University of Buffalo’s Track and Field/XC Head Coach Vicki Mitchell will be returning for her second season as the Head Coach of Checkers AC.

Everyone welcomes Vicki back and we look forward to another fabulous year!

CHECKERS ANNUAL MEETING
Our annual meeting is set for Sunday, March 21, at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held in the meeting room at the UB stadium, the same location as last year. There will be information on the track workouts, presentations by Vicki Mitchell and Jim Schaffstall, and the election of board members.

Representing Checkers at The Hartshorne Masters Mile was Tim McAllister winning his heat.

Congratulations to everyone who Competed in Ithaca, January 23rd.... Dave Carroll, Catherine Meyer, Ted Paget, Diane Donnelly, Edna Hyer, Ted Sullivan, Helen and Sandy Bueme.

Picture by Steve Gallow

The BUNNY HOP is April 3rd and start time is 10:30am. Some new features are the use of Scorethis and champion chip timing, 4 deep in all age groups to 90+, runners over 85 are free. Canadian money will be at par! Each of the first 700 runners will get a 3 pack of Saucony high tech running socks. In addition we have beer, food, and over 100 door prizes.

We’re collecting running shirts to donate to the Western New York DDSO (West Seneca Developmental Center) for use by the customers they serve.

The cost is $16 up to 3/27/10 and $20 up to race time. Folks can also register online via the East Aurora Rotary Website.

Enjoying the Y10 in Lockport!
Herman Van Leeuwen John and Jack Noe
Ron Lemmon
Volunteers needed for upcoming Track & Field events

Warm weather is finally approaching and so is the opportunity to help out at some local track & field events. If you are new to Checkers or a season veteran this is how it works. Checkers rents the main stadium at the University at Buffalo every spring for Tuesday night track practice. To help cut down on rental expenses we volunteer at numerous UB athletic events. For every hour a club member volunteers rental charges are deducted from our bill. It a win / win situation for everyone. UB gets to host a great sporting event with knowledgeable volunteers and Checkers gets to save on rental expenses. As an extra incentive, each member that volunteers gets his or her track fee waived. If possible work more than one event; volunteers get one year waived per event as an extra incentive. Plus don’t forget that our very own Checkers coach Vicki Mitchell is also the head coach at UB. So if my math is correct Checkers volunteer + UB home T&F meet = a happy Checkers coach.

This year will be extra exciting as the University at Buffalo’s Track & Field team will host two home meets:

**Saturday, April 17th**  UB will host the UB Invitational.
**Thursday, Saturday May 13th – 15th**  UB will host the MAC Track & Field Championships.

There will be a sign-up sheet on the Checkers web site [www.checkersac.org](http://www.checkersac.org) where you will be able to sign up to volunteer. Any amount of time you can volunteer will be much appreciated. Regardless if you can work an hour or all day you will not be turned away and past experience is not necessary. So pencil in the dates now and come out and enjoy the excitement of some great College Track & Field while helping out our club.

For more information feel free to contact me at rogerroll@roadrunner.com or at 716-912-9800.

Thanks,
Roger Roll
Assistant Coach, Checkers A.C.

There is a new inaugural race called the "Stella B. Foundation" to take place on April 25. Some of their applications have already been given out. There was a mistake on the application that said age groups stopped at 65. This has been corrected and the new groups will be 5 year groupings to 80+.

Congratulations to Henry Sypniewski for being included in the March 2010 issue of Running Times. Henry won ‘Masters of the Year 2009’ for age group 90-94. (One of Henry’s top races was the Lancaster 10K in 1:13:40)

In the same article, Checkers female, Helen Botti had an honorable mention for the 70-74 age group.

Also listed in a separate article is the famous Ed Whitlock of Canada.

It’s a girl!

