

MCRRC Intervals

May 2014

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

May 10

Kids on the Run
Bohrer Park
Gaithersburg, MD

May 11

Run Aware 5K (XC)
Potomac, MD

May 17

Germantown 5 Miler
Germantown, MD

May 26

Memorial 4 Mile
Rockville, MD

June 13

Run with the June Bugs (XC)
Gaithersburg, MD

June 14

Run for Roses
Wheaton Regional Park
Wheaton, MD

July 5

Little Bennett Cross Country (XC)
Clarksburg, MD

July 11

Midsummer Night's Mile (CS)
Rockville High School
Rockville, MD

July 19

Rockville Rotary Twilight Runfest
Rockville, MD

For complete details of MCRRC's races and programs, visit www.mcrrc.org

Board Meetings

May 1, 7 pm
Rockville

June 5, 7 pm
Rockville

Pike's Peek 10K



Photo: Mark Shaddy

Christine Ramsey breaks the tape as the women's winner of the Pike's Peek 10K

MCRRC  Intervals



Spring, a Time of Renewal

by Scott Brown, Editor

As the cherry blossoms remind us, spring is a time of renewal, and for many of us runners, it also heralds the start of racing season. After a long—too long—winter of bundling up to brave the elements, we relish the chance to shed our mittens and jackets in favor of singlets and shorts as we toe the starting lines of our favorite races.

This spring we also commemorate an important milestone: the 25th anniversary of the Women's Distance Festival (WDF), a series of women's races inaugurated to help boost women's participation in competitive distance running. On June 14, MCRRC will hold its annual WDF event, the women-only Run for Roses, at Wheaton Regional Park.

In recognition of the WDF anniversary, this issue of *Intervals* is all about women's running and the great strides women have made in several facets of our sport since the inception of the WDF a quarter century ago.

Club President Karen Kincer celebrates the benefits women and running have brought each other, from the camaraderie of running partners to women's growing prominence in Club leadership roles, as well as the ways

women are striving to encourage future generations of women runners.

Dan DiFonzo describes the history of the WDF, chronicling its origins and evolution as a women's competitive racing series.

Apropos of this theme, Lisa Reichmann profiles former MCRRC Runner of the Year Cindy Conant, one of the Club's most competitive—and nicest—runners. Having run several times with Cindy, I can only hope to be as fast as her some day!

As Dan DiFonzo poignantly writes, this spring also marked an important moment of renewal when runners from around the world—including nearly a hundred MCRRC members—helped reclaim the Boston Marathon as a celebration of running in the wake of last year's bombings.

Finally, Lisa Reichmann provides a look into the role of sponsors in helping MCRRC stage its signature events, with a focus on GEICO's longtime sponsorship of the Pike's Peek 10K.

— Scott Brown has run MCRRC races of distances from one to 50 miles. He lives in Gaithersburg.

Congratulations to Our 2013 Award Winners!

Volunteer Service: Leonard Lee, Denis McDonald, Dan Reichmann

Volunteer of the Year: Christina Caravoulis

Coach of the Year: Kimberlee Dinn-Smith

Journalism Award: Dan DiFonzo

Race Director of the Year: Michelle Price

Most Improved Runner: Bernard Kelly (male), Melissa Chotiner (female)

President's Award: Jim Farkas, Paula Knutson, Jim Rich, Patti Rich

Outstanding High School Runner: Collin Crilly and Chase Weaverling (male), Helen Webster and Regina Schreiber (female)

Runner of the Year Recognition Award: Miles Aiken and Daniel George (Open men), Nicole Deziel and Anna Savage (Open women), Scott Koonce and Frank Perna (Masters men), Andrea Keane-Myers and Julie Sapper (Masters women), Don Hensel and Richard Morgan (Grandmasters men), Jane Godfrey and Ellen Cooper (Grandmasters women)

Runner of the Year: Keith Flanders (Open men), Patricia Soumoff (Open women), Jean-Christophe Arcaz (Masters men), Kellie Redmond (Masters women), Alan Pemberton (Grandmasters men), Giovanna Tosato (Grandmasters women)

MCRRC Intervals

Newsletter of the montgomery county road runners club

Board of Directors

President

Karen Ward Kincer

Vice President

Lori Kaleikau

Secretary

Doug Watt

Treasurer

Becca Kinney

Member-at-Large

Danielle Jones

Member-at-Large

Don Shulman

Member-at-Large

Yvette Ju

Member-at-Large

Kimberly Price

Member-at-Large

Susan Lynch

Staff

Operations Manager

Ashley Zuraf

Bookkeeper

Kathleen Clawson

Race Operations Assistant

Halsey Sinclair

Intervals

Publisher

Karen Ward Kincer

Managing Editor

Freddi Carlip

Editor

Scott Brown

Photo Editor

Dan DiFonzo

Production Designer

Bob DiIorio

Contributors

Lisa Levin Reichmann

Dan DiFonzo

Intervals is a publication of the Montgomery County Road Runners Club. All Rights Reserved. For an electronic version see www.mcrrc.org.

