



WORD from = the BIRD

BCRR MONTHLY NEWS

WWW.BCRR.ORG

February 2023

Houston Marathon Behind the Scenes



Joel DuBois

Leading up to Race Day — My experience of the 2023 *Chevron Houston Marathon* was a bit different than before. I am a middle of the pack runner, having completed 30 Marathons (15 Houstons) and a number of ultras. This year I have been afflicted with a case of plantar fasciitis that just won't go away. I saw a sports recovery chiropractor that was able to keep me running, but I never got totally past it. I have been able to run 6 miles fairly comfortably, even 8 miles one time, but somewhere in the 6-8 mile range, the foot starts talking to me telling me to "stop." Sometimes it screams "STOP RIGHT NOW!"

I signed up for the Houston Half marathon in October after my 8-mile outing, hoping it would hold up for the 13.1 miles. Long story short, it did not! Running out Allen Parkway I hit the first underpass and the foot started hurting a bit as the heel strike is different on the downhill. I soldiered

on to the second underpass and the foot started hurting more on the downhill. I continued down towards Shepherd, but the foot kept moaning and groaning; and as I thought about having to run down those underpasses three more times (or 6 more downhills), I decided the foot would not hold up, that it just wasn't worth the pain I knew I'd feel if I continued and finished. So I DNF'd at Shepherd and jogged back to the start via the Buffalo Bayou trail, walking the downhills. At that moment, I also knew that I was not going to sign up to run in January. Volunteering, not running, would be my "job" for the 2023 edition of the Houston Marathon.

Due to a Texans tailgate and game (totally different conversation I do not want to have), I wasn't able to attend *John's Loooong Run* to help out, so I volunteered to help set up the day before and was in the kitchen in **Sue and Allen's** party house, when **Susan Cita** asked **John Phillips** if he knew anyone that could captain the refueling station at Mile 23. Before I realized what that meant, I chimed in that I was available to volunteer and Susan DID NOT LET

THAT GO!! Next thing I knew I was filling out application forms and a resume; and I think I signed away my

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PR'd at CHM

Photo: CHM

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Word from the Bird

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FREE

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Has your contact info changed?
Send any updates to
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From the President



Lisa Thompson

Hey BCRR,

Wow, that was one heck of a January! From the marathon to the crazy weather, the whole month was a test of one's mental and physical toughness. Luckily, for BCRR members, mental and physical toughness are characteristics that are commonplace in long distance runners. And I was proud to see so many of our members tough it out during a very warm Chevron Houston Marathon and Aramco Half Marathon. Everyone looked so good out there! Special kudos go out to all of you that beat your goal or achieved a new PR. Congratulations!



Photo: Hardeep Thind

ALMOST as challenging as the marathon was the weather Houston endured in January. From bitter cold, to surprisingly hot, combined with thunderstorms, flooding, and tornados, meant we saw it all lately. The stormy weather should be a reminder to us all to be careful out there! Even the toughest runner is no match for some of the freak storms we've seen lately. When in doubt, please always check the weather forecast before heading out to one of our runs.

Speaking of tough runners, I want to thank the folks behind the tough runners. The friends and family that line the streets, and the volunteers shivering in the cold to hand out fluids, make a tough run much more bearable.

At the time of my picture here, approximately 11 miles into my race,

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REPORT YOUR RACE RESULTS

We want to know what our members are doing on the roads and/or trails. Send all your results to us at spyderbounds@gmail.com or thatsjoesmail@gmail.com and we'll make sure they hit the next newsletter!

ADVERTISING INFO

How would you like to see your own ad in the Bayou City Road Runners Newsletter? For all personal or business advertising inquiries, please send an email to the Treasurer at sarah.austin@utexas.edu.

CHM Behind-the-Scenes *(Continued from page 1)*

first-born son. He is 36 and I haven't had the heart to tell him yet... Shhh!!

I've volunteered at many runs over the years, but it usually involves helping with course setup and teardown, post-race shirt distribution and beer distribution ("one for you, one for me" is my motto, but please don't tell the people in charge of beer). I have never been in charge of a refueling station (Gatorade & water) at a full-blown marathon. I knew these stations from a runner's perspective; and I helped Susan at her Mile 20 station 8 years ago upon returning from Dubai in no shape to run the marathon. Oh, and did I mention that the training held for the station captains had already taken place. So I didn't even have that to help guide me.

