

**The History of Running  
And the USRSA  
As I Know It  
By: John Strumsky, Founder  
April 30, 2016**

Today is my seventy-sixth birthday and this is my present to myself. It is a firsthand account of the history of the United States Running Streak Association from the dawn of civilization down to the time the leadership reins of the organization were placed into the very capable hands of Mark Washburne, the current President.

As a runner and a historian I am aware that no human activity or historical topic exists in a vacuum, so this historical presentation has been written from the viewpoint of how I have lived my portion the events or had personally known them to exist through my individual study and observations. Remember also that I tried to be a serious student on the subject of running, and owned and read over 200 books and many hundreds of running periodicals throughout my running years and beyond.

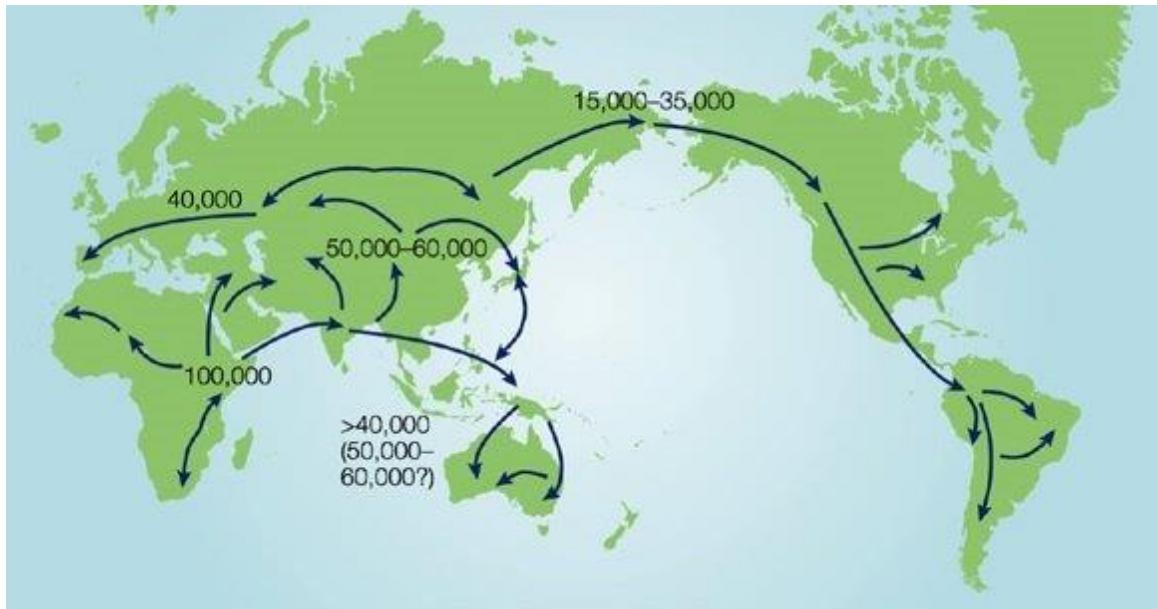
As with any physical activity in life one's attitudes and philosophy are paramount to the outcome realized through his or her personal exertions. Through the exertion and struggle of the footrace and the heaving and grasping price to be paid by its end, I personally witnessed the triumph of the human spirit—in myself and in others. Many times I witnessed less than world-class runners give their all, and in most of those cases each of them was victorious on their personal level. So, as only runners can know, our chosen sport constantly provided me and those others with a strong sense of personal satisfaction and achievement. Each contest a battle where one took aim at the runner just in front of them and gave it their all to finish just one place higher in the results, even if it happened to be 283rd place out of 350 runners.

We cannot talk about the history of the United States Running Streak Association without first agreeing on what constitutes “running.” The act is a completely natural one within itself, but one that more recently—that is, in the last three or four thousand years or so—has been structured and measured and recorded in various ways to make it first quantifiable and then competitive as both an individual and a team sport in its many iterations. For instance, the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, the unabridged version, lists a grand total of 179 definitions for the word “run.” All told, approximately 40,000 words are used by this reference guide in its explanation of the word. The first definition is “to go quickly by moving the legs more rapidly than at a walk and in such a manner that for an instant in each step all or both feet are off the ground.” Repeat this physical ritual day after day, ad infinitum, and you have a “running streak.” So now that we know what running is, let’s pursue some of its history.



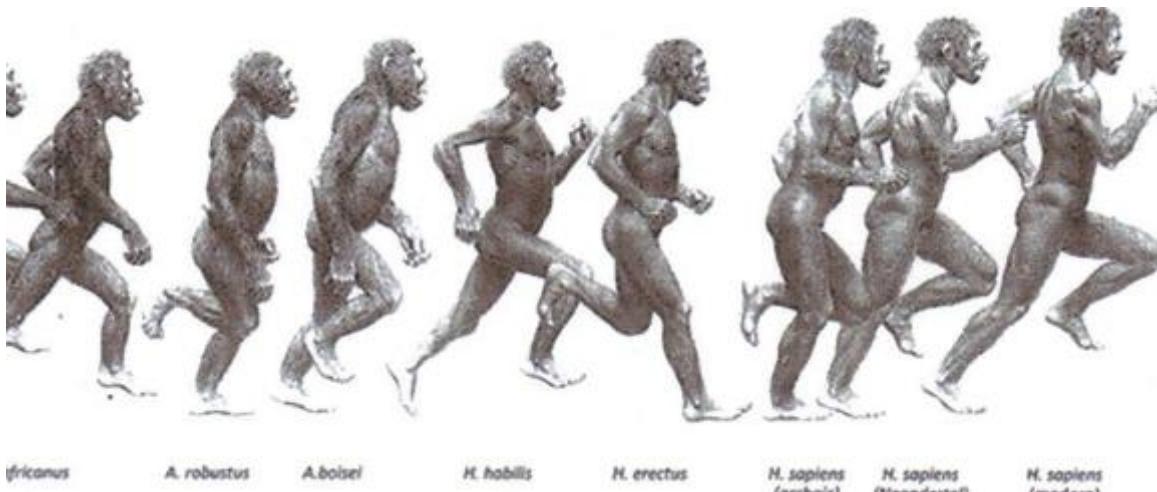
Homo Erectus.

Our first picture today is of a scientific reconstruction of Homo Erectus for a 2006 exhibit by the Archeology Museum in Herne, Germany. Our history of running begins long ago and far away—in fact, a very long time ago in a place very far away. The hypothesis of how Homo Erectus or “upright man” evolved out of the animal kingdom is that our forebears gained an advantage over other creatures when they stood upright and began walking and running on two feet some two million years ago.



Human Migration Patterns.

Next is a map of human migration patterns developed from analyzing DNA in populations around the world to demonstrate the thousands of years it took man to walk to, run to, and sail to, various portions of the globe to populate it. Modern man or Homo Sapiens began evolving from Homo Erectus some 200,000 to 150,000 years ago. Then, somewhere around a 100,000 years ago the ancestors of modern man walked and ran out of the eastern part of central Africa to begin their worldwide trek. Generally speaking, these early men were nomadic hunter-gatherers who roamed across the Bering Land Bridge from Asia between 15,000 and 35,000 years ago, during the final glacial period or most current ice age.



Evolution of Man Running.

We now have a drawing depicting the evolution of man running. Most of the time since the dawn of history, man has had to move over great distances without the use of the latest model sports convertible. Long before he learned how to plant and harvest, he wandered first in search of roots, berries and other such delicacies of a potluck nature.

Later, he followed the migration patterns of the large animal herds. Eventually, he established nomadic routes geared to the tune of the seasons. With all this, I am willing to venture that most—if not all—of his days involved prolonged periods of not just walking, but serious running. He needed to be able to chase down his prey, and, in turn, avoid being chased down by some other creature as its prey. Man's running ability meant life itself.



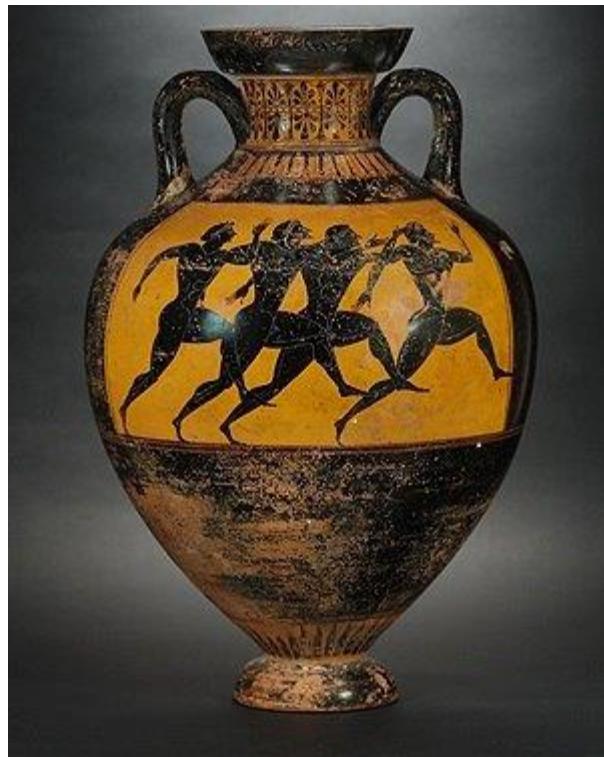
A Lion Chasing a Gazelle.

The next photo shows a lion chasing a gazelle. There is the story of life on the African plain that goes like this: Every day as dawn breaks, the jungle comes alive once more. The lion awakes and instantly its instincts tell it that it must run faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve. And every morning the gazelle shakes off its grogginess and knows without being told that it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will no longer survive. So each and every day as we awake, we face that constantly renewing challenge: we're off and running because it's a jungle out there.



A Bear Chasing Two Runners.

We next have a photo of a bear chasing two runners. There is another story about two runners jogging through the woods when suddenly they happen upon an angry bear. As the bear rears up and roars, both take off running hard with the bear in hot pursuit. The first runner looks back, then looks at his buddy, and says, "Why are we running? It's obvious he's gaining on us and is going to catch us. We can't outrun a bear. He's too fast." To which the other runner replies, "I don't have to outrun him. All I have to do is outrun you." This then is how man has evolved and survived down through the millennia. He ran and he ran and he ran some more. If he lost the ancient cross-country race, history no longer recorded his existence. If he could not complete in the earliest of marathons, his remains were buried under the frozen tundra. If he could not circle that prehistoric track fast enough, whomever or whatever came up on his shoulder claimed him as the prize. It's what all of ancient history was all about—survival of the fittest.



Ancient Greek Vase.

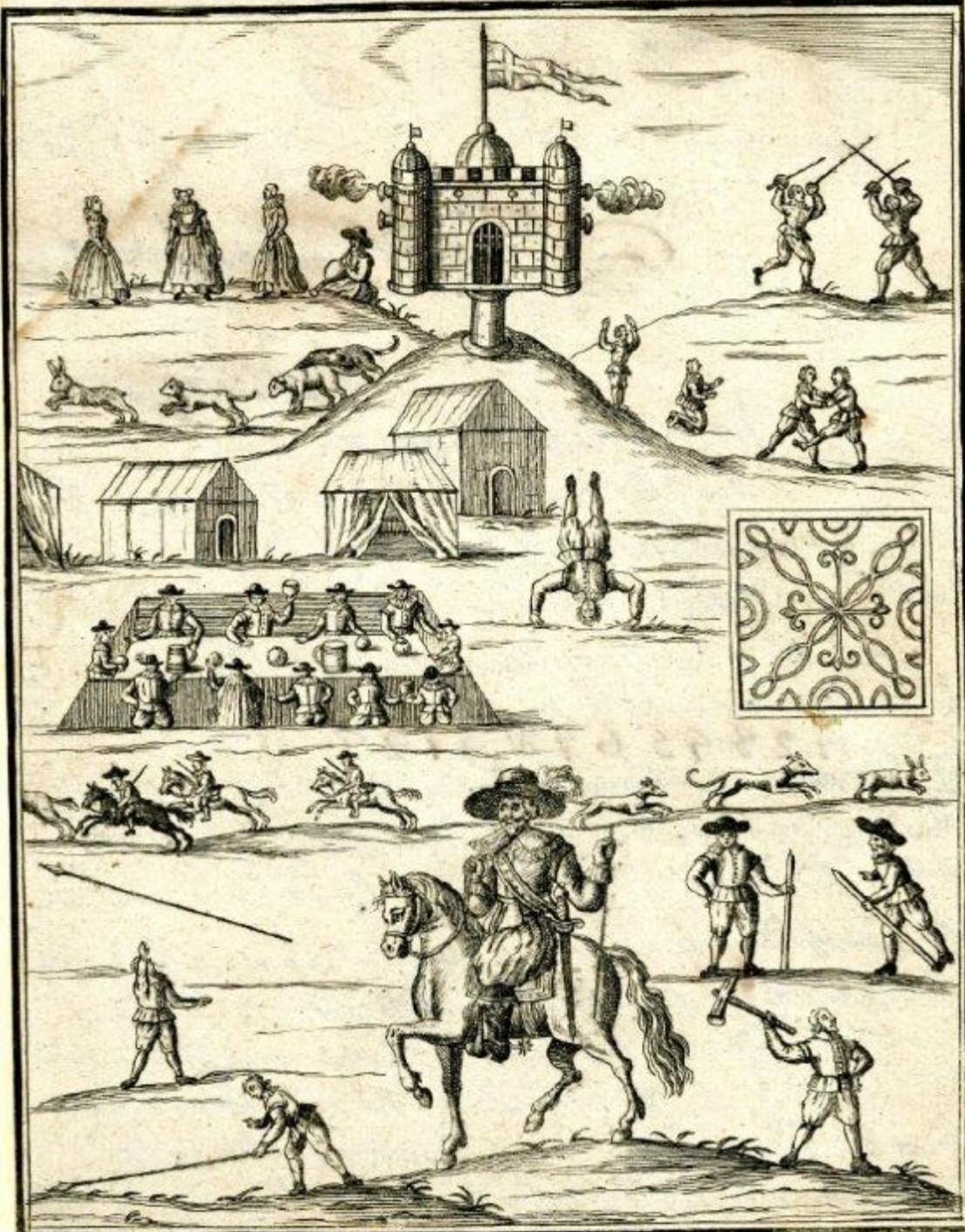
Our next picture is of an ancient Greek vase in the Royal Ontario Museum featuring runners. For over a thousand years—from 776 BC to 393 AD—the ancient Olympic Games were held every four years in Olympia, and running was involved in these games from the very beginning. Homer, the renowned ancient Greek philosopher who lived some three thousand years ago, wrote, “There is no greater glory that can befall a man than by what he achieves by the speed of his feet or the strength of his hands.” The ancient Greeks contested the one- and two-stade distances, where a stade was approximately 200 yards; the dolichos, about 2½ miles long, and another race of an unspecified distance in armor. The marathon, as a long-distance race, did not exist in the ancient games. A cook by the name of Coroebus of Elis is recorded as the winner of the first one-stade race held in 776 BC, making him the very first Olympic champion in recorded history.



