



LONGBOAT
roadrunners



Wildfire

Official Newsletter of the Longboat Roadrunners

Winter 2017

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2017 was quite the year and had many ups and downs. Longboat faced one its greatest challenges in the history of the club with the extensive flooding on the Islands. We also lost a great friend and icon of the running community, Ed Whitlock. We are ending the year with some of the coldest temperatures on record and yet we move forward.

When the Islands flooded, there was a collective gasp as the water levels persisted and images began to be posted of the beloved submerged sandbar that is home to both the Sunset Shuffle and Island Run. Meetings were held, contingency plans were drafted and many different course options were explored. Luckily the water levels ultimately receded, permits were granted and a mad scramble was on to host the races and salvage the year. The Shuffle went off without much issue and was a great success. The Island registration numbers were low as many runners had already opted for other races offered at that time of the year. We faced the challenge head on, sent e-mail blasts, advertised and shared all over social media as well as word-of-mouth and we came out relatively unscathed as the numbers approached a normal year. The course was changed, re-measured and certified to official 5 and 10k distances. We saw a dramatic finish and course record in the men's 5k of 0.8 sec and our 10k champions Lindsay Tessier and Trevor Hoffbauer ran tremendously and later went on the place 2nd and 1st respectively in the Canadian Marathon Championships.

It is heart breaking to have a world without Ed. He was different things to different people, but was always an amazing man who left an impression. It would easy to discuss Ed Whitlock, the seemingly super-human Master's runner, who set world records almost every time he laced up his shoes. Ed Whitlock, who humbled runners less than half his age. Ed Whitlock, one of the only non-Longboaters to race in a Longboat singlet. What really stood out about Ed was his humble, unassuming, gentle, kind and gregarious manner. He always had time to shake a hand, hug, pose for a photo or have a chat. It is my hope that although we lost Ed this year, that we can carry forward a little of him in each of us to honour his legacy and continue to keep the running community the best community.

We also had significant events and changes around the club this year. Longboat friend, Johana Kariankei eclipsed the course record at the club XC race. Many club records fell and even Ontario and Canadian records weren't safe from the speedy Nancy Wells. PBs were set, dreams were transformed into realities and we rained feathers at races all over the world, including a significant contingent at Boston. Ragnar Niagara returned and we put on an impressive showing and placed second in the men's division with a co-ed team who were also the fastest team from Toronto. History was made with the election of our youngest President to date, the twenty seven-year-old Mirwan Saleh. The Longboat Distance Project was formed and the workouts that coached runners were given aligned, so more runners actually ran together during Wednesday and Friday runs.

So as we bid adieu to 2017 and head into 2018, I encourage you to be part of the awesome, be a little bit Ed Whitlock. Come out to club runs, events and meetings. Let's continue to blend the insight and tenacity of the experienced members with the energy and enthusiasm of the newer members into a recipe that is

rather unique in this city. Know that you can overcome any challenge, be it personal, physical or weather related. How? Because you aren't doing it alone, you are doing it with a family.

I thank you all and wish you my absolute best in 2018,

Michael Moran
Communications Coordinator

Wendi Hanger, Honourable Member

By: Tina de Geus

2017 marks the year that Longboat member Wendi Hanger turned 80; on July 17th, to be exact. This significant birthday is a perfect opportunity to check in with Wendi, especially as she has, by this time, been a Longboat member for 33 years. Many long time members, of course, know Wendi and her accomplishments as a runner very well. However, newer members may want to read the profile of Wendi written by Diane Marrow and published in the Longboat newsletter of 2002, Volume 21, issue 2.

Wendi ran the Longboat race in 1981 and joined the club in 1984. She was immediately a very active runner and competitor in races of various lengths. In fact, she still holds a number of Longboat records, two of which were for 10-mile races run while in her 70s.

(See the box below.)

Records held by Wendi Hanger	Age category	Time	Year	Race
10 miles	45-49	1:08:13	1985	Run for the Grapes, St. Catharines
	70-74	2:12:51	2011	Toronto Acura
	75-79	2:26:50	2012	Toronto Acura
20 km#	50-54	1:28:50	1988	WBEN, Buffalo
Track record				
2000 m	50-54	8:19.3	1988	LBGPS, York U.





Wendi has run a number of marathons in her day, eight at least. Her last marathon was the one run in Medoc, France, in 2009. This is the famous marathon held every five years which features great scenery and, of course, wine. Consider that Wendi ran this marathon just a year and a half after having broken a leg during an accident while riding a bike in Thailand. The plates inserted in her leg in Thailand had been removed just six months before that marathon.

