



# Forever Run

January, 2016

## Keeping Communication Current with Jan Holmquist

Dear 65+ members,

**Happy New Year!** As we welcome in 2016, I reflect on this past year and our amazing group of older members...so many still participating in races! Last month I offered a trivia question: How many of us ran in a race on Thanksgiving Day? If you went to our website results section and counted 64, you were right!

Now here it is January 1st and another popular day to race and begin the New Year with others who value fitness, fun, and friends. I wonder how many of us raced today? In order to give our results volunteers time to gather the statistics, you may want to wait a few days before you review the data. Results will be in next month's *Forever Run*.

<http://www.ne65plus.org/index.php?page=race-results>

Another special race is just a few months away - the Boston Marathon. The club received 8 waivers and your selection committee - comprised of John Gibbons, John O'Donnell, Mary Harada, Zeke Zucker, and myself - awarded the waivers to Anthony Cellucci, Gary Circosta, Rick Collette, Chuck Keating, Phil Pierce, Marj Radin, Ram Satyaprasad, and Mary Ulinski. Beginning next month, and through the April edition of this e-news, we will briefly profile each marathoner (2 or 3 each edition), then follow-up after the marathon. We congratulate them and wish them well in their training! The club also has members who have qualified to run Boston and our good wishes go out to them as well.

Last year, our Finance Committee recommended that we save thousands of dollars by discontinuing the hard copy newsletter - 3 editions per year - by going to an e-news format. *Forever Run* has completed its first full year of providing **monthly** news with interesting information. My sincere appreciation goes out to ALL the members who have contributed articles, photos, and results. We encourage everyone to do so! Special thanks go out to Rick Stetson who set up the contract with Constant Contact and volunteers numerous hours each month to create and compile *Forever Run*!

I look forward to seeing many of you at races and events in 2016...Happy New Year!

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# 65+ Runners win USATF-NE Grand Prix Team Title

by Rick Stetson

2015 was a good year for the men's competitive team. Not only did the men's 70+ runners win the national USATF 10K masters championship in April at the James Joyce Ramble, but the team also won the men's 70+ division in the USATF-NE grand prix series by finishing ahead of the Cambridge Sports Union and the North Shore Striders.

Runners scoring points in the grand prix for NE 65+ included Joe Noonan, Richard Paulson, Rick Stetson and Gerald Poricelli. In 2016 the team should be even stronger with the addition of Robert Knight who won the 70+ division in the 2015 grand prix while running for Gate City. The team will open the 2016 grand prix season in March at the An Ras Mor 5K in Cambridge.

NE 65+ also had a number of runners compete in New England Runner's Pub Series. There was stiff competition in the 70-79 division with Joe Noonan coming out on top followed by Denny LeBlanc, David Pember, Rick Stetson, Richard Paulson and William Jennings. Jan Holmquist was first in the womens 70+ and Larry Cole won the 80+ division.



photo by Ted Tyler

Joe Noonan, member of the 65+ men's competitive team and pub series winner.

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## Out on the Roads of New England

by Dan D.

Seasons greetings NE65+ Runners Club members!!! I hope your holiday was terrific and together we can look forward to a most satisfying 2016.

As I write this column on December 29th, the ground in Newton, N.H. is covered with frozen snow and ice. After a record-breaking stretch of warmth we finally have some external obstacles to

overcome. After last winter ... we're still looking pretty good!!

My personal race total for events 2.0 miles and longer stands at 106 for 2015. I might squeeze one more race in before the year ends – we'll see.

