

50Sub4 Rambles Spring 2009

Spring marathon season has drawn to a close and it has been a very successful one for the Club and its members. Since our formal start-up on January 1, we have climbed over the 50-member mark. We represent 24 states and Canada, with the largest groups from Texas and Pennsylvania. Curiously, we have more members (two very hardy and fast women) from Alaska than from California.

We remain the only time-based marathon club and I like to think of us as the "Boston Marathon" of running clubs. Also, after having interacted with many of you via email over the past several months, I think we would be a pretty interesting group to be around if we were ever able to get in the same place at one time.

Speaking of the Boston Marathon, we were well-represented at Boston. **Chuck Engle** led the way with a 3:02:43, followed closely by **Gary Krugger** (a 24-year-old wunderkind who is quickly knocking off states with times in the low 3s and upper 2s) in 3:04:24. Other finishers included **Kevin Abraszek** (NY), **Ted Blankenship** (AL), **Gary Circosta** (MA), **Jeff Hill** (TX), **Steve Hillman** (O Canada), **Lou Kneeshaw** (TX), **David Nemoto** (TX), **Thomas Schmitt** (IL) and the "grand dame" of our club, **Amy Yanni** (SD).

Honors and Accolades

We have to begin with a very deep "we are unworthy" bow to our most crazed member - **Chuck Engle**. Chuck recently claimed his 75th OVERALL WINNER placing at the Brookings, SD Marathon (one of my favorite marathons). Thus far, I have him down for 16 victories in the 29 (and counting) marathons he's run so far in 2009 ;-). All of them were under 3 hours with the exception of Boston, where he was acting as a guide runner to an exceptionally fast disabled runner from the UK. Chuck provided much-needed perspective to us "mortal" runners.

Another overall winners in the Spring was **Mark Ott (MI)**, who won the Larry Yeagle Trail Marathon in Ruston, LA in 3:48:30 and captured 2nd overall at the Free State Trail Marathon in Lawrence, KS in 3:25:50. Mark is actually a sub-3hr runner who is in danger of losing his "Gazelle" status because he keeps doing these masochistic trail marathons.

One of our newest members, **Deb Cropper (AK)**, had several impressive performances in the spring season. She captured the overall women's title at the Kentucky Derby Festival Marathon (3:15:05) under steamy conditions and also captured the overall women's title at the Running from an Angel Marathon (Boulder City, NV) in 3:30:24. She also took her age group award at the Mercedes Marathon with a 3:10:41.

Monica Huff (GA) came all the way from Athens, GA to capture the overall women's title at the Miracle Match Marathon in Waco, TX (3:29:26). This was a hilly and challenging course and Monica represented us well. She bettered this time two months later at Fargo with a 3:19:59

Susan Rouse (TX) who, in her zeal to finish the Bataan Memorial Death March in under 4 hours, actually claimed the 2nd overall women's place AND a Boston Marathon qualifier in 3:56:52. Not many people can claim to having qualified for Boston at a "Death March." Susan also claimed an age-group win at the Kentucky Derby Marathon and has one of the longest consecutive-year streaks at the Houston Marathon. Susan also delights in knowing that she finished 5 minutes ahead of me in last November's Ironman Arizona race.

Another of our gazelles, **John Van Steenbergh (GA)**, placed 3rd overall at the Death Valley Trail Marathon in 3:01:24. The pictures and narrative of the course (and weather) are really intimidating. Those of you that just don't get enough pain from a regular marathon should add this one to your list.

Dane Rauschenberg (UT) seems to be peaking in his performances as he knocks off the states at a pretty rapid clip. He garnered a 2nd place age-group at the Ogden Marathon (2:49:36) and a 3rd place age-group at the Mississippi Blues Marathon (3:06:14).

Gary Krugger (PA) just started serious marathoning in 2008 (okay, he was only 23). This spring, he has captured a 2nd place age-group in 3:06:08 at the Little Rock Marathon and a 1st place age-group at the Shamrock Marathon in Virginia Beach (2:59:42).

