



THE  
**STARTING LINE**  
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE **397**





Well, obviously I should start out with the Gate River Run and that is exactly what I will do. What can I say, other than that it was absolutely great? I could even go out on a limb and call it the best GRR ever. Considering the perfect weather it is easy to say that no one had any excuse for running a bad “Gate”, except yours truly. I won’t bore you with that here, no, I will bore you with it later in this issue. It is called, Reflections of (Another) River Run. Admittedly, last year I wrote my Pulitzer Prize winner, Reflections of a River Run, and now there is another one, similar but different. You could call it a sequel (and if I do it again next year you can call me Sylvester Stallone).

Kudos to race director, Doug Alred, and all his staff; congratulations also to Jane Alred for making the mayhem known as “The Expo” such a smooth operating, successful affair.

Only a few days left before the next great Gate River Run, I can hardly wait.

Speaking of our race director extraordinaire, Doug Alred, I know that we are all very happy and relieved that his recent heart ailment was resolved so uneventfully. His cardiologist said that it was all those years of running that made the life-or-death difference. So let’s all keep running, you never know when it might come in handy.

As successful as our Gate River Run has become, our Winter Beach Run has become almost a tale of woe. But our Race Committee is on it and board member, Franz Lerch, has been particularly active in its resuscitation. It makes for another story in this issue.

The good old “Fun Run Track Meets” are back. They are also back at our old sprinting grounds, The Bolles School track. And as WalMart might say, “we are rollin’ back the prices.” Yes, the ever-popular, no-cost, run-as-many-events-as-you-like track meet has returned. We hope that everyone will not only love it but also come out for the meets. More details inside.

The two Ryans have both contributed mightily to this issue. Jaguars’ trainer, Mike Ryan, with another of his informative injury reports, this time the dreaded plantar fasciitis, and Mark Ryan tells of his latest ultra experience in the Wolfson 55-miler. It’s all good stuff and you need to read them both. Feel free to read my stuff too, of course.

Can it be? Is “minimalism” already dead? Has it been supplanted by “maximalism”? Dear runner, are these too many ism’s for you to handle? Don’t worry, I will sort you out in my latest edition of Run the Shoe or Exalt the Shoe.

Back to the Gate River Run, and elite runner procurement officer and head man of the TenBroeck Cup team competition, Richard Fannin, gives us all an inside view. You have to feel for him, he works like a man possessed on the elite field and he works a high-pressure job in the hierarchy of the United Bank of Switzerland and has a wife and five kids to boot. Richard, thanks, but go to bed and sleep for as long as you can-you deserve it.

Oh, and now my disclaimer. No, no matter what you might think, I am not a pervert. When I wrote my tongue-in-cheek bit last year about all of us getting on a chartered bus bound for the in-the-buff 5k in Lutz, Florida, I was but kidding. Kidding ... yes, kidding. Now a fellow track club member has also submitted a story (that made it past our censorship panel!) about another “clothing optional” run. He’s not a pervert either, but rather, a man just trying to get information abroad.

But what of these “clothing optional” runs? If they so opposed to clothing then why is there a race t-shirt, and what would participants do with it? Do the runners look at the shirts and say, “t-shirt? For twenty years I haven’t even worn pants, what am I supposed to do with a t-shirt!?” And what does it really mean: “Clothing optional”? Then, if race officials see someone they can’t bear seeing in the all-together, I suppose they run after them yelling, “We’ve opted that you should definitely put your clothes back on. No option; do it now!”

There is also a poignant story of a track club member who encounters, on the road, a suffering, almost dying animal (gee, sounds like me in the River Run). The runner is happy that the creature is not him. Although he feels, knows, that it could have been. Good stuff. The sort of stuff our Nobel Prize winning newsletter has been about for decades.

Don’t miss the story of one of the finest athletes of our time who has now become a walker, our president, Larry Roberts. As we age we can’t help but slow down and very often running is replaced by walking. Larry seems to have taken it all very well, even proudly, and I hope that when my time comes I will do likewise.



**Bob Fernee, Editor**



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Jeremy Smith who finished in 1:15:03.

Even though registration and packet pickup has been streamlined in recent years, it is still a huge effort. Ken Bendy led a large team of volunteers who did a great job. Many Club members volunteered to staff our Expo booth where they had an opportunity to meet and greet Club members. Thanks to Club Vice-President Larry Sassa and others, the hospitality tent was better than ever with food, drink, bag check, massage tables, and five port-o-lets!

Thank you to all the volunteers among the 15k, the 5k, and other events... special mention to those who helped support the field of national elite runners making the race the best 15k in the country. Richard Fannin led a team who provided transportation and hospitality for the elite athletes during their brief but hectic stay. This coordination played a vital role in making the Gate River Run one of the most desired events among the country's top runners.

On a personal note, I was able to complete my 21st consecutive Gate River Run thanks to two people. Drew Heideman, of Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute, led me through rehab of a back issue and got me in shape to attempt #21. Then a guy about my age, who I only know as Chuck, hooked up with me about mile 2 and paced me all the way to the finish line. Chuck was competing for the first time in several years after undergoing a triple heart bypass and his



Larry Roberts, President



Greetings! The 36th Annual Gate River Run is in the books. What a race it was-- perhaps the most exciting since Todd Williams set the record in 1995: Janet Cherobon-Bawcom crossed the finish line first to win the equalizer and, in the closest men's race in memory, Ben True edged Bobby Curtis for the men's title. The absolutely beautiful weather helped preserve Todd's record, but the day was also thoroughly enjoyed by the thousands who participated and stayed till long past noon for the post race party. Race Director Doug Alred produced an extraordinary event.

Bill Rodgers, winner of the first River Run, was on hand at the Expo to greet and sign autographs. Several Club members had Bill sign their new River Run 15000 long sleeve shirt, which displayed the design of the original 1978 race shirt. Thanks to merchandise committee chairwoman Carol Fitzsimmons we had those available at our Expo booth and we sold a ton of them! Bill Rodgers also ran the race in a very respectable 1:15:03 and we hope to see him back next year and many more to come.

Our title sponsor Gate Petroleum again provided great support and dozens of volunteers. Many Gate Clubs team members participated in the race, among them



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*JTC Running Presents*  
***Fun Run Summer Track Meet Series***  
***April 13, May 17, June 8, July 13***  
*Field Events 5:00 PM, Track 6:00 PM*  
*The Bolles School Track*  
*JTCRunning.com*



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Lisa Adams	Layla Croft
Rick Akam	Maria Croft
Wendy Aldridge	Will Croft
Mark Stephan Angelloz	Jonathan Crouch
Lindsey Balz	Tom Custer
Matt Barfield	Elizabeth Danies
Matthew Bargas	Erin Dankworth
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Kurt Barnhill	Ardis Davis
Robert Barnhill	Elaine Davis
Andrew Barr	Hernando De Soto
Dan Barton	Doug Degenhardt
Joseph Barton	Jeremy DeMille
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Catherine Berry	Beth Durling
Patrick Biddinger	Tina Dyal
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Angie Carter	Sue Granger
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Ilene Chazan	Bobby Green
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Flo Wolfe Sharp  
Julia Wood  
Brian Yatzor  
Curt Young  
John Zarou  
Carl Zart III  
Bob Zimmer  
Roberta Zukauskas



Best issue of the newsletter I remember from the JTC. Thanks for all the work. A couple of unsolicited comments.

