

# The Greater Pittsburgh Roadrunners

December 2000

## The President's Column

**Bruce McGlothlin**

Happy New Year To All! Hope you had a wonderful holiday running here and there. The weather seems to be cooperating, but these shortened days are tough to get our workouts in. We are always running for "Daylight".

Last year, our racing schedule was great. We always have a nice mixture of road races and trail runs that make us a pretty active club, "Race-wise". People are very nice and so cooperative. This is what keeps our club going.

Those of you who enjoy trail running may like to know that there is a new running magazine entitled "Trail Runner". It highlights trail running events, schedules and equipment that you may enjoy. It even listed the "Bushwhacker's Nightmare" in the last issue.

In December, we had an incident that everyone should be aware of, especially running in the fields and woods. Dogs bit a couple of our members – one in the race and one after the race.

A "Loose" Great Dane mauled Rich Hickey. There was plenty of blood and numerous stitches that required a hospital visit to the emergency room. He was lightly jogging after the race. A leashed dog that was in the race bit Dena Holland. Luckily, it did not break the skin, but it was still a serious wound.

Both Rich and Dena seem to be all right, but this should alert us to several things. We have been pretty lax about dogs in our races in the past because there were few, in any problems. All of us should become more aware of potential dangers from dogs.

Running tends to excite dogs, just like us, but usually we don't bite other people. So a word to the wise is sufficient.

RRCA National Headquarters states that dogs, strollers, bikers, etc. are not allowed on our racecourses during the race. Since it violates insurance regulations. We must continue to maintain our insurance to have our races.

People who sign up to race will not be allowed to run with their dogs, even on a leash. It will be up to the Race Directors to enforce the "No Dog" rule in our races. Dogs may interfere with the health and safety of our runners. We cannot allow this.

We hope this does not cause any undue bad feelings, but you can see where we are coming from. Please cooperate and help us enforce this rule.

On a lighter note, I had the opportunity to run in John Papa's (Track coach at Slippery Rock) "Let's Get Dirty" cross-country run. It was great fun with deep, oozing, sloppy mud to run and play in. Some did. I was trying to run. I felt like I was back in High School, since I was rubbing shoulders with 200-300 high school boys and girls. Anyway, it was nice to be young again, even for an hour.

There are still T-shirts for sale from the "Gutbuster" that were designed by the late Harry Holland, former GPRRC President and marathon runner for the Championship Club. They are very attractive short-sleeved T-shirts selling for \$8.00. We will be selling them at all races until they sell out.

T-shirts will also be available for the Bushwhacker's Nightmare Trail Run on January 21. It is such a tough run, people have asked for some kind of memento. So, here is your chance to impress family & friends. It is my original logo designed by "You Know Who". "You Know Who" loves this course, so he had to have a T-shirt. Some people never have enough T-shirts.

Speaking of the Bushwhacker, Dave Helwig from Mt. Lebanon has written to Runner's World about his favorite race. It will be published in January 2002. We got the scoop from Dave and he allowed us to publish it in our newsletter. Thanks Dave. It was well written and gives our race much publicity.

Thanks to all our members, race directors and others who contribute to GPRRC. We are a devoted group of fun-loving people who run hard and go home. We wouldn't want to be late for dinner.

Good running in 2001! See you at the banquet and the races!

Bruce

P. S. Check out our new Web Site:[www.geocities.com/gprrc](http://www.geocities.com/gprrc) and e-mail : [rhickey@adelphia.net](mailto:rhickey@adelphia.net)

Thanks to Rich and Kathleen Hickey for upgrading us to the modern world. Some of us have a hard time getting there since we still use rotary phones.

## From The Editor

### Ed Hall

The year 2000 has been one of mixed emotions. We lost another member, Amos Salven who passed away in August. Since his accident, he had been an infrequent participant in the monthly runs and had to run at a much slower pace but otherwise he was his usual friendly and likeable self. His last run with the club was at the Piece of Cake Run in June. He will be missed.

On a brighter note, Bill Hoon finally achieved his goal of qualifying for the Iron Man Triathlon in Hawaii. As you will find out in Bill's narration, his experience was one of mixed emotions and was one that no one would have predicted.

We had another participant in an offshore event – Ron Hannan ran the London Marathon 2000. After a three year vacation

I added another marathon to my list of completed marathons. My time was the slowest ever but I still enjoyed it. I can recommend the Indianapolis Marathon – it has a stretch of rolling hills in the first half but is otherwise a fairly flat course. The organization and on course support were excellent.

