

# GTC NEWSLETTER

**“Few sports allow first-timers and other amateurs to compete on the very same playing field in the very same event as the elite athletes. Running is one of these sports. My life has changed merely knowing that I can compete with, but not against, the elite athletes.”**

— Gloria, age 43, quoted by John “the Penguin” Bingham, *Marathoning for Mortals*, 2003, Rodale Press, page 221.



## PRESIDENT’S LETTER

By Robin Walter, GTC President

Hello all,

A little over halfway through the year and we’ve had the best time celebrating with you so far!

50 years and we feel amazing! We have been so busy the last few months with the Paris Mountain Trails 12K, Freedom Flyer 2 Mile, Sunrise Run 8k, GTC SC Open & Masters Track & Field Classic, the All Comers meets, and the Red White & Blue Shoes 5k. Each time we hold these events a new energy arises.

The energy comes from all of you: the participants, the spectators, the cheering squads, and all of the volunteers. We could not do it without you! We are so thankful that we can get together with you and share these moments in person and not 6 feet apart.

Let’s keep the momentum going! We have amazing events lined up for the rest of 2022; please look at our [calendar](#). Sign up to volunteer, participate or both! I am out there for pretty much every event because nothing beats the runner’s high of race day morning!

There is a question that I, as your president, ask myself repeatedly: *what can the Greenville Track Club do that could benefit you?* We are on alert for your voice, from a text or email to me or any board member, or through the GTC Web site.

Another question is one that you might ask yourself: what can you do that will benefit

your GTC? For example: come and spend time at GTC races, even though you might not be running that day. Your Greenville Track Club intends every race we sponsor to always be a celebration for everyone who engages in this sport, including its spectators and volunteers. Take photos (we’d like to [publish](#) them! Encourage friends and family (bring your noise-makers and cheers!). It’s always exciting and heart-warming to see a cadre of runners moving by, an eclectic mix of abilities, ages, running styles, and running gear, intent on doing their best on that course and day. Stay for the excitement of the finish - runners completing with a flourish of speed all the way to those simply pleased to cross the finish line. Come share in the accomplishments and rewards of those race days in your own way - you won’t be disappointed!

Please join our monthly meetings and events, and let’s find out what we can accomplish. Let’s work together to find the balance to grow by giving back while having fun bringing fitness and health into our lives and the lives of others.

**Together + Teamwork = Energy & Momentum!**

See you out there!!

Robin Walter

President, Greenville Track Club  
[president@greenvilletrackclub.com](mailto:president@greenvilletrackclub.com)



## UPCOMING RACES

- Aug 13 | Paris Mountain Trails 7k
- Aug 20 | Edouard Michelin 5k
- Sept 16 | BMW Performance Classic 2M
- Oct 15 | GE Cross-Country 6k
- Oct 29 | Spinx Runfest
- Nov 5 | Paris Mountain Trails 16k
- Nov 19 | Zoom Through the Zoo 5k
- Dec 3 | Paris Mountain Road Race
- Dec 17 | Santa Run

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# GTC MEMBERS MEETING: SPEAKER RECAP

By Kerrie Sijon

As part of Greenville Track Club's 50 year celebration it was decided the speakers for the monthly club meetings would be previous presidents and/or longtime members.

Our first speaker was **Adrian Craven**, one of the founders of GTC. He spoke in February of the original glory days of the club when they met at a small bar on Poinsett Highway, mostly to drink beer, but to discuss races. Adrian enlightened us with the statistics of the fast runners who made up the track club back in the early 1970's. These runners, mostly men, with a sprinkling of women, were incredibly talented and ran all kinds of distances locally and nationally. A lot of the original members were professors or worked at Furman University. It was a joy to listen to Adrian reminisce about he and his buddies.

Our next speaker was **Bill Keesling**, the founder of GTC. Bill spoke of his personal history of being a track coach at the University of Tennessee where they had a track club for local runners. He was recruited to coach at Furman in the early 70's and when he arrived he observed there was no local running club so he decided to create one. With the help of the local community and many running friends he met he founded GTC. The first race created was the Paris Mountain Road Race and it was run in August! It's a good thing this race was moved to the winter time because with this humidity in the the south we wouldn't be able to safely put in that event.

Bill has been involved in the GTC all these years and presently is on the GTC board and is a longtime volunteer at most of our events. We are so grateful to Bill for his leadership and knowledge— because of him we are who we are today!

The next month's speaker was **Sam Inman**, a past president and former longtime race director of Reedy River Run. Sam told of the days preparing for Reedy River when he had to personally shovel off dirt run off in Cleveland Park along the race course. He also spoke of putting an old green astro turf rug on the grated bridge in Cleveland Park. Many of us seasoned runners remember this bridge as it was very slippery to run on and it could damage your body if you fell. This rug was stored at GTC house for many years until the bridge was replaced in what is now Cancer Survivor Park.

Sam talked about his early days as a runner in Greenville in high school, college and soon after. Local fast guys would take him all around the southeast to run in different events. He learned very fast about how to survive this crowd! So many funny stories were told of his times crammed in a station wagon to get to the races. His parents obviously were very trusting people! Sam still gives of his time to many GTC events as an emcee for Reedy and Spinx Run Fest.

Our most recent speaker was **Jim Roberts**, longtime Masters track meet director and GTC historian. Jim created the GTC History page on FB and many people have posted old pictures of races back in the 70's and beyond . It's quite interesting to read about the old days and how incredibly fast these runners were!

Jim spoke about the history of the masters meet and told us about the different events at the meet. Shot out, discus, javelin and pole vaulting just to name a few. Now, remember the majority of these folks are senior citizens. They are doing hurdles along with the other track events. In fact this is a full track meet with all the events a high school or college meet has. Jim told us there were athletes in their 80's participating. That is an unbelievable accomplishment in my mind!

I joined GTC in early 2000. I never thought I was worthy enough before because I thought it was only for elite athletes. It wasn't until my friend John Johnson became president that I would feel comfortable enough to join. Now, I am thrilled to be a part of this wonderful group of friends who happen to run.

