 10 m 8:30 AM

Sep 12-Sun- NYRR Queens ½ marathon 7 AM

Sep 12-Sun- Tuckahoe Challenge 5m/1m 9 AM

Sep 18-Sat- Woodlawn Run for a Cause 5K 10 AM

Sep 19-Sun- NYC Marathon Tune-up 18m 7 AM

Sep 19-Sun- Yonkers Marathon/half 8:30 Am

Sep 19-Sun- Ocean to Sound Relay 50m 8 AM

Sep 19-Sun- Philadelphia Distance Run ½ marathon 7:45 AM#

The final Summer Series Cross-Country race will be held August 19, 2010 at 7 p.m. We need volunteers. There will be a party after the award ceremony, at Mr. McGoo's, 5601 Broadway.

Race Report

Ragnar Relay, May 14-15

More than one full day's worth of blood, sweat, & tears; not to mention much laughter—usually at the expense of my poor groin—and some late race incoherence. This was the Ragnar Relay—from Woodstock to Dobbs Ferry, New York.

Long Legged Lou Netter reports:

It all started with the distant gaze of a chubby, slow witted van rental employee on Gun Hill Road. He said the van that we had ordered for pick up at 9 am was not there. In fact, both vans were in Queens and we were politely asked if we were in a rush. With a looming start time in Woodstock at 1pm, both Dave Isaac and I had steam coming out of our ears. Fortunately, we were directed to a slightly more competent rental affiliate and van 1 was on its way.

The gear and crew, Dave and Rachel Isaac, Mike Lee and captains Rachel Kimber, Melissa Filut and I were packed up in the van, then we headed out onto the thruway. An accident on the highway about 10 miles from our Woodstock exit threatened our arrival time, but I was able to get around it and continue. We arrived in Woodstock with minutes to spare. In the first of a series of unfortunate events for Melissa, she was shoved to the start line straight out of the porta potty.

Melissa started with a bang. As I am a slow Tuesday track workout guy, I failed to realize how ridiculously fast Melissa is and what a consummate athlete she is. It was my go next. Melissa came flying in and handed off the snazzy arm

band baton. The course was well marked and although it was humid and hot, the scenery and my awesome crew made it a great first leg.

The last $\frac{3}{4}$ mile was a severe downhill which felt good. I handed off to Dave and he tore it up for his 3.7 mile run. After tracking Rachel I. from the van and feeling bad for her supposedly easy run, (a monster hill) we city slickers noted the chickens that were in the middle of the road, a sheep at the side and man chopping wood. What is this the Waltons?

Rachel K. and Mike ran the next two legs, each turning in amazing performances. Mike would hand off to the first VCTC runner in van 2.

The way the Ragnar Relay works is 2 vans of 6 people leap-frog from Woodstock to Dobbs Ferry. Racers 1-6 are in Van 1 and racers 7-12 are in Van 2. Each runner runs one 3-9 mile leg before switching off to the other van.

Kyle "The Groin" Hall reports:

Van 2 had Mandi Susman, Christina Cordaro, Heidi Velasquez, Allen Steigerwald, Matt Holzer and me in it. After a long trip out of NYC, we knew we were close to our first destination when we saw the first Ragnar racer(not VCTC). Although our team didn't have bib numbers yet, everything fell into place just before Mike arrived and I was off and running on my 8.3 mile leg. It was a warm, humid afternoon but we all ran well under the conditions, being inspired by the endless turns through verdant forests filled with fast flowing whitewater streams. Danny of Urban Athletics and I ran head to head through our "very hard" route. Crew members held large red Dixie cups of water out for me, which I was thankful for. The

large cups, however, promptly led to half the water going up my nose and most of the rest being poured over my head.

I handed off to Matt at the top of a steep incline. Matt then ran what was surely the most scenic and secluded leg of the entire trip for Van II. After giving him water, the van pulled away, back doors flew open, and a large water jug went flying out onto the dirt road. Mandi did not realize this was happening until I let out a startled shriek, which sent Christina & Heidi into convulsions. But we moved on, not realizing how difficult it would be to find Matt's endpoint at a Ukrainian church. We drove back and forth on a busy road before pulling into a state police precinct. No one answered the bell and we were pulling out of the parking lot when a police car drove up. The young officer began telling us how to go before stopping midsentence: "Follow me," he said. He then shot off down the road. We had our very own police escort.

