

THE

RATT

ROAD AND TRAIL TALK MAGAZINE

FEATURES

- Summer Trail Running
- The Escarpment 30k
- An ARE Guy's Guide
- Running High
- Mudders and Grunters



are
AN
PUBLICATION



Volume 1

Issue 1

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What is the RATT?

The RATT is the Albany Running Exchange's newest creation. We hope that you enjoy our publication for all that it is... and isn't. If you are looking for a serious magazine, this is not for you! If you want something fresh that combines useful information with a fun sense of humor, then set aside 17 minutes to sit down and check out the RATT!

Each issue of the RATT will be complete with helpful information to improve your running, humorous stories to keep you smiling, and even a section where you can have your questions answered!

In addition to that, there'll always be a calendar of events that are worth attending, as well as information regarding training opportunities to help you reach your goals.

In short, reading this magazine can save your life. There's no time to waste, take out the reading glasses and be thankful for your literacy!

If you ever see anyone from the Albany Running Exchange on the road or trail, feel free to talk to us! That's the inspiration behind many of the articles in the RATT!

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Message from the President



For the first edition of the RATT, I would like to let you in on a little secret about the members of Empire Commons room C5 103: we eat a lot of garbage. And by garbage, I mean pasta, cereal, pancakes, pizza, and bread. Neil Snedeker, Brandon Meyers, Josh Merlis and I are human garbage disposals. Rarely is there any item of food that is left uneaten. Our lives consist of the following: running, eating, and sleeping.

I would now like to tell you all a little about our individual eating habits, favorite foods, and strange delicacies.

The first victim is Josh. He likes cereal, LOTS of cereal, but if there is any food product out on the table, including cashew juice, Josh will be right there picking at it. Any slice left over, you'll immediately hear, "Hey is anyone eating that?" It is unfathomable that anyone who eats so much never has to go food shopping. In 2005, Josh has bought food a total of two or three times. However, he always has food in his mouth.

Next comes Neil. He is a much more normal eater. His main diet is composed of pop-tarts, rice, tater tots, Mac-and-cheese, eggplant parmigiana, etc. I like Neil because he also drinks 2% milk like me, so when I run out, I can count on Neil for a drop. Neil's theory for eating says that you should go to bed when you're getting hungry in order to stop yourself and conserve your food. He has averaged out that each meal costs an estimated \$1.50.



Sir Brandon Meyers' appetite is truly different. His favorite foods include peanut butter and Fluff, Garden burgers, bread, and sweet gherkin pickles. He cannot eat ANYTHING containing meat, which I cannot understand. He is a self-proclaimed "Gavone" (a clever name for human garbage disposals).

Last but not least, myself. My favorite foods include Cheerios, pizza, pasta, steak, fries, pickles, and LOTS of milk. I cannot get enough milk. However, I am a tremendously picky eater. I hate mixing my foods on my plate and I do not have a broad horizon when it comes to trying new foods.

This is all I have for now. I could go on, but writing this article has made me hungry. I'm currently craving a giant steak, fried calamari, French fries, and milk. However, I'll have to settle for a can of soup and water.

Summer Trail Running

By Josh Merlis

“Even Couch Potatoes May Have Been Born to run.” That was the title of an article that appeared in the New York Times on November 17, 2004. It was realized that humans, contrary to the excuses purported by many non-runners, have evolved to run! It is who we are – all of us! Not that every last person would agree with the study, but here are a few thoughts on the matter.

Nearly all of us have been injured at one time or another throughout the course of our running careers. Isn't it also safe to assume that every single one of us who has ever been injured has trained on roads? The forests aren't paved. When Mr. Lion is chasing his prey, you don't hear of him backing off due to *those darn reoccurring shin-splints* or his *IT band acting up yet again!* In fact, it seems like animals get a pretty good deal when it comes to having a nice surface to run upon. That's where trail running comes in.

Here in Albany, we are blessed (cursed?) with a temperate climate. It can reach one hundred degrees in the summer and body-numbing negative temperatures in the winter. Usually by late March, however, (and for one day in February when a certain club was trying to put on a snowshoe race) the snow has melted for the season, and we are welcomed with the perennial re-growth that accompanies spring. There is no better way to greet this beautiful time than by running in your local trails! They are closer than you think!