I ended up doing much more than heading up that station, as I was asked to go to the Marathon's warehouse in late December to help prep some of the equipment that goes to each of the stations. Since the Course Director figured out I was available and willing, I was again asked to head to the warehouse a few days before the race to pick up the trucks that would carry the equipment to the stations along the course; and I stayed to help load the trucks. Trucks carried equipment out to 22 refueling stations on the course, for the full and half marathons. I didn't know it at the time, but this additional help went a long way to helping me on race day. Knowing what all was being taken to the stations allowed me to ask a lot of questions. Why is this taken? How is this used? What is THAT? The answers to those questions helped me figure out what all was involved in running the station.

Race Day — I was originally told to be at my station on Allen Parkway (just before Dunlavy) at 5 AM. Who the heck gets up at that time of morning I asked the mirror. "Runners do" the mirror responds! I talk to Stan, who will be bringing my equipment with the truck, and he gives me until 5:30 to show up. YAY! I'm already winning, I get an extra 30 minutes of sleep!! I arrive about 5:20, and he and the truck are there. We have a chance to talk a bit as we are still waiting on the Water Monsters to be delivered. We need those to be set up and filled before we can start setting up. So no need to unload the truck too early. I had never seen (or hadn't paid attention to) a Water Monster before,



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Prez letter *(Continued from page 2)*

is about when the day started to heat up and many runners started to slow down. That's when I start to really appreciate the volunteers. If you were on **Susan Cita's** team near mile 20, or **Joel DuBois'** team near mile 23, or served in other ways, THANK YOU! Runners are tough, but we all still need the strong support of friends, family and the kindness of strangers.

Going forward, as we run the streets of Houston in 2023, my wish for my BCRR family this year is that you all receive even more support from volunteer friends and family. Even more kindness from strangers. And even more opportunities for YOU to be the one that provides support and kindness to a fellow runner.

Most of all, I hope you all find 2023 does NOT require us to be so tough. I hope 2023 is NOT as challenging as the last couple of years; and instead I hope 2023 proves to be one of our best years yet!

See you on the road!
Lisa



CHM Behind-the-Scenes *(Continued from page 3)*

but it made my job that day much easier. I had 8 of these (each holds 125 gallons of water) and have multiple spouts, so we didn't need to get water from fire hydrants.

The Water Monsters were dropped off, the water truck followed shortly thereafter, and we were able to



start setting up tables and filling cups. My station was allotted 75 volunteers, leading up to race day I had 45 volunteers sign up for my station and on race day I actually had 35 show up. Many were late, as they couldn't get to where they were supposed to be able to park due to road closures, but they showed up ready to work. I quickly put them to work making Gatorade from concentrate, then filling cups. We had 13 tables, so 6 had Gatorade and 7 water. The cups are filled 3-4 layers high. On a cooler morning 3 would have been enough, on this day, I decided to go 4 layers high on half of the tables, three high on the others. It was a nice cool

morning, but very humid, and got warmer as the day unfolded. So I knew later runners would be hurting by the time they got to Mile 23.

Having only about 45 of 74 volunteers allotted bothered me quite a bit leading up to this day. Seven of the 45 were my family members (including a friend), as I had recruited my wife, my son (yes, the one that I signed away), a daughter, her husband, one granddaughter and a friend of the granddaughter (my daughter provided the only pics from the station, I never even thought to take any). Then having 25% of them as no-shows, I was a bit concerned. Luckily, I must admit I had some pretty good workers out there. They kept pretty darn busy from ~7:30 AM until things started to die down about 1 PM. Then we were cleaning up and getting ready for the trucks coming to pick everything up after the last runners came by. Luckily, we didn't have any real issues pop up. No runners falling at our station (maybe they were stopped by Medical just before they got to the refueling station).

All in all, it was a good day! I learned a few things about setting up. So I



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would do a few things differently, but in all honesty, I hope I'm back to running next year, probably in the Half Marathon. If I cannot run, I will be back out here at Mile 23. Volunteering is a wonderful way to give back to the running community. I'm 100% sure I still have a lot to learn, but I did learn a lot about how much goes into putting on a marathon. SOOO much more than I ever thought about. I highly recommend runners volunteer for races when not running them.



OPPOSITE PAGE:

- 1) Joel DuBois' granddaughter, Stacey Smith in pink, with friend Reagan filling and stacking Gatorade cups.
- 2) Race leaders passing the Mile 23 Refueling Station
- 3) Volunteers show spirit as they await the first runners.

