

MCRRC Intervals

September 2026

Newsletter of the Montgomery County Road Runners Club

On the Horizon

Please volunteer if you can!

Lake Needwood 10K (TS)

Saturday, September 12, 8:00 am
Derwood

Country Road Run 5K (CS)

Sunday, September 20, 8:30 am
Dickerson

Parks Half Marathon (\$)

Sunday, September 27, 6:45 am
Rockville

Cabin John Kids Run (YS)

Saturday, October 3, 9:00 am
Bethesda

Matthew Henson 5K (CS)

Saturday, October 10, 8:30 am
Silver Spring

Black Hill 10K (TS)

Saturday, October 17, 9:00 am
Boyd

Check our website for updates:

www.mcrrc.org

Board Meetings

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

The Spirit of MCRRC



Photo: Robin Lerner

Shana Rosenblatt, Bayah Biles, and Joisee Biles embrace Fourth of July colors at MCRRC's inaugural Red, White, and Blue 5K.



Photo: Dan Reichmann

Abenezer Wudenhe sports tie-dye and far-out glasses to run Groovin' Woodstock 7K.



Photo: Conroy Zien

Ed Liu, wearing one of MCRRC's new club shirts, rings the (distance) PR bell after FTM's first 20-mile run.

Branching and Enriching

by Amy Lin

Although the start of a new school year can be nerve-racking, routines soon settle down, and I see my kids branching out as they learn, both inside and outside academics. I may grumble about having to chauffeur a kid straight from one activity to another, but when I take a big-picture look, I realize how extracurriculars supplement and enhance the subjects taught in class.

Non-runners and novice runners tend to focus on speed as a benchmark for improvement, but those who've been in the sport for a while know there are many possible ways to enrich running, especially within a club like MCRRC.

In From the Board, Brian Murphy describes how we're engaging younger runners and how this newest generation of MCRRC members, coming aboard during the running-club boom, help broaden the Club's scope.

MCRRC's first Summer Speed program wrapped up a few weeks

ago, and Danny Tang provides a recap, explaining how it's not just about increasing speed but also about expanding a runner's comfort zone.

For anyone who likes to be in charge and/or wants to know how all the moving parts come together, Beany Kelly offers an overview of race directing and an appreciation for everything that goes into a successful MCRRC low-key race.

Our Runner Profile features Donna and Dan Goldberg, stalwart Club volunteers and directors—Donna of the Spring 5K program, Dan of Riley's Rumble Half Marathon—and prime examples of how not-running can be as rewarding as running when you're part of the MCRRC community.

Finally, Frank Wu shares a personal essay about his running and writing and how the two disciplines have bolstered each other as he progresses in both.

Here's hoping everyone gets a chance to branch out this fall!



Board of Directors

President

Brian Murphy

Vice President

Eric London

Secretary

Deb Griffin

Treasurer

Michael Patrick

Member-at-Large

James Jalandoni

Member-at-Large

Bruce Lemieux

Member-at-Large

Gordon Li

Member-at-Large

Monika Schneider

Member-at-Large

Matthew Von Hendy

Staff

Executive Director

Ashley Zuraf

Operations Assistant

Heather Sisan

Intervals

Publisher

Brian Murphy

Managing Editor

Freddi Carlip

Editor

Amy Lin

Production Designer

Bob DiIorio

Contributors

Bernard Kelly

Lisa Levin

Brian Murphy

Danny Tang

Frank Wu

Have comments or questions? Or want to help?

Contact us at Intervals@mcrrc.org.

Intervals is a publication of the Montgomery County Road Runners Club. All Rights Reserved. For an electronic version see www.mcrrc.org.

All material herein is fully protected and may not be reproduced in any manner without the permission of the publisher. ©2026. Views expressed herein are those of the authors exclusively.

Intervals is published bimonthly by the Montgomery County Road Runners, P.O. Box 1703, Rockville MD 20849.

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!

