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## Montgomery County Road Runners Club

**Ins & Outs - March 19, 2021**

*"We Are Running in Montgomery County"*



Dear Members -

Can you believe we surpassed ONE YEAR since life as we knew it changed? Sometimes, I honestly have to look down to see if I remembered to put pants on in the morning and probably can't tell you what I ate for dinner last night. But I can tell you every single thing we did that weekend, in what order, and who we did it with. "That weekend" -- the last one before (as I like to call it) all hell broke loose. Can you remember what you did "that weekend?" Most people can. It's such a strange thing to me. We've suffered unimaginable loss, stress, anxiety, and fear. We've had a lot of good times, too. And we made it. We are still here. We may never be as we were before "that weekend," but the human race will find a new way to live. The club will find a new way to thrive.

So with that, how about a return to racing?! Tremendous thanks to our Race Committee for their help getting some events back on the calendar. **Piece of Cake is THIS SUNDAY & registration will be open through tomorrow at 6 PM.** Some important notes on this: **the race is still free to members, but EVERYONE MUST PRE-REGISTER.** Yes, that includes you as a member. I know this is different, but it's necessary to control our numbers. Registration is open to non-members as well. As I type this, there are about 80 spots left so don't delay if you'd like to participate! Huge thanks to **Race Director Mayra Fairbairn** for her flexibility. And I do mean flexibility! Due to the difficulty of permitting a race during these COVID times, we gave her 5 days' notice to pull off a race. Things will look different for sure, but we'll be out there - and for that, we're THANKFUL. If you are running, **please thank the volunteers** - now more than ever, we appreciate their efforts! **If you are not running, please, stay home** -- I know we would all LOVE to see an in-person MCRRC race again, but in order to remain compliant with our permits, only registered participants and volunteers can be out there. Cheering on your fellow runner virtually however, is more than encouraged! Check out our [webpage for race information](#) (lots of it) and register [here!](#)

And how about a BIG congratulations to all who participated in the **Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon & 50K!** I'm sure you've seen all the hoopla for our Rockstar RD, **Karen Craney** (we think she deserves every bit of it) and we appreciate ALL the volunteers, timing team & participants who made that possible.

We're currently working on permitting additional races, but please keep in mind the "last minuteness" of this process - we 100% don't love it either. But it's also 100% out of our control. We are grateful to our permitting partners (the park services, DOT and county HHS, etc.) for their trust in our offering a safe & fun event!

And finally, save the date for Tuesday, March 30th for our **Annual Business Meeting**. The meeting will take place in a virtual format and details will be released closer to the meeting. The [2021-22 Board of Directors Slate](#) has been announced and I would like to once again thank our outgoing board members for all their support, work and dedication in helping me navigate the club through a time I never thought we'd see in this lifetime. Your service won't be forgotten and you will forever bear the title of "The Pandemic Board" (yes, that's official). I will certainly miss you all.

Have a great weekend, MCRRC!

Ashley Zuraf, Director

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## Member Spotlight: TOM HU

### *Dopey*

The title of Tom Hu's spotlight was written in jest to reference Tom's passion for running challenges that often put his sanity into question among his friends, but also his love for Disney's Dopey Challenge. Tom, however, is far from dopey. When he isn't running marathons and ultramarathons, Tom is an Interdisciplinary Scientist and Program Officer who has been very busy during the COVID-19 pandemic doing very important things that he is too humble to mention. A resident of Bethesda, Tom also enjoys playing chess and training in karate. He likes to think the former is a sport, but that is up for debate (inside joke). Below, we share a little bit more about Tom, his love for running, and participation in MCRRC.

### *What motivates you to run?*

My motivations for running are to live healthy, reduce stress from work, push my limits and endurance, enjoy friendship, explore various parts of the area and cities I visit while traveling for work (pre-pandemic), and eat without guilt.

### *When did you start running?*

I first started to train for the marathon distance in 2012. My oldest brother was borderline diabetic and hypertensive, so we started training and completed the Philadelphia Marathon together in 2012.

### *What do you enjoy most about being a part of MCRRC?*

I really enjoy the breadth and depth of running knowledge within the club, as well as the friendship. I also enjoy all the various excellent training programs. All the Program Directors are extremely welcoming and knowledgeable, and I have developed so many friendships within the club's programs.

