

# Houston Veteran's News

March 1999

Arlen R. Isham & Jack Lippincott

## THE VIATOR VET - JACK L.

## Member

**W**ell, another Houston Marathon has come and gone - and good riddance, too, as far as my personal pre-race goals were concerned. Obviously, we all love this event, but - WHEN is it going to kick this bad-weather habit, anyway?! We just HAVE to get a better day next time, that's all. So simple, really. You'd think the organizers would try harder after all the complaints about the heat - or the cold - these last three years. But no-o-o! Well, somebody has to step up and tell them how to take care of it. So, if there are no other volunteers... Here's my solution. Have you noticed that they keep moving the DATE of the race around? A week here, a day there; this obviously hasn't helped one little bit. What they NEED to do is change the COURSE. Yes, like - move it to South Padre Island; or Cancun. Someplace that's balmy but temperate in January. Someplace where, even if it IS too warm, we could dive into the ocean every mile or two, and cool off. THAT should do the trick... See what you can accomplish if you put some serious thought into it?! Problem solved! (Now, we just need to work on moving The George R. Brown...)

Anyways. There ARE some real neat items to report about the race. We should be proud of the role that about 15 of our veterans played in making the Polar Pacing Teams a rousing success. The feedback was almost universally positive, from the points of view of the pacers AND the pacers. You may have already read first-hand stories by some of these folks via email from Arlen Isham, and/or through the HARRA newsletter. Although there was plenty of disappointment to go around about degradation of times - mostly due to conditions - everyone basically enjoyed the "team experience." This is definitely a tradition that we vets should do our best



eterans who may want to be a Pacer for the 2000 Houston Marathon.

If you are interested:

Contact Arlen Isham at  
"E" Mail - [isham@flash.net](mailto:isham@flash.net)  
Fax - 713-988-9298

I am building an "E" Mail base directory from your data and there are about 100 names. However, some of them were hard to read and do not work.

Send me an "E" Mail and I can get them corrected.



# PAST & FUTURE

## Jan. , 1990, 10 years ago.

### 18 Th Annual Houston Marathon

Paul Pilkington, USA, won in a 2:11:13, about two minutes ahead of Allen Zachariasen of Denmark

Maria Trujillo, USA won the women's race in 2:32:55, also about two minutes ahead of Kerstin Pressler of W. Germany.

The men's master winner was John Custy at 2:28:07 and the women's master winner was Susan Havens at 2:59:09.

Total entrants was 4,842. Of that number, 3,249 finished, 2,689 men and 560 females.

Weather was nearly ideal at 45 degrees and cloudy at 8:00, but warmed to about 65 degrees and sunny at 11:00.

Gene Askew headed up the list of 10 year or more veterans with 17 finishes. The list was 57 people long. 12 people were first time 10 year veterans.

Since it did get warm later, 237 people were treated for blisters, exhaustion, nausea, and headaches. Only one required hospitalization.

This years race was the National Championship of the RRCA.

## Race Calendar

- 4-11 Tour De Cypress
- 4-11 Capitol 10,000
- 4-17 Bellaire Trolley Run 5K
- 4-17/18 MS 150 Ride to Austin
- 4-24 Bellaire Trolley 5K
- 5- 1 Bayou Bash Relay
- 5- 2 Houston to New Ulm Bike
- 5-15 Bay to Beach Mar. Relay
- 5-29 COMBAT Tri .3s/15mb/3mr
- 6- 2 Heights 5K

Arlen R. Isham  
12803 Peoria St.  
Houston, TX. 77105

## Upcoming Events

### Fresh Air Adventures

Last year I did the Mt. Whitney climb with this group. They run a first class operation. Some of their trips are:

Mt. Whitney  
Mt. Elbert & Mt. Massive  
Mt. Shasta  
Mt. Wheeler

Website: [www.freshairadventures.com](http://www.freshairadventures.com)

Phone: 281-358-3773  
Fax: 281-358-3767

### Marathon Predictor

Take your 25 K time and multiply by 1.9.

Take your 10 mile time and multiply by 2.9.

**Mountain bike needed so I can ride with my son. If you are upgrading or have one to sell, give me a call.**

Arlen Isham  
713-455-4858

### Tour de Bayou X-Country Series

Every Wednesday beginning on April 7 for at least five consecutive Wednesday. The Location for the race varies each week.

