# THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | NOVEMBER 2026




# GETTING READY TO TROT

## GWTC'S TURKEY TROT TRAINING GROUP PREPARES FOR THE RACE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Photo credit: Ashton Smith

VOLUME 51 | ISSUE 10

Gulf Winds Track Club

# THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | NOVEMBER 2026 VOLUME 51 | ISSUE 10

**Editor:** Robert and Kory Skrob with Alex Baglietto, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

**Columnists:** Jane Johnson (Featured Feet), Allen Blay and Jerry McDaniel (Presidents Column), Bill Lott (Race Calendar).

**Advertising Copy:**
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**Submissions/Contributions:**
Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged, the preferred format is Microsoft Word. If you have pictures or stories about your running group, don't be shy, photos should be in jpg format. Contact us if you have questions. Robert & Kory Skrob, (850) 270-8295, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

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# DIRECTORY

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# SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING RECAP

Here is a Gulf Winds Track Club Board of Directors meeting briefing about the meeting held September 9, 2026, hosted by Lisa Unger and Mary Jean Yon. The full meeting minutes are available at gulfwinds.org/minutes. To learn about future board meetings and their locations, visit gulfwinds.org/business-meetings. All GWTC members are welcome to attend any board meeting. Please join us if you are interested or curious about the work happening behind the scenes.

**November Board Meeting Rescheduled**
The November GWTC board meeting has been moved to Tuesday, November 10, to avoid Veterans Day.

**RunSignup University Attendees Share What They Learned**
Robert and Kory Skrob and Bill Dillon attended RunSignup University in Minnesota at their own expense, despite the board previously approving reimbursement for their travel expenses. Since returning, they've been sharing what they learned with GWTC race directors and other interested members.

**New Track Opens at Holy Comforter**
The new track at Holy Comforter has been hosting Tuesday morning interval workouts, with an official opening ceremony scheduled for September 10. Jerry and Jackie McDaniel planned to attend on behalf of GWTC. The club is also considering an annual fee to Holy Comforter for use of the track. Proceeds from the Springtime race have helped fund its construction, and the proposed fee would cover activities such as interval workouts and Breakfast on the Track. A recommended amount will be presented at a future meeting.

**Board Elections**
Eight candidates are running for six director-at-large positions in the upcoming GWTC election. Additional candidates may be recruited through social media, and the final ballot will be presented to the board for approval at the October meeting.

**Race Closeouts Approved**
Breakfast on the Track generated $3,110.20 in revenue and $1,816.98 in expenses, resulting in net revenue of $1,293.22. Proceeds will be divided equally between GWTC and Maclay Track and Field. The Summer Trail Series brought in $14,636.47 in revenue against $11,779.53 in expenses, resulting in net revenue of $2,856.94. Of that amount, $1,606.94 will go to GWTC, $750 to Tallahassee Friends of Our Parks and $500 to Maclay Gardens State Park Trail Maintenance. Of the 152 runners who participated in the series, 52 completed all four races, 61 ran three races, 25 ran two races and 14 ran one race. Miller Landing Madness generated $8,923.48 in revenue and $10,938.94 in expenses, resulting in a net loss of $2,015.46. An unexpected increase in participation, particularly in the 3K, required additional race shirts to be printed. The event also generated $1,249.23

# GET READY FOR THE 2026 TURKEY TROT

**Turkey Trot Training Group Begins October 5**

Join the Turkey Trot Training Group, an 8-week beginner program designed to help runners build distance, fitness, and confidence for the 5K.

## BEGINNERS WELCOME!

**MONDAYS AT 6 P.M.**
**October 5 through November 23**
Four Oaks Park in SouthWood
Meet by the volleyball courts

We'll start with a 1-mile run and gradually build to the full 5K distance. Each week, we'll preview portions of the Turkey Trot course so you'll know what to expect when Thanksgiving morning arrives.

All participants must complete the Training Groups Waiver before participating. Visit the Training section at www.gulfwinds.org to complete the waiver.

**Please remember to bring visibility gear for evening runs.**

**Contact Ashton Smith with questions: Ashtoncowansmith@gmail.com**

# YEAR ROUND RUNNING GROUPS

**Learn a lot more about running groups by visiting www.gulfwinds.org/training.**

**TUESDAY MORNING INTERVALS**
Tuesday, 6:30am at the track at Holy Comforter Episcopal School, 2001 Fleischman Road

**TUESDAY EVENING INTERVALS**
Tuesday, 6:00pm at Skate Park/Rattler Snake on FAMU Way

**MIDTOWN MIDWEEK MILES**
Wednesday, 5:30am at Whole Foods Market

**WEDNESDAY EVENING INTERVAL WORKOUT GROUP**
Wednesday, 6:00pm at Harriman Circle Park

**OPTIMIST PARK THURSDAY NIGHT GROUP RUN**
Thursday, 6pm at Optimist Park

**SUNDAY AT FOREST MEADOWS TRAIL RUN**
Sunday, 7:30am at Forest Meadows Tennis Complex

**REFLECTION TRAIL RUN**
6:30pm 1st & 3rd Sunday of each month. Tom Brown's Lafayette Heritage Trail (501 Easterwood Dr). Meet at the West Cadillac Trailhead signpost.

and 1,550 pounds of canned goods for Second Harvest, along with $725 for the Chenoweth Fund. All three race closeouts were approved by the board.

**Historic GWTC Race Films May Get New Life**
A collection of films featuring five GWTC races from 1976 to 1983 could soon become available for members to enjoy. The footage includes the Salute to Prefontaine, Springtime Tallahassee, Palace Saloon, FSU Dairy Farm Cross Country, and Run for the Pies races. Dave Rogers offered the films to the club, and Mike Schmitt will explore options for transferring the footage into a format that can be shared with members.

**2027 Race Budgets Approved**
The board approved proposed budgets for two upcoming races: the 2027 Swamp Forest Trail Races, directed by Bobby York, and the 2027 GWTC 30K/15K, directed by Zach DeVeau.

**Club Reviews New Nonprofit Legislation**
GWTC is reviewing HB 797, passed during the 2026 legislative session, which updates state law concerning nonprofit organizations and board governance. The review may result in minor changes to the club's bylaws to ensure compliance. Any proposed changes will be brought before the board at a future meeting.

