



# WORD from = the BIRD

BCRR MONTHLY NEWS

WWW.BCRR.ORG

May 2020

## Houston Half Marathon Legacy Runners



Joel DuBois

In February's newsletter, I wrote about Houston Full Marathon Legacy runners, this article will focus on Aramco Half Marathon Legacy runners. The current rolls for BCRR include five Half Marathon Legacy runners. To qualify as a Legacy runner for the Half Marathon, an individual needs to complete 10 or more Aramco Houston Half Marathons. For those interested, Legacy status allows sign up until the end of October, even if the race has sold out. There are also designated restrooms (not port-a-potties) in GRB for Legacy runners. Benefits are the same for all Legacy runners, Full or Half.

I started with a download from the Chevron Houston Marathon website and compared that to a listing of current BCRR members (if I missed anyone, please let me know). I did not see any 9-year finishers that qualified for Legacy in January.



*Proving their endurance time-after-time, Mike Mangan and Billie-Kay Melanson have completed the Aramco Houston Half Marathon 13 and 12 times respectively.*

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**Word from the Bird**

May 2020  
FREE

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Has your contact info changed?  
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# From the President

**Dear BCRR,**

The last eight weeks have been full of change, uncertainty, and the unexpected in all aspects of life. Our day to day lives are now drastically different, with few similarities between current and our lives eight weeks ago. Very little similarity, with the exception of one thing - the importance of running. For most club members, running is as important for mental health as it is for physical.

I like to think the rest of the city has finally figured out what we've known all along - running in Houston is FUN!! We've all noticed the increase in foot traffic on the majority of our favorite running spots. This has forced many of us to find an alternative route - but isn't that exciting?! I encourage you to share your new favorite route with the club, and once we can all run together again - I challenge the club to change up the routine!

Maybe a Sunday run on the White Oak Bayou is in order, or a Wednesday run through West U. We're slowly learning that as a runner, a change in habits is not always a bad thing.

Due to the social distancing and



*Sharing selfies of his recent run, Steve Hasson offered this artistic message he spotted near Brays Bayou.*

*(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).

# Volunteer Profile: Bob Thompson



Mike Mangan

It's interesting that **Bob Thompson** and I have been running buddies since 2006 and yet I have never considered interviewing him for the BCRR newsletter. Perhaps I thought since I know him so well, the other club members will also know him very well. In any case, let's learn more about Bob!

**Mike Mangan (MM):** how did you get started as a runner?

**Bob Thompson (BT):** When we were pregnant with our son Chris, Amy and I decided that being healthy was important for all of us. So, we each in our own way worked on our health. We both focused on eating healthy, I added running to my health regimen and to try to lose a little weight and Amy added walking. Chris is now well into his 30s, so we have been living healthy for quite a long time!



MM: I understand you once finished first in a race. Is that true!? Describe that experience.

BT: Amy's father was an active member of a professional society and each summer they would have a conference in St. Petersburg, Florida and we would go with him to the conference. They had a one mile run on the beach on Saturday morning of each conference AND each year I would finish second behind a very fast runner, but they only went one deep, so I never got an award! Well, one year he did not show up AND I DID. Voila, **Bob Thompson** was the gold medal winner!

MM: How did you get involved with BCRR?

BT: You are to blame for that, Mangan! In the summer of 2006, I was preparing for the 2007 Houston Marathon. I had run Boston a couple years earlier and was hoping to return again in 2008. One Sunday morning after just starting the River Oaks run, I noticed some old dude running behind me at about the same speed. He eventually caught up to me before we got to San Felipe and we started talking. He suggested we stop for some water and Gatorade at the BCRR gas station water stop and again at the Rose Garden. That was great because in those days you just drank out of the hose if you knew where to look.

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## Prez letter (Continued from page 2)

social gathering recommendations, we have been unable to meet as a club. That hasn't stopped any of us from running, or photographing it! Thanks to the handful of you submitted Solo Running Selfies. It's great to see y'all embracing the solo run!

