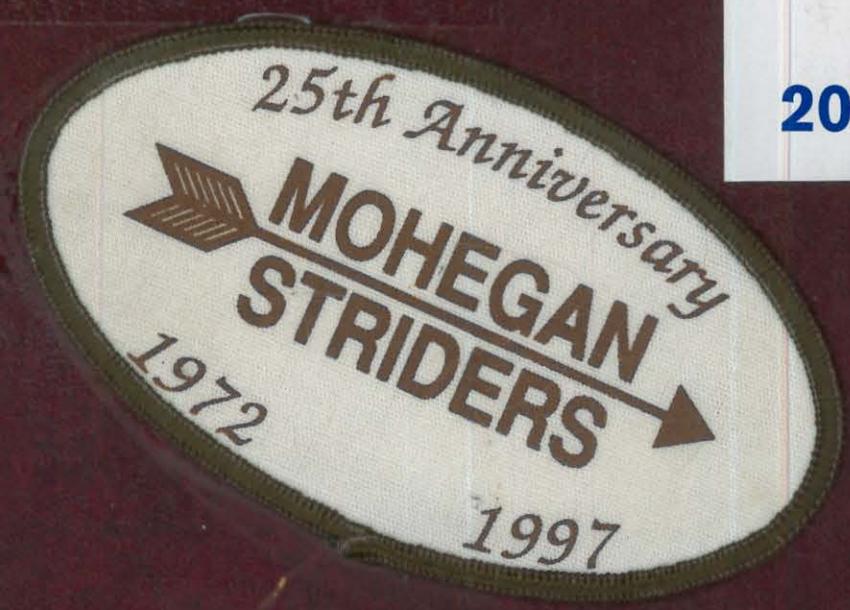




USATF

1998-2007
Part 3



CONGRATULATIONS

to

CARLA THOMPSON

2004

ECSU HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2004

BETTY R. TIPTON ROOM
STUDENT CENTER

1 p.m.

CARLA D. THOMPSON

Cross-Country (1985-1987)

Track & Field (1986-1987)



In the first 58 seasons of men's and women's cross-country at Eastern Connecticut State University, only **Carla D. Thompson** has achieved NCAA Division III All-America status.

In her first season in 1985 and in her third and final season in 1987, Thompson earned such accolades with Top 25 finishes at the NCAA Division III National Cross-Country Championship.

In her first season of collegiate competition eight years after graduating from high school, the Stonington, Conn. resident became the first female – and only the second individual from Eastern – to qualify for the national cross-country championship, placing 24th overall in a field of 111 finishers. At the New England regionals that fall, Thompson placed fourth overall in an ultra-competitive field which produced the eventual national champion and No. 3 finisher at the next week's national championship meet at Atlanta.

In 1986, Thompson was slowed by a case of the flu and missed the cut for national competition. In 1987, she returned to form, however. She placed fifth overall among 177 finishers at the New England regionals and went on to finish 23rd in a national championship race run in the snow at Holland, Mich.

Under head coach Jim Uhrig, Thompson followed up her brilliant freshman cross-country season in the spring of 1986 by qualifying for the NCAA Division III outdoor track & field nationals at 5,000 and 10,000 meters. That season, she won the ECAC Division III championship at 5,000 meters, and at 10,000 meters ran to a second-place finish at the New England all-division championship and was 12th at the Division III national championship.

In track & field, Thompson set current program records in the indoor 5,000 meters and the outdoor 800, 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000. A high honors student, Thompson was the female recipient of the ECSU/E-Club Scholar-Athlete Award as a senior.

Thompson earned a B.S. Degree in Elementary Education from Eastern and an MAT from Sacred Heart University and is employed by the Stonington Public Schools. She resides in Pawcatuck, Conn. with husband Curtiss and daughters Haley, 9 and Angela, 6.

And they still keep flocking back to Manchester *Excerpts by Don Sikorski*

Forty-seven-year-old John Treacy of Ireland was back in town, lacing up the shoes to hit the streets of Manchester on this balmy Thanksgiving morning in celebration of his course-record win 25 years earlier.

Amby Burfoot was here too. It was Amby's seven straight wins and his Manchester-best of 22:21 in 1971 that stood as the benchmark for Treacy and his Irish contingent to measure themselves against. Amby would finish 317th in 31:03 for his 42nd consecutive race here.

Amy Rudolph was also here to race, herself a five-time winner and like Treacy, a Providence College grad. She was expected to face a stiff challenge from Kim Smith, a 23-year-old New Zealander who was wearing her PC colors. Defending champions Peter Nthiwa of Kenya and Emily Mondor of Canada were also back.

Then there were the tailgaters, the local high schoolers, the Blues Brothers, the Plaiders, the middle-aged ladies in leopard skin, the "I run one race a year and this is it" crowd, and those runners who ingest a pre-race donut and Budweiser in the Army Navy Club.

There were nearly 10,000 runners in total, plus spectators, all here on Main Street in Manchester this Thanksgiving. One look around signifies that the Manchester Road Race, now in its 68th running, is more of an event than a footrace.

• Others offered their thoughts on why the Manchester Road Race is special. Clem McGrath, 65, has been coming to the race for 48 years.

"The Manchester Race is a tradition," said McGrath on his way to the Army-Navy Club for a post-race beer or two. "I've run about 30 Manchesters, and this year is probably one of the warmest on record. I was overdressed."

In his Manchester debut in 1956, McGrath, then a senior at Norwich Free Academy, would place 16th overall to claim top high school honors just weeks after winning the State Open Cross-Country championship.

Joe Swift, 41, doesn't race competitively anymore. In fact, the lingering aches and pains from his racing days have forced him to turn to the bicycle and the weight room for his exercise. But Swift, along with his brothers, still makes the trek to Manchester each Thanksgiving morning.

"I come here to see old friends and to drink beer," Swift joked. "It's tradition."

Swift has raced here since the mid 1980s, and has run 22:49 on the course. He placed as high as eighth at Manchester.

Pawcatuck's Curtiss Thompson, 50, has been coming to Manchester since 1990. By comparison to many, he still considers himself a relative newcomer to the event.

One of the special features at the Manchester Road Race is the seeded starting corrals for the top runners. Any runner completing the course in less than 30 minutes receives a card allowing entry into this elite area at the front. Thompson posted a time of 29:50, accomplishing his goal of a sub-30:00 performance.

"I think of it (running under 30 minutes) as the poor man's Boston qualifier," joked Thompson outside the Army-Navy club.

Cow Chip Cross Country Santa to make Dec. 10 toy run

November 27, 2004 - 5K

Trumbull, CT

By DON BOND
Norwich Bulletin

OVERALL WINNERS

Chad Brown, Waterford, CT - 16:25
Sarah Scholl, New Canaan, CT - 18:48



To contribute: For assistance: Distribution

NORWICH— Santa Claus may have a belly that shakes like "a bowl full of jelly," but he's still in good enough shape to jog through the streets of downtown.

Santa will take his jog on Dec. 10, leading the annual Santa's Run to provide toys for the Norwich Bulletin's Tommy Toy Fund.

The Santa's Run, sponsored by the Mohegan Striders, began nearly 25 years ago and has brought thousands of dollars worth of new toys to the Tommy Toy Fund.

Race organizer Bob Miles said the Santa's Run will begin at 7 p.m. at Billy Wilson's Ageing Still on Broadway. After a double loop through the downtown business district, the run will conclude at Billy Wilson's, where participants will be provided with refreshments.

The entry fee is a new, unwrapped toy for the Tommy Toy Fund. The fund annually provides toys, a book and warm mittens at Christmas for children in New London and Windham counties.

Miles stressed the Santa's Run is not competitive. "This is strictly a fun run. We run as a group and usually sing Christmas carols as we go," Miles said. "The run is open to anyone willing to donate a new toy to the Tommy Toy Fund."

Miles said the Santa's Run is conducted at a leisurely pace. "In fact, it seems like the pace gets a little slower each year," he laughed.

He said he expects the Santa's Run will attract its usual group of between 50 and 60 runners, including some from outside Connecticut.

"People know this event is done for a good cause and want to be a part of it," Miles said.

Local families gather for fun run with Santa



Tali Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Runners, led by Santa, make their way down Broadway in Norwich on Friday during the annual Santa Fun Run.

By TONY FARMER
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — It looked odd seeing three brand new bicycles and several bags full of toys in the front window of a downtown bar, but that was scene at Billy Wilson's Ageing Still Friday night.

Local families came together for the 26th annual Norwich Bulletin/Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run, with the entire fee being a toy for a less fortunate child.

"(I'm here) to benefit the kids and just run," said

15-year-old Joseph Marcell, who brought a fire truck. "It's really a lot of fun."

The event featured Christmas carols during the three-mile non-competitive run, and Santa Claus leading the pack. But St. Nick wasn't the only familiar face among the runners.

NFA assistant cross-country coach and 1993 graduate Chad Johnson — one of the more well-known runners in the area — was back for the 15th time.

"I've been doing it since I was about that big," John-

son said, pointing at a group of much younger runners. "It's just a chance to get to see all the people you see at the road races all year long one more time before the (winter) break.

"It's a chance to say happy holidays to everybody, it's for a good cause and low-key. No pressure and no competing."

Norma Vivar-Orum brought three board games and a large group of runners from the Integrated Day Charter School Cross

Run: More fun scheduled

FROM C1

Country Club with her Friday night.

"I like to turn kids into life-long runners and let them know that you can have fun and have it not always be competitive," Vivar-Orum said. "Look at them all. I have 16 kids on the team and I have two alumni that came back to do this. They're in high school, they're cool now and they are still coming back to hang out with the team, and they get nothing out of it except the pride and accomplishment of running with the group."

Crowd turns out for Fun Run

Frosty the Snowman waves Friday outside Billy Wilson's Ageing Still in Norwich as people gather for the annual Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run.



Robert Carbray

Ledyard — Robert "Pepe" P. Carbray, 67, died at home on Sunday morning, Dec. 26, 2004, surrounded by his family after a very courageous one-year battle with cancer.

He was born in Norwich on Aug. 21, 1937, to Peter J. Carbray Jr. and Dolores (DuFresne) Carbray of Norwich, who survive him.



Bob married Sheila Redmond on Aug. 21, 1965, in Gales Ferry.

As a young boy, Bob served as an altar boy at St. Patrick's Cathedral in

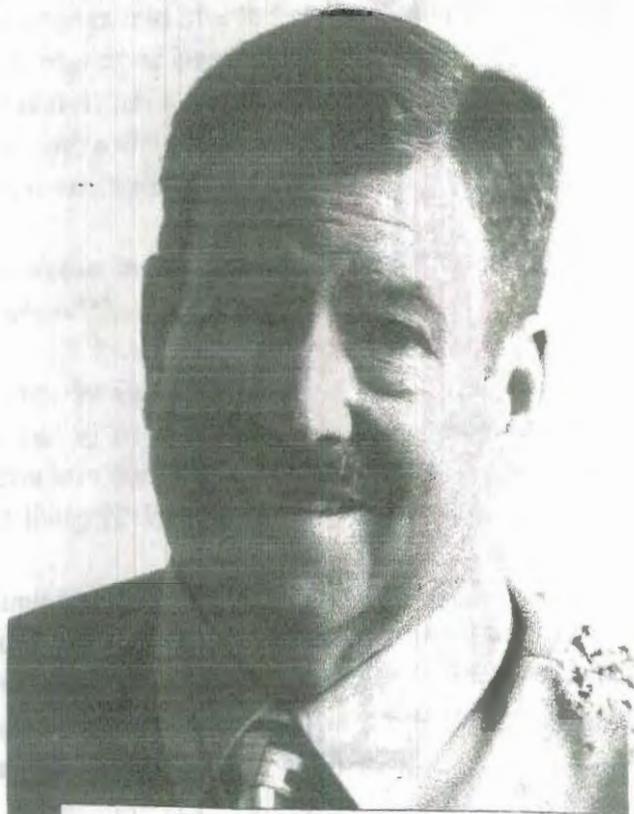
Norwich and he earned his Eagle Scout Award with the Boy Scouts. He attended St. Patrick's School in Norwich and graduated from NFA with the Class of 1955. He then attended Holy Cross College and went on to graduate from Central Connecticut State Teacher's College in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in industrial arts. In 1961, Bob received his master's degree in industrial arts from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. He taught industrial arts at Clark Lane Jr. High in Waterford for 31 years before he retired in 1993.

Bob's life pleasures included driving his 1993 Mustang Convertible, being an honorary lifetime member and founding member of the running club, The Mohegan Striders, for which he also served as secretary for 17 years, caring for his yard, and spending time with his friends and family, especially his six grandchildren.

In addition to Sheila, his loving wife of 39 years, and his parents, Bob is survived by his three children with Sheila, Michelle (Carbray) Hinton, and her husband, Brian, of Ledyard, Robert Carbray of Boise, Idaho, and Kevin Carbray and his wife, Tanya, of Franklin; also his two children from his previous marriage, Mark Carbray of New London and Cheryl Carbray, of Ledyard. Bob also leaves behind the joys of his life, his six grandchildren, Haley and Logan Hinton of Ledyard, Charly and Christopher Carbray of Boise, Idaho, and Owen and Andrew Carbray of Franklin. In addition, Bob is survived by his sister, Carole Carbray of Phoenix, Ariz., and many friends and relatives.

Calling hours will be held at the Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich, on Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m., and on Wednesday from 9 to 10 a.m., followed by a 10 a.m. funeral service at the funeral home. Interment will be in Avery-Stoddard Cemetery in Gales Ferry, after the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to Hospice of S.E. CT, P.O. Box 902, Uncasville, CT 06382-0902.



Robert P. "Pepe" Carbray
August 21, 1937 - December 26, 2004

In Loving Memory of

Robert P. Carbray

Born

August 21, 1937

Died

December 26, 2004

AFTERGLOW

*I'd like the memory of me
To be a happy one. I'd like
To leave an Afterglow of
Smiles when day is done.
I'd like to leave an echo...
Whispering softly down the
Ways of happy times and
Laughing times and bright
And sunny days. I'd like
The tears of those who
Grieve to dry before the
Sun of happy memories
That I leave behind when
Day is done.*

Labenski Funeral Home

107 Boswell Avenue

Norwich, CT

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Mohegan Striders running club

NORWICH — Mohegan Striders running club promotes and encourages participation in running, road racing, and track and field athletics. Membership is open to anyone wishing to take part in running activities competitively or socially. For information, visit www.moheganstriders.org.

Hedding Loves Playing 'The Heavy'

By **JOE WOJTAS**

Day Staff Columnist, Stonington/Mystic

Published on 1/16/2005

While he's been one of the region's more talented runners for four decades now, Way Hedding of East Lyme says he's been handicapped by the fact that he's "not a 130-pound guy with legs up to here."

Weighing in at 215 pounds, some of which can be blamed on his fondness for post-run pints, Hedding though has carved out his own success in the world of Clydesdale runners over the past few years. In 2004 he was ranked first in the country among senior Clydesdale runners who weigh more than 190 pounds.

Hedding, 55, won his division in all seven races he entered last year including the Martha's Vineyard Half-Marathon where he clocked 1:43 and the wacky 4.5-mile Big Man Run in Massachusetts. In that race he ran 43:09 and finished 18th. That may seem a little slow for Hedding until you realize that every runner has to stop at three bars along the course and each time choke down a hot dog and chug a beer. That's three brews, three dogs and 4.5 miles on a hot July afternoon.

Hedding said he was ranked first among New England runners in 2003 so he decided last year to see how he would do nationally. The Clydesdale organization, which can be found at www.clydesdale.org, keeps track of the runners' rankings.

"I said this is cool to have something for heavyweight runners. I just got hooked on it. You see a lot of the same guys. We all travel to the same races," he said. "They're all guys who like to eat, who like to drink and who like to run. All three things are a lot of fun."

The camaraderie among Clydesdale runners is perfect for Hedding because there's probably no other guy who embodies the spirit and friendliness of the local running community more than he does. And no one enjoys the post-race festivities more. Many of you know Hedding from his work with SNERRO, which times 50 local races each year.

Hedding and his fellow Clydesdales have to weigh in before each race and there are always a lot of jokes among the competitors about their eating habits. But when the gun goes off they are just as serious as anyone else. And some of them are real fast despite their extra size.

Hedding said he plans to try and defend his ranking this year with his first race being the Hyannis Half-Marathon on Cape Cod next month. He'll follow that up on March 20 with an annual 5K run in Massachusetts, a big St. Patrick's Day tradition. He ran 21:04 there last year

to win the senior masters Clydesdale division.

"There's a bunch of pubs involved. There's lamb stew and Irish soda bread afterwards and all the Guinness you can drink. That attracts all the big men," he said.

Running through the years

LOCAL RUNNERS

MEN'S OPEN

WOMEN'S OPEN

2004	Chadwick Brown	Martha Merz
2003	Chad Johnson / Stephen Herrera	Carolyn Verdon
2002	Chad Johnson / Stephen Herrera	Martha Merz
2001	Chad Johnson	Melissa Perkins-Banas
2000	Steve Herrera	Martha Merz
1999	Ed Zubritsky	Kris-Anne Kane
1998	John Anthony	Kris-Anne Kane

MEN'S MASTERS

WOMEN'S MASTERS/GM

2004	Dan Dillon	Martha Merz
2003	Mike Fritz	Martha Merz
2002	Bob Stack	Rebecca Stockdale-Wolley
2001	Bob Stack	Rebecca Stockdale-Wolley
2000	Bob Stack	Rebecca Stockdale-Wolley
1999	Wayne Jacob / Jim Murphy	
1998	Tim Kane	

MEN'S GRANDMASTERS

2004	Richard England
2003	Tim Smith
2002	Wayne Jolley
2001	Tim Smith
2000	Dennis Crowe
1999	Dennis Crowe
1998	Tim Smith

STATE RUNNERS

MEN

WOMEN

2004	Chadwick Brown	Kate O'Neill
2003	Chad Johnson / Stephen Herrera	Heather Gardiner
2002	Chad Johnson / Stephen Herrera	Sue Faber
2001	Chris Chisholm	Marie McMahon-Davenport
2000	Steve Swift	Zofia Wieciorkowska
1999	Steve Swift	Christine Junkerman
1998	Steve Swift	Kerry Arsenault

Local runners of the year

MALE: Chadwick Brown, Waterford — Brown has run in the shadows of local standouts like Chad Johnson and Stephen Herrera for the past few years, but not in 2004.

Brown has now established himself as one of the best runners in Connecticut, winning the state 12K title, finishing a strong 14th overall at the Fairfield Half Marathon (1:13:45), winning the Kelley Race in New London (1:02:20) and had strong finishes at the New Haven 20K and Mystic Places, where he led his Mohegan Striders team to another USATF championship.

Johnson and Herrera both worked themselves into top form by the fall, and with runners like Todd Bennett, Dave Hurtado, Chris Owen, Brendan Cashman, Christopher Kane, Chris McCormack, Jeff Wadecki, Shayne Steadman and Keith Pellerin all posting strong efforts in 2004, there was plenty of racing action going on up front all season long.

Best performance (local)

Brown's best effort was at this fall's Mystic Places Marathon in Niantic, where Brown assumed the duty of running the opening leg of the five-person marathon relay for his Mohegan Striders team, then continued to race the complete 26.2 miles distance in 2:36:02, good enough for fourth overall and top American honors. New Grandmaster Richard England of East Lyme ran an impressive 2:58:47 at Mystic Places, good enough for 20th place overall.

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FEATURING EVENT CALENDARS AND ENTRY FORMS FOR RUNNING • WALKING • CYCLING & MULTI-SPORT

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2005

GREATER BOSTON



LOCAL RUNNING April 2, 2005

St. Joseph School 3 mile race

Overall results At Baltic

Name	Age	Town	Time
1. Kyle Friedman	16	Norwich	15:39
2. Matt Miclette	17	Baltic	16:09
3. Deslongchamps	35	N. Grosv.	17:11
4. Keith Pellerin	40	Brooklyn	17:19
5. Mike Munroe	46	Newington	17:36
6. Ruben P. Cruz	33	Willimantic	18:00
7. Charlie Olbrias	28	Willimantic	18:07
8. Wayne Jolley	54	Brooklyn	18:12
9. Eddie Eckard	40	Canterbury	18:18
10. Dan Ravolle	52	Exeter, RI	18:34
11. Dave Jacobs	59	Niantic	18:57
12. Zach Eckard	14	Canterbury	19:01
13. Tim Smith	56	Norwich	19:07
14. M. Turkinton	60	Rocton	19:10
15. Tom Curry	41	Hampton	19:24
16. C. Jolley	25	Brooklyn	19:33
17. Dean McNabb	58	Sudbery, MA	20:01
18. Glenn Coughlin	36	Griswold	20:02
19. M. Filteau	27	Danielson	20:12
20. A. Turner	25	Glaston.	20:31
21. Randy Kuhn	43	Pomfret	20:32
22. Vidal Paz	43	Baltic	20:37
23. S. Macfarland	36	Plainfield	20:49
24. Joe Lemieux	52	Norwich	20:55
25. Laz Pittman	14	Storrs	21:04

Age division winners

Elementary

Male

1. Zach Eckard	19:01
2. Laz Pittman	21:04
3. Kyle Rouillard	21:12

Female

1. Allison Black	21:05
2. Angela Turner	23:55
3. Melissa Ferguson	23:59

Junior

Male

1. Kyle Friedman	15:39
2. Mike Miclette	16:09

Female

1. Alicia Poorman	23:42
2. Rebecca Glenney	24:12
3. Renne Poorman	24:41

Open

Male

1. Charlie Olbrias	18:07
2. Chris Jolley	19:33
3. Adam Turner	20:31

Female

1. Kara Kochanski	24:47
2. Jessie Turrek	24:54
3. Tanya Swaney	27:55

Sub-master

Male

1. Scott Deslongchamps	17:11
2. Ruben Perez	18:00
3. Glenn Coughlin	20:02

Female

1. Both Martin	24:16
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2. Liz Tefft	25:40
3. Katie Robbin	27:25

Master

Male

1. Keith Pellerin	17:19
2. Mike Monroe	17:36
3. Eddy Eckard	18:18

Female

1. Joann DeMico	22:01
2. Lynne Love	23:15
3. Norma Vivar-Orum	25:31

Grand master

Male

1. Wayne Jolley	18:12
2. Dave Pavenell	18:34
3. Dave Jacobs	18:57

Female

1. Joan Monroe	23:11
2. Rose Buckingham	23:35
3. Sally Maresoone	25:47

Veteran

Male

1. Mark Turkington	19:10
2. Ted Phillips	21:09
3. Ron Dombrowski	22:57

Senior

Male

1. Culburn Graves	35:19
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Calendar of Events
Presented By:



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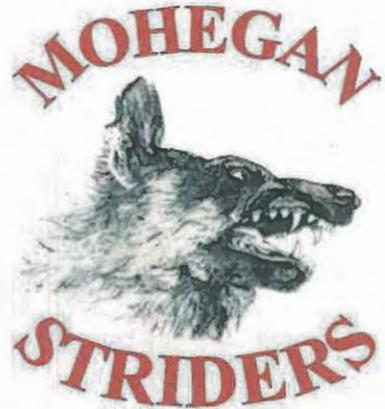
**COOL
RUNNING**

12th Annual Mohegan Strider Gala

Last Year's Event was a Hit! Let's Do It Again!



*Food,
Fun,
Drinks
and
Dancing*



New Members Welcome!
www.moheganstriders.org

Dancing and Music provided by our very own band the RUNZ

When: Saturday, February 26, 2005 6:30pm

Where: Port-n-Starboard Club, Ocean Beach,

New London CT. 860-447-2346

For additional information contact: Lynne Hansen at 401-539-4672

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Strider Banquet 2005



*Pursuit Fitness & The
Mohegan Striders
Running Club
present:*

A RUNNING FORM & TECHNIQUE CLINIC

**Learn the secrets to faster, more efficient,
injury-free running!**

Location:	Norwich Free Academy
Date:	Monday, March 14, 2005
Time:	6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Fee:	Free and open to NFA students and members of the Mohegan Striders Running Club
The Coach:	Al Lyman, CSCS

Coach Al Lyman, CSCS, is a certified USA Triathlon coach, a certified professional coach with the Triathlon Academy, and a certified strength and conditioning specialist (CSCS) with the National Strength and Conditioning Association. In addition to coaching multi and single sport endurance athletes of all abilities here in the U.S and abroad, he is also an 8-time Ironman Triathlon finisher, a 3-time Hawaii Ironman finisher, and holds a 2:39 PB at the Boston Marathon.