Call Roger Boak at 713-665-0757

*Pick your top 50 Things to do before you die. Write them down and start to do them. We can only go around once and the clock is running.*

# Houston Marathon Veteran's Pacing Team

**Clifford Click 4:15** says Pacing was a lot of fun for me and I would like to do it again! I did pin a yellow dot on my hat so it would stay on and could be seen a little easier. This was my 20th Houston and I wore clear plastic numbers ("20th") on my chest and put some dots on them and none came off. I was really disappointed with my time (4:38), since I tried to run 4:15, but cramped up. I was able to stay on pace thru 18 and was 1 second off at 19 (really a 20-second/mile loss!), but just had to walk much of the last 6 miles. I shared a group with Bob Sipple, and got separated from them in the first few miles, but some of the yellow dot people were still with me till about 21-22 miles, then went on ahead when I couldn't make the pace! If I get the chance to pace again next year, I will be a little more conservative and shoot for 15 minutes slower than I would like to make (based on other '99 marathons).

I too was met by John Bingham at about 23?? miles and really appreciated his cheerful comment about the tough conditions. I'd like to say to Polar that the Polar stuff was nice and fine looking, and I got lots of comments about "here comes a Polar pacing team member" and a lot of questions about what pace I was

running!! The stuff was a little hot however- maybe they can find something more open -mesh?

## **John Bingham** – Runners World

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all the hard work that you, and ALL of the pacers, put in this weekend. From every perspective, it was a huge success.

The are no "gimmie" marathons, no matter how many you've done. And a day where they set [or nearly set] an all time high temperature for the day is NOT ideal. None the less, you and the 'team' were an impressive bunch of runners, and a world class group of people.

I can tell you that you helped, and touched, many more runners than you will ever know.

Congratulations, one and all, on a job well done. Let's get together and do it again sometime!!!

John J. Bingham, jbbingham@earthlink.net

## **Sue Flaster** – Polar

I really just wanted to add my thanks for all that you did to make the pacing team work. I

know how difficult it must have been to get folks to give up their own races for the benefit of others.

Sorry the dots didn't stick--next time we'll advise people to add a safety pin!

From everything I've read and heard, your group did an incredible job, especially given what a tough day it was for a marathon. Thanks again and congratulations on a splendid job.

**Susan Rouse 3:30** Thanks for letting me be a part of the pacing group. I enjoyed a lot of aspects of it. The main part being getting to meet new friends/runners. I do hope to be able to see some of them again at races. I don't know if I will want to do this again. I need to evaluate. It was definitely a good first time experience. So many needed to drop back on the pace because of the temp. and I stayed right on that 3:30 time goal. I felt bad because the first mile was a 7:38 but I immediately put on the brakes and dropped it down to a 7:50 and then after that got right on the 8:00 minute time. Some made the goal but most of course didn't. I felt responsible for them. I hate that I missed getting in the picture. I totally forgot about it.

## **Bob Sipple** - 4:15

Arlen, I enjoyed doing the pace, however, I did not train properly for the race and it really caught up to me at mile 18. I was just a little off at the half way point but started slipping badly after that. At mile 20 I was not feeling well and at mile 22 I was in trouble. I ran my worst time ever by over 21 minutes. I did not do justice to my group. When I crossed the finish line I was really sick and left everything I had drank and eaten right there. I like the concept, but will commit to more preparedness next time. Sorry I did not do what I should have done.

## **William Buffum** - 3:45

The day was already warm as I started my 16th Houston Marathon on January 17, 1999 in downtown Houston. This year, fortunately, I had agreed to run as a Polar Pacer, a new concept designed to use seasoned runners to help others by running a consistent pace throughout the marathon. I say un-fortunately because my 8:35 pace designed to finish us in 3:45 was slower than I usually run, so I knew (that I had to take 4)



**Left to Right:** Tim Henry, William Buffum, Bill Osgood (Holding pace sign 5:15), Phylis Thompson, Bill Van Pelt (pace sign 4:45), Bob Sipple (pace sign 4:15), Clifford Click (head), Arlen Isham (pace sign 4:00), John Bingham (Runners World), Lee Norris, Bob Koester (top of his head -back), Coach Roy Henson, & Seth Schild (Polar).

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to extend. If you didn't try it this year, the pacer-thing is a must-do next time around. Oh, and a huge THANKEW and other kudos to Arlen for all the time he spent organizing that deal, too. He was pushing the pacer idea for our marathon before "The Penguin" et al came on board.

