

# RRC, NYA

## No. 5 Summer, 1960



# NEWSLETTER

### OFFICERS--for 1960-61

President: John Conway (NYPC) 37-33 80th St., Jackson Hts., L.I., N.Y.  
Vice-President: Harry Murphy (Milrose AA), 4111 Ave., I, Brooklyn, NY.  
Secretary-Treasurer: John Sterner (NYPC) 610 Trinity Ave., Bronx, NY.

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ELECTIONS---Listed above are your officers for 1960-61 year. John Conway and Bill Wiklund finished in a dead heat for the presidency and Conway won the run off election by a narrow margin.

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FINANCES---Money in treasury at the moment: \$20.90 from last year, plus \$13.73 balance from income of 1960-61, for total of \$34.63.

If you have not paid your dues, please do so as soon as possible. This is essential in planning future races, etc.

Make checks or money orders payable to treasurer: John Sterner, 610 Trinity Ave. Bronx, N.Y.

Additional contributions are welcomed and needed. Thank you, gentlemen !

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NOTICE: There will be a meeting of the RRC at Van Cortlandt Park at 1:30 PM on Sept. 11, 1960.

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"CHERRY TREE MARATHON" COURSE MEASURED---In June a team of RRC members headed by John Sterner and Nick Bilotta met and measured the Harlem River road course in the Bronx. Complete details will be given later.

The Road Runners Club is extremely appreciative of the efforts of two men who were kind enough to give some invaluable assistance in this project.

Mr. Ed Backus, Chief, Bureau of Bridge Construction, Dep't. of Public Works, obtained the use of a measuring wheel from Mr. Bill Franck of the Duropave, Inc., 1210 Rogus Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. This wheel was used to measure the course and proved a great time saver.

It was a nice friendly gesture all around. Ed Backus went out of his way to personally pick up the wheel himself and also returned it. And of course it was especially nice of Bill Franck to entrust it to a complete set of strangers.

WANTED: Back copies of the "LONG DISTANCE LOG," intact, clean---Last part of 1959 and first eight issues 1960. Let me know what you have, condition, and price wanted. Write to: Mr. T. Suito, Box 603, Englewood, New Jersey.



PROFILE NO. 2: Mike O'Hara

Mike O'Hara, the famed distance star of the St. Anthony's Boys Club, started his athletic career in a most unusual manner. Originally he was a long distance bicycle racer, for the French Sporting Club, and competed in road events of up to 100 miles. But unfortunately for Mike these races started at 4:30 AM; much too early an hour for him to be at his best. When O'Hara learned that his club also sponsored marathon runs, which started at 12 noon, he immediately switched over, and was very successful right from the beginning.

He has been competing in road runs since 1937, and at the last count had negotiated number 348. Of these, 85 were marathons, and he has been able to go under the three hour mark in 65 of these. This is the third best record of any marathon runner in American history. (Only the remarkable John A. "Old John" Kelley and the peerless Clarence DeMar have surpassed O'Hara's marathon achievements.) Mike is also very proud of the fact that he has completed every event he has entered, except one. The only time he was forced out of the going was in the 1940 Boston Marathon. Extremely bad blisters from a 10 miler the previous week, made him consider not showing up at all. But he did, and bravely struggled on for 11 miles, before he was forced to call it quits.

Because Mike did not run in high school and did not attend college, he never got the benefit of professional coaching; thus he must take most of the credit for his consistently fine performances over the last 25 years. O'Hara emphatically believes that only by a steady diet of hard, long training, all year round, can a distance runner hope to become a success. His rigorous program consists of:

- 1) Five days a week working out seven miles each morning, and in the evening Mike adds another 5 miles.
- 2) One night a week, in addition to his morning run, he puts in a 12 mile workout.
- 3) On Sunday, after a days rest, he prefers a single, strenuous effort, usually between 20-30 miles.

In recent years Mike has sensed that the years were beginning to take their toll. To compensate for this, he has begun to step up his mileage, from about 5,000 miles a year to his present level of 5,700, in order to maintain his usual times.