To learn more about the clinic, email Coach Al Lyman at:

coachal@pursuit-fitness.com

www.pursuit-fitness.com

Mohegan Striders to honor three of its own with run

Sports teach us many things about life. We learn how to compete, how to play by the rules, how to push ourselves to accomplish more than we realize we are capable of.

And along the way, we develop friendships, many of which last a lifetime but are often taken for granted in day to day life. Having been involved in distance running for 25 years now, I sometimes find myself reflecting back on how many great friends and acquaintances I have made through the sport.

The Norwich-based Mohegan Striders Association formed in 1972 and over the years developed into one of the top running clubs in New England. I joined the Striders as a high school cross country and track runner and have remained an active member of the organization ever since. Lured to the club by the opportunity to compete with the area's best road racers, such as Tim Smith, Fran Houle, Billy Marshall, Jim Uhrig and Joe Banas, I soon learned that runners were more than weekly mileage and racing flats.

Along the way, I also met a terrific group of people. Despite their different backgrounds, runners share a common bond, which is something that makes our sport unique and special.

In the club's 33-year history, the Mohegan Striders have named a total of seven honorary members to its organization. Sadly, three of those honorary members passed away in 2004.

Al Morrison was not a runner, but he was an enthusiastic supporter of the sport of distance running and track and field. Morrison served the organization as timer, statistician and honorary coach. He was named the club's third honorary member in January 1976. Though his health failed him during his later years, many area runners fondly remembered Al's storytelling abilities and statistical memory.

Joe Lonardelli began assisting the club with its Summer Recreation Race Series in Norwich's Mohegan Park in 1981. He had participated as a volunteer in that event every year until his passing this past June. Retired after 30 years of service with the City of Norwich Public Works Department, Lonardelli served as Kevin Crowley's right-hand man with the youth track and cross-country programs in Norwich, and donated countless hours of his time to dozens of local road races in the area.

Bob Carbray served as the club's Recording and Membership Secretary for 17 consecutive years. In fact, it was Carbray who recruited Lonardelli's assistance that summer of '81. Carbray also served on the Rose Arts Road Race Committee and was an active member on the Board of Directors of the East Lyme Marathon Committee.

All three of these individuals contributed a great deal to the Mohegan Striders and to the sport of running in Southeastern Connecticut.

John Degange, a former sportswriter for the Day of New London, and Harold Tantaquidgeon, a direct descendant of Uncas, Chief of the Mohegan Nation, are two other honorary members of the Mohegan Striders that have passed away. These individuals, along with a number of family or friends of the Striders and of the running community, will be recognized at the Mohegan Strider Memorial Service and Run next month.

Long-time runner Marshall Collins of Salem is responsible for establishing the first event for the Striders. Reflecting back on what people like Morrison, Lonardelli and Carbray meant to the running club inspired Collins to organize the memorial event.

"There have been a number of people who have died this past year," Collins said of the club's recent loss. "And as different people as they were, they were all important people to the club. Sean Delaney, he was a great runner (Delaney, the Mohegan Striders Men's Open Racing Team Captain, passed away in May 2000). Al Morrison, on the other hand, never ran a step in his life. But he was an ambassador for running. Jessie Kelley, look at all she did for running.

"So the idea came about as to how do you honor and remember these people without it being a sad occasion?"

After tossing the concept around at a few of the running club's weekly social gatherings, Collins realized the idea of a memorial service -- to include a social group run and post-event refreshments -- would be a great way to accomplish this task.

Club President Tim Kane of Preston also recognized the need to honor those individuals who have meant so much to the organization and to the sport.

"The Mohegan Striders are more than 30 years old now," Kane said. "Many of the people who were there with the club in the beginning have moved on. In 2004, three of our honorary members passed away. It brought to light to some of the members of our club to tell a story about the people who established the club into what is today."

Kane, a competitive runner and cyclist who has served as the club's president for nine years now, also feels it is important to recognize the bond the honorary members had with the local community which extended past road racing.

"Joe Lonardelli, Al Morrison, Bob Carbray. . . these were three guys who were a part if the community in southeastern Connecticut," Kane said. "The Mohegan Striders want to remain close to those roots, the community we live in. And it's a good thing to memorialize the people who did good things."

The first Mohegan Strider Memorial Service/Run will take place Sunday, April 3 at Fort Shantok in Uncasville. The event kicks off at 12:30 p.m. with the national anthem, followed by a group run and walk through the park.

Around 1 p.m., a brief prayer service and remarks will take place. Names of honored family and friends of the Mohegan Striders Association will be recognized. Expect the Striders to share stories and memories with post-run refreshments following the service. The event is free and open to the public.

1st Annual Mohegan Striders Memorial Service

April 3, 2005

12:30 PM

*Fort Shantok Park
Uncasville, Connecticut*

Program

12:30 PM Welcome - President Tim Kane

12:35 PM National Anthem

12:40 PM Group Run / Walk through Fort Shantok

1:00 PM Prayer and Remarks - Father Walter Nagle

1:15 PM Reading of the names of deceased Mohegan Striders
and friends

1:25 PM Concluding Blessing - Father Walter Nagle

1:30 PM Refreshments

"(I was thinking) If he catches me, it's OK—that's racing," Herrera said. "He

dia Clamargo (Danbury) 1:01.56. Female 40-49: 1. Matha Merz (Mystic) 1:03.56. Female 50-59: 1. Rose Buckingham (Norwich) 1:30.29.

It is with great pleasure that we remember the following members of the Mohegan Striders and some of our many friends. Their friendship, joy of competition and contributions to running are missed.

*Roger Camire
Bob Carbray
Paul Cirioni
Bob Chamberland
Gary Crossan
John DeGange
Sean Delaney
Jack Dempsey
Tim & Kim Donnelly
Bruce Ellis
Jim Fixx
Jesse Kelley
Scott Hamilton
Fred Lebow
Joe Lonardelli
Dave Mills
Ralph Mills
Al Morrison
Harry Ogulnick
Ray Portelance
Jim Rowan
Agnes Ruane
Tony Sabilia
Jock Semple
Tag Tagliapetra
Harold Tantaquidgeon
Will Ward
Lloyd Whitman*

Westerly — Results Sunday from the Westerly Track and Athletic Club's Clamdigger 5-Mile Road Race (167 finishers):

• Top 10 men — 1. Scott Bessette, 26:21; 2. Raymond Youngs Jr., 27:26; 3. Zachary Kudlak, 27:28; 4. Brian McNeiece, 29:09; 5. Scott Deslongchamps, 29:21; 6. Dave Schaad, 29:34; 7. Michael Tamaro, 29:42; 8. T.J. Dooling, 30:51; 9. Keith Pellerin, 30:52; 10. Wayne Jolley, 30:56.

• Top 10 women — 1. Jessica McGarty, 32:22; 2. Carla Thompson, 32:37; 3. Dominique Lee, 33:30; 4. Claire Gadrow, 34:08; 5. Lauren Youngs, 35:52; 6. Annette Montoya, 37:36; 7. Alison Dupont, 37:54; 8. Gerah Ventresca, 38:26; 9. Margaret Warfield, 39:03; 10. Meghan Goulter, 39:53.

• Divisional winners, men — Juniors, Andrew Orum, 31:02; Open, Scott Bessette, 26:21; Submasters, Scott Deslongchamps, 29:21; Masters, Dave Schaad, 29:34; Grandmasters, Wayne Jolley, 30:56; Seniors, Mark Turkington, 32:11; Clydesdales ages 39-and-under, Brian McNeice, 29:09. Clydesdales ages 40-and-over, Frank Burns.

• Divisional winners, women — Juniors, Dominique Lee, 33:30; Open, Jessica McGarty, 32:22; Submasters, Claire Gadrow, 34:08; Masters, Carla Thompson, 32:37; Grandmasters, Margaret Collins, 41:38; Seniors, Miriam Hawley, 48:06; Fillies ages 39-and-under, Karen Santacroce; Fillies ages 40-and-over, Mary Ann Barboza, 51:10.

Ribeiro survives a tough course

5/13/05

By TONY FARMER
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH —The key word in the title of Friday night's seventh annual Rose City Challenge 10 mile road race is the word "challenge."

The demanding course featuring steep hills in Norwich's Industrial Park took its toll on runners, but when the dust had settled it was Waterbury's Sergio Ribellio (54:40) who crossed the finish line first.

"I really didn't expect to win the race, but you never know how your opponents feel," Ribellio said. "It's a really tough course. The first three miles you go fine and that's where I (opened a lead) and after that you manage the hills, and then I felt them catching me for the last two miles."

Second-place finisher Stephen Herrera, of Waterford, saw things a little differently.

"Sergio wasn't going to get caught today, he was just too strong," he said. "The way those hills are, even if you caught somebody you'd be dead by the time you caught them. By the last two turns I could see him looking back knowing he had it in the bag."

Herrera, a 1989 Ledyard High School graduate, finished 14 seconds behind Ribellio and 11 seconds in front of friend Chadwick Brown.

"(I was thinking) If he catches me, it's OK — that's racing," Herrera said. "He

knows how I race, I know how he races so if it comes down to a kick so be it, we'll see how it turns out.

"Breaking 55 (minutes) is actually pretty sweet. I was actually just trying to break 56, so being under 55 is real good. I'll take it."

The first female finisher was Claudia Camargo, who finished in 1:01.56 — more than two minutes ahead of her closest competitor.

According to her coach and translator Orlando Souza, Camargo is training to represent her native country of Argentina in the 2008 Olympics.

Other local finishers included Norwich's Tim Smith (10th), Ledyard's Michael Fritz (11th) and Brooklyn's Wayne Jolley (13th).

Ledyard High School assistant track coach Jeff Wadecki won the 5k race with a time of 17:10 and Branford's Michelle Stratz was the top female finisher with a time of 20:13.

Top overall finishers

1. Sergio Ribellio 54:40; 2. Stephen Herrera 54:54; 3. Chadwick Brown 55:05; 4. Justin Maloney 57:48; 5. Larz Selmer-Larsen 58:09; 6. Claudia Camargo 1:01.56; 7. David Lively 1:02.49; 8. William Lunn 1:03.44; 9. Martha Merz 1:03.59; 10. Tim Smith 1:04.18.

Class winners

Male 1-19: 1. John Fields (Taftville) 1:13.55. **Male 20-29:** 1. Chadwick Brown (Waterford) 55:50. **Male 30-39:** 1. Sergio Ribellio (Waterbury) 54:40. **Male 40-49:** 1. Michael Fritz (Ledyard) 1:04.31. **Male 50-59:** 1. Tim Smith (Norwich) 1:04.18. **Male 60-69:** 1. Guy Pullino (East Haddam) 1:17.47. **Female 20-29:** 1. Melissa Nestel (N/A) 1:04.53. **Female 30-39:** 1. Claudia Camargo (Danbury) 1:01.56. **Female 40-49:** 1. Matha Merz (Mystic) 1:03.59. **Female 50-59:** 1. Rose Buckingham (Norwich) 1:30.29.



Together with our parents
Margaret and Joseph Verdon
Joanne and John Fusaro

we

Carolyn Ann
and

Michael Philip

invite you to share in our joy
as we join our lives in marriage
Saturday, the fourteenth of May

Two thousand and five

at Noon

The Cathedral of St. Patrick

Norwich, Connecticut

THE BLESSING AND CELEBRATION
OF MARRIAGE

Carolyn Ann Verdon
and
Michael Philip Fusaro



May 14, 2005

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PATRICK
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

The Fusaros



Mike & Carolyn

Our Wedding Party

PARENTS OF THE BRIDE	<i>Joe and Margaret Verdon</i>
PARENTS OF THE GROOM	<i>John and Joanne Fusaro</i>
MATRON OF HONOR	<i>Mary Lynn Kolowsky</i>
BEST MAN	<i>John Fusaro, III</i>
BRIDESMAID	<i>Francesca Fusaro</i>
GROOMSMEN	<i>Joseph Verdon Jake Fusaro Kevin Kolowsky</i>
FLOWER GIRL	<i>Isabella Fusaro</i>
RING BEARER	<i>Zachary Kolowsky</i>
READERS	<i>LJ Fusaro Marie Schleyer</i>
GIFT BEARERS	<i>Kyle Kolowsky Michael Verdon</i>
OFFICIANT	<i>Monsignor Anthony Rosaforte</i>
MUSICIANS	<i>Douglas Green, Organist Carroll Mailhot, Vocalist Ken Tedeschi, Trumpet</i>
CATHEDRAL WEDDING COORDINATOR	<i>Sunnie Robinson</i>

*We Lovingly Remember Mary and Robert Furey,
Anastasia Verdon, Caroline and Michael Morosky,
and John Fusaro, Sr.*

Our Wedding Ceremony

PROCESSIONAL *"Procession of Joy", Cornell*

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Liturgy of the Word

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Genesis 1:26-28, 31*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *"Wherever You Go", Haas*

NEW TESTAMENT READING *1 John 3: 18-24*

GOSPEL *John 15: 9-12*

HOMILY

Sacrament of Marriage

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE *"May the Light of Christ",
Chepponis*

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL *Monsignor Anthony Rosaforte
Sam Fusaro*

Liturgy of the Eucharist

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS *"Walk With Them Lord", Besig*

NUPTIAL BLESSING

COMMUNION *"The Gift of Love", Hopson*

CLOSING PRAYER AND FINAL BLESSING

Recessional

"Hornpipe", Handel

"Rondeau", Mouret

The Fusaros



Mike & Carolyn

Perkins-Banas a quick healer

From E1

wonderful person. It's wonderful to be able to do this for her in her honor. I have such positive memories of her. She was just a kind, genuine person. The world was certainly fortunate to have someone like her in it and I'm fortunate to have known her."

It was the third time that Brown had run the race, continuing a family tradition. His father, Marty, had run the race in the 1980s

and would rave about it to Brendan.

'It's a great day, a nice atmosphere, and I like the area. It's a great event.'

Brendan Brown
men's winner

"(It's) just a great crowd," Brendan Brown said. "I like the New England running community ... I was born in (Middletown), so I like to come up. It's a great day, a nice atmosphere, and I like the area. It's a great event."

"It's interesting with the cars and everything. ... it has nice scenery and is not monotonous by any means."

Brown, like Perkins-Banas, had no intention to win.

His only race of late was a 4-mile run July 4 and he ran Saturday in order to train for other marathons. He is considering running in the Philadelphia and New York marathons.

Brown finished almost 17 seconds ahead of runner-up Peter Oviatt of Lebanon.

"I was in the lead pack the whole way, then around eight miles it kind of started to string out more," Brown said. "(Oviatt) was pretty close behind me the whole rest of the way. I looked back a few too many times. He definitely was (pushing me)."

"It's an odd distance. I think I might have run it a little faster last year, but I really wasn't that concerned with my time. I was just trying to stay in front."

Brown can also needle his father, too.

"He never won it, but he ran some really good times here," Brown said. "He ran times faster than I did. There were more guys back then, I guess."

ROAD RACING

Ocean Beach/John J. Kelley Race
At New London (11.6 miles)

Overall

1. Brendan Brown (Malverne, N.Y.), 1:04.18.3; 2. Peter Oviatt (Lebanon), 1:04.35.2; 3. David Hurtado (Groton), 1:04.50.4; 4. Scott Herrick (Flushing, N.Y.), 1:05.07.2; 5. Patrick Ward (Seekonk, Mass.), 1:05.39.4; 6. Tom Clark (Somerville, Mass.), 1:06.08.8; 7. Jacob Edwards (North Stonington), 1:08.09.6; 8. Chadwick Brown (Waterford), 1:08.34.2; 9. Jeffrey Wadecki (Ledyard), 1:08.45.4; 10. David Swift (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.), 1:09.38.4; 11. Pat Swift (Waterbury), 1:09.47.2; 12. Jim Zeldy (Watertown), 1:10.12.8; 13. Stephen Swift (Cromwell), 1:10.23.4; 14. Tim Murphy (New London), 1:10.50.0; 15. Dan Springer (Westerly), 1:11.12.3; 16. Larz Selmer-Larsen (Norwich), 1:11.18.9; 17. George Kaminos (Southington), 1:11.22.7; 18. Josh Springer (Westerly), 1:11.23.3; 19. Brian Williams (Seymour), 1:11.32.8; 20. Carl Roth (Niantic), 1:11.55.3; 21. Jon-Paul Mandelburg (Norwich), 1:12.10.2; 22. Kevin Shehan (Pawcatuck), 1:12.37.5; 23. Charlie Iselin (Madison), 1:13.17.4; 24. Chris Pettito (North Granby), 1:13.20.7; 25. Andrew Baird (Yarmouth, Maine), 1:13.56.6.

Women

1. Melissa Perkins-Banas (Norwich), 1:15.25.5; 2. Kerry Shanley (Marshfield, Mass.), 1:21.23.9; 3. Cheryl Simoni (Wethersfield), 1:22.11.6; 4. Erica Angell (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.), 1:22.50.2; 5. Emily Watson (Groton), 1:23.45.8; 6. Heather Barina (Boston), 1:23.51.5; 7. Karen Purcell (Hebron), 1:24.51.6; 8. Kristen Malloy (Phoenix, Md.), 1:25.10.5; 9. Grace Jensen (Hadlyme), 1:26.02.9; 10. Elizabeth Mainiero (Southbury), 1:27.30.8.



Runners take off at the start of

rk in New London on Saturday morning.

OFF TO THE RACES

Norwich's Perkins-Banas wins women's division; Brown takes overall title

By **NED GRIFFEN**
Day Sports Writer

Now London — Melissa Perkins-Banas' goal for her return to organized racing has been to train for next season and stay healthy.

Staying healthy hasn't been easy for the 34-year-old Norwich resident, though. She had been inactive for a two and a half years due to injuries to her left foot. And after she began training again last March, she slipped on some ice and broke her ribs.

Perkins-Banas' accelerated her comeback Saturday, winning the women's division at the 42nd annual Ocean Beach/John J. Kelley Road Race. She finished the 11.6-mile course in 1 hour, 15.25.5 seconds, 34th overall and almost a full six minutes ahead of the next female finisher.

"It's my first year back, so I've minimized my training substantially," Perkins-Banas said. "My goal is to stay injury free for the year and then start racing next year, so it was a good win for me. I

was very surprised."

Brendan Brown, 22, of Malverne, N.Y. finished first overall (1:04.18.3), his first victory at the race.

Perkins-Banas had taken time off because of multiple stress fractures in her left foot. She broke it twice, the second time after it had just healed. Then came the broken ribs.

"I fell on the ice, broke my ribs and had to start (training) again in April," she said. "It's been one of those years. It was just a freak accident. I was running out to the car, there was ice and I fell. After that, I was determined to come back."

"I won in 2001, and I was probably about three and a half minutes quicker, so that shows you how out of shape I am. But a win is a win. I'll take it anyway I can."

The victory had extra significance for Perkins-Banas. She knew Jessie Kelley, the late wife of John J. Kelley.

"It's a meaningful race to me," Perkins-Banas said. "She was a

See **PERKINS-BANAS** page E3

■ *Melissa Perkins-Banas crosses the finish line to win the women's division at the 42nd annual Ocean Beach/John J. Kelley Road Race on Saturday in New London. Perkins-Banas was running in honor of Jessie Kelley, the late wife of John J. Kelley.*

DANA JENSEN/The Day



MOHEGAN STRIDERS 05:46:40				
1 340	JOHNSON	CHAD	Lisbon	CT 29M 1:06:24
2 1311	BROWN	CHADWICK	Waterford	CT 30M 1:07:13
3 4136	ANDREW	CHRIS	NORWICH	CT 23M 1:08:45
4 127	SWIFT	PATRICK	Waterbury	CT 40M 1:11:19
5 2430	HERRERA	STEPHEN	WATERFORD	CT 34M 1:12:59

HOUSATONIC OPEN 06:19:34				
1 546	ZOLDY	JIM	Watertown	CT 43M 1:13:53
2 384	TIROLETTO	FRANK	Orange	CT 45M 1:14:20
3 125	PUOPOLO	JOSEPH	Shelton	CT 46M 1:15:43
4 1500	SKEHAN	KEVIN	Stratford	CT
5 622	WILLIAMS	BRIAN	Seymour	

ATHLETES FOOT 08:00:00

1 1096	HARDING			
2 1664	MACDOUG			
3 1165	KING			
4 1151	HO			
5 232	R			

BAA Elite

1 1310	SI			
2 1309	EL			
3 1307	CHU			
4 1308	LA RO			



Runners tackle the first stretch during the annual Mystic Places Marathon at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme Oct. 23 of last year. Some residents complained about the marathon during last week's Board of Selectmen's meeting. **File photo by Suzanne Ouellette/The Day**

The Day

Annual Mystic Places Marathon and USATF Relay

Published on 10/24/2005

At Rocky Neck State Park, Niantic, 26.2 miles

Top 10 teams

1. Mohegan Striders, 2:28:22;
2. Camny, 2:41:16;
3. Hartford Track Grand Masters Men, 2:45:35;
4. Mohegan Striders Grand Masters Men, 2:54:18;
5. Block Island Express, 2:55:48;
6. USCG Running Fix, 3:06:06;
7. John Ward PT, 3:07:34;
8. Hancock's Harriers 2005, 3:08:53;
9. Team CGLDC, 3:09:29;
10. Team Mellarren, 3:12:55.

Among the nearly 70 marathon relay teams Sunday, the eastern Connecticut-based Mohegan Striders defended their title, although most of the members of last year's team were in Boston this year for the prestigious Mayor's Cup cross country race at Franklin Park.

Taking over at Mystic Places were Jon Kornacki of Wallingford, Jeff Wadecki of Ledyard, Esteban Rivera of Hamden, Steve Swift of Cromwell and Pat Swift of Waterbury. The team finished in 2:28:22, with Kornacki running the final three miles.

"It's a good team race," Kornacki said. "You feel like you're a part of a team and you don't want to let the other guys down."

Rivera, who has never run an entire marathon himself, completed the beginning five-mile leg Sunday for the Striders and said he was in awe as he watched the elite marathoners.

"You watch them run a pace that's amazing," Rivera said.

In last year's race, the Striders' Chad Johnson passed race winner Zintu Meaza coming down the final stretch of Route 156 toward Rocky Neck. Meaza, not understanding Johnson was part of a relay team, thought he lost.

This year, Johnson and 2004 teammates Chad Brown and Steve Herrera traveled to Boston for the Mayor's Cup, sending Kornacki, Wadecki, Rivera and the Swifts to Mystic Places, where the result was much the same.

Steve Swift was the lone holdover from last year's first-place team.

To add more fuel to the fire, McGrath's younger brother Richie passed on NFA to attend St. Bernard and would go on to score for Sharples' 1969 State Open Championship team. The runner-up that year was Norwich, with Richie essentially being the difference, a story re-told over beverages at McGrath family reunions.

Three years ago, both coaches returned to the ECC and the rivalry was renewed. McGrath's return to NFA sparked a renewed interest in boys cross country in Norwich.

"They needed a coach that cared and I figured I owed it to the program, so I came back," McGrath said.

Sharples' own retirement from St. Bernard following the 2001 season didn't last long, as East Lyme offered him a position as coach in 2002. Sharples turned around the struggling Vikings program immediately, although he is quick to point out that Norwich still had the upper hand over his East Lyme teams. NFA, with McGrath back at the helm, won

Article published Oct 3, 2005

Sharples, McGrath continue to run neck-and-neck with each other

By **DON SIKORSKI**
For the Norwich Bulletin

At a friend's backyard barbeque a few weeks ago, I glanced over the crowd and witnessed something unusual.

NFA cross country coach Gene McGrath and East Lyme cross country coach Doug Sharples were having a friendly conversation. With each other. For no reason.

Having participated in the McGrath-Sharples battles back in the day, I looked down at my beer bottle and began to wonder just how many I had, since what I was seeing clearly wasn't right.

After all, Jim Calhoun and Jim Boeheim might be entering the Hall of Fame together but they aren't having dinner and cocktails together like old pals. So why, after so many hard-fought battles on the high school scene, were these two coaches suddenly getting along so well?

A deeper look at history might indicate why a rivalry exists between the two coaches in the first place. As a high schooler, McGrath ran second man on NFA's 1956 State Open championship team. Ten years later, McGrath would become NFA's cross country coach, a position he would keep until stepping down after the 1984 season.

A young freshman named Doug Sharples also ran on that same 1956 NFA championship team. His idol was his state champion senior teammate Clem McGrath, Gene's older brother.

After a brief stint at Kelly Junior High School at coaching football for one season, Sharples took over as head cross country coach at St. Bernard in 1968. In an effort to build the program, Sharples immediately looked to McGrath's NFA team as a target.

"My philosophy has always been that if you're going to be the best, you have to face the best," Sharples said. "And NFA was great. They had (two time New England champion) Jim Euell, but we countered with Mark Connelly, and it turned into a rivalry pretty quickly."

