



THE MAINE TRACK CLUB:
THE FIRST TEN YEARS

MAINE TRACK CLUB 10 YEAR HISTORY

The Maine Track Club was 10 years young in September of 1989. In attempting to chart the organization's progression, we have highlighted key events of historical note. Our story, based on a review of the records and interviews with veteran members, will reveal a club that has undergone numerous changes, and continues to redefine itself as it enters its second decade.

Herewith, a synopsis of the first decade of the Maine Track Club:

IN THE BEGINNING

In the mid 70s, the Maine Track Club (MTC) evolved from the Portland Track Club, a group of twelve individuals who regularly scheduled and participated in medium distance and intermediate running events.

The short list featured several runners who played important roles in guiding the club through its early phases: Brian "Ziggy" Gillespie, Danny Paul, Gene Coffin, Wayne LaRochelle, and Dave Paul.

In September of 1979, with Ziggy at the helm of the club, long runs-- an activity which continues to this day-- heralded a new focus for a growing membership. Every Wednesday evening at 5:30 PM, and 10:00 AM on Saturday mornings, interested runners would convene at the University of Maine gym, and run parts of the Casco Bay Marathon course, grouped according to levels of ability and endurance. The fee for this form of entertainment was a mere 25 cents for hot water-- although members had to provide their own towels!

The hard work paid off; 41 finished the 1979 Casco Bay Marathon.

A sought after perk of early membership was the MTC running outfit, a singlet and pair of shorts. Another was Ziggy's handwritten monthly newsletter which detailed the 27 races conducted by the club, in addition to the social activities.

The club's first banquet was held in December at the Ramada Inn for 150 running enthusiasts. A closed club race preceded the festivities at 3:00 PM-- a five miler was held on the same course as the Bailey cross country run at the University of Maine Gorham campus. Controversy was created because the race was inadvertently advertised as an open event; this was a continuing concern for membership-- open versus closed club activities.

At the end of 1979, issues of member participation, race scheduling, by-laws structure, and leadership were also surfacing.

THE SECOND YEAR

Ziggy Gillespie continued as sole leader of the MTC in 1980.

Long runs were held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6:00 PM, and also on Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM.

More in step with the early founders, interval running was introduced on Wednesday evenings at the Expo track. A prerequisite for beginning intervals was an established base of weekly mileage completed, naturally, through participation in the long runs!

Ziggy's personal coaching appealed to many (40+ members), hence interval night became a well attended event, and reached the height of its popularity in 1980-81.

The club experienced several tragic moments in the early going. One involved John Fyalka, a member, Big Brother, and dedicated runner, who was killed in an automobile accident; a 10 km race and scholarship were established during this period in his memory. The scholarship is still awarded annually.

The summer road racing season featured some national talent; Bill Rodgers, Greg Meyers, and Randy Thomas ran the July Cooks Corner five miler in Brunswick.

In the Casco Bay Marathon that fall, great times were recorded by the following members:

Gene Coffin	2:30	Kim Beaulieu	2:57
Russ Connors	2:54	Marjorie Adams	3:17
Dick McFaul	2:55	Barb Hamaluk	3:20

A Point System was established in this year by Peter Hand and Grace Amoroso in response to burgeoning running club activity throughout the state. In keeping with Ziggy's promotion of the sport, this system provided a means to encourage full participation at regional events among all track clubs in Maine.

Further developments on the Maine running scene included publication of the Maine Running magazine, later renamed Maine Running and Outing in the mid-80s with the advent of cross training and triathlons. This booklet filled the void of media coverage on the running community.

Fortunately, the MTC had an inside media connection of its own on the roster. Dave Silverbrand, of WGAN TV, loaned his

camera regularly to the club; any member wearing the MTC colors while competing in a race would be filmed for posterity. Dave was a competent runner as well-- recording a 3:26 at the 1980 San Francisco Marathon.

An expanded social calendar included the Bethel weekend, featuring a 10 km, Half Marathon, and Lobster Bake. During the half marathon, Gene Coffin overtook Ken Flanders, former local schoolboy track star, at the ten mile point, and won handily in 1:08:51. Two other events were the Bermuda Marathon group trip, and the Holiday Inn banquet in December.

The Bernie Chapman awards for all finishers of the Casco Bay Marathon were initiated at this banquet and continued each year after until termination of one of the MTC's most popular races.

Unfortunately, the year end festivities generated a loss, and attrition continued to occur in the membership. These two factors contributed to the club's perilous financial condition.

THE THIRD YEAR

In 1981, the needs of the club demanded formal organization-- albeit remaining under the direction of its first president, Ziggy Gillespie.

