

Van Cortlandt Track Club newsletter

Dick Conley Wins One for the Bronx

Press, prizes, and private port-o-sans highlight the Footlocker 5-Borough Challenge



Dick Conley (second from left) and his fellow competitors rub elbows with Mayor Bloomberg before the race

If any of you in the future are registered to run in the NYC Marathon and see an email soliciting you to apply to run in the Foot Locker Five Borough Challenge, by all means respond! It can only be described as a true Walter Mitty type experience. Pre-race news conference at Tavern on the Green, receive about \$400 worth of running gear in the mail, limo to the race start, lounge in the heated VIP tent munching on buffet breakfast, while occasionally venturing into the cold for interviews with the press, luxury box seats to view the wheel chair and hand cycle starts, and then the elite women's start, while in between starts having your picture taken with the Mayor! Then of course there is the start of the Challenge, immediately behind the elite women, where you have about 7 miles of running alone to wild cheering through Brooklyn. Did I mention the post race news conference with Tiffany Crystal Trophy followed by lunch and more interviews at Tavern on the Green? All of it is a bit unreal. Of course reality returned when my daughter Michelle and I left Tavern on the Green and hopped on the subway. But of course the fun continued there in the real world where everyone was excited about the race and the great day NYC had for its Marathon. The Foot Locker people mentioned to me that they have difficulty recruiting people from the Bronx---hey, I got in, as did Neil Liebowitz a few years ago. Keep your eye out for that e mail! **-Dick Conley**

Hark, A Tiffany Glass rises in the East

By Kate Donovan

Dick Conley's sweetest moment in his three-decade running career came on marathon Sunday 2007, when he overtook one of his competitors as he strode into the Bronx. Tasting victory, knowing that his 31-year-old competitor from Queens had only two long runs under his belt, on his own turf and feeling chipper, VCTC's own indulged some trash talk worthy of our fair borough.

"So Edwin, welcome to the Bronx," he snarked, cruising by to a smashing victory in the time of 3:35:21.

"The guy kinda' gave me a look," said Dick in fond reverie. Edwin finished in 3:43.

That afternoon, I saw Dick in the press conference room with a 1000-watt smile and a spring in his step. "Can you think of a more perfect day?" he said. "I am so happy I qualified for Boston by 40 seconds. You don't know what that means to me. I win the five borough challenge. At first, I didn't even want to do it. I thought it was going to interfere with my ultimate, but minimum goal, to requalify for Boston. Instead, I win the challenge, I qualify for Boston. It doesn't get any better than this. For me, it is perfect."

I last saw Dick that Sunday as he and his daughter Michelle headed off to catch the subway up to the Bronx, the Tiffany blue box with an en-scribed glass plate the size of a meteorite under Dick's arm for safekeeping. It must have been a rare sight on the train that day. "Folks on the subway were all touching my trophy. I was like a hero." I didn't want to ask, but I think it has been sharing the marital suite since arriving home. Possibly as a pillow.

Dick Conley wins one for the Bronx. Now that is a sweet memory.

Dick Conley was born July 4, 1955 in Portland, Maine. Second oldest of 12, ten boys and two girls. Married 26 years to Kathy Nolan (Two-time NY marathon finisher). One dog, two kids: Maggie, 60 (dog years), Brendan, 17 and Michelle, 19 who runs with VCTC and is asking for a singlet for Christmas.

31 marathons beginning with Long Island in Spring 1983.

Fastest time in the now defunct Jersey Waterfront Marathon, 2:49 in 1985.

Two Dublin Marathons. Three in Portland, Maine

Three Hartford Three New York (1983, 2001, 2007) Ten Bostons (beginning in 1997)

Goal: "I want my youth back."

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

ON THE RUN

By President Bette Clark

I begin On the Run this issue with the sad news that many of you know: Jim Hudick, long time member of



VCTC, and newsletter time-keeper for many years, passed away on October 19, less than a month after being diagnosed with a rare and very aggressive form of cancer. We know that he made many VCTC friends and running partners over the years and we are asking people to send in reminiscences, stories, and photos of Jim for our next newsletter so that we can continue to honor his amazing accomplishments as a runner and to remember him as part of the VCTC family.

The latest edition of Track and Field features a story about what it means to be part of a team, words that seemed strangely appropriate to me as I struggled to find ways to put my thoughts about Jim on paper. Jeff Johnson writes:

At any time, in any group of runners of approximately the same ability, there is likely to be one runner who is just a little stronger or just a little faster

than his/her teammates. If the group is closely matched, the best runner may be a different person from day to day. In fact, even within a single practice session, or within a single race, the strongest runners may be a different person at different times. At running fast over long distances, we are all capable of improving. Team running aims to maximize each runner's ability to improve by "borrowing" from the strength of her teammates.

VCTC members do this for each other. At different times—and for different reasons—we all “borrow” from the strength of others.

Our VCTC family has come together in many ways over the past few months. I believe we gain strength from each other in many aspects of our lives, not only on the track or on the trails. I hope that we can help to give strength to Jim's brother Mike and other close friends and family members during this difficult period. As runners, we learn to get through the challenges of a hard race, often with the support of our team mates, and as club members, we learn to support each other in (Jim's words) “the marathon of life.”

In September, we gathered to celebrate our 30th Anniversary, with a party that brought together close to a 100 old and new members, thanks to the work of our Social Director, Katherine Callan

and others. Andy Kimerling, our founder and past President, spoke about how everything else fades away when we put on our shoes and go out for a run—that in some ways running brings us to what is most basic (and important) in our lives. It was wonderful to be able to share memories, learn about club history, and enjoy each other's company on this beautiful early fall day.

As Cross Country season is upon us, we share Van Cortlandt with so many young runners every weekend. It is a pleasure to watch them meet new goals. This has been a busy racing season for VCTC members, topped off by Marathon weekend, when VCTCers volunteered to be course marshals at the Men's Marathon Trials in Central Park. Then, of course, there was Marathon day, November 4; 23 members ran, and there were almost that many at our table, cheering on all the runners. Among our finishers: Mike Hudick, running in honor of Jim; Dick Conley, winning for the Bronx in the Five Borough Footlocker Challenge, and Kevin Shelton Smith, 12th in his age. You will have to turn the pages to learn about all our amazing marathoners...

