



# Forever Run

June 2020

## From the President

by Steve Viegas

Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well. The pandemic has helped me heal. Without the physical stress of competitions and regular track interval work, I am feeling the best I have in years of running. I'm a competitive athlete. So this lull isn't what I'm used to or desire but I count my blessings. I plan to stay away from the track and not to race virtually during the pandemic.

I do encourage those who are attracted to virtual races to continue and I applaud them. Dan Dodson's embrace of the virtual was documented in the previous *Forever Run*. Donna Sarasin has taken on the Great Virtual Race Across Tennessee, a 1000 kilometer (620 mile) effort. #gvrar1000k She had covered 300 miles in 30 days as of her most recent post on our Facebook page. She's almost half the way there.

Jan Holmquist, our race director for the Run for All Ages and indispensable steward of so many things that make our club special, polled the stakeholders of the race about naming the race for Jerry Panarese. With unanimity, they agreed to Jan's suggestion that the race will be called Jerry's Run For All Ages in the future. As to the future, Jan doesn't believe that we will be able to run the race safely in 2020. Her opinion is based on an RRCA survey as to the recommendation of holding races going forward. The following link will take you to the RRCA website with a "Statement on Events and Group Runs" which contains a further link to the RRCA's "Looking Forward: Guidelines for Races," [www.rrca.org/](http://www.rrca.org/) Hopefully the virus will be in our rear view mirrors in 2021 and we can celebrate Jerry with our 5K race. It should be noted a board vote would be required if Jerry's Run For All Ages is to be postponed until 2021.

The BAA had given entrants until May 29 to decide if they wished to stay in or receive a refund. I don't believe that any marathon will be held in this year or well into next. Therefore, I requested a refund. I contacted our members who received waivers to tell them that they were free to go either way since they wouldn't be letting the club or the BAA down by withdrawing. Some requested the refund. Others decided to hold on in the chance they would receive a waiver into the next Boston Marathon. The BAA trumped us all by cancelling the 2020 event and offering refunds or the opportunity to run it virtually in September.

Since entrants won't be deferred into the next marathon, I feel that our waived members should be given priority to run on a club waiver in the next Boston Marathon if they don't choose the virtual race or otherwise qualify. I haven't heard dissent about this idea. If you feel differently, drop me an email with your thoughts.

Our board will meet this month on our Google G Suite Meet platform on June 18. I'll post an announcement on our Facebook page with instructions for non-board members to join as non-voting attendees if they wish. If you aren't on Facebook but would like the link, drop me an email. The most pressing issue will be to field a complete field of candidates for

officers and board.

While I have no poetry to offer in this letter, I have been uplifted by Byron Petrakis' daily posts of haiku on Facebook. Byron is famously allergic to social media. So in addition to appreciating his product, I appreciate his using social media to publish it. I note that Rick Bayko and Tom Wylie have provided their own verses in response. Thanks for uplifting us up in this trying time!

Stay safe,

Steve Viegas

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## Betsy's Birthday Photo

**Betsy Knapp took the above photo of herself after celebrating her 75th birthday on May 14 by running a 5K in her neighborhood while wearing a face mask. She had gone through some old race numbers and found a #75 which she pinned to her 65+ t-shirt and added her 100 mile racing patch she received last year. Way to go Betsy!**

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## Just Don't Call Us "Joggers"

**Editor's Note: The following is from an article written by Jason Gay that appeared in the May 4th issue of "The Wall Street Journal" under the title: "The 'War on Runners' Is Getting Hot and Sweaty." Surely all of us in NE 65+ are courteous when out on the roads. It must be some of the younger runners who are giving us a bad name.**

Let's deal with the runners, because the runners are getting a lot of grief right now. Some folks are getting steamed at the runners—social media teems with accounts of runners barreling around sidewalks like getaway cars from a bank heist, weaving among pedestrians, not adhering to rules of safe distance and personal space. People are getting so mad at runners, they're starting to call them "joggers," which runners really hate, because a "runner" is someone committed to fitness, and a "jogger" is someone who waddles around in sweatpants while eating a turkey leg.

As a longtime cyclist, I find the agitation toward runners very unsettling. After all, cyclists are supposed to be the people that everyone hates. We're the ones who traditionally get yelled at and told to move back to France. It's odd to not have your favorite activity demonized—I hate cyclists, they're all so smug and entitled—because someone saw one person do something they didn't like. Cyclists no longer feel like Exercise Public Enemy No. 1. Honestly, I'm a little offended. Runners are moving in on our turf.