Pheidippides.

Next is a photo of the statue of Pheidippides along the Marathon Road from Marathon to Athens. Pheidippides was a trained courier dispatched by the city-state of Athens to run to the city-state of Sparta in 490 BC to request military assistance when the Persian Army landed at Marathon. He is said to have run about 240 kilometers, the equivalent of 150 miles in two days. Then, when the Greek Army defeated the Persians at Marathon, he ran the 40 kilometers or 25 miles between Marathon and Athens to announce the Greek victory, saying, "Joy to you, we've won." According to the 2nd Century AD writer, Lucian, upon uttering this phrase Pheidippides then collapsed and died.

## *COTSWOLD GAMES.*



Cotswold Games.

We now come to an old woodcut that was used for the cover of a book called the Annals of Dover published in 1636. The Cotswold Games were Olympic-type contests started by a lawyer named Robert Dover around 1622, and were held every year in a natural

amphitheater near the town of Cotswold in the Gloucestershire section of England. In the woodcut Robert Dover is the gentleman on horseback, and the rest of the cover shows a number of the games contested each year. Running as an event in the games is shown in two places on the cover: near the upper left side, and at the middle right side, in the form of hounds chasing a hare or rabbit. Cross-country running developed in English schools by at least the late 1500s, where a runner designated the hare would take off running through the woods and leave a trail of torn bits of paper that all the other runners called the hounds had to follow after a designated lapse of time. The Cotswold Games usually took place over two days between mid-May and mid-June. The games disappeared in 1642, with the outbreak of the English Civil War, but were revived with the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. They then gradually degenerated into a drunken country festival according to their critics, and were ended in 1852.



Samuel Pepys.

Next is a 1666 portrait of Samuel Pepys by John Hayls. Pepys was the Chief Secretary to the British Admiralty under both Kings Charles II and James II, but is more famous for the detailed diary he kept from 1660 until 1669. It provides numerous eyewitness accounts of great and obscure events, such as the Great Plague of London, the Great Fire of London, and this entry dated August 10, 1660: "I went by water to White-hall to the Privy Seale, and that done, with Mr. Moore and Creed to Hidepark [sic] by coach and saw a fine foot-race, three times around the park, between an Irishman and Crow that was once my Lord Claypoole's footman. Crow beat the other above two miles" [end of entry]. I ran that exact course through Hyde Park three-hundred-thirty-four years—or a third of a millennium—later on a visit to London in 1994.



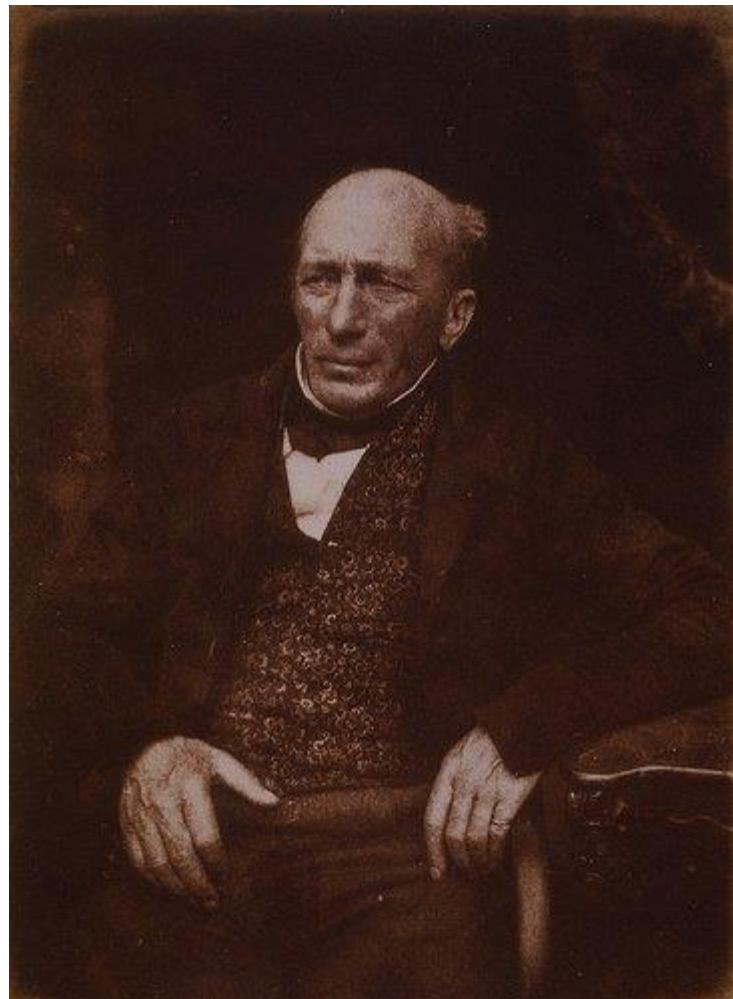
Runing Footman

The next woodcut is of a running footman from the book, *Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe written by Himself*, and published in 1826. O'Keeffe lived from 1747 to 1833, and he wrote: "My Lord's or the Squire's was called the Big House, and had its privileged fool or satirist, its piper and its running footman: the latter I have often seen skimming or flying across the road....The running footman's dress varied....In the early part of the 1700s they had worn kilts, but these were replaced by breeches...." According to other sources, they not only ran messages for their masters, they also accompanied their masters or mistresses alongside their carriages or horses, and they sometimes carried a long cane containing a mixture of eggs and white wine for sustenance. In the 18th Century running footmen were frequently matched by their masters to run against each other or against horses and carriages for wagers on who had the fastest foot servants or footmen.



The Great Walk.

Next we have an 1899 Currier & Ives print of “The Great Walk,” or “Go As You Please.” It shows an Irishman, an American and a Brit competing against a walker carrying two batons. Pedestrianism or competitive walking developed as a spectator sport early in the 19th Century and became a fixture at fairs, but would not reach its peak until the 1870s and 1880s. In the “go as you please contests” pedestrians could either walk or run, and could even take time out for eating or sleeping. Those who engaged in these long-distance or multi-day contests would evolve into today’s ultra-marathoners, while those who eliminated pure running and subscribed to the heel-to-toe method would evolve into the race-walkers of today.



Captain Robert Barclay Allardyce.

The next picture of Captain Robert Barclay Allardyce was taken sometime prior to 1848 by the photography firm Hill & Adamson in Edinburgh, Scotland. Captain Barclay was an endurance walker, who would become known as the father of pedestrianism. In 1801 he walked 110 miles in 19 hours, 27 minutes. And each year thereafter through 1808 he covered distances of between 60 and 100 miles on foot. Then between June 1st and July 12th of 1809 he walked a mile in each of 1,000 successive hours to win a bet of a thousand pounds. As the pound sterling in 1809 was worth the equivalent of almost \$2.57 today, his wager netted him the equivalent of \$2,569.00.



Dr. William Penny Brookes.

The next photo is of Dr. William Penny Brookes, and was taken around 1860. He was an English surgeon known for starting the Wenlock Olympian Games in the town of not Wenlock, but Much Wenlock, England in 1850 for “the promotion of the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town and neighborhood of Wenlock and especially the working classes, by the encouragement of outdoor recreation, and by the award of prizes annually at public meetings for skill in Athletic exercise and proficiency....” The first Games were held in October of 1850, and quickly expanded through the coming years. His motto for his Olympian Games was “May he who earns it win the prize.”



Church Steeple over the English Countryside.

Our next shot is of a church steeple over the English countryside. Meanwhile, around 1860, as Dr. Brookes was organizing his Olympic Games, cross-country running was evolving in the English countryside. Now, instead of just chasing after another runner on a course of indeterminate length as in hare and hounds, steeple chasing began where runners raced from the church in one small town or village to the church in another locality, which they'd be able to spot by the steeples above the trees, while facing natural and manmade obstacles such as ditches, streams and fences along the way. But in not too long a time both cross-country and steeplechase races would become more formalized and more precisely defined, with their courses more exactly measured.



Dr. Brookes in 1875

We now have another picture of Dr. Brookes in 1875. By 1858 Dr. Brookes had established contact with the organizers of an Olympic Games revival in Athens, and had sent a prize of ten pounds sterling to be awarded in what was called "a seven-fold footrace," which was a distance of 1,400 yards or 1,280 meters. In 1865 Brookes set up the National Olympian Association based in Liverpool, and it held its first national Olympian Games in 1866 at The Crystal Palace in London, which attracted a crowd of over 10,000 fans. In 1877 Dr. Brookes requested a prize from Greece to mark Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and in response King George I of Greece sent a silver cup to be presented that year. Dr. Brookes was again in contact with the Greek government in 1881, when he tried to instigate Olympic Games in Athens which would be open to international competition.



WESTON THE PEDESTRIAN.

Edward Payson Weston.

We next have a 19th Century sports card of Edward Payson West, who was largely responsible for the rise in popularity of pedestrianism in the 1860s and '70s. He first came to public attention in 1861, when he walked 478 miles from Boston to Washington, D. C. in 10 days, 10 hours—from February 22nd through March 4th. During the walk he faced snow, rain and mud, and as a consequence fell several times along the way. In 1867 he walked from Portland, Maine to Chicago, a distance of 1,200 miles in twenty-six days to win a prize of \$10,000, but also received death threats from gamblers who had bet against him.



Deerfoot – The Seneca Indian Runner.

Our next woodcut is titled “Deerfoot – The Seneca Indian Runner,” who hailed from the Buffalo, New York area. He was an early American distance runner who also went by the name of Louis Bennett. He was taken to England in 1861 by a promoter who saw him race in Buffalo, New York, and wanted to match him against the great Victorian runners of the day. So he embarked on a 20-month tour, and in September of 1861 he lost a 6-mile race to Teddy Mills, but then won a 4-mile event a few days later against Jack White. He next beat both of these runners in a 10-mile championship race. During his running tour in England he generated enormous crowds of paying spectators who came to watch him chew up his British and Irish competition. 13,000 fans showed up at one event, fascinated as much by his physical appearance and his antics as by his running ability. To capitalize on the European fascination with Native-Americans, he raced bare-chested in a short loincloth with a headband containing a single eagle’s feather, and would yell out war whoops as he charged to victory. He set a 10-mile international record of 51 minutes, 26 seconds, and a 12-mile world record of 1 hour, 2.02 seconds.



Silver Medal Awarded to John Hulley.

Our next photo is of the silver medal awarded to John Hulley by the Wenlock Olympian Society in 1864. John Hulley, along with philanthropist Charles Melly, founded the Liverpool Athletic Club in 1862. The Wenlock Society recognized his efforts to improve the physical well-being of the working man with this medal award. In 1865 he joined with Dr. William Brookes to organize the National Olympian Association, the forerunner to the British Olympic Association, which conducted National Olympian Festivals in the 1860s that drew crowds of up to 15,000 spectators. Unlike the Much Wenlock Games, the Liverpool Games prohibited professional athletes from competing, which generally kept athletes from the working classes from entering the games because they could only afford to compete as a means of earning their livelihood, whereas members of the upper classes of society had the time and the wherewithal to afford to retain their amateur status.



Stamford Bridge Stadium.

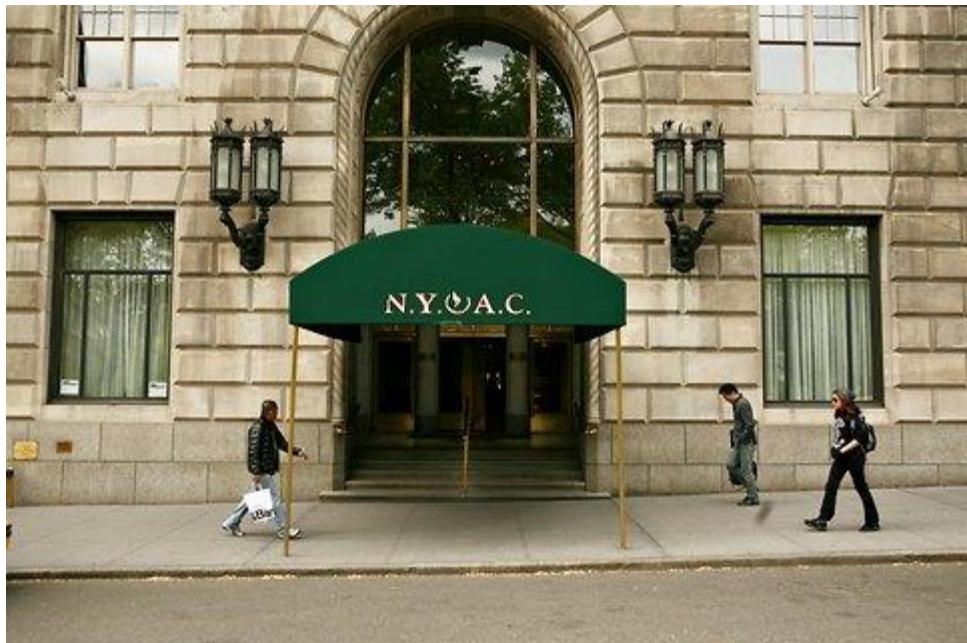
We next have an aerial photo of Stamford Bridge Stadium, which was built by the London Athletic Club in 1877. The London Athletic Club is the oldest independent track and field club in the world. It was initially named the Mincing Lane Athletic Club, because its early members were mainly businessmen from the insurance and underwriting section of the city. The club conducted its first meeting on June 27, 1863, and in 1866 a sports publication called *The Sporting Life* announced that the club had changed its name to The London Athletic Club, and stated "gentlemen from all parts of London, and most of the principal pedestrians of the day were among its members." We shall have more to say about pedestrians shortly.

# Amateur Athletic Association



Logo of the Amateur Athletic Association.

We now come to the logo of the Amateur Athletic Association. Offended by the National Olympian Association's democratic stance of allowing ordinary working men to compete on the same fields with upper-class gentlemen, a group of said gentlemen formed the Amateur Athletic Club, or AAC, in 1865, and closed their competitions to professional or semi-professional athletes. It held its first ever championships the next year, which were held annually until 1880, when the AAC was succeeded by the Amateur Athletic Association.



New York Athletic Club.

