

THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | FEBRUARY 2025



GWTC 30K/15K
START LINE

VOLUME 50 | ISSUE 2



THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | DECEMBER 2024

VOLUME 50 | ISSUE 2

Editor: Robert & Kory Skrob, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

Columnists: Jane Johnson (Featured Feet), Jennifer Hay and Jerry McDaniel (Presidents Column), Bill Lott (Race Calendar).

Advertising Copy:

The maximum print size of our page is 4.75 in. by 7.75 in. If possible, ads should be sent as MS Word files, will look best with standard fonts (Arial, Times New Roman), and formatted to fit the desired size. A simple way is to use 2 inch margins on 8.5 by 11 paper. Deadline: 10th of month previous to publication. Questions, contact the editor.

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GWTC-Fleet Foot and sent to, PO Box 3447, Tallahassee, FL 32315

Submissions/Contributions:

Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged, the preferred format is Microsoft Word. If you have pictures or stories about your running group, don't be shy, photos should be in jpg format. Contact us if you have questions.

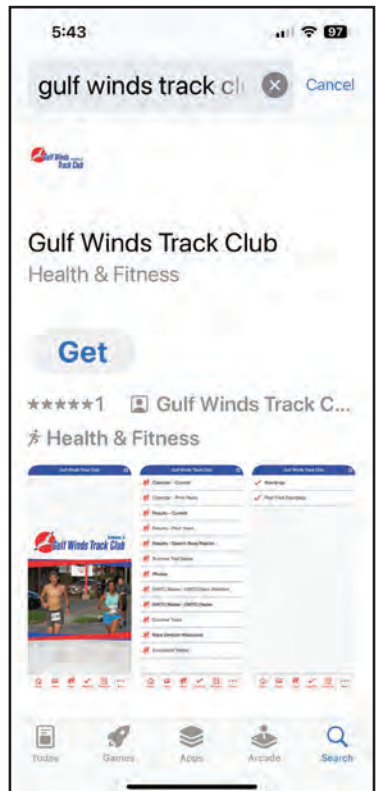
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Stay Connected with the Gulf Winds Track Club App!

Get the latest club updates, check race results, and view the event calendar right from your phone! It's the easiest way to stay informed and connected with all things GWTC. Download the app today on the Google Play Store or Apple App Store to keep up with our club's activities. Don't miss out—download now!





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Road Runners Club of America Member Club

USA Track & Field Member Club #14-1275



ST. MARKS DUATHLON

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

Join us for the St. Marks Duathlon on
February 23rd, 2025 hosted by the
Gulf Winds Triathlon Club!

This beginner-friendly race consists of a flat and fast
5K run, 20K bike, followed by another 2.5K run.

Want to race with a team or on your mountain bike?
Relay and fat tire bike divisions are also available!

More info + register online at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/SaintMarks/TheStMarksDuathlon>

OR scan the QR code:



Questions? Email duathlon.stmarks@gmail.com

YOUR MEMBER BRIEFING

Your GWTC Board of Directors met on December 11, 2024

Here's a summary of the board meeting, distilled down for you.

Complete minutes for all board meetings are available at [Gulfwinds.org](https://www.gulfwinds.org).

Turkey Trot Wrap-Up

Mary Jean Yon shared that this year's Turkey Trot was another success, with just under 6,400 registered participants and 5,695 finishers. The 5K race saw the largest turnout with 4,232 participants. The event is projected to raise \$54,000–\$59,000, with proceeds split among four designated beneficiaries. To meet demand, additional t-shirts and medals had to be re-ordered.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Peg Griffin reported that as of November 30, GWTC has net assets of \$269,734.35 and a net income of \$12,363.05. Much of the revenue from the Tallahassee Marathon has already been received, while most expenses are yet to be incurred.

New Role for GWTC Mailbox Duties

Robert McNeal discussed the need for additional help managing the club's mailbox. Jeanne O'Kon volunteered to pick up mail, ensuring checks and bills are directed to Peg, while Allen Blay will serve as the backup keyholder.

Exciting Name Change for the Ultra 50K

The board voted to rename the Ultra 50K the "Bill Hillison 50K" in honor of Bill Hillison, who impressively ran the race 30 times.

Membership Growth

GWTC continues to thrive, with current membership reaching 1,319 individuals and 760 households. This marks an increase compared to the same time last year.

Training Groups and Socials

The Half-Marathon training group is progressing well with around 30 participants, despite a few pacers experiencing injuries. On the social front, Tina Bahmer reported positive feedback from the Christmas Party on December 7. Although the party ran slightly over budget by \$64, new children's activities and a photo booth were well-received.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Gabrielle Gabrielli submitted an update on the DEI Committee, highlighting her recent article in Fleet Foot and reflecting on the successful October 22 discussion at Ology Brewing. Gabrielle expressed pride in the club's ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity, including contributions from members like Danny Manausa and David Yon.

Chenoweth Fund Supports National Representation

The Chenoweth Fund approved \$285.96 in travel support for Stanley Linton, who will represent GWTC in the USATF Cross-Country Championships in Lubbock, Texas, on January 11, 2025.