In 1941, which he considers his greatest year, he was the Metropolitan AAU titleholder at both the 20 mile and Marathon distances. He was also second in the National AAU 30 kilometer championship with a time of 2 hours 3 minutes. The performance which made the year a memorable one was his powerful 8th position in the Boston Marathon, which was achieved with his best time, 2 hrs. 41 min. His other best times are: 20 kilo: 1 hr. 15 min., and for 30 kilo: 1 hr. 51 min.

A methodical, plodding runner, O'Hara is rarely influenced by the wild variations of pace that his competitors may pursue. He keeps a steady stride for most of the going, and in the final stages, he actually lifts it, despite fatigue. This amazing ability to push himself, has gained him the well deserved respect of all his fellow road runners. Yet even O'Hara winces when he recalls some of the tough marathons he has been in. He says that the National AAU championship at Yonkers has been a consistently backbreaking and exhausting affair; the warm weather and hilly course easily sap ones strength. His worst experience was on the Baltimore-Laurel course, in the mid-forties. It seemed to be 26 miles of uphill going, and the temperature was 85 degrees. He just managed to reach the tape, in 3 hrs. 5 min.

Mike believes that experience is the most valuable asset to a distance runner. Before attempting road or marathon runs, he should have several years preparation by competing in middle and long distance track events. This will sharpen his sense of timing, speed and develop endurance.

As for O'Hara's future plans: He doesn't plan to retire from the sport, but, according to him, he'll continue to run as long as he can lift his legs. (By John Chodes, NYPC).



NEW YORK ASSOCIATION NEWS , by Joe Kleinerman, Millrose AA

Did you know that a member of the RRC NY Assn had a special police escort up the streets of NYC from the Battery ? Gus Kotteakos, 58 year old runner from the Grand Street Boys and a member of the RRC NY Assn. was chosen to carry a lighted torch from the Statue of Liberty to the Tavern on the Green Central Park. The occasion was the Hungarian National Sports Festival for the Olympic Games. Gus was taken out to the Statue of Liberty in a boat and came back with a red glowing torch from the island. He jumped out of the boat and was off running up the New York streets with an escort of three police cars. Joe Kleinerman, vice President of the National RRC, witnessed the feat and tried to follow on foot but Kotteakos armed with the torch flew up the streets and before long was out of sight. Gus Kotteakos is one of the most co-operative members of the NY Assn of the RRC despite a busy life with his grandchildren, his restaurant and his side-line of "private eye." Gus is a licensed private detective in NY State and with his stamina woe to the unlawful followers.

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Two members of the RRC NY Assn had the deep misfortune of losing their fathers in the past few months. Harry Murphy lost his father a couple of months ago and our deepest sympathy is extended to our Vice-President and his family. Also Larry Lesser, willing worker of the NY Assn RRC, lost his beloved father last month. The RRC NY Assn extends condolences to Larry and his family.

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The summer scene in NY is being enhanced with the presence of Herb Benario, Millrose AA runner, just back from teaching at Sweet Briar College in Virginia. Herb is making the T&F News Olympic Tour and when he gets back will go to Atlanta, Ga. where he will take up his new teaching job at Emory College. His wife will teach at Georgia State College. The best of luck to Herb and his wife. Perhaps he will start an RRC club in the deep south.

With summer here, an onlooker in Yonkers or near Van Cortlandt Park can see a herd of runners every sunday morning being led by Nick Bilotta, RRC NY Assn senior citizen, over new terrain which he seems to discover every week. He takes the runners over cool and soft underfooting and when the trip is completed the boys can drink water (?) and talk for hours about the new course Nick has discovered. Frank Brown, another of our famed senior citizens, always has a word for Bilotta's new course and it's favorable.

