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43 Years of Running  
[www.jtcrunning.com](http://www.jtcrunning.com)



THE  
**STARTING  
LINE**  
NEWSLETTER



**THE GUANA TRAIL RACES**  
50k Ultra • 2x25 Team • 12k Trail  
Sunday, December 2

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As I have mentioned before, each issue of The Starting Line has a theme. The theme varies quite a lot depending on what's going on or coming up. Sometimes I just dream them up. This issue is dedicated to wildlife. In fact, I'm calling it The Wildlife Issue. Why? It's not to do with nightclubs so don't get your hopes up. But a lot of wild things have been going on lately or are about to go on. When I say "wild" I mean as in cross-country and trail racing. So, you see, it's more than just a cutesy title.

In August, JTC Running member Richard Fannin race directed a mammoth cross-country meet in the wilds of west Jacksonville, the Cecil Pre-Season Cross-Country Classic. On a beautiful course, high school and middle school teams ran their little hearts out. It was a sight to see, and although yours truly did not run his heart out it did his heart good to observe the swelling scene. Included was an Open 5k race, enjoyed by many who were older at body but just as young at heart. Since I seem to be on about hearts, I must say that Richard Fannin put his entire heart (and everything else) into this very successful running event. The faces of the kids involved told the story. I was there in the flesh and I caught their joy and excitement first hand. Our club is a part sponsor of Richard's event, so we were able to bask in the glory of his triumph. Well done, Richard, keep up the good work for the kids and for the sake of cross-country running. What he is doing is nothing short of heroic. Readers will find a full report, including photos, inside this issue.

Wild, wild, wild. That's what I say about JTC Running's next event, the Guana Back to Nature Trail Races. For the seventh time, club member Mark Ryan organizes this three-races-in-one spectacular. Mark is one of the most dedicated, avid runners I know. He is devoted to his favorite type of running, the ultra. That's what made him get involved in bringing this event back to life years ago. To top it off, he fell in love with South Ponte Vedra's Guana Tolomato Matanzas Reserve (please, just "Guana," if you will). He became a member of the Friends of Guana Research Reserve, a nonprofit citizen support organization that helps to preserve the huge 73,000-acre woodland. Now Mark is the organization's 2019 president-elect. Speaking for myself and all our club, we are proud of you, Mark, for the job you are doing for Guana and the work you have done, and continue to do, for us. Congratulations on your election and good luck. Thanks a bunch, pal. Mark is also the subject of Returning the Favor inside this issue.

Herb Taskett is our area's third-longest serving race director. He took on JTC Running's The Last Gasp race in 1988 and has been directing it ever since. This will be his 31st continuous time. One more go-round and he will tie Lamar Strother's 32-year reign over our summer track meet series. Unlikely, however, that he will ever top Doug Alred's River Run 15k

streak that has continued since 1983.

The Last Gasp began in 1977 and will be run for the 42nd time on Saturday, Dec. 29. It is by far this area's oldest cross-country race. The course is located on the campus of Jacksonville University. Part of it is a grassy field that once was a golf course and the rest is a section that we affectionately call "The Jungle." Yep, that's where the wild comes in. Oh, and I forgot to mention that there are also some heart-pounding hills involved.

The race began as a 5-miler and was later pared down to a 5k. For most of us, 3.1 miles is enough on that challenging course. The wildness continues afterward as our club throws a great party inside JU's Francis Bartlett Kinne center. This fine fiesta serves as the post-race party, awards presentation and New Year's Eve gala (well, OK, we're going to get started a little early. Our track club is always quick out of the blocks). Anyway, mark your calendars.

Rodney Smith was the first person to ever join the Jacksonville Track Club in 1975. Back when we issued membership cards his had the number 1 on it. Rodney is also the only person to have run every edition of The Last Gasp. He used to be a lot quicker out of the blocks himself, but a gimpy hip slowed him down. He now has a new hip and he tells us all about it in his story, Running With A Hip Replacement.

Club member Jean Schubert is a Florida Master Naturalist. She appreciates Mother Nature and knows all about it. She's another wild one, and if you've ever seen her unleash her sprint finish at the end of a race you know what I mean. For this issue Jean has written an appropriate piece, Living Wild and Loving It. I think you'll enjoy it and learn something too.

Longtime club member Everett Crum recounts his most recent experience in JTC Running's Tijuana Flats Summer Beach Run. By the way, results of the SBR can be found on 1stPlaceSports.com and JTCRunning.com.

Our good friend and contributor, Rob Coltman attempts to take some of the wildness out of trail running. His plan is to keep you injury free while you transition past the differences you are likely to encounter as you leave the road to run wild and free.

If you really want to live on the wild side take up parenting. Another friend and contributor of ours, Jon Vredenburg, has done just that. He became a father for the first time in August. He is now the dad of a beautiful little girl (photo included in this issue!). Despite everything, Jon never neglected JTC Running and has written up another of his tasty recipes. One thing is certain, once his daughter can accept solid food, nutritionist Jon will fill her up with only the best. Just like he does for his pals at JTC Running.



**"IT SEEMS LIKE SUMMER LASTED FOREVER, BUT THIS ONE IS BEHIND US NOW AND WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO LOTS OF FALL SEASON RUNNING."**

Welcome to cooler weather! It seems like summer lasted forever, but this one is behind us now and we can look forward to lots of fall season running.

The Club's Half Marathon Training Class is in full swing as OVER 90 competitors are working hard to be ready for the Community First Thanksgiving Classic or the Ameris Bank Marathon/Half Marathon on December 15. Class Director Jennifer DeSantis, and the great group of Pace Leaders, are giving the group their money's worth!

Mark your calendar for JTC Running's fall events: [The Guana 50k and 12k Trail Races](#) are Sunday, December 2 at the Guana Research Reserve in South Ponte Vedra Beach. Registration is at 1st Place Sports. The annual holiday social will take place after the Festival of Lights 5k in San Marco on Saturday evening, December 8, at the 1st Place Sports San Marco store. It is a wonderful evening that you won't want to miss.

End the year running in JTC Running's [The Last Gasp 5k Cross-Country Race](#) at Jacksonville University on Saturday, December 29. A free kids' one-mile Fun Run is at 1:30 P.M. The 5k starts at 2, followed by the awards ceremony and social right after the race. Ever since the social was moved on campus a few years back it has drawn an enthusiastic, large crowd. Race registration is at JTC Running. Click [HERE](#).

