

Starting Lines

May 1980 through December 1990, Volume 10, Number 04



John Burke (with megaphone) and Dick Stackpole (in front of clock) cheer on Kevin Ratelle at the Merrimack Regional Theatre Race (April 1980). From this race, the GLRR was formed.

GLRR = f (X)

by Will Mason

Decades are neat. Late this autumn I will have collected five of them. As I write this our club, the Greater Lowell Road Runners, will have completed its first. X years running.

Anniversaries are natural reflection points: look back; look ahead. Looking back, I recall exactly how I joined GLRR. I had been hooked

up with another club; I was a member but did not belong. Worse than that, the club's marathoners would not put me on their team. So I beat them all and looked elsewhere. And get this: my time was 2:47! How things change.

My first thought was to start a club on my own—the "Chelmsdale Track and Social Club." Nice ring but no answer. So I kept looking. Then, one day in a race in Lowell I

saw these guys in spiffy black uniforms. The Merrimack Valley Striders. They had a name and a uniform and that was enough for me. Somehow, nobody answered that number either.

Soon thereafter, out of the blue, one of the Chelmsdale High students called to inform me that a Lowell track club was holding a

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President's Message

Messages Through the Years

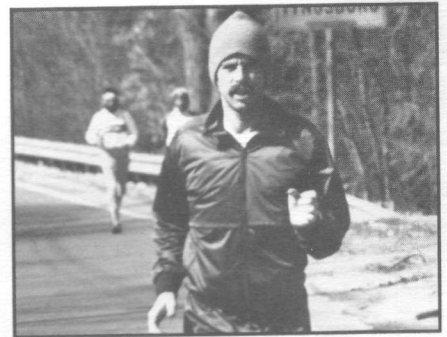
John Burke (1980 to 1985)

"One of the great lessons of running is that it shows us that success is achievable. The discipline of regular running allows us to discipline other areas of our lives and thereby achieve success in those areas. You can be what you want to be. The Greater Lowell Road Runners can be what you want it to be."



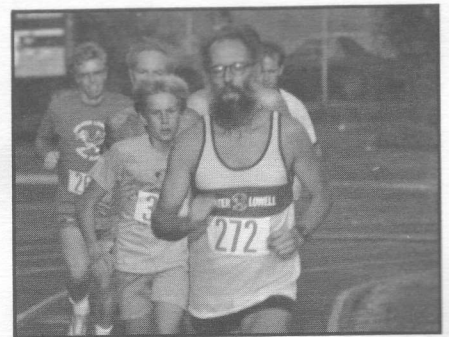
Fran Maycock (1985 to 1986)

"We all have something to offer each other; at a minimum, a running partner, but potentially, new friends. You don't have to be president or on the board of directors to take advantage of what our club has to offer. So please join us for a Sunday long run, or a track workout, or a weekday run, or a picnic, or what ever you find interests you. But whatever you decide, keep in mind that the club belongs to its members and we are all equal members of the same club."



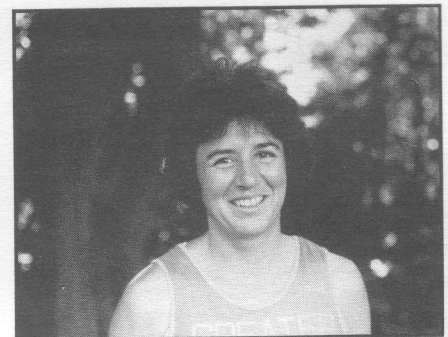
John Aegerter (1986 to 1989)

"Become an informed member. The information you need will not be supplied solely by Starting Lines or the Calendar of Events. Come to the general meeting each month to hear what the club is doing and considering, and to hear what other club members are doing. Don't be a member who supplies nothing but annual dues. Work a race, serve on a committee, be involved. I think that you will find that your membership in the club will mean more to you."



Mary Bourret (1989 to Present)

"Our road races including Hynes, Great Legs, and Jim Witt, have all grown in size over previous years when the numbers at other races are falling. This can be attributed in large part to the excellent job by our race directors and all the volunteers. Runners know that a GLRR road race will be safely run, have an accurate course, accurate and quick results, adequate facilities, a good prize structure and a great party. The income from these races has put the club in excellent financial shape for the future."



GLRR = F(X) Continued

meeting at a nearby golf course club house. After a long search I found the rascals. (One thing all the federal funding in the world is not going to change is the difficulty of navigating around Lowell.)