Our new RRC NY Assn president is really getting the appearance of an executive with his added poundage but a few sundays with the boys and a little heat will have John Conway back to the crowd. That man chasing after Lou Sciavo is all the races is his dad Angelo who was a fast runner in his days. Ask Joe Kleinerman who recalls Angelo's races at Bryant High School. By the way his brother-in-law is that past famous 880 and x-country runner at Manhattan College in the 1930's, Lou Burns...Did you notice that pretty lady following Nat Cirulnick in all the races lately ? Well that's Ann his wife who is a swiftie in her own right. Nat must be figuring on pulling a McKenzie act: Gordon being chased by his wife...Too bad we can't get more combinations like that...By the way, Aldo Scandurra, Millrose AA, has become an island estate man. Aldo has a new home on the island and his wife Betty is being kept busy getting it in shape, and probably measuring out some new courses for her spouse...Mike O'Hara, St. Anthoy BC, spent a month up at North Lake in the Catskills and the road really took a beating. His wife Lee must have really been busy feeding him because Mike loves his chow and beer...With all the runners having wives who are interested in running and helping them and the other runners with water at the races why don't we make them honorary members of the RRC NY Assn ?...We are happy to hear that our RRC NY Assn member Bill Wiklund is out of the hospital and in good shape again. Now he is ready and willing to expound his theories on running to any willing young runners...That fellow on the scooter in the Greenwich Village actors' scooter parade was none other than our famous Lou White of the NewYork Pioneer Club who really gets around...Congratulations are in order for the new Junior Met. 3 mile champ Jim O'Connell of the St. ABC who really has improved. Jim is now linked with the top finishers



in all the road races...The big question for Rudy Mendez now is what school to go back to in the Fall. Last year he was at Maryland State College...Perhaps Jose Dones may also go to school in the Fall...Lou Schiavo is going to attend the U. of Penn...The RRC NY Assn has been honored with the new membership of Bob Preston former Met. AAU long distance chairman and one of the leading AAU timers. Bob is really a hard worker... Another new member is Tony Speranza who is also an officer in the Walkers Club of America and being retired from business is looking for something to occupy himself. The RRC will welcome his help. He is making a tour to the Olympic Games...Another fellow making an Olympic tour is Dick Clapp of the NY Pioneers... Member Carl Genovese put on a wonderful race in Newburgh NY last May...Notice Jack Jarrett absent from the races around here? Well he is working down in Maryland now and may get up for a race soon... That big fellow who runs in all the RRC NY Assn races and who is usually the first to enter is none other than Ernie Medaglia Bronx Union YMCA. Ernie is a transit police-man working a mid-night tour. A swell fellow who runs to make a race and not for a prize.

"RESULTS OF NATIONAL A.A.U. MARATHON"  
by John Chodes, NYPC

John J. Kelley, of the Boston A.A., scored his fifth consecutive victory in the National A.A.U. and Olympic selection marathon at Yonkers, New York, on May 22, 1960. Kelley's time of 2:20:13.9 set a record for the course, and eventually gained him a berth on the marathon team which will compete in the Olympic Games at Rome. Others earning the trip to Rome included Gordon McKenzie (New York Pioneer Club) who finished second in 2:23:46 and Lt. Alexander Breckenridge of the Marine Corps, who was third in 2:32:41. Fourth place finisher Bob Cons (Culver City A.C.) rounded out the team as the first alternate. He made the trip to Rome with the marathon team.

In winning the event Kelley displayed a fine tactical sense. He is usually an impulsive and aggressive runner, dominating the lead regardless of the pace. The knowledge that he had to win in order to keep his slim Olympic hopes alive--after having dropped out of the first qualifying test at Boston, prompted him to pursue a more conservative course of action this time.

During the early stages, Kelley, along with Breckenridge, Cons, Al Confalone (Boston A.A.) and Richard Greene (New York A.C.), were clustered tightly together, almost out of sight behind the front running Gordon McKenzie, who led the pack. McKenzie appeared quite overconfident, oblivious to the amazingly fast clip at which he was proceeding. At five miles he had opened up a 300 yard lead over the rest of the field. He was well ahead of the course record and abreast of a world record pace.