Everyone is in my thoughts and prayers as we are each facing unique challenges during the pandemic. Please stay safe, healthy, and sane! Know the club is here for any need you might have!



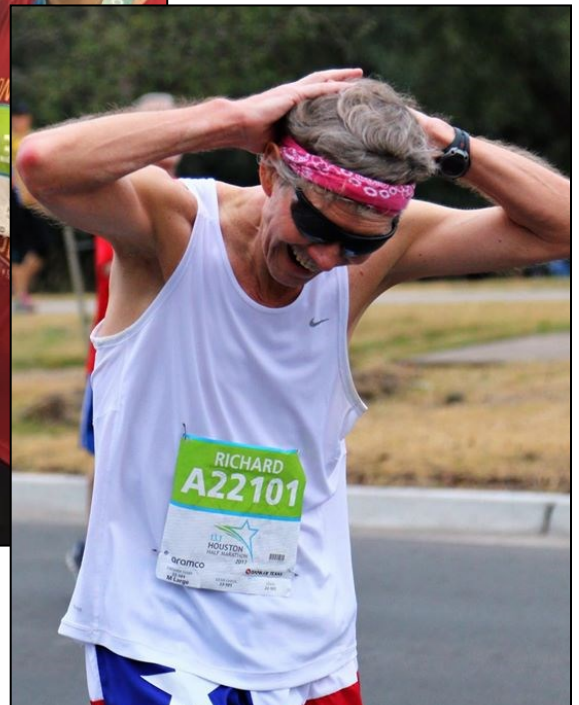
*Happy, safe running!*  
*Christina*



## Legacy Runners (Continued from page 1)

For more information on the Legacy program and runners, please see the CHM website at <https://www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com/participants/legacy>.

Finishes	Name	Gender	Age	Last
13	Michael Mangan	M	77	2019
12	Billie-Kay Melanson	F	65	2019
11	Richard Verm	M	65	2019
10	Robert Swanson	M	60	2019
10	Anna-Marie Levy	F	55	2018



*Legacy runners Anna-Marie Levy, Robert Swanson and Richard Verm have completed the Aramco Houston Half Marathon a combined 31 times.*



## Bob Thompson *(Continued from page 3)*

BT: Then he suggested I join BCRR. As they say, the rest is history!!

MM: How did you do with your Boston run?

BT: Other than leaving my race bib in the hotel I did quite well! I managed to get another bib in Hopkinton, and I kissed some Wellesley girls, drank some beer and walked up Heartbreak Hill. What else is there!? Oh, I had fun and finished, too!!



MM: Have you run New York or Chicago?

BT: I have actually run both. Chicago is flat and fast! It is a great race that is really well organized. I qualified for Boston at the Chicago Marathon. When you run New York, you get to run in all five boroughs! And you finish in Central Park!! You see runners from all over the world.

MM: If you had a chance to do only one of them again, which would you choose?

BT: It's gotta be Boston! Boston is the signature marathon! I have never been a fast runner and I never won many races. I just tried to get faster and compete with myself and tried to improve each year. Once I made it to Boston, I felt like I had finally accomplished something with my running.

MM: How about your favorite BCRR experience?

BT: This may surprise you; serving on the BCRR Board. I met lots of the members and developed some excellent personal relationships from my BCRR Board experience! I am really pretty shy, and it pushed me out of my comfort zone.

MM: What BCRR experience seems like a good idea to do now, but would seem like a really bad idea halfway through the event?

BT: Being on a TIR team! I did it once and, don't get me wrong, everyone on my team was great to be with. It is really a fun time, but I didn't discover it until I was older and the recovery from not sleeping for a couple of days is hard on an old dude. There will be no second time!

MM: I notice you are the water station captain for the Rose Garden each Sunday.

BT: This keeps me involved in a positive way and it's a chance to give back to the club. But the real reason is that it keeps me focused on showing up for that long run on Sunday. You can't just roll over and go back to sleep if you don't feel like running that morning. And, I often get your butt out there as well!

MM: Any ideas for BCRR?

