

*“The Nation’s Most Unusual and Entertaining  
Running Publication . . . Ever.”*



# THE RAMBLINGS

THE UNDERGROUND GRAND PRIX NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2007

## VIRGINIA TECH

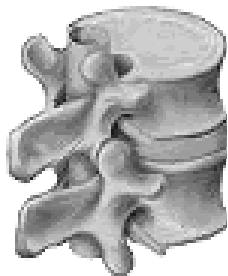
*BLACKBURG SEES 33 DEAD AND 29 HURT IN THE WORST SHOOTING IN U.S. HISTORY*

Normally we have an unwritten axiom of bringing out humor and poking fun of as many different situations and people as we possibly can. It goes without saying there is nothing humorous or light hearted about the tragedy that happened at Virginia Tech earlier this month. You don't have to be a Tech fan or alumni to be effected by this catastrophe; all you really have to be is human.



One thing we will do is to stick to our philosophy of non-political views and truly believe we are not so obtuse as to make suggestions or raise questions about how or why this occurred or how it could have been prevented. Instead we will, for whatever it is worth, extend our hearts, thoughts and prayers to all those families and friends whose lives are now forever changed.

We hope all of you dedicate a run, walk, bike – whatever – to those affected by this senseless act of violence.

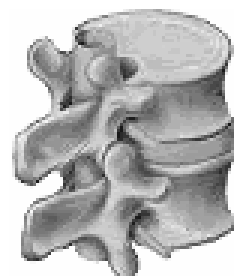


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**You say you have weight issues? A baby whale gains 200 lbs. a day.**



## Our/Your Religion Has Been Named!

We got some great responses for naming what we are sure will be the next great religion. We considered names like: Heathenism, Sauconweiserism and AJ Towney wrote "F&%k off!" When the smoke cleared, the submission of "The Church of What's Happening Now!" from Mark Shaw of Maryland was selected. Mark is not only a subscriber (and a bit touched in the head), but he is also the race director for the spring marathon held in Ocean City, MD. So, for your efforts Mark, we are making your marathon the Mecca of our newly formed religion. It will be the Boston, NYC and Chicago marathons all rolled into one for us. We are talking the Polo Grounds, Yankee Stadium and Wrigley Field of the classic distance. And if you wanted us to use your birthday instead, piss off this is what you're getting. Amen.

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## OUT OF THE CAVE...

By Dean Clifton



The Ramblings has a diverse group of subscribers spread out all over the United States and world. The Cannibal thought it might be good to write a few articles covering what is happening out West. Since I live out West and enjoy running on the trails I thought I would share my personal favorites so far:

10. Red Rock Canyon-Nevada: About 15 miles north of Las Vegas but once you get out here it feels like the middle of nowhere. Sebastian Bach with Skid Row runs out here in his efforts to help combat his alcoholism. Also, you can run by a house that Howard Hughes used to bring his starlet girlfriends to.

9. Fairyland Trail-Bryce Canyon-Utah: I actually ran on this one after reading Cat's article. Elevation is about 7500 feet, landscape is surreal. The Hoodoo's look like giant sand-castles.

8. Topanga Canyon-California: This is where Fleetwood Mac used to hang out; a tiny little hippie enclave just outside of Santa Monica with killer trails. Also, M\*A\*S\*H and Planet of the Apes where filmed here.

7. Whiting Ranch-California: I run on this trail more than any other mainly because it is about a mile from my house. Made famous by Mark Reynolds a few years ago who was jumped and killed by a mountain lion while changing a tire on his mountain bike. There is a nice memorial to him at the top of "Dreaded Hill" trail.

6. Aliso-Wood Canyon-California: I warned Tommy of the rattlesnakes on this trail and sure enough we saw a big fat one stretched across the trail. Talk about spooked the rest of the way . . . what a Mary.

5. Devastation Trail-Kona Hawaii: One of the most diverse trails I have run on; lush tropical feel one minute, running along side a barren waste land of steaming volcanic craters the next. It ends up next to a pitch black lava tube you can walk into.