All material herein is fully protected and may not be reproduced in any manner without the permission of the publisher. ©2014. Views expressed herein are those of the authors exclusively.

Intervals is published bimonthly by the Montgomery County Road Runners, P.O. Box 1703, Rockville MD 20849.

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.



Celebrating Running Past, Present, and Future

by Karen Ward Kincer, President



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Women's Distance Festival (WDF). This is one of those times that I am so happy that I am President of this Club and quite honestly can use that position to push just a little bit of my personal agenda and say, "Wow, this is something to celebrate!"

And I would feel badly about that if I didn't believe so strongly that women and running are so good for each other. Guys, there's lots of good stuff for you in the sport, too, but right now, in this column, it's about the ladies. This anniversary marks not just the longevity of a running event but is also a celebration of women in this sport and all that it brings to us, and that we bring to it.

I started running in junior high and continued in high school and college. I not only learned to run and to race, but I also learned about teamwork, friendship and leadership. The friendships forged on those teams were special and different. This is when I learned that though we all may have been different, each person had value and supporting one another was the most important thing we could do as teammates.

Running as an adult really isn't much different. Outside of my family, one of the great blessings in my life is the group of ladies that I run with. No matter the circumstance, we are there to support each other. No judgments, no hassles, just support. And I think that is what attracts

many women to this sport.

Whether it is a running partner or a pace group, going for a run with others is not like going to the gym, putting on your headphones and getting on the elliptical or hopping on a spin bike. I have a shirt that I bought at a race expo that says "Running is Cheaper Than Therapy." It's also more fun and healthy and I really don't think there's much that my girlfriends can't tell me or teach me that I'll learn on a therapist's couch. In fact, I think having a great group of friends to run with can help alleviate the need to be on the therapist's couch.

You'll learn about the history elsewhere in this issue, but WDF, and the women's races that preceded it, are a bit like the feminist movement of running. Yes, we've achieved equal and even greater numbers with men in the sport and awards are always distributed evenly, and many take that for granted, assuming that it was always equal. But that is not true and I think that the sport and women are better for those early efforts.

In a community fueled by volunteer support, women are making critical contributions. I see more and more women stepping up to lead races, training programs and even running clubs! Of the 35 races on MCRRC's schedule, women now direct 13, while couples direct another three. In our 14 training programs, women direct seven. I questioned my nominating-com-

mittee chairman recently because so many of the new members on MCRRC's board were women. I asked him if he was concerned about diversity. His response was that he was very happy to defend the extremely qualified women that the committee was recommending, especially in light of the fact that no men had stepped forward.

In addition to volunteering many, many hours with MCRRC, come springtime I also coach youth track and field for the City of Rockville. This year I am coaching the midget age group – essentially third and fourth graders. Out of 25 kids, I have 6 boys and 19 girls on my roster. This presents some coaching challenges. I recently purchased a voice amplifier with a little mic that goes on my shirt so that I can be heard above the endless chitchat of all those girls.

But I think it bodes well for our sport and for these girls as they learn the value of friendship and teamwork. They have no idea that women had to fight to make sure they had a place in this sport and for now, at their age, that is not so important. But by celebrating things like WDF and keeping it alive, I hope that someday that history will become part of what they treasure about running and all of its opportunities.

— Karen Ward Kincer is the President of MCRRC. She can be reached at president@mcrrc.org.



The Women's Distance Festival Celebrates 25 Years

by Dan DiFonzo

In 1979, National Distance Running Hall of Fame member Henley Gabeau addressed a problem she wanted resolved. As the newly elected first female president of the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), Gabeau noticed a disparity between women and men in competitive distance running. She wanted to focus attention on the lack of women's distance running in the Olympic Games. Under her leadership, the RRCA organized a series of 5K races to be held across the country on July 13, 1980—the date of the men's marathon at the Moscow Olympics. The events were so successful that Olympic organizers included the female marathon for the first time in 1984. It also marked the birth of the Women's Distance Festival (WDF) as we know it today.

