

Bloomsday #31—May 6, 2007

The Fit For Bloomsday youth fitness program enjoys a surge in numbers, with 85 schools and nearly 6,000 children participating. Changes to Bloomsday implemented in 2006 to the start, finish and timing system are refined slightly, but the biggest change is before Sunday morning, as Check-In and Trade Show are relocated to the new Convention Center, just east of the site that has been their home for nearly 30 years. Whimsical metal sculptures by artist “Blowtorch Annie” are on display at the show, and are later positioned at mile marks along the course. The sculptures are sold to sponsors, with proceeds benefiting the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Bloomsday’s official charity in 2006 and 2007. A calm, cool and sunny morning greets 44,180 entrants for the first run in Bloomsday’s fourth decade. John Korir outsprints two contenders on the final downhill for his third Bloomsday victory, and Edna Kiplagat shakes Teyba Erkesso at six miles and surges ahead for the women’s title. Saul Mendoza edges Krige Schabort to earn his tenth consecutive wheelchair title, while first-timer Amanda McGrory outwheels Shirley Reilly for the women’s victory. The University of Illinois wins Bloomsday’s first-ever college wheelchair competition over the University of Arizona. Among the 40,362 finishers is 1982 Bloomsday champion Henry Rono, who runs 50:35 at age 55. A green shirt showing the Monroe Street Bridge proves extremely popular with the crowd.

Bloomsday #32—May 4, 2008

Promotional poster by Spokane artist Steve Merryman, the second in a series, encourages runners to “Take a Running Tour of Historic Browne’s Addition.” In spite of coming on the heels of the second snowiest winter in Spokane history, Bloomsday numbers post the first significant increase in five years, with entries surging by over 3,000. That includes approximately 100 runners at Camp Echo in southern Iraq, participants in the “Bloomsday Away” program for service men and women. Bloomsday hosts guest speaker Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon. Cancer Patient Care, Bloomsday’s official charity for 2008, raises funds through the sale of “Go For the Gold” singlets that can be personalized to honor a loved one battling cancer. For the first time, notice of bib number and color group assignment is emailed to online entrants a week before the run. Also for the first time, entrants can order souvenir gear with their name, city, team and other personalized information. Sunny weather greets runners on race morning, and US Senator Maria Cantwell acts as celebrity starter. Micah Kogo takes advantage of the conditions, racing to a new Bloomsday record of 33:51. Lineth Chepkurui wins the women’s race on her first try, while perennial wheelchair champion Saul Mendoza is upset by Aaron Gordian. Amanda McGrory repeats her 2007 wheelchair victory over Shirley Reilly, and Arizona takes the team title in Bloomsday’s second “Collegiate Challenge” competition. 59.2% of finishers are female, the highest percentage in Bloomsday history.

Bloomsday #33—May 3, 2009

Residents recovering from a second straight winter of massive snowfalls seem eager to get back outdoors, as entries surge for the second straight year. 51,259 register, the highest total since 2002. Finisher totals also grow again to 45,477, although fear of a possible swine flu outbreak, coupled with the threat of rainy weather, hold the numbers down. In the end conditions on race morning are cool, pleasant and dry. Promotion for the 33rd Bloomsday features ads with a comic book superhero theme, as entrants are encouraged to “Flex Your Superpowers!” and reach the finish by defeating villains like Dr. Sloth and Procrastinator. Promotion also includes social networking through a Facebook fan page, which by race day includes over 2,000 members. Bloomsday also takes steps to reduce, reuse and recycle as part of its “Getting Greener” initiative, and over a ton of water cups collected along the route are composted. Runners on race day are sent on their way by celebrity starter Jon Knight, coach of the North Central High School boys cross country team, the number one team in the nation in 2008. Addition of a US citizen purse of \$20,000 results in a number of Americans finishing among the top 25, including Dan Browne in fifth and local star Forest Braden in 12th. Braden’s time of 35:45 is the fastest ever by a Spokane resident. John Yuda of Tanzania becomes the first non-Kenyan winner in 15 years, Lineth Chepkurui repeats as women’s champion, and Krige Schabort and Amanda McGrory capture the wheelchair titles.

Bloomsday #34—May 2, 2010

After four years of computer chip timing, Bloomsday adopts the Chronotrack D-tag—a strip of plastic with RFID embedded in it. This takes the place of chips attached with a Velcro strip around the ankle. The new system is simpler and proves extremely accurate. Registration totals 55,090, an increase of more than 3,800 over 2009. The percentage of female participation reaches an all-time high of 60%. Travelers Insurance and GD Itronix are added to the list of Major Sponsors, while official 2010 charity SNAP encourages the community to purchase “SNAPetizers” at participating restaurants on Bloomsday weekend to help raise funds for the organization. Cool, sunny weather greets runners on race morning, and Lineth Chepkurui takes advantage by posting a world 12K best of 38:10 while notching her third straight Bloomsday title. Peter Kirui takes the men’s title, with Jordan Bird and Amanda McGrory emerging as wheelchair champions. Christine Kennedy sets a women’s national age 55-59 record of 48:22, and John Keston sets the men’s 85-89 record of 1:16:14. One of two new team programs added this year, the School Challenge, attracts nearly 30 teams, with the Jasper Place Rebels of Jasper Place High School in Edmonton, Alberta, finishing as the fastest overall team. A second new competition, the Bloomsday-Hoopfest Team Championship, fails to draw enough teams and is cancelled. 50,721 finishers are recorded, the highest number since 1996.