Like cyclists—like every good public villain, really—I suspect the runners are getting painted with too broad a brush, that the vast majority of runners recognize the need for social distance and common courtesy. They're crossing the street, running in low-traffic areas and at funny hours to avoid crowds. Runners aren't looking for confrontations. They're runners! Not wrestlers! They're just trying to finish their runs, so they can get home and eat half a pint of ice cream and not feel horrible about themselves.

If you're one of the few problem runners out there, please stop being a problem. As for the rest of us, take it easy. Be kind. Be courteous. We're all trying to figure this out as we go along. We need to look out for each other. It's clear we've got a ways to go here, whether it's walking, running—or me, taking a smug, entitled ride on my smug, entitled bicycle.

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## Vermont City Relay Memories

by John Gibbons



**Above, the author with one of the many relay teams he has been a member of at the Vermont City Marathon. (L-R): David Treadwell, Zeke Zucker, John Gibbons, the late Dr. Bill Yates, father of four Maine standout cross country runners.**

Twenty years ago this Memorial weekend, three middle aged men, originally from Delaware where they were high school classmates, somehow were lured to Burlington, Vermont for that city's legendary marathon and relay (teams of three, four, and five men, women or mixed). Burlington is a college town and very picturesque and the race is in the shape of a clover with lots of spectator interaction.

Dave Treadwell was our captain and had been lured from Brunswick, Maine to Burlington by his step-son (an executive with Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream company) and daughter-in-law, first violinist in the State of Vermont orchestra. Dave thought the relay would be fun and sucked Bill Francisco ("Frannie") and me to this event. Neither of us had ever seen Burlington or the Battery Hill. Frannie and I were on our high school track team (he as a 400 yard hurdler and me as a sprinter and high jumper). Frannie was also a purple heart decorated war veteran (so Memorial Day was very meaningful). All of us had run local races in Maine (David and I), Maryland and Delaware (Bill), and CT.

We had not done a relay since Bill and I were in the Penn Relays in 1959 (Dave did not make that

event). Neither Bill nor I had ever considered a marathon; however, Dave and I watched in wonder as Joanie (Benoit) Samuelson, our Bowdoin pal won Boston and the Olympics in LA, and made 26.2 look easy. Confession: I trained for my 7 mile leg by running 28 laps at Greenwich HS Track.

We arrived in Burlington with our wives and went to register at the race HQ. Being rookies we wandered over to the busy relay desk and were signing in (getting shirts) where we encountered one Zeke Zucker. "Hi guys", he said. "Are you running the relay masters?" We mumbled our assent whereupon he looked at us carefully and said, "We are going to crush you." Welcome to Zeke's Vermont!! Zeke had Bill Borla on his team and we were quick to learn just how fast Borla was (and is). Long story to fit 26.2: Frannie and Dave ran two "shorter" legs and I had the middle long leg (straight through downtown Burlington). Yes, Zeke and his team won and crushed all competition. We were impressed that we finished well with a decent time for a three some. I had never really trained for a seven miler with traffic and cheers. I recall great bands (who knew?), a trek down and up in a new housing development the southern apex of the race, a long slog parallel to the lake, then the rail depot (hope?) and the Asian martial drummers....and Battery Hill. Quite a shock at the end of a leg. My wife and Dave's wife were positioned along the hill cheering. I never saw them nor heard them, I was so tired and focused on finishing.

Post script: We reconnected with the jubilant Zeke, who angered some of his relay teammates by running the entire 26.2 ahead of them (how he passed Borla is still a mystery). He suggested we try this again and to recruit some new teammates, which we did: Dr. Bill Yates from Farmington, ME father of the Yates Cross country runners, and Steve Beale, attorney from Portland who had run B2B with us. Bill Francisco's health was sadly on the wane (he passed from his Nam injuries a couple years later)...so we merged our team with the survivors of Zeke's team becoming a Grand Master's Team that won both male and mixed (when Sharon Vos turned 55) for the next twelve years.

