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THE  
**STARTING LINE**  
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

**421**

Get Ready for Track Season!



# Letter from the Editor

It was the Season of the Streaker. On the Tuesday before the Gate River Run a pre-race event was held at Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena. The media were there, dignitaries from JTC Running and Gate Petroleum were also in attendance, as was our mayor, Lenny Curry. Oh, and I was there, too, along with a bunch of fellow Streakers.

Incidentally, the Gate River Run historical shrine has always been housed in Riverplace, a building on the Southbank previously owned by Gate. Sometime ago Gate sold the building and so the historical shrine, of which the Hall of Fame is a part, had to find a new home. It has one now inside the Arena. Hence, the reason why this function took place where it did (in case you were wondering).

Gate River Run race director Doug Alred made a big deal about all us Streakers as one-by-one we were inducted into the GRR Hall of Fame. There are 41 of us and even though not all 41 were on hand that night it still took quite a while to go down the list. I'm not so sure that someone like me should be put in any sort of Hall before more deserving people get there. True, showing up for a race 40 times continuously is an accomplishment but I know of others who should have been recognized long before me. I showed up at the race all those years because it is such a magnificent event, one that every runner in town never wants to miss, not because I ever expected to get something out of it. I would have been there anyway.

Two Streakers never made the race this year. Mark Dzamko had a broken foot and Bill Longenecker ripped an Achilles tendon. As far as I know, all the other 39 finished the 15k. How many will come back next year and try to keep their streaks "alive" remains to be seen.

I am thinking of skipping next year's race to get the monkey off my back. There were times when I had no desire to run the race and only did so to keep my streak going. That's kind of a drag. I feel if I were to discontinue my streak then I could have the GRR back on my own terms. Then I could run the race because I wanted to run the race and not because I felt that I had to. Liberation? Maybe.

Of course, we will see if I go through with it. The GRR does seem to have an inextricable hold on me and maybe I will have an entirely different outlook later. In any case, I still love the race. I believe it is one of the most dramatic, scenic and magnificent courses in the world. I also believe

that the 15k distance is a great one for people to aspire to. It is long enough and it is hard enough. It is plenty for the average person. I wish that more people would test themselves and put full effort into a 15k rather than overdoing it in a marathon. Far too many people burn out that way. OK, so maybe that's just me, but still, it's my opinion and I am sticking to it.

Congratulations to everyone who completed this year's Gate River Run.

Track will soon be back. Ever since this club's first days we have organized track meets and supported the glorious sport of track & field whenever and however possible. This year is no different. JTC Running track meet series director, Coach Eric Frank, will be organizing meets during the months of May, June and July. Some of the meets will take place at our traditional venue, the Bolles School, but others will be run at Creekside High School in St. Johns County. Best of all, if you sign up online at [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com) you can do all the events you want free. That's right, our generous club foots the bill for these meets. Check our website to enter and for all the pertinent details.

It takes a lot to get the big boss man, President Larry Roberts, to open up, but I think I've done it with the latest installment of Returning the Favor. You won't want to miss his most intimate thoughts and feelings revealed in this issue.

Injuries are an ever-present danger to us all. I found myself limping around the Gate River Run course this year due to a bad left knee. Luckily, I had physical therapist Rob Coltman to turn to and he gave me some great specific stretches to enact a quick recovery. Rob's article in this newsletter is all about "ageing up" and the potential injuries that the joy of getting old can bring. I think you will like it. (The story, I mean, not the other bits.)

I chipped in with another of my Reflections of a River Run stories and a piece about another love of mine, skimpy short-shorts. My wife made me throw all of mine away and I must confess, I've never been the same since. Then again, I'm not the same as when I bought them so maybe it's a good thing.

# President's Letter

Well, it wasn't that much of a streak-- not compared to those who have done all forty Gate River Runs-- but it was my streak. And now it's over.

It began in 1993 during the "Storm of the Century". I ran my first Gate River Run bundled up from head to toe, stocking cap and gloves, but I did it! And I did it the next year, and the year after that- fifteen running years in a row. In 2008 I was warned by my orthopedic doctor at JOI to stop running or line up for back surgery. I took the advice to heart and walked the 2008 Gate River Run. It was a very different experience and a very competitive one (as those ladies walking a 14:55 pace quickly showed me) and I finished. I walked the next year and the year after that. As the walking section of the race grew bigger and bigger, with its own starting line, I really got into it. There is life as a Walker after years as a Runner. Until this year.

Having walked the Jacksonville Half Marathon in December at a very respectable pace of 15:37 over 13.1 miles, I was working towards a walking P.R. in this year's 40th Gate River Run. It was to be my 25th consecutive. But then it wasn't. In mid-February I succumbed to a violent case of Influenza Type A. I became so dehydrated that I ended up hospitalized for four days to stabilize my fluids and a zillion other critical numbers. But I had not lost hope of my 25th Gate. After all, looking back-- one year I completed the race with my arm in a post-surgery sling; another year on pain killers to dampen back pain.

But this flu was something else. The day I was released home from hospital I had trouble walking to our mail box and back. That's when it started to dawn on me. Two days later it was a struggle to walk a mile with the race two weeks away and I knew it was over.

So this year I worked the JTC Running booth at the Gate Expo without the worry of how

many hours I'd be on my feet before race day. I was the first one at the JTC Running hospitality tent Saturday morning, calm with no pre-race nerves (yes, serious walkers have them), dressed comfortably in jeans and a sweatshirt. It was a wonderful morning. I enjoyed watching the runners' pre-race preparations and post-race elation. But yes, I did look at those beautiful 40th Gate River Run medals with more than a touch of envy. When I got home I marked March 10, 2018 on my calendar. I'll be back!