As George Sheehan said: “The obsession with running is really an obsession with the potential for more and more life.” I think this is an obsession we all share—let's go out there and give it our best.

COACH'S CORNER

by Ken Rolston

What an emotional marathon weekend. I've been reading the threads in tribute to Ryan Shay on letsrun.com and feel awed by the power of the running community. There are countless remembrances of a runner who took time to discuss training with mere mortals like us. From all accounts he was a ferocious competitor. Shay was listed as a top 10 contender and for all we know he may have been in the mix at the end.

Our club also lost a good friend and competitor Jim Hudick. At his wake Mike Hudick was kind enough to share some wonderful memories of Jim, how he helped Mike through his first marathon and there were pictures of Jim with Alberto Salazar, Haile Gebrselassie and Catherine Ndereba. We all share a far deeper bond than miles run together. One prayer stood out for me and I hope you don't mind it being repeated here:

"Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let's run with perseverance the race marked out for us."-Hebrews 12:1.

The trials were a terrific event and I wish to thank all the VCTC members who came out



Ryan Hall "flies by" on his way to victory

early to ensure an impediment-free run for America's best marathoners. Ryan Hall's race was a gigantic statement which stamps him as a serious threat for a medal in Beijing. I look forward to seeing him duke it out against Gebrselassie and Tergat. Ritzenheim and Sell ran well, too. There's a side of me that hopes Ritz steps aside to run the 10K and lets Khannouchi compete in the Olympics.

Marathon Sunday was as much fun as I can remember at our outpost in The Bronx. We witnessed the dual between Radcliffe and Wami, saw the lead pack of 5 men cruising at a sub-2:10 pace, and then saw many VCTC runners enjoy career days from Kevin Shelton-Smith's high-kicking 2:47 to Neil Liebowitz' PR 3:04, to a stunning debut 3:16 from Danielle Rosario-Mullen (do you need 2 last names to be fast?). And what can you say about our 5-boro stud Dick Conley? In all, 23 VCTC members finished, capping a stellar weekend.

Track workouts are winding down for the year and will conclude sometime this month.

Thanks for your participation and feedback. We've had larger and younger groups than ever and that's a happy trend. In December, we will begin hill workouts, which proved to be quite popular last year. Same time, 7 PM, different place. We will meet outside the Manhattan College gym, at Waldo Ave and 246th St. then embark on a 2-mile hill loop run then follow up with some character-building hill repeats. See you at McArdle.

Upcoming races:

Nov 18- Sun- Philadelphia Marathon- 8 AM

Nov 18- Sun- Race to Deliver- 4m- Central Park- 10 AM

Nov 18- Sun- Mamaroneck Turkey Trot- 5m/1m- 10 AM

Nov 22- Thu- 5 mile Turkey Trot- Rockland Lake- 8:30 AM

Nov 25- Sun- McArdle XC 15 K- Van Cortlandt- 11 AM

Dec 1- Sat- Hot Chocolate 15K- Central Park- 9:30 AM

Dec 1- Sat- X-Country Relays- Blue Mountain, Peekskill- 10 AM

Dec 2- Sun- Couples Relay- 3 x 2 m- Blue Mountain- 11 AM

Dec 9- Sun- Jingle Bells Jog- 3m- Greenwich, Ct- 9 AM

Dec 9- Sun- Joe Kleinerman 10K- Central Park- 9:30 AM

Dec 15- Sat- Holiday 4m- Central Park- 9:30 AM

Dec 31- Mon- Midnight Run- Central Park

30 years and counting: Van Cortlandt Track Club

By Kate Donovan

Bette Clark commented that all runners like numbers. She is correct. We are always counting something, whether it's miles, meters, minutes, hours, seconds, years gone by, races, trees in the path, streams crossed, bagels eaten. You know what I mean.

The September 30th luncheon marking the 30th anniversary of the founding of the club could have been a numbers convention. It was a gathering of thousands of sweet memories dressed up in numbers. We excavated the old, the recently old, and the just happened and passed them around, laughing, wondering, bonding us in a warm embrace of shared agony and momentary respite.

Nearly 100 people showed up that sunny Sunday afternoon at the Van Cortlandt Golf Club House. The wooden porch overlooking the pond where the tables of food and drink were set out was festooned with vintage T-shirts from long gone races and primitive club branding, remnants of frayed cotton, perma-

nently soiled treasures that we gaped at and touched carefully. Photo albums held pictures of radiant smiles, toned young bodies and boldly short shorts from past fashions. Music played in the background, reminding us of how long we have been around: *If you don't know me by now, you will never never know me, oh yeah. We have got our old funny ways, I've got mine, you've got yours too.*"

The room is called to order with a piercing whistle and a Willie Kaye-type call: "All right you guys, let's do it!"

Bette Clark opened by running through some important thread of numbers: 28 registered for the NY Marathon, 213 runners in our end of the season cross-country summer series, the most ever.

She introduced club co-founder Andy Kimerling. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think that my wife's wild idea [for me to start the club] would still be going strong," said Andy. "I am just thrilled to be here today."

Since its founding in 1977, hundreds of runners, and soon to be runners, have joined, logging hundreds of thousands of miles. The beauty of running, Andy said, is that it's the big equalizer. "Put on a pair of shoes and a T-shirt and all those other ideas that people have about you fly out the

window."

The club's greatest blessing, besides the hills and flats of Vannie, has been the people who have offered leadership, selfless givers of service who have been the glue that has kept it all together, from the Presidents, Treasurers, Membership Coordinators, Webmaster, Uniform fashionistas, race and social directors.

"The enduring thing about this club has always been that there is somebody to step up and help out," Andy said.

After Andy spoke, Margaret Nolan put on a fashion show and comedy act, stripping down to the *old* running shorts. Van Cortlandt's colors don't run, it has been noted, but its members can be racy.

