

CHECKERS ATHLETIC CLUB

FOR ALL ABILITIES

CHATTER

May 2009

CONGRATULATIONS BOSTON MARATHON FINISHERS!



Perspective from a Boston First timer

It was a sunny marathon morning in the city with the temperature in the low to mid 40's. Runners made their way to the buses that were located at Boston Common. The buses left from 6:00am to 7:30am. As we were bused to the start the clouds thickened and a fog appeared. Runners were taken to the athletes village in Hopkington. Bagels, bananas, Powerbars, Gatorade and coffee were available as well as numerous (but never enough) port-o-potties. As the over two hour wait passed the temperature rose slightly, the fog lifted and sun peaked through the clouds now and again. At about 9:30am we made our way to starting line and our appropriate corral. Myself being in corral 12 of the first wave it took just over 9 minutes for me to reach the starting line after the gun went off.

Throughout the race the water & Gatorade stations were well organized and seemed to handle the nearly 25,000 runners with ease. Crowd support was awesome for the entire 26.2 miles. While the last three miles for this runner were a blur from the pain and



suffering, the crowd support grew to crazy levels at the end. I believe that running Boston is the goal of most marathoners.

I'll tell you this—train hard because it is well worth it. Boston is one of kind and I'm going back for round two in 2010! *Jim Figler*

Patrick Occhino	2:57:34
Jeffrey Hirt	3:04:51
John Ende	3:20:39
Kieran O'Loughlin	3:28:28
Jim Figler	3:30:22
Theresa Palmieri	3:48:42
Sam Neal	4:03:30
Jane Wright	4:04:44
Sarah Neal	4:04:56
Sharon Linstedt	4:15:07
Maureen Lachiusa	4:18:50
Billy Flynn	4:26:11
Andrew Moynihan	4:58:47

CHECKERS BOARD VOTES TO REDUCE CHILDRENS TRACK FEES

The Checkers board of directors during the late April meeting, voted unanimously to reduce annual track fees from \$20 to \$5 for Checkers members 18 years of age and younger. Track fees for members who have already paid for 2010 will be waived through 2013 provided they are 18 years old or younger through that time. This is a way for us to do a little something for Checkers' families in these challenging economic times, while also encouraging kids to come out and have some fun as they work on achieving their running goals," Checkers President Tom Donnelly said.

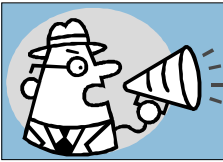


Little Gracie Dalton decided to run the Bunny Hop this past April in East Aurora. She did well and surprised herself with her endurance. Grace is the daughter of long time member Pat and sister of Patrick Dalton Jr. We're looking forward to seeing her at other races in the area! Good Job!

Noah Radlich gave his all at Feel The Spirit race put on by Tim Zelasko! He's training hard at Tuesday night track and we're very proud of his efforts in his running.



Many Checkers members supported Tim's race on a chilly but sunny morning in Cheektowaga.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOCIAL/EVENTS CALENDAR

