



Forever Run

January 2021

From the President

by Steve Viegas

Friends,

Happy New Year!

It appears that we may return to some sort of normal this year. I look forward to racing and socializing in person with our running community. At USA Track & Field New England, we are cautiously optimistic for a return to racing in the late third quarter or fourth quarter of 2021. We are also exploring other programs to keep our members motivated in the interim. I'll report on this work in progress when it has more form.

I don't have a lot to report this month. However, January is the month we will christen our new website. You should check it out.

January 1 is also a date you can total up your 2020 running mileage. If you have logged 1000 miles or more you should inform Ken Houle. He will post the names and totals of our 1000 mile runners on our website and will issue awards. Last year, he had a nice patch made to commemorate our feats.

I was more liberal with time off during the pandemic to heal after serious injuries in 2019. However, I managed to log slightly under 1300 miles. I will be emailing Ken with my total.

Please stay safe. These next two or three months are going to be scary with the pandemic peaking. As part of the older cohort of citizens, we can look forward to receiving vaccines sooner rather than later. Let's stay out of trouble until then.

Steve Viegas, President
stephenviegas@hotmail.com



photo courtesy Jerry LeVasseur

American Masters Record Setters

It took a while, but the above NE 65+ runners (L-R: Jerry LeVasseur, Joe Cordero, Ram Satyaprasad, Bill Spencer) have received official word that their 4 x 800 relay time of 18:25.33 set last January in Providence is in the books as an American Masters 80+ indoor track record, some two minutes faster than the previous record of 20:27.12.



Janit Romayko Profile

by Byron Petrakis

Janit Romayko has great genes. One of the two New England 65+ Runners Club Directors representing Connecticut, she comes from an athletic family. At the Pittsburgh Senior Olympics in 2008, her 95-year-old maternal aunt took the gold medal in the 50-yard backstroke. Her 91-year-old mother medaled in the 100-yard, 200-yard and 500-yard freestyle. Not to be outdone, Janit herself earned age-group medals in 100 and 200-yard breaststroke. From 1995 to 2005, Janit, her mother and aunt traveled together every two years to the Senior Games, bonding over shared athletic events with their peers. Both Janit's aunt and mother died just days before their respective 100th birthdays. Her mom had been swimming just nine days before her death. Janit also inherited longevity genes from her dad, a former minor league pitcher who lived to 96.

Genes alone don't make the athlete, however, and Janit's self-discipline, cross-training and joyful approach to running have all contributed to her athletic success as a runner, swimmer, and triathlete. She also credits the support of her late husband who shared her passion for running and racing. For 25 consecutive years the couple would don costumes and run a 3.5 mile race in Glastonbury, Conn., an event known for its group costume category. They would join other members of the "Silk City Striders," a running club from Manchester, Conn., who would all dress up in identical costumes for the race. Over the years, the Striders dressed as Santa's reindeer, Christmas cards, gingerbread men, and Christmas ornaments, often winning the group costume award.

Ring in the New Year was another opportunity for the Romaykos to celebrate by racing in costumes. In Janit's words, "My favorite was the New Year's race in New York City, where I dressed up as a champagne bottle." Her husband dressed up as a cork, an appropriate costume for the Central Park Midnight Run which offered champagne to the runners along the route. The cumbersome costumes often made their early a.m. walk back to Grand Central Station, "a bit hungover," as challenging as the race itself.

Janit's "joie de vivre" is but one side of her running and racing coin. The other is her demanding training regimen, which includes 30 to 60 minutes in the pool or nearby lake at 6:00 a.m. (she continued her lake swim until November 10 this year when the water temperature dipped to 53 degrees), followed by a later morning and evening run. Her typical weekly total of about 40 miles provides her with a solid base for racing. While she does not train on a bike, she gets her cycling miles during her triathlons. Over her career, she has completed well over 3,000 races, including 46 marathons and hundreds of triathlons. While she has run marathons in Boston (four), New York (three), Long Island, and Bermuda among many others, her favorite is her first New York City Marathon:

"I remember going across that bridge feeling like the thing is shaking because there were so many people (30,000 that year). And also because...it was one big crowd for 26.2 miles. And then coming around that corner from Central Park by mile 25 and hearing Frank Sinatra singing 'New York, New York' ...I still get shivers thinking about it."

Janit's running career features an admirable mix of "serious" competitions like the Boston and New York Marathons, triathlons, and the Senior Olympics, as well as more light-hearted events like the Central Park Midnight Run on New Year's Eve. One of her favorite initiatives was her role in "creating a running club with a goal of racing in all the towns of Connecticut." In 2011, she and seven others met one day at Dunkin Donuts and created the "Run 169 Towns Society." In 2015, she became just the second woman to complete her 169th town. As Janit describes it, "the good thing about this group is that there are no dues and that it's non-competitive....We wanted to promote a healthy lifestyle for people and it's been great because a lot of people have said this really has made a difference in their lives."

Janit began her professional career as a teacher, but soon switched to social work, which she describes as her calling. Her career as a social worker involved a great deal of work-related tension. "Running for me was a good stress reliever," she says, because "you hear a lot of stories all day long, and your sense of reality gets to you. You broadened your horizons but at the same time deal with problems that are insurmountable...I thought running relieved the stress." She still works part time as a social worker via Zoom during the pandemic.