Every runner among us ran with determination and a cooperative mindset. We embodied that age-old adage: "There's no 'I' in 'Team.'" But as darkness fell, one new runner among us demonstrated her capacity for competition. Heidi was running not only her first race ever, but what were soon to be her first three races ever—all within the same 24 hour period. She may think we were exaggerating, but we were all truly impressed by her solid stride and unflinching, take charge command of her relay legs. Her vest reflected loudly against the darkened sky as she charged up on a trio of male runners. Unfortunately, someone sent them all off course and they ran for several minutes in the wrong direction before finding the next exchange point.

Next, Allen had perhaps the

worst leg of the trip, a grueling journey along car choked roads in darkness, leading into a series of long steep inclines. We then drove to the exchange point, not knowing that the Incident that Shall Not Be Spoken Of (thanks, Christina, for that) was about to occur. We waited impatiently for Van 1 to arrive at the exchange point as we knew Allen would soon be finishing his leg and passing the baton back to Van 1 in moments. Cell communication with Van 1 verified that they were still a ways off. We wondered what in the hell was going on, as they'd had several hours free while we ran our legs.

Allen shot into town, extending the bracelet to a stranger who he presumed was Melissa. It wasn't. Van 1 was a no-show. Finally, ten minutes later van 1 arrived and the handoff was done.

So what the hell happened to van 1?

Race-Ready Rachel K, reports:

10 minutes before Allen was due into the Major Exchange, Van 2 started making frantic phone calls to Mike and Lou. With each call we assured Van 2 that we were at the exchange and waiting for them to arrive. The final phone call came and went something like this:

Matt: "We're here now. We're by the entrance to the stone church. Where are you?"

Mike: <looking around and seeing nothing of the sort> "Errr, you mean ... the wooden school, maybe?" <pause> "Exchange 13 right?"

Matt: "No. 12" <pause> "No. Don't say that."

Mike: <long, painful silence> "Okay. Hey, Matt. We need to sort a few things out on our end. I'll call you back in a minute." <click> "EVERY-

ONE GET IN THE VAN NOW! RUN!!"

We backtracked with as few profanities as possible and as quickly as possible through New Paltz traffic and around Ragnar racers without the requisite night safety gear. We passed our afternoon perch at Starbucks, where we had been watching runners (from slower teams that started earlier than us) lope past. They were running on Melissa's route from the correct exchange point.

Bright lights and the smell of BBQ guided us into the Major Exchange, once again, we shoved Melissa out of the van and she took off like a shot! Van 2 doled out severe looks of disappointment to the remaining members from Van 1.

Mike "Fast Twitch" Lee reports:

After a few hours of navigating through the dark roads, dropping off and picking up our runners, it's my turn again to shake out some stiff legs. Now it's real night running time. After a few quick strides to loosen up, I find my Garmin has died, Highway 9D seems awfully dark, the race packet proclaims that no van support is allowed on this 7.6 mile leg, and the runner preceding me takes off with probably a mile head start. So, some time after midnight, it's into the dark I go by myself. Most of my thoughts revolve first around "Boy, I hope I'm going in the right direction", and then "Please don't run me over, Mr. Truck". About 4 miles in, I think to myself that there's nothing I would rather do than stop running, lie down and take a nice nap. But the nice thing about the staggered start is that you can catch a lot of the slower teams, and after a few miles, I was relieved finally to see some other runners (I really was kind of worried that I had

run in the wrong direction), and then it was a game of Pac-Man ... gobble, gobble, gobble up the other runners. Finally, I make the last few turns, spot Kyle, and sprint through to deposit the baton in Kyle's hand.

Kyle "The Groin" Hall reports:

Van 2 parked in downtown Beacon and had a nice meal at a Mediterranean restaurant. I was wide-awake and getting ready to run my second leg, but knew my groin needed some TLC. It was a little beat up but I did my best to warm up. My five mile leg, began at around 2:15 a.m., and I went along fine until a presumably drunken driver drove straight at me at full speed, swerving only at the final second. Though it was an unnerving experience, my pace quickened and I began feeling fast as I reeled people in. About .3 from the exchange zone, I scanned the horizon to ensure I was on track as a sign earlier had been misplaced, my left foot was swallowed by a huge pothole. My foot twisted over hard and I just knew it was bad.

