

# SHORT TAKES

Virginia may be for lovers, as the old tourist campaign used to claim, but on Labor Day weekend, Virginia Beach is for runners. Lots of them. 12,343 of them, give or take a few hundred, all participating in the very flat, potentially fast, Rock 'N' Roll 1/2 Marathon. And with the exception of a finish area crush that was almost stacked up enough to back up the chute (don't think that actually happened, however), the race was extremely well organized. Mother Nature cooperated nicely, blessing the runners with some overcast skies for the majority of the race on an otherwise mostly sunny, very hot and disgustingly humid holiday weekend.

Road trips are always fun, especially when road races are involved -- just ask **Marshall Collins** and the entourage he has heading to Ireland in November. But when you get to see old friends *and* experience one of those friends complete her first half marathon, well, the road trip memory becomes one to cherish. Enter Sue Wyatt: a woman who once shared a boyfriend with me (slight exaggeration but I'm taking poetic license here. Hey, it's my column!), who became my little sister, married a kind, smart and funny friend of mine named Brian, ran in the Sneekers Run with me many years ago, and moved to 'Michikin' where her running was sporadic but her inner drive was still intact. When she started running consistently last year, she mentioned wanting to compete in the Bobby Crim 10 Miler this past August. On a whim, I mentioned that **Sue Lamoureux, Pete** and I, along with my high school friend, Dr. Kathy Hall (who tutored me through Physics and to whom I am still indebted) were entering the Rock 'N' Roll 1/2 Marathon which was the week after Bobby Crim. Hell, if Sue Wyatt wants to run 10 then what's another 3? Presto-chango! Sue Wyatt's 10-mile goal became 13.1 miles with a road trip involved!

What's it like to run 30-plus mile weeks, month after month, all alone? While some runners relish the solitude, yours truly seeks training partners to push me and/or socialize with me. Sue Wyatt ran all those miles with Murray-Dog and Brian in the immediate vicinity but with no one at her side to make the miles merry. Such drudgery. Did she complain? Nope. Did she let an Achilles injury compromise her goal? Nada. She just plodded along, week after week, until Labor Day weekend brought a very fit Wyatt Woman to the Virginia Beach boardwalk.

The results? Well, **The Hammer Lamoureux** led the **Strider** contingent with an 1:54 flat as she used the race as a training run to help prepare for what we hope will be her Boston qualifier, Mystic Places. The Internet posted **Lynne Hill** finishing in 1:57:48, although we didn't see **Lynne** or **Cathy Samokar** (2:44:02) or **Karen Goyette** (2:04:30). We spotted **Brian Andstrom** (2:00:57) as he searched for his wife, **Liz** (2:22:11), in the post-race madness. And as we headed to the UPS trucks for baggage pickup, a smiling **Janice Logan** (2:18:47) called out to us. Small world, eh? And **Pete**, Sue and I? Well, Sue Wyatt was trained for a 10 minute/mile pace. As were approximately 9,000 of the 12,000 finishers, or so it seemed. We averaged 10:45s and had to contend with hoards of sweaty bodies for every step we took. Did we care? Did we really have a right to whine? Not when there were 10 bands on the course. Not when there were cheerleaders lining the roads. Not when we actually stumbled upon the aforementioned Dr. Hall (2:23:50) in the middle of the race and spent a few miles sharing stories and strides. Certainly not when we witnessed a runner lying on the side of the road awaiting an ambulance. If the crowded pack caused us to run a slower-than-desired 2:21:01, well, so be it. I was there to watch my friend cross the finish line of the longest race she's ever run. Trust me, the overhead clock couldn't possibly diminish the pride I felt as she accomplished her goal. She rocked. And I got to roll along with her. How did I get so lucky?

And, in closing...Question: Why would someone name a strip club after a fish? Answer: Because "Croc's" was already taken!