A new slate of officers was selected; bylaws were written; and stricter qualifications for membership were introduced. For example, anyone living within a 50 mile radius of Portland had to attend 3 meetings a year as well as work 3 races.

The MTC convened regularly on the first Tuesday of every month, with a fun run preceding the business agenda. In recognition of Ziggy's efforts during the first two years of club development, members approved a stipend to cover his expenses for the Bermuda Marathon trip.

Other developments during the year included club registration with the TAC; issuance of club IDs to obtain discounts on clothing at the now defunct James Bailey Co.; and a NIKE shoe wear test program initiated in conjunction with the now closed Saco manufacturing facility. Six pairs of sneakers were donated by NIKE to the club in exchange for recorded sneaker performance data from the fortunate runner who received a pair. To wear a pair, the designee had to be logging more than 40 miles per week.

Speaking of mileage, the "longer" long runs were established by Bob Coughlin, who led group treks in excess of 20 miles. This extreme activity achieved its culmination with the 50 mile Bowdoin Ultramarathon sponsored by the Maine Rowdies.

The Rowdies are a colorful contingent of distance athletes who live by the dictum: "Run Hard, and Party Harder!" For runners who were not addicted to the LSD (Long Slow Distance) fitness program, Wednesday night intervals continued to hold their allure. A new wrinkle was introduced in 1981: the showdown! On August 29th, the final evening of intervals, Hank Pfeifle clocked in at 4:22 to win the one mile loop.

The running season featured outstanding performances from Virginia Connors, State Champion; Kim Beaulieu, 1sts in 50 mile and 100 mile events with records in both, also 1st in the Maine Coast Marathon; and Mark Hoffmaster, with a 2:48 Foxboro Marathon.

With road racing reaching its peak of popularity, many rival clubs were challenging the MTC's leadership status in local competitions. The Rowdies, The Musters, The Central Maine Striders, The Maine Road Ramblers, and the newly formed Marathon Sports Club (sponsors of the Maine Coast Marathon), were but five of the entities to be reckoned with.

The MTC fielded a powerful corps for intrastate competition. It handily won the 20 km Annual Autumn Gold Championship in Ellsworth, and recorded a victory in the Maine A Team Championship as well as winning an award for Maine Club Participation. In the 20 km, the men's race was aced by the team of Hank Pfeifle, Bob Winn, and John Gardiner. The women's race was victorious thanks to the efforts of Kim Beaulieu, Marjorie Adams, and Barb Hamaluk. The master's division was led by Bob Coughlin, Russ Connors, and Frank Morong. At the Ellsworth event, free rooms were provided by the Chamber of Commerce for attendees.

By the end of 1981, the Maine Track Club approached its first major crossroad.

In three short years, Gillespie's leadership had produced much intra-(particularly northern Maine), and inter-state goodwill. Outings within the running community comprised a full slate of weekend festivals, fun runs, picnics, and races. And regional recognition of the sport flourished despite sporadic media coverage. Yet, his tenure might also be deemed one of a single distance running machine careening out of control, bedeviled by the lack of financial and managerial resources needed to support and sustain group activity.

THE FOURTH YEAR

New President Bob Coughlin faced two significant challenges in 1982; low morale among club membership; and implementation of professional financial controls.

The morale issue was addressed, once again, by a full running schedule. Three sections were established for the spring, summer, and fall racing seasons. In the interests of evenly distributing the volunteer workload and boosting the club spirit, members were required to work on one race from each section.

Notable races included: the Officer Friendly's Childrens Run, in memory of Mike Anderson, a South Portland policeman who conducted public safety classes at local schools; the Handicap Race, an unusual event with runners grouped by weight, rather than by age; and the First Annual Midwinter Classic, a tough ten miler established by Bob Payne, which continues to this day.

Notable racers included: Maine Runners choice for male runner of the year, Hank Pfeifle, who turned in a 2:16:39 at the Orange Bowl Marathon; and a blistering 29:53, just ten seconds behind Bill Rodgers, in the Pickering Wharf 10Km; Kim Beaulieu, who completed two marathons and a championship 50 miler in a six week span; and Barbara Coughlin, a soon-to-be master runner, completing the Maine National Bank five mile race in 33:48.

At the Boston marathon, hospitality was extended to fellow Maine marathoners by the Cronins of Hopkinton. The Cronins opened their home each April for runners awaiting the start of the race. Eugene Cronin's son-in-law, Kevin McShane, a former schoolteacher here, posted the "Maine House" sign. Eugene Cronin, an accomplished yet unpretentious gentleman, passed away in 1985. His son, Jerry, and the family have carried on this warm tradition.

Training for running events often led to disabilities, and injuries prompted a need to reevaluate conditioning efforts. Supplemental exercises were sought as a means to strengthen the runner and prevent physical breakdowns.