**Fleet Foot Mailing Costs Under Review**
The cost of printing and mailing paper copies of Fleet Foot was discussed as part of a broader review of club communications. Currently, 297 members receive printed copies of the newsletter at an estimated annual cost of $80 per person. The board is not proposing to eliminate the printed newsletter but plans to revisit the costs and the club's various communication options at its October or November meeting. The discussion will also include the GWTC podcast. Mark Priddy also has an extensive collection of Fleet Foot issues dating back to the 1970s that he is willing to share with interested members.

**Equipment Updates**
The club experienced some difficulties with the return of race equipment, prompting several board members to offer assistance if similar situations arise. Some lights on the GWTC trailer also failed during Miller Landing Madness. Additional testing is needed to identify the problem, and a new four-prong adapter has been purchased as a precaution.

**Chip Timing Report**
In August, two non-Club races (Tallahassee Beer Festival Beer Mile and Wedding Bell 5K) and three Club races (Breakfast on the Track 1 Mile, Miller Landing Madness 8K/5K/3K and Summer Trail Series Race #4 – Maclay Gardens) were chip timed. For September, one non-Club race (Bluebird Run for Brookie B 5K) and three Club races (5K for Sickle Cell Anemia/Tim Simpkins 1 Mile, Women's Distance Festival 5K and Salute to Steve Prefontaine 5K/1 Mile Forest Run) will be chip timed.



# Turkey Trot 2026

## Thursday, November 26, 2026

**SouthWood, 4055 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Florida**

Start Thanksgiving Day with one of Tallahassee's favorite running traditions!

| DISTANCES | START TIME |
|---|---|
| 15K | 8:30 a.m. |
| 10K | 8:30 a.m. |
| 5K | 8:30 a.m. |
| 1 Mile Fun Run | 8:00 a.m. |

**Sign up or learn more at www.TallyTurkeyTrot.com**

Whether you're racing for a PR, running with family and friends, or simply making room for Thanksgiving dinner, there's a distance for you.

**1 Mile Turkey Gobbler** A flat, fast course with no hills. A great choice for families, walkers and runners of all ages.

**5K** The most popular distance, featuring a fast loop around Central Park Lake with one hill along the way.

**10K** Share the opening miles with the 5K and 15K runners before heading out on a longer tour through SouthWood.

**15K** Ready for more? Take on 9.3 miles through SouthWood for the morning's longest challenge. 15K participants should be able to finish by 10:30 a.m.

The race is chip timed, with all four distances starting and finishing on Esplanade Way.

## Register Early And Save!

Individual registration starts at **$20 without a shirt or $25 with a shirt** through November 15. Families registering three or more receive discounted pricing. GWTC members also receive a $2 discount when eligible.

## RUN. GIVE THANKS. EAT PIE.

**Training Groups Gear Up for Fall**
Bobby York will lead the Beginning Running Group, scheduled from September 23 through November 18, 2026. Training groups for the Turkey Trot and Tallahassee Half Marathon will also be announced. Fleet Feet is offering a separate half marathon training group for a fee, while GWTC's Half Marathon training group remains free.

**Race Director Resources and Support**
Planning continues for the Tallahassee Marathon and Half Marathon. The club is also working to secure licensing through the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) for copyrighted music played at races. Geoffrey Adams and Bill Dillon are assisting with gathering information. Additional efforts include documenting the process for securing Leon County Emergency Management Services support for races and exploring a Canva subscription to help race directors create promotional materials.

**Membership and Communications Continue to Grow**
GWTC currently has 459 individual memberships and 284 family memberships, for a total of 743 memberships. The club is exploring ways to encourage nonmembers who participate in GWTC races to join. GWTC's social media platforms continue to grow without paid promotion, and regular email updates remain an important way to keep members informed. The GWTC podcast has generated $1,000 in sponsorship donations. An upcoming episode will feature the Tallahassee Turkey Trot, and members are encouraged to share podcast announcements through email and social media.

**Grand Prix Planning for 2027**
The Grand Prix Committee is preparing the 2027 race schedule. Nonclub races interested in being included were asked to submit requests by September 15, 2026. All new committee members have completed training on the scoring system, and the committee continues to explore opportunities to automate scoring.

**Roberts Elementary Receives Running Grant**
The board approved a $500 grant for the running program at Roberts Elementary School.

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# RACE CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2026

**07 Working Well Corporate Cup Challenge**, 8:30 a.m. (teams of 2 with one each completing in Family Fun Run, 5K(ish) Run, Office Olympics, Wellness Warrior Challenge, AND have fastest Wellness Challenge time). XC course at Apalachee Regional Park, 7550 Apalachee Pkwy. Online registration available at Eventbrite.com. Visit www.workingwelltoday.org; or email to workingwelltlh@gmail.com.

**11 Memorial to Memorial Veterans Day 5K**, 8 a.m. Cascades Park, 1001 S. Gadsden St. (start at Florida Vietnam Veterans' Memorial - enter from Calhoun St.; finish on Suwannee St. near Korean War Memorial in Cascades Park). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Bob Asztalos at Bob.Asztalos@FDVA.FL.GOV.

**13 NCAA Division I South Region Cross-Country Championships**, 9:30 a.m. women's 6K; 10:30 a.m. men's 10K. XC Course at Apalachee Regional Park, 7550 Apalachee Pkwy. Visit www.ncaa.com.

**20 FHSAA Cross-Country State Championships**, 7:20 a.m. 1A girls; 7:45 a.m. 2A girls; 8:10 a.m. 1A boys; 8:35 a.m. 2A boys; 9:00 a.m. 3A girls; 9:25 4A girls; 9:50 a.m. 3A boys; 10:15 a.m. 4A boys. XC Course at Apalachee Regional Park, 7550 Apalachee Pkwy. Visit www.fhsaa.org.

**21 Art Fest Half Marathon/10K/5K/1M**, 8:30 a.m. half marathon; 9 a.m. 10K; 9:30 a.m. 5K; 10 a.m. 1M. The Arts Center of Moultrie, 401 7th Ave. SW, Moultrie, GA. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Krysta Porteus at programs@moultriearts.org.

**22 Marching Chiefs 5K**, 9 a.m. Bill Harkins Field (Chiefs Field), located next to the Flying High Circus, FSU Campus. Additional information and online registration available at www.marchingchiefs5k.com. Aiden McIlvenna at racedirector.mc5k@gmail.com; or Audra Cantrell at coracedirector.mc5k@gmail.com.