Ever ready to take on other challenges, Wendi started power walking about 15 years ago. It was for her, not surprisingly, another way of being competitive as one of her hips was giving some trouble and running was more difficult. "Now," says Wendi, "I walk but don't train. My body will dictate what I do, walk or run." Just to get an idea of how active Wendi continues to be, this year, she has already completed 5km at Bread and Honey, 8km at Robbie Burns and 8km at the Shamrock run in Buffalo. And on July 14, she was the only one of six Longboat runners who came home with a flamingo, having come third in her age category in the Subaru 4-mile Chase in Buffalo. That last achievement was followed by some of Wendi's favourites: beer, lots of food, and dancing until the band went home.

Wendi has also been doing yoga for many years. "My body needs the stretching", she says. And just to emphasize the extent to which Wendi throws herself into an activity, she participated in a competitive yoga challenge called "Every Day in May" of this year. She did it and, as a happy bonus, won the draw prize for all those who completed the challenge. And, after a 5km walk on Saturday mornings in High Park, she forgoes breakfast and instead heads for her yoga class, the one where participants, including Wendi, strive to comfortably, somehow, hang upside down among ropes. She's a wonder.

A highlight in Wendi's life these last 16 years has been the gift of five grandsons, three from her daughter and two from her son. They are a great joy to her, as she is to them. She's not one to refuse an opportunity to spend time with them or to miss their many hockey and baseball games and track meets. Besides

running and racing, Wendi has always been and still is an active volunteer for the club. She and Bob Nagle, her partner of 30 plus years, help out at many races and, over the years, have hosted many a Longboat party at their house. "I enjoy the Longboat people; it's a community. And I met Bob there." Another Longboat activity they enjoyed together was dragon-boating. Bob steered the boat for many years while Wendi joined the paddlers in the back of the boat for the last two years Longboat was involved.

Wendi feels good about being 80 as long as, in her words, she's healthy. She says she lives in the now and is grateful to live in a peaceful place.

But life does throw its curves. While on vacation in Croatia in September, Wendi had a fall and broke her hip. She had a hip replacement there and is now recovering at home. True to form, she is in good spirits and figures she'll be walking well again soon and might be ready to compete again in 2019. "It's good to have a goal," says the indomitable Wendi.

It's that competitive spirit that certainly seems to define her. After having started running, Wendi discovered pretty quickly that she not only liked running but was good at it. Wendi's first race, a 10 km, was run on Toronto Island, where she was living at the time. As she described it, "I went home after the race and then someone brought me an award. I stayed for the awards after that." She also stayed to watch the other runners. "I learned from them to see what they did to win." Having grown up with a very athletic and competitive mother and sister who both played tennis, Wendi decided not to compete with them. "I don't bother if I can't win. It's always fun to win. Go for something that's possible." And that something possible turned out to be running.

Wendi has been, and still is, a great inspiration and role model to many of us in Longboat. We congratulate her on a life well lived so far and wish her much happiness in the years to come.

Ed Whitlock

By: Mike Bedley

Although I had spoken to Ed on many occasions before and after races and had read numerous articles about him, I did not know him on a personal level. What follows is a modest attempt to show the influence this man had over my running. Although we were separated by some 16 years, we often found ourselves racing together. These are memories I will always cherish.

It was an almost perfect racing day when I found myself near the finish line of the London Price Waterhouse Marathon on May 13, 2001. I had moved to Toronto the previous year and returned to London, Ont on this day to settle some unfinished real estate matters. Having discovered that Ed Whitlock was in the marathon, I was excited to see him finish as the first septuagenarian to break the 3 hr mark. I knew the marathon course well, having raced and trained on it countless times during my 5 years living in London. The route starts in the north end of the city, follows the Thames River downstream to Springbank Park where it turns to finish upstream at Western stadium. The second half of the course is always more difficult, as you finish with an imperceptible but gradual elevation.

Ed had completed the Columbus Ohio Marathon the previous October in a time of 2 hrs 52mins 47 secs which was an age group world record for a 69 year-old. A few weeks earlier, he had also proven his fitness by running the 30K ATB in Hamilton in a time of 2 hrs 55 seconds. With these recent impressive times Ed looked like a sure bet to go under the 3hr barrier.

