



## INTERVALS

### Newsletter of the Frederick Steeplechasers Running Club

#### President's Message by Lou King

My first "President's Message"... very exciting.

First of all, I want to thank again those who supported me and the other officers for these positions: Mark Lawrence and the nominating committee, the outgoing officers Pam Geernaert and Crista Horn, the committee chairs, and the members. It is humbling to follow in the footsteps of the great past presidents, and I hope in two years that my tenure and that of the other executive officers is looked back on as positively as it has been for our predecessors.

I can't think of a good segue, so I will just say... Wow, is there a lot going on in this club or what?

You may have noticed this page sports a new logo. This came after over a year of discussion within the board about it. Every one of the officers (current and previous), past presidents, and other board meeting attendees contributed to this conclusion, but special thanks go to Siobhan Leonardis for supporting us through this process with her artistic talents. We hope you like it as much as we do.

We finished 2014 with 630 members, and we already have (at the time of this writing, March 16) 482 - this is almost as many as we had at the end of May last year! I hope to analyze the registration information so we can know for sure, but I suspect that many of this new member explosion came because of the enthusiasm of Billy Clem who is leading the half marathon training - there are 112 people registered for this group! Speaking of training, our Vice President Javier Montenegro has agreed to chair the Training and Education Committee. He plans to help coordinate the activities of the training and education programs, including the sharing of best practices among these popular FSRC services. Much of the work of the committee is done by the leaders of each, of course: Billy Clem for half marathon training, Jan Harris for marathon training, Luanne Houck for women's distance festival 5K training and Pam Geernaert for education.

The Volunteer Appreciation program has been put in place, thanks to Pam Geernaert and Luanne Houck, and if you volunteered for the club last year (and there were 128 of you whom we counted - 20% of the membership), you should be able to see your name at <http://steeplechasers.org/volunteer/volunteer-recognition/>. Small tokens of the club's appreciation were given out at the banquet to the Gold Level volunteers, and (after some vendor delays) by the time you read this we should have started giving out something to the Silver Level volunteers as well. Speaking of Pam, she's doing a great job organizing the education seminars -- we had a very informative one in February on warm-ups and exercises by Zach Baker of Rehab2Perform (see <http://steeplechasers.org/training/education/warmups-and-exercises/>), and there's one coming up in April entitled Fueling on the Run by our very own Amy Goldsmith. Look for Pam to schedule these about once a month

Did you know that proceeds of all of our "signature races", Market Street Mile, Women's Distance Festival and Rick's Run Ultra Challenge, go to charity? In 2014, Women's Distance Festival gave over \$10,000 to the Women's Giving Circle of Frederick County, Market Street Mile gave almost \$7000 to the Lincoln Panther Running Program benefiting a free after school running club at Frederick's Lincoln Elementary School, and Rick's Run gave over \$3600 to the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation, in memory of our own Rick O'Donnell who passed away from this terrible disease.

If you want to know more about the Lincoln Panther Running Club,

Continued on page 3.

**FSRC - 2015 Officers**

President – **Lou King**  
 Vice President – **Javier Montenegro**  
 Secretary – **Sage Norton**  
 Treasurer – **Harriet Langlois**

**Committee Chairs**

Social - Ruth Taylor and Art Gregory  
 Membership and Communications - Luanne Houck  
 Competition - Cassy Crouse /Chad Ahalt  
 Race Support - Tim O'Keefe/ Mark Lawrence  
 Training and Education - Javier Montenegro  
 Technology - Lou King  
 Newsletter - Malcolm Senior

# Social Committee



Good news Steeplechasers the date has been set for our annual picnic.

The date is July 12<sup>th</sup>. This year will be different than the last two. The picnic will be held at Utica Park. We have reserved a picnic shelter with plenty of space for our expanding group of runners and their families. The park offers amenities such as a playground, soccer field, ball fields, horse shoes, and volleyball. We would like to get input from Steeplechasers old and new to make our picnic a success. Any Steeps that would interested in helping Ruth Taylor

and I (Art Gregory) to make this annual event a “must attend” event for future years let us know. We will be happy to hear from you. Again our goal is to make this an inclusive event for all the Steeps family. Suggestions will be appreciated, it's your picnic we want to hear from you. We have many new members and a lot of different running groups. This is an opportunity to all be in the same place at one time to meet greet, and have fun together.