Thur.	06/04	6:45 pm	JPMorgan Chase Corp. Challenge	Delaware Park, Buffalo
Fri.	06/05	6:00 pm	Fred's Trek Duathlon	Cazenovia Park, South Buffalo
Fri.	06/05	6:30 pm	Seneca Nation ECLC 5k	Salamanca
Sat.	06/06	8:00 am	Woods Walk & Trail 5k, 10k & 10.5 miles	Pfeiffer Nature Center, Portville
Sat.	06/06	8:30 am	Independent Health Kids' 1.8 miles	Delaware Park, Buffalo
Sat.	06/06	9:00 am	River Run 5k	Red Brick School, Lewiston
Sat.	06/06	11:00 am	Kyle Reid Memorial Scholarship 5k	J.P. Fitzgerald's, Hamburg
Sun.	06/07	8:00 am	Keuka Lake Tris & Duathlon	Penn Yan
Sun.	06/07	9:00 am	Run for the Rosa's 5k	Masonic Hall, Cheektowaga
Sun.	06/07	9:30 am	Juneteenth 5k & 10k	William Emslie YMCA, Buffalo
Fri.	06/12	6:30 pm	God Speed 5k	St. Joseph's Church, Lockport
Fri.	06/12	6:30 pm	Alden's 5k Race for Scholarships	Alden High School
Sat.	06/13	9:30 am	Jamie LaBarbera 5k	St. Albert the Great Church, No. Tona.
Sat.	06/13	9:30 am	Flight 3407 Memorial 5k	Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Co.
Sat.	06/13	10:00 am	Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure 5k	Delaware Park Rose Garden, Buffalo
Sat.	06/13	10:00 am	Fort Erie Dash 'n' Splash 5k	Sugarbowl Park, Fort Erie
Sun.	06/14	10:00 am	Dirty Duathlon	Holiday Valley, Ellicottville
Tues.	06/16	6:15 pm	Best of Eggertsville 5k	St. Benedict's Church, Eggertsville
Fri.	06/19	6:30 pm	Mount Mercy 5k	Mount Mercy Academy, South Buffalo
Fri.	06/19	7:00 pm	St. Gregory the Great 5k (ROY)	Williamsville
Sat.	06/20	9:00 am	Ripley's Race to Greatness 5k	Ripley Town Building
Sat.	06/20	10:00 am	Trooper Brinkerhoff 5k	Boston Town Park
Sun.	06/21	9:30 am	Jog for the Jake 5k	Delaware Park, Buffalo
Sun.	06/21	6:00 pm	Gowanda Memorial 5k	Gowanda American Legion
Wed.	06/24	7:15 pm	Run in the Mist 5k	Goat Island, Niagara Falls
Fri.	06/26	6:30 pm	Fit for Fire 5k	D'Arcy McGees's, Buffalo
Fri.	06/26	6:30 pm	Spring Into Summer 5k	Finnan's Restaurant, Lockport
Sat.	06/27	various	Ride for Roswell	Baird Point, UB North, Amherst
Sat.	06/27	9:00 am	Niagara Assoc. 5k Track	Nazareth College, Rochester
Sat.	06/27	9:30 am	Niagara Assoc. Juniors T&F	Nazareth College, Rochester
Sat.	06/27	10:00 am	St. Mary's of the Lake 5k	Hamburg
Sun.	06/28	9:00 am	Bemus Point 10k	Long Point State Park

At the Friends of the Night People Race, Bridget Pawelczak tried warning people before the race to watch out for the uneven sidewalks so they wouldn't fall on the way to the start line. Bridget ran her race and then FELL and broke her knee cap. We are hoping that she will be back running soon.



CHECKERS will once again be providing a room for showering after the Buffalo Marathon. Once we get nearer to the date, PLEASE Check the website for more information. An email will be sent out to members OR a message (password protected) stating what the room number Will be at the Hyatt.



Winning a Silver Medal in the Canadian National Indoor Rowing Championships was Fred Luongo. His son Dan is at his side. Not only can Fred run fast, he proved he's strong in other sports too! Nice going Fred!



The Duathlon Run Bike Run

The US National Duathlon Championships were held in Richmond, VA on April 26. The race was open to anyone, and no qualifying time was required. In previous years the race had about 300 entries, however this year there were 1,000 starters. One reason for the larger field, was that the top 12 in each age group were eligible to compete in the World Duathlon Championships, which will be held in Concord (Charlotte), NC in September. Six from the Buffalo area competed, including Checker's members Catherine Haight, Warren Elvers, and John Moore.

Richmond was undergoing their first heat wave of the year, and the prediction was for 95° f temperatures, which fortunately did not materialize. The first wave which was 55 and over men, started at 7:30 AM, with the ladies 5 minutes later. Subsequent wave starts for younger participants were at 40 minute intervals.

The distances were 10k run, 40k bike, and 5k run. The runs were on the roads....



and had a short stretch of cobblestones, where most runners took to the sidewalks. The bike course was three loops, and each consisted of about 1/3 flat and 2/3 technical sections. All riders seemed to like the bike course, as they could hammer the down hills and negotiate the many curves without slowing down.