I handed off to Mandi who ran her leg down completely blackened roads, beneath an infinitely starry sky. And just as dawn was breaking, Heidi completed her second leg. We were now nearing Peekskill. I got some ice for my sore ankle, hoping I could run again.

Mike "Fast Twitch" Lee reports:

As Van 2 was running, Van 1 slouched into the Peekskill High School parking lot where the first shift vans were resting up. Think refugee camp. Hundreds of nasty sweaty athletes sprawled out on a high school gym floor and people doling out cups of coffee and hot

water from poorly lit tents. We opt to stew in our own filth inside the van rather than share the nastiness of our fellow runners in the gym. At some point in the wee hours someone proclaimed "Oh my God my stomach hurts so much". At some other point we were text messaged about a warning regarding some mysterious safety violation on the course. Neither event registered very well in my sleepy brain. But eventually, it was time to roll - Matt and I traded a few texts and then calls about Allen's ETA, and we were absolutely focused on not messing up this exchange. After cheering on the early morning runners of Van 1 on their final legs, it's *finally* time for me to finish off our contribution with a hugely hilly 6.9 mile run. Its about 9am on Saturday and we've been going for 20 hours! As we drive towards the exchange, there's some discussion of stopping for coffee, to which I feel I have to interject "Errr, should we maybe get me to the exchange first, then talk about getting coffee?" I count off and remember a few rabbits to chase down (green jersey, red jersey, blue shorts ...) as I wait, then take the bracelet from Rachel K and head off into the hills. On a steep climb, Lou pulls the van up and hands off a bottle of Gatorade, for which I'm eternally thankful ... at least until I realized I didn't have the cap. So, splash, gulp, splash, gulp, run, splash ... but it's better than being thirsty. With all the wasted minutes of the botched exchange still weighing on my mind, I try to make amends by gobbling up as many runners as I can before I spy Rachel K and Melissa pointing me in the right direction on a particularly tricky turn. Kyle's ready and waiting, we make the hand-off, and I enjoy the pleasures of not running for a while.

Kyle "The Groin" Hall reports:

We made our way to the last large exchange zone—at an office park in Armonk, I believe. We hung out there for a while, with some dozing more (i.e. Matt—who slept twice as much as anyone else) while I tested out my ankle and became increasingly worried. Allen gave me a lidocaine patch and I froze my foot with Freeze It, the same way my groin gets frozen. Now, I've never dropped out of a race in my seventeen years of racing, but I'd also never gone into a race with such a fresh and painful injury. The ligaments on top of my foot were swollen and hurt like a bastard. Nothing really seemed to help, however, and it was only by the Grace of God (truly) that I was able even to embark on my final 6.4 mile leg. A half mile in, I realized I could do this. All I had to do was establish a rhythm. Into the hills of Chappaqua I went, telling myself, "Pain is temporary, pride is forever." And when eleven teammates shouted at the tops of their lungs, "How's your groin??!" I knew I could not let them down. And so I went on. Every single step was felt, as my ligaments were pounded into submission. I did the best I could in that leg in one of the toughest races of my life, grit-wise. I handed off to Matt and thanked God it was over. 19.7 miles within 18 hours, check. Christina soon ran smoothly down a bike path alongside a forest, bringing us ever closer to Rockefeller State Park. That's where Heidi took full control of her final leg to charge, absolutely charge, through the park and down toward Tarrytown. Along the way, Allen attempted to persuade her to give up the long-sleeved shirt around her waist. She shrugged him off real quick as she floated past us, headphones flying every which way.

Allen brought us all home with a final few miles from Tarrytown and into Dobbs Ferry. On the cool, sunny banks of the Hudson River we landed. Both van crews reunited for a final stand. We didn't know it at the time but we'd just finished 6th overall of 95 Open Mixed teams. Mission accomplished.

Galloping Mandi reflects:

Running is usually a pretty solitary sport. I do most of my miles by myself as do many other runners. It's time I use to straighten out my head, think about particularly challenging issues, meditate. But the Ragnar Relay is a team sport in every sense of the word. We had two captains keeping us on track, but we truly needed all 12 members of the team. Each brought their own special skill to the race. Everyone pitched in when it counted and 12 folks pulled together to finish in 6th place in a crowded open division. Not too shabby for a team of newbies.#

Brooklyn Half-Marathon May 22

by Jeff Powell

In my quest to complete all five NYRR Half Marathon series races in each borough, the next stop on my list was Brooklyn.

