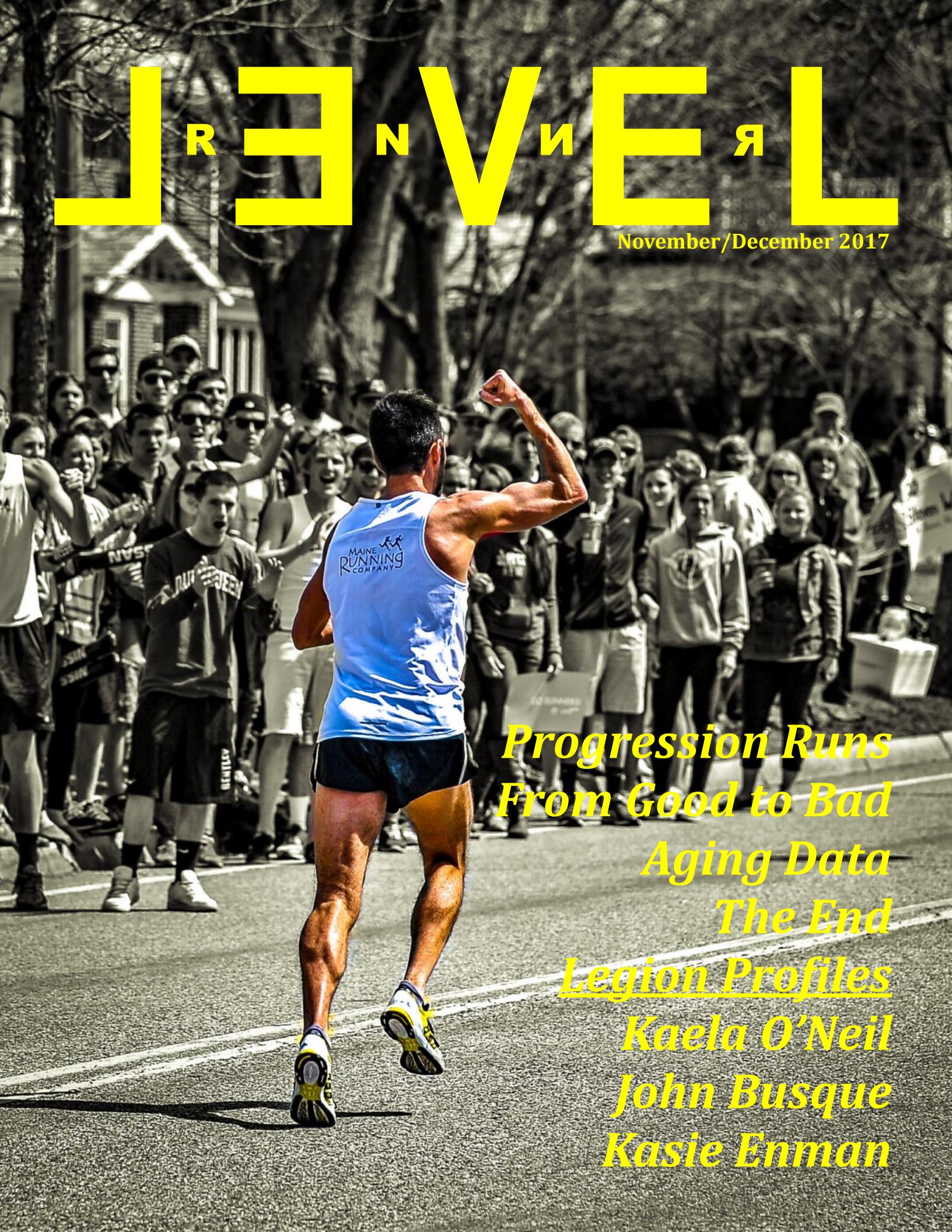


# LEVEL

November/December 2017



*Progression Runs  
From Good to Bad  
Aging Data*

*The End  
Legion Profiles*

*Kaela O'Neil  
John Busque  
Kasie Enman*



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On the Cover: Rob Gomez pumping his fist on his way to Boston. This photograph inspired the LVL10K logo and was taken by Scott Mason. Gomez and Mason both embody the goodwill so prevalent in the running community.

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TOP PHOTO: SCOTT MASON  
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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Closure presents the opportunity for reflection and with this being the last issue of Level Renner, I thought it appropriate to reflect on some of the many memorable moments throughout the last half decade or so. But, before I do, I wanted to one last time publicly thank all the writers, photographers, and contributors who helped make Level Renner possible. Thanks too to all the readers who made this endeavor so worthwhile over the years. And lastly, thanks to my family and friends who had to put up with me and the seemingly endless tasks that go into producing such a magazine. Your insights and patience greatly improved the finished product. Thank you.

Now, let's go for a run down memory lane:

### Issue #1

We featured three prominent athletes: **Diana Davis, Joe Navas, and Bob Wiles**. This issue solidified a life-long friendship with Navas who proceeded to write article after article for the magazine. Davis went on to contribute mathematical articles. Wiles is a hilarious human being. He has YouTube videos to prove it.

### Issue #4

The LVL was slowly but steadily expanding its cadre of contributors. This issue marked appearances by **Ray Charbonneau** (though not his first article), **Muddy**, and **EJN**, who would proceed to take on a significant role in the online presence of Level Renner becoming the producer of much of its web content, including the groundbreaking article "Suspect on the Run" by **Dan Harper**.

**Scott Mason**, who has the most cover shots in the magazine's history, had also begun contributing by this time.

### Issue # 14



This was our first issue after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. It was an emotional issue that was reworked at the last minute to best reflect the

sentiment in the running community at the time. The first 10 pages offered space for runners to process the events.

### Issue #26



The May/June 2015 edition, which featured a Scott Mason photo of Matt Pelletier on its cover, was one of the most read issues in the magazine's

history. Likely reasons include: increasing popularity, Boston coverage, and the Pelletier profile.

### Issue #33



Sadly, this was **Rich Stiller's** last column for the mag. He died unexpectedly. He offered a west coast perspective that many a reader appreciated.

Keeping up with LVL standards, this edition featured insightful athlete profiles and a great fiction piece by **Anna Tomasulo**.

### Issue #41

Well, this is the last one, and we're going out on a reflective theme with many articles having to do with farewells, loose ends, and just plain endings. But, when we're not pontificating on the passing, we're profiling three great athletes: **Kaela O'Neil, Kasie Enman, and John Busque**.

...One last time, I would like to say thank you. In this space, I am not able to thank everyone individually who has contributed over the years, but I am grateful for every illustration, photograph, idea, and article. I think we proved the running community is a great one.

Run. Read. Peace.

**issue 41**  
**November/December 2017**  
**[levelrenner.com](http://levelrenner.com)**

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*Level Renner is a free digital magazine and website. Interested parties can [subscribe directly](#) on the Level Renner homepage.*

**run on the ground  
read the underground**

# Goodbye, Farewell, Amen

by Ray Charbonneau

**Text 31 – Anonymous short metrical chronicle, 14th century**

## SW Midlands dialect

Suppe regnede a goude gome  
 Harold Godwynes sone  
 He was icluped Harefoot  
 For he was **renner** goud  
 Bote he ne regnede here  
 Bot .ix. mones of a ȝere  
 Willam bastard of Normandye  
 Hym cant þat was a vilanye  
 Harold lieþ at Waltham  
 & Willam bastard þat þis lond wan  
 He regnede here  
 On & tuenti ȝere  
 Suppe he deide at þe hame  
 At Normandye at Came



After reigned a good man  
 Harold Godwin's son  
 He was called Harefoot  
 For he was runner good  
 But he ne-reigned here  
 But 9 months of a year  
 William bastard of Normandy  
 Him deposed that was a villainy  
 Harold lies at Waltham  
 & William bastard that this land won  
 He reigned here  
 One & twenty years  
 Then he died at (the) home  
 In Normandy at Caen

**B**ack in 2011, a running buddy (probably **Gail Martin**) told me about this new running magazine called *Level Renner*. According to their website, "The LVL" was formed to fill the void left by the demise of the iconoclastic running magazine, the Hockomock Swamp Rat.

I googled 'renner' and found that it was Old English for 'runner.' I had to work with anyone who thought that *that* was interesting. So I got in touch with Kevin and Eric, and in the second issue, the LVL published an article of mine on volunteering for races.

I've had something in every issue since, all 40 of them (counting this one). It got weird at times. A lot of the articles were things you would never see in any other running magazine – stories featuring talking race trophies, runners fleeing from armed gunmen, or marathoners in exoskeletons. There were also opinion pieces on race prices, fairness in running, and media coverage of running events, some poetry, and much more.

But I've never had a Letter to the Editor. So here we are.

