



★ BIRMINGHAM TRACK CLUB ★  
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# THE VULCAN RUNNER



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September 2014 Issue ⑨

# The Mother of All Relays

## *THIS ISSUE*

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Earlier this year, I submitted an application to run Hood to Coast on the Nuun Hydration team. Knowing the past teams, I did it on a whim and forgot about it, thinking I would never be picked. Then, the email went out in April about the team being chosen, I scrolled down the list of names and found my name on the very bottom. I couldn't believe my eyes. I was chosen to run the Mother of All Relays for a company that I loved and believed in. The shoes set before me to fill were big, but I couldn't have been in more awe-inspiring company.

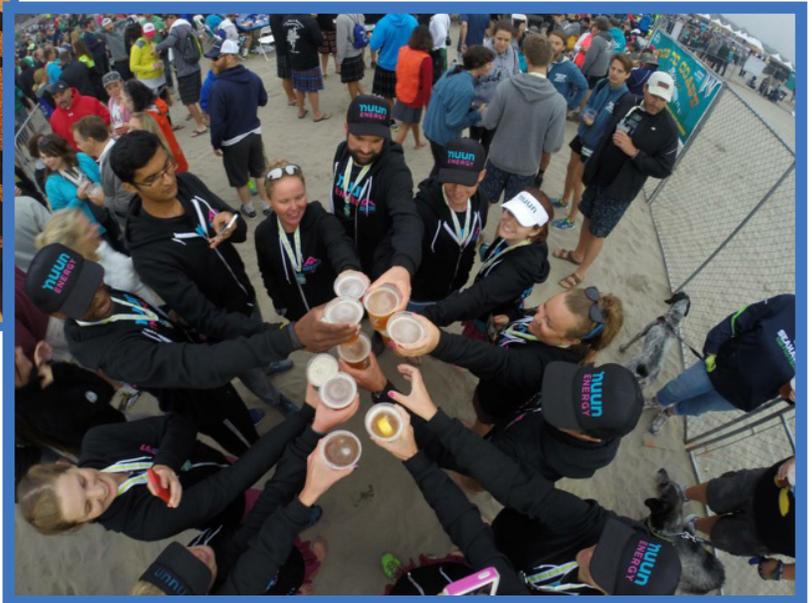


Nuun chose 20 runners plus 4 employees to make up two teams to cover the 197 mile relay race from Mt Hood to Seaside, Oregon. We were all added to a private Facebook group, and throughout the following months, we would get to know each other via Social Media. There was one other person from Alabama, Jim, who lives in Huntsville. I actually met him this summer at a race expo. August rolled around, and it was time to pack my bags and head across the country to live in a van and run a relay with 23 people that I had never met.

I was placed on Team Wild Berry as Runner #8, which meant I was dubbed The Ocho. It also meant that I was in Van #2. We left Seattle around 10:30 to head to a place called Boring, WA and hit some major traffic (foreshadowing for the entire race, right there!). We were hoping to arrive with about an hour and a half to spare, and in reality, we had about 30 minutes in

the exchange before our first runner took off. When it was my turn to run, we were making our way into the exchange coral when someone spotted our runner and shoved me in front of him. My Garmin hadn't even found satellites yet. With the mid-afternoon heat and rolling hills, this run was far from the "easy" that it was described but I rolled into the first exchange taking in every bit of Oregon beauty.

When it was time to hand back off the Van #1, we found ourselves in Portland at sunset. It was gorgeous. Someone from Van #1 asked who runner 8 was and informed me that "No one else had a right to complain about their legs because leg #2 was miserable." Great. After the exchange, we were able to eat and then head to a teammates house that actually lived in Portland. We were able to shower and stretch out for catnaps. About 12:30, it was time to head to the next exchange.



My second leg was the one that I was the most worried about. It boasted a 700ft elevation climb over almost 6 miles... at 3 am. The van was able to offer support over the first half, giving me Nuun and water as I needed it, but on the second half, the road turned to gravel, they were supposed to head to the next exchange. I noticed on this leg that I was mostly around men, and I quickly realized why. This leg was not for the weak. As I climbed, I could tell the air was turning thinner, and I could see my breath in my headlamp. On the only downhill, I let it loose. I relaxed and let gravity do



they just parked in the road. If you ever want to truly get to know someone, then you should get stuck in a traffic jam for 2 hours in the early morning hours, while sweaty, sleepy, and hungry. Since we had no cell service, we had no idea where Van #1 was.. but they were stuck in this traffic too. I'm happy to say that everyone made it out alive, even if they were a tad grumpier than before.

We had to drive on straight to the next major exchange because of all of the traffic and we had about an hour and a half before

it would be our turn again. I, once again, found myself in a mid-afternoon rolling hills run. I took in the Oregon hills and beauty on this last leg, and enjoyed every strike of the pavement. As I made my last turn, it was downhill, and I once again, found myself flying and letting gravity work, when I looked up to see a steep incline with my final exchange point. I guess they don't call it the Mother of All Relay's for nothing.

As we made our way to the beach, the weather turned cold and foggy. With each passing exchange, we were seeing fewer and fewer volunteers. At our last exchange, the volunteers were packing up tents and no one was even there to mark the last turn. With so many people behind us, I was worried what would come of that.



it's thing, and as I passed runner after runner, the men honestly looked shocked that a girl in a sparkly skirt was passing them. Once I hit the gravel road, I began my love/hate relationship with the vans alongside me. When they were behind me, their headlights illuminated the road so I could see, but as they passed me, they kicked up a dust that was almost like a fog. I could barely see through it, and I could feel with each inhale, that gravelly dust settling into the back of my throat. When I would think about how much my legs and calves were screaming at me, I would look up into that black Oregon sky, and be able to see every star. It made it my single most amazing and awful run, rolled into one. I came into the exchange to no one there waiting. I was in St Helens, and on top of a mountain, and the air was thin and it was getting cold. It took about 5 minutes for Runner #9 to find me and take off. This exchange was such a cluster. We probably waited around for the van to make it's way to us for about 25 minutes.

This is the part of the course where you completely lose cell service... no contact. But since it's 4 in the morning, who really needs it, right?? I was so exhausted, that I passed out in the front bench of the van and awoke 2 hours later to a stranger sitting next to me. Apparently, we had picked up a stray runner. He was left behind from his team. They were trying to win the Masters division and weren't pulling into the exchanges and were picking up their runners down the road. But since we were stuck in traffic, they probably were too. We sat in traffic for 2 hours.. barely moving. The police had shut down exchange #24 because there were too many cars, and no one could pull in, so



Nuun had planned ahead and rented condos for everyone on the beach, right next to the finish line. I inhaled a piece of pizza and a beer before heading to the beach for our final runner to come into the chute. We crossed the finish line as a team and celebrated on the beach while the concert was going on, before making our way back to the condo for many laughs and war stories.

Running this relay with complete strangers may seem a little weird, but I can say that without a doubt, that these people are no longer strangers and that I made some lasting friendships in that smelly van. The bonds that are formed in a dark van at 2am, while rapping Gangster's Paradise, are like no other. I am so incredibly honored and humbled to have been chosen to represent Nuun Hydration on such an epic race. It was truly the experience of a lifetime, and I don't know that words will ever be able to express the entire trip. If you ever get the opportunity to run Hood to Coast, or any relay, be prepared for delirium... because that's where the best inside jokes are made.

— Rachel McPhillips

# PRESIDENTS ADDRESS

—Jennifer Andress



## Fall is here, BTC!

We are closing out the summer and setting our sights on the Vulcan Run 10km on November 8th! Once we again our premier race will be the RRCA State 10km Championship. This year marks 40 years of racing in our Iron Man's name.

Our free training programs for Vulcan Run are underway with our three coaches: Race Director Danny Haralson, BTC Vice President Alex Morrow and Coach Kile Putman. Look for some words about this year's race from Coach Danny in this newsletter. Our Finish Line arch makes its Vulcan Run debut this year. Contact Alex Morrow at [vp@birminghamtrackclub.com](mailto:vp@birminghamtrackclub.com) if you are interested in having your business' banner on our arch for all to see!