I would like to thank the many, many Club members who volunteered their time to make the 40th Gate River Run a success. The people working our Expo Booth and Hospitality Tent are visible to us, but there were those behind the scene who drove elite runners from and back to the airport among other vital jobs who are just as appreciated. Their efforts are yet another reason for JTC Running members to be proud of their Club and its premier event, the Gate River Run.



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# New & Returning Members

Miranda	Abbas	Phil	Ellis	David	Kelley	Susan	Santos
Susan	Abraham	Jason	Evert	Edward	Kelly	Katie	Sawaya
Karen	Albert	Jennie	Fagan	Bob	King	David	Scott
Richard	Amell	Nathan	Ferguson	Mary Jane	Kohm	James	Scott
Bjorn	Anderson	Lina	Fichera	M J	Lafrance	Christine	Scrimge
Kara	Andreski	NiCole	Finch	Scott	Land	JoAnne	Seach
Cynthia	Angresano	Steven	Foppe	Gary	Ledman	Ryan	Sloan
Herb	Armstrong	Monica	Forbes	Kaitlin	Legg	Josh	Smith
Jennifer	Ashe	Kristina	Foster	Julie	Liszka	Martin	Smith
Samuel	Atwell	Lori	Frederick	Lolita	Lockett	Jayunell	Smith Cameron
Marcia	Baker	Michelle	Fredette	Justin	Loyd	John	Snowden
Rodger	Baldwin	Bob	Gailey	Lori	Magyar	Alfonso	Solano
Dan	Barrus	Mark	Gannon	Jeff	Marks	Carmelo	Sorita
Monte	Beane	Sonja	Gapinski	Thomas	McVey	Brittany	Sparks
Jennifer	Becker	Leigh	Gardner	Megan	Mello	Kelly	Stephens
John	Blanton	James	Garvin	Jerry	Miller	Lisa	Strickland
Karen	Bock-Losee	Fred R.	Gaudios	Tracy	Milligan	John	Stringfellow
Wendy	Bourgholtzer	Kathryn	Gay	Stephen	Miron	Cathy	Stupski
Bruce	Bradley	Hal	Gilreath	Carlos	Monsalue	Lisa	Swartz
Tom	Brandies	Thomas	Goins	Paige	Montooth	Rebecca	Taylor
Carina	Brillhart	Sue	Granger	Sharon	Moore	Joanie	Teofilo
Alex	Brucker	Deborah	Gray	Tiffany	Morales	Carol	Terre
Jan	Bullock	Emily	Gray	Gary	Myers	John	Terry
Catherine	Buskirk	Linda	Green	Brent	Narkiewicz	Bill	Thomas
April	Bynum	Shaina	Green	Chad	Nordstrom	Lashelda	Thompson
Deryle	Calhoun	Matthew	Hallenbeck	Cherie	Norman	Donna	Trumble
Austin	Campbell	Billy	Hart	Bob	Opkins	Pamela	Turbeville
Patrick	Carmody	Hannah	Hatcher	Jessica	Palmer	Jonathan	Vredenburg
Brandice	Choi	LeAnna	Hayward	Lori	Parent	MIchele	Weed
Roy F.	Clarke, Jr.	Lauren	Heard	Jesse	Parker	Charles	Weeden
Kari	Clement	Stacey	Hendry	Norman	Patton	Robert	Welch
Scott	Coble	Tammy	Henson	Raven	Pazmino	Karen	Wendzel
Debbie	Coffman	Carey	Hepler	Perry	Pelham	Anna	Williams
John	Coles	Paul	Hibel	Jill	Pennington	Michael	Williams
Terry	Collins	Hal	Higdon	Shaun	Phillips	Steve	Williams
Robert	Deal	Robert	Hogan	David	Pizzi	Ken	Wilson
Charles	DeLay	Bruce	Holmes	Jamie	Poindexter	Malcolm	Wooton
Trey	DeMoville	Amanda	Hooper	Ron	Porter	Curtiss	Young
Pushpe	Devi	George	Hoskins	Leigh	Powell		
Katherine	Diaz	Teresa	Howey	Jaelyn	Reyes		
Richard	Donahue	Erika	Imhoff	Alex	Riggins		
David	Donoho	Amy	Ingles	Susan	Roche		
Lanier	Drew	Elizabeth	Jimenez	Bryan	Rohlin		
Barb	Ebers	Ansa	Johnson	Michelle	Rosemeyer		
Ron	Elinoff	Laurie	Johnson	Bob	Ryan		
James	Elledge	Cindy	Kaneer	Angi	Saffle		

# Returning the Favor, President Larry Roberts

The recent 40th anniversary Gate River Run served as a reminder how far JTC Running has come and how long we have been around. In fact, the club began three years before the race, in 1975. It takes a lot to keep a club going, a lot of good people. One of our all-time best is our current president, Larry Roberts. His hard work and dedication are beyond question. He is a man who is definitely returning the favor.

## **Let's start from the beginning: How did you first get into running?**

I started running in Asia in the early '70s, around the neighborhoods in Singapore and Hong Kong, to stay in shape. My first running shoes were a pair of hand-me-down adidas that already had a lot of miles on them.

## **What led you into our club, JTC Running?**

When I moved to Jacksonville in '92, my apartment was near 1st Place Sports on Baymeadows and I ran the Pies when it was held at the store.

## **How long now have you been a club member?**

Since '93 when I ran my first Gate River Run.

## **How long were you a club board member?**

I was first elected to the Board of Directors in 2002, I believe.

## **When did you first become the president of JTC Running?**

I was first elected president in 2006.

## **In all the years that you have been involved in the club in one way or another, has the club changed very much?**

The Club has changed a lot! Perhaps the biggest and most important changes have come in the area of the Club's finances. Through the efforts of Carolyn McClanahan and Bonnie Brooks, JTC Running's accounting, investing and financial reporting have reached a level of excellence that all members can be proud of.