For all the miles logged and sweated, all the races and personal bests, the tankards of water and sports drinks consumed, VCTC's heart lies not in its running shoes but in its handshakes, the pats on the back, the hugs, the encouragement. Here's to 30 more years of the ineluctable warmth of family and friends.

TRAINING TIP

Sleep Well, Run Well

By Steve Park

I was running on a recent Saturday morning run in Van Cortlandt. Three runners struck up a conversation on better ways of training and increasing metabolic efficiency. One suggested breathing through a straw, similar to training at high altitudes; deprive yourself of oxygen, and your body naturally becomes more efficient at utilizing oxygen. Little did they know that many people do this unknowingly all the time, but only when they are asleep.

How often have you awakened in the morning after 8 hours of sleep, only to feel as though you slept for four hours? You feel groggy and find it hard to get out of bed. But you drag yourself to the bathroom for a shower that wakes you up only partially. A nice cup of coffee finally does the trick. You go to work but near the end of the day, or when you are sitting still, you feel an overwhelming sense of fatigue. You come home exhausted, eat dinner, and go to sleep, thinking that you need more sleep. But the cycle continues. The only thing that makes you feel somewhat alive again is running or some other

form of vigorous physical activity. Over months, or years, you suffer from various physical ailments, from frequent or prolonged colds or infections, to various aches and pains. You're tired of being tired.

For some people who are predisposed, this is a daily routine, ranging in severity from mild to debilitating. Many people compensate well by exercising regularly, but for others, it's not enough. Even skipping a few days of running or working out in the gym can make you feel more tired and lethargic.

The reason lies in the fact that you can't sleep well due to an inability to breathe properly at night. This means that you can't obtain deep, restorative sleep, no matter how many hours you sleep.

In theory, all humans are susceptible (to various degrees) to this phenomenon, and it's because of our unique throat anatomy: due to our ability to speak and communicate, our upper airway is prone to relative narrowing, especially during deep sleep. Deep sleep (non-REM delta stages and Stage REM) is when all the muscles in our body relax, including our throat and tongue muscles. It's worst when we sleep on our backs, mainly due to gravity. So people who are more susceptible to this condition usually like to sleep on their sides or stomachs. Some people absolutely cannot sleep on their



backs. So in effect, if you are susceptible to this condition, and sleep on your back, your tongue will fall back to the point where your airway is no more than the diameter of a straw. Occasionally, one will prefer to sleep on his/her back, due to either a back, hip or shoulder injury, even though he/she would rather sleep on a side or stomach.

The problem is similar to what occurs when you breathe through a straw, as it can sometimes collapse: When you reach deep sleep, as the muscles relax, without any more muscle tone in your tongue, with the onset of inspiration, the tongue falls back completely, and you wake up. You can wake up completely (every few hours), or in most cases, wake up to a light stage of sleep, after which you roll over back onto your side or stomach.

If you are completely healthy and catch a cold, one of the reasons that you may keep tossing and turning is because your tongue can potentially collapse more easily. It's much worse when your nose is stuffy. Any

degree of narrowing, due to inflammation, allergies, acid reflux, or weight gain can aggravate these obstruction and arousals, preventing deep efficient sleep. Even if you don't stop breathing completely, if your brain senses from the pressure receptors in your throat that it is about to collapse, it will automatically wake you up.

These multiple arousals not only cause you to be tired during the day, they also cause a low grade stress response in your body. This leads to myriad physiologic events, two of which are increased cortisol levels, and lowered leptin levels. This can promote weight gain. Increased weight can enlarge the fat cells in your throat, leading to more po-

tential narrowing. Furthermore, obstruction and arousals also can lead to vacuum pressures in the throat that can bring up stomach contents and juices into your throat. This can lead to various throat symptoms such as a lumpy sensation, throat clearing, post-nasal drip, chronic cough, or throat pain, among others.

Unfortunately, this inadvertent form of "exercise" via straw-like air passageways doesn't make you run better.

There are many theories about why this is happening, but one interesting book published about 60 years ago is worth mentioning: A dentist traveled the world looking at indigenous cultures living and eating off the land. He found that their teeth

were well-aligned and their jaws were nice and wide. However, people who started to adopt Western diets, including processed foods, began to have more cavities and narrow jaws. In this context, a smaller jaw means less room for the tongue to sit, leading to more airway narrowing.

The key to feeling better is to avoid sleeping on your back if you may have this condition. It's also important to avoid or lessen anything that can potentially increase inflammation, swelling, or narrowing in your entire upper airway, from the tip of your nose to your voice-box. If the condition progresses, you should see your doctor for a potential sleep-breathing problem.

Hunte LAW GROUP, P.C.

Adrian C. Hunte

Member
Former General Counsel
NYS Liquor Authority

Mary Anne Harkins

Of Counsel
Former Westchester County
Assistant D.A.

(914) 526-1000

Fax: (914) 526-3106

info@huntelaw.com • www.huntelaw.com

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RACE REPORT

I Will Tri Anything Once

By Peter Coy

[pronunciation guide: whi=why]

Whi, oh whi, did I tri a tri?

I thought I'd di

And that's no li.

A tri, they say, is really fli

But now I'm sore from i to thi



Patanella's Buckman
Sprint Distance Triathlon
Santamora 09, 2007



2007 seemed like the right year for me to try the tri. For the first time this past summer, I had been doing regular cross-training: bicycling in May and June followed by swimming in July and August. For my baptism by tire and water, I picked the Patanella's Buckman Triathlon, an Olympic-distance tri in Lebanon, N.J., on Sept. 9.

After a long, bedraggled morning, I now know that I am not a biker, not a swimmer, and definitely not a triathlete. Unlike Mike Arnstein and Diane Calderon, I never will be an Ironman. (Irony Man, maybe.) So what am I? By process of elimination, I must be a runner.

I knew when I showed up at the staging area before dawn that I was out of my element. Everyone else had space-age bicycles that were credit-card thin and lighter than a pack of cigarettes. I was borrowing a friend's knobby-tired Cannondale touring bike. (My own bike is an overweight machine made by Giant called, no kidding, the Giant Boulder.) For the swim I wore ordinary running shorts, which made me stand out like a flounder alongside my seal-like competitors in their black wetsuits. I think I was also the only entrant who wore eyeglasses for the swim.