In the early 70s, the only existing program, offered by the YMCA, the "Y's Way To Fitness", centered on weight lifting. Director Bob Folsom moved the curriculum to the University of Southern Maine, in the fall of 1976 where it resurfaced with a new name and expanded format: "The Leisure/Learn Program". One participant was long-time MTC member Jean Thomas.

Building upon the earlier walk/jog series, "Leisure/Learn" became the centerpiece for a diverse fitness format, the "Bodyshop and Lifeline Program". By 1982, the Bodyshop was beginning to hit its stride. Jeri Bugbee, new MTC member and Exercise Specialist, conducted classes on aerobics and weight training. Nutrition, wellness, yoga, massage, as well as back and heart related exercise regimens, rounded out the fitness offerings at USM. Today, Director Tom Downing, who

helped to enlarge and modify this program, presides over the "Lifeline Center for Fitness, Recreation, and Rehabilitation".

The financial health of the club improved through increasing volunteerism. Much credit should be accorded to Treasurer Dick Manthorne, who established a sound record keeping system and issued interim reports to the membership.

At the Officer Friendly's Race for Children, costs were reduced via donation of trophies provided by former club recipients. New plaques were added to these trophies prior to their reissue to the younger champions.

And, the Tennis Racquet Social, organized by Merle Hartford, contributed a modest profit to the treasury-- reversing the slide experienced in outings earlier on.

The club newsletter acquired a new look as well. Under the capable guidance of Marion Leschey and a select group of volunteers, the format was expanded and upgraded over the next two years.

Clearly the hurdles of the recent past had been squarely met and negotiated. The "Mighty Tough Crowd" had recaptured its form.

THE FIFTH YEAR

1983 may be remembered as the year of the statistician. Splits, PRs, and finishing times assumed top priority in the monthly newsletter summaries. Member profiles, initiated in 1981, disappeared for the bulk of the year. Rather, Dr. and President Dick McFaul's agenda, in line with the prior year's concentration on injury prevention, focused on medical issues of interest to the runner.

A review of these data revealed impressive records from the running scene:

Ladies first!

In Boston, Kim Beaulieu qualified for the first women's marathon Olympic Trials by a mere second; Jean Thomas, in her mid-forties, ran the Rotterdam Marathon in 3:36; and Jane Dolley took more than 20 minutes off her earlier marathon effort-- running the Maine Coast Marathon in 3:33.

And now the gentlemen:

Chris Kein, Chevrus track star, won the 800m and 1600m events in the State Class A Championships; Former President Bob Coughlin, nailed a 2:44 in the Maine Coast Marathon; and, John Keller, former college track champion, was the first

finisher for the club in the Casco Bay Marathon with 2:40.

The summer racing season featured a 154 mile relay event from Cape Cod to Dimillo's Pier in Portland, as a fund raiser for Big Brothers-Big Sisters. Bruce Lewis of "OK Norman" fame proposed a challenge: could two dozen MTC runners complete the distance ahead of his parallel coastline sculling efforts? With the finish never in doubt, the runners and their able handler, Dave Trussell, covered the course in 18 hours. Three days later, near Biddeford, Bruce Lewis was lifted-- semi-comatose-- from his vessel.

Other club developments included the transfer of member Glen Poland, coordinator of the NIKE shoe wear test program, to a work assignment in Chattanooga, Tennessee-- effectively eliminating the sneaker perk for high mileage runners.

New member Bob Jolicoeur established a PO Box for the club, in an effort to facilitate communications.

The brief social calendar featured the Pleasant Mountain and Saddleback Mountain summer family weekends, the former organized by Russ Connors.

An employee of New England Telephone, Russ was later selected to participate on the company team to carry the torch across the country en route to the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

His torch carrying nomination proved timely, given his ascent to the MTC Presidency in 1984.

THE SIXTH YEAR

By 1984, the membership had stabilized at 125, with a small core of regular contributors.

Russ Connors led the way with newly elected Vice President Bob Jolicoeur in coordinating events for the Olympic year.

Establishing a new club tradition, outgoing President Dick McPaul chaired the newsletter committee, once more emphasizing pertinent medical notes for the MTC. Ironically, McPaul suffered a knee injury early in the year and was forced to follow his own prescription for recovery; his expertise earned the respect of many when he ran a 3:06 at the Maine Coast Marathon shortly after the accident.

