



# CHECKERS CHATTER

ATHLETIC CLUB

Nov/Dec 2006

## 25th Annual High School Cross Country Invitational



Sunday, November 19th, Checkers AC celebrated the 25th year of its All WNY High School Cross Country Invitational at East Aurora High School. This year's Silver Anniversary Race featured a new addition to our annual event: a race for all alumni from years' past. Charlie Higgins, Kenmore East '03, won the men's race in 19:47. Krystyna Markut, Lancaster '01-'03 and Genna Pfeiffer, Lancaster '03-'04, Lancaster tied in the women's race with a time of 27:35. The three were presented with the first Paul Lewis Alumni Award trophies. Their names will be engraved on the trophies and displayed at our race sponsor store, Runners Roost, throughout the next year.

Leanne Skrabacz, West Seneca West, won the girls' title of All WNY High School XC Runner of the Year in 21:17. Ryan O'Conner from East Aurora ran away from the field on a very soggy course to win the boys' title with a time of 17:19. Complete results and photos are available on the club's website.

On Saturday night the club hosted an Alumni Reunion for past participants, club members, and the local running community at Cole's Restaurant. Those who attended thoroughly enjoyed the stories of our club's past races and history. My sincere gratitude to race committee members: Joe Jordan, Jim Kinney, Karen Krissey, Peter Morris and Paul Lewis. A special



thanks to Pete Szymanski our Poll Coordinator for his hard work on this year's race. Without Pete's dedication to our race, it may have been cancelled because of the October storm.

Thank you to all the club members who came out to volunteer this year: Catharine Haight, Diane and Tony, Greg Lavis, Karen Crissey, Kim and Bob Truesdell, Jeanne Chiarmonite and Kathy Sinicropi. Runners Roost and Donnelly Design came up with another outstanding shirt this year. The support of Roger, the Board and club members involved this year is sincerely appreciated as this is a much anticipated event by our WNY high school XC runners. Stephen Seerey, Race Director

# More from High School Cross-Country Invitational



Photos by Diane Sardes

## A Little History

The race was the idea of Paul Lewis, who taught and coached in the area. Paul also began our organized track workouts at Cleveland Hill HS in the early 1980's.

There was a great deal of resistance among club members to the idea of a HS race. Among other reasons, in 1980 we began sponsoring the waterfront 10K and felt that was our way to give something back to the running community. We did not feel we needed another event. Plus, we thought the high schools already had their own federation and state championships. But Paul was insistent. He and Donna single-handedly got that race going and off the ground.

In acknowledging the growth and success of the race, thanks go to the following people: Tom and Marty Courtney. Tom took over track workouts and race directorship from Paul and Marty handled registration for over 20 years. Jim Dunlop, Sr., who helped compile the weekly poll. Joe Jordan who was an early supporter of the race. Karen Crissy who has handled registration and was honored at this year's race for her years of service to the event. To Diane Sardes who took some great photos of the event. Greg Lavis who set up the registration page. Runner's Roost for their sponsorship of the race and the runners' poll. Steve decided that the Alumni run will become a permanent part of the event moving forward. Finally, to Pete, Steve and Kathy who have worked so hard to improve the race. *Jim Kenney and the Race Committee.*

*Thanks again for the invitation to join you on this the 25th Anniversary of the Checkers High School All Star Run. It was a very special day for both Donna and I. As I told you, I actually got goose bumps when I walked into that gym this morning and saw all those kids and their parents and coaches there. It was exactly what I dreamed of 25 years ago. It speaks positively of what Checkers means to the "running community". Back when we were in the infant stages of Checkers that was one of our primary goals: to reach out to the entire running community and not only our club members. We wanted to foster a spirit of pride in what we had here in Western New York. Keep up the great work, and, without any question, Checkers is still the best club in our area. Please pass this on to the club membership.*

**Paul and Donna Lewis**

*Dear Checkers members,*

*Thank you so much for supporting high school running. I have had the pleasure and the honor of running your HS Cross Country Invitational for 5 years. It's been fun and challenging - especially with the foot of snow last year and the mud this year! It couldn't have been a better ending to my high school "career" in XC this year. I won the race and was honored to be called the High School Runner of the Year. The trophy will long be a centerpiece on my awards' shelf. I hope to be able to run in the Alumni Race sometime in the future. Thanks again. I will miss the weekly ritual of hoping that I was named "Runner of the Week!"*  
**Gratefully, Leanne Skrabacz  
West Seneca East High School**



## GETTING TO KNOW YOU, by Paul Wandel

### Checkers Interview with Sam and Stephanie Spritzer

BIO:	Sam	Stephanie
Age Group:	50- 54	45- 49
Checkers member:	1 year	1 year
Running:	5 years	8 years
Residence:	Williamsville, NY	Williamsville, NY
Professional:	Business Analyst Adeptiv Solutions	Medical Secretary Main Urology PC
Personal:	Married with 2 children: Michael (22), Dan (15)	
Interests:	Cross training, Website Development	Cooking, Gardening, Fitness
Pace Group:	26	27



The Village of Williamsville is a most historic place. Founded by Jonas Williams in 1811, he harnessed the energy of Ellicott Creek and created the Williamsville Water Mill. The village showcases many 19<sup>th</sup> Century homes, and offers a charm and feel reminiscent of that era. Main St. intersects directly through the village center in a stretch that is 5 lanes wide and nearly 2 miles in length. This historic charm is rapidly neutralized each day around rush hour, when motorists contend with vehicle congestion and personal frustration. However, it is in the pre-dawn hour of 5 AM, that Sam and Stephanie Spritzer really enjoy their village. "We run together through the village almost daily."