Please join us for the remaining meetings in 2022—you will hear from more of us about what it means to be a member of such a fine club!



## GTC MEMBERS MEETINGS CALENDAR

By Beth Grumbles, Vice President, GTC

**MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT 6 PM AT WORLD PIECE (109 W. STONE AVENUE, GVL)**

### → AUGUST 1 - JOHN LEHMAN

- John is a long-time member of GTC, and an inductee in the GTC Hall of Fame
  - John has for many years been race director of the Sunrise Run 8K and our GTC Trail Run Series races
  - He is Pastor for Member Care and Missions at the Hampton Park Baptist Church in Greenville
- John will be speaking about his long-time association with the Greenville Track Club, and experiences during his years of directing races for GTC.

### → SEPTEMBER 12 – JOHN JOHNSON

John is a Past President of the GTC and is a 50 States Marathoner.

### → OCTOBER 3 – BEV PARLIER

Bev was GTC President in 1995-1996 and was the Race Director for Paris Mountain Road Races for many years.

### → NOVEMBER 7 – ED BOEHMKE

Ed has been a long time member of the GTC and a GTC Board Member. Ed is a retired Cross Country and Track and Field Coach from Eastside High School. The track at EHS is named in Ed's honor. Ed continues to be involved in high school track and cross country with the GTC sponsored Invitational Meets at Eastside High School.

### → DECEMBER 5 CHRISTMAS PARTY: FOOD AND SOCIALIZING!

# MEET A MEMBER: BERNARD VERMEERSCH

By Bill Blask

**B: When did you start running seriously?**

I'm from Belgium originally and was running a 5K loop around a canal close to my apartment in Ghent every evening. When a friend asked me to run two loops instead, I replied 'Oh, no, I cannot do that! I'm going to die!' So, I did it and of course I survived. Then a colleague from work who had recently relocated from the US to Belgium invited me to join him during a 10 mile race in the beautiful ancient city of Bruges in Belgium. Races were not that popular at that time in Belgium and I never saw myself as an athlete, but I was so happy that I did it. Running on cobblestone streets in the Old City, the whole city cheering the runners coming through is such an unforgettable experience. From then on, I kept on adding distances in other races.

**B: So Bernard, you have run in a wide variety of races. What's your favorite distance?**

That's not an easy question. Just to give you an example, last year I made a resolution goal to run a 5K race in less than 20 minutes and finish my first 100 miler as well. It gives you an idea about the kind of races that I do without really training for one specific distance.

If I really need to pick one distance [over others], I would say a 50 miler or 50K. That is the ideal distance because you can easily finish it in one day.

**B: We've run together Wednesday evenings at the Greenville High School track during those evenings hosted by Mike Burchett. I realized what a good stride you had; that's the first thing I noticed as you pulled away from us during the 400 meter run. Your feet are still landing right under your hips, but you have a very strong push off.**

You may have noticed that I'm running with Vibram shoes. (Bernard ran with what are called 'five-fingered' or 'skeletoned' shoes: it's like an 'armored glove' with all five toes articulated.) This type of shoe forces you to take smaller strides and high cadence. Just for fun I had given the other runners a head start and was highly motivated to catch up!

But that's also what I like about track work. It allows you to push yourself out of your comfort zone. It's probably not the ideal practice for long distance running, but I do like switching workouts a little bit.

**B: Tell me tell me a little more about those 50Ks or 50 milers. What draws you to those longer races?**

My first attempt to finish a 50K did happen during a race called Conquer the Rock (organized by Upstate Ultras) and consists of running up and down Table Rock three times. It's one of the hardest 50K races in the region with 7,500 feet of elevation gain. While trying to run that race in 2018 for the first time, I did not finish (DNF) because I was wearing the wrong shoes and was afraid of ruining my toes. The following year I did finish it in a bit over 10 hours.

Since then, I got really hooked up on that race because it's so challenging and so beautiful out there. The course is very technical so you need to be careful that you don't get hurt running among all these rocks.

**B: When you do a longer race such as a 50K, what occupies your mind or your perceptions? What are you focusing on during that long period of running?**

First at all, you really need to watch your steps so that you don't fall because the terrain can be really challenging. At the same time there's so much else that goes through your mind. The conversations that you are having with fellow runners at the point of exhaustion under these extreme conditions are really inspiring.



Bernard relocated 10 years ago to South Carolina from Belgium. He enjoys running, traveling around the world, and cooking. He is a Chemical & Biochemical Engineer working at Global Headquarters of Milliken & Co in Spartanburg supporting new technology platforms in their Chemicals Division. Bernard started running at 18, loves its simplicity, and the chance it gives to 'reset your mind' and meet new friends.

I used to run only road races. Then one evening I was running track and some of us were sitting together afterwards having a beer. I was just going around the table asking, 'What's the longest distance you've ever run?' To my surprise one lady (Shirley Smith) said "100 miles". I was so intrigued by her answer that I decided that I wanted to personally experience what's going through the mind during such a challenging race.

That's the main reason why I've decided to start running ultra-races. It's so easy to think that you can't do it. But at the end you will succeed and are ready for another challenge. It's not really a physical thing, but rather a purely mental game that can also be applied beyond running.

**B: Is there an acceptance, or perhaps a release, of the fear that you'll injure yourself during that long period of running?**

Being afraid that I would fall was the key reason why it took so long for me to start running trails. The first time when I ran Paris Mountain, I fell, rolled and landed on my back on a stone. For four weeks after that I could barely sleep because of my bruised ribs. But that accident didn't stop me. Running on trails is addictive. It's so beautiful. It's not about how fast you go. It's about the whole experience of nature, who you meet and the kind of discussions you have with them. That's how you make a lot of friends as well.

**B: Bernard, do you tend to break up a longer race into shorter pieces or segments?**

Yes, I do. I'm always calculating what percentage of the race I have completed. I always do that.

