

MCRRC Intervals



March 2025

Newsletter of the *montgomery county road runners club*

On the Horizon

Saturday, March 8, 7:30 am
Seneca Creek Greenway Trail
Marathon & 50K (\$)
Gaithersburg

Sunday, March 23, 8:30 am
Piece of Cake 5K/10K 10K(CS)
Potomac

Saturday, March 29, 7:45 am
Spin in the Woods 4M (TS)
Wheaton

Saturday, April 12, 8:00 am
Capital for a Day 5K (CS)
Olney

Sunday, April 27, 7:50 am
Pike's Peek 10K (\$)
Rockville

Saturday, May 3, 8:30 am
Kids on the Run (\$)
Gaithersburg

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

Board Meetings

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

Neither Snow Nor Rain...



Photo: Amelia Vincent

Coach Bill Yesnick leads intrepid Winter Trail program runners through the fresh snow at Little Bennett Golf Course in January.



Photo: Siwei Luo

Winter Marathon Training program's 12:00/12:30 pace group tackles snowy, icy conditions on the Capital Crescent Trail.



Photo: Tim Willis

Members of Speed Development's 7:45 pace group document their CCT long run at the Maryland-DC border.



Leveling Up

by Amy Lin

Well, the groundhog predicted six more weeks of winter, and February certainly delivered. After training with the Winter Trail program for the past three months, I feel as though I've leveled up—I've gained much more experience and confidence running on snow, ice, slush, and frozen (and not-so-frozen) mud than I ever expected, and I've learned a lot more about the variety of snacks available for post-run noshing! One of the many things I love about our sport is that there's always another way to level up.

This issue of *Intervals* focuses on several options for adding something extra to your running or walking.

In From the Board, Jim Dahlem provides an overview of MCRRC's various race series, which allow Club members the chance to compete consistently

with their peers and reward both frequent racers and frequent volunteers.

For Coaches' Corner, Libby Miller offers tips on setting successive personal goals to maximize our sense of accomplishment each time we complete a training session or target race.

Our Runner Profile features speedy Angela Cason, whose infectious joy encourages her fellow MCRRC runners and volunteers and shows how a positive mindset elevates every workout.

Finally, Debbie Sinnott gives us a glimpse of the whats and whys involved in participating in a race to benefit a charity and how that kind of commitment adds layers of meaning to both the training and the goal race.

Here's hoping you find your own way to level up this March!

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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.



An MCRRC Race Series Primer

by Jim Dahlem

Now that you've started planning your 2025 races, please consider taking part in the various race series that MCRRC offers! Participating in the series over the years has always been one of my favorite parts of being a member.

Before moving to the DC area, I lived in Raleigh, North Carolina. My wife and I found a race series in that area and loved running in it throughout the year, earning points, tracking standings, and using it as motivation to improve. The first thing we did after getting the job offer here—even before searching for housing—was to look for a location with a similar race series. We moved to Silver Spring because that gave us close access to both the DC Road Runners and MCRRC race series. We didn't find anything similar in Virginia then, so you might say we picked this side of the river due to the race series!

After a short time, we quickly fell in love with MCRRC (although our friends at DC Road Runners offer great events too). One of my favorite stories about meeting local runners revolves around the Championship Series (CS) the first couple of years after we'd moved here. Before I was able to put faces to names, I'd write my

CS competition's bib numbers on my hand with a Sharpie. I'd look for them in the start corral and introduce myself to them after the race (hopefully after I'd out-kicked them at the finish).

That's how I met one of my now-friends at the Going Green Track Meet—Brian Murphy passed me and offered some “spirited” encouragement (what he actually said to me depends on who's telling the story). After running close to each other in a few previous races, we met in person at the finish line.

Building community is another benefit of the race series, besides the obvious motivation to improve your overall running. Your running peers will usually finish near you over and over again, and it's a great way to meet those potential run partners and friends. And the races in the series are all included in your membership—why not give them a shot?

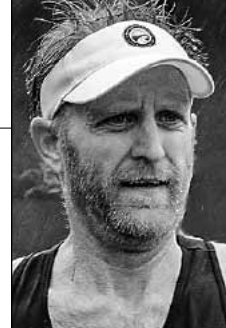
So, how do our race series work? MCRRC hosts three series in a calendar year. Our Championship Series (CS) is run on roads and the track, and our Trail Series (TS) is run on unpaved trails. Our Participation Series rewards those who run and volunteer in at least 16 races throughout the year.