1. Elites. From my perspective they are definitely worth the \$\$\$. No, I don't see them run, I do not interact with them and some I barely recognize the names and I'm probably more aware than the majority of the participants. Yet, I believe they add to the mystique of the event. They help bring many of the top notch runners in FL and thru out the US that are top notch runners, just not up to the elite status and then that helps bring in other good runners until after awhile you have an event that we common people (Jimmy Joe's and JoAnn's) want to be a part of. The JTC has built a great event over the years. They have the \$\$\$ and should not go penny pinching and risk losing such status. As you pointed out Gasparilla just did that.

2. WBR: Yes, I believe the JTC should keep this race. I even like the split format. Tho I was unable to complete

this year, it is still a great event and if anyone wants to have bragging rights in this town, they should definitely have to run the WBR. Even with the warm weather this year, it was still an "anything can happen" sort of an event until just a few days before the event (and by that time runners were prepared for the event they registered for). Since many of the shorter races are actually gaining in attendance, maybe some consideration should be given to the short race being 5K rather than 5 miles. And from a personal POV, I miss the after race social aspect with the beer, I remember all too well sitting around after the race freezing our buns off but still enjoying some suds and socializing with friends (many times new friends) but I believe you need something going on to help hold the runners after they have picked up their AG award. Maybe a Sat race so everyone doesn't have to get up early the next day. That's enough of my rambling.

Happy Trails, Frank Frazier

**Below is a collection of appreciation notes from Marathon High - Raines students and coaches you sponsored for the Jax Beach Winter Run. We wanted you to hear how much your gift of sponsorship was appreciated by the participants.**

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"Thank you so very much for sponsoring me. I'm really enjoying this experience and this is something I want to continue as I get older." - Brandi T.-R.

"Thank you for giving me the most fun experience I have ever enjoyed. This something that I want to get better at." :)  
- Lawrence A.

"Thank you for sponsoring everyone and for the great experience. This is something I want to get better at as I get older. I hope you will consider sponsor other students in the future.- Miko G.

Thank you for sponsoring us in Marathon High. It was a great pleasure doing The 5 mile run - even though my legs were screaming for help :) - Tre'moll B.

I am so proud of my marathon friends that ran in the Winter Run! We did really worked hard. Thank you for sponsoring us and for the support!!! - Uriah O.

I am so excited my team got to participate in the 5 mile run. It felt great to run with all the other runners from different schools. What I really enjoyed was having my teammates run with me. I want to thank all of you. I can't wait for our big race!  
;) - Desiree M

With a spirited heart, I thank you for the opportunity to be involved in such a powerful experience. Thank you for your sponsorship and giving heart. - Always, Dr. Mathis

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As you can see, you made a tremendous impression on our students. Thank you so much for sponsoring the students and coaches for this race. We could not have done this without your support! - Dr. Keefe



Lamar Strother must have thought the world a very strange place as he watched the scene unfold before his eyes. Strother, a founder, "pioneer", of our club, JTC Running, then known as the Jacksonville Track Club, is also a Board member and has been ever since it was decided we needed a Board. Dedication? That's Lamar. When it comes to this club, Lamar Strother has seen it all and done it all. He owns a copy of every newsletter that this club has ever printed and has taken notes in every meeting this club has ever held.

He had a very quizzical, bemused look on his face as he heard the ideas thrown around by fellow board members during that January meeting. I think it was the sheer cost of things that got him. You see, for 32 years Strother has been the race director of our club's Summer Track Meet Series. And for all of those 32 years Strother has shouldered the work and responsibility for the series without a word of complaint or a nickel's worth of pay. Talk about a labor of love.

Word came down the pike: In order to pull off a single meet it could cost \$500 for a race director and his crew. When Lamar heard that his facial expression was classic. But with mere words how can one describe the look on an elderly man's face that seems to say, "500 bucks for one meet!?" For 32 years I did six every summer for nothing!"

Yes, words are inadequate. An idea was floated that we would buy a high tech photo-finish timing system and basically give it to the Duval County High School coaches in exchange for them organizing and executing the summer track meets in our name. When the estimated cost of the system went from \$8,000 to an actual cost of more like \$15,000 the idea didn't seem quite so viable. It wouldn't have worked out anyway. A big proponent of the effort,

Englewood High School coach, AJ Hart, was met with a few insurmountable obstacles when he suggested the plan to the Duval County High School Athletic Director. The plan never got out of the blocks.

"I knew it was over," Hart said. The idea of public track meets on public school property would never be.

So the club's board decided on the old fashioned, low-tech alternative: Hand-held timing devices often used in the past, known as stopwatches. Creekside High School coach, Eric Frank, agreed to pull off the meets, four of them, and he would supply his own help. With time running out, a decision was quickly reached.

Bolles High School, on San Jose Blvd., will be the location of the track meets, just as it used to be. And in another return to the past, the meets will take on the complexion of our old 'Fun Run Track Meets' and they will be absolutely free of charge.

The dates of the meets are: April 13 (distance events only), May 11, June 8 and July 13 (all events for the other three). Check our website, [JTRunning.com](http://JTRunning.com), for all the details.

These freebies are a real gem; so come one and come all. The Summer Track Meet Series will be as great as ever, you can count on it. But for the moment I am left with the image of Lamar's amazed face in that board meeting, the 32 years of track meets, and all I can think is...Lamar, you were worth your weight in gold.



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It seemed like I was just here. Could a whole year have really gone by? No wonder they say that when you get older time just seems to fly. But there we were, the 36th annual Gate River Run and I. Him, the omnipresent, ever powerful adversary and me, the weakening Streaker. I took in the swelling scene, the band, the bouncy houses and the beautiful people.

“Wow”, I thought to myself, “how is it that everywhere else I go in our sterling city the people look so grotesque and yet here at the Gate River Run everyone looks so pretty and healthy?” I reasoned: “This is testament to the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. The rewards are obvious: you look better, feel better and you can run 9.3-miles.”

It, the River Run, sure has changed but then, of course, so had I. I could hardly recognize the race from its 1978 version but, then again, it could probably say the same of me. It has grown stronger, grander and so much more impressive, and I have grown ... well ... that's enough.

“What's my strategy this time?” I wondered. “Sheer survival?” A couple of months prior to the race I had hurt the Achilles tendon in my right leg. It wasn't enough to make me stop training altogether but just enough to hamper me, cut my distance and make me miss more days than I wanted.

The week before the race was one of zero mileage. On the Saturday I got married in the morning, so ding-dong you know and dang it I didn't run. The euphoria spread onto the next day and I didn't run then either. Somehow I lost Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Then on Thursday our house was burglarized, so the evening run I was looking forward to was abandoned in order to get home as soon as possible. No point in running Friday, the day before the big race. I figured all this rest would at least be good for my troublesome Achilles.

Arriving at the starting line, or should I say lines, I found little respect for my 4000-plus bib number and was made to move further and further back in the crowd. “Oh, well, fair is fair, I don't deserve to be any closer to the front,” I admitted to myself, “and anyway, with chip timing if you look at your chip time rather than the gun time it doesn't matter how fast or slow your start is.”



