

# MCRRC Intervals

November 2017

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**November 5**

Rockville 10K/5K

Rockville, MD

[www.rockville10k5k.com/](http://www.rockville10k5k.com/)

**November 11**

Stone Mill 50 Mile

Montgomery Village, MD

[www.stone-mill-50-mile.org/](http://www.stone-mill-50-mile.org/)

**November 12**

Candy Cane City 5K

Chevy Chase, MD

**November 18**

Run Under the Lights – SOLD OUT!

Gaithersburg, MD

[www.mcrrcrununderlights.com/](http://www.mcrrcrununderlights.com/)

**November 25**

Turkey Burnoff

Gaithersburg, MD

**December 10**

Jingle Bell Jog

Rockville, MD

**December 17**

Seneca Slopes 9K

Gaithersburg, 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.

## Parks Half Marathon



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Runners wait at the new start line.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Desta Ber Morkama takes the win.



# Falling into Place

by Scott Brown, Editor

As the leaves piling up in my yard remind me every day, fall is here. Fall is the season when this runner's thoughts turn to cooler temperatures, gorgeous foliage, and excellent trail running.

This issue of *Intervals* highlights some of the great aspects that come with the arrival of fall and the close of the year, from great races and training programs to the awards season just around the corner.

MCRRC President Mike Acuña outlines some plans the Board has to improve communication with Club members and ensure that the Club continues to serve the interests and needs of its membership. Mike also makes a plug for taking advantage of the great opportunities to hit the trails, whether running one of the Club's cross-country races or giving the Winter Trails Program a try.

Also in this issue, Wanda Walters presents some of the many testimonials from MCRRC's "5K for All" program, which truly embodies the Club's goal of

providing "a place for every place."

In this issue, Lisa Reichmann highlights one of the Club's important partners, Adventist HealthCare, a longtime partner of MCRRC's perennially popular Parks Half Marathon.

Separately, Lisa profiles Club member John Fitz, the newly minted Assistant Race Director for the Stone Mill 50-Miler, one of my all-time favorite races and a terrific way to dip your toes into ultra running, if you've ever been curious. Thanks to the efforts of Club member Keith Evans, Stone Mill is eligible to earn points toward qualifying for the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc, a famous 171-km mountain race that starts in Chamonix, France, and also traverses parts of Switzerland and Italy.

Finally, Dave Haaga and the MCRRC Awards Committee want you to nominate candidates for the Club's coach and runner of the year awards. Take a look at the nomination page to find out how you can propose a worthy candidate—it could be you!

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

Like us on Facebook – Montgomery County Road Runners

Follow us on Twitter - @MCRRC

Connect with us on LinkedIn - Montgomery County Road Runners

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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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.





# Design Thinking, Trails, and What Else?

by Mike Acuña

**R**ecently I was in a training class for design thinking, a business design methodology to solve complex problems and reach desirable solutions for clients. In a crude summary, design thinking places focus on listening to the customer vs. telling the customer what they want. What this has to do with a running club is the same as it does for any business or organization, which is to focus on the needs of the customer. or in the case of MCRRC, the needs of the membership.

Over the past few months, the Board has placed an emphasis on enhancing Club communications by better managing our social media platforms to deliver consistent and timely messaging. However, one piece is still needed in this process: you, your feedback and your input. As a Board, few things would be easier than to sit in a room and have nine people decide what's best for MCRRC, but to be the best MCRRC we need to hear from you to ensure that the direction of MCRRC is one that's relevant by focusing squarely on the needs of the

membership. Over the next few weeks to months, you will see deliberate actions to better leverage our social media platforms and, more importantly, to gather and utilize membership feedback.

With this issue we're rounding out the summer training season and moving into what is always one of my favorite times of the running year as fall races are in full swing, autumn foliage along Rock Creek Park and the Seneca Greenway comes alive, and the trails change from hard packed dust and dirt to soft single track terrain covered in fall leaves. After I wrote about the running community in the last issue, another Board member shared her experience within the trail community. If the fall colors aren't enough to entice you to the trails, then perhaps the free exchange of home-grown produce and the relaxed camaraderie and trail pace will give you reason to consider it. Another great way to experience trail life, if not running, is to volunteer for the Stone Mill 50 Miler scheduled for November 11, or register for Winter Trails, where you'll strengthen

balance and build character on crisp, cool mornings.