It was great fun since Zeke knew everyone and really managed the elite marathoners. We became paymasters (Beale), tour guides (me...so the real runners could understand Battery Hill), airport pick up men and travel guides (me and Zeke), and marathoner bottle arrangers (Zeke and Joost Vos). Funniest comment from a female elite (though Casey Enman smacked her in 26.2) when I picked her up at the airport and she looked a little confused. Me, "how did you get here?" She: "flew from Philly." Me: "Oh you from Philadelphia, I grew up near there." She, "no I live in the Bronx, New York." Me: "What? You could have ridden up with us." She "No, a Mr. Zeke got me a flight from LaGuardia through Philly to Burlington." That is our Zeke. Right price for VT City budget. Twenty years of running with the famous small boat captain in Vermont, Maine, Alaska, NYC, and CT....and more than once (in Maine relays) Zeke ran the entire 26.2 passing his relay team members.

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## From the Archives

by Jan Holmquist

When I became President of the NE65+RC in 2014, I inherited several boxes of club information from Tom Wylie. Apparently the tradition was for past presidents to hand down the boxes to the next president. The boxes contain information related to our club history. I am slowly going through the files and folders. Information includes some financial records, correspondence, board notes, etc. AND newsletters dating back to the Winter of 1997... what fun to read through our club history! So as my time allows, I plan to share some fun facts with all of you! May as well start with 20 years ago as both John Gibbons and I are reminiscing about races we ran two decades ago.

Fun facts from 20 years ago in 2000

Florence Dagata was President

The club welcomed its 400<sup>th</sup> member

16 club members ran the Boston Marathon, all finished, all were men

We had email addresses for 22 members

The newsletter was paper, black & white, volunteer compiled, published quarterly and ranged from 45-73 pages, and the club's biggest expense related to printing and postage

The Hall of Fame was initiated

The guest speaker at the annual luncheon was Dave McGillivray (who has honored us several times since and is now a member)

Florence wrote the following in her "President's Message":

There is a very good reason why a policy of a "One time life membership" was established at the time the club was formed in June 1991. Since our unique club requires that members must be 64 ½ years of age or older in order to join, it was expected that some members along the way might reduce their level of activity or abandon it all together for a variety of reasons. This "One time life membership" is a recognition of those that preceded us making it possible for all who followed to build upon a club that is recognized throughout New England. Everyone should feel very much a part of the club – active or inactive.

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**Jerry LeVasseur with some of the many national and world championship medals he has won in master's competition.**

## **Staying Fit During Difficult Times and Challenges.**

**by Jerry LeVasseur**

It would be interesting what per cent of runners do core, balance and weight exercises.

In high school I played sports in all 3 seasons. Coaches had us do warm ups before we started practice. The same for college but not so much in interfraternity sports. After college I played softball, flag football and basketball. At age 30 I gave up football and basketball and started a running routine to stay fit. At age 34 we purchased a Siberian Husky and looked into sled dog racing which I did for 30 more years. That sport gave me the weight training with lifting dogs and holding them back. The running helped when the dog team slowed down going up hills where I ran with the team. Success comes from how much effort one puts into it. We won a number of Club Championships.

I started competitive running at 41 years old. Within 7 years I was running sub 6 minute miles. Training runs were longer with some speed work. Warming up for races included a mile or so jog and some pickups as well as leg swings and skips. I qualified for Boston and ran several other marathons as well. At age 50 I ran a hilly 10 mile race at a 6 minute pace. I was averaging between 30 and 40 miles a week, over 50 when training for a marathon. It was hard to train for Boston while racing sled dogs. After racing a couple teams I would do a long run.

I did some speed work but most of it was racing on the weekend. The first international race was in Bermuda at age 57. I had qualified for Boston but decided to do senior games in Bermuda doing 7 events placing 1st in 5. That was around the time that I did the first National Championship 10K cross country race. The course was wet and muddy and I did not have spikes. I was an arm's length behind the 2nd place runner and not far out of first. They were not slipping as I was and I ended up 4th. The next week I bought spikes.

From there I did numerous National and World competitions. At age 60 I ran 39.13 minutes for a 10K at the Nike World Masters Games and a 5:36 mile on the roads. Fitness was the same as I had been doing. Over the years we put together numerous winning and record setting teams (road and cross country races, track and road relays). My goal was always to win my age group more than 50% of the time. In my 50's I gave up softball because of groin pulls. That was because I didn't do the proper exercises. When I was 61 I wanted to have 50 wins. When I reached the goal by September, it was suggested I do my age. I ended with 65 wins.