Like us on Facebook – Montgomery County Road Runners

Follow us on Twitter - @MCRRC

Follow us on Instagram - @MCRRC

Subscribe to our *groups.io* for important announcements (membership required): <https://groups.mcrrc.org/g/MCRRC-info/>

Solidifying MCRRC's Future

by Brian Murphy

This summer has been a blast. As always, it's fun to see MCRRC members out and about in the spring and summer months. Whether you were taking advantage of our mainstay summer programs or checking out a new offering, I hope you've been enjoying yourself. We've seen some great participation in our yearly race series—both road/track and trail—and growing numbers of under-18 runners.

In recent years, the board has been working on ways to increase participation of younger runners *and* make their time in the Club enjoyable. This is coming at a moment when we're seeing greater popularity of running, especially from Gen Z. As a fan of the sport, I find it fun to watch what the younger athletes are doing. The kids are absolutely getting faster. We were lucky enough to see local phenom Quincy Wilson head to the Olympics a few years ago, and a slew of others are stepping up, too—I'm sure there are some other Cooper Lutkenhaus fans out there. Better shoe technology, better fueling and nutrition science, and data-backed training regimens are making their way through the sport and are not just for pro runners anymore. We even have our share of younger runners competing in our Club series, and some placing overall for series awards!

Part of shepherding MCRRC for years into the future comes down to all of us creating a welcoming place for anyone new to the sport. Fellow board member Deb Griffin has been highlighting some of the growing pains that some run

clubs are facing as the running boom brings in more people. A lot of it comes down to culture. I came to MCRRC years back by joining a few of the drop-in weekly workouts the Club had at the time. I was welcomed immediately and I knew I had found my place. I want everyone who's new to a program, race, or drop-in run to have that same experience I did, and this is certainly something we all can contribute towards. Spot someone new at a weekly run? Say hi and help them feel seen.

I feel as if it was just yesterday I was reading articles on running in summer heat or the physiological benefits of training in humidity (Who am I kidding? We'll need to hold on to that thought until at least October around here!), but here we are, transitioning into fall. This is such a great season to be a runner in our area—a full fall race calendar, cross-country season starting, and, of course, better weather. I also use this transition time to start looking ahead to our next year as a club and how we'll establish a budget that captures our priorities for all members. Some of these priorities remain the same from year to year: carrying out our mission, continuing to establish and promote running in *all* areas of the county, supporting younger runners, and being good stewards of membership dollars. As a board, we'll be further refining these goals and working through the budget process to ensure that MCRRC continues to thrive.



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

Symbiosis

continued from page 8

scribbled, I realize how I can improve. It is not the gear. It is not the physical limits of my body, either. My own words make it clear. What holds me back is me. Before I head out, I should get a good night's sleep, fuel intelligently, have everything prepared, and be in the right frame of mind. Then, when I am under way, I have to push into higher “zones” of aerobic effort. I follow the walk-run method. I can adjust the intervals, with longer durations of running, shorter durations of walking.

I also goad myself to run more so I can write more. I have cultivated the habit. I associate running and writing. I force myself to lace up my shoes even if I'm tired or the conditions are miserable, telling myself I can't disappoint readers expecting an account I've promised already. I have motivated myself with these nudges. The “Hawaii 5-0” theme song is a prompt to sprint. In longer races, I put on that tune every mile for a boost.

To write and to run are to be engaged in life and with the world. I hope to write and run as much as possible, as long as possible.

—Frank H. Wu retired from his post as President of Queens College, City University of New York, this past summer.

Summer Speed Sends Runners Soaring

by Danny Tang

Transform like a caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly to fly. Run like the whole animal kingdom lives within you: the lion's courage, the eagle's focus, the elephant's strength, the geese's teamwork, the roadrunner's efficiency, the early bird's discipline, the cheetah's explosive speed, and the unicorn's impossible dream pulling you forward. You are all of them, and you're chasing something extraordinary."

These are the inspiring closing remarks from the director of MCRRC's inaugural Summer Speed program, Kam Yee. His proudest accomplishment is finishing the 2023 Umstead 100-Mile Endurance Run and honoring his late father by scattering his ashes in Umstead State Park in Raleigh, North Carolina. Kam is a Senior Olympic athlete and is set to complete one hundred races in 2026. He will also be the Fall 5K program's "consulting coach," providing cadence, effort, and recovery guidance for each team.