Similar to the way you'd like your health insurance company to be, here at the ARE, we are looking out for you. That's right, we want you to run on soft surfaces through pretty places that make you smile and breathe clean air, not suffer from the toxins of



car emissions and bone-breaking pavement. The best way to do that is to participate in our **Summer Trail Run Series!** This will be the second year that we put the STRS on, and here is a little information in case you find yourself with plenty of time and no idea what to do with it:

The series begins on Thursday, May 26, and runs until the end of August. Each week we take you on different trails in the Capital District, predominantly located within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, with the option of a shorter run around 3 miles and a longer distance that continually increases as the summer progresses. Runs always start at 6:30pm and we provide course maps and water for all runners.

2004 was our first attempt at such a series, and it was a great success! Most weeks had between 20 and 30 runners on hand, including some unfamiliar faces just looking for a good time. In fact, we even had a runner from Las Vegas, NV join us for several weeks as he was vacationing in the area with his family. At the last running of the summer, we held a huge cook-out, which basically means there was tons of left-over food that was readily eaten by the starving members of the ARE as they continued their quest to disavow the

recommendations of a balanced diet.

In 2005, we've got bigger and better plans. For one, we are going to give out *Summer Trail Run Series Survivor Awards!* There's only one thing you have to ask yourself: do you have what it takes? To answer that question, think about all of the commitments in your life that are probably going to get in the way of this challenge. In other words, if you do *somehow* make it to all of our events, we're going to wonder if you're neglecting something at home. In any event, though, feel free to come to as many as you can, cause best of all, the series is FREE (four letter word meaning you don't have to pay.)

But that's not all, folks. We also know that setting goals is what makes this all worthwhile. All the hours of training suddenly becomes worth it when you step on the starting line of your first 5k, 10k, marathon, or what have you. What we plan on doing is hosting the **first ever half marathon in Pine Bush** on August 28, 2005. At the time of this writing, we have been 'told' a permit will be granted, but are still awaiting confirmation.

Editor's Note: Our permit was denied for the August 28 date because that will be a very busy day for the buck moth caterpillars. The tentative new date for the event is Sunday, October 30, 2005. Stay tuned to our website for more details.

We do expect the Pine Bush Commission to honor our request, although they are asking that we give it a rest with the humans in animal costumes. You can't win every time. Nonetheless, on that Sunday in late August, we plan to hold a 6m / half marathon trail race in Pine Bush starting and finishing at the trailhead at Madison Avenue Extension.

If you need any additional motivation, here it is: at that event we plan to crown Kings and Queens of the trails (consider each suit a different age group

[there'll be plenty of stuff for everyone]). A "Grand Prix" of sorts, for which there is much more information available at our website. The series begins with Dodge the Deer and continues with the first STRS in May.

June's "Grand Prix" event will be the 4th STRS, and July's points are to be found in the Indian Ladder 15k, which will fortunately continue on in the hands of Mike Kelly and Chuck Tanner with event creator Jim Gilmer's departure after an impressive ten years at the helm. Jim is currently helping us in secret to get our trail events off the ground, and that assistance is tremendously appreciated!

The final event in the series will be the half marathon, which will be followed by more food than you've ever seen at any of our events. While I'm at it, we will need and would love it if you would like to volunteer at this event! Trail runners love to occasionally see humans hanging out in the forest; it's always

reassuring to know that you *are* going the right way! Volunteers also have the best deal because you can pig out *before* the race!



**The Hairy Gorilla
Half Marathon
& Squirrely 6 mile**

Half marathoners must bring one banana to the race.

Six milers must bring a bag of nuts.

Visit the Hairy Gorilla on the web today!

In conclusion, you have two options this summer: stay on the roads and suffer from the 'I told you so's' of your friends who joined us at the STRS, or join us yourself and see what all the cool runners are doing these days! For more information on our summer trail run series, our August race, or anything else, please visit our website at www.albanyrunningexchange.org or feel free to email me at josh@albanyrunningexchange.org. Bring down your friends, the more the merrier! ☺



From the Cutting Room Floor

By Andrew Rickert

With the introduction of the Hairy Guerilla Half and Squirrely Six Miler later this year, one can't help but imagine what crazy idea the A.R.E. will come up with next. This column will give readers the low-down on races that the A.R.E. came up with but scrapped for various reasons.

**Dodge The Traffic Ten Miler
Monday, April 4, 2005
5:30pm**

Runners would start at the NYS Northway Exit 9 "off" ramp and head south in the North bound side (against traffic of course). Runners would be encouraged to run the tangents along the course in order to save time. This may mean cutting across lanes and occasionally jumping onto the median in order to gain an edge over your competitors.

