



# Forever Run

January, 2017

## Keeping Communication Current

with Jan Holmquist

Dear 65+ members,

**Happy New Year!** As we welcome in 2017, let's all reflect on 2016 and our amazing group of older members...so many still participating in races! I hope you visit the results section of our website often and find it inspiring to see so many participants in so many races throughout the year! We cannot all do what Dan Dodson does, but just getting to a race once in a while can be so rewarding, especially when you realize other 65+ members are there too!

For the prestigious 2017 Boston Marathon, the club received 7 waivers and your selection committee - comprised of John Gibbons, John O'Donnell, Mary Harada, Zeke Zucker, and myself - awarded the waivers to Christina Christides, Larry Cole, Rick Collette, Yolanda Hobin, Jo Ann McCalister, Phil Pierce, and Jeffrey Race. Beginning this month, and through the April edition of this e-news, we will briefly profile each marathoner, then follow-up after the marathon. Larry Cole is featured in this edition of Forever Run...note that he is 83 and still running strong! Go, Larry! We wish all of our marathoners' (waivers and qualifiers) safe and fun training and an enjoyable, memorable marathon!

There is a brief Treasurer's Report by Andy Lewis in this edition. Please accept our heartfelt appreciation to every one of you who donated and made this year the best ever! We are especially grateful to an anonymous member who donated \$1,000 through their Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC retirement account. Since the donor is anonymous, I cannot thank them personally, so if you are the donor and reading this, please know we are overwhelmed by your generosity! All of the donations allow us to continue to expand programs that support our members and our mission! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As many of you are aware, I am on the Board of the USATF-New England Association with the position of Masters LDR Chair. This volunteer commitment gives me, and all of you, a voice with USATF and the opportunity to showcase our participation in USATF competitive events. Our 70+ men's team is giving our club national recognition with participation in the USATF-NE Grand Prix series as well as excelling at USATF National Masters Championships. We now have several 80+ men who, I hope, will compete at the James Joyce Ramble on April 30, 2017 in Dedham. Winning both the 70+ and 80+

divisions would be awesome!

Note Steve Viegas's article...succession planning and goal setting at its best! Steve is your VP who will succeed me as President in the fall of 2018 and is looking ahead to joining the men's 70+ team by changing his USATF affiliation now to the NE65+RC! You likely know that we can join as many running clubs as we have the inclination to do - great way to meet others who are passionate about running - but we can only have one USATF affiliation. I am so pleased that so many of our members have chosen the 65+ club for their USATF affiliation.

Feel free to contact me with any questions/concerns/ideas in regard to my USATF Board position or as your 65+ club president: [jholmquist@mspca.org](mailto:jholmquist@mspca.org).

I look forward to seeing many of you at races and events in 2017...Happy New Year!

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## Spotlight on Larry Cole

by Byron Petrakis



**Larry finishing as the first 80+ runner in the Manchester City Marathon.**

Some people choose to run a marathon; others are chosen. Larry Cole is one of the latter.

Marathoners typically begin by gradually increasing their mileage and evolving from 5Ks and 10Ks to half-marathons before going the full 26.2 miles. Others, like 82-year-old Larry Cole, are "chosen" to run because of unique circumstances they wish they could change.

In Larry's case, his wife's stroke led to an invitation in late summer 2005 by the American Stroke Association to start training with a group called "Train to End Stroke." Like others in his group, Larry was charged with raising a great deal of money for the cause. The only choices presented to him were walking or running a half or full marathon in Orlando or Phoenix in January 2006. Larry chose to run his first full marathon, the Phoenix Rock 'n Roll Marathon.

Before then, he had run 2-3 Corporate Challenge races in Boston with a GTE Labs team from Waltham, but says he never trained seriously for them. He was in decent shape, though, because he played old timers hockey for decades up until September 2015, when-after a particularly "abominable game"-he decided to hang up his skates and commit himself to running. Despite being in decent shape, he still lost about 20 pounds training for Phoenix.

After Phoenix, he completed 6 more marathons, including the Manchester City Marathon twice, the Marine Corps Marathon twice, the Clarence De Mar in Keene, NH and Boston. His most recent 26.2 miler was the hilly and challenging Manchester City Marathon on November 6, 2016, which he finished in an official time of 6:03:40, proudly wearing his NE 65+ Runners Club singlet over a long-sleeved jersey.

