

Van Cortlandt Track Club newsletter

The Marathon That Wasn't

Hurricane Sandy forced the cancellation of the New York City Marathon.

The plans of more than forty thousand prospective marathoners were derailed by a powerful hurricane that caused major damage over a huge section of the East Coast on October 29th and 30th. Beleaguered New York City Mayor Bloomberg and the New York Road Runners(NYRR) finally conceded on Friday, November 2nd, that the 2012 New York City Marathon could not be staged as planned in two days because so many people in the tri-state area had suffered such hardship. There was a growing movement among victims to cancel the race, so that resources normally meant for runners could be used to help those in life-threatening circumstances.



Hurricane Sandy caused widespread destruction on the East Coast.

The marathon was cancelled less than forty eight hours before the start-cannon was to fire. This brought more criticism to officials, as many New Yorkers thought the race should have been cancelled five days in advance, when damage from the storm was becoming widely known. The delay caused anger and confusion to many involved in the huge event.

The storm-surge, aided by 70 mph winds and a full-moon high tide left many coastal residences under water, while homes and businesses inland were hit by extensive power outages due to fallen trees on electrical lines.

On the brighter side: On what was to be race day, November 4th, about a thousand would-be racers ran through the streets of Staten Island, distributing much-needed supplies to local residents. This goodwill gesture helped to ease animosity which had been growing geometrically in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The NYRR also contributed about a million dollars to the relief effort in our area.

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A group of Van Cortlandt Track Club members ran their own version of a marathon on Sunday morning, starting in Van Cortlandt Park, running to Central Park, then back again. The run provided a much-needed outlet for VCTCers who had put in long hours and a lot of energy training for the now-famous international race. But the disappointment for club members was evident, as many scrambled to find alternative races in the next month. #

On The Run

by President Bette Clark

Today is a week after Sandy hit the tri-state area and a day before another storm is expected. It is also just 2 days after marathon Sunday, or, what is usually marathon Sunday. This is the day in past years that I usually see many people on the streets of Manhattan with that noticeable post-26.2 mile "my quads are still screaming" wide gait that gives them away as NYC marathoners. This column usually appears in the the VCTC newsletter devoted to the *NYC Marathon*, the front page of which is usually covered with photos of our runners, the content brimming with stories of our first-time marathoners, fast times, and support from our table at mile

21. But there is no "usual" this year. In the aftermath of what is arguably the worst natural disaster faced by New York and the unprecedented cancellation of what is now the world's largest and most expensive marathon--and our home town race, we are still reeling from it and trying to make sense of it all. VCTCers have personally suffered everything from minor inconveniences and discomforts to major property damage and loss. And all of us who lost the opportunity to run our marathon have struggled with mixed emotions, ranging from disappointment to frustration, rage, resignation and understanding.

But there is something remarkably familiar (not quite "usual") to the responses I have seen among VCTCers to both Sandy and the cancelled marathon, events that will always be inextricably

intertwined in our memories.

We are runners--and as runners, we set goals, are prepared to do the hard work, work through discomfort (and sometimes pain) yet know that even with all our dedicated training, we never really can predict what will happen on race day. Particularly when preparing for a marathon, we know that we cannot control all the variables that lead us to having a good race, set a PR, or end up with a disappointing PW. And the reasons we run--for the competitive urges it satisfies, for the health benefits, to fight our own personal demons, fill empty spaces in our lives, or for the pure joy of feeling the wind in faces, the sweat on our brows, that rush if adrenaline--(or some combination of these things)---fuel us to continue running despite the obstacles

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Van Cortlandt Track Club 2012 Board of Directors

President: Bette Clark
Secretary: Dick Conley

Vice Presidents: Mike Arnstein, Dave King
Treasurer: Kevin Shelton-Smith

2012 Executive Committee

Social Directors: Jill Staats, Vera King
Controllors: Mike and Pat Hudick
Public Relations: Steve Lewis, Liam Moroney
Clothing Director: Bobby Asher, Jamie Kyei-Frimpong
X-Country Series Race Director: James Moloney

Newsletter Editors: Dave King, Norris Ogard
Membership Director: Gene Westling, Rick Bloomer
Athletic Director: Ken Rolston
UEC Race Director: Hiroshi Kitada
Ramble Race Director: Kate Donovan

Website Committee: Dominic Lombardo, Jeff Powell, Kevin Shelton-Smith, Maryann Khinda, Jonathon Stenger

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

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- Personal Injury

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we face. When something interferes with our goals--injury, illness, work or family obligations--we have some options: mope and withdraw, or take action. In marathons, we may not be able to control many things--but what we can control are our responses. And all around me, I see people finding ways to turn the negative into something positive.

What makes me even prouder to be a VCTCer right now than all the fast times and PRs people have set this year is what people are doing in the aftermath of Sandy and the bungled cancellation of the NYC marathon. Just a few of the actions I know about:

--helping with clean up efforts in our beloved Van Cortlandt Park (as one member said, what better way to deal with rage than use chainsaws and haul lumber) --putting their training to good use and running another marathon as soon as possible --organizing collections of warm clothing and bedding for those in need --coming to the Tortoise and the Hare to run together (what we do best), then down to Central Park to join the thousands of runners on marathon Sunday, where the positive energy generated by athletes from around the world was as visible as their countries' flags --hosted a "pre-race" post-

cancellation party with plenty of pasta and good will

--turned up en masse at a "post-race" party to commiserate, enjoy each other's company, and as usual, come together as a family.

This is the time that team spirit can help us all to keep moving to pursue our personal and collective goals, motivate us to continue to find ways to support each other--and to remember to reach out to those who need that extra support during times of difficulty.

