

December 2024

splitimes

The Official Newsletter of the Utica Roadrunners



New Year's Day Run
JANUARY 1, 2025

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December
2024
Utica Roadrunners
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If you would like to advertise in Splitimes, please contact: Michelle McCarrick email: michelle@484design.com or call (315) 534-0067.

All payment, copy, advertisements and race applications are due the first of the month prior to the month that your ad will be placed (NO EXCEPTIONS!).

Editor: Michelle McCarrick • michelle@484design.com



Useful Links:

[Utica Roadrunners Facebook Page](#)
[Club Handbook](#)

TRACK MEMBERSHIP

**Only \$50
for a year!**

**Family price
\$75/year**



UR members receive a discount for use of the indoor track at Accelerate on Judd Road in Whitesboro

SIGN UP ONLINE

President's Message

by Andrew Rubino



**“ Run, run Rudolph, Santa’s gotta make it to town
Santa, make him hurry, tell him he can take the freeway down
Run, run Rudolph I’m reelin’ like a merry-go-round”**

– RUN RUDOLPH RUN BY CHUCK BERRY

Here we go!

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season arrived. Roadrunners are still running all over town and gearing up for the end of the year. Club members continue to meet at Forte at 8:30am on Saturdays and planning is well underway for the **New Year’s Day Run** at Accelerate. Members are also taking advantage of group runs and racing opportunities supported by the Club. If you would like to captain a race, please let us know! This winter we are looking forward to the return of the Four Race Challenge opening in January, a Blood Drive on Martin Luther King Day, a winter run and brunch around Delta Lake, and the Awards Banquet.

In November we celebrated during our annual board meeting with Saranac beverages, sandwiches and snacks from Brooklyn Pickle, and a little bit of business. Thank you to Mason Hedeem for helping to organize the meeting! **This year the Utica Roadrunners are celebrating over 50 years running.** George Searles has been on a fact finding mission to collect information about the club and preserve its history. Check out his initial history of the club on page 14. Please share any “Remember When” moments to help George continue his mission throughout the year. Lastly, the Club welcomed new board members Tommy Carlson and Lauren Culyer and said, thank you to Travis Olivera and Mason Hedeem for their service to the board and Club.

A group of Roadrunners participated in **The Safety Run** in their brightest gear, lights, glow sticks, and we even found some light up maracas! This was a choose your own distance course that ended at Pizza Boys with slices provided by the Club. Thank you everyone who participated to make this a fun and memorable event.

We had another fantastic turnout for the **Run 2 End World Hunger**. This year was the 40th Anniversary. It was great to see Dave Jones, the founding race director, who also said a few words commemorating the event. The rainy and snowy conditions did not deter runners and walkers from showing up to donate food and money for this great cause. Thank you to Rebecca LaPorte and Mason Hedeem who continue to excel as race directors.

As we round out December, **remember to renew your Utica Roadrunners membership.** Also, be sure to share your photos and stories as you hit your 1,000 miles and other mileage goals for the year. We’d love to hear stories from you about your achievements and reflections as we close out the year

Happy Holidays Everyone and Enjoy the Journey!

Andrew
arubino13@gmail.com

Club News



Runners celebrate birthdays with a trek to the Eagle in Utica!



No December Club Happy Hour

Enjoy your holiday parties - watch for exciting new social events in the New Year!



2024 SAFETY RUN



Runners lit up New York Mills for our annual run to promote safety and finished at Pizza Boys!

Save the Date!



The winners of our
Cliff's Local Market Gift Cards.

Cliff's keeps UR going!

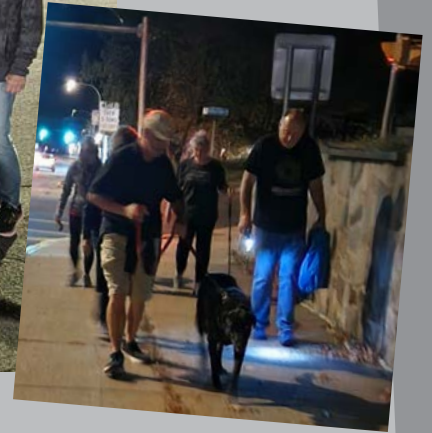
Congratulations to
Amanda, Tommy and Sue!



