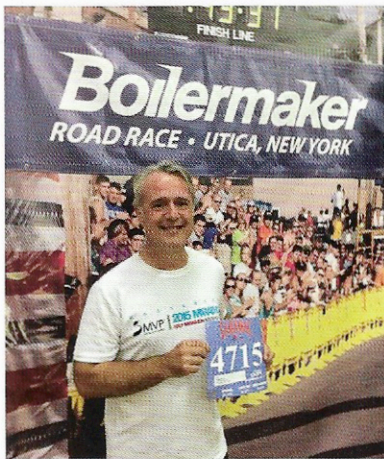


15K REASONS TO LOVE THE BOILERMAKER

Guest contribution from writer, editor and eight-time BoilerMaker finisher, Bruce Pegg. Originally published in his running blog, "The Flat-Footed Fox," found at brucepegg.com.



15. The spectators who hold up signs saying "Only nine miles to free beer" just after the start: You mean this isn't the beer line? That's not funny, man. **Not funny at all.**

14. The Unity Mile: Because the combined energy and awesomeness of 13,000 runners running up Culver Avenue isn't nearly enough.

13. The cool, shaded section of the course around mile two on the Parkway: It's going to be like this all the way round, right?

12. Valley View Golf Course: Because it makes you feel like a badass when you get to the top and an elite runner when you get to the bottom. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

11. The aid station at the top of the Golf Course Hill. Because Gatorade showers are best taken out of the view of spectators. And the volunteers promise not to tell anyone how you got those strange stains on your shirt. What happens on the hill, stays on the hill.

10. The animal out in front of the Utica Zoo. Because it's good to be reminded that you really can run faster than an iguana.

9. The families who set up sprinklers and hand out ice pops on the Parkway around mile five. You. All. ROCK.

8. Burrstone Road. The heat. I'm going to die.

7. The giant Stars and Stripes flown by the Utica Fire Department at the 10K mark. Because even during a race, it's good to be reminded of our freedoms and show our appreciation for Utica's finest.

6. Rounding the corner onto Champlin Avenue. The crowd is three or four deep and cheering like crazy. I feel like an Olympian. The hard part is behind me. Maybe I won't die after all.

5. The Stilt Guy midway down Champlin Avenue. Dude, I'm eight miles in and you want me to jump for a high five? Really?

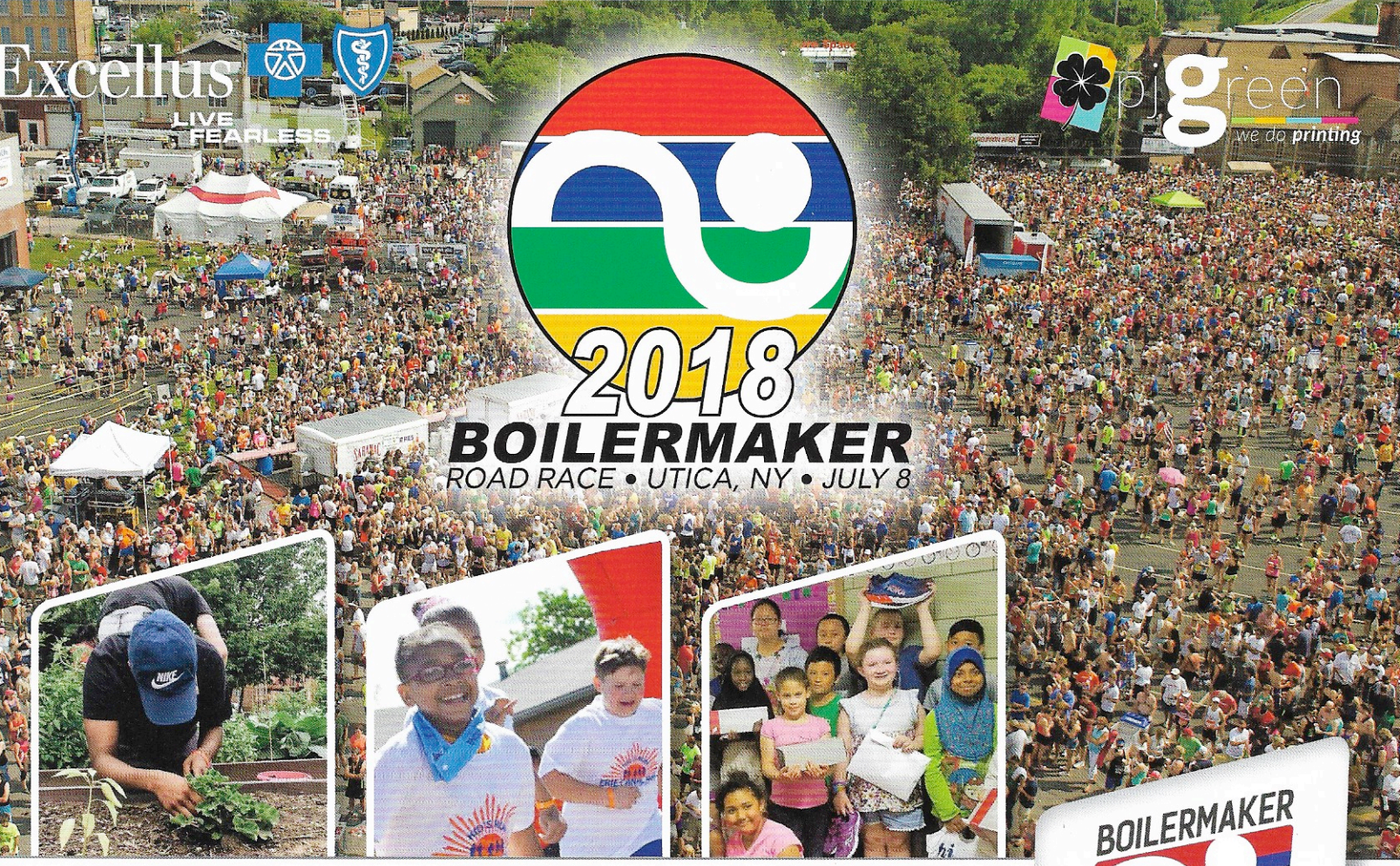
4. The young rock band midway down the Champlin Avenue hill (and all the entertainment on the course). Because I, too, turned it up to eleven in my parents' garage before I became a middle-aged runner. Rock on, gentlemen. Rock on.

3. The Mohawk Valley Frasers Bagpipes. It's mile nine, I'm almost dead, and you're playing like it's my funeral. Rub it in, why dontcha.

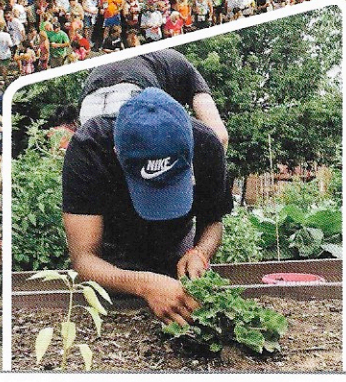
2. The spectators, organizers, volunteers, first responders, local government, and people of Utica. For throwing an amazing party and allowing a race to break out.

1. FREE BEER. *Oh, like you didn't see that coming.*

BOILERMAKER



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