4. Joshua Tree-Boy Scout Trail-California: If you want to feel isolated and alone, this is your place. Weird rock formations and the high desert give this a feel like none other. When you run this 16 mile trail you will think you just got done running a marathon. Rock climbers, freaked out hippies and Indians hang out here, my kind of place.

3. Pfeiffer State Park-Big Sur California: I was in awe of the giant redwoods, truly a joy to run here. A crystal clear river runs next to the trail system, really nice!

2. Angel Bright Trail-Arizona-The trail down to the Colorado River on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. You sort of forget you are running, hard to explain. You have to do this before you die, really. Warning . . . leave very early . . . bring lots of water . . . also, watch your step, it is a long way down. Just and fyi, if anyone is interested I have a book listing all the ways people have died in the Grand Canyon.

1. Wonderland Trail-Washington-Located in Ranier National Park, in a word "Nirvana". This is a 91 mile trail around Mt. Ranier . . . my favorite! It just sustained some major damage as a result of the 100 year rains that happened last November....it will take 2-3 years to get the trail back up to speed.

**Coaches Corner** – Don't have any good hills to train on? Try this: head to the nearest High School and run up and down the bleachers to get a hill workout in – just not in the rain.

#### A LETTER FROM OUR READERS:

Dear **RAMBLINGS**,

I just ate something that was bad, and I need to get sick and empty my stomach, and reading your trash is so bad, it makes me want to puke.

Yours in lower intestinal distress,  
Rick Platt

*Dear Rick,*

*We are always glad when we can help out a subscriber in need. How about some tax advice? Perhaps we could recommend a good cardiologist or strip club?*

**THE RAMBLINGS**



We hope you join along as **RAMBLINGS** contributor, Tommy Neeson, attempts to set a new world record for the 50K on a treadmill. Yes, they actually have that as an official record. In fact, one of our very own subscribers, Geoff Weber, is a two-time former record holder for this same category. The attempt will take place in June this summer and hopefully many of you will help support our very own Mary as he sets out to capture some glory and raise some money for the local Ronald McDonald House Foundation. For more information you can e-mail [Tommy](#).

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# Happy Hour

... with the Cannibal

## Hell-bent on Lent II



*Hey, certain things require an act of God, right?*

Those were my last written words as I leapt off a soap box that was so elevated even spider man would want a safety line. I was **a man** on purpose. I was **a man** who was determined to find the meaning of life by practicing everything (but abstinence) in the remaining 24 days of Lent. Do you remember that my Lent list was so holy that it **required** 12 commitments (no more, no less) so that the faces of the disciples would be in the forefront of my mind every waking moment during this time of sacrifice? There was no room for error as the path was paved; the blinders were in place and...

And that's where it ended. Perhaps it was missing that third and final cornerstone. Perhaps it was just too regimented. Perhaps it was too long. Too early? Too late? Or maybe, just maybe, it was too perfect. Frankly, I like that last reason the best. Yes, the list was too good to be true. It was meant to be regarded as an untouchable, a holy grail likened to an original copy of the declaration of independence. And you know how that goes. Sure it looks good on paper, but who really practices this crap?

I tried. Really, I tried. For just under 7 days, ok...5 days, I was consumed by the God fearing plan. I monitored every step with the intention of reaching that destination of enlightenment on Easter morning. For those five days, I was as obsessed with "the truth" as Quentin Tarantino is with...uh... Quentin Tarantino. Seriously Quentin, I wish I knew how you get people to buy into that garbage.

Anyway, that's it, I failed. Frankly, I don't know where to go from here. Maybe I should meditate under the Bodi tree. Maybe I should do 12 hours of community service. That would seem fitting since I broke laws put in place by the almighty one. Maybe I should shoot for honoring Yom Kippur or Ramadan. Or maybe, just maybe...I should go back to church this Sunday.

Certain things require an act of God, right?

*"If you always do what you have always done . . .*

*you will always run no faster than your fastest run."*

# UGP Member Profile: Mark Donahue

It would not be a shock to say we here at **THE RAMBLINGS** tend to stretch the boundaries of decency and fair play. Hell, we wouldn't even argue if we got accused of crossing the line - often. In this month's profile we absolutely cross that line. Shit, we drill Naval Captain (since when do they have ranks for body parts?), Mark Donahue, so bad about one moment in his life, we almost felt bad about it . . . almost.