The first annual Dennis J. Donnelly Memorial Hartwood Tour Run was a great success. There were many family members who participated. Daughter, Tammy Slusser, was second overall in the 10K, Son-in-law, Don Slusser was third overall and Jane Donnelly was first in the Senior Division. There was also an extraordinary spread of food that was enjoyed by everyone.

I suppose some people were on pins & needles waiting for the possible questionnaire asking about their running – why, how much, races, likes and dislikes, etc. I was to include this in the next scheduled newsletter. But I forgot to do this, so the suspense will continue for a while.

## Championship Club

The members of the Club for 1999 were:

- Terry Carskaddan
- Jane Donnelly
- Andy Gero
- Ed Hall
- Ron Hannan
- Kathleen Hickey
- Richard Hickey
- Dena Holland
- Bill Hoon
- Georgette Lacey
- Jim Lacey
- Tom Mal
- Bruce McGlothlin
- Art Wiland

The award was a special edition of the 1983 Championship Club award T-shirt, which was designed by former club member Harry Holland. Changing the year, changing to short sleeves and by adding Harry's signature the special edition was created. In addition, a one of a kind short sleeve version

with the original year and Harry's signature was presented to Dena Holland.

The award for year 2000 is unique and is something that most runners will find useful. Please take time right now to complete your year 2000 Championship Club participation information form at the end of the newsletter. **Mail (or email) it immediately** so the awards can be ordered in time to be available for the awards banquet.

## **Awards Banquet**

### **Connie Hoon**

It's that time of year again for our annual dinner/meeting. This year we're having it at Tambellini's in Bridgeville. Circle your calendars for February 3, 2001 at 6:30 PM. Tambellini's is located on Railroad St. with free parking on Bower Hill Rd. We will have a private room to conduct all business matters and to enjoy the company. The dinner is \$17.50 per person. **Please respond by January 27, 2001.** Several of our members have dined at this restaurant and all agreed that the food is excellent. As always, there are meatless meals to choose from.

Send Checks to: Connie Hoon  
456 Coolidge Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

## **Ironman**

### **Bill Hoon**

On October 14, 2000, I became the first member of the GPRRC to take on the Hawaiian Ironman World Championship Triathlon. This race consists of a 2.4-mile swim in the Pacific Ocean, a 112-mile bicycle race, and a marathon, all within 17 hours.

The swim race started at 7:00AM in warm clear waters and light chop and it went pretty well for me. I finished in 1:40:32 and well under the 2:20 cut off time. This was a little slower than I had expected, but I chalked that up to probably the chop effect. What was more troublesome was that I had begun

to feel some of the strain in my left hip that I had injured eight days previously while on a training run.

I quickly showered to get the salt off, a pit stop and then on to the bike. The bike was going quite well through about the first 25 miles. Temperatures were steadily climbing and suddenly cross winds started hitting the riders. These were quite strong and required a heavy grip on the handlebars to stay upright. This was quite unnerving and took your thoughts away from racing. My forearms actually went numb at one point from holding on so tightly. I also passed up a couple of aid stations to avoid getting knocked over while taking a hand off the handlebars.

The turn around point was at the town of Hawi (HaVee), and shortly after that a woman passed me and said, "Hi." We were traveling at 25-26 mph and within a mile she had been knocked over by the wind. I didn't see her crash, but another woman who got to the accident site first had and said that the wind had just picked this lady up, bike and all, and slammed her to the road. Things did not look good when I pulled up. The woman on the road looked smashed. There was about a pint of blood under her and her helmet was cracked all the way through in two places on the side that didn't hit the road. I was thinking serious skull fracture and possible spinal cord injury.

I asked the other competitor if she was a physician or a nurse. She said no, and then I knew that I had to take charge. I am trained in trauma care and do triage in the Army Reserves. I guess that she lucked out crashing in front of me.

The other competitor kept talking to the injured racer while I was thinking – cell phone. Finally a Hawaiian woman pulled up and asked if we needed help. She had a cell phone and called 911. She also had a sleeping bag that we used to provide some cover for #200 who was lying on the road.

#200's name was Madonna Buder, a 70-year-old retired nun from Spokane, WA. I didn't know those details until the next evening. Two fellows from the race showed up. No medical expertise there, either.

Madonna didn't want water, but she was getting concerned that the two of us who had stopped were losing a lot of time. A policeman finally showed up and I stressed to him that we needed an ambulance, "NOW!"

