



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Run concludes / The Cause continues

The Run: On May 9, 2011 a lead runner finished a one-lap 1,022-mile run around Pennsylvania to raise awareness about PA / America political redistricting and to inspire reform in this once-a-decade process. The Run started on April 1, 2011, the deadline for the U.S. Census Bureau to publish the data required for states to do this decade's redistricting. The runner passed through hundreds of communities while symbolically extending a relay baton to those who would help to fulfill The Run's purpose. Members of the news media reported extensively on The Run. Hundreds of people joined the runner in person and tens of thousands more participated virtually, including through the popular GPS-tracking tool. The Run succeeded beyond expectations in raising awareness about redistricting among millions of citizens.

The Cause: While The Run has concluded, the (bigger) cause continues. The Cause is to assure *transparency & independence* in the redistricting process and *compactness* in the shape of resulting district boundaries. Legislators have long used redistricting as an opportunity to select their constituents, rather than empowering voters to elect their representatives. Thus, a goal of The Cause is to enable the formation of independent redistricting commissions in future decades. The primary geographical focus of The Cause is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Reform efforts in other states will be pursued as circumstances permit. Learn about redistricting reform at www.redistrictingthenation.com.

- **Why is redistricting -- and redistricting reform -- important?** Political redistricting may be the single most important act of American government every ten years. Proper redistricting enables fair elections, reduces voter cynicism and attracts better candidates for public office, which leads to better government and a better society for all people. In PA, under current law, the redistricting process is controlled by state legislators. Allowing elected officials to draw their own districts is a conflict of interest that harms voters. See the **Blue Paper** at www.pjmathison.com/pennultimaterun.
- **What needs to happen in order to reform PA's redistricting process?** Amending the PA Constitution, a *major* undertaking, although one not without precedent (sort of like running 1,000-miles around the state). The goal is to replace the current legislative commission approach with an independent commission in future decades.
- **What are the ongoing efforts of The Cause?** Ongoing efforts focus on the following four AREAs, based on time and resources. Analyze redistricting news and data. Respond to inquiries about The Run / Cause. Educate the public about redistricting and reform opportunities. Act upon requests for assistance.
- **Is there some "group" behind The Run / Cause?** This effort is being pursued by the pjmathison firm in a spirit of cooperation with allied organizations and individuals.

- **Is there a “political agenda”?** Yes and No (how appropriate). Yes, because this effort deals with *how* people are elected to public office. No, because it’s non-partisan.
- **Is this really about “running” for elected office?** No, although some runners develop skills and insights that inspire them to serve as Dog Catcher.
- **Is financial support to The Run / Cause tax deductible?** Not for charitable purposes. The Run / Cause is NOT a 501(c)3 charity or the like -- it is a professional undertaking.
- **Is The Run / Cause considered lobbying?** Some elements of this effort may fall under one or more lobbying disclosure laws. Standard registration and reporting requirements will be complied with where applicable.
- **If I support The Run / Cause, will my name appear anywhere?** In PA, if an individual or entity provides support (money or in-kind) in the amount of \$250 or more during a 3-month period to this effort, then that supporter’s name, address and phone no. *may* – but not necessarily – be included in reports submitted to the State as per PA’s lobbying disclosure law (this will depend on applicable amounts raised & expended). Otherwise, unless you give us prior permission to disclose your info, we will hold it in confidence.
- **Will you accept a check?** Yes. Make it payable to “The PennUltimate Run.” See our web site for mailing address. Please include name, address and telephone number.
- **Will funds raised be used for political campaign contributions?** No.
- **What else can I do to advance The Cause?** Attend and participate in a redistricting public hearing convened by government officials. Join a redistricting reform group, such as Common Cause or The League of Women Voters. Ask your legislators to explain the redistricting process and continue to ask until you receive a satisfactory answer and see a satisfactory result. Talk, Tweet, text, and otherwise communicate about this topic. The Run / Cause is a “team effort” and you are hereby called to serve on this relay team.

Enough about redistricting (for the moment), tell us more about The Run!

- **Was The Run accomplished alone?** No one achieves anything worthwhile alone. The lead runner is indebted to a nationwide support team who assisted in such areas as technology, logistics, communications strategy, social media, and physical & mental conditioning. During The Run, many people spontaneously provided assistance (e.g., pointing us in the right direction), and walked, jogged or bicycled with the runner. That said, there was no in-Run support vehicle or crew so the runner was, in a sense, alone.
- **What about the runner’s “companion”?** You must mean “Babe,” the anthropomorphic jogging stroller. Babe attracted throngs along the route, and nationwide on the Internet. Babe is a BabbyJogger.com brand stroller and was matched with the runner via Craigslist. One of Babe’s key features is her 20” wheels. Scientifically, this larger-than-average wheel diameter meant fewer encounters with the road, thus less friction, which resulted in more distance covered each day with less effort.