BT: BCRR is a very unique combination of single and married folks, older and younger folks, parents and non-parents. Keep this special concoction! It makes for a fantastic organization and, boy, do those guys know how to party!!





# Take a Bow John Phillips



David Gaskin

Thinking back now on my tour of duty as a BCRR volunteer, I have to pinch myself in disbelief. How did I get so darn lucky? I mean they actually let me get up at 4:30 am and drive 30 miles to set up a tent in some vacant parking lot on a 30° morning in the dark. What goob wants to run a race with all their friends on a crisp Sunday morning when you can clean out a Port-o-Pottie instead? I loved making **David Piper** jealous though.

Every now and then, a familiar raspy voice over my shoulder...

"Are y'all planning to look at those cones all day? That truck's not gonna load itself"

"Here, don't just throw my long poles in the trailer with the short ones, place them in gently. Everything has its own place."

"Hey, put that beer down and go grab those stanchions. And there better be 10 of 'em!"



On second thought, why did I do all that work?

Those volunteers are one big reason. Among all the road runners that I got to work with on those weekends were a lot of dedicated folks. You've got to be full-on committed to give up so much personal time to making those races happen. "Go team!" as our President says.

Everyone knows the other reason people show up to volunteer... **John Phillips**. He's the guy that started the Gatorade pit stop thing, right? Yep, but more than that, his 30+ years of devotion to BCRR makes it possible for everyone to have fun, and he inspires the rest of us to pitch in too. There's a reason the club's coveted annual volunteer award is called the John Phillips Award. But if that's all you know about John, then you don't know jack.

Starting this year, John is taking a step back from all his volunteer work for BCRR and HARRA. That volunteer work probably means about 300 races for which he has hauled equipment back and forth. He's been a motivating force for BCRR members, reaching more than 2,000 runners that have been in and out of this club over the years. He served as club President (1993-1997) and long-time board member (HARRA too), and he has given 10 years of support to the Houston Marathon. More than anything else, he has set the bar high for BCRR to excel as a competitive club. Let's



take this month's newsletter to recognize John for all that work (and to soften him up so he'll let us use his trailer some more).

We all know John is a hard-core competitor. For starters, he entered his first marathon (Houston) on a whim, having only ever run a maximum of 4 miles, and then clocked in at 4:03! His marathon finishes improved: 3:15 (Austin), 3:16, 3:18 (Houston), 3:17 (Dallas). He's run 24 straight Houston Marathons, qualified for Boston 8 times and finished 6 times. His 70 total marathons include 6 internationals – Vienna, France, Barcelona, and Rome to name a few.

Second thing to know is, John's influence is almost as big as a bronze F-250 Super Duty. Besides being a legend in the Houston running world, not many people are on a first name basis with every head coach of the Houston Texans. And isn't he pro-



(Continued on page 7)

## John Phillips (Continued from page 6)

filed in that fancy coffee table book? It's called People of Memorial Park and John charges \$5 to sign a copy. What about the time some stone-cold stranger ran up to John in front of the Colosseum at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Rome Marathon, "Hey, you're John Phillips"? John didn't know him, but he sure knew John.

Stories just seem to follow John. There's the legend of the Posse, or the tales of the Tanglewood Trash, or how John first stole the "I kicked your butt" trophy. Some of those stories are best left to late night happy hours. Everyone seems to have a John memory. Not everyone wants their name attached.

*He's always on time and sometimes on the money.*

**Lara Allen**

*The thing is I've never seen a volunteer like John who does such massive amounts of work for an organization, and then goes on to do that for DECADES! We would not be the club we are without his herculean efforts. When you consider all the times that John has gotten up for events many hours before we're even awake, it's amazing. And you show up, the tent's up and it's wonderful... Clearly he had help from others, a great cast and crew that evolved over time. But for all those decades, John was at the heart*



