

MCRRC Intervals

September 2023

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

Sunday, September 10, 6:45 am
Parks Half Marathon (\$)
Rockville
www.parkshalfmarathon.com

Saturday, September 23, 8:00 am
Lake Needwood 10K XC
Derwood

Sunday, September 24, 9:00 am
Cabin John Kids Run
Bethesda

Saturday, October 7, 9:00 am
Black Hill 10K XC
Boyd's

Sunday, November 5, 8:30 am
Rockville 10K/5K (\$)
Rockville

Saturday, November 11, 6:00 am
Stone Mill 50 Mile Run (\$)
Montgomery Village
www.stone-mill-50-mile.org

Saturday, November 18, 6:15 pm
Run Under the Lights (\$)
Gaithersburg

Saturday, November 25, 8:00 am
Turkey Burnoff 5M/10M
Gaithersburg

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

Board Meetings

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

Summer Training Stays Cool



Photo: Brad Stewart

Experienced Marathon Program (XMP)'s 10:00 and 10:15 groups, coached by Brad Stewart and Debbie Sinnott, respectively, smile for the camera at Montgomery College's track.



Photo: Addilien Ntam

Summer Half Program's run/walk group, coached by Katrin Weixel (far left), enjoys the shade on a Ken-Gar run.



Photo: Ruby Chang

First Time Marathon (FTM)'s 10:30 pace group, coached by Ruby Chang, Icel Kuznetsova, and Gavin La, take a photo break at the Great Falls overlook off the C&O Canal Towpath.

from the editor



Plotting a Course

by Amy Lin

During the pandemic, to add variety to my solo runs, I spent quite a bit of time mapping new routes so I could hit different streets and see neighborhoods I'd never visited before. Although running familiar trails with friends is definitely much more fun (especially with post-run coffee as a reward), doing new-to-me routes alone still keeps me engaged and motivated.

A few weeks ago, after I'd mentioned a First Time Marathon training route to my husband, he remarked that the program has much more diversity in its long-run locations than when he was in FTM twenty-five years ago. That's by design—MCRRC has been working on broadening its geographical reach throughout the county, and thanks to the many hours of planning that our program directors, race directors, and other volunteers put in, we do indeed have runs all over the map.

This month's Intervals looks at course plotting, both literal and figurative. In From the Board, MCRRC president Brian Murphy explains how his goal to do all the Club races leads him to new people as

well as new places.

Jerry Epstein's idea to run all fifty states—without leaving the DMV—had him consulting a thoroughly marked paper map, finding creative ways to reach his routes, and even taking in some history as he logged his miles.

History also informs Ben Galbraith's overview of our upcoming Parks Half Marathon, which, despite its many course changes over the years, remains a favorite MCRRC race for local runners.

In lieu of our usual Runner Profile, longtime member Ginger Smith recaps her running career and the paths she took (and sometimes created) along the way to being inducted into the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame.

Finally, Kristen Kelman reviews the nitty-gritty of one of her favorite and trail-specific volunteer jobs, course marking, without which a trail race literally would have no direction.

Whatever direction *you* choose, MCRRC will help you find your way, whether training, racing, or volunteering. Hope to see you out there!

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Newsletter of the montgomery county road runners club

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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.



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President's Race Recap

by Brian Murphy

A few weeks ago, I ran the Groovin' Woodstock 7K trail race for the first time (more on the "XC" versus "trail" distinction in a bit). This one was on my list for a while, but something always had me missing it—being on vacation, having a family commitment, or just not wanting to make the early drive to the other end of Montgomery County. Well, after some gentle nudging by its race director, Gretchen Bolton, I made it out this year. What a fun time! With Groovin' Woodstock checked off, I can now say that I've run all of MCRRC's low-key races and almost every MCRRC race that's currently offered. I'm missing five—see if you can guess which ones the next time you see me.

Everyone has their piece of MCRRC they love—the "why" they are Club members. For some, it's the training programs and the people they meet on weekend morning group runs; for others, it's the weekly workouts providing a place to maintain consistency in their training, and for me (and I think many others), it's the free (for members) low-key races offered throughout the year. I love these as a place to say hello to members, meet new people, and connect with this amazing community. It's fun to see what you're getting at each low-key race: a standard, high-quality race with a little unique flare each race director gets to show off.

