



KEEPING TRACK

The Newsletter of the **Essex Running Club**

P.O. Box 183, Verona, NJ 07044

Vol. 24, No. 3

March 2007

Since 1983

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Desmond Duncker

Although I have never been a star athlete in any sport, I've been involved in various sporting activities since my late teens, and I do consider myself an athlete.

But what makes a person an athlete?

I believe there is an athlete in each and every one of us. We become athletes when we look at our limitations and say, "I will do what is necessary to accomplish something better than I have before."

For different people, the accomplishment might be qualifying for the Boston Marathon, or finishing a marathon, or lowering a 5K time by 30 seconds, or completing a 5K.

Steve Prefontaine said, "To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift." The gift is a God-given talent that must be nurtured and developed. If we waste that talent, we squander the gift.

We have different gifts, and we are at different stages in our lives. We can each look back at things once thought impossible but now are done. All runners remember their first marathon. Mine was with 17,000 other participants on November 23, 1983, a cold, wet day in New York City. I wasn't sure I could run that far, but after completing it I felt I could accomplish anything I put my mind to.

To excel at any activity means focus, dedication, and a willingness to put up with discomfort and pain—a willingness to go outside our comfort zone.

We may not all be attempting world-class performances, but we can all be athletes by striving to become better and to do more than before—by going beyond the limits of our frail bodies to achieve goals once "unattainable."

"Shoot for the stars, and, if we only reach the moon, we have still done well." Use your gifts well, my fellow athletes.

NOTES & REMINDERS

- **Mar 5.** General meeting. *Box, page 1.*
- **Mar 14** (new date May 5). Newark Distance Classic. *Page 10.*
- **Mar 18.** St. Paddy's 10-Miler, Freehold. First club race of 2007, USATF-NJ Open/Masters Championship race for men and women. *Page 4.*
- **Mar 24** (rain date Mar 31). West Essex Trail cleanup. *Page 7.*
- **Mar 25.** Millburn Spring Run (10K, 2M), So Mtn Res. Club race. *Page 4.*
- **Apr 1.** Ten-Town Distance Challenge through Essex County. *Page 8.*
- **Apr 7.** South Orange Rotary 5K. Club race. *Page 4.*
- **Apr 10.** ERC Awards Banquet, Church Street Café. *Box, page 1.*

Beware the strides of March

ERC'S NEXT GENERAL MEETING 7:30 pm, Monday, March 5

Church Street Café
12 Church Street, Montclair
BYOB

*Park on street or in Crescent Parking Deck
behind Church Street between
So. Fullerton & So. Park*

Our Speaker

Joseph McVeigh on training for a spring marathon. Joe was ranked among the top 10 US marathoners in 1998, the same year he set a personal record of 2:16:48. In 1996 and 2000, he competed in the US Olympic Team Trial Marathons. He also represented the United States at the 1999 Pan American Games, placing 6th in the marathon. At Lehigh, he held the college indoor 5000-meter record (14:39). Recently, as a master, he ran the NYC Marathon in 2:27:07 (2nd New Jerseyan to finish). Currently, he is an age-group nominee for NYRR Road Runner of the Year, an award he won previously.

ERC Awards Banquet, Tuesday, April 10!

The annual ERC Awards Banquet, at which we will honor club members for their outstanding achievements in 2006, will replace the April general meeting but will be held *not the first Monday* of the month but *the second Tuesday*, April 10, to avoid conflicts with Passover and Easter observances. Place and time are the usual: Church Street Café at 7:30 pm.

The \$18-per-person buffet will include artisan breads, pasta (choice of), romaine salad, dessert, soda, coffee, tea. BYOB.

RSVP is required; walk-ins cannot be accommodated.

To attend, write a check to Essex Running Club and mail it by April 2 to Mark Frankel, 1444 Ratzer Road, Wayne, NJ 07470.

Questions? Call Lynne Mortimer (973-857-3344). We hope to see you there!

ESSEX RUNNING CLUB 2007

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Postal Address

Essex Running Club
P.O. Box 183, Verona, NJ 07044

ERC Online

Web site & membership application:
www.essexrunning.com

Join our e-mail group:
[groups.yahoo.com/group/
essexrunningclub](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/essexrunningclub)

Send e-mail to the group:
[essexrunningclub@
yahoogroups.com](mailto:essexrunningclub@yahoogroups.com)

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RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

Chilly Cheeks 7.2-Mile Trail Run, Reading, Pa, Jan 21. Chilly Cheeks: three monster hills; smaller hills in between; quite a few technical sections, some dovetailing dangerously with descents; and a little bushwhacking thrown in for good measure.

Two tenths of a mile into this inaugural race, we looked skyward and started climbing, not on a trail but through brush. (One might say this part of the course was off-off-road.) Runners fanned out as they tried to find the best way up; then they saw the race director at the top of the hill and began converging on him, in most cases not to kill him but to learn where to run next. Pointing us in the right direction was his crooked, gnarled, evil index finger.

And lest anyone think I'm kidding, when you're participating in one of Ron Horn's Pretzel City Sports events, you're truly racing with the devil, or with two devils, for he's buddies with Bill Smith, director of the Conestoga 10-Mile Trail Run, which takes place near Lancaster, 40 or 50 miles farther west. Those guys sit around in their brimstone Barcaloungers designing all manner of torments for trail runners, who, inexplicably, say thanks and ask for more.

On reaching that hilltop, I started running again, but with my quads very much regretting the stair running I had done four days earlier, preparing for the Empire State Building Run-Up (see p. 5). Never before had I felt so worn out so early in a race—I wanted to stop right there, within the first half-mile.

Despite what seemed like a lot of walking, I guess I did pretty well. The Chilly Cheeks distance (7.2 miles) equaled that of last February's Ugly Mudder—which takes place on different trails in the same hills of Reading—but the Chilly Cheeks race was harder, and I finished it in 1:18:46, almost 9 minutes better than my Mudder time, 1:27:36.

I should've known. Sports drink is code for beer. But I didn't want beer at the 4.4-mile aid station—I wanted sports drink. I had to settle for water, which I do not like during a race.

This was the first trail race in which I had too much company late in the game (mile 5 on). I think we were bunched up rather than spread apart at that point because the course's hills, twists and turns, and tricky rocky sections were pretty evenly distributed throughout, and runners were constantly slowing down and speeding up, creating bottleneck after bottleneck.

But in those last two miles, on a particular section of rocky, single-track trail (a no-passing zone, for sure), I had a moment of clarity: I'm a little risk-taker, and I wouldn't be so slowly and carefully picking my way downhill had there not been a line of runners in my path.

With about three quarters of a mile to go, the rocks dwindled, and the trail widened and leveled off a bit. Still, runners seemed content moseying right down the middle. I couldn't stand it anymore! I took to the brushy shoulder and there made good time, passing 15 to 20 people in the process. With half a mile left, however, one of those runners blew past me as if I were walking (though I did manage to keep everyone else at bay).

The race ended with a grab-any-rock-or-root climb up the cliff known as Mt. Mud, and then a short sprint to the line—the same finish the Mudder has.

A fellow finisher pointed out that I had an icicle hanging from my beard. I guess I forgot to mention the temperature up until now because, even though Chilly Cheeks was run on the same bitterly cold day as the Manhattan Half-Marathon, I had no problem staying warm during the race. I wore Under Armour long-sleeved shirt and pants, and a fleece jacket, which I opened when things became too toasty. Even my hands, with two pair of light gloves on, were okay the entire way. After eating, however, I quickly changed into dry clothes.

