

Editor's Column By Bill Spencer

This months cover story presents an interesting way of celebrating a runners entrance to a new age group. You should enjoy the story, but I doubt that many of us would pick that particular way. Although not covered in this newsletter, I understand that

some members are finally putting a team together to run in the Reach to Beach relay. Having participated in the mother of these relays, namely Hood to Coast on two occasions, I can guarantee that a good time will be had by all. I would encourage members to form more teams for this relay. Our Youths have had a very successful track season and are looking forward to the start of Cross Country.

Fitness University had an other successful year, despite the last minute change for or Dean of Fitness and it relocation to Hudson. The members of our surrounding towns look forward for the Clinics each year.

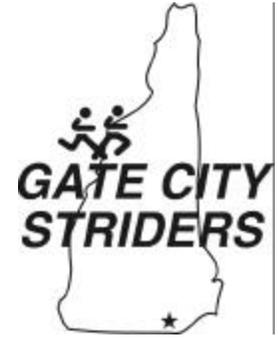
Don't forget the Club Triathlon on Aug 10th. Details are on page 14. This is a fun event and if you can't participate, feel free to volunteer to help.

Last June I went on a Running/Cruise vacation with my wife Pat and 30 other people from all around the country. Most of us ran the Vancouver 1/2 Marathon, while Pat ran her the first 5k of her life. After the races, we boarded a cruise ship and spent the next 7 days cruising the Inside Passage of Alaska. When we got together the first night, the two fellow runners in the picture, one from Florida and the other from Massachusetts came up

to me and told me that they were one time members of the Gate City Striders. What a small world. Anyone recognize them? The answer is on page 18.



If you experience problems with the delivery of the newsletter call our membership chairperson. This newsletter is sent third class mail. There is no forwarding by the post office, so make sure we have your correct address. Advertisements are gladly accepted.



Striding Along is published 6 times a year by members of the Gate City Striders, Inc. of Nashua, NH. For correspondence or a membership application, please write to:

Gate City Striders
PO Box 3692
Nashua NH 03061.

Visit our Web Site
WWW.GateCity.Org

USA Track & Field Club # 157
AARC Club # RC12

Our Mission Statement

The Gate City Striders is an athletic and social organization dedicated to the promotion of running and fitness at all levels. Members vary in ability from beginning joggers to competitive marathoners.

Membership meetings

3rd Wednesday of month at the Merrimack YMCA.

Track workouts

Wednesday nights, Nashua North High school, April thru October. Weekly runs are held elsewhere throughout the year. Youth workouts on Monday and Thursday nights. See calendar for details.





President's Column

By Bob Pelletier

The Inverted Pyramid - III

Our membership continues to hammer away at creating the pyramid one large block at a time. Your E-board hopes to not get in the way of your progress. The final blocks are sizable but key to the long term sustainability of a healthy and vibrant membership. Maybe we can borrow a chunk or two of the "Old Man" from below Franconia Notch.

As your board sees it, we have three primary blocks left to meet our goals in 2003. The first involves the installation of a "user friendly" forum on the club website. Steve Moland has investigated a number of options and has arrived at a final candidate. The E-board will first interact with some test messages before we go "live" with the full membership. We hope to be up and running by the next newsletter issue.

Block number two includes finding a venue which offers smoke free favorite beverages and a bite to eat for our winter season general meetings. We are also looking to upgrade our speaker list with sights set on the likes of Dick Hoyt, Tommy Leonard, Bill Rodgers, and others. Not unexpectedly, each of the local restaurants that have function rooms is asking for minimum meal and bar tab guarantees, and for good reason. The "makes good business sense" point for these restaurants appears to be about \$15 per head with a minimum party of 50. We will announce the speaker/venue and cost in the near future for our celebrity speaker nights. We will continue to accept the open invitation from our friends at the Merrimack YMCA as the location for the balance of our non-celebrity speaker/general meeting nights.

