

MCRRC Intervals

November 2022

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

Sunday, November 6, 8:30 am
Rockville 10K/5K
Rockville
www.rockville10k5k.com

Saturday, November 12, 6:00 am
Stone Mill 50 Mile Run
Montgomery Village
www.stone-mill-50-mile.org

Saturday, November 19, 6:15 pm
Run Under the Lights
Gaithersburg
www.mcrrcrununderlights.com

Saturday, November 26, 8:00 am
Turkey Burnoff 5M/10M
Gaithersburg

Sunday, December 4, 9:00 am
Seneca Slopes 9K XC
Gaithersburg

Sunday, December 11, 9:00 am
Jingle Bell Jog 8K
Rockville

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

Board Meetings

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

MCRRC Hits the Trails



Photo: Steve Blandino

David Richardson (front) and Magali Hoebeck are unfazed by the technical challenges of the Black Hill 10K.



Photo: Ryan Wise

Lola Franco Jones crosses the Lake Needwood 10K finish line with flair.



Photo: Bruce Lemieux

Jeanne Larrison embraces the spirit of the Groovin' Woodstock 7K.



Awards and Rewards

by Amy Lin

Election season is well under way, and it behooves us to inform ourselves about the candidates and issues so that we can vote intelligently. As MCRRC members, we can also put our brains to good use by nominating fellow members (or ourselves) for the Club's annual awards and also for the awards presented by Road Runners Club of America (RRCA).

This month's Intervals looks at ways we can make a difference—to ourselves, to our community, and to those who follow in our footsteps.

Board Member-at-Large Jim Dahlem kicks off the issue with a call to action: Let's get MCRRC back on the radar at the RRCA national convention after more than two decades of anonymity.

Attorney Jamie Alvarado-Taylor lends her professional expertise to inform us of our safety and legal

rights as Maryland pedestrians, especially important as our daylight hours get shorter.

On a more personal note, Jefferson Lunsford offers his reflections on the origins of MCRRC's weekly Kemp Mill run and what it means to acknowledge those origins.

In our Runner Profile, Lisa Levin interviews Mimi Zaw-Pham, who is not only a talented runner herself but also the parent of a rising track and field star. Mimi provides insight on the rewards that come from training, mentoring her daughter, and sharing the love of the sport.

Lastly we have a previously published article (updated by Ashley Zuraf) describing MCRRC's many awards and prizes to be given out in the spring. Be sure to get your nominations in!

Erratum

In our September 2022 issue, the article "A Snapshot of MCRRC's Training Programs" should have stated that the First Time Marathon program runs on Wednesdays and Sundays (not Saturdays). We regret the error.

Stay Informed!

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Have comments or questions? Or want to help?

Contact us at Intervals@mcrrc.org.

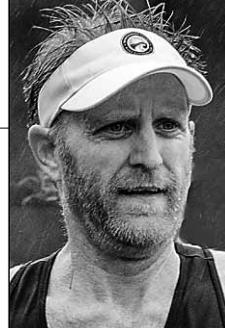
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MCRRC is a non-profit, educational organization which promotes personal health and fitness through the sport of running. The club conducts regular running activities, including training sessions races, seminars, and social events.





Help MCRRC Receive National Recognition

by Jim Dahlem

One thing we can all agree on is that MCRRC is the best running club in the nation! To prove it, we would love to help recognize the contributions and accomplishments of our members, volunteers, and leaders on a national level.

One great way to do this is through the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), of which MCRRC is a member. The RRCA holds an annual convention during which they have an awards ceremony recognizing outstanding people, programs, and races from RRCA clubs around the country. The award categories are wide-ranging, from individual accomplishments to club-based awards.

In the past, our members and programs have won some of these awards. For instance, twice we have had Club members win Volunteer of the Year, and twice we have had MCRRC members win Outstanding Club President. Other club-based awards that MCRRC has received include: Excellence in Journalism, Best Club Newsletter, and Best Youth Program. However, we haven't had any representation at these awards lately. And by lately, we mean none at all this century. All of our previous award winners were in the 1980s and 1990s. Meanwhile, many other local Maryland, DC, and Virginia clubs have had their members, programs, and races recognized at the convention. It's time to get MCRRC back in the national spotlight!

One of the best parts of this process is that all the award finalists receive a travel stipend and complimentary admission to the RRCA convention and awards ceremony for in-person attendance. Next year, the convention takes place in Chicago, Illinois (and by design happens to fall during one of the

largest races in the city: The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle).

