



Around the Park

News of the Prospect Park Track Club - March 2009

PPTC 2009 Cherry Tree Rocks Prospect Park

Jessica Kouvalakis, Race Director

Nearly 700 people — 449 ten-mile runners and 75 relay teams — raced in this year's Cherry Tree 10-Mile Race and 3-Person Relay. On February 22, hard-core runners throughout metro-NYC traveled to Prospect Park to race three loops of Park Drive in misty, 40° weather. In addition, more than 20 volunteers and the Cherry Tree Race Committee donated their time and energy at Slope Sports and Bishop Ford High School, in Prospect Park, and behind the scenes to make this year's race such a great success.

PPTC members had impressive showings in many race categories. Most notably, Emily Sanderson was the second overall female finisher, winning a \$50 cash prize. As the first PPTC woman to finish, she also received a 6-month membership to Slope Health & Fitness. Brad Skillman was PPTC's first male finisher, so he, too, won a 6-month Slope Health & Fitness membership.

Maggie Deschamps (1st place), Elizabeth Cannelle (2nd), Danielle Hansen (3rd), Fran Hawthorne (3rd), Brad Skillman (3rd) and Paul Soskind (3rd) were top finishers in their age categories. Jay Dinowitz, Rebecca Rosenberg Beran and Charlene Kohler-Britton won 4th places in their age groups. And, Arthur Gonzalez and Al Prawda finished 4th and 5th, respectively, in their age-group. Amy Duquette celebrated her birthday with a 10th place age-group finish. In all, 23 PPTC members raced the 10-mile course at impressive paces.

PPTC fielded top finishers in the relay categories, too. Anthony Watson, Helen Dole and Troy Phipps, as PPTC Born to Run, successfully defended their 2nd place win in the co-ed division. As The Pink Ladies, Corre Kombol, Amy Hassler and Sarah Scott placed 8th in the women's division. And, PPTC Murphy's Harry-ers — Frank DeLeo, Gil Torres and James McFarland — finished 20th in the men's division. Several NYRR running clubs enjoy the Cherry Tree relay race so much that they field multiple teams and make our race their annual tradition.

The record registration and race-day turn-out surpassed all our expectations. Any worries about the NYRR Al Gordon Snowflake Race in the park the day before proved to be unfounded early in the pre-registration period. Generous prizes and support from our sponsors and cash awards also enhanced the competition.

The PPTC blog rounds up other bloggers' impressions, as well as the official race photos. Many bloggers noted that our enthusiastic and cheerful volunteers, the retro relay slap bracelets and scoring system, and the crowd's friendly encouragement along the course created real camaraderie that will bring them back in 2010.

An Emotional Epiphany

Michael Ring

It used to be easy to get into the New York City Marathon. Back in 1993 and most of the 90's you just had to make sure you mailed in your application on the first day you were allowed to do it at the Post Office used by the NYRR. You just had to get to their Post Office in Manhattan at Midnight or first thing in the morning before work. If you were not one of the first few thousand, the lottery was impossible. Then you just needed to know low people who knew people in high places. Not a problem.

These things started getting complicated. (and easier at the same time). Knowing low people no longer helped; you had to run seven (then nine) "qualifying" races. In 2008, they announced you had to volunteer at a NRRR event. These are not necessarily bad ideas. The NYC Marathon had gone from huge to galactic in size.

Around 2001 I noticed a new guaranteed entry option; completing 15 or more NYC Marathons. I did the math. If all goes well, I will do that in November of 2008. Wow! That sounded a long way away, but it was a nice goal.

I often found myself day-dreaming about how it would feel to reach this qualifying standard. I actually made a point to think about it a lot. I knew that visualization could lead to success... It was also a pleasant diversion when the train got stuck and I had nothing to read.

