

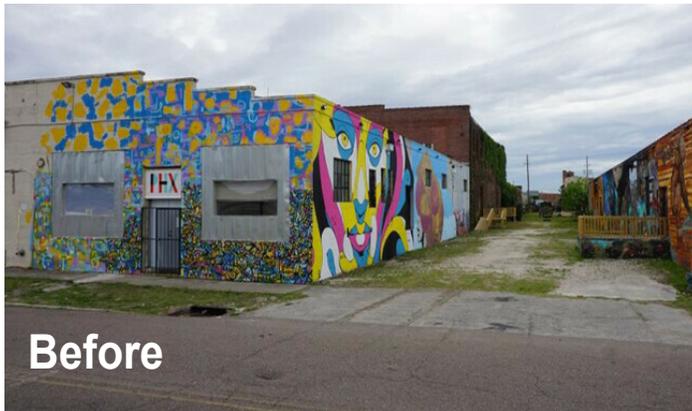
Connecting Communities through the Emerald Trail



**JTC Running Donates \$50,000 Towards
Construction of Emerald Trail S-Line Connector**



JTC Running Donates \$50,000 Towards Construction of Emerald Trail S-Line Connector



Before



After

Phoenix Arts District

The JTC Running Board of Directors has awarded Groundwork Jacksonville a \$50,000 grant to kickoff construction of the S-Line Connector 1.3-mile segment of the Emerald Trail. When completed by 2029, the entire 30-mile trail system will connect two colleges, 16 schools, and 21 parks in 14 historic neighborhoods to downtown, Hogans Creek, McCoys Creek, and the St. Johns River.

In 2018 JTC Running played a key role in getting the Emerald Trail project started by underwriting Jacksonville's Master Trails Plan with a first \$50,000 donation. The Plan was completed and adopted by Jacksonville's City Council and Groundwork Jacksonville was tasked with implementation.



Construction of the first segment of the Trail, from the Prime Osborn Convention center to the existing S-Line at Myrtle and Union Streets, will begin in October of this year.

The S-Line Connector segment includes the Andrew A Robinson Elementary and the Phoenix Arts District. It will pass under the 20th Street Expressway and connect to the existing Northern S-Line segment at 21st Street.

Completion of the S-Line Connector segment will enable runners, walkers, and cyclists to travel six miles between Evergreen Cemetery and the Brooklyn Neighborhood.

Shortly thereafter the Fuller Warren Shared Use Path will connect the Emerald Trail to San Marco. At that point it will be possible to park in the King Street Garage on the Southbank and run to Evergreen Cemetery, and beyond!



The Starting Line

President's Letter - Larry Roberts

Greetings!

I hope you are as excited as I am about the Emerald Trail S-Line Connector project on the cover of this issue. It seems the right moment, while so much of our lives has been interrupted, to recount a wonderful story of progress: the Emerald Trail and JTC Running's involvement in making it happen.

It was just over three years ago that Colin Moore (then with the City of Jacksonville now with the City of Neptune Beach) broached the idea of a Master Trails Plan for the city. It was at the celebration of Car-Free Week held at Intuition Brewing. His reasoning was persuasive-- with a master plan, developers can incorporate urban trails in construction plans. Potential donors, seeing a plan, can be convinced to give. A Master Plan would be the key first step in connecting Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods with dedicated paths for runners, walkers, and cyclists. Think of the Atlanta Beltway, he said.

During that Fall of 2017, the JTC Running Board of Directors reviewed presentations on the concept of a Master Trails Plan by Colin Moore and Amy Ingles, (then City Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator) and by Kay Ehas, CEO of Groundwork Jacksonville. Groundwork's non-profit charter to redevelop urban areas into parks and trails made it the natural champion of a Trail Master Plan.

In January of 2018, the Board awarded Groundwork \$50,000 of the \$88,000 needed for the PATH Foundation to create a Master Trail Plan. It was completed in a six-month process that included input from community groups and a steering committee on which the Club was represented. Over 300 citizens warmly received the plan at a public presentation, and it was formally adopted by Jacksonville's City Council.

An organized First Mile Walk was attended by 300 supporters of the Trail in April last year. Small groups were led on a guided tour of the route from Prime Osborn Convention Center to Engine 15 Brewing Company

on Myrtle Avenue. Detailed construction plans for that first segment are being finalized now and construction is set to begin this Fall. Funding is coming from the City of Jacksonville, local businesses such as VyStar, organizations like JTC Running, and individual donors. You can become a supporter of the Emerald Trail like I am. Go to GroundworkJacksonville.org for details.

Design of Segment 2, the Hogan Street Connector, will begin soon, and the design costs will be shared equally between Groundwork and the Downtown Investment Authority.

Groundwork is also managing the McCoys Creek Restoration Project from its headwaters in the

Lackawanna neighborhood to the St. Johns River, connecting to other Emerald Trail segments at Edison Street.

Design of the Southwest Connector, which will link the Fuller Warren Bridge Shared Use Path to the McCoys Creek, Riverside, and the Prime Osborn Convention Center is planned for

next year.

The S-Line Connector segment, shown on this page, has been moved up in priority to support development of the Phoenix Arts District. The JTC Running Board of Directors saw the value of joining the existing segments of the S-Line and approved the Club's most recent \$50,000 donation towards construction. Its completion will coincide with the opening of the Fuller Warren Path and enable trail users to go from San Marco all the way to Evergreen Cemetery (site of the Pumpkin and St. Patty's Day races in recent years).

All in all, this is a lot of progress in a relatively short period of time. It represents major steps forward for Jacksonville in urban trail development. We can all be proud of the pivotal role that JTC Running has and continues to play in making it happen.



Letter from the Editor - Bob Fernee

Oh, boy, Coronavirus, aka Covid-19, I was hoping it would be something we wouldn't have to talk about anymore but here we are and here it still is. It lingers on, like a bad case of plantar fasciitis (and we all know what that's like). Sadly, this issue is laden with our unwelcomed parasite. Let us all hope and pray that in the July/August issue the virus will be out of our pages and out of our lives. Yes, I know, it is a big hope, but miracles have been known to happen. We could use one.

It is in a runner's nature to be adaptable, resilient; just like when you must run around an injury. "My knees won't let me run hills, but I can still run long on a flat surface, so that's what I'll do." I can now introduce you to the newest version of racing in the Covid-19 era.

The Hastings area of North Florida has long been known for potatoes, cabbages and other veggies. The 10-year-old Spud Run is a classic, but like all the other races lately its scheduled date of May 9 was scrubbed (ha! Get it? Scrubbed like a potato. OK, I'll work on it. It's never good when you have to explain a joke, even a lame one). However, they have adjusted the event and announced a new date: May 30.

The race will now use a social-distancing staggered start. What? Right, let me try to explain. Yes, there are 16 separate races that the organizers refer to as "time trials." They begin at 6:30 AM with the final race at 10:15. Runners of each race will be sent off every 30 seconds and a maximum of 25 to 30 runners will start in each 15-minute time range. So, if you want to race at 8:15, you could, or, you could race at 9:45 – very convenient. Well, convenient for the runners, yes, maybe not so much for the volunteers who would normally work a 5k for about 50 minutes and then head

home. In this event it will take more like five hours.