The club's feminine contingent, long dormant, began to assert itself. Joan Benoit captured the first women's marathon in the Summer Olympics, earning a lifetime membership in the MTC. In the spring, Kim Beaulieu staged three remarkable performances: the Boston Marathon, the Olympic Trials, and, two weeks subsequent, a victory in the Maine Coast Marathon, her third in five years. Later in the

season, she placed third in the Western States 100 mile endurance run, won the Casco Bay Marathon, and set a women's record of 131 miles in the 24 hour Rowdy Ultramarathon.

Barb Coughlin and Jane Dolley organized the Cape Challenge Half Marathon, where Jeri Bugbee finished first for the 35-39 age group.

Male running standouts included the Perennial Bob Trio, Coughlin, Payne and Jolicoeur, respectively, who recorded two sub- and one plus-three hour Boston and Casco Bay marathon times. In Boston, Greg Dugas bested the pack with a 2:54. Dick McFaul responded with a similar time in the Casco Bay event.

Another sturdy performance was turned in by 62 year young Carlton Mendell, who established an age group record for a 100 mile endurance run.

Jim "Terry" McGovern was featured in the fall issue of The Greater Portland Magazine. A recent retiree, McGovern started his second life with the MTC. After losing 70 pounds, he ran three marathons, each better than the last, proving conclusively that age was merely a social disease.

To contrast, long time running pioneer Jim Fixx suffered a heart attack and died during a jogging session. His death reaffirmed the need for a well rounded athletic program--running by itself did not guarantee lifetime fitness nor immortality.

A major club project was initiated in this year: Fundraising for the Baxter Boulevard Running Path around Back Bay; a heavily trod two mile jogging route with several exercise stops needed proper resurfacing. Since public funds were unavailable for the \$70,000-\$100,000 cost of improvement, private financing was solicited from interested sources, including the Maine Savings Bank, Blue Rock Industries and the S.D. Warren subsidiary of Scott Paper Company. Support was also garnered from the membership. Widgey Thomas Jr. led the way with a generous donation.

In the spring of 1984, the regular monthly meetings, formerly held at the Portland Police Station, were relocated to SMVTI, through the assistance of SMVTI Director Wayne Ross. Drawing on his experiences as past president of the Down East Ski Club, Connors inculcated "Roberts Rules of Order" into MTC proceedings and reshaped the By-Laws.

On the social scene, long distance trekkers carbo-loaded with a spaghetti dinner prior to the Casco Bay Marathon. After the race, Priscilla and Bob Jolicoeur hosted a party at their Cape Elizabeth residence.

The Jolicoeurs contributed much time and energy to the club in 1984. Bob's efforts included a complete newsletter facelift, generation of a computerized club mailing list, and the introduction of corporate culture to MTC management. In addition, he expanded the heretofore local boundaries of the club-- filing for membership in the RRCA, Road Runners Club of America, in December.

Near the end of the year, prior to assuming the presidency, he conducted a survey of the membership. Only 22 questionnaires were returned, pointing toward glaring deficiencies in participation. Indeed this was the first year nominees were reluctant to step forward to fill the officer's slate.

How could the group be revitalized, and where might the new energy source lay?

THE SEVENTH YEAR

Undaunted by the poor survey response of the preceding year, President Jolicoeur continued to circulate questionnaires on a regular basis, emphasizing subjects that included road racing techniques, running literature, and health concerns. Suggestions on club improvement were sought as well.

Jolicoeur charted a new course for the MTC. Following incorporation and acceptance of membership into the RRCA, formal business of the organization was conducted under the umbrella of a national enterprise. At that time, the club faced additional responsibilities: election of a governing board, certification of all race courses, and the purchase of liability insurance. Without precedent, Jolicoeur also unveiled a bold strategy for the club to host the 1986 RRCA National Convention in Portland.

Delegating broadly, Jolicoeur initially enlisted the support of his officers: Vice President Jane Dolley raised meeting attendance with her selection of engaging speakers; Treasurer Rick Strout brought a professional format to financial reporting; and Secretary Phil Pierce documented, in great detail, the club's progress.

Other contributors followed suit from old and new committee chairs: Clothing, Course Certification, Membership, Newsletter, Photography, Public Relations, Race, Refreshments, and Social.

Membership Committee Chairman Bob Ayers announced a drive to increase membership by 50% in a one year period. As an inducement, fees to join the club were lowered from \$30 to \$12 for a single membership. Uniforms were no longer part of the package, rather purchased separately. The campaign slogan, "Run with a Friend, Join the Maine Track Club" became the official motto.

The program produced dramatic and immediate results. Mid-year, the membership had increased to 200, and by October, approached 300.

Ayers also noted that the single male runner for the club logo was no longer representative of the current membership. The addition of many female and younger members to the group had rendered the logo anachronistic. By unanimous consent, the chickadee was selected to appear on the club banner and stationery. Earlier on, the state bird had been used by Ziggy Gillespie on club clothing.