### *What is your favorite MCRRC Training Program?*

I truly enjoy First Time Marathon (FTM), Experienced Marathon (XMP), Winter Trails, Advanced Marathon Training (AMT), Winter Half, and Speed Development Programs.



*What is your favorite MCRRC Low-Key race?*

This is such a tough one to answer due to the high quality of the MCRRC Low-Key races. However, here are some of my favorites: New Year's Day 5K, volunteering for Kids on the Run, Memorial 4 Mile, Riley's Rumble Half Marathon, and Turkey Burnoff. Other ones that are not in the Low-Key series, but I really like are: Seneca Creek Trail Marathon and 50K, Pike's Peek 10K, Parks Half Marathon, Stone Mill 50 Mile, and Run Under the Lights 5K.

*What is your favorite volunteer position?*

I really like being one of the many pacers for the Pike's Peek 10K, which I've done for a few years. Also, I like to be a course marshal for various races, especially Kids on the Run - oh, who could forget the excitement for Kids on the Run?! Volunteering at the 355 Rt Aid Station during Stone Mill 50 is also memorable. Loading and unloading the equipment truck is tough work, but rewarding when the race starts.

*Who is your favorite coach, mentor or source of inspiration?*

My favorite coaches are Serey, Sunny, Emma, and Elliott during my very first season of training in the First Time Marathon (FTM) program. They are the ones who inspired me to be a running coach. There are also numerous training friends who have been sources of encouragement at various times, and I greatly appreciate them all.

*What's your preferred race distance?*

One of my best race experiences was during the New York City marathon. One year, I did "back to back" marathons. The New York City marathon was the week after the Marine Corps Marathon, where I helped to pace my FTM pace group runners. I had a lot of doubts whether I would be able to maintain my pace in New York, but I ended up having a relatively good race. It was not a PR, but I love the energy and enthusiasm of the spectators throughout the 5 boroughs.

*What's the strangest thing that you've seen in a race?*

I saw a black bear cub at the 80K mark of the Catskill Mountain 100K Road Race (CMRR). I actually took a few steps back and took a couple photos of the cub. It was probably not the smartest thing to do.

*How do you reward yourself after a hard workout?*

A nice, cold beer.

*What is your favorite running spot in Montgomery County?*

One of my favorite spots is Rock Creek Trail, where you could see other runners but not it's not too crowded. It's also a nice way to see various wild animals.

*What running goal(s) do you have?*

Run a few more ultras, if possible.

*What else would you like to share that would help people better understand your personal running story?*

I hold the status of a Disney Perfect Dopey participant.

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***MCRRC Would Like to Spotlight Our Members!*** All of our members have a story about their running journey and what motivates them to run. We would like to spotlight your story or the story of another great member you know using MCRRC's various communications platforms. Our vision is to celebrate the diverse stories and voices of our membership (race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, etc.).

To submit your story, go to the form [MCRRC Member Spotlight](#).

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## Cadence

### *The Beat from MCRRC's Inclusion and Equity Committee*

#### *Growth*

The end of March brings the transition of MCRRC Board of Directors and an opportunity for the Inclusion and Equity Committee to reflect upon its inception as a member discussion group borne out of the racial awakening of 2020 to being recognized by the board as an official club committee. Throughout this year of growth, one thing has been consistent - it is a space that is member-centered and shaped by the voices of MCRRC members.

After the high profile murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd in the spring and summer of 2020, club members were welcomed to participate in what was then called the Diversity and Inclusion Discussion Group. The focus was to provide a safe and respectful place for all of us to think about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as it applies to running, wellness, and a healthy community. It was also envisioned as a forum for members to have a collective voice on ways the club can be more intentionally inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all groups in achieving MCRRC's mission and creating quality programs, races, and services.

Since then, I&E has provided input to the Race Committee to consider ways to make the structure of the Fall Virtual Race Series more safe. We work with the Communications Committee to ensure image representation and content across social media, the website, and publications tell the diverse stories of our runners. The committee's Featured Runner Series has been very popular with our [inaugural event](#) guest, Meb Keflezighi, and our [first Black History Month panel](#) that featured distinguished panelists, Jean Arthur, past president of MCRRC, Kathryn "Brooke" Walter-Conte, MCRRC member, and Jay Ell Alexander, owner and CEO of Black Girls RUN!

