

Richmond Times-Dispatch

RUNNER'S LOG

*Meet **Laura [Stassi] Jeffrey**, a 30-something (OK - 42) married writer with two kids and a self-described nonrunner who set the goal of completing the 2002 SunTrust Richmond Marathon on Nov. 9.*

She will write regularly about her progress and her talks with others who have taken on the marathon challenge.

GETTING UP TO SPEED

Special to The Times-Dispatch

Published: July 25, 2002

I'm not a runner. Or to be more specific, I'm not comfortable calling myself a runner. A runner, in my mind, is someone small, sleek and flat-chested. Or long, lean and flat-chested. Without getting too graphic or depressed, neither of those descriptions fits me.

So I'm not a runner. But I'm running about 20 miles a week. As the summer progresses, I'll be running even more. I joined the YMCA's marathon training team, and I'm training for the Richmond Marathon. Come November, I'll be one of those fearless-- or foolhardy--people running all over town in the quest to finish the 26.2-mile course in 6 hours, the time limit.

How did I, a self-described non-runner, get into this? Perhaps the idea began forming in November 1999, after I watched runners complete the 8K (5-mile) portion of the marathon. Many of those crossing the finish line fit my description of what a runner looks like. But many others did not. Their accomplishment motivated me, and also shamed me.

I was bored with riding the Lifecycle at the gym. And frankly, I was beginning to feel the need to challenge myself beyond my mommy-wife-work routine.

It took another year or so--not to mention my 40th birthday--to get going, but in January 2001, I began running. I started slowly, grateful for the lung power those Lifecycle sessions had built but painfully aware of how pounding the pavement affected my heels, my ankles, my shins. I could run no more than a mile or two without stopping, and often my legs were so sore that I had to sit out the next few days. But I kept at it and three months later, in April 2001, I completed the Monument Avenue 10K (6.2 miles). I ran the first two miles and the last two and did a combination walk-run the middle two miles. I finished in about 68 minutes. Not bad for a beginner.

I continued running about three times a week and gradually, it became easier. I began to look forward to running almost as much as I looked forward to finishing.

In November 2001, two years after being a mere spectator, I ran in the 8K and knocked out those 5 miles in just under 51 minutes. It was the longest distance I had ever run without stopping, and the feeling of satisfaction was indescribable.

Then, in April 2002, I again participated in the Monument Avenue 10K. But this time, I ran the entire distance and averaged 9-minute miles. And while I was proud of myself, I wasn't as amazed at my accomplishment. Obviously, I needed a new challenge.

So when the mailman brought the brochure describing the YMCA's marathon training program, I didn't automatically toss it into the recycle bin. I had never considered training for a marathon. But then I

realized that by devoting a little time and effort to train, I had completed 6.2 miles. Perhaps with a lot of time and effort, and a new pair of shoes, I could run even farther.

Don Garber concurred. Garber, the head coach for the marathon training team, looks like the runner that he is. He has completed 15 marathons and has coached several training teams. At an informational meeting, Garber explained how the marathon training team works. We would be broken into smaller groups based on our running experience and ability. We would meet every Saturday at the downtown Y for group runs, and we were encouraged to find a buddy of our pace to run with during the week.

By joining the training team, we also would benefit from the experiences of Garber and 10 assistant coaches, all of whom are experienced marathoners. And if we were truly dedicated to this endeavor, Garber said, then we would be able to complete the marathon.

I believed Garber. So I joined the team. On Saturdays, you'll find me at the downtown Y with the more than 100 other Richmonders on the training team. We break into smaller groups and knock out our long runs. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, I'll be running around my Westover Hills neighborhood early in the morning, or making laps around Byrd Park in the afternoons. Mondays are cross-training days; Fridays are rest days.

I'm not a runner. But I'm running. And soon, I'll be running even more.

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ENDURING LITTLE PAINS, FOR A BIG GAIN

Special to The Times-Dispatch

Published: Aug. 7, 2002

After two months of training, this is what I've learned:

Running makes me sweaty, and the sweat stings when it drips from my bangs into my eyes. Running makes me thirsty, and hydration is important. So I hydrate often while I run, and when I need to go, I go - and hope that Ed, a nice assistant coach who's accompanying me, doesn't notice.