The event was very well organized, and went off relatively trouble free. It was also good value, as each entry received a technical shirt and hat, a pint glass, and a back pack.

We are now waiting to see if Warren Elvers qualifies for his 15th World Duathlon Championship Team. Amazing!!! Warren had the second fastest transition time for the first transition, and fifth fastest for the second transition - pretty good out of 1,000 competitors!!

Catherine Haight was a near miss for qualifying for the World's, with a 17th place finish in her age group. Look for Catharine to qualify next year!

John Moore

Sandy Bunn ran his first ever marathon at Flying Pigs in Ohio May 3rd in 3:43:47!

Back in Time



In Memory of Tom Steele (#2). Jerry Mangan is # 165. Checkers presents a plaque ever year to the person who stands out in the club and dedicates their time endlessly. Tom Steele drowned after trying to save others.



Aprox. 1988 Who can pick out, Ken Grzebinski, Jerry Mangan, Tom Donnelly, Mile Rogers, Ken Tocha, Mark Lunney, Mike Davis, Bob Williams and Mike Curry? MANY of them are still racing today! It's ONLY been a

Saving The Season- Tom Proctor



With the season just beginning for many runners in the Buffalo Area, it's never too early to catch a glitch in your body's biomechanics. Injuries tend to pop up at this time as volume increases for training. It could be something like a difficult workout, done way too early for your body to handle, due to the lack of aerobic training. It could be a long run, one that you're not used to yet for that same reason...or, it simply could be something that had happened to you a while back and you are able to catch it at the right time to take care of the situation at hand.

Eight years ago, I had a third degree ankle sprain. Realizing that this was my only chance to compete for Buffalo State College, which I had three semesters, I went through with it. Then I lost the entire summer in which I couldn't even walk a step without cringing. The ankle sprain made my foot weak, which in turn, plantar fasciitis followed.

Eight years later, I was on a routine session early April at Goat Island and realized that about 30 minutes in, I had the same issues. I was reduced to a limp and pulled up. Luckily my car was nearby. The same pain that I had back then, was current. So naturally, thoughts circulated throughout my component in my head, known as a brain. Even the thought of 'maybe it's way too much to ask for' was in the air. It is a lot to ask for anyone to not race for long periods of time, then decide to try it again.

This time, the ailment lasted for two days and also, I had realized what had made my right foot flare up. My shoes were too soft to run in. I immediately went to buy a new pair. A firmer outsole. I also ditched the next two days and continuously worked my foot with a roller, balanced on my right foot, and wore firmer shoes to correct the issue.

The next step was simply...to run less. The timing was right, since family vacation was for the week of everything that had happened earlier. Keeping it simple, I simply ran 30 minutes per run for five days of that week. Just to make sure physically and mentally, I would be ready to bump up the training once again.

The best advice to anyone who has an ailment is not to make it worse for the next time around. Just step back, assess and follow through with the plan of attack. See a specialist, and alleviate the problem by self treating the area. Doing so, you will only miss minimal time and by doing such, you will be happy by saving your season.

2009 University At Buffalo Track & Field Camp GIVEAWAY

Roger Roll will once again be sponsoring a boy or girl to attend the University at Buffalo Track & Field Camp. The location is UB Stadium North Campus. The dates are June 29 - July 1. The daily schedule starts at 8:45 and dismissal is at 3:30. The theme of the camp is Learn By Doing and will specialize in what ever event the camper chooses. To be eligible for the drawing the boy or girl must be between 12 - 18 in age, a member of Checkers or be a relative of a Checkers member; child, grandchild, niece, nephew, brother or sister. Please send entries to: rogerroll@roadrunner.com. Winner will be chosen at Tuesday night track on June 2.