The Back Bay Footpath Project continued with \$30,000 received via private donations. The MTC raised more than \$19,000, including \$2,000 from Portland's Perfect 10 km, conducted by the Athletic Attic and the club. Dedicated in October, the footpath became a favorite spot for daily early morning runs from the USM gym.

Jeff Galloway's book on running became the Bible of the morning group. Through diligent adherence to Galloway's methods, improvements were achieved at various competitions by several disciples: Jean Thomas, the nominal leader; Barb Coughlin; Bill Davenny; Mel Fineberg; Barbara Footer; Ruth Hefflefinger; Joan Lavin; Terry McGovern; Al Mack; Widgery Thomas; Sandy Utterstrom; and Jane Dolley. While on a training route, coins and currency were often discovered; these monies were saved until December, and then donated to the Bruce Roberts Christmas Fund. Allegedly, a twenty dollar bill was uncovered on one outing-- no doubt reward for the loss of sleep these dawn stalkers experienced.

Other contributions within the club included a memorial scholarship for deceased early member John Fyalka. His father made a donation to establish an annual award for the Maine high school senior who was distinguished in local, state, regional, and national running competitions. The MTC matched this amount and presented checks to designated male and female graduates at the winter banquet.

The club was approached by Special Olympics program directors to support their track and field event weekend at Colby College. For members who volunteered, the activities provided a fresh perspective on the fitness abilities of the disabled.

Running performances were more prominently featured in the newsletter due to more sophisticated recording of race results. Newly elected Club Statistician, Don Penta, maintained a meticulous file on each competitor. Complete and accurate listings on all races, domestic and foreign, were published monthly. These statistics proved invaluable in the selection of recognition categories for the annual award banquet.

Many impressive performances were recorded during the year:

Joan Benoit won Chicago's marathon with a personal best of 2:21, setting an American record.

Kim Moody placed seventh for the women at the Boston Marathon with a personal best of 2:46. In November, she completed two 50 mile ultramarathons within eight days-- the latter race in 6:46.

Chasing Kim at Boston were Bob Coughlin, Russ Connors, and Dick McFaul, reaching the finish line in a little over 3 hours.

Wanda Haney, under the tutelage of Ziggy Gillespie, won the 800m and 1600m in the State Class A Schoolgirl Track Championships.

Finally, at the Casco Bay Marathon, Everett Davis became the first USM Heartline Program participant to complete the 26.2 mile event.

The club's mission had been significantly modified during the year. And the sport of running was also in a state of flux. The emergence of triathalons and cross training programs impinged upon existing running schedules, tarnishing the allure that this singular exercise once held for many.

President Jolicoeur's energy had rejuvenated the club, yet the organization needed to harness that energy and apply it consistently over a broad range of activities.

THE EIGHTH YEAR

President Jane Dolley carried the corporate blueprint forward into 1986-- enlarging the membership and narrowing the club's focus on the upcoming RRCA Convention. In the month of March alone, a record 123 members and guests attended the regular meeting, swelling the ranks by more than 25% to 411.

One new member, Bruce Ellis, joined the fold and immediately found the spotlight with a string of first place victories: Maine Coast Marathon, 2:25:03; Sugarloaf Marathon, 2:18:37, a new course record; Cape Challenge Half Marathon, 1:07:28; and a scorching 2:17:54 at the Twin Cities Marathon for 16th place, qualifying him for the 1988 Olympic Trials.

Dolley's goals included: improved volunteer participation; a quality racing schedule; and a successful national convention.

The emphasis on race quality versus quantity resulted in a 50% reduction in running events sponsored by the club-- contrasting sharply with the ambitious schedules of Ziggy Gillespie earlier on. Race director since 1982 and present at

nearly every competition, Charlie Scribner exemplified the new volunteerism that reached its crescendo with the RRCA Convention in May. Once again, Charlie's efforts toward race course certification, execution of events, and computerized finishing times facilitated operations.

The convention, spread over a four day period, brought the club national recognition. Portland provided an ideal backdrop for the festivities-- high points included: the welcoming party at Jolicoeur's home; the lobster bake for the attendees; and the 10 km run around Back Bay. More than 40% of the membership helped out in activities ranging from solicitation of sponsors to transportation of delegates. In Yankee defiance of the diminished interest in the sport, these functions provided an opportunity to renew the running spirit. Significantly, the convention also enriched the club's treasury by a sum exceeding any previous annual balance (\$7,000+).

In keeping with increased member participation, an expanded social calendar was introduced. One event per month was offered, with Sandy Wyman's progressive dinners, Mike Reali's hikes, and sponsorship of the first annual Christmas Candy Cane Fun Run by Joan Benoit Samuelson and Bruce Bickford.