We are doing something a little different for the Vulcan Run this year: we will be offering a soft t-shirt with your race registration. I love seeing the previous year's technical shirts when I am out for a run, but I personally also love a good race shirt to wear when I am not running, so we thought we would shake it up this year. We will offer the shirt in both women's and a unisex cut. Look for the gorgeous artwork done by our newsletter Editor Andrew Nuckols to be prominently featured on this year's shirt!

Speaking of shirts, the Arthur K. Black Signature Shirt

has been an enormous hit with our members. We have sold out of almost all of the women's styles and sizes, and most of the men's singlets. We have another order on its way; look for an announcement from us when they are ready. I can take your order at [president@birminghamtrackclub.com](mailto:president@birminghamtrackclub.com) and make arrangements to meet you with your shirt. I would like to thank the Trak Shak for its help with this project. Manager Jeff Martinez posted a Throwback Thursday picture of the BTC wall in the Trak Shak's original location, featuring the "rising sun" logo on a variety of apparel. The response was overwhelming, and Jeff and I knew we needed to bring the old logo back. Thank you also to Dr. Black's family for sharing his name and signature, and blessing this tribute to him.



After we published last month's newsletter with Dr. Robertson's article on Arthur Black, I heard from Lisa Longshore McManus, daughter of the one-of-a-kind Les Longshore.

She writes: "I went to the Track Club website and found a wonderful article about Daddy that made me almost cry (last October's issue-editor JA). What great pictures you have of him! I want to thank you for that and for helping my Dad. He loved running and the great people associated with the Trak Shak and the Birmingham Track Club.

I was so thankful to have run 2 Birmingham marathons with Daddy and countless Vulcan 10K's. I hope to get more involved with

running in the future and do some "road runs" as Daddy says.

Thank you for the sweet kind words you wrote about my father, I miss him everyday."

Communicating with the people behind the history of the BTC—the Black children, Ray McKinnis (whose letter is published in this newsletter), Laura Spaulding Gorham, and Lisa McCanus (along with Wally McRoy, Rick Melanson, Dr. Robertson and Jak Karn)--- has truly been a blessing to me. The people of the BTC, past and present, are the very best thing about my job!

As far as present-day BTC folks go, I would like to say a huge thanks to our Social Coordinator Katherine Dease. She put on a heck of a social this past month at Vulcan Park! You can see some of the pictures from that fun event in this newsletter. We had a great crowd, and a perfect morning. Lululemon Athletica from The Summit was in attendance, and its employees donated a large amount to Vulcan Park for its connector trail, and paid for our breakfast. We are a big supporter of the connector trail as well, so we appreciate lululemon's generosity and community spirit.

Lastly, speaking of community projects we have undertaken, I can happily announce I have placed an order for a marker recognizing our members for the water fountain on Jemison Trail. The plaza design is complete, but Mt. Brook Parks and Recreation does not yet have a start date. I did meet with Chair Carey Hollingsworth and Shanda Williams, and we selected a spot for our marker. It will have the same brass patina as the fountain, and will read "Fountain Provided by Birmingham Track Club, 2013". The marker is expected to be ready by October, and I will then deliver it to Mt. Brook Parks and Rec for installation.

Lastly, I also want to thank our Communications team, including Webmaster Dean Thornton, Secretary Kelly McNair, IT Chair Alan Hargrave, Membership Chair Olivia Affuso, Race Coordinator Trish Portuese and Member Benefits Coordinator Kemper Sarrett. All have worked hard to ensure a smooth transition to our new software, Run SignUp. We have heard from some members that since the transition, they have not received our Constant Contact updates that Kelly works so hard on each week. Email me at [president@birminghamtrackclub.com](mailto:president@birminghamtrackclub.com) if you are experiencing any issues, and our team will get you back on board!

As always, BTC, thank you for your membership and your support! See you on the roads this fall, and at the Vulcan Run 10km Start Line November 8th!

# ARTHUR BLACK

## A Message from Arthur Black, Jr.

Thank you, track club members, for your kind words – both written and spoken – about Arthur Black since his death on June 24. My father would be honored by your tributes, yet he would be overwhelmed by them, for he was a modest, unpretentious man. There were many others who joined with him in organizing the Birmingham Track Club and who continue its legacy today. You know who you are; he knows who you are. Speaking for him, I express my gratitude to you. My father always said his mind would wear out before his body, and that is what happened. For the last five years of his life, he coped with dementia. He lost his short-term memory, yet his long-term memory was fine. To the very end, he recognized his friends and family. For the last nine months of his life he lived with my sister, who took wonderful care of him. During his final weeks, we knew his death was imminent. His children were at his bedside when he drew his final breath. To those who attended the memorial service at Vestavia Methodist Church, to those who wear the T-shirt, and to those who continue the legacy of the Birmingham Track Club, my family says “Thank you.”

*Art Black*

# ARTHUR BLACK

Hi Jennifer Andress (and the whole BTC crew),

Thank you for your letter and thank you for remembering Dr. Arthur Black in the past issues of the Vulcan runner. He was a true, courageous visionary. Other doctors were warning that jogging was bad for you because it would “use up” the limited number of heart beats you have been given and might even jiggle your kidneys and uterus loose! I got more than one cat-call as I jogged around Birmingham in those days.

Those first leaders, Dr. Black, Versal Spaulding, Les Longshore, Dr. Adam Robertson, and the others I believe set the “personality” for the whole BTC as it has evolved—everyone is a winner who gets up, ties on his or her shoes and runs. Dr. Black always said running was a powerful miracle drug which gives you better health, better sleep even helping you to live longer—it just takes 30 minutes a day to “swallow.”

Dr. Robertson had the experience having run a couple of marathons including Boston and Versal Spaulding had been jogging daily for many years and always encouraged the rest of us. He even began selling running shoes out of his garage because they were hard to find back then. Versal was the one who encouraged me to run some of the races being held around Birmingham. And Les was so low key but he and Ann made a bigger impact than most people realize.

I still remember the first race organized by the BTC with the help of Herald Tinsely from Huntsville. It was a couple of loops around a few downtown blocks with the mayor standing on the steps of his office building cheering us on as we ran by. After the race the mayor asked Dr. Black if I was ok since, in those days, I ran bent over about 80 degrees because my back was weak having suffered a slight case of polio as a pre-teen and I had never run before.

Seeing that first page of the BTC newsletter also brought back memories of my manual typewriter and the smell of correction fluid when I made a mistake on the mimeograph film I used to print it.

And just as important as those “founders” is a big THANK YOU all for embodying that same spirit and continuing and expanding that vision involving more and more runners of all abilities and making the BTC one of the premier running clubs in the country. With almost 1200 runners and a wide range of runs and races and other events inspiring and supporting a good life through running (and walking), all of you put forth enormous effort making a great impact on life in the Birmingham community. Birmingham is a better place because the BTC is a part of it.

Peace,

Ray McKinnis

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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.

## Contact BTC at:

Birmingham Track Club  
P.O. Box 530363  
Birmingham, AL 35253  
info@BirminghamTrackClub.com

## Race Results

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

# The 2014 BTC Triple Crown Half-Marathon Challenge is finally here!

You can register for the Challenge on the [BTC Triple Crown page](#).

Reminder: you must be a BTC member to participate. [Join the BTC now!](#)

We kick off with the **Talladega 21000** on September 14. Then we travel back to Florence for the **Life Without Limits Half-Marathon** on October 25. We finish up right here in Birmingham at the **Magic City Half-Marathon** on November 23!

That's the challenge: 3 Half-Marathons in 3 months, and you get a one-of-a-kind Triple Crown Challenge medal and t-shirt.



**TRIPLE CROWN  
HALF-MARATHON  
CHALLENGE**

# Join Us!

Join the Trak Shak and Birmingham Track Club for a 20 week marathon and half marathon training program that starts on October 6 and ends February 22, 2015 at one of Birmingham's premier events, the Mercedes Marathon. Seasoned coach Al DiMicco and second year coach Natalie Ferguson have designed a training schedule to get you to the finish line. They will also provide you with weekly information and encouragement about Marathon training and are available throughout the training to answer questions. This is a free group. Join us for an information session on September 25, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Trak Shak in Homewood. E-mail [NatalieZL@hotmail.com](mailto:NatalieZL@hotmail.com) or [Jeff@trakshak.com](mailto:Jeff@trakshak.com) for more information.

