



KEEPING TRACK

The Newsletter of the **Essex Running Club**

P.O. Box 183, Verona, NJ 07044

Vol. 24, No. 5

May 2007

Since 1983

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Desmond Duncker

As I drove up for the Boston Marathon, I thought about the many times I've made the trip and how I've grown over the years. Running has been a class in Life 101. It's taught me:

1. *We are not born equal.* There is a cross-section of abilities and talents. As most races attest, sometimes even running is too difficult, but a brisk walk is still good enough to reach the finish line, even just to become fit.
2. *Goals are achieved through hard work and dedication.* Talent by itself gets a runner only to the starting line. How much effort is put into attaining an objective relates directly to how much progress is made.
3. *Fate happens.* Even the best plans can be upset unexpectedly. In 2002, after getting into phenomenal shape for Boston, I was sidelined by a wicked flu a month before the race. I have not been able to get to that level again.
4. *Consistency pays off.* Some people look at my fitness level and ask how I got to this point. My response: "Twenty-five years of running." Even just maintenance takes work!
5. *Short-term goals eventually merge into a set of values that then define our long-term goals.* All those little runs and races every year become a part of who you are.
6. *It's so much easier with friends beside you.* How many of us would venture out for a run on a cold Sunday morning if we didn't know that others were waiting for us?
7. *Enjoy the run.* I would have stopped running a long time ago if I didn't enjoy the feeling of carefree movement it provides. Nothing else comes close.

ERC: THE NEXT GENERATION

Mick and Donna Close: Grandparents!

We're very happy to report that our daughter, Lisa, had her baby on March 21. Parker Henry (Gruenbaum), 7 lb 4 oz, 20¾ in, was born at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. The father's name is Jason.

Greg Neal: Top of the Pops!

Tavia gave birth to Atticus Pierce Neal (8 lb 12 oz, 22 in) in Glen Ridge on April 6. Our son is healthy and happy, and his brothers, Austin, 5, and Bowie, 3, have been very helpful. We now have our 4-man relay team!

Come what May, I'll be at ...

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

Church Street Café
12 Church Street, Montclair

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

Our Speaker

ERC member Andy Kotulski will present a slide show on his Antarctica Marathon.

Summer Hosted Runs Begin June 7

It's time to make plans for ERC's traditional summer group runs, hosted at 7:30 pm each Thursday in June, July, and August. Hosts plot a 3- to 6-mile out-and-back course and provide light food afterward. Volunteer hosts are needed! If interested, write to Chris (jaworski@verizon.net). He'll add runs to the schedule and print the details in *Keeping Track*. Already reserved are Jun 21 (Smoke Rise/ERC Challenge 4M), Jun 28 (Sunset Classic 5M), and Aug 2 (Project Children 5K). Want to host a run but need help with preparation, cost, or location? Consider doing what others have successfully done—team up with one or more members, cohost a run, and share in the fun!

NOTES & REMINDERS

- **May 1.** Tuesday 7:00 pm West Essex Trail runs begin. *Page 3.*
- **May 2.** Wednesday 7:00 pm track workouts continue. *Page 3.*
- **May 5** (postponed until fall). Newark Distance Classic. *Page 4.*
- **May 6.** Nutley 5K (club race). *Page 4.*
- **May 6.** Our House 5-Miler (Masters M & W Championship). *Page 4.*
- **May 7.** General meeting. *Box, page 1.*
- **May 12.** Newport 10,000 (Open M & W Championship). *Page 4.*
- **May 20.** Gilda's Run 15K (club race). *Page 4.*
- **May 28.** Ridgewood Run (10K Masters M & W Championship). *Page 4.*
- **Jun 3.** Montclair Run (club race). *Page 4.*
- **Jun 4.** General meeting.
- **Jun 7.** First hosted run of the summer! *Page 1.*
- **Jun 15.** ERC Wine & Cheese Party hosted by Catherine Alessi.
- **Jun 21.** Smoke Rise/ERC Challenge 4M. *Details next issue.*

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](mailto: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!

I had a less than stellar day on the trail at this year's Mt. Penn Mudfest 15K (Apr 7). I probably should have quit after turning my foot at the 2-mile mark, but nooo, I had never DNF'd a road or trail race and wasn't about to start then. So, I compensated and dainty-stepped the remaining 7.3 miles, dinging that dawg several times in the process. The stream water, too cold for other runners, got my icing treatment under way early, but, even so, when Aubrey Blanda dropped me off at home, I could barely walk! I hopped around the rest of the day, hobbled around the day after and the day after that, limped up to accept my Off-Road Award at the ERC banquet on Tuesday, and waited until Thursday to run again. I hope I'm not getting too old for this \$^&#!

Aubrey's words of encouragement helped me when my spirit was flagging near the 5-mile mark. Thanks, Aubrey! She and Robert Stack and I had a blast at the Mudfest!

"I'm always up for trail running, especially in nasty weather!" said Robert, convincing me to go ahead with the Urban Environmental Challenge 6.3-Mile Trail Run ... during the April 15 nor'easter. "New York City's only trail race" took place in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx.

When I got home after this sloppy scramble, I showered the mud off, tended to a thorn-scratched lip, and massaged the sensation back into my cold-numbered right heel. Oh, did it ever feel good to be warm and dry again, to have some hot oatmeal and hot coffee!

I heard 97 people had preregistered for UEC, but, when Robert and I arrived, we were 2 of only 3 runners, and wondered if we'd be running alone. By the start, there were 60+ of us.

Ah, my race. You know, if it weren't for making a habit out of turning my left foot lately, I'd do much better in trail races. The foot had gotten much better in the week since the Mudfest, but not enough not to give me problems now and then during the UEC, and trying to protect the foot definitely slowed me down.

There was a problem with the trail markings on the second loop. A straightaway was blocked off, but there was no marked path headed left. Some of us started down to the right, where there were a few flags, only to meet a group coming back up and saying that it had turned out to be a dead end. Lost a little time there.

This 9th running of the UEC was a good tune-up for the Leatherman's Loop. The UEC had some Loop-worthy boggy areas and one short stretch of downhill mud-skiing.

Surprisingly, with the weather, running UEC was not uncomfortable, but the before and after were—standing around under a tent or out in the rain. When I was leaving, a Van Cortlandt Track Club member said, "Thanks for coming," and I earnestly replied, "It was great!" Then I realized what a goofy statement that was—the rain was then coming down harder, the wind was picking up, and I was soaked through, shivering, and walking through a field of puddles with my body bent oddly to one side and frozen into position.

Yep, it was great.

VCTC: "The mud was deep, the rain bone-chilling, and visibility close to zero. Times ... will ... be posted ... once the race tags have dried out, and the smudged ink becomes readable."

And then came the Leatherman's Loop (Apr 22). Where to begin? With joining Wayne Carlson, Gary Peters, and Robert for the drive to Cross River, New York? With enjoying this event for the second year in a row with Wayne? With introducing Gary and Robert to this great race? With taking in the beauty of the reservation? With admiring the 3-D model/map of the course—displayed on a large table? With the warm, sunny weather being diametrically opposed to last year's torrential rain and low temps? With the mud being inexplicably deeper, gloppier, and sloppier than last year's (a result of the recent nor'easter, no doubt)? With taking a bit too much glee wondering what newbies Gary and Robert were thinking when they were running through that mud? With my avoiding last year's nosedive into a huge mud puddle? With the first stream being waist-deep and very cold? With the stream near the finish being too deep and fast and dangerous to cross (again, that nor'easter)? With the course being rerouted past that stream and being lengthened by 0.2 mile as a result? With returning to that stream to wash our mud off after the race? With Gary telling the story of how he ran into a tree? With reciting to myself, "Beauty before me as I run," and then finishing with a strong last 2 miles? With my sprinting over the field to the finish and almost bouncing out of control but reining it in to surge past a half-dozen runners? With Wayne knocking 2+ minutes and me knocking almost 3 minutes off last year's times—on this year's longer course? With hearing the bagpipes before and after the race? With Gary narrowly missing an age-group award—a pie? With this run being a celebration? With feeling peace, so many hours later? Where to begin?

