

40 YEARS STRONG Chapter 6 (The History of State Street Mile) By Bob Sharp

(This series of articles ran in the RRR newsletter as part of the clubs history compiled by Bob Sharp)

The August 1985 newsletter announced the first State Street Mile. The front-page article gave details of the unique event. "The State Street Mile maybe the premier race of the season. This race will incorporate many new ideas that have not been at our races.

" Our first evening run!!
A Point to Point mile!!
First MILE run!!
A trophy to ALL finishers!!
The fastest down hill course ever!!
PACE CAR!!
VIDEO TAPED FINISH!!
HUNDERES OF DOLLARS in gifts!!
WATERMELLON!!

" ***MOUNTAIN BIKE TO BE GIVEN AWAY IN DRAWING AFTER RACE***

"The race is for all abilities since we have a slow heat and a fast heat. The slow heat is designed for people running 6 minutes or slower up to 18 minutes maximum time. Senior citizens, children, joggers, and all kinds of walkers could easily finish under the 18-minute limit. Bring a first time racer to this event and let them enjoy a race of top quality!

"The fast heat is designed for the true racer, and we hope to see a mile time of 4:00 or better since the course is downhill. Just watching this caliber of race would be gratifying. A \$5.00 fee will get you signed up! Plan to bring your child, and both can run for \$7.00. Yes, your child will also get a trophy!

"Please register early to help us out. If you can't run, we need lots of help. Contact Dick Berry at 398-8361 or Rich King at 398-7826."

Such was the beginning of a 24-year run for the event. But how did it come to be? As I understand it Dick Berry and Paul Peterson were doing a 20-mile training run in preparation for the 1985 Huston Marathon. It was the fall of 1984. During their conversation the idea of a mile road race was born. Dick couldn't get the idea out of his head. He sold Rich King and Rich Roland on the idea. They formatted it similar to an event run in Chicago. Dick set two goals for the race, first a sub-4, and the second to present the winner with a new car.

So the first ever Mile was run August 24, 1985. There were about 320 registered in the two heats. The fast heat had enough runners to form two rows deep from one side of State Street to the other. Male and females ran together. The eventual winner was Belvidere star Ron Wartgow. He ran an impressive time of 4:12.86. Rockford native Carolyn Smith was the first woman to the finish in 5:07.79.

The schedule was set so that the fast heat went off right at sundown. The reason was that they found that if there was any wind it died at that time, allowing the runners to run in calm conditions.

As was advertised all runners received a trophy, there were lots of door prizes, but no recollection of who won the bike. And no, Ron didn't get a new car. But the race was off and running.

Tragically however, Dick Berry was struck and killed by a drunk driver while he was out running on April 9, 1986. It could have been the end of the event but Rich King and Rich Roland decided to continue Dick's dream. And the race has been run as a memorial to Dick each year since.

The format was changed to three heats in 1986. The first for runners no faster than 7 minutes. The second was for those running between 7:00 and 5:30. In the fast heat for those faster than 5:30, Ron Wartgow repeated as male winner with a time of 4:08.20. Karmille Hawinson was the first female at 5:10.70. And a fast heat it was, from Ron's finish, only two minutes elapsed until the last runner crossed the line a 6:08. The number of runners grew to about 340.

Rich and Rich decided to run the 1987 edition very nearly as it was the previous year. The three heats had the same time qualifications. Ron Wartgow, in winning for the third time in three tries, lowered his course record to 4:07.56. Carolyn Smith became the first female to break 5:00, finishing in 4:57.68. The field rose to 360 registered.

For the first time a major sponsor was obtained in 1988. The Shrine Club put \$3,000 on the table. Also, an association with On The Waterfront was established with expectations that more community exposure would be given the event.

Held on the weekend prior to On The Waterfront, the format was changed somewhat. The first of four heats was a fun run with no awards. The second heat was for competitive runners with the first three finishers in each age group receiving a plaque. The third heat was for wheel chair athletes. The final of the evening was the elite runners race and offered prize money to the top seven male and female finishers. This race saw both the male and female course records fall. Jeff Jacobs lowered the men's by more than a second to 4:06.11. In the women's competition Beverly Roland-Miller took the record down to 4:56.91. Each won \$200 for their win and \$100 for breaking the records.

This year marked the first time each entrant was given a T-shirt. The number of runners was at 320.

The 1989 edition lost the Shrine Club as its sponsor and the association with the Waterfront hadn't worked well. There was concern that the event may not be able to be done. Memories fail and the records don't show who came forward with money, but the race went off as usual. And not only did it go, but records were set in the fast heats. The race was held on September 23.

In the men's fast heat, Max Hern of Madison, WI won and set a new record of 4:03.04 which was 3.07 seconds faster than Jeff Jacobs ran the prior year. Jeff ran second in 4:04.77. Craig Young was the only other Rockford runner to finish in the money with a fourth place 4:10.64 behind Greg Domontay of Lake Forest who had a 4:08.37 for third. Completing the top six in the money were Jeff Hill of Hinsdale in 4:11.35 and John Thanos, also of Hinsdale with a 4:14.54.

The women's winner for the fast heat was Holly Haring from Madison WI who ran 4:53.41 to take the record from last year's female winner, Beverly Roland-Miller who ran 4:56.91. This represented an improvement of 3.50 seconds in the record. She beat Karen Lutzke from Macomb who ran 5:00.13 for second place. Carolyn Smith took third with a 5:10.87.

The article in the '89 October newsletter concluded with the following paragraph. "Looking ahead, it has to be only a matter of time until the State Street Mile does break the four minute record, and with any luck the record will still be there to be broken in the state when it happens. Next year could be the one."

After the '89 race Rich and Rich decided to retire and turn the race over to others. Long time member and race director of other events Dick Green took over as director. He found a new sponsor Oakwood Hospital. He set the date for August 11, 1990.

The evening started with the usual slow heat, just to get things started. The first ever high school heat followed that. The male winner was Justin Smith, 17, of Sterling, with a time of 4:30. The top female finisher was Chyenne Schnorr, 16, of Pecatonica, with a time of 5:50.

The Open (Competitive) male and female heats were next. Dave Linton, 33, of Roscoe, was men's overall winner with a time of 4:25. Kate Hennessey, 44, of Rockford, finished first in a time of 5:24.

Craig Young had assumed the position of coordinator of elite runners. Craig put together a field designed to break the course records and hopefully produce a sub-4 mile. For the first year elite heats for men and women was run. Craig invited 19 men and 9 women to compete in those races.

Gerrie Gustafson made these comments in the newsletter following the race.

“One was expected-but five was unprecedented.

“Illinois fastest mile” lived up to its billing on Saturday, August 11, when five runners made road racing history by running Illinois' first sub-four minute road race mile in this year's State Street Mile.”

The winner Mark Deady, 22, of Bloomington, IN, turned 3:55.2, and was closely pursued by Rod DeHaven, 24, of Madison, WI, in 3:55.3; Greg Domantay, 24, of Lake Forest, IL in 3:57.4; Jeff Jacobs, 26, of Roscoe, in 5:58.5; and Mike Huffman, 24, of Madison, WI in 3:59.6. WOW!

