



## Gone But Not Forgotten

By Chris Walsh

A little over a year ago, I received one of those texts that no one ever wants to get. A friend and former teammate of mine had unexpectedly passed away. Those of you who are “youngsters” or anyone who is



new to running have probably never heard of Marianne Dickerson, but I consider her to be one of the groundbreaking pioneers of women’s distance running. She came out of nowhere to win the silver medal in the 1983 World Championship marathon. This was a big deal for two reasons - first because this was the first time that women were allowed to compete in the marathon at an international competition and second because she out-kicked a Russian in the final lap to take the silver. She was such an unknown that the announcer actually called her by her teammate’s name for a good portion of the race, not realizing that the teammate had dropped out of the race a ways back. It turns out that training in the heat of a

Midwestern summer had uniquely prepared her for the conditions she was to face in Helsinki that year.

While visiting with my college roommate this summer, we reminisced about some of the funny quirks our friend was known for. It occurred to me that I could honor her memory by sharing some of these silly stories with the running club and show a little bit about the making of a world class distance runner.

I first met Marianne in August of 1980. She was a veteran of the University of Illinois cross country team, and I was one of a large group of new recruits. We spent the first two weeks of practice slyly checking each other out, trying to determine who would be our competition to earn one of those coveted top seven spots on the team. We had heard rumors that Marianne was our best runner, but I took one look at her awkward form (shoulders scrunched up by her ears, arms crossing her body, and bouncing up and down on pointed in feet) and immediately counted her out. It wasn't until our first speed workout where she blew us all away that I realized just how fast she was. She told me later that she didn't make the middle school track team the first year she tried out. I'm sure the coach took one look at her "herky jerky" style and figured there was no way she could be any good. Of course after that workout, we were terrified of her. It didn't help matters that she had this brilliant, sarcastic wit that us newbie freshman didn't quite know how to take. It wasn't until a meet late in the season that we finally got to see a little bit of the "real" Marianne.

It was late October and we were competing in the Illinois State Championships for all the colleges and universities in the state. This was probably a big deal, but we were more excited that we were getting to spend the night in a downtown Chicago hotel. After running the course in Lincoln Park and having dinner, we had a team meeting where we were given strict instructions to stay in our rooms and rest with lights out at ten. Shortly after returning to our rooms, my roommate and I began to hear things in the hallway - doors opening and closing, running footsteps and a lot of giggling. Pretty soon there was a knock on our door. It was Marianne inviting us to her room. What did we find waiting for us? Not boys or booze, but instead her bed was covered with junk food! Everything you could imagine: candy, cookies, soda, and chips. A smorgasbord of mouth pleasures,

if you will. She must have hit every vending machine on every floor of our high rise hotel. The whole team settled in with their chosen snacks and watched whatever night time soap opera was on at the time. I don't remember how we ran the next day (I do remember it snowed!), but we started a Friday night team bonding tradition that lasted for years!

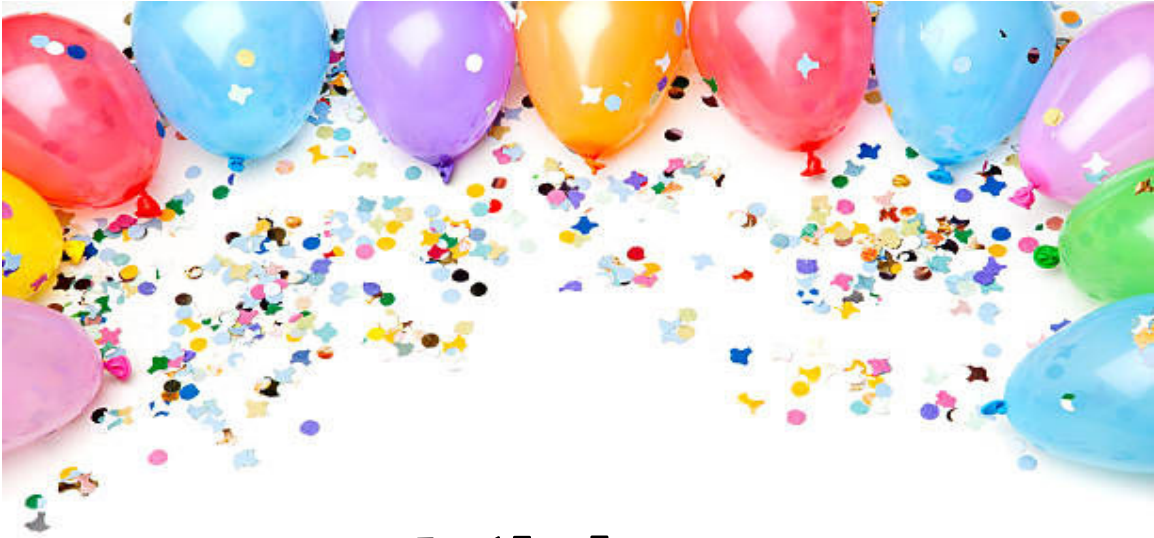


Marianne was known for two things when it came to training. First, she always had to run in front of everyone. It didn't matter if it was a warm up or speed work; she had to be beating everyone. Maybe that was her competitive spirit and part of why she was so good. I don't know. Second, she almost always overestimated how far we had run. This drove my roommate crazy because she was a stickler for getting all of our mileage in, and at least once a week, I would end up doing an

extra loop here or there just so we could meet that magic mileage number. These two particular traits came back to bite Marianne on one beautiful spring day. We were told to do an easy six miles. Back in those days, we didn't have a GPS so we went by time. After only 35 minutes, Marianne said we could head back. My roommate insisted that we run more, so we decided to make a loop thru campus town. Don't ask me why we chose to run thru the busiest area at the busiest time of day, but we did. As usual Marianne was running several yards in front of us, so we could only watch in horror as a car lurched out of an alley, hitting her squarely on the left hip. She simply rolled across the hood of the car, off the side and back onto the sidewalk without missing a step. We had to assure the frazzled driver that if she was still running, she was okay! We quickly caught up with her to make sure. She was black and blue for awhile, but it shows the kind of determination and pain tolerance it takes to be an elite athlete.