They finally got one 40 minutes after the crash. I then hopped on my bike and did my best to make up the lost time in that last 56 miles. My official bike split was 7:51:29, which included the time spent at the accident site.

I was still in fairly good shape for beating the 17-hour deadline, but started feeling pain in my hip as soon as I started to run. I jogged along for 8 miles until the pain became too great and then I started to walk.

I remained optimistic on a finish until I timed myself between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> mile marker. Nineteen minutes. A bit beyond the 23-mile marker, I checked my watch. 40 minutes to go. I needed 57. The race was over.

The finish area is closed down at the 17-hour mark and so I got a ride to the medical screening area at the pier via ambulance. There I was seen by their crew and expressed my desire to leave. The physician in charge dared me to get up off the stretcher. When I couldn't, I was then transported to the local hospital. X-rays of the hip followed and a jolt of morphine through my I.V. I was out like a light until the next morning and felt much better.

I still want to go back to finish the race. Hopefully, I'll be healthy the next time and no accidents.

The race course is great. The swim course was one of the best that I have ever done. The bike course was good with a lot of rollers and aid stations every 5 miles. The run course is all but flat with aid every mile.

My only complaints are that the heat is intense and the cross winds on the bike make that race very traumatic. With 9000 volunteers, the race is definitely world class and designed for a finish.

I'll make every effort to qualify again, but probably not next year because it looks like the Army is going to be sending me to Kosovo for 9 months beginning in February.

John Brokenbrough finished second in the 40-44 age group in 98<sup>th</sup> position overall in 9:43:24. His father, Roger won the 65-69 age group in 14:08:58. Roger finished in the 1275<sup>th</sup> position.

## **Ironmanlive.com**

### **Kevin Mackinnon**

The Ironman Triathlon World Championship, with its supremely demanding course, draws out an endless show of human spirit every October. But even among this group of driven and committed athletes, a story arises every now and then that displays the true class that underlies the spirit of the sport.

This year, one of those stories involves two competitors who, because of their selflessness, sacrificed their own Ironman race to take care of another athlete. As a measure of their true modesty, the two have not been easy to track down. Nancy Taubner, a 52-year-old from Edmonton, Canada, has not spoken to any media about the event. The quotes we do have come from her husband Nick Lees, a columnist with the Edmonton Journal, and from a brief interview Ironmanlive.com was able to get on the morning following the race. The other, 55-year-old Bill Hoon from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has been equally reluctant to talk about his notable feat.

What these two did was take care of one of the Ironman's most famous age-group athletes, Sister Madonna Buder, after she sustained serious injuries in a bike crash.

This incredible 70-year-old nun is hardly a stranger to the Big Island course, since she holds both the 60-64 and the 65-69 age-category records at the Ironman Triathlon World Championship. This year she hoped to add the 70-74 age-group record to her incredible resume.

While the infamous “Mumuku” winds took an even greater-than-usual toll on all the competitors at this year’s Ironman race, for a few those 45 mph winds proved almost fatal. Some of the best age-group athletes in the world were reduced to walking their bikes through the worst of the powerful gusts. At the post-race press conference, the professional men talked about one athlete they saw blown right off the road just meters ahead of them as they came down the hill from Hawi.

It was at about the same spot that Buder was literally thrown up in the air by a particularly strong gust of wind. She fell to the ground with a sickening thud on her head. In comes Taubner and Hoon.

“I saw someone cycling back towards me as I made my way to the turn-around point,” Taubner told her husband. “Suddenly a gust picked up both cyclist and bike and dumped them down hard on the ground. It was sickening to watch.”

“It was the worst cycling accident I had ever seen,” Hoon says. A dentist who also does trauma care in the Armed Forces Reserve, Hoon was the only person with medical knowledge around when the accident happened. As much as he realized staying with Buder was jeopardizing his chances of finishing the race, he didn’t even think of leaving the scene.

Buder was unconscious when the 54-year-old Taubner made it across the road to her. Hoon was cycling behind Buder, and as he dismounted, he felt sure Buder had sustained a major head injury. Her helmet was cracked in two places, and she was bleeding from her head. A passing motorist stopped to help, and used her cellular phone to call an ambulance. Hoon and Taubner held Buder’s head, fearing she might have a neck injury, and used a borrowed sleeping bag to cover her in case she started to go into shock.

“I had no idea who it was at first,” Taubner told her husband. “But Madonna soon regained consciousness and thanked me for helping her.”

