



Washington Running Club Newsletter

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On Giving Back

Contributed by Kit Wells

A couple of weeks after my first happy encounter with WRC, I narrowly avoided performing the most common civic function a modern runner ever appears to serve: [finding a dead body](#).

I might have found what I wasn't looking for, if not for the distraction of heated debate and spicy gossip shared with a college track teammate, whose lead I blindly followed that fateful morning. Only when criss-crossing our path later in the afternoon, to fetch some gas at "Run In Jim's" for the Mystery Machine, did we learn of our close call. A television reporter and his cameraman from the local affiliate of a national network had just wrapped up their video coverage, standing at the gas station, adjacent to a bike path, alongside a creek that contained the body. They had previously interviewed the jogger who actually found the drowned body from the bike path. That attentive jogger trailed us by about ten minutes. The useful, responsible jogger alerted the oblivious police, whose warm and cozy station was four hundred feet away from the site.

When we saw him, the reporter was interviewing a local woman (regular, 11:00/ mile) while she was pumping gas (regular unleaded, \$3.28/ gallon). The local woman, who learned about the day's unpleasant news from Twitter, speculated that the victim might have been a soldier from a nearby Army base. The professional reporter's astute follow-up question was, "Oh, really?" In fact, the body was that of a paratrooper who had recently returned from a repeat deployment to Afghanistan, a front where our Nobel Peace Prize winning President continues to wage an untenable and increasingly unpopular war with fatigued veterans.

When we told the reporter about our passing through the site just before the jogger that morning, and our not noticing a body laying in the creek, his eyes grew wide and he begged us for an interview. We declined, on account of the Twitterati giving us nothing savory to work with, thus avoiding the only entertainment function a Washingtonian can ever offer this world: to give good quote.

Unnerved by this revealed sad news which went untwittered-unto-us, we indulged in some emergency retail and food therapy for the afternoon's snacking smörgåsbord. My teammate bagged an outrageously expensive coffee bean burr grinder, and I secured double rations of soppresata. From a halcyonic haze of caffeine, fat, meat, and salt, I dwelt upon how useless I felt to most other people as a runner, particularly while running.

So, as you, dear reader, have probably deduced, when WRC's Carla Freyvogel stepped up this year to champion several outreach and community events for the club in 2012, the opportunity came as no small source of relief to me. Here was the antidote to my losing streak at both finding dead bodies and possibly other things that runners might conceivably do to "give back", or "[pay it forward](#)", or "pawn for quick karma with the hope of one day buying it back at considerable markup"! Whatever the euphemistic formula might be, Carla's enthusiasm has forged several novel ways for our club to engage as a more active presence in the greater Washington D.C. community, by means which feel entirely authentic to me as an experienced runner.

I attended three of these WRC service events in 2012: the Girls on the Run 5K at GMU in May, the Rock Creek Park Cleanup in September, and the Service Day (i.e. planting tulips and raking leaves) in November. Without a doubt,

the Rock Creek Park Cleanup was my favorite occasion for several reasons. First, I could enjoy that special feeling of not being that kind of runner who finds forensic evidence of a foul play (not the experience our crime solvers: Josh Kalla, Rick Kennedy, Ben Stutts, and Kirk Masterson). Second, I learned that the DoJ's Dan Yi knows quite a lot about hobos and their natural habitats located throughout Rock Creek Park. Third, the work we volunteered to do was hard, dirty, required a lot of agility, and mercifully didn't involve wearing some silly un-reusable hat or t-shirt. On the contrary, there was an impressive display of vintage race t-shirts spanning the better part of two decades.

Fourth, I was impressed by how thoroughly David Pittman and Nelson Paz scaled all terrain to nab trash ignored since approximately the Burning of Washington in 1814. Fifth, I learned from Geoff King about the formal dining hall racing rules at Cornell. Sixth, we received unsolicited thanks from regular people walking the paths that we were cleaning up, as well as from National Park Service police officers. Seventh, it's always a good day for truth, beauty, and wisdom, when someone asks the clarifying question of exactly which Opium War you were referring to. And finally, I really enjoyed our picnic lunch that was generously coordinated by Bill Freyvogel, staged in an incrementally more beautiful park, on gloriously mild fall day, shared with my enormously generous teammates of this [modest grass-roots club for like-minded runners](#).

I'm looking forward to one day performing other useful civic functions as a modern runner, starting with finding and giving back [driver's licenses dropped in Rock Creek Park](#) by runners, who may perhaps turn out to be sexy biographers and furtive lovers of powerful spies. Because when it comes to giving back with WRC, I too am all in.

