

# MCRRC Intervals

July 2018

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**July 13**

Midsummer Night's Mile  
Gaithersburg High School  
Gaithersburg, MD

**July 21**

Matthew Henson Trail 5K  
Silver Spring, MD

**July 29**

Riley's Rumble Half Marathon & 8K  
South Germantown Recreational Park  
Germantown, MD

**August 3**

Going Green Track Meet  
Gaithersburg High School  
Gaithersburg, MD

**August 12**

Groovin' Woodstock XC  
Dickerson, MD

**August 18**

Eastern County 8K  
Silver Spring, MD

**September 9**

Parks Half Marathon  
Rockville, MD  
[www.parkshalfmarathon.com](http://www.parkshalfmarathon.com)

**September 15**

Lake Needwood XC  
Derwood, MD

**September 23**

Cabin John Kids Run  
Bethesda, MD

**September 29**

Black Hill 10K  
Boyds, MD

For complete details of MCRRC's races and programs, visit [www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org)

## Board Meetings

Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month.

## Memorial 4 Miler Spirit



Shah Jalden shows his spirit.



Spirited during the kids' run.



# Our Running Community

by Scott Brown, Editor

One of the great things about MCRRC is that we have such a large membership and such diverse options for races and training programs that it's easy to find inspiration and support for our running goals. In that spirit, this issue of *Intervals* highlights some of the many ways the Club provides a community for its members, from training and races and beyond.

Club President Mike Acuña reminds us of the value of our running community. Whether you're trying to help a running partner reach a goal or are trying to cope with life's challenges, fellow runners make a great support group.

In a similar vein, Summer Half Marathon Program Director Larry Feidelseit uses this month's *Coaches' Corner* to offer some helpful pointers. Whether you're an experienced runner or new to our

sport, you're sure to find a useful tip or two!

In this issue, Club member Julie Sapper provides an inspiring report on her Boston Marathon experience and how she got through the miserable conditions on race day with a little help from her MCRRC friends. It's well worth a read!

Also in this issue, Lisa Reichmann profiles Travisha Gunter about her path from new runner to MCRRC coach and now co-director of the Club's Winter 5K Run/Walk Program. Travisha offers a great perspective on the value of paying forward the support we receive from our fellow runners.

Finally, Dr. Betty Smith explains the benefits of deep-water running, a fantastic way to rehab injuries or just add some variety to your training. Check it out to find out how you can give it a try!

## Keep up with the latest news and information about MCRRC events and happenings!

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Instagram account - @MCRRC

Subscribe to our Yahoo Groups!

**mcrrc-alert** for breaking news alerts (track closed due to thunderstorms)

**mcrrc-info** for general news and information about club events

**mcrrc-discuss** for discussion with other club members about anything running or club related

<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/mcrrc-info/>

## MCRRC Intervals

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**Have comments or questions? Or want to help?**

Contact us at [Intervals@mcrrc.org](mailto:Intervals@mcrrc.org).

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MCRRC is a non-profit, educational organization which promotes personal health and fitness through the sport of running. The club conducts regular running activities, including training sessions races, seminars, and social events.



## Support Crew

by Mike Acuña

**O**n a personal note, as some of you know, the past six to eight months has not been easy on my family as we've had to bid farewell to many loved ones. I mention this not to solicit sympathy, but to share that one constant through these days has been the overwhelming support from our running family that has been with us through every turn, selflessly giving their thoughts, time, and friendship. This is not to say that non-running family and friends haven't been there, but it's hard not to notice how runners are always there for each other. This comes as no surprise when you consider the miles we spend together pushing and encouraging each other through the good, the bad, and the ugliest parts of races and training runs. It's warming and a silver lining to see that our support for each other extends beyond the race course.

