



# Forever Run

September 2020

## From the President

by Steve Viegas

Friends,

I hope everyone's summer has gone well. With the pandemic, there is not much going on in the sport of running. New Hampshire race organizers have been able to put on socially distanced races. Recently, the organizer of the Cape Cod Marathon tried to get a socially distanced race approved but could not. So, its race this year will be virtual.

The past several days of 70 degree weather have been a relief. My times have been slow during the seemingly interminable 90 degree days and I have been like a wrung-out sponge at the end. Lately, my times have been faster and I feel much better at the end. It feels like fall.

We are fortunate that when competition in our sport is suspended, we can continue to run. Running is great for our health and keeps us feeling younger. I think it has kept me in good mental health during the pandemic, although my days somewhat resemble Groundhog Day. I'm waiting for a Southwest Airlines ding sound and a voice telling me that I am free to move around the country.

USATF New England has cancelled all events but has scheduled a special Codfish Bowl cross-country race for teams. It will allow a virtual race on a properly measured team home course or an asynchronous race on the Franklin Park course. See <https://newengland.usatf.org/News/USATF-NE-Codfish-Bowl-Cross-Country-will-run-virtua.aspx> for details.

Our board meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2020 at 11:30 AM on Google Meet. The main subject will be the annual elections. We are still working on director candidates: one for Massachusetts, one for Vermont and two for Rhode Island vacancies. We also need a candidate for secretary.

Donations to our annual fund will still be graciously accepted. If you would like to do so, simply mail your check to Jan Holmquist, 32 Paulson Drive, Burlington, MA 01803.

Happy running and stay safe!

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## Member Memories Appreciated

In the August issue of this newsletter, we asked if members of NE 65+ had a running memory or memory of a favorite race they might share. We appreciate Henry Wolstat and Bill Springer writing about races, both in Florida, that produced some unexpected finishes and Lynn Nill, our Minnesota correspondent, for letting us know what it is like to run a virtual marathon. There are more stories that need to be told, so if you have a favorite race

or a running memory you would like to share, send it in an email to:  
[rickstetson@aol.com](mailto:rickstetson@aol.com)

## **A Running Memory**

**by Henry Wolstat**

Over the almost 50 years of my running career I've had many memorable experiences. As I've aged my times have diminished to almost a slow crawl. Yet my last race just prior to the pandemic was not only memorable but unique.

For the last several years Marj and I have spent the month of February in Florida. While there we've attempted to sign up for at least one race. This year the choice was the Festival of Light 5K in Fort Myers honoring the winter home of Thomas Edison. The race precedes the festival parade and spectators are lined up on both sides of the road with a turnaround at the halfway point. I started out at the back of the pack and ran my usual 20 minute pace. As the field spread out, I was pretty much alone except for a few straggling walkers. I heard cheers from my captive audience. Some spectators even jumped onto the course to snap pictures of me. The applause and the encouragement became louder as I moved towards the finish, maintaining my slow but steady pace. Marj accompanied me for the last mile and a half, having long finished her race. I felt like an elite runner as I crossed the finish line. My forty marathons were all unique experiences but I never expected such a reception for a slow and short race.

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## **My Favorite Race Memory**

**by Bill Springer**

As I mentally get ready to celebrate my 81st birthday this month, I can think of one race that stands out in my 40 years of enjoying this incredible sport.

In 1983 I was 43 and signed up to run the Marathon Keys 7 MILE Bridge Run. The evening before the run I joined my friends in Key West and did our usual bar hopping. Driving to the race the next morning was not pleasant, and starting at the back of the pack was a comfortable spot. The hangover was suddenly replaced with passing 1100 runners to win overall????? It had to be the beer! Thanks for letting me share my favorite race.

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**Lynn's virtual marathon loop took her by this "pretty little pond" five times and she stopped and took a picture each time she passed. The above photo was taken on her final loop.**

## **A Virtual Marathon**

**by Lynn Nill**

When the San Francisco Marathon was cancelled, at first I was pretty ok about it, because it was not a big surprise. I chose to defer to 2022 and decided I would run a virtual marathon on my own. I decided to run it the week before, because that worked better with our schedule. Then I decided to run it on Saturday, July 18th, because the 19th was my husband's birthday. And then I looked at the weather. There was a heat advisory for Saturday, so I moved it to Friday instead.

It was still going to be hot, however, so I decided to get up early, at 2 am! That gave me plenty of time to eat and get ready and still get out the door by 4.