At 8½ miles, as McKenzie's lead continued to grow, Kelley suddenly put on a powerful burst of speed in the attempt to shake off his pursuers and close the lost ground. The others quickly recovered the distance, but in doing so they weakened themselves badly. Soon Cons had dropped back, and both Confalone and Breckenridge were obviously distressed. Over the last half of the run, Cons tired badly and narrowly managed to gain fourth place over the West Coast's Tom Ryan. Confalone, another contender for the honored spot was only 150 yards back of Kelley at halfway, but he too was used up by the merciless pace. Although runnerup on two occasions, he was a disappointing 10th.

From the 10th mile onward, the marathon became a battle of attrition. Kelley methodically cut down the distance separating him from McKenzie and in the process he killed off all the other competitors.

On the long downhill stretch at the 15 miles point he finally overtook Gordon, who appeared to be losing some of his steam. A bitter struggle followed. Both men matched strides for almost 3½ miles, until finally, McKenzie who was severely bothered by stomach cramps, faltered, and Kelley spurted away.

From the 20th mile to the finish, Kelley steadily added to his lead. He negotiated the difficult, hilly terrain with ease, and commanded a 1,000 yard advantage when he hit the tape.

THE LEADING FINISHERS

1. J.J. Kelley, Boston A.A. . . . . 2:20:13.9
2. Gordon McKenzie, N.Y. Pioneer Club . . . . 2:23:46



3. Lt. Alexander Breckenridge, Marine Corps . . . . . 2:32:41
4. Robert Cons, Culver City A.C. . . . . 2:33:11
5. Tom Ryan, California . . . . . 2:34:18
6. Ed Duncan, U. of Bridgeport . . . . . 2:35:03
7. Ted Corbitt, N.Y. Pioneer Club . . . . . 2:36:07
8. John Lafferty, U.S. Navy . . . . . 2:36:33
9. James Green, Boston A.A. . . . . 2:37:28
10. Al Confalone, Boston A.A. . . . . 2:39:14

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BOB PRENTICE, Australian, 1952 Olympic marathoner at Helsinki, President of the Victorian Marathon Club, Victoria Australia: "The VMC was founded in 1946. It has had its ups and downs but races have always been run, although at times fields have dwindled to 8 or 10; other times we've had fields of 35 to 45 starters...We used to run some unusual events. Creates a lot of interest: 10 or 12 hour relay; border to border of our state: 160 mile x 6 men, each running over the marathon distance; also in the summer season when track only goes to 2 or 3 miles, we hold runs over 3,4,5,6, 10,000 metres and 10 miles--handicaps and scratch events."

ROBERT WEINGARD, NYPC/Marietta College (Ohio) will write up a pamphlet on the use of Yoga in athletics. This will probably be available sometimes late in 1961. One of the big problems in fast running is tension and inability to "relax" sufficiently or to run with ease while in action. Yoga has possibilities as an aid in this direction.

CHARLES ATLAS, Physical Culturist: "Spend at least as much energy on mental growth, the building of personality and the development of a livelihood, as you do on physical activities."

GEOFF WATT, The bearded marathoner of Australia has now almost circled the globe and is working in London. He is getting back in shape for the English road racing season. He expects to be in Rome as a spectator and feels that Japan's Hiroshima may be a threat in the Olympic marathon. Geoff's current address: 33 Ossington St., London W.2, England.

COACHES--COACHES--COACHES

If you desire coaching, we have three dedicated men who are interested in distance runners and are willing to help. All they ask is that you be sincere. Select one. If you want more information on any of these men, write to: Ted Corbitt, 5240 Broadway, New York 63, N.Y. Otherwise write directly to your choice.

Robert Campbell, 758 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, Mass. A former runner and long time AAU official. Has coached many successful runners.

Dr. W.M. Ruthrauff, 211 So. 46th St., Philadelphia 39, Pa. A former track man. Has coached in high school and college. Has spent years investigating form, etc. of the champions.

Bill Wiklund, 25 Cliff Hill Road, Clifton, N.J. Road Runner (with long and interesting experiences), AAU official and experienced coach.