The women's race also saw another course record broken. Rachele Roberts, 23, of Columbus, IN, blazed across the finish line with a time of 4:42.3. The next finisher was Jean McGould of Chicago, in 4:46.4. Roberts' teammate at the University of Iowa, Kim Schneckloth, 23, finished third with a time of 4:48.5. The next finishers were Linda Gill, 32, of Lake Forest, in 4:49.7; and Carol Harris, 23, of Chicago in 5:54.4. Rockford's Carolyn Smith, 25, finished seventh in a time of 4:59.2.

Both Deady and Roberts won \$500 for the win and an additional \$100 for new course records. Deady also won an additional \$500 for breaking the four-minute mark.

Gerrie's article concluded with this. “Plans are already underway for next year's event. With the billing of “Illinois fastest mile,” one can only imagine what will happen in 1991.”

Please tune-in again next month to find out what did. See you then, enjoy your running.

40 YEARS STRONG - Chapter 7 (History of State Street Mile (Continued))

After the banner year of 1990 neither Dick Green nor Craig Young returned in '91. So Jim McIntosh stepped forward and assumed the position of race director. Sadly Oakwood Hospital didn't return as sponsor. But Jim and his group gathered a number of contributors; they included Swedish-American Hospital, Rockford Health Club, Runner's Image, B. Sanfield, Don Carter Lanes, The Ice cream Depot, Dierks Foods, Schleicher Printing and Dee Dee Taylor.

But Jim had a tough hurdle in that the State Street Bridge was under reconstruction and couldn't be used. However a new course was measured moving the start to the East and the finish short of the bridge. That has been the only year that the original course has not been used.

But as usual the weather was great and the race went off on time with the first heat starting at 6:30 on August 10.

After its debut last year the Elite Heat was not part of the agenda this time. There were only two heats, the Female Open and the Male Open. Age group awards were given in both.

In the women's race Jessica Langford outdistanced the field to win in a time of 5:05 flat.

After his fourth place finish in the Elite field last year Jeff Jacobs won the Open Heat with a sparkling 4:05.30 which was the second fastest time ever for the Open.

In his article on the race in the September newsletter Jim wrote following:

“I also want to share a personal observation with you. Coming from the Quad Cities area, I have watched the Bix run grow from a race with a couple hundred runners and no traffic control to one of the premiere races in the country. I believe the State Street Mile can be Rockford’s race. The format is unique and the course makes for an exciting finish. I think this race can be as good as we (the RRR club members) want it to be.”

Jim returned for 1992. With one under his belt and the newly rebuilt bridge open for the finish he charged forward with confidence. Records are unavailable as to who else stayed with it this year.

The only record of results for the race which was run on August 9 was in the September newsletter. It lists only one heat which included all abilities, all ages and both genders. There were only 137 finishers.

The overall male winner was Lance Murphy with a time of 4:11 flat. Karen Rogers was the first female and 42nd overall in 4:59.69. Karen was the last finisher under five minutes. But there were 93 under six minutes, and 114 bettered the seven minute mark.

1993 found Mike Mapes joining Jim as co-race director. In Mike’s words, “1993 was a year of changes to the State Street Mile. NICE, the Sharp Copier dealer, signed on as a major sponsor. Several sponsors as well as having the race benefit two groups (Rockford Sports Coalition and Crusader Clinic) it allowed the race to grow from numbers of 150-200 in prior years to 450-750 competitors the next several years.” It also marked the first year that Magic Waters gave passes to all registered runners. Many other freebies were also given.

The race was held on August 7.

The Ben Newson Jr. Heat made its debut this year. It was named for former Auburn coach who died in the spring. Proceeds from that race benefited the Rockford Sports Coalition as well as providing a cash prize to the school with the most finishers.

The winner in the Newson heat was Jason Enke of Jefferson High who ran 4:28 flat. Jayme Bulthaus running for Christian Life High School was the female winner in a time of 5:35.00. Guilford High School had the most finishers.

The Open heat expanded the age group awards considerably and the awards were done by Heartwood Creations. They were quit unique.

Jeff Jacobs won for the second time running a 4:06.00 just a half second off his time two years prior. Forty year old Ken Popejoy finished second with a 4:12, which remains the fastest time by masters. We didn’t have a master category at the time. Karen Rogers defended her title from the previous year in 4:57.51. Rockford runner Kate Hennessey, also a master, finished third female. I noted the newsletter that I had had a conversation with Ken Popejoy and he had used the word “spectacular” in describing the event. High praise from a man who has literally run all over the world.

The evening concluded with a ¼ mile kids fun run. It had the most kids participate ever to date.

The 1994 State Street Mile kicked off on August 6. Mike Mapes continued his improvements with the grand door prize being a pair of tickets to anywhere in the continental United States. For the second year Rockford Mass Transit ran a trolley bus from Runner’s Image to the start line for each heat.

The number of sponsors was increased greatly, with NICE becoming as Mike said “a patron saint for runners.” There were quarter mile sponsors, and so many others that space doesn’t permit naming them all.

As a result of all the above the number of runners set a record with over 650. They came from 3 countries and 8 states. They ranged in age from 6 months to 76+. Also the Newson heats had over 35 schools represented.

Jeff Jacobs was a repeat winner cutting over two seconds from last year’s time with a 4:03.56. Cassie McWilliams set a new heat record with a 4:42.23 clocking.

The Ben Newson Jr. female winner was Janet Mangus of Winnebago High. She broke the year old heat record running 5:12.57, bettering the old one of 5:35.00. Ryan Daniels of Hononegah H. S. also set a new record of 4:26.74. The old record was 4:28.00. Guilford again had the largest number of finishers.

The 1994 race raised over \$12,000 for Crusader Clinic and the Rockford Sports Coalition.

1995 set a new record for participants with a total of over 700 in all events. The July/August issue of “Runner’s World” listed State Street in a special listing of road miles. We had hit the big time. The date was August 5.

And again there were many, many sponsors. Again NICE & Rockford Health System-The Heart Center were big contributors.

In the Open Jim Dickerson ran a 4:05.80 to win the men’s heat. Rachel Knapp turned a nice 4:48.30 to top the women’s.

This was the first year we recorded masters times Dan Copper ran 4:29.50 and Peggy Whitlow was first woman in 5:34.90.

The Ben Newson Jr. heats found Erin Kelly of Lincoln Way High School besting the girls field with a time of 5:18.20. Marcus Masison of Harlem High won the boys heat with a 4:36.80 clocking. Auburn High School won the competition for most finishers.

The event again raised over \$12,000 for Crusader Clinic and Rockford Sports Coalition.

To be Mike Mapes last year as race director the 1996 edition was held on August 10. New this year the race was part of USA Track and Field Youth Circuit Mile. It required that some age groups were a little strange.