Chip Timing Success

Bill Lott reported that revenue from chip-timed non-club races since July has totaled \$3,713. Upcoming chip-timed events include the Swamp Forest Trail Run, GWTC 30K/15K, and Bowlegs 5K Run for Scholarship in January.

Merchandise Updates

Sherry Wise noted that while online merchandise sales remain low, she is exploring options to boost interest. The upcoming Marathon Expo will feature walk-in merchandise sales, along with pre-order opportunities for special shirts and caps.

Grand Prix Committee Changes

The Grand Prix Committee is preparing for Annual Awards, with nominations open through December 15. Elizabeth Kamerick is stepping down after three terms of service, and Lisa Unger expressed gratitude for her contributions. The committee is also verifying volunteer service for potential Grand Prix award winners.

Looking Ahead to 2025

The board is focused on the future, including plans to host a Race Director meeting in January and appoint a board member with strong tech skills to support the club's operations. Jerry McDaniel emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong foundation for club activities, including efficient communication and technical infrastructure.

As the meeting wrapped up, the board reflected on a successful 2024 and the exciting events planned for the year ahead. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved with GWTC!

FEAR NO DISTANCE

The background of the entire advertisement is a photograph showing the silhouettes of several runners in motion on a road. The scene is set against a bright, hazy sky, likely at sunrise or sunset, which creates a strong backlighting effect. The runners are captured in various stages of their stride, conveying a sense of movement and energy.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025

8:00 AM - 1 Mile

8:30 AM – 5K

**Killearn Methodist Church
2800 Shamrock Street South, Tallahassee**

Registration includes post-race Pancake Breakfast!

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RACE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2025

01 Chipola 5K Challenge 8 a.m. (CT). Cultural Center, Bldg. 1, Chipola College, 3094 Indian Circle, Marianna, FL. Online registration available at ItsYourRace.com. Visit www.chipola.edu/chipola5k; or Thomas Howell at tvhowell1@gmail.com.

02 GWTC Tallahassee Marathon/ Half Marathon, 7:30 a.m. Start at Leon County Courthouse, 301 South Monroe St., downtown Tallahassee; finish in College Town at Madison Social, 705 S. Woodward Ave. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.tallahasseemarathon.com; or email race director at marathon@gulfwinds.org.

08 Dr. James H. Crowdis Run 5K/1M, 9:30 a.m. First United Methodist Church, 397 College St., Blakely, GA. Online registration available at RaceEntry.com. Visit <http://crowdisrun.weebly.com>; or Tony Gilbert at tonygilbert@windstream.net or (229) 723-5070.

15 GWTC Flash 12K/6K, 8:30 a.m. San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park, 148 Old Fort Rd., St. Marks, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Rob Klepper at rob.klepper@comcast.net.

15-16 Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) Indoor Track & Field Championships, TBA. Birmingham CrossPlex, Birmingham, AL. Visit www.swac.org.

20-23 USATF Indoor Masters Championships, TBA. Alachua County Sports & Events Center at Celebration Pointe, 4870 Celebration Pointe Ave., Gainesville, FL. Visit usatfmasters.org.

22 M.A.D. (Making A Difference) 10K/5K/1M, 8 a.m. 1M; 8:30 a.m. 10K/5K. Thomasville Road Baptist Church, 3131 Thomasville Rd. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Dan Evans at evans@harvestoflife.org.

23 GWTC St. Marks Duathlon (5K run/20K bike/2.5K run), 8 a.m. 25 Riverside Dr., St. Marks, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit <https://gulfwindstri.com/st-marks-duathlon/>; or Averi Lewis at duathlon.stmarks@gmail.com.

MARCH 2025

01 Shamrock Scurry 5K/1M, 8 a.m. 1M; 8:30 a.m. 5K. Killlearn Methodist Church, 2800 Shamrock South (at the Killarney Way traffic circle). Online registration available at EventBrite.com. Visit www.shamrockscurry.com; or email to jim@killlearn.church.

01 Capital City Senior Games (50+) - Track and Field, 9 a.m. javelin; 9:30 a.m. fun walk; all other events on rolling schedule starting at 10 a.m. Godby High School, 1717 W. Tharpe St. Online registration and information available at www.talgov.com/seniorgames; or Lucas Williams at (850) 891-3825.

01-03 ACC Indoor Track & Field Championships, TBA. Norton Healthcare Sports & Learning Center, Louisville, Ky. Visit www.theacc.com.

08 Realtors Community 5K. 8 a.m. Cascades Park, 1001 S. Gadsden St. Online registration TBA. Therese Gagliano at sarah@therese@TBRnet.org.

23-30 World Athletics Masters Indoor Championships, TBA. Alachua County Sports & Events Center at Celebration Pointe, 4870 Celebration Pointe Ave., Gainesville, FL.



27-29 FSU Relays, 3 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. Friday; 10 a.m. Saturday. Mike Long Track, 1104 Spirit Way, FSU Campus. Visit www.Seminoles.com.