As you'll read there's a common thread of support through this issue as we delve into summer training programs where new friendships are forged and old ones are strengthened as we hit the challenging days of summer running. It's further exemplified by Travisha Gunter, who shares her running journey and gives back through coaching with the First Time Marathon

program and who earlier this year stepped up her support efforts by taking over the reins of the Winter 5K Run/Walk Program. Also, Julie Sapper shares binding testimony with her race report from this year's Boston Marathon, where competitors and friends came together to battle brutal race day elements to get each other across the finish line.

So whether it's handing out popsicles on a hot summer run

or race, sharing Gu or electrolyte tablets, giving up a pair of gloves, motivating a friend to achieve their goals, or taking time to comfort a fallen runner, we're a strong community, a competitive community, and one community.

Cheers,  
Mike

— Mike Acuña is the President of MCRRC. He can be reached at [president@mcrcc.org](mailto:president@mcrcc.org).



Photo: Dan Reichmann

The Easter Bunny was the "rabbit" at the Spin in the Woods 4-Miler.

# Things I've Learned

by Larry Feidelseit

**W**ith the Summer Half Marathon program starting, our President asked if I might contribute to this issue's Coaches' Corner. I started thinking about the advice I give our runners, which led to things I've learned as a runner over 30-plus years. The following is a bit random, but hang with me.

**Stop Moving:** Stopping at a crosswalk to wait for the walk signal won't kill you ... but the alternative might! You will not lose one iota of fitness, and you will not negate any gains if your feet stop moving for a few seconds. In fact, it's sometimes just the break you need to turn around a tough run. And if you're having a good run, consider that the breather might allow you to pick up the pace a little for the rest of your run. You might even end up with a better workout than had you run continuously!

**Keep Moving:** Those people jogging in place at an intersection are onto something! As you age, it takes more time to get the wheels moving smoothly. Consider doing some leg swings or hip stretches to stay loose as you're waiting. It can make a substantial difference in your ability to get moving again, especially after a long red light in the second half of a run.

**Have a Plan:** Many of you participate in the various programs offered by MCRRC and are very familiar with the training concepts we employ. Our plans incorporate a variety of types of runs (e.g., long runs, speed work, and recovery runs), and they have periods of challenging your bodies and of rest to prepare for the next challenge. The difference in how you feel and how you perform at a goal race after following a plan vs. simply pounding out the miles can be astounding.

**Everyone Has a Plan Until They Get Punched in the Mouth (Mike Tyson):** We figuratively get punched in the mouth all the time in our sport, by

anything from weather calamities to injuries to vacations to unexpected overtime at work, any of which can throw our carefully planned training into chaos. As you get thrown a curveball, be flexible. Depending on the duration of the impediment, you may still be able to reach your goal. If you don't see the path forward, talk to one of our coaches (it's what we're here for).

**Run with Your Kid:** I'm going to get personal with this example. One of my daughters started running when she was in middle school. Initially, I'd run with her when it was convenient. I soon realized the gift that this time was, and I started actively rearranging my schedule to run when she asked. We have had really open and honest conversations on our runs, and we're closer because of them (maybe it has something to do with the lack of eye contact). By the time you read this, we'll be back from our latest adventure, running partway around Lake Ontario to an inflatable finish line at Niagara Falls.

**Pay Attention:**

Runner 1 (vertically challenged): Easily runs under tree leaning across trail.

Runner 2 (taller): Slams forehead into tree.

Runner 3 (me): "Boy I'm glad I wasn't right behind Runner 1!"

When you're driving your car, you should always be on alert, anticipating anything that could go wrong around you. The same is true when you're running. Make sure you can hear your surroundings, wear lights and reflective gear at night (even if you're running on sidewalks), and watch for the holes in the ground and the trees at head height.

**Thank the Volunteers:** Our race directors are fantastic about sending out messages thanking the volunteers who help make our events possible. When you're on a race course, thank as many of them as you can (and the police officers, too). It makes them feel good

to be acknowledged, it makes you feel good that you've made them feel good, and you'll notice that it leads to other runners around you thanking them, too. Win-win-win!