—Chris Jaworski



GROUP RUNS & TRACK WORKOUTS

Tue	7:00 pm	(▲) West Essex Trail Run, Verona
Wed	7:00 pm	(○) Track Workout, Verona Middle School
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. *Tue 7:00 pm; 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 Ave). 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.

(○) Track Workout, Verona Middle School. *Wed 7:00 pm.* Meet at track behind Verona Middle School (600 Bloomfield Ave). Take either Gould Street or Park Place (both off Bloomfield Ave) to track.

(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 St) 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@yahoogroups.com.

📍 **Track Workout at Verona Middle School** 📍
Every Wednesday at 7:00 pm
Directions above

ESSEX RUNNING CLUB		2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	
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Name		DOB	
Street			
City, State, Zip			
Primary Phone		2nd Phone	
E-Mail			
FAMILY			
Spouse Name		DOB	
Primary Phone			
E-Mail			
ANNUAL DUES & MAILING			
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family	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. Jan through Dec. Current Members. Renew by Feb 1 to avoid 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 Directory. Your name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail address will be printed in a directory distributed annually to ERC members only. This directory is solely for the personal use of members and is not to be used for commercial or political purposes.</p>			

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Katie Maher Clifton
 Helene Scarnegi Little Falls

ERC COOKBOOK

The *Essex Running Club Cookbook*, featuring 75 recipes, is now on sale for \$7 (in person) or \$10 (mail delivery). All proceeds help defray Karen Mishler's medical expenses not covered by insurance. Please see me at a race or meeting or write a check to *Essex Running Club* and mail to ERC, PO Box 183, Verona, NJ 07044. Thanks for the support!

—*Marta Rose*

ERC cookie fans! My Misty's Cookies recipe (p. 41) needs a small addition. Combine the butter and sugar and melt them over low heat on the stove until the sugar dissolves. Pour the dissolved mixture over crackers before sprinkling pecans on top. Then bake as directed and enjoy!

—*Joan Szabo*

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.

For Spring: **ERC Warmup Jacket**

Brooks 100% microfiber polyester shell with 100% moisture-transfer polyester mesh liner. Red jacket with white ERC logo. XS to XXL. Only \$40! Contact Sal Ulto for more info or for an order form: sulto@att.net or 27 Hunterdon Road, West Orange, NJ 07052.

POETRY CORNER

Donna Close

On Scene
 Reporters on scene
 Helicopters overhead
 Chase marathon strides.

PRs
 Marathon runners
 Exchange numbers while on cells
 And high-five PRs.



USATF–NJ

Gary Peters

May is marked by three USATF–NJ championship races—Summit's Our House 5-Miler (Masters Men & Women) on May 6, Jersey City's Newport 10,000 (Open Men & Women) on May 12, and the Ridgewood 10K (Masters Men & Women) on May 28.

I continue to believe that we can compete with the best New Jersey running clubs if we consistently show up for championship races. So, stay motivated and plan ahead!



AT THE RACES

Mick Close

Running Shorts

More race-calendar changes have been announced. The Newark Distance Classic, initially moved to May 5, is now postponed until the fall. A second Newark race, Integrity House Run for Freedom, in May, is canceled this year.

On the brighter side, new races continue to pop up. In Montclair alone are two new 5Ks: Challenge for Change 5K (Sun, May 20), which looks to have inherited the course left by the Lager Run (this year set in Glen Ridge), and the Bradley Richards 5K at Anderson Park (Sun, Jun 10).

Lottery-entry deadlines are May 16 for the NYC Half-Marathon (race day, Aug 6) and June 1 for the NYC Marathon (race day, Nov 5). Info: 212–860–4455, www.nyrr.org.

Nutley 5K

Sun, May 6

This local race, which has received high marks for its organization and volunteers, starts at the Nutley Town Oval at 9:00 am and circles the downtown business district. All runners receive T-shirt, medallion, and goody bag. Curves for Women will help runners warm up, and Starbucks will warm up spectators with free hot chocolate and coffee. A few lucky competitors will win terrific door prizes. Info: 973–667–9500, www.nutleychamber.com.

Our House 5-Miler

Sun, May 6

This 1:00 pm race starts at the Village Green in Summit. You get a lot for your entry fee at this event: sports bags, hats, and long-sleeved shirts before the race and then wraps, other food, and many excellent random prizes afterward. The course is on residential streets over rolling hills. The first 4 miles are mostly downhill, but you need to save something for a tough last mile back up to the finish. This race is the USATF–NJ Masters 5-Mile Championship and a team competition for both men and women. Info: 732–381–0318, www.olymp.net.

Newport 10,000

Sat, May 12

This race goes off at 8:30 am on the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend. With almost \$20,000 in prize money, this premier event attracts many elite runners. It's also the USATF–NJ Open 10K Championship and another opportunity for us to enter teams. The course is said to be the fastest in the tristate area, with the first 4 miles through local streets

and the last 2 on the waterfront, with spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline. Runner amenities include special Newport ringer tees, postrace refreshments, DJ, and random prizes. We will likely arrange a car pool. Info: 732–381–0318, www.olymp.net, www.newport10k.com.

Gilda's Run

Sun, May 20

This 15K, introduced in 2006 as a replacement for the Midland Run, is on the mostly flat paved paths of Saddle River County Park in Paramus/Ridgewood. Many of us ran and enjoyed it last year. If you need a 500-point category 3 event for the Grand Prix, this is a good choice. Along the winding course with several out-and-backs, you'll get encouragement from fellow ERC runners several times. This 9:00 am race is a fundraiser for Gilda's Club of Northern New Jersey, which offers free support to people touched by cancer. We may have a car pool going. Info: 732–381–0318, www.olymp.net.

Ridgewood Run

Mon, May 28

The Ridgewood Run (32nd annual) will be held as usual on Memorial Day (10K at 8:45 am, 5K at 10:15). The 10K is the USATF–NJ Masters Championship. There is no race-day registration. North Jersey Masters does a great job with this event, and there are many amenities—the usual T-shirts, goody bags, and postrace refreshments but also massages, raffles for a mountain bike and a baby jogger, and Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Info: 201–447–9750, www.ridgewoodrun.com, www.njmasters.com.

Montclair Run

Sun, Jun 3

It's the 25th anniversary of the Montclair Run! The popular 10K (9:30 am), one of the best local races, draws a large contingent of ERC members. The 2-miler (8:30 am), which usually involves about 200 runners, many children, is a great race for kids who are aspiring runners. The mostly flat courses are on tree-lined streets, with the 10K going through Edgemont and Anderson parks. The Montclair YMCA organizes all the events, which include many children's activities. Register at Fleet Feet Sports in Montclair or online at www.active.com. Prerace packet pickup is at Fleet Feet. Info: 973–744–3400, www.montclairymca.org.

Other Club Races in June

The President's Cup (Mon, Jun 18, 8:00 pm) is a fast, exciting two-lap 5K around downtown Millburn. The Charlie Brown's postrace party features Samuel Adams beer. This event is again the USATF–NJ Open Men's 5K Championship.

The Pine Beach 5K (Sun, Jun 24, 9:00 am), down the Jersey shore, is a new USATF–NJ championship race (Masters 5K). The fast, flat, scenic course follows Toms River and travels through the quiet streets of Pine Beach.

The annual 5000-Meter Lager Run will be held the same day (Sun, Jun 24, 5:30 pm) in Glen Ridge, where it moved after its very successful 2006 debut in Montclair.

The Sunset Classic (Thu, Jun 28, 7:30 pm) is the popular Bloomfield/Glen Ridge 5-miler that finishes on the track at Foley Field. Come celebrate the event's 20th anniversary!

