

WEEKEND OFFERS TWO WORTHWHILE CHARITY EVENTS FOR RUNNERS

By **DON SIKORSKI**
Special to the Bulletin

Steve Hancock is a long-time distance runner. Blessed with a great family, plenty of friends, and an infectious sense of humor, the 58 year-old Bozrah resident is constantly cracking jokes and entertaining others. But something Hancock is 100% serious about is finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. That's because Hancock was diagnosed with the disease in January 2004, and despite hundreds of road races and marathons under his belt over the years, he is now unable to muster the energy to run at all and battles constant fatigue from the disease and its treatments. But Hancock remains enthusiastic in his support both of running and for curing the disease.

On Sunday, May 14th, the first annual "Trails to a Cure" race will take place in Cockaponset State Park in Chester, CT. The race is a re-incorporation of the former Cockaponset Trail Run that ceased four years ago. Now the popular event is back, along with a 5K walk, in an effort to raise funds for PanCAN. PanCAN is a national non-profit organization committed to finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. "I wanted to do something to promote pancreatic cancer awareness," explained Hancock of how the event evolved. "It's the most deadly of all cancers, with a 99% mortality rate in the first twelve months." Despite battling some difficult days, Hancock considers himself fortunate to be able to be promoting this event. He has lost two high school friends to the disease this past year alone. "After my diagnosis, I did some research and used PanCAN (The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, Inc.) as a referral for my own research on the disease," said Hancock. "It's all about getting better cancer treatment and diagnosis of the disease".

You can support Steve in his cause by participating in either the 8 mile trail run or the 5K walk (both events kick off at 9:00am sharp) or by making a donation to the organization. Checks can be made out to PanCAN, "Trails to a Cure" and mailed to P.O. Box 293 in Bozrah, CT 06334. Contact Laurie Tomlinson at 1-800-243-2743 (Laurie.Tomlinson@agedwards.com) or PanCAN at their toll-free number 1-877-272-6226 for more information.

Dave McBride also hopes to help others by honoring the memory of his long-time friend with the 5th Annual 5K River Run For The Fund. The race, which takes place this Saturday, May 13th at Ocean Beach Park in New London, is part of the Greenleaf Memorial Foundation, which also incorporates an annual Golf Tournament and a Memorial Dinner. McBride and James Greenleaf were best friends since high school, graduating from St. Bernard in 1987. Sadly, Greenleaf lost his life because of the terrorist acts that occurred as he was working in New York City on the morning of September 11th, 2001. In a tribute to Greenleaf, his family and friends created the James A. Greenleaf, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund, Inc., with proceeds used to award full book scholarships for 8th grade students to attend St. Bernard High School. The organization received approximately 30-40 scholarship applications annually, which require a formal essay and teacher recommendations that are reviewed by the Foundation's Board of Directors. The fund also hopes to increase its scholarship offerings either to St Bernard students or other local students who will be attending college.

McBride hopes to get 250-300 runners or more for this year's race, which has received strong support in past years due to amenities that include a flat, scenic race course, plenty of prizes, and a tremendous post-race raffle. "We wanted to establish a tribute to Jim after 9/11," said McBride of the foundation's beginnings. "The success of the fund is a tribute to his being. 100% of the funds earned go directly towards the scholarships," said McBride of the cause. The race takes place on Saturday beginning at 11:00am. Walkers are also welcome. Check out www.jamesgreenleaf.org for more information on all three of the Greenleaf Memorial events.

London Roundup

The 2006 Flora London Marathon once again produced a stellar field and a dramatic duel to the finish, as Kenyan teammates Felix Limo and Martin Lel battled down the final stretch in a race that was fast early and tactical late. It was the 25-year-old Limo who would limp away \$105,000 richer for his win in a brisk time of 2:06:39, outdueling the defending champion Lel by a mere two seconds. In what was considered to be one of the deepest marathon fields ever assembled, Hendrik Ramaala of South Africa was 3rd in 2:06:55, with three runners sub 2:07 and seven men under the 2:08 mark. American Khalid Khannouchi, the former world record holder running his first marathon in over 18 months, finished 4th in 2:07:04, while pre-race favorite Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia struggled over the final 5K, fading to 9th place in 2:09:05.

In addition to a strong Khannouchi return, it was a great day for another American distance runner as California's Deena Kastor ran the fourth fastest female marathon time ever, clocking in at 2:19:36 for a new American record. Russia's Lyudmila Petrova earned runner-up female honors in 2:21:29, also a national record, while Susan Chepkemei of Kenya finished 3rd in 2:21:46. Kastor, who had won in Chicago last fall despite some late mile struggles, ran a perfect race this time, hitting the halfway mark in 1:09:48 and shaking all of her nearest competitors by 25 kilometers. She hammered through the final parts of the course on her own, making good on her promise of a sub 2:20 effort.

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.