*of it, the captain.*

*Thank you John. Words are not enough to express our appreciation.*

**Chuck Bracht**

*For decades, John Phillips has been the hardest working man in Houston's running community. Always the first one on site directing volunteers and the last one at the ever-charming Boat Shed. Found at start/finish lines with a smile on his face, "grapefruit juice" in one hand, and a time clock in the other. John Phillips is a BCRR*

*legend, and I'm not saying this just because he always took care of the BCRR Porta-potty.*

**Susan Cita**

*He runs without a shirt in freezing weather (to show off his tan chest!). He's always there first, in the dark, way before the start and stays last to help clean up, socialize and take home his little portable potty (he custom built!). He has been the BCRR President and been a perfect example of servant leadership! He has done this now for decades even thru his personal bout with cancer... Oh yeah it took me at least a couple of those decades to catch up to his great running feats (many marathons!!). Great guy. Great Servant Leader. We love John. PS: Did I mention he played professional Football, as a quarterback?.. yeah really..!*

**David Harvey Sr. & Mikki Hebl**

*I had just completed my first marathon (Houston) and there I am, wandering around the George R. Brown...excited and a bit lost. When I found my training partner, Mikki Hebl, she suggested that I join a running club and proceeded to walk me over to the BCRR tent. She introduced me to John and after some casual conversation, I asked him what it cost to join. He*



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## John Phillips (Continued from page 7)

said it was \$15 per year. He seemed like a nice guy, and Mikki had recommended the club, so I decided to join. I only had a \$20 bill but gave it to John. It's been 21 years and I'm still waiting for my change.

**Jay Hendrickson**

We both ran the first Cinco de Mayo Run. I started out faster than John and was ahead of him the entire race. He almost caught up with me as we approached the finish line. I had a burst of speed (or I didn't slow down as much as he did) and beat him by 3 seconds. My time was 24:02. But it was not shown in the results. I went to the timers and said they had missed my time and they said they would fix it. They then showed my time as 24:11. John just smiled. To this day John says he beat me in that race!

**Mike Mangano**

In 1998, I joined a BCRR group to run the Maraton de Catalon in Barcelona. What a great trip. I ended up rooming with John and when we left Barcelona to travel around Spain, we wound up in the same car with Tim and April Murphy. John rode "shotgun" while I drove. He had the map, and his soft cooler with plenty of orange juice and vodka. Good thing I was driving. John of course was mostly attired in shorts and a tank top, which isn't always the appropriate clothing for some places in Europe. I remember someone taking a shot of John in front of a church where the sign said "no shorts no sleeveless shirts". John of course was wearing shorts and a tank. John couldn't go in, which I'm sure was devastating.

**Ron Morgan**

OLD days when the style was zip up ski suits? We were in the lodge after a full day of skiing and John decided to be a little flirtatious with a group of girls sitting next to us. But just as he was leaning in to introduce himself, he passed gas (altitude does that to you). In his words "I didn't even have time to move my chair so I could pretend that was where the sound came from instead of me. That night I remember us laughing so hard at our condo recounting and imagining a fart caught in a zipped-up ski suit all day. We are



so easily entertained, aren't we?

**April Murphy**

I first knew of John in the running world about 1994 seeing him at the races around town. I would run the River Oaks 10 mile run on Sunday with a couple of my friends and we followed the BCRR group. During those times we would stop at the Shell station to get water from a water hose on the building. I started to notice this group that would hang out near the cleaners (BCRR) and wondered what was going on over there and what was the secret. Soon found out that John had placed Gatorade and water out for the morning group (1<sup>st</sup> come





## John Phillips (Continued from page 8)

*with 1 milk crate) there and at the rose garden. I remember asking John if I could have some – "Sure just join the club". After that it seemed that John and the club were a fixture in my running life forever. John, do you ever wear a shirt when it's cold outside?*

