

MCRRC Intervals

March 2022

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

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

Sunday, March 20, 7:30 am
Piece of Cake 5K/10K
LOCATION TBA

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

Saturday, April 16, 8:00 am
Capital for a Day 5K
Olney

Sunday, April 24, 7:50 am
Pike's Peek 10K
Rockville

Saturday, May 14, 8:30 am
Kids on the Run
Gaithersburg

Sunday, May 15, 8:00 am
Run Aware 5K XC
Bethesda

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

Board Meetings

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

Undeterred by Rain and Snow



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Kenia Rivera takes the rain in stride at the New Year's Day 5K.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Femi Mustapha crosses the New Year's Day 5K finish mat with a smile.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

MCRRC Competitive Racing Team members Stephen Varney, Rob Palmer, Shlomo Fishman, Laura Ramos, and Chris Shaw pose for a photo before the snowy Kemp Mill (C)hills 5K/10K.



Going Off-Roading

by Amy Lin

Even though MCRRC stands for Montgomery County Road Runners Club, we also have a thriving and enthusiastic trail-running community, and we're blessed with an abundance of unpaved trails throughout the county. The Club hosts multiple trail races throughout the year, such as the upcoming Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon and 50K and the Spin in the Woods 4M. Our Stone Mill 50-Mile Run, held in November, attracts ultra runners from all over the eastern US, and many MCRRC members train with a local trail-running group, My Muddy Shoes. In recognition of our increasingly accomplished members who run their miles on unpaved trails, the Club is introducing a Mountain/ Ultra/Trail Runner of the Year Award.

I'm relatively new to trail running, but I hope to do more of it. I've found it to be a challenging and fun change from road running, not to mention a lot less pounding! It's great to get out into nature for a while and to get a little (or a lot) dirty.

This issue of Intervals provides some

insight into trail running and also running when one or more things—weather conditions, running surface, your body and mindset—are less than ideal.

Ashley Zuraf and Brad Stewart touch on the Club's training programs, all of which are excellent motivation to avoid doing your unpleasant-weather miles on the "dreadmill." Physical therapist Rachel Miller discusses how to adjust training when a nagging injury threatens to derail your running plans.

In Coaches' Corner, Winter Trail program coach Leah Kauffman offers tips for running in the cold, particularly on trails when you may be far from any possible place to warm up. This month's Runner Profile features Terri Scadron, a frequent sight on Montgomery County trails and a veteran of many different running surfaces and weather conditions.

Last but not least, Kenny Ames gives us a personal perspective on winning the mental game, a game we all have to play no matter what surface or what distance we choose to run.

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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.



Embracing the Cold

by Ashley Zuraf and Brad Stewart

As we write this, it's Winter Olympics time—a time when the world watches as top athletes from around the globe take the stage. There's a reason that running events are reserved for the Summer Olympics. One reporter noted that during some of the ski events, the temperatures felt an unimaginable -24°F .

While many prefer to run in cooler weather, sometimes it's *hard* to get out of bed for a winter long run, especially when temps start in the single digits. However, based on the participation in our winter programs this year, the cold has not affected our members' desire to hit the trails and get that mileage in.

Donald Chung, co-director of the Winter Marathon Training program, says winter is the “perfect time of year for marathon training.” Many feel it's the perfect time to train for any distance, as evidenced by the high participation numbers of our other top-notch training programs such as Speed Development, Winter 5K Run/Walk, and Winter Half Marathon. The Winter Trail program filled and registration promptly closed back in December.

It's certainly easier to just hit the “dreadmill” and call it a day, but getting out there in the fresh air and natural light provides health benefits, such as helping to avoid seasonal mood disorders. Most of the time, running will keep your core warm enough to meet your goals that day.

We've already had some weekend mornings that began in the low teens. But instead of misery, we saw droves of Club members with smiling faces, all excited to work towards their spring racing goals. Speed Development members who typically target Pike's Peek 10K in April join the rest of us who are thrilled to see the return of one

of the Club's premiere racing events.

While Donald says the colder-than-average temps have caused some to push the pace to stay warm, the cold also helps prevent dehydration on long runs. Also, it's much easier to drag your body out of your warm bed when you know there is a group of friends who *will* hold you accountable for your absence! Welcome to the realm of MCRRC training programs.

We're grateful to all our program directors and coaches for showing up for our members and getting us out of the house. The best part: It doesn't end when winter ends. Our spring and summer program leaders are busy planning and getting ready to motivate you to leave your air conditioners behind and to get out into the swampy DC-area summers. As you prepare to say goodbye to these cold days, start to think about your next goal and which MCRRC training program will help you meet it. There's something for everyone and a place for every pace.

