

Rob Rose - 7/12/07

When something resembles something else, it's usually not a coincidence. This Sunday's Kid's Day 5K and the Runaway's Five Miler, which will be held on Aug. 19, seem to have formed within the same pod. Five years ago, the Kid's Day 5K reemerged and a month later the Runaway's Five Miler debuted. That was no coincidence. Kid's Day race director John Gautieri says that the Runaway's Bill Beardsworth used Kid's Day as a model to craft their event. Gautieri in turn credits other races, such as the TI Dana-Farber 5K and Run For Humanity 5K for influencing him in structuring the Kid's Day race. A small field, community oriented and geared to the family were the basic tenets of what Gautieri wanted the event to be. In addition to their connective origins, they share common traits. Here are some others.

- North Attleboro - Both races will be held in North Attleboro and these are two of only three races that North Attleboro hosts each year. Kid's Day will be contested in the Mason Field area whereas the Runaways race starts in the downtown area and heads out to the verdant west side of the town.

- Summer Races - These two, in addition to the new Butterfly 5K on Aug. 26, are the only local races that will be held between June 9 when the Norfolk Community Day 5K was held and Sept. 8 when the Wrentham Wroad Wrace happens. They're the only summer game in town. Over the years, the selection has dwindled, most likely due to the prevailing thought amongst race directors that people are away at this time of year. You want to schedule your event when your customer base is the largest, which is the spring and summer. The TI/Dana-Farber 5K retreated from June and recast itself as the Sensata 5K in October. Numerous races, such as the Fill the Pool 10K, the Foxtrot 5K, the Powderhouse 5K and the Wrentham Police 5K became desiccated fossils on the parched summer savanna.

- Moderate Cost - The Kid's Day race and the Attleboro Y races have the lowest race fees in the area. Ten dollars pre-registered and twelve dollars on race day. The Runaways are at fifteen and twenty. Compare that with last weekend's Paul White 4.8 Mile in North Falmouth, which charges \$35 on race day.

- Runaways Connection - Gautieri is a member of the Runaways running club, thus establishing the Runaways/ Kid's Day link. Zen Master Beardsworth will have his traveling Runaways road show on display at the Kid's Day race. For a club whose active members you can count on the fingers of one hand, it's quite an accomplishment to manage two moderately successful races.

- Field Size - Last year, Kid's Day had 125 finishers and the Runaways had 102. Which race will have the most this year and lay a claim to the title, 'Most Popular Race in North Attleboro'?

- Participants - Lots of North Attleboro runners did both races last year such as Ailing Wang, Larry Kessler, Jennifer Smith, Marc Pelletier, Sean Rooney, Joe McLoughlin, Steve Robinson, Paul Robinson and Tracey Magill

- Salvaged From the Scrap Heap - Five years ago, there was no Kid's Day race. The former race director pulled out and for a year, no one stepped in to the void. Gautieri revived the race in 2003 and brought it back from the abyss.

The Runaways race had a more unusual start, beginning as the R2T2, a mile competition held at Bishop Feehan to choose runners for various Runaways Cape Cod Marathon Relay teams. That fizzled with only 12 people competing. The following year, they went with the conventional road race and by offering attractive prize money, they had a fine turnout. The third year, due to costs, they abandoned Attleboro for North Attleboro.

- The Number Five - 5K and five mile. This is the Runaways' fifth year and the fifth year of the Kid's Day 5K revival.

- Schools - The Kid's Day race has registration at the Falls School. The Runaways five starts at the Community School.

What don't they have in common? No one has won both races. The post race food is better at the Runaways. It's always sunny at Kid's Day and always rains at the Runaways. Kid's Day doesn't offer prize money and the Runaways do.

Because the Run For Humanity begot Kid's Day which begot the Runaways Five, we now have the Summer of Similarities. It's no coincidence.

^Footnotes - the Tom's Tavern 5K summer series, a Wampanoag Road Runner production, continues next Thursday, July 19 at 7 p.m. at the Wrentham establishment; runners can use the event for either racing or training; contact Roland Desrochers 508-384-4485 or ronan262 @yahoo.com for more info ... registration for the Oct. 7 B.A.A. Half Marathon will open on July 18 on the Boston Athletic Association website (www.baa.org); the field is limited to only 4500 runners and past experience says that the threshold will be reached in four weeks or less ... The new Butterfly 5K will debut on Aug. 26 in North Attleboro with a unique course that starts and finishes at the WWI Park; details to follow ... Race director Tom Kenwood said that this year's Arnold Mills 4th of July race had the most participants ever, 518 finishers ...With half the year gone, it's not too soon to be thinking about 'Runners of the Year'; if you know of someone who should be considered for our annual awards, jot off a note to me at the e-mail address below ...