Finally, there seems to be a light at the end of this icy tunnel we have been sliding along for what seems like ages. It is with great excitement that we welcome the return of shorts weather with a new, rejuvenated edition of The Wingfoot! Special thanks to Shaun Dever who provided the creative spark to get things up and running again.

Now that most snow has melted, and I am personally back on my feet running again, I have had some time to reflect on the club and things learned over the past couple years. I am reminded of a coffee-table book written by my college coach. Old School America is a witty (albeit nostalgic) look at values that have stood the test of time to make America great, hard work, tenacity, family.

After almost 10 years on the team, I think this idea represents us well. We are old school. The thing that makes this club great is not our fancy uniforms or cushy (or brief) sponsorships; it is our old school values. Our family trains together, competes together and parties together. Nobody is a bigger fan of GBTC than our own runners – that’s old school. We like to beat up on each other on the weekend, not because it feels good to win the long run, but because it feels good to watch your teammate demolish their college records once thought untouchable. Also because brunch just tastes better after a good hard workout.

Over the past year we have had great turnouts both at practice and on the trails, track and roads. I hope that with the help of folks like the ones you will hear from in this edition of The Wingfoot we can find new ways to keep our club going strong while staying true to our old school roots – even if it means curling up in my sleeping bag in a hotel room bathtub so we can squeeze one more person onto the next nationals trip... I’m in. See you out there!

Dan

Blondin: “Master” of Indoor Track

Chris Blondin, GBTC member since 2011, had an indoor season that most club members dream about. While most of us were excited just to attend two major track & field events held at the Reggie Lewis Center, Chris had the opportunity to race in both USATF Indoor Nationals and the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix. Known for his strength as a middle distance runner, Blondin hasn’t always done his running in split shorts and spikes. He began running competitively at age 8. His training consisted of running back and forth from both school (2mi away) and the local arcade (3mi away). His father would reward him with a quarter for each mile he ran.

“The more I ran, the more games I could play at the arcade.”
The Winter of Our Discontent
Eric Mendoza, Member Since 2008

In the play Richard III, William Shakespeare famously wrote, “Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious by this race in April.” In its original form, he might have actually said “son of York,” but the way I wrote it aptly describes this winter of training. After running the Manchester Marathon in November and having better than expected results in less than ideal conditions, I was looking forward to running Boston in the spring. Through December and January, the weather was cold, but manageable and the miles came easy. Like most, I felt that early premonitions of an exceptionally snowy winter were exaggerated and that we might have a relatively easy training period. That all changed on January 26th when winter storm Juno unleashed her fury on the Boston area. Subsequent storms not only added foot upon foot of snow upon our city but also added growing frustration to area runners as they planned for their spring marathons.

For most of my life, winter was defined as grey and drizzly with a temperature hovering around 45 degrees. Since moving to Boston, my winter training has become more efficient. I still do not look forward to snowy days. Those who have run with me have become well acquainted with my infamous “shuffle” that has a leg lift of probably only a few centimeters. I often have said that snow is my running kryptonite and that even a snow cover a few inches will considerably slow me down. Running with a Brennan Bonner or a Jonathan Charlesworth, I often feel like I need to work twice as hard just to keep pace. So it is my goal to find places that are as clear as possible to avoid having my normal training runs from sounding like something out of a Wilfred Owen poem.

Salvation came in the form of the Arnold Arboretum. Though they might have received criticism for snow removal in other parts of the city, I found that the roads located in the arboretum were often quickly plowed and the lack of cars made it easy to run. This became my go-to spot and I would end up running there three to four times a week. It became a welcomed oasis in a city driven crazy by the snow.

My other saving grace was my teammates. At the risk of sounding cliché, I was fortunate enough to find a like-minded group of guys that made the training much more bearable. Every Tuesday, and most Saturdays and Sundays, I would meet up with Manny, Ian, the Robs, and Matt to get after aerobic workouts, tempo runs, and long runs. Having a group to rely on kept me honest the rest of the week. When the snow and wind would have most sane people to opt out of their run in exchange for burrowing under the covers, I was out on a run so that I could continue on the same progression as my training group. This, by far, made the difference this winter.

With only a short time to go until Boston, I’m looking towards the race with bated optimism. Although I cannot say that my training was ideal this winter, my hope is that our resiliency to combat the elements will translate into GBTC performances that will even have Shakespeare describe them as glorious.

Eric Mendoza and more than 30 members of GBTC will don their red singlets during the 119th running of the Boston Marathon. Be on the lookout for the bold GREATER BOSTON letters as you line the course this Patriots’ Day.

Caleb’s Coffee Connection: Club Networking
Caleb Evanter interviews Jeff Ragazzini

Editor’s Note: While some may know him as GBTC’s unofficial pub and club reviewer, when Jeff Ragazzini trades his singlet for something more proper, he does more than cut a rug. Caleb Evanter recently sat down with Jeff to discuss the part we tend to overlook: his day job.