Running makes me uncomfortable; sometimes, it hurts. But here's the most important thing I've learned: Running is not something I'm doing to myself, it's something I'm doing for myself.

My teammates on the YMCA marathon training team agree. About 160 people signed up for the program back in May, and, 11 weeks later, most have stuck with it. Some are seasoned runners, but 81 percent are like me, first-time marathoners and, indeed, relatively new to running.

Our average age is 35. The oldest man on the team is 62 and the oldest woman, 57. We are single as well as married and work as attorneys, architects, account executives, engineers, consultants, computer programmers, nurses, teachers, parents.

All of us are too busy for marathon training. We're doing it anyway. We're doing it even though running makes us uncomfortable and sometimes hurts. We're doing it even though we're sweating profusely and relieving ourselves more or less in public. We're doing it because we want to, and we want to because this training program is showing us that we can.

As Stan Grochowski, a CPA who's almost 50, says, "Training for the marathon is my birthday present to myself, to accomplish something I have dreamed about for a while."

Adds Caroline Maier, 32, a stay-at-home mother of a 2-year-old: "This is the one thing I'm doing just for me right now. It feels great!"

And says Steve Combs, 38, a UPS tractor-trailer driver: "Every year I pick a new way to stretch and challenge myself. This year, it's marathon training."

During the past several years, the number of people who have completed marathons nationwide has increased significantly, rising to about 451,000 in 2000. (Marathon participation rates declined slightly in 2001, most likely because of travel fears after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.)

According to Tracey Russell, director of events for the Richmond Sports Backers, participation in the Richmond Marathon increased 42 percent from 1999 to 2000, and then another 2 percent in 2001. To date, Russell adds, registration for the 2002 Richmond Marathon is about three times higher than it was during the same period last year. The Sports Backers is a nonprofit organization that sponsors the Richmond Marathon and partnered with the YMCA for the training team.

Locally, as well as nationwide, the people driving up marathon participation rates are not elite runners. They are regular Jo(e)s, like most of my teammates and me. We're not out to set any speed records. We just want to run 26.2 miles, all at one time. We may not be comfortable. It definitely won't be pretty. But the accomplishment will be ours to savor.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Aug. 21, 2002

How am I preparing for a 26.2-mile race? I'm taking it one week at a time At the first meeting of the YMCA training team, head coach Don Garber gave us detailed schedules spelling out what to do to get ready for the Richmond Marathon.

There were two schedules: one for new runners who simply wanted to finish, and one for more experienced runners who wanted to finish and perhaps even make a certain time. The schedules' main differences were the total weekly miles, and how quickly the mileage increased.

For example, the first schedule called for four days of running, including a long run of 5 miles after five weeks of training. The second schedule called for five days of running, including an 8-mile run. I had recently completed a 10K (6.2 miles); surely I could quickly step up to an 8-mile run.

But as I flipped through the second schedule, I nearly flipped out. The long run after 12 weeks was 14 miles, followed by a 7-mile run the next day. The first schedule, in comparison, called for 10 miles, followed by a cross-training day.

I put down the second schedule, and then I picked it up again. This time, I studied only the first week. A 6-mile long run: I could do that. I decided to follow the second schedule, but I would take it one week at a time.

Almost 14 weeks later, I'm happy to report that I completed the 14-mile run that previously intimidated me, and I'm tackling 16 miles Saturday. I haven't always managed the mileage indicated on the second schedule for the day after the long run, but I've run more on my "off days" than the first schedule requires. Week by week, I'm working my way to Nov. 9.

Here's a quick overview of team training:

We run as a group every Saturday morning. It's our longest run of the week and the most important one, not only for the mileage but also for the camaraderie. As Bertie Fishburne says, "Everyone is so supportive, and the energy of the group definitely enhances my running experience." Jasper Mersereau adds, "I am running faster and better and more consistently because of [my teammates]."

The second most important run is on Wednesdays, when we run half the mileage scheduled for the upcoming Saturday. We run on our own or make arrangements with other team members.

No matter which schedule we're following, we increase mileage about 10 to 20 percent each week. If mileage is increased too quickly, fatigue and injury are more likely to occur.

It's OK to occasionally cut back or take a day off. (Two rest days are built into the first schedule; one is in the second schedule.) However, the marathon is not a test you can cram for the day before," Garber says. "If you don't prepare, you will not have very much fun on marathon day, if you finish the race at all."

