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# Van Cortlandt Track Club **newsletter**

## UEC: Taken by Storm

*57 Brave Runners Complete the Wet and Wild Urban Environmental Challenge*



**By Jill Staats**

*Two saturated participants celebrate their UEC adventure*

**O**n April 15th, the taxing 6.3-mile Urban Environmental Challenge (UEC) was held, despite forecasts that called for the worst storm in 15 years to hit New York City. More than 100 people pre-registered for the race, and 57 brave souls showed up. The mud was deep, the rain bone chilling, and the visibility close to zero. Despite the conditions, no one was seriously hurt, and most runners finished the race with big smiles on their faces. First place winner Armando Oliveriera crossed the finish line in 39:53, amazingly only three minutes and three seconds behind last year's winner Steven Marsalese.

I guess uncertain weather is part of the "challenge" of this race. The UEC race has been held during snow storms, raging heat waves, and other nor'easters. For a race that has been around for almost 10 years, so far only two of them have been held on nice days. Aside from the usual inclement weather, the course covered two loops of rugged Van Cortlandt backcountry, which includes some steep climbs, touch and go with some swamps, a few downed trees, and lots of mud.

As race director, it was a rewarding experience and I want to thank all those who ran and, as importantly, who came out and volunteered in such weather. It is great to be a member of VCTC. I'm not the only club fan: On the next page are comments I received via email from runners.

## COMMENTS FROM THE RACERS



"I had a great time at the UEC yesterday—you put on a fine event under difficult circumstances."

"I just wanted to let you know that I had a great time at this race. You and all the volunteers deserve a great deal of credit in making this race such a success especially given the adverse weather. I always say that the volunteers have it much harder than the runners on a day like this. The course was well marked and there were plenty of spotters out there to guide us along the course. The bags that were given out were a great idea as opposed to the usual T-shirts."

"Thanks so much to you, the Van Cortlandt Track Club, and all the volunteers for braving the bad weather on Sunday for the Urban Environmental Challenge. It was my first time on the Van Cortlandt cross-country trails, and it was a lot of fun—a lot more fun than the subway ride back downtown. Plus the carrot cake was a great hit with my usually non-supportive-of-my-running family. So thanks to Lloyds, too. We'll definitely visit for more carrot cake."



"Just wanted to pass along a huge "Thank You" for the wonderful job VCTC did in pulling the race off on Sunday. Volunteers were great, course conditions were wonderful (I'm one of those who likes wet conditions) and it was an all out blast. Another guy who finished (I think) sixth, Andrew, was also in awe. For a race that ultimately had, what, 60 people, the amount of support provided by the club to host something like this was unbelievable -- and that you do it year after year makes it that much more rewarding."

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# On the Run



**By Bette Clark**

*Finally*, spring has arrived. And even though the flats and trails around Van Cortlandt are still a bit soggy, we are now able to enjoy some truly great running weather (until it gets too hot, that is!!). VCTC showed its true colors (especially purplish blue) at this year's Urban Environmental Challenge, with almost as many volunteers as runners braving the nor'easter of '07. Jill Staats has become a "seasoned" race director in one fell swoop (she'll be back next year). I think everyone will agree that she quickly shed her novice ranks and pulled off a great race in very challenging conditions with amazing style and aplomb. I was sorry not to be there (see Bette Battles Boston) but the great photos that were posted so quickly on our Web site brought me right to those sodden hills. The many accolades by happy runners are testimony to how VCTC goes the extra mile (the course really is 6.3 miles, right?) to put on a race, with the course expertly marked and marshaled, and runners well

looked after all along the way. Everyone who lent a hand (and that was so many of you) did an amazing job.

As more and more races appear on our summer calendars, VCTC adds to the list with our first 5K of the cross-country summer series, on Thursday, May 24, staged by our veteran race director Fred Daley. Then, just a little over a week later, on June 3, our famous Riverdale Ramble takes place in a new venue and on a new course, carefully plotted by race director Dave King and his compadres. I know we will all be there to help in all the ways we are needed.

One of our members has just completed his goal of running a marathon on every continent! All of us have unique (and often remarkable) goals and running accomplishments. Please keep setting new challenges, find ways to meet them, and tell us all about them by writing stories for the newsletter. Also, please don't forget to send your race times to Peter Coy or we won't know about your amazing times and PR's.

Our next Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, June 9. At that meeting, after a Ramble debriefing we will begin to plan our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, coming up this fall. So please come with your ideas and energy to help implement a great celebration.

## **May-June races of note**

5/12-Sat- Tony Colavito 4 mile- Yonkers- 10 AM  
 5/13-Sun- Mother's Day 4m/10m Central Park- 8 AM  
 5/19-Sat- Healthy Kidney 10K- Central Park- 9 AM  
 5/20-Sun-MINT 5K- Bronx Botanical Gardens- 9 AM  
 5/20-Sun- Marisa 10K/3-mile run- Rockland Lake- 8:30 AM  
 5/20-Sun- Gilda's Run-15K/5K- Paramus NJ- 9 AM  
**5/24-Th VCTC XC series 5K, Van Cortlandt Park- 7 PM**  
 5/26-Sat- Bronxville run for fun 5m/2.5m- 9 AM  
 5/28-Mon- Jim Fixx Memorial -5m- Greenwich,Ct- 8:15 AM  
 5/28-Mon- Wall St Run- 5k- Wall St, NYC- 7 PM  
  
 6/2-Sat- North Rockland Family Day 3m- Haverstraw- 5 PM  
**6/3-Sun- Riverdale Ramble- 10 K- Bronx- 10 AM**  
**6/7-Th- VCTC XC series 5K- Van Cortlandt Park- 7 PM**  
 6/9-Sat- NY Mini-marathon 10K- Central Park- 9 AM- Women only!  
 6/15-Fri- Cook your buns 3m/1m- Greenwich, Ct.- 6:30 PM  
 6/16-Sat- Greenburgh Mile 1m- Hartsdale, NY- 9 AM  
 6/17-Sun- Father's Day Fight vs 5m- Central Park- 8:30 AM  
**6/21-Th-VCTC XCseries 5K- Van Cortlandt Park- 7 PM**  
 6/23-Sat- Gay Pride run 5m- Central Park- 9 AM  
 6/24-Sun- Fairfield ½ marathon/5K- Fairfield, Ct- 8:30 AM





