

# MILES & MINUTES

Publication of the Richmond Road Runners Club

Winter 2021 | Volume 44, Issue 1

## 20/20 ON 2020

*Reflections on the Running Year*



100 Miles



Running with Rock



Socially Distant & Virtual



**Miles & Minutes** is the official newsletter for and by members of the Richmond Road Runners Club (RRRC). The RRRC is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to foster fitness and a healthy lifestyle through running in the metro Richmond, Virginia area. The club is affiliated with the Road Runners Club of America and sponsors nearly 20 races throughout the year with distances ranging from 1 mile to

50K. As a service to the community, the club contracts to provide race services. These services range from renting equipment to full-computerized race timing. The club provides services for over 30 events during the year.

#### Club Officers

Nikkia Young	President
Crystal Koch	Vice President/Operations
Amy Black	Vice President/Communications
Victoria Hauser	Secretary
Dawn Walker	Treasurer

#### Function Heads

Anne Brown, Mara George	Chip Timing
Don Garber	Club History
Glenn Melton	Equipment
Ralph Gibbs, Suzi Silverstein	Grand Prix
Sara Baugh	Volunteers
Mara George	Membership
Crystal Koch	Operations
Crystal Koch	Race Coordination
David Trump	RunSignUp and RRRC Website
Chris Mason, Mara George	Social Media

#### Miles and Minutes

Annie Tobey	Editor
Ed Kelleher	Proofreader
Melissa Savage	Graphic Design

**Board of Directors:** Megan Alper (Novak), Mike Bender, Farleigh Fitzgerald, Joe Flynn, Mara George, Marcy George, Michael George, Mike Gholson, Mary Beth Hall, Shawn Lafland, Mike Levins, Chris Mason, Allison May, Kirk Millikan, Eric Nachman, Jim Oddono, Suzi Silverstein, and Katherine Zampolin.

**Deadline:** The deadline for submitting letters, articles, pictures and volunteer credits is posted on the club website. Send articles directly to the editorial staff at [milesandminutes@rrrc.org](mailto:milesandminutes@rrrc.org). Please keep article submissions to under 1,000 words. *Miles & Minutes* is distributed quarterly.

**Membership:** RRRC dues are \$5 for students, \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. The club mailing address is Richmond Road Runners Club P.O. Box 8724, Richmond, VA 23226. Members can renew or sign up on-line at [www.rrrc.org](http://www.rrrc.org). Unless otherwise noted, opinions expressed in *Miles & Minutes* are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Richmond Road Runners Club.

## Table of Contents

- 2 Editor's Letter
- 3 RRRC News Bits
- 6 Health & Wellness: Keeping Cramps at Bay
- 6 Foot Notes: Running Shoe Flexibility
- 11 RRRC Survey: We Asked – You Answered!
- 14 Meet the RRRC Board
- 16 Feature: 20/20 on 2020
- 18 Feature: Run 100 Miles? That's A Terrible Idea
- 21 Feature: 100 Miles for Mama
- 23 Feature: Running with Rock
- 24 Merchant Discounts
- 25 Group Runs



Richmond Road  
Runners Club



@rvaroadrunners

## [ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ]



As 2020 comes to a close, it's hard to believe what all has taken place. While we did have to cancel several of our in-person events, I am so proud of how quickly we pivoted our remaining events and even rounded out the year with some in-person

events following the COVID guidelines.

The running never stopped. We may have not been able to gather for awhile, but people kept running, walking and moving forward through it all.

I have been encouraged by seeing the neighborhoods with people out walking all times of day and night. The parks are being appreciated, and more and more people are testing out the area trails.

Many of you created goals, signed up for events and tried fun new challenges to keep the running spark alive, and it shows just how resilient the Richmond running community is.

As we look to the future, we will continue to focus on the health and safety of our runners and supporters while planning events. We will keep working with the city and the counties to ensure we are following guidelines so that we can keep having in-person events. We have appreciated your patience as we navigate the new postures and hope that you all will continue to stick with us in the new year. Richmond Road Runners Club has committed to learning and growing through this change in our world, and we know we will come out on the other side better and stronger.

I speak for us all when I say we have so much more in store, and 2021 is already looking to be a great year in our very long history.

Forever Forward. ■

**Nikkia Young** | *President*

**On the cover:** Richmond runners kept logging the miles, despite the pandemic, including Kelly Harris, who tackled The Yeti 100 Mile Endurance Run (left); members of the Running with Rock group tackling the Sports Backers Richmond Marathon and Half Marathon (center); and RRRC members participating in the club's 2020 socially distant and virtual events.

## The Therapy of Pursuing Our Passions: Running and magazines



In good times and bad, taking time for our passions can center our soul and ease life's pressures. Clearly, this was true for many members of Richmond Road Runners Club in 2020. Responses to the survey that RRRC sent out in its weekly email included:

"The friends I've met through training teams, especially this year, have been my lifeline to helping me feel connected and supported despite so much about this year being rather isolating," said Caitlyn Berry.

"Just glad to have found something healthy to help me cope!" said Abbie Allison. As another member explained, "It is my way of dealing with the stress."

"Running kept me sane in 2020," said Leigh Anne Stacklin, a sentiment echoed by Sinead Lynch-Hall. Or as Betsy Somerville put it, "So glad to have running solo as an outlet during the pandemic ... a real sanity saver!"

And Candace Broadus: "2020 has sucked as a year (everyone can agree), but running was my outlet and solace for trying to tune the world out."

Joe Sikora deemed running "a much-needed outlet."

"Fortunate to be able to continue to run as it seemed to be one of the activities one could continue to participate in with everything else being cancelled/postponed," answered James LaFratta.

William Glavin was specific on what running did for him in 2020: "Kept me focused mentally, kept me strong during times of otherwise mostly inactivity, gave me goals to look forward to, distracted me when I needed it most. So thankful for it."

And other members stated, "It was a blessing that I had running to stay active, get outside, and stay healthy!" "It is my way of dealing with the stress." And: "Appreciate those who made running possible – the most fulfilling moments of the year."

### Passion project

I echo the words of these RRRC members who value running, especially this past year. I stepped back from coaching MTT in person, being cautious as well as a member of a more vulnerable population. I stayed on as a virtual coach,

*In good times and bad, taking time for our passions can center our soul and ease life's pressures. Clearly, this was true for many members of Richmond Road Runners Club in 2020.*

maintaining contact with our team's virtual members as well as Team Aquamarine as a whole. But I missed the camaraderie of running – one of many perks that keeps me clocking the miles.

In 2020, I kept running to train for the virtual Boston Marathon in September. I also kept running to be in shape to rejoin running groups when the pandemic eases. I kept running because of the health benefits, because it allows me to consume a few extra calories, and because it centers my soul, especially the "forest bathing" of trail running.

But I lost another passion this year. The short-term economic damage of the pandemic added to the long-term struggles of print publications, and the magazine of which I was editor, Boomer, ceased publication. No longer could I focus my work efforts on planning future issues, gathering stories, and collaborating with writers, designers, and a sales team to create a finished product that engages, educates, inspires, and entertains readers.

And then I heard that RRRC was looking for a new editor for *Miles & Minutes*.

So here I am, able to engage two passions in one! I have big footsteps to fill, but the beauty of this club magazine is that it's a team effort. The same hard work that the RRRC board and volunteers put into creating a valuable local running experience helps fill the magazine. And the experiences of our members provide fodder for inspiration and entertainment.

Do you have a tale to tell? It doesn't have to be a major accomplishment. Perhaps you know of a runner (including you), an organization, a book, or an experience that is amusing, motivating, informative, or otherwise of interest to other RRRC members. Send it in! I'm here to put everything together, but this is a club magazine for – and about – you!

Keep putting in the miles, whatever the minutes! ■

**Annie Tobey** | Editor  
milesandminutes@rrrc.org



## RACE RESULTS

### Bear Creek 10 Mile Trail Run, Dec. 6

RRRC's second in-person race during the pandemic offered great weather for running the trails at Bear Creek Lake State Park. The 167 runners who finished the race were great in being social while maintaining social distance and in wearing face masks before and after the race. Volunteers set the example with masks in place while at work. Thanks to the runners and to the volunteers who provided encouragement and support.