**Put the date on your calendar: Utica Park July 12<sup>th</sup> Steeplechasers Picnic**

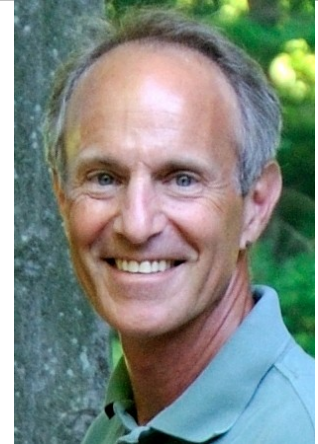
Today was not about times, it was about getting in there, enjoying the race, and enjoying the atmosphere [on winning NY marathon] ... Paula Radcliffe



**Do you have any interesting running tales to tell?**  
**Do you have a favorite route or race? Any picture to share?**  
**News of members` or anything running related?**  
 Please forward to Newsletter editor at [newsletter@steeplechasers.org](mailto:newsletter@steeplechasers.org)

...Continued from page 1) this program teaches love of running, associated muscle groups and respect to over 60 children now, grades 2 through 5, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4:00 to 5:00. Anne Light, who leads the program, is always looking for coaches and assistants to help. Having coached in this program for the last couple of years, I will tell you it is so rewarding –those kids are so much fun to work with!

What else? Last year Sage Norton (who has since become the club Secretary) spent hours upon hours researching racing teams around the state, and designed a Racing Team program for the Steeplechasers. She was able to launch it in January. The team is currently set for the spring, but another opportunity to join will be announced this summer. See <http://steeplechasers.org/competition/racing-team/> for details.



Thanks to Ruth Taylor and Art Gregory who agreed to co-chair the Social Committee – their first duty was the Running Celebration Banquet in January and it was a huge success – over 100 people came! Next on their agenda is the Frederick Running Festival post-race tent, and then the summer picnic. The summer picnic venue will be moved to a local park, to hopefully make it more kid-friendly.

Did somebody mention the banquet? Thanks so much to Cassy Crouse and Chad Ahalt for bringing the Competition Committee together to choose the award winners for the major awards given at that event. And of course thanks to Tim O’Keefe for his always-entertaining tributes for the decathlon winners. If you weren’t there, we did miss you, but you can see the awards and tributes at <http://steeplechasers.org/about/hall-of-fame/award-winners-2014/>. And if you didn’t already know – it only takes four grand prix races and five decathlon races to win a participation award for those series, so everyone can get out and be recognized.

In Technology, you are probably aware that a new web site was launched in December which has dynamic content of announcements, calendar events and recent Facebook posts on the home page. On the new web site, a “suggestion box” is now available there which allows you, the members, to pass on your great ideas. We reviewed six great suggestions at the February board meeting, and we will be able to act on many of them. See <http://steeplechasers.org/about/suggestion-box/> if you have ideas of your own you would like to share.

Special thanks to Jenny Donoghue for agreeing to help operate “scoretility”, which keeps you updated on grand prix, equalizer and decathlon race results and standings. See <http://steeplechasers.org/scoretility/> if you are interested in more information on scoretility.

Of course, Mark Lawrence is getting ready for another busy race season. You see evidence on this on Facebook almost every week during the season, when he looks for volunteers to help him time around 30 races each year. Thankfully, many of you have stepped up and did help, as mentioned way up there in the paragraph on Volunteer Appreciation. What we really need is for someone to step up to lead some of these and give Mark some weekends off. If you are interested in getting started and training with Mark, contact one of us and we’ll get you going.

And we mustn’t forget to thank Malcolm Senior who spends the time, quarter after quarter, pulling together this newsletter you are reading right now, and you the readers who help supply the content.

**I know I have left out so many key volunteers, but I think I used up my allotted space. Stay tuned for next quarter’s message – there’s more great stuff coming.**



