

MCRRC Intervals

November 2019

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

November 3

Rockville 10K/5K

King Farm, Rockville, MD

<https://www.rockville10k5k.com/>

November 9

Stone Mill 50 Miler

Montgomery Village, MD

<https://www.stone-mill-50-mile.org/>

November 23

Run Under the Lights – SOLD OUT!

Gaithersburg, MD

<https://mcrrcrununderlights.com/>

Volunteer today!

November 30

Turkey Burnoff

Gaithersburg, MD

December 8

Jingle Bell Jog

Rockville, MD

Join us after the race for our Annual Business Meeting!

December 15

Seneca Slopes 9K

Gaithersburg, MD

January 1

New Year's Day 5K

We are currently working the 2020 race schedule. Thank you for your patience!

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.

Parks Half Marathon



Photo: Sandra Engstrom

Joel Wakesberg and Michael Collyer are having a good time...



Photo: Dan Grab

... so is Brittany Blumer



We Want to Hear from You!

by Scott Brown, Editor

First, an apology: if you were paying attention, you may have noticed that no September issue of *Intervals* ever landed in your mailbox. That wasn't by design, and to my knowledge, it's the first time since MCRRC relaunched a newsletter as *Intervals* that we missed an issue. But the truth is, as a volunteer-based organization, we rely on Club members for our submissions. We are fortunate to have a stable of regular contributors and to get periodic submissions from MCRRC members (we love those!), but some months the well runs dry, and in the unusual case of September, we just didn't have enough content by press time to put together a credible issue. So, again, accept my apology, and please direct your complaints to president@mcrrc.org. (Kidding!)

On that note, allow me to appeal to you, MCRRC members and *Intervals* readers, to invite you to help *Intervals* by contributing photos, pitching article ideas, or sending us articles you've written. We are always eager to feature new stories and voices, and to spotlight some of the terrific stories about people,

programs and events in the Club. So, if you have an idea or want to chip in, please reach out to intervals@mcrrc.org.

In this issue of *Intervals*, George Tarrico and Dr. Betty Smith provide an overview of deep-water running, which provides a different way to train that is great whether you're trying to maintain fitness while recovering from an injury or just looking for away to get some extra "miles" in a non-impact modality.

If you have a race coming up, be sure to check out Dan DiFonzo's article on running the tangents to learn how what you learned (or forgot) in high school geometry can make you a "faster" runner. Dan has been preaching the gospel of tangents for as long as I've known him, and not coincidentally I've run my best marathons while hearing his exhortations to "run the tangents" in my head.

Finally, for this month's profile, Lisa Reichmann features longtime MCRRC member Monika Bachmann, an accomplished road and trail runner who describes some of the evolution of the Club since she joined as a teenager during MCRRC's early years.

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

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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Publisher

Ken Earley

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Photo Editor

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Contributors

Dan DiFonzo

Lisa Levin Reichmann

Dr. Betty H. Smith

George Tarrico

Have comments or questions? Or want to help?

Contact us at Intervals@mcrrc.org.

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Intervals is published bimonthly by the Montgomery County Road Runners, P.O. Box 1703, Rockville MD 20849.

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.



Lake Needwood Kids Run



Photo: Dan Reichmann



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Deep Water Running

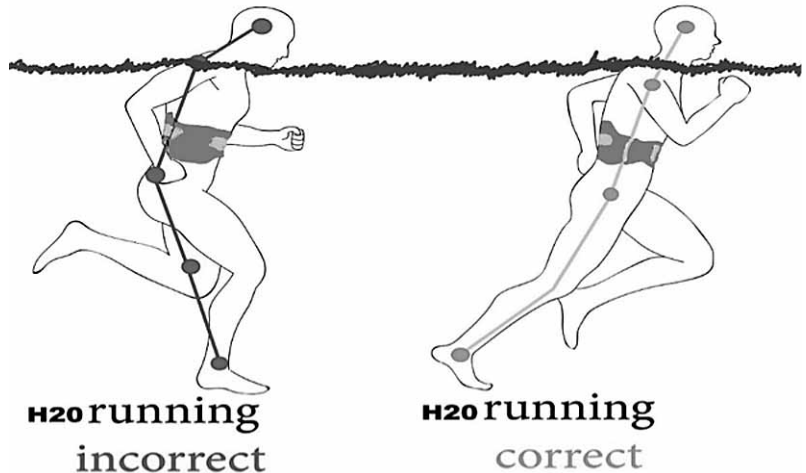
by George Tarrico and Betty H. Smith

Are you recovering from an injury and need some low impact exercise to help accelerate the healing? How about a “no impact” training regimen not only to maintain cardiovascular fitness, but also strength, flexibility and balance during the season and offseason? Or when the weather says, “don’t run outside” this winter? Or maybe you’re just plain tired of running laps around a track wrapped in layers or in the heat when you can’t take off enough layers?