To help nominate our best, we need your help! We need 5–10 people to go over the award categories, figure out whom and what to nominate, and submit the nomination abstracts. The nominations are due to RRCA in mid-January, so we will need your help in the month or two leading up to this.

If you are interested in helping select nominees and submit applications, please contact me at jimdahlem@gmail.com, or let me know if you see me out and about on the roads, trails, and at the races.

—Jim Dahlem joined MCRRC in 2012. He is a Member-at-Large on the the Club's board of directors and a member of the Competitive Racing Team.

Blinking Light

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entrance to the Capital Crescent Trail, running groups should be mindful that they are not taking over the whole crosswalk.

§21-506. Rules for pedestrians walking along and on roadways.

When sidewalks provided

- (a) *Where a sidewalk is provided, a pedestrian may not walk along and on an adjacent roadway.*
- (b) *Where a sidewalk is not provided, a pedestrian who walks along and on a highway*, may only walk on the left shoulder, if practicable, or on the left side of the roadway, as near as practicable to the roadway, facing any traffic that might*

approach from the opposite.

§21-510. Pedestrians required to yield right-of-way to emergency vehicles.

In closing, we must be our own advocates, and that starts with being vigilant about our safety and the safety of our pace groups and running mates. Wear bright, reflective clothing for visibility, especially during the months with shorter days; run with your cell phone, or a watch that can call for help in the event of an emergency; and be sure to stop, look, and listen before proceeding. “Green” (or in our case, “white”) does not necessarily mean “go.”

For more information or with questions, please feel free to reach out to me at jalvaradotaylor@steinsperling.com. You can also visit the Maryland Department of Transportation's website: zerodeathsmd.gov.

*MD Code, Transportation, §11-127 (2010) as noted here is any public roadway intended for cars, rather than simply an interstate.

—Jamie Alvarado-Taylor has been a member of the MCRRC since 2018. You may have seen her in the 2022 Summer Half Marathon program, but most definitely not in FTM or XMP because, to quote her favorite magnet, “I only run half-marathons. I'm lazy like that.” She lives in Rockville with her four-year-old daughter, who also loves to run, and her hockey-playing husband, who only runs when he is chasing their daughter.

A Blinking Light is Not an Invitation to Add Speed Work to Your Run

by Jamie Alvarado-Taylor

Montgomery County Road Runners run this town, quite literally. Maryland laws consider runners to be “pedestrians,” and the Maryland Transportation Code has an entire chapter on pedestrian rights and responsibilities. When I am not running, I practice my day job as a Maryland and Virginia personal injury attorney, so I want to share some of this information with you in hopes that it helps keep you safe.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: Contributory Negligence.

Maryland is one of just five states that still follow the archaic principle of “contributory negligence.” This means that if a runner had any fault at all in the incident that caused the injury, the runner can’t recover from the primarily at-fault party for the runner’s injuries. For example, if you cross the street where there’s a solid red pedestrian don’t-walk sign, and you’re hit by a car speeding through a green light, you can’t get any help from the driver to pay for the cost of your injuries, even if the driver blatantly admits to watching YouTube videos while driving. You may be thinking you have a great insurance plan and wouldn’t need the help. If you’re lucky enough to sustain minor injuries, that might be true. If you just need an ambulance ride, that cost would be anywhere from free for a county resident to \$500. The average cost of a Medevac helicopter ride, however, is \$12,000–\$25,000. In either case, those costs are before any surgery or physical therapy, and the amounts

can add up quickly.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF? Here are the Maryland Transportation Code laws and explanations:

§21-501. Pedestrians Required to Obey Traffic Control Signals

Pedestrians need to obey traffic control signals if they want to keep their right-of-way advantage. That means that if your running group wants to stay together, and the crosswalk light starts blinking, it’s not an invitation to add speed work to your run. It means you don’t have time to make it. You should wait, and then cross together when you have the walk signal.

§21-502. Rights of pedestrians when crossing roadway in a crosswalk

Drivers must yield the right of way to pedestrians in a crosswalk, but only when the pedestrian follows these rules:

Pedestrian prohibited from walking or running into path of vehicle...

A pedestrian may not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to yield...

A pedestrian who doesn’t follow these rules can get a ticket. “A person convicted of a violation of this section is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 2 months or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.”

Run with the speed of a hare, and

not like a kamikaze squirrel.

