



September 2003

Volume 12, Issue 6

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Check rvrr.org for latest club info.

Understanding the Motives of an Endurance Junkie

*by 'Iron' Pete Priolo
Triathlon/Ultramarathon/
Visualization Coach*

I've been with the Raritan Valley Road Runners since 1995/1996. At this point, this marks the longest tenure I've ever been with a certain group, even eclipsing my professional tenure as a scientist at Colgate-Palmolive Company. And between the two, most of you who know me know that I've had a lot more

enjoyable experience here than there. As one of the more noted endurance multisport athletes in the club and now a multisport coach, I've fielded a lot of questions about training for multisport events, especially the Ironman events. And I've answered them all to the best of my ability, except for one question that keeps rearing its ugly head time and time again:

"Why do you do it?"

Actually, the question is usually formed more colorfully, like "why the (beep) would you like to destroy your body in a (beep)ing event that has the capacity to break down your complex mental reasoning down to basic survival instincts and also takes months to recover from? I could kick you in the head repeatedly to give you the same effect."

There is no simple an-

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My Ninth Mile in the President's Shoes

By Dana Gross

Hi all. Summer is just about over, thankfully. I can't say we have had the best of weather this summer. I think training and racing have been difficult for a lot of us. Hopefully we can look forward to cooler days with less humidity.

First and foremost I would like to announce the date for the next general membership meeting. It will be held on

September 24th after the club run. Pizza will be served. At this meeting we will be having nominations for the December elections for the 2004 board. Once again I will implore you that this is one of the best ways to get involved with the day to day running of the club. If you want to help out or get involved this is one of the most straight forward ways to accomplish this. Following nominations we will be holding the first ever

RVRR garage sale and swap meet. Please bring things that you no longer love or don't know what to do with and try to find new homes for them. As I stated in the last newsletter if you have any old vinyl that is in good shape that needs a good home I am always looking. Sell or swap, it is up to you.

Summer and youth series were both very successful this year. I would like to thank Doug and

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Understanding the Motives of an Endurance Junkie

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answer to that question. Yet, endurance triathlons like Ironman have seen an explosion of people in recent years, so I know I'm not the only one who finds endurance events appealing. The above question is even asked by endurance athletes themselves to other endurance athletes extensively in order to get some insight in to their own answers to those questions. In one of the listserv communities that I am on, this question was recently the hot topic of conversation. The answers I observed ranged from "a good way to lose 84 pounds and quit smoking" to "I do it for the status it brings among my acquaintances" to "I just enjoy it."

As for me, well, I've mulled for a long time about an accurate answer to my enjoyment of what others consider painful. How? Well, I've looked at snippets of my life to help me out. Here are some of those snippets:

First life snippet. I started out as a swimmer in a high school on Staten Island in 1983. My swimming coach always used to tell me in those first two

years that I was a "solid" swimmer. I was decent enough to do all of the swimming strokes, but not "superstar" enough to place me into those important events where the other "superstar swimmers" are placed. It upset me a lot. I didn't want to be "average". I worked hard to get my butt onto the Varsity Team and started to excel at the long course freestyle events (200 yard/meter freestyle and 500 yard/400 meter freestyle). I received the Most Improved Swimmer Award twice in my junior and senior years in high school and qualified for the Nationals in Villanova, where I set a PR for the 400 meter freestyle.

So, maybe the answer is some measure of revenge against my former swim coach and others who didn't think I was good enough? It could be a possibility.

Second life snippet. In 1995, a year before I was to finish my first Ironman race, I entered into the New York City Marathon. I finished the race with a decent time. Some 2 hours later, I noticed that quite a lot of people were crossing that finish line. It

had also dawned on me that almost half of everyone I know at work and at play had finished at least one marathon in their lives. At the risk of sounding offensive to other marathoners, I felt that there were too many people in my life who completed this distance to be one of those special few who had done something completely different. Again, I am not trying to cheapen anyone's completion of a marathon, since it does take very strong willpower to go the distance, but I am trying to be very truthful about how I was thinking at this point. And, even though we may act politically correct, nobody thinks politically correct! I wanted to be different from even the marathoners, I must admit. I signed up for Ironman Canada soon after the race (it was much easier to enter Ironman Canada then), feeling that there is a much smaller, more special population that had completed such a race.