Portland was the site not only for the RRCA Convention, but the TAC Junior Olympics as well. Conducted in June of 1986 and 1987 by Portland High School Coach George Towle, these regional track and field events were held for 9 to 18 year old runners from the six New England states, New York city, and the Adirondacks. The small profits realized each year were invested in lighting for the Exposition track and school running competitions.

Mark Hoffmaster was another member and schoolteacher who influenced children's running. Succumbing to leukemia in January, Hoffmaster was remembered with a 5 mile Westbrook road race, a tradition that continues to be observed.

Notable performances at the elder end of the running spectrum featured 64 year old Carlton Mendell placing first at the Essex County Ultramarathon and 24 hour relay race in Westport, New York. From noon July 19, to noon July 20, Carlton logged 100.5 miles and arrived 8-1/2 miles ahead of the second place finisher!

And 68 year old John Woods, in keeping with his former occupation as a commercial airline pilot, traveled all over the globe to participate in national and World Masters Championships 60+ and 65+ age groups-- accumulating a silver medal in the marathon, a bronze in the 10km, and a bronze in cross country.

The elite corps featured, once again, Joan Benoit Samuelson, MTC Female Runner of the Year, honored as one of the most influential women in the sport of running over the past two decades; and Andy Palmer, MTC Male Runner of the Year, singled out for his summer running camps and individual coaching.

Susannah Beck, a Waynflete senior, won the prestigious Kinney Regional Cross Country Championship in New York city, completing the course in a faster time than predecessor Joan Benoit.

Kim Moody won the 50 mile ultramarathon in North Adams, Massachusetts, finishing 1 minute short of the world record. At her third Western States 100 Miler, she overcame the disappointment of the previous outing-- combating blister and kidney problems to place second for the women.

Deb Sawyer led the women's field for more than half of the Casco Bay Marathon, until she was overtaken by an alien Kim (Goff) from Rhode Island and arrived a mere 2 minutes and 22 seconds behind her (3:05:59).

Several MTC athletes challenged the limits of endurance running performances in the triathlon-- where swimming and biking preceded the marathon effort. Four members qualified for the Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon: Paul Merrill, Rosalyn Randall, Deb Hewson, and Barb Hamaluk-- the largest contingent ever fielded by the club for this event.

For Dolley, the short term goals of the club had been achieved. A broadened platform of activities had sparked a new synergy within the membership. In addition, the organization had surmounted the obstacles of national affiliation and disparate interests. One puzzle lingered for the long term: how might the club maintain the accelerated pace it had set for itself over the last two years?

THE NINTH YEAR

As the club approached even higher limits, the ascent proved difficult and the peak elusive. Under new president, Phil Pierce, the MTC once more assumed a local posture while preserving the corporate infrastructure established earlier on. Indeed, the activities conducted during the year embodied global versus local tensions that continued to strain both camps within the club.

The annual banquet met with some direction and funding complications. But, as usual, club membership, under the direction of Sandy Wyman, pulled together to produce a Grade A event. In addition, the club's

tradition of recognizing student athletes via scholarships was greatly reduced in scope. Not least, funds allocated for liability insurance and RRCA Race Seminar travel expenses appeared with the increased national involvement of the MTC.

The focus continued to oscillate throughout 1987. Increased circulation (434) of the newsletter was unfortunately coupled with the loss of sponsorship by the Maine Savings Bank (MSB). Fred Beck addressed the challenge of maintaining a quality and economical monthly mailing that had now reached a print/mail cost of \$1.00 per member per month. For the first time, sponsors were solicited to offset the publication costs. Deb Hewson contributed a herculean design effort to the project.

Newsletter information was supplemented by Sara Hobson, a new member and welcome addition to the club, who frequently covered MTC activities in her column on running for the Maine Sunday Telegram.

The actions of the MSB foreshadowed the removal of corporate patronage from the Maine Coast and Casco Bay Marathons. UNUM's decision to drop the fall classic was a particularly bitter pill to swallow, given the popularity of the race and the large proportion of company employees who were members.

In August, casting about for ballast, President Pierce, in his newsletter column, THE RUNNER'S EDGE, opened debate on the future of the organization. Ideas would be reviewed by the executive committee, and presented to the membership for adoption. In October, a voice from the past outlined possible avenues to promote and sustain growth. Bob Jolicoeur defined three scenarios: a merger with the Maine Coast Road Runners, to pool fresh recruits with a flagging workforce; renewed sponsorship of the Maine Coast Marathon by the MTC; and/or establishment of a committee to oversee development of an indoor track within the Greater Portland area.