It can also be modified since this is specifically directed at folks in the community who might not be familiar with BTC already. This is the piece that's going out to OTMJ and al.com.

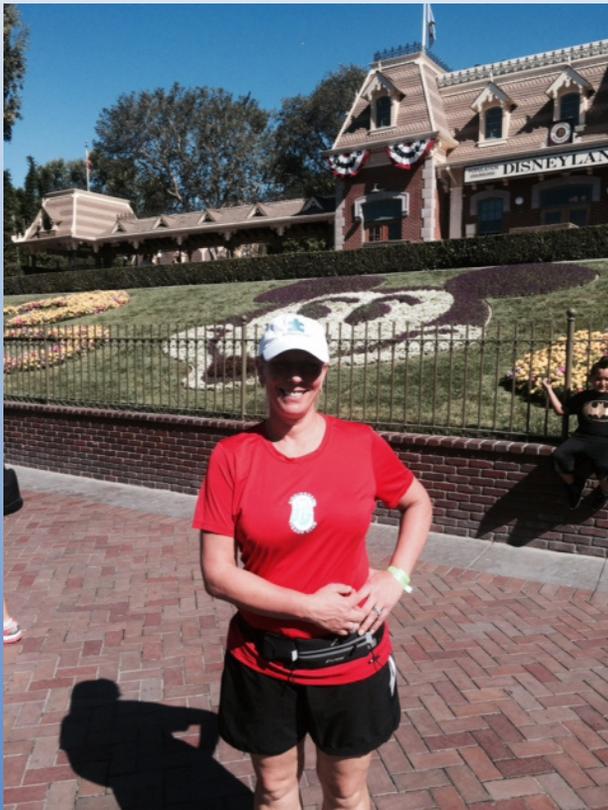
# SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



*Saturday Moderate Run group  
led by Coordinator Mark Criswell*



*Shane Norris at Tupelo Marathon*



*Diane Knight Disneyland Half-Marathon  
in Anaheim, CA*



*Judy Loo Statue  
2 Statue Race  
Director and  
Karen Choat  
at the Dumbo  
Double Dare*

# SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



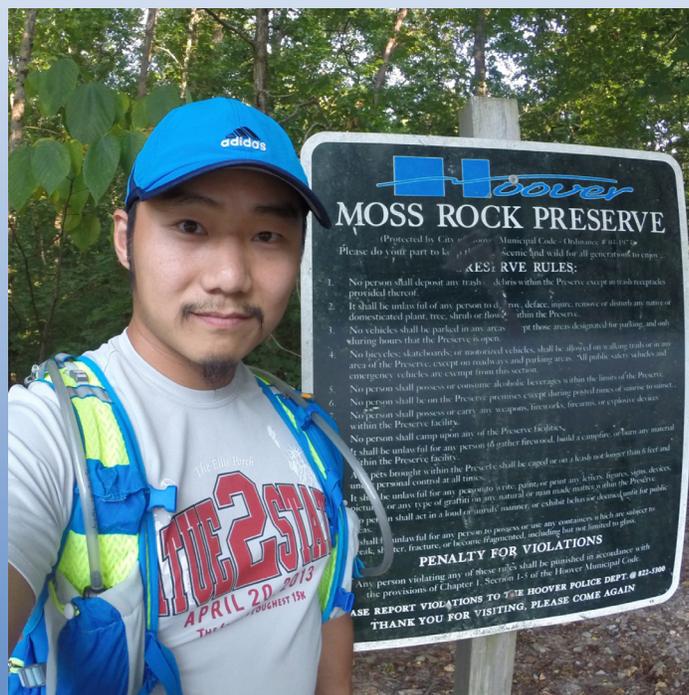
*Rachel McPhillips, CenturyLink Stadium at the Seattle Sounders game vs San Jose*



*Kelly and Brian Atkins and Cary Morgan  
Tupelo Marathon*



*Michael Brown and Stephanie Schilling at Retro Run*



*Chulwon Park at Moss Rock Preserve*

# SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL



*Kendall Harris in Madrid*

# Vulcan Social



# SEND US YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BTC APPAREL

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

[president@birminghamtrackclub.com](mailto:president@birminghamtrackclub.com)

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**[Facebook.com/BirminghamTrackClub](https://www.facebook.com/BirminghamTrackClub)**

# DIRTY RUNNING

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— *David Tosh*

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## **Lightning and Running**

Whether you run trails or roads, you will, from time to time get caught in a storm. Some of us have even been known to venture out on a run just because severe weather is approaching. A severe thunderstorm several years ago broke me of that habit, but most of us plan our training schedule months ahead and we run no matter what the conditions.

The most common and most frequent threat runners face from storms is lightning. We all know that if we hear thunder we should run for the nearest building and wait for the storm to pass. I am sure we all do that without fail. The problem with trail running is there is often no place to take cover. We can make a mad dash for the car, but if the car is 6 miles away at the far end of the park, the storm will be long gone before we get there. The next best option is to make yourself the least-likely lightning target you possibly can.

Early in July I ran a race in Colorado where thunderstorms became a major factor. I was headed for the high point on the course at 14,048 ft. (Handies Peak) when I was pinned down for over an hour at about 13,300 by a storm. At that elevation I was about 1,500 ft. above timber line so just standing up makes you a likely target. I got in a shallow gully about 3 feet deep and 10 feet wide and pulled a poncho over my head and waited out the storm. The hour delay also caused me to miss the cutoff at the next aid station.

As I sat there, realizing my chances of making the cutoff were rapidly ticking away, I considered making a mad dash for the top and getting over the other side as quickly as possible. Trouble was, at that altitude the 800 foot climb just to reach the top would be little more than a slow crawl and I would be on top of the ridgeline for about 30 or 40 minutes before I could possibly reach the basin on the other side. I chose not to take the chance.



Obviously, sitting in a shallow gully on the side of an exposed ridge is not quite as safe as getting down below timberline. The image to the left shows a lightning strike on the side of a mountain, just about the exact location I was at during the storm on Handies Peak. (this image is not Handies Peak)

Upon returning to the start finish (by 4X4 truck) I learned that the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher, Adam Campbell and his pacer were both knocked down by lightning while trying to beat a storm over Handies Peak long before I reached the peak. Adam's headlamp was "fried" but that was the only damage. I also learned that two people had been killed and several injured that same weekend by lightning in two separate incidents on Trial Ridge Road, a high pass almost 12,200 feet, in Rocky Mountain National Park. You can drive to the top on paved roads so there are always a lot of people up there that don't understand the risk.

The three images below are screen shots from a video. The total time span of the three lightning strikes is less than one second.