So, the answer to that stinging question could be to gain an elite status over the rest of the population? Interesting thought...

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My Ninth Mile in the Presidents Shoes

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Janice for organizing summer series and Pete P. and Cheryl for heading up youth series. Your hard work is greatly appreciated.

Adventure runs are going strong with good turnouts through Watchung. The trails there are very challenging and I am hoping to be able to make it. Once again I commend Ken in putting these events to-

gether.

Enjoy the fall and may all your training runs feel easy.

Dana △

Past President's Day

By Peter Onufryk

At the last general membership meeting the club celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Wednesday night run. In honor of the anniversary, former club presidents were invited to speak and event was dubbed "Past Presidents' Day." Of the eight former club presidents, four attended and one sent a detailed email.

As the club's founding president, Allen Paul was given the honor of speaking first. Allen deserves much of the credit for creating an organization that has lasted for twenty years and for one in which all are welcome. He served as president during the club's first three years, 1983 through 1986, and has remained active ever since. During his talk Allen recalled the founding of the club. In the early eighties there was a running store called "In the Running" located in Woodbridge that held group runs from its store. When the store closed, Allen and others felt that it would be good to have weekly group runs in the Highland Park area. This idea gave birth to the Raritan Valley Road Runners. The club was started in October of 1983.

In order to attract members to the newly formed club, Allen handed out flyers advertising the club and Wednesday night runs everywhere he went. He even carried flyers with him during Wednesday night runs, passing them out to everyone he saw. One can only imagine

what these flyers looked like on a hot summer run in humid ninety degree heat. However, Allen assured us that passing out flyers was very successful in attracting new members.

Allen's goal for the club was simple, "have a good time and go for a run." By 1984 the flyers paid off and the club had a core group of members. At that point the club decided to organize its first major event, the Summer Series.

Doug Brown served as the club's second president from 1987 through 1989 and spoke next. Doug learned of the club through one of Allen's flyers and joined in 1983. As president, Doug spent much of his time making the club "run like a business." At the start of Doug's presidency, the club had a large number of members, but most of these members were inactive. Doug rebuilt the membership into one of mostly active members.

Doug's second major contribution to the club was serving as race director for the Summer Series. Like Allen's flyers, the Summer Series became a terrific recruiting tool for the club. Local runners came just for the races, but often got to know club members and wound up joining the club. Runners like statistics and an amazing one mentioned by Doug was that in the over 80 races held in the last 19 years of the Summer Series, it has never rained during a race.

John MacGillivray was the club's third president. He was

unable to attend the event in person but sent a detailed email that recalled the club's activities during his presidency. Dana Gross, the current club president, read much of John's email.

Ray Petit served as the club's president from 1997 through 1998 and was the next to speak. Like a modern day Moses, Ray led the Raritan valley Road runners through Highland Park in search of a home. After many years at the Highland Park Y, the club was forced to leave the only home it had ever known. In 1997 the management of the Y decided that in order for the club to continue to use its facilities, club members would have to join the Y. Individual membership at they Y had a yearly fee \$250 and Ray immediately realized that this meant the club had to move. Ray led the move finding a location on Raritan Ave. However, the club soon moved once again to the Highland Park Senior/Youth Recreation Center on South 6th Ave.

During Ray's presidency, he not only moved the meeting location for Wednesday night runs, but he also moved the Saturday morning towpath runs from Blackwells Mills to Gove #5 in Johnson Park. At the time, this was somewhat controversial as the Blackwells Mills area is a beautiful place to run. However, the run was becoming unreliable. Some Saturdays there would be over a dozen runners.

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Past President's Day

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Other Saturdays there would be no one. After moving the run to Grove #5, Ray made it his personal commitment to attend every Saturday morning run to ensure that there will always be someone to run with.

