

O'Brien and Stones dash off to Boston Marathon

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How do you spend your Mondays? College faculty members Dick Stones and Tim O'Brien spent a Monday in April with 11,498 others, running 26 miles in Boston.

The Boston Marathon is the pinnacle of running, sort of the Mt. Everest for marathoners worldwide. It's the world's oldest annual marathon, and qualifying to enter the race can be more of a challenge than the 26.2-mile run itself. For men aged 18 to 34 this means proof that they've run a certified marathon in under 3 hours, 10 minutes during the preceding year. Women in the same age group must post times of three hours, 40 minutes in order to qualify. For each increasing five years of age entrants are allowed the luxury of an additional five minutes of time.

Dick Stones has been a German and English instructor at the college for nine years. He began running twenty-five years ago while living in Salt Lake City.

"I'd always been active in sports but never really committed to anything," he says. That is, until he was "encouraged by some people to enter a race". The experience of that 10K event seemed to whet his appetite for competitive running and he hasn't stopped since. Boston was Stones' 48th marathon and his third this year. His first marathon, in Salt Lake City, was memorable for the pain, but he professes that the more marathons he does, the easier they become.

"The more I run, the faster I recover," he says.

Not content with a mere 26 miles of agony, Stones has also competed in five ultra marathons, ranging from 50K to 50 miles. But the Boston Marathon was special.

"The whole city and more turns out for this event," effuses Stones, who was overwhelmed by the more than one million spectators lining the route.

Stones was impressed with the management of the marathon and seemed especially intrigued by the modern timing methods. Prior to the start of the race each a computer chip was placed in each entrant's shoe, which provided accurate times over the course.

Now that he's surpassed this long-time goal, what does the future hold for Stones' running career? "Foreign countries," he said, hoping to use marathons as an excuse to see more of the world. He also spoke of completing the

stultifying Death Valley-to-Mt. Whitney run, which takes place in the sizzling heat of the California summer.

Why does he run? "The more I run, the better I feel both mentally and physically," he explains. He then adds a confession: "Each race gets easier." Which could be words of encouragement to the potential marathoners among us—or fear to those he's competing against.

Talk about karma; as Dick Stones was crossing the finish line in Boston, Tim O'Brien was about to do the same. O'Brien is completing his first year at the college. He teaches horticulture and is rumored to be the youngest instructor on campus.

Like Stones, O'Brien spent a Monday in April fulfilling his dream as well.

The spectators play a major role in O'Brien's memories of the marathon. He says he was completely "in awe" as he was running the final one-half mile.

"You can see the finish line as you are running past bleachers packed with people, cheering you on," he said. Like many others, O'Brien views this marathon as "the race that separates the recreational runners from the serious runners." Like Stones, he revealed that a big part of the mystique of Boston lies in the challenge of qualifying.

While Stones had 47 marathons under his belt before tackling Heartbreak Hill in Boston, O'Brien had just two. He started running when he was an undergraduate

as a way of "staying active" and soon found himself entering into 5 and 10K races. His first marathon was in Seattle in 1995. "That was an interesting experience," he says, as his original intent was nothing more than to finish the event, "just to say I had run a marathon."

Once the race was underway, however, he found the going a lot easier than he'd anticipated and finished in an impressive time of 3 1/2 hours. O'Brien quickly realized that his time was only twenty minutes above that needed for Boston. So, with confidence flowing, "I gave myself the goal of qualifying for the Boston Marathon during the following year," he says.

His determination paid off. O'Brien's next marathon was a year later, again in Seattle. "It was a nerve-wracking last few miles," he recalls, as he was keeping a close eye on the time he needed to cross the finish line during the race. He qualified for Boston with nine seconds to spare. An injury kept him from running in the 1997 contest; fortunately the Boston officials allowed him to postpone his entry until this year.

O'Brien's next running goal is to complete a marathon in under three hours. With his track record this looks a *fait accompli*. In the meantime he can be found involved in more leisurely pursuits including big-wall rock climbing and canoeing.