Whatever it may be, consider deep-water running. What is it? It’s running in deep water. (Go figure.)

You can go it on your own in one of Montgomery County’s great indoor swimming pools. These pools are open all year long and they are maintained at a comfortable 80 degrees. OR you can sign up for genuine deep-water running classes taught by our very own ultrarunner/coach Betty H. Smith. Her deep-water running classes provide “written homework” to help you minimize injury and maximize energy. The homework focuses on the “how to” of excellent posture, excellent body alignment and deep belly breathing. In Betty’s classes you will run non-stop for 50 minutes in 13 feet of water using a flotation device to keep you upright in the water. You will warm-up, achieve cruising speed, run intervals, and cool down, which includes full body stretching. Betty’s program is individualized, so you will improve your overall fitness beginning at your current level of fitness. There are no other “Coach Betty-type” deep-water running programs in the Metro area that focus on injury-free water running techniques. Betty teaches exclusively at the Olney Indoor Swim Center on Georgia Avenue.

Betty’s experience with deep-water



running: I’ve been deep-water running for three years and found that it has tremendously improved all of my outside training and racing, including my ultramarathon racing, as I have aged. I have made running in the deep water a major part of my overall training program. I’m in the water running at least five hours per week for myself and another four hours working one-on-one with MCRRC runners and others.

George’s experience with deep water running: The idea of deep-water running is pretty intuitive, but of course, there is some technique involved. Think of it as dog paddling in a pool where you can’t touch the bottom. Your legs maintain a running motion that propels you through the water while your arms mostly provide stability and direction. At first, you’ll pedal like mad, but you won’t feel like you’re going anywhere. Try as you might, you won’t go very fast regardless of how fast you pedal. But with a little practice, you’ll realize that, with some forward lean and holding a yoga-like core pose, you will get moving. Once

you find the correct form, you will find that the faster you pedal, the faster you go. It takes some practice, but you’ll adapt quickly. About 30 minutes of this and you’ll feel the rush of energy that comes from steady exercise. The real benefit comes afterward when you have the warm-buzz energy that lasts most of the day. Some people can learn this alone, but most will need to learn proper technique to minimize injury.

MCRRC member Michele McLeod started running in Coach Betty’s class while trying to heal an Achilles’ tendon injury during marathon training. Michele noted that, “In the pool I practice my running form, with a full stride and arm swinging. It helps me when I run on the road or trail.” Michele continued pool running after the class ended and brought her husband, Glen, to try it,

“With pool running I can stretch out my knees and hips when they are tight from regular running. I get a full deep muscle stretch,” Glen commented.

— George and Betty have both been very active members of MCRRC since the 1980s.

Straight Lines Mean Fast Times

by Dan DiFonzo

Here's a riddle for you: Two runners run the same certified 5K race. They start side by side and cross the start mat at the same identical time and both average exactly six minutes per mile for the entire race. Yet one runner finishes the race more than 30 seconds ahead of the other runner. How is this possible?

The answer? The faster runner ran the tangents. The slower runner did not.

So what exactly are tangents and why are they so important? Tangents are imaginary lines that are the shortest distance between two given points. During a race, these two points are usually turns on a course. A measured course is made up of these line segments, sometimes dozens of them. By running on these invisible tangent lines, runners can be sure that they will run no **longer** than the advertised length of that given course.

While we all have learned in our high school geometry class that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, few actually put that knowledge to use when racing. But when every second counts, it's a technique that needs to be practiced from the word "go" to that final finish mat.