Congratulations to Jim and Jennifer Schaffstall on the recent birth of their daughter, Audrey Rose.
## Race Calendar

### March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 3/20</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Bengal 5k Run</td>
<td>Buffalo State College, Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 3/28</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Bemus Point 5k</td>
<td>Bemus Point, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 3/28</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Around the Bay 30k</td>
<td>Hamilton, Ont.</td>
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### April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/3</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Bunny Hop 5k</td>
<td>American Legion, East Aurora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/10</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Memorial Miles 5k</td>
<td>Hilbert College, Hamburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/10</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Haiti Relief 5k/1 mile</td>
<td>Delaware Park Ring Rd., Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 4/11</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Friend’s of night people</td>
<td>D’Youville College, Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/17</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Feel the Spirit 5k</td>
<td>Infant of Prague, Cheektowaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 4/18</td>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Shoes for Shelter 5k</td>
<td>Forest Lawn, Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 4/19</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Boston Marathon</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/24</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Envirun 5k</td>
<td>Fallside Inn, Niagara Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/24</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>3 Kings Royal Race 5k</td>
<td>Epiphany R.C. Church, North Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 4/24</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>JDRF Run for the Cure</td>
<td>Fitness 360, Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 4/25</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Stella B. Foundation 5k</td>
<td>The Bar, Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 4/25</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>BPAC 6 Hr. Classic</td>
<td>Pepsi Ct., Amherst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 4/25</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Stomp out Stigma 5k</td>
<td>Niagara University, Niagara Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur. 4/29</td>
<td>6:30 am</td>
<td>SFC 5k Race for a Cause</td>
<td>Southtown Fitness Ct., W. Seneca</td>
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### May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. 5/1</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>16th GBTC Half Marathon</td>
<td>Beaver Island State Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. 5/2</td>
<td>6:30 am</td>
<td>Flying Pig Marathon</td>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The race calendar is continually being updated, please check our Checkers website calendar for more information.

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### Welcome New Members

- Hugh Arthur
- Jessica Bell
- Lauren Breen
- David Cady
- Kim Chinquee
- Maureen Dalton
- Rick Deren
- Tim Eggert
- Sharon Harezga
- Evan Hilbert
- William Hilbert
- Des Hughes
- Haley Hughes
- Megan Hughes
- David Cady
- Des Hughes Jr.
- Jennifer LaBuda
- Jim Lynch
- Lisa Lynch
- John Miller
- Wendy Neff
- Anna Niedermeier
- Eric Niedermeier
- Mike Rivera
- Alexander Wukovits
- Jacob Wukovits
- Joseph Wukovits
- Roseanne Wukovits
- Brad Fretz
- Sharon Harezga

![Mike Rivera Image]
Checkers Interview with Linda and Kingsley Haas
by Paul Wandel

BIO:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>Kingsley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group: 50-54</td>
<td>50-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkers member: 25 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running: 33 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence: Clarence, NY</td>
<td>Clarence, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional: Controller</td>
<td>Network Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal: Married with 3 children: Anna, Eric, Sarah</td>
<td>Golf and Bowling, Builds Wood-strip Canoes &amp; Kayaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests: Golf and Bowling</td>
<td>Golf and Bowling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace Group: Red 46</td>
<td>Red 46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A commitment to running and enjoyment of the sport. That is what inspires Linda and Kingsley Haas to run marathons together. Last September, this running couple competed in the Rochester Marathon and finished 20 seconds apart. They ran the whole distance together but allowed each other to trade off the pace setting. The result was a 15 minute PR for Kingsley (3:45) and a Boston Qualifier for Linda. Kingsley comments “Linda and I run well together. It makes running fun. We spend a lot of time together.”

Linda has a rich history in running. “In 1974, I ran on the boys track team at Maryvale High School before girls had their own team. Then Title 9 enabled girls to compete on girl’s teams.” Highlighting her accomplishments were competing in the New York State finals and burning the 440 distance in just 60 seconds. Her coach was Bob McDonnell (a Belle Wattling member) and encouraged her to run distance. “I started running road races in 1977 with Coach Bob. I ran cross country and track at ECC under Dennis Kozub in 1977-78 and then transferred to Fort Hays State University in the fall of 1978 where I ran cross country, indoor and outdoor track.”