*Pictures: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/VA/Cumberland/BearCreek10MileTrailRun>*





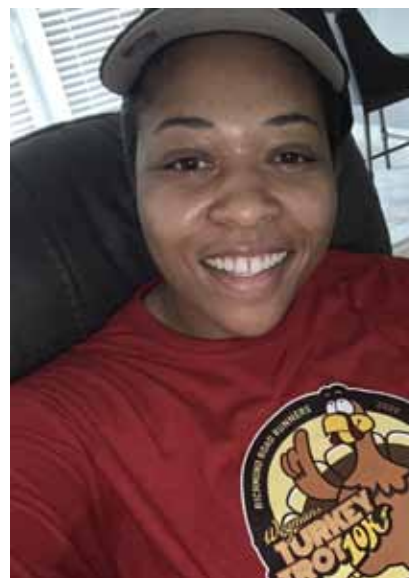
## Race Results

*continued from page 4*

### Wegmans Turkey Trot 10K, Nov. 26-29

More than 265 people ran virtually for RRRRC and race sponsor Wegmans virtual Turkey Trot 10K and Kids Run during Thanksgiving weekend. Because of COVID-19, the University of Richmond campus was closed to outside groups, but the 42-year tradition continued virtually – still burning calories to be consumed during Thanksgiving dinner!

*Pictures: <https://runsSignup.com/Race/Photos/VA/Richmond/WegmansTurkeyTrot10K>*





## East 51 at Rocketts Cap Trail 10 Miler & 5K, Oct. 1-31

RRRC partnered with the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation and presenting sponsors East 51 at Rocketts and Dominion Energy. They hosted 109 participants in virtual 10-mile or 5K races, runs and walks. All profits from the races benefited the programs of the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation, a 52-mile dedicated multiuse trail connecting Richmond and Williamsburg along the Route 5 corridor.

*Pictures: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/VA/Richmond/CapTrail10Miler5K>*

## Poop Loop 4ish Miler, Oct. 4

Forty runners participated in the third annual Poop Loop 4ish Miler. The race was held in-person (and socially distanced) on roads, paths, and beginner-friendly trails. The Ancarrow's East trail, nestled next to the City of Richmond's sewage treatment plant, earned it the nickname "Poop Loop."

## WHAT'S UP?

*More information and registration at [RRRC.org](http://RRRC.org).*

## 2021 Grand Prix Competition

Compete all year long against your fellow RRRC members. The Grand Prix is a free running competition that awards points for speed, participation, and volunteerism. While the pandemic will continue to impact races into 2021, RRRC will continue to host races – in person when possible, with a virtual option when necessary. The 2021 Grand Prix rules have been modified to reflect the effects of the coronavirus. Sign up any time before Feb. 28.

## RRRC Winter Marathon & Half Marathon Training Teams

The coach-led WMT offers Saturday morning runs from Dogwood Dell for both half marathon and marathon training for runners and run/walkers of any pace and skill level up to 14 minutes/mile. Those moving up to the half marathon or marathon distance for the first time are welcome. Many of this year's routes include tidbits of history to learn as you run! Coach Joe Burton reminds runners of Vince Lombardi's quote: "The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary." You can join WMT through Jan. 31.

## Advanced 10K Training

The in-person program (if permitted by local and state directives) is designed for intermediate to advanced runners with a goal of completing a 10K race in less than one hour. This 12-week, coach-led A10K Training provides a defined range of weekly volume for both intermediate and advanced runners, supplemented with prescriptive pacing guidance for tempo and track workouts. Tempo runs will be Saturday mornings (8 a.m.) from the RRRC Club House, and track workouts will be a weekday evening (TBD) at Sports Backers Stadium. Training extends Jan. 30 through April 24.

## Still to Come!

These in-person races are pending for early 2021. Keep fingers crossed and your masks up so health conditions will allow us to gather and race.

- **RRRC Frostbite 15K – Jan. 24**  
Final Gravity is the title sponsor.
- **RRRC Sweetheart 8K – Feb. 14**
- **RRRC Huguenot 3 Miler @ Robious Landing – March 7**





## Keeping Those Cramps at Bay: Potential Prevention Strategy for Exercise-Associated Muscle Cramps



By Damien Howell

You know those terrible cramps that grab you unexpectedly – like when you're pushing through that last bit of a race or even when you're resting peacefully at home? Physical therapist Damien Howell explains possible causes for muscle cramps and what you

can do to combat them.

Exercise-associated muscle cramp – EAMC – is a painful, spasmodic, and involuntary contraction of muscle that occurs during or immediately after exercise. The exact mechanism or cause of EAMC remains unclear. Although there's consensus that the first aid treatment of EAMC is to stretch the affected muscle, a study at the University of Southampton in England concludes that regular stretching exercises fail to prevent cramping. While there may be no clear strategy for preventing EAMC, here are a few ideas for minimizing it.

### Reasons for Cramping

There are two hypotheses for why EAMC occurs.

1. Electrolyte depletion and dehydration hypothesis. The cramp is due to a decrease in hydration and a change in the level of sodium and potassium, as induced by exercise. The evidence for this is mainly anecdotal. One of the criticisms of this hypothesis is that heat cramping from excess perspiration, which leads to this dehydration and loss of electrolytes, may be a separate problem from EAMC. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalance are systemic abnormalities; it is not clear how these changes would result in local symptoms of specific muscle cramping. Muscle cramping can occur without dehydration and electrolyte imbalance.
2. Altered neuromuscular control hypothesis. The cramp is in response to spinal reflex that isn't working correctly.

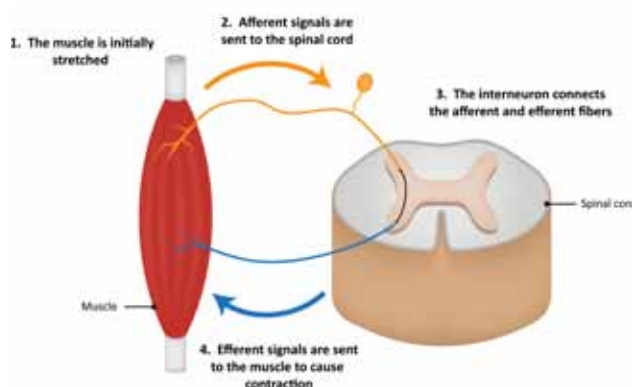
A common example of a spinal reflex is when the tendon of the knee is tapped and the knee jerks into motion. The quick tap of the tendon stimulates the specialized sensory nerves in the muscle and tendons.

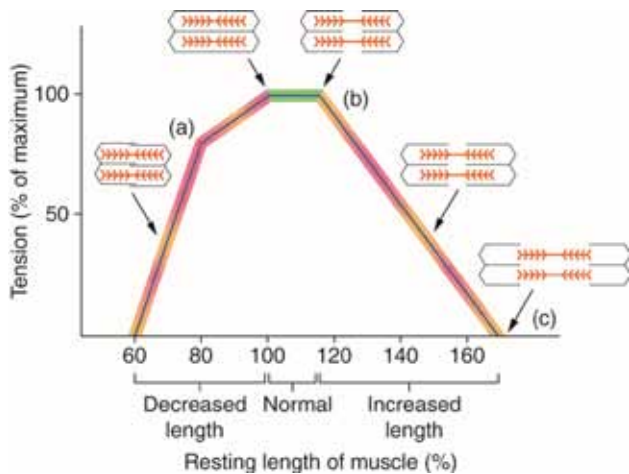


However, there can be an imbalance between signals coming from sensory nerves in the muscle (muscle spindle) to the spinal cord. Similarly, there can be a decrease in nerve signals coming from the spinal cord back to the muscle, which inhibits the muscle contraction (Golgi tendon organ). Such imbalances in spinal reflex can result in a muscle cramp. Spinal reflex imbalance, resulting in a muscle cramp, occurs when the muscle is contracting – i.e., when it is in a shortened (slackened) position.

There is a connection between the length of a muscle and the ability to generate force that influences the spinal reflex. The length of a muscle tendon unit varies from long to short. More tension/force is occurring when the muscle is neither long nor short. Less tension/force occurs when the muscle is lengthened or slackened (see illustration below).

### The Stretch Reflex





## Positions that Make Muscles Susceptible to Cramping

Muscles in the lower extremity that are notorious for cramping – the *rectus femoris* (thigh); hamstring; calf; and foot muscles – are muscles that cross two or more joints, producing simultaneous movements at all the joints they cross. When you contract the muscle across multiple joints, this can result in a position of slack at which the muscle can no longer generate a useful amount of force. This is called “muscle active insufficiency.” When actively contracting, the muscle is insufficient at producing useful force.



When muscles are in the position of “active insufficiency,” they are more susceptible to cramping. Thus, it’s helpful to know precisely what these vulnerable positions are.

The position of active insufficiency for the rectus femoris is hip flexion with knee extension. This is commonly described as isometric knee extension, straight-leg raise when sitting, the L-sit or V-sit positions, or a standing or kneeling thigh stretch without using the hands.

