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REDDING ROAD RACE NEWSLETTER

20 Volume 2

1/22/20



SAUGATUCK RIVER (GEORGE HULL RD), JUST PAST MILE 6 OF THE HALF COURSE. RUNNERS PASS OVER THIS OFTEN DURING THE RACE



THE FARM, WHERE THE FINISH AREA WILL BE SET UP



THE BARN YOU RUN THROUGH AT THE END OF THE RACE

1. REDDING RUNNING FESTIVAL

RACE DAY SCHEDULE (SATURDAY JUNE 27TH)

4:00pm – Race Time Packet pickup
5:00pm – 9:30pm Live Bands, Food and beverages included with registration
6:00pm National Anthem
6:05pm Final 5K and 1 Mile race instructions + walk to start line (led by the reenactors)
6:15pm 5K and 1 Miler Start
6:50pm Final 9K race instructions + walk to start line (led by the reenactors)
7:00pm 9K Start
9:30pm Fireworks
9:45pm Drive safely home







REGISTRATION LIMITED TO 1,000

2. REDDING RUNNING CLUB

Come run with us!!



3. [RYAN HALL](#)

Is Ryan Hall Making a Comeback? He Explains

The American record holder in the half marathon says he won't be in any races anytime soon, but he is training consistently.

By [SARAH LORGE BUTLER](#)

NOV 20, 2019



Ryan Hall, who was America's top marathoner from 2007 to 2011 before abruptly retiring from competitive running in 2016 at age 33, said today he is back to training—but he does not know if he would define it as serious or not.

He is currently running 8 to 13 miles daily, including two harder workouts each week, either intervals or a tempo. He is also lifting weights for 60 to 90 minutes each afternoon.

He wants to get back into shape to be able to run a 2:18 marathon or a 1:07 half marathon, which would make him fit enough to be able to pace his wife, Sara Hall, during training. She will be a top contender at the 2020 Olympic Marathon Trials in February in Atlanta.

Sara Hall first hinted at her husband's return to running in an Instagram post, saying he has "already gotten in ridiculously good shape." Hall clarified his wife's comments in text messages to *Runner's World*.

Currently, he does not have any races on the calendar, he wrote. While he builds up training, he plans to continue his regimen of lifting heavy weights, so he can "deadlift 400 pounds, squat 350 and bench 250." He is not eyeing competing against "the running fellas unless they want to do an arm wrestling match," he wrote.



4. [BILL RODGERS ARTICLE](#)

The Rise of Rodgers

At Boston in 1975, an unexpected winner set a new American record and began a brilliant marathoning career.

By [ALISON WADE](#)

APR 8, 2015



CHECK OUT THE HAND-WRITTEN SHIRT (GREATER BOSTON TRACK CLUB), THE GARDENING GLOVES (OBTAINED BY HIS BROTHER CHARLIE FROM A HARDWARE STORE MINUTES BEFORE THE RACE STARTED) AND THE “NON-SUPER ELITE #14.”

Forty years ago, 27-year-old Boston College graduate student Bill Rodgers surprised the running world—and himself—by winning the 1975 Boston Marathon. His 2:09:55 was a course and American record. It was a career-changing race for Rodgers, and it transformed him from one of the best marathoners in New England to one of the best in the world.

No one expected Rodgers to improve his personal record by nearly 10 minutes that day, but perhaps they should have seen it coming. The previous month, at the world cross country championships in Morocco, Rodgers had earned a bronze medal, becoming just the second American male ever to medal in the race—and giving him a boost of confidence.

“I felt, ‘I can run with anyone now,’” says Rodgers, who is 67. “That race was pivotal, and it set me up to run well at Boston.”

The 1975 Boston Marathon was Rodgers' sixth marathon and third Boston. Two years earlier, in his debut, he had dropped out of the race at Heartbreak Hill. He had then quit running for three months in frustration, “hating the sport,” he says, because he knew he could do better.

In 1974, he did do better. He finished 14th in 2:19:34 and got a taste of what it was like to contend. And by 1975, Rodgers knew the course well, training on it regularly with the Greater Boston Track Club. He considered it his home turf.

“I felt like it wasn't Jerome Drayton from Canada's race, it was a Bostonian's race,” Rodgers says. “I was a Bostonian, I was running with Greater Boston Track Club—we were a little bit feisty like that.”