THIS PAGE:

- 4) Near the end of the race, the barely alive runners grind out the final miles as best they can.
- 5) Joel DuBois' son-in-law, Wade Smith, still helping as the last marathoners limp by the Refueling Station followed immediately by the clean-up trucks.

COVER PAGE:

Joel DuBois notes, "Just so you know that I am still running, I provided a picture of me running the 5K the day before the marathon, with running partners, Amy Tan and Sam Pace Webster (who both set significant PRs in the marathon on Sunday, mainly because of my pacing them at the 5K)."

ALL PHOTOS CREDIT: October Smith

Author's Note: I was supposed to request, obtain and consolidate short write-ups from the BCRR participants in this year's races, but totally forgot to request them, so no one provided any write-ups. WTH??!!??? My penance was to write a longer article. Your penance for not providing any write-ups is to read my longer article!!

River Oaks Lights Up for BCRR



Joe Lengfellner

The wintertime-fun tradition that is the *BCRR Holiday Lights Run* commenced on Wednesday, Dec 14, and it proved a great excuse to jog through the festively decorated River Oaks neighborhood. Approximately 30 holiday lights lovers joined in the merriment including BCRR members alongside family, friends, children and baby! The event kicked-off with a group



PHOTO: Hardeep Thind



PHOTO: Hardeep Thind

photo near the Rose Garden and looped through River Oaks for about four miles before returning to the Rose Garden. After the run, many attendees went to *Kenneally's Irish Pub*



to continue the celebration with pizza and beer — just the way Santa intended!

Half Marathon Memories—Valentino Jay



Valentino Jay

I PR'd by exactly 100 seconds on Sunday by running 1:11:28 (5:28 avg). You'd think that everything had gone perfectly for that kind of result. Well, that's far from the case. I've been semi-injured since Nov. I had minor hip issues, which lead to knee issues, which lead to ankle issues, then back to hip issues. You know, compensation type of injuries.

I was still able to put in some very easy pace (8:00 - 8:40 per mile) miles in on a week-to-week basis and maintain a healthy volume, but couldn't do workouts for a while. I was able to get in a couple of 4 mile tempo runs at 5:35-ish and some 7x1 mile runs at the same pace. Something around the hips, or lower back, would get really tight as I'd do anything faster than a 6 minute pace.

Then 1 week prior to the race, I had a fever of 101.3 F and was throwing up the Sunday prior to the *Aramco Half Marathon*. On the Thursday before the race, I tried a mini-workout and did 3x800m on roads and barely averaged 6:00 a minute pace and struggled. Race day came and I had my wife wait at mile 4 (which is close to our home) with a blanket in case I decided to drop out, but I wanted to at least start so that I could feel the race day energy and enjoy some of the crowd support.

The morning of the race I drank some caffeine, took a Tylenol, and prayed to God that I

wouldn't feel as miserable as I'd felt all week.

Well as the race started all of a sudden I felt great and had no signs of my sickness or any of the injuries I had. Then the rest is history. It's hard to believe that I was really close to not even starting the race and would've left such a good PR on the table!