By the time the ambulance got to Buder, Taubner and Hoon had been waiting with the 70-year-old for 45 minutes. Taubner made a gallant effort to complete the bike course by the 5:30PM cut-off, but missed it by just two minutes.

“Running is my strongest event and I’d have had no trouble completing the course in the 17-hour time limit,” a disappointed Taubner said the next morning. “It’s disappointing to go home without a finisher’s medal, but I did what I know Madonna would have done for me.

Hoon managed to make it to the bike cut-off, but knew he was going to have a rough time making the final midnight cut-off.

“I had injured my hip about eight days before the race,” Hoon says. “I was able to run for eight miles but then I had to walk the rest of the way.”

With just three miles to go, Hoon realized that he was walking too slowly to make it to the finish line in time – he had 45 minutes, and he needed 57. He decided at that point to pull out.

Upon hearing about Taubner’s unselfish sacrifice, it literally took seconds for Ironman race director Sharron Ackles to invite Taubner back to compete in Kona next year. At the awards banquet, Ackles told the crowd that both Taubner and Hoon had displayed the true Ironman spirit.

Buder is recovering well after the crash. While she didn’t sustain nearly as bad a head injury as Hoon had originally envisioned, it seems that she might have suffered a mild concussion. She required 20 stitches in her face, too. What was keeping her from training a month after the crash, though, was the broken clavicle she suffered from her spill.

“I’m dying to get out skiing and snowshoeing,” Buder says. This amazing nun is going to be patient though, and has started her training by doing some water running. She is hoping to meet Taubner again at next year’s Wold Short-Course Triathlon Championships, which will take place in Taubner’s hometown of Edmonton.

While they might not have been official finishers of this year's Ironman Triathlon World Championship, both Hoon and Taubner have shown that they are much more than simply Ironman competitors. They are world-class individuals, too.

## **Runners World Article**

[Will be in January 2002 issue]

### **Dave Helwig**

My favorite race is the Greater Pittsburgh Road Runners' Bushwhacker's Nightmare Trail Run. Held the third Sunday in January at Allegheny County's South Park, it attracts a hardy band of several dozen mud-loving masochists. They have the option of slogging the 5K course once, or repeating it to double their (dis)pleasure. Actually the course's high degree of difficulty puts participants at ease mentally since PRs (except for the course itself) are out of the question. Any 10K time under an hour is respectable.

Runners, hooting and laughing at the absurdity of the event, start up a narrow, moderately steep path which winds through woods for about 1/3 of a mile. They then run a mile or so on a bridle path to reach the utility pipelines that make up roughly half the course. Steep terrain is only part of the challenge. Even without recent rain or snow the course always is wet. I use ultra-cautious foot placement on downhills, but others hurtle past heedless of potential ankle sprains or worse. On uphills the mud necessitates grabbing adjacent tree limbs or bushes for purchase.

The conditions make it inadvisable to wear shoes have much remaining useful life. I save my most recently worn pair for this race, to be discarded immediately afterward. My neighbor, Susan Schneck, still regrets her decision to compete in new shoes several years ago.

Finishers bask in the satisfaction of completing the toughest course that most of them are likely to undertake. There's great camaraderie at the finish line. The race is very low key -- \$1 entry fee (\$2 for non-RRCA members), no numbers or awards.

(There are cookies and soft drinks) It's a welcome antidote to the flat, out and back, pay \$20 for an ugly shirt 5K syndrome!

## **ROAD RULES: RIDE LIKE THE WIND – CAREFULLY**

[Appeared in the Mt. Lebanon Magazine, August 2000]

### **Dave Helwig**

The buck stares impassively, then turns his eight points down the dirt path and saunters back to several waiting does. (He's a guy, after all, and can't betray alarm at the sight of the likes of me.) A great heron strides across the near-dry creek bed searching for breakfast. Two dozen turkeys forage, oblivious to my presence. A doe and fawn bound across the field like African savanna-dwellers. I have observed these and many other Wild Kingdom scenes within 10 miles of Mt. Lebanon during the past two years. My vantage point – a bicycle.

I procrastinated for a decade before buying my first bike since childhood. Soon, I was kicking myself for delaying so long. Cycling has opened my eyes to a wealth of beautiful and interesting sights that I had overlooked in my 40-plus years of living in Mt. Lebanon. It has given me much more than simply another way to cross-train, which was my original purpose.