When Ed entered the stadium, I was a little concerned as he did not appear to have his usual strong graceful stride. As the clock ticked down and as the crowd was cheering, I knew it would be close. If only he could summon his normal kick, it wouldn't have been a problem but Ed had resorted to a survival shuffle. He missed the mark by seconds, officially 3 hrs 19 secs (chip time). The time was still amazing and an age group world record for a 70 year-old. I spoke with Ed afterwards. He was disconsolate and felt that he had failed. He said the Hamilton ATB race may have been too close to the marathon and he didn't have it on the day. Still, it was a great marathon time and there would be other marathons to run.

Around and around he goes, breathing in, breathing out. Ed called his 500 m (approx.) runs in the Evergreen Cemetery a drudge. He conceded that while his long slow runs circling around grave markers worked for him, it may not work for anybody else. The route is mostly flat, a few short minutes from his

front door, safe from vehicular traffic, and most importantly, he could run at his own pace. The graveyard also provided some protection from the wind or at least you only face the wind in one direction. When preparing for a marathon, Ed had been practicing these easy long runs on a daily basis for a number of years. The runs were timed in length but unmeasured. Accordingly, Ed could not tell you the distances he trained but could tell you he ran 60 x 2 hr runs and 30 x 3 hr runs leading up to a certain marathon. A good running program in many ways resembles a good meditation. Both require repeated hard work and both are often silly in their expression. What could be more foolish than repeatedly running in circles in a cemetery for hours unless it is counting your breath 1000 times or chanting your personal mantra over and over again ad nauseum? However, we can see that meditation often provides some good for the person doing it. Although it is not an end in itself, there are physiological benefits, like a decrease in blood lactate, breathing and heart rate are reduced, a state of deep relaxation often occurs. We could say that Ed had transformed Evergreen into his personal sanctuary where he could practice his daily ritual undisturbed. It definitely worked for him.

It was sometime in the spring of 2003 when I heard that Ed, now 72, was back running and planned to run the Toronto Waterfront Marathon. Since the London race, he had battled some knee issues and had opted to take time off rather than risk surgery. He had been advised at one point to give up running altogether but thought better of his chances if he took a lengthy time off. Now, 2 years later and after tentatively testing his knee, Ed was up to 1 hr per day. He would increase his time at the Evergreen sanctuary in small bits till he was running 2 hrs daily in July and 3 hrs daily in August and into September. Ed planned to mix in some shorter road and track races to test and stretch his fitness. Owing to a calf issue, which always cropped up whenever he trained on the track, these road and track races would become his only speed workout.

I registered for the September 28 Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Ed's race, in May and set about planning my training, based on what had worked for me in the past. My goal was to run with or near Ed and by so doing help myself to a respectable marathon time. I was 56 and wanted at least one more shot at a sub 3 hr time. Ed's goal became my goal. I knew Ed would be training very hard and every day. I was employed at the time and on the road so daily cemetery runs were not in the cards. I decided to run whenever I could but to make sure to get the long runs in and starting with free form tempo runs, graduate to mile repeats on the track by early August. My long runs would build from June to mid-September alternating with shorter marathon pace runs every 2 weeks. I also began a new practice of going fast over the last 500 meters of every run no matter whether it was an easy run or not. Ed had a dream and I wanted to be part of it. Like Ed, I also sprinkled in some shorter races to test my blossoming fitness. I ran an OMTFA 10K track race with Ed at the end of May (38:52), a 15K in early June (58:27), and a half marathon in late June (1:24:32). These races gave me some confidence that a sub-3 hr was doable provided I maintained the distance training and added the mile repeats in August. I also planned to run 30K of the Montreal Marathon, slightly slower than goal pace, as a final prep two weeks before. (My son, Charlie was doing the full marathon)

Ed Whitlock was a disrupter. He was capable of setting us older runners onto a new wave of possibility. Instead of making plans for a retirement home, reducing our physical exercise and the intensity of our lives, he suggested that we go with him, run fast, and break records until we die. Like Ed, we needed to go to a place inside our head that does not recognize age boundaries, that sees that anything is possible. He said watch what I am planning to do. Come with me and train like you have no limits. With Ed as my guide how could I not be motivated to train hard every day? Disrupt your life. No excuses allowed.