Member Accomplishments



Sandy Arcuri celebrated 1,000 days of walking at least a mile every day!



Sue Luley was happy to accomplish her 1,000th mile during the 40th UR Run 2 End Hunger and celebrate with running friends!



Donna Morreall (center, in purple) celebrated 1,000 miles!

Awards Are Coming Up!

**Do you know any Utica Roadrunners
who have done AWESOME or
INSPIRING things this past year?**

**Maybe some who have put in lots of
VOLUNTEER time or helped with TRAINING?**

You should nominate these folks for an AWARD!

When nominating, please don't just put the person's name, but also include some information about why you think they should earn that specific award. The nominating committee doesn't always know every person who gets nominated - so the more you can tell us, the better chance of your nominee being a winner!

NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!

Volunteer Service

These are awards for people who help out the club by volunteering their time in leadership positions, on the ground, or working with new runners. We also award a location organization or other non-club entity each year that supports us.

Running Merit

These are awards for people who have shown significant running achievements over the past year including participation,

training, dedication, and finishing times and awards. We also look for the most improved, no matter where you started.

Generalized Awards

The Inspiration Award goes to someone whose upbeat attitude and dedication to using their talents has had a positive influence on other runners throughout the year.

The Grit Award goes to someone who shows passion and perseverance while overcoming obstacles and challenges, and pushes themselves further than they thought they could go.

The Hall of Fame Award goes to the individual who has excelled for many years in the sport of running and has distinguished himself or herself through racing achievements and/or support of the running community.

See the website for recent and historical award winners, and start thinking NOW about who you would like to nominate! The nomination form will be available beginning in December.

Red Jacket Candidates



It is time to start thinking about mileage and volunteer activity reporting!

We would like you to fill out [this online form](#) by January 15th to be certain that we can order your patches in time for our banquet on March 8th. You should fill out this form if:

- You would like to earn your Red Jacket for either the 1000 Mile Club or the Extra Mile Club (volunteering)
 - You have a Red Jacket and would like to earn patches for it
- You want to report data for future purposes and club record keeping - even if you won't be earning patches or have a jacket yet

Remember: You must have 1,000 miles in 2024 and 10 volunteer points (which can be from this year and last)

Any questions about mileage reporting or awards? Contact Melissa Barlett (docbarlett@gmail.com)



November Membership Meeting



Board Member Profile

Rebecca LaPorte

Meet Rebecca – our board secretary and volunteer coordinator

Rebecca started running in 2007 while still in middle school. Her coach, former board member Linda Turner, encouraged the New Hartford modified team to volunteer at the Development Runs, and Rebecca has been involved with the club and the Dev Runs ever since.

She has run the Boilermaker fifteen times since 2009, missing only once (2015, due to injury). She was part of two national champion MVCC teams – cross-country in 2014 and outdoor track in 2015 – and was MVP of SUNY Poly's 2017 cross-country team while majoring in nursing, her current profession.

Her other interests include downhill skiing and hiking. In 2021 she completed all 46 Adirondack High Peaks.

Rebecca lives in Whitesboro with her husband, Mason (himself a board member), and their two dogs.

She told SpliTimes, "Growing up, I never thought of myself as athletic. But after starting cross-country I learned I was capable of more than I'd realized. I fell in love with the sport and have made so many friends through running!"



Get Your Friends to Join NOW!

If they join NOW, their membership will last through Dec 2025!

(Get December 2024 FREE!)

Also! Now offering pre-pay for 2 years of membership through Dec. 31, 2026



[LINK TO MEMBERSHIP](#)

Member Article

The Right Place at the Right Time

By Gary Burak



The History

When I joined the Utica Roadrunners in September 1990, one of the first people I met was Jim Tyler. Jim had run for Buffalo State in college and after about a three decade break, he was back to running. This worked out well for this 32 year old new runner, as we were running the same pace and Jim had plenty of running experience to share with this new runner. By May the next year, Jim had me doing my first marathon, and not long after that track workouts were added to my training routine. The Monday Night Utica Roadrunners Track Workouts started with three runners – Jim, Al Roberts and me. Before long, I was getting faster and began to occasionally make my way to the awards podium. As time went on it became more common.