The race would begin right as the traffic hits its peak coming across the twin bridges. Since daylight is fading at this time, the first 150 registered would be provided with sleek all-black long sleeve shirts to wear. The A.R.E. was contacting local businesses to sponsor water stops along the way. The only businesses that were interested, however, were local Geico agents and a body shop in downtown Albany. The finish line would be at just off Exit 4 near the

Times Union building. Staff writers would conveniently be on call to help write obituaries. Awards would include "Best Skidmark", "Most Creative Lane Crossing", and "Best Hood Ornament". The following is a transcript of the voicemail President Matt Wright received from Josh in early March:

"Hey Matt, it's Josh. Look, I heard back from the Thruway Authority today. It seems they are a little reluctant to approve our permit. It seems they are a little antsy about the lay-out of the course. They really freaked out when I told them we expected at least 200 participants. I guess they just don't understand what we're all about...I mean we're promoting health for the thousands of Capital Region workers who drive to work everyday. It's not like we're on the Autobahn or anything, it's just the Northway...the speed limit is 55 after you get into Latham so any accidents caused as a result would probably be people who were asking for it anyway. But...anyway, I ahh, I guess we'll have to put this one off until we can get someone in the NYS Transportation Office to back us up. I was thinking January might be a better time for this anyway...like Dodge the Snowplow Snowshoe or something...alright, I gotta go...Jeopardy is coming on. Later!"



Dear Gee

The "Dear Gee" section is your place to have your questions answered by the Albany Running Exchange's premiere expert on running, Gee, the pound puppy. Each issue, Gee will tackle any all questions, whether they relate to tempo runs or interval training, strained hamstrings to finger pain – Gee is here for you!

Dear Gee,

Let me begin this by saying what a huge fan I am! When I first saw you on TV at the Purina Dog Show, I was captivated by your good looks and obvious maturity. About two years ago, I came down with a rather strange condition... it seemed that I could only go to the bathroom while on a long run. At first, the realization that I no longer had to visit *that* aisle at Price Chopper was comforting, but when I ran my first marathon, I had to stop 7 times, and there's no chip mat next to the port-potty to get my net time.

I was wondering if you have any suggestions so that during my next marathon I'll be running without the runs.

Thanks,
Lou S. Tool

Dear Lou,

Thank you for the kind words! I've really enjoyed the publicity I've received since my first television appearance four years ago, and I'm also thankful that more and more races are allowing me to participate. Regarding your question, rest assured that you are not alone! Matter of fact, in a recent study conducted by BS University, they concluded that nearly 35% of all runners complain of some type of stomach agitation at least once a month while running. While I can't offer you a remedy, I can offer you a reason why. You see, Mr. Tool, when you run, all of your blood floods the muscles used in running, predominantly in your legs. This causes a lack of strength in certain other muscles, causing them to relax, and the end result is you reducing yourself to the level of primate, hopefully in a heavily wooded area. My suggestion – and please don't laugh because many of my listeners from the radio show do this – is to keep some toilet paper in a Ziploc bag in key locations on courses you frequent. This way, the next time you realize the Turkey's done, you'll have the oven mitts to avoid the burn. Good luck, Lou!

Yours Truly,
Gee

Events Calendar

April 16, 2005

9am, Naples, NY

Muddy Sneaker 20k

Think you're a strong runner? Not until you've tried the Muddy Sneaker 20k, a challenging race that also combines a little bit of humor in the form of a dancing chicken. There's also beer at all the water stops. Quirky, indeed!

<http://www.geocities.com/goutnow>

April 24, 2005

9am, Cross River, NY

Leatherman's Loop 10k

We've all run in big races before... but when's the last time you ran with nearly 1,000 people – in a trail race? This is your chance to cross creeks, dance in the mud, and have a blast!

<http://www.leathermansloop.org>

April 24, 2005

1pm, Chatham, NY

Sean's Run 5k

This popular race is a fundraiser for SADD, MADD, and RID. It was created in honor of Sean French, who was a standout runner at Chatham HS. He lost his life on January 1, 2002 as a passenger in a drunk-driving car crash.

<http://www.seansrun.com>

Looking Ahead

June 5, 2005

8am, Chaplin, CT

Nipmuck Trail Marathon

Ever wanted to run a marathon but were too afraid? Try this one! It's a relaxed course that is easy on the legs! The second half is hillier than the first, but it's a fun unique event created by David Raczkowski.