The ticker headline on the Pretzel City Web site now reads: "Good News! No one was killed at this past weekend's Chilly Cheeks!" If the reports I heard are true, however, there were some serious injuries. One person broke a wrist, another broke an ankle, a third gashed a foot. And yet the 68-year-old runner who had fallen and was bleeding profusely at the Dirty Bird 15K in November was back in action on this January day and went home with a first-in-age award. Yes, some trail runners are tough as nails, but there are also the Dirty Bird Five who gave up their races to help that runner in distress.

For answering a postrace questionnaire, I took home a 20-plus-ounce glass beer mug filled with pretzels. The primary question was what you would name the last and hardest of the three hills on the Chilly Cheeks course. My suggestion was *Horn's Third Buttock*.

Chilly Cheeks begins and ends (like the Mudder) at the Liederkrantz German Singing & Sports Club—a warm, comfortable place, especially welcome on a wickedly cold day. There were some of the usual postrace snacks but also complimentary hot breakfast (pancakes, scrambled eggs). I had a bagel with peanut butter and jelly and two cups of good hot coffee.

Playing Celtic music at the Liederkrantz was the Martin Family Band, sort of an Irish version of the von Trapp family ... husband and wife, several kids, and a couple other folks ... all playing instruments, and very well, indeed.

Driving times: 2.5 hours there, 2.25 hours back.

The race T-shirt depicts a runner. The front of the T shows him from the front, with his face cheeks all red; the back of the T shows him from the rear, with ... —Chris Jaworski



Trail running, NYC style. Photo by Martta Rose.

YEAR-ROUND GROUP RUNS

Sat & Sun	9:00 am	(▲) West Essex Trail Run, Verona
Sun	7:00 am	(F) Fleet Feet Sports, Montclair (FF Long Run)
Sun	7:00 am	(+) Grove Pharmacy, Montclair (Grove Street Long Run)

(▲) **West Essex Trail Run, Verona.** Sat & Sun 9:00 am. Meet near tennis courts in Verona High School parking lot at corner of Fairview Avenue and Sampson Drive (Sampson is a one-way street, so approach from Grove Avenue). The trail's round trip from Verona to Little Falls is approximately 6 miles. The trail is blazed, and mile markers are posted on trees.

(F) **Fleet Feet Sports, Montclair (FF Long Run).** Sun 7:00 am. Meet at Fleet Feet (603 Bloomfield Ave) for runs on 1 or more of 3 loops (each is 6–8 miles) at paces ranging from 7:30 to 9:00 per mile.

(+) **Grove Pharmacy, Montclair (Grove Street Long Run).** Sun 7:00 am. Meet at Grove Pharmacy (123 Grove Street) for runs of 4 to 20+ miles. We will try to find a pace and a distance for you.

Questions: Wondering if anyone will show up for a run? Need to confirm a start time? Looking to buddy up for a certain distance or pace? Contact the Yahoo e-mail group to get answers about attendance, times, conditions, routes, alternative plans, distances, paces, and other items of interest.

Yahoo E-Mail Group: Join at groups.yahoo.com/group/essexrunningclub and then send e-mail to essexrunningclub@yahoo.com.

Thanks for the Winter Weekend Runs!

As winter winds down, we thank our generous hosts and road-trip organizers: Barbara Parzatk (Dec 2); Elizabeth Simonetti (Dec 9); Gary Peters and Phil Coffin (USATF–NJ 10-Mile Championship, West Windsor, Dec 10); Dr. George and Christa Studzinski (Dec 17); Paul Maloney (Dec 30); Tom Kelly (Emerald Nuts Midnight Run, Central Park, Dec 31); John Fabbro (Fleet Feet New Year's Day Run, Jan 1); Aubrey Blanda (Jan 6); Catherine Alessi, Martta Rose, and Tom Kelly (Jan 14); Debbie McNally and Chris Jaworski (Jan 20); Mick Close (NYRR Manhattan Half-Marathon, Jan 21); Laura Messina and Phil Coffin (Jan 28); Rick Pingitore and Lynne Mortimer (Ramapo Reservation, Feb 3); Robyn Silverman and Val Kenny (Feb 11); Susan Palermo and Wayne Carlson (Feb 18); and Aubrey Blanda and Doug Williams (Feb 25). These 2006–2007 winter weekend runs were a good mix of home-hosted runs, special holiday events, road trips to New York City races, and trail runs near and far.

ESSEX RUNNING CLUB		2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	
<i>INDIVIDUAL</i>			
Name		DOB	
Street			
City, State, Zip			
Primary Phone	2nd Phone		
E-Mail			
<i>FAMILY</i>			
Spouse Name			DOB
Primary Phone			
E-Mail			
<i>ANNUAL DUES & MAILING</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family	Please make check payable to <i>Essex Running Club</i> and mail with this form to: Essex Running Club, PO Box 183, Verona, NJ 07044–0183.	
<p>Membership Year. January through December. Current Members. Renew by Feb 1 to avoid an interruption in delivery of <i>Keeping Track</i>. New Members. Your first year may not be a full year. If you join after Sep 1, however, your membership will carry over to include all of the following year. Membership List. Your name, address, primary phone number, & e-mail address will be included on a membership list distributed about once a year to ERC members only. This list is solely for the personal use of members and is not to be used for commercial or political purposes of any kind.</p>			

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

David Barrington Pearce . Glen Ridge
 Jennifer Edmond Bloomfield
 Bryan Lockward Cedar Grove
 Susan Shore Cedar Grove
 Andrea Silk Montclair

COOKBOOK UPDATE

The Essex Running Club cookbook proofs looked good (with some minor edits), and we should be receiving the finished books in approximately two weeks. As ERC is a nonprofit organization, we can promote the sale of these cookbooks through press releases to local newspapers. We can also bring the books to sell at races, plus ask other running clubs to promote them for us through their newsletters and Web sites. —*Martta Rose*

ERC CLOTHING

See T-shirts, sweatshirts, running singlets, hats, and other club apparel either online (www.essexrunning.com) or at monthly club meetings. Between meetings, send queries and orders to Sal Ulto at sulto@att.net. ERC obtains clothing at close to cost and passes the savings along to its members.

ERC Warmup Jacket

Brooks 100% microfiber polyester shell with 100% moisture-transfer polyester mesh liner. Jacket is red with white ERC logo screened on back and club name on front. Sizes from XS to XXL. Low price! \$40. Please contact Sal Ulto for more information or for an order form with photos. Write to Sal at sulto@att.net or at 27 Hunterdon Road, West Orange, NJ 07052.

POETRY CORNER

Donna Close

Hazards

Hazards of the course,
 Summer's energy is gone
 While mountains remain.

Reassured

Pumping rosy blood
 Reassured through exercise,
 Healthy hearts emerge.

Boxcars

Boxcars run the line
 With newsletters keeping track
 Of what goes to press.



USATF–NJ

Gary Peters

The first championship race of 2007 will be the St. Paddy's Day 10-Miler in Freehold (Sun, Mar 18), a team event for men and women in all divisions, open and masters. If you plan to run, please consider preregistering, as that will help me get your bib

number ahead of time (instead of on race day), and you will save money on entry fees. We're hoping that a large ERC turnout will get us off to a good start this year.