Originally from New Rochelle, NY in Westchester County, they eventually moved to WNY. "We were looking for a better quality of life. Our schools were poor, the cost of living was high and we had people congestion everywhere!" Settling in Williamsville has been a wise move for them.

This running couple both discovered the sport on different steps. Stephanie first became a casual runner in 1998. "My Mom had died and I was dealing with the emotional grief." Her twin sister encouraged running to help with the stress. "I entered my first race at the Village Glen Moonlight 5K, in 1999."

Sam had different issues. "I smoked 1.5 packs of cigarettes a day and I was 20 pounds overweight." Encouraged by Stephanie's influence, he began to run as well. "My first race was the St. Gregs 5K race in 2000, which I did in 29:04."

It wasn't until 2003 that Stephanie was placing in local road races. "I discovered a healthy competitiveness," and that became her inspiration. In 5 years, Stephanie found progression in both improvement and enjoyment. "It's a part of me. I have a passion for running. Its fun and I meet many new people." Her hard work and dedication eventually paid off. She won the Amherst Triple Crown Award in 2003 and repeated for 4 consecutive years. Her 1998 5K time (28:00) is now just a memory, in the light of her current PR (22:37).

Meanwhile, Sam Spritzer was genuinely concerned. "Stephanie was beating me by 3-4 minutes in the 5Ks. I decided to consistently improve my times." Sam focused on his goal of breaking 24 minutes, submerging from the 27 to 28 range.

There were no secrets. Sam framed his goal with cross training, spinning and disciplined eating. Occasional injuries nagged at his efforts, but he remained steadfast. The evidence of Sam's hard work is clear and convincing. His 5K times tumbled. For 2006, he posted a high of 27:20 at the Jan 1<sup>st</sup> Resolution Run, to a current PR score of 22:11, at the Bob Ivory Race in November. Sam was most recently recognized at the Checkers Award Banquet last October for the distinction of "Most Lifetime Records" (7 in 2006). Sam posts his own Website at samspritzer.com. The following is an extract. "If you notice the progressive decline in my times, it is not something to brag about but to be proud of. It is a testament to dedicate and hard work, a can-do 'never say never' attitude, came with its share of injuries and frustrations, and with the encouragement of a selected few."

Sam has drawn inspiration from running legend, Steve Prefontaine. *Most people run a race to see who is fastest, I run a race to see who has the most guts.* "Pre Her very close friendship with Diane Sardes and Tony Garrow (2006 recipient of the Tom Steele Award) has forged a new bond and a new inspiration for Sam. "Tony is more than an awesome guy. He is a hero and an inspiration. There have been times during a race when I wanted to give up because of sheer exhaustion. But when I think about what Tony is going through and how he never quits, it gives me a fresh sense of motivation to finish the race, no matter what!" "Quitting is not an option...Finishing is the ONLY option!"

The Spritzer's connection to Checkers AC, first developed in 2005. Stephanie recalls, "I met Julie Donnelly at the Village Glen Fitness Club. She encouraged me to be affiliated with a family-oriented running club and to meet new people." Since then, they have become dedicated members, faithfully attending Tuesday Track workouts. "Bob is a great Coach and he spends a lot of time with you." Once a month, the Spritzers meet with other Checkers members for dinners. 'Stephanie's Supper Club' has allowed an opportunity for informal social interaction and fun.

2007 will be a year of challenge and goals for this running couple. Stephanie will hope to compete in the 21s and continue to have a lot of fun doing it. She is planning to compete in the Buffalo News Runner of the Year Series, as well. Sam is planning to break 21, and both would like to increase their distances to compete in the Buffalo Half Marathon, this Spring.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to Ted Paget and his new wife Joan who just returned from a belated honeymoon in Israel.



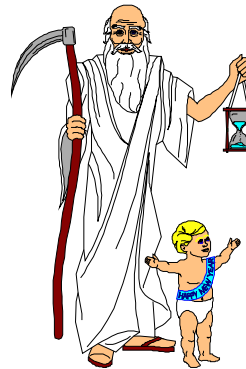
## Tuesday Group Runs

Track season is over, but Checkers members continue to meet to run. A group is meeting at UB, at the football stadium, on Tuesdays at 5:30. Another group meets at the Historical Museum at 6:00 for a run around Delaware Park.