Whether it's on the trails, the Marine Corps Hospitality Suite, Run Under the Lights, Rockville 5K/10K, the Jingle Bell Jog and Annual Budget Meeting, or any one of the many other fall races around the corner, I hope to see you out there, hope to hear your feedback, and most of all hope that you and yours has a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Cheers!

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



## 5K for All

by Wanda Walters

**T**he 5K Run/Walk program truly lives up to MCRRC's "A Place for Every Pace" motto. The 5K motivates anyone who wants to walk his/her way to improved health and fitness, begin running for the first time, or return to running or walking with a group after an injury or simply a hiatus. Experienced runners (even marathoners) return year after year to improve their shorter-distance speed.

Because workouts are scheduled by time and not mileage, everyone begins and ends together. Thus, it's the perfect fun-filled workout experience for friends, colleagues and family members with varying skill sets.

Registration for the 2017 season far exceeded expectations. When asked about the growing popularity, participants and coaches shared the following:

*Coach/Fitness Trainer/Ultra 100 Miler Runner Margaret Campbell:* I tell people that this program really is for everyone! We have a place for people of all levels to fit in. I enjoy teaching the runners and walkers how to gain strength and prevent injuries. They have access to more information, from experienced runners, than most athletes do. I think it is special that Potomac Community Resources (PCR.org) members are fully integrated to our program and are represented throughout the pace groups.

*Steve Cardon:* This is our fifth year that Deb (wife) and I have been in

the MCRRC 5K program. We even did the Winter 5K program this past year and realized we can be more than just "fair-weather" runners ... lol! In the early years, we also did the 8K twice and the 10K once, but at 60 years old, have found that the 5K is the distance we enjoy most and can easily maintain. We have made lots of friends over the years, who like us, participate year after year. That social aspect helps makes the training fun and also motivates us to "rise and run" on those early Sunday mornings!



Photo: Wanda Walters

Stretching with 5K for All.

*Coach Judith Sitkin-Porzell:* Whether you are just trying running for the very first time, coming back from injury, having a baby or haven't run since your youth, the 5K for all program is "spot on." The energy is electric and the coaching is supportive and informative. On top of all the health (mental and physical) benefits, you get to make new friends, have lots of fun and explore some of the beautiful trails

Montgomery County has to offer.

*Coach Lauren Kline:* This 5K program is very flexible, we have all sizes, all shapes, all levels of experience, and all levels of ability. Some days, you're on top of the world and you run with a faster group. Some days, you walk because that's what you can handle. There's always a group of people to join.

Coaching this program is fun. I love seeing people finish what they started, even though they didn't think they could. They see immediate results in how far they can run. From the first week to the last, they grow in confidence and begin to realize their abilities.

Wanda is fabulous. She added a walking group to catch those who want to be outside moving but might not be able to run. Some folks join with the intention of testing out running and then they realize it isn't for them. There is a place for them to walk, get the exercise, spend time outside in a social setting, and reap the health benefits. It's the friendly people in this program that keep me coming back again year after year. This program has a "no judgment" environment ... very supportive and kind.

*Diane Kilcoyne:* I think the best thing about the training group is that it makes you feel like you are part of something bigger than just "going out for a run." When you are by yourself there is no accountability, no camaraderie, no

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# Race Sponsorships Lead to Win-Win Relationships

by Lisa Reichmann

**A**t larger MCRRC races, including the Parks Half Marathon, Pike's Peek, Suds and Soles, and the Germantown 5-Miler, you'll notice the presence of sponsors both before the race as well as on race day. Because larger races involve more logistics, and hence more expenses, sponsors play an integral role in helping keep registration rates down. From the sponsor perspective, the ability to interact directly with so many fitness-minded runners, volunteers and spectators offers a significant value.

For the past several years, Adventist HealthCare has been one of the major sponsors for the Parks Half Marathon. In addition to providing financial support, Shady Grove Medical Center, one of the hospitals in Adventist's network, donates the medical supplies for the race and recruits its employees to volunteer for the race. This year, Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation brought athletic trainers to the finish line to offer runners tips on post-race recovery. Tina Bergeron Sheesley, Adventist's Manager of Public Relations & Marketing, and MCRRC member, explains, "We have fun being part of the excitement on race day. It's inspiring to watch the people

we serve achieving their goals, staying active and having a good time. Several of our 5,300 employees were Parks Half finishers!"