**Gate River Run 2013**

I found myself next to local running legend, Barb Ebers, and naturally enough we began yakking about the good old days. Talk about the beautiful people, Barb has taken great care of herself and despite her 60-plus age looks phenomenal. I told her that I was ashamed of myself because at the age of 62 my father had run a River Run age record for 62-year old men and now myself, being that age, would get no where near his record-setting time.

The cannon blasted and the race was off. Well, the race was, but we weren't, we were standing. Then, eventually, we were off too. Determined to run a steady and safe pace I hobbled through downtown. Due to my slower pace and less competitive demeanor I noticed things in the city that I had never noticed before. As we entered San Marco Boulevard we passed Sherwood's Tavern where, not long ago, I had interviewed Course, the route of the Gate River Run, and also avoided the advances of the toothless barfly floozy. That was a close one. The things I do for the newsletter.

The neighborhoods of San Marco were as beautiful and hospitable as ever and I was amazed at the parties going on in so many front lawns. I was aware of the tightness and pain in my Achilles tendon but figured it would subside as it warmed up. I thought of two fellows I knew, Bob Garzel and Ray Owens, a Streaker. Their philosophy has become, “If you can't break an hour in the race, why not just have fun and run it in two?” Why is it I can't be sensible and adopt that mindset also? Unburden myself of all the trappings of having to “do well”, “have a great race” or the worst one of all, “run a good time.” I'm not competitive anymore, so why even pretend to be so? I tortured



myself with these soul-searching questions but for now, the answer would have to wait. This race was far from over.

The generosity of some of the San Marco residents was impressive to say the least. Donuts were being handed out at one point, at another mimosas and beer. I think I noticed a pitcher of Bloody Mary's somewhere along the road. There were wings, bacon and sausages, all of them looking for mouths to fill. I thought to myself, "This community really gets into the race, the people here must enjoy it so much." And I am sure that they do.

I emerged from San Marco and into Atlantic Blvd. That stretch on the road in front of Bishop Kenny High School has never been a favorite of mine and today I could say the same for it. Soon however it was over, and I found myself passing the 10k mark in the St. Nicholas neighborhood. It was becoming real work now, though, and I knew that I was just trying to grind it out. My Achilles was grinding too and the discomfort was palpable.

Except for the incline of the Hart Bridge, the section



Gate River Run 2013

along Atlantic Blvd. leading up to the Hart is the worst bit of the course, I think anyone would agree. An excited spectator kept yelling, "keep going; you're almost there!" I was sure he was just trying to help but this was a case of so-near-and-yet-so-far for the worst part of the race lay right before us, the mammoth Hart Bridge, "The Green Monster."

Then, my very favorite part of the run: New wife Nancy and eight-year old son, Norman gave me my usual hugs

and kisses at the foot of the on-ramp to the bridge. It was wonderful but when I attempted to run again the tightness and pain from my right Achilles tendon shut me down. I was seriously limping.

I grabbed a cup of water at the aid station and threw it on my face, ears and neck. The coolness of it felt good and it revived me considerably. I felt guilty though; I hate to use water, I know the breweries need it and I hate to leave them short. The water did nothing to revive my Achilles, of course, and neither did the loud, invigorating music from the many speakers up the bridge.

I was forced to walk the entire incline of the Hart Bridge while trying to stretch and loosen my troublesome Achilles. Moving at such a snail's pace did provide me the opportunity to (and for probably the first time) see the sights from the crest of the Hart. The beauty and grandeur of our wonderful city is so very magnificent. I thought about the race's founder, Buck Fannin, who was adamant to include the Hart in the course. "People will be able to look down from the bridge and see it all, the whole city," he said to me while reliving the planning of the race recently.

Jacksonville is a city that could have been, should have been, one of the world's grandest. Perhaps one day, this great underachiever will realize its full potential and take its place as one of the worlds best. And perhaps in the future people will say "and the Gate River Run helped to make it so."

I finished, and I was oh so happy to do so. Collected my medal. The Top-10 Percent finisher's cap, that used to be such low-hanging fruit, I must have missed by miles, once again. Oh well, I never wear caps. I could barely walk, especially on my right leg. But I had to keep moving; a stop at the JTC Running hospitality tent then it was on to the Junior River Run where son Norman, namesake and grandson of the fast father Norman, would race at 11:00 AM.

Another generation of River Run runners about to come out of the blocks. It won't be long before he outruns me but, by golly, he'll never catch my River Run streak. 36 times; the Streak is alive!



Before moving to Jacksonville in 1992 I ran off and on for years in Asia: Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong. And I ran in the USA: New England, New Jersey, and Maryland. In all that time I entered only one officially timed race, a 10k in Madison, NJ in 1977. As fortune would have it my temporary apartment in Jacksonville was just around the corner from 1st Place Sports. I soon wandered in and learned about the local race schedule-- the premiere event was the Gate River Run. So I started training for the 9.3 mile distance up and down San Jose Boulevard and Sunbeam Road.

As March 13, 1993 approached I had worked my mileage up to the point that I thought I could complete the event. But there was no Gate River Run on Saturday, March 13 because the "Storm of the Century" intervened and postponed the race to Sunday, March 14. That morning the rain was gone but the temperature had plummeted. I huddled with other runners in the lee of the old Jacksonville Coliseum to avoid the wind until the start. Off we went running the storm's aftermath obstacle course, dodging downed trees and debris. I finished!

I came back to do it the next year, and the year after that. In 2001, training for my one-and-only marathon, I posted a personal record of just over 84 minutes. The following year, in the wake of my Jacksonville Marathon effort, I broke 82 minutes. To you sub-60 minute people that is no big deal, but to me it was!

I kept doing the race year after year until in 2007 I completed my 15th in a row. I spotted the first 15 races to the Streakers but had my own mini streak going with visions of reaching 20, 25, 30 consecutive Gate River Runs. True, I would never see the Winners Finish, but I would persevere!

Then I paid a visit to my orthopedic doctor complaining of hip pain. The MRI showed no issue with the hip, but revealed some issues with discs in my lower back. I was advised that continued running would result in serious problems requiring surgery. I went into that visit a runner and came out a walker. I have not run a step since.

After that fateful day I walked a couple of 5k's there in the back with the other non-runners. But as the 2008

Gate River Run approached I had to decide if I wanted to participate and finish in a time way north of two hours. I'd be coming in well after all the runners who would be off in the hospitality tents enjoying their beers and regaling each other on their times. I wouldn't even be back in time for the awards ceremony!

I had my streak of 15 Gate River Runs in a row... stop there? Or walk? I walked #16 in 2008. I was embarrassed to be at the back of the huge field at the start line. I couldn't even see the start line! But off we went some minutes after the gun sounded. Very quickly I noticed that some of these walkers were walking really fast! To keep up with them I had to pump my arms and force my stride turnover- constantly! After 9.3 miles of that I was exhausted, but I'd done #16 in just under 15 minutes per mile. And I had memories of every part of the course, every water stop, every band playing- much more than I'd ever had while running.

So I've showed up every year since to walk the Gate River Run. After last month's Gate River Run, my count stands at six walks after fifteen runs, and my sights are now set on completing a walk for every run, thirty in all.