The most challenging thing about a virtual race is that there's no race day magic. And because I couldn't psych myself into feeling nervous, I couldn't poop before the start and I ended up having to go during the race, something that has never happened to me before. I did plan a course that had plenty of porto potties, so I didn't need to worry about THAT!

I decided to do a loop course because otherwise there was no way to carry all the water I would need, not to mention gels and snacks and changing from a headlamp and a visibility vest to a hat and sunglasses. I put a box and a cooler at the end of our front walk and that was my start and finish line. But each time I stopped to refill my water bottle, grab a gel, take off my headlamp, etc etc, I lost time. The one advantage I had was that I used the time on my Garmin and didn't worry about GPS creep, so for once when my watch said 26.2 I was done.

My loop was 5.16 miles long, so I did it 5 times, and then did a little half mile out and back to finish it off. There was a very pretty pond along my route and I decided I would take a picture each time I passed it.

I always use run/walk intervals so I decided to use 45 seconds of running and 30 seconds of walking. I stuck to these intervals except occasionally when I needed to walk a little bit

more. There were some hills but I avoided anything too challenging. I would slow down a little in the hilly part but make up time on the shady rail trail and on the downhill parts.

The last two miles were pretty awful. I was so very tired. I walked if I needed to but I actually felt better if I ran a little even at this late stage. It's because running and walking use different muscles so it spreads out the effort a little.

I watched my wrist based heart rate on my Garmin, even though I knew it wasn't that accurate. If it started climbing into the 160-170 bpm range I walked a little more until it came back down. Strangely sometimes I felt like I was breathing hard, but my hr was only 140 or so.

The second to last time I passed the house everyone came outside and cheered for me. My husband found some marathon crowd noise on YouTube and played it, haha. But when I finished they had all left to go out on the boat for awhile.

I was so tired at the end I could barely walk. I kept having to sit down while making a smoothie, and even in the shower. But once I started doing some serious rehydration I felt a lot better. I did get a little dehydrated; I lost 5 pounds during the race. But of course I gained it all back by the next day!

When I came inside my son had bought me a medal! It said I was #1, and of course in this particular race I was first AND last!

I laid down and took a nap when my grandson took his but I was woken up twice by a terrible calf cramp. Ow ow ow I've never felt anything so painful! I took some Motrin and someone said to drink pickle juice so I drank a small glass of it. Yuck! Very vinegary and salty, but the cramps stopped so I guess it worked.

That was one hell of a challenge. I'm really glad I went ahead and ran my virtual marathon, but I think I'm one and done on that count. It was incredibly hard, mentally and physically. Part of it of course was the weather. I just can't race in the heat. But it's funny. This weather was worse than Grandma's Marathon in Duluth in 2016 but I feel much better about this race. I didn't have unrealistic expectations because I've been struggling in the heat for weeks. And I already knew I would need to walk more at the end.

I spent the rest of the day hanging out with family and feeling happy that was finally over. No running at all for a week, then not much for the next month. I don't expect there to be much in the way of real races for the next year, or even two. At my age its going to take a lot for me to start racing with a lot of people again, as much as I love it. I'll do some more virtual races, just not a virtual marathon!



Lynn proudly displays the medal presented by her son for finishing first in her first ever virtual marathon.

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## Larry Cole Update

We heard from Larry Cole after he was pictured in last month's newsletter running a marathon with a caption that said he lived in Harwich, MA. The Korean War veteran contacted us and said he is now living in a retirement community in South Weymouth, MA where the former naval air station was located. Larry told us he received a new hip in July and that he plans to resume running as soon as the "medics" (his doctors) give him the green light.

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## 65+ Runner In The News

The clipping below from the August 17 e-edition of the North Andover, MA *Eagle-Tribune* gives club member, Daniel Dodson, a virtual pat-on-the-back for reaching his annual goal of 100 races. Dodson points out the paper made one small mistake saying he is 74 when he is actually 75. The dedicated runner says he enjoys being 75 because he prefers competing in the 75-79 age group. At this rate, we wonder if Dan D will have 200 races by the end of 2020?

### DODSON REACHES 100

It's only August, but Newton's



**Dan  
Dodson**

74-year-old **Dan Dodson** has already reached his goal of running 100 road races per year. It's a lot easier this year, he says, because so many races are now virtual, allowing them to be run during the week at one's convenience.

