

# The Van Cortlandt Track Club

---

BRONX, NEW YORK

Volume # 39 Issue #5      [www.vctc.org](http://www.vctc.org)  
September/October 2005



**Dennis bikes the Empire Games**  
**Olga reprises the Western States 100**  
**Naomi explores Alaska**

# VAN CORTLANDT TRACK CLUB

P.O. Box 341, Bronx, NY 10471

## 2005 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Dennis Burns

Vice Presidents Yuen Na Chun, Diana Cecil

Secretary Gary Spalter

Treasurer Larry Barazzotto

## 2005 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Social Directors Linda Norton, Wanda

Bills

Newsletter Editor Naomi Marcus

Controllers Jim, Mike, and Pat

Hudick

Membership Director Tony Thoman,

Athletic Director Ken Rolston, Firdaus

Dotiwala

Public Relations Arnie Gore

VCTC membership meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month at 10:30 am. Club workouts are Tuesdays at 7:00 pm (track), Thursdays at 7:00 pm (trails), and Saturdays at 8:00 am (roads/trails).

The VCTC newsletter is published bimonthly. For changes of address or missed copies, please notify us at 212 795-6460. We welcome all contributions.

Call race times to Jim Hudick:

201 816-8359 or e-mail:to

jhudick@optonline.net or use snail mail,

U. S. Postal Service. When submitting times, please let us know the date, name, distance, and location of the race; your time; age group award (if any); and other club members who ran.

Articles and times for the next newsletter are due **November 5**. E-mail to neshama44@msn.com.

# IN THE LOOP

By Dennis Burns

That cool breeze blowing through my window sure feels good. It feels like real September weather. What a relief from the last few weeks. I was actually able to enjoy a 6-mile run without the usual depleted feeling afterwards. It was just last week that I returned from a 4 mile run completely saturated with perspiration, right down to my shoes. I've had it with the summer heat, and I'm sure I'm not alone. I'm looking forward to the cooler weather, and the return of Autumn.

We know that running has no real season, but rather a cycle, that seems to follow the cycle of the seasons. August is a rather dormant month (we didn't even have a Club Meeting in August). Now, as the sun appears to lose its strength, and the days become shorter, we seem to come back to life once again.

Pretty soon, the VC Flats, which once seemed like the Kalahari Desert in the steaming heat, will come alive with the movement of runners training for the cross country season. This will be followed by the weekly NYRRC X-C races, which make Vannie such an exciting spectacle. On Saturdays, the Flats will be covered by the colorful tents of the various high school and colleges, as they descend on the Mecca of Cross Country to host their invitational meets. Their tent colors enhancing those of the foliage.

Marathon season is not far behind, with groups of runners doing their fifteen and twenty milers in the cool weather. Soon, VCTC members will be congregating at 138<sup>th</sup> Street, under the Concourse, to cheer on our valiant NYC Marathon participants.

## I In the Loop continued

This is the time when runners become nocturnal creatures, training in the dark of night, as the sun is no longer able to light the way. Shorts and singlets make way for lycra tights and long-sleeved tops, as runners navigate by streetlights. We run in the street now, the trails are enveloped in darkness. When we are able to run in Vannie, on the weekends, we will hear the crunch of our feet upon the fallen leaves.

The Pete McArdle 15K is the turning point from Autumn to Winter, as the cold winds blow across the bare flats, and runners blow out steam like locomotives in the cold air. Soon after, our feet will slap the frozen earth, and our runs will be determined by the amount of snow on the trails and roads.

But we runners are a hardy breed. We always find ways to get in our training. We run in every condition possible, be it heat, rain, snow, or darkness we find a way. Darwin would be proud of us.



## Coaches Corner- September

By Ken Rolston

Having endured a veritable Malaysian summer ( is that where the word malaise comes from ? ) we can look forward to crisper days - when the group runs become bouncier and 6-mile runs easily convert to 8-9. The long weekend runs serve as the fulcrum for the running week. For those planning a fall marathon the 13-16 mile slogs of August edge up to the desired 18-20.

Others may prefer to race down 5<sup>th</sup> Ave on Sept 24 along with Alan Webb and other notables. If you are in the mood give me a call at 914-772-7382 or send an e-mail to [krolston@aol.com](mailto:krolston@aol.com) and we can discuss last-minute preparations for this tricky race.

Tuesday night workouts will continue throughout Sept and Oct at the track. We will focus on intermediate distances form 800-2,000. My favorite workout is the Yasso 800's popularized by Runners World writer Bert Yasso who devised the theory that one's marathon goal time, let's say 3:50, could be converted to a track time of 3:50 for an 800. Start with 4 repeats with equal rest time and gradually work up to 10 repeats. If you can do 10 800's at 3:50 w 3:50 rest and you've done suitable distance training, you should be able to meet your goal marathon time of 3hr,50 min ! This theory seems to hold whether you're a 2:30 marathoner or a 5:00 marathoner.

I remember getting into a discussion with Bill Rodgers 29 years ago after he set a world road record 1:29 in a 30 K race. We talked about the best possible time for a marathon. At that time Rogers held the US record of 2:09. We agreed it wasn't possible to break 2:06. My wife a noted non-runner and to some VCTC members a non-existent person, argued at the time that someday a runner would break 2 hours. I said it won't happen in my lifetime. Now the WR is 2:04.55.

I mention this in light of Kenesisa Bekele's  
Continued on page 5

## LOST AT SEA

By Dennis Burns

It all started in a perfectly normal way. I was going to run to Orchard Beach, get in a good long run, and meet Enid at the beach with a sandwich and a cold one, bathing my aching knees in the cold water.

Little did I know I would learn something important. Now, I have always considered myself pretty well prepared for any situation, but I was to learn about an area that I have overlooked., I was overconfident to the point that it could have been very uncomfortable, and this made me realize that it is ALWAYS a good idea to be prepared on a long run.

I left my house in hot and humid conditions, carrying a water bottle and my Walkman. I would meet Enid at the beach in the usual location, get my chair from her car, where she always parks it, and spend the rest of the day relaxing, eating and drinking. Meanwhile, Enid had run long the day before, so she would run a few miles around the beach, and meet me. That was the plan. We had done it dozens of times before.

