

# MCRRC Intervals

November 2013

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**November 3**

Rockville 10K/ 5K  
King Farm  
Rockville, MD

**November 10** \*\* Date Change!

Candy Cane City 5K  
Ohr Kadesh Congregation\*\* Location  
Change!  
Chevy Chase, MD

**November 16**

Stone Mill 50 Mile  
Gaithersburg, MD

**November 23**

Run Under the Lights 5K  
Seneca Creek State Park  
Gaithersburg, MD

**November 30**

Turkey Burnoff (5 miles or 10 miles)  
Seneca Creek State Park  
Gaithersburg, MD

**December 8**

Seneca Slopes 8K  
Seneca Creek State Park  
Gaithersburg, MD

**December 15**

Jingle Bell Jog  
Rockville Senior Center  
Rockville, MD

For complete details of MCRRC's races and programs, visit [www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org)

## Board Meetings

November 7, 7 pm  
Rockville

December 5, 7 pm  
Rockville

## Parks Half Marathon



Photo: Tom Brennan

The 1:50 pace group strides past one of the Parks' Half Marathon's most unique features this year, a concert pianist entertaining the runners as they pass through Ken Gar.



# The Back Nine

## Older and wiser; more mellow and more joyful...and still running.

by Freddi Carlip, Managing Editor

**I**t's been almost two years since we brought Intervals back, with a different twist. It's been a lot of fun working on each issue. Although I live in PA, my heart is still with the MCRRC. When I was on the RRCA board, I always held the MCRRC up as a shining example of what a running club—what dedicated volunteers—can accomplish. I hope all of you are enjoying Intervals as much as I enjoy working on it.

Given that my 69<sup>th</sup> birthday is coming up in December, I've written a column that expresses my feelings about growing older and what's important.

I was talking with a friend about my upcoming birthday. Before I had a chance to tell her I'd be turning 69, she asked if I was turning 55. What an ego boost! I thanked her and told her that she was one decade early. We laughed. She then made a comment that gave me a lot to think about. She said, "You're on the back nine. Do what makes you happy?"

The back nine. I'm a runner not a golfer, but I knew exactly what she meant: I'm on the back nine of life and I shouldn't squander the precious time in front of me. And, thanks to my friend, Laura, I'm doing my best to make my back-nine years the best years.

I've spent so many hours fretting over the future, or anticipating a significant occasion yet to come. I've lived with my planner, writing in dates and times as if my life *was* the planner. Some people call it "calendar-ing," living for the future, as we let each day escape our focus.

We might have thoughts like these: Once I get that marathon under my belt...once I get that 5K PR...once vacation comes...once the kids are out of school...once I get a new job...once I retire...than what? Why do we think that life will be so much better

in the future, when each day brings us something worth celebrating?

Life, whether the back nine or the beginning of the course is about *now*. Maybe it's only by getting to the back nine that we realize what's important. When we put running, working, working out, or time fillers ahead of family and friends, then our priorities need an adjustment. If we live by our planners and not by the day, than we're heading off the course. We should plan for the future, but not live for it.

My back nine is already filled with the joy of family and friends; the joy of love and caring; the joy of dancing and music; the joy of laughter; the joy of running, and the joy of working with beginning women runners.

The back nine. I'm aiming for a whole lot of holes-in-one. And, if I don't get them, I'll keep in mind that it's in the trying that the joys of living and running are captured.

In *this* game, we don't get a Mulligan after we play the last hole.

— *Freddi Carlip is editor and publisher of Runner's Gazette, a former president of the RRCA and a proud MCRRC member. She lives, runs, and works in Lewisburg, PA.*



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MCRRC is a non-profit, educational organization which promotes personal health and fitness through the sport of running. The club conducts regular running activities, including training sessions races, seminars, and social events.



# Valuing Our Community

by Karen Ward Kincer, President

**I**n these times of fiscal concern in our country, when government shutdowns have enormous trickle-down effects on job security even for those who do not work for the federal government, one has to contemplate the value of just about everything. What is nice, what is needed and what represents the wise use of a dollar.

