



Hard Worker Loses Weight, Gains New Life

by Brian Mathews

It takes effort. That is the unfortunate truth I show to people. I find myself hurting for them. People are looking for a magic solution to fitness problems in me and I cannot give them one. Let me back up a bit...At one point in my life a little more than a year and a half ago I found myself weighing over 350 pounds. How much over 350? Well, I'm not sure. Around two years ago I was weighed at a doctor's office on one of those medical scales everyone is familiar with; you know the ones with the sliding weights you balance to determine your weight. Well, everyone may not realize those scales only go up to 350 pounds and that scale could not weigh me. You would think at that moment I would have had an epiphany and changed my unhealthy ways instantly, but I did not. I kept gaining weight for a couple more months until I finally got myself together and started getting back into shape.

The question I am still asking myself is why did it work this time? Why was I successful (I have lost over 135 pounds and don't plan to stop yet) now when I had desperately tried over and over again over the last decade to lose the incredible amount of body fat that was slowly killing me. I still don't quite know the answer. There are reasons I can point to such as: Breaking my daily food intake into 5-6 small meals per day (as opposed to starving myself then binging), having a child I want see grow up, or mentally just deciding I was not going to be fat anymore. The last one may be the answer. I had always been fat, but I was at the point of obesity where it was affecting every single thing I did in my daily life. Life was harder than it had to be and I had no one to blame but myself.



Brian ran the inaugural 2007 Atlanta ING Half-Marathon last March in 2:20.

I took no magic pills and followed no gimmick eating plan. I ate sensible meals (avoiding junk foods such as sugar and trans fats) and worked my tail off in the gym. I sweated pounds off on the treadmill and on the road. After six months I worked up to completing the ING Atlanta Half-Marathon

last March and I am currently training for the 2008 Walt Disney World Marathon in January.

So when people who watched me shrink down to an almost normal-sized person come up and ask me what my secret is, I have to tell them there is no secret. Sometimes I can see their hopes fall in their eyes. They are looking for an answer I cannot give them. The truth is it takes hard work. It is not easy, but rewarding things are often not easy. I would rather enjoy the rewards of hard work than settle for the mediocrity of the easy way.

Macon Tracks Club News

After slogging it out in the heat all summer, cooler fall weather is finally here! All of a sudden, the chrono function on my watch is my friend once again. I'm not getting older and slower after all, it was just the heat!

The race calendar is picking up again now, too. Macon's 2nd biggest race of the year will be on Oct. 20th, Race for the Cure. Run with friends and help fight breast cancer at the same time. Then enjoy a Macon Tracks get-together at the Martinez's that evening (see page 4 for more details). On Oct. 27th, the inaugural Peacemakers 5K will be run at the Ocmulgee National Monument. It will be a cross-country course, which should be a lot of fun. I'm going to braid my hair and pretend I'm Pocahontas as I race through the woods at the Indian Mounds. Stick some feathers in your cap and come along!

On November 10th, there are at least two great choices. Close to home is the Jay's Hope 5K & 10K (see Leslie's article for more information on this great race for a worthy cause). Others will head to Chickamauga to do either the 10-mile race or the marathon. It's not too late to sign up. It will be a family affair, and we have plans to visit the aquarium afterward (Dave may have to push me in the stroller—if he can still walk!).

We had over 50 people join or renew their Macon Tracks membership in August & September. It's now easier than ever to join. Just go to the membership page of www.macontracks.org. After a few clicks you're official, no stamp required! Thanks very much for your support. Of course it helps defray the cost of the newsletter and website, but we especially welcome your greater involvement in the track club. Also, please help welcome all our new members. If you see a new face on a group run, introduce yourself and make sure they know the way!

Extra Labor Day shirts are for sale on the website for just \$7. Stock up for yourself for next year or give them away as Christmas presents. These wicking shirts are great to run in, and stylish besides! Check the website also for group runs, race results, a lively forum, and more.

See you on the run!

Kerry Oedel (koedel@cox.net)

Running For a Reason



Cindy Gaskins, (Jay's Hope race director) & Leslie Spiegel

By Leslie Spiegel

Most all runners will at some point contemplate why they run. Some run to improve their overall fitness, some to improve a race time, or others to regain some sanity after a hectic day. The Jay's

Hope Foundation has brought a new perspective to my reasons for running.

Each day, 46 children are diagnosed with cancer. Three local children a month will be diagnosed, and the pediatric population in Middle Georgia has risen by 347% since 2004.

The Jay's Hope foundation was created by Cindy and Jason Gaskins in memory of their precious "Baby Jay". Jay courageously battled a malignant brain tumor for two and a half years. He touched thousands of lives during his short time here. Jay taught others to embrace life and to never give up hope.

The foundation hosts numerous bone marrow drives, and has registered over 1,400 potential donors to the national bone marrow registry. They offer non-medically related financial support to patients and their families, and in 2006 over 200 bears and blankets were distributed to newly diagnosed children and inpatient children during the Christmas season. This is just to name a few of the services that Jay's Hope provides.

On November 10th, the Jay's Hope Foundation will host its 2nd annual Jay's Hope 5k/10k road race and family fall festival. All proceeds will benefit local pediatric oncology patients.