Compared to 2014 when I only did 2 races all year .... 2015 has been quite satisfactory. I was fortunate to win my age group in both the North Shore YMCA Road Race Series and in the Millenium/Elliot Series. Wendy Burbank won the female 70+ division in both these series too. I also completed the Gate City Series (all 6 races), the Tour de Patrick (3 races), and the Fudgcicle 5K Series (Jan. & Feb.). My one failure was not completing a race in Connecticut this year (I always try to run at least 1 race in all 6 New England states every year). Just wait 'til next year!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This leads me into the subject I promised to talk to you about this month – road race series. I've been busily checking the schedules to see which race series can be completed without conflicting with too many races in another series. It can get quite complicated. Some of these race series have a minimum number of events to be run in order to win a series jacket, gain an invitation to the series awards party, or qualify for winning an age group award. If you run a lot of races each year it is mandatory to select your desired series of races first prior to registering for any other individual races. I try to do from 3 to 6 of these series each year.

In the past I have qualified for the USATF-NE series, Millenium/Elliot Series, Wild Rover Series, Fudgcicle 5K Series, Concord Area Race Series (CARS), Tour de Patrick, North Shore YMCA Road Race Series, N.H. Seacoast Series, Gate City Series, and parts of several others. I think it would be an idea for our NE65+ club to perhaps initiate an award for completing all 6 of our New England "flag" races. I'll bet interest would pick up with the goal of winning a jacket or some similar award. I hope you try a series in 2016 – they can truly increase your motivation.

I have run in 8 races thus far in December. On December 5th I had to "double" in order to score in my 2 competitive road race series. I did the "Reindeer Run 5K - 9th Annual" in Beverly, MA. in the morning. Wendy Burbank won F70+ and Daniel Dodson was 3rd in M70+. The fee was \$24 pre and \$28 on race day. Nice tee shirts and inside the YMCA awards ceremony. Chip timing by North Shore Timing Company. Many runners raced in holiday outfits and prizes for "best dressed" were awarded. This race was the finale in 2015 for the North Shore YMCA Road Race Series.

I traveled from Beverly directly to Manchester, N.H. for the 3:00pm "Santa Claus Shuffle". This unique 3 - mile race was part of the Millenium/Elliot Series with a complete Santa Claus suit given to each runner to be worn in the race. There were 1,396 finishers and age group awards up to 70-99. Daniel Dodson won the M70-99 division. The Santa suits replaced the "normal" tee shirts, but a long-sleeve tech shirt was available for \$15. Instant post race results on computer screens, free beer tickets and hot pizza, announcing by Ch. 9's Jamie Staton and Andy Schachat, high school cheerleaders at various intersections, race start by the Mayor of Manchester, flyover video by a drone, speakers with Christmas music all over the course – a lot of "bang for the buck"!!! And of course the incredible sight of nearly 1400 runners charging along Elm Street in downtown Manchester wearing Santa Claus outfits.

Sunday, December 13th saw another "double" for me in 2 additional VERY unique races. The "Santa's Toy Trot - 21st Annual" was at 10:00am in Merrimack, MA. This staple of Merrimack Valley racing has a 2 mile course that runners can choose DURING THE RACE to run once or twice or 3 times for 2 or 4 or 6 miles. How unusual is that!!! Our own Bob Randall started this race 21 years ago as a member of the Winners Circle R.C. The fee was \$25 or \$15 with an unwrapped toy. Yankee Timing used the B-tag chips. Awards & food & a large raffle were inside at the Sweetsir School. Long-sleeve shirts were given to all, and age groups for all 3 races went up to 80+. Our NE65+RC age - group medal winners included: Ted Tyler, Robert Randall, Louis

Peters, Charlie Farrington, Daniel Dodson, Rita Labella, Byron Petrakis, Roger Gosselin, and Wendy Burbank.

