

The Paper Race

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

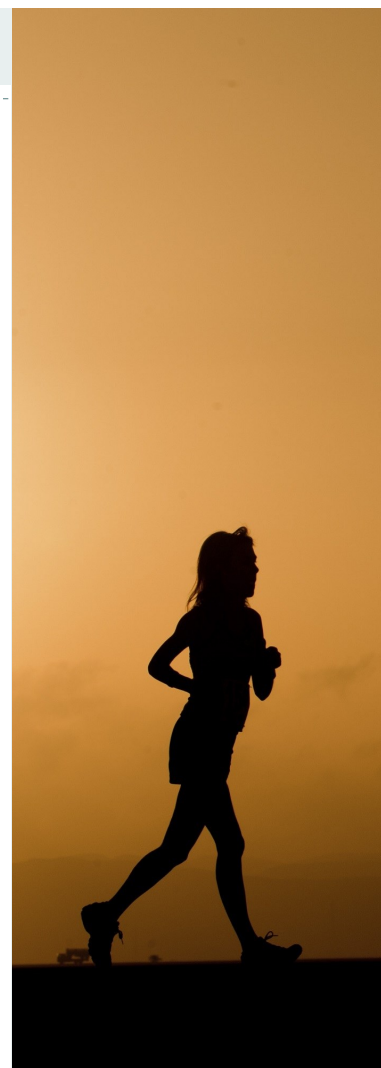
Greetings runners, walkers, and all you movement enthusiasts!

It's February so naturally there can be no better theme for this month's "Corner" than LOVE! I promise not to get all mushy-gushy and I'm sure not going to suggest donning a Cupid-inspired costume for an upcoming event, although I'm positive I've seen a race out there that matches that theme perfectly. Cherubs and heart-decorated quivers aside, this is the time of year where I know I really struggle with finding the motivation to move (think polar vortex conditions when the daily high struggles to make it into positive degree territory). I know it's brutal when our treadmill in only a slightly-heated sun-room refuses to work properly. It also doesn't help things when this early period of the year coincides with those well-intentioned resolutions lagging or being completely thrown to the wayside.

So motivation time..... and the best motivation is that which comes from within yourself. And let's not forget that four-letter word mentioned above. I know that a lot of our activities can have a cacophony of four-letter words, especially if the unforeseen arises, but I know that I didn't type any combination of those. Let the adoration motivation begin!

We've had a few posts on Facebook for our Monday meet-ups at Northfield Square Mall, and once nights become more readily available at the Community Center's (Kankakee High School) indoor track, sharing the love (misery?) with a walk/run group is a sure way to keep your movement accountable. Make it a point to visit one of your favorite movement locations either as a highlight or at the end of a training week; and pair that spot with a revered workout (long run, intervals, hiking) for double the love. Treat yourself to a personal indulgence once completing an extra difficult or lengthy session (my personal favs are picking up a coffee, or especially relevant at this time of year, gobbling down handfuls of conversation hearts — I'm doing that now in between these

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sentence compositions). Having that "treat" already in mind at the start of the workout will almost certainly guarantee that it will involve slightly less effort. And by no means does that special something need to be small, so I'm not excluding new athletic shoes or apparel. Sign up for a race that you've already participated in that falls in the latter part of the year. With that in mind, every fitness bout can be thought of as a building block leading up to that event. Furthermore, as I always mention, share the love with social media posts to our group, with pictures (or did it ever really happen??!). I enjoy seeing and always look forward to everyone's accomplishments, and they likewise keep me responsible for my own training.

Love group meet-ups, love your running locales, love your end-of-movement perks, and love your performance. To close this out, I'm going back to borrow some of my own (I take pride and LOVE my earlier newsletter submissions ☐) previous words when I wrote about personalized Valentine greetings for all things that assist us in our day-to-day movement.

"You inspire me to move, Valentine!" -- most important of all and fondly sent to anyone or anything that encourages you to get out the door, this Valentine can be dedicated to movers all over the world, this wonderful and supportive running club, on-line posts, written words, and any other motivation that gets you out for either your first, thousandth, or millionth step.

