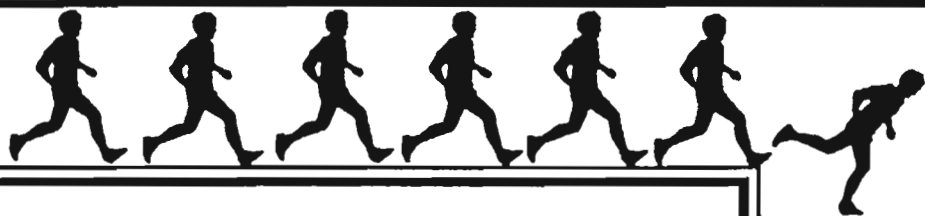


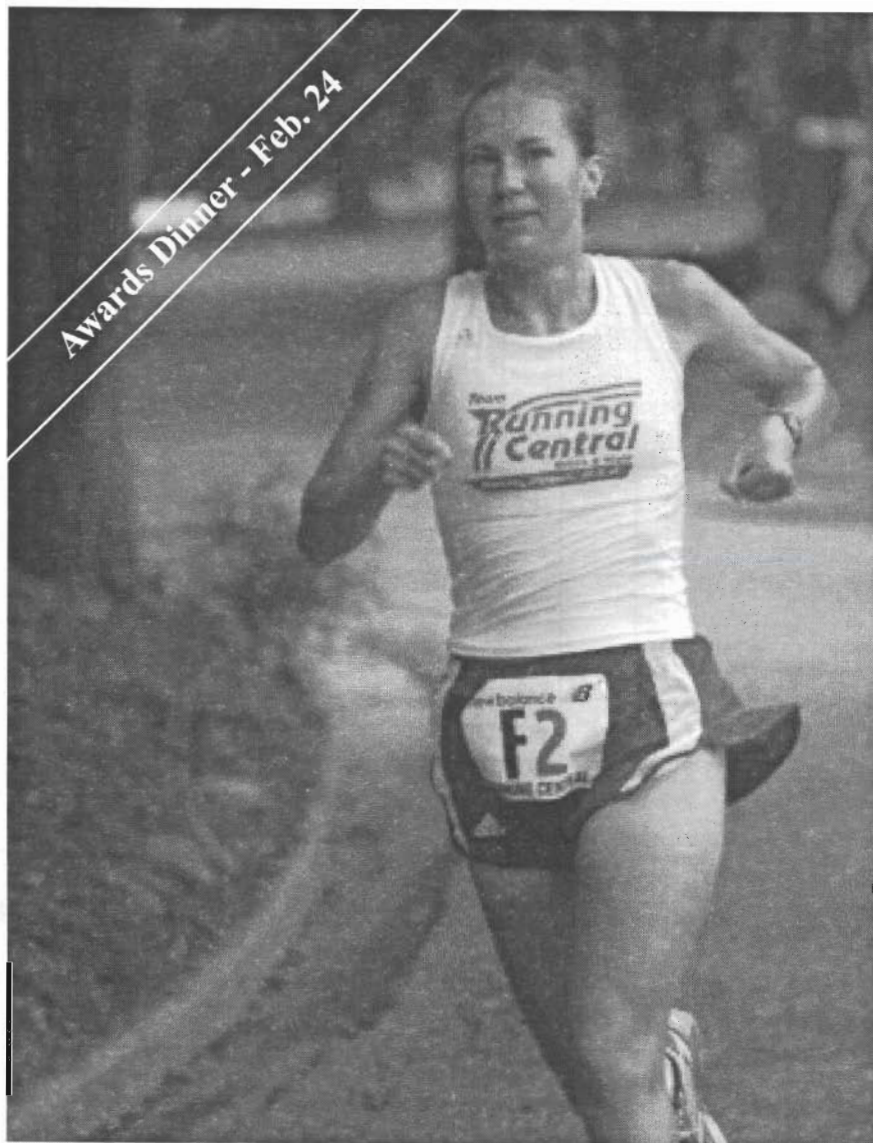
# Off the Track



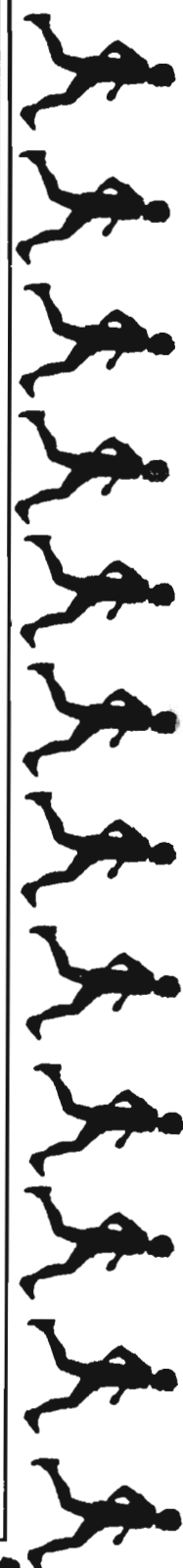
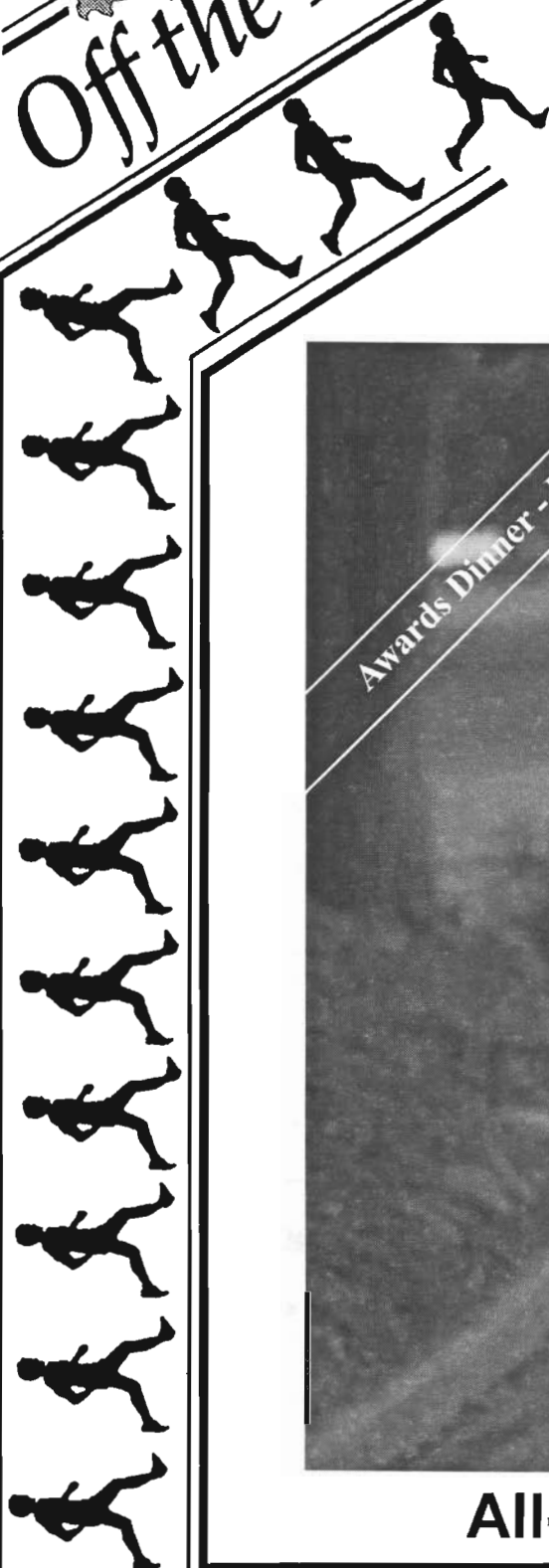
# ...On the Road

Illinois Valley Striders Newsletter  
700 West Main Street, Peoria, IL 61606

January 2007



All-Around Allison



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## **Editors' Comments**

### ***On The Cover-***

From the 5K to the half marathon to the marathon to the triathlon, Allison Arndt has been the woman to beat. Read about Allison in the interview inside. The photo was taken by Bob Padilla of Fujimo Sports Photography.