Two Separate Lightning Strikes Kill Two People at National Park



Two Separate Lightning Strikes Kill Two People at National Park



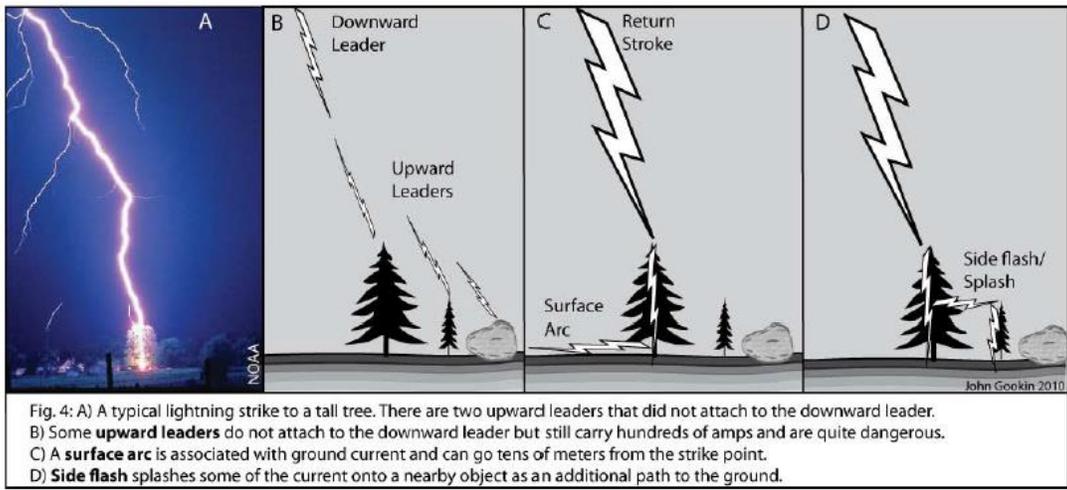
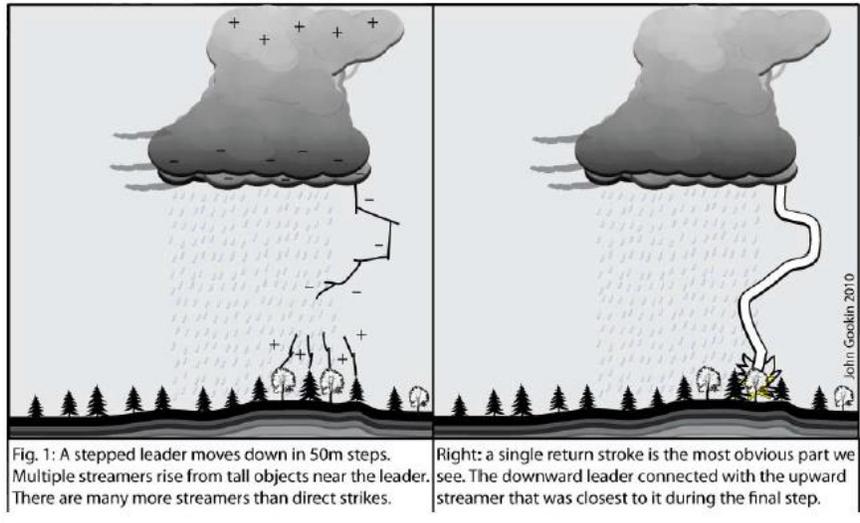
The problem is, Lightning strikes most frequently along ridges and mountain peaks. Lightning is static electricity caused from the friction of particles of dust, ice and water droplets colliding with each other. This causes a collection of negative charges in the cloud which begins to send down a stream of ionized air, known as a charged leader. As the cloud moves over the land, an equal but opposite electrical charge is formed in the earth. As the charges in the cloud approach closer to the earth, the attraction gets very strong and a similar positive charge of ionized air emanates from the earth — this is called a streamer. Mountain tops get a lot more strikes than lowlands, since they are the first to come in contact with the descending cloud charges.

As mentioned above, lightning tends to hit elevated sharp terrain features like mountain tops. In open areas lightning tends to hit tall trees. Objects that are twice as high as the surrounding terrain such as trees, rocks or buildings, receiving roughly 4X the strikes as their shorter neighbors. (Byerley, et al, 1999). Lightning tends to hit bushes in the desert if the bush is sticking up higher than the flat ground around it. Lightning hits people that are higher up than their immediate surroundings. Just make sure you are not the tallest object out there and not standing near the tallest object.

Below is a pretty amazing shot of lightning striking the top of three peaks in the Teton Mountain Range in Wyoming.



Of course it doesn't take a direct hit by lightning to kill you. In this case, as with hand grenades, "Close Counts." The people that were injured by the lightning strikes in Rock Mountain National Park were not hit directly by the lightning. High voltage tends to travel across the surface of any conductor. A ground strike typically hits a primary object and then disperses until it dissipates. How it disperses depends on many factors but the voltage stays higher along better conductors. These conductors often include wet terrain and water. In the absence of long conductors (fences for example) and surface arcs, data from lightning striking crowds suggests that a lightning strike is hazardous out to roughly 10 meters from the strike point, with 1-2 fatalities and dozens of injuries. Some people occasionally get injured 50-100' from a strike.



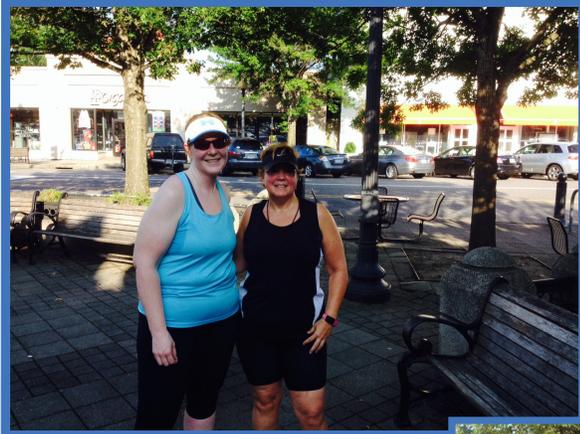
All that said, if you are about to get caught in a thunderstorm, get off ridges and hill tops QUICK!! Around here, you will never be the highest point unless you climb a tall tree, so get to low terrain and stay there, away from large trees until the storm passes. If possible, find dry ground to stand on or make your way to a shelter before the storm hits. Stay put until you are sure it is safe to leave. According to NOAA:

- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks
- Never lie flat on the ground
- Never shelter under an isolated tree
- Never use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, windmills, etc.)

# Saturday Morning Moderate Runs

Find us on FB or email Natalie  
Ferguson at [nataliezl@hotmail.com](mailto:nataliezl@hotmail.com)  
for more information

## JOIN US!



# Ridge 2 Ridge

## 10 and 20 mile Trail Race

Saturday, Sept 6<sup>th</sup> - Oak Mountain State Park,  
Redbud Pavilion by the BMX Track

Register at [Ultrasignup.com](http://Ultrasignup.com) enter "BTC-R2R" for a 10% Discount.



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## Birmingham Mountain Stage Race

**3 Days – 3 Unique Mountains – 53 Miles**

**September 26, 27 & 28**

Friday Stage -  
Moss Rock Preserve

Saturday Stage -  
Red Mountain Park

Sunday Stage -  
Oak Mountain State Park



Register at: [Ultrasignup.com](http://Ultrasignup.com)  
Use offer code "BTC3day"  
For a 10% discount.

Printable Registration Form  
and Details at:  
[SoutheasternTrailRuns.com](http://SoutheasternTrailRuns.com)

Presented by Southeastern Trail Runs and the Lake Martin 100

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Functional Athletic Rehabilitation & Medicine



WITH LOVE

23rd ANNUAL

Magic City AIDS Walk & 5K Run<sup>2014</sup>  
**Sunday . September 28**

Avondale Park | 3:00PM - 6:00PM

Grand Marshals – The Birmingham Metro Youth Choir

**5K Fun Run Start Time: 5:15PM**

*Run starts and ends at Avondale Park*

*Suggested Minimum Donation \$15*

Grand Prize for 5K Run:

**\$100 Cash**

*to Female and Male  
Winners*



Thank you to our sponsors: **Walgreens** | **Target**

Visit [birminghamaidsoutreach.org](http://birminghamaidsoutreach.org) for registration and more information

Contact [jamie@birminghamaidsoutreach.org](mailto:jamie@birminghamaidsoutreach.org) or by phone at 205.322.4197 ext.20

**BAO**  BIRMINGHAM AIDS OUTREACH

2nd Annual  
Leah's Legacy

# RUN FOR THEIR LIVES

5K & 1 MILE FUN RUN  
OCTOBER 4, 2014

TRICK OR TROT  
5K

TRICK OR TROT 5K  
COSTUME RUN  
AT SLOSS FURNACES

OCTOBER 18, 2014 | 8AM

\$30 REGISTRATION FEE  
ONLY \$25 IF YOU REGISTER BY OCTOBER 1ST!

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TEAM REGISTRATION & AWARDS!

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# DONATION

*Donation at BTC Social from lululemon athletica at The Summit to Vulcan Park for its connector trail.*



# 1200 MILE CLUB

—by Alison Hoover

September is here, bringing with it school, cross country season, football, and hopefully some cooler weather for our runners. Fall marathon season is kicking in to high gear this week with just a few days remaining for those hoping to make their final BQ attempt of the year. Good luck to everyone, especially our BTC members who have just made the trek to sticky, steamy Tupelo!

