

# THE WIND DRINKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE BIG SKY WIND DRINKERS, A  
RUNNING CLUB FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES IN  
BOZEMAN, MT



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Wind Drinkers,

We seem to be having an early spring and the trails are drying out nicely! Time to start getting those base miles in. With the local health department altering some outdoor gathering rules, we're starting to think ahead to what summer fun runs and races might look like, but are proceeding with caution. Read on for more information as well as a great edition of the Mature Runner about David's journey to climbing Mt. Blanc.

As information on our various events becomes available, we will update race information on our website, at <https://winddrinkers.org/trailhead/races/>

# FROM THE PREZ

## By Gary Hellenga

On March 12, the Gallatin City-County Health Department made several changes to the rules governing group gathering sizes. Outdoor events may now allow up to 250 participants (as long as certain physical distancing protocols are adequately implemented), and the size of events for which operating plans are required was raised from 50 to 150 participants. While we are quite encouraged by these reductions to restrictions on our club runs and races, we plan to take it slow (my typical racing plan! ;-)), and continue to be very conservative in our transitions back toward more normal group run formats. Indeed, COVID cases in Gallatin County have started to increase again, and our county now has the largest number of active cases in the state. So we will continue to be careful with our runs, for the time being.

Speaking of runs, I'm keen for our next event, the final Fun Run of the Winter season, on April 10th! This will be a new run: "Back From the 'M'". This was our first event impacted by the appearance of the virus last year, so we've had to wait a whole year to hold it. This run is being held at the time of year of our traditional "Back From Bridger" run, which we discontinued a few years ago, due to increased traffic speed and volume on Bridger Canyon Road. We are still working on the "Back From the 'M'" courses, but plan to offer an option that will include running to the 'M', and using the recently-completed paved trail between the 'M' and Story Mill Road. For those able to work out the logistics for doing this point-to-point event (we are NOT encouraging carpooling by those not in the same household), this will be a fun event to complete; for others, we will also be setting up loop courses, probably in or near Story Mill Park. Please keep an eye on the web site for final details, to be published shortly after Easter.

How will the rest of the summer go? Will we be doing in-person weekly (Wednesday evening) fun runs? Will we be able to hold our races as in-person, competitive events? We sure hope so! But much remains to be seen. With an ever-increasing allocation of vaccines, and other improvements in the public health situation, we are looking forward hopefully to running with fewer restrictions in the months ahead!

# HANDICAP FUN RUN RESULTS

The Handicap Fun Run is intended to compare your running progress against the Froze Nose Fun Run, which took place last month. Runners chose between a short, medium or long run around the Glen Lake Park. The righthand column shows result improvement. Thanks to all who participated!

Name	Course	Distance	Time	Improvement Percent over Froze Nose
Jean MacInnes	Glen Lake - Short	1	0:23:38	15.85%
Kristin Harbuck	Glen Lake - Short	1	0:25:57	
Ryan Grady	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:25:04	7.88%
Leigh Holleman	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:25:32	9.24%
Bence Bécsy	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:25:40	7.40%
Robbie Lamb	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:29:48	
Gary Hellenga	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:30:13	16.99%
Sierra Holleman	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:31:27	
Darryl Baker	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:36:21	
Leonard Baluski	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:39:23	-1.85%
Corey Johnson	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:45:42	
Angie Johnson	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:47:24	
Andrea Abrahamson	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:47:27	
Billy Dutton	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:49:42	13.49%
Steve McGuire	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:52:11	
Gail Cary	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:54:25	
Jacki McGuire	Glen Lake - Medium	3	0:56:15	
Christopher Ashland	2020 Handicap Run Long Course	5.1	0:31:24	3.09%
Andrew Holleman	Glen Lake - Long	5.1	0:35:44	
Rob Maher	Glen Lake - Long	5.1	0:43:04	4.84%

# THE MATURE RUNNER

**By David Summerfield**

## **Confessions of a Reluctant Runner**

I've been making fun of the crazy things "mature runners" do to stay in shape – to "manage their obsession" (oh, there's a flagrant misuse of terms. Mature runners THINK they can stay in shape by doing this or that, when in fact all they can do is convince the mind they are staying in shape). I realize I started laying the foundation for doing crazy things early on in life. So, indulge me a bit while I go down memory lane, trying to find where it all started. Let's be clear, I had NO intention of ever being a runner. I grew up in Switzerland and lived near amazing mountains all around me—everyday. My family and I looked out across Lac Lemman (Lake Geneva in English) at the French Alps. On a clear day, Mt. Blanc could be seen—all shining white—year-round. As seen from the north, Mt Blanc looks like one giant glacier - no break in the white - for the top 5,000 feet. My intent was always to climb it someday.



Coming back to America in 1960, the dream kept its place in the back of my mind. While in grade school, a school buddy invited me to climb Mt. Jefferson (5,712-feet) in the White Mountains near where we lived in New Hampshire. I felt so at home doing that. Then in high school, I ended up at a summer camp nestled under three different

14,000-foot peaks in Colorado. I signed-up for "mountaineering" and went up Mt. Princeton (14,197-feet). Again, right at home. Then came college. I realized I was hardly in shape to climb any mountain.

The college was small, and anyone could go out for any sport and get on a team. Running seemed inevitable—I had never participated in any team sport before, so I started the gradual process of becoming a runner, even though I was always the slowest runner on every team all 4 years. Then graduation...and I was asked what I wanted as a graduation present.....can you guess? I wanted the tuition—not to a graduate school to earn a degree in law or medicine, but to attend the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Lander, WY. I don't remember my mom batting an eyelash, like—how will you earn a living climbing mountains?? I found out about this school which trained mountain guides led by a well-known mountaineer legend named Paul Petzholdt. Maybe this guy could help me learn how to climb Mt Blanc. So off I went to Lander. I never "trained" for anything as physically



challenging like this before. The Wilderness Course was 5-weeks of carrying over 60 pound packs up and over the Continental Divide (it seemed like we did that everyday) in the Wind River Range. My body and I realized this was exactly what I had been looking for my whole life.