In addition, through the hard work of Mac Kelly, the Club's website, communications and membership and event management are state-of-the-art.

## **Do you think that local running has changed much?**

There have been a lot of changes. The scene has gone from maybe one 5k per weekend to two or even three. Where once getting a T-shirt with race entry was a big deal, now unless the medal weighs half a pound the race is shunned! On the plus side the advances in timing with chips printed on race bibs and results available instantly on apps is a great improvement over the manual processes of the '90s. Shoe technology, and unfortunately, prices, have risen to new heights.

## **What kind of future changes do you foresee for JTC Running and local running?**

JTC Running will continue to work on new ways to provide inexpensive running and track and field opportunities for all the youth of Jacksonville, regardless of where in town they live. The Club's donations for improvements in local running trails and parks will increase.

## **How proud are you of our club's events and what do you think we could do to improve them?**

I am extremely proud of the growth and fantastic participant experience of the Gate River Run. Through the efforts of Race Director Doug Alred and title sponsor Gate Petroleum the event just gets better and better. I am also proud of our two beach races and our ability to keep their numbers up year after year. We in Jacksonville are very fortunate to have such a wonderful beach, and running on it is an experience you just can't duplicate in very many places. Our Last Gasp cross country and Guana Trails races are also unique events in the community.

## **The people who do the lion's share of the club's work are, well, not exactly youngsters. Do you think JTC Running can survive without a new generation to**

## Returning the Favor, President Larry Roberts

### **continue all our work?**

The Club is fortunate to have the level of volunteerism that we do for putting on events and expos. I'm confident that we will be able to continue to attract Club members of all ages to support it.

### **Is the day of the volunteer coming to an end? Will we have to resort to paid employees?**

Absolutely not. The officers and Board members are all volunteer positions and will remain so.

### **How are you accepting your new life as a "walker" rather than a runner?**

I was disappointed at first to have to trade walking for running, but I ran for 30 years and walking now is not so bad. Staying active and healthy are the important things.

### **Here is your chance to express yourself. Got anything else you'd like to say?**

I want to thank the Board and all Club members for giving me the opportunity to serve JTC Running.

## Doing a Lap with Coach Eric Frank

Our track club has a long, distinguished history, and so do our track meets. We started track meets about the same time we began signing up members in 1975. We were lucky, we had Lamar Strother, a club pioneer and charter member, to put the meets together. Lamar did a great job and did so for 32 continuous years. When he retired as track meet director five years ago, we got lucky again. Coach Eric Frank stepped in and took over and our meets never missed a stride. Today you will find that Coach Frank and his team put on an expertly run track & field meet. Yes, field, too; almost no one organizes public track and even fewer do field events. The meets are set to start in May. Check [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com) for all the details.

### **How about if we start with you, Coach Frank. Who are you and what do you do? How did you become involved in running and our track meet series?**

I am a husband, father, high school teacher, ESE teacher, high school track and cross-country coach, and youth minister. About 5 years ago, Doug Alred asked if I was interested in working as the meet manager for the JTC Running track series, I thought it would be fun so I accepted. Five years later and I still love doing it.

### **You are the race director of our track meets. How are you enjoying it?**

Loving it. JTC Running is a great organization that does so much for our city and the excellent running community. I am very happy and proud to work for such a great organization.

### **Comments on the track series have been sensational, but what do you think can be done to improve it?**

I am always looking at changing and updating the series. The goal is to make the track series a fun family event. We encourage all ages to compete and have fun. This year we have pushed back the date of the first meet with the hope of increasing participation. I am always open to ideas and suggestions to improve the meets. Please let me know if you have any.

### **Last year we went from a one venue plan at our long-time place, The Bolles School, to a split venue adding Bartram Trail High School. How has that worked?**

Actually it was Creekside (the high school I work for). Bartram is our rival, lol. I thought it was excellent!!! Having a meet at another location just continues to spread the JTC Running brand and

# Doing a Lap with Coach Eric Frank

allows more to get involved.

## **Do high school students still enjoy and participate in track the way they used to, or is it a suffering sport in regards to attendance?**

I believe high school track and field is on the rise. I have seen numbers increase at the high school level and watching the younger AAU teams compete at our meets, I know that track and field will continue to be a premium sport in Jacksonville.

## **Have you heard any negative comments about our track meet series?**

I haven't. Most of the time I hear about the length of our meets. Coaches, athletes and spectators are very happy it's not an all-day event. A track meet that takes 3-4 hours from start to finish is something that our sport needs more of. No one likes an 8- to 10-hour track & field meet.

## **Do you need more help from our club members on track meet days?**

I would love the help. I think having the JTC community be a part of the meet is an excellent idea.

## **Do we need to advertise our track meets more?**

Yes. This year President of JTC Larry Roberts and I set a goal to iron out the dates earlier than before so we can have those dates ready for the Jacksonville community. I think we did a great job selecting dates and getting the word out. Those dates have all been posted on the JTC website.

## **Are you happy with the attendance?**

Yes, I am. Over the years we have seen attendance numbers grow. I would love to see that trend continue.

## **Is track a pertinent part of our club's repertoire, or are we, as the saying goes, "flogging a dead horse"?**

I believe it is very pertinent. Running is a great

lifelong activity. Our track & field meets help promote a healthy lifestyle and teach kids the importance of staying active. By providing these meets free of charge to the community, we are helping create a healthier lifestyle for all those involved.

Personally, I would like to thank you for all your good work with our track meet series. Because of you JTC Running's track program is flourishing. I think that track is an important part of our club's makeup. In fact, the T in our name stands for "track."