29 GWTC Springtime 10K/5K/1M, 7:30 a.m. 1M; 8 a.m. 10K/5K. Suwanee St. next to Cascades Park. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.springtime10k.com; or www.gulfwinds.org; or Jerry McDaniel at springtime10k@gmail.com.

APRIL 2025

12 GWTC 50th Palace Saloon 5K, 8 a.m. Start at Messer Fields, corner of Jackson Bluff Rd. and Dupree St.; finish at The Palace Saloon, 1303 Jackson Bluff Rd. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.gulfwinds.org; or Tom Perkins at tomperkinsfsu@gmail.com or (850) 264-4595.

12 Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival Wiggle Worm Fun Run (1.4M), 8 a.m. Corner of Rose St. and Municipal Ave., downtown Sopchoppy, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.wormgruntinfestival.com; or Katherine Westmark at mkwestmark@gmail.com or (850) 445-4206.

19 Rose City Run 10K/1M, 8 a.m. 10K; 9:30 a.m. 1 M. North Broad St. at corner of Broad St. and Monroe St., near U.S. Post Office, Thomasville, GA. **No Race Day Registration for 1M.** Online registration available at <https://ymca-thomasville.org/rose-city-run>. Thomasville YMCA at (229) 226-9878 or rcr@ymca-thomasville.org.

25 FSU Invitational, TBA. Mike Long Track, 1104 Spirit Way, FSU Campus. Visit www.Seminoles.com.

26 NeSmith Way 5K, 8:30 a.m. Phipps Farm/Meridian Meadows, 4300 N. Meridian Rd. (across from Maclay School). Online registration available at web.cvent.com. Sue Ault at (850) 556-5922.

26 Nene Fest 2-Way 5K/1M, 8 a.m. 5K; 9 a.m. 1M. Optimist Park, 1806 E. Indianhead Dr. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit <http://facebook.com/nene5k>; or Marie Claire Leman at nenefest5kandfunrun@gmail.com.

26 Rose City 5K Walk, 8:30 a.m. Thomasville Center for the Arts, 600 E. Washington St., Thomasville, GA. **No Race Day Registration.** Online registration available at <https://ymca-thomasville.org/rose-city-run-walk>. Thomasville YMCA at (229) 226-9878 or rcr@ymca-thomasville.org.



NEW 2024 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Members aged 15 and older must perform volunteer service for at least one GWTC race.

Document your volunteer service here

<https://tinyurl.com/GWTCVolunteer>



Tallahassee, FL
Gulf Winds Track Club
GRAND PRIX

All GWTC members receive points for finishing in the top 12 positions by age group for Grand Prix events. It's a fun way to compete with fellow members throughout the year.

2025 Complete Grand Prix Schedule

Date	Race	Adult	Youth
February 2	Bank of America Tallahassee Marathon and Half Marathon	Full/Half	-
February 15	Flash 12/6K	12K/6K	-
March 29	Springtime 10k, 5k, & 1M	10K	5K or 1M
March TBD	Bowlegs 5k & 1M	5K	5K or 1M
April 12	Palace Saloon 5k	5K	-
April TBD	NeSmith 5k	-	5K
June 7	Great Potluck Bash 4 Miler	4M	-
August 8	Breakfast on the Track	1M	1M
August 16	Miller Landing Madness 8K/5K/3K	8K/5K	3K
September 1	Bluebird Run 5k (1mile not timed)	5K	-
September 13	5K for Sickle Cell Anemia & Tim Simpkins 1 Mile	-	5K or 1M
September TBD	Women's Distance Festival 5K & 1M	-	5K or 1M
September TBD	Steve Prefontaine 5K Forest Run	5K	-
October TBD	Pine Run at Tall Timbers 20K	20K	-
November 27	Turkey Trot 15k, 10k, 5k, & 1M	15K	5K or 1M
December 13	Tallahassee Ultra Distance Classic 50M/50K	50K or Marathon	-

GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Get the complete 2024 standings by visiting:
<https://runsignup.com/Series/GWTCGrandPrix>



VICE PRESIDENTS COLUMN

By: Allen Blay, GWTC Vice President

If someone had told me seven years ago that I'd be VP of a track club and writing an article about how much I love running, I would have told you that was crazy. I never ran until January, 2018 – running was a necessary evil of 'real' sports like soccer and tennis. My two younger boys ran. Even my twin girls, who were still in their single digit years, started going to this new summer running program with Coach David Yon and a summer camp with Coach Angie Milford. My wife Kristin had been running for years – a couple marathons and a bunch of half marathons to raise money for Leukemia research in honor of her sister. My oldest son Jackson and I thought they all were crazy. So I was incredibly reluctant when Kristin signed me up for a 'free week' at Orange Theory. I can assure you that I did nothing but complain on those treadmills that old man legs aren't made to go at the speeds they said was running. I preferred what they called power walking speeds, but without the inclines, which also were just plain mean.

