

RUNNING BRIEFS

The Running Club North Newsletter

February 2009

Welcome to the February issue of Running Briefs. Inside you'll find a memory of running in Fairbanks by two-time Equinox winner Mari Shirazi, a Pumpkin Muffin Recipe, and four articles- a look at the top age-graded Equinox performances by Roger Sayre, an ultra-marathon race story by Bob Hildebrandt, a take on lightweight hiking in the Interior by Michael Richmond and an update on trail work in the Chena River Recreation Area by Eric Troyer.

*Any and all contributions to the next issue are welcome- including race results, race stories, training tips, recipes, poetry, fiction, photos, ect. Please email submissions to:
andysterns@worldnet.att.net*

Iviq by Mari Shirazi

in any case, i am not sure i would have
anything very interesting to write about, well
maybe i would but i can't
remember a damn thing. truthfully, one of my
most vivid memories of
running in alaska was running with iviq at dusk
on the UAF ski trails,
it was late fall, but before snow covered the trails,
and we came to
that open field that is shaped like a square and
slopes upward and i
believe if you kept going up you would hit a
water tank... no wait,
maybe the edge of the reindeer farm?, and iviq
dashed into the field,
tucking her tail into her turns as she serpentine
this way and that,
and then looping back around in a huge figure
eight, tongue hanging out,

eyes bright, enticing me to chase her, which i did,
sort of, more like
short spurts and lurches towards her as she zoomed
by. she continued
those field romps, perhaps not quite so often or so
energetically, even
up to a few months before she died. those were
her most joyful moments,
and they warmed my heart like nothing else in the
world could.
ah, now i am sad. i guess i am just thinking of her
because tomorrow is
her birthday. she would have been 15.
mari

Double Pumpkin Muffins

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp salt
1 cup canned solid-pack plain pumpkin
(not pumpkin pie filling)
¾ cup skim milk
2/3 cup cup packed light brown sugar
1 large egg
3 Tbsp olive oil
½ cup hulled pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. In medium bowl, whisk together flours baking powder cinnamon, ginger and salt. Set aside.
3. In large bowl, whisk together pumpkin, milk, brown sugar, egg and oil until smooth.
4. Add dry ingredients to pumpkin mixture in 2 batches, stirring until just incorporated (a few lumps are fine). Stir in seeds.
5. Lightly coat cups of nonstick 12 cup muffin tin with cooking spray. Divide batter evenly among cups (each should be about 2/3 full).
6. Bake until toothpick inserted in center of muffin comes out clean and tops are just turning golden brown, about 25 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before removing from tins.

Ranking the Equinox by Roger Sayre

I took a little time perusing the archives and databases and have come up with a comparative performance ranking for the masters (40+) on the Equinox course, using World Masters Association (WMA) age-graded percentages. The formula is explained a little here:

<http://jick.net/track/grubb/wavalookup.html>.

The scores were based on 2006 WMA calculator: <http://jick.net/~jess/track/mtf/index.php>. Things would actually be a little different if I used a calculator for each era (say 80s, 90s, and 00s); but that would make my brain hurt.

WMA points are based on the world's best time for a given age, compared to the overall world record. This system allows comparisons of performances by athletes in different age groups. For example, how does a 2:45 marathon run by a 40-year-old compare to a 3:10 run by a 58-year-old. Based on the percentages shown below, the 3:10 at age 58 ranks slightly higher, 79.06 points compared to 77.56.

(Note that if a 58-year-old runs a 2:22 marathon in the future, the percentage would change significantly for runners in that age group).

2:45 marathon at 40: Open std: 2:04:55, Age std: 2:08:00, Age-performance performance: 77.58.

3:10 marathon at 58: Open std: 2:04:55, Age std: 2:30:13, Age-performance percentage: 79.06.

With these tables/calculators you can obtain an equivalent open time, but I don't think that's fair to the open runners. Let's just look at performance on the rugged Equinox course based on the percentages for a given age. Wow, Wayde Leder's 'The Man'. He has 5 of the top 20.

If you want the official statistics, go here, www.equinoxmarathon.org. It has everything

you'd ever want to know about Equinox statistics and trivia. You will find a treasure trove of archives and information. The annual deluxe booklet is yet another perk that makes this race so unique and fun.