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**Joe Noonan next to a family support sign several years ago after his 28th consecutive Boston Marathon. His streak is now 30 Bostons but the 31st will have to be virtual. Joe and Phil Pierce were both mentioned recently in *Lifetime Running*.**

## **Boston Streaks**

**by Rick Stetson**

Frank Bryant, a retired Louisiana attorney, had been looking forward to running Boston this year until COVID-19 halted the marathon. He began to wonder how other runners who had qualified for Boston in his 75-79 age group were dealing with the setback and thought he would try to contact them.

The 46 entrants in this year's Boston 75-79 age group are scattered around the globe and how Bright located them is an interesting story told in a "Lifetime Running" article titled "Boston Marathon Runners Over-75 Form Internet Group." Bright was interested if any of the runners he contacted had Boston streaks going. The leader was Ronald Kmiec of Carlisle, MA who has completed 42 consecutive Bostons. Next was our own Joe Noonan who has a streak of 30. Bright also mentioned Phil Pierce whose streak of 19 was broken due to a case of pneumonia. (Phil has a total of 31 Bostons.)

Bright found emailing back and forth about Boston to be enjoyable so he and his fellow marathon competitors decided to form a group with special T-shirts. But what to call it? Ideas were bounced around to include the BGs (Boston Geezers) and Frank's Bright Idea but they decided putting FBI on shirts might result in legal problems. Finally, The Bright Forum was selected and TBF it is. Bright put down some guidelines regarding the group's emails. Forwarding humor, political or religious emails would not be allowed. However, emails with name dropping would be fine as well as ones bragging on running accomplishments, careers or family. For more about The Bright Forum, click on: <https://www.lifetimerunning.net/>

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photo courtesy of Cheryl Lauriente Rossman

**Above, the latest book to be published by a member of NE 65+ Runners Club, Byron Petrakis, who tells in the following article how the book, *Haiku Unmasked: Perspectives from the Pandemic* came to be.**

## **COPING WITH COVID**

by Byron Petrakis

Like many people, I was caught off guard by the impact of the COVID pandemic upon life as I knew it. As the crisis deepened into the winter and spring, I developed a strategy for staying sane: stick to a daily routine and focus upon circumstances under my control. So, in addition to daily walks, my wife and I incorporated other healthy practices to help structure our days: online yoga classes with our instructor on Wednesdays and “Bone Builders,” a strength and balance program, on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Monday mornings, I meet Tom Wylie, my friend and former NE 65+ Runners Club president, and two other friends for walks around Kenoza Lake in Haverhill, MA. While strolling on wooded trails that offer occasional glimpses of swans and grey herons, we talk about everything from the weather to the world’s problems, none of which we solve.

This strategy worked fairly well but still left me feeling that something was missing. While my wife pursued her photography projects with renewed energy, I floundered around for something that would make me want to get up and get going every day. From my college teaching days, I recalled how in 14<sup>th</sup> century Florence, the writer Giovanni Boccaccio composed his masterpiece, *The Decameron*, in response to the Plague that ravaged much of medieval Europe. In his book, Boccaccio created a group of 10 characters who fled their infected city for a countryside villa where each character told ten stories for ten days as a way both of distracting themselves from the horrors of the plague and reimagining a more just and civilized post-pandemic society.

Though my circumstances differ greatly from those of Boccaccio and his characters, we share a belief in the healing power of language to express our human condition and reimagine a better world. So, on April 5, I proposed a “haiku challenge” on Facebook, vowing to write a daily haiku during the span of the pandemic and urging my Facebook friends to do the same. Haiku follow a strict 3-line pattern, with 5 syllables in line 1, 7 in line 2, and 5 in line 3. The tight poetic form serves as a metaphor for the social confinement imposed by the pandemic. Just as the haiku’s rigid structure challenges writers to convey meaning in three short lines, so does the COVID pandemic challenge us to modify our individual behavior in order to promote the common good. Think of how some people view universal mask wearing as suppression of their freedom, while others

understand the benefits to society at large.

Since the day of my first post, I have been able to meet my own challenge and have been delighted to see others attempting to do the same. Among them are Tom Wylie, a published poet in his own right, and Cheryl Lauriente Rossman, my inspiring yoga instructor. Independently, my daughter, Cassandra Petrakis Zwahlen, began composing her own haiku, utilizing her experiences running and walking through her hometown forests in Dielsdorf, Switzerland.