**B: Do you run for a PR or is the overall goal just to experience the event?**

My objective was always getting a PR, trying to do better than what I did before. Then at certain point, as you're getting older, you start winning your age group and even finishing within the top 3, and your goals evolve.

**B: How do you know when you've trained too much or too little for a race?**

I'm often running 5-6 days a week and don't really train. For example, last year I did run 47 races with distances ranging from 2 to 100 miles. It's really a hopping from race to race. I am now paying a bit more attention to the fatigue level that my watch tracks.



## SUMMER GTC WEDNESDAY WORKOUTS

By Mike Burchett

The GTC Wednesday Workouts are back at Greenville High Track! The workouts began in the late 2000s, and despite having been interrupted by the COVID pandemic, are still going strong. They are a vital component of our community outreach: membership is not required, and there is no charge to participate.

We meet at 6pm each Wednesday for a brief warmup and are usually done by 7pm. All paces and ability levels are welcome. The workouts are designed to be friendly to beginning, intermediate, and masters runners, but younger and faster runners can benefit from them by increasing intensity or adding repeats. The sets are different each week, and I usually post them on the club Facebook page at the beginning of the week.

You are welcome to come out and run easy in the outside lanes if you want to observe what we do before jumping in. The workouts are informal and family-friendly. We have had kids as young as 8 and adults in their 80s join us. You are not “too slow” to do speedwork. That’s what speedwork is for. We come to the track not to BE fast, but to get FASTER!

Contact me at [pastpresident@greenvilletrackclub.com](mailto:pastpresident@greenvilletrackclub.com) if you have any questions.

## MEET A MEMBER: BERNARD VERMEERSCH (CONTINUED)

**B: Is keeping track of your metrics such as pace important to you when you run?**

I do check instant pace, average pace, elapsed distance and elapsed time during a race. Without any doubt the data that running watches can provide is impressive and I am starting to learn on how to use it more efficiently.

**B: Do you try to control aspects of the process of running as you’re running? Do you make changes consciously?**

I’ve been watching a couple of videos about running and how we can get better at it. One of the things I pay more consciously attention to when I’m running is my running form. My position.

**B: “Position.” Your body posture?**

Correct, that’s very important. I am also watch stride length and cadence when I am running hills. However, during the race itself I am more occupied with what it will take to catch up with the runners in front of me.

**B: Some time ago I talked to Mike Caldwell about ‘perceived effort’, because that’s often what I use to judge how I’m doing in a particular race or a particular distance. I know you’re aware of that type of evaluation.**

Yes, it’s all about perceived effort. You’ll see me slowing down significantly on any uphill. Running in South Carolina is so much harder than in Belgium.

**B: So Belgium is fairly flat?**

Yes, but also the weather conditions makes it so much harder to run here in South Carolina. I did finish my first half marathon in Brussels in 1 hour 43 minutes before I moved to the US. Can you believe that it took me 30 half marathons before I could break that PR in South Carolina? The combination of the hills, high temperature, and humidity makes it so much harder to run compared with Belgium.

**B: You’ve also run trails. The other day I heard a young woman saying that she preferred trails because of the interesting scenery compared to a road race. Do you feel the same way?**

Absolutely. Because running on trails is so much more technical, pace is not that important and it allows you to enjoy the surroundings. Also, a lot of people are switching over from running road to trails because they’re experiencing issues with their knees and hips. Running on trails requires some agility what implies that the load gets spread over different parts of your body.

**B: Should our club be sponsoring more trail runs?**

Yes. Why not? One side effect of COVID is that it has made trail running more popular.

**B: You’re still working, still in the business world. What does it take to get the time to invest in all this running? Are there things you give up to do that?**

Because I live in Greenville and work in Spartanburg and in order to avoid the traffic on I-85, I do start work early in the morning (like 7:00 - 7:15 in Spartanburg) and leave work early (around 4:30) to be back on time for a group run in Greenville. That’s a sacrifice, but outside of my professional life running, traveling & cooking are the main activities that I am doing. Yes, of course there is an opportunity cost to this, but I do love running so much. I am typically running 5-6 days a week with up to 200 miles maximum per month.

**B: Thanks so much for your time!**

# GREENVILLE COUNTY XC CHAMPIONSHIPS – THEIR STORY

By Ed Boehmke, retired Head XC Coach - Eastside High School (1978-2016)

Each year as the summer heat and humidity slowly changes to the days of fall, most runners are thinking of the cooler runs and classic autumn races that are held on the weekends throughout the state. But many high school athletes are looking forward to transforming their daily summer practices into weekend cross country meets.

Beginning at the end of August, dozens of sites around the state will host cross country meets where hundreds of sixth through twelfth graders will take to the course in hopes of PR's and team championships. The culmination will be the dreams of competing in their classification state championships in November.

But along the way they will race in meets like the Lake Murray Invitational, the Darlington Cross Country Carnival, and the Coaches Classic. But the most competitive meet in the state is the Greenville County Championships (GCC)

The GCC is the most competitive because the meet does not divide the schools into classifications as does the state championships. Therefore, runners in the 1A class compete against those in the 5A class. And, as this article will show, many of the best teams and best individual runners call Greenville County home.

I have always been proud of our county teams and the individuals that have run in the County Championships and even more so at how these same teams and individuals went on two weeks later to greatness in the State Championships. This year will be the 50th running of the Greenville County Championships!

The first Greenville County Championships meet was held in 1973. There were only two teams – Hillcrest and Berea. (Eastside had a team but chose not to compete in the County Championships). I was a senior at Berea and one of the only ten athletes that competed in that first meet. Hillcrest won the meet and I have no more history than that, not which individual won, no team scores, and not even my own time. The races were shorter then, maybe 2.25 miles or so. That first GCC was held at Furman and started and finished on what is now the soccer field.

I have tried to find results from the next four years by looking through old copies of the Greenville News and the Greenville Piedmont, but I cannot find any hint that a meet was held. I was a student cross-

country (XC) coach at Eastside my senior year at Furman and my notes mention a County Meet but there are no results. I am guessing that I had a Furman XC Meet to attend and did not go to the GCC.

