



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

BCRR MONTHLY NEWS

WWW.BCRR.ORG

November 2020

Beach Day!



Andrew Young

In search of a social venue with plenty of space to spread out and roam, BCRR decamped from Houston for the wide open sands of Surfside beach on Sunday, Oct. 18. Attendees brought their own food, drinks and toys, leading to a crazy mishmash of kayak surfing, jello shots, s'mores and sand castles. About 15 members enjoyed the warm afternoon and the (almost) cool water. Be on the lookout for the next socially distanced BCRR event!



LEFT: Daniel Kenworthy digs a swimming pool for his toes.



ABOVE: Maggie and Bob Kirkpatrick, with Sheila Ramamurthy demonstrating social distancing, beach style on Sunday, Oct. 18, at Surfside Beach.

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Word from the Bird

November 2020
FREE

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

**Dear BCRR,**

Any other year, you and I would be starting our marathon training plan. Calculating the weeks until race day. Strategically assigning weekends for the longest of the long runs amidst the holiday season. Thinking about race day hydration and fueling. However 2020 has proven to be anything but "any other year". What I have seen in 2020, is members exploring the modified Sunday route. Adapting our hydration stations to keep runners safe. Finding ways to safely socially interact and deepen the friendships that are so dear to BCRR. The persistence of BCRR to find a way to do what we love and to do so safely, makes me so proud to (still) be your president.

Amidst all the changes, I want to give a special thanks to the BCRR Board for making decisions and guiding the club to a safe reopening. I think we are all enjoying the ability to run together on a routine basis. It's a small bit of normalcy in the midst of all the challenges and limitations of our new day-to-day lives.

I'd like to give a not so silent brag and congratulations to the 2019-2020 members of BCRR. Congratulations for winning the HARRA Team Champions for Veteran Women, Club Champion for Veteran Women, and Overall Club Champion. We showed up, ran fast, and won some races! More than



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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 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.

Get to Know April Murphy



Mike Mangan

Today I have the honor of interviewing **April Murphy**. Besides being a strong runner, April is an excellent artist and one of our early BCRR presidents. Here we go!

Mike Mangan (MM): Are you originally from Houston? If no, what brought you to Houston?

April Murphy (AM): I was born in Dallas and have lived in a lot of different places outside of Texas during my adult life, but since I went to junior high and high school here, I call Houston my hometown.

MM: When and how did you get into running?

AM: A friend of mine was training for a marathon when I was living in Dallas (I was 25 at the time I met him) and I thought it was so intriguing... how does one run 26 miles at one time? I had never run a race or even a few times around a track. He gave me some pointers and I started training. I ran the *White Rock Marathon* (1986) in Dallas and had never run another organized race prior to that. Once I crossed the finish line, I was hooked on endurance running.

MM: How did you find BCRR? When?

AM: **John Wacasey** was a high school buddy who was a member and I had just moved back to Houston in 1994 or so...



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Prez letter

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any other Houston club in fact! Congratulations BCRR!!

See you running!

Christina



April Murphy

(Continued from page 3)

when he found out I was a runner, he told me I should come out on a Wednesday evening at Rice and meet everyone. I thought Valhalla was the coolest thing ever!

MM: What drew you to BCRR?

AM: I truly felt that I had found my tribe when I went to dinner with members after happy hours at Valhalla... everyone was talking about adventures past and future. I honestly felt like I had been somehow living under a rock until that moment. I was always the weird one on a trip having to get up early and get my run in before the day started for sightseeing, etc. And here was a group of people that wanted to travel, see the world, and get up with me to do a run as PART of the vacation. Magical!

MM: You went on some BCRR road trips. Which was your favorite and what was special about it?

AM: They have all been so fun but the one that stands out is the *Rome Marathon*. Four of us decided to just have fun and stop for beers along the way while we waited for our BCRR buddies... we had agreed at the start that we would all finish together. When in Rome... you know? So, we purchased a few brews to share every 5k or so, and we sat on a curb hydrating with them until our buddies appeared. At that time, my finish times were at just under 4 hours. We finished together as a group of about 10 or 12 people at 5 1/2 hours. And I had zero soreness anywhere the next day. Add to that, we had two subsequent weeks of eating and drinking our way through Italy (and of course running every morning to explore the small towns we visited). I absolutely loved (and still do) traveling with active people!

MM: I heard you were club president, but that was before my time. What were you most happy about that was achieved while you were president?