§21-503. Pedestrians not crossing at crosswalk

(a) *If a pedestrian crosses a roadway at any point other than in a marked crosswalk or in an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, the pedestrian shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching on the roadway.*

If you’re crossing in an area that does not have a crosswalk, do what we tell our kids to do: First look left, right, and then left again, to make sure there are no cars coming.

Crossing between adjacent intersections with traffic control signals

(c) *Between adjacent intersections at which a traffic control signal is in operation, a pedestrian may cross a roadway only in a marked crosswalk.*

Crossing roadway intersection diagonally

(d) *A pedestrian may not cross a roadway intersection diagonally unless authorized by a traffic control device for crossing movements. If authorized to cross diagonally, a pedestrian may cross only in accordance with the traffic control device.*

These two subsections speak for themselves.

§21-505. Pedestrians required to walk on right half of crosswalk.

In crowded areas, such as near the

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A Piece of Chalk

by Jefferson Lunsford

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak to a group of runners about the importance of acknowledging the land that we run on, and the context of our use of that land. In Montgomery County, we run on land that belongs to the tribes of the Piscataway Nation, and on land that has been used to traffic and shelter slaves. Land acknowledgements are written into MCRRC's Values Statement and Strategic Plan, and they may become a regular part of our runs, races, and training programs.

In reflecting on my words, I was reminded of an essay I wrote a few years ago about the early days of the weekly Kemp Mill workouts. It's not, by any stretch, a land acknowledgement. But it does speak to the origins of the run, and is a reminder that every workout, every route, and every race comes from somewhere. I've updated the essay slightly—I don't have the same car anymore, and a few details have changed—but the story stands.

I have a piece of sidewalk chalk on the dashboard of my car.

It's an otherwise ordinary piece of chalk, only ever garnering attention because of its unusual placement. I put it there several months ago after glancing at it and noticing how the grooves catch the light and give it dimension. I actually carry a whole box of sidewalk chalk in my car at all times, with plenty of pieces whole and used, just like this one. But whenever I get in my car, this particular piece of chalk reminds me of my childhood, my community, and my potential.

For more than five years, I've been leading a group of runners on a weekly workout through Kemp Mill, mostly for selfish reasons.

A few years before, I was struggling to ground myself. My running goals were becoming unclear, my commitment to running had faded and I wound up thinking about running more than actually lacing up my shoes. I'd go through the motions of showing up for a run, putting on a happy face and covering the distance, but my heart really wasn't in it. I tried to organize a workout on Thursdays mornings in Kemp Mill, using the "If you build it, they will come" philosophy. With a little persistence, I found a few local runners who would show up consistently to join me—a fact that

surprises me to this day. What I was really doing, however, was creating a sort of forced accountability for myself—I had to show up as the organizer and creator of the group.

The choice of Kemp Mill was no coincidence. It is close to my current home in Silver Spring. And having grown up there, I know the roads better than any place on Earth. I had already been running through Kemp Mill for many years as a respite from the straight, flat, and repetitive Sligo Creek Trail. I use the neighborhood hills as a way to build strength and challenge different muscle groups.

Over time, the group has grown, with



new runners showing up nearly every week. We became an official MCRRC run, and we've become a presence in the community as a founding sponsor of Kemp Mill Community Day. Part of our early growth highlighted the need to take a more structured approach to organizing the runs. I began to plan a new route every week and broadcast it via email to a dedicated group. I include a link to the route and describe each turn in the hope that nobody gets lost. We've even developed names for some of the segments, for ease of reference: Lovejoy Loop, Northwood Terrace, the ski slopes, the mansion loop.

We also attract runners with a wide range of paces. I began to chalk each route to add a little extra wayfinding for our runners. Initially I'd add an arrow at each turn during the course of the run, but that proved to be too difficult. For a few months, I chalked the route the night before the run, but too often the arrows were washed away by the rain or diminished by cars.

My new solution is to wake up early and chalk the route before the group meets. This act has become quite central to my experience of the run. I arrive in Kemp Mill around 5:00 a.m. and drive the route, stopping as necessary to draw arrows on the road. While I'm chalking the route, I may pass by my childhood home, the roads I biked on, or the schools I went to. I see my friends' houses where I spent hours as a teenager, and I retrace the roads I traveled as a new driver. The grooves carved into each piece of chalk are a roadmap of my childhood memories.

The chalk markings are, of course, functional. I'm charting a path so that nobody gets lost while running through the neighborhood. But with each arrow I'm also creating forward motion—an opportunity for others to discover a neighborhood, but also to develop community with a group of like-minded local runners. The arrows serve to keep us on the same course with friendly faces and shared goals. The grooves point us in the direction of that communal experience.