The final piece is the one that addresses the lack of a sizable block of open division runners for our NHGP Club races. We are in the midst of enjoying great NHGP success with our corps of Master level and up age group runners. We have also benefited by way of contributions from a few open division runners including our youth from the Nashua PAL and Granite State Flash programs. We have developed a nice cooperation with GCS member Michael Amarello and his Moose Mountain Miler racing team. Several of our Wednesday night track participants are joint members of GCS and MMM. They run for GCS in the NHGP races, then switch shirts for the NEGP Race Series and other MMM focus events. If you have had conversations with area open division runners who seek to work out on a state of the art track with other similar paced runners, invite them

over to Nashua North HS some Wednesday night.

The 2003 NHGP season is underway and we hold onto the top spot in our State racing league. There are only three races in the books at publication time with four more to go as the schedule stretches all the way into October. Many of you are piling up the points and participation/scoring dollars for GCS. There is still plenty of opportunity for other members to come on out and show your GCS colors.

Raising enough revenue to support our various club endeavors is usually a challenge. In the event that you do some running related shopping with Road Runner Sports or Activa, please try to log onto their web sites via the Gate City Strider web site links. Our club gets an 8% rebate off of any purchase that you make with Road Runner and Activa, regardless of sale item or not. The more revenue we have the more perks we can offer back to the membership.

My favorite running related time of year is rapidly approaching as the youth cross-country season kicks off in September with the individual school programs. The season continues into early December and culminates with the USATF National Championships held in Albuquerque, NM. If you aspire to do some youth coaching with a sport that you know and love, there are always a couple of elementary or junior high schools in Nashua in need of a coach each year. You will never regret the time that you chip in with these children. Many of your GCS club members already lend their time and expertise to area youth running programs. You can contact Mark or Debbie Fraser at: MFraaser136@aol.com if interested in a coaching position. In the meantime stay safe and have fun out there on the roads, trails, and tracks.

Bob Pelletier

I am introducing an "Ask the President" feature in this month's edition of *Striding Along*. Feel free to forward questions to me at: Pelletier.R@attbi.com

You should indicate if you would like your question printed in an upcoming issue. I will reply to all questions, suggestions and comments. This feature is designed to help keep the board and I informed and updated on any matters needing attention, improvement, or action while giving you a chance to air your opinion on any running or club related matter.

Angel Island 50k Trail Run, Saturday July 5, 2003

By Bill Gray

"Fifty years and 50 miles", seemed to be an appropriate slogan to celebrate the half century milestone. Last winter, two soon-to-be seniors and other high mileage thrill seekers gathered to discuss undertaking a special running experience to commemorate our 50th birthdays.

We've had our share of injuries and collectively the number of total marathons completed was in excess of 60. We were not novices to the training and time commitment required to complete a long distance race. After cooler heads prevailed, we decided that the 50k was the more appropriate distance. The new battle cry was, "Fifty years and 50k".

This is our first 50k. The venue had to be carefully chosen. We knew the pounding over the 31 mile distance, not to mention the training would be punishing. The location had to also accommodate the needs of a family vacation. Our solution was to minimize the unforgiving pavement and choose a well organized trail run located outside the local area. We chose the Angel Island Trail Run organized by Pacific Coast Trail Runs (PCTR). PCTR organizes trail races in the San Francisco area. The trail runs are designed to be non-competitive and emphasize the whole trail running experience. If you check out the PCTR website at www.pctrailruns.com you'll see why we chose a PCTR trail race.

Angel Island is a hilly, grass and forest-covered island, the largest in San Francisco Bay. The island covers 740 acres and is 788 feet high at the top of Mt. Livermore. Over 13 miles of foot trails and fire roads circle the entire island. From the top of Mount Livermore there is a 360 degree view of the Bay, San Francisco, Sausalito, and Tiburon. A clear day on the island is referred to as a 5 bridge day, when from the top of Mt. Livermore you can view the Golden Gate, Bay, Richmond/San Rafael, San Mateo and the Dumbarton bridges. Angel Island has served as a hunting ground for the Miwok Indians, a Civil War encampment, a quarantine station during the Spanish-American War, a discharge depot and recruitment processing center during World War I, an embarkation station and POW camp during World War II, an Immigration Station often referred to as "The Ellis Island of the West" from 1910 through 1940 and a Nike Missile Base from 1955 to 1962.