Janit strives for balance in her athletic pursuits. In her words: "I try to have a balanced approach with running. Swimming helps my running and vice versa. I have been active in the New England triathlon scene since my 50's and have been a member of the National Ski Patrol since 1968."

Her approach to running reflects her balanced approach to life. Together with her genetic background her positive outlook may help ensure that club members will see Janit on the New England race circuit for years to come. If you are at a race a few years from now and see a runner in a costume that looks like a DNA diagram, don't be surprised if it's Janit, smiling all the way to the finish.

New Member

Elizabeth Hastings, Woburn, MA.....Sponsored by: Ram Satyaprasad

Long distance runner who has run marathons in Boston, Chicago, New York and Portland (ME). Leads groups in long runs.

A New Year Is Here

Members of NE 65+ were able to run away from Covid-19 last year by staying safe, keeping their distance during workouts and making most of their races the virtual kind. Now it is time to show how you refused to let the virus keep you off the roads by reporting your mileage to Ken Houle who heads up the 2020 Running and Walking Challenge. The total can be all running to include race mileage, all walking or a combination of the two. Ken will recognize mileage covered by club members who run less than 1000 miles but only those who reach 1000 miles or more will

receive a patch. When sending in your results, keep the running and walking mileage separate. Then you can add the two totals together for your grand total which should be sent to Ken this month: hoolks@metrocast.net

Phidippides Award

Club Members who belong to the USATF and have been able to race during the Year of The Covid Virus, can demonstrate a dedication to running in addition to wearing a 2020 Running and Walking Challenge Patch by applying for a 2020 Phidippides Award. The link below provides more information about this award which will not be easy to obtain during a year of Covid-19 as USTAF prefers real races, however, an exception is being made for 2020 when three virtual races are allowed. The deadline to apply for the 2020 award is Jan 31. <https://www.usatf.org/disciplines/road-running/phidippides-award>

Celebrating our founding – 30 years strong!

by Jan Holmquist

Background: When I became president of the club in 2014, I “inherited” several boxes of files with information preserved from some of our previous amazingly organized Board members. From financial information long ago to hard copy newsletters 72 pages long, to letters back and forth (no email way back when!), the boxes are partly a “why would you save that” to a “now that is interesting to share”. Throughout 2021, I hope to give our members historical nuggets from what I find in the files.

Our club was founded in June 1991. Yet, most of the information only goes back to early 2000 years, with a few exceptions. I came across a program booklet for the 2001 annual luncheon and thought the following blurb in that booklet would be a good place to start: Ten years ago (*think 1990*) when Ray Cormier and Lou Peters were taking their regular workout on the Andover Academy track, they discussed how older runners needed more respect and better treatment. Before their practice was over, Ray said that as they were both 65, it made sense to have an organization that would advance the cause of older runners. He and Lou sought out others in their age group, and by June 1991 the six runners whom we are honoring today (*think 2001*) got together and formed the New England Over-65 Runners Club. Almost from the start Ray, Lou, Bob Hunter, Ken Folsom, John Kane, and Jack Keefe knew they were onto something big as proven by the goals they set up that first year...

To be continued next month...

New NE65 Plus Website Is Almost Here

by Bill Cotter

A survey sent out with the annual mailing included questions about our website and how it could be improved. Based on your responses, we have redesigned our website to hopefully make it easier for members to navigate. We have also added new content.

Here are some of the changes:

Calendar: A calendar has been added to list upcoming events such as Club Meetings, Races, Annual Luncheon....

State Specific News: Each State now has a page for publishing State specific news.

Quiz: We plan to post a new quiz to the website each month

Buttons: The new site will make use of large buttons to help navigate to content

Contact Form: We have added a new contact page that members can use to send in

questions or comments. These can be website related or any club related questions. I would like to encourage our members to use this form to send us suggestions for improving your website.

The new website was built using Google's G-Suite Site application. As a nonprofit, the NE65Plus running club qualified for a free license for using G-Suite. After the new site is launched we will use additional features of Google's G-Suite to add enhancements to the site.

Note: The club's web site will be down for maintenance today (1/1/2021) as we work on launching the new NE65Plus.ORG site. Be sure to check it out when the new site is up and running.

Send Us Your Stories

by Rick Stetson

We are not through with the virus yet but there is a vaccine on the way. So as we look forward to a better year in 2021, we would like to hear how runners managed during 2020, the Year of the Pandemic. Were you able to find any real races? If so, did the race director make changes to protect the participants like not holding an awards ceremony, using staggered starts or requiring masks? And if you ran virtual races, were your times affected by not having runners to chase? But runners 65 and older have got to be tough. Many of our parents made it through the Great Depression and now we are hanging in there during the Great Pandemic. Years from now, historians might want to research how we managed. There are many stories out there that need to be shared so if you can tell how you coped during Covid-19, write up something for this newsletter and send it to me at: rickstetson@aol.com We look forward to hearing from you. HNY!

Quote of the Month

"Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope."

Romans 5: 3-4

President: Steve Viegas
stephenviegas@hotmail.com

Vice President: Zeke Zucker
zekezucker@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gary Circosta
gary.circosta@yahoo.com

Secretary:

Newsletter Co-Editor: Rick Stetson
rickstetson@aol.com

Newsletter Co-Editor: Byron Petrakis
Byronpetrakis@yahoo.com

Results: Bill Cotter
savemyresults.com