## **Is there anything that you would like to say – good or bad – to finish up?**

Thanks for the kind words. I love the running community in Jacksonville. It is a special group of people that I think other communities don't have. JTC is a really big part of that community and I am beyond grateful to be small part of it.

*Editor's note: Well, of course it is Creekside High School and not Bartram Trail. Silly me. I guess I got nailed. I found my undoing so amusing that I decided to leave it in (despite my embarrassment). Regardless if you go to Creekside or Bolles, you will enjoy a great track & field meet with lots of events. All free if you enter in advance at JTCRunning.com. Don't be shy; if you would like to volunteer to help out at a track meet just go to our website.*



# Your Running Shoes - Friend or Foe?

More than 8 out of 10 runners experience running pain or injury during their running career, sometimes chronic. This hasn't changed in 40 years. You would think, with all the advances in materials and shoe construction over the years that this would not be the case. But, sadly for those who choose running as their sport, it is. The reasons are varied, but I'll cover the most predominant, below.

Poor fit is among the most common causes of running pain. Close to 80% are wearing running shoes that are either too short, too narrow or the wrong shape for their feet. Your feet should be analyzed each time you buy new shoes. There are two constants in running – feet and shoes change. Chances are, you need a larger size. So don't beat up your salesperson for suggesting it. He or she is only the messenger ... and trying to help.

The wrong stability level for the runner's needs continues to be a major source of pain. What we are talking about here is alignment, including alignment of the ankle as well as the knee. When joints are aligned, aches and pains usually do not appear because the body is working properly. The body will always take the path of least resistance to maintain its center of gravity. This means that if one joint is out of alignment, the next one or more above it must counterbalance the original movement. It's just what the body does naturally. But repeat it too many times (as with running), and eventually, some structure of the body will suffer enough to become a nagging issue or serious problem.

Getting caught up in the latest fad is also a common source of running pain. One reason is that companies so badly want to be first-to-market with the latest "cutting edge" technology, that it takes precedence over testing and validating, not to mention common sense. Minimal shoes with little or no cushioning and forefoot running shoes are

now all but gone. And it will be interesting to see how the recent hyper-cushioned and hyper-bouncy footwear will continue to be received. I like to go back to nature – how do I feel and how does the body respond when running barefoot on grass or sand? It is only how we've done it for tens of thousands of years.

Finally, footwear is not immune to be a cause of running pain. The foot and body work best without shoes, on natural terrain. When shoes are added due to our hard, flat and unyielding modern surfaces, levers are created to which the body must adapt. Basically, levers cause mal-alignment, and can begin at heel contact and not end until toe-off. How much a running shoe manufacturer deals with reducing levers in its shoes is directly proportional to the number of problems that runners may or may not have with their shoes ... and how their shoes are accepted in the marketplace. Currently, and for the past number of years, the top three selling brands in specialty running have been #1, Brooks, #2, Asics, and #3, Saucony.

If you have running pain, are injured, or don't want to be, consider the above options, in that order. Some companies just spend much more time making a safer and more functional product. Also, when considering your equipment, keep two things in mind: All running shoes are not created equal; and, if you're in pain, you need a change. Happy and safe running ...





Hall of Fame reception



Jordan Hasay about to be passed by eventual winner Leonard Korir



Paul Chelimo's Olympic Silver Medal from 2016



Hall of Fame reception



JTC \$1,000 presentation to the GTM Reserve (Guana)



## Boone Park

The running community of Jacksonville is blessed with many training run courses, from a 2-mile loop of the bridges (with hills) to an 18-mile loop and beyond. Different groups of different sizes pound these different courses. At one time I was almost doing a different run every night of the week. But for me, it involved too much travel. One of the first training runs that I recall was from the YMCA to Boone Park and back, utilizing the tree-lined sidewalks of St Johns Avenue. This course is still used today by many individuals. Though I enjoyed my many bridge runs with Danny Weaver and the group as much as any, my most frequent runs were with one of the largest and smallest groups, Orange Park and Boone Park.

At one time, most of the running stores catered to training runs. We would meet at Jay Birmingham's Phidippides, Norm Fernee's Athlete's Foot store, and, of course, Doug Alred's 1st Place Sports, to name a few. Some runs no longer exist, but many others have taken their place, as shown on the back cover of "The Starting Line." I have run many different courses in the Jacksonville area, including the beaches (and several at Fernandina Beach). I have run the rails-to-trails course from West Jacksonville to Baldwin and back (I think Donna Deegan uses this course for some of her marathon training groups).

I guess the most popular training course, and the one I have done the most, is the 12-mile loop in Orange Park, though you can do other distances within the loop. This group usually consisted of about 30 or more. Early every Sunday morning the group would start out together but after 3 or 4 miles we would be in many smaller groups, or pairs, depending on the pace that one ran. Long runs have many advantages other than just building endurance. I believe when two people run together, alone, for long distances is when you truly learn about "the soul" of each other. The Orange Park run is one big loop that goes up Blanding Boulevard, across on Wells Road to the St. Johns River

and follows the river for a couple of miles. It then crosses the bridge (another hill) at Doctors Inlet and returns to Kingsley and goes back to Blanding. For longer runs, you can break off at the railroad crossing on Kingsley and go south along the running path adjacent to Doctors Inlet Drive. Orange Park may have the largest training group, but my favorite run was always at Boone Park.