Runners were noticing, and by the mid 1990s the Monday night track group was about 15 people. Workout paces ranged from six minutes a mile to 13 minutes a mile, and Jim would come up with different workouts for everyone, according to how fast they were running. It was during this time that I had my best year – you know the one where race after race you put those two letters (“PR”) after your race times.

However, despite running my fastest times ever, one thing was missing. I wasn’t getting any awards. This made me train harder, which made my race times faster, however I couldn’t get out of placing fourth place in my age group. By the fall running season, Jim could see my frustration growing and so it was time for some coaching advice. I don’t remember the exact words, but it was something like this – **“Running is like life. You don’t need to be the best, the strongest or the fastest. All you need to do is be at the right place at the right time.”**

The Event

Coach Tyler was right, the next year, despite a 10-15 seconds slower average pace per mile, I was back on the podium, and not only was I back, I was winning my age group race after race. Now, three decades later, Jim has been proven right again. This time it was huge – winning my age group at the Huntsman World Senior Games!

For 37 years, St. George, Utah has been the home to the World Senior Games. Thirty years ago the Huntsman Foundation stepped up and became the major sponsor of the games. St George is located in Southeast Utah in the desert, with an average temperature range of 55-80 degrees throughout the day in October. The daily lows are at 8:00am just before the sun rises.



The 5K

This year 12,055 senior athletes, ages 50 to 100 years old, from 30 different countries competed in 35 sports at 40 different location throughout the greater St. George area. New to the games this year was the designation as the official World Senior Championships which makes any gold medalist a World Senior Champion. The games were held for two weeks with Track and Field events during week one, and a 5K Trail Race, as well as both a 5K and 10K Road Race on week two. I signed up for both road races – the 5K took place on Monday, with the 10K on Wednesday.

The 5K course runs on part of the 23 mile long St. George Virgin River Trail System.

The Virgin River starts in Zion National Park and, after joining the Colorado River, ends at Lake Meade. The course was out and back on part of the trail that is near the St. George Convention Center, which is the headquarters for the games.



This is a flat fast course with only a 20 foot elevation rise over the first 1.55 mile outward portion of the course. After picking up my number, Felicia and I walked out for half a mile and returned back so I could check out the course. Felicia then headed back out for a four mile walk on the trail, while I got ready to race.

Starting out mid pack, I slowly began moving up and about a mile into the race I see Felicia heading back from her walk. As I reached the 1.25 mile mark the leader comes flying by, making his way back to the finish. Out and back races are great as you can count your position and as I made the turn I was 25th overall. With three male and three female age groups younger than me in the race, I figured I needed to be in the top 21 runners to have a shot at a medal, so I pick up the pace and begin moving up. At 2.5 miles in the race the effect of running at 3,000 feet above sea level (which is five times higher than the elevation I train at here at home) hit me. So I did a quick 10 second walk break and start back running.

Felicia had almost made her way back to the finish line and, as I went by she cheers me on. At the finish area there was water and cut bananas for the runners. On another table next to it volunteers were placing cards with the runners name, finish time as well as their place overall and in their age group. When the last runner finished everyone headed over to the tented area next to the convention center. This area has plenty of chairs and tables along with pit groups for the athletes to relax during the day and in the evening enjoy the nightly entertainment at the Friendship Festival. Before the awards started, a Chick-Fil-A worker shows up with two big boxes of breakfast wraps for the runners. The awards started with the oldest age group first. Runners who place fourth to sixth get beautiful color ribbons, and the top 3 receive medals. I ended up placing third for a bronze medal! One race down, one to go.

