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ONE HALF-MARATHON DOWN, ONE MORE TO GO!

RUNNING ADVENTURES WITH MY DAUGHTER, SARAH ANN

A few months ago, on Oct. 9, I was poised at the starting line of the Charlottesville Fall Classic Half Marathon, wondering what the heck I'd gotten myself into. My daughter Sarah Ann and her friend Ana were beside me, bouncing up and down in anticipation. When the starting gun went off, we all dashed off the line, and I waved the two of them ahead.

"Don't stay back for me!" I said, "Go get the best times you possibly can."

The girls quickly disappeared, and I settled into my pace — ready to spend at least two hours in the cold, huffing and puffing my way through the downtown mall and along the Rivanna River.

The half-marathon was a big deal for me because I have something of a tortured past with running. I've done plenty of 5K and 10K races to keep my heart in shape, but the only half-marathon under my belt before October was the CarMax Richmond Half Marathon, which I completed at age 38. I also injured my IT band in the process.

When Sarah Ann asked if I'd like to run the Charlottesville Fall Classic with her, I was a little worried about aggravating that injury. But I didn't want to pass up quality time with my daughter, so

of course I said yes! I did the bare minimum to train for the race, hoping just to get a respectable time. I had no illusions that I would achieve a personal best — especially considering the beating my 51-year-old body took during the training process.

I expected to struggle in the 38 degree F weather. But amazingly, my breath stayed even, and my IT band didn't act up! Halfway through the race, a thought struck me: "I'm

feeling good. Could I actually finish this in under two hours?"

My optimism held as the last mile approached. One of the men running beside me shot me a look. "I think we can beat two hours!" he said. We charged forward — only to discover that the last mile climbed a steep hill. "I don't have a chance now," I thought.

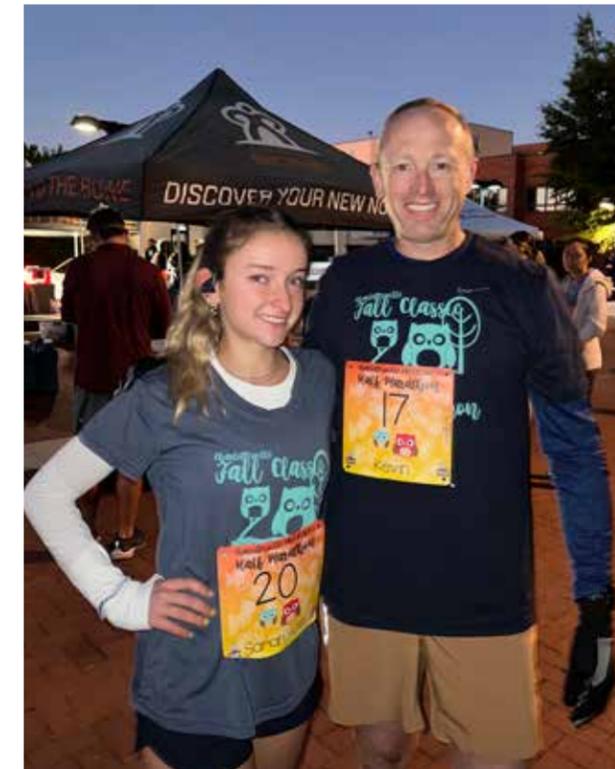
I was right, but I was also wrong! I finished the race in 2 hours and 1 minute. It was a fantastic finish, much faster than I expected at the outset. I crossed the finish line in fourth place for my age group! Even more impressive, Ana and Sarah Ann came in first and second in their age group, respectively, and Ana took fifth place out of all of the women in the race.

Afterward, the girls and I celebrated our success with a round of mimosas. It was wonderful to share that moment with my daughter — and when she asked if I'd run another race with her in 2023, of course I said yes.

That's the story of how I signed up for another race this spring. I'm still deciding whether to do a full marathon (Sarah Ann's choice) or another half-marathon. If I choose the latter and get lucky, maybe I'll break two hours! Either way, I'll keep you updated right here in this newsletter.

Wish me luck.

-Kevin Mottley



THE FURRY FRIENDS OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

HOW BANGLADESHIS USE OTTERS TO HARNESS THEIR CATCH

If you wander down a riverbank in southwest Bangladesh, you might happen upon a squealing, squeaking crate of river otters. The otters aren't in danger. In fact, they're the pampered helpers of the region's fishermen and women, who've trained them to herd fish.