Drayton, the Canadian record-holder in the marathon, was expected to be one of the top competitors in the 1975 race, as were course record-holder Ron Hill, and Tom Fleming, the 1973 New York City Marathon champion, who had finished second in Boston the previous two years.

The race became a two-man duel, Rodgers and Drayton, by the 8-mile mark. The two men ran side by side, Drayton wearing a Canadian maple leaf on his singlet.

“I remember someone yelling, ‘Go Canada!’” Rodgers says. “It really got me fired up, and I surged and I made my move. I think Jerome didn't know who the heck I was, and he let me go.”

Rodgers ran the second half of the race solo. He wore a hand-lettered T-shirt with “Boston GBTC,” his club's initials, written on it. He also wore painter's gloves, purchased by his brother, Charlie, at a hardware store in Hopkinton earlier that morning, because Rodgers was feeling chilly at the start. They would become his trademark.

On his feet, he wore a new pair of Nike shoes that he got from Steve Prefontaine about a week before the race. “It was like [having] magic shoes,” Rodgers says.

Running alone, Rodgers stopped near the bottom of Heartbreak Hill to tie one of his shoelaces. It was an opportunity to collect himself and see what was going on behind him. No other runners were in sight.

To the surprise of onlookers and reporters, Rodgers stopped four additional times to drink water. He defends that strategy, saying he had learned from his previous marathons.

“It is always tricky getting your water, so I just came to a complete halt and would drink it,” Rodgers says. “I think that worked. I didn't stop long. I took a few gulps and then I was gone. And to this day, that's what I do in a lot of my racing.”

Rodgers ran without a watch, and the splits given at odd distances in the center of each town along the course meant little to him. What was meaningful, however, was race co-director Jock Semple leaning out of the press bus and yelling, “You're going to break the record!”

He broke Ron Hill's course record by 35 seconds, and Rodgers couldn't believe it. “When they told me my time, I said, ‘That can't be,’” he says. “I was shocked to win that sucker.”

It was a banner day for the Americans, who swept the top three spots for the first time since 1945. Steve Hoag finished second in 2:11:54 and Fleming third in 2:12:05. Drayton dropped out at mile 24.

Rodgers did not receive any prize money. He took home a gold medal with a diamond chip in it, and he also remembers receiving a trophy with a grasshopper on top, in honor of the bicentennial of the American Revolution. "I put [the trophy] down, someone walked away with it, and I never saw it again. So if anyone has it, please call me," Rodgers says, laughing.

A String of Wins

The victory changed how he viewed his running career, giving Rodgers the belief that he could compete with Frank Shorter, the 1972 Olympic marathon gold medalist, and even make a team himself. Rodgers made the Olympics the following year, but he had a disappointing games and finished 40th in the marathon.

In the fall, however, he showed he was there to stay when he won the New York City Marathon. Those first two victories were just the beginning for Rodgers, who would win Boston (1978–80) and New York (1977–79) three more times each. His eight wins between the two races have been equaled by no man before or since, and they secured his legacy.

Rodgers' career spanned the transition from the amateur era to professional running. After his 1975 win in Boston, races started to pay him a little bit of money under the table, because it was against amateur rules to accept money at that time. He took a teaching job for two years to help make ends meet, but when he was forced to choose between running and teaching, he chose running.

In 1976, Asics paid Rodgers \$3,000 to wear their shoes; he thought he had hit the jackpot. Gradually he was able to make a living. He opened a running store in 1977, started a clothing line, and in a small way, cashed in on being a star runner.

When the Boston Marathon began offering prize money in 1986, Rodgers' career was already on the downswing. At age 38, he finished fourth in 2:13:35 and earned \$12,000.

By the time he turned 40, he had run 50 marathons, 29 of them under 2:15. The amount of hard racing Rodgers did, particularly at the

marathon distance, is unheard of today. “We were a little too competitive, but I think that exercise science and the knowledge of coaching has evolved,” Rodgers says. “Today everyone runs one marathon a year, maybe two, whereas I did three or four.”

Rodgers never announced his retirement. He just kept running and racing—long after many of his competitors had hung up their shoes. Rodgers describes it as “a gradual slipping away sort of thing.” Over time, making appearances and promoting the sport became his main focus. He estimates that he will attend 40 races, fun runs, clinics, or promotional events in 2015.