Your August miles are now due to be uploaded to the website, and this marks the two thirds point of the year for 1200 Mile Club qualifiers. The lovely black and blue jacket awaits our first time qualifiers, so keep logging those miles. As of July we have over 190,000 miles logged, with 272 participants. Of those, 138 are on track to qualify (some may be behind on reporting mileage), and 20 people have already reached their 1200 mile goal-congratulations!

Last month I included all of the links for the year to date for anyone that was behind in reporting their mileage. Please be patient after uploading older mileage as our amazing webmaster Alan has to manually add these in when he sees them appear, and they are not checked every day. If you enter them, they will be recorded and should appear after a few days. If after a few days you are still not able to see your totals on the BTC website, please send me an email and I will check into it for you. We will also be starting to get jacket orders together soon, so please look for your link on the first of each month and get those miles uploaded, as we don't want to miss anyone.

Enjoy the end of summer!

Ali Hoover

“By all these lovely tokens  
September days are here,  
With summer's best of weather  
And autumn's best of cheer.”

– Helen Hunt Jackson,  
September



11.8.14

★ ——— VULCANRUN.COM ——— ★

VULCAN

RUN



# VULCAN RUN

— *Danny Haralson*

As the Vulcan Run rolls ever closer there will be television and newspaper articles (well, internet articles) about the history and tradition of Vulcan. There's no question it's steeped in tradition from well known 3 time Vulcan winner Bill Rogers, to Marcos Barretto's course record of 28:18, continuing on through Stephen Bolt's and Benje Durden's victories. We certainly can't forget back to back to back victories by Janet Cherobon-Bawcom who won her 4th Vulcan the week after winning the Marine Corp Marathon in Washington D.C. We've also had such luminaries as coach and author Hal and his wife Rose and author/runner Tawni Gomes. Yes, Vulcan owns an impressive collection of entrants. We could also talk about the challenge of the 10K, running the course strategically or the excitement generated by the Start line and even more so by the Finish Line.

Let's don't leave out the post race party - there is so much to get excited about. However as multiple time participant and Race Director who's seen Vulcan's Start/Finish change multiple times over the years there has been one constant. Mile 3 to 4 along Highland Ave - Every year Autumn invades the Deep South and leaves burst into a kaleidoscope of color as they prepare to drift to the ground.

Highland Avenue is awash in golden Gingko leaves as well as a multitude of other trees and colors. From Independent Presbyterian (mile 3) to the Highland Overpass (mile 4) and passing through 3 parks, it is a wonderland really not to be missed. We get the opportunity to run along one of nature's and running's most beautiful miles and that opportunity only presents itself a few weeks each year. As you train this year and perhaps even as you run the race regardless of your goals or pace, look around on Highland Avenue and take in the most beautiful mile I think exists in almost any race. Funny, it always seems to be the little things.....



—*Stacey Gordon*

**“The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't have that, we never grow, we never learn, and sure as hell we should never teach.”**

**—Maya Angelou**

One Sunday morning, not too long ago, I noticed some runners were still circling the parking lot after they had already finished their weekly long run, or so it seemed. They kept glancing at their watches and I began to wonder if they were impatiently waiting for others to finish, when it suddenly dawned on me what was going on.

It was not so long ago, that a runner wanting to plan a route would have to get in the car and drive it. The odometer was the gold standard and a tenth of a mile, here or there, off of the desired distance was not a concern.

Now, thanks to gps watches, everyone knows down to the hundredth of a mile, the exact time, pace and distance they are travelling at any given moment. Folks who used mapping software to plan their weekly long route of, oh say, 10 miles, will continue to circle the parking lot until the discrepancy between what they charted, matches what their gps watches tell them they have actually covered.

Perhaps there is something inherent in human nature that gives rise to the desire to finish things off with round, even numbers.

Thanks to a special kind of mental math, claiming a 10 mile training run somehow lends more credibility and a sense of completion to the accomplishment than does claiming a 9.87 mile run. Not to mention that uploading and sharing 9.87 miles to social media simply screams “unfinished business” to the world.

Unfinished business is messy and unsettling.

The same is true for race results. Finish times may be disappointing, or they may be a point of pride; a reward for hard work invested.

Ask anyone involved in racing and they will always prefer a finish time, any finish time, no matter how awful, to the alternative; a DNF.

Did Not Finish.

DNF did not sit well with me.

Several years ago, I climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. Twice.

Why twice? Because the first time I took a crack at it, I did not make it to the top. I vowed to return someday because not completing the journey disturbed me so deeply. Three years after the first attempt, I returned with a friend and successfully completed the climb. I cannot begin to describe the feeling of satisfaction other than to remark that the issue was settled and the itch was scratched.

Some say, that a DNF opens a wound that may only be healed by returning to finish another time.

As a newly minted cancer survivor in the spring of 2001, I knew all about wounds. I was also determined to prove to anyone that cared to notice, that cancer had not diminished me in any way. Having already been involved in sprint distance triathlons prior to my illness, the Ironman® became my focus and fixation, because it had been billed as the “ultimate test of personal fitness”.

My plans were set to go further and faster than ever before, thus figuratively flipping off anyone, and everything, that haunted me.

In my mind, it was going to take something big to shake off the yoke of victim status. The medical profession that had completely dismissed me was going have every expectation of failure and catastrophe they threw at me, slung right back in their face.

Ironman® was big.

After my recovery, rage fueled a ferocious return to my comeback training. Entire days were spent out on the roads, dividing the hours between running and riding my bike. Early morning master swim practice was somehow crammed in there as well.

It was a singular existence. Eat, sleep, train. Outside of work, it occupied most of my time.

What I discovered out on the road, is that retribution is a fickle motivator and it does not guarantee success.

I made it to Ironman® but I DNF. Somewhere around mile 70 of the bike segment, about 40 miles short of the run transition, the pain of a herniated disk in my neck forced me to abandon the race. As emotionally painful as it was, I rationalized quitting as the safe and prudent thing to do, which it was.

At that moment, I knew, or thought I knew, that I would be back to prove myself another time.

After neck surgery to repair the damage, training started all over again, but not to the same degree as before.

As the years passed, I found that was I was left frequently feeling anxious and disappointed because I never did return to Ironman®. I'd resolve to train more and work my way back to previous levels of intensity, but it never quite materialized. I'd train some, but never enough. I'd stress about it and yet was unable to get myself up to speed.

I could make a million excuses as to why - different job, not as much time to train, all legitimate excuses... reasons and yet, not enough.

Eventually, I recognized that my motivation had shifted and the time had come to make peace with that.

I had nothing to prove to anyone, any longer. I had accomplished so much, physically, and managed to dismiss all of the negative expectations. So why was I still anxious? There was something else I could not quite name banging away at my brain.

In addition to all the indignation I was venting through my training, I discovered I had also become entangled in a compulsion. I had completely bought into the mentality that endurance sports confirmed that you could, as a matter of fact, "endure" anything. I had stepped into

a world in which stopping was an unacceptable option. Further and faster was all that mattered and whether or not this contributed positively to one's well being was never a concern.

Looking back, it was easy to recall the exact moment, over 15 years ago, when the obsession started. My most immediate thought as I crossed the finish line of my first long distance event was:

"If I can do this, I handle anything that comes my way".

I was diagnosed with cancer 5 months later.

I suppose it is a useful metaphor to take into battle, whether it's a cancer diagnosis, or a tour of duty in Afghanistan, but the ability to "endure" a particularly grueling race doesn't necessarily correspond to improving one's health or fitness. This is particularly true, especially when one considers other elements of good physical conditioning such as strength, power and agility.

Ultra events, into which category the iron distance triathlon belongs, are more properly classified as suffer fests, rather than true tests of overall, personal fitness and health.

Keep in mind, the iron distance itself, was not developed as a scientific benchmark of health or wellness.

It is random.

Worse than random, it is the result of a drunken argument among a few runners, swimmers and cyclists about whose sport was the toughest; which athlete among them the fittest. They selected the longest distance races of the three local, Hawaiian events for each of their respective sports and threw them all together sequentially. Scientifically speaking, this experimental endeavor would not even answer the questions they themselves raised.