Yes, that's right — just as we use herding dogs to corral sheep and cows into pens, people who fish in Bangladesh use otters to drive fish, crabs, and prawns into their nets. The practice dates back hundreds of years — and it's impressive to watch.

First, in the dead of night, the Bangladeshi anglers load crates of otters onto their boats and head out to fish. Each otter wears a small rope harness and leash attached to a wooden pole. As soon as the boat reaches the fishing area, the fishermen release the otters. They dive into the water and paddle furiously after schools of fish, encouraging them to swim into their owners' nets.

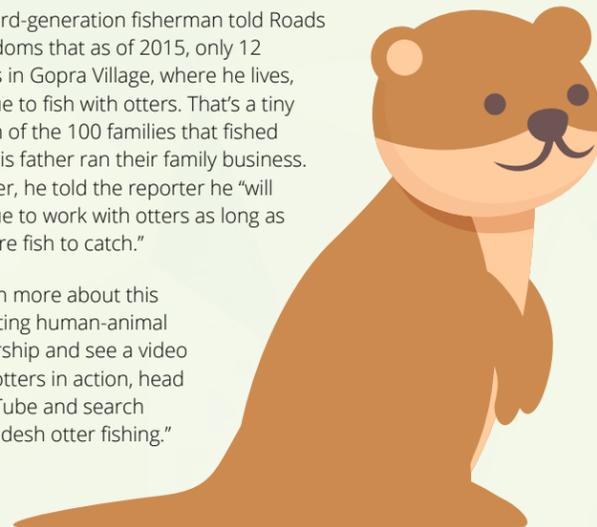
According to the publication Roads & Kingdoms, Bangladeshi fishers can catch more than 20 pounds of fish per excursion thanks to their otter helpers. Locals breed otters specifically for this purpose, raising them just like Westerners raise dogs and cats.

This otter-human partnership is an important part of Bangladeshi culture. The fish the otters bring in sustain their owners through lean times and

help them survive periods of famine. However, according to the BBC, the tradition is slowly fading away. Rivers in the region are drying up, pollution is surging, native fish are disappearing, and families are getting out of the otter business.

One third-generation fisherman told Roads & Kingdoms that as of 2015, only 12 families in Gopra Village, where he lives, continue to fish with otters. That's a tiny fraction of the 100 families that fished when his father ran their family business. However, he told the reporter he "will continue to work with otters as long as there are fish to catch."

To learn more about this fascinating human-animal partnership and see a video of the otters in action, head to YouTube and search "Bangladesh otter fishing."



OLD PROBLEMS, NEW SOLUTIONS

HOW MARRIAGE COUNSELING CAN HELP SENIOR COUPLES

No one stays the same forever, so it makes sense that many couples have more difficulty relating to each other as they age. So-called “gray divorce” is rising, with 10% of all divorces occurring with couples 65 and older. It’s never too late to start again and be happy, but it also may not be too late to save a troubled relationship.

Marriage counseling helps countless couples reconnect, communicate, and solve their differences. While many people still attach a stigma to marriage counseling, the practice is more common than ever among seniors. And there are a variety of issues counseling can help address.

Many couples who have been married for a long time have ingrained negative patterns over decades. Changing them is possible, but it isn’t easy without outside help. People change significantly over 10, 20, or 30 years, leading to conflict and dissatisfaction. And it’s not uncommon to go through a relationship upheaval during an “empty nest” period.

Other seniors are in second marriages, and while they’re often newer, they can come with their own sets of problems. After all, integrating two lives is never easy. And couples of all ages can struggle with routine marital problems like conflicts over money, a loss of romance, infidelity, regular arguments, and simply growing apart.

Contrary to popular belief, you don’t need to be contemplating divorce or at each other’s throats to attend marriage counseling — though both



scenarios are good reasons to do so. Many people attend marriage counseling when they feel like their relationship is going through a slump, have trouble communicating, or struggle with one specific issue. Counseling also isn’t about proving who’s “wrong” or “right” but about helping you and your spouse work together better to address the problems in your life or marriage.

If you think your marriage could benefit from counseling, talk to your spouse and look for therapists through friends and family, your doctor or faith leader, or even Google. Hopefully, your other half will be on board with the idea, but you can’t force them. A spouse who refuses to attend will be a roadblock, but you can still benefit from individual counseling. With a therapist, you can determine the best steps forward for your life and relationship.



DRAGGING YOUR FEET ON VALENTINE’S RESERVATIONS?

Call One of These Restaurants Before It’s Too Late!