These days, we walkers have our own starting line away from the runners, and we have our own series of bib numbers. The walkers have risen from a couple hundred to something over five hundred. And while some are taking a leisurely pace and paying more attention to their smart phones than the course, the majority of us are pushing ourselves as hard as we can and being as competitive as possible.

Many walkers are former runners who, while perhaps wishing they could still run, are most thankful to be participating in the Gate River Run one more time. I am proud to be one of them.



JTC Running Board member, Franz Lerch, awoke from his fitful slumber in a sweat and panic. He had been trapped in a horrendous nightmare and before he awakened he found himself alone, on Jacksonville Beach. Like a frightened Ebenezer Scrooge looking at his own grave, Lerch saw an awful, grizzly marker in the beach sand. It read:

RIP The Winter Beach Run

“Oh, no! It can’t be!” he cried in his semi-sleep, as his wife, Anita, tried to calm him. “How could such a classic race just die!?” Franz exclaimed, the sweat gushing from his brow.

You see, Lerch is more than just a man who loves running; he is a man who loves the beach. He lives at the beach. He loves beach running. When he decided to organize a fundraiser to make money for his daughters’ school, what did he do? He created a beach run. He’s a beach man through and through.

It is said that if you cut his veins he bleeds beach sand. Of course, that’s not true, he’s German, bleeds beer with a bit of beach sand mingled in.

Lerch is alarmed that the noble Winter Beach Run’s attendance has been falling. In fact, it has been falling at such a rate that there has been talk of putting the once hugely popular event out of its misery—discontinuing it all together. Consequently, Lerch can’t sleep.

But the real question is: If the race was so popular before, why isn’t it now? Some explanations have been broached, though not one is an unequivocal answer. The explanations?

People aren’t into beach runs anymore.

The 10-mile race is too long.

It should be on Saturday not Sunday.

It should be in the morning not the afternoon.

It’s too close to the Donna Marathon and half marathon.

It’s too close to the Super Bowl.

It’s not a mud run, a paint run, a nude run, an obstacle run or any other sort of gimmick run.

Yes, people sure seem to go for gimmick runs these days. They are paying 60 bucks a clip to participate in

a “tough mudder” or a “color me rad” and other such nonsense. It amazes the hell out of me. Oddly enough, I can remember a couple of our beach classics that inadvertently became obstacle runs, there has been plenty of wet beach sand, mud, and we had a nearly-nude run the time Donna Garcia ran in a Brazilian thong. Yet all we ever heard were complaints (well, not about Donna, at least not from the men).

In a recent meeting of the Race Committee we had a bit of a think tank in regards to the WBR and one of the things that everyone agreed to was that the race has been hurt ever since we lost our host hotel. Over the years, we’ve had a few hotels that let us use their facilities before and, more importantly, after the race. In bad weather, and we’ve had plenty of that, those places were real sources of refuge. Even the outdoor deck of the Comfort Inn was a fine place to warm up, dry off and exaggerate your race heroics. There were food, drinks and a convivial, intimate atmosphere that made for a very nice post-race bash. Unfortunately, these days we seem to have lost that. Another thing is that nowadays people feel that they have to have a reason to stay as much as they need a reason to go. Post race is as important as PRs.

Franz Lerch has begun a quest to find a place for us to call WBR headquarters. He has made initial contact with a few establishments and one in particular, close to our original haunt at the corner of Atlantic Blvd. and 1st Street, looks especially good.

JTC Running is far from giving up on the Winter Beach Run. Franz Lerch is on a crusade and in order to complete his quest even if he has to drink a beer (or several) in every place at the beach, by golly, he’ll do it.



As our editor very well pointed out in a previous newsletter, some races are well worth "getting on the bus" and attending. And with Spring in the air, what better way to celebrate the season than with a race done the "natural" way. Just like the Greeks of old.

While most runners know about the bigger events near Tampa such as the annual Lake Como "Dare to be Bare 5K", you might be surprised to learn that you don't have to travel hundreds of miles in order to participate in a clothing optional event. Right here in our own backyard is an annual race less than 50 miles from Jacksonville in St George, GA.

(North of Macclenny). If you're looking for a big time, highly competitive road race, this is not your event. But if you're seeking a low key, non-competitive cross country race, this is the race for you.

After the mega races of the season such as the Jacksonville Marathon, 26.2 with Donna, and the River Run, this small informal gathering of trail runners and nature lovers is a welcome relief. There's no pressure with this event, and you certainly don't have a dilemma of what racing outfit to wear. With just socks and shoes and a few bucks entry fee you're off and running, or walking if you prefer. In fact, you don't even need to bother bringing your watch since this is a predicted time run where everyone has a chance to win an award by coming closest to their predicted finishing time.

The adventurous trail blazers in the buff who tackle this race traverse through multiple terrains in the 5K course including grass, dirt, sand and sometimes a little wetland mud, depending upon the weather. The one thing you will not find is asphalt, and that should be a welcome relief for any cross country aficionado. The course is always well marked, but even after doing this race for many years I can still easily get off course by taking the wrong trail at some point. But, that's just part of the fun in a deep woods trail run.

The race takes place during the weekend of Hidden River Resort's Nudie Blues Festival. RV and tent camping is available for those who wish to stay overnight and enjoy the evening outdoor concerts on Friday and Saturday. BYO for adult beverages, and an outdoor cookout is available for a fee.

Whether this style race is something you've always wanted to be able to check off your bucket list, or just something novel you've always wished to try, I'll bet it will end up being the one race you talk about the most for the rest of the year. But beware, if you win an award, you might have some explaining to do if you display it at work!

This year's race takes place on April 27th. For more information go to [www.hiddenriverresort.com](http://www.hiddenriverresort.com)



*JTC Running Presents  
Fun Run Summer Track Meet Series  
April 13, May 17, June 8, July 13  
Field Events 5:00 PM, Track 6:00 PM  
The Bolles School Track  
JTCRunning.com*



The stories in one of the recent newsletters about the dangers of street running reminded me of my own close encounter, of the vehicle kind. Not that I needed a reminder, but it really hit home recently as I was running a regular route of mine on Mount Pleasant Road in the Ft Caroline area, when, at the top of a hill just past a hairpin curve I noticed a raccoon lying on the side of the roadway, apparently typical road-kill. But as I approached the animal I noticed it was still breathing, gravely injured. The poor little fellow probably never saw what hit him, and all he was doing was trying to cross the road to the safety of his home in the woods, costing him his life.

And as I continued down the road from where the animal lay dying I thought of my own close encounter with a vehicle that occurred about a year earlier that very likely could have had ended up with the same results for me as with the raccoon.

