

Striding Along



A Publication of the Gate City Striders

February 2001/March 2001



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Editor's Column



Hello Fellow Striders,

About the time the last issue went to press most of us were setting in motion the moves necessary to allow us to pose for this issue's cover photo. And move with alacrity we did. It's quite a tale and our resident bard, **Skip Cleaver** has got all the details in his article "Gate City Striders Victorious at 17th Annual Mill Cities Relay".

What a club. En-masse we've arguably conquered a portion of the Merrimack valley running scene, the entire NH Gran Prix running scene and some of our kids have carved out a hold on the USA Jr Olympic Xcountry running scene. **Bill Spencer** will explain some that in his final column as club president. Most recently our veteran runners have carved out a hold on a USA and World record. **Bill Engle** tells about that feat and his first ever run on an indoor track in "The Tilted Boards."

When I read **Kevin Beck's** "Reflections of a Brief Coaching Career" a few months ago I was awash in the emotions he conjured up. There's something in his story for the roles that potentially lurk in all of us as a runner, coach, parent, grandparent, teenager and as a sport's fan whether you're strongly provincial or not.

This may be my last issue as your newsletter editor as I'm looking for a change in assignments within the club and will be seeking a position on the Eboard at our ANNUAL meeting on the 21st at the Merrimack YMCA. **Bill Spencer** will be assuming the duties as newsletter editor over the period of the next issue or two. I've enjoyed putting it together since it provided me many opportunities to relive some great club activities. I plan on providing photos for Bill and encourage you all to remember to do so as well. Also, try your hand at writing an article or two, you'll be surprised at how much fun it can be.

I can't wait for the first NHS track workout.

Steve Moland

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:

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USA Track & Field Club # 157

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.

Track workouts
Wednesday nights, Nashua High, April thru October. Weekly runs are held elsewhere throughout the year.

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.





President's Column

By Bill Spencer

As my final column as President, I would like to cover some of the highlights of the past year. The club's membership increased, and we ended the fiscal year on budget and slightly in the black. Lori Lambert, our outgoing Treasurer did an outstanding job in managing the club's accounts and keeping us within the budget.

As far as the competitive aspect of the Club was concerned, we had an outstanding year. We won the NH RRCA Gran Prix series after a serious challenge from the Granite State Racing Team. That series was successful for New Hampshire running due to the efforts of club members Traci Swanbon and Tom Kolb. The Men's Veteran's team won the club's first NE-USATF Gran Prix series. On the relay side, the Veterans set a new world record for the Indoor 4 x 1600-meter relay. At the Lake Winnepesaukee Relay, both the Men's Master and Veteran teams won their divisions in club record time, while the club won its first ever Mill Cities Relay Championship. Lastly, the Youth members of our club ran for the Nashua PAL Junior Olympic Teams. Twenty of them would make it to the National competition at Reno Nevada and seven of them gained All-American status.

Club members set forty new State records in 2000. Our two major events, Fitness University and Applefest, were once again overwhelmingly successful thanks to the Directors, Shaun McMahon and Bob Pelletier. The Amherst 10k under the direction of Sandy Geisler was once again in the black and Pack Monadnock under the direction of Skip Cleaver overcame several obstacles and served as the wrap up for the NE-USATF Mountain series. The only disappointment that I had was when the club triathlon was canceled because di-

rector Chip Geisler couldn't get enough volunteers to assist in the event. Chip is planning to try it again this year, so all of you that told me they would have helped if they knew take note.

At the annual party, I had the pleasure of recognizing several individuals for their contributions to the club. Dick Doyle was given the Newcomer award for his work at most of the club supported races as well as assisting with the Newsletter. Steve Moland was given the Volunteer of the Year award for key roles at our club events and his efforts as Newsletter Editor. The Lifetime award was given to Judy Nicholson for her years of work as the Applefest food coordinator.

Lastly, for those of you that didn't make it to the party, I would like to give special note to one other individual that was recognized. Warren Church will be leaving New Hampshire for the State of Connecticut. He has been a major member for many years assuming leadership roles in many areas. He was also responsible for getting me to run marathons even though I hate running long distances. In recognition for his many years of service, the E board awarded him with a lifetime membership.