One of the hot issues during Ray's presidency was whether or not it was harmful for a child under 13 to run a distance of 5K or farther. The club looked to the RRCA for guidance, but they didn't have an official youth running policy. Some in the club felt so strongly that it was harmful for children to run long distances that they wanted the Youth Series and Summer Series races held on different days. The issue was finally resolved by creating a club policy in which runners under 13 are allowed to run in club events (i.e., they are not physically removed from a race); however, there are no age groups for those 13 and under.

The final speaker of the night was Pete Priolo who served as president from 2001 through 2002. When Trink Poynter (club president from 1999 through 2000) approached Pete about running for the presidency, she told him that his first term would be a honeymoon and if he chose to run again, his second would be a nightmare. Pete's nightmare began a couple of minutes after he was elected. Soon after being told that he won the election he was informed that Norm, the head of the Highland Park Senior/Youth Recreation Center, was throwing the club out of the building.

After an emergency executive board meeting and a call to the mayor of Highland Park, Pete persuaded Norm to allow the club to continue to use the facilities.

The foundation of Pete's presidency was that the club was built on the racing teams. When the USATF-NJ announced a new club division in the grand prix, Pete got the club's teams together to compete. That year the club not only came in first, it had twice the points of the second place club. The club repeated this feat the following year. This caused the USATF-NJ to change the scoring policy so that other clubs had a chance to compete.

In the final days of Pete's presidency, Norm found yet another way to expel the club from the Senior/Youth Recreation Center and this one succeeded. He convinced the township to charge the club for using the facilities. Since the club could not afford to pay the fees, it was once again forced to find a new home.

Over the last twenty years club presidents have not only organized and lead the club during their presidency, but many have continued to do so after their term has ended. It is safe to say that RVRR would be a mere fraction of what it is today if it were not for the continued efforts of these dedicated individuals. Although we rarely see Allen Paul at a Wednesday night run these days, he continues to serve the club in ways which are too numerous to list.

He helped find our current Wednesday night run location, he allows the executive board to use his store for meetings, and he is a frequent volunteer at club events. Doug Brown takes care of copying and mailing the club newsletter and has served as the Summer Series race director for nearly two decades. Doug also serves as a pillar in the masters racing community. Ray Petit not only continues to meet his stated commitment of being at every Saturday morning run but he also single handedly organizes the annual Tow-Path "Train"ing Run which has become one of the club's premier events. While Pete Priolo has only been out of office for a year, he has spent that year serving as race director for the Youth Series, working on the Equinox race committee, and volunteering at other events.

Having served on the executive board under three club presidents, I can personally attest that the time and effort of these leaders often goes unrecognized by the general membership. The situation is best described by Lyndon B. Johnson when he said "If one morning I walked on top of the water across the Potomac River, the headline that afternoon would read President Can't Swim." Past Presidents' Day not only served to recall some interesting club history, but also provided much deserved recognition of the contributions of former RVRR club presidents. Δ

Understanding the Motives of an Endurance Junkie

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Third snippet. After the year 2000, one of my more private e-mail list communities seemed to have migrated from doing Ironman races to ultramarathon races. At the completion of each of the ultramarathons, the members of this list placed pictures from the race onto the internet for all to share. Almost all of these pictures can knock anyone's socks off: they show the competitor in a completely different emotional phase at different stages of the race. In one picture, the person shows a refreshed look as he smiles to the camera. In another picture later on in the race, his hunched shoulders and drooping eyes show a completely different side to him as he struggles through that particular stage of the race. Even later on in the race, his posture looks healthy again as he gives a thumbs-up to the camera. A picture is really worth a thousand words! In the meantime, I did support for one of the members of this club who did the Garden State 50 Miler for two years in a row. To see the condition that Chris Lehman was in as he entered each of the aid stations during the race and how he managed himself nutritionally and emotionally was a wondrous story in itself. At that point I knew I **had** to try one of these out for myself, as it could be even tougher than any of the Ironman races I ever did. Which leads to another possible answer to that question. Maybe the epic nature of the distance of the race and its many tests along the way are pretty accurate microcosms of