That particular incident occurred one Wintery day when I was running this same route southbound after leaving the Spanish Pond Trail in the Theodore Roosevelt Area of the Timucuan Preserve. I was on the outer edge of this 2 lane road, facing traffic, as required by law, with visibility of a mile or more so I could easily step off the road and back on to the sidewalk at the first sign of an approaching northbound car. As I was running along at a leisurely pace, I heard a southbound car approaching from behind, which was no worry for me since Mt. Pleasant is also a double-yellow line road with no passing allowed, so I knew that the car would pass by me in the opposite lane on the other side of the street. Suddenly, I felt a force from behind like a strong gust of wind, and then saw a car blow by my side at high speed. The car swept by me so close that I felt the metal of the bumper brush against my nylon running pants. The encounter only lasted a split second, as I moved to the sidewalk to take in a deep breath and process what had just occurred. Apparently, there was another vehicle directly behind the car approaching from behind in the southbound lane that decided to illegally pass the car in front of him at the same time this car was parallel to me running on the road. Surely, the driver must have known that he only had a matter of inches to squeeze between me and the other car, or he would kill me. And since the speed limit on this road is 45 mph, that means

the average driver probably travels about 55 to 65 mph, so this car could have easily been passing at 70 or 80. Another inch or two towards me and I would have ended up like the raccoon, only without the suffering since I likely would have been killed instantly. But the thing that really struck me as I watched in disbelief as the car sped away was the fact that the brake lights never came on. This driver apparently didn't even consider slowing down. I still wonder what kind of person could make a decision to jeopardize someone else's life just to shave a few seconds off their precious drive time. The sad fact is that there are plenty of those types of people behind the wheel, and as runners we unfortunately too often end up having to contend with them on the road. I think this particular driver's selfishness and disregard for another's life will always haunt me. Fortunately, I have the advantage of living in close proximity to trails in the woods where I can enjoy the luxury of running with my beloved dogs without having to deal with crazy drivers on the roadways. And I've definitely learned my lesson to always stay on the sidewalk when I do occasionally run on city streets.

Postscript: By the way, after I returned home on my recent run, I drove back to the spot where the injured raccoon lay dying in the cold and the rain, and I placed him in a box and took him back to my carport. It was hard watching him suffer, and more than a few warm tears fell upon him as the little guy kept reaching up with his hand to touch his aching head, unable to move any other part of his broken body. A speeding car vs. a small animal is never a fair fight, and, as expected, he didn't make it through the night. But I take some comfort in the thought that he now rests in a better place, far removed from this chaotic world, as I buried him on a hill overlooking Mud Flats Creek in the solemnity of the Timucuan Preserve. I like to think that he really did make it home, after all.



The New York Road Runners Club has the New York City Marathon, The Atlanta Track Club has the Peachtree Road Race, and JTC Running has The Gate River Run.

Make no mistake, Gate is our baby. It is what separates us from thousands of other local track clubs in the country that float by on a shoestring budget. But it is more than just our primary funding mechanism, it has become over the years a beloved road race nationally, along the likes of Falmouth, Bloomsday and Bolder Boulder.

When I began helping Doug Alred with the elite runners in 2009, I took a look at the state of the sport, and found that the proliferation of competitive teams around the country was the most exciting thing going on in road racing. And although a couple of races held team competitions, there were none with a substantial prize structure – big enough to draw the best teams from around the country.

I approached the Board with the idea – in the fall of 2008, with the idea of creating a major team competition, with a separate \$20,000 - prize purse. A competition within the competition to call our own – and named in honor of the late, great John TenBroeck, who had recently lost his courageous battle with cancer.

Over the last 5 years, the TenBroeck Cup has grown and grown, and so has the buzz. Not only has it resulted in the deepest fields we have ever had among the elites at our race, but it has earned Gate River Run the reputation as having the strongest US elite field of any race in the country.

In 2013, the numbers speak for themselves.

In a competition that could not have been better scripted in Hollywood, we had a tie for first among BOTH the men's and women's team competitions.

After scoring the competition by place the first couple of years – a format that resulted in a couple of ties – we changed the rules to begin scoring by time. This

was a format that we felt sure made a tie statistically impossible. So sure were we, that we did not even have a tiebreaker in place.

So there we stood, an hour after the race, staring incredulously at the team results, seeing that both women's teams 1-2. Adidas Boulder Running Company ADP and Team USA Arizona, both had a time of 2:31:00 – both breaking the old team record. We then looked to the men, where ASTF (Amateur Sport of Track and Field) and Team USA Arizona – also deadlocked to the second. (2:14:13) Thanks to the quick action of head timer Stu Toomey, we were reminded that our timers could pull a more accurate tape – rounded to the nearest hundredth of a second. And although this delayed the awards about 10 minutes, we were able to award first to the women of Adidas BRC and the men of ASTF.

Poor Team USA Arizona, who ended up 2nd in both races, which was a costly \$3,000 hit per team. The winners took home \$6,000 each, 2nd place received \$3,000 each. In third place for women was Team USA Minnesota, earning \$1,000 – and Hansons for the men, who also earned \$1,000.

The depth among the teams was also a record, as we ended up with 7 scoring women's teams .. 4th was Hansons, 5th was Sacramento Elite, 6th was New Balance Silicon Valley and 7th was Nike Team Run LA.

For the men we had 8 scoring teams .. 4th was Hansons, 5th was Adidas BRC, 6th was Asics Aggies, 7th was Boulder Track Club and 8th was Nike Team Run LA.

We were proud to have 2 teams from Colorado, 3 teams from California, 1 team from Minnesota, 1 team from Arizona, 1 team from Michigan and 1 team from various locations (ASTF).

It was truly a NATIONAL competition, reaching clubs from coast to coast. The team concept has caught on and is creating just the stir we hoped it would 5 years ago.



Other races on the circuit are now beginning the emulate our format, with the US 8k championships hosting a team race later this year for the first time.

And lastly, the overall competitive structure of the elite race has been the big winner.

For the first time in the 36 year history of the race, we had 21 men run under 45:00, 33 men under 46:00, and 41 men under 47:00.

The women also smashed previous depth records, with 8 women under 51:00, 16 under 52:00 and 26 under 53:00.

“Turn off your mind, relax, and flow downstream...” So wrote John Lennon in the old Beatles song, Tomorrow Never Knows. It appears that it is also good advice for runners. Runners without motivation, runners with injuries, runners who can't improve, runners who can't even put their shoes on and get out the door. Just turn off your minds and your running troubles will be over. “Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void ...” Lennon. What am I on about? In the October edition of the Running Journal a woman by the name of Teri Saylor wrote a story titled: Need A Dose of Motivation? Try Hypnosis. Great idea; why didn't I think of it myself? (Because I turned my mind off years ago? Well, could be.) Hypnosis does not have to mean walking around in a zombie-like trance, drooling from the mouth like a two-year old. And you don't have to dart around clucking like a chicken, though when you mention hypnosis that is exactly what so many unenlightened people would imagine. I'm telling you, she's right; hypnotism has its place in the world of running. The cost of some race entry fees has gone cosmic and it would be a good thing if you were in a trance when you opened your wallet. Pain is far more bearable when you're in a stupor, just ask that drunk over there. Or Mitt Romney, I'll bet he's enjoyed his liquor since November the 6th. So what if Mormons don't drink, cut the guy some slack.

Hypnosis is drinking on steroids. Runners love to drink, so we are all just a hop, skip and a trance away from enjoying ourselves as hypnotistical dummies. Who knows, this could be the ultimate Runner's High.

Speaking of steroids, Lance Armstrong went to a lot of trouble for them, and it cost him. How much more could he have achieved, and with so much less fuss, if he had used hypnosis? Heck, it's also legal, and even if it wasn't, it is perfectly undetectable, except for that unmistakable deer-in-the-headlights look, and I know a lot of people who have that. You blew it Armstrong; EPO was never your game. Lance, you should have been in a trance.

