

The Starting Line

My History of Failures

By Carl Gustafson

I like to try. While I am not happy to fail I do fail. I try to learn from what goes well. I try to learn from my failures. I am human. By that I am fallible. I embrace that as best I can and move forward.

To that end here are some of my classic failures.

I remember being a little kid and living in Worcester. We had that clas-

sic metal hand-railing going down the steps from our front house. I remember wondering if I could fit my head through the rails. Well, I found that I was able to get my head through the rails,... My father had to come to help me get out by keeping my ears from folding as I pulled back. That enabled me to get my head out. Lessons? Many of them. My first idea is not always my best idea. I need to try to think through the whole thing, not just the first part of the plan. I need to make sure I

have good supervision or a back-up plan. Most importantly I started to learn to be able to laugh at myself since I am not perfect. My family has loved to laugh at our own foibles and this has been great too!

Flash forward to my senior year in high school. I worked all winter and spring during the winter restoring a 42 year old, wooden Cape Cod Knockabout sailboat. My best friend Jim would happily say "half the fun is working on it!" However at that time I was competitive about sailing and racing. My father was known as "Gut-ta-Win Gustafson." He was not the best loser as you can imagine. He was gifted in many things; having a 172 bowling average, a 5 handicap in golf and he was an excellent fisherman, etc. He had passed away the year before and as a tribute to him we named the boat "Gut-ta-Win."

During the first race we sailed happily to the starting line. As we sailed the boat started to ship water. We were pumping a little before the race. The gun went off and we were in first place sailing to the windward mark. As we hardened the boat up to windward the boat starting taking on water rapidly. We were now bailing and sailing. Boats went by us one by one. By the end of the race we were last. We could never really tighten up the boat sufficiently well to race. It was 42 years old at the time and more restoration was needed than a couple of 17 year olds could offer her during our time away from all of the other important parts of being a teenager. Were there lessons there? Yes, many. Lessons about proper and full restoration, lessons about learning to become a good loser and listening to Jim who was right. Half the fun had been working on it.

Flash forward one last time, although trust me, I have many more failures! I had run my first two marathons as I was courting Sandra. My second marathon was the Cape Cod Marathon in 1992. I decided to run it again a year or two later. Sandra and her parents were going to be supports for me following me from point to point in the car. I still was going out way too fast for my skills in those days and then would struggle painfully as the later miles came by. I remember running 7:30 miles at first and then barely being able to walk. So marathon day came. I saw them at stops during the early miles. I was happy and flying along. Then I met them at mile 21. They opened their car door. It



Starting First Race

By Steven Vando

When we read a good book, watch a funny movie, or find a great local restaurant, we are eager to share what we've experience with others so they too can be full of joy. As runners, are we doing the same to promote our sport? To the outsider, running seems mundane, boring, tedious, or just plain torturous. We find it exhilarating, therapeutic, rejuvenating, and challenging. We need to let non-runners know why we are so passionate, and hopefully lessen their apprehension.

Many people are reluctant to race because they think their lack of fitness may make them an out-cast, or finish last. If you know someone with this concern, you can build their confidence by offering to train together. Help them pre-register for a race as a concrete goal to work towards. Consider finding something that is fun, such as night runs, costumed runs, color runs, and other themed events where the focus is less on the pace. For additional encouragement, the Falmouth Track Club sponsors a variety of workouts, including the Friday night five-miler and Wednesday nights at the high school track. These groups are open to people of all levels, and the participants are highly supportive of beginners.

While visiting family in Arizona, my wife Mary and I wanted to do a turkey trot. My aunt and uncle offered to drive us since we had no rental car, and they know I'm terrible with directions. Since my aunt and uncle are not athletic people, we signed them up for the charity walk. After our race, we joined them on the walk to make it a family event. They have continued to keep us updated on other charity walks they participate in, and have the benefits of being part of an active community which improved their overall health.

Starting New Goal

Congratulations on your most recent accomplishment, now it may be time to set a new goal. Consider increasing the distance of your next race,



Who Do YOU Run For?