## Coach's Corner

By **Ken Rolston**

Welcome to racing season. As you can see there are a slew of races, featuring our 5K Summer Series run through the cross-country course. I always have a feeling of anticipation mixed with dread at the notion of taking on the course yet again; kind of like singing the Clash version of "I fought the law and the law won." Just substitute the word course for law! That's a long-winded way of stating that it may be time to re-assess HOW we run these races. In the past, I've preached that the key to running a good 5K is to run negative splits (running the last half of the race faster than the first). I've advised caution with racing our course because the first mile is flat and the hills follow, so an all-out start is foolish.

Then I read an article by Ed Eyestone in Runners World. I had the privilege of meeting Ed on a flight to Utah this past February and found him to be warm, relaxed and proud of

what he's done both as a runner (27:40 10K, 2:10.59 marathon, member of 2 Olympic teams) and as a coach at BYU (NCAA x-country champs). He wrote an article in Runners World that espouses the idea of starting more aggressively in a 5K race. Researchers at the University of New Hampshire examined 3 different pacing strategies for 11 of their runners who were averaging 35 miles a week and had run two 5K time trials:

1. run at baseline pace for the first mile; adjust accordingly.
2. run the first mile 3% faster than base pace; adjust accordingly.
3. run the first mile 6% faster than base pace; adjust accordingly.

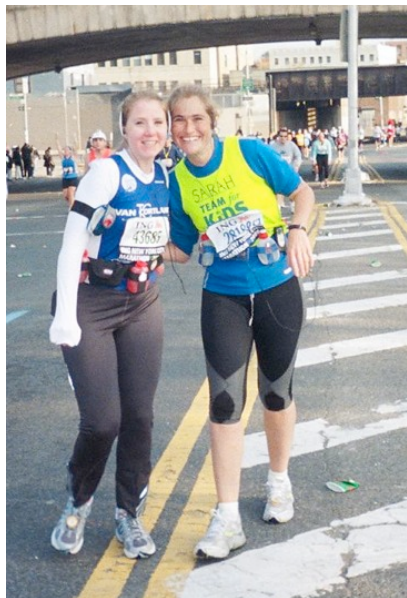
**"A study examining  
pacing strategies  
found that runners who  
went out faster tended to  
perform better."**

Guess what? The runners who went out faster tended to perform better—8 of the 11 ran their best when they went out 6% faster, the others 3 did better going out 3% faster. The researchers felt that this strategy would be most beneficial to experienced open and masters division runners. Hmmm, sounds like our club profile. Since we have 6 races this summer, you can be your own

lab rat if you'd like: Establish a base pace in your first few races, then experiment as the season progresses. Who am I to argue with Ed Eyestone?

I'd also like to have you think in strategic terms when it comes to our Tuesday night track workouts. I can give you a steady diet of 400's, 800's, 1200's but what does it all mean and how will you incorporate these workouts into your racing plans? A majority of the upcoming workouts will be geared to 5K races—as the summer progresses, we can gear up for fall marathons or the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave mile.

**P.S.** I'm not sure how many of you saw what Ryan Hall did in the London Marathon. If the name is not familiar to you, Hall ran at Van Cortlandt Park last year when we hosted the US Cross-Country Champs. He swept the 4K and 12K races easily. He then ran a stunning half-marathon debut in an American record time of 59:43. In his first marathon, he set another mark with a gritty 2:08.24, the fastest time ever for an American-born runner. He and current American record-holder Khalid Khanouchi (2:05.38) will be running in the US Olympic Marathon Trials in Central Park the day before this year's New York Marathon.



*Joann Pate with Sarah Baglio*

## Runner's Profile:

# What Makes Jo Ann Run?

By Bette Clark

*This is the first in a series of profiles of VCTC runners, aimed to help us get to know each other and to share running and motivational strategies.*

Jo Ann Pate has been running pretty consistently since she was a young teenager. Through the years, her primary reason for running was to stay in shape. She also discovered that it helped her to think, to find clarity. But she discovered 6 years ago at the age of 27 when she was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma, running also helped her get through a very difficult time.

Then, she lived in Inwood and ran in Fort Tryon Park: "I just had to go running every day." Running helped her counter the fears that otherwise kept her from getting out of bed. No matter how badly she felt, she was always better after she ran.

Jo Ann comes from a big Italian family, where she was never alone, and running gave her a chance to be by herself. But since joining VCTC, Jo Ann says this reason for running has changed. "Now I like to run with people in the club," she says. I can't even listen to my i-Pod anymore. I'd rather be talking to other people while I'm running."

**"Her goal is to run another NYC marathon an hour faster. 'I think if I stop talking, I can do that!'"**

Jo Ann joined VCTC in April, 2006 on the advice of her co-worker, a long-time member of VCTC. She met Sarah that first Saturday run, and the twosome has been running together ever since. She made many other friends who encouraged her and helped her train for the New York City Marathon. People like Gary Spalter and Bill Smith kept her going on long training runs on the Aqueduct, while others, like Enid Burns, cheered her on. She appreciates that when-

ever she felt hurt and discouraged, Diana Cecil gave her permission to "take it easy."

Jo Ann decided she wanted to try to run the NYC marathon in 2006 after being interviewed on the sidelines of the course as a spectator the year before. After telling the reporter that she thought it was very important to support the runners this way, the reporter suggested that she try running a marathon herself.