In addition to his long-distance efforts, Larry runs about 40-45 races of various distances per year. Because he is not focused on marathons, he does not do one every year. When not training specifically for a marathon, Larry follows a weekly routine which varies long, short, speed, and easy runs. This training regimen keeps him ready to run anything up to and including a half marathon year round. He says he has never experienced a "runner's high," but he enjoys finishing and the post-race activities, "especially if there is a beer to be had." He also enjoys the company of fellow runners whom he has met over the years.

Larry's most memorable moment in a marathon was when he finished Marine Corps the first time, and the finisher medals and water were being handed out by platoons of brand new 2nd Lieutenant Marines in their Class A uniforms. "I had been an enlisted dink-um in the active Army and the reserves for over 20 years," Larry writes, "and it was about time to get waited on by an officer."

His short term goal is to train for Boston 2017, while continuing to do most of the winter and spring races he usually does." I am going to adhere to a Hal Higdon 18-week training program, which I have juggled the sequence of days so my longs runs are on Wednesday and the tempo runs are done at Sunday races." He says his one "long- term goal is to keep running as long as I am able, and outlast some of those fast old guys who show up each year at the RFAA. Also, I think it might be neat to run a marathon in Cuba and in Iceland in the not too distant future."

I hope you accomplish all of your goals, Larry, and if you get to Cuba, can you see about bringing me back a cigar?

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## Message From Your Vice President

**Editor's note: When Vice President Steve Viegas sent the message below to**

members of the 65+ competitive team, we asked if we could reprint it in "Forever Run" and he kindly agreed. Even though he still has two years before he can be a member of our 70+ competitive team, we look forward to a runner with Steve's talent wearing the 65+ singlet.

I have gone through a transformation as a runner. With my appointment in 2014 as the RRCA Massachusetts State Representative, I have tried to run more on the roads than the track which has been my competitive home for over 30 years. Prior to my appointment, when I did road races in the off-season, I chose mainly 5K's. I used to joke that the Winners Circle April Fools 4 mile race was my marathon because of that extra .9 miles. Since 2014, I have run some 10K's and a 12K. This year I ran two marathons and 3 half-marathons. I am now identifying more as a long distance runner. I represented USATF New England at the recent USATF Annual Meeting in Masters LDR and other LDR meetings.

I watched the plans for the 2017 USATF New England Grand Prix with interest. I have decided to try to become an Iron Runner. I am no longer afraid of the marathon distance and the races seem to line up well with my schedule. I'm not as talented in distance running in my age group as the addressees on this list are in theirs but I'm pretty good and will love representing the club.

So this morning, I transferred my USATF affiliation from MassVelocity to NE65+ Runners Club. I last ran in a USATF New England event at the East Championships in Providence in January. I had been considering doing this at age 70 but there is no point in my competing in the 2017 Grand Prix for a club which is exclusively track and field. I will continue my relationship with MassVelocity but NE65+ Runners Club will be my USATF competitive home for the foreseeable future.

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## New Members

**Bill Cotter**, Gilford, NH      Sponsor: Dan Dodson

Has run around 25 marathons including 6 Bostons. Is a member of Coastal Athletic Association Running Club.

**Stanley Dutton**, Antrim, NH      Sponsor: Dan Dodson

Ran XC in high school, XC and track at Springfield College. Has run road and trail races since. Has won a race in each age group up through 60-69.

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## My Favorite Half Marathons

by Ted Ridout



photo courtesy of Race Wire

### **Ted finishing the 2016 Steel Rail Half Marathon.**

The most common races these days seem to be 5Ks and half marathons. These events now have to compete intensely to get enough entrants each year. I am not a fan of 5Ks. To me, they are too short for the money usually charged. If I am going to drive a distance to an event, it had better be longer than 30 minutes of running. So I run many more half marathons instead. I have traveled throughout New England to these events. Perhaps I can recommend some to you.

I think the best half marathon event of all is the BAA Half Marathon, hands (or feet) down. It is on Columbus Day weekend, with a lovely traffic-free course along the Emerald Necklace, efficient wave start reducing congestion, enthusiastic spectators, speedy and tasty food and drink at the finish, a superior long-sleeve t-shirt, no ad-encrusted back, and convenient bus shuttles to cars at U Mass Boston. It is a world-class event like the BAA Marathon, but without the cumbersome logistics on race day. No lengthy wait for your wave to start.