The CS races range in distance

from one mile to half-marathon. The TS races range from 5K to 10K(ish!). Both of those series require you to run at least half the races to qualify for the year (at least six of twelve CS races, at least four of eight TS races).

You earn points based on where you finish, both overall in your gender and also in your age group. First place gets 10 points, second place gets 9 points, etc. If you run more than the minimum number of races, you can eliminate your lower-scored races. The top three overall male and female runners and top three in each age group win prizes that we distribute at MCRRC's

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Jim Dahlem (front) receives “encouragement” from Brian Murphy at Going Green Track Meet in 2016.

Photo: Jonathan Bird

Race Series Primer

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annual awards banquet. The Participation Series winners are also recognized there, with a gift. All of the scoring is tracked for you and posted online (thank you very much, Art Drisko, for doing this over so many years!).

Our webpage for the race series provides the latest standings and details on what happens if there's a tie at the end of the year, or if adverse weather cancels a race, etc.: <https://mcrrc.org/club-race-series/>

The lists of CS and TS are below. Please note that on the back of the MCRRC low-key bib, the Matthew Henson 5K is not listed as a CS race—that was a printing error and it *is* part of the 2025 CS. The bib also lists Spin in the Woods as an 8K—the correct distance is four miles.

I hope you make running in the race series part of your 2025 plans and that I see you out there many times during the year! You won't even need a Sharpie to write down my bib number: I'm number 5 this year, so come say hi and introduce yourself if you see me at one of the races.

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

Championship Series	Date
*Kemp Mill (C)hills 10K	Sunday 2/9
*Piece of Cake 10K	Sunday 3/23
Capital for a Day 5K	Saturday 4/12
Memorial Day 4 Mile	Monday 5/26
Midsummer Night's Mile	Friday 7/11
Riley's Rumble Half Marathon	Sunday 7/27
*Going Green Track Meet 2 Mile	Friday 8/1
Matthew Henson 5K	Sunday 8/10
Eastern County 8K	Saturday 8/23
Country Road 5K	Sunday 9/28
*Turkey Burnoff 10 Mile	Saturday 11/29
Jingle Bell Jog 8K	Sunday 12/7
Trail Series	Date
Cross Country on the Farm 5K	Sunday 1/26
Spin in the Woods 4 Mile	Saturday 3/29
Run Aware 5K	Sunday 5/18
Little Bennett 10K	Saturday 5/31
Groovin' Woodstock 7K	Sunday 8/3
Lake Needwood 10K	Saturday 9/6
Black Hill 10K	Saturday 10/18
Seneca Slopes 9K	Sunday 12/14

*Race offers multiple distances. Only the distance listed in the table is part of the CS.

Run for Charity

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host webinars to discuss raising money and training for the race. Most charities give runners a team singlet to wear during the race to raise awareness of the charity. Pre-race amenities like meet-ups or special meals are perks some charities provide. During the race, some charities offer hydration and fueling stops along the route. Karen Ryan, who ran the 2024 Boston Marathon for the Heather Abbott Foundation, says that HAF had a huge cheer spot along the last stretch of the race. This spot provided some late race motivation, along with a place where families and friends could gather to celebrate their runners after the race.

Overall, what general impressions do charity runners have of the whole

experience?

In many cases, charity running offers runners the opportunity to run a race which may have a difficult entry process. Charity running also provides runners a chance to feel fulfilled as they cross the finish line, knowing that their efforts in making it to race day helped others by contributing to a cause that they care deeply about. It's also a great way to meet like-minded people. Libby states, "My training allowed me to make lifelong friends and share many miles with inspiring runners." Karen adds, "It was a lot of money to raise, but I would do it again. Our HAF Team, Limb-it Less, was a wonderful group of people!"

—Debbie Sinnott joined MCRRC in 2018. She has coached in the Advanced Marathon Training (now Winter Marathon Training), Speed Development, and Experienced Marathon programs.