When the opportunity to run in the Avon marathon in St. Louis came up, Marianne jumped on it despite the fact that our coach was completely against it. She won and it qualified her for the Avon International marathon in Los Angeles where she placed second to earn the spot on the world championship team. She was only 22 at the time and a complete unknown when she toed the line of that inaugural women's marathon. One by one her competitors melted in the warm, humid conditions. She entered the stadium in third place and kept thinking of her father's final words of wisdom - "whatever you do, beat the Russians!" She used that to motivate her final push and finished four seconds ahead of her Russian competition to take the silver. You can actually Google it and see a grainy replay of her dramatic finish.





## October Birthday wishes to:

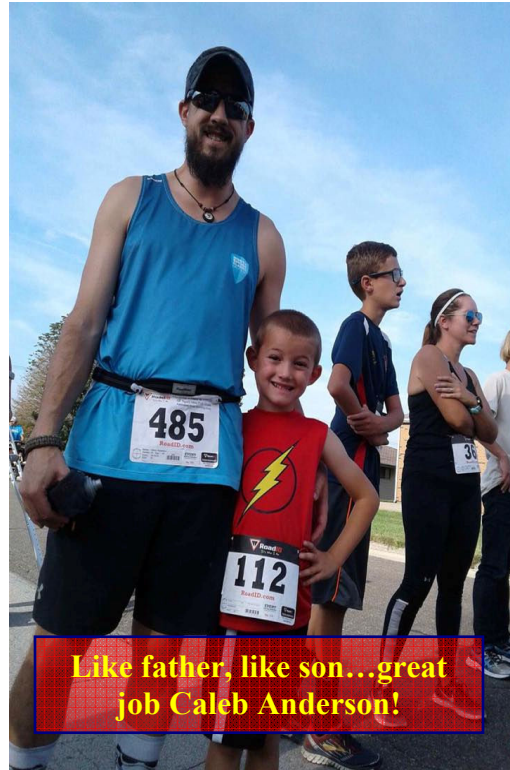


10/04 Ellen Fennell 20  
10/04 Diane Gerber 56  
10/05 Craig Alberts 61  
10/05 Marissa Belcher 37  
10/05 Debra Goodwin 58  
10/05 Angie McQueen 42  
10/05 Daryl Meyer 58  
10/08 Zander Betterton 16  
10/08 Trudy McNally 48  
10/10 Brian Noffke 57  
10/11 Debra Lovell 42  
10/12 Rich Olmstead 66  
10/13 John Martin 51  
10/16 Lauren Martin 20  
10/20 Angella Bylak 47  
10/21 Pete Hinrich 59  
10/22 Brock Altenberger 14  
10/27 Kelly Bonner 42  
10/28 Dan Bullock 66  
10/31 Steve Anderson 41  
10/31 Lucas Kisner 15

# *Some glimpses of the KRRC:*



Julie Loving jumping for her love of Fall!



Like father, like son...great job Caleb Anderson!

# KRRC strike your pose!



Julie Loving, Rick Lagacy, Ande Wegner, Rick Loving, Glenn Tuuk

KRRC members Debbie Dye, John Schimmel, Frankie Avalon and Rachel Simington at the Hub City race.



# I run because:

**Matt Wenzel:**

Because I haven't mastered the ability to fly?

**Valery Denby:**

Because I can't sit still long.....

**John Bevis:**

Because others can't and to pass on the passion to the future runners of the kids I coach

**Tina Spenard:**

Well I'm still trying to figure that out. I don't enjoy it, I'm miserable most of the time I do run, I'm not very good at it ... BUT it's the satisfaction of knowing that I can conquer a tough challenge! #determination

**Jen Ingram:**

Because someone very close to me told me I couldn't.... I love proving him wrong every freaking time!!!!

**John Schimmel:**

Heart disease, diabetes, stroke and mirrors.

**Rhonda Hubert:**

Since it is so hard for me...For the feeling of accomplishment and the medal!

**Debbie Martin Dye:**

It makes me feel good.... when I'm done.

**Terri Putnam:**

Because I figured out it was a good way to relieve stress and save on therapy sessions.



# Who's Who in the KRRC:

**\*\*Editors note\*\*** Wondering where the “Who’s Who in the KRRC” article is? Well, it’s **cancelled** due to lack of participation. I’ve put out there several times asking for answers to submit. Sorry, not begging.

It’s easy to submit to the newsletter....it’s up to all of you to make this newsletter great! You can PM me via FaceBook, email me @ [mспенard@hotmail.com](mailto:mспенard@hotmail.com) or click on the link to take you to the KRRC official website:

<http://www.kankakeeriverrunningclub.com/index.php>



# Upcoming Events:

## Birthday Party

Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm

Aurelio's Pizza, 1600 N Convent St,  
Bourbonnais. The party is open to all. The  
club will bring the cake. You will be  
responsible for your own food and drinks.

Please let us know if you will be attending,  
either by email to [krrclub@gmail.com](mailto:krrclub@gmail.com) or on  
the club facebook event page.