

BOSTON 2003

By Jim Belanger

About a week before the Boston Marathon I was looking at the long range forecast and it called for rain. I said to myself that I hoped the forecast changed and that it was a nice day. Like the old saw goes "be careful what you pray for, you just might get it" The forecast changed all right and it wasn't long before I was begging for a cool rain as I was making my annual trek from Hopkinton to Boston.

I ran two of my long training runs in cool and wet miserable conditions, and I ran excellent times in both races. I figured I had had enough of running in the rain. If only I had known what was about to transpire.

It may have been a nice day for the spectators, but for this runner it was about 11 miles of torture.



The weather report at the start was 58 and sunny (it was actually 70) We were told on the PA that by the time we got over the hills it would be cloudy. Not a chance. I started out too fast and was adjusting all the way up to the half, when I really started to feel the effects of the sun and warm temps. By this time slowing down was not an option but a reality that was not going to change. What was happening, didn't I run two of my long runs in probably the most miserable weather I've ever encountered? Didn't I run in the same kind of heat in '99.

By the time I got to the mile 16 Rte 128 overpass I was toast. I saw Bob Pelletier and he said that he's seen me in better shape. The walking started soon after and lasted the rest of the race. Mental toughness wasn't going to pull me through this time. I struggled through the hills. (I did see Allan and Sue and Walter and possibly a few others along the way) Thanks for the encouragement. If you're ever died during a marathon you knew how I was feeling. I debated dropping out but soon ruled that out and actually put together some solid jogging for extended stretches. I was going to finish as long as I could stand.

Funny thing was that when I walked I felt awful and started to cramp up everywhere. So I tried to keep my feet moving at some semblance of a pace. Probably between a 8 or 9 minutes (as much as two and one half minutes slower than what I normally run). As I approached the city there was a headwind and it got cooler but It was of no matter to me, I just wanted it to be over. I finally crossed the finish line 21 minutes slower than last year. After all the recent success I've had at Boston this was a tough

pill to swallow. I just keep telling myself that I wasn't the only one who had a bad day and that I was glad I finished. You have to take a little from each marathon you run and apply it to the next one. The one thing I learned from this one is that if your body isn't acclimated to running in warm weather you had better adjust for it at the beginning of the race. I probably would have been fine if I had only gone out just a little slower. The down side of running a bad marathon is that it stays with you until you run your next one. For me that probably wont happen until late fall.

See you next year Boston.

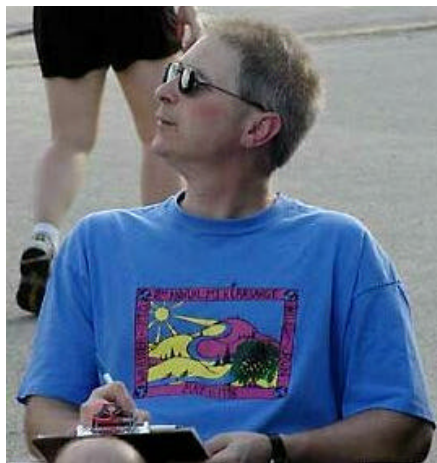
Jimmy B

SOME OTHER SURVIVERS



Randumb Thoughts

By Bob Thompson



Record crowds have been in attendance at the Wednesday evening workouts this spring in spite of the fact that we are meeting at Pennichuck Junior High School and not at Mine Falls Park. On Wednesday May 7th over 140 Striders were in attendance and it was estimated that over 700 miles were hammered out by GCS members that night. Several groups of varying abilities provide opportunities for beginners to marathon veterans. Brian Withers has a large group of introductory runners who started out walking and have progressed quickly and are now running. Coach Dave Camire has the competitive group running hard and pushing themselves to faster times each week, while Walter Swanbon prepares runners for the NH Grand Prix. Coach Sharon Yu has been mentoring the half-fast group and the results are beginning to show. Sharon's group may only be half as fast as Dave's elite runners, but we make up for it by having twice as much fun. This is my first year back on the track since 1999 due to injuries and after just a few weeks the speed-work is starting to pay dividends. If you have been slowed by injuries or lack of commitment, get down to the Wednesday track workouts and find the group that is right for you. If you aren't sure which group is right for you, speak with one of the coaches and they

