

# MCRRC Intervals

May 2023

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

## On the Horizon

**Saturday, May 6, 8:30 am**  
Kids on the Run (\$)   
Gaithersburg

**Sunday, May 21, 8:00 am**  
Run Aware 5K XC   
Bethesda

**Saturday, May 21, 8:00 am**  
Germantown 5 Miler (\$)   
Boys

**Monday, May 29, 8:00 am**  
Memorial 4 Mile   
Rockville

**Saturday, June 3, 7:30 am**  
Little Bennett 10K XC   
Clarksburg

**Saturday, June 17, 8:00 am**  
Run for Roses 5K (\$)   
Silver Spring

**Saturday, June 17, 7:30 pm**  
Suds & Soles 5K (\$)   
Rockville

Please visit our website for updates:  
[www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org)

## Board Meetings

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

## Spring Races Run Cold to Hot



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Sonali Parry finds a zen moment at Spin in the Woods 4M.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Alan Mulindwa sails to the finish at Capital for a Day 5K.



Photo: Bruce Lemieux

Joseph Aukward (1213) and Patrick Williams (847) tackle Piece of Cake 10K side by side.



# Lofty Goals

by Amy Lin

I'm writing my column in Boston, after having spent five-plus hours standing on that famous "Right on" street corner, cheering for thousands of athletes in a race many consider to be the pinnacle of achievement for its participants. It occurs to me that I've now lived more years in Montgomery County than anywhere else, and I've become used to being surrounded by high achievers. Spectating a prestigious race like the Boston Marathon reminds me of the value of hard work and also how lucky we are to have so many amazing opportunities.

On that note, this issue of Intervals showcases the Club awards. They're predominantly awards for running achievements—we are, after all, a running club—but we also honor other vital contributors to MCRRC. Where would we be without our fabulous race directors, coaches, and other volunteers? In addition, we had several MCRRC members nationally recognized by the Road Runners Club of America. Thanks to our Nominating Committee for their

hard work, and congratulations to all our award recipients!

This month we also welcome our new board members, and in From the Board, Brian Murphy outlines his vision for his term as President of MCRRC. Thanks to our outgoing president, Brad Stewart, and board member-at-large Rob Palmer, for their service!

One of our high-achieving volunteers, Karen Craney, provides her expertise on one of her favorite roles, the water-stop volunteer, and in Coaches' Corner, pace coach Libby Miller shares her thoughts on mentors and how they're an important part of reaching big goals.

May's Runner Profile features Dr. Adam Spector, who helps maintain a key physical part of keeping MCRRC members moving—our feet.

Our winter programs have concluded, and most participants have completed their goal races. Whether or not you met your goal, please take a chance to celebrate everything you accomplished on the way. Every step is an achievement!

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### Board of Directors

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

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



## Stay Informed!

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# Greetings from Your New Prez

by Brian Murphy

I started running with MCRRC in 2013 by joining a few of the weekly workouts offered at the time—Sunday long runs at Ken-Gar and Wednesday track workouts. I was welcomed immediately by Larry Cynkin at Ken-Gar and by Denis McDonald at track. Those two and the group running with them made me feel part of the Club on my first run. My wife, Jen, and I started running all the low-key races we could fit into our schedule, and she started joining programs. With FTM, she trained for and ran a marathon, something she had sworn would never happen. We were hooked, and we had lifelong friends to show for it.

This is the Club atmosphere I want to continue to foster as president: one that is quick to attract and welcome new members, builds a sense of community, and has members coming back year after year, with long term, sustainable growth.

The last few years have not been easy, but I think it's important to look back at what we've been able to do through and after the pandemic. We hit 3,000 members in early March 2020; then we all know what happened after that. MCRRC's membership numbers dropped precipitously in subsequent months until we had just over 2,000 in March 2021. This is understandable when we were not able to offer most of what made our club great. Our members stepped forward to figure out how to start offering programs and workouts safely. Our Race Committee worked through all the rules of the county and started offering more races. Weekly workouts started coming

back strong. Through all this, we started looking more like a running club again. We can credit these efforts to getting our membership numbers back over 3,000. In fact, as of this writing, we now have more members than we did in March 2020.

