



# W O R D f r o m = t h e B I R D

BCRR MONTHLY NEWS

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## *Every Picture Tells a Story*



Photo credit: Joe Lengfeller

On January 14 at George R Brown Convention Center on the morning of the marathon, spirits run high! BCRR members gather for pictures, last minute strategy discussions, and to share in the fun of the race to come. This annual endurance test, the Chevron Houston Marathon and the Aramco Half Marathon, serve as the premiere distance races of the area, and routinely draw the world's top talent. BCRR's talent also comes out in force. Pictured above only represents half of the BCRR members running and/or volunteering at the event.

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**Word from the Bird**

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



Photo credit: Milan Jamrich

**Greetings BCRR!**

Congratulations, BCRR, on another excellent *Chevron Houston Marathon* and *Aramco Half Marathon*! As usual, this club produced a crop of stellar performances. There are too many to recognize each accomplishment, but I'd like to at least call out some notable groups. First, I'd like to recognize our *Local Elite* invited runners, perhaps the largest contingent our club has ever sent to the front corral (although unfortunately even our elites occasionally get injured and miss a race!). These include: **Frank Dougherty, Andrew Kenworthy, Joe Melanson,**

**Allyson Serrao, Lisa Thompson and Rhonda Emerson.**

Second, I'd like to recognize our members who ran at least their 20th Houston Marathon. These stalwarts include: **Fred Steves, Bob Kirkpatrick, Larry Lindeen, Steve Hasson, Gloria Mahoney, and Paul Schulz.**

And lastly I'd like to mention some of our key volunteers, although many others also contributed to the event in ways big and small:

**Susan Cita and Katie Decker** for aid stations, **Sue Leone,**



Photo credit: Lisa Thompson

Answering the question, "Who loves volunteers?" on the last training run before the Houston Marathon. John Phillips and Rosie Schmandt hosted in-person aid stations for this run.

(Continued on page 3)

**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 [thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com](mailto:thatsjoesmail@yahoo.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 [p\\_griffiths@bellsouth.net](mailto:p_griffiths@bellsouth.net).



## Tell Me Your Past, I'll Tell You Your Future



Andrew Young

Anyone who knows **Neeraj Rohilla** knows that he has a mathematical mind. In fact, most people don't make it more than a couple minutes into their first conversation with him before the maths come up. Neeraj recently put his skills to use by predicting Houston Marathon finishing times for several of our club members. His predictions were based upon the training data he could glean from Strava, as well as, his knowledge of the competitor's race strategy. He plugged these inputs into his proprietary mathematical model to develop highly scientific finishing time predictions. In order to avoid biasing the results, these predictions were sealed and delivered only to **Alonso Vargas** and me. Now, with the marathon in the books, we reach the moment of truth...

How many finishing times did Neeraj accurately predict? (The allowable margin of error is +/- 2 minutes.) Drumroll:

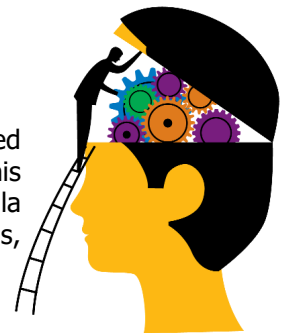
- **Frank Dougherty**: Prediction 2:37, Actual 2:35:29 ★
- **Lauren Hannigan**: Prediction 3:16, Actual 3:13:59 ☆
- **Christina Jones**: Prediction 3:27, Actual 3:29:08 ☆
- **Natalie Lankford**: Prediction 3:32, Actual 3:30:35 ★
- **Sylvia Morgese**: Prediction 3:18, Actual 3:36:54
- **Avi Moss**: Prediction 3:21, Actual 3:27:47
- **Paul Schulz**: Prediction 3:34, Actual 3:55:38
- **Melissa Weiland**: Prediction 3:36, Actual 3:45:43
- **Tom Wille**: Prediction 3:19, Actual 3:19:29 ★

Pretty impressive! If you give Neeraj credit for Lauren and Christina, who were a combined nine seconds outside the official window, the accuracy comes to 55% (5/9)! It turns out this crystal ball is more clear than cloudy. Neeraj reports that his next project is to extend his formula to include predictions not only of your race times, but of your love life. Contact him for details, and stay tuned for more reporting from Neeraj on the nexus of math, running and love.



Photo credit: Neeraj Rohilla

*Chemical Engineer by day, Math Wizard by night.  
Neeraj Rohilla proves prognosticating prowess.*



### Word from the Prez

(Continued from page 2)

**Alan Svoboda, Chuck Bracht, Cheryl Verlander, Sarah Cusack** and **Neal Diez** for the party. **Chris McGrew** for gear drop-off, **John Phillips** for logistics. Every year I'm blown away by how this club rises to the occasion of the marathon.