Still Racing

“Certain races mean a lot to me, like the Falmouth Road Race, or the Bix 7 Mile, or the Utica Boilermaker,” Rodgers says. “They’re the races I won when I was young, so I never let it go.” Rodgers ran his last marathon in 2009 at age 61, in celebration of hitting a new decade and surviving prostate cancer.

Once in a while, Rodgers' competitive streak takes over. He says that at the 2014 Mississippi Blues Half Marathon, “This guy came up to me before the race and he had a T-shirt that said, ‘I Beat Bill Rodgers in Boston,’ in 1973, which he did, because I dropped out.”

“So I’m in the race and I’m running pretty good, but I’m tired and it’s a tough course. But then I see him up ahead of me at 10 miles, and I caught him. So I started getting competitive. That’s what running is like for me now. It’s not like dog-eat-dog, like I have to win, but I’m still going to try if I can.”

5. REDDING, CT POINTS OF INTEREST

All apologies to veteran RRR runners who have probably read the following multiple times. This is for the newbies and we have a ton of them.

In Redding, you once would have come across Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), who lived here in the final years of his life, dying in Redding in 1910. Charlie Morton (current MLB pitcher) grew up here, Daryl Hall and Leonard Bernstein lived here, as did Marvin Lee Aday. Who is Marvin Lee Aday, you ask? Well he of course, was the famous softball coach at the local high school. He coached his girls' team when he had time away from his side job, as Meat Loaf. Benedict Arnold also passed by, a town over from here, and was one of the heroes in the Battle of Ridgefield - a hero for the Colonists, believe it or not.



If interested in the town you're running in, here is a more in depth history of Redding from local historian, Charles A. Couch:

In the early 1700s, Redding, Connecticut, was home to an Indian village whose leader was named Chickens Warrups. In 1714, John Read, the first white man to settle in Redding (which was then part of Fairfield), claimed 500 acres to set up a homestead for his wife and children. Lonetown Manor, as Read's home was called, soon became the center of a busy and populous farm settlement, and a number of mills and other enterprises associated with farmer's needs soon took root.

Col. John Read

Although the elder John Read moved to Boston in 1722, his son, Col. John Read, took over administration of Lonetown Manor. In 1767, the Connecticut General Assembly incorporated the Town as Redding, which had less than 1,000 inhabitants.

Revolutionary War and Continental Army encampment

In the years preceding the Declaration of Independence, tensions escalated in Redding between Tory loyalists and larger numbers of those supporting the resolutions of the Continental Congress, with some Tories fleeing to escape retribution. Some 100 Redding men volunteered to serve under Captain Zalmon Read in a company of the new 5th Connecticut Regiment, which participated in the siege of Quebec's Fort Saint-Jean during the autumn of 1775 before the volunteers' terms of service expired in late November.

In 1777, the Continental Congress created a new Continental Army with enlistments lasting three years. The 5th Connecticut Regiment was reformed, enlisting some men from Redding, and assigned to guard military stores in Danbury, Connecticut. Getting word of the depot, the British dispatched a force of some 2,000 soldiers to destroy the stores, landing April 26 at present-day Westport and undertaking a 23-mile march north. The column halted on Redding Ridge for a two-hour respite, with many residents having fled to a wooded, rocky area dubbed the Devil's Den. The British column resumed its march to Danbury where soldiers destroyed the supplies, then skirmished Continental Army and militia forces in Ridgefield while on the return march south

For the winter of 1778-79, General George Washington decided to split the Continental Army into three divisions encircling New York City, where British General Sir Henry Clinton had taken up winter quarters. Major General Israel Putnam chose Redding as the winter encampment quarters for some 3,000 regulars and militia under his command, at the site of the present-day Putnam Memorial State Park and nearby areas. The Redding encampment allowed Putnam's soldiers to guard the replenished supply depot in Danbury, Connecticut and support any operations along Long Island Sound and the Hudson River Valley. Some of the men were veterans of the winter encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania the previous winter. Soldiers at the Redding camp endured supply shortages, cold temperatures and significant snow, with some historians dubbing the encampment "Connecticut's Valley Forge."



Redding's Business and the Railroad

In 1852, the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad line was completed through the west side of Town with depots at Georgetown, Topstone, and West Redding. By this time, farmland was left unplanted as floods increased and lower-priced western product came to eastern markets. New steam-powered factories were sprouting up along main rail lines. Redding's small water-powered industries could no longer compete and gradually ceased operations. Only Georgetown's Gilbert & Bennett, with access to the new railroad for coal and raw materials and for shipment of its finished wire goods, was able to survive. Despite a disastrous fire in 1874, Gilbert & Bennett rebuilt immediately with modern buildings and machinery. The company continued to prosper and expand, employing nearly 600 workers by the early 1900s. Consequently, Georgetown grew, adding new homes and streets, while the rest of Redding remained rural and pastoral. The Town's population began to decline.