From Merrimac, MA. I hustled up to the world-famous N.H. Motor Speedway in Loudon, N.H. to run 2.25 miles on the actual motor speedway track through New Hampshire's largest holiday light display. Instead of a tee shirt ..... the first 1,000 runners were given a lighted LED running hat (which made it easier to run in the dark). Personalized bibs with your own name printed on it and chip timing by Millenium Timing with instant post-race results on computer screens at the finish line. Results were immediately sent to all finishers on their cell-phones, computers, etc. Food included hot chocolate, yogurt, bananas, warm soup, and a campfire where you could toast your own s'mores!!! Age group awards went up to 70+. Pre-race fee was only \$25. There were 1,453 finishers and NE65+ members included Vermont's Mildred Rhoades (3rd in F70+) and Lucien Trudeau, George Tosatti, and Daniel Dodson were 1,2,3 in M70+. Members Kathy Clark and James Stafursky were also finishers in the "Yule Light Up the Night" race.

December 19 (Sat.) was the "Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis" in Concord, N.H. There were 229 finishers in this 5K from the Rundlett Middle School.

The race fee was \$30 pre and \$35 on race day. Jingle bells were given to wear on your running shoes and tee-shirts were included for all pre-registered runners. Timing was by Millenium Running. One negative was a lack of post-race food. Daniel Dodson won the M70+ division and Kathy Clark and Terry Lee Harrington represented NE65+ in F60-69.

For 2 of my other December races (Dec. 20 & 27) I traveled to Abington, MA. to run the 4.1 mile "Colonial Winter Series". The Colonial Road Runners put on this series every Sunday from November 29 to February 7. The fee is only \$2 for this no frills club race. The 2 mile course starts at the entrance to the Mt. Vernon Cemetery about 0.1 mile from the finish line at the Abington Police station. Thus you have the option of running 2.1 miles or the full 4.1 miles. Completing the 4.1 mile distance were NE65+ members Betsy Knapp, Daniel Dodson, and Ann Marie McDonald.

In January I plan to run the "Fudgcicle" each Saturday in Tewksbury, MA. On January 1st I'm running the "1st Run" in Lowell, MA. at 11:00am followed by the "Millenium Mile" in Londonderry, N.H. I'm registered for Millenium's SOLD OUT "Snowflake Shuffle" on January 17 in Bedford, N.H. I'm registered for the "Wild Rover Series" on Feb. 28 and March 6 & 13 in Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, MA. These 3 races are 3, 4, and 5 miles long and include the greatest medal you will ever win. I plan to repeat the Millenium/Elliott Series and the North Shore YMCA Road Race Series this year. I hope to add a new series later.

That's about all the room we have for this month. Next month I'd like to choose my personal "Race of the Year" out of all the races I've run in 2015. I'll also tell you about the 4 awards parties for series that I was able to attend. I hope you will "stay tuned." If you recognize me (white safari hat) at a race – please come by and introduce yourself. I'd like to include as many NE65+ members in my column as possible. Maybe together we can sign up a new member or two for our club.

Until then ..... I hope to see you in 2016 .... "Out on the Roads of New England."

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## Help us contact the following members of 65+

The 72 names listed below all belong to NE 65+ Runners, but unfortunately they have not received a single issue of Forever Run, either because we do not have a good email address for them or perhaps because their server has blocked the newsletter as spam. If you know a

club member listed below, please let them know about our email newsletter and mention that if they would like to receive it every month, to send their email address to: [rickstetson@aol.com](mailto:rickstetson@aol.com)  
Thanks.

Sally Amory  
Arch Astolfi  
Valerie Barcelos  
Rene Martel  
Fred Best  
Sheila McKenna  
Fred Best  
Norman Boudreau  
Patricia Burke  
Norman Campbell  
Jack Carlock  
Wesley Chadbourne  
Lilian Christmas  
John Cragan  
Allen Days  
William Dole  
Dan Dorazio  
Paul Ducios  
Dick Evans  
Jack Finan  
Larry Fisher  
Patrick Fitzgerald  
Ben Fudge  
Carol Geis  
Ken Graves  
Fred Grosso  
Elwin Guthrie  
Robert Hillman  
Harry Hunt  
Donald Johnson  
George Johnston  
Dick Lajoie  
Horst Langer  
George Lothrop  
Tony Lucia