**Don't Race Every Race:** Many of you like to challenge yourselves with races. Don't feel like you always have to reach for that personal record. It can be a really enjoyable experience to run a race at tempo (or even long slow distance) pace, treating it as a very large group run where everyone just happens to be wearing numbers. And you'll have the breath to thank even the last volunteers on a course. Our low-key Club race series, which offers events free to MCRRC members, gives us a great opportunity to run easy without feeling that we're throwing away our money.

**The Power of the Group:** Running with others can have a number of positive impacts on your training, from pushing you to work a little harder, to taking your mind off the tough runs, to giving you the kick in the butt you need to get out the door because somebody's waiting for you. We recently witnessed an elite-level example of the power of the group. Desiree Linden was suffering early in this year's Boston Marathon. She said, "I gave [Shalane Flanagan] a tap and said, 'There's a really good chance I'm going to drop out today. If you need anything—block the wind, adjust the pace maybe—let me know.'" When she had the chance to help Flanagan rejoin the lead pack after Flanagan's bathroom stop, it gave Linden the chance to get out of her own head to focus on something (and someone) else, and ultimately win the race. Without this group of two, we likely would have crowned a different Boston Champion.

Let's finish strong with a quote...  
 "When you work together, you never know what's gonna happen. Helping her helped me..." - Desiree Linden

# Travisha Gunter



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

Travisha Gunter started running in 2011, doubtful that the couch to 5K program she used could actually make her learn to love running. She was proven wrong, and after completing her first 5K at Jeremy's Run that year, she joined the MCRRC 10K training program, and then rapidly progressed to participating in the Winter Half, Speed Development, and First Time Marathon (FTM) programs. Eventually, Travisha became a coach for the Beginning Women Runners, 10K, and FTM programs, and is currently the co-director of the Winter 5K Run/Walk Program, along with Keith Ord. When she's not busy volunteering for MCRRC races and training programs, Travisha is a Senior CAD Designer at a civil engineering firm and lives in Gaithersburg.

**What appealed to you about the MCRRC training programs enough to motivate you to progress from the 10K program through FTM?**

Everyone was so nice and encouraging. I met a group of BOP (Back of the Pack) runners that I followed from program to program.

**How did you transition from participant in MCRRC programs to coach?**

I started coaching the Beginning Women Runners (BWR) program when the group of ladies I ran with decided to coach. I figured if others could take time out of their schedules to run to encourage me, and others, as participants, I could certainly do the same. I am not sure how I started coaching the 10K program, but it was probably similar to my reasons for coaching the BWR program, and I do know now that I couldn't quit even if I wanted to. For FTM, when they first asked me if I was returning, I was suspicious. I thought, "yes, unless it's a problem and you don't want me to come back?" Instead, they just wanted to make the argument that if I was returning, anyway, I might as well coach. That rationale worked for me!

**What are your favorite training routes?**

I love running in Montgomery County and in and around D.C. In the training programs, we do often end up running the same trails, but if you take it all in when

you are running, it never looks the same. Nature is always changing and you can see that change with every run. And I'll admit: I don't really go outside unless I'm running, so that's why I like it so much.

**What were your most important lessons learned in your first year as the Program Director of the Winter 5K Program?**

As a coach, I just do what I'm told by the program directors, no worries. That all changes when you are Co-director. It was an eye-opening experience. I was so grateful that Keith Ord and Debbie Spagnola had



Photo: Kirstie Cancellato

Travisha Gunter

such a great program in place; so that I could pick up where Debbie left off and follow Keith's lead this winter. Having the experienced Winter 5K program coaches return really helped make for a great winter program. It takes a village.

**What were the biggest challenges you faced during the Winter 5K Program?**

My challenge was being prompt and responsive with emails and posting to the groups. People message all day through the Yahoo group, Facebook, and email. Some need responses right away, and some can wait, but it was hard for me to keep up. Keith pulled more than his share on that front.