Annual  
Award  
Banquet

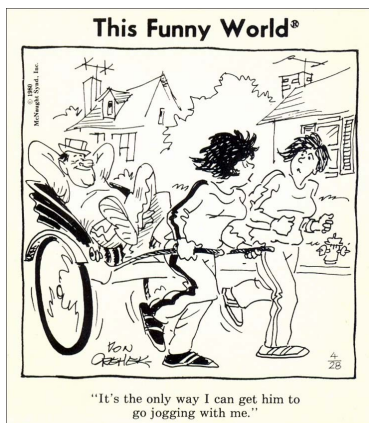
Award Winners



## Jogging Gives Running a Bad Name

Mark Lawrence

What do we mean when we use the term “jog”? As defined by Webster’s, the primary meaning of the verb “jog” is: *“To move up and down or about with a short, heavy motion.”* (Synonym: *trudge*) From that definition, it’s easy to understand how it was later adapted to describe what many people do when they take up running as a fitness activity. People tend to think of jogging as simply running slow, but there is a more significant distinction that should be recognized. The slow, up-and-down trudging technique is employed by many hoping to improve their fitness. They use this technique because they think that jogging is gentler and conserves energy as opposed to running, but moving this way actually creates inefficiencies and greater impact forces than does running when done properly. This misunderstanding is likely responsible for many of the injuries that people often attribute to running.



The root of the problem with jogging stems from the slow cadence that is normally applied. Joggers typically move at a cadence significantly below the 170-180 strides per minute range that is proper for light-footed, sustained running. Typically, a jogger does this by keeping their center of gravity behind their foot strike (because having it forward would force their feet to go faster). The result is their foot making contact when their leg is fully extended causing the heel to collide against the oncoming ground. (Incidentally, this is made even worse if they are wearing a shoe with an elevated heel.) The ankle and knee are not in position to flex with the impact sending shock waves through the legs, hips and lower back. They then must use their hamstring muscles to pull their body weight forward until the ankle and knee can flex and get in position to push off to the next stride.

This is far more effort and impact than with the gravity assisted, load/recoil technique that comes naturally when our body weight is forward and we’re moving at a quick cadence. In other words, jogging is harder on our bodies and actually requires more energy to accomplish less. Alternatively, running relaxed doesn’t require us to jog. We can control our speed and manage our energy with our degree of lean and the length of our stride without ever slowing our cadence. A shorter quicker stride in the right posture is far easier than a longer slower stride in an incorrect posture.

Another problem to consider: If we start running and develop the habit of using these jogging mechanics, do the mechanics of jogging get carried over into runs when we start going faster? You bet they do, and then the impact forces and risk of injury become even greater! It’s a bad habit!

There are ample studies detailing how the majority of people who run for fitness get injured in the process of

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

running every year, but they should differentiate people using a jogging mechanic from those who run properly. If running was inherently hard on our bodies, how would you explain the growing number of people continuing to run marathons at retirement age? While there has been much debate and research in recent years about the impact of a heel strike vs. a forefoot landing, I believe those arguments and studies to be oversimplified because they don't account for the most important element: Where is your body in relation to your foot upon impact with the ground?

What part of your foot touches the ground first will vary under different circumstances, but your foot should always be under or somewhat behind your center of gravity when your weight comes down. Because of their slow cadence and lack of forward lean, joggers normally have their foot in front. That is a key difference and one that leads to injury! This is why I believe jogging gives running a bad name. As opposed to jogging, people should learn how to RUN RELAXED with a short, quick stride. You'd be surprised at how much progress you can make without getting injured in the process!

*Mark Lawrence is a running coach certified through Chi Running, RRCA, and USATF.*

*Questions about this article or his instruction can be addressed to [markruns50@comcast.net](mailto:markruns50@comcast.net).*

# 4 STEPS TO BETTER RUNNING >>

JOGGING FORM	GOOD RUNNING FORM	
 <p>KNEE &amp; JOINT PAIN</p> <p>POSTURE OUT OF BALANCE</p> <p>OVERSTRIDING</p> <p>HEEL STRIKE</p>	 <p>COMPACT ARMS</p> <p>BALANCED FORWARD POSTURE</p> <p>HIGH CADENCE</p> <p>PROPER FOOT STRIKE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1 BALANCED FORWARD POSTURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Stand tall, gaze forward</li> <li>◀ Keep chest forward and shoulders back and relaxed</li> <li>◀ Don't bend at the waist</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2 COMPACT ARMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Short, compact, relaxed arm movement</li> <li>◀ Pump back and recover forward, don't sway side to side</li> <li>◀ Elbows should not extend in front of the waist unless sprinting</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3 PROPER FOOT STRIKE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Land softly underneath a bent knee</li> <li>◀ Avoid overstriding and excessive heel striking</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4 HIGH CADENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Maintain approximately 170-180 steps per minute</li> <li>◀ Count 30 steps per leg in 20 seconds for a 180 cadence</li> <li>◀ Light, soft &amp; quick foot placement</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Whether it's ten miles or one, you will NEVER regret lacing up those running shoes and going outside.