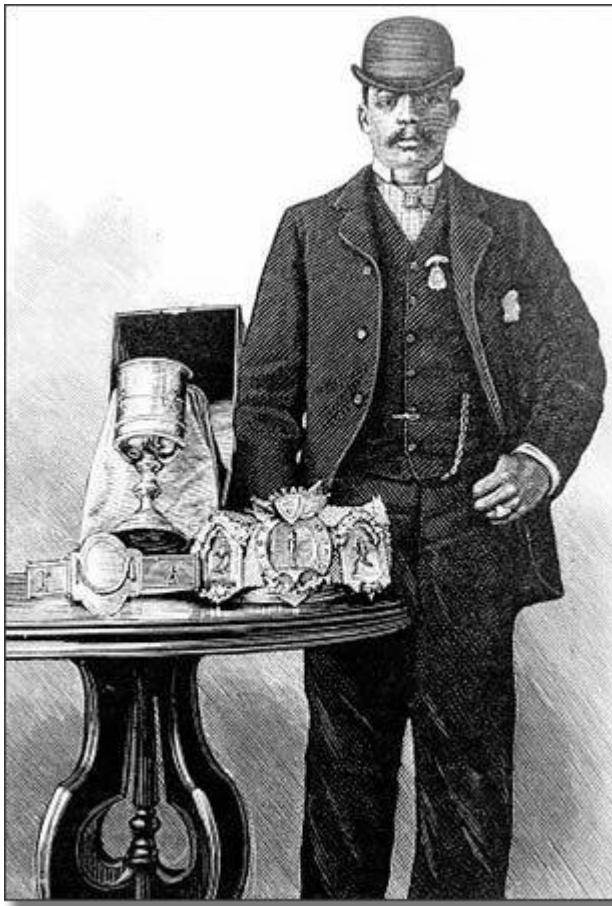
Our next photo is of the New York Athletic Club, located at 180 Central Park South in Manhattan. The NYAC was founded on September 8, 1868, and was modeled after the London Athletic Club. Its goal was to sponsor athletic competitions in the New York area, and to keep official records for various sports. In November of 1868 the NYAC sponsored the first indoor track meet held in the United States, and in July of 1874 sponsored the first inter-collegiate track and field championships at Saratoga, New York, in conjunction with the rowing championships.



John C. Babcock.

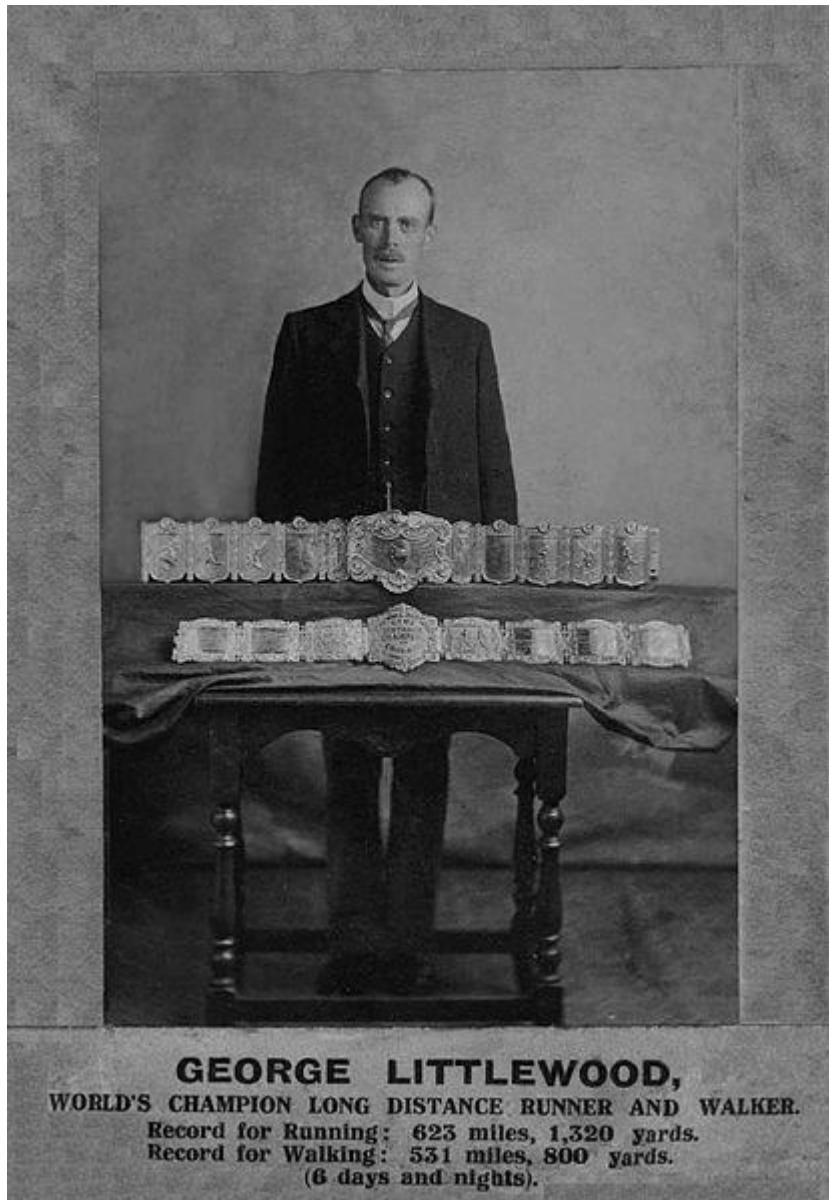
We now come to a sketch of John C. Babcock, the first vice president of the New York Athletic Club. It was he who built an enclosed ice rink called the Empire City Skating Rink for the people of New York in 1868, but before the rink opened for business he

decided to host a night of indoor amateur athletic games on the evening of November 11, 1868 on behalf of the NYAC. According to the New York Times newspaper account of the day, the events included the running high jump, the standing three jumps, the shot put, and a half-mile footrace, but the reporter did not see fit to list either the participating athletes or their results, so we have no clue who won that first half-mile indoor race.



Frank Hart.

Next is an engraving of Frank Hart with his pedestrian awards. Haitian Frank Hart was a “go-as-you-please” racer in pedestrian events during the 1870s and ‘80s, when Great Britain and the U. S. were in the grips of “Pedestrian Mania.” “Go-as-you-please” events were those long-distance or multi-day events where the participants could either walk or run, or even crawl if they had to, to reach the finish line or the conclusion of the race, and these races were extremely popular in their heyday. On April 10, 1880, after covering 565 miles in six days of racing Frank Hart won \$17,000 as he waved an American flag to the thousands of cheering fans when he hit the finish line at Madison Square Garden. William Pegram, another African-American pedestrian, came in second with 540 miles



George Littlewood.

We now have a photo from 1889 of George Littlewood standing with his running and walking awards. He too was a professional pedestrian, known as "The Sheffield Flyer," who still holds the six-day world record for walking 531 miles, which he set on a 13-lap-to-the-mile track between March 6th and March 11th of 1882. He also set the British six-day race record for running 623 miles and 1,320 yards. Once, he ran against a horse named Charlie in a 17-mile race, and only lost by three-quarters of a mile. After 1888 pedestrian races declined rapidly, and are now a distant memory.



Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

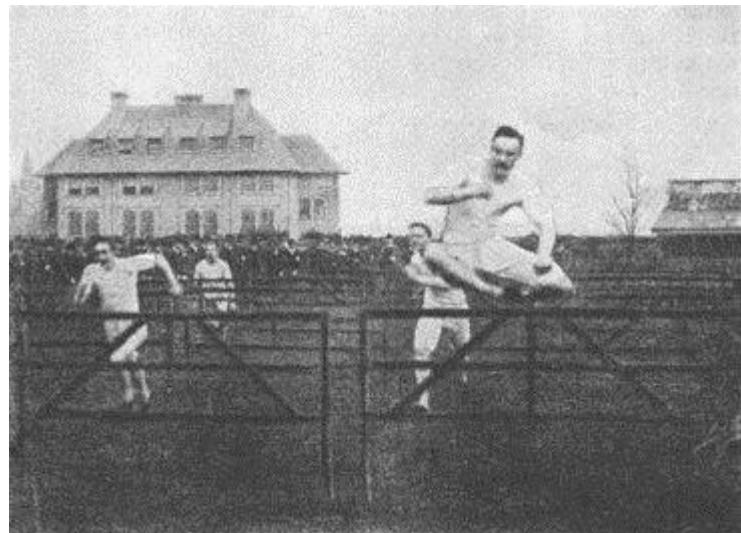
Now we come to a photo of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. In 1881 Dr. William Penny Brookes of the Wenlock Olympian Games established contact with the Greek government again, this time in an attempt to urge a rebirth of the ancient Olympic

Games to be held in Athens and to be open to international competition. Sadly this attempt failed as Greece was then in the midst of pressing political problems, and nothing happened for another eight years. Then in 1889 Dr. Brookes invited Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the organizer of an international congress on physical education to Much Wenlock, and in October of 1890, de Coubertin went to stay at the Brookes' family home for several days. A meeting of the Wenlock Olympian Games was held in de Coubertin's honor with much pageantry, and with a dinner held at The Raven Hotel. Upon his return to France de Coubertin gave a glowing account of his stay in which he referred to his host's efforts to revive the Olympics. Although de Coubertin later sought to downplay Brookes' influence, he corresponded with him for several years, and sent him a gold medal (actually gold-coated silver) in 1891 to be presented to the winner of what was called the tilting competition. Dr. Brookes died just four months before the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896, which were organized by de Coubertin's International Olympic Committee.



New York Athletic Club Track Team.

The next shot is of the New York Athletic Club track team in 1876, and the bare-chested athlete sitting in the middle is William B. Curtis, who is considered to be the father of American amateur athletics. On January 21, 1888 he co-founded the Amateur Athletic Union with the goal of creating common standards in amateur sport. He was first a sprinter, and from 1853 through 1872 did not lose a race in the 100-yard dash. Later, he was a three-time national champion in the hammer throw. He was also one of the co-founders of the New York Athletic Club in back in 1868.



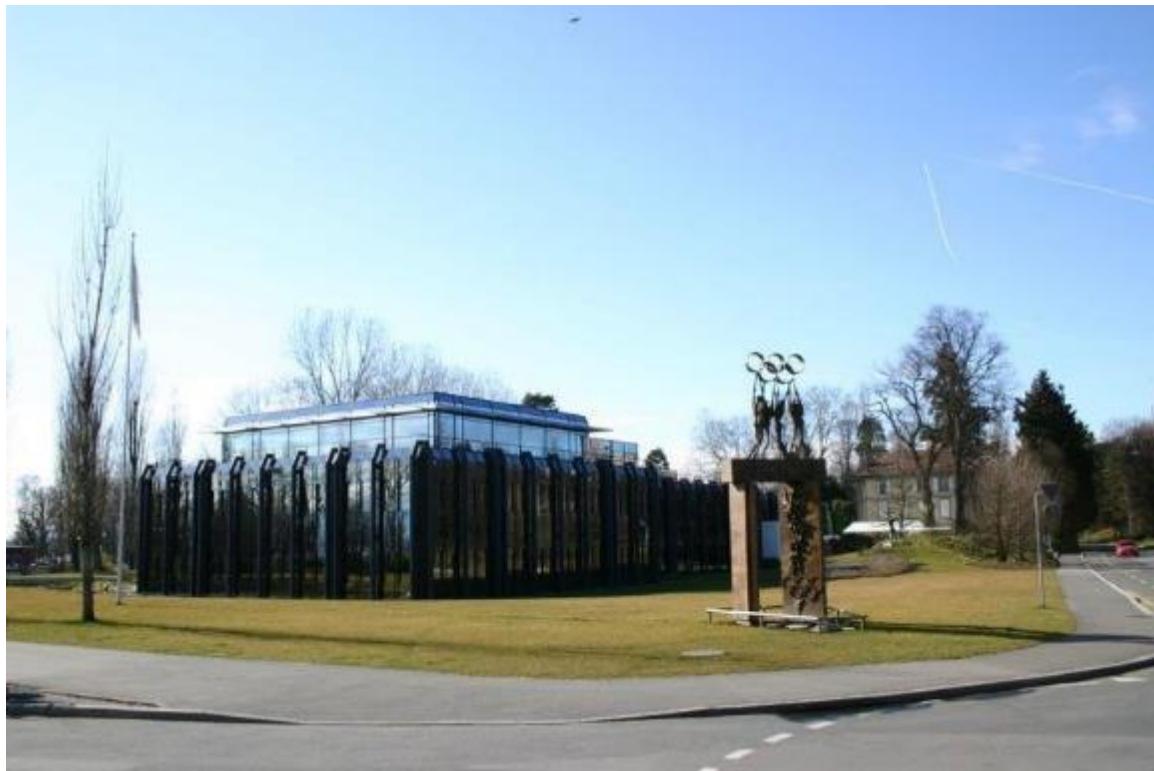
An Early Hurdles Race.

Next is a photo of an early hurdles race by the Detroit Athletic Club. The DAC was founded in 1887, and the following year staged this hurdles race for its members. This photo was included here so that you could see what hurdles looked like back in the 19th Century.



The Great Hub-and-Hub Race.

Dig deep enough in your research and it is startling what sometimes comes back to light after being hidden away and not being exposed to the light of day for many years. A case in point is this now little understood piece of Americana called "The Great Hub-and-Hub Race." When I first came across the picture in the Library of Congress archives I didn't understand what kind of race it was, although it was once a common occurrence in many localities. This "Great Hub-and-Hub Race" was held in the town of Deadwood in the Dakota Territory on the 4th of July in 1888, and pitted two teams of eight Chinese runners against each other. Both teams are pulling a hose and wagon as they raced down the town's main street in front of a large crowd of spectators. This was a race to celebrate the 4th, but the practice of racing fire suppression teams goes back into the 1700s, where rival teams of firefighters would race against each other to the site of a burning building to be the first on the scene, and therefore the fire company entitled to receive the insurance money for putting the blaze out. I've learned that often fistfights would erupt at the scene, and that sometimes buildings would burn to the ground while rival firefighters fought each other.



Headquarters of the International Olympic Committee.

The next picture is of the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1890, after attending the Wenlock Olympian Games as the guest of Dr. William Penny Brookes, the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, was inspired to start an international Olympic movement, and on June 23, 1894 he created the International Olympic Committee in Paris, but during World War I the permanent committee moved its headquarters to Lausanne, Switzerland. The Baron believed that the ancient practice of a sacred truce in association with the Games might have modern implications, which would also give the Olympics a role in promoting peace. Additionally, he saw the Games as important in advocating his philosophical ideal for athletic competition: that

the competition itself, the struggle to overcome one's opponent, was more important than winning. As he put it [quote]: "The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle, the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well" [end of quote]. In 1894 he also proposed that the motto of the Games be "Citius, Altius, Fortius," which means "Faster, Higher, Stronger."



Manhattan Field.

Our next shot is of Manhattan Field, which would become the Polo Grounds in 1901, the home of the New York Giants baseball team, but was originally laid out for polo matches. On September 21, 1895 representatives of the New York Athletic Club and the London Athletic Club met on Manhattan Field to contest an international track and field meet with 12,000 fans in attendance. Eleven events were contested that day, from the 100-yard dash to quarter-mile and half-mile runs, and also the one and three-mile races. The Americans won all eleven events. Charles Kilpatrick won the half-mile race that day in 1 minute, 53.4 seconds—a record that would stand for 14 years.



James Connolly.

We now have a photograph of James Connolly. The first modern Olympic Games opened in Athens on April 6, 1896 with 241 athletes from fourteen countries competing in 43 events. America's James Connolly became the first modern Olympic champion when he won the triple jump on the opening day of the Games. France, Great Britain, Germany and Greece had the largest number of athletes participating, but the U. S. took home the most first place finishes with 9 silver first-place medals.



