



JULY 2013

## For the Love of Marathonizing:

Monica Huff and Her 26.2 Mile Pursuits

by John Kissane

Compared to some local die-hards, Athens Road Runners board member Monica Huff really hasn't been running all that long. That is to say, not all that long in *years*. But in terms of long runs, specifically marathons, no one in this town can touch her. She's up to 67 marathons and counting, finishing under four hours in each of the 50 states, a milestone only four other women in the world have achieved.

Monica, now 43, has always been athletic and favored tennis while growing up in Clemson, S.C. She began running seriously in the late 1990s, in an effort to relieve some of the stress of working on her Ph.D. in psychology at UGA. "I was in the dissertation stage," she recalls, "and I read something about how you should record the hours you put into it as though you're training for a marathon. So I guess I took that analogy seriously, because I decided to prepare for one."

She completed the San Diego Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in June of 1999 and didn't really think about running a second one. But four years later she ran the Mayor's Midnight Sun Marathon in Alaska to

celebrate completing her dissertation. Her 3:40.45 finish time in qualified her for the 2004 Boston Marathon, and the chance to run the world's most historic 26.2 miler was too tempting to pass up. It was unusually hot on Patriot's Day in Boston that year and Huff struggled a bit, but she got across the finish line and soon began thinking about where she might run her fourth marathon.

"I did three in 2004 and then two in 2005 while pregnant. That's when I decided to make running marathons in all 50 states my goal," she explains. "Our son, Wyatt, was born in January of 2006, and then it really took off." She ran the Ellerbe Springs Marathon in North Carolina that March and tacked on six more in 2006. That gave her 14 marathons in 14 states, so she was well on her way.

Six marathons in 2007 and 10 in 2008, and Monica was up to 30 at age 36. That was a piece of cake. What's more, she was gradually getting faster. Her early marathons were in the 3:40 to 4:10 range. By 2008 she consistently finished in the 3:30s, with a quick 3:32.56 in the New Hampshire Marathon where she was the overall women's champion.

## Club Highlights

**Athens Half Marathon Training** starts this month. Check out the programs offered by WOW Boot Camp, Fleet Feet Athens, and our very own Coach Al Jeffers. (See "Train" page of our Athens Road Runners website for details).

**Are you travelling this month?** Send us a picture of you running in locations near and far for us to feature in the August newsletter (ideally wearing your red ARR tech t-shirt) at [info@athensrr.org](mailto:info@athensrr.org).

## Saturday Morning Group Run



We will miss Jittery Joe's Roasting Company (the Roaster) but look forward to meeting at the new Hendershot's in the Bottleworks!

## For the Love of Marathoning (continued)



Start of the Columbia Half Marathon with daughter Gabby on her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.



From Georgia Magazine story after 55 marathons. Not your typical medal collection.

Photo by Andrew Davis Tucker



All smiles and a big "5-0" after achieving her goal of finishing 50 marathons under four hours each.

And then, in 2009, a new motivational challenge popped up the establishment of the 50Sub4 Club, whose members aim to complete marathons in all 50 states with finish times of under four hours. Its founder contacted Monica and asked her to join. She immediately knew she wanted to attempt this, as only of the six of her 30 marathons had been over the four-hour time limit.

Her next marathon was her personal best, 3:19.59 at the Fargo (N.D.) Marathon. The following year she ran her fastest ever, a 3:16.04 at the Leading Ladies' Marathon in Spearfish, South Dakota, where she was runner-up. She turned 40 in 2011, the year she completed her original goal of a completing a marathon in every state. More than 50 friends and family made the trip out to Nevada for the Las Vegas Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, where Monica ran 3:24.40 to notch state number 50.

In 2012 Monica returned to several states where she still needed to get a sub-4:00 time, and she planned to finish the 50Sub4 goal at last November's New York City Marathon. Mother Nature would not cooperate, however, as Hurricane Sandy swept into the region and forced cancellation of the event, along with bringing many far more serious consequences. So Monica's 50th sub-4:00 state, New York, was delayed until this past May 5, when she ran 3:24.55 to win the masters division at the Long Island Marathon.

