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March 2014 Issue ③

IMPROVING OUR RUNNING COMMUNITY

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Typically when you have read or seen something in the Vulcan Runner newsletter the past couple of years, it is because I have come across the featured runner on Facebook. I am forever trolling my friends and their friends for their blogs, their pictures and their race-day stories. I love sharing inspiring stories and lovely travel pictures with the BTC. So when I “liked” Run Gardendale on Facebook, and became Facebook friends with its founder Jay Beard, as well as Chad Burke of 2014 in 2014, I knew I had to introduce them and their running clubs to the greater BTC membership.

What I love about both of these groups is that just over a year ago, neither of them existed, and now they incorporate hundreds of runners. Both Chad and Jay saw an opportunity, put it out there, and welcomed all to join them. And now they have genuine community movements. Thanks to you both for sharing your stories, and for positively affecting our lives!

If you have an inspiring story, fun photo, or running group we should know about, please contact me at president@birminghamtrackclub.com

Run Gardendale

Jay Beard is a Manager at Buffalo Wild Wings in Gardendale. Jay saw a need for BWW to become more involved in the North Birmingham area community. A runner since high school, he decided to begin a Tuesday night run from his restaurant. What began as a simple idea has blossomed into a weekly event that draws hundreds of runners and their families.

Jay is also a member of CrossFit Gardendale, and as he started his weekly runs he enlisted the help of its co-owner Carrie Cotney. The first week Jay and Carrie had 55 runners show up to take on the 1, 3 or 5 mile marked course. Locals such as BTC members Kenny McShan, and Walker Wonderdog Blakney and his human Ronnie Blakney, were happy to have a running option close-by for their Tuesday night. Within 4 weeks they had grown their weekly run to 100 runners, and at 6 weeks they had 200 runners coming out to enjoy running with this new group.



Buffalo Wild Wings provides water and Gatorade each week, as well as food specials. Jay and BWW set up inflatables for the kids that attend. The runs welcome runners of all abilities. Jay tells of folks who were not runners when he began Run Gardendale that have taken on the challenge and started running.

Run Gardendale grew so big that it began accepting sponsorship opportunities from local businesses in the Gardendale area. Different holidays

offer fun themed runs throughout the year, such as last year's Halloween run that attracted 400 runners. For New Year's Eve, Run Gardendale had a Glow Run. The city of Gardendale chipped in for glow sticks and NYE swag, and BWW provided a large ball to drop and ring in the New Year. Other sponsors provided for fireworks. All this less than a year after Run Gardendale had launched!

Run Gardendale also gives back to its community. This year it is holding a Mud Duck Mudder 5km to raise funds for Cornerstone Ranch, a not-for-profit youth camp. In March it is holding a Pink Ribbon Walk to raise money for breast cancer research.

All of this started as a way for Buffalo Wild Wings to offer something community and family-oriented for Gardendale. It has grown to a beloved weekly gathering for hundreds of runners. Last year, BWW was recognized by the Gardendale Chamber of Commerce as Chamber Member of the Year.

And Buffalo Wild Wings knows what a great leader they have in Jay Beard. He has been promoted to Assistant General Manager of the Tuscaloosa location, with the idea of starting a similar weekly run in conjunction with the Tuscaloosa Track Club. But Jay will still reside in his hometown of Gardendale, and attend Run Gardendale runs every Tuesday night.

Jay gives all the credit for the success of Run Gardendale to the runners that show up every week, and to Buffalo Wild Wings for hosting every week. Still, the BTC says thank you to Jay--- and thanks to Carrie and Buffalo Wild Wings----- for making a difference in our running community!

By: Jennifer Andress



2014 IN 2014

Why 2014 in 2014? Chad Burke explains the genesis of his running group below. Chad started running 7 years ago, when his life was in turmoil. His grandfather had died, his wife had been diagnosed with leukemia, and in his words, *he was fat. He realized that health was no guarantee, and life was passing by quickly.* He says, *“I will never forget my first run...12 minutes for one mile with a super size diet coke in the cup holder of the treadmill”.* Now Chad is 60 lbs. lighter, much healthier, his wife is doing great and his son is growing up. Chad says, *“I truly believe running saved my health.”*

My first attempt at this goal actually started in 2012, but I realized quickly that it wasn't going to happen; a stress reaction sidelined me for 6 weeks, so 2013 was going to have to do. I forget the specifics of how the group 2013 in 2013 was born. It seems like Suman Silwal, aka MarathonRuns, and I were discussing our 2013 plans, and the next thing I knew I was a member of a 10 person Facebook group. That number grew throughout the year, and we ended the year with 75-80 members. Some achieved 2013 miles, and some did not. The one thing that was achieved was constant motivation and accountability. While the group centered around running 2013 miles, it was also a place that runners could post about upcoming races, any questions/thoughts/concerns, etc. they had, kids' soccer games, new shoes, the hate/hate relationship most of us have with the treadmill and an outlet to post our running stories to others who actually cared about how far we have gone YTD. I'm not sure about the rest of the group, but my "other" FB friends DO NOT CARE ABOUT MY YTD mileage, so to post and get a pat on the back was a nice change. We've coached each other through illnesses, babies being born, PRs, achieving our goal of 2013, race reviews, good runs, bad runs....you name it.

I'm the type of person who is very goal oriented; if I'm not training for a race, it is hard to get motivated. 2013 in 2013 provided me a year-long race. It gave me



motivation as work caused me to travel and put me in a hotel's fitness room at all hours of the day and night. It motivated me in the snow of Illinois, and it motivated me in the rain (not really, I like running in the rain). I was motivated in the extreme heat, extreme cold and on many 4:00 am runs. December of 2013 also marked my 40th year on planet earth. What better way to celebrate turning "old" by doing an activity that "young" people do?

Once 2013 ended, it only seemed logical to form a 2014 in 2014 group, and so it was born. 2014 in 2014 is an open group that anyone can join. We have members from California to Maryland, with at least 10 states represented. Our goals are to run 2014 miles in 2014 and have fun doing it. Based on last year, it



looks like our group will be around until at least the year 3200---some folks just keep running....

I think the part of the group I enjoy most is the camaraderie of a group of people, most of which haven't ever met face to face. I personally struggle in the winter months to find motivation, and this group helped tremendously with that by just being themselves and sharing their experiences. Thanks to them I got back to the "by any means necessary Chad", meaning if I wanted 2013 I had to go and get it, it wasn't going to come to me. There were some days when a run in the afternoon wasn't possible, but 4 am was....so 4 am it was. I think there was a two week stretch when I got rained on every day. Some runs passed quickly, others seemed to go on forever. Regardless of 4 a.m., rain, snow, treadmill, or road: on November 30th at 7 a.m. two miles into a 16 mile run in downtown Trussville I ran my 2013th mile and everything was, all at once, worth it.

On to 2014..... only 1824 more to go! The group as of today is at 95---quite a difference from the 10 person group that started this. It will be interesting to see where we end up in December. Hopefully we will be 2014 miles away from where we started. Happy Running y'all!

Quotes from 2014 in 2014 Members:

"Jeff from MO: Toughest 10 miler in a while. Snow covered trail with a nice freezing rain garnish. 285 YTD"

"Sonya from NC: Catching up on your posts is an amazing motivator! This group has motivated me out of my comfort zone! Well done!"

"T.J.: Hit the trails and dirt roads around my neighborhood for 8 deliberately SLOW recovery miles. It felt good. Miles-to-date: 232.8"

Suman: "In our group, there are always miles to be found, you just have to find them."

— by Chad Burke



PRESIDENTS ADDRESS

—Jennifer Andress



Hello BTC! I hope this finds you well!

It is almost spring, and we have a lot going on as usual. This newsletter is full of great stories about your fellow BTC members and other running-related events in our community, so set aside some time to meet or get reacquainted with your fellow BTC teammates!

First let me get you caught up on the past month. We had a busy February with our Adam's Heart Run at Oak Mountain, and Mercedes Marathon weekend. First-time Race Director Allison Stone did a remarkable job with Adam's Heart. She took on this big responsibility less than one month prior to the event and knocked it out of the park! Thanks to all of you that came out for the three races, and thanks to Allison and her team for their hard work.

Next up was Mercedes Marathon weekend. We had a booth at the expo, and we were busy the entire time. We handed out 1200 Mile Club jackets, sold merchandise and took in 40 new members in those two days. I loved every minute of it! I enjoyed meeting so many of our members, welcoming new members, and catching up with friends. I especially loved meeting those who were about to embark on new challenges that weekend. I met BTC member Eric Thomas as he was purchasing a BTC 26.2 sticker. He was getting ready to run his first marathon at Mercedes. We talked about the benefits of running your first marathon in your hometown, and what a beautiful, fun day he was going to have. I asked him to take a picture with his sticker in place and his medal around his neck so I could put it in the newsletter. He did one better: he wrote an article about his experience! You can read it on page 15. Thank you Eric for sharing your story, and congratulations on a huge achievement!



Mercedes expo BTC booth Brian and Kelly Atkins, BTC Secretary Kelly McNair

Volunteer Coordinator Katie Pezzillo and her volunteers did a wonderful job with the BTC water stop on Highland Avenue. You can see pictures in this newsletter of the fun our volunteers were having. Katie has instituted an additional new Volunteer benefit: a random drawing from the pool of event volunteers for a prize. At Adam's Heart, Jan Hill won a free BTC long-sleeve shirt, and for Mercedes, Wayne Davis won a gift card. Thanks to Katie, and thanks to all of our volunteers! We could not be successful without you!