We celebrate each victory. A victory is every time we finish a run, whether it's an easy 3 or a 10-mile trek.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Sept. 4, 2002

I'm seven miles into my first 11-mile run, and I'm losing it. My will is weak from sticky weather, a numb knee, and Hermitage-to-Boulevard's commingled aromas of auto exhaust, dog droppings and a barbecue restaurant. My usual running partners are ahead of me; there's one person struggling behind me. I am too cowardly to wait for her, too dispirited to keep going.

Then I call on the angels at my elbows. I envision them lifting me up and moving me along. Suddenly, I feel lighter on my feet. I'm going to make it, I tell myself. The angels at my elbows will get me through the run.

So what do other runners think about? In the book "Marathon," runner extraordinaire Hal Higdon talks about how important it is to concentrate on every stride, and to be "acutely aware of any [body] signals." I say Higdon's advice is fine - if you can breeze through 26.2 miles in a couple of hours.

But the only way I get through a long run is if I spend a lot of time not thinking about what I'm doing. So I talk, to my teammates if they're around and to myself if they're not. I let my mind wander. I call on the angels.

An informal survey shows that many of my teammates are doing the same kinds of things. We're employing "positive self-talk" and imagery, two techniques suggested by Lisa Harmon of the Life Skills

Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. Harmon talked to the Y team recently about preparing mentally for the marathon.

"I play old rock and roll in my head constantly," says one teammate. "I dream about finishing strong and the people waiting for me—in spirit and in person—at the end. I play some more rock and roll and turn it up."

"I envision a runner in front of me with a rope around her waist, pulling me along until I have enough strength and energy to move ahead or closer to her pace," says Angela Robinson, 37, a banking sales management consultant.

"I try to visualize floating along like a cloud," says teacher Cathy Pelnik, 39.

"My father passed away when I was 4," says architect Shelley Myers, 29. "I imagine that the wind is his way of encouraging me to keep going."

For plant manager Don Sumerford, 47, success is as simple as a smile. "In 1998, I ran the Richmond Marathon," he recalls. "The day before the race, the man I work with said, 'Whenever I see someone running, they look like they are dying or in serious pain. Why would anyone want to run?'"

"I gave that a lot of thought. I decided I was going to smile as I ran. It worked. It finished the marathon in 4:32 with a smile on my face. Even now when I run and start to feel fatigued or get too serious about my performance, I try smiling."

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Sept. 18, 2002

Before I started running, I was firmly planted in the "food is pleasure" camp. I knew intellectually that "food is fuel" but to me, it was so much more. In fact, one of the reasons why I joined the YMCA training team was to lose weight. If Oprah Winfrey could turn so trim from a marathon adventure, I thought, then why couldn't I?

Losing weight is no longer a goal of my training, though I have indeed, shed several pounds. Instead, I focus on what I *should* eat so I'll have the stamina to run. Bagels, big bowls of oatmeal, stir-fry broccoli and rice, pancakes with fresh blueberries and strawberries spooned on top—these are my new pleasure foods.

They're also among the right foods to eat, says nutritionist and marathoner Patti Williams, because they're rich in carbohydrates. Williams, assistant professor of health education at Longwood University, spoke to the Y training team recently about food.

Williams says nutritionists agree that runners should load up on carbohydrates. They are the body's primary fuel source, providing the energy we need to make it through our workouts. In fact, 60 to 70 percent of a runner's daily diet should consist of them. This is "carbo loading," Williams says, not pigging out on pasta in the days before a big race. "Eating a high-carbohydrate diet should be the norm every day during training," she says.

Williams adds that most people consume too much protein. "In doing so, they reduce their athletic potential," she says. "While adequate protein is essential for building and repairing damaged tissue, the average American consumes twice as much protein as he or she needs."

Of course, complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, breads and rice are best. But Williams says that after our long runs, when we've burned through our stored carbs, it's important that we quickly restock our supply. That's when it's fine to ingest simple carbohydrates such as the Fig Newtons and full-strength Coke that my husband, Derk, and I savored after completing a half-marathon on Labor Day.

When I began training for the marathon, I sometimes skipped breakfast before a run. Now I never do, even if I'm running only 4 miles and "breakfast" is half a chocolate brownie Cliff Bar – total of 41 grams of carbs, 4 grams of fat and 240 calories – and a tall glass of orange juice.