By Lindsay Benson

I stumbled upon the Facebook page for the nonprofit “I Run for Michael” (IR4) during the summer of 2013. My son, James, had recently celebrated his first birthday; and in the year since his birth, I had run exactly zero miles. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to run. I had been hyper-focused on being Supermom, preparing all of James’ baby food from scratch, and washing and folding cloth diapers. I had been struggling to persevere through my final year teaching under a principal who made me want to run screaming from the building every afternoon. I had been living in Charlotte – it was hot. The IR4 page caught my eye because of my background in working with individuals with special needs, both through my teaching career and through my involvement in organizations like Special Olympics. The virtual running club matches runners with adults and children with physical disabilities and/or conditions that prevent them from being able to run themselves. Inspired by an internet meme that states, “I run because I can. When I get tired, I remember those who can’t run, what they would give to have this simple gift I take for granted, and I run harder for them,” IR4 founder Timothy Boyle began dedicating his runs to Michael, a man in his 50’s with Down syndrome in January 2013. What began as a private group with 20 members has grown to include a following of nearly 39,000, including me and my “running buddy,” Robyn.

I signed up to be matched with a buddy, because I knew that this was type of motivation that I needed, in order to truly commit to training again. When I was matched with Robyn, I became accountable to another person. I went on my first run the next morning. Robyn lives in Murrieta, CA; which is basically the furthest geographic point from my home in MA within the continental United States. Robyn is diagnosed with urea cycle disorder, a genetic disorder that affects her body’s ability to process protein, and therefore to develop the muscle mass required in order to engage in physical activities for lengthy periods of time. She and I have never met. Despite the physical distance between us, Robyn has become one of my closest friends, my coach, my cheerleader, and my shoulder to cry on when I am sidelined by an injury.

As a runner, my instructions are to post a run to Robyn on the program’s Facebook page at least three times per week. A typical runner post includes a screen shot of a GPS running app (course map, mileage, pace), along with one or two photos. I soon found myself seeking out courses that would make for more scenic or exciting photos for Robyn, and bringing the kids along as my “running partners” more often, because she enjoyed seeing

them in my posts. In return, Robyn comments on my posts – my virtual cheerleader. Following live races, I send Robyn my race medals, because WE finished the race together. If it wasn’t for our partnership, I am certain that I would not have accomplished as much as I have, or participated in nearly as many events as I have during the past three years. I owe these experiences, in large part, to Robyn.

I wouldn’t say that I was what you might refer to as a “serious runner” until I was matched with Robyn. I began running in college; however, each time I stopped running for any significant period, due to illness or injury, I would take months or even years off before I got the itch again. Recommitting to training following that kind of downtime is intimidating – you know you’re going to be slow, you know it’s going to be painful, and you know that it isn’t going to get better without some serious effort on your part. Seven months after I was matched with Robyn, I discovered that I had a stress fracture in my foot. I was forced to stop running for eight weeks while the bone healed. During my time off, I continued to stay in

touch with Robyn through IR4. I even walked a 5k in my orthopedic shoe, labeling the corresponding post “I hobble for Robyn.” When my doctor released me to begin training again, for the first time in my life, I started running again, immediately following an injury. I ran 1.8 miles that day. And 1.8 miles the following day. And 2.5 miles the day after that. These were some of the most difficult runs of my life – running on a newly healed foot, in 90-degree heat, after relaxing in the air conditioning for eight straight weeks. I have been committed to serious training for nearly three years now – the longest consecutive stretch of my life – and I owe that commitment to my running buddy.

I run for Robyn. Who do YOU run for?

For more information on I Run for Michael or its sister programs IR4 Siblings – The Unsung Heroes, or Kerri On – I Run for Remembrance, visit <http://www.whoirun4.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/IRunFor>.

Lindsay Benson is a former summer-person/recent transplant from Charlotte, NC. She lives in Falmouth Heights with her husband and three sons. Lindsay is a K-2 special education teacher at Teaticket Elementary School in Falmouth. When she’s not teaching, Lindsay enjoys running, hiking, reading Elin Hilderbrand novels, and weight training (pushing her two youngest sons in the double jogger).



The Seagull Six was a Success!

by Mike Norton

Many thanks to all the volunteers that helped at the 39th annual Seagull Six Road Race. Race conditions were bleak in the early morning with heavy rain and snow. However, by 10 a.m. the snow and rain cleared and the roads dried up, but the ferocious winds continued. Runners were hit with a 35 mph gale force head wind winding through mile 4 to 5 through at the Nobska Lighthouse area.