life itself, along with its emotional highs and lows. And, unlike the 5k and 10k running races, where a bad day will only slow my time by a few seconds, a bad day in an ultra endurance event will have to be confronted **and solved** in order to even finish the race. The continual elaborate thought process in these races is nothing short of sensational; the constant monitoring of my vitals and how to manage the next few critical miles in the race nutritionally and emotionally in a given stage of the endurance event **forces** me to get to know myself at levels most never see at a 5k or 10k race. For proof of this, I need only to refer to my first legitimate ultramarathon in last year's Mountain Masochist 50 Mile Trail Run (I did our club's 34.1 Mile "Train"ing Run in a previous year which is more an event than a race). I was a bit overweight, and was nowhere as fit as I was in the last 1990s. But I had such extensive previous Ironman experience tucked away in my head that when each problem reared its ugly head during the race, I had the presence to solve it before it got to the point where it threatened my goal to finish. In other words, I "thought" myself through the race and finished strong.

After quite a bit of pondering, I feel the real answer lies somewhere in the middle of these revelations. And my future intentions show this to be quite accurate. When this article comes out in this newsletter I will have paced someone I know through the last 32 miles of the Vermont 100 Mile Trail

Run. Why do I want to go pace for him? Well, aside from the joy to motivate him to the finish, I want to see exactly what problems one goes through in a race as grueling as this and how he goes about solving them. Secondly, I want to experience this special race for myself, since I will like to do one of these 100 milers next year. Why? First, like the marathon in 1995, it seems now like there are now many people who have done the Ironman lately to be considered unique to other people and I want to be one of the chosen few who have run a century. Second, I will be forced to get to know myself even better under even more grueling conditions. Fits very well within my revelations, doesn't it?

So, here is my formal attempt to answer that stinging question, "Why?" For those who still do not understand, don't fret about it, you're not alone. And there is nothing wrong with that, since I might not understand what makes you tick as well. But don't ask me to try to explain again! But for those few that do understand, believe me, the rewards for doing these races are beyond great. If you actually do understand my desire to do ultra endurance events, and also find them tempting to do, then I strongly suggest you go out there and try one for yourself. Believe me; you will come back a changed person! △

I can attest to this fact!! - ed.

Happy Birthday!

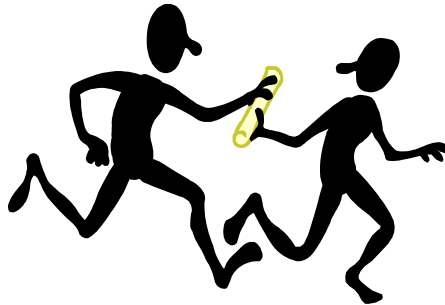
September 2003

** -New Age Group

David Lazarus	9/1
Anthony Bainbridge	9/2
Greg Mullins	9/3
Cloey Wilcox	9/3
Elliot Gordon	9/3
Emily O'Connell **	9/7
John Gould	9/7
David Brown	9/11
Carl Rocker	9/11
Joseph Balint	9/11
Sue Juronics	9/13
Paul Grassie **	9/13
Paul Fiorilla	9/23
Sascha Scott	9/25
John Dale	9/27
Richard Myers	9/27
Butch Pivano	9/27

Welcome New Members

Talia Kohn	Highland Park
Kristel Lauk	Basking Ridge
Sascha Scott	Highland Park



RVRR Shorts and Singlets for Sale

Just in time for the racing season.

RVRR singlets-Coolmax White Mesh

Male: M, L, XL

Female: M, L, XL

Cost per item is \$17. Mail check and 'Ship to' address to RVRR, PO Box 1197, Edison, NJ 08818-1197. Singlet will be mailed to you via first-class mail. High-split running shorts are also available at a clearance price of \$5 per item. Clothing is also available at Wednesday night runs. See **Ray Petit** or **Dana Gross**. △

The 'Double'

By Dave Lazarus

For the past eight years members of my unofficial track club have partaken in what we call 'the double'. The unusual time slotting of a summer Saturday night race, the Fanwood 5K has given my Saturday morning running group the chance to do our distance in the morning and run the race at night.

For many of us it has become a ritual, made more sadistic by the fact that the race almost always coincides with one of the most humid days of August. I have done the "double" most of the time and when I haven't I never noticed any race improvement so this year with marathon training looming there was no doubt about my decision.

