

MCRRC Intervals

January 2022

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

Saturday, January 1, 10:00 am
New Year's Day 5K
Derwood

Sunday, January 30, 8:00 am
*Country Road Run

Sunday, February 13, 8:30 am
Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K
Silver Spring

Sunday, March 12, 8:00 am
Seneca Creek Greenway
Trail Marathon & 50K
Gaithersburg

Sunday, March 20, 7:30 am
*Piece of Cake 10K

Sunday, March 27, 7:45 am
Spin in the Woods 4M
Wheaton

Races with asterisks are location and permits pending.

Please visit our website for updates:
www.mcrrc.org

Board Meetings

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

Happy Faces at End-of Year Races



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Terri Scadron and Turkey Burnoff race volunteer Stephanie Ciosek enjoy a post-race moment together.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Kristen Kelman reclaims the women's crown at Stone Mill 50M, a 2021 RRCA National Championship Event.



Photo: Larry Feildesert

Yvette Murphy, John Shin, Crystal Kwon, Debbie Sinnott, and Jefferson Lunsford embrace the holiday spirit at Jingle Bell Jog 8K.



Auld Lang Syne

by Amy Lin

Happy New Year, MCRRC! I'm not one to make New Year's resolutions, but I do like to pick one new thing to try. It could be as simple as attempting a new recipe, or it could be something that requires more time and commitment, such as learning to snowboard. (Want a good laugh? Imagine mild-mannered, middle-aged me being urged by my twenty-something surfer-dude instructor, "Let's get ready to SHRED!")

In keeping with the song "Auld Lang Syne," this issue of Intervals looks back at the old and also forward to the new. Brad Stewart and Ashley Zuraf update us about what's on tap for MCRRC and how members can do one new thing to benefit both themselves and the Club in the coming year.

At the suggestion of our longtime managing editor, Freddi Carlip, Intervals is introducing a new feature, Blast from the Past, where we plan to showcase tidbits on MCRRC history and articles of interest from years

past. In this issue we have an essay by Bernie Greene, originally printed in the previous incarnation of Intervals, *The Rundown*.

As frequent trail users, we can all embrace the project Dan Wilcock briefs us on—more than 750 miles of new trails in the pipeline, thanks to the work of several local organizations, including MCRRC.

For January's Runner Profile, Lisa Levin talks to married runners Ruby Chang and Donald Chung, one of whom has been running for several decades and one of whom has come to the sport relatively recently, proving that it's never too late to try something new.

Last but not least, Debbie Sinnott writes about her own new thing—occasionally running watch-free—and how it can be beneficial to those of us who tend to get a little obsessed with our numbers.

Who's ready to do something new in 2022?

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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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/>

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Have comments or questions? Or want to help?

Contact us at 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.



One

by Brad Stewart and Ashley Zuraf

At MCRRC's Annual Meeting on December 16th, once again held virtually, the Board presented the Club's operating budget for 2022. We are pleased that the Club continues in the right direction through the pandemic, although it has significantly impacted our bottom line. Thanks to the Boards that came before us, we had reserves that were set aside specifically for a disaster such as COVID-19. However, due to the extreme generosity and support of our members, we haven't yet found ourselves needing to dip into those reserves to continue our operations. For that, we are beyond thankful. As we look to the New Year, we are all hopeful for improving conditions.

But there is still more work that needs to be done. Our board, staff, and volunteers are working hard—sometimes around the clock—to bring back the races and events that our members rely on. So, what can YOU do, as a member? Every one of you has the opportunity to pitch in to help MCRRC have a successful 2022. Some ideas:

- Recruit just *one* new member! Have your own “Buddy Day.” For those of you without toddlers in your house, this means simply “Bring a friend.” Reach out to your friends, co-workers, neighbors, book club, teammates, or even your mahjong group, and invite them to one of our events. Show them what a good time they could have sharing in your running and fitness journey. Remind them that for less

than the cost of three MCRRC low-key races, they could have a year's membership, which opens the door to approximately twenty free, low-key events.