The purpose of Summer Speed is to improve speed performance in shorter race distances (one mile, two miles, and 5K) with an eight-week program. There is a time trial in Week 5 and a goal race in Week 8, with the goal being a measurable time improvement, relative to the runner's starting level. The time trial race options are Midsummer Night's Mile and Kensington parkrun, and the goal race options are Going Green Track Meet and Kensington parkrun again. For each track workout, there is a theme centered around a specific animal—each animal represents another aspect of overcoming fear and getting "comfortable with being uncomfortable."

What motivated you to create/coach/participate in this running program?

Kam: Years ago, MCRRC leadership recognized the need for a speed training program focused on shorter race distances. Having found some success racing short distances myself in the 50+ age group recently, I wanted to share my secret sauce with others who have a similar pursuit to maintain or improve their speed at the one mile, two mile, and 5K distances. This program is different from other existing

Club programs because the workouts are exclusively on the track, and the long runs do not reach double-digit mileage.

What has surprised you most about the program?

Kam: Participants in the program want to improve their speed but hold themselves back due to fear of trying or fear of failing. It was surprising that participants were more than willing to step out of their comfort zone and push a little harder to pursue the goal when given the right mindset and guidance. They understood the number-one piece of advice of this program: *Learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.*

Wanda Walters (coach): What surprised me was how much I looked forward to Kam's weekly intro, "Animal Fables." It was very motivating for me to learn each new animal and how it related to the theme of the day!

Liming Yang (participant): I was surprised to see how many FTM runners were in the program. Equally impressive was how well the new program was executed by Kam and all the coaches. Each week had a precise protocol and animal metaphor. Despite the heat and storms, the coaches and director did not miss a single week of

practice.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Wanda: I still have a nagging left knee injury and took a nasty fall on the track the evening before the Going Green Track Meet's two-mile race, but thanks to Danny Tang, I finished and placed second in my division (there were only two of us).

This is a good reminder that there is more to racing than a result time—it's more about friendship and finishing!

Liming: I am very proud to have completed the demanding track practices and participated in three goal races: one mile, two miles, and 5K.

Overall, the Summer Speed program is a rewarding experience, not only focusing on improving speed but also gaining the ability to overcome great fear and become comfortable being uncomfortable.

—Danny Tang has been an MCRRC member since 2023 and has coached in the Fall 10K, Winter 5K, Winter Marathon Training, and First Time Marathon programs. His favorite race is Midsummer Night's Mile, and outside of running, he enjoys drawing, writing, reading, and baking cookies for loved ones.



Coaches and participants kick off MCRRC's inaugural Summer Speed program at Quince Orchard High School's track.

Photo: Kam Yee

So You Want to Be a Low-Key Race Director

by Bernard Kelly

Have you run or volunteered at many or all of MCRRC's low-key races, and think they could be better organized? Or perhaps you just like the thrill of authority and bossing people around, and you're willing to lose another hour or so of sleep for this opportunity? Congratulations—you might be ready to direct a race yourself!

As is probably true for many MCRRC race directors (RDs), my first involvement with the race I now manage was running it. Run Aware 5K, organized by Patricia Moloney, was a fun jaunt around and about the trails of Cabin John Regional Park, avoiding the attractions of the miniature train, the baseball and tennis courts, and the sinister talking, trash-eating pig head. A year or two later, I signed up as assistant RD (ARD) for the race, and got to see more of how the sausage is made. After another couple of years, I took over as RD, and Patricia got to enjoy Mother's Day properly. Anny Rosenthal graciously agreed to be the new ARD.

MCRRC offers regular training for members interested in directing races (it also maintains an RD manual that is perpetually being revised and updated but somehow never *quite* finished). The main lesson is that preparation is everything; unlike most race volunteer roles, the bulk of your work is done long before race day so that on the day itself, you can push a button, kick back, and relax while everyone else does the hard work around you. (Well, kinda.)