Predictably August 16 dawned with warm sticky stagnant air. I struggled through 10 miles with huge puddles

forming in my shoes. I finished my run a little after nine meaning there was about 7 hours to recover for the evening half. Summer afternoons with two kids are not hard to fill and many of the tasks were far from relaxing. I tried to mostly drink fluids and eat easily digestible food.

The nice part for me about Fanwood is that the race starts less than a mile from my house so I was able to use a warm-up run as my transportation to the race. My wife would meet me with my racing flats and other important reinforcements. Local races are great chances to catch up with people that have vanished during the summer and the time passed quickly. I was quick to mention to everyone within earshot about my morning activity. The reactions were predictably erratic from admiration to derision.

I delighted in the reduced expectations, which sometimes enhances my performance. This time around I just had sore quads from the morning and was happy to find a fellow morning runner who quickly convinced me that we should run together. That turned out to be the best idea of the day and he managed to keep me from running too hard. We did well to concentrate our efforts on the small upgrades, At two miles we were together and the splits were encouraging so with so little to go I decided to let loose and left my partner behind.

I finished the race with my quads actually feeling better than earlier in the race and wound up with a time that for me was acceptable. Then I finally got to enjoy some food before I finished the day with a cool down run home. △

Raritan Valley Road Runners

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Former Presidents of RVRR

Allen Paul	1983-1986
Doug Brown	1987-1989
John MacGillivray	1990-1992
John Pretzell	1993-1994
Mark Rogalski	1995-1996
Ray Petit	1997-1998
Trink Poynter	1999-2000
Pete Priolo	2001-2002

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Wednesday Night Runs

The Raritan Valley Road Runners have met weekly for *twenty* years of consecutive Wednesday night runs! **Come join us at 6:30 PM at 808 Raritan Ave. (Rt. 27) right next to the Fleet bank.** Parking in the bank lot is not allowed, there is plenty of available spots on North 8th Ave. directly across from the building. Come dressed in your usual running garb. We are currently running the summer course that takes you to the end of Johnson Park and back. Runs of 2,4,6, or 8 miles are offered on an out and back course. After the run join us for dinner!

Week Place

- 1 **Dolls** Rt. 27 South, 1st bldg. on right past railroad bridge, New Brunswick
- 2 **Tumulty's Pub**
- 3 **Dolls**
- 4 **Tumulty's Pub**
- 5 **Wild Card**-See Bob Townley to make a suggestion Δ

Happenings at RVRR!

Club Events, Selected Races

September 7 — RVRR Summer Series Picnic and Awards Party

September 14 - Somerville Sizzle 4mi. Open and masters champ.

September 21 – Columbia Trail (High Bridge) Adventure run, 9 a.m.

September 24 — general membership meeting

September 28 — Liberty Waterfront half marathon all divisions champ.

October 5 — East Brunswick Road Races 10K and 5K

October 11 - USATF 5K XC Champ. At our own Donaldson Park Δ

Saturday Towpath Runs

Every Saturday morning at 8 AM, we meet in Johnson Park, Piscataway at the Grove 5 parking lot for a group run. Take the oneway park road west from Landing Lane (between Landing Lane Bridge and River Rd). Turn left into the first parking lot. .

The run is out-and –back on the D&R Canal towpath. Typical distances vary from 4.8 to 20+ miles and runners of all levels are welcome! Runners should arrive by 7:50 AM to run with the group. In the event of the lot being closed, you can park in the lot near the end of the road at the Old Towne Village. Δ

Don't Forget!

Raritan Valley Road Runners present our Annual Club Picnic

Sunday, September 7, noon 'til??
Grove 1, Donaldson Park, Highland Park, NJ

Featuring....Food, Friends & Fun catered BBQ, frisbee, croquet, etc. and.....Summer Series Awards

Age Group - Youth Series - Team Champions

All this for Only....
\$5 per Adult ; \$3 per Child (ages 6 - 12)

Family & Friends Welcome!! (pay at the door)

RVRR

PO Box 1197
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C CLUB MEMBERS!

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