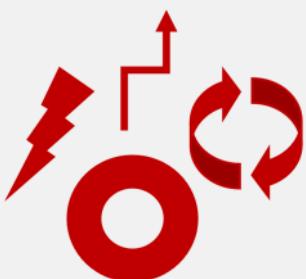
Of course, my work was only a small part of keeping things interesting for the discerning New England runner. Each issue of the magazine also included extensive coverage of local racing and runners, tips to help readers run better, and things to think about while on your next 10-miler. And it was all free, something unusual today, when for-profit running interests control more and more of the running community.

Now the magazine's run is over. That's sad, but like running (it always comes back to running), life has its ups and downs. Last fall I was running well. This spring not so much. But things are getting better again.

For six years, Level Renner was part of the good times. We'll miss it when it's gone, but we'll keep on keeping on in the hope that the good feeling will return, different, shaped by future experiences, but worth all the effort.

It's been a goud ren. Stay on the level, friends. Ω

*Keep in touch with Ray at [Y42K.com](http://Y42K.com).*



Various images from Ray's articles over the years.  
The photos are courtesy of Ray Charbonneau.

# A Progression Run

*by any other name is still a great workout*

by Nate Jenkins

**S**tarting in the very early sixties **Ron Clarke** began meeting up with some friends for runs around a two kilometer field every weeknight. They would run 8 to 12 laps starting at a jog and get a bit faster with each passing lap. At some point each night someone would start to push and the pace would get fast. As the men grew fitter the final laps were run under 5:00 mile pace often even under 4:30 pace. These men largely did very little track work. In many ways they were indistinguishable from any other running group except that this group included Clarke himself.

By the end of the 1960's Ron Clarke had reinvented what was possible in distance racing, taking 19 and 38 seconds off the 5K and 10K world records, respectively. His group also included four others

This one simple rule is the key to the magic of the progression run. Often I talk to runners who do great interval workouts and wonder why they don't race well. The reason, invariably, is that they either are taking too much rest between intervals or that they go out fast and fade in their intervals so that even though they average, for example 2:30 for each 800 meter rep, they average close to 40 seconds for the last 200 of the rep, so the body is learning to run 20 seconds per mile slower than it should be. Similarly the same can happen in tempo runs and time trials. The simple setup of the progression run avoids this fade.

The two keys to running fast are learning to run fast relaxed and learning to run fast when you are tired and in great pain. The pro-

## The progression run has only 1 rule: Get faster throughout the run

10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1...

who had all run sub 13:40 for 5K. Keep in mind the world record in 1960 was 13:35, modern running shoes were a dream, and Mondo surfaces were yet to arrive. Yet these men raced like today's professional Kenyans. If you think about it though, both Clarke's group and many Kenyan-based groups have at least one thing in common: they do an almost unimaginable number of progression runs and race at paces that boggle the mind. I doubt this similarity is a coincidence! In fact if a runner told me she could only do one type of run for the rest of her life and she still wanted to be fast, I would prescribe progressions.

A progression run can be of any length. I have personally gone as short as 3 miles and as long as 24, but please don't feel limited by my range. The progression can be run on any terrain. I have always preferred to do loops, like Clarke, so I know clearly that I'm getting quicker but there is no rule that says you must do that. In fact the progression run has only one rule: you must get faster throughout the run. If you can't go any faster, the workout is over no matter how much longer you planned on it being.

gression run teaches both these lessons intuitively and perfectly. If you don't learn to run quickly while relaxed, the miles that should be your middle miles will become your finishing miles. You have no option but to finish running your fastest or you have broken the only rule of the progression run and you are no longer doing one!

Clarke didn't have a name for them, I call them progression runs, others call them acceleration runs, step down runs, stepping stone runs, the names are countless, but regardless of what you call them these runs are sessions that touch on all of the body's systems. Even more importantly, progressions teach the mind and body how to run fast when it counts: at the end of the race when you are exhausted. Ω

*Nate Jenkins has the unique resume of having both beaten **Meb Keflezighi** and been beaten by **Kim Smith**.*

Source for Ron Clarke training: <http://blogs.teambb.com/mathieuohalloran/2012/03/14/the-myth-of-long-slow-running-by-ron-clarke/>



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Gender Place: 7

Age Group Place: 1

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**Name:** Kaela O'Neil

**Age:** 39

**Height:** 5' 4"

**Weight:** 112 lbs.

**Nickname:** Mom, Mom, Mom

**Residence:** North Kingstown, RI

**Day Job:** Stay at home mother to three daughters ages 3, 7, 10

**High School:** The Wheeler School, Providence, 1996

**College:** Rollins College, BA, 2000; Lesley University, MA Ed., 2005

**Club:** Boston Athletic Association

**Average Miles per Week:** 65-70 a week is my happy place. In a taper, I will run as low as 35. When I run more than 80, I start forgetting things, like my name.

**Notable PR's:**

5K - 17:29 @ BAA 5K, 2016

10K - 36:24 @ James Joyce Ramble, 2015

10 Mile - 1:00:22 @ Quonsett 10 Miler, 2016

½ Marathon - 1:19:43 @ Gansett Half Marathon, 2015

Marathon - 2:59:07 @ Hyannis Marathon, 2016

## Favorites

### Races:

BAA 5K, Boston, MA

Women's Classic 5K, Providence, RI

Gansett Half Marathon, Narragansett, RI

Eversource Hartford Half Marathon, Hartford, CT

### Workouts:

For workouts, I love a schedule and will follow it to a T. Currently, I am living by the BAA's schedule tailored to running the BAA Half Marathon. I do most of my workouts alone on a marked bike path. I feel that the turns and hills transfer well to road races. Other days, when I need some extra help from my friends, I head down to Providence and jump in a 5:30am track workout with the Ronald McDonald House Providence Running Club. I will do a workout every Wednesday, hill repeats or a tempo run on Monday, a long run on Saturday, strides on Friday, and three recovery runs in between.

### 1. Bob Rothenberg's RMHP Running Club's Mile Breakdown Workout:

Mile/1200-400/800-800/optional 4x400

2. BAA Workouts that add up to around 5 miles such as 4-5x1 mile @ HM pace w/ a 400 recovery jog, 6x200 @ 5K pace with 30 sec rest

3. 2x2K @ HM pace w/ a 400 recovery jog, 4x1K @ LT pace w/ a 200 recovery jog (2-3 min rest between sets)

### Places to Run:

1. My favorite place to run is right out my own front door and around Wickford, RI, first thing in the morning, when it is just light enough to see, but when most people (especially my three kids) are still sleeping.

2. In Wakefield, RI on the bike path, or in Newport, RI with my two long run partners, friends, and heroes **Abbey Kaknes** and **Karolyn Bowley**.

3. In Narragansett, RI, "to the lighthouse and back" along Ocean Road with the members of



Kaela O'Neil at the 2017 Run 4 Kerri. Photo by Scott Mason.

the running club that made me fall madly in love with this sport, The Narragansett Running Association.

**Running Shoe:** Adidas

**Workout Songs:** I'll listen to anything upbeat, usually Amazon Music's Top Pop Station.

**Books:**

1. Because it inspired my return to running after 8 years off: *Born to Run* by Christopher McDougall
2. To understand that running is a team sport: *The Animal Keepers: The Story of an Unlikely Hero and an Unforgettable Season* by Donn Behnke
3. For tips on training and racing: *Marathon Man* by Bill Rodgers

**Hobbies:** Boating, beaching, reading, cooking, baking, and cleaning and organizing anything

**Running Intangibles:**

I'm an all or nothing kind of gal. If I am going to do something, I want to do it well. If I fail or simply fall short of what I believed I can do, I am going to seek the right advice and methodology to get me to where I want to be. One of my weak spots is making excuses when things don't go my way. I hear myself doing it but can't always stop them from pouring out of my mouth. But overall, I like to believe I am coachable. I am grateful for all of the support, encouragement, and guidance I have received from the running community, a group of people I am proud to be part of.

**Training Philosophy:**

Love it. Make it fun. For me, I love to race. I always considered myself a competitive person but what running and racing has taught me over the past few years is that I'm actually not that interested in what anyone else is doing. I don't think much about competition before, during, or after a race. For me, it's all about putting in the work, then getting to see and enjoy the results. This speaks true to every run, workout, and race. When I know I am doing it for me, it gives me a great sense of pride and accomplishment when I reach a goal. It's a feeling I cherish and one that makes me feel happy and alive.

**PreRace Ritual:**

In the last three years that I have been racing after the birth of my third daughter, sleep and good nutrition have been more important to me than ever. For balance, I drink two cups of coffee every morning and a glass of red wine every night, even before a race. In between, I focus on clean eating; I avoid processed foods. I turn to my super foods while training: roasted beets, quinoa, eggs, spinach, overnight oats, lots of chia. I tend to go to bed right after I put my kids down, 8:30 or 9:00pm. On race day, my focus is to arrive at the event an hour before the start. Then I usually stake out the bathrooms. I will head out for a few warm-up miles with fellow teammates or friends. 20 minutes before the start I change to racing flats. I will eat a gu. Drink some water. Do 6 strides. Then I take a piece of the starting line. Every second counts! I activate satellite on my watch. (Yes, I am addicted). Wait for the gun. Go.