**What do you find most rewarding about your participation in MCRRC training programs?**

The reward is I don't have to run by myself. I really enjoy the company!

**How do you balance your own training with coaching/directing MCRRC training programs?**

I'm there for the participants, not for myself. The balance, for me, is to make sure everyone is covered and no runner is left behind. Don't get me wrong—I want to get in my miles, but I'm not upset if things don't go as planned and we must adjust. For me, the 10K program helps me get in my own weekly mileage. Coaching helps keep me on task because I can't cheat my pace group; whereas if I'm running solo, there's less accountability. I like to make sure whoever I'm coaching gets their money's worth by making sure we complete the workouts. With that said, I do enjoy a good recovery break, but I know that all good things must come to an end and it's back to training.

**Have you met any particularly inspiring runners through your role as a coach/program director for MCRRC programs?**

All of the runners I coach are awesome. It's just great to see them complete their goal race and exceed the expectations they had at the start of the program.

**What advice would you give you a runner contemplating training for a new distance, whether it be 5K or the marathon?**

Follow the training program. If you stick with it you will see the progress. Make friends with your fellow runners. That accountability might just be the thing that gets you to the start line of that goal race.

— Lisa Levin Reichmann is a member of the MCRRC racing team, sponsorship coordinator for the Parks Half Marathon and Pike's Peek 10K, and an RRCA-certified running coach and co-founder of Run Farther & Faster.

# Boston Marathon Recap

by Julie Sapper

The morning of the race, I met my running partner Lisa in the lobby of our hotel and we soldiered on to check our bags in downtown Boston before boarding the buses with a tiny issued plastic bag to head to Hopkinton. Adorned in motorcycle suits and Tyvek suits to stay warm, we looked like a motley crew, or as someone commented, characters right out of *Ghostbusters*.

Underneath, we wore several layers of clothing to stay warm, and in fact, at one point, Lisa commented to me that she was warm, to which I responded, “We will be fine.” We boarded the buses and like a perfectly timed performance, the rain started pounding the bus windows as soon as we left the city and headed toward Hopkinton. The rain was SIDEWAYS. The rain was hard. We were not fine.

The bus arrived, and the conditions were worse than we anticipated. Athletes’ Village, where the runners wait before heading to the start line in Hopkinton, was covered in thick, wet mud and the rain continued to pour sideways. I was thankful that I wore my hiking boots and carried my running shoes in a plastic bag. We trudged through the mud and staked some real estate inside one of the many tents set up throughout the village. Using trash bags and tarps, we created a mini village for our fellow MCRRC runners, where we would all huddle together and gorge on



Photo: Ken Trombatore

**MCRRC Ready to Run...or Swim!**

carbs for the next three hours to wait to run 26.2 miles back to downtown Boston.

Fellow runner Ken brought lubricant and explained that this lube would provide a better barrier to chafing than traditional chafing cream. We were desperate, so we took his advice and smeared lubricant all over our feet to prevent blisters and our bodies to prevent wounds from wearing wet fabric while running for several hours. As a side note, it worked. The time flew by and suddenly it was time to walk the mile to our start corrals.

Typically, when I walk to the start corral of Boston, my adrenaline is pumping with excitement, and, of course, I am

wearing running attire. On this day, as I walked with Ken, my adrenaline was pumping with fear, and I was wearing three layers of clothing, a poncho, and my trusty hiking boots. The rain, unbelievably, became even more steady upon our arrival at the start, and with five minutes to spare, I stripped off my layers, threw them in a donation bag, straightened my unicorn headband, which secured my baseball hat—a necessity while running in the rain—and put on my dry running shoes. I was as ready as a gal could be for running in a monsoon.