Jo Ann is the only one in her family to be a runner. "In my family, eating pasta is a marathon." When she told them she was planning to run a marathon, "they thought I was crazy." Yet after she finished the marathon, her family was very proud of her.

Her goal is to run another New York City marathon and do it an hour faster, in 4:40 instead of 5:40. "I think if I stop talking, I can do that!" She noted: "Sarah and I made a party out of the marathon" with friends and family joining all along the way. Next time, Jo Ann wants to "really run it."

Jo Ann points out that the reasons for running—and its benefit—can change over time. For her, running has provided solitude and companionship, clarity of thought and emotional solace, physical fitness and psychological strength.

## Training tips

# Incorporate Weight Training into Your Workout

*By Danielle Rosario-Mullen*

*I*'ve been weight training four times a week since I was 13 years old. I feel that it is critical to running fast 400m, 200m and 100m sprints. Although I've left sprinting for distance running, I still lift weights three to four times a week. Weight training is critical to all athletes; it increases strength and stamina and, more importantly, for all those runners recovering from injuries, it supports the joints you pound on every day.

Your body needs balanced strength. What does this mean? Divide your body into four: upper body, left and right; lower body left and right. Your upper body should not be stronger than your lower body and vice versa and your left side should not be stronger than your right. You get the idea ...it's not okay when you can do 10 reps of bicep curls with a 10 lb weight on your right side but you can only do 8 reps of the same weight on your left. This is why I do bicep curls and tricep extensions with dumbbells rather than

only with a bar or machine. When I do leg extensions and hamstring curls on the machine, I do one leg at a time. Also when you work out your quadriceps, you should follow with a workout for your hamstrings; follow chest with back and biceps with triceps.

This is more time-consuming, but it pays off. A weaker left hamstring can put more pressure on another body area and cause an injury that requires months of physical therapy. Many injuries result from muscles compensating for a weak area and this can easily be avoided with 20 to 30 extra minutes of weight training two to three times a week. It's important that you change your lifting routine every six to eight weeks so you are continuously challenging your muscles.

**“For developing your upper body, nothing can beat wide- and close-grip pull-ups and push-ups.”**

So what are my favorite workouts? I love squats and there are so many variations that can be done. My favorite are what I call ballet squats: At a sliding barbell stand with your feet wider than shoulder width apart, toes pointed slightly outward. Bending at

the waist and knees (back straight), dip down in a 5 second count until your knees are at a 90-degree angle, then push onto your toes and push yourself back up, placing your feet back flat on the ground. That is one rep. I do 3 sets of 15 reps with 15 lb weights at each end of the barbell. Beginners should start with a comfortable weight, doing two sets instead of three. This works your quadriceps, gluts, hamstrings, calves and inner thighs. When I don't have a lot of time, I'll do jumping squats with a medicine ball for one minute...30 second break ...leg extensions at a weight where I can not do more than 10 reps... no break...hamstring curls at a weight where I can not do more than 10 reps...no break... calf raises and back to the medicine ball jumping squats. I do two sets. But because it's difficult, I get a great workout in.



For developing your upper body, nothing can beat wide- and close-grip pull-ups and push-ups. There are so many variations of push-ups that you can do one every day of the week without ever repeating. Ladies please don't say you don't have the upper body strength for this! Arm strength is what helps you run fast. Please do not do fast pull-ups where you fully extend your arms. You see guys at the gym do this all the time and they think they're tough. Trust me, you get more out of a pull-up if you go up slowly (at a three to five second count), stay up for a one second count and go down slowly (at a three to five second count). Make sure you go down until your arms are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way extended. Even if you can only do three reps of this workout, it's more than 10 reps of fast, sloppy pull-ups. Use the assisted pull-up machine if necessary.

Two push-up variations I recommend trying for Intermediate/Advanced: Unbalanced push-ups- one hand on a medicine ball, then switch arms; and Bouncy Ball push-ups- get two of those big bouncy balls everyone is doing abs on now, get yourself in a push-up position but with your knees or feet on a bench and with the two bouncy balls in front, place one hand on each ball and do your push-ups.

You're using more muscles in these push-ups because of all the balancing.

One important thing to remember is always be aware of your form. Most people look at themselves in the mirror at the gym to make sure their form is correct, not because they think they're gorgeous. You should never fully extend your joints (meaning do not lock your knees or elbows), your knees should always be slightly bent and hip-width apart. Your back should be straight, not curved, and shoulders back so they don't begin to curve inward. Also, if you're not looking to bulk up but rather get stronger, then your reps should be slow and numerous.

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## The Riverdale Ramble needs you to volunteer. June 3, 2007

## **Training Woes:**

### **Tuesday Night at the Track Agonistes**

***By Bill Gaston***

Oh, why hast thou forsaken me?  
Fast twitch muscles  
For thou hast weathered lo those  
Many Rolston repeats  
Vain hustles  
Through two score years and races  
Innumerable  
Tuesday night's 800 repeats  
Now plodding, lamentable!

Oh, why hast thou forsaken me?  
Evanescent engines of speed  
Time hath stolen ye indeed  
But not the memories  
Of workouts past  
Where legs moved lively  
And splits were fast  
Tis time to close  
This wretched prose  
And hit the track again  
(As Rolston knows)





# Four Days at Boot Camp

By Katherine Callan

As someone with the military channel on my "favorites" button, I jumped at an invitation for educators to tour Parris Island in South Carolina to see how Marines train. It's rare that this elite facility opens its doors to civilians, and the trip's purpose was to expose teachers to career opportunities in the Marines. My four days there were fascinating on many levels; for one, it's been a while since I've shed tears of patriotic pride. For the purpose of this article, though, I wanted to share with my VCTC teammates some principles I observed regarding how the U.S. military takes young men and women in nominal shape and turns them into hard-bodied warriors in 13 weeks. *The process is extraordinary.*

**Always pay attention.** When young men and women arrive at Parris Island (always in the middle of the night), a drill sergeant enters their bus and shouts at them to exit and stand on the legendary yellow footsteps, where countless Marines before them have stood to begin their journey. Educators who too wanted to be yelled at experienced this introduction, and we were jolted into complete adherence to every directive. While I'm glad Coach Rolston isn't a drill sergeant, I believe we could maximize the benefits of our workouts by better adhering to this principle.

