

# FOOT NOTES

Volume 23, Number 6

The Hamilton Harriers Bimonthly Newsletter

November 2008



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## CONTENTS

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General Meeting Notice

From the Oval Office

Harrier 2008 Championship Series

Marathons

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### General Meeting

The November General Meeting of the Hamilton Harriers is scheduled for 7 pm, Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at the Hamilton Downtown YMCA.

### From the Oval Office

The President has been mightily engaged in preparation for the Boxing Day run i.e. manning our expo booth, printing and distributing information fliers, interfacing with suppliers, re-programming our Boxing Day web site, etc. and must therefore be excused for not having time for his usual reflections from the Oval Office.

### Harrier 2008 Championship Series

These results are tentative and omissions can be forwarded to Russ Doyle as soon as possible. The final results will be tabulated after the last race in our series, the Egg Nog Jog 10.8K, to be held on Dec. 14, 2008 at Terra Cotta Conservation area, Halton Hills.

The results are in two sections.

The first section identifies the Harrier's standing by race. The results show the points you earned in that race on an over-all basis and by age category.

The second section presents a summary of the points each Harrier earned grouped by age category along with identifying the races in which you participated.

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## Standings by Race

### Robbie Burns January 27th, 2008

#### 8k Males

Name	Age Group(Points)	Time	Over-All
Jose Fuentes	40-49 (10)	29:05	10
Mike Bown	30-39 (10)	30:10	9
Steve Fisher	40-49 (9)	33:22	8
Dennis Swan	40-45 (8)	34:25	7
Pete Jenkins	50-59 (10)	35:03	6
Doug Little	60-69 (10)	36:28	5
Russ Doyle	40-49 (7)	36:34	4
Mike Traynor	40-49 (6)	36:37	3
James Van Dyke	50-59 (9)	40:39	2
Doug Marck	50-59 (8)	41:52	1
John Campbell	70-79(10)	48:51	0

#### 8K Females

June Jenkins	50-59(10)	41:42	10
Jamie Macleod	50-59 (9)	43:04	9
Vera Crossley	40-49 (10)	45:08	8
Carol Hilson	60-69 (10)	46:41	7
Maria Harrison	30-39 (10)	51:45	6
Julie Anderton	60-69 (9)	56:05	5

### Saint Catharines' Runners 5k Valentines Run Feb.10, 2008

#### 5K Males

Peter Jenkins	50-59 (10)	22:15	10
Dave Harrison	40-49 (10)	22:45	9
Jim McNeil	50-59 (9)	27:17	8

#### 5K Females

June Jenkins	50-59 (10)	26:32	10
Maria Harrison	30-39 (10)	28:30	9

### Slainte Saint Patrick's Day 5k March 8th, 2008

#### 5K Males

Dennis Swan	40-49 (10)	23:03	10
Russ Doyle	40-49 (9)	23:52	9
John Campbell	70-79 (10)	30:50	8
Paul Martin	50-59 (10)	39:11	7

## Burlington Runner's Good Friday 10 miler March 21st, 2008

Name	Age Group(Points)	Time	Over-All
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### 10 Miler Males

Mike Bown	30-39 (10)	56:09	10
Steve Fisher	40-49 (10)	1:10:40	9
Dennis Swan	40-49 (9)	1:12:34	8

### 10 Miler Females

Jamie Macleod	50-59 (10)	1:34:56	10
Vera Crossley	40-49 (10)	1:36:22	9
Maria Harrison	30-39 (10)	1:41:12	8
Julie Anderton	60-69 (10)	2:03:08	7

## Around The Bay 30k March 30th, 2008

### 30k Males

Mike Bown	30-39 (10)	1:47:52	10
Kyle Maga	30-39 (9)	2:17:46	9
Steve Fisher	40-49 (10)	2:23:03	8
Peter Jenkins	50-59 (10)	2:25:23	7
Dennis Dell	50-59 (9)	2:26:45	6
Brian Bobolo	40-49 (9)	3:51:30	5
Russell Peters	70-79 (10)	4:16:20	4

### 30K Females

Linda Clayton	50-59 (10)	2:36:33	10
June Jenkins	50-59 (9)	2:52:30	9
Jamie Macleod	50-59 (8)	3:05:10	8
Carol Hilson	60-69 (10)	3:14:51	7
Vera Crossley	40-49 (10)	3:24:47	6
Julie Anderton	60-69 (10)	3:47:28	5