- Participate in our programs. You need to run anyway, right? For most of you, your next goal is probably already laid out in your mind. So, what's better than running with friends? Winter is upon us. The cold weather is coming. It goes without saying, it's a LOT easier to leave your warm, comfy bed when you know that your group is standing out in the cold, waiting for you to show up.

- Race with us—especially at some of our larger (i.e., not low-key) races. Our team is working incredibly hard to hold Pike's Peek, Suds & Soles, and Parks Half. The 2022 running of the Germantown 5 Miler will be its last—it would be amazing to see as many members as possible there to wrap up this long-standing tradition. Come out and represent MCRRC at these events. They are as much for you as they are for the community.

- Volunteer. Even though we have since invested in technology, paid staff, etc., MCRRC remains true to its starting days—a club run by volunteers. Everything mentioned here is only offered because of the hard work of our volunteers.

- Take on bigger roles! Don't be afraid to try something different from your water stop, or your Mile 3 course-marshal position you've worked for the last five

years. MCRRC needs people who are willing to take on leadership roles. Ask to be a team captain at one of our larger races. You might discover talents you didn't know you had! Attend an upcoming Race Director Training Class (details forthcoming), provided free by the Club! We have several races that are in desperate need of assistant race directors (ARDs). This is a wonderful place to start; learn from the best, and you can direct your own race one day.

Only good can come from doing these things—for the Club and for our members. In each of these roles, you are guaranteed to meet wonderful new people. There are so many successful stories of camaraderie that have come out of this Club—from spouses to lifelong best friends.

January 1 is New Year's Day, and this is our New Year's Resolution: For each member to do ONE new thing. Run ONE new race. Take on ONE new volunteer opportunity for the Club. Make ONE new friend. This is what will carry us all through 2022.

—Brad Stewart (*president@mcrrc.org*) is the President of MCRRC. Ashley Zuraf (*office@mcrrc.org*) is the Executive Director of MCRRC.

Death and Rebirth in the Valley of Recovery

by Bernie Greene, RRCA Writer of the Year 1996

All change is a kind of death, and all growth requires that we go through depression.

—M. Scott Peck

“Most running injuries aren’t accidental, but self-inflicted,” wrote Joe Henderson in the February 1996 issue of *Runner’s World*. My sentiments exactly.

Runners rarely twist an ankle or injure themselves by taking a spill. Even the runners among us with biomechanical imbalances like leg-length discrepancies have typically learned to manage their problems and therefore seldom succumb to their structural imperfections.

More often than not, the etiology of a running injury goes something like this: You’re fifteen miles into a twenty-mile run. You’re feeling strong. You’re cruising. You’re juiced (“Yee-hah!”). You’re singing Debby Boone’s golden oldie (“It can’t be wrong when it feels sooooo riight...”). You’re picking up the pace. You’re nearing your anaerobic threshold. You’re...injured. And all you have to say in your defense is: “It seemed like a good idea at the time.”

In matters of morality and athletic training, it seems, feelings are not to be trusted. That’s why we have the Ten Commandments and that’s why we have the Rules of the Road. The latter code is as uncompromising as the former: You break a rule, you stand a good chance of being sidelined for a while.

Not only that, but the gods of running have also decreed that those who injure themselves by breaking one of the Rules of the Road—it matters not whether through negligence, stupidity, or deliberate misbehavior—are obligated to go through five stages in the Valley of Recovery before they are allowed to run again. (Indeed, anyone who wishes to change or grow in any area of life must go through these five stages.) The stages, which were first elucidated by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her landmark work, *On Death and Dying*, correspond to the five successive stages

people go through as they face their impending death (which is apropos since, to a runner, time off from running due to an injury feels a little like dying). The stages are (in order): denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Denial, as the saying goes, is not just a river in Egypt. It is the first stage in the Valley of Recovery, the stage in which injured runners simply deny the reality of their injuries. They wake up each morning, assume their injuries did not really happen (or hope that they have magically disappeared), and attempt to go for their usual runs. This, of course, leads to a lot of gimping around, which, in turn, leads to fist pounding, foot stomping, and purple-faced profanities—which is the second stage: anger.