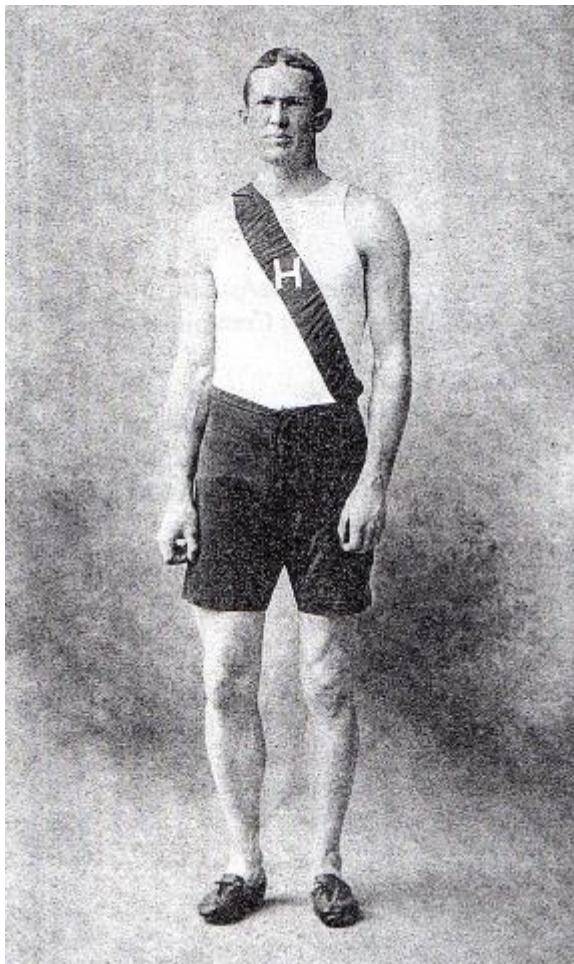
Robert Garrett.

Our next photo is of Robert Garrett of Baltimore participating in the discus throw in the first modern Olympics in 1896. Other American winners in the Athens games were: Thomas Burke, who won both the 100 meters and 400 meters; Thomas Curtis, who took first in the 110 meter hurdles; Ellery Clark, Sr., the winner of both the high jump and the long jump; William Hoyt, who captured the pole vault win; and Baltimore's Robert Garrett, who won both the shot put and the discus throw. Edwin Flack of Australia won first place in the 800-meter and 1,500-meter races, and the only other first-place silver medal at those first games went to Greece for winning the marathon.



Spyridon Louis.

Here we have a photo of Spyridon Louis, the Greek water carrier who won the first Olympic marathon on April 10, 1896 in 2 hours, 58 minutes, 50 seconds. Another Greek, Charilaos Vasilakos, finished second in 3 hours, 6 minutes and 3 seconds. In fact, 13 of the 17 starters were Greeks, who felt that their national pride was on the line. There was also one Greek woman, Stamata Revithi, who attempted to run the marathon, but the Games then excluded women and the officials would not allow her to participate. So the next day she ran the exact course in approximately 5 hours, 30 minutes, and had witnesses sign and verify her running time. As records were only kept of the finishing times of the first 4 of the 9 finishers, we can only state that she finished someplace between 5th and 9th places. Still in all, she was in fact the first woman to complete a marathon. Credit for including that first marathon in the modern Olympic Games goes to Frenchman Michel Breal, who suggested to his friend the Baron de Coubertin that the race be included in the Games to honor Pheidippides, who first ran the 25-mile distance from Marathon to Athens in 490 BC. There had been no such thing as marathon race until April 10, 1896 AD.



Ellery Clark, Sr.

Our next photo is of Ellery Clark, Sr. as a member of the Harvard Track Team, circa 1892. As we mentioned, he was the first place medal winner of the high jump and the long jump in the 1896 Athens Games. At the time he competed for the United States he was a member of the BAA, the Boston Athletic Association. He was proclaimed the "All-around Athletic Champion of America" in 1897 and 1903, and the "All-around Athletic Champion of New England" in 1896, 1897, 1909 and 1910. (The All-around Athletic Contest was the forerunner to today's Decathlon, and the contested events were the 100-yard dash, shot put, high jump, half-mile walk, hammer throw, pole vault, 100-yard hurdles, broad jump, 56 throw and the mile run.) The "56" was a fifty-six pound weight! The discus replaced the half-mile walk in 1897, and all the events were then held in a single day. The "56" pound shot was replaced with a 16-pound metal ball, and the events of the modern decathlon are now conducted over a two-day span. Remember, Ellery Clark could not compete in the All-around or decathlon at the first Olympic Games, only the high jump and long jump. Multi-events such as the five events of the pentathlon or the ten events of the decathlon would not be incorporated into the Olympics until the 1912 Games in Stockholm.



John J. McDermott.

The next picture is of John J. McDermott, the winner of the first Boston Marathon, which was run on April 19, 1897, the year after the U. S. Olympic team returned from the first Athens games. The BAA, the Boston Athletic Association, asked to have the race added to Boston's Patriot Day celebration, which had begun three years earlier in 1894, and it is now the oldest continuously run marathon in the world. The original course of the race was 24½ miles long, and the inaugural winner was John J. McDermott of New York City, who won over the field of 15 runners in 2 hours, 55 minutes, 10 seconds. He ran the 1898 Boston 52 seconds faster than his 1897 race, but finished fourth.



James Lightbody.

The next photo is of high school graduate James Lightbody of the Chicago Athletic Club winning the 800-meter race at the 1904 St. Louis Olympics. After the multi-day pedestrian events of the 1870s and '80s, then the Athens Olympic Games of 1896 and the Boston Marathon of 1897, running became a big- time event in the United States and many other countries around the globe. The 1904 St. Louis Games were the first Olympic Games to be held in the new world, but were conducted in conjunction with the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, and as such, were perceived as a sideshow to the Fair. Yet, there were 651 athletes from 12 countries, but only 42 events included foreign athletes. The steeplechase as an Olympic event made its appearance at the Second Games in Paris in 1900. In the 1904 Games James Lightbody first won the steeplechase, then days later the 800-meter race shown here, and finally the 1,500-meter race in a new world record of 4 minutes, 5 2/5 seconds.



Start of a Junior Cross-Country Race.

The next picture from the Library of Congress shows the start of a junior cross-country race on November 14, 1908. Now, even with top-flight collegiate and professional runners and teams sprouting up all over the place, track and field events and cross-country races also became high school and junior high school activities. Even marathons were becoming commonplace.



International Marathon Derby.

Our next shot is of the runners at the start of the International Marathon Derby. The Los Angeles Herald reported on April 4, 1909 that Frenchman Henry St. Yves won the International Marathon Derby held at the Polo Grounds in New York City the previous day, with a time of 2 hours, 41 minutes, 3/5 seconds, taking home \$6,000 in prize money. The Italian marathoner, Dorando Pietri took second to earn \$2,500, while American Johnny Hayes of New York City got \$1,500 for coming in third, and American Matthew Maloney of Yonkers, New York made \$1,000 for taking fourth place. The other two runners in the six-man field, Englishman Alfred Shrubb and Canadian Native-American Tom Longboat finished out of the money.



Another Shot of the International Marathon Derby.

Now we have another shot of the International Marathon Derby showing the runners in action and the size of the crowd in the Polo Grounds on that rainy spring day. The 30,000 paying spectators had to use their umbrellas for the first hour of the race due to rain. The previous year New York City's Johnny Hayes had been declared the winner of the 1908 Olympic Marathon held in London, after Dorando Pietri, the Italian, was disqualified for having received physical assistance prior to reaching the finish line.



Two Native-American Finishers in the New York City Marathon.

The next photo is of two Native-American finishers in the New York City Marathon on May 6, 1911. What you say? The New York Marathon started in 1970. True, but back in 1911 a twelve-mile race was run from the Bronx to City Hall and called the New York City Marathon. It was won by Louis Tewanima, the runner on the left, and his cross-country teammate from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School on the right, Mitchell Arquette, placed fifth in the race. The next year Louis Tewanima won the silver medal in the 10,000-meters run at the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden in a blazing time of 32 minutes, 7 seconds. Another student from the Carlisle School in south-central Pennsylvania whom we shall hear about next was the great Jim Thorpe.



Jim Thorpe.

And here is our picture of Jim Thorpe from the 1912 Stockholm Games. Thorpe began his athletic career at Carlisle in 1907 when he was walking past the track and beat all the school's high jumpers with an impromptu jump of 5 feet, 9 inches while in street clothes. In addition to track he competed in football, baseball, lacrosse and even ballroom dancing, winning the 1912 intercollegiate ballroom dancing championship. However, he first gained nationwide attention in 1911 as a running back, defensive back and kicker on the Carlisle football team, winning All-American honors in 1911 and '12. He then qualified for the 1912 U. S. Olympic team for both the five-event pentathlon and the ten-event decathlon, and won gold in both at the Stockholm Games. But early in 1913, disaster struck. The Worcester Telegram published a story that he had played professional baseball, which then made him ineligible to compete as an amateur in the Olympics. He had indeed played for very meager pay, as little as two dollar per game, and the AAU thereupon stripped him of his amateur status and asked the International Olympic Committee to do the same, which it did later that year, requesting the return of his medals.



Jim Thorpe as a Canton Bulldog.

Our next photo is of Jim Thorpe as a Canton Bulldog. Once the AAU and the IOC determined he was no longer an amateur, Thorpe became a professional football player, signing with the Canton Bulldogs in 1915, where he played running back, defensive back and kicker. Then he remained in the National Football League as a player and coach until 1928. In 1950 an Associated Press Poll of four hundred sportswriters voted him the "greatest athlete" of the first half of the 20th Century. He passed away in 1953, and ten years later the NFL inducted him into its football Hall of Fame. Then in 1983 the IOC reinstated his medals and presented them to his children



School Girls.

We now come to a photo of young school girls running a race. The picture comes from the Library of Congress, and is dated 1923, but there is nothing else to identify the photograph—not the circumstances or the location of the event. In the early days of running men decided that it could be physically harmful for women to run or compete in races, and they were banned from competing by the AAU and the IOC due to medical concerns that such strenuous activity was too taxing for their frail constitutions. The IOC did relent under serious pressure in 1928 to permit female competition in the 800 meters of half-mile. Then the 1,500meters or metric-mile was open to them in 1972, followed by the 3,000 meters and the marathon in 1984. The IOC conveniently overlooked the performance of the female Greek marathoner, Stamata Revithi in 1896 because her participation and finish were not “official.”



Start and Middle of Six-Mile Cross-Country Race.

Next we have a composite shot of the start and middle of a six-mile cross-country race put on by the South Atlantic AAU at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland on December 13, 1924. These two photos from the Library of Congress were used to demonstrate that though races for girls were few and far between, races for young men abounded.



Shortly after the Start of the Trans-American Footrace.

We now have a photo of shortly after the start of the Trans-American Footrace on U. S. Route 66 on March 4, 1928. The U. S. Highway 66 Association made its first major attempt at publicity for the new highway in 1928 by declaring that the first part of the Trans-American Footrace from Los Angeles to New York City, or the "Bunion Derby," as the newspapers called it, would run eastward along the entire length of Route 66 from Los Angeles to Chicago, where it would transfer to other roadways. The 3,455-mile race was organized by Charles C. Pyle, and offered a total of \$48,500 in cash prizes, with \$25,000 going to the winner. The contestant with the least amount of lapsed time would be declared the winner. 199 runners started the race, but many continued dropping out as they struggled from town to town. The eventual winner was Andy Payne from Foyil, Oklahoma, who used his prize money to pay off the mortgage on his father's farm. His

winning time was 573 hours, 4 minutes and 34 seconds. The following year the race was run in the opposite direction, from east to west, and Johnny Salo won in 525 hours, 56 minutes and 10 seconds. They were the only two coast-to-coast races contested along Route 66.



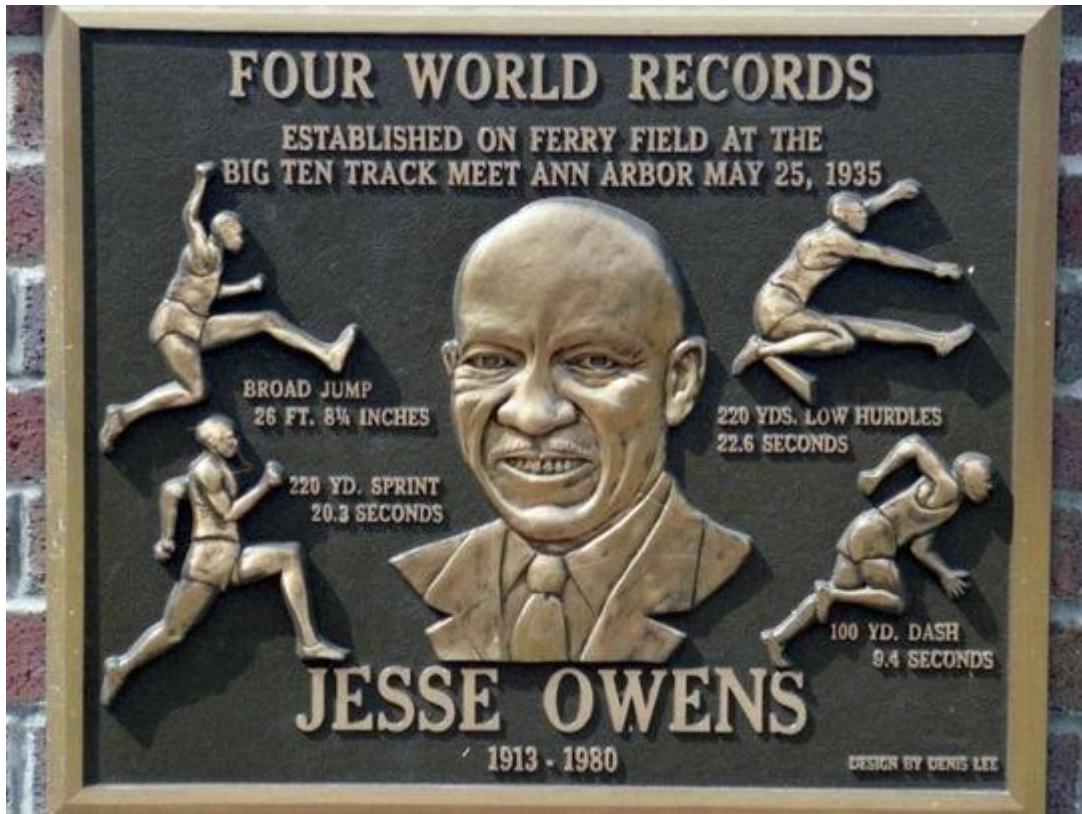
U. S. Postage Stamps.