Too late to make a long story short, so I'll continue. Remember the Uncle Remus story about Brer Rabbit and the briar patch? Well, when I arrived at the meeting, two gents approached me immediately (they knew a 2:47 marathoner when they saw one!) and asked me (1) if I wanted to join a running club and (2) would I care for a beer? Nossir, please doan throw in that briar patch! It was 1980. I found my club.

The Club was better and worse than I had anticipated. The good part was that once a month we would meet at the President's house to figure out how we could raise dues to survive. (Some things never change.) Somehow I became a Vice President, which entitled me to pay my dues six months early so we could stay in the black. But the Board meetings were fun, as were the open meetings where we, "THE BOARD", pretended everything was under control.

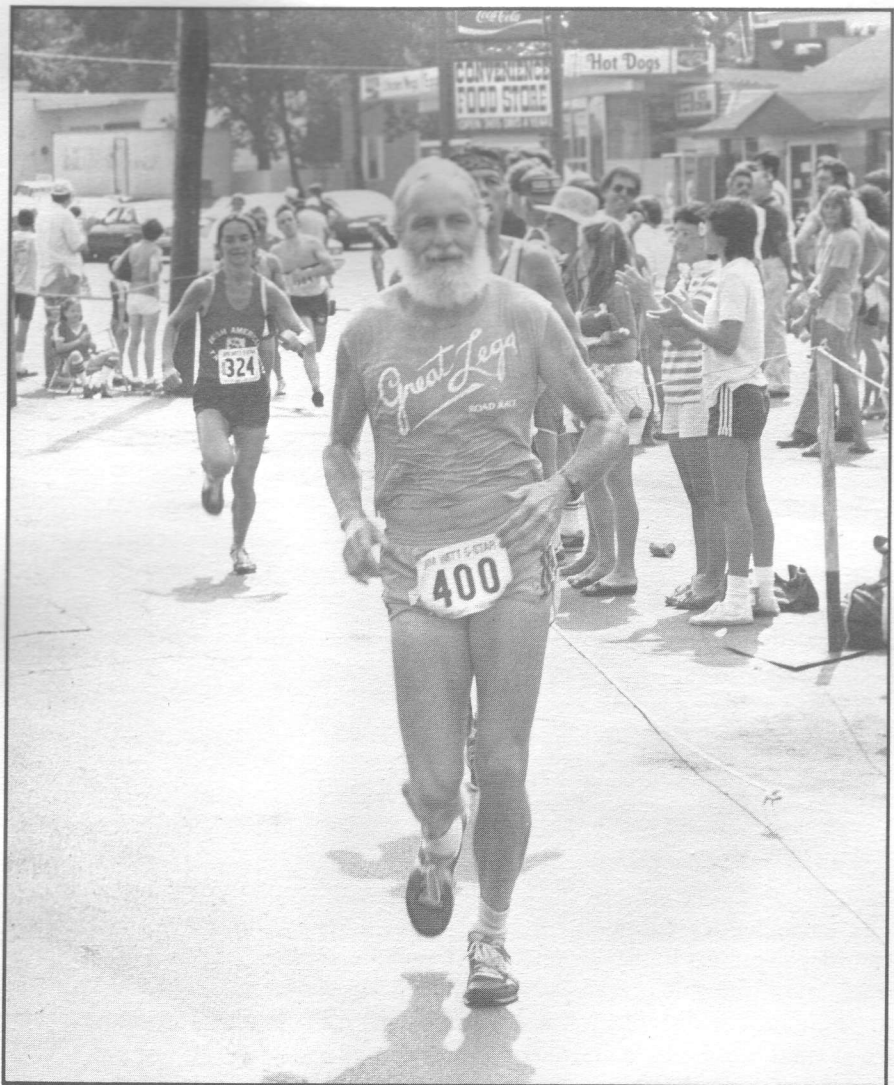
The bad part was the uniforms. No spiffy black for us. Due to a technical error in ordering and damaged brain cells in the acceptor, we had green singlets on top and see-through white shorts below. I don't know who was more excited, the men, the women or the spectators. (Note: the early uniforms have been replaced several times, most recently by duds that one can see for 50 miles. But, you know what? Still green on top.)

Having conquered the dues and the uniform problems, GLRR set off to do things for its members. (Imagine that: the members got

something and the Board could serve its members. Wait a minute, I think I am on to something here.) The first formal running that I recall was the Shedd Park series. For those new to Lowell that is a park on Route 38 and the route around "Fort Hill" is precisely 2.75 miles (not two and three quarters, 2-point-75). Every Tuesday evening during the summer we gathered near the Little League field and did something on that loop. Fast runs up and around Fort Hill. Guess your time runs. Staged start runs. It was fun and it was instructive.