St. Bernard, led by Connolly, claimed the State Open championship that 1968 season. NFA bounced back to defeat St. Bernard in a dual meet the following year, but the Saints returned the favor and got the best of NFA in the State Open again that November, claiming their second consecutive state championship.

"That kinda solidified things as a rivalry," said Sharples of those early battles.

Two years later, McGrath's '71 team, with top-5 scorers Alden Miner, Paul Hill, Jim Olsen, Andy Coco and Bob Sirpenski, claimed both the Class LL and State Open titles that season. The stage had been set, with two of Connecticut's best team's located just miles down the road from one another and coached by former high school teammates.

"The rivalry was very intense in those days," said McGrath. "As an upperclassman, I looked down on (Sharples) because he was younger. Then, years later, he (Doug) shows up on the running scene and suddenly he's beating me. It kinda bothered me."

As far as his recent bonding with Coach Sharples, McGrath cited respect for his former high school teammate.

"They have three State Open Championships," McGrath said. "But I enjoy what the rivalry has become. I think we have a mutual respect for each other. It's always intense during the race, but now when it's all over, we can get together and have a beer."

To add more fuel to the fire, McGrath's younger brother Richie passed on NFA to attend St. Bernard and would go on to score for Sharples' 1969 State Open Championship team. The runner-up that year was Norwich, with Richie essentially being the difference, a story re-told over beverages at McGrath family reunions.

Three years ago, both coaches returned to the ECC and the rivalry was renewed. McGrath's return to NFA sparked a renewed interest in boys cross country in Norwich.

"They needed a coach that cared and I figured I owed it to the program, so I came back," McGrath said.

Sharples' own retirement from St. Bernard following the 2001 season didn't last long, as East Lyme offered him a position as coach in 2002. Sharples turned around the struggling Vikings program immediately, although he is quick to point out that Norwich still had the upper hand over his East Lyme teams –NFA, with McGrath back at the helm, won handily in Sharples' inaugural season at East Lyme.

The Wildcats also claimed close dual meet wins both 2003 and 2004, but both races were competitive. Norwich outran East Lyme last year's ECC and State Open meets (finishing third and fourth in the state, respectively), but Sharples' team returned a week later to surprise the field, claiming third overall at the New England Championships ahead of Norwich.

Recently, McGrath's NFA team, rich with upperclassmen and loaded with depth, easily outran Sharples' young Vikings team 15-50 in the team's opening meet of the season, with the Wildcats claiming the top seven finishers.

It's evident a mutual respect exists between the two rival coaches for what they have accomplished. McGrath cites both Euell and former national class runner Bill Khron as two of the best he's ever coached. He also credits assistant coach Chad Johnson for much of his team's current success.

"The kids really look up to (Chad). He works with the Track team and sends me a lot of good kids each season," McGrath said.

The McGrath-Johnson relationship extends beyond recent years, as it was McGrath who returned to NFA as an assistant track coach in 1991 to mentor Johnson, then a junior who would later go on to win a second consecutive State cross country championship and run one of the fastest 3,200 meter times in the country (9:01) his senior year.

Sharples' tenure at St. Bernard lasted for 34 seasons before retiring. That run included three State Open Championships (1968-69, 1981), seven state class championships, and nine state class runner-up finishes. His St. Bernard teams finished in the top three in state class meets in 27 of his 34 seasons.

Sharples was also named to the Connecticut High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame and earned National Cross Country Coach of the Year in 1987. Besides Connolly, some of Sharples' individual standout runners include Todd Renehan, Chris Hansen, Adrian Pelchat, Bill Gill, Daryl Giard and Matt Warren.

Sharples also expressed admiration for some of the runners who have been through the rival NFA program.

"They've had some great runners," Sharples said. "Jim Euell, Bill Krohn, Alden Miner and then Chad (Johnson) and (Chris) Andrew, who both won State Open titles."

Both coaches also admit to differences in their coaching styles.

"Doug always had more strategy," McGrath said. "They would sometimes go out hard to get position based on the course, or they would mark a man to try and run with in order to win the meet. He spent the time doing research. My kids would just go out and try to run their best."

But upon returning to the coaching ranks after many years, McGrath found himself with a new philosophy.

"I'm adopting a lot of his (Sharples) training methods, the heart rate monitor training and the Jack Daniels training philosophy," he said. "Really, I try to encourage the kids to move up to the next level. And I've always relied on the big numbers, getting a lot of kids out for the team."

As far as the rivalry, it appears things have mellowed a bit for these two coaches.

"We've been hot competitors for years," said McGrath. "He (Doug) is a very competitive guy. I used to be, although I think I've mellowed out."

As far as his recent bonding with Coach Sharples, McGrath cited respect for his former high school teammate.

"They have three State Open Championships," McGrath said. "But I enjoy what the rivalry has become. I think we have a mutual respect for each other. It's always intense during the race, but now when it's all over, we can get together and have a beer."

From Guinness to dancing, runners have remedies to combat post-Marathon blues

More than 35,000 runners crossed the finish line of the New York City Marathon on Sunday, and I'm betting that not one of them walks without some sort of pain or discomfort to-day. Spectators who line the 26.2-mile route often witness the agony that many marathon runners endure during the trek through the five boroughs of the city to the finish line in Central Park. But few realize the discomfort and pain associated with such an athletic achievement have only just begun.



ON THE RUN

Don Sikorski

Watching race winner Paul Tergat of Kenya and Hendrick Ramaala of South Africa dig in down the race's final stretch showed how grueling the marathon can be. Ramaala, the defending champion, lunged towards the tape in desperation only to fall

are probably both in a world of hurt right now. There's also plenty of local runners out there who are familiar with the post-race discomfort of the marathon. Wayne Jolley seems to re-

must say that I enjoy knocking down a case of beer over the next 3-4 days." Karen Short and Sue Smith often train together for marathon races. After recently completing the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. this past month, both Short and Smith are just now returning to some easy recovery running.

Short accomplished her goal of qualifying for Boston after clocking a personal best at the 2004 Chicago Marathon. But despite cruising through her Boston Marathon race at a comfortable pace, the recovery experience was less pleasant.

"Boston was horrible; the worst marathon to recover from," said Short, mostly due to the hills that greet the runners over the latter stages of the race. "The recovery was much easier after Marine Corps."

But both agree on a recommended formula for post-marathon recovery.

"Guinness and dancing are good for the legs," Smith said.

Uncasville's Kevin Gallerani has a total of 40 marathons, including 20 Bostons, to his credit. He also coaches marathon runners, so he is well-versed in the science of recovering from a 26.2 mile effort.

"If it's a hilly course, I usually try to do something of low resistance on a stationary bike, maybe 20 minutes a day

RECOVERY FROM A MARATHON

According to the Web site www.marathonguide.com, there are a number of ways to combat post-marathon blues:

- Immediately after the race, keep walking and start drinking cool fluids as soon as possible.
- After the first day, eat a well-balanced, nutritious meal with a greater focus on protein calories rather than a normal training diet. Avoid running, jogging and cross-training.
- Three to four days after the race, a runner can begin to jog short distances.

cover from marathon racing efforts better than most. The 54-year-old Brooklyn resident has run 30 marathons and often schedules three per year: the Disney Marathon in January, Boston in April, and then a fall marathon in October. In addition to Jolley's three marathon efforts, he usually



Smith

manages about 35 road races per year. "I usually don't even take a week off," Jolley said of his marathon recovery. "I run Boston just about every year, and then six days later, I'm down in Westerly running the Clamdigger 5 Miler just about as hard as I can go."

Norwich's Tim Smith is considered the area's best marathon runner. This past month, at age 57, Smith finished 25th overall in 3:00:00 at the Hartford Marathon, running in less than ideal weather conditions. Smith also owns

the course record at the East Lyme Marathon, 2:23:56 in 1982.

He claims that not much has changed for him over the years concerning his marathon racing philosophy. "I like to enjoy the moment but then get out as soon as I can," he said.

With 53 marathons finishes on his running resume, few are more qualified to talk about the marathon experience. "I really enjoy that 24-48 hour window following a marathon," he joked. "And I

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5K Cross Country Race

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Kids Fun Run - 1 Mile

Sponsored by:

William W. Backus Hospital, Liberty Bank, Leader Stores, Billy Wilson's Ageing Still, Phelps Dodge Copper Products

New location and course! New Date and time!

When:
Location:

Saturday, October 15, 2005 - Starting Time 11:30 a.m.
Starts and ends at Park Center in Mohegan Park, Norwich, CT
Check out our new course on www.reliancehouse.org

Benefit:
Patrons:

Reliance House's Outreach to Homeless Program
City of Norwich-Dime Bank
The Norwich Recreation Department - American Ambulance
Wheel Measured 5K (3.1 Miles)

Course:
Entry Info:

\$15.00 Entry Fee - Day of Race \$20.00
MC/Visa (pre-registration only)- \$15.50

Divisions:

Junior Boy & Girl	18 & Under
Open Men & Women	19 - 29
Submaster Men & Women	30 - 39
Masters Men & Women	40 - 49
Grand Master Men & Women	50 - 59
Veteran men & Women	60 - 69

Priz
Run

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JOE LONARDELLI Age-Group Cross Country Championship

Sponsored by:
Burger King of Norwich

Monday, October 10, 2005
Kelly Jr. High School
Races start at 11:00 a.m.

Races will proceed in the order in which they are listed.

Ages 13-14 (2000 meters)

Ages 6-8 (800 meters)

Ages 9-10 (1500 meters)

Ages 11-12 (1500 meters)

Children in eighth grade or lower are eligible. Awards - Ribbons will be given to all trophies will be awarded to the first three boys & girls in each race.

Joe Lonardelli Meet- 2005

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@netzero.net.

USATF-CT 2005 Road Grand Prix Final Team Results

RETURN TO GRANDPRIX PAGE

Men's Open	Mid May 10K	Branford 5 Mile	Fairfield 1/2	Corp. Classic 5K	New Haven 20K	Mystic Relay	Total Points
1. Mohegan Striders	11	11	9	11	11	11	64
2. HiTek	9	9	11	9	8	0	46
3. Hartford Track Club	6	6	8	8	6	9	43
4. Housatonic	7	7	7	7	7	0	35
5. Woodbridge/Milford RR	8	8	6	0	9	0	31
6. Silk City Striders	0	0	0	0	5	0	5

Men's Masters	Mid May 10K	Branford 5 Mile	Fairfield 1/2	Corp. Classic 5K	New Haven 20K	Mystic Relay	Total Points
1. Hartford Track Club	9	9	9	11	7	11	56
2. HiTek	11	11	11	9	11	0	53
3. Housatonic	8	7	8	7	9	0	39
4. Mohegan Striders	7	8	7	8	8	0	38
5. Woodbridge/Milford RR	6	6	6	0	6	0	24
6. Silk City Striders	0	0	5	0	5	0	10

Men's Grandmasters	Mid May 10K	Branford 5 Mile	Fairfield 1/2	Corp. Classic 5K	New Haven 20K	Mystic Relay	Total Points
1. Hartford Track Club	11	11	11	11	11	11	66
2. Mohegan Striders	9	7	7	9	8	0	40
3. Housatonic	8	8	9	0	9	0	34
4. HiTek	6	9	8	0	7	0	30
5. Woodbridge/Milford RR	7	6	6	0	6	0	25

Men's Seniors	Mid May 10K	Branford 5 Mile	Fairfield 1/2	Corp. Classic 5K	New Haven 20K	Mystic Relay	Total Points
1. HiTek	9	9	11	0	9	0	38
2. Woodbridge/Milford RR	8	8	0	0	11	0	27
3. Mohegan	11	11	0	0	0	0	22
4. Hartford Track Club	0	0	0	11	0	0	11

Run 'bigger than ever'

By DOROTHY SCHNEIDER
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — Organizers say the 2005 Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run is shaping up to be bigger than ever.

"It's a big event every year, and we hope to make it bigger each year," said Joe Manfredi, who owns Billy Wilson's Ageing Still and has hosted the event for years. "The more runners we have, the better it is for the Tommy Toy Fund."

The run, which begins at Billy Wilson's, loops a mile-and-a-half in downtown. The entry fee for runners is a donation of one unwrapped toy. The race will also include a raffle, with all proceeds going to the Tommy Toy Fund. Coordinator Kevin Crowley

invited Kokopelli's Coffee and Tea Co., located across Broadway from Billy Wilson's, to join the event and make it more child-friendly.

"Joe Manfredi at Billy Wilson's has always been an enthusiastic supporter of this

event," Crowley said. "It's great to have Kokopelli's on board this year giving out hot drinks to the young runners. It makes it a bigger and better event."

Norwich's Smith wins in Waterford

Norwich Bulletin

ROAD RACE

WATERFORD — Norwich's Tim Smith battled two inches of snow and some cold rain to win Sunday's Pearl Harbor Memorial Masters Run 5.1-mile race.

Smith, 57, finished in 31:36, ahead of Mystic's Jim

Roy. Roy, 44, finished eight seconds behind in 31:44, in the master race, which consisted of runner 40-and-over.

The top female runner was Lynn Love, 47, of Lisbon, who broke the tape in 39:25,

ahead of Rose Buckingham of Norwich, who won the 55-59 division at 45:09.

Other age-group winners included: Laurie Lamb of North Stonington (1:10:01), who won the 50-to-54 age group. Jim Roy of Mystic (31:44), who won the 45-49 di-

vision, Brian Lundle (34:04), who won the 50-54, Dave Jacobs of Niantic (34:18), who won the 60-64 division, Charles Merils (43:22), who won the 65-69 division and Joe Riccio of Branford (45:34), who won the 70-and-over division.

"We're hoping that people get dressed up so that this is a festive occasion and everybody has a good time," he added. "We could use some reindeer and a couple snowmen."

Norma Vivar-Orum, the cross-country coach at the Integrated Day Charter School, said her team is planning to run in costume again this year.

"Last year we came as reindeer, and this year we will be dressing as elves," she said.

"And we're having a toy drive at the school so we can bring more toys to the run. Our kids really enjoy this event."

Residents brave snow to jog for Tommy Toy Fund Run in Norwich

DECEMBER 9, 2005



Tall Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Vince Thompson of East Lyme brings a bag of toys to add to the collection of toys for the Tommy Toy Fund at Billy Wilson's Ageing Still in Norwich Friday before running in the annual Tommy Toy Fund Run.

By JESSICA DURKIN
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — With a Santa Claus in jogging shoes leading the pack, about 100 local runners put foot to icy pavement Friday night for the annual Tommy Toy Fund Run on downtown streets.

Dressed in usual running attire — sweat pants, long-sleeve shirts, running shoes, Santa hats — runners took 18 minutes to run a 1.5 mile loop around downtown that began and ended outside Billy Wilson's Ageing Still on Broadway.

Tommy Toy Fund



Participants of all ages also sang Christmas carols as they ran.

WHAT'S NEXT

■ **Chaplain Resident Trooper Paul Black** will be at the Town Hall on Route 198 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday to collect new toys to donate to the toy fund.

Participants of all ages also sang Christmas carols as they ran.

"It's not a race, it's slow — it's a fun run," said organizer Kevin Crowley, a member of the Mohegan Striders running club. "Because we're all runners, it's a nice event."

Running for 25 years

Crowley said the Mohegan Striders have been involved with the run for 25 years. A

HOW TO HELP

■ **Donations:** Money — \$25,000 is needed this year — can be dropped off at any People's Bank in Eastern Connecticut or mailed to People's Bank, Tommy Toy Fund, 4 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360. Toy donations may be dropped off between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays at the shipping and receiving dock at the Bulletin.

raffle raised more than \$1,000 toward the cause.

The only entry requirement was a donated gift that went toward the Norwich Bulletin's Tommy Toy Fund. Board games, stuffed animals, bicycles and other

items filled a collection area at Billy Wilson's.

A severe storm earlier in the day dumped rain and about 4 inches of snow in Norwich, leaving the roads slippery. But runners still turned out for the evening event.

"We'll go slow," runner Val O'Keefe of Norwich said before the jog. "It's going to be a little slippery."

Post-run, John Sacrey, who runs about 30 miles a week, barely broke a sweat.

"It's a good cause, you see a lot of friends," said Sacrey, who donated a boy's bicycle. "The snow is good, not bad conditions."

Reach Jessica Durkin at 774-5563 or jdurkin@norwichbulletin.com

S PHONE: 887-9211 | LET

Profile of a Newsmaker: Norwich runner organizes run toy drive

In the News: Norwich resident Kevin Crowley, a member of the Mohegan Striders running and social club, helped organize this year's Tommy Toy Fund Run to raise Christmas toys and other donations for children this holiday season. Crowley is a guidance counselor at Norwich Free Academy. To include runners from a wider age spectrum, the group shortened the Dec. 9 run from two 1.5-mile laps around downtown Norwich to one. The club has been involved with the Tommy Toy event 25 years.

Background: The Mohegan Striders has 325 members and was formed in 1972. It is one of the biggest running clubs in Connecticut, Crowley said. It has won state championships on several occasions. The group participates in about 100 running and social events a year, including marathons, road races, relays and charity runs, in the Northeast and Canada. The club is also open to non-runners. For more information on the club, visit www.moheganstriders.org.

Quotable: "I think the Tommy Toy Fund has been a big event for Mohegan Striders for a long time," Crowley said. "We want to keep the excitement going. This is a good charitable event, but also a good social event."

— Jessica Durkin



2. Amby Burfoot. The 1968 Boston winner won many races including the Manchester Road Race nine times. He ran 2:14 at the prestigious Fukuoka marathon and in 1968 missed the American marathon record by one second. Today he is the executive editor of *Runner's World* magazine and returns home each year to lead the annual New Year's Day run and swim from Kelley's house.

3. Jan Merrill. Our only female track Olympian, she finished eighth in the 1,500 meters in the 1976 Olympics, was a two-time national cross country champion and three-time national outdoor champ in the 3,000 meters. She went on to coach at Waterford High School.

4. Patti Dillon. I know, I know. She didn't live here when she set the American record in the marathon, won four Honolulu marathons and dominated the road racing world back in the early 1980s. But she's been a local runner for a while now, coaches a homeschooled running team with her husband Dan and was a recent nominee to the National Distance Running Hall of Fame.

5. Liz Mueller. While dominating high school racing for Waterford High School back in the late 1980s, this phenom not only won a ton of local, state and regional championships, she is the only local runner to win the national high school cross country championships. She had the strength of a distance runner and the speed of a 400-meter runner, often competing in the sprints and hurdles. She went on to become a successful professional boxer.

6. Wayne Jacob. In addition to winning numerous races over three decades, Jacob won the prestigious Tarzan Brown Mystic River Run nine times. No one will ever touch that record. He still holds the second fastest time on the 5.5-mile course, 26:29.

7. Tim Smith. The ageless Smith has been winning races and his age division for decades and continues to do so, beating most runners half his age. This past October at age 57, Smith ran 3:00 at the very wet Hartford Marathon, good enough for 24th place overall and an easy win in his division.

8. This was the toughest choice of all so I'm making it a tie. Now in their 40s, Carla Thompson, Heather Bessette and Martha Mertz have dominated women's racing here for almost 20 years. They've won countless races and always raced tenaciously, often against each other. They're great role models for young girls starting out in the sport.

9. Norm Higgins. The 1966 national marathon

champion, Higgins won the 1971 New York City Marathon in 2:22.

10. Jessie Kelley. While Mrs. Kelley never ran she contributed more than anyone to the local running community. From dispensing advice to generations of runners at Kelley's Pace to welcoming runners along with her husband John at their home, she

was the matriarch of the region's running community. So it was no surprise that when she died in 2003, runners packed St. Patrick Church in Mystic to honor her.

A Level Above

January 1, 2006

An unofficial list of the top 10 area runners of all time

THIS IS ALL STEVE FAGIN'S FAULT. ONE Sunday last month, I'm working in The Day newsroom when Fagin, a veteran local runner and Day copy editor, suggests that if I'm ever looking for a column idea I should write about the top 10 local runners of all time. We immediately started coming up with names. When I asked for suggestions from local runners, I received a lot of great e-mails.

I realize I may be opening a can of worms here. Some readers wondered how long someone had to live here to be considered a local runner and what factors I would base my rankings on. I didn't have any hard and fast rules, so this list is totally subjective. We've had so many great runners over the years some of the choices were difficult and I had to leave out a lot of people. But these 10 seemed to be on a level above the rest.

So here's my list. Be nice if you don't agree.

1. John Kelley. For me this was the easiest choice of all. The 1957 Boston Marathon winner, Kelley was an eight-time national marathon champion and made two Olympic teams in 1956 and 1960. He won the Pan American Games Marathon in 1959 and is a member of the National Distance Running Hall of Fame. He won the Manchester Road race six times, coached many area runners and opened the region's only running shoe store. He was an inspiration to many and he and his late wife Jessie always welcomed runners at their Pequot Avenue home.

In 2005, we saw a lot of great running

Profile of a newsmaker: Psychologist inducted into 'Who's Who' publication

In the news: Dr. Melissa Perkins-Banas of Norwich recently was inducted into the latest edition "Who's Who of American Women," a national publication of accomplished women of distinction.

Background: Perkins-Banas is a school psychologist in the Plainfield school system. A 1989 Norwich Free Academy graduate, Perkins-Banas, 35, holds a dual doctorate degree in psychology — clinical and school psychology — from Albert Einstein College of Medicine of New York.

Accomplishments: Perkins-Banas was a recipient of the Connecticut distance runner of the year Hi-Tek Racing Team in 2001 and is a avid distance runner. "My goal is actually to qualify for Olympic trials in the marathon." She is a member of the American Psychological Association and is completing a post-doctorate degree in neuropsychology in order to achieve board certification as a neuropsychologist. She is also a member of the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sports Psychology.

Quotable: Perkins-Banas said she enjoys working with children and is interested in pursuing more studies in the growing field of sports psychology. "I love children. It's very rewarding. I'm very lucky to do the work I do."

— Greg Smith



Melissa Perkins-Banas

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS: KELLY SORRELL, LYMAN — Sorrell, now in her junior year at Lyman Memorial, posted a terrific cross-country season, winning the Class SS race, finishing a strong third in the Connecticut State Open, fourth at the New England and 16th overall (top Connecticut runner) at the Foot Locker regionals.

Best local performance

Tim Smith, 57, of Norwich ran 3:00:00 at the Hartford Marathon in October in less-than-ideal conditions. Melissa Perkins-Banas returned from injury to run an impressive 2:59:34 at the Mystic Places Marathon to place 21st overall.

Best local race

JOHN J. KELLEY/OCEAN BEACH ROAD RACE, Aug. 6 — The 43rd annual race again lived up to its reputation as being the best bargain in town. Brendan Brown of New York and Norwich's Melissa Perkins-Banas led 379 finishers to earn top honors. This 11.6-mile race continues its long-standing unique tradition of charging no entry fee while offering a quality race and a great day at the beach.

In the running world, a post-Olympic year didn't mean there was less drama on the roads and the track.

American runners continued to re-establish themselves on the world circuit, building on the successes of Mebrahtom Keflezighi and Deena Kastor and their Olympic marathon medal efforts from a year ago.

Local road races remained strong and the talent of the Eastern Connecticut Conference showed promise for our local runners of the future. As always, a special thank you should go out to the Road Race Directors, SNERRO timing officials and all of the race volunteers who help keep the racing events going. Here's a look at running's top performers and performances from 2005:

Local runners

MALE: CHADWICK BROWN, WATERFORD/STEPHEN HERRERA, WATERFORD/CHAD JOHNSON, LISBON — This one was too close to call, as each of these runners put together strong racing seasons in 2005.

Brown ran 1:07:12 for 39th overall at the New Haven 20K, Herrera was runner-up to Sergio Ribiero at the very hilly Rose City Challenge 10-Miler (54:54) and was one of the state's best cross-country runners, finishing 24th at the Boston Mayor's Cup. Johnson ran 1:06:23 for 31st overall and top state finisher at the New Haven 20K and ran sub-15 minutes at the competitive Eliot Festival 5K race in Maine.

Norwich's Chris Andrew led the field of those chasing the big three with runners like Adam Fitzgerald, Dave Hurtado, Brendan Cashman, Christopher Kane, Chris McCormack, and Jeff Wadecki, who all posted strong road racing efforts in 2005.

FEMALE: MELISSA PERKINS-BANAS, NORWICH — Perkins-Banas returned to top form after struggling with injuries in past years, winning the Kelly Road Race in 1:15:26 and running 2:59:34 at the Mystic Places Marathon for 21st overall and fifth female.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS: TRADELLE WARD, GRISWOLD — With former teammate Gavin Coombs now at North Carolina State, Tradelle Ward has moved to the forefront. His 14th-place finish at the Foot Locker nationals race capped a well-executed plan and put an exclamation point on an outstanding high school career.