The event comes with all the accoutrements; goody bag, t-shirt, finisher's medal in the shape of, what else? a potato, age group awards and post-race refreshments. Oh, and free spuds to all participants! Sign of the times: There is also an accompanying Virtual Race. Proceeds from the events will benefit the Putnam-St. Johns County Farm Bureau. "We operate to insure and better promote the profitability of our farmers," they say.

So, at least there is one race around here. It takes place at the Ascot Shooting Club, 447 East Cracker Swamp Road, East Palatka, 32134. The course is cross-country and dirt roads. Kudos to the Spud Run for thinking outside the spud. Ha! Once again, that was terrible, I'll work on it.

Now then, this issue is not entirely Corona-driven. We have a wonderful story written by club member Adriana Ibrahim. She is a child of the world. Born in Mexico but raised in Texas when she married, she ended up in Egypt. Now she is here with us. We are the lucky ones. I met her at the Gate River Run expo, she showed me photos of her running in the Egyptian desert, pyramids and all. I smelled a story and I asked her to write it and she did. I wasn't surprised that she was obliging; I was struck by her effervescent personality and by the fact that even though we had only just met I felt that I had known her forever. That type of person is rare, but she is certainly one of them. I know that you will enjoy reading about her experiences.

This issue follows that up with another Corona-less feature. We turn back the pages of history as we tell the tale of the Phidippides Running Center, Jacksonville's first specialty

Letter from the Editor - Bob Fernee

running store from 1978. It was quite a store and quite a time. I should know as I was there and a part of it. So were the other people who contributed magnificently to the tale. You're going to love it, or else I'm going to revoke your club membership. No, not really, I can't do that.

Once again, we crush Corona with a fine technical running article by our pal, Sean McCormack. All you ever wanted to know about hill running but were afraid to ask would be a good subtitle. Sean breaks it down so you will never have hill fear again. Good man, that Sean, and it is so wonderful to have his contributions in our newsletter. Did you know that he is available for personal coaching? Well, he is, so if you need help you know who to call. Need assistance reaching Sean? I can help you with that, email me at Bobfernee@aol.com.

Good news is that the great new urban running route, the Emerald Trail, continues apace. Our club is helping with this worthy endeavor. Soon, the first part of the trail will be a reality. Bad news is that we had to cave into the Corona crisis with a couple of stories about how running in this situation has affected us personally. Be not afraid, it is not all doom and gloom. It's readable. Meanwhile, keep safe, wash those hands, wear that mask, and look forward to better days.

One final thing; retail has taken a hard hit lately. We have a local running store that needs your support. Shop 1st Place Sports and keep running events going in our area. Ten percent discount to all active club members. It is the quintessential win-win.



New & Returning Members

Lisa	Adams	Randall	Hill
John	Baldwin	Kay	Campbell Jones
Jill	Benavides	Carolyn	McClanahan
Jeff	Bertram	Mary Clare	Muhl
Cindy	Bohn	Randy	Rolando
Jerry	Caito	Rick	Schart
Len	Ferman	Jeremiah	Sulewski
Scott Allan	Flanders	Travis	Vogt
Jay	Gardner	Jeremy	Wenzel
John	Gilman	Jeff	Wight
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JTC RUNNING BOARD

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lawhar17@comcast.net

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ebdj0515@comcast.net

Doug Alred
doug@1stplacesports.com

Jane Alred
jane@1stplacesports.com

Nicole Address
ndaddress@gmail.com

Christy Astorga
christy.astorga@gmail.com

James Bryant
jebjay@att.net

Dennis Harrison
info@dennisharrison.com

Susan Haag
susanlainhaag@yahoo.com

Angela Harris
jazqui01@me.com

Franz Lerch
Lerch01@comcast.net

Todd O'Donnell
toinab1964@yahoo.com

Ty Payne
tpayneea@att.net

Paul Smith
smithfccj@hotmail.com

Doug Tillett
douglastillett@icloud.com

Stuart Toomey
stuart@1stplacesports.com

Jim VanCleave
jimvanleave@comcast.net

PHIDIPPIDES - Jacksonville's First Running Specialty Store

Near the leading edge of the 1970's running boom, that led to the Jacksonville Track Club and the River Run 15,000 (now the GATE River Run), was a 28-year old running enthusiast. That guy was me, Jay Birmingham, from Ohio. This is the story of the Phidippides Running Center, a small store in Arlington, that from 1978 until 1981 was where serious runners went for running shoes, running advice, and running fun.

I came to Jacksonville with an extensive running background. As a college student, I joined the Ohio Valley Track Club, started a cross country program at Wilmington College, founded the Mid-Michigan Track Club in Lansing, started and coached a cross country program at Kenton (OH) High School, and helped organize the Ohio River Road Runners Club, serving as its first president. Between 1966 and 1973, I ran 12 marathons and competed in scores of track, cross country, and road running events.

By 1975, there was growing enthusiasm for starting a new running club. The Jacksonville Track Club was formed, and I served as its first secretary and spearheaded the creation of The Starting Line newsletter. We conducted monthly "fun runs" at Florida Junior College's south campus, initiated a mile run festival, and took over the Summer Beach Run.

However, finding good running shoes was problematic. There were a few sporting goods stores in Jacksonville, but none carried "real" running shoes for serious runners. Inspired by stories of Browning Ross, a US Olympian and publisher of Long Distance Log, who sold running shoes from the trunk of his car at

New England-area road races, I wondered if I could do the same here.

I contacted New Balance, a Boston-based shoe company. I received a call from its president, Jim Davis. He was flying to Miami on business but offered to meet me at the Jacksonville airport to discuss shoes. My plan was to buy a few dozen pairs at wholesale and sell them at races. Davis agreed to my small-potatoes plan, shipped me three cases of NB 305s, their best-seller, and for two years, I made enough money to keep myself in shoes and entry fee money for out-of-town races.

My real job was downtown, at Tompkins-Beckwith, a mechanical contracting firm. They hired me because I could type. For 4-1/2 years, I worked for T-B with the bonus that my office was 10 miles from my house in Arlington. I ran to work and back most days, making it easy to get in 100-mile weeks in preparation for marathons.

But in 1977, jobs were shrinking, and I had the choice of working in Iran or in a swamp in Louisiana. I decided to pursue the wild dream of starting a running store. In February 1978, Birmingham's Running Center was born, a tiny shop a half-mile from Regency Square Shopping Center. Three months later, I joined Jeff Galloway's group of more than 40 Phidippides Running Centers.

I rented a storefront in the Town and Country Shopping Center, a quarter mile east of the Matthews Bridge. We opened with \$7,000 of inventory (a pitiful amount of stock), but a lifeline to the Phidippides warehouse in Atlanta. A quick phone call and I could have nearly



PHIDIPPIDES - Jacksonville's First Running Specialty Store

anything for a customer in three days.