Even better, for an established race, most of the preparation is semi-automated. Any permits needed for race staging are handled by our MCRRC office, while the most technically demanding race-day activity—the timing—is in the hands of the Club's own incredibly efficient Timing Team. There are some things you can't hand off, though, such as:

Checking the course: For an established race, you'd like to think the course is fixed from year to year. However, sometimes parts of the course have to be tweaked due to forces beyond your control. For a trail race, these changes can

be significant if storms take down a tree, or erosion makes a trail section unusable. With several weeks' notice, you can redraw the race map with a route that gets you from start to finish in approximately the same total distance; if you only have a few hours' notice, you may have to make tougher calls.

Soliciting volunteers: Volunteers are the lifeblood of all races, and you can never have too many of them. This is especially true for Run Aware, where erosion, plant growth, and human clearing efforts all lead to a constantly changing network of trails. It's always a good idea to request an extra person or two for each volunteer category—better to have the personnel and not need them than the other way around.

Making an equipment list: Everything you need for the race (apart from perishable food items) is sitting in our Clubhouse—cones, high-viz vests, tables, water jugs, etc.—and if you give them an itemized list several days in advance, the Timing Team will likely be able to pack it all up and deliver it to the race location for you. You don't want to have to make very early morning trips to/from the Clubhouse yourself if you can help it.

On race day, you have to be the first person on site, to meet the timing truck, help set up the staging area, and greet the volunteer coordinator (ideally this won't be you or the ARD). I try to be there at least half an hour early. Give the volunteer coordinator your volunteer list and then relax...

...until someone has a question or a problem. *Where's the bathroom? Why is this gate locked? Where's the bathroom? Can I park here? Where's the bathroom?* Fielding these is the main thing you'll be doing on race day; even if you can't resolve an issue yourself, you'll be expected to at least point the person in the right direction.

Everything seems to calm down about five minutes before the race starts, and once you've launched the runners, it's almost eerily quiet for a while. Nothing makes you appreciate the beauty of nature more than the absence of runners within

earshot. This might be a good time to take up poetry, or practice award acceptance speeches...

...and then the irritatingly fast runners start appearing and you have to pay attention again. For a road 5K race, you may have as little as fifteen minutes of peace and quiet; a trail race like Run Aware buys you another couple of minutes, but not much more.

What follows is 40+ minutes (for a 5K) of runners, mostly happy and sweaty, racing across the timing mats, taking a moment to catch their breath, and then heading for the refreshments area. Trail races have a greater chance of producing cuts and scrapes, so it's good to know where the first aid kit is (and to have a volunteer to help with administering it).

You shouldn't have much to do as runners finish, though you'll be talking with the timing lead to keep track of how many runners are still out on the course. Ideally, you'll have a course sweep, who marks the official caboose of the race. Once they cross the finish line, the clocks can be turned off, the mats rolled up, and the finish chute generally disassembled.

The last thing that has to happen is clean-up. That means the staging area as well as the course. Road races usually need a handful of cones and arrow signs to mark the course; trail races also need a lot of trail tape and small flags, and these all have to be retrieved to leave the trail pristine. Often, a posse of faster runners will do much of the trail clean-up as part of a cool-down run, but I walk the full course once everyone's gone, just to check.

Or perhaps I'll run the course instead. I've heard running is fun.

—Bernard (Beany) Kelly joined MCRRC in 2007, after his wife took his vague "I'd like to run a marathon some day" musings a bit too seriously and looked up the Club's FTM program on his behalf—a bit of proactivity she's had ample time to regret. He works at NASA Goddard, and he's recently been spending more time with the Goddard Music and Drama (MAD) club, where people can't just run away from you when you sing at them.

Donna and Dan Goldberg



by Lisa Levin

Donna and Dan Goldberg are proof that the more that you put into being an MCRRC member, the more you get out of it. Donna joined the Club in 2018 after Dan encouraged her to walk a 5K, and Dan followed three years later in 2021. They have been active participants in just about every MCRRC training program (5K through FTM), which led them to coaching and volunteering, and eventually directing, with Donna currently directing the Spring 5K program, and Dan directing Riley's Rumble Half Marathon. MCRRC has become an important part of their lives, described by Donna and Dan as a "core part of our community here in Montgomery County." While they currently live in Potomac, Donna is originally from Woodland Hills, California, and Dan is from Acton, Massachusetts, and spent a good amount of his childhood in Port Chester, New York. Dan works as a project manager for a wireless telecommunications solutions provider, and Donna recently retired from her job as a project manager in healthcare guidelines and policy, giving her more time to run and volunteer.