## BREAKFAST RUNS

A big THANK YOU to Karen Ochs for organizing and holding the breakfast runs. They are a great way to start the year of running and meet fellow members.





Rehav Rotary Resolution Race  
January 1st 2015  
Malcolm Senior Newsletter Editor

A favorite, well organized race is the Resolution run from Ida Lee Park Leesburg on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. With a 5K and 10K option, a start time of 10:30 am, plenty of door prizes and gift certificate awards (although they are only 2 deep in 10 year age groups) it's a great race to start the year. Registration and awards ceremony are in the Ida Lee Park Recreation Center. Both races start on a grassy field in the park and run on paths and roads incorporating the grounds of Morven Park Equestrian Center.

Art Gregory won his age group in the 5K in a time of 26:15. Ruth Taylor was 2<sup>nd</sup> in her 10K age group time of 47:10. At the awards I was announced as 2<sup>nd</sup> place age group winner but when the official results were posted I was 1<sup>st</sup> place age group winner in a time of 45:52. The runner who took the 1<sup>st</sup> place prize at the awards had an official time of 1:00:06. After a discussion with the race organizers and timing officials they have given me a free entry to next years race.

Morven Park today consists of:

**The Davis Mansion and Museum:** Morven Park's last residents were Westmoreland Davis, the 55th governor of Virginia, and his wife Marguerite Inman Davis, daughter of a wealthy New York cotton broker. Davis, who served as governor from 1918 to 1922, purchased Morven Park in 1903, leaving behind a career as an attorney in New York City. He began his second career as a farmer and as an advocate of progressive agriculture, approaching this endeavor with the same idealism and leadership that he displayed in other aspects of his life. He ran Morven Park farm as a model of efficiency and productivity and shared what he learned with other farmers, who would eventually encourage him to run for governor.

**Equestrian Center:** Home to internationally recognized competitions from every English riding discipline, Morven Park attracts the country's top riders and horses to its multi-faceted event facility. Twice a year, Morven Park hosts its Horse Trials, a triathlon for horses and riders and an action-filled experience for spectators.





## What is Core Stability?

By Josh Funk - Rehab 2 Perform  
*Physical Therapy and Performance Training*

What is core stability? No, seriously, what is the definition of core stability? Is it the ability to have 6 pack abs? Is it the ability to hollow out, or suck in, my abdominal region? Is it the ability to “brace” my abs with everything that I do? How do I achieve what many people consider to be one of the key components of athletic performance and injury prevention, if I don’t know what it is?

A lot has changed in the past few years and we are learning more and more about how the body functions on an optimal and suboptimal level. Gone are the days of crunches and russian twists and enter the new era of breathing and a new buzzword, pressure.

Many of the same muscles used for optimal postural control and stabilization, also happen to be the same muscles used for breathing: the diaphragm, transverse abdominis, obliques and pelvic floor musculature. If you look at these muscles, their connections and where they are positioned, you will notice that they form a barrel of sorts in the mid-section of your body. This “barrel” is an area that is an essential to maintaining optimal position of your body as well as proper breathing mechanics necessary for high performance. When these muscles perform in coordination with one another, we create intra-abdominal pressure which is necessary for the ability of our body to maintain a neutral posture necessary for daily activity, recreation and competition.

A lack of control of these muscles has been linked to increased incidence of low back pain, Sacroiliac joint pain (SIJ pain) and a variety of other postural faults (excessive lordosis, flattening of the thoracic spine, etc.) Individuals that do not show control of these muscles will have a diaphragm that is “flattened”, or in a position of inhalation, rather than a diaphragm that is in a domed, exhalation position. Along with the suboptimal diaphragm position, we will see decreased activity of the abdominal musculature as well as pelvic floor musculature. In this instance, there is a lack of intra-abdominal pressure, much like a barrel with a leak.