As mentioned above, we have given out almost all of the 1200 Mile Club jackets for the 2013 inductees, including to a large number that came by to see us at the Mercedes expo. I am so happy to report that the new 1200 Mile Club jackets have been an enormous success. The feedback we have received from the 2013 class has been extremely positive, and we have sold several jackets to previous inductees as well. 1200 Mile Club Coordinator Alison Hoover has been taking emails from 2014 hopefuls- at this time we have 215 of you hoping to accomplish this goal, with those new to the 1200 Mile Club aiming to win a new jacket! Ali even heard from longtime member Dewayne Morris, who is going for the jacket for the first time in his long membership. Dewayne wrote us a very nice email telling us how much he appreciates the work the BTC has been doing the past few years. Thank you Dewayne, and we greatly appreciate your involvement with the BTC!

Another longtime BTC member, Alan Hargrave, has joined the Executive Committee as our IT expert. Alan is going to take over our RaceIt software, in addition to working with Ali and BTC Webmaster Dean Thornton on improvements to our 1200 Mile Club monthly reporting. Alan, Ali and Dean are working on a "self-entry" system on the website by using some sort of password and a link, similar to what we are doing with the newsletter now. This system would allow members to see their February reporting, so stay tuned. And thanks to Alan for joining our team!

Another Executive Committee member, new Member Benefits Coordinator Kemper Sarrett, has also been busy gathering new retailers for our BTC members to enjoy at a discount. For a list of businesses offering benefits and discounts to you, please see our website. Kemper is also starting a new newsletter feature next month, highlighting our retail partners.

Speaking of new retail partners, I had a productive meeting this past month with Jay Beard, Manager at the Gardendale location of Buffalo Wild Wings. Last year, Jay started a Tuesday evening run from his restaurant, which has grown into 200 runners and a local club called Run Gardendale. You can read about it in our cover story. I am so inspired by these folks who start something from scratch, and the success stories that come along with it. Chad Burke has started a grassroots group as well, also featured in this newsletter, which has turned into a movement: 2014 in 2014. These runners are making a difference in our community, and we are better off for it. Look for the BTC to be at the Run Gardendale St. Patrick's Day run

on March 18, and enjoy a 10% on your food purchases at the Gardendale Buffalo Wild Wings, just for being a BTC member!

We have other events coming up in April, and we want you to save the dates so you can join in on the fun.

--- April 12th will be our first social of the year, so be on the lookout for details. We will have food, fun, running and activities for the whole family.

--April 19th, is the second race of the BTC Races Series, Statue 2 Statue 15km. Race Director Judy Loo is hard at work with her team, planning a great morning. The Races Series is still available to BTC members through Statue 2 Statue, so take advantage of this great deal.

Also in April is the BTC trip to Birmingham's sister city, Maebashi, Japan to run in the Maebashi Marathon and 10km. BTC Long Run Coordinator and previous participant Natalie Ferguson is working with Japan Exchange Coordinator Johnaca Kelley to arrange this excursion. We have 5 BTC members looking to travel abroad and represent the BTC. We wish them safe travels and we look forward to hearing their stories when they return!

Finally, I have a few updates on outstanding business. First, I am still in contact with the Mt. Brook Parks and Recreation Board for a marker for the water fountain the BTC paid for. The city is still awaiting approval on its plaza design, according to Board member Carey Hollingsworth.

Next is an update on the pedestrian bridge over Highway 280 at Hollywood Boulevard. I attended a Homewood City Council meeting at the request of Council Representatives from Ward 4 Heather Reid, and from Ward 5 Peter Wright. The city of Homewood had learned that a sidewalk is needed to approach the bridge, to satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act. According to Councilman Wright: "[In our surveys] We learned the sidewalk right of way property is actually in the city of Birmingham, so now we have to get its permission to let us build the sidewalk, and obtain a temporary easement over a small speck of the property. This should not be a problem, especially since Birmingham has given its support for this project. Hopefully we will get the necessary approval soon and get on with this project. Stay tuned." I remain extremely committed to following this project in its development and will report back to our members on all details.

Lastly, we are looking for a new Moderate Group Run Coordinator. This person would schedule weekly Saturday morning runs to start usually at 7:00 a.m., and are typically 3, 5 or 7 miles in distance. Let me know if this is something you would be interested in taking on for the BTC by emailing me at president@birminghamtrackclub.com.

So as you can see, it has been a busy and very exciting few months for the BTC! See you soon at one of our fun spring events!

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BTC Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the Birmingham Track Club (BTC) shall be the education and training of individuals in and around the community of Birmingham, AL, as to the benefits of jogging, running, and walking for fitness, health, and recreation.

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Race Results

Find the latest and most complete local race results at the following:
birminghamtrackclub.com
trakshak.com run42k.com

RUNNING FOR LILY

— by Brent Lape

After completing our first marathon last weekend at the Mercedes Marathon in Birmingham, I couldn't help but take in the lessons one can learn from running a marathon that coincide with raising a child with special needs. **First lesson learned:** focus on today. I made a huge mistake around mile 18 and began to start counting down to how many miles I had left and started to become anxious about how great it would feel to cross the finish line. The first 16 or so miles, I was taking in the whole experience in and was, believe it or not, having a great time. The mistake I made with not focusing on the task at hand and just enjoying the present journey is extremely similar to the mistake I made, and most other new parents make, the first few weeks of Lily's life. Instead of taking in the amazing new life that we brought into this world, I was consumed with fear of all of the what ifs of Lily's future. "Would Lily ever go to college? Will Lily ever be able to live independently? Will she be able to do things that all of the other kids are doing when she gets older?" Not one of those concerns were things I could do anything about either then or now. Luckily we have been blessed by local organizations like the Central MS Down Syndrome Society and the Little Light House that put us in contact with so many different local families that were able to help put things into perspective for us. Yes, it is completely normal to worry about the future for your child, special needs or not, but it makes a lot more sense to take each day one day at a time and enjoy each and every second of the present. Why worry about tomorrow, next year or even 20 years down the road when you can celebrate each and every small milestone that your beautiful princess is accomplishing today?

Lesson two: enjoy and celebrate the small things. You might be thinking, "There are small things to enjoy in a marathon?" If your only thought when running a marathon is "holy crap...I have to run 26.2 miles!"...then you are most likely going to have a long, painful marathon experience. Instead, take in the



full experience. Take in all of the awesome folks that got up early that morning just to come out and cheer for thousand of random people that they don't even know. The first group that comes to mind is the Birmingham Track Club. This crazy bunch not only came out to cheer you on, they made you feel like an absolute rockstar as you passed by them. And when they noticed Lily and saw her waving and clapping at them, they got louder and louder and cheered her on like she was winning the race. That is one memory I will never forget and am extremely grateful for this crazy group:) In comparison, as parents we can easily get caught up in worrying about some of the larger milestones that

other children are accomplishing that our child has not yet attained. Instead, I have learned to not focus on the things Lilybean can't do and instead celebrate and enjoy each and every small accomplishment. It's more fun to celebrate anyways isn't it?

Lesson three is something I have learned from observation. While we were training and during/after the marathon, so many people have the opinion of "there's no way I could run a marathon nevertheless push a stroller in one!" This is comparable to the opinion most people have about having a child with special needs. Most think..."there's no way I could do what you guys do with all of the therapies and everything else." Now, we did have the choice to run a marathon and didn't have a choice of having a child with special needs, but I can honestly say that I wouldn't have it any other way. You never know what you are truly capable of until you are in the situation. I used to say I would never run a marathon...I mean who wants to run 26.2 miles and pay to do it? Yes, there were tough times to push through, but the accomplishment of going through that finish line pushing Lily is something I will never forget. In comparison, I was naive enough to actually pray for a child that didn't have special needs. I feared the unknown and wanted what all of the other normal parents had...a normal child. Now I wouldn't trade what we have with Lily for anything. Yes, we have more traveling back and forth during the week with doctor appointments and therapies, but that's just a small part of our new normal. Each doctor appointment ensures my baby girl is as healthy as possible and each therapy appointment is giving Lily a better chance at reaching her true potential.

The last lesson is that running a marathon is synonymous to raising a child with special needs as raising a child with special needs is similar to raising a child with typical development. Yes, Lily may have a few more doctor and therapy appointments than a typically developing child, but besides that, we deal with the same things as any other parent. We have our ups and our downs, but we are in love with our sweet Lilybean and are her largest supporters! The word "can't" is not in our vocabulary nor is it in Lily's! No matter what life throws you, find some way to embrace the struggle and "Enjoy the Journey!"

RUNNING WITH KENYANS

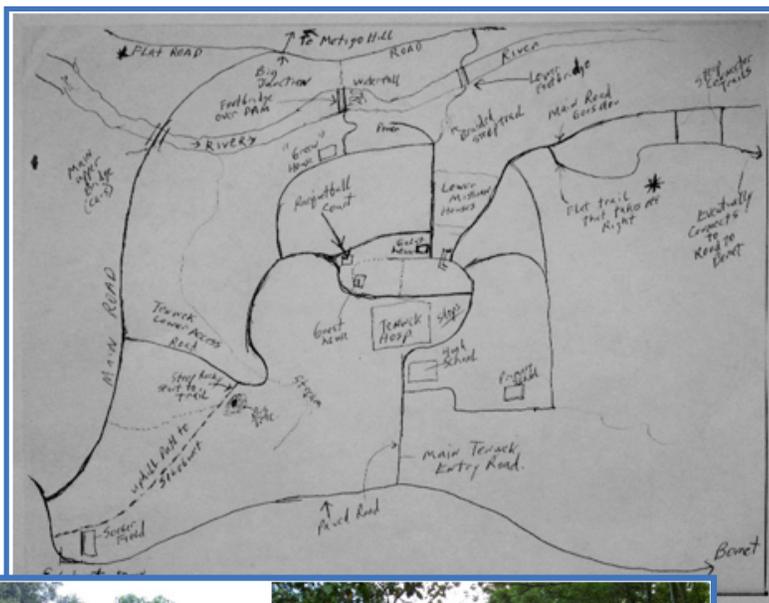
— by Dean Thornton

I'm not exactly sure what I was expecting to happen. But I was sure of two things. I wanted to run while I was in Kenya, and -- more importantly -- I wanted to run with Kenyans. How was I going to make that dream a reality? Would it be up to me to suggest a run? Would someone be kind enough to ask me? As so often happens, reality unfolded in a way I had never dreamt or even considered.

