

MEMBER PROFILE

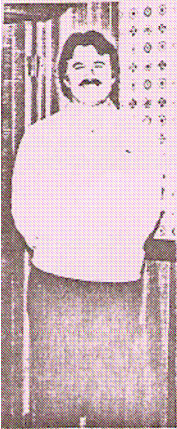
Raphael P. DePrez, born in Worcester, Massachusetts, will turn 45 on June 10, 1985. He joined the Maine Track Club less than a year ago, but then that's not the amazing part of the story.

The amazing part is that "Dee," as he is known by his many friends, ran his first marathon after only one year of running, when he completed the Maine Coast Marathon on May 26, 1985, in 4:07:36. It was to be a marathon he'll never forget. Dee was doing nicely until about mile 17 when the 4:30 a.m., english muffin and coffee breakfast began to assert itself. Around mile 20 he had to take a little side trip into the bushes.

But then the stomach cramps wouldn't go away. So he did the best he could walking, jogging, running, and walking some more. His wife, Renee, waiting at the finish, was getting worried because he had estimated his time at approximately 3:30.

The local runner is well known in the Portland area, having lived here most of his life. He's a graduate of Cheverus High School and the University of Southern Maine. He also attended Boston University for four years, and holds two Bachelor of Science degrees - one in Social Services and Psychology, and one in English. He has been the Executive Director of the South Portland Housing Authority for over 9 years. Dee really enjoys people and loves his work because of the fact that he can help others.

That's how he met his wife, Renee. Both were in service to others during the Model Cities years (late sixties). He was a social worker and she worked as a supervisor at the Danforth Neighborhood Center. They were married in 1972. But this one was more than a marriage. It was also a merger. Renee had 7 children and Dee had 4 children by previous marriages. So when they combined forces, they found themselves with 11 children and now have 17 grandchildren. But don't panic...only two are still living at home with Dee and Renee. It's a piece of cake now.



Before

Speaking of cake, that's really how Dee got into running, more or less. He loves to eat as the "before" and "after" pictures show. Dee says he was doing fine until about age 35. Then something happened. His metabolism must have slowed down because he started to gain weight. Not only did he eventually shoot up to 205 lbs., but his blood pressure shot up as well - "sky high," he says. So Dr. Carnes (a YMCA member) put him on blood pressure pills, but also continued to pressure him to do something about his situation. Dee's father had died of a heart attack at age 65, so Dee knew he was in trouble.



After

Renee, who has now been working at the YMCA for about 8 years, was also after him to join the aerobics fitness class or do something else...anything. Well, eventually he agreed, and in December, 1983, started working out in the Y's Fitness Center and even bought a rowing machine and treadmill for his home. On May 15, 1984, he started running and also soon joined the Y's aerobic fitness class to strengthen his legs.

MEMBER PROFILE cont.

The results were dramatic. He lost over 45 lbs. - from 205 lbs., in May, 1984, to under 160 lbs., four days after the marathon. Blood pressure also dropped dramatically...to normal levels and Dee stopped taking the pills. He recently went on a no-red meat diet but will eat fish and chicken. He's also sworn off fried foods and salt...and grew a beard.

Why a beard? Well, you try losing 45 pounds in one year with a big family around. Renee says everybody thought she was abusing him. They were asking if he was sick and making remarks like, "Don't you ever feed him?" The beard is a disguise and it worked. Now everybody comments about the beard instead!

If you meet Dee you'll immediately like him. There's a solid tranquility about him, a quiet sense of determination and discipline. It reflects in his lifestyle. He's an avid reader of Reverend Andrew Greeley works (My Brother's Wife, Lord of the Dance, etc.), goes to church everyday (7:00 a.m.), is President-elect of St. John's Church Parish Council in South Portland, is a Eucharistic Minister, and President (King Lion) of the South Portland Lions Club. Dee wraps it all up by saying the good Lord has been very kind to him, and he's very thankful for all the blessings.

DePrez