**Career High/Lowlights:**

My highs come from the moments that I realize I dreamed up this type of personal success and that it came true. For example, I can vividly recall a time in 2012, where I sat at my kitchen table one late July morning, staring at this muscular, tattooed man on the cover of our local newspaper's sports section. I poured over the article. It was **Matt Pelletier**. Here was this guy, my age, in my town, doing an extraordinary thing. Winning a huge 10 mile race, The Blessing of the Fleet. All I could think was "Wow. That is cool. I want to do that." I had just started running again with a group of moms from the YMCA. On my next run, I started thinking about that "winning" feeling. It led me to meeting Pelletier a few months later, and two years after that, he would pace me through my half marathon PR. This summer, 5 years after being so inspired by that image, I didn't win the Blessing, but I came in second place. I'm still chasing that dream. At 39! It's a good feeling.

All of my lows revolve around the marathon. Running comes easy to me. The marathon does not. I've tried three times in the last three years to run a decent marathon. Each time was a devastating blow to my ego. I have hit the wall, blown up, run out of gas, fallen apart...there are so many ways to describe what happens to me out there—it's just

not good.

**Goals:**

My present goal is to avoid the marathon. I love the structure of the marathon training, the miles, the regime... and being part of something so huge and awe inspiring, such as the Boston Marathon. But I realize I love racing shorter races so much more. When I got into running at 36, my husband told me, "Train for four years and you might do okay at the masters level. The open is too competitive." The last three years have been a trip just to be in the mix. To read about all these women who are so fast and talented, and then have the opportunity to run with and race against (usually behind) them has all been an honor. So now when 40 strikes this July, I hope to also have some success in the masters division. Later down the road, I'd like to give the marathon another shot.

**Proudest Moments:**

PR's. Prize Money. Perks. These things all make me proud. And happy.

**Best Distance Runner of All Time:**

I'd have to say my husband, **Keven O'Neil**. When I first met him, I learned that he got free shoes in the mail. If there were runners that existed in this world that were better than that, that's great, but I didn't know them personally. I was awe struck. He's incredibly modest but is such a talented runner. And if you think all runners are born with talent, you have never seen him run. It's not pretty. He's not built like a runner and he doesn't have smooth form. That's what impresses me the most about him. It's all heart. And hard work. He can push through a workout, long run, and even an injury with fearless determination. And a little bit of stubbornness. He's taught me so much. He inspires me every day. Without all of his love, sacrifices, and tremendous support, I wouldn't be a runner.

**Local Running Role Model:**

Rhode Island's Karolyn Bowley and **Diane Senecal**. Not only are they great runners and friends, but both are super moms of three and four sons. Plus they are older than me, work full time, and have dogs! They both ran sub 3 hour marathons over the age of 40. It is a total inspiration knowing them so well and all that they are able to do-while still being fun, cool chicks.

**Oddest Thing That's Ever Happened to You on a Run:**

One rather dreary New England "spring" morning, I was running alone down a residential road when I rounded a corner and spotted a large bird in the trees above me. Sitting high on a bare grey tree branch, he stared down as I slowed my stride. Pausing my watch, of course, I came to a complete stop. It was an owl. Never taking my eyes off of him, I stood there as he flew from his branch to another—even closer, and then again to the road right in front of me, a few feet from where I was standing. We continued to look pensively at one another, as owls are very serious, when he opened his large wings again and flew off into the distance as quickly as he had come. I'm not sure what it means. Google was very ambiguous. But it was cool!

**Advice for The Legion:**

Live with passion. Believe in yourself. Find what you like to do. Dream it. Then do it. It's never too late. ☽

# Simple Rhythms

## Poetry for runners

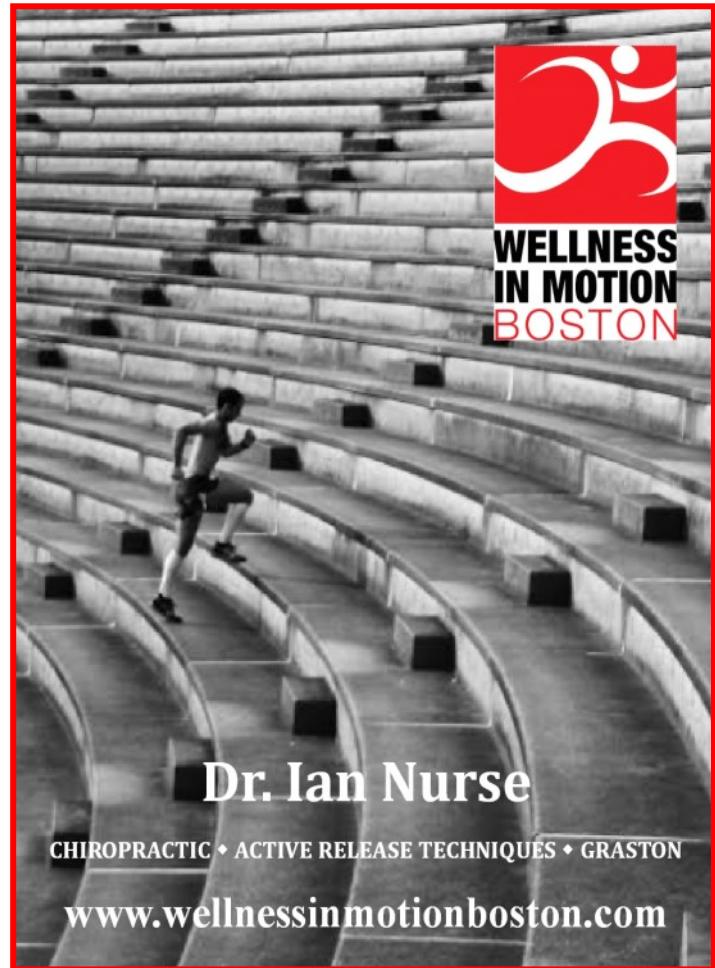


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race champions  
Jonas Hampton &  
Kaela O'Neil.

Thank you to everybody  
who participated in this  
year's race.

See you next year!  
Sunday, August 5, 2018



Enman competing in the 2016 Tamalpa 50K. Photo by Joe Viger.

Kasie Enman is a 38 year old all-terrain runner from Huntington, VT. She's also a mother of two, member of the Green Mountain Athletic Association, two-time Olympic Trials Marathon qualifier, three-time Vermont City Marathon champion, and World Mountain Running champion. Despite all those credentials, she is probably best known for the maple syrup she both produces and awards to the victors of the Sleepy Hollow Mountain Race.

So how does one achieve such accomplishments? "I fit my training around an unpredictable schedule juggling an assortment of jobs that I have pieced together to allow me the flexibility to be home with my kids," Enman says. "I have gotten very adept at running morning, noon, or night, at either end of meal times, at a moment's notice." Adaptability is a must for a world champion!

In her own words, Enman's personal records are "ancient," but rewriting them is still not out of the question. Currently, her PR's are as follows:

26.2 - 2:37:14 (identical tie with her husband's PR)

13.1 - 75:15

10K - 35:05

5K - 16:54

Enman also has a score of other mountain and trail times, but as any seasoned runner knows times don't tell you much on those terrains.

As for favorite workouts, Enman says, "Anything that gives me the feeling of gaining momentum and getting the most out of myself. I'm goal oriented, so I thrive on training that has a purpose and gives me confidence." Her improvement as a runner has always been steady and gradual. Keeping at it, day after day, year after year, has afforded her a great deal of success. "It hasn't even felt like progress day-to-day most of the time," she admits, "But when I look back at the runner I was in high school, college, my 20s and now my 30s, I can see it. It's crazy to think about how my 5K race pace in college is now my marathon race pace."

Her words of advice for her fellow runner: "Things that can seem impossible, become possible if you stick with it."

Turn the page to see a week's worth of Enman's training. Ω



Enman competing in the 2017 Cranmore Mountain Race US Mountain Running Championships.  
Photo by Joe Viger.

## **Week in the Life**

The below training week was taken from Enman's marathon build-up for an Olympic trials qualifying attempt, in this case the Chicago Marathon.

### **Monday**

am: 12 miles with 8 miles at marathon effort. Usual warm-up routine of carrying daughter to the end of the driveway and onto school bus, then running easy to the base of my road. Faster paced miles out and back on the flattest, paved road available. Cooled down back up my road. No splits or firm measurement, all effort based. 10 minute strength circuit immediately after.

### **Tuesday**

am: 11 (or so) miles easy  
pm: 4 miles easy on Sleepy Hollow trails

### **Wednesday**

am: 10 miles easy

### **Thursday**

am: 9 miles easy at Trapps trails doing reconnaissance work for the Hills Are Alive 5K XC course. Took 3 times around to figure out best route. Was planning on a shorter run.

pm: Physical Therapy appointment for general maintenance work. Then to the UVM track to both coach and workout with the GMAA team. Did 4x400m, 1600m, 3x400m (missed a 400, in port-o-let), 1600m, 4x400m. Added on 2x200m to make up for the missed 400. 400s were mostly sub-80, 1600s were in the 5:30s. 90sec recovery after 400s, an easy lap after 1600s. 9 miles total.