June 19, 2005

10am, Mt. Greylock, MA

Mt. Greylock Half Marathon

Tough trail race just over the border! Very rocky at times, but if you've got Escarpment in your future, it's terrific training for it.

For Your Health

Each issue, visit this section for exciting information that can improve not just your running, but possibly save your life!

By Di R. Etic

Today, more than ever, it is vital that we watch what we eat. People have abandoned meat in favor of a better life, and some have even cut out all dairy products too! For those of you who can't handle the vegan lifestyle, there's also other diets, like South Beach and Atkins, to keep you trim and fit as you make sure to only eat 73 grams of carbohydrates in the entire month of May. While all of these diets claim that they are best, there are constantly specials on TV telling you that what you thought was great is actually carcinogenic, or simply that it really isn't good for you. Well, I've got a diet for you.

"The Calorie Free" diet. That's right, if you want to look your greatest and save money too, try this one! This diet is very popular on college campuses for two reasons:

1. The students are broke.
2. The dining hall.

Yes, the rumor is true, college students have no money! In fact, they are reduced to grade-school children in the presence of pay phones, as you can always catch a *slick-Rick* trying the coin drop at the bottom of the phone for a quarter. In addition, college dining halls are known to 'get their money's worth' out of a piece of meat. For example, Monday's dinner might be a chicken sandwich. On Tuesday, it is chicken-parm. If you look closely, however, you notice that the 'parm' is just on top of the patty from yesterday. Wednesday they'll add some pasta into the equation, and by Thursday, they've already cut the meat for you into little pieces that have conveniently been placed in the pasta dish. If any chicken does somehow survive the week, it typically ends up in Friday's dessert as a "special treat".

Not convinced? Check out the pictures below.

Before



After



Wow! What a difference! So think about this the next time you visit Price Chopper: Do you really want to spend money on foods that could be harmful to your body or would you rather **a)** save money, **b)** prevent harmful toxins from entering your body, and **c)** have more time to do the things you really care about! The choice is yours.

Coach's Corner

By Andrew Rickert



I'd be willing to bet that if you're reading this magazine you are interested in becoming a better runner. As a coach, I take that intention very seriously. Running "easy distance" can only get you so far. If you want to improve you'll need to try other things and see what works best for you. My intention for this feature is to introduce you to workouts that have worked for me and my athletes throughout the years. I suggest you give them a shot and challenge yourself to push the envelope of your training in order to reach your full potential!

WORKOUT: 800m Tawasentha Hill Repeats

TYPE: Interval Training—Max Vo2

REPETITIONS: 4-8 (depending on target race/fitness). Do six for a target 5k.

PACE: Goal 5-10k Race Pace

RECOVERY: Jog back down to the start (equal to or just below interval time)

This is one of my favorite workouts to run in preparation for a trail race or hilly road course. I typically visit this workout in the late summer/early fall months for cross country racing. This 800m repeat starts at the infamous performing arts stage at Tawasentha Park in Guilderland, NY. Explore the park for a nice warm-up and end your warm-up for a good stretch on the usually vacant and dry stage. If you leave the stage from the corner nearest the woods where the parking lot begins, enter the wooded trail and you will find the burn I love so dearly. The trail in the woods is rolling at first before a sharp left turn directs you up a continual slope. Stay right on the trail after it levels off. This is where you need to remind yourself to "run through the crest" of the hill and keep pushing. The trail will eventually come to a junction where you want to make a left and quickly exit the woods. At the end of the woods is where the 800m repeat ends. This is the point at which you are usually clutching your knees and gasping for air. The key is to keep moving after the repeat and easily descend the exposed hill back down to the stage for your next repeat. Depending on your fitness level you may want to stop and allow your breathing to return to normal. But I find that by the time I reach the starting line after an easy jog down, I am just about ready to go again. Ideally, you want to see consistent interval times. Don't forget to cool-down and admire the view from the top of the hill! Make it a good one!

Tawasentha Park is located on Route 146, south of Western Avenue (Route 20.) It was home to Bob Oates' summer trail run series for 25 years. Visit the Guilderland HS XC website and click on "Invitational" for a course map and more information. <http://www.guilderlandxc.com>

Andrew Rickert is the Head Coach of the Men's & Women's Cross Country Team at The College of Saint Rose. He is certified as a Level I Coach with USA Track & Field and an active member of the A.R.E.