AT THE FINISH LINE

Catching Up With Emily Ginder

Ramona's Run (4M) (Dec 30) 40:05
First Day 5K, Fair Lawn (Jan 1) . . . 30:21
St. Patty's 5K, Morristown (Mar 10) 31:06

Millburn Spring Runs (2M, 10K), Mar 25 South Mountain Reservation

2M: *Jim Malone* 18:32
 10K
Larry Czaplowski (2nd AG) 38:04
Charlie Slaughter (2nd AG) 39:16
Mike Kalthoff 43:34
Debbie McNally (5th W, 1st AG) . . . 44:50
Sharon Morrissey (8th W, 1st AG) 46:10
Chris Jaworski 48:56
Susan Mello (2nd AG) 49:09
Desmond Duncker the Younger . . . 50:41
Heather Welch (3rd AG) 51:46
Marta Rose (3rd AG) 53:09
Susan Shore 54:56
Ed Trieste (1st 10K!) 65:18

Thanks to Wayne Carlson for coaching me through another race. He ran the 10K (and the 2-miler!) unofficially. —*Heather Welch*

More Women's Half-Marathon, NYC Mar 25

Karen Feenaghty 1:50:54
Eileen Percevault 1:58:50
Robyn Silverman 2:02:56
Marta Sylvester 2:08:33
Sallie Liberio 2:20:38
Val Kenny 2:23:23
Lisa Davis 2:29:35
Ginger Brock (1st half!) 2:44:20
 Eight ERC women braved the tough hills of Central Park. —*Aubrey Blanda*

South Orange Rotary 5K Apr 7

Dan Murphy (8th OA, 1st AG) 18:11
Tom Eaton (22nd OA) 19:47
Doug Williams 20:59
Susan Shore 26:09
Martta Rose 26:12
Andi Robik 29:32
Val Kenny 30:09
Emily Ginder 31:14
Bev Salerno 32:31
Susan Palermo 39:16

Mt. Penn Mudfest 15K, Reading, Pa Apr 7

Chris Jaworski 1:50:12
Aubrey Blanda 1:51:10
 Race report on page 2.

Ocean City Marathon, Md Apr 7

Jeff Burrowes (3rd AG, PR) 3:17:07
 This was supposed to be a spring marathon. At the start, the temperature was 38 degrees,

winds were 10 mph, and snow was flurrying. That quickly changed to 32 degrees, 20-mph winds (they felt stronger), and snow showers. I felt I was running into the wind the second half. The course was a north-and-south route with a turnaround at Assetaugue Island. The weather was so bad not even the island's wild horses were out. The left side of my face and hands were numb at the end. I couldn't untie my shoes to get my chip off (someone helped). By race end, visibility was less than a mile. Someone said it was the first time in 30 years they had snow in April.

This was the third year for this marathon. The course was nice and flat, except for a bridge at miles 12 and 14. You run along Route 611 and through neighborhoods, so there was some car traffic. Aid stations were good, and, given the weather, spectators came out in decent numbers. The postrace party was okay; everyone was just cold and wet. I needed 3:15:59 to get into Boston. I hope I can appeal because of the weather.

Building Tomorrows 5K, Apr 14 Brookdale Park

Dan Murphy (3rd OA, 1st AG) 18:18
Eric Stadnyk (2nd AG) 20:24
Doug Williams (3rd AG) 20:26
Mike Kalthoff 21:14
Debbie McNally (5th W, 1st AG) . . . 22:30
Chris Jaworski 23:16
Karen Feenaghty (2nd AG) 23:39
Bill Wilde 24:06
Tom Kelly (1st AG) 24:26
Susan Shore 25:31
Aubrey Blanda 25:37
Martta Rose 25:46
Michael Topper 27:49
Andi Robik 28:11
Emily Ginder 31:26
Bev Salerno (3rd AG) 32:54
Susan Palermo 39:18

The weather was perfect. The course was two different loops around the park. The first took you up along Bellevue Avenue and past the tennis courts. One hill didn't look like much but was a killer 2.9 miles into the race.

Eric Stadnyk needed a challenge, so he gave everyone a 25-second head start (the race went off early, at 9:57). However, he passed me later, and I couldn't catch him.

This was a good event with a good postrace party. —*Doug Williams*

Doug did catch me, but I managed to get him in the finish by just 2 seconds. This race was going to be my first sub-20-minute 5K. I think I could've accomplished that if I were at the

start when the horn went off (9:57 by my watch, too). I think I ran the first mile at a sub-6-minute pace trying to catch up, weaving through the midpack. That frantic expending of energy didn't help me the rest of the way. Still, it was nice to receive my first age-group award and see everyone come out for the beautiful weather. —*Eric Stadnyk*

NYRR Brooklyn Half-Marathon Apr 14

Roosevelt Lucas 1:37:34
Rich Unis 1:48:07
Robert Lewin 2:03:09
Jim Enslin 2:12:52

I'm glad this Coney-Island-to-Prospect-Park race was run the day before the nor'easter. The weather was sunny and breezy. Still, I couldn't appreciate the ocean, as it didn't offer me any heat while I awaited the starting horn. The empty beachfront and wide open water would make for a good photo, though.

With a field of 4500+, it was a crowded start, but runners thinned out quickly after the boardwalk portion (the first 3 miles). The boardwalk lost its beauty early on, as it was easy to get paranoid looking at untightened screws and broken wood. Then we turned onto Ocean Parkway and headed north. We started at Avenue Z and worked our way up the alphabet. The wind helpfully died down near the end. The final stretch consisted of 4 miles in Prospect Park. There was a slight hill at 3-2 miles and again in the last mile, but I was familiar with the park, so I anticipated and conquered the hill.

Depending on your pace/condition, a not so funny part came with 5K left, where we met runners turning into their final 0.4 mile. The short thrill that runners may get thinking the end is near quickly evaporates as they turn onto one of the longest hills.

I hope to run this race again next year. —*Roosevelt Lucas*

As the Beastie Boys sing, "Don't stop till Brooklyn!" (Actually, Prospect Park.)

No water stops, no bathroom breaks, no stopping whatsoever. Today I got my third straight course PR, though this time by only 2:48 over last year.

Again I arrived at the start in a frantic state, but this year the Goethals Bridge was open, so at least I didn't have to take the scenic tour of the Arthur Kill.

Instead of driving to the Coney Island start, leaving my car there, and taking the subway back after the race, I drove to the finish at Prospect Park and caught the Q train to the start. Smart, right? Well, the train took

forever, making every stop. By the time I got to Coney Island, I had 10 minutes to get and put on my chip and bib, stop the baggage bus to add a bag, and hit the Port-a-John.

With the added adrenaline rush, it goes without saying that my fastest miles were the first 7, and I had to hold on for dear life after that. Not a great tactical race.

Yet my recovery was quick. I owe that to tuning up with Phil Coffin's sadistic Ten-Town Distance Challenge two weeks earlier.

I hope the Brooklyn Half and the Cherry Blossom Run won't be on the same weekend next year. They're both personal faves!

—Robert Lewin

Urban Environmental Challenge Apr 15 6.3-Mile Trail Race, Bronx, NY

Chris Jaworski ~61:15
Report on page 2.

Rotterdam Marathon Apr 15

Maria Imas 3:45:45

My training had gone well, I had run a half-marathon PR of 1:42:03 five weeks earlier, and here I was, expecting to run about 3:35, which would be a PR by 2 minutes. Well, it was not to be, with this disaster of a race.

As much as Boston was a cold and windy monsoon, Rotterdam was an ugly scorcher, with bright skies, blazing sun, an 11 am start, and temps going from 77 to easily over 80 degrees. Sweating buckets while standing at the start, I knew that my goal time was out the window; this would be a survival race.

The flat course began on a narrow road, where passing was difficult. I spent the first 3 miles boxed in, watching people in front of me and trying not to step on their heels. My pace here was about 8:50 per mile, slow and frustrating, but I couldn't break out.

After the first 5K, the course opened up a bit, and I sped up a little. I ran mostly by feel but checked my Garmin for overall pace.

I also had to slow down at the crowded water stations. (At the first two, my pace dropped to 9 minutes per mile.) At each station, I made a special effort to rehydrate—I drank two cups of water, used quite a few sponges, and ran through all the sprinklers.

I hit the halfway mark at 1:52:15, way off my recent 1:42. It was frustrating seeing all my goals crash, but I didn't want to end up in an ambulance or have to drop out. So, I kept plugging along at the same pace. Rotterdam felt like a long training run, not a race. I didn't push myself until after 30K.

Even with all the water I was drinking, I was thirsty all the time. Taking four gels containing sodium (200 mg) was a good idea—I was able to avoid muscle cramps.

Things got really tough after 35K, but I started pushing and kept a consistent pace. That lasted until 38K, at which point I hit the wall, saw my pace drop significantly, and revised my goal time. Now I wanted to run 3:45 to qualify for Boston and London.