During our June beach vacation in Emerald Isle, N.C., I struggled through morning runs after dinners that included a couple of light beers and hush puppies from our favorite seafood restaurant. Now, dinner is whole-wheat fettucine mixed with chopped tomatoes and a bit of feta cheese, or polenta topped with tomato sauce.

"During training, alcoholic and caffeinated beverages should be consumed only in moderation because they are diuretics," Williams says, "and adequate hydration should be a primary goal." I admit that along with lots and lots of water, I've also consumed many homemade iced coffees with fat-free half-and-half. Since July 5, however, I've been alcohol-free. I'll wait until sometime after Nov. 9 to crack a celebratory beer.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Oct. 2, 2002

If the YMCA marathon training team had a theme song, it would have to be R.E.M.'s "Everybody Hurts." From blisters and bruised toenails to shin splints, tendinitis and torn ligaments, many of us are feeling the physical effects of increased weekly totals and long runs stretching anywhere from 16 to 20 miles.

"My legs are definitely suffering," said Erin Fuselier. "The quads start screaming around mile 13 and from 16 on, everything aches."

"My legs are fine but oh, my aching feet!" said Keith Yoch. "I have had lingering plantar fasciitis in my left foot for a couple months now."

As for me, I've been nursing my right knee for several weeks. Why am I and so many of my teammates hurting? "Extra miles can take a toll on the body," said Dr. Doug Cutter, medical director of the Chippenham Sports Medicine Center as well as medical director of the Suntrust Richmond Marathon.

"But the main reason [for injuries] is the body is accustomed to a certain amount of recovery between exercise bouts, and your training does not allow for this at this point," Cutter says. "Exercise causes a breakdown in tissue followed by repair. Without proper recovery, the body does not repair and the older we get, the longer it takes to recover."

According to Cutter and other experts, few people can expect to run as often and pile up as many miles as the training team and not feel it. "Most runners will experience some type of minor to major overuse injury," Cutter said. "Catching the problem early is the key. Otherwise, the injury can become debilitating."

Cutter said injured runners should cut back on the number of miles they're putting in. He suggested cross-training with another activity such as cycling or swimming, or even take a brief break. "An extra day of rest may provide as much help to the training regimen as the prescribed mileage for the day," he said. "Many experienced runners know intuitively when to back off," Cutter said. "But novice runners, in particular, should not try to push through the pain."

Cutter also recommends stretching before running, and stretching even more afterward. Apply ice to the painful area, he said, and if the injury persists for more than a few days, seek medical attention.

So yes, "Everybody hurts. And everybody cries." But there's another line in our theme song we relate to. It goes, "Hold on, hold on, hold on." With about a month to go until marathon day, holding on is what we are desperately trying to do.

"That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger," said Blair Just. "A little pain reminds me I am getting stronger with every stride."

"The accomplishment of running longer distances has filled me with pride, and the aches and pains are my medals of achievement," said Sean McLaren. "I am having fun."

Or as Christine Pancoast said, "My feet are blistered and my legs are heavy, but they're both moving in the right direction - forward, one step at a time."

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Oct. 16, 2002

My husband, Derk, is also training for the Richmond Marathon. We're not running together, because he's fast, but there are definite advantages to us tackling this challenge at the same time.

Neither of us is complaining about the sweat puddles left on the kitchen floor by the runner who habitually stands at the refrigerator and guzzles cranapple juice straight from the family-size bottle.

No one is griping about the money the other runner has spent on two pairs of shoes, a half-dozen pairs of socks, five shirts, three pairs of shorts, and six very expensive, no-bounce sports bras.

And neither of us is upset that most of our evenings end by 9:30 when, tired beyond reason, we fall into bed and almost immediately to sleep.

Several other couples are training together, including one who met after they joined the YMCA marathon training team. Some of these couples, such as Derk and I, are sharing the experience but not the long runs.

Angela and Christian Parrish, who have been married for four years, "have each found our own group of running buddies" on the team.

Teammates Tom Reilly and Emily Grossman are engaged. They don't run together, Reilly said, because Grossman, a high school cross-country champion and collegiate competitor, is "too damn fast."

"In the beginning, we had some difficulty deciding whether to run together," Grossman said. "Once we decided that it was OK to run at different paces, everything's been fine."