Actually, the accomplishments of all our veterans represent the heights to which anal-compulsiveness can rise. But look, if we must get "hooked" on something, marathon racing is certainly one of the most POSITIVE addictions we could find. (Anyway, that's what I tell my wife all the time...) On another personal note, yours truly is now officially a double-vet-and-a-half (and STILL ambulatory!) Long races are getting tougher and slower, but I really look forward to the NEXT quarter-century of running...

That's all for now. Be careful on the roads, all you road warriors...

## Jan. 1999 Marathon Veterans Survey

### Comments Regarding Veterans Long Sleeve "T" Shirts & Golf Shirts – Question # 6

(2) etc. Means it was repeated twice.

1. Suggest choice of color on shirts. (2)
2. Appreciate the shirts & special recognition at the dinner. (6)
3. Great., nice touch, or good. (4)
4. Could not be better.
5. We have paid entry fees for 10 years. We should not have to pay for Veterans Shirts. (4)
6. Likes the long sleeved shirts with Chevrons. (7)
7. Likes the opportunity to get the golf shirts. (3)
8. What about hats with 10-15-20 patches or veterans patches?
9. Perhaps a sponsor for the veterans shirts
10. Possibility of a short sleeve veterans shirt?

### Suggestions for improvement for the Houston Marathon – Questions # 7

1. Requested a special parking lot for the morning of the marathon for Vets. (1)
2. Reserved Port a cans for vets.
3. More Port a cans along the course, most areas had lines. (2)
4. Race later in the year, such as mid to late Feb..
5. Veteran's picture was done early, better organization. (2)
6. Availability of hot food for the late runners was very bad.
7. Picture of Veterans in the result (2).
8. More water & cups (4)
9. Be consistent on the location of the PowerAde. Which side of the street? Balloons to mark that table? Everyone is always asking which table. (5)
10. Increase the time limit to 6 hours, which would allow more people to be official.
11. Earlier start.
12. Don't have two water stations within two-mile markers and put the water station just past the mile marker to be more consistent. Also fits with new concept of walking at the mile markers. (2)
13. Finish mugs and finish shirts should be passed out in the runner area.
14. There were a couple dangerous intersections.
15. Some problems getting the correct shirt size.
16. Point out that high temperatures can happen in the Entry Brochure.

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## Pacers Continued

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easy. As it turned out, going out slowly and maintaining a pace was essential by mile 20 when the heat began to take its toll on all of us. My finish time was 3:47:05.

The day was hot for us all. I had a 3:45 group, and since there were three pacers at this speed, we did split up to respond to the differing experiences.

My sub-group maintained an 8:27 pace for the first half and then slowed until we were at the 8:35 mark. I finished in 3:47:05, but by that time we were strung out, so I am not sure how various team runners did.

My pacer groups was of a modest size, about 7 or 8. I noticed that others informally joined our group for support, some later speeding up and some slowing down. Because of the temperatures in the upper 60s, my pacer group slowly disintegrated as some prudently began to walk for extended periods. By mile 22, I lost my last group member. I decided to maintain the pace, but after a time, I thought that I was not helping anyone by running alone, so I stopped and waited a few minutes ... but no pacer group members appeared, so I jogged to the finish. I last saw the second runner in my group finishing at 3:53. Thus, none of us can claim to have met our goals, and I really am not sure how many actually finished at all.

This was a rewarding experience for me. I really enjoyed meeting the other group runners and to learn about their goals and hopes. I wanted to carry them to the finish if I had to. This Polar Pacer team concept seems helpful for many, and I hope that it continues.

At the finish, I had to go inside the George R. Brown Convention Center to get water. I was not allowed to leave the building to watch for other group members as they finished. I could have joined the crowds behind the wire fences, and maybe that would have worked. I thought that we should have agreed upon some post-race meeting place to share experiences, and just to find out what happened to all. After the race, I only saw 2 or 3 other polar people!

My dots fell off too. I knew they would and thought about using some fabric glue. I think that would have worked.

Good job. Arlen and the others did a great organizing job. *(Continued on page 5)*

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17. Better banquet agenda. Boring with too much talking.
18. Use the chip.
19. Food ran out for the 4:30 and up people.
20. Consider expensive awards for the top ten or 10 % in each age bracket.
21. Prices getting too high for merchandise.
22. There was no place to change clothes this year in the finish line area.
23. Cost of the entry is getting too high for the masses.
24. Possibility of a website link to the Veterans.
25. "Make it shorter, 35 degrees F, clear, crisp, low humidity, and no wind

## Pacers Continued

(Continued from page 4)

**Arlen Isham - 4:00**

Well after reflecting on the day, sitting in my hot tub for awhile, and taking a nap, I wanted to take a moment to thank all the Pacers for volunteering to do this today.