### **Friday**

am: 10 miles easy on trails

### **Saturday**

am: 13 miles plus strides

### **Sunday**

am: 20 miles broken down as 10 miles easy, 4 miles progression, 6 miles at marathon effort. First half was hilly, second half was flattish. No data, effort based. Practiced taking in fluids during the marathon effort segment. Strength circuit immediately after.

### **Weekly Total**

98 miles (roughly)

# John Busque

## the heartbeat of America

*Get to know John Busque, a CT native who we got to know up close at the 2016 LVL 10K.*

**1. You grew up in Manchester, CT, home of one of the greatest road races in the world. How did the Manchester Road Race affect you growing up? What was your perception of its effect on the community?**

Am I biased in confirming that it is “the best” road race in the world? I wasn’t a run-

gets excited for it.

**2. Despite growing up in the shadow of the Manchester Road Race, you didn’t start running until your senior year of high school. How come? What do you see as advantages and disadvantages for starting your running career relatively late?**

I somewhat fell into running my senior year after being convinced by a good friend to join the cross-country team. I was on the

a few more years in my legs!

**3. You recently received a doctorate in physical therapy. How did you balance the demands of rigorous academic work with those of an ambitious training schedule?**

I think the ambitious training schedule helped me keep a level head with the academic work. I used it as my break from school and it gave me something else to focus on so that I wasn’t so obsessive about



John Busque at the 2017 Run 4 Kerri. Photo by Scott Mason.

ner growing up, but I do remember walking down with my family to watch the race every year as a kid since that’s just what you do on Thanksgiving if you’re from Manchester. Now, I obviously have much more appreciation for it, and Thanksgiving is by far my favorite day of the year. It definitely unites everyone from the community and everyone

wrestling team in the winter and it seemed like a decent way to stay in shape, but I was hesitant to join. I didn’t take it too seriously but found that I had the physical build and mindset to be a distance runner. I regret not being a part of a high school cross-country or track program, but I think it’s helping in the long term. Hopefully that means I have

my schoolwork. There were times when training took a bit of a backseat to school but I like being busy. I think I would have lost my mind if I weren’t training hard this summer while studying for my licensure exam.

**4. As a newly minted PT, what tips can**

## **you give runners for preventing or treating “common” injuries?**

I think that every runner has potential to improve their performance and decrease risk for injury with certain changes in biomechanics. One easy trick is cadence. I did an in-service presentation during a clinical rotation on the correlation of cadence and injuries in runners. Injury rates decrease significantly when cadence is around 180 steps per minute (this applies for any type of pace including training runs to races). I made a conscious change this year to shorten my stride and go from 165 steps per minute to about 175.

## **5. How do you deal with running injuries of your own?**

Just about everything I would tell my patients not to do is how I deal with my own running injuries. I'm pretty stubborn and have yet to learn my lesson on when to listen to my body. This lets me train pretty hard but has its obvious setbacks. I've spent the entire 2017 healthy for the first time since college (knock on wood!), so I attribute that to my recent improvements.

## **6. Not an injury per se, but you do have Celiac’s Disease. How do you manage this disease and still produce fast times?**

I've been eating gluten-free for a little over six years now so I'm more than used to it. I stick to a pretty good routine of foods that I eat before races or workouts to make sure that my stomach is good to go. It's also getting much more common to serve gluten-free foods at restaurants or in grocery stores so it usually isn't an issue when on the road.

## **7. For the most part, you coach yourself. What does that look like on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly basis? How do you plan your training?**

I plan a lot of my training based on my work schedule. I work 3 long days in the clinic (8-7) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays so I use these days as my early morning (0500) single runs of about 80 minutes with some drills and strides incorporated. If I can, I'll squeeze in a double during lunch on one of these days. I workout on Tuesdays and Saturdays with Sundays as my long run. A lot of my workouts are decided based on what my training partners want to do. I'd rather have company and do a workout that's not exactly what I planned on doing than work out alone!

## **8. You do workouts with the “Hartbeat Running Club,” a group of pretty fast local runners (Everett Hackett, Donn Cabral, Chris Helminski). Describe what that’s like.**

Yes! They've all moved into a house in Hartford so it's been pretty cool having a group to meet up with on Tuesdays. Everyone seems to contribute something specific to the group that keeps us well balanced. There have been talks of us starting a small “Hartbeat Club,” but it's all talk as of now. I also used to do a good amount of training with my close friend

**Jonas Hampton** who recently made the move to the Boston area.

## **9. You date a runner. How’s that working out?**

Haha yes, it is working out well! She was on the University of Hartford XC/track team and we've been dating for four and a half years now. She's very busy, attending graduate school at Hofstra University to become a Physician Assistant, but we make it a point to see each other about every other weekend. It's great having someone to run with who also understands the weird nuances of a distance runner.

## **10. What are your future goals and aspirations, running and otherwise?**

To keep getting better and to have fun with it! I'm hoping to make a smooth transition (if that's possible) to the marathon within the next two years to take a shot at the 2:19 OTQ standard, so I guess I would consider that my future goal. Ω



Wynne

Simple math tells us  $10 \times 10 = 100$ . Thus, we have 100 short answer questions that should allow us to get to see the many sides of John Busque. It's amazing how much you can learn from 100 words.

## True or False

I've run in a foreign country. **False**  
 I've been flirted with post race. **True**  
 I subscribe to Level Renner. **True**  
 I do barefoot strides in the summer. **True**.  
**Love them!**  
 I pray before a race. **False**  
 I've left work early to go running. **Do lunch break miles count?**  
 Beer is an acceptable post race replenishment. **True (A carb is a carb, right?)**  
 Burgers are better than burritos. **True**  
 I've Googled myself. **True**  
 A dog has jumped on me during a run.  
**Very True**

## Yes or No

I've run 100 miles in a week. **Yes**  
 I log my miles with pen and paper. **No (Running2win!)**  
 I drink coffee prerace. **Yes x3**  
 I ice my legs postrace. **No**  
 I own a treadmill. **No; gym treadmills**  
 I have taken a selfie. **Yes**  
 I look up race results of my rivals. **Yes**  
 I have run through injury. **Too many times to count**  
 I have gone skinny dipping. **No**  
 I read a book to fall asleep at night. **Yes**

## Favorites

Ice cream. **Purple Cow from Cape Cod (black raspberry w/ white chocolate chips)**  
 Athlete. **Nomar Garciaparra**  
 Running shoe. **Altra Torin 3.0 (trainer). Nike Victories (track).**  
 Seinfeld character. **Kramer, of course**  
 Board/card game. **Cards against Humanity**  
 Color. **Red**  
 Season. **Fall**  
 President. **Obama**  
 Book. **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. JK Rowling is the GOAT.**

## 1 word

Twitter handle? **jbusque**  
 College? **University of Hartford**  
 Car model? **Toyota Camry from mom and dad**  
 Carn-, herb-, or omnivore? **Omnivore**  
 Occupation? **Physical Therapist**

## Fill-in the Blank

I'd rather be **playing spikeball**.  
**Not running in high school** is my biggest regret.  
 Stretching is **not as important as it's cut out to be**.  
**Not much** can improve The LVL.  
**Jonas Hampton** doesn't get the recognition he deserves.  
 If I could only listen to one song while running, it would be **nothing! I can't listen to one song that long**.  
 I sleep with **a fan; it's a must**.  
**24** is the most miles I've ever run in a day.

## Numbers

Height & Weight. **5'11 & 128 lbs**  
 Most laps ever on a track. **40**  
 5K PR. **14:24**  
 10K PR. **29:37**  
 Shoe size. **10**  
 Preferred racing distance. **Between 5-10K MPW. 90-105 (95 has been my sweet spot lately)**  
 Minutes per day online. **30**  
 Texts sent per day. **A lot. My girlfriend is 3 hours away in grad school!**  
 Age started running. **18**

## 1 - 10

*I is the least/worst. 10 is the most/best.*

Desire to run in all 50 states. **3**  
 Priority I place running in my life. **9**  
 My fear of injury. **9**  
 My ability to get out of my comfort zone while racing. **2 (I need to work on this)**  
 Beer Miles. **0**  
 Pearl Jam. **3**  
 Banksy. **Not sure??**  
 Shakespeare. **1**  
 Importance I place on my eating habits. **7**  
*Runner's World.* **5**

## Either Or

Front runner or late surger? **Late surger**  
 Trail runner or road burner? **Trail runner for the easy miles**  
 Fenway or Gillette? **Fenway**  
 Tea or coffee? **Coffee 4 lyfe**  
 GPS junkie or run on feel? **Run on feel**  
 Track or treadmill? **Treadmill**  
 Facebook or Twitter? **Facebook**  
 Network TV or streaming? **Network TV**  
 Wine or beer? **Beer**  
 Dogs or cats? **Neither, not a pet guy**