We now have a picture of the U. S. postage stamps issued in 1932 to commemorate the Tenth Olympic Games being held in the Los Angeles Coliseum. The 1932 Games were held during the depths of the Great Depression with fewer than half of the participants who took part in the Amsterdam Games in 1928, and Los Angeles was selected because it was the only city that expressed an interest in holding them. These were the first games that had an Olympic Village for the athletes—the male ones, that is. Women athletes were housed at a hotel in downtown Los Angeles. These were also the first games where a victory podium was used for the medal ceremonies. In spite of the depression these games were well received, and there were 117 events contested in 20 disciplines. One small problem in the overall scheme of things was that the steeplechase went an extra lap due to an official's error, but otherwise everyone left the Games—fans and athletes alike—with happy feelings.



Louis Zamperini.

Our next photo is of Louis Zamperini setting the American record for the mile while running for the University of Southern California in 1938. He first came onto the national track scene at 17 in 1934, when he set a high school interscholastic record for the mile in 4 minutes, 21 1/5 seconds while running for Torrance High School at the California State Championships. Two years later he qualified to run the 5,000 meters for the U. S. Olympic Team, but he gained 12 pounds by gorging himself on the ship carrying the team to Europe, and finished 8th in the race. Still, Hitler still insisted on meeting him and shaking his hand. In spite of his lackluster performance at the Berlin Games, his running prowess helped him to win a scholarship to the University of Southern California, where in 1938 he scored the win in this picture, setting an American collegiate record for the mile in 4 minutes, 8.3 seconds. With the start of World War II he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941, and was shot down behind enemy lines in 1943. Then after floating in a life raft for 47 days he and his raft-mate were captured by the Japanese and severely beaten and tortured during their two years of confinement as prisoners of war.



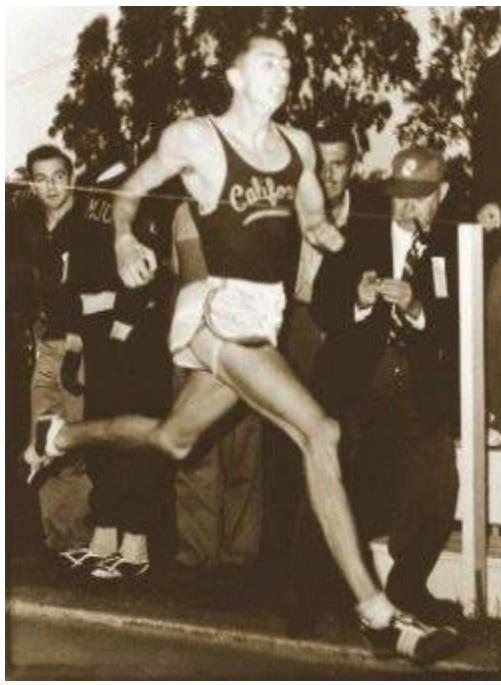
Jesse Owens Plaque at Ferry Field.

Next is the Jesse Owens plaque at Ferry Field in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Jesse Owens quickly became known at Ohio State University as the "Buckeye Bullet" for his track and field prowess, and won a record 8 individual NCAA championships; 4 each in 1935 and 1936. On May 25, 1935 he had what has since been called "the greatest forty-five minutes in sports" during a Big Ten track meet at Ferry Field in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he set three world records and tied a 4th. He equaled the world record for the 100-yard-dash in 9.4 seconds; and set world records in the long jump at 26 feet, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches; the 220-yard sprint at 26.3 seconds; and the 220-yard low hurdles at 22.6 seconds. Then at the Berlin Olympic Games in August of 1936 he won 4 gold medals: for the 100-meters, the 200-meters, the 4 by 100 relay, and the long jump. These were the Nazi Games where Hitler was intent on showcasing the Aryan master race to the world, and the Führer only shook hands with German event victors and selected others. He pointedly refused to shake Owens hand. However, even with his success he was treated no better at home. He and the other African-American athletes had to live off-campus, and when the track team traveled they were restricted to ordering carry-out or eating at "blacks-only" places. Further, they received no form of scholarship assistance as did their white counterparts, so had to work part-time jobs to pay for their schooling.



Roger Bannister.

We now have a photo of Roger Bannister gaining immortality by breaking the four-minute mile on May 6, 1954 while running a world-record time of 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds on the Iffley Road track in Oxford, England. Until then the sub-four-minute-mile was considered a physical impossibility.



Don Bowden.

The next photo is of Don Bowden crossing the finish line of a mile race on June 1, 1957 in 3 minutes, 58.7 seconds to become the first American and the 11th runner in the world to break the four-minute barrier. At both Lincoln High School in San Jose and the University of California at Berkeley he ran as a half-mile specialist, and ran only a few full mile races before attacking the four-minute barrier.



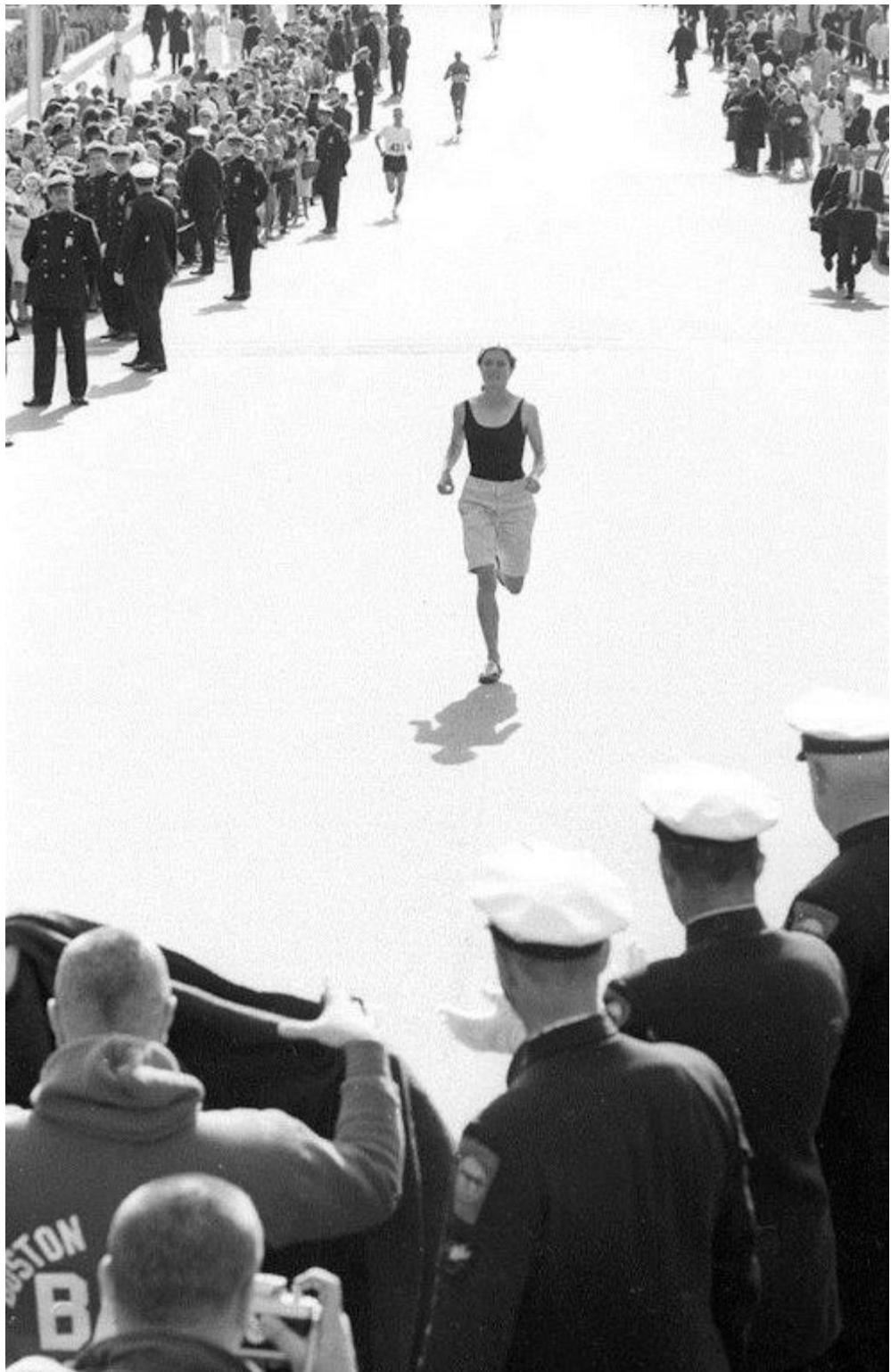
Ron Hill.

Next we have a shot of Ron Hill winning the Boston Marathon in 1970 with a course record of 2 hours, 10 minutes and 30 seconds. He also ran in the Olympic marathons in Tokyo in 1964 and Munich in 1972, and held several world records at varying distances over the years. In 1974 he won the old Maryland Marathon in a time of 2 hours, 17 minutes, 23 seconds.



Billy Mills Hitting the Finish Line.

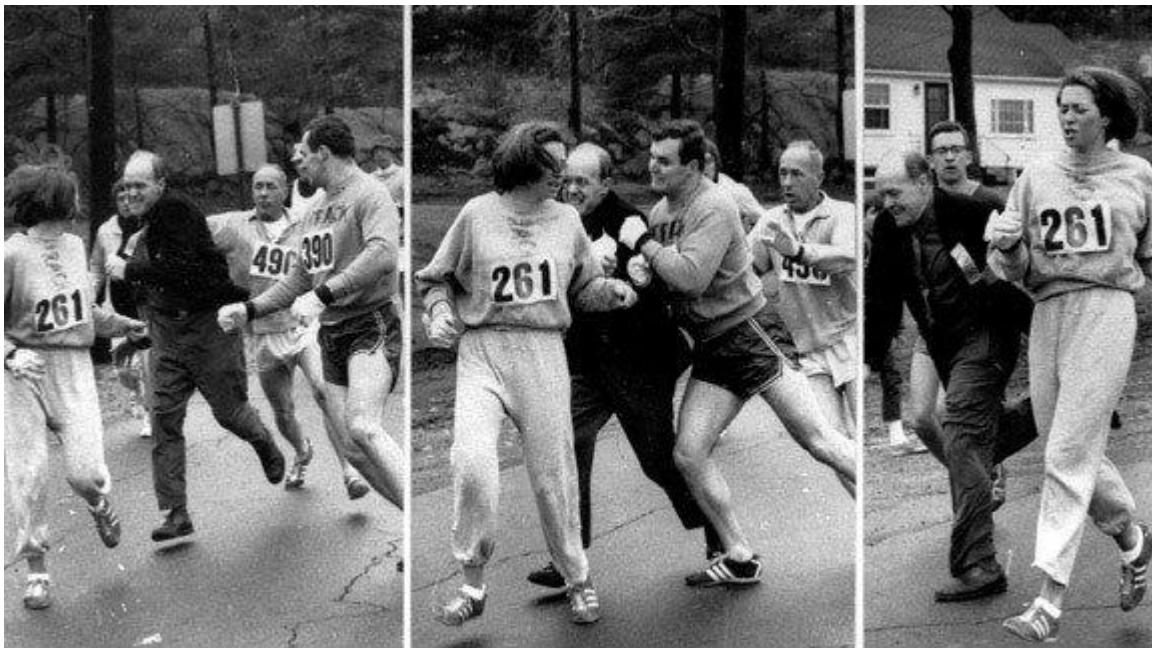
Our next photo is of Native-American U. S. Marine Lieutenant Billy Mills hitting the finish line of the 10,000 meters or 6.2-mile race at the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. He became the first American to ever win the 10,000 in the Olympics, and took gold by finishing in a time of 28 minutes, 24.4 seconds. His come-from-behind finish was so thrilling that NBC TV analyst Dick Bank was screaming, "Look at Mills! Look at Mills!" In 1965 Mills and Gerry Lindgren broke the world record for the six-mile run when they finished in a tie at the AAU National Championships by running 27 minutes, 11.6 seconds.



Bobbi Gibb.

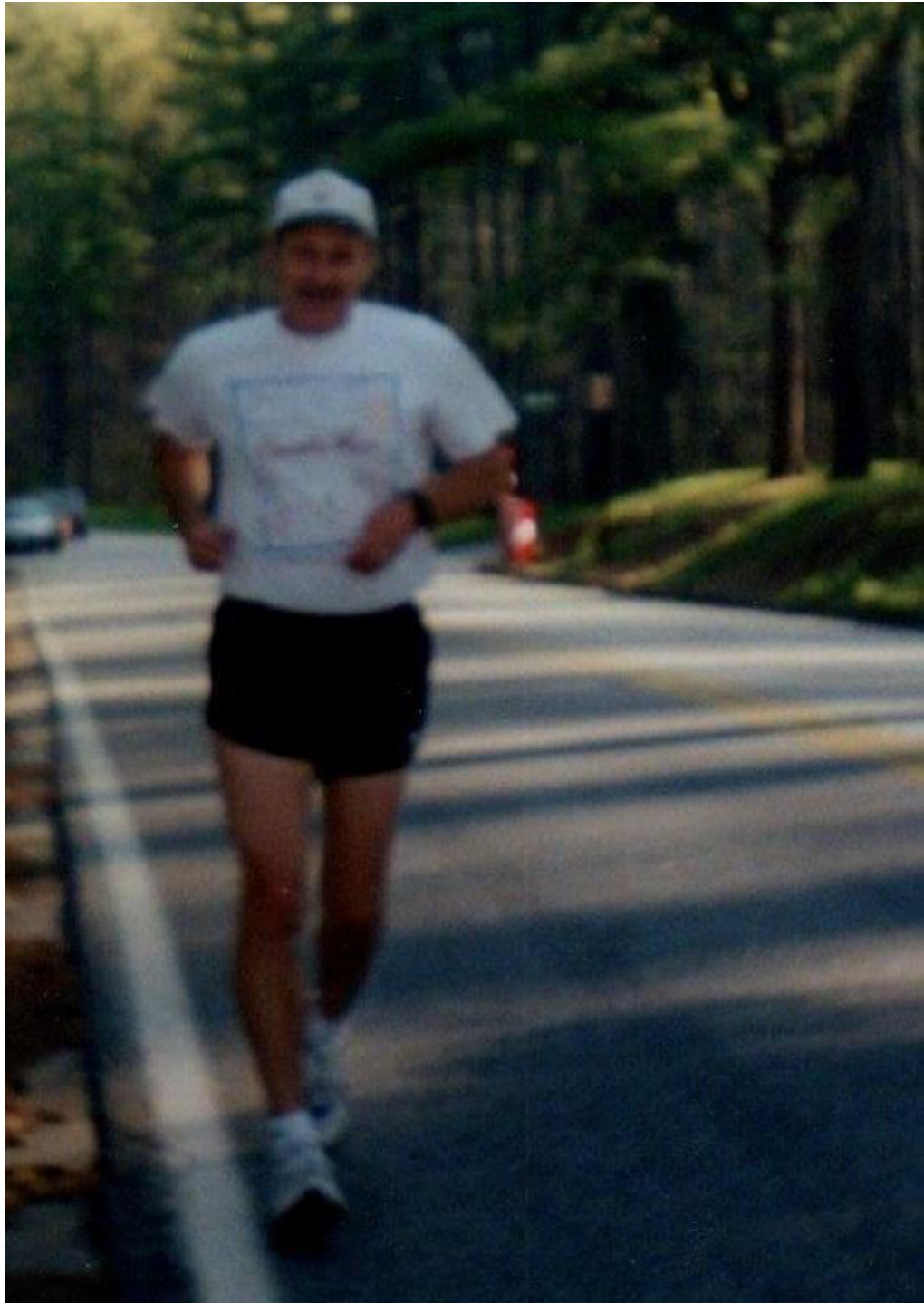
We next have a photo of Bobbi Gibb finishing the 1966 Boston Marathon. Bobbi applied for entry into the 1966 Boston Marathon, but was turned down because the AAU ruled that women athletes could not run more than a mile-and-a-half. In spite of the rejection

she had her mother drop her off near the starting line on April 19, 1966 and she hid in the bushes near the starting pen, wearing her brother's Bermuda shorts and a hooded sweatshirt. She then took off in the middle of the pack at the starting gun, and was afraid that she would be pulled off the course and arrested. Instead, she was cheered loudly as fellow runners and fans realized she was a girl. By the time she reached the finish line, the Governor of Massachusetts was on hand to shake her hand. Her finishing time of 3 hours and 21 minutes eclipsed two-thirds of the field. In 1967 she finished an hour ahead of the only other unofficial female runner, Katherine Switzer. Then in 1968 she won again, over the other five unofficial female runners. In 1982 she was inducted into the Road Runners Club of America Hall of Fame, and the BAA has since certified her times.



