

Marathon ‘maniacs’

Hardcore  
long-distance  
runners descend  
on Vermont

By SUSAN SMALLHEER  
STAFF WRITER

Larry Macon likes to tell the story about how he ran his first marathon — 1,511 marathons ago. It started with a lie during a meeting among a group of Texas lawyers who were bragging about what they had done over the weekend.

Macon had worked, but he said he was damned if he would admit that.

The 70-year-old trial attorney, a wiry 150 pounds spread over a 5-foot, 10-inch frame, lied and said he was training for a marathon.

The other lawyers, sensing a fib, said they would throw him a party if he completed the run.

And so a second career of running marathons started, said Macon, whose pursuits outside the courtroom have left him deeply tanned and wearing a ball cap with a flap covering his neck.

He still tries cases, but, he said, he loves running hundreds of miles a week.

Macon was wearing the No. 1 bib last week when 200 runners from all over the country came to Springfield to run a marathon on the Toonerville Trail.

Unlike the famous Boston Marathon or New York City Marathon, this run, a production of Mainly Marathons, involved only 2-plus miles of the Toonerville Trail. Participants ran the same section a dozen times to complete the standard 26.2-mile distance.

And last week the 200 runners and walkers were having a grand time doing it.

Mainly Marathons, which was founded in 2013 and is based in Las Cruces, N.M., held a New England series of marathons this past week. It started Monday in Maine, moved to New Hampshire on Tuesday, hit Vermont on Wednesday, and headed out to Massachusetts on Thursday, Connecticut on Friday, Rhode Island on Saturday and New York on Sunday.

“Seven states in seven days,” said George Rose, marketing director for Mainly Marathons.

The runners pay for the right to run, a daily fee of \$90 to \$150, depending on the level of procrastination in signing up.

Wednesday in Springfield, there was a total of 200 runners, 100 doing the full 26 miles, 85 doing a half marathon and 15 completing a 5K.

All 50 states were represented, Rose said, calling the mostly deeply tanned, mostly retired set “marathon maniacs.”

The Toonerville Trail, which was built over a spur of the former Springfield Terminal Railroad, was nicely shaded for a summer marathon. The runners started at 6 a.m., and since the organization doesn’t impose a time limit, organizers they would be there until the afternoon, waiting for all runners to complete.

The average runner takes five to seven hours, he said. “Some do it in four hours and some in 10,” Rose said. “We have a ‘No Runner Left Behind’ policy.”

He said runners are urged in the heat and humidity to take it easy and to stay hydrated he said.

Mainly Marathons provides runners with water and snack tables.

Runners can grab a jelly sandwich, olives and pickles, or salty junk food such as potato chips or Cheese Doodles.

The company provides the runners with breakfast and lunch; the runners have to find their own hotel rooms and are on their own for dinner.

After Springfield, the runners headed to Northfield, Mass.

Macon, who holds the Guinness Book of World Records mark for most marathon races in a year, completed 255 marathons in 2013, including the Boston Marathon that



Larry Macon, 70, of San Antonio Texas, starts out on the Toonerville Trail in Springfield last week. He has run more than 1,500 26.2-mile marathons in his life.



PHOTOS BY LEN EMERY

Newton Baker, 73, of Montpelier, drinks from a half-gallon of chocolate milk after finishing the Vermont leg of a New England series of marathons last week in Springfield: seven races in seven days.



Mark Parrotte of Arlington, Va., gives a rubdown to Tim Hardin of Marshall, Mich., after the Springfield marathon last week.

was infamously ended by homemade terrorist bombs.

Macon wasn’t injured in the bombing. He has run in the Boston Marathon 10 times.

But, he said Wednesday, he enjoys the low-key atmosphere of Mainly Marathons.

“I do this for fun,” said Macon, adding that he applies his legal focus to marathons. “I do it because I love it, the people.”

Macon, who has been profiled by ESPN, took a break during his marathon morning in Springfield, with only 6 miles to go, to answer some questions.

Earlier this year, he said, he hit the 1,500 lifetime mark with a marathon in Montana. He’s run 12 more marathons since then, now at 1,512 marathons, with more to come.

He said he hopes to complete another 40 to 50 marathons this year; so far he’s completed 120.

Some days, he’s slow, he said.

“There are snails passing me,” he said. “Don’t look at your watch. The pleasure is not doing it fast.”

He said he has run several other marathons in Vermont, including the Vermont Marathon in Burlington, and races in Bennington and the Mad River Valley.

“How often in life do you start and finish something in 24 hours?” Macon said. “For lawyers, it often takes years.”

“Larry is a rock star,” Rose said.

Another marathoner from San Antonio, Parvaneh Moayedi, 53, said she had 780 career marathons, and her personal record was 168 in a year.

Moayedi, who works for Hewlett-Packard, has been doing marathons for 16 years.

“It’s a great way of keeping in shape and traveling,” she said.

She’s run in marathons in Boston, New York and Chicago, with a goal of running 1,000 marathons by 2017; she currently has completed 780 marathons.

She holds a Guinness Book record, too, for completing the most marathons for a woman, 168 of them in 2013. She holds a record for completing 17 marathons in 17 days.

