

November 28, 2008

Veteran Trotter Wins Again

New Hartford man takes home pie at 31st annual Goshen run

By John McKenna

GOSHEN - It's fair to say that Marc Robaczynski earned the dessert that followed his Thanksgiving dinner.

The New Hartford resident on Thursday morning successfully defended his title at the 31st annual Goshen Turkey Trot and by doing so earned a homemade pie as a prize.

"If I can leave here with a pie, it's good thing," Robaczynski, 34, said at the Goshen Fairgrounds after finishing the 6.2-mile race in 33:41. "That's become my job on Thanksgiving."

Robaczynski, who has won the Turkey Trot so many times he's lost count, planned to share his pie with his wife, Courtney, and their two children. Courtney Robaczynski has run the race in the past, but is expecting the couple's third child and stayed home to prepare dinner.

The race drew a record 531 runners and walkers on a day that was mild by Goshen standards. Previous Turkey Trots have been run in bitter cold, rain, sleet and snow, but with the temperature in the upper 30s and just a light breeze blowing across the fairgrounds, conditions were perfect for running.

After the first quarter of a mile or so, Robaczynski was running by himself, a talented group of runners behind him unable to keep pace. Eamon Dempsey of Albany, N.Y., was a distant second in 35:00 and Jeff Niedeck of Canaan third in 35:10. Two local runners thought to have a chance at giving Robaczynski a battle, Jeremy Schmid of Litchfield and Dan Lane of Goshen, were fourth and fifth, respectively, in 37:02 and 37:41.

As the first male finisher from Goshen, Lane earned a turkey and also took home a pie for finishing first in the 15-18 age group. Lane's mom, Rosemary, added to the dessert table in her family's home by winning a pie for finishing second in the women's 50-59 age group.

The first female finisher was Addie DiFrancesco of Waterbury, who was 10th overall in 39:03. Like Robaczynski, she earned a pie and the Adam Laschever Cup award the race gives to the first male and female finisher. The award is

named for the late Adam Laschever, who lived in Goshen and supported the race. It was presented by his father, Barney.

DiFrancesco, 18, made her Turkey Trot debut a memorable one by blowing away the women's field. The runner up was Amanda Hill of Wethersfield in 43:54. DiFrancesco is a graduate of Holy Cross High School in Waterbury and spent the fall running for the women's cross-country team at Marist College.

The Turkey Trot was organized by a group of the same volunteers who have been at it for years, with some, like Johanna Kimball and her husband, Tony, and Joan Lang going back to the race's inception. The Kimballs and Lang, all of Goshen, pull the race off with the help of about 35 volunteers.

One of the volunteers was Laurie Mosley of Goshen, who not only assisted with runner registration and the post-race awards presentation but also was the first Goshen female finisher in 47:59. She won, of course, a turkey. Mosley's husband, Mark, built and tended a bonfire that kept runners warm as they waited for the start.

Another volunteer was Marty Connor of Goshen, whose job was to make 12 gallons of hot apple cider for the participants. Connor was assisted by Tim Angevine of Goshen. They did their work at the nearby Church of Christ Congregational and hauled the cider container to the fairgrounds.

The organization of the race, the weather and the camaraderie of the runners, many of whom do the Turkey Trot as a tradition, added up to a perfect morning. Seeing it all for the first time were Mimi Roberts of Middlebury and her husband, Andrew, the executive director of the Waterbury YMCA.

"We've wanted to run this for a long time, and it turned out to be everything we thought it would," Mimi Roberts said. "It puts you in the mood to celebrate the rest of the day. Hopefully we'll make it a tradition."