I enjoyed the people at Orange Theory, so I agreed (was forced?) to continue on for one more month. Somehow, my competitive nature

kicked in and even though I hated running, I kept going every day and pushing myself to try to be as fast as this guy who usually was next to me in class. I even ran a 5k with my kids – the Trent Trot. My goal was to beat 30 minutes and I did. Barely, but I did. Each month, I just kept going.

Now to the real point of this column. Everything changed for me sometime in the early summer of 2018. David Yon, who was running with my girls and their friends, invited me to join him at a Sunday morning run at Forest Meadows. I had never run a trail, or even outside other than that one 5k – my experience was entirely about six months on treadmills. I was nervous about it, but decided to go. I met Felton Wright and Jane Johnson that Sunday, and a bunch of other runners. You are never going to meet three better people than David, Felton and Jane. They made me feel welcome and I completely fell in love with the trails. I think I went five miles that morning, the longest I had ever run. It went very fast – not the pace, but the time. I have no idea what speed we ran because I didn't have a watch or a running app, which is probably why I liked it so much. I was hooked, and it wasn't because of the running. It was because of the people.

David, Felton and Jane mean so much to not only me, but to a huge number of runners in Tallahassee. Pretty much the entire Chiles girls XC team and a smattering of Lincoln and Leon boys learned to love running with David. David, Felton and their equally awesome spouses MJ and Bonnie have furthered the sport of running through their volunteering efforts, directing huge and challenging races, and supporting youth running through the development and support of programs in Tallahassee. Jane is always looking for ways to make sure everyone has the opportunity to run. I see the tradition of volunteering and building up community continuing.

David's SMIRFs program has continued to grow, encouraging kids to grow to love running. People like Emily Webster and Ashlee Blake are building up the GWTC group runs community with their positive energy. Tallahassee has something really special, and it's not just our trails. Seven years after I ran for the first time, my oldest son Jackson – the one who made fun of the rest of my running family with me – joins me on our Sunday morning runs. So next time you hit the road or the trails, grab a friend who doesn't run and invite them to join you. Like the new GWTC t-shirt says, every runner, any pace.



YEAR ROUND RUNNING GROUPS

Learn a lot more about
running groups by visiting
www.gulfwinds.org/training.

TUESDAY MORNING INTERVALS

Tuesday, 6:30am at Maclay School Track

TUESDAY EVENING INTERVALS

Tuesday, 6:00pm at Railroad Square (by skate park/rattler snake)

MIDTOWN MIDWEEK MILES

Wednesday, 5:30am at Whole Foods Market

WEDNESDAY EVENING INTERVAL WORKOUT GROUP

Wednesday, 5:30pm at Harriman Circle Park

OPTIMIST PARK THURSDAY NIGHT GROUP RUN

Thursday, 6pm at Optimist Park

SUNDAY AT FOREST MEADOWS TRAIL RUN

Sunday, 7:30am at
Forest Meadows Tennis Complex

REFLECTION TRAIL RUN

Every 2nd and last Sunday, 6:30pm
at Tom Brown Park

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FEATURED FEET

JENNY EARLY



Childhood ambition: I wanted to be everything! There were no limits to my career aspirations when I was a child.

Current occupation: Marketing and Partner Development Manager for Florida Health Care Association, which represents long term care centers across the state of Florida.

If money were no object, what profession would you choose? Either a cake baker or a race director for some trail ultras that focuses on the party experience and fun of running (costumes encouraged of course).

Favorite running memory: I am lucky enough to have some good ones but up there would be when I qualified and ran Boston as well as when I finished a 100 miler in the middle of a hurricane. They say you live 1,000 lives during an ultra and boy was that especially true at the race!

Indulgence: Chick-Fil-A ice cream cone (or frozen coffee), hush puppies with ranch, nachos, Cuban food and cold draft beer.

Non-running hobbies: baking, riding bikes with my boys on the trails, driveway basketball games, and other typical boy mom activities.

Favorite reads: Born to Run is a favorite, but currently I have been on a murder mystery kick these days.

Best place to run in

Tallahassee: Bradley's (old Centerville Rd) is a favorite, but I love Alford Greenway and all of the connector trails like Long Leaf and Cadillac because it is basically in my backyard. You can find me out there every week.

Preferred running technology: Garmin Forerunner 955 but I'm pretty sure my watch hates me based on some of the recommendations and reports it gives me lol.

Perfect day: A very long run on the trails that was a mixture of technical, yet runnable terrain so you feel the accomplishment of getting your butt kicked and follow it up with either a Lucky Goat coffee trip or cold beers with some yummy food, depending just how far I go on the run.

Biggest challenge: My mind and autoimmune setbacks. I can get in my head sometimes and it will have me self-doubting my ability to accomplish big things. I also suffer from an autoimmune disease so even if I am ready and trained to crush a race, sometimes my body just says, "nope" and shuts down. 🏹

FEATURED FEET

TOM PARKER



Childhood ambition: I wanted to be a lawyer when I grew up. And on the sports side played baseball and football and viewed running purely as punishment!

Current occupation: I work as the Senior Director of Policy and Reimbursement for the Florida Health Care Association which is the industry trade group that represents skilled nursing facilities all over the state.