AM: I had a great board for those two years! It was so long ago (2003 or something like that?). I was the first female prez... so there's that. And mostly my mantra was to make sure BCRR was a warm and welcoming group... yes, we like to win the HARRA competitions, but let's have some fun and be social too. One of the cool things about being in charge is that you know EVERYone. And it was important to me to walk (or run) the talk. So, I attended all the things... even the midweek 5:30 am speedwork and I am NOT a morning runner... Once I stepped down, that was the one thing I let go of... ha-ha!

MM: What was your favorite race and why?

AM: *Big Sur Marathon*... have done it four times! Gorgeous views, and oh I adore my CA!

MM: What race would you just as soon forget if you were able? Why?

AM: I did the inaugural *Lakeshore Marathon* in Chicago (it was in March at the time). It was sleeting when my husband (**Tim Murphy**) dropped me off and headed back to our toasty hotel room. I ran 10 miles of it and it was brutal. It was along the water... terrible wind and freezing cold with the sleet. I tried to



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Photobook

Beach Day



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

1) Michael Pullara, Mirka Jalovcová and son Joshua enjoying a snack. 2) Peter Griffiths and Andrew Young contemplate their options for flammable materials. 3) Sheila Ramamurthy, Tom Wille and their son Neal, with Christina Young take a break from playing in the surf. 4) Peter, Bill Lindsey and Andrew hide from the sun.

PHOTOS CREDIT: Susan Latimer

Chicago Bound-Houston Half Challenge 2



Joel DuBois

Similar to the first challenge, *Run to Boston* (see article in the last newsletter); the *Houston Half Challenge Part 2 – Chicago Bound* brought out the best in BCRR. While it still took a little ca-Joel-ing (see what I did there? I crack **me** up!), folks came out of the woodwork and ran (&/or walked) 4,688 miles during the month of August. This was good for 3rd place overall!! Unfortunately, we were not selected from the nine teams that successfully completed the 1,198-mile challenge for a prize this time around. There were six participating teams that were unable to accumulate the needed miles.

My thanks go out to the following folks who submitted miles during this challenge:

NAME	MILES	NAME	MILES
ALAN TILLOTSON	76	JUNE HARRIS	39
ALLYSON SERRAO	127	JUSTYNA PACZKOWSKA	122
ANDREW WEBSTER	141	KAT NIEDEBALSKI	66
ANDREW YOUNG	141	KATHLEEN MAHON	6
ANNA S HELM	102	KATHRYN VIDAL	151
APRIL MURPHY	203	LEE HOLM	231
AVI MOSS	194	MARGARET PACE	192
BARRY TOBIAS	67	PAUL SCHULZ	25
BRENDON FLAHERTY	59	PIOTR PACZKOWSKI	125
CHRISTINA YOUNG	142	RICHARD VERM	143
CLARK COURTRIGHT	225	ROBIN HOLM	243
DANI CARBONE	45	RON MORGAN	138
DAVE FRIEDMAN	7	SALLY HALL	19
DEBORAH TOUCHY	109	SARAH AUSTIN	129
FRANCIS DOUGHERTY	259	SCOTT BOUNDS	124
HARSH BHASIN	54	SCOTT MOORE	205
JACQUELINE FLAHERTY	119	STEVE HASSON	94
JOEL DUBOIS	191	SUE LEONE	105
JOSEPH LENGFELLNER	110	THERESA PEARSALL	160



April Murphy

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tuck behind some of the bigger guys running near me to shelter from the wind, but it was miserable. I finally got off the course and asked the policeman there if it was a safe area if I ran into town away from the lake. He said yes, and off I went. I found a cool diner and ordered breakfast. I called Tim and told him, no hurry... I am having a big hot breakfast, but I will need a ride. Two local guys walked in and saw my race number. They said they had signed up but bailed when they saw the start weather. They bought my breakfast. ;-) It was the only race I have ever DNF'd.

MM: You quit doing races for quite a while. What brought you back?

AM: I quit racing and actually running as well when I was getting my art biz going. I was so focused on that... making it successful, that I let most everything else slide and was 24/7 working. Once things started humming along, I felt like I could relax a bit and get some balance back in my routine.

And then the pandemic hit. Ugh. So, anyone who really knows me knows that I am kind of an unconventional runner. I love to stop in the middle of a run and have a snack and a soda. I have met exactly

one person in my running life that loves to do the same. With the pandemic, I thought... I don't want to carry a mask, sanitizer, and gloves to get my snack/soda. So, I started hiking instead with a small ultra running pack. And then I found out that endurance hiking is a thing! So, I have some new goals now... plus, you really cannot run pain free forever... I want to be active as long as I am on this earth, so right now I am transitioning to endurance hiking vs. running.

