

THE **RATTT**

ROAD AND TRAIL TALK MAGAZINE



Sophia Chromczak about to finish her first race, with mommy and daddy at her side.

are
AN
PUBLICATION

The Official Magazine of the Albany Running Exchange

MAY 2012

ROAD AND TRAIL TALK

The Official Magazine of the Albany Running Exchange
<http://www.ALBANYRUNNINGEXCHANGE.org>

Monday, April 30, 2012 marked the fifth week of the fourth year of the Spring Trail Run Series. What made this night especially unique was not just that we had well over 100 attend, but that the Dream Big Running (DBR) program was present as well.

DBR is a program that was created this year by ARE member and Olympic Trials participant Jodie Robertson with the aim to *empower girls to believe in their dreams one step at a time*. Participants are girls between 9 and 13 who meet twice each week with Jodie, along with Karen Bertasso and Erin Rightmyer.

In addition to the "word of the week" that the girls are to use at home - words that always relate to confidence, effort, and general altruism - this week Jodie wanted to impress upon them that "they have support and a team not only at DBR but also at home as well." The run was pushed back from 4:30pm to 6pm so that it could be with the general club run, and all parents/guardians were encouraged to attend with their children in the program.

The result was fantastic. These young girls were able to have their families join them for a run and all the girls (and family members) proudly displayed their DBR shirts and took on the 3.5 mile distance.

For the girls to be able to participate - and be welcome - at an event with participants of all ages and abilities, further helps to make them feel welcome and also instill the one thing that this country so actively is trying to do these days, and that is to get our youth outside exercising - and to enjoy it too.

Thanks to Jodie, Karen, and Erin, along with the Randy and Kathleen Goldberg organizing the Spring Trail Run Series, the girls were able to be part of our bigger running community that night. We sure hope to see them and others continue to make running a part of not just *what* they do, but *who* they are. Dream Big!

Pictures in this issue courtesy of Geoff Flynn and Five Pines Photography

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Mondays at 6pm at Tawasentha Park

ARE's 4th Annual Spring Trail Run Series

Join us for a 3.5 mile run in the beautiful park in Guilderland! Over 100 have been attending weekly.

Wednesdays at 5:50pm at the UAlbany Track

ARE's Wednesday Workout Series

Nearly 50 members are heading to the track each week. All ages/abilities welcome.

Thursdays at 6:30pm starting on May 24

Summer Trail Run Series *Sponsored by Miller64*

It's our 8th year of the STRS and this year surely is lining up to be bigger and better than ever! More details to come, but in the meantime, clear your Thursday nights and get ready for an awesome time!

ABOUT THE RATT

The RATT is published monthly as a PDF by the Albany Running Exchange and made publicly available on their website. It costs \$50 to run an advertisement, which must be a single page PDF sent [here](#). Please note that ARE reserves the right to **not** include an ad for any reason whatsoever. Articles are submitted by club members through a console within the ARE's members page. The Albany Running Exchange does not necessarily agree or encourage any of the viewpoints expressed by the authors of the articles contained within.

The 10th Dodge the Deer



Our first year with a live band! A big thank you to Katsura Band for adding to the experience for all!



Joe Yavonditte and Marey Bailey oversee (on the left) the apparel area while Kim Morrison and her husband Ian scope it out. (With Randy Goldberg showing off the cool Dodge the Deer bright yellow socks.)



ARE Racing Team members Aaron Knobloch and Chris McCloskey with a quarter mile to go.



No ARE Event is complete without plenty to eat. ☺



Ten Years of Dodge

10 year runners (back row, L-R): Tom Mack, Bob Knouse, Greg Rickes, Mike Langevin, Kim Scott, and Amy Forgea. Also pictured is Josh Merlis (left side, DTD shirt), event director for 10 years/runner in 2 of them, and Paul Mueller (center, black shirt), volunteer at all 10 years.



Top 3 Overall Male and Female Finishers with Dodge and Friends

Dodge the Deer – A Look Back

By Josh Merlis

Numbers. As far back as I can remember, I've always enjoyed them. As a second grader at Lakeville Elementary School, my father had already irreversibly instilled in me a driving focus both on performing calculations and doing them expediently. I would spend indoor recess "playing" Number Munchers on a Commodore 64, performing such exciting tasks as finding multiples of 2:



He blurred the line between *games* and true education; in truth, that perhaps is the best form of education, much like how many parents try different tactics to get their children to "love" broccoli and the like. But for better or worse, I was hooked to numbers.

In the fall of 2002, when the ARE started, group runs were held 2-3 times each week, always at 4:30pm meeting at the UAlbany track. I kept attendance of all who attended. At the end of that school year, Paul Mueller and Peter Rossi had the same number of runs, and that number was more than anyone else. They were each awarded engraved trophies stating "Most Group Runs Attended." To this day, those are the only trophies the ARE has ever given out.

In November of 2002, a few weeks before Chris Chromczak and I ran our first marathons, we were on a run in Pine Bush, ticking off the miles. It was often just the two of us as we geared up for Philadelphia that fall. One night we ran 7 perimeters of the UAlbany campus instead. In the pouring rain. Good memories. But on one particular run in Pine Bush, we were talking about fundraising for the club and thinking about ways to do it. Holding a race was one of the ideas that we

discussed, and by the time our run was complete, we had it all figured out... we would hold a race!

So "all figured out" doesn't mean much more than we made the most basic decision one can make, the decision to *do* "something". But putting it into play was a whole other story. In between attending classes, growing the ARE, and doing my best to be an active participant in the relationship I had with my girlfriend (boy, did she have no idea what she was getting into that fall), I started planning Dodge the Deer.

The Pine Bush Commission requested substantial documentation/information as this was not a commonly occurring event for them. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, no race had ever been held there before, so per request, I prepared several pages outlining who we were, who the event was for, why we wanted to hold the event, what the course would be, and a few other items that hopefully would get them to give us permission to do this. (Those items are available [here](#).) Holding it at Rensselaer Lake Park was pretty much our only option because almost none of the members of the club (college students) had vehicles, so we needed it to be convenient to UAlbany.

Jim Gilmer, who was president of the HMRRRC at the time, was the ultimate resource and deserves a tremendous amount of credit for helping it all get started. He took me under his wing and was always available when I emailed or called. After countless checklists, brainstorming sessions, and meetings with those who were emerging to become key members of the organization (some of whom are still part of the group today) we found ourselves just a few days away.

My girlfriend unofficially became co-director, which meant that she had to make posters and do a lot more than she expected when we started dating before the ARE existed. Somehow she remained on as unofficial co-director (AKA my girlfriend) for a couple of more years. Alas, I figure she simply grew tired of making posters. If only she had stuck around long enough to experience the pleasure and joy of chip sorting, with a romantic dinner to follow, of course. ☺

Sunday, April 13, 2003 was the first Dodge the Deer. We had 162 finishers, and all of them had to run around a 6' 5" college sophomore in a deer costume. His name is Matthew Steeves, and for five years, he towered over the finishers, as they literally had to *dodge* him. Just a few days before that first year, no costume was rented. I had toyed with the idea for a couple of months, but it didn't seem like we could afford it. Not only we were operating on a tight budget, but we were at least

hoping to make a profit on the event to get us some singlets and cover some race entry fees. With a couple of days to go, I figured the atmosphere was more important than trying to hit a particular dollar amount, so I rented a deer costume and respectfully prodded Matthew to be our deer. It wouldn't be the same if the person in the costume was normal size to begin with.

The first year "went." Looking back, and even right then, it did seem to go well, but I didn't know what I was doing. I had no barometer to gauge it with. While I don't think it was foolish that we timed it ourselves (a combination of not being able to afford a timer and my desire to write a computer program to do it ourselves), I did foolishly give myself the task of timing it, which pinned me down for the race, taking me away from actually experiencing the event.