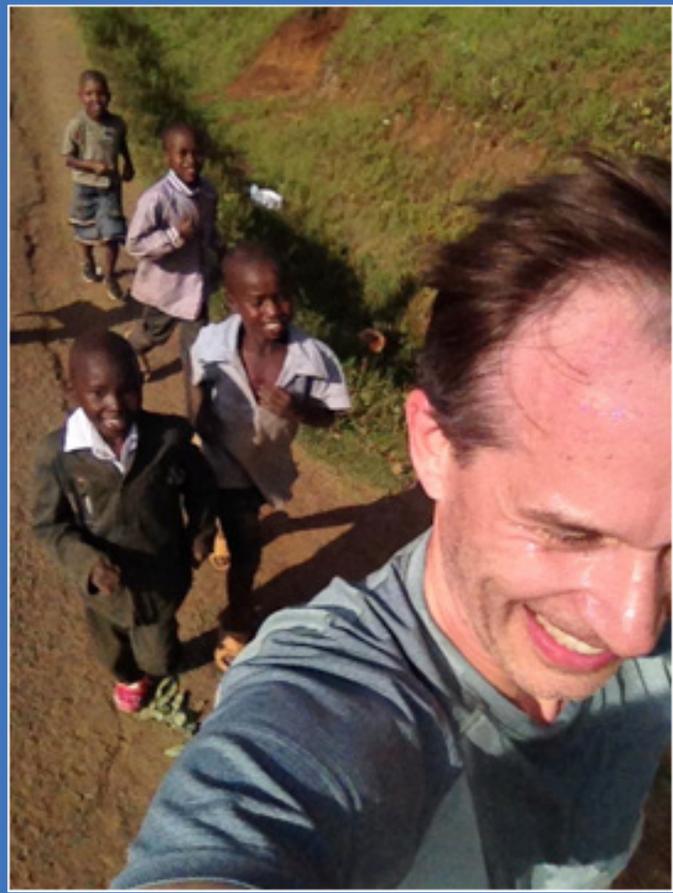
I recently spent two weeks serving at Tenwek Hospital, a missionary hospital in southwestern Kenya. Tenwek is the largest hospital in the area with about 300 beds serving a population of approximately 600,000 people. The hospital is staffed by permanent missionary physicians along with a handful of Kenyan national physicians. In addition, many short-term missionary physicians like myself visit regularly staying anywhere from two weeks to two years.

The hospital is situated near the town of Bomet in the western highlands of Kenya about 100 miles south of the equator. The area is hilly and green. A few of the roads are paved, but many are dirt the color of dark red bricks. The terrain is rocky and uneven. The elevation of the hospital is 6500', high enough to notice when climbing a set of stairs. (My house in Birmingham sits at about 650' elevation.) The elevation keeps the area warm but not unbearably hot during the day and pleasantly cool at night.

In planning my trip, I had communicated with a physician who had been to Tenwek many times. He is a fellow runner and was kind enough to send me a hand-drawn map of the running routes he had discovered around the hospital. I looked forward to exploring the roads and trails he had plotted.



Being unfamiliar with the area, my first few runs were tentative and stayed close to the hospital. I ventured out only on the dirt roads and trails closest to the hospital. But any fears I had about getting lost or accosted by strangers were soon put to rest. The people I passed were naturally intrigued by the "mzungu" (white person) who was bold enough to run on their roads. I was greeted with warm smiles and polite waves. On my first few runs I passed school children walking to or



from school. They took it as a chance to practice their English. Hails of “How are you?” and “I am fine!” and “What time is it?” were launched in my direction.

After a few days, I was convinced by another physician to run farther along the paved road to the next town, Silibwet. On a pleasantly warm late afternoon, we began the long climb up the hill from the hospital to the crossroad. I struggled to catch my breath as I carried a load of jet lag, altitude, and fatigue on my back. After a mile or so the road flattened out, and we reached the crossroads. As we turned right onto the main road, motorbikes pattered by carrying two or three people. The occasional car or truck whizzed by avoiding the larger potholes. At mile 2 of our run we reached the town of Silibwet. A busy market was underway. Locals were buying and selling chickens, clothing, fruit, roasted corn, and much more. We were as inconspicuous as a pretty girl in a comic book store. We passed through the town and soon came to a line of simple dwellings along the roadside. What happened next I will never forget.

A group of about five women sat on a small hill overlooking the road chatting among themselves no doubt passing the time until dinner. Their children laughed and romped around their mothers. That is, until they spotted us. Screams of excitement soon erupted as

they began to run after us. Soon they joined us along the side of the road easily matching our pace. They grinned as only children can when they feel they are getting away with something. I looked back at their mothers who were watching in silent amusement. None called out or made any move. So on we ran. We thought surely the children would tire and retreat to their homes. But no, they ran ahead, behind, and even between us along the shoulder of the road. Some of the children had shoes; one was wearing boots; at least one was barefoot. I considered a moment whether this scene would be repeated at home. Would a group of children leave their yards to run with two strangers down a moderately busy road? And would their mothers allow such a thing? I smiled as I silently answered my own questions.

The other physician and I reached our turnaround point and headed back the way we came. We herded the children into a relatively safe group as we returned toward their homes. Along the way back, still smiling and laughing and chattering to each other, some of the children reached out to grab our hands. We ran hand in hand with our new running partners. Others ran on ahead trying to see who was the fastest. When we reached their homes, we waved goodbye. Their moms continued to chat probably wondering why these



one of the students began to jog surreptitiously behind me carrying his much-too-large backpack. I turned to smile and say, "Hello." He replied, "Hi," in hesitant English. I introduced myself and asked his name. "Saduk," he replied, "You run to Bomet?" I said, "No, I will turn around soon." With that he turned off the trail to what I imagined was his home. I continued on alone for another half mile before turning around. About 10 minutes later, I saw him again. He had apparently gone inside to drop off his backpack, shed his shoes, and come back outside to wait for me. As I passed the gate to his yard, he matched me stride for stride. He skillfully picked his way through the rocks and potholes in the trail. I could tell he wanted to race. As we sped along for another half mile, we talked as much we could, he with his limited English and me with my non-existent Swahili. I did manage to get him to stop long enough to take a few pictures. Soon, he had to return home, so we said our goodbyes. I continued on along the dirt trail back toward the hospital, the proud owner of yet another happy memory.



strangers were running along the road for no good reason. For the rest of the run back to the hospital, my companion and I reflected on how fortunate we were to have experienced such a thing.

My first run with Kenyans was complete. It certainly didn't occur in the manner I had wanted or even expected. And it wasn't the last time that it happened. I ran a solo run along the same route a few days later with the same glorious result: children running alongside me for the pure delight of a new experience.

On one of my last runs, I explored the only flat trail in the area. I followed a dirt path as it led me between houses and small farms along a country lane. I soon passed a few people walking home including several slightly older school children. Spontaneously,

So my simple little dream had been fulfilled: I had run with Kenyans. They were not elite athletes gliding along at a 5 minute pace. They were not competitive or even recreational runners as one might find in the Birmingham Track Club. Instead, they were children who reminded me once again of the joy that can be found in running: a joy not in hill repeats or long runs or speed work, but in the simple act of putting one foot in front of the other and savoring the moments along the way.

MY FIRST MARATHON

—by Eric Thomas

I just finished my first marathon on yesterday, February 16, 2014 at the Mercedes Marathon weekend. It was everything I imagined it would be and a lot more! But before we get to that, let me take you back a little, and give you the back story on what led me up to this personal triumph. I won't go all the way back to four years ago when I first started running to lower my cholesterol while lowering my risk for heart disease. That was the first real triumph I had that involved running, but that's another story.

We'll just go back to the Mercedes Marathon weekend 2013. You see, I had joined forces with a great group of runners from the Birmingham running community, called Black People Run, Bike, and Swim. I had completed a couple of 5k's with them from the previous Fall of 2012, and felt good about stepping up to a half-marathon. As you can tell, I had got bitten pretty quickly by this thing called the "running bug"! Well we decided to run the half. We trained hard that winter of 2012 in preparation for the Mercedes 13.1 that coming February. Running with my buddy Kenny McShan, I trained so hard that I developed a pesky shin-splint in my left leg, that would not go away easy. But I was determined to run my first half-marathon. I guess it was some of that stubbornness that most of us runners develop over time. I eased up on my miles a few weeks out, tapering a bit, and just putting off going to my doctor until after the race. That way I knew he couldn't sit me down. I really had no idea what to expect as far as time wise in finishing the race because I was hurting. And also the fact that I had never ran 13.1 miles before. But some kind of way, I was hoping to crack the two hour plateau anyway.