Getting in is tricky. There is a lottery for entrance in June, filling in 10 minutes or less on-line. You have to speed type to make it. Anxiety city! To avoid that you can sign up as a charity runner raising money, or sign up for the three races in the BAA medley: 5K, 10K, and half marathon. This enrollment starts early in the calendar year. There are equally nice shirts for the 5K and 10K. One warning on race day: though there are numerous porta-johns, the wait can be 30 minutes. Enjoy!

Western Massachusetts has the Steel Rail Trail Half Marathon in May. Starts in Lanesboro, Ma., does one loop plus around a shopping area, and then dead straight ahead and nearly flat to end in Adams, MA. I love events with no cars around. The trail is scenic. A nice brew and food, speedy awards, and bus back to your car. In the line for food, I asked the lean runner next to me how he did. "I won the race!" Eric Ashe replied. Perfect. This race closes at 750 entrants, so enter early.

Finally, 3C Race Productions runs the New England Half Marathon Tour. 18 races in 7 states. Do enough of them, as I did in 2015, and get a fine fleece jacket embossed with

your name. The pricing of these races is reasonable, especially if you sign up for a 3-pack or 6-pack of races. 20% of the race proceeds go to a local group, such as a school running club. They assist as volunteers. Good shirts without ads, pint glasses to make a collection, and medals. These are smaller events. Gets you to see lots of corners of New England. I especially enjoyed Wolf Hollow in November in the lovely Mine Falls Park in Nashua, NH, largely no traffic, some good dirt road, and asphalt trails along a canal and the Nashua River. Another is Colt State Park, again November, in Bristol, RI. Run alongside the water in a stunning park. Absolutely a candidate for most beautiful setting. So get out your 2017 calendar and start planning. I am.

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## Message From Your Treasurer

by Andy Lewis

I can report that as of the end of December, the 65+ Annual Fund has reached a total of almost \$8,400. This is our best year total in the history of the club. Many thanks to all our donors, especially those that went over and above this year. We will now be able to hit next year's commitments and activities with renewed vigor!

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## A Labor of Love

by Byron Petrakis



photo by Byron Petrakis

**Editor's note: I am indebted to Ray Cormier for providing me with detailed background notes for this article. I am also indebted to Jim McLaughlin's article on Dr. Ray Cormier in a 2007 issue of the NE 65+Runners Club newsletter.**

Ray Cormier has touched many lives and accomplished a great deal in his 91 years. As a WWII veteran aboard the aircraft carrier USS Antietam, a chiropractor, physical educator, and superb amateur athlete, his contributions are legion. Not the least of these is his role as one of the founding fathers of the NE 65+ Runners Club. Along with Lou Peters, Bob Hunter, Ken Folsom, John Kane and Jack Keefe, Ray was instrumental in creating an organization that grew from 6 members in 1991 to over 700 today. By 1992, the Club

reached its short-term goal of 100 members, and it shows no signs of slowing down today.

After helping to create and maintain our viable organization, Ray set his sights on establishing a permanent location to house and showcase the NE 65+Runners Club Hall of Fame (HOF) plaques and Reverend Joseph Shea Awards. In 2000, Ray had the good fortune to run with Al Papalardo, whose family owned the Day's Inn Motel in Methuen, MA. Al generously donated space in his facility to the Club, for no cost, in order to display its awards. When the motel's ownership changed hands, the new owners graciously agreed to keep the display intact in its facility, now called Day's Hotel and Conference Center, again at no cost to the Club. For those interested in viewing the Hall of Fame plaques and Reverend Shea Awards, the Day's Hotel is located at 159 Pelham Street, just off I-93, exit 47 in Methuen, MA.

Ray shows his pride in the display by the care he takes in pointing out to a visitor some of the qualifications of each of the HOF recipients, starting with the freshman class of 2000-Phil Campbell, George Conway, Carleton Mendell, and Louise Rossetti. In 2001, Joe Fernandez, Barbara Robinson, and the Reverend Joe Shea were inducted, followed in 2002 by Dr. Ray Cormier himself, along with Robert Matteson, Reverend John Noffle, and Bill Tribou. The list goes on, of course, right up to 2016 with the induction of John Howe. It is on the shoulders of these 44 men and 9 women that the NE 65+Runners Club proudly stands today. While describing some of the many accomplishments of these athletes, Ray took special care to point out that 2006 inductee Mary Haines, though legally blind, continued to excel as a runner with the assistance of her guide dog. Another member of the HOF, George Conway, race walked until he was 100!