Yours, with love of movement,

Alan Toronjo
KRRC President

Come Join our Team and Make a SPLASH!

The KRRC is fielding a team this year for the Polar Plunge! We're looking for more plungers to join us to raise money for Special Olympics. The Polar Plunge will be held this year on March 1 at the Manteno Sportsmen's Club in beautiful and chilly Lake Manteno. Won't you join us? Click here: <https://support.soill.org/event/2025-letr-polar-plunge-manteno-region-e/e626735>

Click on "Register to Plunge" and then "Join a Team." Our team name is "KRRC Whose Idea Was This?" You know— the kind of thing you say when you think it's a great idea and then, when the time comes, you realize that you will be cold and wet!

Registration is free and, if you post your link to social media, there's a good chance that someone will donate to you! Each plunger must have \$100 in donations to plunge. We will have a tent for shelter and snacks to help fuel our internal furnaces. Won't you join us?

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Do you have comments? Questions? Something for the newsletter? Please send all submissions to KRRClub@gmail.com

Find race registrations and results at https://kankakeeriverrunningclub.com/krrc/2024_Race_Calendar.html

Koko Crater: A Brutal Climb and a Breathtaking Reward

By Jill Channing

As a member of the Kankakee River Running Club, I'm no stranger to the challenge of pushing through tough terrain, but nothing could have fully prepared me for the short yet grueling hike up Koko Crater in Hawaii. Often referred to as a "nature's stairmaster," this trail is a relentless climb of nearly 1,000 steep railroad-tie steps. It's only about a mile to the summit, but every step demands your focus, stamina, and willpower. My journey up Koko Crater took an hour, and every moment was a test of endurance. Coming down was no easier, taking another hour and offering its own set of challenges—but more on that later.

The hike itself is deceptively simple on paper: a straightforward ascent following the old railroad tracks up to the summit. In reality, the steep incline and uneven footing make it a slow and methodical process. I hiked alongside my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, both of whom shared my determination to reach the top. My wife and mother-in-law accompanied us partway but wisely decided to turn back when the incline became too treacherous. The three of us pressed on at a slow but steady pace, pausing often to catch our breath and take in the ever-expanding views of the island below.

Once we reached the summit, every grueling step felt worth it. The panoramic view was nothing short of spectacular, with the vast blue of the Pacific Ocean stretching endlessly on one side and the lush green hills of Oahu on the other. The gentle breeze at the top was a welcome reward after the sweaty climb, and we spent some time soaking in the scenery and taking photos to capture the moment. It was one of those experiences that reminds you how small you are in the grand scale of nature, and yet, how capable you are of conquering its challenges.

The descent, however, proved to be even trickier than the climb. Navigating down those steep and narrow steps required intense focus and careful footing. At one point, I lost my balance and fell hard onto one of the metal rails lining the trail. The sharp pain was immediate, and I knew I'd have a bruise to remember the hike by. But in the grand scheme of things, it felt like a small price to pay for the stunning views and the sense of accomplishment that came with reaching the summit.

Hiking Koko Crater with family was an unforgettable experience,

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not just for the physical challenge but for the camaraderie it fostered. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law were great hiking companions, and we encouraged each other every step of the way. The hike pushed us to our limits but also reminded us of the importance of pacing ourselves and enjoying the journey, not just the destination.

For someone who loves running along the Kankakee River's scenic trails and the mountains of Tennessee, hiking Koko Crater was a refreshing change of pace and an excellent workout. Every muscle in my legs felt the burn, and the sense of accomplishment at the end was unmatched. It's a hike I'll never forget, and though it left me with a few scrapes and bruises, I'd do it again in a heartbeat.

If you ever find yourself in Hawaii, I highly recommend tackling Koko Crater. It may be short, but it's anything but easy. Just be prepared for a slow, steady climb and don't forget to pack plenty of water. And who knows? Maybe next time, I'll convince my wife and mother-in-law to conquer it, too. After all, the view from the top is something everyone should experience at least once.