What is this one moment we carried on about? Could it be the time he won the USATF's Masters National Cross Country Championships? Nope, don't think so. Perhaps it's about the time he came within seconds of qualifying for the US Olympic trials in the 10,000 meters? Nah, not that either. Maybe, just maybe, it is about when he was featured in the lousiest f%\$king running mag of all time, Runner's World? 'fraid not, folks. You really want to know what it is. Then read on:

UGP: Just for the record, you dropped out of how many marathons?

MD: It depends on how you define "dropped out" but I can safely say I've only dropped out of one marathon.

UGP: And you started how many marathons?

MD: It depends on how you define "start" but I can safely say that I've started one. Wait a minute that makes me 1 for 1 -- isn't that a perfect record? Now that I think of it that is something I'm really proud of. ☺

UGP: How are you handling it all? It has to be tearing you up inside, no?

MD: I'm basically a very humble person, so I try not to rub it in on those lesser runners that cross my path, but sometimes I just can't help it. I mean really, how many people can claim a perfect record?

UGP: Night sweats? Chills? Anything? I mean Oprah finished a marathon for crying out loud.

MD: Yeah, but I'll bet I can out-drink Oprah.

UGP: Point taken.

UGP: That's an awful big albatross to have hanging around ones neck. No plans to actually finish one?

MD: Well I'm going to step to the line in December in the JAL Honolulu Marathon although I've grown tired of the "classic distance." There are no more mountains to climb. Lately I've been focusing on getting the World Community to adopt Esperanto as the World Language. Please check out our web site:

[www.esperanto-usa.org/?fonto=gugloppc&gclid=CIukyfbw6ooCFRvJYAodq1V-nA](http://www.esperanto-usa.org/?fonto=gugloppc&gclid=CIukyfbw6ooCFRvJYAodq1V-nA)

Heck any organization that hosts their annual convention in Tijuana has to be doing something right!

UGP: So, aside from your marathon mishap what else have you failed at?

MD: I've failed at learning Esperanto.

UGP: Wouldn't it have been nice to answer a question that doesn't involve your ill-fated marathon attempt?

MD: Do you have any questions about Esperanto?

UGP: Just what mile did you bail at again?

MD: Dudek du (for those not Esperanto speakers that is twenty two in Esperanto).

UGP: Tell us something about yourself that chances are no one else but you really care about?

MM: I' a pretty slow reader.

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# Take It In Stride... By Tommy Neeson

The Self-Transcendence Race is an event that circles one city block in NYC. Seems simple enough except when you consider the athletes tackle this block 5,000 times. The ultra distance event covers 3,100 miles and takes, on average, 60 miles a day and 51 days to complete. Yeah, that doesn't make runners seem like lunatics. No, not a bit.



Disgraced former World Record Holder and Olympic Gold Medalist, Tim Montgomery, is headed to jail for his role in a multimillion-dollar money-laundering and bank-fraud operation. Is this really a surprise to anyone? I mean come on; we are talking about a sprinter. Sure in a heads up race, he'll beat me in HIS event by what 4 or 5 seconds? However, I'll bet Dean's house and his wife that I can take Timmy in the classic distance by more than five seconds. What a Mary.

The "black box" in commercial airliners is actually orange.

I went to pick Dean up at the Philadelphia airport for our trail marathon the next day in Newark, DE (details on marathon next month). As I'm zipping along route 495 I see a billboard that has a couple holding hands walking on the beach with their pants rolled up and the water at their feet. The sign reads, "Dream Vacations, now taking reservations." Okay, quick guess at to what state's tourism board put that one up. Come on, guess. Did someone say Delaware? Good guess, but wrong. Who said Pennsylvania? Nice try, but wrong. The correct answer is New Jersey. Yup, New f&%\*king Jersey. You show me someone who finds Jersey as a dream vacation and I'll show you someone who needs to be committed.