With increasing momentum and growing interest in women's running, organizers from several Washington-area running clubs, including MCRRC, met in 1988 to discuss coordination of their Women's Distance Festival 5K races. The goal was simple: to increase participation in the races and improve the visibility of the events throughout Maryland.

While many states still hold Women's Distance Festival events each year, only Maryland continues to host a Grand Prix Series as part of its Women's Distance Festival races. The Maryland Women's Distance Festival Grand Prix Series is sponsored by the Maryland RRCA and its participating RRCA clubs and consists of 10 5K (3.1-mile) races for women runners and walkers of all ages and abilities.

Held throughout Maryland between April and August, the Women's Distance Festival Grand Prix Series is open to all female runners regardless of ability and attracts runners from all over the state. Women who complete four or more of the races are eligible to be invited to the annual awards party

and receive the Women's Distance Festival Participation Award. MCRRC has several runners who attend many of the races throughout Maryland with one or two completing all 10 of the races. Christina Caravoulis, a prolific Club member, ran nine of the Grand Prix Series races in 2013.

Throughout the years, the WDF's emphasis on competitive racing has shifted slightly. "For many years, the Women's Distance Festival was more of a championship series," explained MCRRC member Joanne Mallet, a longtime WDF participant and Grand Prix Series organizer. "The winner of the Maryland series for that year would travel to the national championship race to compete for the national title. We no longer do that," said Mallet. "More recently, the emphasis has shifted into getting more women into running, fitness and exercise."

Running clubs like MCRRC have adopted this focus on fitness and exercise and now have programs catering to the first-time runner. In fact, the Beginning Women Runners program is one

of the Club's most popular programs and typically fills to capacity in record time each year. The program targets the MCRRC's Women's Distance Festival Grand Prix Series race, the Run for Roses 5K on June 14, as its goal race.

The scenic Run for Roses course traverses Wheaton Regional Park and the picturesque Brookside Gardens. The race attracts more than 350 runners from across the state and is open to any female runner. All finishers receive a long-stem rose and a finisher certificate, as well as age-group awards.

Regardless of your running objective—whether it's running your first 5K or competitively running for a new personal record—the Women's Distance Festival Grand Prix Series is a perfect opportunity for all female runners to test their fitness in the state of Maryland.

— Dan DiFonzo has been a proud member of MCRRC since 2004. You'll find him racing, announcing or behind the camera at a club race near you.



Andrea, Griffin and Perrin Myers at the 2013 Run for Roses

Reclaiming the Glory of the Boston Marathon

by Dan DiFonzo

For the nearly 100 MCRRC runners who converged on Boston to run the 118th Boston Marathon—the world’s oldest continuously run marathon—there was a sense that the focus was very different this year. Instead of turning out to mourn the city of Boston, runners and their families—like the Whos down in Whoville—were coming together in solidarity to take back the sport we love. We were turning out to thank the city of Boston, to salute Boston’s resilience and to pay tribute to the victims, survivors, first responders, police, and hospital workers, and most of all, to honor the sport of marathon running.

Among the 36,000 runners registered to run this year—the event’s second-largest field ever—were nearly 5,000 who never had the opportunity to finish what they started in 2013. Because of the finish line bombings, these runners were stopped along the course—some less than 100 yards from the finish line—and never had the opportunity to complete the race. Many of those runners were angry and frustrated. Each was invited back. For them, this was a race for redemption—a chance to take back the finish line from the terrorists who had so selfishly claimed it for themselves and disrupted the lives of so many.

Are you afraid to run?

Over the past year, I have been asked dozens of times by friends, family, coworkers and members of the media whether I had any reservations about running the race this year. The answer has always been: No! Never for a moment. In fact, to a person, everyone I chatted with felt the same way. Truth be told, it made our desire to run even stronger. Through the years, I’ve learned one thing about runners: they love to be challenged and they love to prove others wrong. This was just an

extension of that defiance.