### ***MARK YOUR CALENDAR-***

The Illinois Valley Striders Awards Dinner and Celebration will be on Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup> starting at 6pm at InPlay in Peoria. Details will be forthcoming but it is guaranteed it will be a very good time.

### ***In Memory of Rich Cemenska-***

Rich Cemenska, a long-time runner and Illinois Valley Strider, passed away on November 26. Rich was 55 years old. He died after being struck by a car while he was running very close to his home in Edelstein. Rich was a friendly, outgoing person who enjoyed life and was an enthusiastic runner. Our sympathy and condolences have been extended to his family for their tragic loss. Memorials may be made to ARK in Lacon, Il. or the Mossville Elementary School Music Department.

## **Off The Track**

**Co-Editors**– Steve Shostrom 688-7313  
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**Schedules**– Craig Thompson and Judy Tolliver

**Photography**– Bob Padilla

## Traditional Grand Prix Series - by Steve Foster

**Congratulations!**  
**These are the award winners for 2006.**  
**Awards will be presented at the IVS Awards Banquet in February.**

### Women

Place	Runner	Points	Races
1	Regina Hartley	705	21
2	Dana Wallace	619	20
3	Angie Banister	598	17
4	Sandy Theobald	560	18
5	Jona McDermaid	546	18
6	Mindy Elliot	527	15
7	Pat O'Bryan	469	13
8	Cheryl Jeffery	449	13
9	Fran Garcia	424	13
10	Christy Lairmore	412	12
11	Marysue Baker	398	13
12	Diane Legaspi	365	12

### Men

Place	Runner	Points	Races
1	Bill Holmes	721	22
2	Doug Newton	664	19
3	Nick Laux	624	12
4	Robert Robertson	502	15
5	Terry Whitehead	458	13
6	Mike Rucker	456	14
7	Mike Grieshaber	451	15
8	Paul Urycki	440	14
9	Josh Banister	436	12
10	Herb Kasube	411	13
11	Paul Laux	358	13

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***Racing season is just around the corner!***

***Sign up for the 2007 IVS Grand Prix Series and Competitive Series.***

The IVS Grand Prix Race Series and Competitive Series are free programs that allow participants to accumulate points based on their participation in selected circuit races. You must be an IVS member.

Everyone that is interested must register, even if you participated last year. **Registration deadline is June 16.** All entries will be retroactive to the first Series race in March. Once you've registered, you will receive a confirmation letter that includes the **Grand Prix Series Rules** and a **List of the Circuit Races**.

To register for the Series, send the following information to Steve Foster at 301 Indian Circle, East Peoria, IL 61611 or by email to [fost@insightbb.com](mailto:fost@insightbb.com) : Name, Address, Phone Number, Email address, Age as of 3/11/2006, Competitive Series (yes or no).

## THE JOYS OF THE OBSCURE MARATHON XI

### *By Drake Stockert*

With my daughter running cross country this year, my fall marathon had to be put on hold until November. Therefore, the pool of available marathons meeting my needs had dwindled. However, there on the marathon calendar I found the Valley of Fire Marathon slated for Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. It was small, about 125 runners and very scenic.