I think we can keep getting better, and that's going to be my focus the next few years. We do a good job of reaching out and communicating to our members within, but we have a little more than one million people in the county and more when you include the surrounding area. We can reach more people and continue the Club's mission by communicating better to more groups. I would like to see MCRRC grow more diverse in how we look, where our members live, and where we run.

Over the last year, the board has taken steps to improve MCRRC's financial viability through a review and update of our financial policy. We need to ensure the Club is agile enough for immediate needs, but is also making long term plans for capital investments needed to keep us meeting our mission for years into the future.

Those who have participated in our programs know how fantastic they are—shout-out to our First Time Marathon program for being recognized nationally by RRCA as the Outstanding Beginning Running Program of 2022. We also have incredible program leaders welcoming all levels of runners, from those looking to get started to those training for a Boston Marathon—qualifying time. We can maintain the high standards of our programs for members looking

for a fun, welcoming place to train and also for developing the Club's leaders for the long term.

Earlier I briefly mentioned the Race Committee. This committee was integral in helping the Club work through the pandemic and within the various rules in the state and county, but also in working, along with our race directors, to keep MCRRC races at a high quality—whether it was one of our low-key events or a larger race. Leveraging the success of the Race Committee, over the next few years I would like to establish similar committees around other key aspects of the Club, like programs and communication. These will allow us to continue to offer and support empowering programs, high-quality and fun road and trail races—most of which are free to members—and weekly drop-in workouts that attract new members and build our community.

No one president or one board member or one club member does all of this alone. Nor can one person take credit for making MCRRC so great. It takes an engaged membership to come forward with good ideas, to champion those ideas, and to add value to the Club. When you see me or my fellow board members at a low-key race, a training program run, or a weekly workout, we want to hear your ideas on how we can continue to make the Club one of the top running clubs in the country. Our members, like you, are what make MCRRC so amazing.

—Brian Murphy is the president of MCRRC and a member of the Competitive Racing Team. He can be reached at [president@mcrrc.org](mailto:president@mcrrc.org).

# So You Want to Be a Water-Stop Volunteer

by Karen Craney

**E**ver wondered how to volunteer at MCRRC events but didn't know where to start or what to sign up for?

Well, look no further than helping at a water stop! All of MCRRC's low-key races have at least one water stop, and some of our larger races, such as Pike's Peek 10K, Parks Half Marathon, and Riley's Rumble Half Marathon, have more than one stop.

Years ago, my very first volunteer gig with MCRRC was at a water stop for Marathon in the Parks (yes, Parks Half Marathon used to be a full marathon). It was an extremely cold November morning, and we were stationed near the entrance of Lake Needwood, where the runners would turn to enter Rock Creek Trail. We were pretty cold setting up the stop but knew it was great running weather for the participants. However, after filling the cups, we soon discovered that ice was forming on the surface of the water. When the runners came through, we joked that they wouldn't need to go to 7-Eleven because we were serving "Icees" that morning!

Back to the details of volunteering at a water stop: All of the essential supplies—tables, cups, pouring pitchers, foam separators for stacking the cups, sports-drink mix (for stops that are providing an electrolyte sports drink in addition to water) are dropped off by MCRRC's supply van at your designated location. There is usually a captain or team lead to coordinate the volunteers assigned to that stop.

Once you arrive at the stop, set up the tables and cups, and mix sports drink if needed. Then pour the liquid into the cups. Here's where a bit of water-stop "science" comes into play—you want to pour the cup about 1/2 to 2/3 full. Why? Well, if you fill it all the way to the top, one of two things will most likely occur. The first is that, as the runner grabs the cup, you're going to end up wearing the liquid, because it will spill on you. The other is that the runner will dump out some of the liquid to make it easier to drink on the go.

One of the most important things to do at a water stop is to be prepared with enough filled cups prior to the start of the race. The last thing you want is to be scrambling to pour more liquid into cups as incoming runners hit your stop. The flat foam separators are provided so that you can create two levels of stacked, filled cups ready

to pass out to thirsty runners.

Finally, strategically place the garbage cans at the middle and end of your stop area. Most runners will try to put empty cups into the garbage cans as they finish drinking.

Now it's showtime and time for the fun part—passing out the water to the runners as they reach your spot!