Housing History

Home building in Redding slowed, but did not cease during the Great Depression years of the 1930s. About two dozen farms were still operating, although the land was now about 70% forest and woodland. With the close of World War II and the beginning of the great post-war housing boom, new house construction in Redding began at a vigorous pace. Now within easy commuting distance of job centers in Danbury, Bridgeport, and lower Fairfield County, Redding began to attract speculative developers. Its citizens realized a potential avalanche of development threatened the character of its Town. Following a public referendum ([link](#)), the Town's first zoning regulations became effective in June 1950.

History of Redding Schools

In 1737, the people of the parish of Redding voted to have a public school with three districts, "the Ridge, the west side, and Lonetown." One schoolmaster went from one to the other, teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. By 1742, the parish voted for "three separate schools, each to be kept by a master."

In 1878, a citizen of Redding funded the establishment of a public high school, the Hill Academy, in Redding Center. Ten one-room schoolhouses in strategic areas of Town served younger students in Redding, and the Town shared an 11th with Ridgefield. One of them, the Umpawaug School, built in 1789, still stands on Umpawaug Road near Route 53 (you pass this school less than a mile into the race). Every November, the Redding Historical Society holds an open house at the Umpawaug School, which closed in 1931. One of its teachers, Luemm Ryder, approaching a century of living, lives just up the road from the school.

Early in the 1900s Gilbert & Bennett opened a public school for the Georgetown Recreation.

By 1931, the Town had closed all of its one-room schoolhouses and enlarged the Hill Academy to four classrooms to serve the eight elementary grades. The Hill Academy closed in 1948 when Redding Elementary School opened. Redding paid tuition to Danbury for its high school students to go to Danbury High School.

In 1959, the Town converted the Hill Academy to Town Hall.

Redding Elementary School

Redding Elementary School (tel. 938-2519), with eight classrooms, was completed in 1948. In 1957, a new wing doubled its capacity. The School serves grades K-4.

John Read Middle School

In the mid-1960s, the Town began planning for another school. John Read Middle School (tel. 938-2533) opened in 1966, housing students in grades 5 through 8. In 1980, the fifth grade moved to the Elementary School. As an echo baby boom caused the school population to grow, a new wing was added to the Middle School in 1999, and the fifth grade moved back.

Joel Barlow High School

In 1957, Redding and Easton referenda approved the formation of a regional school district, and a 35-acre site was purchased from a farm on Black Rock Turnpike for a high school designed to serve 650 students. Joel Barlow High School, originally serving grades 7 through 12, opened for classes in the fall of 1959. The school now serves grades 9 through 12.

In 1971, a major addition doubled the size of the building and increased its capacity to 1,000 students. In 1974, the Town purchased 78 more acres to build athletic fields. An addition and two portable classrooms were built in 1984, and the school was renovated in 1994. The Town is now engaged in a construction project to add more instructional space and athletic fields.

Two-Acre Zoning

The rush of new development became a reality. Several large tracts were subdivided into one-acre lots, new subdivision roads were built, and school population began to spiral upward. Responding to Town-wide demand, in 1953 the Zoning Commission enacted two-acre zoning for the entire Town outside Georgetown, which had, and still has, multiple-family, ½-acre, and one-acre zoning. Concern about the Town's future persisted, and in 1956 a Town Meeting authorized the establishment of a Planning Commission. The Commission prepared regulations to control the layout of subdivisions, and these regulations were adopted in 1957.

Newcomers and Automobiles

During the 1890s, Redding was discovered by prominent summer visitors from New York City. Writers (including Mark Twain), artists, and business and professional people, who were enchanted by the Town's tranquil beauty, established country estates. By 1910, Redding's more adventurous and affluent residents were driving automobiles on the Town's dirt roads.

Telephones

A few years after Mark Twain came to Town, Redding's first telephone exchange began operation. It was located in a private dwelling on Cross Highway and had a small group of subscribers.