**Do everything to perfection.** Everything a recruit does—from holding a dinner tray with elbows firmly planted at his sides, to lining up his shoes in a particular order to ironing his uniform—must be done perfectly. The result is a uniformity that is jaw-dropping. During graduation, we watched several hundred recruits respond to each order of "About face!" with shouts of "Aye Sir!"



and then perfect pivots in perfect unity. Of course, in the physical arena, doing an exercise or following a training program to perfection leads to better results.

**Tough it out.** First, a small example: After a certain date, all Marines must switch to short sleeves. One morning we viewed an outdoor raising of the flag service, and the temperature was 39 degrees. While we stood shivering and discussing the cool temps, the Marines just stood at attention. Even if they were shivering, they wouldn't indulge in conversations based on complaints about minor ailments. This toughness is taught. A final rite of boot camp is a 54-hour exercise called the Crucible, where recruits must work together and complete intensely rigorous workouts on minimal sleep and food. This hard-core philosophy was well-stated on a T-shirt in the gift shop: Pain is weakness leaving the body.

**Build esprit de corps.** Marines are committed to something bigger than themselves, namely



the corps and each other. While at boot camp, the first-person point of view disappears. Recruits can only talk about themselves in third person, such as "this recruit believes..." or "this recruit can run a mile in 7 minutes." The purpose is to promote an esprit de corps that builds unity and a common commitment to a goal. I believe VCTC is stellar in this arena of support.

**Train hard and eat properly.** A highlight of our tour was a walk through a confidence course that all recruits—men and women—complete twice during training. For each event, a Marine who is also a Martial Artist would effortlessly scale a six-foot wall or climb a three-tiered structure, and then the Marine guide would ask us, "Do I have any volunteers?" I tried one event that required swinging over a small ditch on a rope. I landed oddly on my leg and couldn't run for two weeks. This veteran of 18 marathons humbly submits that she needs to work on her physical toughness, Sir! A few in our group were

extremely impressive in their efforts on the course, which required excellent upper body conditioning, agility and, as the course is aptly named, confidence. In terms of nutrition, recruits eat extremely well and regularly. There are no snacks and coffee breaks. I had lunch with one young man who had lost 20 pounds by 10 weeks into boot camp. His story is common. After careful inspection, I concluded there was no bodyfat on Parris Island—not on the recruits and not on the 30-year veterans. The men all have V-shaped physiques and the women look strong and muscular.

After successful completion of boot camp, recruits go through a ceremony in which they become actual Marines, which we observed while flags waved in the wind and "Proud to be an American" wafted from the speakers. I have great respect for the mental and physical toughness of those who choose to serve our country. My experience at Parris Island has absolutely re-inspired me to step up my game. Semper Fi!

## The Road To Recovery

*By Charles Brewster*

Last June, I was sidelined by plantar fasciitis and a torn heel pad and could not run for approximately seven months. When I was diagnosed by Dr. Gregory Doerr of Bergen Chiropractic (with the help of renowned foot technician Ted Forcum of Portland, OR), it was the first time I experienced a foot injury of any type. What were the proper treatments to follow for this type of injury? And what exactly was a torn heel pad? These were a few of my many questions.

The best way to heal a foot injury such as plantar fasciitis is with rest and stretching (some doctors also recommend orthotics). Dr.

Doerr's prescription of laser treatment, stretching, propiopathic exercises, the Grastec Technique (where instruments are used to break up scar tissue injuries) and rest was trying at times. But this is one time I can say that persistence truly paid off. I was given the green light to run lightly in February. That first run back was a very humbling episode, to say the least.

I have now resumed a three times a week schedule, without pain, and can offer the following advice to anyone who is experiencing some sort of foot injury: a) find the proper doctor to deal with an injury is not an easy thing. Ask around, I'm sure someone in the club has gone through it before b) after the injury has healed, con-

tinue daily maintenance to prevent injury occurrence. Stretching after a run, rolling one's foot on a golf ball, and toe exercises (using marbles) helps tremendously, and c) cross train to prevent total deterioration of fitness during injury. Stay off the foot as much as possible and rest.

I will stick with my three times a week running schedule, and in addition to cross training, hope to be able to successfully run a half marathon in August.



## Q&A with Willie Kaye



*Willie Kaye at the VCTC Awards Dinner receiving the first annual Willie Kaye Award for Being Willie Kaye.*

**I**n 1990, Willie Kaye ran 30 races, finishing first in his age group 20 times. He ran 800 meters in 2:10, took third in the indoor nationals 1500 meters in 4:35, won the mile in 4:46 at The Meadowlands, ran consistent low 17's for the 5K, clocked 5 miles in 28:00, and won the Scarsdale 15K in 55:10. Not shabby for a 50-year-old!

Ken Rolston and Bill Gaston sat down to chat with ageless VCTC wunderkind at the Shortstop Diner one Saturday morning. Here is the full and unexpurgated text of our interview with the club's resident comic and one-time NYRRC Runner of the Year.

*You've been running for so many years now. Whence the insanity?*

When I first started running, I found that I could eat and eat. Bill Hart [former Heights In-

wood Track Club teammate] and I would go to this Indian restaurant, and we would order 5 appetizers, 2 main course dinners, and 3 different breads. The guys in the kitchen loved us.

*How did you catch it?*

One day I looked out my front window on Seaman Avenue, and I saw these runners go by. That planted the seed. Next thing I knew I was one of them. This was the late 70's.

*The era of really bad running shorts?*

That's right. I'd given up smoking about five years earlier, and I wanted to be a positive role model for my kids.