Now's a good time to (re)join USATF. Membership gives you a preregistration discount on most races and allows you to compete in the Grand Prix and run on an ERC team at championship races. To join or renew, visit www.usatfnj.org, call 973–334–8900, or sign up at any championship race. Please list ERC (ID number 246) as your running club.

Please contact me (gary.peters@kraft.com; work, 973–503–2442; home, 908–665–1580) if you have any USATF questions or would like to run on one of our teams.

Interested in indoor racing? Check out the USATF–NJ & USATF Metropolitan Open & Masters Indoor Track & Field Championships and Dual Meet Challenge on Sunday, March 4. These Jersey City Armory events begin at 12 noon.



AT THE RACES

Mick Close

Running Shorts

The Newark Distance Classic will not be held in March and has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 5. So, our first club race will now be the St. Paddy's Day 10-Miler (and Leprechaun 5K) in Freehold (Sun, Mar 18). Anyone looking for a longer race in early March may want to consider the E. Murray Todd Half-Marathon in Lincroft (Sun, Mar 4).

A marathon may be coming to Essex County. Organizers of a new 5K in Branch Brook Park (Sunday, Memorial Day weekend) hope to expand the event within a few years to include a marathon. Former ERC member William Crowell is one of the people behind this event.

There's another 15K on the 2007 race calendar—the Country Run in Clinton (Sat, Apr 28). In addition, Gilda's Run is returning (Sun, May 20), which should help dispel fears about the disappearance of longer New Jersey races after last year's cancellation of the Midland Run.

Club member Phil Coffin has scheduled this year's Ten-Town Distance Challenge for Sunday, April 1 (details on p. 8). We don't know yet if there's any special significance to the date, but at least everyone should be less sleepy this year, with Daylight Saving Time in effect starting March 11.

The Fool's Run in Kutztown is back this year but with an earlier start (9:00 am). Many of us remember the bus trips we used to take to run this challenging 10-miler through the Pennsylvania countryside.

St. Paddy's 10-Miler/Leprechaun 5K

Mar 18

The 10-miler was selected ERC's latest club race because of its new status as the USATF–NJ 10-Mile Championship.

Organized by the Freehold Area Running Club, the 10-miler and the 5K start in Tighe Park in Freehold at 10:00 and 10:15, respectively. According to the application, St. Paddy's is for runners and walkers, those who compete to win and those who want to go the distance and have fun in the process. More pluses: nice scenery, plenty to eat and drink, commemorative shirts, random drawings, an expo, a corps of experienced volunteers, and, if that's not enough, beer! (I'm told.)

You can register at www.active.com and obtain more info at 732–431–2627 or www.farcnj.com.

Most likely, an ERC carpool will leave at 8:00 am from Grove Pharmacy. To confirm final arrangements, come to the March meeting or check the Yahoo group.

Millburn Spring Run

Mar 25

The Sneaker Factory of Millburn organizes this annual event in South Mountain Reservation. The out-and-back 2-mile race is at 11:00, the double-loop 10K at 11:30. Children's races (half-mile run, ages 10 and under; 1-mile race, ages 11–14) start at 10:30. The morning's events are followed by a nice awards ceremony, usually with three-foot subs and Guinness, at Sneaker Factory (973–376–6094).

Marathons

Good luck to all our spring marathoners, including Mark Frankel and Mike Skara, who will be leading pace groups at the Shamrock and New Jersey marathons, respectively.

- 3/18 Shamrock Marathon (Virginia Beach, Va)
- 3/25 MORE Women's Marathon (New York City)
- 3/25 Ocean Drive Marathon (Cape May)
- 4/16 Boston Marathon
- 4/29 New Jersey Marathon (Long Branch)
- 5/6 Pocono Mountain Run for the Red Marathon (Tobyhanna, Pa)
- 5/6 Long Island Marathon (Uniondale, NY)

Lottery registration for the 2007 New York City Marathon (Sun, Nov 4) has begun. All applications must be completed at www.ingnycmarathon.com before June 1.

Club Races in April

The South Orange Rotary 5K (Sat, Apr 7) is held in the town's historic section, and the course is said to be scenic and fast, though I've heard it's hilly. This race is probably best known for its postrace festivities, including great food, music, and random prize drawings.

The Cherry Blossom 10K in Branch Brook Park (Sun, Apr 15) is one of our most popular club races. Running through the park, surrounded by all the cherry blossoms, is a great way to celebrate the return of spring.

On that same weekend is the Building Tomorrows 5K in Brookdale Park (Sat, Apr 14). This nice local race loops around the park and helps raise money for the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Essex County.

Closing out the month is Run for Rachel in Livingston (Sun, Apr 29), now in its 7th year and again host to the USATF–NJ Open Women's 5K Championship. This race has an excellent reputation for super goodie bags, random prize drawings, and one of the fastest 5K courses around.

AT THE FINISH LINE

Disney Marathon, Orlando Jan 7

Andi Robik 5:58
The Disney Marathon was my first marathon, and I did it in connection with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program. In return for my fundraising, I received coaching and mentoring for several months (Sep–Jan) leading up to this endurance event. I am proud that I raised more than \$3700 for this worthy charity, and I completed my first marathon!

Unfortunately, my 41-year-old body did not completely agree with training, and I developed patella tendinitis about 5 weeks before the event. Despite many tests and therapies, my patella did not heal in time, and I ran 24 of 26.2 miles in pain, which slowed me down to a chip time of 5:58. I had fun, though—Disney does a marathon in style!

Except for the 6:00 am start (and the 4:00 am staging), the Disney Marathon was filled with fun. At the start were real fireworks, which were very pretty, as it was still dark outside. We began in Epcot; ran through Magic Kingdom (through Cinderella's castle), Animal Kingdom, MGM, and Wide World of Sports; and finished in Epcot.

My chip time included stopping for more than a few photos with Minnie Mouse, Woody (*Toy Story*), and a few scary witches (pictures available on request). There were 22 water-and-Powerade stops and a few food stops on the course. (And if you are not sprinting at the end, you can visit the margarita stand in Mexico, just 0.3 mile from the finish line, and cross in style! You need money for this one.) There were tons of spectators and live entertainment everywhere.

The course was basically flat with the occasional on or off ramp to a highway. The amusement parks still opened at 9:00 am, so the marathon route was sectioned off, with enough room left that running did not feel cramped. There were just over 10,000 runners, and it took only about five minutes to cross the start. The T-shirt is very nice, and the Mickey Mouse medal is even nicer.

Maybe this could be a club event in the future. I know I would love to run Disney again, this time uninjured. I hope to see you all when I start running again, probably in the early spring.

NYRR Gridiron Classic (4M), NYC Feb 4

Peter Connell 28:42
Greg Neal 28:44
Tom Daniels 28:51
Scott Wickham 29:16
There was some solid running put in by the four Essex representatives at this 4-mile Central Park race—they all finished within about 30 seconds of one another. Almost 4500 runners braved the frigid conditions (temperature 14 degrees, wind 16 mph). For the first time, the New York Road Runners used a wave start to help ease congestion and provide a better experience for all the runners. This wave start is expected to become a common feature of NYRR races. Next up is the NYRR Al Gordon Snowflake 4-Mile (Feb 24), which will also have separate start times for men and women. —Mick Close

The take-aways from this race are:

1. Assuming you are not a 5:30 miler with an automatic pass into the first corral, the key to running a NYRR race under the new rules is to line up at the very front of each subsequent corral.