## Word Association

\$50 5K. **Woof**  
 Obama. **Bracketologist**  
 USATF. **Corrupt**  
 Minimalism. **Everett Hackett**  
 Fuel Belt. **Ultra**  
 Bill Belichick. **Brilliant**  
 LVL. **RENNER**  
 Going Green. **Recycle!**  
 Color runs. **Expensive**  
 Jack Daniels. **VDOT**

## Hodge Podge

Zodiac sign. **Pisces, I think.**  
 Hours of sleep per night. **8-9**  
 Percent of day spent thinking about running. **Too much**  
 Refrigerator essential. **Greek yogurt**  
 Best article in the history of this mag. **"Suspect on the Run" by Dan Harper**  
 Rather step in gum or dog poop. **Gum**  
 # of bumper stickers on my car. **Zero**  
 # of minutes spent answering these questions. **22**

# Loose Ends

by Timothy Paul Smith

**A**bout a year ago I was writing in this space about the effect of aging on runners ("[Races for All Ages](#)"), and in that article I left a thread dangling which has bothered me ever since: "So as we get older, do our AG (age-graded) scores get better?" What I need to do is find individuals with a long history of running and look at results across the decades, but I have not figured out how to do that simply. Of course the answer came to me shortly after that article went to press. But waiting a few months is not always a bad thing and I now find that I can answer some additional questions with that same data set.

Half a decade ago I lived in New York City for a year. Since my normal runs in New Hampshire are on country roads where I can take my lane out of the middle, I thought NYC would be the death of my training. However, much to my surprise, I hooked up with the Central Park Track Club (CPTC) and learned about running in parks and on bike paths. A city that never sleeps lights the loop around the reserve all night, and when you are there with teammates that is exhilarating.

I also learned a lot about the New York Road Runners (NYRR). NYRR is more of an umbrella organization than a traditional running club. It not only organizes races (perhaps you have heard of their marathon and the Fifth Avenue Mile?) but also maintains an impressive database, with online race results going back into the 1970s.

One of my CPTC teammates mentioned that he had been with the club for nearly forty years, which started me looking through the NYRR data base. The first ten years of data is almost all about the NYC marathon, but over the last thirty years there is a lot of race data, with most of my older teammates having over a hundred races to their credit.

So what I can do is pick a sample of runners and plot their AG scores over a number of years. But first a quick reminder about what is "Graded" and "Age Graded" scoring.

"Graded" scoring is a way of comparing your performances across various events. To calculate the grade, you take the world record and divided it by your time. Or you can think of it as your speed as a percent of the speed of the world record holder. That is roughly the idea.

In fact the real calculations use a "standard" which is similar to the world record, but not quite the same; you don't want people's graded score to change every time a world record is broken. For example, the world record in the 5000M for women is 14:11, but the "open standard" (2015) is 14:24 for track and 14:48 on the road. This means that if a woman runs 20:00 on the road, her graded score is

$$14:48 \text{ min}/20:00 \text{ min} = 888 \text{ sec}/1200 \text{ sec} = 0.74 = 74\%$$

In "Age Graded" scoring times are not compared to the open standard but rather to the "Age Standard," roughly the world record for your particular age. So if our 20:00 for 5K runner is 50 years old, the women's 5K road age standard is 16:46, and her age-graded score is 83.8%.

$$16:46 \text{ min}/20:00 \text{ min} = 1006 \text{ sec}/1200 \text{ sec} = 0.838 = 83.8\%$$

Back to my question: if you are a 75% AG performer at age 30, will you still be one at age 70?

Originally I was planning on plotting every race for every runner. But with over a thousand races for the 16 runners in my sample, that plot is a mess of points and it is hard to read a trend. I then thought about plotting the average AG for every year for each runner. This looked a lot better, but it still had a lot of spikes. Digging in on those spikes I saw cases where a runner can have a number of good races, and then one race where he DNF'ed or had to walk due to an injury. This greatly skewed his average. In the end, I plotted the best AG for each year, reasoning that our upper limit better defines us then the occasional injury.

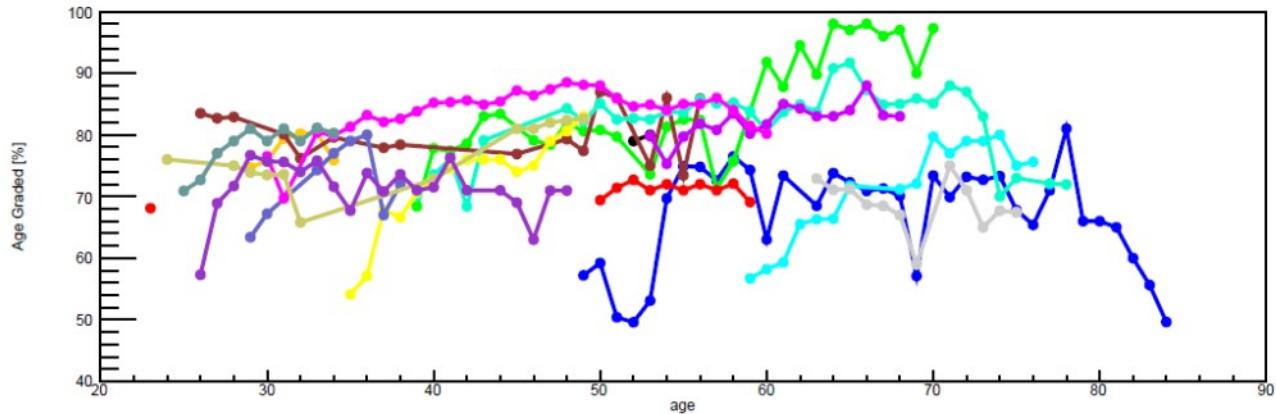
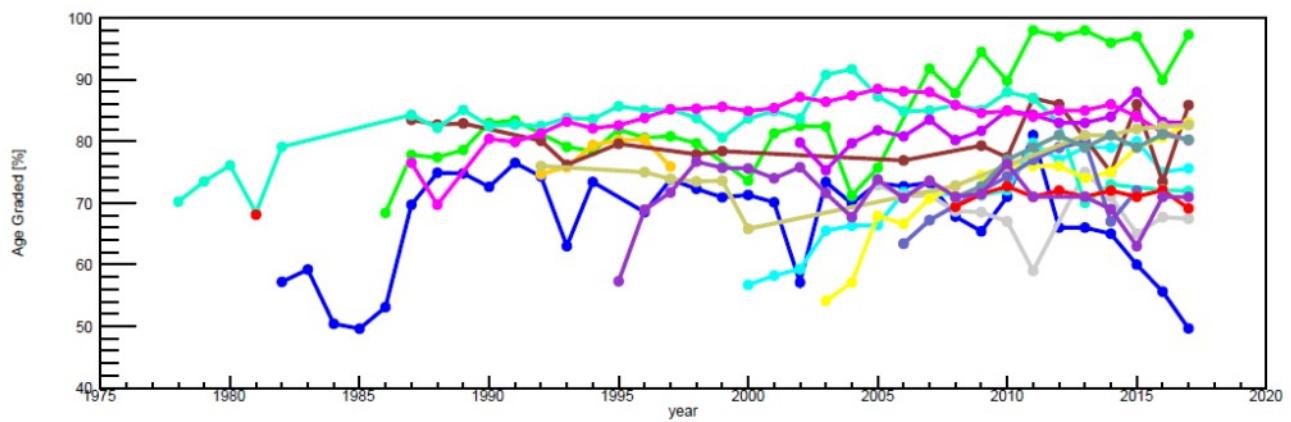
In Figure 1 (next page), I have plotted a line for 16 different runners whose careers span decades. In the upper panel I plotted AG vs. the year of the race, which really just shows us that they were all racing in 2017. The lower panel is AG as a function of age. This is a collection of good runners with whom I have trained, but most of you will not have heard of them, so I'll refer to them by line color. I'll also admit that they are not "average runners." These are individuals who are so passionate about running that it has spanned decades and defined their lives. One of these runners told me he had run longer with CPTC than any job he ever held, even longer than the length of his marriage.

In Figure 1, the blue line is a man who may not be the most consistent runner, but at age 84 he is the oldest one I have charted. He has run five races this year, ranging from the Fifth Ave. Mile to the Brooklyn Half Marathon. I would feel elated if I can follow those footsteps.

