

news from the Tallman Track Club



"Where the road goes on forever and the party never ends."

-- Robert Earl Keen

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2006



Welcome to the first issue of news from the Tallman Track Club. The newsletter will feature club activities and coverage of running in the Kanawha Valley. Issues are planned for spring, summer, fall and winter. If you have an idea, photo or story, submit them to: tallmantrackclub@yahoo.com

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Leader of the Pack Veteran Ken Tallman recalls early days of running boom



Ken Tallman

By Jeff Morris

Veteran runner Ken Tallman is matter-of-fact when asked how it feels to have a local track club named after him.

"I really didn't think much of it then," the 67-year-old Charleston resident said. "We were running along, and one of them came up with

the idea we should have a name. Since I was the oldest and the slowest, we called it Tallman."

That name has stood the test of time since several local runners bestowed the honor on Tallman nearly 20 years ago. Members of the Tallman Track Club still gather at 5 p.m. weekdays in Kanawha City at the University of Charleston for a run and more than a few laughs.

The informal start to the club is similar to the way Tallman fell into running. He was 36 or 37 and was getting bruised and battered in basketball games at the old YMCA downtown.

"Most of the people were a lot younger and better than I was, and I played hard," Tallman said. "One Saturday morning, I was down in the basement. I had beaten myself up so bad I couldn't get back up the steps. My wife had to

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Tale of the Tallman unfolded nearly 20 years ago

By Bob Fleming

The Tallman Track Club, an informal nonprofit group of road and track runners, began with an off-the-wall comment by our off-the-wall runner, Michael Mayes.

During the first half mile of our daily 10-mile course, Mike looked over to Ken Tallman and said, "Tallman, what are you trying to do here, start a track club?"

What had begun with three to five runners had suddenly grown to a group of 12 to 15. Ken, being the old man of the group, flashed his trademark grin, blinked a couple of times, and an idea was born. Bob Fleming had an idea that a track club needed shirts, and that it should be named after the runner we all loved and respected – Tallman!

Thus, the Tallman Track Club was born on a fall day in 1976. Bob purchased two shirts, had Tallman Track Club printed on the back, and on the following Monday, he and Leonard Hager donned the shirts under their rain jackets. In the exact spot where Michael spawned the idea, Leonard and Bob removed their

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come down the steps and get me. She said, ‘You better pick something else to do.’ “

Soon, Tallman was running several miles on the track. Working at Columbia Gas, it was natural he would take his new pursuit to the streets of Kanawha City. It wasn’t long before he hooked up with other local runners, like Bob Fleming, Mike Mayes, Bill Ripley and Leonard Hager. From this group, the Tallman Track Club was born. Over the years, hundreds of local runners affiliated with the club have dominated area road and track races.

Despite his late start, Tallman developed into much more than a recreational runner. He was running 80 to 100-mile-plus weeks as he competed in road races, including 15 consecutive Boston Marathons. Along the way, he recorded personal bests of 2 hours and 43 minutes in the marathon and 34:30 in the 10-K. At age 40, he finished second in his age group in the 15-mile Charleston Distance Run in 1 hour, 32 minutes.

“When we started, we had people like Frank Shorter and Bill Rogers. I think this is why I was running 80 and 100 a week,” Tallman said. “Mike Mayes, one of the old-timers, would come around and say, ‘Shorter or Rogers is running 120 miles a week. So, well, hell, we can at least do 100.’ “

One of his favorite memories occurred when he and a group of runners went to the Columbus Marathon. The evening before the race, they decided downing a dozen or so beers would be no problem since it was unlikely to be hot the next day.

“The marathon started about 10:30, and we were all in really good shape. I thought I was capable that year of running 2:40,” he said. “At about the 10-mile mark, all of a sudden the sun came out, and it got hotter than hell. They accused me of crawling into one of the water stations.”

Still, Tallman and fellow runner

John Greenwald made it to the finish line in a respectable 3 hours and 5 minutes.

Time and circumstances have changed running for Tallman. His gait has been affected by what he believes may have been too much downhill running in the Boston Marathon.

While he doesn’t run with the track club since he moved to Edgewood, Tallman keeps in shape by running and walking four to five miles a day. He is pleased the track club continues and tries to make it each year to a Tallman tradition — a sharing of post-race beers by the railroad tracks following the Distance Run.

Running has kept him in shape and healthy. Most of all, though, it has allowed him to interact with the many fine people associated with the Tallman Track Club.

“I’ve met all kinds of people — doctors and lawyers. People like Mike Mayes, who is an engineer, Fred Waybright and W.K. (Munsey),” Tallman said. “Runners seem to be sort of a different group of people.

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rain jackets and ran in front of Ken. Ken again flashed his trademark grin, laughing loudly, and said, “What in the world are you two up to now?”

By acclamation, the group unanimously applauded, and the Tallman Track Club became official. The club was open to any and all, the only unwritten rules were that you ran Mount Alpha on Wednesday and drank beer. If you returned the following Wednesday, you were in. Ken graciously waived the beer drinker rule on occasion with unanimous consent. It was unanimously approved that Ken Tallman would be president for life.