To make matters worse, when I reached the 39K mark, the organizers canceled the race because of the heat! Their minute-long announcement may have been in Dutch, but I knew the words *marathon* and *stoppen*. We were ordered to walk to the finish.

I was demoralized. I had been struggling, and now all of a sudden I didn't know if my time would count. I was tempted to begin walking, as scores of other runners did, but I was so close that I decided to press on.

But it was hard. I walked through the final, 40K water station (the only one I walked). After starting up again and shuffling past 41K, I saw signs *500 m to Go* and decided to kick it in. I had a strong last 500 meters, relatively speaking (maybe 8:20 pace).

Later I read that runners behind me were forced to use a shortcut to the finish—reducing their race distance by about 12K. Many, people, perhaps thousands, didn't run the full race. What a mess! Now there are two sets of results: "regular" and "shortened." My net time for the regular was 3:45:45, okay for Boston but not London, which doesn't give a courtesy minute. (You need to finish *below* 3:45:00. I'll double-check!) At least I got a BQ—about the only positive outcome of this race (provided I can use my time officially).

After this marathon, I was able to walk, though not easily, and I was in better condition than after my other marathons—probably another indication that I ran well below my potential this day. Overall, Rotterdam was a very frustrating experience, especially coming after 4 months of training. I couldn't do anything about the weather, but maybe I should have pushed myself more.

Boston Marathon Apr 16

Desmond Duncker 3:36:35

Jen Lanterman 3:41:08

Tom Daniels 3:47:30

Chip Bearden 4:02:26

I finished with a survivor-mode 3:47:30 (12 minutes slower than New York), but I am comforted by the fact that the winner was off his pace almost as much (11 minutes).

For all of us waiting for the buses in the Common and then for the gun in Hopkinton, the nor'easter came just as advertised. During a prerace broadcast, a WBZ reporter had his hat blown off as he spoke into a wet camera lens, and sheets of rain fell down on him. In the staging area, I felt like Noah

building the ark, except I was wearing a trash bag over my head, four layers of clothes, a ski hat, and plastic bags on my feet. We stood in a holding field, in mud 4 to 6 inches deep; others were sheltered in a school, opened for the marathon for the very first time.

It was cold (40 degrees), wet (pouring rain), and windy (from the east at a constant 30 mph), yet 90% of the entrants showed up. Then, inexplicably, the rain subsided for the 10:30 start. The roads were wet and muddy, the air damp and cold.

Donna, my wife, braved the elements. She donned her foul-weather gear and ski pants and provided valued support in two locations. A Boston work colleague jumped in to accompany me over the last 10 miles, barking me up the three big hills, keeping me focused on form, and chastising me when I veered off the rhumb line too much.

Around Heartbreak Hill and the Graveyard Mile, a hazy blur set in as I settled into my now all too familiar just-get-to-the-finish death-march trance. It wasn't until I saw the Citgo sign, Fenway, and the Hancock Center that I knew I was over the hump.

Many said the crowds were about a third their usual size, but there being 150,000 to 200,000 spectators out under these conditions says much about the heart of the fans and the tradition of this race.

Santa Claus made a roadside cameo. The Easter Bunny, a man in tutu, and a guy swinging a tennis racket also ran (none of whom I beat), as did Big Bird (whom I did). The day was best summed up by a yard sign near the 10-mile mark: *It's a Pissah!*

—Tom Daniels

Despite the stinky weather and the horrible toe cramps I had for 16 miles, I am thrilled with my 3:41:08. I didn't pressure myself. I traded in some training so I could finish school. I decided that I would run as fast as my little legs would take me. I would be happy if I could finish under 4 hours, and, if I could do that, then I would be delighted if I made it under 3:45. It wasn't my NYC 3:25, but I am more proud of my Boston time than of my performance in New York.

Man in tutu, rabbit heads, puking runners, almost yakking myself (too much Gatorade trying to rid myself of those blasted cramps), Heartbreak Hill (not as bad as expected), ... I came, I saw, I conquered.

Know about the infamous Wellesley girls? I saw them. I heard they were warned they would be expelled for certain antics, such as nudity. Well, some were out there in bikinis and rain boots. Many held signs saying *Kiss a Wellesley Girl!* I was so excited about the

fanfare that, despite my preference for boys, I wanted to kiss a Wellesley girl!

Then I saw someone nestled in among all those screaming girls—someone holding a *Kiss a Wellesley BOY!* sign. He was cute, too. Well, I couldn't help myself. However, I was afraid that, if I stopped to suck face, I wouldn't be able to start running again, so I blew kisses, which he gleefully returned.

I told Ray, my fantabulous boyfriend, about this, and it cracked him up. He said that, given the circumstances, he would have been fine with me sucking face with a Wellesley boy. What a trouper!

After the race, Ray said that ERC should add the *Captain Insano Award* to its slate of awards and that it should be given to everyone who ran the 2007 Boston Marathon. He argued that running a 5K in a storm is one thing, but running a marathon in the weather we had is more than running—it's also sheer determination and utter madness!

—*Jen Lanterman*

For me, this has not been a good year for training. I never recovered from taking it easy for much of last year. I could not ease my legs back up to the mileage I consider essential for racing a marathon. In addition, this year I completed only one 20-miler in the weeks before Boston.

Given all that, I concluded I was probably good for a 3:30-ish marathon at best. Then, a week before Boston, my right knee acted up. So, there I was walking stiff-legged upstairs and downstairs *before* the marathon.

But as Mick Close would say, I was just doing my usual antics before uncorking an amazing performance. He relishes telling the story of how one year I hurt my back, could hardly walk going into another Boston, could not even get out of bed upright, and yet ran a 3:20. Engaging in these antics is now called "pulling a Desmond" by the runners in the Sunday 7:00 am group.

As I drove up, I listened intently to the dire forecasts. Several friends speculated that Boston might be canceled, but I knew Boston is the one marathon that will not, under any weather circumstances, be canceled.

I have run two other marathons in this kind of weather—Marine Corp Marathon in 1998 and Jersey Shore Marathon in 2002—so I knew what to expect and decided I would run, not race, to the finish.

I got up Monday and put two layers on underneath my ERC race singlet, plus my best winter-grade tights, gloves, a hat, and an industrial-thickness 40-gallon trash bag.

I drove from my hotel 20 minutes north of Boston, parked at the Boston Common

lot (\$10 all day), and walked out to face the worst lines I have ever seen for the buses that would transport us to the start. I now doubted I would make the 10:00 am start, but that didn't bother me much, as I would not be racing. After waiting about 25 minutes, I finally boarded a bus and was on my way. Approaching Hopkinton High School, we were halted by bumper-to-bumper buses, all trying to unload their runners. I finally asked our driver to let me out, and I walked the 300 yards to the high school.

The weather lived up to its billing—cold, wind, constant rain. I was thankful that the temperatures held in the 40s. With my many layers, I was not uncomfortable. I walked the half-mile to the starting corrals and lined up. I had two gels and took the first at the start; the other I saved for the 10-mile mark.

After the cannon sounded, it took us at least a minute before we started walking and a couple more before we passed the starting mats. I felt comfortable in my trash bag and ran with it on for 3 to 4 miles.

As expected, my legs were not in racing condition, so after the first 4 downhill miles I eased up. This was the first Boston in which a stream of runners was passing me all the way to the finish. No bother—my objective was simply to finish in a reasonable time.

The rain didn't bother me much either. My Nike Dri-Fit peaked hat, which I had found at the finish of another marathon, made all the difference in keeping the rain from my face. Although my shoes were very wet, I still tried to avoid pools of water to save time.

At certain points, the wind made itself known. The wind that came off the lake at mile 9 cut right through me!

After that, the symptoms of undertraining began surfacing. First came the stiffness migrating from the inside of the right thigh up to the right groin area. I knew from past experience that this would slow me down, so, while running, I pressed my fingers into the right groin and massaged the area.

A couple miles later, sharp pain in the right buttock almost made me jump! I took deep breaths, balled my fist, and pressed it into my butt. I must have been a sight!

At mile 12, I kept to the left and watched, amused, as other runners were lured away by the noisy and pretty sirens of Wellesley. I also noted an unusually large number of male Wellesleyans with signs asking for kisses. I wondered how they would react to male runners taking them up on their offer. It is a different world these days!