One of my goals when the club started was to expose the students on campus to the running community off campus. To take them to road races and trail races, near and far, and to make running something that was more than just "what they did after school while a student." As the awards ceremony wrapped up, I spoke a bit about the club to all who were present, namely encouraging them to say hi when they saw us, and the same to all the students who made it happen that day. I had dozens of volunteers out there, and almost all of them were teenagers volunteering at their first race. I couldn't believe we had pulled it off, and as my final words, "We are the Albany Running Exchange" echoed over Rensselaer Lake, I took a few steps, and then essentially collapsed beside a picnic table. Crying. Bawling. We had done it. Marcus Catlin picked me up and shook my hand. I was in disbelief. It was a silly idea on one run in Pine Bush with Chris - let's dodge the deer! Five months later, it was real. This gang of running focused but still otherwise mostly immature college kids had put it together. I was so proud of everyone. And also so regretful that I'd planned a volunteer party at my apartment that afternoon. While some of the volunteers "emptied" the helium tank to change their voices and others playfully recounted the day, I sat in the corner - ostensibly engaged in the activity, but exhausted inside. Little did I know that *that* day would change everything.



The next day, I started planning Dodge the Deer 2004. It was all I could think about. My girlfriend was somewhat hoping that *she* would be all I could think about that day, but I really couldn't shake *this* from my mind. That one event brought all of us together more than anything we'd done up to that point, and it almost seemed like it flipped a switch. Students, who until that point saw the ARE as something they did after class, more than ever began to look forward to *after* class. We were getting pretty tight as it was, but after Dodge, it changed. We started going to the dining halls together, hanging out besides after group runs, and, put simply, were becoming a family. The next year, many members of the club roomed together, and with group runs held daily, bagel sales every Tuesday and Thursday (we raised \$10,000 selling bagels that year, it was insanely awesome the operation we were running in the lecture centers, sometimes selling up to 24 dozen bagels daily) - everything went on auto-pilot. We were all in it together.

In the summer of 2004, we started the Summer Trail Run Series, and February 20, 2005 brought Brave the Blizzard. The Hairy Gorilla Half and Squirrely Six Mile were introduced on October 30, 2005 and our Adventure Race unassumingly came to fruition on December 2, 2006 as a low-key race for those at Dippikill that weekend for our annual club weekend getaway. Through it all, Dodge kept going. High participation years and low, sunny years and rainy ones. In fact, in 2006 it rained for the two days before, on race day, and two days after and in 2007 a woman ran it in snowshoes. And yes, there *was* snow for it. In fact, Brave the Blizzard wasn't a true snowshoe race until 2008, so the first ARE event in which someone wore snowshoes was actually Dodge the Deer.

For the first 7 years of the event, there was always only one day that it "could" be held. For the first few years, it had to be while school was in session so the students would be here (and not away for April break), after the snow was off the trails, and before finals. Inevitably, that always only left one possible day. While the club demographics began to change at that point, as I was now a high school teacher, I chose the date to coincide with my April vacation so that I'd have a week free leading up to it to run errands and do all the things that are not so easy to do when you have a "normal job". In the summer of 2009, a year after requesting to go part-time at Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School, I fully resigned from my position as a math and computer science teacher. ARE Event Productions was growing, I wasn't sleeping, and I couldn't hide from my passion any longer. While I didn't know what "this" fully meant, *this* is what I wanted to do.

A few days after the first Dodge the Deer, I told my girlfriend that I wanted to do this. As a job. She endearingly laughed at me as she lovingly asked if we could watch something on TV other than the video from Dodge the Deer for the fiftieth time. (We watched it three more times before turning on something else that I don't remember.) I would lay awake thinking about it often; I never knew how this could be a job. What it would be, how it would be possible. And the irony is in the definition of the word "job." The ARE, from essentially that first meeting held back on October 1, 2002, was simply what I wanted to do, wanted to provide. The reward is the experience we all share; it is a two-way street in every way possible. And while it was never part of the plan or even thought about it until we started getting solicited for it, ARE Event Productions - the eventual company born from other events contacting us to time their races - is what provided the vehicle to make it a reality. And while I definitely enjoy all that goes into the unique existence of being an event consultant/race timer (there is no lack of stories on that end), perhaps the best part is that it has given me the freedom to do the simple thing I've always wanted to since this all began 10 years ago, and that is to blur the lines between game and work, play and sport, dreams and reality.

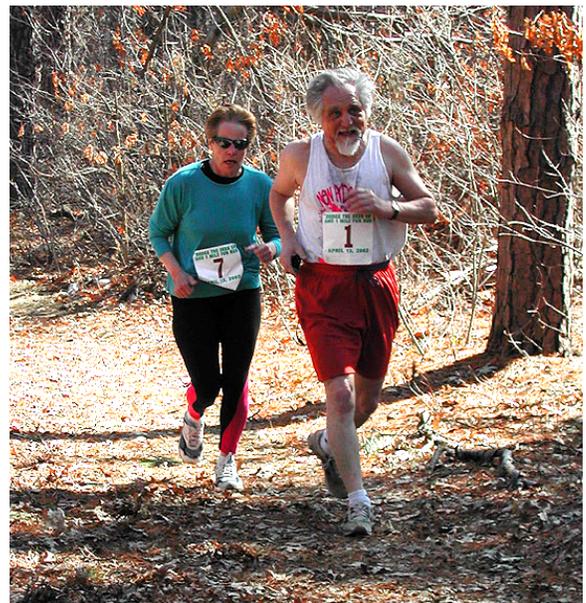
On Saturday, April 21, 2012, we held our tenth annual Dodge the Deer 5k. It was a gorgeous morning in a beautiful park with hundreds present. Dozens of kids took on the fun run who weren't born yet when we held our first, and some of them are the children of parents who met through the Albany Running Exchange. That includes Chris, AKA Bully the Bear, AKA my friend from that otherwise routine Pine Bush run some nearly ten years earlier. On this day, he finished the kids race in a bear costume holding one hand of 11 month old Sophia while her other hand was held by Emily Chromczak. A few years earlier, Emily was Chase the Chipmunk and Chris was Bully the Bear. While this event may not be the reason they fell in love, the deeper connection and meaning revealed in a picture like the one below can't be measured with numbers.



Thank you to everyone who makes all of this possible.
And yes, the best is yet to come! ☺



Starting the inaugural Dodge the Deer 5k in 2003



2003: Charles Merlis told his son he would run in the event under one condition: he had to get bib #1. Ginny Mosher isn't intimidated by this and would go on to finish 9 seconds ahead of Charles.



A young finisher at the 2010 Dodge the Deer.

AREEP's Trail Running Camp

Our fifth season!

Thursday, July 12 to Sunday, July 15, 2012



Highlights

- ◆ Geared towards and exclusively for adults!
- ◆ Learn the basics of trail running.
- ◆ Yoga and fitness classes.
- ◆ Special clinics on running form.
- ◆ Technical DRI-FIT shirt to participants.
- ◆ Gourmet meals provided.
- ◆ Pond open for kayaking and swimming.
- ◆ "Run and Tube" Tubing Trip.
- ◆ Entry into the Froggy Five Mile.
- ◆ And much, much more!

Dippikill Wilderness Retreat, Warrensburg, NY

Join us for a weekend of exercise, relaxation, learning, and camaraderie! Beautiful accommodations, gourmet meals, optional yoga and kayaking, along with nearly 1000 private acres on which to roam are just some of the reasons you will love this experience!

Camp is limited to 50 participants.

Visit www.AREEP.com/camp to learn more.



ARE Event Productions
PO Box 38195
Albany, NY 12203
info@areep.com
518.320.8648

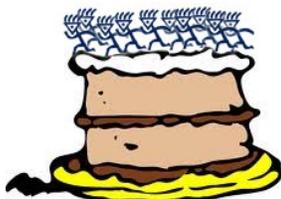
Happy 10th Birthday ARE!