All-Time Age Group Rankings- The Men

Name	Age...	Time...	WMA	Percentage	Points
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- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|------------|------|--|--|
| 1. Fr. Bozanich | 44... | 2:58:01... | 74.3 | | |
| 2. Bob Murphy | 43... | 2:58:28... | 73.5 | | |
| 3. Roger Sayre | 50... | 3:09:44... | 73.5 | | |
| 4. M. Lindberg | 45... | 3:02:37... | 73.1 | | |
| 5. Wayde Leder | 49... | 3:09:48... | 72.8 | | |
| 6. Jim Decur | 53... | 3:18:52... | 72.6 | | |
| 7. Wayde Leder | 44... | 3:02:41... | 72.4 | | |
| 8. Bob Murphy | 52... | 3:16:14... | 72.3 | | |
| 9. Wayde Leder | 51... | 3:14:35... | 72.2 | | |
| 10. Reifenstuhl | 54... | 3:20:40... | 72.1 | | |
| 11. R. Burton | 60... | 3:32:44... | 72.0 | | |
| 12. Wayde Leder | 45... | 3:05:26... | 72.0 | | |
| 13. Roger Sayre | 48... | 3:10:47... | 71.8 | | |
| 14. Bob Murphy | 42... | 3:01:21... | 71.8 | | |
| 15. Wayde Leder | 51... | 3:14:29... | 71.7 | | |
| 16. M. Lindberg | 44... | 3:05:14... | 71.5 | | |
| 17. S. Justice | 42... | 3:02:46... | 71.2 | | |
| 18. Jim Decur | 56... | 3:27:20... | 71.1 | | |
| 19. Wayde Leder | 48... | 3:12:45... | 71.1 | | |
| 20. Mike Kramer | 40... | 3:00:18... | 70.9 | | |

All-Time Age Group Rankings- The Women

(I'd like to make a caveat to the women's masters performance list, and say that it might not be complete—there might very well be some good age group times that have been buried in the results; please feel free to let me know if there are any corrections).

Rank.....	Name.....	Age.....	Time.....
Age Grade Percent			

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---------|------------------------|
| 1. | Marcie Trent |61 |4:08:0575.1 |
| 2. | Marcie Trent |60 |4:04:4175.0 |
| 3. | Marcie Trent |63 |4:10:5274.3 |
| 4. | Susan Faulkner |43 |3:18:1674.0 |
| 5. | Marcie Trent |68 |4:46:4673.6 |
| 6. | Marcie Trent |59 |4:11:4371.8 |
| 7. | Dorli McWayne |54 |3:59:4570.3 |
| 8. | Jane Lanford |48 |3:41:5170.3 |

9. Debbie Cropper463:38:2169.7
10. Amy Dalton453:36:5969.2
11. Jane Lanford503:51:2569.1
12. Georgia Gufstason493:49:0968.9
13. Doris Cooper705:58:4168.3
14. Marcie Trent564:14:2068.1
15. Dorli McWayne534:04:0468.1
16. Susan Faulkner423:34:0667.7
17. Jane Lanford463:44:5567.6
18. Dorli McWayne513:59:4767.6
19. Marcie Trent584:24:5167.3
20. Dorli McWayne524:05:0567.0

If Wayde Leder is 'The Man' for masters men, then Marcie Trent was certainly 'The Woman'. Not only does Trent have 7 of the top-20 age-graded Equinox performances of all time, she also has the top-three. Susan Faulkner's 3:18:16, run at age 43 is an outstanding time, and the current course record that has stood for 6 years.

Nevertheless, Trent went on a tear after turning 60, capped off with a 4:04 at age 60, and 4:08 at 61. These will be tough marks to beat. Dorli McWayne has also made her mark, with 4 of the top-20 masters performances. As with the men, we have some tough masters women runners out there- among them Susan Faulker, Tina Devine, Jane Lanford and Dorli McWayne- ready to take down some of these age group times. We can expect to see this list to change a lot in the next few years.

Check out Roger's coaching and personal blog: <http://northernlightsonline.blogspot.com> where this article first appeared.

Turning 60

By Robert Hildebrandt

Turning 60 was great. I had waited 60 years for the event. It feels great that I finally made it- better than the alternative. In addition, being able to run a marathon in all 50 states, and to have run at least 100 marathons before age 60 was really good. The front part of 2008, filled with sports injuries, surgery and recovery, wasn't the best. The conclusion of the year is turning out much better.

