

MCRRC Intervals

January 2018

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

January 1

New Year's Day 5K
Manna Food Center,
Gaithersburg, MD

January 28

Country Road Run (CS)
Olney, MD

February 18

NEW Kemp Mill (C)hills
5K/10K
Silver Spring, MD

March 3

Seneca Creek Trail Marathon &
50K (\$)
Gaithersburg, MD

March 25

Piece of Cake 5K/10K
Gaithersburg, MD

For complete details of MCRRC's races
and programs, visit www.mcrrc.org

Board Meetings

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

Stone Mill 50 Miler



Photo: Brian Butters

Runners emerge from the stone mill.



Jake Kruse is thrilled to reach the Rt. 28
aid station.

Photo: Dan Reichmann



New Beginnings

by Scott Brown, Editor

Brr! As I sit down to write this letter, the temperatures have been closer to freezing than I like. On the bright side, we had our first snow of the season this past weekend, which gave the Winter Trails Program long run in Rock Creek Park a festive, snow globe feel, even if we finished too early in the day to enjoy running through a few inches of fresh powder.

This issue of *Intervals* gives an overview of the many offerings just around the corner for the Club. From new initiatives to help MCRRC to continue growing, to the kickoff of winter training programs, to new races on the Club schedule, this issue puts the *new* in the New Year.

In this issue, MCRRC President Mike Acuña outlines some of the Club's goals for the coming year as it strives to continue promoting the Club while adapting to serve the evolving needs of its members.

Also in this issue, check out the Club's race calendar for 2018. It's a great addition to your refrigerator, office bulletin board, or anywhere else you need a little extra motivation (or information).

This issue brings the return of *Coaches' Corner*. In this month's installment, Speed Development Program Director Tom

Brennan explains the counterintuitive idea that the fastest way to improve your marathon time is to not train for a marathon. Check out *Coaches' Corner* for more tips on how to run speed intervals to boost your marathon performance, and be sure to check out the Speed Development Program when it begins later this month.

Also in this issue, Lisa Reichmann profiles John Whitridge, a relatively new yet highly accomplished member of the MCRRC Racing Team and noted photo chronicler of SDP and XMP workouts.

Wrapping up this issue, Club member Jefferson Lunsford introduces the newest addition to MCRRC's low-key race calendar, the Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K. This new race debuts in February and promises to be a challenging but fun event. And if you've ever wanted to create your own race, Jefferson's article offers a great look at how a race evolves from an idea in your head to an event on the Club calendar.

Finally, we want to recognize MCRRC Racing Team member Silvia Baage, who posted a time of 2:58:36 to win the Baltimore Marathon in October. Congratulations, Silvia!

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Have comments or questions? Or want to help?

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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.



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

Like us on Facebook – Montgomery County Road Runners

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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/>

Happy New Year, Buckle Up!

by Mike Acuña

On behalf of the Board, I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season full of great memories and spent with those held dear.

As we cap another great year for MCRRC, we eagerly look forward to 2018 and the opportunities it offers. As you read this, we have presented the 2018 budget, and while conservative in nature, it holds optimism for growth as we make a more concerted effort to market our programs and high-level races and to revitalize our brand where needed. Some of this will be seen in both Pike's Peek and the Parks Half Marathon, where Pike's Peek has been made the 2018 RRCA state championship race and Parks is working to add a relay option for runners. In addition, the Board has assembled a Strategic Advisory Panel to look to the future needs of MCRRC in conjunction with benefits to the membership and the changing competitive landscape of running in the region. We are a place for all paces and all ages, backgrounds, and running

and fitness goals.

We also look forward to continued efforts with our community partners, such as Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, which generously sponsors Parks and helps many runners achieve their fitness and health goals by offering CPR/First Aid certification and the Cancer to 5K Program, which ran its inaugural 5K race at our New Year's Day 5K (held in partnership with Manna Food Center). I'm also pleased to share the success of the new Women's Self Defense Training, held in cooperation with Infinite Fighting Concepts; the first session (sold out) is later this month and will serve as a guide for future sessions. And, of course, we enjoy continued success and innovation with our longtime sponsors and volunteers at the Run Performance Lab.

