

# THE WISSAHICKON WANDERERS

## Water Stop newsletter

An inside review on the Wissahickon Wanderers race performance

December 2006

### WATERLOGGED WANDERER TELLS HER STORY *BY PETRA KRETSCHMANN*

In late spring I decided to participate in an eight-mile swim in the Navesink River in New Jersey. The distance sounded daunting at first but I knew that a structured workout plan would bring me to my goal. My coach Katja agreed and provided me with a training plan par excellence. Following the plan I found myself in the pool seven times a week. To keep warm on days that had two swim workouts I brought tea with me and sipped on the hot beverage in-between sets. To hone my orientation skills I threw little things such as shampoo bottles behind me and tried to find them while I was swimming. After about ten weeks I felt well prepared for the race, and I was looking forward to the event.

Every swimmer was accompanied by a kayaker. This was not only for safety, but also to provide water and food for the swimmers, and to make sure the swimmers would stay on course.

The race day weather was perfect, warm temperatures and smooth water. During the first half of the swim I could not find my rhythm since I was too focused on the other swimmers. Leonard, my kayaker, must have noticed what I was doing and advised me to swim at my own pace. So I let go of the group and swam at a comfortable pace until I thought that I was approaching the finish. When I asked Leonard if we should sprint to the finish he asked "are you sure?", and off we went. Soon I

realized that I had underestimated the distance but I kept up my speed anyway. It worked out pretty well; I had found my rhythm and with the finish approaching and the rushing of the water I got a swimmer's high. In the end I arrived first out of my group. I think I finished in three hours and seventeen minutes.

One month later I did another open water swim. This time on the Germany North Sea coast. A ferry brought us to Langeoog one of the Friesian Isles, and we had to swim back for 10.6 K to Bengersiel on the coast. Luckily, the weather was good and water calm and the water temperature was not cold. The course was well secured by members of the DLRG (German Rescue Society) from all over the area. The swim did not go that well since I got hungry during the last 20 minutes. However, I finished fourth among those who had started without fins. My time was 1 hour and 57 minutes.

Two weeks after this event I was signed up for a race on a regatta course near Cologne. It was supposed to be a 5 km swim. I knew this was my day to grab first place. But 10 minutes before the scheduled start an enormous thunderstorm came down over the course and the organizers canceled the event.

I would like to thank those Wanderers who supported my participation in the Navesink River race and thus motivated me to do the other races as well.



THE SWIMMERS BEFORE THE NORTH SEA RACE. PETRA IS IN THERE SOMEWHERE.



SWIMMERS INCLUDING PETRA START THE RACE.



PETRA WAS SWIMMING LIKE A FISH AT THE NAVESINK RACE.



SWIMMERS AND KAYAKERS MET FOR A PARTY AFTER THE RACE.

## INTERVIEW WITH PAUL GORKA, OCTOBER 22, 2006

Shortly after finishing her first ultramarathon, Barbara Gorke sat down with her father, Paul Gorke, to talk about his days as an endurance runner. Even though he started running as a kid, it wasn't until the running craze of the mid 1970s that he began to train seriously. By the time he was 56, he had set national records for his age group in the 48-hour race (165 miles) and the six-day race (385 miles).

Paul is a 70-something year old artist who lives in a renovated VFW post in East Falls. Barbara suspected there was something her fellow Wanderers could learn from such an experienced and crazy ultra trail blazer.

*Do you remember your first ultra?*

It was my 50th birthday. It was a heavy winter with a lot of snow and a lot of ice. I had already run my age in miles since 45. But for my 50th, there was nowhere to run. Then someone told me about a race at Haverford College, an indoor race for 24 hours. I went to my goal of 50 miles, and I was going to stop there, but the other runners were kidding me about being a sissy for stopping, so I kept going. I managed to run 57 miles. And I got hooked from that moment on. I loved the idea of going out there and running, and if you're in shape, you're not thinking about the running,

you're thinking about other things, about life, about your next painting.

*Did you run any ultras on the road or trails?*

I did 64 ultras total, including my birthday runs. I ran the Philadelphia to Atlantic City race (100K) once, the JFK 50 miler twice, I did the M&M Mountain Marathon, where the pre-race instructions were "If you're running flat, you've gone off course." Besides those I've run 16 marathons, and 530 races overall.

*What's the biggest difference between running an ultra on the track versus on the trail?*

On the trail you might end up alone, but on the track you always have company.

*You said that your maximum training week would be 180 miles. How did you break that down?*

Monday was my long run day, and I would run between 30-50 miles. The rest of the week I'd run 20-25 miles a day. Without pain by the way. It was not difficult. I loved that training.

*You were doing ultras before they had high tech gear, energy bars or gels, or Gatorade. What was that like?*

I always had horrible running shoes. I typically ran 7,000 miles on every pair of shoes.



PAUL GORKA LETS OTHERS DO THE RUNNING FOR A CHANGE. HERE HE WATCHES THE PHILADELPHIA DISTANCE RUN IN SEPTEMBER WITH DAUGHTER BABS.

*But did you eat?*

Maybe a little bit, not much.

*My low point during my first ultra was at mile 32 to 39 or 40. I'm pretty sure that most of it was mental. What would you do when your mind started playing tricks on you?*

What else can you do but keep pushing. I wouldn't let myself think about stopping, ever.