In larger races, where the stop has sports drink in addition to water, you'll want to have someone near the first table, alerting runners that water is first and sports drink is second, or vice versa. You'll get asked that question numerous times by the runners. The captain will make sure enough volunteers are spread out alongside the tables for coverage.

There is a bit of an art to passing out the water cups, especially to the lead runners, who often grab a cup at breakneck speed as they cruise through. In order to minimize spillage, hold the cup in the palm of your hand as you reach out to the runner. Some runners may point to you as they reach the tables and some runners may take more than one cup, especially if it's a hot day. Some may even take a cup of water to pour over their head.

After the last runner comes through (there may be a sweep telling you this, or you can tell from the runners themselves), it's time to clean up. Make sure all the cups

are picked up from around the water-stop area—we want MCRRC to be in good standing with the either the neighborhood or the geographic location of the water stop, so it's vital to clean up thoroughly.

Want to have some fun at your water stop? Years ago I was a part of a group that originated the "Funkytown" themed water stop at Parks Half Marathon. We wore tie-dyed or batik-style clothes, "love beads" or peace symbol necklaces, and wigs, and played '60s and '70s music on a boom box. This tradition has traveled to other MCRRC races such as Seneca Greenway and Riley's Rumble.

Volunteering at water stop is not only an integral part of the race itself but also a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Come join us at a water stop in a future race—you'll have a great time!

*—Karen Craney has been a member of MCRRC since 2002. She is currently the race director for Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon and 50K, and she previously directed Run Under the Lights. As an avid and ongoing volunteer, she has served in nearly all possible race-volunteer roles. The half marathon and ten mile are her favorite race distances, and when she's not volunteering or running, she enjoys playing with her two German shepherds and biking in Italy.*



Photo: Trevor Myers

**Karen Craney, Lucy Slovon, Phil Magno, and Lisa Viera work a groovy water stop at Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Marathon and 50K.**



# The Value of a Mentor

by Libby Miller

**W**hen I first fell in love with running, it was because it allowed me to let go of any anxieties I was carrying around that day, week, or month. The more I ran, the more my love of running became a lifestyle, filled with races on the calendar, shoes lining my closet, and medals hung on the wall.

As I got more involved with running and wanting to run faster and farther, instead of turning to the great athletes in the sport of running for guidance, I began seeking out advice from my fellow runners—runners who shared the track with me on Wednesday evenings and got lost in conversation with me on a Sunday long run. I found true value in having a mentor, someone who is a positive part of your life, helping you reach your goals without judgment or critique.

I want to share just a few things I admire about several of my mentors, who are all members of our fantastic club.

1. **They defy age limits.** I was always under the impression that running fast was for the young, seasoned athlete. But the runners within MCRRC prove this theory wrong. Many of my running mentors are decades older than I am, but they are faster and running stronger than they were years ago. This helped me realize my potential as a runner hasn't even begun to be tapped into.
2. **They make time for cross training.** Runners often fall in love with running because of the natural endorphin high it provides. However, it's equally important to commit to other forms of exercise, to build a strong base as a runner. I often hear from my mentors that they prioritize strength training or low-impact cardio such as swimming, and it reminds me to make time for these activities

even if they aren't high on my to-do list. I can see the benefits it gives my mentors, reminding me that it's an important piece of the puzzle to getting faster and stronger.

3. **They admit and learn from failure.** Social media is a way to share our successes with the world, but it can also wrongly give the impression that every run is a "win" and getting a BQ is "easy." The best mentors are honest and candid about the times it didn't work out and what can be learned as a result. We are all human, and even the best training cycles can end in defeat. I always appreciate their honesty because it reminds me it's all a part of the process of running—there will be highs and lows, but it's how you respond and bounce back that matters the most.
4. **They give unwavering support.** Last year I was running the Baltimore Marathon trying so hard to achieve a goal of a sub-4-hour marathon. Several of my mentors got up early on a Saturday and tracked me the entire way. They sent encouraging text messages throughout the race and congratulated me at the finish when I beat my goal. Even though my mentors were all faster runners than I, they made me feel like an elite athlete for a day. While running is largely a sport of one, the accomplishments we reach at every race mean nothing if we can't share them with others. After I beat my goal in Baltimore, all I remember wanting to do was see all my fellow runners who trained with me, to celebrate and thank them for their unconditional support.
5. **They provide compassion and listening.** As someone who tries

