

2003 Newtown Sports Hall Of Fame

Ed Sandifer - Always On The Run

By KIM J. HARMON

Whether you know it or not, at some point in your daily travels around Newtown you have come across Ed Sandifer.

Don't recall? Well, he is that wiry guy with the thick beard you see running alongside the road - running, running, running. And whether he is running for fun (a concept some people can't understand) or training for a marathon (he has done about 80 of those), Ed Sandifer has become such a fixture in town and local running circles that he has been named to the Newtown Sports Hall of Fame.

'Variety In Sameness'

He has run the baggage tunnels in Madrid (a dreadful place) and along the walls of Tower Castle in England (a beautiful place), but to Ed - now 51 - one of the most special places to run is right here in Newtown.

"There's a lot to see in the same places everyday," said Ed, a mathematics professor at Western Connecticut State University. "The cows are in a different place or someone has a new mailbox. There is a variety in the sameness."

Ed began running many years ago - back in high school in New Jersey, when he was trying to find a way to stay in shape for soccer. He graduated in 1969 and headed to Dartmouth and then the University of Massachusetts

at Amherst. He took a position at WSCU in 1986 and moved to Newtown in 1990.

And during all that time - running, running, running.

"It's never been a health thing," Ed said. "I do it because I like it and I'm grateful I've been able to do it for so long."

Ed has performed in about 80 marathons ... 30 of those in Boston, four in Philadelphia and two in New York. Back in 1978, when he lived in New Milford, he began his association with the Roxbury Road Race series (now in its 25th year). He finished seventh at the Mount Washington road race in 1978 and performed well at the Northeast Regional Marathon Championship in 1983. For a number of years, as well, he ran *The Newtown Bee Road Race* (and he remembers the top runners like Marcus Love, Pat O'Neil and Dan Shea).

Now, Roxbury runs 42 weeks out of the year and features a cumulative points system. And when it comes to Roxbury, Ed may like to run for fun ... but he is also competitive and has his eyes on taking first-place overall (although, currently, he is running second to New Milford cross country coach Mike Abrahams).

"There aren't as many local races as there used to be," said Ed, who has a closet full of t-shirts from all the road races he has run in, "and when peo-

ple like to run, they run Roxbury. I'd like to have everyone happy, but at Roxbury my goal is to beat the guy I lost to the week before."

Off road, Ed is not only busy lecturing at WSCU but he also busy working on publishing his research project on Leonard Euler (famous in math circles for his equations in fluid dynamics) in anticipation of the 300th anniversary of Euler's birth in 2007.

Ed gets a lot of support - in all his endeavors - from his family along the way.

His wife, Theresa, is a mathematics professor at Southern Connecticut State University (the two met in graduate school) and their son, Philip, is now at the University of Chicago. The couple also has a daughter, Victoria, a sixth-grade student at Reed Intermediate School (Victoria an accomplished knitter, as her three ribbons for sewing at the Bridgewater Fair will attest).

So, if you're driving around town and you see a wiry guy with the thick beard running along side the road, that's Ed Sandifer.

Don't forget to toot your horn hello.