Over the years, the group has prospered and members of the oldest group, the St. Albans runners, contained

many state, county and high school champions, many of whom are current members today. The club has contained runners ranging from the state record holder in the 800 meters to the national masters 50-mile champion. It routinely had overall winners in races from one mile to the marathon, and age group winners three deep at times. Its roster is well known, respected, admired, and often written about in local newspapers.

The club has hosted the annual post race railroad track party outside Laidley Field after the Charleston Distance Run for more than 20 years, where an anonymous contributor provides the moonshine for Ken to close out another successful year for the Tallman Track Club.

news from the **Tallman Track Club**

Editor: Jeff Morris, tallmantrackclub@yahoo.com

Contributors this issue: W.K. Munsey, Bob Fleming, Linda Dorsey.

<http://www.tallmantrackclub.com>

*We apologize for any names left off this document. We are in the process of updating our list. If you know of anyone who should be included, contact us at tallmantrackclub@yahoo.com

TALLMAN TRACK CLUB

1976-2002

Aaron Allred
George Aulenbacher
Robbie Ashley
Lyle Atkins
Glenn Baldwin
Robin Baldwin
Don Barnett
Billy Belcher
Patrick Board
Pete Brown
Harry Bruner
Kelly Castleberry
Billy Chandler
Scott Clark
Dave Copeland
Bruce Cox
Bubby Dent
Rufus Dingess
Pam Dockery
Ray Dockery
Jack Dove
Harold Edwards
Tim Farmer
Dave Fields
Bob Fleming
Jane Fleming
John Fleming
John Frazier
Terry Gossard
John Greenwald
Leonard Hager
Dennis Hamrick
Bernard Haynes
Jerry Herndon
Todd Hughes
Greg Imhoff
Don Jeffrey
Mona Jeffrey
Sharon Jones
Cherie Jones
Jeff Jordan
Tod Kaufmann

Dave Kline
Larry Lawrence
Steve Ledahawsky
Steve Legg
Brian Lessley
Bill Logue
John Lukens
Tom Lumadue
John Maher
Ben Mascari
Mike Mayes
Rob McCracken
Linda McFessel
Rich McFessel
Steve McFessel
Glenn Morris
Jeff Morris
Diana Morris
Andy Muldoon
W.K. Munsey
Tom Murphy
Scott Myers
Gwain Noga
Ron Norman
Bill O'Dell
Frank Offutt
Denny Payne
Ron Plantz
Bill Platt
Rosemary Platt
Butch Plott
Tom Poole
Fred Potter
Sam Pritt
Mike Province
Chap Richardson
Bill Ripley
Bill Rogers
Joel Rodgers
Steve Roberts
Tony Ross
Duncan Rowan

Leo Runyon
Wes Runyon
Bill Schultz
Jeff Shue
Herb Smith
Marshall Spradling
Steve Stewart
Worley Stout
James Sturgeon
Ken Tallman
Ted Torpy
Jerry Traylor
Fred Waybright
Pam Waybright
Teddy Waybright
Pat Whitten
Kevin Williams
Don Wilson

Current Record Holders:

State High School 800 Meters
Bubby Dent 1:54

Almost Heaven Marathon
Bubby Dent 2:32

Hall of Fame Marathon
John Frazier 2:19

Marshall Univ. Track 5-K
Dave Kline 14:15

Marshall Univ. Track 10-K
Dave Kline 29:50

National Masters 50-Miler
Fred Waybright 5:55:41

National Masters 50-Miler
Tallman Track Club 22:04:00
Team Title

National Track and Field 50-Mile
Championships
Fred Waybright, 5:55:41; Ron
Plantz, 7:43:50; Shawn Chillag,
6:57:02

Doing the Charleston



Runners gather at the railroad tracks for the post-race cooldown.



Shawn Chillag, a.k.a. Spider Man, cools off with a post-race drink.



W.K. Munsey is all he can bee.
Make that a Yellow Jacket!

Photos by Linda Dorsey



Glenn and Robin Baldwin relax at W.K.'s party.

Tallman runners finish strong in Huntington

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Glenn Baldwin's second place finish in the Huntington Marathon paced a group of Tallman Track Club finishers.

Baldwin, 47, of South Charleston ran the course in 2 hours, 48 minutes and 50 seconds — a pace of 6:27 per mile. His time was one second off the old course record, set in 2004 by Roger Scott. Baldwin finished runner-up in the 2005 race to John Davis, 21, who set a new course record of 2 hours, 44 minutes and 40 seconds

Three other runners with local ties cracked the top 20 – Joe Molinaro, 3:05:50, 11th place; Charlie Weaver, 3:06:47, 13th place; and Jeff Jordan, 3:09:01, 14th place.

Rob McCracken finished in 4:04:20 to place 181st in the field of approximately 500 finishers, including marathoners, relay teams and walkers.

The relay team of Aaron Allred, W.K. Munsey and Bernard Haynes, which competed as 2 Gimps and a Wimp, finished in 3:07:27.

