

What Makes Ted Run

It's not all about running for Arlington's 100-Marathon Man.

By ASHLEY SIMPSON
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Having just crossed the finish line of the Wild Atlantic Way Marathon in Ireland on Sunday, June 12, Ted Hobart has officially run 100 marathons. That's 2,620 miles of both triumph and pain, which the long-time Arlington resident has covered over 18 years.

As he announced on the ManiacFanaticsMadness blog upon finishing the race, "I did it – I completed my 100th marathon today at the Donegal Wild Atlantic Marathon in Killybegs, Ireland."

Marathons have always been about more than just running, accomplishment, and medals for Hobart. He's always run them in tandem with fundraising for a non-profit organization, and to raise awareness for important causes.

"I ran my first marathon in 2004, as part of a charity team raising money for [a now defunct national AIDS non-profit organization]" Hobart said. "And, although this foundation doesn't exist anymore, I've continued running marathons as a member of various fundraising teams and for causes and organizations that mean something to me."

For example, after his first three marathons, he began fundraising – as well as working full-time for – Walker-Whitman Health, a non-profit health organization that focuses on HIV/AIDS healthcare and advocates for the LGBTQ community.

And, representing Whitman-Walker both as an employee and volunteer runner was life-changing for Hobart.

"It was a year after my first marathon that I came out as a gay man," Hobart said, "and I really couldn't have done this as a part of any other charity."

The Biggest Purpose Behind Hobart's Running

There are a lot of poetic things about Hobart's running journey. Perhaps the most poetic part of his running is the way he devotes all of his races to his fallen friends, Lollie Winans and her girlfriend Julie Williams. The two young women were brutally murdered during a



Ted Hobart in his hotel after completing his 100th marathon, this one in Ireland.

Ted Hobart with the race director at the finish of his 100th marathon, the Donegal Wild Atlantic Marathon in Killybegs, Ireland.

long hiking trip along the Appalachian Trail on June 12, 1996.

And yes, Hobart intentionally completed his 100th marathon on the very day that marked the 26th anniversary of Lollie's and Julie's deaths – the still-unsolved murders were deemed the nation's first federal hate crime.

"It is suspected that Lollie and Julie were killed because they were a lesbian couple," Hobart

he consistently feels that he shares with Lollie.

"Running a marathon is never easy for me – it's always difficult," Hobart said. "But, Lollie – who had become a part of my family almost immediately after meeting her – is always on the back of my mind when I run."

Every year, June 12 is an unavoidably difficult day for Hobart,

but he didn't think twice about planning it as the date of his centennial marathon this year. He was fueled by the idea that, in running a hallmark race on this day, he would bring extra awareness to the still-unsolved double homicide.

Even before this momentous marathon, Hobart had been running in honor of Lollie and Julie for more than a decade.

"The first marathon that I officially did in honor of Lollie in Julie in 2005 – the Vermont City Marathon" Hobart recalled. "[Lollie and Julie had special ties to Vermont], and that's why I did that for them;

it was their memories that brought me to that part of the world to run."

Hobart's Hurdles en Route to Running for Lollie, Julie, and Himself

Hobart had to clear many hurdles before getting to the point of accepting the tragedy and loss. The hurdles were also there on his way to finding pride and joy in living his own life.

"I met Lollie in 1991 when she had just graduated from Sterling College in Vermont," Hobart said. "She became a part of my family, and was in all my family photos ... Then, in 1995, she and Julie were hiking the Appalachian Trail and were due to visit me in North Carolina – where I was attending Warren College at the time – during their travels."

That year, he was so looking forward to Lollie's visit. However, all the plans he had for the reunion fled from his mind after receiving a chilling phone that he'll never forget.

"This FBI agent kept calling for me, leaving messages on my voicemail," Hobart said. "I found out they were calling everyone in Lollie's address book because she

and Julie had been killed in the Shenandoah Mountains in Virginia. I just couldn't believe this. You read about people getting killed, but you never think it's going to be one of your best friends who dies. It's just one of those moments you're never prepared for – especially not in your twenties. You realize, you're not as immortal or immune to these things as you think you are."

Among all the ways this tragedy affected Hobart, it also prevented him from publicly accepting himself as a gay man – something he said Lollie had helped him find the courage to do.

"Before Lollie's death, I was feeling on top of the world – ready to come out as a gay man and stop having to keep that part of myself from people," Hobart said. "Lollie was someone I could have talked about this with. I was so ready to

just be open with it all, and then after Lollie died, it all came to a crashing halt. It pushed me so much farther into the closet that I didn't even come out until 2005."

Not Running from Grief, but Moving Forward One Step at a Time

The first marathon that Hobart ever ran was in 2004 – the Mardis Gras Marathon in New Orleans just eight months after breaking his leg (and about eight years after Lollie and Julie were killed).

"I had to ride the metro everywhere, and I kept seeing this sign on the train about training for your first marathon," he said. "When I told my orthopedic surgeon about it, he looked me up and down like I was crazy. I wanted to prove him wrong."