Last year, a club member calculated that given the dues that he paid for himself and his family, it cost him 6 cents per mile to run each of the 113.7 miles he ran in club races in 2012. I think most of us would increase that tenfold and still call MCRRC a good value without hesitation.

As the board has worked through the annual budget process over the last couple of months we have also been calculating the value of each dollar that we spend and what it brings to our members. Budget time is always a lot of work and of course requires compromise and difficult choices but it is so important and worth it because it really sets direction for the upcoming year. As much as it may sound crass, how we spend the club's money makes a big contribution to how we serve our members and to the quality of everyone's experience with our club.

Like a lot of folks we've had some financial setbacks and some gains over the last year. We've seen income and sponsorship from a number of races decline, as have running clubs across Maryland. For the upcoming year we are budgeting for fee increases for many of the permits that grant us access to parks and tracks for our races and training programs.

We've also made some investments, which we hope will pay off in better service to members. Among the things we have done are expand our physical office space to accommodate

a growing staff and create meeting space for use by all club races and programs. We have upgraded our Internet technology to provide for a stable web presence ensuring that our most vital communications tool, our website, is available to members and the community. We have expanded our staff this year to provide better support to general members as well as Race and Program Directors. And we've invested in training, providing free First Aid and CPR certifications to 40 coaches and financial support and assistance for more members to become RRCA certified coaches.

Even as we make these investments we are looking at ways to conserve funds in other areas. You will see less mail from MCRRC races next year, hopefully replaced by a more robust email blast system. I know that I personally throw those pretty postcards in the recycle bin often before they even enter the house and I suspect that many of you do too. Some people I've consulted are respectfully arguing with this decision and time will tell if it is a good one or not. For those of you who have relied on the postcards for motivation to register to run or volunteer, I hope you will help us conserve both environmental and financial resources by responding to our emails!

We are also encouraging races and programs to work with selected vendors to purchase premiums and other items. Reducing the number of vendors we work with will reduce the amount of administrative time spent on these purchases, will help to ensure better branding of MCRRC race and program premiums and will hopefully result in direct cost savings by consolidating some business.

All of this sounds like a lot of business and details to most of you I am



sure but it is also yet another sign of how much our club has grown. We are no longer just a little running club, holding a few races and scheduling a few training runs. In 2013, over 1700 participants will run in MCRRC Training Programs. Over 25,000 people will run in races managed by MCRRC. We cannot do well by all of them by doing the same old thing even if it means that some things change.

But as several authors in this issue point out much of this change is good. Expanding our programs into Trail Running is keeping up with the times and market demand, and mostly, it's really fun! As Bill Stuart points out the racing scene has undergone some changes but at the end of the day, it's still you against the road. Sometimes, the road takes us to new places as Dan DiFonzo illustrates but the important things, like being part of a community remain.

On the board level, as we work through this budget season, we are striving to ensure that we structure the business and pesky details of this club in a way that we can preserve the programs and events that help us to sustain this community and all that we think it has to offer to our members. And in this day and age, when so much of our world is centered on a computer, when many of us don't even go to work in an office with other people, and when we are so busy running to this and that that we sometimes don't even get to enjoy it when we're there, that sense of community is invaluable. I hope that is part of the value that MCRRC brings to you.

— Karen Ward Kincer is the President of MCRRC. She can be reached at [president@mccrc.org](mailto:president@mccrc.org).



# Hitting the Road for More Than a Run

by Dan DiFonzo

The recent running boom has created a sea-change in how people run marathons and half-marathons. Thanks to a bevy of great training programs, MCRRC is producing more marathoners and half-marathoners than ever. Whether it's the First Time Marathon Program, the Winter Half and Winter Marathon Program, the Summer Half Marathon Program or the slightly more competitive Experienced Marathoners Program, there's a time—and a now a season—for every pace.

It wasn't long ago when marathons were reserved for uber-athletes, an elite group of runners who trained and ran the grueling 26.2 miles on a solo mission to beat their personal best and place high in their age group. People trained—largely individually—for their target race. This involved many solitary hours on the roads and trails and then a road trip with a friend or family member for the race itself. Times have changed.