## Ancaster Old Mill 10k June 10th, 2008

### 10k Males

Steve Fisher	40-49 (10)	42:52	10
Kyle Maga	30-39 (10)	42:53	9
Dennis Swan	40-49 (9)	44:36	8
Doug Little	60-69 (10)	48:32	7

## Grimsby Peachbud 10k June 24th, 2008

### 10K Males

Jose Fuentes	40-49 (10)	35:32	10
Steve Fisher	40-49 (9)	41:12	9
Dennis Dell	50-59 (10)	46:18	8

## 10K Females

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age Group(Points)</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Over-All</u>
Maria Harrison	30-39 (10)	1:00:16	10

## Hamilton Harriers 2008 Cross Country Race Churchill Park, Westdale, Hamilton. (3000m course)

<u>Overall Position</u>	<u>Runners</u>	<u>Finishing Time</u>
1.	Mike Bown	16:11
2.	Russ Doyle	18:16
3.	John Greene	19:14
4.	Lenny Ippolito	19:33
5.	Marv Curry	20:40
6.	James Van Dyke	22:26
7.	Sydney Rugarain	23:47
8.	Peter Richardson	24:07
9.	Mathilda Machado-Gardiner	24:07
10.	Deena Sacks	26:41
11.	Linda Clayton	27:15
12.	Scott Clayton	27:15
13.	Carol Hilson	27:17
14.	Julie Anderton	33:45
15.	Sheila Ranalli	36:08
16.	Bob Ranalli	36:08

## Run For The Toad 25k October 4th, 2008

### 25K Males

James Van Dyke	50-59 (10)	2:48:44	10
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### 25K Females

June Bobolo	40-49 (10)	2:38:16	10
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## Ed Hicken/Corktown Halloween 10k October 25th, 2008

### 10K Females

Julie Anderton	60-69 (10)	1:16:02	10
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## Georgetown Runners Egg Nog Jog 10.8k Sunday December 14th, 2008. (Harrier Series Final Race)

## Standings by Age Category

Legend:

RB	Robbie Burns
Valentine	St. Catherines Valentine 5K
GF	Burlington Good Friday

Bay	Around the Bay
Mill	Ancaster Old Mill
Peach	Peach Bud 10K
Pats	Slainte 5K
Mac	Wellwood 5K
Cork	Halloween Corktown 10K

Note: The Age Group Standings do not yet consider the results of the Harrier Cross Country Run. They do consider results supplied for 1/2 and full marathons

### **Male 30-39**

Mike Bown-3 races  
RB 10, GF 10, Bay 10  
Total Age 30pts

Kyle Maga-2 races  
Bay 9, Mill 10  
Total Age 19pts.

### **Male 40-49**

Steve Fisher-6 races  
RB 9, GF 10, Bay 10, Mill 10, Peach 9, half 8.  
Total Age 56pts.

Dennis Swan-5 races  
RB 8, Pats 10, GF 9, Mill 9, Mac 10  
Total Age 46pts.

Jose Fuentes-3 races  
RB 10, Peach 10, half 10  
Total Age 30pts.

Russ Doyle-3 races  
RB 7, Pats 9, half 7  
Total Age 23pts.

Dave Harrison-1 race  
valentine 10  
Total Age 10pts

Dan Divincenzo-1race  
half 9.  
Total Age 9pts.

Brian Bobolo-1race  
Bay 9.  
Total Age 9pts.

Mike Traynor-1 race  
RB 6.  
Total Age 6pts.

### **Males 50-59**

Peter Jenkins-3 races  
RB 10, valentine 10, Bay 10.  
Total Age 30pts.

James Van Dyke-3 races  
RB 9, toad 10, Mac 10  
Total Age 29pts.

Dennis Dell-2 races  
Bay 9, peach 10  
Total Age 19pts

Paul Martin-1 race  
Pats 10.  
Total Age 10pts.

Jim McNeil-1 race  
Valentine 9  
Total Age 9pts.

Doug Marck-1 race  
RB 8.  
Total Age 8pts.

### **Males 60-69**

Doug Little-3 races  
RB 10, Mill 10, Half 10  
Total Age 30pts.