When we retired, we moved to Maine where I volunteered to help with Bowdoin's cross country and track teams. I worked out with the team doing the big warm-up which included core and full body exercises. By the end of the year, one of the coaches mentioned that my flexibility improved a lot. I continued doing National and World events adding the steeplechase and triple jump to my events. I also added a trail and snowshoe race series. I probably averaged 50 events a year but did not race all and many times ran with friends and new runners helping them to reach their goal. There is much satisfaction in doing that. At age 70 it was suggested that I do my age again so I ended with 75 wins with 20 from corporate track where one can do 5 events per meet. As a 70 year old in corporate track, I set 9 records with several meeting the all-American standard. At age 71 my prostate was enlarged and I was put on 2 drugs, one being a muscle relaxer. For the first time John Howe and Bob Randall beat me.

My legs would get tired toward the end of the race, a new experience. The next year I was told I had prostate cancer and that it was a watch situation. After 5 months I decided to have the prostate removed. My PSA continued to increase so it was decided to do radiation therapy but I needed a scan before doing the procedure. The scan showed I had kidney cancer so my right kidney was removed. During these challenges I continued with my fitness regimen. If the operation was on a Thursday or Friday I was back at Bowdoin practice on Monday. My running times had slowed. I did have a partial comeback and was awarded a comeback award. The next year it was found I had cancer of the esophagus. The cancer was removed and I would go to Boston quarterly for testing and removal of the bad cells. This was for 4 years. I now go in once a year. During this time I had skin cancer as well blood clots on my lungs. I am now on a blood thinner. During this time my PSA went up so I went on hormone therapy to reduce my testosterone so the cancer wouldn't grow. I've done this twice for a year with the therapy reducing my PSA. The latest went from a PSA of 6 to .01 with a .03 reading after a year after the therapy ended, but the effects of hot flashes and fatigue went on for more than a year.

These were all challenges which one has to be positive and face the challenge head on. When the doctors told me that I had cancer I would say, "Okay what do we do now?" I have been through 5 life threatening challenges. The one when I was in the circus fire at

age 6, a nurse commented when I was in an oxygen tent, that I probably would not make it and I thought "oh yes I will." I believe that a strong will, a positive attitude and a lifetime of fitness have gotten me through the challenges. Without the fitness I probably would not be here today.

A few years ago running the Portland half, a runner younger than I was walk-running. He would pass me running as I got slower and continued to run. He ended up beating me and I said to myself, "Did you learn something?" I now walk-run. Going from a 23 minute 5K to over 40 minutes at age 80 and being beaten by many that I used to beat has been hard to accept. I have to remind myself why I run and do races: it is about fitness, fun and friendship. Instead of quitting like some have, I am having fun walking and jogging at the back of the pack with friends. I even had 50 wins of 70 events last year and at 80 in corporate track, set 11 records from 100m to 5K including long jump and hurdles. Most of the records are soft. The pounding really bothers my legs so I have to walk in many races.

Fortunately, I can use the Bowdoin fitness center where I do a hour and a half workout. I do elliptical, treadmill, rowing machine, stair climber and stationary bike for an hour varying the amount of time and which machine I use each day. The half hour is spent on weight machines, core and balance exercises as well as step ups. The balance is done on a bosu half ball doing 20 squats on each side. If I run outside or play tennis, I just do the half hour in addition. I generally work out 6 days a week. One of the days I do the zero runner which gives one a stride like running and the lateral machine. Both are non-impact but one can get a mile per hour pace like the treadmill. My goal is to do 7.5 to 8 miles in an hour. I do the lateral for 33 minutes with a fast pace for a half lap and slower for the other trying to do 4.5 miles or 18 laps. (My recent best is 4.58 miles) then do the half hour workout finishing with 27 minutes on the zero runner. Outside, I can sprint for 100 meters but after that my legs ache from the pounding. Being able to set goals on the non-impact machines such as a sub 23 minute 5K keeps me going and takes the place of running fast in a race. It is important to do fast intervals for at least 30 seconds getting your breath back and doing it again for 10 times at least once a week. My second time of raising my heart rate is to do 400 stairs in 5 minutes. Years ago when the stair master came in I set up a challenge for those 65 and older to do 1,000 steps without stopping. I believe there were at least eight that did it. There are a number of 70 plus working out at the fitness center and I have been able to get several of them to try new exercises.