*Where did you develop your love for humanity?*

You must be kidding. I always say, "The more people I meet, the more I love my cat."

*Ba-da-bing. But seriously, you have been happily married to Carol for 47 years with two daughters and one 23-year-old granddaughter. That is remarkable.*

When I first met Carol, we hated each other. But I had a kissing club—she wasn't part of it—and when I kissed her, I found that we kissed the longest. That was that. We married in 1960.

*Do you miss working?*

Hmmmm, let me think about it. Absolutely not! I was a work-a-holic. Then the phone company offered a buy-out, and I took it.

I do miss the people, though.

*Tell us about your car wreck and recovery a few years back.*

I was involved in a 5-car-pile-up on the Major Deegan and I was in the middle of the wreck. The car was compressed and so was I. I was out of work for 2 months, my knees and my back were a mess. I didn't run for 8½ years. I wanted no doctors, no shots, and no surgery. Just rehab with Dr. Feelgood! [Ed note: We believe this is code for Willie's chiropractor.]

*What's your favorite workout?*

My favorite long workout was a run from Palisades Avenue all the way up to the Tappan Zee Bridge. It was about 20 miles; very scenic—the fastest runs were with Bill Hart. We would run progressively faster miles, starting from 7-minute-per-mile pace and working down to 5:45s. I ran in sweats, you know—no gay caballero stuff. On the track I like 400's. I would do 12 of them at 70 seconds.

*What were your favorite races?*

The half marathon and the full marathon. These races are the ultimate challenges and they help to make your other races better. Runners need motivation. Me, I hated to lose. I would use positive projection ("if I can pass this one..."). I ran 2:37 at the age of 45 and 2:39 at the age of 50.

*What's the secret to staying young?*

Laughing.

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

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# RACING REPORT

## A Sea of Green

St. Patrick's Day 4 Miler

Fairfield, Ct.

March 11, 2007

*By David King*

Cool, breezy but sunny weather greeted participants in this late winter celebration of St. Patrick's Day. The race was run over a mostly flat course on roads close to the beach where the Fairfield Half-Marathon starts and finishes.

Number pick-up was easy (I pre-registered wife Vera and me). The race start was much "saner" than Coogan's 5k the week earlier because there were only 500 entrants. The course was well-marked though sparsely patrolled by course marshals. But I had no trouble following the route as, unfortunately, there was always someone ahead of me (it was easy to follow all the green shirts in front).

There were splits for miles one and two, but none at the third mile. After what seemed like an inordinate number of right-angle turns, the finish line appeared in the distance over a muddy part of the parking lot near where the race had started; not a great end to a good race.

The competition was strong as I finished with about five other people, madly sprinting for the line. I ended up running 26:24 for 5<sup>th</sup> in my age-group, while Vera ran 37:22 for 14<sup>th</sup> age place. Post-race eats included Irish soda bread, corned beef and cabbage and hot chili.

## Boston or Bust

Boston Marathon

April 16, 2007

*By Dick Conley*

When I got up at 5AM in Portland, Maine to prepare to leave for the race, there were downed trees and power outages throughout the region. My father insisted we were insane even to con-

sider going outside, let alone get on the turnpike south, and, if we reached our destination, attempt running a marathon in these conditions. But, hey, this was the Boston Marathon and not to go was just not an option.

Mother Nature, however, was kind this day. Just prior to the 10 a.m. start, the rain eased dramatically. The 20 to 30 mph winds, with gusts up to 50 mph in Boston, were still present, but you can imagine the tremendous uplift of spirits with the diminishing rain!

Despite the horrific weather leading up to the race, it was as well organized and put together as my other nine trips along this course. The BAA is truly a world-class organization. What surprised me most was that the water stations were all intact with plenty of supply.

The weather did keep crowds away, though. Even in Boston the crowds seemed lighter, where usually the deafening roar can affect your concentration. The spectators were supportive, though, and there was a stronger bond among the runners due to the conditions, which made for a great day!

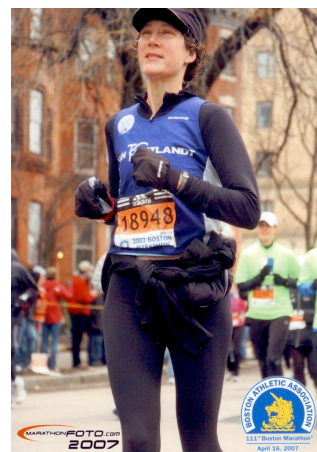
## Bette Battles Boston

Boston Marathon

April 16, 2007

*By Bette Clark*

I barely slept the night before the Boston Marathon, waking every half hour worrying about oversleeping. At 6:45 a.m., I made my way to the subway, with rain and wind pelting me, to ride to where we had to catch the bus to the start. By the time the second



wave of runners began moving toward the start line, the weather had improved and the heavy rains and winds had somewhat abated. What had seemed like an eternity was here so quickly. We began running to get to the right corrals. But this story begins before I made my way across the sodden ground through the corals to the start mat in Hopkinton.



In January 2006, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. During my whole ordeal, running remained my greatest distraction and stress-reliever. I'd qualified for Boston after I ran the New York City marathon in 2005. Now there I was, going from doctor to doctor, discussing

treatment options when strange things popped into my mind that would sometimes form into questions I shared with my doctors. When trying to choose a surgeon, I asked: "When do you think I could run a marathon?"

**"I was nervous, but Firdaus encouraged me to just go out there and have a good time."**

After my second round of surgery in July, I argued with one of my surgeons who said "no running for six weeks." I rounded it down to four and then compromised and waited three. Trying to keep running a top priority may sound strange, but it kept me going. Radiation knocked me out and I needed to take afternoon naps to get through my work days. My VCTC friends kept me going strong, encouraging me to go out for a run, picking me up on Saturday (and Sunday) mornings so I would get to the trails, no excuses. After those minutes under the photon rays, where

I imagined the machine lights as sunlight peaking through palm trees on a Caribbean beach, I put on my running shoes and headed to Rockefeller State Park. Within minutes I was running alongside sweeping views of the Hudson river, spotting the occasional hawk and deer crossing bubbling streams on wooden foot bridge, suddenly transported miles away from those machines, taking deep breathes and savoring the remarkable opportunity to run in such a beautiful place.