2. Unless you line up early—or play G.I. Joe elbow-crawling underneath one of the steel gates that now align the start—you need to resign yourself to a slower pace. We went off in the fourth wave and crossed the start at 6:37. That meant picking our way through wave 4, then wave 3, then wave 2, and so forth.

3. A corollary to #2 is that there is no avoiding 2-, 3-, and 4-abreast packs of runners—they are found in every wave.

4. Gun times are no longer reported; stats and place rankings are now based on chip times.

5. If you are a woman and could have thrown a football more than 28 yards, you would have won the football competition. —Tom Daniels

After living my first 38 years in warmer climates, I now know what zero-degree wind chill feels like.

I had the perfect strategy for this race: Wait at the baggage claim with my warmups on until about 10 minutes before the start; then go to the start line to minimize freezing of my thin blood. The good news is I stayed warm at the baggage claim; the bad news is the first three start corrals were packed. Fortunately, I hopped the fence at corral 3 and squeezed into the front. After the wave start, I ran near the front of corral 3 and quickly caught up with the back of corral 2. And it was a wall of people. ... So, you have to resign yourself to slowing a bit as you dodge runners for the first two miles or so. Things opened up after mile 2, and I picked up the pace a bit, but I hope NYRR starts assigning corrals by pace: gate 1 (5:00), gate 2 (6:00), and so forth.

I think these races are better treated as fun tempo runs. I'm doing them only to qualify automatically for the 2008 New York City Marathon. —Greg Neal

NYRR Empire State Building Feb 6

Preliminary Run-Up

Chris Jaworski 17:40
On Jan 16, I ran nine miles, part of it up the Bloomfield Avenue hill to Highland Avenue in Montclair. On Jan 17, I jogged to Foley Field and then ran up 50 stadium steps, and down, then up 50 again, and down, until I had run up 1600 steps. Each time I reached the top of the stadium, I called out the cumulative total of steps up, and, when I reached 1600, I raised my arms above my head and yelled "Kong!" out over John F. Kennedy Drive and the rooftops of Bloomfield.

Why the hill? Why 1600? Why Kong? I was training for the 1576-step Empire State Building Run-Up (ESBRU) on Feb 6, and I wanted to do well enough to make the big ape proud. Ever since I was a kid, I've loved that fictional creature, loved the 1933 version of the movie *King Kong*, and loved that quintessential New York City landmark. Add in a love of running, discov-

ered in midlife, and I had the makings of a classic regression experience, plus a beautiful confluence of memory, time, place, action, life. I just hoped, though, that it would not be another case of beauty kills the beast!

I'd first heard of the run-up a few years ago, but it seemed shrouded in secrecy, much as Skull Island was. *By invitation only*. Then I read in the Jan 2007 *Runner's World* that "more than 1,000 people apply every November for just 200-odd slots ... so you'll have to set your sights on the 2008 run-up." You can apply? I just missed the deadline? I checked the New York Road Runners Web site and learned that the deadline was actually Dec 19. I sent in my application, didn't expect much, and then received an e-mail: "You have not been accepted to the ... *Invitational Race*. However, I would like to give you the opportunity to participate in the *PRELIMINARY RACE* scheduled to take place on the same date."

In a second, disappointment turned into joy. *Invitational. Preliminary*. I didn't care which word was being used—I'd be climbing the Empire State Building!

I trained twice more: 1800 steps up and down Foley on Jan 30, and a repeat of my nine-miler, on Feb 1.

* * *

As Feb 6 approached, I became a bit nervous. The Empire State Building looms tall around these parts. I can see it from where I live, 11 miles away, and it looks as if it could be just one town over. You can see it even from about 25 miles away, and somehow it doesn't look any smaller at that distance.

Riding the bus to Port Authority around 7:15 am, I was treated to the sight of a huge, deep-orange blobby sun bouncing up bit by bit from the horizon, above the beautiful, cold-smokin' Manhattan skyline, with one building standing out from all the rest. It's tall—did I mention it's tall?

Once you're there, though, there are just 86 stories, 1576 steps, to the observation deck. You can break down the distance—is *height* a better word for this race?—story by story, step by step.

But I was nervous, too, about other things—I was feeling fuzzy coming off a cold, and the day before I had mysteriously developed a sore big toe and a painful crick in my neck and shoulder blade. Would the fuzziness slow me or stop me? Would the toe give me a twinge with each step? Would the crick—the kind that makes turning your head left or right difficult—cause me problems when I spiraled upward, clockwise, flight after flight?

Once I stepped into the Empire State Building, the adrenaline kicked in, and, though doubts persisted, physical troubles slipped easily away.

The first two runners I met—one from Connecticut and the other from here in New Jersey—were fellow trail enthusiasts. What trails have to do with the Empire State Building might not be obvious, but it's not a stretch, either; to me, our little bond seemed downright apropos. Later, I enjoyed listening to a few "tower runners" talk

about other run-ups in other cities. (Check out <http://www.towerrunning.com>.)

There's Mar!ta! Cool. Mar!ta Rose was working publicity for this event, now in its 30th year. It was good to see her before the run-up, on the concourse level ... and again after the run-up, on the 75th floor, where the media congregated and the awards were announced. Mar!ta took photos and offered encouraging words—both very much appreciated. Thank you!

Standing at the start, just before 9 am, I estimated there were 60 of us in the Preliminary Race. According to the results, there were 50 male and 9 female finishers.

Off we went at the horn! We squeezed through a doorway and started up. Two abreast were all the stairway would allow. I decided to follow three-time ESBRU participant Rick Pingitore's advice: Walk, don't run; take two steps at a time; and use the handrails to pull yourself up. I adopted a steady pace right from the start, and yet I was winded by about the fifth floor and began wondering how quickly my speed might deteriorate and whether I'd have trouble finishing. I kept rock-steady, though, and even passed a few people. Twenty stories up, I was breathing harder but maintaining a regular pace—not slowing down, as far as I could tell. Still, I had made it up only a quarter of the way, and there were many more steps to climb. Onward and upward. Soon—all of a sudden, actually—I reached the 40th floor. That was a welcome surprise!

RACE RESULTS

We in the Essex Running Club sure do love our numbers (race dates, distances, times, age-group places). These delightful digits tell terrific tales, too! Close finishes, personal bests, comebacks—oh, the humanity, the drama!

That's why we hope you'll submit your race results to *Keeping Track* each month. Often, either Mick Close or another ERC member will include your data in a Yahoo group e-mail (later printed here, in "At the Finish Line").

If you don't see your result, send it in an e-mail either to the ERC Yahoo group (essexrunningclub@yahoo.com) or directly to the editor of *Keeping Track* (jaworski@verizon.net). There's another good reason to do all this, after all ...

Each calendar year's race results are compiled for use in selecting the winners of the ERC Annual Awards, presented each spring.

Only results reported in "At the Finish Line" are eligible for awards. ERC members who want their results counted are ultimately responsible for making sure they're published here.

The early stories consist of two flights of about 9 or 10 steps each, with a small landing between flights. Farther up, the pattern changes—you go up one flight of (I think) 18 to 20 steps, and then catch your breath a bit as you walk across a longish landing. I liked this pattern better—progress seemed swifter. I might have the details about these upper levels wrong, though, as every time I looked, it seemed I had climbed another two stories. I didn't dispute the numbers then, and I won't now.