When I got downstairs, I put my pack in Enid's car, called her on my cell phone to talk about something, and put the phone back in the pack, locked the trunk, and took off, a full 20 ounces of water for a 10 mile run. I didn't bother to carry my cell phone.

The air was so hot and humid, you could see it. I continued down Pelham Parkway, by now, totally saturated, and not cooling off. I was very uncomfortable, but the thought of the destination kept me going. I ran on the bike path, running from Van Cortlandt to Pelham Bay Park, and beyond. It's a beautiful path, and you don't have to worry about traffic except at the intersections. I tried to run in shaded areas, but some portions of the run are in the sun.

As I approached the traffic circle at Orchard Beach, I decided to finish the run on a dirt trail, which leads to the beach. I turned off my Walkman, and listened to the sounds of the birds, as I ran in this shaded oasis. The brightness of open space and the noise of people having a good time, hit my senses, as I ran onto the grassy area towards the "Boardwalk". I ran down

the beach, feeling tired and hot, and thirsty, but knowing that in just another  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile, I would be soaking my legs in the cold water, and drinking a cold one. I approached the meeting place and did not see Enid on the beach. I looked further down the beach, hoping to spot the familiar blue triangle shape of the back of her chair. No Enid. I was hot and tired, and disappointed. Maybe she was out running. I approached the parking lot, after filling up my water bottle, and filling it full of water. Up and down the aisles and rows to look for Enid's car, which, by the way, looks like everyone else's car. The sun was beating down on me, as I returned to the beach. "Maybe she didn't get here yet", I thought, and so I waited in the shade of a tree. Still no sight of Enid.

Back to the car, and back to the beach, looking for Enid. By this time, I started to worry. What if something happened? I had no money, and no way to reach her, but I did have water, so I filled up my water bottle, and continued the search. I couldn't find Enid. I couldn't even find any friends. I always find someone I know at the beach, but this time I found no one. I was beginning to light-headed and weak, but my adrenaline drove me on.

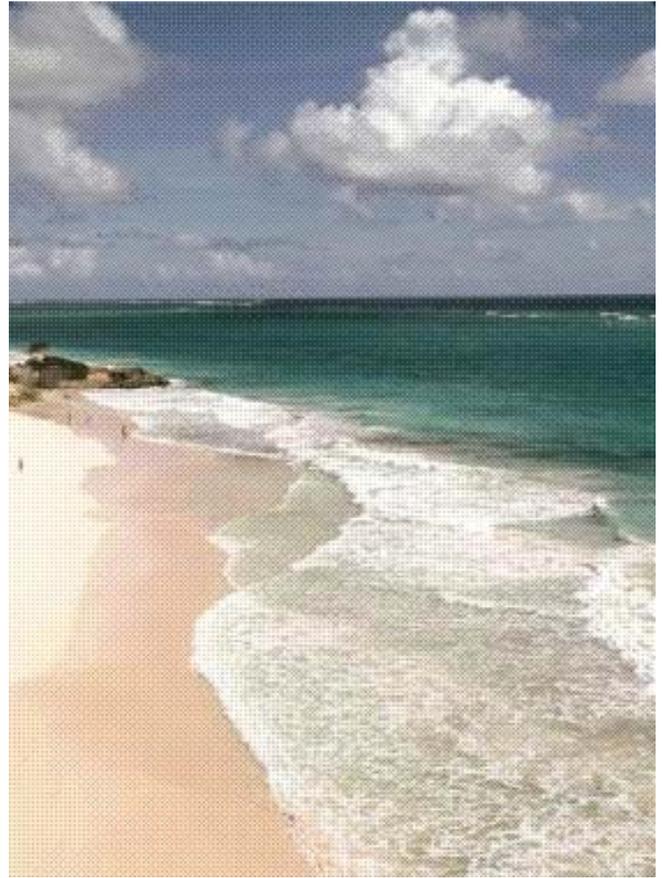
After about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hrs of back and forth searching, I walked into the police station on the boardwalk. Feeling uncomfortable and embarrassed, I explained my situation to the police officers gathered around me. I asked if there was any way he could find out if Enid's car had been in an accident. He told me that I would be notified by phone. When I told him that I had no phone, he looked at me kind of strangely. When I asked if I could get a ride home, I was told they didn't do that. When I asked if I could borrow a couple of bucks for food, as I now had to walk home. They told me they couldn't help me. I walked out of there thinking that I would have gotten more attention if I told them I was a lost child.

I was resigned to walk home, hoping that Enid would appear somewhere, and I wouldn't see her car on the side of the road. As I headed out, I remembered the Basketball Tournament that Bert Blanco runs. Maybe he would be there. I could borrow a couple of bucks from him. I saw

Bert standing out on the boardwalk, in serious conversation on his cell. When I reached him, I knew this call was serious. Bert quickly greeted me, and before I could speak, I heard him say "Yo, D, Enid is worried about you, she's on the beach". I thanked him and took off for the beach, suddenly feeling the weight of the whole world lifting from my shoulders. I saw her waiving out there on the beach, just where we always meet. I was so happy to see her, and yet angry that I went through those changes. We talked about what happened. Enid got a late start, and then got caught in traffic. Thinking I had my cell phone, as I originally called her, and put the phone in my pack, she left me a message and told me she would be late, that the car was in a new location, and that she'd gone running and would meet me at the same spot, but later.

There had to be a lesson in all this, so I thought it over. I learned to always bring a couple of bucks on a long run, and a cell phone. If I can carry water, I can carry those. Even if it's a course that I've done hundred of time before, things can happen. I was shocked by the situation, and how I wasn't prepared for it. I am always prepared when I go mountaineering, camping, climbing. Things where your survival depends on it. In a situation where it would have been just a major inconvenience, I overlooked my safety. It taught me once again to always be prepared, anything can happen.

On a lighter note, that cold one tasted REAL good!!