Please be on the alert for announcements about ways to help with clean up efforts in Van Cortlandt Park, and ways to help relief efforts for those most in need. (continued)

Also in this newsletter you will find details about our upcoming election for 3 open Board positions. Please look over the list of eligible nominees (people who have served on the Executive Committee for at least a year) and think about who you would like to nominate for leadership positions in VCTC. Nominations can be made before and during our important Annual Membership meeting, scheduled on Saturday, December 8 at 10:45 at the Van Cortlandt mansion. This is the time to learn more about the ways you can get involved in our club, find out about what people have been doing, and what you can do in the upcoming year.

Please come!! ##

Coach's Corner

by Coach Ken Rolston

Congratulations NY Marathon Finishers- Oh, wait a minute... The winds of fate changed things in many ways that keep our running efforts and lives in perspective. We train, sacrifice, plan, obsess, but in the end, running takes a back seat to higher priorities. The tunnel vision we may have acquired while focused on that special race opens up as we become aware of a greater goal. It was wonderful to see the outpouring

of support for the citizens of Staten Island as supremely fit runners converged on the starting area to dole out goods and support.

Others chose to run in Central Park to help raise money for victims of the storm.

Congrats on your strong race performances in subsequent marathon venues. If you didn't have the chance to run that far, no need to waste all that strength you built up. There are plenty of other racing opportunities that await.

In the meantime we will continue to pound out the miles on the track. The final NYRR race of the year is the *Join the Voices in My Head* 5 miler in Central Park. Both the men and women Open B squads are in 1st place so let's be ready to end the year on a high note. With the cooler weather and shorter days here, we will have the track mostly to ourselves. The plan is to stay on the track until the end of the year. If snow comes we can always adjust accordingly. Fieldston hills beckon soon enough.

Before you know it, we will be preparing for the indoor season with races beginning on Jan 3 at The Armory. We plan to combine track work with hill work throughout the winter. Who knows, maybe there will be access to the gorgeous new track at Manhattan College someday!

I'm thrilled to see that the *Foot Locker High School Northeast Regionals* are returning to Van Cortlandt Park on November 24. If you enjoy great racing come out and watch. The top 10 runners qualify to run in the Nationals in San Diego and the drama builds as you see runners 7-12 duke it out on the final straightaway in hopes of securing a spot. As we know too well, it's the course that always wins!

Upcoming Races:

11/22 Thu- 8:30- Rockland Turkey Trot- 5m
 11/22 Thu- 9:00- Prospect Park Turkey Trot- 5m
 11/22 Thu-10:00- Manchester Road Race- 4.7m
 11/24 Sat- 9:00- Bronxville Katie Welling Run- 2.5m
 11/24 Sat- 9:00- Rye Turkey Trot- 5K/5m
 11/24 Sat-12:00- Foot Locker Regional Champs HS-VC Park
 12/1 Sat- 6 AM- Las Vegas Marathon
 12/2 Sun- 8:30- Join the Voices 5m- Central Park(CP) *
 12/2 Sun-11:30- Pete McArdle 15K- VC Park
 12/8 Sat- 8:30- Jingle Bell Jog 4m- Prospect Park
 12/8 Sat- 10:00- X-C Relays 3m Blue Mountain, Peekskill
 12/9 Sun- 9:00- Jingle Bell Jog 3m- Greenwich, Ct
 12/9 Sun- 9:00- Couples Relay 3m x 2- Blue Mountain
 12/15 Sat- 8:30- Ted Corbitt 15K- CP
 12/31 Mon- Midnight Run 4m- CP
 12/31 Mon- 11:15 PM- New Year's Eve Run 3m- Brooklyn
 1/3 Thu- 7 PM- Thursday Night at the Races
 1/5 Sat- 8 AM- Joe Kleinerman Classic 10K- CP

Upcoming Elections and Annual Membership Meeting

Annual Membership Meeting December 8

Time: 10:45 a.m.

Place: Van Cortlandt Mansion, Van Cortlandt Park

Refreshments will be served

Currently, VCTC has 5 Board of Directors. They are elected for two-year renewable terms: 2 positions are open in even numbered years, 3 in odd numbered years. In 2013 there will be 3 open positions. Members nominate eligible candidates at or before our annual December Membership meeting on December 8.

The following people are eligible for nominations to the Board by virtue of serving at least one year on an executive committee. This is not an exhaustive list: if you think someone may be eligible due to past service, please let us know.

Mike Arnstein	Kate Donovan	Hiroshi Kitada	Glen Shane
Bobby Asher	Arnie Gore	Dominic Lombardo	Kevin Shelton-Smith
Bette Clark	Dave Isaac	James Moloney	Jill Staats
Fred Daley	Jamie Kyei-Frimpong	Ken Rolston	Jonathan Stenger

If you would like to nominate any of these people for a Board position, please send your nomination(s) to a member of our nominating committee: Ken Rolston (krolston@aol.com), Dave King (kingkvd@optonline.net) or Dick Conley (RConley@communityp.com). **Nominations can also be made in person at our December 8 Annual Membership Meeting.** Once these nominations have been accepted, nominees for the Board will announce which of the open Board positions he or she will be running for. The election this year will be for specific Board positions: President, Treasurer, 2nd Vice President/Vice Treasurer. Each candidate can run for only one of these positions. The election will take place by electronic and/or paper ballot between January 1-January 15.