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Life in the outport

I’m not exactly a party animal, but I’ve been to a few shindigs now and then through the years. Some were a lot of fun, others not so much. The one I’m enjoying at the moment ranks up among the all-time stars.

It’s late afternoon in Petty Harbour, Newfoundland, we’re done with the day’s fishing, and we’re sitting in a rough oval in old kitchen chairs in Tom Best’s stage on the south side of the harbor. We’re surrounded by stuff — life jackets, foul weather gear, an outboard motor — and from somewhere mysterious has appeared a generous supply of Molson’s and rye. Ted, the retired communications engineer sitting by my right shoulder, has just produced a small bottle of Jameson’s, which confirms that this is the Catholic side of the harbor. There are two guitars, and Pat Chafe, a hilarious retired sea captain, has just unlimbered his squeezebox.

I ask Pat if he knows “The Old Pollina,” and he dives right into it: “But the wind was on the quarter, the engines runnin’ free ...”

Pollina is the local rendering of the name of a famous whaling ship, Polynya (Russian for “an opening in the ice pack”), that sailed west every year from Scotland to pick up Newfoundland fishermen for the Arctic whale hunt. The fastest ship in the Scottish fleet got here first and got the best men, who apparently were lively librettists, as well.

Petty Harbour got its name from the French, who once ruled these shores. It’s pretty small — petit, you might say, which they did. It’s also funnel-shaped and faces directly east toward the open Atlantic; so an easterly gale could really make a mess of the fishing fleet

at its wharves. But a sturdy breakwater with a pretty small opening protects it. A small stream burbles into the

head of the harbor, draining several ponds just inland. Upstream, it’s dammed, and with a tributary running down the steep, rocky side of Gull Hill into the powerhouse through a penstock, provides electricity for the provincial grid. Only six miles from the capital of St. John’s, the town appears to want for little — if you except a tropical climate — and even won the provincial competition one year for “Tidy Town,” a tradition imported from Ireland.

But all is not entirely well here. For hundreds of years, cod-fishing was the basis of the local economy. Fishermen traced their heritage back — and boats, too, in some cases — many

generations. But over time the technology for harvesting cod advanced radically, and eventually foreign fleets moved into Canada’s waters. As Stan Rogers, the late Canadian singer/songwriter, laments in one of his songs, “Foreign trawlers go by now with long-seeing eyes. Taking all, where we seldom take any.” The stocks of fish plummeted; Canada enacted a 200-mile territorial limit; and in response to cod’s apparent near-extinction, closed the commercial fishery in 1992 in hopes of restoring it.

It’s impossible to overstate the impact this had on not only the outports’ economy, but upon their culture and people, as well. A fisherman who can’t fish is a cowboy without a horse, a farmer without land. Many boats were hauled out, and still sit beside their owners’ idle stages on the wharf. The shock was intense. Some, when

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Willem  
LANGE  
Yankee Notebook

BOOKS

B2

ACTIVE VT

B3



Advice for the trail: Don’t feed the bears!

PERSPECTIVE

B5



Democratic candidates seek distance from Shumlin.

IN THE GARDEN

B10



Prepare your harvest for the winter.



# Marathons

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Moayeddi said the running helps her cope with several medical conditions, including high blood pressure and low metabolism. She passes the snack table and heads for the water and Gatorade.

Newton Baker, 73, of Montpelier, was one of a handful of Vermonters to do the Springfield marathon.

Sporting a Central Vermont Runners shirt and drinking from a half-gallon of chocolate milk after completing the race, Baker said he had run across the United States earlier in the year.

It was part of the Race Across USA, designed to encourage healthy behavior among children. It was the equivalent, he said, of running 117 marathons, back to back.

Baker said he drank a gallon of milk every day during the cross-country run. "BST-free," he said.

The Springfield marathon, he

joked, was relatively pleasant. "It's the only flat 2 miles in Vermont," he said of the shady trail.

Baker, who was born in Brattleboro and grew up in Waterbury, said he had been running since he was 38, and had been an athlete since he was a student at Middlebury College.

"This allows marathon maniacs to run a lot of marathons," Baker said.

And there are no time limits, unlike some marathons.

Rose praised the help he had received from the town for his organization.

"Springfield has been a wonderful town to work with," he said, thanking the local Chamber of Commerce.

Rose said 60 people are doing the entire New England series, taking a "running vacation."

Mainly Marathons will be back — but not in the sometimes searing heat of August, he said. Next year, the New England marathon series will be held in the first week of May, with towns to be announced.

susan.smallheer  
@rutlandherald.com



Marathoners come and go at the start/finish area of the Toonerville Trail in Springfield.

# Lange

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the fishery is eventually reopened, won't have survived it.

But Newfoundlanders are — since they've pretty much always had to be — resilient, creative and tough in the face of adversity. I listened recently to a CD of Stan Rogers doing a show in Halifax, Nova Scotia, his adoptive home, and noticed his audience's loudest cheers — sometimes even in anticipation as they heard the first chords — were for the songs that celebrated the gumption, righteous anger and determination of the screwed-over little guy. That

goes a long way up here.