Early this year, JTC Running made the lead \$50,000 donation to Groundwork Jacksonville for the creation of a Master Trail Plan for the City of Jacksonville. I had the good fortune of serving on the steering committee and am happy to report that the final draft of the Emerald Trail Plan comprising over 21 miles of trails is being readied for presentation to the Jacksonville City Council. The first section to be constructed as a demonstration project will run 1.3 miles from the current

end of the S-Line behind the Main Post Office to Park Street in front of the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

In another initiative, the club is embarking on a project to add to [JTCRunning.com](#) a thorough compilation of "Where to Run in Jacksonville". It will bring together information on the 1st Place Sports and JTC Running's races with details of all the group training runs around the city. It will have information on many of the trails and parks around the city that are available. In just my first look at this, I can tell you that there are miles of trails out there that few of us are aware of, let alone the thousands of people moving into the area each year. We are starting out by looking at the best websites around the country that perform a similar service in other communities. If you have some to recommend, please email the links to: [jtcrunningclub@gmail.com](mailto:jtcrunningclub@gmail.com). Once we get the format in place, a team led by Board of Directors member Paul Smith will start compiling the data, maps, and photos.

Finally, be sure to check out the back cover of this newsletter for fancy new JTC Running gear for sale online! Pick your style, your color, your size, hit a few keys, and it's on the way to your mailbox! I've already received a great shirt and blue ball cap. If you are reading this online, click [HERE](#) to go to the store!

# NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

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Rebecca	Ballod	Gary	Ledman
Natalie	Blanco	Kenny	Leigh
Andrea	Boyd	Shannon	Leigh
Kathleen	Brooks	John	Leschitz
Megghan	Brooks	Jacqueline	Lightsey
Sung ho	Choi	Trish	Livesay
LeAnna	Cumber	Amy	Lorenz
Steven	Derin	Hamish	MacLean
Angela	Dilland	Teresa	Matthews
Leslie	Drake	Caddi	Mayfield
Stacie	Drawdy	Sean	McCormack
Tiffany	Eckert	Erin	Meeks
Richard	Elkins	Carolyn	Menke
Nell	Fender	Walt	Mitchell
Brandon	Fox	Jade	Mukri
Brandon	France	Banda	Nadeau
Jeff	Funderburk	Krithika	Narayan
Tyrone	Gaines	Mark	Nelson
Jose	Gavarrette	Greg	Norris
Laura	Gaver	Yetunde	Oyewole
Mark	Ghirardi	Alan	Pickert
Emily	Gideon	Patrick	Pritchett
Joe	Gilbert	Jasmine	Quezada
James	Gillard	Eric	Reinhardt
John	Giorgianni	Alison	Ronzon
Brandi	Gonzales	Dagoberto	Salinas
Don	Gramling	Mark	Sekelsky
Christina	Groger	Michael	Sperry
Jon	Guthrie	Stacie	Stemm
Christine	Haloda	Maggie	Stormant
Jim	Hanson	Morgan	Streit
Ian	Hardington	Leah	Strommer
Craig	Harms	James	Sylvester
Leslie	Hart	Tammie	Taylor
Amber	Hill	Lori	Theus
Jessica	Hill	Nadine	Thomas
Genie	Hilton	Vanetta	Thomas
Jennifer	Holtzapple	Gina	Wardell
Susanne	Jones	George	White

## HOW TO STAY INJURY FREE AS YOU TRANSITION BACK

It's finally getting to be the time of year when the weather is starting to cool down a little bit, running trails are getting dryer, and there are fewer bugs out there.

### "TRAIL RUNNERS, CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETES, AND ANYONE ELSE WHO ENJOYS RUNNING OVER MORE CHALLENGING TERRAIN ON OCCASION WILL BE HITTING THE TRAILS SOON.

Although running on trails seems as though the surfaces are softer than the road, and thus would cause less injury, it's actually been shown that the overall impact forces are very similar to the road. There are also differences in muscular activation to control and stabilize the legs over the uneven terrain, and these can actually be higher than on the road.

As you move over uneven surfaces, move side to side to avoid roots and rocks, and go up and down hills, you are using your muscles and tendons to attenuate and control these forces more than just running straight ahead on a flat road, so therefore the injuries that occur on the trails are typically muscle and tendon related. Additionally, there also is a significant increase in risk of ankle sprains compared to running on the road due to the uneven surfaces.

Some of the specific common injuries that occur on the trails include ankle sprains as stated above, as well as Achilles and patellar tendinopathy, medial tibial stress syndrome (shin splints), IT band problems, plantar fasciitis. Especially as one transitions to the trail too quickly. These often occur on the road as well.

Most runners these days have been hearing that we need to strengthen our hips, glutes, foot and ankle muscle groups, etc. to prevent running injury, and weakness in these areas has been implicated in all the above problems. Additionally, single leg balance work has been shown to prevent ankle sprains, especially when

one has already had an ankle sprain. Due to all the muscle engagement that occurs during trail running, this work becomes even more vital.

Not only will weaknesses in these areas be accentuated on the trail, but also muscular fatigue and running form breakdown will come earlier due to the more muscular work required to negotiate a trail, thus setting the stage for overuse injury.

So, what do I do to stay injury free on the trail?

Because of the differences in trail vs. road running, one should gradually increase distance and time running on trails over 4-6 weeks. This will give the body adequate time to adapt to the new muscular demands required from running on uneven surfaces. During this time, strengthen hips, glutes, quads, hamstrings, as well as foot and ankle muscle groups. Perform single leg balance work to stabilize ankles.

If you are patient with your transition to the trail and bulletproof your body against form breakdown during the transition, your risk of injury will be significantly less as you get off the roads a little and onto the trails!

If you have experienced a trail running injury, or have any questions about how to safely strengthen and/or work on balance exercises to prevent a trail running injury, give us a call at Coltman & Baughman PT (904-853-5106).

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JTC Running's Most Unique Event

### THE GUANA TRAILS RACES

50k Ultra, 2x25 Team, 12k Trail

Sunday, December 2, 8 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Guana Tolomato Reserve, S. Ponte Vedra Bch.

Enter & information @ [1st Place Sports.com](http://1stPlaceSports.com)

## LIVING WILD AND LOVING IT

I don't know about that nurture versus nature stuff. I do know I was lucky to have a mother who loved the outdoors and even though she had to work to support her two kids, she made certain our home was in an area that supported a love of the outdoors.