By Emily McCabe

To be totally honest, I thought I would be the last person to join an adult running club until I visited the Albany Running Exchange website. A couple of years ago I heard about the ARE through one of my co-workers at the NYS Assembly. He was a former ARE member and encouraged me to join. Still feeling pretty beat up mentally and physically after 6 grueling years as a collegiate and post collegiate professional runner, I ignored his suggestion.

This past December, I finally felt ready to be a competitive runner again. My challenge was to find a group of runners who had similar goals. I Facebook messaged my friend from college, Brett, an avid marathoner, and asked for her advice on who I could train with. She encouraged me to check out the ARE website. The first time I visited the website I was impressed! It totally defied all my preconceived notions of what an adult running club could offer me. It appeared to be the ultimate resource for Albany region runners. I saw postings of interval workouts, well organized group runs, and cool non-running social activities. I was also amazed with how personalized it was, loaded with members' pictures and bios, race photos and video footage, current weather conditions, running route maps, Mapquest directions to runs, and a runner's chat board. Instantly drawn to the tremendous amount of hard work and dedication that went into maintaining this remarkable website and the awesome group of fun-loving people I decided to give it a try.

Throughout my running career, I have been convinced a major portion of my success could be attributed to the support and motivation I received from my teammates and coaches. Never in a million years, did I imagine that at age 28 I would be training and thriving in that kind of atmosphere again! After just three short months of joining the ARE I truly believe this one-of-kind organization will give me the tools I need to make my running goals a reality. In addition, the ARE has provided many new friendships. Happy Tenth Birthday ARE, and I hope to celebrate many more happy birthdays with you!



At the Races



Mendy Taylor sets the course record at the Scenic Hudson Spring Sprint 5k Trail Race



Stacey Kelley going after more Grand Prix Trail Series points to earn another sweet Grand Prix shirt. ☺



Mike DellaRocco sporting the 2006 DTD Shirt.

ALBANY RUNNING EXCHANGE MEMBERS AREA



The Albany Running Exchange is pleased to announce its 6th annual "ARE Runs Vermont" Memorial Day Get Away

As in the previous years, the ARE has many members participating in the Vermont City Marathon and Marathon Relay. If you have plans to run either, join your fellow club members with our unique "ARE Runs Vermont 2012" benefits package.



If you are not running, consider joining the group as support crew! A great crew makes this weekend even more special.

Those in VT for the weekend/race day will receive:

- Lodging discounts booked through our room block at the Holiday Inn South Burlington
- Commemorative Soft-Tech T-shirt for you and support crew
- Access to ARE finish area tent village (must have ARE Apparel)
- Complimentary PRIVATE massage therapist in tent village
- Communal support crew access (back drop / gear check)
- Post race beer kegs (21+; \$5 cash donation)
- Additional benefits to be announced

Book your hotel room [here](#) (or order your shirt(s) if you have other lodging arrangements)

Please contact Kevin Reedy with questions: kreedy@areep.com



1720 Shelburne Rd
South Burlington, VT

Dodge the Deer



Start of the Chase the Chipmunk Mile Fun Run



Registration Tent



Two kids going for the gold with Andrew McCarthy watching on from the right (red shorts.)



In 2003, event director Josh Merlis was given a small toy deer by volunteers Ryan Cowper and Tini Sevak. That deer has been brought to every Dodge since; sometimes left in more obvious spots than others.



72 Seconds

By Joe Benny

There are not many nuanced moments in our day-to-day lives: get-up, stop for coffee, go to work, Facebook, get out for a run, eat dinner, send a text, and go to bed. But every once in a while... every once in a while we stumble upon a moment that makes us do a double take. I've been alive for about 11 Billion, 125 Million seconds. I have rarely if ever thought about that; or tried to identify any small group of them that have had any impact on the totality of my life. How important can that amount of time be? Why in God's name would anyone be concerned with that? I would have been the first to ask that just days ago.

My 72 seconds unfolded over three point two (3.2) miles of the Gettysburg North South Marathon this past Sunday. In a valiant attempt on an 8 week training plan I set out to hit the "A" qualifying standard for the JFK 50 Miler; that being 3:44:59 or faster. The Marathon is set among the area where the decisive battle of the Civil War took place nearly 149 years ago. Today the area is the picture perfect scene of rural south central Pennsylvania; complete with old towns, barns, and the respectful and reverent monuments to the past you would expect.

The day could not have been more perfect: 38 degrees, sunny, and little wind for the 7:30am start. My personal condition: well rested, hydrated, and well fed from the Italian food and beer the night before. And accompanied by relay teammates: Tom Scudder and Kristen Quaresimo; and my volunteer pace group leader: Kevin Reedy. The Race course no less perfect: tranquil country roads sporadically lined with volunteers and spectators.

My plan, and Kevin's job, was to run consistent, comfortable 8:30's straight thru until the A standard was a mortal lock. At Mile 14 we had been running for 1:58:32; perfect with the exception of a 7:50 downhill mile and a 9:10 uphill mile. When we came through mile 21 we were at 2:58:47, still perfectly on plan and pace. Through mile 23 and 3 hours, 16 minutes of running; though on track (Heck I had 28:45 to run 3.2 miles!) I was starting to struggle. The rolling terrain of the first 21 miles had taken its toll and though overall "still on pace", I had reached and passed my fitness level. My legs and arms were heavy and micro cramps were setting in.

Mile 26.2 resulted in running for 3:46:11. 72 seconds is what I missed my goal and the "A" standard by. I could not be happier to have those 72 seconds in my life. I spent them with three unbelievably warm, selfless, and caring people.

Kevin Reedy:

To this point, had stuck with me, engaged me in conversation and had let me run my race; offering guidance and advice as we traversed the rolling hills. He now became my biggest fan and cheerleader. As he ran out in front of me by 15 to 20 meters he rallied all the support he could from spectators and volunteers encouraging them to yell "Come on Joe". No one, not small child, nor police officer on duty, was immune to his calls to support me. He even reminded me to put my shirt (and bib with timing device) back on with just a few hundred meters to go. Kevin did not have to run with me, Kevin did not have to run a marathon this past weekend. Kevin chose to support me and was happy to volunteer to act as my pacer on my mission.



Tom Scudder and Kristen Quaresimo:

Most of you that read this do not know them nor did I five months ago. When they found out about the race, they jumped at the opportunity to run the relay. They were both planning on running a half marathon as a tune up to their upcoming marathons. Once finished with the first leg of the Marathon Relay, Tom jumped in and ran a bit with us and added a little fresh air to our conversation at the half way point. Then with just over a mile and a half to go I spotted some ARE BLUE running towards me. KQ as Kristen is affectionately known, and Tom had finished and came back to run us in! It bears stating here that somewhere between 23 and 24 I was very, very fearful that my goal had slipped from reach; in fact it had. As a side note; you need to understand that Tom is quiet with a dry intellectual wit

and there is NOTHING quiet about Kristen. She is bubbly and endearing. As a further side note: the last thing you want to do is annoy a marathon runner at mile 25 who is 'in trouble'.

No sooner did she identify that I was 'in trouble' when she started in with her incessant yackity-yack. This was met tersely and abruptly with Joe Benny commanding "Shut-up! This is a NO TALKING MILE." Clearly this was unwarranted and regrettable; yet KQ and Tom continued to push me for the last mile. With some new life and energy that KQ and Tom brought, I dug in for one last effort. We dropped to 7:30's for a good 300 meters; but cramps and fatigue won the day and I was back to 10 minute pace in short order. Diminishing with my ever slowing pace was the chance to break 3:45.