Also unique this year Olympic marathoner Jenny Spangler attended as a dinner was held in her honor at Davis Park the Friday evening before the race while she did not run in Saturdays race she did graciously meet and sign hundreds of autographs at the dinner, it was a unique opportunity to have a local runner of that stature in our midst.

In the Open heat Jeff Jacobs set a heat record with a winning time of 4:01.70. Jeff was pushed through the half in 2:00 by Mike Egle of Mt. Prospect who finished second in 4:03.90. The largest female field the history of the race for the Open heat had 101 finishers. The defending champion Rachel Knapp turned a :61 half, but the pace turned out to be too fast for her, and Jessica Langford pulled even then passed Rachel on the bridge and ran the third fast time for the heat, 4:50.00. Knapp finished second in 4:55.80.

The Ben Newson Jr. heats were also impressive. Lincoln Way High School sophomore Michele Barrowman, 5:10.10 out ran Auburn High School junior Jenny Anderson, 5:15.90, with Michelle’s teammate Katie Henning running 5:18.80 for third. These three had the 4th, 5th, and 6th fastest times of the evening for all women. Steve Gunderson from Conant High School finished first in 4:20.20 setting a new heat record. No less than three

teammates from Fenton High School took 2nd through 4th. Guilford High School claimed the top honors with the most participants.

This year featured the first Masters Heat. It had 85 somewhat aging runners showing that there is life after forty. Especially in Ron Piro a 41 year old from Streamwood, IL running the second fastest time by a masters on the course with a 4:25.80. On the women's side Peggy Whitlow, 50, ran 2.10 seconds faster than last year in 5:32.8.

The evening as always concluded with the best event of all, the kids ¼ mile. It was an outstanding evening. Thanks to Jim McIntosh and Mike Mapes for their contributions to this article. More next month.

40 YEARS STRONG - Chapter 8 History of State Street Mile (Continued) By Bob Sharp

After four very productive and successful years as director Mike Mapes stepped away in order to devote more time to his wife and kids. Mike deserved much credit for his innovations and leadership he gave to the race.

In his place Tim Goodwin, a brand new member of the Road Runners, came forward to take the reins for the 1997 edition. In spite of the fact that Tim had never directed a race he did assemble a seasoned committee to assist him. That group included Lisa Doll, Steve Jaycox, Cindy Garner, John Irving, Jenny Leek, yours truly, and from the Sports Coalition Terry Heden.

The race T-shirt, which was designed by local commercial artist and runner Jeff Larson, is even to this day the best ever for this event.

New this year was DR Komputing doing the scoring. They made a nice enhancement to the race as runners were able to pickup a results card shortly after each heat concluded. They also made our lives much easier as they did all timing and scoring.

Also it was the first year since 1990 that prize money was given. That was made possible by the many fine sponsors. Giving either cash or in-kind donations were Rockford Health Systems, Rockford Park District, Danka, Runner's Image, Specialty Floors, Nike, Offsite Services, North West Airlink, and Liebovich Brothers.

August 9, 1997 would see a number of heat records set. In the Ben Newson Jr. Steve Gunderson of Conant H. S. in Elk Grove Village won for the second year and lowered his own record by nearly 2 seconds finishing in 4:18.50. And Jenny Anderson of Auburn H. S. ran a new female record of 5:06.50, bettering the record of 5:10.10 set the prior year. Winnebago H. S. with over 40 finishers won the participation award for the first time. The Newson heat had the younger age groups added, and as a result the Rockford Sports Coalition realized more money.

Glen Henthorn of Beloit was the male master's winner with a time of 4:38.20, not a record. However Peggy Pate broke the women's record set in '96 by nearly 4 seconds. Her time was 5:29 flat.

In the Open heats records were set by both the men's and women's winners. Tony Escarcega of Madison broke the record set by Jeff Jacobs the previous year by 1/10 of a second. Tony's time was 4:01.60. But not to be outdone Kris Ihle of Oak Creek, Wis. shattered the three year old record of 4:42.23 by turning a 4:29.90. That time would have won the Elite heat in 1990.

As usual the kid's fun topped off another outstanding evening of running. And again the door prizes were capped off by the North West Airlink tickets. There was one additional record set. The awards, which themselves were special, were handed out in record time. That was made possible by DR Komputing having

results in a very timely manor. Another chapter in the Fastest Mile in the Midwest was complete on “State Street that Great Street.”

The committee worked most of the winter, spring, and well into the summer planning the 1998 edition to be run on August 8, starting at 5:40 p.m. A new feature was added to the Ben Newson Jr. school mile. The male and female winners will be awarded a \$250 scholarship sponsored by Larson & Darby Architects. There had been many inquiries about the Newson heat from sources both in Rockford and Chicago areas. It was looking as though there would be a record number of entries this year.

Also new will be prize money for the master’s division. \$100 will go to the 1st male and female, with \$50 to 2nd place. In the Women’s and Men’s Open the cash awards will be 1st - \$300, 2nd - \$200, and 3rd - \$100. And new was \$100 to USAT&F 1st place winner which was part of a newly formed Illinois Championship Circuit. And again Runner’s Image offered a \$250 incentive to the female and/or male setting a new course record.

The awards in the competitive heats will be unique. They are steel miniature State Street road signs. The steel was donated by Liebovich Bros. Steel. And Jeff Larson designed another great shirt.

MELD would again be the benefactor of funds given by Danka, the major sponsor.

The Ben Newson heat kicked off with a record number of runners. Jenny Anderson, former Auburn star headed for Northwestern University, set the only course record of the evening by breaking her own record set last year recording a 5:06.20. (The rules were changed following this year. Runners were not eligible to run in the Newson heat after they had graduated from high school. Jenny had graduated in June.) The boy’s race was won by KC Randall of Pecatonica in the time of 4:30.20. Winnebago H. S. again won the money for the most finisher with 48 Indians crossing the line.

Defending woman’s open champion Kris Ihle-Helledy (she was married since last year’s race) repeated her victory, but was disappointed in not breaking her course record she set last year. Her winning time 4:36.10 would have won every year with the exception of ’97. In the men’s open, Art Seamers now living in Bolder Col., passed 5 time winner Jeff Jacobs on the bridge and posted a 4:03.90 victory.

The women’s master’s winner Peggy Whitlow, who lives in Elmhurst, is 52 years young. A veteran of the CARA Circuit, Peggy crossed the finish line a 5:44.30, and was the only masters to break 6 minutes. Ligonier, Ind. resident Mark Furkis headed the men’s master’s heat in the fine time of 4:32.30. Ron Wartgow, winner of the first three State Streets, ran his first as a masters and got second place money.

As usual the kid’s fun run, with a prize for each, capped off another well done event.

The 1999 May/June issue of “Run Illinois” contained a Road Race Profile of the State Street Mile. It was a fine article with the exception that it stated the location is Main St. Rockford, IL. In my Sharp Talk article that June I stated that maybe we should rename it? Duh! Well at least we were being recognized.