I still remember that Sunday morning in 2013 like it was yesterday. It was clear and crisp, but it was also a very icy 24 degrees. The race went pretty much uneventful. I warmed up pretty quick during the race. I wore some black calf/compression sleeves to make the pain that was creeping in from my inner shins more bearable. At the time I didn't think I went out to fast, but apparently I did, because as I passed Avondale Park I felt my energy drop off considerably, and became "kill" for several runners that I had breezed by going up Highland. Anyway, I regained my composure, and managed to gain some speed back as I hit the flat straightaway of 2nd Ave. S. Adrenaline now surging,

knowing I was nearer to the finish, I scooted on up short 20th to the finish line. I had done it! I completed my first half-marathon.

Soon after collecting my finisher's medal, some Powerade, and scarfing down a couple of bananas, I discovered that I had come in under 1:55. Now the next thought to pop in my head was, "wow, that wasn't too bad: I broke two hours on a bum shin." Then, "a half (13.1) really isn't that bad, I am going to do the full next year!" And that my friends, is truly where this story begins.

Now anybody who has been bitten by the "running bug" either consciously or sub-consciously looks for the next challenge; and myself going from a couple of 5k's, 10k's, 10 milers, and a half-marathon was no different. I did go on to my doctor that following week, and as I suspected, the doctor confirmed it was a nasty shin-splint. He assured me that it wasn't a fracture because, indeed, I was able to finish the race. So he prescribed me plenty of rest, some new running related exercises and stretches to strengthen my shins, and "no" running for a few weeks. Now telling a semi-newbie runner or any runner for that matter "no" running is akin to telling a car salesman he can't sell cars. Somehow I managed to take his advice and not run for the rest of the month of February. To add insult to injury, I had set some pretty lofty running goals by my standards, for 2013. The main two were to: 1) make it into the BTC's 1,200 Mile Club and 2) Train like "heck" for my first 26.2.

So my first goal didn't get off to a roaring start. I had run about 128 miles total by the end of March, from resting my aching shins. Still, I decided to come up with a gameplan as to how I would train for and attack my first marathon. I google everything; so quite naturally I googled marathon training plans. After sifting through countless free plans on the internet, I finally found two that I thought would be suitable for a first-timer like me. But I couldn't quite choose one over the other. So I took what I liked from both, scrapped what I didn't, and made my own plan with what I had left. Now I had created my own custom tailored plan, I just needed to know if my body was ready to go to work.

I was hesitant at first, coming back from injury,

so I forced myself to stay disciplined. I really tried to listen to my body, while paying close attention to my mileage. That had me running about 40 miles in April, 64 miles in May, and 98 in June. By July it was as hot and as humid as I can remember, but I had gained a lot of confidence back, and I had finally cracked the century mark! I ran 106 miles for July. This started a string of six consecutive months of close to 150 miles each and even a couple of months during this period when I went over 170 miles. Boom! It was December, I was rolling along pretty good, and those 1,200 miles that seemed darn near impossible in March had been melted away with an extra 25 miles for good measure. Let's see, goal number 1, check; goal number 2, well within reach.

Feeling confident as a first time member of the 1,200 mile club, I cruised into January 2014 eagerly awaiting the first of the Mercedes on the course trial runs. I knew then it would be close to taper time baby! At the first trial run, I linked up with Kenny, Brian, Lisa, Ashley and crew. We knocked out about 6 miles plus the 13 on the course. It was great running with some new faces, having someone to talk to, to get me through a long run. Up until that point, most of my long runs had been, up way early on Sunday mornings; running by myself because of work, family, and church. Sometimes I just had to make due, because I rarely had an extra 3 hours just lying around!

One thing Brian said during that long run that stuck with me, was a saying that "you should either put the brakes on now, or watch the wheels fall off later." I found that interesting because that's exactly what I felt happened to me one year earlier in the Mercedes half. Another thing he said, which was almost kind of prophetic now that I look back on it, was "I don't care who you are, at some point during your racing career, you are going to have to walk. But don't get discouraged it happens to the best."

So a couple of weeks went by after that first trial run and we soon came up on the final one, before the "real deal". It was a steady, smooth run with Kenny and Brian again, though Brian was into some good fortune that day; he had found twenty bucks on the course. How about that, getting paid to run, sort of like the elites! After the run Kenny and I stood around for a few at the Boutwell getting coffee and eating doughnut holes. Kenny spoke to Birmingham running legend Al Dimicco. He introduced himself and said "Hi, I'm Al." All I could come up with was, "Hi, I'm Eric, I know who you are; you're a legend." I'm paraphrasing but Al's response was classic. He deadpanned with, "Yeah, Abraham Lincoln's a legend, but I'm just a guy who runs." Anyway after a few minutes of talking and Al finding out that Mercedes would be my first marathon, he asked me did I have any expectations on finishing.

I told him I was optimistic for a 4 hour finish and had hopes for a 3:45 run. He and Kenny both agreed that 4 hours was a good goal to shoot for and that a lot can happen between 3:45 and 4 hours on race day. Al also recommended that I follow his 4 hour pacer for the race, because she was really good and that she would bring me in on time. So we parted ways, said our goodbyes, and I headed home to get ready for church.

So the next couple of weeks, were pretty much normal. I had given Al's advice some serious thought and decided that I would go with the 4 hour pacer, and take all of the extra calculating and worry out of my hands. I just had one final tune-up before the "Big Race" and it was Adam's Heart Run the week before out at Oak Mountain. Adam's Heart Run turned out to be a great day for running on a cool, clear, chilly morning. I had ran the 5k last year and decided that I would do the 10 miler this time around. At the race, I picked up my 1200 Mile Club jacket, got a really cool, black long sleeved Adam's Heart shirt, and made a few new friends. My time wasn't bad either, which I pr'd for a 10 mile race at 1:19:54, good for 18th place overall. It was a good last minute, long run before Mercedes weekend.

Finally the big week was here. All I had to do was follow my training plan and taper like I was supposed to do. I managed a 3 mile run on that Tuesday before Birmingham's second impromptu winter wonderland of February. I was supposed to run 6 miles but kept it to 3 to rest my sore knees. And the snow effectively cancelled my gym workouts for the week. So basically all I could do was hurry up and wait. The night before the race my BPRBS family had a nice pre-race dinner at DoDIYo's in SoHo Square. Everybody said their goodbyes and we all headed our separate ways. My wife and I were going to catch a movie but decided against it because it would've been close to 10 p.m. by the time we got home. We got back home early and got everything ready for our early morning trip to Linn Park. Now that I think about it, we might as well have went on to see a movie, considering I only got about 4 hours of sleep. Between me being excited and nervous, my auntie calling me out of the blue to talk about a savings club and refusing to hang up even after I told her I had to get up early and run a marathon, I was very distracted.

Finally I got to sleep and like "clockwork", pun intended, my alarm went off. But I was so excited, we got up and got out the door; being tired was not an issue at all. So we get downtown about 6:30 a.m. and the whole place is electric. The temp on my phone said it was 32 degrees, but by me being so excited, it felt like I was in paradise. It actually felt perfect to me, even with the random gusts of wind coming from around buildings and parking decks near the Boutwell and Linn Park. So much was going on with us trying to take

group pictures, making sure bags were checked, and me getting my relay team together. Almost forgot, oh yeah I was the captain and first leg of our relay team too. So we are going over the relay exchanges and then suddenly realized that we probably should have been heading towards the relay buses because 7:03 a.m. was rapidly approaching. So I led my wife LaShondria, Michelle, Barbara, and Eleanor to the relay buses and they just did make it onto the final buses heading for their drop-off points.

Then I hastily rushed back to the starting corrals to get ready for the race. All this time I was trying to keep my ears open for the pacers, in particular the 4 hour lady. By this time 8th Ave. had pretty much filled up with a sea of beautiful neon colors of runners. I was just about caught up between the 8 and 9 minute/mile corrals. Then further on up, I saw the 4 hour stick slowly extend towards the sky. It was only about 40 yards in front of me, but it might as well have been 10 miles; It was no way I was going to reach it before the air horn went off. So I just put in my left ear-bud from my mp3 player, relaxed and just soaked up the moment. This was my sport, I was with my people; all random strangers around me, but we understood each other. There was no need to explain why we lived for these moments. And then the horn blew, and off we went. I didn't turn my mp3 on right away because I wanted to be immersed in the sights and sounds of thousands of people trampling the streets in unison; each with their own goal. I actually didn't turn my mp3 on until after the first loop because I figured that's where I was going to need it the most. So I just settled into my planned 8:30 minute/mile pace and tried to run a tangent line on the course with as little bobbing and weaving as possible. I thought no need to run extra distance and expend valuable energy reserves if I didn't have to.

I figured I would run into the 4 hour pacer soon enough and that is exactly what happened. When I came up on the group, I was running a steady 8:30 minute/mile and they were doing about 8:45 to 9 minutes/mile. At that moment I had to make a decision, either stick with them or go it alone. I thought back to the conversation me and Al had. I remembered he said that the pacer was really good. He also said that almost all of the time, the group a pacer starts with is completely different than the one she ends up with. I noticed one lady in particular with a purple top among the many people that were running with the pacer. She stood out because she seemed to be the closest to the pacer, matching her stride for stride. It was at that moment that I decided to go it alone, despite what I had originally planned to do. I mean, I felt great; I was used to holding that pace by myself from all of the long runs I had done, up at 4 a.m. on Sunday mornings alone. So I struck out, and left the slower pace group behind.