Norman Mackinnon  
Ray Maloney  
Mike Marich  
Peter Bleiberg  
George Munroe  
Terry Partridge  
Brian Peacock  
Ray Pickell  
David Quealey  
John Rasmussen  
Robert Reagan  
Johanna Riley  
Joseph Rorick  
Marjorie Rosiello  
Marjorie Rosiello  
Maurice Ross  
Rich Rudert  
Martha Rumley  
Royce Sawyer  
Peter Sontras  
George Scott  
Julian Siegel  
Ralph Stevens  
Pete Stringer  
Diane Stuart  
John Thomas  
Stuart Thurston  
William Tribou  
Victor Tseki  
Mel Uchenick  
John Waller  
Delvin West  
William Wilson

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Mike running the Disney 10K in 2014

## 100 wins in 39 months

by Mike Lozan

**Editor's note: When we heard that Mike Lozan had collected 100 age group wins in 39 months, we asked if he would send us an article detailing how this was accomplished. We would like to thank Mike for the following:**

One day in March of 2000, I received a small package in the mail. It was a first place age group medal from a race that I had run the previous weekend. I was 58 years old and this was my very first medal ever.

Since I began running at the age of 43, I never paid much attention to the results other than my times which I kept in this new (1985) thing called a spreadsheet, but now I had to add a new column called "age group placement". Being slow and one of the old guys in his 50's, nothing much got added for the next couple of years.

In the year 2002 I joined a running club, the Colonial Road Runners. Running with a group made me more competitive and now I was the young guy in the 60's age group. Halfway through my sixties I had a couple dozen first place age group wins, but then I become one of those old guys in his 60's. Those younger guys always seemed to be winning the races and my sixties ended with just 26 wins.

When I was 65 I joined another running club, the New England 65+ Runners. After meeting these older, wiser, and most of the time, faster people, I knew I needed to set a goal and have a plan to get there. The 70's goal was to get as many wins as possible in the shortest amount of time.

The first race in my seventies, the Jim Kane Sugar Bowl in Dorchester, was on my 70th birthday, July 19th 2012. The race started at 6:30 PM. Now my sister had brought it to my attention that I was born at 6:51 PM. Technically, at the start of the race I was 69 and I ended the race as a 70 year old. A friend of mine got on the microphone and announced that fact to everyone over the loud speaker. But the win didn't happen. Fred Zuleger III beat me by 25 seconds.

But the wins did begin to happen and by the end of 2012 I had 13. In 2013 I was running a race almost every weekend and finished that year with 31 wins. Included in the 31 was a win in every New England state. I had to run a second race in RI because I only got a second the first time around. In 2014 I was again running a race almost every weekend but those younger 70 year olds were showing up and I only got 28 wins.

In January 2015 the count was up to 72 and if I were to get the same number of wins as I did the previous year, I could get to 100 by the end of the year. But then it began to snow. It was the kind of snow I remember from my eight years in upstate New York. By the start of May I had only one win. I had to change the plan. I had to get to 100. New plan: two races each weekend when possible. It was a real good feeling getting that first double win weekend in June. Over the next four months I got four more double wins. And on October 24 in Foxboro, I got my 100th win with many of my Colonial Road Runners friends there.

100 age group wins in 39 months. It took me 167 races to get the 100. We all know how much it costs to register for a race but when you multiply that number by 167, the 100 wins cost a pretty penny. The thirty year old spreadsheet has a lot of interesting facts in it. I've run 793 races in my lifetime. The 5K races didn't start until the late 1990's and most of my races I run these days are 5Ks.

As I look back on these races, I realize that some of the ones that stand out and that I'm most proud of weren't necessarily the wins, some were better than wins.

