

THE HUMAN RACE

EDITED BY EILEEN PORTZ-SHOVLIN



Cindy Keeler

Cindy Keeler has been on a serious roll since turning 40 late last year. In April the Lake Worth, Fla., resident ran 2:39 at Boston, the fastest marathon of her 15-year career. "Usually I'm a low-key racer," says Keeler. "But this time, I saw some women ahead of me and decided to go after them." In the process, she won the masters title and earned her fifth consecutive trip to the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials.

"Cindy's always been a very consistent runner," says her husband, Mike. And how: She's done more than 20 marathons—all in the 2:40 to 2:45 range. "Now that she's in the masters division, her times are drawing some attention." Other recent performances include a 1:18 at the Naples Half-Marathon, 35:58 at the Azalea Trail 10-K and 17:43 at Miami's Race for the Cure 5-K.

Knee surgery slowed her down for a few months in early '97, but solid training and racing later that year fired her competitive instincts as she approached masters status. "I just love to run," says Keeler. "And I always felt that I hadn't reached my potential. I always knew there was more there."

Keeler is a full-time mom to Kelli, 6, and Allison, 4, and she admits it can be tricky to schedule training and racing with two small children. "I'm fortunate," says Keeler. "My husband is my number-one fan, and he lends plenty of support."—*Laurel Park*

When Tom Jones finished his 15-mile run on July 21, 1986, he was overcome with relief. Not so much because he'd run 15 miles, but because he'd done so daily for the last 100 days in a row. The effort raised more than \$100,000 for the children of Orangewood Children's Home, a southern California shelter for abused and neglected children. "Thank God I made it," says Jones, who covered the length of California from the Oregon border to Mexico, and then ran from San Francisco to his hometown of Huntington Beach.

Jones himself endured years of abuse from his father before being taken into protective custody at age 8. He was then placed in the Masonic Home for Children in Colton, Calif., until he turned 18. "I know firsthand that without lots of support, abused children will become tomorrow's abusers, delinquents and violent criminals," says Jones.

Now 35, Jones is a fourth-degree black belt in Tang Soo Do Karate, and a three-time national and international kickboxing champion. An avid runner and advocate of child-abuse awareness, Jones realized he could use his talents to call attention to this national epidemic after speaking to the foster kids at Orangewood. "People must stop hitting their kids," says Jones.

Jones isn't finished yet. His next charity run will cover more than 3,000 miles from New York to California, ending sometime during Child Abuse Awareness Month in April. "I want to keep spreading the word to improve the lives of abused children," says Jones. "There is so much more to do."



Tom Jones

When Aubrey Barr was 3, her parents noticed suspicious-looking marks on her skin. Eventually, doctors diagnosed her with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, a childhood cancer with a staggering 90 percent fatality rate. She underwent years of chemotherapy at New York City's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Remarkably, she went into full remission at age 17.

Now a healthy 31-year-old, Barr has 13 marathons under her belt, including a 3:32 PR. She realizes every day just how lucky she is. "I was told as a child that I had a bad cold in my blood," says Barr. "To keep our home life as normal as possible, my parents didn't tell anybody how sick I really was, including me. I was in college before I finally knew the whole story."

Now she's gone public with that story.



Aubrey Barr

Last year she and Memorial Sloan-Kettering (for which she had been privately raising funds since 1992 through the Fred's Teen program of the New York City Marathon) formed the Aubrey Fund for Pediatric Cancer Research. "The fund's goal is to wipe out pediatric cancer completely. And we're going to do it soon," says Barr. Nearly \$1 million has been collected from the efforts of Barr's family, an supporting corporations and runners.

Each day when Barr runs along the Charles River near her home in Boston, Mass., she thinks about the interlaced gifts of running and a healthy body. "Running is my way of proving that I'm healthy," she says. "And it's a reminder that children with cancer are still in need of our help." For more information on the Aubrey Fund, call (800) 878-7522.

—*Wilkes Lab*