

Running Briefs
c/o Tracey Martinson
1716 Reed Circle
Fairbanks, AK 99709

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October 2004

Running Briefs

Looking for an out-of-state marathon? Try Oklahoma, Des Moines, and Austin

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By Larry Stice

Ed. note: Larry is a former Fairbanksan (in body, but not in spirit), and a lifetime member of RCN.

I am writing this moments after having hit the enter key to commit myself, ready or not, to on-line registration for the upcoming Equinox. If you're reading this, the race has come and gone, and my performance will be a matter of public record. I always enjoy the stories in Running Briefs about the various experiences members have in out-of-state races, and thought I would share an outside-looking-in perspective.

This will be either my fifth or sixth Equinox; it's all a blur after a while. Since leaving Fairbanks in 1991, I have tried to do at least one marathon a year (Chicago, San Diego, Pikes Peak (!), etc.), with wildly varying results. The last three I've done, however, stand out as being enjoyable and ones I would highly recommend to Fairbanksans.

In November 2001, Candy and I drove down from our home in Kansas City to Tulsa for the Oklahoma Marathon. Due to my obligatory summer softball injuries, I was on a walk-run program (emphasis on walk). Still, I felt pretty smug with

fifteen or so marathons under my belt. Of course, at the pre-race dinner (this was a 50-Stater event) they introduced a guy who had run something like 900 marathons, and a guy in his 80s who was on number 300+. Of course, there was the race director himself, who had completed marathons in all 50 states and all Canadian provinces *every year for the previous three years*. This guys hasn't had a weekend without a marathon for years. That put quite a damper on the conversation at my table, needless to say.

The race felt like an RCN event, with about 200 runners and every one uniformly cheerful. The course is a flat double out-and back on a bike path along the Arkansas River between south Tulsa and downtown. Given the relaxed atmosphere, by the time people passed each other for the third time we were exchanging recipes and promising to get together for the holidays. I only had two concerns. First, how do you pronounce the name of the river (AR-kun-saw or AR-KAN-zus — I still don't know)? Second, since I was the first registrant ever from Missouri, I was wearing a race-provided shirt emblazoned "MISSOURI". I was worried that, given my pace, my fellow Missourians

would waylay me and rip it from my body to spare them embarrassment. However, that did not happen, and I finished in 345. As in three hundred and forty-five minutes. As I was limping back to the hotel, half the runners were already driving to Kansas City for another marathon the next day. Ah, to be young and foolish again. The other half of the runners went to the after-race party at the race director's house. There, I got to mingle with people wearing "Antarctica Marathon" jackets, "such and such 100-miler" patches, etc. I didn't dare talk about how my feet hurt.

The inaugural Des Moines Marathon was in October 2002. I convinced a co-worker that we should do it together. It was his first marathon. I was in better shape than before, having graduated to a run-walk mode, emphasis on run. However I was (and still am) afflicted with a condition called hyperlipidity, which is characterized by a trend toward buying relaxed fit pants. The doctors feel it is caused, in my case, by working in close proximity to Li'l Jake's Eat-It-An-Beat-It, home of the world's best Southern-style pulled pork sandwich. The sole advantage Kansas City has over

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Running Briefs is published bi-monthly. Unlike two former editors, who write entertaining columns for real newspapers, Tracey writes technical jargon for musty scientific journals. So, puhleeze, if you have any exciting news that you would like to see here, write it up and send it to Tracey at 1716 Reed Circle, Fairbanks AK 99709, or email at fntam@uaf.edu. Your fellow RCNers will thank you.

Advertising

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Stice: out-of-town race reports*(Continued from page 1)*

Fairbanks is barbecue.

Despite a prediction of rain and 30 mph winds, the weather on race morning was perfect. My daughter, Tristan Wagner, had come down from school in Wisconsin to do the half-marathon. Her longest previous run was about seven miles. She shares my training philosophy, which consists largely of the attitude "Hey, how hard could it be?". The rolling course goes around the capitol, west past Drake University, then enters a beautiful park system before finishing downtown along the river. Candy and my co-worker's uncle were along the route with supplies. At one point, I had so many bite-sized Snickers in my pockets it looked like I was running in jodhpurs. The aid stations seemed to be spaced about three blocks apart, and were staffed by hundreds of workers with an almost Stepford-like pleasantness. Well, it IS Iowa, after all.