So many aspects of the weekend were special. There was the Marathon Scarf Project, an international grassroots effort from volunteer knitters to wrap runners in blue and yellow scarves knitted and crocheted with love and courage for every runner in Boston. There were more race signs than I’ve ever seen at a race—many inspirational, many funny, but all encouraging. There was an undeniable sense of civic pride from the Bostonians who lined the course and filled the city. While the police presence was unmistakably large and omnipresent, you never felt that the true character of the race was compromised. For a weekend, everyone seemed to come together as a family. Police and security personnel were polite and friendly. Businesses seemed to bend over backwards to make guests feel special and welcome at their establishments. In fact, the only negative I could find was the sea of hideous orange marathon jackets that only a first-time Boston Marathon finisher would buy—or wear with pride! It did make spotting the runners easy, though.

And then there was the race

On race morning, there was a moving moment of reflection, a silent tribute in Hopkinton where the nearly 30,000 runners prepared for the start. It was eerily quiet and emotionally stirring as the emcee announced the names of the victims who lost their lives in the bombing a year earlier, the only sounds coming from the circling helicopters overhead.

The race itself was like a never-ending parade. Surreal for the runners as the nearly 1 million spectators cheered each athlete as they made their way to Boston. There were sore hands from all of the high-fives and

sore lips from the gals in Wellesley. There were many runners missing limbs: Wounded Warriors or bombing victims? It didn’t matter. Each reminded us about the meaning of real pain. In a more uplifting moment, I remember approaching Heartbreak Hill about three-quarters of the way into the race, when word began to spread that Meb Keflezighi had just won the men’s marathon. This time it was jubilant runners AND spectators who were cheering in unison at the news that an American distance hero actually won the same race we were still running! (By the way, what other sport can one actually compete in the same marquee event against the world’s best athletes?!)

For MCRRC’s Zach Hawkins, this was his first Boston Marathon and an experience he’ll never forget. “The crowds were incredible. Along the entire course the crowds were eight or nine people deep in some places. It was both overwhelming for spectators and the marathoners, but I think it was therapeutic for all. My expectations were definitely met with this race,” said Hawkins. He expects to return again next year.

Each year the city of Boston plays host to thousands of runners from every state in the Union. This year it was our turn to thank Boston for all they’ve done for marathoners throughout the years, to show the world that we run as one, to show that marathon running is our sport and it won’t be taken away. This year’s event proved one thing: that the city of Boston and marathoners everywhere are, indeed, *Boston Strong!*

— Dan DiFonzo has been a proud member of MCRRC since 2004. You’ll find him racing, announcing or behind the camera at a club race near you.

Cindy Conant



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

Cindy Conant has been a member of MCRRC for approximately 15 years and has consistently been one of the Club's top women runners. Defying the laws of aging, Cindy has gotten faster with age, setting a number of personal records (PRs) since she turned 50. Cindy was the 2012 Runner of the Year, Masters Women, and was most recently ranked no. 1 in the area for Grandmasters Women (50 and older) by Run Washington. Cindy lives with her husband, Carleton, in Kensington and has three children: Alexander (24), Paul (22), and Charlotte (15). She volunteers at MCRRC races throughout the year and has been a pace coach for the Winter Marathon Program for two years.

Were you always athletic?

No, I was not. I always spent lots of time outdoors but I lived overseas where participation in structured sports wasn't as widespread.

When did you start running?

I ran in college only for exercise, not as part of any organized team. About 20 years ago, I started running races and getting more serious about running. The Kensington 8K course passes our house twice, so my husband and I decided to run it. About the same time, I tried my hand at the marathon distance even though I was completely clueless about training and race strategy. I had never run more than nine miles and I was really, really hungry because I had only eaten about a half of a bagel before the race.

What are your proudest running accomplishments?

Since I turned 50, I have had several PRs in various distances, including 5K and 10K. I set my 10K PR at Pike's Peek just a week after running the Boston Marathon. This year, at age 52, I beat my previous 10-mile PR by one and a half minutes and managed to go under 31 minutes at the Saint Patrick's Day 8K. So race-wise, I have had a good couple of years, which I am trying to enjoy since I know it may be a limited opportu-

nity and that sometime soon I may slow down!

How have you seen women's running evolve over the 20-plus years you have been running?

I can still remember Title IX. I was in sixth grade and it was a big deal. All three of my kids have run in high school, and I have particularly enjoyed watching the high school girls run; they are so self-confident. When I was a teenager, it was much less common to see many girls



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Cindy Conant

running.

Any favorite races?