I have yet to truly thank Kevin, Tom, and KQ. Over the course of 72 seconds three casual friends became life-long friends. I'm not entirely sure how you tell people that they are stuck with your affection, humility, and friendship for the rest of their lives. But, as I sit here to today, I am humbled to count them as friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Dodge the Deer



Chris and Kelly McCloskey

Pacers Needed for 2012 Adirondack Marathon

Contributed by Laura Clark

The 2012 Adirondack Marathon in Schroon Lake, NY is scheduled for Sunday, September 23. We would like to offer participants the option of running with a pacing team, whether the goal be to secure a coveted Boston qualifying time, to achieve a personal best or simply to complete the journey with a new bunch of friends.

We are seeking pacers, for each of seven time goals:
3:30, 3:45, 4:00, 4:15, 4:30, 4:45, 5:00

Qualifications:

- 1 Previous marathon experience on hilly courses
- 2 Previous marathon times of 20-30 minutes faster than the group you are pacing for
- 3 An ability to remain positive and encouraging.

What's in it for you?

- 1 Free Entry
- 2 Free Pasta dinner
- 3 Lots of warm fuzzies
- 4 An opportunity to be a working part of "the friendliest" marathon on the planet

For further information and to sign up for the team, contact Laura Clark laura@saratogastryders.org or 518-581-1278

GO TEAM!



Upcoming Events



Want to stay fit this spring and have fun too?

It's easy by attending Albany Running Exchange and ARE Event Productions events! From well-organized club runs and functions to precision chip-timing and entertainment at races, we're here to help you get fit and enjoy it too!

ARE's Spring Trail Run Series—Every Monday at 6pm at Tawasentha Park (April 2 through June 4)

Looking to run on a soft surface in a large group that welcomes all paces!? This is your chance! It's the fourth year of the series, which features a 3.5 mile loop and pace groups that truly span the spectrum; usually a few show up to walk too, so anyone can join and no one gets left behind. The free series features great camaraderie in a beautiful place.

Trail Running Camp—Our Fifth Year!

Check out the flyer below for information about our all-inclusive getaway retreat for adults. It's a blast!

Find out more and register at www.AREEP.com/camp

- Exclusively for ADULTS of ALL abilities!
- Learn the basics of trail running.
- Yoga, form clinics, and special sessions.
- Gourmet meals.
- Pond open for kayaking and swimming.
- FREE entry into the Froggy Five Mile.
- FREE entry for the Run & Tube Trip.
- One of the best weekends you'll ever have!



Cost is from \$260 to \$365 for the entire weekend, based upon accommodations.

Held at Dippikill Wilderness Retreat in Warrensburg, NY.

ARE's Summer Trail Run Series—Every Thursday at 6:30pm (May 24 through August 30)

Now in its 8th year, ARE's "STRS" is pumped for another great summer of taking you to trails throughout our area. Each week we pick a different place and mark a route between 2.5 and 4 miles. Run it as many times as you like. In past years, we've had up to 200 people attend weekly—unbelievable! Every 4 weeks we hold a cook-out and like all of our events, all ages and abilities and welcome and encouraged to attend.

ARE Group Runs—Typically 4+ every day of the entire year throughout the Capital District

The Albany Running Exchange held over 2,000 organized group runs in 2011. That's a lot of running! If you're looking for running partners, it's easy with the ARE! Simply login and click "Search for Running Partners" to find others who are at your same fitness level, or simply check out our event calendar for a group run near you.

Find out more about all these events by visiting www.RUNALBANY.com

The Ups and Downs of Marathoning

By John Kinnicutt

Americans love superlatives. We want the biggest, the fastest, the best. Marathon runners are not immune to this. While no marathon is ever “easy”, runners generally look for races described as “Fastest”, “Most Scenic”, “Best Post-Race Experience”, etc. It’s unusual to find a marathon that actually brags about how difficult it is. Last summer, a fairly large contingent from ARE headed to Boone, North Carolina to try and learn humility at the hands of the Grandfather Mountain Marathon - touted as the “Second Hardest Marathon in the USA!” After surviving that experience, how could I possibly pass up the chance to run the Mount Lemmon Marathon - “The Toughest Road Marathon in the World”.

The race’s website also talks of the 6000 feet of elevation gain*, and of how it’s one of the most scenic marathons in the United States. This all sounded custom made for me. There were two other “benefits” the race offered that concerned me more than the huge climb: the fact that the race was at altitude, and the mid-90 degree heat predicted for the middle few miles of the race.



The course map showed 8 aid stations along the course, roughly every 3 miles. But the pre-race email emphasized that you would need more water. And “strongly encouraged” all competitors to carry their own water bottle. I’ve always been very open to the suggestion of locals, so I carried a fuel belt with two 24 oz. water bottles. And, for two very good reasons, I’m glad I did:

Reason #1: When I realized that, before mile 2, I had already emptied my first bottle. And the sun had barely come up yet!

Reason #2: At mile 15, when one of my water bottles sprung a leak! If this was my only bottle I would have been in serious trouble!

But I’m getting ahead of myself. This adventure starts before the race.

On my way out west, I had a layover in cold/wet Chicago. This allowed for the entire plane to be filled with people bundled up and wearing jackets. About an hour outside of Tucson the flight attendant made an announcement telling everybody to put their coats in their bags. Since, at 80 degrees by 10AM, there would no need for them once we arrived. But I was okay with this. After all, it was a “dry heat” so it wouldn’t be too bad (insert sarcasm here).

Once I landed I headed right to packet pickup. That gave me an opportunity to chat with several other runners, all of whom had previously run this race. They all just smiled when they heard I was from New York. Most told me to expect to add about 90 minutes to my typical marathon time. This estimate turned out to be fairly accurate.

Having all day free, and no plans until dinner, I decided to take a driving tour of the course. The only problem with this plan was that I didn’t actually know where the course started. Being fairly good with directions I decided to just drive towards the mountains and look

for signs for Mount Lemmon. This plan worked out wonderfully - it got me lost! BUT, getting lost was the only way I every would have found a back entrance to the Seguro National Park. Since I hadn’t run yet that day, I decided to throw on my running clothes and run for a couple miles on the trails in the park. This probably wasn’t the wisest of plans since I didn’t have any

water and it was close to 90 degrees. But I knew that I was only going to be going a couple miles. Those couple of miles were amazing! The trail I found meandered over rocks, near 30 foot high Seguro cactuses, and through dried up river beds. I ended up doing a little over 3 miles, which did give me a lot more respect for the altitude and the heat. A lesson that would come in handy during the race!

After my little run, I tried again to find the elusive Mount Lemmon. This time I was actually on the right road (but I didn’t know it) when I saw a sign for a scenic view ahead. Never one to pass up a scenic view, I quickly detoured. This brought me to the Agua Caliente Park. A 100 acre park surrounding a spring-fed lake full of fish, turtles, and waterfowl. I was not

expecting this at all, within 100 miles of Tucson. I walked some of the nature trails and took lots of pictures before deciding to head to my hotel.

The Race

Waking up the morning of the race, I was greeted by fairly cool temperatures. Even though it was only 4:30AM it was in the mid-60s, about 10 degrees less than I was expecting. I picked up a friend and headed over to board our bus to the start. Once again, I was greeted by mostly locals that had already run this race. The bus trip was about 30 minutes, and dropped us off in the middle of the desert. You could still see the lights of Tucson, but there wasn't really anything else around. We had about an hour before the race was set to start. This wasn't bad and I spent my wait talking to the race director and hanging out with the race timers. Some habits are hard to break.

After a few last minute announcements, the National Anthem, and little other fanfare - we were off. The first thing I noticed was that nobody was talking. Normally there is some chatter at the start of a race. But not here - just silence. That was mostly due to the fact that we were already climbing and we couldn't breathe! Thankfully there was still plenty of shade, and a nice breeze to help us from over-heating right away. But that didn't diminish the fact that the sweat was pouring down my face within about a half mile.

The race seemed to go straight into the mountain. It wasn't until about ½ mile in that I noticed that the road I would soon be on was actually above me! In fact, when I got to the 1 mile mark I looked over the cliff next to me (yes, I really mean cliff) and could see the back of the pack a few minutes behind me.