My pace was slowing. After the half, even 8-minute miles were hard. Then I passed a group of New York Flyers who recognized

my ERC singlet. One saw me struggling and called out, "Do this for Karen [Mishler]!" That gave me the drive to get through 15.5 miles.

Then I meandered down the sharp incline that signaled the start of the infamous Newton hills. When I passed the *Welcome to Newton* sign at the start of the first hill, I realized that I know these hills intimately and that, difficult as they are, I looked forward to what was to come.

I downshifted to 9-minute miles, took deep breaths and short strides, dug deep over each hill. As usual, by the third hill (19 miles), there were the questions of the uninitiated. *Is this Heartbreak? Is this the last hill?* I responded, "No, after this you hit a flat section. Then it goes up again. *That's Heartbreak!*"

The crowds were not up to par this year, but, once we hit the hills, they were out in force! I think there is something in all of us that wants to see others overcome adversity. As I suffered up the hill, I saw how spectators cheered on the worst-looking runners who were still moving, and to the runners who stopped they called out, "Don't give up! Keep going!" That's when I knew I was holding my own, despite my 9:20 pace.

At the start of Heartbreak, I warned a few runners, "This is it, Heartbreak!" No one was able to muster any words of thanks.

Heartbreak was like Montclair's Bradford Avenue hill. Both are longer than expected, and you must pace yourself! I crested the final hill and jogged down the other side. Passing the Boston College towers, I assured myself my finish now was not in doubt.

But the downhills took their toll, and my legs stiffened up so much that I had to put in lots of effort just to keep them moving.

I thought back to the final miles of last year's Philadelphia, where, finishing at an 8-minute pace, I told runners around me, "It's only pain. Run through it." Now at Boston, these words haunted me. Not only was I in pain, but my legs weren't working, either.

Those who have run tough marathons know that the final 6 miles are defining. Your legs aren't working, and you have a long way to go to finish. During this part of my Boston ordeal, I recalled the Flyer's words about Karen and resolved to make it through these miles. Each of them took an eternity.

At mile 25, I summoned the strength to move my legs a little faster. I ran down, under the overpass, to the welcome sight of the right turn. I took the turn, sprinted up the short hill, and made the left for the famous Boylston Street finish. The twin semicircular finish-line banners, visible all the way from the turn, cue you to begin the most excruciating third-of-a-mile sprint to the finish.

A big-city marathon finish can present another set of challenges. Here at Boston, the rain may have stopped, but my legs were shot, and the wind was as blustery as ever. It cut through my water-soaked clothes and left me shivering and my teeth chattering. Finally over the line, I wobbled as fast as I could, grabbed food and water and Mylar blanket and medal, and rounded the corner to pick up my bag. There were not enough baggage handlers, so runners had to wait, shivering. It seemed like forever before my number was called. As soon as I found an open spot on the street, I pulled off my wet shirts and put on dry ones. The marathon is not over until I am warm and dry!

I will most likely not run Boston in 2008. I've decided that, unless I put in the winter training miles to pursue a spring marathon, I will not do one. So take note: My days as a multiple marathoner are numbered.

—Desmond Duncker

I started. I finished. The weather sucked. Still, the experience was everything I hoped it would be. Just different.—*Chip Bearden* [Chip provides a few more details on p. 9]

MK5K, Denville	Apr 21
<i>Dan Murphy (1st AG)</i>	18:13
<i>Charlie Slaughter (2nd AG)</i>	18:43
<i>Debbie McNally (2nd AG)</i>	22:00
<i>Sharon Morrissey (2nd AG)</i>	22:12
<i>Susan Mello (4th AG)</i>	23:50
<i>Chip Bearden</i>	24:05
<i>Aubrey Blanda (PR)</i>	24:23
<i>Emily Ginder</i>	30:14

The weather was picture-perfect for this fast, flat 5K. Blue skies, scenic residential course, many volunteers, and lots of food made for a well-organized race with a small-town feel.

My only gripe: The finish was at least a mile from the start (where I had parked), so there was a hike back after the race.

Especially fun was watching all the young runners. Coach Joel was there with one of his athletes, a 12-year-old girl who ran 19:20! She wasn't alone, either.—*Aubrey Blanda*

Jersey Shore Marathon Relay Apr 21
Essex Lightning Team 3:31:55

On a gorgeous day, 200+ teams showed up to participate in this marathon-length relay benefiting Special Olympics of New Jersey. Our team consisted of Lynne Mortimer (coordinator), Tom Kelly, special guest runners Dean and Betty Shontz from the Sneaker Factory, and yours truly.

The five race legs ranged from 3.6 to 6.25 miles, starting in Seaside Heights and finishing at Asbury Park's Convention Hall,

where we were greeted with a live band, pasta, salad, and beer. We all ran strong, for a finishing time of 3:31:55—good for 4th place in the mixed masters category (350 teams total) and not too shabby for a bunch of injured masters. Yes, all of us were coming off illnesses or injuries of some sort. I commented to Lynne, "Gee, if we could only run all our marathons this way!"

It was good to see Catherine Alessi, who came to congratulate us at the finish. Wish her luck at the Dash for Organ Donor Awareness tomorrow! —*Martta Rose*

It was really a wonderful day, both for running in such great weather and for enjoying the unbeatable camaraderie.

I was told there was a total of 1300 to 1400 participants—350 teams plus a small group of runners who completed the entire

marathon distance solo. No question, a relay is the perfect way to complete a marathon—and it'll be the only 3:31:55 I'll ever run! Next year, we'll give advance notice of this event, in case other Essex members want to form teams and run. The race site is only an hour away, and the post-race party makes the drive well worth it. Mucho fun and a great cause: Special Olympics. —*Lynne Mortimer*

5K Run in the Park, Lakewood Apr 22
Phil Coffin (2nd AG) 19:42

Leatherman's Loop 10K (6.4M) Apr 22	
Trail Run, Cross River, NY	
<i>Gary Peters (5th AG)</i>	52:48
<i>Wayne Carlson</i>	57:38
<i>Peter Connell</i>	57:59
<i>Chris Jaworski</i>	65:45
Report on page 2.	

ESSEX RUNNING CLUB AWARDS FOR 2006

Athletic Achievement Awards

USATF	Charlie Slaughter Grand Prix (2nd AG), Mini 1 (1st AG), Mini 2 (2nd AG)
	Rick Pingitore Grand Prix (1st AG), Mini 2 (1st OA)
	George Studzinski Grand Prix (1st AG)
	Lynne Mortimer Grand Prix (3rd AG), Mini 1 (2nd AG)
	Martta Rose Mini 1 (3rd AG), Mini 2 (3rd AG)
Distance	Interclub Challenge Martta Rose & Charlie Slaughter
	5K, 5M, 10K Lynne Mortimer
	5K, 15K/10M Charlie Slaughter
	5M, 10K, 20K/Half-Marathon Dan Murphy
	15K/10M Debbie McNally
	20K/Half-Marathon Sharon Morrissey
	18M Martta Rose & Rich Zanni
ERC	Marathon Kathy Canale & Peter Hughes
	Runners of the Year Sharon Morrissey & Larry Czaplowski
	Rookies of the Year Debbie McNally & Tom Eaton
	Most Improved Runners Jennifer Lanterman & Bill Wilde
	Most Consistent Runners Aubrey Blanda & Phil Coffin
	Comeback Runners Robyn Silverman & Chip Bearden
	Multisport Athletes Anne Chesny & Jennifer Lanterman
	Off-Road (Trail) Runner Chris Jaworski
	Racewalker Susan Palermo

Spirit Awards

Purple Heart Award	Randy Miller
Sally Sammon Award for courage in the face of hardship	Catherine Alessi
Cheerleaders	Anne Chesny, Laura Messina, Randy Miller, Eugenie Temmler
Marco Polo Award	Eric Stadnyk
	for Vermont City Marathon, Reach the Beach Relay (NH), Hood to Coast Relay (Ore)

Service Awards

Julia Child Award for fantastic food	Val Kenny
Newsletter/Journalism Award for Keeping Track	Chris Jaworski
Larry Hollander Award for club service (Verona 5K, Web site, cookbook)	Martta Rose
Rick Derella Award for community service (Goodwill 5000 & Rescue Mission)	Aubrey Blanda
Supporting Business Awards	Church Street Café, Fleet Feet Sports, Grove Pharmacy, Joel Pasternack, PIP Printing

Above & Beyond Awards

For all they have done for Essex Running Club	Mick & Donna Close, Karen Mishler
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Thirty Years to Boston

Chip Bearden

Listening to someone describe running the Boston Marathon can be like hearing a neighbor who works in the movie business discuss his most recent trip to the Cannes Film Festival. Even if you're a savvy film buff and you *could* attend as a spectator, you never will. You're an outsider. And being around someone who talks so casually about it is a constant reminder that you lead a more mundane, prosaic, and commonplace existence.