By the time we reached the first buoy nearly the entire field was in front of me, their lime-green swim caps spread out across the horizon. I came out of the water in 95th place out of 98 entrants. It was a strange, almost comical feeling to be so far out on the wrong tail of the bell curve.

Determined to make up ground on the bike, I tore off up the hill (see photo) and started picking off slower bikers. What I didn't realize was that the faster

bikers were getting farther and farther ahead of me. I came in 80th out of 98 entrants in the bike portion.

Only the run could salvage my pride. By this time it was hot, my legs were rubbery, I was completely out of contention, and I was about to run the hilliest 10K race I'd ever been in. Never mind—I took off after the line of people ahead of me with a vengeance. I flew past them like they weren't even racing. I ended up with the eighth-fastest run of the day.

I think I had the most unbalanced performance of the whole tri. The top seven finishers in the run were also the first seven finishers in the overall triathlon because they were good at everything. I was eighth fastest in the run, yet I finished 60th of 98 overall.

Here is how I did:

1,500-meter swim: 38:43, 95th out of 98

40-kilometer bike: 1:32:00, 80th out of 98

10-kilometer run: 41:46, 8th out of 98

Overall, 2:56:02, 60th out of 98

Special thanks to Steve Standing Bear, the Sioux Indian medicine man from the Black Hills of South Dakota who blessed my borrowed bicycle by laying hands on it and chanting. (Fat lot of good it did.) Thanks also to my support crew: my wife, Ariela, and my son, Ethan. They were actually sleeping back

home during the race, so I suppose I should call them my “moral” support crew.

At least now I know for sure that I picked the right sport.



Running in Pink

By Bette Clark

This year was my second time running Race for the Cure (now called “Komen For the Cure”) dressed in pink. I had run this race several times in the past in a white shirt, before I was a real runner and before I earned the right to wear a pink t-shirt. I did it in memory of my mother, Rosalie, who died of breast cancer at age 35, when I was 4.

The first time I ran the race, I remember being amazed at all the people with pink squares of paper pinned to their shirts, “I run in memory of my mother, Ruth,” “I run in honor of my friend, Julie” “I run for my sister, Anne” and even more amazed by all the people in pink—the “survivors.” I found myself in awe of those women (and few men) who walked or ran in this sea of pink. There were so many there in memory of loved ones, but there were also so many others who

were determined to do more than live only in someone’s memory.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer almost two years ago, one of the many strange thoughts that flooded me as I tried to comprehend the news, was that I could wear a pink T-shirt the next time I ran Race for the Cure. Only now do I recognize that imagining I would be able to wear a pink t-shirt in the next race was actually a sign of my veiled optimism, rather than some misguided effort to distract myself from the reality at hand. Somehow, I believed, that unlike my mother, I would live long enough and be strong enough to run in a race more than 9 months in the future. Just as runners plan ahead for their next big race, I knew I would have to make it through months of “training” to make it to this next race.

The first time I ran Race for the Cure in pink, about 8 months after my diagnosis, and only a few weeks after completing my treatment—surgery, chemotherapy, followed by two more surgeries, then six weeks of radiation—I had only enough peach fuzz covering my scalp to make me feel as if I still needed to wear a hat to protect my head. As I ran up Central Park West, right at the front of the pack (after all, there are not too many opportunities to be in the lead like this—here, “survivor” runners are lined up alongside the elite runners), I knew that this was not just any race. As much as I would have wanted to run it hard and strong, I also knew, at that time, I would

have to acknowledge the scarring in my lung from the radiation, and the lingering fatigue in my body from the chemotherapy and the surgery, and these were likely to slow me down. I had made the shift, it seems, from measuring my strength and fitness on the basis of being able to get out of bed, take a shower, and walk downstairs, to how fast I could run a race...which of course, was not very fast. But I did notice, when I crossed the finish line, people with clipboards approaching a few of the other runners in pink, and realized that they had “placed” (first, second and third “survivors”), and that I was not too far behind.

This year, when I lined up at the start line for my second Race for the Cure in pink, I was wearing a pink hat with two ribbons stuck to it instead of one (these ribbons represent the number of years you have “survived” past diagnosis:

After the first mile of this 5K race, I noticed one other woman in pink who came up behind me. She passed me on an uphill and was looking very comfortable, running easy. “So here’s my competition,” I thought, and I began to push a bit harder. I passed her on the next downhill, she passed me on the next uphill. Then, after the two-mile mark, I passed her and kept ahead of her... for a while. Just yards from the finish line, she barreled ahead of me, passing me by maybe one second.. The cheers at the finish line grew louder, and it was only then that I realized we

were the two first “survivor” finishers—and I was beaten by only a second by someone who sprinted past me right at the end!! Soon another woman in pink crossed the finish line, and people with clipboards approached us. So the three of us chatted, listened to each other’s stories (both about cancer and about running), and then were lead to the stage at the bandstand in the middle of Central Park, where cheerleaders and crowds applauded as our medals were placed around our necks. Oh, and my time was 23:50.

Next year, when I put on my pink tee-shirt and add another ribbon sticker to my hat, I will line up right at the front of the pack, once again. But this time, I will run with all I’ve got, because now I know that I have to do that whenever I can. Besides, I’m not going to let anyone—not even another survivor—come up from behind and take first place. And who knows, maybe I’ll do a PR. I’m a real runner again, even when I wear pink.

My First Marathon

By Dominic Lombardo

I have just completed my first marathon, The Baden Marathon. That’s Baden, Germany. I had wanted NYC to be my “first,” but didn’t get into this year’s race, so I went elsewhere to fulfill my lifelong dream of running a marathon.

I had then planned on running the Berlin Marathon but couldn’t get entry into that race either. In a state of panic, I ended up entering what turned out to be a big local race: The Baden-Marathon. Everything, including the application, was written in German - and that’s all Greek to me.