A combination of good coaching, natural talent and hard work earned Linda All American status twice in both cross country and track during her college career. Linda was invited to the 1981 NAIA Nationals Track Meet where she posted a notable 4th place (All American) in 18:08 for 5000m and the next day ran 3000m in 10:37, finishing 7th. In addition, she was recently inducted into the athletic hall of fame at all of her former schools. The induction at Fort Hays, where she set several school records during her career, was especially meaningful.

Kingsley is passionate about running but is relatively newer to the sport. A Division III wrestler in college, he ran for physical conditioning. Encouraged by his new wife in 2001, Kingsley re-discovered running in a fresh way. “Checkers helped me with my speed work training. My father was a miler and he once finished 2nd or 3rd overall in the Turkey Trot.” Linda encouraged him along the way and eventually he participated in races. “I placed in my age group in the Fisher-Price 5K (19:13) and also in the Checkers Mile Race (5:26).”

Linda is a veteran Checkers member. She joined the club in 1985 along with her former husband Karl Niedermeier. Then Checkers Coach Tom Courtney, assembled teams for out of state meets and Linda and Karl were quickly recruited. “We were part of that very serious and competitive side.”

Linda remained highly competitive in the local and national running circuits during the 80’s. While having run many road races over all distances, she has a few that hold special memories. When living in Washington, DC she won a Footlocker sponsored couples race and ran the Marine Corps Marathon in a PR (2:57). Additionally, Linda has recorded top performances in the Subaru 4 Mile Money Race (4th woman 23:36), has won the Buffalo Turkey Trot in 29:13 (overall female 1985), and finished second in 1986 running a very competitive 28:48.

Just how did this running couple come together? Linda recounts. “We were on a bowling team together in 2001. I invited Kingsley to join me at Chestnut Ridge for a run. That day it was a blizzard but we ran 5 miles together.” Kingsley admitted he struggled with the pace and the distance but they ended up chatting by the casino fireplace. “I was impressed with this man who braved the elements and committed to it.” After their “first date”, the rest was history.

Continued on next page…………..
Linda and Kinsley Haas continued...

Checkers Athletic Club has helped both of these runners. Linda states, “The club has been a steady connection. The practices and work out schedule can assist anyone to get to a new level. You can get out of it what you want to.” Kingsley adds, “I love the club. Checkers brings out the best in you. All the tools and support are there... programs online, great coaching and individual support. All of this was instrumental to our marathon training this past year.”

Interestingly, this running couple has a competitive spirit between them. Kingsley notes, “She is an elite runner and I am just an average runner but we balance each other so well.” They curiously ask each other about their workouts. “We are competitive with each other but in a fun sort of way.”

Jack Meegan

A lot of you have seen the sketch that was given to Dick Sullivan for his 80th birthday. After that, I did a few more of the Belle Watlings. For me to do the sketch is the easy part. The hard part is done by Mary Magoffin who takes care of the matting and running around getting the signatures of friends to go with the gift. We work as a team on this project. A graphite pencil sketch of Jack was done 8 or 9 months ago and we had planned to present it to him on his 75th Birthday which would have been a couple of months from now. As we know, sadly, he did not make it and he never got to see it. The sketch was framed and given to the family after the funeral.

Jack was a great person to know as people like him don't come along often. Most of you know him as just another one of the Belle Watlings who comes out to the races. As an athlete, he was much more. For those who didn't know, here are some of his accomplishments-- Played baseball, hockey ("The Damn Yankees"), scuba diver, an avid hunter, and most incredibly, after the age of 70, going to Death Valley, he did a skydive out of an old rickety airplane and once on the ground, he then ran a full marathon across the hot desert.

Although he was not a coach, (maybe he was), he enjoyed parting his wisdom and knowledge to others. He was a very humble man, and when he helped others, he never seemed to say "I". It was a pleasure to know and compete with him. He will be missed by all of us.

Bobby Heard, the Bum

Checkers Race to Savings

Checkers is pleased to offer you Race to Savings, a series of events throughout 2010 that are presented by fellow Checkers members.