We pulled in at 5:12, and were greeted by Candy and Tristan, who had completed the half sweat-free and breathing essentially normally. Very irritating. Reviews of the race were glowing, save for some early closings of aid stations and the solitude of a portion of the park (about Miles 22 to 24) into which spectators could not drive. Frankly, that's just

about the point when I'm happy if people can't see me. My co-worker has actually vowed to do another marathon. It went that well.

Buoyed by my stunning performance, I signed up for the Austin Marathon, in February of last year. We toured San Antonio for a few days before the race, and carbo-loaded on huevos rancheros and Lone Star.

On race morning, we were bussed in the pre-dawn hours to the start in northwest Austin. Despite predictions of perfect weather, it was about 34 degrees accompanied by howling winds. There were hundreds of runners huddled in the lee side of an office building near the start, looking much like the bat colonies for which Austin is famous. The first few miles were run merely to dispel hypothermia.

On paper, the course is downhill, but when you're running with all the flexibility of the Tin Man, it doesn't seem to help. The capitol building marks the end of the half-marathon, which is run on the same course as the marathon. My belief that all the runners ahead of me were doing the half was rudely shattered at Mile 13.1. But I pressed on, hoping that I might still be leading my age group. Most of the pack was brought to their knees by a 200 foot long, 20 foot high hill at about the 22 mile

mark. Having slogged up Miller Hill about a million times, I was able to call up my reserve and run the entire 200 feet. I finished happy, in a time I like to refer to as "four-something". I wound down post-race in various establishments in downtown Austin. It didn't take too long to find out why there are bumper stickers that read "Keep Austin Weird".

On a roll, I signed up this past spring for the Little Rock Marathon, and promptly tore something in my knee that ruled out running. In fact, it is still ruling out running the Equinox, but walking seems like an option. I also signed Tristan up for the Equinox. She is temporarily back in Fairbanks, and her longest race ever is still that half-marathon. But hey, how hard could it be?

I love the Equinox. It's the only marathon I will ever repeat, and I have a great deal of respect for it. Running in Fairbanks really is different, and it truly is special. I think most runners in Fairbanks have been around enough to realize that, but for those who haven't, let me just assure you of how great it is. Hang on to it. I'm writing this before the Equinox, but I am confident that no matter what my time is (or even if I don't finish), I will have the kind of experience that only Fairbanks and the Equinox can provide.

Fahrenheit-Be-Darned Winter Training Runs

Just because there is a little snow on the ground doesn't mean you should quit running for the winter! Join fellow runners for some fun winter training runs beginning October 6th. Runs leave from Patty Center at ~6 p.m., and go regardless of temperature (hence the name, Fahrenheit-Be-Darned). Short (3-5 mile) and long (6-8 mile) routes are available each week. Cookies and hot drinks provided. Don't be left out in the cold this winter—join us!

Running with Moses

By Roger Sayre

July 2004.

Under an orange and blue haze, with temperatures in the mid 80s, we meet at the Patty Center for an evening workout. By the time we start, there are about ten or twelve men and high school boys, and about five or six girls.

As we run across the soccer field and head past the west end of the Patty Center, it is quickly apparent that the run will be swift. We climb the sledding hill, and dive into the birch trees. Barely a quarter mile into the run, and I'm breathing hard.

Six or seven of the group are ahead, including several high school runners, Kevin Megar, and Moses Waweru, the Kenyan who is visiting Fairbanks this summer. Moses glides along easily just a few strides ahead. Also in the group are Jon, who flies Blackhawk helicopters for the Army, and Anders, a Nordic skier going into his senior year of high school. The others I haven't met yet.

After we crest the hill we catch our breath a little as we cross a parking lot and head into the UAF trail system. The pace seems to be well under 7 minutes a mile. There are now about nine of us, as others have fallen back. We drop in elevation for a few minutes and then start climbing at the T-Field. For a few hundred meters the trail is wide enough to continue talking. Then it narrows into the woods and we run single file. Runners are ahead of me

but no one is right behind. A few more have dropped off, and the pace seems much quicker now.

Moses steps aside and motions me to jump in ahead of him. He wants me to stick with the group. I do so for about five minutes, but on another long hill segment, I let him move ahead. Twenty-one minutes into the run and I realize that it will be difficult to hold on much longer. My throat is dry and I feel heavy. My legs are sluggish from the Santa Claus Half Marathon a few days earlier. The forest floor looks like tinder and the air smells like campfire from the millions of acres burning in Alaska. I want to hang with the group for as long as I can. Thirty-five minutes?