When race courses are certified, they are measured from turn to turn via the shortest tangent or line between two given points. If you've ever run around the track for any number of miles—especially in an outside lane—you've certainly noticed that your GPS is signaling your splits for the quarter mile well in advance of your finishing point on the track. Quite simply, that

quarter-mile track is only a quarter mile if you've managed to run on the inner most left hand side of lane one. The further you run outside of that left side of lane one, the longer you're running. In fact, you pretty quickly realize that you're **always** running just a bit further than the prescribed distance.

This same concept holds true if you've ever run a race with your GPS's auto-lap turned on. You'll find that the longer your race is, the further from the upcoming mile-marker you are when you hear that beep alert. This can be an annoying reminder of how poorly you've run the tangents—or you can do as many do and blame the race organizers for misplaced mile markers.

Lyman Jordan is somewhat of an expert on the subject of course measurement. In addition to being an MCRRC member for nearly 40 years, Jordan has served as a "Final Signatory Course Certifier" for the International Amateur Athletic Federation for 35 years, which means—as an official—he has been charged with measuring and certifying race courses to ensure the stated race distance meets the eligibility requirements should a participant set a World Record on a given course.

So, what can you do to run the tangents as "perfectly" as possible? "The single best thing you can do is do your homework," explains Lyman Jordan. "You can start with familiarizing yourself with the race course well before race day. Sometimes the tangent will be unnoticeable. Where it really makes a difference is when you have a lot of really tight turns and curves.

Scouting out the course ahead of time makes all the difference," said Jordan.

"If you aren't familiar with the course, it's hard to know exactly what to look for when you're sighting down the road after your turns. Sometimes you'll make a turn and start moving to the right expecting your next turn to be on the right hand side, before realizing you need to make a left. If you've pushed toward the middle of the road, you've run outside of that imaginary tangent line and forced yourself to run further than you needed to," says Jordan.

"It's really important to start running your diagonal immediately after your turn," says Jordan. "If you can't see that far down the course, you don't know. You get halfway down the block—or two blocks—and you realize you should be on the left side of the road. Now you've already run longer than you should have! It's getting out on the course and learning so you don't have to guess where the next turn will be."

Jordan acknowledges that not everyone can run the course in advance of their race—especially when it's a longer event like a marathon or a half-marathon. But with today's technology we have instant access to virtually any course via Google Maps or—better yet—Google Earth. Jordan recommends drilling down to the Street View and planning your race from that vantage point.

"People have to understand that's why their GPS is registering long on road courses. It's because they're not

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Monica Bachmann



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

Today, Club membership exceeds 3,000 runners. Back in 1981, membership was a more intimate 455, and one of the new members to join that year was 15-year-old Monika Bachmann, who needed her mother to sign and pay for her membership after Club President and one of the founding members of MCRRC, John Sissala, invited her to join after she ran the Piece of Cake 10K when it was still run in Montgomery Village. Monika has spent almost four decades as a Club member, winning the Runner of the Year award in 1992 and later chairing the Runner of the Year Selection Committee, serving on the Board, dedicating countless volunteer hours as a race director for many races, and, just recently, getting the ultimate membership benefit when she married fellow MCRRC member and speedster/Runner of the Year recipient Jim Whitnah on December 18, 2018, at the Rockville Courthouse. Monika and Jim live with their dog, Holly, in Clarksburg, in a “55 and better” subdivision (even though she’s just 54) and house with no stairs. When she’s not running or volunteering, Monika is a geography professor at Prince George’s Community

College in Largo.

What are some of the more significant changes you’ve seen in the Club over the years?

Three come to mind: demographics, training



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Monica Bachmann with Jim Whitnah

programs, and professionalism.

Demographically, not only has the Club grown in sheer numbers, from hundreds to thousands, but has many more women members, with a resulting larger range of running abilities and interests. This of course mirrors the larger running movement.

Training programs have

evolved, and while the small, informal, groups of the 1980s and early ’90s still exist, they have been largely supplemented by much larger, formal training and coaching programs to meet the needs of more and different runners. Thus the “place for every pace.” The much smaller, male-dominated MCRRC of old focused on only a handful of distances (no ultras, no trails), specific road races (the “biggies” like the Cherry Blossom 10-Miler and Marine Corps Marathon), and paces and abilities (no walkers, no first-timers). Current training programs have attracted many new members, whose affinity seems to be toward their specific program rather than the Club generally.