The 10K

The 10K finishes at the downtown Irvin's City Park. From there, runners are transported to the start in nearby Snow Canyon State Park. After getting my number I say goodbye to Felicia and get on the luxury tour bus that will take us 6.2 miles to the starting area. One thing I can say about the organization putting on the games is that everything they did was topnotch. We get dropped off with 20 minutes to go till the start. There's two bathrooms along with two extra port a potties, along with plenty of water to fill water bottles. As I start to warm up I start talking with a few runners and learn from the veterans that the first two

numbers on your race bib are your age group. It was surprising to me that we didn't wear back bibs with our age like in the National Championships I have raced in. Now I understand how they were able to give out those cards with the unofficial results at the 5K so fast. I look around and one runner with a 65 bib catches my attention. He's dressed all in blue and is lean and mean. I figure he is going to be my biggest competition so I get right behind him for the start.

The first 1.5 miles are run on the road, and the elevation quickly drops over 500 feet before we cut through a parking lot and begin to run on the bike trails through the rest of the park. With the start elevation at 3,600 feet above sea level, I start out easy trying to hold back a little. Downhills are my strongest point in a race, so half a mile in I open up my stride and start pulling away for the runner in blue. After a hamstring injury back in May, my return back to running has been slow going and I was sure that I would need a few short walk breaks to finish the 10K distance. So my plan was to take advantage of the downhill portion in the state park, and hopefully get a large enough lead so that none of the other runners in my age group would catch me.



As I leave the park and begin running through the local neighborhoods and at the five mile mark my heart rate jumps 20 beats per minute meaning my blood has started to thicken up. The two things that can cause this are dehydration or heat. With no sign of my leg muscles tightening up, I'm sure it's due to the temperature along with the desert sun. As I make my last turn the finish line is only a third of a mile away, but with my heart racing I needed to take a short walking break to get it under control. I take five deep breaths and start back running again. As I cross the finish line, Felicia is back from her morning walk and is there to cheer me on.



The win!

After catching my breath and drinking some water I head over to check my unofficial results. To my complete surprise it says I won my age group! After changing into dry clothes, it's time to head to the pavilion and out of the sun. The local Guru's Sports Bar has put out a breakfast buffet for the runners and volunteers. It takes quite a while for the last runners to come in and some runners picked up their medals and leave before the awards ceremony started, however I was definitely going to wait to hear them say Gary Burak from New Hartford, New York is the 65-69 Male Champion. With the awards finished, it's time to return to the hotel for a shower, some rest and later head over to the Friendship Festival for a little entertainment.

By Friday it was time to start heading back home and get back to my regular running routine. If anyone would like to join Felicia and I at next year's games we would love some company and who knows, it might be your turn to be at the right place at the right time.

Run 2 End Hunger



Celebrating 50 Years in 2025!

Utica Roadrunners: A Brief History

By George Searles

Founded in 1974 by Bob “Coach” Carlson, the Reverend John Morrow, and Dr. Paul Ohlbaum, the Roadrunners began as The Utica YMCA Track Club, with only ten members, operating out of the Washington Street Y (now the Charles A. Gaetano Veterans Complex). Although many other running-based organizations have appeared since then, the Utica group was the first in the Valley area.

In 1978 the club took a giant step forward, becoming officially affiliated with the Roadrunners Club of America (RRCA), with Carlson serving as that national organization’s New York State representative.

In its early years, the club changed its name a couple of times, and was known as the Mohawk Valley Running Club and the YMCA Running Club before settling on its permanent moniker: the Utica Roadrunners. During that formative period the membership steadily increased, growing to over 200 during the first decade, and is now far more than double that number.

As its name evolved, so did the club itself, becoming a major presence on the local scene. The club-backed Falling Leaves Road Race debuted in 1975, predating even the 1978 arrival of the now-legendary Boilermaker, a joint venture of the club and Utica Boilers CEO Earle Reed, himself a Roadrunner. Since then, a great many club members have been centrally involved in that ongoing annual event, including Dick Coleman, Dick Mattia, and current director Jim Stasaitis, among numerous others. Reportedly the largest 15K race in the country, the Boilermaker is now internationally known, attracting top-tier distance runners from all over the world.

For some time, the club has conducted its Boilermaker Training Program, readying first-time participants to successfully complete the race. The club has been a longtime presence at the Boilermaker Expo, originally hosted by the Masonic Home but then relocated to Mohawk Valley Com-

munity College, offering merchandise sales, health & wellness information, and other services such as packet pickup on the day before the race.