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

Mental Game

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about a minute behind. That ignited my killer instinct! The closer I got to the final turnaround without seeing the leader, the better my chances to catch him. Finally, as I was within a third of a mile of the turnaround cone, I saw him ahead. He made the turnaround seconds before I hit. I kicked it into my next gear, leaving him behind.

Somebody may beat me, but they are going to have to bleed to do it.

—Steve Prefontaine

I ran the last few miles with excitement but also fear. I used both to push harder; my last 5K was my fastest of the race. When I saw the finish, I sprinted and crossed the line with pride. It was easily one of the best days of my life and a feeling I won't ever forget.

We all know that if you run, you are pretty much choosing a life of success because of it.

—Deena Kastor

Runners are the toughest people I know. We've chosen a hobby where we suffer. We brag about lost toenails. We get up before the sun and endure terrible weather. We choose pain because we're addicted to challenges and achieving impossible goals. When we apply mental toughness to our lives like we do to our races, we enjoy personal and professional success.

You can make all the excuses you want, but if you're not mentally tough and you're not prepared to play every night, you're not going to win.

—Larry Bird

—Kenny Ames is a certified running coach who joined MCRRC in 2021. He is originally from Boston and has completed his hometown marathon seven times.



Listen to Your Gut, Not Your “But”

by Rachel Miller

January’s issue of Intervals featured Bernie Greene’s very entertaining article about “self-inflicted” running injuries. He included the five stages of grief when you are injured and cannot run, and I think he is spot-on (I was also a psychology major in college). Running is a stress reliever for some, a social network for others, a way of life for so many of us. Why risk all of this when most injuries can be avoided?

Most of us experience some sort of ache or pain while running at some point in our running career. Pain does not have to morph into injury. Most injuries are caused by training errors, meaning *you* can control your risk of injury.

However, we fall into the trap of “but”s: “But I have a race coming up” or “But my training schedule says I *have* to do my track workout tonight” or “But I run with my friends, and they are going to run faster/longer.” *Listen to your gut, not your “but”!* Don’t be glued to your training schedule, and it may be time to make new friends! Okay, I don’t really mean that, but I sort of do. You have to do what keeps you healthy, and perhaps for a short period of time you have to run either by yourself or with different folks. But more on that later.

So, what is an actual injury? This could be tough to answer but here are some general guidelines. Pain that keeps recurring during or after runs. Pain that creeps into your everyday activities such as knee pain walking down the steps, heel pain stepping down in the morning, or pain down your leg when sitting at work, to name just a few. These are signs that something isn’t right. A little pain can turn into a full-blown injury. So, listen to your gut—if you are not feeling right, then follow the guidelines below.

The number one thing you can initially do is modify your training. First, identify what you *can* do without any pain, and take it one week at a time. Can you run three miles and feel good

during and afterwards? Does that foot start to hurt after Mile 8? Use that to determine the distance you should stick to and run every other day pain-free for one week. Rest days come in handy as recovery days during this time.

Do not underestimate rest days! They may be the most important part of your training even when not hurt, especially as we get older. Rest days will permit your bones and soft tissue to heal and allow your body to be more prepared for your next run. Generally speaking, all training schedules for ninety-nine percent of us should have at least one or two rest days. If you are hurting, I am giving you permission to not run for a week! Cross-train instead!

If you cannot run even two or three miles without some pain, or make the smart decision to not run for a few days, time to cross-train! Examples of cross-training are using the elliptical, bike, erg, swimming and aqua jogging. Instead of running, get on a piece of equipment or into the pool and do “equivalent times”—if you were going to run for thirty minutes, cross-train for thirty minutes. Trust me; I know cross-training doesn’t have the same feel as running, but it certainly beats hurting and injuring yourself further.

Okay, let’s talk about making new friends. Part of my job as a physical therapist is showing my patients the ideal world, then jumping into the runner’s reality and coming to a compromise. If you are having pain and are listening to your “but” not your gut, consider running a bit slower—which may mean not running with your usual crew. I promise it is not the end of the world! If you *must* do a track workout (there is never a so-important-my-entire-race-will-be-ruined-other-wise track workout, but I hear this a lot!), then join a group that is at least 30 seconds slower than your usual pace group. If you *must* run that long run, then run 45–60 seconds slower per mile. And run less mileage! There are

great people in the Club that you have never met—use this time to make new friends!