If money were no object, what profession would you choose? Probably a running coach as I love helping others achieve the same joys from running I have.

Favorite running memory: My first Boston marathon in 2018. I worked for years to qualify, and the weather was miserable but the people who showed up to cheer on the runners for the length of the course made me realize just how special Boston was.

Indulgence: Late night salty snacks are my vice, potato chips, popcorn, etc.

Non-running hobbies: Craft beer and good bourbon, ensures I must keep running.

Favorite reads: Don't read as much as I would like but my favorite running book is *Once a Runner*.

Best place to run in

Tallahassee: Running Old Centerville Road from Bradley's but I also spend a lot of time on all the trails around town.

Preferred running technology: I am a Garmin watch kind of guy, been using them for years.

Perfect day: Early morning trail run in about 50-degree weather, followed by a nice latte and then pizza and beer for lunch.

Biggest challenge: Speed work. I would rather go run an easy 15 miles than race a 5k. 🏃

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

EMILY WEBSTER

Tell us briefly about your running experience.

I consider myself a social, casual runner. I'm not setting any records or winning any races, but enjoy running with my friends.

How long have you been a member of GWTC?

Oh goodness, don't let the treasurer see this, but probably off and on for the last decade or more. But definitely staying current now to support all the great things GWTC does for runners in our community!

How did you first get involved as a volunteer?

Over the years I have volunteered at several races when injured or not running them. Most recently I was encouraged to take a more active role in co-leading the training group runs for the club with three other fantastic runners. It has been a rewarding challenge to get more involved behind the scenes.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

I enjoy helping people to reach or exceed their potential and supporting runners along the way. It's so fun to be part of the training runs as well as cheering them on during the race!



Why do you volunteer?

I think it's important to give back to our amazing running community. My most sacred friendships have been forged on some long and grueling training runs - and some shorter fun ones. It's just one small way I can contribute to the club and the runners of Tallahassee and those coming to our beautiful city to race.

What is your next volunteer project?

I am currently helping with the Tallahassee half marathon training group as well as our training group runs. We have worked over the last year to increase the number of weekly runs offered around town, and we hope to grow them even more! Word on the street is there is also a fun January streak coming - so if you're not on our Facebook group run page, look us up! (Shameless plug for our awesome group!) 🏃‍♀️



FEMALE TRIATHLETE OF THE YEAR

SIGNE ULSAMER

Presented by Annie Bowman

It's not every day you meet someone as humble, driven, and versatile as Signe Ulsamer, Gulf Winds' 2024 Female Triathlete of the Year. Behind her kind and easygoing nature lies an extraordinary athlete, mother, daughter, engineer, and adventurer.

Signe's journey to triathlon began just a few years ago when she moved to Tallahassee. Since then, she has made an indelible mark, competing in countless local running and triathlon events and excelling in sprint, Olympic, and 70.3 Ironman distances. Always ready to support her fellow athletes, she even spontaneously signed up for Ironman Florida just weeks before the race after joining others on long training weekends.

Her achievements go far beyond triathlon. Signe has completed a remarkable array of endurance events, including the Pinhoti 100-mile trail race with over 14,000 feet of climbing, a 50-mile trail run in Alabama, and a grueling 64K race up Mount Etna in Sicily, Italy. Her dedication and mental toughness were summed up by her support crew at Pinhoti: "She never complained, never doubted—just kept placing one foot in front of the other."



Signe is not only an athlete but a true community leader. As the tri club treasurer since 2022, she has exemplified selflessness, from supporting training partners to helping clear debris with a chainsaw after tornadoes ravaged Myers Park.

Her philosophy? "Commit to what you're doing and don't get distracted by the past or the future." It's advice we can all take to heart. Congratulations, Signe, on this well-deserved honor!

MALE TRIATHLETE OF THE YEAR

MARK JETER

Presented by Jeff Bowman



Mark Jeter's journey to becoming the 2024 Male Triathlete of the Year is a story of resilience, faith, and unwavering dedication. A former high school running back and collegiate baseball player, Mark's endurance sports journey began over a decade ago when he started running 5Ks with his wife. His first half marathon was the Tallahassee Half 11 years ago, and just eight months later, he completed his first triathlon at the Try the Res Sprint Triathlon. He was hooked.

In 2017, Mark completed his first half Ironman at Augusta, enjoying the camaraderie and challenge. But his life

was profoundly shaped by the battle his daughter, Kaylee, faced with brain cancer. Through her strength and faith, she reassured him, saying, "God's got me." After five years of remission, her cancer returned in 2021, and by 2022, Kaylee had passed.

Triathlon became a way for Mark to channel his grief and honor his daughter's memory. He continued training and racing, supported by the Gulf Winds community. In 2023, he encouraged and cheered on local triathletes at Ironman Florida. Inspired by their achievements, he set his sights on completing Ironman Florida in 2024.

With a stone engraved with the word "Grace" from Kaylee in his pocket and 2 Timothy 1:7 in his heart, Mark overcame swim anxiety and completed Ironman Florida with strength and joy.