Our goals this year are complex and aggressive as we balance the pursuit of long-term growth with a focus on the evolving needs of MCRRC, one of the largest running clubs in the country.



Competition for races and programs has grown and will continue to grow, and our efforts to stay ahead of the pack will need a collaborative effort from the diverse and talented members of MCRRC.

As I said recently, we literally run with rocket scientists; together we can do anything.

Happy New Year!

— Mike Acuña is the President of MCRRC. He can be reached at president@mcrrc.org.



2018 MCRRC Race Schedule

New Year's Day 5K	1/1/18	Manna Food Center, Gaithersburg, MD
Country Road Run (CS)	1/28/18	Olney, MD
NEW Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K	2/18/18	Silver Spring, MD
Seneca Creek Trail Marathon & 50K (\$)	3/3/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Piece of Cake 5K/10K	3/25/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Spin in the Woods (XC)	4/1/18	Wheaton Regional Park, Silver Spring, MD
Capital for a Day 5K (CS)	4/21/18	Olney, MD
Pike's Peek 10K (\$)	4/29/18	Rockville, MD
La Milla de Mayo (\$)	5/5/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Kids on the Run (\$)	5/5/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Run Aware (XC)	5/12/18	Bethesda, MD
Germantown 5 Miler (\$)	5/19/18	Germantown, MD
Memorial Day 4 Miler (CS)	5/28/18	Rockville, MD
Run for Roses (\$)	6/16/18	Silver Spring, MD
Suds & Soles (\$)	6/23/18	Rockville, MD
Little Bennett (XC)	6/30/18	Clarksburg, MD
Midsummer Night's Mile (CS)	7/13/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Matthew Henson Trail 5K (CS)	7/21/18	Silver Spring, MD
Riley's Rumble (CS)	7/29/18	Germantown, MD
Going Green Track Meet (CS)	8/3/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Groovin' Woodstock (XC)	8/12/18	Dickerson, MD
Eastern County 8K (CS)	8/19/18	Silver Spring, MD
Parks Half Marathon (\$)	9/9/18	Rockville, MD
Lake Needwood XC (XC)	9/15/18	Derwood, MD
Cabin John Kids Run	9/23/18	Bethesda, MD
Black Hill 10K (XC)	9/29/18	Germantown, MD
Cross Country on the Farm (XC)	10/21/18	Derwood, MD
Rockville 5K/10K (\$)	11/4/18	Rockville, MD
Candy Cane City 5K	11/11/18	Chevy Chase, MD
Stone Mill 50 Mile (\$)	11/17/18	Montgomery Village, MD
Run Under the Lights (\$)	11/17/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Turkey Burnoff (CS)	11/24/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Seneca Slopes (XC)	12/2/18	Gaithersburg, MD
Jingle Bell Jog (CS)	12/9/18	Rockville, MD

Please visit www.mcrrc.org for complete details on our races!



Want to Run a Faster Marathon? Don't Train for One!

by Tom Brennan

Want to run a faster marathon? Don't train for one. "Wait, what did he say?" That's right, if you want to run a faster marathon, don't train for a marathon. I see it all the time, runners spend season after season training for a marathon and they plateau with little improvement. The best way to improve your marathon time is to spend a training season focusing on something shorter and faster. The improved speed will carry over into your next marathon training cycle and you can train at a higher level.

Let's look at why this is the case.

Change of pace: Training for a marathon is a grind. Most buildups last four to six months. They involve long runs that can last four to six hours and increased mileage during the week. All this is necessary to train yourself for the rigors of the distance. It also pulls you away from many other things in your life, such as family, friends, and work. This can be a mental drain along with a physical one. Fitting in all those miles with the rest of your life can be stressful.

Training for a shorter distance provides a change of pace that can be both a mental and physical relief.

Decreased volume: Training for a shorter race does not require the same volume of running as marathon training. The decreased volume leads to a faster recovery time from the weekend long run and increased mileage during the

week. Because you recover faster, you can run more often at various paces faster than LSD pace, which will improve your VO2 max.

VO2 max: Your VO2 max is your body's ability to carry oxygen to your muscles. The higher the VO2 max, the more efficient your body is in transporting the oxygen. Improvements in VO2 max have a direct correlation to improved running performance at race distances from 800 meters to the marathon.