Episcopal High School hired me to coach its cross country and track teams that fall, plus teach science classes. So, I needed Rodney Smith and Bob Fernee to run the store in my absence. We hosted Wednesday night fun runs, held clinics for beginners, conducted races, and tried to serve the needs of Jacksonville's growing running community.

A few weeks prior to the inaugural River Run 15000, we held the Little River Run (7500 meters) in the nearby Clifton neighborhood. Arthur Lydiard, the famous coach from New Zealand, came for three clinics. Olympians Galloway and Ron Daws held court at Phidippides in brief visits. And we sold a few pairs of shoes, singlets, shorts, and t-shirts.

To say the business struggled would be an understatement. I had no business background, and it showed. The running boom led large department stores to carry Nike running shoes. At one point, JCPenney was selling Nike waffle trainers and Elite racing flats for less than I could buy them wholesale.

My lease expired in early 1980, I couldn't afford the rent increase, and for the final six months of Phidippides' existence, we tried to make a go of it at the Riverside YMCA. Alas, two burglaries wiped out much of our stock and we were done.

I like to believe that for a brief span of time, we served the running community well with sound advice, good equipment, and abundant enthusiasm for the sport of running. It was an exciting time to be a runner in Jacksonville.

Rodney Smith recalls those days: "The couple of years I worked at the Phidippides Running Center were not only very rewarding, but were also my best running years. Opening the store at 10 AM gave

ample time for a morning run and we usually ran again after closing at 6 PM. Two-a-days were essential for marathon training and Jay and I were running several marathons a year back then. We ate, drank, and slept running in those days. Jay was a great motivator, mentor, and advisor, not only for his employees but for every customer and running enthusiast who came into the store. We conducted Wednesday night training runs from three to seven miles for runners of varying abilities and these were extremely popular. I am still friends with many of the people I met during those "fun" runs of 40 years ago, including Tom Burr, Walt Allen and Mike Davis, to name a few.

With Jay's blessing, I started coaching track at Bolles High School and incorporated much of what I learned at the store into my coaching philosophy and it never let me down in my 35-year coaching career. Indeed, I have many fond memories of those days, selling New Balance shoes, explaining "heel-slippage" and Shoe Goo, and promoting running as a lifelong, healthy lifestyle. We indeed were the pioneers of the specialty running store phenomena."

Editor's note: Yes, it was a very, very, exciting time to be a runner around here and it was a lot of fun too. I had a boring job with Southern Bell at the time when Phidippides opened and I wanted to be a part of it. Fortunately, Jay gave me that opportunity and I went to work for him. I was in love with running, racing and everything to do with it. Jay gave me an introduction on running shoes and how to pass the information onto our customers.

It was a low-pressure, soft-sell approach. In truth, there was no real selling involved, everyone was so hot to buy the shoes and get out and run. It was more like, "do you have my size? I want to buy."

PHIDIPPIDES - Jacksonville's First Running Specialty Store

Having enough shoes to sell was the problem, not who was going to buy them.

Jay's favorite shoe model was the New Balance 320 and he ran in them exclusively. I remember when, in order to make way for a new rendition of the 320, New Balance sold the "old" model at a discount. These discounted shoes were sold in a pre-pack, meaning the buyer could not order exactly what he wanted, he had to take what was in the pre-pack. At this time New Balance was proud of its width-sizing and the company offered men's 320s from a 4A width to a 4E. No women's running shoes were made, women wore smaller men's shoes.

In the NB pre-pack were a lot of C-width shoes. These were the absolute hardest sizes to sell. In fact, I am convinced that God in his infinite wisdom never made a man with a C-width foot. People with truly narrow feet said the Cs "felt sloppy" and those with normal width feet complained they were "too tight." What a dilemma, I wonder what ever became of all those C-width 320s. Shortly afterward, New Balance cut their width offerings way back and produced women's shoes made on a women's last (foot shape).

If you were a local runner in the late 1970s and 1980s then it meant that you were a serious runner. You trained hard and long, and you raced at full throttle. When you went to a race you went there to run a fast time and to beat people. A lot of avid runners passed through the Phidippides door. One of them, I remember, was a chubby accountant named Doug Alred. New at the game, he was fired up to run in Jacksonville's new race, the 1978 River Run 15,000. I believe I sold him his first genuine pair of running shoes.

Ironically, I would one day be selling running shoes for

him, not to him, in his store, 1st Place Sports.

By the time I was employed at Phidippides I had been a runner for some six years or so. I thought I knew something about the sport. Not quite. When I watched, and heard, Jay selling shoes and talking running with the customers I was amazed at all he knew and what he said. I was sure he knew more about running and everything connected to it than anyone in the world. To this day, I still believe so. I have often said that his running knowledge is encyclopedic and it is.

Aside from creating Jacksonville's first running store, Jay founded the city's first marathon, its first ultra, a River Run tune up race called The Little River Run (7500-meters, half the length of the 15k), a race series called The Metric Road Race Series, and the almost-forgotten Phidippides Challenges. He was also a founding father of a fledgling running club known as The Jacksonville Track Club, later JTC Running.

In order to help runners train for upcoming marathons in 1976 Jay Birmingham organized and executed his first Metric Road Race Series. The series was staged on unused roads at the northern tip of University Blvd. A developer built the roads but then took decades before constructing homes on the site, so the quiet streets were perfect for a traffic-free running area. Jay's entry fees were low, extremely low. You could run any of the events for two dollars.

Races were held once a month and the distances were 15km, 20km, 25km, and 30km, beginning with the shortest distance first. There were mugs awarded for those who finished all four races, a trophy for the high points runner and ribbons to all finishers. Training runs? Look at these course records!

15km: David Lawson 1980, 52:30
Elfrieda Wyner 1980, 66:54

PHIDIPPIDES - Jacksonville's First Running Specialty Store

20km: John Rogerson 1980, 68:05

Cindy Kline 1979, 88:35

25km: Bruce Carpenter 1980, 1:23:20

Carol Newby and Cindy Kline 1979, 1:52:34

30km: David Lawson 1980, 1:47:47

Becky Motley 1980, 2:18:24

Jay said, "The Phidippides Challenges were created to encourage exceptional fitness."

There were four challenges and a custom embroidered patch was awarded to whoever finished a challenge. The four were: the Strength Challenge, 50 repetitions of the steepest hill on The Last Gasp cross-country course at Jacksonville University; the Stamina Challenge, 5-mile run through the Regency sand dunes (today they no longer exist); the Endurance Challenge, a 30-mile run; and the Persistence Challenge, 60 consecutive days of running, three miles minimum.

Longtime runner and club member, John Thrush takes us down memory lane.

"I was asked to write a small article on my Phidippides Challenge patches. This made me go back to my logbooks for information, which was interesting in itself. I had to go back to my 1979 log. I was surprised at the mileage we were all doing. The patches were established by Jay Birmingham who had a small running shop in Arlington and that became a magnet for a lot of runners.