Want to run faster? Then do it while you can't sense anything. Who needs a coach? A hypnotist will have you running like a Kenyan in one easy session. Speaking of Kenyans, there was always this rumor in the 1980's, when the Kenyans really came on, that the Kenyan runners had all been lobotomized. The part of their brains that registered and felt pain had been removed. How can you outrace a mindless man who feels no pain whatsoever? You can't; and this is exactly what hypnosis can do for you. Plus, you get to keep your brain intact (good thing too, because ObamaCare doesn't cover it.)

Just imagine the next Gate River Run with 20,000 people all with glazed eyes and mesmerized looks on their faces attacking the finish line together at full speed. Cool. And imagine the winner at the post-race interview - clucking like a chicken.

I tell you, I love this hypnotism idea. I'm feeling motivated already. But knowing my luck, I'll just turn into a chicken.



Oh, It's What You Do To Me.

Sometime in the 1980s, a Times-Union sports columnist grew tired of hearing runners – and maybe some of his golfing buddies – rhapsodize about the River Run. He fancied himself either the “fittest fat person” or the “fattest fit person you know” and decided he'd prove it by running the race without training for it.

Well, he finished in something like an hour and 40 minutes and the next morning, he chided all the runners who'd wasted their time running all those miles in preparation. What he never admitted is how his body felt when he got out of bed on Sunday morning.

After this Gate River Run, I think I know.

There's no such thing as a bad River Run -- if there is, I haven't lived it yet – and race day certainly provided glorious weather. But if all you're doing to get ready for it is slogging through a few miles every other day, great conditions and cheering spectators, not to mention a massage and an annual pedicure in the week leading up to it, will make it survivable – but also make you wish you'd done a little more active preparation.

By the point of no return, and the sausage and beer aid station, on Belote Place, it was apparent that distant muscle memory would be necessary to get me through the last half of the race. Afterward, my quads were aching even before I walked out of the JTC Running tent to my car, and let's just say I didn't apply quite enough Body Glide to one area of my torso that's susceptible to chafing.

Those reminders went away in a few days, though, and there was no time in the short term to dwell on the discomfort. My River Run didn't begin on Gator Bowl Boulevard at 8:30 and it didn't end at the finish line. For the last four years, I've been part of the taxi corps shuttling guest runners from and to the airport, and by 12:20 on Saturday afternoon I had to be ready to deliver Janet Cherobon-Bawcom and three or four others to Jacksonville International.

Between pickup runs on Thursday and Friday, a tour of the course on Friday and drop-offs on Saturday and Sunday, I had the privilege of driving at least six of the top 10 male and top 10 female finishers, including the two-time women's

champion, about 40 of them altogether. We can all say that we ran the same race as those 120 national- and world-class runners. A handful of us can also say we had the chance to meet and speak with them and serve up some world-famous Jacksonville hospitality.

If only it would be easier to remember them from one time to the next. Coverage of our sport doesn't exactly rival the NFL or Major League Baseball, though, and so until the Track and Road Racing Channel pops up on cable, encyclopedic knowledge and instant recognition of the athletes will remain hard to come by. Just know that they're happy to visit Jacksonville in March and grateful for the treatment we provide them.

Lest you think they just pop in for a few days and an opportunity at a paycheck, you should know that on the day before the race, several dozen of them rode up to the Sanctuary on 8th Street in Springfield, where they met and ran relay races with the children in the after-school program. It's a fairly recent race tradition, but already it has repeat performers and increasing participation.

When the runners arrived, one girl ran up to Janet Cherobon-Bawcom and called out to her by name, knew she'd won the race the day after visiting last year and knew she'd run in the Olympics. Janet, suffice to say, was touched. If she returns in 2014 to take a shot at three wins in a row, she'll probably also be leading the pilgrimage to Springfield.

Besides winning the race, one way to get people to remember you might be if you're the inspiration for a Grammy-nominated song. While she was in college, Delilah DiCrescenzo, who was the eighth female finisher, met Tom Higgenson of the band Plain White T's through a common friend. Their only date was for the Grammys in 2008 -- The song didn't win – but the music plays on. When she boarded the van for the airport, I resisted any temptation to say “Hey There Delilah.” Maybe she's heard that “more than enough?”

Maybe next year, I'll find some original way of bringing it up. And maybe next year, I'll do more to be ready for the race than a 3-mile run every other day. Then I'll feel better about the prerace pampering. And probably feel better the morning after.



## Understanding Plantar Fascia Strain

Plantar fasciitis is a common injury for runners. It's a painful condition with localized pain at the back of the arch where it attaches to the underside of the heel bone. It is often the result of overstretching, overloading or tearing of the origin of the arch, which runs from the heel to the front of the foot under the toes.

This band of tissue stretches every time weight is applied to the foot. It helps to stabilize the underside of the foot. Plantar fascia strains can result excessive trauma to the band or the result of culminated effect of repetitive stress placed on arch over time. A plantar fascia strain usually gives rise to sustained inflammation of the front of the heel and back of the arch.

This results in excessive pain in this location, especially after prolonged non-weight bearing inactivity such as sleeping and sitting. If left untreated, a plantar fascia strain can become a chronic and very troubling ailment.

Causes: With experienced runners, the most common causes of plantar fasciitis are too rapid an increase in your running mileage, poor lower extremity biomechanics and/or improper footwear. With some chronic plantar fasciitis conditions, as the band of tissue continues to pull on the heel bone, it can result in a heel bone spur.

### Signs & Symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis for Runners

- Localized burning, stabbing, or dull aching pain at the front of the heel and arch.
- Difficulty bearing weight on the foot when getting out of bed in the morning.
- Arch pain with heel raises and with flatfoot squatting.
- Localized swelling and tenderness under the heel and arch.

### Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar fascia strains usually respond well to conservative treatment methods although the recovery times do vary with every runner.

- "Rest", a 4-letter word for runners, will vary from just no running to no weight bearing.
- Utilize the latest physical therapy modalities and rehab devices to reduce swelling and decrease pain.
- Repetitive icing with the arch and toe flexor tendons in a stretched position.

- Taping the arch & foot will assist in supporting of the arch.
- Aggressive transverse friction massage to the posterior arch. **WARNING:** This will hurt like hell but necessary to breaks up the excessive scar tissue causing much of your pain.
- Strengthening and stretching exercises for the arch and calf muscles.
- Make Downward Dog stretches a part of your day 3x/daily.
- Moderate sized arch support inserts may help for walking.
- Weight loss, if overweight or obese.

### Asking the Right Questions

'Here's what a wise runner asks' his/her sports medicine specialists to ensure a fast and safe return to sports:

- 1) Does this injury have anything to do with my pelvis, lower extremity or foot alignment?
- 2) What forms of physical therapy do I need to do to quickly resolve this injury so I can get back to running pain-free?
- 3) What are my options besides surgery?
- 4) Are there any long-term complications from this injury?
- 5) Will I benefit from the use of anti-inflammatory medicine?
- 6) Is this injury a result of some other biomechanical abnormality that needs to be addressed?