Well, last November I did it. Fifteen NYC finishes. Wow. I was just thinking that the moment was not as special as I thought it would be. I imagined that special volunteers would make room for me at the finish and bring me a special drink. Maybe men in loincloths would start sounding gongs just for me. Or rainbows would appear the moment I finished. No, nothing special. I just remember being a little disjointed when I saw that the official clock was 47 minutes ahead of my watch.

In December I got a little nervous. The NYRR website said nothing about the "finish 15" rule

In 2008 I did not run nine races and I did not do any volunteering. I emailed the club and got a "don't worry about it" reply. This did not make me feel any better. Anybody at the Road Runners Club who knows what they are talking about does not have time to answer their emails.

More than three months after the Marathon I got my emotional epiphany. At six a.m. this morning, I began my usual routine. I was checking out my friends' blogs. I noticed that Brooklyn Running had a post about the fact that if you run the Brooklyn Half in 2009 (whenever that will be) really fast, that that can get you into the NYC Marathon this year. Brooklyn running also included a link to the qualifying standards for the 2009 Marathon. "While the application for the 2009 marathon won't be available until next week, the qualifying standards have been posted."

The hairs on my arm suddenly stood up. I felt dizzy and sick. I was afraid to click on "qualifying standards". What would I see? Did I earn what I thought I earned? Did I reach this arbitrary goal?

My emotions took over my body, there it was:

• Those who have completed 15 or more New York City Marathons.

My eyes filled with tears. I saw the rainbow, I heard the gongs. A whole troupe of Chinese Acrobats was performing for me! It was the moment I was dreaming about.

Or maybe NYRR had just had enough of me.

RACE RESULTS

**Coogan's Salsa, Blues & Shamrocks 5K
Washington Heights 3/1/2009**

Troy Phipps	19:00
Anthony Watson	19:07
Helen Dole	20:08
Timothy Mcelreath	21:31
Francis Pope	26:56
Tineke de Vries	27:46
Juan Rivera	29:08
Yvette de Leon	29:25
Paul Soskind	30:13
Charlene Kohler-Britton	31:49
Majo Tinoco	32:05
Rosemarie Lugo	35:47
Rosa Nales	35:55
Chi Iregbulem	36:24
Francesca Daza	36:49
Richard Weaver	40:05

**PPTC Cherry Tree 10mile 3-person relay
Prospect Park 2/22/2009**

PPTC Born To Run	1:02:25
Tony Watson, Helen Dole, Troy Phipps	
PPTC Murphy Harry-Ers	1:11:05
Frank Deleo, gil Torres, James Mcfarlane	

**Al Gordon 5k
Prospect Park 2/21/2009**

Mark Crowther	19:37
Chris O'brien	20:35
Jeff Reynar	21:25
David Jones	21:53
Edmund Baumgartner	22:37
Pieter Van Hattam	22:19
Neville Nagarwalla	22:29
Danielle Hansen	22:51
Al Prawda	24:00
Doug Olney	24:12
Marvlyn Jno Baptiste	25:16
Arthur Gonzalez	25:41
John Nickles	26:52
General Butler	26:53
Brian Mendoza	26:59:
Juan Rivera	27:02
Francis Pope	27:09
Elizabeth Canale	27:41
Gerry Sun	28:07
Staci Pierson	28:36
Sandra Ferrari	29:22
Yvette de Leon	29:34
Elba Rodriguez	30:17
Traci Lester	30:28
Shontay Butler	30:33
Robert Underwood	30:34
Veronica Antoine	31:48
Fred Spiegel	32:59
James Israel	33:02
Majo Tinoco	33:11
Susan Tomasi	33:53
Francesca Daza	35:29
Chi Iregbulem	36:04
Richard Weaver	39:12
Natacha Ferrari	40:04
Mollie Spiegel	42:24
Jackie Deane	43:48