Finally, in October of last year, after finishing my last radiation treatment, I decided to try to run my first race. I chose Race for the Cure, a race I had entered several times in the past as a fundraiser. As a "survivor," I was given the opportunity to start at the front of the pack of runners and walkers. After this experience, I couldn't resist running a cross country 5 K in Van Cortlandt (Kurt Steiner, third AG in 26:44) with the goal of trying to get ready for Pete McCardle. I figured if I could survive McCardle, then I would train for



Boston. I ran it 7 minutes slower than the year before (1:26) but I got through it without feeling too bad (and there was Gary's soup to revive me). Things looked more hopeful for some serious training.

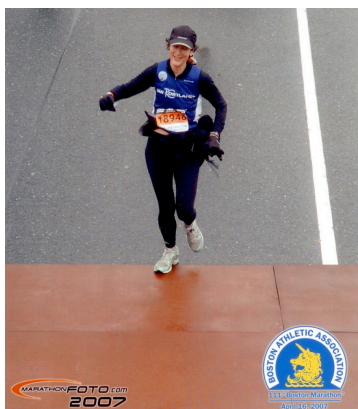
I started running for one and a half hours, then two, and gradually built up to two and a half. About six weeks before Boston, I ran my first three-hour run, and then ran two more (the last was 3:30). I was nervous as the date approached, but Firdaus encouraged me to just go out there and have a good time. This was the advice I needed.

The first two miles of Boston, I was wedged between so many people that I could not really get my stride. This was not like New York, my

first marathon experience, where I felt great the first 20 miles and then really crashed. I can honestly say I never felt great during this race. My legs felt heavy almost from mile one. Even the first 5k seemed long to me, and when I calculated that it was more than eight times that distance to reach the finish, I thought, "I'm in trouble." I ate Shot Blocks for energy, but I think I ate more of them than I had tried on practice runs. By mile 12, I had bad enough stomach cramps that I had to stop at a port-a-potty. I made it to the half-way mark in just over 2:00, about 5 minutes slower than I had planned. Even so, I knew by the way that I felt that the second half would be slower than the first. Unlike New York, where I hit the wall, in Boston, I felt like I was pushing against one the whole way.

When I crossed the mats at the half-way mark I felt a bit energized by the great crowds outside Wellsley college. Just when I felt my stomach cramps were getting a bit better, my leg and foot cramps started. I knew I was just on my way up Heartbreak Hill. Leg cramps started around on the way up the first hill—first in one foot, then the other, working up my calf—I thought, oh no, this could really do me in—so I slowed even more but now the goal was not to beat the clock but make it to that finish line.

What kept me going much of the time were the sights and sounds around me, and the thoughts that kept circulating in my head about the many people at Gilda's Club I was running for. I talked to some friendly Canadians, and passed a couple—he in black and she in white—who, I later learned, were married at the top of Heartbreak Hill. And later, after Heartbreak Hill, at



Boston College, the college spirit really helped, as students tried to pass out ice cold beers.

When I finally started to head down that hill, I knew I was on my way to the finish line. Those last few miles did not feel easy but they were also not excruciating, as they had felt in New York. When I could finally see the finish line way ahead, it felt far away, but there it was.

As I crossed it, I smiled and started to cry at the same time. I wrapped myself in a space blanket, had my chip untied for me and accepted my medal and headed towards the Family Meeting area, very slowly. My husband greeted me with a hug and we made our way back to our friends' house for dinner before our drive to New York.

The next morning I woke up a bit sore and a bit tired. I thought to myself, "Okay, that's it. I've run New York and Boston—no more marathons for me." Then I heard a little voice inside my head getting more and more audible: "Which marathon would be good to run to try to qualify for Boston again? Philadelphia? Scranton?" This was that inner voice that runners can't seem to quiet from coming through.

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## A Run To Fame

Hall of Fame 5k&10k

Bronx Comm. College

May 5, 2007

*By David King*

**T**his race, although in existence for 29 years, is the Bronx's best kept secret. It is well-organized, easy to get to and loaded with perks. And yet, less than 350 runners toed the starting lines for both races combined. It must be because both courses are particularly difficult.

Twenty six years ago, I ran just under 32:00 for the 10K (2007 was the first time a 5K was included), and I remember feeling ecstatic that I had run so fast over the rolling hills of the Grand Concourse. The roads are a very hard surface and there is absolutely no shade out there.



This year I ran the 5K. It was similarly difficult, just half the distance. And to add to that, I had a strain in my right groin. Nonetheless, Coach Ken and I (the only VCTCers in the 5K) braved the warm temperatures and bright sunshine as we lined up for the race. Our team had a very good showing in the 10K, with at least ten members running.

The 10K started 22 minutes after the 5K, so it was a bit warmer yet for these runners. After running down Hall of Fame Terrace, a quick left onto Aqueduct Avenue revealed a bit of flat terrain. Then a right on 184th St. took us down to the Concourse. Now the Concourse might look flat to me when I'm driving on it, but when I am running it, it's anything but flat. My groin pull made it that much more difficult as I could not stretch out my heavily taped right leg. But I made it to the finish line in one piece. I was ecstatic once more, with my 20:24; Ken, too with his 21:04.

After both races were done, there was a huge cookout with good food and pleasant conversation on a beautiful Cinco De Mayo morning. The awards ceremony was the only downside to this race as it dragged out for several hours after the cookout. But who could complain on such a day! By the way, Ivan Mills won 2 American Airlines tickets to anywhere in the western hemisphere in the raffle. Not bad for a \$12 entry fee.