Those who ran the Boone Park 7-mile loop always were a small group. I think it was Irene Herbertson who originally paved the way for this trail. She, Tania Woodrum and Robert Irvin all lived at Boone Park, a few doors apart from each other. But Tania's house had Boone Park as her back yard. The group would always park beside her house under a big oak tree, near the tennis courts, which was actually a parking area and part of Boone Park. On one side of this area, we had facilities offered by Tania. On the other side was the Boone Park clubhouse with its facilities, where I sometimes showered. The Boone Park run was always done late in the evening as it was getting dark. The course ran through Avondale and over the Ortega River Bridge utilizing part of the Ortega River Run course, as well as running around the Roosevelt Mall and along parts of St Johns Avenue. The small group that ran this course usually consisted of couples, including Doug and June Tillett, Randy and Becky Barnett and a few others. At Orange Park, I never knew everyone in the group and only saw all of them at the start. But at Boone Park everyone knew everyone and we all ran the whole course together at a slow pace. There was no "soul mating" here because everyone among the group talked with each other. To me, running out from Boone Park was always a delightful enjoyment. In the cool of the evening casually running past areas just beginning to light up for the night, as well as running through some dark areas, was a gratifying experience; and the route we took was virtually traffic free. Of course, I may be a little biased for other

## Boone Park

reasons, but Boone Park still remains my favorite training run from the past.

Over the years, one by one, the group began to decline until there was no one left. Doug Tillett may have been the last holdout trying to keep it alive, but to no avail. Today in Orange Park, runners still gather every Sunday morning to do their routine. But for the Boone Park group, there is only yesterday. In Boone Park, the blue jays still sing, the water stream still flows, and the mighty oaks still refresh the air. But the runners are no more. Today, they only exist as ghosts of the past yielding fond memories.

*Editor's note: It is quite amazing what a*

*race or even just a training can mean to a person. For one reason or another, it is always possible to trigger emotions and memories. Everett has done a fine job of "waxing nostalgic" in this piece. Do you have any sort of feelings about a person, a course, a race or a training run? If so, why not write it down and send it in? My email address is Bobfernee@aol.com*

## Reflections on (*yet another*) Gate River Run

For the 40th time I arrived at the Gate River Run 15k. When I wore a younger man's clothes – you know, skimpy split shorts – I knew it as the River Run 15,000 and it knew me as a dark brown-haired stud. Kind of a young George Clooney, only better.

Oh, how times have changed for both of us, the race and the stud. I took on the 1978 inaugural 15,000 meters as a 27-year-old competitor, eyes popping out of my head at the sight of 2,500 others about to embark on this exciting, unexperienced journey. This time, I felt overwhelmed with a crowd 10 times the one I encountered in April 1978. I could barely recognize the race, and I wonder if the race could recognize me, the gray-haired, unstudly fellow who was no longer out to conquer the course, the field, the clock or anything else, but just to finish.

As always, the massive spectacle of the GRR amazed me. "How do they put all this together?" I said to myself.

In 1978, they erected a finish chute of wooden stanchions and nylon cord, not much else. Today they place timing mats, a jumbotron monitor (so you can see yourself coming in),

and put a honking huge medal around your neck when you do (if they did that in 1978 you'd have thought you'd won the race). In the \$5 race of 1978 you got a T-shirt if you finished. Unlike the \$50 race of today where you get the moon before you even lace up your shoes. Five dollars to 50 dollars; hmm, another tenfold increase. Who said inflation is dead? Oh well, that's life, and if you expect more then be prepared to pay more.

Driving into the venue, it seemed the crowd was bigger than ever. The parking lots were bulging nearly as much as I was. But looks, as they say, can be deceiving. The number of finishers in this year's 15k were down by 215; 14,445 in 2016 compared to 14,230 in 2017. I am sure the vast majority of them were ahead of me.

There was a good excuse for that, and now I would like to bore you with my injury tale of woe (or feel free to skip on down). I began running in 1971 and from then until now I have never had a single problem with my knees. About six weeks before the River Run, I had a mysterious pain in the back of my left knee. I figured I had tweaked something and it would

## Reflections on (*yet another*) Gate River Run

go away. It didn't. In fact, it increased and then moved to the inside lower portion of my knee joint. The knee became so stiff and painful that I curtailed all my GRR training to save it for the big day. But on the Sunday before the race, I was unable to put my weight on my left leg; walking was nearly impossible. This prompted me to see a knee specialist at Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute. Though he could find no reason for the malady, he gave me a prescription for diclofenac sodium, a topical ointment and an oral pill version. Well, I don't know what was in the stuff but it was magic. In a couple of days, I might not have been 100%, but I felt so much better that I knew the 40th GRR was once again a "go." It would be devoid of any real training, it would be painful, slow and ugly, but I felt I could do it. Being a "Streaker" finishing the race this year was essential.

Still awake? I hate boring people with injury talk. You'll be happy to hear that's the end of that.

I found the way to my starting wave and before I knew it I was "off" and limping my way down Gator Bowl Boulevard. We soon passed the Maxwell House coffee plant on the right. I wonder how many people realize that Jacksonville's Maxwell House plant is the only one in the world? There were two, but when the company decided to downsize years ago, the other one, in Hoboken, New Jersey (birthplace of Francis Albert Sinatra), was closed. It was them or us and for once, Jacksonville kept a company. My friend Karie Ewing asked me how many people worked there because oddly enough, she had never met one. Nor have I, and I had no answer.

I jogged the first mile but decided to walk up the slight incline of the Main Street bridge. I was jogging when I crossed the first timing mat in front of the European Street Café. The spectators, as always, were into it. Doughnuts and beer were being offered, but not wanting to worsen my problems, I declined.

As we navigated through San Marco I observed some new construction. Some parts of town still experience investment apparently. Not like Arlington, where I recently sold a house. No investment there. Regency Square mall, once a local retailing landmark, will soon be a ghost town. The River Run course was designed to be a taste of Jacksonville, and good or bad, it is.