Now that Bowdoin is closed because of the virus as is the golf course I can run on a trail from our back yard to the golf course and do between 4 and 5 miles. I do this 5 days a week as well as the core exercises. Since it is a soft surface it doesn't bother my legs as much but I still have to jog walk or better called slogging. Even in a race if there is dirt on the side of the road that is where I run. If the weather is bad I do the bike and elliptical I have or I do stairs of 4 sessions of 10 times up and down 13 steps for 500 plus going up steps. I rest between sessions.

With the trail runs I have to walk over the roots and rocks since I am on a blood thinner. Since I am almost always the last to finish and the oldest, and because I don't want to keep the volunteers on the course longer than necessary, I go out early usually with someone else. To make myself useful I take my camera and as runners pass me I take their photo and post them on Flickr.

This time at home can be a difficult challenge especially mentally. It is important that we stay busy and find projects that will bring us a feeling of accomplishment. I am putting together a photo book and slideshow of the years I have helped coach at Bowdoin for his 100 seasons of coaching. Stay fit, safe and well not only through this time but always.

A few quotes from Amby Burfoot's books follow. We should take them to heart.

"Winning has nothing to do with racing. Most days don't have races anyway. Winning is about struggle and effort and optimism, and never, ever, ever giving up."

"In running, it doesn't matter how fast or slow you are relative to anyone else. You set your own pace and you measure your own progress. You can't lose this race because you're not running against anyone else. You're only running against yourself, and as long as you are running, you are winning"

"Runners don't quit. We fade; we 'hit the wall'; we're sometimes reduced to a walk. But we

keep on."

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## ***Complete Book of Running Relevant Today***

by Rick Stetson

I received my June issue of "Sports Illustrated" yesterday, the one with the cover of a sad looking baseball mascot sitting on a pitcher's mound. Nowhere on the cover does it mention the magazine includes an excellent article by Chris Ballard about Jim Fixx, who in the 1970's, "brought running to the masses and died doing what he loved." The article, "Running For Our Lives," is pertinent during this time of pandemic so I wanted to bring it to the attention of non-SI readers who might want to look at the article on line at:

[www.SI.com/track-and-field/2020/05/21/jim-fixx-legacy-running-coronavirus](http://www.SI.com/track-and-field/2020/05/21/jim-fixx-legacy-running-coronavirus)

In 1979 I attended the RRCA annual meeting in New Orleans. The meetings back then were not quite as elaborate as they are now, but they did include individuals responsible for the running boom like Fred Lebow who organized the NYC Marathon and the man who was at the forefront of the running movement, Jim Fixx, who was a featured speaker. Two years before, Fixx had written a hugely popular book, "The Complete Book of Running" which had made it to the top of the "NY Times" best seller list for 11 weeks. After he spoke, Fixx sat at a table with copies of his book. I purchased one and he inscribed it with a message for me to "keep running," something I have tried to do these many years.

Random House doubted a book about running would sell well and the initial printing was for 35,000 copies. The first week, however, the publisher received orders for 85,000 books and Ballard writes that by 1981, the book had been printed in 16 foreign editions and sales "topped 900,000 . It ultimately became the most lucrative nonfiction title ever published by Random House."

Jim Fixx became a celebrity while putting many demands upon himself as he remained in the public eye. He kept running, totaling 3,877 miles one year and 4,035 another while taking Valium to calm his nerves. He started to feel a pressure in his chest and when a friend urged him to see a doctor, Fixx said he was "in the best shape in his life." Then, in July 1984 while working on another book, Fixx went for a run in Hardwick, Vermont and was found dead by the side of a road.

I remember the shock that went through the running community when the death of Fixx was reported. Some non-runners said, "See, we told you that running was not good for you." But as Ballard writes, an autopsy report from Vermont's chief medical examiner stated that "while exercise, including running, is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, it does not prevent...coronary arteriosclerosis to a significant degree. Running did not cause the death of Jim Fixx."

Ballard concludes with the thought that the book's "passages that resonate most now, as we hunker in our apartments and houses, battling anxiety, boredom and fear are not the prophecies but the simple truths of the sport" because as Fixx wrote: 'Only running can be done anywhere, requires practically no equipment and costs about nothing.' " And as you will see in this issue of "Forever Run," many of us are still able to get out and run while keeping a social distance during this time of a pandemic. It is a good way to escape the anxiety of what is happening in the world around us.