Lisa and Peyton Randolph, who have been married for 16 years, also are on the team. But Peyton, the stronger runner, usually stays home on the Saturday runs to take care of the couple's four children. He does his running solo after Lisa returns.

"It's not easy to get a baby sitter at 5:30 a.m.," Lisa said. "Usually, we high-five each other at the door as an exchange of support and changing of the guard with the kids."

Teammates Jennifer Marwitz and boyfriend Johnny Capocelli also run at different paces. But unlike some other couples, they're sticking together.

"Johnny stays with me even though I know he could turn in much faster times," Marwitz said. Capocelli agreed. "Our individual paces are different. But without question, I enjoy running with Jennifer more than I do running alone."

Becky Hartz and Steve Sadler, who celebrated their first wedding anniversary in September, also are dedicated to running side by side.

"We set the expectation at the beginning that we wanted to do this together," Sadler said. "I think there is considerable value in having a great time running instead of a great running time."

Said Hartz: "We decided that running the marathon would be something we would do together as partners to build on our relationship. We plan to cross the finish line together, holding hands."

Derk and I won't run together. But I know he'll be waiting for me at the finish line. Then we'll drive home and limp into the house and straight to the kitchen - where the cranapple juice awaits.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Oct. 30, 2002

Six months, one week and five days ago, I began training for the Richmond Marathon. Since then, I have run almost 700 miles over bridges and through the Fan, up and down - and back up - Riverside Drive and on long stretches of Patterson and Forest Hill avenues, to name a few spots. I've sprinted up many a hill and have shied away from only a few.

I've dodged road kill, cars rolling through stop signs and an irate driver who leaned over and out the passenger-side window of his truck so he could show everyone on the marathon training team his chubby middle finger.

I've been sore, and I've been hurt. But I've also felt good, and I have felt strong. I've eaten pancakes, baked potatoes and pasta like there's no tomorrow (Take that, Dr. Atkins), and still I have lost 20 pounds.

I have made new friends through the team but also have lost a few to injury, personal conflicts and pregnancy. I have been energized by family, friends and strangers who wave, wish me luck and honk their car horn in support as I jog past. Running has been the most difficult thing I have ever done, but it has also been one of the most rewarding.

With the marathon a little more than a week away, we on the Y team are following a few "road rules" so we'll be ready for the big day. Here they are:

*Tapering. We're running fewer miles, and we're running less often. Last week, we ran 40 miles. This week, we're running 26 and next week, not counting the actual marathon, we'll run 11 miles.

"Some people have asked me, 'Why aren't we running anymore?' " says Don Garber, head coach of the Y training team. "Studies have shown that a rested athlete runs better." Tapering enables the body not only to heal, Garber said, but also to store glycogen, our fuel for the marathon.

*Eating. We're running fewer miles, and that means we're burning fewer calories. We're trying to cut back so we don't have an extra pound or two to carry with us on the marathon. However, we're still maintaining a diet consisting primarily of carbohydrates.

*Hydration. We'll be carrying water bottles with us wherever we go next Thursday and Friday to remind ourselves to keep drinking water. We shouldn't wait until the morning of the race to try to hydrate.

*Mental preparation. We've done just about everything we can do physically to prepare for the marathon. Now, we need to prepare mentally. So we are visualizing the course, thinking positive thoughts, and preparing to concentrate and stay focused.

"You will have a bad stretch sometime during the 26.2 miles," Garber said, "everyone does. Just keep going: It will pass. You will get over it."

*Relaxing. In the days leading up to the marathon, we're supposed to get plenty of rest, limit stress and stay off our feet. No problem. I already hear the couch calling my name.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Nov. 6, 2002

Experienced runners say the marathon is two races: the first 20 miles and the final 6.2. As a beginning runner and first-time marathoner, I'll be tackling several races Saturday.

The first will be to Mile 13, where I'll wave to my kids and neighbors standing on the corner of Forest Hill Avenue and Westover Hills Boulevard.

The second will be to Mile 18, where I'll shake the memory of a really bad training run and cheer that I'm almost to Boulevard.

My next race will be to Mile 20, of course, and from there, I'll run a series of 1-mile races until I make it to the finish line in under five hours, spirit and right knee willing.