Runners, uncommonly quick learners, realize in short order that their anger is (1) getting them nowhere and (2) alienating everyone in sight, so they segue into bargaining. Bargaining, the third stage in the Valley of Recovery, is not unlike the praying you used to do at school. This praying, as you probably remember, is not the kind that the Supreme Court has banned, but, rather, is the kind that has been around since Socrates (and will be with us as long as there are teachers who ask questions): “Oh, please, please, PLEEEZE don’t let her call on me. I’ll take out the trash for Mom without being asked. I’ll even take Fido for a walk. I’ll do anything—just don’t let her call on me.” For injured runners, however, the bargaining usually takes this form:

“Just let me do my normal ten miles and I promise to do my long runs slower and stretch after every run... No? Okay, whaddya say to swapping a five-mile jog for a vow to replace my shoes after four hundred miles and to not neglect my strength training... Hoo boy, you drive a hard bargain... How about trading a two-mile trot for my swearing off speedwork and racing for the next six months?”

The trouble with this sort of bargaining is that you have nothing of value

to offer except your willingness to rest your injury and learn from your mistakes. The Valley of Recovery, you see, is not a place where you get to call the shots. Nature, the Head Honcho of the Valley, requires nothing less from you than time off from running, repentance for your rule-breaking ways, and, most important, the completion of the remaining stages of your sojourn in the Valley.

When denial, anger, and bargaining don’t cut it (and they never do), then all that’s left is depression—the Big Kahuna of stages, the deepest part of the Valley, and the sole gateway to the final stage. In the topsy-turvy world of the Valley, depression is seen as normal and healthy. It is merely the feeling associated with giving up something loved, something that is a part of yourself and familiar—a rigid, burdensome training routine, for example. Since this giving up of the “old self”—a kind of death—is painful, it is easy to retreat into denial, anger, or bargaining. But if you persist and complete the painful work of assisting part of yourself to die, then you will enter the final stage, acceptance, which serves as the exit from the Valley.

In the case of injured runners, the stage called “acceptance” could just as well be called “rebirth.” For it is a reborn runner who emerges from the Valley of Recovery—one who cherishes each run, not as a means to an end, but as a dance of joy; not as one’s due, but as a gift that should never be taken for granted. And the reborn runner, ever mindful of the Rules of the Road, never again has to visit the Valley.

—Bernie Greene is a hillbilly by birth, a statistician by trade, a creative writer by fate, and a competitive athlete by nature. He was an MCRRC member for more than twenty-five years and still lives in Montgomery County. Although he has retired from running due to an arthritic knee, he remains extremely active, leading weekly spin classes in Aspen Hill, Rockville, and Wheaton. At 77, he is currently the oldest spin instructor in the country.

Pathways to a Runner-Friendly Region

by Dan Wilcock

In July 2020, the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) unanimously approved plans for the National Capital Trail Network, which would more than double our region's existing web of paved trails and protected bike lanes by 2045. It would add 755 miles of trails to 645 miles of existing trails—in many cases providing links between currently disconnected trails.

The plan encompasses DC and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, as well as Charles, Frederick, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties. The network aims to make it easier for people to run, walk, or bike wherever they are going, including improved access to public transportation.

“We'd like to make it so most people can get on the network on one side of the region and travel to the other side without having a bad experience,” says Michael Farrell, a Senior Transportation Planner at COG. The plan does not guarantee trail construction, but it puts trails on the map during land-use decisions and prioritizes government funding to research and develop planned trails.