**PPTC Cherry Tree 10m
Prospect Park 2/22/2009**

Brad Skillman	1:06:54
Emily Sanderson	1:08:59
Maggie Deschamps	1:10:37
Rebecca Rosenberg-Beran	1:14:06
Danielle Hansen	1:16:27
Jay Dinowitz	1:16:28
Peter Tomasi	1:23:19
Mark Mcsherry	1:23:43
Arthur Gonzalez	1:24:38
Amy Duquette	1:25:49
Al Prawda	1:26:34
Marvlyn Baptiste	1:28:44
Brian Perkis	1:29:24
Mary Crowley	1:31:49
Elizabeth Canale	1:34:21
Jackie Callender	1:35:05
Renee Colombo	1:40:13
Aaron Koffler	1:41:13
Paul Soskind	1;41:18
Veronica Antoine	1:42:24
Lauren Davenport	1:44:16
Fran Hawthorne	1:44:44
Charlene Kohler-Britton	1;47:30

**Valentine's Day 5k
Prospect Park 2/15/2009**

Arthur Gonzalez	25:23
Kathleen Mooney	32:46

Meet The Members: Etienne Tchitchui

By: Amy Duquette

Observe a typical gym class in any American public middle school and you will most likely see a group of children lingering in the corner attempting to stay out of the coach's view, another group passively tossing a ball around and a select few actually partaking in the sport. Growing up in Cameroon, a province in Central Africa, Etienne recalls a very different situation of children of the same age. All the kids in primary school, the equivalent to American middle school, wanted to engage and looked forward to the 7-8AM exercise hour, twice a week. "The teachers were not demanding, but they wanted us to sweat and to be happy and awake before school started; and we all wanted to play."



At the time he was playing and loved soccer. However, at around age 11 he noticed that he could run faster than any other kid in his school. In Africa, if a child shows interest in a sport, the teachers (coaches) would gladly support it. The teachers encouraged him to stop playing soccer and focus on running especially when he entered college, which in America we call high school. He joined a running training club. "I loved it. If I was not running, I would not know what else would make me happy." He also found his competitive passion in running at that young age. "I had a dream. I wanted to be the champion of my province." That first year of college he trained to be ready for the next year's

province's championships. He achieved his dream taking first place in the 800 with a time of 2:17. He also ran the 1500 and finished 7th in the province.

After this competition his parents realized that running was clearly first in his life, before his studies. They made him adjust his focus. His father predicted that if he eased up on running now and studied more he'd be able to come back to running at a later time and be just as strong. "My father knew what he was talking about," Etienne says. But along with the truth in his word also came great pain. When Etienne was 17, his father died. Etienne then moved in with an uncle and changed schools. He could not focus on running for about a year while in bereavement. When he came back to the sport, he found that the increased competition among the runners at this new school, along with its location at a higher altitude, were both conducive for pushing his running to another level.

Students stay in college in Africa for more than the four years that American high school students do, so Etienne had plenty of time left to compete; and he made the most of this time. For three consecutive years he remained the undefeated champ in the 800 on the statewide level. During this time he got his PR in the 1500 down to 3:54 and in the 800 down to an impressive 1:57. This time won him a trip to the Jeux de La Francophonie games in France and the African Games in 1987 where the best young athletes from around the world convened. In France, he shaved even more time off both of his races, finishing his 800 in 1:52 his 1500 in 3:49.

Even with these times he did not place at these highly competitive games but these times did win him a very important scholarship. Only three of the type are awarded each year. The country selects its three best young athletes to be sent to France to train for the Olympics. Due to political corruption and money being in the

wrong hands, the country did not acknowledge Etienne's scholarship and sent another athlete.

'Disappointment' barely describes the feeling that overtook Etienne. He moved to South Africa, stopped running and started weight lifting, completely changing his body from that of an elite runner to a body builder. Next, he moved to Chili where he began to run longer distances for the first time in his life. He realized that the extra miles began to burn off the muscle mass that he built up while in defiance of the sport. Then he moved to Central America where he lived for three years. Here he opened two very successful internet cafes and a restaurant. Finally, he moved to New York where he studied culinary arts at the French Culinary Institute in Soho. Etienne now works for JP Morgan as a chief, preparing meals for company events.