If you plan to take your significant other out for Valentine’s Day and haven’t made reservations yet, you’re just about too late to grab a table. In fact, you may have already missed my favorite restaurant for a romantic evening in Richmond — L’Opossum!

The contemporary French food, moody atmosphere, and quirky vibe at L’Opossum are unbeatable, but it’s tough to score a reservation. If you ring them at **804-918-6028** and they’re out of tables, try one of my other top date night restaurants in the area.

1. The Stables at Belmont — This local spot for steak and seafood has never disappointed me. Check out main dishes like the brown butter scallops, crispy-skin duck breast, or coffee- and chili-rubbed ribeye, and chase your dish with a signature cocktail or mocktail. The Stables also offers a range of excellent starters (think Appalachian cheeses in three styles and roasted Virginia oysters on the half shell) and an extensive wine list. Make a reservation by calling **804-588-9231**.

2. Lemaire Restaurant — This spot is in the Jefferson Hotel, where my great-grandparents were married in 1910, and my wife and I spent our wedding night! The food is over-the-top good — there’s a reason folks call the restaurant “quintessentially Richmond.” You will find everything from the classy Lemaire “Barnyard” Burger to Vintage Grass-Fed Beef Tenderloin on the menu, along with desserts like the dark chocolate delight — an oat chocolate cake with extra brut cocoa buttercream and chocolate sorbet. Call **804-649-4629** to make a reservation.

3. Chez Max Restaurant — You may have heard that Chez Max has changed ownership recently, but don’t be alarmed. It’s still a fantastic place for a romantic evening! If you enjoy sipping cocktails and eating authentic French food like escargot and foie de veau (sautéed calf’s liver served with Spanish onions and white wine mustard demi-glace) in the firelight, give them a call at **804-754-3464**.

Good luck, and happy table hunting!

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CHIPOTLE BOURBON PUMPKIN CHILI

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp grapeseed oil
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 cup bourbon
- 14 oz can of pumpkin
- 28 oz can of crushed tomatoes
- 19 oz can of kidney beans
- 19 oz can of navy beans
- 1 small butternut squash, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tbsp chipotle peppers puréed with adobo sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups corn
- Sea salt, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté until brown, about 8 minutes. Add garlic and red pepper and continue to cook for about 5 minutes. Add chili powder, cumin, and sea salt and cook for 1 minute.
2. Add bourbon and bring mixture to a boil. Add pumpkin, tomatoes, kidney beans, navy beans, squash, peppers, and water and stir well. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and let chili simmer for 30 minutes until the butternut squash is tender.
3. Add corn and cook for 5 minutes. Season with sea salt and serve.

Inspired by TheEndlessMeal.com

IT’S TEEN DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH!

3 Ways to Keep Your Young Drivers Safe

Eight teenagers die in motor vehicle crashes every day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That’s a scary statistic — especially as a parent of teenagers. Learning it didn’t surprise me, though, because I often see the aftermath of teen driving crashes in my office. Here in Virginia, 42 people died in crashes involving teen drivers in 2021. That begs the question: **As a parent, what can you do to keep your kids safe?**

Assuming you’ve already explained why either drinking or texting while driving are terrible ideas, here are my recommendations as a parent and personal injury attorney.

- 1. Encourage your kids to take their time.** It’s tempting to try and get from point A to point B as fast as possible. However, it’s safer to pause and think before hitting the gas. When teaching your kids to drive, encourage them to double-check the flow of traffic at busy intersections, four-way stops, and before turning or merging. Even if they’re legally in the right, they could fall victim to a reckless driver if they rush ahead.
- 2. Teach your kids the rules of the road.** Make sure your kids understand the laws for signaling, turning, and right of way. I swear, no one in Virginia knows how four-way stops work these days! If they did, we’d all be a lot safer. You can visit DMV.Virginia.gov/safety for teen driving resources. When you get to the page, click “Teen Driver Safety” on the left-hand side of the screen.



3. Tell your kids to ignore the knuckleheads. Folks here in Virginia have the terrible habit of yielding to other drivers when they’re not supposed to out of “kindness.” While this may be kind, it’s also dangerous! To keep your kids safe, teach them to follow the rules and ignore the knuckleheads — even if someone waves them on or honks at them.

Ultimately, the best thing you can do is lead by example. If you model safe driving behavior for your kids, they’ll likely be good drivers, too! Hopefully, your kids stay as safe as mine have, but if anything happens, I’m here to help with the legal fallout.

—Kevin Mottley