

Jamieson, Irvin finish first in Rockland Turkey Trot (2005)

By DANIEL KIERNAN
THE JOURNAL NEWS
(Original publication: November 25, 2005)

CONGERS — As the other runners slogged across the finish line in the 14th Annual Turkey Trot at Rockland Lake State Park yesterday morning, first-place finisher Carlos Jamieson commented that the weather wasn't as bad as he had expected.

"I was checking the weather reports, and they were saying 30 degrees and snowing," said Jamieson, "so I thought it was going to be a lot worse."

He showed up and ran anyway, one of 1,268 who braved the cold, wet conditions to take part. The 18-year old North Rockland High School graduate shattered the record time for the race, covering the 5-mile course in 25:38, which replaces the mark of 26:03 set by Andy Latinsics in 2003.

Jamieson's was one of three records set at yesterday's event.

Kate Irvin's time of 30:46 broke the women's record set last year by Lilian Kroner, who ran a 31:32.

The other record broken was that of total attendance, which has gone up every year since the event was first held in 1992.

For being the top female finisher, Irvin, like Jamieson, was given not only a trophy, but a turkey.

"I think there's already a turkey in the oven," she said. "Maybe I'll donate it."

It would certainly be in the spirit of the event to do so. The Turkey Trot is a charitable event organized by the Rockland Road Runners, one that raises money for several organizations, including People to People (who ran a simultaneous food drive), the Rockland County Police Hispanic Society Scholarship Fund, Piermont VFW Post 7462, the Salvation Army, and Friends of Manny, an organization named for Manny Lopez, the 20-year old Army corporal and North Rockland High graduate who died in Iraq earlier this year. The organization is raising money to build a statue in honor of Lopez in his home town, Haverstraw.

Lopez's mother, Yolanda, appeared on stage at the starting line at the beginning of the race.

Also present were representatives of the Hudson Valley chapter of Nam Knights of America, an organization of local veterans and police officers. They were without their motorcycles, though, on which they usually lead the race.

"This morning we got up and the salt trucks were out," said chapter president Charlie Maushardt of Blauvelt. "We figured just for safety reasons we'd leave the motorcycles home today, and just come out and support."

Also present to support the event were members of the Piermont VFW. Ted Jessup and Mike O'Neill, Korean War veterans, were on hand along with post president George A. Lynch, a World War II veteran.

The Piermont VFW is raising money for a statue in Kennedy Park as a World War II memorial.

"We're doing a bronze statue— GI Joe," said Lynch. "It represents the GIs that left through Piermont from Camp Shanks in Orangeburg in World War II. Over a million men left from the Piermont Pier aboard ships to Europe."

Paul Ciorra, a veteran of the Iraq war, was also on hand. He returned just a couple of weeks ago, and will soon return to his job as a captain with the New York PD.

Rockland Road Runners president and race director Mike Greco pointed to all the positive aspects of the event, from family togetherness to physical fitness, and from charity to patriotism.

"I think the reason the attendance has gone up every year is that people want to be a part of that," said Greco. "It's a great way to start the day. You run your 5 miles and you eat guilt-free for the rest of the day."

TURKEY TROT

Another record field turns out at Rockland Lake

Ziminsky wins men's race, Kroner the fastest woman

Steven Edelman
The Journal News

CONGERS — The 13th Annual Turkey Trot attracted a record number of runners and walkers to the patriotic road race.

Over 1,200 participants with flushed red faces crossed the white finish line under not-so-blue skies yesterday in the five-mile event presented by the Rockland Road Runners Club at Rockland Lake State Park.

The rain held off long enough for the race to continue its streak of increasing participation every year since its inaugural run.

"This is our biggest and our best," Rockland Road Runners Club president Mike Greco said.

Race officials said this year's event was "in memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and in honor of those who continue to fight in the name of freedom."

The patriotic opening ceremonies included a flyover by a state police helicopter.



Joey Ziminsky

Joey Ziminsky of Mount Kisco finished first overall in 26 minutes, 41 seconds. Although it's the off-season for Ziminsky, who runs for the Syracuse University track team, he couldn't resist the opportunity to race.

"It was fun," Ziminsky said. "I came out here to have a good time. It's a great atmosphere."

Monroe's Lilian Kroner was the women's winner in 31:32, which broke the previous record of 32:05

set by Nanuet's Erin Demchko in 2003. Kroner saw the race as an opportunity to write her name in the record book.

"I saw the record time for the race and I thought I could do better," Kroner said.

Both overall winners were running in their first Turkey Trot and plan to be back next year.

"I have to defend my title," Kroner said.

Jimmy Stalter Jr. of West Haverstraw, the only wheelchair participant, finished in 37:33.

"I'm glad to be able to participate in this," Stalter said.

This was his second Turkey Trot, but the first using his modern, three-wheeled racing chair. Veterans and retired police and firefighters from the Rockland Chapter of the Nam Knights of America Motorcycle Club purchased the chair for Stalter after seeing him struggle with his conventional chair in last year's race.

"We participate in it every year," Nam Knights member Paul Goldberg said. "It's the Turkey Trot, and it's done on a day where everybody's thankful that we can participate in these type of events."

Continuing the patriotic theme, veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and present-day duty presented medals, bouquets, and frozen turkeys to the winners in each age group.

Charlie Maushardt, president of the Rockland County chapter of Nam Knights, represented the veterans of the Vietnam War.

He had his own theory as to why the Turkey Trot attracts so many people.

"I think they're getting their appetites built up for the rest of the day," Maushardt said.

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Susan Magnano for The Journal News

Monroe's Lilian Kroner was the first female finisher at yesterday's 13th annual Turkey Trot 5 mile race at Rockland Lake.