I will close this column with a request. Don't be afraid to be an active club member. We can only succeed as a club if everyone helps out at one time or another. We need people to take leadership roles on many of our activities, including committees, team captains, and coordinators. Likewise, we need people to work our various events that make our club successful. There is a place for everyone; from our youths that work the water stops to our adults that work the registration, food, etc. at our events. •

Gate City Striders Victorious at 17th Annual Mill Cities Relay

By Skip Cleaver (Reprinted from Coolrunning.com)

The Gate City Striders of Nashua, NH were victorious at the Mill Cities Relay on December third, and are now the Champions of the Merrimack Valley. It was close; and it was not easy. The initial results showed a virtual tie between Gate City and the Greater Lowell Road Runners, with the Striders winning by a gnat's eyelash. In fact, Gate City earned the coveted Trophy as the Champions of the Merrimack Valley by virtue of a tie - breaker, so the margin was as tight as the presidential race. In the end only one slim point separated Gate City from their long-time rivals from Lowell, the one-time capital of the textile world. Novelist Jack Kerouac split his time between the two Merrimack River communities, Nashua and Lowell, adding to the lore of the "Mill Cities". And relay officials had to split out total times to determine the winner. Unlike the presidential race, there was no question and no challenge when totals were added- Gate City won its first championship in the history of the event.

For seventeen years the Mill Cities Relay has been held on the first Sunday in December (except for one year when the relay was postponed a week by a blizzard). And for sixteen of those years the Gate City Striders have been looking up in the standings- usually at the perennial winners, the Greater Lowell Road Runners. The championship has eluded the Striders, one of the founding clubs of the Mill Cities Relay, for all those years. The powerhouse Massachusetts clubs seemed to overpower the New Hampshire entrants year after year. This year, however, when the dust settled following the Nashua to Lawrence joust, Gate City came away victorious by a 45 points to 44 margin. Another traditional power, the Winner's Circle Running Club, last year's runner-up, finished a

close third with 42 points. Last year's champion, the Merrimack Valley Striders, dropped to sixth this year. Last year only two points separated the two at 51 to 49, with Gate City solidly in third with 46, among the closest finishes ever-until this year.

The Greater Lowell Roadrunners won several battles this round after being nearly shut out last year. Their men were the first team overall- the Men's Open group, led by Eric Beauchesne, zipped through the finish line three minutes ahead of the Whirlaway Racing team (2:31:20 to 2:34:53). Gate City's open men were third

for Gate City-until this year. Greater Lowell has won 12 of the 17 championships, and only finished out of the top three once-last year when they were outdistanced by several clubs and tied for seventh. They really wanted to make up for that this year, and came to win. Greater Lowell has been a traditional power in New England, attracting some of the best talent in the region. They were hoping to take back the championship and erase that embarrassing finish of 1999. But this is a new century, and reputations seem to have shifted. All clubs must put the feet on the pavement to win in road racing-especially in team events. It seems the Striders have changed the very foundations of running in the Valley with competitive groups at all levels, young and not-so-young. And with the terrific growth of the Gate City club and with the new, young talent joining the Striders, it very well may be their century.

This is one of the greatest relay events in New England, sharing that honor with the Winnepesaukee Relay held in September. The annual Mill Cities relay trek along the Merrimack is for all the running clubs of the valley. The event was created to provide an end-of-season run and



MCR starts with a drop of the BRICK

overall ((2:40:03). Greater Lowell also won the Female Open Division (2:55:47) and the Men's Masters. But Gate City won the Mixed Open (2:56:07), Male Veteran, Female Masters, and Female Seniors divisions. Their Male Open and Mixed Masters finished second, and the Male Masters lead team finished third. The GCS Male Seniors and Female Open teams captured sixth place. What a balanced effort! Gate City scored in all nine of divisions.

The Greater Lowell Road Runners have for years been the dominant force in the Mill Cities Relay. The GLRR green won the trophy in the very first year of the contest, 1984, and Gate City finished a distant second. That was the highest finish

party, a get-together for all the clubs in a low-key relay. Low key? Runners are just naturally competitive. The season is nearly over (although the road running season is never-ending), and the clubs that have competed so hard during the spring, summer, and fall got together for this unique opportunity for camaraderie and enjoyment. It was a celebration of running AND a competitive relay!

The relay began at 8:00 AM in Nashua and ran from the Nashua YMCA across the bridge into Hudson, NH then south on Route 3A into Tyngsborough Massachusetts. The first handoff point followed the initial 5.6-mile sprint across the border at

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