Near Future Racing Plans

[Jingle all the Way 8K \(This Sunday!\)](#)

Race all the way with your team! Several WRC members are already signed up for this race, so expect a small turnout for next week's Sunday Distance Run.

When: Sunday, December 9, 2012 at 9 a.m.

Where: The race will start / finish on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, between 12th and 13th Streets (Freedom Plaza)

How: Registration and additional information: <http://pacersevents.com/race/jingle-all-the-way-8k/>

If you already have a WRC singlet, wear it with pride! And if you want one, please email Kirk Masterson (kirk.j.masterson@gmail.com) ASAP, so you can receive it in time for the race (assuming we have your size). The forecast indicates that it will be about 40 degrees—great race temperature, albeit a bit chilly at the starting line.

Sign up with the WRC Team during the registration—just look for us in the list of teams! The scouting report for this race indicates that WRC has a good chance at placing well in the team competition. Sign up for your chance to be a part of history! And let's be honest, the race entry fee is a better use of your greenbacks than those lottery tickets you purchased last week.

[Grand Prix proposal for 2013](#)

David Pittman has proposed a slate of races for WRC members to concentrate their efforts in 2013. Whether it becomes a bona fide Grand Prix or just an internal race series remains to be seen, but it's definitely a good idea to pick a set of race that are local, popular, easy to enter, and preferably have a team scoring component.

Here are some of the early nominees, with more to be discussed in the coming weeks:

Sun Feb 17, 2013	George Washington Birthday Classic 10k 600 Dulany St, Alexandria, VA
Sun Mar 10, 2013	St. Patrick's Day 8K Washington, DC
Sat Mar 16, 2013	Rock 'n' Roll USA Half Marathon
Sun Apr 7, 2013	Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Washington, DC

Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, April 7, 2013

Let's return to compete in the Running Club division of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom (CUCB) Ten Mile Run! First, we have to get people registered as individuals for the lottery. Only afterward, in February, can we register our teams. Please don't wait for the lottery to pass you by, resigning you to hobo-trolling for bib numbers by bartering crack on Craigslist, and driving your team captain crazy with anxiety! **Sign up for the lottery, now.**

This, from the race organizers (emphasis ours):

"The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run ... will be using a lottery system to select our 2013 race entries. Here is how the lottery system will work: Prospective entrants will be able to register for the lottery during an 11-day period **starting at 10:00 A.M. on Monday, December 3 and extending through 11:59 P.M. on Friday, December 14** on the event website, www.cherryblossom.org. When registering, prospective entrants will complete and submit the entire entry form including the credit card information. However, credit cards will not be charged unless the applicant is selected. The entry fees are \$40 (plus an approximately \$3.50 online entry fee) for the 10 Mile Run."

Last year, after a two-year hiatus from the team competition, WRC returned in force. With three teams comprising thirteen athletes, WRC increased its tally of team scores in the event's modern era (1999 and afterward) to 22 marks. The Open Men climbed onto the podium (3rd) for the first time in collective memory, with a respectable aggregate time of 2:53:56; the Open Women finished 6th with an aggregate time of 3:41:31.

The men also bagged some custom engraved medals and a carved wooden plaque (soon to be installed in the clubhouse trophy room, naturally). Highlights from the recent past include finishes by WRC as fast as 2:47:27 (1999), and 1st place among open women (2003, 2009) and as fast as 3:03:08 (1999). Let's do it again!

Annual Meeting and Party

Contributed by Kirk Masterson, WRC VP

[Article VI of the WRC's bylaws](#) requires that we hold an annual meeting, so we might as well make it a party! Additionally, this is when the club elects its next President and Vice President. If you have the post-Inauguration Ball Blues, this is your chance to rally and revel with your fellow runners in a (nominally) sweat-free environment. Most importantly, this is our chance to recognize outstanding members with our annual awards presentation.

When: Saturday, January 26, 2013 from 7 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Where: James Hoban's Irish Bar and Restaurant (1 Dupont Circle NW, D.C., 20036)

Dress Code: Casual

James Hoban's is easily accessible via Metro's Red Line Dupont Circle Station (use the South side exit).

Get involved!

Self-nominations for leadership positions are not only permitted, they are highly encouraged; this is no time to be modest. The club is only as strong as its members' participation in its activities. If you are interested in a leadership position in the club (President or Vice President), please send an email to Kirk Masterson (kirk.j.masterson@gmail.com). Similarly, if you are interested in any of the non-elected, appointed positions (i.e., Treasurer, Secretaries, and Members at Large), please communicate this to the [incumbents](#) or announced candidates so that you may be considered. And finally, if you want to help the club out in an informal capacity or on a specific initiative, please send an email as well.