Highways

In 1916, the State of Connecticut began to construct a network of highways to link population centers and provide farm-to-market access for the rural towns. By 1921, Routes 7 and 58 had become two-lane paved highways. Other roads followed in the 1920s and 1930s. By the mid-1930s, hard-surfaced roads reached every section of Town along with telephone and electric lines. The Town's rural isolation passed into history.

Saugatuck Reservoir

A major controversy raged during the 1930s over Bridgeport Hydraulic's plan to flood the Saugatuck valley for a large new reservoir. A reservoir would inundate the historic village of Valley Forge and much of Redding Glen. Opponents lost their appeals, and the Saugatuck Reservoir was completed in 1942.



Putnam Memorial Park

The high terrain of Redding, with views south to Long Island Sound and northward toward Danbury, assumed strategic importance during the Revolutionary War. In April 1777, the road over Redding Ridge and Sunset Hill was the invasion route used by British forces in their assault on Continental army provisions stored in Danbury. A year later, in 1778 and 1779, Putnam's division of Washington's army was in winter encampment at three key locations in Redding to protect the left flank of American forces then holding the Hudson Valley. Remains of the largest of these campsites are preserved on 35 acres of land donated by a Redding citizen in the 1880s. Putnam Memorial State Park contains a monument to the American troops and a colonial museum.



Geography

According to the United States Census Bureau, Redding has a total area of 32.1 square miles (83 km²), of which 31.5 square miles (82 km²) is land and 0.6 square miles (1.6 km²), or 1.75%, is water. Redding borders Bethel, Danbury, Easton, Newtown, Ridgefield, Wilton and Weston.

Redding has four primary sections: Redding Center, Redding Ridge, West Redding (including Lonetown, Sanfordtown, and Topstone), and Georgetown, which is situated at the junction of Redding, Ridgefield, Weston and Wilton.

Topography

Redding's topography is dominated by three ridges, running north to south, with intervening valleys featuring steep slopes and rocky ledges in some sections. The highest elevation is about 830 feet above sea level, on Sunset Hill in the northeast part of the town (contrary to public opinion, the race does not go up this high!!); and the low elevation is about 290 feet above sea level at the Saugatuck Reservoir along the southern border.

Four streams flow south through Redding toward Long Island Sound: the Aspetuck River, the Little River, the Norwalk River and the Saugatuck River.

The Saugatuck River flows through the Saugatuck Reservoir, Redding's largest body of water which stretches south into Weston. The reservoir was created in 1938 through the flooding of a portion of the Saugatuck River Valley.

<http://townofreddingct.org/> - a Cool video on the town can be found here

6. NEW POND FARM ARTICLE



Tim Laughlin is the new program director at New Pond Farm. — Christopher Burns photo

‘There’s magic’ at New Pond Farm

Tim Laughlin has only been the program director at New Pond Farm for a month, but he already lights up when he talks about his new job.

“There’s some magic here,” he said smiling.

New Pond Farm is an environmental education center with a farm component.

Approximately 6,000 children annually come to the grounds to tour the functioning dairy farm and participate in hands-on programs that range from beekeeping to making bracelets from sheep’s wool.

Laughlin was a middle school science teacher in Brookfield for 39 years before coming to New Pond Farm.

“This is my classroom now,” he said while waving his hand across the landscape not unlike a conductor to his orchestra.

Laughlin’s passion for teaching is clear, and his love for the programs that the farm offers is palpable.

The main program that New Pond Farm offers is simply known as “The Farm Program.” Laughlin says that kids, predominantly K-4 students, are shown the dairy barn where the cows live. They get to simulate milking a cow using water bottles on a wooden cow.

“The kids get the idea that it’s real work,” he said.

Laughlin then takes the children to an area where they get to brush and touch a full-grown cow.

“It’s very child friendly,” he said, adding that many of the kids who come for the farm program are from inner cities and have never gotten to touch these animals. “It’s a blend of having fun and learning.”

Laughlin also mentions the bee program. They put each of the children in a full beekeeping suit and let them near a beehive that houses up to 60,000 bees, who then proceed to crawl all over the children.

“They love to tell their mom about that,” he said.

Laughlin is spearheading a project that documents natural plant growth in an area of the farm that was leveled by a tornado that touched down two years ago.

He plans to incorporate counting the number of certain flower types into a program in the future, so he can help get children involved with the scientific process.

“Children think science is just between four walls,” he said “but it’s overflowing.”

For “the first time in a long time,” Laughlin has conducted a few fishing classes for members of New Pond Farm and guests.