**26 GWTC Tallahassee Turkey Trot 15K/10K/5K/1M**, 8 a.m. 1M; 8:30 a.m. 15K/10K/5K. Southwood State Office Complex, 4055 Esplanade Way. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit http://tallyturkeytrot.com; or David Yon at david@radeylaw.com.

## DECEMBER 2026

**04 HurriGains 5K Glow Run**, 6 p.m. Florida State University Schools, 3000 School House Rd. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit https://www.floridadiaster.org/5k/; or Casey Bruno at casey.bruno@em.myflorida.com.

**05 GWTC 10M/5M Challenge**, 8 a.m. Hawks Rise Elementary School, 205 Meadow Ridge Rd. - use Meridian Rd. parking lot entrance. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Mark Tombrink at marktombrink@gmail.com.

**05 Jingle Bell Run**, 6:15 p.m. Corner of S. Monroe St. and Park Ave. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.talgov.com; or Tallahassee Parks & Recreation at 891-3866 or 891-3860.

**05 AAU Cross Country National Championships**, 8:20 a.m. open/masters 5K; 9 a.m. 15-18 girls 5K; 9:30 a.m. 15-18 boys 5K; 10 a.m. 13-14 girls 4K; 10:30 a.m. 13-14 boys 4K; 11 a.m. 11-12 girls 3K; 11:30 a.m. 11-12 boys 3K; 12 p.m. 9-10 girls 3K; 12:30 p.m. 9-10 boys 3K; 1 p.m. 7-8 girls 2K; 1:30 p.m. 7-8 boys 2K; 2 p.m. 6U girls/boys 1K; 2:15 p.m. parents/coaches 3K. XC Course at Apalachee Regional Park, 7550 Apalachee Pkwy. Visit www.aausports.org; or www.visittallahassee.com; or Chad Culver at c2culver@gmail.com or (423) 827-4977.

**12 GWTC Tallahassee Ultra Distance Classic 50K/25K/10K**, 7 a.m. 50K/25K; 7:30 a.m. 10K. J. Lewis Hall Park, 1492 J. Lewis Hall Park Lane, Woodville, FL. Online registration available at UltraSignup.com. John Baughman at jtbaughman@yahoo.com; or Travis Crow at robertcrow2018@outlook.com.

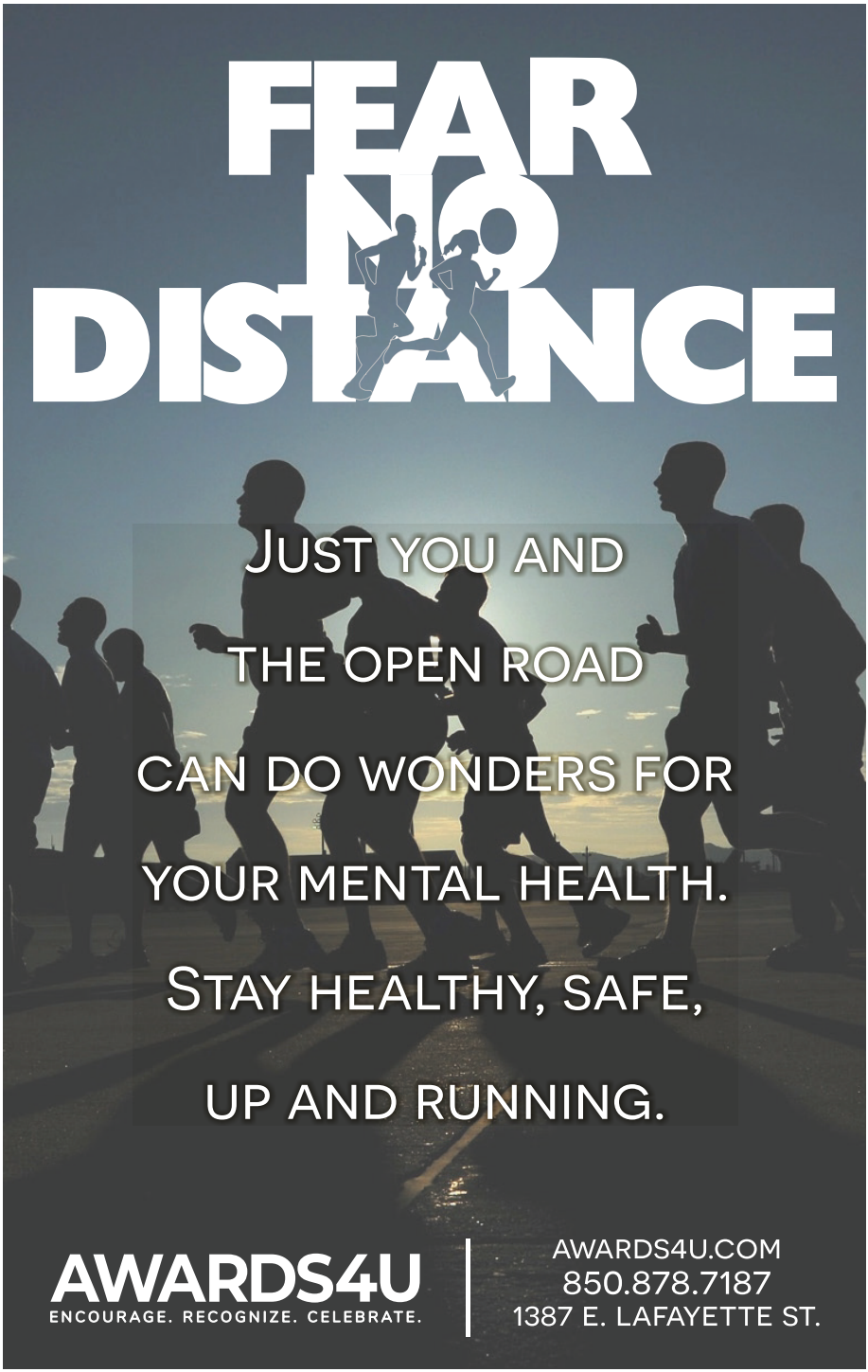
**19 GWTC Tannenbaum 6K Cross-Country Run**, 9 a.m. XC Course at Apalachee Regional Park, 7550 Apalachee Pkwy. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Herb Wills at hwills@gmail.com; or Judy Alexander at jalexander98@comcast.net.

**31 New Year's Eve Ball Drop 5K Run/Walk**, 8 a.m. (CT). Frank Brown Park, 16200 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Joe Edgecombe at joeruns@ yahoo.com.