Bob Ranalli-1 race  
Mac 10  
Total Age 10pts.

### **Males 70-79**

John Campbell-3 races  
RB 10, pats 10, Half 10  
Total Age 30pts.

Russell Peters-1 race  
Bay 10  
Total Age 10pts.

### **Females 30-39**

Maria Harrison-6 races  
RB 10, valentine 10, GF 10, Peach 10, half10, full10.  
Total Age 60pts.

### **Females 40-49**

Vera Crossley-3 races  
RB 10, GF 10, Bay 10.  
Total Age 30pts.

### **Females 50-59**

June Jenkins-3 races.  
RB 10, valentine 10, Bay 9.  
Total Age 29pts.

Jamie Macleod-3 races  
RB 9, GF 10, Bay 8.  
Total Age 27pts.

Linda Clayton-2 races  
Bay 10, Mac 10.  
Total Age 20pts.

**Females 60-69**

Julie Anderton-4 races  
RB 9, GF 10, Bay 9, Cork 10  
Total Age 38pts.

Carol Hilson-3 races  
RB 10, Bay 10, Mac 10.  
Total Age 30pts.

## MARATHONS

Before the 1970's there were only a handful of long distance foot races being held in North America. By the end of the 70's, every major city around the world was waking up to the prospect of hosting a marathon. The city fathers were being egged on by promoters who, with calculators in hand, were quick to demonstrate the financial benefits such events would bring to those who had the good sense to show an interest. After all, what did you really need – a big name city, like Chicago, Toronto, Washington, Los Angeles, London, Paris etc. and a willingness to have your local merchants flooded with visitors eager to spend money. Of course, the event would tie up traffic for awhile but this would occur on a Sunday morning when traffic flow was at its lightest anyway. And best of all, it wouldn't stage during the prime tourist season and, get this; the runners would thank us for it. No runner would want to do a marathon in Washington in the middle of summer. No, let's wait until the cool weather moves in and the tourists move out, say late October.

Those clearer minds not into the sport must have found this activity to be bizarre. Why would any sane person want to run themselves to the point of exhaustion and then keep going? No animal would do this unless under a dire threat. The only justification for either a human or an animal to push their bodies to this extent should be the threat of being eaten alive. And if this is supposed to be a sport, most would say it's unlike any sport they had seen before. And yet, over very good reasons not to, from the 1970's onward, the marathon attracted tens of thousands of runners to the delight of promoters, merchants and those enlightened city fathers who agreed to the event. If this is a "fad", it's the longest running one in history.

Dr. Ernst Van Aaken, the father of long slow distance training, had indicated that certain activities if pursued over time would increase the amount of oxygen in our systems. Oxygen is the necessary catalyst in the body's production of energy. More oxygen would heighten our body's energy and thereby improve our feelings of health - at least for a day or so. Jogging as it turned out was the premier activity for increasing our body's rate of oxygen intake. This wouldn't necessarily add days to our life - it isn't going to clear out arteries that are prone to clogging up - but it would add to the quality of our days. Van Aaken recommended the more running you do – at an aerobic pace – the better. Unfortunately, eventually our muscular and skeletal systems must have their say - a lifetime of running, particularly when done on asphalt or concrete, takes its toll on our joints. But in the 1970's the Baby Boomers were in their prime and, if you will pardon the word play, still miles away from those over-use injuries that would bedevil them in their later years.

Now the question is what led so many of them to participate in distance races, and in particular, the gruelling marathon distance? There is a perfectly understandable connection between the transformation of glycogen into energy to power the running muscles and the need for an increased supply of oxygen to act as a catalyst to this reaction. How does one understand pushing this transformation to its limits and beyond by running a marathon? Can this, in any way, be seen as a benefit to the body?

One can begin to appreciate how one might be led to run the marathon distance by considering that old saying that if one drink feels good, two should make you feel better. If running two miles makes me feel this good, I wonder, would four make me feel twice as good? It turns out, as Van Aaken suggested, the higher mileage will improve your endurance, to say nothing of the benefit of all that additional oxygen. This oxygen is not limited to use in the leg muscles. It would be dispersed throughout the body, leaving one with a feeling of over-all well being.