I grew up under the rule that you were not allowed to stay in the house if there was daylight outside. Growing up in Michigan on the shores of Lake Huron surrounded by woods, it would seem a wonderful rule to keep, but remember the sun shone in the winter as well, so making snow forts, playing on icebergs and all the winter sports were an engaging way to spend those daytime hours.

As an adult the U.S. Navy sent me to Florida. Wow, what a change!! Heat, humidity, rain, winds, and the INSECTS!!! I tolerated it and went back to Michigan after the Navy. It wasn't long, though, when I found myself missing the ability to be outside most of the year instead of a few prime months.

I returned to Florida, adjusted myself to dealing with the heat and humidity and found out with a minimum of self-educating I could even tolerate the insects and other wildlife. Now I spend nearly every day outdoors and actually love the flora and fauna of Florida! (Though, the fact that poison ivy can grow to be a hundred-foot-long vine, thick as my arm and the active irritant, urushiol, is in EVERY part of the plant, it's even in the smoke if you try to burn it and remains active for FIVE years after the plant dies, still irks me.)

I am aware that there are many people that do not like to step outside except to get to their cars to get to another building. I am so happy that I am not one of them. I'm amazed at the way so many people feel that they're "going to be got by something" if they spend time outdoors. I've had people ask me "where is it the critters WON'T be?"

I was taught you are never more than 3 feet from a spider and I believe that. I also know that you are not likely to die from a spider bite, even from one of the Widows (g. *Latrodectus*), though they do have neurotoxins that can put you in the hospital. You are more at risk of being killed by a cow. (approximately 25 people a year in the U.S. meet that fate). If you are the first one down a trail, especially during the summer months, you might encounter the large web of a Golden Silk Orbweaver (*Nephila clavipes*), but if you leave her alone she'll leave you alone. The web is just protein so don't freak out.

Snakes don't chase people though they may go in the same direction as you to find their safe spot. Even when I'm trying to find snakes, I seldom come across them even though we have more than 40 species in Florida (we only get 5 of the 6 species of venomous snakes here in Northeast Florida).

I have been surprised by the leaping ability of the common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) and have learned to give them their space. I like having 5 fingers on each hand. And those little stinkpot turtles (*Sternotherus odoratus*) have earned their name, so leave them alone.

To be honest, when I'm running on trails it's not the wildlife that concerns me, except for that one time I wondered why there was a Black Angus cow in the woods that turned out to be a 291-pound wild hog in the not so far distance. Hint: it's OK to scan for which tree you may be able to climb if needed while you're running in the woods.

It's more often the plant matter that can be the obstacle that trips you up. The roots of pines and other tree species, the fallen branches, the living and dead vines such as smilax, wild grape, and Virginia creeper, the duff (the buildup of fallen leaves and pine needles leading to false footing), the thorns on the blackberry canes can snag you -- and those seeds! Not the maple seeds we used to call helicopters, but the larger seeds like the magnolia clusters, sycamore and sweet gum balls, and the various hickory nuts that can cause your ankle to twist and roll you down. And, from personal experience, those pinecones falling from the heights hurt when they hit your head!

To stay safe whether you are indoors or outside, NEVER put your hands where you can't see them and don't touch the wildlife!! Same as when you're in an elevator, just be aware of your surroundings and wear closed-toed shoes. Wear insect repellent year-round and avoid wearing bright blue (Yellow flies are actually attracted to that color).

It is Florida, folks!! We are lucky enough to live among so much of nature's wonders. Enjoy it!! Go outdoors and run some trails!!

JTC Running's Guana Back to Nature Trail Race is coming up in December...hope to see you there!!

## RUNNING WITH A HIP REPLACEMENT

After completing the Cecil Field 5k recently, Bob Fernee asked me to share my experience with going through total hip replacement surgery and how recovery has been going. I had the surgery on March 6 at the Heekin Clinic to replace my right hip with a "40-year" titanium. I guess running 45 years with a bit of hip dysplasia and some over-pronation with the right foot finally wore out the cartilage to the point it was bone on bone, making running and even walking a challenge. I was also losing flexibility in the right hip, making it difficult to even put on a sock. Surgery seemed the best option, particularly since stem cell therapy is still experimental and not covered by insurance. I have been very pleased with the results.

When I asked Dr. Heekin about the prospects of running again post-surgery, he did not recommend it, but added, "I know how runners are, so if you have to run go ahead, but that 40-year hip may become a 20-year hip if you start running again." I thought, "well, by then I doubt I'll still be running anyway" and the main reason for having the surgery was so that I could run pain-free again. His nurses were much more adamant about replacing running with walking and added that if I tripped while running it would be very easy to dislocate the hip.

Consequently, I am very cautious now when I run, especially on the trails, to avoid tripping and falling. Much to their chagrin, I am back out running the trails at UNF every Saturday morning.

The Cecil Field 5k, which I ran with my daughter (her first 5k race ever), was my first race since the surgery. I began my physical rehab the same day as the surgery in the St Vincent's "rehab camp," and continued it every day for eight weeks with a rehab therapist coming to the house three days a week for the first four weeks. During the first week after surgery I got around with a walker, by week two I advanced to a cane, and by week three I needed neither. I was soon up to walking 3 miles at a time and by week nine I resumed some light running. The hip gets a little tight occasionally but feels better than it has in years and I am getting my flexibility back. I know runners who have run the River Run following a hip replacement, and though I do not intend on doing that, I am glad to be back running the occasional 5k and would encourage anyone who is experiencing hip pain due to arthritis and cartilage degeneration to consider the surgery and get back out there on the roads and enjoy the passion we all have for our favorite sport!

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### A MESSAGE FROM NEW BOARD MEMBER, CHRISTY ASTORGA

I am excited to join the JTC Running Board of Directors. JTC Running does so much for our Jacksonville community through different sponsorships, events, and volunteering and I wanted to be a part of it.

I picked up running after high school when I wasn't playing other sports and instantly fell in love with it. I have four children and we have lived in Jacksonville since 2006 (minus a few years in North Carolina). Jacksonville offers races year-round so there's always something to train for. My favorite race is the half-marathon on Thanksgiving Day --such a great way to kick off a long, family-filled holiday weekend.

We just launched the new JTC Running apparel line on our website, so be sure to check it out. Buy something and wear it to show your support of JTC Running! There are a variety of designs, so there is something for everyone. Look for different specials throughout the year to keep your running gear fresh!