THE STORY OF THE TURKEY TROT

By Tom Meany

One cold winter morning around 1995, a chance meeting with Lou Vasquez on an outside loop of the Park set in motion a series of events that led to what is now the Turkey Trot.

At the time, Lou was the Bishop Ford High School coach for the boys and girls track teams. To buy uniforms for the track team, he had been putting on the Jingle Bell four-mile race in the park every December but said, on that cold morning, that he would have to stop doing the race due to his work load. Not willing to see a traditional neighborhood race disappear, we asked if PPTC could put on the race and continue to benefit his team. He agreed.

In addition to keeping a traditional neighborhood race going, it was a way to reach out and establish a running relationship between adult and young runners with the hope of creating some continuity.

The result was the first five-mile Holiday Classic. We did this for a number of years, averaging maybe 200 or so runners. Many of those races cleared so little money that the club made up a contribution to make it a respectable contribution to the Ford kids. At the same time,

Living in Brooklyn, close to Prospect Park where he was running one day, he saw a group running by and asked one who the group belonged to. It happened to be a bunch of PPTCers. Etienne looked up the club on the internet and joined, bringing his elite running times into the club. Etienne's pace per mile are all within the five to six minute range. He recently completed the Joe Kleinerman 10K 12/7/08 in 38:27, the Continental Airlines 5th Ave Mile 9/21/08 in 4:51 and his Half Marathon time was 1:22:33 in the 7/13/08 NYC Half. "Every time I step on the track I do my best. I'll never stop running...but now it's for my health and for the experience."

we were doing a race that couldn't find the right spot. It started as a 10K in October, moved to August as a 5M, then a 4M and finally, a 5K. No matter what we did, the race never took off.

Around 1993 NYRR gave up their rights to their five-mile Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot. In its hay day in the early 80's it had attracted 3,000+ runners. Ask Lenny Nemorovsky as he helped NYRR organize it; he can give you the facts. By 2002, NYRR found it difficult to get their volunteers to Brooklyn, so they gave the race rights to PPTC.

The race, now going into its 7th year, has grown to more than 1300 runners. After expenses, Ford and PPTC share the profits equally. The event requires 12 months of joint planning, so we have a race preparation meeting each month. Ford provides their facility, vans, student, faculty and alumni volunteers. Additionally they provide printing, sponsors, in kind services from alumni, such as bagels, hot chocolate, water, etc. They also give us free use of their facility for the race and for the Cherry Tree. We provide sponsors, volunteers and technical support.

We have a great partnership with Ford. Our goal was to bridge the gap between adult and youth running and we have started to see results. We now have track alumni volunteering and mentoring students with an eye toward joining the club. Additionally other alumni are volunteering for the race as a community service opportunity.

Bishop Ford High School has its own fundraisers that support the operation of the school: they have golf outings and a Do Wop concert, all open to the public. Club members have been invited to, and do attend some if these...all at their own expense, no discounts, kickbacks or freebees. The Turkey Trot proceeds are earmarked for the track team.

Next time I would like to talk about the importance of being part of and supporting a network of other community organizations, such as the Prospect Park Alliance, the YMCA, and NYRRC, etc. Additionally I will talk about nurturing relations with running related businesses: Jack Rabbit, Slope Sports, Metro SportsMed, Fitness Collective, Slope Fitness etc.

See you on the roads!

Food Focus: Brown Rice

Brown rice, with its sweet nutty flavor, provides four times the amount of insoluble fiber found in white rice, because it is a whole grain that has not been stripped of its natural bran covering. It contains an impressive number of vitamins and minerals such as concentrated B vitamins (which help nervous systems and mental depression), niacin, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, and even some vitamin E. This whole grain also contains a small amount of high-quality protein in the form of the amino acid lysine, which helps boost the body's ability to fight viruses, especially those that cause cold sores.