Setting Goals One Step at a Time

by Libby Miller

Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible. —Tony Robbins

I was thinking about this on a recent run. It's funny how in our society we tend to put so much emphasis on setting new goals or resolutions when a new year starts. It can put pressure on some, or make others feel like failures if by the end of January they have already lost track of meeting your expectations.

I actually think goals can be set any time of the year. On any day. At any time. When I think about goals tied to my running, it's fun to look back at how much can change. I remember when I first started running a decade ago and set a goal of finishing a 5K. And then it turned into a half-marathon. And then up next was the famed marathon distance. I set finish goals, and then time goals a little while after that. Each time I set a goal, it scared me. What about it was scary? I think the reality is that once a goal is set, then comes the work to achieve it. There is also the fear of letting people down. If you don't reach your goal, will people look at you differently?

As I matured as a runner, and a person, I realized setting and having goals is what propels us forward. If we don't meet this arbitrary goal, it's just something to keep working towards. Goals are here to help you—on the days you aren't motivated, on the

days you'd rather sleep in, on the days you just want to give up. I also find that in a world where we have all sorts of expectations, it's sort of nice to have personal goals that are just yours. Something tangible that you can look back in a few months, years, and say, "Hey I did it—and I can conquer whatever else lies ahead."

Here are some tips for setting movement goals:

Make your goals specific. Avoid vague goals like "Exercise more." Set specific targets, such as "Run five miles in x number of minutes" or "Walk three times a week."

Start with short-term goals. Build confidence and consistency with short-term, attainable goals, like improving your pace by 15 seconds per mile or trying a new route.

Add variety to your goals. Mix up goals that focus on distance, speed, or frequency (e.g., a target time for a 5K, finishing a longer distance, or a consistent goal of working out every weekday).

Track your progress. Use apps like Strava or a journal to log your distances, times, and how you feel after each workout. Tracking progress makes it easier to see improvement over time.

Include rest and recovery. Set goals for recovery as well, such as getting adequate sleep, stretching after runs, or including rest days in your schedule. This helps

prevent burnout and injuries.

Set a "big picture" goal. Think about your ultimate goal, whether it's finishing a marathon or hitting a personal best in a race. This will help keep you motivated through challenges.

Celebrate small wins. Break larger goals into smaller milestones. Celebrate things like completing your first 5K or hitting a personal time goal.

Visualize your goals. Picture yourself achieving your goals, whether it's crossing the finish line of a race or setting a personal best. Visualization can keep you motivated and focused.

Get support. Share your goals with friends and family, or join a training group. Accountability helps with staying on track.

Celebrate success and reflect. Once you hit a goal, take time to appreciate the achievement, then reflect on what worked well and what can be improved.

Whatever your goals are for 2025 and beyond, I look forward to cheering you on!

—Libby Miller joined MCRRC in 2021 and currently co-directs and coaches in the Winter Marathon Training (WMT) program. She also serves on MCRRC's Board of Directors and is a member of the Competitive Racing Team. When she's not out running, she and her husband enjoy walking their two rescue dogs.

Angela Cason



by Lisa Levin

At the MCRRC Annual Awards Banquet on March 23, the Club will recognize the MCRRC Runners of the Year, presented to Club members who have demonstrated the greatest achievements in competitive running during 2024. Angela Cason received the award for Grandmasters (60+) Female in 2017, recognizing her outstanding performance at that year's Marine Corps Marathon, where she finished first in her age group, as well as her first Boston Marathon finish. Angela's achievements were especially remarkable given that she did not join MCRRC and run her first marathon until 2015, at age 59. More memorable than her speedy finish times is Angela's contagious happiness and the exuberant smile she shares both on and off the race course, and as a volunteer at packet pickup, water stops, post-race refreshments, and registration. Angela, now age 68, is originally from Opelousas, Louisiana, and currently lives with her husband, Bob, in Damascus, with her adult sons, Anthony and Elrid, nearby.

like to run a marathon. I started running more and even started doing shorter distance races. It wasn't until nine years later, in 2015, that I decided that I was ready to run a marathon. I knew from his experience that if I was going to do it, I had to train properly. I had met a few

remember smiling a lot and waving back at everyone who waved or yelled my name which was written on my arm. I had a good race and qualified for Boston. I didn't fully grasp what it meant to BQ, but I was very excited that I had accomplished that achievement.

