



No Shortage of Energy at the Macon Labor Day Road Race

The **32nd Annual Macon Labor Day Road Race** was a big success and a powerful amount of energy was generated with over 1700 participants. For the 5K, Alan Black scored his 9th Labor Day win, and we're pretty sure Grace Tinkey, at age 13, was the youngest ever winner. Mt. De Sales Coach Jeff Dobias won the 10K along with Lauren Grant who was first woman for the third year in a row. In looking through the many pictures that were taken, I was struck by the effort and determination put forth as evidenced by the expressions on people's faces (I know pain when I see it!). Clearly, everyone who crossed the finish line was a winner.



New this year was a disposable chip-timing system. There was a definite learning curve to the new system, but people really appreciated the convenience of having the chips already in their race packet and not having to wait in line on race-day morning. The shirts were a big hit, so much so that we ran out and had to do a massive 2nd printing! The number of registrants was up 8 percent over last year. We will be able to donate money to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and to the Georgia Industrial Children's Home when we get a final accounting and all the bills are paid.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our many sponsors, without whom we wouldn't have been able to put on a quality race. Take a minute to read the back of your race t-shirt and tell the folks on it "Thanks" next time you see them!

I also want to thank the many volunteers who donated hundreds of hours to get all the myriad details taken care of. It's amazing what logistical challenges arise in putting on a point-to-point race with 1700 guests, but all pleas for help were met with cheerful

smiles and a willingness to pitch in and get the job done. I was proud to be part of such a great team.

I appreciate everyone's suggestions and have compiled a list of all the great ideas. Among other things, next year we'll plan to have the awards ceremony nearer the finish line to better coordinate with the race timers on the results. We'll be working to improve the online registration process. We plan to hold the

fun run before the 5K awards ceremony. We'll even get Tommy some trash cans at the 5K start! Please e-mail me if you think of other things over the course of the year.

My favorite part of the



Alan Black won the 5K with a time of 16:18, his 9th Labor Day win over the course of 11 years. Rosalba Martinez, a 5K age group winner herself, congratulates granddaughter Bethany on a well-done fun run. *Photos by Nadia Ward.*

(Continued from page 1)

morning, in addition to running the fun run with my daughter, Sophie, was seeing the parent & child teams, husband & wife teams, and teams of 5 come up to get their awards. Who says running isn't a team sport? Whether you ran with family, friends, your school, or your colleagues, I hope you felt a strong sense of community spirit running through the streets of Macon on Labor Day morning.

And don't forget, it's not too early to volunteer for next year!

Kerry ☺



Photo by Kelley Hague

Five of the top six 5K teams were from First Presbyterian Day School, an awesome display of both participation and talent. Coaches April Willingham (pictured above) and Nick Morgan both ran on teams with the kids.

Armstrong Macon Plant Sets the Pace in Labor Day Road Races

by Thelma Rhodes

We had such an awesome time with 40 Participants at the 31st Annual Labor Day Road Race that we decided to take on the 32nd with 81 participants. This year was different & exciting because family members of employees also participated in this annual event. A piece of cake it was for those that were already trained runners, but for many others, it was a challenge that we all were determined to achieve. Participants ran, walked, or did a combination of both to reach the finish line.

Last year Plant manager, Karl Christianson, led the Armstrong pack with a time of 21:01 with employee, Darryl Turner, only a minute behind at 22:06. This year Karl still led the pack at 19:22 with employee, Ben Ragan, just seconds behind at 19:36. WATCH OUT KARL! You just may have a little competition for the 33rd Annual Road Race.

What was special about both races were having our team nurse, Yvonne Jackson, and the Spirit of Armstrong Booster Club cheering us on to victory at the finish line. They held a banner that read "GO ARMSTRONG". All participants received soft Armstrong hand towels at the end of the race for their great achievement. After all, we were all WINNERS!

We thank Karl Christianson for giving us the opportunity to participate in such a great event. It was a chance to get fit and have fun at the same time.

Armstrong encourages other companies in Macon and surrounding areas to participate in this fun and challenging event.