Coach's Corner (continued)

incredible 10K WR he set in Brussels last month. He ran 26:17, pacing through 5K in 13:09 and finished with a final 1500 of 3:52, and a final 400 of 57. So for 25 laps he averaged just over 63 seconds. He is only 23 years old and has talked about moving up to half marathons and ultimately, the marathon.

What are his limits ? What is possible ? If he can average 62 seconds per lap he'll break 26 minutes for 10K. With that kind of breath-taking speed combined with amazing endurance maybe it's possible that the 2-hour barrier could be broken. Would my wife, perish the thought, be right? Today she says that someday a woman will also break through the barrier.

Now I'm imagining the day when the Yasso workout will call for 10 800's at 1:59 each !

**7/10 NYRR Half-Marathon Grand Prix: 13.1 M**

**Bronx, NY, Sunday, 8:00 AM**

1:23:00	Michael Arnstein	M28
1:36:05	Richard P Conley	M50
1:42:10	Firdaus Dotiwala	M36
1:43:32	Ivan S Mills	M49
1:45:40	Paulino Santana	M44
1:51:11	Blas Abadia Jr	M50
1:54:37	Dominic Lombardo	M38
2:03:49	Ivan Ragoonanan	M59
2:05:42	Jill Staats	F53
2:05:43	Katherine Callan	F43
2:05:42	Annemarie Krothe	F27
2:06:48	Impirika Quinzon	F30
2:09:28	Michael J Yorio	M58
2:15:10	Marisol Zapata-Ruiz	F39
2:13:56	Walter Gary	M51
2:15:32	Fernando Ruiz	M73
2:15:08	Selma Sequeira Raven	F39
2:18:42	Carl Morrishow	M48
2:18:37	Tami Luhby	F34
2:26:07	Gilda L Serrano	F56
2:32:19	Lisa E Fleischmann	F41
2:32:55	Dennis J Brooks	M52
2:32:19	Daniel O Flynn	M63

**7/16 NYRR Dash and Splash 5.0 M**  
**Central Park, NY, Saturday, 8:30 AM**

42:00	Margaret R Nolan	F45
46:18	Edith Jones	F65 <b>1st F 65-69</b>
50:56	Gilda L Serrano	F56
50:19	Ira A. Weiner	M46
50:34	Fernando Ruiz	M73
52:10	Lisa E Fleischmann	F41
55:57	John Arbucci	M47

**7/17 Mossman Sprint Triathlon**  
**0.5 M / 12.5 M / 3.1 M**  
**Norwalk, CT Sunday, AM**

	Eddie Crawford	M61
21:32	Swim -	0.5 M
43:47	Bike -	12.5 M
26:02	Run -	3.1 M
1:31:21	Overall	<b>4th M 60-64</b>

**R  
A  
C  
E  
R  
E  
S  
U  
L  
T  
S  
  
2  
0  
0  
5**

**7/20 Nike Run Hit Wonder 5.0 M**  
**Central Park, NY, Wednesday, 7:00 PM**

41:32	Annemarie Krothe	F27
55:41	John Arbucci	M47
57:21	Lisa Fleischmann	F42
52:49	Carl Morrishow	M49

**7/21 VCTC Summer Series (Race # 5) 5K 3.1 M**  
**Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, NY**  
**Thursday, 7:00 PM**

21:08	Firdaus Dotiwala	M36
23:23	Annemarie Krothe	F27 <b>3rd F 20-29</b>
23:40	Bette Clark	F49 <b>1st F 40-49</b>
25:53	Eddie Crawford	M61 <b>1st M 60-69</b>
27:30	Katherine Callan	F43 <b>2nd F 40-49</b>
27:34	Gary Spalter	M52
30:24	Bill Smith	M60 <b>3rd M 60-69</b>
31:47	Fernando Ruiz	M73 <b>1st M 70-79</b>

**7/23 Run For Central Park 4.0 M**  
**Central Park, NY, Saturday, 8:30 AM**

28:21	Ivan S Mills	M49
45:26	Tami Luhby	F34

**7/23 NY Mets Run To Home Plate 5K 3.1 M**  
**Shea Stadium, Queens, Saturday, 10:00 AM**

23:41	Neil Ghezzar	M34
26:46	Ivan Ragoonanan	M59
31:13	Selma Sequeira Raven	F39

**7/24 Lake Placid Ironman Triathlon**  
**2.4 M / 112.0 M / 26.2 M**  
**Lake Placid, NY, Sunday, AM**

	Diane Calderon	F45
1:05:25	Swim -	2.4 M <b>3rd F 45-49</b>
6:20:08	Bike -	112.0 M <b>6th F 45-49</b>
3:54:28	Run -	26.2 M <b>1st F 45-49</b>
11:30:34	Overall	<b>2nd F 45-49</b>

**8/04 VCTC Summer Series (Race # 6) 5K 3.1 M**

**Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, NY  
Thursday, 7:00 PM**

19:09 Lou Csak M39  
21:05 Firdaus Dotiwala M36  
21:17 Tony Thoman M42  
22:45 Joan Baldassari F50 **1st F 50-59**  
23:33 Ann Marie Krothe F27 **3rd F 20-29**  
24:23 Bette Clark F49 **2nd F 40-49**  
24:40 Bill Gaston M47  
25:12 Arnie Gore M64 **2nd M 60-69**  
26:07 Margaret Nolan F45 **3rd F 40-49**  
26:12 Katherine Callan F43  
27:20 Selma Raven F39  
27:37 Dennis Burns M58  
34:12 Susan Epstein F62 **1st F 60-69**

**8/18 VCTC Summer Series (Race # 7) 5K 3.1 M**

**Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, NY  
Thursday, 7:00 PM**

20:43 Firdaus Dotiwala M36  
21:29 Tony Thoman M42  
22:05 Richard Conley M50 **3rd M 50-59**  
22:44 Bette Clark F49 **1st F 40-49**  
22:51 Neil Ghezzar M34  
23:29 Harold Benitez M46  
23:32 Anne Marie Krothe F27  
24:52 Eddie Crawford M61 **2nd M 60-69**  
25:19 Katherine Callan F43  
26:01 Margaret Nolan F45  
26:24 Wanda Bills F44  
27:17 Dennis Burns M58  
28:17 Kate Donovan F47  
28:49 Gary Spalter M52  
29:19 Rosza Gaston F47  
29:30 Bob Velez M61  
22:14 Fernando Ruiz M73 **1st M 70-79**  
33:26 Susan Epstein F62 **2nd F 60-69**  
36:30 Tami Luhby F35