What are your proudest running accomplishments?

During my first MCM, I placed eighth in my age group and qualified for Boston. I continued to train with FTM for two additional years and placed first in my age group in MCM in my third year training with FTM. I continued to achieve milestones by placing first in my age group in Wineglass and Richmond in 2018, second in my age group at the New York City Marathon in 2022, and fourth in my age group at the Chicago Marathon in 2023. I am very proud of those accomplishments as well as others in shorter distance races, and I thoroughly enjoyed those running experiences.

Do you have any particularly memorable race experiences that stand out in your mind?

My first marathon, MCM, was one of my favorites. I had so much family support near and far. One of my daughters-in-law came out on the course and ran with me for a short distance. My son Elrid also ran with me for a short distance near the finish. Looking at those photos is so special and helps me relive the experience. I also remember the feeling at my first Boston Marathon as I got closer to the finish. What a thrilling experience that was! I was starting to get a little tired and ready to be done, but adrenaline kicked in and I managed to wear a big smile as I finished strong.

What is your favorite race distance?

My favorite distance is 10K. I enjoy Pike's Peek 10K even though the uphill at the start can be challenging. I also



Photo: Bob Cason

Angela Cason represents XMP at the official pre-Berlin Marathon shakeout run at the Olympiastadion (Olympic Stadium) in 2023.

people who were members of MCRRC. Several people recommended that I join the First Time Marathon Program (FTM), so I did. That was one of the best decisions of my running career.

What do you remember about your first marathon?

My first marathon was the 2015 Marine Corps Marathon. I trained with FTM and felt ready to run the distance. I was very excited about running the race. I made lots of friends and acquaintances during the training. On race day, we met at the hospitality suite and took lots of pictures. As we walked to the start together, I remember being nervous, excited, and ready to start. Several family members came to spectate. I felt well trained and did not get tired during the race. I also

When and why did you start running?

I started running in approximately 1982, just casually with friends. I joined a gym and started running on a treadmill. Most of my early running was on a treadmill; I did very little outside running. In 2006, my younger son, Elrid, who was a sprinter on his high school track team, decided to run the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) with a friend. He did not train properly for a marathon and had a not-so-pleasant experience on race day. My husband and I were there to spectate, and I became concerned during the race because Elrid's friend finished and there was no sign of Elrid. I ran out on the course at around Mile 24 and found him struggling along, so I ran with him until he was near the finish. He finished the marathon but readily admitted he had made a bad decision in attempting the race without proper training. It was that moment that I thought that I would

enjoy ten-mile races. Cherry Blossom is one of my favorites.

How many marathons have you completed? Do you have a favorite?

I have run and completed 17 marathons. It's hard to pick a favorite, but I really enjoyed Chicago. I enjoyed running through the city and being distracted by all of the sights. I felt removed from the thoughts that I was running for 26.2 miles. I placed fourth in my age group and received a special additional medal for age-group placement.

Do you prefer training solo or with others? Any favorite training groups or group runs?

I prefer training with others. I enjoy conversations during the runs. They help take my mind off the work if I start to get a little fatigued. Also, it's interesting to hear stories from others. Talking to other people can also be educational. I like training with the Experienced Marathon Program (XMP), including the runners who return year after year to train with the group. The training can be challenging, and having those experienced runners as role models helps provide mental strength to get through the training. The camaraderie is very encouraging.

Do you have a favorite training route?

I like running down the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT). I like running from Maryland to DC and around the different monuments in Washington. It's encouraging to run past so many runners from many different area running groups. When I tell family, friends, and co-workers that we run from Maryland to DC, their reactions are priceless. I enjoy taking in my surroundings as I'm running. I observe people, animals, houses, and just objects that I run past. I don't run with headphones/music. I never got into a habit of running with anything that distracts me from seeing or hearing what's going on around me.

What motivates you to keep running, training, and racing?