I took a direct flight to Frankfurt, then Railpassed west to Karlsruhe-Baden where the race was to be held. Karlsruhe is a “young” city--fewer than 300 years old. I arrived 2 days early, with the idea that I’d be fully-rested. That didn’t go as planned. I spent an entire day checking out flowers at the Botanical Garden and viewing Renaissance paintings. I day-tripped to Stuttgart – home of the FIFA Soccer championship and the Mercedes-Benz museum. After a tiring two days of walking, I went back to Karlsruhe to pick up my goody bag/number and have a nice pasta dinner. I noticed that I was the only person in this huge hall having a beer. Were those wimps worried about dehydrating?

Though this was to be a big life event, I had a surprisingly good night’s rest. I shot out of bed by 6 a.m. feeling strong, loose and pumped up. I got to the race site just 15 minutes prior to the start (didn’t know the tram schedule), then ran around looking for the baggage check, which they call “des gepack.” There

were so many people – it turned out the half- and full Marathon were being run simultaneously and on the same course. I couldn’t find the starting line. Luckily, a guy I met earlier called out to me and we started the race together.

The course was quite organized once we got going. There were waving crowds, musicians and lots of interesting landscapes. Unfortunately, my body started aching after just 10 miles. Making matters worse, I had problems pacing myself as all the



signs were in German and the “mile” markers were in kilometers! On a lighter musical note, as we ran into the rural areas, I heard someone singing in English, of all things, “New York-New York.” I stopped in front of the guy pointing at my “Bronx, New York” logo of my VCTC shirt until he smiled, then went my merry way.

Near the half-way point, there was a fork in the road and I ended up jogging to the Half-Marathon Finish line (in 2:07, which was pretty much my ½ goal). This mistake cost me just a

few minutes but it played out in slow motion. My legs kept cramping up, forcing me to stop and stretch a half-dozen times. It goes without saying the terrain was beautiful, floral, and mostly rural. When we came back to the city-center, the final miles were through the gardens of a Versailles-like palace. The water stations had individual and decorated goody drinks for the local runners –somewhat like Koolaid-kind of cute.

I felt horribly during the last few kilometers of the race. But, at least I felt that I deserved my reward. I came into the race feeling that it would be an easy run, but I struggled to the finish line, in four hours thirty minutes, with a deep respect for the distance. And this time, I accepted my medal! I could hardly walk after the race and my muscles kept getting spasms every time I walked on any surface deviation. It was all about baby steps. But I certainly enjoyed the beer after the race. Only in Germany...Prost !



The race was run on a course that had been used by indigenous peoples 5,000 years ago, predating the more famous Stonehenge.

I bought my ticket home(England) scheduled to arrive on raceday before I had decided to run this race, so it was crucial that my flight from JFK have no delays. Not surprisingly and common for air travelers these days, the flight was delayed 3-1/2 hours in New York, so when the race started, I was still on the plane. My father picked me and my family up and we decided to go straight to Checkpoint (CP) 1 at mile 11 on the course, where I met up with the race director, Anthony, got my number, dropped off food and water for the race and then drove off to the start at Ivinghoe Beacon hill fort. I telephoned Anthony with my start time, just 2 hrs 18 mins behind everyone else. By 4pm I was back at CP1

in Wendover and found the water and food and phoned Anthony again. He advised that CP2 was going to hang on for me as it was a nice day. Nice for picnics, yes. The public were thoroughly enjoying the day. Runners on the other hand were dropping like flies in the late summer heat, and my own speed was quite subdued. The route passed through a great deal of National Trust land, numerous prehistoric sites I had to resist the urge to study, through Beech woods, a former Rothschild estate and it also crossed the driveway of, and overlooked, “Chequers”, the Elizabethan mansion of the Prime Minister’s official country residence. A piglet ran some of the way with me.

I’d hoped to reach CP3 before the official closing time but I wasn’t making the headway I’d hoped for, but the crew charmingly waited for me. They all knew the story of my late start. Was my enforced carbo-loading strategy of 4 in-flight meals and 5 breakfast bars, going against me? Was the complete lack of sleep in an upright straight jacket seat, not proving too helpful? Surely it can’t be jet-lag. In an all day event, who cares what time it is! I had expected to reach my kit bag and head torch at the midway point at CP5 before nightfall and although the track to CP4 near High Wycombe went a bit better, darkness was fast approaching. After a

The Ridgeway Challenge - U.K. Trail Championships 25 Aug 07

by Kevin Shelton-Smith

The 85 mile Ridgeway Challenge was chosen as the 2007 UK Trail Running Championships, starting near Luton, 30 miles north of London.

nice cup of tea the crew at CP4 lent me a torch. One mile later, the torch gave up and thumping it only kept it going intermittently for another half a mile.

Map memory was the game from here, plus the moonlit "Ridgeway" signposts. I found my way across a golf course to the Devil's Ditch, a 10' ditch, hundreds of miles long, and so named for being humanly impossible to build and made so long ago that no-one knows why it was done. Hence the locals of old (and some existing country bumpkins) supposed the devil had built it. I for one wish he hadn't. The trees blocked any moonlight getting in. I struggled along, with intense focus on what I was feeling under-foot. When the ground became rough or crunchy with leaves and twigs I had to stop, shuffle one side or the other until I felt good ground, and then continue with absolute faith that I would not meet a log or branch to smack my shins or swipe my face. I tripped a few times. A stubbed toe could have been worse, and the contact with my knee against a tree stump was fortunate for the stump being rotten and giving way before my leg did. A miracle stopped me running into a wire fence and so much more. I guess the practice running home in the dark after work and training was paying off and providing useful instincts and confidence.

In the distance I heard a helicopter hovering. An hour later as I approached North Stoke, it was still there. It was a Police Helicopter and had now put a spotlight onto the path ahead. Police were on one side of the path, pointing a gun at some villain on the other side of the path, shouting at him to keep his hands above his head. In contrast to previous hours, this moment quickly passed. I barely hesitated in deciding what to do. The noise of the rotors would have drowned any conversation, and explanations of my presence could have added confusion in a tense situation or even lead to the captive making a futile run for it. So I decided it best to break through fast with a shout, "Runner coming through" and just keep going. I didn't look back to see how much surprise I'd caused but within 20 yards came upon Sue, wearing number 7, running towards me. She was the first runner I'd 'caught up.' After a lot of persuasion I convince her she was going the wrong way. In South Stoke, some friendly advice at a pub told me it was just 5 miles along the Thames meadows to Goring, I wish I could have stayed for a brew but I knew it was only one mile to go really.