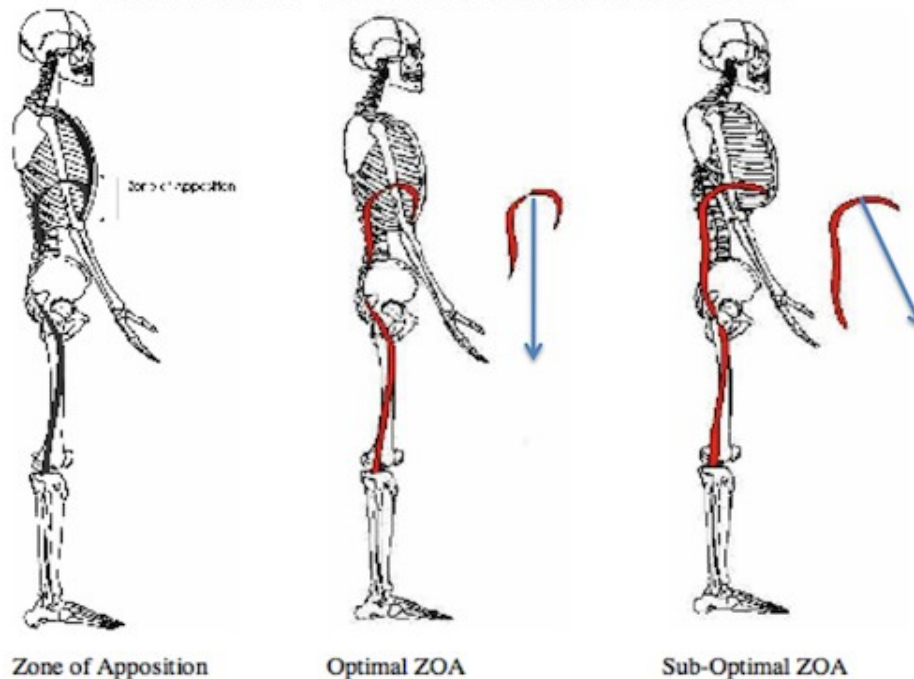
In order to control these muscles, we need to first start by putting the body in a more optimal position for them to function. Without proper position, it is extremely difficult for our muscles (yes the diaphragm is a muscle) to function in an optimal manner. This starts with focusing on being in a ribs down position with all activity. The years of standing as tall and as straight as you can are gone. When you stand as tall as you can, you place your body in an extended position, with ribs that are externally rotated, or flared, in the front of your body. This has widespread effects which compromise the ability of our muscles to function the way they were intended to. People should focus more on “being in the middle” and finding a position where your ribs are down and more internally rotated, creating a position in which the diaphragm, abdominals and pelvic floor can function optimally. In my world, we call this establishing a Zone of Apposition (ZOA).

Continued on next page



Continued from previous

Taken from Postural Restoration Institute®



Without a proper Zone of Apposition, there are a cascade of potential issues that may arise such as the following:

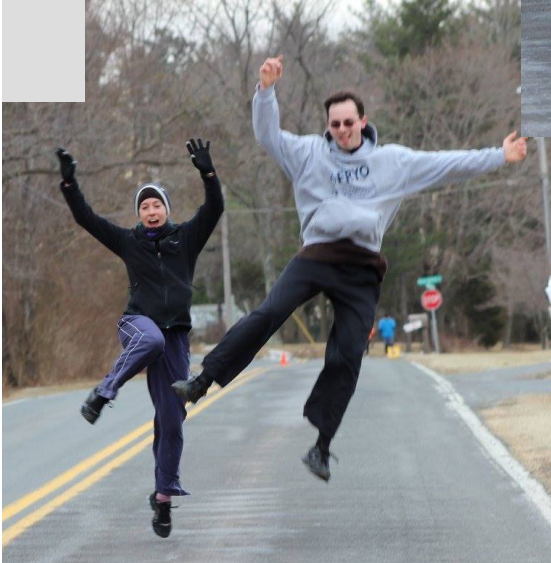
1. Potential hyperactivity or hypertonicity (high tension/tone) in certain accessory muscles of respiration (scalenes, SCM, levator scapulae, pec minor, trapezius, etc.)
2. Compromised scapular/shoulder stability
3. Increase sympathetic drive (fight or flight response)
4. Anterior weight shift (which can cause a whole host of lower body issues such as shin splints, plantar fasciitis, achilles tendonitis)

In addition to maintaining a ribs down position with daily activity, recreation and competition, it is imperative that we focus on the quality of movement with our breathing. As we go about our daily activities, we should not be focusing on a deep belly breath, but focus on a circumferential, or “full barrel”, inhalation. By emphasizing this barrel breath, we ensure that ribs are expanding, in addition to keeping a neutral spine with each breath in, as opposed to potentially increased the curve of your low back with each breath. This is particularly important for running as our respiration, and ability to breath properly, are a very important part of the sport! Without efficient breathing patterns, we run the risk of fatiguing sooner than we would like, or potentially ending up injured in the long run!