Web Site Forum ID's

The *forum ID* is used to get access to all of the "protected" areas of the web site - the newsletter, the group run pages, the track workout information and coach's notes, as well as the forum itself. When you click on any of those places on the web site, you will be asked for your ID and password. For those that are new to the club, or members that never needed a forum ID before, the easiest way to get an ID is to send me an email at greg.lavis@gmail.com. I need your name and email address, the ID that you would like to use (and a second choice in case the first ID is already taken) and a password. I usually update the ID's once or twice a week, so please allow a few days. I'll send you a confirming email when the ID is ready to use. I can also help you with forgotten passwords, or any other questions you may have. You can also get a forum ID by clicking the forum link, then clicking on "Sign-up" on the next page. You will see a signup form, all you need to fill in is your name, email address, ID, and password, everything else is optional. Again, I'll send you an email when your ID is ready to use. If you have any questions, or problems logging in or finding something on the web site, send me an email, or ask me at track or a race. **Greg Lavis**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Mary Casey	6/1	Maddison Zuppelli	6/15
Jerome Wojnicki	6/2	Helen Bueme	6/18
Art Warlow	6/3	Kelly Dearing	6/18
John Appenheimer	6/4	Ted Paget	6/19
Mia Symoniak	6/5	Don Mitchell	6/20
Bill Harden	6/6	Rick Schoellkopf	6/21
Kumar Madurai	6/6	Ray Bailey	6/22
Joannie Essler	6/7	Toby Mazur	6/23
Russell Trippe	6/8	Mark Guasteferro	6/25
Christopher Basty	6/9	Amanda Phillips	6/25
Keith Bonas	6/9	Seamus Degan	6/26
John McGuire	6/10	Nicole Novak	6/26
Vicki Mitchell	6/12	William Smith	6/26
John Niblock	6/12	Michael Irish	6/28
Luke Klimchuk	6/15	Jen Behlmaier	6/30
Carol Robinson	6/15	Linda Gerbec	6/30
Emily Zuppelli	6/15		

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Abbigal Adkins	John Niblock
Mary-Lyn Adkins	Katie Niblock
Tracy Adkins	Masami Niblock
George Camann	Megan Niblock
Richard D'Arcy	Peter Palmer
Mary Glazier	Dan Shubsda
Christina Klein	David Welby
Bill Kraft	Anne Marie Will
Jeanne LeGault	



PERSONAL RECORDS!



Low Port /Ken East Track Meet

1500-5:45, 3000m 12:20

Jennifer Raby Life

Flying Pig Marathon

3:43:47 Sandy Bunn Life

GBTC Half Marathon

1:29:27 Herman VanLeeuwen Life

1:34:05 Rick Queeno Course

1:35:25 Schweikert, Darlene Life

1:45:19 Schweikert, Chuck Life

1:49:32 Campbell, Nancy Life

1:57:59 Neff, Michael Life

2:02:11 Doreen Strzalka Life

2:24:56 Bingeman, Dawn Life

Stomp Out Stigma Run/Walk 5K

22:55 Tracy Adkins Life

Bunny Hop 5K Race

22:21 Sam Spritzer Course

Do the Right Thing - Eggs, Ears 5K

27:50 Carol Joseph Life

Friend's of Night People For Hunger 5k

18:16 Matthew Phillips Life

20:13 Rick Queeno Course

24:23 Michael Neff Life

26:27 Linda Gerbec Course

Juvenile Diabetes Run For The Cure 5K

24:17 Krysten Stoll Life

Around the Bay 30K

2:46:08 Gary Lew Course

2:48:33 Chuck Fried Course

2:49:06 Nancy Campbell Course



The weekend running group at Chestnut Ridge Park would like to Congratulate Susan Ballard for completing FOUR Joanie Hills in a row!



(I was told Cole beat her with 7!)



Condolences go out to our very good friends, John Lintner and Ellen Ode who lost their Fathers this past month.

Our thoughts are with you.



Five Checkers Members Share a Second Passion

The "Murder Creek Band" is made up of five runners whom are members of Checkers AC and share the same passions together, Running and Music! The band, which is a mix of Blues, Soft/Contemporary Rock and Easy listening, is comprised of Bach Weslow (Vocals and Guitar), Jacob Klimchuk (Drums), Davidlee Klimchuk (Saxophone), Dave Klimchuk (Bass) and occasional guest Trumpet Player and youngest brother Luke Klimchuk.