*What advice would you give to marathoners who are considering the jump to ultras?*

If you don't have it in you, if you don't want it, you shouldn't do it. I never felt better than when I finished my six-day races. Finishing is absolutely fantastic. I would be in heaven for at least three months. Nothing else mattered, nothing could bring me down. I can think of a lot of reasons to do an ultra, but you have to want that feeling.

*How is your running now?*

I'm a trudger now. I've had a bad year physically, but I'm back up to 7 miles or so.

(Chris chimes in with a question): *How do you feel now that your daughter is doing ultras?*

I think it's wonderful. I just hope she's as happy about the experience as I used to be.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear WaterStop: As a bicycle enthusiast, I enjoyed the photos of Wanderer Susan Branson on the route of the Giro d'Italia bicycle race this summer. It was beautiful. But I noted that her tour was taken in an auto, and not a bicycle. I also appreciated Bin Reuter's 24/7 coverage of the Tour de France in July. It was good to know that if I had any question or needed information on the tour I could call Jan at any time of day, or night, and get an answer. All this coverage is well and good, but I have one question. Does anyone in the club actually ride a bicycle? I am not complaining. But I just want to know whether I should be packing my bike up and putting it in cold storage, or better yet putting it in the Wanderer's museum as a historical artifact. Yours most truly, R. Carnage

# WANDERERS PHOTO PAGE



TUSSEY MOUNTAIN SOLOISTS BARBARA GORKA AND CHRIS MOORE (TOP) AND THE RELAY TEAM CONSISTING OF RANDY CLEVER, BRIAN MCKENNA AND POLLY JANSEN POSE FOR TEAM PORTRAIT AFTER 50-MILE TRAIL RACE IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA.



8TH GRADER ADAM GARNICK NAILS HIS FIRST ROAD RACE IN THE JINGLE BELLS 5K IN MALVERN ON NOVEMBER 26.

THAT'S WANDERER RANDI GARNICK KEEPING PACE WITH HIM.

THE FITNESS TEST FOR *THE GREAT ONE* AT THE CROSSFIT GYM IS SET FOR JANUARY 2, 2007.

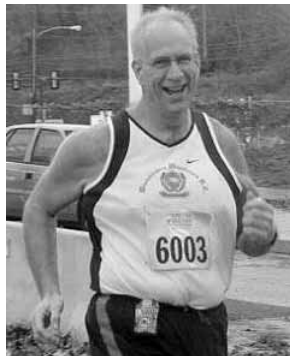
HER ASSIGNMENT IS SIX PULL-UPS AND 300 BURPEES IN A SPAN OF 20 MINUTES.

DO YOU THINK SUSAN WILL PASS HER TEST?

VISIT THE WANDERERS WEBSITE AT [WANDERERSRUNNINGCLUB.ORG](http://WANDERERSRUNNINGCLUB.ORG) TO CAST YOUR VOTE OR TO LEAVE A COMMENT.



## 2006 PHILADELPHIA MARATHON



DENNIS HAD A BUSY FALL... TRAIL SERIES, RIVER TO SEA, MARINE CORPS MARATHON, FOLLOWED UP BY THE PHILADELPHIA MARATHON.



HEAVEN DELORME WAS THE YOUNGEST STAFFER AT THE MARATHON WATER STOP. ABOVE, SHE SHOWS OFF HER UNIQUE WATER DISTRIBUTION METHOD.



WANDERERS STAFFED THE WATER TABLE AT THE 18/22 MILE MARK AT THE PHILADELPHIA MARATHON. WENDY STEVENS WAS A STAR.



MATT PALOMBARO ROARS INTO 22-MILE WATER STOP EN ROUTE TO 50TH PLACE FINISH IN THE PHILADELPHIA MARATHON



## BIKE RIDES COMMENCE ON SATURDAYS

A great opportunity for bike riders is now happening on Saturday mornings at 9 am. Philadelphia biking maestro Paul Molino will be conducting the group bicycle rides starting in Roxborough at his Bike Addicts story located at 5548 Ridge Avenue (directly across from the hardware store). The rides will be about one hour to one hour and a half in length, and are geared to the enthusiastic recreational rider, but not the racer.

Check the Wanderers website for details.

## STAIR WORKOUTS STARTED

For the athlete who is looking for that extra competitive edge or for the person seeking a little variety in their workout program, Michael Branca "The King of Stairs" has the solution..... stairclimbing workouts. Michael's stairclimbing workouts in Manayunk were very popular last year, and they are back now on Sundays starting at 10:30 a.m. These sessions are free and are open to persons at all levels of conditioning. Check the Wanderers website for details.



## WANDERERS SPORTS CALENDAR

- December 2: 'Lil Bird Sharon Tasman makes her debut marathon performance at the *St. Jude's Hospital Marathon* in Memphis.
- December 9: *Rosie Carnage* and *NAYLZ* will compete in the *Rocket City Marathon* in Huntsville, Alabama.
- December 10: Ken Evans will be running in the *25k Louisiana State Championship* in New Orleans.
- January 2: Susan "The Great One" Hurrey will take her fitness test at the Crossfit Philly gym. Her assignment six pull-ups and 300 burpees in 20 minutes.
- January 6: Chris M. and Babs and possibly Carnage will be running in the *Fattest Butt 50k* trail run in Delaware.
- March 25: Lorre Eng will be running in the "*More Marathon*" Marathon in Central Park in New York City.

## 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](http://www.WanderersRunningClub.org)



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newsletter

WISSAHICKON WANDERERS  
1021 WEST HORTTER STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19119

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