What was your first race, and what do you remember most about it?

Donna: I first raced in 2018 in Salt Lake City, where I discovered that I could actually finish a 5K before everything gets packed away, and even get a banana!

Dan: My first race was the YMCA Bethesda–Chevy Chase Turkey Chase 10K in 2002. I had been running as part of the local Sergeant's Fitness boot camp training program for just over a year, and this was my first try at a road race. The following spring, I ran Pike's Peek 10K, my first MCRRC race.

What distances do you enjoy most and why?

Donna: I enjoy it when we travel for races, and the half marathon distance is challenging enough for the trip to be worth making. The locations we've

enjoyed traveling to for races include Lisbon, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Rehoboth, and Eugene, Oregon. Each has been memorable because of cultural differences and scenery. We're looking forward to discovering more destinations!



Donna and Dan Goldberg celebrate their finishes at the A1A Half Marathon and 10K with a cruise out of Fort Lauderdale in February 2025.

Dan: While there is nothing more rewarding than finishing a marathon, I love the half marathon distance. The training and workouts each season keep me moving, in a social training environment, but without it feeling like a weekly beating.

What do you enjoy most about running and training with MCRRC?

Donna: I love the community and the friendships made along the way, and knowing there really is "a place for every pace."

Dan: The camaraderie and community in MCRRC are irreplaceable. In both the organized groups and the drop-in social runs and Club runs, you just feel welcome and supported.

Do you run and train together, or separately?

Donna and Dan: We generally go to start a run together and then train separately because we are at different paces. For special destination races, we often run at the same pace and finish together, but we also have goal races where we each give it our independent best.

What motivated you to become more involved as Club volunteers and leaders?

Donna: Volunteering is a gift. I like being able to contribute and getting to know this community better. It's been a thrill to be the program director for Spring 5K for more than two years, and to have volunteered during races and be a coach for various programs for many years.

Dan: I had been a participant in programs for a couple of years and wanted to start giving back. I feel my success can be attributed to so many others who volunteered. It was a no-brainer that giving back would have been equally rewarding, and it has been.

What has been your favorite or most rewarding volunteer role, and why?

Donna: Being the PD for the Spring 5K has been very rewarding. I especially enjoy working with experienced and amazing coaches to create a cohesive community. Choosing the routes we run, the training runs we do, and watching us break out of our cocoons and take flight is priceless!

Dan: The project manager in me loves directing Riley's Rumble. It's a lot of

work, but it is fun working with a great group of other volunteers to put on a big race. The most rewarding volunteer role I've done is coaching in the Spring 5K program. Helping new runners and people just getting back into running achieve their goals is a great feeling.

What are you most proud of when you look back at your years of involvement in MCRRC?

Donna: As a type-1 diabetic for more than fifty years, I've appreciated being able to learn what I need to be able to keep moving, which has led to a lot of discovery and a healthier me. I am also proud of the fact that I can run 5K and beyond, surrounded by a community of friendship and smiles, and that I can share and give back to this community.

Dan: I am most proud of this community of runners. Each and every runner and walker and volunteer that makes up this community makes me proud. Being part of a group of more than 4,000 people who make awesome things happen, makes me proud.

What's the best piece of running advice you've received?

Donna: Fellow members Michael L and Marty K, whom I admire, told me to do more miles than the race I am practicing for, and just get the miles in every week, at any pace.

Dan: The best advice I've received is also one of the most difficult to follow: Give injuries time to heal. It is so hard to cut back, especially when you have a training goal in mind. But sometimes a couple of weeks or months of rest can save you a lot of extended pain.

How has your training and racing changed over the years?

Donna: I'm running longer distances than

I ever thought I would run. I never even thought I'd be a member of a running club. The fact that I am now training for, and running races, has been amazing.