1978 was my first year as the head coach at Eastside and I made sure that we had a GCC. We held the meet at Eastside and Wade Hampton won the boys and girls meet. There were only five boys teams and two girls teams that scored.

The real tribute to our county runners began in 1980. Berea finished fourth in the County and runner-up in the State. 1981 saw Hillcrest win the GCC and was State Runner-up. Greenville then won the 1982 GCC and went on to win the 1982 1A/2A State Championships and the GCC runner-up, Hillcrest won the 4A State Meet. Since that year, a school from Greenville County has won at least one State Championship or State Runner-up in one of the boys or girls classifications. In fact, since 1981, only one year saw no State Champion team from Greenville, 2009.

In that time, Greenville County has had forty-two girls State Championship teams and fifty boys State Championship teams. We had two State Championship teams in the same year for the girls in 1996, 1997, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 and for the boys in 1982, 1987, 1988, 1994, 1995, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019, and 2020. We had three girls team winners in 1998 and 2016 and three boys teams won in 2021.

Individuals have fared just as well. Out of the GCC meets that I have full results for, beginning in 1978, the winner of the GCC boys has gone on to be the individual State Champion in their state classification championship seventeen times. Fifteen girls have won both meets also.

Now some County Meet statistics. Please remember that the meet has been held at various places around the County. Eastside held the meet for twenty years, but it has also been at Furman, Cleveland Park, Heritage Park, Hillcrest and Woodmont. Even the course at these sites have not been consistent, so I am not trying to make any comparisons between runners at different sites or even different years at the same site. I do not have any results from the girls meet in 1980, 1982, or 1984 or the boys meet from 1973 - 1977.

There have been 14,249 high school athletes cross the finish line at the GCC.

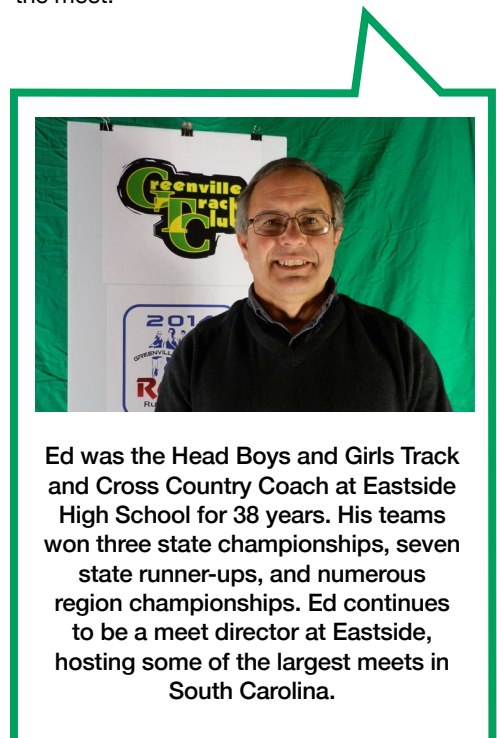
Twenty-four boys teams and 20 girls teams that have won the GCC went on to win their State Championship.

Thirty-five boys teams and thirty-seven girls teams have been the state runner-up (many times losing to a County team).

Greenville County has six boys schools and six girls schools ranked in the top fifteen All-State winners (All-State is top fifteen individuals in the classification State Championships).

Greenville County has seven boys schools and seven girls schools that rank in the top twenty of the winningest schools in the State Championship history.

At the Greenville Track Club November members meeting I will discuss more of the history and fascinating statistics about the Greenville County Championships and the SC State Championships. This meeting will be just after the 2022 Greenville County Championships which will be held on Saturday October 29. If you have any past or present interest in high school cross country, please make plans to attend this November GTC members meeting. I especially send out invitations to the “old” members of the GTC who have always been supportive of the meet.



Ed was the Head Boys and Girls Track and Cross Country Coach at Eastside High School for 38 years. His teams won three state championships, seven state runner-ups, and numerous region championships. Ed continues to be a meet director at Eastside, hosting some of the largest meets in South Carolina.



## CORPORATE SHIELD RACES

**AUGUST 20**  
Edouard Michelin 5k

**SEPTEMBER 16**  
BMW Performance Classic 2 Mile

**OCTOBER 15**  
GE Cross-Country 6k

**NOVEMBER 19**  
Zoom Through the Zoo 5k

# CORPORATE SHIELD RUNNING CS TEAM CAPTAIN: ZACH JOHNSON OF SCANSOURCE

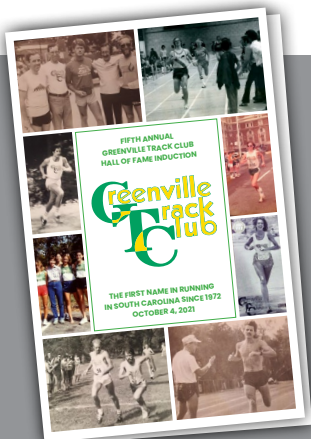
By Sarah Schoonover

In the world of Corporate Shield, Division 1 can be a tough space in which to compete. Zach Johnson has taken on the challenge by joining our corporate shield family as the Scansource Team Captain.

Zach holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Anderson University and is currently working towards his corporate wellness certification. At Scansource, he works on a Benefits Team as a Wellness Program Manager.

Previously a force to be reckoned with in the early to mid 2010's, Scansource is working on making a comeback in Division 1 with a trophy in sight. The team continues to grow as the summer goes on, as you can see in the above team photo at July's Red, White & Blue Shoes 5K. This race brought their team participation up to 25 runners. Scansource snagged both 1st and 3rd place in the female division.

Team Scansource would love to give special mention to Casey Huffling, Senior VP of Sales, who has been a HUGE help with getting participation numbers back. When she isn't pulling off 6.5 minute mile feats on our last 2 corporate shield events, Casey is helping Zach recruit employees for the races and their running club at ScanSource during the week. I am thrilled to see this team back in action.