Mimosas were served along Hendricks Avenue. I was tempted but kept going. The Atlantic Boulevard overpass that we run underneath as we leave San Marco has increased substantially and is now more like a tunnel. It was dark and almost chilly, quite nice. The stretch along Atlantic in front of Bishop Kenny High School is as grueling and unenjoyable as ever. In many past River Runs that exposed portion has been sun blasted and baking hot. With temperatures in the 60s, I could be thankful for near perfect conditions and one less thing to worry about.

I decided to run all the bits in the course that I liked least and walk those I knew were attractive and enjoyable.

Between 5 and 6 miles I realized that my good leg was doing most of the work, compensating for the gimpy knee on the left side. The right leg was tightening up. When I wasn't focused on my gimpy gait I also noticed that I was surrounded by a crowd of young people, teenagers and twenty-somethings, and I wondered why they were going so slow. "They should all be way ahead of me, they must not be putting anything into it at all," I said to myself. Apparently, I was encountering the new generation of River Run runners. Participants rather than racers, out not to see how fast they could go or who they could beat but there for some other purpose. Quite unlike the runners of the 1970s and 1980s.

Trudging along as a semi-cripple, being passed by a guy wearing the Hart Bridge, another dressed as Elvis and a variety of other characters, I found it a humiliating experience. It was hard to accept, and if it wasn't for the monkey on my back known as "The Streak" I would never have

## Reflections on (*yet another*) Gate River Run

endured it. But the streak had to live – at least one more day.

At the foot of the entrance ramp to the Hart Bridge I was met by my support crew, wife Nancy and 12-year-old son, Norman. As always, it was a great relief to see them and to soak up their encouragement. Norman is named after my father, a fine runner who ran age records at the River Run 15,000 when he was 62 and 63 years old. No way could I match his exploits. They were very good finish times, too.

I hate the Hart Bridge, but I kind of looked forward to it because I knew it would be a good long walking “break.” Moving slowly along the bridge is an opportunity to take in the spectacular vista. Something was new this year, the construction of the amphitheater. Its white girders very visible beside EverBank Field. I was reminded of club member Gary Ledman’s words many years ago: “Another

reason for running the Gate River Run is that from atop the Hart Bridge you can see many of Jacksonville’s businesses – leaving town.” Those were dark days in the economic history of the Bold New City of the South.

The finish line is always a wonderful sight. The boisterous sound of the crowd. The thought of stopping, resting, and going to the JTC Running hospitality tent. Plus, the other thought: “Don’t look at that jumbotron screen above the finish line, you already know you look bad, don’t see it for yourself!” We didn’t have that in the old days, when I ran so much harder and faster but looked so much better at the end. How unfair.

It was a great Gate River Run. Will the 40th be my final? I told myself that it would be, but who knows what a year can bring.



**To All Gate River Run Volunteers**  
You Spectacular People Made the Event Great

# Never Mind the Whales, Save the Dolphins

I got an email from a writer at our local newspaper, the Florida Times-Union. His name was Clayton Freeman and he said he was writing a feature story about the Gate River Run and how it had changed since it began in 1978. He was looking for facts, just the facts (as Sgt. Joe Friday always said on the old TV show, *Dragnet*). Of course, I told him he had come to the right place. If he wanted history I was full of it (some say I'm full of something else, but that's beside the point).

He followed up with a phone call and was lucky that my social calendar was somewhat lean that day and he caught me at home. You'd think that I was an old geezer, stuck in the house, and had no one to talk to the way I unleashed my verbal diarrhea on him. I gave him enough info to write the River Run's version of Tolstoy's tome, *War and Peace*.

I must say, he did a fine job with the story and it appeared in the Sunday edition on March 5. Several people mentioned to me that they saw the article and noticed my name and contribution. I was happy to do it and was even happier that more deserving people such as Jay Birmingham and Rodney Smith got into the act also. Of course, you can't write a historical piece about the River Run 15,000 without the input of Buck Fannin, the first race director, and the current one, Doug Alred, and he quoted them, too. I was privileged to be in their company.

Freeman kind of veered away from his original concept and wrote more of a historical piece. I know how that is. Sometimes a story takes the writer off in a different direction. He forgot about all of those "changes," of which there are many. That's why I feel the need to talk about the most distinguishing and unmistakable icon of the 1970s. Yes, you guessed it: Dolphin shorts.

In the 1970s, the era of the "Running Boom," we believed in short shorts. Yes, those tiny nylon tricot shorts were more than just a fad



to us, they were crucial equipment. A grown man in a pair of short shorts was not a fellow to be laughed at, he was to be respected – he was a 1970s serious runner.

We weren't out there trying to look like Daisy Duke, we were convinced that shorter was better. Who needs all that extra fabric? It only adds weight, gets in the way, causes friction and is totally unnecessary. So, we went skimpy. We loved skimpy and turned our polyester-covered backs on "long" shorts. You know, the ones with a 3-inch inseam. King of the skimpy shorts were "Dolphins."

Dolphin shorts were the rage amongst runners. They had none of that nasty, unwanted, down-the-leg fabric. They were made of shimmery, lightweight, sometimes nearly transparent, nylon tricot; a fabric that stuck to the body and revealed everything when the sweat was dripping. In Florida, the sweat is always dripping (and the people are always looking). Dolphin shorts had no inner lining, or brief, as all of today's running shorts do, and with no appreciable inseam, going "commando" was not an option. Not unless a guy cared to spend a night in jail for indecent exposure.

Nylon tricot went out of style quickly, replaced by a more cotton-type polyester. The Dolphins came in all sorts of colors. The most memorable were the vertical stripes for which Dolphins became famous. Once they disappeared, a person could show he was the real deal by showing up at a race decked out in an old pair of Dolphins. Sure, he'd get a few

# Never Mind the Whales, Save the Dolphins

derisive laughs, but once he put power to the pavement he grabbed the trophy and got the last laugh.