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## **Reporting Race Results:**

### **IMPORTANT: NEW EMAIL ADDRESS:**

I have changed my home email address. From now on, race times should be sent to [petercoy@verizon.net](mailto:petercoy@verizon.net). I promise I won't keep changing my email.

A few reminders:

\*Put VCTC race results in the subject field

\*If you don't have email, ask someone who does to send in your results, or mail the results to me at Peter Coy, 52 Stelfox St., Demarest, N.J. 07627

\*Please do not phone in results. If you have a question, feel free to call me at 201-784-5724.

\*You don't need to submit results from NYRRC races. I get them off the website.

\*Do submit results from VCTC races like the Urban Environmental Challenge and the summer 5K series.

\*Please submit results in the following format:

Name of Race

Distance

Date

Location

Your Time

Your Name

Your gender and age (e.g. M51)

*Plus, if you'd like, the following optional information:*

Age Place (e.g. 4 if you were 4<sup>th</sup> in M50-54)

Age-Graded Percentage

Submitting results this way will make it easy to format the non-NYRRC races the same as the NYRRC races. It will also cut down on mistakes from retyping. By the way, if you use Microsoft Excel and would like to submit results in that format, send me an email and I'll happily send you a template.

Thanks a lot,  
Peter Coy

REMEMBER: Please email race results to:  
[petercoy@verizon.net](mailto:petercoy@verizon.net)

## **The Ramble needs volunteers.**

# Race Results

## Kings Park 15K

Kings Park, Long Island  
March 10, 2007

Time	Name	Sex/age	Age place
1:25:25	Blas Abadia	M52	
1:43:19	Fernando Ruiz	M75	2

## Goshen 5K

Goshen, N.Y.  
March 11, 2007

31:26 Fernando Ruiz M75

## Colon Cancer Chall 4M

Central Park  
March 11, 2007

30:50	Ramon Ruiz	M67	1
37:34	Edith Jones	F67	1
39:46	Luis Colon	M52	
41:00	Gilda Serrano	F58	

## Colon Cancer Chall 15K

Central Park  
March 11, 2007

1:06:27	Ivan Mills	M51	4
1:13:52	Paulino Santana	M46	
1:18:11	Ed James	M60	9
1:26:53	Margaret Nolan	F46	
1:31:13	Dennis Brooks	M54	

## St. Patrick's Day 4 miler

Fairfield, Ct.  
March 11, 2007

26:24	David King	M56	5
37:22	Vera King	F52	

## St. Patrick's Day 10K

FDR Park  
March 18, 2007

50:55	Bette Clark	F51	2
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## More Marathon

Central Park  
March 25, 2007

4:52:58 Edith Jones F67 1

## More Marathon 2-person half marathon

Central Park  
March 25, 2007

1:32:31	Danielle Rosario-Mullen	F26	4
2:05:43	Rozsa Gaston	F49	
2:06:33	Alta Dustin	F44	
2:11:31	Selma Sequeira Raven	F41	
2:15:15	Leoni Parker	F42	
2:18:25	Susan Epstein	F63	21
2:20:53	Gilda Serrano	F58	

## Scotland Run 10K

Central Park  
April 1, 2007

41:38	Danielle Rosario-Mullen	F26	9
46:42	Blas Abadia	M52	
49:44	Ed James	M60	
52:13	Margaret Nolan	F46	21
57:02	Dennis Brooks	M54	
58:52	Luis Colon	M52	
59:00	Roxanne O'Brien	F40	
1:05:26	Ramon Minaya	M67	21
1:10:52	Gilda Serrano	F58	
1:11:06	Michael O'Brien	M43	
1:13:32	Ann McKeague	F65	6

## Mt Penn Mudfest 15K trail race

Reading, Pa  
April 7, 2007

1:27:40 Allan Ludgate M40

## Brooklyn Half-Marathon

Brooklyn  
April 14, 2007

1:23:27 Peter Coy M49 5

**Time Name Sex/Age Age place**

1:32:59	Danielle Rosario-Mullen	F26	19
1:41:28	Firdaus Dotiwala	M38	
1:50:41	Zafar Shahbaz	M50	
1:51:36	Ed James	M60	
1:55:29	Kate Donovan	F48	17
1:56:59	Jose Cooper	M57	
1:58:29	Wanda Bills	F45	21
2:08:09	Ivan Ragoonanan	M61	
2:09:38	Luis Colon	M52	
2:10:11	Dennis Brooks	M54	
2:13:19	Margaret Nolan	F46	
2:16:47	Carl Morrishow	M50	
2:23:03	Susan Epstein	F63	11
2:26:29	Tami Luhby	F36	
2:44:47	Ramon Minaya	M67	23
3:07:40	Gila Serrano	F58	

**Boston Marathon**

April 16, 2007

3:40:59	Dick Conley	M51
4:37:25	Bette Clark	F51

**Hook Mountain Half-Marathon**

Rockland Lake

April 22, 2007

1:54:28	Blas Abadia	M52
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**Leatherman's Loop**

Cross River NY

April 22, 2007

1:12:32	Kate Donovan	F48	22
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**Run for the Parks 4 miler**

Central Park

April 22, 2007

30:24	Arnie Gore	M66	3
34:46	Luis Colon	M52	
36:00	Dennis Brooks	M54	
36:58	Tami Luhby	F36	
44:39	Gilda Serrano	F58	
47:38	Ann McKeague	F65	10

47:41	Ramon Minaya	M67
1:03:19	Sarah Baglio	F34
1:04:22	Jo Ann Pate	F32

**Run as One TGL Classic 4-miler**

Central Park

April 29, 2007

27:56	Firdaus Dotiwala	M38	
29:39	Gabrielle Popoff	F30	
30:29	Arnie Gore	M66	2
31:07	Blas Abadia	M52	
35:03	Leoni Parker	F42	
35:19	Ivan Ragoonanan	M61	
35:42	Sarah Baglio	F34	
36:39	Dennis Brooks	M54	
38:51	Jill Staats	F55	17
39:56	Susan Epstein	F63	20
42:22	Fernando Ruiz	M75	3
46:34	Ann McKeague	F65	15
50:22	Ramon Minaya	M67	

**Westport Minute Man 5K**

Westport, Ct.

