

SCRATCHPAD

A confession from a 'crazy' runner

By **NIKKI DAVIDSON**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR



A wave of runners and walkers will shut down the Astoria Bridge to traffic from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Sunday morning for the return of the Great Columbia Crossing 10K.

I'll be one of the little dots in the distance trotting my way over the 4.1 mile bridge, rain or shine. I can't wait to participate, I registered immediately after I found out the event was happening.

But the truth is, I wasn't always this excited about running. Not too long ago, I would have rolled my eyes and complained about the disruption to traffic, labeling anyone who wanted to participate as "crazy."

Back then, my only experience with running was in school gym class. I was always one of the last to finish the 1 mile run, lungs burning, legs wobbly and utterly miserable as my gym teacher clapped and yelled at me to "hustle up." I hated running.

But several years ago, something unexpected happened. I came across a couch-to-5K program that caught my interest. With no one recording my speed or pressuring me to go faster, I gave it a shot. After figuring out my pace and breathing, setting and achieving small goals became one of my favorite things to do. My physical and mental health significantly benefited. I even got a job in a running store and started coaching other people to complete 5Ks.

Throughout my bizarre transition, I started to see the world through a runner's

eyes. It's common for random vehicles to slowly follow, honk or yell obscenities at people out walking and running.

In some parts of the country, there aren't easily accessible paths and pedestrians are forced to mix with traffic. The reality is, finding safe places to run and walk can be challenging. That's what makes events like the Great Columbia Crossing 10K attractive to people from all over the country.

If you're not participating and find yourself cursing under your breath Sunday about

the traffic delays, I understand. In a perfect world, our transportation systems would be built with access for both vehicles and pedestrians.

However, please keep in mind it's just 150 minutes, and one chance for pedestrians to experience the same rights vehicles always have on the bridge. Law enforcement will be on-site and are prepared to help guide emergency vehicles across if necessary.

Thank you to the organizers who make this event possible, and the state and law enforcement agencies that work tirelessly to keep everyone safe. Good luck to all of the "crazy" runners and walkers who are crossing the bridge. I hope it's everything you trained for it to be!

our coast **weekend**

ON
THE
COVER



North Coast Commons members enjoy a bounty of food from meal kits created by The Salmonberry restaurant in Wheeler.
PHOTO BY SOPHIA KNOX

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