There's a vain, egotistical side to all of this as well, that is a bit tougher to own up to, but I'm doing it now. Most will not admit it, but deep down inside, every triathlete gloats and preens just a little bit when someone calls them out as an overachiever. I confess; I enjoyed it. Perhaps it was because I am physically small, but people were often astounded when they heard that I did triathlons. I'm not exactly sure why, but I imagine it has something to do with the way triathlon is mythologized by society. It was quite the ego stroke, kick in the pants and pat on the back all rolled into one, whenever someone acknowledged it for me.

There was an ugly, elitist attitude that went along with it as well. Snide banter triathletes would engage in when other athletes were around often went something like this:

“Oh you are a runner, that’s nice, how cute. I run too, after I swim and bike, of course...”

You may have even seen that crap on a bumper sticker.

I could have been their poster child.

Reading books by Dean Karnazes did not help the situation any. I was simultaneously drawn in and repulsed by, everything he describes in Ultramarathon Man. There was something strangely appealing about running all night and ordering a pizza for refueling to be delivered to a street corner in the next town. I also found myself thinking that he was an annoying, narcissistic jerk as well, and that didn’t bode well for my own self image. Reading his description about his experience at Badwater, kicked something loose. It had me thinking that perhaps something about extreme endurance racing was not quite right.

A line had to be drawn somewhere, between healthy activity and insanity. I had to decide for myself when or where, the finish line of “that’s enough” was.

Badwater, The Ultra-Marathon, claims to be the world’s toughest footrace. According to the race website: “Covering 135 miles (217km) non-stop from Death Valley to Mt. Whitney, CA in temperatures up to 130F (55c), it is the most demanding and extreme running race offered anywhere on the planet”.

I suppose that the mental fortitude required to complete any ultra event is admirable, but nowadays I struggle to understand what sort of accomplishment it is to suffer the potential consequences of severe dehydration, kidney damage, heat stroke or death, in a race that someone else dreamed up as a challenge?

What benefit could it possibly impart to my body? Or anybody’s body?

What is to be gained? Prestige? Pride? Bragging rights? At what cost?

Is it worth it?

To some it must be, but the answers to those questions are ultimately, quite personal.

Was everyone else who participated in these races as furious as I had been? What drives them? What compels someone whose life is not being threatened, to push themselves to the very edge of survival?

For me, and certainly many other athletes, participation in sports is an avenue of self-expression. It’s an old cliché that a true artist must suffer for their art, and in that sense, all athletes suffer, to a certain extent, for their sport in various ways. It’s also been said that a little suffering is good for the soul, but at what point does the suffering become counterproductive?

I have dubbed myself a "reformed" triathlete. Years of pushing myself to go further and faster never got me anywhere. The compulsion to spend endless hours riding the same training routes, eating energy bars and sucking down Gatorade in the hot sun, to the exclusion of all other activities, was gone.

Once the anger that had been driving me dissolved, once I came to appreciate that stopping, or slowing down was not failure, extreme racing became an unfulfilling, open-ended treadmill. It was easier than expected to step away.

It was a relief.

Who’s to say that 140.6 miles imparts better longevity, health or mojo than 70.3 or 26.2, 13.1 6.2, or even 3.1 miles.

Is more of the same, always better?

I suspect the answer will be different for each of us. Everyone needs to seek their own, healthy balance. For me, that balance has to involve not being so involved, in any, one thing. Others thrive on the singular focus, so for them it works out.

I know I’m not alone when it comes to the need to “step away” from triathlon culture. Recently, while out running with some friends, a guy wearing a souvenir Ironman® singlet struck up a conversation with us out on the road.

“You guys training or maintaining”? he asked. We told him we were training and which marathon we were training for. I gestured to his Ironman® shirt and said, “which one are you training for”? He threw up his hands with a dismissive wave and said, “Oh I don’t do those anymore. In fact, I’m thinking about taking up smoking and bull riding instead”.

I completely understood the sentiment.

Ridding myself of the obsession to be constantly training, or feeling guilty when I wasn't training, was liberating. I had forgotten how much fun it is to do other things. Reading, working in the garden, hanging out and drinking beer with friends and gasp... even playing golf, are now back on my list of things to do. They are not necessarily focused on improving my VO2max, but what's the point of being fit, if you can't enjoy the fitness?

It had become difficult for me to enjoy these things because even when I allowed myself to partake in those other activities, I was constantly thinking about, how much training time I was losing, how far behind I was falling. Gradually it dawned on me that training had become more of an obligation in my life and not all that much fun anymore.

It was time to ask myself some hard questions:

Why was it important to go so far? I no longer remembered.

Was killing myself racing the best or most appropriate way, to honor my body and the battle I fought with cancer? Probably not.

It's been 12 years, have all the wounds healed yet?

Yes.

Thanks to years of training, I can still swim a mile or 2 or 3 if I need to. I'm not the fastest or the slowest out there but it doesn't really matter.

In this part of the country, riding a bicycle out on the roads is a particularly risky undertaking and I'm no longer willing to endanger my life every time I go for a bike ride. Riding a bike here is way too stressful for me and certainly not fun. If we lived somewhere more conducive to bike riding, or if we go on vacation somewhere bike friendly, I'll ride.

It is still fun to plan vacations around a destination marathon now and then, for the shared experience and exotic location. Why not? After all, it is "only a marathon". That's fun.

By no means should it be construed that I think ultra events shouldn't exist, or that they are inherently bad or wrong. I'm glad other people can participate in and enjoy them. If "enjoy" is the right word for that experience.

What's different now, is that it's finally acceptable for me to sit back and marvel at other people testing the limits of human endurance.

Their endurance. Not mine.



MERCEDES MARATHON  
February 10, 2002  
MARATHONFOTO

# MY OCTOBER MARATHON

— Suman Silwal

Fall is a great time to run in North America. The cooler weather makes it one of the perfect seasons to run a marathon. Over the years, I have run many big city marathons such as Chicago, Toronto, New York City, and the Marine Corps Marathon as my first fall marathon. I love the big city experiences that they can bring to this southern runner.

Every year, I try to put at least one early fall marathon in my race calendar. I do not want to miss any opportunity training during the humid, slow days of summer in which I can log most of my training miles. After the hot summer months of training, the subsequent cooler fall races can put my summer training to the test. Over the years, I have proven my own saying: “Summer training can bring a Fall Personal Record (PR)”.



As a family man and a runner, I like to plan some of my races when my family can travel with me. This gives us a break from our busy work/school schedules as well a quick getaway in general. My family has travelled with me to many big city marathons. However, my kids’ school, my work, my own school, and the cost factor makes it harder to travel to big cities every year to run marathons.

## 7 Bridges Marathon

In November of 2011, as I was looking for an alternative first fall marathon that was close to home, I came across the 7 Bridges Marathon. Duane, a co-worker, running buddy and contributor to MRuns.com, mentioned that there was a new marathon named the 7 Bridges Marathon in Chattanooga. I’d never ran in Chattanooga, though I had been to the area before. Like most who hear about running in Chattanooga for the first time, I thought it was going to be a hilly race like in Atlanta. I looked up the race website (<http://sevenbridgesmarathon.com/>) and reviewed course profiles (<http://www.mapmyrun.com/us/chattanooga-tn/7-bridges-marathon-v4-route-29344266>). I was pleasantly surprised to find out that the race was not hilly, with a total climb of just 445 feet for the entire race. I told my friend Duane that I would run the marathon next year – 2012– and the rest is history.



As I prepare for my 3rd year of the 7 Bridges marathon, I reflect back and realize how much I have enjoyed the race, city and people of Chattanooga. In the last two years, I have been able to set my PR to a point that I am yet to break in any other marathons outside



### Where can I find race information?

MRuns.com has information including a 10% discount at <http://www.mruns.com/?p=12736>. You can also visit the event website for more information: <http://sevenbridgesmarathon.com/>

Chattanooga – even on flat and fast courses. In 2013, I was able to achieve every runner’s dream of being a Boston Qualified (BQ) runner. Yes! I will be running the Boston 2015 – and it’s all thanks to the 7 Bridges Marathon!

