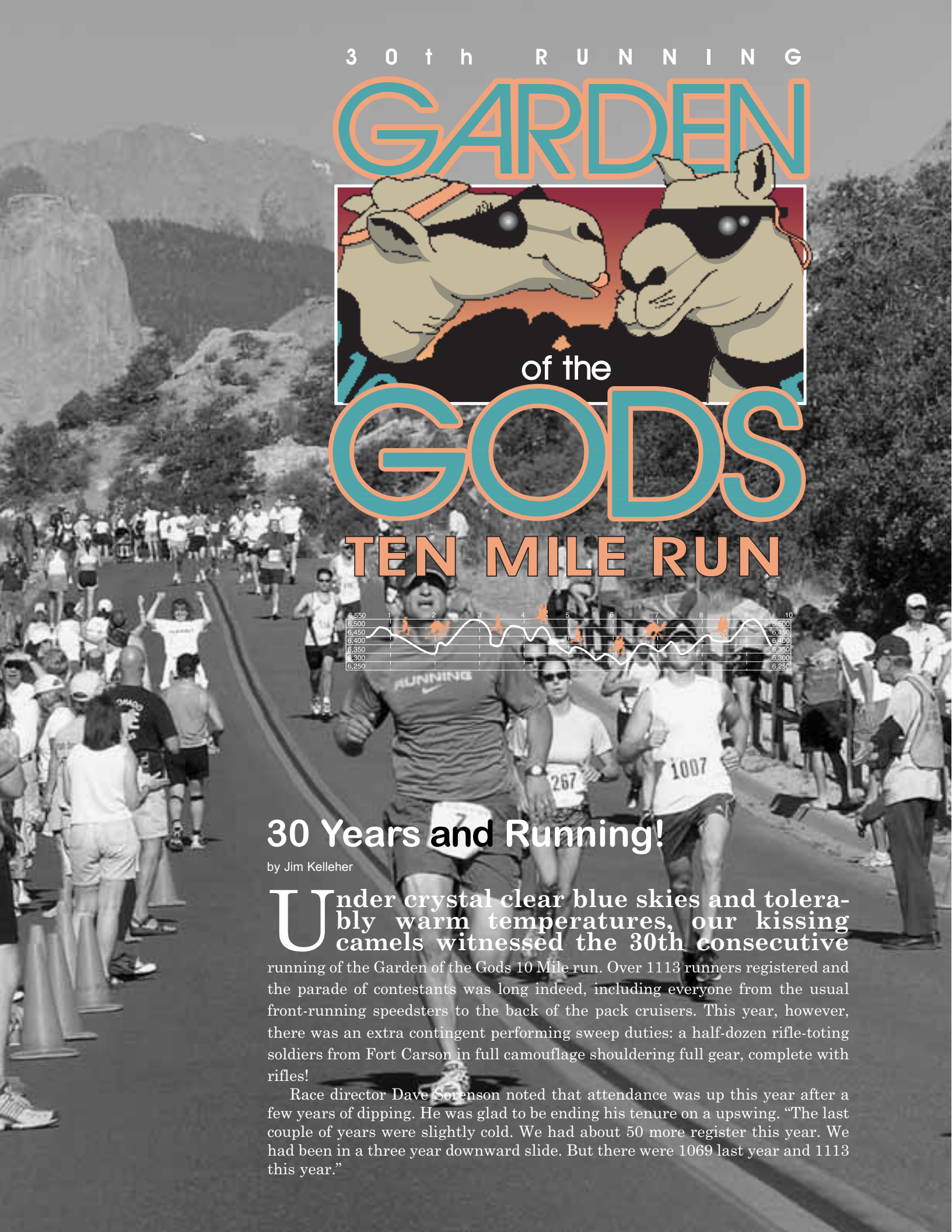
30th RUNNING

GARDEN of the GODS TEN MILE RUN



30 Years and Running!

by Jim Kelleher

Under crystal clear blue skies and tolerably warm temperatures, our kissing camels witnessed the 30th consecutive running of the Garden of the Gods 10 Mile run. Over 1113 runners registered and the parade of contestants was long indeed, including everyone from the usual front-running speedsters to the back of the pack cruisers. This year, however, there was an extra contingent performing sweep duties: a half-dozen rifle-toting soldiers from Fort Carson in full camouflage shouldering full gear, complete with rifles!