The position of active insufficiency for the *hamstring muscle* is hip extension with knee flexion, as in a hamstring curl. Yoga instructors call this the “twisted lizard pose.”



The position of active insufficiency for the calf muscle is knee flexion with plantar flexion of the ankle, foot, and toes. This includes a calisthenics flutter kick with the knee flexed as well as a standing heel raise with the knee flexed.

*continued on page 8*





## Cramps

*continued from page 7*

The position of active insufficiency for the foot muscles is ankle plantar flexion and plantar flexion of the toes. This is experienced in the *ballet pointe position* or the flutter kick when swimming.

### Possible Strategies to Prevent Exercise-Associated Cramps

If you experience cramps while contracting or engaging a muscle during a position of active insufficiency as described above, this suggests possible strategies to prevent the cramp.

One strategy is to avoid or minimize those vulnerable positions during hard, long exercise periods.

Sometimes, however, this isn't possible. Athletes swimming long distances need to place the foot and *calf muscle* in a position of significant slack when performing a flutter kick. Long-distance runners often need to position the hamstring muscles in a position of significant slack when flexing the knee towards the buttock during swing phase of gait.

Another strategy is to train and strengthen the muscle while it's in the position of active insufficiency.

Researchers Michael Behringer and Molly McCourt at the Institute of Training Science and Sport Informatics in Germany propose that muscles can be strengthened in a manner that can prevent EAMC. Investigators used electrical stimulation of muscles to induce muscle cramps. The subject's calf muscle was in a slack position (active insufficiency



position). It was more difficult to trigger a muscle cramp, and the threshold to elicit cramps changed.

Essentially, they applied a colloquial saying, "Drink the hair of the dog." In other words, the best cure for what ails you is to have more of it.

The procedure in their research experiment to train the muscles was relatively complex and not clinically applicable in that it uses electrical stimulation of calf muscles. On the other hand, the exciting part of their research is it suggests a procedure to prevent EAMC.

Perhaps adding routine isometric strengthening exercises to muscles that are susceptible to cramping can change the frequency of troublesome EAMC. The photos accompanying this article are postures or positions of isometric exercises that can lower frequency of cramps. Many traditional yoga postures place muscles in position of active insufficiency, which can also help prevent muscle cramps.

A potential working hypothesis is, if the muscles at risk of experiencing EAMC perform regular isometric strengthening exercise with the muscle in position of active insufficiency, then it will decrease likelihood of EAMC. This deserves investigation.

While there is a correlation between active contraction of a muscle in a slackened position with the onset of EAMC, the pathophysiological mechanism is yet to be determined.

### The Bottom Line

Causes of exercise associated muscle cramps are uncertain, and likely multi-factorial contraction of muscles that cross two joints in a position of active insufficiency (slackened position) is a significant risk factor for exercise associated muscle cramps.

Potential actions to prevent exercise-associated muscle cramps include regular isometric strengthening exercise of muscles in a position of active insufficiency.

If you have a history of EAMC during competition, the best cure for what ails you is to seek more of it by carefully eliciting muscle cramps during training. ■

*Physical therapist Damien Howell was a competitive runner for more than 45 years. He retired from competition in 2014 when diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. He has assisted injured runners in managing and preventing injuries since 1972. DamienHowellPT.com*

## Running Shoe Flexibility: Understanding stiffness and flexibility variations. Flexibility is a virtue – sometimes



By George Lane

An important feature often overlooked when selecting your ideal running shoes is shoe flexibility. How flexible or stiff the sole of the shoe is, and where it is flexible or stiff, can make a big difference in the appropriateness of the shoe for your particular needs. The amount of flexibility and the location(s) of flexibility are determined primarily by the portion of the shoe below the level of the foot: the midsole and outsole. Firmer, more rigid materials stiffen the shoe.

### Two shoe-twisting tests

The foot flexes during running in two basic ways: 1) the foot flexes upwards, or “dorsiflexes,” in relationship to the toes at the “ball” of the foot (at the base of the toes, where they join the foot) as the foot is leaving the ground in preparation for propulsion; and 2) the rearfoot (back half of the foot) twists a small amount relative to the forefoot (front half of the foot) during the entire time the foot is on the ground.

The shoe can be evaluated to see how well it matches these properties of the foot with two basic tests: the sagittal plane bending test and the torsional flexibility test. As a general rule, the sole of the shoe should not flex at locations where the foot doesn't flex.



**Fig. 1: Sagittal plane bending test. The shoe flexes at 1/3 the distance from the front of the shoe – ideal.**

***An important feature often overlooked when selecting your ideal running shoes is shoe flexibility. How flexible or stiff the sole of the shoe is, and where it is flexible or stiff, can make a big difference in the appropriateness of the shoe for your particular needs.***

The sagittal plane bending test is performed as follows: hold the shoe firmly by the sole at the heel and toe and bend the front of the shoe upwards – it should only flex at the ball of the foot (at about 1/3 the distance from the front of the shoe – **Fig. 1**). This is ideal for promoting proper running mechanics. If the shoe is flexing instead at the arch region, the shoe will not match normal running mechanics (**Fig. 2**), and this situation should be avoided, as excessive stress to the arch and related structures may increase the risk of injury.

Torsional flexibility testing is performed as follows: grab the shoe by the heel with one hand and by the front of the shoe with the other hand and twist the heel clockwise and the forefoot counterclockwise (like wringing out a towel – **Fig. 3**). If the mid part of the shoe (arch area) remains relatively stiff and resists the twisting of the shoe, there is less torsional flexibility. If there is a lot of motion between the two portions of the shoe, there is more torsional flexibility. By performing this test on several different shoe models, you will get a feel for this particular property.

*continued on page 10*



**Fig. 2: Shoe flexes at the middle of the shoe – not good.**



## Foot Notes

*continued from page 9*

Shoes that have a lot of torsional flexibility may increase the risk of injury or aggravate existing injuries for runners with problematic biomechanics, such structural misalignments of the lower extremities; foot or lower extremity weakness or imbalances; structural damage; or excessive foot collapse during gait, termed “overpronation.”

### The shoe for you

The ideal amount of torsional flexibility or stiffness for you may require a trial-and-error approach on your part, but recognizing and paying attention to this property, as well as understanding your own foot functional properties, will help you understand how this feature can be important to meet your needs for optimal comfort, function, and injury prevention.

Although I will discuss in detail the concepts of neutral, stability, and motion-control running shoes in a future article, understand that there are plenty of neutral running shoes that have a lot of torsional stiffness, although almost all motion-control shoes and most stability shoes are stiff in torsion as well. Virtually all minimalist running shoes, some neutral shoes, and even a few stability shoes are relatively flexible in torsion.

Another feature regarding running shoe flexibility that is gaining popularity in recent years is the sole that is stiff in flexion at all locations, particularly at the ball of the foot in sagittal plane flexion. This is a purposeful design, with a mild “rocker” shape under the ball of the foot to encourage a gentle rolling transition to propulsion off the toes (**Fig. 4**). This design provides protection of the joints at the ball of the

***The ideal amount of torsional flexibility or stiffness for you may require a trial-and-error approach on your part, but recognizing and paying attention to this property, as well as understanding your own foot functional properties, will help you understand how this feature can be important to meet your needs for optimal comfort, function, and injury prevention.***



**Fig. 3: Torsional flexibility testing**



**Fig. 4: Stiff sole in sagittal plane flexion test with mild rocker forefoot**

foot by shielding them from potentially damaging bending stresses, which can be especially helpful for those individuals who may have pain and/or structural damage at those joints (arthritis, misalignment, ligament damage, etc.) or faulty biomechanics that can often lead to structural damage at those joints. Additionally, this stiff design can assist the toes in providing propulsive force at “push-off” as the toes leave the ground.

What works best for you regarding running shoe flexibility may also be affected by the particular surfaces you run on. Harder vs. softer surfaces, smoother vs. more irregular surfaces, etc., all may make a difference in what shoe flexibility properties are ideal for your particular needs. Other features such as shoe cushioning and stability, which I will discuss in future articles, also need to be factored into this complex equation. ■

*George Lane, DPM, Richmond, Virginia  
Fellow, American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine  
Owner, Superior Foot Supports, SuperiorFootSupports.com*

# WE ASKED – YOU ANSWERED!

## RRRC Survey on Running & Racing in 2020

**T**his past year has been atrocious. Most runners have experienced the temporary suspension of running life as we know it and love it – cancelled races, virtual races, races with restrictions, cancelled or scaled-down training teams, and less time exercising with friends. Fortunately, even the most stringent U.S. restrictions never banned outdoor exercise.