And every time I finish a run—even if it didn't feel great—I remind myself that I am a little bit stronger. I've burned off a few calories and expanded my cardiovascular capacity. If I'm training for a race, I feel progress towards that goal too. When I see that piece of chalk, I'm reminded by each groove that I'm continually building my potential.

I saved that piece of chalk on a whim, but I'll never let it go.

Recently one of my regular runners offered to chalk the route if I ever needed backup. I was stunned at the generous offer—it means waking up extra early and learning the route. But it also made me feel like I was finally and truly successful. I have introduced runners to Kemp Mill, built a

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Mimi Zaw-Pham



by Lisa Levin

Mimi Zaw-Pham joined MCRRC in 2018, signing up for the First Time Marathon (FTM) program as she prepared for her first marathon, that year's Marine Corps Marathon. Mimi has repeated the FTM program in subsequent years, and has volunteered as a pace coach for the program. Her dedication to training and her natural ability resulted in a Boston-qualifying finish time at the 2019 Revel Mt. Charleston Marathon. After the disappointment of a canceled Boston Marathon in 2020, and postponement in 2021, Mimi crossed the finish line on Boylston in October 2021 and April 2022, and will return to the start line in Hopkinton in 2023. Mimi's passion for running and dedication to her training must have made an impact on her two daughters, particularly nine-year-old Emma. In her short running career, Emma has already broken track records (one which had been held for 23 years) and earned All-American status at the National AAU Track & Field Junior Olympics. Emma and Mimi can often be found running around their neighborhood in the Kentlands in Gaithersburg, and taking first place in the mother/daughter category at the Kentlands 5K as team Gritty Girls.

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

I was on an XC team in high school and played field hockey for a season. I am embarrassed to say I hated running back then.

When and why did you start running?

I started running back in 2017. I signed up for my first 5K, the Kentlands 5K, and I was hooked. I started out running to lose some pregnancy weight but that quickly turned into something more. I really



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Emma Pham and Mimi Zaw-Pham zip through the Kentlands 5K

love to challenge myself to longer distances and treasure my alone time. Running gives me the mental clarity that I need to start my day.

What do you remember most about your first race?

I remember running in the rain with my friends and having the best time. And I was surprised that I ran all 3.1 miles without stopping, in less than thirty minutes.

What is your proudest running moment?

My proudest running moment was seeing my two girls at the finish line at Marine Corps Marathon. They were so proud of their mommy for getting the finisher's medal, because they thought I won.

How did Emma first get interested in running?

Emma started running in local 5Ks when she was four. But she became really interested in running after joining her school track and field team. She loves competitions.

What is the Seven Locks Running Club, and who can participate?

It is a youth running club established during the pandemic so that kids could get out of the house to safely train and socialize. The team competes in both cross-country and track and field. Any kids with the love of running, from age of six to middle-school age, can participate.

Do you give Emma running advice, and does she listen to it?

I don't try to give her a lot of running advice. I want to make sure she enjoys the process and does not feel the pressure. But I do try to make sure she doesn't overtrain. Less is more at her age. The only advice I have given her is that she just needs to try her best and give 100% in anything that she does.

Have you learned any lessons about running from Emma?

Yes, Emma doesn't take herself too seriously during her training runs but turns it on for all her races. She definitely takes her easy day easy! And I can see the benefits of cross-training, because she only runs two days a week and swims three times a week.

What is the most challenging aspect of parenting a youth athlete?

The most challenging aspect is managing the expectations. Emma is very competitive when it comes to running and swimming. She can be hard on herself. We make sure to reassure her that winning isn't everything and that the most important thing is that she is having fun.

What is the most rewarding?

Emma has learned to work hard in every aspect of her life. Running and swimming have taught her that she must learn to do hard things if she wants to achieve her goals. She has become my running buddy as well, and I really enjoy our quick runs in the neighborhood.

How do you (attempt to) balance parenting, work, and the girls' extracurricular activities?

It's been, without a doubt, challenging since my husband travels frequently for work and I have a demanding full-time job. It takes a lot of planning and a lot of calendar alerts on my phone. I recently learned the magical benefits of carpooling and asking for help when needed.

How has your own training and racing changed over the years, as you've had kids and as they have gotten older?