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## **New Member**

**Rina Brodney**, Boston, MA.....Recommended by Phyllis Mays

Rina was contacted by Phyllis Mays after running in the Reebok 10K and said she would like to join the club. Welcome, Rina.

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## **A Marathon Out Of Nowhere**



**Most club members get to see Zeke Zucker, our 65+ vice president, only when he is wearing a t-shirt and shorts. We included the above photo from he was inducted in the 65+ Hall of Fame to show that he can "dress up nice" when he is not running.**

So, here I am, along with everyone else in the Nation, or really around the World, hunkered down at home, in order to out-fox the novel Corona Virus. I, however, consider myself to be quite fortunate to live in a rural area, where social-distancing is actually rather easy to accomplish. Fairly wide open spaces and fewer people amount to a low density environment. In recent years, on a regular basis, I've driven or flown down to New York City to be with my special Lady, and did so as recently as early March, less than three months ago. I don't need to remind readers about the situation down there. Thanks to wireless phones, laptops and desktops, we've been able to keep in touch with each other and our family members and mutual friends.

I'm also thankful that my passion is running, because unlike sports that require a gym, pool, ballfield or court, I can find my venue right outside the front door. I've been getting out to run an average of five days each week and keeping at least 6' from others has been easy. Occasionally I encounter walkers, but they're slow-moving, so skirting around is no problem. I sometimes see bikers, who are on the other side of the road if going my way. If they're coming at me, on my side of the road, they're generally riding at a modest pace, so I just mosey over to the other side of the road until they've passed by.

Without any goal races, in at least the near future, I've found that my energy level is a bit lower than usual, and I'm generally taking it easy, regardless of the length of my training runs. Just being out of the house, out in the fresh air, and in the spring sunshine (sometimes), is absolutely refreshing. I've been averaging just under 40 miles a week, which is ahead of last year's pace. Up until my 50K race on March first I was averaging close to 47 a week, but due to the aforementioned lack of race incentive, and the general uncertainty because of the pandemic, my mileage has tapered some. Regardless, the running I do serves as excellent exercise for my body and emotional therapy for my spirits.

On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of April I happened upon a Facebook posting from Dave McGillivray, of Boston Marathon fame, in which he announced that on the 20<sup>th</sup> he was going to run a marathon near his home in North Andover, Mass. Since THE Marathon was postponed until the fall, he wanted to still honor the original date by running his own marathon. According to his posting, Dave was going to run a 3.8 mile loop course 7 times to achieve his 26.2. The more I thought about this, the more I began thinking that it might

be 'fun' to do the same thing in my neck of the woods. What made me a bit hesitant was the fact that since the beginning of March my longest run was about 10 miles, and speedwork just wasn't happening. The closer I got to making my decision, the more I began rationalizing away the holes in my non-plan marathon training plan. Long story short, I decided to do it. I made the decision on Saturday, while completing a 3.5 mile training run, and then decided that it would be a wise idea to take Sunday off, in preparation for My Marathon on Monday. That qualified as my briefest marathon taper ever.

The weather was cooperating, producing a cloudless day on Monday, with the temperature just a tad below normal, sitting right at 32 degrees. Had I been in Boston, it would have been about 45 degrees, headed toward an almost perfect marathon temperature of 55. I live on a paved (yes we do have some of those) state road, and decided to run on it at the beginning. One of my standard routes takes me 2.5 miles up the highway, climbing about 180', and then back down again to the house, for an even 5 miles. Another takes me on a triangular 3.75 mile loop, with one side on the highway, and the other 2/3 on a hilly unpaved road. Together these two add up to 8.75 miles. I decided to alternate the 5 and 3.75, and if I did that three times, I'd end up with 26.25 miles. How about that for convenient? Needless to say, there wasn't much traffic on either road, and only a handful of walkers, and very few bikers or runners. Who would be foolish enough to run when the temperature was freezing? I, for one!