Have you renewed your membership for 2025 yet? Don't forget — you need to be a member for races to count toward the Classic Series. You know you want to earn the cool prizes we give out!

<http://kankakeeriverrunningclub.com>

It's not too late to sign up for the Winterfest 5k Run/ 1.6 mile Walk! The race is this Saturday, February 8, at 1:00 PM. Race check in is at the Civic Auditorium at Small Park in Kankakee. Sign up online until Friday or in person on Saturday morning. After the race — pizza from Chicago Dough!

<https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Kankakee/WinterfestKankakee>

ON DAN'S RUN

RUNNING AT 80



by Dan Gould
DANSRUN@AOL.COM

When I started running in 1982, race age groups often topped out at 50 or 60 and up. People were expected to retire at 65 and relax in the front porch rocker to await the Grim Reaper. Women were deemed too frail to run 3000 meters let alone a marathon. That, of course, changed in 1984 when the Olympics added a woman's marathon and Joan Benoit Samuelson showed the world that a woman could run 26.2 miles without her female parts falling out.

I was 37 and simply looking to find good health and fitness after years as a sedentary, cigarette smoking, overweight, couch potato. The U.S. life expectancy was age 74. Running at age 80 was not on my horizon.

A little over 35 years ago I began taking Florida vacations in the winter which is the heart of the Florida running season with cool temperatures and low humidity. Florida's senior population (over age 65) is about 21% compared to 16-17% nationwide. Supplemented by snowbirds and vacationers who run, senior age group demographics were quite different from my Illinois world.

Racing 2-3 times on a two week vacation, I began getting acquainted with the Sarasota-Bradenton running community. The number of senior age group competitors was striking as were the number of senior age groups.

The Sarasota running club has a racing series. For a race to be eligible for the series, it must offer five year age groups to age 90. While a 90 year old is unusual, they do appear from time to time and there are a fair number of runners in their early to mid-80s.

With the Paradisos - Anne Marie, 82, and Tim, 87

On January 12th I ran the Andrew Monroe 5K on Sarasota's Siesta Key Beach. There were 218 finishers in the



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5K and I was one of the nine octogenarians. Julia Evans, 88, was the senior most citizen followed by Tim Paradiso and Fred Fiala, both 87. Louisville Carol was next at 86. Note the equality of the sexes!

When I ran my 1,000th road race in December of 2018 at age 74, I expected to be running and racing at age 80. While I've had a number of running injuries over the years, they have been of the overuse, soft tissue variety, not the debilitating arthritic deterioration of knees, hips, or back. My injuries have simply required, rest, stretching and strengthening of the affected body part.

Then, almost four years ago, different body parts mutinied, taking turns shutting down my running. Left calf, right calf, lower back, hip flexor, I-T band, left shin, left glute (sciatica), soles of my feet. I impatiently took days or weeks off, resting, stretching and strengthening the affected body part while trying to figure out what I had done to cause the injury. Maddeningly, I found no answers, but I found a lot of new stretches.

In December of 2021 the reoccurrence of an overuse injury in my lower back shut me down and, a month later, gave no indication of improvement. It was January of 2022 and we were supposed to be driving to Florida, but I didn't think I could make the drive with my back issue and sought medical intervention. Before I could get an appointment, Linda broke a hip and began two months in rehab. My back issue went on the back burner.

The beauty of Siesta Key Beach

By late February, the back pronounced itself healed after three months of rest and I made the first of what would be three attempts in 2022 to return to running. Two or three weeks into my return, the

right hip flexor sharply rebuked me toward the end of my run and I was done for a couple more months. Two more attempts that year met with similar results. I did not race in 2022 and running at age 80 began to look doubtful.