The race started, and I was comforted that one of my favorite Earth, Wind, and Fire songs (so appropriate) was playing as we

crossed the start line. Ken, who is much faster than I am, decided to run with me this year, and while our original plan was to run my 7:45 pace, we threw that plan out the window (or rather to the wind) and intended to run by effort instead. As soon as we started, I turned to Ken and thanked him profusely for running with me. I was so grateful for having great company during a marathon with conditions so epically deplorable. We ran consistently and easily for a few miles, and I actually got cocky thinking that the conditions were not so bad. We increased our pace to 7:45, my original plan, and I felt fairly smug that I was going to beat this weather. At times, we slowed our pace a bit, channeling the amazing and relatively few spectators, and carried on while periodically laughing at the ridiculous situation we found ourselves in that day.

As a running coach, I very much try to practice what I preach, so even though I had no desire to eat because my numb fingers, even with surgical gloves, regular gloves, and hand warmers, could not easily access my nutrition, I dutifully ate four Honey Stinger chews every fifteen minutes. I kept the chews in a Ziploc bag inside my bra, so I would hand Ken a glove, reach in, pull out four, shove them in my mouth, and carry on. I would do the same for Ken each time he needed to take off a glove to grab his nutrition. We both tried to be vigilant with our hydration, too, and carefully avoided getting water on our hands after grabbing water from the truly selfless water stop volunteers. I continued to

remain confident that I was doing everything I could to stay warm and nourished as my body moved steadily toward the finish line.

As we hit the screaming girls at Wellesley around the halfway point, holding signs such as, “Kiss Me, I am wet,” I was lifted by their willingness to spectate, their energy, and the fact that we made it through the halfway point. A few miles later, around Mile 16, though, that all came to a crashing halt. I looked at my watch to make sure I was not running too fast and was surprised that I had dipped from 8:10 to 10:30 pace. I also noticed that my breathing was weird. I was in trouble. I grabbed some Gatorade at the nearby water stop and Ken trotted back to see why I had stopped. I explained through gasps that I was having trouble getting my breath and that I was going to get off the course and quit. I literally went from feeling positive and resilient to negative and weak within 30 seconds, which pretty much describes the agony of a marathon. Ken, who knows me well, said calmly, “There’s nowhere for you to go, so you need to keep moving until we can get you to a warm place, or you will get hypothermia.” He handed me the trash bag he had been wearing, and started jogging very slowly to guide me to a nearby medical tent, which was nowhere close to where I had decided to stop. He then shoved a gel into my hand and told me to suck it down. I obliged, almost puked, but kept it together and kept going.

Somehow we passed the medical tent and made it to Mile 18, and

we had already crested most of the hills of Newton. I honestly do not remember how. With just one hill left, Heartbreak Hill, I knew I could finish the race, provided that I maintained a slower pace. We made it over Heartbreak Hill and did some math at Mile 21. If I sustained at least a 10 minute pace the rest of the race, I would requalify for Boston the following year, because logically, while running in this misery, I wanted to return and do it all over again. That was enough to carry me through to the finish. We kept an 8:45-9:00 pace for the rest of the race and made the famous right on Hereford, followed by the left on Boylston to head to the finish line.

Since the bombings of 2013, I view the run to the finish line as a combined sacred moment and a celebration, and, as a result, I love to wave and thank the spectators, especially this day, while running the last 800 meters down Boylston Street, rather than focus on the clock at the finish. With just 200 meters to go, Ken and I ripped off our trash bags and layers, held our hands in the air in victory, and crossed the finish line one hour after Des made American history by winning the women’s race.

We made it in 3:43, the exact same time as my other slowest Boston time, a 3:43 in the 2007 Nor’easter. I have no complaints; only pride.