John Cook was added to our committee as elite runner coordinator. John had many new ideas for the event. On Monday night August 9, 1999 Mayor Charles Box proclaimed August 14, “State Street Mile Day.” It would be the first year since 1990 to have a star studded invitational elite heat. Additionally the schedule for the weekend had been greatly expanded.

The festivities started on Friday with a pre-race carbo dinner at the Ramada Suits. Cary Pinkowski, Chicago Marathon race director and Glen Latimer, elite runner coordinator for the Steamboat Classic, were with us for the evening. Starting the events on Saturday was a pre-race clinic featuring Glen and Cary and some of the elite runners. And to conclude the evening following the awards presentations was a post-race celebration with munchies, autographs and war stories at the Patriot Center.

The non-competitive heat started the evening's races with a 5:30 start. It was highlighted by amputee runner Aktanay Kwazdran, who lost his right leg to cancer winning in just under six minutes.

That was followed by the men's master's heat. Steve Winchel of Janesville was the winner finishing with a time of 4:28.20. That was the second fastest master's time to date, just over two seconds off the record. There wasn't a female master's heat this year, the women masters ran in the women's open heat.

The Ben Newson Jr. female heat was next up. Lindsay Schwartz from Lake Zurich High School bested all girls running a 5:33.90. In the Ben Newson Jr. male heat Andy Enright a Belvidere High School runner outdistanced the field running a fine 4:27.10. Winnebago High School won their third in a row participation award.

With women of all ages including masters the open heat was next. Jenny Anderson now a student at Northwestern University and two time winner of the Newson heat claimed the title winning with a time of 5:04 flat. The master's winner was Meg Anderson, no relation to Jenny. Her time was 6:31.50.

In the men's open Jim Dickerson of Naperville who won it in 1995 repeated that feat with a winning time of 4:07.30.

At approximately 7:05 the field of nine men and eight women, running the elite heat, left the start line. Viewing them from the timing truck their start looked like that of a 100 meter dash.

Because of the extremely fast start those in the timing truck kept thinking that their pace would slow. But if it did we never noticed. A pack of six, led by Kenyan Julius Mwangi, just smoked from start to finish. Near the end fellow Kenyan Ben Kapsoya passed Julius and broke the tape in the new record time of 3:53.30. Julius finished second in 3:53.70, with Amos Kipyogan also of Kenya third in 3:54.60. All three had broken the old record. But that wasn't all. Neville Davey from Ireland finished in 3:56.20, Charles Mulinga of Zambia in 3:57.9 and last year's open winner, Art Siemers of Colorado was sixth in 3:59.20. Six Sub 4's!

Not to be outdone the ladies ran well also. Two time defending champion Kris Ihle-Heledy threepeated, and broke her own course record of 4:29.9 running 4:28.20. Following Kris was Karen Harvey who also bettered the old record with a clocking of 4:29 flat.

The 1999 State Street Mile reaffirmed the nickname "Fastest Mile in the Midwest."

40 YEARS STRONG - Chapter 9 History of State Street Mile (Continued)

The new millennium found John Cook hard at work planning new events and recruiting more elite and high school runners. This 2000 edition again included a clinic which featured Joe Newton, famed coach at York High School in Elmhurst as speaker. That was followed by a carbo dinner at the Ramada Suits. New this year was a Health/Fitness Expo sponsored by WZOK, and a concert in Davis Park following the race.

By the first part of July John had commitments from four top high school milers from across the country. And he was working on another strong elite field. John also assembled an impressive number of sponsors. There were too many (19) to list here, but they all helped to make the race another fine event.

As it turned out Stet Street 2000 seemed to be ladies night. Not that the men didn't run well, but the females really shined. Two records were set, both of them by women.

The first to fall was in the Ben Newson Jr. school heat. Alicia Craig of Gillette, Wyoming ran the first ever sub-5 with a time of 4:47.5, smashing the old record of 5:06.2 set in 1998 by Jenny Anderson.

Later in the Elite Women's heat Lyudmila Vesilyeva of Russia cranked out a 4:21.3 to ellipse the old record by nearly 7 seconds. The old mark of 4:28.2 was set by Chris Ihle-Helledy last year.

In the other female events Janet Mangus, who won the school mile as a senior at Winnebago High in 1994, out distanced all competition in the Women's Open turning a winning time of 4:58.8. The Women's Masters winner was Lynn Vovelka who ran a fine 5:47 flat.

The forgoing should not suggest that the men ran poorly as they didn't. For example, the winner of the Men's elite heat, East Peoria native Tim Broe, finished in 3:57.1. And as our announcer said, "It sounds odd to refer to 3:57 as a slow time." Well we had expected that a new record would be set again. But as it turned out it became a tactical race and Tim had the most finishing speed this night.

In the Men's Open Henry Dennis, a coach in Madison, Wis., edged former Harlem High and Illinois State star Clint Wescom by just over a second for his win. Henry's time of 4:03.5 virtually equaled Jeff Jacobs' winning time in 1994, and was the fourth fastest time ever in the Open heat.

Greg Barker, coach at Jefferson High, had trained during the summer to break the masters record of 4:25.8 set by Ron Prio in 1996. About a week prior to State Street Greg injured himself in the Winnebago High alumni run. But like the true champion he is he ran the mile anyway. With no one to push him Greg ran a fine 4:32.2.

The male school heat saw a record number of runners, nearly 170, and John Houseworth of Eureka High led them all to the finish in 4:25.2. It was the third fastest winning time recorded in the heat.

For the fourth straight year Winnebago High captured the participation award. That was becoming easier for Coach Roger Fredrickson than it was to get his cross country teams to the state meet.

And as usual the evening's running ended with the best event, the kid's fun run. As always there were lots of winners in that one.

In his third year as elite runner coordinator John Cook made new efforts to beef-up the 2001 Elite heat by establishing qualifications for the heat. It will be open to anyone who can verify having run 4:10 for men and sub-5 for women. Also the Newson school heat was looking good, John had invited the state champions from Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Indiana.

One major change in the schedule was there would be no Friday night pre-race dinner. However the benefactors would again be the Wildcats, Mother House and the Rockford Road Runners.

The races started on August 11, and as usual near perfect weather prevailed. The fun run kicked off the events.

The Ben Newson Jr. male heat was won by Pat Quinn of Wheaton St. Francis High who ran 4:16.7, while the female heat went to Erika Odlaug from Deerfield High School. She ran a great 4:50 flat. And as usual Winnebago won the participation award for the fifth year.

Men's overall winner of the first three State Streets, Belvidere's Ron Wartgow, lowered the Men's Master's record by more than a second. Ron's time of 4:24.3 erased Ron Piro's 4:25.8 set in 1996. An unanticipated happened in the Women's Master's competition. Jane Murphy of River Forrest not only smashed the master's record by nearly 20 seconds, but because the women all ran in one heat, she was the Open winner also. Jane's time was 5:09.9.

Not to be outdone by the younger masters, 60 year old Ed Pickel of Lake Forrest ran an Illinois age group record for 60 to 64-year-old men. The prior record of 5:42.2 was set by Helmut Rothe of Westmont at State Street in 1996. Well Ed didn't fool around; he broke that mark by almost 25 seconds, blazing to a 5:17.3 finish.

