

Remembering The Classic's unsung hero

Race calendar

March

18: Run for the Gold 5K, Montgomery. Contact: email Amy at Acon0876@yahoo.com or Erin at erinsherry23@gmail.com.

19: Shamrock Scramble 5K, Wallkill Firehouse. Spaghetti dinner at 6 p.m. March 18 at the firehouse; cost is \$10. Information: Bob Garrison at 926-8055, Al Schmidt at 895-8350, JoAnne Warren at 895-8373, or register at www.wallkillshamrockscramble.com.

25: Wurtsboro Mountain 30K & Road Relay. Contact: Mac Thurston at mackie.thurston@gmail.com or C.Westerman at 235-3460 or cwest845@gmail.com.

26: 5K for Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Stewart International Airport. Contact: independenthelicopters.com/pilots4lls

April

1: Washingtonville Scholarship Run 5K. Contact: Lindsay Maguire or Barbara Quinn — lmaguire@ws.k12.ny.us and 497-4000, ext. 22501 or 22502.

1: Orange County 4-H Alumni 5K Run/Walk and Kids 100 Yard Bunny Hop, Education Center and 4-H Park, Finchville Turnpike, Otisville. Register at www.cceor-angeconomy.org. Call Peggy Kral at 344-1234.

2: Run and Walk for Autism "Hustle for the Puzzle" 5K; 5K run and two-mile walk, Orange County Airport, Montgomery. Contact: Holly Borzacchiello at borzacchiello@yahoo.com or amoc@mhaorangeney.com or 342-2400, ext. 307.

30: 3rd Annual Chocolate 5K Run/Walk, New Windsor. Contact: James Roe at 541-2500 or email chocolate5krun@yahoo.com.

May

7: 24th annual Delaware River Run 5K, Port Jervis. Contact: Bobby Bell at 344-7761 or John Faggione at 858-4045. Register at www.delawareriver5krun.com

June

17: Lap4Life 4 mile run/walk, Chadwick Lake, Newburgh. Contact: www.lap4life.org to register or contact Maddalena at 325-3685 with questions.

To get your race in the calendar, email details to sports@th-record.com. For online running content, go to www.recordonline.com/topics/Running

Timer Bill Sherry a fixture at road races

Bill Sherry, 69, was a fixture at almost every Classic 10K in Middletown for the last 36 years. He was our race timer, consultant and a cherished friend. For me, he was that calming voice at the other end of the phone line whenever I needed it.

When it came to every detail of organizing an endurance event, he always had the answer to any question. Bill Sherry died on Dec. 15 after a seven-month battle with cancer.



FRANK GIANNINO

In 1978, Bill and his friend Steve Marek ran a 10K in Central Park. Being April Fool's Day, Steve, who is well over 6-feet, dressed as Superman. People loved it and asked what club they were from and where their next race would be. The next day the pair formed the Suburban Road Runner's Club in Westchester and started putting on races for the club. Soon after, Super Race Systems was formed. Bill and Steve were fixtures at many of the races around the region, so it wasn't long before our lifelong friendship began.

In July 1980, just before my second run across America, I got a call from the Times Herald-Record to help create a running event in Middletown to celebrate the paper's 25th anniversary in 1981. Bobby Bright suggested the 10K distance and to invite Frank Shorter. The newspaper hired me to be the first race director of the Orange Classic 10K. The first person I called for help was Bill Sherry. Bill and Steve were hired as timers and consultants for the inaugural race. Frank Shorter would go on to defeat Bill Rodgers in one of the most memorable running events in history. Around the world, to this day, the Crystal Run Healthcare Classic 10K in Middletown is known as Frank Shorter's hometown race. Bill Sherry helped make this happen



The 14th annual Celebrate Life Half Marathon on Sunday in Rock Hill had another superb showing, with 1,033 registrants and 780 starters in the 13.1-mile run and walk, and the relay. [PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID ISSAC]



As a race timer for almost four decades, Bill Sherry was a fixture on the local road racing scene. He timed every Classic and Orange Classic race in Middletown, starting with the inaugural race in 1981. Sherry passed away in December. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

from the very beginning and helped grow The Classic by timing the race year after year.

By 1981, the running boom was in full swing with Bill and Steve at the forefront of timing. Because there were few timers back then, Bill began traveling coast to coast working races. In

1984, he met his wife Gail while timing a race in Gail's hometown of Grand Rapids, Mich. Gail was a volunteer that day. She became an integral part of Super Race Systems and, in 1988, they were married.

Bill was a teacher in Westchester County, the perfect job for him. He took pride in working with students and loved anything to do with the English language — reading, word etymology and solving crossword puzzles. Teaching allowed him summers off to time races, and when he retired after 32 years of teaching, Bill began to focus on the race business full time. He started out the manual way with stopwatches and clipboards and finish chutes, then bar-code scanning the pull tags, then chips that had to be returned, and now the RFID disposable chips. He always invested in the latest technology to stay up to date.

The other part of the race-timing business that kept Bill interested was that he got to be part of helping raise money for so many different charities. Bill was always willing to do what he could to help out, whether it

involved sharing his resources or volunteering his time.

He loved being involved in a business that centered on physical activity. Bill completed 10 marathons and was an avid golfer.

There is a 5K race/3K walk at Graymoor in Garrison at 9 a.m. May 13 to benefit the Hope for Youth Foundation and the Bill Sherry Memorial Scholarship. I've always handled the passing of a friend by recalling my first impression of the person. "Superman" Steve Marek was running around with his bull-horn shouting instructions to everyone, and there was Bill keeping it all together — calm, collected, always on top of his game. To Bill, timing truly was everything. We will miss him dearly.

—Frank Giannino, owner of Frank's Custom Shoe-Fitting in Middletown, ran 3,000 miles across the country in both 1979 and '80, chronicled in the book "46 Days," by Times Herald-Record sports editor Kevin Gleason, available on Amazon and at Frank's store. Email Frank at frankg@shoe-fitter.com.