Since its founding, the club has embraced a variety of other initiatives, notably the summer Development Runs. Probably the most longstanding such weekly event in the United States, the Dev Runs were first developed by local enthusiast Joe Ficcaro in 1970, but their continuing success over the years can be attributed to a host of selfless volunteers including Sam Gratch, Mike Kelly, Bob Ruckel, and Roadrunners Paul Ohlbaum, Howard Rubin, Mike Kessler, Linda Turner, and—most recently—Ashley Mancini.

Starting on the Memorial Parkway and veering into Roscoe Conkling Park, these Wednesday evening Runs offer three distances (two mile, 5K, and an exceptionally challenging 10K, along with shorter distances for children), providing a valuable training opportunity for local runners preparing for the Boilermaker, the Falling Leaves, and various other races the club has created and continues to sponsor: the Ted Petrillo Save Our Switchbacks (S.O.S.), the Summer Sizzle, and others.

In addition, the club actively supports the annual Heart Run and the Thanksgiving Day Hunger Run, originated by Jones in 1985.

The 1996 S.O.S. project was a highlight of the club’s history, as Roadrunners legend Ted Petrillo wrote a successful grant application (edited by George Searles) that brought in more than \$100,000 from various funding sources, including the Utica Parks Department, the Oneida County Department of Public Works, the federal Rails to Trails Program, and the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, along with individual benefactors. This enabled the club, in cooperation with the City of Utica, to restore the decaying trail system and surrounding area in the park, thereby allowing the switchbacks to remain available for public use.



Ten years later, under the direction of project coordinator Dave Jones, a similar grant written by Searles yielded nearly \$10,000 from the American Heart Association, the Community Foundation, and private donors, enabling the City to install a dozen Fit-Trail exercise stations along the trail. In 2017 a commemorative plaque was installed in front of the refurbished pavilion at the entrance to the switchbacks, recognizing the project's many generous financial contributors: Dr. Louis K. Brumer (in memory of), Dr. Paul & Billie Ohlbaum, Dr. Venkata Mannava, Earle C. Reed, James Kernan, Richard Hanna, Dave Jones, Chuck & Janet Silverman, Theresa & Dan Cohen, and Phyliss & Ted Petrillo.

In keeping with the club's stated mission of promoting fitness and health, five annual Paul Ohlbaum – Howard Rubin \$500 scholarships are presented to outstanding high school seniors intending to compete in college. Another longstanding Roadrunners tradition is the annual awards banquet, at which members who have logged at least 1,000

miles during the previous calendar year and have completed certain other requirements receive the group's coveted red jacket. Members can also qualify for jacket chevrons and patches signifying mileage landmarks, marathon completions, and other achievements. For example, the age-based "Grand Prix" awards recognize members' performances in a series of races during the preceding year.

The club's website is maintained by member Andy Hartnett, a professional software architect, providing full details about club activities, archived information such as the Roadrunners Hall of Fame, and more. SpliTimes, the long-established, award-winning monthly newsletter currently edited by Michelle McCarrick of 484 Design, is another indispensable source of Roadrunner news, replete with race results, abundant photos, running-related articles, Board member profiles, and much more.

Group Runs

Trying to keep up with your running even as the race schedule thins out? There are still group runs happening weekly! You can drop in at the following times/places and will likely find people to run with; distances may vary.

Saturday Mornings, 8:30am

FORTE Strength and Fitness

50 Genesee Street, New Hartford (Locations may change!)

[Email Erik Winberg](#) or check in with the [URR Boilermaker Training Program Facebook group](#) for current information

Wednesday Nights, 6:00pm

Sneaker Store

24 Genesee St, New Hartford

Do you have a regular group run that you want to let people know about? [Email Melissa Barlett](#) and we can consider adding you to the list!



Call for Donations!

CITY OF UTICA YOUTH BUREAU

HOLIDAY GIVEBACK



The City of Utica Youth Bureau is looking for donations for the following items:



- **Coats**
- **Hats**
- **Gloves**
- **Boots**



DROP OFF LOCATION:

220 Memorial Pkwy

Utica, NY 13501

Monday-Friday 9am-6pm



These items will go to youth in need in our community whom participate in our programs.