**8/20 NYRR Team Championships 8K 5.0 M  
Central Park, NY Saturday, 8:00 AM**

**R  
A  
C  
E  
R  
E  
S  
U  
L  
T  
S  
  
2  
0  
0  
5**

31:04 Louis Csak M39  
33:25 Michael P Hudick \* M60 **2nd M 60-64**  
34:46 Ivan S Mills M49  
35:35 Firdaus Dotiwala M36  
36:17 Richard P Conley M50  
37:08 Neil Ghezzar M34  
37:25 Bette Clark F49  
38:41 Rachel Gissinger F29  
38:48 Arnold L Gore \* M64  
39:52 Annemarie Krothe F27  
40:37 Ramon Ruiz \* M65  
41:54 Margaret R Nolan F45  
42:43 Katherine Callan F43  
46:34 Yuen Na Chun F48  
47:36 Edith Jones F65  
50:01 Susan R Epstein F62  
50:48 Gilda L Serrano F56  
51:13 Bill Smith M60  
51:41 Fernando Ruiz M73

\* **VCTC Team Award 3rd 60+ Men**

**8/28 NYRR Half-Marathon Grand Prix:  
Manhattan 13.1 M  
Central Park, NY Sunday, 7:00 AM**

1:41:16 Karl Vamos M21  
1:41:02 Richard P Conley M50  
1:44:32 Ivan S Mills M49  
1:46:46 Bette Clark F49 **3rd F 45-49**  
1:46:38 Neil Ghezzar M34  
1:48:45 Firdaus Dotiwala M36  
1:59:30 Blas Abadia Jr M50  
2:00:33 Ramon Ruiz M65 **3rd M 65-69**  
2:04:24 Ivan Ragoonanan M59  
2:17:50 Marisol Zapata-Ruiz F39  
2:16:01 Susan R Epstein F62  
2:19:31 Dennis J Brooks M53  
2:18:22 Yuen Na Chun F48  
2:23:41 Gilda L Serrano F56  
2:11:55 Selma Sequeira Raven F39  
2:27:18 Rosza Gaston 47  
2:35:12 Edith Jones F65 **2nd F 65-69**  
2:29:28 Gary Spalter M52  
2:27:22 Fernando Ruiz M73  
2:32:23 Lisa E Fleischmann F42  
2:39:58 Tami Luhby F35  
2:41:44 Ramon Minaya M65

# How I Spent My Summer Vacation: The Call of the Wild

By Naomi Marcus

The Brooks Range, the continent's northernmost mountain range, is difficult to explore if you're not a backpacker. Only one road goes into the American side of northern Alaska, the Dalton Highway, the haul road for the Prudhoe Bay oilfields. I'd decided that backpacking was not for me - I just don't have that upper body strength nor have I the time or discipline to develop it. So when I heard about a car camping trip to northern Alaska, I signed up right away. A month or so later, I received a letter from REI, the tour company, that participants on my trip would be lucky in having Jody Young - an experienced Alaska hand -- as our guide. Jody lives in Utah and originally hails from the Midwest, but she has been leading Alaska tours for a long time and knows a lot of interesting people.

And yes, there are interesting people to meet in Alaska. America's last wilderness attracts a particularly self-sufficient breed of adventurers who have learned to take advantage of Alaska's natural bounty while accepting the extreme conditions of this harsh and beautiful land.

Unlike other trips that I've taken to Alaska, which started in Anchorage, a coastal city, we took off from Fairbanks, in central Alaska. A note of interest - Fairbanks was founded just before the turn of the last century by a gold prospector named Felix Pedro, the great grand-uncle of our own Larry Barazzotto. The town has grown a lot in 100 years, but it is still unprepossessing. Most of the houses are small and, as is common in Alaska, built low to the ground to conserve heat.

As I left the airport, I noticed the overcast sky. This was not from rainclouds but from the smoke of forest fires. Alaska was having an unusually dry summer; we traveled under an haze of smoke

until we reached the north slope of the Brooks Range. Our first hike took us over a mountain about 50 miles north of Fairbanks. We hiked through boreal forest - hardwoods like aspens and alders as well as fir trees. Jody told us to look for morels, a kind of mushroom that is common in areas recovering from forest fires, but if there were any, they had already been picked. We hiked down into Chena Hot Springs, and spent the afternoon recovering from the hike in the naturally warm water. That night, we ate in the restaurant at the spa and slept in the hotel. Jody was such a fine cook (in a former life, she'd been a professional chef), that we didn't miss restaurants.

My companions came from all over the lower 48: Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, Colorado, New Mexico, and California. We were varied in occupation too - 2 doctors, 2 lawyers, 2 engineers, a teacher, a hydrologist, and a project manager from the FDA, who was my roommate. What we shared, aside from our common interest in the out-of-doors, was our blue-state politics.

I explored the spa at Chena a bit and found that our dinner salad had come from a large organic garden. The heat from the hot springs kept the greenhouse at 75° even at 40 below. At Manley, our next stop, we again enjoyed a hot spring. This one was also used to heat a greenhouse and we bathed in hot tubs surrounded by tropical plants with a grapevine as a canopy (no grapes, however).

In Manley we visited Pam and Joe Redington. Joe's father Joe Redington, founded the Iditarod, the famous 1,100 mile sled dog race from Wasilla to Nome, but the Redingtons' dogs are bred to run races in the 10 to 40 mile range - middle distance for a dog. Like the spa at Chena,

the Redingtons had an organic garden, with its summer days (it never got fully dark while we were there) Alaska has a short but intense growing season, so the vegetables in Pam's garden were mammoth -cabbages the size of basketballs and zucchini the size of baseball bats. The dogs live on salmon, which Joee catches in huge quantities early in the summer when the salmon swim upstream.