Increased intensity: Improving your VO2 max requires you to run at a higher intensity than what is needed for a marathon. Optimizing this process requires you to run intervals at your current 3K to 5K race pace. Each interval should last two to six minutes. The total mileage covered at this pace should be 2.5 to 5 miles, which does not include your warmup, cooldown or recovery jogs between intervals. The more time you can spend at this level of effort, the better the training effect. It is important to maintain the proper pace for these workouts. If you run the first couple of intervals too fast and are not able finish the last ones at the proper pace, you lose much of the benefit of the workout. Conversely, if you run the first intervals too slowly, you are not training your body to pump more oxygen to the muscles. Recoveries for these intervals typically last 50 to 90 percent of the time it took to run the interval. I believe in an active recovery, which involves some

walking/jogging. You want your heart rate to come down so you can recover for the next interval, but not so low that it takes you too long to get back into the training zone. I recommend a short walk immediately after each interval to catch your breath and then a jog to let your heart rate come down without it getting below 60 percent of max. Typically, you should add an interval workout into your weekly schedule for six weeks to achieve the maximum benefit.

Mixing this high level of intensity with the high mileage of marathon training is usually a recipe for an injury, which is why it's important to separate the two. You can incorporate some interval training into your marathon training, but the high mileage of marathon training will prevent you from getting the benefits that come when you do it as part of a program with decreased mileage.

Speed Development: I've been coaching the Speed Development program for more than 16 years. I've designed a program geared toward maximizing the speed of motivated runners of any pace. I've had thousands of runners participate in the program. Every year, I see the runners who show up and give their all, achieve amazing accomplishments. Many have gone on to train for a marathon next, and inevitably I will hear from them about how much their marathon improved. Join me in January 2018 and see if you can be one of those runners, too.

John Whitridge



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

A member of the men's masters division of the MCRRC Competitive Racing Team, John Whitridge is a relative newcomer to running. In 2009, John was encouraged by co-workers at Marriott and his marathoner/Ironman brothers to start running, and in just one year qualified for Boston at the 2010 Marine Corps Marathon. Since then, John has run four of the six World Marathon Majors—Chicago, Boston, New York and Berlin—with two finishes under 3:00. In 2017, John set a PR at almost every distance, from 18:47 for 5K to a 2:58 marathon in Berlin, proving that at age 56, he is still on an upward trajectory. John has participated in the Speed Development (SDP) and Experienced Marathon (XMP) programs, and can usually be found capturing pictures of training runs and races to post to social media or for the end-of-program banquet slideshow. John and his wife, Donna, have three grown children (and an adopted beagle, Gumball) and live in Gaithersburg. John's family often joins him on (shorter) runs and volunteering for aid stations on longer training runs or races.

Although you didn't run, did you play sports growing up?

I was the oldest of four boys. My youngest brother was only five years younger, so we were all pretty close. Between my brothers and our friends, there was always somebody around to go do something somewhere, so we'd be gone in the morning and back in the evening. We were always roaming around on our bikes, hiking in the woods, or playing something in the backyard when we were younger. Typically, we played baseball in the spring, football in the winter, and just ran around the neighborhood or played in the backyard between those seasons. In high school, I wrestled for a few years and placed at the Virginia

state tournament my senior year. My first year at George Mason University, I practiced with the wrestling team and went to a few tournaments. After that, I pretty much would have periods where I might ride a bike for a while, or maybe run a little. Certainly nothing competitive or sustained.

How (and when) did you start running?

Our oldest son had a baseball game scheduled one evening in the spring of 2009 and the other team didn't show up, so somebody thought it would be a good idea to have the parents play



John Whitridge (right) at the Berlin Olympic Stadium.

the kids instead. At one point, I got caught in a pickle between third and home, and when I turned around to go back to third I felt a big pop in my hamstring. Being the knucklehead that I am, I decided to start walking at lunch at work instead of having a doctor look at it. After doing that for a week or two, I noticed there was a group that kept coming back from a run at about the same time. I struck up a conversation

with Jim Snee, who convinced me to come out and try running with the Marriott running group, which was several decades old and had a long history of competitive runners, bikers and triathletes. They were very supportive and helped me actually get to the point where I enjoyed running. Looking back on it, though, it was because I was running with them and not just by myself. They taught me the routes, about pacing and training, and became many of my best friends over the next few weeks and months.