*With  
Deepest  
Sympathy*



On November 16th, Larry Ammon lost his only son Matthew in a tragedy that occurred in Seattle, where Matt lived. Please keep Larry in your and prayers. If anyone is inclined to donate in Matthew's name, a memorial fund has been set up by his friends. The "Matthew Ammon Memorial Fund". You can make a check out to the fund and send it to: Jake Ferderer, 300 110th Ave. NE #404, Bellevue, WA 98004. Alternatively, you can go to any Bank of America and ask them to deposit money into the account. It is under Jake Ferderer / Matthew Ammon Memorial Fund.



**WHO SAYS  
THERE IS NO  
RESOLUTION  
RUN?!?!?!?!?**

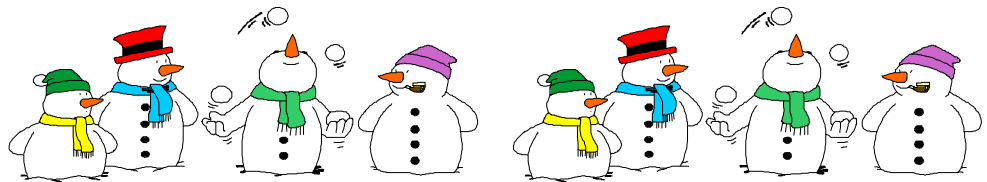
It's my resolution that the tradition will continue.

Meet in the parking lot of the Historical Society on Nottingham at noon on New Year's Day, take a fun run with your Checkers friends, and follow the crowd over to my house for a New Year's Brunch. Joan

Thanks to Amy (Gerbec) Koppmann who is the Senior National Digital Imaging Product Trainee at Sony Electronics for supplying information on a new camera purchase for Checkers. Amy even delivers Sony products if you ask her really nice. ([amy.koppmann@am.sony.com](mailto:amy.koppmann@am.sony.com))

## New Members

Patrick Concannon  
Brigitte and Frank Soltiz  
Colleen McCoy  
Nancy Campbell  
Melanie DeZitter  
Eva Basehart



## SOCIAL/EVENTS CALENDAR

Jan. 1, 12:00 PM	Resolution Fun Run, Delaware Park
Jan. 6, 7:30 PM	HOLIDAY PARTY
Jan. 22, 10:00 AM	Chestnut Ridge Snowshoe Race, 627.3448
Jan. 29, 11:00 AM	Penguin Run 5K, Classics V, Amherst, 691.6000

ALWAYS VERIFY DATES ON RACE APPLICATIONS



## Helping out at the Casino Niagara

**Marathon**—Checkers volunteers, and Coach Vicki's UB X-Country team. Thanks again for exemplifying the Checkers' spirit of giving to the local running community. You are appreciated.



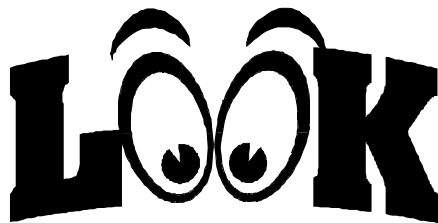
Vicki's UB Team volunteers



# HAPPY Birthday

Teresa Metz-Zagskorn	12/3
James Kavanagh	12/4
Alan Wrobel	12/4
John Teuscher	12/5
Karen Aavik	12/6
Brenda Bartkowiak	12/6
Mary Roll	12/6
Ray Ernst	12/7
Mark Kelly	12/7
John Lintner	12/8
Andrew Rearson	12/8
Lucy Lorzczak	12/9
Bill Schimpf	12/9
Eric Cornavaca	12/10
Kieran O'Loughlin	12/10
Diane McGuire	12/11
Jerry Bergman	12/12
Eileen D'Arcy-Smith	12/12
Kenneth Heavern	12/12
Lydia Samuelson	12/14
Tom Droz	12/15
Patrick Green	12/15
Richard VanAlmkerk	12/15
John Tamburlin	12/16
Wendy Guyker	12/17
Anne Lytwynec	12/17
Mike Rogers	12/17
Annie Schuster	12/18
Allison Bartkowiak	12/19
Chloe O'Loughlin	12/19
Adam Heiligenthaler	12/22
Darell McKenrick	12/23
Gary Raby	12/23
Leanne M. Skrabacz	12/23
Grant Hennigar	12/25
Liza Callahan	12/26
Michael Cole	12/26
Thomas Donnelly	12/26
Rudy Diaz	12/27
Rebecca Donnelly	12/27
Jody Snyder	12/27
Paul Wandel	12/31
Gloria Santarpia	1/1
Diane Sardes	1/1
Herman Van Leeuwen	1/3
Mike Cook	1/4
Maria Baer	1/6
Linda White	1/6
Lauren AnnLorek	1/7
Chuck Tokarz	1/8
Cindy Bartkowiak	1/9
Hermann Pohl	1/9
Tim Zelasko	1/9
Carol Heiligenthaler	1/11
Jerry Mangan	1/12

Con't next page....