I did go to graduate school, but that was a detour that didn't make sense.



The next summer I was hired to develop a climbing program for high schoolers in Colorado, but 1st I had to return to NOLS to take their Instructor's Course (taught by Petzholdt himself) and that primed me to get on as an instructor to take their Winter Wilderness courses—two weeks of skiing on WWII U.S. Army surplus wood skis to get up Wind River Peak each time we went out. (Petzholdt served as the Quartermaster General of the Army during the war, and had access to all WWII gear.



So, what about Mt Blanc? Well, getting married, having a dog (Norwegian Elkhound), and a three-week old son was surely the best way to get going on my dream, wouldn't you think😊? My wife and I answered an ad in the New York Times asking for a couple to live for free in an old farmhouse in Southern France and help in its renovation. At least that was the right country from which to climb

Mt Blanc. If you think I've lost the thread of this article, don't worry. I'm still laying the groundwork.

We landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport with \$6,000 in our pockets. We bought an old Peugeot 304 and drove down to Arles, pulling up next to the approximate address we'd been given in a downpour at night. We could find no building that even had a roof, though there was a series of old stone walls. Our packs were full of climbing equipment (ropes, crampons, ice axes, etc.) and a little mountaineering tent. We pitched it near one of those rock walls, put a tarp across on top to keep most of the rain out, and tried to sleep. The

next morning we asked around and found out that WAS the right place. Hmmm. Not too conducive to raising a one-month old son, eh? Luckily, one of my best counselors in the Colorado mountaineering program was French (Alic Rachmanoff) who lived in Grenoble - only three hours away. We knocked on his door later in the day, and he saved us from having to fly back to the U.S. right away! Alic and his wife Christiane also owned the top floor of an old building in Gresy-sur-Isere, up in the mountains which they used as a "get-away" from city life. It happened to be at the foot of where else? Mt Blanc of course.

Our \$6,000 nest-egg (now down to \$3,000) was fast disappearing, I realized if I was ever to get up the Big One (Mt Blanc is the highest mountain in continental Europe at 15,774'), I had better make plans fast. By now it was November, not the best peak-bagging month! I went to the nearest book store, found a climbing guidebook, scribbled down notes on a piece of paper, telling me how to climb the thing, and folded it up in my pocket. The stars (or moon) were lining up just right—full moon was near Nov. 21. A big storm had come through earlier in the week, dumping lots of snow up high. High pressure had set in, and high winds had swept the upper slopes pretty clean. The guidebook said the "easiest" route up was to just follow the wide trough dug into the glaciers by the hundreds of climbers who climb it every day all summer long. Sounded pretty simple. And I really wanted to have the Mountain all to myself—a rare thing even back then.



The month before, all 3 of us scouted out the lower reaches of Mt Blanc, gaining the Tete Rousse hut (called a "refuge" in French) where we spent the night. At least I knew the 1st 3rd of the hill.

November 20th, I started off under a full moon, doing a "solo," which I had become

accustomed to doing since I liked traveling at my own pace. I had no headlamp – they weren't a thing back then. I had snack food for a big day of climbing. These European huts are uniquely made for mountaineers wanting to climb peaks year-round. They are always open, and staffed during the busy months, but just sitting there open, for emergencies the remainder of the year. I was wearing everything I owned, and was frozen when I opened the door to the hut. The winds on exposed slopes were bone-chilling. I decided to wait for the sun to come up, so I put 3 or 4 thick wool blankets over me, got on a bed, and really never warmed up.

As the day started to break, I got on the route - 1st soloing up a rock band with slight technicality, and once on top, on went the crampons, and I could see the trough winding up the slopes. The trough was a no-brainer, but was solid ice, so I walked along beside it so the crampons could dig in a bit more. I reached the top slightly after noon, did the regulation "balance your camera on your ice axe, take a selfie before the wind tipped over the axe, and headed down. I got back to the car by moonlight - a 12,000' elevation rise over a 20 hour period. Ahhhhh. Now that was a dream-come-true.

Thus ends the 1st installment. The Matterhorn is next, then Monta Rosa, and what precipitated the reluctance to become a "runner"!

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## BIG SKY WIND DRINKERS 2020 OFFICERS

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# BSWD INFORMATION

*DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS ARE AVAILABLE AT MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES:*

- BOZEMAN RUNNING CO.
- GALLATIN ALPINE SPORTS
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- SCHNEES
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- SIGNS OF THE MOUNTAINS
- CLINICAL MASSAGE CONCEPTS

See [www.winddrinkers.org](http://www.winddrinkers.org) for updates and more information



**“FITNESS CANNOT BE BORROWED,  
BOUGHT OR BESTOWED; LIKE  
HONOR, IT MUST BE EARNED.”**



Proud member of the  
road runners club of  
America

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Published monthly by the Big Sky Wind Drinkers, a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of physical fitness.

Membership is obtained by signing up online under "Membership," or sending dues to:  
BSWD, PO Box 1766, Bozeman, MT 59771.

Memberships are \$15 annually, for individuals and families. Benefits of membership are receiving our newsletter, discounts at local businesses, the opportunity to vote in club elections and participate in fun runs.

Submissions to newsletter must be in by the 25th of each month to [miracbrody@gmail.com](mailto:miracbrody@gmail.com)