The Jay's Hope team will also be heading to Memphis, TN on December 1st to participate in the St. Jude's Half-marathon/Marathon. The research dollars raised for St. Jude's will offer thousands of children the hope for a cure and a hope for their future.

So I ask myself, why do I run? As I contemplate, the answer is clear. I run for the same reasons stated above, but also to make a difference for children fighting for their lives.

Get to Know Some of Our New Members



Rick Raines:

I started running in 1976 to get in shape and quit smoking. I ran my first marathon in Macon in 1978 and have been running ever since. I am a Physical Therapist Assistant practicing in Thomaston Ga. I run for fun and to get my cardio as I also like to body build as a hobby. I lived in Nashville for 5 years and enjoyed running in Middle Tennessee very much also. I ran the Macon Labor Day race and enjoyed that too. My goal for this year is to break 51 minutes in the 10-K and do 3 half-marathons. I chatted with some Macon Tracks Club members and was impressed with their friendliness and openness. Fall is my favorite running season and I look forward to seeing y'all on the road. Attached is a picture at the Warner Robins race in August with me on the left, my training partner Rhonda from Thomaston, and Catherine who is from Macon.



Melvina Palmer Spence:

I am a former member of the Macon Tracks Running Club, but in 2005 my husband was diagnosed with lung cancer, and he passed away this past May. I have decided to start running again, although I haven't

missed a Labor Day Road Race since 1996. I like to run on the dirt track at Macon State College and I'm currently running alone in the evenings now that the weather is cool enough to run again.

I am a graduate of Macon State College and Georgia College and State University. I currently work as the Retail Coordinator for the Georgia Music Hall of Fame where I have been employed since 1996.

I would like to receive the weekly e-mails and I would like to become more active in the club.

Troy Tarpley:

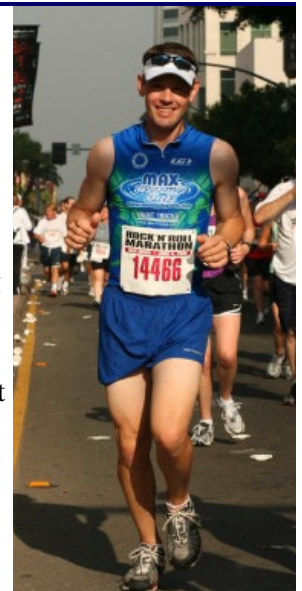
I moved to Macon in '98 to start Dent Tricks, a paintless dent removal company. My fiancé, Amy Galeazzo, works with us part-time handling the books, though her "real job" is working as an auditor for the DOD. She, too, is a Macon Tracks member.

When I moved to Macon, the only sport I participated in was mountain biking. After I got to know some of our local mountain bike racers, I found out that several of the racers spent more time on a road bike than a mountain bike in order to increase their endurance/stamina. I didn't see how road biking could offer as much excitement as bunny-hopping fallen trees and flying between skinny saplings on tightly packed single track, but I did want to increase my endurance with expectations to race. So I bought a road bike. As I got to know the road bikers, I was introduced to a few tri-athletes.

I went to Panama City in 2003 with a group from Macon that was competing in the Gulf Coast Triathlon. The excitement and energy was incredible. Even if I'd not been a cyclist, I would have wanted to get into triathlon that very weekend. I loaded up on magazines and checked out all the vendors that were set up inside the expo. Getting pumped up about it was the easy part, but carrying that motivation back home and acting on it was quite another.

Soon enough, I had competed in my first sprint triathlon and soon after that did an Olympic distance. For two years I trained pretty hard, while trying to keep my business afloat and trying to balance time for friends, family, other hobbies and rest. I ended up just burning myself out. The more I wanted to move up in my age group rank, the more time it seemed I had to give to training and therefore take away from other things in my life.

Then I met Amy. She had an interest in running, but had never done it. She'd seen my tri pictures and heard friends and I talking about trips and races and training. She wanted to do it. That got me excited about it too. I thought we could do it together and not be compulsive about it. Well, within the first year of dating we'd run the San Diego Rock and Roll Marathon and some smaller races. It was fun and still is. We don't let training or races get before more important things in life, but we do stay focused and consistent. As a matter of fact, I just competed in my first triathlon in over three years, the Two Bridges Sprint Triathlon in Cumming, GA and it was a blast! So, that is a little bio on me. I look forward to running with you and the group soon and hanging out at the upcoming party.



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Fall Party for All

I'm pleased to announce there will be a fall Macon Tracks get-together at 6:00 pm on October 20th, hosted by Robin & Sam Martinez. Everyone is invited, whether you're a member or not. Kids & significant others welcome. Just bring a potluck dish and your alcoholic beverage of choice should you so desire. The address is 408 Barrington Hall (477-3580). If you didn't get your e-invitation, send me your e-mail address and stay up to date with this and other Macon Tracks happenings. Hope to see you there!

These junior varsity girls looked strong heading off from the start at the Stratford cross-country meet on Sept. 10th. It's been an exciting season. I just love cross-country. No one sits on the bench, kids work to improve their individual times, yet there is a strong sense of being on a team, and they learn they really can keep going even when it hurts. A side benefit: your kids can become great training partners (at least as long as you can keep up with them!).