Run of the Month

THE BARN LOOP

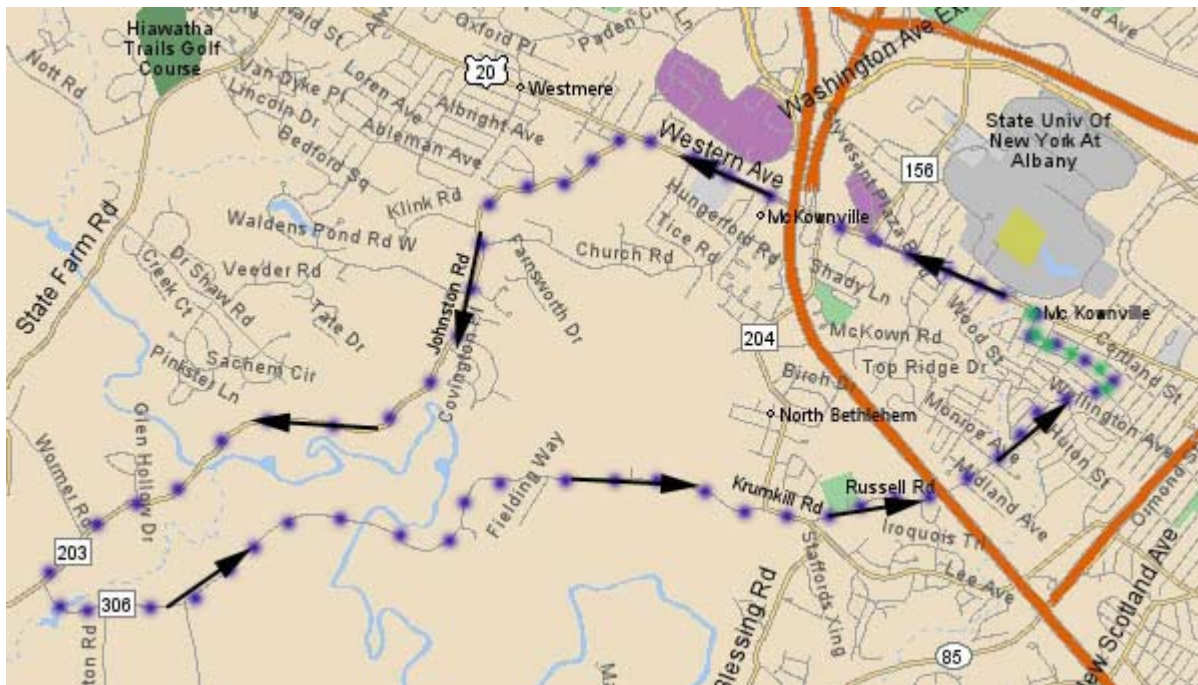
Distance: 11.5 miles

Starts: SUNY-Albany PE Building

Finishes: SUNY-Albany PE Building

Description: Road, rolling hills, moderate difficulty.

The infamous barn loop! Variants of this course have been run since the HMRRC began, particularly in the likes of Ed Thomas, Don Wilken, and others. It was brought to the ARE during Josh Merlis, Adam Rice, Andrew Rickert, and Jamie Rodriguez's tenure on the University at Albany cross country team. A Sunday morning ritual of sorts, they could always count on the climb to the barn to wake them up. It is a challenge run in either direction, but the one below is preferred.



THE COURSE

1. Take Western Avenue west to Johnston Road. [About 1.6 miles on Western Ave]
2. Turn left and take Johnston all the way to Krumkill Road (route 306.) [~3.5 miles]
3. Turn left onto Krumkill and take until Russell Road. [~3.5 miles]
4. Turn left onto Russell Road, then left on Hazelhurst, right on Tryon, and you are back at Western Avenue

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This is a moderately challenging course. Western Avenue is essentially flat, and Johnston is downhill and flat for the first 2+ miles, but there is a near mile ascent leading to the Krumkill Road turn. Krumkill begins with a quick dip before a 1/4 mile hill leading to the "Barn". It's then downhill for nearly a mile before the steepest hill on the route (about a 1/4 to the top.) The rest is fairly level with no major inclines or declines.