Anything in Philadelphia! Philly was the first marathon where I trained more seriously and understood what I needed to do, and I was pleased with that race. My husband, Carleton, ran it as well, so it was a good day all around. I have run the Philadelphia Distance Run (now the Rock 'n' Roll Half-Marathon) and the Broad Street 10-Miler, both of which are flat, fast races. Locally, I like the Cherry Blossom 10-Miler and two MCRRC races that are in Seneca Creek State Park (Turkey Burn-

off and Piece of Cake).

Have your children followed your lead and become runners?

Off and on, all three of my children have run over the years. Right now Paul is coaching a club track team at his college. They never wanted me to run with them. Instead, they always insisted everyone run at his or her own pace and not slow down to keep someone else company!

How has your training changed over the years?

I have become a bit more scientific and I run more miles than I did when I was younger. Typically, I do track work on Tuesdays, a tempo run on Thursdays and I run a lot of races, about 25 annually. I am still kind of unstructured in that I often don't have a plan ahead of time but just do what feels right that day.

If you could do a long run with anyone, who would it be?

Ha! I've already done it. My oldest son ran with Joan Benoit Samuelson's son in college and I literally ran into her one year at end of Cherry Blossom. She told me to contact her the next time I was in Maine, so I did and we ran together. I have seen her a few times over the years and email her now and then. She probably has done more for woman's running than almost anyone. For anyone who doesn't happen to know who she is—she won gold in the 1984 Olympics and still holds the fastest times for an American woman at the Chicago Marathon. She is still an amazing runner at age 56 and last year she ran 2:50:29 at the Boston Marathon.

What do you enjoy most about running?

It clears my head. If something is bothering me I will mull it over while I am running. I run almost every day—it is just part of my daily routine.

— 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.



MCRRC members at Athlete's Village before the start of the 2014 Boston Marathon

RUN FOR ROSES 5K FOR WOMEN

Saturday, June 14, 2014 8:00 am
Wheaton Regional Park, MD
2014 Maryland RRCA WDF Grand Prix Series Event
Walkers are Welcome



Fees:

\$15 April 12 to May 16; \$20 May 17 to May 29; \$25; May 30 thru race day.

Pay an additional \$16.00 to reserve your 2014 Roses Tech shirt (women's sizes S,M,L,XL).

Roses and certificates to all finishers. See complete details on the website
April 12, 2014 – www.mcrrc.org click on Run for Roses under Race Schedule

Sponsorship a Win-Win Proposition

by Lisa Reichmann

While many MCRRC races are low key and low cost, several of the Club's larger races, such as Pike's Peek 10K and Parks Half Marathon, require a higher budget to support larger participation, permits, security, road closures, runner premiums, and other expenses related to staging a larger-scale race. For these races, corporate and organizational sponsor support is key to a successful event. Sponsorship also enables the Club to donate more of the race proceeds to beneficiaries. As MCRRC is a nonprofit organization, sponsorship support is tax deductible and, for many sponsors, qualifies as a business expense.

Sponsor relationships are mutually beneficial, as the support certainly helps the Club pull off these larger races by providing financial and in-kind support, while the sponsors benefit from the visibility of their participation. Many sponsors develop long-term relationships with the Club through their sponsorships. GEICO has been a sponsor of the Pike's Peek 10K since its inception in 1996, through the company's Corporate Community Citizens program. Rynthia Rost, GEICO's vice president of public affairs, explains that "Pike's Peek 10K is a triumphant success that GEICO is proud to be a part of. As an avid supporter of community outreach programs that positively impact the community, GEICO is excited to participate and partner with so many vested, local organizations in conjunction with MCRRC." GEICO is a fixture

at the Pike's Peek postrace festival, where the GEICO Gecko is particularly popular.

The benefits of sponsorship often extend beyond the organization itself to its employees. GEICO, like other sponsors, has used its relationship with Pike's Peek to promote health and wellness to its employees. By encouraging employee participation in the race—such as by subsidizing race entries and offering training programs geared toward the race—employers engender employee morale and wellbeing. These efforts and the presence of sponsors at the race speak to the importance of health and fitness in our community. MCRRC President Karen Kincer appreciates that

message and its ties to MCRRC's mission: "Businesses are asked to support many charities and events and that they would choose to spend money on running sends a message that events like this are important for bringing people together in a way that is positive and healthy for the community."

Please be sure to thank the generous sponsors of our races and events by supporting the businesses and organizations that support our local running community!

— 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.



Photo: Jim Rich

The GEICO Gecko is a hit at the Pike's Peek 10K Finish Festival