In August I ran Humpy's marathon in Anchorage. My continuing Achilles tendon and foot problems made finishing Humpy's a challenge. Still I had to finish, as I had a streak of 16 finishes at this race that I didn't want to end.

Finally I wised up and consulted a different doctor. A very smart move. Instead of telling me to stop running and rest on my "laurels," the new doctor said "Let's see if we can solve your problems so that you can continue running." His treatment is working. Not a total cure, but a lot better than I was doing.

In August I ran the Equinox for the 16th time. Although I was slow, my body felt better. Running the aspen trail and Henderson Road felt good. I enjoyed the Equinox rather than suffering through it. Thank you, Dr. Dixon.

Next up was turning 60 and the Heartland 50 in Cassoday, Kansas. I wanted to do something special for my 60th birthday, and I felt that running a 50-miler for my 60th filled the bill. Especially since I was born and raised in Kansas, approximately 15 miles from where this event takes place. Cassoday, Kansas is almost a ghost town, with fewer than 100 residents. It also claims to be the 'Prairie Chicken Capitol', but I never saw a single one.

The Heartland is both a 50- and a 100-miler, run on dirt back roads through the Flint Hills. The Flint Hills are hilly, but Ester Dome is a mountain by comparison.

The race started at 6:00 a.m. on October 11th, in front of the abandoned high school building. After about ¼ mile of asphalt, we were on dirt roads- a regular freeway- as I saw only six pickup trucks in my 14-hours-plus of running. Once the sun came up, the sky was clear with temperatures in the 80's, but the wind BLEW the entire race. No shade trees, just open Kansas prairie stretched out before me as I ran.

My right foot was not perfect, and I ran with a taped, rather than permanent, orthotic (it hadn't

arrived before my trip.) I ran through the pain that started at about mile 18. At the 25-mile turn around, my wonderful wife Patsy was waiting with clean socks, a change of shoes, a few words of encouragement and a camera for a photo moment.

I slowed way down in the last 25 miles. The first 25 had taken me 6.5 hours, but I had forgotten to refresh my supply of GU for the second half. Who knows what the cause was- the wind, no GU, 25 miles of running, a 59 year- and 364 day-old body, or a combination of all of the above.

Patsy greeted me at the finish line, ringing a cow bell. Amazingly, I wasn't last in the 50-miler. I finished and would celebrate my 60th birthday the next day, no worse for wear. I also shaved off my mustache which I had worn for more than 40 years. Patsy had never seen me without it. She says the verdict is still out on whether I should grow it back.

Despite physical problems, 2008 has been a great year. Receiving the "Spirit of the Equinox" award was really a wonderful surprise. Thanks to Dr. Dixon, I hope to continue running. Next year I'm staying around home more and am looking forward to completing all of the Flint Hills series races.

Fast-packing by Michael Richmond



What is fast-packing? Simply put, it is backpacking with lighter loads than typical for

multi-day outings, allowing you to cover 25 to 35 miles or more in a day. Average speeds are typically just 2 to 3 mph, unless you plan on running parts of the route. Twenty pounds or less is the ideal for the fast-packer, as this smaller amount of weight gives you more mobility, less fatigue in the shoulders, and less stress on the knees and feet. A brisk 25- to 35-mile fast-pack on a steep, rocky route will give you a good workout, along with some inspiring and refreshing wilderness access. For those of us who enjoy endurance athletic activities, such as long-distance running, skiing, or biking, it is a great tool for maintaining our fitness as well as getting away from the daily routine. And given the vagaries and uncertainties of Alaskan environmental conditions, it can also provide you with unexpected and significant challenges. On my fast-packs, I only pack what is necessary, one change of layers, a water and wind proof shell (absolutely vital!), food and water for the expected duration, with one extra meal for unexpected delays, and emergency shelter. In spring and fall, this would be my 1.5 pound bivy sack and light +20F down sleeping bag (1.8 lbs.), while during warmer periods, I just bring my hot sack (an ultra-light sleeping bag liner, similar to the mylar emergency "space blankets") and foam pad. These are just for emergencies, and fortunately, I have not needed to make use of them on any of my outings. So, with all these things, and my 2 pound pack, the load is only 15 to 20 pounds, slightly noticeable on the shoulders and legs, but not a great hindrance to my speed and mobility.

