

32nd Annual
Shop'n Save
Turkey Trot



5K Road Race
November 18, 2000

Shop 'n' Save Turkey Trot: A Time-Honored Tradition Turns 32

WHEN: Saturday, November 18, 8:30 AM (Kids Run); 9AM (5K)

WHERE: Pond Cove Cafetorium (off Scott Dyer Road), Cape Elizabeth

Only two other Maine races—the Portland Boys and Girls Club (1930) and the Bangor Labor Day (1963)—are older than the Shop 'n' Save Turkey Trot, which holds its 32nd annual running on Saturday, November 18, 2000. Like the running world at large, this race has seen dramatic changes since its inauguration in 1969. It began as one of several events put on each year by the Maine Masters, an informal, now-defunct group (mostly male, mostly over 40), led by local writer and running enthusiast Dick Goodie. The location, then as now, was Cape Elizabeth; the distance, however, was 5.8 miles. Rumor has it that race director Goodie disliked the thought of making the runners trudge up that final hill to the school, so he ended the race at the foot! And 5.8 miles the course remained until the mid-1980s when it became, hill added, a standard 10K. Although the 10K distance gave way to 5K a few years ago, today's competitors must still scale the same daunting slope to the finish line.

For the first five years, the Turkey Trot was pretty much a "guy thing." Legendary names like Ken Flanders, Danny Paul, Ralph Thomas and Bob Hillgrove led small, hardy bands of road warriors over hill and dale (once, Dick Goodie relates, "in a heavy, wet snowstorm."). In 1972, Maine running pioneer Diane Fournier became the first woman to enter the race. By the mid-1970s, Robin Emery, Joan Benoit, Barbara Hamaluk, Carol Roy, Kim Beaulieu and other outstanding Maine women athletes were revving up the competition. Could anyone have imagined, then, future fields in the hundreds, a large percentage of them women? Could they have predicted the numbers of recreational runners, even walkers, participating in the Turkey Trot of 2000?

No longer the province of a hardy few, today's Shop 'n' Save Turkey Trot appeals to runners of all abilities, making it an ideal event for families. Younger children even have their own half-mile race, with free entry and T-shirt. Best of all, in the view of many, are the age-group prizes. Each winner receives a turkey from Hannaford, our generous sponsor. Back in the old days, if you won, you had to chase your turkey around the gym with an axe...(no, no, I'm kidding!). Actually the race director used to hand out the 12-pounders, well frozen, from a large cooler. One year Bob Coughlin almost dropped his prize on my foot. Today if you win, Mel and I just give you a "turkey certificate," which you can redeem at your nearest Shop 'n' Save. Not nearly as exciting, granted, but far less hazardous....

If you're a regular reader of running magazines, you're aware that nowadays there are many races throughout the country called "Turkey Trots." (Portland, as you may know, now even has a "Tukey Trot.") Each is a tribute to our own, the original, the race that grows with the times and never ends! So come and enjoy it, as competitor or volunteer. If you're not running, but a family member is, or if you'd just like to do something fun and useful on a Saturday morning, please help us out. Call Mel Fineberg (774-8868) or Maggie Soule (846-3631); we'll be happy to hear from you.—*Maggie Soule*

NOTE: Some of the information in the article comes from Dick Goodie's book, The Maine Quality of Running.