Thanks to marathon organizers and sponsors, we runners will have plenty to look forward to as we wind our way along the course. Water and the sports drink Ultima will be available for us to take - we runners don't "drink," we "take" - starting at Mile 2 and then every 2 miles until Mile 20, when they will be available every mile. Conveniently, these are also the portapotty stops.

Musicians will be playing along the course to encourage us. We can ingest the energy gel GU at Mile 14 and again at Mile 20, where we also can break through a paper wall to show that we haven't hit it. "Hitting the wall" is a running term that means losing the physical and mental stamina to continue. See what six months of training has taught me?

At Mile 22, those of us in need of a quick sugar fix can grab a Coke, chocolate chip cookie or other sweet treat. I'm skipping this stop, so I can make the final 4.2 miles without gastric distress.

The finish line, sweet finish line, is at 10th and Cary. After crossing it, we runners will wrap up in Mylar blankets, grab bagels, get a massage, perhaps, and revel in the satisfaction of completing a lofty goal.

Several official spectator spots have been set up for those who are interested in watching the marathon. They are at the Starbucks at River Road Shopping Center, which is Mile 7; Main Street Brewery, Mile 17; Pope Avenue on North Side, Mile 21.2; and the downtown YMCA, Mile 25. For details and driving directions, go to www.richmondmarathon.com.

At one of these spots or somewhere else along the course, I hope I'll see you on Saturday, and I hope you'll see me. I'll be wearing a bright yellow YMCA marathon training team shirt with my name on it.

My bib number is 1790. Call out to me and wave. During this incredible journey, I have been blessed with so much support and goodwill. I know it's selfish to ask for more, but I'm doing it anyway.

While you're waiting for me to pass by, cheer for all the thousands of runners who will be ahead of me. After I pass, cheer for the few who will be behind me. We all will need encouraging words on marathon day.

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RUNNER'S LOG

Published: Nov. 12, 2002

The way I figure it, I have double the endurance of Elly Rono, winner of the 25th annual Richmond Marathon. He completed the course in 2:16:02, while I took more than twice that long. While he was claiming victory, I was still a couple of minutes away from reaching Mile 13. He obviously wanted to just get the whole thing over and done with, while I savored each and every mile.

That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. I finished the Richmond Marathon Saturday, and on that day, finishing was all the victory I needed. The weather was uncomfortably hot and windy and the course was – how else can I describe it? – long.

The marathon never got easy for me, even though I had been buoyed by phone calls and cards of support. It didn't get easy even though strangers along the course called out my name and cheered for me. (Hint: If you ever run a marathon, write your name in big letters across the front of your shirt.)

It didn't get easy, even after I passed Mile 20 feeling fairly pumped up from the cola my parents and kids passed to me at Mile 18. At Mile 25, with the finish literally right around the corner, it still didn't get easy.

But I finished, in 4:49:37, and I'm proud. I'm also proud of my YMCA marathon training teammates. Kelly Berling (4:23:13) and Blair Just (3:53:46) completed their first marathons with aplomb after earlier attempts to run a marathon were disrupted. Three teammates qualified for Boston: first-timer Emily Grossman, 26, at 3:30:45; and multiple marathoners Daryl Jaschen, 42 (3:16:36) and Levy Matala, 39 (3:02:08).

Many people have told me they dream of running a marathon. I say if I can do it, anyone can. The most important thing is to join a training team. On Saturday, 108 of us on the YMCA marathon training team lined up for the start. We all finished. (A total of 158 people signed up for the team, according to Don Garber, head coach. Twenty-nine people came to one or two sessions but then dropped out; eight others dropped after a month or so, 11 became injured or pregnant and were unable to run the marathon; and two trained but ran another marathon.)

The best part of training? Without a doubt, the runner's diet. Eat all the carbs you want, folks, and still lose weight. The worst part? For me, a directional dyslexic, it wasn't getting up early every Saturday morning or pounding the pavement during one of the hottest summers on record. The worst part for me was getting lost on the training runs.

Today, my calves are still tight from Saturday's feat and I'm practically bathing in Icy Hot. But I'm also anxious to start running again and have made plans to run the Jingle Bell 5K. As for another marathon ... I'm running for fun the next several months. But next fall, I may just ramp up the mileage and go for a P.R. at the 26th Richmond Marathon. I'm not a runner, but I'm running.

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