Membership Renewal for 2013

The club's board members are launching a new, streamlined, and more elegant process for joining the club and renewing memberships via our website, www.washrun.org. The goals of this initiative are to provide new members with key club information immediately upon joining, for all members to receive confirmation that their dues were received, and to reduce transaction costs for those wishing to renew online. Here are the usual details:

Annual Dues

Individual Membership: \$20 per year

Family Membership: \$30 per year

Current Members

Please renew in advance of the annual meeting and party. If you are currently a member, then your membership will expire on January 31, 2013. This will help reduce the administrative burden and cash accounting the night of the party so that everyone can focus on celebrating the club's accomplishments during 2012.

New Members

If you joined on or after September 1, 2012, your membership will be good for the rest of this year and all of next year! If you're not sure, contact Kirk Masterson and he will let you know when you joined WRC.

Your dues pay for the club's operational costs and fund member benefits. These include, but are not limited to:

- City registration and running organization affiliation fees
- Website and member communication costs
- Subsidization of annual party (including awards, when applicable)
- Subsidization of select WRC team races
- Subsidization of WRC racing singlets
- Miscellaneous expenses (bank fees, postage, etc.)
- Other associated operational costs when appropriate and necessary
- Donations to worthy running-related causes.

The ultimate financial management and control of WRC is under the direction of a sometimes-foolish WRC President, who is elected by the always wise general membership.

A Foolish Man's Marathon (A Tragi-Comic Tale)

Contributed by John Kendra, President, WRC

Kit Wells requested that I write up a race report for the Anthem Richmond Marathon that I completed on Saturday, 10 November. He said I should not worry about any word limit in this piece, so I'll just put it all out there. You can perhaps read it in installments; perhaps before bed each night for a time to help you get to sleep.

The backstory is that I have only done one other marathon—26 years ago. I managed a very good time back then, 2:58:11. This was the 1986 Houston-Tenneco marathon. I never got around to doing another one, and frankly had adopted the view that it wasn't something I wanted to do, that it just wasn't healthful. However, hanging around so much with the WRC runners, one cannot help but get caught up in the excitement of marathoning that is so prevalent with that crowd—I caught the bug. An additional motivating factor is that I'm coming up on (in 2013) my 50th birthday—not getting any younger, nor (in all probability) any faster.

Finally, I'd been exhibiting some pretty reasonable results on some shorter races, half-marathons and 10-milers; seemed a shame to not apply it to a greater challenge. In fact, remarkably, it appeared that based on some popular online race-time [calculators](#) that I should be able to match or even top my PR race time, set, as mentioned, 26 years

prior! I therefore set for myself the goal of a sub-3 marathon and, this part is important, communicated this intention to just about every person I know.

I'd also been very inspired by a recent [article](#) in Runner's World magazine by Peter Sagal, host of the NPR radio program "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me", entitled "Time of the Ancient Marathoner". In it, he describes how he sets out, aided by the expertise of Runner's World staff, to set a marathon PR at age 46. It is (to me, at least) a riveting tale (and even longer than this one will be, much longer in fact) of his journey and training, culminating in achievement of a new PR, sub 3:10.

I did not skimp on the training for this marathon. I'd been pretty much doing ~25 miles per week year round including the typical 10-12 mile long run with WRC on Sundays. I put myself on a (self-created) program to gradually increase my weekly mileage to 60 miles per week. This training was done, apart from the Sunday long runs with WRC, almost exclusively in the mornings before work. I'm fortunate to live right on the W&OD trail by the East Falls Church Metro station, so I had three great routes to alternate between: W&OD west, W&OD east, and the Custis trail. The latter route has the added attraction of being rather excessively hilly.

I arranged my training to culminate in three long runs in the 19-21 miles range; these with the WRC bunch on Sundays, normally conducted at a very healthy pace. My emphasis was on these two attributes: a healthy weekly mileage, in which regard I achieved 60 miles for the last three weeks of my training; and incorporation of at least three quality long runs, which I also achieved. The other area where I did exceedingly well was injury avoidance. I had basically no physical problems during the lead-up to the marathon. The one area where I almost certainly underachieved, but which factor also increased the probability of an injury-free training experience, was in speed work. I did essentially no speed work and in fact, very little marathon pace training. The one exception was a blistering 10-mile run with my friend Joe Landry about 10 days before the marathon (this was my last hard run) in which we more or less succeeded in running marathon pace (6:45) on the ridiculously hilly Custis trail, requiring a level of effort that felt almost exactly like half-marathon race pace (e.g. 6:20-ish).

