

# MCRRC Intervals

March 2020

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**March 7**

Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon  
& 50K

Greenway Trail

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

Piece of Cake 5K/10K

Seneca Creek State Park

Gaithersburg, MD

**March 22**

MCRRC Board Elections & Club's  
Birthday Party

(Following Piece of Cake)

Seneca Creek State Park—the Woodlands  
Room

**March 29**

Spin in the Woods XC  
Wheaton, MD

**April 18**

Capital for a Day  
Olney, MD

**April 26**

Pike's Peek 10K  
Rockville, MD  
[www.pikespeek10k.org](http://www.pikespeek10k.org)

**May 2**

La Milla de Mayo  
Gaithersburg, MD

**May 3**

Run Aware  
Bethesda, MD

**May 3**

MCRRC Annual Awards Brunch  
(Following Run Aware)  
AMP by Strathmore, Rockville, 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.

## Kemp Mill (C)hills



Photo: Bruce Lemieux

Wendy Young and Roscoe are ready for volunteer duty.



Photo: M. Miller

Erin Kelman loves the cold and hills.



# Oh, the Possibilities

by Scott Brown, Editor

The dirty secret of being the editor of *Intervals* is that for all my angst at having to rely on other volunteers to submit the articles that make up each issue, it's my own column that is always the very last one done. That's mostly by design. My vision for these columns has always been to provide a narrative table of contents, and it's impossible to adequately describe an article until I've read it. But I also like to wait to receive all the other submissions to see if there's any sort of logical unifying theme. The submissions for any given issue reflect the diversity of Club members, which is great from the standpoint of serving the breadth of MCRRC's membership base. But it often means any given issue is a hodgepodge of topics without an obvious common thread that ties all the submissions together.

Surveying this issue, however, I immediately recognized that the thread running through these submissions (nearly all of which, by the way, are from first-time contributors to *Intervals*) was that they're all about possibilities. Whether it's lobbying for a new tunnel on the Capital Crescent Trail, trying your hand at directing a race, going for a run in a new park, or getting expert guidance on your running form and footwear, these articles are all about the *possibilities* available to us as runners right here in Montgomery County.

First up in this issue, Jane Heinrichs raises awareness about the need for civic engagement to encourage the County to keep its promises for replacing the tunnel connecting the

CCT to the Georgetown Branch Trail, which is not funded in the County's proposed budget. Jane highlights the advocacy MCRRC leaders have already taken and ways you can help the cause. If you are concerned about infrastructure for pedestrians and runner safety, or are simply sick of having to run the hills of Chevy Chase to venture between the two trails, check out Jane's article for ways to make your voice heard.

Next up, Connie Corbett provides a wonderful profile of several MCRRC members who have taken on one of the most essential volunteer jobs: serving as race director for one of the Club's low-key races. The low-key race series is a great perk of MCRRC membership and a fantastic bargain, so be sure to thank the race director the next time you toe the line.

Also in this issue, Wayne Breslyn provides a wonderful invitation to check out the former RedGate Golf Course, which is now Redgate Park, offering miles of hills, ample parking and even a bathroom for your next run. It's a great place to add on to the Millennium Train loop or if you're just looking for a new route that's more scenic.

Finally, in this month's Runner Profile, Lisa Reichmann interviews Ray Chen from RnJ Sports, who is the shoe guru at the Club's Run Performance Lab. Whether you're looking to improve your race times or simply struggling to stay injury free, make it a point to visit the RPL and to visit your local running store for some expert guidance.

## MCRRC Intervals

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

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



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# Broken Promises: Capital Crescent Trail Not Funded by County Executive

by Jane Heinrichs

On September 5, 2017, runners, pedestrians and cyclists were sacrificed for the “greater good,” when construction for the Purple Line became a reality. The Georgetown Branch Trail (GBT)—the 3.5-mile trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring—and the Air Rights Tunnel, which connected the GBT with the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), closed for the duration of the project, an estimated four to five years.

The loss of the GBT—with its lush canopy of trees and beautiful trestle bridge—was somewhat tempered by the promise that this sacrifice would result in a new trail stretching from Silver Spring to Bethesda and a new tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda as a safe connection point for users to access both trails. Since then, Club members have become all too familiar with local Chevy Chase street names such as Leland, Thornapple and Jones Bridge to help navigate between downtown Bethesda and the Rock Creek Trail/Beach Drive.