The network represents a victory for grassroots trail advocates. The Capital Trails Coalition formed in 2015 to champion a capital trail network, and now counts more than sixty member organizations, including the Montgomery County Planning Department. “We have incredible trails across our region, but it's very disjointed,” says Steph Piperno, Trails Coalition Manager. “We asked: How can we connect them?”

The Coalition also seeks to raise the quality standards for trails. “We want it to be world class,” she says, “wide, paved trails that are feasible in the next twenty-five years.” The Coalition estimates that trail benefits

will go beyond better access for the nearly four million people who would live within two miles of a trail when the plan is complete. Their research forecasts that \$1 billion invested in network expansion will yield more than \$10 billion in economic impact, including environmental benefits, 16,000 construction jobs, and more than \$500 million each year in public health savings.

As our region continues to become more densely developed, MCRRC is active in standing up for its members. “How do we ensure access to safe running routes?” asks Club president Brad Stewart. “MCRRC is not a political organization, but we have the right and responsibility to advocate for better, safer, and more places to run.”

The issues of safety and trail connection have come to a head at one point in particular: the tunnel in Bethesda where the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT)—which connects Georgetown, Bethesda, and Silver Spring—coincides with the future site of Purple Line light rail tracks. The Purple Line project includes funding for new bridges and neighborhood connections to the CCT, but the tunnel funding has faced significant challenges. Without the tunnel, trail users must cross busy Wisconsin Avenue at street level. Stewart maintains that this contradicts Montgomery County's Vision Zero project to end traffic deaths and also goes against pledges to replace the tunnel after years of Georgetown Branch Trail closure due to Purple Line construction.

The county agreed to create a new tunnel for runners, walkers, and cyclists; trains and Metro system connections will use the existing tunnel. However, despite support from the County Council, Stewart says, the County Executive did not provide funding for the capital expenditures in

two consecutive budgets. “The tunnel has been a huge challenge for us,” he says. In early 2020, MCRRC—led by then-president Ken Earley—joined the Capital Trails Coalition in calling on the County Council to provide the missing tunnel funding. Stewart estimates he and Earley spent more than a hundred hours meeting with local officials advocating for the tunnel.

That kind of local advocacy is essential to get results, says Piperno of the Capital Trails Coalition. “The biggest thing you can do is write to your elected officials and tell them why trails are important, and attend public budget hearings. Our goal is to turn people out.”

Explore plans for the National Capital Trail Network at:

<https://www.mwcog.org/maps/map-listing/national-capital-trail-network/>

Learn more about the Capital Trails Coalition at:

<https://www.capitaltrailscoalition.org/>

—Dan Wilcock has been an MCRRC member for more than a decade. He considers himself lucky to live near the Lake Needwood and Lake Frank trails.

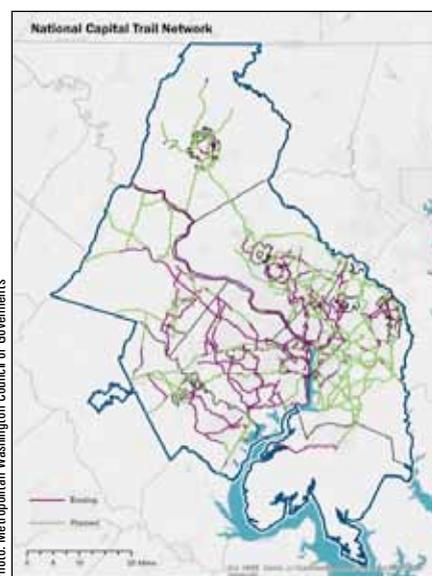


Photo: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Ruby Chang & Donald Chung



by Lisa Levin

Ruby Chang and Donald Chung can often be found out running together, particularly around their Rockville neighborhood, usually in the Mattie Stepanek and King Farm parks or the nearby Millennium Trail. Donald was the first to pick up distance running and has been a member of MCRRC since the 1980s. Once their son and daughter (who grew up participating in the Club's Young Runs) were grown, Donald encouraged Ruby to lace up her running shoes, and she joined MCRRC in 2013. Since then, this dynamic running duo has run countless races (Donald's marathon count is now at 68!) and dedicated many hours to the Club, with Donald serving as co-director of the Winter Marathon Training program and pace coach for several programs, and Ruby as pace coach for the Beginning Women Running and First-Time Marathon programs. Both retired as of the end of 2020, Ruby and Donald are now enjoying the extra time to run together.