As for the Men's Open the winner was Klint Wescom who had finished second last year. His time was a very respectable 5:09.9.

In the final event of the evening, the Elite, still another sub-4 was turned by Kenyan Julius Mwangi with a time of 3:57.9. Julius had finished second in 1999 after leading most of the race. No one caught him this time. Priscella Hein out-did the Women's Elite field running a sparkling 4:36.4.

It was felt that there were the most spectators ever for this year's event. It was yet another very fine year for State Street Mile. Dick Berry was no doubt smiling again.

40YEARS STRONG - Chapter 10 History of the State Street Mile (Continued) By Bob Sharp

The 18th Annual State Street Mile was held on August 10, 2002. The major change for the event was the elimination of men's and women's Elite heats. John Cook who had been the elite runner coordinator left the committee and we decided to go back to the basics. It would allow us to cut way back on our budget, but still deliver a quality race for all runners.

The prize money for the open divisions was very good when compared to other race of various distances. In fact for a one-mile it compared very favorably to considerably longer races, many of which paid much the same or less. We paid \$300 for 1st, \$250 for 2nd, \$200 for 3rd, \$150 for 4th, \$100 for 5th, and \$50 for 6th in both the men's and women's open heats. We also gave \$200 for 1st, \$150 for 2nd, \$100 for 3rd in the men's masters. Due to a very small turnout in the women's masters in prior years we eliminated money for them.

Age group awards were given three deep in eleven categories in the open and masters heats. The Ben Newson Jr. heat received awards three deep in six age groups.

The Ben Newson Jr. Boy's race was very close and exciting. In a sprint to the finish Mike Kelley of Winnebago out-kicked Justin Aronson of Hononegah to take the win by .3 of a second with a time of 4:31. Mike's teammate Kraig Laurence finished .5 of a second behind Justin to take third. Another 'Bago runner Ryan Richardson was close to the leaders finishing in 4:33.4, to edge out Mike's twin brother Brian Kelley, who ran 4:36.1. That gave Coach Roger Fredrickson's 'Bago harriers four of the top five places. They also won the \$1,000 prize for the most runners for the 6th consecutive year.

The girl's Newson race was not as close but never the less it was a good one. Jacqui Aubert a junior at Crystal Lake South out ran the field to take the win in 5:22.6. Stephanie Abram of Palatine was second in 5:29.3 with Lindsey Glass from Byron less than a second behind at 5:30.2. They were followed by Praise Cowman of 'Bago in 5:32, and Natalie Aschim of Jefferson clocked at 5:33.1.

Next up was the Women's Open. One of our fine local young runners, a former Road Runner of the Year, Ellie Pinzarone led the race at the half-mile. Diana Ainsley, a sophomore at Illinois State took charge at that point and won going away in a time of 5:22. The top female master was Christina Lipa, 42, of Glen Ellyn who clocked 5:32.8. She was also the fourth finisher overall in the open.

The Men's Masters winner was not a first timer at State Street. He had finished second in the open a few years prior. 40-year old Mike Egle of Des Plaines beat our own Mark Hepworth, running 4:31.5 to Mark's 4:43.2.

Julius Mwangi, last year's Elite winner, cruised home in 4:04.3 to beat Chicago's Jeremy Parks who ran 4:05.7. Julius, a native of Kenya now an American citizen living in Lebanon, Indiana, was running State Street for the fourth time. Klint Wescome, last year's Open winner, was not in top form as he finished back in 6th place with the relatively slow time of 4:18.8.

As usual the evening's races concluded with the kid's ¼-mile fun run. Yes, it was the most fun event again.

Thanks to our sponsors Adidas, Runner's Image, Specialty Floors, Sparkling Springs, Magic Waters, The Bagel Place, 320 Store, Big Apple and Muller-Pinehurst, plus the many volunteers, we were able to make State Street another huge success for the 500 plus runners.

SwedishAmerican Health System became our prime sponsor for the race which took place on August 9, 2003 with the usual format. They will provide assistance with printing the registration forms, will make a large mailing of them, and give other in kind services. Also they did two very much needed new finish line banners. They signed a three commitment.

We were finding that the event was attracting more runners from the Chicago area, and the president of the Wisconsin Track Club in Madison recommended State Street to his membership. There are some very fine runners in that organization. We hope we will see more of them this and in coming years.

The prize money was changed to 1st through 5th only in the Open Heats and the addition of 1st through 3rd in the Women's Open being the same as for the men.

Following the usual Fun Run the Ben Newson Jr. Girls heat stepped off. It saw the first local winner since 1998. Former Wildcats standout Stephanie Baliga, a freshman at Auburn High, posted a time of 5:06.7 while outdistancing the field. Jared Richardson of Harlem High captured the boy's Ben Newson with a time of 4:23.4. And Winnebago High won the participation award of \$1,000. It was only the seventh straight time that the Indians have run off with the money.

Mike Egle not only defended his title in the Men's Masters but lowered the heat record. His time of 4:18.4 broke Ron Wartgow's mark of 4:24.3 set in 2001. Following Mike to the line was Greg Domantay of Lake Forest who was one of the five, he finished fourth, who broke four minutes in 1990. Bill Gilmore, a Road Runner from Janesville, took third place.

Christine Lipa was also a repeat winner posting a 5:30.8, two seconds faster than last year in the Women's Masters. Susan Croll was second with Carol Pratt finishing third.

Jack Kafel of Chicago ran a relatively slow time of 4:09.7 to win the Men's Open. Twelve years his senior Jeff Jacobs followed Jack to the line in 4:11.9. Anthony Taylor took 3rd place money.

For the first time in three years the Women's Open winner ran a sub-5. Christine Marie Wruth beat all comers in the fine time of 4:40.6. She was followed by Monika Stupian, Emily Hauser, Lisa Menninger and Jennifer Pollard.

As always the heats went off without a hitch, another successful State Street Mile in the books. The 2004 SwedishAmerican State Street Mile was held on August 14. The major change was moving the site of the awards ceremony from the National City Bank Plaza to the SwedishAmerican Hospital grounds. Swedes had formed a "couch potato" group for those who have never run. The group met on Wednesdays, and participated in the Fun Run.

Prize money remained the same for both Open and Masters Heats. Merchandise awards from Adidas were given to age groups 1st through 3rd places. As usual Specialty Floors made the participation pins available to all in the Ben Newson Jr. Heats.

The Ben Newson Jr. Boys Heat saw a repeat winner. Jared Richardson of Harlem High not only won the race, but he lowered his prior year's time by nearly six seconds clocking 4:17.8 which was just 1.1 seconds off the

heat record. In the Female Heat Rachel Brubaker, Durand High, turned only the third ever sub-5 for the heat with a time of 4:58.9. And as usual Winnebago captured the participation money of \$1,000.