Through it all, organizations have adapted. While struggling with their own loss of income, many put on their thinking caps and created a new breed of event to keep runners active and engaged.

To get a feel for how this has affected RRRC members and to gauge opinions on running-related COVID precautions, we sent out a survey via the weekly newsletter. Many thanks to approximately 100 people who responded. With other answers reported elsewhere in the magazine (see the editor's letter and "20/20 on 2020," here's a peek into what we learned.

### OUR 2020 RACES

As usual, Richmond runners started the year with visions of races dancing in their head. Planned races looked like a catalog of Richmond favorites alongside a travel itinerary for destination races – nearby Shamrock and Blue Ridge; popular U.S. races such as Chicago, Marine Corps, Flying Pig, Big Sur, and Boston; international races in Dublin and Madrid; and ultramarathons. But many were cancelled – or became virtual.

As race organizations adapted, so did RRRC members. They ran the creative new long-distance races and relays, covering ground we couldn't otherwise visit: Sports Backers Great American 5000, Blue Ridge Parkway Virtual Challenge, Key Largo to Key West Challenge, and the Big Surreal. They signed up for RRRC's virtual races, beginning with Quarantown 10K (the repurposed Carytown 10K). And

they logged miles and contributed money for races for a cause, such as Run for Ruth and the run for Ahmaud Arbery. And dozens more!

### ON VIRTUAL RACES

With all of this experience racing virtually, members had opinions on what makes a good virtual race. Most runners cited the swag (not unlike in-person races!), including local swag such as brewery tickets. Other pluses mentioned were low cost, effective organizer communication, social media buzz and race photos, proceeds to a good cause, friends participating, and a competitive element (including age-group placing). While some people preferred a limited participation time (such as at a specific time or over merely a weekend), others appreciated several weeks to complete a goal.

Several cited the benefits of being able to choose your time of day and weather conditions.

Other responses:

- "Either a novel challenge (like Great American 5000) or as close to a traditional race as possible (live chip timing and set course like the Richmond marathon)."
- "Have a unique course, since you probably won't have a large group of fellow runners to make it memorable."
- "Some races I did had Facebook live events where they sang the national anthem and tried to make a true 'race' experience. Other races provided a playlist that you could listen to while doing your virtual run."
- "The ability to log activities by linking to Strava or Garmin, a map showing individual/team progress, leaderboards based on distance and/or pace."
- "I like the events with groups and trackers. A single virtual event doesn't motivate me, but the idea of teamwork and a long-term goal helps a lot in these times!"

*continued on page 12*



## We Asked

*continued from page 11*

Of course, not everyone has positive feelings about virtual races, but some still saw a silver lining.

- “I’m not a big fan of virtual races. But kudos to the people that stay motivated to participate.”
- “Eh ... not much. I like getting the T-shirts. They are more of souvenirs of this crazy year.”
- “[There’s] no such thing [as a good virtual race] in my opinion, but I appreciate all the effort that has gone into trying to keep racing alive during the pandemic.”

## ON PANDEMIC-STYLE ON-SITE EVENTS

Sports Backers pivoted to present both the August Patrick Henry Half Marathon and the November 8K, half marathon, and marathon as on-site supported races (with virtual options for the November races). In our survey, members expressed appreciation for the hard-working organizers, who provided “as close to a race experience as possible while taking precautions to keep everyone safe.”

- “I ran the Frostbite 15k way back in January and I didn’t realize how much I appreciated being in a large crowd and having post-race festivities until those were no longer safe to have. I really, really, REALLY missed the post-marathon hangout on Brown’s Island this year! That said – I also loved the new marathon experience this year, the out-and-back of the Capital Trail was so awesome and friendly and easy for my spectators to navigate. Sports Backers absolutely nailed it with the water stops, signage, packet pick-up, and start/finish line experience.”

Most runners expressed appreciation for the pandemic safety measures for on-site events and in-person training teams: masks before and after runs; social-distance requirements when not running; electronic registration and alternatives to sign-in sheets; readily available wipes and hand sanitizer; cup-less, touchless hydration or individually bottled hydration; prepackaged snacks; masked volunteers; staggered start times and corrals; and finish-line grab-and-go bags of food, water and swag.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Smaller groups, waves, and races to allow for better distancing.
- Participants to be entirely self-sufficient (carrying their own water, snacks, etc.).

- Lots of space to spread out, including a wide course. While running outside is lower risk, proximity to other racers is a concern.
- Outside only.
- Skip the group photos.
- Runners and necessary support personnel only.
- Zero-tolerance policy for showing up sick to group runs.
- Mail the swag or have pre-packaged bag pickup.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

On what it will take to feel comfortable with in-person races, the most-cited factor was vaccines, especially before returning to larger races; and “Vaccines and beer.” Others mentioned the need for the pandemic itself to abate, while most emphasized the need for races to continue with safety precautions.

Even outside of running, many have questioned what changes might continue after the pandemic. One survey response reflected this myst: “A vaccine will go a long way towards making me feel comfortable with in-person races as we used to have them, though frankly I’m not sure I want to go back to that experience.

And one answer we can all relate to: “Let’s just do it! I’m ready. #### COVID, I’m over it.”

## MILESTONES OR A MILLSTONE

The pandemic affected RRRC members’ running, but the effects varied.

Many who responded had no PRs (although this could be true in any given year). To the question, “Did you have any milestones this year,” one person answered, “No, and it was very sad/disappointing. So I’m setting goals for more running in 2021.” Another runner said, “I wish, but some days just getting out the door seemed like something to celebrate!”

Others were pleased with their accomplishments (see “20/20 on 2020”), including PRs and firsts – first trail races, half marathons, marathons, and ultramarathons – and “3 marathons in 4 weeks” and “4 ultras in 4 weeks.”

One person even started running this year because of the pandemic.

- “[I] started running in May during the height of lockdown. Started with the Couch to 5k app, loved it. Kept running after completing the program because it does wonders for my anxiety and PTSD and decided to

train for a marathon. I have run two half marathons and multiple 5Ks and just completed a 20-mile-long run on the Capital Trail!"

Since March, 43 percent ran more and/or faster, while 35 percent reported that they ran less and/or slower.

- "I've run more in 2020 and found that I've continued to get out to run even when I wasn't training for a specific race. Running has been my outlet during this crazy year. At times when I felt I was stuck at home all the time, running got me out of the house and has brought me so much solace. I've also been running slightly faster."
- "2020 made me run 100% more. Went from 0 miles/week to 30+ miles/week. I'm happier, healthier, and mentally more stable than I've been in six years, despite the craziness of this year."

But one respondent summed up the other end of the scale: "Less. Slower. All alone. Ugh!"

## OTHER TAKEAWAYS

Other comments reflected the roller coaster of 2020.

- "I've learned that I don't need a race to validate my running."
- "It's been lonely."
- "Running is still enjoyable alone!"
- "Glad to be done with 2020."
- "It's been a lifesaver, honestly. I don't think I'm alone in saying that having RRRC, Sports Backers, and other organizations supporting running and recreation has been one of the things for which I'm most grateful this year!"
- "I saw a lot more people out on the roads and in my neighborhood running, jogging, and walking. Hope that stays after the pandemic goes away."
- "I'm grateful for the sport and hobby of running. I've learned a lot about myself, my resiliency, through the sport. I cherish the friendships I've made on the roads and trails of RVA, many thru RRRC connections."
- "For the first time in my very long life of running, I realized just exactly who my biggest competition is ... it is, will remain, and has been all along ... ME."

And then there's this:

- "Thank you, RRRC. My life is better because of what you do."

The Richmond running community has helped all of us during this crazy year! ■

## OUR RUNNERS

A wide diversity of runners responded to this survey.\*

### Age

20-29 – 4  
30-39 – 23  
40-49 – 27  
50-59 – 12  
60-69 – 28  
70 and over – 6

### What is your typical pace?

#1, I'm so speedy, they call me The Streak! ... #5, I prefer to take in the scenery as I walk!

1 – 3  
2 – 24  
3 – 59  
4 – 15  
5 – 0

### What is your favorite race distance?

5K – 5  
10K – 21  
Half Marathon – 43  
Marathon – 23  
Ultramarathon – 2  
Other – 7

### Approximately how long have you been participating in public races?

Less than a year – 1  
1-5 years – 21  
6-10 years – 28  
11-20 years – 22  
21-30 years – 8  
More than 30 years – 21

### How would you rate how cautious you've been in following pandemic health guidelines?

#1, What pandemic? ... #5, I'm all in for masks and social distancing!