The opportunity to view a mother moose with her two calves enhanced a quiet afternoon paddle in the Manley Slough.

The next day we took off for the north country and soon we were traveling north on the Dalton Highway - 416 miles of gravel road from the Elliot Highway to Prudhoe Bay. The Dalton Highway was built to service the pipeline, which extends for 800 miles from Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean to Valdez on Prince William Sound. The pipeline extends across Alaska across the tundra, over the Brooks Range and crosses the Yukon on the only bridge to span that great river. Not far north of the Yukon, we crossed the Arctic Circle; of course we all had to have our pictures taken. Now we were driving through taiga, scraggly spruce trees with roots stunted by the permafrost.

The next day we took our longest hike. We were soon above the tree line and hiking on tundra. The ground was carpeted with lichens, inedible bearberries, and edible blueberries. The tundra was dry, but spongy and we sunk in on each step. We ate lunch on the mountainside and then continued along the side of the mountain. We spotted a pair of foxes further up the mountain.

We had started our hike in a mining town where the inhabitants were said to be hostile to outsiders. By contrast, Wiseman, the most northern gold-mining town in Alaska with a year-round population of 12, prides itself on being tourist friendly. Here we met Jack Rakoff, a subsistence hunter and raconteur. Subsistence hunters are permitted to kill one moose a year during the month of September; they can then live off that one animal all winter. To prepare for the winter, Jack also picks 11 gallons of wild blueberries, which he preserves in sugar and drinks every morning to keep his mind sharp and prevent Alzheimer's. He certainly seemed very bright, with the gift of gab, so maybe the blueberries work. And, of course, he had his organic garden. Jack is off the energy grid, so he heats his house with solar panels and a wood stove.

From our camp among the spruce trees, we drove north past the most northern tree on the Dalton Highway. The sky was clear now - no more forest and no more forest fires. We could see for miles and were able to spot caribou and Dall sheep frolicking on the jagged mountains. We camped on the open tundra and hiked across the road and up a mountain, our feet sinking into the spongy tundra.

We were now on the north slope of the Brooks Range and 150 miles from Prudhoe Bay. We drove at a leisurely pace, stopping frequently to look at musk oxen, caribou, Dall sheep, and all kinds of birds that we were not likely to see further south. As we approached Prudhoe

Call of the Wild continued

Bay, the sky clouded over with the cold moist air from the Arctic Ocean. Prudhoe Bay is a company town. People come there to work. There are no schools and no public roads, just industrial buildings, a few hotels, and gravel. Nonetheless, we saw eider ducks, a fox, and a marten (like a weasel), as well as two more caribou. The next morning, we were given a Phillips-Conoco tour of Prudhoe Bay, including a brief glimpse of the local Halliburton headquarters with its sign

proclaiming some plywood cutouts of spruce trees to be "Halliburton National Forest." No one who sees the drabness of Prudhoe Bay could wish this to be extended any further into the wilderness. As our final Alaskan experience, the bravest among us (including this member of the Van Cortlandt Track Club) submerged ourselves in the Arctic Ocean (temperature 34 degrees) and were officially inducted into the Polar Bear Club.



Hiking on the Tundra. The author is second from the right.

## Empire Games continued **EMPIRE GAMES REVISITED**

By Dennis Burns

While driving up to New Paltz, to compete in the Empire State Games Master's Division Cycling Race, I had this special feeling of returning to my roots. New Paltz is quite familiar to me, as I've run and mountain biked its trails, and climbed its cliffs, and even ridden its roads, but never have I raced on them.

This was a very special occasion for me, as the last time I competed in the Empire State Games was in the summer of 1981, in Syracuse, when I was a serious competitive cyclist, and it was also the year that I first started running, as an off season activity. Little did I know, that in the next few years the roles would be reversed, and I would find myself running competitively, and cycling would be a way to ward off injury. As the years progressed, I found a way to enjoy both worlds, and stay competitive at the same time, by doing biathlons, and dabbling in a bit of road racing, while still trying to remain a competitive runner. Since retirement, I have been able to devote more time to both sports, and have returned to competitive cycling in the Master's Division. Things have come around full circle, and I find that I am able to enjoy the best of both worlds. Though I am not as competitive as I would be if I concentrated on only one sport, I find that I enjoy the changeup. I really enjoy doing both. As Forest Gump would say, "Life is like a buffet, you need a little of this and a little of that". The balance works for me.

I had trained hard this season, riding about 200 miles per week with a group of competitive riders, and doing time trials and a few road races (not to mention running about 25 miles per week, and the occasional race). I felt that I was ready to take advantage of this special opportunity.

The Empire State Games is like a mini Olympics, on a statewide level, with the best athletes in

their division competing. Many sports are represented, from boxing to archery, to soccer, to baseball. In the open division you need to qualify for the games in your event. In 1981 I had to place in the top 15 of 100+ riders in a 100-mile race. As a Master, there was no qualifying race. All I had to do was to fill out the form and pay my entry fee. I couldn't pass this one up.

The first race was a 10-mile time trial, or race against the clock. Riders start in minute intervals, and ride by themselves as fast as they can. The course was a flat farm road, 5 miles out and then back. As I warmed up, I scoped out my competition. Though these riders were in their 50's, they were in really great shape, and took this seriously. Skin suits, special aerodynamic time-trial bikes, or ultra light bikes with aero bars were the choice of the day. All I had was my regular road bike without any fancy bars. My friends told me that I would lose about 2 minutes in a 10-mile race without a special setup, but since I had none, I didn't worry.

As I rode to the starting line, I could see the riders lined up according to their number, and I took my place in sequence. The rider in front of me rode off, and I rode to the starting line. I clipped my feet in the pedals, as the referee held me upright by my seat post. The countdown began..5,4,3,2,1 GO! Off into a fierce 10 mph headwind I pedaled. Down on the drops of my handlebars, trying to get as low and aerodynamic as I could get, I pedaled away in a large gear, straining against the wind. My heart-rate shot up, and my hamstrings ached, as I tried to maintain my form. Though the road was flat, it felt like I was going uphill, as I plowed through the air. I knew I was at a disadvantage, but I

tried my hardest, as my legs burned with lactic acid.