The group is mainly an originals group with most of their songs written by Bach Weslow and Davidlee, however it is not uncommon to hear cover songs such as "The Letter" by Joe Cocker, "Mr. Soul" by Neil Young, and others from groups like Average White Band, The

Band and Van Morrison, plus many other favorites.

"Murder Creek" (The name by the way is taken from the famous creek they all live by that was host to many tragic events during the 1800's) Has just announced a release date of July 1st 2009 for their debut LP called "Breaking the Ice". The band is currently available to play for Private Parties, Fund Raisers, Road Races and much more! Please visit their web page at www.myspace.com/murdercreekband for up coming shows, CD's, Fan gear and other interesting news about the group!



Two Checkers Members Provide Rock Solid Foundation



The Time Pirates were formed in 1986 as a classic Rock Band. It began as a five piece group. Through the years the Time Pirates have played several venues and events throughout Western New York. The band always maintained either a classic rock or oldies format with the emphasis on music you could either dance to or sing along with. The current line up features original members Tom Droz on Bass Guitar and lead vocals, and Rusty Droz.

Rusty is featured ..boards, guitar, percussion and lead vocals. Lead Guitarist Dave Newman joined the band in 1997. Drummer, vocalist Toby Mazur joined the band in 2006. Toby is the final piece of the puzzle to make the band a truly rock solid band. The band played most gigs as a quartet for a some time. Recently they were joined by Tom and Rusty's daughter Maria. Maria has been seen in several musical productions throughout western New York. She performs lead vocals and percussion. Maria is a regular performer now and she has added another new and exciting element to the band! Check out the band's my space site at <http://myspace.com/tpirates>.



Checkers Singlets were seen everywhere at the Environ. It was held on Goat Island, Niagara Falls April 25th.

Way to go! members!

“Always Listen to your Mother (Nature)”

Every runner who trains long distance in the summer heat knows the hazards of such activities. You must protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat, sunglasses and applying sunscreen to exposed skin. You wear the new tech fabric clothing and socks; they shed perspiration and they can prevent chafing and blisters. You drink plenty of water and an electrolyte beverage to replenish what’s lost through perspiration. But probably the most important part of summer training is getting your body acclimated to running in the heat. As the cool spring air gradually warms to summer heat, your body gets used to the rising temperatures. Just as your body adapts to the building mileage, it learns to tolerate the excess stress to your cooling system.

Once in a while though, Mother Nature likes to move us out of our comfort zone by acting in the most unexpected ways. For example, the weather she treated us to on the weekend of April 24 – 26 was just glorious, with bright sunshine and temperatures hovering around 80 degrees. Karen and I had scheduled what has become an annual weekend camping trip to Allegany State Park, and to have dry, warm weather forecast is not what we usually expect, or receive. When you’re staying at Allegany in April, it is nice when you don’t have to put up with sloppy, muddy ground caused by spring snow or rain, and you can sit out at night around the campfire without getting soaking wet or freezing your butt off. It’s like mid-summer, but without the crowds or the bugs.

Did I mention I’m training for the Cleveland Marathon coming up on May 17th? Yes, that’s a few weeks away, making this very weekend at Allegany the site of my last long run before I start to taper. Saturday morning around 10 o’clock I start my run. At home I would have started by 7:30, but I did have to drink the obligatory (few?) beers around the campfire the previous night, and I *forced* myself to sleep in a little longer.