Somehow I knew 20 miles wasn't going to be

a problem, because I had reached that plateau several times during training. I even actually went to 21 one time. But I had heard about the dreaded "wall" that new marathoners hit at mile 20 and I didn't think it would affect me. I had even anticipated speeding up after mile 21 to about 8 minutes/mile. Because all the pace calculators on the internet I had been using were all in agreement that I should finish somewhere between 3:45 and 3:55. I would be lying if I told you I wasn't right on target through 20 miles. So much for needing a pacer huh? Then Bam! That magic mile 21, it hit me. Somewhere up on Highland, through the beautiful neighborhoods, around the curves and parks that I know I have run past many times before with no problems. My legs began to lock up on me like the motor from a junked 93 Hyundai Excel. All apologies to Hyundai, they make some wonderful cars now, but anyone over 30 knows exactly what I'm talking about. I was getting cramps from my butt to my ankles!

Then I saw a familiar face; it was Shilonqua Lee. She was a lifesaver for me, just telling me to keep going, giving me motivation. I sure was glad she was running the last two legs for her relay team that day, because otherwise I probably wouldn't have seen her. She couldn't stay with me too long because she had a race to run herself; but her motivation was just enough to keep going when every fiber in my body wanted me to stop. So I ran, walked, cha cha slided, cupid shuffled, or whatever line dance it looked like I was doing over the next couple of miles and made it to Montclair Rd. Now Montclair looks relatively flat to a driver, and it's really on a slight incline going east. But when you have 20 + plus miles on your legs and have been running for 3 hours it might as well have been a hill! So I passed the Piggly Wiggly and Highland Golf Course and almost stopped again. But once more, the Lord must have seen that I was hurting and saw fit to send an angel my way. It was Stacey Gordon and crew high fiving me as I ran by. I had met Stacey one of those early mornings last summer. We were both out on long runs and somehow we ended up running together for about a mile. We were the only two people on 2nd Ave. S. that morning last year; I was doing 8 miles and I think she was doing about 18 getting ready for the MCM. As runners, we just clicked.

Okay, that's enough of that memory for now, let's get back to my butt and my aching hamstrings, quads, etc ... Speaking of Butts, I got another shot of adrenaline as I ran past Avondale Park, high fiving just about everyone at the BUTTS water stop. Huge shout out to BUTTS, those guys and gals run and they rock! Avondale Park, this was the area last year, where I became "kill" to other runners for going out too fast. It couldn't possibly happen to me again. Not in this spot. Could it?

Then it happened. I saw that little 4 hour stick first out of the corner of my eye as we made a left onto

5th Ave. S. Then I heard her voice, coaching up and motivating her one pupil that had stayed faithfully by her side even as they ran a slower pace than what I was accustomed to. It was the lady in the purple top. It could have been some more runners with her from the original group, but I sure didn't recognize them. So I tried desperately to stay with them, but on this day my hamstrings would have no part of it. We actually were still under 4 hours as I heard her say, before they pulled away from me, still a little ahead of pace.

It seem like forever but I finally made my way to the flat, fast straightaway of 2nd Ave. South ; roughly about a mile and a half to go. Surely I would gain some of my speed back as I had done the previous year in the Mercedes Half. It was not to be. I ran and I walked, I ran and I walked, and I took some pickles from a nice lady to see if that would help with the cramps. It didn't. But a funny thing happened, I was inspired yet again by some fans as they were repping for the Bell Center as I passed by. They had an awesome fire truck to the left of me, and was really encouraging the runners as we rounded the corner to the right on to short 20th Street. I can't

explain it, but I know that adrenaline is real. Suddenly some of my speed was beginning to come back and I was beginning to run through some of those cramps that moments earlier had me resembling Frankenstein trying to run. I got faster as the finish got closer, and did a nice little sprint as I rounded the corner and heard the announcer call out my name as I crossed the finish line. I had done it, completed my first marathon, in my hometown. Four hours, three minutes and five seconds; not quite four , but close enough. It was really special, because only a day earlier I saw both my kids cross the finish line in similar fashion, in the kids marathon and I was so proud of them.

I think a lot of runners dream of running Boston, including myself. It's supposed to be the crème de la crème and I'm sure it is. But on this day, in my hometown, I am reminded of what San Francisco 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh says to his team in the locker room after they win the game, "Who's got it better than us?" And the team replies, "Nobody!!!!"



GIRLS ON THE RUN

— *by Rebecca Smith*

In the fall of 2011, I first heard about an organization that would impact my life greatly. My cousin told me about this great organization called “Girls on the Run” that she had heard of involving teaching girls self-esteem combined with finding joy in keeping up a healthy lifestyle. The program sounded right up my alley and in the spring of 2012, the school where I teach organized our first Girls on the Run team.

While the program is geared towards impacting the lives of 3rd-5th grade girls, I had no idea how much it would, in the process, impact me, a coach, as well. Each week I watched as the girls began to blossom and shine, showing off the best parts of themselves. They learned more about how to be true to themselves, no matter the outside influences that affect them. They learned how to be a good friend and how to find and develop true friendships with people who make them feel good about themselves. They learned the importance of giving back to the community and just how rewarding that can be. But what I think struck me the most was how the girls learned that they could do whatever they put their minds to do.

At the beginning of the season, sometimes running a few laps seemed to exhaust them, so the idea of running 3.1 miles seemed far reaching. But the girls, with the encouragement of their peers, family members and coaches, continued to grow stronger and more confident in their own abilities.

Then it was time for the big day, the day that the girls would prove to themselves and everyone else that they could complete a 5K. The girls were so excited, so full of an energy and cheerfulness that only 9-year-old girls seem to be able to encompass. The girls took off, donned in brightly-colored tutus and grins reaching from ear to ear. Seeing the girls laughing and cheering each other along the race was so much fun, but it was the final minutes of the race that left a lasting impression on me.

Fourteen of fifteen of our girls had crossed the finish line and were eagerly awaiting the fifteenth member of the team. This young girl was one who had

struggled with confidence for many years. She was not the most popular girl in her class, nor the most athletic, nor the smartest, but in the final moments of the race she was the star of the show. As she neared the finish line her fourteen teammates ran to her side, grabbed her hand, cheered and screamed as they, together, ran across the finish line. The smile on her face shone brighter than the sun that day, and the confidence she gained that day remains in her: I see it each day as she walks down the hall, head held high.

This week, we begin another Girls on the Run season, one that will no doubt impact the lives of many more girls. And returning this year, as one of the 5th grade leaders on the team, is this same young girl. Just think of the example she will be to all of our team members.

THE RUMPSHAKER 5K

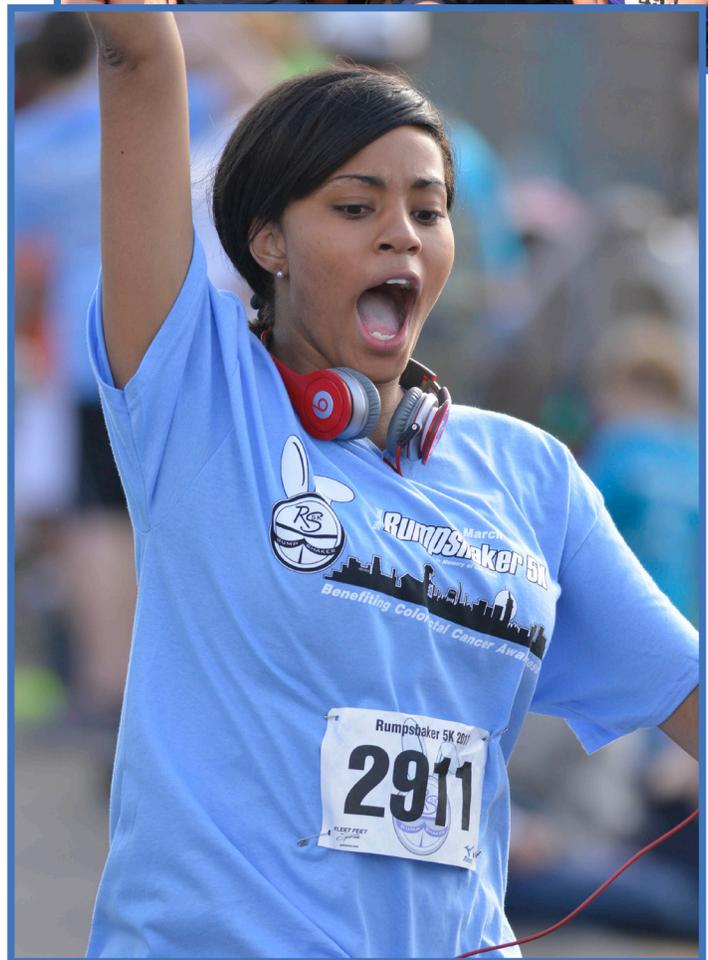
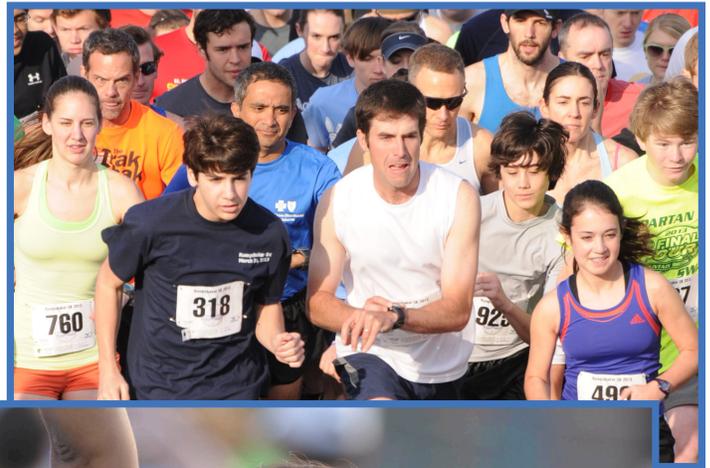
— by Jacky Turner

Rumpshakers it is once again that time of year to get your rear in gear! The 6th Annual Rumpshaker 5K and new 1 Mile All Terrain Fun Run will be held on March 15, 2014 at Historic Sloss Furnaces. The name is funny but the cause is serious... colorectal cancer awareness! Rumpshaker, Inc. has a threefold mission: Raise Awareness, Fight Colorectal Cancer and Provide Hope. The Rumpshaker 5K is the sole fundraising event for the Rumpshaker foundation and is what allows us to carry out our mission.