## RETURNING THE FAVOR, MARK RYAN



One of JTC Running's unsung heroes is club member Mark Ryan. He has served on the Board of Directors and is also an official with the Gate River Run. He is one of the most avid, dedicated runners you could ever

meet. He loves it. Mark's greatest contribution is to our club's Guana Back to Nature Trail Runs – a 50k Ultra, 2x25k Team Trail Race, and 12k Trail Race. This year's event takes place on Sunday, Dec. 2nd. Enter at [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com) or [1stplacesports.com](http://1stplacesports.com) (\$4 discount to club members). Mark Ryan is certainly an involved, committed runner and one who is returning the favor.

**BOB FERNEE:** You have been a runner for a very long time, but I doubt if many of us know how you first got into it. What's your story?

**MARK RYAN:** I played team sports all through high school; football, hockey and golf. I never ran track or cross country. After college when I was working in the broadcast advertising business, one of my colleagues, who was a runner, got me interested. After about six months of running a couple of times a week, he talked me into signing up for a 5-mile race. It was the middle of July in Minneapolis and it was hot and humid. I thought I was going to die, but I finished and just kept going from there. That was in 1975. I did not run my first marathon until 2005; earlier that year I had relocated from New York City and never had the inclination to do a marathon. I thought it was crazy. I fell in with a group of runners in Ponte Vedra and they were all marathoners and one thing led to another and I ran my first marathon in December of 2005 at the Jax Bank Marathon.

**BF:** Your favorite events seem to be ultra races. What is it you love so much about the super long distances?

**MR:** I always tell people there is a Zen quality to it for me. You are one with nature and just letting your mind wonder. I rarely listen to music during an ultra

race; I like to chat with other runners and just set my mind free. During a 100-mile race I am constantly checking my vitals, how do I feel etc. I want to make sure I am consuming enough water, calories, electrolytes, etc.

**BF:** Your running career is still in full swing and the best may be yet to come, but looking back, what do you see as your best performances and most notable achievements?

**MR:** I believe my most notable achievement so far is the fact I have had very few injuries and am still competing at 67 years old.

**BF:** Years ago, we had "marathon mania." The idea was that everyone and anyone can do the 26.2 miles. Do you think that this has cheapened the marathon? Has its aura gone? Is the ultra today what the marathon was, say, 50 years ago?

**MR:** I don't know about that, but I always tell people if you can finish a marathon you can finish a 50k (which is 31 miles). The thing I like most about ultras is the ultra community. They are very close knit and will do anything to help out if one of their fellow competitors is struggling during an event.

**BF:** For the seventh time, you are the race director of JTC Running's most unique event, the Guana Ultra and Trails Races, how did that begin?

**MR:** About eight years ago, I got a call one morning from Doug Alred asking if I would be willing to be the race director for the Guana 50k Trail Race. It had not been run in a couple of years and Doug wanted to bring it back. So, he twisted my arm a little and I said yes. He said he would help me with the planning and he did. He suggested a co-race director and suggested you and there we went. You also suggested we add a 12k trail race, which we did, and that has been very popular.

**BF:** Are you happy with the way the event is going?

**MR:** Yes, very happy. In fact, this year we are the USATF Ultra Championship for Florida in the 50k distance.

## RETURNING THE FAVOR, MARK RYAN

**BF:** Please tell us what you have planned for this year's event. Anything new or changed?

**MR:** Hopefully it will not be as muddy as last year. Nothing new planned.

**BF:** Please tell us about your involvement with the Friends of Guana organization.

**MR:** Because of my involvement with our Guana Trail Races, I was asked if I wanted to be on the Board of the Friends of the GTM Reserve four years ago. This board is the designated citizen support organization for the GTM (Guana Tolomato Matanzas) National Estuarine Research Reserve in Ponte Vedra Beach; our mission is to enhance and support environmental education, stewardship of our natural and cultural resources and scientific research at the Reserve. I am the president elect of the board for the 2019 fiscal year.

**BF:** You've seen a lot of big changes in running and racing over the years. What are your thoughts? Do you like what you see or not?

**MR:** I think the two biggest changes in running since I got involved in 1975 are: 1) the shoes are so much better than when I started; 2) the electronic timing equipment made race results better for everyone. I still remember when you finished a race you had to tear off a section of your bib and hand it to people who would put them in order on a spindle; then the results wouldn't be available until the next day. Boy, I wouldn't want to be the person going through them and put them on a spreadsheet.

Over the last three or four years the number of entrants in races around the country has fallen off. I don't know the reason, maybe it is because there are more races these days, but I hope those numbers start to grow again.

**BF:** On behalf of JTC Running I would like to say thanks for doing such a splendid job of directing the Guana event. It is a lot of work but thanks to your dedication and expertise you accomplish it very well.

### MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE FOR SALE ONLINE AT [JTCRUNNING.COM](http://JTCRUNNING.COM)



Congratulations Club Member & Guana Race Director, Mark Ryan

**2019 President-Elect:**

**Friends of GTM Reserve**

Well Done, Mark, and Good Luck!

See Old Friends, Make New!

**JTC RUNNING'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**Saturday, December 8, 6:30 p.m.**

1st Place Sports, 2018 San Marco Blvd. 32207

## NEW PARENTS' TUSCAN CHICKEN PASTA



Nutritionist Jon Vredenburg, MBA, RD, CDE, CSSD, LD/N (yeow, I never knew there were so many letters in the alphabet, but if anyone deserves them it would be him) is a new member in our club, he's also a new contributor to our newsletter. Now, his newness has gone one better – he's a new father. Jon and his wife Carrie just had their first child, a girl, Hadley Rae, born August 11, 7 lbs. 3ozs, 19.5 inches. It was an exciting time for them and wouldn't you know it, close to The Starting Line's deadline. Well, I'm not like all those other editors, I cut people some slack when slack is due. I always said, "Slack is due, when your wife is due." Ha! Get it? Thought it up myself and I'm quite proud. But not as proud as our new dad.

Busy as he is, Jon has provided us with another of his wonderful recipes. Did he have nothing else to do between feedings and naps? Thanks Jon; congratulations and best of luck with your new gig – fatherhood.

JTC Running's 42-Year-Old Classic

### THE LAST GASP

5k & Kids' Free One-Mile Fun Run

Sunday, December 29, 1:30 & 2 p.m.