# JANUARY 2027

**01 33nd Annual Wilde Mountain Scramble** (approximately 5M, unless you cheat), 8:30 a.m. SHARP!!! Forestmeadows Park and Athletic Center, 4750 N. Meridian Rd. Don't forget state park pass or entry fee. Race entry fee: $2 or $2 of scratch-off lottery tickets and a gift you don't mind pawning off on a fellow runner. As always, whining, fussing or even the slightest grumble gets you disqualified. Pre-race contact forbidden.

**09 GWTC Swamp Forest Trail Run (Quarter Marathon/Half Marathon/20.4M)**, 8 a.m. Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Gate B, 1775 Miller Landing Rd. (1.3 miles west of Meridian Rd. on Miller Landing Rd.). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Bobby York at byorkjr@msn.com.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**16** **GWTC 30K/15K**, 8 a.m. The Retreat at Bradley's Pond, 9002 Bradley Rd. (across from Bradley's Country Store on Old Centerville Rd.). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Zach DeVeau at zach.deveau@gmail.com.

**23** **GWTC Bowlegs Run for Scholarship 5K/1M Run/Walk**, 9 a.m. FSU/FAMU Engineering Building, InnovationPark, 2525 Pottsdamer St. (across from Seminole Golf Course). Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Visit www.GulfWinds.org; or Bill Hillison at (850) 893-4557 or whillison@fsu.edu; or Larry Giunipero at (850) 878-5569 or lgiunipero@cob.fsu.edu.

**23** **Motion to Move 5K**, 9 a.m. 4050 Esplanade Way. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Alberto Garcia Marrero at (786) 520-7632 or agarcia3370@gmail.com.

**23** **Mardi Gras 5K Run/Walk and 1M Fun Run/Walk**, 8 a.m. (CT) 5K Run/Walk; 9:15 (CT) 1M Fun Run/Walk. Frank Brown Park, 16200 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, FL. Online registration available at RunSignUp.com. Joe Edgecombe at joeruns@ yahoo.com.

Tallahassee, FL
Gulf Winds Track Club
# GRAND PRIX

All GWTC members receive points for finishing in the top 12 positions by age group for Grand Prix events. It's a fun way to compete with fellow members throughout the year.

## 2026 Complete Grand Prix Schedule

| Date | Race | Adult | Youth |
|---|---|---|---|
| November 26 | Turkey Trot 15K, 10K, 5K, & 1M | 15K | 5K or 1M |
| December 5 | GWTC 10 & 5 MC | 10M or 5M | - |
| December 12 | Ultra 50K & 50M | 50K or 50M | - |
| December 19 | Tannenbaum 6K | 6K | - |

## GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Get the complete 2026 standings by visiting:
https://runsignup.com/Series/GWTCGrandPrix



# 5 & 10 MILE CHALLENGE

## Saturday, December 5, 2026

Get those miles in before the year wraps up.
Join us for a race that's fast, friendly, and a little bit fierce.

**Race Options:**
5 Mile or 10 Mile – both start at 8:00 a.m.

**Location:**
Hawks Rise Elementary, 205 Meadow Ridge Dr. 32312

**Registration:**
5 Mile Challenge is $25 to register, 10 Mile Challenge is $30. Price increases by $5 after December 3 at 6 p.m. EST.

**Packet Pickup:**
Thursday, December 3, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
at Location To Be Determined
Race morning beginning at 7:00 a.m.

**Awards:**
Top 3 Overall Male & Female in both distances
Male and Female Master

**Push your pace. Test your limits.**

**Take the Challenge: RunSignUp.com/GWTCTenMileChallenge**



# PRESIDENTS COLUMN

By: Jerry McDaniel, GWTC President

After four years, I have chosen not to run for President again, thereby making room for new leadership. As such, this will be my final column since Allen Blay (VP) and I alternate each month. This is one innovation I decided upon when I started, with Jennifer Hay (former VP) agreeing to this change so that the membership could hear different perspectives and ideas about GWTC each month. I hope this has proven beneficial to members.

Reflecting on some of the changes and challenges we have dealt with over the last four years got me to perusing the minutes for these years. At their core, Board meetings approve race budgets and closeouts and run through a variety of reports regarding finances, equipment, communications, group runs, etc. We routinely raise and attempt to resolve issues that occur in these areas. However, the number of innovations and sometimes controversial issues that have occurred is amazing. Our Board has done an incredible job of tackling these things while maintaining good meeting decorum, keeping the club on stable financial footing, putting on a wide variety of road and off-road races at varying distances, and keeping a strong pipeline of youth running programs afloat.

A sampling of the more noteworthy issues the Board took up and resolved over the last four years:

**2023**

- Start of greater focus on social media
- Start of mandatory volunteerism in order to participate in Grand Prix
- Begin usage of new timing system offered through RunSignUp
- Advocacy opposing Dempsey Mayo Road Extension through Greenway
- Start of Leon County Track Closure debate
- Rex Cleveland Magic Mile ceases and “GWTC Legacies - Remembering” initiated
- Start of Group Run efforts and FB page

**2024**

- Start “Running Shorts” email
- Revamp of Bylaws to shrink Board and consolidate duties
- Miccosukee Greenway floods and GWTC gets involved
- GWTC Marathon/Half secures title sponsor - Bank of America

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# PRESIDENTS COLUMN CONTINUED

- Begin gearing up for World Athletics Cross Country Championships
- Creation of Volunteer Coordinator and database
- Participate in Miccosukee Greenway Management Plan update
- Start of summer GWTC Town Hall meetings

**2025**

- Participate in Alford Greenway Management Plan update
- GWTC moves significant donation to World X-Country event
- Formalize GWTC partnership with Holy Comforter Episcopal School re: track
- GWTC initiates podcasts
- Initiate trademark use re: RUN TLH
- GWTC receives "Outstanding Community Organization" award