In the world of running, the smallest change can contribute to major improvements in running quality, times and/or overall enjoyment. Reinforcing proper breathing mechanics may be just the change you need to hit a PR in 2015! <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2971640/>

For questions or thoughts regarding this article, feel free to reach out to Dr. [Josh Funk at Info@Rehab2Perform.com](mailto:Info@Rehab2Perform.com). Thanks!

LEWIS MEMORIAL 10-MILE RACE



Check out the next issue of Intervals for the history and background to the Lewis Memorial Race

**The very first Lewis 10 Miler Race Report and my  
first official 10 mile race EVER!**  
Siobhan Leonardis FSRC Member

As many of you know I spend most of runs in the woods and on the trails. So showing up to this tough 10 mile ROAD race was very out of my character. With the encouragement of my coach Lori Cooper, and in the spirit of running my first marathon nearly 5 years ago running the Lewis made sense. This race would officially be my longest ROAD race in 5 years. The timing felt right to literally come out of the woods and see what these ol' trail legs can do.

With a 50K in Arkansas, in two weeks these fast 10 miles would make for a great mental game to tap into on race day. Lori saw the Lewis run being a "perfect fit" in my training plan.

The Tuesday prior, Lori and I went out for a beautiful evening run (full moon that night :) We caught up on my previous workouts, upcoming runs for the week as well as discussed the Lewis Run.

For those of you who don't know about this Steeplechaser favorite. These 10 miles have close to 1000ft of elevation gain through the back country roads of Frederick, MD. Registration consists of bringing a breakfast item and predicting your finishing time. You are not allowed to look at your watch and the runner that comes closest to their predicted time is the winner.

So on our Tuesday jaunt, in conversation Lori threw out a time of 1:16 that she thought I could finish in. I thought to myself holy crap that is REALLY fast! I'm not sure I can do that. She encouraged me that it's totally possible. It was going to be hard and get real uncomfortable but it's do-able. Plus, she's been staring at my data for the past 6 weeks so she must know what she is talking about, Right?

The weekend approaches and I spent Friday evening out with my two friends from high school (Yes, I am still very close with my friends from High School!) at Founding Farmers in Rockville. I tried so hard to make good decisions knowing that the race was the next morning and I wanted to be a 100% to give my full effort. I chose not to drink but my love for food took over and next thing I know I am devouring butter, oil, cheese coated vegetables and handmade butternut stuffed ravioli's. Followed by a slice of chocolate ganache cake with hand churned raspberry flavored ice cream. Sounds delicious right? Well it was!

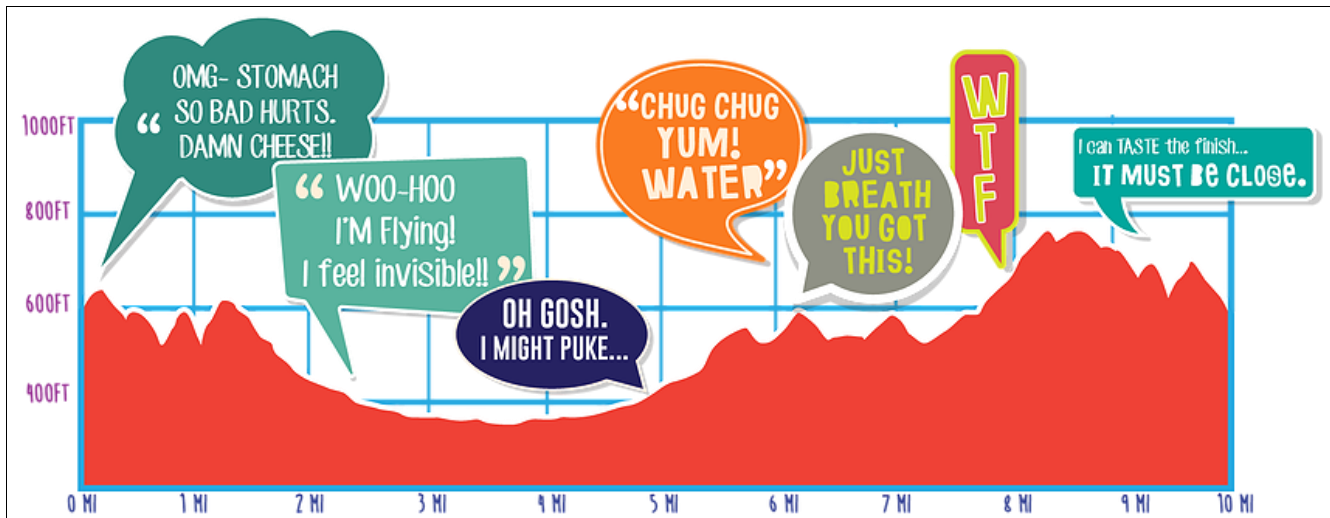
However my 96% Vegan gut was not agreeing with me when I abruptly woke up at 5:30 in the morning with my stomach screaming at me. A road runner's worst nightmare. I started the morning mildly disciplining myself "you know better Siobhan, what were you thinking, you have sabotaged yourself!" My reply back to myself "but the Cheese, Ice Cream and Cake was so worth it...not really"