Enter & information @ [JTCrunning.com](http://JTCrunning.com)

### Tuscan Chicken Pasta

*(makes 2 servings)*

- 2 ounces of whole wheat penne pasta
- 2 chicken breasts, about 5 ounces each, and ¼ inch thick
- 1 teaspoon of olive oil
- 1 clove of crushed garlic
- Half a teaspoon of dried rosemary
- 1 cup of rinsed cannellini beans
- 2 tablespoons of diced roasted red pepper
- 4 cups of baby spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons of grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. While pasta is boiling, season the chicken on each side with a pinch of salt and pepper, and sear it in a skillet over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes a side. Remove from skillet and set aside. Make sure the chicken is cooked thoroughly.
3. Add the oil, garlic, rosemary, beans, red pepper, and spinach to the skillet. Cook, turning frequently, until the spinach wilts (1-2 minutes).
4. Slice the chicken and drain the pasta; toss them with the bean mixture.
5. Spoon the pasta into two bowls and top each with 1 tablespoon of Parmesan cheese.

Nutritional analysis, per serving: 412 calories, 7 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 45 grams carbohydrate, 42 grams protein.

JTC Running's Most Unique Event

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50k Ultra, 2x25 Team, 12k Trail

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Guana Tolomato Reserve, S. Ponte Vedra Bch.

Enter & information @ [1st Place Sports.com](http://1stPlaceSports.com)

## TAKE A RUN ON THE WILD SIDE DECEMBER 2ND



Mark Ryan, Race Director

Lou Reed sang (well, it was more like a talk/sing), “take a walk on the wild side.” While I don’t exactly want to experience the kind of wild side Lou was referring to, I would like to encourage you to take a run on the wild side this Dec. 2nd. For that Sunday is the date of JTC Running’s wildest and most unique event, the Guana Back-to-Nature Trail Races.

The race is certainly different. To begin with, it is more than just one race, it is three. The blue-ribbon event is the 50k (31-mile) Ultra race. An ultra is any run longer than the 26.2-mile marathon, but I’m sure you knew that. The course consists of a beautiful, spectacularly wooded tour through the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarian Research Reserve. Phew! Come to think of it, the name is nearly as long as our 50k. You can cut that mouthful down to just Guana; everyone else does. Guana is located along Florida A1A in South Ponte Vedra. You can hardly miss it, the place is huge, more than 73,000 acres. Mind you, we will only be running in the southern portion. The northern section is a hunting preserve and we wouldn’t want to get too close to that place.

The course is a single loop of slightly more than 7.5 miles. The runners in the ultra will complete it four times, and for an ultra, that’s not much repetition. There is also a two-person team race in which each

runner will do 25k (15.5 miles). Both races begin at the same time, 8 a.m. An aid station will be located along the trail and a well-stocked aid station, complete with toilets, will be in operation at the start/finish line area. Ultra runners will pass it at the end of every lap.

An “every man’s” 12k (7.5 miles) was added when Mark Ryan took over as race director. This was to attract those runners and walkers who didn’t feel up to going so far but wanted to enjoy the delights of Guana and this event. The 12k participants will start their journey at 1 p.m. and do just one lap of the same course. The late start is by design, so that runners in the ultra and the 12k will finish closely together. Then, together, they can make their way to The Reef restaurant for another wild moment: the postrace party and awards presentation.

Awards, yes, there are age-group awards as well as the usual overall and masters prizes. Medallions to all finishers of any of the three races. Shirts to everyone, and a special gift for those who attend the postrace fest. The Reef restaurant is only 5 miles south of Guana along A1A. Between the party, the food and drink, and the gift, it is well worth the drive. Besides, if you’ve just run that far you’ll love sitting down for a while.

This JTC Running event is sponsored by REI, Altra shoes, and The Reef restaurant. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Friends of Guana foundation to help support preservation efforts at the GTM. Race director Mark Ryan is an avid ultra runner and knows the wants and needs of ultra runners. He provides it all perfectly. Mark has done a splendid job with the event and our club thanks him – you will, too! More than a race director, Mark is now the 2019 president-elect of the Friends of GTM Reserve. Obviously, people in that organization also recognize his quality and commitment. Congratulations, thanks, and good luck, Mark.

## SBR 2018, WHAT A TRIP!

In the editor Bob Fernee's "Beer Issue" of The Starting Line I had a bit titled My First Mile. Now I feel compelled to write a story with a title like, My First Fall or My First Trip. Perplexing, you'll have to read on to see what I mean. Falling over is for little kids and old people. Sadly, I'm far more like the latter than the former. Falling is an incident that is often more embarrassing than it is painful. Well, depends where and how you land, it can be highly painful, too. In any case, here is my humble, personal reflection of another fine, historic Summer Beach Run.

Another SBR in the books and as usual, everything went very well. Hats off to our club, the hosts, JTC Running, Doug Alred & his crew, Tijuana Flats & their crew, and all the many volunteers. There were about a thousand people on hand to participate in this classic 5-mile beach run, Florida's oldest race, and at one time, my favorite. Because of some personal problems, I haven't been running much lately, so I walked the 5 miles. I don't do any "racewalking," I just walk strong. I don't have anything against walking, but yet, it just isn't running. This is only the second race that I ever walked. Despite my running decline, it was still good to see, and talk with, all my many old running friends.

The race started promptly at 5 o'clock. It was congested at the start for us walkers. After about half a mile I settled into a pretty good walking pace and everything was going well. All the running friends that I used to run with were long gone, and I didn't recognize any of the people around me. But I was starting to pass a few as we were coming up on the 1-mile mark. After about one and a half miles I looked up and low and behold, there was the great Jay Birmingham about 30 yards or so ahead of me. Now, if this wasn't enough to give me some additional incentive to push a little hard, nothing would. Around the 2-mile mark I was actually gaining a little on Jay. I was walking

hard and he was running. But he doesn't run like the Jay of years ago (who does?). He used to be fast, and certainly the most enduring of runners. But now his running is more like what I would call the Birmingham shuffle, nothing like the days of yore (sorry, Jay; but look at me, I'm walking!). I had just passed the 2-mile mark and was getting close. Jay was now in striking distance, and then it happened. Boom! I didn't know what happened. I've run many beach runs and I never run in the water. I always run where the sand may be damp but yet firm. Furthermore, I'm always very observant of where I land. I had just put my left foot in front of a small hole with no problem. A lot of kids were playing on the beach, and they may have been tunneling around, digging holes. This hole was only about the size of a baseball and it had just a little water in it. I was striding pretty good so my right foot cleared the hole by several feet and thus I landed on good solid ground. Boom! The ground gave way and my whole leg sank below the surface. I landed in a sort of deep underground pit. My right leg held fast but my body keep on going. I went end over end, glasses went one way and hat another. I could have easily gotten a broken leg but I guess I'm blessed. I got up and brushed off the sand. Then I made sure that nothing was broken. I didn't have any pain and everything seemed OK (except for one little spot of blood on my shirt and I didn't know where it came from). I started out again. Before I got to the turnaround, Jay and some others that I had been closing on had already made the turn and were well on their way back. I think I came back somewhat slower than going out. But I was just thankful to be in one piece. That night I was up all night with severe leg cramps. I don't know why, because the next day I walked on my nearby school's track and all seemed well. I guess I should be very thankful.