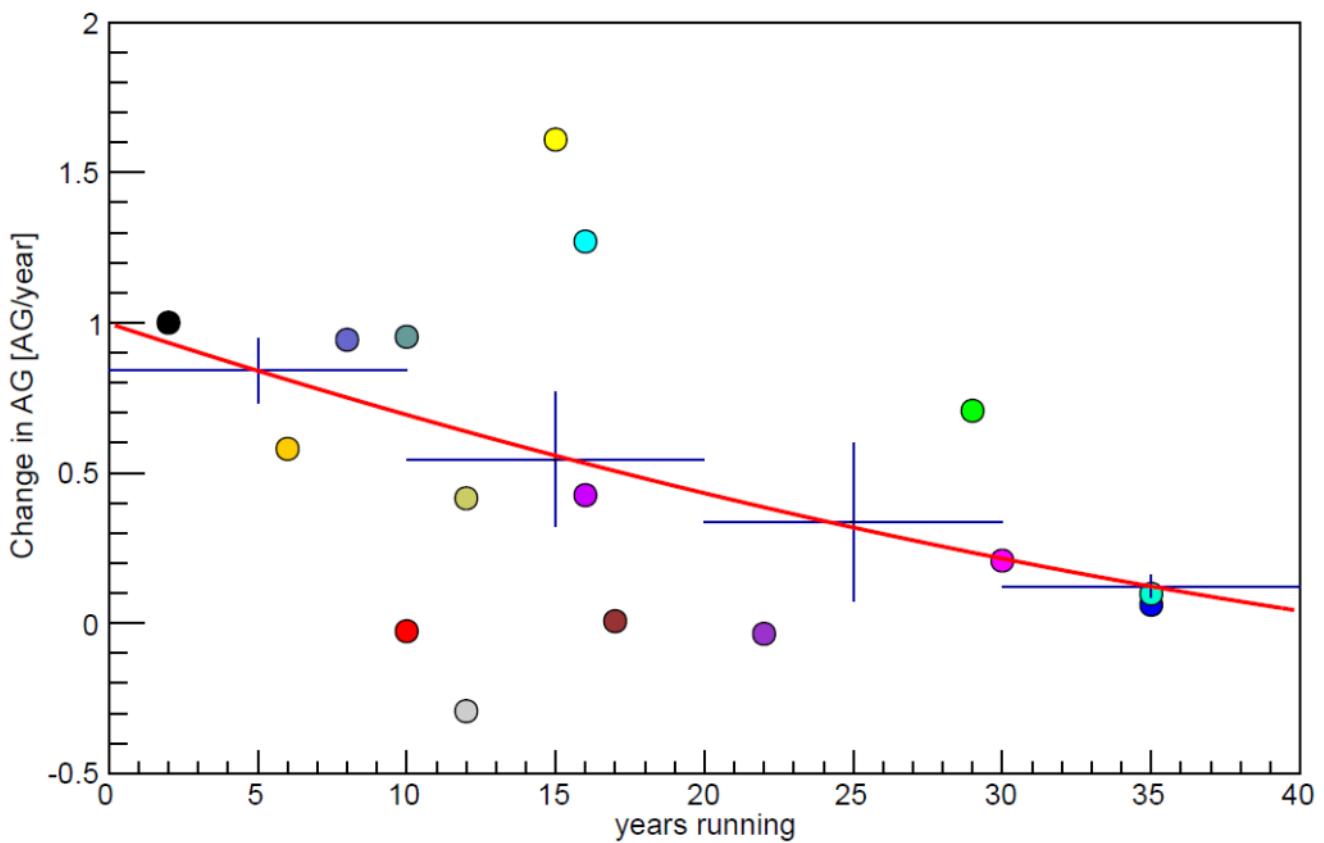
The green line is a woman who just gets better. Thirty years ago she scored about 70%, but now that she has matured into her 70s she is consistently in the upper 90th percentile. However, she is the exception in my sample, climbing by 0.7% per year. Some of the younger runners also climb by a percent a year, but can maintain this only for about a decade.

One of my favorites is the red line (and point), who ran the NYC Marathon in 1981 but then hung up his racing flats for 27 years until 2008. But for this analysis the special thing about him is that his AG is almost exactly the same even across that gap.

A few older runners find themselves susceptible to injuries and many runners take a few seasons to get started, but by and large



**Figure 1 (above)-** The best Age Graded scores for each year, for 16 runners. A number of runners have careers which span decades. Ages reported range from 21 to 84 years old.



**Figure 2 -** The change in AG scores for these 16 runners. In general, early career runners often improve their AGs. Over the decades they stabilize.

people race at about the same level across decades. In Figure 2, I have plotted runners' change in AG as a function of the number of years they have run. The trend is to improve in your first few years, and then to stabilize.

With this same set of data I can also address another question: How hard is a race? And is cross-country much different from a road race? So on my last figure (Figure 3, next page) I have plotted a runner's AG score for various races vs. their best AG score for that year. The line which stretches from corner to corner marks where a runner's results would fall if that race was the best race of the season.

What jumped out to my eye is that almost everybody has a good Fifth Ave. Mile. Actually this is something I understand: my personal data is buried under other people's marks, but that race was the best of the year for me too. A cool September morning, a mile of cheering crowds, a nearly flat and very straight race. It was easy to run and easy to do well.

Coogin's, or Washington Heights (it changed names) is early in March and I expected to see more variations on this race. By New York standards it is a hilly course, but some people like it. For the Brooklyn Half people are either on or not; I don't know how to explain that one. But the NYC Marathon has the most data points and a lot of people perform up to their best that day. In October/November it is prime weather to race and the end of a training cycle.

But the two cross-country races are unique.

The 16 runners in this database have run about 2,000 races of which about 100 of them are cross-country races, most of those in Van Cortlandt Park. That data is plotted on the middle two panels, the Kurt Steiner and Fred Lebow Classic.

The course starts with an open meadow, but two-thirds of the Van Cortlandt course is on winding dirt trails with plenty of ups and downs. Having raced there once, I think the course lends itself to the strategist. There are stretches where you can make your move, and other points where you can control the pace of the runners around you. For a runner, it is a lot of fun, but it might not be your best time. So on these plots I have added a dotted line which marks

5% below your season's best AG.

## Conclusions?

First, over decades racers' performances are pretty steady. Between good and bad years your AG may bounce around by 4-8%, but over the long term it will be flat, except maybe a fast rise in the first few years as you learn to train.

Secondly, cross-country is hard. People perform about 5% slower than in other races. Another way of thinking about this 5% is in terms of extra energy. It is (according to the [Sept/Oct 2016 issue of Level Renner](#)) the same as running the whole race up a 2% grade, which means gaining a 100 meters of elevation, or adding 30 flights of stairs to your race!

