

# VEGAS NOT THE HOT SPOT FOR THE PHYSICALLY FIT

By DON SIKORSKI  
*Special to the Bulletin*

People who are driven to exercise on a regular basis often struggle when away from their structured routines of home. Vacations and business travel often throw a money wrench into the workout schedules some thrive on. Runners, many being the obsessive-compulsive type personality that measures a week's progress in miles, tend to suffer the most when removed from the structure of their weekly discipline. And there's not a city in America that compares to Las Vegas, Nevada when it comes to dismantling the physically fit.

This accusation is not a knock at Vegas. In fact, Las Vegas has never attempted to market itself as the city to visit when looking to get some R&R or drop a few pounds. Vegas is the city of excess; the "city that never sleeps"; a place where a person can abuse their body with rich foods, plentiful beverages, and 24 hour, round-the-clock entertainment. Sure, the Las Vegas mega-resort properties each offer a spa and fitness center. And for runners, this provides an option to burn off the calories associated with the Las Vegas living. I've witnessed plenty of patrons losing at the blackjack table but getting their money back from the Casino at the all you can eat buffet.

Surprisingly, Las Vegas residents are a fairly fit bunch compared to their cold-climate counterparts. As a place of residence, Vegas offers plenty of options for runners. The Las Vegas Track Club, for example, boasts over 800 members and consistently offers running events almost every weekend. There are also triathlons and other athletic events offered in surrounding communities. Unfortunately, most Vegas tourists travel by cab and choose not to search out these local offerings. Who wants to think about running 10K kilometers in the desert sun when surrounded by air-conditioned, billion dollar properties and nearly every vice imaginable?

Personally, I've always believed that one of the best ways to offset the caloric intake that Vegas delivers is to walk until your legs can't tolerate anymore. Casino properties have expanded dramatically in size, and with this expansion so did the walking requirements to get from Point A to Point B. As comedian Steven Wright once said, "Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time". Yet now even this simple concept may become extinct. For a rate of approximately \$40 per day, Las Vegas tourists, even those without disability, can hop aboard a mobile scooter and see the Las Vegas strip without burning a single calorie. There's something about a perfectly healthy individual utilizing a device invented for the handicapped that just doesn't seem right to me, but after dodging able-bodied motorists at 5 miles per hour more than once, who am I to argue?

If you're planning a trip to Las Vegas in the future and want to return home a comparable size to when you left, I recommend a hotel wake up call and a brisk morning jog somewhere away from the main drag. The temperatures will be manageable and the traffic minimal at this hour; anything mid-morning or last afternoon spells disaster. Search out your properties' health clubs and adequate treadmills that will do the trick if hitting the streets doesn't seem inviting. The discipline of getting a few miles after only a few hours of sleep should be enough to offset the 22 ounce porterhouse you'll tackle later that evening. And your body will be glad you did.

## Race Update

The Norwich Recreation Department Summer Road Race series kicks off on Thursday, July 5th and will run for eight consecutive Thursday evenings concluding on Thursday, August 23rd. There is a ½ Mile Kid's Run beginning promptly at 6:30pm, followed by a 1 Mile Fun Run at 6:45pm. The 3 Mile Run begins at 7:00pm. All races begin and end in the center of Mohegan Park and there is no cost to participate. Contact the Norwich Recreation Department at 823-3791 for more information.....Waterford's Stephen Herrera has already won more races in 2007 than most people have in their entire running careers. Herrera outran his Mohegan Striders teammate Steve Swift to claim victory in last weekend's Delaney Dash Road Race in Old Saybrook, winning the 5 mile event in 26:47. It was Herrera's 4<sup>th</sup> win over the past 5 weekends .....Mystic's Scott Bessette ran 2:44:48 at the Vermont City Marathon on May 27<sup>th</sup>, good enough for 28<sup>th</sup> place overall.....Former Griswold High standout Gavin Coombs finished 22<sup>nd</sup> in the 3,000 meter steeplechase final at the East Regional NCAA Division I Track & Field qualifier in Gainesville, Florida. Coombs, a junior at North Carolina State, ran 9:08.75. The collegiate best for the distance is Henry Rono's 1978 mark of 8:05.4, a world record at the time that stood for an amazing 11 years. Rono, who turned 55 this year, has recovered from alcoholism and is currently training for an attempt at the word record for the mile in the 55-59 age group.

Don Sikorski writes a twice-monthly running column for the Norwich Bulletin. His "Coach's Corner" column can be accessed at [www.moheganstriders.org](http://www.moheganstriders.org). He can also be reached by e-mail at [kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kdcsikorski@sbcglobal.net).