## SPECIAL WINS

1st place: 2014 Air Force 5K, Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio  
1st place: 2012, 2013 & 2014 Run To The Rock 5K, Plymouth, MA  
1st place: 2012, 2013 & 2014 Dream Catchers 2M, Weymouth, MA  
1st place: 2012 & 2013 Edaville Rail Run 5M, Carver, MA

## Almost better than Wins

2nd place: 2012 Marine Corps 10K, Washington DC  
2nd place: 2012, 2013 & 2014. Air Force 10K, Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio  
2nd place: 2015 Air Force 5K Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio  
3rd place: 2012 Air Force 5K Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio  
2nd's & 3rd's: 2013 & 2014 medaled in all 3 races of the Wild Rover Series, N. Shore, MA  
3rd place: 2014 January's Inaugural 10K Disney, Orlando, FA  
3rd place: 2013 BAA 10K, Boston, MA

(NOTE: BAA doesn't give a medal, plaque or trophy for 2nd & 3rd age group awards. They send you a letter stating what you've done and an Adidas gift card but nothing you can put on the trophy shelf that says this was special.

My Favorite Race: Edaville Rail Run 5 miler. I've run it for the last fourteen consecutive years.

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## A Great Presidential Year



photo by Ted Tyler

Jan on her way to her 8th consecutive age group record at the 2015 Run For All Ages

As the year 2015 reached its conclusion, it was announced that 65+ Runners Club president Jan Holmquist had been elected to the USATF Masters Hall of Fame. It was also revealed that Jan had been named a USATF masters long distance age group runner of the year.

It was a remarkable year for Jan who set an age group world record for the mile (6:37), and American records for the 5K (22:15), 10K (45:19), one hour run (12,100 meters), 5 miles (36:37), and half marathon (1:44:33).

We can't think of a running club president who accomplished more last year than Jan. As we move into 2016, we feel her record-setting pace will continue. We are fortunate to have her leading the way for NE 65+ Runners.

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## **The Double Lives of NE 65+ Runners Club Members**

**by Byron Petrakis & Tom Wylie**

Some members of the NE 65+ Runners Club lead multiple lives. No, they are not secret agents or spies but members of multiple running clubs. Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than at the Mill Cities Relay, a 27-mile relay race that starts in Nashua, NH and ends in Lawrence, MA following the course of the Merrimack River through five cities and towns, including three iconic mill towns of the Merrimack Valley: Nashua, Lowell, and Lawrence.

For the past 32 years, on the first Sunday of December, runners from 20 clubs in two states in northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire compete for the coveted Mill Cities trophy. Many of these runners are also members of our NE 65+ Runners Club, but on this day they compete as runners from among the clubs of the Mill Cities Alliance: Andover Striders, Athletic Alliance Running Club, Gils Athletic Club, Gate City Striders, Greater Derry Track Club, Greater Lowell Road Runners, Melrose Running Club, Merrimack Valley Striders, Mystic

Runners, North Medford Club, North Shore Striders, Sandown Rogue Runners, Shamrock Running Club, Somerville Road Runners, Squannacook River Runners, TriFury, Whirlaway Racing Team, Wicked Running Club, and Winner's Circle Running Club.

On an unusually mild Sunday, December 6, 2015, a number of NE 65+ Runners Club members were spotted wearing the colors of their "other" clubs engaged in friendly competition for the Mill Cities Trophy. While most of the teams feature 5 runners competing against others in their age and gender divisions, the "Sunshine Start" runners (the 60 and 70 year-olds) compete on 3-person teams, who run three of the five legs. Rather than completing the first two legs (5.4 and 4.75 miles, respectively), these veteran and "super veteran" (70+) runners complete legs of 2.5, 9.5, and 4.75 miles and start the race at 8:45 a.m. instead of 8:00 a.m. like their younger counterparts.

