

Making Tracks



Why Do I Run?

By Kyle Buck

I was out for a run the other evening along Bayshore in Safety Harbor. I stopped at my favorite water fountain at the marina and was approached by an elderly couple out for a walk. I always get a warm and fuzzy feeling when I see older couples holding hands, so I gave them a smile and said hello. The gentleman asked me how many miles I was running without hesitation. I replied, to which he smiled and launched into a story about his youth and running through the fields in Europe. You could see his eyes light up as he told this story. His wife started to shake her head. I knew this gesture, having witnessed it from my own wife. It means, "oh geeze, here we go again with this story for the thousandth time. Wake me when it's over." He was unfazed and told the whole story, finishing with a plea that I appreciate what I have. It was very clear he would love to be out there running with me. I thought about this encounter for the rest of my run and well into the night. I got me thinking about my own appreciation of running and the purpose behind it.

Having run all of my life, I never really thought to question my reasons for heading out the door every day. I would get questioned frequently about why I ran and trained. To most people it seemed like work with not much reward. Like many other runners, my answer to this "why" question was a quick reference to a race I was training for and because I liked to run. It would have been an honest answer too; there really wasn't a lot of depth or appreciation to my running.

Beginning with the birth of my first son, I began to think about this "why" in a bigger sense. I suddenly saw a purpose to my daily miles and speed work that transcended the next race. I now wanted my running self to represent something in the eyes of my son. I wanted to be his Superman. I pictured other dads out there sitting on the sofa watching the game while I was pounding out the miles. I would hope that all parents are heroes and an inspiration in their kid's eyes, but I wanted to make sure I was setting a good example for my son that went above and beyond the usual.

The funny thing about this whole running with purpose is that it has a tendency to expand. I have become more and more introspective on my runs. In fact, I never take my iPod on runs now so I have this time to think. I now have two sons and my running purpose has expanded exponentially. I now have to run farther just so I can put all of my thoughts in order. It is a vicious circle, really.

My most recent thoughts have extended out beyond my running for my children. Sure, being disciplined and in shape sets a great example for my sons, but I am now looking for more. I think my desire to maintain fitness and be at my best stems from my being a cancer survivor. This connection hit me a while back on a long run and has stuck with me. For many years I felt embarrassed by the fact that I had cancer. I felt weaker and vulnerable, so I subconsciously turned this into a deep need to run and stay in shape. I was only twenty when diagnosed, and the impact on my life has been huge. What I regret though is that I have just figured this all out.

My new mission in life is not only to be a physical Superman to my boys, but an all around Superman. I want to help raise awareness through something that helped me to gain my own awareness and give back to the sport. Running means many different things to people whether they think about it or not. The key is to think about it. Take off your headphones, leave your watch behind, and appreciate the freedom of running. There are many out there who would love to be in your shoes.

• Inside This Issue

Why Do I Run?	1,
Upcoming Events	2
President's Message	3
Greetings from Southern California	4
Running for Bluebells	5
Turkey Trot	8

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Upcoming Events:

TURKEY TROT

1 Mile Gobbler

5K Fun Run

5K Wingding

10K Turkey Trot

Christmas Party

December 10, 2010

6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: - November 3, 2010.
 Check web site for location

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Submissions: Submit articles, "unusual" race results, photos, etc. via e-mail by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter. Please keep articles to one page due to high printing costs.

Race Flyers: Deliver 300 copies of each approved and prepaid, 8.5" x 11" race flyer to Linda Schumacher by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Contacts: Linda Schumacher: two.shoes@knology.net

GROUP RUNS:

SATURDAY Morning John Chesnut group run 7AM start s at Shelter #2

SATURDAY Morning Long Run "the loop" starts at Clearwater City Hall at 6:00 AM. Contact: Kathleen Roach at kathleenxyz@hotmail.com

SUNDAY Morning 6:00AM Contact: Mac Jacobs @macjacobs@hotmail.com

TUESDAY AM track 4:30AM
 Clearwater High School

Volunteers Needed

E-Mail

Linda Schumacher
 (two.shoes@knology.net)

Or Skip Rogers @trotskip1@verizon.net

Ad-Rates:

Item	1 Month	1 Year
Business Card	\$20	\$180
1/4 Page	\$50	\$450
1/2 Page	\$75	\$675
Full Page	\$125	\$1125
Race Flyer	\$100	---

President's Message by Skip Rogers

It's that time of the year again when turkey lovers who love to run gather for an appetite-inducing morning of good-natured competition.