PGA golfer, Phil Mickelson, was recently asked what it will take to be on the same level as Tiger Woods. Mickelson replied that he could finish off his career with 8 more major titles and 50 more PGA wins, compiling a career he could only dream of and he still wouldn't be on the same level as Tiger.

There has never been a president of the United States with brown eyes.

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## That's a My Boy! An Update from the Reverend's Kids

Our beloved adopted Cross Country team, the Chicken Hawks, is in full spring track involvement and already our fearless religious leader is proud as a peacock. Unlike the Cincinnati Bengals, not one of the boys has been arrested. But there is so much more than that to report.

Junior stud, Greg Yates, has his sights set on a sub 10 minute 3200 and already has nipped at his mile PR of 4:42. Greg has also turned in great performances in several distances including a person best in the 800. He's already been dubbed the "Chosen One" by his team/family mates. He's not all that pleased with this.

For some ungodly reason, the squad's captain decided it would be a good idea to play basketball in PE class. So, Derrek MacNichols, is just now recovering from an ankle injury but we are looking forward to his 800 meter event coming soon.

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Now Drew Trac has been quite the pain in the ass as of late. His winter plan of high mileage gave way to trolling at the local mall for chicks. We are sad to tell he came up short on that as well (just like the old man!). The good news is he has begun to focus on the 300 meter hurdles. Apparently in Washington state 400 meters is too far, bunch of Mary's. In spite of these hurdles, no pun intended, Drew has leaped into the top 16 for the league.

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## *The Kat House*

Have you ever tried running with a mantra? I tell you what, you should try this out. Transcendental meditation involves repeating a word, phrase, sound or "mantra" over and over again so that it becomes etched into your psyche. What happens after awhile is that you move from an internal state of being, to going external and having a unique perspective and point of view outside of yourself. This allows you to see yourself in a different light than you normally do. How fun!

My mantra is malata, malata, malata. I will say this about 100 times and then "the desired effect" takes place. I have actually gone for a two hour run, repeating my mantra the whole time, and not really remembered much of anything and come back feeling super refreshed and invigorated.

Speaking of not remembering much, be very careful of eating wild mushrooms. I recently had a bad experience that involved soiling myself and passing out on a trail. Turns out the entire area the mushrooms were growing in were sprayed with chemicals to kill a colony of red ants. I made a vow as I drove home to only eat mushrooms I buy in the store.

While I am on the subject of vows, I have vowed to not date any men for one full year. To help occupy my time, and to take the place of men, I bought a falcon and have joined a falconer's guild. As a runner I think we should all have fall-back hobbies and interests. My father was a falconer and I have always had an interest in birds of prey. Fly free my children and don't be afraid to let the kitty out of the cage.

Think like a cat...m-e-o-w!

Kat

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Thanks to the very fine man in Charlie Forman, we now have our complete library of **THE RAMBLINGS**. Somehow our head editor lost both the May and June 2006 editions of this literary masterpiece that we others have dubbed "*The Nations Most Unusual and Entertaining Running Publication . . . Ever!*" You rule Charlie and we are actually thinking about recognizing your birthday as a nation holiday in The Church of What's Happening Now! Just don't tell Mark, we aren't sure how we're going to break the news to him.

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Think you have what it takes to make it on the digital pages of **THE RAMBLINGS**? We think you do and we think you should send in your submission to us. Perhaps you have a hysterical story that you love to tell. Perhaps you have an embarrassing story you want no one to know about. Or better yet, perhaps you want a one year subscription to **THE RAMBLINGS**. In any event, we want you to send us what you've got. Have pictures? Even better. Think of it this way, can you do much worse that what we are doing? I didn't think so. So please people, send your stuff to [tommy@undergroundgrandprix.com](mailto:tommy@undergroundgrandprix.com).



Missing one of **THE RAMBLINGS** editions? Fear not, we now have them on-line. Find out how we named our spokesperson Rev. Chauncy Bentsworth III. Read Dean's 10 ten signs your running store is in financial difficulty and best of all it's free! Check it out at:

[www.undergroundgrandprix.com/Archived.html](http://www.undergroundgrandprix.com/Archived.html)

Peace out my Brother,

**REV. CHAUNCY BENTSWORTH III**