# GREENVILLE TRACK CLUB HALL OF FAME

Nominations have been received for the 2022 Greenville Track Club Hall of Fame.

As part of our Members Meeting on October 3, at World Piece Pizza, 109 W. Stone Avenue, Greenville, Bill Keesling will conduct the 2022 induction of this year's honorees.

We look forward to honoring the inductees many contributions to the legacy of our club.

# GTC FLASHBACK: HOW THE ALL-COMERS MEETS BEGAN

The summer GTC All-Comers meets are a terrific part of our Club's agenda. Bill Keesling and several others were the sponsors of the first meets in the 1970s. Those All-Comers meets continue to this day. Your editor was interested in hearing how that came about. Bill tells his part of the story, and more. He ends with a special memory.

Just about everything that I did, outside of direct coaching in my first couple of years at Furman, related back to my experience when I was a grad assistant in the track and field program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. That includes the idea for the original GTC All-Comers meets.

The Knoxville Track Club was formed perhaps a few years before ours, and they had implemented an all-comers type of thing during the summer there in Knoxville. When I was coaching there, I was able to observe some of what was going on, and talk to some of the key people who were involved. When I got to Furman, outside of running the Furman program I had two objectives. Number one was to start the track club if we could, and number two was to start some type of summer all-comers type track event, and that's the way it started.

My focus in all of what I did to help start that program was to try to connect the Furman track and field program to the Greenville Track Club. From the all-comers standpoint, it was because we had some really competitive guys back in those early days. The GTC All-Comers events gave those who had finished their high school or college running careers a chance to recall what they did when they were in school, and maybe do a little bit of work on the track during the summer, a little bit of time away from the road.

According to a research document done back in 2013 by Duncan McArthur, first Secretary/Treasurer of the GTC, during the summer of 1973 the Greenville Track Club sponsored weekly all comers track meetings. Attendance at the meets began with "several" participants. The participant numbers grew through the summer and continued to grow in 1974. Average participation in 1975 was 75, and by 1977 150 or more were racing, throwing and jumping.

Unbeknownst to me, about the same time we started those events at Furman, several kids summer camps were being held up in the Hendersonville area. Those camps have buses or vans for their program. They would load those rascals in the afternoon and show

up for All-Comers! Summer camp kids were entered in just about every event, so there was a lot of spirited competition.

We had participants of all ages from the get go. Each race was necessarily set up by age. I'm not sure that initially we had the parent child relay and some of those special kinds of events, but at some point those races were added to the event schedule to try to enhance the scope of running events and instill fun for everyone.

We had a full schedule throughout the summer. It's my recollection that we had them every week. I don't remember what day of the week but we pretty well covered most of the summer. At a certain point, perhaps two or three years after we started All-Comers, we actually put on a meet that we called a "Meet of Champions". We had a full blown track meet where all of the champions [winners of summer meets] competed. We gave awards for the top three finishers in each event. It was a pretty big deal back in those days.

It took a while to get people to volunteer and help us with officiating and putting on the meets. The need for help made me realize what it takes to run some meets like these. And not just run them but set everything up to hold them. That in itself is a significant amount of work.

I left Furman, Greenville and the GTC in late summer of 1978 to become Head Coach of Track and Cross Country at Southwest Missouri State University, now Missouri State. So, I know the leadership of the club continued to have the meets but at some point the format began to change into the more relaxed event sponsored today by GTC. My only regret is that we have lost the results from those early meets and, through that loss, a part of GTC history as well.

Speaking broadly of "all-comers" meets, during those years several other types of "open" track and field events began and had their heyday. It might be of some interest that during my time at Furman, we also held meets besides the All-Comers meets that drew elite athletes of similar skills from around the Southeast. Prior to my coming to Furman, a guy by the name of Chuck Rohe, the coach of

Tennessee when I went there as an assistant, had come to Furman in 1958 and was a real go-getter type of guy. He had some pretty strong teams during the time he was at Furman. At that time we had what we called the Greenville News/Piedmont Relays. The Greenville News ended up being the sponsor and put some money in it. Chuck Rohe got it going. The coach after Chuck was John West. John continued with that.

By the time I came to Furman, the News/Piedmont Relays was an established event. It was probably one of, if not the only, relay type competition for high schools and colleges, particularly in the Southeast. We had Yale, we had Harvard, we had Bowling Green. We had a lot of teams from the Midwest and the Northeast who would come to our meet because it was right at the end of March. They were taking their spring break that next week, so they'd go from here to Florida and compete the next weekend in the Florida Relays.

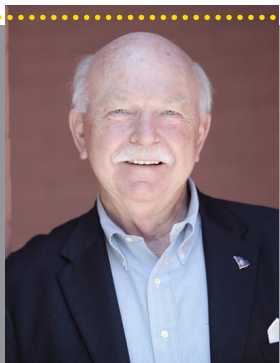
It was also a huge high school event for South Carolina because it was the first outdoor meet in the area when they were not having indoor track events back then. We got a ton of schools not only from here in South Carolina, but also from some of the schools up in the Hendersonville area, as well as a few from Georgia and east Tennessee. A lot of colleges and universities came.

I'll end this visit to past memories with one that is still fresh in my mind. The Furman campus venue for these events was awesome. The only challenge we had was weather. My introduction to that challenge came in my first year. I can remember it to this day.

I'm sitting in my office at 10 o'clock in the morning, waiting for the guy that was going to be the clerk for one of the meets, to come in so we could set up the heats for the meet, and it was snowing like crazy!

By the time we got to the meet, the snow had turned to rain. What a mess! But to our credit we didn't postpone the event - we just kept plugging and got it done. To everyone's credit, it was a memorable weekend. For those responsible for such an event, you have to go on with it no matter what.

Those are good memories.