**2026**

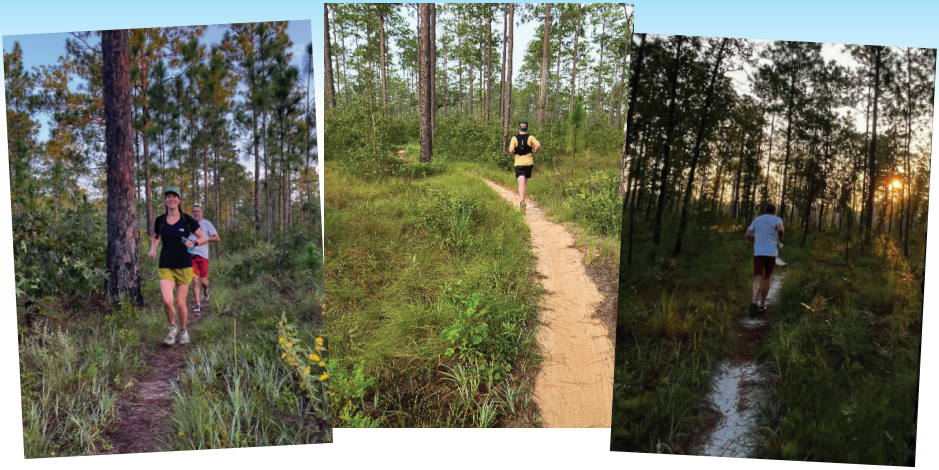
- Volunteer Recognition Policy adopted
- GWTC races move to dynamic bib assignment
- Privacy Policy adopted
- Contract to pay GWTC Marathon/Half Race Directors instituted
- Bylaws revamped due to new legislation governing not-for-profits

In retrospect, I would have to say that the current year has been the most challenging for the club during my tenure. I am thankful for the privilege of working with committed Board members to see us through some of the difficult issues. As I ponder this past year, two things become evident to me in terms of how I have chosen to try and conduct my affairs—these learned from two sources, my father and my professional career. One—from my dad—if you make a commitment, you see it through, if at all possible. From my career—if you do not have a seat at the table, you cannot effect change or even have a voice on any given outcome.

I wish to thank the Board members I have served with for their help and counsel along the way, for none of what makes GWTC great could have been achieved without them. I especially wish to thank certain longtime Board members whom I have repeatedly tapped for help over the years (they know who they are). I cannot thank them enough.

Voting for the 2027 Board is open now, so please vote. Based on the ballot I have seen, you will have an excellent Board composition going forward!

# TALLAHASSEE ULTRA DISTANCE CLASSIC



## SATURDAY 12.12.26

## 50K | 25K | 10K

**1492 J. Lewis Hall Sr. Lane, Tallahassee, FL**

Experience Tallahassee's wild side at the Tallahassee Ultra Distance Classic! Run through the scenic Munson Hills and Twilight Trail System, where winding singletrack, sandy trails and rolling terrain offer a challenge for runners of all levels. Whether you're taking on your first trail race or going the distance with a 50K, there's a course for you!

### START TIMES

50K – 7 a.m. | 25K – 7 a.m. | 10K – 7:30 a.m.

### COURSE INFORMATION:

The 25K and 50K have a 10-hour cutoff. Aid stations are located at miles 7.5 and 23, with an additional station at the start/finish area (mile 15.6). Water is also available at approximately miles 2.5, 11 and 27.

**Registration Closes Thursday, December 10 at noon**
**Don't Miss Out! Register Today at**
**https://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=142650**



## FEATURED FEET

# JESSICA LOWE-MINOR

**Childhood ambition:** Olympian. In any sport.

**Current occupation:** Nonprofit executive.

**If money were no object, what profession would you choose?** Philanthropist. Who wouldn't want to have tons of money to give away?

**Favorite running memory:** Finishing the GWTC 30K up at Bradley's. The course is so beautiful, and the fellow runners and volunteers are incredible. They really create a strong sense of community, and their applause as I crossed the finish line made me cry happy tears.

**Indulgence:** A chocolate cupcake with white icing from The Cake Shop. They're the best.

**Preferred running technology:** I love my Topos! I have one pair for road runs and one pair for the trail. Both are great.

**Non-running hobbies:** Horseback riding, yoga and reading. Also, I really love podcasts.

**Favorite reads:** The ACOTAR series by Sarah J. Maas. Book 6 just came out, and Book 7 will be out in January. Can't wait!

**Best place to run in Tallahassee:** Lake Overstreet Trail. It's gorgeous, shaded and really allows you to commune with nature. Plus, there's an awesome water fountain at exactly the right spot!

**Biggest challenge:** Physical challenge? The Tallahassee Marathon. So many hills!

**Mental challenge?** Raising two daughters who are just as stubborn as their mom. Which reminds me that I need to send my mom some flowers. I don't know how she put up with me and my sister!

**Perfect day:** A Sunday morning run at Lake Overstreet, then church with the family, followed by brunch at Canopy Road Cafe. Next, a trip to the barn to ride my horse. After that, some family time and phone calls with friends. In the evening, a yoga class at Rising Om, then watching a new episode of Ted Lasso with my husband (who has, of course, already handled the kids' nighttime routines so I don't have to! We are talking about a perfect day, after all). Life is good.

# Gulf Winds Track Club
# We Run This Town

## 50 Years of Tradition: The Tallahassee Turkey Trot Story

**Host: Mickey Moore**

*Featuring Race directors David and Mary Jean Yon and future race directors Danny and Allison Manausa*




The Tallahassee Turkey Trot has come a long way since its first race in 1976. In this episode of We Run This Town, longtime race directors Mary Jean and David Yon join Danny Manausa, who, along with his wife, Allison, is preparing to take over leadership of the event.

Together, they look back at how the Turkey Trot began, share memorable moments from its 50-year history and discuss what makes the race such a special Thanksgiving tradition in Tallahassee.

### From 200 Runners to Nearly 6,600

The Turkey Trot didn't start out as the Thanksgiving morning tradition we know today. The original race in 1976 was part of GWTC's effort to offer runners different distances, and over the years, it went through several names and locations. It wasn't until 1992 that it officially became the Turkey Trot and moved to Thanksgiving Day. That year, about 200 runners participated.

Today, the race attracts thousands, with nearly 6,600 people registering last year. The 50th anniversary event returns to SouthWood this year, offering the 1-Mile Turkey Gobbler, 5K, 10K and 15K. As Mary Jean explained, having four distances means there's something for just about everyone. "Pick whatever distance you want," she said, emphasizing how important it is for runners and walkers of all abilities to feel welcome.

### A Few Bumps Along the Way

Getting to 50 years hasn't been without a few challenges. The race has been held near Natural Bridge Road, FSU, the Civic Center, Tram Road, and the fairgrounds before finding its current home in SouthWood. Some of those early courses worked better

# Podcast




than others. David recalled a time when the race had grown too large for Tram Road, leaving runners heading in opposite directions on a narrow stretch of pavement. Another experiment at SouthWood had runners from different distances approaching the finish from different directions at nearly the same time. The stories offered a reminder of just how much planning goes into organizing four races on the same morning.

