



Member Spotlight: Mr. Gary Walk, Esq.

You have likely seen him at local races and marathons, a bearded unassuming gentleman with a warm smile and a kind word. He innocuously blends into the starting corral, usually deep in thought and reticent - that is, until the race begins. What emerges is a fierce competitor who barrels ahead of runners less than half his age, forging ahead toward the finish line. Once he crosses the finish line -typically ahead of most of the field- he waits and graciously welcomes runners that follow with a smile and friendly nod. That runner is of course, PBRR's own Gary Walk, a local attorney and long-time veteran of the PBRR Executive Board. At age 60, Gary is a legend in the running world, and we are honored to interview him in this month's Member Spotlight!

Gary was kind enough to take a few moments and answer a few questions.

When did you begin running and why?

I ran track in high school, and was pretty much a mid-packer. My best mile time was 5:12, which wasn't good enough to even place in the race in which I ran it. I gave up running until I was 35, when someone at a high school alumni dinner challenged me to run a 5K with him the next morning. I ended up joining his running group and racing with them.

What distance is your passion?

The marathon. I'm not as fast as I was when I was younger, but I still have the endurance on long runs.

What drives you to dig deep when the pace or distance gets tough?

I try to set realistic goals, and take pride in running strong. I have used phrases that I repeat in my mind, as Galloway recommends in his books. I have a sense of what level of discomfort I can maintain. Sometimes I get to the point where I don't have the strength to keep up the pace, and I back off, but I usually believe that it was because I didn't pace myself well enough, and try to adjust in the future.

Each runner practices different nutrition. What is your pre marathon meal regimen? How do you fuel during the race?

I try to carb starve about 4 days before a marathon and then carb load for 24 to 36 hours before the race. I try to hydrate and eat light the day before a race. During a race, I take two GU packs (I like Espresso Love!) at about miles 9 and 18.

Tell us about your favorite race and why it's your favorite.

I would have to say Boston. From the moment that you get to the Boston common, to the long bus ride to Hopkinton, to the wait at Hopkinton High School, to lining up in the corrals, to the run through the New England towns, to the screaming Wellesley girls, to the dreaded Newton hills, to the endless push on Commonwealth Avenue, to the turn onto Boylston Street and the big blue finish sign, there is a holiness to it. Everyone there knows it, and treats each other like they are part of it.

List your top 3 running accomplishments.

My 8 year Boston streak; my running group's number 3 finish in the age graded team competition at the Chicago Marathon; my marathon PR at Disney of 3:14:56.

What are your future running goals?

To keep running strong marathons as long as I can.

Have you suffered any significant injuries you'd care to share? How did you overcome the challenge and what did you learn?

I've had serious hamstring injuries and moderate plantar fasciitis. One hamstring injury came two weeks before the New York Marathon, and prevented me from running. Chris Fox helped me through the worst hamstring injury. I learned from the injuries that you have to increase mileage gradually and develop a keen sense of what your body can handle and when to back off. Using cushioned slippers and padded insoles during the day helped me with the plantar fasciitis.



Thank you, Gary. I am certain that your best races are yet to come. We thank you for the many years you have dedicated to the PBRR, as well as the running community. Be sure to say hello to Gary at the next local running event. He'll be waiting for all of us at the finish line with a medal around his neck and a warm smile!