In my case, I started by working on the 60-day challenge, which was designed to make you run at least three miles a day. This turned out to be the toughest one to earn. With all the running and racing it was easier to not run every day. My first attempt started on April 12, 1979. It was going well but I hurt

my hand after 42 days and missed two days. Started my second attempt on May 26, 1979 and completed the 60 days on July 24, 1979. I kept that streak up for 158 days which ended October 30, 1979. There were a lot of runners I knew always talking about the trouble they were having not missing days.

The next challenge for me was the Endurance Challenge, the 30-mile run. The day chosen was April 22, 1979. There were six of us who took on the challenge: Don White, Mike Boyle, Mike Lucas, John Johnson, Scott Owen and me. I don't remember much of the run except we started at Phidippides and ran around and into Ortega. I think we all stayed together, and it took about 4 ½ hours, which wasn't bad for the distance and we all survived.

The third challenge was the Strength Challenge. It was 50 repeats of the steep hill at JU. This is the same hill we run up at The Last Gasp cross-country race. It just made you proud if you were hard-headed enough to hold on. It was done on September 10, 1979. We ran from the store (in the Town & Country Plaza, about 4 miles away) to JU, did the repeats, then ran back to the store.

The last challenge was the Stamina Challenge. It was tough. You had to run a course around the sand dunes by Regency Square. There was a time requirement which was hard. The sand dunes were soft and energy sapping. On April 29, 1979, Rodney Smith, Steve (I forget his last name) and I did the course. We all succeeded that day.

The four challenges were all hard in their own way but doable. It came along at a good time for running in Jacksonville. Thanks to Jay for the challenges."

Everett Crum is another longtime runner and club member; he takes up the saga.

PHIDIPPIDES - Jacksonville's First Running Specialty Store

"In April of 1981, I completed this great series, The Phidippides Challenge, that Jay once offered, free of charge, to anyone up to accepting his challenge. He gave four patches, one for each of his four challenges. One was a 30-mile run from Arlington to the Roosevelt Mall and back, one was to run 60 days in a row, one was on the hill at JU, and one was to be able to keep up with Jay while running the sand dunes at Regency Square Mall. In my early days of running, this was a special treat for me to be able to run with Jay Birmingham and be able to complete his challenges. I am sure that all who participated in this series appreciated Jay's contribution to our running community. Just another example of his giving back."

Rodney Smith remembers The Phidippides Challenges vividly: "Only Jay could have conceived such diabolical challenges, but we loved earning those patches. They were not only great running goals to achieve but they got you in great shape. I managed each challenge at least three times with the 50 hill reps being the toughest and the 60 consecutive days of running the easiest, that is, for me."

The name Tom Burr will only mean something if you were around way back then. Built like a tank, Tom seemed an unlikely distance runner, but he was a good one, nonetheless. He moved out of town but was a fixture back in the day. Tom takes up the story.

"I did all four challenges. It gave me a lot of motivation and helped me become a better runner. The JU hill challenge was tough, having to run the hill 50 times without stopping. The sand dunes challenge made my legs feel like rubber. Thank goodness others were with me or I might have quit. The 30-mile run certainly taxed me to the limit. Interestingly, we took a wrong turn near Channel 4 and had to backtrack some. Ended up running about 31 miles that day.

Of all the challenges, running 60 days at a minimum of three miles a day was the toughest. Of course, had I not chosen to also do the other three challenges within that 60-day period it might have been better. The hardest part was having to run day 60 the day after my first marathon. I could barely walk, let alone run. Fortunately, my best friend, Mike Lucas, ran the three miles with me and helped pull me through."

Burr continued: "I have very fond memories of the Jacksonville Track Club and the friends I made. Being unable to run any more makes me sad at times. My daughter runs, and I can live vicariously through her exploits now."

"Rejoice, we conquer!" So, said (or so they say he said) the ancient Greek warrior/messenger Phidippides. He had run 25 miles from the Battle of Marathon to the city of Athens to give news that the Greek forces were victorious over the Persians. Then, according to legend, he dropped dead. The year was 490 BC. When the modern Olympic Games began in Athens in 1896, a long-distance race called the marathon was added to honor Phidippides.

In 1908, the Olympics were held in London, England. A 26-mile course was laid out from Windsor Castle to White City Stadium, ending in front of the royal box. It is said that Queen Alexandra had the starting line adjusted so that the littlest royals could view the race's start from their nursery window. The new distance measured 26.2-miles (26 miles, 385 yards, or, 42.195 kilometers). In 1921 the 26.2-mile distance was standardized.

Unknown to himself, Phidippides gave us a race and a running store. Oh, plus, of course, his life. No doubt, he is still kicking himself because by dying so soon he didn't even get a t-shirt out of it.

Solace to Solidarity

A runner was born in Egypt. To be precise, it was me, Adriana. I began a running journey of a lifetime while living in Cairo, Egypt. For me, my running story begins in the late fall of 2013 while living overseas and raising a family. After 34 years of living in Texas, I found myself learning how to run for the first time. I was invited to try running for fun by a Venezuelan friend of mine by the name of Ysabel. I was smitten by the majestic beauty of the Wadi Degla Protectorate desert valley that I encountered during the first early morning runs. It was a different desert environment than the one I found under the West Texas sun. I was used to desert landscapes, and I also enjoyed the quiet wilderness while I learned to pace my runs. You can say my love of running in the desert was born at this time.

While a handful of female expatriates enjoyed the solitude found in the desert canyon runs and enjoyed the deafening stillness of the desert valley, I was ready to add more experiences to my running repertoire. As the training with the female runners culminated at the end of March 2014 with the Madrid Rock N Rock 10km. I gained confidence after running the 10 km in Spain and I looked forward to joining the experienced runners outside the walls of the Wadi. It made me ask myself if I should push for something bigger. I heard so much about this group called the Maadi Runners, a group of a similar caliber to JTC Running, and I became determined to join them. Training for longer distances would be great, especially if all the runners were surrounding me with positivity from within them.

In the early fall of 2014, some parents and teachers at my children's international school mentioned that the Maadi Runners met every Friday morning at the front gates of the school exactly at 6:00 am.

I understood running with them would be possible by invitation only and that running group included female and male runners alike. Although I made it clear to my friends that I was not a good runner and would prefer to walk/run, I was assured that each member had different abilities and were led by an experienced coach that was used to recruiting neighborhood walkers and turning them into marathoners. I was intrigued. I asked my friend Nada, who was already a member, to ask the coach if I could join as a guest on any given Friday. The answer came back yes. The only caveat was that Maadi Runners ran in the bustling streets of Cairo, a stark change to the quietness of the canyons. I had so many questions. Did women



run in the streets? Will the locals bother the runners? Can you run with this much pollution? Can you run in the uneven streets and missing sidewalks? All these questions had the same answer. It was "Yes."

Early in my experience as a Maadi Runner I learned that this running group was special and possibly like no other in Cairo.