## Checkers Board of Directors Nominations

Attention all Checkers members. If you have always wanted to get more involved with the club or you a new member looking to make a difference, then now is your chance. Checkers is now accepting nominations for the board of directors. There are five positions available and are each a two-year term. Elections take place at the Checkers general meeting in March. Duties include organizing and helping at different Checkers events, running and non. We meet the last Tuesday of each month, normally after track practice and at 7:00pm during the winter season. Therefore, if this interests you or someone you know might be interested, please contact Roger at 716-912-9800 or e-mail him at [rogerroll@adelphia.net](mailto:rogerroll@adelphia.net)

## Checkers Clothing

Attention all Checkers members, are you sick of running races and not getting your picture taken? Are your current running gear clothing items that the Goodwill threw out? Do you find yourself hanging out at post race parties by yourself because other Checkers members don't realize you are also a member? Finally, while competing in races out of town do you want the locals to see that you come from an outstanding club in Buffalo N.Y.? If you answer yes to any or all of the above questions then I have a deal for you. **New Checkers Clothing.** We have the latest in Nike Pro Vent running tops, short and long sleeve. Singlets for those hot summer races and now new Nike jackets and Sweat-shirts, perfect for those cool weather runs or just looking cool at post race parties. See the clothing link on the Checkers web site [www.checkersac.org](http://www.checkersac.org) for updated pictures and prices or contact me about available sizes at [rogerroll@adelphia.net](mailto:rogerroll@adelphia.net) Roger

# PR's

**Turkey Trot**—0:28:16 Darrin Pocza Life 0:32:02 Herman VanLeeuwen Life 0:33:02 Jane Wright Life 0:33:14 Anne Pyrak Life 0:33:43 Carolyn Corgel Life 0:34:59 Dave Sada Life 0:36:22 Patricia Hilbert Life 0:40:14 Kim Chmielewicz Life 0:42:33 Sandra Hebel Life 0:44:32 Linda Gerbec Life

**Lindsay's Legacy 5K**—0:20:12 Jim Figler Course

**Bob Ivory 5K** 0:19:32 Peter Hogan Age-Group 0:22:11 Sam Spritzer Life 0:24:38 Sarah Bartkowiak Life 0:25:09 Ron Bartkowiak Life 0:25:28 Cindy Bartkowiak Life 0:26:53 Linda Gerbec Life Florida Ironman 4:35:03 Patrick Dalton Jr Life

**Jack O'Lantern Fall Classic 5K** 0:20:07 Jim Figler Life 0:28:21 Fran Rowe Course

**Falls View Casino Marathon** 4:05:43 Kim Chmielewicz Life

**Falls View Casino Half Marathon** 1:59:48 HEBELER, Sandra Life

**The LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon** 3:31:00 John Teuscher Life 4:51:55

John Lintner Life

**Columbus Marathon** 3:44:43 Lisa Woodward Life 4:52:59 Nancy M

Battaglia Life **Ridge Walk 14M** 3:02:09 Carolyn Corgel Life

**ECMC Lifeline Foundation 5K** 0:22:15 Sam Spritzer Life

**Akron Tiger Trails xc invitational** 0:24:19 Jennifer Raby Life



## Fall Marathons

New York City Marathon - Paul Wandel 4:27:02

Chicago Marathon - Nicholas Baer  
2:59:28, Elizabeth Guancial 3:27:11, Billy Flynn  
3:28:37, John Teuscher 3:31:00, Alan Baer  
3:58:53, Toby Mazur 4:22:01, Chuck Fried  
4:24:49, Nancy Sheehan 4:27:59, Gary Lew  
4:28:03, Susan Bennett 4:28:59, Michele  
Bauman 4:51:05, John Lintner 4:51:55, Maria  
Baer 4:53:48, Maureen Sacks 6:16:53

**Breakers Marathon** - Roger Niethe 4:14:38, Jacqueline Proulx 4:19:57

**Columbus Marathon** - Lisa Woodward  
3:44:43, Nancy Battaglia 4:52:59

**Fallsview Casino Marathon** - Tom Appenheimer  
3:46:20, Patricia Webb 3:47:17, Mike Schiavone  
3:49:24, Herman van Leeuwen 3:50:22, Pam London  
3:50:30, Jennifer Anderson 4:04:43, Kim  
Chmielewicz 4:05:43, Kristin Leiby 4:10:05, Scott  
Perrapato 4:30:15

*Congratulations to all!*



In October a Checkers' tee shirt made it to the 10,000 foot summit of Mt. Haleakala on Maui, Hawaii. Here's a picture that shows it. Ray Ernst Show us where your Checkers' T has been. Send photos to [jcrouse@buffalo.edu](mailto:jcrouse@buffalo.edu). (Keep it clean, please.)

**Do you want to get in to the best shape of your life or finish a marathon? Have you always wanted to help Roswell Park?**

**Here is your chance...**

Roswell Park's Team Cure Challenge program is dedicated to providing a memorable, life-impacting experience that improves your cardiovascular fitness level and helps advance cancer research and patient care programs at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. To date, 140 Team Cure participants have raised over \$300,000 with the help of our customized training program.