For better or worse, that's how I felt about Boston: I wanted to be an insider, to be a member of the club, to pass the test I imagined all *real* marathon racers must pass ... but I never could. Thirty years ago this summer, in *The Complete Book of Running*, my first book purchase as a runner, Jim Fixx took his readers along that course in detail. I had just graduated from finishing a mile without walking and was working my way up to two and three miles every morning. The idea of a 10K was beyond comprehension. Still, I could relate at some level to Jim's reverence for Boston, as I could to the many subsequent accounts over the intervening decades.

Ten years ago, after half a dozen marathons of my own, I began to believe I had a chance—a slim but nonzero chance—to qualify for Boston myself. All I had to do was run my PR again and equal the 3:25 I'd done at age 30. The only snag was that 17 years had elapsed, 15 of those without running a marathon. Thus began a quest that by late last year had a familiar and discouraging pattern: train hard, often too hard; recover from injury; then miss the qualifying time by varying amounts, usually three to seven minutes. The future always offered hope—of improved fitness as well as a new age bracket—but as Boston's age-graded standards rose from 3:25 to 3:35 and then to 3:45, so did my finishing times. A sudden problem with my lower back two years ago slowed me by nearly 15 minutes and seemed to bury my prospects for good.

Then, through a miraculous combination of hard work, obstinacy, weather, grace, and sheer luck, it all came together last November in Philadelphia. In that brief span of time—just 3 hours, 44 minutes, 48 seconds—my life changed. And if I didn't know that, others did. Many running companions in the Grove Street and Fleet Feet Sunday-morning groups had long reassured me that Boston was just another marathon, that it was a lot of hype, and that I shouldn't

worry if I never qualified. Now they were singing a different tune:

Typical: "Chip, it's amazing! It's like going to the Olympics! The special atmosphere, knowing you're a member of an exclusive club, the athletes' village out in Hopkinton. It's like no other marathon!"

Me: "Thanks, guys. Were you lying then, or are you lying now?"

Anyway, it's not that exclusive—they let *me* join. But it *is* different. Just not quite in all the ways I expected.

My race was not very interesting apart from the well-publicized no-race. I didn't go to Boston with a time goal in mind. It would have been nice to requalify with a 3:45. But I knew my Philly 2006 time was good for Boston 2008 anyway.

Instead, this was a victory lap. I'd made a commitment to myself that I was going to treat this event differently than my other 24 marathons. I wanted to enjoy this one not because it was my first or fastest or because I was running it with my brother and sister or because I was coming back from injury and wanted to preserve my 11-year streak at Philly. Selfishly, I wanted to run Boston as a reward for achieving something I set out to do almost 10 years ago. Simply being there was enough.

That's the way I approached my training: serious but enthusiastic, not grim. Relieved of the usual pressure to hit every training milestone, I found the process of growing stronger and faster tremendously uplifting, almost as if I were a little younger each week, the exact opposite of the postmarathon recovery in which you feel the peak fitness level you've worked months to achieve now slipping inexorably away. Ironically—and perhaps partly because of this—my body exhibited few of the typical stress symptoms that had occurred all too regularly during training. I even felt free to experiment, which led to some interesting training with a neighborhood woman, a 3:37 marathoner, who took me on 24- and 28-mile run/walk workouts. The upshot was that, in the last weeks leading up to Boston, my 10 × 800 times were some of the best I'd achieved in several years, and I'd run a hard mile on the track about 20 seconds faster than only four months earlier. I was actually enjoying myself rather than doggedly grinding out the training.

And that's the way I ran the race. I was feeling okay when the gun went off, but I held a 3:45 pace (8:35/mile) for the first five miles only because of the early downhill.

When the course leveled out, and a 9-minute pace felt better, I let the idea of a 3:45 finish slide away, with no anguish. I used my heart rate monitor to modulate my effort on the rolling uphills and downhills in the first 16 miles. I was surprised when I crashed relatively early, but I hadn't done the full carbohydrate depletion/loading regimen that, though no guarantee of success, is a prerequisite for me. And the Newton hills slowed me down more—much more—than expected. Then, with cramps threatening in the final miles, I couldn't stretch out on the downhills I love so much. As a result, I coasted in for a 4:02+ finish, my slowest time since coming back from injury in 2000.

On this occasion, though, rather than putting my head down and slugging it out dourly knowing I'd fallen off the pace yet again, I took the opportunity to look around.

It started on the Saturday and Sunday before the race, when I roamed the elaborate downtown Marathon Expo for hours. I must have visited each vendor's booth at least twice. I even had a long discussion with some Philly Marathon staff about the problems they had last year and what they're doing to fix them.

I attended two seminars and at each of them heard Grete Waitz speak about her philosophy of running, both when she was competing seriously and now that she is not. She confessed that she sometimes finds it difficult to stay motivated and does not always enjoy the running itself, but she relishes the feeling it gives her afterward. I heard three world-class US female runners—Carrie Tollefson, Amy Rudolf, and Sara Slatery—talk about the motivational tricks they use. Amy Rudolf said, "If it's cold and raining, and I don't feel like going out, I just tell myself that someone is training today ... and if I meet her, she'll beat me." They all strongly endorsed cross-training as a standard part of their routine. Grete uses the elliptical machine frequently. Several of them advocate intense pool running, though they feel it's too easy to back off if you wear a flotation belt.

And wherever I went, of course, the big topic of discussion was the weather and how to deal with the threat of hypothermia. Like many, I bought a polypro hat and wrap-around sunglasses, realizing that a 30-mph wind would rip off my brimmed cap and rain would then wash the contact lenses right out of my eyes.

I also bought "the jacket," the one I've been spotting at other marathons for years, the one with the not very subtle Boston Marathon logo splashed all over it. I'm not sure

where and when I'll wear it, but I've wanted one for a long time.

The night before the race, I took the subway to Government Center and emerged at street level to discover the wind had strengthened dramatically. City Hall Plaza is a bleak, starkly modern anomaly in old Boston: open, windswept, brick paved, and spilling out from an austere, angular, concrete City Hall. At best, it is unwelcoming; that night, it was downright hostile. The temperature had dropped, too, so we hurried across the empty square, through cold sheets of rain driven almost horizontally. Inside the lower public spaces of City Hall, I enjoyed pasta and bread with a handful of runners who, like me, were there for the first time (Boston neophytes make up 40% of the field). But also like me, they had all run qualifying marathons to get there. Instead of the casual one-upmanship heard at most marathons, self-deprecation seemed to be the order of the day, regardless of ability. My sense was that everyone was more relaxed because they'd already passed that certain test to gain admission.

But the real test was the weather. I woke up several times that night to hear the wind lashing rain against the hotel windows. When I finally rose at 5:00 am to dress, the Weather Channel was showing 30- to 40-mph winds directly in our faces, with not much hope of respite until the evening. Temperatures were surprisingly higher than predicted, still up in the mid to high 40s rather than the high 30s they'd predicted the night before. But temps were forecast to fall 5 to 10 degrees throughout the day.

I rode the subway into Boston to meet two friends on the Boston Common in the rain. I was wearing compression shorts with six gels pinned into the waist, a long-sleeved polypro top, my ERC singlet, and a lightweight jacket. Over that I had layered sweats and a hooded "Maid of the Mist" blue plastic poncho that Sharon Morrissey had given me after a trip to Niagara Falls. I was warm and reasonably dry—at least above the knees—but the question was how I'd fare when the running started.