Katherine Switzer.

The next frame of photos shows a race official trying to yank Katherine Switzer off the 1967 Boston Marathon course, but being knocked off her by her boyfriend who was running beside her. She had registered for the race under "K. V. Switzer," and was assigned race bib number 261. She was beaten by Bobbi Gibb, but in 1974 won the women's division of the New York Marathon. Then in 1975 she officially finished second in the women's division of the Boston Marathon in 2 hours, 51 minutes, 37 seconds.



Bob Ray Running the Roads.

Our next shot is of streak runner Bob Ray running the roads as he has done for many, many years. Bob owned the longest running streak in the United States, which he began on April 4, 1967. He had previously started running on a regular basis in 1953, and had accumulated about 22,000 miles before his running eased into an everyday occurrence. He was an early member of the Baltimore Road Runners Club, and had the nickname "Big Streak."



Bill Rodgers Winning Boston.

The next photo is of Bill Rodgers winning Boston in 1975. Starting with the Bay State Marathon in 1973 Bill Rodgers completed 49 marathons in times under 3 hours. Between 1976 and 1980 he won the Boston and the New York Marathons four times each, and in 1975 and 1979 won Boston with American records of 2 hours, 9 minutes, 55 seconds, and 2 hours, 9 minutes and 27 seconds. He belongs to the Greater Boston Track Club and is nicknamed "Boston Billy."



George Hancock.

Now we come to a photo of streak runner George Hancock of Windber, Pennsylvania. He started his original running streak on February 26, 1978. George published the first running streak list in the Runner's Gazette. It contained the names and streak starting dates of 50 runners throughout the United States as of December 1, 1994, and was compiled in response to an inquiry about streak running that appeared in the November, 1993 issue of Running Times. George then periodically sent out updated streak lists to those on the list.



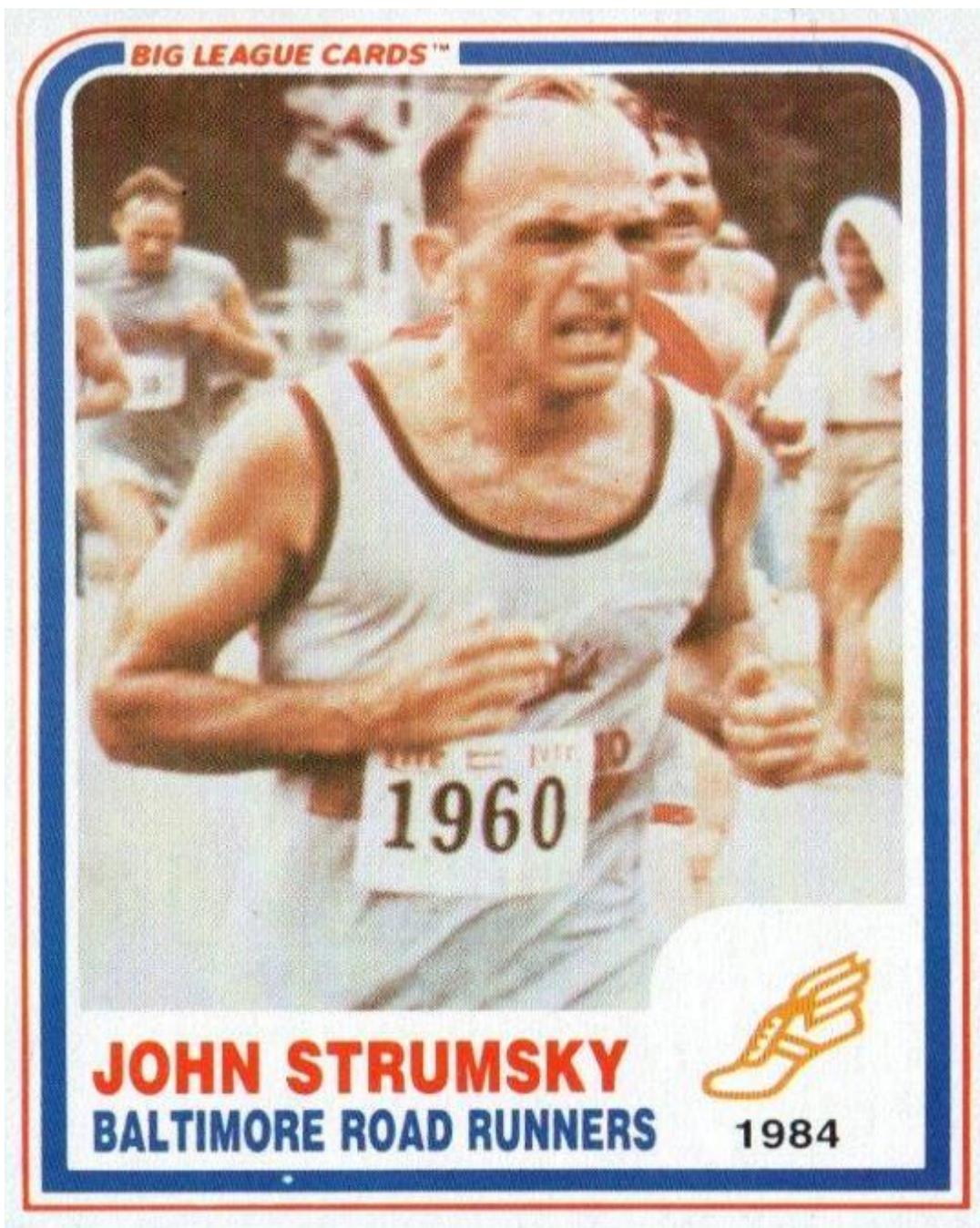
Grete Waitz.

Our next photo shows Grete Waitz crossing the finish line of the 1986 New York Marathon in 2 hours, 28 minutes, 5 seconds. She was a Norwegian school teacher who began running as a teen and won gold in five world cross-country championships between 1978 and 1983. She also won the silver medal at the first Olympic Marathon for women in 1984, and won the New York Marathon an incredible total of nine times between 1978 and 1988. Her best marathon time was 2 hours, 24 minutes, 54 seconds at London in 1986.



Margaret Blackstock with Me.

The next picture is of streak runner Margaret Blackstock of Atlanta, Georgia with me in the 1990s. Margaret's "running career" and streak both started on the same day—on September 9, 1979, and she originally had the longest documented female running streak in the United States until it was discovered some years later that Julie Maxwell of Kasson, Minnesota had a longer one that dated to July 5, 1978. However, both of these female streak runners now occupy the retired running streak list; Julie with a streak that lasted 12,212 days or 33.4 years, and Margaret with one that lasted 11,251 days or 30.8 years—both incredible accomplishments.



Me.

Next is a running card of me. I began running at least a mile a day, every day, on May 23, 1983, but my running streak ended on February 9, 2009 as a result of falling while running during an ice storm and damaging my left Achilles tendon. I accumulated 9,395 days in a row, or 25.7 years, and ran over 46,000 miles and 644 races during my running and racing career. In July of 1984 I ran a 52.4-mile double marathon near the magnetic North Pole in 9 hours, 42 minutes, 20 seconds. I also belonged to the Baltimore Road Runners Club, the Annapolis Striders and the New York Road Runners Club, and was nicknamed "Little Streak" in deference to Bob Ray's "Big Streak."



Me with Ellery Clark, Jr.

The next photo is of me with Ellery Clark, Jr. at the Maryland Governor's reception in Annapolis for all the torch runners from the State of Maryland on May 14, 1984. Governor Schaefer held a reception and luncheon for all the Maryland runners who participated in the 1984 Olympic Torch relay and all the Olympians from Maryland, and it was my chance to meet and chat with Ellery Clark, Jr. I was the runner who carried the Olympic torch into Baltimore City, and Ellery was the one who carried it into Annapolis on its journey across the country to Los Angeles. You may recall that Ellery's father, Ellery Clark, Sr., participated in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, and won both the high jump and the long jump. They are the two first-place silver medals that Ellery, Jr. is wearing in our picture.



Carl Lewis.

Now we come a shot of Carl Lewis on the track at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He was an amazing athlete who specialized in the 100 meters sprint, the 200 meters sprint, the long jump and the 4 by 100 meter relay. He won gold in all four events in the 1984 Games at Los Angeles, two golds and a silver at Seoul in 1988, and two golds at Barcelona in 1992. He also won another eight golds, a silver and a bronze medal in world championships. His best time in the 100 meters was 9.86 seconds, and 19.75 seconds in the 200. His farthest long jump was 29 feet, 1 inch, and the fastest four by one-hundred relay team he was on blazed 37.4 seconds to victory. In 1999 Lewis was voted "Sportsman of the Century" by the International Olympic Committee.



Joan Benoit Winning the Women's Marathon.

Our next photo is of Joan Benoit winning the women's marathon at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. In the first officially sanctioned Olympic marathon for women in 1984 Joan won the gold for the USA in 2 hours, 24 minutes, 52 seconds, a record that still stands. Grete Waitz took the silver for Norway in 2 hours, 26 minutes, 18 seconds; and Rosa Mota won the bronze medal for Portugal in 2 hours, 26 minutes, 57 seconds. All told, 44 of the 50 starters finished the race. During her career Benoit raced 11 marathons, coming in first in 6 of them, second in 1, third in 2, fourth in 1, and sixth in 1. Her best time was in 1983 when she won the Boston Marathon in 2 hours, 22 minutes, 43 seconds. She later married and changed her name to Joan Benoit Samuelson.



Michael Johnson.

The next picture is of Michael Johnson next to his new world record time in Seville, Spain. He is the only athlete in Olympic history to win both the 200 meter dash and the 400 meter sprint in the same Games, in Atlanta in 1996; and he won gold medals in three separate Olympics: in 1992 at Barcelona, Spain in 1996 at Atlanta, Georgia and in 2000 at Sydney, Australia. He's also won eight gold medals in world championship competition. He ran the 200 meters in 19.32 seconds at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, and set a world record in the 400 meters of 43.18 seconds in the 1999 Seville World Championships.



First of the Three Original USRSA Logos.

Now we come to the first of the three original USRSA logos. It graced the first page of Volume One, Number One of the April, 2001 issue of *The Streak Registry*. Starting in October of 1998, George Hancock and I had a series of discussions about the formation of an "official depository for running streak records." By February 11th of 1999 those discussions led to me roughing up potential first drafts of an organization that would compile and retain such data. At the same time George was also furnishing contact data on all known streak runners in the country to aid my wife, Dawn, and me, in putting together a Bob Ray Day celebration.

## THE STREAK REGISTRY



**VOLUME ONE**

**NUMBER ONE**

**APRIL, 2001**

Second of the Three Original USRSA Logos.

Next is the second of the three original USRSA logos. Thus far, it has graced every cover of The Streak Registry. On May 13, 1999 Dawn Strumsky commissioned three logos for the USRSA through an art contest held at Lansdowne High School in Baltimore, Maryland. We purchased the three logos on behalf of the USRSA through small scholarships to the three students with the winning designs.



Bob Ray Day.

Next is a photo of the Bob Ray Day celebration held in Towson, Maryland on April 8, 2000, which was the first Saturday after the 33rd anniversary of Bob Ray's running streak. Bob is at the lower right hugging one of the runners in the reception line waiting to congratulate him, while other runners are congratulating the other streak runners forming the reception line. I am at the upper right, serving as the banquet chairman.

This was the first known gathering of streak runners from across the United States, and 11 streak runners joined with the 125 runners and guests gathered there to honor Bob Ray's running streak of a third of a century without missing a day. He began running at least a mile a day, every day, on April 4, 1967, and at the time of his celebration I said of him, "He lifts the human spirit, inspires us all to extend our reach, and makes up happy for having known him."



Third of the Three Original USRSA Logos.

We next come to the third of the three original USRSA logos. The United States Running Streak Association was officially incorporated on August 7, 2000, with me as the Founder and President from Millersville, Maryland. On November 21, 2000 the Advisory Board was created composed of streak runners: Bob Ray of Baltimore, Maryland; Margaret Blackstock of Atlanta, Georgia; and George Hancock of Windber, Pennsylvania. The Advisory Board was expanded on December 12, 2000 to include: Robert Kraft of Miami Beach, Florida; Steve DeBoer of Rochester, Minnesota; Geza Feld of Farmingdale, New York; John Watts of Portland, Oregon; John Roemer IV of Parkton, Maryland; and John Wallace III of Portland, Oregon. John Wallace soon became the Vice President and the first webmaster. It was he who started the USRSA website at [www.runeveryday.com](http://www.runeveryday.com) and animated the logo of the runners circling the globe and placed it on the website.



Dawn.

Now we have a photo of Dawn early in 2001. The USRSA commenced operations on January 4, 2001 with Dawn Strumsky as Administrator of the association and Editor of The Streak Registry. She immediately sent out press releases about the formation of the USRSA to all the running publications in the country, and she would faithfully keep the records of the organization in good order for the next ten years.



IRS Logo.

Next is a copy of the IRS logo. The first Active Running Streak List was compiled by the USRSA as of March 1, 2001 and contained the names of 113 streak runners. The first Retired Running Streak List, as of that same date, listed 16 retired streak runners. That April Ron Whittemore of Claremont, New Hampshire made the leap of faith and became the first paid lifetime member of the USRSA. Then that July the Internal Revenue Service approved our tax-exempt status. By the end of 2001 the USRSA sported 64 members.