My strategy for fast-packing always involves the possibility of running parts of the chosen route if possible, so I wear my running or multi-sport shoes, with good insoles for the long, hard pounding my feet will be enduring. Trekking poles are a must since these low-topped shoes offer no ankle support, so the stability of the poles keeps me from rolling an ankle or jamming a knee on the steep rocky routes. With the right combination of socks, and attention to my stride and balance, I have been blister-free on all my outings in these shoes. On outings involving snow-patches, marshy tussocks, and swampy areas, my multi-sport shoes with the fleece-lined

neoprene storm socks have proved their worth, keeping my feet relatively warm, allowing for fast drainage, and still providing good traction on rocky slopes.

So what are some good areas for fast-packing for those of us here in the Interior? If you want the certainty of a marked trail, two excellent options are the Pinnell Mountain trail (27.3 miles) and the Chena Dome trail (31 miles). Having done both in the past year, I would have to rate Chena Dome as the most difficult, as it has more elevation gain and fewer switchbacks.

There are two trailheads for the Chena Dome trail, one just before and one just past Angel Creek Lodge, on the west side of Chena Hot Springs road, around miles 50 and 51. They are clearly marked with signs. When my little 15 month-old husky/lab mix dog Mattie and I fast-packed this in mid-May this year, it took us 13 hours, with one hour spent sight-seeing and photographing. I had originally thought of running sections of it, but the very rocky and tussocky route, and the steep knee-jarring descents and stair-step steep ascents kept me from doing any running.



The Chena Dome trail covers a sweeping expanse of above-treeline summits with the average elevation, once you make the initial ascent from the trailhead at 1100 feet, of 3500 feet or greater. You reach the highest point, Chena Dome (4421 feet) at about mile 10.5 after a couple very steep ascents/descents. For the next 16-18 miles, a

seemingly endless series of summits and dips awaits you, though progressively lower than the first two steep ones before Chena Dome.



The remains of an old DC-4 freight airplane that crashed in 1952 during bad weather lie next to the trail on a 4100 foot ridge near mile-eight. The pilot and co-pilot lost their lives on a flight delivering supplies to Barrow when they slammed right into the ridge when the weather closed in. The cold, dry sub-arctic conditions up there have preserved the wreckage amazingly; it seems that it could have been just a few years ago, judging by the shiny look of the aluminum and magnesium fuselage and wing parts, the engines, and uncorroded wiring.

The weather during my outing in mid-May was about as good as could be expected, with gusty northeast winds of 15-25 mph and temperatures in the low 40s. Hat and gloves were essential, but I stayed dry, always a plus on a long outing. We did this hike on a Wednesday and didn't see a single person. This trail is not very heavily used, and in some sections you just have to set your course between the rock cairns that mark the route. These are supposed to be easily visible from one to the next, but in heavy weather with very low visibility, this could be a problem. Something to keep in mind.

If you want a slightly shorter hike within a two-hour drive of Fairbanks, but still challenging- with the option of adding the extra element of biking at the end- the Pinnell Mountain trail beckons.

Located on the Steese Highway, it has two trailheads, on at milepost 86 (12 Mile Summit) and milepost 106 (Eagle Summit). This one I did alone in late August. I couldn't bring intrepid little Mattie because I had to stash my bicycle at one end of the trail (12-Mile Summit), and bike the 20 miles back along the highway, to my car, where I started the hike, at Eagle Summit.



Both the Chena Dome and Pinnell Mountain trails are classic interior Alaska tundra hikes, very rocky with occasional marshy or tussocky sections in saddles and low points, but expansive views in all directions on the summits.



One thing to keep in mind with both of these is

wind. It is almost always windy in these exposed areas, and if even what would seem to be a minor weather disturbance to us in the lowlands near Fairbanks moves in, fog and cold windy rain or snow will occur at these higher exposed elevations. Which is why extra layers, hat, gloves, maps, and a GPS are essential for your safety. I always check the weather forecasts before I undertake these fast-packs. The best place for accurate weather information and forecasts can be found on the National Weather Service's web-site at <http://pafg.arh.noaa.gov>, or by calling the Alaska Weather Information Line, 800-472-0391 (458-3745 in Fairbanks). You can also look at satellite and radar loops on the NWS website to help make your decisions.