On January 15, County Executive Marc Elrich presented his proposed FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget, which covers capital investments in facilities and infrastructure, such as the construction of public schools, street maintenance and parks

improvements. Funding for the tunnel was conspicuously absent from the CIP. County officials explained that building the tunnel had become too costly. After the announcement, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), which is handling the tunnel’s design process, held a public meeting on January 29. Public hearings on the overall CIP also were held in early February. Club President Ken Earley testified at the CIP hearings that the tunnel is more than just a convenience for Bethesda residents, but also a key link to the region’s trail network and consistent with the County’s Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic-related deaths and severe injuries by 2030.

The Club’s efforts have not stopped there. Club leaders have met and spoken with key state and county officials to stress the importance of the tunnel to the citizens of the region for transportation, recreation, fitness and safety. To amplify our voice, the Club is coordinating with other organizations that also believe the tunnel is critical and should be funded.

Based on feedback from the hearings and individual public outreach, MCDOT has heard that the community wants the tunnel built. The next step in this process is for the Transportation and

Environment (T&E) Committee of the Montgomery County Council to evaluate the issue, vote on it in April and, hopefully, move the tunnel project to the County Council for its consideration.

If you would like to make your voice heard, contact the Chair of the T&E Committee, Tom Hucker, (*Councilmember.Hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov*) and Committee member Evan Glass (*Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov*). Be sure to note where you live and let them know that the tunnel is not a pedestrian, runner, walker, cyclist or Bethesda issue; it is an issue of critical importance for all County residents and a fundamental part of the region’s transportation network that should be funded immediately to ensure that it is complete when the Purple Line opens for operation.

Although the County has funded a surface trail that rejoins the CCT at Woodmont Avenue, this trail does not adequately meet the objectives or replace the tunnel. Club leaders continue to seek ways to most effectively engage members in productive advocacy and will provide information about additional opportunities via email and Facebook as they arise.

# Race Directing: Do you Have What It Takes?

by *Connie Corbett*

If you aren't taking advantage of MCRRC's low-key races, then you are most likely not getting the most for your membership. The Club offers more than 20 low-key races each year. For those accustomed to road running, there are many 5K and 10K races, while those who like to come home with muddy shoes will enjoy the various trail races. The best thing about these races is that they are at no additional cost to Club members! When you consider the average race registration is around \$40, MCRRC membership provides a value of more than \$800.

A fascinating note about the MCRRC's low-key races is that they are managed by volunteer race directors (RDs). Jim Farkas, who has been involved in race directing since 2005, was driven to the role due to his curiosity of what makes a race work. "When an opportunity came up to become an assistant RD, I was more than that happy to step in, just so I could see what happened behind the scenes." Michele and Chuck Potter view race directing as "another way to give back to MCRRC." Both Michele and Chuck Potter are avid runners and co-directing the Seneca Slopes race is one way to share their love of the sport with others.

Race directing is similar to being a company CEO in that the ultimate responsibility for a smooth running event lies with the head honcho. An RD's work begins with planning the course, obtaining permits and certifying the course distance. Once a race date is set, the pre-race logistics ramp up with volunteer and photographer sign-ups and food coordination. The most intense phase of an RD role is race day. Setting up the start/finish line and check-in, marking the course, delivering water-stop supplies, and laying out the post-race food are just a few of the tasks. During the race, the RD must ensure there is ample course marshaling and medical support. The RD's day wraps up with results posting and course cleanup.

For a race that has already been established (meaning the course has been designed and certified), the race directing duties begin about three months before race day. As the event gets closer, an RD is

involved in recruiting volunteers, securing the food, and ensuring the equipment is available in the Club warehouse. The day of the event can be a long one, with the RD arriving a few hours before the event, and concluding after the race site is cleaned and the equipment returned to the warehouse.

Of course, these tasks are not all performed by the RD, who relies on a host of team captains responsible for a specific area. Jim said, "RDs need dedicated team captains who understand their roles and follow through on the tasks." Chuck added that the success of the low-key races is highly dependent on the volunteers. "With the number of events that are offered, the call for volunteers can be challenging, especially when events are scheduled close together." Karen Craney, who has served as a volunteer, a team captain and an RD, offered that MCRRC is "a big club with a lot of people. Our volunteer base is extremely

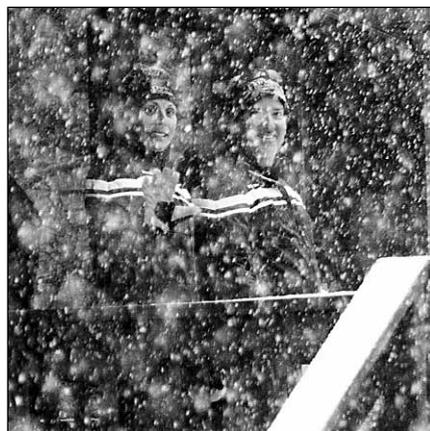


Photo: Connie Corbett

**Michele and Chuck Potter deal with a little snow while directing Seneca Slopes.**

reliable, but relatively small. To keep our low-key races going, we will need to recruit new volunteers [from our membership]."