to be positive and upbeat most of the time, even I fall into the trap of having a bad day. On those days it can be easy to tap into negative thoughts. A good mentor is there to push back on the negative emotions and remind you of all the gains you've made so far. When you are training for a marathon, which is months of work, it's easy to forget the times when you felt unstoppable. One bad day, or one bad run doesn't define you as a runner. I've always appreciated having a sounding board with my mentors who don't fault me for feeling a certain way but rather work to reshift my focus back to seeing the finish line.

6. **They remember to have fun.** Running PRs aside, mentors help remind me why I enjoy running in the first place. It's about having fun! With the privilege to be healthy and strong enough to run, it's important to be brought back to reality that races are just a small part of why we love this sport. My mentors each help me focus on the joy of running.

All this is to say thank you to all the mentors who help runners like me see the possibilities that lie ahead in our running careers. Anyone can be a mentor—so you may just find your next mentor at one of the several training programs offered by MCRRC.

Special thanks to Ben G., Judy L., Gene P., Conroy Z., Sarah D., and Kelsey O.

*—Libby Miller joined MCRRC in 2021 and currently coaches in both the Winter Marathon and First Time Marathon programs. She also serves on MCRRC's Board of Directors. When she's not out running, she and her husband enjoy walking their two rescue dogs on the county's many trails.*

# Adam Spector



by Lisa Levin

*The MCRRC Run Performance Lab (RPL), formerly the Stride Clinic, is a unique Club member benefit that provides a one-stop screening session with experienced medical professionals and running coaches. Dr. Adam Spector is the co-founder of the RPL, along with physical therapist Rachel Miller. Adam is a native Washingtonian and has been in private practice as a podiatrist since 1990. He is one of the original founding members of the Foot and Ankle Specialists of the Mid-Atlantic, which now extends to Texas and Ohio and employs more than 200 doctors. As a podiatrist, he specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of foot and ankle disorders, with a special interest in sports medicine. Adam's offices in Shady Grove and Kensington offer state-of-the-art technology, such as digital x-rays, PRP injections, and EPAT for Achilles tendonitis and plantar fasciitis, and a laser for fungal nails. He takes pride in providing personalized care to everyone from newborns to seniors in a comfortable office setting where sport posters cover the walls and music from his extensive collection fills the air. Adam was recently voted one of the top sports medicine physicians by his peers, as compiled by Washingtonian Magazine.*

## **What's your athletic background?**

I played tennis and basketball as a youngster, and even attended Coach Lefty Driesell's University of Maryland basketball camp, but my two younger sisters and I soon realized that we were faster in the water than on land. We swam in the MCSL and Country



Club summer leagues and competed in the JCC and then the RMSC year-round national training groups. Swimming four hours a day paid off, as we all earned NCAA Division 1 swimming scholarships.

Staying close to home, I chose George Washington University over the University of Maryland.

I was swim team captain for three of my four years and was awarded the most valuable player one year. After four years at Temple Medical School, followed by a surgical residency, I returned home.

## **How have you continued to pursue your passion for swimming as a Masters athlete?**

I have participated in Masters Swimming, earning All-American honors in 2005 and 2006 and posted numerous national top 10 times in distance freestyle and butterfly events over the years. I have completed many open water swims including the 4.4-mile Great Chesapeake Bay Swim seven times.

## **How does running factor into your athletic endeavors?**

I began running regularly as part of preseason training in college. After college, I competed in triathlons, 10Ks and a few half marathons and one marathon. I trained with FTM [MCRRC's First Time Marathon program] for a couple years.

## **What is your proudest athletic accomplishment?**

I am especially proud of my many leadership roles: captain of my college swim team and head coach of four different basketball teams concurrently

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every year (one team for each of my children) in the Gaithersburg and Jr. NBA youth leagues for several seasons.