As the largest health-care network based in Montgomery County and the largest provider of charity care and community benefits, the fit between the mission of Adventist HealthCare and MCRRC is a natural one and has facilitated a win-win relationship. Adventist HealthCare's involvement in Parks evolved into broader collaboration with MCRRC, including the creation of a new Running Beyond Cancer training program, which was launched in October at the

Shady Grove Adventist Aquilino Cancer Center and will be led by two experienced MCRRC coaches, Immediate Past President Don Shulman and Andy Steinfeld.

"We know the MCRRC programs are about more than just the running itself, but also about relationships and the health and healing that they can bring," Sheesley says. "We also love that the Club encourages runners of every age, pace and ability. We want to share the message that anyone can get out and get moving."

Learn more about Adventist's network of health care providers and programs at [AdventistHealthCare.com](http://AdventistHealthCare.com).



Photo: Alex Reichmann

Adventist HealthCare volunteers at the Parks Half Marathon.

# John Fitz



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

*John Fitz, 43, has been a member of MCRRC for five years but has always enjoyed running, first as a way to stay in shape for high school football, then as a requirement for his position in the U.S. Navy, and more recently as an avid trail and ultra (greater than marathon distance) runner. To date, John has finished 32 ultra races, including 11 50-milers and four 100-milers. As a three-time Stone Mill 50-Miler finisher, John is particularly suited to his new role as Assistant Race Director of this year's race alongside longtime Director Barry Hauptman. When he's not hitting the trails, John is a science teacher at Magruder High School and lives in Kensington with his wife, Michelle, and daughters Emma (8) and Kira (6).*

## **What made you decide to move up to the ultra distance?**

I just discovered ultra races in the past several years, which is kind of crazy because I grew up with one of the most famous ultras, the JFK 50 Mile, very close to my hometown, but I had never even heard about the race. I ran a couple of road marathons before I was encouraged by some friends to join in on trail runs, and found those to be so much more fun than road running and a good way to connect with nature. A group of about six of my buddies from work convinced me to run the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon with them, and it was so much fun. I still consider that to be one of my best races ever, and I've been hooked on trail running ever since. The timing of the transition coincided with the popularity of the book, *Born to Run*, but I was ahead of the game and already into running

trails and ultra distances when I read it.

## **What was your experience as a runner at Stone Mill?**

I really love running Stone Mill and my only complaint about moving into race directing is that I can't run it anymore, but I'm thrilled to be involved with the sport in a different way. I love volunteering at trail runs, so this is going to be a really exciting opportunity for me. I've run Stone Mill three times and have had three really different experiences. The first time I ran it was my fastest time, surprisingly, especially because I had just run Rim to



Photo: Bob Fabris

**John Fitz with daughters Emma and Kira.**

Rim to Rim eight days prior. Nothing like a good taper run across the Grand Canyon and back, right?

## **What makes Stone Mill unique?**

Stone Mill is a truly an "old school" type of ultra, with an affordable entry fee and low-key feel, featuring nice trails and even nicer volunteers. The course

highlights some of the outstanding trails that we have in Montgomery County. People are always surprised about how much green space and what great trails we have in the D.C. area—I know I was. Because the race is local, there are a lot of friends and familiar faces along the course and it feels like an all-day party. Plus, November is such a great time to run a race as the weather is cooler.

## **What are your responsibilities as Assistant Race Director?**

I take all of my orders from the Boss (Director Barry Hauptman) and do whatever needs to be done. So far, I've created the current version of the course map for the race, and have been involved with discussions about race partnerships and sponsors. I have also helped promote the event on social media. I've volunteered at the race over the last couple of years, helping load the trucks the week of the race, so I will continue to do that, and look forward to being on the course on race day, helping the runners have their best day possible. I'm excited to get a front-row seat to the race and to visit all the aid stations and to mingle a bit with friends working there.

## **Aside from Stone Mill, of course, do you have any favorite races?**

The Old Dominion 100 Mile in the mountains in Virginia is by far my favorite. You always remember your first, right? I quit my first time and went back for redemption the next year and have been involved in some capacity (running or crewing/pacing) for the last five years. It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest 100-mile race in the U.S. and was designed in a similar fashion

to the Western States 100 Mile race in California. It's held in the heat and humidity of June and you get a really sweet sterling silver belt buckle if you finish the race in less than 24 hours.