They were running enthusiasts who were supportive, kind, generous, knowledgeable, courteous, and very family oriented. The group is made up of locals and expatriates from all over the world with a yearly goal to train for a marathon hosted in a European country. Many of the Maadi Runners in Cairo train year-round for marathons in London, Berlin, New York and of course the very coveted Boston Marathon. I immediately immersed myself in the game and was coached by none other than Coach Mohsen Alasmoshi. He is the leader and in charge of my running group. He is the glue that keeps us all together no matter the distance. Coach Mohsen and many of the experienced runners always gave the generous support I needed. As a result, I

Solace to Solidarity

successfully completed my first official Geneva Half Marathon in 2014 and then my first ever marathon in Warsaw in 2015. Through the numerous Maadi Runner events that included weekly Friday morning potluck breakfasts, family picnics by the pyramids, to Gala-type fundraisers, or Christmas and New Year's Eve parties, we bonded as a running family. In solidarity, we ran together at almost 100 percent participation at the following annual events:

Sphinx Run - 19 Km from Maadi to Sphinx Gate in Giza

Pyramids Half Marathon at Giza Plateau

Sakkara to Dahshour Run - 22 km run in the Sakkara countryside to finish line at Dahshur's Red Pyramid

Zamalek Half Marathon

Cairo Runners Half Marathon

As my running experience developed, I also grew to be an intrinsic member of a team who essentially supported different Maadi runners who had independent running goals. As Maadi Runners, we took pride in supporting our fellow runners in solidarity and finishing some amazing races they set out to conquer on a personal level. These following races included running support for the visiting runners and Maadi Runners alike:

777 Marathon Challenge in 2015 - Marathon 5: Africa - 23rd January. Cairo

(Supported the Brits and Australians running through Cairo)

888 Triple Eight Quest in 2018 - (Maadi Runner, Robert Priest)

White Continent Marathon, Antarctica (Maadi Runner, Trevor Stevens)

Pharaonic Race - 100 km race under 10 hrs.

(Several Maadi Runners participate on a yearly basis)

Manchester to Liverpool 80km - (Maadi Runners, Peggy and Trevor Stevens)

Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon - (Various Maadi Runners participated)

Pyramids Marathon - (All of Maadi Runners participated)

Power Ride's Galala Challenge (cycling) - Cairo - Galala Climb -130 km (Various Maadi Runners participated)

Marathon de Sables - (Several Maadi Runners are currently registered)



What started with my single membership in the Maadi Runners Club flourished in subsequent years to include membership in five other running clubs. It was no coincidence that running fever had started to catch in Egypt. The membership in the running clubs included the Maadi Runners, Zamalek Early Risers, Cairo Runners, Tri-Wezzas Triathletes, and Maadi Athletes. No matter where I was on my running journey any of the five clubs had a familiar friendly approach to supporting me as an athlete. The support came from many experienced marathoners, coaches, and Iron Man athletes alike. The generous spirit and dedication to the running sport was present in all five. Every single group had something different to add to the sport. I gained knowledge, a running family, and lifelong friendships. These groups added value to the time I spent in Cairo. I gained confidence with every race, and my enthusiasm for the running sport keeps growing thanks to the shared experiences and solidarity of the runners I now call family, back in my second home in Egypt.

Prognostications: The Post-Corona Running World

Prognostications. Yes, prognostications. I could have used the word predictions, but I prefer the more erudite, prognostications. Guess I'm just more of a prognosticator than a predictor. Point is, Coronavirus. More specifically, our world in the post-Coronavirus scenario. What will it be like, will it change? If so, how? What will this new world mean to our world, the world of running? I've been known to rub on a crystal ball or two in my time, so here I go again.

A couple of years ago I saw an interview with the president of Mercedes. Surprisingly, he said he wasn't worried about the competition from BMW, Volkswagon, GM, or any other auto manufacturing company. He was worried, even threatened, by the likes of Uber and Lyft. He felt that in the future people wouldn't need their own cars so much. If the price of calling an Uber to take you to work was significantly less than driving your own vehicle then you wouldn't bother to own one. Anyone can see that the computerized technology in new cars has caused the prices of autos to go sky high, and those retails are not likely to stop. If it gets to the point where you can order an Uber, sit in the back seat while scanning your omnipresent cell phone, and let the driverless car take you where you want to go, why would you want to drive and fight traffic yourself? When it comes to weekend family trips you could always rent a car or call another Uber.

In a way, it is already happening. Reports show that today's teenage boys are not interested in cars, as we were when I grew up, they only care about technology. Cell phones and stuff. Supposedly, those boys aren't even interested

in sex! Jeez, the world's gone mad. When I was a teen that was all I thought about. Yes, I thought about it but never got any of it. Oh, man, why did I have to open that old wound? I'm going to skip this subject.

Furthermore, who is going to work? Technology allows a lot of people to stay home and do their jobs in their pajamas. Why travel to some far-flung office when you have an office next to your bedroom?

Coronavirus has illustrated that being housebound isn't so bad and that life and work can go on from the kitchen, or the backyard hammock. Why go out to a brick-and-mortar store when Amazon has it all, and they deliver, usually for free. So, offices and stores are on the way out. Are conventional restaurants next?

That was another point raised by the Mercedes man and his predictions (nope, he's not a prognosticator, that's just for me). He said that if anyone has a future business idea it had better all fit on a cell phone or that person better just forget it. Who would doubt it? We have been told for decades that computers would take over and we have witnessed it happening. COVID-19 has only sped up the inevitable.

"Alexa, do this virtual race for me. Five-minute pace, I want a trophy." Ah, finally, oxygen debt and lactic acid are a thing of the past.

Due to the dangers of COVID-19 my wife and I have stopped going to Publix. We order online and it is delivered to our doorstep within hours.

Prognostications: The Post-Corona Running World

It costs ten dollars a month; ten bucks! This changes everything, now I wonder if we will ever go back.

I digress, I often do. What of running? Local runners have said for years that we “don’t need all these little events.” Yet, other, new little events kept cropping up. Due to Corona, events throughout March and April were either cancelled, postponed or tossed into the wasteland known as the “virtual” race. I think I’d rather have COVID-19 than do one of those idiotic virtual things. Well, no, not really.

Almost certainly, if we only had the races hosted by the local running clubs and the true classics, such as, Matanzas 5k, Ortega River Run and the Run For The Pies, etc., we would have plenty. Will Corona change local running? I put on my investigative reporter’s hat to find out.

Sidewalks: Today’s sidewalks are about five feet wide. For “social-distancing” purposes (which may not disappear) we are told to stay six feet apart. You cannot do that on a five-foot wide sidewalk. Will future sidewalks be made eight feet wide so that we can stay six feet away from each other? You could stage a lot of small “races” on eight-foot wide sidewalks.

Handshakes: They are gone. No longer will a father have to teach his son how to pull off the perfect firm handshake and no longer will that insecure boy have to wonder if his is manly enough. Handshakes are now a bioweapon and to be avoided no matter what. Humanity is working on an acceptable replacement. So far, we have the elbow bump (not my style),

the head nod (well, that’s better), the yoga bow (not bad), the wave (simple, effective and can be done from a safe distance), and the hand-on-heart (that one I really like). There is also something called the “Wuhan shake” where you bump your shoes together (thanks a bunch, Wuhan, you never come up with anything good, do you?).