My regression experience was going quite well. I felt like a kid again. But then I noticed something strange. The higher the other runners and I went, the more we changed. Everyone was now hunched over ... making guttural noises ... sprouting thick, dark hair where smooth skin once was ... and swinging up by the handrails. I don't know who supplied the bananas, but soon I was trying not to slip on the peels. Grunting like Kong, I continued climbing, all the while hoping that this devolution would stop in time. My fear was that a quivering mass of protoplasm, or a puddle of primordial soup, would find it difficult getting up one step, never mind hundreds more.

Such a hallucinatory vision might be induced by hard running, but I did precious little of that. I simply walk-climbed two steps at a time, with no stopping, all the way up. Maybe my altered state was a by-product of the conditions—the stairwells were dry and dusty. Even after taking water at the 20th and 65th floors, I was parched.

Around the 60th floor, I passed a couple of people, and then two others passed me. I went by one more person but was having a hard time catching a man wearing an FDNY shirt. Around the 84th floor, I felt a slight breeze, and the air tasted fresher. FDNY and I finally reached the observation deck at the 86th floor and got sweetly smacked by a blast of arctic air. It was 18 degrees outside (imagine the wind chill), and there we were in shorts and T-shirts, now running. We made our way halfway around the deck, crossed the finish line, and went on inside to the warmth and water.

Two tenths of a mile (0.3 kilometer) in 17:40—what a trip! I finished 31st out of 50 men, 32nd out of all 59 runners, 10th out of 17 men in my age group. Hey, at least I was the first 48-year-old to come in. (The winner of the Invitational Race, which started an hour and a half later, finished in 10:25!) The words on my ESBRU shirt nicely sum up this event: "86 flights. No elevator. No problem."

Many runners seemed to have a slight cough after the run-up—from the dry air and dust. My throat was scratchy most of the rest of the day.

I hope to get into the 2008 Empire State Building Run-Up. If I do, I'll train more than I did this time. (I didn't expect to get in and didn't know about the Preliminary Race.) I'll also try for a faster pace, try to *run* more, though I'd be almost equally satisfied "just finishing" again. To next year!

Now when TV news stations show footage of the Manhattan skyline with its famous centerpiece, I feel a great sense of accomplishment and pride. "I ran up that building, the *Empire State Building*!" Thank you, Kong.

NYRR Thu Night at the Races (2M) Feb 8
Rick Pingitore 10:52:5
This race was run at the New Balance Track and Field Center at the Armory.

NYRR Bronx Half-Marathon Feb 11
Eric Stadnyk 1:34:24
Ira Ford 1:39:15
Rich Unis 1:54:13
Rollin Deas 1:56:06
Robert Lewin 2:07:09
Jeff Matthews 2:24:49
—Mick Close

In July, I ran this race for what I thought would be the last time (my body had always shut down on the frying-pan five-mile stretch of the hilly Grand Concourse). When I saw the race switched to February, I just had to, once more, try to exorcise my demons. While cold weather can bring its own challenges, light winds and a 60-degree difference from July allowed me to run negative splits all along the Grand Concourse to the finish. As the race did not take place in July, perhaps only a few demons were exorcised. On what is arguably the toughest half-marathon course in the region, I'll take it! —Robert Lewin

Mid-Winter Beach Run & Walk Feb 17 (2M), Manasquan
Jim Malone 19:28
For a half-mile, the race was on the beach! I'm now off to Florida to get out of the Manasquan cold!

Austin Marathon Feb 18
Phil Coffin 3:43:13
I flew to Texas this weekend to see my sister and managed to get in a long run on Sunday.

The Austin Marathon.
Heh heh. Yeah, it's been my secret since early December, and part of the fun of my training (if marathon training can be considered "fun") was keeping my plans so under the radar that almost no one figured it out. The only people who definitely knew that Austin was on my calendar were Laura M (obvious reasons), Howie Brown (who originally planned to run Austin, too) and Glenn Trimboli (just because).

Glenn actually became an important part of my preparation, running the final miles of long runs with me and performing a substantial amount of mental coaching as well. The physical training for marathons has not been a huge issue for me in the past, but I have managed to make a hash of the mental preparation, and Glenn helped keep me calm and unruffled before Austin. I have not gone into a marathon so at peace with it since Philadelphia in 1998—coincidentally or not, my PR.

Before wasting any more time, the numbers are: 3:43:13 on the chip. This puts a marathon time on the board for the rest of the Grove Pharmacy runners to aim at, and it certainly does not set the bar too high. Darn it.

I was on pace to run much better—sub-3:30—but at mile 20 the wheels fell off, and after that the tires blew and the axle broke. It was an ugly, ugly, ugly final 10K. How'd this happen? I ran miles 3 to 6 too hard; I kept telling myself to slow

down, was trying to physically force a slowdown ... and then would run another 7:35 mile. But perhaps the biggest factor was the Austin course, the hilliest marathon course I have ever run.

In the past, Austin was a great Boston qualifying course, a point-to-point with a 440-foot drop and about three notable uphill. This year, organizers changed the course to a loop, covering different areas, and now Austin may be a Boston prep course because of the hills. From mile 7 to mile 18, you are going substantially uphill—a few downhills and some flats, but every time you look up there seems to be another hill looming. There is no Bradford Avenue among them, but there is a series of hills like the Brookdale Park tennis court hill, plus numerous other gentler but persistent grades. I knew from checking out the course profile that such was the case, but it's a lot different when you're on the pavement.

So I crapped out eventually. I'm disappointed but not crushed. This was substantially better than my last two marathon experiences: Philly '04 (the failed foot follies) and New York '03 (the P. Diddy disaster). I think I still managed to qualify for Boston '08, when I will be 55. I trained well and with delightful sneakiness. And there were some enjoyable elements to Austin despite the hills.

I got to spend time with my sister, Marjorie, who ran the accompanying half (also hilly); being 1500 miles apart, we don't see each other often enough. At the expo, I was looking at the course map and started chatting with a guy ... who turned out to be from Springfield, NJ! At mile 16 the next day, I got a tap on the shoulder, and a voice said, "Hey, Bloomfield!" My new Springfield friend, who had much the fresher legs (3:27 finish—what I would have managed had I run 8's the final 6 miles). In the port-a-john line, a woman

behind me has a sister who lives in Wyckoff, NJ (coincidentally, where Laura's brother Gerald lives). Little things like that add just an extra teeny kick.

Texas races have some nice elements of their own. All bibs have your first name printed on them in inch-high bold letters, and they do help you get fan support. And half-marathon runners have an extra bib for the back saying *Half*, so racers know who is (and isn't) their competition. My sister says the big marathons in Texas tend to have half/marathon doubles and do this, and that's a nice addition.

I hope to hell, however, that they don't all have so many freaking hills!

So that's my stealth marathon, and for those of you who may have figured it out in advance, thanks for keeping mum and letting me delude myself into the notion that I'd pulled one over on the Grovers.

EYE ON THE SPEAKER

Aubrey Blanda

Bikram Yoga for Runners

Peter Petrovic captivated his audience at the February meeting with a demonstration of difficult and complex yoga poses. Balancing on his hands, holding his body above the ground with his feet outstretched before him, the yoga instructor and owner of Bikram Yoga Montclair explained the benefits of gaining and maintaining strength and flexibility in muscles and connective tissues, especially as we age.

Bikram yoga differs from other yoga methods in that it consists of 26 poses and two breathing exercises and is practiced in a room heated to 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Bikram teachers say that the heat encourages blood circulation, increases oxygen intake, and promotes flexibility. The poses promote strength and blood flow, while the breathing exercises improve lung capacity.