These Tuesday night "events" taught us two things. First, different people would actually step forward to assume responsibility for the format of a particular evening and, second, other people would actually do what the first people said should be done. (Aha! Now I am on to something else. Army people could write a dissertation about this, under the general rubric of "followership/leadership".)

Well, the writing was on the wall. GLRR people wanted to run. Seemed fair, given the club's



Will Mason being chased by Maureen Sullivan at the 1983 Jim Witt Road Race.

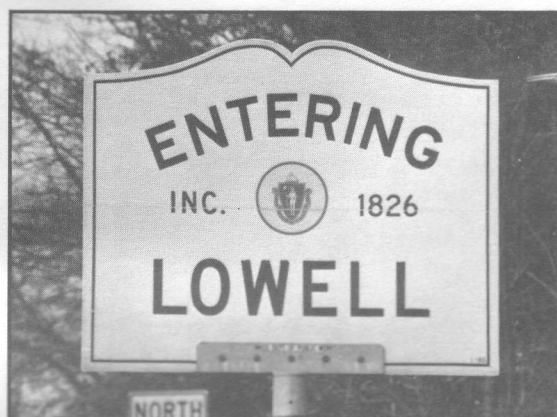
charter. The real test of this had its roots in a cockamamie idea called the "Marathon Clinic." (The word "clinic" should suggest fixing or healing. Rather an odd choice for the purpose.) In any case, this experiment was probably doomed to failure. As would become the motto for many other ideas to follow in the club's brief history, we say "It'll never work." No way could you get ordinary folks who happened to have running shoes and see-through shorts to complete a marathon.

To implement the objectives of the clinic, some volunteers (see, we now knew you can always get these people) ran every Sunday with a bunch of slow people who signed up to run further every Sunday until 26.2 miles was a possibility. Ah, the elegance of the plan! Sure, some did not enter the marathon, but even they ran greater distances than they had ever dreamed. One day a particular runner's family piled in the van just to see ole Dad during a 16 mile run. I will never forget the look on those kids' faces as Dad slugged by, singlet and all. (P.S. Dad quit after that run, resting on his laurels.) But, without going into a lot of detail, a group of GLRR runners completed a marathon, proud as could be. Perhaps not nearly as proud as the people who had paced them Sunday after Sunday after Sunday.

And then came another stupid idea that would never work. Get this: people should show up on hot summer evenings to run around the track eight times. Cleverly, it was to be called the "Two Mile" series. I was there for the first night. It was cloudy and rain threatened and I wondered if I would not have to run it alone. But, after a while almost 30 people showed up. The series was so successful that we

gave out trophies at the end. Hot ticket, you say? On some nights now over 100 (one hunnert!) people in our club show up to do this crazy thing on Wednesday evenings. And the organization is superb. There's those damn volunteers again. Wonder what they get out of it?

Time passed (or did we pass through time?). The marathon clinic was taken over by others and improved immensely. The Shedd Park runs folded into the two mile series events. Even the monthly meetings began to take on class:



they were well-organized and featured class speakers. We have had Joan Benoit and Greg Meyer speak about marathoning, Jock Semple speak about something (that was a tough accent), nutritionists, masseuses, reporters, therapists, lawyers, psychologists, triathletes, mega-distance runners, and finally, then President-elect George Bush even showed up to discuss the Iran-Contra thing. Next thing we had annual Christmas Parties (as if Christmas comes anything other than once a year), picnics, and outings for kids, young and old. Most amazing, we had people who formally knew beans about road racing putting on class events. Management models for New England.

And we got coaching, real coaching with track workouts and

all. After some debate, we formed a GLRR team. (By the way the first trophy won by any GLRR team was in the Dixville Notch Marathon.) The formation of the team was, for many, the highlight of the decade. (It was not, as I will opine later.) The formation was not without controversy. How could a club have an "elite" racing team and still cater to the majority? At first the answer was to make the team self-sufficient and not draw on the assets of the members. That tenet still holds true to some extent. The racing folks still earn their own money and even have a formal

budgeting process, but, it draws on the entire club now. And, again, team captains have sprung from our midst. It's our club's team. You could be on it. Is the Team successful? You know our record. It speaks for itself.