This is an important annual meeting. It is when nominations to the Board are made, and executive committee positions reviewed--a time to learn about what goes on behind the scenes and to volunteer to take part in our social committee, publicity, website, clothing committees, just to name a few. Heads of executive committees hold their positions for one year terms (which may be renewed). As good a job as they have been doing, the goal is to broaden the conversation (and share the responsibility) by encouraging as many members as possible to get involved and to take on leadership roles in 2013. Prior to the meeting, we will provide written descriptions of these committees so you have a chance to think about ways you would like to be involved. Please come to the meeting to hear from those who have been doing the work, share your ideas about changes you would like to see, offer your suggestions and help for the upcoming year.

Please come!!

To All VCTC Members:

Save the date

WHAT: Annual VCTC Awards Dinner

WHEN: Saturday, January 19, 2013

7p.m.-11 p.m.

WHERE: Dunwoodie Golf Club

COST: TBD

DETAILS TO COME AT THE DECEMBER 8TH TEAM MEETING



VAN CORTLANDT
TRACK CLUB

Join online at:
www.vctc.org

Membership Application 2013

Single: \$20

☐

Family: \$30

☐

New Member:

☐

Junior: \$10

☐

Senior: \$10

☐

Renewal:

☐

Last Name: _____ First Name(s): _____
 Date of Birth: _____ Male: ☐ Female: ☐
 Email Address: _____
 Cell #: _____ Work #: _____
 Singlet Required (\$15): Male: S / M / L / XL / XXL Female: XS / S / M / L / XL

Last Name: _____ First Name(s): _____
 Date of Birth: _____ Male: ☐ Female: ☐
 Email Address: _____
 Cell #: _____ Work #: _____
 Singlet Required (\$15): Male: S / M / L / XL / XXL Female: XS / S / M / L / XL

Address: _____ Apt: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Home Tel #: _____ Date: _____
 Signature: _____

Mailing Address: Van Cortlandt Track Club, P.O. Box 341, Bronx, NY 10470

Van Cortlandt Track Club is a Road Runner Club of America (RRCA) affiliated club. Any VCTC member wishing to compete in TAC sanctioned events as a TAC member must join TAC as an individual. Runners are responsible for their own condition and suitability to run. VCTC accepts no responsibility for injuries and illness attributed to running with the Club.

Club runs are Saturdays 8am. Track/hill workouts are Tuesdays 7pm. Tempo runs are Thursdays 7pm. Various locations, see web for details. Club Meetings are 2nd Saturday of every month at 10am. Get group messages by joining www.vctc.org and VCTC's Facebook page. To get urgent messages – text 'vctc' to 90210. Membership good till December 31st, 2013.

Member Profile: Jonathan Stenger

Jonathan Stenger has only been a member of the Van Cortlandt Track Club for two years. But he has made a significant impact on the team in that short duration. Not only has he added fast times to VCTC's points races, but the student of constitutional law volunteered for, then co-ordinated an effort to rewrite the VCTC by-laws.

Jonathan was born in Oakland, California 39 years ago. He began his running career in the 8th grade in Santa Rosa, California, an hour north of San Francisco, where he grew up. The coach of the junior high school he attended "made running really fun." Jonathan was hooked. He ran X-Country and track at Piner High School, where he recorded a fantastic 4:29 mile in his senior year.

He was favored to make the California State Mile Final that senior year, but faltered on the 3rd lap of the qualifier and missed out. Most of us have similar

stories at some point in our lives. His high school coach had often quoted Alberto Salazar: "I am a coward on the line, but a lion in the race." Jonathan considered his race a failure and it bothered him for a long time. In a moment of self-denial, he felt he hadn't been that "lion" when needed. But he found solace in another Salazar quote: "I had as many doubts as anyone else. Standing on the starting line, we're all cowards."

Jonathan finally reasoned that, "I think anyone who really knows the pain of running a good race has reason to be afraid when he/she steps up to the line. I've never run a good race in which I didn't question my ability to finish or wonder if I had enough to make it to the line. For me, the test inherent in racing is deeply personal. Just because I am slower than I want to be (or can be) does not diminish my desire to beat an opponent or my own previous performance, of course, but the only standard that can really mean anything to me over time is how hard I pushed myself. How willing I was to suffer. It is that limit I wish to find and attempt to exceed. Anything less still feels insufficient (for me)."

Jonathan attended UC Santa Cruz, a small division III school, where he ran X-Country (there was no track program) and played Ultimate Frisbee. After college, he stopped running altogether, dabbled in law school,

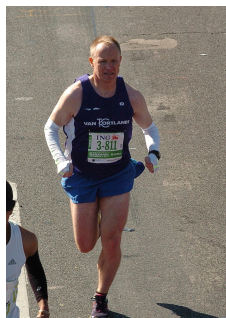
then dropped out after one semester. A short period of stagnation and indecisiveness followed. Finally, in 1997, Jonathan moved to New York City to study at the New School. His adviser taught Constitutional Law at Cardozo. Jonathan spent a lot of time studying under him. And thus came his propensity to read and revise VCTC's somewhat archaic by-laws.

But he still wasn't doing any running. He got a job as a grant proposal writer at the Osborne Association, an agency that provides services to incarcerated individuals and their families. He took up biking in Central Park for a time, but realized it wasn't his "thing." Bikers, after all, were very different from runners. He wanted the close-knit social interactions of a running club.

In 2000, Jonathan started running again, but mostly alone. Three years later, he decided to venture into a marathon. Still training mostly by himself, he then flew out to Long Beach, California where he recorded an incredible 2:55:54 for his very first attempt at 26.2 miles.. His ideas about running had changed slightly. That led him to a quote by Joan Benoit-Samuelson: "My philosophy on running is: I don't dwell on it, I do it."

