

GTC NEWSLETTER

“I can learn something from every run, even the difficult ones.” | John Bingham |

A Message from Your GTC President

Mike Burchett, our GTC President, shares how our club has made possible three races in the past few weeks, and forecasts plans for coming events this year. Reedy River and Spinx FunFest are some of the familiar events that Mike will discuss with us in his letter.

A Message from Your GTC President



By Mike Burchett

First of all, I would like to thank the many people in our community who have stepped up to keep us safe and comfortable during this crisis: the doctors, nurses, first responders, truckers, grocery and hardware store employees, restaurant employees, delivery people, and other essential workers who have faced unprecedented risks and challenges, many of whom are also members of our running community. I would also like to thank all of our club members and loyal runners who have been patient and adaptable as we have dealt with the impact that this pandemic has had on our sport.

Competitive sports has been one of the hardest-hit sector of our society during the time of covid. As large public gatherings, sporting events were the first thing to go and will likely be the last thing to return. However, rest assured that the leadership of the Greenville Track Club has been working hard to adapt to these challenges and provide local runners with opportunities to get out on the roads and trails. Prior to this, the GTC putting on a virtual race would

have been unheard of; however, as it became clear that our spring and summer events were not going to take place in person, we switched a few of them to virtual, and although it was unfamiliar territory to us, our race directors stepped up and did a wonderful job with them. We have already held the Paris Mountain Trail 12k, the Sunrise Run 8k, and the Free Bird 5k as virtual runs.

As of now, the Reedy River Run and Spinx RunFest are still on the calendar as in-person events and open for registration. We are feeling good right now about the prospects, and are working hard on a safety protocol that will allow us to minimize risk to our runners and volunteers. We are also hopeful about holding our Freedom Flyer 5k as an in-person event in the fall.

Please check our website (www.greenvilletrackclub.com) and Facebook page frequently for updates, and feel free to contact our race directors or e-mail me at president@greenvilletrackclub.com if you have any questions.

The Greenville Track Club is here for the running community, separate but together. Stay well and stay safe!

Your Newsletter Editor Introduces Himself

In January, your GTC vice-president Jim Roberts and I began talking about providing a sharing place for our members running experiences in this new post-group gatherings world. So this is me doing that, hopefully with your help.

Your Newsletter Editor Introduces Himself

Hello. I'm Bill Blask, newly appointed editor of the GTC Newsletter. I am a runner, a GTC member, and a technical writer and editor in a former life.

I like to run, at least most of the time. It is a habit, and I believe fulfills a need. Over the years I've worked up to winning a few 2nds in a number of races in my age category (details upon request!), enough to keep me coming back to that part of running. I did win 1st in my age category in the 2020 Greenville News Run Downtown 5K and the 2020 GTC Sunrise 8K virtual, so we'll see how that works out. The pack must be thinning!

Other pleasures definitely include my wife of 37 years (please let that be right!), Paulette, and our two daughters and two sons. I get my feet wet occasionally in our sailboat docked at Keowee Sailing Club. We are both retired from technical careers, and recently moved from Blythewood near Columbia to Easley and closer to our daughters living in the upstate.

In my opinion - and every editor has one and wants to publish it - GTC is a great organization. Its board really cares about its members. They walk the walk.

What we all are going through has been tough for sports like ours. We are in transition, and it's good to have an organization devoted to finding safe and successful ways to support our interests.

This GTC Newsletter is part of that effort. The last edition of our GTC Newsletter was in October 2017. It's been resting for awhile. With a little help we hope to restore your interest and its usefulness to you and to our organization.

Your comments and suggestions are and will always be welcome.

Bill Blask
Your Editor

Running the Virtual GTC Sunrise Run 8K

One runner's experience in his first virtual race. Hey, it's still running, still out in the real weather, just different.

Running the Virtual GTC Sunrise Run 8K

By Bill Blask

I ran my first "virtual" road race this month: The GTC Sunrise Run 8K in Simpsonville. Kudos to the organizers, and race director John Lehman. Results are at <https://runsignup.com/Race/SC/Simpsonville/GTCSunriseRun> 8k.