So, a decade has passed for GLRR. X years. It appears to continue its success and it is worth examining some of the reasons for that success. One reason is, in my opinion, necessary but not sufficient. A club must be there for the members. The members will be disparate in their desires, but there must be tolerance for disparity. I think GLRR meets that challenge well. For example, at one time we faced two dangers: (1) not having enough youth and (2) not having enough maturity: "You guys aren't old enough to have any stories" and "Don't play any songs by dead people." Two potentially polarizing positions, each with perspective, but somehow accommodated within our club. I like to think that, once in a while, the old hounds can jog with the pups and learn something new.

Certainly the Team spirit has helped our club. A fellow reported to me today that there must have been 400 Greater Lowell Road

Runners at a recent race. I suggested that the correct number was probably 370-385. Maybe the green uniforms or the noise caused him to overestimate. Or possibly our financial solvency and track record (a little pun there, heh, heh) contributes. But, there is something about those green singlets.

I am sure, however, that the best reason for success is the willingness of people to do something right (always a risk), do it, and then step aside and let someone else do it

better. The Board is much more efficient than the first. The clinic is better. The two mile series is better. The youth section is better. The racing team is better. More people have responsibility. Each President was able to build upon the successes of the previous President. We changed Presidents four times during this decade, each time building a better club. And so on.

So, I look back. X years. 50 years. Today, the young old guys

are running faster than the old old guys. It should be that way. And somebody reading this is going to have an idea that should not work, but will. And she or he will step forward and do it and, even more impressive, volunteers in public speeches replete with jokes, will announce their willingness to participate. It should be that way. By the way, I made up that part about George Bush. The rest is true. Looking forward, I'll be happy to report on GLRR = $f(2X)$. It should be that way.



"So Sue, was it as good for you as it was for them? " Team photo two days prior to the 1985 Boston Marathon. Front Row (Left to Right): Tom MacDonald, Sue Lamontagne, John Burke, Rafael Rios, Tom Amiro and Dave Camire. Top Row (Left to Right): Charlie Keefe, Dave Weeks, Rich Lamontagne, Dennis Connors, Wendell MacDonald, Will Mason and Colin Gouldson.

Lloyd's Llaws

by Will Mason

Editor's Note: LLOYD's Llaws appeared sporadically, usually in groups of five, within the confines of the newsletter over the ten years of the club's existence. Will Mason has (graciously?) granted permission to print the list in its entirety. And now, Lloyd's Llaws, truly dedicated to excellence in mediocrity.

(1) It takes just as long to get back in shape as it took to get out of shape.

(2) Two ten mile runs do not equal one twenty mile run.

(3) Stretching before a training run is a waste of time.

(4) At least one half of your running should be undertaken alone.

(5) Never run nine or nineteen miles.

(6) Downhill running causes more injuries than uphill running.

(7) The first production model of a "revolutionary" running shoe is always a disaster.

(8) At some given pace, it's easier to run faster than slower.

(9) Given equal running abilities, an adult will beat a kid in any race over three miles.

(10) Every runner has a picture of himself/herself running (or will receive one in the mail shortly after the next race).

(11) One of your personal records was accomplished on a short

course.

(12) Your body is smarter than your mind (or any nutrition expert).

(13) Every runner has a pair of shoes which should be thrown out but will not be.

(14) Runners spit more than other athletes.

(15) Running will not make you trim; not eating will.

(16) Every hill has two sides.

(17) If there were a grand prize for last place, everyone would tie for first.

(18) Running is neither blue nor white collar; it has no class.

(19) You could have run faster in your last race.

(20) Joggers keep it up longer; real runners sleep.

(21) If the last mile was faster than the first, you probably ran a good race.

(22) Friday nites make Saturday mornings more conducive to chores than to running.

(23) The healing power of running on grass or dirt is a myth; you are better off on macadam.

(24) The person who invents an odor-free running shoe will earn millions of dollars plus the gratitude of non-runners throughout the world.

(25) You never see world class runners doing jumping jacks or pushing on trees.

(26) Running does not prevent colds.

(27) Vegetarians do not run better than meat eaters.

(28) Black is most beautiful hurdling.

(29) The Biblical proverb "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" is particularly appropriate for some of this nation's top road runners.

(30) Running clubs are comprised of 5% who do 90% of the work, 90% who are satisfied to belong and participate now and then, and 5% who complain about the other two groups.

(31) Most dogs are afraid of runners.



*"Honey! I shrunk the Cruz kid!"
Ricky Cruz at Cawley Stadium
circa 1981.*

(32) Little dogs are more likely to bite than big dogs.

(33) Dogs will generally stop at the edge of their property.

(34) Dogs always pause immediately before attacking; your sudden stop signals your intent to attack.

(35) Not being able to read, Doberman Pinschers do not understand the above LLaws.