This is one of the Half Marathon Series races that I had not run, and word-of-mouth was that it was the best one in the series. After completing the Manhattan Half in January, I was ready to take on the next one which was

hopefully more exciting than two laps around Central Park. The fact that it started in Prospect Park and ended in Coney Island (one of my favorite places in the world) was enticing enough, and the morning of May 22 was a spectacularly cool and somewhat overcast day so it seemed like it might be a perfect race.

The only non-perfect thing it seemed was the 7:00 start which required me to get up at the crack of dawn for my pickup in Matt Holzer's car. Allen Steigerwald also joined us and we headed onto the West Side Highway at around 5:20 in the morning. As you can imagine, the highway that time of day is relatively deserted, so we made it to Brooklyn with plenty of time to spare.

We warmed up on the walk to the start of the race, and ran into other VCTC members – Dave Isaac, Bette Clark, Jo Ann Pate and Erick Fernandez. Everyone was pumped for the race – fun atmosphere, great weather, and a good running course to look forward to.

At the start, Marty Markowitz welcomed everyone to Brooklyn (a bit loudly of course) and it just seemed like an atypical NYRR race – people were chatting, everyone was smiling and we were enjoying the music which reflected a Brooklyn theme – whether it was a Brooklyn artist, or the song was about Brooklyn in some way.

Finally, the horn went off, and the runners started. I took off quickly as usual and finished my first mile around 6:30. Not a bad start, but probably a pace I could not keep for the next 12.1 miles. However, I was pretty pumped. Prospect Park is beautiful, but hilly. Thankfully this was only going to be two laps, not three. The hills came up quickly, and I was able to tackle them well on the first lap, keeping around a 6:40 pace.

The second lap was more difficult, and the beauty of Prospect Park started to recede. I thought “beautiful park but it is a bit boring – not like Central Park where you can see the skyscrapers.” Of course, it was my tired brain thinking this after six miles, but the reality was that I was tired of the same scenery and ready to get out on the road. Destination: Coney Island.

At around mile 7.5, we left the park and headed down towards Ocean Parkway. My adrenaline kicked into gear and I even tried to get the spectators cheering the runners coming out of the park. We headed down the highway ramp and onto Ocean Parkway. I looked down the road and thought “Oh no... this is going to be one long stretch”.

Ocean Parkway was one of the longest, most tedious stretches of road I have ever run. Perhaps it is a great avenue to drive down but when you are 8-9 miles into a race and your legs

are starting to fatigue, you seem to be staring into oblivion.

I just kept going. I even tried to make conversation with the guy running next to me who seemed to be in no mood to talk. “Wow, this is a long stretch” I said. He just nodded and kept running. Probably thought “Thanks dude for clearing that up, I didn't know”. I passed Avenue P and then Avenue R thinking “No Avenue Q” and then remembering how funny that show was to keep my mind off this loooooonnnngggg stretch.

Mile 10 passed, Mile 11 – finally I could see the alphabetical avenues moving up towards the end – U, V, W, Z. Mile 12 and I can start seeing Coney Island.

I get excited. I can see the Cyclone Roller Coaster in the distance, thinking to myself how excited I am to ride it afterwards. We jump onto the boardwalk for the last sprint to the finish. I finish in 1:30:14 – a PR for the half marathon! Afterwards, we enjoyed the festivities. We met some other VCTCers for a beer at Peggy O'Neill's (nothing like a beer at 9:00am). Then we rode the Cyclone. Allen and I rode it three times.

Great race – everything I'd hoped for. The course was tough – Ocean Parkway was unrelenting. But would I do it again? Oh yeah! fuhgettaboutit!

The Greener Runner

by Kevin Shelton-Smith

RACING

Here are a couple of easy ways you can lighten your racing carbon footprint.

Easy entry-[Entering races online](#) not only saves you time and hassle, it also helps prevent thousands of registration forms from going unused.

Road trip- Save on gas costs and carbon emissions by using public transport if possible, or by organising shared transport with friends or running club mates. Better still, choose races closer to home. The tri-state area is hardly short of races.

