

Real Men Run Vreeland's 50-Mile Ultramarathon

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A marathon? Pfff. That's kid stuff. Real men may not eat quiche, but they do run, or try to run, ultramarathons. That's 50 miles, kids. Almost twice the distance of a standard 26.2-mile marathon.

And who in the Lehigh Valley but Len Vreeland of Allentown would dream up such a race? No one, other than this same 54-year-old daredevil who tried to ride a 10-speed bicycle across the country, who successfully crossed the country on a reclined bicycle, and who most recently staged and ran in a cross-Pennsylvania relay run.

This coming Sunday, October 17, approximately 35 men will begin Len's fourth Broken Spoke 50 Mile Ultramarathon at 7 a.m. on a 2.3836 mile looped course at East Allen Township Bicentennial Park in Allentown, just off Airport Road.

"I had a fancy to do a 50 when I turned 50," Vreeland explained about how he originated the race four years ago. "So I talked to the guys at the LVAA (Lehigh Valley Athletic Association) and said, 'Why don't we set up a 50 on a course I want when I want it?'"

So Vreeland accomplished his goal, finishing the course with about 20 other runners. Thirty started the event. Vreeland hasn't run it since, preferring to coordinate operations from the sidelines.

"I have to have a feel for it, a desire," he said. "The first year, I had only been running 25 to 30 miles a week to train. I wanted to quit at 32 miles. My wife, Carol, and my daughter, Susie, rubbed down my legs with butter and everyone kept bribing me to do another loop."

Last year, 30 entries started and 19 finished. Doug Heagey, 31, of Mount Joy, Pa., won in five hours, 50 minutes and 35 seconds. Harry Smith, 31, also of Mount Joy, was second, three minutes and 10 seconds off the pace.

"They ran side by side for 42 miles," Vreeland remembered.

Vreeland reported Friday that 23 have signed up so far, including people from as far away as Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Virginia. No women have entered. Smith will return this year but Heagey won't because of an injury, which doesn't bother some of the locals planning to run the event; it'll cut down on the competition.

Ed Kay, Skip Bollman, Ed Kolosky and Paul Garavaglia, all of Bethlehem, Charles Skumin and Randy Bernhard of Allentown, Mike Shi-

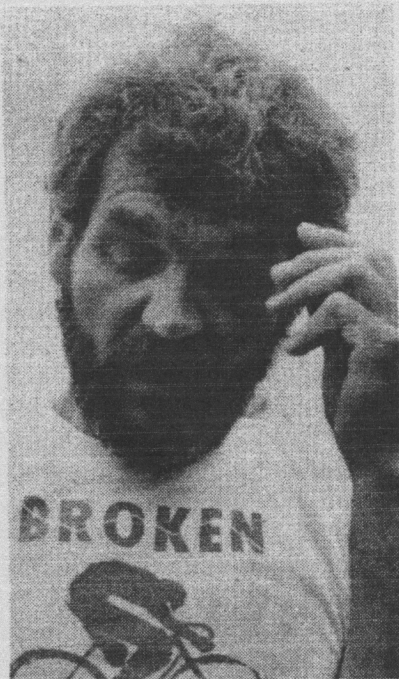
but if I'm lucky I guess I have a chance to win."

To complete his pre-race training this week, Kay said he will cut down to six or seven miles a day. "It's time to relax."

Kolosky got through 31 miles of Vreeland's 50-miler last year, but had to quit because he found out during the race that he had a kidney infection.

"A few weeks later they put me in the hospital," Kolosky said, pointing out the severity of his condition.

Kolosky has been running for just two years and has already run three marathons. His best time is 2:51.49, which he ran in the 1981 Prevention event.



LEN VREELAND

"When I got out of college, I weighed 200 pounds, so I got back into shape and lost between 50 and 65 pounds. I don't think it's too much running (in a short period of time). It depends on the person."

Kolosky is the kind of person who went to Boston last year and ran a 10-kilometer race the day before the Boston Marathon. He figured that as long as he was in town, he might as well run the marathon, "for fun, unofficially," the next day. He finished in 3:04.

Kolosky's training program consists of approximately 13 miles a day with a 20-22 mile run on Sundays. When he heard how many miles some of the competition puts in, he responded, "I swing a sledge hammer and lift heavy tires every day (as an employee

was 59 at the time. He calls himself 'The Incredible Huck.' One time he went to Italy to run the Rome Marathon. He wanted to get his money's worth, so he ran it twice. He also did the Iron Man (triathlon) in Hawaii a couple of years ago. And one year he ran Boston twice, once each way."

This year's classified "wacko" might well be Melvin D. Olkowski of Lake Placid, N.Y. He calls himself a "Wolfman" and runs through the woods and up mountains as a search-and-rescue volunteer. He lives most of the year in a tent, earns \$50-\$60 a week as a part-time night cleanup man at Howard Johnsons and watches local properties for storm and vandal damage. And he is a registered state guide. *Runner's World* magazine and several New York newspapers have run feature articles about him.

"What's his time in the marathon?" Kay wanted to know.

About 3:20. Olkowski lumbers and doesn't look like a typical runner with nylon shirts and shorts. He wears black high shoes with heavy soles and long pants. He runs in front of or behind the wolves in the wilderness.

"Oh," Kay said, dismissing the Wolfman as serious competition.

Vreeland's scheme also includes a five-mile race, starting at 11 a.m., on the same course. He'll be watching from the finish line for that one too, but, fear not, the wizard has something cooked up for the future.

"I thought I might try next year's cross-country bike race, the Great American Bike Race they did this year in August. (Lon Haldeman of Princeton, Illinois won it). They had four entrants this year and they expect 12 next year. Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas is sponsoring a 750-mile time trial in May and I'm going to see if I can get into it."

Can anybody doubt he will?