Like it or not, in the new world there will be new things taking the places of old ones. Going “handshake-free” shows that you are thoughtful of other people’s health. Just like wearing a face mask, which says, “yes, I care about my well-being, but I also care about yours.” Simple as that. Of course, one famous person commented that he would look “ridiculous” in a mask. How did he think he looked before?

The kids can’t go to class, so they are all at home doing online schoolwork and parents are going crazy. New twist to an old adage: “It takes a village to raise a child, but it takes a distillery to homeschool one.” Yes, parents have discovered daytime drinking. The booze companies are getting rich. No second guesses as to where all those personal stimulus checks were spent.

A friend of mine mused: “I don’t know what the world will be like when all of this is over. I think it might be a poorer world, but a better one.” Hmm, food for thought, and better would be a nice change. The best of the best: Go on youtube and type in Great Realization 2020-Tom Foolery. This clever bit (I wish it were mine) makes you wonder, and maybe even hope.

Prognostications: The Post-Corona Running World

At home is the new thing. After such a long quarantine will people get used to doing more and more inside and almost never go out? Commercial gyms will be in trouble as people buy more fitness equipment and do their workouts at home. Online videos might replace personal trainers. Cardio training could be done on a treadmill or one of those fancy Peloton cycling machines. The terminology is already changing, it is no longer a workout it is a “work-in.”

Burglaries are down. Too many people at home and too many witnesses. The men in masks (the other kind of masks) will have to find another way to rob. They will; cybercrime is all the rage and it is far more profitable. Pretty soon we will have to change all our annoying passwords almost daily.

But enough about them, what about me? Since I have been retired now for over five years, I can't tell much difference in my life today and my pre-Corona one. I was already a “cranky old shut-in,” as comedian Jonathan Winters used to say. In fact, my running has increased. I think I look forward to my daily run more now because it is the only time when I go outside.

For over 40 years, Doug Alred, owner of 1st Place Sports and North Florida's busiest race director, has organized race after race, including JTC Running's Gate River Run. For the first time, he now finds himself with nothing to do. One of his oldest and most-popular ones, The Run For The Pies 5k, scheduled for June 13 has been cancelled. It would have been the final event of the Jacksonville Grand Prix.

Alred said in an email: “It has been a very strange couple of months. I am afraid that the crisis is far from over. Our only chance to getting back to putting on races this summer is the pressure to have attendance at pro football games. I was hoping that we would be able to have The Run For The Pies as scheduled, but that is not going to happen. There may be a slight chance for the Celebration Run (July 4th), but it is probably slim. Vestcor has already moved the Bridge Run to next spring so maybe Tour de Pain will be our first event back if the government gives in to pro football pressure.”

He continued: “I think attendance will be thin when we first start back. I truly believe that our only hope for the return of running events is finding a vaccine. It is hard to believe that we may not have any more events this year, but I feel it is a strong possibility.”

Bill Krause can't get enough of running, so he belongs to two clubs, JTC Running and the Florida Striders Track Club, for whom he serves as treasurer. He also is the race director of The Run To The Sun. I reached out to him for a Coronavirus-inspired interview.

Bob Fernee: In what way has the Corona scare and the self-quarantine affected your running habits?

Bill Krause: (Due to injury) I don't run anymore. Right now, I walk A LOT and do A LOT of yard work. I have walked every five-mile route in my neighborhood, more than a few times. I think I'm going a little buggy. Also, I found myself very busy working on The Run To The Sun, after we had to change it to the virtual route. I thought it would be easy; no

Prognostications: The Post-Corona Running World

setting up, don't have to recruit volunteers, no expense for timing, police, food, water, etc. For the first time, I didn't care about the weather forecast. Heck of a way for me to go out as race director, huh? This was my tenth time, and if I signed up for any more, I think my wife, Annie, would shoot me.

BF: Were there any races/events, local or otherwise, that you were looking forward to that were cancelled or postponed due to Corona?

BK: The RTTS going virtual proved to be a challenge. Lots of advertising, but still only got about half of what we normally do. People from NY, MD, CA, WA, TX, TN, NC, SC, etc. signed up, but I was disappointed by the low turnout locally. Runners here want to race, and this race was no longer a Grand Prix event. If you want to put a plug in here for JTC Running, Larry Roberts couldn't have been more helpful! Even did a \$200 Facebook post. It definitely helped some.

BF: I suppose you have been at home during much of the last couple of months, are you enjoying it or is it making you insane?

BK: I keep hearing voices ... Mom, is that you? You died several years ago.

BF: Do you think that the local racing scene will be the same or worse after the virus scare?

BK: I talked to Stuart (Toomey) today. He said it is looking grim. They were hoping to have live racing again on the 4th of July, but now he isn't sure. Said that even if they open things back up, it will take a while for people to feel comfortable in large groups again, especially when you are sweating. I think it will come back, but it will take a while.

BF: When all of this is over, what are you looking forward to doing the most?

BK: Getting a haircut and having a beer with you!

BF: Anything else?

BK: Stay safe, drink beer, and take care of yourself and others my friend.

BF: Drink beer? Did he say, "drink beer?" OK, I will. Seriously though, I believe his last line says it all.



How COVID-19 Has Affected My Running



Editor's note: I asked our pal, and former JTC Running president, Doug Tillett to write a little something for inclusion to my Coronavirus story and he went hog wild. I guess that is what happens to a self-quarantined man. Rather than a couple of paragraphs he gave me his version of War and Peace. He did a really great job and I did not want to water it down or cut it in any way, so I think it best to print his words in their entirety. Thanks, Doug.

I am glad to report that I have been running more consistently, practically every day, even though we have been under a "stay at home" order. Fortunately, even from the very beginning, they said it was safe to go out running but to maintain social distancing. No problem! I live in Riverside, the best area of town for running. There is plenty of room on the streets and sidewalks and on the trails nearby in Boone Park, for us to run without getting too close to others. I'm lucky that I have a running partner, who is my wife, Tanya, and she helps remind me that we need to maneuver out of the way of oncoming pedestrians, so we occasionally end up off the pavement and on

the grass, briefly, so that's different than before, when we didn't worry about passing people on the same sidewalk.

It happens that I had an injury, Plantar Fasciitis, in February, and I had to stop running for six weeks or so because it hurt so bad (so bad!!) that I couldn't run anymore. I was lucky and the ol' plantar got better and I was able to start running again, which was at the same time that the quarantine was called. I went from not running at all due to foot pain before "the thing" and instead began running every day after the quarantine was called. How fortunate! As runners, we just step outside and do it. And since we have been inside the house more than usual, we have been especially enjoying the time we spend outside running.