These RDs all agreed that the most important skill an RD must have is organization. Keeping on top of the details and managing to the timeline is critical. Jim noted that "first-time race directing can be daunting because you don't know the routine. But if you keep with it, it will become easier each time."

In addition, RDs need to be flexible and prepared to make decisions on the fly. For example, some RDs have had to reroute courses the day of the race due to unforeseen obstacles (such as downed trees and swarms of bees). Other RDs have had to handle neighbors irritated by temporary road closures. There have also been a few times where runners missed a trail marking and ended up off course in a densely wooded area. "You can't control the weather or if volunteers don't show up," Karen shared. "The only thing you can do is have a 'cool head' and roll with what the day offers."

If you are interested in becoming a low-key race director, MCRRC offers the Race Director 101 course. The course is offered in the fall before the creation of the low-key race schedule for the upcoming year. Wendy Young and Andrea Keane-Myers, who taught the course in November, recommend being an assistant RD first. "The Club's race directors have a great deal of experience and have perfected the various tasks that are required to put on a successful, enjoyable, and safe event, and shadowing with one of them is the best way to learn the ropes."

If race directing sounds like a big job, it is. It is also extremely satisfying. Regardless of their individual motivation for becoming RDs, Jim, Michele, Chuck and Karen share the same reason why they continue to direct races: the satisfaction of watching the participants enjoy their event. Karen said, "the comments from the runners expressing their happiness make all the effort worthwhile and motivate me to be an RD for yet another year."

No doubt race directing isn't for everyone. However, those who embrace the responsibility deserve our gratitude. Next time you attend one of the Club's low-key races, seek out the RD and give them a big "high five" for a job well done.

— *Connie Corbett is a longtime member of MCRRC and has served as a pace coach for many programs. This year, Connie will step into the role of program directing.*

# Running at Redgate Park

by Wayne Breslyn

**S**et against the post-apocalyptic backdrop of an abandoned golf course, you'll find 144 acres of hills, hollows and sky. This is Redgate Park.

As Rockville's newest park, Redgate offers one of the hilliest places to run in



Rockville, with even steeper hills than the fabled Silencer. Formerly RedGate Golf Course, the City of Rockville



closed the course in January 2019 and recently reopened it as a park with little fanfare. Located right next to the Carl Henn Millennium Trail on Avery Road just off Norbeck,



there is ample parking, paved paths, and even a small outdoor bathroom located near the cellphone tower. A

run around the perimeter of the park covers two miles. For a longer run, follow the markers for each of the 18 holes for a total of about four miles.

Also of interest is the wide variety of wildlife at RedGate Park, with foxes, chipmunks and more than 130 species of birds.

The City of Rockville is currently deciding the future of the park and will be seeking input from Rockville residents and other parkgoers. For now it's a hill runner's paradise.

Photos: Wayne Breslyn



RedGate Park, 14500 Avery Rd., Rockville, MD 20850

# Ray Chen



by Lisa Levin Reichmann

*One of the valuable benefits of MCRRC membership is the opportunity to participate in the Run Performance Lab (RPL), where runners can receive expert advice from coaches, physical therapists, podiatrists, a massage therapist, and a running-shoe expert. If you've participated in the RPL, you've likely been impressed by the knowledge and insights of Ray Chen, the general manager of RnJ Sports, who serves as the RPL's shoe specialist. A member of MCRRC since the early 2000s, Ray grew up locally, buying his tennis racquets from RnJ when it was Racquet & Jog. As a student at the University of Maryland looking for a part-time job, Ray jumped at the chance to work at the store he loved when he saw a help-wanted ad. He started in 1997 as a clerk and worked his way to manager two years later. Eventually, as the store moved into the Internet world, he managed the online business. For the past six years, Ray has served as general manager. Ray, 44, lives in Rockville with his "hilarious" rescue pit bull Storm.*

## **How did you develop your tremendous knowledge of shoes and shoe fit?**

I have always had a love for shoes and diving into the minutiae of things. With the decades of experience passed on from the owners, information gathering from the sales representatives, and the invaluable frontline experience of fitting more than 30,000 customers,

I've seen just about everything relating to feet and shoes (and then some). I love that something as simple as switching shoes can instantly help someone with injury prevention and recovery.

## **For you and your staff, what are the most important factors when**



Photo: Enduro Photo

Ray Chen

## **determining proper shoe fit?**

There are so many factors we have to consider when we work with a customer for our fitting process, but we boil it down to two major factors: proper fit and functional support. The shoe has to physically fit the dimensions of the foot and, if necessary, to have the corrective design and components to resist a collapsing arch.