I stuck around for the music, awards, and food. Talk about food; the folks at Tijuana Flats do a fantastic job, especially at seeing the food never runs out. All

## SBR 2018, WHAT A TRIP!

in all, it was another great SBR and I'm glad I went. I've been running for 40 years now (10 walking). I've seen many runners fall, in training runs and races, even a couple of elite runners. Yet, I never thought I would ever fall. I guess there is always a first time. My pride of being able to say I've never fallen while

running is no longer. Now I can only say to myself, "It's not the falling, it's the getting back up and staying in the game." I'm just grateful that all ended well.

## BACK TO ROUTINE: HOW TO FUEL FOR SHORTER, BUSIER FALL DAYS

As summer training comes to an end and the fall season approaches, a lot of our schedules transition with shorter days, kids back in school, and that fall race day quickly approaching. The initial putting a race on the calendar excitement has worn away, and now we are in what is known as "the grind." It's easy to be consumed by days that seem to not have enough hours to get everything done. However, even in days with less time, and a bigger to-do list, there are still simple strategies that everyone can take part in to promote a healthy, well balanced diet. Now, I don't know about you, but when I think of "meal- prep" I yawn and then think of Tupperware of chicken, rice, and green beans (BORING). Therefore, Meteor Nutrition strives to find strategies that are just as simple and time effective, and less redundant than the meal prep stereotype.

### Some of Meteor Nutrition's favorite benefits of fun meal prepping for athletes:

- Helps reduce stress
- Saves money
- Helps meet nutrient timing windows (more energy and improved recovery around workouts)
- Helps manage caloric intake
- Takes guess work out of what to eat

Meal planning can be done in 4 simple steps:

### Step 1: Pick recipes and insert them into weekly calendar

Focus on food groups rather than specific recipes. This will help to keep a balance of lean protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates in your meals. Remember to choose options that are also rich in fruits and vegetables. A healthy everyday and performance diet should limit concentrated sweets and saturated/trans fat to maintain healthy organ system function. Meteor encourages clients to review their recipe lists for "double duty meals" which can mean leftovers, or repurposing original meals (example: tacos to taco salad).

### Step 2: Take inventory of what you already have at home

Based on the meals that you have selected, determine what ingredients you still need. Check your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry to find out what items are available in your own home. Try keeping a list of staple items you have in stock such as herbs, spices, flours, and seasonings to avoid buying a product that you already have.

### Step 3: Make a shopping list

Use the information you have gathered from inventory and based off your meal plan to develop a list of items you will need at the store.

The Starting Line / Written by Kelsey Beckman

## BACK TO ROUTINE: HOW TO FUEL FOR SHORTER, BUSIER FALL DAYS

Visit [meteornutrition.com](http://meteornutrition.com) and sign up for email list for a Meteor Nutrition complimentary grocery list template. We also encourage organizing coupons, apps, and other money-saving methods ahead of time.

### Step 4: Shop Strategically

The more efficient you get at steps 1-3, the more realistic step 4 will be, and the more time and money you will likely save. Ultimately, the goal is to have an accurate grocery store list that will allow you to shop no more than once during the week. Consider using grocery delivery services

such as Instacart, Shipt, Peapod, Walmart, and AmazonFresh to save valuable time.

Ultimately, planning meals ahead of time helps you save money, reduce stress, and helps you better meet your run specific nutrient needs. If you are looking for a monthly dose of recipe inspiration, check out our Meteor Members publication, where each month has a run specific theme and a 7-day menu to accompany it!

## Weekly Training Runs

**Sunday 6:30 am, Mandarin:** Various locations and distance. See Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pg/JaxSundayRun/posts/](http://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](mailto:whitelindab@bellsouth.net)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Thursday 6:00 pm, Tapestry Park:** 1st Place Sports, Bottlenose Brewing, 3-6 miles. Contact: 620-9991

**Thursday 6:30 pm, Springfield:** Hyperion Brewery, 3-4 miles Contact: Bill Dunn, [wmdunn222@gmail.com](mailto:wmdunn222@gmail.com)

**Friday 5:40 am, Mandarin:** Beauclerc, Forest Circle, 7.5 miles. Contact: Paul Smith, [smithfccj@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

## SNAKES & SUCH

Don't you love those magazine covers that show some buff guy or sleek young lady running through the perfection of what appears to be the Smoky Mountains or the Sierra Nevadas? No doubt you look at it and think, "Boy, sure beats my stomping ground, Blanding Boulevard." Call me Mr. Negative I guess, but I can't help thinking, "I hope that cute young thing doesn't get eaten by a mountain lion or mauled by a bear." It has happened, you know. Given the choice I'd rather look at a Waffle House than an enraged, gargantuan grizzly.

Round here though, we don't worry much about bears and panthers.

Though they do say the Florida panther is making a comeback, and a few years ago you might remember that a panther was seen in a tree in San Marco. San Marco! I saw it on the local news, but I never



heard what ever became of that cat. Anyway, it was probably a Jaguarundi (which is not a Jaguar running around in his undies – I anticipated your thoughts). The Jaguarundi is a small, otter-looking cat that is indigenous to Florida and quite rare. But we had one in the woods behind our house. Don't know what became of him either. Wonder why Jacksonville's gridiron team didn't call itself the Jaguarundis? Far more appropriate, and they're cuter. The Jaguarundi exists, check him out, he's on the internet, and as I've told you before, the internet does not lie.

They say that dogs are man's best friend, everybody loves them. But are they a runner's best pal? If they get aggressive they become more than a barking nuisance. I remember my father was out training one day, and a tiny, yapping

dog ran at him from behind. He thought the little thing was no threat and kept running, but without so much as a bye your leave, the dog bit straight into his Achilles tendon. He was out of running for eight weeks. My dad, not the dog.

