



COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

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For some of us, 25 years is a lifetime and for others it is the age of a pair of running shoes forgotten about in the closet. And I should know since I've had my share of time in the closet. Despite my occasional denial and attempts to delay the inevitable, I'm starting to show my age like those old shoes. But for 25, I must say our club looks MARVELOUS!

Memories of my past 25 years are a collection of yesterdays strung together and accented with an assemblage of unforgettable events. In 1981, the year in which the club organized, I was 27, teaching college and realizing my fascination with hot fraternity boys was not just a phase. Ah, those were good times. It was about then I began running more for fun and exercise than as a result of the Army's requirements. I realized that running could be enjoyable and since some things are more fun done in groups, it wasn't long till I had several of my fraternity brothers running with me.

As hard as it is to believe, Middle Tennessee in the 80's was not a gay hot spot; and with the discovery of a new disease affecting gays in the major metropolitan cities it was a safe place for me to come to terms with who I was. Although not certain what lay ahead for me, I knew that I would have to break free of what others might have in mind. It was during this time I had the opportunity to visit Washington DC for the first time as a gay man. That was gay with a little "g"; I was still getting used to the idea. In any case, I did find my way down to Southeast DC, OMG! That was one of those 'unforgettable' events.

A little time would pass, but the hand of providence was looking out for me. Soon Bush 41, would fight the first war with Iraq and I would be on my way to the big city of Washington to live and work. Al Gore had not yet

invented/created/discovered the internet so I had little likelihood of finding the DC Front Runners. I ran on my own and observed the Washington gay community from afar, but not without the occasional excursion to the haunts of the homosexuals.

After a three year assignment to California, a return to DC and the breakup of my first long-term relationship, I was ready to become part of the gay community. The EX was my running partner, so we both found ourselves single. He was living just outside NYC, had found the NY Frontrunners and recommended that I do the same in DC. So with a little trepidation I located the website and mustered up enough courage to join the group for a run. That was over 5 years ago now and I feel so very fortunate that I took that first step.



We all take many first steps during our lifetime journeys; some lead to the memorable events and relationships that we look back upon with fond memories. Each of us has found our way to the DC Front Runners, and for whatever reason, whether to get back or stay in shape or to just be a part of the gay community, we have been a part of one of the most fabulous gay organization in DC and I believe anywhere. My thanks go to our past members who took those first steps and organized what we all take great pride in today.

As runners we often find ourselves speeding along the course never giving a thought to what is happening around us. That is unfortunate, because often there are many wonderful things that happen along the way. Over the past 25 years, hundreds of runners have found friendships and community, and pushed themselves beyond what they believed possible. Maybe there is something to the old saying "It's the journey, not the destination, that matters." Our club has grown and prospered; and it is my hope that next 25 years will continue the wonderful traditions and welcoming spirit that we have had in our first 25 years.

Happy Silver Anniversary DC Front Runners! ▼