In each grain of brown rice exists a matrix of whole, unrefined energy and nutrition. It is a complex carbohydrate and therefore burns slowly in the body, providing a steady stream of

long lasting energy while increasing the brain's levels of serotonin, the chemical responsible for the feeling of well-being. Those who consistently eat brown rice report steady energy and an overall feeling of calm and balance in their daily lives.

For brown rice and whole grains in general, the majority of digestion occurs in the mouth through chewing and exposure to saliva. For optimal nutrition and assimilation, it is vital to chew your rice well and with awareness. A great meditation is to find a calm place, without distractions, to sit down for your meal. Make it a habit to chew each bite 20 times or more. See how this simple practice can help your digestion and overall focus for the rest of your day.

Recipe of the Month: Brown Basmati Pilaf

Christine Boutross

Prep Time: 3 minutes

Cooking Time: 30-40 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

1 cup brown basmati rice
2 cups of water
1/2 cup of dried cranberries
1/2 cup of walnut pieces
1/4 cup of chopped fresh parsley
pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Rinse rice in fine mesh strainer until water runs clear.
2. Boil the water and add rice and salt, cover and reduce heat.
3. After 15 minutes add cranberries and walnuts to top, do not stir.
4. Cook 15-25 minutes more, until all the liquid is absorbed.
5. Remove from heat, add parsley and fluff with fork, cover and let set for 3-5 minutes and serve.

Peter Tomasi
6 Washington Ave
Port Jervis NY
March 1, 2009

Tom Meany, President
Prospect Park Track Club
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Tom:

Congratulations on the very well done Cherry Tree 10 miler/relay you put on February 22nd. I ran the 10 miler and found the course well marked, the race volunteers well organized and their performance outstanding. In fact, I spoke to a number of runners who were very appreciative of the club for putting on the race/relay.

Of course my most enthusiastic congratulations is offered up for **Jessica Kavoulakis the race director**. As an experienced director of many races including the Cherry Tree, I know how many hours of hard work, planning and preparation are required for a race like the Cherry Tree. And that's just to get to the day! Jessica did a tremendous job, made all the more impressive by the fact that this was her first time. Very few members have the courage and commitment to take on the responsibility for a race. Thank you, Jessica! Thank you and well done!

Finally, all should recognize the members of the clubs leadership that worked the race. The Board members who volunteer their time all year long so that the club could be a home and resource for our community were there last Sunday for all to see. On the roadways, School, finish line shoot and everywhere in between. You're the best! Congratulations and thank you.

I miss not working by your side but as always you made it great to be runner, just running on the day.

Sincerely, Peter Tomasi, Runner and Proud Member of the Prospect Park Track Club.

Next PPTC Meeting

Monday, April 6, at MetroSports Med, 263 7th
Avenue, 2nd Floor, 7 p.m.
Meet the new members – 6:30 p.m.
Featured guest speaker: Mary Wittenberg, CEO
of NY Road Runners
Refreshments, yum

Our Newest Members Are...

Katherine Davis
Lauren Duffy
Jacqueline Klihance
Elvia Negron-Perez
Patricia Perlo
Tim McElreath and
Janet Gotleab

Around the Park

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Prospect Park Track Club
P.O. Box 150658 Van Brunt Station
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PPTC Board:

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Directors: Sandra Ferrari, Richard Weaver, Michael Ring, & Susan Tomasi

Copy Editor: Anne Perzeszty
Design and layout: Michael Ring
Distribution Dir: Evelyn Deliz

Phone: (718) 595-2049 / E-mail: contact@pptc.org
Visit our Web site at: <http://www.pptc.org>

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contact@pptc.org



Prospect Park Track Club
P.O. Box 150658 Van Brunt Station
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215-0658