As many of you know, the Rumpshaker 5K and Rumpshaker, Inc. foundation were established in memory of Lisa Martz. Lisa was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer at age 48 and lost her battle on October 5, 2007. She was a true symbol of faith, hope and determination to her family and friends. With early detection, this disease is preventable, treatable and beatable. To honor Lisa's memory, we continue to spread this message.

It is hard to believe that the 5K has grown from 1483 participants in 2009 to over 3400 participants in 2013. With the community's support, we expect the 2014 race to be the biggest and best yet. We'd like to take some time to let you know what the proceeds so far have been able to accomplish. Without all of you in the community supporting us, these accomplishments would not have been possible!

Since 2009, over half a million dollars have been raised to fight and treat this disease. Rumpshaker, Inc. has contributed over \$171,000 to various Birmingham hospital GI labs for the purchase of equipment crucial in the detection and treatment of colorectal cancer. Our 30 foot inflatable colon display has traveled to over 57 various health fairs and community events to educate our citizens about the need for regular colon screenings. The inflatable colon resembles a kid's bounce house but it is a great educational tool for colorectal cancer awareness. It illustrates the difference between normal and abnormal tissue in the colon, however,



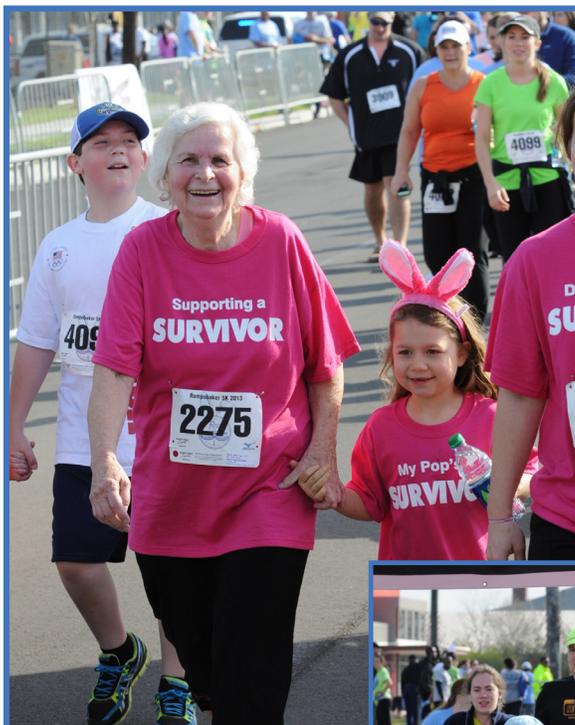
walking through the colon will not provide a screening!

In 2013, Rumpshaker, Inc. established the Lisa Martz Hope Fund. The goal of this fund is to provide community support networks for patients and their families and provide scholarship opportunities for family members of those affected by this disease, as well as provide other short term financial assistance programs. This year we have also started a monthly support group and a corporate education program. Our support group, The Semi-Colon Club: Funny Name... Serious Support, is the only support group in the Birmingham area that specifically addresses colorectal cancer patients, survivors, care givers and their families. In January, Rumpshaker board member JP Dice shared his personal story of colorectal cancer diagnosis and survival with the group. Rumpshaker at Work, our corporate education program, takes the message of awareness to employees by providing expert speakers on the topic of colon cancer in seminars and lunch & learns around the city. Now that we've talked about what we are doing with the funds raised, let's talk about the race! The 5K course will remain the same and we will once again implement a corralled start line for the ease and safety of our runners. Remember, if you pay for chip timing, your time will not start until you cross the start line. We will once again have two water stops near miles 1 and 2.

This year we are introducing an all new All Terrain Fun Run that travels through Sloss Furnaces. The Fun Run will start in the grassy field at Sloss, travel through a wide trail, wind through the Furnaces and back down a smaller trail through the woods! We think you will really enjoy the new course!

Also new for 2014 is our Kids Fun Zone. The Fun Zone will include two inflatable bounce houses, face painting, coloring tables, last year's popular toilet toss game and popcorn for the kids! As you can see the Rumpshaker 5K is a fun, family friendly event that has something for everyone.

Don't delay register today at www.rumpshaker5k.com!





Rumpshaker 5K

In Memory of Lisa Martz

**Colorectal
Cancer
Awareness**

*Funny Name
Serious Cause*

Historic
**Sloss
Furnaces**

5k / 1 Mile
Fun Run



6th
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March 15,
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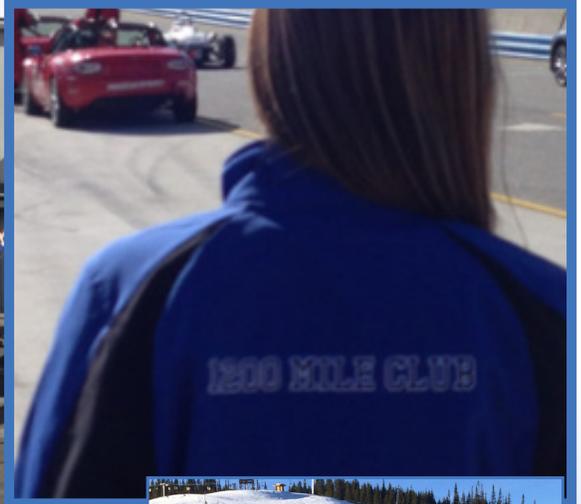
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Lanier Milsap and JR Bertram



Vicki Merry



Mark Johnson



Greg Fasking



Lara Walters, Napa and Big Sky Montana



SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Jan Hill, Volunteer at Adam's Heart, collecting her free BTC long-sleeve shirt for volunteering that morning and winning the random drawing we are doing now at each event



Kim and Eric Benner, Rock n' Roll New Orleans



Greg Caldwell and Boyd Peters at the Mercedes Marathon



*Mercedes Kids Marathon
l to r: Heather Ponder, Christina Blackmon, Henry Ponder, Archie Blackmon*

SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Barry Blankenship



Kyndle Sims



*John and Amy Gash,
Mercedes Marathon
was both of their first
marathons!*



Jeff Clark and Shane Higgins



Katherine Dease



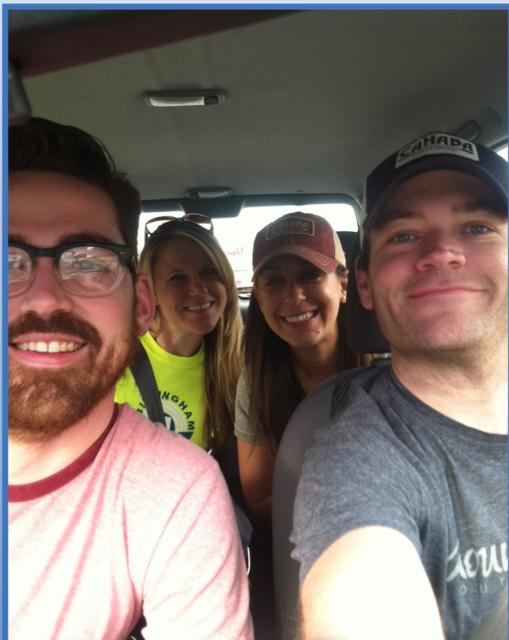
SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



Ray O'Neal



Dan Crumpton



L to r: Ryan James, Becca Fite in BTC shirt, BTC Finish Line Coordinator Tanya Sylvan, Greg Wingo on their way to the Mississippi 50



*Winner of the brand new weekly Facebook contests Win it Wednesday
Meghan Wayman*

SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL

We want to see where you have been running, representing the BTC! Email photos to:

president@birminghamtrackclub.com

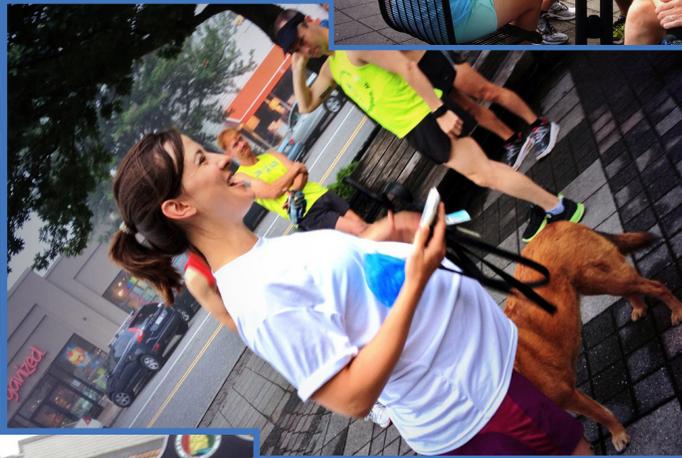


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Saturday Morning Long Runs

Find us on FB or email Natalie Ferguson at nataliezl@hotmail.com for more information

JOIN US!



SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2014 VETERANS PARK, HOOVER, ALABAMA

Walk With Me

PICTURE HUNDREDS OF PARTICIPANTS UNITED & EXCITED FOR A COMMON CAUSE. Whether you are a corporate team or an individual, your participating in the walk helps create solutions and change lives for people with disabilities.