My wife was attacked in our community by a pit bull, and it was on a leash no less (try saying that after a few beers). He bit her in the side, beneath the rib cage. The owner was lucky she didn't sue him, she could have. In some states owners must buy \$150,000 worth of liability insurance just in case. These states know that certain dog breeds can go off at almost any moment. Given

their history, I wonder why they are still legal. But I guess as long as machine guns are fine and dandy, well.

Alligators? Very Florida. Luckily, we don't often concern ourselves with them.

Too slow, right? Those stumpy little legs and the heavy tail dragging behind, it's like resistance running at its worst. Beware though, they are swifter than you might think. For a short distance an alligator can run between 10 and 15 miles per hour. Unlike us, he can hit top speed without a jog warmup. Don't try using a gator for your speedwork partner, you could regret it. In the water a gator can move twice as quick – up to 30 mph, that's deadly fast, literally. Favorite thing is to grab their prey, pull it into the water, drown it, and well ... you know the rest. Don't let that happen to you, or you might wake up in a gator gut.

Snakes? You came to the right place. Most people don't go for snakes. That's understandable, they're creepy the way they crawl around on the ground. Trouble is, most people know nothing about

## SNAKES & SUCH

snakes, other than the fact that they don't like them, any of them. They think that they are all poisonous. They see a snake and automatically think, "Kill it." Kind of like me when I see a nice cold beer.

Pythons: These days everyone is seeing pythons. Why? Because the Everglades is crawling with them; they got loose from exotic pet stores when Hurricane Andrew came through in 1992. The pythons had no problem finding food and procreating. Seems that pythons don't like North Florida because the weather is too cold. I never knew pythons were so picky. Fine, my

reptilian pal, I'm glad you feel that way. Someone in Duval County reported seeing a python in a tree and quickly called the authorities. One of the local news channels must have thought it hit paydirt and shot some exciting footage. Turned out it was a yellow rat snake, a perfectly harmless fellow (unless you're the rat) and it was just seeking higher ground to get out of the rain.

Whenever I am out running my mind often turns to snakes. I live in the World Golf Village area, which not long ago was a huge forest. Its original inhabitants are trying to stand their ground. Or should I say, slither their ground. My 13-year-old son says they should have called it the World Soccer Village because, "More people play soccer here than golf." Good point, but I believe World Snake Village would have been even more accurate. The place is rampant with reptiles. It has come to the point where I am almost surprised if I don't see one.

Mostly they are of the harmless type: The black snake, aka black "racer," garter snake, green snake, king snake, rat snake. Unfortunately, other

inhabitants are the cottonmouth water moccasin, pygmy rattle snake, and the eastern diamondback rattler. Did you know that the pygmy is the second-most common snake in Florida, only outnumbered by the black racer? In Florida, no adult deaths have been attributed to the pygmy, but he can send your dog or cat to pet heaven. I dread to think what he could do to a child.



In my former residence, the Arlington area of Jacksonville, we barely saw any snakes. I think it was because the place was built some 60 years ago, and the snakes have been pushed out. A sort of 1950s gentrification; or genocide, if looking at it from the snake's

point of view. Except my neighbor, track club member Karie Ewing, who took her dog for an innocent walk and later discovered at the veterinarian's office that the reason for his lethargy and swollen body was due to a snakebite. The poor thing nearly went to the big doghouse in the sky; fortunately, he survived. Hence the term, "lucky dog," Ha! Well, it was funny in rehearsal.

Then there was the true story of The Redneck and The Rattlesnake, or, at least, that's what I call it. You might have seen it on the local news a few years ago. The guy lives in the middle of nowhere, he's driving down his dirt road one day when he sees a 6-foot-long rattler in the road. He decides that this is not good because "Someone might run over it and kill it." That's bad? I'm not so sure. He gets out of his truck, finds a twig beside the road and attempts to push the six-footer off the road and into the brush. What do you suppose the snake thought?

"This fool's trying to kill me with a stick, better get out my fangs," that's what I imagined.

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Next of course the snake gave him a good one. Life Flight arrived and helicoptered him to the nearest hospital where he spent over two weeks, much of it in the intensive care unit. The attending physician said it was the worse snakebite he had ever seen. Total cost of bite? Hold onto your snake-proof boots: \$700,000. 'Tis true, the reporter showed the invoice. I wonder who paid it. In an accent stronger than that of Paula Deen the wife said: "That snake is still out there somewhere. I'm gonna get him and when I do I'm gonna turn him into a belt." Oh no, here we go again. The authorities say that most snakebites happen because people mess around with the snake.

Recently there was a guy in Texas who killed a big rattler and cut off his head – the rattler's, that is. Then he made the classic mistake of picking up the head. Nerves and instinct took over and the reptile did what came naturally, he bit him. The rattler could have done a Mark Twain and said: "Rumors of my death are grossly exaggerated." Instead, he let his venom do the talking for him and dumped all the venom he had into the fool's hand. Mr. Snake Handler nearly died along with the serpent. After a week in the hospital they said his organs were still not functioning at 100%. Don't mess around with snakes, people.

I've become more used to snakes, mainly because I look for them. Although there is always that quick-as-a-flash moment when you suddenly see one and he's virtually under your feet and, harmless or not, he scares the high-tech socks off you. Never quite get accustomed to that. My encounters have not been too bad, though I did kill a pygmy on my doorstep and had to call the police on a water moccasin.

What does a runner do if he or she has an adventure with a snake while running?

1. Don't scream, and don't show any fear. Look him right in the eye; stare him down. No wait, that's for a mountain lion. A snake would never fall for that.
2. Hit the ground, get into the fetal position, cover your neck and head and stop breathing. Oh, sorry, that's for bears. Oddly enough, when a bear sees a snake he does the same thing.
3. Reason with the reptile. Say, "You don't want to bite me, I'm just a pokey walk-jogger." It always works; no self-respecting snake would ever bite a Gallowalker.
4. Give him your best Donald Trump: "Hey, you loser! You're crawlin' around on the ground. Loser. Ya can't even get up on yer own two feet. Oh, yeah, cause you ain't got no feet, you loser!" Somehow, it's successful. This type of mentality works on a lot of reptiles and people alike.
5. Be creative. Try something like: "I'm a JTC Running member and you're not included in my membership fee." By the time he's figured out what such an idiotic outburst means you'll be yards away.