"After that marathon, I ran recreationally again, but my wife and I always seemed too busy for me to put in any concerted

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*Jonathan in last
year's NYC
Marathon*

training. When my daughter was born in 2006, I pretty much stopped running for a few years. I started again in 2008, but I didn't really return to training until 2010."

And then, one day that year, Melissa Weiner (who lives underneath him in Inwood) invited Jonathan to a VCTC track workout. The rest is history, so to speak.

"I still struggle to fit my workouts into my family schedule, but I love that my daughter is now excited about running and the two of us will often run through the neighborhood--especially on rainy days when we can splash through the puddles.

"Ultimately, I run because I love how it makes me feel and I appreciate that each week (or month, or whatever), we line up together and see what we've achieved with the help of our friends and teammates. VCTC is unlike any running club I have encountered in that the social support we offer each other defines the environment that allows each of us to run and compete in whatever context makes sense to us. I love that about this club and I am proud, and honored, to be a member."

##

Member Profile: Shelly Buchbinder

by Gene Westling

Shelly is already in her second year as a VCTC member. I've run with Shelly a few times during our Saturday morning group runs, and she's definitely a strong and fast long distance runner. Shelly ran a terrific race at the last Riverdale Ramble and will be an asset to our Women's NYRR club team races in the future. We caught up with Shelly recently and asked her a few questions:

What races have you run recently [including times if you would like to share them]?

This summer I have been enjoying the extra hot weather running. I ran in the Riverdale Ramble - my first try at the event. I finished 2nd for women 20-29 and was a 5th female finisher overall. I also ran in a number of the summer cross country series, placing in my age category.

Describe your training schedule:

I run 3-4 times a week with 2-3 maintenance runs and one long run (8-12 miles). Weekdays I do my runs in Riverside Park and weekends I run in Central Park or Van Cortlandt Park. I am a pretty even runner (I run about the same times per mile for 5K's 10K's and half marathons) -give or take a mile. Both my roommates are currently runners - so I run quite

a bit with them. One roommate is an experienced college runner and encouraging more "strategic" running that does not include me charging quickly up every hill!

What are your current running goals, things you'd like to achieve over the next year or two?

My number one running goal is good health! I have had some hip problems off and on. I would also like to get my half marathon time around 7:30/mile. I mostly love to run and have been enjoying smaller club runs over larger events. I just love running.

Why did you join VCTC? What do you like best about the club?

I joined VCTC because I love the running in Van Cortlandt Park. I am from rural New England and I feel much more at home run in the Bronx than in Central Park. Also, the VCTC runs are friendly (and still competitive)!

What book have you read recently?

I am currently reading "American Project" on the history of public housing in the US and "Boomerang" by Michael Lewis about the international effects of the 2008 financial crisis (I love nonfiction).

VCTC welcomes all of our new members. We encourage our members to become active in club events where you can find



running partners and make new friends. After you've signed up and paid your club dues, you will have access to our Club Members Only Group, found on our website at www.vctc.org. Go to "My Page" where you can upload a picture of yourself, edit your profile, and tell us about yourself...we'd like to get to know you.

Most of the daily dialogue between club members occurs on Facebook. Instructions on how to join VCTC's Facebook group are found under the "How, Where, Who" tab on our website. Social media is a great way to share your race results, upload pictures, and meet new/ stay in touch with club members.

At its core, VCTC is a running club, which means we love to do group runs, train on the track, do tempo runs, and race. The place to start is our Saturday morning group run. Every Saturday at 8 am we gather near the track/handball courts in Van Cortlandt Park for the start of our weekly group run. This is a good place to meet other VCTC members and find someone who runs your pace to join on a run that will go around the "flats", down the "Putnam trail", up the "Aqueduct trail", or into the "back hills". It ends at the track and for most of us, a lively breakfast at the ShortStop across the street. Coach Ken can tell you about the Tuesday night track workout, and talk with Kevin or Jonathan about the Thursday tempo runs. #

Race Report: Reach The Beach Relay

by Mandi Susman



*We all ran the last 50 yards with
anchorman Liam Moroney*

I'm not even sure where to start this report since there really are things that happened before race day that certainly contributed to the experience.

We had a couple planning meetings before the relay, which you really need to do when there are so many people involved and so many resources required. We met at a pizza place after a regular workout and began planning what vehicles to take and who was bringing what food, pretty basic information for a 24 hour relay. Most of the team had not done a relay of this type before, so those of us who had were providing some information on what to expect and issues to avoid, if at all possible.

I was relaying a story from my 2010 Ragnar NY experience. My last leg had a pretty steep incline at the end and it also happened to be a leg that the van route differed from the runner's

route. I shared my thoughts from that last quarter mile or so with my new team – how I really pushed it and gave it everything I had because I knew the van would be there waiting for me and I didn't want them to see me walking. Well, the van got lost and wasn't at the transition area when I finished, huffing it up that terrible hill running on fumes. I was so disappointed about them not being there and about losing time even though the team ended up doing well.

Just after I finished telling that story, Laura Rodriguez was looking through the course description for each leg. New Jersey is a pretty hilly state, but we're all used to running a fair amount of hills considering we are based in Van Cortlandt Park, so even the pretty tough legs didn't really get much attention from her.

That is until leg 14. The top of the page contained a large statement: "The elevation profile is correct. This leg has an epic finish." Just in case there were any doubts about the elevation profile, here it is:

Well, when we figured out that I was running second and therefore leg 14 was mine, I near about cried. But, I'm training for the marathon, my total mileage for the relay was only about 14 miles and this particular leg was only 4.4 miles. I could do it, no problem.

The next day I came down with a head cold. The same one
(continued)

my husband had had for a week. Nothing really terrible, but enough to be annoying, and certainly not what you want when you have a physically demanding race coming up.