I ran the course on Wednesday before the June 13th deadline. Mid-morning. Persistent drizzle. Only me and a 20-something lady who caught and passed me during mile two on South Main Street like I was standing still.

The run was an exercise that reminded me of my Boy Scout orienteering days. Back then I became an expert in getting lost. This time I had the MapMyRun graphic, and a turn-by-turn list thanks to Greenville Track Club's/ RunSignUp.com's Web site. They were the key to going from start to finish that day.

In my experience virtual route running is not easy. When we are running against the clock it adds challenge. Add running solo and you are very busy with more than running. Without blocked-off traffic and traffic control public safety men and women, my head was on a swivel, especially on Simpsonville's main streets. In neighborhoods, I had to run up to street signs after first locating them, jog or run in place while reading the map and text directions on my iPhone (that's an exercise in itself, flipping from page to page in Safari, or between copies of the information), then picking up my pace again. Seconds ticked away while I sweated and dripped while getting my bearings.

Bottom line: running alone, I spent time puzzling out the route as I ran.

I am not claiming that any record for my age group and gender was at risk. On my best day I'm a middle-class runner. I place my best when few of us my age and gender show up, unless someone like George Luke or another with similar abilities is there putting the rest of us running

that day - including folks 30 years or more younger - to shame.

Good on you, George. May you run forever!

One more unforeseen element in the race. Because of where I parked, I started my race at the church rather than the “official” start line in the park. I had to run longer to put in the full 8K, by doubling the church and more. I ran 5.30 miles just to be sure. And then my Apple watch “can’t turn it off” thing happens.

My Apple watch, wet, wouldn’t let me stop my timing precisely at 8K. In fact, it wouldn’t let me stop timing, period. It just kept running as I slowed to a stop, swiping and tapping on that little bugger, watching with frustration as my race time got longer and longer - and my average per mile time got slower and slower!

Luckily I had run more than five miles. I could, and did - full disclosure - use my five mile splits to calculate an accurate time for 8k (4.97 M) from those splits. With the distractions I’ve mentioned, it was still within seconds of my time last year. Go figure.

Would I run another “virtual” race? Sure. It was a race. It felt like a race. Its organizers did what they could to put it together and give me what I needed, and actually used, to run the intended course. It asked more of me individually, and that’s OK. What else was I going to do that morning anyway?

So maybe the crowds aren’t there during these times. It’s a big miss, no doubt about it. I still ran, not “in” a race, but I ran the given course. I know I will recognize some of the names on the results page, and that will give me a reference point in a time of my life when reference points of all kinds are disappearing.

As I see it, each of us runs the way we run. And we run alone, inside ourselves, whether we are in a gaggle or not. At least I do. On a given day my body will tell me what I can do. Sheer determination can play a role, but I decide what I will do with what’s in the tank. Someone famous once said we race within ourselves. I think they got it right.

A Request for Your Help

Your GTC Newsletter wants others to benefit from your stories, your experiences, your insight. Please share with us, so we can share with your fellow members.

A Request for Your Help

Your GTC Web site is a trove of information about upcoming races and race venues, and other track and field events. Your GTC Newsletter seeks to share your experiences, your tips and best practices, and insight into what it is like to run, walk, participate in an athletic event, and train for those events.

It might be information or insight about a race or event or practice - any race or event or practice - and your experience in particular. Really and truly, it is those personal insights and experiences you have had running, throwing, heaving, jumping - the whole track and field experience - that are valuable, and that you might share with others.

It might surprise you how many other heads might nod in agreement with what they hear from you.

There are no wrong answers, only invaluable experiences, at least in this editor's opinion.

You might share opinions, articles, or references that others might find amusing or informative.

Occasionally we may also publish messages directly from your Board of Directors, or other officials responsible for the direction and management of our sport. Given the evolving circumstances, we want you to know and understand what they have to say to us as directly and authoritatively as possible.

So, that's our request.

Send items to me at this email address:
newsletter@greenvilletrackclub.com.

Be safe. Be well. Go forth!