The Pinnell Mountain trail was easier than the Chena Dome outing, because there is less elevation gain (the start at Eagle Summit is at 3600 feet, and the highest point, Mt. Pinnell is 4934 ft), and the ascents and descents on the steeper slopes are all switchbacked. I was able to complete the 27.3 miles in nine-and-a-half hours, under beautiful sunny skies, in a stiff 15-25 mph cool (40-45 degrees) northeast wind. I kept a brisk hiking pace the whole way, and took just four short breaks for food/water, and energy drinks, of 5 to 15 minutes. I did slow down and take pictures at times too.

One highlight of the trail was seeing a herd of caribou after I descended into the marshy "Swamp Saddle" between miles 14 and 15. I stopped and stood quietly, and they actually approached me slightly. But when I said hello and they realized what I was, they took off running. This section of the trail is boardwalked, to protect the marshy tundra, and to make for easier footing. There are also some sections of boardwalk in the last mile of the trail, before you reach 12-Mile Summit. These can be very slippery when wet or frosty, so caution is advised if that occurs.

The fall colors of the tundra were in full view, and this combined with the clear blue skies and craggy rocks, was stunning. Views north across the Yukon Flats and south through the seemingly endless uplands were a patchwork of brown

tundra and fall color dropping down to the spruce and yellowing birch/aspen in the lower elevations.



The 20 mile return bike ride from 12-Mile Summit to my vehicle at Eagle Summit took just under two hours. It proved to be quite fun for the first 10 downhill miles, slightly invigorating on the next five-mile flat section, and highly challenging for the last five uphill miles. A stiff headwind and temperatures falling in the 30s, added to my overall fatigue from a long day of movement, as I longed for Eagle Summit to come into view in the fading daylight, while my feet began freezing (I had extra layers, but just didn't want to stop). I had started the day at Eagle Summit at around 10 a.m., and it was near 10 p.m. when I returned to the sanctuary of my vehicle, heat, and warm, dry clothing.

One thing to keep in mind about all these fast-pack routes, is that they are all above treeline, and leave you more vulnerable to the elements. In fact, the uplands, north and east of Fairbanks, where the Chena Dome and Pinnell Mountain trails are, have the highest number of thunderstorm days in all of Alaska. June and July have the highest number of thunderstorm days, so your odds are better on these trails in May, and later in August/September.

Fast-packing remains one of my favorite outdoor activities, I always pack my collapsible trekking poles when I head to the lower 48 to see family.

I've been on other beautiful 25-40 mile fast-packs in the Cascades of Oregon and Washington, where the trails are wider and smoother, enabling me to run more. There are other great routes in Alaska I've yet to hit as well, on the Kenai, and in the Chugach, and the alpine traverse opportunities in the Interior are virtually unlimited. Kyle Joly's book "Outside in the Interior" is a great reference for any outdoor activity in our area.

WORK CONTINUES ON MULTIUSE TRAILS IN REC AREA BY ERIC TROYER

With help from a forest firefighter crew, state parks has cleared trees from 3.5 miles of the route of the planned Angel Creek Hillside Trail in the Chena River Recreation Area.

In September, a crew from the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association (SAGA) will clear the rest of the trail route to the Lower Angel Creek Cabin. Next spring dozer work will be done on the trail.

Once finished, the 5.5-mile sustainable trail will offer year-round multi-use access to the cabin (except for seasonal restrictions). The current wetlands trail has been closed in summer because it is in poor condition. Plans call for the sustainable trail to eventually be extended to the Upper Angel Creek Cabin.

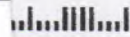
State parks has also worked on the Stiles Creek Trail, another multi-use trail in the rec area. A wet portion of the trail near the trailhead at Mile 31.6 Chena Hot Springs Road has been hardened with fractured rock. Both ends of the trail are due to be rerouted to sustainable standards. Also, 70 of 400 planned rolling grade dips have been finished. The dips help to shunt water off the trail to prevent erosion of the trail tread. The remaining dips will be finished next year.

Crews and contractors spent seven days doing maintenance work on the Compeau Trail, such as grading rough sections, reworking rolling grade dips, and re-establishing outslopes.

The above article was excerpted from Interior Trails Quarterly, a free email newsletter that is written and distributed by Eric Troyer. email Eric at etcl@acsalaska.net.

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Running Briefs
c/o Andy Sterns
PO Box 82671
Fairbanks, AK 99708



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