Mark's resilience and devotion inspire us all. Congratulations to Mark Jeter, 2024 Male Triathlete of the Year.





COMMUNITY AWARD MIKE RUPP

Presented by Tom Perkins

The Community Award honors an individual or organization that has supported running in our community over many years. This year's recipient, Mike Rupp, embodies the spirit of generosity and dedication that this award represents.

For more than 40 years, Mike has collaborated with local race directors to create memorable T-shirt designs for countless participants. His passion for Youth Running shines through his sizable discounts on shirts for the 8-week Summer Track Series, Miller Landing Madness, and other local events. Beyond apparel, Mike has also donated race awards, always refusing payment, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to our running community.

Mike's story is one of hard work and innovation. In 1972, he started Tallahassee's first T-shirt printing company, RAGZ, in a plywood storage shed while attending FSU. His dedication



grew that small operation into a thriving business, producing apparel for schools across the nation and major brands like Disney, ESPN, and The Gap.

Through his kindness and generosity, Mike and RAGZ have set the standard for quality and service in our community. Gulf Winds Track Club and local runners have been fortunate to benefit from his contributions, which have left an indelible mark on our sport.

Please join us in congratulating the 2024 Community Award recipient, Mr. Mike Rupp!

CLEVELAND CALDWELL ADVANCEMENT OF THE SPORT AWARD MICKEY MOORE

Presented by David Knauf



The Cleveland-Cadwell Advancement of the Sport Award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to advancing running through research, education, or other expertise. This year's recipient, Mickey Moore, embodies the very essence of this award.

Mickey's impact on the local running community spans more than a decade, with contributions that have inspired countless runners and supported numerous causes. He founded two local races and has raised thousands of dollars for organizations like Special Olympics, the Rodeo Youth Club, the Wounded Warrior Project, and the Pace Center for Girls. In 2017, Mickey ran every day for 365 days, using his dedication to running as a platform to raise funds for the Pace Center.

His influence extends beyond fundraising. Mickey originated the Striders program while at TMH, encouraging others to embrace running and fitness. Volunteering has become a family affair for him, as he's inspired his loved ones to join him in giving back to the running community.

A five-time Boston Marathoner and now an Ironman triathlete, Mickey's personal achievements are impressive, but it's his love for the sport and his ability to inspire others that truly set him apart. From supporting local races to motivating others to be active, Mickey's contributions have left an indelible mark on Gulf Winds Track Club.

Congratulations to Mickey Moore, the well-deserved recipient of the 2024 Cleveland-Cadwell Advancement of the Sport Award!





RACE DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR BILL LOTT

Presented by Jeanne O'Kon and Lisa Unger



The Race Director of the Year Award recognizes a Gulf Winds Track Club member who has gone above and beyond in organizing and producing high-quality events for the running community. This year, that honor goes to a familiar and deeply appreciated name: Bill Lott.

Being a race director is no small feat. It requires meticulous planning, from measuring courses and designing t-shirts to recruiting volunteers, ordering awards, and coordinating registration. On race day, the responsibilities grow—managing equipment like cones, timing clocks, and mats, directing the race, and

ensuring everything runs smoothly. As Mary Jean Yon often says, "It takes a village" to put on a successful event, and Bill has been the heart of that village for years.

Bill has directed multiple races annually, consistently ensuring they meet the high standards GWTC runners have come to expect. Beyond directing his own races, he's always ready to lend a hand to other race directors, sharing his expertise and working tirelessly to make every event successful.

His dedication to the running community and willingness to go the extra mile have made an incredible impact on the club.

Please join us in congratulating Bill Lott, the 2024 Race Director of the Year! Thank you, Bill, for your extraordinary efforts and unwavering commitment to GWTC.

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FEMALE RUNNER OF THE YEAR STEPHANIE LILES-WEYANT

Presented by Judy Alexander



The 2024 Female Runner of the Year Award goes to someone whose dedication, positivity, and athletic achievements have made her a standout in

the Gulf Winds Track Club community. This year, that honor belongs to Stephanie Liles-Weyant, a runner who exemplifies what it means to be committed, supportive, and relentlessly positive.

Stephanie's coaches, Gary Droze and Abigail Crow, speak highly of her dedication and openness to new challenges. "Nobody exemplifies a 'big yes' attitude more than Stephanie," noted Gary. "She is relentlessly positive, open to suggestions, and supremely coachable." Abigail echoed these sentiments,

praising Stephanie's hard work, nutrition, and recovery practices, describing her as "an athlete in every sense of the word."

Her training partners are equally inspired by her kindness and support. Whether she's offering words of encouragement, helping others believe in themselves, or simply being a great friend, Stephanie makes those around her better. "She never misses an opportunity to encourage or lift up a fellow runner," said one partner. "She's a shining example of what makes Tallahassee the greatest running community around."

Stephanie's race results are equally impressive. She claimed top finishes in 11 GWTC races in 2024, from the mile to the marathon, and qualified for the Boston Marathon at the Tallahassee Marathon. She's one of only three women to win both Runner of the Year and Triathlete of the Year.

