

LEHIGH VALLEY HOSPITAL MARATHON

Time flies for 26.2 miles



STEPHANIE MAGUSON, a math major at Lehigh University, gets congratulations from her fellow Kappa Alpha Theta sorority members as she closes in on the marathon finish line Sunday at Riverside Park in Easton. The sorority entered two teams of five students each.

Douglas Kilpatrick Special to The Morning Call

Allentown-to-Easton fundraising race tests runners' cool, calm.

By **Tim Shoemaker**

Special to The Morning Call

Running a marathon is hard enough, but try doing it when you lose your training watch or, even worse, lose your way. That's what happened Sunday to the top male and female finishers in the Lehigh Valley Hospital Marathon for Via.

About a mile into the 26.2-mile run, Rob Weidman lost his GPS training watch, and with it his ability to keep track of time and pacing. His wristband broke, and the watch bounced off the Hamil-

ton Street bridge and plunked into the Lehigh River.

Around the 22-mile mark, Carol Jefferson took a wrong turn. After several moments of panic with no one around, a race volunteer emerged to help get her back on the course.

Despite this, Weidman and Jefferson emerged as the top male and top female finishers.

Weidman, a librarian at Lehigh University and Kutztown resident, won his first marathon in a time of 2:49:37, a personal best.

Jefferson, a shift supervisor at a Starbucks in Limerick Township, Montgomery County, not only found her way, but was the first woman to finish, in a time of 2:59:28. It was the first marathon for the Perkiomen Valley High and



MATT SCOTT

(left) of Zionsville and Sam Heller of Ore-field lead the Lehigh Valley Hospital 5K Walk through Bethlehem's Colonial Industrial Quarter.

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Liberty University graduate.

"I knew I wanted to break three hours, so I guess I did OK, considering I probably could have gone faster if I went the right way the whole time," Jefferson said. "It was a learning experience. I did it for training. I was happy for a

while, but when I got lost, I was so frustrated. I was screaming and nobody was answering. I don't like stopping in races."

The LVH Marathon is a fundraiser for Via, the Bethle-

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hem nonprofit agency for disabled people. The marathon portion of the race started at Ninth and Hamilton streets in Allentown and finished at Easton's Riverside Park.

Via also conducted 20-mile races, team relay races and a 5K walk through Bethlehem. Via communications director Lisa Walkiewicz said more than 1,400 runners and walkers, as well 350 volunteers, took part in the event, which raised more than \$30,000.

Jefferson, 23, said that she figured she would try a marathon because of the training she already put in for her 5K and 10K races. She will run again, possibly in the Boston Marathon, for which the LVH Marathon is a qualifier.

"I prefer the smaller race, because it feels more like a race."

ROB WEIDMAN
Kutztown

"I've never done a marathon before. I ran the 5K and 10K in college," she said. "I wanted to try this marathon to see how it would be in a marathon. I definitely know I want to continue running. I ran in high school and college, and can't see myself just stopping."

Weidman, 32, grew up in Bellingham, Mass., about an hour south of Boston. He got into marathons about four years ago and has run the famous Boston Marathon twice.

He finished second in last year's LVH Marathon. He said his main concern was his time, not necessarily winning.

"It feels great," he said. "I'm really happy mostly about the time. To put it in perspective, in Boston I ran 2:56 and was in something like 800th place. It's more about the time for me, but of course it's nice to win."

Although the Boston Marathon is a must-do for him because of his Massachusetts upbringing, he said he enjoys running in smaller races like this one.

"Because I'm from the Boston area, I've always wanted to do Boston," he said. "I prefer the smaller race, because it feels more like a race. I just like the feel of it. In the first 10 miles [in Boston], it's like you're a sardine."

Tim Shoemaker is a freelance writer.



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FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL'S Fife and Drum Corps lead the start of the Lehigh Valley Hospital Via 5K Walk through Bethlehem's Colonial Industrial Quarter. The walk raises money for Via's Community Connections program, which helps people with disabilities.