Interested participants can choose from a variety of venues and events. The San Diego "Rock & Roll" Marathon on June 3, 2007 offers a full marathon. The San Francisco Marathon on July 29, 2007 offers a full or half marathon and a 5K. The Lake Tahoe Marathon on September 29, 2007 offers a full or half marathon, 20 mile power walk or run, 10K, 5K, 72 or 35 mile bike race, a 1 mile swim and a triathlon. The Disney Orlando Marathon on January 6, 2008 offers a full or half marathon and a 5K.

All races will be covered at our information sessions on Monday, January 15 at 6:00 pm or Monday, February 5 at 6:00 pm in Roswell Park's Research Studies Center, or on Thursday, January 25, at 6:00 pm or Wednesday, February 7 at 6:00 pm at a location to be determined. For more information please call 845-8788, or visit our website at [www.teamcure.com](http://www.teamcure.com).

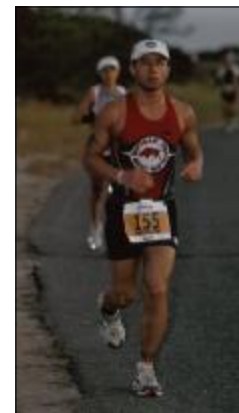


## BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED

Paul	Duttge II	1/13
Alison	Green	1/13
Jackie	Appenheimer	1/14
Kitty	Mahoney	1/14
Bill	White	1/14
Steven	Follum	1/16
Sally	Murphy	1/16
David	Eckhardt	1/17
Kristin	Kuehn	1/17
Kathleen	Fretthold	1/18
Edye	Radice	1/18
Peggy	Towers	1/18
Catherine	Forrestel	1/19
Tim	Sloan	1/19
Christopher	Mattingly	1/21
David	Peterson	1/21
Carol	Oleshansky	1/23
Chin Li	Pompeo	1/24
Billy	Flynn	1/25
Ellen	Hamm	1/25
Patricia	Hilbert	1/25
Jeff	Mead	1/25
Paul	Donnelly	1/27
Warren	Hale	1/27
Robert	Rich	1/28
Marc	Koester	1/29
Jennifer	Schaffstall	1/29
Larry	Ammon	1/31
Elizabeth	George	1/31

## SWIM, BIKE, RUN at the Ironman Florida

2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run— all said and done 140.6 miles!!! It was great race for me being it was my first time. I was shocked on how big this race is and how many people are out there to support you. I am still living off the high and am thinking about Lake Placid 2008. Any-one interested?? I thought my race went well finishing the race in 14 hrs 35 min.. And yes I did meet ex-Sabre Pat LaFontaine. *Pat Dalton*



## Checkers Annual Holiday Party

Date: Saturday, January 6th, 2006

Time: 7:30 pm 'til ?

Place: Roger and Mary Roll's house

80 Cayuga Road, Village of Williamsville, one block south of Main Street, across from Calvary Episcopal Church at South Cayuga & Milton Street. Parking is not allowed on Cayuga, but is allowed on the south side (church side) of Milton. In addition, there is a public parking lot near the corner of Cayuga and Main, just four houses away.

We ask for a \$5.00 donation or a dish to pass. Members along with non-members are welcomed. Checkers provides wine and pop. This year Flying Bison will be providing a selection of beer for our enjoyment.

Please RSVP Roger at 716-912-9800 or e-mail at [rogerroll@adelphia.net](mailto:rogerroll@adelphia.net)

## The Ducks vs. The Pigeons, By Bill Donnelly

I've just finished raking the leaves at my home in North Buffalo, and boy was it back-breaking work this year. I think it was tougher this year since the leaves were still attached to the huge branches they grew up on during the past year. I broke three rakes because of those dang branches.

Oh, we all have our horror stories or tales of heartwarming events to share of that wonderful mid-October snowstorm that kicked Buffalo right where it hurts. Two feet of the fluffy stuff that was none too fluffy, but rather heavy and wet like two feet of freshly poured concrete. It made running such an adventure as you tried to avoid getting clobbered by falling branches, crippled by tripping over said tree pieces, or even getting electrocuted by downed power lines hiding in said debris.

People called it by different names: Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Horror, October Surprise, October Nightmare, October Fest(ivity for the rest of us), October storm, Ach du Lieber. Whatever one names it, the storm was a cruel reminder that winter is on the way, and it seems to have come six weeks early this year. Like we need six more weeks of winter around here. My guess is a long cold winter for training, guaranteeing a record hot Boston Marathon for 2007.

Any hopes by me that this still might be a mild winter were dashed just days after the storm when I spied a Woolly Bear in the parking lot where I work. To many people, the Woolly Bear is a sure predictor of winter, especially to the people of Northeastern Ohio where I lived for over twenty years. The Woolly Bear is actually the caterpillar that becomes the Isabella Tiger Moth, but in the larva stage it is a fuzzy looking black worm with an orange stripe in the middle. According to those in the know, the width of that orange stripe, which changes from year to year, tells you how long and cold the winter will be. Holy shades of Punxsutawney Phil Batman (like whether a fat groundhog seeing his shadow or not on February 2 tells us we still got at least six more weeks of winter coming our way.)