(36) A morning ten is never so fast as an afternoon ten.

(37) You know you look bad when someone in a car stops to offer you a ride and takes off before you can accept.

(38) Your chances of running well are better if you wake up in your own bed.

(39) One of five runners has a disapproving mate.

(40) Weight loss occurs in top-down fashion.

(41) Good runners do not use under-arm perspirants. (Some bad runners do not either.)

(42) The wind will generally change, unfavorably, on an out and back course.

(43) Some people are just not good wind runners.

(44) You can tell real runners who are watching a race by their fidgets.

(45) Stretching is fine, but a two-beer bath is better.

(46) Your strength is your strength.

(47) The better you run, the worse you swim.

(48) No training methods will prepare you for February in New

England.

(49) No one improves by running the same distance each day.

(50) Association is necessary for good racing, but dissociation is great for mental health.

(51) It's only those last few miles that have any training effect.

(52) The most boring discussions begin with the question "Why do you run?"

(53) Never buy running shoes from a fat man.

(54) Boston is called "Boston", not "the Boston".

(55) There is no greater paradox than a 300 pound Elk handing a trophy to a 120 pound gazelle.

(56) Runners will drive hundreds of miles to run six miles.

(57) No matter how busy, a runner will find time to tell you about his or her PR.

(58) Avoid first time marathoners at post race parties.

(59) Every marathon has 26 terrible stories, per person.

(60) The first woman always attracts a bunch of fools who think she requires the quantity and quality of protection that the Secret Service affords the President.

(61) Before every big race you see some otherwise well-dressed person walking around in a Hefty bag.

(62) Every runner gets a warm-up suit for Christmas.

(63) If you think runners are insufferable, talk to their proud mothers.



Berna Finley acts as a witness as Sue Lamontagne pledges to the Wall God that she will run much better in her next race. Taken at the Couples Race, Concord, NH circa 1987.

(64) Working fathers, on the other hand, think running is a waste of time.

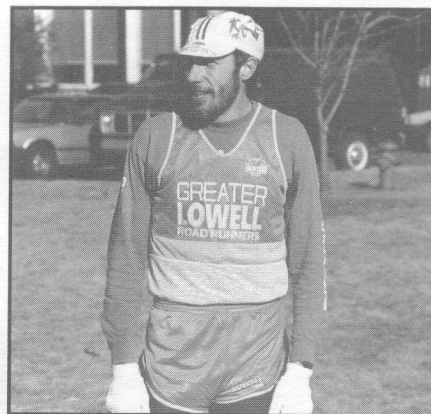
(65) The best running stories are told in divorce courts.

(66) Married runners are too tired to have affairs.

(67) There is nothing worse than falling in stride aside a windsucker.

(68) Running in the summer rain is like being twelve again.

(69) Real runners are afraid of downhill skiing.



The Roy Hobbs of running - Tom Carroll at the finish of the 1988 Mill Cities Relays.

(70) Ultra-distance runners train at race pace and race at training pace.

(71) Runners greet the big "40" as a new dawn.

(72) Your 45 minute 10K would be national news if you were a Hollywood star (or President, or both).

(73) Sooner or later you will read an article about a runner who eats wood.

(74) Designer shoelaces will raise the price of running shoes by \$5.

(75) There should be a Toe Nail Fairy for runners.

(76) The first races were conspiracies of t-shirt companies.

(77) Next summer was best last winter.

(78) Women's shorts still fit like men's shorts.

(79) Runners who can barely speak correct English, break into fluent Latin when discussing injuries.

(80) A slight calendar adjustment, affecting the starting day of the running week, giving you perhaps eight days, will sometimes help you maintain your weekly mileage quota.

(81) The first women's model of a man's shoe is always powder blue.

(82) Your first opportunity for a trophy was at a race you did not run.

(83) Next to jockeys, runners are the most weight-conscious group in America.

(84) Runners make lousy bowlers.

(85) Bowlers make lousy runners.

(86) It is always reported that runners have great ideas while running; it is never reported that they usually forget them by the time they hit the showers.

(87) Runners who give bikers a friendly smile tend to ignore roller skaters.

(88) Boxers run well, but you will not see many runners in the ring.

(89) The unrecorded world record pace was set by a kid on his way to the candy store with the \$5 he just found.

(90) Running west to east is faster than vice versa.

(91) Weight classes for runners make as much sense as eight foot high baskets for short basketball players.