You've all experienced the commencement of a long or even longer run, and it's important not to dwell on the distance in front of you, but to simply take it one step at a time. We know from experience that the miles will go by, and we'll eventually get to the finish. Even so, we're only human, and can't really help occasionally thinking about the distance and about how long it's going to take us to complete it. That first 2.5 miles uphill was a test of my resolve, and the turn around and subsequent cruise back down to the house was a nice intermediate reward. Then I set out on the loop, having to deal with the ruts caused by the frost heaves and melting, which are a part of living in Vermont. The old saying goes that we have five seasons. The 5<sup>th</sup> being the one between Winter and Spring, which we call Mud. Where there are locations on the gravel roads that get particularly muddy and rutted, the Town road crew drops truckloads of gravel in an attempt to provide some traction through the muck. I was running late enough in the spring that most of the mud had dried up, but now I had to run on the lumpy, ankle-tweaking gravel stretches. This wasn't too bothersome for the first and second times on the loop, but the third time was challenging.

As I meandered along, I thought back to the seven times I'd run Boston since 1986. Thus, I recalled the various Boston course landmarks, as I reached their respective mile points. I envisioned the first downhill miles out of Hopkinton and passing the original 1897 starting line at 2.3 miles. At 10K I would have been starting the level stretch through Framingham and Natick. At the halfway mark I was running through the Wellesley 'Tunnel' with the cheering coeds crowding in from both sides, creating a narrow corridor, and sporting signs such as "Kiss me, I'm from Texas". At 17.5 I'd make the righthand turn at the Newton fire station, and shortly thereafter commence the climb up through the 4 Newton Hills. Fortunately, today my course was just a bit easier, especially since I didn't have any Heartbreak Hill at 20.6 miles. Of course, it's so great thereafter, being able to enjoy the route DOWN into Cleveland Circle and Coolidge Corner, onto Beacon Street and past Fenway Park (Go Sox!). Onto Comm. Ave. and finally the right turn onto Hereford Street, followed by the quick Left onto Boylston. There's the finish line a quarter mile away.

Oops! Back to reality, and the finish 'line' at my mailbox. I actually intended on running 26.47 miles, in order to equate exactly to the length of a properly-certified course, with 1% added. Anyway, just to make sure I'd covered the required distance, I ran 26.54 miles, and it took me 5 hrs. 8 min. & 38 seconds. As a testament to the benefit of adequate pre-race training, my March 1<sup>st</sup> 50K race took me 5 hrs. 4 min. & 48 seconds, and that was 4.8 miles longer. I have experienced a lower level of energy when running these days, probably due to lacking any specific race goals. My thought is that in 'normal times I do at least one weekly speed workout, which invigorates me, and makes it easier to do longer and faster training runs the rest of the week. In this time of social distancing, I'm somewhat distracted from the normal carefree running, when I can enjoy my surroundings and the feeling of freedom. Now I have to pay rapt attention to my surroundings and be prepared to keep at better than a safe minimum distance from others.

Boston Marathon Dave finished his 26'er before noon because he started running before sunrise. He commented that under normal circumstances he would be totally engrossed in directing Boston, and then in the evening would run the course from Hopkinton into the City, finishing after dark. This year he could, and did, finish in daylight, which he said was a pleasant change. He also reported that he had to stop several times to speak with various media people, who were obviously looking for something to report other than Covid-19 news. He also had a number of family members and neighbors cheering him on during his run, whereas I had neither, and the press was conspicuous by its absence. During my 5 Hour plus run I encountered 3 walkers, one biker and a very busy squirrel, who was clearly focused on finding some buried nuts, and quite willing to avoid any interaction with the nut who was running through his territory.

I make no bones about it that I have entered this in my running log as an "official" race. I ran the required marathon distance, received no prohibited support (actually no support whatsoever), and have the proof of my effort in my Garmin Connect log. Heck, this Covid-19 Marathon could be my last race of 2020, what with races being cancelled at least through early fall.

Virtual races have now become very popular and are popping up all over the place. I must admit that they provide a way to support the poor RD's who have seen their income sources simply vanish. It was with this in mind that I took the plunge just two weeks ago. The Director of both a spring Marathon and fall ultra on the trails at the famous Trapp Family Lodge, staged a virtual 36-hour event to raise money to support the Vermont Community Foundation's Covid Emergency Support Fund.

Hey, maybe I'll write another story about this one too.

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## Quote of the Month

**"People told me when I turned 60 I that life was all downhill. I love downhills."**

Brian Chamberlain (Ran a 3:45 marathon at age 70)

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