With characteristic humility, Ray said nothing about his own athletic accomplishments, though they are noteworthy and many. As Jim McLaughlin's story about Ray in the 2007 newsletter points out, Ray participated in track and field competitions throughout New England and Florida for 20 years. He competed in the Senior Olympics in track and field, as well as racquetball and tennis, qualifying for the Nationals in 1996 in each of the New England States. During his running career, Ray ran the Montreal Marathon (his 1st) and Boston in 1983. In 1991, he ran Mt. Washington.

Though a left hip replacement in 2000 forced Ray's retirement from running, he continues to stay active in the running community, as highlighted by his long-standing and ongoing commitment to the NE 65+Runners Club. As Ray himself puts it, "I would rather wear out than rust out." Having witnessed his enthusiasm in keeping alive the history and HOF tradition of the NE 65+Runners Club, I do not foresee Ray Cormier ever rusting out!

The men and women of Ray Cormier's generation are called "the Greatest Generation" for good reason. Without their sacrifices and selflessness, our country may not have survived the existential threats of the Great Depression and World War II. It is an honor to be in their presence. We may never see their likes again.

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## **A New Year Means New National Competition**

**by Rick Stetson**



photo courtesy of Jerry LeVasseur

### **Jerry LeVasseur with 7 medals won at the 2016 USATF Masters Meet**

When the USATF Masters Track and Field Meet was held in Grand Rapids, MI last year, 65+ Board member Jerry LaVasseur came home with medals won in the following events: 1500, 5000, steeplechase, 4x100 relay, 4x400 relay, 4x800 relay and the triple jump. Jerry was joined at the meet by fellow 65+ members Bill Spencer and Dennis Branham, both who captured first place in the 800. Joe Cordero also competed in the meet.

As we enter a new year, 65+ members might want to pull out their 2017 calendars and circle some important dates in June and July. The National Senior Games will be held at Samford University in Birmingham, AL June 7-11 followed by the USATF Masters Outdoor Track Meet July 13-16 in Baton Rouge, LA. We look forward to hearing about the performances of Jerry and our other 65+ competitors at those meets.

While you have your calendars out, don't forget to circle April 30. That's when the USATF National Masters 10K championship road race will take place in Dedham, MA. And there is one additional race that should be on the calendar of every member of NE 65+ Runners Club. It's our own Run For All Ages 5K which will take place on November 4 in Wakefield. It is always a fun race on a flat course and an event that really is for all ages.



So as you fill out your 2017 calendar, we want to wish you a New Year filled with many Happy Races.

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## Out on the Roads of New England

by Dan D.

Seasons Greetings to all my brother & sister members of the New England 65+ Runners Club and my most sincere wishes to all for a very healthy & happy 2017. As the year of 2016 draws to a close I find myself quite satisfied with making my running goals that I made in late December of 2015. I managed to complete all 6 N.E. 65+ Flag Races this year, as well as reach my annual goal of at least 100 long-distance races of 2 miles or longer. I'm presently at 104 which averages out at 2 per week (2 X 52 weeks = 104 races). In addition I qualified in the Elliot Millenium Running Series (1st place), the North Shore YMCA Road Race Series (2nd place), and the Gate City 5K Series. Far more important to me was the terrific runners I met this year and the many conversations and social interactions that we all had. Many thanks to everybody involved.

Let me start my report on the December races I ran with an addition from November and a "correction". The latter is an apology to running friend Kathy Clark who completed the "Going, Going ... Gobble" 5K in Plaistow, N.H. on November 23rd. Kathy finished 5th out of 9 in the rugged F60-69 division. The addition was the November 30th "The D5K" in Danvers, MA. that brought my total through November up to 95. Daniel Dodson was the only NE65+ member in the 15 - runner field. The race was run in a strong rainstorm at 7:00pm – tough running conditions.

The "Greater Beverly YMCA's Reindeer Run 5K Road Race" was held on the morning of Saturday, December 3 in Beverly, MA. This final event for the North Shore YMCA Road Race Series (2016) drew 441 runners on a typical cold New England morning. The \$25 fee included a festive long - sleeve shirt, light refreshments served inside the YMCA, chip timing by North Shore Timing Company, and a Holiday Costume Contest. Daniel McClorey finished 2nd in M70-99 followed by Daniel Dodson (5th) and Lou Peters (6th). Kathy Clark was 5th in the F60-69 division with Terry Lee Harrington 11th.