A runner no longer needs to run alone to reach his goal of finishing or even racing a half or a full marathon. Thanks to these training programs an athlete can run year-round and virtually never run alone. This includes daily training runs, speed workouts, and the dreaded long runs. Conventional wisdom now dictates that if you're going to spend all of those hours with others it makes perfect sense to make the goal race part of the group experience as well. And so it has.

Runners today have turned the race experience into one giant weekend social event. At this year's Wineglass Marathon in Corning, New York, more than 50 MCRRC members drove more than 400 miles to run the race. For the first time, the Experienced Marathoners Program had nearly as many people travel to Corning, NY for the Wineglass Marathon as to the program's goal race—the local Marine Corps Marathon.

“Running for me is social,” said Teah Devan who has been running with the club since 2008. “I'm able to train with friends who inspire me, socialize along the way and then go on a road-trip to run a marathon with these same people. To me it's the perfect formula!”

Destination races have turned into events akin to weddings—with large pre-race dinners, van-loads of people driving hundreds of miles together, entire hotel floors filled with fellow runners, and post-race gatherings to celebrate the culmination of yet another training cycle.

At Wineglass, more than 30 people gathered the night before the race at an



The MCRRC crew including author, Dan DiFonzo, at a pre-race dinner before the Wineglass Marathon.

Italian restaurant in suburban Corning for a pre-race pasta dinner. Conversations were mostly about weather predictions, pacing, on-course nutrition and race strategy—not your normal Saturday night dinner chatter. But runners found it calming to spend this valuable time with friends and training partners before heading back to their hotels and preparing for race day.

In Boston this past April, MCRRC was once again well-represented. More than 60 club members made the trip and most were toasting their accomplishments at the Club's informal post-race gathering when news of the finish-line bombings quickly spread.

The Boston tragedy brought out the best in our club members. Instead of panic, there was an immediate instinct to take care of our own. Runners huddled together and thanks to texting and social media were able to immediately let family, friends and co-workers around the country know they were safe. More importantly, it allowed MCRRC members to account for all of the runners who weren't present or had yet to finish.

Less than a week later, more than twenty Boston finishers met at a Rockville tavern to talk about the tragedy and to celebrate why they had traveled together in the first place: to compete in the Boston Marathon.

“Because we left the gathering in Boston so hastily, I thought it was important to finish what we started, get everyone back together to talk about what had occurred and to process that information with the people who shared the same experience,” club member Julie Sapper said. “It was as much about healing as it was to finally celebrate the accomplishment of running the Boston Marathon.” Runners share their highs and lows on their daily and weekly training runs throughout the season.

“When you run with people all year, you forge bonds that are hard to break,” Sapper added.

If you've ever contemplated running your first race or joining one of the Club's highly successful training programs, never before has the expression, “Just do it!” been more appropriate. You'll make many friends along the way, have plenty of company for training and you can bet there will be more than a few people to join you when you're ready for a road trip!

— Dan DiFonzo is perfecting the art of the road trip with races in Boston, New York and Richmond this year.



# What's Changed in Road Racing

by Bill Stuart

A few weeks ago I ran the Parks Half Marathon. My hat's off to the race director Mike Acuna, the great race committee, and to the 400 energetic volunteers. What a great job they did, and because of them, this race is now **One of the Best** on the MCRRC's race list!

Anyway, a little about me. I've been running in organized races some 40 years, which is about the same time Jim Fixx wrote the book that really started it all, *The Complete Book of Running*. I have completed 58 marathons (including 15 Bostons), over 2,000 smaller races, and one ultra (JFK 50). So while I was running the Parks, I got to thinking about what's changed and what hasn't since I started running. I thought I'd share some of those thoughts so that those of you old enough to remember can reminisce, and you younger runners can shake your heads in disbelief.

Let me start by saying the biggest thing that *hasn't* changed is the volunteers. Without the volunteers, there would be no races. This was just as true in 1973 as it is today. Those of us who run are so lucky there are people willing to get up at 4am to put out the cones, set up the start, etc., etc. Thank you, thank you!