Dolphin shorts made a resurgence when the restaurant chain Hooters came into being in 1983. Scantly clad “Hooters’ Girls” played up their physical attributes dressed provocatively in tiny orange Dolphin shorts. They made Dolphins look better than ever; the unforgettable shorts were back on the map.

Runners of the 1970s trained harder than they do today and had the finish times to prove it.

But ultimately, when future runners look in the old magazines and pages of race results, they may not even notice the fast times, they’ll just see those skimpy, little shorts. That’s OK, I think we all know who has the last laugh.

Addendum: Well, wouldn’t you know it, shortly after I wrote this Clayton Freeman wrote another piece for the TU and in it he highlighted the differences between 1978 and 2017. Skimpy shorts garnered a lot of space, as they should. Never mind, I’m not tossing this out, I’ll print it anyway.

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*Maggiano’s Little Italy Restaurant*

*Town Center*

*Register online at [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com)*



# Etiquette for Runners

In the interest of promoting an enjoyable running and racing experience for everyone, the Road Runners Club of America encourages good runners' etiquette. Whether running in a group or running alone, always follow the RRCA Safety Guidelines.

Whatever the pace, wherever the race, manners matter.

## Rules of the road and trails

- Run against traffic if running on the road. If running on the sidewalk or multi-use trails, travel on the right and pass on the left.
- Never run more than two abreast if you are running in a group. Don't be a road or trail hog.
- Don't run down the middle of the road or trail.
- If you are running an out-and-back route, don't just make a sudden u-turn at your turnaround point. Stop, step to the right to allow oncoming traffic the opportunity to pass. Ensure the road or trail is clear of oncoming traffic (runners, cyclists, in-line skaters, etc.) then make your u-turn. Making a sudden u-turn without looking over your shoulder is a good way to get hit.
- Alert pedestrians when you are passing them – don't assume they are aware of their surroundings. A simple "on your left" warning will suffice.
- Be alert on blind curves.
- Stop at stop signs and ensure oncoming traffic yields to you before proceeding across a road. Don't assume cars will stop if you are entering a cross walk.
- Respect private property along your route. Don't relieve yourself in the neighbor's bushes.
- Don't litter. If you can't find a trash can, carry your trash home.

## General Rules for Running in an Event

- FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE RACE OUTLINED ON THE RACE ENTRY FORM! All runners have a collective responsibility to keep the event safe. Races generally discourage running with dogs, headphones, cell phones, and jogging strollers.
  - Pre-register even if same day registration is offered. This will help ease the registration process for everyone involved.
  - Arrive early for the event, especially if you are picking up your number on race day. Check your registration information carefully, especially if you are racing for an award or prize money.
  - Use the facilities before the race start to lessen the need once on course, and help keep the facilities clean for the person in line after you.
  - Pin your race number on the front of your shirt/shorts. This is where it is most visible for photographers and race officials.
  - Line up according to how fast you plan to run or walk the event. Slower runners and walkers should move to the back of the race pack. Just because you arrived early does not mean you should be at the front of the starting line.
  - Pay attention to the pre-race instructions. This is NOT the time to be blaring your favorite song on your personal music device (which should be locked in your car or at home).
- ## Race Etiquette on Course
- If you drop something as the race starts, don't stop and pick it up! Wait until almost everyone has crossed the starting line; then retrieve it.
  - Don't drop clothing on the course after you warm-up. If you must shed layers of clothing, tie them around your waist or place them on the side of the road where no one will trip over them. If you drop it; don't expect to get it back.
  - Run or walk no more than two abreast.

# Etiquette for Runners

- Do not block runners coming up behind you by swerving needlessly back and forth across the course.
- If you are walking in a group, stay to the back of the pack and follow the two abreast rule.
- Bodily functions are a fact of life during a race. If you need to spit, blow your nose or throw-up, move to the side of the road and do it there. If nature calls, check for a port-a-potty, an open business, a kind neighbor along the course, or as a last resort, a discreet clump of bushes before relieving yourself.
- Move to the side if someone behind you says “excuse me” or “on your right/left”. The person behind you is giving you a heads up before passing. It’s proper race etiquette to let that person pass you without blocking their effort.
- If someone in front of you is wearing headphones, and they are blocking, gently touch their elbow or shoulder as you pass to alert them to your presence.
- If you need to tie your shoe or stop for any reason (phone call, nose blow, etc) move to the side of the road and step off the course.
- Pay attention to your surroundings. The course may or may not be closed to traffic. It is your responsibility to watch for oncoming traffic!
- Yield the right of way to all police and emergency vehicles. Yield the course to wheel chair athletes, you can change direction or stop more quickly than they can, especially on a downhill.
- Don’t cheat! Don’t cut the course or run with someone else’s number.
- Enjoy your race!

## Aid Station Etiquette

- When approaching an aid station to hydrate or re-fuel, move to the right and grab your fluid/nutritional needs from the volunteers or the aid tables then continue forward away from

the volunteers or aid table.

- If you need to stop at an aid station step to the right side of the road and proceed to the aid station, but do not block others from accessing the aid tables or volunteers handing out fluids.
- Throw your used cup to the right side away from the course as close to an aid station as possible. Drop your cup down by your waist as opposed to tossing it over your shoulder. The person behind you may not appreciate the shower if the cup is not empty.
- Say thank you to the volunteers manning the aid station.
- If you see someone in distress on the course, report their number to the aid station and try to recall the approximate mile maker where you saw them.