From Beverly I traveled about 60 miles north to Manchester, N.H. for the 3 mile "BASC Santa Claus Shuffle". This is an Elliot Millenium Running Series event and had all the features that most Millenium races include. Race announcing was performed by both Andy Schachat and Channel #9 sport's director Jamie Staton, Miss New Hampshire sung the National Anthem, all roadways were totally blocked to vehicular traffic with city police at most intersections, cheerleaders from the 3 Manchester high schools rooted the runners along at different locations, all 1647 finishers wore Santa Claus outfits provided in place of tee - shirts (shirts could also be purchased additionally), free beer tickets were included for several area pubs near the start/finish line, free parking was allowed at local parking garages, hot pizza was served at the finish line, instant results were sent out to computers and electronic devices, age group awards were 3 deep in 10 year divisions up to 70+, and of course Millenium Running did the chip timing. The Manchester Christmas parade began within 30 minutes of the race finish. The NE65+RC swept the M70-Up age group with Shu Minami 1st, Daniel Dodson 2nd, and James Stafursky 3rd. Mary Minami was 2nd in F70-Up, while Terry Lee Harrington finished 34th in F60-69 out of 49 finishers.

The "Mill Cities Relay - 33rd Annual" took place on Sunday morning, December 4th. This unique event has 5 legs which run through 2 states for 27 miles mostly along the Merrimack River from Nashua, NH to Lawrence, MA. The 19 running clubs who participate

provided 214 teams with 5 people each and 19 teams of 3 - persons for the Sunshine Start. The 3 - leg Sunshine Start is for F60-69, Coed 60-69, and M70+ teams only and begins with the 3rd leg. Over 1100 runners total participated in this event. There were too many runners to pick out all NE65+ members, but Daniel Dodson's North Medford Club Coed-Masters team scored 3 points, as did the Men's Super Veterans team from the Winner's Circle Running Club made up of Tom Wylie, Phil Pierce, and Charlie Farrington. The highlight of the day for our club was the annual presentation of the Phil Quinn Award (1991 to 2016) for "outstanding contributions to our sport" to Rick Bayko from Newburyport, MA. The so - called "6th leg" post-race celebration with a pasta and salad meal and beer takes place at the huge Claddagh Pub in Lawrence, MA. The Gate City Striders won the overall 1st place "brick", followed by the Somerville Road Runners (2nd), Athletic Alliance Running Club (3rd), Greater Lowell Road Runners (4th), and the North Medford Club (5th).

December seems to have an above average number of "unique" races as the December 11 - Sunday morning, "WCRC Santa's Toy Trot - 22nd Annual" certainly represents. This race takes place from an elementary school in Merrimac, MA. on a 2 - mile course. The "uniqueness" comes from the choice the runner makes DURING the race as to whether to run 2 miles, 4 miles, or 6 miles. The \$25 fee includes a nice long sleeve t-shirt and hot chocolate and refreshments served inside the Sweetsir School cafeteria, with timing by Yankee Timing. A total of 202 racers took part as 89 runners ran 2 miles, with 71 doing 4 miles, and 42 completing 6 miles. In the 4 - mile David Ritchie topped M70-79 with Charlie Farrington 2nd and Tom Wylie 3rd (NE65+RC "sweep"); Lou Peters was 1st in M90-99; George Leslie was number 1 in M80-89; while Maureen Farren was 3rd and Rita Labella 5th in a rugged F60-69 field. The 2 - mile had Kathy Clark 1st in F60-69 with Terry Lee Harrington 3rd; while Robert Randall, Daniel Dodson, and Robert Aucoin were 3,4,5 in M70-79. All 3 races have 10 - year age groups up to 90-99 and go 2 deep in awards.

From there I headed 67 miles north to the New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, N.H. for still another very unusual race. This is the "Yule Light Up the Night" 2.1 mile race that begins at 4:30pm on Dec. 11th at the N.H. Motor Speedway and winds its way through the largest display of Christmas lighting in New Hampshire. This final event of the 15 - race Elliot Millenium Running Series features a winter hat with LED headlights, personalized bib with your name, free race photos, and a NHOC Holiday Hat Trick half-zip performance shirt to runners completing 3 of the 4 holiday races, refreshments, free parking and free admission to the "Gift of Lights" on the actual motor speedway, etc. for a \$25 fee. The 10 - year age groups go up to 70+ and are 3 - deep. 1764 runners completed this event with Mary Minami winning F70-99; while new member Stanley Dutton won the M70-99 age group followed by Shu Minami 2nd, Daniel Dodson 3rd, and James Stafursky 7th. The weather was quite cold and there were a couple of small patches of black ice on the course.