### Elite Sports Medicine Tips from Mike Ryan for Plantar Fasciitis

- **Fast Treatment/Fast Recovery:** The sooner you address plantar fascia the quicker it resolve. Don't let it become chronic.
- **Minimize Newton's Laws:** Aggressive weight bearing activities will prolong the time for recovery and increase the risk of long-term complications.
- **Template for Post-Workout Therapy:** Immediately after all of your workouts or treatments do the following:
  - o Elevate your foot for 3 minutes
  - o Stretch for 5 minutes
  - o Ice the arch and heel for 7 minutes in stretch position.
- **Stretch:** Aggressive stretches for the calves, arches, big toe and toe flexor tendons will go a long way in maintaining healthy tissue involving the entire foot.
- **Eat and Drink Right:** It's easier and safer to control inflammation and promote healing by being well hydrated and with a healthy diet compared to taking all sorts of pain pills.
- **Smart Game Plan:** Take a break from running, massage it aggressively, bike/swim more, ice it every hour and get back into the running in a couple of weeks.



### Maximalism Is Here To Stay (Or Is It?)

The movement to return to a more natural barefoot-style running, known as “minimalism”, has been going on for some two or three years. It was sparked by a best-selling book titled, *Born To Run*, in which author Christopher McDougall went off to Mexico to spend some time with a tribe of Indians, the Tarahumara. They all did a lot of unshod running together on Mother Nature’s unpaved surfaces. When McDougall returned to our asphalt jungle he penned his book and went for another run, this time to the bank with all his booty. He also criticized a lot of our modern day notions about footwear and claimed that we were nothing but a bunch of over shod pansies with lazy feet that had forgotten how to work (must be a republican).

But he started something and soon all kinds of wafer thin, super flexible, ultra lightweight shoes appeared on the market, such as Vibram Five Fingers, “the toe shoes” and New Balance Minimus trail and road models. Before long every shoe manufacturer got in on the act and produced shoes of various thinness, both minimal and semi-minimal. Some people could run in the shoes and some found that they couldn’t. Just not enough Tarahumara in them, I guess.

So where is minimalism today? Well, it is not dead but it is ceasing to grow. As they say in the business world, “the market has matured.” Indeed it has and although I do not think we will see the end of minimalism within the next two years or so, I do think we will see some of the shoe models “die” and limp off to the minimalism graveyard just as the wounded, dying elephants used to lumber off to the “elephant’s graveyard” in those old Johnny Weissmuller Tarzan movies. Boy, that ripped my heart out when I was a kid. Can’t help but get a lump in my throat as I think of it now.

Somehow, when the trend ran its course I thought we would see a quiet return to the conventional running shoes of old but it seems I was wrong. For standing in our way, and tempting us like a gentle (yet expensive) seductress is “maximalism.” She seems to say: “Don’t go back yet, try me.”

Yes, we have gone from super thin midsoles to super thick. If you have been reading this column with the required regularity (and if not, why not?), then you know that conventional running shoes typically have a 12-millimeter drop. That means that the eva foam at the heel would be 24-millimeters thick tapering to a forefoot that would be 12-millimeters thick. Minimalism introduced us to zero-drop. So a shoe might be 13-millimeters thick in the heel and the same thickness in the forefoot. In the case of real minimalism shoes they were much thinner than that.

Introducing ... drum roll, please... the Hoka Stinson, the king of maximalism. Shoes with a 32-millimeter thick midsole! Put your dogs in these puppies and you won’t feel a thing.

The shoes feature a unique 32mm heel height and a 26mm forefoot for a 6mm drop. That’s one heck of a lot of foam. When I first saw the Hokas I thought they looked absurd and I felt sure that they would be completely impossible to run in. I wanted to hate the shoes and I was convinced that I would. I was sure that they would feel muddy, too soft and very unresponsive. I was wrong.

I took them out for a three miler and was surprised that they were not overly soft, they were quite springy and responsive and they weren’t even cumbersome. Maybe it is because, even though you are so high up on that bed of foam, the low 6mm drop doesn’t make it seem so. Of course, the midsoles are so thick that they barely bend at all but Hoka get around this by building the shoes on a “rocker sole”. Instead of having to bend and flex the shoes with your feet the shoes propel themselves forward by the roll of the rocker.

“Bucket Seat” design: The Hoka’s midsole is recessed to wrap the foot horizontally and vertically, stabilizing the foot for both pronators and supinators – no need for a medial post.

Hokas were invented by two Frenchmen who recently sold the company to shoe manufacturing giant, Decker. They used the New Zealand Maui tribe words for the name, Hoka One One, or Time to Fly (but of course you knew that). They make a few different models for road



and trail, training and racing. The shoes are a favorite among the Ultra running crowd. I can see why, who wants to feel the earth when you're running a 50 or 100-miler?

When I returned from my first run in the HOKAs I remarked: "Not as bad as I expected." Seems to me that

when you run a few times in a shoe that you want to condemn but can't, that makes for a pretty good review. Only snag with HOKA could be the high price points, \$160 and \$170. But with all that foam you will surely get a lot of miles out of them.

A windy, cloudy, seemingly dreary day on the beach lends itself to a philosophical mood. Since the 1970's, my "Long Saturday Run" has been my staple weekly event. Running led to my first newspaper column simply called "Running" in 1982.

That November morning was a perfect day for reflection. My run begins with about a mile warm-up walk and surf check. My first contact was a visitor from Pennsylvania who was also walking and a bit worried about being caught in the rain without a jacket.

He glanced at my outfit and asked my age (65). Surprised by my answer, he asked how far I was running. "About 18 miles." My response also surprised him. Wishing me well, he turned back to find his car and shelter.

After changing the surf report to include the 12 to 22 mph north, northwest winds and 3 to 5 foot surf, my journey continued. Then, a brief encounter imparted some stunningly tragic news which will not be shared here, but deepened my thoughtful mood.

I settled in for the 6 mile sand-strand beach leg. I was alone, but comfortable thanks to that outfit noted by the visitor. It was a nearly all Gate River Run Expo outfit.

My Gore-Tex jacket was from one of just two Gate River Runs that started on the Southbank while the football stadium was being built.

With its pants, the suit, on sale, had cost only about \$75 and is going strong. My long-sleeved synthetic shirt, tights, and shorts were all from that special \$9.99 expo booth.

Proper clothes and attitudes can turn most any weather situation into a profitable event. Just two other people, both with happy, active dogs were on the beach. Both dogs, with tails wagging, and their owners greeted me with smiles. Only cheerful, strong people venture out on such days.

The little white puff of fur bounced with delight as I bent down to greet her. Like me, she had been chasing the sea foam. Foam breaks loose from "glacier" piles and slides down the beach. They melt quickly and quietly and remain a never ending source of amusement as I chase the "Florida icebergs".

The ocean is an exciting view in its most washing machine mode. That day the turbulence entertained me as four radio stations, two rock stations, one country station, and WJCT were the soundtrack to the run. Mumford and Sons's "I Will Wait" features a hard driving banjo and followed a rock revival version of Dylan's "Times They are A'Changin".

At 8:00, the station surfing stopped with "Weekend Edition" hosted by a nearly 30 year "friend", Scott Simon. We have never met, but he has come along on these runs since sometime in the early 80's.



Two guests that day were inspirational for weather-challenged run. He interviewed 97 year-old author, Herman Wouk and an 84 year old actor Christopher Plummer.

Both provided extra motivation for such a gloomy-looking day. A bright yellow house with the street number 911 made me smile as it tried to replace the sun. I rolled along.