I&E also formed a Values Statement Working Group in August to envision MCRRC's guiding principles that underpin how the club carries out its work toward achieving its mission and vision. In essence, the Values Statement will convey the heart of the club and provide a belief system that shapes our running community. If we believe our members are the heart of the club, then every current and potential member should be able to see themselves represented within the Values Statement. We look forward to sharing the MCRRC Values Statement with you soon!

Bolstered by our members and with the support of staff and the outgoing board, I&E has become a mainstay within the club. Our first issue of Cadence was included in the September 25th Ins and Outs and has been a presence ever since. On October 8th, the board voted unanimously to recognize I&E as a formal committee, and each month, I&E has been a standing agenda item at board meetings.

Throughout the recent months, I&E has undergone much reflection and soul-searching. There is a lot to be proud of this past year, but we have definitely faced our share of challenges and lessons learned. As we look ahead, we will reflect and rethink how to continue the work toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Ultimately, we see ourselves as MCRRC's "member committee," and we will remain member-centered and guided by our collective values.

Thank you to the 2020 board for their support in what has been a very difficult year for the club. In particular, thank you to outgoing president Ken Earley for understanding that inclusion and equity is integral to retaining and attracting members. We look forward to working with the incoming board and welcoming them at the Annual Business Meeting.

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*As our numbers have grown, we realize that there is much work still to be done within the club. If you are interested in contributing to the club's only member-driven committee, please contact [diversity@mcrrc.org](mailto:diversity@mcrrc.org).*

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## Coming Back from COVID-19

*By: Roman Gurule*

COVID took me from the best shape in my life to the very worst in May of 2020. It nearly killed me and required 8 terrifying days of hospitalization. In total, I spent nearly 60 days struggling to do even the most basic things like pee and shower.

The virus took a huge toll on my body. Post-hospitalization, I almost didn't recognize myself in the mirror because the 16+ pounds I had lost left me looking like a skeleton. Plus I had multiple post-COVID symptoms that included constant tiredness, brain fog, random heart rate spikes, difficulty breathing, insomnia, and just not being able to do much of anything physically.

Restarting life at zero was the most daunting challenge I have ever faced. I had lost so much of what I had been working really hard towards but I promised myself to give it my best effort each day, control the controllables, keep moving forward, and not look in the rearview mirror.

My recovery started with daily short slow walks that involved frequent rest breaks. Then the always awesome Julie and Lisa from Run Farther & Faster graciously came up with a plan that got me back into the running game. I am beyond thankful they provided this spark because it was exactly what I needed to get things rolling. Parallel to running I started back up on strength training and yoga. As for the post-COVID symptoms, I was fortunate to be able to mentally compartmentalize them and just power through.

In early July, I decided to proceed with running the Virtual Boston that I had signed up for. I needed a far reaching goal even though this course of action was not recommended for somebody in my condition. Needless to say, this was the shortest and the very hardest marathon build I've ever done. Due to social distancing and my COVID paranoia, I trained 100% solo in the DC summer heat and humidity. I augmented the running with tons of strength training and yoga to compensate for my greatly reduced aerobic ability. It wasn't until a couple of weeks before virtual marathon week when I completed a 20 miler and knew I would be able to attempt the marathon. I ran the virtual race fully unsupported with a finish time of 3:29:50 - my second slowest marathon to date but the one I am most proud of. The mental aspect of this was huge and it was at this moment that I knew I could tackle everything else I needed to take on to rebuild the rest of my life.

Post marathon, I dropped the mileage back because I knew that I needed to focus on a more balanced recovery. I kept up a nice mix of short to medium distance running, strength training, and yoga which got me to about 90% of where I was pre-COVID. Then I spent the month of December in my home state of New Mexico which was the best decision I ever made. Something about training at high altitude in a beautiful, serene, no-pressure environment got me really close to being 100% and I haven't looked back since.

I have been focusing on enjoying every workout, re-evaluating my life priorities, and working hard on what I want to accomplish next. I must say there is a lot of good stuff on the horizon!

Last but most important of all, I am blessed to have the best family, friends, and MCRRC running family. Throughout my recovery, the love and positive encouragement from everyone made my recovery so much better. I am eternally grateful for this.

