



30 YEARS OUT...HAS GTC REALLY REACHED MIDDLE AGE?

Believe it or not, the Track Club celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Adrian Craven, one of the Founding Fathers of GTC has graciously written his thoughts and reflections on the birth and early years of the Club.

ADRIAN CRAVEN REFLECTS.....

One evening in May 1971, several Furman professors and track coach Bill Keesling met in a campus classroom. They had a common interest—running—a fringe sport attracting few participants outside schools with few races (who'd ever heard of Boston except the real hard-core) and zero publicity. Furman had a fine reputation as a track-and-field and cross-country power, that routinely thrashed Clemson and USC among others. In keeping with Furman's desire to build a more visible profile in community affairs, they wondered if the time was ripe to form a running club on and off campus.

How long have there been "thin-clads" as the paper termed them for years, in this area? Certainly since the early '60s. One Curt Hollifield, whom some of you may know (today an occasional runner and insurance broker in Greer), was a 4:15 miler at Furman. He enjoyed a run from Greenville to Spartanburg.

The driving force behind the early running days was Bill Keesling, the Furman coach. Dynamic, hard-driving Bill, a decathlete himself, loved and still does love every aspect of the sport.

The Greenville News mentioned the meeting. By-laws were quickly drafted and the first public meeting organized. I remember 12 or so showed up at Furman. The fledgling club was named Greenville Track Club since it was assumed track-and-field would play a big role in the club's activities. Bill Keesling was elected president, and Furman professors filled the remaining offices.

For several years all activities were staged at Furman. Races started and finished on campus. The only ongoing event was Paris Mountain, informally held in the summer by Furman runners. The first recorded mountain race (1971) saw a memorable tussle between Jeff Galloway (1976 Olympian, famous for later books, running programs and his Phidippides store in Atlanta) and Lee Fidler of Furman, subsequently a 2:16 marathoner and 3 time Olympic triathlete.

Early going was slow! There were 16 entrants in the 1972 Paris mountain race. One race in 1972 attracted 2 participants! They split the award; 50 cent entry with no t-shirts.

Meetings were held at the now defunct Oxford House cafeteria on Poinsett highway down the road a bit to Furman from today's Cherrydale Shopping Center. Oxford's epicurean meat and 3 soon attracted a dozen enthusiasts, then twenty.

Early members still involved one way or another in the local running scene include Doug Nelson (Furman steeplechaser and partner in Sam Wyche Sportsworld—Greenville's first running store), Dave Wamer (University of Tennessee starter for years and subsequently at the Olympics), Tom Malik (who starts Furman and area high-school meets and still holds the Furman high-hurdles record with a sterling 14 flat). Eddie Boehmke coaches at Eastside High, and is involved in every major track and cross-country meet around and masterminds the Masters track meet held at Furman each June. Art Williams still runs in spite of operations that would fell a lesser mortal.

By 1975, there was a race practically every month. Several new concepts were introduced, mostly by the Brit members :

- January: a 6 mile handicap race
- February: Green Valley 5 and 10 mile
- March/April: 10Ks which evolved into Reedy River and Greenville/News Piedmont races
- May thru July: All-comers track-and-field
- September: Cleveland Park 5 and 10 mile
- October: 25 mile road relay
- November: Dog City/Saluda river 10 mile
- December: Paris Mountain

The handicap race each January was a lot of fun. You confessed an honest time for 6 miles. A minute per mile was the maximum handicap; the slowest started first with scratch runners last. A desperate finish one year had +6, +4 and +2 runners fighting to hold off scratch runners down the finishing straight.

Similarly, the road relay—named the Great Road Relay—blossomed into a yearly event attracting as many as 80 teams of runners (5 per team), mainly from the Southeast, but often from further afield. A couple of years we had teams from the Cayman Islands. The relay started at Furman. The first year coach Roy Benson brought his Florida TC team by DC3. We had arrived! Each year saw a mighty tussle between Atlanta TC and GTC—the latter rapidly becoming a powerhouse.

The relay was split into age groups: open, 30-39, 40-49, both sexes. No-one was over 50 then! It was fiercely contested and cost \$2 to enter. There were fine awards, still no t-shirts, with beer, spaghetti, fruit, frisbees, etc after. A highlight of the club's year, it fostered team camaraderie while attracting some outstanding athletes. The most memorable year, 1981, saw a team from East Tennessee State average 24 minutes 3 seconds for each (wheel measured) 5 mile leg. Ray Flynn of Ireland, who subsequently ran the mile in 3:49, ran 23:11 for the fourth leg. We'd never seen such running as he handed the baton to Adrian Leek of Wales. Adrian was a 3 time runner-up at Peachtree, each time recording a sub 28:15. He blistered the Cleveland Park course in 23:10, edging Ray by a second and earning a fine cut-glass vase for his effort.