The race course is comprised of a 10k Perimeter Loop and a 7k Summit Loop. Both loops start and end at Ayala Cove. The course was well marked with colored ribbons for each loop and at all intersections. Although it was mandatory that each runner carry at least one water bottle, a fully-stocked aid station was located at Ayala Cove. My personal favorite was the boiled potato. We had our own aid station and cheering section at Ayala Cove. Our aid station was staffed with family members and stocked with solid and liquid foods, dry clothing, extra shoes and encouragement. From Ayala Cove the course climbed up 80 to 100 stairs (I didn't think to count them at the time) to both the Perimeter and Summit Loops. To complete the 50k distance you were required to complete both loops three times and therefore

climb the stairs six times. I can only describe the sixth stair climb as brutal. My quads cramped to the point that I could not ascend or descend the stairs. My legs were frozen. Through trial and error I was able to relax the muscles by squatting. Three agonizing squats later, I was able to complete the sixth and final stair climb. The Perimeter Loop included sections of paved fire road, a nasty hill climb and meandering trails around some of the historical sites on the island. The Summit Loop was a long, steep, switch back and narrow single track trail climb punctuated with sheer drops, beautiful views and a leg pounding descent. The elevation gain for the 50k course was 4,560 feet.

Family, friends and runners caught a 7:20 am chartered ferry from Tiburon for a 10 minute ferry ride to Ayala Cove. We set-up our aid station in the picnic area at the bottom of the trail leading to the finish line. It was cool and sunny at the start, but we fought wind gusts and warmer temps where the course was exposed. Race participants could choose to run one of several distances, 7k, 17k, 34k and 50k. There were a total of 203 finishers with only 18 completing the 50k. With an 8 am start we slowly made our way up the stairs, crowded with over 200 runners. Runners split into two groups at the top of the stairs with the 7k runners heading to the Summit Loop and the rest of us to the Perimeter Loop. Dave Sargent, Bob Pelletier and I ran together. We metered the pace to avoid going too fast and walked the steep paved perimeter hill. The pace was conversational and the comments jovial. We completed the 1st loop unfazed. After stopping for re-fueling and family encouragement we headed for the Summit Loop. More stairs and a steady climb up narrow trails and switch-back corners. During the pounding descent there was a point along the trail that wrapped tightly around the mountain and appeared to drop off to nowhere. The view over the bay was fantastic, but looking down made me dizzy. The three of us completed the 17k loop in good shape. Bob headed for the finish, Dave and I re-fueled and headed for the stairs and a repeat of the Perimeter Loop. We continued to meter our pace and saw fewer runners and more hikers. Hikers stood aside to let us pass on the narrow single track trails. Conversation continued, but less frequent during the final Summit Loop. The sixth stair climb was torture, but the Summit ascent was easier than the stairs. We walked some of the Summit ascent for the first time, but the effort was over at the top and only the pounding descent remained. Dave took a blood letting header with about a mile to go. We crossed the finish together in fourth place and in surprisingly great shape. Unlike previous marathons, we never ran to depletion. The constant re-fueling and hydrating allowed us to run 31 miles and never hit the wall.

Months earlier, Dave Sargent and I decided to run the 50k together; we stood by our plan and crossed the finish line in 5:26:42. Dave was 1st Master and I was 1st Senior. Paul Fiori, another celebrating senior, finished 9th with a time of 6:20:47 and master runner Bob Pelletier, opting to train and run a shorter distance completed the 17k in 1:41:15.

Any suggestions for my 60th birthday?