Training - Road trip?-Why turn a local run into a road trip? Consider running to the track, Vanny or your local route. You'll save on time getting the car out, finding a parking space, gas, getting tickets and get more miles in without incurring as much time as you'd imagine. If you live within 3 miles, would it take 30 minutes to run? Even less to bicycle. Time your next drive, including getting to and from the car.

WASTE

Packaging currently makes up around 38 to 40 per cent of the average American's household waste, so reduce and recycle the packaging you consume to be kinder to the environment.

Powder power-Buy energy drinks in powdered form. It comes in much

smaller packaging relative to the amount of drink you'll end up with, making it more eco-friendly to transport and saving you the trouble of recycling hundreds of plastic bottles.

Plastic - not fantastic-Plastic bottles and bags made using oil can also take hundreds of years to degrade. Swap plastic bottles for a reusable one.

Bottled Water-NYC has great tasting water. Why have a truck drive all the way from Maine to deliver the bottled stuff. Use a faucet and save yourself a buck, and the earth some CO2 and oil.

Litter picker-Just take a bag on your runs and pick up all the litter you see along the way.

Light bulb moment- Save electricity – and money – by popping your GPS charger or MP3 player into a timer socket. You can make sure it'll always have enough power to last through your next training session, without it using up needless electricity. Plug devices into your(on) computer. While most wall socket chargers are only 30-40 per cent efficient and leak energy as your device charges, firewire and USB cables have an efficiency rating of 85 per cent.

NUTRITION

Easy electrolytes-Isotonic drink: mix 500ml of fruit juice with 500ml of water and 0.5g (one eighth of a teaspoon) of salt to make one liter of isotonic drink, and contain around 6g of carbohydrate per 100ml. Add-

ing a little salt (sodium) encourages you to drink more during a run and helps your body to retain, rather than excrete, fluid when you stop exercising.

Snack attack-Energy bars: Each bar is virtually fat-free, easy to digest and supplies 30g of carbohydrate - enough to fuel 30-60 minutes of hard running. Combine 175g oats, 85g muesli and dried fruit together in a bowl. Warm 3tbsp of honey in a small saucepan until it becomes runny, then add it to the oat mix. Stir in 150g dried fruit (such as raisins, dates, apricots, figs, apple, pineapple), two egg whites and 175ml apple juice. Press the mixture into a lightly-oiled 18x28cm baking tin. Bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes until golden. Allow to cool slightly then cut into bars.

Bee-licious-Honey is a natural, cheap and effective alternative to energy gels. One heaped teaspoon provides 13g of carbohydrate - enough to fuel 20 minutes of running. Use runny honey in plastic tubes or cut honeycomb - available from health food stores - into slices and wrap it in foil. And as a bonus on top of its high carb content, honey is also packed with vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants.

Race Results

Celebrate Life Half Marathon

Mar. 14, 2010

1:22:02	Kevin Shelton-Smith	2, 5 OA	
1:36:53	Melissa Filut		2
1:44:44	Rachel Kimber		4
1:47:36	Erick Fernandez		
1:52:26	Jamie Kyei-Frimpong		
1:52:28	Alexandra Fernandez		
1:55:12	Hiroshi Kitadi		
1:55:30	Dave Isaac		
2:05:26	Erica Hubbard		
2:05:26	Jo Ann Pate		
2:12:40	Jill Staats		
2:24:26	Sherry Fraser		

NYC Half Marathon

Mar. 20, 2010

2:00:04	Tami Luhby		
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Boston Marathon

Apr. 19, 2010

2:53:33	Kyle Hall	PR	
4:26:32	Tami Luhby		

North Face Challenge

Bear Mountain, N.Y.