With winter finally upon us, the idea of sitting in a 105-degree room appealed to me very much, so a week after the meeting I tried one of Peter's classes. I went in expecting an hour of relaxing meditation and gentle stretching, but boy was I wrong! In this intense 90-minute class, students moved from one challenging pose to the next with little rest in between. Equipped with my yoga mat, two towels, and a giant water bottle, I stretched, twisted, and tried to hold some challenging balance poses.

The heat was extreme, and I became dizzy twice. I was told that slight dizziness is normal in the first class, and I eventually became accustomed to the heat. Most students were dressed for the occasion, scantily clad in shorts, briefs, sports bras, or, in the case of one older gentleman, a Speedo brief bathing suit.

From the way my legs shook only 15 seconds into a standing pose, I realized how weak many of my muscles were, despite years of running. And from the way another woman's legs did not shake at all after holding the pose for several minutes, I saw how much strength could be gained from yoga.

For more information, see www.bikrammontclair.com.

West Essex Trail Cleanup, March 24 (In Memory of Rod Munro)

Our annual spring cleanup of the West Essex Trail will take place Saturday, March 24. We'll meet at 9:00 am by the tennis courts in the Verona High School parking lot off Sampson Drive, between Grove and Fairview avenues. Please give back to the community by volunteering for this special event. The rain date is Saturday, March 31.

This annual cleanup is dedicated to ERC member Rod Munro, the first person to arrive at the very first trail cleanup, organized by George Studzinski in April 1996. Rod passed away a few months later while running with his wife at the Cedar Grove Reservoir, not long after running on our first River to Sea Relay team with Tom Kelly and company. This is a way for us to honor Rod and help keep his spirit alive.

Usually, the cleanup is finished by about 10:30, and then some people run the trail. Background for new members: The West Essex Trail is approximately six miles round trip (to the end and back). If you'd like a shorter run, turn around sooner (there are mile markers on trees). The trail is straight, narrow, and blazed, so there's little chance of going astray. In addition, you'll have plenty of company after the cleanup.

Gloves and other protective clothing are recommended for the cleanup. Please try to bring one or two large, heavy-duty plastic bags. Pruning shears may be helpful for cutting back some of the smaller branches along the trail.

Bagels and juice will be provided, and free T-shirts will be available. For more information, contact Mick Close at 973-857-3612 or mickclose@aol.com.

Directions to Verona High School Parking Lot

Take Bloomfield Avenue to the center of Verona and turn onto Grove Avenue. Go north on Grove about 0.5 mile and turn left onto Sampson Drive. Just before reaching Fairview Avenue (where Sampson ends), turn into the parking lot on the right (where the tennis courts are and across from the high school). Park at the Fairview end of the lot. (Note: Sampson is a one-way street; don't enter from Fairview.)

Ten-Town Distance Challenge (No. 7), April 1

Phil Coffin

The Midland 15K is gone. The Equinox 20K has vanished. The Newark Distance Challenge has moved to a later date. The Liberty Waterfront Half-Marathon wasn't even the right distance. But there is one distance event you can count on—the Ten-Town Distance Challenge.

And in keeping with the spirit of the event, the 2007 edition will be on April Fool's Day, Sunday, April 1. Maybe you gotta be foolhardy to want to run 14.5 miles through 10 towns in Essex County—Montclair, Glen Ridge, Bloomfield, Nutley, Belleville, Newark, East Orange, Orange, West Orange, and Verona—but it sure is fun.

This is not a race, nor is it only for the marathon crazies, although it makes a good last long run for those getting ready for Boston (Apr 16) and a good prep for those training for the New Jersey Marathon (Apr 29). Anyone looking for a long run with plenty of company (about 30 runners last year), two water/Gatorade stops, a downhill finish of almost three quarters of a mile, and homemade muffins at the end should consider taking the challenge.

We'll start at 7:00 am at Grove Pharmacy (123 Grove St, Montclair). Parking is across the street, in the Deron School lot. (Please don't park on the street in front of the pharmacy.) Course directions and/or maps will be available in advance and on the day of the run.

We do have prizes for the first finishers, but remember, it's not a race, so leave those flats in the car.

Have questions? E-mail me (Philco53@comcast.net).

And keep training for 10 towns and one great run!

The 100th Millrose Games

Anne Chesny

I started attending the Millrose Games in the late 1970s. As was tradition, Dad took some of my high school track mates and me to Madison Square Garden to see this legendary meet. We never had great seats, but we got to see our track idols and Olympic stars up close. In the early 1980s, Mom and Aunt Mary came, and thoroughly enjoyed the Games.

In 1977, Jan Merrill and Francie Larrieu battled it out for distance bragging rights.

In 1978, I witnessed history being made when Fairleigh Dickinson University's Franklin Jacobs (5 ft 8 in) achieved a world record 7 feet 7¼ inches in the high jump. Magical!

"Little Mary Decker" was always America's sweetheart. In 1980, I saw her set the world record in the 1500 meter. With pigtailed flying and a smile from ear to ear, she gained momentum with each cheer.

Joetta Clark, a standout at Columbia High School in Maplewood and "Queen of American Middle-Distance Running," was always a crowd favorite. Her wins in the 800 meter catapulted her to the Olympics more than once.

Greg Foster was Mr. Consistent in the hurdles, and Houston McTear tore up the sprints.

Eamonn Coghlan was named "Chairman of the Boards" for his seven wins on the Garden's wooden infield track. He

was powerful and light while controlling the pace or charging to the finish. From when the lights were lowered to introduce the field, to when the crowd stood to cheer on this talented Irish runner, to when Coghlan took his victory lap—this was a meet highlight, and these were the Millrose Games.

There have been too many great events to rehash them all here. Congratulations, Millrose, on reaching your 100th anniversary in 2007! Keep it going!

This year's Games (Feb 2) did not disappoint. Danielle Tauro from Southern Regional High School in Manahawkin repeated as high school mile champion, while Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva entertained us going for the world indoor pole vault record (she was just short in three attempts).

Shawn Crawford won the men's 60-meter dash, with Maurice Greene stumbling halfway through the race—an unusual turn of events.

Bernard Lagat effortlessly took the Wanamaker Mile, beating prerace favorite Alan Webb and Australia's Craig Mottram. With five Millrose mile wins now under his belt, Lagat is closing in on Coghlan's record of seven. Will Lagat tie Coghlan in 2009?

Earlier in the evening, with Olympic themed music playing and the crowd cheering, several Millrose alumni from the past 100 years were introduced—Horace Ashenfelter, Mary Decker Slaney, Renaldo Nehemiah, Marcus O'Sullivan, and Marty Liguori, to name a few.

If you've never been to the Millrose Games, mark your calendar for 2008!

Verona Girls Hurdle Relay Team

Debbie McNally

My daughter, Hana, is a hurdler on the Verona High School winter and spring track teams. She is also a member of the VHS hurdle relay team.

At the State Relay Championships (Jersey City Armory, Jan 12), the girls hurdle relay team took 2nd place (out of 8 heats, so I'm guessing approximately 32 teams). But, even better than that, they broke the VHS hurdle relay record!

Then, at the Essex County Relays, the team took 2nd place *again*. They are quite the talented bunch of female hurdlers, and the oldest is only a junior, so they should be fun to watch for a while to come. The full team is Alyssa Giannuario, Emma Kapstein, Hana Masri, Ashlee Petroski.