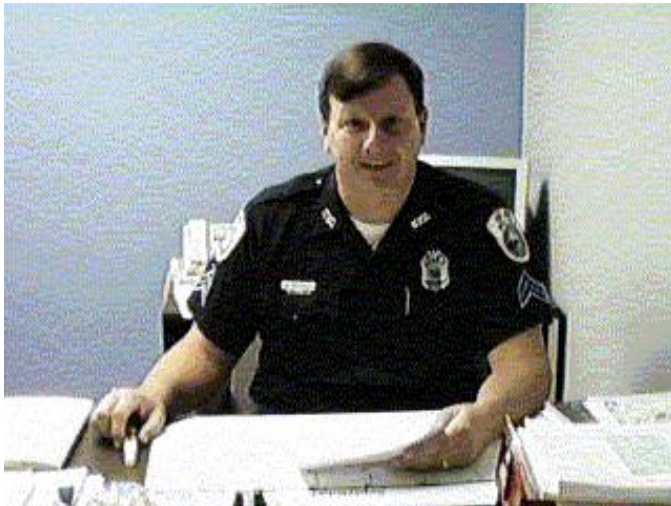
will place you with runners of your ability. You too will quickly see the benefits of running intervals just once a week and will soon be running at a faster pace.....The Wednesday evening workouts will be moving to the brand new state-of-the-art rubberized track at Nashua High School North beginning Wednesday June 18. This will also give Striders a chance to run in Mine Falls Park, which is less than a mile away on the north side of the Nashua River. The new rubberized track surface will make you feel like you have on a brand new pair of PF Flyers and will allow you to run faster and jump higher. This will be a big improvement over the hard, unforgiving, asphalt surface at the Pennichuck track. Asphalt is not all bad; it did help one Strider make weight for the Clydesdale Division at a local race a few years ago. A few large chunks of Asphalt in the shorts will easily add a few pounds. (Speaking of asphalt, did you hear the one about the GLRR who thought asphalt was rectum trouble?)..... The Gate City Striders were out in force as entrants and volunteers at the Medical Center 6K on Mother's Day on May 11th. Striders, Nicole Slane and B.J. Bottomley, strode to easy victories. Other Striders on the victory stand in their age groups included, Yuki Minami, Pam Hall, Allan Rube, and Bill Spencer. In all my years of running, this was the first time that I entered an event as a walker. I walked with my mom and dad over the 2.4 mile walking course and helped raise money for Fitness University. There is talk of getting the Medical Center 6K onto the NH Grand Prix for next year. Great job by race director, Damien Rowe, and all of the many GCS volunteers.....The ever popular Bedford Rotary 12k and 5k races were held on Saturday May 17th with several Striders in attendance. Striders dominated the female 50-59 division by taking the top 7 places. Heidi McGaffigan was closely followed across the finish line by teammates Sandy Machell, Pat Keisselbach, Emily Strong, Genia Sanborn, Marie Mullins and Mary Minami. Great job team!.....On Wednesday May 21st, several Striders celebrated passover, as they passed over the GCS club meeting to attend church services at the Club National.....As usual; several Striders attended the first race of the mountain series and ascended the 4.3 mile auto road to the top of Mt. Wachusett in the rain and fog on May 24th. The series continues on May 31st and June 1st with Mt. Kearsarge and Pack Monadnock, respectively. The final race in the series is the Mt. Ascutney 3.7 miler on June 28th. Finishing a mountain race is something that all runners should experience. Your friends will be amazed that you could accomplish such an astounding feat..... Speaking of mountain racers, veteran mountain goats Liz Tringali and Matt Soroka are off on an experience of a lifetime. The newly weds will be moving to Australia at the end of June as Liz pursues a masters degree in sports management. While downunder, Liz and Matt plan on running the Asics Melbourne Marathon on October 12th. Best of luck to Matt and Liz!.....Don't think that Wednesday's nights are the only nights to run with a group. Each Tuesday evening the Good Times 5k race series kicks off in Lowell at the Old Court Pub at 7 pm. On Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm the Moose Milers and Marathoners run a 5k and 5.2 miler in Mine Falls Park starting near Stellos Stadium.....Racing advice from a slow runner dept: To ensure a strong race finish and to make sure you don't have too much left at the end of a race, you may want to try the following. During your pre-race warm-up, start your watch at the finish line and jog the last portion of the course in the opposite direction. Keep a close eye on your watch and try to identify landmarks that will tell you how much distance is left in the race. For example, if you jog an 8 minute per mile pace to warm-up, you will then be able to spot the ½ mile to go point by jogging out 4 minutes from the finish and the ¼ mile to go point can be found by jogging out 2 minutes from the finish. This information can then be used to know when to put the hammer down as you approach the finish of the race.....Tom Conley has stepped up and volunteered to direct the annual GCS Sprint Triathlon. This fun filled event is tentatively scheduled for Sunday August 3rd at Lake Potanipo in Brookline NH. For those of you that