That's the way the entire race went. It was filled with hair-pin turns that just kept you going up. The race was like trying to find the end of a rainbow. Every time it looked like I was getting to the crest of a hill I would go around a turn and see that it kept going on. From mile 1, this was always a run to the next (hand-drawn) mile



marker. That was all I could wrap my head around. There was no way I could do this for 26 miles, but I knew that I could always make it one more mile.

My Mile-to Mile plan was working nicely until about mile 17. I'm not sure if it was the heat, which was in full effect at this point, or the elevation. Whatever it was, things went from fine to very wrong, very quickly. I suddenly started getting dizzy when I was running. I could still power walk with no

problem, but running was basically out of the question. I made it to the aid station at mile 18.2 and refilled my one remaining water bottle (one had sprung a leak and I needed to throw it away). This is when I was told that there was a downhill at mile 21, and that I just needed to keep going until then. I could deal with this. I was still moving along okay.

My "moving along okay" didn't last very long. I eventually got to the point where just walking was an issue. I considered sitting down for a few minutes to rest, but didn't think that I'd ever be motivated to get up again. So I just kept trudging (*trudge* --[truhj] - *Verb: Walk slowly and with heavy steps, typically because of exhausting or harsh conditions*) forward.

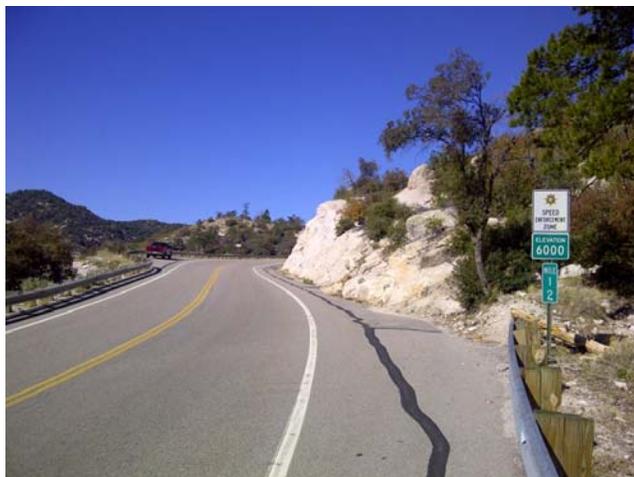
I finally got to the long awaited downhill. This allowed me short periods of running, but still not much. I was still getting dizzy when I ran, and now my fingers were starting to go numb. At least I wasn't going up! But this downhill did do a lot to recharge my batteries, both physically and mentally. Just moving was still an effort, but I started feeling that the end was finally within my grasp.



That good feeling lasted until the next big hill, at mile 24. Although this wasn't any steeper than any other part of the race, the downhill made it seem much

worse. But relief finally came again at mile 24. This is when we turned off of the main road and onto a downhill dirt road. I'm not sure what felt better, the downhill or the softer surface. Whatever it was, I was able to actually scrape together an 11 minute mile! Not

much, but it seemed very fast at the time. The last two miles were a complete change of scenery compared to the rest of the race. We were now on dirt roads, running past huge vacation homes, with very few trees. We were close to being above the tree line.



5 hours 16 minutes and 13 seconds after I started my day, I was finally finished! I did all I could do to run the last 200 meters - I was not going to walk with the finish line in sight. But I even paid the price for my "finishing kick". It took me about 1 minute to walk the 5 meters past the finish line to get my medal. Then I staggered for another minute before I found a place to sit down. Sitting never felt so good!

It probably took me about 10 minutes to catch my breath after the race. I never knew that anything could be so draining. Before Mount Lemmon I thought I'd hit "The Wall" a few times. Nothing even comes close to the level of exhaustion I felt. Thankfully, where I chose to collapse was very close to where they were giving out the various age group awards. It was then that I found out that I actually won my age group! My prize was a wonderful, hand-made ceramic plate. (this is being mailed to me, I'll share a picture when it arrives).

Would I recommend this race to anybody - probably not.

Would I run it again - more than likely!

*To help put 6000 feet of elevation gain into perspective, this race had an average vertical rise of **225 feet per mile**. The road to Thacher Park, from Route 85 to the Overlook, averages **155 feet/mile**.

ARE Website: A Quick Guide

Has appeared in previous issues of the RATT

The ARE Website provides a tremendous resource for club members to get involved and truly be part of the organization. Here's some information on how the site works.

The site is composed essentially of two zones: one for the public and one just for members. The public zone includes the homepage and the links found there, including pictures, race results, race schedule, running routes, and more. Some of these areas have special features only members can utilize. For example, only members can use the results search and find pictures of specific club members.

The members' area, however, contains all the excitement and gives life and credence to our name – the Albany Running **Exchange**.

Accessing the Members Area

If you joined the club online, you created your own username and password. If you joined via mail, you should have been emailed your access information. If you need your access information, contact us by emailing are@albanyrunningexchange.org

Okay, so I'm logged in... now what?

Above all else – feel free to click around and explore! There's plenty to do and information to find – the most popular and functional things you can do once connected include:

See what runs/events are being offered

Click on "ARE Event Calendar" and click on the name of an event that interests you. You will see who posted it (the event "Leader"), basic event information, a roster of who is attending, and also a chat for the event. Want to go? Click the "Sign Me Up" button and you're now listed. Event leaders can email that group specifically – so if you plan on attending, it's a good idea to sign-up.

Track your race results and PRs

Once logged in, go to the results for a race you ran and click the green arrow on the right side. This adds it to your race history, which is viewable by clicking "Race Information" – "My Racing History" from the top navigation.

Communicate

Have a question or a comment? Put it on the ARE Chat located on the members page. Looking for a running partner? Put it out there!

192 Pounds – Don't Give Up On Yourself

By Randy Goldberg

This is not going to be a story about weight loss but I do need to let you to know that, 192 pounds is what I weighed at my doctor's office about a month before I made the decision to start running. This story is actually more like my runner's testimony: "If I can do it, you can too", so my overall physical condition at the time I started running *is* relevant.

I know 192 is just a number but I am proud to report that on any given day now you can weigh me in at about 170 pounds. 170 is still about 20 pounds over my doctor's recommended weight for me at 6'5" (or is it 5'5", what's the difference?). I like to tell myself that I carry the additional weight with cause, because I worry about famine in this apocalyptic world and the extra weight may come in handy some day. Unlike my malnourished skinny running friends who will be looking at me with envy when the day comes... But of course the truth is the extra weight still comes from my desire to eat anything with sugar or fat in it, any Chinese food and Italian food and baked, broiled, buttered and battered food... I digress.

However as I just wrote, my weight isn't what I want to talk with you about; I want to talk with you about the day my *desire* to run made a *decision* to run. Seriously, if you're relatively new to running then you may be struggling like I did when I started. Let me try to encourage you a little to carry on.

The Background

I started running when Kathleen lost her running partner (our daughter, Lindsey) to college and needed another partner to run with. I guess I should add that at the time I was thinking how much closer to death I was getting with each pound I was gaining and I was also thinking I probably needed to do something about it because if I died from not taking care of myself, Kath would surely kill me. Not to mention even the short walk to the refrigerator was getting dangerous for me. ☺

To mention; there is a rule in our household concerning running that **cannot** be broken or ignored; **nobody runs**

alone. Not Kathleen and definitely not the precious one we named Lindsey.

The Further Back Background

In the fall of 1999 our youngest daughter, Lindsey, became part of the Guilderland high school cross-country team and practiced with her teammates on a very regular basis. Kathleen was her running partner when they ran at home in the neighborhood. On their runs she and Lindsey would often do extensive mother-daughter bonding and they not only began to understand each other as more than simply mother and daughter, but as women and even friends.