My goal was breakfast. A homemade mini-loaf of walnut-raisin-almond bread was my goal. Hot Constant Comment tea with orange blossom honey, black cherry yogurt, and orange juice were also my rewards for the 3.5 hour run/walk.

After a slow meal complete with newspaper and NPR's Car Talk, my next adventure would be in Hanna Park on my bike. A beach-life Saturday was well spent. Score: Bill one; weather zero.

### **Wolfson Children's Hospital 55 Mile Ultra-2013**

This year's version of the Wolfson Children's Hospital 55 mile ultra was bigger and better than last year. This was the 4th annual running of this event and let me tell you The Landing was a happening place on Saturday February 9th. This event is the featured item in a series of fundraising events for Wolfson Children's Hospital. Before I tell you about this year's event I think it bears mentioning how this event came to be in the first place.

Five years ago Paul Wilson, a well known tri-athlete and ultra runner in Jacksonville, and his wife Amy had their first child, a boy. Luke was born with the lower part of his spine sticking out of his back. The doctor who delivered him told Paul there was only one hospital in the area that could help his son and that was Wolfson Children's Hospital. So their son was taken there immediately. The short version is Wolfson's did their job and today their son is a normal 5 year old boy thanks to the doctors and staff at Wolfson's.

Paul was so grateful that he wanted to do something to bring awareness to the area and tell what a great resource Wolfson's is for the community; it is one of the top children's hospitals in the world. Paul thought, "wouldn't it be great if we could raise the awareness level and raise some money for the hospital at the same time". The timing worked out to plan events around the hospital's 55th birthday in 2010. One of the fund raising

events Paul came up with was the 55 mile ultra run, one mile for every year the hospital was in existence and this event became the lead fund raising vehicle, which included a series of other fund raising events.

That brings us to this year's event. As a reminder, the course is a five mile loop through downtown and across two bridges. The start/finish line, like last year, was at the west end of The Landing by Chicago Pizza. We proceeded along the river on the river walk and made a u-turn at the end of Berkman Plaza, proceeded past the Hyatt and crossed the Main Street Bridge, took a left on Riverplace Blvd. and took a right on Prudential Drive to and over the Acosta Bridge to Riverside, took a left under the Fuller Warren Bridge back to the river and to the Landing. We did this 11 times.



**Ultra Marathon**

Taken by: Bruce MacFarlane

JTC Running was represented in the individual ultra event, with yours truly participating for my second



consecutive year. The 55 mile individual kicked off at 4am, Saturday February 9th. Just prior to the start Dan MacGregor, one of the ultra individuals, played a moving version of Amazing Grace on his bagpipes. After a brief invocation we were off. There were 21 ultra runners this year versus 9 last year.

This year it took me 10 hours and 35 minutes to complete the course. I finished 11th out of 18 finishers. The fastest time was turned in by Sung Ho Bruce Choi, who completed the 55 miles in 7 hours and 19 minutes.

JTC Running was well represented for the relay team portion of this event. There were a total of 51 relay teams competing and each team had up to 11 runners (five miles each). Some teams had less than 11 members. To put in perspective the growing nature of this event consider that last year there were 9 individual ultra runners compared to 21 this year and last year there were 18 relay teams compared to 51 this year. The relays commenced at 6am on race morning.

Just north of the start/finish line on Hogan St. there was a tent city with over a dozen tents set up with supporters cheering on the runners. Many of the tents housed the relay teams. Every time we passed these people each runner would get a loud ovation, complete with noisemakers, which was a lot of fun especially toward the end when there were a lot more people. The noise actually became almost deafening which was awesome. A number of supporters were dressed up as super heroes, it was an amazing sight



### Ultra Marathon

Taken by: Bruce MacFarlane

I finished at 2:35pm and now the other events that are part of the whole fundraiser were in full swing. The Landing was totally packed with people and activities. A large ten foot tall birthday cake was in the center of The Landing and everywhere you looked there were adults and lots and lots of kids. There was a stage set up and Channel Four celebrities were announcing activities and reading off the names of 55 kids who were honored this year as part of the event. I must say it was quite a night and day.

If you want any further information about this you can visit <http://www.wolfson55.org>  
You can also email Paul at: [pwilsonsales@gmail.com](mailto:pwilsonsales@gmail.com)



*JTC Running Presents*  
***Fun Run Summer Track Meet Series***  
***April 13, May 17, June 8, July 13***  
*Field Events 5:00 PM, Track 6:00 PM*  
*The Bolles School Track*  
*JTCRunning.com*







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## Weekly Training Runs

Sunday, 6:30 am, Atlantic Beach: Atlantic Blvd. & 1st Street, 5-10 miles. Contact: Linda White at (H) 246-2137 or (C) 662-4928.

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

Sunday, 6:30 am, Orange Park: Sun Tire, 346, Blanding Blvd., 6-20 miles. Contact: Dave at 545-4538.

Sunday, 10 am, Guana Reserve (trail runs): Seasonal (Oct-Mar), 3-8 miles. Call for update. Contact: Craig at 424-9690.

Monday, 6:30 pm, Tapestry Park Location: 9823 Tapestry Park Circle. Contact: Jacksonville Running Company at 379-7170.

Monday, 5:30 pm, South Bank Downtown: River City Brewing Co., 2-6 miles (includes bridges). Contact: Danny at 287-5496.

Monday, 6:30 pm, Brooks YMCA: All abilities welcome, mileage based on ability. Contact Jacksonville Running Company at 379-7170.

Monday, 6:00 pm, Jacksonville Beach: 1st Place Sports, 3-6 miles, 1st Place Sports, 270-2221

Tuesday, 5:45 am, San Marco: Southside Methodist Church, 5-6 Miles, 7-8:30pace. Contact: JC at 803-8758.

Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Ponte Vedra: Sawgrass Village south lot, 3-6 miles (very social). Contact: Craig at 424-9690.

Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Lulu Lemon (Town Center): All abilities welcome, mileage based on ability. Contact Jacksonville Running Company at 379-7170.

Tuesday, 6:00 pm, San Marco: 1st Place Sports, 3-6 miles, 399-8880

Wednesday, 5:30 am, San Jose: The Bolles School (JTC Running members) track intervals (all abilities). Contact JC at 803-8758.

Wednesday, 5:30 pm, San Jose: The Bolles School (JTC Running members) track intervals (all abilities). Contact: Danny at 287-5496.

Wednesday, 6:15 pm, UNF Track: All abilities welcome, mileage based on ability. Contact Jacksonville Running Company at 379-7170.

Wednesday, 7 pm, Jacksonville Beach: 20234 Av. South, 5+ miles (all abilities/social). Contact: Anita or Franz at 241-7199.

Wednesday, 6:30 pm, Jacksonville Running Company: 13760 Old St. Augustine Road. Contact: Jacksonville Running Company at 268-0608

Thursday, 6:15 pm, Orange Park: 1st Place Sports, 2186 Park Av., 3-6 miles, runners/walkers. Contact: Denise Metzgar at 264-3767.

Thursday, 6:30 pm, San Marco: Corner of Largo/Naldo (JTC Running members), 4-7 miles. Contact: Doug at 728-3711.

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

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

Visit [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com) for more information.