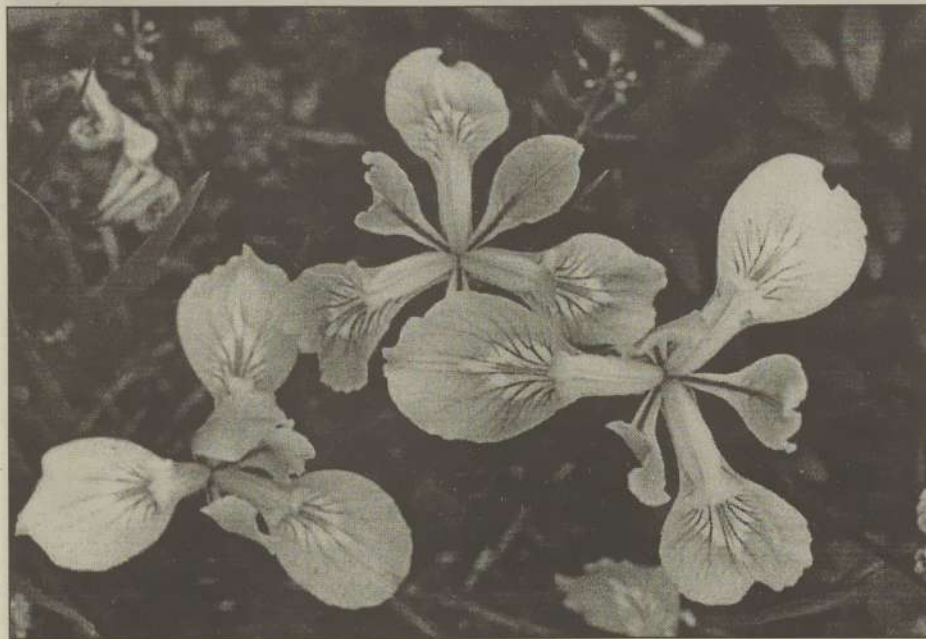
For Dick Stones and Tim O'Brien, Mondays will never be the same. The 103rd Boston Marathon will be held third Monday in April in 1999. What will you be doing?



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Horticulture Instructor Tim O'Brien (left) and German Instructor Dick Stones display proudly their medals signifying completion of the Boston Marathon, the world's oldest annual event of its kind.

Diverse wildflowers enliven the Native Garden



TIMOTHY BELL / Clackamas Print

Del Norte Iris flowers open their tiger-striped petals in greeting. They are but one of many Iris varieties that make the Native Garden their home.

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As spring swings into high gear, it becomes difficult to keep track of all its many minions, mainly the wildflowers. As you stroll through the Native Garden you can't help but notice the rock garden vibrantly blooming in a diverse assortment of shapes and colors.

Located directly below the windows of the chemistry lab, the rock garden hosts some of our most unique and spectacular native plants. Many of these plants would be seen blooming later in the year in their natural habitats,

usually above 3000 feet in elevation. But, because of our unseasonably warm weather and low elevation, we get the opportunity to see them blooming all in one early flush.

In the center of the rock garden the Oregon Iris, *Iris tenax*, appears at first glance to be boiling out of the brick wall that sits behind it. Oregon Iris has a palm-sized light purple flower with three petals, and an assortment of petal-like reproductive parts

inserted in its center. Its petals come decorated with a white patch lined with thin black stripes.

Oregon Iris leaves were recognized by Native Americans as an extremely strong source of fiber, and small ropes were braided from these leaves. It is reported that a rope the size of your little finger would be strong enough to use in an Elk snare. This lends to its Latin name *Iris tenax*, tenax meaning strong, or "tenacious." The name "iris" is derived from the Greek goddess who flashed her messages across the skies in the form of rainbows.

Another interesting Iris located in the rock garden, is the Del Norte Iris, *Iris innominata*. Look to the very north end of the rock garden for its tiger-like bloom. Its flower

looks very similar in structure to that of the Oregon Iris, but the Del Norte Iris colors itself a livid orange that immediately distinguishes it from the light purple Oregon Iris. Although you cannot braid steel-cable strong rope out of this iris' leaves, it does have some unique qualities.

For instance, the Del Norte Iris derives its common name from a small county in northern California (Del Norte County), where it is native. This plant is another example of the interesting and divergent flora that occurs in the southwest Oregon / northwest California corridor.

Del Norte Iris grows naturally only within this isolated area of the planet, and it also has the uncommon tendency to change its flower color from plant to plant. Some plants produce a light blue bloom, and some a tiger-orange display, as we see here in the Native Garden. It is the tiger-orange that is the more commonly occurring, but the odd-ball-blue ones do occur, and they confused and confounded early botanists for many years.

In the wooded area, between the Pauling Center and the Barlow parking lot, there is a wonderful flush of White Fawn Lilies, *Erythronium oregonum*. Take a walk back there and look for the clusters of nodding white flowers about eight to twelve inches off of the ground. These flowers are extremely delicate, both in appearance and in impactibility, so please be careful to stay on the edge of the patches and not walk through the center of the area in bloom. The name Fawn Lily comes from the plants' oval-shaped leaves, which are mottled in color, like the markings of a young fawn.

Fawn Lilies have six white petals that bend and curve backwards, ending in pointed tips. The flowers are solitary and seem to be dozing off as they tend to nod over and face the ground at the end of their slender stalks. All of this makes them an easily recognized and appreciated native wildflower; one that we are fortunate to have in such proliferation.

I hope you take the time to stop and smell the Native Garden this week. It is quickly waking up from its long winter sleep. Enjoy.