"The Major-Grover's Song"

Gilbert & Sullivan & Mike Skara

We are the very model of a modern major running club.
We've run the chilly miles, no one of us is a schlub.
We know the streets of Montclair, and we quote races historical,
From marathons to local 5Ks, in order categorical.

We're very well acquainted, too, with matters nutritional.
We understand race splits, both the simple and quadratical.
In the monthly newsletter, we're teeming with a lot o' news,
With many cheerful facts about the races we all do choose.

For our running knowledge, we're plucky and adventury,
And hearing of Desmond's exploits seems to take a century.
But still, in matters racing, clothing, and eating, bub,
We are the very model of a modern major running club.

Virtual Running Clubs

Aubrey Blanda

Running is a paradoxical endeavor. On one hand, it's a lonely sport. We don't depend on teammates to catch a ball, stop a puck, or score a point. We run alone—it's our feet and the asphalt. We go at our own pace, not someone else's.

On the other hand, running is the most social sport. Tens of thousands of us wait together at the start of major marathons, and some run in groups during these races. In our clubs, we meet to share running stories, find answers to running questions, and hear speakers offer advice on training. We also meet for group runs, during which we motivate one another and form lasting bonds.

Through the Internet, we can now join running communities that extend beyond our local clubs and local specialty stores. Online forums—Web sites' bulletin boards, where members can post and reply to messages—have given rise to vibrant international communities with infinite opportunities for giving and getting advice, sharing entertainment, and enjoying camaraderie. Runners with access to a computer can use most of these online forums for free.

Forums are available at Runnersworld.com (an extension of *Runner's World* magazine), Runningtimes.com (*Running Times* magazine's offering), Runango.com, Letsrun.com, Coolrunning.com, Slowtwitch.com, and other Web sites. Although these sites differ in how their forums look, work, and are organized, individual forum titles such as *Women*, *Beginners*, *Training*, *Marathon*, *Nutrition*, *Trail & Ultra Running*, and *Injuries* are common. Within each forum, members create focused topics, and then the conversation begins. In topics such as "Trail Tuesday" and "Frosty Friday," forumites describe their daily workouts and answer get-to-know-you questions such as "What's your favorite running trail?" and "How are you dealing with the ice and snow?" Other topics are devoted to a single running-related question, such as "What's the safest way for me to increase my running from 20 miles per week to 35 mpw?"

I have been active in the *Marathon* forums at the Runningtimes (RT) and Runango sites for several years. Recently I polled my fellow forumites on the benefits and drawbacks of online running forums. Poll results can be divided into three areas: advice, entertainment, and community.

Advice. A single question might generate hundreds of responses, but how do you sort through them? Which ones are trustworthy? The consensus, as expressed by poster *ReelTrouble*, is that "online forums can be a great source of information or misinformation. The trick is to know ... which forumites provide good information and which should be ignored. ... Even then, information should be viewed with a healthy level of skepticism (unless you personally know the poster)." As *Juliebug* on the Runango site put it, "information is only as rational as the person giving it."

Several forumites indicated that they have felt relieved learning that they are not alone—that other runners have had similar experiences, or the same injuries, and that one treatment or another was particularly helpful. Forumites with travel plans have received good advice on restaurants, lodging, and running routes in new locales. Race reports, wrote *Indie*, are very useful and are the "kind of stuff you really can't get even from a real running group."

Entertainment. Not only are race reports informational, but they are a great source of free entertainment. Sure you can pay four or five dollars for a running magazine, but online you can also read, at no cost, firsthand accounts of races held all over the United States and even in places as exotic as London, Paris, Beijing, and Alaska.

Want to play a running-mileage game? Some forumites set up and maintain weekly and monthly mileage games for all to

enjoy. In the RT *Marathon* mileage game, teams of about 20 runners post their weekly mileage each Monday; later in the week, they "meet" online to chat. "The mileage game feeds my need for competition," wrote *The Beast* on the RT site, "but what quickly happens is that you get to know 20 other people extremely well, and the camaraderie is what becomes the most important facet of the game."

Occasionally, a topic stirs up controversy and ignites a "flame war," a heated argument that degenerates into insults. (Yes, even arguments can be considered entertainment.) Some site managers try to keep their forums civil and relatively flame-free by asking members to restrict controversial topics to a forum set up for them (hint: look for *Opinion* in the forum title). When a controversial topic arises, the advice universally offered by old-timers is to stay out of the fire. Instigators tend to drop out after a while, never to be seen again.

Community. In another paradox, the biggest online attraction for forumites who are tens, hundreds, and even thousands of miles apart is by far the camaraderie and close friendships that develop through constant, regular interaction on the boards. (Most forumites, however, have never met in person and realize they may never do so.) Although we post under aliases—*Spinnogoddess*, *Myles Torun*, *Hillrunr*, and so forth—some of us "chat" every day and eventually come to know more about one another than we do about our next-door neighbors. Why do we spend countless hours online with people who are, essentially, complete strangers? "This is the nirvana and home of people who are as passionate about running as I am," wrote *The Beast* about the RT *Marathon* forum. "Running is more than just a lifestyle. It's a passion. And when I can trade thoughts with, learn from, and share in all the individual successes and failures of people who are as passionate about running as I am—well, it just doesn't get any better than that."

Geography and schedules permitting, many devotees of online forums leave the anonymity of the boards to meet in person before, during, or after races. These "forum encounters" or "forum events" (FEs) can range from a quick hello before a race to a more relaxed large-group prerace dinner at a restaurant. All poll respondents wrote positively of their FEs. "It's kind of neat to meet the person behind the posts after getting to know their online personality, which is often at least somewhat different from their real personality," wrote *Hillrunr*. One RT regular has met up with more than 150 forumites at FEs over the years. "Almost without exception," he posted, "they are regular people. Of course, they are more than that—they are people who share your passion and love of running and racing. I've made [online] friends far and wide." The forumites whom *SeoulRunner* has met "have all been fun, friendly, and interesting people. No weirdos." *Sparkyrunner* expressed a hope that, "if there is an online axe murderer, he/she doesn't have the gumption also to be a marathoner, and wouldn't make it to a forum dinner, expo, or the starting corral of my next race."

I can attest that participating in running forums has enriched my hobby/passion/sport. I have learned about running, training, and racing, and I have received support, encouragement, and motivation from runners of different ages, abilities, and geographic areas. Chasing races has taken me to various cities, even across the border into Canada, and in each place I have been fortunate enough to meet people I had known only online before, and now call my friends. In January, I had the wonderful experience of being paced by a forum friend (from Texas) over the final five miles of the Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon in Phoenix.

Is there any downside to joining online running communities? "I spend way too much time here," admitted *Indie* on the RT *Marathon* forum.

Me too! Now I have to find an online support group for online forum addicts!