For more information contact us at (315) 223-4320 or
Franchesca at floconti@cityofutica.com



HELP FILL THE NEED

Donate blood!



American
Red Cross

Utica RoadRunners

American Legion Post 229
409 Herkimer St. Utica, NY 13502

Monday, January 20th
12:30p – 5:30p



Come give Jan. 20th with Utica RoadRunners to automatically be entered for a chance to win an exciting trip for you & a guest to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans! Includes travel, hotel, \$1,000 gift card, pre-game activities & more!

To sign up, scan the QR code or visit
redcrossblood.org and enter keyword: **UticaRR**

Multiply your life-saving impact by signing up for Power Red (types A-, B-, O-, O+) or by bringing a colleague with you!



1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

© 2023 The American National Red Cross | 418001-04-Field-RW

UR Membership Has Its Benefits!

The Utica Roadrunners, founded in 1975, is a running club that has a “place for every pace”. The members are wonderful and the benefits are great. Become a member today!

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES & GUIDANCE

Wednesday Development Runs

For over 30 years, we have held the “Dev Runs” on Wednesday nights at the Parkway which includes a kid’s fun run, a 2-mile, a 5K and a 10K following a challenging route up the golf course and into the Switchbacks... guaranteed to get you “Boilermaker Ready!”

Boilermaker Training Program

This popular Saturday morning program will get you ready to finish OR improve on your 5K or 15K race. The weekly routes are laid out, plans are made to follow, and the club provides support for runners.

LIVE UR RACES

We have been running these local favorites for years!

Save Our Switchbacks
Summer Sizzle 5-Miler
Falling Leaves 5K and 14K
Skeleton Run

Plus we added the Run Against Racism, Grateful for Graham 5K and the Tunnel to Towers 5K,

CHALLENGE YOURSELF



Run 1,000 miles in one year and accumulate volunteer points and you get our coveted Red Jacket!

EDUCATION & INSPIRATION



From fellow Roadrunners with great stories to the legendary Kathrine Switzer, our Speaker Series grew stronger during the pandemic and will continue with great programming to inspire our members!

FRIENDLY COMPETITION



Get points for running local races and compete against UR members in your age group



A season-long, age-graded challenge against other CNY running clubs.

CONNECTION

So many opportunities to meet new people and stay in the know with running

Social Events
Happy Hours
Monthly SpliTimes Newsletter
Great Social Media
Group Bus Trips
Friendship & Camaraderie
Natural mentorship
and positive support

SAVINGS!



Our members receive a 10% discount on their gear at The Sneaker Store plus they have access to select members-only sales throughout the year. **Plus!** Enjoy race discounts exclusively for our members.

GREAT LEADERSHIP



We have some of the hardest working people around involved in UR – from the board, committees, race directors, special program leaders, volunteers and more!

CELEBRATION



Our Annual Awards Banquet and Ceremony celebrates member accomplishments from throughout the year, lets us kick back and enjoy one of the best events of the year!

splitimes



UTICA ROADRUNNERS

Advertise with us!

Our monthly newsletter is emailed to over 900 runners in the Mohawk Valley who love to take part in races throughout New York and beyond!

For just **\$25 per issue**, you get a full page ad (8.5" x 11"). **For \$40**, get the full page ad PLUS we'll post the flier and a link to your race registration page on our Utica Roadrunners Facebook page (2,700+ likes)

SpliTimes is the 2015 RRCA Newsletter of Year!



Reserve your space and submission information

Please email SpliTimes editor Michelle Truett at michelle@484design.com to reserve your space today or fill out information below and mail this form to us. Ads can be submitted to Michelle as PDFs or JPEGs (no Word or Publisher docs please!) and all ads are in full color.

Payment: Mail to: Utica Roadrunners, P.O. Box 4141, Utica, N.Y. 13504. Ads will not run without payment.



Race name: _____

Contact name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Month(s) you would like your ad to run (\$25 per month)

- January 2025
- February 2025
- March 2025

Would you like to add a UR Facebook post

for just \$15 (per month)?

Yes No

Total included: \$ _____