RUNNING NOTES

Don Sikorski



Name: Charlie Iselin
Age: 42
Home: Madison, Connecticut
Time: 3:01:04

"People make up names for you as you run the course. The first time I did New York, one guy yelled out, 'Mustache Johnny, go!' This time, this guy says, 'Mustache Charlie, go!' It was just a coincidence but kind of funny."

Hoping 'Trashed' makes a splash

Nick Checker submits his locally made movie to film festivals



BRENDA DE LOS SANTOS / The Day

Local filmmaker Nick Checker and Kate Mullarney, his assistant director, watch as a scene of his new movie, "Trashed," is filmed by Brandon Cook in Salem last summer.

By **BEN JOHNSON**
Day Arts Writer

ndie film director and avid sports fan Nick Checker doesn't want all the credit for his new movie "Trashed."

"Brett Favre says 'It's not about me, it's about the Green Bay Packers,'" says Checker, who regularly wears Green Bay's colors. "If I didn't have the support of the network of people who took part in the production of this movie, catching the passes, throwing the blocks, there would be no movie."

Checker's team of volunteers and sponsors helped him put together the 52-minute film in the summer and fall of 2005, with a budget under \$1,000. Now that Checker's Nightshade Productions has finished "Trashed," the novice filmmaker is busy sending it to festivals in the hopes of getting more exposure. So far, "Trashed" has been submitted to the Brooklyn Film Festival, the Black Maria Film Festival in New Jersey, and the San Francisco Women's Film Festival. Checker says he will start hearing back from selection committees next month.

Along with sending it out into the world, Checker says that the locally made film will be used as a fund-raising tool to help the homeless of New London. On Feb. 19, "Trashed" will be screened at the Garde Arts Center, where Checker has asked some of those who were involved in the project to speak on the film's subject matter.

Mixing documentary with a fictional narrative about a down-and-out girl named Autumn who is on the brink of poverty (played by actress Kathryn Downie), "Trashed" draws a tenuous but relatively clear parallel between New London's troubles with eminent domain in Fort Trumbull and the plight of the homeless in America.

Alongside the black-and-white drama, which borrows some scenarios from real incidents in the local eminent domain case, Checker places footage of anti-eminent domain protests and rallies that took place in New London in 2005. He also includes interviews and commentary by City Councilor Rob Pero, eminent domain lawyer Scott Sawyer, and Fort Trumbull landlord Richard Beyer.

Top 10 list draws quite a response

This is for those of you who were on my list of the top 10 local runners of all time two weeks ago. As I read through the 30 or so e-mails I received about the column, it quickly became apparent that you are more than just a group of people who run fast.

You are also a great source of inspiration to your fellow local runners. They admire not just your leg speed but your dedication, encouragement and contributions to the sport.

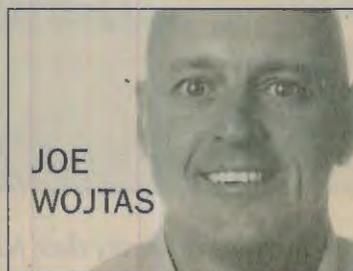
So here is what they say about you.

■ Nick Checker on John Kelley, Amby Burfoot, Wayne Jacob and Carla Thompson: "The common denominator that binds these four together is something we need to see more of - character. All four have always been graceful in victory and defeat, never offering the lame excuses we hear too often from others when they lose ... and yet never rubbing their victories in the faces of others. They have never disgraced the sport of running in any way."

■ Dave Raunig on Amby Burfoot, John Kelley and Jessie Kelley: "Amby spent most of his time and running effort right here in southeastern Connecticut. The success of the area's local runners is due, in no small part, to his dedication to local running and local racing. He was our leader for the Sunday morning runs and a lot of us old-timers still run Amby's running loops and rarely anything else."

"Of course right alongside Amby would have to go Johnny Kelley. He gave back to this area more than he took and his dedication to coaching and passing that love of running along was responsible for guys like Amby and Wayne Jacob to excel in high school and later. He and Jessie are fixtures that transcend time and age."

"The Kelleys and Amby are local running. Faster runners did exist but none of them had the longevity or influence on us like these guys."



JOE
WOJTAS

j.wojtas@theday.com

RUNNING

■ Kris-Anne Kane on Tim Smith and Carla Thompson: "Tim has been the impetus of many runners, young and old, to do their best at every outing. Tim is always smiling, and always has a kind word for those he comes in contact with. But when he is on the starting line, look out. If you're in the front pack, you may get an elbow or two in the face as Tim jockeys for position ... He is a wonderful role model for the running community. May he continue to inspire us all."

"Carla has been an inspiration to me since I became interested in running back in the mid-80s. She is the gutsiest runner I know. She LOVES to run. And she LOVES to race. After having two children, she hasn't lost her drive to get out and kick butt on the roads ... On days when I think it's time to hang up my Asics and take up something else that's a little easier, I think of Carla and remember why I need to keep at it."

■ Rich Kosta on Wayne Jacob: "For the past 20 years or so Wayne has been involved with athletics as a high school coach. He has most recently been my assistant coach for boys' outdoor and indoor track at Fitch High School. He is a great teacher of the sport, not only the technical aspects but the historical and emotional aspects as well. I was very happy to see Wayne included on your list not only because of his accomplishments as a runner but because of what he has given back to the sport as a coach and role model."

I received several e-mails from

people who said Dave Raunig should be on the list.

I agree.

With a 5K best of 14:14, a 10K of 29:52 and a marathon PR of 2:29, he won the 1996 national 10K master's championship and is a five-time winner of the Strides for the Handicapped race where he holds five of the top 10 times in the event. So Raunig becomes number 11.

Nick Checker suggested two more additions to the list.

"How can we ignore two of our most courageous runners who continued on with conviction and grace in spite of the most dreadful disease ever known: cancer. Sean Delaney and Steve Hancock must always be mentioned in the same breath as all the greats," Checker wrote. "Sean finished with honor and Steve continues his run. Both remind us that simply being able to run is what this is all about."

Patti Dillon wrote to say she and her husband Dan, who has represented the U.S. five times at the world cross country championships, feel blessed to be raising their children in this running community.

"The kids can visit Johnny (Kelley) at his store, run with Jan (Merrill) Morin sometimes at Harkness Park and can give Amby a hug twice a year when they see him for the big local running events," she wrote. "I am so honored and touched to be so well received here in this little pocket of southeastern Connecticut. Danny and I have lived in six states from Massachusetts to New Mexico and have moved 11 times in the 13 years we have been together as a family. And to be mentioned in the same breath as a local, well, I can now really call New London HOME."

Finally, my sincere apologies to two people on the list. Jan Merrill-Morin for not using her married name and Martha Merz for misspelling her last name.

I must have been suffering from all that holiday egg nog.

This is the opinion of Joe Wojtas, The Day's running columnist.

Herrera's focus is on training

DETAILS

Standing at the half-mile mark of the Tarzan Brown Road Race last November, I watched Stephen Herrera cruise by effortlessly, well out in front of the next 692 runners that, by comparison to Herrera, seemed to be slogging along in slow motion.

Herrera finished the 5.5-mile course in a brisk 28:21, a solid minute-and-a-half up on his nearest competitor. To the spectators that line the road to watch the race's final stretch down Pearl Street, it appeared that distance running and winning races comes rather easily for Stephen Herrera. If they only knew the truth.



RUNNING NOTES

Don Sikorski

ways winning races.

The 35 year-old Waterford resident was good enough to earn all-conference honors in cross-country at Ledyard High School, but his credentials fell short of many teammates and competitors he now outruns today. After continuing his running career at Southern Connecticut State University, Herrera searched to find something to fuel his competitive fires over the next few years.

"After college, I tried bicycle racing," Herrera said. "I found that I preferred mountain bike racing to the roads, but there were so many more running and road racing events locally."

That and the high cost of equipment expenses that accompany bike racing, led Herrera back to running.

"Old habits die hard, I guess," said Herrera of his return to running. "It was natural fit for me."

All competitive runners consider racing a marathon at one point in their careers and Herrera was no different. Getting accidentally lost on a college training run with a teammate (thus turning a 12-mile run into more like 23), got Herrera thinking that running a marathon might not be so difficult after all. He entered the 2000 East Lyme Marathon having had enough success in road races to be considered one of the favorites. But a lack of preparation proved to be his undoing in his debut 26.2-mile effort.

"My long run was only 16 miles," said Herrera of his marathon training for East Lyme, "and that doesn't get you ready for what happens at the two-hour mark." Herrera crashed and burned, struggling to the finish line in a still-respectable 2:52:42 for third place. But he offers no excuses for his performance.

"It was lack of preparation, plain and simple," he said. "It would be like someone trying to race a mile without ever stepping on a track." But once the sting of that race sub-

Waterford's Stephen Herrera is training to have his most successful year in road racing yet. His training includes:

- Base of 10 miles running in the winter.
- Two high quality workouts each week, totaling about 60-70 miles per week.
- His goal is to run 30-35 road races this year.

sided, Herrera gave the marathon another shot, this time at the Mystic Places Marathon two years later.

With three solid runs of more than 20 miles and plenty of quality work under his belt, Herrera took advantage of near-perfect conditions and hung on the finish in an impressive 2:29:56 for sixth place overall and top American honors.

"Around 20 miles or so, I knew I was in for some hurting," Herrera said about that day in Niantic. "I was just trying to hold on and was thinking around 2:32." Herrera has not raced another marathon since and won't unless he believes he is at 100 percent. And that hasn't always been the case.

After running his first marathon, Herrera suffered a stress fracture in his foot. He returned to racing form only to suffer a broken left foot during the 2001 New Haven 20K national championship race. Herrera ran well, but was forced to walk the final quarter mile and was done for the remainder of the season. He returned again only to break his right foot in the final 300 meters of a 5K race in May 2003 (still managing to run 15:20 in the process). Fully healed by the following summer, Herrera rolled his ankle on a trail run in January 2005 and against struggled to get back to consistent training.

Surgery to put a pin in the foot, which is still there, proved successful, and by late last summer, Herrera was back in racing shape and getting stronger each week. His 24th-place finish at the prestigious Mayor's Cup cross country race in Boston's Franklin Park highlighted a successful return to racing for Herrera.

Herrera trains daily after a day's work as a graphic designer at Sign-A-Rama in New London. After a solid winter of base mileage, a typical week might find Herrera logging 60-70 miles and incorporating two high quality workouts per week, either running the track or the roads. Herrera also races 30-35 times per year or more, especially if he can stay healthy and his work schedule allows it, although he has tried to give up racing on back-to-back days.

"I'm kinda crazy," Herrera confessed, "but I guess it won't shock the body if you're ready for it."

Self-coached since college, Herrera trains alone. Of course, even if other's schedules were compatible, few runners are at the fitness level to keep up with Herrera in training. He also prefers cross-country rac-



Herrera

ing to the roads.

"They (cross-country races) are just so much fun," he said. "I think they're a little more honest and a little less trash talk."

Whether it is the roads or the trails, Herrera is usually the favorite, especially in Southeastern Connecticut.

"My goal is usually or be in good enough shape to win locally," Herrera said. "I know you can't win all of the time and I enjoy a good, competitive race. But I like to get myself ready to always have a shot to win."

In addition to pounding the pavement or the trails, Herrera also plays a fair share of volleyball and spends plenty of time in gym. He is diligent in his work ethic, with a quality stretching and post-run routine that allows for the proper recovery before tackling the next workout.

Despite the numerous injury setbacks and all of the hard work that he pours into his training, Herrera enjoys running and racing and has no plans to retire anytime soon.

"I enjoy it," he said. "I knew back in high school. And there is the enjoyment in just doing the hard work. Going out and doing a workout, knowing that I could have tanked it, but I didn't ... there's some satisfaction in that. I also enjoy racing for the team (the Mohegan Striders). I run a lot of races that I might normally not if it weren't for the team competition. It's easier to race hard when others are depending on your effort. And I guess I wouldn't race if it wasn't still fun."

If he can keep his feet healthy in 2006, most runners in New England will have a difficult time keeping up with Stephen Herrera.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@netzero.net.



Runner's Profile - Clem McGrath, the Emerald Isle's Gift to the Westerly Track and Athletic Club

If you are lucky enough to be spending time in the Misquamicut area during the summer or fall, or frequenting area road races during this time, chances are good you have met or will be meeting Clem McGrath. If you happen across a tall, 60ish, handsome, athletic gentleman (who you have to be in good shape to keep up with) and his face is beaming with an infectious Irish smile, it's probably Clem.

Clem has been part of the local running community for years and has a vast array of **accomplishments**, and has some very good advice for aging athletes and runners ([see below](#)). However, being a premier runner as a young man, coupled with his more recent successes, he has some valuable wisdom to pass on to runners of ALL ages.

For young runners just entering the sport, Clem advises that the most important thing is to keep it fun. Although hard work can bring success, it is important to nurture and develop your love of running and this early stage of development should include more pleasure (fun) than pain (rigorous training).

For scholastic runners (high school and college), the time has come to run to your potential. It is important not to take all the fun and enjoyment out of your running, but do realize that this is your turn to shine and the opportunities you have now, will not come again. Your achievements during this period cannot be duplicated later in life, so make the most of these golden years of opportunity and accomplishment. Your successes now will stay with you for a lifetime, and no one can ever take away from you the things you achieve today.

For aging runners, staying healthy becomes a paramount issue. Clem suggests that you not ignore warning signs and be sure to get yourself checked out if you do not feel normal. The [article](#) below goes into his personal experience in this area and how you can benefit from it.

If you do not already know Clem, he is a gracious and knowledgeable ambassador for the sport of running, and making his acquaintance is sure to enrich your life. If you already know Clem, you know why this is true.

(Some of) Clem McGrath's Accomplishments

- Former student at Norwich Free Academy.
- As a member of the Cross Country Team, in 1956 won none straight dual and triangular meets breaking NFA course record; won the Eastern Connecticut Sectional meet in record time; won the CIAC State Open Cross Country Championship; led NFA to the team state title; participated in the Manchester Road Race, finishing 17th and was the first high school runner to finish.
- In 1957, was undefeated in the track mile in the State of Connecticut; won the State Track Open Championship in record time; and broke the University of Connecticut's Cross Country Freshman record by 32 seconds.
- In 1958, finished third to Johnny Kelly and Norm Higgins in the Westerly Elks 5-mile Road Race.
- After a 14 year "retirement" from running, Clem returned as a member of the Mohegan Striders and was a consistent top three finisher in the Master's Division and Grandmaster Division; he has been a Mohegan Strider Grandmaster Club Circuit Champion for 1990, 1991 and 1992; and a 1990 and 1991 member of the TAC Grandmasters State Championship Team.
- In 1992, Clem was inducted in the Norwich Sports Hall of Fame.
- In 1993, William L Satti, Mayor of the City of New London, proclaimed Saturday, August 7th to be CLEMENT "Clem" P. MCGRATH DAY in the City of New London.
- In 2000, Mohegan Strider Veterans Division Grand Prix Champion; and fourth in his division at Manchester.

When In Doubt, Get Checked Out - by Clem McGrath

In February 2001, while escaping the Connecticut winter weather in sunny Florida, I had open heart surgery (5-way bypass). This came as quite a shock to me as I get an annual physical and the basic risk factors (high blood pressure and high cholesterol) were not there.

I retired from Electric Boat in 1999 and had been concentrating on my training as I entered the 60+ age division. I had a pretty good racing season in 2000 with divisional wins at Rose Arts and Kelley and a fourth place finish at Manchester.

As you know, we runners are a strange breed, especially when it comes to denial. Speaking for myself, I write off most discomforts as a "bad day", "I have a little cold", or "It's not easy after 60". The concern I have is "how many runners out there are like me?" The "running boom" came a little behind me so there are many runners approaching their "golden years" and, like myself, are not listening to the body signals. I can look back to last fall <fall of 2000> when I experienced some chest discomfort and achy joints and attributed it to the Connecticut weather. I figured once I got to Florida, I would feel better.

So here I am doing speed workouts and hill repeats on the Ft Myers Beach Bridge in preparation for the The Edison Festival of Lights 5K, and my discomforts are persisting. A week before the race, I decide to go to a Walk-In Clinic convinced that I had Lyme Disease. After an examination by the doctor (who happened to be a runner), he thought the symptoms were heart related and recommended I put the running shoes aside until I had a stress test. I had never had a stress test and thought it might not be a bad idea to rule out any possible heart problem. To my complete surprise, I failed the stress test and the rest is history.

Thank heaven there was no heart damage and I'm looking forward to full recovery, but I was lucky. How many runners, with no risk factors, are gambling their lives by not listening to their bodies. Genetics is a major risk factor that is easily overlooked.

The important lesson to be learned here is that, if you have any question as to why you feel the way you do, especially if it persists, don't blow it off. See someone and get it checked out. It

NFA's two of a kind

Cross-country coaches retire after nearly 60 years of service

By MARC ALLARD
For the Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH -- Gene McGrath is used to these sendoffs, but it's a first for Gil LaPointe.

Norwich Free Academy has lost not one but both of its veteran cross country coaches as both have decided it's time to move on to bigger and better things, namely, a more calm and serene fall season.



Tall Greener/Norwich Bulletin

New Norwich Free Academy boys cross country coach Chad Johnson, left, and girls cross country coach Kara Kochanski, middle, stand with outgoing coach Gil LaPointe in front of the trophy case in Alumni Gym. LaPointe was doing the same thing as he came on as McGrath's assistant with the boys program in 1969.

"It's not a plan, I knew Gene was going, but it was a tough decision for me," LaPointe said recently. "I don't know if it's the right decision but, at some point, you have to move on."

LaPointe has been the girls coach since 1979, when he took over the program from McGrath, who was coaching both the boys and girls programs at the time. LaPointe was doing the same thing as he came on



Bulletin file photo

Gene McGrath started at NFA in 1965. Gil LaPointe started at NFA in 1969.



sixth and made the New Englands."

McGrath had a hero of his own, his former assistant, as it was Lapointe who helped put together a spectator bus to accompany the NFA boys to their only State Open championship under McGrath back in 1971.

"He got at least 25 people and all the cheerleaders to get on a bus and come root us on at UConn but that's Gil," McGrath said. "He's just a great organizer. He's also a little more laidback than I was and that's why he was good with the girls. You have to keep them happy, you can lean on the guys a bit more and I used to be that fired up kind of coach."

McGrath had his own list of favorite runners which includes his successor, Johnson, as well as a New England champion. Jim Euell won that title back in 1969 when he ran a 4:10 mile, a feat that McGrath believes has not yet been repeated in Connecticut. Other standouts in McGrath's tenure included Bill Krohn, former Killingly coach Alden Miner and Mike Breault.

NFA athletic director Gary Makowicki said it's odd to have two local legends leave a school's coaching ranks at the same time and both will be missed.

"Gene was very knowledgeable and was great at keeping up on the latest trends," Mackowicki said. "He was able to motivate the kids, make them want to compete. Gil had a different style and was just a perfect fit for the girls. He started the program and he left his mark on it."

Originally published February 9, 2006

For McGrath, a retirement from coaching is nothing new.

"They're not giving me parties any more," McGrath said as he laughed over the telephone from his winter haven in Florida.

McGrath took over the boys cross country program at NFA in 1965 and was the head coach until 1983, when he stepped aside. He retired from teaching and went to work at Electric Boat for a number of years before being asked to return to NFA as boys cross country coach in 2002. He has been at the helm of the program since, but it was a tenure that he knew had to end soon.

"It's a young person's sport," McGrath laughed adding a little tongue-in-cheek. "I'm on Medicare and I would start talking about the old days and there was a big gap between me and the kids. I'm leaving the program in good hands though."

The boys program will now be handled by Chad Johnson, a former cross country and track standout for the Wildcats.

"It's a dream come true, running for him and now taking over for him," Johnson said of his new assignment.

Johnson ran for NFA when McGrath was an assistant track coach in the early 1990s. "He always kept a level head," Johnson said of McGrath. "It didn't matter if it was a dual meet or a national event, he never got too down nor too excited."

The girls will now be guided by another former NFA standout in Kara Kochanski.

LaPointe leaves a program that has had more than its share of success over the years as it has won six Class LL state championships and two State Open titles in 1993 and '95 under LaPointe's guidance.

"I don't think we've finished lower than fifth in Class LL since 1990, so it's been a good run but we've had the kids, too," LaPointe said.

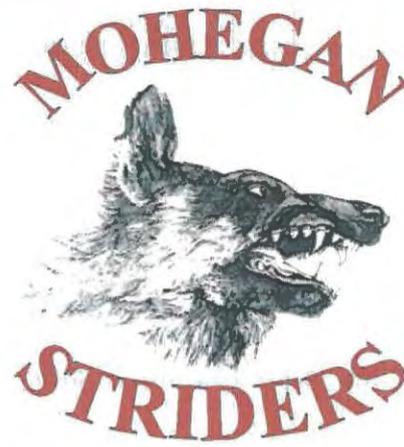
They're kids who are not really kids anymore like Jill Akus, who was a three-time state champion or two-time winner Janice Palonen. There was Stephanie Johnson, Erin-Kate Mandelburg, Molly Burnett and, of course, Saona Chapman.

Most remember Chapman for her exploits on the basketball court where she left NFA and played Division I hoops, but LaPointe remembers her for an entirely different reason.

"My wife had taken ill during the 2000 season right after we had won the LL state championship and I couldn't make it to the State Open," LaPointe said. "Chad Johnson took the team to the Open but it was Saona, who was just such a great person, who took over, made sure everything was done and we finished

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Patrick's Day!

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Tail Greener/Norwich Bulletin
Larz Selmer-Larsen of Norwich finished first in the St. Joseph School 3-mile race Saturday in Baltic.

Norwich man wins 3-miler

By **JOE PEREZ**
Norwich Bulletin

BALTIC — Larz Selmer-Larsen, 25, of Norwich, won Saturday's St. Joseph School 3-Mile road race and is gearing up for the Boston Marathon next month.

"I just wanted to have a little road race before the Boston Marathon," he said of his first time participating in Baltic. Selmer-Larsen qualified for the Boston Marathon with his 38th-place finish in the Hartford Marathon.

It was a windy, overcast morning with the thermostat barely jumping above 40 degrees. And the participants of Saturday's race wouldn't have wanted the conditions any different.

The 97 finishers were the highest total in the history of the race.

Selmer-Larsen ran neck-and-neck with two-time race winner Kyle Friedman. Friedman took an early lead, but Selmer-Larsen made his move around the 1-mile marker, winning with a time of 16:10.

"I was drafting off of Kyle for the first mile," he said. "It was uphill, so I wanted to take it easy for that first mile. I went for it after the mile marker."

Event coordinator Glenn Costello sees the incline on the first half of the course as a feature to draw in runners preparing for Boston.

"The Boston Marathon is well known for the hills," Costello said. "I think it is a good barometer once you get to Heartbreak Hill in Boston as to how they're feeling."

Others, like Emily Getz, 26, of Putnam, were getting ready for future half marathons, instead of training for Boston.

Getz, who ran cross country and track in high school

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL 3-MILE ROAD RACE

INSIDE

■ Complete race results, C4.

and college, won the women's division in 20:22. She completed the course 1:35 ahead of Allison Black.

"It was fantastic," said Getz. "I was planning on doing a comfortably hard run, but when the gun went off I was racing."

"This weather is perfect for running," she said. "It's cool, not cold, so you don't have to be all bundled up."

As a part of The Last Mile Racing and The Mohegan Striders Grand Prix series, the level of competition in the race is growing. Costello estimated that members of the Mohegan Striders accounted for nearly a third of the race's participants.

Costello hopes the race will continue to prosper and see "20 percent" growth each year.

Results

Age group winners (male, female): 9-under: Kyle Watson 26:45, Molly Holte 42:44; 10-14: Conor Clendennin 22:07, Meagan Tuttle 22:58; 15-19: Kyle Friedman 17:29, Allison Black 21:57; 20-29: Charlie Obrias 17:54, Kara Kochanski 24:08; 30-39: Dave Dziekan 20:34, Kelly Tuttle 23:41; 40-49: Keith Pellerin 16:37, Geodi Johnston 22:08; 50-59: Tim Smith 18:06, Sandy Collins 22:50; 60-69: Ted Phillips 21:49, Pat Baker 34:44; 70-plus: Ronald Gale 24:12, Irene Burke 35:19.