May 8, 2010

50M

8:00:35	Mike Arnstein		5
10:28:53	Mike Oliva		
6:44:19	Kevin Shelton-Smith		
7:29:04	Hiroshi Kitadi		
7:37:46	Erick Fernandez		

Half Marathon

2:08:51	Eric Nolan		
2:41:15	Bette Clark		

R Baby Mother'S Day 4M

May 9, 2010

29:55	Heidi Pabon	F36	
31:53	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M53	
32:36	Robert Branch	M33	
32:31	Ramon Ruiz	M70	1

34:03	Shirley Middleton	F55	5
39:25	Edith Jones	F70	2
41:12	Catherine Schwarz	F46	
42:33	Kenn Sapeta	M55	

Healthy Kidney 10K

May 15, 2010

36:25	Kevin Shelton-Smith	M50	3
38:35	Harald Lixenfeld	M46	
39:09	Thomas Murley	M31	
39:31	Perry King	M53	
41:44	Louis Csak	M44	
42:09	Erick Fernandez	M28	
45:25	David Monahan	M58	
46:38	Dominic Lombardo	M43	
49:18	Bette Clark	F54	
51:26	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M53	
51:42	Edward James	M63	
51:49	Kathryn A Donovan	F51	
51:51	Alexandra Hernandez	F29	
51:54	Arnold L Gore	M69	5
52:17	Gene Westling	M55	
53:35	Jane Berger	F42	
54:08	Shirley Middleton	F56	
54:14	Jill Staats	F58	
54:40	Jo Ann Pate	F35	
54:59	Robert Branch	M33	
55:32	Erica Hubbard	F30	
56:31	Adrian Hunte Smith	F56	
56:54	Melinda Abbott	F34	
1:00:38	Jose D Cooper	M60	
1:02:07	Ivan Ragoonanan	M64	
1:02:19	Bill Smith	M65	
1:03:33	Edith Jones	F70	2
1:04:13	Susan R Epstein	F67	
1:12:54	James Moloney Jr	M47	
1:34:34	Ramon Minaya	M70	

Brooklyn Half Marathon

May 22, 2010

1:19:06	Kevin Shelton-Smith	M50	1
1:27:16	Harald Lixenfeld	M46	
1:30:14	Jeff Powell	M38	
1:31:46	Erick Fernandez	M28	
1:37:26	Allen Steigerwald	M36	
1:38:13	Mathew Holzer	M37	
1:39:53	Richard P Conley	M54	
1:40:13	Paul Swem	M60	3
1:48:48	Bette Clark	F54	
1:49:55	Alexandra Hernandez	F29	

22:43	Eugene Westling				JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge 3.5M		
23:32	Kate Donovan				June 16, 2010		
23:43	Rachel Isaac			19:58	Kevin Shelton-Smith		
24:08	Bill Gaston						
24:22	Rozsa Gaston		5		Run-a-Muck 5K		
24:25	Arnie Gore	M69			Harriman State Park, N.Y.		
26:23	Harrison Isaac				June 19, 2010		
28:33	Jill Staats			46:10	Andy Toledo		
28:34	Vera King						
32:08	Susan Epstein	F67	2		Jeff's Run 5K		
					Staten Island, N.Y.		
	New York Mini 10K				June 20, 2010		
	June 12, 2010			27:27	Ramon Ruiz	M70	2
45:37	Diane Calderon	F50		32:04	Edith Jones	F70	1
46:28	Colleen McMahon	F26					
48:46	Jamie Kyei-Frimpong	F28			Father's Day 5M		
49:27	Bette Clark	F54			June 20, 2010		
51:11	Christina Cordaro	F31		28:51	Jacob Adams	M17	2
52:21	Kathryn A Donovan	F52		29:12	Kevin Shelton-Smith	M50	1
53:11	Jill Staats	F58		31:50	Harald Lixenfeld	M46	
53:46	Erica Hubbard	F30		32:04	Perry King	M53	
54:01	Heidi Velasquez	F31		34:30	Carlos Lopez	M29	
54:05	Melinda Abbott	F34		36:07	Erick Fernandez	M28	
55:08	Adrian Hunte Smith	F56		36:57	David Monahan	M59	
55:23	Jo Ann Pate	F35		38:26	Richard P Conley	M54	
55:31	Astrid Guzman	F33		38:41	Miguel Ortiz	M48	
1:06:54	Susan R Epstein	F67		39:05	John Farrelly	M41	
				39:06	Robert Branch	M33	
	Run Against Obesity 5K			40:16	Jason Krasner	M36	
	Van Cortlandt Park			40:58	Ken Rolston	M58	
	June 12, 2010			41:41	Arnold L Gore	M69	
	VCTC 1st Team Overall			41:44	Gene Westling	M55	
17:51	Kevin Shelton-Smith	1 OA		42:16	Heidi Velasquez	F31	
18:51	Chris Eckstrom	1, 5OA		42:17	Edward James	M63	
19:33	Lou Csak	2, 7OA		44:53	Jo Ann Pate	F35	
	VCTC 1st Masters Team			44:57	Astrid Guzman	F33	
22:10	Dick Conley		2	45:15	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M53	
22:53	Dave King		3	45:37	Sandra Barros	F30	
23:17	Ken Rolston		4	46:57	John Campbell	M32	
				49:06	Jose D Cooper	M60	
25:43	Arnie Gore		2	50:47	James Moloney Jr	M47	
26:11	Glen Shane		1	53:53	Andy Toledo	M30	
29:41	James Mahoney			55:48	Marcelo Barros	M27	
34:36	Kathy Nolan		1	56:11	Fernando Ruiz	M78	4
				1:12:26	Ramon Minaya	M70	
	Orange County Classic 10K				Coney Island Cosme 5K		
	Middletown, N.Y.				June 27, 2010		
	June 13, 2010			26:14	Ramon Ruiz	M70	1
36:36	Kevin Shelton-Smith		1	30:05	Edith Jones	F70	1