December 18 - Sunday was the "Jingle Bell Run" 5K in Concord, N.H. The race headquarters was at the Rundlett Middle School where the packet pick-up and post-race awards ceremony took place. The cold weather kept the crowd down to 74 finishers who received long-sleeve t-shirts and jingle bells for their running shoes. Daniel Dodson topped the M70+ division. Millenium Running chip-timed the race and Andy Schachat from Announcers on the Run did the race announcing.

On Wednesday, Dec. 21st, I traveled down to Wakefield, MA. to run "The Mystic Runners Lake Q 5K". This weekly 5K race is sponsored by the Mystic Runners with a low \$2 entry fee. The course circles around beautiful Lake Quannapowitt which serves as the drinking water for the town. A total of 38 runners completed the race with Daniel Dodson the only

runner over 65 years-old. There are no age groups or t-shirts, etc. and timing is done by Mystic Runners volunteers. The course is mostly level with perhaps 2 small inclines along the way.

Monday, December 26th, several of my N.H. running buds traveled down to Swampscott, MA. to run the "Chabad North Shore's Chanukah Run-a-Latke Family Fun 5K". This race started and finished at a Jewish synagogue and was timed by North Shore Timing Company. The \$25 fee included a nice t-shirt and post-race food and beverages inside the Chabad Hall. The highlight for many of us was trying a latke – which is a Jewish version of a potato pancake (and VERY tasty). The rabbi gave a quick explanation of Chanukah and started the race by blowing on the shofar - a horn. Again – another rather unique race in December. A new record total of 150 runners took part with 10 - year age groups (one deep). Michael Pelletier topped the M70-79 age group with Daniel Dodson 3rd, while Harriet Snyder was 1st in F70-79 and Richard Snyder won the M80-99 division. Following the awards ceremony runners were invited to walk across the road to a city park for the lighting of the Chanukah Menorah.

December 28, Wednesday, was "The D5K" in Danvers, MA. This weekly 5K race starts and finishes on Cherry Street directly across from the Osborn Tavern. The race is free and popsicle sticks are used as you finish. Lights and reflectors are useful as the course is quite dark in places and the traffic forces runners to often run on sidewalks. Daniel Dodson was the only runner over 65 years old. This was race #104 for me in 2016.

I'd like to summarize the NE65+RC 6 - race "Flag Race Challenge." This series features one race in each of our 6 New England states which allows NE65+ to hand out flyers and talk to potential new members. The 6 races and number of NE65+ finishers are as follows: Maine – Portland – 5K – "Portland Sea Dogs Mothers Day 5K" on May 8th (17); Connecticut – West Hartford – 5K – "Celebrate West Hartford 5K" on June 5th (6); Vermont – Stowe – 8Mi. & 5K – "Stowe 8 Miler and Flying Onion 5K" on July 10th (6); Rhode Island – Narragansett – 5Mi. – "Bobby Doyle Summer Classic" on August 14th (12); New Hampshire – New Castle – 5K – "Great Island 5K" on October 9th (15); and Massachusetts – Wakefield – 5K – "Run For All Ages" on November 5th (54). There were a total of 110 entries from NE65+ members to these 6 races with 87 of our club members running at least 1 race. Daniel Dodson was the only member to complete all 6 races. Lou Peters ran 4 of them; with Zeke Zucker and William Morgan finishing 3. Two races were completed by Rich Paulsen, Mary Tyler, Michael Pelletier, Nancy Wilson, Charlie Farrington, Jan Holmquist, and Susan Filene. 76 club members ran one of the races in the "Flag Race Challenge". It would be nice to have more of our members try to complete 2 or 3 or even all 6 races on the circuit. It is refreshing to see the different sections of New England and to meet other club members who might not be able to attend the banquet or the RFAA in Wakefield.