Reach Joe Perez at 425-4257 or jperez@norwichbulletin.com

RUNNING

St. Joseph's 3-miler

At Baltic

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

1. Larz Selmer-Larsen 16:10; 2. Kyle Friedman 16:36; 3. Keith Pellerin 17:29; 4. John Hadcock 17:38; 5. Charlie Obrias 17:54; 6. Tim Smith 18:06; 7. Wayne Jolley 18:16; 8. Jay Lucas 18:40; 9. Oaty Frye 18:41; 10. David Stygar 19:05.

11. Adam Turner 19:11; 12. Josh Puthier 19:14; 13. John D. Tomasso 19:15; 14. Tom Curry 19:18; 15. Vidal Paz 19:27; 16. Richard Rice 19:34; 17. Mark Ruffo 19:51; 18. Joe Lemieux 20:03; 19. Emily Korniskey Gietz 20:22; 20. James Smith 20:24.

21. Dave Dziekan 20:34; 22. Glenn Coughlin 20:36; 23. Mark Fitton 20:46; 24. Gene Maran 21:02; 25. Dean Berardi 21:07; 26. Ted Phillips 21:49; 27. Allison Black 21:57; 28. Conor Clendennin Hill 22:07; 29. Geodi Johnson 22:08; 30. Brian Andstrom 22:16.

31. Spring Cole 22:19; 32. Stephen Moskaluk 22:26; 33. Jackie Sullivan 22:30; 34. Ron Dombrowski 22:38; 35. Alex Dzjavit 22:44; 36. Sandy Collins 22:50; 37. JonWayne Smith 22:51; 38. Meagan Tuttle 22:58; 39. Joan Munroe 22:59; 40. Tim Paz 23:31.

41. Bruce Grisafe 23:30; 42. Michael Papineau 23:37; 43. Kelly Tuttle 23:41; 44. Tom Baker 23:42; 45. Nancy Davis 23:43; 46. Arthur Jenkins II 23:48; 47. Liz Tefft 23:55; 48. Kathleen Wilson 24:01; 49. Mike Tules 24:02; 50. Stephen Avery 24:03.

51. Kara Kochanski 24:08; 52. Jacquelyn Tules 24:12; 53. Mark Charter 24:13; 54. Jerr Potter 24:21; 55. Adam Tonnesen 24:27; 56. Lori Paz 24:34; 57. Ronard Gale 24:42; 58. Larry Bransford 24:51; 59. Norman Diggs 25:02; 60. Richard Zbrozek 25:04.

61. Jackson Tonnesen 25:52; 62. Angela Turner 25:59; 63. Michaelen Haeseler 26:22; 64. Charles Potter 26:32; 65. Kyle Watson 26:54; 66. David Drobiak 27:02; 67. Michael Dzjavit 27:06; 68. Patricia Phillips 27:13; 69. Kim Johnson 27:14; 70. Norma Viar-Orum 27:30.

71. Lori Slowik 28:18; 72. Liz Andstrom 28:30; 73. Alyson Dzjavit 30:09; 74. Lori Andrzejak 30:10; 75. Cynthia Holte 30:16; 76. Micala Smith 30:18; 77. Gunner Tonnesen 30:58; 78. Harry Holte 31:10; 79. Leslie Jolley 31:20; 80. Christine Sacrey 31:49.

81. Tana Swaney 31:51; 82. Jan Przystek 33:07; 83. Colburn Graves 33:12; 84. Pat Baker 34:44; 85. Daniel Doherty 35:18; 86. Irene Burke 35:19; 87. Fr. Joseph Tito 35:58; 88. Brian Daly 35:59; 89. Carlton Smith 38:20; 90. Cecelia Grisafe 38:32.

91. L. He Lamb 39:04; 92. Patty Wuytowa 39:13; 93. Molly Holte 42:44; 94. Carl Holte 42:44; 95. McKenzie Coughlin 43:24; 96. Alex Smallwood 45:27; 97. Kathy Smallwood 45:28.

McCormack Makes A Winning Return To Road Racing

Montville High grad runs away with L&M Spring Stride event

By **Owen Poole**

Published on 5/7/2006 in [Sports](#) » [Local Sports](#)

New London — Christopher McCormack hadn't participated in the Lawrence & Memorial Hospital Spring Stride road race since 1998, and he had one distinct goal in his return effort this year.

"I really wanted to win the race," McCormack said.

The 2000 graduate of Montville High School and 2005 graduate of Southern Connecticut State University did just that on Saturday, besting a field of more than 800 runners and walkers to win the 19th annual event and unofficially kick off the local road racing season.

The temperature was an ideal 70 degrees at the start of the race, with no rain clouds in sight.

"I was a little concerned for rain, but it warmed right up at the start," McCormack said. "Seventy degrees is perfect for this time of year."

McCormack, who hadn't run in a race since October due to a knee injury, is in the process of working himself back into shape, but you couldn't tell by his performance. He ran the 3.5-mile course in 18 minutes, 33 seconds, easily outdistancing second-place finisher Jeffrey Wadecki (18:54) and Larz Selmer-Larsen (19:02), who was third.

Dan Dillon (19:15) and Anson Moody III (20:27) rounded out the top five.

"I wanted to wait until after the (first) mile," McCormack said of his strategy. "Just stay behind the leaders for the first mile and then just before mile two, I wanted to just go for it right at mile two. That was the plan all along. I wanted to get myself a good pace. I didn't want to burn out too quickly in a race like that because of the shape I'm in."

McCormack broke out of the pack just past Mitchell College and led the rest of the way, ushering the rest of the runners down Montauk Avenue, onto Lower Boulevard and Pequot Avenue before finishing up across from the hospital entrance on Montauk.

An electrician out of Old Saybrook, McCormack was busy with college during the last few years, prohibiting him from competing in the Spring Stride, but he has focused his energy this year back into running.

"I'm going to concentrate on running the mile for the entire summer," said the 23-year old McCormack. "I'm going to make a stand this summer while I'm still young and still have time and just run as fast as I can."

110th Boston Marathon

For love of running

DON SIKORSKI RUNNING NOTES 7/19/06
Herrera (seventh in 27:02) and Chadwick Brown (eighth in 27:06) soon followed, putting the Strider team in strong position to claim the win. But Hi-Tek had five finishers in under the 30-minute mark to make things interesting.
Norwich's Tim Smith finished in 37th overall (30:04) to finish fourth man for the Strider team, and Uncasville's Kevin Gallerani, nursing a lingering hamstring injury, rounded out the team scoring in 31:54 for 62nd place overall.
Although Gallerani was disappointed with his effort, it proved just enough to edge the Hi-Tek team, led by Farmington's Chris Chisholm, by just 3 seconds.
Scoring is calculated by combining the finishing times of each teams' first five runners.
The Mohegan Striders team also claimed the first state championship race of the season, the St. Patrick's

Over-40 locals tackle Boston's famed race

And the love of running won't die soon in most local runners such as Niedbala.

"I plan to run into my 80s, doing Boston," he said. "The physical lifestyle is something that's a part of me."

By MIKE TROCCHI
Norwich Bulletin

It's a young person's world — unless you're a marathoner.

While youth is served in sports such as tennis, basketball and football, runners tend to peak after the age of 40 and that's evident in Eastern Connecticut. About 25 local runners will compete in Monday's 110th annual running of the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon, many of whom are older than 40.

"I started running at 40," said Robert Niedbala, 58, of Norwich, who is running in his 13th Boston Marathon. "I biked and played tennis and it didn't do much for me. The simplicity (of running) is the beauty of it."

More and more, people are taking up running. In 2005, there were more than 383,000 marathon finishes in the United States, according to Marathonguide.com, and the median age of the finishers was 38.7.

The Boston Marathon is the nation's oldest 26.2-mile footrace. It starts in Hopkinton, Mass., winding through several small Massachusetts towns before heading into the immediate Boston suburbs. From there, the tough hills, such as Heartbreak Hill in Newton, test even the toughest runners, before the pageantry of Boston.

Norwich's Robert Niedbala has completed his 13th straight Boston Marathon. He last came in 1994.

Niedbala also completed his first marathon in East Lyme. Once he was done, he was "hooked on the distances."

"Running keeps you sharp," said Niedbala, whose best Boston finish was 3:25 in 1994. He hopes to run in the neighborhood of 3:40 this year.

Finding the time

As runners advance in age, they battle not only physical obstacles, but career challenges as well. Cole-Chu practices law in New London and uses weekends, mornings and evenings to find time to run. "It's not easy," he said.

Niedbala teaches at Three River Community College and trains in the dark winter evenings after work, pushing himself day after day.



Racing roundup

■ To say that every second single counts could be an understatement if you were looking at the results of the recent USATF/CT 5 Mile State Championship race in Branford on June 18. The Mohegan Striders Racing Team edged their cross-state rivals Athlete's Foot/Hi-Tek Racing by a mere 3 seconds to claim top honors in the open team competition.

Steve Swift of Cromwell led the Striders with his runner-up finish in 26:07.

Local standouts Stephen

Article published Apr 18, 2006

Marathon runner enjoys conditions

By JOE PEREZ

Norwich Bulletin

The Boston Marathon has come and gone, but local runner Robert Niedbala is already looking forward to next year's event.

Niedbala, 58, of Norwich, has ran in the previous 13 Boston Marathons, and 52 marathons overall. This year he improved his time by 20 minutes (3:51:35).

"I knew by doing smaller races, from those times, I'm in better physical condition," said Niedbala of his preparation for Monday's run.

He said the conditions certainly didn't hurt, either. With temperatures in the mid-50s and the skies overcast, Niedbala called the conditions ideal.

"From a marathoner's point of view," he said, "the weather couldn't be better."

After having run the course, Niedbala was feeling OK, claiming no aches and pains but expects to feel a "good soreness" when he wakes up this morning and heads to his teaching job.

He said along with the New York City Marathon, the Boston Marathon is one of his favorites.

"The Boston fans are special," said Niedbala. "There is a lot of tradition."

Part of the reason he finds the fans so incredible is the cheers given to the runners and the Red Sox, who played the Seattle Mariners Monday afternoon

This year's participation of 22,517 is the second-largest field in the Marathon's history.

"It's a privelege to run against the best in the world," he said.

Mark Novotny of East Lyme was the top local finisher in the race, finishing 904th overall in 2:58:19. Norwich's Larz Selmer-Larsen was next at 956th (2:58:44), while Patrick Jacksin of North Franklin followed at 1,205th (3:01:11).

Blazing trail against cancer

Steve Hancock is a long-time distance runner. Blessed with a great family, plenty of friends and an infectious sense of humor, the 58-year-old Bozrah resident is constantly cracking jokes and entertaining others.



DON SIKORSKI

Running Notes

But something Hancock is 100 percent serious about is finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. That's because Hancock was diagnosed with the disease in January 2004

and, despite hundreds of road races and marathons under his belt over the years, he is now unable to muster the energy to run at all and battles constant fatigue from the disease and its treatments. Still, Hancock remains enthusiastic in his support both of running and for curing the disease.

On Sunday, May 14, the first annual "Trails to a Cure" race will take place in Cockaponset State Park in Chester. The race is a re-incorporation of the former Cockaponset Trail Run that ceased four years ago.

Now the popular event is back, along with a 5K walk, in an effort to raise funds for PanCAN. PanCAN is a national non-profit organization committed to finding a cure for pancreatic cancer.

"I wanted to do something to promote pancreatic cancer awareness," Hancock said of how the event evolved. "It's the most deadly of all cancers, with a 99 percent mortality rate in the first 12 months."

Despite battling some difficult days, Hancock considers himself fortunate to be able to be promoting this event. He has lost two high school friends to the disease this past year alone.

"After my diagnosis, I did some research and used PanCAN (The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, Inc.) as a referral for my own research on the disease," Hancock said. "It's all about get-

ting better cancer treatment and diagnosis of the disease".

You can support Steve in his cause by participating in either the 8-mile trail run or the 5K walk (both events kick off at 9 a.m.) or by making a donation to the organization. Checks can be made out to PanCAN, "Trails to a Cure" and mailed to P.O. Box 293, Bozrah, CT 06334. Contact Laurie Tomlinson at 1-800-243-2743 (Lau-

Short, Volkmar Keep Delaney's Memory Alive With Old Saybrook Race

By Joe Wojtas

Click name for author info, most recent articles ...

Published on 5/14/2006 in [Sports](#) » [Sports Columns](#)

Before last year's Delaney Dash in Old Saybrook, race directors Karen Short and Pete Volkmar made a pact. If they didn't get 300 runners, they weren't going to put the race on again. The 6-year-old race, which is run in memory of Sean Delaney, a talented Old Saybrook runner who died of cancer in 2000 at age 42, had initially attracted 225 runners. Last year the number of entrants fell to 162.

"At the end of the race, a very enthusiastic guy pushing a baby jogger comes up to us and says, 'I want to sponsor your race next year,'" Short recalled. "It only took us a half a beer after the race to start planning for this year. The pact went out the window."

Even without the offer from chiropractor Kurt Strecker of the Center for Better Health in Old Saybrook, it would have been tough for Short and Volkmar to abandon the five-mile race, which will be held Saturday, May 27.

"The whole purpose of the race was to keep Sean's memory going," Short said. "You feel a sense of obligation and you don't want to let Sean down by not doing it."

They also didn't want to let down the students of Old Saybrook High School. Each year proceeds from the race are used to give two \$1,000 scholarships to a boy and girl who ran cross country or track at the school and are now going on to college. Delaney, who won his share of local races, graduated from Old Saybrook High School.

"When I go to the graduation ceremony and see the high school kids, I say, 'All right, we're helping them out in a small way,'" Short said. "The race has been successful in that we're giving out scholarships every year."

Volkmar said the number of runners may have gone down because it's a holiday weekend and people may be traveling. While serious runners know about the race, he said it's important to get the word out to local recreational runners who normally don't race but may want to run because it's an event in their town. It's like the Tarzan Brown Mystic River Run concept. For hundreds of people in that race each November, it's the only one they run all year.

The scenic five-mile course is certified and according to Volkmar has a "three-foot elevation rise." That means no excuses for not running fast. Local police block one lane of traffic for runners along the entire course.

Another great thing about this race is that if you're fast enough to win an award, you won't be taking home another boring trophy or medal. Each year Short and Volkmar design new homemade prizes. One year they took a photo of the start of the race, ran over to Staples, made copies of the photo and inserted them into plaques in time for the awards ceremony. Last year they gave out teddy bears that wore T-shirts bearing the race logo and what division the recipients won. This year's creation is a secret.

The race begins at 9 a.m. at Saybrook Point, which is where College Street (Route 154) meets Long Island Sound. There's also a 5K and a kids' run of one-third of a mile.

The first 200 runners and walkers and 50 kids get T-shirts.

You can register at www.active.com. Information is also available at www.hitekracing.com or by calling Short and Volkmar at 437-7247.

While Short and Volkmar said they were not Delaney's closest friends, they knew him through the Mohegan Striders running club, which is also a race sponsors.

"A lot of people wanted to do something for him and we just sort of stepped up and did the race," she said.

So get down to Old Saybrook in two weeks and support the race and help keep Delaney's memory alive. And don't force Short and Volkmar to make another pact.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!!!!!!!!!!!! YES YOU CAN!!!!!!

On May 14, 2006, the first "Trails to a Cure" 8 mile run/5k walk will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Cockaponset State Park, in Chester CT to raise funds for Pan CAN.

My name is Steve Hancock and I'm glad that I have the opportunity to reach out to others for support in this worthy cause. This past year alone I lost two high school friends to this disease. I have been more fortunate to still be here to talk about it. I do need your help.

"My runs are more walks now," said Hancock, whose personal best for a marathon is 2 hours 50 minutes. "But I just miss my friend, Dean Festa, of Hancock's valor once again in the face of death (quote) ... His motto,

Uncommon Valor

Hancock refuses to give in to pancreatic cancer

By [Vickie Fulkerson](#)

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Published on 5/13/2006 in [Sports](#) » [Main Photo](#)

Bozrah -- Steve Hancock was 19 years old when he was sent into the middle of the Vietnam War as a member of the United States Marines Corps.

It wasn't until a friend was helping him move several years later, and found a box with a collection of Purple Hearts in it, that Hancock ever told any of his pals he had once been decorated for his valor.

"I was like, 'Whose are these? Your father's?'" said Way Hedding, a fellow runner who has competed in several marathons alongside Hancock, from Boston to New York to Montreal. "His wife said, 'No, they're his.'"

Steve Hancock was 56 years old when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, cancer's deadliest and most rapid-moving tentacle, and told that 99 percent of all patients with his disease die within the first year. And by then, Hancock had already been having symptoms for nearly a year.

"I think I surprised some of the doctors," Hancock said this week, telling the story of his diagnosis in January 2004. "I said, 'I know all about that. And now that that's all out of the way, I'm the 1 percent. I'm the 1 percent that keeps on going.' That was my approach.

"... I miss my running. I'm down to 125 pounds from about 150. The chemo does wear you down. But my heart's still there."

Along with three other local runners, including Montville's Festa, Hancock formed a singing group called the "Plaiders," a takeoff on The Platters. The foursome, clad in plaid jackets, runs the Manchester Road Race each year on Thanksgiving morning while stopping to sing the Platters' hit, "Only You" along the way.

The Plaiders have performed for 24 straight years and Hancock doesn't intend to be the one to break the string.

... I miss my running.

race.

"Before you know it, it'll be the fall," Hancock said. And Thanksgiving and the Manchester Road Race, Hancock's favorite race, where he and his friends have run wearing plaid jackets and "performing" as The Plaiders.

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by Dana Jensen

Steve Hancock of Bozrah will serve as the race director Sunday for 'Trails to a Cure,' an 8-mile trail race at Cockaponset State Park in Chester. The proceeds from the race will go to benefit PanCAN, the pancreatic cancer action network. Hancock, a longtime runner, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in January 2004 and continues to fight the disease.



Local fans

And the Plaiders, a group of runners from Southeastern Connecticut who don plaid jackets and

MANCHESTER
2006

serenade the thousand of spectators with Doo Wop classics along the race route, were in Manchester for the first time on 25 years without good friend and longtime Plaid **Steve Hancock** of Bozrah, who passed away from pancreatic cancer in August. In a fitting tribute, Hancock's wife, **Brenda**, and son, **Steve Jr.**, joined the Plaiders for this year's event. Steve Jr. was even fortunate enough to obtain his own plaid jacket, which he purchased on e-Bay. The jackets had gone unwashed until this year's rain-storm helped things out.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net.

Said another friend, Dean Festa, of Hancock's valor once again in the face of death (quoting the Marine Corps motto meaning "always faithful"): "It's a Semper Fi thing."

....Hancock's face is thinner than it used to be, yet still his smile enlivens a conversation. His pale blue eyes grin along with his lips, although these days they may quickly fill with tears in appreciation of all the support he's been given by his family and his community.

Today, Hancock, now 58 and a survivor of pancreatic cancer for nearly three years, has things to do.

He is organizing an 8-mile trail race, "Trails to a Cure," which will take place at 9 a.m. Sunday at Cockaponset State Park in Chester. Proceeds from the race will be donated to PanCAN, the pancreatic cancer action network which has assisted Hancock significantly since his diagnosis.

He is headed on a couple errands prior to the race, to Federal Express for a package and to Big Y to collect a food donation.

It is a good day, following on the heels of a few bad ones during which Hancock struggled to get out of bed.

Dressed comfortably in a 2004 Boston Red Sox World Champions sweatshirt and a pair of jeans, he grimaces at the memory of the previous couple of days, then admits to doing something "stupid" to adversely affect his health.

Last week, unbeknownst to his wife, Brenda, Hancock went four-wheeling with a friend for several hours, something he now knows not to do again unless he's prepared for the consequences.

"I kind of forget sometimes, especially being a marathoner," Hancock said somewhat sheepishly. "My mind says yes. ... I can be a little stupid, but not completely stupid. I was physically drained; I had a loss of appetite; I had the shakes like I was in the jungle with malaria. I was in bed.

"I got a little worried myself."

But that's how Hancock has always lived his life.

To the fullest.

Along with three other local runners, including Montville's Festa, Hancock formed a singing group called the "Plaiders," a takeoff on The Platters. The foursome, clad in plaid jackets, runs the Manchester Road Race each year on Thanksgiving morning while stopping to sing the Platters' hit, "Only You" along the way.

The Plaiders have performed for 24 straight years and Hancock doesn't intend to be the one to break the string.

"My runs are more walks now," said Hancock, whose personal best for a marathon is 2 hours, 50 minutes. "But I just get determined and suck it up."

Hancock is also a part of a group which sings patriotic songs throughout the "Chester Four on the Fourth" road race on the Fourth of July. And he sings the national anthem at many, many events, including the Mystic Places Marathon in East Lyme each October, often causing tears to well in the eyes of many bystanders who know of Hancock and his inspiring journey.

Of course, there are always Hedding and Festa to tell stories of Hancock from his running days.

"Once we were in New York and we went to a party after the marathon," Hedding said, asked for a good story and not hesitating.

It seems that Hedding and Hancock were the last to leave and head back to their hotel in New York City and during the walk encountered a few tough-looking guys standing on a street corner.

"Steve starts acting like a crazy guy, jumping, yelling, talking to himself," Hedding said, amused. "I tell people he was just acting normal. But those guys, they don't know what to do. ... The guys didn't beat us up, so it was a good thing."

Nor does Festa hesitate with his favorite story about Hancock.

"Once, after the Chester road race, we were walking up the hill to the parking lot and we went past a Fourth of July party and he was like, 'Wait a minute,'" Festa said with a laugh.

Hancock spotted a bumper sticker on a car outside supporting then-Waterford Speedbowl driver Bob Potter. He stopped at the gathering, told the hosts he was a friend of Potter's and he and Festa commenced eating and drinking for free.

"We were like the original 'Wedding Crashers' only on the Fourth of July," Festa said. "I was like, 'What do you know about the Speedbowl?' He probably maybe drove by it once."

•••Hancock credits the people around him for giving him strength, including his wife and two children, Stephen, 23, and Michelle, 21.

"My spirit is coming through it because of family and God and friends," he said. "I can't tell you how much support and strength I've been given."

His friends, however, heap the admiration right back on his shoulders.

"No one has a greater will to live than Steve Hancock," Festa said. "He's had this for three years and I'm convinced it wasn't medicine, it was Steve Hancock. They could have given him anything or nothing. It's all Steve."

"If anyone's going to pull it out at the last minute, it's going to be him."

Hancock has undergone two operations at Yale-New Haven Hospital, the latest one lasting more than 13 hours, to try to remove the cancerous tumor in his pancreas. The tumor, however, is wrapped around an artery, making the removal impossible.

Hancock has gone through chemotherapy and radiation and currently takes a chemotherapy pill. During his last surgery, doctors performed a pancreatic bypass to relieve some of the discomfort he was having, yet Hancock still relies on pain medication — a patch he changes every three days — to help make him more comfortable.

He has participated in several clinical studies directed toward the treatment of pancreatic cancer, trials which give him hope that every morning he wakes up is a day closer to a cure.

He drinks an herbal tea, which he swears by. Hancock is also diabetic, for which he receives insulin.

But "why me?" isn't a part of his thought process. There's not a trace of bitterness in his voice.

"He doesn't look at it as a disease that's so debilitating," Brenda Hancock said this week in the couple's living room in Bozrah. "He's instilled that in us. You really appreciate the things you didn't think about that much before."

Hancock, in fact, refers to his illness as "a blessing in disguise."

He tells the story of being offered a high-profile job by Electric Boat that would have taken him to Bremerton, Wash., just before he was diagnosed.

He and his wife decided against it and his employers didn't force it.

He believes that had he made the decision to head west, he wouldn't have made it this long after his cancer was detected.

"I wouldn't be here today," Hancock said. "I would have been thousands of miles away from home. And I would have put off the ailments I was having.

"... There's a message in everything. This is a message that was sent to me. I appreciate things a lot more than I probably would have."

Hancock began undergoing testing for some symptoms he was having, at first it felt like chronic indigestion, in May 2003. In November 2003, a biopsy of tissue from his pancreas came back negative, leading doctors to tell him he didn't have pancreatic cancer.

In January 2004, Hancock learned the doctors had been wrong.

He had pancreatic cancer, which he was told would likely kill him within a matter of months.

For Hancock, that wasn't enough time.

"We have a lot more human power within our own selves than we know that we have," Hancock said. "We just have to tap into our own resources."

He urges those diagnosed with the disease to take control of their treatment and not to feel sorry for themselves.

"When you're diagnosed, don't take it as a death blow that you're going to expire in a couple months," he said. "Don't believe all that. Don't have a defeatist attitude. Don't give up hope. You can be here a lot longer than you possibly think you can be."

Hancock said he doesn't want to be an exception to the rule, he wants to *be* the rule.