Valley of Fire State Park is the #1 rated park in Nevada, and obscure, as in Overton is where? Plus I could spend a couple days in Vegas. Since our local direct low-cost carrier to Las Vegas had high fares on my travel dates, I found a better deal out of Bloomington via Atlanta. Of course that added 2 ½ hours to my trip each way. But as many of you know, it is common for me to drive up to 1000 miles each way for races so what was a little extra fly time. Plus for those of you who know me as a banker, as in frugal, cheap, tight (just ask my family) it saved me a considerable amount of money. After a little online shopping, I was able to book my flight, car and hotel in 30 minutes, but as my trip played out, the time savings was even greater.

I arrived at the airport just before 5:00 am and strolled past the 50 people in line at the ticket counter and proceeded to the self check-in kiosk, inserted my credit card, got my boarding passes, handed my bag to the attendant then headed for security at the gate. Upon arrival in Vegas, I grabbed my bag and jumped on the shuttle to the rental car lot. Once there, I walked past the long line and went to the self-serve kiosk, inserted my credit card and got my rental agreement. Then I proceeded out to the lot, selected the car I wanted and drove to the check out booth. I had made reservations at Excalibur Hotel on the Strip, a short 15 minute drive from the airport. They also offered online express check-in with the added bonus of a 1:00 pm check-in versus standard 2:00. I walked into the lobby at 1:00 and proceeded to the self-serve kiosk, inserted my credit card and received my receipt, room keys and directions to the room in a mere 5 minutes. By 1:15, I was in my room and changing into my running gear for a short trip along the Strip. Later that afternoon, I grabbed a sub sandwich at the food court and dined in my room with a nice glass of wine before turning in at 7:00 on a Friday night in Vegas. Sheeeez!

On Saturday, I left the hotel around 5:30 for the 1 hour drive to the race. While getting coffee in the lobby, I was amazed at the number of people still in the casino and those returning from a night on the town. Valley of Fire State Park is an hour drive north of Las Vegas off of I-15. To reach the start line required a drive through the park and a chance to review the course. That undulating, roller coaster ride instilled a sense of dread and consternation and I quickly realized that I needed to make some serious alterations to my race strategy. I decided I would need to take short walking breaks at all aid stations, which were every 2 miles and consume a glass of Gatorade and water at each. That change in tactics served me well late in the race. With the small number of runners, I was able to take a place at the starting line. After an a cappella rendering of the National Anthem by those assembled, we were off.

The 1<sup>st</sup> mile was a steady climb with the 2<sup>nd</sup> mile being a steep plunge into the canyon. I immediately took note that this would be mile 25 on the return trip. Miles 2-8 were a mostly steady, gradual rise with the 9<sup>th</sup> mile an even stiffer climb. But these were just a warm up for mile 10 which had a significant grade. Upon reaching mile 10, the remaining 3 miles to the turn around were primarily downhill with some rolls. The return to mile 16 meant 2 miles of significant descent and by mile 20 my quads were toast. I took some extra rest time before starting out on the last 10K. The next 5 miles was again a gradual descent, but it was the couple of slight ascents that revitalized my legs. When I reached “the hill” at mile 25, I was able to charge right up and over. The remaining 1.2 miles were again a slow easy descent to a finish lined by flags and cheerful volunteers.

The finisher’s medal is very nice and a great addition to my collection. My time of 3:42:15 was certainly the slowest of my 51 marathons, but it may well be one of the smartest races I have run. Within 15 minutes of finishing, I received a card showing my overall place (10<sup>th</sup>) and age group 50-59 place (1<sup>st</sup>). There was no waiting for an awards ceremony, I just presented my card to the volunteer and was given my award, a beautiful framed picture of the park imprinted with the date, name of event and award status. Way cool!!! The race shirt is actually a technical micro fiber long-sleeve shirt in a dark red with yellow print and easily my favorite. The scenery on the course is simply spectacular with numerous red rock formations. The aid stations were well stocked and had helpful and enthusiastic volunteers. Many had young children greeting us with wide toothy grins and words of encouragement. Race temperatures ranged from low 50’s at start to low 60’s by finish, with no humidity (this is the desert) a slight breeze and clear blue skies. Despite the isolated location, Annette Deakins, her staff and race organization executed perfectly and allowed the runners to do their best. I would highly recommend this to any runner looking for an adventure marathon. In addition to the marathon, there is a companion ½ marathon and 10K. Details can be found on their website [www.valleyoffiremarathon.com](http://www.valleyoffiremarathon.com).

