

THE WISSAHICKON WANDERERS

Water Stop newsletter

An inside review on the Wissahickon Wanderers race performance

January 2006

WISSAHICKON TRAIL WORK BEGINS

The club motto "No Slackers Need Apply" is now being earned each month in the Wissahickon as Wanderer work crews have embarked on a trail restoration program. The Wanderers have committed to restoring an approximately one-mile trail running from Valley Green Road to Rex Avenue.



ROUGHLY 1/3 OF THE STRETCH OF TRAILS 'ADOPTED' BY THE WANDERERS WAS COMPLETED DURING THE FALL OF 2005.

The work sessions are supervised by the Wanderers' own version of Paul Bunyan....Jan bin Ruitter, and were held most Saturdays in the Fall starting in late October. The program is expected to re-commence in the next week or two after a break for the holidays and bad weather.

"The objective of the project is to create a stretch of trails that is ideally suited for running" according to Dan Gordon. "After we finish this particular trail, we are looking to tackle a trail on the other side of the creek. Together, these two trails would make a great loop starting and ending at the Inn."

The work that is being done by the Wanderers trail crew is twofold: 1) removing potential tripping hazards and 2) preventing [further] erosion to the trails.

"As a result of several unusual rain events in the last couple of years, specifically two huge rain storms in the Fall of 2004 and then another during 2005, the park got hammered" according to Bin Ruitter. "As a result, there are large portions of the trails that got washed away or where the erosion left stones and rocks sticking out and posing tripping hazards to trail users" he continued. "By removing these tripping hazards and by putting in erosion barriers where needed we hope to create a patch of trails that will be ideal for trail running."



MEGAN AND THE GREAT ONE REMOVING ROCKS IN OCTOBER

"Slowing down the run-off water during storms is essential" said Bin Ruitter. "By putting branches and limbs held down by heavy rocks in the water's way we can slow it down and as a result, dirt

and debris is deposited where otherwise you would've had continual erosion."



CARNAGE, BIN RUITTER, MATT AND CHRIS MOVING A LARGE TREE WHICH NOW SERVES AS AN EROSION BARRIER.

Hopefully, when the Trail Series resume this Spring, runners will notice the difference on some of these trails.

The Wanderers welcome anyone who is interested to join us in the weekly trail restoration effort. *"It's a lot of fun and we really feel like we are getting something accomplished."* said Dan.

If you want to join us, simply let us know you are interested (see our website for contact info) so we can email you with the exact time and place to meet us. In addition to the weekly sessions, Wanderers are planning to team up with other park organizations to carry out larger scale projects.

All you need to participate is a pair of gloves; we'll bring the tools. Work sessions typically last about two hours.

WANDERER ABROAD: A SURVEY OF THE ENGLISH RACING SCENE

by Carnage

The running calendar in England is a feast. There is a competition for virtually everyone. To begin with, there are the standard five kilometer races right up to the marathons and ultra marathons. But then there are the mountain races, the cross country marathons, the fells runs, the long distance relays, anything your heart can imagine. Of course, while residing in England for 10 months, I went in none of these races. But they were a lot of fun to think about. My wife **NAYLZ** and I entered several races but never actually made it to any starting gate.

My favorite race was the three peaks. Here is how it works. The competitor must run up and down three peaks, Ben Nevis, Scafell, and Snowden within 24 hours. The problem is that Ben Nevis is in Scotland, Scafell is in Northern England and the Snowden is in Wales. The three mountains are selected because they are the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales respectively. The race requires a good driver because you need to travel 500 miles to complete the race. Typical British, the competition is done on an honor system. You can run it any time of year although May through July is the best period because of the increased sunlight.

Also, typically British, you can now complete the race on bike or on foot as well as by car although of course without the 24-hour time limit. **Axel**, another expatriate Wanderer who has been living in England, and I worked on the logistics of the race, but just could not pull it off... for this year at least. I am hoping to complete it one of these days.

Other beauties were the Clarendon Way marathon, the

Welsh Castles Relay, and another favorite, the Three Forts Marathon which combines history with fitness. The course loops around three Iron Age earthen forts in southern England. The race also would have a special appeal for those runners with an interest in the occult. One of the forts called the Chactonbury Ring has over the years according to one guide book become "a mecca for UFO spotters, ghost hunters and psychic investigators."

As this issue goes to press, there is another race which we missed, but which Wanderer founding member **Simon Newman** is entering. The race is called "The Devils Revenge." The web site describes the race as "10 miles of running with three distinct zones, one entitled the Wetlands and another the Hills of Hell." Promotional photos show runners slogging through puddles of ooze and mud and clambering up steep hills on all fours. Good luck, Simon!!



FIELD CONDITIONS AT MANY ENGLISH RACES WOULD BE IDEAL FOR WANDERERS. THE BRITS ARE NOT AFRAID TO GET A LITTLE MUDDY WHEN THEY COMPETE.

Kilian Mullet, who ran for the Wanderers several years ago before returning to his native Ireland, has also ventured into some extremely unusual running events, in particular the Mourne Mountain Marathon in Northern Ireland. He actually won the open division three years ago, and just placed 29th out of 80 entrants in this year's event, held last month. The entrants are composed of two-member teams and skills required include not just running and endurance, but orienteering and camping. Kilian and his partner **Jacqui Howard** completed in the two-day event this year in an elapsed time of 16:42:36.

So what happened? Why no races? It turned out living in London was a full time job and NAYLZ and I could never free up enough time to actually enter any of these races. It's probably a good thing, too, at least as far as I am concerned. Conditioning this past year was suspect. And I am not sure some of my aging bones and tendons are quite up to the test as well.