No action was taken. The membership opted for the status quo.

Notable club contributors during this difficult period were Tom Norton, Chris Stanley, Nancy Stedman, and Jane Dolley.

Tom established a more efficient system for distribution of MTC clothing. Through bulk purchases, he obtained substantial discounts, thereby reducing associated expenses and club subsidies.

Chris, assistant manager of a local sporting goods store, wrote a monthly newsletter column which detailed current developments in the athletic shoe arena.

His reviews paralleled articles submitted by other members: Jerry Allanach, Vice President Cheryl Bascomb, Jane Dolley, Bruce Ellis, Joan Lee, and Jodi Reali. In particular, Bascomb regularly profiled speakers who later appeared in her diversified and stimulating program schedule for the monthly meetings. Two standouts were Brooks Johnson, Head of the Women's Track Program at Stanford University, and Dr. George Sheehan, well-known for his books on running and medicine.

Nancy Stedman, Social Committee Chairman, coordinated an ambitious agenda: a February cross country ski outing; a March potluck brunch; an April caravan to the Bangor Kenduskeag Canoe Race; a May fundraising yard sale (netting the club \$600); May and June bicycle pie rides sponsored by Deb Hewson; a brunch following Pat's Pizza road race at the Dolleys; the August Highland Lake Fun Run Finale; the President's Falmouth Lobsterbake; and a fall potluck supper, where members donated race t-shirts. Bruce Ellis packaged and shipped these jerseys to Dr. Peter Millard in South Africa for distribution to needy children.

Past President Jane Dolley continued to cultivate increased member participation. In March, she hosted, with the assistance of Charlie Scribner, a race director program for 18 interested members. Her efforts were rewarded with the addition of six new directors: Ken Dolley, Danny Fitzgerald, Barb Footer, George Prescott, Mike Reali, and Marie Wood. Jane also closely monitored volunteer attendance-- noting contributions in the newsletter. In May, she received the RRCA Scott Hamilton Award for Outstanding Club President, in recognition of her management of the Portland National Convention during the preceding year. Concurrently, she was appointed Vice President, RRCA East Region, and agreed to serve on the TAC Women's Long Distance Running Committee.

Youngsters launched a vigorous assault on the racing circuit. Kristen Berube, MTC Youth Runner of the Year, established a new record for 1500m (4:53.6) at the Maine TAC Championships. She also placed first for both boys and girls in the Officer Friendly Race. Denise Harlow captured a first for the 14-18 year olds at Bridgton's Four on the Fourth (25:19). Daniel Berube was the first MTC finisher in the two mile Special Olympics Fun Run at Saco (12:13).

Bill Green, WCSH sportscaster and member, helped to organize Maine's first fully televised race-- the For Kids Sake four miler. Joan Benoit Samuelson placed tenth, a mere two weeks before giving birth to her first child, Abigail.

The competitive edge of club regulars remained finely honed as well. Two dozen elite men and women members captured a majority of the top trophies for the season. Returning home from Seattle, Kim Moody placed 15th overall at the Boston Marathon, pocketing \$1,100. Deb Jensen arrived from Portland,

Oregon and became the new--if short lived--Portland, Maine star, setting a course record at the Cape Challenge Half Marathon (1:24:26). Peter Lessard scored two first place victories: 26:44 at the Rangeley Moose Run (5.2 miles), and 49:23 in the Sugarloaf 15km. And, Virginia Connors completed her first marathon in Montreal in a sterling 2:52.

Jennifer Rood turned in several stellar performances: first place at the Spring Point four miler (24:28) and, fourth overall-- men and women-- setting a new course record for the hilly Dixville Notch 12 miler (1:17:59).

The benefits of cross training were best exemplified in the accomplishments of Barry Fifield. In the Wicked Winter Caribou Bog Run cross country ski event, he placed in the top 10 percent of finishers; he completed each of the three Maine marathons in 2:45 or less; and, in winning the Kennebec 50 mile canoe competition, Fifield set a new course record. Paddling in the same event, colleague Gordon Chamberlain was nearly consumed by a man-eating eddy. True to form, he nonchalantly clamped the canoe's rope between his teeth and swam to safety.

Wanda Haney copped three first place awards: the Midwinter Classic Ten Mile Race (63:56); the April Amble four miler (23:02); and the five mile Pat's Pizza Classic (29:14).

Carol Weeks won the most improved MTC female runner (30-39) with a sub-40 Great Pumpkin 10km (39:38), and a fifth place finish-- in subfreezing weather-- for the women in the Boston Peace Marathon (3:06:47).