1 – 2  
2 – 4  
3 – 7  
4 – 27  
5 – 61

*\*Since 101 people responded and occasionally answers were skipped, you can read the responses as percentage or total respondents.*



## [ MEET THE BOARD ]

### Dawn Walker

#### *Treasurer*



Although Dawn Walker hails from Lynchburg, Virginia, she has lived in Richmond since 1994. She's been married since 2003 and has a 14½-year-old "wonderful yellow lab" named Dixie. She hones the skills she uses as treasurer in her work as business manager at SkateNation Plus, an ice skating rink in Short Pump.

#### **What do you like most about running?**

I enjoy working toward a race with the goal of being stronger both mentally and physically each time.

#### **How did you get involved with RRRC?**

I found out about RRRC after running my first Monument Ave. 10k in 2005. I was looking for other races in the Richmond area and found the race calendar. I think my first race after that was the Cul-de-Sac 5k. It is kind of a wonder that I continued running after being in that heat, in a race that is held annually at 7 p.m. in July!

#### **What do you value most about RRRC?**

I love the running community in Richmond and feel that the club has some of the nicest volunteers of any organization in the city!

#### **What running accomplishment are you most proud of?**

Running my first marathon in Richmond in 2010. I had signed up for MTT with a friend not knowing how difficult it would be to log so many miles in the heat and humidity that summer.

My friend ended up injured, so I ran by myself, but I was never really alone as my Pink Nation coaches seemed to be around at every turn to help get me to the finish line.

#### **What's your favorite TV show, movie, book, or song? Why?**

Tom Petty is my favorite musician, but I love too many of his songs to pick just one. I am drawn to his honest lyrics and obvious love of music in general.

#### **Who has been your greatest inspiration in life and why?**

I would say there are many great people who have inspired me in different ways. One of the first would be my childhood piano teacher, Lucille Kent. She was an engaging teacher and taught my best friend, Kathy, and me music theory and made sure we played multiple duets together. After years with her, I found out she was one of Virginia's first female flight instructors in 1939 and had also written an autobiography. This made me want to excel in many different things in life.

#### **What is one thing that you are really looking forward to once the coronavirus is under control?**

Not being in fear of all of my races cancelling after training hard for them.

### Mark Cerny

#### *Assistant Treasurer*



Mark Cerny holds a new position on the RRRC board, assistant treasurer. As a semi-retired CPA, he's ideal for the task. He's married (more on his wife, Eileen, later) and has two sons, Zachary and Justin. Mark has lived in the area for more than 20 years. Though Mark and Eileen don't have any pets, they have four granddogs and one grandcat to entertain them.

#### **What do you like most about running?**

So many things to like, any day I run is a very good day.

#### **How did you get involved with RRRC?**

Bill Kelly asked for my help and, well, I like Bill.

#### **What do you value most about RRRC?**

Variety of races and great folks.

#### **What running accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I appreciate still being able to run as a senior runner.

**What's your favorite TV show, movie, book, or song?**

Lord of the Rings. I like adventure-type movies.

**What animal are you most like?**

I'd like to say a greyhound, but a Shetland sheepdog is probably more realistic.

**Who has been your greatest inspiration in life and why?**

My wife – definitely a case of marrying up.

**What is one thing that you are really looking forward to once the coronavirus is under control?**

Travel.

## Amy Black

### VP-Marketing



**Give me a three-to-four sentence bio of non-running information about you (profession, partner, children, hometown, pets, etc.).**

I am a Mom to a precocious 4-legged doggie diva who turned 12 last year. My world revolves around her! In the warmer months, I love to paddle board

with my doggie diva and kayak on our lovely James River. I also love to cook (and eat) and try new recipes.

**What do you like most about running?**

I can't list one thing because there's so many things I love about running! But if I must, I like what running has taught me. Running is a journey; along the way, you visit awesome places, see beautiful sites, and meet amazing people. One of John Bingham's quotes is perfect, "It was being a runner that mattered, not how fast or how far I could run. The joy was in the act of running and the journey, not the destination."

**How did you get involved with RRRC?**

My first involvement with RRRC was in 2014 as a volunteer at the Huguenot 3 Miler. If I was a member (not sure exactly when I joined), I had just joined, but not sure. The next memory I have is signing up for the Cul de Sac races

in July that same year. And I did all three - I had definitely drank the Kool Aid!

**What do you value most about RRRC?**

Again, I can't just list one thing! There are so many GREAT things about RRRC but if I have to list just one, it would be the friendships I have formed through the club. While RRRC is a club of all paces, ages, abilities, experiences, etc., the one thing we all have in common is running. And that has been the basis for some of my greatest friendships to date.

**What running accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of joining my first half marathon training team back in 2012. I thought you had to be "an accomplished runner" to be part of a training team. I was very apprehensive (scared to death) and almost didn't join (i joined the very last day). At that point, the longest I had ever completed was a 10k (Monument Ave 10K). Since then, I have completed too many half marathons to remember, 7 marathons, and 2 ultra marathons...and I'm just getting started! One of my favorite quotes is by Rikki Rogers, "Strength doesn't come from what you can do, it comes from overcoming the things you thought you couldn't."

**What is one thing that you are really looking forward to once the coronavirus is totally under control?**

I am most looking forward to hugging all my friends and family!! And sitting down in a restaurant for a long drawn out dinner with lots of conversation, amazing food, and delish beverages! We will get there soon, I have total faith. ■





# 20/20 ON 2020

## *Reflections on the Running Year*

By Mark O'Brien

A new year is always a time for looking back and reflecting on the last 12 months of running. That may be especially important this time around, given how widespread and long-lasting the effects of the global pandemic have been.

When the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, the impact was immediate. Communities around the country and the world soon implemented mandates that limited, among other things, social gatherings. Running was not entirely spared, and the novelty of the coronavirus left more questions than answers in the pandemic's early days.

### **RRRC Responds**

"We are extremely lucky to have members of the Virginia Department of Health as part of our club leadership," says Nikkia Young, who took office as president of the Richmond Road Runners Club (RRRC) less than three months before the pandemic hit. "We leaned heavily on them to help make decisions about having events, following guidelines, and working with local governments to ensure the events we do have are safe."

As it happened, RRRC had a regularly scheduled monthly meeting the night the pandemic was declared. Given the uncertainty of the virus' spread, the club voted to close or delay all race registrations and adopt a liberal refund policy for its signature spring events, the Carytown 10K and the Stratford Hills 10K.

"The main question was: if we are going to have an event, how do we keep participants and volunteers safe," recalls Young.

Although RRRC had hoped to hold in-person races, the reality of the health crisis required a different solution. Enter the Quarantown 10K, the rebranded Carytown 10K that became RRRC's first virtual race.

"In this time when we are so isolated, this race definitely brought me some comfort," recalled race director Anne Brown. "I hope it brought some sense of normalcy to our running community."

### **Sports Backers Adapts**

Across town, Sports Backers also faced the dilemma of what to do with its calendar of events, including the popular Monument Avenue 10K scheduled for March 28. Like

RRRC, Sports Backers took the “collaborative approach” by working with local government and health officials to keep the community’s safety at the forefront of its decision making.

“In general, we had to cancel, postpone, or go virtual with everything in the spring,” says Megan Schultz, Sports Backers’ chief operating officer. “The decision between which of those options to choose very much depended on the size and scale of the event as well as how far along we were in the registration process.”

Sports Backers developed a four-phase response to COVID-19, starting with an evaluation of its event portfolio. The staff held brainstorming sessions on Zoom to figure out how to “stay relevant and come up with new product that would motivate and inspire people to stay active in a safe manner,” Schultz recalls. During the eight months that followed, the organization found its stride with its first full-fledged virtual events and challenge experiences, including the Taco Trot, the Firecracker 4 Miler, the Great American 5000, and the Great European 2500.

“We had to learn and move quickly,” Schultz says. “Our staff has done an amazing job being adaptable, learning and working quickly, and pulling together to make it all happen.”

The fall schedule of marathon and half marathon training teams and races proved to be its own set of logistical challenges. Volunteer coaches strategized with training team coordinator Mara George to solve the puzzle of returning to in-person events. From face masks to group sizes, parking availability, water stops, and contingency plans in case a team had a positive case, every scenario was considered. The goals were simple: provide runners what they wanted and do it safely.

“We knew having an actual course with a start and finish line that was measured and marked removed the guesswork (of virtual races),” Schultz says. “Having water and restrooms on course were two of the more critical race amenities, and having timing provided that more real race-like experience. Dorey Park and the Virginia Capital Trail became the obvious locations to make it happen.”