A major objective of GTC in the early days was to promote club running. Most European runners belonged to a club. Even stars such as Sebastian Coe, Steve Ovett, and marathoner Ron Hill ran for their clubs and wore their singlet proudly. In this country the club tradition took hold primarily in the Northeast with clubs such as Greater Boston, and New York Road-Runners, and Atlanta in the South. GTC was afraid shoe companies would cream off the talent. They would offer money and equipment, but couldn't buy loyalty. As soon as a runner faded, the shoe company dropped him/her. The club concept flourished briefly, then withered. Today there are

fewer clubs, there's scant interclub competition or even people running for a club. In the 1970s, GTC ran against teams from Asheville, Athens, Florida, Atlanta, Charlotte, Charleston, Columbia, and Knoxville, to name a few. Several road races and cross-country meets were held at Furman. Today not many relays are left. Best known perhaps is Oregon's Mt Hood to the sea. For a while, the "Georgia Lake to Lake Relay" flourished. The tough 164 mile course stretched from Allatoona Lake to Lake Lanier. Several times GTC fielded teams of 8 runners in the open and masters divisions.

By the mid 1970s, the number of running participants had increased dramatically. This was fueled by Frank Shorter's win in the 1972 Olympic marathon, followed by the rise of Bill Rodgers (3-time Boston winner), Alberto Salazar, and women such as Nina Kucsic and Kathy Switzer, who forced the hidebound Boston authorities to open their race to women. They were followed by the incomparable Joan Benoit-Samuelson. Who can forget her winning the LA Olympic marathon, destroying the best in the world? US running was on the map.

In 1975, 750 started the Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta. We couldn't believe the crowd! Maybe running had peaked. What about 50,000 today plus thousands of bandits?

By 1977, Greenville was ready for its first t-shirt race! The "Lung" run for the American Cancer Society, a 15K from Furman, attracted 180 entrants. We felt we'd arrived on the world stage. Reedy River was the next development and attracted our first major sponsor, the SCN Bank, through GTC member Gally Gallivan. Art Williams directed the first race, in which latter stages were held in a hailstorm (almost as bad as this year). Benji Durden (2:10 marathoner, 1980 US Olympian in the marathon) and Bob Varsha (Atlanta TC and 1976 US Olympic marathon alternate), tied for the win in 30:25. Today you can see and hear silky-smooth Bob on ESPN and OLN doing Formula 1 Grand Prix and the Tour-de-France coverage. Bob's brilliant and about 100 lbs heavier.

Reedy took off, and became one of the first and longest-running races on the Running Journal Grand Prix series. Participation and sponsorship grew. The

race was televised three times in the 70s and 80s—twice live.

Women's running took off, too. RUN-JANE-RUN—sponsored by Liberty Life attracted hundreds of women. The concept of health and fitness through running was boosted by Stone Mfg, a Greenville-based apparel sportswear manufacturer. They took over from Liberty Life with WOMEN-ON-THE-RUN, directed for years with great success by Anne Williams. Held in Cleveland Park, WOTR soon attracted over 1000 participants. These were the forerunners of races exclusively for women which have enjoyed continuous and ongoing success. Indeed, Anne Williams became a guru in the sport. She was hired as consultant and speaker at women's races across the country.

And so it goes. Running has changed a great deal in the 30 years of GTC. Or has it? As John Disley, Brit Olympic steeplechase champ famously observed, "the only interesting thing about running is if you forget to alternate feet." The benefits of health and fitness are now widely known to be true. We thought it might be perceived as a fad and die off like the hula hoop, to be periodically revived. But it hasn't. The numbers are there. There seems to be more occasional runners, call them what you will: people who run a bit on occasions to feel better about themselves. There are fewer racers and fewer club enthusiasts. More are doing their own thing, often for laudable reasons such as raising money for medical research.



A look at Bill Marable's records shows how the sport has become less competitive. Most times were set 10 to 20 years ago, and runners today aren't coming close to them. Dick Lyons and Dr. Rudy Nimmons of Seneca set marks way out of reach. Rudy ran 38 for 10K when he was over 60. Dick ran under 20 minutes for 5K when over 60.

Some highlights of GTC 30 year history come to mind. Many are excluded for space ; also I wonder how many people have read this far? (Trick question: who ran the first 4 minute mile? Trick question, don't forget. Ask editor Tim Stewart. Winner gets a special award from the prez, the Mick).

HIGHLIGHTS:

In 1980 a GTC team won the Road Runners Club of America National 10K cross-country team event staged in Van Cortland Park, New York. The team consisted of Dave Branch (former GTC prez, Furman super runner, 29:08 10K, 2:17 marathon), Kevin McDonald (1979 Washington Marine Marathon Champ in 2:18), Dave Cushman (holder of Furman 3K steeple record still with a 9:05, 2:19:46 at Boston 1980), Coty Pinckney (2:19 marathon), and Dave Geer. The latter is the only one who still lives in the area. Dave still competes in the 45-49 division at the national level. Winner of many local and regional races including Reedy and Paris Mountain, Dave is a remarkably versatile runner who flourished (after leaving Clemson) with a 4:07 mile, 14:20 5K, and 29:20 10K. An interesting sidenote on Coty Pinckney: Coty worked for the World Food Organization. On a tour of duty in Nairobi, Kenya, Coty decided to test his marathon skills against the Africans. He finished through the streets of downtown Nairobi to the welcoming cheer of "mizungu" (white man). Coty was the first white man, and was 6th overall.