Congratulations to Stephanie Liles-Weyant, the 2024 Female Runner of the Year!



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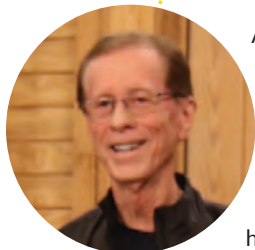
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MALE RUNNER THE YEAR DR. CARLOS ZAPATA

Presented by David Mayfield



At an age when many might choose a rocking chair, Dr. Carlos Zapata chooses the trails. Gulf Winds Track Club is proud to honor him as the 2024 Male Runner of the Year for his incredible

achievements, unwavering dedication, and inspiration to runners of all ages.

In 2024, Dr. Zapata completed over 30 races, tackling distances and terrains that would challenge runners half his age. His year included over 10 5Ks, two 6Ks, two 10Ks, two 15Ks, the Pine Run 20K, the Tallahassee and Birmingham Marathons, and three grueling Summer Trail Series races. He pushed his limits even further

with the Ridge to Blazing Ridge 10-Miler in Alabama's summer heat and the Blood Rock 55K, a treacherous race featuring over 6,000 feet of elevation.

Dr. Zapata's race schedule was as relentless as his determination. Just one week after completing the Blood Rock 55K, he ran the Tallahassee Ultra 50K, and he capped off his year by becoming the state champion for his age group at the Tannenbaum 6K.

Beyond his achievements, Dr. Zapata is a tireless encourager. He inspires runners young and old, pushes his peers to take on greater challenges, and has even brought spectators into the fold, convincing them to join the races. His passion and perseverance remind us all of what is possible.

Congratulations to Dr. Carlos Zapata, the 2024 Male Runner of the Year!

JOIN THE SPRINGTIME 10K TRAINING GROUP

**beginning February 10th
on Mondays at 5:45 pm
at Myers Park**

The training group runs for 7 weeks to prepare you for the race!



GWTC HALL OF FAME MARATHON JACK MCDERMOTT

Presented by Gary Griffin



The Gulf Winds Track Club Hall of Fame honors those who have not only achieved incredible running accomplishments but have also contributed significantly

to the club and the broader running community. This year, we welcome the incomparable Jack McDermott, affectionately known as “Marathon Jack.”

Jack’s running resume is nothing short of astonishing. He has completed 265 marathons (and counting), with nearly 50 of those under the coveted three-hour mark. Among these are 23 finishes at the Boston Marathon, seven of which were sub-three hours. He’s run marathons in 43 states, 13 countries, and even set a personal best of 2:50:15 in Newport, Oregon. In addition, Jack has completed 27 ultra-marathons,

including the 100-mile Pistol Ultra in an incredible 17 hours at age 50.

Beyond his running achievements, Jack’s contributions to GWTC are profound. In 2005, he and Toma Wilkerson served as race directors for the Tallahassee Marathon, helping to grow it into the premier event it is today. Jack and his wife, Laura, have also directed the Tallahassee Ultra Distance Classic, working to restore its status as a cornerstone of the ultra-running community.

Jack’s selflessness truly sets him apart. He sacrifices his own training runs and race performances to mentor and support others, inspiring both new and seasoned runners. Whether he’s marking race courses, cheering at events, or running alongside those tackling their first marathon, Jack embodies the spirit of Gulf Winds Track Club.

Congratulations to Marathon Jack McDermott, our 2024 Hall of Fame inductee!

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BILL LOTT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR DAVID LANDIS

Presented by Bill Hillison

The Bill Lott Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes individuals whose dedication and selflessness have made an extraordinary impact on Gulf Winds Track Club, and this year's honoree, David Landis, exemplifies these qualities.

David's contributions to GWTC began with a successful running career, during which he completed over 100 races in 15 years, including sub-20-minute 5Ks and half marathons just over 1 hour and 30 minutes. He finished in the top five of the GWTC Grand Prix several times, competing in a highly competitive age group.

However, this award is not about his running achievements—it's about his tireless volunteer efforts. Even during his running years, David regularly gave his time to support races, volunteering for water stops, registration, road guard duties, and more. After an injury ended his running career, David fully embraced volunteering, becoming a vital part of almost every GWTC race.

Two years ago, David joined the chip timing team, taking on one of the club's most demanding roles. With over \$80,000 in timing equipment and a rigorous learning curve, many volunteers found the task overwhelming. But David persevered, mastering the new timing system and stepping up to lead races like the Tannenbaum 6K, where he impressed USATF officials with his precision and professionalism.



David's dedication, hard work, and willingness to take on challenging roles have been invaluable to GWTC. Congratulations to David Landis, the 2024 Bill Lott Volunteer of the Year!

HOW TO BE A VOLUNTEER

Contact race directors to serve on their committee This can be as involved as learning the t-shirt process so you can take it on next year to as simple as taking the snack table shopping list and doing the shopping. Race directors always need help getting sponsors, coordinating giveaways, ordering awards, marking courses, picking up and returning race equipment, setting up water stations... You'll meet a lot of cool people and learn a lot about hosting races.