I didn't run at all in 1999 and had no desire to. I certainly had no desire to go outside in all kinds of weather and run around in circles like a crazy person. I had no desire back then, under the darkness of winter, to parade myself in tights through our neighborhood, as I apparently do now. I'm not even sure I knew what a "K" was, 5, 10, 15 or otherwise. It even used to bother me that those stinkin' car magnets on the car bumper in front of me would bait me to search for 70.3 & 140.6 on my radio dial. Runners seemed a crazy lot to me, I didn't get it.

As parents, Kathleen and I followed the Guilderland team from meet to meet and town to town. We learned a whole bunch from boy's coach Bob Oates and girl's coach Sandy Morley. What we learned wasn't just about the mechanics of cross-country running, it was as much about the *heart* of running, the *rhythm* of running. Lindsey, her teammates and Kath made running look rather easy and an awful lot of fun. Don't get me wrong, it was clear to me through all of their hard work and nursing of their injuries that it wasn't the wimpy hobby I originally thought it was. It was clearly one *down and dirty* sport with plenty of team strategy, even. Yet, every time they put their sneakers on for another workout they seemed to capture that heart flow right back into that rhythm.

So you can imagine our sadness at the distance away from home (especially mom) when Lindsey decided to attend Brockport for college to continue her cross-country running career and education. What was Kathleen going to do? Abandoning running, changing sports was not an option. Lindsey now had teammates at college to run with, Kathleen had nobody. So like a good husband and friend I decided that I was going to be Kathleen's new running partner and I was going to do it by surprising Lindsey as well as Kathleen.

I decided to include Kathleen in my scheme and registered Lindsey and me in the St. Claire's Thanksgiving Cardiac Classic in Schenectady the fall of 2003 without Lindsey knowing it. Then I began to run. I knew I could do it. Should be a walk in the park (pun intended), right? Remember, I watched the routine vicariously for four years and of course, while Kath was paying attention to Lindsey and to Coach Oates and Morley, I was about to prove that I clearly was not.

Well, my pleasantly surprised and supportive wife sent me to the Mohonasen HS outdoor track to get started. I took the jean shorts down from the shelf, put them on with a complimentary looking cotton tee shirt - I looked good if not for the way my belly rubbed against the front of that shirt; and the day after we dropped Lindsey off to Brockport in August 2003, I was on the "Mohon" track. I had a plan to run a 5K on Thanksgiving with my gorgeous little baby girl and nothing was going to stop me...

My first evening I entered the track through the turnstile and sat down on the soft, scratchy surface thinking to myself, "So this is what it feels like" and then I started to stretch. With the first awkward and somewhat painful lift of my leg I remembered that I was a man and men did not stretch. Not really, not on purpose. At least not when I shoot hoop or play ball so why bother for this sport. So I skipped the sissy stretching and started my 3.1 mile sprint. *Yup, no idea what I was doing.* The 5K sprint lasted less than 3 minutes, less than 100 meters. My carefree excited confident smile went quickly to that look of, *what the heck is happening to me*, kind of horror. I was panicked, thinking, "Oh -my-God, I am going to die right here and Kath is going to find me later on a darkened track, face down with my tongue hanging out. She did this to me..."

She knew what *she* was doing of course. She sent me to the track alone that first evening to help *Mr. Confident* be humbled so he would stop his silly jokes about runners in tight shorts and running not being a real sport and how easy it is, etcetera. She knew *he* would be forced to recognize how surmountable the task was ahead of him. She was right, I needed the moment alone. I was as embarrassed as any grown man can get. You see, I had fancied myself a hunter, a fisherman and a hiker. I was a hunk of an outdoorsman and a sportsman, if I did say so myself. I could shovel snow, rake leaves, mow



lawns, and toss a football -yet I couldn't even make it once around the track - geesh. Wow, did I ever learn that running from home plate to first base and making a few lay-ups, is not preparation for a 5K. Neither was pitching a tent after a long walk in the woods. I had my job cut out for me and honestly, *I didn't know if I could do it.*

Over the next 6 weeks I would go faithfully to the track. Kathleen would accompany me most often. She would be there to lift my spirit and encourage me as she personally introduced me to each part of my aching, sore body. I learned where Mr. Achilles resides and why the expression "Achilles heel", I learned about my shin and shin splints. I was taught that Plantar is not something you do in the dirt in your yard and it's not a peanut company either. I was educated on how to heal blisters and better yet, how to try to prevent them. I learned about nasty rub burns and how to try to avoid them. I learned to apply ointment to parts of my body I don't like to touch and Kath won't - yuck, TMI. When just prior to the race I leaked my plan to Lindsey, I learned why something as simple as tying my laces properly would be the difference between excruciating pain and freedom from it, (thank you Brockport Coach Stevens through Lindsey for that one). And most importantly, I was also learning not to be too discouraged by the fact that on a given Monday, I couldn't make it another one-quarter mile around the track, because by the time next Monday rolled around, I would be able to - as long as I didn't quit. *As long as I didn't give up on myself.*

I was finally learning first-hand what my daughter and wife had already come to know: *If they could do it, I could do it.* When my shins hurt so badly that I couldn't walk and I threatened to quit, I was convinced by Kath that I was not suffering from an incurable disease. She had me change my stride so my feet struck the surface a little differently and after a few days the pain subsided. When my knees started aching so badly I wanted to quit she suggested that I transition off the circular track (and stop whining). It worked, and within a week no more significant knee pain. As I started to compliment my track workouts with road work I was running too flat footed and I could hear each slap of the ground as I ran. It was my two year old sneakers that were the problem. New sneakers, no more slap-slap. I changed the socks I wore to a more friendly wicking material and even started wearing the proper size (who knew) and there went the blisters.

In other words, I listened and I learned and I ate the elephant one bite at a time. I lost ground; I gained ground (pun intended, again). I suffered through a set

back or two but kept at it. I can attest that it wasn't pretty or easy (just ask Kath ☺). When Thanksgiving Day came I was still pretty much dressed like a dork and ran like the first-timer I was, and anyone with half a brain and poor eye sight would have shot me and put me on their table - *but I did it*.

So I am pleading with you now, *stay with it* because if I can do it, then you can too!

Since 2003 I have managed to run in many timed races at different distances. I do not run with finesse and grace. I am so *not* pretty. My first Hairy Gorilla Half which was the first half I ever ran ("ran" if you can call it that), I tripped and fell 5 times. 5 times! My only regret is that I didn't hit my head the first time and render myself unconscious. ☺ The harder races I sign up for I never do with any style. I never finish with a medal in my age group. My first marathon was the Vermont City Marathon in 2010. After putting in all my practice runs and losing some additional weight I was pretty confident I would achieve my goal of 4 hours 20-30 minutes. I didn't even come close. I cramped at mile 16 and for the next 10 miles had to decide how much finishing was worth to me. I did finish with a 5 hour 18 minute time and to a screaming, cheering ARE crowd at the finish line. It was a great day, I love this club because of the *you and me* in it.

I tried the Vermont City Marathon again last year, 2011. I still didn't come close to my target time. I did finish with 4 hours 55 minutes and again to a screaming, cheering ARE crowd at the finish line. There's nothing like that feeling. It was another great day.

When my own physical strength has failed me and I start to hear that trash talking voice in my head that I think we all hear from time to time, "You can't do it. Who do you think you're fooling? You're too slow, you're not worthy", I still draw on the tenacity I had for that first race a long time ago. I hear the voices of Coach Oates and Coach Morley and Lindsey and Kathleen and I am reminded to dig deep and harness the *heart and rhythm* of running.

So please, stay with it! I know you can do it too.

Volunteer Opportunities

Want to feel like you are making a difference and giving back? The ARE Event Calendar lists all types of events, including upcoming volunteer opportunities. Whether you are directing a race or simply looking for help with something, feel free to put it out there.

Fear the Beard

By Chris Winslow

For the past week, I've been growing my playoff hockey beard. It's an annual rite of spring, similar to the sighting of the first robin in our yard. The beard is a belief that if one cut's his facial hair during the playoffs it will bring his team bad luck and an early exit from the elusive search of Lord Stanley's hardware.