## Where the Rubber Meets the Road

According to a recent RRRC year-end survey, the efforts by running clubs to keep people running paid off, as the majority of respondents indicated that they gladly participated in events including the Quarantown 10K, the virtual Monument Avenue 10K, the Richmond marathon, half marathon, and 8K, and several others in between. In fact, several respondents found that the unpredictability of 2020 was the perfect time to change things up.

“I ran more miles [in 2020] than I ever have before and will hit 1,000 before the end of the year,” one runner says. “First

10K, first 10-mile race, first 100-mile month, and first 500-mile year,” says another. One runner even “completed a run streak that lasted 144 days.” And approximately one in four respondents indicated they set a new personal record in one or more distances during the pandemic.

Suffice it to say that, while 2020 was far from a perfect year for the RVA running community, it was a lesson in adaptability and perseverance.

“I am extremely proud of how resilient RRRC has become,” Young says. “People are getting creative with virtual races, participants are following the COVID guidelines at our events, and we are trying more new things in the

future that we would not have implemented had it not been for the pandemic.”

As for that future, RRRC hopes to have more trail events in 2021 “to open up some options for runners who want a more spaced-out experience,” Young explains. Sports Backers also is planning some firsts, including its first spring series of marathon, half marathon, and 8K races. But the virtual events will not be a thing of the past just yet.

“We know there is a ton of virtual fatigue, but there is some reality to the fact that virtual is safe and does still have the ability to motivate,” Schultz says. “So continuing to produce these types of events, whether it be a race or a multiweek challenge, will be important.” ■

“We know there is a ton of virtual fatigue, but there is some reality to the fact that virtual is safe and does still have the ability to motivate. So continuing to produce these types of events, whether it be a race or a multiweek challenge, will be important.”



# RUN 100 MILES?

## *That's A Terrible Idea!*

# WHEN?



Carrie Edwards during her 100-mile run.

A story of friendship, support, endurance, and the strength of the Richmond running community

By Lynn McDaniel

I would not have dreamed a year ago that I would be running 10 10-mile loops in my subdivision with someone I had met this summer, but that is exactly what I found myself doing this past November. During those 100 miles, we were joined by a host of awesome supporters – confirmation of the power of the running community.

Ultramarathons, or ultras, are any running races beyond the standard marathon distance of 26.2 miles (or 42.2K). The most common ultra distances are 50K, 100K, 50 miles, or 100 miles, with each event being unique in terms of distance and terrain. Ask anyone who has completed any of these distances and they will most likely respond that ultras are challenging both mentally and physically.

### MILES AND MATES

Running is an individual sport, with significant social interactions for many people. The support of the running community, in my experience, is deep and wide. There are so many authentic, wonderful people, who I most likely

would not have crossed paths with if it were not for our shared passion for running.

In ultra running, you train for hours and hours, weeks on end, mile after mile. You train with folks, and you get to know their lives, their stories, and their core. At running race events and group runs, there is a significant sense of camaraderie and shared community. Conversations about experiences, race locations, gear, injuries, and various other exercise topics fill the air without fail. One such group training run with Sports Backers Marathon Training Team, MTT, is when and where I first met Carrie Edwards.

After a few runs, Carrie and I became more acquainted and she was talking about some previous endurance race experiences, which included her first 100 miler. Carrie shared that the event went virtual so she ran it solo in March at Powhatan State Park. I was amazed and impressed by her running that distance period, nevertheless alone! Having never run more than 50 miles at a single event and intrigued by the 100 mile distance as a personal goal, I continued to

pepper her with questions. Carrie said that since she did not do the distance during an actual race, she had decided to sign up for another.

In late August, Carrie's second race event converted to a virtual race; however, she was fully committed to running the 100 mile distance again. I think she sensed my interest and casually mentioned her plan. She asked if I would be willing to run some of the miles with her. I immediately said yes and leapt at the opportunity to try to run as much of it with her as I could, as well as support her, because that is just what runners do!

## STRATEGIES AND SURPRISES

Carrie and I set the date for Nov. 21 and began some quiet planning between each other, sharing with a few trusted folks in our running network. Privately we would talk nutrition and strategy, make lists, make promises to each other, and joke about the possibilities. I truly enjoyed this time and looked forward to supporting Carrie for this epic run.

Thinking back on it, one of the funniest promises we made to each other was not to intentionally annoy one another. We vowed not to ask, "How are you doing?" We knew it was going to hurt and did not want to let that enter our mindset. We planned to gently redirect the question if asked by anyone.

When people would comment or ask questions about the number of miles we were logging, we would share that we were training for an ultra. We created a small support group of a few folks, while we planned to essentially SAG ourselves from my house, which was on the 10-mile route that we planned to run 10 times. I engaged the support of Gail Schechter, a friend who lives in my area and whose home we strategically included at the five-mile point on the route as a second SAG stop. Carrie and I thought it would be great to not have to carry water, nutrition, etc. if possible. It would



be a game-day decision mainly based on weather, but we were preparing best possible scenario. Gail agreed to restock water, nutrition, and any other items we needed throughout the day. It was great to have her support and, since she was also a runner, we knew we could count on Gail.

Carrie was logging serious mileage in preparation for her second 100-mile race event, before and after it went virtual. We had a few conversations about an upcoming ultra trail run, Rim to River 100 in West Virginia, where Carrie planned to pace and run with Whitney Richman after she reached mile 50. The ultra rules at this specific event allowed for a race participant to have a pacer anywhere after the 50-mile mark. At this trail run, Carrie would be running in the dark with Whitney for 20 miles as part of her training – and because that is what supportive running friends do for one another.

At this very same Rim to River event, Carrie caught up with Crystal Koch, who was providing SAG support for Whitney in West Virginia. I was not aware at the time that Carrie mentioned our 100-mile plan to Crystal and Whitney. Carrie is friends and connected with Whitney and Crystal; however, at the time, I was not. Without either of us knowing, Crystal put out a social media post, blocking Carrie and not visible to me, about the 100 miles Carrie was planning to run. The post solicited folks in the running community to join her for support. Being a social runner, I had lined up a few key folks, on the down low, to run different loops with us at various approximate times throughout the day.

As Nov. 21 approached, our MTT head coach mentioned a reunion run on the Southside to join in supporting Carrie. I was a bit taken back, and that is when Carrie and I found

*continued on page 20*



## Run 100 Miles?

*continued from page 19*

out about Crystal's social media post. Cover blown in the best way possible, but we still had no idea what a strong and supportive crew of runners would show up.

### COMPANIONS ALONG THE WAY

Nov. 21 arrived. Carrie and I set up our garage SAGs in the wee hour of 2:30 a.m. to begin the day. I had absolutely no idea how the day would go. We began running at 3 a.m. under a gorgeous midnight-blue sky and a large, bright moon. We quickly shared how nice it was for Mike Magee to suggest and spend his time marking the ten-mile loop with temporary course paint. After the first two loops, we had a missed communication when I made a pit stop before meeting our MTT team. Carrie ran the majority of the third loop solo, and I ran a modified loop with our MTT reunion run. Chris Mason and Terri Gerloff accompanied Carrie on parts of her third loop.

As we began Carrie's fourth loop, Mike Gallogly and Monte Evans joined for the run and I hopped on my mountain bike. Loop five ushered in Katherine Zampolin, Joe Burton, and Tom Hackenberg. The end of the planned runners – or so we thought.

I had not “planned” on any other runners until mile 80. Carrie and I did doubletakes as we came up to the SAG and began loop six with the pleasure of runners Carrie Parker, Ed Ross-Clunis, Whitney Richman, and Winnie Brown. Wow, Winnie had so much fun that she stayed on for loop seven with us, joined by Vickie Bryant and Chef Ellie Basch. On loop eight, Jeff Moore joined us and provided some much-needed entertainment to get us through some rough patches. Struggling, frozen, and 19 hours later, I called it after 90 miles. Carrie and Whitney soldiered on into the night for the final loop.

At mile 97, Whitney's encouraging and common-sense statement to Carrie was, whether you walk or you run, it will hurt either way, so you might as well run. Carrie let that sink in for a few seconds and she ran the last three miles. “Even at mile 97, I can somehow force a second wind,” Carrie said.

**“It was uplifting to have so many people in the running community come out and show so much support.”**

~ Carrie Edwards



**“Being generous is not something you merely ‘do,’ it is the motivation to follow a higher purpose and example, it is realizing it is a ‘get to,’ not a ‘got to.’”**

~ Lynn McDaniel

Rockstar! Crazy! Impressive! Whatever your word for it is, as a multi-time ultra and Ironman finisher I have not ever seen the sheer determination that Carrie and the associated Richmond running community brought that day. I wish I had proper words to accurately express the experience. The various conversations, smiles, laughter, and joy will stay with me. While not the day I had planned, I learned a lot by staying the course and observing Carrie and the running community. What a day! I am so very thankful! The longest endurance event I have ever had the pain and pleasure of being a small part of.

