

## On The Run



## Dog Days of Summer



By Robin Steckley

Mild-mannered Clark Kent entered a phone booth and come out as Superman, confident in his amazing strength and courage.

As Bob Schwartz points out in his book, *I Run Therefore I Am - Nuts!* we runners experience this delusion simply by tying up our running shoes. We can climb mountains; well large hills anyway; endure torrential rains, face tornado-like winds, and plough through snow to complete training runs. We can even outrun dogs. At least in our minds we can!

I am not a dog owner, but my running buddy Todd Sinclair and his wife Denise have just become the proud owners of 20-month-old Emilio, an Anatolia Shepherd mix. He is 75 lbs of youthful exuberance, eager for adventure and ready to go with or without his leash as was the case last Saturday afternoon.

Todd propped open the front door of their Box Grove home to bring in a piece of furniture, only to see Emilio bound out and take off for places unknown. For those not familiar with this area, there is a large green space south of the 407, east of Ninth Line, with a marsh and a creek running through the middle. Denise headed for the car to go find their dog, but Todd had other ideas.

This dog couldn't outrun him. He runs marathons. Todd was going to show Emilio what it means to have a master who runs. So the Sinclairs' neighbours had the opportunity to cheer on this rather large young dog, running with abandon from front yard to back yard through the subdivision, followed by his slightly older owner, as the chase continued out into the green space.

Now Todd was faced with a dilemma, for while he could hear his dog crashing through the brush and see the branches bending and snapping, he couldn't actually see Emilio. He also knew that somewhere in all this brush was a creek. A creek he didn't want to accidentally fall into, risking injury to his legs or ankles.

Todd is now at week eight of a 20-week training schedule. An injury would mean the end of his aspirations to enter a port-a-potty rather than a phone booth on Oct. 25, and come out as a racing machine running a personal best marathon and going back to Boston one more time. Without me, I suspect, after he reads my ramblings about his adventure with Emilio.

This dilemma solved itself when Todd observed that Emilio was running in a continuous circle, as leaves swayed and branches crashed, making so much noise that Todd was sure a mower was about to break through the underbrush. His dog had no idea how to get out. He was lost.

Now came Todd's moment of brilliance. He would silently tiptoe to the edge of the path his dog had created, and when Emilio circled around again he would pounce on him, wrestling him to the ground and clipping his leash to his collar to show Emilio who was master.

Todd crept stealthily through the bush to the edge of Emilio's clearly-defined trail and waited for his prey to arrive. Emilio's approach could be heard long before he was in sight. Todd was ready to leap out and grapple with his dog. He just forgot about the marsh and the creek.

Emilio got closer and closer. Todd leaped onto his back and wrestled him to the ground, and when they come to rest they were both splayed out face down in the mud. Emilio, with his tongue hanging out, panting, looked up at Todd clearly having enjoyed their romp. Todd, covered from face to foot in mud, wondered if maybe the car might have been the better approach.

With leash firmly tethered and Todd in tow, Emilio headed home. Once home, Todd changed out of his running clothes and showered, eyed his dog and thought, okay you might have been able to run for three kilometres, but let's see you try 42!

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## University Chronicles

## The Last Signatures

By Alice Donoghue

I've never worried about how many classmates' signatures I accumulated in my yearbook.

It seemed trivial, knowing we would meet again after two blissful summer months, but this year I am determined to collect all the signatures I can. I wrote this column on a dreary Sunday evening before my final week of school, an ideal setting for introspection and reflection.

Attending Stouffville District Secondary School has shaped me in many ways. The oft repeated "To thine own self be true", a bite of wisdom offered by Polonius to his son Laertes in Shakespeare's Hamlet, may seem trite to some, but I have come to realize the value in these words.

Emulating others, trying to act the part of someone I am not has never earned me respect from my peers. My friends have no hesitation in telling me that my excessive eyeliner days of grade nine were difficult to bear, or that my "rebellious stage" was so unsuccessful they weren't even aware I was in it.

Although I am still unsure of exactly who I am, I know that I am not bound to one template for the rest of my life. These four years of high school were years of self-discovery, of breaking ties and forming bonds, of risks

and sometimes regret.

The more time I spent with my classmates, the more I found we were fundamentally alike. In grade nine I believed that membership of certain groups was closed to me, but I discovered that was a myth. In many cases the people I thought were the least interested in my friendship have turned out to be those I most enjoy spending time with.

I also unearthed talents I didn't know I had. Joining the school's Songwriters Club was beneficial for my confidence and creativity, but also allowed me to view a vast array of diversity and skill, from the self-penned works of Joanna Tence to the musical poems of Harley Johnson.

I've also suffered the effects of stage fright, the ultimate manifestation of self-consciousness. As I played guitar and sang at coffee house open stages, it was exciting to watch first-time performers grapple with the opposing desires of proving themselves and self-preservation. The results were amazing, not only because of the talent that emerged but also because of the ecstasy that followed a successful performance.

The familiar routine of the school week will be difficult to break out of. Seeing the teachers' faces, doing the assigned work (or pretending to), engaging in extra-curricular activities... these can all be done at university as well as high school, but everything going forward has a grave feel to it.

University is difficult, the workload is intense, the professors are distant, dorm life is insane and you have to do everything for yourself, with no parents to pick up the slack: these thoughts have been circling through my mind. A recent visit to Glendon, however, proved soothing to my nerves and gave me a hint of the atmosphere I will be immersed in come September.

Course selection day saw a small classroom of prospective students waiting to establish their schedules. But first we had a French interview to confirm that our placement was reflective of our abilities.

Glendon College is a bilingual campus of York University, and students need a certain fluency in French to be accepted. I had considered myself reasonably fluent, but the interview made me realize I still had a lot to learn. Nevertheless, I am excited to have the opportunity to improve my French to the level that I can speak comfortably.

When I wrote this I had just one more week of sharing my school day with the people I have known for four years, one more week of speaking French veerily sloooooowly, and one more week to take in the environment I had taken for granted. Although the end comes with excitement, relief and hope, it also looms with the knowledge that the end of a significant time in my life is over.

Most of all, it is difficult to imagine myself as an adult. High school has provided a stepping stone to help me from the days of youth to the years of maturity, and will live on in my memory for the rest of my life. Or at least in my yearbook.

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