At the end of this training, I admit I was a little bothered by the knowledge of the lack of speed/interval training I had done. Otherwise, I was pretty secure in the thought that I had put in the effort needed to achieve my goal of a sub-3 marathon. All of the metrics suggested this was not only possible, but probable. In discussions, I likened it to the Presidential election we were experiencing: nothing was guaranteed, anything could happen, but there was a "most probable" outcome.

Marathon day (10 November, Saturday) in Richmond was beautiful. Waiting for the starting gun it was sunny and about 43 degrees, forecast to rise into the high 60's by midday. Even there at the starting line, I was able to strip down to my WRC electrolime singlet without any particular discomfort. Someone tapped me on the shoulder; it was Dan Walfish, a former WRC member, who moved to NYC about three years ago. Dan was one of the 800 folks who took advantage of the Richmond Marathon's offer of a marathon berth to runners registered for the (cancelled because of Sandy) NYC marathon. Dan was always a bit faster than me, and he is a bit younger (36 to my 49); we discussed race strategy. I told him of my plan to play it ultra-conservative; run the slowest possible pace that would put me under my goal time: about a 6:50 pace. Dan had in mind a slightly different plan; he would try to exploit the very flat and/or downhill early portion of the course to bank some time.

The race started. Within the first mile, we passed George Buckheit, coach of the Capital Area Runners (CAR) group, standing along the side of the route. I'd heard they had about 40 runners present for Richmond. Ahead of me, barely, were two of the CAR runners, whom I knew to be 2:40-ish type runners. George yelled at them: "Take it easy! No early mistakes!"

This is a good time to mention some of the good advice and wisdom I'd been the recipient of prior to the marathon, delivered by highly qualified sources. I'd had it drilled into my head that banking time was a fool's errand; that time "banked" was repaid three-fold or worse in the last 10K of the marathon. It had been emphasized to me that the race was best understood as a 20-mile run, followed by a 10K.

Well, despite all this good advice, I have to confess that I did succumb, and badly, to the allure of fast easy miles in the first half of the marathon. My first mile was 6:30. The next seven averaged (with small variance) about 6:40. Consider that a 6:40 pace over 26.2 miles equates to about a 2:54:40. Thus did my “conservative strategy” go out of the window. I had this thought during this portion of the race, during which the miles were clicking by like nothing: “Boy this marathon distance makes for a pleasant race. In the half-marathon, one has to run one’s damn ass off the whole time. Here, I’m gliding along effortlessly and my main challenge is to somehow slow myself down by ten seconds a mile.” This tidbit serves well, I believe, as one of the promised comic elements of this account. Figure 1 is a picture of me taken about this time. Still, I did make an effort to slow down and in particular allow Dan Walfish, with whom I’d been running, to gradually move out ahead of me.

From the beginning, I could see ahead of me Alan Pemberton. Alan is an incredible runner; now 60 years old, he has been regularly clocking sub-3 hour marathons. I recalled he had done one just this last spring in 2:55. I knew I did not want to be keeping pace with Alan. Nevertheless, at about mile 12 I came up alongside him. He asked me how I was doing. I said, “Well, I’m very sorry to be talking to you, because it means my ‘conservative strategy’ is out the window.” Alan was laboring a bit with a stitch in his side. We ran together for a couple miles and then I moved gradually ahead him.

The 17th mile of the Richmond marathon consists for the most part of running over the massive Robert E. Lee Bridge over the James River. It is slightly uphill, the beginning, in fact, of a slightly uphill attribute that will persist for about the next four miles of the course. The bridge, an undifferentiated span of concrete, has a soul-killing aspect to it. At this point, the race has taken a turn; clearly it’s not going to be much fun from here.

Laboring up the next two miles, I become conscious that I am seriously winding down. I have been taking Accel-Gel all along the course, where it is offered as well as a couple of packets that I carried with me. I’ve drunk water at every stop, a bit, and after about mile 15 started drinking some Poweraid as well. Still, by the time I am approaching mile 19, it is clear to me that my energy is rapidly approaching depletion stage. The last significant hill of the course occurs just after mile 20. It is relatively short but fairly steep. At this stage of the race it feels very, very, difficult. I keep trudging along, but I can feel my pace becoming increasingly slow.

Fairly quickly I begin to experience a strong feeling that I just don’t wish to keep running anymore. I bargain with myself. The deal I offer myself is this: “you can run at any pace you wish, anything at all, but just keep running.” I am able to keep this up for another mile but by the time I see the mile 21 marker ahead I know that I have to stop. It’s funny—that was one of my “non-negotiable” factors in my planning for this race; that there simply was no time-budget for stopping. A major concern of mine was that I would have stomach issues and need to stop at a Port-o-john. Fortunately, I have experienced zero GI issues, but nevertheless, it is now crystal clear that I will have to stop and walk. I’m disappointed, but it is funny how in the face of life’s disappointments, implacable reality trumps completely hopes and intentions, and engenders, frankly, acceptance of something you never imagined you could. In other words, there’s what you want and planned for, and then there’s reality, and well, guess who wins?