Other key people to thank and appreciate! Mike Magee, Crystal Koch, Annie Tobey, Michele Plouffe, Cole Richmond, and so many of our neighbors who cheered, put up signs, added sidewalk chalk, shouted words of encouragement, supplied “fireworks” and stuffed animals to cheer Carrie on for just over 21 hours. The running and community support was nothing short of amazing, welcomed, and very much appreciated.

Richmond is a blessed, active community. Even in unique times, we have a community full of passion and common interest. I love experiences and am humbled and fortunate to be a part of this connected community. ■

# 100 MILES FOR MAMA

## A recap of an average runner's first 100 miler

Story and Photos by Kelly Harris

I was asked to write an article about my experience at my first 100-mile ultra, The Yeti 100 Mile Endurance Run, held on Sept. 25-26, 2020, on the Virginia Creeper Trail in Damascus.

Many of you in our running community may have no idea who I am. I am not a speedy runner. I am your average, middle-of-the-pack runner on my good days. However, I have grown to fall in love with distance running. I just love going out for a run with no route in mind, no distance planned, and just running. Running as far as you can for as long as you want to – there's just something very freeing about that.



Kelly Harris during the race.



About this time last year, a dream was forming in my mind. I had already run several 50k's, two 50 milers, and had a desire to go even farther. The Yeti 100-miler was my dream race! I love the Yeti community – they are amazing!

When sign-up time arrived, which is a lottery, I had a hard time deciding to try for it when I saw the price! However, thanks to some wonderful friends in the RVA running community who came together, money was not an excuse. I am so blessed by my running family!

When I found out I was chosen in the lottery, I was so excited and scared! I told my mom, and her exact words were, "You're going to kill yourself. No human needs to run that far." Which actually meant, "You are crazy, I love you, and you can do it."

I stuck faithfully to my training plan from December 2019 until the beginning of April 2020. The first weekend of April, as I was finishing up a 50-miler, I received word that my mom had suddenly gotten sick. I won't go into details, but this was a pretty active lady who had just been on her first cruise in October. Anyway, with COVID, we were in for a rough ride. She tested negative but ended up in the hospital for two weeks, then rehab, back home, and back and forth again. This went on from April until June. On June 19, she ended back up in the ER, and on June 23, we said our final goodbyes.

My mom was my best friend, my biggest supporter (no matter how crazy the idea was), and I wasn't sure how I was going to go on.

*continued on page 22*



## 100 Miles for Mama

*continued from page 21*

A few days later, Jason, the race director for Yeti, put out a call for folks to “Call Their Shot” – basically meaning it was all or nothing. You finish in 24 hours or under, you get a special buckle; if you don’t make it, you are not guaranteed a buckle. I felt led to do this in my mom’s memory. My training had not fallen too far behind, and I had a great plan in place with more than 90 minutes to spare.

### 100 MILES TO GO

Fast forward to race day. Slept great the night before and felt awesome the morning of the race. Walked out the door to a pouring rain that would not stop for the next 12-plus hours. Still felt good despite the rain the first 20 miles or so. Had a great pace going and was on track. I stopped with my crew about 28 miles in and changed clothes, just to get soaked again right away.

About mile 45, I started having some severe GI issues, which I learned after the race many folks were having. No matter what I tried to switch up, nothing helped. The GI issues would be with me until the bitter end.

At mile 80 or so, my daughter and a good friend joined me on the trail to pace my last 20 miles. At this point, my hopes of a sub-24 were all but gone, and I was just hoping to finish before the 30-hour cutoff. The only thing – and I mean only thing – that kept me going was the fact that I was running for my mom. This was all for her. I needed to finish this race as a tribute to her and to the strong race she had fought the last several months of her life.



As I got closer to the finish line, I was crying for joy to be finishing for her but also inwardly a little upset at the prospects of no buckle.

A fellow runner, Andrew Hardyman, was waiting for me close to the finish line. He had already finished and done amazing! He wanted to let me know that he had contacted the race director prior to the race and told him that if I did not receive a buckle, he would give up his. Again, I cannot tell you how much I love this running family.

I made it to the finish line, got all my hugs, cried, drank some Fireball, and cried some more. My mom would have been proud, would have called me insane, but would have been so proud!

I then uttered those words I have said so many times in the past: “Never again, one and done!” No more time to write – I’m training for a 100-miler in April 2021. ■



Before and after: Kelly Harris at packet pick-up (left) and after completing her 100-mile run.



# SUPPORTING THEIR COMMUNITY

## Running with Rock

By Crystal Koch

**R**unning with Rock began about a month after COVID hit us hard in March, forcing everyone to stay inside and away from others. Anthony and Tara Clary believed their community needed a little extra help getting off the couch and outside exploring their city while getting healthy. Their group started with just five people and has grown to approximately 60 participants.

After Anthony's own pre-diabetic scare forced him to lose weight and clean up his diet, he began working out and running to also effectively manage stress. As a way to connect with others and impact his community, he began inviting others to run with him on Sundays. The rest is history!

Anthony and Tara aim to provide a positive running experience centered around camaraderie, fitness, and fun. Their purpose is to encourage all people of different paces and various backgrounds to get up and get moving – there's no such thing as a "runner's body." Tara was a track and field athlete in high school and has completed a half marathon distance; running has been a part of her life for a long time. Together they aspire to help their community run further away from obesity and heart disease and into a healthier lifestyle.

Their mission is to support the running community, whether it be helping members get a new pair of shoes or education on healthy eating habits. Last month, many members completed the Sports Backers Richmond Half Marathon, a first for almost all who participated.

The group meets at a different location every Sunday. The beginner run/walk is two miles and starts at 10 a.m. with a welcome message. Those attending introduce themselves, do some stretches, and then take a socially distanced group photo. After the beginner run, a longer intermediate-focused run begins at 11 a.m., again with a welcome message,



introductions, stretches, and a socially distanced group photo. The participants are friendly, and everybody is welcoming. They'll chat you up, and, most important, they cheer on everyone. The folks who finish first go back to get the last, and others will help cheer them across the "finish line." The atmosphere is electric, and you can't help but get sucked in to their excitement. ■

*Additional photos on the back cover. All photos by Jesse Peters and Richmond Sports Backers.*

# [ MERCHANT DISCOUNTS ]

If you would like to offer a discount to club members  
(and get free advertisement here), contact the club at  
**milesandminutes@rrrc.org**



## 10% Discount on Services

James River Physical Therapy  
9019 Forest Hill Ave.  
Richmond  
**330-0936**



## THE JUICE LAUNDRY RVA

WE ARE 100%  
ORGANIC | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE | DAIRY FREE | SOY FREE | PEANUT FREE | NON-GMO  
100% OF THE TIME

RRRC Members 10% Off Every Day!

Delicious Post-Ride  
Recovery Drinks

COLD-PRESSED JUICES | SUPERFOOD SMOOTHIES | VEGAN CHILI

WWW.THEJUICELAUNDRY.COM/MENU

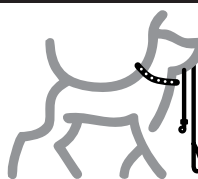


## 10% Off Merchandise

11341 W. Broad St.  
Short Pump Station  
**804-955-4801**

Richmond

(cannot be combined with other promotions)



## Dog Speed

**Crystal Koch**  
(804) 503-0530

We run your dogs so you don't have to.

**www.facebook.com/dogspeedllc**



**7SAMSON**  
High-Quality Christian Graphic Tees

## Free shipping for RRRC members

Based in Chesterfield County  
**www.7samson.com**



Nutrition & Fitness Services

\$10 coupon RRRC Members  
Body Fat Analysis, Sport Nutrition, Weight Management, Corporate Seminars  
Janice Shaheen, PT, CNC, CISSN  
Facebook Message contact JAS Nutrition & Fitness Services  
[janice@jasnutfit.com](mailto:janice@jasnutfit.com)  
804.840.8547



**My Muscle Mechanix - Massage Therapy Like No Other**  
**\$20 off of the first visit and 10% off all future visits**  
**for Road Runners members.**

3122 W Cary St, Suite 220 • Richmond, VA 23221  
11091 Air Park Rd • Ashland, VA 23005  
(804)358-2256 **www.MyMuscleMechanix.com**



**VIRGINIA**  
SPORTS MEDICINE  
& PHYSICAL THERAPY

## 10% Off Video Running Gait Analysis

Professional analysis with consultation to  
understand and improve your running.