Photo by Nadia Ward.

Left: One young passenger hops out to run to the finish under her own power. Many moms and dads pushed future runners to the finish.

Larry Lancaster Overcomes All Obstacles

Editor's note: I'd seen Larry at many of the local races but had never had a chance to talk with him. When I saw the great picture of him running the Labor Day Road Race (see back cover), I e-mailed him and asked him to share his story. He says he's happy to speak with anyone in need of support in their recovery.

In 1991, I began running to relieve the stress of going through a divorce that I did not want. I had worked for Georgia Pacific for 25 years and in July of 2003 I was laid off due to job seniority. In August of 2003 I went to work with a bridge company and on the first day an I beam I was standing on fell, trapping my right leg below the knee against a cement pillar. My body weight pulled me out and I fell 22 feet into the river bed. I was flown to Macon where they wanted to amputate below the knee. I asked for a second opinion and was transferred to Atlanta. By the time all the surgeries to set bones and clean out the wound (it was laid open to the bone from below my knee to the ankle) were done, infection had spread above the knee, resulting in an above-the-knee amputation.

I always knew I was going to run again. I had prayed and trusted God would give me the strength and determination to overcome any obstacles I faced. I worked hard at rehabilitation and anything they told me to do, I did more. By the Grace of God I ran my first race in March, 2004.

I want people to know that they can overcome tragedy if they only trust in the Lord. "Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Right: City Attorney Pope Langstaff ran the Labor Day 5K.



Photo by Nadia Ward.

Below: The Mt. De Sales Cheerleaders did an awesome job calling splits for the runners. Look for them to make a re-appearance at the Jay's Hope Race on November 1st!



Photo by Lisa Seneker.

Running Towards Victory

by Sam Martinez

You can't have run very many local road races in Middle Georgia and not have heard of Clark Walker. He's been competing at local events for two decades now. I've only been running two years, but it didn't take me long to notice the guy in the master's division consistently running fast times. I got a chance to talk to Clark after this year's Macon Labor Day Road Race. I found out Clark is a hard worker and a busy man at age 50. He works at the State Hospital in Milledgeville during the day and runs his own lawn service in the afternoons and weekends. He's married, has six kids, and still makes time to be chauffeur, coach, and fan for his two youngest children who are still at home and active in sports.

He possesses a special passion for our sport that not everyone has. You see, Clark was not always a runner. In fact he says he only played a little football growing up and didn't even know he could run. As a young man he was focused on only one thing, and that was feeding his addiction for illegal drugs. It consumed his life and led to many run-ins with the law and treatment hospitals. He was lost and in need of a miracle to help him break this vicious cycle. In the late 80's the miracles started to happen. He got in a treatment program that actually helped. He received a powerful touch from God that gave him the hope and strength that he could beat his addiction. He was given one other thing, the gift of running. As part of his rehabilitation he started running. It didn't take him long to realize he had a special gift. Clark says running came pretty natural. It provided him with a release and gave him clarity in his mind during his workouts. Running helped him replace his appetite for drugs with an appetite for hard work, competition and perseverance. It gave him strength. He really enjoyed training, competing and placing well in races.

Once Clark started down the road to recovery he shared his story with others. He spoke to groups about the dangers of illegal substance abuse and about how hard he had to fight to get back his life. He hoped his message would help others, especially young people, stay off of drugs.

Twenty years later Clark still knows how to motivate anyone with his story. He never forgets the demons of his past or what helped him defeat them. Running continues to be a stabilizing force in his life. He manages to make time for 25 to 30 miles of training each week in between his two jobs. He carries many memories of great races, with the Macon Labor Day Road Race and the Officer Will Robinson Memorial 5K Race in Milledgeville topping the



Photo by Amanda Cook

Clark Walker finishes strong at the Macon Labor Day Road Race. He was 3rd master with a time of 17:52.

list. When asked about his most memorable races he lists those two, especially the one year when he went sub-17 at both of those 5K's for the 1st time. I asked him about a rough racing experience and he recalls a year at the Museum of Aviation Half Marathon when he ran two minutes slower than he had run in Atlanta just a few months before. He couldn't understand how he could run a 1:20 marathon on a hilly Atlanta course one day and a 1:22 on a flat Middle Georgia course a few weeks later. But then he concedes that is racing. Not every effort will yield the same results.