### Passing the Torch After Nearly 30 Years

Mary Jean and David have spent nearly three decades directing the Turkey Trot, but they're gradually handing over responsibility to Danny and Allison. The transition began about three years ago, giving the them time to learn the many details involved in putting on the event. Danny joked that their biggest responsibility is simple: "Don't mess it up." But behind the humor is a real appreciation for what the Yons have built. The goal isn't to change everything. It's to keep the tradition going and allow it to grow along with the community. And while Mary Jean and David may eventually step away from directing the race, they don't plan on disappearing from Thanksgiving morning.

### Some Very Fast Thanksgiving Mornings

The Turkey Trot has attracted plenty of talented runners over the years, and several course records have stood for decades. Paul Waldron's 46:26 men's 15K record and Carla Borovicka's 53:36 women's record date back to the 1980s, when the course included some challenging hills around the Civic Center. Other standout performances include Chris Haynes' 31:34 in the 10K in 2019, Amy Hines' 34:21 in 2021, Matt Mizereck's 14:46 in the 5K in 2010 and Violah Lagat's 16:26 in 2012. The conversation also recognized longtime competitors such as Jane Johnson, Sheryl Rosen, Chris Lake, and Stan Linton, whose performances have become part of the race's history.

### The Story Behind the Turtle

Ever wonder why a turtle appears on Turkey Trot shirts, medals and other memorabilia? The answer goes back to the race's earliest charitable beneficiary, the local homeless shelter. Christie Koontz, who was involved with the shelter, helped establish the connection, and the turtle became a symbol of the idea that it carries its home on its back. The shelter eventually became the Kearney Center, but the turtle stayed. Over the years, it's appeared in running shoes, raced against a turkey, and become one of the event's most recognizable symbols.

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### Running for a Good Cause

The Turkey Trot has always been about more than finishing times. Today, race proceeds benefit the Kearney Center, Refuge House and Boys & Girls Clubs of the Big Bend. The Turkey Trot Heroes program also gives participants an opportunity to make additional donations to the charities. Last year, the program raised approximately $12,000, and each of the three organizations received an estimated $16,000 to $18,000 from the event and associated donations. Danny pointed out that the race's volunteer-driven structure helps keep registration fees affordable while allowing GWTC to give back to the community. For many participants, knowing their registration supports local organizations is another reason to show up each Thanksgiving morning.

### The People Who Make It Happen

Behind every successful Turkey Trot is a large group of volunteers, many of whom have been showing up for decades. They handle everything from registration and water stations to parking, course support, and the finish line. Mary Jean recalled the days before chip timing, when she and David spent hours manually entering race results after everyone had gone home. Today, runners can check their finishing times online within minutes, thanks to GWTC's timing volunteers. The group also shared stories about volunteers who stayed at their posts through pouring rain and community organizations that return year after year to help make the event possible. As Danny put it, "It's a community of volunteers helping the community."

### Fifty Years of Thanksgiving Tradition

For Mary Jean and David, the milestone is a chance to look back at the people they've met and the relationships they've built through the race. For Danny, reaching 50 years means the Turkey Trot has become something bigger than an annual running event. "You don't magically become a tradition," he said. And that's what makes the race special. Families return year after year, some with several generations participating together. Others come to walk a mile, run their first 5K, or challenge themselves in the 15K. Whatever brings them out, they're all part of the same Thanksgiving morning tradition.

### Join the 50th Anniversary Celebration

The 50th Tallahassee Turkey Trot takes place Thanksgiving morning, November 26, at SouthWood. Registration is available through RunSignup, and volunteers and sponsors are welcome. Visit www.tallyturkeytrot.com for details.

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**Listen to this full episode and future stories from our running community on the We Run This Town podcast—available on the Gulf Winds website, YouTube and wherever you listen to podcasts.**

# A RACE AGAINST THE WEATHER

## The Decisions, Challenges, and Preparations Behind the Pine Run Cancellation

Months of planning go into putting on a successful race. From coordinating volunteers and preparing the course to ordering shirts and awards, there's plenty of work that happens long before runners arrive at the starting line. But what happens when Mother Nature has other plans?

That's exactly what happened to this year's GWTC Pine Run 20K at Tall Timbers, scheduled for October 10. With Hurricane Isaias approaching and forecasts calling for heavy rain, lightning and possible tornadoes, race directors Carter and Jennifer Hay faced a decision no race director wants to make: cancel the event or risk the safety of runners and volunteers.

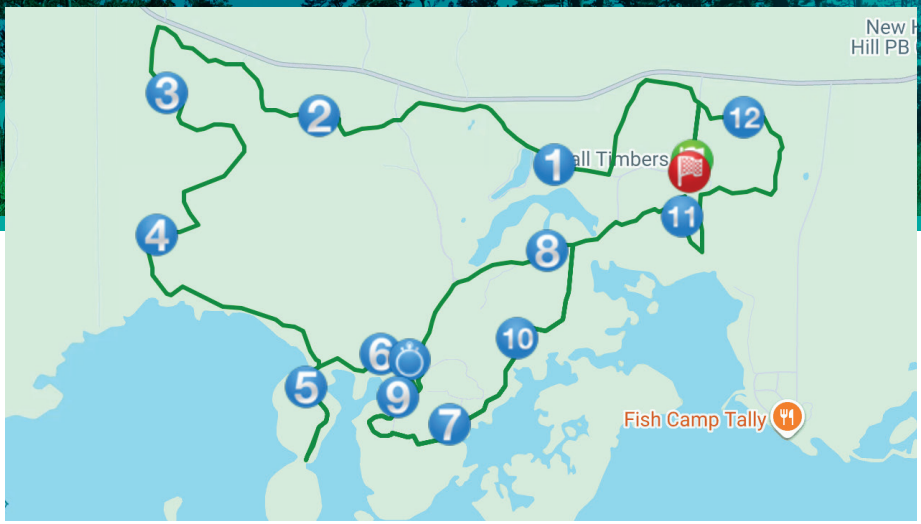
Now in its sixth year, the Pine Run has become a special event on the Gulf Winds Track Club calendar. Held at Tall Timbers Research Station, the race offers runners a rare opportunity to explore a beautiful research forest that is otherwise closed to running. The challenging 20K course winds through pine forests, grassy trails and rolling hills, with views of Lake Iamonia along the way.