As much as I want you to join me in the next 7 Bridges Marathon, I also want you to realize that you do not have to travel hundreds of miles and spend thousands of dollars to achieve your PR, or qualify for Boston, or enjoy a city and marathon. It can be done close to home.

### The City of Chattanooga

I have always loved the city of Chattanooga and the things it offers for a family. It is only around 2.5 hours from the Birmingham, AL area. Before I was even a runner, I visited the city with my family for quick weekend getaways. Now, once per year, I have an opportunity to visit the city and connect to new people and places. I call it a “win-win” for both my family and I.

The city has a lot to see for both kids and adults, such as the Tennessee Aquarium, the Riverwalk area, Point Park, Rock City, Ruby Falls, the Kids’ Science Museum and more (<http://www.chattanooga.com/>). Even with all this, we still have more to discover. My family and I plan to go back to Chattanooga for a long time. If you have never visited the city, you should give it a try – even on non-marathon weekends.

When is the race? And how is the weather?

The race is on the 3rd Sunday in October. As mentioned earlier, the weather during this time of year is cooler. Training through the hot summer months has great payback during fall due to the weather. In the last two years, the temperature upon the start of the race was around 45 degrees. A perfect start, especially when you have been training within harsher weather.

### How is the course?

The course is mostly flat, other than bridges. The race start crosses the river from downtown, then runs through part of the city before it goes away from city. The 5th bridge around mile 17, which is the furthest point on the race course, has the longest and biggest climb. Once you get to the top of the bridge, the rest is mostly downhill and flat on the banks of the Tennessee River. The riverside run is great and peaceful.

In conclusion, if you are still looking for your first fall marathon or next marathon in general, give the 7 Bridges Marathon and 4 Bridges Marathon a try. You will see why I always have such a high rating for the race and event. Hope to see you at the starting line!

**More info:** <http://www.mruns.com/?p=12736>

**Event website:** <http://sevenbridgesmarathon.com/>

**Registration:** <https://www.edgereg.com/registration/>

**Race Date: November 8, 2014**  
Alabama RRCA 10K State Championship

**Race Web Site:**  
www.VulcanRun.com

**Race Day Registration:**  
Boutwell Auditorium  
1930 Reverend Abraham Woods Jr Blvd.  
Birmingham, AL 35203



**Pre-Race Packet Pick-up:**  
November 6th - 7th from  
11am - 6pm  
Trak Shak Homewood  
2839 18th St. South  
Homewood, AL 35209

**Race Date: November 8, 2014**  
6:30am - Registration & Packet Pickup Opens  
7:45am - Registration & Packet Pickup Closes  
8:00am - 10K Starts  
8:30am - 11:00am - Post Race Food and Fun  
9:30am - 1 Mile Fun Run Starts  
9:45am - 10K Awards Ceremony

**Vulcan Run 10K**  
**Race Date: November 8, 2014**  
Race Location: Boutwell Auditorium  
**Benefits:**  
Vulcan Park & Museum & Girls on the Run  
**Online Registration:**  
www.RunSignUp.com

**\$5,000 Cash Awards** to  
Winners in the 10K  
Top 200 runners get  
additional Finishers Shirt

	Post Marked by: August 31st	Post Marked by: September 30th	Post Marked by: November 5th	Nov. 6th - Race Day	XXL Shirt Add On cost	BTC Member Discount	Total:
<input type="checkbox"/> 10K	\$25	\$30	\$35	\$40	+\$3	-\$3	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Mile Fun Run / Walk	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	+\$3	-\$3	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am going to Sleep In, But I still want the T-shirt				\$20	+\$3	-\$3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Donation to Vulcan Park & Museum							
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Donation to Girls on the Run							
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive information about the Birmingham Track Club							
<b>Make Checks Payable and Mail to:</b> Vulcan Run P.O. Box 59349 Birmingham, AL 35259							<b>Total:</b>

**Participant Information:**

Last Name:  First Name:   
 Street Address:  City:   
 State:  Zip:   Male  Female Age:  DOB:   
 Phone Number:  Email:   
**Gender Specific Tech Shirts:**  W-Small  W-Medium  W-Large  W-X-Large  W-XX-Large (\$3 add-on)  
**All Adult Sizes**  M-Small  M-Medium  M-Large  W-X-Large  M-XX-Large (\$3 add-on)

**Emergency Contact Information:**

Contact Name:  Phone Number:

**Release Waiver:**

I know that running a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run the Vulcan Run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official or Police relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all rights associated with running the event including but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and conditions of the road. All such risks are known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing the risks and in consideration of you accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release the Birmingham Track Club, the City of Birmingham, all sponsors, volunteers, together with their employees, contractors, subcontractors, directors, officers, agents, attorneys, and representatives from all claims of liabilities of any kind or character arising from my participation in this event or any related activity even though liability may arise from negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons or organizations named in this waiver and release. I also am fully aware, whether same be caused by negligence or fault, that baby strollers, baby joggers, wheels of any kind (except competitive wheelchairs), animals and headphones are strictly prohibited and I agree not to have them on the course. I consent to the use of photographs, video, film and sound recordings of all Vulcan Run events for all legitimate purposes. I give permission to be contacted by interested media. I understand that the entry fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. I have read the entry information provided for the event and certify my compliance by signature below. **This is a Release of Liability Waiver.**

Signed By or Guardian signature if under 18

Date:

# New Membership Database

— by Alan Hargrave

Over the last few weeks, we have worked toward establishing a new membership database to improve your overall club experience. You may be familiar with a company called RunSignUp due to recent races in the area that have used their race registration product. It turns out they also have an excellent product for clubs and the BTC has made the decision to move its membership database to that product. Some of the advantages of the new system include:

- Automatic renewal reminders via e-mail. You will receive e-mail reminders 30 days and 7 days before your membership expires.
- Self-service maintenance of your profile. You can change your address, telephone number and other personal information online.
- Discounts to BTC events. When a discount is offered to BTC members, the system will automatically apply the discount as you register for the event.
- Print your membership card. Your membership card is available online and can be downloaded or printed any time you like.

We are pleased to report that all of our club membership records are now in the new system and we are ready to move forward. All future membership transactions will take place in the new system. This includes both new memberships and renewals. In fact, one of the features of this new system is that you never have to leave the BTC web site to complete your membership transaction.

To fully benefit from the new system, each BTC member has an account on RunSignUp and every member should have received an e-mail prompting you to claim the account. If you did not see that e-mail, check your junk mail folder. We have heard of some instances where it was treated as spam. When you click the link in the e-mail, you can claim your account by taking one of three actions:

## **Option 1 – Register Your Account**

If you have never used RunSignUp before, choose this option to verify your e-mail address and create a password for your new account.

## **Option 2 – Merge with Existing Account**

If you have used RunSignUp before, such as to register for a race, you already have an account in their system but it is not associated with your BTC account. This option allows you to compare the information in your existing account with that in the BTC account and select which is to be used. **IMPORTANT:** Do not select this option for more than one member of the same family using the same e-mail address. Doing so will remove one or more family members from the database.

## **Option 3 – Add as Secondary User of Existing Account**

This option is especially for families where more than one member of the family uses the same e-mail address. Choose option 1 or option 2 to claim the account for the primary member of the family. Choose option 3 for the remaining members of the family that use the same e-mail address.

For family memberships, each member of the family should have received a claim e-mail. Each member of the family should claim their account using the appropriate option detailed above.

Printing Your Membership Card

**Here are the steps to print your membership card.**

1. Login to RunSignUp ([www.runsignup.com](http://www.runsignup.com)).
2. Click on “Profile”. On a desktop browser, you’ll find this among the links at the top of the page. On a mobile browser, you may have to click the icon to expand the menu to see the Profile link.
3. Click “My Club Memberships” under Account Links.
4. Click on “Membership Card”. The page displayed is a PDF file that you can either print or save to your computer. If you have a family membership, cards for the entire family will be displayed on one page.