Clark's story is an example of the life-changing impact healthy living can have on our lives. If you want to see Clark in action just look for him in his usual spot at a local race— in the front of the pack, quietly doing his thing, running towards victory.

Upcoming Macon Tracks Piedmont Sports Medicine Series Races:

Run for the Health of It 5K & 10K, Oct. 11th

Jay's Hope 5K & 10K, Nov. 1st

Peacemakers 5K, Nov. 8th

Will Robinson 5K, Nov. 22nd

Bartram Forest Marathon & 50K, Nov. 29th

Reindeer Run 5K, Dec. 6th

Christmas Lane Dash 5K, Dec. 13th

The Race for Camp Little Shot 2008

I decided a few weeks ago *By Catherine Brown* that I wanted to run in a 5-k race with my dad. I chose the Race for Camp Little Shot, which I heard had lots of hills. This was actually my fourth race, but it was my first one since May.

We started out with over 200 other runners and walkers. We headed out onto Sheraton Drive where my dad and I saw Sam Martinez already in the lead. We ran towards a bridge, and we soon turned around and started up a big hill. Ahead of us, we saw several younger girls that I knew I had to pass in order to finish first, second or third place in my age group. By the time we reached the top of that first big hill, we passed some of the girls and a few other people. I sure was getting tired by now!

When we reached the first mile marker, I was ready for some water. The man with the stopwatch said eleven minutes and something seconds and on we went. It looked like I would have to wait a little longer for water.

All around us, lots of runners were having a good time, running, talking and walking. Soon we could see the place at the top of another hill where you turn around and start running back towards the finish. And best of all, there was water and Gatorade at the top of this hill! I drank some water, dumped some on my head and chased after my dad.

Before we even reached the turnaround, we saw Sam Martinez way ahead in first place and other runners chasing after him, including Dan Ash who my dad knows. We also saw some other runners my dad knows named Chris, Monica, F.M., Donna, Catherine, Tyler and Jerome. It looked to me like they were burning up the road, except for that really slow Chris Wood something guy! Actually, he's really fast too.

As we were heading back towards the finish, one girl kept speeding up every time I got near her.

Finally, after the last big hill, I was able to pass this girl for the last time and finish in second place in the nine and under girls age group. I

was so tired by now that all I wanted was something to drink! I drank up a Gatorade in a snap! By the way, I smoked my dad to the finish by three seconds. My time was 39 minutes, even though the computer says it was 38:49.

I was also hungry, so I got two sugar cookies. My dad and I walked around for a minute, and soon the awards ceremony started.

Sam won the race, and the first female winner was named Suni Heaton. Sam's

time was 18:56, and Ms. Heaton's time was 23:16. Other members of the Macon Tracks club won awards for their great races too.

I want to thank the race staff for a great race experience that I really enjoyed! Camp Little Shot is a great place for children with diabetes to learn things and have a great time. I learned that the money from this race helps kids go to camp. It's really great that people want to help with this camp. See you next year!



Photo by Donna Segelken.

Catherine Brown at the MSO Allegro 5K on May 10th.

Don't forget to send Elizabeth your mileage totals for this year's **Challenge of the Miles**. If you need to revise your goals, this is a good time to do so. You can e-mail her at emjtcj@cox.net. It's not a bad time to start setting goals for next year, either!

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Larry Lancaster (left) and Wendell Parker running the Macon Labor Day Road Race 10K. Larry is a regular on the local racing circuit and an inspiration to us all. Read his story on page 3.

Go to PeachSports.com and download free photos from the Labor Day Road Race.

We also still have a few Labor Day Road Race t-shirts left over. E-mail Kerry at macontracks@cox.net if you'd like one.

Cool weather is here—hooray! Check inside for information on upcoming fall races.

Photo by PeachSports.com.