Mark Covert.

Our next photo is of streak runner Mark Covert of Lancaster, California pounding the roads. On July 23, 2003 the USRSA presented The Running Streak Medal to Mark in honor of the 35th anniversary of his running streak. His medal was the first to be presented by the USRSA, but was the 16th awarded since the medal was created by Dawn and John Strumsky for the streak runners who attended the Bob Ray Day celebration. The medal bears the image of "Winged Victory" atop the world. Its meaning is that most veteran streak runners will eventually cover enough miles to circumnavigate the globe. The rainbow-colored ribbon, from which the medal is draped, is symbolic of every-day streakers running in all the elements—whatever weather each day happens to bring. The back of each medal is inscribed with the runner's name and the dates of his streak to the 35-year point.



Jon Sutherland being congratulated by Jim Scarborough.

The next picture shows streak runner Jon Sutherland of West Hills, California being congratulated by streak runner Jim Scarborough of Rancho Palos Verdes, California on May 26, 2004 after Jim presented Jon with The Running Streak Medal on behalf of the USRSA in honor of the 35th anniversary of his running streak. Jon's was the 17th medal awarded. Running Streak Medals have since been presented to all streak runners in recognition of their 35th streak anniversary.

# **MY RUNNING LIBRARY**

**JOHN STRUMSKY**

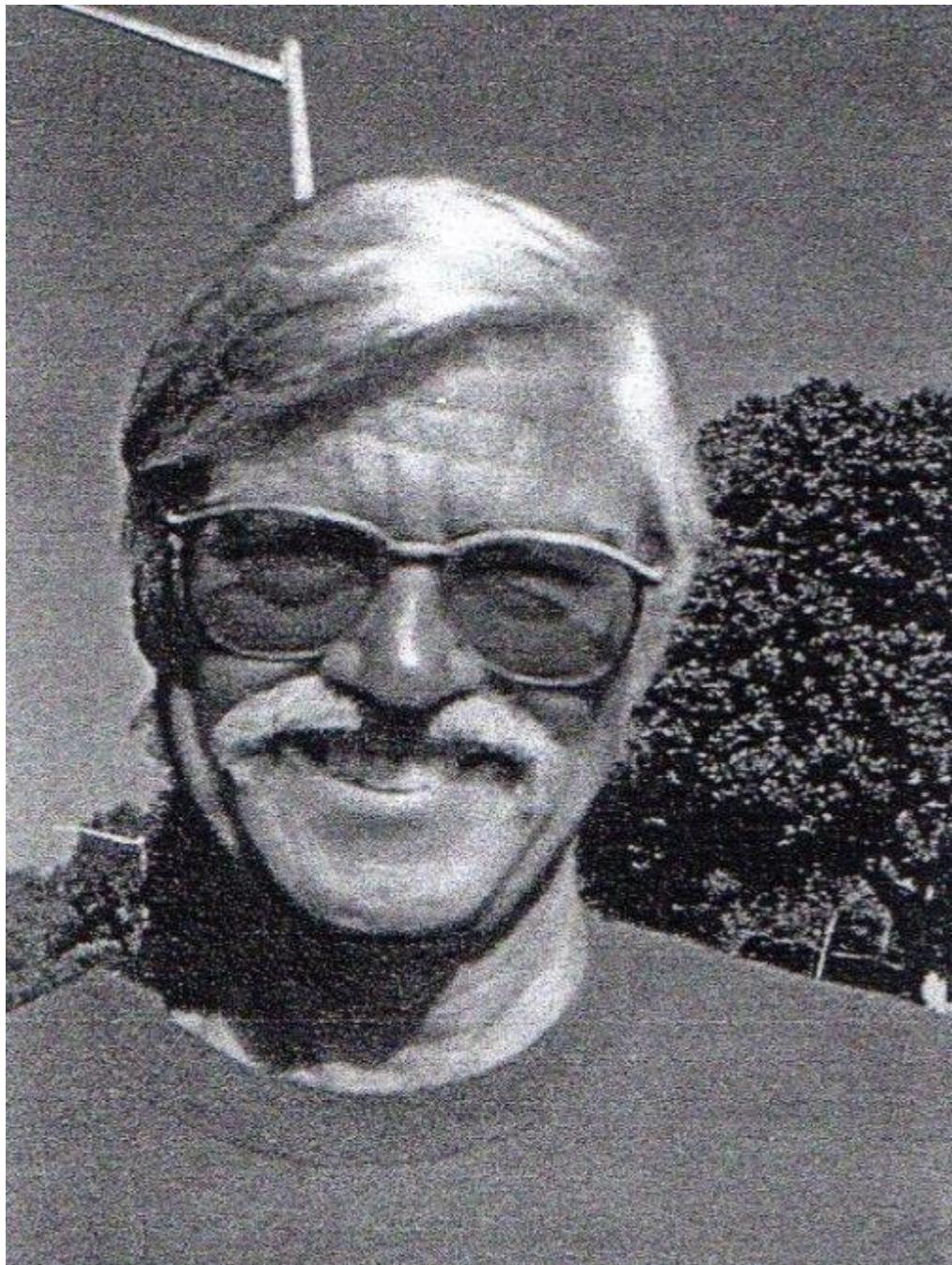
**A SUPPLEMENT TO THE FALL, 2004**

**ISSUE OF**

**THE STREAK REGISTRY**

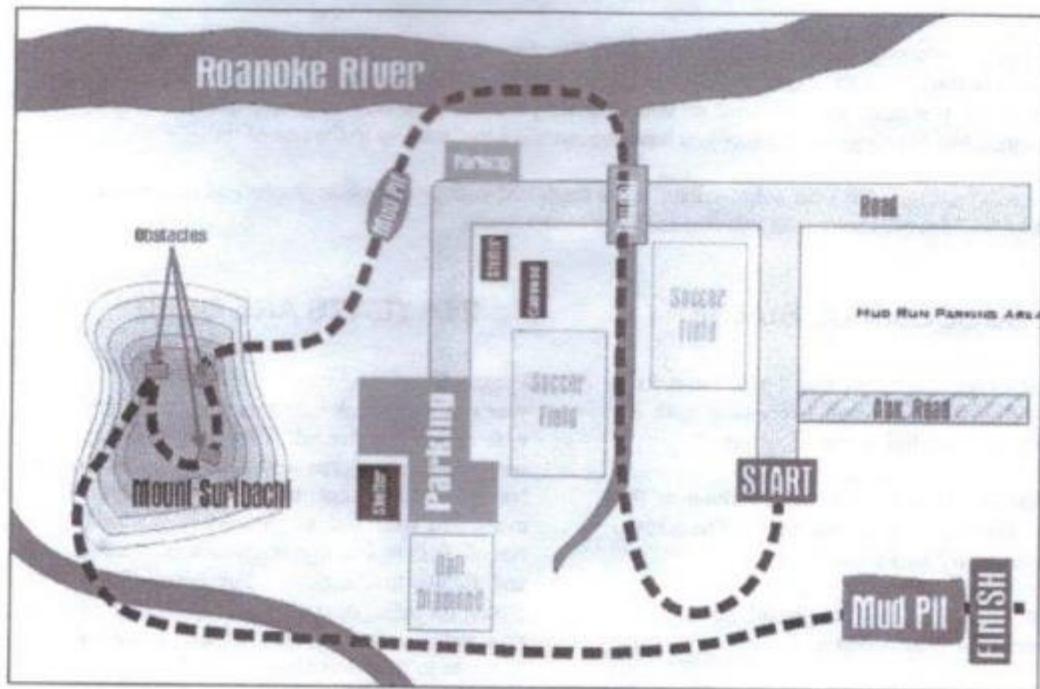
Title Page of My Running Library.

We next have the “title page” of My Running Library by me. This 17-page supplement to the Fall, 2004 issue of The Streak Registry lists the 207 books on running and running history that I owned. I also had stacks of running periodicals dealing with the subject, including those from Footnotes, Runner’s Gazette, Runner’s World, Running Times and Washington Running Report. Additionally, as a member of the Annapolis Striders, the Baltimore Road Runners Club, and the New York Road Runners Club, I had hundreds of their newsletters. I took pride that I had read all of the books and periodicals in my library from cover to cover, many on numerous occasions.



Craig Snapp.

Now we come to a photo of Craig Snapp of El Cajon, California. Streak runner Craig Snapp became a regular contributor to The Streak Registry early on. He possessed a real talent for writing coupled with a plethora of quirky insights into various aspects of running and racing, so it was no surprise when he won the first USRSA essay contest for members in November of 2004. There were six winners and two categories: for first-time submissions and repeat submissions. His winning entry in the repeat category was entitled "Fishes-and-Loaves." Winning the first-time category was Sue Favor of Seattle, Washington with "My Three Running Feats." The three winners in each category won a \$100, \$75 or \$50 U. S. Savings Bond.



Mud Run.

The next photos and diagram are from the 2004 Marine Corps Mud Run held in Roanoke, Virginia. During the summer of 2004 I shared with my godchildren that at 64 it was time for me to stop racing after 22 years and 644 races, so they decided to find a memorable race that we could all do together, and here is the result. Running through a river, several obstacles and a mud pit turned out to be a surprisingly enjoyable way to spend one of my last races.



John Wallace III.

Our next photo is of John Wallace III with the running cart containing his sleeping bag and supplies that he pushed across the United States. This picture was taken at Tybee Island, Georgia at the end of John's Trans-USA Run on January 27, 2005. John, the Vice President of the U. S. Running Streak Association, ran across the United States, beginning at the Pacific Ocean on September 26, 2004 at Westport, Washington, and running 3,805.9 miles over the next 124 days through a dozen states to reach the Atlantic Ocean at Tybee Island, Georgia on January 27, 2005, which required running an average of 30.7 miles per day, an amazing feat by his feet.



John Wallace Receiving the Runner of the Year Award.

Here we have a photo of John Wallace receiving the USRSA Runner of the Year Award from me at Tybee Island, Georgia on January 28, 2005 in honor of his Trans-USA Run. John's transcontinental journey took 1,163 hours, 35 minutes, 56 seconds of running, or 48.48 days of the 124 days he spent on the roads and byways of America.



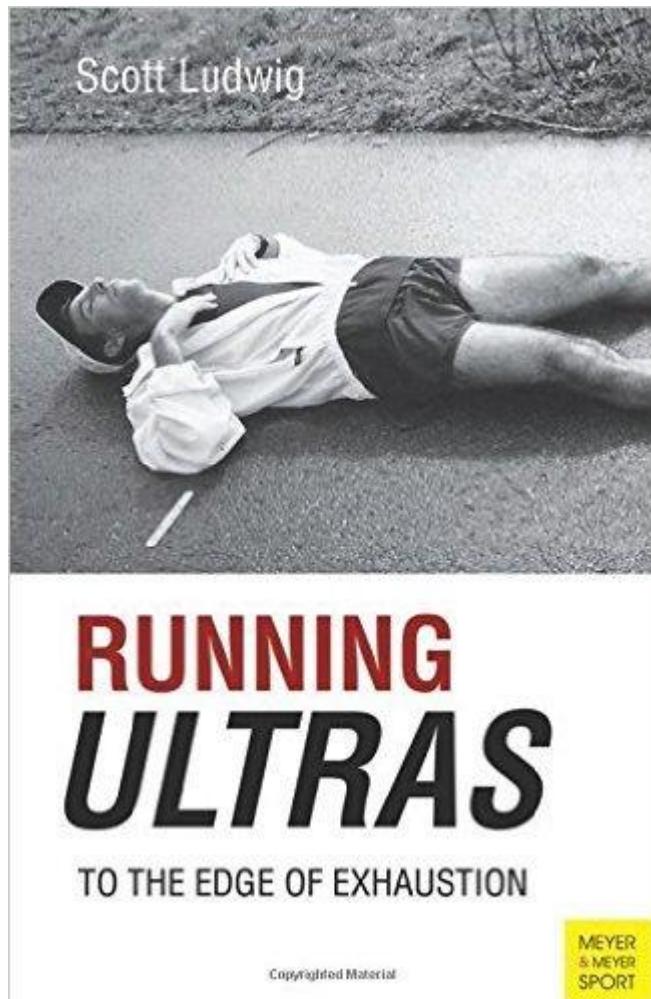
Bob Ray's Cartoon.

The next illustration is Bob Ray's cartoon about the end of his running streak. It was published in the Summer, 2005 issue of The Streak Registry. Bob started his running streak on April 4, 1967, three days before his 30th birthday, and finished his streak on his birthday, April 7, 2005. He completed 13,884 days, or 38.0 years, and ran over 100,000 miles and over 500 races during his lifetime. In the cartoon, he is flipping the baton to Mark Covert of Lancaster, California.



Dawn Strumsky.

Our next photo is of Dawn Strumsky, the Administrator of the USRSA. By the end of 2005, which was the finish of the USRSA's fifth year of operations, Dawn reported that the Active Running Streak List contained the names of 129 streak runners, and the Retired Running Streak List had 37 retired streakers on it. She also reported that there were now 139 members. The President was so impressed with these results that he presented her with this plant for all of her hard work on behalf of the Association during the past five years.