Has this beard ever brought me good luck you may ask? Well, never any luck really. For the past 10 years that I have done this, we have only won Lord Stanley's chalice once. As runners we don't have as many crazy superstitions as athletes in other sports, at least not to me anyways. Former Chicago Cubs pitcher Turk Wendell believed that he would have bad luck on the mound if he ran across the foul lines, didn't eat 3 pieces of twizzlers, and brush his teeth in between innings. It is commonplace for football players not to wash their playing gear until they have a loss. During a perfect game in baseball, teammates do not talk to the pitcher for fear that doing so will break up his streak of perfection.

We need more of this in running; there is a lack of eccentric personalities in the sport. Maybe more people would tune in to coverage of the New York City Marathon knowing that before toeing the line, Ryan Hall would lead fellow sponsored Asics runners in a war chant of some type. "What time is it? Race time hmmmph." Or that Josh Merlis wears lucky underwear in hopes of a PR.

As a runner, I have my own pre-race routine, just like anybody else. None of which involve lucky underwear. I'm curious though, I believe that some of us are, if you have some superstitions that you would like to share for a future column, please feel free to email them to me. The names will be changed to protect your identity, and superstitions kept to yourself.

The time with the beard, like spring, has come to an end already. My Chicago Blackhawks were trounced in the first round by the Phoenix Coyotes. Alas, there is always next year, and another reason to fear the beard.



Albany Running Exchange



is going on ANOTHER cruise!!!



Day	Port	Arrive	Depart
Sunday, January 27, 2013	Miami, FL		4:00 PM
Monday, January 28	Nassau, Bahamas	7:00 AM	2:00 PM
Tuesday, January 29	Fun Day at Sea		
Wednesday, January 30	St. Thomas	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday, January 31	San Juan	07:00 AM	3:30 PM
Friday, February 1	Grand Turk	11:00 AM	5:30 PM
Saturday, February 2	Fun Day at Sea		
Sunday, February 3	Miami, FL	8:00 AM	TBD

What's Included:

- Price includes round trip airfare from Albany to Miami
- Round trip transfer between airport and Port of Miami
- 7-Day Cruise aboard the Carnival Glory
- All taxes, port charges and tips

Payment:

- This trip is on a first paid, first served basis. Any cabin can sell out at ANY time.
- These prices can change at any time until we actually make your reservation.
- These prices are our best estimate. The exact price won't be known until April
- To lock in your cabin and flight, you must put down a \$300 non-refundable deposit. (Cash/Check)
- Final payment is due on or before November 7, 2012. (Cash/Check/Credit Card)

Inside Cabin:

From \$1126 per person Double Occupancy*

Oceanview Cabin:

From \$1226 per person Double Occupancy*

Balcony Cabin:

From \$1426 per person Double Occupancy*

* Contact us for prices for 3rd and 4th passengers in the same cabin

For more information go to <http://www.albanyrunningexchange.org/cruise>

Contact Letticia Ruderman to book your FunShip vacation!

letticiaaviles@aol.com



Travel

The ING Miami Marathon/Half Marathon is on January 27, 2013.

Please contact Letticia Ruderman (518) 598-9290 if you are interested in a pre-cruise Marathon package.

2012 Boston Marathon – A Survivor Race

By Joe Yavonditte

Most runners these days don't consider marathons to be survivor races. We think of 50 and 100 milers as survivor races. But there have been a few survivor marathons over the years. Most notable among these was the 2007 Chicago Marathon where temperatures reached 88 degrees with high humidity. 10,000 runners choose not to start the race, 10,934 starters didn't finish and many more were pulled off the course when organizers closed the course for safety. In 2012, Boston decided to become a survivor race.

Having high temperatures in an April marathon poses a greater danger than high temperatures in a late summer or fall marathon, especially in the Northeast. Most northeastern runners have trained in very cold weather (or this year mildly cold). They have trained at temps ranging from maybe 50 degrees down to zero. So an 85 degree race day can mean a 35 to 70 degree difference from a typical training run. With a hot fall marathon, you're probably looking at 0 to 25 degree difference from training runs.

So along comes Boston 2012 where the forecast started 10-days out as a high in the low 70's, than jumped to the high 70's, to low 80's, high 80's, back to high 70's, low 80's and with 1 day to go, mid to high 80's. All of these forecasts also called for very, very low humidity and partly cloudy skies (some relief at least). The temps were predicted to be nowhere near record Boston Marathon temperatures. The 1905 marathon was run with temps in the 90's and the 1976 "Run for the Hoses" marathon had a reported finish line temp of 86 degrees although many claim that the temp in Hopkinton at the noon start was actually 96 degrees. At the other end of the weather spectrum, the Boston Marathon came close to be cancelled in 2007 because of a Nor'easter that came through New England on Patriots Day. The BAA apparently argued until 5am race day about cancelling before the light bulb went off. They finally realized that even if they cancelled the race, thousands of runners would still run. It would be better to run the race and provide support for those who choose to run, rather than have thousands of runners doing a marathon with no support. It was 40 degrees with 35 mph winds when the race started.

This was also the first year that the race started at 10am rather than the traditional noon.

As the forecast for 2012 started to reach into the 70's, BAA started sending out emails to entrants warning them about the temperatures and precautions to take. These continued each day, right up to Sunday when there were several emails. It appears that the BAA was also having discussions with their attorneys as the temperature forecasts rose. With a number of deaths at prominent marathons in recent years (generally not related to heat issues), the BAA was taking precautions to minimize lawsuits. On Saturday, the BAA announced a "deferral" program where entrants could chose to pick up their packet, not start the race, and be eligible to run the 2013 race without re-qualifying. The email did not mention that you could also call the BAA office, by Saturday night, and request deferral rather than driving to Boston to pick up your packet, something that really upset a number of out-of-state runners who found out about this option on Monday or Tuesday. The BAA claims that only 497 individuals exercised this option although some 4,200 runners did not make it to the start line. Typically, 92% of Boston entrants make it to the start line. In 2012, this percentage dropped to 84%.

The final email that they sent out on Sunday stated that if you had not properly trained for the marathon or had not entered the race by meeting a qualifying time, you should strongly consider not running the race. This was widely interpreted as - if you're in the race only because you're a charity runner, don't run. The BAA, or more likely DMSE (Dave McGillivray Sports Enterprises), was taking measures to assure a safer race in the heat. They purchased 110,000 additional paper cups and arranged for the fluid to fill them, added 24 additional volunteer doctors, and arranged for local fire department to set up misting tents (their decon tents) along the course. It also appeared, though not announced, that they had actually modified the locations of the some of the water stops so they were more frequent than one per mile. Typically at Boston, each mile there is a Gatorade then Poland Spring stop on one side of the road and shortly after that the same thing on the opposite side of the road. This year, that second stop seemed more like a ¼ to ½ mile down the road at some locations. Fire Departments that did not have decon tents (and some in addition to their decon tents) set up fire hoses to spray the runners. Many homeowners and businesses along the way did the same thing. There were many eight year olds with a garden hose along the course. Thirty buses which were normally sent home after transporting runners to the start were held back to

transport the expected large number of runners who would be dropping out of the race due to the heat. These proved to be far more than needed.

Race day arrived with bright sun and 61 degrees at 6am, not a good sign. Unlike last year where you were bundling to stay warm and out of the wind in the athletes' village, many were stripping down and sunning themselves. BAA announced several months ago that they had arranged for a significant increase in the number of Port-a-Johns for this year. That email didn't mention that most of those were being located in Colleta's parking lot on the way to the corrals. Although there were several thousand less runners this year, the lines at the Port-a-Johns were longer and slower than last year. Could it be that people took the 'hydrate' theme to an extreme and it took its toll on the lines? Boston is a chipped race and all athletes are released precisely on schedule. If you miss your start, your chip will save you. Because many of the additional Port-a-Johns were in Colleta's parking lot, the mass of runners moving to the start line actually split evenly in two at the entrance to Colleta's.