At about 4 miles, I was passed by the guy who had started a minute after me. At first, I was demoralized, but, I quickly realized that I now had someone to chase. By the time I hit the turnaround at 5 miles, he had about 200 meters on me, but as I made the turn, I realized that now the wind was at my back, and his aerodynamic advantage had decreased. I tried with all I had to catch him, but I could not. He was just too strong and fast, however, I did not allow him to make up any more time on me for the remainder of the race. I felt as though I was in a tunnel, with everything, including sound, passing me by in a blur. I finished gasping for air, and felt pleased that I had tried my hardest. I had finished the 10 miles in 27:27 for 12<sup>th</sup> place, not as good as I'd hoped, but better than I thought I would do.

I spent the next hour cooling down, riding along the back roads easily, and savoring the beauty of the countryside. A man was painting a landscape on the side of the road. I passed the Ulster County Fairgrounds, and many farms, and everything seemed so beautiful on such a gorgeous day. The feeling of accomplishment made it all so much more vivid. I ended the day with a good meal and a couple of good brews at the Gilded Otter.



On the following day, I drove up to Unionvale, a small town on the east side of the Hudson River from New Paltz, to compete in the Road Race. The Masters would be doing 2 laps of this 15-mile course. I had never been in this area of New York State before. This was a farming community with long, rolling hills. We were once again blessed with a beautiful sunny day. The sky was a deep blue, with puffy cumulus clouds, and the humidity was low. It was a perfect September day in August, a real scarcity for this summer.

The race had a neutral start for the first mile, as we rolled through the town. We would be riding with the women's field, but scored separately. This was a small field of about 30 riders, which meant that there was no place to hide and sit in from the wind. I would have to do more work.

We hit the traffic circle, and the race began, with the stronger riders setting a hard pace. I tried to position myself near the front, but sheltered from the wind, as we hit the first hill. Two riders attacked on the hill, and the field strung out, in an attempt to chase them down. I began to lose position, as I slid towards the back, the stronger riders passing me by. I was clearly not warmed up yet. We crested the hill, and descended, as I began to work my way to the front again. This went on for about 5 more miles, until we hit the "big" hill, about 1½ miles long and about a 6% grade. I found myself slipping off the back again, as I struggled up the hill. Clearly, Riverdale has some good hills, but none of this length.

By the time we had crested the hill, the stronger riders were way out front, and there was a large group of riders behind me. The group had completely splintered into smaller groups of 3 or 4 riders. Way down in front of me, I could see them all, descending, as I pushed it into my biggest gear, and pedaled down the hill. As reached 48 mph, I was going too fast to pedal, so I tucked in, trying to be as aerodynamic as possible. I could see a group of farmhouses, way

off in Empire Games continued - the distance, as the riders disappeared around a curve in the road. I chased as hard as I could, and caught another rider. We took turns at the front, each one riding into the wind, as the other sat in his slipstream. Around through the Start/Finish we zoomed, in an attempt to catch the group of four in front of us. We rode as hard as we could (I would later learn that this rider was 69 years old!), reeling them in little by little. Halfway through the final lap, we caught them, and we sat in to rest ourselves for a couple of minutes. Our group worked smoothly, each rider taking his or her turn at the front, until we reached the finish. Since there were two women

medal, we backed off as we approached the finish line, and let them sprint for the win. My friend Polly, a fellow member of my cycling team, USI (Unione Sportiva Italiana) finished first, for the Women's Masters Gold Medal. I finished in 11<sup>th</sup> place, about 4 minutes behind the leading men, and I was happy with my result (yeah, really I wished that I'd won, but let's be realistic).

I came away from that race with an incredible sense of accomplishment, (after all, I had returned to this level of competition after 24 years) and a realization that I would have to train much harder for next year's Empire Games. These old guys are serious!

## What a Difference a Year Makes!

By Olga Varlamova

in The West, who swears 100M trail races. The a Boston marathon of ultrarunning! The legend of Gordy Ainsleigh! My dream! My dream of running there in sub-24 hrs and placing in top 10! Did I really think it was possible? No way! But it was nice to have a dream...

Year 2004. After making it without any real hardship through Umstead 100M I decided I was ready for a dream. WS beat me up and ate me alive. Not physically, though it was painful. Emotionally, I was blown away. It showed me a real world of prime athletes with a genotype for lots of fast-twitch muscles and a hard training regimen, yet the kindest human beings. It was love at first sight. I had to come back.

September 2004. The whole family packed up and moved to Portland, Oregon. Mountains were calling. This is a premier ultrarunning community with a great training ground. Columbia Gorge is 30 miles away. Forest Park is in the city itself. Trail ultramarathons are held practically every weekend. Every other person is a trail ultrarunner. Scott Jurek lives almost next door

(in Seattle). I signed up for his training schedule and got sucked in to a local ultra community. Not being the most obedient client, I interspersed my training runs with many more races than planned, but loved every minute of it. February was the last time my feet saw roads. After that, I started running only on hilly trails every day. The best advice that I was heard was on the long runs during the beautiful Gorge weekends, from Gail, Greg, Mike and so many others the list will just take too much space. My legs stopped being sore after hard downhill. I learned how to run uphill. I began to believe into myself. LT runs, intervals, hill repeats, back-to-backs, a couple of well-run tune-up races...what an amazing 6 months I had!

June 2005. 2 weeks before WS100, I ran a Capital Peak 50 mile race. Scott opposed it, but I persisted. I am known to be not the smartest in making important decisions. John Pearch is an RD and personal friend. No, he did not twist my arm, nor did my Marathon Maniacs teammates who decided to include me for a team competition. The course measured at 56M, but I got

Olga continued  
sidetracked for an extra 2 and ran under rainy, cold, muddy bushwhacking conditions for over 11 hrs. My body was drained of energy. I wondered what would happen?

June 23rd. I flew to Sacramento. Nick Palazzo, my pacer from last year, joined me again. His first remark - my legs had doubled in size. I am not sure if it was a compliment -- I am a girl after all - but I tried to think positive. Maybe it's muscle? There was nothing I could do about it anyway. His second comment was that I am totally a different person, much more relaxed and seemingly unconcerned about the run.