Kevin Shelton-Smith's suggestion was, naturally, to run it out. Go out and run hard and burn up that virus... But I know my body and I chose to get as much rest as possible and actually didn't run the rest of that week.

The morning of the race, October 12th dawned sunny and seasonable for October. We had our supplies, we had our vans, directions and we were all set to go. Naturally, our supplies included several purple tutus, purple car paint and a large purple afro wig. You can't take these races too seriously, especially not with Laura Rodriguez on your team!

The trip out was uneventful but when we got to the ski lodge to sign in and get our numbers we were sure we were in the wrong place. It was a ghost town except for a few signs from Reach the Beach so eventually we made it to registration, got our numbers, safety information and team photo.

We were gathered in the ski lodge getting ourselves together when we realized that Dave King, our first runner, needed to start warming up. It was 12:30 or so and our team had a 1 p.m. start time so we were basically at go

time. Being the second runner, that meant that I was going to be up in less than an hour since Dave's leg was only about 2 miles.

We were just getting started and already I knew I was going to be running on no fuel because we didn't leave enough time to get lunch. I ran back to the van to get my protein shake and make sure I had on my running clothes so I could be ready to start when Dave came in.

Dave got to the start line on time with Van 2 there cheering him on while Van 1 started out on the road to get me in position in time for my first leg. We got there in good time so I got in my leg swings and a mini-warm up before the runners came in. I got the hand-off and began my first leg of 4 miles. I realized that I hadn't paid any attention to this leg since I was so stressed about the second leg. I wasn't really sure where I was going or where the hills were.

This ended up being a tough leg only because I just didn't feel ready. But that's the whole point of these relays. How do you perform when conditions are not perfect? When you show up for a regular road race of any length, generally you have planned out your pre-race meal, made sure you got to bed early the night before, completed your carb-loading if it's a long race and laid out all your race clothes ahead of time. Running a 24-hour relay

eliminates the possibility that any of these things can happen. You have to make do with what you have at the moment, not what is ideal before a race. So, I ended up not getting lunch before I ran my leg and even though it was only 4 miles, I was out of energy for the last little hill at the end of my leg and it was tough. Of course, knowing that the entire team was waiting for you at the next exchange was motivation enough to dig deep and kick it home.

I made it to my hand-off to Kevin and had a few minutes to walk around before we had to jump back in the van and cheer on Kevin and get the next runner to exchange 4.

Naturally, Kevin had no issues and really didn't need much during his legs considering his level of conditioning. But we somehow still didn't support him well and he was dying for some water by the time we caught up with him.

The next event from Van 1 was Rick Bloomer's first leg. The signs weren't great and we were traveling through a relatively populated area so it was easy to miss the one directional arrow for the relay runners. Both Rick and the van missed a turn and went off course, but we figured out where he was, where he went wrong and got him back on track. We didn't lose too much time and considering there (continued)

were 36 legs, we were bound to get lost at least once.

Maryann Khinda's first leg was pretty hilly and kinda took us by surprise. I think everyone was so focused on the "epic finish" of my second leg, that the other hills in the course were not given much attention. It was a tough leg, but she completed it with grace and guts. Mick Burke had a bit of a tough go of it during his first leg, but like Maryann, he gritted it out and finished strong.

Once we got through everyone's legs, we had a little bit of time to get some dinner before starting on our second legs. I had located a diner online near the next exchange point and figured that would give us the best options for everyone. All the diners in New Jersey that I have been to have all been reliable so I thought it would be good but this one was definitely sub-par in terms of quality and taste. But it did the trick and we were all happy to be in a heated restaurant using indoor plumbing before heading back out for the second legs.

Before we knew it, Dave was off for his leg and I was in the back getting ready for mine. The sun had been down for hours and it was going down below freezing that night so I was dressed for the cold. That was one thing I was concerned about since it really hadn't been cold yet so I wasn't used to running in

the cold, but again, this is what these relays are about.

If you have ever run in the middle of the night, you will agree with me I'm sure that it's a surreal experience. You are really alone with your thoughts, and the support van. The first 3.5 miles of this leg was really flat. I started out at a good pace knowing that the last mile would be slow. I felt so strong and calm and ready for whatever was to come. The stars were beautiful and even though I couldn't see it, I could smell a pasture and knew I must be running past some sleeping cows. When it's dark out your other senses are more acute so smells and sounds felt amplified.

I got warm enough to not need my gloves and threw them at the van before heading up the hill. It started out slowly enough, nothing that I would call epic, after we turned down a narrow country road with a sign that said: "No Outlet." That was a bad sign. I kept my pace for another quarter mile or so, and then the "hill" began. It was just as advertised. I knew it was coming, shortened my steps, kept breathing and took some of my sports drink. The van was right there with me and it was a good thing, too, because there were no street lights and even with my headlamp it was tough to see. They shouted encouragement and did everything they could to help. About half way up I was really

wishing that they would just head up to the transition and leave me in my silent pain. I also really wanted to walk, just for a few steps so I could get a proper drink of water and catch my breath. They finally pulled away because they had to get Kevin to the transition area. I took a few steps, got my drink and started up again, right before I met up with Van 2 waiting for me at one of the side streets. They followed me to provide light and encouragement. And Beni Veraz decided it was important to catch this moment on film. Had I known that I might not have let those three expletives out but I just couldn't help it. This was a %*&^\$ hill, as advertised. They followed me a good way of the rest of the hill and then went on up to the transition area to meet me. I took another quick water break, caught my breath and kept at it until I crested the hill. All I needed to do was make it around the corner and to the orange cones where Kevin was waiting for me. I did have a little left and finished fairly strong to give Kevin a good start for his leg (which was then all downhill, I might add).