With Race to Savings, you can save on race-day entry fees for any of these races:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Race Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Apr. 17</td>
<td>Feel the Spirit, Cheektowaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Aug. 14</td>
<td>Mississippi Mudd's 5K River Run, Tonawanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Aug. 21</td>
<td>Checkers Presents The Mueller Mile, Tonawanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun., Aug. 22</td>
<td>Run for Row, Lancaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Oct. 30</td>
<td>Jack O'Lantern Fall Classic 5K, Niagara Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Nov. 13</td>
<td>Lindsay's Legacy 5K, Tonawanda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keep an eye on the Checkers Web site for details.
Please visit the Checkers home page, click on ballot to vote electronically for your new board.
Happy Birthday!

Chuck Lachiusa 4/1
Jacob Klimchuk 4/2
Phillip Halpero 4/3
Victoria Luongo 4/3
Katie Niblock 4/5
John Moore 4/7
Kierscen Polano 4/7
R. Michael Stoll 4/7
Margaret Giardini 4/8
David Arlington 4/9
Jim Schaffstall 4/12
Megan Niblock 4/13
Nathaniel Oliver 4/13
Patrick Donnelly 4/14
Peter Forrestel 4/14
April Mazurcz 4/14
Noah Radtke 4/14
Amy Fakterowitz 4/15
Sheint Grozdano 4/15
David Melohusky 4/17
Gary Ruby Sr. 4/19
John Russo 4/21
Helen Boett 4/22
Shayne Sullivan 4/22
Linda Gross 4/24
Ken Grozhnitsk 4/26
Tom Oehmeler 4/26
Edna Hyer 4/27
Brian Serwicki 4/27
Stephanie Stoll 4/27
Susan Moran 4/29
John Radzikowski 4/30

Miami Marathon
3:10:51 Hermann Pohl
3:39:04 Mark Valites

Disney Marathon
3:56:25 Brenda Spillman
4:19:44 Amy Bryan
4:25:55 Laurie McGorry

Los Angeles 13.1 Marathon
1:55:35 Tom Lansing

Ontario Masters Indoor Championship
February 14, 2010
Ted Paget 2nd place-800 Meters 2:31, 2nd place-1500M 5:25

Ontario Masters Indoor Championship
February 14, 2010
Ted Paget 2nd place-800 Meters 2:31, 2nd place-1500M 5:25
Aside from putting countless miles on your running shoes, what have you done to improve your running lately?

Of course, there is a good chance that you will become a faster runner by piling miles on the road, doing hill repeats, or interval training, but all that training comes with an increased risk of injury. Improper running form subjects your body to increased pounding and stress, not to mention slower race times. Whether you are a seasoned or novice runner, a running gait analysis is a useful tool to not only to become a faster runner, but to also correct poor mechanics that make you susceptible to injury. Running has long been deemed as an activity that everyone can participate in, a sport whose success is entirely based on training habits and dedication, rather than technique. However, as golf and tennis players often seek advice from pros to improve their game, runners often just run. A running evaluation can not only improve your form and efficiency, but also can alleviate nagging aches and pains related to logging countless miles on the road.

The RunSmart© program offered at Buffalo Rehab Group is unlike any in the area. RunSmart© is a video treadmill gait analysis performed at normal, slow motion, and frame by frame speeds that are then reviewed by a licensed physical therapist, who is an expert on running. The staff will evaluate your running and make recommendations pertaining to mobility, strength, running mechanics, and muscle imbalances. Each participant in the program will receive a custom and individualized DVD pertaining to their running form, which also includes over 60 minutes of additional video information on injury prevention and run specific strengthening exercises.

Your personalized analysis will allow you to identify and understand why certain movement patterns are linked to slower and less efficient running splits. You may even be able to conquer previous running related injuries!

In a sport where we are looking for the next edge in competition, RunSmart© is here to help you through the final leg of your race. Our goal is not only make you a fast, efficient runner, but to improve your durability and become a smart and injury free one. As the snow melts and we wait for warmer weather, there is no better time to improve your running efficiency for a successful 2010 season. For more information or to schedule your consultation, contact:

www.buffalorehab.com  Phone: 716-656-8600
Patrick O’Connor, MS PT OCS Cert. MDT  (Ext. 16)
opconnorbrg@roadrunner.com
Steve Gonser PT DPT  (Ext. 6)
goonerbrg@roadrunner.com
Scott Tanski PT DPT  (Ext. 8)
tsanskibrg@roadrunner.com
Our sincere condolences go out to Toby Mazur and Barbara Sauer who lost their Mother’s.