CP5, the first I'd reached before official closing time. The slow pace had meant my tummy was able to fully enjoy food for the first time in any race and the

baked potato, baked beans, meat balls and pastie went down a treat. Not feeling very competitive, I took the time to change clothes and re-lube the worry areas. My stop must have been 40 minutes – a very rare luxury. I ate the pastie as I left, crossing the Thames before trotting up the chalk Downs, benefiting from the midway re-charge, and having my headlamp. I caught the next runner just before CP6, at Mile 52. I couldn't resist another cup of tea but soon after I caught up with another four runners. Speed seemed to improve, times said otherwise, but I wasn't slowing down, despite the pain behind and beside my right knee, which was causing a significant limp whenever I tried to run. I found that persevering with running warmed the knee up just enough for it to hurt less and move more easily. Normally I abstain from painkillers so that I don't mask injuries but I knew the damage was done already, that it really hurt, and that I was going to continue regardless, so, Tylenols in.

Perhaps by Mile 61, CP7, I had felt I was getting back into the event. I was eating well on the hoof and just stopped for water, rice pudding and a banana. I could hear music in the distance. After 3 miles I came to it. There was a Rave of all things at Uffington Hill Fort, still going strong at 5am! The teens knew all about the run by now and they were thoroughly friendly and

supportive, I was even offered beer. At 6am I called my wife and told her to have a lie-in and not to get up to meet me at the finish as planned. An 11am or even noon finish was probable. The knee and hamstring weren't helping.

Ten miles on, a hill full of runners inspired me to run going right up the hill and rush through the next water and banana stop. I sensed home was close and departed quickly. I was just 15 miles away and feeling sufficiently invigorated to push all the way. With the sun rising, and wanting to get hard miles in while it was still cool, I ran almost non-stop to the top of Liddington Hill (site of King Arthur's victory over the Saxons?). A rest walk came along the narrow nettled section, gave me the chance to revise my advice to my wife, it was time for her to set off. Ogbourne St George seemed to take forever to reach but I was on track to break 20 hours for the first time since starting if I could just keep the pace going. This was hours off my original goal but one has to adjust to changing circumstances and set new sights, and I now saw sub-20 as fully respectable. I quite impressed myself over the coming miles but knew that the climb to Barbury Castle near Swindon needed some time in reserve. I couldn't quite believe it myself as I ran up the uphill for the last time. Time in the CP was cut to 5 seconds.

Then, caught in ruts and having to walk, with 4.5km to go in 35 minutes, I could see my efforts being dashed. I pressed forward, hopping from rut to rut, when I saw ahead, the largest, most obvious direction arrows the Downs have possibly ever seen! 18 minutes to go. The track was good ahead. I ran down. I checked my watch. One and half miles to go in 16 minutes. The game was on and the downhill was on a good track. I stepped up a gear, reaching the massive embankment circle in just 10 minutes, pushing hard with just an ounce in reserve for the end. As I entered the car park area I sprinted with something close to 6 minute mile pace, the knee and tendons could take their revenge for being ignored later in the day, and so they did, but, not before having to re-enact, somewhat stiffened, finish line runs for my wife's camera.

I was delighted with the final outcome and was looking forward to some rest, but I had just one task left to do. I had to go to Swindon and remove furniture from the loft of the house we have there. Once done, the body recognized the opportunity to shut down and did just that. I fell asleep over a beer in the pub and recall nothing of the drive home to Bedford. In bed by 5pm with a pillow to keep the weight of the sheets off my feet, I woke 16 hours later. My feet had fully recovered and after a few min-

utes stiff walking the rest seemed good for normal duties. How the body recovers so fast I'll never know, I held off running for a few days and felt great running on Thursday. I can do the Challenge faster than I did and I loved the route, so I'll be back, maybe with sleep the day before and starting at the same time as everyone else. That said, I had the pleasure of meeting more competitors than almost any other runner. I caught up to finish 23rd overall and 2nd in my age group. Starting on time would have moved me up to 7th or 8th. Not running blind on Devil's Ditch and with less tea could put me on the podium, one day.

31 Miles in the Green Mountain State

By Gabrielle Popoff

Sept. 30, 2007: a beautiful fall day in Brownsville, a small town in southern Vermont, home of the Vermont 50, which has four separate events: a 50 mile footrace (done individually or as a relay), a 50 mile mountain bike race, and a 50 kilometer race. The Vermont 50 is the sister race to the Vermont 100 in July, and covers some of the same ground.

Inspired by finishing my first marathon in San Francisco in July, I signed up for the 50K and tried to maintain my fitness from the marathon. I chose this race because I'd attended a great ultra-running camp in June in the same area, near the Mount



Ascutney ski resort. Despite some aches and pains, I felt pretty ready if a little nervous at the starting line. The 50K began at 8:00 AM, after the pre-dawn starts for the 50 mile runners and bikers.

The leaves were just starting to change color, and the race course, most of which is on trails through woods, dairy farms, horse farms, and Vermont country meadows, took us past many lovely spots and picturesque Vermont farms. The cows and horses seemed surprised to see us on their turf, but unlike the summer I spent in rural New Zealand, I managed not to get chased by angry horned livestock while running!

Part of the 50K race course was shared with the 50-mile mountain bike course and the 50-mile run course, so I enjoyed the camaraderie of those folks along the way. At times I was faster than the bikers—because either the uphill was so steep, or the terrain was so tricky—which was a unique experience!