Here's another thing that hasn't changed: Running is *still* fun! I do it because there is something about it that I really enjoy. I used to say I ran because I stunk at playing golf. But the truth of the matter is, I really do enjoy it. And before the start of *every* race, I am still a little anxious. It just doesn't go away.

PA systems still have poor sound quality. The only people who can hear them are those at the front of the pack. And the folks at the back of the pack are the ones who probably need them most, because frankly, the ones at the front aren't even listening. We used to have guns to start the race or maybe

even cannons. I guess those are no longer socially acceptable.

The camaraderie of runners hasn't changed. We are always trying to help each other do better, and when one falls we always stop to try and help. We always give advice on how to train better, or how to get to the start, or to recommend the best training program. Running Clubs and Groups, organized Training Programs, Pace Groups, and good running friends are still **great!**

And runners still have great looking legs and ugly, ugly feet and toes.

Now, the changes.

The price of a road race has totally changed. In 1977, the cost for me to run the Gasparilla Classic 15K in Tampa was only \$8. By the way, I ran as a bandit because I couldn't afford the \$8—and I still feel guilty. My first Boston, in 1988, was \$35 (and back then you also had to be a member of The Athletics Congress—now USA Track and Field—in order to run). Today, the entry fee for Parks is \$65 and for Boston it's \$175.

Entry times have changed. I can remember people signing up for the Marine Corps the day before the race. For Boston, anybody who qualified got in. The procedure was to mail in a stamped, self-addressed envelope requesting they mail you an application. As long as you returned it by mid-March, you were in the race. Now, you'd better get onto the website the day it opens in December or you won't get in (unless you are a member of the BAA).

My goals have changed. In the past, my goal was to run with the leaders the first couple of miles, win my age bracket, and maybe, (hopefully), in the end beat the first woman [nothing sexist intended]. I just wanted to get my name in the paper while also aiming towards the goal of helping me to train or qualify for Boston. Today my only goal is to finish while there's still any beer left.

Smoking has certainly changed. We routinely used to get together as

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Photo: Alex Reichmann

MCRRC's Cindy Conant at this year's Parks Half Marathon

# Rob Palmer



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

**R**ob Palmer, 37, got his first taste of trail running as a runner on his high school cross-country (XC) team after running shorter track distances since middle school. As an adult, he's transitioned to longer distance road races but has maintained his love of the trails, incorporating trail marathons and ultra distance races, as well. A member of MCRRC since 2004, Rob is a 5-time participant in the Club's Experienced Marathon Program (XMP), an active racer in the MCRRC Championship and Cross-Country Series, and a frequent volunteer. This season Rob completed in longer distance road races (Toronto Waterfront Marathon and Parks Half Marathon) and off-road/trail races (Revenge of the Penguins 20-miler and Rosaryville 25K trail race). A Biologist/Health Specialist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Rob lives in Silver Spring with his wife, Susan (also a runner) and dog Quincy.

**What came first, road running or trails?** High school team running eventually evolved into short road races and XC events. A few years later I started doing road marathons eventually incorporating trail marathons/ultras as well. My first participation in an MCRRC event was the Comus XC race in 2003.

**When did you first start running trails?** High school XC was my first experience running trails. When I first joined MCRRC I met up with some of the Saturday morning trail runners at Candy Cane City (Meadowbrook). Those group runs really got me interested in local trail race opportunities.

**What are your favorite trail routes?** Rock Creek Park (Candy Cane City); Cabin John Regional Park; and Seneca Creek (Greenway) trail.

**Do you run trails on your own or with a group?** Shorter recovery runs on trails are usually done solo. For longer training runs I usually try and

recruit other MCRRC friends.

**Do you notice a difference between the “vibe” of trail races/runners vs. road races/runners?** Absolutely! While there is certainly a competitive component to both groups, many XC/trail events feature a more laid-back atmosphere, often incorporating post-race picnics or BBQs to complement the time spent out in the natural surroundings. While road racing is often about finishing times, trail running is more about the overall outdoor experience.



Rob Palmer

**Do you use different shoes/gear for running trails?** Yes – I use road shoes or trail shoes as appropriate. I use Brooks Cascadia shoes on trails because they give me better traction and mid-foot cushioning for off-road terrain.