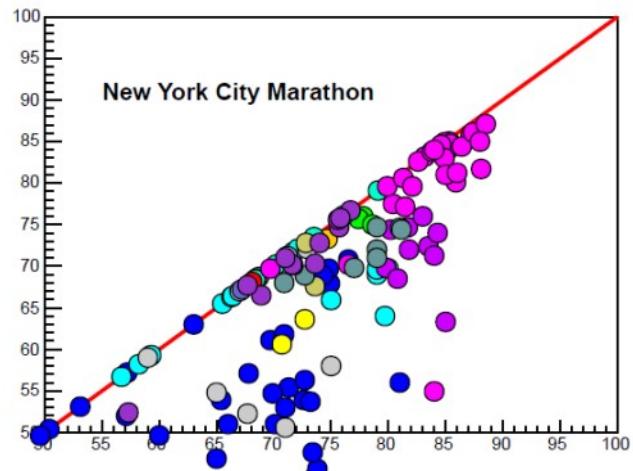
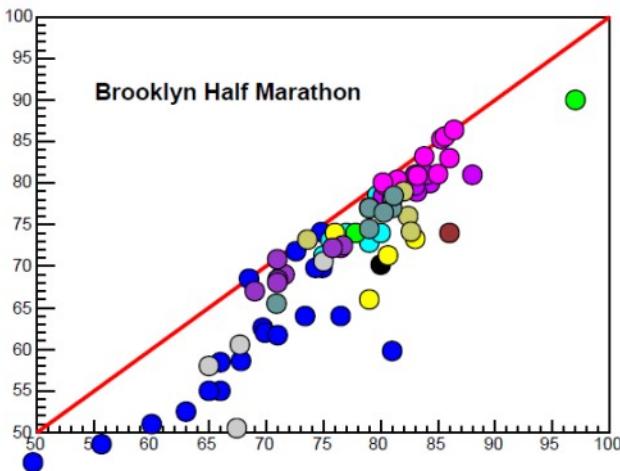
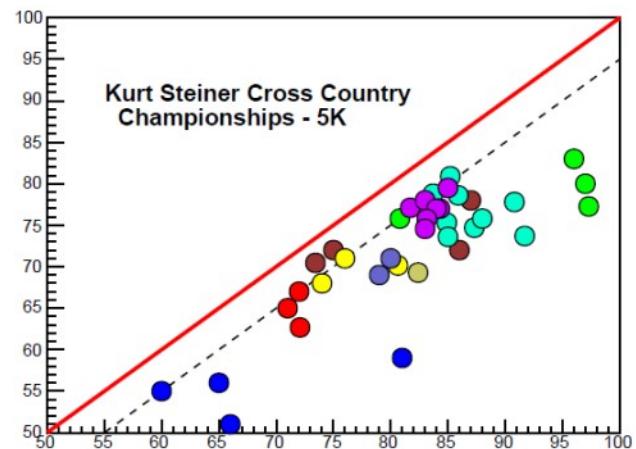
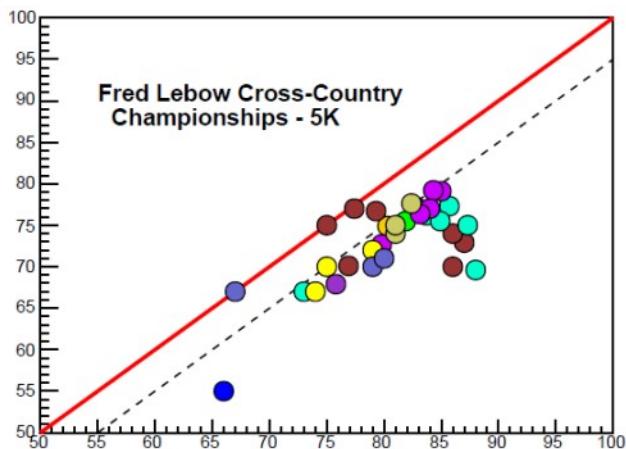
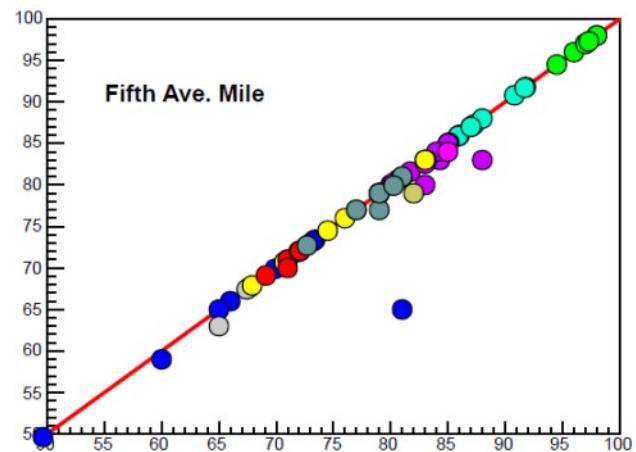
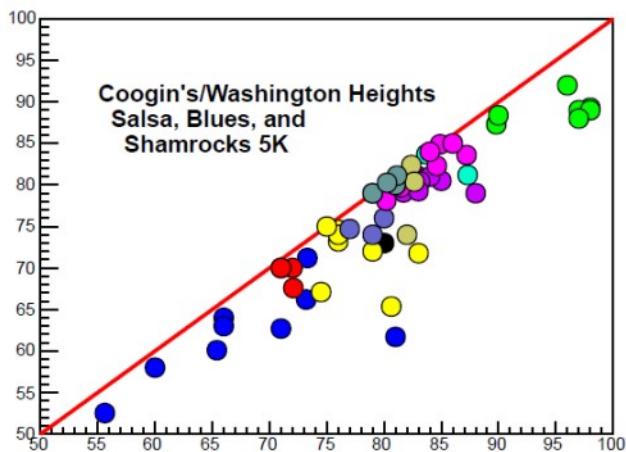
Cross country is somehow unique in running lore. On a recent long run a teammate sniffed the air and then told me, "That smell of leaves, that is the smell of autumn, of cross country. That is the smell of running!"

Aren't numbers fun?! Ω

*Tim Smith is a physics professor at Dartmouth College and the president of the Upper Valley Running Club. "Since this is my last column in Level Renner, I'll be running off into the sunset—and with that extra time, maybe tweak my Age Graded scores a bit."*

*For further analysis, check out Smith's website, [www.trailnotes.org/Running](http://www.trailnotes.org/Running). Contact Tim at [timothy.p.smith@dartmouth.edu](mailto:timothy.p.smith@dartmouth.edu).*





**Figure 3 - Comparing runners' best performances of the season to their performance from six different races. People tend to have good days at the Fifth Ave. Mile, and almost everyone is about 5% slower in cross-country.**

**Thank You  
for reading  
Level Renner**  
a journal of running for the olde school athlete

*Run  
on the  
Ground.*



*Read  
the  
Underground.*

**this is our  
last issue**

**we appreciate all of your support over the years**

# From Bad To Good

by Paul Clerici

**O**n e of the greatest qualities of the running community is its capacity and desire to help, to come together for something bigger than itself for the common good. That is abundantly evident regarding charity runners who raise money and the race organizers themselves who earmark bibs. For example, the 2015 Boston Marathon raised more than \$30 million via the Boston Athletic Association Official Charity Program (\$16.5 million), John Hancock Marathon Non-Profit Program (\$11.26 million), and combined other official charities (\$2.8 million); and the 2016 Falmouth Road Race raised \$4 million through its Numbers for Non-Profits Program.

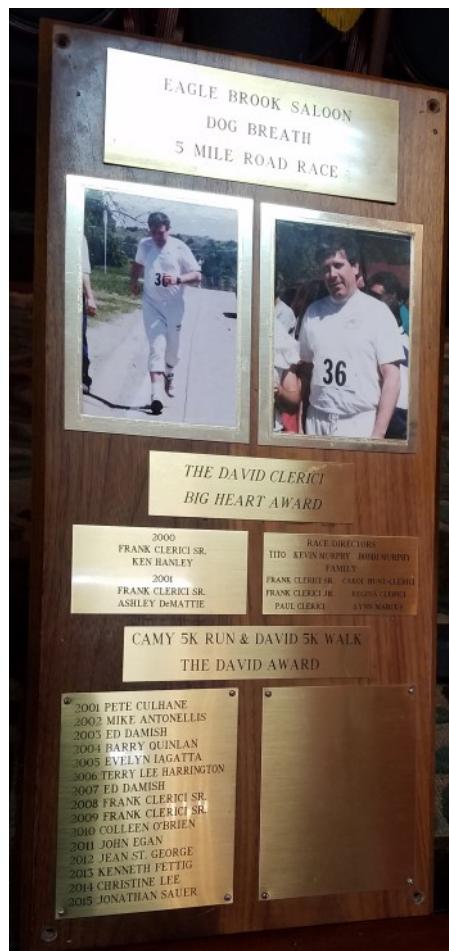
On a smaller scale, there are hundreds of races with the same visions and goals. This is one of those stories.

As race director of the Camy 5K Run & David 5K Walk, in Walpole, MA, I have seen this benevolence firsthand. In February 2000, one of my older brothers, **David Clerici**, at the age of 38 died from medical complications after surviving cancer. Nine months later, on November 10, my paternal grandfather, **Camilio "Camy" Clerici**, died of cancer at the age of 86. It was, to say the least, a most difficult year for our family. What to do with such grief, such personal loss? You want their impact to mean something, to make a difference in the world. You want their lives, their memories, to live on. There are numerous ways to accomplish this, of course.

As an athlete, I'd run in many races where money was raised for a charity or a family in need. The concept is not new. So my thought was to create a race in honor of my brother and grandfather. And my family agreed. That was 17 years ago! And in those years, the outpouring of support from people who simply want to help, whether as a volunteer, runner, walker, donator, sponsor, or spectator never ceases to amaze me. Some run or walk regardless of why it's held;

some only for its namesake; and still others decide based solely on distance, location, date, or some other reason: beating a disease, supporting Boston Strong or a suffering family member.

The entire organizational process from soup to nuts is also beneficial to organizers, volunteers, donors, participants. There is a personal connection, a visceral impact that comes from personally partaking in the event. The collectiveness of coming together for a common goal, the expenditure of energy and emotion, is cathartic to some degree for all involved. A sense of righting a wrong is rewarding, and hopefully proactive in terms of preventing similar occurrences.



The David Award plaque, which is engraved with the name of each winner and is on display at Eagle Brook Saloon in Norfolk. Photo by Christine Lee.

In addition to presenting a competition, of course, the focus for our first few races was to give back to the institutions that gave to my brother and grandfather during their times of need. In Boston, that included Brigham & Women's Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, both of which were instrumental with their expert care; and closer to home, the Norwood Hospital Oncology/Hematology Clinic/Lab, which became the Norwood Hospital Cancer Center oncology department in Foxboro. In addition to much-needed funds, we were also fortunate enough to have the opportunity to donate something of a more personal nature to the Foxboro facility: a blanket-warmer unit for the chemotherapy patients, who can experience chills during treatments (the cancer center even affixed an engraved plaque on it with the race's name as a sign of appreciation).

We then expanded the giving to include smaller organizations and causes close to our hearts and those of my brother and grandfather. As both of them were also members of the Walpole Italian-American Society, and the fact the race is held at the Walpole Italian-American Club, money was raised for the Society, the Club, and also to purchase much-needed defibrillators for the building. My brother also spent time helping children, so the Matty Eappen Foundation (to help prevent abusive child head trauma) benefited, as does the Walpole Community Food Pantry, which serves local families and children in need. Additionally, since the legendary **Bill Squires**, who coached five Boston Marathon winners (**Bill Rodgers, Jack Fultz, Alberto Salazar, Greg Meyer**, wheelchair champion **Bob Hall**) and two team title-winners (1978, 1979), donated his time at several of our races, and the fact that many runners in our race have also run the Boston Marathon, funds were raised for the Coach Bill Squires "Run Smart" Fund (which provides assistance to economically-challenged student-athletes) and One Fund Boston (created in response to the bombings at the 2013 Boston Marathon).