You may notice while viewing your profile that there is the option to edit your profile. This is the best way to make sure that we have up-to-date information in our membership database. Any time something changes, such as a new address, simply edit your profile and the BTC will have current information for you.

As with any project of this size, there are certainly a few kinks that will need to be worked out but so far things have progressed very well. Thank you to those who have already claimed their accounts and verified their information. We hope that you find this new way of managing our membership database adds even more value to your BTC membership.

# RUNNING RAMBLINGS

— Compiled by Randy Lyle



## Quotes

“It’s important to know that at the end of the day it’s not the medals you remember. What you remember is the process -- what you learn about yourself by challenging yourself, the experiences you share with other people, the honesty the training demands -- those are things nobody can take away from you whether you finish twelfth or you’re an Olympic Champion.”

~ **Silken Suzette Laumann, MSC, Canadian champion rower**

“Racing teaches us to challenge ourselves. It teaches us to push beyond where we thought we could go. It helps us to find out what we are made of. This is what we do. This is what it’s all about.”

~ **Patricia Susan “PattiSue” Plumer, retired American long-distance runner**

“You also need to look back, not just at the people who are running behind you but especially at those who don’t run and never will... those who run but don’t race...those who started training for a race but didn’t carry through... those who got to the starting line but didn’t in the finish line...those who once raced better than you but no longer run at all. You’re still here. Take pride in wherever you finish. Look at all the people you’ve outlasted.”

~ **Joe Henderson, American runner, running coach, writer and former chief editor of Runner’s World magazine**

“Running long and hard is an ideal antidepressant, since it’s hard to run and feel sorry for yourself at the same time. Also, there are those hours of clearheadedness that follow a long run.”

~ **Monte Davis**

“What distinguishes those of us at the starting line from those of us on the couch is that we learn through running to take what the days gives us, what our body will allow us, and what our will can tolerate.”

~ **John Bingham, American marathon runner and author**

“Watching the world’s best compete fires you up to achieve your own feats of greatness. When it comes to running, participation and spectating go hand in hand.”

~ **Kara Goucher, American long-distance runner**

## Ramblings

### Ten Must-Do Marathons around the World

Source: <http://www.active.com/running/Articles/10-Must-Do-Marathons-Around-the-World.htm>

As we approach the end of summer and the start of the school year, we know that it is almost time for marathon season. While looking online, I ran across an article about the top must-do marathons in the world. I found it interesting and thought other runners would as well. Without any preamble, the following are the top ten marathons in the world that Active.com considers must-do:

**1. Patagonian International Marathon** – Held in Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia, this race touts amazing views of some of the most impressive landscapes in the world. Participants run along rivers, lakes, and imposing glaciers as mountains tower more than 8,000 feet above the course with abundant wildlife marking the area. Runners finish at the base of Monte Almirante Nieto. This event boasts an off-road course mostly held on a rolling gravel terrain and attracts about 400 runners from over 20 countries each year for a different type of running journey. To add to the challenge, the race has a “Leave No Trace” policy, which means participants are required to bring their own hydration systems.

**2. Columbia Gorge Marathon** – This event is one of the most scenic races in the United States. It offers spectacular views of Oregon’s fall foliage during peak season. The race finishes at the Port of Hood River’s Marine Park after taking the runners down the Historic Columbia River Highway and through the gorge. A region believe to be have been carved out by Ice Age flooding, the canyon gets as deep as 4,000 feet and runs 80 miles to create a natural border between Oregon and Washington. Participants see stunning vistas overlooking the river, as well as free flowing waterfalls and charming small towns all along the racecourse.

**3. BMW Berlin Marathon** – This marathon starts and ends at the Iconic Brandenburg Gate and takes the runners in a large loop around the city. Perfect for running sightseers, marathoners encounter everything from the Reichstag (where the Third Reich once met), to the Tiergarten (a famous city park), to Potsdamer Platz (a public square where the Berlin Wall once sat) and past the Berlin Cathedral. To make marathon racers happy, this event has one of the fastest courses in the world, boasting

of countless world records being set. This marathon is the ideal race for those running for a PR or simply looking to experience a slice of history.

**4. The Big Five Marathon** – This event is the literal definition of a wild race. The route is in the Entabeni Game Reserve of the South African savannah. This marathon is not for the faint of heart as it takes the participants through the habitats of elephant, rhino, gazelles, buffalo, giraffe, lion and leopard with nothing separating runners from the animals. This race is a favorite among thrill-seeking trail runners with a course that goes through valleys, down ridges and up steep climbs. With a terrain that includes sheer ravines, raging waterfalls and redstone dunes, it is perhaps the most unique way to experience this type of landscape.

**5. Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon** – This race offers the chance to turn a race weekend into a wine-tasting vacation. Dubbed the “biggest little marathon in the West”, this event takes runners through the heart of wine country. Vineyards and wineries flank the course that starts in Calistoga and meanders along the historic Silverado Trail to finish at Vintage High School in Napa. The route is a net downhill from point-to-point on the almost entirely rural course. With capacity for 2,300 runners, the event prides itself on catering to individual runners and maintains a well-organized, small-town feel.

**6. Catalina Island Eco Marathon** – For those that seek a remote race in a beautiful location without leaving the United States, this event is it. The course starts off the coast of Long Beach, California, on the scenic trails of Catalina Island and takes the runners through three separate ecosystems. Throughout the marathon, participants traverse single-track trails, dirt roads, rough ridgelines and breathtaking vistas that offer expansive views of the Pacific Ocean. It is common to see buffalo out on the trail, seals in the water and bald eagles soaring in the sky overhead. Therefore, while the course is tough, it is worth keeping your eyes on the horizon so you do not miss anything.

**7. Access Health Colorado Marathon** – This race offers a great reason to head out west. Many regard this event as the fastest and most scenic marathon in the Centennial State. The course is almost entirely downhill although it does start at 6,108 feet. Runners lose 1,353 feet over the 26.2-mile course, which makes it accessible even for runners who do not train at altitude. The event starts in the foothills of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains and winds runners down through Poudre Canyons before finishing in Fort Collins. Thanks to the course design, it is one of the most successful races in the country at producing Boston Marathon qualifiers. Nearly 18% of participants most years hit the BQ standard, which is a higher percentage than any other race.

**8. Marathon du Medoc** – A description of this event is that it is “a wine and food festival disguised as a marathon”. The race takes place in the southwest of France near Bordeaux and includes food stands and wine tastings along the entire course. Among the fine fare offered are oysters, cheese, meats and fruits along with the region’s world-famous wines to wash everything down. Participants are encouraged to dress according to the year’s theme, which always results in

a parade of spirited costumed runners. There are over 8,000 runners stumbling their way to the finish line. In addition, the hospitality surrounding this race cannot be beat.

**9. Asics Stockholm Marathon** – This marathon course consists of two loops around Sweden’s capital city and provides a tour of the country’s most notable landmarks such as the Royal Woods, Royal Palace, City Hall and Houses of Parliament. Running mostly along the city’s charming waterways, participants can enjoy a particularly good view of the medieval and contemporary architecture of the city as they cross the Västerbron Bridge. The race finishes in the 1912 Olympic Stadium where over 80 world records in track and field have been set allowing the runners to get a rare glimpse into one of the most renowned venues in the sport.

**10. Sparkasse 3-Laender Marathon** – This unique event offers runners the opportunity to run through three countries in a single race: Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The course starts along the harbor on the island of Lindau, Germany, before taking runners through several Austrian towns and crossing the Swiss border to finish in Bregenz. With 60% of the route along the shores of Lake Constance, this race is flat and fast. It also helps that the temperatures tend to be moderate in October when the race occurs. In addition to amazing views, the varied terrain, featuring cobblestone, gravel and asphalt, keeps things interesting for the participants.

There you have it. These are the top must-do marathons in the world according to Active.com. Whether you are looking for nature, travel, sightseeing or adventure, one of these events should meet your requirements. There are plenty of marathons domestically that offer excellent organization with ideal courses, but sometimes you just want to escape to some place unique. There is plenty of uniqueness on this list. I want to run them all. My guess is that the total price tag will unfortunately keep me out of most of them. Oh well, one can still dream!