Bloomsday #35—May 1, 2011

Early registration is running 40% ahead of 2010 numbers at the end of January, but by the first Sunday in May things have returned to normal, and the field increases by a little over 1,500. The sour economy and a worldwide shortage of cotton make securing sufficient T-shirts a challenge, but in the end all finishers are taken care of. Bloomsday partners with Step Up Spokane, a new non-profit that encourages daily physical activity and healthier eating, in offering a training program. Participants can also sign on to Twitter for regular tweets about Bloomsday. A misty fog on race morning burns off just in time for a sunny start, preceded by a marriage ceremony for participants Karen Fall and Michael Smith. At the end of a tactical women's race, Misiker Mekonnin outsprints five women on the homestretch to become Bloomsday's first Ethiopian winner, male or female. In the men's race, Kenyans Simon Ndirangu and Allan Kiprono go one-two and post two of the fastest times ever run on the course. In celebration of the 35th running, 35 bands are on the course, 35-year medals are offered for sale, and iPads are awarded to the 35th, 350th, 3,500th and 35,000th finishers. For the first time, individual video clips are posted along with photos after the race. Later in the year, Bloomsday breaks ground for a new office and warehouse in the West Central Neighborhood.

Bloomsday #36—May 6, 2012

A variety of technological enhancements add spice to the 36th Bloomsday Run. Online registration is optimized for smart phones, three online training programs are offered to entrants, and digital medals—one for training and one for finishing—are available for posting on social networks. On race day, timing is done with an RFID tag affixed to the back of the bib number (the B-tag) rather than placed in the laces of shoes, and QR codes on the front of each number mean it's a quick scan for finishers to find their individual results. In addition, for the first time mats at the bottom and top of Doomsday Hill let runners know how long it takes them to make the climb. That isn't much for women's champion Mamitu Daska, who reaches the three- and four-mile marks faster than any woman in history, and who goes on to post the third fastest women's time ever recorded on the course. Allan Kiprono is the men's winner, while 52-year old Scott Parson claims his first wheelchair title, and University of Illinois phenom Amanda McGrory notches her sixth consecutive win. Over 48,000 finishers follow the winners on a day ideal for making the trek—clear skies, a temperature at the start in the low 40s, and virtually no wind. After race day, organizers begin moving into a brand new building near the top of Doomsday Hill.

Bloomsday #37—May 5, 2013

A bombing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15 impacts running events around the world, including Spokane. Bloomsday organizers meet with police and federal agencies to review and heighten security procedures, including restricting participants from bringing backpacks on race day and requiring bib numbers for entry to the starting area. Putting a positive spin on it, the Lilac Bloomsday Association partners with

Washington Trust Bank to distribute nearly 58,000 “Bloomsday Stands With Boston” bracelets to participants and volunteers. There are no problems on race morning, as participants are greeted with warm weather and sunny skies. Belete Assefa becomes the first Ethiopian male winner in race history, and Buzunesh Deba makes it two for Ethiopia by winning the women’s race. In the wheelchair division, Scott Parson earns a second straight victory, although he can’t shake Laurens Molina of Costa Rica until the final 100 meters. Inland Northwest native Susannah Scaroni becomes the first racer from the region to earn the women’s wheelchair title. Among the enhancements this year is the opportunity for entrants to post instant results to Facebook, Twitter, and mobile phones, while the first inaugural return of Junior Bloomsday takes place on Saturday. Eight different “character trading cards” are distributed through the Fit For Bloomsday program and at the Trade Show, and for the smallest Bloomies, a youth extra small T-shirt option is added for the first time.

Bloomsday #38—May 4, 2014

A field of 49,094 signs up, that number no doubt impacted by chilly conditions leading up to the weekend and a forecast of thunderstorms during the race. Instead, there is a rainstorm early in the morning and thunder and lightning in the evening, but at race time Bloomsday participants enjoy nearly perfect conditions. Among the crowd are about 300 representatives of major running clubs and events from around the country who attended the Road Runners Club of America Convention, the third held in Spokane during Bloomsday’s history. Additions to the run include photos taken at Doomsday Hill and at the finish, provided post-race free of charge. Also introduced this year is the first “Bloomsday Scenes” medal for sale, which highlights the start on Riverside. A headwind may have slowed the elite women in the early miles, but by the top of Doomsday Hill Lineth Chepkurui is running smoothly on her way to what appears to be her fourth Bloomsday victory, until fellow Kenyan Mary Wacera rallies, catching Chepkurui shortly after that and outsprinting her on the homestretch. In the men’s race, Allan Kiprono surges in front heading up the hill and continues to build on his lead to the finish, notching his second Bloomsday win. In wheelchair competition, Josh George wins his first Bloomsday, while Tekoa native Susannah Scaroni, a student at the University of Illinois, improves by over a minute in scoring her second victory over seven-time champion Amanda McGrory.