I was feeling very confident on race day. My training had gone exceptionally well and the weather seemed perfect (10 degrees, slightly overcast, with hardly any wind). I was taken aback when I spotted Ed in the starting corral. His face was badly bruised and he looked uneasy. We spoke briefly and when I asked about his face, Ed replied that he had sustained a fall earlier in the week and was uncertain that he was able to complete the race. He said that he would give it his best shot (I later learned that he had fallen into a hole and considered not starting). I figured if Ed was starting, it was game on. We ran together with others in a group. I was off to the side because Ed knows the pace he wanted to run and doesn't like runner interference or too much talking. I also had practiced my own pace runs and knew what I needed to run at each 5K split. For a sub-3 hr, I use a simple formula, of 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, for every 5K (ie 21, 42, 1:03, 1:24, 1:45, 2:06, 2:27, 2:48) or thereabouts. Using my easily remembered formula, I had started to drift a little ahead of the 3hr group. At 35K and out on the spit, I decided to slow a bit to run in with the group.

George Hubbard had generously offered to meet us at about 37K and pace us in the rest of the way. My son was on his bike and also there for encouragement. A small group of us were on the 3 hr train and

nothing could stop us. With Ed leading, we could not fail. I remembered my 3 month program and how I had trained myself to go hard over the last part of the run no matter what. I was feeling very strong and Ed looked like he would finish under our goal. With about 1 mile to go, I told George and Charlie that I was going to leave the group and go as hard as I could to the finish. They would stay with Ed and the group as long as possible. I sprinted ahead to finish in 2:58:36. Ed finished in 2:59:08 amid wild cheering and much adulation. Mission accomplished.

Ed had raised the bar. He showed us what could be accomplished by a 72 year-old with flowing white locks, a graceful stride, and a space inside his head that knew no bounds. Three is only a number but breaking 3 hrs after the age of 70 in a marathon is symbolic and liberating. When something like this happens, we are somehow less shackled by the stigma of old age. The accomplishment is such that it earns universal respect amongst all generations of runners and non-runners alike. If your clock has become unwound, you can wind it up again. Freedom 55 becomes freedom 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90.

With the marathon over, I took it relative easy during the fall of '03. According to my running log, I did a few cross-country races and one 10K on the road. I was already starting to look ahead to the 2004 racing season and planned to run the 30K ATB in March as my first major race. Many members of Longboat would be making the trek to Hamilton, Ont, to participate in the oldest road race in North America. My son, Charlie, and Michal Kapral, our club's fastest two runners would also be there. My training for this race on March 28, was not up to my usual standard. I would have liked a few more long runs and with better quality speed work, both elements of which had been limited owing to a calf issue.

I was surprised to see my favorite disruptor, Ed Whitlock, in the starting corral. He was standing back, away from the front where the elite runners were stretching. He looked very fit and calm. I figured that he was probably in good shape; otherwise, he wouldn't be starting. Like me, Ed had done a couple of shorter road races since the '03 marathon and had something to prove. It turned out he wasn't happy with his Waterfront finish and I had heard that he was planning on running it again in '04. We spoke briefly and both of us agreed that a sub 2 hr time was not on the agenda for this day. My goal was to run something under 2:10 which would give me a club age-group record. I was unsure of my fitness and lacked the confidence that followed me to the starting line of the Waterfront marathon. I didn't plan on running with Ed but thought that if I tagged along beside him, his steady pace might help me to a good time. We went stride for stride through 15K and feeling comfortable, I decided to continue running with Ed's group through the rolling hills. We were with a good bunch of runners and all had settled into a comfortable steady pace. At a point just after 25K on a slight downhill, Ed suddenly increased his speed. The suddenness of his acceleration caught me, and others in the group, by surprise. Did I say previously that Ed Whitlock was a disrupter? By the time I regained my composure and changed gears, Ed was 25 meters up the road. I was uncertain whether I should chase. I instinctively decided to follow him from a distance. I gradually increased my speed on the downhill and kept Ed about 50 meters ahead but didn't want the imagined elastic band to break. By the time I got to the bottom of the big hill, Ed was about halfway to the top. At the top of the hill, he was clear by 100 meters and appeared to be pulling away. I needed to recover and assess my physical situation before deciding whether or not to abandon the chase. My form was good, no cramps, and I still had ambition. I didn't need to catch and pass Ed to have a good time. My strategy of staying with Ed had worked. He would have pulled me along as predicted. But I still had the competitive juices flowing and I still had fresh memories of the summer of '03 when I trained to finish fast no matter what. A voice inside my head screamed, "Do it". I turned my cap around backwards in a defiant gesture and set off chasing that 73 year-old with the 20 year-old legs. I finally caught Ed with about 400 meters to go and roared to the line in a full sprint. I finished in 2:03:40, just ahead of Ed Whitlock who finished in 2:03:47. Ed had again pulled me to an amazing time which would not have happened without his competitive presence.