Volunteer for race day Contact a race director to sign up for the set up or clean up crew, water station staff, directing runners on the course, handing out medals at the finish line.





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SHEEP, GUINNESS, & A 2:55 FINISH

AN UNFORGETTABLE IRISH MARATHON WEEKEND



BY CHRIS O'KELLEY

Florida State's playing in Ireland? Yeah, I'm going! The ultimate FSU game road trip, or flight, was an instant decision. The day the game was announced, my phone was abuzz with friends asking if we would make the trip across the pond to see the Noles play. One of my best friends, Sam, agreed to go without hesitation. A few days later I started building out an itinerary and decided to see if there were any races happening around the time of the game, hoping to find a 5k. Little did I expect to find a marathon in August, but latitudes being what they are, the

climate in Ireland is suitable for it in the summer and I was again on the phone with Sam to see if he would also want to run a marathon.

We had a pretty restful week in the lead-up to the race, starting with a redevye flight. We spent a couple days in London to see the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, tour the Churchill War Rooms, take a boat ride down the Thames, and attend an English football game where for some reason no one used their hands. While in Ireland we saw Blarney Castle and Killarney National Park, hiked Carrauntoohil (the highest peak in Ireland), rode some horses on the beach, and managed to see a bunch of cliffs without falling off. The Friday night before the game was one of the best nights in recent memory as I got to see dozens of friends from all different phases of my life, in freakin' Ireland.

On Saturday the game was played and was an unfortunate precursor to the horrific season to come. It ended around 8:30pm, leaving us a two hour plus drive to get from Dublin to Longford, so there was not much time to sulk (ok, maybe just the entire car ride). Once there, the hotel we had booked turned out to be a sparsely furnished apartment above a family convenience store without any heat and down the street from a very lively nightclub. There was not much sleep to be had.



Finally, race day was upon us. It was a rainy 11°C (whatever that means) and the wind was whipping so powerfully that the inflatable arch over the finish line was nearly blown away. The race began in downtown Longford and after a loop through the town we were on the highway into the countryside. I started with the 3-hour pace group but quickly dropped off after a mile as they were well under pace. They continued to pull away for the next five miles and when they were a few hundred yards (metres?) ahead I turned to the guy next to me and told him they started too fast and we were going to run them down by the end of the race. From there we struck up a brief conversation and he

relayed that his name was Lee, and was running his first marathon. We stuck together for a few miles, but I started to ease the pace down to the high 6:40's and Lee dropped back.

At this point the race had turned off the highway and was meandering through a narrow back country road. I could no longer see the

3-hour pace group but was confident I was gaining on them. There were not many runners around me, but I had some sheep as well as some very friendly water stations for company and kept



my heart rate up thanks to some oncoming traffic navigating blind corners, including a tractor. Near the end of his stretch, I started catching some members of the 3-hour pace group who had fallen off after the fast start. I was starting to hit my stride. I had shifted down to the low 6:40's and gaining confidence as I passed the runners who I last had contact with over 16 miles prior. Soon enough I was back on the highway and had a string of runners in front of me. I saw blood. With the benefit of an open road I put my foot on the gas and was now in the 6:30's. It was spaced out at this point, but I was fulfilling the prediction I made from the beginning of the race, and was doing so with ease. There is no greater fuel late in a race than passing other runners, and between miles 18-23 I passed about seven more and finished off the last few miles at a 6:20 pace for a 2:55:33. Then promptly threw-up some Irish sport drink in a gutter.



Post-race I hung out with my buddy Lee and his wife at a pub where we downed pints of water and discussed how fascinated the Irish are with American politics. Sam, battling through an injury, finished around 4 hours and we got back in the car to drive back to Dublin in time for a tour of the Guinness factory to start the next week of our trip.



ALTHOUGH THE RESULT OF THE GAME WAS NOT WHAT WE WANTED, TO COMBINE TWO OF MY PASSIONS IN ONE WEEKEND WITH SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS IS SOMETHING I'LL NEVER FORGET.

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Mr. and Mrs. David and Mary Jean Yon
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As we reflect on the many blessings of the past year, we are humbled by the generosity of our donors whose steadfast support has allowed us to help so many. With your generosity, we have been able to accomplish so much. From the bottom of our hearts, we want to thank you for your generous donation of \$18,883.57 on 12/31/2024.

We are launching our Capital Campaign this month to support a groundbreaking model for those fleeing domestic violence. With this new approach, entire families – especially children – will receive extensive counseling, therapy, and wrap-around support services that will help ensure that the cycle of abuse within families is finally broken, making way for hope and resilience to thrive.

Refuge House believes that the legacy we leave as a society matters. What our children inherit from this generation directly determines the kind of world they will inhabit. We hope that you will continue to support our endeavors as we remain committed to creating a world free from domestic violence. With your help, we will build strong families through healthy relationships for the next generation.

Wishing you peace, light, and a blessed New Year!



Emily Mitchem
Executive Director

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