Race morning, I make my way to the Eastview Clubhouse. I drop off my sad contribution of 5 bananas (I say sad because the Steeps don't mess around when it comes to breakfast runs.) I proceed to write my name down and 1:16 for my predicted time without over thinking it. I was feeling so awful still and just thought I'll just put it down, whatever Lori thinks is right it probably is.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

I stand at the start 65 runners deep, listening to Mark Lawrence shared his excitement, words of wisdom and then off we went... The full 10 miles went a little something like this:



while listening to my all time favorite Shakey Graves song over and over and over again. (It was the fuel to my fire!). I crossed the line and looked back at the clock 1:16:05! how did I just do that?! Like almost every run I have done since working with Lori, I somehow managed to shock myself yet once again. Lori was standing there as I hugged her and told her this goes in the record book of coaching awesomeness! (If there ever was such a thing.)

So, yes you guessed it folks Winner Winner Chicken Dinner **WE** (Lori and I) won the 2015 Lewis 10 Mile Race.

Post-race the Clubhouse was filled with the most delightful breakfast food, camaraderie and runner spirit. I reflected on where my running journey began more than 5 years ago in AR when I was training for my first marathon. I spent nearly all of those training miles by myself, as I did not know anyone to share those miles with. And now my journey has led to be surrounded by the most caring and compassionate running community anyone could ask for.

I have been running for years; and have completed a **WIDE** variety of races but like many others I still have **firsts**. After 5 years of completely embracing this sport as an athlete I feel as though I have discovered another beauty to running. There will always be a challenge. There will always be a new moment. There will always be opportunities to push beyond the doubt. **There will always be firsts.**

As Ultra Runner Training tagline states "we bring out the runner in you." These past few years I may have been "wandering" around in the woods feeling very alive on the trail but; this past Saturday I found a different kind of aliveness. It's called believing in yourself.

There are MANY Steeps that PR'd and several that finished much faster than their predicted time. Congratulations to ALL of you! Especially to a few of you that finished your very first 10 Mile Race.

Mark Lawrence and volunteers, Thank you so much for all you're your time and putting on a fantastic race! We are so lucky to have people like you to make this community and race possible.

I hope you get to experience your next "**running first**" soon! Happy Trails! the lil' redhead

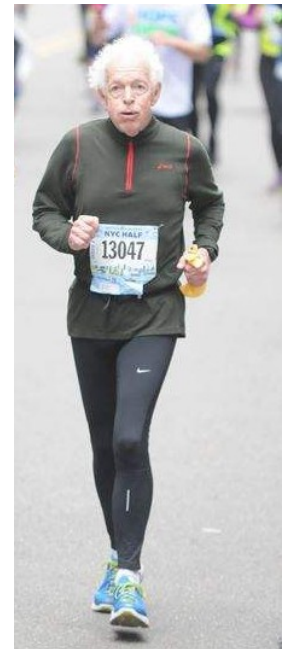


### A Runner’s New York City Adventure

By John Clarke FSRC Member

Early morning on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March found me on a routine 3 mile run in rural Maryland. I met one car, one school bus and zero people. I never see people. Breakfast later overlooked a snowy field of cows. A very normal, very rural start to the weekend. But later that day after a 3 hour train ride, checking in at a hotel, and a cab ride to the show Mama Mia, my wife Toni and I were fully immersed in the crazy urban bustle of the Big Apple.