***How has your experience as an athlete and coach shaped your approach to the practice of medicine?***

My athletic background has given me valuable insight into treating injured athletes, understanding not only their medical issues but the psychological impact of being less active. I have learned that depression and ADHD are conditions that may need to be addressed and managed during recovery. I have shared with many of my injured patients my own story of a severe knee injury in high school that required a heel-to-thigh cast and could have derailed my swimming career. After some waterproofing, I returned to the pool (in the slow lane) and dragged the heavy cast through the water for eight weeks. When the cast was finally removed, my arms were stronger, and my times improved significantly. I do not think I would have reached the same level of subsequent success without this apparent setback.

***How has that personal experience, along with your medical training and expertise, influenced the advice you give injured patients?***

From my own medical standpoint, I feel that immobilization of injuries is necessary in some instances but is over utilized in the medical community. Often, modifying an athlete's training by reducing mileage and adding cross training, with biking, strength training, or swimming, for example, can maintain fitness while still allowing the injury to heal. I am a board-certified surgeon and am Chief of Podiatric Surgery at Holy Cross Hospital, if surgical repairs (bunions, hammertoes, neuromas, tendon ruptures, etc.) are needed, but I always try to offer conservative remedies first.

***How did the Run Performance Lab come into existence?***

The idea for the Run Performance Lab germinated in my office when I was treating the MCRRC president at the time, Brian Tresp, and his wife, Julie. We imagined a scenario in which all the specialists I referred to were working together in real time and in the same room to evaluate runners. Twenty-two years later, the camaraderie and collaboration among our volunteer staff still resembles a think tank where we learn from each other and runners see how running form, posture, shoes, core strength, cadence, nutrition, massage, and medical issues affect their performance

and injury profile. We have had a talented staff over the years, including Carol Lavrich, Gary Resnick, Betty Smith, Karen Craney, Lee Firestone, Keith Evans, Lisa Levin and Julie Sapper from Run Farther & Faster, and RnJ Sports, among others. The late Mike Broderick, RPL co-founder and physical therapist Rachel Miller, and I were thrilled to be invited to the White House to evaluate President George W. Bush, senators, and Secret Service personnel several years ago.

***Let's get personal! Tell us about your family.***

I'll be 60 years old this year, a fact that I cannot hide, because my oldest daughter is 33! I have four phenomenal mostly grown kids, one stepdaughter, and one son-in-law so far. I am impatiently waiting for any of them to someday give me a grandchild who will call me Batman. The love of my life, Lisa Horowitz, and I married six months ago. She is a psychologist, working as a senior scientist and clinician at NIH. My friends tease me that I finally have the live-in psychologist I so desperately need.

—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.

## 2022 MCRRC Awards

### Lifetime Achievement Award

Michael Acuña

### President's Awards

Bonnie Gitlin

Jeff Gitlin

Ted Lutterman

Becky Melzer

### Outstanding Running Achievement

Mark Neff

### Runners of the Year

*Grandmasters*

Cindy Conant

Dave Haaga

*Masters*

Kristin Lemos

Scott Munro

*Open*

Chris Phillips-Hart

Erica Singleton

### Runner of the Year Recognition

Lynn Case

Tim Greszler

Marty Horan

Ryan Johnson

Melissa King

Ted Lutterman

Chris Moen

Courtney Perna

Laura Ramos

Monika Schneider

Yang Shen

Pete Wergin

### Mountain/Ultra/Trail Runners of the Year

Magali Hoebeeck

Erin Kelman

### Most Improved Runners

Bruce Lemieux

Judith Sitkin-Porzal

### Outstanding High School Runners

Frederick Alfonzo-Frank

Alexa Avila

Colin La

Sarah Seam

### Journalism Award

Kelyn Soong

### Coach of the Year

Lauren Kline

### Race Director of the Year

Reaya Reuss

### Volunteer of the Year

Stephanie Ciosek

### Youth Volunteers of the Year

Ari Reichmann

Evelyn Wan

Roslyn Wan

### Volunteer Service Awards

Lee Firestone

Martin Kiebert

Rachel Miller



Photo: Glenda Garcia

In March, the Road Runners Club of America presented 2022 National Running Awards to MCRRC members Kelyn Soong (Excellence in Running Journalism, for his *Washington Post* work), Jean Arthur (Browning Ross Spirit of the RRCA), and Sarah Day and Conroy Zien (Outstanding Beginning Running Program, for FTM).