Last year I initiated my personal choice of "Race of the Year" from the 100+ races I complete each year. My choice for 2015 was the "Boot Scootin' Boogie" 5K in Londonderry, N.H. This year's choice was quite difficult as there were so many wonderful events that I ran in "out there." Yet one race truly surprised me and tugged at my emotional heart strings like no other. Surprisingly I was NOT registered ahead to run it and had never run it before. I did not pre-register because the 11th of June (Saturday) was awful weather-wise. Finally Lou Peters and I decided to head to Cashman Park along the Merrimack River in Newburyport, Mass. for the unusual 3:30pm start of the "1st Lt. Derek Hines Flag Day 5K - 5th Annual". It was raining pretty hard as we walked over to register ... and then we saw "them." The field was lined with placards – maybe 200 of them – stuck in the grass along the edge. Were they political signs or something like that?? As we got closer and I recognized what I was looking at, my eyes began to water at about the same

pace as the rain pouring down from the sky. Each placard had the name, picture, and short story of a U.S. soldier from New England who had been killed in the Middle East. It's a good thing we arrived 90 minutes before the 5K because I knew I just had to read each one (I also needed to regain my composure). The servicemen & women were from all 6 states and all branches of the military.

Then we heard the announcement from the stage and learned that the announcer was the father of Lt. Hines from Newburyport. As we reached the stage we saw an empty chair and draped over it was the dress uniform worn by this American hero who was killed in Afghanistan in 2005. Phewwwwww ..... The money raised from the 1204 runners who completed the race went to the 1st Lt. Derek Hines Soldiers Assistance Fund which is used to assist returning Massachusetts veterans who have sustained serious life-altering injuries. As for the race – it was a fair course with a nice downhill towards the river in the last mile. There was a 60's style rock band and a great choice of refreshments like burgers, hot dogs, beer, soft drinks, etc. We all got a nice t-shirt, chip timing by Yankee Timing, etc. In short (despite the inclement weather) it was a great take for the money ... but you know somehow all that really didn't matter!!!!!!

Before I conclude my little column for 2016 – I want to again thank Tom Abbott and the "results" crew who tirelessly organize all our race results throughout the year. I utilized their efforts to complete the "Flag Race Challenge" statistics and have checked their results for all my race reports. Their work is sort of "behind the scenes" but it sure does a lot to keep us together as a 6 - state running club.

Perhaps it's because I'm "getting older" but I've been thinking a lot this month at how truly blessed I am to have discovered this marvelous sport and the many people in our region who make it the success it obviously has become. What terrific variety we have from the awful humidity this summer at the "Bobby Doyle Summer Classic" in R.I. and the "Ribfest 5 - Miler" in N.H. to the freezing icy "Fudgcicle 5K" runs last January in Massachusetts. Within a couple of weeks I ran in several jingle bell Christmas races and through holiday lights on a professional NASCAR racing track ... to be followed by eating latkes at a Chanukah 5K in Massachusetts. In 2016 I had the good fortune to run in races along the Atlantic Ocean in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and on vacation in South Carolina. I qualified for race jackets and awards parties for 3 separate race series and completed our "Flag Race Challenge" this year while finishing 104 distance races and 2 shorter races (1 mile and 3K). My running helped me through life challenges of family illness, election discord, terrorist and drug-related threats, etc. I sometimes wonder how people who DON'T run manage to survive it all?? In any case another year is over and we all get to start over again at the "starting line". I truly hope to see many of you in 2017 as we collectively run towards the finish line "Out on the Roads of New England."

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**Volunteer of the Month: Bill Borla**



Our first volunteer of the month for 2017 is a runner who is known in masters competitive circles from coast to coast. Bill Borla has held the American 5K record for age 65 (18:22) and has won numerous national championships on the roads, track and cross country. For his running accomplishments, Bill was inducted in the 65+ Hall of Fame in 2012. If the club had a "volunteers hall of fame," Bill would be a member of that as well.

Bill has been a dedicated member of the 65+ Board of Directors, driving up from Torrington, CT to attend meetings in Massachusetts. For the past two years he has served as the coordinator for the club's Connecticut flag race where he would hand out club membership applications to interested runners in addition to winning his age group and bringing the club additional recognition in New England. Bill, along with several other speedy 65+ runners, brought the club national recognition when they captured a USATF National Masters 10K Championship at the James Joyce Ramble. Club members might recall Bill's account of that race in his article, "A Very Special Ramble." Volunteers are always needed to submit articles for the club's newsletter and Bill has contributed his share of good ones, such as "Special Running Moments," his account of running with his son, Peter, and grandson, Grayson, in the Apple Harvest 5K. For writing memorable articles, serving on the 65+ Board of Directors and bringing flag races to Connecticut, Bill Borla is our January Volunteer of the Month.

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## Quote of the Month

**"Methinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow."**

Henry David Thoreau

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