I did it. Everyone, the whole team (except Kevin) was there congratulating me and suddenly all the pain went away. I walked off my tired legs a bit and got stretched some and then it was back in the van to support Kevin.

(continued)

On a side note, Laura told me that when they were waiting for me on that side street in the dark, two shady looking guys came up to them and asked them if they needed something. I guess it's not often that they see decorated vans parked on the street for an extended period of time so they were just checking on them. However, it looked like those two guys just disappeared into the woods behind the van and the whole experience was a little freaky. They also shared that when they were driving down the hill to meet me, the road was so steep, they were hanging on for dear life and were really scared just driving down. This was the road I ran up. Why do we do this to ourselves?

The rest of Van 1's second legs were pretty uneventful other than all of us being tired. After his leg, Kevin decided it was time for a spot of tea, having missed Tea Time that afternoon. He broke out his propane fired Coleman stove and made his tea while we were waiting for one of the guys to come in. That was a nice luxury to have, the problem being the slow leaking propane in the back of the van for the rest of the trip. It took me awhile to figure out what the smell was considering there were seven runners who had all run twice and there were a lot of smelly items in the van.

We got our seven legs done and then drove to the next big

transition area for a little shut-eye. And I do mean "little". It was freezing, literally, below freezing and we tried to get bundled up but it was just too cold even with sleeping bags. I was lying on the floor below the back seat, Dave and Maryann were in the front seats and the rest of the guys tried to find room in the back to lie down. Rick relayed that he went through a few different items trying to find a suitable makeshift pillow: chocolate milk containers, a plastic container of something, a small bag of unknown contents, etc. then deciding "OK, this shoe is pretty comfortable."

Needless to say, there was very little sleeping in the van between the propane smell, the lack of head and the lack of sufficient room for most to lie down properly. We did turn on the van eventually so we wouldn't actually freeze, but it was less than two hours before we had to be ready for our next leg so there was no real rest for most. I still had to get changed before my next leg and had to re-think my running gear to make sure I had enough warm clothes since it was actually colder with the sun coming up than it was during our overnight run. We slowly got ourselves together, made contact with the other van and tried to get our heads back in the game. Dave was trying to be good and get into position but it was really cold and we didn't

know exactly when the #12 runner (Liam Moroney) would be coming in to hand off to our #1. A couple times I called him back to get in the van so he wouldn't be an ice-pop before they showed up. Eventually Dave got on the road and we headed out for our third and last legs.

My last leg was pancake flat and 5 miles long. I was certainly running on fumes, as were most of our team, but this is really where the rubber meets the road, figuratively and literally. Dave finished and I started out at about 7 a.m. It was really, really cold. Definitely below freezing. I never warmed up through the whole leg. I started out at a good pace and kept it pretty strong until mile 4. The van met me there to cheer me on and let me know how far I had to go, then they drove on up to get Kevin in place for the hand-off. I'm not sure what happened, but it felt like I just hit a brick wall right after the van drove off. I kept going, but I definitely slowed way down. My body was just done.

I made it to the transition area, handed off to Kevin and started walking around to shake off the run. I looked down at my tights and noticed there was frost on them. My sweat had frozen on my tights while I was running. Now I had proof that it was *^&#\$ cold.

Frankly, the rest of the legs were a bit of a blur. Everyone was running hard, (continued)

working to hit the splits we had set before the race began, but we really had nothing left. We did get through all of the legs, with Eduardo Lara blowing through his leg like he had spent the night in a four start hotel. Kevin also seemed quite fresh and un-phased by the lack of sleep, food or warmth. Once our van was done running, we headed toward the finish line to wait for Van 2.

There was food and drink waiting for us at the beach so that seemed like the best course of action. We had to drive over a bridge to get to Seaside Heights and the finish line. While driving over we saw a few runners heading over as well and realized where our runner would be. We looked for Laura but just weren't sure where she would be at this point since we didn't have consistent contact with the other van. We found out after the fact, that right over the bridge, Laura had missed a turn sign and ran off course for a few blocks before realizing that she was going the wrong way. Considering her speed, we probably only lost a minute or two, but she was really upset that she cost the team that time. Again, this is all part of a relay, dealing with the unknown and less than ideal racing conditions.

It was still quite cold, in the 40's, when we made it to the beach, but apparently it's tradition to jump in the water at the end of a Reach the Beach Relay so a few

of the guys had brought bathing suits. They got changed (Kevin under a towel on the beach as only Kevin would) and jumped in. If I wasn't still cold from my run and still fighting off this head cold, I might have gone in all the way, but I just took off my shoes and socks and waded in up to my knees. The cold water really felt good on my tired and sore feet and calves and I stayed in for about 10 minutes.

Kevin and Eduardo insisted on doing his entire "ice bath" of 20 minutes in the ocean and both came out feeling refreshed and chipper as ever. After lots of pictures we headed up to the finishers party to wait for Van 2. There was an endless supply of pasta and salad and I even got a Corona and was feeling pretty good. We couldn't really celebrate, though, until our #12 runner crossed the finish line. Van 2 showed up with everyone except Liam who was running and we proceeded to get ready to cross the finish line with him. There were no other runners close to him so we could all jump in and run the last 50 yards across the sand and over the finish line together. That was really cool, to finish as a team.

We had on our purple tutus and massive purple afros and all our Van Cortlandt Track Club singlets and we made quite a sight. It was truly a reflection of the craziness of the event and the spirit of the team. Supportive,

positive, totally accepting of everyone on the team regardless of ability, background or whether or not they were willing to wear a tutu. Races like these are bonding experiences like no others. Someone commented that this relay sounded like a slumber party for adults, with some running thrown in. That's a nice way to describe what we went through.