The Nov. 13 race started in front of the “CAM” on a cloudy 50-degree day that was suited for a marathon. Light breezes brought a rise in temperatures to the 60s before the end. There was rain after the one-hour mark at the bottom of the course, but not enough to cause any problems for the runners. **(Reported by W.K. Munsey)**



Upcoming Races

Local

For The Love Of It/Valentine Run/Walk, 10-K, Nitro, old Nitro High School, 9 a.m. Feb. 11. Contact: Doug and Patty Stewart, info@fortheloveofitrun.com

West Virginia

Run to Read Half-Marathon, Pricketts Fort State Park, Fairmont, WV, noon, Jan. 7. Contact: Jim Woolfitt (304) 366-6055, run2read@yahoo.com

White Grass 5-K, Snowshoe Run/Hike, Davis, White Grass Ski Touring Center, 1 p.m., Jan. 22, cross country. Contact: Dan Lehmann, 304-924-5835, irun@starband.net.

White Grass Snowshoe 5-K Walk/Run, White Grass, Davis, 1 p.m., Jan. 29. Contact: Dan Lehmann, 304-924-5835, irun@starband.net, or White Grass, 304-866-4114.

Valentine Classic 5-K Run, 5-K Walk, Vienna, 55th Street and Grand Central Avenue, 2 p.m. Feb. 5. Contact: Darren Barton, 304-863-3960

March Hare 5-K Run, 5-K Walk, Boaz, Hill United Methodist Church, Old River Road, 2 p.m., March 5. Contact: Darren Barton, 304-863-3960

Outside W. Va.

Bi-Lo Marathon/Dasani Half Marathon, Myrtle Beach, S.C., Coastal Federal Field, 21st Ave. N., 6:30 a.m. Feb. 18. Contact: 843-293-RACE, MBMarathon@sc.rr.com. See W.K. Munsey for applications.

Club Runs

- Tallman Track Club runs begin weekdays at 5 p.m. Meet at the University of Charleston parking lot across from the Pharmacy Building construction.

<http://www.tallmantrackclub.com>

Taming a monster named Mount Alpha



W.K. Munsey

Tallman Tidbits

It was Thursday, December 1, at the University of Charleston parking lot. The rain was coming down lightly as a small group of runners gathered in the Fleming Hall waiting area to stay dry during the final minutes before the bell rang at 5 o'clock.

There was hardly any conversation as the group awaited the coming bell and with it, the first assault of Mount Alpha since the summer of 2003 by the Tallman Track Club.

To be sure, there had been individual stealth efforts up the mountain, but these were by men and women alone, with no group to hinder their efforts by taking large sections of pavement, so prized by the gas guzzling four and more wheeled cars and trucks moving up and down the mountain. A single assault does not register with the harried drivers long enough to cause angst or anger. But, put together a group — that causes drivers to move across the yellow line into the oncoming lane, or worse, having to come to a complete stop. Now your assault is taking on some serious meaning.

Promptly at five, the group started to move out before the bell stopped ringing. Conversation was about anything but the task that lay before us. We wound through the rain slicked streets out to the river into the gathering gloom. When we got to Chesterfield Avenue, the fun had just begun. As we dodged cars and rain puddles trying to stay on the pavement, we looked much like tight rope walkers on the high wire with buckets of water splashing into their faces while trying to miss couches and refrigerators flying by them.

As we turned onto Chappell Road for the first part of the climb, the stakes went up a notch. Now there was nowhere to bail out when the cars screamed close enough to touch. Some went out to

the other lane, but some played the game of, see-if-you-can-scare-the-stuffing-out-of-the-runner. Lights from the oncoming cars blacked out the festive holiday lights on many houses up the street. Getting onto Alpha was much like I remembered, as Jeff Jordan and I climbed the first hill. Not being able to breathe while trying to maintain forward motion, once again limited my view to the five feet of pavement in front of me. Still, everything looked the same with a few more cracks as the cars hurtled by us at one hundred miles per hour. They flew down the hill so close, I was glad I didn't have another layer on.

“I just thought the dots on the edge of my vision were the first signs that I was ready to black out.”

There were a great deal of new houses and construction, so I'm told. Trying to concentrate on not heaving up lunch and keeping my feet in line had robbed me of my peripheral vision, but Jeffy gave a wonderful narrative as we ascended into the darkness. After Whispering Woods, the cars had stopped careening by so close that I had paint burns on my clothes. The only sounds were the silence and the train roaring in my ears. Oh wait! That was the wheezing of my breathing as we climbed past the five-mile mark. Coming to the last climb near the end, Jeff was chatting happily about the progress we had made. I was just wondering if I could make this climb without throwing up a lung. Eventually, we made the summit and to the end, where we paused and watched the snow that fell gently onto the wet landscape.

Jeffy told me it had been falling for some time; I just thought the dots on the edge of my vision were the first signs that I was ready to black out. The return was pretty uneventful except for the mad possum, and the cars careening off the hills like bowling balls with lights, but hey, that's a story for another day.

Anyone feeling nostalgic after this missive is invited to meet at UC at five o'clock on Thursdays where we continue our weekly assaults until the Myrtle Beach Marathon in February.



Group gathers for annual run in the Loop.

Lights Run 2005



Bernard Haynes and John Frazier ready for St. Albans run.