## GORDON DAVID SEAY DIES AT 83

### Long-Time GTC Member

"Gordon was a man with numerous interests and strong community involvement," his obituary notes. "One constant in Gordon's life was his love of the outdoors. His passion for running led him to his longtime involvement in the Greenville Track Club and participation in over 26 marathons. He served as a coach for Team in Training for both Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Some of his most cherished moments were spent running, hiking, hunting, camping, and fishing with his children and grandchildren. Gordon's gifts were many and freely shared with all who were blessed to know him." He will be missed by the many members of the Greenville Track Club who knew him.

# GTC RACE HIGHLIGHTS & RECAPS

## PARIS MOUNTAIN TRAIL RUN 12K

By John Lehman

On May 28, many newbies, and veterans as well, lined up for the 16th Annual 12K in the Paris Mountain State Park. The Park is one of the best kept secrets in Greenville, as the trails are magnificent for both training and racing. We thank Stax Original, Poinsett Hwy, for providing their delicious pancake mix for us to prepare and serve all run-ners and spectators. The next GTC trail run will be held on August 13 as the runners will compete in the 16th Annual Paris Mountain Trail 7K.

First place overall was Erick Martinez with a time of 54:02, followed closely by Angtoine Baulain in 55:48 and Kyle Kugler in 56:12. Women's top three were Lynne Honnette, 1:05.59.73, Maria Kugler 1:13.35.05 and Anna Geurink 1:16.02.28.

Great job, Everyone!



## SUNRISE RUN 8K

By John Lehman

On June 11, the 43rd Running of the Sunrise Run took place in Simpsonville. We thank First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, for their gracious hosting of this race. They not only provided the venue, but also the delicious post-race water and snacks. We also thank Run In Simpsonville for sponsoring our socks, and Enhanced Living Chiropractic for providing sponsorship monies and on-site massages and assistance prior to and following the race! Giveaways this year included the traditional socks along with commemorative shorts. Next year's Sunrise Run will be held on June 10, 2023.

16-year old Knox Young won the event in a time of 25:35.08. Brett Morley was a close second as he ran the 8K in 25:58.02. Philippe Giguere ran for third in 28:46.7. First place women was Shelby Jaramillo in a time of 30:14.3. Congratulations, Everyone!



## FREEDOM FLYER 2 MILE

By Chuck Baker

It was a wonderful Monday morning for the day that we remember those that gave their life for this country. We had close to 350 individuals that signed up for the race.

Charlie Hall, the president of Upstate Warrior Solution, was our honorary chairman. Charlie was a 2001 graduate of the US Military Academy and became a Marine during his time in the service. Runners contributed over \$900 to UWS to support veterans that live in the Upstate.

Daniel Pronk was the DJ for the day. Daniel is a firefighter for the city of Greenville. He played Taps just before Keisha Thurman-Johnson sang the National Anthem.

Much thanks to Jim Roberts for recertifying the route after an email on the Friday before the race from the city stating that we could not run the race on the Commons side of the Swamp Rabbit Trail. Jim went out and recertified the course on Saturday.

We had 105 US flags that surrounded the Kroc Center soccer field. Much appreciation to those that assisted in pounding them into the ground the morning of Memorial Day. As the last people were coming to finish the race, we had a number of people removing the flags and posts so that everything could be put away in record time back at the GTC house.

Thanks to all for a successful race.



# 2022 SC OPEN & MASTERS TRACK & FIELD CLASSIC

By Jim Roberts

There were 341 entries this year from 10 states in the June 25 GTC SC Open & Masters Track Classic/2022 USATFSC Association Open & Masters Track & Field Championships.

Temperatures were in the upper 80's F, but cloud cover and just a brief shower made the meet bearable.

The 4 x 100m and 4 x 400 m relays were very popular.

Meet directors were Jim Roberts and Tom Johnson:

Twenty-four (24) Age Group meet records (12 women/12 men) were set. Alyssa Nogez broke the most with four (4).

The track event with the most records broken was the mile at three (3). The field event with most records broken was the Super Weight at three (3).

New GTC Member Nonie Hudnall entered only the mile because she followed our meet with a trip to the World Masters Championships in Finland. She set a meet AG record in the mile.

GTC Members Michael Budnick and Philippe Giguere broke age group records in the mile.

GTC Member and Founder Bill Keesling finished gold in 4 events including the shot put.

New GTC Member, Carol Waddell entered and won many throwing events and set a meet record in the 20# Super Weight throw.

Former GTC Elite athlete, Alison Parris, set a new meet record in the mile.

## Women

- Nonie Hudnall 1 mile (70-74)
- Nicole Kelly Shot Put (40-44)
- Carlos Larry Super Weight (50-54)
- Linda Lowery 200 m Hurdles, Triple Jump (70-74)
- Alissa Noguez Shot Put, Weight Throw, Hammer, Discus (55-59)
- Alison Parris Mile (30-34)
- Carol Waddell Super Weight, Hammer (70-74)

## Men

- Michael Budnick Mile (45-49)
- Jim Hodges Pole Vault (75-79)
- Phippe Giguere Mile (50-54)
- Sam Hall 50 m (75-79)
- Ernie French Super Weight (85-89)
- Glenn Irion Triple Jump ((65-69)
- Alan Moore 3000 m Race Walk (75-79)
- Bob Rockwell Triple Jump (70-74)
- Terrance Rolland 200 m (40-45)
- Sanford Stoddard Javelin (75-79)
- Tim Treon Mile (75-79)
- Mike Valley Super Weight (80-84)

Thanks to the following volunteers, who gave of their time: Ruth Albright, Lola Amcher, Chuck Baker, Claire Blanton, Bill Blask, Michael Burchett, Charlie Burchett-James, Adrian Craven, Lillian and Chuck Damman, Greg Day, Stephanie Finley, Dave Geer, Philippe Giguere, Charles Gill, Annie Groom, John Gullick, Liz Harvey, John Hatfield, Steven Heller, John Henry, Vince Herran, Tom Johnson, Olivia Morse, Robert Morse, Joan Mulvihill, Scott Murr, Chris Starker, Harry Stathakis, Tim Stewart, Susie and John Thompson.