This year, as always, competition among the 20 clubs was fierce, with the Gate City Striders of Nashua, NH winning their 8th consecutive first place title. The Winners Circle Running Club from Salisbury, MA finished 2nd, barely edging out the 3rd place Somerville (MA) Road Runners by one point. Contributing to the winning Gate City effort were Rob Knight, Joe Noonan, Shu Minami and Skip Cleaver, while the Winners Circle's strong finish was aided by Rick Bayko, Maureen Farren, Charlie Farrington, Polly Kenniston, Byron Petrakis, Phil Pierce, and Tom Wylie. NE 65+Runners Club President Jan Holmquist ran a strong 9.5 mile leg for the Whirlaway Racing Team's female veterans contingent, while Denny Leblanc from the Greater Lowell Road Runners ran the anchor leg to help secure his team's 2nd place finish in the male super-veterans division.

Kenniston and Wylie helped their Winners Circle team cop first place in the co-ed super veterans division, while Petrakis, Pierce, and Farrington won 3rd place for the Winners Circle in the male super- veterans division. Among others spotted in the crowd at the lively after party at the Claddagh Pub in Lawrence were NE 65+ Runners Club members Richard Paulsen, Bob Randall, and Ram Satyaprasad.

The comradeship of the NE 65+ runners was apparent at the finish; no matter the individual or team placement times, we all know how fortunate we are to still be out there to run, race, and represent the excellent benefits of being senior runners.

And, while it is always enjoyable to encounter fellow NE 65+ Runners Club members at the annual banquet and flag races, it is also fun to "run into" them at large, multi-team events like the Mill Cities Relay, where individual members can lead multiple running lives.

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## **Spotlight On Maud Chaplin**



This month we turn the spotlight on Maud Chaplin, a retired Wellesley College philosophy professor who set an 80+ age group record last summer while winning the Tri Valley Front Runners Woodland Trail Series (she also holds the 70+ record for the series.)

Maud lives in Dover, MA and when she is not running, she serves as a trustee for the town library. She also gave weekly classes last winter titled: "Conversations with Maud on Justice: The View From the Twenty-first Century." Maud holds a doctorate degree and is qualified to speak on subjects ranging from justice to running. We are pleased to start the New Year with Maud in our spotlight.

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## **USATF 12K National Championship Report**

**by Rick Stetson**

While walking to the start of the USATF 12K championship in Alexandria, Virginia, a runner in the 75-79 age group spotted my NE 65+ jacket and said, "You guys got us in Dedham." He was Ronald Cormier, a former Massachusetts resident who now competes for the Shore Running Club. Cormier finished 2nd in the 75-79 age group behind John Elliott. By Dedham, he was referring to the James Joyce Ramble national 10K championship where the NE 65+ men's veteran team captured first place. However in Alexandria, 65+ did not have enough runners to field a team so Shore ran away with the title followed by the Atlanta Track Club and then Ann Arbor. Shore was led by Przemyslaw Nowicki who was followed by Paul Carlin and Doug Goodhue in the 70-74 division. There were no female 70-74 runners but the women's 65-69 winner, Edie Stevenson, came all the way from Colorado while the men's 65-69 winner, Lloyd Hanson, was from Utah. It was a good national field at the 12K national race.

The 12K championship was an out and back course, scenic and flat with most of the race taking place on the George Washington Parkway. The elite women were given a 10 minute head start which let the other runners have a good look at some very fast ladies led by Molly Huddle who at the three mile mark, had a good 20-second lead over the pack behind her. Huddle, of Providence, Rhode Island, went on to win the championship for the third straight year in 38:36. At the awards ceremony, Huddle received two \$20,000 checks; one for winning the 12K championship and another for winning the USATF grand prix series.

The men's winner of the 12K championship, Sam Chelanga, also received a check for \$20,000 but it is a shame it could not have been divided between the first two places because the runner-

up, Tyler Pennel, was less than one second behind the winner. Both Chelanga and Pennel were clocked in 34:35, a close finish to say the least.