It's not so bad, your chances of being killed by a car are far greater than being grabbed by a gator. Running and Florida's wildlife go well together, believe me. Find out by attending JTC Running's next event, The Guana Trails 50k ultra, 2x25k team race and 12k trail race. It all takes place on Sunday, December 2nd. It may be the wildest, most different run you will ever do. It even includes a wild post-race party. You can learn more and enter on [JTCRunning.com](http://JTCRunning.com) or [1stPlaceSports.com](http://1stPlaceSports.com).

## FANNIN'S CLASSIC OVERCOMES NATURE'S OBSTACLES

The day looked ominous. Nearly all afternoon Mother Nature had unleashed her fury, a nonstop sheet of rain. Would the sophomore edition of the Cecil Pre-Season Cross-Country Classic make it to the starting line? It didn't seem like it. I sent an email to Race Director Richard Fannin right before the first of four races were scheduled to begin and received no reply – that worried me. After all his hard work and preparation was the whole thing washed away? Only one way to find out, I stuck to my plan to attend the event.

For most of us, the Cecil Multi-Use Sports Complex, aka New World Sports Complex, is a bit of a drive. But it is worth it. For such a magnificent cross-country venue you get what you drive for. Located on the fringe of west Jacksonville, the gigantic space has it all and is what we runners, especially harriers, have dreamed about for decades.

JTC Running is a financial sponsor of this pre-season extravaganza that took place on Aug. 17. We also provided funds to install permanent mile markers along the course. These have yet to be installed.

Prior to 1999, the 2,600 acres of what was Naval Air Station Cecil Field was the largest military base in acreage in the Jacksonville area. Today it is a joint civilian/military airport that serves as an Army Aviation Support Center Facility and the Cecil Commerce Center. The rest of the land is a City of Jacksonville Public Park that boasts an 18-hole golf course, playing fields, sand dunes and something quite rare: a frisbee disc golf course. To you and me it is just a great place to run. Or rather, to stage a race, or, in this case, many races.

It is somewhat odd, but although the city owns the grounds it is leased to a private company. New World Sports LLC and its 19 employees do all the work around

the place, as the owner, Robbie Newcomer, was quick to point out. An excitable, enthusiastic fellow, Newcomer showed me around and gave me a good talking-to on the night of the event.

“We have the No. 3 disc-golf course in America and the No. 1 in Florida. People come from all over the world to play here. We're busy all year long,” Newcomer said.

Indeed, he pointed to a map of the world displayed on a wall. It was full of colored pins showing where teams had come from just to play in this remote corner of the globe. I had no idea that disc-golf was so big and its participants so, well, fanatical. He introduced me to his on-site, full-line, disc-golf store. “I have over 400 frisbees in stock at all times,” Newcomer said. I could see the place held a lot of plastic.

He is upset about the city. He said he wants more recognition from the parks department and more help. I was reminded of the old saying: “Be careful what you wish for.” If they are leaving him alone that might be a

good thing – we all know what City Hall can do. He operates his own on-site bar/restaurant and when I left that night the place was packed with people. It functions as their local pub. It has a full bar and I think I know what the city would do about that. Keep under the radar, Robbie.



Outside, Newcomer pointed to a small army of high schoolers warming up. “That's the future right there! Who wouldn't want to be a part of all this?” he said with conviction.

What does he want from the city? I am still unclear about that. He said he needed more flood lights and lights on a parking lot extension. Should the parks department cut the grass or pay his employees? I don't know. All I do know is that this is a wonderful venue and it is hard to

## FANNIN'S CLASSIC OVERCOMES NATURE'S OBSTACLES

believe that today, with so much of Duval County being destroyed and developed, this huge cross-country running ground should open to us. It seems like an impossible dream.

The rain ran out of rain just before the first race, for middle schoolers, leaving soggy ground. "It was actually firmer than it was last year," the race director said.

The deluge drowned an important piece of equipment belonging to the famous Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute band, Second Helping, and they were unable to perform. Without missing a beat, the Adam Hill Band provided live music throughout the evening. Ultimately, it was a beautiful evening to be racing.

Long-time club member Doug Tillett commented on the event: "I like it.

The course has variety, grass and woods. I like cross-country and I enjoy the opportunity to run it."

Tillett ran in the second race, the Open 5k, as did Bonita Golden-Sikes. "I think it's great," she said. "It's my second time out here. I like that it's cross-country."

The third race was for high school girls and the final one was for high school boys.

Cross-country enthusiast Rodney Smith, who coached the sport at Bolles High School for 14 years and Stanton College Preparatory for 20, said: "I love it. I think it's great; it gives high school runners an idea of their shape." Smith coached Richard Fannin while he was at Bolles. He also coached Richard's two sisters, Jennifer and Laura. It was his first race since hip replacement surgery last March.

Race director Richard Fannin's father, Buck, was also in attendance. He was more than pleased by what he saw: "Such a big turnout, so early in the season."

He continued: "Richard said to me, 'I think I've found my

calling.'" Indeed, Richard Fannin puts his heart and soul into this event and the Bishop Snyder girls' cross-country team of which he is the head coach. He founded the event to make money to support the girls' program that has no financial aid from the school. As I have said before, I cannot say enough great things about Fannin and his passionate, tireless work for cross-country and running in general in our area.

Fannin has a lot to be proud of. The event was a resounding success, as it was last year. There were 108 finishers in the middle school 2.5k-race, representing eight schools. 283 boys finished the high school 5k race and 143 girls finished their race, representing 19 and 13 high schools respectively. In the Open 5k there were 84 finishers. These numbers were up from 2017, producing a

grand total of 618 finishers. Full results can be seen at [1stPlaceSports.com](http://1stPlaceSports.com).

This was only the beginning, as Fannin has at least three more events planned before the end of the year. These include the New World Fall Spectacular Cross-Country Carnival, a new two-day event on October 5th and 6th, that will incorporate

the Gateway Conference Meet and an Open 5k race on Friday the 5th starting at 4 p.m. A new course will be showcased using the "Back 9." This will be followed by a pre-Regional meet and then, finally, the high school Regional Championships.

His ideas do not stop there. "I'm thinking of a 10-mile trail race, a couples run and a dunes race, all here at Cecil," he said. Those events would be for all runners.

Hopefully, our track club and the city will be fully behind this ever-improving project. It is the future of cross-country in our area and a great endeavor.



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