He remains hopeful, citing ongoing research at Johns Hopkins University.

And he remains gracious.

"One thing that I can say about Steve and I'm not embarrassed to say this," Festa said. "A couple of times I've been overwhelmed by this and Steve will comfort me."

"He's taught us all not to waste time. He's taught me to work harder, live harder, love harder. He's an amazing guy. He has an understated greatness. Every day there are people on ESPN sports; to me, Steve Hancock kicks their asses. In his toughest times, he's bringing other people up."

•••Sunday, Hancock — who has also lost two lifelong friends to pancreatic cancer — will concentrate on bringing other people up, directing a race for the first time instead of running in one.

On one notice of the race, Hancock quotes the "Plaiders" favorite song.

"Only you can make this world seem right.

"Only you can make the darkness bright."

Ninety-nine percent of the people in his situation wouldn't be here right now.

Maybe someday, they will be.

Until then, Steve Hancock continues to be the exception to the rule. The one percent. The shining light that can somehow make the darkness bright.

"He's definitely the one percent," Hedding said, speaking of his friend. "Oh, he's the one percent. That's one thing I can definitely tell you."

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!!!!!!!!!! YES YOU CAN!!!!

On May 14, 2006, the first "Trails to a Cure" 8 mile run/5k walk will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Cockaponset State Park, in Chester CT to raise funds for Pan CAN.

My name is Steve Hancock and I'm glad that I have the opportunity to reach out to others for support in this worthy cause. This past year alone I lost two high school friends to this disease. I have been more fortunate to still be here to talk about it. I do need your help.

How can you help?

- Volunteer the day of the event.
- Sign up and take pledges to raise money for the event.
- Make a donation to PanCAN.
- Become a sponsor.
- Make an 'in-kind" donation (e.g. food, printing, raffle item) for the event.

A donation may be made with check made payable to: PanCAN and mailed to "Trails to a Cure", P.O Box 293, Bozrah, CT 06334.

For more event information, please contact me at 860-887-2062 or email me at stephen82941@sbcglobal.net. You may also contact Laurie Tomlinson at 800-243-2743 or email at Laurie.Tomlinson@agedwards.com.

One final note from one of my favorite groups the Plaiders "Only you can make this world so bright. Only you can make the darkness bright".

Your fellow Strider.....Steve Hancock

Hancock Works To Blaze A Trail

By LORI RILEY
Courant Staff Writer

May 6 2006

Steve Hancock likes to set goals. That way he can focus on something positive, rather than his pancreatic cancer, which he has fought for almost 21/2 years.

His latest goal is organizing Trails to a Cure, an 8-mile trail run/3-mile walk, which will benefit Pan-Can, a national non-profit pancreatic cancer action network, May 14 at 9 a.m. The Trails to a Cure is a revived version of a former trail race in Cockaponset State Park in Chester. It's a difficult course, which includes a splash through what Hancock calls a water challenge, about a quarter-mile from the end of the race.

"You can swim across it. It's about 25 to 30 yards," Hancock said. "We'll have somebody out in a boat there and a pull rope, too, if you want to run in the water."

Hancock, 57, of Bozrah, ran the old Cockaponset race a number of times, but because of the cancer, he can't run anymore. He was diagnosed in January 2004.

"I've lost some weight - if only I could run now, I'd be so fast," he said. "I take the dog for a walk every couple of days. But my big purpose now is trying to get this [race] squared away. That's my goal. I have one goal at a time."

His next goal, and the next race he plans to attend: the Four on the Fourth, a 4-miler in Chester on July 4, and after that, the John J. Kelley 11.6-miler Aug. 5, where he sings with the band on the boardwalk after the race.

"Before you know it, it'll be the fall," Hancock said. And Thanksgiving and the Manchester Road Race, Hancock's favorite race, where he and his friends have run wearing plaid jackets and "performing" as The Plaiders.

STEPHEN HANCOCK



Bozrah - Stephen G. Hancock, 58, of 450 Fitchville Road, Bozrah, died at his residence on Tuesday evening after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

He was born Dec. 2, 1947 in New London, the son of George D. and Olivere Young Ballassi.

Stephen was graduated from Montville High School in 1965 and also attended Mitchell College.

He served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a decorated sergeant during the Vietnam War. His decorations include a Purple Heart with two stars, Vietnamese Service Medal with four stars, National Defense Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnamese Campaign Medal and Meritorious Unit Citation.

Mr. Hancock retired as a human resource specialist from Electric Boat in 2004 after 30 years of service. He began work there in 1973 as an industrial radiographer. He was an active union member serving as an officer of the OPEIU Local 106 from 1976 to 1997. He was a past officer and served as a negotiator with the MTC from 1979 to 1997. He had also served as a president of the Local 106, Clerks Union.

Stephen married the former Brenda Baldino at the Morton House in Niantic on Aug. 4, 1974. They were married by Stephen's late mother, Justice of the Peace Olivere Ballassi.

He was a well known member of the Mohegan Striders Running Club, where he was a past president, and participated in area road races and marathons. He participated in the Thanksgiving Day race in Manchester where he ran as a member of "The Plaiders", a group that ran wearing plaid jackets and singing popular tunes. He was also an avid supporter of the POW cause and worked regularly raising funds for PanCAN, a pancreatic cancer fund. Stephen was also know for singing the national anthem at road races, Dodd Stadium, EBAC events and other places. He was a member and past vice-president of EBAC.

Mr. Hancock was also a member of the VFW Post, Montville, participated in the EBAC activities at the Waterford VFW, and was a past board member of the United Way.

In addition to his wife Brenda, he is survived by a son, Stephen J. Hancock, of Norwich; a daughter, Michelle O. Hancock, of Bozrah, and her fiancé, Derrick J. Pizzo; a brother, David O. Hancock, of Punta Gorda, Fla.; and three sisters, Donna A. Cataldi, of Kingsland, Ga., Stephanie A. Pfliger, of Bridgeton, N.J., and Rallou A. Clark, of Oakdale; and father-in-law, Frank Baldino, of Norwich.

The funeral service will be held at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Lee Memorial United Methodist Church, Norwich. Burial will be in the Connecticut Veterans Cemetery, Middletown, with full military honors at 11:30 a.m. Calling hours will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday at the Woyasz and Son Funeral Home, 141 Central Ave., Norwich.

Donations in his memory may be made to either PanCAN, 2141 Rosencrans Ave., Suite 7000, El Segundo, CA 90245 or to HOSPICE, PO Box 902, Uncasville, CT 06382.

Byles Memorial Home, 99 Huntington St., New London is assisting the family with the arrangements. Please visit www.Byles.com for obituary, directions or to post a note of condolence



Published in The Day on 8/17/2006.

EULOGY

Steve Hancock: In Memorium



Carl Jung, the father of Archetypal psychology said: *"We are so convinced that death is simply the end of a process that it does not ordinarily occur to us to conceive of death as a goal and a fulfillment, as we do without hesitation the aims and purposes of youthful life in its ascendance."*

It is my greatest honor to give the eulogy for my best friend, Steve Hancock. But he was also Tom's best friend and Dean's and others. But more importantly, when you were with Steve he made you feel as though you were HIS best friend. A few days before Steve left us, Brenda and Maureen Collins and I were sitting by his bed, while Steve danced between this world and the next and when he returned to this world his eyes would open and his beautiful smile spread across his face. That smile was the clue to what Steve was all about. On August 15, 2006 our beloved friend, Steve Hancock, left this life for a new adventure, leaving his family and friends with more gifts than we could possibly carry. My intent here is not to describe the gifts Steve left us with, we all individually know that, but rather the gifts his pancreatic cancer brought to him. I joined him on his three year journey with his disease possibly in a different way than others who were equally close to him.

Steve Hancock was many things, but to his closest friends he was pure sweetness, pure joy. Steve would allow Tom, Dean and myself into his central core, for he never needed a defense while with us. Steve surrounded that core of pure unprocessed sweetness with a bravery, a strength, a loyalty, a sense of responsibility, a patriotism and a tenacity that most of us could only aspire to. Many saw his toughness and thought that it was his toughness that kept him in the battle for three years. And it did, but his toughness had a goal. That goal was to dig and dig until it revealed to Steve that core sweetness that drove everything else. As his cancer progressed and his body withered, Steve's understanding of himself blossomed. He used to refer to himself as Mr. Defense, and traces of it remained, as when he'd squirt cologne into the full-on blower of his car's air conditioner, forcing those riding with him to crank down the windows. But as his attention turned more and more toward himself he came finally to understand that there was nothing to defend against.

EULOGY



Steve's cancer brought him physical limitations, which were difficult to witness for all of us that loved him, but again, as his physical powers diminished his self insight grew. Steve was not a big man, if one measures a man by his size, but Damn, was he strong. There was no one I'd rather have *"taking my back"* in a tough situation. It was difficult for him to acknowledge the loss of his strength and yet he was willing to accept it as long as what he called *"The Inner Gifts"* kept coming.

"Billy," he said. *"I know people wouldn't understand this, but my cancer is the best thing that could have happened to me."* He paused for a moment and with that beautiful smile of his added, *"Except for Brenda, of course."* God! How he loved Brenda. A few days before his death we argued about whether there was a song named Brenda. I later realized that Steve believed there was because to him Brenda was a song. We talked of death and for Steve it was not to be feared. What Steve feared most was how his family would fare without him. Responsibility was a strong belief in Steve; held as a truth above all others, even above loyalty and courage. They were his path markers throughout his life and they guided him well. What his cancer taught him, amongst many other things, is that his path markers were not necessarily everyone else's path markers.

He began to allow others their choices and as he did he drew to himself his own acknowledgment through the visible affection heaped upon him by friends and strangers alike. People came out of the woodwork to thank him for how he had touched their lives. The more he talked about these things the more Steve approached the realization that there was nothing about himself that was unacceptable. He grew more at peace even while his cancer ravaged his powerful body. The sugar, the furnace that fired him and drove all else, was making itself known to Steve Hancock.

People were drawn to Steve because he carried for them those aspects of themselves they feared to openly express. Steve could make you laugh when you thought you were ready to cry, and he loved to sing. Boy, did he love to sing. Nothing would keep him from breaking out in song. His favorite (next to *The Star Spangled Banner*) was *"Only You"* the 50's classic, and he crooned it as beautifully to the 90 year old woman at the Manchester Turkey Day Race as he did to a group of 20 somethings at the Mohegan Sun. They giggled and wondered if Steve wanted to be paid. Tommy laughed and said, *"Hell, ladies."*

He does it because he loves to see you smile."



Steve wondered sometimes - as we all do - what people thought of him. "Billy," he once asked, "Do you think people only see me as a song and laugh man?" He needed to know that he mattered, that he made a difference. God, did he matter. But, I told him that what mattered most is what he thinks of himself. Steve Hancock left an indelible mark on all those who drew him into their lives; some for just the briefest of moments, and others like me and Dean and Tom, who needed so much more from him. Randy Collins, who Steve loved like a son, wears Steve's Saint Jude medal around his neck as he fights for freedom as a marine in Iraq. Few understood the significance of that gesture. It brought Steve home safely from Vietnam nearly forty years ago. Toward the end we shared what each of us carried for the other as though we were each one side of the same coin. This was something we didn't or couldn't do before cancer entered his life and mine and yours too.

Steve gravitated to battles, whether they be in Vietnam or a 26.2 mile race. You are the man, Steve, and WE thank you for the light you shined upon all of us. How beautifully typical that this Marine's Marine would choose such a battle to get to his own golden sugar.

And so the sugar ROSE and ROSE until all one could see of Steve was pure sweetness. It outweighed his strength, which he carried to the end. It outweighed his sense of responsibility, which finally relinquished him so he could go. It outweighed his courage, which kept those who knew him in awe. But more than anything else, his sweetness- that was always known to everyone else - at last revealed itself to Steve. At death, Steven Hancock finally knew about himself what all of those he temporarily left behind had always known. Above all those things that our culture holds dear; things like courage, responsibility, loyalty Steve at his core was sweetness.

Now, at this point I thought I had finished Steve's eulogy, written the day after he departed. I needed to run, as it is that space in which I find my own peace. I

headed out my back door and into the woods and then into the Norwich industrial park. My head and heart was filled with Steve. As I passed Dodd Stadium I invited Steve along for the run, not by my side but as part of my own spirit, and as I asked, a wave of pure joy filled me and I gasped. It was not a gasp of sorrow, but rather a gasp of knowing joy. Steve was with me.



I ran further and felt a rush of pure thought that formed itself slowly into words. I know as surely as I know that I am standing here that it was Steve telling me something. His words came and filled my mind. They were meant for Steven, Michelle and Derrick. I realized then that I had left them out of Steve's Eulogy and he was telling me what he wanted to say to them. These are his words that I felt on that run:

Dearest Steven, Michelle and Derrick,
I have left you a treasure chest full of me. There was a time when I felt it my responsibility to pick out of that chest for you. What I say to you now is this: Choose freely from my chest and use what suits your own natures, not mine. Some of what I have left you may serve you, some may not. I set you free to be who you are, and who you are I love oh so well.

That, my friends, is who Steve Hancock is. PURE SWEETNESS!

Now, try to bring Steve into focus, because if he could give his own eulogy this would be it.

NEXT PAGE

Now, try to bring Steve into focus, because if he could give his own eulogy this would be it.



by the Platters

Only you can make this world seem right
Only you can make the darkness bright
Only you and you alone
Can thrill me like you do
And fill my heart with love for only you

Only you can make this change in me
For it's true, you are my destiny
When you hold my hand
I understand the magic that you do
You're my dream come true
My one and only you

Only you can make this change in me
For it's true, you are my destiny
When you hold my hand
I understand the magic that you do
You're my dream come true
My one and only you

posted by Bill Marshall at 2:56 PM 2 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

Ocean Beach race will draw large crowd

Club President '90-'93

For years, **Way Hedding** has lured runners from all over New England to the Ocean Beach/**John J. Kelley** Road Race with the same simple tactic: the promise of a free "comp" entry for the recruited runner making the trek to New London for his race.

The gimmick sometimes works. What Hedding, the race director doesn't always reveal is that the Kelley Race is free for every runner, from the race's elite finishers right on down to the casual jogger. In an era of inflating prices, the Kelley race is clearly the best deal in town.

Consider that running 11.6 miles in the heat and humidity of an August morning isn't so bad when you combine the perks of a free day at the beach and the companionship of 300-plus fellow runners. Runners will have that opportunity on Saturday, Aug. 5 as the 44th Annual Ocean Beach/**John J. Kelley** 11.6-mile road race takes place at Ocean Beach Park in New London.

The race began in 1963, when the city of New London collaborated with Schafer Beer Day at Ocean Beach Park to organize a road race event. Local standout **Johnny J. Kelley**, a two-time Olympian with a Boston Marathon win and eight AAU Marathon titles to his credit, won the inaugural race, which consisted of only 19 runners braving a noon-



DON SIKORSKI

Running Notes

and continues to maintain its no-entry-fee policy.

Hedding, who lives in Niantic, is a 1968 New London High School graduate and road racing veteran. He competed in the Ocean Beach/Kelley race after his high school years and learned the ropes by assisting then-race director **Jack Dempsey**, who passed away in 1998. Dempsey stepped down in 1988 and passed the torch to Hedding, who is now in his 18th year as the race's director.

Hedding's approach to managing the event is consistent with Dempsey's philosophy.

"You have to suffer dehydration before you can enjoy re-hydration," Dempsey was quoted at the 1979 race. That theme has remained.

At 44 years strong, the Kelley race is the second-oldest in the state (behind the Thanksgiving Day Manchester Road Race). The course (designed by 1968 Boston Marathon winner

Amby Burfoot) winds through the picturesque neighborhoods of New London and Waterford and offers plenty of water stops along the way.

Asked why the Kelley race has outlived its competitors and remains such a popular race, Hedding offers a number of explanations.

"The race has a mystique to it," Hedding said as he discussed all the great names that have competed at the Kelley race in past years.

That tradition helps maintain the race's "throwback" image, which is perceived by many as a positive.

"It doesn't have the glitter and gloss of a big sponsor race," said Burfoot years ago of the allure of the race. "It's described as a race for runners and that's just what it is."

Hedding has also demonstrated the ability to promote a road race as well as anyone, attracting both the masses of middle of the pack runners as well as a top-notch race field to battle.

Despite the absence of prize money, the race historically attracts plenty of quality runners. The start time change from noon to 9 a.m., which took place in 1985, helped produce both course records, as Middletown's **Gary Nixon** (57:33) and the late **Agnus Ruane** (66:57) lowered the course's best mark that year.

England's **Dave Clark**, who finished second to Nixon in the 1985 race, holds

the Masters mark of 58:56. Bloomfield's **Jane Arnold** ran 76:06 in the 1982 race for the female Master's record. Past winners include Kelley (twice), Burfoot (seven times), **John Vitale** (three times), **Norm Higgins**, and **Wayne Jacob**.

Norwich's **Melissa Perkins-Banas** is expected to return to defend her Kelley Race title (1:15:25). Her husband, Joe, himself a past champion with a win in the 1988 race (1:04:45), may also compete. They are the only husband-and-wife team to claim Kelley Race victories.

The event takes place thanks to the sponsorship provided by Dave Sugrue and Ocean Beach Park.

The race was also recently voted "One of New England's Top 80 Best of the Best Road Races" by New England Runner Magazine. The Connecticut Defenders have also stepped in for this year's race, donating tickets as awards for the top runners. Race day entries will be accepted (Hedding will gladly accept a post-race beverage at the Port N' Starboard Lounge in lieu of an entry fee) and volunteers for water stops, split times, and at the finish area are always needed.

Call the race hotline at 739-9927, e-mail heddingw@aol.com or check out www.moheganstriders.org for information.

Runners are asked to bring old pairs of unwanted running shoes or sneakers

for donation, as Nike is coordinating a project in conjunction with the Mohegan Elementary School to install a rubber ground covering at the school's playground.

Nike will be funding the melting and construction to upgrade the handicapped accessible playground and is looking for 10,000 pairs of rubber-soled shoes for the project.

Racing roundup

The Mohegan Striders Summer Racing Series continues through Thursday, Aug. 24 in Norwich's Mohegan Park. There is a 1/2-mile kids run starting at 6:30 p.m., with a 1-mile developmental run at 6:45 p.m. and the 3-mile recreation race starting at 7 p.m. Races are conducted every Thursday, all events are free of charge and all begin and end in the center of the park. All levels of ability are welcome ... For those looking for more of an off-road challenge, head up to Franklin's Giddings Park on Route 207 every Monday night. There is also a preceding kid's race at 6:30 p.m., with the 3-mile cross-country run starting at 7 p.m.

ROAD RACING

Ocean Beach/**John J. Kelley**
44th annual Road Race
At New London

Overall
1. Gavin Coombs, 1:01:59; 2. Chris Goff, 1:03:11; 3. Adam Fitzgerald, 1:03:11; 4. Chadwick Brown, 1:03:31; 5. Jily Shaw, 1:04:28; 6. Andrew Greene, 1:05:09; 7. Hakeem Olajuwon, 1:05:29; 8. Stephen Swift, 1:07:26; 9. Dan Dillon, 1:07:54; 10. John Welsh, 1:08:18; 11. Jimmy Grant, 1:08:38; 12. Shawn Mulcahy, 1:09:33; 13. Stephen Herrera, 1:10:11; 14. Ben Smith, 1:10:23; 15. Clay Howland, 1:10:30; 16. Jon Fearnley, 1:10:39; 17. Jim Zoldy, 1:10:55; 18. Andrew Ditt Baird, 1:11:26; 19. Tim Smith, 1:11:35; 20. Esteban Rivera, 1:11:41; 21. Jason Perelra, 1:12:02; 22. Gregory Bonaiuto, 1:12:07; 23. Pat Ward, 1:13:00; 24. Jacob Johnson, 1:13:02; 25. Nick Rezendes, 1:13:07.

Division winners
Male 19 and Under
1. Chris Goff, 1:03:11; 2. Shawn Mulcahy, 1:09:33; 3. Jason Perelra, 1:12:02.

Men's Open
1. Gavin Coombs, 1:01:59; 2. Adam Fitzgerald, 1:03:31; 3. Jily Shaw, 1:04:28.

Men's Sub Master
1. Chadwick Brown, 1:03:44; 2. Stephen Swift, 1:07:28; 3. Stephen Herrera, 1:10:11.

Men's Master
1. Dan Dillon, 1:07:54; 2. Clay Howland, 1:10:30; 3. Jim Zoldy, 1:10:55.

Men's Grandmaster
1. Tim Smith, 1:11:35; 2. Anthony Fosse, 1:13:48; 3. John Richers, 1:20:08.

Men's Senior
1. Peter Orli, 1:28:49; 2. Lance Magnuson, 1:31:39; 3. Bill Marshall, 1:37:41.

Men's 70 and Over
1. Peter Pantelis, 2:23:09; 2. Victor Haddad, 2:41:33.

Female 19 and Under
1. Krister Malloy, 1:26:31; 2. Caitryn McCallum, 1:31:06; 3. Amanda Chapman, 1:38:15.

Women's 20-29
1. Jenny Meyer, 1:18:58; 2. Joellen Arons, 1:25:25; 3. Jessica Cini, 1:27:08.

Women's 30-39
1. Melissa Perkins-Banas, 1:14:25; 2. Alison Dupont, 1:23:16; 3. Kimberly Battipaglia, 1:24:23.

Women's 40-49
1. Martha Merz, 1:16:45; 2. Diane Malloy, 1:27:54; 3. Grace Jensen, 1:28:15.

Women's 50-59
1. Lindy Olewine, 1:40:45; 2. Ellen Bellicchi, 1:45:15; 3. Peggy Pelland, 1:45:54.

Women's 60-69
1. Jo Marchetti, 1:33:45; 2. Monique Robitaille, 1:50:29; 3. Judith Pierson, 1:52:53.

Women's 70 and Over
1. Jeannette Cyr, 2:18:36.

Anthony makes a successful returns to road racing

By **DON SIKORSKI**
For the Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — John Anthony has been one of the area's best runners in the past dozen years, but his name is hard to find in race results.

That is until Saturday, when Anthony made a rare race appearance and easily outdistanced the field in the Run for Reliance House 5K Cross-Country race in Norwich's Mohegan Park.

Anthony, 31, led wire-to-wire to earn the victory in his first race effort in more than two years in 17:41. He attributes his absence on the rac-

ing scene to a busy schedule, as well as a lack of motivation.

A former All-State cross-country runner at Norwich Free Academy, Anthony had a solid collegiate career at the University of Hartford and has continued to train consistently. His racing, however, has been sporadic.

"It's a great course," Anthony said of the Mohegan Park layout. "It's nice to get off the roads. I just needed to get out there and race, and I felt pretty good."

Anthony's racing skills were sharp enough to win by more than a minute. Runner-up Curt Ramsey, who

RUN FOR THE RELIANCE

will run the Mystic Places Marathon in three weeks, was second in 18:58. Ramsey, who is stationed at the Naval Sub base, also won a 5K race on the Base on Friday.

Canterbury's Eddie Eckard held off Norwich's Tim Smith for third.

Women's title

Catherine Sikorski of Norwich successfully defended her 2005 title, running 21:12 for 11th place overall. She returned the Reliance House race for the opportunity to compete on the newly-reno-

vated Mohegan Park trails.

"I really enjoy running cross country because it reminds me of my high school and college running days," said Sikorski, 38. "Kevin (Crowley) really did a great job improving the trails in the park."

Crowley, a guidance counselor at NFA, has been an integral part of youth running in the area for many years. This summer, Crowley volunteered his time to repair and improve the Mohegan Park trails, which are also used by the NFA cross country team for home meets.

For his efforts, Crowley

was presented with an award from the City of Norwich prior to the start of the race.

The 5K cross-country event was also preceded by a kid's race. Twelve-year-old Zachary Wesolek of Norwich claimed top honors in 5:06.

"I felt good," said Wesolek of his win. "I just like to run."

Wesolek enjoys running so much that he also competed in the 5K race, finishing 14th overall in 26:19 to claim top honors in the boys youth division.

Reach Don Sikorski at sports@norwichbulletin.com



FAMILIAR FACES



Coombs, Perkins-Banas each add another Kelley trophy to their collections

By MARK COLLINS
Special to The Day

New London — The championship trophies from the 44th annual Ocean Beach/John J. Kelley Road Race are in some familiar hands.

Former Griswold High School All-American Gavin Coombs finished first overall to win his second Kelley title while Norwich's Melissa Perkins-Banas successfully defended her female crown Saturday and won for the third time overall.

Perkins-Banas finished the 11.6-mile course in one hour, 14 minutes and 25 seconds, two minutes ahead of her nearest female competitor.