The third significant change involves professionalism. This year’s Parks Half Marathon really underscored that for me. While the club has conducted high-quality races and events for decades, and not just small ones—the many iterations of the Fritzbe’s 10K, hosting the 1987 RRCA Convention, the 25th annual Pike’s Peek 10K, and the 10th annual Stone Mill 50 Miler come to mind—both the frequency and level of these races and events—and

now programs—has blossomed. Decades of institutional memory and knowhow plus more and better resources (equipment and funds) along with sheer talent (the better the organization, the better talent it attracts) equal a polished, well-organized product. Parks Half Marathon Race Director Don Shulman and his race committee organize a first-class race. I rarely run road races anymore, but am so glad I did this year's Parks—my only other one since the original Marathon in the Parks in 2000. I was both impressed and proud to be associated with a club capable of putting on such a great event.

You're an accomplished runner and the past recipient of a Runner of the Year (ROY) award. How has your running career progressed since you received the award in 1992?

Two words: slower and longer. While most of my PRs were set in subsequent three or four years after the ROY award, my best racing was over by the late '90s. Running overall took a hit from a series of surgeries. I could no longer do any quality speedwork, although I could run long distances as long as it was at a slow pace. Shorter road distances were increasingly frustrating; my PR days were clearly behind me, yet I still enjoyed races. I couldn't go any faster on the roads, but I could go farther, and, fortunately for me, most of the longer-than-marathon distances

were off-road. I had always liked trails, being familiar with the horse paths and pipelines I remembered from my riding days. Suddenly, ultras didn't seem as nutty as they used to, and in 2000, I did my first 50K. I hated it, and it took another year or two to forget that and sign up for another, but I've been happily geezing on the trails ever since. I haven't completely abandoned the roads, but this transition from mainly roads to mainly trails is the most significant progression in my running in the past 20 years.

What does your current training schedule look like? Has your training approach changed over the years? Jim and I answer this the same way: "Training schedule? What training schedule?" If training is specific, targeted workouts geared toward a specific goal or race, then we stopped doing that years ago. The actual number of hours per week running may not have dropped that much, but the amount of miles covered and intensity devoted to them sure has. Most days we geeze for an hour or so. Once a week I try to extend that to a longer geeze of four-plus hours, depending on which ultra is on the calendar, but that's about the extent of any formal schedule. We just love to run.

Do you have a favorite race distance or race you like to do every year?

These days I tend toward the longer distance races (ultras up to 50 miles; 100s have eluded me as of yet), but every distance has its unique appeal. I have my standard races I do every year: Greenway, Virginia Creeper Marathon, and Fodderstack 10K.

When you're not volunteering or running with the Club, what do you enjoy doing?

Recovering from said activities, horizontal on the sofa with dog(s).

What are your running-related goals for the rest of 2019 and into 2020?

To keep running/geezing until then, and beyond.

— 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.



Straght Lines

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running the way it was measured. They are running down the middle of the road and anything other than the tangents, they are going to be running a longer distance than the nominal distance," he says.

Don't be afraid to get out of line! Some runners know that tangent running can save them precious seconds yet some just won't do it during a race. Why not? Because they're afraid to step out of line and they don't want to be the only ones running alone while the others follow the meandering painted lane lines. If a road is closed for the race, use the full road to take advantage of running that tangent as tightly as

possible. It's time in the bank and may mean the difference between a new PR, a podium place or a Boston Marathon qualifying time.

In early October, Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge ran the first sub-two-hour marathon ever in 1:59:40. His success was due in large part to running nearly perfect tangents. But he had a little help.

Jordan says, "If you looked closely, you could see a painted line that was set up by a course certifier that very clearly indicated the tangents. If he ran down the middle of the road and outside of the tangents, he would have never achieved his sub-two-hour goal! Think about that!"

Be respectful! When running tangents properly, you'll need to be respectful of fellow runners. It's

not uncommon that what appears to be zig-zagging to some runners is actually the proper tangent for the "smart" runner. Be considerate when running that tangent that you are not cutting off another runner. They may seem confused, but you'll have the last laugh.

Some runners—no matter how hard they try—will never be good tangent runners. For those people, Jordan offers this bit of advice he once overheard someone say about him, "If Lyman Jordan is running the race, I just follow him!"