RACES: MARCH–MAY 2007

*Compiled by Mick Close. Club/Team races in **bold print**. Some dates and times tentative—call to confirm. NBGP = New Balance Grand Prix.*

3/4	Sun	9:00a	E. Murray Todd Half-Marathon (Lincroft)	13.1M	732-542-1642	
3/4	Sun	9:00a	Salsa, Blues, and Shamrocks 5K (NYC)	5K	212-860-4455	
3/10	Sat	10:00a	St. Patty's Day 5K (Morristown)	5K	973-401-1300	NBGP: 500 pts
3/11	Sun	8:00a	Colon Cancer Challenge (NYC)	15K, 4M	212-860-4455	
3/17	Sat	7:30a	Men's 8K Championship (NYC)	8K	212-860-4455	
3/17	Sat	10:00a	SDA Spring Thaw Run (Liberty State Park)	5K	201-434-5938	NBGP: 500 pts
3/17	Sat	10:00a	Winter's End 5-Miler (Rahway Park)	5M	908-245-3000	NBGP: 500 pts
3/17	Sat	10:00a	Bordentown St. Paddy's Day 5K	5K	609-324-6350	NBGP: 500 pts
3/18	Sun	8:00a	Shamrock Marathon (Virginia Beach, Va)	26.2, 13.1M	757-412-1056	
3/18	Sun	10:30a	St. Paddy's 10-Miler & Leprechaun 5K (Freehold)	10M, 5K	732-431-2627	NBGP: 10M (700 pts), 5K (500 pts)
3/18	Sun	1:00p	Leprechaun Leap 5K (Mount Olive)	5K	973-448-3589	
3/24	Sat	9:30a	Community Action Service Center 5K (Hightstown)	5K	732-742-6868	NBGP: 500 pts
3/25	Sun	8:00a	MORE Women's Marathon & Half-Marathon (NYC)	26.2, 13.1M	212-860-4455	
3/25	Sun	9:00a	Ocean Drive Marathon (Cape May/Sea Isle City)	26.2, 10M, 5K	609-523-0880	NBGP: 26.2M & 10M (both 500 pts)
3/25	Sun	11:00a	Millburn Spring Run (So Mountain Reservation)	10K, 2M	973-376-0231	NBGP: 10K (500 pts)
3/31	Sat	9:00a	Fool's Run (Kutztown, Pa)	10M, 5K	610-683-6173	
4/1	Sun	7:00a	Ten-Town Distance Challenge (Montclair)	14.5M	973-748-4688	Group Run Thru Essex County
4/1	Sun	9:00a	Indian Trails Run (Middletown)	15K	732-842-4317	NBGP: 500 pts
4/1	Sun	10:00a	Scotland Run (NYC)	10K	212-860-4455	
4/7	Sat	9:00a	South Orange Rotary 5K	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
4/7	Sat	10:00a	Mt. Penn Mudfest 15K Trail Run (Reading, Pa)	15K	610-779-2668	
4/8	Sun	9:00a	Easter Road Race (Ironbound, Newark)	5K	973-598-7878	NBGP: 500 pts
4/14	Sat	8:00a	Brooklyn Half-Marathon	13.1M	212-860-4455	
4/14	Sat	9:30a	Essential 2 Life 5K (Liberty State Park)	5K	732-381-0318	
4/14	Sat	10:00a	Building Tomorrows 5K (Brookdale Park)	5K	973-535-1181	NBGP: 500 pts
4/14	Sat	10:00a	River Edge Run	5K	201-599-6295	NBGP: 500 pts
4/15	Sun	9:30a	Rau-Fitzgerald 5K (Hasbrouck Heights)	5K	201-288-1426	
4/15	Sun	10:00a	Cherry Blossom Run (Branch Brook Park)	10K	973-268-3500	NBGP: 500 pts
4/16	Mon	10:00a	Boston Marathon	26.2M	508-435-6905	
4/21	Sat	8:00a	MK5K (Denville)	5K	973-896-5236	NBGP: 500 pts
4/21	Sat	9:00a	Jersey Shore Relay & Individual Marathon	26.2M	732-793-3000	
4/21	Sat	9:30a	Westfield Recreation 5-Miler	5M	908-789-4080	
4/21	Sat	10:00a	Earth Day 5K (Liberty State Park)	5K	201-795-4555	NBGP: 500 pts
4/22	Sun	9:00a	Lincoln Tunnel Challenge	5K	609-896-8000	
4/22	Sun	9:00a	Run for Children (Elizabeth)	5M	908-820-4050	NBGP: 500 pts
4/22	Sun	10:00a	Adidas Run for the Parks (NYC)	4M	212-860-4455	
4/22	Sun	11:00a	Miles for Matheny (Liberty Park, Peapack)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
4/28	Sat	8:30a	Draft Day 5K (Giants Stadium)	5K	732-381-0318	
4/28	Sat	8:30a	New Providence 5K	5K	908-464-4430	
4/28	Sat	9:30a	Country Run (Clinton)	15K, 5K	973-386-6884	NBGP: 15K & 5K (both 500 pts)
4/28	Sat	9:30a	Main Street 5K (Sparta)	5K	973-726-6218	NBGP: 500 pts
4/29	Sun	7:30a	New Jersey Marathon & Long Branch Half-Marathon	26.2, 13.1M	732-578-1771	
4/29	Sun	8:30a	Thomas G. Labrecque Classic (NYC)	4M	212-860-4455	
4/29	Sun	9:30a	Run for Rachel (Livingston)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 700 pts
5/5	Sat	9:00a	Glen Ridge 5K	5K	973-672-2140	
5/5	Sat	9:00a	Xercise 5K (Chatham)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
5/5	Sat	9:15a	Revlon Run/Walk for Women (NYC)	5K	212-379-3199	
5/5	Sat	9:30a	Newark Distance Classic	20, 5K	973-733-3749	NBGP: 20K & 5K (both 500 pts)
5/6	Sun	8:00a	Pocono Mountain Run for the Red Marathon	26.2M	570-992-4113	
5/6	Sun	8:45a	Rubin Run (Tenafly)	10K, 5K	201-569-7900	NBGP: 10K & 5K (both 500 pts)
5/6	Sun	9:00a	Nutley Chamber of Commerce 5K	5K	973-667-5300	NBGP: 500 pts
5/6	Sun	10:00a	Madison High Five	5K	973-514-1057	NBGP: 500 pts
5/6	Sun	1:00p	Our House 5-Miler (Summit)	5M	732-381-0318	NBGP: 700 pts
5/10	Thu	6:30p	Wyeth 5K (Madison)	5K	973-376-6094	NBGP: 500 pts
5/12	Sat	8:30a	Newport 10,000 (Jersey City)	10K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 700 pts
5/13	Sun	8:00a	Mother's Day 4-Miler & Women's 10-Miler (NYC)	10M, 4M	201-860-4455	
5/13	Sun	9:00a	Mother's Day 5K (Berkeley Heights)	5K	908-464-8373	
5/19	Sat	9:00a	Maywood 5K	5K	201-845-0920	NBGP: 500 pts
5/19	Sat	9:00a	Healthy Kidney 10K (NYC)	10K	212-860-4455	
5/19	Sat	9:30a	Shepherd Lake 5K (Ringwood)	5K	973-962-9465	NBGP: 500 pts
5/20	Sun	9:00a	Gilda's Run (Saddle River County Park, Paramus)	15K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
5/20	Sun	9:30a	Edison Family Day 5K	5K	732-248-7361	NBGP: 500 pts
5/26	Sat	8:30a	Spring Lake Five	5M	732-449-3544	
5/28	Mon	8:45a	Ridgewood Run	10, 5K	201-445-8638	NBGP: 10K (700 pts), 5K (500 pts)

Online race applications and related information: www.compuscore.com (CompuScore), www.nyrr.org (New York Road Runners Club), www.oympt.net (On Your Mark Productions), www.raceforum.com (Metro Race Forum), www.active.com/running (Active.com).