"This race is really important to me because of the namesake, Johnny Kelley," she said. "His wife (the late Jessie Kelley) was just a wonderful lady. The first time I won this race in 2001 she told me before the race I was going to win. She was the first person ever to believe in me, and that's why it's so meaningful to me."

Perkins-Banas, 35, is in marathon training and hopes to tackle the Olympic Trials in the spring. She said she ran 93 miles this week, leaving her in a weakened state for Saturday's race.

"My legs hurt from the start, and I didn't know if I could hang in there," said Perkins-Banas, who ran the early stages with her husband, Joe Banas, the 1988 Kelley champion. The couple is the only family with two race champions in the history of the event.



'It's a fun race to come down and run. I know a lot of people here. It's just a lot of fun.'

Gavin Coombs of Jewett City, who finished first overall in 1:01.59 for his second Kelley Road Race title

See PERKINS-BANAS page B3

■ *Melissa Perkins-Banas of Norwich crosses the finish line in 1 hour, 14 minutes, 25 seconds to win the women's division at the annual Ocean Beach/John J. Kelley Road Race in New London on Saturday. It's her second straight Kelley title and third overall.*

"She told me to run ahead at about mile three," Joe Banas said. "She said she didn't have it and I shouldn't hold back." Joe Banas finished 27th overall in 1:13.27 (his wife was 32nd overall).

"I questioned how fast I could go today, I never thought I had it," Perkins-Banas said. "I always tell myself to get to mile seven ... that's when I feel better."

Unlike her competitors, Perkins-Banas enjoys running in hot, humid weather and began to loosen up as the race continued. At mile eight, a hill in the wide-open heat, allowed Perkins-Banas to pull away from her competitors.

"It's all about running at a pace you can barely sustain, and doing your best," she said.

Profile of a Newsmaker: Norwich team, coach reaches national stage

In the news: Kevin Crowley is the volunteer track and field coach for the Norwich Recreation Department. He led four Norwich teens to the 29th Hershey's Track and Field Games Aug. 3-6 in Hershey, Pa.

Hershey's Track and Field Games: The games promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles through track and field events. Another goal of the games is to establish a sense of accomplishment in children as they strive to reach their goals.

Hershey's provides transportation to and from the Games for the participants, as well as housing and meals. The children will also receive a tour of the Hershey's candy factory and complimentary passes to Hershey Park, the company's theme park.

Long time coming: After a stretch where Norwich had regularly sent representatives to the Games, this year's attendees are the first in 11 years. Julian Calender won the 1600 meters in 1995.

Quotable: "It's a learning experience," Crowley said. "It's not often you can compete at the national level in any sport."

—Joe Perez

Originally published August 14, 2006



Article published Jul 31, 2006

Our view: Cheers and jeers

Nice work and thank you to Kevin Crowley and members of the Norwich Free Academy cross-country team who last Saturday helped clean up Mohegan Park in Norwich. In an all-volunteer effort, they worked on landscaping the hiking trails -- repairing eroded patches and removing rocks. Their goal is to repair about two miles of trails by summer's end. Crowley, a guidance counselor at NFA, undertook the work after running in the park and seeing the work needed. He and his charges deserve credit for their good citizenship.

Mohegan Park trails receive a spruce-up thanks to NFA students

By LIZ CHRETIEN

For the Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — Kevin Crowley of Norwich and a team of cross country runners from Norwich Free Academy worked Saturday morning on landscaping the hiking trails throughout Mohegan Park as part of an all-volunteer upgrading effort.

"This park is one of the treasures of Norwich," said Crowley, the lead volunteer on the project. "This will really enhance the experience of the people that come here to enjoy what the park has to offer."

Crowley, a guidance counselor at NFA, began the project after running a road race last fall in the park and realizing how much work the trails needed.

"This will really enhance the experience of the people that come here to enjoy what the park has to offer."

Kevin Crowley,

Norwich Free Academy guidance counselor

"They had become uneven and eroded with exposed roots and rocks. So I started asking around for help."

The goal is to repair about two miles of the trail by the end of the summer, so future road race participants will have an easier time. The town has donated dirt and has hauled woodchips for the project, he said.

Luke Albertson, 17, a member of the NFA cross country team, was happy to pitch in, because he will benefit from the cleanup.

"When you're running, you want to worry about catching the guy in front of you, not spraining an ankle," Albertson said. "Helping to fix the trails not only helps us, but it makes the park look better. And it's good community service to get the guys out here."

Albertson and four of his teammates spent the morning hauling dirt and woodchips along the trails. The dirt was used to fill in eroded or low spots, and the woodchips were spread over the dirt. When people



Tall Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Members of the Norwich Free Academy cross country team work Saturday to maintain the trails at Mohegan Park in Norwich. From left, Mike Miner, Jason Wagner and Luke Albertson.

run, the chips are packed down and there isn't as much washout, according to Crowley.

On any given day, hundreds of people enjoy activities in the park, from the beach to the playground to

the trails, Crowley said. For an overcast Saturday morning, people were still out enjoying what Mohegan Park has to offer.

"I use the park all the time," said Cher Golas of Norwich, watching her son fish. "We enjoy it very much, and we've never had problems or safety issues here."

"I bring the kids about once a month," said Jason Dayon of Plainville. "I think it's great that they're fixing up the trails, even though I've always found them to be in good shape."

"We hope to gain momentum with more volunteers and get more done," said Crowley. "For now, we're putting in a few hours here and there and making it work."

Kevin Crowley - Club President '81 + '82

McGrath Jumps At The Chance

Retired NFA coach accepts Lyman cross country job

By **Chuck Banning**, Day Editor

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Published on 9/28/2006 in [Sports](#) » [High School](#)

Gene McGrath has really embraced his life as a retiree.

In fact, the former Norwich Free Academy cross country coach was relaxing with family and friends along the Rhode Island shore last weekend when he got an unexpected call.

It was from Chad Johnson, NFA's current coach, who informed him that Lyman Memorial High School was looking for a coach following the resignation of Peter Oviatt last Thursday.

Johnson, who coached the Bulldogs before returning to his alma mater in 2004, mentioned McGrath's name to Lyman athletic director Marty Gomez as a possible successor and was calling gauge his former mentor's interest.

Gomez and McGrath talked on Monday, McGrath accepted an offer from Gomez on Tuesday, and he was on the job Wednesday, meeting his runners for the first time and leading them through practice.

"I was honored just to be considered by Marty," said the 65-year-old McGrath, who is actually coming out of retirement for the second time. He coached the highly-successful NFA boys from 1966-84 before stepping away and returned from 2002-05. He also coached the NFA girls in 1977-78, leading the Wildcats to a Class LL state championship in 1977.

"Chad Johnson was a huge help," Gomez said. "He knew we were in a time of need and because we had those bridges built from when he was at Lyman, he was able to help us get a guy like Gene. We're getting someone with experience, someone who has a proven track record, and to be able to come into this situation, for me as athletic director and for the kids ... I don't think we could get anybody better."

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• Former NFA cross country coach Gene McGrath has come out of retirement to help stabilize the Lyman Memorial program.

McGrath inherits a successful program (both teams are off to 3-0 starts), in particular the girls' program. Lyman is currently ranked No. 1 in the state, returns its entire lineup from last year's New England championship team, and features reigning State Open champion Kelly Sorrell.

"Marty told me that I was the only guy around that had the credentials they were looking for and I was available, so I'm happy to help out," said McGrath, who lives in the neighboring town of Colchester. "I know they had a problem, and a realize the transition could be a bit tough, but I told the girls, 'You're the ones that make the difference. You're the ones that count.'

"I know (Oviatt) resigned, and it's hard for them to reconcile with that right now, but I said, 'I'm here to help you.' I thought the first practice was very positive. I have good feelings about them."

Oviatt, beginning his third season at Lyman, was asked to resign in wake of his behavior at the Windham Invitational on Sept. 16. Gomez declined to discuss the specifics of the situation, but sources said Oviatt became enraged with meet officials when a number of runners, including Sorrell, got lost during a girls' race and did not finish.

The Bulldogs finished fourth that day, but were declared the winner two days later after a scoring error was discovered. Still, sources said Oviatt continued to berate longtime Windham coach Bob Haddad, the meet's organizer, on the popular running website [dyestat.com](#), for days after the event until the comments were later removed.

Gomez hopes that's all behind the program now, especially now that the runners have someone of McGrath's caliber to lead the way.

"We have a lot of kids who are achieving and will have opportunities beyond high school," Gomez said. "Some are being recruited by college programs right now, so if they listen to Gene, they're still going to be able to achieve all of these things. We've certainly got a guy who's been there in the past, and that's what's exciting.

"The only thing that disappoints me is that none of this was the kids' fault. We have great kids who are high achievers. It's painful that they have had to go through this."

McGrath will make his debut with the Bulldogs on Oct. 3 when they travel to North Stonington for an Eastern Connecticut Conference Small Division dual meet against Wheeler. ■

Veterans' Day Relay To Celebrate The Spirit Of Steve Hancock

By Joe Wojtas

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Published on 11/5/2006 in [Sports](#) » [Sports Columns](#)

This is just the way Steve Hancock would have wanted it. This Saturday, about 40 of his friends will gather at his home in Bozrah and run an informal 35-mile relay to Veterans' Cemetery in Middletown.

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That's where the 58-year-old decorated Marine was laid to rest this past August after an almost three-year battle with pancreatic cancer that doctors originally told him would last only a few months.

That tells you a lot about the spirit of Hancock, who I spoke to years ago as I wrote a column about his friends running in his honor at the Mystic Places Marathon. I had never spoken to a guy who was so upbeat and determined despite the fate that likely awaited him. What struck me most was his concern about how his illness was affecting his friends and family.

In an interview with Day sports writer Vickie Fulkerson just three months before he died, Hancock talked about organizing a trail race in Chester that weekend to raise money for an organization that assists pancreatic cancer patients. He urged people diagnosed with cancer to take control of their treatment and not feel sorry for themselves.

"We have a lot more human power within ourselves than we know that we have. We just have to tap into our own resources," he told Vickie. "When you're diagnosed, don't take it as death blow that you're going to expire in a couple months. Don't believe all that. Don't have a defeatist attitude. Don't give up hope. You can be here a lot longer than you possibly think you can be."

I guess such courage, determination and concern for others shouldn't be surprising from a guy who earned numerous military decorations, including a Purple Heart with two stars while serving as a sergeant in Vietnam. Married and a father of two, he worked for 30 years at Electric Boat and was a well-known member of the Mohegan Striders.

"He was just an amazing guy. What a spirit. He had a presence," said John Ficarra of Westerly who worked, ran and partied with Hancock for 25 years. "He had the ability to change lives. He changed my life. There wasn't a person he met who wasn't affected by him."

Hancock combined his love for his country and of running by singing the national anthem at races. Calling themselves the "Plaiders," Hancock and three of his friends ran the Manchester Road Race for 24 years dressed in plaid jackets and stopping to sing The Platters' hit "Only You" along the course. Ficarra said a simple training run with Hancock could turn into a midnight breakfast at a local diner. You never knew where you would end up with him.

It's stories like these that many of the runners will tell on Saturday.

Ficarra said he was thinking of a way to honor Hancock and help his friends grieve when he came up with the idea for the Veterans' Day relay. At first he thought of including just a half dozen of Hancock's close friends but quickly realized many more would want to be involved.

"We'll have a lot of laughs along the way. Certainly it won't be morbid. It's something to celebrate his spirit. That's the way he would want it," Ficarra said.

He said the group will run with the American, POW-MIA and Marine flags, three things that meant so much to Hancock.

The legs, which cover a portion of Hancock's favorite marathon training course, vary in length from less than a mile to more than six, which offers non runners and walkers a chance to participate. Afterward, the group will gather around the outdoor fireplace at Hancock's home, where he spent a lot of time with friends and family. Everyone is asked to bring a piece of wood for the fireplace, a dish to share and, of course, the beverage of their choice. If you want to participate, contact Ficarra at 401-596-8778 or at ficarraj@cox.net.

Organizers of the run are Ficarra, Dean Festa and Kevin Gallerani of Uncasville, Tom Lee of Cheshire and Bill Marshall of Norwich. The first time they got together to plan the relay they spent the first hour swapping stories that always began with the phrase "Do you remember when Steve ..."

Most of the stores involved a race and some beer. When I asked Ficarra about his favorite, he joked there were none I could print.

The next day Ficarra e-mailed me his favorite Hancock story. Here it is in his own words.

"One year, Pete Volkmar, Steve, and myself thought it would be a challenge to run the NYC Marathon while periodically incorporating beer stops. By the time we made it to First Avenue, approximately 17 miles into the run, we had consumed quite a bit more than we had anticipated. We stopped at an Irish Bar on First Avenue primarily to use the men's room. I remember coming out of the dark bar into the bright sunshine and there was Steve, a pint of Guinness in one hand and a cigarette in the other working the crowd in front of the bar. He had them chanting and singing to encourage the struggling runners on First Avenue to keep moving. We each had two pints before the crowd let Steve go and we could finish.

"Later that night instead of nursing our tired legs the three of us, at Steve's insistence, went back to that bar where Steve was welcomed like an old friend. More singing, drinking and dancing followed until the early morning hours. I can still see that Steve smile and hear that laugh; he was in his element and everyone around him felt it. That was what it was like to hang out with Steve."



Tall Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Alison Dupont and Kevin Gallerani, both of Uncasville, bring a bag of toys to add the pile collected in Billy Wilson's Ageing Still window Friday before they run in the Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run, beginning in front of the bar in downtown Norwich.

Runners brave cold for Toy Fund

Fun Run benefits long-standing holiday charity



Photos by Tall Greener/Norwich Bulletin

Runners line up Friday on Broadway in downtown Norwich for the Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run.

By DOROTHY SCHNEIDER
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — Runners dressed as elves, reindeer, a gorilla and, of course, Santa Claus took to the streets of downtown Friday night for the annual Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run.

At race start, the temperature was 20 degrees, with a wind-chill of 15 degrees and north/northwest winds at 6 mph.

"I think it's cold," said Noah Andruskiewicz, 13, of Preston, as he stood in front of the race's starting point, Billy Wilson's Ageing Still on Broadway.

The 1.5-mile fun run is a cooperative event between the Mohegan Striders and local businesses. It is held each year to help collect toys for the Tommy Toy Fund, which provides age-appropriate toys, as well as a book and either mittens or socks, to needy children at Christmas.

Race coordinator Kevin Crowley passed out gold, silver and green "Jingle Bells" for runners to attach to their shoes or clothes. The runners were greeted with complimentary hot chocolate at City Perk and spirits at Billy Wilson's at

Article published Nov 30, 2006

Downtown coffeehouse joins Tommy Toy Run
Norwich Bulletin

par-
for

NORWICH -- The 2006 Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run is shaping up to be as big a community event as ever.

City Perk cafe will join the festivities this year, staying open Dec. 8 to offer hot chocolate for children participating in the event.

"We are happy to have the young runners bring their toy donations here and join the festivities," said Shawn Magliano, owner of City Perk, adding anyone wishing to donate can drop off a toy before the night of the run. "We hope to have a big crowd for this great Christmas event."

The run will begin at 7 p.m. on Broadway in front of Billy Wilson's Ageing Still, and all the proceeds -- donated unwrapped toys -- will go to the Tommy Toy Fund.

The 1.5-mile loop course goes through the downtown area and many runners and walkers will be dressing up in seasonal attire.

"We had great participation last year and we hope more people join us for the run this year," said Joe Manfredi, owner of Billy Wilson's. "The more runners we have, the better it is for the Tommy Toy Fund. This has become a downtown tradition, adding to the Christmas city spirit."

The event will include a raffle, too, which raised more than \$1,000 for the Tommy Toy Fund last year. The raffle is open to anyone and tickets can be purchased at Billy Wilson's.

Kevin Crowley, who coordinates the event, said the theme of this year's race is Jingle Bells and the group will begin the event with a rendition of the holiday carol.

"We want everyone to bring some bells to 'jingle all the way' around the running course," he said. "Tie them to your shoelaces, wear them as a necklace or just carry them so they 'jingle all the way.'"

Crowley encouraged runners to come in costume as well.

"We could use some snowmen, elves and reindeer," he added. "Maybe we could sing about Rudolph if we had some red-nosed reindeer."

Annual
Tommy Toy Fund Fun Run

Mohegan Striders

Friday, December 8, 2006
Start 7:00 PM

Run with Santa through Downtown Norwich while singing favorite holiday songs.
To join the fun — bring a donation for the Tommy Toy Fund.

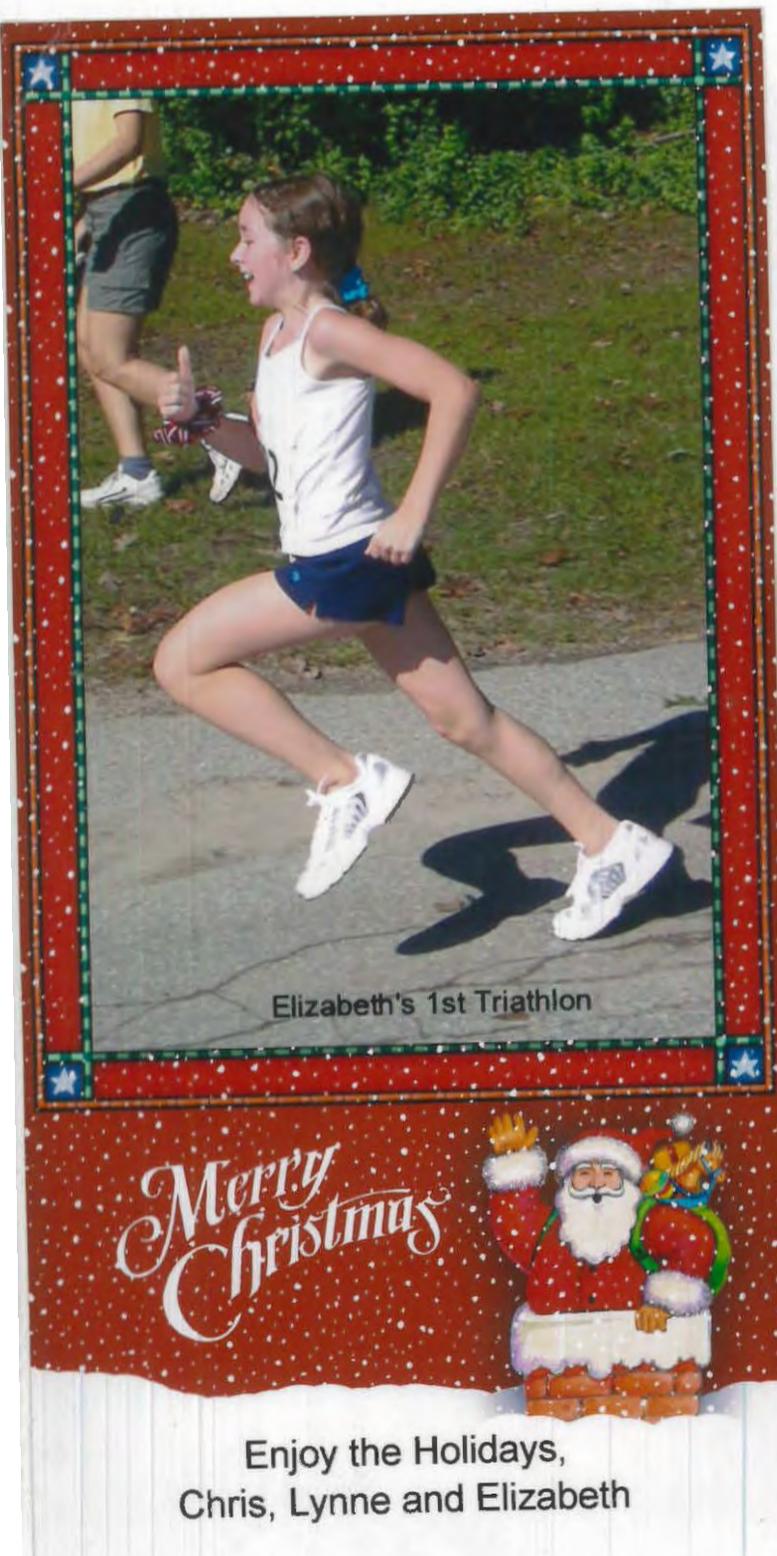
Entry Fee: One or more new, unwrapped toys
Start: in front of Billy Wilson's Ageing Still on Broadway
The Route: One loop, approximately 1.5 miles.
Fun: This is a fun run, not a race. Runners must stay behind Santa.
Safe: Police escort in front and back of the pack.

Toys will be gathered in the front window of Billy Wilson's before the run. Children may bring toy donations to City Perk on Main Street. City Perk is offering hot chocolate and spirits to runners.

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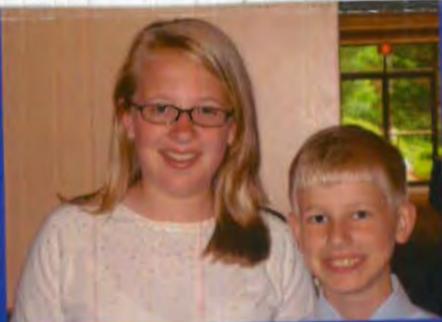
Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year
Love,
Mike, Carolyn & Catherine



Elizabeth's 1st Triathlon

Merry
Christmas

Enjoy the Holidays,
Chris, Lynne and Elizabeth



Happy New
Year!



Here Are 10 Of The Best

Here Are 10 Of The Best

By [Joe Wojtas](#)

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Published on 2/4/2007 in [Home](#) » [Sports](#) » [Sports Columns](#)

As promised, here is my list of the top 10 contributors to the southeastern Connecticut running scene. These are the people and groups that make the sport possible for all of us to enjoy, but who seldom get the recognition they deserve.

Unlike most top 10 lists, these are not ranked in order of importance. They are all great. Thank you for all your suggestions.

1. Tom McCoy. For more than 30 summers, this Stonington resident has organized a weekly family fun run series at Misquamicut Beach. There are races for little kids right through the three-miler for adults which attract large crowds every summer. McCoy was also a longtime coach at Stonington High School and few people are more enthusiastic about running. Thirty years is a long time to do anything but McCoy has made sure we all have a place to race for nine weeks every summer.

2. Way and Melinda Hedding. There's probably no man in the region who better illustrates the importance of having fun when you run than Way. A talented runner in his own right, Hedding has overseen the SNERRO timing of races across the region since 1986 and you can hear him calling out your name and encouragement over the loudspeaker when you cross the finish line. He organizes the still free John Kelley Ocean Beach race every August. He's run races in costumes and is known for having just as much fun after the race is over. And Melinda is behind the scenes at all the SNERRO races making sure the times and places for all the runners are accurate and posted quickly.

3. John Kelley, Amby Burfoot and Jan Merrill-Morin. Our three home-grown, world-class runners showed us that even if you're from this little corner of the world it's possible to win the Boston Marathon or compete in the Olympics. They also showed us that there's more to them than just fast times as they went on to inspire us through their writing, teaching and coaching.

4. The Mohegan Striders. The largest of the region's running clubs with more than 360 members, the 30-year-old club is not only a group that boasts some very fast runners, but one in which runners of all abilities can find camaraderie. In addition to their group workouts and competing as a team in their trademark red and white singlets, they have a summer picnic, winter banquet and even a team night at Dodd Stadium watching the Defenders. The Striders are an integral part of the local running scene.

5. Nick Bottone Jr. Bottone not only helps out with the Tom McCoy fun runs, but he organizes a unique event every year, a track mile in honor of his father. The event offers several heats based on time so runners get a chance to race against others of the same ability. He also organizes the annual Charlie Stavros On the Beach Run in Misquamicut, which honors a local runner who died in a race. During the post race party each year, Bottone makes a heartfelt speech to all the runners about the man they just honored and introduces Stavros' family. And while Bottone can't run much anymore because of injuries, there's no one who promotes the sport better.

6. Marie Gravell. The longtime director of the former Sail Fest Road Race, she co-directed the former East Lyme Marathon and kept it going. She helped run other area races and also worked with SNERRO timing events. Gravell also has volunteered at both the New York City and Boston marathons.

7. Jessie Kelley. Not only did the late Mrs. Kelley dispense sound shoe advice while running Kelley's Pace in Olde Mistick Village for many years, she was one of those truly kind and gentle souls you don't meet often in life. She was always interested in more than just your running and along with her husband John, always had an open door policy for runners at their Mystic home.

8. Pete Volkmar. The other behind the scenes guy at SNERRO. He measures and certifies courses and does all the nuts and bolts technical stuff that makes races run smoothly, but which few people notice. Without his help, a lot of these race wouldn't happen. He also puts together the SNERRO calendar each year which is our guide to area road races. Volkmar was the longtime director of the now defunct Sneekers Race, a popular event with a great post race party.