All runners warmed up at the post race party inside the Captain Kidd restaurant. The male winner was Tom Giardino of Falmouth (34:24) and the female winner was Allyson Manchester of North Falmouth (39:37). Many thanks as well to the North Falmouth PTO for managing the water stop. See you next year!

About the Race Director and Author: Mike runs five to six days a week, logging 40 to 50 miles per week. His nickname is the 'machine.' Mike was 8th overall at the 2015 NE Mountain Series. You can say hi to Mike on the track on Wednesday, at the Cape Cod Trail Race and at other trail races throughout New England.

Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable: Youth and Running

By Allyson Manchester

Each fall, I work as one of the assistant coaches for the girls' soccer team at Falmouth Academy. I am long on running enthusiasm and short on actual soccer skills—so I oversee the conditioning aspect of our practices. I combine speed, endurance, and strength workouts that are meant to help the girls find a happy fitness level in between “couch potato” and “too intense.”

When introducing students to running, I think it's most important to focus on how students view the activity. Many middle school and high school athletes see running solely as a form of punishment. I always try to emphasize running as an opportunity to build confidence, relieve stress, and socialize!

The challenge, of course, is that running does seem like a punishment to beginners. The first week of conditioning practice is a plunge into the depths of despair—muscles are sore, grievances are aired, tears are shed. In these moments, it's very difficult to convince kids that running will (eventually) become enjoyable. When students complain about running, I encourage them to “get comfortable with being uncomfortable.” It's important to acknowledge to students that running can be difficult and painful. Still, as soon as they familiarize themselves with the feelings of being out of breath, pushing their legs to move faster, and breaking a sweat, they come to crave them.

Additionally, students draw immense confidence from surviving difficult workouts. Nell Bowen, a player on my soccer team and participant in the FTC youth running programs, says that she runs for the post-run satisfaction. “I just love how I feel after a run. I love being done,” she laughs. “Running has made me more fit, but it has also just made me more motivated and happy overall.”

If you know a student who would like to get involved in running, here are a few tips:

- Make sure to hydrate: Kids often forget the importance of drinking water before, during, and after workouts. Hydration is a key practice to teach early.
- Get the right gear: When kids first start running, they sometimes wear the old shoes that they wear around school everyday. If possible, invest in a dedicated pair of running shoes. As you know, running does not require a lot of

Failures

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was hot. I was tired. I got in. It was my first DNF. Lessons? Plenty of them. Don't have an out during the tough miles. Those are miles where the body is less relevant than the mind and will. I needed to learn to pace myself. I needed to learn when to concentrate and work through a tough section. I needed to learn that finishing slowly was better than not finishing at all.

I am not proud of my failures. I am happy to have had them though. I learn from them. They make me better. I am happy to try many things. Some of the times the things work out. Other times I have my head between two metal rails and wonder what to do next.

I encourage you to try things. I encourage you to figure out what you can and cannot do. I encourage you to learn from your successes and your failures. We define ourselves by what we try to do and by what we wished we had tried to do. Either way we are living our lives in real time. I thought that all of these things were a good idea. Some were, some were not. Sailing has stayed with me. Running a marathon has stayed with me. Sticking my head through a rail, not so much.

Until then I am on to my next great idea!

Carl

Carl can often be found running and biking the pathways of the Cape. When swimming look for something that looks like a shadow at the bottom of the pool. That is him cross training like a flounder. He is happy to have completed a marathon in every state. His next great idea is to move forward logging as many miles as he can in 72 hours. Great idea? We will see.



FTC Adventures: The Hike and Run up Mount Washington, June 25, 2016

In anticipation of the FTC Adventure at Mount Washington, FTC member Bob Pritchard agreed to write about his hiking experiences. For more information about the bus trip to Mt. Washington, contact Carl.

Hiking for Runners by Bob Pritchard

I'd be willing to bet if you're reading this you enjoy running and that many of you runners are also hikers. Running and hiking embody the same core behaviors – getting outside, exercising, enjoying fresh air and the views. And just like running, hiking has many ways to participate. You can hike on flat terrain; you can hike in mountains, during the day, at night and in all seasons of the year. There's something for everyone that can match your abilities and interests. Of course there's a lot of crossover between the activities as well, such as trail running. For those of you who don't consider yourself hikers I'd like to tempt you to explore the pastime. I think you'll enjoy it and maybe we can hike together!