**What is your training like leading up to an ultra race?**

I don't run as many miles or as many days as I did when I first got into ultras, but I like to run four or five times a week leading up to a race, with shorter runs during the week and longer distances on trails on the weekends. I choose races or organized training runs leading up to my target races and use those as my long runs. For 50-mile races, I like to get in several 20-mile runs and a couple of 30-milers or 50K races. For 100-mile races, I try to get in several back-to-back long runs and usually use a 50-mile race a few weeks before the big dance to get lots of time on my feet.

**What is your favorite local training route?**

I love Rock Creek Park in D.C. I have several options on distances, but my bread and butter is a 10-mile loop that basically goes around the perimeter (on trails) and has more than 1100 feet of elevation gain. I usually hit it multiple times per week leading up to the races and have run it so many times that I literally have memorized where individual rocks and roots are located. It's a great place to run through all four seasons.

**How do you manage your nutrition during an ultra race?**

I'm lucky in that I can eat anything and rarely get nauseous. For "shorter" ultras such as 50Ks and 50 milers, I usually just eat gels and then nibble on whatever looks good at the aid stations. For 100-mile races, I definitely rely on my crew to get me high-calorie foods that I know work for me, like bean burritos, pierogi, and avocados, and at

night I really like soup. I also drink a lot of soda during ultras. It's the only time that I drink that stuff, but it delivers quick sugar and a hit of caffeine that really helps, too.

**Do you still run shorter distance races?**

Yes. I took a shot at qualifying for Boston a couple of years ago and missed it by about five minutes. I definitely will go for it again. All my running buddies tell me to wait for the qualifying times to go up as I get a little older, but I really want to make it at my current time (3:15). Maybe I'll take another shot next fall.

**What do you enjoy most about running?**

Everything except the laundry.

**What are your training and racing plans for the coming year?**

My dream race is the Western States 100 in California, but entry is through a lottery and it's almost impossible to get a spot. Most likely, I will need to run another qualifier for that race. I plan to run Old Dominion 100 again for the 40<sup>th</sup> running, but that race isn't a qualifier so I will also run the Vermont 100 in July as my qualifier. I swore off running two 100-mile races in the same summer after this past summer, but I suffer from "runner's amnesia" and will attempt to do another double next summer. I'd also like to run a fast road marathon and possibly return to the JFK 50 again now that I'm helping direct Stone Mill and not running it.

**When you aren't running, what are some of your interests and hobbies?**

Chasing my daughters, family hikes, day trips, watching the Caps, cooking, and eating with my best friend and wife, Michelle.

**What advice would you give a runner contemplating moving up to the ultra distance?**

Do it. Just don't apply for Western States (until I get in J).

— 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.

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## 5K for All

*continued from page 4*

one pushing you. But when you are with the group, you feel like you CAN go a little faster, a little further, than otherwise. Also, the training starts off slowly enough that anyone should be able to do it, even if it's been a long time since you ran. There are all ages of people and all fitness levels who come out.

*Marjorie Perloff:* Wanda is largely responsible for creating a welcoming, inclusive, and sometimes even fun, activity for all. She somehow has encouraged an unbelievably heterogeneous group of people to sign up for the program and then been able to make us all feel part of the group and willing to make an effort to be engaged in the program and try to our running/walking skills. It all starts with her smile and then gets better and better!



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## MCRRC Awards Nomination Season is Upon Us

by Dave Haaga

**T**he Awards Committee requests nominations by December 10, 2017, for:  
(a) Coach of the Year (must be member of MCRRC but can be a coach in MCRRC or other positions such as high school coach) (<https://www.mcrrc.org/awards/coach-of-the-year/>)  
and (b) Most Improved Runner (1 female, 1 male award—must be members of MCRRC; self-nominations welcome) (<https://www.mcrrc.org/awards/most-improved-runner/>)

These awards are a great way to recognize the accomplishments of our fellow Club members. Please do not be bashful about self-nominations. And please do not be intimidated about your ability to nominate others (“What if I am not sure of the spelling of her hometown ... or his intermediate splits in the Parks half 2017 vs. 2016?”). Take a look at the nomination instructions for each award, and you will see that we have tried to guide you toward the desired information that would be most useful, but also to realistic options in the event that you lack easy access to all the details.

So while you are thinking of it, please get to the keyboard and fire off a nomination or two. Thanks!

## Fun Pub Run



Photo: Jim Dahlheim

Wrapping up the first pub run at Denizens Brewing Co.