## **What is the most frequent mistake you see runners make regarding their shoes?**

The biggest problem is actually not realizing how impossible it is to find a correct pair of running shoes by yourself. Contrary to most things you order online, a running shoe has to be evaluated while in use and by how well it fits, both of which cannot be determined by reading reviews. More specifically, though, sizing is never guessed correctly. Even when you buy bigger than you normally would, it's never as big as it should be. So many issues are related to tight shoes: ingrown toenails, hammertoes, neuromas, calluses, blisters and bunions, to name the popular ones.

## **In your opinion, how often should runners replace their shoes? Is there an easy way to determine it is time to replace a current pair of shoes?**

Mileage is the key, but even then it's a wide range because there are so many factors, including body weight, surface, weekly mileage, shoe weight and type of shoe. So with those variables in mind, shoes are good for anywhere from 200 to 400 miles. You have to find your sweet spot. A simple example of the effect of one variable is that the same person running on a treadmill versus outdoors will find the same shoes will get more miles on the treadmill than outside due to the treadmill deck absorbing the shock, and that prolongs the legs from

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feeling the pounding one might feel running outside in older shoes.

**Is there a benefit to rotating between multiple pairs of shoes? Should those shoes be the same model?**

If you are running four or more days a week, rotating shoes is definitely beneficial. “Rebounding” allows the foam to rise back up after being compressed during a run, and that takes about a day. Finding one style that works is already a difficult task, but if you can find two styles, rotating between those is ideal. Having two different shoes helps as the feet land differently, with different pressure zones.

**Should runners have different pairs of shoes for training and racing?**

Yes and no. It depends on the race distance and pace. If you are fast enough, then yes. If you are not biomechanically efficient, then switching to lighter racing shoes will break down your mechanics and lead you to injury. So in that sense, a heavier shoe is actually faster and safer for the majority of runners.

**What has been the biggest development over the course of your career in running-shoe technology?**

The cushioning foam. The drop in weight has been instrumental in allowing shoe companies to add cushion and improve stability while dropping the overall weight of running shoes by about 30 percent from 15-plus years ago.

**What is your take on the recent Nike Vaporfly controversy?** It’s the same idea as with racing flats. If you’re already fast, the Vaporfly shoes may help you. If you’re not, you’re more likely to get injured. If you have feet that need support, the Vaporflys don’t offer any correction. They also have a very specific fit as well, so if they don’t fit properly, they won’t help. At the end of the day, nothing beats proper training and nutrition.

**Are these shoes any runner can wear if they’re willing to pay the high price?**

They don’t come in widths, which makes it tough for most runners. If you currently wear a neutral shoe, are in the top 5 percent of race times, and the Vaporfly fits you correctly, then you’re a candidate.

**As a member of the staff for the Run Performance Lab, how do you think you contribute to the runner’s experience at the RPL?**

I hope each runner gets a better idea of why changing certain characteristics may ultimately help their enjoyment of the sport. Issues you may be dealing with can be completely eliminated just by switching shoes.

**Is there any particular piece of running gear you think every runner should have?**

A hydration device such as a handheld bottle or a Camelbak backpack. Hydration is the number-one factor in performance. It affects

your speed and recovery times so much more than you think. It will actually help runners more than any Vaporfly could!

**What do you think is the secret to RnJ’s continued success, especially as a locally owned small business in a world of increased online sales and corporate competition?**

Personalization is our specialty. Our one-on-one process of fitting takes you through all the small details that are overlooked and oversimplified by competitors to make a sale. We don’t use gimmicks or smoke and mirrors. We are here to help you get to your goal, by means of getting the best equipment for your athletic endeavors. More than anything, we have a strict no BS policy. We tell it like it is, even if you don’t want to hear it because injury prevention is everything for us. We want our customers to run/walk another day without injury. Being able to answer questions and demystify and debunk internet misinformation is so important these days. There are so many options and opinions that we take the guessing game out of your hands.

— 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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## Join Us To Celebrate The Club's Birthday & Elect The 2020-21 Board Of Directors

Sunday, March 22  
Around 9 a.m. (after the Piece of Cake 5K/10K)  
Woodlands Room, Seneca Creek State Park

This event is **FREE**.

Members are encouraged to bring a homemade cake for our annual cake contest, which will be held after the Board elections. Stick around to see the winning cake & sample all the submissions!

\*\*\* If you are interested in submitting a cake, please contact [office@mcrrc.org](mailto:office@mcrrc.org) so we know how many cakes to expect. Entrants will be responsible for transporting their own cakes to the Woodlands Room no later than 8:30 a.m.