Runner challenges distances

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Farmington Hills' Allan Gelfond, 46, once weighed 265 pounds and puffed three packs of cigarettes a day. The activity dearest to his heart was wolfing down ice cream.

What was this self-described "ex-overweight, non-athletic heavy smoker" doing competing in "America's Ultimate Challenge" — Colorado's recent 28.3-mile, grueling Pikes Peak Marathon?

It seems Gelfond has mended many of his evil ways.

The 6-foot-2, 180-pound British Columbia native now works off his ice cream indulgences by running an average of 10 miles a day and specializing in the most demanding running events America has to offer.

This is the same person who, 15 years ago, considered running so "boring and uneventful" that he returned a friend's jogging invitations with "go fly a kite."

"Finally I went with him — just to get him off my back," said Gelfond, who now has run the Boston Marathon four times and boasts a Pikes Peak belt buckle owned by finishers of the Colorado marathon — a feat only a few thousand runners have been equal to.

GELFOND'S RUNNING career began modestly enough.

"I ran a mile and I was awestruck that I could do it," the Detroit social worker said of his first attempt at the sport. "I worked up to three miles, and soon was competing in 10-mile runs.

"It kind of got to me that I could do such a thing. About six years ago, West Bloomfield sponsored its first marathon, and I entered.

"The week before, I went out for a training run and tried going 15 miles.

"I ran out of steam after 12 miles, and hitch-hiked home," said the slightly-greying Gelfond.

"The guy who picked me up happened to be the director of the run. He talked me into entering, and I finished in three hours and 45 minutes. I felt like (I was) dragging lead."

The Wayne State University graduate was so ecstatic he decided to run at Boston a month later.

"I wasn't conditioned to taking water, and after 21 miles I blacked out," he said. "My wife Harriet wasn't too happy to hear I ended up in a hospital with a 108-degree temperature."

Gelfond's lesson-learned-the-hard-way paid off. The father of three returned the following year and licked the Boston course in 3:07.

HAVING LICKED the marathon, Gelfond sought a new challenge. He discovered the annual 50-mile ultra-marathons in Lake Waramaug, Conn., and Chicago, and decided to enter.

Last November, he completed Toledo's 62-mile ultra-marathon in 10:59.11.

Gelfond caught wind of the Pikes Peak Marathon. "It sounded so demanding I was reluctant at first," he said.

In the end, the challenge was irresistible. Gelfond found himself in Colorado at a high-altitude-training seminar the evening before the gut-wrenching marathon.

"I GOT VERY queasy hearing peoples' battle tales," he said. "They talked about evacuating collapsed runners, loose 'B's, altitude sickness and oxygen debt.

"When I hit the finish line I was ready to burst into tears of joy."

(The race begins at 6,500 feet above sea level and soars to 14,110 feet at the summit. During the same day, temperatures may vary from 15-85 degrees, with rain, snow, hail and sunshine all likely occurances).

In the morning,Gelfond realized that the Detroit-area hills he trained on bore no resemblance to the rugged, hazardous terrain before he was to encounter.

"I was worried going in about whether I'd be able to do it and come out of it safely," Gelfond said.

"You run single-file up a narrow, steep burro trail. Above the timber line you're on rocks that you have to climb over, so for 50 or 75 percent of it, you have to walk so you don't fall. It's tough work.

Allan Gelfond was once overweight and a heavy smoker. Recently, however, he competed in the grueling Pikes Peak Marathon in Colorado.

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CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 10, 1981

Farmington Hills City Council held a regular meeting August 10, 1981. Mayor Pro-tem opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Members present were: Burwell, Soronen, Opperthauser, Alkateeb, Dolan and Lange. Absent: Mayor Wolf.

Others present were: City Manager Savage, Assistant City Manager Costick, City Clerk Cairns and City Attorney Bibeau and Mr. Bruce Bonjour from the firm of Dickinson, Wright, McKean, Cudlip and Moon.

Approval of the minutes of July 13, 20 and 27, 1981, with corrections.

Attorney's Report was presented.

Council approved project plan to finance Hunters Square at Fourteen and Orchard Lake Road for $8,500,000 under the E.D.C. Act 334 P.A. 1974.

Council approved project plan to finance addition to Ingersoll-Rand for $4,000,000 under the E.D.C. Act 334 P.A. 1974.

Council approved project plan to finance Roson Office Building at Fourteen and Orchard Lake Road for $6,000,000 under the E.D.C. Act 334 P.A. 1974.

Council awarded bid to National Bank of Detroit, being the low bid for the purchase of Bonds at an effective interest rate of 10.61505 for 1981 soil stabilization paving program.

Request for extension of time for open space plan in the Bridle Hills Subdivision was approved until Sept. 1, 1982.