9. Coaches. As I mentioned two weeks ago, high school, college and other coaches are being listed as a group because it is impossible to just pick one or two. Each of us knows a coach who may not have inspired us to start running but more importantly inspired to keep running. They were there to encourage us when we needed it and kick our butts when we needed that. We can never thank you men and women enough.

10. Ocean Community YMCA. While we are lucky to live in an area where so many organizations and businesses support running, whether with food for post-race festivities, sponsorship money or even police officers to direct traffic, two groups stand out.

The YMCA sponsors one of the biggest events each year, Tarzan Brown Mystic River Run, along with the Mystic River Triathlon, the Ocean Community YMCA Triathlon and the Turkey Trot and Dip as well as sponsoring masters swim programs and triathlon training classes. The YMCA has two locations in Mystic and Westerly is where many of us work out. And this past fall, it agreed to put on a last-minute marathon to coincide with the final leg of Christian McEvoy's run across America for cancer survivors.

For Hedding, Some Things Never Change

For Hedding, Some Things Never Change

By [Joe Wojtas](#)

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Thirty years ago, Way Hedding of East Lyme and Pete Volkmar of New London made one of those epic running trips. They had heard about a new race in Tampa, Florida called the Gasparilla Distance Classic, a 15K with a large, world-class field.

So they flew down to the race the day before. Having no hotel, they slept on a park bench. They woke up the next morning, grabbed some Cuban sandwiches for breakfast and ran the race. Then it was on to the all-night post race party before going back to the airport in time to catch their flight home.

Two weeks ago, Hedding made it back to Tampa for the 30th anniversary of the race. While he and his wife Melinda didn't sleep on a park bench this time, there were some aspects of the trip that stayed the same, such as the post-race beer party.

This time, Hedding also took on the Bud Light Challenge, a special division for those who run the 5K and 15K on Saturday and the half-marathon on Sunday.

So after finishing the 15K in 1:15 and then the 5K in 23:00, it was on to the post-race party where he met Bill Rodgers and Dick Beardsley. He got back to his hotel at 4 a.m. just in time for the 6 a.m. start of the half marathon, in which he finished in 1:51.

That earned him a second-place finish in his division and a 33rd overall placing for those who took part in the Bud Light Challenge. And I bet none of the 32 runners in front of him stayed out to 4 a.m. After the race, the Heddings drove across the state to watch the Daytona 500.

Hedding, who said he ran into a number of local runners, received a medal and t-shirt for each of the three races as well as t-shirt and medal for his Bud Light Challenge finish.

The races, which also include a marathon, are held in conjunction with a big pirate festival each year, and they attract tens of thousands of runners.

"They really do a nice job. There are live bands on the course and it's really festive. It's out and back along the water. It's just gorgeous," Hedding said. "It's like a whole week devoted to running and the expo is comparable to the one in Boston. It just takes over the whole convention center."

He said the spread of food after the races, which include seafood paella and black beans and rice, can't be beat. There also two pre-race pasta parties.

"And the Budweiser never stops flowing," he said.

Hedding plans to return to the race next year with a group of Mohegan Striders. And he hopes to bring Volkmar with him.

Maybe they can find that park bench again.

When it came to giving his time, Spellman stood alone

Charlie Spellman didn't plan to commit to running the show for that long. But like the individuals who donate their time to volunteer organizations are aware, it's easy to get started and difficult to walk away.

So when Spellman agreed to coordinate the Norwich Recreation Department's Summer Race Series in 1991, he never thought that it would take 15 years to finally step down from the responsibility.

"I was participating in the Rec Runs," Spellman said, "and they were looking for someone to help out. I was there each week anyway, so I volunteered."

Fifteen years later, Spellman finally turned in his clipboard and stopwatch at the end of the 2005 series. He continues to participate in the races, knowing his efforts made a difference.

Because of those volunteer efforts, Spellman will be honored at tonight's Norwich Sports Hall of Fame induction dinner by receiving the **Joseph Kaptiena** Service Award. The award is presented to



**DON
SIKORSKI**

Running Notes

to initially volunteer for the task.

A 1980 Norwich Free Academy graduate who ran track for the Wildcats, Spellman was living in Norwich at the time and had done some casual running after college just to stay in shape. When a friend talked him into running the challenging Woodstock 10K Road Race on Memorial Day, Spellman agreed.

After the race, he was in pain, but he was hooked. Spellman continued to participate in area road races and joined the Mohegan Striders Association. With his

an individual or group that provides outstanding service to the Norwich sports community. Spellman certainly meets that criteria.

"I wanted to give back to the running community," said Spellman of his decision

newly acquired race director duties, he became an integral part of the club. And despite the challenges for time commitments that accompany work, marriage and children, Spellman continued to be a part of the event every Thursday evening in July and August.

Spellman, who now resides in Rocky Hill with his wife, **Michelle**, and two children (**C.J.**, 11, and **Victoria**, 8), remained committed to helping out with the event year after year even after his move.

"I never found it to be a burden to come down," said Spellman of his Thursday evening trek from his Rocky Hill home to Mohegan Park. "I enjoyed doing it. It was a great way to stay connected to the running community."

Spellman would often arrive early and run the course solo, tackling his evening workout and reviewing the course for safety purposes at the same time. At the finish line, Spellman recorded every finisher's time and place and got the information to the Norwich Bulletin that same night. The races consistently drew 40 or 50 runners each week. Since re-

locating from its former Kelly Middle School start to the current location in the center of Mohegan Park and the addition of kid's races, attendance has nearly doubled and rivals some road races in both quality and quantity of runners.

Spellman still continues to make the trip to Norwich for the rec runs each summer. Now he enjoys the freedom of running in the kid's race with C.J. and just enjoying the camaraderie of his fellow runners. And he continues to assist with volunteer duties when needed.

Spellman promotes the event as an avenue for runners to get training in while at the same time enjoy the company of fellow runners.

"It's not just a competitive race," Spellman said of the Norwich Recreation Race Series concept. "There's a social aspect."

Spellman is also quick to credit an outstanding support staff and a loyal crowd of runners for allowing things to run so smoothly for the 15 years he was at the helm.

"I had a lot of help over the

years," he said. "It was great to see a lot of the same faces running each week over those 15 years."

The Norwich Sports Hall of Fame induction dinner will take place at 5 p.m. tonight at the Holiday Inn in Norwich. Contact **Bill Sullivan** at 889-1834 for ticket information or visit the organization's Web site at www.norwich-sportshalloffame.org for more information.

Congratulations to Charlie Spellman, this year's inductees and all of the award recipients on their recognition.

The Norwich Recreation Races begin July 5 and runs for eight consecutive Thursday evenings, concluding on Aug. 23. There is a kid's run beginning at 6:30 p.m., followed by a one-mile fun run at 6:45 p.m. The three-mile run begins at 7 p.m. All races begin and end in the center of Mohegan Park (adjacent to the water fountain). There is no cost to participate.

For information, contact the Norwich Recreation Department at 823-3791.

Race update

There's a new road race in the area next month, back with a familiar name but with a new twist.

From the folks who delivered the former Up Against the Wall 5K race in New London, the event returns with a new location and a new cause.

This year's race will take place at 10 a.m. June 10 at the Montville Polish Club.

The event, with proceeds benefiting the Montville Lions Club, will be timed by SNERRO and feature prizes for all division winners, a large post-race raffle, food, and live music.

The newly-designed race course has two hills on the way out and is fast on the way back. For information, call 848-8059.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net.



Charlie Spellman

Charlie Spellman was born in Norwich in 1962. While attending St. Patrick's, he began running with Gerry Chester's track program. He ran indoor and outdoor track at NFA during his 3rd and 4th years, earning a varsity letter in his senior year. In addition to running, he participated in the hurdles and triple jump.

Charlie continued to run during and after college to stay in shape. In 1988, because of the encouragement of a co-worker who was involved with the Woodstock Road Race, he began running road races. In that same year, he joined the Mohegan Striders. In 1991 when the Striders were looking for someone to direct the Norwich Summer Rec Runs, Charlie felt it was time to give back to the sport he had been enjoying for the last several years and accepted the position.

In 1996, Charlie accepted an engineering position at Radio Frequency Systems in Meriden. Because of the long commute, he and his wife, Michele, and their two children, CJ and Victoria, re-located to the central part of the state in 1998. Charlie continued to drive from Rocky Hill to Norwich every Thursday evening in the summer for the next seven years. In 2006, after fifteen years, he retired as Director of the Summer Rec Runs at Mohegan Park.

Charlie says he mostly will savor all the "thanks" he has gotten over the years and seeing the "crew of runners" every week. His greatest headaches were getting to races on time and finding a replacement when he was unable to be there.

To take advantage of the beauty of the Mohegan Park center, to bring people into the park for recreational activities for which the park is ideal, and for safety purposes, Charlie hopes the City of Norwich will continue to support this race in Mohegan Park.

Delaney Dash honors fallen runner's life

For the husband and wife team of **Pete Volkmar** and **Karen Short**, it's a labor of love.

The New London couple has been actively involved in the Southeastern Connecticut road racing scene for many years. Volkmar is the co-owner of SNERRO, a timing service that works more than 60 events annually and Short competes in races from 5K to the marathon as part of the Pfizer Racing Team.

But it's the Delaney Dash, the annual road race that honors the memory of the late Mohegan Striders team captain **Sean Delaney**, which consumes the majority of the couple's time. Though both admit some struggles and challenges in putting together such an event, it's both the community service and the honor of "keeping Sean's memory running," that fuels their energies each year.

This year's seventh annual Delaney Dash will take place at 9 a.m. May 26. The 5-mile road race and accompanying 5K (3.1 mile) fun walk will both start and finish at Old Saybrook Point.

Following the race, there will also be a 1/4 Mile Kid's Fun Run. Race proceeds will benefit the Sean Delaney Scholarship Fund, created with the concept of assisting an Old Saybrook senior, competing in cross-country or track, with the opportunity to attend college.



DON SIKORSKI

Running Notes

Awards Night. The fact the race can serve as a vehicle to assist with such a worthwhile cause is attributed to Volkmar and Short's efforts and the generosity of the event's sponsors and volunteers.

Sean Delaney was a former teammate of mine and a good friend. Born and raised in Old Saybrook, Sean was recruited by the Mohegan Striders 20 years ago and soon became an integral part of the club's racing team.

But what I've always respected most about Sean Delaney was the fact he was so much more than just another fast runner who won races. Delaney was a competitor. He was personable on the starting line, a monster when the gun went off and happy to knock down a few cold beers with you when it was all over.

Delaney became captain of the Mohegan Striders Men's Open

Racing Team in 1994, leading his team to a string of consecutive state championships. Although he enjoyed competing, his subsequent struggle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma made it impossible for him to do so. I recall in admiration Delaney telling me of his running ritual almost on a daily basis between bouts of chemotherapy treatments. He never made excuses and he never asked anyone to feel sorry for him. In May 2000, Delaney passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer at the age of 42.

Volkmar and Short hope to attract more than 300 runners to this year's event. The first 200 registered runners and walkers (plus the first 50 kids) will get T-shirts. Race awards are always unique at the Delaney Dash.

"The race's primary sponsor is The Center for Better Health, a chiropractic and rehabilitative service group for runners located in Old Saybrook," Short said. **Dr. Kurt Strecker**, owner of the business, is also a distance runner. His infectious energy is contagious and his talented hands have healed many an athlete."

The Mohegan Striders Association has also been consistent sponsors of the race, with many of the club's members either running or volunteering.

"We're grateful, when there are a lot of good causes out there, that the club is still sponsoring our

race," Short said. "It's a tribute to Sean's legacy."

Other sponsors who have supported the race include Prides Corner Farms, United Abrasives, Fortuna and Cartelli, PC. Attorneys at Law, Savinelli Well Drilling, Iselin Tree Experts, and CL&P.

Race applications can be found at www.snerro.com and online race entry is available via active.com. The race pays for the online fee, another unique feature. The race course is extremely flat and fast and is USATF certified.

"The Old Saybrook Police Department has also been a tremendous supporter of the race, always helpful by directing traffic, blocking the intersections, and keeping the runners safe," Short said.

A complimentary race entry and a flowering landscape shrub (courtesy of Prides Corner Farms) will be awarded to anyone donating \$100 or more to Sean's scholarship. Checks for scholarship donation should be payable to the "Old Saybrook Education Foundation" and are tax-deductible.

Contact Pete and Karen at 437-

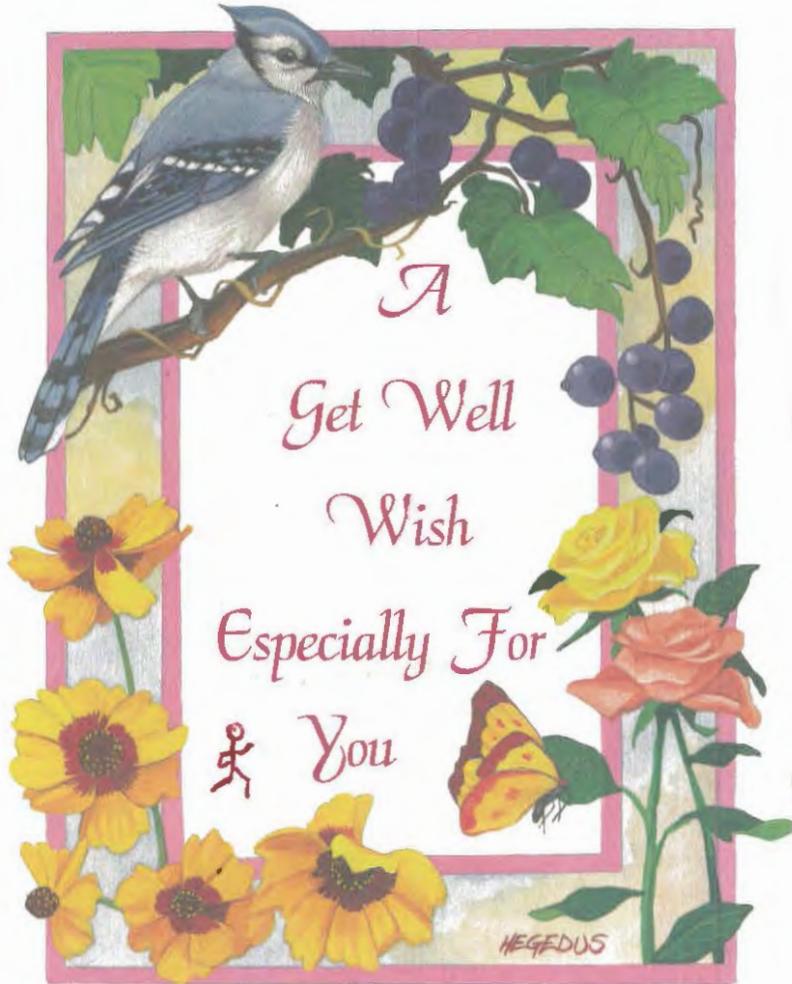
7247 or by e-mail at pvolkmar@snet.net for race information or to volunteer your services in Delaney's honor. Despite the stresses and many hours of work that go into coordinating such an event, Volkmar and Short feel their efforts are worthwhile.

"We do this because Sean was our friend, because we want to keep his memory running," Short

said. "And because we, like so many others, miss him."

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@sbc-global.net





Mohegan Striders
Everywhere, CT 06000



Larry Pontbriant
7 Lambert Drive
Norwich, CT 06360



On Site AED's



Let the Beat
Go On...



Sadly, a get well card that never got mailed:
Larry Pontbriant went down in Norwich Rec Run August 16, 2007.
He died Sunday, August 19, 2007.



John (Jack) P. Martin
November 17, 1918 – January 1, 2012



John P. Martin, 93, passed away on Sunday, January 1, 2012. He was formerly of Uncasville, Moosup, Pinellas Park, Florida and most recently of Crescent Point at Niantic.

He was born John Joseph Pershing Martin in Norwich, Connecticut on November 17, 1918, son of Francis (Frank) and Elizabeth (Libbie) (Bonin) Martin. He was predeceased by his wife, Pearl, of almost 66 years, who died on June 22, 2007. They were married October 11, 1941.

John (Jack) served in the Army and the Connecticut National Guard until June of 1941.

Known as Jack Martin, he was an avid runner most of his life and one of the founding members of the Mohegan Striders Running Club in 1972. He was made an Honorary Member of the Mohegan Striders on November 18, 1983. Running since 1935, he was part of the Electric Boat's Track Team in 1936. He ran several hundred races and several marathons including East Lyme. He completed a full-marathon at the age of 64. He was very proud of all his medals and trophies. Jack was also a Boston Red Sox fan.

Jack worked at many area places during his lifetime including Electric Boat and Lathrop Brothers before starting his own business as a realtor and building homes

in the Uncasville and Mohegan section of Montville, including his own in 1946 located at 7 Edwards Street in Uncasville. He always enjoyed having a big garden and sharing with friends, playing bingo and singing.

Jack was very involved in Montville politics for nearly 40 years. The Town of Montville honored him with John "Jack" Martin Day on October 9, 1983, at the Montville Polish Club. He served on six town committees, was appointed constable in 1946, and appointed deputy sheriff in 1947, and continued until the early 50's, Board of Tax Review 1957-1963, Justice of The Peace 1967-1981, Zoning Board of Appeals 1971-1983, member of the Montville High School Building Committee and ran for Republican State Representative in 1956. He was also a member of the Mohegan Volunteer Fire Company for many years.

His surviving family includes John C. Martin and his wife Marian of Stonington, Thomas Martin and his wife Linda of Norwich, Lynn (Martin) Wisniewski and her husband Theodore of Uncasville, Jean Martin of Glastonbury; six grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, one sister, Marie Knierim of New Jersey, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by brothers Francis, Joseph, Harold, Leon, and sisters Ruth Morgan Lee, Lucy Metsack, and Helen Ulrich.

He wore his Strider gear proudly including his jacket. My mother sewed all his patches and I will wear it to any gathering the Striders maybe at in remembrance.

I will be forwarding copies of very old clippings and things I would like to see the Club put in the albums of days gone by.
Sincerely,
Lynn Wisniewski

Family of John Martin

Dear John and all the Mohegan Striders,
We would like to thank the Mohegan Striders for the beautiful flower arrangement sent to the church. Also, a thank you for the Striders that came and represented the Club. The Club was a big part of my father's life. The first meetings were at his house, Sunday morning runs for many years even before the Club was formed.

SNERRO: The First Name in Local Road Racing

Volunteer organization has good time while timing

BY LARRY KELLEY
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

There are certain entities that are readily identifiable by their acronyms. IBM, NFL, AFL-CIO, AT&T, ESPN, EB among many.

In southeastern Connecticut, SNERRO, short and snappy for its original full title of Southern New England Road Race Officials, is the first name of local road racing. In the last 15 years, SNERRO's scope has expanded to Rhode Island and all of Connecticut.

If SNERRO services a race, it offers validity much the same way if ESPN brings color man Dick Vitale to broadcast a college basketball game. SNERRO's white U-Haul-type 40-foot truck, with the big black letters of SNERRO emblazoned on each side, carries timing equipment, three clocks of various size, and a musical sound system and speakers that entertain competitors and runners during races.

Most importantly, the SNERRO truck carries its two partners, Pete Volkmar of New London and Way Hedding of Niantic. Still avid runners in their 50s, Hedding and Volkmar have become the de facto co-commissioners of local road racing, officiating and orchestrating up to 60 races a year locally and as far away as Block Island, New Haven, Ridgefield, Columbia, and Chester.

"We ensure an accurate distance, an accurate placement, and an accurate time," Volkmar said. "If those three provisions are guaranteed, I think it makes you run better. If we can't guarantee this, after a while if nobody believed their time, all runners would ignore us and take their own time on their wrist watches. There is no excuse to have a horror show with the software we have."

Volkmar and Hedding are ringleaders among SNERRO's group of 15 or so volunteers, who handle various duties including mapping out the course, timing the race, announcing, gathering finishing order placing, and disseminating overall and divisional results in, what else, timely fashion.

"There is no more knowledgeable operating group in road racing," said John Kelley of Mystic, the 1957 Boston Marathon winner and longtime local road racing contributor. "We live in a world where everyone is replaceable. But if SNERRO would disappear, I don't know what would happen. I consider them irreplaceable. Sometimes



Way and Melinda Hedding, Mohegan Strider club members and race officials, check runners' numbers during a 5K race in Waterford. Photo by Robert Patterson

we take them for granted because they've done such a good job for so many years."

SNERRO began in 1963 as an organization to produce the Ocean Beach 11.6-mile run and a handful of other local races. Volkmar, Hedding, and his wife, Melinda, contributed about \$1,300 apiece to buy SNERRO from its previous owners in 1986. The Ocean Beach race, named the John Kelley Ocean Beach 11.6-Mile Road Race, is the jewel of SNERRO's events. Nearly 500 competitors annually enter the run, which is one of the few major national races that offers free registration. The 46th annual Ocean Beach Kelley race commenced Aug. 2. Mark Olivier, 25, a former Fitch High and Columbia University standout runner, won in a time of 1 hour, 4 minutes and 16.2 seconds. Jon-Paul Mandelburg, a former Norwich Free Academy standout who ran with Olivier at Columbia, finished nearly side by side in 1:04.16.7. Branford's Cheryl Anderson was the top women's finisher (1:11.36.7) and ninth overall.

"*Runner's World* has listed it among the top 80 road races nationally," Hedding said. "Johnny Kelley starts the race, Amby Burfoot, the 1968 Boston Marathon winner, designed the course, and it remains one of the only free races in the

entire country. For an event such as this, which includes free parking at one of the East Coast's beautiful resorts, chowder, and refreshments, it could require a \$40 entry fee. But we want to give back to the racing community and keep up the tradition of a free race."

Volkmar and Hedding enjoy giving good-natured ribbing to runners and taking them back. They're organized, but keep things loose. Volkmar recalls the strangest occurrence he's encountered in his 22-plus years was when he asked for a starter's gun at the Montville Masters (over 40) 10K run. "Instead, a runner handed me his teeth," he said.

What was more important than money? Running a professional organization and having a good time doing it.

"It's more of a hobby for us,"

Volkmar said. "We could be playing golf, but would we still be doing that after 22 years? We don't make money out of this, but most of our volunteers are former runners or still runners and have a pulse of the road racing scene. We enjoy it."

Hedding's wife remains a loyal volunteer.

"We bought her out," Way said with a laugh. "We never sought to make a profit. The money

we receive from race fees goes into buying new toys like chronomix timing systems or microphones. We've really expanded SNERRO's services over the years, and are booked every week, although we try not to do more than one race a day. It's very rewarding to us, many of whom still race, to produce fast, accurate results. Plus, we have a lot of fun. We usually meet somewhere after the races for 'one pint.'"

Tom McCoy, race director for Tom McCoy's Family Fun Runs for the last 30 years at Misquamicut Beach in Westerly, believes SNERRO's presence brings life to a race. His co-director of McCoy's Fun Runs, Nick Bottone Jr., is SNERRO's public address announcer and third major partner today.

"They bring enthusiasm and heart to their job," McCoy said. "Nick does a great job with his commentary, announcing the names of finishers and giving background information. The music and Nick's announcing add a lot of color. Plus, the big clock with the digital numbers is a nice dimension for spectators and runners. SNERRO ensures every race is a vibrant event."

All three SNERRO major partners were or still are avid road runners. Bottone held Westerly High's mile record in the '70s and was a top local runner until hurting his back in the '80s. Hedding, 57, still competes, specializing now in Clydesdale running events for 200-pound-plus competitors. But Hedding will be quick to add he barely tips over 200 pounds on a 6-foot-2 frame.

"Pete and Way are great leaders and have a lot of fun during a race," Bottone said. "We have a nucleus of about 12 people volunteering. It's a smooth-running operation."

SNERRO's services extend beyond races. Its yearly race schedule, listing more than 100 state-wide races, even ones they don't time, is considered the premier index for road runners.

"We starting to produce a schedule to keep track of our contracted races and soon found that it was the only local schedule of races available," Volkmar said. "We only require written information from the race director each year."

McCoy says the schedule, listed in *The Day* and on SNERRO's Web site, www.snerro.com, is an invaluable resource.

"Most runners plan their schedules according to the SNERRO list," McCoy said. "I'm not sure everyone realizes what an important role SNERRO plays in a road runner's life."

1983-84



Tim

Doug Barlow

Dave Jacob

Tony Savinelli

Brian Lundie

Tim Smith

2005 MGM RELAY TEAM - MYSTIC PLACES

Missing: Ted Phillips





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