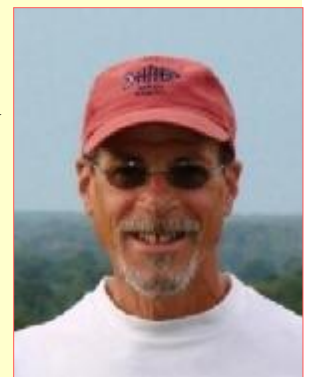
I have run long here a few times before, and I always try a different route, just to keep things interesting. The first time I ran 20 miles at Allegany I made the mistake of starting out downhill, which meant my return to the cabin was (duh) uphill! There was a lesson to be learned there. The next year I started uphill and the second 10 miles downhill was much easier. This year I decided to try running from the Quaker Area, where our cabin was, to the Red House Area on ASP 1, and back again. I knew it would be 20 miles or so, and the hill climb would be right in the middle. That meant the first 5 miles would be uphill, the next 5 down, 10 to 15 up and the last 5 down, but I felt I could handle it. I carried water, some electrolyte candies and a gel pack. I made the run to Red House at a slow but steady pace, and my legs felt surprisingly well after the 891 foot climb and 931 foot descent. I nibbled the electrolytes along the way, and took the gel at 10 miles. As I turned and started back to Quaker, I thought of how good it would feel to get back, knowing I conquered two 900 foot climbs during a 20 miler, kind of a “Rocky” type moment.

Suddenly at 12.3 miles the bear charged out of the woods and jumped right up on my back. Not a real bear of course, but the one that makes you realize it’s getting pretty hot out in the sun, and the hill’s apex is still a ways off. My legs told me the bear was quite heavy and if I didn’t start walking they were going to give out, so I walked to the 13 mile mark to recover a bit. It helped, and I started running again. At 13.6 miles the bear was back, and I again slowed to a walk. At 14 miles I sucked it up, and started running, hoping to make the summit at 15 miles. After that, I thought, gravity will take over and carry me back to the cabin. I hit 15 and started downhill feeling good again. At 18 miles I finished the last of my water and I noticed something was amiss. My skin was dry and the salt was starting to crystallize on my arms, sparkling in the bright sun. While my head told me to hang on; “you’re almost done,” my body said, “fat chance!” I was bonking and I was bonking very well, thank you. I walked the last mile or so, and made my way back to our cabin feeling a bit disappointed that I couldn’t run it in; no ‘Rocky’ moment this day! After sitting and sipping a nice, cold Gatorade, I began feeling a bit woozy. That’s when it hit me.

Mother Nature had teased me with this beautiful day; had me thinking this was my reward for the months of running through the cold, snowy winter. What I’d forgotten was that my body was used to the cold, snowy winter and not the heat of July, especially in April. I wasn’t ready for this weather yet; even though the head said “YES,” the body said, “NO”!

After a bit more water, a sandwich and a nice long shower, I was feeling pretty good. I wasn’t so disappointed that I had to walk the last mile. I realized I wasn’t ready for the heat yet, and 20 miles from Quaker to Red House to Quaker will be there again next year.

Ray Ernst



Marathoning in Japan by Carolyn Corgel

Nagano Japan - the site of the 1998 Winter Olympic Games. Located in an inland prefecture, Nagano boasts nine of the twelve highest mountains in Japan. The province's mountains have made it relatively isolated, and many people come for its mountain resorts and hot springs.

Many came for the Nagano Olympic Commemorative Marathon - held this year on April 19th. One Checkers member traveled to Japan to run a very strong marathon. Here is her story.....

I started running 11 years ago as a form of exercise. Just for fun I began racing. From that point forward I for the most part (OK, maybe not the 20 mile training runs) have enjoyed every part of it.

Why? Because I have met new people and have seen things that I would have missed if I were traveling in the conventional way.

One of those places was Nagano, Japan. My daughter fell in love with Japan when she studied abroad there 3 years ago. She vowed that she wanted to go back. When she graduated from college, I told her that if she got a job there, I would visit her and run a marathon. Well she did, she teaches English to Japanese students. I set my goal on Nagano.

Starting in July, I planned my trip to Nagano to run the Nagano Commemorative Olympic Marathon. It has been 11 years since they hosted the Olympics, and the marathon runs past each of the venues ending up in the Olympic stadium. After all the planning (including a sorry attempt at learning Japanese), on April 9th we went to Toronto and flew out on the 10th. Our destination was Tokyo.