I walk through the water stop for twenty or thirty seconds and it feels very good to have stopped running. I reflect on how, even in our longest runs with WRC, we still stop and take water breaks and sometimes restroom breaks. I start running again and feel somewhat recharged. New bargain with self: “run between water stops and you may walk through the water stop.”

This arrangement lasts for one mile, to water stop #22.

It has become exceedingly hard to keep running. There is absolutely nothing wrong with my physical component parts. No problem with hamstrings, quads, calves, etc., (true my feet are killing me but more on my newly enlightened view of Newton shoes later...). I’m just completely and entirely depleted of energy. I cannot fathom how I am going to cover the next 4.2 miles. I feel that it is possible—no likely—that I will have to quit this thing. I just can’t go on...I think about all the people I would disappoint if I simply dropped out the race; this provides me motivation to keep slogging along.

I know I'm not the only one bonking this severely, but it does seem I'm in a very select minority. Where I am, there are very few walkers. The volunteers at the water stations and supporters along the course don't know what to say to me. They are accustomed to yelling "You're looking good! Looking strong!!" to runners, but not under the most generous interpretation can these exhortations be fairly applied to my state. I walk dejectedly along. At some point along the way, obviously, though my brain is not processing the numbers very well any more, it has become mathematically impossible for me to meet my goal. There really does seem a much bigger question now, of whether I can even get to the finish line at all. I walk/run in odd, random intervals.

Around mile 25, while I am walking, Alan Pemberton passes me. A lot of people are and have been passing me. Some race volunteer yells that "there is only a half mile left; one more turn and it's downhill from here!" I recall from the bus tour of the course that I took on Friday that the finish is ridiculously—like don't-hurt-yourself—downhill. I start running; decide that I will run all the way in, and exploit this ridiculous downhill aspect. It is longer than I think, but I force myself to keep running; a left turn, then a right, then, here it is, the downhill finish. I fly down—it's very steep—pass a few people. Finally, the finish line; I have no idea where I am at, timewise; I stopped looking at my watch back at mile 23, have not even had the presence of mind to capture with a button-press my mile splits at 24 and 25. The time on the finish line is 3:04:28.

Alan Pemberton finished about twenty seconds ahead of me. Dan Walfish ran a 3:00:53. Each of us, in our own way, has bonked on the course, though I feel that mine was the most severe. I reflect that 26.2 is a most insidious distance. It exists, it seems to me, perfectly, just beyond the chemical- and physiological limits of a normal human being. It seems that so few are able to get through it in a reasonable fashion. And, too, it makes no difference whatsoever, counts for exactly nothing, what your time may be at the twenty mile split, or 24 miles, or whatever—if it ain't 26.2 it don't mean a thing. I don't consider my performance to be reasonable or successful at all. I was broken, beyond any dispute. Before I made the decision to do the marathon, the 26.2 mile distance—the running of it—seemed incomprehensible in its magnitude. I have to say, that feeling never really went away; nor did this experience erase it. For now, it remains to me an incomprehensibly long distance to run, properly. Certainly I did not do it on Saturday. Strangely though, I think maybe now I've caught the bug. I want to take my revenge on this course, on this distance. I know I can do better; be less idiotic about it, show more respect. By this time next year, my goal is to become an expert on how to avoid hitting the wall.

Footnote: Regarding Newton shoes. I have resolved that I am going to wean myself off of these shoes, which currently account for my entire running-shoe inventory. I started with the Sir Isaac, graduated to the Distance, and have these last two months been using the Gravity, in which model I ran Saturday's marathon. One effect of these shoes, which I had begun to notice on my longer runs but which finally came home to roost in the most painful way during the marathon, is that the four lugs in the forefoot begin to assert themselves in a way which, over a long hard run progresses from mildly to extremely uncomfortable. This condition became crystal clear to me during the marathon. I will forthwith be transitioning to a shoe that has a uniform surface distribution over the forefoot.

The data doesn't lie...

Figure 2 illustrates the "time bank" aspect alluded to above. Over the first twenty miles, by running about ten seconds faster than my goal pace, I succeeded in banking about two minutes of time. It works out that I was banking about six seconds per mile over the first twenty miles. As the figure also shows, I gave it all back with considerable interest over the last 10K. I gave it back at a rate of about 58 seconds per mile, roughly ten times the rate at which I banked it. High interest indeed...