Even though I get to run every day, I miss all the running events that used to abound all over town, especially the JTC Running events, since this is my club. We were lucky, incredibly lucky, that the Gate River Run was held the weekend before every other event everywhere was cancelled. It's fun to go to the races and see everybody and pick up the pace, but we haven't been able to do that and I'm not sure how long it will be before we will be safe running so closely to each other again. I miss the JTC Running Track Meets – we have had to cancel three of them, but we still hope that maybe we will be able to stage a couple, or maybe only one. We are missing the National Running Day event that benefits Marathon High, the JTCR Track Workouts at Bolles, and the Awards Banquet. The Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta on the 4th of July has been moved

How COVID-19 Has Affected My Running

to Thanksgiving Day, so I cannot make it this year. And who knows about the Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run in August or the Emerald Trail 5K in September? Will we be able to have races by then?

I am not an “every weekend” racer but I think it will be nice when events resume. I will probably even pay the money and run a race. I think the number of participants in races will be a bit low at first and that there will be fewer races for a few months. That might even be good, to have fewer races, and perhaps reinvigorated races in their place. I am looking forward to going

out with my running pals and chatting as we traverse along the roads in training and then not talking as we race one another.

I am so happy, and so awfully glad, that I have been able to run almost every day during the shutdown. I have an irrational hope that maybe my good fitness level from running will somehow protect me from Covid-19 and keep me from catching it, or if I do get it, that it won't be as bad on me, because I'm a runner, after all. I have that good wish for all of us runners, that our running is keeping us well and keeping us happy too.

Stay Out of the Slipstream

If you are like me, then you feel that running makes you fitter and healthier and if Mr. Corona V. comes calling you can fight him off. I hope we are right. It does make sense, Darwin said that the strong will survive. However, a study from Belgium titled, Outdoor Activities Require Stricter Social Distancing, says we need to be careful and not so smug. The research comes from KU Leuven and Eindhoven University of Technology.

Basically, they are talking about the slipstream. For example, when you are running in JTC Running's Winter Beach Run and there is a formidable head wind, naturally, you craftily sneak behind some big guy and “draft” off him. He breaks the wind and you get the benefit – an easier run. Same with cyclists, they love to let another biker break the wind and so they have an easier ride. Smart tactic, yes, but not with Coronavirus around.

Study coordinator, Bert Blocken said: “When you are moving, running, walking, cycling, you are actually creating an area behind you that is often

called a slipstream or a wake.”

Blocken continued: “When people speak, exhale, cough or sneeze they generate droplets, and while the largest droplets tend to fall to the ground first, the smaller ones can remain in the air a bit longer, so it is important that a person who is behind another does not walk into this cloud of droplets.”

This is the dreaded slipstream, and they say the best thing to do is to not run or walk directly behind someone else but to go beside them. Think horizontal not lateral. Or you might say, longitudinally rather than latitudinally, if you are the scientific type. One also must consider perspiration and where it can fly. Then there is also the direction of the wind or even a light breeze. Yes, and we always thought that sweating was a good thing. Oh, man, running alone never looked so good.

Now I can say: “I have running partners, lots of them, I just don't want them around me while I'm running. I can't afford their slipstreams.”

Stay Out of the Slipstream

There you have it, practicing social distancing at six feet away might still not be enough. When you are outside running, walking, or cycling be aware

of the slipstream and remember that six feet is not enough. Do not run behind, run beside and be at the very least six feet away.

The Starting Line / Written by Sean McCormack

It's All Downhill from Here!

This past Monday, (at the time of this writing) was supposed to be the running of the Boston Marathon. Growing up in Boston and living on the course in Framingham, Patriot's Day was always a special holiday. Anyway, as I thought about the world's greatest marathon, it reminded me of the challenging course and how smart you had to run to navigate the hills successfully and to finish strong. Yes, the hills started around mile 15, with the three Newton Lower Falls hills and finishing around mile 20-21 with the famous "Heartbreak Hill."

Of course, when we ponder these hills, we naturally default to thinking about running uphill, as we must work harder and concentrate on maintaining pace as much as we can. However, rarely do we think about the other side of cresting these beauties...and that is the downhill that gives us that much needed breather to gather ourselves and recover.

So, why you may ask, am I talking about running hills here in Northeast Florida? Well, we are the home of the nation's 15k National Championship, and I can't think of a more challenging uphill mile than the one to the top of the Hart Bridge, and the corresponding final mile, that truly is "It's All Downhill from Here." If you read on you will learn how you can shave a significant amount of time, most significantly in the last downhill mile.

When I was running my best, I looked forward to the uphills and dreaded the downhills! How is that possible? you may ask. Well, as a strength runner, I excelled on the uphill portions. I could power myself, go to my upper body and usually have an advantage. On the flip side, once I crested a hill, the downhills were not my friend. At 6 feet and 152lbs, I was big for a distance runner. My natural reaction was to lean back and put the brakes on somewhat, as I was afraid that I would lose control. This generally meant that competition I may have gapped on an uphill, soon was passing me back on the downslope. It really wasn't until well into my racing career that I received good coaching and how to dramatically improve my downhill running. So, before I move into the tips to improve your performance, let's briefly review the physiology so this will better frame the conversation.

First, muscles contract in two ways. When muscles shorten, they concentrically contract, and when muscles lengthen, that's eccentric contraction. Now, I'm not going much deeper than this, but the important point is when you run downhill, your lower compartment, particularly your quads will be contracting eccentrically. And this can lead to some severe pounding and stress in these tissues, which is much more stressful on the body than running

It's All Downhill from Here!

up a hill. However, with proper form and technique, the stress can be minimized, while at the same time the speed down the hill can be dramatically improved. And here is the real benefit...with far less effort on your part!

Going back to the Boston Marathon, you could always tell who ran Boston, as they usually were in significant stiffness and discomfort particularly walking downstairs. Why? Simple... the first 13 miles are considerably downhill on average, followed by 6-7 miles of climbing up hills, and then finishing the last 10k back down to the finish. The course puts incredible stress on the body, particularly the quadriceps from eccentrically contracting downhill. This is medically called Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness or DOMS, and because of this pounding, small tears develop in the tissues, which results in significant soreness for about a week.

So, without further ado, here are the techniques you can practice and employ to improve your downhill speed, reduce the degree of eccentric contractions, and do it with less effort.

1. Don't lean back! - Instead lean into the slope from your hips (not your shoulders) so your hips are perpendicular to the slope. CAUTION...this takes practice as you will begin to feel a little out of control until you adjust to the feeling. But don't worry...you are already traveling faster with less effort. In fact, it takes much more effort to "put the brakes on" and lean back than it does to lean forward into the slope from the hips.

2. Increase your leg cadence - Pretend your feet are running on coals. This quicker cadence

will help push your hips forward and keeping your feet under you instead of out in front of you. Much easier to engage your core and truly relax.

3. Look down the hill - look at your feet or just in front of you as this will hinder your ability to push your hips forward. This may work uphill but not downhill. When you look far down the hill you can relax, let yourself go, and maintain the form that allows you to go faster.

4. Use your arms for balance – Unlike running uphill you do not need to go to the upper body and pump your arms. Instead, as you accelerate using the above-mentioned techniques, you should use your arms to help you balance and stay on the proper plane with your hips to the slope. They may, and probably should, come out wider from your body to assist with this balance play.

In summary, find a bridge or somewhere where you can practice these techniques so you can adjust to this new feeling. And believe me...it will be different! But once you do master these techniques, you will be traveling so much faster with less stress on your body, and a fraction of the effort.