We arrived late afternoon on the 11th. Serious jet lag and inability to remember any Japanese made this trip a challenge. Luckily, my daughter served as tour guide, interpreter, and all around good sport (She kept reminding me of the cultural differences and making sure I followed them.). After a week in Tokyo, my husband had to fly home and Colleen was now my coach. In true style, she has been through the Boston routine and several other marathons, she got me to Nagano and made sure I rested enough to be ready to run on Sunday.

If it were not for her, I would have walked the 8-10 miles that we had grown accustomed to. Also, if she were not a true daughter of a marathoner, she would not have had the patience to find my pasta meal (in Japan spaghetti is not the same as the US) without weird meat in it.

Sunday arrived and I could not believe I was running a marathon in Japan. I arrived at the start. I ended up in the men's dressing building. Colleen was not with me so I could not read the signs. There was a shape of a women next to room but found that in Japan there is a men's building and a women's building so those shapes met nothing. This was all so different and needless to say, I was getting a bit rattled and worried that she would not show up. She did and got the biggest hug I think she has ever received. She sent me on my way. As we waited, the opening ceremonies took place. Luckily, I met a German lady who spoke Japanese and she interpreted for me.

Three miles into the marathon and experiencing sights, people, etc. that I have never seen before; I decided I wasn't going to race it. This was an experience. I ran for the fun of running not for a time. I saw things I would never have seen, and I finished in an Olympic stadium. 26.2 miles later I reconnected with my daughter, realized that I had seen her world since July, and experienced something truly awesome. I do not know my official place (It is in Japanese and I can't read it.) I know I finished 3:40:53. Not my best, but one that I will never forget.



Checkers Membership by the Numbers



A word of caution: If you're squeamish about numbers, you may want to turn the page. Maybe to page 7. (Oops, a dreaded number already.) This article is intended to give you a little insight into how the Checkers Athletic Club membership has grown without lulling you into stage-four sleep.

Membership in General

As of May 1, Checkers has 485 members in good standing; a year ago at this time, we had 418. Our membership continues to grow throughout the year, as the weather takes a turn for the better and more people join us at track. Of our current 485 members, 267 are male and 218 are not. Most Checkers members are on board for the long haul, as according to the last fall's "How are we doing?" survey, the majority having been a member for at least six years.

Who has been a Checkers member the longest? A fine question and it would be interesting to know. We bet some of you know right off the tops of your heads.

Acting Our Age

The average Checkers' member is 44.8 years young. The majority of our membership—148 members or 32%--falls into the 50-59 age bracket. Another 108 members are between 40 and 49 years of age. Youth is being served, however, as 92 members are 29 or younger.

Where You're Coming From

Checkers members reside in all the cities and towns you would expect like Grand Island, Hamburg, Lancaster, Lockport, and Niagara Falls. But we also have members from as far away as Green Bay, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and New Port Richey, Florida and Alaska.

Can you guess where the majority of Checkers members call home? Tonawanda? Orchard Park? Appleton? Good guesses (except maybe for Appleton). The winner, hands down, is Buffalo with 84 members. Runner up is Williamsville with 49, and coming in third is Amherst with 38. No duplicate awards.

Keeping Track

The majority of Checkers' members participate in the club's Tuesday night track workouts—54.1% of us to be exact. New members enjoy track as well, with over 60% of them opting for the oval. The popularity of track shouldn't come as a surprise as, according to the "How are we doing?" survey, most people cited "personal improvement" as their primary reason for joining Checkers. The second most popular reason was "track practice" and third was "to improve speed/results."

We welcomed new track coach Vicki Mitchell aboard this year. And with Vicki, came a new group color coding system. Vicki's Lilac Group has the most members to date, with 119, or 40.3% of all those participating in track workouts. The Red Group places second with 86 members. Third is the Gray Group with 50 members and fourth is the Blue Group with 39. It must be lonely at the top for Brad Heron; who as of now has the Yellow Group to himself.