Jane B. Cash, MSPT, DPT &  
Karen M. Myers, MS, PT

3413 Cox Road • Richmond, VA 23233  
**804-527-1460 • Fax 804-527-1463**



## 10% Discount on Shoes and Apparel

3002 West Cary Street • Richmond  
**353-tenK**



## Special offer to all RRRC Members!

\$400 Couple's Will  
Package (regularly \$450)

Includes Last Will & Testament, General Power of Attorney  
and Medical Power of Attorney

Call attorney Gail Holstrom at **(804) 592-0848**



ENDORPHIN FITNESS

Center Community Membership  
8910 Patterson Avenue  
Richmond  
**741-1599**

**\$15.00 OFF**  
Performance Testing

**\$10.00 OFF**  
Video Run Analysis

**10% OFF**  
Merchandise in Shop (excludes bikes)  
**\$10.00 per Month Training**



## \$40 OFF

Custom Foot Orthotics

Custom foot orthotics from an  
experienced podiatrist, done at  
your home, office, or local  
footwear store!

804-464-3299

**www.superiorfootsupport.com**

# [ GROUP RUNS ]

Name	Day of the Week	Time	Location	Pace	Contact
<b>Basch's Group</b>	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	4605 Monument Avenue	8:00 to 9:00	Ellie Basch, ellieruns@gmail.com, 804-873-5156
<b>Back of the Pack Trail Group</b>	Sundays	9:00 a.m.	Vary	12:00 to 16:00	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/201907430234622/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/201907430234622/</a>
<b>Black Girls Run</b>	Mondays	5:45 p.m.	Wells Fargo parking lot, White Oak Village Shopping Center	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/bgrichmond/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/bgrichmond/</a> blackgirlsrunva@gmail.com
	Tuesdays	6:45 p.m.	Great Shiplock Park	Various	
	Saturdays	8:00 a.m.	Parking lot next to Rockwood Park	Various	
	Sundays	2:30 p.m.	Parking lot next to Rockwood Park	Various	
<b>Black Men Run</b>	Sundays	8:00 a.m.	Fountain at Byrd Park Lake	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMRRichmond">https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMRRichmond</a>
<b>Bryan Park Group</b>	Saturdays	7:00 a.m.	Stir Crazy Café	8:00 to 12:00	Susan Deusebio skdeusebio@gmail.com
<b>City Stadium Runners</b>	Saturdays	7:45 a.m.	City Stadium	8:00 to 14:00	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/577195912350952">https://www.facebook.com/groups/577195912350952</a> citystadiumrunners@gmail.com
<b>Crossroads</b>	Wednesdays	6:00 p.m.	Crossroads Coffee	9:00 or faster	ysman75@yahoo.com
<b>Dog Pack</b>	Sundays	7:30 a.m.	Carytown Panera	8:30 to 14:30	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/1671581323100585">https://www.facebook.com/groups/1671581323100585</a>
<b>Fan Foxes</b>	Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	Fox Elementary School	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/fanfoxes">https://www.facebook.com/groups/fanfoxes</a>
<b>Fleet Feet Sports</b>	Tuesdays	6:00 p.m.	5600 Patterson Avenue	Various	<a href="http://www.fleetfeetrichmond.com">www.fleetfeetrichmond.com</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/fleetfeetsportsrichmond">https://www.facebook.com/fleetfeetsportsrichmond</a>
<b>Mary Munford Sunday Runners</b>	Sundays	7:30 a.m.	Mary Munford Elementary School	8:00 to 8:30	
<b>Midlothian ACAC</b>	Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	11621 Robious Road	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/MidloACACRun">https://www.facebook.com/groups/MidloACACRun</a>
<b>Midlo Mafia</b>	Daily	5:30 a.m. / 6:00 a.m.	Midlothian YMCA	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/429449713804077">https://www.facebook.com/groups/429449713804077</a>
<b>Morning Workout Group</b>	Daily	6:00 a.m.	Various	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MorningWorkoutGroup">https://www.facebook.com/MorningWorkoutGroup</a>
<b>Mountain Hearts Running Club</b>	Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	Tredegar parking lot	Various	<a href="http://www.strava.com/clubs/mountainhearts">www.strava.com/clubs/mountainhearts</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/mtnhearts">https://www.facebook.com/mtnhearts</a>
<b>Museum Run</b>	Thursdays	5:30 p.m.	Behind VMFA (on Sheppard St. between VMFA and Benedictine)	7:00 to 9:45	Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, (804) 651-5415, markiscool1@hotmail.com



# [ GROUP RUNS ]

Name	Day of the Week	Time	Location	Pace	Contact
<b>New Kent in Motion</b>	Saturdays	8:30 a.m.	New Kent Active Life Fitness Center	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ActiveLifeFitnessCenterRunning">https://www.facebook.com/ActiveLifeFitnessCenterRunning</a>
<b>One for the Road</b>	Wednesdays	6:00 p.m.	Various breweries	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/100890573593214">https://www.facebook.com/groups/100890573593214</a>
<b>Richmond Running and Social Meetup</b>	Mondays Wednesdays Thursdays Saturdays	6:30p.m. 6:30p.m. 6:30p.m. 8:30 a.m.	Libby Park Carytown Panera Retreat Hospital (ER side) Byrd Park VITA Course	Various	<a href="https://www.meetup.com/RVA-Running-Social-Meetup">https://www.meetup.com/RVA-Running-Social-Meetup</a>
<b>Ridgefield Runners</b>	Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	John Rolfe Commons Publix / YMCA	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/36838678999522">https://www.facebook.com/groups/36838678999522</a>
<b>RiVAh Runners</b>	Thursdays	6:00 p.m.	Dogwood Dell Carillon	6:30 to 8:30	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/TheRiVAhRunners">https://www.facebook.com/TheRiVAhRunners</a>
<b>Road Runner Running Store</b>	Mondays	7:00 p.m.	3002 W. Cary Street	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RoadRunnerRunningStore">https://www.facebook.com/RoadRunnerRunningStore</a>
<b>Rogue Runners</b>	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	Starbucks at Libbie and Grove	7:30 to 10:00	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/254849741268828">https://www.facebook.com/groups/254849741268828</a>
<b>Run Short Pump</b>	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	Einstein Bros. Bagels on Pump Road	7:00 to 10:00	Frank Finn, <a href="mailto:finn.frank@gmail.com">finn.frank@gmail.com</a>
<b>RVA Monthly Trail Run</b>	1st or 2nd Saturday or Sunday of each month	8:00 a.m.	Pump House Parking Lot Trailhead	Various	RVA Monthly Trail Run Facebook page Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, 804-651- 5415, <a href="mailto:markiscool1@hotmail.com">markiscool1@hotmail.com</a>
<b>RVA Stroller Runners</b>	Tuesdays, Thursdays	9:45 a.m.	Various	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/1597418347194024">https://www.facebook.com/groups/1597418347194024</a>
<b>Sandston Striders</b>	Saturdays	8:00 a.m.	Chicahominy Family YMCA	Various	George Talley, <a href="mailto:gc_talley@verizon.net">email gc_talley@verizon.net</a>
<b>Shady Grove Runners</b>	Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays	5:45 a.m.	Shady Grove YMCA	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/shadygroverunners">https://www.facebook.com/shadygroverunners</a>
<b>Sugar &amp; Twine Training Team</b>	Tuesdays, Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	2928 W. Cary Street	8:00 to 9:00	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/361699573878105">https://www.facebook.com/groups/361699573878105</a>
<b>Team Wednesday Night (TWN) Fan Run</b>	Wednesdays	6:15 p.m.	Monument and Boulevard from steps of First Baptist Church (don't park in church lot)	8:00 to 12:00	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/twnfanrun">https://www.facebook.com/twnfanrun</a> <a href="mailto:twn.fan.run@gmail.com">twn.fan.run@gmail.com</a>
<b>Tuesday Nite Trail Run</b>	Tuesdays	5:45 p.m.	Dogwood Dell parking lot, grassy field near dog park	9:30 or faster	Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, <a href="mailto:markiscool1@hotmail.com">markiscool1@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Tuesday Night Speed Group</b>	Tuesdays	6:00 p.m.	Midlothian Athletic Club	Various (speed workouts)	Jay, (803) 379-2686
<b>Winter Trail Group</b>	Saturdays	9:00 a.m.	North Bank Pump House Trail Head	Various	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/shamrocktraining">https://www.facebook.com/groups/shamrocktraining</a>



The Richmond Road Runners Club  
PO Box 8724 • Richmond, VA 23226



# Running with Rock

*Feature article on page 23. All photos by Jesse Peters and Richmond Sports Backers.*