Finally, for someone that wasn't athletic enough to play any varsity sports in high school (believe me, I tried!) and who it took 62 marathons before I finally qualified for Boston, I, for the first time EVER, took home some hardware from a couple of my spring marathons. I had a 3rd place masters finish (yes, there were more than 3 finishers) at the Surfside Beach Marathon (26.2 miles of running on hard-packed sand) and a 1st place age-group placing at the Seabrook Lucky Trails Marathon. All of which does nothing to explain my disappointing 3:27 time at Boston.

RESULTS

Race results reflecting times through 5/17 (and a few past that) are currently posted on the website. As always, let me know if there are any inaccuracies and please keep me posted as you knock off your states. We have quite a few members that are at 40+ states.

CLUB APPAREL

As noted in a previous e-mail, we finally have a variety of t-shirts, hats and singlets for those of you interested. They are all displayed on the website along with a Adobe Acrobat form that can be filled-in and printed out.

THINGS I'VE LEARNED -

I'm hoping to make this a regular feature in our newsletters so that our members can dispense some things they've learned about running and other things along their life journey. Here are some "nuggets of wisdom" I've learned thus far along the road of life:

- Non-stop flights are almost always better, even if they're a little more expensive;
- A heart rate monitor keeps you honest in your running efforts;
- The Garmin 305 gives a runner any information they really need to know;
- Smaller marathons tend to be a lot more enjoyable than the huge ones;
- Music is one of the best performance-enhancing (and boredom reducing) tools for those of us that have to do most of our training solo;
- Our bodies are capable of more than we sometimes give them credit for;
- There is always someone out there that is faster or that can go farther. At the end of the day, the race is against the goals you set for yourself;
- There are few experiences less pleasurable (for you or your seatmate) than hopping on a plane after a marathon without having had a shower;
- There is always something interesting to be found wherever you travel—it's just a matter of finding it out.
- Other runners seem to be more impressed by the 50sub4 challenge than non-runners. I think non-runners just don't have a frame of reference to start from.
- I have met very few ill-tempered runners - we're a pretty likeable bunch.
- Walking 45 seconds every mile until you get to Mile 23 will get you a 3:45 marathon with a very quick recovery. Try it sometime. It's also an easy way to shake an overly chatty fellow runner ;-)
- The pre-race "official" pasta dinner very quickly loses its appeal after the first few.
- Sometimes the "race day magic" won't be there - no matter how hard you've prepared. Those are the days you just get through the race, finish healthy, and move on.

Club Involvement Opportunities

Now that we have reached "critical mass," I'm hoping that I might be able to get some volunteers in the following areas:

- **Newsletter Editor** - Someone who will put together a brief quarterly newsletter to be sent via e-mail to club members updating the latest Club happenings. Hopefully this can include some pictures, helpful links, etc.
- **Facebook Czar** - if anyone out there is proficient in Facebook, I would be very grateful if you could administer the Club Facebook page. I've got it set up but need someone to regularly monitor it and improve its usefulness to Club members;
- **Advisory Board** - Anyone who has ever facilitated or organized a running club (or who would like to) and has ideas to contribute to how we could make this a better entity, I would very much welcome your input (i.e. should we keep it low-key like it is, have Club reunions on a semi-annual basis at popular marathons, have dues, etc.)
- **Outreach** - I'm hoping to find someone that would be willing to find creative ways to reach out to prospective new members. At the moment, we are growing primarily by word-of-mouth - anyone that has expertise in "spreading the word" could really lend a hand here;
- **Website administration** - OK, I know this is a tough one but I'll throw it out there. At the moment, a friend of mine is administering the website on a "gratis" basis as a favor to the running community. His expertise (and time) is limited but he has provided us with a basic and reasonably well-functioning website. If anyone has any expertise in this area, that would be awesome.

OK—that's it. Keep your updates coming in. Stay healthy and I'm hoping to run (no pun intended) into some of you this fall at an upcoming marathon.

Happy Running

Jeff