On the trip out to Hopkinton through often torrential rain, we heard rumors that the organizers would allow runners to linger on the buses as long as possible. In fact, it seemed to some veterans that the buses took a circuitous route just to kill time. Indeed, our bus convoy pulled over to the side of the road to wait on several occasions. We reached Hopkinton about 8:30 am and trooped up the hill to the school athletic field, where tents, portable toilets,

and shivering runners were lined up in the mist, the rain, and the buffeting wind. Everywhere we stepped, our shoes sank into the sodden grass, water, and mud. The Hopkinton athletes' village looked more like a post-Katrina refugee camp.

Some had bound their feet in plastic bags; I tried to be careful where I stepped, but it was impossible to stay dry. I was regretting having removed my sweatshirt on the overheated bus. A few enterprising runners had pitched small pup tents for themselves, but there was so much water on the ground I wasn't sure that helped.

We all carried the official orange plastic luggage bags handed out at check-in. They were sturdy and waterproof, but the paper bib-number labels affixed to them began to fade and shred in the downpour—leading to idle curiosity about how long it would take later in the day to identify 20,000+ identical luggage bags by examining the contents.

Because the Hopkinton town green was flooded, officials had opened up school buildings to provide additional shelter. But when we arrived, these were already packed. The three of us managed to squeeze under the edge of a food tent, out of the rain and shielded enough from the wind that we could sort through all the clothing we'd brought. None of us was sure what to wear. I'd run many marathons in the low to mid 40s with a singlet, shorts, gloves, and hat. I had PR'ed at those temperatures in heavy rain. And I'd run a marathon when the temperature at the start was 4 degrees. But I'd never gone the distance in a 30-mph headwind. Somewhat surreally, during a calm moment I considered running in a singlet. Then, as the wind arose anew to punish the tent, I thought about wearing two long-sleeved layers under a jacket. Not knowing how much or even if the wind would subside, I stayed with a single inner layer, my ERC singlet (which I've been wearing since I began my Boston quest), and a light rain jacket. I tucked gloves into a pocket just in case.

My friends departed when the 10:00 am start for the first wave of 10,000 runners was called. I took the opportunity to squeeze into the big tent, where masses of runners were huddled together, most sitting on plastic bags and space blankets. I took my sweatpants off, swapped a garbage bag for my Maid of the Mist outfit (which was too nice to abandon), and stuffed everything into the big orange bag to drop off at the baggage buses.

By the time they called the next 10,000 of us for the second-wave start 30 minutes

later, the rain had slacked off quite a lot. The temp had fallen, but so had the wind velocity. The three-quarter-mile walk to the start line was upbeat, as we were all keen to start running after waiting out the storm.

Without being too graphic, I will observe that there are times when it's great to be a guy ... involving the ability to pee standing against the bushes, while hundreds of runners file by, as well as in the starting corral, using a recently emptied Gatorade bottle while cloaked in a giant black Hefty trash bag and disguised as a wearable Port-a-John. Mick Close told me about that trick, and it really works.

As I implied, the race was pretty straightforward. I don't recall the wind hitting me that hard, but obviously it did based on the slow times posted by most runners. Actually, I spent the majority of the race hoping it would blow harder to keep me cool. For the first time in my marathoning career, I had overdressed. I carried my new hat and had the jacket down off my shoulders much of the time. Most people wrapped their jackets around their waists, but my zipper proved difficult to engage, so I left it zipped a few inches and slid it down to elbow level to expose my torso. There was rain, but nothing like the deluge we'd driven through earlier.

I had studied the course in detail. Plus I had insights into "Things to See & Do While Running the Boston Marathon" from Desmond Duncker and Susan Mello. And even though I didn't have a goal, I couldn't resist carrying an effort/elevation-adjusted pace chart good for 5-minute intervals from 3:40 to 4:05, which I had figured (correctly) would bracket my time.

The start was everything I'd been reassured it would be: fast and smooth. It's great when the corral system works and people start off running without having to dodge slower runners who've pushed up front. The quick downhill helps too, as at New York.

Speaking of that other metropolitan megarace, I was very surprised at the relative lack of hype in Boston. Both New York and Boston are huge, well-publicized, world-class affairs. But New York is the Super Bowl of marathons: overproduced, loud, garish, slick, "we're the best, and we're going to tell you every five minutes," with the athletes strutting and trash-talking before and during the game and Janet Jackson or Prince prancing around partially naked in a half-time show with fireworks and lasers.

Boston seemed more like the Masters Golf Tournament (albeit with a more enlightened attitude toward women): understated, hushed, steeped in clubby, Old World

tradition while no less competitive, “we’re the pinnacle of golf, and, because we know that, we don’t have to say it.”

Actually *hushed* is not exactly the right word. I’m told the crowds were a lot smaller this year, especially early in the race when it was still raining and blowing harder. That didn’t diminish the impact of the Wellesley girls’ screaming, though. Thanks to Desmond, I knew exactly when it was coming, but I heard the noise at least a half-mile away—a continuous high-pitched whine like that of a jet engine winding up. As I drew nearer, I saw a long line of screaming girls kept back, barely, by police fencing—girls with their hands held out for high-fives and many with *Kiss Me* written on their forearms. I managed to restrain myself, but I was sorely tempted by a particularly fetching lass who had managed to scrawl *Take Me to a Hotel and Kiss Me* on her arm!

Okay, I made up that last bit. On the other hand, I never saw the Wellesley boys that Jen Lanterman described. In answer to the question posed by an e-mail discussant, a Wellesley boy is referred to as a *coed*. At least that’s the way it was 30+ years ago, the last time Wellesley girls welcomed me with open arms. Back then, *Kiss Me* was a little forward, even in that liberal hotbed (so to speak) of the feminist movement and sexual liberation. But I have fond memories of shared kisses nevertheless.

Much of what makes Boston’s tradition special to me now is the knowledge that, as I scaled the Newton hills, these same roads have been run for more than a hundred years by most of the storied names in marathoning, including Bill Rodgers and Alberto Salazar, the guys who were winning when I first started to race 26.2 miles. Because I knew Heartbreak Hill was still way up ahead, the earlier hills seemed that much tougher. When I finally crested the last one at 21 and started down, I discovered that my quads were fine (warnings notwithstanding), and I accelerated. But barely half a mile on, two young women suddenly shot out from the crowd to slice diagonally across the road arm in arm! They were headed straight at me but were focused on someone behind, and I had to pull up suddenly. Instantly my right hamstring knotted up painfully, and I yelped, which at least had the effect of shoosying them away.

After that, I found it dangerous to stretch out too much on the downhill because I felt my hamstrings and calves threatening to lock up, though my pace improved. Uncharacteristically, I was still looking around a lot: at landmarks, at architecture, at street signs, at

the crowds, at all the things I’d read about. I’ve run Philly since 1996, but it was years before I ever looked up from my pace-chart tunnel vision to notice, say, the zoo in Fairmount Park. In Boston, conversely, as we moved along Beacon Street toward the big Citgo sign in the distance, I glanced over to see Fenway Park, with its lights turned on for the Red Sox game—a landmark that can be difficult to spot.

I was hurting by then—my legs were tired, and my feet were sore and blistered. I hadn’t intended to wear my lightweight training shoes, but I unwisely elected to squeeze one more marathon out of them to spare my relatively new trainers from the mud and water. But though I was spent, I experienced something I’d never felt before: the last mile went by too quickly. One minute we were diving into the underpass, then climbing out of it and turning onto Hereford Street, and a few seconds later we’d burst onto Boylston Street across from the Convention Center. I could see the big blue Boston Marathon banner hung up over the finish line way out ahead. I’ve heard finish-line crowds cheering before, but these seemed even louder and more enthusiastic. And based on what I’d heard all the way in, from the early rain-thinned spectators to the throngs in Newton to the crowds in Boston proper, they were more knowledgeable not just about running but about Boston’s tradition as well.

It was a pretty emotional moment as I hurried across the line a little stiff-legged, trying to keep my calves from cramping. That’s a guy way of saying I had a few tears in my eyes. I had felt this moment welling within me ever since the terrain turned up in Newton. Just to be able to say “Newton hills” and know what it’s really like, to have actually run them instead of reading about them, was a thrill.