June 24th. We went to check in at Squaw Valley. Wow! In the past year, I've met so many people, it seems that I know everyone now. That makes spending a day a paradise. There are friends from Northwest, from the East, and everywhere in-between. The female field is thick. The RD talks snow for the first 25 miles. I have a pace chart for 23 hrs. Hmm...

June 25th. I took a sleeping pill the night before, but tossed and turned. My last memory of a dream was that I paced my friend Rob Hester at CCC (planned for later this summer) I tell him to listen to me and stick to my advice, I KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT!

The alarm didn't work, but both Nick and I woke up a minute before it was supposed to go off. We ate breakfast with many other runners staying at Truckee Inn and made it to the start. My number was 46. I have faith in numbers. For the Umstead I had 65, same as my high school. My sister is 46. She lost her only son this year, my only nephew, who I helped raise from his very first day. I am sure they'll be looking over me...

5 AM. The gun goes off and we begin climb to Emigrant Pass. My breathing is totally erratic. I wonder if that 58-miler was a bad idea. Every move feels like I'm exerting myself more than

ever before. My legs are strong, but my heart is beating as if I am seeing a bear or flying into space. I think back to my talks with Gail, Greg and Glenn. I have a Grand Slam planned this summer, sub-24 is secondary in this picture, so I discard my pace chart and slow down. We hit snow as soon as we reach the peak. It is not that bad, hard-packed, in patches for 100-300 feet, but slanted and making it too dangerous to run on. Actually, it makes it kind of fun, like being kids and playing outside. I take in the view. Between the fields of snow, there are streams and run-offs, so my feet are wet. It's OK, I am running in new Cascadia that I tested in that famous wet Capitol 58-miler of mine. I see Ronda and smile. It seems we have a friendly competition going. We finished last year in the same time, seem to be equal runners, live in same town and both trained with Scott Jurek. But now - we are just two runners who happen to have the same goal. We both are focused. We say encouraging words and continue on. It just so happens that we are close in pace and enter most of the aid stations in the first half almost together.

Red Star Ridge. I don't look at my watch as I don't care about my time. Oh, the watch. I am known to forget to eat on the run, so Gail lent me her watch that beeps every 45 minutes to remind me to have a gel. I also carry a bottle of water and a bottle of Clip2 that I refill every aid station. My body is exhausted, moving is an effort and it's an interesting feeling like my legs are going by themselves despite not having been directed by the rest of me. I perk up, thank the Gorge for the training and start looking around. The views are simply breathtaking! As if I am not struggling enough to breath! I run with Dawn and tell her that I vowed to enjoy this run to its fullest no matter what.

Robinson Flat, first crew-visiting aid station. I change socks. On the way out, I see Walter with a camera. Of course I stop to pose - I wouldn't be Olga continued  
me if I didn't, which cracks him up. I set a small

goal - see if I can run the next section as well as I did last year (this was one of my stronger sections in 2004). The crowd always charges me up and I fly. We see an official photographer and I thank him for coming out to help us preserve our memories (last year they were taking pictures by Cougar rock, but due to snow conditions in High Country the location of the photographer was changed). At Little Bald Mt station. Michael and Stacey are cheering for Ronda (and all the Team Oregon runners), and Nick feeds me with Ensure. It doesn't sit well and I puke it soon after, sticking with only Clip2 from now on.

We run on. I feel better. The day progresses, and I realize it's not going to be hot this year. I don't use ice at all. A few times a small cloud covers the sun and a light breeze touches my face. I enjoy the people I encounter on the way, and we share stories. Dusty Corner gives me a surprise hug and Tony (\*tc), who crews for Cary Miller, gives me a kiss. I make another small goal - not to be hard on myself when I bonk on my way to Last Chance. I do bonk, and I don't judge myself. I just continue on. Actually, I am feeling much better than a few hours ago, and gain 10 min on a 24 hr pace. I still don't make any long-term plans. Next goal - to climb Devil's Thumb strong and not to sit down. Last year I sat 5 times on the way up and 12 people passed me; this is where I gave up my game and was ready to call it quits. Not this year. Climb? What climb? 1800 feet in 2.5 miles is not a climb, we've seen much worse in the Gorge! I charge. In fact, I have a mental assurance I could jog up if I wanted, but hold it back, passing 5 people, and I am capable of talking with Dawn and Pam Reed on the way up. I begin to have fun.

The next section brings memories of dead quads and a long chair sit down at the bottom of Eldorado Canyon. I decide to take it easy on the steep downhill portion (me, the famous downhill buster!!). I feel great and after grabbing a few strawberries, jump for a Michigan Bluff climb.

This "hill" makes me laugh this year. How was it that last year I planned to drop as soon as I reach the top? Why? Had it not been in the middle of a 100M, I'd call it flat! I come into the final turn and see Maura and lots of people screaming my name. It feels fantastic! Nick changes my bottle and I am off. I remember this section from 2004. We discussed it with Scott and decided this is why I had to save myself on those 2 climbs - so I can have a boost here, on my way to Foresthill. I didn't like this portion, don't ask the reason. Just didn't. Hard bonking, more sitting, more judging...well, it all happened again, but without the latter. I just accepted it and moved on. Ronda passed me what seemed to be for good, picked her first pacer and ran strong and fast, pulling away in a horizon. I got to Foresthill with about 25 extra minutes on 24 hr pace. Tony helped me change socks while I cursed minor cramping in hip flexors and Nick got my Starbuck's coffee and aheadlamp. I took off without waiting him get ready.

Yes, the year was indeed different. I loved this next section last year, both in training and in a race. I was waiting for it the whole day. I was almost an hour ahead of my last year's time and enjoyed the daylight, yet - something started to go wrong, namely my stomach shut down. First I could not digest even liquid calories anymore and I began to slow down. Despite my problem, I passed a few runners and vividly remembered where we turned our lamps on before and how this year it was still light. We only needed the lamp after we left Cal3 station and started along the American river. A couple of miles before Rucky Chucky I bumped into Ronda. I was sure she was on her way to 22:30 finish, but she apparently lost much of her vision (again!! with some side effects of the allergy medicine she's taking) and straggled on downhill portion. She did run away strongly (as she was all day, cheerful and focused and strong) to a 22:59 and 8th female.