- **Selected metrics about The Run:** The runner covered 1,022-miles over 39-days, averaging 26.2-miles, or one marathon, per day, which we proclaim a “record” (*Guinness Book* people take note). Longest day: 37.5-miles. Days 30-miles or more: 16. Fuel consumption: 7,000-8,000 calories/day. Flat tires: 0. Nights slept outdoors: 0. Bears encountered: 3. Nights in a motel-33, bed & breakfast-2, private residence-2, and VFW post-1. Counties passed through: 29 (out of 67).
- **Were there any “days off”?** Yes, two. Day 10, due to protestations from a basketball-sized ankle. Day 37, *only* because we were closing in on busy Philadelphia near the end of The Run and needed an entire planning day before entering the city, and besides...
- **Toughest part of The Run?** The *combination* of elements as follows: harsh weather (snow, sleet, rain, cold, wind, lightening, etc.), mountainous terrain (traversed the Appalachian mountain chain, twice), after-dark perils (because reaching indoor lodging each day was paramount), command of a 70lb. jogging stroller (physics lesson: restraining a boulder from going down a mountain requires as much energy as pushing it up), hostile traffic conditions (like a squadron of airplanes continuously landing and taking off within arm’s reach all-day-long), un-navigable roadways (narrow, corroded or non-existent shoulders, mounds of winter residue, plus road-kill and its manifestations), and the daily worry of whether or not there would be suitable shelter ahead.
- **What else was going on inside the runner’s head?** The runner mostly was in good spirits, which can be attributed to adrenalin, endorphins, vanity, Boy Scout training, and having an ever-so-small screw loose. The runner never *felt* in imminent danger. (Editor’s note: We’re not sure if the runner would recognize “imminent danger.”)
- **“High point” of The Run:** The joy, experienced daily, of “living in the moment.” Also, the amazing recurrence of so-called miracles, e.g., adequate shelter every night, friends that appeared when needed (we know, we know, someone was watching over us).
- **“Low point:”** Truly, losing the “Official Shirt of The PennUltimate Run,” which fell out of Babe on the way down a mountain east of Connellsville (we know, don’t sweat the petty stuff). Days later, a friend drove us to a store and purchased an exact replacement.
- **Biggest surprise/s?** In no particular order: One, never once sleeping outdoors, after extensively preparing for such circumstances. Two, finishing sooner than expected (39-days vs. 50-days). Three, the *extra* friendliness of Pennsylvanians everywhere (OK, this has to be #1). Four, the popularity of the GPS-tracking system. Five, no chafing.
- **Interaction with the news media:** Interacting with the news media was a delight. Reporters may choose to emphasize any aspect of a story. We support both a “free press” and the right of anyone to say sometimes dorky things to these fine professionals.
- **Interaction with the PA State Police:** On three occasions (twice in one day) Babe and the runner were “pulled over” by members of this equally fine profession who, we later learned, were deluged with calls from horrified drivers (e.g., “OMG, there’s a man with a baby in a jogging stroller running in the rain towards the hospital!!!”).

- The first incident occurred on Route 30 near Bedford Memorial Hospital in cold, driving rain, with Babe's safety lights ablaze. Exiting *her* vehicle, the trooper exclaimed: "Why, there's no baby in there!" Consequently, the runner presented a calling card and launched into a spiel about redistricting reform, which ultimately convinced the trooper that she was dealing with merely a lunatic.
- The third incident involved being "pulled over" in response to calls police received while the runner was heading north out of Pittsburgh, where the only option was to run in the roadway of a busy four-lane corridor. Fortunately, this incident occurred just a quarter mile before the next county, where the shoulder opened-up. Consequently, the trooper here insisted on escorting the runner across the county line (like who hasn't had that happen before?).

On another occasion a trooper parked along Route 6 asked the runner, who was heading *with* the traffic, to please move to the other side of the road and *face* the traffic, where it would be "safer." This presented a conundrum: Does a runner with a jogging stroller heed statutes related to pedestrians, bicyclists, both or neither? Prior to The Run we obtained copies of relevant statutes for reference should such questions arise. During The Run we deliberated extensively ourselves on jogging stroller public policy (e.g., Do three wheels outweigh two feet? Can conditions at-hand override rule-of-law?). Prudently, here, we chose not to openly debate this fascinating policy issue.

NOTE: All interactions with the state police were friendly and mutually respectful. Troopers were polite and helpful and just wanted to make sure that everybody was safe and was obeying the rules of the road. The runner was never asked to, in so many words, "park the stroller, and buy a bus ticket home" (not that that wasn't a worry).

- **Interaction with lawmakers:** The route passed naturally by dozens of district offices of state and federal lawmakers, which provided opportunities for visits or to leave a card. Interactions occurred mostly with district staff, who graciously hosted their panting interloper. In Wellsboro, the runner learned from staff that the barn-sized female black bear encountered the day before is well known in those parts and has a name (ohkayy).
- **Did The Run make any donations as previously suggested?** Yes. Camping supplies were donated to a Boy Scout troop. Safety lights were given back to a local bicycle shop to re-gift to cherub-faced kids. Financial gifts were made to an American Legion post (i.e., the overseers of the memorial that served as the start/finish of The Run) for veterans in need, and to support children's cancer research. Babe was adopted by a local chapter of the national MOMS Clubs organization, during a tearful ceremony.

For further details please see pjmathison/pennultimaterun. This information includes: news feeds, press releases, photos, sample media coverage, actual route map with daily highlights, the "blue paper" on PA redistricting, how to contact and support The Run / Cause, and information about the **pjmathison** firm.