Anyway, the Woolly Bear tradition is big around Cleveland in large part thanks to local and very popular weatherman Dick Goddard, who has been predicting the weather for a local TV station since way back when weather was first invented. Goddard is a huge proponent of the caterpillar's ability to predict the coming weather, and now that I think about it, Goddard was no better at predicting the weather than any other weatherman situated near the great lakes, so why not get rid of the lot of them and just hire a few Woolly Bears and old Punxsutawney Phil, except Phil probably would feast on the poor caterpillars, and that wouldn't be good for family viewing. But I digress.

Goddard is such a proponent of the squishy bugs that the little town of Vermillion, located somewhere to the west of Cleveland, started an annual Woolly Bear Festival, held right in the middle of October, when the streets are covered by slithering black and orange hairy slugs. Goddard is always the Grand Marshal of the little festival, thus guaranteeing much free publicity during his weather show, when he freely admits to guesstimating the forecast. At the festival, they have a big parade where everyone dresses up as Woolly Bears and march through the Woolly Bear covered streets slipping and sliding on the scurrying larvae. What fun! I just hope they don't have a Woolly Bear eating contest.

So finally back to the Woolly Bear I saw that told me all I needed to know about the severity of the coming winter. This was right about October 16, when usually we are enjoying wonderful weather. I don't remember how wide the little fella's orange stripe was, but what struck me was that the bug was curled up in the fetal position, frozen to the pavement. You're right, I don't know that a caterpillar has a fetal position since it starts out as an egg, but you get the idea, and frozen solid in mid-October was not a good sign.

I guess what got me most about the October Storm was that it came just two weeks after I had returned from Eugene, Oregon, where the weather had been a sunny 85 degrees and dry. What a wakeup call that snow was, as if reminding me that Buffalo aint the land where everyone seems to be either out running, roller-blading, or riding bikes this time of year. You see, after working over two years for the natural gas provider for western NY, whose name I shall not mention, but which rhymes with Irrational Fool Class, I took my five whole days of vacation all at once, and along with Diane McGuire, flew out to Eugene to visit my sister Kate and her husband, Jim Caher.

Back in the Day, Jim was an early member of Checkers, a 2:48 marathoner, as 2:50 was the time a male under forty years old needed to qualify for Boston. A lawyer, he was Deputy Corporation Council for the city of Buffalo. He was one of the runners I ran with quite a bit, and we became close friends, socializing quite a bit. Through this connection he eventually met my sister.

I moved to Ohio in 1978, and the last time I saw Jim was in 1982 when he and Kate stopped at my home in Kent for a short visit while on their way to Oregon. Since then Kate earned her law degree and is now a Judge, and Jim has his own Law office, and is a leading expert on Bankruptcy Law. He and his brother John wrote the two versions of *Bankruptcy for Dummies* in the famous series. He does not run anymore, but he bikes and roller-blades with the same intensity he always put into his running.

Seeing Jim again was great, and we caught up on what has happened to each other over the years. We





also spent much time reminiscing about Back in the Day. Bad news readers, for memories came flooding back and I now have material for countless more articles. "Oh No!" you say?

Why Jim stopped running is a very interesting story. Seems about six months after arriving out west, Jim was flying along with the boss of the firm he hooked up with, winging in a small plane towards southern Oregon on business. While buzzing over the mountains at 12,000 feet, the plane's single engine exploded with a loud bang. The windshield was covered with streaks of oil, and then there was the sound you never want to hear at 12,000 feet, the sounds of silence. And I don't mean Simon and Garfunkle's song.

I do not know about you, but if I were in the very situation Jim found himself in, certain thoughts would definitely be going through my mind. Almost immediately I would be wondering if I would be able to clean, let alone ever wear my pants again. Then I might wonder if the others stuck with me in this tragic, cramped space of a rapidly falling airplane would notice the horrible odor coming from my pants. Next I would realize, what does it matter, as in mere moments, all in the plane, along with my foul pants, would soon become one with the mountain. With that realization, my pants would become truly unrecoverable, but once again, why care.

Well, I learned from Jim that he clearly remembers his thoughts. Initially he thought, "Cripes, how are we going to get home!" as if they were in a car that broke down in the middle of nowhere. But then Jim understood the gravity of the situation and he became a sudden realist. His final thoughts as the plane descended were "What a waste, I'm too young and there is so much more I want to do, and what about those dummies who will never understand bankruptcy?"

Well, fortunately for all those dummies, not to mention my sister, Kate, myself, and of course Jim, he survived the crash. The plane hit a tree and somehow turned over before landing on the ground, up high in the mountains, in the middle of nowhere, and all survived, though upside-down. So now Jim probably thought "Cripes, how are we going to get home!" Jim crawled out, as did the others, they were rescued by loggers, and the worse Jim suffered were two broken ankles, thus, the end of his running career, and the start of his looking for other means of exercise.