MM: Were you always as competitive as you are now?

AM: I am and always have been super competitive, but in a laid-back sort of way... meaning I love to set big goals, but they need to be enjoyable along the way.

MM: You are quite an artist. What got you interested in art?

AM: I have always loved art, but never thought of it as a career path until I got laid off from a corporate graphic design job. I started painting, and people started buying. I never looked back. In fact, **Jay Hendrickson** (a fellow BCRReR) bought my first painting... I didn't even know how much to charge for it. He got a good deal. ;-) Ask him yourself... lol!

MM: What do you consider your best accomplishment as an artist?

AM: The tipping point was being the featured artist for *Bayou City Art Festival*. People don't generally know, but 1000-1200 artists apply, and they pick 300 to attend. Out of that they pick one artist to be the face of the festival. That was me in 2016... and am forever grateful.

MM: Wow, I got to talk to a leader, a solid runner, a hiker, and an accomplished artist, all in one interview. Thank you very much!



Great Virtual Race Across Tennessee



Joel DuBois

A number of BCRRs ran Great Virtual Race Across Tennessee (GVRAT) this past summer, May thru August. The following will give an overview of the race and some personal insights into the event.

Overview (by Lee Holm)

At some point in April, it was pretty obvious that in person races were not going to take place anytime soon. BCCR member **Tracey Driver** heard about a virtual race being organized by the infamous Lazarus Lake, mastermind behind the absolutely absurd Barkley Marathon. The event evolved into the *Great Virtual Race Across Tennessee* (GVRAT). Entrants would have May 1st through August 31st to complete the 1000K challenge. BTW, Lake's 1000k equals roughly 635 miles. Sometimes you have to ignore standard math.

Tracey texted multiple friends and eventually many of us were somehow compelled to enter. Initially the organizers expected several hundred participants. By the middle of May over 19,000 persons and dogs had entered. A portion of the proceeds from the human category would go to food banks in Tennessee and 100% of the funds for registering dogs would go to animal rescue shelters in Tennessee.

Essentially a participant needed to average 5.15 miles per day running, walking or crawling as long as the miles were done with the intention of working out... no counting steps on the job or walking around the empty toilet paper aisles grocery stores. You could fall behind the pace without being eliminated as long as you finished by August 31st. Miles were entered on to a website using the honor system.

5.15 miles does not seem like a long distance until you try to do it over and over and over. To help runners understand where they needed to be a system of Buzzards were employed to mark goals along the way.

The Buzzard averaged the 5.15 miles per day beginning May 1st and would do that distance every day until August 31st. This would help runners to understand how many miles they needed to cover to stay ahead of the Buzzard. Eventually Buzzards of all distances flew on to the course.

Without "real" races to train for it would have been easy to sleep in multiple days or cut back on miles altogether. But nothing like putting a few dollars down and seeing your results plastered on a website to give you the motivation to get up and log an early morning run and then perhaps go out for an afternoon or evening walk because you want those miles and find yourself competing against runners from every time zone in the world.

A Facebook group was created for the event and it certainly helped to connect from runners around the world. No politics and no promoting other events was the general rule for the group. It was exciting to see pictures from runners in faraway places. Of course, as a Houston based group running in the summer months we were jealous of the running temps submitted by new friends!

In the end about 13,700 runners finished the quest! In addition to being great motivation for 1,000s of people, the race also raised \$30,000 for *Animal Rescue of Tennessee* and \$250,000 for the food bank of Tennessee.

Personal Perspective on GVRAT (by Robin Holm)



Robin & Lee Holm (July 30)

In late April, when running groups were no longer running and races were getting cancelled and the gym was closed, my friend **Tracey Driver** mentioned an opportunity to do a virtual race across Tennessee. The mileage averaged out to just over 5 miles a day which is more than I would normally do - especially when training for nothing. But having nothing to train for made me desperately need a reason to get out of bed in the morning. I mentioned it to my husband, **Lee Holm**, who I figured would have no interest given that he was pretty busy at work but surprisingly he was also wanting a reason to run. I mentioned it to **Sam Pace** and also to several other friends including **Ragan Crowell** who immediately registered and also registered her dog Lily for the dog Division. Lily was super excited to have a reason to run and have extra walks on top of it.