Everyone, all 12 runners and one driver (thanks to Trish Novelli's husband Ray who was quite a trouper through this adventure), gave 100% toward the effort and worked to make their contribution as best they could. And in the end, that was good enough for 2nd place in our division and 5th place overall. Originally we were placed in the open division, but since we only had 5 women, that put us in the open men's division where we placed second (interestingly, if we had remained in the open division we would have come in 3rd). We were eligible for a prize but since they didn't get the divisions straightened out for a couple days, we didn't actually get our prize, other than true bragging rights and memories that will last a lifetime. #



The roller coaster at the RTB finish line ended up in the ocean after Hurricane Sandy hit.

Race Results

Tuckahoe Challenge 1M

Sept. 9, 2012
6:17 Dave King M60-69 1

Tuckahoe Challenge 5M

Sept. 9, 2012
28:05 Bobby Asher M27 1OV
29:07 Kevin Shelton-Smith M52 2OV
34:14 Rachel Kimber F34 1OV
35:35 Dave King M60-69 1
38:38 Riccel Kouns F16
41:40 Jill Staats F61 1
45:47 Kate Donovan F52

Nation's Triathlon

Sept. 9, 2012
Washington, D.C.
3:07:32 Tami Luhby

Great Cow Harbor 10K

Sept. 15, 2012
Northport, N.Y.
38:33 Laura Rodriguez 2

Woodlawn Run for a Cause 5K

Sept. 15, 2012
19:17 Melissa Weiner F30-39 2OV
19:33 Dan Hennessey M40-49
21:35 Lauren Valentino F30-39
21:47 Dave King M60-69 1
22:39 Lorraine Clarke F30-39
23:19 Mandi Susman F40-49
24:56 Bill Gaston M50-59
24:57 Mick Burke M30-39
26:34 Eileen Hickey F30-39
26:45 Yani Fernandez F40-49
27:19 J Vera King F50-59
28:32 Rozsa Gaston F50-59
39:08 Kathleen O'Donnell F40-49
45:52 Ann McKeague F60+

Yonkers Half Marathon

Sept. 16, 2012
1:45:27 Bette Clark F50-59 2

2:20:43 Mike Yorio

Pfalz Point Trail Race 10M

Sept. 22, 2012
1:33:08 Bette Clark F50-59 2

Pfalz Point Trail Challenge 10M

Sept. 23, 2012
1:30:48 Andie Davis F50-59 1

Hands-on-House Children's Museum 1/2M

Sept. 29, 2012
Lancaster, Pa.
2:20:07 Mike Yorio

Wineglass Marathon

Sept. 30, 2012
Corning, N.Y.
3:07:52 Melissa Weiner 8OV
3:53:53 Dave Isaac PR

Henry Isola XC Classic 4M

Sept. 30, 2012
Van Cortlandt Park
25:47 David Kornacker M48 3
31:34 Salvatore Carretta Jr M56 4
33:32 Reggie Ceden M32 9
38:52 Edward James M66 4
0

Divas Half Marathon

Oct. 6, 2012
Long Island
1:23:43 Laura Rodriguez 2OV

Steamtown Marathon

Oct. 7, 2012
Scranton, Pa.
3:37:21 Bette Clark F55-59 2PR
3:37:54 Andie Davis F50-54 3PR

Mohawk Hudson River Half Marathon

Oct. 7, 2012
Schenectady, N.Y.
2:01:14 Tami Luhby

John Zumbo 5K

Oct. 7, 2012
Greenwich, Conn.
23:07 Bill Gaston
26:02 Rozsa Gaston

Staten Island Half Marathon

Oct. 7, 2012

1:14:23	Michael Arnstein	M35	1
1:21:32	Sarah Alaei	F30	1
1:24:43	Jonathan Stenger	M39	
1:29:11	Aaron Lipskar	M36	
1:29:16	Daniel Hennessy	M47	
1:31:42	Steven Joseph	M51	5
1:37:11	David Rippon	M43	
1:37:27	Lauren Valentino	F34	
1:40:31	Benigno Veraz	M57	
1:43:46	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M56	
1:48:19	Anne Tiger-Days	F44	
1:56:40	Darren Rosa	M47	
1:57:31	Eileen Hickey	F30	
1:58:35	Edward James	M66	9
2:00:05	Zafar Shahbaz	M55	
2:02:50	Enrique Jaen	M47	
2:12:28	Carlos Lopez	M31	

Hunts Point Hustle 5K

Oct. 13, 2012

17:51	Carlos Lopez		
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Grete's Grete Gallop Half Marathon

Oct. 14, 2012

1:13:05	Michael Arnstein	M35	2
1:13:49	Thomas Murley	M34	3
1:15:57	Bobby Asher	M27	
1:16:35	Kyle M Hall	M34	7
1:18:54	David Talbird	M31	
1:22:43	Garland Days	M42	
1:23:43	Kevin Shelton-Smith	M52	3
1:28:51	Sean Moore	M48	
1:31:08	Peter H Coy	M54	
1:32:01	Ely Greenberg	M33	
1:35:25	Steven Joseph	M51	
1:37:15	Christopher Hill	M38	
1:39:36	Josh Moosikasuwan	M39	
1:40:44	David Monahan	M61	
1:41:26	Victoria Arnstein	F42	
1:42:36	David Isaac	M49	
1:42:43	Kevin Mulvey	M25	
1:43:14	Bette Clark	F57	3
1:45:12	Daniel Hennessy	M47	
1:45:22	Juan Tony Gonzalez	M66	3
1:46:59	John McCarthy	M53	
1:47:56	John Farrelly	M43	
1:48:18	Salvatore Carretta Jr	M56	
1:50:42	Suzanne Corber	F59	5
1:50:53	David Rippon	M43	
1:51:45	Colleen McMahon	F28	