All races begin at Keene Road just south of Gulf to Bay Blvd. (except the 5k Fun Run) and end in Jack White Stadium at Clearwater High School.

Proceeds from the St. Petersburg Times Turkey Trot will be donated to many local charities, including the West Florida Runners Club Scholarship Programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Pinellas County and the Children's Heart Foundation. We'll be collecting canned goods and non-perishable food items in the stadium on race day. All collected foods will be given to the Food Pantry Program at Religious Community Services, Inc.



GREETINGS FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Victor Gambone

Greetings from SOCAL,

We hope you are all well and enjoying the cooler Fall weather.

Wow! Does time fly! It has been 15 months for Barbara and 8 months for Victor since moving from the beautiful Sunshine State. Compared to Tampa Bay, the Southern California weather has been quite boring. Except for 3 days in the past year, we haven't turned on either the heat or A/C. No afternoon thundershowers here either. In fact, we haven't seen rain for 6 months.

Running, however, has been awesome. With the extended spring/summer daylight hours, we have been able to run either before or after work in "daylight" with temps in the 55-70 degree range. With the terrain here there is no escaping a hill work out wherever we run.

We have been doing a bit of trail running as well. What a surprise to connect with Judy Maguire at the Billy Goat Hill Climb, a half marathon with a 2300 ft. climb. Judy is living just South of LA. She is a buyer for Costco. She continues to be great runner - now excelling on the trail.

We were fortunate to make the lottery for the St. George (Utah) Marathon. Barbara placed 2nd in the 55-59 age group with a time of 3:35:37. Victor beat his Boston qualifying time by 22 minutes with a time of 3:38:24.

We now have 26 Koi fish and 5 water turtles in the three tiered waterfall pond in the front yard. We enjoy breakfast on the patio there almost every morning. Renovation of the backyard patio is underway. We expect to have the in-ground infinity pool hot tub, fire pit, and barbeque done before Christmas.

It was great to get together with Ron Cote while we were in San Francisco for the Half Marathon in July. In two weeks Ron will be coming to visit us in Laguna Beach. We plan to run the Long Beach Half Marathon together.

Today marks the 12th anniversary of the day that we first met to run the classic WFYRC Sunday loop. We will be toasting our many good friends in Florida in celebration. We miss you all and hope that you are continuing to enjoy good health and much happiness.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Victor and Barbara

Victor Gambone, Jr. & Barbara Eckes

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**Running for Bluebells
(And What I Really Found There)**

By Mike Patterson

BULL RUN STORY

This is the story of how I lived my dream, or at least one of them. I had been telling people for almost five years that I wanted to run 55 miles when I turned 55. Well, that birthday came, and I realized that I had to do it. Uh oh! So I found this lovely little race in Virginia, where the Civil War Bull Run battles took place. It was now covered with dainty little bluebells that ran along streams of sweet-smelling water... or so the advertisement said. So I packed my bag, took along my friend Trevor to be my crewman and set out to complete my goal, and prove myself to all I had (regretfully) told.

I got to run with this guy Robert Moody from North Carolina for awhile but lost track of him after leaving the 16 mile aid station. Our paths would cross later. The first 16 miles upriver was the easier part of the race course (running through the bluebells) The last 34.4 miles downriver from Hemlock Park was where the fun really began!