That fall I watched my brother Tim, a competitive runner who was on the Atlanta Track Club team, run the Marine Corps Marathon. He finished in 2:55 and placed 2nd in his age group. When it was over we were sitting on the curb talking about running and his experiences. At that time, I don't think I had run consecutively longer than about six miles. So when Tim suggested that we run the 2010 MCM with our other brother Dave (who was doing Ironman competitions at the time), I told him I didn't think I could do it. He looked at me and said, "you don't know what you can do." It was pretty clear I wasn't getting out of it at that point. I ended up running the Rockville 10K the following weekend, and about another half-dozen races over the course of 2010 on the way to MCM 2010. Tim, Dave and I did run MCM 2010 together, and I ended up qualifying for Boston.

What aspect of your training do you think has the most significant impact on a successful race performance?

When I am consistent in my training, it pays the biggest dividends in my race performance. This is one of the main advantages of the MCRRC training programs. Sticking to a plan that includes different distances and paces, along with cross training like yoga, riding a bike, or strength

training is an obvious answer. But the training programs—or rather the people and friends in those programs—are the key. There are plenty of days where I'd rather sleep in, or it's rainy or cold, or I'm a little sore, where if I was left to my own devices I wouldn't get out there. I have enough experience now that I know that even though I had always thought of running as a somewhat solitary and individual activity, I'm at my best when I'm part of a group. When I started running and racing, I had the group at work to keep me motivated and looking for me to join them. At one point, my job changed and I couldn't get out at lunch any more with them and I ended up mostly training by myself nights and weekends. It wasn't that long before I pretty much stopped running altogether. The best thing I did was sign up for SDP and join a group again, which got me out there at least two times a week with everybody else, plus I had a training schedule for the rest of the week. From there I heard about and joined XMP, and I've been able to train consistently enough that I am setting personal records again.

What do you enjoy most about being a member of the MCRRC Racing Team?

There are some very competitive runners on the team that definitely set the bar high. I like to joke with some of them that when I can actually see them cross the finish line at a race we're running together, I consider it a success. Often it takes a pretty lengthy unobstructed straightaway right before the finish to do it, though. I also learn quite a bit from them about what it took for them to be so good, how they train, nutrition, cross training, or how often they race. There is an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience to draw from, it's really one of the great benefits of getting to know them. Not only do I consider many of them good friends, I am honored that I can be on the team with them representing MCRRC. It seemed like such a stretch that I could actually make the team. But the dedication of the team members, not only to the Club and each other, but to the sport, has made me rethink what I can do again.

Do you have any particularly memorable or funny training run or race stories?

One truly memorable experience was running the 6K fun run the day before the Berlin Marathon with Donna and our oldest son John this year. The run winds through Berlin but ends up going down Jesse Owens Avenue toward the 1936 Olympic Stadium where he won his gold medal. The run goes through a small tunnel into the stadium, everybody is celebrating, and then we ran around the track to the finish. Looking at Youtube videos of Jesse Owens running on the same track back then, the historical significance of his accomplishment and knowing we ran in his footsteps is something I'll always remember.

One of the funniest moments was during the 2012 Boston Marathon, which I also ran with Tim. The race started out at 70-plus degrees and only got warmer as the day wore on. Somewhere along the first half we were already feeling the heat, so I started thinking (my first mistake) about how sometimes runners will put ice in their hats to keep cool on a hot day. So I took it to the next level by thinking that maybe if I put some ice in my shorts, it would cool my core and be even more effective! What a great idea! As we ran past one of the spectators handing out plastic bags of ice, I took one, ripped it open (another great idea) and poured all the ice into my shorts. Needless to say, it did not have the intended effect and then I couldn't get the ice out because it kept sliding underneath, behind, and around all over the place. The ice started falling out of my shorts and I was stepping on it and sliding around. There was no "core cooling," just a dork running down the road with his hands in his pants, ice falling out all over the place and everybody trying to steer clear of the trail I was leaving behind. A classic example of the old advice—never try anything new at a race.