The Elite males and Wave 1 started at 10am. Wave 2 was released precisely at 10:20. Wave 2, Corral 9 took about 8 minutes to reach the actual start line. Even after the 10:20 start when Wave 3 runners were already making their way to the corrals, hundreds of Wave 2 runners were still trying to get from the Port-a-Johns at Colleta's to the corrals. Until 10:30 they funneled the runners coming from the Port-a-Johns into the back of corral 9. At 10:30, they held back all remaining Wave 2 runners telling them they would have to start with Wave 3, in Corral 2 or further back. Although it is mentioned prominently in BAA material that you may drop back to a later corral or wave, you cannot move back to corral 1 of the next wave. But, many of the Wave 2 runners who got held up at the Port-a-Johns were still fighting to get into Wave 3, corral 1. As Wave 3 waited to be released, the winner of the 1976 "Run for the Hoses" spoke about the heat on that Patriots Day, stating it had been 96 degrees when they started as opposed to the 76 degrees it was in Hopkinton at 10:30 this Patriots Day. As I mentioned, news reports indicate it was "only" 86 degrees at the finish line in 1976. At exactly 10:40 and 76 degrees, Wave 3 was released. One runner noted on Tuesday that his race was going really well, but then they were released from the corrals. The forecast for Patriots Day proved to be 2/3's correct. It was very hot, very dry, but it was not partly cloudy. It was very bright. Every time a shadow appeared from a building or large tree, the entire pack would move into the shade for even a couple of seconds. If the partly

cloudy portion of the forecast had come to pass, the impact on the race would have been significantly less. The Boston area had brilliant sun the entire day - a great beach day, not a marathon day. The hottest officially reported temperature was 89 degrees in Framingham at 12:30 while the finish line area was recorded as 87 degrees at 2:30. Unofficial reports had the temperature in Copley Square as over 90 degrees at 3 pm. The pavement temperature on Boylston near the finish was over 102 degrees.

The crowds along the course seemed to be significantly bigger than last year. In addition, there were more people (unofficial volunteers) handing out orange slices, water, ice, wet paper towels, and working garden hoses. The only place where there were fewer people was Wellesley where there seemed to be fewer girls making offerings to the runners. The larger crowds, when people knew times would be slower, raised the question of whether there was a NASCAR effect on the crowds. The NASCAR effect is people coming to the track to watch the crashes, not the racing. I started wondering while on the course if there were larger crowds only because people wanted to see how the runners suffered in the heat and hoped to watch someone collapse on the course. Once you got past Wellesley, the crowds seemed to swell just as many runners started to struggle reinforcing the NASCAR theme. On the positive side, if you stopped or looked dazed, someone was immediately at your side to help you.

One 'water' stop needs to be commended. Just before the Hills of Newton there was what appeared to be a well manned unofficial 'water' stop. However, they weren't offering water or Gatorade, the cups were full of beer. There weren't too many takers of beer at this 20 mile point, but they were definitely pushing their product.

Joe at Boston
in 2011



Now for a few statistics. First, remember that the normal percentage of entrants reaching the start line is 92% (92.5% in 2011). The DNF rate in 2011 was under 2% while in 2012 it reached 4%.

	Entrants	Starters (% of Entrants)	Finishers (% of Starters)
All	26656	22480 (84.3%)	21606 (96.1%)
Males	15504	13173 (84.9%)	12615 (95.8%)
Females	11152	9307 (83.4%)	8991 (96.6%)
18 -39 All	10838	9300 (85.8%)	8930 (96.0%)
Males	5232	4548 (86.9%)	4335 (95.3%)
Females	5606	4752 (84.7%)	4595 (96.7%)
60-64 All	1077	894 (83.0%)	854 (95.5%)
Males	861	725 (84.2%)	725 (84.2%)
Females	216	169 (78.2%)	165 (97.6%)

It should also be noted that 100% of the entrants in the over 80 division started and finished. That's a number I want to be included in someday. I choose the above divisions as sample bookends. Except for the number of 60-64 women who did not start, the stats for the younger and older divisions are very similar. Overall and in each division a higher percentage of males started and a higher percentage of females finished. This would suggest that women took a more cautious approach to the race and only the fittest actually started.

The stats that the BAA does not publicize but did release dealt with health issues. In 2011, about 1000 runners received medical assistance in some form (I may actually be counted in that number because I, and 50 others, had to visit the medical tent for a research study, so the number may be inflated). In 2012, that number jumped to 2200 (and there was at least one research study this year which required a medical tent visit). [If you have not been to the medical tent at Boston, your bib gets scanned as you enter and MUST be scanned again before security will let you leave the tent.] Somewhere between 75 and 120 runners were transported by ambulance with most released quickly. Although actual timing of the race ended at 6 pm (one hour later than normal), we were still hearing

ambulances leaving the area near the medical tent well after 7 pm. There was one reported heart attack and one non-heat stroke. The BAA stated that on Tuesday (the day after the race) 10-15 runners were still hospitalized and listed in 'critical' condition, but "none appear to be in a life threatening condition." Is there a new term out there- 'Very Critical' or "Critical, seriously." I always thought 'critical' meant 'life threatening.' Fortunately and surprisingly, no one died.

A stat that probably is of more interest to this year's finishers is that the average time was 12% slower than last year. Runners, like me, who had hoped (and planned) to qualify for 2013 were in for a disappointment. In 2010, 41% of finishers had a BQ time. In 2012, that percentage dropped to 13%. [No data for 2011.]

On Tuesday, the Paramount Diner (north of the Boston Common) was packed out into the street with runners seeking a reasonably priced, good breakfast. At every table, the conversation covered two items - surviving Monday and "how bad was your PW." I had actually forgotten that acronym. (It was my PW by 36 min). Nowhere was there a discussion of BQ times or PR's, just PW's. Maybe surprisingly, everyone looked healthy and happy. No one seemed disappointed that they had run on Monday or felt that they shouldn't have run. Everyone seemed pleased that they had simply finished. Isn't that the definition of a 'survivor race'?



The 10th Dodge the Deer 5k



Meet Julie Keating

**** From the ARE Member Profile System ****



Years Running: 13

What is your favorite place to run?
Kinderhook Area and Schodack Island State Park.

What is your favorite race?
OK 5k

What are your favorite conditions to run in?
With delicious food at the end.

Why did you start running?
I got into fitness in my late 20s and loved the adrenaline rush of running, and the opportunities to socialize and celebrate after races.

Who do normally run with?
Chris Keating, Ann Birckmayer, Alanna Almstead.

Anything humorous happen throughout your running escapades?
Running of gas right before exit 12 on I-90 Eastbound on the way home after the 2/12/2012 Joe Benny Pancake Run!

And lastly...
Looking forward to the January 2, 2013 Miami Marathon and ARE Carnival Cruise!



The Hudson Mohawk Road Runners Club is holding a shirt drive at the *Freihofers Run for Women* Race expo. Bring old and new Runner T-shirts and drop them off at the HMRRRC collection booth. All shirts will be brought to the Schenectady mission after the expo.

The expo is at the Empire State Plaza Concourse. It goes from 12-8pm on Friday, June 1 and 8am-3pm on Saturday, June 2.

If you have used sneakers, bring those too. Another nonprofit is holding a sneaker drive there.

With Many Thanks,
Hudson Mohawk Road Runners Club

Special Volunteers Needed

Help is needed to staff the shirt collection booth at the *Freihofers Run for Women* expo on Saturday June 2nd. Expo goes from 8am-3pm. If you can help, email or call the HMRRRC recycling coordinator Robert Moore (518 377-1836/RMoore4626@aol.com). All volunteers will be given special prize for volunteering.