Condolences also to the family of Jack Meegan.

We will especially miss our friend and hot air balloon enthusiast, Jim Kozlowski who suddenly left us. Our best to Jim’s wife Peg and daughter Jill. We’ll miss your teasing.

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Picture This  By Ray Ernst

Cleveland, May 17, 2009. Someone shouts out, “Hey, Bond Lake” This photo is an expression of my joy at completing the Cleveland Marathon. Well, I still had a few blocks to go, but at that point I knew that, not only had I run a PR, but I had qualified for Boston. A few more blocks and my wife Karen would be waiting to greet me and share in my accomplishment. But wait, if Karen was still blocks away, who took this photo?

Buffalo, May 24, 2009. Karen and I are downtown cheering half-marathoners finishing their race, and the passing marathoners with half of their race yet to run. This fellow riding by on his bike stops and asks me, “didn’t you run the Cleveland Marathon last week?” “Yes I did,” was my reply, not knowing where this was leading. “How’d you do?” “Great,” says I, “I qualified for Boston”. “Well,” he says, “I have a couple of photos of you that I took. Remember ‘Hey, Bond Lake?’ That was me.” (This is where my friends started with the stalker jokes). “I don’t have the pictures with me; I keep them in my car figuring I’ll run into you sooner or later.”

“Cool,” like this guy is ever going to see me when he’s in his car. I know Buffalo is a small town, and sometimes it seems as though we’re all connected somehow, but just what are the odds this guy will ever get me those photos?

Tonawanda, February 15, 2010. I’m five and a half miles in to a twelve mile run when a car going by slows and the driver rolls down his window.

“Hey buddy” he calls to me. I’m ready to give him directions to somewhere when he says, “Are you the guy that qualified for Boston at Cleveland last May?” Now remember, it’s the middle of February, probably twenty degrees, I’m bundled up, my head and most of my face are covered and I’ve got shades on; and this guy knows me?

I stop my watch and go over to his car. (No, I’m not worried, there’s a woman in the passenger seat). “Yeah,” I said, “I’m that guy”. He reaches his arm out the window, and there in his hand are two photos of me. “Here you go,” he says.

I suppose stranger things have happened to people, or maybe this wasn’t all that strange. Just the right circumstance; a runner and a photographer heading down the road, one, living the moment, the other capturing it and giving it back.

The Feet of Checkers

Nothing stops the Tuesday night runners at Delaware Park, even when their running shoes were left at home, as these photos can attest!

Work boots on the left, soft soles on the right and OMG in the middle!

Running in whatever is in your car is no mean feat.

(It’s nice having a camera in the car for moments like this)
What pre-race rituals or habits do you have?