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## Deep Water Running with Dr. Betty – Much more than Injury Rehabbing

*By Betty Holston Smith and George Tarrico*

**D**eep water running (DWR) made *Runner's World's* list of the 25 best training tips of all time! *Runner's World* was on to something, according to three MCRRC runners. These runners have firsthand knowledge that consistent DWR is great not only for rehabbing running injuries, but also for the entire running body. They found out what studies have shown: proper body alignment along with proper belly breathing during DWR makes the body stronger, more flexible, more balanced and more relaxed when running on land! George talked with three MCRRC members who have been running nonstop in the deep water for several months.

Elaine is an experienced 68-year-old runner who works to overcome knee arthritis through alternative exercise. She tried deep-water exercise but found that it was not demanding enough for complete running training. She likes nonstop DWR because it is not a social class; it is set up for runners with an emphasis on hard work that includes proper breathing and the correct running form.

Steve is a 50-plus runner dealing with a lifelong spinal alignment issue that has limited his running stride. He finds that nonstop DWR helps improve his posture on land, resulting in smoother, improved running performance.

Krista is an experienced, mid-40s runner with a demanding professional schedule. She joined the nonstop DWR class for cross training and overall better fitness.

The DWR class that these runners are participating in is offered by Montgomery County's Aquatics Program at Olney Indoor Pool. It was designed and is taught by MCRRC member Betty Smith, a longtime long-distance runner and coach. This unique program, presented by the Wellness Network, is the only one of its kind in Montgomery County. Betty's program draws on her more than 40 years of experience, having run more than 100,000 miles and coached runners on land, including about 10 years coaching in MCRRC's Run Performance Lab (formerly the Stride Clinic).

Many people, including healthy runners of all ages and types, do not realize that DWR, in addition to rehabbing injuries, is also the best injury-prevention medicine for runners. It shores up the entire body, which minimizes or even prevents running injuries. Studies show that proper breathing and proper posture in deep water leads to proper body alignment, which makes the body better able to withstand the pounding of running on land.

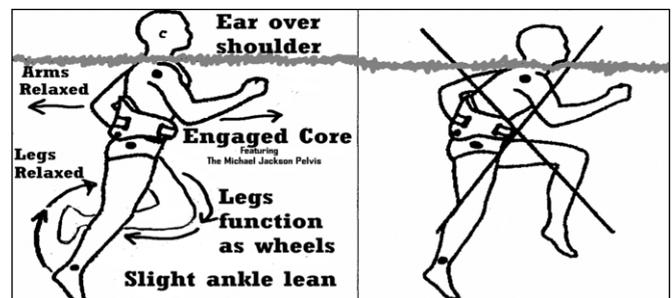
Be forewarned, however, Betty's class (unlike other DWR classes

in Montgomery County) uses the deep water in unique ways, as weekly mileage is increased without additional pounding. It requires nonstop running during each 50-minute session. Participants learn to maintain good posture, proper body alignment and vertical body position as they move in the water to warm up, gradually increase speed for 25 minutes, including interval paces, (all while striving to establish and maintain a heart rate 20 beats above its resting rate), before a cool-down and stretching. This program is ONLY for serious participants ready to work hard to reap significant improvements in running posture, body alignment, breathing, pacing, cadence, speed and endurance. Consistency is the key. Over time, participants will maximize energy and minimize injury when running on land or on other hard surfaces.

### Registration Information

Betty's 50-minute DWR class is offered (at this time) only on Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m. at the Olney Pool, 16601 Georgia Ave., Olney. A new class began on June 20, but you can register at any time at the pool's front desk or online at [www.activemontgomery.org](http://www.activemontgomery.org) (course #53680.). A deep-water belt is required and can be purchased at the pool for \$20. You can also try a free class to find out if this hard-hitting class is right for you, and can rent a deep-water belt for \$2. Olney Pool may offer an addition evening or weekend class. Interested runners and non-runners should contact Wellness Network's Linda Costello at [wellnet1@aol.com](mailto:wellnet1@aol.com).

— Dr. Betty Smith and George Tarrico have been MCRRC members since the late 1980s.



Proper posture and body alignment for deep water running