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*Editor's Note: This was a special piece and I would like to thank Roman for agreeing to share his story of bravery, recovery and hope. I hope that it resonates to someone out there, who needed to hear this.*

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## Tangents

*By: Kristen Serafin*

We're going with a "Less is More" theme for Tangents this week. Everyone's got a lot going on, so let's cut to the chase! Here's what I've been thinking about this week:

1. Barkley Marathons - The Barkley Marathon is underway, and as of the time of this writing only 2 runners were able to start Loop 3. I'm sure most of you have seen the documentary "[The Race That Eats Its Young](#)" on this wild race, but have you checked out the documentary on Gary Robbins, aptly titled "[Where Dreams Go to Die?](#)". If you recall, Gary Robbins is the poor guy who \*almost\* finished Barkley, but he was [a few seconds over the cutoff and came from the wrong direction](#). Gary is a phenomenal athlete and his perseverance is incredible. Note: He's taking a break this year so don't worry about him! If you can't get enough Gary, [here's a nice blog post](#) he did about his 2018 attempt.
2. It seemed like Des Linden was running a lot of miles in [Destober](#)... and it turns out that was for a good reason. Recently she announced that she will be going for the [female 50K World Record](#). It seems like the men have been trying to [break their 50K world record](#) for the entire duration of the pandemic, so if you ask me it's about &%\*^ time a woman took a crack at it. And judging by her [recent Strava activity](#) (yes, you can follow her on Strava!) there's no one better to do this than Des.
3. Finally, speaking of Strava... I'm just going to [leave this here](#).

Thanks for reading. Hopefully see you at the [Piece of Cake](#) race on Sunday (I'll be jogging with a friend - you can still run even if you don't race all out!), and the [Annual Meeting](#)!

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*Have an article, book, video, or other medium that you would like to be highlighted in the next issue of Ins and Outs? Please email it to Kristen Serafin at [kristennserafin@gmail.com](mailto:kristennserafin@gmail.com). Thanks in advance for your contributions.*

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## Competitive Racing Team Results

*By: Nicolas Cruzier*

### **Seneca Creek Greenway Trail 50K -- 2021-03-13**

Nicolas Cruzier 3:51:43 (Age group rank: 1st of 14, Gender rank: 1st of 64, Overall rank: 1st of 92)

Ryan Johnson 4:31:33 (Age group rank: 2nd of 14, Gender rank: 2nd of 64, Overall rank: 2nd of 92)

Adrian Spencer 4:37:38 (Age group rank: 3rd of 14, Gender rank: 3rd of 64, Overall rank: 3rd of 92)

Aaron Trulock 5:32:19 (Age group rank: 8th of 14, Gender rank: 14th of 64, Overall rank: 14th of 92)

Robert Palmer 5:36:36 (Age group rank: 6th of 32, Gender rank: 16th of 64, Overall rank: 16th of 92)

Erin Kelman 5:44:23 (Age group rank: 9th of 32, Gender rank: 21st of 64, Overall rank: 21st of 92)

Kristen Serafin 5:44:23 (Age group rank: 1st of 8, Gender rank: 1st of 28, Overall rank: 22nd of 92)

Rodney Rivera 5:47:19 (Age group rank: 11th of 32, Gender rank: 23rd of 64, Overall rank: 24th of 92)

### **Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon -- 2021-03-13**

Daniel Jacobs 4:14:27 (Age group rank: 2nd of 2, Gender rank: 3rd of 41, Overall rank: 3rd of 59)

Liz Ozeki 4:16:53 (Age group rank: 1st of 2, Gender rank: 1st of 18, Overall rank: 4th of 59)

Michelle Miller 4:28:32 (Age group rank: 1st of 10, Gender rank: 2nd of 18, Overall rank: 6th of 59)

Taylor Williamson 5:00:29 (Age group rank: 6th of 12, Gender rank: 10th of 41, Overall rank: 12th of 59)

Steven Andrews 6:39:59 (Age group rank: 12th of 12, Gender rank: 33rd of 41, Overall rank: 40th of 59)

### **Mid Maryland Ultra 50K Relay -- 2021-03-07**

Liz Ozeki & Kristen Serafin 4:01:38 (Overall rank: 1st of 24)

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