1:53:09

Zafar Shahbaz

M55

1:54:33

Jill Staats

F61

2

1:57:39

Elaine Keating

F29

2:03:19

Arnold L Gore

M71

5

2:06:25

David Pultz

M60

2:09:58

Shirley Middleton

F58

2:10:04

Eileen Hickey

F30

2:10:44

Penelope Sheely

F43

2:16:06

Stephen Orban

M32

2:33:14

Susan R Epstein

F69

7

2:43:32

Catherine Anne Sapeta

F49

2:47:23

Gilda L Serrano

F64

Harry Murphy XC Classic 5K

Oct. 14, 2012

Van Cortlandt Park

20:03

David Kornacker

M48

5

20:28

Bob Rooney

M56

1

21:47

Anthony C Thoman

M50

2

22:03

Anna Carlson

F30

2

23:28

Benigno Veraz

M57

2

37:24

Edith Jones

F73

1

Susannah's Run 5K

Oct. 20, 2012

Tod Point, N.Y.

23:47

Bill Gaston

26:31

Rozsa Gaston

Sleepy Hollow Halloween 10K

Oct. 20, 2012

Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

59:28

Michelle De La Rosa

F29

Kurt Steiner XC Classic 5K

Oct. 21, 2012

Van Cortlandt Park

20:02

Bob Rooney

M56

1

20:12

David Kornacker

M48

8

21:24

Anna Carlson

F30

6

22:47

Benigno Veraz

M57

2

23:29

Adam Golovizki

M36

23:31

Lauren Valentino

F34

8

24:34

Salvatore Carretta Jr

M56

4

26:53

Jill Staats

F61

1

26:57

Darren Rosa

M47

28:23

Edward James

M66

3

33:30

Peggy Janosik

F57

4

33:46

Kathleen Nolin

F56

5

Hoboken 5K

Oct. 27, 2012

Hoboken, N.J.

19:27 Melissa Weiner 1

Rocky's 5K

Oct. 27, 2012

Rockefeller Preserve

21:02 Tony Thoman M50-54 1

37:08 Colin Thoman

37:08 Maureen Thoman

Poland Spring Marathon Kickoff 5M

Oct. 28, 2012

31:26 David Kornacker M48 7

34:43 Kevin Mulvey M25

35:33 David Isaac M49

35:45 Benigno Veraz M57 7

36:29 Shawn Bobb M46

37:19 Matt Newton M38

42:24 Lyndsey Dore F35

43:06 Edward James M66 9

44:32 Salvatore Carretta Jr M56

44:59 Robert A Jacklosky M47

45:03 Miguel Ortiz M51

46:53 Leoni Parker F48

53:19 Catherine Anne Sapeta F49

56:03 Elizabeth Castro F46

56:43 Gilda L Serrano F64

1:03:39 Ramon Minaya M72

1:07:30 Kenn Sapeta M58

Air Line Ghost Run Half Marathon

Nov. 3, 2012

Colchester, Conn.

1:33:54 Peter Coy M50-59 2

Harrisburg Marathon

Nov. 11, 2012

2:36:07 Michael Arnstein 30V

2:47:58 Bobby Asher 6

2:48:46 Matt Soja 3

2:53:40 Kevin Shelton-Smith 1

3:05:02 Lilia Britez 30V

3:27:31 Lauren Valentino

4:00:07 Lorraine Clarke

4:04:47 Lyndsey Dore

4:21:19 Mandi Sussman

4:35:18 Eileen Hickey

4:37:09 Dennis Martinez

Relay

3:54:02

Sal Carretta and Maria Romano

After the Leaves Have Fallen 20K Trail Run

Nov. 11, 2012

Minnewaska, N.Y.

Bette Clark

1:55

Race to Deliver 4M

Nov. 18, 2012

22:57 Garland Days M42 2

24:24 Jonathan Stenger M39 6

26:56 Anthony C Thoman M50 8

28:17 Alexandra Hernandez F31

28:22 Benigno Veraz M57 10

28:55 Matt Newton M38

29:02 Hiroshi Kitada M47

30:04 Salvatore Carretta Jr M56

30:23 Rick Bloomer M48

31:03 Bette Clark F57 2

31:56 Penelope Sheely F43

32:39 Jill Staats F61 2

33:24 John McCarthy M53

34:30 Kathryn A Donovan F54

36:15 Glen H Shane M73 6

44:19 Elizabeth Castro F47

49:14 Juan Tony Gonzalez M66

52:29 Kenn Sapeta M58

DELAYED RESULTS

Long Island McArthur Airport 5K

June 2, 2012

18:23 Laura Rodriguez 20V

Schwachman Diamond Dash 5K

19:04

Laura Rodriguez

1

*Kevin Shelton-Smith on a New Jersey road in RTB*

CLUB NEWS

Membership *Please renew your membership which is due 1/1/13* (If you haven't already). Membership rates are: single-\$20; family-\$30. New members 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.vctc.org Please e-mail Gene Westling or Rick Bloomer with any changes of address, phone, email and whether you would like to be added to the group email.

Meetings/Workouts For 2013: Team meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of the month 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 7:00 p.m.

Newsletter stories The newsletter is published bi-monthly. We welcome all contributions. Deadline for the January/February issue is December 20, 2012. 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.vctc.org

Van Cortlandt Track Club

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