All the marathons and all the miles (so far around 1,750 in the marathons themselves, and of course many thousands more in training), have been only part of the story. Along the way Monica has found great enjoyment from the people and the places. Monica's husband, Reign Streiter, and their three children, Gabby, Scout and Wyatt, and her older sister, Kris, have accompanied her on many of the trips.

The Huff-Streiter children have no doubt learned a lot from their mother about setting goals and following through, about finding a passion. Monica was extra proud when Gabby completed the Columbia (SC) Half Marathon this past March on her 13th birthday, finishing second in her age group.

I really like the small marathons best," Monica says in thinking back on here experiences. "But there was something worthwhile, something memorable or funny about every one of them. And I got to visit quite a few states I'd never seen before."

Even though she's a vastly experienced runner and often wins age group and overall masters awards, Monica is very low-key about her achievements. She is genuinely more interested in helping others to discover and enjoy running than in focusing on her own efforts. In 2010 she founded Girl Powered, a local running program that helps 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade girls improve their health and fitness, share fun times together and eventually train to complete a 5K race. Serving on the ARR board is a natural for Monica, as she knows the organization will do great things to promote the sport.

And, not surprisingly, there are more marathons on the horizon. Monica is contemplating a new goal of completing 100 marathons by age 50, and she'll likely help sister Kris with the handful of remaining states on her list. "I am doing Miami, where I've never been," she says in talking about upcoming races. "And I've signed up for Grandfather Mountain (in North Carolina). That may be a bad idea," she laughs at the thought of tackling that grueling event. But chances are she'll breeze through it, as she does just about every time. Monica Huff and the marathon just seem made for each other.

*"...there was something worthwhile, something memorable or funny about every one of them. And I got to visit quite a few states I'd never seen before."*

# All-Comers Track Meets

By Stefan Billmeyer

Let me extend a huge thank you to all of our members who volunteered or participated in the first-ever Athens All-Comers Meets hosted by Athens Academy! The meets on June 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> were a huge success due to the support of the many Athens Road Runners who helped to register participants, time events, set-up equipment, and take it all down when it was over. Club President Julie Thompson did an incredible job signing up new members while the rest of us flooded the track with our red ARR t-shirts!

It was great to see roughly 200 participants and spectators from local and surrounding counties come together in support of a true running community. Runners of all ages and abilities competed in events ranging from 100 to 5000 meters. Although it was impressive to see runners, including many Athens Road Runners set some fast times and PR's, the highlight of each evening was watching the kids 8 and under run the 100 meter race to a cheering crowd of proud parents and onlookers.

In addition to the running events, participants were offered a chance to see how far they could jump and throw in the long jump and shot put events. It was exciting to see our own Monica Huff volunteer her time to manage the long jump, while Adam Nelson, local Olympic shot put gold medalist and director of our strategic partner, the Athens Orthopedic Clinic's Sports Rehabilitation and Performance Center (SPARC), offered valuable tips to those eager to try throwing a shot put.

The flavor of both events was one that supported running in a family atmosphere within the local community, which is exactly what the Athens Road Runners is all about. In response to numerous requests for more All-Comers Meets, I am working with Athens Academy host, Geoffrey Walton to include at least four dates for next summer.

Without your support, this event would have been difficult to accomplish! Thanks again, Athens Road Runners, for a successful event!



Lining up for the 1500 m race, first event of the June 20 meet.



First turn of the 800m race.



Lots of kids were eager to run the 100 meter dash! We especially loved watching Lauren Nelson with her tutu.

## Recent Races for Road Runners

Congratulations to all of the Athens Road Runners who ran the Jammin' Jog on Saturday, June 22. In finish order: Monica Huff (1<sup>st</sup> overall female), Jill Lucas (1<sup>st</sup> in age group), Paige Cole (1<sup>st</sup> in age group), Gabby Huff-Streiter (2<sup>nd</sup> in age group), Alan Ashley (2<sup>nd</sup> in age group), Frances Berry (3<sup>rd</sup> in age group), Vicki McMaken, Jarod Gilliam (3<sup>rd</sup> in age group), Jennifer Gilliam (2<sup>nd</sup> in age group), Tony Paramore (3<sup>rd</sup> in age group), Tino Johnson, Kara Tinker (3<sup>rd</sup> in age group) and Jennifer Givan.