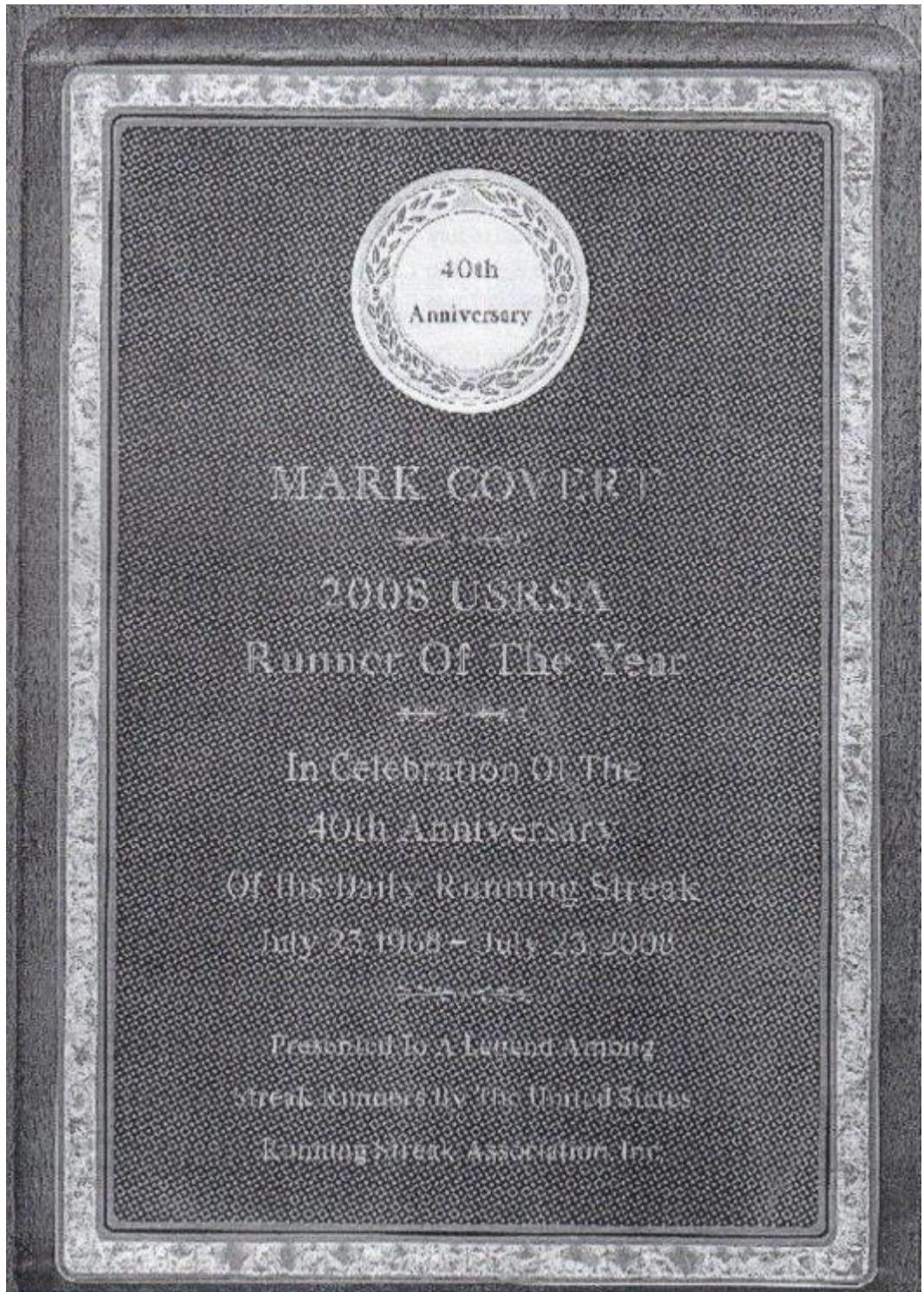
Scott Ludwig's Book.

We next have the cover of Scott Ludwig's book, *Running Ultras*. Streak runner Scott Ludwig of Peachtree City, Georgia, pictured on the cover, was the founder of the Darkside Ultra Running Club back in 2001, and has also been a member of the USRSA since that same time. On February 4, 2008 the USRSA announced the winners in its 2007 members Running & Racing contest. The male winner for the most streak miles run in one day was Scott with 100 miles. The female winner was Heather Nelson of Houston, Texas with 31 miles. The fastest male marathoner was Darrin Young of Columbia, Missouri in a time of 2:59:43, and the fastest female marathoner was Vivian Wilson of Short Hills, New Jersey in 3:59:03. All told, there were 8 male and 8 female winners in 4 running and 4 racing categories. A second such contest would be held for members in 2008.



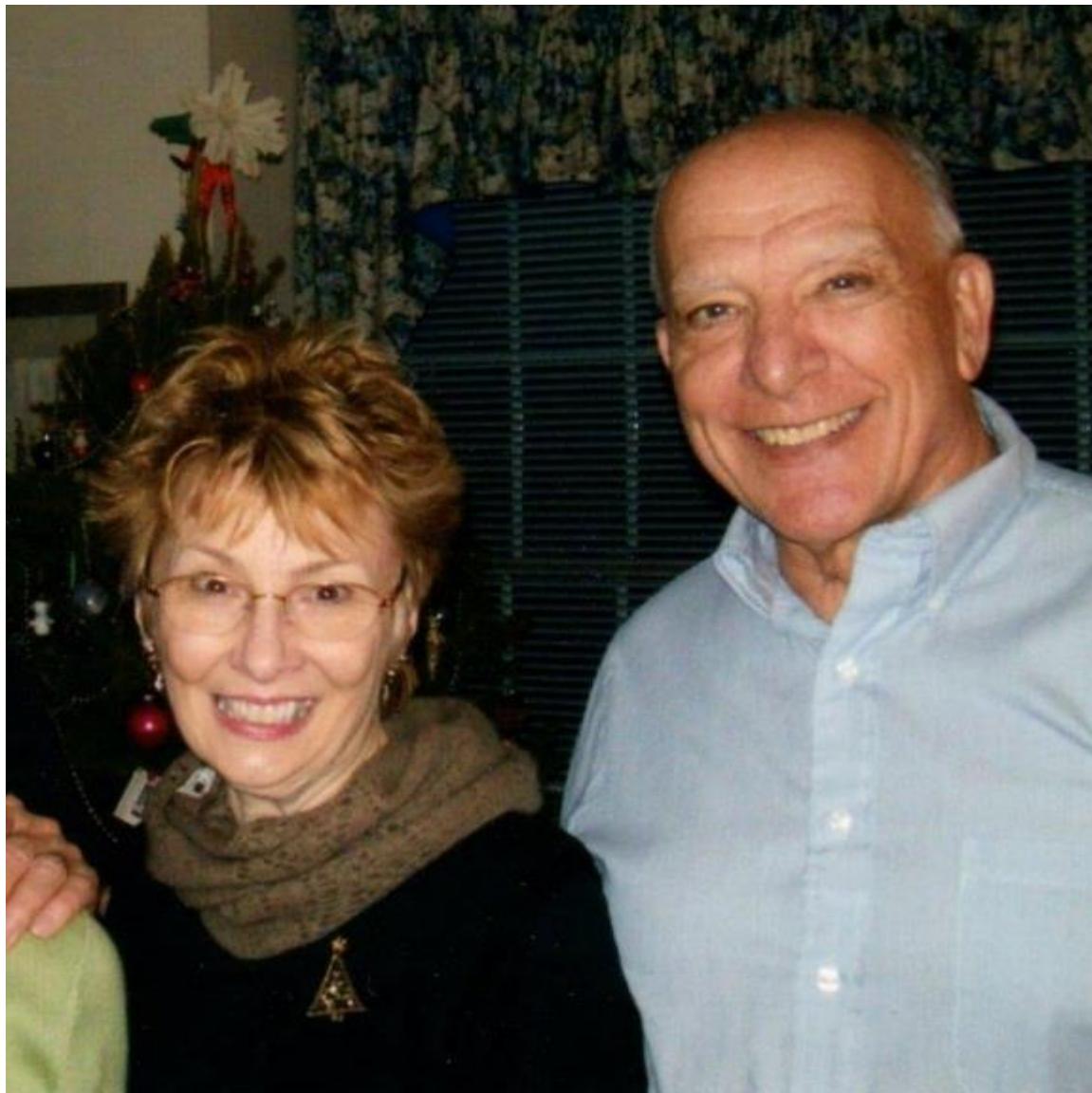
John and Karen Wallace.

Our next photo is of John and Karen Wallace with the running cart containing their sleeping bags and supplies that they pushed across the United States. Streak runners John and Karen Wallace of Ishpeming, Michigan are the parents of streak runner and USRSA Vice President John Wallace III. You may recall that their son ran across the United States from the West Coast to the East Coast, from September of 2004 to January of 2005. So to pay tribute to their son's Trans-USA Run, John and Karen ran north to south across the country on a shorter Trans-USA Run. They left from the Coast Guard lighthouse station at Marquette, Michigan on July 7, 2007 and arrived on the Gulf of Mexico at Biloxi, Mississippi on September 26, 2007. They covered 1,300 miles in 82 days, an average of 15.8 miles per day. On March 6, 2008 the USRSA named them its Runners of the Year for 2007.



Runner of the Year Award.

The next shot is of the USRSA's Runner of the Year Award. Starting with streak runner Mark Covert, the USRSA began presenting Runner of the Year awards to those runners who reached the 40th anniversary of their daily running streaks. Mark received his award on July 23, 2008 for a 14,610-day streak that dated back to July 23rd of 1968.



Team Strumsky.

Now we have the last group photo of "Team Strumsky"—the USRSA staff in December of 2010. By the end of 2010 Administrator Dawn Strumsky reported to President John Strumsky that with the finish of the USRSA's first full decade of operations, the Active Running Streak List consisted of 269 streak runners, while the Retired Running Streak List contained the names of 173 retired streakers. She also reported that the USRSA had now grown to 348 members. We now decided to step aside, and the Board selected Mark Washburne as the new President of the USRSA.



Now on the sidelines, we watched as Mark Washburne and the USRSA created Streak Runners International in 2012 to provide a depository for streak running records for overseas streak runners.



Ron Hill Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of his Running Streak.

We now have another photo of Ron Hill, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his awesome running streak in December of 2014. In addition to all his other running accomplishments, the 77-year-old Dr. Hill holds the record for the longest daily running streak in the world, having run at least one full mile a day, every day, since December 21, 1964 and still counting. Including April 30, 2016 he is now up to 18,759 days in a row, or 51.4 years, to lead the other 1,162 certified active and retired streak runners from around the world. He has thus far run over 160,000 miles during his lifetime. Not only did he set numerous World and British race records at many different distances, but he set course bests at various marathons throughout the world. He also achieved a personal goal of racing in 100 countries before his 70th birthday, and his final marathon was the 100th Boston in 1996. He's run 115 total marathons, with times under 2:50 in 112 of them, under 2:45 in 103 of them, and under 2:20 in 29 of them. He also served as the President of the Road Runners Club (United Kingdom) from 1987 to 1988.



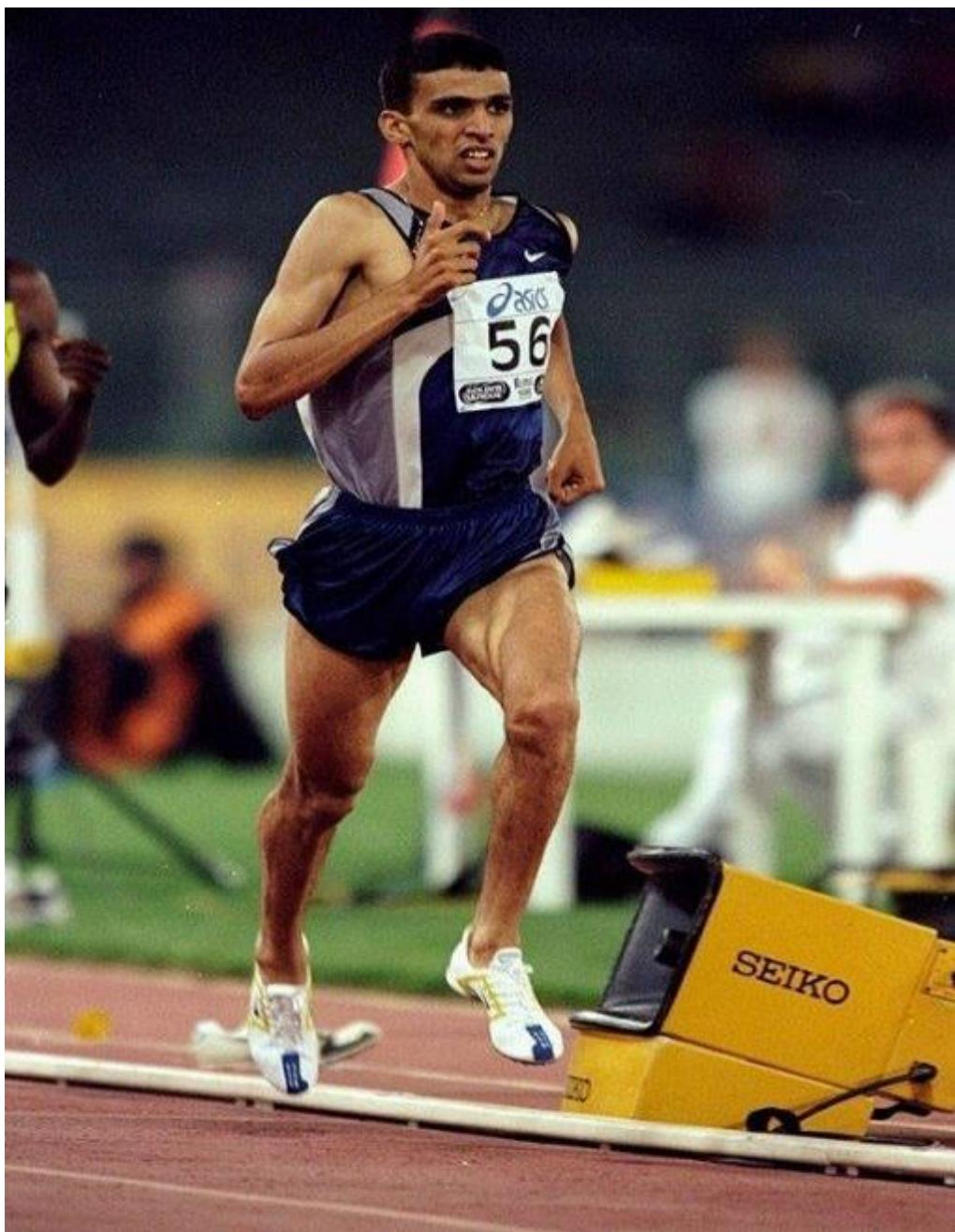
Me Nearing the Finish Line.

The next picture is of me nearing the finish line in the Field of Honor 5K race at the Charlestown Retirement Community in Catonsville, Maryland. The twilight race was held in conjunction with the Memorial Day festivities on May 22, 2015 at the retirement home where Dawn and I now live. At 75, after a 10½-year absence from racing and a 6-year hiatus from running, I finished in the 64-runner field as the first male Charlestown resident and the winner of the 70-79 age group.



Mark Washburne.

Our next photo is of streak runner and USRSA/SRI President Mark Washburne. Dawn and I have watched as he has taken a healthy USRSA and continued to nurture it while also creating the SRI. In the five years since he took over the leadership post, the Active Running Streak List has increased from 269 streak runners to a combined USRSA/SRI active list of 701 streak runners. The Retired Running Streak List has gone from 173 retired streakers to a combined retired list of 461 retired streak runners. And, he has taken the USRSA membership from the 362 members we passed on to him up to a combined list of 959 members! This outstanding performance should be applauded by everyone in the streak running community, both here and abroad. Mark's own running streak began on December 31, 1989.



Hicham El Grerrouj.

Here's our last picture. It's of Hicham El Grerrouj chasing the world record in the mile. Mark Washburne and the three Wallaces are certainly prime examples of how much humans have increased their running endurance since the dawn of time, and Hicham El Grerrouj and Ron Hill are excellent examples of how much faster humans have become. It wasn't until 1861 that official records were kept of the fastest times for running a mile. At that time the distance was covered in 4 minutes, 55 seconds. Today Hicham El Guerrouj [Guer-rouge] holds the world record for running the miles in just 3 minutes, 43.12 seconds, another amazing feat.

Well, fellow streak runners, you now know and hopefully love the triumph of the human spirit through running the same way that I do. I hope this historical presentation gives you better insight on how the United States Running Streak Association came into being, and why Mark and Dawn and I thought such an organization should continue to exist and thrive. And remember: "The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running!"