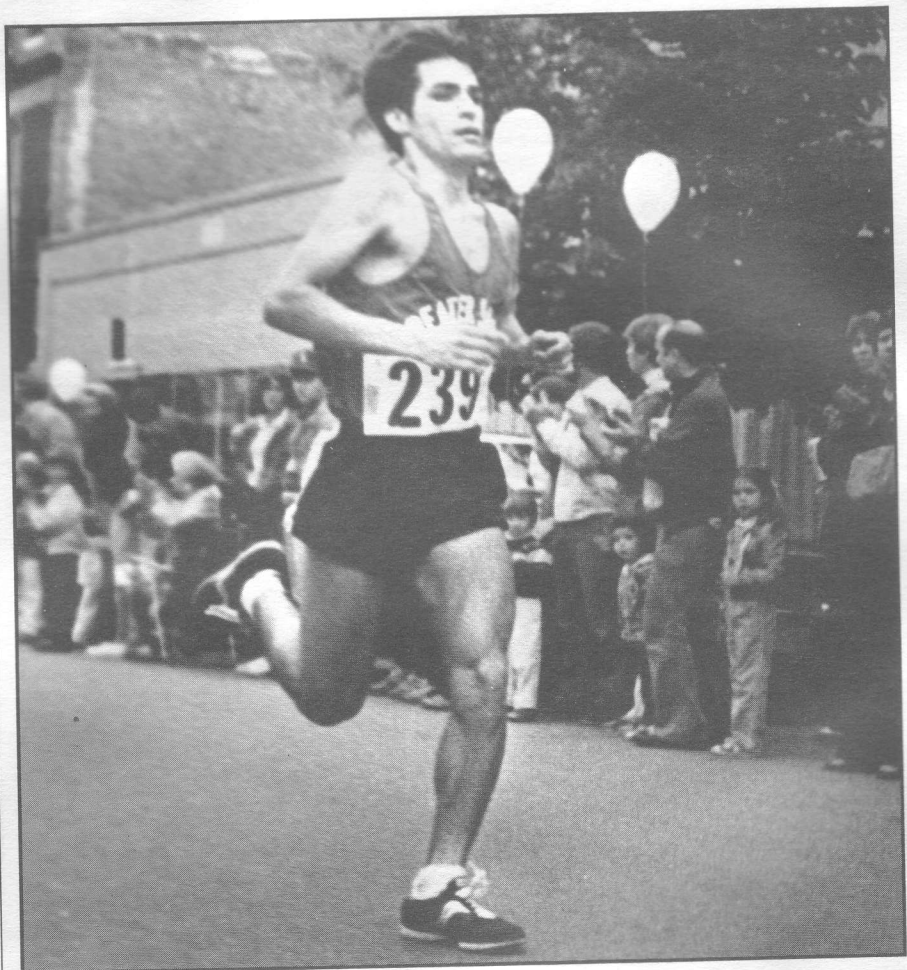
(92) Married runners wonder what single runners do with their wallets and keys during a race.

(93) Running diets are honored mostly in the breach.

(94) A television show about running would last no more than three weeks.

(95) The correlation between running and divorce is well substantiated; what is not known is the direction of the cause and effect.

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Art Demers coughs up two balloons as he breaks away from the pack at the Dubliner Road Race, circa 1943.

Lloyd's Llaws Continued

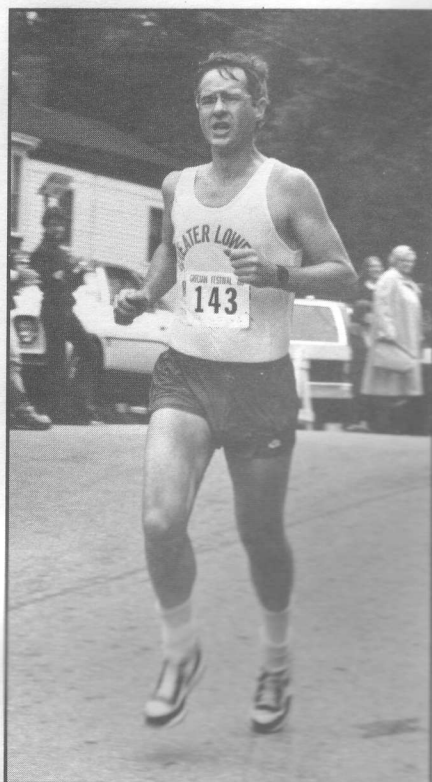
(96) Every runner has pictured of herself winning the big race.

(97) Generally, you think better when you run; always, you run better when you think.

(98) You never see a course advertised as being "inaccurately measured".

(99) Most running stories are repetitive.