Editor's note: Even though the Gate River Run and its mountainous Hart Bridge are behind us for a while, we still have other races that include some challenging hills (bridges). Furthermore, if you travel out of town to attend a race you are almost certain to encounter inclines. Sean's advice is critical when you do. So, keep this article for future reference. You will be glad you did.

COVID-19 Complications

We have all been affected in a profound way by COVID-19. Being runners, triathletes, race/team sponsors, race directors, and also small business owners of a PT/healthcare practice, we have seen multiple sides of this. Though we have continued to work as an essential business, even with the utilization of telehealth PT, our patient volume has significantly decreased, as many patients became no longer comfortable with being in public places in general, let alone coming into our practice. The orthopedic physicians that refer to us for PT after elective procedures, were no longer performing them, so these patients weren't coming to us as well. The concerns of not being able to keep our staff in place, as well as not being able to put food on the table at home has been very real for us. We are fortunate and grateful that things are starting to return to a more normal pace for us, but we know that we still have a long way to go, and that this is not true for so many. On the other side of this, the extended family time that we have had has been a wonderful thing. My family has made a pact to continue some of the things that we have been doing together once things get busy again.

We have not only faced not being able to race, but also not being able to set up a table in support of an event, hold group workouts with the groups that we affiliate with, and we have had to postpone our own race.

We were looking forward to our triathlon being the local triathlon 'season-opener' as it was in early May. We were also looking forward to racing in/supporting multiple 1st Place Sports events as usual, as well as doing our usual group events with the teams that we sponsor.

I have no science to back this up, but I feel that

runners, and endurance athletes in general, seem to fall into two camps right now. The first camp is running and training more, because there is more time to do it and fewer distractions, even though there really isn't a race on the horizon. Maybe even a little too much. They have signed up for every virtual event possible, just to pass the time. The second camp that seems to be present, is the group that has lost some motivation and are either training less, or very little, because there is nothing to shoot for.

I have personally not reduced my own running volume. Mine has actually increased as I am still unable to swim, but running is a little different these days, as there are far more folks on the sidewalk now, and concerns of social distancing force all of us to avoid each other in pretty exaggerated ways compared to just a few months ago.

I think what we are most looking forward to is a return to business as usual with our patient care, the events that we support, and gathering with folks in the community. We are really looking forward to having our race in September.

Although I truly feel that we will return to having large events, etc. I think that the local racing scene, as well as the national scene, will be changed at least initially. I think that folks may be much more concerned with standing in a start corral with a bunch of people, making sure post-race food and in-event nutrition/hydration is provided in a sanitary way, and may not hang around after the event as long. However, I have confidence that we will adapt and learn from these unprecedented times, and after some time, we be back to doing all the things we used to do.

SECRETARIAT - This View of Sport

Since this year's Belmont Stakes, the third jewel of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown has been moved to the fall, we give you an excerpt from *Olympic Hopefuls*, a novel by Jay Birmingham

In her second Olympic appearance in 1992, Lynn Jennings of the USA won the bronze medal in the 10,000-meter run. She ran an American Record that day in Barcelona, 31:19.89.

Fresh out of college in 1973, I watched Secretariat, the triple crown racehorse, dominate the Belmont Stakes by an amazing 31 lengths. The equine athlete established a track record that still stands --2:24. His performance was magnificent.

The other horses in the race were galloping all-out, but Secretariat just pulled farther and farther away. Remembering that afternoon raises the hair on my arms.

Diana Bailey raised the hair on my arms again last night. The diminutive long-distance runner from California, Notre Dame, and currently the mountains of Colorado, raced 10,000 meters at the Olympic Trials with the courage and the dominance of Secretariat.

Those who criticize the 25-lapper as tedious or boring may be incapable of understanding genuine excellence. When an NBA basketball team dominates another squad by 34 points, no one can know how fiercely the winners were defended, or how many lucky bounces led to rebounds, field goals, or free throws.

In contrast, when Diana Bailey dominates a ten-kilometer track championship by 380 meters and obliterates Lynn Jennings' record by 29 seconds, there can be no doubt about the quality of the performance.

Bailey zipped to the front of the 20-woman field and ran with an elegance rarely seen. She opened with a brisk first kilometer—3:10— and that was her slowest of the race.

I've witnessed hundreds of track meets and thousands of races. Certain athletes are consistently strong performers. Others prevail

in head-to-head battles. But this reporter cannot recall watching a race where perfection was so apparent.

Many athletes in Olympic Trials finals run conservatively. They gather themselves for an all-out effort over the closing yards of their event, fearful of committing too soon their accumulation of strength and speed that endless training has created.

Bailey had every reason to simply run for the win—or just settle for a place among the Top Three. After all, a courageous race in the 5,000 meters two days before had already secured her a berth on the Olympic Team.

The 10,000 was her third race in five days. The stadium was oppressively warm, crowd restless and inattentive—at first.

Fifteen laps into the race, I watched a transformation of the 27,545 people in the stadium, from track meet attendees into Diana Bailey supporters.

The announcer droned on about qualifying heats while athletes lazed on the high jump apron, and idle officials and newsmen took a break. A handful of athletes at trackside began to cheer Bailey's effort. The enthusiasm spread like contagion. The last four kilometers were a love-fest.

Men in the stands whipped off their shirts and waved them around their heads. Applause was constant and sincere. When Diana found a way to sprint the last 100 meters, a final roar of approval erupted.

Bailey's time, 30:50.05, is just a number to me. But her effort on the track last night in Knoxville, will be a life-long highlight. Excellence has a name this week—and it is Diana Bailey.

Where are the River Runners going?



To Jacksonville Beach, to check out the JTC Running water fountains installation!



One at Oceanfront Park is ready now!

One at the Pavilion will be soon!

Full details coming in the July/August issue of the Starting Line!

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Weekly Training Runs

Sunday 6:30 am, Mandarin: Various locations and distance. See Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pg/JaxSundayRun/posts/ NO Facebook account necessary

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. 3-6 miles. The "Has-Beens" not a run, just a walk.
Contact: John Powers; 264-8024 johncpow@gmail.com

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

Tuesday 5:45 am, San Marco: Southside Methodist Church 5-6 miles. 7-8:30 pace.
Contact: Kelli Howard; 904-333-9208 text or cell

Tuesday 6:30 pm, Baymeadows: Wicked Barley on Baymeadows. Close to 1st Place Sports, 3.5 and 5 mile routes. Enjoy great food and beer afterwards. (The Wicked Road Warriors).
Contact: Steve Sassa; (904) 860-0053

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

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

Thursday 6:30 pm, Springfield: Hyperion Brewery, 3-4 miles. Good beer at Hyperion after each run. Historic neighborhood. Worth the trip!
Contact: Bill Dunn; wmdunn222@gmail.com

Friday 5:40 am, Mandarin: Beauclerc, Forest Circle, 7.5 miles.
Contact: Paul Smith; smithfccj@hotmail.com, 982-3730



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.