Planning for the race typically begins four to five months in advance, with preparations gradually picking up as race day approaches. Fortunately, the partnership with Tall Timbers makes some aspects of race planning easier.

"Our planning benefits greatly from Tall Timbers providing us a beautiful guaranteed venue with no hassles from permitting or city/police coordination," Carter explained.

This year, organizers had several new additions in the works. Registration numbers for the 14K rucking option, which the race continues to promote and grow, were looking promising. They were also preparing to introduce RaceJoy, a tracking feature that would allow friends and family to follow participants' progress along the course, along with automated photo capture near the 10K mark.

With help from David Landis and Robert and Kory Skrob, those additions were coming together, giving organizers even more to look forward to on race day.




**Unfortunately, the weather had other ideas.**

By Wednesday night, just three days before the race, forecasts were becoming increasingly concerning. Heavy rainfall, lightning and the possibility of tornadoes were expected to affect the Tallahassee area Friday night and potentially into Saturday morning.

**"By Wednesday night, we knew things were trending badly, not just for our event but for anything in Tallahassee," Carter said.**

As the forecast worsened, other cancellations began rolling in. Florida State University's Pre-State high school cross country races, scheduled for Friday evening and Saturday morning, were canceled. Leon County was included in a declared state of emergency, and by Thursday, both FSU and Leon County Schools had announced closures.

The race directors also reached out to fellow GWTC member and meteorologist Ryan Truchelut, better known as the Weather Tiger, for his assessment.

Truchelut confirmed that the expected heavy rainfall and potential for tornadoes would likely lead to the cancellation of most, if not all, outdoor events in Tallahassee that weekend.

**"At that point, the writing was on the wall," Carter said.**

While canceling a race is never an easy decision, the circumstances made the choice relatively straightforward. The biggest concern wasn't simply whether runners would have to navigate muddy trails. It was whether organizers could reasonably guarantee everyone's safety.

Unlike a road race, where emergency vehicles can generally access much of the course, the Pine Run takes participants deep into a large forest. Heavy rainfall, even the day before the event, could make portions of the course inaccessible to trucks and emergency vehicles. Fallen trees and other storm damage could create additional hazards.

"We might not even be able to fully get out on the course to know how it had fared and whether we had a bunch of downed trees," Carter explained. "Ultimately, if something went wrong, we wouldn't be able to respond effectively."

Waiting until Friday evening or Saturday morning to make a final decision wasn't a realistic option, either. The size and location of the course require significant advance preparation, and the forecast left little room for uncertainty.

As Carter explained, much of the behind-the-scenes decision-making comes down to avoiding a careless or impulsive call that could turn out to be dangerous.

In the end, the forecasted Friday night rainfall was severe enough that the race would likely have been canceled even if organizers had waited longer.

**Of course, canceling the race didn't mean all those months of preparation had gone to waste.**

One of the more interesting aspects of the Pine Run is how organizers plan ahead for unexpected circumstances. For example, the race shirts never include the year, precisely because something like this could happen.

"Our shirts never have the year printed on them—precisely for this reason—so this year's shirt just officially became next year's shirt," Carter said.

The purchased awards will also be saved for 2027, meaning much of the money already spent can still be put to good use.

Another major advantage is the race's relationship with Tall Timbers, which provides the venue at no cost. Without the expense of renting a facility or losing money on other nonrefundable arrangements, organizers were able to offer participants refunds.

**"Many races can't do refunds because they've had to spend money that they can't get back," Carter explained. "But in our case, we were happy to be able to issue a refund."**

And while the cancellation was disappointing, the response from the running community was overwhelmingly supportive.

According to Carter, participants, sponsors and volunteers were understanding of the circumstances and the challenges involved in managing a 20K course through a large forest.

"It's a terrific group who I think understand the challenges posed by a 20K course spread out through a big forest," he said.

For Carter and Jennifer, the Pine Run is about much more than organizing another race. It's also an opportunity to introduce runners to one of the region's most beautiful natural areas and support an organization dedicated to protecting it.

"For us, the most unique thing about this race will always be Tall Timbers," Carter said. "Getting a chance to run a race through a beautiful research forest makes this a wonderful race to run and a real joy to direct."

The partnership also helps highlight the important conservation work Tall Timbers does throughout the Big Bend, protecting natural areas so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Although the 2026 Pine Run didn't happen as planned, there's already plenty to look forward to next year. Organizers hope to introduce the RaceJoy tracking and automated photography features originally planned for this year's event, while continuing to expand participation in the 14K ruck.

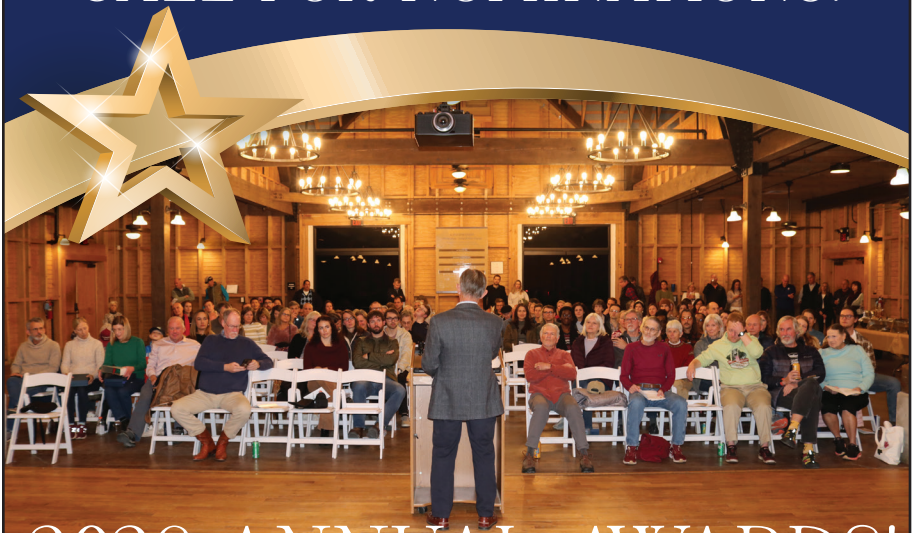
And for those who were disappointed not to make it to the starting line this October, Carter has a simple message:

**"Thanks for your patience during race week as we gathered all the information for making a decision! And we look forward to seeing you at the Pine Run in 2027!"**




**Need to volunteer to get your Grand Prix award? contact Tina Bahmer, 307-286-3725.**

# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!