Jeff’s Place of Employment: DENTSPLY Implants - Waltham, MA

JE: What do you do? JR: My team and I develop new mechanical products and hardware for the restorative dentistry market, mainly chair-side tools, dental laboratory services, and prosthetic components (fake teeth). Sometimes our factory floor floods, in which case we are demoted to impromptu janitors for the day. JE: Weren’t you in Germany? What were you doing in Germany? JR: I travel to Europe a few times a year for work, either visiting our corporate headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden or working with component suppliers in Southern Germany and Switzerland. Gothenburg hosts the largest half marathon in the world with something like 60,000+ participants. Every Spring, my Swedish colleagues ask me to run the race wearing their bib numbers so that they can qualify for the faster corrals the following year and brag to their friends. JE: Have your coworkers ever seen you in short shorts? JR: A lot of my co-workers are avid cyclists, so we frequently share mutual feelings of shock when we see each other in uncomfortably revealing workout gear. I’d say the “short-shorts, shoes, watch, and nothing else” look trumps the “skin tight orange spandex from neck to knees” look any day when it comes to outfits that look out of place in the company parking lot.
Solid Performances in New Bedford
By Mike Giberti

With spring marathons in sight, many members of our running club jumped on board for the 38th running of the New Bedford Half Marathon. Held on March 15th, the race served as the 2nd installment of USATF-NE Road Grand Prix. GBTC placed 2nd on the men’s side and 3rd on the women’s side. Yuji Wakimoto crushed his debut half marathon and crossed the line as our top man with a time of 1:10:27 good for 14th overall. Andy Chalmers, Adrian MacDonald, Rob Bond, and Rob Espinosa rounded out the top five scorers, all posting times at or below 72 minutes to cover 13.11 miles. Not bad at all for training through these rough winter months!

On the women’s side of things, the bronze medal performance was led by Kerri Leonhardt with her sub-80 time of 1:19:27. Caroline Martin and Aly Millett sealed the deal for the GBTC women.

Congratulations to Nate, Sarah and Lisa!

Blondin (continued from page 1)

Even though Blondin found success racing in the Jr. Olympics (AAU back then), he says that everything “clicked” during his high school years. As a standout athlete at Bedford High, Blondin aimed to break Alberto Salazar’s Wayland Field House records. He found success in the 1000yd, and helped his team of only nine athletes win the class meet and a state title. He came within .03 seconds of Salazar’s 1000 record before moving away his senior year. He continued to gain confidence and strength before graduating.

Years later, Blondin is excited to be back on the track. He credits his GBTC teammates with helping him get back in shape, but he’s sure his speed and dedication have done the same for others. He has expressed that turning 40 and joining the Masters ranks have been “a renaissance in running” for him. Just last year, Chris pulled together a group of athletes to break a World Record in the 40+ 4x800m. He shared that his involvement in two high profile indoor races this winter have “…given us a platform to rekindle our “glory days” and show the crowds that racing doesn’t have to end at 30 or 35.”
Paulsen Meets Trials Qualifying Standard at CIM

Greater Boston Track Club is proud to share the success of distance runner Laura Paulsen. In her 26.2 debut at the California International Marathon, Laura ran an Olympic Trials Qualifying time of 2:39:54. Her performance breaks Sara Donahue's Club record of 2:43:45 set in 2007. Laura was joined by her boyfriend, Mom and family friend in Sacramento. They provided the support she needed to stay calm and navigate the surprisingly hilly course. Paulsen expressed that crossing the finish line was an overwhelming feeling. On crossing the line, Laura wrote: “To be completely exhausted, but ecstatic at the same time was a really crazy feeling. I’m sure I looked a bit odd - hunching over and walking all limp-legged, but with a big goofy grin on my face.”

Laura doesn’t plan on running another marathon before the Olympic Trials in 2016, but she’s already back racing and finding success in the Grand Prix Series. Congratulations, Laura!

Liz Ryan Awarded 2015 Margaret Bradley Award

Elizabeth Ryan, distance runner and GBTC executive board member, is the 2015 recipient of the Margaret L. Bradley Award. Margaret was a member of GBTC who lost her life while on a trail run through the Grand Canyon on July 10, 2004, at the age of 24. The intended recipient of this annual award is a female club member who will compete in a domestic event of her choosing for which GBTC will cover some or all of the expenses. The selected recipient must be someone who shares Margaret’s enthusiasm and dedication toward both personal and team goals. Liz, an athlete who excels in each aspect of distance running, credits her success to her GBTC teammates. Tom Derderian says, “Liz seems ubiquitous, road, track, or trail, and like Margaret, is always there to help the club team score as high as possible.” A special reception on April 18th will provide club members an opportunity to celebrate Liz’s success and share their favorite memories of Margaret. Visit the GBTC website (www.gbtc.org) for Margaret’s story.