Mike Egle threepeted as Men's Master champ. He had hoped to lower his record of last year, but was not in the best of shape and only managed to run 4:25.1. Second and third places went to Road Runners Mike Newcomer and Bill Gilmore. First place in the Women's division went to Doreen Groshan with a 5:20.1. Winner for the two prior years, Christine Lipa finished close behind, and Tricia Nicks took third place money.

Patrick Quinn, who had won the Ben Newson Jr. Heat in 2001, headed the field in the Open crossing the line in 4:08 flat. The names of second and third place winners are not available. Jason Brown and Anthony Taylor were fourth and fifth respectively.

The Women's Open field was headed by Sara Schwald. Sara ran a nice 4:32 flat. She was chased to the line by last year's winner Christin Wruth-Thomas. They were followed by Bethany Brewster, Sara Kopin and Jessica Sweeney.

There was an increase in the number of runners over last year. Prospects are high for next year's 21st annual event.

40 YEARS STRONG Chapter 11 (History of the State Street Mile) By Bob Sharp

With SwedishAmerican again our main sponsor the 2005 Mile kicked off on August 13. The format didn't change from the prior year, and the prize money remained the same also.

The fun run continued to draw a smaller than hoped for number of participants. But the ones that did run/walk had a great experience.

The Ben Newson Jr. Female heat started the serious running. Autumn Dettmann from Watertown High School in Watertown, Wisc., headed all the girls winning with a time of 5:07 flat. The Newson Male heat followed with Andrew Perkins, also of Watertown, blazing to a new heat record of 4:15.3 breaking the four year old record by 1.4 seconds, and Andrew is only a sophomore. This was the first time ever that the female and male winners were from the same school. As you may have guessed Winnebago again won the \$1,000 participation award.

Next off the line was the Masters Heat for both men and women. Paul Giannoble held off John Gessert, 2nd, and Mike Newcomer, 3rd. Paul's time was 4:45.1. On the distaff side Lisa Menninger turned a new heat record with 5:07.7 clocking. Following Lisa was former two time winner Christine Lipa, with last year's winner Doreen Groshan taking 3rd place money.

The Open Heat for men and women concluded the competitive event for the evening. In a surprise Henry Dennis set a new heat record. With the spectators on the bridge and at the finish area cheering wildly for him to break "four" he narrowly missed breaking the tape in 4:00.3. Matt Groose finished 2nd, Anthony Taylor 3rd, the 4th place winner is not available, and Truwon Taylor rounded out the top five. The women's winner was a familiar face. Jessica Sweeny ran a 4:48.9 to take top money. It was her 3rd win at State Street, and it was her best time also. Jennifer Roser finished 2nd, Jennifer Pollard, 3rd, Ellie Pinzarrone was 4th, and Shannon Ring, 5th.

We were again very pleased to present the Wildcats a nice check. Promoting running for future generations has become a prime mission of State Street.

With three heat records broken, State Street again lived up to its "Fastest Mile in the Midwest" title.

Saturday, August 12, 2006 was the date for the 22nd annual SwedishAmerican State Street Mile. A pre-race article in the "Rockford Register Star" on August 4, written by Mike DeDoncker alluded to the fact that the

event was putting the emphasis on young runners. Mike stated that “State Street Mile earned the nickname ‘Fastest Mile in the Midwest’ in the 1990s when elite runners came in and regularly broke four minutes on the mostly down hill course.”

Mike continued, “Since then the emphasis has shifted to the school-age runners in the Ben Newson Jr. Boys and Girls heats.” The Rockford Wildcats were again doing specific training for the event. It gives them as well as junior and senior high cross country runners a good chance to see how their training is going for the up coming season. It has provided larger numbers in the Newson heats in the last few years. Therefore the Newson heats are the highlight of the evening.

In another article prior to the race Mike noted that Mike Egle of Des Plaines would return after missing State Street last year. He had won the men’s masters heat three years straight and set the heat record in 2003. The 44-year-old was returning to see if he could lower his masters heat-best time of 4:18.4.

At 5:00 PM the Non-competitive Run/Walk heat left the start line. As had been the case for the last few years the numbers were down, but again there were lots of smiles as the competitors crossed the finish.

Next up the Ben Newson Jr. Female heat was won by Karen Lipa, an eighth grader from Glen Ellyn, in 5:20.1. Hayley Thomas finished second in 5:21.7 and Andrea Rediger was third in 5:25.3. Lipa, daughter of Christine Lipa, a two time Masters champ, said she was surprised to do as well as she was recovering from an Achilles’ tendon injury. She said she was “shocked.”

The Newson Boy’s heat was won by local runner Aaron Winter from Rockford Lutheran High. His time was 4:22.1. He was followed by Broc Vike of Stoughton, Wisc., in 4:31.1 and Jordan Wolf of Honohegah High timed in 4:32.7. And as always Winnebago garnered the \$1,000 participation prize.

In the Masters Heat Mike Egle was good to his word and returned to reclaim his title he had held from 2002 through 2004. He was off his heat record time as it was his slowest time in the masters, but it was still good enough to best the field. His clocking of 4:35.5 put him nearly three seconds ahead of Andy Hepburn of Roscoe who was timed in 4:38.3. Dale Mackle from Algonquin claimed third place in 4:40.5. The Women’s Masters saw a repeat winner. Lisa Menninger of LaGrange defended last year’s victory winning with a time nearly five seconds slower than her record setting mark of 5:07.8 in 2005. Her “slow” time was 5:12.5. At that it was third best time ever for the masters. Lisa was followed by past winner Christine Lipa of Glen Ellen, at 5:20.8 and Susan Croll from Marengo, finishing in 6:02.7.

It was a happy homecoming for Klint Wescom. The 30-year-old Grayslake resident and 1995 Harlem High graduate won the Men’s Open. He was also the winner in 2001 with a nearly identical time. This year he was 4/10th of a second faster at 4:06.2. Bryon Rubyon was second in 4:06.8, and former Winnebago High standout Jeremy Stevens claimed third place money at 4:11.2. The Women’s Open winner was Colleen Newhart of Oak Park, in a time of 4:41.8. Jaime Turilli from Champaign ran 4:49.4, while Stephanie Baliga, former Ben Newson winner, now running for the University of Illinois, took third in 5:00.82

Following the always great kid’s fun run at the Hospital, the awards were presented there also. Many of the winners were very pleased with the merchandise awards given by Adidas. With so many great comments from lots of the runners we are looking forward to next year.

The 23rd annual State Street Mile, presented by SwedishAmerican Health Systems, Specialty Floors, Adidas, Runner’s Image, Magic Waters and Rockford Road Runners, was held Saturday, August 11, 2007. The schedule of events remained the same. The entry fees were changed from \$17 to \$18 for the non-competitive, open, and masters heats. The Ben Newson heats went from \$12 to \$15, with a \$20 late entry fee for all. Prize money remained the same with \$150 for 1st, \$100 for 2nd, and \$50 for 3rd for both men and women in the Open and Masters heats. With still fewer runners than last year the non-competitive heat kick-off the evening’s races. Even with a lesser number participants each year those who do run have a great time.