As mentioned, it's also a great

spot to meet new people. At Little Bennett back in June, Monika Bachmann was giving a preview of the race over the loudspeaker when I came through, finishing my warm-up. She introduced me as the MCRRC president, and that opened the door to some great conversations with people I hadn't yet met. One person in particular was a non-member named Nick. It was great to hear what brought Nick out that day, how he liked the race, what he was training for, etc. Fast-forward to Groovin' Woodstock—I happened to run into Nick again in the woods on the final climb of the race, to learn he had such a great experience, he's now a member and has already run a few of the Club's

races. It's these interactions I love getting at our low-key races and our weekly workouts, welcoming new members and growing our community. It turns out Nick and I are both training for one of those MCRRC races that I've yet to run, in November (hint, hint).

The board, with tremendous help from the Race Committee, has been working to make sure we can continue to offer these high-quality, low-key races for many years. We just had two rounds of Assistant Race Director 101 training, and we're planning another round in September. We're excited to bring in several new ARDs to help our current amazing RDs.

A very slight change with our races for next year will be the designation of our cross-country (XC) series. These have been newly rebranded as our *trail* race series, to better categorize what you expect to see when you show up to one of these events. I'd argue that Cross Country on the Farm is our only true XC race, but that's built into its name. With the growth of trail running in general, we hope this will draw even more people out to participate in the great events the Club offers.

See you at the next race!

—Brian Murphy is the President of MCRRC and a member of the Competitive Racing Team. He can be reached at president@mcrrc.org.



Photo: Dan Reichman

John Lucey runs for peace at Groovin' Woodstock 7K.

Parks Half: A Fall Favorite

by Ben Galbraith

I ran my first Parks Half Marathon in 2006, the year it began, and it's been an annual tradition for me ever since. It's my favorite race and gets priority over everything else on my calendar in September.

Mike Acuña, race director of Parks from its start until 2014, shared some of its history with me. Its origins go back to Marathon in the Parks (MiTP), run from 2000 to 2004, in early November. This full marathon went from Redland Road by Shady Grove Metro to Bethesda, by way of Rock Creek Park. However, early November had a lot of competition from other races, and MiTP participation had declined by 2004.

The idea of Parks Half came up at a MiTP steering committee meeting over pizza and beer at (where else?) Giuseppi's in Rockville. MiTP became a half marathon, since there weren't many in the area that had a parks feel. September was chosen so that Parks Half could be a goal race for the Summer Half Program as well as a tune-up for fall marathons. In 2005, to fill the year between the last MiTP and the first Parks Half, Mike Acuña and Ron Ely co-directed the only Rock Creek Marathon, made up of loops around Lake Needwood.

Parks Half has been run every year since 2006, with a virtual version in 2020 due to covid. The course has changed over the years, but Rock Creek Trail has always remained the race's focus.

From 2006 to 2011, Parks Half started in Rockville, on South Stone Sreet near Rockville Metro, and finished in Bethesda, with most of the miles along Rock Creek Trail and the final stretch on the Capital Crescent and Georgetown Branch Trails and through the Air Rights Tunnel. It was an exciting way to finish! As you approached the end of the tunnel, you could hear noise echoing inside from the Woodmont Avenue finish line, giving you a boost to finish strong. In 2012, the area around Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Ave was redeveloped, so the finish area had to be moved.

From 2012 to 2016, the race continued to have the same start, and the finish line was moved to Elm Street Urban

Park, sans tunnel. Though the tunnel was missed, the new park finish was a great way to end a "Parks" race. In 2017, Purple Line construction began, and several miles at the end of the race were no longer available, forcing a major course change. The start was moved to Redland Road near Shady Grove Metro, and the finish was changed to a section of Beach Drive near Grosvenor Metro. The new course included Lake Needwood and additional parts of Rock Creek Trail, adding to the "Parks" experience and making local police happier, as more miles in the park meant fewer traffic disruptions. This is the present-day course, and it really shows off the beauty of Rock Creek Park and the fantastic job the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) does in maintaining the trails through the Rock Creek Stream Valley. I'm grateful we have Rock Creek Trail in this increasingly developed suburban area.