Did you run or participate in sports when you were younger?

Donald did not participate in sports teams when he was in high school or college. Ruby ran outdoor track for one season as a freshman in high school; she and her friends had fun, but never started in any of the meets.

When and why did you start running?

Donald started running regularly while in graduate school. One

reason for running is the mindset required to train as a runner is similar to what is required to write a PhD dissertation. There has to be continued effort over a long period of time, but the fruit of that effort comes only slowly. No quick gratification. Donald ran his first marathon in 1991, Marine Corps Marathon, with very little training. His longest run before that was ten miles at the Montgomery College track; he brought a gallon of water and ran forty laps around the track. Fast-forward thirty years, and Donald just ran his 68th marathon at Rehoboth.

take them to Chinese school.) She began with the MCRRC Beginning Women Running (BWR) 5K program. Then she proceeded to the 10K program, then the Half Marathon program a few times. Finally, Ruby and her friend Wendy Gillick decided to try the First-Time Marathon (FTM) Program in 2015. They ran the Marine Corps Marathon together and were so proud of their achievement. Ruby thought she checked the box on running a marathon; however, Wendy convinced her to join FTM again in 2016.

What is your favorite race distance?

Our favorites are the longer distance races. Traveling half an hour to run a 10K seems to be a waste of gas.

Do you do your training runs together?

During the pandemic of 2020 we ran all of our long runs together. We also do many of our shorter runs in our neighborhood together. Since Donald is faster, we each also run with other runners who run at our respective paces.

What do you talk about while running?

Donald does not like to talk while running. Ruby likes to socialize, and that is why, when possible, she likes to run with other ladies.

Do you have a favorite destination running vacation?



Photo: Ruby Chang

Ruby Chang and Donald Chung smile with their Rehoboth medals.

He encouraged Ruby to run in 2013; his rationale was that she had plenty of time when the kids went to college. (Ruby used to pick up the kids from Pike's Peek 10K and

Our favorite destination for a running vacation is Honolulu, Hawaii. There is a Mid-Pacific Road Runners Club (MPRRRC) with lots of local runners. We have gone on long runs with MPRRC, and we also love running the five-mile Diamond Head loop.

What do you like most about being married to a fellow runner?

Donald: We met in college and have been married for thirty-nine years. We have always shared lots of common interests; being married to a fellow runner just adds to the pool of common activities we share.

Ruby: It's really nice to share running as a common hobby at this point of our lives. Our conversation used to revolve mostly around our kids, but now there is still plenty to talk about.

Are there any challenges that come up with both of you being avid runners?

Donald: Being avid runners, we both have opinions about the best way to train, and we both own tons of running shoes. We are constantly competing for shoe space in the garage.

Ruby: Donald has twice as many running shoes as I do, but I make it up with sandals and other shoes. The only challenge with two runners in the house is that I'm constantly doing laundry!

What's the most important running lesson you've learned from your spouse?

Donald: The most important lesson I have learned from Ruby is to run slower. She gets on my case for pushing the pace when we run together.

Ruby: Since Donald is a veteran runner, I learned all about running from him. It's like having a personal coach at home.

What advice do you have for other married/couple runners?

Donald: The key to a running relationship is to respect your partner. A faster runner can always run a bit slower and still enjoy the run.

Ruby: Enjoy the time together, talking or not talking.