REGISTRATION opens at 6:30am, closes at 7:45am, 8:00am - 5K START: 9:00am - 1 Mile Family Fun Walk START

For more information, contact ALLISON NICHOLS at anichols@eastersealsbham.org or 205.314.2187

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All proceeds raised by the walk stay local and go directly back to the Pediatric Clinic.

Please visit our website for more information or to register a corporate team: www.eastersealsbham.org



Face painting, moonwalks, cotton candy, popcorn & more!



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2014 Southeastern Ultra Trail Series

And don't forget the 1st of the 7 Short Series Races in 2014 - Tranquility Lake 3 & 6 mile, April 12, Oak Mountain State Park



Lake Martin 100 - March 29 & 30

100 Mile & 50 Mile Endurance Run & 27 Mile Fun Run & No paved roads Near Alexander City, Alabama. Along the shores of one of America's most Beautiful Lakes



The Run for Kids Challenge - May 3

12 Hour, 50K & 10K Trail Races - Oak Mountain State Park, Birmingham, AL 100% of race proceeds go directly to Camp Smile-A-Mile. Alabama's camp for Kids with Cancer.

Birmingham Stage Race



Birmingham Stage Race - September 26, 27 & 28

3 Mountains - 3 Days - 53 Miles or 2 Day Option - Birmingham, Alabama What our mountains lack in size they make up for in sheer technical difficulty.



Tranquility Lake 50K - November 22

50K and 25K Trail Race - Oak Mountain State Park, Birmingham, Alabama

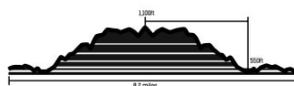
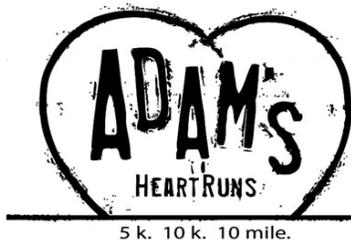
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2014

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SERIES



The Rick Melanson
**PEAVINE
FALLS RUN**
Oak Mountain State Park



4 Races and a Race Series Shirt for only **\$65!**

Must be a BTC member- see

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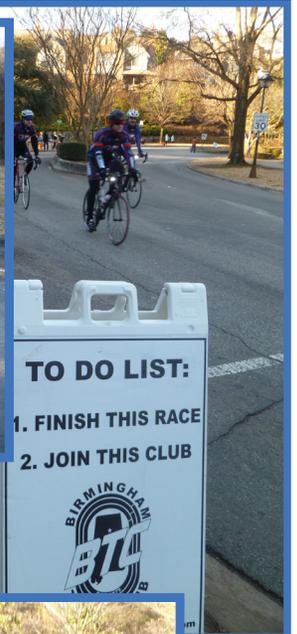
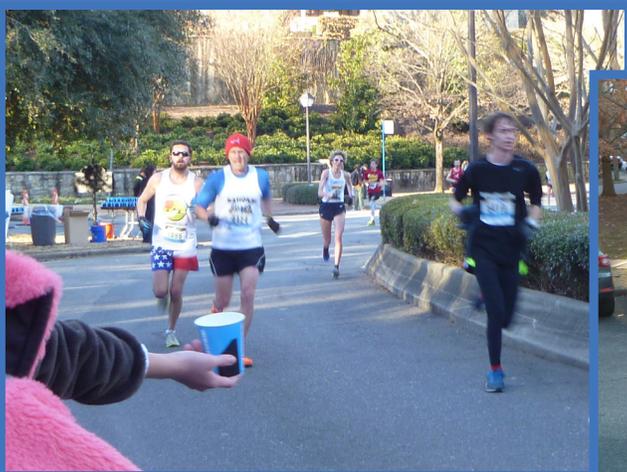
IN HONOR OF



*A brick in honor of Vulcan Run ad BTC at Vulcan Park
Photo courtesy of BTC Past President Trish Portuese*

BTC Water Stop at Mercedes Marathon

Pictures courtesy of BTC Volunteer Coordinator Katie Pezzillo



TO DO LIST:
1. FINISH THIS RACE
2. JOIN THIS CLUB



RUN THERE ARE
MARGARITAS AT
THE END!



CONGRATS



Picture taken at 24 Hour National Championship in Oklahoma City in Oct.

Left to right

Jim Barnes Hoover

75+ 1st

1

Michael Haviland Georgia

70-74 2nd

14

Newton Baker Vermont

70-74 3rd

18

Ed Rosseau Minnesota

70-74 1st

4

Rebecca Barnes Birmingham

World Rank

BTC MINUTES

February 25, 2014

Attendance

Board: *Jennifer Andress, Alex Morrow, Russ Hiller and Kelly McNair.*

Executive committee: *Julie Elmer, Tanya Sylvan, Kemper Sarrett, Ali Hoover, Allison Stone, Katie Pezzillo, Katherine, Alan Hargrave*

General membership: *Randy Lyle*

Agenda:

1. Membership – Jennifer for Jamie

We're currently at 1035 BTC members. 40 new members joined over Mercedes weekend.

2. Financial report – Russ

Nothing to report

3. Adam's Heart recap – Allison

Participation: approximately 50 – 5K, 50- 10K, 100 – 10 mile. 174 – Pre-registered; Comments: very well run; sold some merchandise; about the same participation as last year, excluding the Healthsouth group. Shirts looked great! The contract with the timing company SSG is expiring. BTC will evaluate a new contract and take bids from other companies.

4. Mercedes recap – Katie, Jennifer

Jennifer: constant booth activity; 40 new members; apparel sales were good at Expo.

Katie: the water-stop went well but there were a few issues. An apartment resident complained about the music – the volume was lowered and the direction of the speakers shifted. The First Lutheran Church com-

plained about the music as well. Katie suggested that we send the church an apology letter and, within the letter, let them know about the date of Mercedes for next year and that the race benefits The Bell Center for Early Intervention Programs. It was determined that adequate signage was placed on Highland. Police concerns: police wouldn't let us use empty parking spaces; Police were concerned about the volunteers being too far out in the road to hand out water for fear they would get in the way of the runners. Police were trying not to obstruct roadway. Clean up went very well. We could have used more volunteers at the water stop.

5. March 18 Social with Run Gardendale – Jennifer

On Tuesday, March 18, the BTC is having a social with Run Gardendale at the Buffalo Wild Wings at 6:00pm. Jennifer will be there with a tent, table and material that highlight member benefits. Discussion took place regarding offering membership discounts. Board decided not to make those offers but instead offer merchandise incentives for new members. We're looking forward to this social as our mission is to encourage new runners and grow the running community.

6. 1200 Mile Club – Ali, Alan

Ali and Alan have been working on moving towards an on-line entry of mileage each month rather than by email. Suggestions: set up a form on-line that is password protected; create a new link through Google that will change each month for privacy and security; fill out form that goes into a spreadsheet that Google publishes; updates within 5 minutes automatically. Allows personal and club tracking. Question: Can we attach a picture to a name for each member to have a profile? Answer: Currently, it's simple; it may become too com-

plex. Alan will investigate additional options. Related: the notion of building a collaboration with Google or another search engine for internal use to store forms and data...as a club...possibly a fee attached; Board: if we're a 501(c)(3), this service is free Parliamentarian, Julie Elmer, has asked for the letter from the IRS saying that we fall under the RRCA umbrella and will verify it's sufficiency under the current law. Question: Will drop box accomplish the same thing? Answer: Drop box is only good for file sharing. Alan will investigate all options and get with Dean to activate on our website. Goal: to have ready for March. Cutoff for 1200 Mile Club- April 1, 2014. Additional comments: could we have higher goals or a way to recognize runners that attain higher mileage? Suggestions: add a patch or stripe to the jacket that signifies the mileage attained. We don't want to take away from 1200 Mile Club but we also want to recognize those that run higher mileage and participate in the 1200 Mile Club program. Ali will talk with Marian about our options. USTA does a gold, silver and bronze – another option.

7. Volunteer Coordinator – Katie

Restructure volunteer rewards – make sure that all verbiage is consistent. Old structure vs. new structure; look at page on the website; update for the newsletter as well; first level – BTC volunteer t-shirt; 2nd level – entered into gift card drawing at end of the year party; 3rd level – free race entry; 4th level – free membership. Need new shirts – med and large; Katie will get Jen current inventory; Give every volunteer an opportunity to be entered into a drawing; travel mug and \$10.00 gift card to O'Henry's or Visa; LS BTC shirt; for every BTC event, \$20.00 or less to go to volunteer reward; Do we have an orientation process for volunteers? Katie gathered and digested information and sent out to volunteers; Katie wants to have a library of documents for volunteers; Alan, Dean and Katie will implement; Katie will not be here for Statue 2 Statue.

8. Member benefit report – Kemper

Beef up benefits; they're underutilized. – Maki Fresh, for example, was a quick and simple ask; we have over 1000 members. Don't hesitate to ask places that you frequent regularly or ask Kemper to reach out to them. Businesses do not get a tax deduction for sponsoring. Pick 1-2 benefit sponsors to highlight in the newsletter

each month.

9. 4/5 Event – Jennifer, Alex

Planning for a spring social is under way. After much consideration, the board proposed having the social on Saturday, April 12. It's the beginning of a busy race season so it's inevitable there will be conflicts. Our goal is to have a fun, family-friendly event and highlight the upcoming BTC race, Statue-2-Statue, which is on April 19, 2014. Railroad Park has been suggested as our location. Ideas are also being presented regarding food. We have an approved budget of \$300.00 per social. It's been suggested that we combine a few smaller socials into one big one utilizing additional funds.