I feel such a sense of accomplishment at the end of a race. Even those races where I'm not particularly happy with my finish time, I know that I did my best



Photo: Megui Garcia-Rhija

Angela Cason flashes her signature smile as she approaches Ken-Gar during Parks Half Marathon 2024.

at that time, so it's an accomplishment. I have to keep running, training, and racing, because I enjoy that high at the end of a race. I always manage a smile, even when walking after a finish is a challenge. My husband is my biggest supporter. He is always in my corner for every race, regardless of the distance. My family is my biggest support group and are always there to encourage me from near and far. They are so proud of my accomplishments, and I'm so touched by their support. I was not an athlete in school, so to have excelled to running 26.2 miles over and over again makes me happy and proud.

What advice do you have to help runners stay healthy and continue to enjoy running as they age?

I advise runners who might need a little encouragement to look at members of MCRRC who are older. It is amazing seeing runners who are 60+, 70+, and even 80+ continuing to set records. Just knowing that they can still run is so inspiring. I just tell runners to look at the examples of how they can continue to have a healthy life going forward. The proof is visible on the trails that we run, and also just along streets every day.

What do you enjoy doing when you are not running?

I enjoy meeting with friends for food and drinks. I like going to different restaurants and trying different foods, which is another reason why I have to run. I enjoy walking around and sightseeing. I really enjoy dancing. It's one of my favorite things to do. I'm trying to read more, but it's currently a work in progress.

What are your running-related goals for 2025?

I plan to continue training with various running groups in the Club as I train for the 2025 London Marathon in April. After the marathon, I plan to take in some sights in the United Kingdom and include a side trip to Paris. I have not decided on a fall marathon, but plan to run shorter distance races during the year. I would like to get stronger in my running and improve my speed. This will require more work on my part, so I am gearing up for the challenge. I usually train with XMP whether or not I have a target marathon for the fall. I enjoy running in warmer weather, so I plan to be out running just for the fun of it! It's not always fun, but being out with other runners helps make it doable.

—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.

Choosing to Run for Charity

by Debbie Sinnott

Have you considered running a race while raising money for charity? Doing so generates money for charities that operate in the race's general location. Some bigger races offer up to ten percent of the field size in entries for charity runners, thus allowing charities to raise a significant amount of money to support causes that are valuable to the community at large.

How does charity running work?

As a general rule, the longer the race distance, the more money charity runners need to raise in order to participate. Fundraising commitments for major US marathons range from \$1500 to more than \$10,000 depending on the race and the charity. To run a half marathon with a charity entry, participants generally need to raise from \$1000 to \$2000 for their chosen charity. Races of shorter distances also offer charity bibs and require lower fundraising commitments, generally less than \$1000. As an example of the impact charity running has, last year's Boston Marathon raised a total of \$71.9 million dollars for charities, \$45.7 million of which was raised by 168 non-profit

organizations and charity runners. The 2024 London Marathon broke a world record for a one-day event, raising £73.5 million (\$90.8 million) for thousands of charities.

How do I choose a charity?

Most people choose a charity that they have a personal connection with. Libby Miller, a two-time Boston Marathon charity runner, chose Tedy's Team, a charity that's dear to her because her grandfather suffered multiple strokes before his 2017 death. Before he passed, his mission was to educate and inform others about the impact of stroke on survivors and their families. That led Libby to connect with Tedy's Team, which raises awareness of the signs of stroke and helps fund stroke research. Libby raised more than \$17,000 by running the 2020 Boston Marathon virtually and the 2023 Boston Marathon in person, giving her memories that she will forever cherish because of the friends she met through the organization and the meaning behind her participation.

Bobby Nonato has a similar story. He decided to run for charity when

he and his wife, Kim, both entered the 2024 Chicago Marathon lottery but only Kim received an entry. Running for the Chicago Diabetes Project gave Bobby the opportunity to participate in the marathon while raising money for a cause that had personal meaning. Diabetes runs in Bobby's family, so his fundraising efforts allowed him to raise money for a charity that he believes in while giving him the chance to join Kim and chase down his own marathon goals.

Stacey Geldin has run four marathons for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, where she serves as an ambassador, since her daughter's diagnosis with the disease. She has raised more than \$40,000 by participating in seven of their endurance events over the years. She strongly believes that the funds raised by the organization directly impact her and her daughter's lives.

What support does the charity offer to runners?

Charities give guidance by helping to set up fundraising webpages and providing fundraising tips. Some charities

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