# 2026 ANNUAL AWARDS!

**It's that time of year again!**

It's that time of year again! The Gulf Winds Track Club is excited to announce that nominations are now open for the 2026 Annual Awards. These awards honor the dedication, passion, and achievements of our members who make outstanding contributions to our club and community.

If someone has inspired you, supported you, or made your running life better in any way, this is your chance to acknowledge them and give them the appreciation they deserve.

**Scan the QR to download an application and submit your nominations today.**

Tallahassee, FL
**Gulf Winds Track Club**

NOMINATION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15, 2026



## Hall of Fame

Gulf Winds Track Club members who have brought respect to the club through their contributions, activities, and running accomplishments, and who have played a major role in shaping the ideals of the club are recognized when inducted into our Hall of Fame.

## Runners of the Year

In naming its Runners of the Year, Gulf Winds Track Club seeks to honor those club members, active in the club, who, besides achieving outstanding times in the past year at various distances in local, regional, and national events, have served as models for all of us in their competitive spirit, their continuing devotion to the sport, and their support and encouragement of their fellow runners, both individually and as members of Gulf Winds.

## Tris of the Year

This award will be given to both a male and female GWTC triathlete, active in the club, whose love of triathlon is demonstrated not only in competition, but also in commitment, service & inspiration. This award was first given in 1999.

## Community Award

To an organization or individual who, over a period of years, through financial or other contributions, has supported running in the community at large.

## Volunteer of the Year

To a club member, active in the club, deemed representative of those club members who contribute hours of time assisting in club activities and who often go unrecognized by the club at large.

## Race Director of the Year

In recognition of a GWTC member who has taken a major responsibility in production of quality events, especially those favored by GWTC runners, whether by initiation or direction of the event or by coordination of a major aspect of such event.

## Caldwell-Cleveland Advancement of the Sport

In 1984 GWTC recognized Michael Caldwell's contribution to the sport with this award for his publication of Racing South Magazine and organization of the Racing South Grand Prix (both now owned by Running Journal). The award was known as the Michael Caldwell Advancement of the Sport Award until 2001 when Rex Cleveland, who served as the editor of the Fleet Foot since 1983, retired. To recognize Rex's outstanding contribution to the sport and to GWTC, the award was renamed the Cleveland – Caldwell Award. The award is given in recognition of those who make significant contributions to the advancement of the sport, whether through research, education or some other area of expertise.

**NOMINATION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15, 2026**



## FEATURED FEET

# AARON SUKO

**Childhood ambition:** Before starting kindergarten, I wanted to be a baseball player, train conductor, and/or cowboy.

**Current occupation:** I manage Full Earth Farm with my wife, Katie. We grow vegetables using organic methods in Quincy, Florida, and sell mostly in Tallahassee. It's a small-scale operation and a constant hustle, and I love it. We started the farm in 2009.

**If money were no object, what profession would you choose?** Maybe just farm 3–5 of my favorite crops to work with and give them all to a food bank.

**Favorite running memory:** Watching my late best friend, Mike Nesius, complete the Pikes Peak Marathon in September 2022 in Colorado. Then, running my first ultra at the Pine Mountain Trail Race 40-miler in Georgia in December 2024 in honor of Mike on what would have been his 40th birthday. Katie and Mike's wife and son met me at the aid stations along the course. Hearing their voices, and especially their laughter, through the trees before I could see them was unforgettable and very motivating. My goal was to finish by sundown, and I beat the sunset by at least 40 minutes—and was paced the last 100 meters to the finish by Mike's then-4-year-old son. I was inspired to run longer distances by Mike, so completing that race and having his son there with me is a very special memory.

**Indulgence:** I am very food motivated. From my day job to my free time, I am usually either growing, cooking, fermenting, thinking about, or eating food. I like traveling to other cities or countries and trying as much local food as I can. I like making food for friends and family and enjoying others' home-cooked food.

**Preferred running technology:** None at all, although I typically train with an older, basic Garmin watch. My best 5K races have been without it or when I cover it with a wristband and just run by feel.

**Non-running hobbies:** Cycling, roller skating, making pizza, and reading.

**Favorite reads:** Running-related: The Lost Art of Running by Shane Benzie. I just finished the Three-Body Problem sci-fi trilogy by Cixin Liu, and it's so good. Mark Twain's Joan of Arc, Leonardo Padura's The Man Who Loved Dogs, Marlon James' History of Seven Killings, Isabel Allende's House of Spirits.

**Best place to run in Tallahassee:** Munson Hills and Twilight trails in the Apalachicola National Forest just south of town during fall wildflower season.

**Biggest challenge:** Getting enough time for rest so I can have the strength and energy to do all the stuff I like to do. Sometimes I bike more. Sometimes I run more. Sometimes I spend more time working at the farm, depending on the time of year and weather. Also, having time to spend with friends so I don't turn into a grumpy, old, lonely man. We have enough of those already.

**Perfect day:** RAW Sunday = Running and Waffles Sunday. Every few months on a Sunday, with some friends, I run trails, then make sourdough waffles with lots of toppings and drink a mimosa and/or an espresso martini. Then just hang out with Katie and maybe make pizza later that day.

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# Half Marathon
## TRAINING GROUP

**November 14, 2026 - January 30, 2027**

Looking to run your first half marathon and don't know where to get started? This training group will have you ready for the Tallahassee Half Marathon on February 7, 2027.

The group will meet **every Saturday at 7:05am** in **Cascades Park, by The Edison,** for a 7:15am start.

The goal is to have three pace groups.
**9-10 min/miles, 11-12 min/miles, and a run/walk group.**

*All paces and abilities are welcome!*

Distance will start around 3 miles and increase weekly.

Routes will be posted on Facebook, Instagram, Strava, and in the RunGo app.

Restrooms and water fountains available in park.

Visit **www.gulfwinds.org** to complete the "GWTC Training Groups Waiver" under the Training section. Consider joining the club or renewing membership while visiting the site!

Go **https://www.tallahasseemarathon.com/** to register for the race.

For additional information or to volunteer contact:
Monica Judd at monicamjackson@gmail.com or Geoffrey Adams at gadams52@gmail.com

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Tallahassee MARATHON & HALF MARATHON