They included instructions on how to cast a fly fishing line and a small fishing session in the pond, where a few young children managed to hook some of the fish stocked in the pond.

“You know how kids are,” he said recalling the joy of the kids who caught the fish during his program. “They could catch a minnow with a net and be happy.”

Laughlin is clearly as dedicated to the other operations of the farm as he is to the programs that he helps create. He proudly pointed out the solar panels that line the barn roofs and how they help provide the electricity needed to pasteurize the milk that the cows produce.

Given his background as a middle school teacher, part of Laughlin’s goal as program director is to more actively engage older students. He has a “three-year goal” of introducing more programs that appeal to middle and high school students.

New Pond Farm Executive Director Ann Taylor is looking forward to Laughlin’s goals coming to fruition and anticipates a “lovely collaboration between staff members, board members and volunteers” to help guide the way.

“That’s the beauty of this place,” Laughlin said. “Everyone is excited. It’s a vibrant classroom.”

7. EARLY START – WHOM IS IT FOR

The 7:15am early start for **half marathoners** is intended for runners who anticipate finishing in 2 ½ hours or more. If you think you’ll be faster please don’t utilize the early start. It’s a way to allow for all runners to enjoy as much of the after-race party as possible. If you are running the Mighty Cow race at 7:20, you won’t be able to start early.

8. RUNNER STORY - KEVIN

On June 2, 2019 I had a heart attack in my home. I was very fortunate that my wife whom was an avid walker was home and had not left for her walk. She called 911. The paramedics began work and brought me to the hospital. I had four blockages, one was 99%. When I came home from the hospital that Saturday, I began my road to better health. I was 310 pounds and in desperate need to change my life. I began walking that day with my wife. I made it about 100 yards. I could only think that I have wasted the last 20 years of my life and possibly almost put myself in the ground. I began to walk twice a day. Morning and night. By August I was walking 2 miles and by the end of August I was running and walking. By mid-September I was running a mile, then two. I signed up for my first 5 K for Thanksgiving. I couldn't think of a better goal. I have run in three 5k's and joined the Run 169 towns society. I am running in the Milford 5mile this month. I have lost 90 pounds and my life is nothing short of a miracle. I thank the lord every day. I owe my life to my bride if 35 years and the good lord. With the support of a few friends, I will continue to live, and live





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9. RUNNER STORY - TOM

One decade and five years ago, when I took up running in answer to a perceived midlife crisis—a crisis that saw me way over tense, overweight and overwhelmed not to mention the not-so-subtle overtones of obesity and likely resulting hereditary diabetes—I experienced many of the same and generally temporary complaints that beginning runners often mention: muscle aches and pains, shin splints, plantar fasciitis, iliotibial band syndrome, sore knees. My efforts proved worthwhile, though, for in the long haul as I ran through those complaints I lost a lot weight and retrieved my lost posture, downsized my waistline and upscaled my wardrobe, gained newfound self-respect and as luck and honest effort would have it, I hit upon a modicum of health and sanity and likely rewound my lifeline by the tune of a decade or more. Running was good for me.

Along the way I met and fell into running with various friends who were old hands at it and others who, like me, seemed new to it. Together we logged countless miles in prepping for this or that half marathon. As my distances lengthened, many of those early training complaints fell by the wayside while others showed up. I wound up having to use an albuterol inhaler (as a consequence of years of smoking earlier on; no problems there now I am happy to report) for a year or so and in conjunction with that diagnosis, while taking a stress test at Norwalk Hospital, a doctor cautioned me to take my newfound sense of running dedication with a modicum of caution. Not too much too fast, he said. No worries, I told him, I know when to stop—before I keeled over.

Then I wound up aggravating my back: Sciatica was something altogether new, unheard of, and painful. Yeow! I had to rethink my running strategy, from scratch.

But owing to a lot of physical therapy and not a little determination, I mastered sciatica as well. Then came longer races. When I moved up from half to full marathons, I had little idea what I was doing. Sure, the practice sessions and planning and strategy and energy consumption and dieting had to be taken into account. Simply setting aside the requisite hours for training proved more than a chore. But I prevailed. And the better I got (so it seemed), the greater the wear and tear on my knees. I wound up having to have MRIs, which showed little to no cartilage in either knee as a likely combination of genetics and boyhood sports

(yes, I had been a Little League catcher; yes, I had played junior high and high school football). One of my doctors at Coastal Orthopaedics, Dr. Paul Markey, also let me know that I had a skeletal condition called patella alta—in plain English “high-placed kneecaps”—which is not all that uncommon. He prescribed patella stabilizers, which turned out to be not only inexpensive at the local sporting goods store but also a godsend, and (since he could not convince me to give up running for swimming) a combination of pain medications to control knee pain: two Advil with either one Tylenol Arthritis or one Aleve but never under any circumstance whatsoever combine Tylenol with Aleve.

