

FALL RACING HEATS UP IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

By **DON SIKORSKI**
Special to the Bulletin

The approach of cooler temperatures and shorter daylight hours do little to deter the anticipation of some of the best races on the season in Southeastern Connecticut. Whether your preference is cross-country, 5K's, marathons, or any race distance in between, there are plenty of terrific events going on this fall to suite your needs:

STENGER FARM INVITATIONAL, Waterford – Saturday, October 16th: Runners looking to recapture their days of youth by racing cross-country should give the Stenger Farm race a try. Assistant Connecticut College XC Coach Kevin Grant coordinates this USATF event, which features a 1 mile race for 5th and 6th graders, a 1.5 mile race for 7th and 8th graders, and an open 5,000 meter cross-country race as the premiere event. All races are run entirely on grass or dirt trails in Stenger Farm Park, located across from Waterford's Clark Lane Middle School. Races begin at 10:00am. Contact Kevin at kgrant10k@yahoo.com or call the Waterford Parks and Recreation Department at (860) 444-5881 for more race information.

STRIDES ROAD RACE, Waterford – Sunday, October 17th: The 27th Annual Jack O'Keefe Memorial Strides Road Race will take place at Camp Harkness, with runners again having the option of scenic 5K and 10K races. There is also a 1 Mile Family Fun Run/Walk inside Camp Harkness Park. The Outback Steakhouse of New London is the title sponsor of this year's event. In addition to providing the post race food, gift certificates and prizes from Outback will also be awarded to the top three finishers in each division. Cash prizes will be awarded to the overall top three male and female finishers of the 10K race. All proceeds from the race are used to support recreational, leisure and sports activities for people with disabilities. The 10K race begins at 9:00am with the 5K following at 10:30am and the 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk at 12:00 noon. For more information call The Arc of New London County at (860) 889-4435.

MYSTIC PLACES MARATHON, Niantic – Sunday, October 24th: Race Director John Bysiewicz has turned the Mystic Places Marathon into one of New England's premier events. The 4th Annual Race has teamed up with the Niantic Bay Festival this year, and once again backed with the financial support of heavy hitting sponsors Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Resort Casino, the event will be one of the largest fall marathons in the northeast. "This year's event may be our biggest in terms of total number of participants," predicts Bysiewicz. "We may reach 1,000 entries in the marathon and we should have over 2,000 runners in total. We have an international field again this year, including a number of Kenyan men, Russian men and women, and Canadian women." The Mystic Places Marathon features one of the most scenic race courses around. The race is also a drawing card for marathoning veterans. Consider Bob Dolphin of Washington, who will be running the 349th marathon of his running career in Niantic. The 75 year-old Dolphin, who didn't begin running until after age 50, has 20 consecutive Portland (OR) Marathons and 21 consecutive Seattle Marathons to his credit. He's no slow poke either, with a personal best marathon of 3:00:12 set in the 1987 Emerald City Marathon. He and his wife Lenore are the co-directors of the 100 Marathon Club, of which there are 141 members. Mystic Places will be Dolphin's 24th marathon in 2004 to date. I'd be happy just to have the frequent flyer miles that Bob and Lenore have earned. The weekend's festivities also include kid's races, and health expo, and kid's activities beginning on Saturday at 12:00 noon in Rocky Neck State Park. A 10 mile race and a 5 person marathon relay will also accompany Sunday's marathon. Check out www.mysticplacesmarathon.org or call (203) 481-5933 for more race information.

TARZAN BROWN ROAD RACE, Mystic – Sunday, November 7th: The Tarzan Brown Road Race offers long standing tradition, terrific scenery, and an abundance of New England charm. Run along the Mystic River, the 5.5 mile race course winds past picturesque views of salt marshes and boat launches, with a view of the Mystic Seaport just across the river for those who have the time to steal a glance. Since the inaugural event in 1976, the race, named after two-time Boston Marathon winner Ellison "Tarzan" Brown, has consistently been one of the most popular road races in the state. Contact the Mystic Community Center at (860) 536-3575 for information.

E.B.A.C. FALL CHALLENGE, New London – Saturday, November 13th: The EBAC Fall Challenge offers competition for individual runners as well as for corporate running teams (teams can be declared on race day). Starting and finishing at New London's picturesque Ocean Beach Park, the 4.75 mile race course is flat and fast, heading down Pequot Avenue along the water and returning to the park via Montauk Avenue. Post race festivities include complimentary chowder and beer for all registered runners. On-line race entry is available at www.hitekracing.com or contact Race Director Pete Volkmar (pvolkmar@snet.net) for more information.

Runners of all levels of ability looking to test their fitness levels after a summer of running should have plenty of options. Get out and enjoy these events and see what Southeastern Connecticut has to offer for runners this fall.

Racing Roundup

Former Colorado standout Adam Goucher, the 1998 NCAA XC champion, has announced that he is ending his 10-year working relationship with Buffalo's coach Mark Wetmore and is moving to Portland, Oregon to train with the Nike Oregon Project. Goucher, 29, and his wife Kara, who won the 2000 NCAA cross country title for CU, will both be coached by former marathon great Alberto Salazar, former University of Texas coach Dan Pfaff and former George Mason coach John Cook.....For runners or joggers looking for motivation heading into the cooler months, check out the Putnam Recreation Department's weekly 5,000-meter fun runs on the track. The races will take place under the lights each Wednesday night at 6:15pm at the St. Marie-Greenhalgh facility in Putnam. Runners and joggers of all ages and level of ability are invited to join in this free weekly series.....Add 2004 Men's Olympic marathon silver medalist Meb Keflezighi to the elite field in the 2004 ING New York City Marathon 2004 on Sunday, November 7th.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at www.moheganstriders.org. He can also be reached by e-mail at kdcsikorski@netzero.net.