**What benefits have you noticed from trail running?** In terms of physical benefits, trail running has improved both my overall strength and agility, due to the numerous elevation changes

and winding paths. The concentration needed to navigate the terrain provides a good opportunity for the “mental” training needed for endurance events. Other than that I get to appreciate the natural park settings and disconnect from concrete and pavement for a while.

**Are there any unique challenges that come with trail running?** One of the biggest challenges is contingency planning for emergencies (injury, dehydration, etc.) since aid may not be readily available or close by. Getting used to running on trails with roots, rocks, branches, mud and other obstacles takes some practice, although with time it can become almost second-nature. Also, it is also quite possible to get lost in unfamiliar surroundings!

**Do you have any races (road, trail or otherwise) planned for 2014?** For now I'm mostly planning on the MCRRC series races. I will also apply for the lottery to get into the Empire State Building Run-Up. I did it once in 2012 and would like to try it again.

**What advice would you give runners who want to try trail running?** I would advise those interested in trail running to take the same approach they would with any new running activity, namely to start out simple and build confidence slowly. Start out at a local park on a flat, non-technical trail and slowly work towards more technical ones. Do some homework on trail shoes and check out one of the many trail runs organized by MCRRC. Montgomery County is lucky to have miles and miles of open park trails along with plenty of runners interested in running them.

— Lisa Levin Reichmann is a mom of three who spends her spare time competing in triathlons and road races as well as volunteering for MCRRC.

# What's Changed in Road Racing

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a group and smoke a cigarette after a three-mile training run. Smoking a cigar after completing a big race was standard practice. All the Boston Marathon winners used to celebrate with a victory cigar. That practice became taboo in the early '80s, about the last time an American male won Boston—is it possible there is a connection?

Races are **much** better organized today. I remember running a 10K in the 80s where two people died due to poor, chaotic organization. The race started an hour late, it was **hot**, there wasn't enough water, and there weren't any emergency plans. I am thrilled that this year's Parks was flawless! Although, there wasn't any beer left when I finally lumbered across the finish.

Runners seem to be a lot younger now than they used to be. I look around and I don't see too many runners my age in the race. Thirty years ago it seemed almost everybody was my age. I am not sure how this happened. And, there also appears to be a problem with the clocks today. My 10K time today was my 10-mile time 30 years ago. And my half marathon time today is getting seriously close to my marathon PR.

Today we have the great timing chips; in the "olden days" you used to have to stand in line at the finish all hot, sweaty, and tired while waiting for a volunteer to rip the tag off your bib and stick it onto a long needle. And you seriously used to see some position shifts take place in the chute as people crowded in. You certainly get your results much quicker today...like almost immediately. You used to have to wait for more than an hour, in a *small* race, while they sorted out the winners; and all day for the "unofficial" marathon results.

Injuries are still there, and often unexplainable. And get you just as mad. As we all know, something always hurts when you are running...feet,

hips, back, etc. But today they seem to take twice as long to recover from.

You still have a choice of water or Gatorade—surprisingly, that hasn't changed! But we never had GU. And there has never, never, never been enough Port-A-Johns. And they are still always in the wrong place, and stinking just as bad now as they always did.

The size of the crowd has grown, with the spectators still providing a great incentive to do better. However, the stupid things they say haven't changed. Phrases like "You are almost there!"; "It's all downhill from here!"; or "Keep it up!" are all kind of annoying, but motivating.

Press coverage has certainly changed. Thirty years ago a road race was a big deal. The local newspaper almost always had a picture of the start of a race and with the winners featured in the paper. If you finished the Marine Corps Marathon or Boston, you got your name in the *Washington Post*. Today, you can forget about *that* happening unless you are one of the leaders.

Pace groups are new, as are GPS watches. The clothes have changed a little, running shorts are no longer short, and the shoes are much better. But really, all you need to run is a good pair of shoes and maybe a good running bra (my editor told me to add this). Now, I use Runners Glide, whereas in the past I'd just use Vaseline. The T-shirt quality is much better, but I still haven't figured out what to do with all these valuable race shirts (my guess is they are one of the first things that will go into the dumpster when my kids someday have to clean out my house).