Parks Half represents what I think of as the quintessential MCRRC experience. It's a well run race with beautiful trails, fantastic volunteers, and great runner camaraderie. Ken-Gar Palisades Park, the meeting spot for many training programs' first run and also a weekly drop-in run, was the first place I ever ran with MCRRC. I'm sure many others have the same memory. I always think of Ken-Gar Park as MCRRC's home base. So it's only appropriate that Parks passes through Ken-Gar. Of course, on Rock Creek Trail the other feature that everyone knows is the Silencer, the notorious hill between Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road. Under RD Don Shulman, the Silencer became "High-Five Hill," where runners could get a boost from volunteers offering high-fives. Both Ken-Gar and the Silencer have been a part of every edition of Parks Half.

There are always memorable moments at Parks. In multiple years, runners were treated to a grand piano playing at Ken-Gar. It made you do a double-take. The pianist was a friend of then-RD Mike Acuña. As a September race, Parks has lots of weather stories, both warm and cold, but the most memorable have

been related to rain, and last year was no exception. At times it felt more as if we were running *in* Rock Creek, not next to it, but it was all part of the fun!

Mike remembers that about a decade ago, two days before Parks, rain caused major flooding and Beach Drive was closed to traffic. A day later a tree fell, completely blocking the trail. The race's status was uncertain. M-NCPPC crews worked hard over that short period of time to get the course ready for Parks. On race morning, the course was clear and free of water and branches, thanks to the amazing workers of M-NCPPC. Both past and current race directors mentioned what vital partners they are in making this race so great.

In addition to all of Parks Half's natural beauty, how about the fun, food, swag, and perks? Themed water stops with enthusiastic volunteers and delicious finish line food from Mamma Lucia have been traditions since MiTP. That continues this year with all my favorites: sausage, eggs, potatoes, pizza, penne, subs, and the addition of bacon. (Some years I've replenished more calories than I burned during the race.) And Parks Half's long-sleeve tech shirts are my favorite winter gear, always good quality with a cool design. The free photos taken by Club volunteers are a great bonus on top of all the rest.

That said, the best part is seeing new and old friends. Parks always feels like a big reunion. Thanks so much to past and present RDs Mike Acuña, Don Shulman, and Kiki Li; to M-NCPPC, police, and EMS crews; and to the hundreds of volunteers, including Gaithersburg High School's track team, who make this such a great event every year. If you're running, there are still plenty of volunteer opportunities before and after the race. I look forward to seeing everyone at Parks on Sunday, September 10!

—Ben Galbraith joined MCRRC in 2006. His favorite distance is the marathon, and he currently coaches in the First-Time Marathon (FTM) program. When not running he enjoys live comedy and music.

Run the 50 States—in DC!

by Gerald L. Epstein

Running one marathon is an accomplishment. Running fifty is mind-boggling—and running a marathon in each of the fifty states is, well, a Herculean way to see the United States up close and personal.

I found a way to combine running with geography that was both easier and closer to home. In twenty runs totaling 171 miles, I've run all of the state *avenues* in the District of Columbia. While that's nowhere near as far as the fifty-state marathoners run, it's been a great way to see DC.

Each of the U.S. states has an avenue, if you count Ohio Drive and California Street, and together they come to 106 miles in length. The longest is Massachusetts Avenue, which cuts across three of DC's four quadrants and also enters Maryland. According to my GPS watch, the DC parts add up to nearly 9 miles, more than four times the average state avenue length of 2.1 miles. On the short end, Oklahoma, Indiana, North Dakota, Washington, and Louisiana Avenues are all about 0.4 mile long.

I ran all of Wisconsin Avenue in a single run—six and a half miles, including two and a half in Maryland—but for the longer avenues, I normally plotted an 8-to-10-mile route that covered pieces of multiple state avenues that were the same area. That approach let me do more of my runs actually on the state avenues, rather than getting to or from them.

Several of the avenues continue into Maryland. (None cross the Potomac into Virginia.) I've run those extensions as well, taking them as far as they kept their state names and remained runnable—meaning that they had a sidewalk or wide shoulder and hadn't turned into expressways. Maryland's runnable portions range in length from a few blocks (Nevada Avenue in Chevy Chase) to 14 miles (Georgia Avenue, which becomes unrunnable a mile north of Olney).