Aha Start! Wall Street Run 3M

June 24, 2010

19:04	Jeff Powell	M38	
24:26	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M53	



Gay Pride Run 5M

June 26, 2010

31:16	Harald Lixenfeld	M46	6
34:46	Erick Fernandez	M28	
39:38	Bette Clark	F54	3
39:52	Jamie Kyei-Frimpong	F28	
39:56	David Isaac	M47	
40:48	Kathryn A Donovan	F52	
42:22	Jill Staats	F58	1
42:22	Arnold L Gore	M69	2
43:03	Robert Vassilarakis	M38	
44:44	Erica Hubbard	F30	
44:50	John Campbell	M32	
45:10	Jo Ann Pate	F35	
45:18	Astrid Guzman	F33	
46:15	Rachel Isaac	F17	
47:39	Makenzie Schmitt	F23	
55:09	Edith Jones	F70	1
55:26	Susan R Epstein	F67	
56:19	Fernando Ruiz	M78	5



Hope & Possibility 5M

June 27, 2010

29:12	Kyle M Hall	M32	5
29:52	Kevin Shelton-Smith	M50	1
32:09	Perry King	M53	2
33:27	Carlos Lopez	M29	
38:54	Robert Branch	M33	
40:39	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M54	
41:49	Heidi Velasquez	F31	
42:36	Edward James	M63	
54:45	Gilda L Serrano	F61	5
1:13:30	Ramon Minaya	M70	



Pepper Martin 5M

Staten Island, N.Y.

July 4, 2010

44:33	Ramon Ruiz	M70	2
51:13	Edith Jones	F70	1

CLUB NEWS

Membership Please renew your membership which was due 1/1/10 (If you haven't already). Membership rates are: single, \$35; family, \$45. New membership add \$15 to pay for team singlet; additional singlets cost \$15. Please send checks payable to VCTC to: **VCTC P.O. Box 341, Bronx, N.Y. 10471**. Applications are online at www.vctconline.ning.com. Please e-mail Kevin Shelton-Smith with any changes of address, phone, email and whether you would like to be added to the group email.

Meetings For 2010: Team meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of the month(except August) and will be: **Sept 11, Oct 9, Nov 13, Dec 11** at 10 a.m. Club workouts are Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Van Cortlandt Stadium track at 242nd St and Broadway, Saturdays at 8 a.m. (we meet at handball courts at 242nd St and Broadway) and Thursday evening group runs meeting at the Tortoise and Hare Statue on the VC Park flats at 7:30 p.m.

Newsletter stories The newsletter is published bi-monthly. We welcome all contributions. Deadline for the September/October 2010 issue is August 25th. Maximum length is 600 words. Please e-mail kingkvd@optonline.net and/or ogard777@yahoo.com via the Yahoo group page and try to include a photo.

Race times Remember to send race times to Peter Coy petercoy@verizon.net or 52 Stelfox St., Demarest, N.J. 07627. Please include name of race, date, location, finishing time, your name, age. Optional: place, age-group, personal best.

Website Visit us on our website: www.vctconline.ning.com

Van Cortlandt Track Club

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