### **Joe & Hope Sellers**

*I met John Phillips first at a HASH and shortly thereafter at BCRR. With Kim, twice a year, he would host a family picnic at his home. I was a divorced woman with two young girls who accompanied me to the Spring event in 1991. There we played softball, darts, basketball, and jumped on a trampoline. They had so much fun with John and the other children. The sporting equipment became their Christmas list that year. Marisa and Sloane cut coupons that, if were used, the savings went to the purchase of a \$650 trampoline. They worked diligently and reached their goal. After I married Chuck, that trampoline moved with us to our house on Tangle, and later to our attic here on Mandell. Most recently, it was set up at Marisa's home with a new mat and pads for her step sons to use during this quarantine. It will remain there for Mason, Marisa's and Kelly's son, to use as he grows up. Both Marisa and Sloane run today due to early exposure to BCRR.*

*One may never know what long lasting influence he or she may have on others....Thank you John for your years of dedication to the Houston running community and BCRR.*

### **Cheryl Verlander**

*If you play golf with him, do not let him keep score.*

### **Wishes to Remain Anonymous**

*Let's have another great BCRR event.*

### **John Phillips**

In spite of all his dry jokes he's the bedrock of BCRR, but in true John style he'll never acknowledge that. John takes the selfless path, always the strongest voice of encouragement, never taking the credit. Some thanks are never nearly enough. Now (finally), John will take a long-overdue rest from his race set-up and equipment duties and pass that baton to someone else. That someone is actually probably several someones, since no one person is going to fill John's shoes.

We're fortunate to be able to keep John around - and that's a good thing when you reflect that only he knows where everything is in that boat shed. Once we settle back into our lives post-corona, you'll be able to find him at a Texans tailgate or the Memorial Park back nine. We'll be running the Looong Run and winning races all over Houston like we always do. Every once in a while, he'll show up to send us off on a Sunday morning run, or decide to picnic with us at the Bayou Bash Relay. So, to John from everyone in the club – Get a shirt!



# Super Bowl Soiree



Andrew Young

We were sitting in **Sue Leone** and **Alan Svoboda's** kitchen, chopping vegetables for the marathon party, when Sue declared, "I'm going to host a Super Bowl party!" Alan, recovering from his initial moment of surprise, gave the correct response: "That sounds like a great idea!" And thus, in keeping with the spirit of BCRR social affairs, the next party was on the calendar before the current party had even kicked off.

Sue and Alan hosted a soiree worthy of Miami for several dozen BCRR members and friends. The appetizing menu of kebabs, queso, and a giant football-shaped cake kept everyone well fed. Of course no one went thirsty, either. The weather was cooperative, allowing for plenty of outdoor mingling and viewing. Even the football stars aligned, with a somewhat placid



affair in the first half transforming into a thrilling finish between Kansas City and San Francisco. Once again, BCRR showed that it's equally adept at partying as it is at running. Thanks to



our great hosts!



# Social Distance Run Selfies



*Out of town selfie from Leah Jarvis trail running in Denver.*



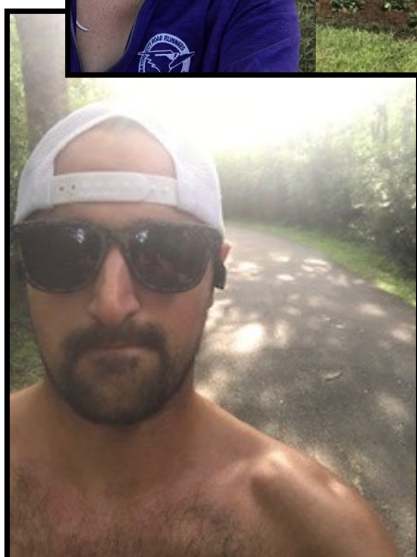
*Tom Wille and Neal getting their exercise family style.*



**Barkers Crossing Road Runner**



*Joe Lengfellner representing at Memorial Park.*



*Jacqueline and Brendon Flaherty*



*June Harris says, "Thanks for the idea to explore new solo running routes. I ran to our high school, knowing there would be no traffic, thinking I could get a photo with the Football State Championship sign; but had forgotten North Shore was State Champs in track in 2011 & 2012. Decided my run photo should be with the track sign."*



# Things I thought about in state of insomnia after “Virtual BCRR happy hours at really odd times”



Neeraj Rohilla

I call that an ambitious title even for a running club's newsletter. It's like making sense of a conversation at Valhalla past 9:30 pm or trying to explain the difference between VDot and VO2max during Sunday long run or worse the difference between “Threshold pace” and a “Tempo” run. Those of you who don't know/remember me, I am a BCRR member living in Mumbai, India whose membership is contingent on periodically providing funny mathematical articles for the newsletter. Huh, let that sink in for a minute.