With a three year archive of race results, statistician "Delta Don" Penta was now producing year to year improvement percentages on selected members. 1986-87 top winners included: John Gale, 10.8% faster at the Midwinter Classic; Peter Stoops, 8.0% speedier in the Kerryman's Pub Race; Clint Merrill, 6.8% quicker in the April Amble; and Ron Cedrone, who dropped 12 minutes off his previous Montreal Marathon record, and 6.5 minutes off his personal best for the Mount Washington Road Race.

In team competition, the MTC maintained its leadership position. At the Bangor Mainiac Half Marathon, six members joined together to best five other groups, including the Striders and the Musters.

The play of the year featured the "President's Challenge". Just prior to the Boston Marathon, each member of the Perennial Bob Trio-- Payne, Jolicoeur, and Coughlin-- received a single glove from Phil Pierce with the cryptic note: "See you at the finish". Pierce arrived at the chute in 2:59, effectively splintering the pack. While Coughlin and

Jolicoeur lagged a few minutes behind, Payne, unbowed, pressed onward-- slipping in two minutes ahead of Phil.

In many ways, John Gale's appeal in the August newsletter provided a telling metaphor for the changing MTC environment. Would the traditional Sunday morning long runs from Payson Park return? The question was met with silence as the year drew softly to a close.

THE TENTH YEAR

New President Charlie Scribner maintained the status quo while continuing to serve as Race Committee Chairman. While the membership hovered at about 400, the year opened without a Vice President and four chairmen. This dearth mirrored the 1985 attempt to fill the officer's slate

The newsletter echoed the strain of non-participation as well, with no publication scheduled for August to November, traditionally one of the busiest seasons for MTC. No member profiles, a paucity of articles, and clippings foreign to club activities characterized the 1988 periodical.

Several problems were highlighted within the budget: a five-fold increase in race expenses; unanticipated equipment expenditures; a lack of sponsorship and patronage; a decline in membership revenues; and a minimum of social fundraising programs.

In recognition of the ensuing ennui, Scribner concentrated on his and the club's main strength--race directing--in an attempt to regroup. Personal kudos included winning the Nike Rod Steele award for outstanding volunteer at the 1988 RRCA National Convention. During this year he also became the new RRCA State Representative.

Not surprisingly, 1988 paralleled 1983 with its emphasis on race results.

RRCA East Region Vice President Jane Dolley turned in an outstanding track campaign, placing first in her age group at the NECTA Regional Track Meet 800m and 5 km events; first again at the MECTA Corporate Track Meet in the 800m, 1600m, and 2 mile heats. And stepping off the track onto the roads, she ran a 3:21 PR at the Twin Cities Marathon.

George Towle captured the most improved runner award for his age group (30-39) based upon first place MTC finishes at the Milk Run five miler (21:36) and the Sugarloaf 15 km (52:17). Taking a short break from his training, he organized the first Forest Avenue Mile contest held June 12th. The following week, Towle continued his MTC firsts at the Doc's

Tavern three miler (15:51) and later recorded a 35:43 at the October Falmouth Lions 10km.

A new member in 1987, Ruth Hall was the second place woman finisher at the Mount Washington Road Race. Arriving in 1:21:05, she bested famed Rat Packers Ron Cedrone (1:22:09), Mike Reali (1:22:27, PR), Al Butler (1:30:35), and John Gale (1:32:04, PR).

In April, Bruce Ellis won the Portland Boys Club five miler, using the event as a tune up for the following week's Olympic Trials Marathon. He completed the New Jersey Waterfront course in 2:23, finishing 29th out of 130 qualified entrants.

At the Falmouth Lions 10km, MTC women Cheryl MacMahon, Maureen Sproul, Carol Weeks, and Jeri Schroder took first place awards for four consecutive age groups. Andy Palmer and George Towle received honors for the thirty-something bracket, and, once again, Carlton Mendell topped the 60+ oldsters division.

In other developments, Bob Jolicoeur initiated and explored the feasibility of a 200m indoor track for Portland. The Jolicoeurs also continued their hospitality with an August fun run and picnic at their home.

To conclude, Scribner experienced the full effects of a membership that had been stretched and fatigued. The reliable core of volunteers had earned a respite, and new members required orientation. An abbreviated race schedule, a unifying project, and expanded social outings; all were past avenues that held future promise for regalanizing the organization. Whether the club would return to its original roots or adhere to a format more heavily influenced by national programs remained a challenge for future leadership.

EPILOGUE

The Maine Track Club has posted many miles in the last ten years. From the early intervals and long runs to the cross training of today, the membership has grown fourfold. Searching for an optimal structure, the group continues to evolve in organizational, financial, and social areas. The principal challenges of the next decade will be the development of new leadership; cultivation of new membership; and continued appropriate promotion of the running spirit.