Moses, the gentleman, slows a little and urges me to get into the group again. Reluctantly, I oblige and glance at my watch, which says 25 minutes. My throat and lungs are searing. The Midnight Sun Run felt easier. The high schoolers press the pace, 10-12 meters ahead. Although downhills aren't bad, breathing is rapid and deep on the uphills. Out of control. Just before crossing Yankovich road, I let Moses by and thank him. Nearly 29 minutes into the run and I'm done. He moves up and smoothly passes a couple of the other runners who also start to lag.

We circle the east edge of the UAF Large Mammal Research Center. Moses looks at the pens, and does a double-take at his first sighting of musk ox. He looks to Kevin and appears to ask,

"What is THAT?" They are only 20 meters ahead, but I am fading.

When the narrow trail drops from the Musk Ox Farm, I can stretch out and maintain, but the hills are a cruel reminder of how much I've already done. On Farmers Loop Road, I catch up to Andy, a sophomore at Eastern Washington University. He's training to break into the top group of runners at that NCAA Division II school. Andy went to high school in Nenana and he's a strong runner.

We return to the Patty Center at 59 minutes, two or three minutes behind the group. After taking a drink, I see Moses, and tell him "good run". He says that he was trying to keep me in the group.

"When you are in a group, you feel good and you keep going," he explains in broken English. "When you drop from a group, you think to yourself too much and you do not feel good and you run slower and the group runs away. I get you back into the group so you feel strong."

"This week 29 minutes. Next time, longer," I promise him.

"That is good. You will get in shape, maybe run a good marathon in a few months," replied Moses.

The high school girls then come up to Moses. A young girl asks, "We'd like to know what you can tell us," she asks. "Whatever you can help us with, about becoming top runners. We'd

Running Away from Home

Humpy's Classic Marathon

Aug. 15, 2004, Anchorage, AK

Karin Gillis	3:41:21
Howard Hanson	3:48:01
Paulette Goodwin	3:59:12
Bob Hildebrandt	5:58:37

Tongass Marathon

Aug. 21, 2004, Ketchikan, AK

Jane Lanford	3:41:40
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Boulder Backroads

Marathon

Sept. 26, 2004, Boulder, CO

Steve Bainbridge	3:53:54
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Boulder Backroads

Half-marathon

Sept. 26, 2004, Boulder, CO

Monte Jordan	2:26:45
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really like to hear that."

"You can run 16 minutes," [for 5k] he says encouragingly. "Many women can run 16 minutes."

It is time to head home, but it feels good to have found this running community here in the far north, and it is good that Moses has found it as well.

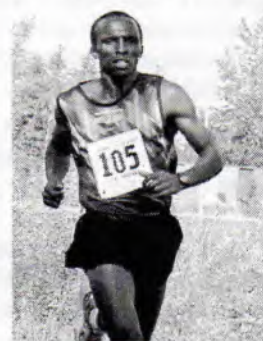
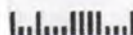


Photo by Jo Cowee

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October 16 and 20th: save the dates!

The RCN Social/Flint Hills Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, **October 16th** at the Birch Hill Cross-country Ski Center, beginning at 6 p.m. The event is a potluck, so dust off your cooking skills and bring something tasty. There will be live music and plenty of time to socialize and celebrate the end of another summer running season. In addition, there will be lots of valuable door prizes provided by RCN.

The Running Club North Annual Membership meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, **October 20th** at Keith Pollock's house (834 Goldfinch, off Ballaine Rd.). All RCN members are encouraged to attend.

The first order of business will be to elect officers for the 2004-2005 RCN Executive Council. RCN members are welcome to run for any office, and nominations will be accepted at the meeting. Positions include: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, Media Liaison/Newsletter Editor, Flint Hills/Insurance Liaison, Calendar Liaison, and three Member-at-Large positions. The folks currently holding these positions are listed on page 2 of this newsletter. So come to the meeting and cast your vote.

The second order of business is to set the 2005 RCN Event calendar. Race directors are encour-

aged to attend the meeting in case their event needs to be moved to another date.

If you are an RCN member, your very own copy of this highly-coveted calendar will be mailed to you in December. When retrieving your mail, however, please exercise caution. Your event calendar will be craftily hidden within the pages of the December issue of ***Running Briefs***. Thus, if you normally throw out your newsletter without even ripping open the little sticker dots holding it shut, be forewarned. You will inadvertently toss out the one thing you really value from your RCN membership dues: that calendar.