The pure joy we receive from knowing that so many people have—and will—benefit from an event directly related to my brother and grandfather—turning something bad into something good—is truly cherished. And I know for a fact that volunteers and participants in the race as well as businesses and organizations that donate to the race feel the same way with their support. It is infectious!

And the selflessness is not strictly from local and amateur runners; it extends to elite athletes, Olympians, and national champions. When we decided to start a raffle as another source of funds, prizes of which included donated gift certificates and various items from generous local and area businesses, I wanted to add some running-related items as well. In my many years of covering the sport of running, including the Boston Marathon for decades, I turned to some of the greats of the sport who I know: Fultz (1976 Boston Marathon winner), **Meb Keflezighi** (Olympic Marathon medalist and 2014 Boston Marathon winner), Rodgers (four-time Boston Marathon and New York City Marathon winner), **Joan Benoit Samuelson** (inaugural Olympic Women's Marathon gold medalist and two-time Boston Marathon winner), **Frank Shorter** (two-time Olympic Marathon medalist), **Geoff Smith** (two-time Boston Marathon winner), Squires, and even

**Bobby Orr** who is a friend of a friend. They never hesitate to help. I would either bring items for them to sign, or they would even give me things for the raffle. Squires would dig through his “attic” for gems from his decades as a coach, speaker, and Olympic coach; and Rodgers, who would even be disappointed if I didn’t have more items for him to sign, donated posters, shirts, and even an autographed pair of his own running shoes!

Unfortunately, loss did not stop in 2000 with my brother and grandfather. Throughout the years, we’ve lost many supporters, volunteers, runners, walkers. But when it happens, support continues at the race for the families. And we’d have family members be our official race and walk starters in honor of their loved ones as a way to keep their memory alive and remain a part of the legacy of the race. In 2006, another trying year for our family, my paternal grandmother, **Rosina Clerici**, and my godfather, **Edwin Priesing**, passed away. In response, we created the Rosina Fun Run, a free 50-yard dash for kids to get them started in the sport; and the Priesing Award, presented to a runner, walker, or volunteer who exemplifies courage, determination, and perseverance in any manner. And when my father, **Frank Clerici Sr.**, died last year, we renamed the male walker trophy after him.

But through it all, we still want the day to be upbeat and fun; to remember those we’ve lost, but with laughter, great stories, and a smile. The David Award, for instance, named in honor of my late brother, is awarded to the second-to-last runner as a way to recognize the importance of being in the race while not necessarily winning it. Shortly after one of his many hospital stays, he was determined to run the Eagle Brook Saloon Dog’s Breath 5-Mile Road Race in Norfolk, which benefited children. He struggled over the hot-weather-day course and came in second to last, quite an accomplishment for him. When he died in 2000, race organizers (friends of the family for decades), came up with the David Clerici Big Heart Award for the last two finishers. When the race ceased two years later, we continued the tradition, which includes the recipients’ names etched on a plaque that is adorned with photos from that race and is on permanent display at the saloon. And on a more playful note, the Coach Squires Award is presented to the runner whose finish place is that of the age of Bill Squires that year.

The race has also organically developed a family atmosphere, where get-togethers and reunions seem to form. Occurring annually on the second Saturday in November, it is held within the cusp of the holiday season when people are in a festive mood. A common sight, one which represents the fun normalcy of a road race, is when groups of friends laugh and enjoy time together as they pose for each other and in little group pictures with not a care in the world but for the fun of the day.

All of this happens at races big and small throughout the nation. This is but one story. Ω

*Paul Clerici is the author of A History of the Falmouth Road Race: Running Cape Cod (2015), Boston Marathon History by the Mile (2014), Journey of the Boston Marathon (2015, Chinese-language version sold in China), and History of the Greater Boston Track Club (2013).*

Race committee member Carol Hunt-Clerici presents Rich Seale with the annual Priesing Award.  
Photo by Christine Lee.



# The End

by Muddy

**R**ecently, while going through my wife's obligatory, perennial "book purge," I stumbled across several **Shel Silverstein** books, (right next to dusty back issues of Level Renner, hard copies, no less). Being a sucker for children's books that present not-so-subtle adult viewpoints and life lessons, I halted the cleansing effort and curled up on the floor to flip through a few (hundred) pages.

Perusing through the childish rhymes of varying pentameters, I paused to reflect on just how aware and perceptive children's authors are. Born and raised on Silverstein, **Theodore Lesieg** (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss), and **Roald Dahl et al.**, I continue to be blown away by the power lying within the prose of these literary giants. It takes a special person to be able to grasp, with equal fervor, the minds of small children, tweens, and adults alike. Perhaps one of my all-time favorite soulful whisperings comes from Silverstein: "There are no happy endings. Endings are the saddest part. So just give me a happy middle and a very happy start."

As a society we tend to focus on the teary-eyed endings and rejoicing in everything that was and all that transpired during 'our story.' But this is so bittersweet. No matter how great 'the trip' was, we still find ourselves at the end, and thus, by default, saddened. Why are we so focused on the end, the finish, the end game? Why don't we instead, focus on the journey? The end is *never* as happy as the beginning or middle. Sadly this is true in nearly all aspects of our lives: schooling, careers, parenting, even running!

Think back to when you began your love affair with running. Exciting wasn't it? Fascination and obsession most likely grew exponentially as you rejoiced in all of the growth and fitness gains. This happiness continued to bubble over as your running

life expanded to meet new friends and acquaintances, run in never-before-experienced places, and entered into new and exciting races. The beginning of this (hopefully) life-long journey was a very happy start, indeed. Now you most likely find yourself, no matter your age or current fitness level, still somewhere in that proverbial middle. It's still happy, isn't it? It's still fun.

Yet, lurking somewhere off in the land of tomorrows, is 'The End.' We know this is true for all things life. Eventually our run-

miler, a monster workout, a long slow distance event, or an enjoyable hour on wooded trails. A run is a run and it is still part of The Middle. Employing this awareness and mindfulness is not always easy but it should be a part of as many components of life as possible. Can you honestly pinpoint when the very final time that one of your children will whisper in your ear, "*Daddy, will you pick me up?*" When shall come the final time a child implores, "*Mommy, will you brush my hair?*" One day we shall realize that those often overlooked small, seemingly trivial moments have ended and will never happen again.

**Kurt Vonnegut** often liked to utter to his fans "Enjoy the little things in life for one day you'll look back and realize they were the big things." Indeed, endings are sad so give us the happy middle with its slew of little things for as long as it can be so.

As Silverstein urges us, embrace the happy middle, Level Legion. Magazines may end but your running doesn't have to. Run every day. Be happy. Technically, the middle doesn't end until the end. Ω

*Muddy is still in the middle and will be on the LVL until his middle ends.*

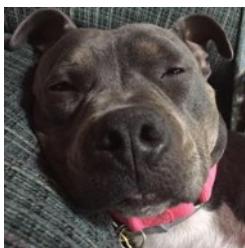


ning and our lives will cease to be. And no matter how amazing the span of events was during the numerous elliptical trips around the sun, it will still be a sad finale. Maybe it will be due to a nagging series of maladies which simply whittles us down into unrunnable things. Or what if we simply fall out of love with running and slowly, over time, our mileage dips down and dwindles away until zeroes are all that we know? The End can sneak up on us. Maybe The End comes quite suddenly in the form of a debilitating injury or even the sudden loss of life itself as our candle of existence is snuffed out. Sadness awaits and Silverstein tried to teach us.

The worst part is that we never know when the middle pages will turn to the final page. *Le Fin* is and shall always be the saddest part. The pages of 'the magazine' aren't always numbered for us. We don't know when the end is coming. Technically, our next run could conceivably be our last. It doesn't matter if it is a snail-paced three



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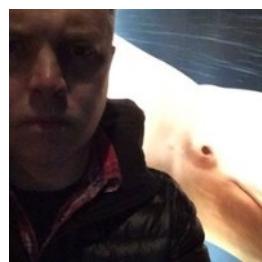
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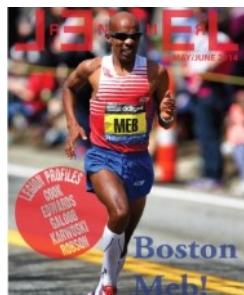
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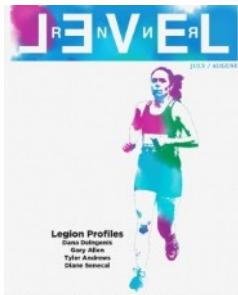
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run on the ground. read the underground.



Photo by Liz Cardoso,  
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