What do you think is your spouse's most impressive running-related accomplishment?

Donald: Ruby did not start running until she was in her early fifties. Yet, she has placed in her age group a couple of times.

Ruby: Donald has qualified for Boston a few times and ran Boston in October 2021.

What do you admire most (running-related or otherwise) about your spouse?

Donald: What I admire the most about Ruby is her outgoing personality and determination. She is getting closer to running a BQ each year.

Ruby: Donald's commitment to running is most admirable. He always encourages me and supports me during my races. He gives me

a cola at Mile 20 to help keep me going. If I can maintain my pace, and that's a big if, there's a chance that I can BQ when I age up. Only runners like getting older!

What are your goals for 2022?

For 2022 we hope to be able to continue to travel and run, and avoid any serious injuries.

—Lisa Levin has been with MCRRC for more than a decade. She is a member of the Competitive Racing Team and co-founder of Run Farther & Faster.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Ruby Chang and Donald Chung finish the Turkey Burnoff 10M in stride.

Watch-Free Running

by Debbie Sinnott

If my run doesn't show up on Garmin (or Strava), did it really happen? A running question we've all heard, and maybe even thought, more than once. Most runners like data, and often we need it. We use pace data to determine if we're in the right zone during a training session. Pace data can have bigger implications as we use it to qualify for certain races, seed ourselves in race waves, determine our pace groups for training programs, or even qualify for running teams. We use our heart-rate data to see if we're working hard enough, or if we need to take some time off. We look at our cadence, splits, elevations, mileage... the running-data possibilities are endless.

But what if you don't run with a running watch? What if you go out for a run and listen to your body, rather than obeying a device strapped to your wrist that you've preprogrammed with some intervals from a training plan? Many runners do this for every run, but there are benefits to not wearing your watch every time you set out for a run.

I admit I wear my watch pretty much every second of the day and night. However, during a recent half-marathon that I raced, I didn't look at my watch. I hadn't planned on doing this; it just sort of happened. I was wrapped up in my thoughts and taking in the whole race experience. At Mile 12, I thought to check my overall time on my watch. I was completely surprised to see that I was on pace to PR the race. I did this all by listening to my body, and not depending on my watch to tell me how I was doing.

According to Larry Feidelseit, director of the Summer Half Marathon program, running without any technology is a great way to listen to your body. Each summer at about the halfway point of the Summer Half Marathon program, he asks runners to run a long run without watches. He calls it a GPS-free day. Most runners don't complain about a GPS-free run. Some runners wear their watches, but he asks them not to check times as they are running. This allows runners the chance to run in their comfort zones and get a

feel for the paces they can keep at a given distance. If checking your watch is too tempting, you could utilize Dale Sinnott's strategy of covering the watch face (if it isn't touchscreen) with blue painters tape. You'll have the data after the run, but you're not tempted by it during the run.

Larry is a proponent of skipping technology altogether every so often. Without a watch and music and a heart-rate strap, you can really be attuned to your body. It can help you to reduce injury too. If you aren't feeling 100% or the weather is bad, you're more willing to slow it down if you aren't overly fixated on times. Running without a watch also helps you to become less worried about mileage. You'll feel good about that run that is usually five miles because your watch isn't there to tell you that you really went 4.9 or 5.15 miles.

Paying less attention to the watch and more attention to your run is also good for the soul! Look around. Notice the sights of your neighborhood or the trail. Greet your fellow runners, cyclists, and dog walkers. Running without technology (including music) gives you time to think. You can be more mindful in your run. Give it a try sometime! Remember the essence of your joy for running! It is quite possible that you may run faster than you think!

—Debbie Sinnott joined MCRRC in 2018. She has coached in the Advanced Marathon Training (now Winter Marathon Training) program and in the Experienced Marathon Program (XMP).



Photo: Sandra Engstrom

Beatriz Diaz finds her happy pace at the Rockville 10K in November.