Gotcha, doc, thank you very much!

This was what I had been looking for. Suddenly I could give my knee pain a break and if running never became a joy, it at least became bearable. My running buds immediately took note. Most of them were a little younger and quicker than me but I managed to keep up—or they managed to let me think so. I am sure that I logged more than five hundred miles with my friend Henri and probably more than that with Stacy. Sometimes we all ran together, sometimes with friends of Henri’s and at others with friends of Stacy’s. No prob, the miles came and went. We ran no matter the season or weather condition. We trained for half and full marathons and then came the day when I thought that I could finally qualify for Boston.

Qualifying and running the Boston Marathon had been a goal from the beginning.

Now at this point of the story, I should tell you that I had already run several full marathons. I ran two a year, one in the spring and one in the fall. My times kept steadily dropping, fifteen minutes here, ten minutes here. Then one mid-October I ran the Hartford in 3:57. I was if not ecstatic nonetheless quite satisfied: At that time and for my age group, I was within eleven minutes of qualifying for Boston. So the next year (again in Hartford), my running bud Stacy proposed an idea: She would station herself at the 20-mile mark and pace me out for the final six miles so that I would complete the run in 3:45, getting me into Boston. This was good. This was sweet. This I could agree to. So we ran and trained and on the morning of the race I was set. With one problem. The pain pills.

My modus operandi had been to take two Advil and one Tylenol Arthritis before a race began and to carry more with me in case I felt I needed them during the race.

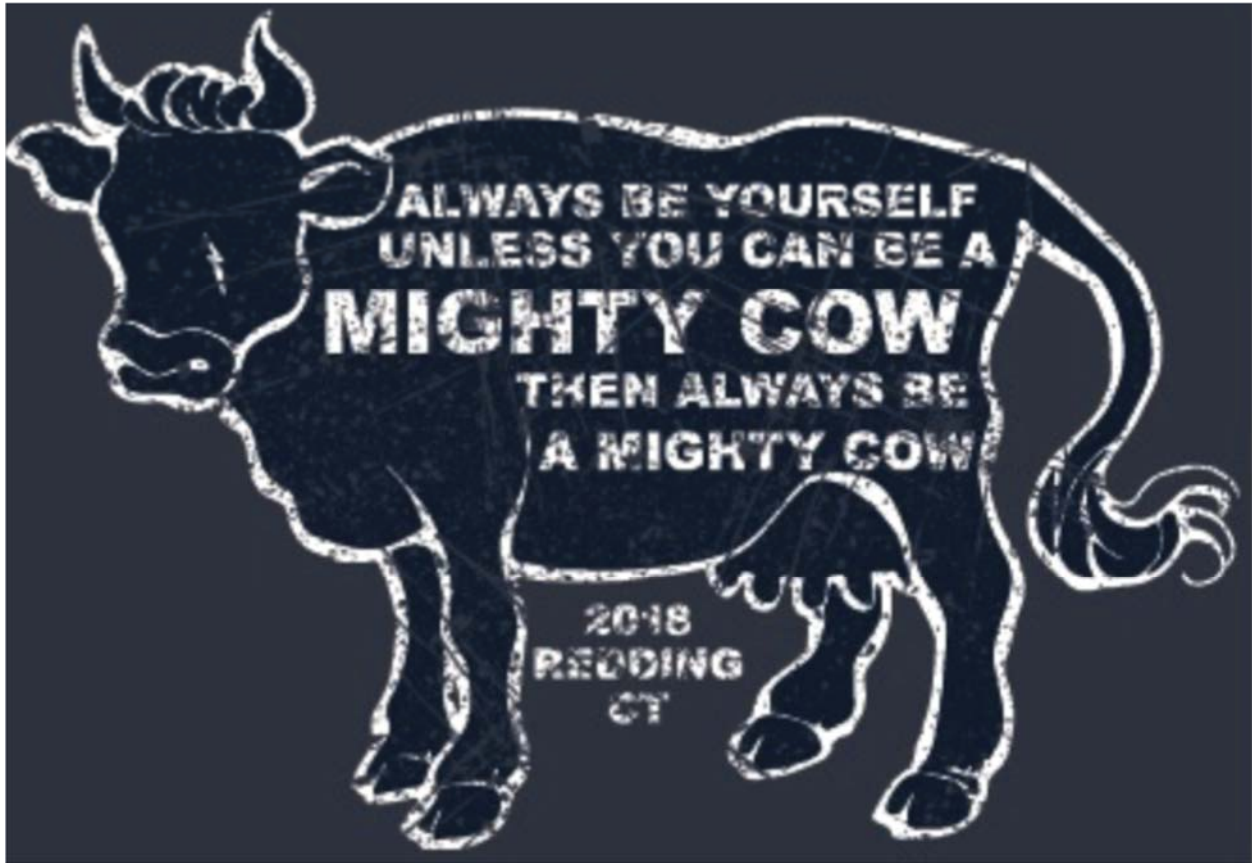
Sometimes I could manage without taking more, but more often than not I would take another two Advil and one Tylenol at the halfway mark (this in addition to various energy squirts like GU or Hammer Gel). But that day I was so determined, so set on mastering the knee pain that I tried something I had not done earlier: I took too much pain medicine and halfway along had to stop, keeling over in pain. My running bud Henri had recently had appendicitis (while he was on the road in Cincinnati—his appendectomy was a complete success), so I wondered what my pain was all about. The pain was so sidesplittingly bad that I thought that I would keel over. One of the on-course EMTs told me that if I could touch my toes, it was likely not appendicitis, but that perhaps I ought to stop. Nothing doing, I said—I had never not completed a race that I had begun and I was not about to start doing so that day.