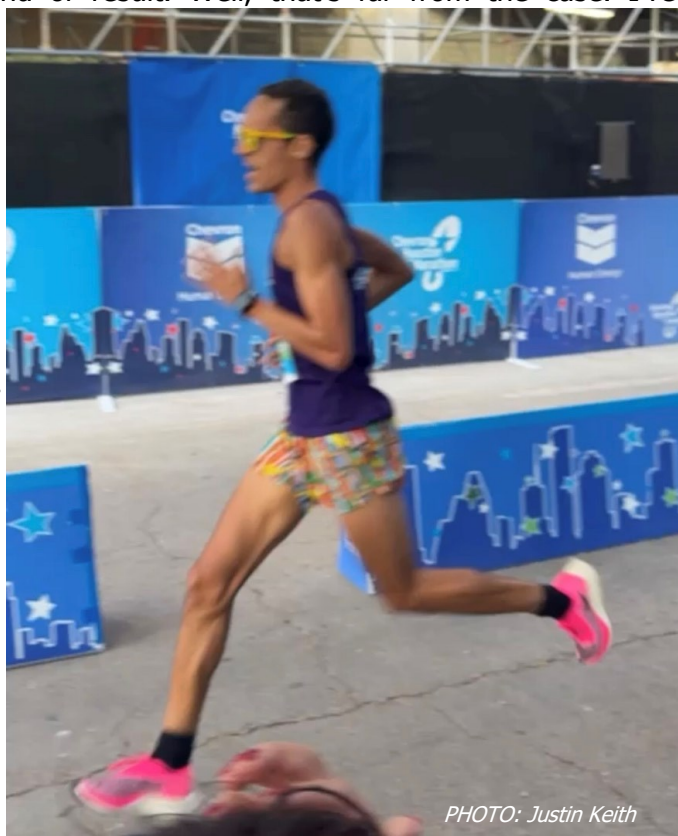


PHOTO: Justin Keith



PHOTO: Milan Jamrich



Marathon Memories—Amy Tan



Amy Tan

What a day! Got my BQ and a Personal Record! So thrilled!

This goal was 10 years in the making. 10 years ago, I volunteered at a water station at mile 6.5. It was freezing and raining. The whole time I was asking myself, "Why wasn't I running?"

Congrats to all the runners! Thank you so very much to all the volunteers! The race doesn't happen without you. Thank you to my wonderful friends and family for all the love and support! The texts coming through were lovely! I have so much love for my running community. All the advice, all the support, all the training runs, all the ups and downs. This day reminds me that the failures and disappointments brought me to this place. It's the journey.

Race report: The culmination of 18 weeks of training, a badly sprained ankle, a mishap with a garage door, weather challenges, a couple of viruses, and a lot of reshuffling. Honestly, I wasn't sure if I was really

ready. Last year, I felt like I had flawless training, and while I had a good race and a PR, I didn't hit my goals. Despite not having flawless training this year, I had a great race. Thanks to all of y'all who supported me and listened to my doubts and encouraged me.

Victor Tan got up at 4 AM to drop our daughter at the mile 2 water stop for volunteer duty and me near the GRB. I got to see lots of friends and made the BCRR picture this year. I really love this part of race day--greeting my running friends before the



PHOTO: CHM

race. It's wild to think there must be over 30,000 people in GRB. I got to hang out with the really fast runners in Corral A--my first time to qualify for A. I walked to the corrals with **Kelli Tomlinson**, and managed to find some BCRR runners (**Joe Lengfellner**, **Lee Morris**, **Stephen Kallus**) to start the race with. I thought I would be cold in the corral, but I really wasn't cold at all.

I was super worried about going out too fast which is one of the things I did last year. Managed



PHOTO: Hardeep Thind



PHOTO: Sam Pace Webster

to run the first mile at 8:54. But then it's just too hard not to run what feels good. Saw my baby girl at mile 2, and she yelled "That's my mom! She's going to PR today!" And then I saw **Michael McDonough** who was running near me. We ran a little way together and chatted about goals and training; and then I went on ahead. I saw **Andrew Webster** and Peper at Waugh with the sun rising over the skyline.

I ran the next 10 way too fast. Had a 7:51 in there—that was ridiculous. And I knew it. I knew I needed to slow it down or I couldn't go all 26.2 miles. And the Westpark Bridge is my nemesis.

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Literally walked up half of it. Mile 12, I started feeling like I couldn't keep going. Mile 13 was the worst at 9:31. But I knew I had given myself a cushion. Running another 13.1 at that pace seemed unlikely. Saw **Richard Lynn** at mile 16 and told him I wasn't going to make it. He told me "Yes you are, get back out there." He brought me my second bottle of Tailwind, and that bottle felt like it weighed 50 pounds, so I started drinking it to make it lighter; and then I hit like some second wind.

It was hard, but I just told myself you have to run goal pace, and somehow, I was able to run 17-21 at the goal pace



PHOTO: Andrew Webster

or faster. Then I knew. I knew I would sub 4 and probably BQ. I was looking at the clock time, and I realized that I only had around 6.2 miles left, and I had close to an hour left on my clock. So I just tried to keep the pace as best as I could until I got to the last 3/4 of a mile and then just sprinted in.

I was looking for the BCRR station at mile 20. I missed it somehow. I was looking for **Joel DuBois and Sharon** at

mile 23, and somehow missed them, although Sharon swears that she was yelling my name. I was very focused on putting one foot in front of the other at that point. I was thinking I will never ever run a marathon this fast again. I'll just take my BQ and never run this fast again. I saw **Kelli Tomlinson** at some point, and I yelled to her that I was going to do it-- I was going to BQ. I think I got a little choked up at that point.