I returned to my hotel for a much needed shower and glass of fine red wine, and then was off for an evening on The Strip. I never made it into any of the casinos, but was very enthralled by the incredible architectural wonders along Las Vegas Boulevard and the human parade plying its way north and south along that magically lit street. It was far more entertaining than anything I would have found inside those palaces.

PS: Elvis is still dead, but his numerous lounge-lizard clones can still be found in many places along The Strip. Thank you. Thank you very much!

Editor’s Note: Drake, if this is your idea of a fun trip to Vegas, you’re nuts!

## **A LITTLE ABOUT ALLISON ARNDT**

***By Steve Shostrom***

Only in town for a few years, twenty-seven year old Allison Arndt has made a huge impression on the Central Illinois running and triathlon scene. As a south side Milwaukee city kid, Allison swam and ran track and cross-country at Hamilton High. Her athletic pursuits cooled some in college and she “mostly studied” as an engineering student at the University of Wisconsin (Madison). In 2002, after graduation, Allison was hired by Caterpillar and moved to Peoria. In the spring of 2003, the newly hired CAT engineer found Building Steam and things began to click. She enrolled in the Team Steam program and started to train more seriously. Her Peoria road race debut was Race for the Cure and she ran Steamboat “27 something or was it 29 something—anyway under 30 which was my only goal,” she recounted. A testament to the efficacy of IVS’ running programs, she immediately moved into the IVS marathon training program.

Her first marathon took her back to her hometown of Milwaukee and she responded by running a 3:29, which qualified her for Boston. She did Boston (just about one year from her start-up in Building Steam). She describes her first Boston as an “experience” which included being part of the “hot one” of 2004 which played havoc with so many of Peoria’s entries. Although Boston was not an artistic success for her, it left Allison with a high fitness level and she quickly established herself as the dominant road racer in the Peoria area. Some notable performances were Allison’s 2d place overall at Race for the Cure behind Melinda Swank and 8<sup>th</sup> place at the Quad City Marathon (3:21). The list of local road races in the past two years she has won is longer than this newsletter. She was named the Illinois Valley Strider’s Runner of the Year in 2005. Perhaps her most impressive races and her favorite performances were her 9<sup>th</sup> place finish at 2005 Steamboat 4M @ 23:35 and 11<sup>th</sup> place in 2006 @ 22:44.

The quick ascent to the top of Central Illinois running has not been without some travail. In late ’05, Allison suffered a stress fracture that kept her off the roads for awhile. She went back to the pool to maintain fitness. Pretty quickly the triathlon folks around the Riverplex, notably Beth Haynes, saw her swimming talents and convinced her to take a crack at triathlons. She did and in ’06 Allison won the local triathlon trilogy of Pekin, Canton and Elmwood. Impressively, she was third overall at Tri-Shark in Bloomington. Without much experience on a bike, her triathlon feats really highlight not only her running and swimming but also her competitiveness.

Right now, Allison is out-of-action with a bad dose of plantar fasciitis which struck at this year’s Chicago Marathon and refuses to go away. If she can get pain free, she would like to take a “serious” crack at the marathon with the hope to break 3 hours and even trying to run an Olympic qualifying time (2:47). In the meantime, she is enjoying doing volunteer coaching of the Limestone H. S. cross country and track teams. Allison gives much credit for her successes to a number of people, especially Team Steam moguls Blair Gorsuch and Greg White, and folks that go back to her first Building Steam days, such as Rich Crandell who still runs with Allison on occasion. Of the Striders she says, “always, everybody is willing to help.” We look to see a healthy Allison Arndt back on the roads soon and better than ever.