In January of 2023, I began the most incremental walk-run workouts, introducing a couple minutes of running into each mile of a three mile walk. I would not run continuously for three miles until late September when I raced a 5K. Olympian Jeff Galloway introduced the running world to the benefits of doing walk-runs over 40 years ago and it became known as "Jeffing." I've done a lot of Jeffing in the past two years. For more on that [What is 'Jeffing'? Running method helps you finish races faster](#)

Last August I turned 80 and joined an elite group of runners. Professor Google told me that only 1% of runners are 80 or older which is consistent with the RunSignup Race Trends Annual Industry Report for 2023 that reports only 2.6% of race finishers are 70 or older. [23-Race-Trends-ONLINE-compressed_3.pdf](#)

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When it comes to speed at this age, you need to leave your ego in your sports' bag. I've known aging runners who didn't enter races or quit running when they couldn't run as fast as they thought they should. I got beat in the Monroe 5K by an 82 year old *woman*! While I might joke of the "humiliation," the 82 year old Anne Marie and her husband, Tim, age 87, have long been among those who have inspired me to remember that age is just a number and that I should live up to my motto and run for my life.

I once ran a marathon at about a 7:15 per mile pace. I am now approaching a 7:15 pace for half a mile. Four years ago my race pace was two minutes per mile faster than it is now, **but I can run!** I still get the fun of competing, the benefit of a hard workout, and socialization with my running friends.

My training the past year has consisted of a couple runs a week totaling 5-6 miles and 2-3 mile walks on the other days. I would be faster if I ran more, but would my body accept the increased workload? I'll probably try some incremental increase as I seek to be the best I can be at 80.

March 1st is my 43rd running anniversary. Will I be writing about running at 90 and a 53rd running anniversary? There is that dream! Run for your life!

Happy Birthday!

2/05 Meghan Tharp ?
2/08 Gina Phillips 48
2/15 Rick Dunbar 64
2/15 Kathi Frazier 65
2/17 Jessica Wright 33
2/18 Charlie Grotevant 83
2/19 Valery Denby 54
2/21 Christina Walsh 63
2/22 Kaylee Cote 21
2/22 Kaylen Cote 21
2/22 Lori Quigley 59
2/24 Jack Littrell 57
2/26 Marianne Surprenant 68



Kankakee River Running Club

Classic Series 2025

Kankakee River Running Club will put on five races in 2025.

There are two possible levels of achievement:

Tier 1 – Complete all five races.

Tier 2 – Complete any four of the five races.

The series is open and free to enter for all dues-paying club members. There is no entry fee for the series, other than entry fees for the races, nor any paperwork needed to enter. All you need to do is be a club member. No need to report your results, we do that for you. At the end of the year, when the results are tallied up, those who did Tier 2 (any four of the five races) will receive an award not yet determined. Those who did Tier 1 (all five races) will receive the Tier 2 award plus an additional award not yet determined. Not currently a club member? Go to <https://kankakeeriverrunningclub.com/krrc/membership.html> to join.

The five club races are:

Winterfest 5K Run/1.6 Mile Walk Saturday, 2/8/25 1:00 pm

Springfest 5K Run/1.5 Mile Walk Saturday, 4/12/25 9:00 am

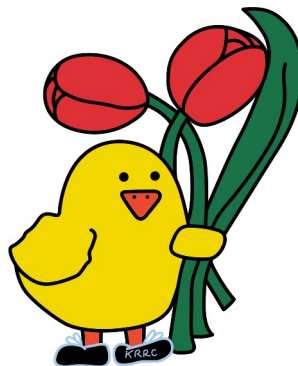
Bourbonnais Friendship Festival 5K Run/1.5 Mile Walk Saturday, 6/28/25 7:30 am

Herscher's Hare & Tortoise 5K Run/2 Mile Walk Sunday, 8/31/2025 5:30 pm

River Rat Races 5K/10K/10 Mile Sunday, 11/9/2025 8:00 am



5K Run/1.6 Mile Walk



Springfest 5K
Run/1.5 Mile Walk



5K Run/1.5 Mile Walk



5K Run/2 Mile Walk



5K Walk, 5K, 10K, 10 Mile Runs