The weather was actually okay for me. I wasn't ever cold, and I didn't overheat. I was so grateful for the cloud cover. There was a breeze that helped. I stayed hydrated with my tailwind and drank extra water too. I wanted to stop so badly. I wanted to just quit running. It was so hard to keep going. I pulled out my mantras to get through and thought of all the people who have encouraged me. I



PHOTO: CHM



PHOTO: CHM

remembered that mindset and determination are critical. The miles faded away, and I kept going. This is where the mental training is as important as the physical training.

I really felt all of the pieces of the Hansons marathon method falling into place. If you are aiming for a pace, you really have to run 10 seconds faster (why they do intervals and strength runs). The first 16 should have been a piece of cake. I felt completely ready for the first 16 because the training gets you out doing 13, with 10 at tempo for 3 weeks, and I knew I could do that. 17-20 is the bridge. 4 miles to mentally hang in there until you get to 20. Once you hit 20, then it's

just a 10k, which is why the minimum run is an easy 6 throughout the training. On race day, it's so mental, and you've done the easy 6 so many times, it really seems like you're almost to the finish.

It was great to have some training on the course itself with BCRR thanks to **Sam Pace Webster** and **Joel DuBois** making me do *John's Looooong Run*. The warmup series really helped with practicing pace and shoes and nutrition. All of these runs with BCRR friends were such a boost and good times.

Crossed the line at 3:51:26. My PR was 4:15. April 2024 feels far away, and I can't wait to submit my application to Boston.

Shout out to all my BCRR friends! I didn't get to see everyone that day. You were all with me along the way.

Marathon Memories—Joe Lengfellner



Joe Lengfellner

Reaching the finish line at the Houston Marathon was a miraculous conclusion to my long road back from a knee injury 10 months prior.

I had to completely stop running for four months, and then started back very slowly. I managed a few good long runs before the marathon, but nothing free of pain. And the fear that I might need to drop out halfway through the race haunted me all the way to the start line. Luckily, my race went well. "Well" being relative to most old runners. In short, my knee pain barely bothered me for the first 10 miles. It slowly crept into an issue around mile 15, but not a sharp pain. So, I thought it was safe to keep going. Besides, BOTH my knees hurt! LOL.

Heading into race day with very little idea what stage I was at in my recovery process, I set my expectations very wide. My base "passing grade" goal was finish standing up, and during much of December that seemed iffy. BUT if I did survive, I thought I'd cross the finish near 4:30. That seemed doable if I just plodded along and didn't drop out. On the opposite end of the spectrum, my "dream goal" was 4 hours flat. My moderate/target goal was 4:15. So I began with a 30-minute wide window of prediction. Not very impressive guesswork for a seasoned runner.

Surprising myself, I stuck to my dream goal pace until about mile 19. However, at that point I WAS DONE. After that I slowed dramatically. I knew finishing under 4 hours was fantasy at that point. And I was cool with that. I eased off the pace and tried to coast it in. "Just enjoy the show," I told myself. I paused for a large beer, and walked up the Allen Pkwy hills.

When I saw my finish was 4:12, I was thrilled! I beat my mid-range expectations, and BONUS I didn't destroy my knee. Victory!!



About that Towel:
Early on in the race, a vendor was giving out hand towels. I grabbed one secretly thinking, "Might be funny if I literally throw in the towel when my knee pain gets too much," but luckily it never got that bad. By the end of the race, I was totally stoked about NOT having to throw in the towel.



ALL PHOTOS: CHM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
Feb 18	Sam Houston Park	Law Week 8K Fun Run*
March 1	Valhalla pub patio, Rice University	Rice Run ALUMNI Night
March 4	Hermann Square	Bayou City Classic 10K*
March 25	Gonzales, TX	Texas Independence Relay
April 1	Bellaire, TX	Bellaire Trolley Run 5K*
May 13	Rice University Track	LP Run*
April 5	Valhalla pub patio, Rice University	Rice Run ALUMNI Night
April/May	TC Jester Park	Bayou Bash Relay
April/May	TBD	BCRR Spring Family Picnic

*Official HARRA race series event.

BCRR is seeking volunteers for events in **BOLD**.



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