Growing up I was taken with the imagery of Northern New England mountains and hiking but the opportunity to participate didn't present itself until I was a young adult. I started hiking in earnest in my 30's and hiked occasionally in Franconia Notch and in the Presidential Mountains including Mt. Washington and Mt. Jefferson. When my son reached school age, I had an available but not always willing, hiking partner! We started out hiking smaller ski areas and as he aged we set our sights on New Hampshire's 48 mountains over four thousand feet tall. When he was younger Andy carried a small and nearly empty pack but kids grow quickly and by the time we completed all 48 four thousand footers, I had witnessed Andy growing from a little kid with very limited outdoor savvy to a young man who was now stronger, carried more gear and could look out for his dad on a hike. It's been one of the most rewarding aspects of being a parent.

Mt. Washington is the largest mountain east of the Mississippi and is notorious for wild and cold weather, including for many years the highest recorded windspeed (231 miles per hour). The size and weather on Mt. Washington demands respect and preparation but as with a challenging road race it all the more rewarding to hike. And thousands of people do hike it safely every year.

I've had the pleasure of hiking and running up Mt. Washington many times in all seasons. I have several memorable experiences on Mt. Washington, including hiking through rain and clouds and emerging in the sun with roiling clouds below, hiking all day in fog and never seeing more than 50 feet!, watching the sun rise and on another day set while sitting next to my then young son. If you hike Mt. Washington, you will leave with your own memories.

The key to a good hike is to know the weather, choose an appropriate route, pack the right gear, hike with others and know your limitations. There are trails that are strictly for well conditioned hikers in good weather but there are also approaches that are easier and better suited for first time hikers. My experience

is that many newer hikers will choose a challenging route they may later regret or set a pace they can't sustain. Better to take it easy, take it all in at a relaxed pace and if you love it (you will) then plan to hike again on a more challenging approach. I can also attest to not always bringing the right clothes or gear – even when I had it back home. The best approach is to print off a checklist and verify you are bringing the essentials. It will make the hike safer and more fun. I still use a printed checklist to prepare for every hike.

Climbing Mt. Washington in a group is ideal. And the FTC event is a great way for experienced hikers and newbies to share a fun day. For first timers, the experience will be awe inspiring. For the group, the camaraderie and safety of being able to look out for one another makes it a better experience.

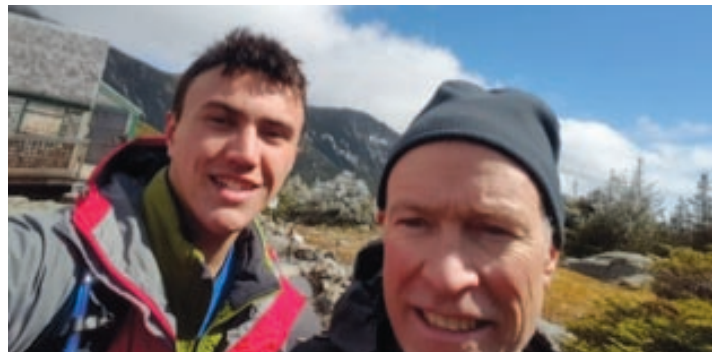
I won't go into all the details as I'm sure Carl will prepare you for this, but here are some ideas to make the day more enjoyable.

- Browse online articles about Mt. Washington. You will get a sense of the history, beauty and challenges involved in hiking the mountain.
- Bring a camera or mobile equipped camera to record the beauty and the people enjoying the hike.
- Take your time to take in the different scenery at changing altitudes. The summit of Mt. Washington has an alpine and tundra climate and you will see plants and possibly animals that you're not going to see in Falmouth. Ascending the mountain the tree and plant varieties will steadily change as you go higher. The Mt. Washington landscape has been shaped by the same ice age that created Cape Cod – in fact much of the material including boulders on Cape Cod were carried here from Mt. Washington and further north.

- Get some rest before setting out – even if you are a marathoner you will be exhausted when the day is done.

The FTC hike to Mt. Washington will be rewarding and create great memories. I hope to see you on the hike!