Oh, the river! This year we had a new experience.

The water current was 10 times higher and wading across was out of question, so the race management opted for rafting. Four people got in (2 runners and 2 pacers) and a girl rowed across in a

Olga continued

minute. As much fun as I had last year crossing the river, having dry feet was nice. I also realized that I am 55 minutes ahead of a 24 hr pace and I powered up to Green Gate in a bliss. My legs, never tired to begin with, got a new life. But - my digestive system disagreed with the good time the rest of me proposed and threw in a case of severe diarrhea! My, was it painful and time-wasting! I would run forward, pass people, stop dead for a duty not to be described here and repeat again. A few times I cried. From cramps and unfairness. I felt so strong! Why??!! Then I'd call on the soul of my deceased nephew, my sister's strengths to go through that and my husband's love and support and belief in me. I had this strange phrase in my head: "I will fight until I can fight no more", and I kept saying it to myself. The Brown's Bar had Immodium, thank you Hush Harriers!! It gave me hope (and an hour later an opportunity to start eating and drinking again), and I was still moving at a fast clip despite all the stops. The dream materialized. Sub-24 was possible. Actually Nick said we had it in a bag, but I didn't want to relax. He also urged me to show him the No Hands Bridge with all the illumination in the dark, and I was more than happy to comply. It was my pleasure, but I didn't even stop to savor the moment. I was on a mission. In fact I was leaving aid stations at such a speed (I couldn't eat or drink anyway) that I was leaving him behind and having him catch me on the trails. Most of the times, between pain and mental focus, I was forgetting I had a pacer. I was all by myself, with a clear vision of all the hard work I put in, all the sacrifices I've made, all that my family had to endure, all the faith that my friends had in me...nothing was going to stop me now, I was to see the Placer high school track in a dark!



I wipe off a tear. Scott raises his head from the from the sleeping bag (yes, he did win, again, "jogging" to his Swan Song for the 7th time) and tells me I placed 9th. I stand in disbelief. It's wrong. It is not right. Next - well, it means next year I am in! No lottery, no waiting. I will have another great day, because there is nowhere I would rather spend 24 hrs than running the WS100!

A shower later I had a privilege to see great friends crossing finish line of the prime event in ultra-world. Sweet weekend had icing on a cake with each and every one of them. Sure, I can start another long list with thank-you's but I'll stop. You all know who you are. You are on the list this report is going to. You are in my heart. You always will be. I am blessed with friends and consider myself to be the richest person in the world for that. Thank you all.



## **HARKINS & HUNTE** Attorneys at Law

Mary Anne Harkins & Adrian C. Hunte

**Former Westchester County  
Assistant District Attorney**

**Former General Counsel  
New York State Liquor Authority**

- Real Estate
- Wills
- Trusts and Estates
- Litigation
- Intellectual Property
- Tax Issues
- Employment Discrimination
  - Civil Fraud
- Asset Forfeiture
- Personal Injury
- Environmental Law
- General Civil & Criminal Law
- Buying & Selling of Businesses
- Workers' Compensation
- Alcohol Licensing

Ph: 526 - 1000 \* Fax: 526 - 3106

E-mail: [harkinshunte@mindspring.com](mailto:harkinshunte@mindspring.com) \* [www.Harkins-Hunte.com](http://www.Harkins-Hunte.com)

**914-526-1000**

ample parking - adjacent to 'Home Depot':

3031 East Main St., @ Cortlandt Town Center, Mohegan Lake

# WANTED!!

## A NEW Race Director for the Urban Environmental Challenge 2006

### All you need are the following:

- A computer
  - Good organizational skills
  - Good communication skills
  - A love for running
  - A desire to see the first Urban Trail race continue
- Any new ideas which you may wish to incorporate.

### Dennis will be happy to give you:

- All of our records
  - Our race database
  - Our mailing lists
- Our maps and our contact people.

No Race Director experience necessary.

Dennis will be happy to coach you, and walk you through the race directorship step by step.  
If interested call Dennis Burns at 718)796-9191.

## Running, Swimming, Cycling, Walking and Fitness, We Fit Your Style

### The Westchester Road Runner

179 E. Post Road

White Plains, New York, 10601

(914) 682-0637

Fax (914) 949-4166

Email wrrunner@aol.com



#### RUNNING/WALKING/FITNESS/CYCLING SHOES

New Balance - Saucony - Nike - Brooks - Mizuno - Asics - Teva - Adidas - Puma - Montrail  
Reebok - Avia - K-Swiss - Dansko

#### RUNNING AND FITNESS WEAR

RONO - Nike - Moving Comfort - BOA Tyr - Speedo - Hind - O'Neill - Ultra Swim  
New Balance - Asics - Hind - Dolfin Barracuda - Dolfin - Ironman - US Divers  
Helly Hansen - Sugoi - Insport - Sporthill  
Pearl Izumi - Hot Chillys - Duofold - DeSoto

#### SWIM WEAR & TRIATHLON GEAR

#### CYCLING WEAR

Discipline Marketing - Brooks - Race Ready Hind- Giordana - Pearl Izumi - Sugoi  
Champion - Danskin - Sporteze

#### ACCESSORIES

Baby Jogger - Free Style - Sorbothane - Spenco - Thorio - Ogio - Jog-a-Lite - TuneBelt - Wigwam - Tulis - Croakies - Second Wind -  
Shoe Goo - Viscoheel - Polar HRM - Sportslick - Bodyglide - Cho-Pat - Nip Guards - Powerstep - Smart Wool - Defeat

#### NUTRITION

Champion Nutrition - Revenge - Metabolol - Ultimate Meal - Power Bar - Power Gel - Ultima - Herbasway - The Perfect Remedy -  
GU

#### EYEWEAR

Oakley - Rudy Project

**Van Cortland Track Club  
Box 341  
Bronx, NY 10471**