One surprise was that the location

of some state avenues within DC mimics U.S. geography. For example, North Dakota Avenue begins a few tenths of a mile north of where South Dakota Avenue ends. Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, three of the southernmost states, have their avenues in Anacostia, the southernmost part of DC. The geographic analogy breaks down, however, given that those states share the southern part of DC with Minnesota. Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois Avenues form a cluster in the north-central, or “midwest” part of DC, with Colorado Avenue just to their west—but Georgia and New Hampshire Avenues pass through that area, too. I particularly enjoy the many geographically impossible intersections, such as where Rhode Island crosses Montana, or Alaska merges into Georgia.

One of the trickiest parts of this project has been identifying all the “orphans”—small pieces of state avenues disconnected from their main parts. Some of the avenues must be split in this way by design; one example is New York Avenue, which has a little piece cut off from the rest by the White House. Other avenues seem to

have been subsequently interrupted. South Dakota Avenue's northern tip is separated from the rest by a rail line. For some reason I can't even guess, Montana and Nebraska Avenues have block-long pieces that are almost a mile away from their namesakes, and, in Montana's case, not even along a plausible continuation. It took looking through an online atlas of all DC street intersections to find Montana Avenue's westernmost piece, which I discovered after I had already run all the state avenues in that area. I had to mount a six-mile round trip “rescue mission” to pick it up!

There are many stories to be told about how these avenues were laid out, rearranged, and renamed over time. The original Georgia Avenue, for example, is now known as Potomac Avenue, which runs alongside the Anacostia River. And in a land where politicians angry with a European ally renamed a certain potato snack “freedom fries,” I have been wondering if the states of the Confederacy were still honored with avenues during the Civil War. Perhaps finding out will be a future non-running project.

—Jerry Epstein joined MCRRC in 2007 and has trained in several of its programs, including the Experienced Marathon Program (XMP). He is no longer racing, but he has pursued a number of multi-run projects. He has run all the stream-side trails he can get to in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties; he has run by each of the 40 boundary stones that were placed in 1791 and 1792 to mark the original border of the District of Columbia; and he has done the entire Metro system, running all the lines and stations except Dulles Airport and the two Silver Line stations beyond it, which he deemed unrunnable. Although he isn't running as far, as fast, or as often as he once did, he tries to keep in mind the sentiment of an XMP running partner: “I'm just grateful that I can run at all.”



Photo: Gerald L. Epstein

Mudder: A Career of Firsts

by Ginger Smith



It's strange to imagine a time—my time—with no girls in track and field, cross-country, soccer, or other school athletics. Being part of a sports team—especially a winning one—when young is a very special experience, one that lasts your entire life.

Imagine, too, my complete surprise to receive a telephone call informing me of my May 18, 2023, induction into the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame for my long-ago accomplishments way back in “that” time.

I am grateful to DSMHOF President Chuck Durante, to my Wilmington, Delaware, school, Tower Hill, and to all those responsible for this honor. And I believe my best in-kind contribution in writing this piece is to express some sense of what this award encompasses.

Always a fast runner, I served as captain and co-captain of my school lacrosse and field-hockey teams and continued playing both sports after high school, for Middle Atlantic and New York Long Island regional and national championship teams. My running prowess attracted the attention of the Tower Hill high school boys' track coach, who asked my parents to let me train with his team in running and hurdling. They said yes.

Without coherent school-based sports programs at the time, Delaware's female talents in track and field had few prospects. Instead, we came together in a more diverse form—a statewide athletic club made up of girls from a cross-section of Delaware public and private schools. The club had Barbara Sowden, Carol Thomson, Joyce Barnes, Pat Lux, and Marion Washington as founding members, among many others. Dedicated high-school coaches and teachers, hundreds of volunteers, and armies of parents supported the club's early successes and its development into the women's Delaware Track and Field Club and later Delaware Sports Club, which included men.

Our girls' club competed in men's sweatsuits and men's shoes; our running

uniforms were homemade. Our team logo was a diamond shape—for the Diamond State—containing a torch and the club's initials, DTF, for Delaware Track and Field. I distinctly remember when our first custom-made running tops arrived, hand-embroidered with our new logo, but with the initials *DTL*, in error. We competed in those tops until replaced,



Ginger Smith (third from left) poses with her MCRRC Spring 5K training group in 2023.

joking that we were the “Delaware Tobacco and Liquor” girls' track and field club.

