



Peeking Into The Pacer's Past

by Harry Littleton

We can't let our 20th Anniversary go by without some reflections on what has happened to the club in that period of time. Between Eric Magni and myself, we agreed that I should cover the earlier years, and he would give a new member's slant on what he saw in the last year.

It is nice to see Larry Drysdale out of our meetings and Sunday Club runs again. He was one of the original members back in 1972. He and Len Smoulders remind us of our roots.

Reviewing 1974, we find Tim Gilchrist and Bill Salter (our London Marathon Race Director) finishing their first Marathons at Belle Isle. Art Obokata is listed as a new member in '74. Art became one of our early presidents and since then he has taken a zillion pictures of many Pacer-influenced events.

It is impossible to capsule all the highlights of the club, so I thought it would be interesting to acknowledge the people who joined sometime in the

first fifteen years and are still members as of June 1992. Sure as shooting I will have missed someone, and I would appreciate if you'll draw errors or omissions to my attention for future recording. The years 1988 to 1992 will be covered in a future article. So, here goes. .

1972: Len Smoulders
1975: Johnny Gaskin

1977: Dave Monteith
1978: Peter Kershaw
Bill Buck
Charlie Kirk
Bernie Conway
Bill Van Leeuwen
1979: Teo Brinkman
Dianne Van Leeuwen
Harry Littleton
Manuel Teodora

1979: Teo Brinkman

1980: Sean Crowe
Charlie BLancher
Ian Campbell
Peter Nichol
Marilyn Gaze
Judy Nichol
Aaron Ramhal
Bruce Pellow
Linda Roberts
Marg Potter
Steve Sullivan
Art Whitfield
Wendy Sullivan
Rich Wigmore
Willie Wigmore
Peter Haase
Jean Haase
Jannette Van Leeuwen

1981: Trevor Craddock

1982: Dave Aikenhead
Lou Gosso
Nadine Grundy
Nick Merucci
Jack Albin
Bob Munroe
Chris Bruckswaiger
Elfriede Munroe

Maurice Butcher
Lorne Duquette
Peter Juknys
Dennis Kalichuk
Sean Ryan
Joe Sikora
Bob Woxman

1983: Ron Falck

1984: Daphne Boyce
Gerry Fenwick
Doug McGill
Susan McGill
Tom Needham

1985: Dann Morrison
Willy Gortworst
Dennis Kinder
Bob Lawton
Susan Lawton
Jack Martin
Bill Nightingale
Susan Vuyisteka-Story

1987: John Butler
Janet Butler
Julian Gonzalez
Gerlof Kateon
Paul Roberts
Kathy Roberts

There are 67 names on this list and when you consider the June 1992 list has 161 members shown. That means that 41 percent of our group have been Pacers for five or more years, consecutively.

In looking through the old newsletters, I came across an article by Len Smolders. Thought you might like to read it. It's on pages 17 and 18.

Nostalgically Yours,

Harry Littleton

Taken from the February 1983 Newsletter

The LONDON PACERS: **THE** FIRST 10



BY LEN SMOLDERS

Quietly 10 years have slipped by and our modest little group has become a respectable assembly of nearly 200 members. From our initial founding group of five runners that used to bump into each other at various locations -- Jerry Conser, Dave Wise, Claude Turner, Alex Vance, and myself -- has grown one of the most active distance running clubs in the country. We originally formed together so that we could travel together and have company and also get to know about some of the races that were available to us (where was Bernie when we needed him!). We found that the Western Track Club was just that -- a track club -- and we wanted a distance running club.

In October, 1972 at one of our regular Sunday morning Springbank Park runs, we stood under that now famous tree at the east end of the little parking lot (very near where we now start the Fun Runs) and founded the London Pacers. We elected each other to the executive committee and we had our first meetings at the office of the National Film Board. Bob Burbridge, a running friend, was manager of the NFB and he gave us access to the building and some of his running films.

Bob Gage began to mention our existence to various people he knew and sure as honey attracts flies, new members began to show up. Dave Prokop wrote our first newsletter which made its appearance in May, '73. Dave, with his know-how in track and field, was the logical choice for this, though not for long. He was soon to accept a writing and reporting position with World Publications (Runner's World) and moved to California. He remained the contact man for the Springbank Road Race Association and the Meet Director. Most of the London Pacers, if not all, were already active in the organization of the Springbank Road Race. Alex Vance proved a fine successor, and our newsletter became a welcome monthly publication.

We invented some of the training runs such as the 'T' Run -- out of Springbank down Boler, west on Soutdale (remember those hills guys?) to the townline, south to Highway 2, then back (hence the 'T' Run name). I believe it was 8 miles. We'd end up back at "the Tree" -- by golly, we should mark that tree with a plaque

some day!

Some of us already had several marathons under our belts: Boston, Detroit, Saginaw, Canton. There were no marathons anywhere nearer than the Police Marathon in Toronto. Shorter races like Guelph (around the bridges), Hamilton (around the bay), the Watford 10-Miler, were about it for Ontario so we headed for Detroit a lot because there were races around there just about every weekend. At Belle Isle Detroit had a good qualifying marathon, a very flat course. Bill McInnis ran a 2:45 and Jerry Gonser a 2:47.

The Pacers reported 27 members by May, '73 and we were soon to grow rapidly when the Fun Runs started shortly after that. The question of female membership came up and we have it on good authority that Claudette Noonan was our first female member. She was soon followed by such current members as Marg Potter, Linda Findlay, Joan Sweeney, and Marg Roberts, not necessarily in that order (and please forgive me if I forgot someone).

Our Fun Runs, our Club Race, and our 10K have attracted many new members and made the London Pacers noted in the world of distance running. Our name also stands high in performance and sportsmanship.

One of the reasons we formed a club, as I noted, was to have access to race fixtures and for many years we have had Bernie Conway do just that. This tireless fellow has done a lot to spread our good name and to supply us with endless numbers of races. I must also mention Gary Dowling who in the early days ironed out some of the difficulties we had with our club certification and who served as secretary for many years. Also, some other names must be put forward: Alex Vance, and later Bill Buck for their work with the newsletter, and Johnnie Gaskin and Bob Baumel for their efforts on the Fun Runs.

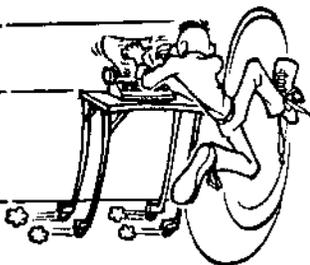
When I look back, I think of 10 years of dedication and hard work on the part of a lot of people. I also think of the combined total mileage of all our members which must reach around the world many times, our great social events, and our interesting monthly meetings. I'm sure I speak for the other four founding members of a decade ago in saying, "a job well done." Keep running!

See you in the "Pacer's Arms",

Len Smolders

a running commentary

by Dennis Kalichuk



WILL BE BACK NEXT MONTH !!