USATF is to be commended for putting on a good national championship race along with the City of Alexandria for providing excellent traffic control and opening Oronco Bay Park to all the runners. As we head into the New Year, the 65+ Runners Club is already looking forward to defending its 10K championship title at the James Joyce Ramble. Runners who took part in the Ramble last year wearing 65+ singlets were: Bill Borla, Zeke Zucker, David Pember, Richard Paulson, Robert Sullivan and Jerry Lévasseur. Look for this group and more to be setting the pace for veterans at the Ramble and at other races in 2016.

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## 65+ New Members

**Peter Bresciano**, Portsmouth, NH      Found club at a 5K race

Has been running for 30 years. Had two hips replaced at age 66. Took up walking in 2012 and has been race walking since 2013. Longest distance is a half marathon.

**Porfirio Claudio**, Woburn, MA      Sponsor: Ram Satyaprasad

Runs 3K, 5K, 10K, half marathon, 25K, marathon

**Robert Dio**, Worcester, MA      Sponsor: Nick Kanaracus

A runner for the past 20 years. Former assistant cross country coach. Has run Boston, several halves, the last 6 Falmouths, last 6 Charlton 5 milers (age group winner in last three). Tries to average 30 miles per week.

**Bonnie Hallinan**, Danvers, MA      Sponsor: Maureen Farren

Has run all distances from 5K to ultra trail runs (60 miles.) Does mostly trail runs now.

**Paul Horiuchi**, Caliso Viejo, CA      Found club on line.

Has run marathons including 2:59 at Boston in 1987. Currently running on trails. "I have slowed down and run on trails where no one can see me."

**Bob Howe**, Barre, VT      Sponsor: Dan Dodson

**Ellen Litt**, Braintree, MA      Sponsor: Wayne Smith

Has been running for more than 30 years including Boston and Memphis marathons. Serves as treasurer and is on board of Colonial Road Runners.

**Alvin Mack**, Portland, ME      Sponsor: Mel Fineberg

Has been running for 36 years.

**Barry Pearson**, Chelmsford, CT

Sponsor: Dan Dodson

Has run in over 1300 road races since 1978. Directed the Haynes Road Race in Lowell from 1988 to 2000. Has run 7 marathons including two Bostons.

**Philip Stuart**, Machias, ME

Sponsor: Dan Dodson

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## **Zeke Zucker Sets Age Division Record at JFK 50** by Zeke Zucker



**NE 65+ board member Zeke Zucker at the 2015 JFK 50 Miler.**

Since about a year ago, I had been cautiously looking at the 70's division course record at the JFK 50 Miler, which happens in late November down in Hagerstown, Maryland. Back in 2004 I managed to take a little more than 2 minutes off of the standing 60's division record, and am incredulous that it hasn't gone down in the eleven years since.

In 2006 a "whiz kid" from Pennsylvania trashed the existing 9:47:46 70's record with a blazing 9:09:00. To be honest, I considered that mark to be out of reach, but did my calculations anyway, figuring out that I'd need to average 10:55's to beat it.

On race day, November 21st, the weather was dry, overcast and chilly, at 33 degrees. The forecast called for something in the high 40's to low 50's at the Williamsport finish line by mid

afternoon. I dressed accordingly, with plans of shedding a complete layer as the day warmed up.

The first 2.5 miles climb on paved roads, followed by more climbing (1,200' in all) and shoddy footing on 13 miles of the Appalachian Trail. This 53-year-old race is 'grandfathered', and is thus the only one allowed to be staged anywhere on the AT. At about the 7 mile mark my right foot slid sideways on a sloping rock, and slammed hard against a tree. It hurt like crazy for a few minutes, but didn't take me out of the game. I also tripped and fell once, thankfully landing on leaves and not rocks. After 3 hours I finally got off the trail at the 15.5 mile mark, where my trusty support Lady helped me swap trail shoes for midweight training flats before embarking on 26.3 miles of nearly flat, meandering barge canal tow path alongside the Potomac River. I was 13 minutes behind schedule after the pit stop and shoe change, but immediately started chipping away at the deficit, with 9:00's and 9:30's on the smooth crushed granite surface. I honestly didn't know how long I'd be able to maintain this pace, and thought the wheels could fall off at any time, but figured I'd just keep plugging and hope for the best.

