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INTERVALS

Merrimack Valley Striders Newsletter

Welcome to the December issue of Intervals.

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MVS Spotlight on Lisa Plume!

10 Questions with ... Lisa, Merrimack Valley Strider
Hometown: North Andover, MA
Role(s) as a club volunteer: New Newsletter Volunteer, Mt Washington Volunteer, Hosted Runs
Interviewed by Amy Dalton



1) How long have you been running and what made you start?

I have been running for two years. I started boot camp with a friend and then started fitness walking. A conversation with my hairdresser about the Irish Pub Race Series led me to consider running and 8 months later I ran my first half marathon. (I have come to LOVE half marathons.)

2) How long have you been running with MVS?

One Year. I've really enjoyed the hosted runs and getting to know so many club members. Since joining MVS, I trained and ran my first marathon and participated in an 'early morning' track group with coach Kristina (and yes there are at least 12 club members who think running track at 6:15 in the morning is a terrific idea.)

3) What is your running sneaker of choice?

ASIC Gel Nimbus 13 with small arch inserts from my physical therapist. I track my running miles and swap them out every 350 miles.

4) What race if any are you currently training for?

I am training for Boston (thanks MVS!)

5) What is your proudest running moment?

My proudest running moment is the day I completed a 20 mile run on my own. I had run two 20 mile events previously – but I was really scared to do it on my own. Once I finished that, I knew I could do anything.

6) What keeps you motivated?

Signing up for the 'next event', having a plan to keep me on track, and having work out buddies all keep me motivated – but the ultimate motivation is that I feel so much better when I run in my overall day to day life. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

7) If you're not running, what are you most likely doing?

Running around with my family, cooking, gardening and reading.

8) Running with headphones - definitely or no way?

Definitely – I have even been known to ‘dance’ to my music while running. I have playlists for race starts (to keep my pace in line), for hills (nothing like a little thumping bass to power me up a hill) and a general mix. My current favorite hill song is ‘She’s Country – dance mix version’ – it’s not for everyone but it’s definitely for me.

9) Favorite pre-run meal?

I always have two cups of coffee before any run. I don’t eat for runs of 12 miles or less. I make myself eat a banana for a half marathon. LSD training runs of 14+, well I do try to eat something simple...

10) Why do you run?

So many reasons.... I am so much fitter. I love the endorphins. It’s a great example for my eight year old. Bottom Line: Running makes me happy.

USATF NE 2011 GRAND PRIX by Steve Seide

The USA Track & Field-New England Grand Prix series is entering its 27th year. If you’re not familiar with these races they bring out the top running competition in New England. You compete at age group categories starting with “open” which is anyone under age 40 then by decade for age groups 40-49, 50-59 and 60-69 for men and women.

The series consists of seven races at distances from 5K to the marathon. Championships are held at 5k, 5 miles, 10k and marathon, two races at distances of 12k through 30k, and a “wild card” which can be a longer race or a unique challenge event. The races in my experience have been in MA, NH, VT & RI so there can be a little travel involved but many take advantage of this to lodge and socialize with fellow club teammates. If you’re an early riser, you can make all the races in the same day.



There are some really amazing runners at all age groups and both genders. Most of the races have about 1,300 runners but not all are competing in the Grand Prix series. The selected Grand Prix races are established road races that are determined by a voting process by USATF members. (The 2012 races were recently voted on and will be announced soon) In doing the series you will see many familiar faces at the races – people with the same motivation to complete the series. What make the races unique are team competition among clubs as well as individual competition. At the club level, times are aggregated for the first three finishers at each age group. To place as an individual you need to finish in the top 10 of your age group. Points are awarded and competition is measured by race for the entire series. Awards follow the last race which is the marathon.

In addition to the competition, completing all the races earns you the designation of “Iron Runner” and a jacket to be proudly worn. Historically there are around 65-75 individuals who earn this designation, however, this year the number was 56. This year’s races started with a half marathon in March then followed with a 10k, 6k, 5k, 8 mile, 5 mile and the Cape Code marathon October 30th.

Striders completing the series and awarded the prestigious jackets this year are Martha O’Brien, Larry Dube and John Kleschinsky. Congratulations to these individuals who endured the needed sacrifices over the 8 month period

to complete the series. Look for them sporting their well-deserved Iron Runner jackets and congratulate them on a job well done.

NOT JUST A RACE By Tom Licciardello

There's no denying it – runners love to compete. Pinning on a number and lining up at the start line gets the competitive juices flowing and the heart pumping. It doesn't matter if the runner competed as a scholastic star or found the joy of being an athletic competitor later in life, racing is a blast.



Along with the upsurge in popularity in running, there are now plenty of races from which a runner can choose. From the local fun runs to the national caliber marathons, ultra-marathons, or the new obstacle races, there are plenty of chances to test the limits.

Sometimes a race is much more than just a race.