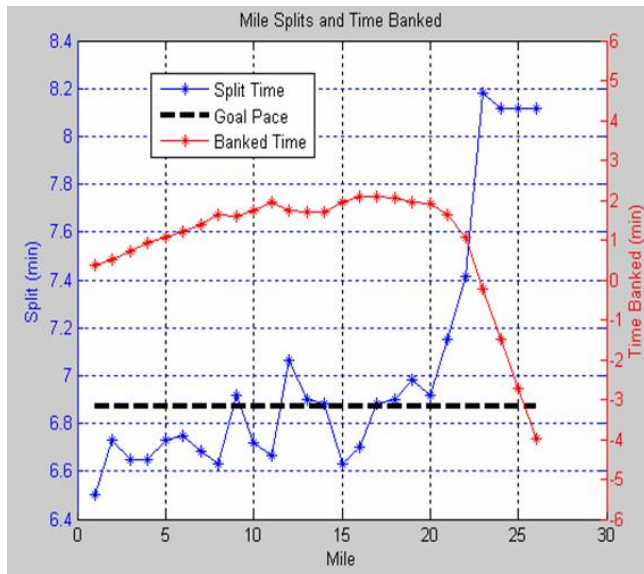


Figure 2: Banked time at 6 seconds/mile over 20 to give back at ~60 secs/mile in the last 10k. (Last 3 mile splits weren't measured; shown is time elapsed since mile #23 divided by 3.2.)

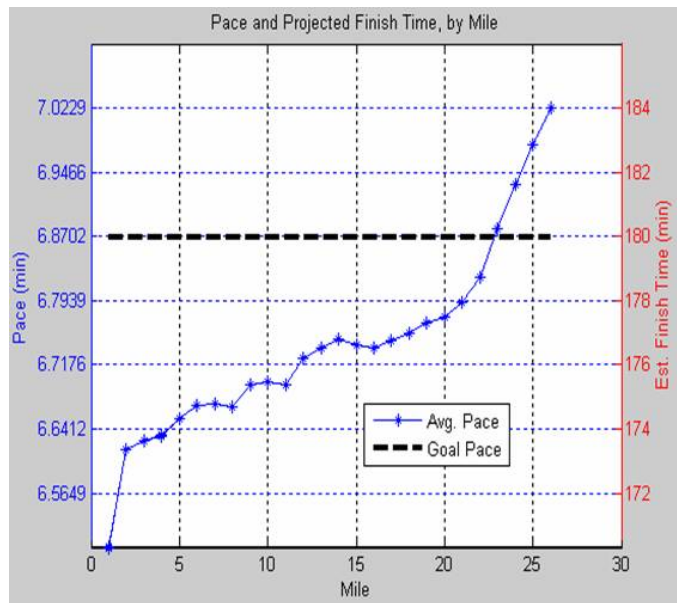


Figure 3: The allure of the early fast miles; I was way ahead on pace—until I wasn't...

Renee Metivier Baillie: A Living Embodiment Of the Soul of the Competitive Runner

(Originally published in [Running Insight](#) and reprinted with permission by WRC member Max Lockwood)

Renee Metivier Baillie had a breakthrough race at the Chicago Marathon last month. [Running Insight](#) contributing editor Max Lockwood interviewed her recently on her achievements and career as a professional runner.

In many, if not most professional sports, 30 years old is considered ancient. However, in our sport of running, many distance runners can peak at 30 or even later, and have a full and successful career into their late 30s. Some of this is due to luck, some to good genes, some to smart training and then, there is the all-important desire and passion piece. To stay competitive for a long time you simply need to love the grind, the work, and the desire to get better.

I tracked Renee down while she was in Hawaii basking in the glory of her successful marathon debut. Seemed fitting. We arranged to speak and went from there.

Unlike many folks I interview, Renee is and was fully present. There is a vibrancy and urgency in her voice and it comes across that she totally loves her life, the choices she has made, her running, her husband and more. Perhaps, things have not always been this way, but it seems that for the moment, Renee is fully on. "Max, in Hawaii, Austin (my husband) and I have been totally relaxing. I have gone on one little 5-mile run but have mostly been eating good food and enjoying some much needed down time. I have even gained a few pounds."

Renee attended the University of Colorado where she was an All American distance runner. With the All American status, great promise was bestowed upon her and upon graduation in 2005, she turned pro. She signed a contract with Nike and became a regular on the women's race circuit. Renee competed in most distances but was loyal to most under 10k. In her first five years Renee did well enough to be invited to races and sustain her contract, but, as a whole, was not stellar. In 2011, an Achilles injury that had been lingering but not debilitating finally flared up to the point where it was not manageable. All of us reading understand this feeling all too well and also, fully comprehend the notion of being helpless and somewhat lost when we fear the sport of our choice is being yanked away from us. With the Achilles broken, she was forced to take time off to find a permanent solution and was not re-signed by Nike.