Looking forward, we have our club title to defend in the HARRA Spring Series. So I hope everyone is planning to run a race or two! We are also planning a memorial track meet in honor of **Joe Conway**. I was shocked and saddened to hear of Joe's sudden passing; and I think BCRR can put together a great event to remember him. Stay tuned for details, and please contact me if you'd like to get involved in the organization. Lastly, we are working on a club trip to Colorado this summer, including hiking, breweries and perhaps a half marathon! Watch the weekly email for updates.



*Happy running!  
Andrew*

## Get to Know Gabe

In an ongoing effort designed to help you get to know (or get to know better) others in the club, we offer runner profiles of BCRR members.



Photo credit: Gabe Gomez

Gabe with teammates Miriam and Milo at Alex's 5K.

- Name: **Gabe Gomez**
- Age: 41
- Hometown Portland, Oregon
- Almost 12 years in Houston
- Occupation banker
- 15 years distance running
- I run 3-4 days a week (30-60 miles).
- I joined a few BCRR Sunday long runs and was consuming most of the Gatorade, so I thought I should join the club and contribute. I was introduced to BCRR by another member **Heidi Zimmerman** a few years ago. I met so many amazing individuals in the club, including my significant other, **Miriam Werner**. I was hooked.
- My proudest running accomplishment is the first time I ran a sub 3-hour marathon. My legs wouldn't function afterwards, so my friend had to drive my car home. It was painful!
- I absolutely love Memorial Park—where I log most of my miles—but my favorite training run is the Buffalo Bayou loop. It's about as scenic as it gets in Houston.
- My favorite race is the Boston Marathon. It has the best expo. I am sort of a marathon expo junkie and could spend all day there. Big Sur is also special since it was my first marathon, and Hood to Coast since it was my first distance running event.
- My best distance is probably the marathon. I really enjoy the half marathon, but the full marathon is twice the fun.
- There are so many reasons why I run, the exercise, getting outdoors, the escape, my running friends, and I must admit I enjoy a little bit of the suffering as they say.
- My life philosophy is simply to be thankful for good health and the ability to run. This generally motivates me to get outside and run.
- I am 41, but I think I still might have PRs in me at the marathon and the ironman; so going a little faster at those distances is my current goal.
- In terms of training food, I eat a lot of pizza. I have actually eaten an entire large pizza the night before a race. I also confess to occasionally eating leftover pizza for breakfast the morning of a run. Craft beer or espresso post-run.
- What do I think about when I run? In races, when it gets difficult, I find myself blocking out negative thoughts about how I feel, falling off pace, or people passing me. This doesn't sound like fun, but it's actually very rewarding to overcome the negative energy.
- My only running advice is to try cross training. There is a good chance that it will improve your running and will likely reduce injuries.
- People may be surprised to know that my front teeth are fake. I knocked them out skateboarding when I was a kid.
- The top thing on my dream list is to have a close friendship with my son Milo as he grows older.
- My primary hobby outside of running is triathlon. I just love training for all 3 sports. I also enjoy traveling and visiting national parks with Miriam and Milo.
- I would love to spend the day with climber and photographer Jimmy Chin. I have always been infatuated with mountaineering and he carries a movie camera up the mountain with him. Singer songwriter Jack Johnson and author Jon Krakauer are also high on the list.



## Get to Know Mirka

- Name: **Mirka Jalovcova**
- Age: Still 49
- Hometown: Aš, Czech Republic
- Years in Houston: 3
- Occupation: Physiotherapist
- How many miles per week do you run? 16
- How did you come to join BCRR? Web search for socializing running club.
- My proudest running accomplishment so far is running Aramco Half Marathon.
- My favorite training run is the club's *Mellow Monday*.
- My favorite race is Alex's 5K.
- I run for fun.
- My life philosophy: Be happy and respect others!
- My next goal is to NOT breath like a Bison when running with talking Lisa.
- Favorite training food: Beer
- When I'm running I think about how to make Murphy's Law NOT work for our family.
- The best running advice I could give would be to listen to yourself and to your body.
- People would be surprised if they knew I sailed over the Atlantic ocean.
- The top thing on my dream list is to have a coffee (with condensed milk) with my friend on a hill side of South Bohemia with no phone signal.
- Other hobbies beside running include: Bicycling, canoeing, trekking, down hill skiing, swimming, diving, sailing, playing squash, and less active things like listening jazz, blues, reading, watching opera and ballet. And...for sure, eating well.
- I would love to spend the day with my grand parents and ask them questions I did not know when I had a chance.
- The most embarrassing thing that has happened to me is that while running in Prague, after my return from Egypt, and I brought an unwelcome amoeba in my GIT. I had to hide on a way home... but I made it.