I would remiss not to mention MCRRC’s Run Performance Lab when talking about pain. Runners attend this clinic to help identify why they are having problems running. We also have runners who come to learn how to run more efficiently and want to reduce the risk of injury. The clinic consists of running coaches, podiatrists, physical therapists, shoe experts, and the newly added nutritionist, who will screen you on running form, footwear, muscle imbalances/weaknesses, and nutrition, and answer your questions. You will be video-recorded, and the video will be emailed to you. To sign up, go to mcrrc.org and look us up under *Training*. Take advantage of this great service that has been operating since 1999!

If your pain persists for a week, or your gut says you need to see someone, then go to a healthcare professional, such as a physical therapist, physician, or podiatrist *who understands runners*, so you can get a solid diagnosis and be on the path to recovery. One of the benefits of living in the state of Maryland is that you can go directly to a PT for treatment instead of having to get a doctor’s referral.

Don’t listen to the “but”s—something minor could turn into something major and keep you from running at all. Making some small changes in your training for the short term will keep you running in the long term.

—Rachel Miller, an MCRRC member for more than twenty-five years, is the owner of ProAction Physical Therapy in Rockville and an RRCA-certified running coach. She was honored to be named RunWashington’s Best Physical Therapist in 2014 and has served as Medical Coordinator for many local races, including the Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run for the past two decades.



Baby, It's Cold Outside

by Leah Kauffman

This year in the MCRRC Winter Trail program, we have experienced several frigid Saturdays much colder than last winter. A few weeks ago, it was just 13 degrees Fahrenheit at our 7:30 am start time. Hypothermia is a real concern in temperatures so low. (And in higher temperatures, too!)

Hypothermia is “a medical emergency that occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, causing a dangerously low body temperature,” according to the Mayo Clinic. You can Google all that stuff on your own, so let's just get down to what you can do to avoid and deal with this condition in actual practice.

Prevention is the best medicine, particularly if you're running on trails far from a place to warm up. Your first line of defense against hypothermia is clothing.

You want to stay warm and not get dangerously cold in the first place. The best way to do that is with synthetic or wool garments. Do not wear cotton. There's a saying in the winter running community that “cotton kills,” and it's not a joke. If cotton gets wet, even with just your sweat alone, it will quickly conduct heat away from your body.

In temperatures below freezing, I wear a light merino wool shirt or two, perhaps a fleece layer if it is 30 degrees F or colder, and a wind shell. I wear fleece tights and add a layer of compression shorts in very cold weather, and wool socks. Wool and synthetics like fleece will warm me even if they are damp with sweat or precipitation.

To help you choose your winter running layers, a general rule is to dress as if you would be standing around or going for a gentle stroll in weather that is 20 degrees warmer. I like to start out a bit cold. I might take off a layer once I'm toasty. I try to hit a balance so that I am warm enough while running, but not sweating profusely.

If you are new to trail running and

used to road running in cold weather, you may want to dress a bit warmer than you would for a pavement workout, because you will be moving more slowly on the trails, and so generating less heat.

Your mother was right: You need to wear a hat and gloves. You might take them off after a few miles; I always seem to. But you should start with them and keep them handy in case you get chilled while stopping to eat or to check your route. A neck gaiter or balaclava is good for covering the back of your neck, which is a high heat-loss area.

I tweak all of the above as I'm running depending on what microclimate I hit: Sidehill calm sunshine? Unzip at the neck a bit to vent. Ridge top wind? Put the hat and gloves back on.

And no cotton anywhere. Seriously.

Consider removing your jewelry before a cold-weather run. Like wet cotton, the metal in your earrings and rings will conduct heat away from your skin. That alone will not give you hypothermia, but it may contribute to frostbite.

People who are even better planners than I am will run into the wind for the first half of their run, then turn around and come home with a tailwind to conserve their energy and body heat when they are most tired.

Food is your next line of defense. How does the body produce heat? By burning calories. Eat breakfast before your run and take calorie-dense snacks with you on the trail, even if you are not planning to go far. A candy bar, half a PB&J, Fig Newtons, nuts and chocolate... whatever is appealing and easy to carry. I once sprained my ankle and had to walk back to a road crossing. Had it been cold, I would have been in need of those calories to stay warm.

And if you have to pee, go in the woods. Your body uses calories to keep that volume of liquid in your bladder at body temperature. Emptying your

bladder when it's full means fewer calories expended.

Sometimes, hypothermia happens. I had hypothermia once when I neglected to bring an extra layer for additional warmth after the sun went down.

While good preparation is key, it is important to know when and how to take action.

As your body temperature drops dangerously low, so goes your mood, state of consciousness, and motor coordination. Do not run alone in very cold weather. Pair up with a friend and check each other for The ‘Umbles: Grumbles, mumbles, and stumbles.