The Escarpment Trail Run

A Quick glimpse at the Ultimate Trail Race in the Northeast

By Christopher Chromczak

If you're up for a challenge, a real challenge, the Escarpment 30k is it. The minor running experience I can speak on behalf of is a few trail and road marathons, a 50k and a 50 miler. Be it known that the 50 miler (JFK in Maryland) was tough and painstaking, but the agony after running the Escarpment makes for a good comparison. The race starts on Route 23 in the Catskills and, in short, it runs up and down several mountains to the finish at North South lake campground. The climbs are insane, especially Blackhead mountain, the highest elevation point on the trail, only 0.9 miles up = not very gradual. The trail contains many elements including: jagged (sometimes slippery) big and little rocks, wild animals that may not like humans, hot summer sun, cold summer rain, New York weather like conditions, big trees, little trees, dead trees, down trees, roots, stumps, cliffs, ridges, bushes, pricklers... I think you get the idea.... just about everything found in mountains.



The run has been a success since 1977, when Dick Vincent and his buddies took the trail on. But I think it's possible that Rip Van Winkle ran the Escarpment trail back in the day, way back in the day in the 1600's when New York (New Netherland) was in Dutch control. So if you get lost, you may have a good chance of meeting him. Many hikers have reported seeing Rip's Ghost lurking in the Catskills Mountains, looking for his lost dog 'wolf'. Personally, after reading Washington Irving's story, I've come to the conclusion that if you do run into little Dutchmen along the trail and they offer you some booze, don't take it... because the chances are you probably won't wake up for 20 years.

Note: the Escarpment is not for everybody; you do actually have to qualify for it. Qualifying standards include: being at least 18 years of age, having previously run a marathon under 4 hours or the Nipmuck Marathon under 6.5 hours, or a 50 miler under 10 hours, and you will also need to get runners insurance from USATF (sign up online or at a local running store [once the ARE opens one.]

This year the race will be held on July 31st. Information about the race can be found at <http://escarpmenttrail.com/>.

An ARE's Guy's Guide to:

Standing Out in Races

By Neil Snedeker



Cheers from the bystanders at races provide a boost in morale and confidence, especially late in the race. This becomes a problem though in the larger races where there are just too many people for the crowds to single someone out to cheer for them. I've learned through the years that this isn't a problem when you do things to stand out in the pack. It all goes back to the years of high school cross country. As part of our uniform we wore black and white striped shorts. When we would run we would stand out amongst the other teams and we were feared. My school was well known for having a good cross country team and when other schools saw "the zebras" at races they knew they had no chance to win.



After graduation from high school I had more freedom of how I could dress and present myself while I ran. Last spring for a few races I had dyed my hair bright orange. My bright hair, along with being tall, brought a lot of attention to myself. Since then I have had blue-black hair and most recently, a mohawk. Every so often I like to switch things up and look totally different. I know for a lot of people some of these things aren't an option. That will be the case for me really soon as I graduate college and enter the real world. There are more temporary ways to make yourself look different. For example this winter I purchased brightly colored knee high socks. It's not too radical but it's something that isn't seen much. Another great way to stand out is to dress the total opposite of everyone else. When it's 10 degrees outside and windy most people wear pants and gloves and numerous layers. Then you catch a glimpse of me wearing shorts and a t-shirt. I'm not the only one that tries to stand out in races. Throughout past years I've seen a man dress like Spiderman, a man running in a Tuxedo, some girl running in fishnet stockings, and a man jump roping a marathon. Hopefully some of you readers keep this in mind next time to plan your wardrobe for race day. It just makes racing much more interesting.



Want to contribute to the RATT?

If you've got something to say, we want to hear it! Simply get in contact with the right person and we'll make it happen. We promise. We really do. There's nothing political about!

Runner's High

Letters to the Editor

By Emily Gravelle

Why do I run? It seems as though I am asked that question all too often and I never have a good answer. The obvious reason is to stay in shape, but I don't need to run nearly as much as I do to stay healthy, so why do I put in the effort to run rain or shine six days a week? My answer is that I'm addicted.

As I was dozing off in my psychology class the other day, my professor moved on to the subject of the runner's high. I'm sure that most of you who are reading this are runners and know exactly what I mean by the term. It is that feeling of euphoria that you can experience after running for a long time. It is the smell in the air, the beauty of the scenery; everything is perfect at that moment and you have never felt more alive.