For the average runner, there are limits to these benefits and they start to make themselves evident as we get closer to 20 miles of steady running. With a lot of training, we may glide through the first 10 miles of such a run, start to feel a little effort as we get to the 15 mile point but from there on it becomes more of an effort. By the time we are into the lower 20 mile range, the tanks of the average runner are empty. In physical terms, we have used up our readiest source of energy, the glycogen in our muscles and must now energize ourselves through the burning of fatty tissue. This process is not as smooth a conversion of fuel to energy as occurs with the burning of glycogen. As the expression goes, this is the point of the race where someone comes along and puts a piano on your back. So why were so many people taking up this most challenging of distances?

The easy answer is that we do this because it satisfies our vanity. Hey, look at me, I'm a marathoner now! It's impossible to over estimate the role of vanity in our lives. The problem with pointing to vanity as the prime motivator here is the runners themselves. Look at us! Are we your classic Type A personality driven to succeed at all costs? Are we the stuff linebackers are made of?

I will not suggest the distance doesn't tweak our egos. However, when you look into yourself after mile 20, will your ego carry you to the finish line? It just might the first time out. After all, you have trained for months and announced to anyone who cared to listen that you were going to attempt your first marathon. The pain of coming up short and not finishing would probably outweigh the blow to your ego if you "did not finish". But marathons always have more repeat marathoners than newcomers. So why do they do it? I know the easy answer – they're brain dead. What else could it be? An animal wouldn't do what they do.

I believe there is an answer and the answer starts with a comparison to the animal kingdom. Much of an animal's behaviour is rule driven. Watch a flock of Canadian geese overhead and see how quickly they form themselves into the aerodynamically superior V shape. A rule is being followed, but unlike humans, this rule is not one which the geese thought about and agreed to. Their rules are ingrained in their DNA and seemingly are not open to change. When changes do come, they come through an evolutionary adaptation that better fits the environment. Much of human behaviour is also rule driven, but the difference is, we humans make up these rules – they are discretionary and our rules change, sometimes dramatically, with time. We used to believe in the institution of slavery and, for most of our history, kept women from having the same legal rights as a man. For centuries we believed that society was best served by installing all political power in the position of a king. The changes away from these rules did not have to wait on changes in our physiology.

An activity like the marathon is also a rule-governed behaviour, albeit the rules are pretty simple. Running is probably man's simplest and oldest sport – from here to there, first one wins. There is a distinction between the rules we follow in running, or for that matter in any sport, and the rules we follow in the conduct of most of the rest of our lives. The rules that govern most of our behaviour are intended to realize certain ends. We spend years in school learning the rules that govern our trade or profession in order that we will not be a financial burden on anyone else. There are a set of different rules that govern us in social settings to ensure that we have positive interpersonal encounters. There is another set of rules that make us good citizens and neighbours. In each of these cases the rule-governed behaviour leads to desirable ends that result from following the rules.

This is not the case with sports. The playing of any sport is not for any reason other than the satisfaction to be gotten from the game itself. Unless I am a professional, I don't engage in sport in order to earn my living; while being a good runner adds or subtracts nothing to my social persona nor does it make me a good citizen or neighbour. When we approach the question of why people would run marathons in this light, it becomes clear that we cannot justify this activity on any grounds other than itself. So what are the inherent values of racing and in particular, marathon races?

One possible answer could be the fact that racing is a test of our physical fitness. Van Aaken had defined health in terms of one's performance capacity over time. He also claimed that your health was your greatest achievement. If you agree with these statements, it is understandable people would be looking for ways to check the standing of their greatest achievement. Are we gaining or losing ground?

This answer has some merit. Races do not allow you to kid yourself about your fitness level. Before you were age 40, you could always run under 40 minutes in a 10K; now as you creep into retirement, a sub 55 looks good. Aging golfers on the other hand, can go to their grave believing they haven't shot their best game. The shortfall with this explanation is we don't need to do the marathon distance as the test – 5,000 or 10,000 meters is plenty long enough to check in on our performance capacity. About now, maybe the non-runners' explanation on marathoners – "these people are all nuts" – starts to gain some traction.

