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Editor [Tony Schinella](#): Heard some news you want us to check out? Let me know: tony.schinella@patch.com

Local Voices



[Barb Higgins](#)

Today on My Run...

Posted on February 24, 2012 at 5:00 pm

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I run ... a lot ... which is not a newflash for those who know me. Running has been a daily part of my life since March 19, 1979. I remember the date for two reasons - it was the first day of Spring Track Practice my sophomore year, and it was the day I met Coach Luti (which is another blog entirely).

What people may not know is that my reasons for running are as varied from day to day as the routes I choose and the speed I engage. There are physical, emotional, mental and spiritual benefits to running for me ... and also historical ones. When I am not in the mood to run (really, as much as I love it there are days when I just don't want to go) I tend to do what I call HTE runs ... the HTE meaning Here There and Everywhere. Rather than follow a prescribed route I just go ... taking random turns, looking at the houses I pass, meandering through a trail on the side of the road, looking in shop windows downtown. I busy my mind with the sites and sounds of where I end up. These runs have been short (two miles of meandering through every inch of [White Park](#), and long (15 accidental miles running WAY past Stickney Hill Road ... but they are always my best ... and I typically learn something on these runs, meaningful at times and trivial at others. I also often stop to visit people, both alive and not so alive (my cemetery runs) which in both scenarios leads to good conversation.

I was running through the White Park during the [Black Ice Hockey Tournament](#) and had the good fortune of standing by the bonfire talking to Kite. Any long time Concord resident knows Kite. We often joke about the number of people we know and the history we share as Concord natives. From our vantage point at the fire I could see the roof of the house I grew up in and we reminisced about skating as children, me at the park and he, a West Street boy, on the man made rink in the middle of McKee Square. For those of you unsure of whom I speak, Kite works for the city and can be found at [Memorial Field](#) eight months of the year tending to the fields. During the winter months he plows, grooms ski trails, maintains ice and myriad other things that can often go unnoticed by the casual observer...until they aren't done. Kite is a fixture and I love talking to him on my runs. On this particular visit we talked about how random it was that the game of ice hockey itself was first played right here in Concord. For a game that now encompasses the Olympics, the NCAA, the NHL and youth hockey leagues nationwide, it's roots in Concord are a significant part of Concord's history! The pond was Turkey Pond, located on the campus of [St. Paul's School](#), and if it freezes thick enough for skating before the first snowfall, the term black ice takes on a whole new meaning. That water is dark. Although I have never played ice hockey, I have skated on a number of Concord Ponds and none can compare with Turkey Pond when it comes to Black Ice.

Hobie Baker, that first St. Paul's School Hockey player, Douglas Everett, a 1928 Olympian for whom the local arena is named and Tara Mounsey, a 1996 Olympic gold medalist all lived in or came from Concord. American Hockey not only started here, but continues to be a thread in the fabric of Concord in the winter. Like a pick up game of basket ball on an inner city court, pond hockey in Concord is a part of the natural order of things.

As Kite and I spoke of those long ago days of youth, and shared our pleasure relief in that cold Sunday weather we paused to listen as a sound caught our ears that made us both smile. It wasn't the laughs of children or the cheers of the crowd, it wasn't Smitty on the loud speaker announcing the next game, no this sound was far better and we smiled at each other not needing to explain ... it was the sound of skate blades on perfectly frozen ice ... Whether a backyard rink, a pond, a river or a lake, the sound of skate blades as the carve the ice is unmatched ... yeah ... that HTE run was a good one. Happy Winter Everybody!