One of the most popular days to host a race is Thanksgiving. Every region of the country has some flavor of local "Turkey Trot". Some are the old fashioned small runs; some are huge events that have a long history like the 75th annual Manchester, CT race with 15,000 participants.

In our neck of the woods, we just had our 24th annual Feaster Five Race with 9,972 participants (where were the other 28 runners who would have made it an even 10,000?). By any measure, it was a great success. But it was more than just "another race".

The Saturday before the race, I ran the reverse of the Feaster route with a few running buddies. We passed numerous runners who were doing their final training run on the course for the big day. Some were clearly experienced, serious competitors decked out in technical running gear, sporting their game face, and flying along at a pace significantly faster than our crew.

But we saw many more groups of friends, some in more retro cotton sweats, running at a more modest pace with huge smiles on their faces. For some, it was because they were beginning to believe they might actually run the full 5K or 5 mile race, a goal that seemed impossible not so long ago.

On race day, the running icons that chose to spend their holiday morning on the Feaster Five course inspired the field in their own unique ways.

Bill Rodgers, multi-year Boston Marathon winner, ran the 5 mile race waving and talking to runners along the course. Running at a "modest" pace, he stopped for photo opportunities whenever asked. His days as a high level competitor may have passed, but as an ambassador of the sport, he is still the king.

Dick Hoyt, at 71 years of age, was at the starting line with his teammate and son, Rick, who is about to turn 50. The love these two have for each other and for the sport of running hasn't faded the slightest over their long career as competitors. They truly live their motto "Yes You Can!". They will be competing in their 30th Boston Marathon in April.

Joan Benoit Samuelson, the first winner of the Women's Olympic Marathon, still amazes everyone with her athletic prowess. At age 54, she won the women's division of the 5 mile race!

Beyond the legends in the race, there were so many more stories.

Joyce Perrault only missed two races in the previous 23 years. The first year, and then in 2006 when she had an aortic dissection. She was in the hospital for 114 days while she recuperated which included battling through rehabilitation for a stroke and seizures suffered during this stay. But she came back to the race the next three years, though in a wheelchair pushed by her daughter, Kristen. Joyce passed away this year, but her family was there to run in her memory.

Then there was the email from Maureen Hentz. On November 2nd a fire destroyed her family's home and all their belongings. She wanted us to know that they were still planning on running the Feaster Five for the 10th time. She wrote "I wanted to let you know how much this race means to us. We've been saying 'Well, we'll just focus on something fun.' The Feaster Five is coming up. We'll do the race just like always. By that time, things will be more normal." For that small gift, she was thankful.

Little Zach Lippman celebrated his 3rd birthday and second running in the Kid's K, and Todd Collin's Dad ran to celebrate his son's safe return home from Iraq the night before.

Well over \$50,000 was raised for two wonderful charitable partners – The Andover/N Andover YMCA and Ironstone Farm.

Esther Pelletier, age 86, ran the 5k in 50:22, well under the USATF Age-Group guideline, to win her age group, while Peyton McGovern, age 13, was 3rd place woman overall!

On August 20th, Nate Jenkins married Mellissa Donais. On Thanksgiving morning, Nate won the men's 5 mile just missing a course record, and Mellissa won the women's 5k. If they have kids, imagine how fast they will be!

Nearly 10,000 celebrated the start of Thanksgiving at the Feaster Five. Some sought to win, some sought to run a personal record. Others enjoyed pushing strollers with their youngsters or grandchildren on board. For some it was a triumph of training, and for others it was to celebrate in honor of a family member. For all, though, it was a day to give thanks for all the blessings we enjoy.

Running is the gift that keeps on giving. Be thankful, put on your running shoes, and get out for a run!

EAT TO RUN, RUN TO EAT by Amy Dalton

Christine Decubellis shared this wonderful recipe with me and I had to pass it on to you.

The best vegetable soup, no kidding

Makes about 10 servings

3/4 cup olive oil, more or less

2 onions, peeled and chopped

2 carrots, peeled and chopped

2 celery stalks, peeled and chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 bunch parsley, washed and chopped, thick stems discarded

2 or 3 cabbage leaves, chopped



1 bunch chard, preferably white, washed and chopped

1/4 cup tomato paste

3 to 4 cups cooked white beans, like cannelloni, with their liquid if possible

Put about a third of the oil in the bottom of a deep pot and turn the heat to medium.

Add half the onion, carrot and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until they soften, which takes about 10 minutes.

Add about half of the remaining oil and repeat the process, seasoning with salt and pepper as you go.

Add the remaining oil with the parsley, cabbage and chard and cook, stirring occasionally, until everything is softened but not browned.

Add the tomato paste and stir.

Mash the beans so that they're about half mashed and half more-or-less whole. Add this mixture to the pot, along with any bean cooking liquid and enough water to make the whole mixture stewy but not watery.

Continue cooking, tasting and adjusting the seasoning as necessary, until all the vegetables are very tender and the soup is hot. Serve hot or warm.

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