5 miles a day is a lot more than I would normally run - especially during the summer. The fact that purposeful walks could also count really helped. With bars and restaurants closed and most events cancelled, Lee and I walked just about every evening. What started as a maybe we can finish by 8/31 turned into motivation to finish earlier and earlier. The Facebook page was filled with people who finished in record time. I found that

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GVRAT

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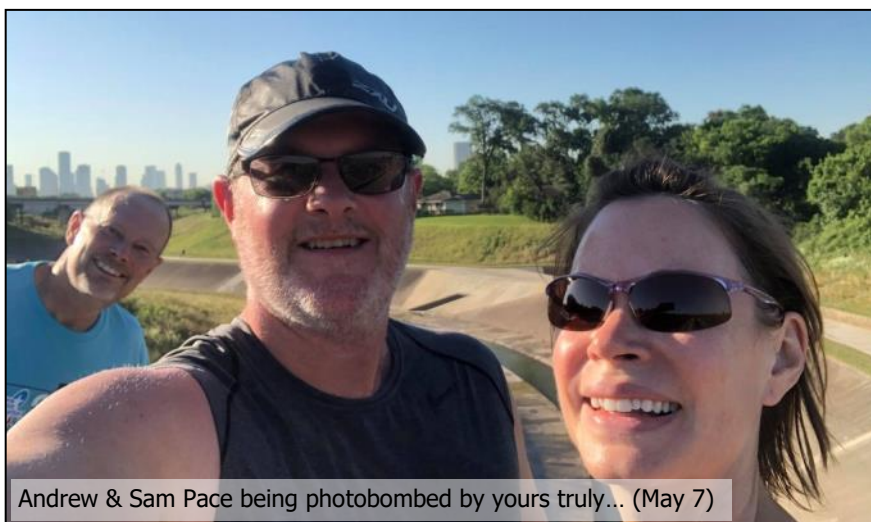
instead of just running a 3-mile loop of the park, that I would try and do 4-6 miles running a day. If I was meeting someone who wanted to run 3, I would run a mile or 2 ahead of time. Lee added several extra running days, replacing days he would have worked out with his boot camp group or biked. Also, Lee and I went from walking 1-2 miles a night to 3-3.5.

I was ahead of the buzzard all through May and at the beginning of June until a car accident and multiple broken bones, along with instructions from the doctor that I was not to run, ended my experience, or so I thought. Lee continued to get up every day and made a goal to finish by the end of July - actually finishing on July 25th. Our walks stopped for a bit or he would have finished sooner. I was sure this would be my first DNF but when I was finally able to at least walk for periods of time, Lee came up with a plan for me to finish my miles - all in walking since no running allowed. I had fallen behind the buzzard but by walking at least twice a day and three times on the weekends, I was able to finish the race by August 23rd. Very thankful to Lee and Sam and everyone who walked the many miles with me to finish.

It was really nice during these weird times to have a reason to get out and exercise. The Facebook page was really positive and everyone was really encouraging - especially of the people who finished in the last days. I know that I would have slept in or done way less without the race. Lee even ran 2 miles in the pouring rain just to make sure he did not have a day with zero miles. I also know that being in good shape before the accident helped with recovery and definitely motivated me to start walking sooner. I was released to run about 10 days before I finished so I could run some of the last miles.

As GVRAT came to a close, we wondered what we could do to occupy our time. Still no in-person races for the foreseeable future. Laz came up with his Circumpolar Race Around the World (CRAW). This will be the topic of a separate article...

Personal Perspective on GVRAT (by Sam Pace)



Andrew & Sam Pace being photobombed by yours truly... (May 7)

Robin Holm and I were running one Tuesday morning in April and she mentioned this race across TN, asking if I would be interested in joining. At first, I thought heck no, I would need to average 5.1 miles a day for four months which was a lot more a month than I was currently running. I didn't want the commitment for an entire summer. But then, well, COVID. At the time, of course, no one knew COVID would mean all events for the entire year would be canceled, but we all knew spring and most of summer would likely be bleak in terms of races. Work had recently kicked me off campus (without any warning, my lunch is still sitting on my desk) and I had some extra time in my days thanks to not spending 2+ hours in the car. Robin promised

to help me get my mileage up and she did. She's a great cheerleader!