Since I have been crazy enough to do 21 of these in a row, I certainly did not expect another day like last year, but it happened. It was much too hot for me. Well, I successfully finished my 21 St. Houston Marathon in a row yesterday. It was hot, even worse than last year, which was the worst in 20 years. I finished in 4 hours, 8 minutes and 44 seconds, which was about 9 minutes slower than my goal.

My story is: I took my group out through the 1/2 marathon at about 1:59, one minute faster than they needed to shoot for a 4 hour marathon. The group was great. They hung around me like a flock of quail, asking all kinds of questions, and generally kept it interesting. My wife told me I was surrounded by people with green dots.

We had discussed the pace, I walked 30 seconds each mile and basically we were at a 9:04 pace at the half. Early we talked about cutting back at the half for those who were tired and encouraging those who were OK to go ahead. That is what happened. I basically was struggling with pace after about 20 and was close to calf cramps in spite of drinking constantly. Anyway, to make a long story short, I ended up at about 4:08:44. About two minutes slower than last year on a similar day.

Since all of you are experienced marathoners, you can probably agree that if the fast people drop 5 minutes, then we drop at least 10 to 15 minutes. If you struggled today, welcome to the group.

I can tell you that one girl who went ahead at the half and was trying to qualify for Boston missed it by 11 seconds at 3:55:11. She saw me after the race and told me even though she missed it, she knew it would have never been that close except for the pace team effect through the first half and running correctly. Many of my greens thanked me for doing it. I hope your people did the same.

All of you did great, no matter what time you did, even if you did not ~~(achieve your goal)~~



# Pacers Continued

*(Continued from page 5)*

pace. It was not really possible today, unless we had all decided to drop one whole 15 minute spot from the start.

If you have suggestions on how we could do this better, let me know. I think Polar was impressed with all of you and our Veterans Group and will want to do this again next year. I would hope we could get 2 to 3 veterans for each bracket next year. The enthusiasm for the Pacer idea was great.

I saw John Bingham out about 25 and he said hello. Yesterday, he made the comment that at the end of a marathon, some people are not communicating in a positive manner. I made some comment regarding a female dog type of day, etc.

One comment regarding the dots. Most of them fell off. If we do this again, we need to tell everyone to pin them on and also put one on the front too. The spectators were also looking for the different colored pace groups.

Once again, you will always be able to say you were part of the "FIRST" Houston Marathon Pacing Team. A very select small group.

I guess the biggest question when you get a day like yesterday is whether the pacers should adjust for the weather and automatically back off at the start. Most of the Pacers had set reasonable goals according to their ability, but not reasonable for a day like Sunday. I was in shape to do about a 3:53 to 3:55 and not push that hard. I had to push hard to finish which is not normal for me.

## **Tim Henry – 3:45**

I enjoyed the experience and wish I had maintained pace but at about mile 18 I slowed down, started some walking and never did get back on pace. I finished with a 3:52. The other pacers in my time (3:45) appeared to be doing great and certainly finished in front of me. I like to run distance in the cold and short runs in the heat. The chances of a cold day in July are nil, but I sure would like a cold one in January.

## **Bob Koester – 4:30**

The experience with the pacing was very positive for me. Do not know about the

participants because I lost most of them. Two factors gave me problems: the getting organized part at the start caused me to forget to relieve myself -- so there I was at the 4-1/2 mile mark along the side of the road taking care of nature early while the team went on. Second, I am definitely not a hot weather runner, so my strategy to start slow and pick up the difference later did not work -- I ran even slower later when the heat had gotten to me. The blue dots started falling off in the first mile so identifying members got tough, but was able to bring about six of the 15 or so in the original group together again at about 6 miles. Some of the others apparently kept together and finished in two separate groups:

one at 4:28 and the other at 4:32 – not bad for a goal of 4:30. Meanwhile my smaller group of 6 slowly started losing members and by 15 miles, there were only two of us left. We went together until the final mile when I convinced the other fellow to take off and finish -- he was running much stronger than I during the last 10 miles and even probably helped me finish in my 4:42:28. Truth be known, on a day like Sunday, if I had not been with the other members of this group and especially the lone remaining one during the last 10 of 11 miles, I would have been very close to 5 hours at the finish. Hopefully next year we can have more pacers in each group to help when unexpected pit stops occur.