*Mirka and her son Joshua visiting the Texas hill country.*



**NOTE:** Runner profiles are always welcome. We encourage you to send in a profile (to [ThatsJoesMail@yahoo.com](mailto:ThatsJoesMail@yahoo.com)) and YOU too can be featured in our newsletter!

### Gabe profile (Continued from page 4)

- The most embarrassing thing that has happened to me is showing up to my first half marathon very late, way past the starting time. They had already taken down the starting line, but I talked them into letting me run it. I think I passed a few run/walkers so I didn't finish in last place.
- The most profound thing that has happened in my life is the birth of my son Milo. What an amazing life experience.

## Member News & Events



Photo credit: Julie Risselman

*I almost a crawl to the Convention Center. That was super hard for me because I'm used to a nice walk after my run to cool down and the sudden super slow-mo actually caused my calves, etc. to tighten excruciatingly. I had to stretch as soon as Jason and I could get clear of some of the people.*

*The emotions came crashing in after the race. Don't know why, but there were a few teary moments.*

*The rest of the day, if I sat for very long periods. There was a little stiffness until I had a couple of steps under my belt. Otherwise though, no issues. No soreness, etc. since. I know I need a good massage/stretch, but that's always me as I sit at a desk all day. The only issue I still have are those sores on my feet. I'll probably need to go to a podiatrist to figure that out, as it happens, in lesser degrees, even in a 3-6 mile run.*

*Julie Risselman*

### *Thoughts on my first marathon:*

*I think it was extremely beneficial having a marathoner and triathlete for a boyfriend. Obviously he understood what I was going through. However, more than that was the training program he wrote for me. I know there are programs online, but they can't give you the individual tweaks that a coach can. **Jason Burris** was able to do that for me.*

*I also believe that a running program, like Cypress Running Club or one of those where you have access to a coach, helps. And of course, running clubs like ours always make it easier to make the miles.*

*The nerves for the week before the marathon were worrying about eating the right way for the last couple days prior to the race and then just concern that I'd forget something at the packet pickup or the morning of the race. I laid out my clothes and pinned my bib on the night before to save time that day.*

*The day of, I was actually pretty calm. I knew I wasn't going to "win" and anything I did was a personal best, so really the only pressure was my personal desire to be closer to 3:30 than 4:00. Based on my training I knew that window timeframe was totally reasonable.*

*I had calluses and blisters on my feet that opened during the run. By 13 miles, the pain was intense. By 15 miles, every step was an effort and I wondered if I'd last.*

*The end was interesting. I wasn't prepared for the way everyone crossed the mat and literally stopped. Then it was*



Photo credit: Julie Risselman

Julie Risselman found success with training partner Jason Burris at the Alek 5K race last November where they both proved age group winners.



## News &amp; Events cont.



Photo credit: Devlin Smith

*I signed up for my first marathon thinking it was the next challenge in my running career (and life), but I never could have guessed how I would grow from the experience.*

*The race itself is a challenge, but the journey is what really shapes you. My own journey to the marathon was filled with many beautiful miles run all over the country and complemented by conversations and friends that helped encourage and inspire me along the way.*

*From the 4-miler on my first day of marathon training, to the happy and easy first 10 miles of the race, and all the way to the grueling last 100 feet, I enjoyed every single moment of my marathon experience and am excited to plan my next 26.2 mile journey!*

*Devlin V. Smith*



Photo credit: Lisa Thompson

BCRR wedding bells are ringing once again! **Sarah Cusack** and **Neal Diez** celebrated their wedding vows on the beach in Key West on January 4. The ceremony was picture perfect with a gorgeous day followed by a beautiful sunset, and witnessed by friends, family, and running buddies—and a chicken that crossed the aisle just ahead of the groom. Congratulations to the happy couple!



BCRR lost a good friend and long time member on December 20, when **Joe Conway** passed away. Joe was 50 years old and easily one of the strongest middle-aged runners in the state. Joe worked at The Houston Chronicle for many years as the *Director of Media Relations*, and more recently served in a similar capacity at Houston Community College. Upon learning the news of Joe's unexpected passing, many BCRR members gathered at a favorite Irish pub to raise a glass in his honor. He will be missed, but not be forgotten. Later this summer, the club plans to organize an event to celebrate Joe's memory as an excellent track and field athlete and a good friend.

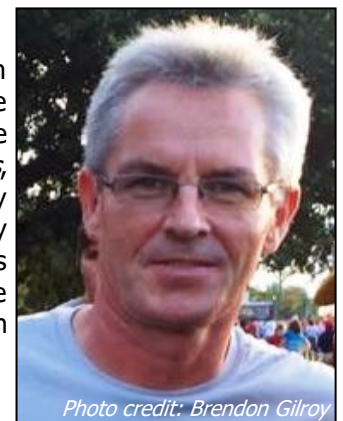


Photo credit: Brendon Gilroy



## Every Picture Tells a Story



Photo credit: Lorna Greenway



Photo credit: April Murphy



Photo credit: Lara Allen



Photo credit: Rosie Schmandt



Photo credit: Simon Vil



Photo credit: April Murphy

Runners must get up very early to race the Houston Marathon. Volunteers must get up earlier! From pre-dawn set up and refreshments duty, to cheerleader and support aid, volunteers work so that others can play. THANK YOU to all our selfless volunteers. You're the best!