Injury breeds uncertainty: a major hurdle presents itself

Renee majored in math and her analytical and probing mind was willing and able to embark on other career pursuits if being a pro runner was not able to bear any fruit. "Max, when the Achilles injury made running unbearable and Nike did not renew my contract, I was like, well, I gave it a whirl and did ok with running. I pursued my dream longer than most, and now it is time for something new. I was seriously considering going back to school to pursue a PhD."

In the spring of 2012, another runner informed her and Austin of a fantastic Sweden-based Achilles specialist, Doctor Alfredson. "I figured, I had some budget still left over from my time with Nike and I could use it for travel. Since Sweden has socialized medicine, the cost for the medical procedure would be low. I had nothing really to lose by going over there and seeing if this doc could make things better." Upon hearing this I thought to myself, why would Renee, after so many years, have to travel around the world to get Achilles surgery? I mean we are in the U.S. and have access to the most advanced medicine in the world. Says Renee, "I had tried every non-invasive therapy under the sun for years. All of them including PT, Massage, Chiro, acupuncture and more were OK and could provide temporary help, but that was all. U.S. surgeons were telling me that the surgery they could perform was risky and that there was a chance they could not help or the surgery would make it worse. This was a chance I was not willing to take. I wanted more certainty. I contacted the doctor in Sweden and decided to give it a shot." Low and behold. The surgery was both quick and success. The surgery entailed removing a bone spur and bursa sac that was aggravating the Achilles. "Says Renee, I was amazed at how quickly the surgery went by. Just an hour

or so. The recovery time took longer than expected and Renee was forced to cross train and be patient. When Renee began to run again in earnest, she and Austin monitored her training with religious zeal. "Our goal was not to rush things like I had in the past and really allow the body to heal. In the past, I had run through pain and this probably did more harm than good. We tinkered and in the process, decided to get a fresh start, so to speak, by moving from Boulder to Bend, OR.

The change of scenery proved to be beneficial in so many ways. Says Renee: "Bend is great. Austin's family is from Portland and so we are closer to them. Bend is filled with incredible running trails, the people are nice and in many ways, is an endurance athlete's mecca." Since Renee kept mentioning Austin, I figured I would probe further about her life partner. Austin Baillie is not only her husband but is also a great distance runner, a massage therapist and her coach. Most runners would kill to have a coach/massage therapist/ supporter and training partner all in one and Renee is no different. "Max, Austin is not only my best friend but as noted, he is a great asset to my running." The two obviously work well in many ways as Renee completed a successful rehab process in Bend and felt confident enough to participate in and win the US 20K Championships in New Haven, Connecticut this past September. Says Renee "I was confident in my abilities and felt great going into the 20k but of course, when coming off an injury and surgery, doubts always linger." Her doubts along with those of the spectators were put to rest with Renee's outstanding effort in New Haven. Her foot held up and her performance was outstanding. After the race, she and Austin realized the time is now to capitalize on her fitness and confidence. They decided to take on Chicago.

Fear, the marathon and shining bright

Life is full of promise is a cliché that might be laughed at in these cynical times. Renee's story seems exempt of such doubtful thoughts. After winning the national 20K championship, Renee knew she had the ability to run well at the marathon. "The 20k gave me confidence and I knew, if the body held, I could do well at Chicago." Renee's thinking proved to be right and if not for tight calves towards the end of the marathon, it is probable she would have run 2:25.

For most of us, enjoying success in our sport/ job/relationship or other activity, which is our passion, is immensely satisfying. Seeing our hard work payoff through high achievement gives us meaning and confidence to be actualized citizens and human beings. However, what do we do once we reach the mountaintop and how do we maintain our lofty status? This is not easy to answer and differs for us all.

It was and is no different for Renee. "Max, the marathon experience was great. The breakthrough was great. I want to build off it and do better. Exactly how, I do not know. I do know that I can and will continue to PR in all distances. I have the ability, the desire, and now that I am fairly certain the Achilles is healed for good, I have total confidence in my body."