In 1964, at age 16, I became the first Delaware runner to qualify for the Olympic Trials, reaching the semifinals in the 80m hurdles and in the 100, 200, and 400m dashes, and I was the first Delaware woman to run in the Philadelphia Penn Relays. In 1965, I placed second in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) National Championships 50-yard hurdles (7.1 seconds). Around this time I had the tremendous honor to meet and speak with Wilma Rudolph, and I was awestruck by her graciousness

and humility. Later that year, in a rain-drenched AAU National Championships 80m hurdles race, I felt a twinge of pride for just being there and finishing second to Wyomia Tyus, who was on her way to multiple Olympic gold medals.

Speaking of rain and hurdles, women's track and field events then were rarely delayed, postponed, or canceled due to bad weather. My nickname was “Mudder” (the term for a racehorse who does best on muddy tracks) due to my reputation for having to compete repeatedly in downpours, sleet, you name it. Women's hurdle events were *always* first so that meet marshals could quickly clear the track of all such “encumbrances” for the more important running events.

Indoor meets were my favorite, with the excitement of crowds shouting and leaning over the railings just above, cheering as you circled the banked curves of the oval wooden tracks. The noise was deafening, the atmosphere electric. There is nothing like it. I still remember my senior-year thrill of winning the 440-yard dash (60.5 seconds) in a tightly competitive field at the 1966 Philadelphia Inquirer Games. That same year, I led the DTF women to their AAU Middle Atlantic title by winning the 80m hurdles, 440-yard dash, and running the lead-off leg for our 4x100-yard relay. In the 100- and 440-yard dashes, I set state high-school records (11.2 seconds and 59.6 seconds, respectively), which I understand lasted for a decade.

I felt the same thrill competing in the New York Milrose Games at Madison Square Garden. NYC spectators personally adopt you, yelling out to you, cheering you on by name. For two days and nights, our eclectic-looking girls' team paraded in and out of the elegantly plush, regally chandeliered lobby of the Algonquin Hotel where we stayed thanks to my mother's persuasive talents. Our mélange of girls created quite a spectacle in our fuzzy blue Delaware Track and Field Club men's sweatclothes, traipsing

through with our bulky track bags, noisy metal starting blocks, javelins, shot puts, and other athletic apparatus—much to the consternation of the perplexed hotel manager, surely wondering what key information he'd missed in booking the reservation. Decades later, a man hesitantly stopped me while I was running on the Capital Crescent Trail and asked if, by any chance, I was Ginger Smith. He told me his father used to take him as a young boy to Madison Square Garden every year to see the Milrose Games, and they always watched and rooted for our club team!

As a high-school senior, in the rain-soaked (detect a theme here?) 1966 Penn Relays, I won the first women's open 440-yard dash in 58.9 seconds. I anchored two 4x100-yard relay teams to their first Penn Relay Championships—the fledgling women's DTF club and Tower Hill School's first-ever girls' teams. That ad hoc TH team also included Gail Straub (father Jim Straub, TH faculty), freshman DeeDee Hardy, and Carter Coates (father Malcolm Coates, TH headmaster).

Delaware's leadership in club-level advancement of women's sports and in the establishment of school women's programs was largely absent at colleges in the 1960s. I am the only freshman I know of who had to bring her own starting blocks to Stanford University in 1966. And, due to some earlier interactions with the public and coaches, and fearful of attracting unwanted attention, I constantly changed my 6 a.m., warm-up jogging route—by myself, from my freshman dorm, with starting blocks clanging—to the one practice track, all the way across campus, that I was permitted to use.

With no women's track, field hockey, or lacrosse teams at Stanford, I bought a car to drive twenty-five miles north to compete instead for the Millbrae Lions Women's Track Club, and won the 100-yard dash in the 1967 California state championships. I ran for the Millbrae Lions women's team in the same meets as the Stanford men's track and field team. In 1968, I was elected President of the Stanford University Women's Athletic Association, and in 1971, after transferring to Cornell my junior year (where I did play field hockey and lacrosse), I was honored with the Cornell University Women's Athletic Association's

Outstanding Athlete Award.

That began my foray into running “unattached.” As many reading this may have experienced, it's a solitary, very exposed competition status with no school coach advocating for you in those contentious “seeding” meetings—demanding the best heats or lane assignments advantageous for you to make semifinals or finals in your events.