So, he trained – and ultimately finished the Mardis Gras Marathon as his first of what is now one hundred.

Hobart added that after Lollie's death, he was likely running these

crazy distances as a way to avoid his grief and other inner turmoil.

Then, running became something entirely different – something far more positive – when he ran his first Vermont City Marathon. It was through the training and fundraising processes for this race that he became comfortable and proud publicly identifying as a gay man – as well as a prolific runner. And, although no longer with him physically, Hobart maintains that Lollie still played a role in this personal transformation.

"Running in Lollie and Julie's memory and raising awareness about them and what happened to them was the motivation that kept me going," he said. "I paired with Outright Vermont, an LGBT youth nonprofit in Burlington to raise money for them in that first marathon ... and I ended up doing four Vermont City Marathons. It was after those four that I went to San Francisco, where I found out about this crazy bunch of people who ran marathons in every different state."

And ultimately, Hobart became a proud, happy, and accomplished member of this wonderfully crazy bunch of 50-state marathoners – one reason he had to go to another continent to run his centennial marathon.

What's Next for Hobart

Hobart is only 55 years old and



The scenic course of the Donegal Wild Atlantic Marathon in Killybegs, Ireland.

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"FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

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Contact: Judy Massabny, jmas-sa@arlingtonva.us
55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers, unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate (starting at a \$20 annual fee). To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747.

NVSO: Registration is open for the 2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics to be held Sept. 10-24. Check the website, www.nvso.us for full details including events, full schedule, rules and more. Registration fee is \$20 for unlimited events. Participants must be 50 years of age by Dec. 31, 2022 and live in a sponsoring jurisdiction. Registration is online only. For additional information, email Sidney Reid, Arlington's representative on the NVSO Committee at sreid@arlingtonva.us.

Movie night at Lubber Run 55+ Center, "West Side Story" (2021), Thursday, July 14, 6 p.m. Registration # 914804-03.

Ballroom bootcamp, common steps to a different dance each week, Thursday, July 14, 2:30 p.m. Lubber Run 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Movie discussion, "The Imitation Game," on Netflix, Thursday, July 14, 3 p.m. Virtual. Registration # 914402-05.

A caregiver's guide to finances, how to prepare for future care costs and benefits of early planning, Thursday, July 14, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Presented by Dan Cronin, Alzheimer's Association. Registration # 914404-05.

Afternoon piano lounge, relaxing music by pianist Daniel Austin, Friday, July 15, 2 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 914301-07.

Social ballroom dance, spacious dance floor, no instruction, have fun with fellow 55+ members, Friday, July 15, 1:45 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Drop-in.

"A Caregiver's Guide to Medicare," Monday, July 18, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Virtual. To register, email, MedicareHelp@arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-1725.

Continuum of care options, Monday, July 18, 1 p.m. Professionals discuss services and answer questions about costs. Virtual. Registration # 914500-18.

Current events, discuss local and world news, informal, volunteer led, Monday, July 18, 10 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914402-14.

Ukulele class to learn basic strumming, Tuesday, July 19, 4:30

p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 914304-02.

55+ Travel group to visit the Library of Virginia in Richmond, Tuesday, July 19. Lunch at Carytown, Registration # 902207-05. Cost \$19, Arlington resident, \$22, non-resident.

Container gardens, information offered by Master Gardener, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Tuesday, July 19, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 914401-06.

Smartphone videography, learn all about the video capabilities of a smartphone, Tuesday, July 19, 2 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Meet tech guru Nick Englund. Registration # 914403-09.

Genealogy 101, share information and research tools, Tuesday, July 19, 11:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914402-08.

Rock music legends, part two of the British Invasion featuring music by The Who and The Animals, Tuesday, July 19, 1:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 914400-26 or virtual, same time, registration # 914400-27.

Breast cancer prevention, presented in both English and Spanish, Tuesday, July 19, 10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Presented by Mirian Campos, Virginia Hospital Center's Cancer Research Center. Registration # 914500-16.

55+ Live! Talk Show, new episode, Tuesday, July 19. Visit youtube.com/virtualprograms.

Harper's magazine articles discussed, Wednesday, July 20, 11 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Facilitated by Librarian Vicky McCaffrey. Registration # 914402-18.

Opera appreciation group to hear musical selections from "La Cenerentola" (Cinderella) by Italian composer Gioachino Rossini, Wednesday, July 20, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Professional commentary by George Cecchetti. Registration # 914300-04.

Afternoon of acoustic music with Ed Girovasi and Phil Rosen, Wednesday, July 20, 2 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 914301-03.

Bilingual Bingo, Wednesday, July 20, 10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914600-02.

Movie discussion, "The Tender Bar" (2022), Thursday, July 21, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914804-05.

"The Rise of Vladimir Putin," Thursday, July 21, 1:30 p.m., via Zoom at Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 914400-14 or virtual, registration #

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