## Finish Line Etiquette

- If you neglected to leave your personal music device at home, now would be the most important time to remove your headphones.
- Follow the instructions of the race officials at the finish.
- If a friend or family member is running the last stretch with you and isn’t in the race, he/she should move off the course before the finish chute starts.
- Once you have crossed the finish line, keep moving forward until the end of the finish chute. Stay in finishing order if the event is not electronically timed so the finish line volunteers can remove the pull tags for scoring.
- If the event is electronically timed, be sure to return the timing tag/chip before leaving the finishers’ chute.
- Exit the chute and wait for friends or family in a central location.
- Enjoy the post-race refreshments, but remember it is not an all you can eat buffet for you and your family.

# Etiquette for Runners

- Stay around for the awards ceremony to cheer on the overall winners along with the age group winners. Running is one of the few sports where the participants get to mingle closely with the event winners.
- Be proud of your accomplishment!

## Award Winner Etiquette

- If you won an award, stay for the award ceremony. It is about you, after all.
- If you feel you deserved an award but your name was not announced, don't run on stage to debate the award with the announcer. The announcer usually just reads the information

given to them by the race officials. Find a race official and discuss the discrepancy with them. Remember that no event is perfect and people work hard to make them safe and enjoyable. Most events are staffed primarily by volunteers, but there is always a race director or race committee that is responsible for an event. If you have ideas for improving an event or concerns you would like to address, share them with the race director or race committee in a positive and productive manner.

The Starting Line / Doug Tillett

## Lucky Me



I was lucky enough to run the Gate River Run this year. Even though I ran the race, I also was a volunteer for the race. I had several different volunteer jobs. I worked in the JTC Running booth in the expo. I was also in charge of the Awards Tent next to the stage at the post-race. But my favorite volunteer job was driving elite athletes from the airport to the Hyatt before the race and then from the Hyatt back to the airport afterward.

We have a team of seven drivers who move the elite athletes around, coordinated by Bill Johnson and Richard Fannin who assign the

drivers to the athletes. After the race, early on Saturday afternoon, Jordan Hasay needed an airport ride and she was the only one going at that time. I was the lucky one who got to drive her to the airport. Jordan Hasay, you see, won the women's race at the Gate River Run this year.

I had heard that Jordan was a very charming, engaging, intelligent, and attractive person who personifies all the good qualities of our sport, and who can speak well extemporaneously, both one-on-one and in front of a TV camera. Sam Kouvaris told me this. I am here to testify that it is all true.

The twenty-minute ride from the Hyatt to the airport flew by. I found out that she is 25 years old and lives in Beaverton, Oregon, where she works and trains as a member of the Nike Oregon Project under famed coach Alberto Salazar. She went to college at the University of Oregon, but grew up in California. That was her destination from Jacksonville – going to visit her dad in California.

We talked about her Gate River Run a bit. I asked her when in the race she left the rest of the women's field behind and if she stayed

## Lucky Me

ahead of the first man for the Equalizer Bonus. She said that it was a tactical race for her, per Coach's instructions, so she was controlling the pace until she got to the Hart Bridge, which is where she was permitted to pick up her pace and leave all the other women behind. As a result of her controlled pace (5:18 average per mile), the first and second place men passed her, but she was very pleased to be leaving Jacksonville with the Women's Champion trophy and a very positive view of our fair city.

And just like that, in no time at all, we were at the airport. She helped me take a "selfie" of the two of us (which is the picture printed here) and gave me permission to write this little piece about our trip to the airport. What a wonderful runner and person she is! I'm so glad that Jordan Hasay came to Jacksonville to win the Gate River Run and that I got to be the one who drove her to her flight.

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## Weekly Training Runs

**Sunday 6:30 am, Mandarin:** Various locations and distance. Contact: Stef at stefgriff@aol.com or 268-1503

**Sunday 6:30 am, Atlantic Beach:** Atlantic Bl. & 1st Street. 5-10 miles. Contact: Linda White (C) 662-4928 whitelindab@bellsouth.net

**Sunday 6:30 am, Orange Park:** IHOP, Blanding Bl. 6-20 miles. Contact: John 264-8024 john powers@floridapowertrain.com

**Sunday 8:00 am, Jax Trails Group Run:** visit Jax Group Trail Running on Facebook

**Monday 5:00 pm, Bridges Run:** River City Brewing Co. 2-6 miles. Acosta & Main St. Bridges. Contact: Bill Krause billkrause615@gmail.com 904-860-9189

**Tuesday 5:45 am, San Marco:** Southside Methodist Church 5-6 miles. 7-8:30 pace, Contact: JC Pinto 655-1044

**Tuesday 6:00 pm, Baymeadows:** 1st Place Sports, Baymeadows Rd. 3-6 miles. All abilities, 731-3676

**Wednesday 5:30 am, Bolles School:** Track Interval Training, (JTC Running Members) Contact: JC Pinto, 655-1044

**Wednesday 5:30 pm, Bolles School:** Track Interval Training (JTC Running Members) Contact: Paul Smith, smithfccj@hotmail.com, 982-3730

**Wednesday 6:30 pm, Jax Beach:** 1st Place Sports various runs designed to improve your running. Contact: Simon 270-2221

**Wednesday 6:30 pm, San Marco:** 1st Place Sports/Aardwolf Brewery, 4 miles, includes bridges. Contact: 399-8880

**Thursday 6:00 pm, Town Center Mall:** 1st Place Sports, 3-6 miles. Contact: 620-9991

**Friday 5:40 am, Mandarin:** Beauclerc, Forest Circle, 7.5 miles. Contact: Stef at stefgriff@aol.com or 268-1503

**Disclaimer on Weekly Workout Sessions**  
The Wednesday morning and afternoon sessions at the Bolles School are sanctioned by JTC Running and open only to registered members. Information on all other sessions is provided as a courtesy only. JTC Running does not sanction, manage, or insure these workouts.