We made the journey so that I could compete in the NYC Half Marathon on the Sunday morning. I had participated in the Frederick Running Festival Half for several years but had never entered a race with over 19,000 finishers. Saturday, which was cold and rainy, was mostly spent finding times, places and transport options for both the start of the race at the south end of Central Park and its end at the southern tip of Manhattan. I prayed fervently for the cold rain to quit. For my all-important pre-race pasta binge that evening my wife and I were joined by a dear daughter and granddaughter. My small but very important fan club.



Our prayers were answered and the rain stopped overnight. Waiting in the corral was the worst part for me. The temperature was just over 40 F with a breeze and there was an hour between leaving my warm clothing stuffed into the drop bags, which were to be taken to the finish, and my starting to run. So I was very nearly at the point of uncontrolled shivering just before the race started and for at least a mile my feet did not feel normal. I should have avoided being so cold by taking an extra layer of clothing into the corral and throwing it into the “donation” bins provided when the race started. I had been warned about that wait but thought at 40 F I would be fine. I was in the second of three waves of runners which began a long 15 minutes behind the start of the first wave.

At last we got moving and the cold soon turned to my advantage as I do better in cold weather. In spite of the three waves and the thirty corrals spreading out the runners, .....continued on next page

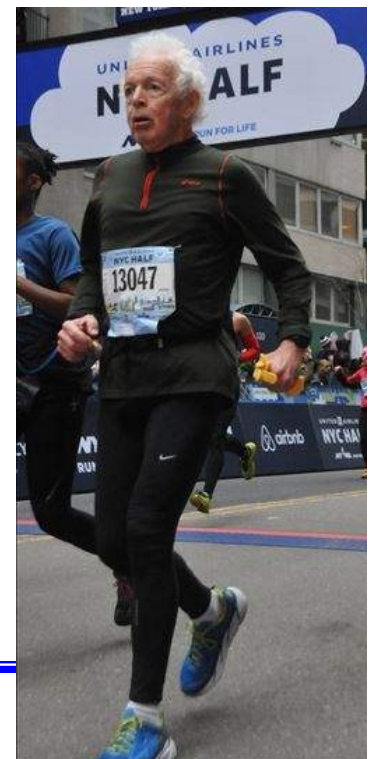


the Central Park roads were crowded with runners. There were some spectators in the park and I had to smile when I heard an elderly man with a dog on a leash proclaiming in a loud voice that he “had to cross over and could not wait there all day”. If he and his dog had made a dash for it, I would have feared for their safety. The hills in Central Park surprised me. I had expected level ground, but I made an effort to take advantage of the down sides. After six miles the route left the park and joined Seventh Avenue. The spectators there were loud and their enthusiastic cheering really did help. This is where I felt pleased to be part of something good for so many people. I had hoped to keep a 1:55 pacer sign in view but I never saw any signs or pacer uniforms. Where is Malcolm when you need him?

In Times Square I saw kids racing in the opposite direction on the other side of the road – a 1500 meter innovation begun this year. About mile 8 we runners emerged from the sheltered skyscraper lined streets onto the more exposed highway alongside the Hudson River. At Chelsea Pier the road ahead points directly at the new Freedom Tower about 2 miles away. It always seems to take forever to get closer to huge things like that. After mile 10 my body scolded me for going beyond my normal running distance. Then we dived down into an underpass which seemed very long indeed: no cheering crowds, just oppressive darkness. At last we emerged into strong daylight again and, wonder of wonders, I could see an 1:55 pace flag jogging perhaps just 50 yards ahead. It crossed my mind to try and catch it but my legs disagreed vehemently. My official time was 1 hour 56 minutes 35 seconds, which is short enough to give me first place in the 75-79 age bracket. After the finish was a walk along the recovery stretch. There were photo opportunities, food bags, plastic blankets which flapped in the increasing wind and, of course, lines of toilets. My mini fan club was waiting where we had arranged. Coffee and a blueberry muffin tasted better than ever.

My watch had recorded the paces for each mile. They varied from 7:55 to 9:09 except for mile 13 at 12:22! There are always “what if” questions. Mine is “what if I had kept that 13th mile to a 9:00 pace?” Then I would have been very close to my best time ever.

**At the age of 77 .. I must be crazy to even think about next time...**




---

### United Airlines NYC Half 2015

Location: Central Park to Downtown, NYC

Weather: 42 degrees, 60% humidity, wind 10-18 mph

John Clarke 1<sup>st</sup> in his age group ahead of runner from Argentina and Switzerland

Overall place 7240; Gender place: 4779: Total number of Finishers 19,455

**Tomorrow is another day and there will be another battle - Sebastian Coe**