So the fishermen turned to other resources: snow crab, lobster, haddock and shrimp. The wharves here, for instance, are piled with cylindrical mesh crab traps. I asked one fisherman what happens when they lose traps on the bottom: Don't they keep on trapping, like the infamous ghost nets floating around in the ocean? No, he said, pointing to a little patch of cotton-fiber mesh in the otherwise almost indestructible plastic trap. That little patch rots out after a while, and whatever gets into the trap can get out. And he was quick to say they pick up old nets whenever they find them.

Earlier this afternoon, the

TV crew and I joined a merry crew of fishermen on Tom and Reg Best's fishing boat, chugged a little way out of the harbor with a fisheries biologist along and started jigging for cod. Ted, the friendly supplier of the Jameson's, handed me a cod line on its small rectangular frame and urged me to try it. It doesn't seem like a very sophisticated technique, but jigging has its fine points. Leaning against the gunwale to steady myself, I jiggled my line up and down and thought, "I'm going to feel this tomorrow — like the first day back on the Nautilus machines at the gym." There were four of us at the rail, all having a great time, but I couldn't help noticing Ted's constant delighted smile.

What was up with that, I asked him. Well, he answered, I'm retired, I'm healthy, I'm in the best of company, and I'm catching fish.

Back here in Tom and Reg's stage, I can't help but reflect on that, because so am I. Cliff, a very large man with a very loud voice and an in-your-face way of conversing, has just served what he calls seal-flipper pie. Its exotic name and provenance suggest more than what it appears to be: a pot roast with a pie crust on top. It's great duff, appropriately dampened with Molson's Canadian lager. Pat Chafe assures us that within half an hour we'll all be stricken with incredible abdominal cramps and be sick for days, and there

are a few comments about how the United States has put the clamps on the seal fishery for humanitarian reasons. Meanwhile, the bonhomie rolls on; but I have my eye on Tom, sitting in a straight-back chair against one wall. He's just returned from a cancer treatment in Montreal, and watches his old friends with a smile that takes it all in — the songs, the smells, the outport accents — with eyes that seem to be looking back 400 years.

Willem Lange is a writer, storyteller and retired contractor who lives in East Montpelier. His column appears each week in The Sunday Times Argus and Rutland Herald. He can be reached through his website, [willemlange.com](http://willemlange.com).

# August Celebrations



## 60th Wedding Anniversary

Wow another ten years!  
CONGRATULATIONS  
GRAMMY AND GRAMPI  
ON YOUR  
"60TH" WEDDING  
ANNIVERSARY  
*Love You! Rachel*



## Muir~Vagvolgyi Wedding

Christina Anne Muir and Matthew Joseph Vagvolgyi, of Albany, NY, exchanged wedding vows on Saturday, May 30th at Boyden Farm in Cambridge, VT. Alicia Muir, sister of the bride, was maid of honor, and Mark Vagvolgyi, brother of the groom, was best man. The ceremony was held outdoors, followed by a reception inside the Barn. The bride is the daughter of Louise Hoermann and stepdaughter of Russ Hoermann of Barre, VT, and daughter of Bradley Muir and stepdaughter of Catherine Smith-Muir of Milton, VT. The groom is the son of Linda and Elmer Vagvolgyi of Milford, CT. The couple both graduated from Union College in Schenectady, NY, where they met. Christina went on to earn a master's degree in Historic Preservation from Columbia University, and she currently works in Albany, NY as an Architectural Historian. Matthew has a bachelor's degree in economics and is Vice President of Investments and Insurance in the Northeast Region of New York Life Insurance Company. The couple plans to honeymoon in Aruba in early 2016.



## Bolognani~Schneider Engagement

Richard and Naomi Bolognani, of Whitingham, announce the engagement of their daughter, Tarryn Bolognani of Whitingham, to Keith Schneider of Benson, VT. Schneider is the son of Cheryl Murray of Benson, and Scott Schneider of Colchester. Tarryn Bolognani is a 2013 graduate of Castleton State College and is currently employed by The Vermont Orthopaedic Clinic in Rutland as a Certified Athletic Trainer and Physician Extender. Bolognani also works as the Athletic Trainer at Otter Valley high school in neighboring Brandon. Keith Schneider is also a 2013 graduate of Castleton and is currently employed by Rutland Town School as the Physical Education teacher. The couple plan to marry next summer.

## Corey~Hamilton Engagement



Chuck and Kathy Corey of Rutland Town, VT and Duncan and Kathleen Hamilton of West Windsor, VT announce the engagement of their children Jill Corey and Zachary Hamilton of Rutland Town, VT. Jill is employed at the Vermont Department of Health and Zachary is employed at Farrell Distributing Corporation. An October 2015 wedding is planned at Mountain Top Inn.



## Smith~McElory Engagement

Pam Smith Barre, VT Dana & Mary Smith of Groton, VT are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Ashley G. Smith to Josh McElory of Barre, VT. Josh is the son of Tom & Catherine Stevenson. The Bride graduated from Spaulding High School. The Groom graduated from Oxbow High School & is employed by J.Morgan's Steakhouse. An August 27, 2016 wedding will take place in Barre, VT.