Photos, results and meet records are available by going to [runsignup.com/Race/SC/Taylors/SCMastersOpenTrackandFieldClassic](https://runsignup.com/Race/SC/Taylors/SCMastersOpenTrackandFieldClassic)



# 2022 GTC ALL-COMERS MEETS

By Kelli Jo Lowe

When the heat is on, the “heats” are on! What, is that too corny? Nothing says “summer is here” than GTC’s All-Comers track meets each Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. The weekly track meets are split between Eastside High School in June and Greenville High School in July.

Our events begin with a 50-meter dash and conclude with the 3200 (2 miles). Some of our loudest cheers are for a popular parent + child 100 meter relay early in the evening. In between those events, we offer heats for different age brackets including the 100, 200, 400, and 800 meters, and 1 mile. We encourage everyone from 1 to 100+ to come out and join us for a few meters or even a few miles of fun.

I have to admit that when I began running about 8 years ago, I never thought I would be welcomed into such an amazing community of runners as we have in the Upstate. I have to say that I’ve enjoyed calling All-Comer events and cheering on runners from the tiniest tots in the 5 and under 50-meter dash to the lightning-fast heats of the 1 mile for the past few years. I am always excited to meet new runners and watch everyone grow into their speed each year.

Whether you just began running, you are an experienced track star, or you’re looking for a little camaraderie, come out and join us. We welcome runners and groups from all over with all types of experience. Come challenge yourself and meet new friends as we look forward to offering this fun event in 2023.



## RED, WHITE, AND BLUE SHOES 5K

By Mickey McCauley

This year there was a change of venue from last year: the GTC Red, White, and Blue Shoes 5K was held on the Furman University campus! Last year Furman was resurfacing the football field, and the campus was unavailable. It was a treat to be back.

RWBS had a really good turnout this year: around 900 registrants. It's still a bit down from 2019, which was the last time we had the event on campus. In 2021 the Simpsonville venue had a little over 600 registrations. But that seems to be the trend with most races at the moment. Participation is running a little bit down from what it was pre-COVID.

Scott Bagwell, owner of Palmetto Events & Timing did an email blast that had to help with folks signing up. He told me that the trend for us in the past had been that, during the last 10 days before the event, a lot of registrations usually came in. He said that back in 2019 we had over 500 people register in the week before the race. So I guess that's just because it's a holiday on July 4th. People wait until the last minute to decide on their holiday plans. It seems to trend that way with this particular event.

This year so many registrants applied toward the end that I was actually sweating bullets that we had enough gifts for everyone. We ran out of commemorative hats! About 40 people didn't get a hat, so we ordered more. We'll get them their hat eventually. We will let those people know where they are to pick them up.

We had about 30 volunteers this year. They did their work so well I had no complaints from anybody. The crew did a great job on check in despite having to process a big crowd at the last hour. And I was sweating — I didn't think we're going to be able to start the race on time at eight o'clock. Robin [Walter, GTC President] and her crew got it done! They got everyone checked in with about five minutes to go!

It might be worth noting that the way the check-in crew did it this year was different: they used an app called "Race Day Check-In" to check people in quickly. That makes it a lot quicker. In the past we had a big folder of the actual bibs already prepared from pre-race registration. You had to alphabetically look for somebody's bib in that folder when they showed up. That took time.

This year, when you came to get your race bib, all our volunteers had that Race Day Check-In app downloaded on their phone. You walk up to the volunteer and you give them your name. They put your name into the app, and it shows the corresponding bib number. It takes about 30 seconds. Evidently all the races are using it now.

We were pleased that the mix of runners — old and young, women and men — was as broad as ever, though there may be a trend of having more females participate.

However, we've always promoted our Red, White, and Blue Shoes race as a family event, so we had a lot of families there. Having this race beginning at eight o'clock in the morning gives everybody time to get some exercise in and run the event. Once the race is over, they can go off to their cookout or barbecue or whatever they do, or get to the lake or the pool and enjoy the rest of the holiday.

Because of that focus, we adopted a short, informal, kids' race as part of the event. It was a run inside the stadium — just a short loop around part of the grounds. That gave young people, 10 and under, a "race" of their own. There were a good number of kids in the stadium, and many participated. The race turned out to be a lot of fun, both for the kids and for their parents. Of course there's no charge for that activity. It's just a fun event, and we gave all the kids a medal. The look on their faces told us they liked that kind of reward! Overall, I think it helped everyone enjoy being part of the event.

Our race announcer, Rita Gary, was more than up to the task. Rita is a member of Furman faculty, an assistant coach. Rita knows running very well, and had fun with the appreciative crowd.

In terms of participant demographics this year, the biggest group was ages 50-64. We had 216 people in that group. There were 67 runners that were over 65. So it was a pretty good range of ages participating. The second highest category was ages 30 to 39, which I consider young. In that group there were 173 participants. So that's good.

This year's Furman course is not quite the same course that we used in the past. We changed the course — it used to start at what we call the Cherrydale Alumni House which is at the top of the hill. Because of that, that earlier course had a net elevation; even though it was a certified course, you couldn't set a record on it. USATF wouldn't recognize it because of that net elevation condition. This year we designed the RWBS course so that if somebody achieved a 5k state record it could count as such.

The redesign also gave us a little bit more of a wider starting area. Where we used to start the race, the start area was pretty narrow. People had to really back up before they started. Now there's a nice broad area to line up across the start line.

Last year for my article recapping the 2021 RWBS I said that our kids future interest will help our sport thrive in the years ahead. I still think that future is looking real good. And I'll base that on a couple of things. High school cross country to my knowledge is still the number one participant sport. That is a potential source. Also, my son owns a Fleet Feet running shoe and apparel store in Georgia. People are buying running shoes and running gear at a phenomenal pace right now. So the sport itself appears very strong.