Request for extension of time for open space plan in Farmington Green North Subdivision was approved until Nov. 1, 1982.

A cross-walk was discussed for Farmington Road between Twelve and Thirteen Mile Road. A study to be made by Oakland County Road Commission, with a report back to Council.

Appointments were made to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Adult Foster Care committee.

Approval was given to St. Alexander's Church to hold a Festival, Sept. 11-13, 1981.

Bid was awarded to Wadel Stabilization Inc. for soil stabilization of roads: Old Homestead, Pleasant Valley Farms, Franklin Knolls, Springland, LaMuera, and Halsted Road south of Colfax.

Report was made by City Manager regarding road improvement of Fourteen Mile from Ten Hill to Inkster.

Discussion on sidewalks was held and report to be made by Bonding Attorney and staff within one month on method of financing and apportionment.

Council approved request for extension of time for sidewalk construction for William Tyndell College until June 15, 1982.

Council approved request for waiver of sidewalk construction for Ingersoll-Rand, Inc.

Council approved extension of City Hall cleaning service contract with AAA Maintenance Company.

Traffic Control Order prohibiting right turns on red at certain hours for Fourteen Mile Road at Middlebelt was approved.

Traffic Control Order prohibiting parking at the intersection of Arden Park Drive and Branchaster Road and requiring the installation of a yield sign for Arden Park Drive at Branchaster was approved.

Council rescinded action on the Emergency Medical Service proposition A, enacted on July 27, 1981, and passed a resolution approving Charter Amendment proposition to be placed on the November 3, 1981 ballot calling for up to 1½ mills for upgrading the existing Emergency Medical Advance Life Support Services for a period beginning July 1, 1982, and thereafter.

Council held executive session regarding pending litigation.

Upon Motion meeting adjourned.

FLOYD A. CAIRNS, City Clerk
DONN L. WOLF, Mayor

Publish August 20, 1981

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 17, 1981

Farmington Hills City Council held a special meeting on August 17, 1981. Mayor Wolf opened the meeting at 7:30 o'clock p.m. Members present were Burwell, Soronen, Wolf, Opperthauser, Alkateeb and Dolan. Lange absent. Others present were City Manager Savage, City Clerk Cairns, Assistant City Manager Costick and City Attorney Bibeau.

Council introduced zoning map amendment C62-259 rezoning lot 50 of Supervisor's kPlat of Woodcreek Farms No. 1 from RA-1A to OS-3.

Introduction to proposed zoning map amendment C62-252 lots 1 through 10 of Grand River Homes Sub. to rezone from OS-1 to B-1 was denied.

Zoning text amendment C62-MM to Section 404 of the Zoning Ordinance to expressly permit and regulate the parking of certain commercial vehicles in Single-Family Residential Districts subject to special conditions as amended was introduced.

Council denied introduction of proposed zoning text amendment C62-NN to Section 406, Planned Unit Developments, to allow said alternate means of single-family development in the RA-1A and RA-1B Districts, as well as in the already permitted RA-1 to RA-2, One-Family Residential Districts.

Council introduced proposed zoning text amendment C62-00 to Section 407, One Family Clustering Option, to allow said alternate means of single-family development in the RA-1B, One-Family Residential District, as well as the RA-1, RA-2, RA-3 and RA-4 Single Family Residential Districts. Further said amendment is reorganized and expanded to more clearly express the discretionary development standards which will be reviewed for this type of development.

Council introduced proposed zoning text amendment C62-PP to Section 1904, subparagraph (e), to regulate the parking in the Industrial Districts for those industrial uses or research establishments in related accessory office use to provide five parking spaces plus one for every one and one-half employees in the largest working shift, or one for each 450 square feet of usable floor area, whichever is greater, and Section 1914, paragraph 4, removing the "color requirement" for poured concrete walls.

Necessity was declared and the Intent to Sell Bonds resolution was adopted for the paving of Fourteen Mile from Ten Hill to Inkster Roads.

Special Assessment Roll No. C161-Fourteen Mile Road Improvement from Ten Hill to Inkster S was confirmed in the amount of $55,120.08.

Public Hearing re proposed vacation of portion of Valley Road and Old Colony Road was tabled.

The $1,225,000 Bonding Resolution for Howard Road Sewer, Water, and Paving Special Assessment Districts was adopted.

Council adopted the resolution to amend sewage disposal rates, pursuant to Federal Court Order of July 10, 1981, effective June 1, 1981.

Construction contract for Fourteen Mile Road paving from Ten Hill to Inkster Roads was awarded to Wadel Stabilization Inc. in the amount of $90,385.44.

Mayor Wolf declared September 13, 1981 Constitution Week.

Upon motion meeting adjourned.

FLOYD A. CAIRNS, City Clerk
DONN L. WOLF, Mayor

Publish: August 20, 1981

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