There came a certain relief from this—which I have enjoyed forever since—with the advent in the late 1960s of Masters division competition, protected at least by five-year age groups. Through the 1980s and 1990s, running unattached, I medaled in AAU national and regional masters' competitions, earning firsts in the Masters 400- and 800-meter dashes in the Virginia 1999 Potomac Valley Games. Along the way, I received mention in *Delaware Women Remembered* (1983) and *A Legacy From Delaware Women* (1987) and was thrilled to be inducted into the Delaware Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1996.

In 2001, my daughter and I ran together in the Run for the Roses 5K, where all finishers received a small, locally made ceramic pot, each adorned with a rose. Twenty years later, we ran together with her daughter, my granddaughter, in one of the first DC Girls on the Run 5Ks. Since then, ready fitness-wise or not, I target local road races as goals, run/

walking many of them with my son. This way I manage to muscle ever forward, placing first, second, or third in my age group (the older you get, the thinner the competition!) in seven 5K races and recently qualifying for the 1500M finals in the 2023 Maryland Senior Olympics.

And in a circle complete today, I have joined a local running club—Montgomery County Road Runners, one of the oldest running clubs in the U.S., with the most outstanding volunteer leadership I've ever known. Running like this again is fun again.

In this light, all of us can share a sense of what inclusion in sports with their rewards and awards encompass, be they school teams, clubs, or honorary institutions. We understand that all of us can succeed when we set an athletic goal for ourselves—or support another person:

- by paying attention to that goal in a particular way—long-term
- by focusing on that goal—come what may
- by thinking about that goal as one thing—fitness and health
- and by doing so nonjudgmentally—for ourselves and others.

—Ginger Smith has been a member of MCRRC for several decades and currently trains with its various 5K programs.



Photo: Nelson Brooks

Ginger Smith takes first place in the 80-meter hurdles at the 1965 AAU Middle Atlantic Championships.

So You Want to Be a Course Marker

by Kristen Kelman

For a club with “Road Runners” in its name, MCRRC has a vibrant trail running community and a plethora of trail races. Do you love trails also? Are you curious about how trail races work? Trail races offer a unique volunteer opportunity—marking. Marking is a fantastic way to give back to the trail community, to learn more about trails, and to spend some time outdoors with some good people. Marking entails placing ribbons or flags along a section of trail to denote where race participants should go. Trails tend to intersect one another or create side trails, some of which lead into neighborhoods or serve as connectors to other trails. By placing flags or ribbons on the designated race course, volunteers help to ensure that participants stay on the correct path and reach the finish without getting lost.

For longer races, such as Stone Mill 50-Mile Run, marking is typically done the afternoon before the race. For shorter races, marking can be done the morning of the race. After the race all markings must be removed. This offers an opportunity to volunteer *and* race. You can either run the course to place markings or walk or hike it.

Marking is a mix of art and science. Volunteers usually act in teams of two to flag a short course or a section of a

long course. The biggest question is how many markings to place, how far apart to place them, and what to put them on. You want to give runners the best chance of seeing the markings. There are two different types of markings: Directional markings tell participants which way to go, and confidence markings reassure participants that they are on the correct path. Because everyone’s confidence levels are different, some people want more and some want fewer confidence markers.

Trail marking is a critical job. If enough markers aren’t placed, or aren’t clearly visible, runners may get lost (though a few might get lost anyway!).

So how do you learn how to mark? The best way is to pair up with a seasoned volunteer. The club has many trail aficionados who are more than happy to spend a few hours on the trails with you, showing you where and how to place ribbons and flags. You can also volunteer to clean up markings afterwards, so you can see how everything was placed. The best thing to do when volunteering to mark is to inform the race director of your experience level. The RD can then pair you with someone you can learn from, or vice versa.

I love the excitement of marking a course that I know runners will soon come through. The woods are a beautiful place to be, and I hope you consider spending some time volunteering for course marking at one of our upcoming races!

—Kristen Kelman joined MCRRC in 2016. She has served on the Board of Directors and volunteered in the Summer Half Marathon Program. She and her husband, Erin, are assistant race directors for Black Hill 10K. Kristen is currently on a short break from running to celebrate the arrival of her daughter, Kaiden, who was born August 5.



Photo: Phil Epstein

A vague sign leaves room for confusion on the Mule Skinner Trail at the Agricultural Farm Park in Derwood, MD.