What I think about when I run has totally changed. I used to think: "Should I go out fast or slow"; "Should I pace myself?"; "Should I try for a negative split?"; "Should I get behind someone for a mile as a wind break?";

"When should I start my kick?" Heck, I remember where it used to take me five miles just to get into my groove. Now all I think about is whatever is on the radio—yep, I'm one of those bad boys who wears earphones when running. Thank goodness for the Garden Center and Jack Edelman. Welcome to the modern world!

Despite all these updates, developments, or upgrades, the fact is that at the end of the day, it's still a race. With all the hoopla, the planning, the training, the point is this: When you cross the start, it is you versus the road versus the nagging injury versus your willingness to endure. Except for a very few elite, the only reason we run is to test ourselves. The last person we ever want to fail is ourselves.

— *Bill Stuart has been a Club Member since 2000 and lives in Kensington.*



Photo: Ken Trombatore

**MCRRC's Laura Cloher at the Cross Country on the Farm 5K**



## How Does a Volunteer Grow?

by Cathie Rosenfeld

**D**o you remember the first time you tried running as an adult? It either came naturally or you worked at it. But you definitely got something out of it and it made a positive difference. It is the same with volunteering your services to the Montgomery County Road Runners Club. The effort is what is most important and the expertise comes with experience.

Eleanor Adcock demonstrates this so well. She started running in high school, as a sprinter on the track team. But then she took a break for a few years. She ran an occasional 5K just to keep her foot in the sport, so to speak. It occurred to her that training for the actual event might better prepare her as well as making it more fun. She turned to the club as so many do. She joined the coed 5K program. “I found that in addition to the training benefits, I really enjoyed the camaraderie of the group and the quality of the program.” At first, running a 5K was her only goal but after the success of that endeavor and all the positives that came with it, “I was pretty much hooked,” and she signed up for the 10K program. “Now I am usually signed up for some club program and seem to keep increasing my distances. I ran the Marine Corps Marathon last year and recently took up trail running. So far, my favorite distance is the half-marathon, but some of the ultra races look pretty irresistible, so I am sure there are some longer races in my future.”

Eleanor observed that the club races were pretty impressive when compared to other races that she had experienced. “As I started to run more races, I came to realize what a tremendous resource MCRRC is – not just the running programs, but the quality of the races.” In her opinion, “they’re better than many



Photo: Jim Rich

**Eleanor Adcock**

of the big, professionally run races in the area.” (We can’t argue.) But Eleanor knew that another difference between our races and the others is that we are a volunteer driven organization. “Since I was enjoying the benefits, I figured the least I could do [was] pitch in and help out, so I started volunteering.” And she enjoyed that too. So just as with the 5K she kept increasing her goal.

She began with helping at races specifically, getting to know how races are

organized and directed. “It’s a good feeling to be part of *hosting* all the runners. You get to see everyone, from the elite runners to the walkers. And each race has its own individual personality.”

Her next job after a few years was to help with volunteer coordination for the Rockville Twilghter. Not mincing words, Eleanor said that it was a lot of work, but she enjoyed helping to bring it to fruition. “It’s been great to be part of the team that makes it all happen, and I get to interact with a lot of club members I might not otherwise meet.”

The next larger challenge was to be the Co-Volunteer Coordinator, with Susie Kinnecome, of this year’s Parks Half Marathon. (Speaking for the Finish Line team, they got a stellar group of volunteers for us.)

So what is next? Eleanor is looking forward to being the Assistant Race Director for the Turkey Burnoff this coming November. We are lucky to have such a flexible, dedicated volunteer who is always up for the next challenge. The club is replete with these types of folks and we thank you for your service. We also challenge you to up your goals and your volunteerism. We promise you won’t regret it and we won’t forget it.

— Cathie Rosenfeld was this year’s Finish Line Team Captain for the Parks Half Marathon. A stellar volunteer herself, Cathie sometimes make the commute from Lewes, DE just to help out at MCRRC events.