Let me also say a word about the English runners. They are fast!!

One thing NAYLZ and I did accomplish over in England was to take a number of long distance hikes. Fabulous. These hikes are totally different from those in America, where the trails are

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Dates have been set for the Wanderers mile race this spring and the Chestnut Hill Cross Country Classic in September. **The Wanderers open mile and 100 yard dash** will be held as part of the Chestnut Hill Academy Relays on April 2. The exact times will be announced later.

The fifth annual Chestnut Hill Cross Country classic will be held on September 16. The race, organized by the Wanderers, is also held as party of the Chestnut Hill Academy Cross Country Invitational.

DENNIS EXCELS AT STEAMTOWN...WITH HELP FROM FRIENDS

On October 9, **Dennis Crowne** ran the Steamtown Marathon. The well organized marathon is run point to point from Forrest City to downtown Scranton Pa. School buses take the 1,800 runners on a 45 minute ride to the Forrest City High School where they are greeted by enthusiastic students and cheerleaders. They wait in the warm gyms and lunch rooms with plenty of bathrooms and port-a-potty's.

On the way back to Scranton they run through many small towns with bands, cheerleaders and town folks cheering for them.

A surprise for Dennis was at mile 20 where he was greeted by three masked Wanderers with posters, cow bells and weird dances. **Petra Kretschmann** (fresh off her Ironman a week earlier), **Megan Boyle** (preparing for her two marathons) and **Susan**



WANDERERS SUPPORT REACHED NEW HEIGHTS AT THE STEAMTOWN MARATHON. THAT'S THE GREAT ONE PROVIDING SUPPORT ABOVE.

Hurrey (with her broken foot) made the trip to Scranton to cheer for their fellow Wanderer.

Later in the run he noticed some writing in chalk on the ground. Thinking it must have been the kids from St. Joseph's Hospital he wasn't paying much attention until he saw his name and a nick name only a wanderer would know, Hot Hen.

But the big surprise came about 50 yards from the finish line when he looked over at the three cheering Wanderers. In plain view of all the downtown crowd they raised their shirts to expose CR,OW,NE spelled out on their bellies.

The marathon took 15 minutes longer (4:53) than last year's Steamtown probably because he was having so much fun.

HOTLINE ESTABLISHED

Do you need help? Have you got a problem? For quick response, call the Wanderers' Hotline at 215-849-9080

DINNER TO BE HELD

The Second Annual Wanderers' Victory Banquet is to be scheduled this winter. Megan, Melanie and Leslie have formed a dinner committee. The dinner will be held at the Valley Green Inn with a date to be determined in the near future.

WANDERER ABROAD (CONTINUED)

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almost exclusively in the woods and mountains. In England, they have those trails. But they also have trails across fields, down country lanes, along rivers and streams and through towns. Stopping at pubs en route surely is a big improvement on the standard road race water table. I realize my credibility has suffered after having promised all sorts of race perform-

ances this past year, and then delivered nothing. But Wanderer **Jeff Hayes** has also hiked through sections of England and was raving about the experience.

I had a dream of walking around England. Never came close, but I was able to enjoy it vicariously. At one of the hotels we stayed at in southern England during a walk, it turned out the receptionist had walked around England years before for charity. It took three months. He was tromping 30

miles each and every day. Another project put off for another day.

One other missed opportunity was the Green Belt Relay around London in which the Wanderers competed in 2003. The 200-mile race circles London over a two-day period, and is a delightful way to see the country. Wanderers can find out for themselves what running is like in England because there are plans to enter another team in 2007!

WANDERERS IN THE NEWS

Wanderer **Tom Adelson**, running as a Democrat, has won election to the Oklahoma State Senate representing a district in Tulsa. During the hard-fought campaign, Tom's Republican opponent Dewey F. Bartlett, Jr., tried to smear him as a "slacker". But the charge didn't stick when voters learned that Adelson was a member of the Wanderers running club and had performed so admirably in the club's first entry at the Cabot Trail Relay. In fact, Tom's affiliation with the Wanderers helped him to win the vital Anarcho-Syndicalist vote in the district that helped put him over the top. Tom won by a 51.5 percent to 48.5 percent margin over the bad-mouthing Bartlett.

Chris Moore has been named East Coast rep for the Clif Bar company. Chris has said his new executive status will not stop him from getting dirty out on the trails each week. His new position also insures that Wanderers will not be going hungry at any competitions we enter.

New Wanderer **Wendy Stevens** made her television debut on November 12 on the television show Trading Places. Some of her

friends in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia were having their homes made over for the television show and Wendy was part of the cast. Critics gave Wendy rave reviews for her performance.

Shannon Hamilton of Oklahoma was a member of the junior girl's tennis team which won first the Missouri Valley Tournament and then the Midwest Regional Tournament. She is ranked in the top ten 14 and under girls in both Oklahoma and the Missouri Valley. Shannon was a support superstar in the Wanderers 2001 Reach the Beach Relay and the 2002 Cape Breton Relay. Meanwhile, her father Wayne has been reported Missing in Action on the road racing circuit.



IN A PERFORMANCE WELL BEYOND THE WANDERERS' WILDEST DREAMS, MATT WINS THE HARRISBURG MARATHON ON NOVEMBER 13TH.

PETRA BECAME THE WANDERERS' FIRST IRON-WOMAN WHEN SHE COMPLETED THE CHESAPEAKE ULTRA TRIATHLON ON OCTOBER 1ST WINNING HER AGE DIVISION.



STAY INFORMED, CHECK OUT THE WANDERERS' SITE

For the latest information on Wanderer race performance and training techniques, as well as a schedule of local races, check out the Wanderers' web site at www.WanderersRunningClub.org

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