Boston’s relatively understated approach was one surprise. Another was the attitude of the runners late in the race. I’d expected a high degree of professionalism, and indeed there was relatively little of the behavior that drove me crazy at New York last fall (e.g., people cutting in front, clipping me from behind, grabbing a cup of water and stopping abruptly to drink). But in the last miles I realized that nearly all of us at Boston were doing one thing: running hard even though few had anything at stake other than pride. There was no chitchatting or easy jogging just to finish. Everyone had come there to run, and by golly they were going to run it all the way in, wind and weather be damned.

Perhaps the biggest surprise to me was just how tough the course was compared with anything I’d run before. I’ve always been impressed with those who’ve run Boston, but those who have PR’ed or run fast times there I now hold in even higher regard.

My time was 17+ minutes slower than Philly last November. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t a little disappointed with that, though learning how the wind had affected most others was reassuring. The weather did take its toll, even though I didn’t think so at the time. I concede I may have been so swept up (in a manner of speaking) by the whole Boston experience that I could have been struck by lightning and probably not noticed.

For that matter, even though I thought I was in good shape, I really hadn’t prepared properly for this rolling course. As I had done successfully last fall, I supplemented a relatively small amount of running each week—usually a long run plus a track workout or a couple of shorter treadmill sessions—with extensive cross-training (on the stationary bike). But I omitted certain elements this time because, frankly, I just didn’t feel like punishing my body. Hard elliptical sessions, tempo runs, hill work, and strength training are four things I will add back in during the next cycle, and possibly pool running. The lack of carbo depletion/loading definitely had an impact. And I strongly suspect I gave up something simply because I didn’t go into this race as grimly and narrowly focused on a BQ as I have most of the past 10 years.

Determination and focus allowed me to qualify for Boston in the first place, but they are not why I went up there to run, and I’m still happy with that decision. Of course, given the Boston-qualifying time I ran at Philly in 2006, I can give Boston another shot in 2008. Maybe then I’ll do it the old-fashioned way: focused, though hopefully not as grim. Now that I can say “I’ve run Boston,” the pressure is finally off!

Note. This account wouldn’t be complete without thanking some of the people who made this remarkable experience possible, those who’ve supported, encouraged, advised, and attempted to restrain me over the past 10 years. A very incomplete list includes Howie and Judy Brown, Phil Coffin, Dr. Bob Gorman, Lauras Messina and Gelman, Sharon Morrissey, Susan Mello, Sarah Sheridan, and the combined casts of the Grove Street and Fleet Feet Sunday-morning running groups. You know who you are. Thank you. It’s a bit melodramatic but not inaccurate to say that you all helped change my life.

RACES: MAY & JUNE 2007

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

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	
5/6	Sun	8:00a	Pocono Mountain Run for the Red Cross 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
5/12	Sat	9:30a	Fairfield Recreation 5 Mile Run	5M	973-882-2745	
5/13	Sun	8:00a	Women's 10-Miler & Mother's Day 4-Miler (NYC)	10M, 4M	212-860-4455	
5/13	Sun	9:00a	Mother's Day 5K (Berkeley Heights)	5K	908-464-8373	
5/13	Sun	10:00a	HOHA Classic (Hoboken)	5M	201-792-0340	
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	9:00a	Challenge for Change 5K (Montclair)	5K	973-746-2499	NBGP: 500 pts
5/20	Sun	9:00a	Essex Fells 5K	5K	973-226-7181	
5/20	Sun	9:30a	Olmsted 5K (Weequahic Park, Newark)	5K	973-372-5715	
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	10K, 5K	201-445-8638	NBGP: 10K (700 pts), 5K (500 pts)
6/2	Sat	8:30a	Jill & Jack 5K (Westfield)	5K	732-381-0318	
6/2	Sat	9:00a	Rockaway Rotary Run	5K	973-625-2291	NBGP: 500 pts
6/2	Sat	9:00a	Stillwater Stampede (Newton)	5K	973-383-7933	
6/2	Sat	9:00a	Hillsborough Hop	5K	908-369-0490	NBGP: 500 pts
6/2	Sat	9:30a	Wayne AM Rotary Club 5K	5K	973-942-2063	
6/3	Sun	8:00a	Japan Day 4-Miler (NYC)	4M	212-860-4455	
6/3	Sun	8:30a	Montclair Run	10K, 2M	973-744-3400	
6/3	Sun	9:00a	Kilometers for Karen (West Orange)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
6/3	Sun	9:00a	Streets of Tenafly 5K	5K	201-567-8313	NBGP: 500 pts
6/3	Sun	10:30a	Spring Morris Mauler 5K (Lewis Morris Park, trail/XC)	5K	908-295-8580	
6/3	Sun	5:00p	Pleasant Valley Twilight Challenge (Basking Ridge)	5K	908-204-2523	
6/4	Mon	7:00p	Merry Heart 5K (Roxbury)	5K	973-584-6709	NBGP: 500 pts
6/9	Sat	8:00a	Sparta Day 8-Mile Run Around Lake Mohawk	8M	973-729-2383	
6/9	Sat	9:00a	New York Women's Mini Marathon (NYC)	10K	212-860-4455	
6/9	Sat	9:15a	Oradell Kids Foundation 5K	5K	201-986-0979	NBGP: 500 pts
6/9	Sat	9:30a	Fishawack 4-Mile Run (Chatham)	4M	973-377-4444	
6/10	Sun	8:00a	Run for Marge (Pequannock)	5K	973-835-8901	
6/10	Sun	8:30a	Woodcliff Lake Run for Education	10K, 5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 10K & 5K (both 500 pts)
6/10	Sun	8:30a	Mountain Top 10K/5K Run (Warren)	10K, 5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 10K & 5K (both 500 pts)
6/10	Sun	9:00a	Portugal Day Run (Ironbound, Newark)	5K	973-589-7878	NBGP: 500 pts
6/10	Sun	9:30a	Bradley Richards 5K (Montclair)	5K		
6/10	Sun	10:00a	Spring Trail Run (Hartshorne Woods, Monmouth)	7.2M	732-578-1771	
6/11	Mon	6:30p	Girls on the Run (Duke Island Park)	5K	908-296-2116	NBGP: 500 pts
6/11	Mon	7:15p	5000 Strides (Morris Township)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
6/14	Thu	7:00p	Flag Day 5K (Basking Ridge)	5K	908-630-3522	NBGP: 500 pts
6/15	Fri	7:15p	June Moon 5K (Colonial Park, Somerset)	5K	866-841-9139	NBGP: 500 pts
6/16	Sat	8:30a	Florham Park Jaycees 5K	5K	973-236-1280	NBGP: 500 pts
6/16	Sat	8:30a	William & Teresa Wright Memorial 5K (Randolph)	5K	973-442-8116	NBGP: 500 pts
6/16	Sat	8:30a	George Sheehan Classic (Red Bank)	5M	732-988-7725	
6/17	Sun	8:00a	Father's Day Fight Against Prostate Cancer (NYC)	5M	212-860-4455	
6/17	Sun	9:00a	American Cancer Society Run for Dad (West Windsor)	5K	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
6/18	Mon	8:00p	President's Cup Night Race (Millburn)	5K	973-376-6094	NBGP: 700 pts
6/20	Wed	7:00p	JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge 1 (NYC)	3.5M	917-463-3954	
6/21	Thu	7:00p	JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge 2 (NYC)	3.5M	917-463-3954	
6/22	Fri	6:30p	Summer Solstice Trail Run (Kittatinny Park, Andover)	5M	973-300-9539	
6/23	Sat	8:30a	Race for Freedom (Somerville)	5K	908-797-0790	NBGP: 500 pts
6/23	Sat	9:00a	Lesbian & Gay Pride Run (NYC)	5M	212-860-4455	
6/24	Sun	8:30a	Hope & Possibility Run (NYC)	5M	212-860-4455	
6/24	Sun	9:00a	Pine Beach 5K	5K	732-349-6425	NBGP: 700 pts
6/24	Sun	5:30p	Fitzgerald's Lager Run (Glen Ridge)	5K	973-748-0093	NBGP: 500 pts
6/28	Thu	7:30p	Sunset Classic (Bloomfield)	5M	732-381-0318	NBGP: 500 pts
6/30	Sat	8:00a	Firecracker 5K (Montville)	5K	973-331-3305	NBGP: 500 pts
6/30	Sat	9:00a	Frog Hollow Independence 5K Run (South Amboy)	5K	732-721-6592	NBGP: 500 pts

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