For most of the race I managed to cruise along, carefully picking out my footing over the uneven terrain which had various

rocks, stumps and bumps, and a stream (where I witnessed 2 mountain bikers crash), until I reached the final 3 miles. These final miles were literally all uphill and took me nearly an hour to cover, a humbling experience since my 5K PR is about 20 minutes! Still, with the finish line so close, I managed to persevere in a sort of cross between a limp, a wobble, and a shuffle (that made some bikers ask me if I had ankle problems) until I reached the final downhill, a ski slope leading to the finish line, at the Mount Ascutney ski resort. Words cannot express how good it felt to sit down once I got there! I finished in 6 hours, 13 minutes.

Some facts:

The distance: total vertical of about 5,600 feet over 31 miles, including 2 stream crossings.

The fuel: 2 liters of water (which I carried with me in a Camelbak), 1 banana, 1 potato, 3 Fig Newtons, 2 chocolate chip cookies, 1 energy gel packet, several cups of Mountain Dew and Coke, 5 grapes, 3 cups of sports drinks, 8 gummi bears, 6 pretzels.

NYC Marathon: Better the Second Time Around *by Jill Staats*

It was a beautiful fall day on Nov. 4th, 2007 and 39,000 runners were ready to start the NYC marathon. There I was, ready for a repeat performance. I really did not know what I could do as far

as time. I was leaving myself open to anything.

My time last year was a disappointing (to me) 4:51. I was injured and it took four months of physical therapy and a lot of work to get back to competing again. Looking back, I had over-trained. I spent this year working hard on trying to understand how to train.

I went to running camp with Bette and things started to come together for me. I learned what strength building was and how to increase speed. The track workouts helped me to pace myself. I did the training runs in Central Park and that also helped to give me a sense of the pace I would need to do.

The day of the marathon, I had my timing wristband taped around my wrist. Norris enlarged it so I could read it without glasses. It was my guiding force. I stuck to that timing until mile 22. The gels were not agreeing with me and at mile 12 I stopped taking anything but water. My calves started cramping and I wanted to get sick. I pushed on and finished with a time of 4:16:55. I miss Boston by one minute, but I shaved 34 minutes off last year. I am not injured and I finished much stronger. I have been smiling ever since. I can walk, I can run and I can race again. It doesn't get much better than that. So, look for me in another marathon next year. I will be chasing down that minute.

NYC MARATHON 2007



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RACE RESULTS

Las Americas 5M Age Place
June 23, 2007
34:19 Blas Abadia

Henry Isola XC Classic 4M
Van Cortlandt Park, Sept. 2, 2007
31:30 Paulino Santana M46
33:08 Edward James M61

New Haven 20K
New Haven, Conn., Sept. 3, 2007
2:20:09 Fernando Ruiz

Fitness Games 4M
Central Park, Sept. 8, 2007
26:36 Michael P Hudick M62
30:46 Edward James M61
34:07 Ivan Ragoonanan M61
42:12 Fernando Ruiz M75
50:53 Ramon Minaya M67

Race for the Cure 5K
Central Park, Sept. 9, 2007
23:50 Bette Clark F51 2nd Survivor Overall

Patanella's Buckman Olympic Triathlon
Round Valley, N.J., Sept. 9, 2007
2:56:02 Peter Coy M49

South Nyack 10M
South Nyack, N.Y., Sept. 9, 2007
1:27:09 Blas Abadia
1:55:27 Fernando Ruiz 2

Harlem Renaissance 5M
Harlem, N.Y., Sept. 15, 2007
42:00 Enid Burns 1
53:24 Fernando Ruiz 2

Fred Lebow XC 5K Age Place
Van Cortlandt Park, Sept. 16, 2007

23:00 Paulino Santana M46
27:48 Ramon Ruiz M67 4
34:39 Edith Jones F67 3

Yonkers Half-Marathon
Yonkers, N.Y., Sept. 16, 2007
1:50:57 Bette Clark F51 1

4 Mahwah N.J. Education 10K Sept 23, 2007
38:23 Peter Coy M49 3rd OV

Queens Half-Marathon
Queens, N.Y., Sept. 23, 2007
1:21:35 Kevin Shelton-Smith M47 1
1:32:06 Neil Leibowitz M32
1:41:33 Richard P Conley M52
1:50:55 Edward James M61
1:53:46 Shirley Middleton F53 5
1:54:15 Kathryn A Donovan F49
1:56:04 Jill Staats F56 2
1:57:09 Ivan Ragoonanan M62
1:58:51 Zafar Shahbaz M50
2:00:32 Dawn Netter F36
2:02:50 Carl Morrishow M51
2:03:04 Michael J Yorio M60
2:06:21 Selma Sequeira Raven F41
2:20:45 Susan R Epstein F64 8
2:30:25 Ramon Minaya M67
2:49:31 Fernando Ruiz M75 5

Pfalz Point Trail Challenge 10M
New Paltz, N.Y., Sept. 23, 2007
1:36 Bette Clark F51 2
1:38:40 Enid Burns 4

Mad Dash 8M
Waitsfield, Vt., Sept. 23, 2007
1:00:34 Gabrielle Elissa Popoff F30 2

Continental Airlines Fifth Avenue Mile
Fifth Ave., Sept. 29, 2007
5:32 Firdaus Dotiwala M38
5:43 Steven Park M40