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 1)





Photo credit: Devlin Smith

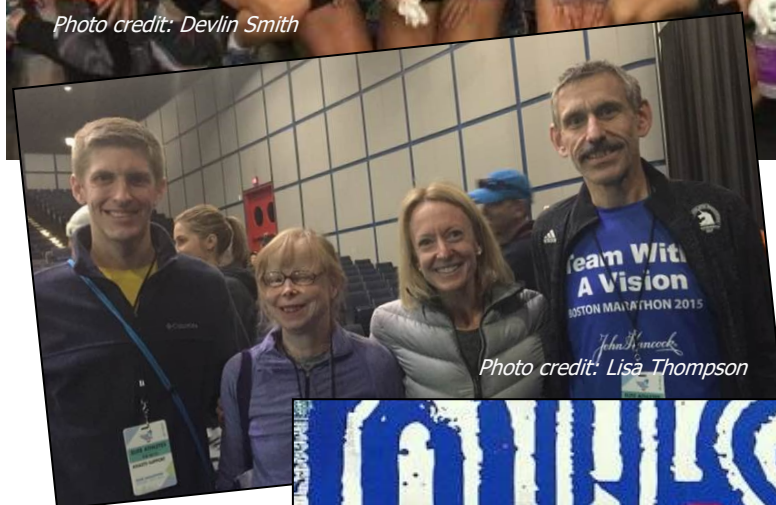


Photo credit: Lisa Thompson



Photo credit: Barry Tobias

(Continued from page 8)

Before the starter's gun goes off, every runner has their own special way to get ready. Some team up, some rev up, and some just shut up and chill out. Hey, you be you! Runners can win style points from every approach. It's all part of "Houston Strong!"

(Continued on page 10)



Photo credit: Lauren Hannigan



## Every Picture Tells a Story (Cont.)



Photo credit: Bernard Castro



Photo credit: Danielle Cousins



Photo credit: Meredith Howell



Photo credit: Bernard Castro



Photo credit: Joe Lengfellner



Photo credit: April Murphy

(Continued from page 9)

In the heat of battle—the middle of the race—what keeps you going? Whether you're running your first marathon, or your 31st, what keeps you pushing long after exhaustion sets in? According to Running USA's annual report, less than ONE percent of Americans can run a marathon.

(Continued on page 11)





Photo credit: Bernard Castro



Photo credit: Lance Phegley



Photo credit: Elaine Matte Mut



Photo credit: Lance Phegley



Photo credit: April Murphy

(Continued from page 10)

The sheer grit to dig down (further than 99% of the public) and find a way to push through makes you one tough cookie. Even *starting* a marathon, or half marathon, is an amazing act of courage. Kudos to you! The resolve shown in the faces on these pages is testament to determination, discipline, and the spirit of BCRR's members. Shout out to BCRR for providing the camaraderie and support to help us be our BEST us. Oh, and beer! "Camaraderie and support" and beer. Thanks for sharing a beer. That beer part is important too.



## Every Picture Tells a Story (Cont.)



# Running make







Photo credit: April Murphy



Photo credit: April Murphy



Photo credit: Ozzie Guvan

es you sexy!



Photo credit: Steve Hasson



## Holiday Season—Ugly Christmas Sweater Party





## New Year's Eve Black & White Party



Photo credit: Lisa Thompson



Photo credit: Theresa Pearsall



Photo credit: Mirka Jalovcová



Photo credit: Neeraj Rohilla

HAPPY  
New Year

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
<b>2/4</b>	1525 Wakefield, Houston	Super Bowl Watch Party ( <i>RSVP required</i> )
<b>2/17</b>	Houston, Sam Houston Park	HBA Fun Run 8K*
<b>3/17</b>	Houston City Hall	Bayou City Classic 10k**
<b>4/14</b>	Bellaire City Hall	Bellaire Trolley Run 5k*
<b>April</b>	Rice University Track	LP Run (33 1/3 min)*
<b>May</b>	Houston, TC Jester Park	Bayou Bash Relay (and HARRA Members' Picnic)**
<b>July</b>	Colorado	Summer Heat Escape
<b>Sept</b>	Houston, Stude Park	Tornados Cross Country Relay*

\*Official HARRA race series event.

\*\*BCRR seeking volunteers



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