Race director Dave Sorenson noted that attendance was up this year after a few years of dipping. He was glad to be ending his tenure on a upswing. “The last couple of years were slightly cold. We had about 50 more register this year. We had been in a three year downward slide. But there were 1069 last year and 1113 this year.”

Bill Bennett was on hand once again to mark the course. Bill has a long history with the race and officially certified the course, which has changed several times over the years. The first race, in 1977, started on GOG Road and also finished there. There were also a couple of variations starting and finishing in Manitou Springs. The current course, according to Bill, is in its 10th and last year of USATF certification, and may very well change again. "I've proposed a course that starts again in Manitou Springs," he said, quickly rattling off a block by block description, "but I'm not going to measure it!"

The race is part of the Triple Crown series, together with the Summer Roundup and the Pikes Peak Ascent. "It's the hardest one in the Triple Crown," reports Jon Cornick, veteran of the race. "It's too short for power walking and too long to run at a race speed. So you end up doing your most for the longest amount of time."

Women's Contest

In the women's event, Stephanie Jones, 36, raced to a uncontested victory in 1:05:22, a minute and 47 seconds ahead of Tanya Poel, 40, from Boulder. Stephanie placed second the previous two years, missing victory by less that a second last year when she and returning champion Stacey Chaston raced down the final stretch matched step by step. Stephanie also took second place in 2004. She was 48 seconds faster than last year's time, and if she keeps at it, she's on track next year for a sub-1:05.

Amy Regnier, 43, repeated her 2004 third place finish, but was 24 seconds faster with her 1:08:17 time. Last year Amy finished 7th for the women. The fastest women's time in recent years was a

Tanya Poel receives her 2nd place women's overall award from next year's director, Matt Carpenter. Below, the first curve in mile 3 takes runners up and around the Kissing Camels. Turnout for the race was over 1000 as the stream of runners seemed endless.

blistering 1:04:45 turned in by 33 year old Atlanta visitor Kim Feather in 2002.

The race begins on 30th street just north of the end of Garden of the Gods Road. Runners head straight down 30th to the main entrance to the park, and then head around the main park road all the way around past the north parking area to the backside of the Kissing Camels Rock. They then leave the road to cut through the center of the park, completing a loop back to the end of the entrance road. From there, they head south to the turnaround where the Rampart Range Road begins.

All on pavement, the course has some significant hills well known to those who frequent the popular park road on foot or bike. The park was closed to vehicular traffic, so alongside the runners was a steady stream of sight-seers trekking in from all corners of the globe.

Men's Race

On the men's side, Matt Mosman was hoping to do well, but like most competitive runners was cautious about expecting too much. Not that he didn't have reason. In 2002, 24 year-old Matt finished second overall with a time of 58:08, 1:08 behind Andy Bupp of Littleton.

He says he "took it easy" on the first half of the course, which could have fooled spectators and especially those who trailed 100 yards behind after the first mile. He increased his lead to several hundred yards at the 3½ mile mark, but second place Ewen North of Boulder came on strong in the second half. Matt had built just too much of a lead, however, and hung on to win first overall by 27 seconds with a time of 56:57.

Third place overall went to local Scott Lebo who came in 38 seconds behind Ewen.