- Bathroom, a lot! Warm up for 21 minutes.
- My number bib has to be perfectly centered, square and flat
- Oddly, I believe I run better with these sterling silver hoop earrings I bought from JC Penney…
- 2 Energy Bars one hour before the race
- ALWAYS small cup of coffee, a Powerbar, many trips to the bathroom and a phone call to my parents the night before the race.
- Early rise, big breakfast, Short warm-up/stretch and race
- Having the right socks & wearing my "checkers" earrings - shamrocks of course
- Arriving very early- Helping Louise find a good spot for her Checker’s photos
- No strange habits other than warming-up and eating a banana
- Before I leave the house, I probably go to the bathroom about 15 times. I hate that part. At the race, I like to warm up a couple miles, and I typically do a few Bob Carroll Drills. I find the alternating fast leg gets me loose and raises my heart-rate
- Nothing special. I like to eat grapes or any fruit with lots of water (melons), ~ 1 mile warm up that breaks a good sweat, then stretch, then lineup for the gun
- Talking to myself after warm-up is completed
- Get there early, start one hour before race, 10-15 minute warm up, 15-20 minutes stretching, 10-15 minute dynamic warm up, finish ten minutes before race starts
- I poop, then I poop again, then I poop again…. I poop ALOT! :)
- For all races, my boyfriend and I give each other what we call "the power boost of love" - - which is a fist bump, twist of the wrist, and a kiss right when the gun goes off.
- For marathons and half marathons, the night before, I always lay out all my clothes (and possible clothes for all kinds of weather), Gu gels, watch, sneakers, food, etc, and take a picture of it. I gently carb load for 2 days before, eat a few bags of pretzels the 2 days before (the salt is good for hydration), and of course, not sleep a wink the night before (this is not on purpose, I can just never sleep well before marathons or half marathons)
- A piece of gum and a kiss from hubby
- Driving the “lucky” way from my house, eating peanut butter and banana sandwiches and using the bathroom
- A bad night’s sleep followed by a banana and usually not enough water
- For any race that is going to be over 3 hours I have to have Pad Tai as a pre-race meal.
- Chicken and rice or pasta the night before. Wake up early and have tea and rye toast with peanut butter, then go through my list to make sure I have everything. Use the bathroom. Take care putting on and lacing my shoes. Nothing fancy.
- I high –five the dog (Cole) before I leave the house.
- 20 minute jog
- Can’t eat for 4+ hours before a race. If it’s a morning race, I only drink a little water. And a “special” piece of gum
- Coffee, PB&J sandwich, 1 mile warmup, stretching, striders Laying down and putting my feet up for an hour. Hydrating with Gatorade a lot more during the day.

What is the furthest you have traveled to run a race?

- 550 miles to St Charles, IL, Greensboro, NC in 2003 (USATF Club XC Championship) Rachel, 2 hours North Of Las Vegas
- Boston (I don’t like flying), Eugene Oregon for an 800m., La Jolla, CALI.
- 100 miles, 2500 miles, 8 hours, Hawaii for the Ironman
- Let’s get out the MapQuest here… Race my marathon in Hong Kong, twice competed in Japan (Yokahoma & Chiba), raced in Seoul, Korea – those are the farthest away.
- 3.5 hours- for a marathon, Lilac Festival in Rochester
- Chicago Marathon, Toronto, Orlando, FL, New York City, Nashville, California for a 5K, Indianapolis, Washington DC,
- Enscheda Marathon Holland, Europe, 1,650 miles to Round Rock, Texas for a 5K, 2,267 miles to Phoenix, AZ.
- Ellicottville Fall Festival race. I stopped going when they made the finish straight UP a hill. I was practically throwing up for the last 100 meters
- 1,275 miles-New Orleans Half Marathon, New Orleans Turkey Trot-It was their 100th anniversary year and I was proud to tell them about the oldest race in the US, the Turkey Trot in Buffalo. It was Buffalo's 112th year and I was wearing my Delaware YMCA Turkey Trot shirt with #111th on it. Buffalo had about 7,000 runners, while New Orleans had about 2,000.
- I raced in Florida in college. Ask me again in March…my answer might be South Africa.
Reflecting back on the past week of my life, I feel like I am thinking about some crazy, surreal dream. In this dream, I was in Africa with 3 amazing people doing something I love to do...run. I met incredible people, ran an international race, and saw a culture that I had only seen on TV or read about in books and running magazines. The best part was this wasn't a dream and my memories are very real. I was in Africa and I got to run.

When we got the news about the trip to South Africa deep down I almost had hoped that my teammates would say they didn't want to go. I have a severe fear of flying. I can't even sit on a plane for 3 hours to go to Florida and they wanted me to sit for EIGHTEEN and go across an ocean?? No way, not me. But of course we were going. Who turns down a trip of a lifetime? I knew this was going to be one of the biggest challenges of my life but I was determined to face it head on.