My GPS battery died at 32 miles, but fortunately I was still able to monitor my per-mile pace thanks to mile markers along the tow path. Now I was doing 10:00's, and still putting time in the bank. At the 41.8 mile mark, one finally departs the path and tackles the last 8.4 miles on undulating paved roads. I'd been running for about 6.5 hours, and my calculations were getting a bit fuzzy, but I figured that I was roughly 3-5 minutes ahead of target, and beginning to believe that the record was possible.

Somewhat in desperation mode, I asked a fellow runner if he had a functioning GPS. He said yes, and informed me that we were on a 9:40 pace, and should be able to break 9 hours. Holy Cow, I thought, unless something catastrophic happens, I should be able to at least break the record, but a sub-9 had never been on my radar.

I was afraid that without a GPS, my pace might start slowing, but was 'saved' again because the event provided miles-to-go signs for the last 7 miles. So once again I relied on my good old wrist watch to time each remaining mile, and I was hanging in there at 10 minutes per, give or take. Lovely Yuen had met me at 27 miles, and would have done so again at 38, except for getting slightly lost on the confusing country roads of Maryland. She felt badly because she knew I'd be wanting a new bottle of energy drink, gels and some heat rub for my legs. In the long races my leg muscles tend to cramp up, so that finishing cannot be taken for granted and applying the rub usually keeps the twinges at bay. She got to Taylor's Landing Aid Station just in time to see me trotting off into the distance, having fortunately been able to stock up on more water and energy gels at the aid station, but alas, no heat rub.

Before the race we'd decided that she didn't need to meet me at mile 46, but should go directly from 38 (Taylor's) back to the finish line. Now, however, knowing that to do so would mean being without assistance for the last 23 miles, she quickly studied the rest of the crew driving instructions, and found her way to the mile 46 location. What a delight it was to see her there, not only because she's such a doll, but also because I'd started getting mild cramps in the late mile uphill. I gave her a big hug, quickly told her that the record was possible, got a fresh water bottle, paused for the few seconds needed to apply the gunk to my legs, and was off.

Four miles remaining, and all systems are go. Then mile 3 and mile 2 and at long last I was actually in the last mile. It seemed to pass slowly, but was truly enjoyable because I was finally confident that I could achieve my goal. Rounding the last turn, the finish line came into view less than 100 yards away. I felt like I was floating as I crossed the line in 8:57:46, feeling just a bit tired but elated, with an average of 10:43 per mile. How about them apples? I did it.

Footnote: - In my previous run at the JFK, 8 years ago, I finished 2nd in the 60's, about 10

minutes behind a good friend from Virginia. This time HE finished 2nd in the 70's age group, one hour & 55 minutes behind me. Sorry Frank, but I was on a mission.

**Editor's Note: Zucker serves on the 65+ board as our club secretary. He was inducted into the club's Hall of Fame last September.**

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## Volunteer of the Month: John Gibbons



Our volunteer of the month is a NE 65+ board member who does much to help our club. John Gibbons serves on both the club's finance committee and the waiver selection committee. He drives up from Old Greenwich, Connecticut to attend board meetings and committee meetings as well as attend events like the club's annual banquet. He helps promote our club mission by urging race directors to include awards for the older age groups. In December, John contributed a humorous article to "Forever Run" about a race director's nightmare when the Healthy Families 5K race turned out to be 3.8 miles long. For all he contributes to the NE 65+ Runners, we are proud to name John Gibbons as our January volunteer of the month.

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### Quote of the month

**"You are never too old to set another goal, or to dream a new dream."**

**C.S. Lewis**

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