Bloomsday #39—May 3, 2015

The final eight “character cards,” beginning with Bruce Sprintsteen (“He was born to run!”) are distributed to the 70 schools participating in the Fit For Bloomsday youth running and walking program. Facebook fans top 18,000, as social media becomes an ever more important tool for reaching participants. On race weekend, Check-In and Trade Show are situated in the newly renovated Convention Center, with the larger space creating a more favorable flow of people among the booths. Corporate Cup is opened to

an additional 50 teams, but registration still closes in a little over an hour. Marmot March fills up quickly for its tenth running, allowing 3rd graders to participate for the first time. A company called Outside Interactive films the course on race morning using Segways to produce a video for treadmill runners, and another company, Photoboxx, develops prints from Twitter and Instagram posts that participants can pick up free of charge after the run. A new tradition begins at the start line as high school girls sing the national anthems of the US and Canada. Lani Rutto is victorious in the men's race only two days after having a wisdom tooth extracted, and Cynthia Limo emerges from a trio of top women for a narrow victory. Superstars Tatyana McFadden and Josh George are the winning wheelchair racers. All participants enjoy the nearly perfect weather on race day.

Bloomsday #40—May 1, 2016

Several embellishments are added in celebration of the fortieth year. Finishers in forty specially designated 40 spots (40, 1,040, 2,040, 3,040, etc.) are entered in a drawing for 40-year gift packages, which include a \$40.00 gift card to Sports Authority, a 40th year poster and a 40th year souvenir pin. A special Bloomsday Blonde Ale is distributed around town in the days leading up to the race. Bloomsday offers its first mobile phone app, and a student group at Gonzaga develops a second. Both prove very popular. Smart phone usage continues to impact the Bloomsday experience, as a post-survey in 2015 showed that nearly two-thirds of participants had their phones with them on the course. Taking advantage of this, selfie spots along the route, organized by sponsor Washington Trust, are popular among participants, as is a “selfie wall” at the Trade Show. Race day weather is sunny and warm, helping women's champion Cynthia Limo set a new course record of 38:03, one of the fastest 12-kilometer times in US history. When all official finishers are recorded (43,018), the total is only eight short of 2015's total. All 92 “Perennials” are among the finishing crowd. For the fifth straight year, the percentage of males inches upward, from a low of 39.7% in 2011 to this year's 40.7%. The day after Bloomsday, Doomsday Hill is closed for a major construction project, to be completed (hopefully) before the first Sunday in May, 2017.

Bloomsday #41—May 7, 2017

After one of the harshest winters in recent memory and a spring that is wet and chilly, Bloomsday participation takes a seven percent downturn to 42,986. It looks like it might be a drizzly race day as well, but just before the first racers take off, the skies clear and the crowd enjoys optimal running conditions, with a temperature of 45 degrees. Construction on Doomsday Hill is completed a few days before race day, but construction in Riverfront Park and elsewhere in the downtown core make scheduling post-race activities a challenge. A last-minute switch of T-shirt distribution to Main Avenue is a smashing success, as is the jade T-shirt. A Bloomsday Blend coffee is introduced in the spring to go along with the Blonde Ale introduced in 2016, and a new mobile phone app features runner tracking. For the first time a title sponsor, Agua, is added to the Trade

Show. Running legend Jim Ryun speaks at Lewis & Clark High School on Friday, 50 years after setting the world mile record. On race day, a relative unknown from Tanzania, Gabriel Geay, surprises a pack of Bloomsday veterans by hanging with the crowd through seven miles and then surging to victory. The women's race, on the other hand, lives up to expectations as Ethiopians Buze Diriba and Mamitu Daska make it a two-woman battle down the homestretch, with rising star Diriba emerging as the winner by two seconds. Male participation ticks up again, to 41.1%.

Bloomsday #42—May 6, 2018

Entries come in well ahead of pace in January and February, but as the official deadline approaches the trend cools, and in the end total registrations are 41,702, down slightly from 2017. A concerted effort to expand social media is the presumed spur for the early surge, as Bloomsday institutes electronic birthday greetings, a monthly e-newsletter (The Rundown), and Snap Chat GeoFilters on race weekend. The souvenir medal, which features a colorful rendering of the famous vulture at the top of Doomsday Hill (Bill Robinson), proves especially popular. Official Bloomsday charity is the Guilds' School, which provides a high-quality early-intervention program for children impacted by developmental disabilities and delays. Because most participants are now getting their results electronically, Bloomsday discontinues the printed results booklet, and instead works with the Inlander to produce a pre-race insert for the April 12th issue of the magazine. Construction in Riverfront Park and downtown creates logistical challenges again, but on race day all moves smoothly. Celebrity starters from Freeman High School get the crowd going on race day, and weather is some of the warmest in history, with only 1977 and 1980 being warmer. For the elites it's a great day for Ethiopia, as the first two places in both men's and women's races are from that country. Up-and-comer Daniel Romanchuk and superstar Tatyana McFadden are the wheelchair champions, while overall male participation in the run inches up a half a percentage to 41.6%.