Pipers Pursuit 5K			Age	Place	Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration 10K			Age	Place
Sept. 29, 2007					Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 7, 2007				
21:23	Blas Abadia	21:23			51:08	Arnie Gore	1		
					1:06:04	Susan Epstein	1		
ING NYC Marathon Tune-Up 18M					Fairfield Half-Marathon				
Central Park, Sept. 30, 2007					Fairfield, Conn., Oct. 8, 2007				
2:18:50	Neil Leibowitz	M32			1:28	Neil Liebowitz			
2:38:16	Edward James	M61	9		1:37	Danielle Rosario-Mullen			
2:43:03	Ivan Ragoonanan	M62			1:39:04	Dick Conley			
2:46:31	Kathleen Hickey	F38							
2:54:44	Zafar Shahbaz	M50			Staten Island Half-Marathon				
2:54:48	Jill Staats	F56	6		Staten Island, Oct. 14, 2007				
2:56:42	Katherine Callan	F45			1:50:26	Edward James	M61		
3:05:05	Selma Sequeira Raven	F41			1:58:09	Kathryn A Donovan	F49		
3:10:27	Jo Ann Pate	F33			1:58:33	Shirley Middleton	F53		10
3:11:50	Dennis J Brooks	M55			1:59:48	Arnold L Gore	M66		8
3:13:09	Roxanne O'Brien	F40			2:00:19	Ivan Ragoonanan	M62		
3:13:43	Sarah Baglio	F35			2:06:13	Selma Sequeira Raven	F41		
3:23:30	Lisa E Fleischmann	F44			2:10:58	Zafar Shahbaz	M50		
3:44:32	Ramon Minaya	M67			2:13:12	Leoni Parker	F43		
Vermont 50K					2:16:32	Elizabeth Castro	F41		
Brownsville, Vt., Sept. 30, 2007					2:21:10	Susan R Epstein	F64		7
6:11	Gabrielle Elissa Popoff	F30	6						
Grete's Great Gallop Half-Marathon					Harry Murphy XC 5K				
Central Park, Oct. 6, 2007					Van Cortlandt Park, Oct. 14, 2007				
1:34:10	Michael P Hudick	M62	4		26:23	John Baglio	M38		
1:44:20	Paulino Santana	M46			27:01	Jean Harkins	F36		
1:55:25	Zafar Shahbaz	M50			Kurt Steiner XC 5K				
1:55:45	Edward James	M61			Van Cortlandt Park, Oct. 21, 2007				
1:59:41	Ivan Ragoonanan	M62			24:57	Rachel Gissinger	F31		
2:02:22	Tami Luhby	F37			25:16	Edward James	M61		
2:06:25	Carl Morrishow	M51			25:44	Arnold L Gore	M66		
Norway Run 1.7M					26:11	Kathryn A Donovan	F49		
Central Park, Oct. 6, 2007					26:19	Bette Clark	F52		
12:41	Arnold L Gore	M66	3		Paramus 10K				
14:19	Gabrielle Popoff	F30			Paramus, N.J., Oct. 21, 2007				
14:31	Dawn Netter	F36			38:28	Peter Coy	M49	3	
15:04	Luis Colon	M53							
16:23	Susan R Epstein	F64	3		Norwood 5K				
Pit Run 5K					Norwood, N.J., Oct. 28, 2007				
Oneonta, N.Y., Oct. 7, 2007					18:26	Peter Coy	M49	3 rd	OV
20:52	David King	M57	1						
27:28	Vera King	F53	4						

Poland Spring Marathon Kickoff 5M
Central Park, Oct. 28

29:46	Kyle Hall	M29
33:06	Ivan S Mills	M51
34:12	Steven Park	M40
39:43	Edward James	M61
44:17	Ivan Ragoonanan	M62
45:12	Sarah Baglio	F35
45:18	Dennis J Brooks	M55
45:22	Tami Luhby	F37
54:38	Roxanne O'Brien	F40
54:53	Fernando Ruiz	M75
55:09	Ramon Minaya	M67
55:22	Michael O'Brien	M44
55:57	Gilda L Serrano	F59

NYC Agencies XC Championship
Oct. 28, 2007

8:15 Blas Abadia (1.35-mile leg)
20:15 Blas Abadia (5K)

New York City Marathon
Nov. 4, 2007

2:47:52	Kevin Shelton-Smith	47M
3:04:22	Neil Leibowitz	32M
3:16:04	Danielle Rosario-Mullen	26F
3:29:47	Jason Krasner	33M
3:35:21	Richard Conley	52M
3:38:37	Michael Hudick	62M
3:57:26	Firdaus Dotiwala	38M
4:02:56	Bette Clark	52F
4:16:55	Jill Staats	56F
4:19:44	Paulino Santana	46M
4:19:48	Zafar Shahbaz	50M
4:20:34	Ivan Ragoonanan	62M
4:24:10	Edward James	61M
4:39:35	Lanny Levit	56M
4:45:24	Selma Sequeira Raven	41F
4:50:12	Blas Abadia	52M
4:56:33	Carl Morrishow	51M
4:56:45	Joann Pate	33F
4:59:49	Sarah Baglio	35F
5:13:59	Roxanne O'Brien	40F
5:30:05	Lisa Fleischmann	44F
5:38:56	Rozsa Gaston	49F
6:01:30	Ramon Minaya	67M

Ten Reasons I Ran the 2007 NYC Marathon

by Bette Clark

5

1. I couldn't give my entry away.
2. I wanted one of this year's cool orange technical shirts.
3. I would get to see many of you in a different part of the Bronx.
- 3 4. If I didn't break 4 hours I could blame it on lack of training.
5. I could eat more chocolate.
6. I would get up in time to watch the sunrise.
7. I might get close to people running in tutus, Viking hats, and rooster heads.
8. I would have a reason to take a delightful ice bath.
9. Carpe Diem.
10. Because I could (boy am I glad I did).

UPCOMING IN THE JAN/FEB ISSUE:

***OUR TRIBUTE TO JIM HUDICK
and
CLUB MEMBERS TALK ABOUT
THEIR WORST RACES EVER.***

CLUB NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Membership

- Membership rates are: Single - \$35 ; Family - \$40. New membership add \$15 (includes one official team singlet). Additional singlets cost \$15. Please send checks payable to VCTC to: VCTC P.O. Box 341, Bronx, N.Y. 10471. Applications are available at www.vctc.org
- Please e-mail Firdaus Dotiwala at 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 Annual Awards Dinner/Party

Park Hill Racquet Club

Yonkers, N.Y.

January 19, 2008

Details will follow in a club-wide mailing

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 Manhattan College gym parking lot for winter months). Saturdays at 8 a.m. (meet at handball courts at 242nd St and Broadway). The next club meeting is Saturday, December 8th.

The Newsletter is published bi-monthly. We welcome all contributions. Deadline for the Jan/Feb issue is December 20th. Maximum length is 600 words. Please e-mail to: kingkvd@optonline.net

Please try to include a photo.

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

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