Next up the Ben Newson Jr. Girls heat saw 12 year-old Katie Adams, a seventh grader at Zion Lutheran School in Marengo cross the finish in 5:27.74 to beat Mary Buzzard, 5:30.82 and Alexandria Palm, 5:31.64. Katie was the first non-high school student to win the heat. The Boys heat winner, Andrew Perkins running at Watertown High in Wisconsin, had set a record time of 4:15.3, winning in 2005. His time this year was 4:19.25. That was good enough to edge Guilford's James Noonan who finished in 4:21.06. Third place went to Blake Brooks, in 4:24.52. And, oh yes, Winnebago had the most runners in the two Newson heats to win the \$1,000 award for the eleventh straight year.

The winner of the Masters Heat, Mike Egle, was pictured on the front page of the "Sunday Register Star" as he was crossing the State Street Bridge leading the pack. It was the 45-year old Glenview runner's fifth win, with a time of 4:36.28. He told Mike DeDoncker that he had hoped to not run as hard as he was running the half marathon at the Chicago Distance Classic the next day. But Dale Mackel, of Algonquin, had challenged him so he couldn't back down. As it was, Mackel chased Egle across the bridge to finish in second in 4:39.36. "This is always a tough race," said Egle, whose time was the slowest in his five victories, "but he (Mackel) was behind me last year, so this year he challenged me." Third place money went to Brian Parker in 4:47.10.

Lisa Menninger of LaGrange took the Women's Masters title for the third consecutive year with a winning time of 5:17.58. She set the heat record of 5:07.8 in 2005. Menninger, 41, beat two time masters winner Christine Lipa, of Glen Ellyn, to the line by just over nine seconds. Christine ran 5:26.59 which was faster than either of her winning times in 2002 and 2003. Debra Lowell was third in 5:59.71.

The Open Heat saw two local products finish second. Nick Bowerman of Dubuque, Iowa, and Colleen Newhart of Oak Park outran Jared Richardson and Stephanie Beliga, who both won their respective Newson Heats in 2003.

Bowerman's picture appeared on the sports page of "Register Star" with Richardson chasing him during the mile. Bowerman, who ran the mile for Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, said State Street was "an experiment to see what I still had, and I'm happy with it." Richardson who starred at Harlem High School finished strong in 4:16.89. Andrew Newton finished third clocking 4:21.39.

Newhart was a repeat winner breaking the tape in 4:40.07, which was a shade better than her time last year. Baliga, who starred at Auburn High, finished third last year and was timed in 5:00.94. Emily Dewald was third with a time of 5:12.97.

As always the little kids were the stars of the evening doing their thing in the fun run. All of them were winners and each received a treat. It's the best event every year. And so ended another successful State Street Mile.

State Street 2008 received some pre-race publicity from an unexpected source. The Saturday, August 9, edition of "Rockford Register Star" ran an article featuring 6-year-old Kelli Tosci. She was entered in Saturday's mile merely because she and her mother were in town to visit her grandparents who had completed in the State Street Mile once or twice. Kelli's mother is Jenny Spangler a former Olympic marathoner, a Rockford native, and Guilford graduate who now live in Lake Villa. Last year, at age 5, she competed in one-mile race and posted a time of 8:08. Spangler decided that as long as they would be in town, and Kelli enjoys running, she might as well enter her.

A major change to the schedule of events was made. For the first time in many years the Noncompetitive Heat was eliminated and was replaced by the Hospital Bed Race. The new event was open to hospital employees; each bed was spectacularly decorated to represent the competitors' area of the hospital. The race had three heats of three beds each running from the East end of the bridge to the West end.

A new sponsor was added to replace Adidas. New Balance provided merchandise for door prizes. WREX 13 became our media sponsor. They provided pre-race PSA's and Erick Wilson, night anchor, was again our finish

line announcer. Magic Waters, celebrating their 20th Birth Day, once again donated 700 passes. And along with major sponsor SwedishAmerican Health System; Runner's Image, Specialty Floors and Rockford Road Runners continued on board.

The entry fees were again raised, with the Open and Masters going to \$20, the Newson up to \$15, with late registration moved to \$25 for all. Prize money remained the same.

Following the Bed Race the Newson Jr. Female Heat went off the line at 5:00 to near perfect weather. Haley Staples who runs for Crystal Lake Central H. S. crossed the finish line in 5:24.66 to win the heat. She was followed by her 11-year-old sister Samantha in 5:36.80. Third place went to Leah Rafferty of Harlem in a time of 5:37.40. Crystal Lake had a good number of runners here this year. The Staple sisters were very visible in a picture in the paper which was taken shortly after the start of the heat. And by the way Kelli Tosci won the 6 and under age group.

The winner of the Newson Boys Heat was Ryan Ballard of Hononegah, who ran a 4:27.76, and edged Sean Smith of Winnebago by less than a second at the finish. Smith took second at 4:28.26. Hononegah's Kevin Jacobs finished third at 4:30.95. Ballard said, "I was hoping for something under 4:30 so I am happy with it."

There was a surprise, as Winnebago was tied by Harlem H. S. for the Participation Award. The two schools each received a donation of \$300. Crystal Lake Central pushed both schools for the money.

There was a familiar face crossing the finish in the Masters Heat. For the sixth time in the last seven years Mike Egle, now 49, and the Masters record holder, was the winner posting a 4:41.5. It was his third straight victory. Mike wasn't sure he would be here as he had run a 10K two weeks prior and thought he had a stress fracture. So he took those weeks off from running and just biked. But his doctor called him Friday and said there was no break so he was able to run. He bested second-place finisher Mike Newcomer, Road Runner member from Winnebago, who crossed the finish in 4:48.69. Newcomer was followed by Darren Christy of Machesney Park in 4:54.51.

In her second State Street Elena Shemyaking, 49, of Geneva won the Masters title with a fine 5:24.56. Former two time winner and second last year, Christine Lipa of Glen Ellyn followed in 5:29.67. She was followed by Debra Lowell of Ellsworth turning 5:53.01. Shemyaking, who had move from Russia to Geneva 10 years ago, had suffered a stress fracture recently. She said, "I wanted to make the top three here, so to win it, I'm very happy."

Another picture in the "Sunday Register Star" showed Tony Teunissen of Belvidere on his way to winning the Men's Open Heat. His winning time was 4:16.62. He was followed to the line by former Boylan runner Sean O'Conner, now running for Carthage College in Wisconsin. Sean's time was 4:20.80. Tony Hardin of Rockford placed third in 4:21.46. In May Teunissen had won the Rockford half-marathon. "I was a half-miler and a miler in college, so since I haven't run a mile in a long time, I figured why not," said Tony, who ran at Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He added, "I am pretty happy with my time, I didn't think I would be that fast."

Most all the spectators who were at the finish line recognized the women's winner. It was none other than Jessica Langford. She was just a shade over her winning time in 2005, turning a 4:49.08. It was Jessica's fourth Open win. Another Rockfordian Shannon Fitzgerald, 5:04.74, took second place money. She was followed by Emily Dewald of Bloomington in 5:16.16. Langford said she was looking to compete in a shorter race. "I felt pretty strong the whole race," she said.