For me, the greatest satisfaction was the earnest questions that the pacing group had of me. These same questions were much on my mind when running my first marathons many years ago and they really seemed to appreciate any information that I had gleaned from this epic effort that means absolutely nothing! Met many very nice people and it made my 18th Houston marathon one that will stand out for me as a memorable one and not because of the heat and humidity.

## **Paul Beveridge - 5:00**

Ok, here is the long version of a hot, Houston, weekend run..

Weekend started on Saturday morning with the traditional gathering at Bubba's sports bar for Breakfast. Had about 45 people and John had us in stitches as usual. After the meal it was off to the Expo., where we heard Jeff Gallaway talk about power bars, John, who as usual touched the audience with his humor and honesty, and finally the pacing group meeting, where I got to meet the 50 or so folks who were willing to let me try to get them across the finish line in 5 hours. They seemed like a really good group, who would all make excellent penguins. They laughed at

my jokes(many shamelessly borrowed from our featherless leader) and seemed ready.

Then home to Carbo load on my wife's most excellent homemade pasta (thanks honey) and a weak attempt at a good nights sleep (yeah right, a good nights sleep the night before a marathon). I did get about 5 hours so that was ok.

Sunday came in what is becoming typical Houston fashion, hot and humid 64 degrees at 5 AM with a 90% + humidity rating. I didn't even want to know what the dew point was. Ok, I did a PR last year in the same conditions, I can do this...Drove to the convention center, of course I took a new route, which was closed, and went into full panic mode, but got there at 6:35 anyway. Met up with a bunch of the local penguins like HouTex Gary and wife Hilda, Lisa Foronda, and the Bubba's crowd. BTW, Gary saved my life by bringing me a bottle of Pro Hydrator after I discovered at 8 PM Saturday night that I was out of it. Thanks pal, I owe you another one.

Grabbed my Pace group sign and went to the starting line to wait. More pink hats covering Doug Shearer and a friend of his(name forgotten but he remembered mine so I feel bad about that)..The energy level in our group was outstanding, and I had a feeling that this group would make this a fun day.

The cannon went off, and in 32 seconds, we were past the starting line and on our way. First two miles went well, nice and slow first, picked it up a little on the second, walked the water stop, took off again, and then....water stop at mile 3.,No water, no cups,...Ah SH\*\*, this is not supposed to happen at Houston..ok, calm down, RNR was a lot worse, we can do this...got to mile 4 water stop, they had water but NO CUPS... we used our hands to get water and I told my group to grab a cup, bottle, anything to hold water and carry it with you until the situation gets better, but be sure to drink...Saw John and Karen at mile 5 and received great words of wisdom from them, Saw the family, and saw water stop # six was functioning ok so life got better. Still held the cups but everyone got water and the spirit of the group came back to life..

Miles 6-15 were just plain fun, we told jokes, we told stories, and we talked to the crowds and had a gass. This was a really good group to run with and I wish they would all come out on Saturdays and run with our group..

At mile 15, we lost the cloud cover and it started to get hot. At 18 I ~~gathered the group~~

# Pacers Continued

## Pacer Comments Austin Marathon

*(Continued from page 6)*

and told them that we were two minutes ahead of pace, if they wanted to speed up, to be sure and drink plenty at EVERY water stop, if they were really hurting, to slow down if they needed to, because they were close enough to be an official finisher, and started adding about an extra 30 seconds per mile walk time.

The best part of the day was as I counted down from 10-1 to our walk breaks, the entire group would shout along. The spectators would hear us, and step back, not sure what was about to happen. Then, we would count down the last 10 seconds to start running again and the crowds would applaud. It was neat and really helped our spirits,

The last six miles were hot and my legs started to cramp some, but a short last walk break at 25.5 Th a good hard rubbing, broke the knots loose and it was on to the finish line. About 10 from my original group were within 20 seconds ahead or behind me at the finish line as I crossed it at 4:59:50 on the official clock.....

About half my group beat that time and about 1/3 came in behind us, but all things considered, especially the heat and humidity, the group did really well. This had to be one of my most pleasurable marathons out of the 8 that I've done.

### **Jerry Smith - HARRA**

A quick look at 414 of the HARRA members that finished the Marathon shows that only 32 of you ran faster than your predicted time (predicted time was calculated using your best single race performance in the fall series and applying that race time to race performance charts that Roger Boak and I have developed). That so many ran slower than predicted is no great surprise considering the hot and humid conditions.