Other stellar runners on the GTC team in the 70s and 80s included: Royce Shaw (4 minute miler at Harvard). Royce trained six days a week, ran 90 miles, took one day off. His interval and hill workouts boggle the mind. Dann Brown was a gifted Furman runner. Dann, in one afternoon competing against Clemson, won the 880 in 1:54, mile in 4:09 and placed 3rd in the 3 mile.

The GTC A team was so tough that runners such as Joe Hammond (25:08 5 mile), Tim Stewart (25:12 5 mile—Tim is a top area master runner today), Rolf Craven (25:31 5 mile, 31:30 10K), Martin Maag, Scott Kidd and others rarely made the top team. Then there were the feared Emblar brothers, Mical, Mark and Mitch—fine runners all three. All incredibly versatile, Mical with a sub 1:50 880 at Baptist College and a 2:37 marathon. Mark ran sub 30 for 10K.

GTC women were tough, too. MaryKay Campbell ran 36 for 10K, Theresa Rau was the first SC high school girl to run a sub 5 minute mile, Julie Ross ran a 5:04 mile, Judy Melton ran a 3:07 marathon and 38 for

10K in her late thirties, and Anne Williams (3:12 at Boston, sub 40 10K at 40+).

GTC twice fielded teams that ran across the state raising money for the American Cancer Society, in memory of Ben Foxworth. In 1978, \$12000 was raised before and during the relay as people called in their pledges to radio stations across the state. 16 runners ran 5 or 6 legs of about 6 miles a leg in less than 40 hours from Caesar's Head to Charleston, in the heat of the summer. The sag wagons were nasty, and the beer flowed.

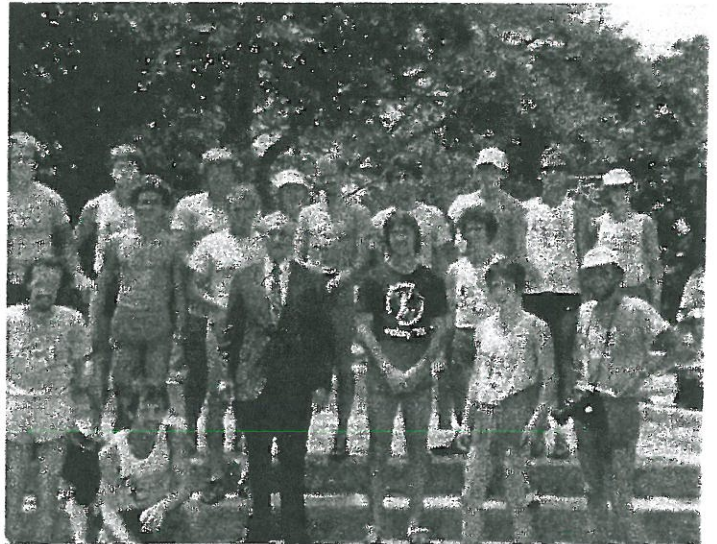
A rare occasion—unfortunately one of a kind—was the Furman/Textile City US Track and Field Federation Indoor Track Meet, in February 1975. Bill Keesling rented a 160 yard, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch plywood, banked track from the Omni in Atlanta. It was shipped in three large trucks. It was held AT Textile Hall (now the Palmetto Expo Center). It was the first high-school and open indoor track meet held in SC. Tony Waldrop of NC, the world-indoor mile record-holder, won the mile in 4:05. Neil Cusack, 1974 Boston marathon champ, won the 2 mile. There were 80 entrants (not all in the same race!). Mickey McCauley, whom some of you know, showed a clean pair of heels to his competition, winning the high-school 880 in 2:04.

What else? I've run at the mouth for long enough. There are so many stories, aren't there? Every runner has them, each group their laughs and memories. GTC is in good shape and good hands. Here's to the future!

OUR FRIEND DOC...A TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THE GTC'S FINEST

As has been mentioned a couple of times already in this newsletter, we lost a true family member on December 30, 2001. All of us who have spent time in the company of GTC members have memories of Doc Bayne. I remember spending a very long weekend with Doc and about 15 other GTC stalwarts during the cross-state relay of 1978. After a couple hundred miles of sweat-drenched, sleepless running around the clock in South Carolina August heat, we were all in great need of a hot shower and about 10 hours of sleep. Somehow Doc kept his cool in the midst of all of this and kept us going through a couple

of very long, exhausted nights on the road. His funeral was held appropriately in the tail end of a rare Greenville snowstorm. As the sun broke through the clouds, I knew Doc was looking down on us gathered there to toast his memory. I'm proud to have known Doc these many years, and I appreciate the following pieces submitted in his memory. - Ed.



**CROSS STATE RELAY 1978
BONUS POINTS TO ANYONE WHO CAN
NAME ALL OF THESE HANDSOME
FELLOWS!**