The runner's high is experienced because of the neurotransmitter endorphin. Endorphins have pain-relieving qualities and when we run long distances, the endorphin level in the brain increases to react to the stress that we are putting on our bodies. Endorphins are chemically similar to morphine, which is an opium-derived substance that elevates the mood. Endorphin is the natural equivalent to morphine, which is highly addictive.

The more we run, the more endorphins we produce. We can literally become addicted to our own endorphins and need them to stay happy. Have you ever noticed that when you would rather shove a fork in your eye than run, but you go anyways, you always seem to come back happier? Endorphins might have something to do with that.

Dear RATT,

I just wanted to say what a fan I am of the magazine. Each issue leaves me with a growing desire to read more, and I truly don't put it down before reading it cover to cover. Especially the inside-scoop on some of the latest trends in the sport – you really present the material in an easy-to-understand way for which I am grateful. Keep up the good work!

Yours truly,
Michael Landin

Dear RATT,

It's one thing to say you're going to do something, it's another to really do it! I'm amazed with the dedication put into this magazine. Seriously, when I was focusing on getting my life back together, it was the RATT I picked up, not Entertainment Weekly, that kept me going. Keep it up guys!

Love,
Robert Downey Jr.

Write to us at:

RATT, c/o ARE
PO Box 38195
Albany, NY 12203

Mudders and Grunters Recap

By: Brandon Meyers

For the third year in a row, the Albany Running Exchange battled slop, water, mud and crud of Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park in Yorktown Heights, NY. 30 ARE members rounded up and headed out from Empire Commons down to course at about 6:30 a.m. on a gloomy Sunday morning. Unlike the previous year which had beautiful weather, this year it was down right chilly and we had overcast skies which led to light rain, followed by a brief snow/rain mix on the car ride back. Due to the enormous amount of rain New York experienced in the week before the race, the course was as muddy as ever this year. What some may consider to be the highlight of the race, the creek crossing, was swollen with water and was nearly five feet high this year. (Next year, we're considering renting some scuba gear and getting a lucky volunteer to hide out in the creek and give the runners a thrill by perhaps grabbing their ankles as they pass through the creek and clutch onto the rope for dear life, but that's still in the works.)

To some, leaping in five feet of water in the Northeast in early spring is not a pleasant experience, but to some such as the ARE's Brandon Meyers, it was a refreshing way to wash off some off the excess mud. This year, the ARE had the highest turn out yet for this race. Our teams consisted of the **Fuzzy Bunnies, Maruchan, The Nature Monkeys, Off Constantly, Skull Breakers, The ARE Rookies, and last but not least, The Women of Experience.** Our runners were **Austin Bloom, Benn Griffin, Brian Hupe, David Quesnell, Chris Cunningham, Mark Grammatico, Paul Mueller, Beth Weaver,**



Chris Chromczak, Brad Lewis, Matt Wright, Brandon Meyers, Brie O'Hearn, Neil P. Snedeker, Josh Merlis, Adam Rice, Andrew Rickert, Jamie Rodriguez, Gabriel Holmes, Christophe Lanaud, Patrick Sorsby, Mary Bovenzi, Christine Miller, Amanda Thornton, Ryan Cowper, Elizabeth Paris, Liz Schilling, Tini Sevak, and Robert Novak. The ARE's marathoner, David Newman, was the official picture taker and team supporter for our 30 runners. The first group to arrive was Neil Snedeker's car, which, as well as Neil, contained Brie O'Hearn, Brandon, and Brian Hupe. They soon realized that no matter where you step, your shoes are going to getting muddy. Josh Merlis came prepared with a of couple tarps that the ARE could use to protect their clean, dry clothes from the rain.

In the true spirit of the race, a few members such as Chris Cunningham and Liz Paris decided to smear some mud on themselves to be more festive for the race. After all, you can't win the muddiest runner award by finishing this race squeaky clean. Some runners decided to take alternative methods of entering the creek, such as Chris Chromczak's cannon ball of doom and Neil Snedeker's gentlemanly piggy back ride in which he helped Mary Bovenzi get across. (Who says that chivalry is dead?) With the help of Mother Nature, hopefully next year's race will be even muddier and if we play our cards right, the creek will be over Chris Cunningham's head. This year, the ARE was pleased to see that our own Brian Hupe was on the race shirt, way to go Brian! For the third year in a row, the ARE took home the priceless hand crafted skull trophy, with thanks to The Skull Breakers and especially Jamie Rodriguez who came in first again this year. Will the ARE tradition continue next year and take home the skull again in 2006? Let's hope so.