April 30, 2007

18:54	Lou Csak	M41	1
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**St. Croix Half-Ironman Tri**

May 6, 2007

4:45:32	Mike Arnstein	1
5:44:34	Diane Calderon	2
7:56:50	Wanda Bills	
dnf	Enid Burns (wrong turn on bike)	

**Hall of Fame 5K&10K**

Bronx NY

May 5, 2007

	5K		
20:24	David King	M56	1
21:04	Ken Rolston	M55	3



## Dispatch from Israel

*By Naomi Marcus*

*I*n the past 3 days, I have bicycled 140 miles from Jerusalem to the middle of the Negev with 174 other people as part of the Arava Institute Hazon Israel Bike Ride. Now we're resting in Mitzpe Ramon for the Jewish sabbath (Friday night through Saturday).

The theme of the first day was downhill. We were up at 5 a.m. to be on the road by 6:30, both to beat the heat of the midday and to avoid rush hour traffic in Jerusalem. The ride began with a 20-mile descent from Jerusalem at 2400 feet above sea level to the Dead Sea at 1200 feet below sea level. Imagine a 20-mile downhill! Now imagine a 20 mile downhill with huge trucks roaring past a few feet from your left elbow! I kept my hands on the brake, my eyes on the road, and my heart in my throat, as the road narrowed from 4 lanes to 2 lanes then 2 lanes with one lane under construction.

We reached the Dead Sea with no major mishaps and biked along the shore past Qumran of Dead Sea Scroll fame, stopping at the oasis of Ein Gedi for lunch. After lunch we could explore Ein Gedi, bike to the hotel, or bike to Masada. I chose to tour Masada, a mountaintop refuge built by Herod the Great in the first century BC that became an outpost for the Zealots, Jewish rebels against the Romans. That night we stayed at an elegant spa at the south end of the Dead Sea.

The theme of the second day was uphill as we ascended from the Dead Sea to the northern Negev (1800 feet above sea level). Our ascent lasted 13.9 miles, and it was all ascent without a break. Some riders chose to take a bus, but I was psyched. I completed the climb feeling strong all the way. After the climb, the road was gently rolling, but the land was desolate and the overcast sky added to the sinister tone. It was pointed

out that the gray clouds were a blessing from heaven, as they cooled the ride and protected us from the hot sun. We received surgical masks to protect us from the fumes of a particularly noxious fertilizer factory as we rode through an industrial zone. Our destination for lunch was the Makhtesh Ramon, a crater-like formation formed by the collapse of a mountain millions of years ago.

On the third day, we continued our ascent 1200 feet more in about 35 miles to Mitzpe Ramoln, a small town at the edge of the more famous Makhtesh Ramon. On the way, we stopped to visit the grave of David Ben Gurion, the great visionary who was the first Prime Minister of Israel, and to see Avdat, an ancient Nabatean fortress. Tomorrow, we will continue our ride after a well-earned rest.

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### MIKE ARNSTEIN

In preparation for the St. Croix 1/2 Ironman in May, Arnstein trained like a madman and got his weight down to 115. Look for his story in our next issue.



## CLUB NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Membership

- Membership dues for 2007 must be paid by April 30, 2007 for members to be eligible for 2007 awards and discounted prices for the Awards Dinner, which be held in January 2008, (i.e. if the club decides to subsidize the dinner). Rates are: Single - \$35 ; Family - \$40. PLEASE SEND CHECKS MADE OUT TO VCTC TO: VCTC P.O. Box 341, Bronx, N.Y. 10471. Applications are available at [www.vctc.org](http://www.vctc.org)
- Please e-mail Firdaus Dotiwala at [thinrunner@gmail.com](mailto:thinrunner@gmail.com) with any changes of address, phone, e-mail, etc. and whether you would like to be added to the group mail.
- 

### Clothing

- Please wear club apparel before, during and after races as this is the best way to publicize our club. Members of our club get many benefits for dues paid(discounted apparel, etc.) and the club **STRONGLY REQUESTS** you show off its colors. While we are reluctant to make this a club rule, we are asking that you represent the club.
- New singlets are available for the discounted price of \$15 for all paid members.

### VCTC 30th Anniversary

- Anyone who knows names and contact information for former VCTC members, please send to our social directors, Katherine Callan ([kccallan@rcn.com](mailto:kccallan@rcn.com)) or Sarah Baglio([sarahbaglio@gmail.com](mailto:sarahbaglio@gmail.com)). We are looking for volunteers to join a committee to plan this event. E-mail Katherine or Sarah if interested.
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### Riverdale Ramble

- The Ramble takes place on June 3rd. Please help our race be successful. Contact David King at [kingkvd@optonline.net](mailto:kingkvd@optonline.net) to volunteer.

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**VCTC membership meetings** are held on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. **Club workouts** are Tuesdays at 7 p.m. (meet at Van Cortlandt Park track). Saturdays at 8 a.m. (meet at handball courts at 242nd St and Broadway).

The Newsletter is published bi-monthly. We welcome all contributions. Deadline for the July/August issue is June 20th. Maximum length is 600 words. Please e-mail to: [kingkvd@optonline.net](mailto:kingkvd@optonline.net)

Please send all race times to: [petercoy@verizon.net](mailto:petercoy@verizon.net) or mail to: Peter Coy 52 Stelfox St., Demarest, N.J. 07627. **Please do not phone in results.**

**The Ramble needs you.**

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Hind-Giordana-Pearl Izuma-Sugio

Champion-Danskin-Sporteze

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Barracuda-Dolphin-Ironman-US Divers

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**NUTRITION**

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

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