After leaving Hemlock Park we worked our way through some hills down to the Bull Run. Heading down river, through a relatively easy section, for a few miles with more bluebells along the water's edge, we got into the serious hills. The run quickly reduced to walk up the hill, run down the hill, cross the stream, walk up the hill, run down the hill, cross the next stream...keep repeating. Stream crossings are either on concrete cylinders, wooden walking bridges, flat natural stones stream or sometimes shoe-sucking mud. I am getting passed by everybody (including Robert who has dealt with his blister and is back in the game) going up the hills. The local runners usually jog them, and most can at least power-walk them. I can barely walk them, having to catch my breath at the top before I start running again. Note to self: introduce yourself to the stair-master at the gym!

By mile 26 I am having serious doubts about my ability to finish this course. I am seriously under-trained for this place. "Alright, Mike," I say to myself, "start planning the excuses... but where do I bow out?" I think I could at the Wolf Shoals aid station at Mile 26.1 just ahead. At least I can say I did a marathon... no can't do it there, Trevor won't be there with the car since it is a remote aid station. I crest a hill and to my amazement I see a fellow that seems to be shining, as if an angel. For a brief moment, I am afraid I have died and gone to Heaven. But this man seems to have an axe and is clearing trail debris in the woods. The closer I get, I realize that instead I have made it to Kansas and that he is the Tin Man! The Aiders at Wolf Shoals had taken their cue from the Wizard of Oz and have the whole cast of characters on hand. My thoughts of quitting fade for the moment as I refuel and crack jokes with Dorothy. I leave "Totodom" in better spirits re-charged for the moment.



The next thing I remember is looking up and seeing the first runner heading back upstream to Hemlock Park... I look at my watch, I have been out here for 5 hours and 7 minutes and just over half done and this guy is hammering his way past me back to the finish...OMG! He is going at a 7:20 pace for 50.4 miles! A little while later the second guy comes by then the third guy, then no one...

The trail starts looking familiar as I remember checking this section out yesterday and I know that means the Fountainhead Aid Station is just up that next hill. Trevor is there and another chance to recharge and reload. I bought some Energy Smoothies called "Boost" at a grocery store the day before and decided to try one. Man they really work! The aid station fare was good all day. I favored the bananas, PB&J sandwiches and either Ginger Ale or Mountain Dew. I was soon out on the trail again to do the White Loop which is upland from the river. Finally, I reach the Do Loop on the map. I see the guy in yellow from the trail spill earlier. He is walking now so I catch him. But just before I get to him he starts running again. So we go back and forth with him leading and me following for a mile or two. Every time I get close he takes off, and he seems to be able to walk the hills faster than me. He was anti-social I guess, I certainly wasn't going to pass him!

I make it back to Fountainhead (mile 38) after some tough mud and more hills. Trevor is there and I meet him and sit in a chair to change my socks again. This time it is not so easy. I cramp up every time I try to pull off the shoes. This is the first sign of things to come. With Trevor's help they get off and I re-coat my feet with Body Glide and get the new pair of socks on, then the shoes. I try to put my gators on but Trevor notices I have not yet tied my shoelaces. I am at the tipping point both mentally and physically and leaking oil badly. He is definitely earning his keep on the trip now. The Aiders get my bottles re-filled. Trevor tries to be encouraging, "Mr. Patterson, you are 75% done and one hour and 6 minutes ahead of the cut-off." I say something stupid like "great" but I am thinking differently. There are still 12 plus miles to go and I am done, caput, spent, finished...

There are two younger guys in the aid station, Vic and Joe, when I get there and I leave before they do. But it is not long before they catch me. So I tag along after them. We run/walk the next few miles together. Joe, who I had seen earlier and told that I was done and quitting, now says, "See you can do it you're going to make it from here". He seems to have a more accurate sense of just how far we have to go then my Garmin. I guess he is a local runner. We make it back up to the Wolf Shoals Aid Station, I see the Aider all dressed up as the "Scarecrow" with straw coming out of every piece of clothing. For some reason all I can think of is her catching on fire. So I do my best Disco Inferno interpretation with the emphasis on "Burn, baby, burn". She looks at me with this half smile shaking her head. She must be thinking "he's lost it and needs to sit down". Speaking of sitting down, I see the guy in the yellow shirt seated in a chair. I wonder if he quit because he did not pass me again.