(100) Most running stories are repetitive.



Dennis Conners rounding the corner at the AHEPPA Road Race in 1982.

The Best of Conners' Corner

Editor's Note: Dennis Conners, one of the "pounding members" of GLRR, had a semi-regular column in Starting Lines. Herewith are this editor's favorites.

The only thing more boring than overhearing two runners talk, is overhearing two wood stove owners talk about wood, saws, pipes, etc.

Gatorade has come out with a new product — Gatorload 280. It's a high energy carbohydrate drink mix intended to take the place of traditional carbo-loading. No thanks, I'll stick to pasta and apple pie.

Ben Fudge has joined the club, making him the most prolific member to join the club in the area. Ben is also a member of the North Medford Club and an associate member of MVS (Merrimack Valley Striders). Ben also said he joined NMC so that he can feel young; MVS so he has a group of runners he can beat; and GLRR so he can reap the fruits of a well organized club. Now that Ben is a member, I hope we can give his Saturday morning winter racing series the support it deserves. I'll even let him use my idea for a name — "The Fudgical Series".

Wear your GLRR singlet in all races in which you are entered. It is another method of promoting the club without any effort.

Most ridiculous statement to carry on your race number for 26.2 miles — "Run and Become, Become and Run" — Sri Chinmoy Marathon 1981.

Most bizarre pre-race instruction — A sign at the Clarence DeMar Marathon 1980 — "Remember, blisters can be painful".

Thanks to the 185 Boston motorcycle cops who chose to follow Salazar and Beardsley for the last 5 miles, instead of doing their job and controlling the crowd for the other 6998 runners. The last time there were that many Boston police in one place was at the weekly disability board meeting.

The club needs more straight men and I'm not talking about sexual preference.

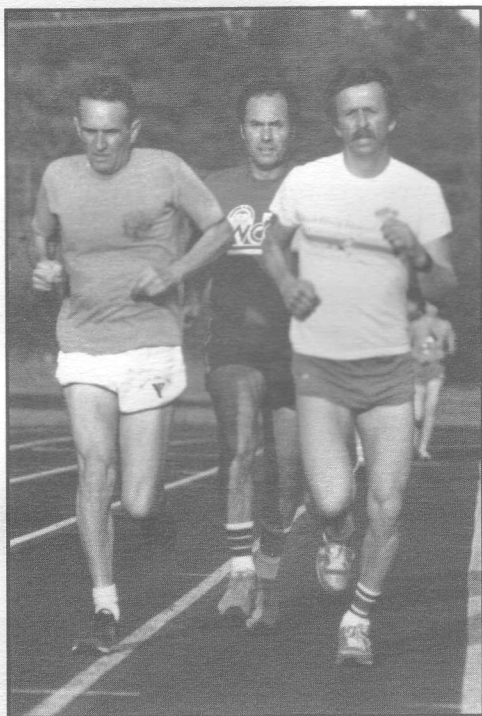
The "Make a Buck on a Runner" award goes to Hautbois Productions which will send you a four page report entitled "Increase Your Chances For Running New York in 1983".

Rob DeCastella wears ugly running clothes.

I watched a 75 mile bike race on TV and all 200 riders finished at the same time. And some people think running is stupid.

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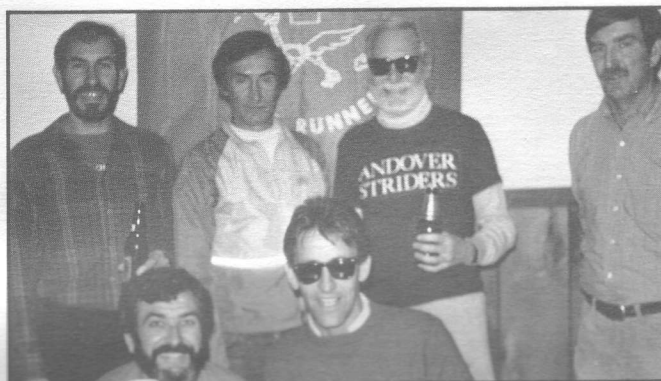
The Way We Were



Former Lowell High School football coach Walter Nelson prepares for his new career as head coach for the Lowell entry in the SFBL (Senior Football League). Seen being whipped and driven by coach Nelson are Joe Craven (Left) and Dan Woz (circa 1984).



"Yo! Dudes! You should look this good when you hit the big Fore-Oh". (L to R) Nancy Chapman, Jeanne Boswell and Anne Sartorelli.