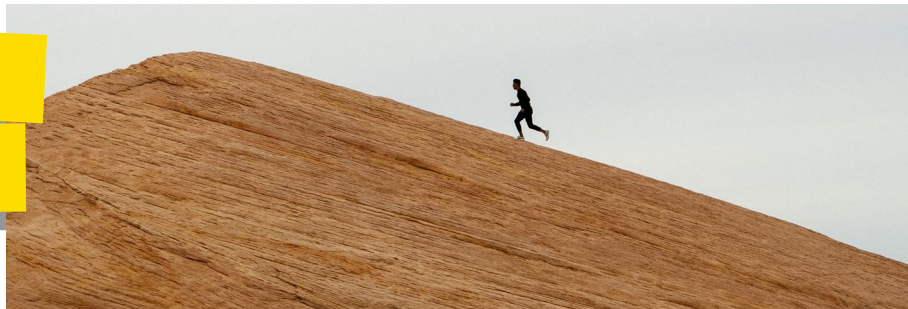
Our Greenville Track Club is helping our sport stay strong. They are bringing some younger people into some important roles. Now you just can't put a younger person in a position of authority and responsibility without their first 'making their way up the road'. You can't become a race director never having done that before. However, we are recruiting individuals who will eventually be able to take that over, as some of us mature out of our responsibilities.

Most people don't understand that we're a nonprofit. We put a lot of money back into the community. The race we just had is a fundraiser for our program that allows our athletes here to have some amenities that they wouldn't have without this money we raised for it. It all adds up eventually.

An example of how GTC helps local runners is that they helped me. In my early years of my running in high school and collegiate track, the GTC helped me get into a couple of races. When I was transitioning from high school to college in the summer before, they helped me in that way, and I've never forgotten that.

# SPLITS: RUNNING HILLS

By Bill Blask



OK, it's a big hill. Or maybe, worst case, a heck of a hill at the end of a long, hard race on a miserable weather day. The Race Director must have smiled when including this 'special surprise' for us.

Still, one way or another, we get up the hill.

Aside from the eternal issue of why there are hills in the first place ("because there are valleys"), what's so special about hills? Is there another way of thinking about them besides being a challenge? Another way of using them?

This morning, I'm thinking running hills offers anyone an opportunity to do two things:

1. Discover our attitude and how much overall energy we have to give to this particular run, and
2. Decide how we can best apply that energy and attitude to this run.

Rather than an obstacle, this hill may set us up for having a good or even great run!

To begin with, consider this: A hill worthy of the name changes the game.

When I run hills, the first insight is that everything about my running changes. Yes, the effort goes up. Running Green Valley or Paris Mountain in Greenville, the Governor's Half Marathon in Columbia, or Maggie Valley in North Carolina are examples of courses whose hills required that extra effort.

In a few steps my first hill brings that into focus, and more.

Before I think of effort, what's my attitude? Am I looking up and taking in the whole hill, surging toward the top, or looking down just in front of my feet and taking the hill one step at a time?

After that, how much energy do I have to give today? Going up, I am giving some of my energy to each step, each stride, each yard of the journey up. What will it take to keep me moving all the way to the top? How easy is it for me to give that energy today?

On my way up, I focus and go through a mental check list. Breathing. Muscular effort. My body's angle relative to the road surface. My stride, my cadence, the angle of my head and vision, my arm movement and its angle relative to my body. Have I missed anything? What's already changed? What needs to change?

As I run the hill, I'm working on the answers. Does a serious hill cause me to think about all that? Certainly the first one does, anyway. Stress provided by a hill worthy of the name, like consciously trying for a PR, brings everything into sharper focus.

Take breathing as an example. I'm never more aware of my breath than while running, and double that when running a hill. Normally, I breathe each half about the same. Running, I can breathe them differently. Every few steps, a conscious evaluation and a choice.

When I start up the hill, the need for breath is modest, but half-way up a serious hill, it can get complicated. Do I deepen the inhale or exhale or both (pant)? Lengthen my exhale and shorten (quicken) my inhale, or shorten my exhale and lengthen my inhale? Make up my mind, please, and be quick!

Five more strides, then ten, twenty. Get the breath I need while balancing all the pieces and maintaining rhythm and effort.

And that's just my breath.

At the top, finally. Breathe, let go of effort, and look around. Run easy for a bit and recover. What's on this other side? I look, see downhill, and everything changes again.

I do a quick evaluation. How steep is the backside of the hill? How fast can I go? Do I increase my cadence or stride?

This is more about safety and control, but still about how I'm using my energy to achieve that.

Going up a hill, you can stub a toe and fall, usually with less risk. You may be embarrassed, but you can get up and take the next step. Fall going downhill, and you may not take that next step. Because you can't.

So, whatever decisions I make now, maintain control going downhill! No injury or fall is worth the speed.

My breathing's coming back. The siren of speed will not be quiet: is it time to ramp up and maybe improve my overall race pace! Control will come from feet landing under my hips. Adjustments will come from my body's angle relative to the slope, and stability from anticipating the footing while the surface comes to my next steps.

Now my speed energy is building as I become more confident. What do the experts say? Small changes in speed are better than headlong rushes downhill?

Breathe easy and deep. Stride from my hips. Control the energy in my push off while maintaining a 'safe' posture and footing.

The hill's slope is easing, becoming more level. I'm finishing this hill. Feel the pace you can maintain, I remind myself. Establish a rhythm. Go!

This serious hill has given me a bit more information about how I might run today, as I adjust my running to fit my available energy and each circumstance, and keep moving.

Maybe what I've just described reflects some elements of what goes through your mind too.

Anyway. Hills. Whether it's a race, a run, or a walk, no wonder we feel we've done something when we've reached the top. Consciously or unconsciously, we've learned something when we've accepted the challenge of a hill worthy of the name.

I look forward to meeting you at the top, however and whenever you and I get there.

See you on the road.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I recently injured my right knee in a race. I believe it happened running the course downhill faster than usual ("with abandon" is the phrase that comes to mind). I hope to share the lessons in a later Splits column.

**Hills. Want some, you ask?  
Lemme think about it.**