Every year, my wife and I would rent bikes while vacationing on Sanibel Island, Fla. We loved getting around without riding in a stifling car and being able to get close to the gators, egrets, spoonbills, herons and (once) an otter. Each year we vowed to buy bikes for home, but the prospect of pedaling on hilly, bumpy suburban streets was less than alluring. What a revelation, once I took the plunge.

My plan was to ride Mt. Lebanon's quiet back streets or Rails to Trails, but this soon became constricting. So with trepidation, I ventured onto more traveled roads. Gradually, I became tolerably comfortable on South Hills highways, with a few exceptions (Washington Road in Mt. Lebanon is one – I frequently take refuge on its side-walks).

I've managed to avoid injury or even close calls by following a few basic rules. 1. Buy and wear a helmet; 2. Maintain visibility, yours and theirs – wear clothes that can be easily seen; don't ride in the dark, and get a rear-view mirror. As the French safety slogan goes, "La vue, c'est la vie". 3. Always yield right-of-way, even when it's legally yours. Motor vehicles have what my friend Steve's father calls "right of weight". Remember Ry Cooder's line, "She was guilty; I was dead". 4. Limit the use of busy roads to off-peak times. I ride Route 19, Route 88, Route 50, etc. only on weekends between 6 and 9 A.M.

My first revelation was streets hitherto unknown to me. Sunset Hills in particular was terra incognita, but other neighborhoods also revealed alleys and dead-ends I had never chanced upon by car or foot. Forays into neighboring communities provided similar surprises. One lesson was an appreciation of how vast Beth Park is, and how many attractive neighborhoods it has. Conversely, I discovered an unfamiliar side of Upper St. Clair—parts that are a fascinating mix of pastoral and light industrial. Those areas, McLaughlin Run and Mayview roads especially, are fertile sources for wildlife sightings. I almost always see deer along the latter and am careful to control my speed on its steep downhill, to avoid being turned into roadkill by a darting deer.

Beyond Route 50, the landscape becomes even more bucolic. I continue to be amazed that the woods and fields of South Fayette, Oakdale and Collier are in Allegheny County. Those communities are home to my favorite local ride, the long, gently sloping Thoms Run, as well as two of my favorite place names – Sturgeon and Presto. (Lower Scrubgrass Road is first runner-up in the ride category.) Despite its rural character, I have yet to see a deer in South Fayette, in marked contrast to its neighbors, where Bambi reigns. The same for turkeys, although Noblestown Road boasts an impressive enclave of free-ranging chickens.

Besides the chance to see wildlife and scenic vistas, cycling has made me more aware of the many streams in the Chartiers Creek watershed, including Montour, Millers,

Painters, Boyds and Brush runs. Railroads often parallel watercourses, so it is no surprise that several of these runs flow alongside the Montour Trail. I no longer stick to the Rails to Trails, but I haven't abandoned them. They're great places to bike! The Arrowhead segment of the Montour Trail in Peters is very good for family rides because its paved surface is easier for little legs than the crushed limestone used elsewhere. Its trailside cone and scone shop, with ample outdoor seating, is a welcome amenity for glycogen-depleted parents and kids alike. (The Cecil-Hendersonville segment also has a good, albeit somewhat hard to find, soft ice cream place at Hendersonville just east of Morganza Road.) Arrowhead's positives outweigh the lack of comfort facilities available on other segments of the trail, and its occasional pedestrian over-population. Farther afield, the Ohio-pyle to Confluence trail offers a beautiful tour on the banks of the Youghiogheny River. I'm looking forward to the day when all the trails are connected and it will be possible to ride from my home to the Montour Trail all the way to Washington, D.C., on converted rail beds.

Finally, a few words of non-expert equipment advice, if you're psyched to bike. The type of riding you do should determine your choice of bike. There are three basic types: *mountain* (primarily for off-road), *road* (what my contemporaries might recall as "racing" or "English" bike), and *hybrid* (to me a regular bicycle but sometimes equipped with dozens more gears than in the good old days.) I picked a hybrid for comfort and versatility and am glad I did. Those with other interests will choose differently. Department or large sporting goods stores often sell more cheaply, but a bike shop offers knowledgeable personnel who can help you select with confidence and perform quality maintenance. We are fortunate to have several of these shops in the South Hills. In addition to the basic safety accessories. I also highly recommend padded shorts and gloves. Wearing them won't automatically turn you into a bike snob, and you'll feel a lot better when riding any distance.

The roads can be yours. What are you waiting for?