10. Statue 2 Statue – Jennifer for Judy

Live in race-it; \$30.00 until March 31; \$40.00 April 1 – race day; shirts are being ordered with the same logo; more police support has also been requested; State Farm is a sponsor and Liberty Animal Hospital will cook hotdogs, etc. again.

11. Pedestrian bridge update – Jennifer

Sidewalks will need to be installed along an area that is a cemetery and this particular stretch falls within the Birmingham City limits. Progress is being made and we are moving forward. This is a part of the bigger zoo loop.

12. Japan update – Jennifer for Natalie

We had great response for the Japan trip. 13 people were interested and 6 applied. 4 invitations were extended. She has requested BTC shirts for the participants. We will add this order to the print job for volunteer shirts.

March meeting: Wednesday, March 19 at 6:00 at Kemper's office.

Unfinished and New business: Katie owes 3 gift cards and needs a way to contact these individuals; 4, 1200 Mile Club jackets to be picked up or delivered.

Katherine has not accepted the position of Social Chair at this time. She'll help with 4/12 event and will ease into this position as assistant chair.

1200 MILE CLUB

— by Alison Hoover

February is coming to a close, which makes many people happy, including my husband, who would probably consider Longfellow's poem to be dead on. The ancient Roman calendar didn't even include February, which messed the seasons up entirely, and the pagan calendar considered February to be the time of the Ice Moon. Who doesn't love an ice moon? Polar Bear club anyone?

I personally love winter, and since I don't really consider Alabama winters to be all that wintery, I am sad to see it go. The Mercedes Marathon weekend was a huge success, as was the Adam's Heart Run. We got to experience a "snowpocalypse". The cold makes you run faster. We got to watch the Winter Olympic games! I know that the cold and the weather did hinder mileage for some, and due to what I consider to be fabulous hockey outcomes (oh, and curling!), my own mileage did suffer a little bit this month. Sorry eh! In any case, please send your February mileage in the first few days of March, and keep on working towards that 1200 mile goal. We are off to a great start!

**"The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.
Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red."
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow -
*Afternoon in February***

RUNNING RAMBLINGS

— Compiled by Randy Lyle



Quotes

“The greatest pleasure in life is doing the things people say we cannot do.”

~ **Walter Bagehot, (1826-1877)** *British journalist, businessman and essayist*

“My feeling is that any day I am too busy to run is a day that I am too busy.”

~ **John Bryant, American financial literacy and poverty eradication activist**

“The five S’s of sports training are: Stamina, Speed, Strength, Skill and Spirit; but the greatest of these is Spirit.”

~ **Ken Doherty, (1905-1996)** *American decathlon champion, college track and field coach, author and longtime director of the Penn Relays*

“The body does not want you to do this. As you run, it tells you to stop but the mind must be strong. You always go too far for your body. You must handle the pain with strategy...It is not age; it is not diet. It is the will to succeed.”

~ **Jacqueline Gareau, Canadian runner who won the 1980 Boston Marathon**

“Now if you are going to win any battle you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. It is always tired morning, noon, and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired. When you were younger the mind could make you dance all night, and the body was never tired. You’ve always got to make the mind take over and keep going.”

~ **George S. Patton, (1885-1945)** *general in the United States Army*

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.”

~ **Booker T. Washington, (1856-1915)** *African-American educator, author, orator and advisor to presidents*

“I had as many doubts as anyone else. Standing on the starting line, we’re all cowards.”

~ **Alberto Salazar, American retired long-distance runner**

Ramblings

Rules to Run By

Source: <http://www.runnersworld.com/running-tips/few-rules-run>

I think one reason I came to enjoy running is that it really is simple. As I got older, I did not want any unnecessary complications in my life. Going for a run does not require a lot of equipment or preplanning. In fact, running does not even require much, if any, skill. We just run. We may choose to run inside or outside. We can run on the road or through the woods on trails. We can run alone or with a group. It really can be as simple as we want it to be. Very few things are as easy as running. As simple as running is, it does seem to have “rules” to follow. To make matters more confusing, this “code” seems to be primarily unspoken. We tend to learn it as we go like “on the job” training. Obviously, I am not talking about the rules one would find in the USA Track & Field Competition Rules Book. I am referring to the “Rules of the Road” as it relates to situations almost every runner encounters along the way. Since most of us are just regular runners, these rules are important for our sanity and maybe even our survival. I came across a compilation of running rules and thought it would be interesting to share some of them since most of our members run for fun. In fact, the first rule is to have fun.

Have Fun

For many of us, our early experience with running was anything but fun. In junior high and high school, we generally ran for two reasons: conditioning and/or punishment. Those were about the only reasons our coaches ever gave us for why we had to run. What I have learned as an adult is that, if done properly, running is fun. Truth be told, I guess running can still be fun if we do not do it properly. So how is running fun? Just watch a child or a dog and you will see what I mean. They will run around with undeniable joy and for no real reason other than just for the fun of running.

Expand Your Sense of Fun

We all must admit that a runner's definition of fun is much broader than most in the general population. After all, other than a runner, who would get up at 5am to run 5 miles, possibly in the rain, snow, heat, or cold? Who else willingly participates in an activity that will eventually turn your toenails black?

Black Toenails Are a Badge of Honor

Speaking of black toenails, we all know we will certainly ruin a toenail or two if we run long enough. It may be because our shoes are too big or too small. It could be because we ran a race with challenging downhill portions. When that happens, we should consider those black (or missing) toenails as trophies commemorating our running accomplishments.

Run Like a Dog

I mentioned it above, but dogs run for the sheer joy of it. They do not care where they are or what time of day it is. They do not even care much about the weather. Unbelievably, they do not know or care what their resting heart rate is and they never wear a Garmin. They just love running.

Let Angry Motorists Go

This is one rule that is particularly difficult for me. Few things anger me more than a driver who seems to despise runners and wants to see how quickly we can jump out of their way. Most drivers look to avoid issues with runners regardless what they think about people being on the road. For those few that do pull out in front of us or turn directly into our path or anything else to act like a jerk, my initial reaction is to slap their car as it goes by or yell something "instructional" at them. It is in our best interest, and the interest of other runners, to fight that impulse. Most likely, our actions will not change their behavior. It may even cause the driver to get extra close to the next runner he sees out of anger.

The Open-Ended Question Is Your Friend

We have all probably found ourselves running with someone that is faster than we are. They are cruising along effortlessly while we are gasping for every breath. This is when we need to ask an open-ended question so broad that our running partner could easily spend 10 minutes answering it. When he has to talk that much, it is likely that he will have to slow down a little bit and that helps us survive the run.

For Pete's Sake, Stand Still at Red Lights

Although sharks die if they stop moving, runners do not. Keep this in mind when you come to an intersection

where you have to wait for traffic. Please do not jog in place or dance from foot to foot. As Coach Danny Haralson told us often, "Stand like you are being cool while you wait for the light. Do not do the pee-pee dance."

"Lookin' Good"...and Other Runners' Lies

We would normally frown on lying and we would almost never endorse it. However, it is acceptable to tell a runner that he is looking good at mile 19 of a marathon. This is especially true when he looks like he is very confused or looks like an escapee from a torture chamber. It seems that our go-to lie is "Lookin' good!" Of course, you could say just about anything as long as it is encouraging. The key is to say something. Even a zombie appreciates encouragement.

Never Leave a Man Behind...Unless He Insists He Is Okay With It

It is perfectly fine to ask a straggler a couple of times if he is okay or wants you to slow down for him. If you ask more than that, it is more likely to be an annoyance rather than a help. Take him at his word and run accordingly. Of course, it is every man for himself in a race unless you committed to run with that person for the entire race.

Smile at Your Critics

We have all talked with a running critic. Some never miss an opportunity to tear down running. Oddly enough, it seems that the most vocal critics are often in terrible health themselves. We have all heard the criticisms – running is bad for your joints, you will get arthritis, marathons will kill you, etc. The best response is to continue running and enjoying it. The reality is that these people are usually jealous of what you can do and wish they could do it too. Try inviting the critic to join you on a short run. They might surprise you one day and accept your offer. You might even find a future running partner.

Remove Your Hat for the National Anthem

This is a pet peeve of mine regardless of the setting. Manners and common courtesy apply; even during a race and even if your hat is made of sweat-wicking fabrics.

Never Miss a Chance to Thank a Volunteer

Even when you are running the race of your life, you can still manage eye contact and a nod when you grab water from a volunteer at a water stop. Even if your legs feel like they are on fire, you can still manage to get out a "thanks" to the volunteers and police officers holding up traffic for you. It will make the volunteer

feel appreciated. After all, there could not be a race without the volunteers.

Running Rules of Thumb

1. **If you see a porta-potty with no line, use it (even if you do not need to).**
2. **If you have to ask yourself “Does this driver see me?”, assume the answer is “no”.**
3. **If you have to ask yourself “Are these shorts too short?”, assume the answer is “yes”.**
4. **1 glazed doughnut = 2 miles**
5. **You rarely regret the runs you do; you usually regret the runs you skip.**
6. **Not everyone who looks fast really is, and not everyone who looks slow really is.**
7. **Nobody has ever watched “Chariots of Fire” from beginning to end (not even the people who made it).**
8. **You can never have too many safety pins on your gym bag.**
9. **Running any given route in the rain makes you feel 50% more hardcore than covering the same route on a sunny day.**
10. **If you care even a little about someone calling you a jogger versus a runner, you are a runner.**

These rules were adapted from The Runner’s Rule Book by Mark Remy. This book is full of previously unspoken or unwritten rules that can help all of us become better runners, at least as it relates to proper running etiquette.