Several Athens Road Runners participated in the "Remember 11" Run/Walk on Saturday, June 29 to remember North Oconee High School freshman and soccer player Ryan King raising \$8,000 for a scholarship in his memory. It was not a timed event.

## Welcome, New Members!

The following people joined Athens Road Runners in the month of June, bringing our membership to 210. Please welcome:

<b>James Anderson</b>	<b>Kathrin Stanger-Hall</b>
<b>Tom Cannon</b>	<b>Jerry White</b>
<b>Kasi Carvell</b>	<b>Angie White</b>
<b>Krista Merry</b>	<b>Kimetha Williams</b>
<b>Christine Miller</b>	<b>Brad Wolfe</b>
<b>Rajiv Ranjan</b>	<b>Beth Wood</b>
<b>Kevin Snyder</b>	<b>Jimbo Wood</b>
<b>Stephanie Sykes</b>	<b>Nina Wurzburger</b>



Athens Road Runners is a supportive community of runners of all ages and abilities.

Our mission is to inspire and engage individuals to achieve health, fitness and training goals through running.

Thank you to our sponsors and partners:



# Training Tips

## *Racing and Nutrition; What to Eat* by Athens Road Runners Coach Al Jeffers

As runners we lean toward extremes. We think more miles equals better fitness. When we look at our food intake our thinking is the same. *I have a big race tomorrow so I better load up on pasta and drink gallons of water.*

What is best to eat before a race? I will attempt to breakdown this question and answer with a simple list of do's and don'ts for pre-race nutrition.

**DO** drink fluids as normally as possible in the days leading up to your race. Keep yourself hydrated consistently avoiding long spells of under hydration. A couple of hours before your race, drink 16 ounces of water.

**DON'T** start chugging water the night before. Not only will you feel discomfort, you risk diluting your electrolytes which could severely affect your muscle performance.

**DO** eat as normally as possible in the days leading up to race day. (This is not the time to try something new and exotic.)

**DON'T** over eat the day before the race. This will not only lead to the possibility of digestive issues but also could make it quite difficult to get a good night of sleep.

**DO** eat breakfast on race day. Three hours prior to the start time is best. The body needs energy to perform at optimum levels. Figure out what works for you and what doesn't by trying different foods in the weeks prior to your race.

**DO** have a race plan for your nutrition, water or energy drink, gels or bars, whichever works best for you. Be sure you have everything in place.

Make your nutrition plan a part of your race plan. Treat it as you do your training. Without the fuel in your tank it is difficult to reach the finish line.

# Community Forum

*Vacation Run, by Steve Marcotte*

Recently my wife Anne and I traveled to Pleasanton, California to visit Anne's family in her hometown. Once known for its walnut groves and sheep farms, Pleasanton is now more of a residential community for the Bay Area and Silicon Valley. Many residents commute to nearby businesses, some of which you may have heard of such as Cupertino-based Apple and Mountain View-based Google, both approximately 40 minutes away.

Our recent Saturday run was very enjoyable. Flat tree-lined boulevards, a Main Street reminiscent of a sixties TV show including the requisite friendly townfolk, weather bordering on perfect for a late June morning and culminating with a post run bagel and coffee in the cool California sunshine. We love the hills and humidity of our home town but a run in Pleasanton is, well, sublime. (I bet you thought I was going to say pleasant!)

## Get Connected!

Join Athens Road Runners for a group run every Saturday morning. We leave at 8 a.m. from the parking lot behind The Bottleworks at the corner of Meigs and Newton Streets. Enjoy a 3-6 mile loop (or shorter if you want to turn back before then) followed by free coffee at Hendershot's at their new location in The Bottleworks.

Check out our Facebook page, web site ([athensrr.org](http://athensrr.org)) and Meet-Up sites for race and running photos, news, and upcoming races.