The Bottom Line

These numbers may be somewhat interesting to some of you, but they often serve a practical purpose. For example, if we see that track participation perks up to numbers that cannot be accommodated safely in one track session, we consider adding another. When we begin planning events such as happy hours or picnics, it helps to know what is considered "centrally located" to most members. And, if written just the right way without too much fill and enough meaningful information, a little insight into how Checkers' membership statistics shape up enables Diane to fill one full page in her newsletter.

Thank you!

A big thank you to everyone who helps make Checkers what it has become: The largest, yet the most supportive, cohesive, and fun-loving running group in Western New York. *Fritz Van Leaven*

PAC 6-Hour Distance Classic

April 26, 2009

Jason Gross	37.65	9:33	1/Male	30-34
Marvin Gross	29.14	12:21	3/Male	60-64
Ed Kamela	22.75	8:59	2/Male	45-49
Ed Wardrop	22.75	10:12	5/Male	55-59
Paul Hassall	22.75	15:02	5/Male	60-64
Linda Gross	19.50	17:10	2/Female	55-59
Christopher Basty	16.25	7:52	11/Male	35-39

Christopher Connelly	16.25	8:16	7/Male	50-54
Clyde Ferguson	16.25	9:42	7/Male	55-59
Hermann Pohl	9.75	7:49	4/Male	45-49
Patrick Occhino	9.75	7:49	5/Male	45-49

The first row from top to bottom are the miles that were run, 2nd column is the pace, etc. We congratulate you all for the endurance you needed to enter a six hour run!

Spring Can be the Best Time of the Year for a Runner

Oh, to be a runner in Spring, it's always been my favorite time of year to run. As hardy northerners, it's a time when the tough conditions of winter are finally behind us. And every week brings improving signs of great weather to come. These days it also jump-starts my training. Spring means the start of a new track season. And as a Checkers member it's a new track program with a new coach.

I've always thought the world of Bob Carroll and his abilities as a coach. That being said, the only thing certain in life is change. It was time for Bob to peruse other opportunities outside our community. To find anyone as capable as him was going to be very difficult. On comes coach Vicki Mitchell. As a replacement, we're extremely fortunate to have her. This new program and coach energized me, and I found myself ready to commit to it from the start.

The first thing I focused on was getting a baseline time from a race. I was reassigned a training group, but that was based on a time from my last race over 5 months ago. A lot can happen to one's fitness in that amount of time. Especially over the doldrums of winter. I started her program following each of the assigned workouts to a tee. They felt right, not too challenging, but certainly hard enough.

Finally, last weekend I headed out for my first race, a 5K. I chose a 5K, as I haven't been running anywhere near enough miles to warrant an attempt at a half marathon, and other than the half, what else is there in Western New York? Before anyone points out there are other options, I'm sure statically over 90% of our local races are 5K.



Speaking of statistics, on the first weekend in May, at three local races we had 45 Checkers members at the GI Half Marathon, 35 at Louis J. Billittier Memorial 5K, and 10 at SFC Race For A Cause 5K. We also had 5 members at races not too far out of town. That's 95 Checkers members out there, and as I'd like to think, getting their own baseline, like me. Couple that with the steady rise in track attendance, reaching 126 this past week, and you get the feeling that improved performance is on everyone's mind.

Back to my race. My plan was to run slightly negative splits each mile. That's been my strategy for over 30 years of racing. It seems to get the best out of me. So I divided my target time by three and aimed for about 5 seconds slower than the average for the first mile. The first mile arrived right on schedule. The only problem was it didn't feel as smooth as I hoped it would. That I chalk up to the first race of the season. The next mile was about a second faster but I'll have to move if I am going to hit my goal. My last mile was ugly but I was still focused and as I hit the finish line my goal had been met. I choke, bent over, wondering why I chose to do this. But within 30 seconds I'm reliving the entire experience in my head, extremely gratified that I ran.

Now my baseline is validated and the workouts I've been doing are backed up with a real number, onto the season ahead! More challenges, great camaraderie while training and many enjoyable runs during the best running season of the year. Oh, to be a runner in Spring.



Checkers Athletic Club

**340 Puritan Road
Tonawanda, New York
14150**



Visit our website at:
www.checkersac.org