When my wife urged me to publish these haiku in book form, I at first demurred, uncertain how much appeal such an enterprise might have. When others urged me to do the same, however, I committed myself to doing so and asked my daughter, as well as Cheryl and Tom, to contribute to the project. Once they all enthusiastically agreed, I then needed to enlist the talents of an illustrator to provide visual appeal to the words on the page. Because of my last teaching assignment at an arts school in New Hampshire (the former Chester College of New England), I knew of a number of talented students. I was fortunate that a former student and current illustrator, Paul Justin Hollingsworth, agreed to provide the designs that grace the cover and major section pages of my book.

With my daughter's creative and editorial help, I was able to finally self-publish my book, *Haiku Unmasked: Perspectives from the Pandemic*, through KDP publishing on Amazon. Seventy pages long, the book contains three sections—April, May, and June—and an Epilogue. While most of the haiku express the relationship between each author's mood and the natural landscape, some take on a political and social tone in reaction to the national response to the pandemic and to the unrest following the murder of black Americans at the hands of the police and vigilantes. The Epilogue contains haiku offering hope for a more just and peaceful world.

In alphabetical order, a sample haiku from each author appears below:

An empty beachfront  
Ghost like patterns in the sand  
The waves gently break  
--Byron Petrakis

Ominous darkness,  
Wild swirling wind, cold cloudburst  
Cleansing Mother Earth  
--Cheryl Lauriente Rossman

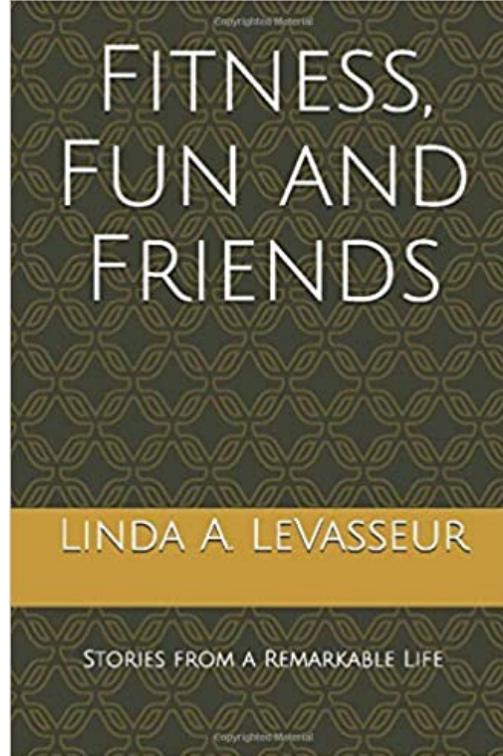
Slice of light appears  
New day of sun without fear  
Nature offers cheer  
--Thomas Wylie

Feathered fronds unfurl,  
Reaching for strands of gold mist  
Still forest awakes  
--Cassandra Petrakis Zwahlen

Readers interested in learning more details about the book can go on Amazon and search for it by its title, *Haiku Unmasked: Perspectives from the Pandemic* or use this link:

[https://www.amazon.com/haiku-unmasked-perspectives-byron-petrakis/dp/b08fp41hgl/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=haiku+poetry%2c+petrakis&qid=1598582682&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/haiku-unmasked-perspectives-byron-petrakis/dp/b08fp41hgl/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=haiku+poetry%2c+petrakis&qid=1598582682&s=books&sr=1-1)

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Above is the latest book to be written about a member of NE 65+. Jerry LeVasseur is known by runners everywhere for winning gold medals at the International Senior Games, the World Masters Games and national track and cross country meets. Runners at Bowdoin College where he has been a volunteer cross country coach, know Jerry as do their parents for the photos Jerry takes at meets and posts on line. Some of our 80+ members know Jerry as a teammate who recruited them to run on relay teams that have set national age group records. Most members of NE 65+ know that Jerry is a past club president and that he was inducted in the club's Hall of Fame in 2009.

There is much more to be learned about our famous club member. (Did you know he once was a dogsled racer?) Now thanks to an excellent book written by his daughter, Linda LeVasseur, Jerry's story has been told in the just-released "Fitness, Fun and Friends. Stories From A Remarkable Life." Jerry hopes his stories will inspire those who have faced adversity in their lives. The book is available on Amazon and can be ordered by using the following link:

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/0985695137?ref\\_=pe\\_3052080\\_397514860](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0985695137?ref_=pe_3052080_397514860)

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## Quote of the Month

" I think I get addicted to the feelings associated with the end of a long run. I love feeling empty, clean, worn out and sweat purged. I love that good ache of the muscles that have done me proud."

Kristen Armstrong

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