What is happening in extreme endurance tests? Let's start with the basics: we humans think of ourselves as being a composite of mind and body. These two seemingly different elements make us the person we are. There is an issue going back over 2000 years regarding how we are to understand the relationship between them. Thankfully for our purposes the reader can be spared going back to Plato. My point can be made by focusing on the way these two entities communicate with one another. The body's communication is blunt - feed me! I'm hurt / tired / cold / hot / sick! On the other side - This feels good or this feels really good! Our minds spend much of their time trying to anticipate these messages so we don't have to bear their full force – you haven't fed me all day, now I'll make you pay – feeling a little weak are we, not up to much?

It happens that, regardless of our best efforts, the body's functioning can be compromised. There may be intruders, like cold or flu bugs, the circulatory system may clog up bringing on heart attacks or strokes, our cell replication process may get out of whack leaving us with an expanding colony of mutant cancerous cells. Our minds address these situations by dragging our bodies to the doctor's office. While we are under attack our focus turns inward. What's happening to me? In developed societies because we have gotten so good at anticipating our body's needs, the only time we are seriously conscious of the hold our bodies have over us

comes when we are sick. But this last statement needs a qualification. There is one other time when we are fully conscious of our body's significance in our life and that occurs during our sporting activities. Is your hand and eye co-ordination good enough for you to hit a fastball? Do you have the reach to keep the puck from a defenseman? Can you out leap a competitor on a basketball court? And how long can you continue to run at pace?

During endurance events, particularly toward their latter stages, our consciousness is dominated by our body's inputs. We are no longer playing at one of our societal roles, we have become one with our body's discomfit, and it blinds us to everything else save one thing – our will. This is life reduced to its most basic elements. We are “mano a mano” – our aching bodies on the one side and our undeniable will to finish on the other. Does this contest have any worth?

I suggest the worth of the contest is best described by the definition of catharsis: a release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience that restores or refreshes the spirit. The emotional tension is brought on by our placing demands on our body that they can barely meet, if at all. You feel totally spent, your legs are wooden, your body is so covered in salt you could double as a salt lick, your thinking is in a fog and you still have five miles to go. Is this not a recipe for emotional tension? You can't adjourn and come back tomorrow; you can't delegate – oh, Snedley, could you...; you can't pin your predicament on someone else. That blunt beast, your body, which you always manage to placate with rarely having to hear a discordant note, has been unleashed in all its fury and it is bearing down on your consciousness with something like a biblical wrath. You didn't know you could feel such pain. You, like so many other healthy folk, were guilty of taking your pain-free life for granted until now. There is no hiding in the group from this pain – it is yours alone to bear. And now through this intense, inescapable discomfort, you finally know what it means to be an individual.

Marathons generate tremendous emotional tension, which like the music Bolero slowly rises to a grand finale, with the release coming at the 26.2 mile point. Here you get to stop and contemplate your life as you have never experienced it before. Until this day, you could rarely, if ever, identify with the breathing organism that is your body. You got a glimpse of the depths of pain it is capable of bearing. You may not get anything close to this experience again until your death bed. But you are not dying; you got to walk, albeit haltingly, away. This awareness matures you in ways that little else is capable of doing.

So do we have it then? Is the reason because marathons provide the participants with an experience, which is best described in the definition of catharsis - a release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience that restores or refreshes the spirit? There was a beautiful scene at the end of the movie “Zorba the Greek”, where Zorba tells the Englishman that he is perfect in many ways but life requires that now and then you need to be a little crazy. Maybe marathons are the craziness that many take up as a means to a species of self knowledge that is, in truth, frightening but something that leads us to appreciate our unique individuality.

Footnotes

Published by  
The Hamilton Harriers Running Club

President.....James van Dyke....(905) 971-6040  
V.P. Finance..... Carlotta Bown.....(905) 383-3821  
V.P. Purchasing ..... Dave Harrison.....(905) 529-6420  
V.P. Technical..... Russ Doyle.....(905) 523-6762  
V.P. Communications Bob Ranalli .....(905) 383-7620  
V.P. Membership..... Mathilda Machado.(905)574-3705  
Social Director..... June Jenkins .....(905) 388-9604  
Secretary..... Sheila Ranalli.....(905) 383-7620  
V.P. Web Mast..... Peter Haentjens... (905) 388-7895  
non-portfolio ..... Art Mitchell .....(905) 389-7229  
non-portfolio ..... Graydon Stephens.. (905) 387-0532  
YMCA rep ..... Bryan Webber