Dan: The Club has really changed how I run and train. From 2002 until I joined MCRRC in 2021, I was mostly a solo runner. Since joining the Club, I am more of a social runner. This has led me to push myself out of my comfort zone, trying new things like occasional trails or running in the brutal cold and rain, and still enjoying the experience in the moment!

What keeps you excited and motivated to keep running?

Donna and Dan: This community, and seeing our friends every week keeps us motivated. We want to approach our later years in the healthiest way possible, and we know that starts now. It's the community that keeps us motivated to show up to workouts and drop-in runs!

When you are not running, what do you enjoy doing together?

Donna and Dan: We enjoy traveling. As we write this, we are on an Icelandic cruise preparing to witness a total solar eclipse. We also enjoy going to concerts and theater. As Dan gets closer to retirement, we are looking at downsizing our home and staying in the community. The house hunt has been fun.

What advice would you give to a new MCRRC member, to get the most out of their Club membership?

Donna and Dan: Join a training program! The Spring 5K is a favorite "all paces welcome," and of course, there are all the other great training programs. Whether you decide to do training program or not, do the Club races, go to the drop-in runs/walks and track meets listed in the weekly Ins & Outs

communication, and volunteer to meet your fellow members! It's a fantastic way to meet some amazing people. Most of all, have fun.

What are your goals for the rest of 2026?

Donna: Preparing for my first marathon, Every Woman's Marathon (EWM) in New Orleans in February 2027, and keeping my eyes open for other exciting races, including our Club races.

Dan: For me, 2026 is a year of recovery from a typical runner's injury, plantar fasciitis. This is a year of running slowly, rebuilding strength instead of speed, and positioning myself to keep moving so I can join Donna at EWM in 2027.

—Lisa Levin has been with MCRRC for more than two decades. She is a member of the Competitive Racing Team and co-founder of Run Farther & Faster.



Photo: MarathonFoto

Donna and Dan Goldberg stick together for 2025's Army Ten-Miler.

Running and Writing: A Symbiosis

by Frank H. Wu

I am a writer. I am a runner. I have become a better writer by becoming a runner. I am improving as a runner thanks to writing about it.

I have been writing since a local newspaper printed my letter to the editor when I was a teenager. Although I only started running in middle age, I have embraced it, finishing approximately three hundred races in a dozen years—I am slow but stubborn. What these activities have in common is the need for discipline. I joined MCRRC even though I live out of town, because I visit the area often to check on my elderly father, and I'm always looking for a race to enter. I love it when I can run in the Washington, D.C. area on one morning of the weekend and elsewhere the other morning.

As a writer, I have published two books and dozens of academic articles and as many popular pieces. But I have always failed as a diarist. I was never able to sustain a journal.

As a runner, I have a ready subject. The desire to document my regular neighborhood run and every race led me to jot a daily entry in a notebook. From that, I expanded to compiling

tables of sleep, step count, and calorie intake. I then sent excerpts to the family text thread and to a few friends who also run or were interested in what I was up to. From that beginning, I have continued. I need inspiration to fill the pages. There is always something remarkable on a run. It could be the feeling of being up early and riding a bicycle to the event, for a personal duathlon; the downpour as

we get under way; a friendly exchange with a volunteer; or being impressed by competitors moving at twice my speed.

More than that, the physical exertion stimulates mental activity. I can see the effects for myself. When I run, my heart rate the rest of the day is lower. If I skip a few days, my heart rate gets worse. I have no doubt about it: The heart pumping gets the brain working. A longer run correlates to lingering benefits; while I'm out there, I am thinking of new ideas and revising old material. I often record a voice memo to remind myself of what I came up with, so I can develop it once I'm seated comfortably in my home office. My favorite venue is the C&O Canal towpath. It is flat, soft, straight, and scenic, and I'm at my fastest in that familiar setting. I am interested in the environment. I try to instill mindfulness in myself, observing details: I have passed the big sign about the dangerous undertow dozens of times, but the water it is warning me about looks different depending on the season.

When I review what I have



Photo: Ultra Race Photos

Frank Wu sprints to the finish of 2016's North Face Endurance Challenge Half Marathon, held in Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

continued on page 3