Vic, Joe and I push out again doing our run/walk another 5 miles together. Coming over a hill, we see the bridge at the Bull Run Marina about a half mile away (the last aid station before the finish). I am leading at this point and we run down toward the bridge. While attempting to negotiate the rocks under the bridge my left calf cramps big time and I go down on the rocks. Great, now I am not only leaking oil but there is blood in the water too. Joe and Vic stay with me until the cramp is worked out and we make it up to the aid station on the other side of the bridge. Trevor meets me and walks with me up to the aid station. He remarks with a smile, "Well Mr. Patterson you are done with the 45 mile warm up and now ready for the 5 mile sprint." I can tell by his rather smart remark that he is now feeling like he has this "crew" thing down pat. I want to slap him but am too tired to do it. I refuel once more. I replenish my empty bag of Enduralites. If I am cramping this bad, they are the only thing that will help. I take one at the aid station, a small banana, more PB&J and wash the whole mess down with a soft-drink. Immediately, I almost puke it all back up while the volunteers in horror try to redirect me away from the food table. It doesn't come up. I am 5.5 miles from here to the finish. I know I can make it only if I DNF, or "DO NOTHING FATAL!" So I head out from the aid station walking my way back to the finish. Trevor comes along for the first 1/4 mile then turns back to get the car. My two new-found buddies, Joe and Vic come jogging up from behind and ask about the leg. I say it is feeling a little better but I am going to walk it in. They run on. More people pass me, then more. I jog at times after scanning the trail to make sure there are no impediments, just enough to keep my mile pace less than 20 minutes.

I come out of the woods and there is a wide gravel area split by a group of trees with soccer fields beyond. I vaguely remember running out this way. But which way do I go? No blue ribbon here to mark the trail. I go right on the gravel by the trees, but after awhile it does not look familiar. Where is the white wood fence along the soccer field we ran by? I see more runners coming up from behind taking the gravel at the left side of the stand of trees, then turning at the edge of the soccer field. Thank God for them coming along! I am saved from doing "bonus miles" or worst getting lost and not finishing. I retrace my steps back to the start of the group of trees and run after the other runners on the gravel, then along the picket fence and into the field beyond, but they are getting further and further away and I lose them when they enter the woods and hills again.

Evening is coming with the sun starting to set and the air is cooling down again. This feels good and I walk on. Finally, I reach a tall hill that has earthen steps built into it going up to the summit. This looks familiar from the early morning first loop upstream. Could it be the trail to Hemlock Park and the finish? A girl shows up on top of the hill looking down the trail past me for some fellow runner who has not made it in. I ask her where we are and she says, "Why, the finish!" I smile and ask "How far?" and she responds "About 3/4 of a mile". When I reach the top of the hill I take off over a tree-lined meadow with some wooden park structures at the other end and not a soul around. Past the structures is a gravel road that will take me the last bit to the finish. Around the bend on the road I hear shouts and applause. Another runner has finished and when I make it around the bend it will be my turn!

Making the final curve I see several hundred people up at the top of the gravel road cheering me on. I pick up the pace in response to the cheering, but it is no sprint, just a faster shuffle. A little girl runs out to meet me and gives me a bouquet of handpicked wild flowers just before the finish. I see the clock and it says 12:02! Wow, 50.4 miles done, still have an hour to spare and just in time for dinner! Trevor is there to greet me. I see Robert Moody eating his veggie-burger at a shelter and sit down next to him. We share stories over a post race dinner provided by the VHTRC.



I came here to run in the Bluebells and see Civil War History, only to be broken by the hills. I am grateful to have finished! HAPPY TRAILS!

West Florida Y Runners Club

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TURKEY TROT 2010

November 25, 2010