So Jim, Kate, Diane and I did much reminiscing during our holiday together. Oh, how Jim and I relived those glorious Back in the Day days, why I'm in a daze just thinking of those Back in the Day days. What stories I have to tell, you lucky readers. My gosh, I'm thinking of putting all these tales into an epic book, one that will have everything. It will have love, intrigue, running, betrayal, blood, guts and vomit, running, near nudity, dribbles kabibbles, running, more running, and Belle Watling herself. It will be the grand story of a bygone era that no longer exists. That wonderful time known to all as Back in the Day. I may call my masterpiece "Gone with the Breezel!"

But I get away from myself. What a surprise! Since we all have so rudely been reminded of winter, the one short narrative Jim told that I will share with you at this time, and the only one involving snow, occurred on our last full day in Eugene. Jim, Diane and I had climbed the two mile path to the top of Spencer's Butte, the highest point in Eugene. It was a gorgeous day, not a cloud in the sky, 90 degrees and as clear as can be because of no humidity. We sat atop that butte for two hours trading tales, and Jim reminded me of one time we had run together during a winter Back in the Day.

The first thing you need to know, before telling this tidbit, is that I am extremely pigeon toed, meaning my feet point inward when I walk and run. You all know what I mean, but I mean I'm **extremely** pigeon toed. In the mid 1970s I ran the Rochester marathon, and afterwards learned from a friend that a podiatrist he was seeing had been running behind me and wanted to get hold of me to make orthotics for me. I went to him, he told me that babies born now would have their ankles broken and reset if they were born as pigeon toed as I was, and he made me orthotics that actually cured a lot of the injuries I had been having because of my condition. But still when I ran marathons, I often finished the race with bloody ankles because of kicking myself because of my condition. My feet were so inverted, it was like my big toes were in love with each other and tried going through life looking into each other's nails.

Jim on the other hand is what we call flat-footed, or as those of us with the clever sense of humor of a seventh grader called duck footed. And as tremendously pigeon toed as I was, Jim was as exceptionally duck footed. When he ran, pictures of Charlie Chaplin's the Tramp came to mind. It was as if his feet were made of magnets, and the toes were the same pole, thus forcing them apart.

So Jim's simple tale was of a time we met and were the only ones running around Delaware Park just after a new snow fall. I so remembered that time, and how as we came full circle to a spot where we had been running single file for some reason, we saw our footprints and almost went into hysterics. It was as if some strange creature had been running before us, one with perhaps the front feet facing away from each other, and the hind feet facing inward. Silly, I know, but Back in the Day we got such a kick out of it, imagining some Dr. Seuss like creature running ahead of us. Perhaps a being that was simply a cross between a giant Woolly Bear and Punxsutawney Phil. I do miss running with Jim.

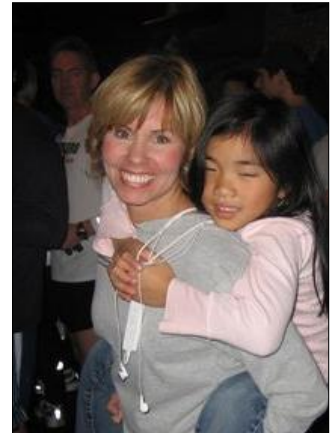
# turkey trot.

The 111th running was by far the biggest, over 7500 finishers. It was a good day for Checkers. 12 age groups were won by Checkers runners, and so far 9 PR's have been reported. Congratulations to Becky Carroll, first masters woman and second woman overall. Thanks to everyone who came out. Lots more pictures and results are up at the web site.. It was a good day for Checkers. 12 age groups were won by Checkers runners, and so far 9 PR's have been reported.



Becky and Bob Carroll  
First place, married couple division.

It's a family affair!



Some people will do just about anything to get into the newsletter.

### **President's Column, con't. from back page.**

Finally thanks to all the members that make this such a great club and just an extension of my family. If I had to thank everyone by name, it would be like listing the entire membership, but you know who you are. Here is a hint, no names included: my board, without them this club wouldn't get off the ground or be the organization you come to expect; the volunteers and organizers of track practice and cross-country; the members who help out at the family picnic and work the water, traffic, and registration tables at numerous races; The Mile and High School X-C committees; the members who put together the newsletter and our great web site; a hard-core few taking pictures at every possible race, sometimes two in a day. These are the members I can always count on to help and know their names will be on the sign-up sheet for volunteering long before I look at it.

In ending, to my closest friends/members, THANKS. The early morning runs and bikes rides, the long talks and venting on a ten miler, THANKS. The talks over the phone and coffee, THANKS.