When I was in Houston, I enjoyed BCRR happy hours as an excuse to meet and interact with fellow runners and some of the most interesting people I have met in life. The silver lining of the Covid19 outbreak was for me to be able to join BCRR happy hours hosted virtually even though at 4:30 am from India. It was great to see regulars embracing technology to connect with one another and sharing a drink while maintaining social distancing. In India, we are under a lockdown situation since March 25th. In Mumbai, this situation is expected to last end of May. Fortunately, India took early strict measure to flatten the curve (whatever that means).

This lockdown gave me enough time to ponder many crazy ideas and theories. I feel the winners of this lockdown situation in India or elsewhere are couples who are in a relationship and are living together. If you can survive 6-8 week long lockdown without killing each other then get married damn it, you won't find

*(Continued on page 13)*





## Neeraj

(Continued from page 12)

someone else like that ever again. Or, this lockdown will save you time and accelerate the inevitable and you will break up during or post lockdown. See, win-win situation.

For analyzing Covid19 data, I'll start with a famous fable from India. There was once a king in India who was a big chess enthusiast and had the habit of challenging wise visitors to a game of chess. One day a traveling sage was challenged by the king. The sage having played this game all his life all the time with people all over the world gladly accepted the Kings challenge. To motivate his opponent the king offered any reward that the sage could name. The sage modestly asked just for a few grains of rice in the following manner: the king was to put a single grain of rice on the first chess square and double it on every consequent one. The king accepted the sage's request.



Having lost the game and being a man of his word the king ordered a bag of rice to be brought to the chess board. Then he started placing rice grains according to the arrangement: 1 grain on the first square, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, 8 on the fourth and so on. Following the growth of the rice grains needed, the king quickly realized that he was unable to fulfil his promise. Calculating, it would require roughly 440 billion tons of rice. Now, that's your exponential growth. I'm sure in Covid19 times you must have heard enough of "Exponential growth" and "Flattening the curve".

If an un-flattened curve looks like the results of "U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials" then the flattened curve is results from the "Disney Marathon". Clearly, a flattened curve is nicer and we love Disney Land. My theory is that a doomed romantic relationship (trust me I have enough data points) can also be predicted simply by analysing distribution of # of text messages sent during the relationship. In fact, I can write a computer program to alert me when a breakup is imminent. A perfect marathon is run as a spiked curve (each mile in roughly same time, so not flattening) while both positive and negative splitting gives flattened curves.

Compound interest mimics exponential growth and that's why it is advised to save early no matter how small. It doesn't matter how many grains you put on square #1 of the chessboard; start early and keep putting more grains on the next square than the previous square and you will be set. See, I can also be your financial planner J

P.S: In high-school the underlying concepts are explained as "rate of change" and "rate of rate of change" while if you take student loans then in college the same as referred as "First derivative" and "Second derivative".



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
<b>Current</b>	All public areas	For health and safety most events canceled or postponed.
<b>Fridays</b>	Online event	Friday evenings join the virtual happy hour on Zoom
<b>May</b>	Online	All month long Early Bird pricing on HARRA membership
<b>TBD</b>	Rice University	LP Run*
<b>7/18</b>	TC Jester Park	Bayou Bash Relay* (Tentative date)
<b>9/20</b>	St. Arnolds	BCRR Annual Banquet (Tentative date)
<b>9/?</b>	Stude Park	Tornados Cross Country Relay*
<b>10/25</b>	Sam Houston Park	Houston Half Marathon*

\*Official HARRA race series event.



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