

## SPORTS

# American relay race scheduled in the area next April

**RUNNING IS** typically an individual sport, but relay racing is a growing sport that allows runners the chance to engage in some team spirit.

The American Odyssey Relay Run Adventure will give local runners a chance to try their hand at teamwork. The 200-mile inaugural race, next April 24-25, will start in Gettysburg, Pa., and end in Washington.

Teams of 12 will run between three and nine miles each, and each runner runs three times. "Every leg is different," said organizer Bob Fleshner, a Silver Spring race organizer.

The race is continuous, which means some runners will run in the middle of the night, Fleshner said. He expects the fastest teams, those with a 6-minute per mile average, will finish in about 20 hours, and the slowest, at a 10-11 minute mile pace, in about 36 hours.

In the meantime, teams are recommended to travel in vans, and will need two vehicles. Relays are split into two sections, with six team members in one vehicle and six in the other. Fleshner doesn't recommend teams use a car, saying runners will need to stretch their legs.

Four legs will loop around Boonsboro High School, allowing relays and drivers to rest while runners are pounding the roads around Boonsboro. The high school band will play and there will be food and drinks for the runners.

There will also be a couple of loops around Smithsburg, allowing runners in the first vans to walk and eat. The early part of the run brings runners from Gettysburg to Rouzerville, Pa., before heading south to Smithsburg. Runners will remain on the mountainous roads of eastern Washington County before the Boonsboro rest stop. After Boonsboro, runners will make their way in the dark of night to Keedysville and Sharpsburg, along Harpers Ferry Road to the C&O Canal.

Runners will then follow the canal into Washington. The finish line is next to the FDR Memorial, near the Washington Monument.

Fleshner has enlisted the help of area runners and running coaches to help him plan the course and the relay stops. Relay exchanges will be at churches and shopping centers.

Teams are encouraged to come up with clever team names. Fleshner, who has run three 200-mile

relays, said his business partner once ran on a team called "Scrambled legs and achin'."

Slower teams will start first. Teams can have fewer than 12 members, although Fleshner said he will try to link up incomplete teams to fill each team.

There will be categories for male, female, co-ed and masters teams. Prizes will be given for the best team name, best costumes and best decorated vans.

Fleshner has competed in relays in New Hampshire and California. The typical relay distance is 200 miles, he said.

"Running is an individual pursuit," he said. "It's all about how you do as an individual. With a relay, there's camaraderie, teamwork, logistics, plus, it's just fun. You run fast and hard to help your teammates."

Those who register before July 31 will get long-sleeve T-shirts. Registration fee is \$1,140 per team, and local teams are asked to supply three volunteers to help out along the course.

Many more details are available at [www.americanodysseyrelay.com](http://www.americanodysseyrelay.com).



For those who want to combine

running with a lesson about history and nature, the Potomac Conservancy is sponsoring a trail run on Saturday at 8 a.m., starting at the River Center, Lockhouse 8 on the C&O Canal. The address is 7906 Riverside Ave., Cabin John.

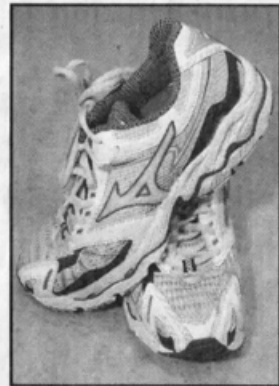
There will be two routes, one of about 3 miles, and one 5-7 miles. The runs will include side trails off the C&O. David Rose, an area runner, will lead the run.

"It's a social thing," said Bridget Chapin, River Center Coordinator, who organized the run. "We're seeing what kind of response we get." Earlier this summer, she organized a bike tour of the canal.

Runners will learn a few facts about the region they're running through, and about canal history. The pace will be conversational.

"The idea is to bring people awareness about the river and to threats the river and its habitat faces," Chapin said. Deer and turtles will likely be seen during the run, and runners will learn a little about native plants.

For more information, call 301-608-1188 ext. 213, or check the website, [www.potomac.org](http://www.potomac.org).



## GOING THE DISTANCE

By **KAREN GARDNER**

■ For suggestions or to include your event in the list of upcoming events, e-mail [kgardner@newspost.com](mailto:kgardner@newspost.com), or call 301-662-1177 ext. 268.