If your buddy doesn't seem like herself, get help. Carry a phone (turn off the Bluetooth and wireless and keep it in an internal pocket to preserve the battery) so that you can call someone to pick you up at the nearest road intersection.

Your hypothermic buddy will be cranky and confused and deny that she has a problem. Don't take “no” for an answer. Offer food—calories make body heat--and keep that person moving to the pickup point. My mild hypothermia was quickly cured once I warmed up the car and wolfed down a cheeseburger.

Running in weather that keeps other people home in bed is one of my favorite things about trail running. It just takes a bit of extra preparation. I look forward to seeing you out there on the single track.

—Leah Kauffman joined MCRRC soon after she moved to the area in 2010 and was surprised and delighted to learn that trail running is a (somewhat) organized sport. She has participated in the Winter Trail program since it began and is now a coach who either runs or volunteers for the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon and 50K and the Stone Mill 50-Mile Run every year.

Terri Scadron



by Lisa Levin

If you have participated in any Club training programs, races, or trail runs, Terri Scadron will likely be a familiar face. A member of MCRRC since 2008, when she joined the First Time Marathon (FTM) program, Terri has thrown herself, enthusiastically and with a huge smile, into all aspects of Club activities, serving as a coach with the Experienced Marathon Program (XMP) and the Winter Trail and the Winter Marathon Training programs. She is a regular and self-described “overly jubilant” water-stop volunteer and course marshal at many Club races, and has served on the MCRRC Nominating Committee. Recently, Terri has been spending more time on the trails and pursuing a love of off-road running that began in 2011. Terri, who retired from her position as an attorney with the Department of Justice in April 2019, lives with her husband, Michael, in Silver Spring.

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

Sadly, no. I was one of the most sedentary kids you could find. I hated the team sports we were forced to play in high school, like field hockey and softball, because I felt inept and had no burning desire to win. My natural reaction when a projectile came my way was to avoid it.

When and why did you start running?

I started running in 1997, as part of a larger effort to reset the direction I was taking in life. I had been an overworked, chain-smoking associate attorney at a large private firm, and suddenly had the epiphany that I was miserable. I switched jobs and started taking fledgling steps to become more physically active. The first time I ran a mile, I was wildly impressed with myself!

What is your favorite race distance?

If I have a superpower in running, it's endurance, not speed, and I greatly prefer longer races. My favorite distance for trails is the 50K, because you can finish the race with marathon training and still get a full day in the woods.

When did you start running trails?

In 2011, when I trained with MCRRC members Dayna Rashidian and Yvette Ju for the North Face Endurance Challenge marathon. We were a bit shell-shocked by the hills on the Potomac Heritage Trail, but had a blast and started planning other trail adventures.



Photo: Sarvin Moghaddam

Terri Scadron enjoys a moment of rest on the Western Ridge Trail.

What do you enjoy about trail running?

In modern life, you don't get a lot of opportunities for primal experiences in nature, and trail running gets you there. When I run on roads by myself, I often listen to music or audiobooks to stave

off boredom, especially if I'm running the same neighborhood loop for the umpteenth time. That's never an issue with trails, because all your senses are engaged and you're making a million mini-decisions (e.g., hurdle the log or climb over it?). Also, the same run will be completely different each time, depending on trail conditions—snow-covered, a muddy mess, or soft dirt—so you can have a new adventure even if you keep running the same routes.

What are your favorite trail running routes (local or out of the area)?

My hands-down favorite is the Seneca-Greenway trail, starting in Germantown and heading to Damascus. I'm not a big fan of crazy rock scrambles, and most of that trail is “runnable.” I also like the trails in Cabin John and Northwest Branch parks, which are closer to my house.

Do you prefer to run trails alone or with a group?

Running with a group is more fun, especially when you can mock each other trying to gracefully cross a stream.

What trail races have you done? Do you have a favorite?

I've done the Stone Mill 50 Mile Run, Rosaryville 50K, HAT 50K, Mid-Maryland 50K in Elkridge, Phunt in Delaware, the Farm Park Challenge marathon, the Dirty German 50K, Seneca Greenway, most distances of the North Face trail series, Miner's Lady 8-hour in Virginia, the Maryland Heat Race in Patapsco Park, and a few shorter races. I also made a valiant attempt to finish the Laugavegur Marathon (actually, a 55K) in Iceland, but that was beyond me. My favorites are Stone Mill and Rosaryville because both are in November, when temperatures are *perfect for distance running*.

Do you have any particular experiences from trail running/racing that stick in your mind?