The Business of being a Female Pro Runner

Being a pro runner is a gift but has many limitations. Unless you are one of the very best or lucky or both, there is not a good deal of financial compensation. The athlete has a contract with a shoe company that pays them a base salary; medical benefits, provides them with shoes and apparel and pays their fees into races. However, where it leads, what career ladders are presented is not known. So, for most, if not all of the pro runners out there, the choice to pursue their dream comes at a huge cost. When I asked Renee about this, she smiled and put some thought into the answer. "Max, this is a complex matter and one that cannot be addressed in one simple statement. In summary, I believe much needs to be done to improve the financial/ professional welfare of professional runners. In particular, I think women need more support across the board. We need higher salaries, training and product advice and more. However, I do not know the intricacies of the business in terms of revenue streams, how money is made and spent, etc. All I can say is I am spending my young years being a pro runner and it is not like I am putting lots of money in the bank. It is not due to being a spendthrift either. Austin and I are very thrifty it is just that there is not much to be thrifty with."

Renee was and is careful when speaking on this topic. She does not want to be unfair to sponsors that have given her support all of these years but rather, her point, is that more can be done by the industry as a whole.

Just like there are drawbacks to being a pro runner, there are many pluses. The running community, for the most part is warm and supportive, there aren't lots of issues regarding revenue and business negotiations simply because there is not a lot of money in the sport. "Max, don't get me wrong. I would love to make more money doing this but I do not want to give up the freedom and pure existence myself and Austin live. There is something pretty pure, natural and direct about the pro running circuit that I do not want to see go away."

Renee on Minimalism

Based on Renee's recent bout with injury and her subsequent commitment to smarter training, I asked Renee point blank about her thoughts on minimal footwear vs. cushioning and support. This was her response. "I do believe in running in lighter, more minimal shoes with a smaller heel to toe height ratio. However, since I did not grow up living barefoot and often run on asphalt, a purely minimal shoe would lead to injuries for me. Given the speed and sheer volume of training that I do on the harder surfaces (especially now that my focus has shifted to the road racing), a shoe that provides a little extra cushion and protection from the pounding allows my body to feel less beat-up at the end of a long training week. Additionally, post surgery I needed to move up to a light training shoe after previously running solely in racing flats, because my Achilles needed some extra support and aid while it built strength. I still do some light barefoot running of about one mile to ten minutes a couple days per week to help strengthen the muscles in the lower legs and improve the biomechanics of my feet."

Interviewing Renee was fun and enlightening. She is both aware of the present and the past and more importantly, seems at ease with the uncertainty of the future. She is prepared to succeed as pro runner but sees her love of the sport transcending her immediate competitive success. "Max, I do not know if I will achieve my competitive running goals but do know battling through this injury and progressing forward has taught me that I love the sport and I know that I want to continue to help others in their running once my pro career comes to an end."

Renee currently runs for Mizuno and trains in the Ronin, a lightweight neutral trainer.

Roll Call

Here's a best attempt at enumerating the WRC diaspora and the club's new email list.

		Invited	Joined	Undeliverable	Total
2012	FALSE	102	23	5	130
Membership	TRUE	16	27	0	43
	Total	118	50	5	173

If you know someone who should be a current member of WRC in good standing, please encourage them to renew their membership for 2013. And likewise, if you know of a current member who isn't receiving the club newsletter, encourage them to register by having them write to <wrc-members-subscribe@yahogroups.com>.

Financial Instagram

The following is a snapshot of the club's war chest for the 2012 calendar year through November 30th. Many thanks to James Scarborough, WRC Treasurer.

INCOME

Individual Memberships	\$922.23
Family Memberships	\$210.00
Donations	\$250.00
Clothing Sales	\$285.00
Race Services	\$200.00
Club Banquet/Awards Party	\$65.00
Interest	\$3.25
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,935.48

EXPENSES

Meetings/Social	\$161.00
Club Banquet/Awards Party	\$947.30
Team Competition	\$37.50
Individual Competition	\$-
Clothing/Uniform Purchase	\$930.00
Internet/Web Page	\$460.00
USAT&F Dues/Insurance	\$-
Equipment	\$-
Printing/Postal	\$-
Supplies	\$-
Registration Fees - DC	\$130.00
Awards/Trophies	\$120.04
Donations	\$-
Other	\$-
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,785.84

ACCOUNT SUMMARY SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR (for the period 1 January through 30 November 2012)

Beginning Balance 1 January 2012	\$4,765.87
(+) Total income	\$1,935.48
(-) Total expenses	\$2,785.84
Ending Balance	\$3,915.51
Net for Year through 30 November 2012	\$(850.36)

Current Board Members, 2012

President: John Kendra
Vice President: Kirk Masterson
Secretary of Membership: David Pittman
Secretary of Outreach and Community Events: Carla Freyvogel
Secretary of Racing Activities: Emily Buzzell
Treasurer: James Scarborough
Member At Large: Kit Wells



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