Most importantly, the only member being named, Mary my wife, for understanding just how much this club means to me. For putting up with boxes of uniforms, newsletters through out the house. Using up vacation time for Tuesday night track practices. For understanding, I still need a pickup truck big enough to haul the Checkers tent and the number one question my wife will ask year round , "YOUR TRYING TO TELL ME THERE'S NO ONE ELSE IN THE CLUB THAT CAN HANDEL THIS?" I always answer, "It's just easier if I do it." THANKS, Mary. See everyone in 2007. Roger

## The 4th Annual Checkers T.N.T. Awards, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006

ED RETZER/DAVE IRELAND AWARD - Bob Merritt  
 CHECKERS CHUCKLE - Bill Donnelly, second consecutive year  
 THE DYNAMIC DUO / THREE MUSKETEERS AWARD -Gary and Rosalie Soehner  
 SANDBAGGER OF THE YEAR -Mike Kowalski  
 METRONOME AWARD -Sandy Bunn  
 TRAILBLAZER AWARD -Dawn Bingeman  
 OUTSTANDING WEBSITE CONTRIBUTION—Herman Van Leeuwen and Greg Lavis  
 HORIZON AWARD—Lucy Lorzczak  
 MOST PERSONEL RECORDS -Men's - Rick Queeno , Women's – Carolyn Corgel  
 MOST LIFE TIME RECORDS -Men's – Sam Spritzer, Women's – Sandy Hebler and Anne Pyrak  
 MOST MISSED BY THEIR GROUP—Keith Bonas  
 BEST PREFORMANCE IN A SUPPORTING ROLE—TRIATHLETE - Patrick Dalton Jr.  
 MULTI EVENT AWARD -Men's – Warren Elvers, Women's – Kim Chmielewicz  
 SELF-MOTIVATION AWARD - Maria Baer, Nancy Pipo, Craig Alf  
 YOUTH TOP ACHIEVER—Men's – David Lee Klimchuk, Women's – Anne Pyrak  
 ROOKIE OF YEAR—Men's – Jeff Norton, Women's – Beth Neary  
 DEDICATION AWARD—Barb Smith  
 RUNNER IN LEADING ROLE—Men's – Kevin Burke, Women's – Amy Fakterowitz  
 MOST IMPROVED—Men's – Russell Trippe, Women's – Patricia Hilbert  
 LEADERSHIP AWARD—Dana Hogan  
 INSPIRATION AWARD—Diane Sardes, Tony Garrow, Joan Crouse  
 COACHES AWARD— Men's – Paul Wandel, Women's – Cathy Levine  
 MILESTONE AWARD—Dave Borodzik  
 MENTOR AWARD—Roger Roll  
 GROUP OF YEAR—“ 35 ” Linda Forrestel, Andrea Pratt, Edye Radice, Gina Brown, Eric Cornavaca, Barb Smith, Gina Brown, Nicole Doak, Linda White  
 OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR—MENS VETERANS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM -Bob Carroll, Jerry Irving, Mike Rogers, Dave Peterson, Peter Hogan  
 Awards determined by and awardees selected by Coach Bob Carroll. (That is also how he gets into so many pictures!)  
 Complete pictures at the web site.



**Tom Steele Award**—In memory of former Checkers member Tom Steele who gave his life trying to rescue drowning swimmers. Given annually to the person who is recognized as having given tireless and consistent voluntary work for the club. Very deservingly given to Tony Garrow.

### Awards for last year Cross Country Season

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD - Women Cross Country Team consisting of: Allison Carr, Carolyn Nugent, Amy Fakterowitz, Jen Klier, Judy Arlington, Carolynne Jones, Brenda Spillman  
 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR— Mike Cook  
 HARRIER OF THE YEAR / MENS—Jason Quast  
 HARRIER OF THE YEAR / WOMENS—Jane Wright  
 OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR—Peter Hogan





## President's Corner by Roger Roll

### Looking back at 2006 and being thankful

As I write this, it is hard to believe that 2006 has come and gone. It seems like yesterday that I was welcoming my newest elected board members at our first meeting of the year. Spring was in the air and the thoughts of track practice in the UB stadium were being finalized. The first day of practice came and went with old friends being reacquainted and new members looking like scared freshmen trying to learn the drills. Spring turned into summer with practice taking a permanent home at Kenmore's Crosby Field.

Along with summer came the numerous road races found in WNY, and the Checkers green being proudly worn at most if not all of them. Besides competing in the races, Checkers members also participated in everything from traffic control to water stops. The Buffalo Mile became the Checkers Mile with a new home in Lockport. Social events like the family picnic and post race parties were sure to bring out the best of Checkers members, even if you weren't in the running mood.

The weather turned cooler with Fall approaching, and Checkers just turned up the heat with volunteer-

ing at local events from the Casino Marathon to the MAC Cross Country Championships hosted by UB. Mother Nature tried to ground us with a few snowflakes and a couple of broken branches in October. (Who am I kidding. I am still hauling tree branches.) However, Checkers prevailed by finding a new venue for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary High school X-C Invitational. Talking about X-C, we might have been down in numbers but Checkers, with yours truly, still competed in the Upstate X-C series. If you have never tried X-C how about considering it next Fall.

With winter on our doorstep, some members will hit the indoor track circuit, while others will cut back on the mileage, and still others will slowly increase theirs with thoughts of running Boston in the spring. This is just a hint of the past year, since I would need ten pages to include all my thoughts and memories.

*Con't on previous page.*



**Checkers AC**  
**C/o 303 Norwalk Ave.**  
**Buffalo NY 14216**



See Checkers web page at:  
[www.checkersac.org](http://www.checkersac.org)