The Dirty German 50K in Philadelphia (May 2017) makes my “legendary” category, because it rained buckets the whole day and the entire course was a muddy slog. They moved one of the aid stations under a bridge because of flooding, and when my friend Rachael Gibson and I reached it, we were greeted by a lovely man with an accordion playing goofy oom-pah-pah songs. That lifted our spirits enough to keep us going.

Do you feel a different “vibe” between the road and trail running communities?

To some extent, yes. Because trail runners don’t focus on pace, the trail community tends to have a more laid-back vibe. And trail and road races have a completely different feel: You won’t see cheering spectators beyond the race volunteers and sometimes the premiums are nothing more than a painted rock (which you’ll treasure forever). Still, it’s wrong to assume a strict dichotomy between road and trail runners; some of the best runners I know excel at both road and trail.

What advice would you give someone considering trying out trail running?

First, don’t look at your watch, and let the terrain determine your pace. It’s perfectly acceptable to walk up steep slopes, and that’s often a smarter strategy than burning yourself out by charging hills. And when you can’t get to a trail, you can improve your stamina for big climbs by walking up a steep incline on a treadmill (10% or higher). Second, it’s usually safer to get your feet wet crossing a stream than to dance over rocks, which can be slippery and lead to a full body dunk. And finally, the obvious: Keep your eyes on the

ground so you don’t trip over roots and rocks. If you find yourself falling, just relax and let it happen. It’s an easier landing than asphalt!

With so many years of running, and miles, under your belt, what is your secret to staying healthy?

The key for me is taking unscheduled rest days whenever something feels “off,” so that little things don’t become big things. Also, after blowing off strength and mobility work for far too many years, I’m now as committed to them as I am to running. Both are essential if you want to have longevity in this sport.

What motivates you to keep running?

I’ve been a much happier person since

I started running, about twenty-five years ago. And I’m acutely aware that my running days could end tomorrow, due to a catastrophic injury or illness. I want to pack in as much as possible, as long as I can.

What are your goals for 2022?

My highest aspiration is to comfortably make the cut-offs for trail races up to a 50-mile distance. To that end, I’m working harder on my strength and flexibility, while very slowly increasing my distance base.

—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: Kista Zanetti

Terri Scadron braves the flooded Northwest Branch Trail.

Winning the Mental Game

by Kenny Ames

In November I raced my 49th marathon and got my first win. As experienced runners know, getting a win, setting a personal best, or just having a good race requires conquering doubts as much as training hard.

Winning has nothing to do with racing. ... Winning is about struggle and effort and optimism, and never, ever, ever giving up.

—Amby Burfoot

Just before 8 am, I lined up for the Cross Country Trail Marathon in Springfield, Virginia. It was my first in-person marathon since the 2019 Marine Corps, and I had an audacious goal: to win. I led off the line for a minute before another runner passed me. The crushed stone, rocks, and roots didn't let me find my desired pace, so I let him go. Now I was in second place and off my other goal of getting a Boston Marathon-qualifying time. At the first turnaround around 4.2 miles, I was a quarter of a mile back. At the second turnaround shy of Mile 11, my deficit had grown to half a mile. Negative thinking took control.

Winning doesn't always mean getting first place; it means getting the best out of yourself.

—Meb Keflezighi

After I crossed the halfway mark, a friend joined me to pace me to the finish. I shouted that I'd felt dizzy pre-race, had experienced digestive troubles the day before, and that I was in a negative headspace. I lined up excuses, but he did not lend a sympathetic ear. It was just what I needed to unlock my best effort.

There is no such thing as bad weather, just soft people.

—Bill Bowerman



Photo: Shawn Zeller

Kenny Ames and Ira Gold celebrate Kenny's win and Ira's PR at the Cross Country Trail Marathon in November.

I steadied myself and remembered the 2018 Boston Marathon, cold and rainy with a headwind. I recalled my mantra: "Fate whispers to the warrior, 'You cannot withstand the storm.' And the warrior whispers back, 'I am the storm!'" I ran a course PR with a negative split.

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.

—Haruki Murakami

At the Mile 17.3 turnaround, the leader was still just half a mile ahead of me. That gave me hope that I could catch him, and in the back of my mind I thought I could make up three or four minutes if he hit a wall. A renewed sense of optimism kicked in. Fellow runners reported I was closing the deficit. As I hit the final five miles, I was cautiously optimistic. The rest of the race was on pavement, and I still had something left.

One skill that separates good from almost-good runners is an ability to concentrate for an entire race, whether it is a mile or a marathon.

—Kara Goucher

One runner relayed that I was only

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