Following the kid's fun run, the awards presentation concluded the 24th State Street Mile. The committee said they will work hard to bring a bigger and better 25th next year.

Planning for this year's event started in January with regular committee meetings held every two to three weeks starting in February. Members of the committee were Bob Sharp, chairman/race director, John Irving, secretary, Steve Jaycox, Rich Roland, one of the founders of State Street and Brian Reck from SwedishAmerican which was again the main sponsor. The main goal was to make this a celebration befitting the 25 years of the quality event, (The Fastest Mile in the Midwest).

A primary goal was to invite and comp as many of the past winners of the Open and Masters heats as we could locate. Also to invite the "Fab Five" from 1990 as they put SSM on the map by being the first to break 4:00 mins. here. They include Mark Deady, Rod DeHaven, Greg Domanty, Jeff Jacobs and Mike Huffman.

SwedishAmerican was asked to design a new logo to commemorate the occasion. Also Special T Engraving was to design a custom medal for the awards. Dick Berry's son Kurt, Rich King and Rich Roland will be recognized at the awards ceremony as founders of SSM. We also would like to have Ben Newson Jr. kids recognized there also. And revival of the presentation of door prizes to include a bike and airline tickets was in the plans.

Bringing back the Non-competitive Heat was discussed, but it was decided against it. The hospital bed race will be run again this year; however it will take place in a location off State Street and not interfere with any of the heats.

Due to the increase in expenses, mostly from the cost of police assistance, and less income from entry fees due to a poor economy it was deemed advisable to seek sponsorship from other sources. As it turned out only the Road Runners came through. They generously ponied up \$1,000 seed money. All other prospective money sponsors turned us down. However SwedishAmerican did cover the cost of the police.

In an effort to increase the numbers in the Ben Newson Jr. heats we decided to send a cover letter and entry forms to all area high schools and other selected schools prior to end of the school year. SwedishAmerican agreed to cover the cost of the mailings.

In spite of the fact that a considerable amount time and effort was made to contact the "Fab Five" and past winners, we had no luck in getting them here. However most of our other plans came to fruition.

In spite of a stormy beginning the day turned out fairly good. It rained hard overnight and was hot and humid early on. But as the day wore on a strong wind blew a lot of the humidity away and the temperature dropped to a more tolerable point. It wasn't an ideal PR day but there was one record set however.

In celebration of the 25th we began the event with a Founders Heat. Kurt Berry, Rich King who flew here from Arizona and Rich Roland, along with some family members "ran" from the east end of the bridge to the finish line. Kurt, Rich and Rich were presented with a special "Founders" race shirt.

At 5:00 PM the Ben Newson Jr. Female heat kicked off. Hononegah's Rachel McDowell ran a 5:19.99 and held off Winnebago's Tessa Hoefle, 5:20.32 and Alex Palm, 5:21.80 who finished second and third respectively. Rachel's time was the fastest heat time since 2005.

Another Hononegah runner won the Ben Newson Jr. Male heat. Kevin Jacobs, son of "Fab 5" member Jeff Jacobs, finished just ahead of teammate and last year's winner Ryan Ballard. Kevin's time was 4:31.02: Ryan's was 4:32.18. Jonny Crain of Dunlap was third in 4:37.40.

At the conclusion of the Newson heats Ben's daughter Nicole Gallas, and son Nate were introduced. His other son Nik was working and couldn't attend. This was the 17th year for the school mile named in Ben's honor.

Up next was the Masters Heat. Chris Ihle, who lives in Oak Creek, Wis., holder of the Open Heat record and who once held the course record, blazed to the finish line with the first ever sub-5 by a female masters at State Street. Her time of 4:58.45 smashed the previous mark of 5:07.80 set by Lisa Menninger in 2005. Menninger of La Grange finished 2nd with a 5:35.14. She was followed by Terry Watson of Rosco, timed in 6:05.02.

If the Masters' winner looked familiar it's because it was his seventh victory in eight years. Mike Egle ran his slowest time ever, 4:45.49, but bear in mind he's 47 now. Will he make it eight next year? I wouldn't bet against him! Following Mike to the line was Darren Christy of Machesney Park in 5:56.82, 2nd, and Brad Moats of Gurnee with a 4:59.44, 3rd.

The Rockford Register Star sports page had a headline, "Wis. runners sweep open classes." Marcia Taddy of Platteville, who just graduated from the University of Wisconsin Platteville, where she ran both track and cross country coached by Tom Antczak, won the money in the Open with a time of 4:55.72. She was followed by last year's winner Jessica Langford who turned a 5:05.44. Li Suetfei of Shoumburg was ten seconds back in 5:15.60, good for 3rd place money.

Another Wisconsin runner, Moses Waweru of Sun Prairie, was the men's winner in the Open with a 4:11.06 clocking. It was his first time here and was using this as a time trial for a number of mile races he will run soon. Two time winner of the Newson heat Jared Richardson, now running at the University of Illinois, was second in 4:15.02 and Brian Runyon of Chicago took third in 4:20.45.

The Kid's fun run concluded the racing for the evening as usual. The kids had a great time and each were given a special first place award.

The awards ceremony was the finale. The first three finishers in each heat received the 25th anniversary medal. The Masters and Open heat winners were awarded \$100 for 1st, \$75 for 2nd and \$50 for 3rd, both male and female. And for the 13th time Winnebago took home the money for the most finishers in the Newson heats. Following the presentation of awards was a drawing for door prizes. Five travel vouchers good at Chicago Rockford International Airport and a Specialized Bike were awarded

In spite of the poor economy the number of runners was up slightly from last year. We had 432 registered in the four competitive heats. Financially we will make another substantial donation to the Wildcats.

In addition to the heat record by Chris Ihle one other record was set. The take-down of the finish line was done in record time. The crew that constructs and dismantles that gear is world class. You folks know who you are, just know also how much I appreciate your labors. I will single out one in the group. Ed Clucas provides use of his truck to haul equipment, helps load it, helps set-up, helps Eric Wilson at the P.A., runs the Masters, helps tear-down, and unloads. He also sponsored the Ben Newson heats for all 17 years. Many thanks Ed!

In addition to our one monetary sponsor we had a good many generous in kind sponsors. All of them helped greatly to make the event the success it was. Thank you SwedishAmerican Health Systems, Runner's Image, Magic Waters, New Balance, WREX-13, Clock Tower Resort, Chicago Rockford International Airport, Specialty Floors, Special-T Engraving and Amateur Radio Operators. Also a special thanks to Rock Valley Culligan, Rockford Wildcats and Mike Mapes for the use of their tent and Kegels Bicycle Store. We must also recognize all of our volunteers, there are probably many more than you would realize, they number between 40 and 50. They make this event run like clock work.

It was a great celebration of 25 years of the "Fastest Mile in the Midwest." I believe Dick Berry would be pleased.