Long story short: I finished the race but did not qualify for Boston and wound up giving both Stacy and my wife a good scare.

But I learned a valuable lesson: Easy does it on the pain meds and as for running, going the distance can mean taking one's time. In the end, and at the end, I likely will have accomplished what I had set out to do at the start—stay in shape, have some fun and enjoy the weather and birdsong along the race course. And thank goodness for running friends. They encourage you and help you and make training bearable as you lift one another up. Running buds help you achieve your goals and let your dream come real. Just don't overdo the pain meds.



10. [MIGHTY COW LOGO FOR HOODIE – UPDATED FOR 2020](#)



11. [FAVORITE RACE](#)

Please send me write ups of your favorite races for inclusion in future newsletters.

Here is one of my favorite area half's (from John McCleary) and I will definitely be running it this year.

COLCHESTER HALF MARATHON

COLCHESTER, CT

FEBRUARY 29 2020

Race Director Rick Konon is awesome, crazy awesome, and for \$14 or so, you can't beat the price.

Part of the Hartford Track Club's Winter Race Series, the Colchester Half Marathon marks its 27th annual running in 2019, for a race that typically draws a

few hundred runners or more and when temperatures are often in the 30s, as wintry weather including ice, snow and sleet have frequently fallen on the day of the race.

Known for its challenging hills along the rolling New England countryside surrounding the town, the Colchester Half follows an out-and-back USA Track & Field-certified loop course that starts and finishes at Bacon Academy on Norwich Avenue. Scheduled starting time for the race is 10:00 AM ET.

From there, runners follow a clockwise route along sections of Norwich, Windham Avenue, Goshen Hill Road and McCall Road. Though most of the race unfolds along paved country roads, a roughly three mile stretch of the race takes runners along dirt roads, where they'll need to be careful of ice and/or snow if inclement weather is in the forecast.

The last few miles of the race take runners along Roger Foot Road and back onto Norwich Avenue, where they run the final stretch back in to the finish line at the high school. After the finish, the race organizers host a post-race "carbo re-loading" party at Colchester's Bacon Academy High School, right at the race start/finish line.

Race Weather & Climate

Located in the central part of the state, about 25 miles southeast of Hartford and roughly 25 miles from Connecticut's Atlantic coastline, the town of Colchester typically experiences very cold conditions in the late winter, and usually sees its lowest rainfall (but some of its heaviest snowfall) in February.

On race day (Feb. 27), the average low is 19°F and the average high is 41°F.

Do you know what your
home is worth? Give me a
call and I'll "run" the
numbers.



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PRE-VALENTINE'S DAY AFFECTION??

Cheers,

John