We left for Johannesburg on March 1st. Our trip went from Buffalo to Dulles to Senegal (just to refuel), and then to Johannesburg. We were armed with movies, books, and medication (for me). Sitting with our knees crammed into our chins and some very sketchy airline food to eat we drifted in and out of sleep and met some other teams that were also on our flight. I am pretty sure I watched about 8 movies but only saw the first 7 minutes of each of them before drifting back to my dreams. Landing in Jo'burg was just unbelievable. Listening to the accents, watching the sights outside of the bus, and arriving at this incredibly fancy hotel was beyond my wildest expectations. From the moment we arrived, we were treated like royalty. The people of South Africa were welcoming and friendly. I walked around in complete disbelief.

The next day we had signed up for a tour of Soweto. We were taken by bus to see the sights and sounds of a city so completely unlike our own. These people live in such poverty and have so little, yet they are so proud of what they do have. It was a very eye opening experience. They invited us into their homes. They looked at us in wonder I'm sure pretty much the same way we looked at them. We visited a museum that chronicles the youth uprising of the '70s and ate lunch at a local restaurant. We quickly learned not to ask for a Diet Coke (Coke Light instead), that you had to ask for your check after eating otherwise you could sit there for 2 hours, and that water was either still or sparkling. Later that afternoon we met up with Jerry Irving and Dave Keenan and a few other people we ran into and ventured out for a local run. We had been told not to go out running due to safety issues. We soon figured out they weren't talking about people. It was the cars. And no matter how many times we reminded each other to look the other way when crossing, at each intersection someone would yell out "CAR!" when a car would come right at us. We were not getting used to the driving on the other side of the road. There was also the matter of running at 5800 feet altitude. I wasn't sure it was that or the hills, but I was not used to breathing like I was.

Finally it was race day. It was a little unnerving racing so far away from home. For a person like me that is such a creature of habit, my world was turned upside down. The time difference was killing me. I was jet-lagged and jet-lagged bad. I was hoping to find my diet staple...bananas. But I swear there wasn't one to be found in the entire country. And we were dehydrated. With so many warnings not to drink the water, we were very careful to only drink from a bottle but that wasn't always so easy to find. We spent a little time at the Nelson Mandela Mall across the street to buy some souvenirs and get our minds off the race but I must admit it was hard not to think about it. We left 4 hours early for the race which was held at the historic Wanderers Club. The grounds were awesome. We were given blue bracelets that gave us VIP status. They had a special bag check for us (we each got a special space labeled with our names), a huge tent that would later be filled with enough food, beer, and wine to feed a small army, and our own bathrooms to use. I could get used to this! We got a roped off area to warm up on. Not being able to see the course prior to getting there I soon realized this course was no joke. In 30 years of running, this was the most challenging course I've ever been on. Hills, hills and more hills. And did I say it was at altitude? How about a little thunder, lightning, and rain before race time? We got to start 5 minutes ahead of the regular Johannesburg Corporate Challenge race with 13,000 people in it. I did a little math in my head and realized the lead runners would be catching us before 2 miles. I stood at the starting line and realized that what I was about to experience was going to probably be the most amazing thing ever. And I was right. Continued.......

**Trip of a Lifetime**

by Amy Fakterowitz

Amy, Joelle Mann, Jennie Ramsey & Jenny Acker
Trip Of A Lifetime continued…..

In the end, I only got caught by maybe a dozen of the top guys and had the most painful yet strangely exhilarating race. I was immediately disappointed at my time but that quickly went away after realizing that everyone was running 2-3 minutes slower than on their home courses. Team Amherst did awesome (we were 7th and only one second out of 6th) and we absolutely represented at the party. They had a live band and it was just fun hanging out with people from all over the globe that love and appreciate running as much as we do.

The next night it was time to head back to reality. I want to thank my teammates and other Buffalo teams for making my trip one that I will remember for the rest of my life. I also want to shout out to Coach Vicki for enabling us to continue doing our workouts all winter in preparation for this race. I also appreciate my family and friends that made me realize that I was bigger than my fear and were confident in my ability to get on that plane and not miss out on such a wonderful trip. What a journey this has been…

Tom Donnelly’s President’s Corner will be returning in the next newsletter.