As an aside, it was a good day for Longboat. Charlie was 5th overall with a time of 1:42:44, and Michal was 6th overall with a time of 1:43:38. Others in the club posted good times and there were some age group winners.

Later that year, in the fall of 2004, Ed ran what he considered his finest marathon, again at the Toronto Waterfront venue. In preparation, Ed had decided to increase his daily long runs from 3 hrs to 4 hrs. He hadn't been happy with the '03 race where he had wobbled slightly at the finish line. He didn't want this happening again and needed to do something more at Evergreen. By increasing the quantity and duration of his long runs, Ed reasoned that he would be stronger after 35K. In hindsight, who could argue with his strategy? On a day when Danny Kassap won first overall and Michal Kapral set a new joggling record of 2:49:43, Ed Whitlock ran an astounding 2:54:48 at the age of 73. That time, age graded, would be close to

a 2:03-04 and almost equivalent to an open world record.

Ed would go on in the following years, into his 80's, to run countless world records on the track and road. His last world record marathon was set again at the Toronto Waterfront course on Oct 16, 2016 when he ran an incredible 3:56:38 at the age of 86. My memories of running and racing will forever be linked to the great Ed Whitlock who disrupted and impacted my running life in a glorious way in 2003 and 2004.

I Remember: Ed Whitlock

By: Bert DeVries

I first met Ed Whitlock at a road race in Cornwall, my hometown, in the 1980's. Ed still lived in Montreal in those days and he came to town with a bunch of Montreal runners. I fancied my chances in this 10 km race, but this time, as with so many other times, he cleaned my clock, even though I could run 33 minutes for the distance back then. Of course I had no idea, and he probably didn't either, how dominant a figure he would become in the running world. I remember chatting with him after the race, and he was as friendly and unassuming then as he always was with everyone. When he moved to the Toronto area and started setting records after his retirement from his mining engineering work, I admired him from a distance, not getting a chance to meet or talk to him for a number of years. This changed in 2009 when I took part in the Cabot Trail Relay for the second time as part of the Mad Dogs and Englishmen team. We were a Masters team: both Ed and his son Neil were on it, and Neil was in his forties! Ed had been a member of this team before and was famous for running 2 legs of the relay in previous years. He was OK with that, but he hated the really hilly legs. For that same reason he didn't often take part in cross country races. His legendary training routine in the Milton Cemetery probably didn't have much in the way of hills. He was a terrific teammate, encouraging everyone all the time, telling all manner of stories from his long running career, calm, reliable and solid as a rock. He didn't participate in the relay in 2008, and the Mad Dogs didn't win the Masters division, but in 2009 and 2010, when he did take part, we won. Coincidence? I think not.

In the last ten years I raced against Ed many times on the track at OMA mini meets and OMA and CMA Championships. The only race where I had a chance against him was the 1500 m. That was because he was usually using it to train for longer record performances. Only last summer I beat him in a 1500 m in which he nevertheless set a new M85 world record. A couple of weeks later he ran another 1500 m world record with a time faster than the one I beat him with. In 2013, at the OMA Outdoor Championships At Varsity Stadium, he did to me what he made a habit of doing. At the gun, I set out at the pace that I hoped to hold for the whole race (I did in fact hold it).



Ed trailed behind me for the first three or four laps. (Photo Credit: Doug "Shaggy" Smith)



Then he slowly started to pull in close behind me. (Photo Credit: Doug "Shaggy" Smith)



Soon after that he passed me and started to pull away from me, increasing the gap with every lap. (Photo Credit: Doug "Shaggy" Smith)

I was lucky not to get lapped. His World Record time was 22:10.57, and mine was 23:01.61. I ran very steadily, not wavering from my pace, and yet he gained almost a minute on me in the last seven laps. He did it this way on purpose. He told me that he knew I would set a reasonable pace that could get him properly started. There was nothing I could do about it. I was on the track at the same time as he was for at least four of his World Records, and the same thing happened almost every time. He was sixteen years older than I and sometimes ran several track races in one day, when I was knackered after just one.

None of this went to his head. He was always modest, polite, and tolerant of even the most moronic questions from non-running people. When I grow up I want to be like Ed Whitlock.

When the shocking news of his death came out, I felt diminished. Ed was always supposed to be there, the shining beacon of invincibility. Jim Rawling and I shared the feeling that we both suddenly felt older and more vulnerable. Instead of vainly following the white locks receding into the distance, we have to make do with the memory.