Starting on May 1, 2020, I began my trek across TN. I managed 182 miles in May, up from 140 in April, and continued the increase through the rest of the summer adding 201 in June, 229 in July, the most I've ever done in a month, and 200 in August. As the temperature and humidity rose, the miles got slower and there was more walking but I kept moving forward. I finished the race in 90 days and by the end of August I had managed 800 miles in four months, something I would have told you was impossible on May 1.

Whenever the Houston summer swamp would start to get to me, all I needed to do was jump on the GVRAT Facebook page to find inspiration. It was an amazing community of people from all over the world sharing their stories, their trials and tribulations with life and the pandemic, and most importantly, leaving politics out of the discussion. We became one extended family, all rooting each other on when setbacks arose. The race's founder, Lazarus Lake, a.k.a. Gary Cantrell, is the best motivational speaker I've known and he knew just how to talk to my Type A personality through his posts. I wasn't going to not get my miles because that's not who I am. And as the miles accumulated, the stress from life in the middle of a pandemic became manageable.

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GVRAT

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As the race came to an end I found myself feeling sad and anxious. I'd come to depend on the consistency of the mileage and the (virtual) support I received from the other racers to get through my days. Thank goodness Laz came up with the CRAW in the nick of time! Now I am covered until late 2021. Surely, we'll be done with COVID by then. CRAW will be the topic of a separate article...



Joel, Sam & Andrew (June 27)

but this will lead into the other article referenced above about CRAW. Stay tuned!!

Personal Perspective on GVRAT from a Non-Participant (by Joel DuBois)

I did not enter GVRAT, but I can certainly say I participated.... Early in the COVID shut-down days, I ran only with Sam Pace and Andrew Webster. In late April, Sam talked about this crazy idea that Lazarus Lake came up with, a virtual race across Tennessee. I'm not big into virtual races, so I chose not to sign up. As May became June, and turned into July, I found I was putting in many of the miles that Sam & Andrew were running & walking. I couldn't believe the miles they were putting in. I had been making sure to get 5 miles in every day, but they bumped up my mileage during their event. Hearing them talk about the online comradery got me interested in this type of virtual race (endurance races have long been my thing, more than speed races). I'll stop here,



Tracey, Lee, Robin, Andrew, Ragan, Lily & Sam (Aug 30, after all finished)



Tracey, Ragan, Robin, Sam & Lily (Aug 30)



Ragan, Robin, Lee & Lily (May 23)

Live Racing Is On! (If you like trails)



Justyna Paczkowski

Piney Woods Ultra was organized by Ultra Expeditions on Sept. 19 in Tyler State Park, Tyler, Texas. It was the first in person run for **Piotr Paczkowski** and I since *Woodlands Half* in March. We were very excited to run with real people, in a real forest and to have a taste of normalcy. **Joana Smiechowska** (BCRR member) and us signed up for a 25k trail race. At the start line, we had to line up in rows of 4 runners, 6 feet apart, and slowly walk to wait for our

turn to cross the timing mat. No bunched up runners. No pushing. No tripping each other. Sweet... We loved it. The trail was not easy for runners from the flat Houston area. On the trail difficulty scale (1-7) the trail was ranked a 4, 4000 feet elevation change during the 25k course, well supported, and with 8 stations roughly every 3 miles. It had a lot of ups and downs, very little flats, roots and rocks which made runners fall, so we have seen a lot of bloody elbows and knees. For the record 3 of us had one fall each, no big deal... Overall, it was one of the most interesting courses in East Texas. We loved it, and it was our third time racing here. I love running trails! There is no pressure, no time frame, no expectations, just pure joy and freedom of running. 1 foot in front of the other until I get to the finish line. I am a very competitive

person (Capricorn by the way) but trail is my relaxation, meditation, and healing time. So until the next trail we run! By the way, Joana was the fastest of our group, Piotr managed to be the oldest, and I placed second in the Female Masters Division.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
Current	All public areas	For health and safety most events canceled or gone virtual.
Mondays	Herman Park	Mello Monday casual run
Wednesdays	Rice University/First Christian Church	Wednesday casual run
Fridays	Online event	Watch for Friday occasional virtual happy hours on Zoom
Sundays	Memorial Park Running Trails Center	Sunday morning casual run through River Oaks
September	Online	REMEMBER: BCRR membership year started. Dues due!
11/20-12/20	Virtual Event	Alex's 5K
11/8-11/29	Virtual Event	HMSA Classical 25K*
12/13	Sugar Land, TX	Sugar Land 30K*

*Official HARRA race series event.



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