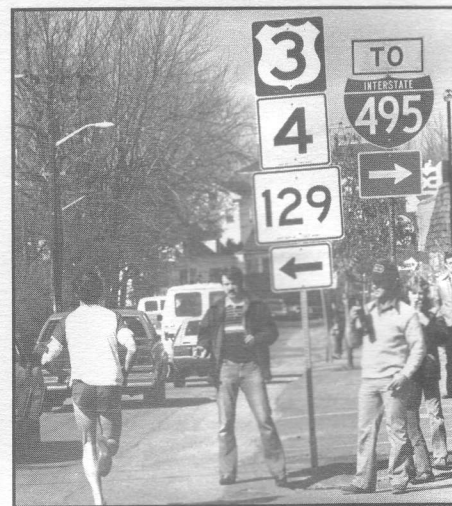


The Blues Brothers at the end of the 1987 Mill Cities Relays. (Top, L to R) Colin Blues, Bob "Mad Dog" Blues, Will Blues and Dave Blues. (Bottom, L to R) Denny Blues and Rhythm n' Blues.



GLRR's first and last attempt at a 24 hour relay. If this was a 24 hour relay, why wasn't anyone on the track? Circa 1983 AM/PM.

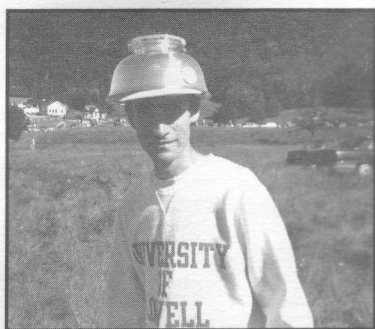
10 Starting Lines



"Davy, Davy Crocker - sendin' them to God-knows-where." Dave Crocker circa 1980 at the VFW Marathon.



The CRUZing runners - proud Papa Cruz with his running family. (L to R) Rosa, Patty and Ricky with Danny in front.



We all know that Bob Hodge is a great runner. But few of us know that Bob's most secret desire is to star in the definitive gladiator movie. Taken at the Mt. Washington Road Race - 1988.



1982



"Just gettin' rid of some Foster's. It's Australian for beer, mate!" Colin Gouldson at the Jim Witt Road Race circa 1984.



Ben Fudge's personal "Tewksbury Twosome." Ben with Becky Payton (L) and Deb Cole at the conclusion of the first Tewksbury Twosome (1988).



Nashua to Hynes Run 1984.



Chris Brennan - Run Your Turkey Off, circa 1983.

Conners' Corner Continued

When you can't get the correct winner in a 300 runner marathon, your race is in trouble — Silver Lake Dodge 1983.

Bill Rodgers was Will Rodgers before he won his first Boston Marathon. Will Mason was Bill Mason before he started running.

T.V. commentator 2:36 into the BAA "and here are some more stragglers".

I would never run in a marathon which charged me \$3 for a chance to get an application.

Best news you can get six weeks before Boston from your boss — "I'm going to be out of town for the next month".

Alberto Salazar quote in a Track and Field interview "I was in such bad shape I couldn't do 5 miles in 25 minutes." Don't feel bad Al, neither can I.

I know it sounds mean but I didn't watch the NY Marathon coverage so I could see one legged people hop across the George Washington Bridge.

What is the proper response when someone spits and it lands on your leg during a race?

Best local quote — "What you did is what you done", Marty Cardoza from his forthcoming autobiography "Down and Out With Merrimack Valley".

I have a bad feeling about "The Boston Peace Marathon".

I like Jock Semple as a guest speaker, but he sounds like me after 8 beers. On the same subject, that was the first time Jock and Ben Fudge had seen each other since high school.

If Zola Budd ran in my neighborhood, she'd never go barefooted ... too many dogs.

Quick Quiz — Will Mason likes to see Colin Gouldson:

- a. at another race.
- b. behind him in the same race.
- c. hurt.
- d. Australia.
- e. all of the above.

If I were an orphan, I'd like to get adopted by the Cravens. The Tiches wouldn't be a bad choice either.

Multiple choice question of the month: What is a Whirlaway?

- a. a scary ride at Canobie Lake Park.
- b. a 1950s hair-do.
- c. a kid's toy.
- d. a six day bender.
- e. a racing team.

Don Drewniak, the Idi Amin of Worcester County, has petitioned Fred Brown to change the rules at the Cape Cod Relays — he wants the eight runners per team changed to seven runners and one car.

Is Wendell MacDonald dead?



"Time passed (or did we pass through time)." In 1979, Roland "Frenchy" Vermette held time at the Lowell VFW Marathon.