The past two years have been extremely challenging for me with kids and older parents. I have learned to be flexible and kind to myself. I don't get upset or stressed out anymore if I am unable to complete a run or a workout. I am trying to be consistent again with my running, but I am also more realistic about what I can fit into my schedule as well.

What advice do you have for parents of kids who show a desire to run competitively?

Let them enjoy the process and training. They also need a great training group where kids are supportive of each other. Having a coach that is supportive, and fun but firm is important as well. We also want to make sure our kids are not overtraining when it comes to running. Their little bodies do not need to be running four or five times a week. Don't let them choose one sport at this age either, since we want to make sure they really love what they are doing.

What are your own goals for the rest of this year?

Get to Boston 2023 healthy!

—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.

Piece of Chalk

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community, and helped them build their potential. I'm rewarded by their groans and curses as they climb the hills, and their smiles at the finish. And someday, if I'm unable to continue on, somebody else may carve their own grooves in a simple piece of chalk.

If you are able to share your expertise in Montgomery County history and/or land acknowledgements, please email diversity@mcrcc.org.

—Jefferson Lunsford joined MCRRC in 2009 and is still training for his 15th marathon. He's an RRCA-certified coach, a low-key race director, a weekly workout leader, and a former member of the MCRRC board. When he's not running, he's recovering from his last run and planning his next run!



Running Across the Red Carpet

by Nicole Deziel and Allison Lawruk

This article is adapted from one originally printed in our November 2012 issue.

Are you ready to run across the red carpet? More exciting than the Oscars, the MCRRC Awards Banquet recognizes our Club's outstanding runners, coaches, and volunteers. Do you have what it takes to win an award? Do you know how to nominate that special Club member? Here's everything you need to know.

Club members who place in the Cross Country and Championship Series go home with something more runner-friendly than an Oscar—cash and gift cards! Members who place first, second, or third in each series run away with \$500, \$250, and \$100 respectively, while age-group winners receive gift cards to RnJ Sports. Every year, some of these generous prizes go unclaimed!

The Club's most prestigious awards are the Runner of the Year (ROY) Awards, honoring the members who have demonstrated the greatest achievements in competitive running. Awards are given to one male and one female in the Open, Masters, and Grandmasters categories, and are selected by a committee of past ROY winners. MCRRC recently introduced a Mountain/Ultra/Trail Runner of the Year (MUTROY) Award to recognize members who excel in off-road running.

The Coach of the Year, Most Improved Runner, and High School Runner of the Year Awards are all

voted on by the MCRRC Awards Committee, chaired by Angie Bosse. The Coach of the Year Award recognizes the outstanding work of one of our dedicated program coaches or a coach in the broader Montgomery County running community. The Most Improved Runner Awards recognize one male and one female member who have slashed their race times and have achieved personal records (PRs), regardless of their overall standing. The Outstanding High School Runner of the Year Awards come with scholarships to applaud the athletic, academic, extracurricular, and community service achievements of two male and two female high school seniors in the county. The Awards Committee meets annually to deliberate on the pool of candidates and their qualifications. Some of our more mathematically oriented members have been known to present charts, graphs, and algorithms, in particular when measuring improvement in the Most Improved Runner division.

The Race Director of the Year Award is selected by the MCRRC Race Committee. The Club holds more than twenty annual races, so this is always a tough decision.

The Volunteer of the Year, Youth Volunteer of the Year (when applicable), and Volunteer Service Awards recognize the incredible efforts of the dependable individuals who provide critical support to make each race—which they would probably rather be running—a success. Christina

Caravoulias chairs the committee that selects these awardees, and the committee is always interested in receiving nominations from race directors, team captains, volunteers, and runners.

The Board of Directors is responsible for special awards, which are not always given. The Lifetime Achievement Award is MCRRC's top honor and is not taken lightly. This award goes to a member who has made exceptional, long-term contributions to the Club, and it provides the recipient with a free, lifetime MCRRC membership. The MCRRC President also has the option of giving out President's Awards to deserving members, to recognize any extraordinary contributions that might not be covered by other award categories.

Did you know we have Journalism and Humanitarian Awards? For the former, the Board may honor someone making significant writing, photography, editing, artistic, or other journalistic contributions. The latter award may be used to recognize a member's philanthropic contributions to the Club and/or the community.

To nominate an MCRRC member for any of these awards, please visit the Awards tab at www.mcrrc.org. You'll find past winners and contact information for nominations. And be sure to attend the MCRRC Awards Banquet next spring to cheer on your fellow Club members for their accomplishments on the roads, trails, and behind the scenes!