Bob Pritchard has had a home in Falmouth for 12 years and lived here fulltime for 3. He runs, hikes and constantly walks his dogs. He lives with his wife Anna, son Andy and two outspoken Samoyeds, Cami and Noosh. He can be reached at robert.pritchard@comcast.net



This photo is from Saturday, April 23rd, on Mt. Lafayette at the Greenleaf hut. Snow and ice in the background! 18 year old Andy on the left and the author, Bob, is on the right.

Youth and Running

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equipment—and a quality pair of shoes is worth it. Additionally, running gear makes a great birthday gift! Something small—like a bright pair of running socks—can really make kids excited to run.

- Start a running log: Recording runs (either online or in a notebook) gives kids tangible evidence of their progress. Also, they can express their creativity through titling their runs, describing their routes, and documenting their body's responses.

- Pay attention to breathing and heart rate: I always focus on mid-workout and recovery breathing with my high school athletes. Helping students to get in tune with their heart rate and breathing can help them to manage stress, even when they are not running.

- Be a role model: My student Nell says that she first got into her running because her mom loves it so much. "My mom has always been really athletic, so that got me started," says Nell. Even if you don't consider yourself to be a teacher or coach, modeling a running routine and a lifestyle of wellness is very impactful to students.

At the end of every soccer season, my goal is that all of the players will like running enough to go for a run on their own. Some might run a few casual miles once a week; others might commit to a more regular schedule and sign-up for races. In any case, I love to see students make running an enjoyable, habitual activity.

Allyson Manchester just moved to Falmouth and loves to run all distances. Her favorite Falmouth running spots include the grass on Worcester Court, the hill on View Crest Road, and the Great Sippewissett Marsh section of the bike path. Sometimes, she even stops for Dairy Queen mid-run. She teaches 10th grade English at Falmouth Academy and is an especially huge fan of tea, Shakespeare, podcasts, Fleetwood Mac, and her dog.



Starting First Race

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setting a personal record, or trying a new event such as a trail run or triathlon. Seek out other people who have competed in the event you are interested in, and ask their advice on how to train for it. They are likely willing to share their experience to save you from repeating their same mistakes. When you set a new goal, share it with an accountability partner who can also keep you motivated throughout training.

After focusing on my speed for shorter distances, I decided

to try a marathon again. To improve my chance of a successful race, I sought the advice of my friend Dave who is an accomplished runner. He was able to help me recognize a better way to approach my training and shared some of his personal techniques. His support and knowledge has provided encouragement when I struggled with the longer distance training runs, and I feel more confident going into race day.

Starting After Injury

All runners dread those time when we can't be out there pounding the pavement due to injuries or illness. Just like going out too fast in a race, we often rush the recovery and end up in worse condition. Your return to running after an injury will be very situational dependent and vary person to person. You should seek professional advice from a coach and/or physician before and during your return, though a common focus will be to ease back into it.

This applies to your pace, distance, and frequency of running. Start slow, short, and with at least a day of rest in between. Listen to your body, and recognize the difference between discomfort and an injury. If you can't tell the difference, err on the side of caution. Although you may want to immediately run at your pre-injury pace, remember a marathon is completed one mile at a time, and each mile is done one step at a time. The same applies to the road to recovery.

After Mary had surgery, she missed some of the prime running season on the cape. This was discouraging, but her friends from the Marvels continued to visit her for support. When it was time to get back to the road, they paced her during training runs to ensure she didn't push too hard. Mary decided she wanted to be healthy enough to run the Falmouth Road Race, and the Marvels her get back to the point where she could finish the race, and actually beat her previous year's time!

Starting Again

Maybe you were a high school track star, or maybe you were a weekend warrior, but either way life has gotten hectic and running has drifted by the wayside. Now, you want to get back to the "glory days" of competition. Much of the advice I mentioned above would applicable to this scenario. Your comeback will also depend on how long you've been out, and what your current fitness level is. If you've been cross training, the transition might be easier. Seek friends or the running club for support and encouragement. Register for a race as a future goal. Ease back into it and listen to your body. Recall what you enjoyed about running in the past, and focus on those positives memories.

Getting to the Finish

On the day of competition, we want to race to the finish in the least time, but running is about more than just that one event. Sometimes, the greater achievement is getting to the starting line.