What's the biggest challenge in your training, and how have you tried to overcome it?

The biggest challenge has been to keep the consistency and training going after achieving a big personal milestone. "I did it" or "that was good enough"

or "I couldn't do better so why try" starts taking over, and I end up sitting around looking back instead of forward. This is the primary benefit that I get from MCRRC training programs and friendships. It was the only way I was able to overcome the inertia that set in during 2014 where I stopped running and working out for a few months. Getting back into MCRRC again through the SDP program was critical, because I just couldn't, wouldn't train by myself anymore. Just knowing that I was signed up was enough to get me building a base again. Having groups of friends to run with, that reach out to me through texts, emails or social media, is the only way I can overcome the siren song of the sofa.

What advice would you give to masters runners looking to improve their performance?

It seems like we can get injured a little easier, take a little longer to recover, etc. Training consistently, not running too hard all the time, cross training, good nutrition and plenty of rest might be obvious answers. But if I was to give a single piece of advice, it would be to really try to understand if our limitations are real or imagined. If we have an injury or something holding us back, is there a way to address it and overcome it? Or do we just accept it as permanent because of our age? Should we just accept that we're older and that we can't achieve something we want? Or should we go for it, find a way around whatever is keeping us from achieving that goal? I honestly think a lot of what we need to improve our performance is between our ears, just like it is for everybody else. If we think we're older, or slower, or weaker, we're going to be those things. If we think we're strong, or focused, or determined, we're going to be those things, too. If you want an example, follow Anny Rosenthal for a while. As my brother Tim told me, "we don't know what we can do," so let's find out!

— 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.

Introducing Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K

by Jefferson Lunsford

The new year brings a new event to MCRRC's schedule of low-key races: the Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K. The name is both a play on the schedule—a February race with the potential to be chilly—and a reference to the course, which includes a number of challenging hills.

The race will be held on Sunday, February 18, and will start and finish at Kemp Mill Elementary School. We'll have a warm, dry place indoors to meet beforehand and recover afterward. The race features two distance options: runners will make the choice at Mile 2 whether to turn right and finish the 5K distance, or turn left and conquer the 10K course.

This race has been in the making for a long time. I've been running in Kemp Mill for several years, typically using the neighborhood hills for my Thursday morning XMP and Winter Marathon training runs. I had a basic six-mile route that I would modify for distance, and would challenge myself to increase my speed on the hills. As my training progressed, I realized that I essentially had developed a weekly 10K race for myself!

In the fall of 2016, I signed up for the Club's Race Director training to get a peek behind the curtain of how MCRRC races come together. Upon completion of the course, I was named the Assistant Director for the 2017 Matthew Henson Trail 5K where, under the leadership of Yukun Fung, I learned the ropes of running a low-key race.

The culmination of this multiyear process was my decision to combine all of these elements into a real race. I began drawing maps, refining the course, and planning the locations for water stops and course marshals. I finally put all the pieces together late last year, and proposed the race to the MCRRC Board. The Board was enthusiastic about expanding the Club's race offerings into this part of the county, and Kemp Mill (C)hills found a place in the calendar for 2018!

So now we're in the home stretch! What started out as a mental exercise during a weekly training run has turned into MCRRC's newest low-key race. I've worked with MCRRC

Race Management to secure permits and have the courses measured. I'm making packing lists for race supplies, looking for volunteers, planning the after party and tending to a million other details.

The process has been a labor of love for me, and I'm grateful to be able to give back to the Club in this way.

In addition to the race, I've begun hosting a weekly Thursday morning workout in Kemp Mill, climbing and descending many of the same hills that are featured in the race. Think of it as an informal training group. Keep an eye out for some "course familiarization runs" as we get closer to race day.

Mark your calendars now for the Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K. Like all low-key races, this is free for MCRRC members, \$10 for non-members 18 and over, and \$5 for non-members under 18. For more information on running or volunteering, head to <https://www.mcrrc.org/calendar-event/kemp-mill-chills-5k10k-2018/>



Photo: Travis Helms

Jefferson Lunsford