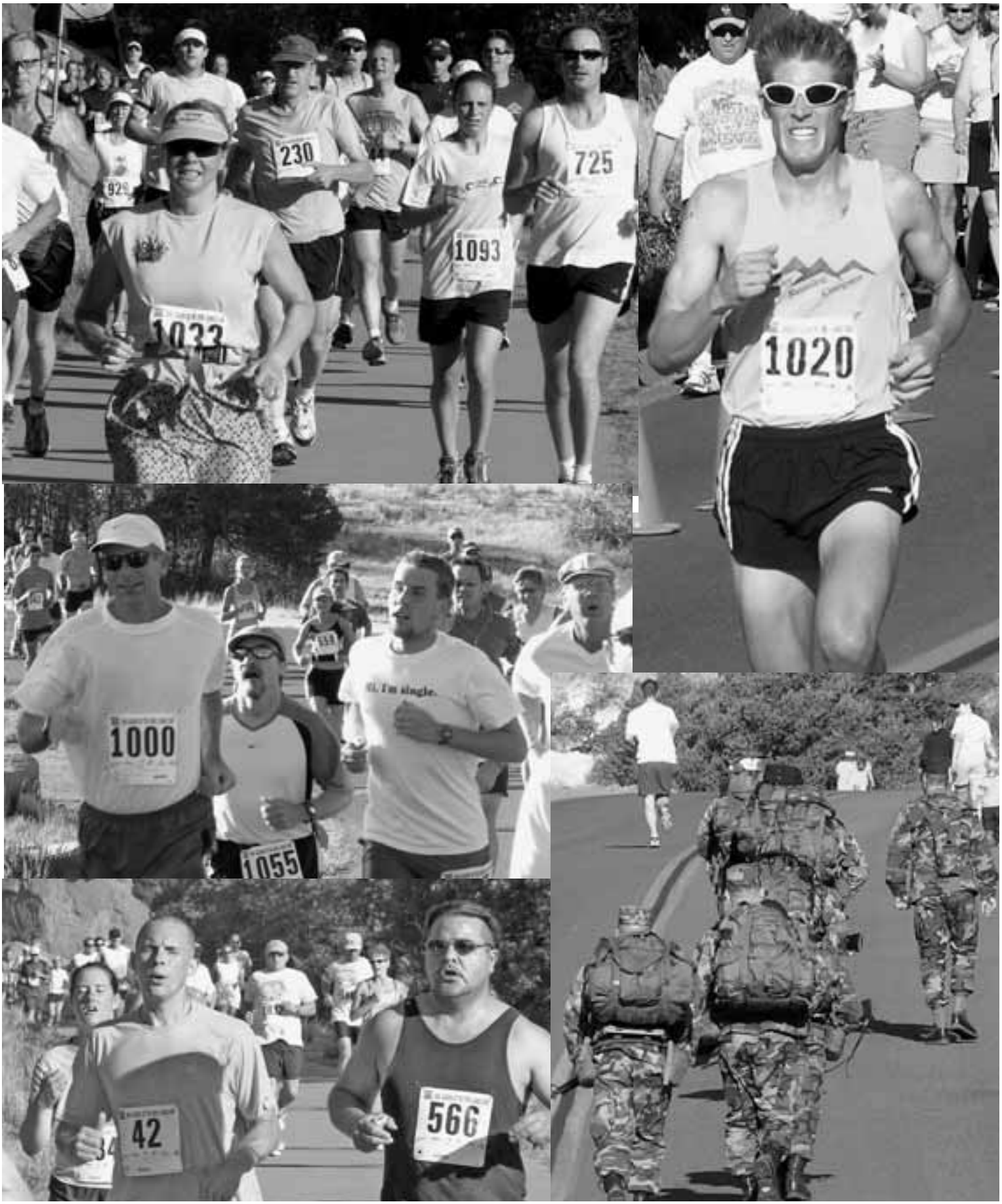
Matt Carpenter was on hand to learn the ropes from Dave Sorenson. Matt is taking over as race director next year but, as dozens of volunteers calmly go about their business, he is confident he won't have any trouble. "Dave has done a super job. If you look around there's not a lot of stress or anything."

The GOG race holds a special significance for Matt. "It's the 30th and not many races go for 30 years. I asked the runners before they started if any were born after June of '77 and quite a few raised their hands. They're younger than this race! There's always a certain level of excitement when you're around something like that."

Volunteers

The event came together with precision, evidence of the long history of expert coordination from seasoned race directors. Among the volunteers were the venerable Bill Bennett and Bill Gallegos, partners in generosity for decades (see this month's Volunteer Corner on page 9). And how about the PPRR board always ready to serve! There were more members present than for the board meetings!

Women's champion Stephanie Jones takes to the mike to share post race thoughts at the awards ceremony. Below, Triple Crown volunteers make ready for a 1000 thirsty runners.



Bottom left: Aaron Alexander and James Dikes (r) lead a group at mile 3.5. Middle: Steve Kent (l), Scott Robinson (c), with Vanessa White (yellow cap) giving chase. Top: (l-r) Leigh Singleton (green top), Richard Mariotti, 15 y.o. Jenny Peek, Bryan Campbell. Top right: Overall winner Matt Mosman sprints to a 56:57 finish. Bottom right: contingent from Ft. Carson brings up the rear, ready to track down any stragglers!