'Turkey Trot' a winner

On Thanksgiving morning, the Rockland Road Runners hosted their 13th annual 5-mile "Turkey Trot" road race at Rockland Lake State Park.

With more than 1,200 runners, walkers and wheelchair athletes, this year's event had the distinction of having the largest attendance ever for a single road race in Rockland. With members of the Clarkstown South High School Band playing the national anthem before the start, the patriotic event was in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and in honor of those who continue to fight in the name of freedom.

Veterans from World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars and present-day duty presented awards to the winners in each age group. The event continues to benefit different local charitable organizations, including People to People and the Salvation Army, and also creates scholarships for college-bound students.

Several thousand pounds of food were also collected from the participants for our annual food drive.

The overall winner was Joey Ziminsky of Mount Kisco in 26:41 (5.21 per mile pace). A course record was established by female winner Lillian Kroner of Monroe, in 31:32 (6:19 per mile pace). The overall wheelchair winner was Jimmy Stalter Jr. of West Haverstraw in a time of 37:33.

A worthwhile community event of this magnitude would not be possible without the many sponsors, contributors and volunteers who wholeheartedly support us. The consistent generosity displayed by our supporters is a true testament of the Thanksgiving Day spirit. Our thanks and gratitude is extended to each one of you. It is no surprise that for the last 13 consecutive years, the Turkey Trot has progressively increased in attendance from the previous year, and it continues to grow. We look forward to seeing this trend continue next year.

Michael Greco
West Haverstraw
The writer is president, Rockland Road Runners.

Road runners donate \$4,000

The Rockland Road Runners club recently donated \$4,000 to two community organizations.

The club presented a check for \$3,000 to the Rockland County Police Hispanic Society, accepted by society President Matos. The money will go toward a scholarship fund for college-bound Rockland students pursuing a career in

enforcement. This is the fourth straight year that the Rockland Road Runners has donated to the society.

The running club also donated \$1,000 to the Congers-Valley Cottage Ambulance Corps, accepted by Capt. Mike Rustecki and 1st Lt. Jane Sullivan. The money, along with a \$1,000 donation made by the club last year, will be toward the purchase of a defibrillator capable of treating children as well as adults.

The money was raised during the club's Thanksgiving 5-Mile Turkey Trot at Rockland Lake, which drew 1,200 runners. The club donates more than \$4,000 each year to local charities and profit organizations.

Jamie Kempton
Nanuet
The writer is media relations director, Rockland Road Runners.

Road Runners do the job

Last fall, I received a phone call from Mike Greco, an investigative officer of the New York state police. He explained that he was the president of the Rockland Road Runners and they were holding a Turkey Trot run on Thanksgiving morning at Rockland Lake.

He asked if I could attend to represent World War II veterans and also bring a Korean veteran as he was having a Vietnam veteran and a returning Iraq veteran present to hand out medals to the winners and to honor veterans. I said I would be honored. When I arrived I was shocked at the amount of people there, more than 1,200 plus onlookers. Mike and his people ran a fantastic event. Not finished yet, the phone rang again a couple of days after the new year, and it was Mike inviting me and Quartermaster Ted Jessup to a meeting of the Rockland Road Runners at the Nanuet Restaurant. We attended. There was a group of about 60 present.

Again, I was in for a bigger shock as Mike called us up to the speaker's platform and honored us with a standing ovation, and handed me a check for \$2,000 toward the G.I. Joe Statue to be installed in Piermont to represent all the G.I.s that left through Piermont to fight in Europe during the '40s.

Mike also gave checks to other organizations, i.e., People to People, Salvation Army. I was at a loss for words of praise for the group and for Mike and his helpers. Thank you will be on our lips, and we veterans will remember for a long time their generosity and thoughtfulness. Hopefully, Mike Greco and his friends will be there at the dedication of the Statue of G.I. Joe.

George A. Lynch Jr.
Piermont
The writer is commander, Veterans Memorial Association of Piermont.

Rockland Road Runners contribute

The Rockland Road Runners club has raised \$8,400 for the victims of the south Asian earthquake and tsunami and donated an additional \$9,500 to local causes.

Mike Greco, our club president, reports that the donation for the tsunami victims has been forwarded to AmeriCares, a Stamford, Connecticut-based disaster relief agency.

In keeping with its mission to assist local charities and projects, the Rockland Road Runners also presented checks to the following organizations: \$6,000 to People to People, a Nyack-based food pantry, accepted by Executive Director Dolores Treger; \$2,000 to the Piermont Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7462, for the planned soldiers monument at the village's Kennedy Park, accepted by Commander George Lynch and member Ted Jessup; \$1,500 to the Salvation Army, accepted by Maj. Norman Garcia.

The club generated the money from its Thanksgiving 5-Mile Turkey Trot at Rockland Lake, which drew more than 1,200 runners, the largest turnout for a single road-race event ever in Rockland.

The Rockland Road Runners annually donates more than \$20,000 to local charities and nonprofit organizations.

Jamie Kempton
Nanuet
The writer is media relations director, Rockland Road Runners.

People to People grateful

Thank you, Mike Greco, and all the Rockland Road Runners for your magnificent donation of \$6,000, presented to People to People. The "Turkey Trot," which is run at Rockland Lake, was again a huge success. Each year the number of runners increases, enabling the club many more opportunities to assist local not-for-profit agencies.

I was honored to be in the company of Salvation Army Maj. Norman Garcia, Ted Jessup and George Lynch Jr., World War II veterans who are raising money for a statue of "G.I. Joe" through the Veterans Memorial Association of Piermont. To show you how wonderful this group is, within 20 minutes at their January meeting, \$8,000 was pledged to aid to the victims of the Tsunami, too.

Need I say more about how grateful I am to also be in the company of the Rockland Road Runners?

Dolores Treger
Nyack
The writer is executive director, People to People.