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Activities

May General Meeting Running Safety

At the May general meeting, our guest was Master Patrolman Walter Kwiecinski of the Merrimack Police Department. His topic was running safety. It was a timely message. Now that Spring has finally arrived, there are a lot more runners and a lot more cars on the roads. Officer Kwiecinski reminded us how to stay safe in traffic. Also, to beat the heat, many runners are now switching from roads to trails. Trail running has its own safety issues and Officer Kwiecinski offered many relevant safety tips.



The following is a brief outline of Officer Kwiecinski's presentation.

Road Rules

☛ Be seen to stay safe. Runners, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists all share the same problem. They are largely invisible to drivers. Drivers are much more concerned about other cars and larger vehicles. We have to accept this and take measures to increase our chances of being seen:

1. Wear bright clothes.
2. Wear a safety vest – even during the day.

3. At night, wear or carry a light.

- ☛ Pick a safe route. Minimize potential problems by picking a route with wide shoulders, clear visibility and low traffic volume.
- ☛ Run with a group. A group of runners is more likely to catch a driver's attention.
- ☛ Run defensively. Never cross in front of a car stopped at an intersection without first being acknowledged by the driver. Try to make eye contact, but when in doubt, cross behind the vehicle. Above all, stay alert. Don't assume a driver sees you.
- ☛ Be patient with idiots. What runner hasn't been yelled at, swerved at, or otherwise accosted by a passing motorist? Officer Kwiecinski's advice is to ignore such incidental acts. If you react too strongly, you are just feeding the ego of the person responsible. Worse, the situation may escalate out of control.

Self Defense

There is a big difference between incidental acts of stupidity, like those performed by passing motorists, and premeditated attacks. Unfortunately, women are often the victims of violent crime. The following are some tips for avoiding, or if necessary, repelling such attacks.

☛ Prevention is the best defense. The "bad guys", as Officer Kwiecinski called them, look for easy targets. To avoid being singled out by an attacker, the best thing you can do is run with a group. If you have to run alone:

1. Pick a safe route. Your chances of attack go up when you run alone on the road at night or on secluded trails during the day.
2. Vary your routine. Predators look for predictable patterns. Be unpredictable.

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3. Follow your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, cancel your run or pick a different route.

4. Before you run, always tell someone else about your plans. Let them know where you will be and how long you expect to be gone.

👊 Repelling the attacker. If you are attacked, use one of these recommended tactics to repel the attacker:

1. Hit and run. Give the attacker a decisive blow, like a strong kick to the knee, and run away.

2. Pepper spray. A big dose of the stuff will temporarily incapacitate anyone.

3. Make some noise. By screaming, you will attract unwanted attention to the attacker and possibly force him to give up.

👊 Be prepared. One thing Officer Kwiecinski stressed repeatedly is to know yourself. If you carry pepper spray, be sure you know how to use it and be prepared to follow through. If you just threaten an attacker with pepper spray, he may sense your weakness and turn it on you. The best way to know yourself is to take a formal self defense course.

Conclusion

The Merrimack Police Department runs occasional self defense courses for groups of eight or more students. Striders interested in forming a group can contact Officer Kwiecinski at merrpd@ci.merrimack.nh.us. Individuals can also check the Merrimack Police Department website for a list of scheduled courses. The address is www.merrimackpd.org.

Stay healthy, stay safe, and keep running.

NASHUA SOUP KITCHEN & SHELTER, INC.

Dear Striders.

The Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter would like to thank all of the Striders who helped Lori Lambert and volunteered at our 10th Annual Run for Food & Shelter. I know also that many of you ran, walked and collected pledge money for us too. We had over 700 runners and walkers this year and we raised \$57,000. This was our most successful year ever.

The funds raised will support our programs providing food, emergency shelter and services to homeless and low-income men, women and families with children. The race is a critical fundraiser for the NSK&S and we greatly appreciate all of your help.

With regards and in the hope that Spring will come soon,

Lisa Christie
Executive Director