

Hello to all members of the UHS Track and Field Alumni Association:

It is a gorgeous day in late October, and June and I just came back from a ride through rural Morris County and the Great Swamp to look at the Fall foliage. The sky was a vivid blue with just a few puffy white clouds; the temperature was a nice 62 degrees with a slight breeze. All the trees have reached their peak of color, with more reds and oranges than usual. In all, it was an ideal ride as we drank our Dunkin Donuts coffee and ate our jelly sticks. (Yes Bridget, I can if pressed get my own coffee). This along with Frank Sinatra on the radio made for a pleasant outing.

I mentioned to June how this was ideal cross country weather and she reminded me of an episode of the TV show "Everyone Loves Raymond". In this episode, the older brother is getting married, and when the minister says, "If anyone objects to this wedding, speak now, or forever hold your peace," Marie, the mother of both Raymond and Robert, who is getting married, decides she has to say something. Of course, all the bad things that have happened between the three of them come up, like her coming up on the stage during an elementary school assembly to change Robert's pants, or when she backed the car through Raymond's front door. After this is over, and the marriage completed, Raymond, as Best Man, has to give a toast to the bride and groom at the reception. He is not prepared, but then a thought dawns on him, and here is the point of this. Our memory is like a tape or a film, which we can edit, and take out the bad things. We tend to remember only the good things from the past, and only if pressed can we bring back the bad things.

June pointed this out to me in our discussion. I remember cross country meets as a day like today, standing at the start looking towards the 600 meter pole (the one I have in my den, thanks to Chris and John), and the trees behind it in their Fall glory, or standing with Jim Dow as he took pictures on a beautiful Saturday morning in Bernardsville. I tend to forget the 95 degree days in September with workouts on the track. Or the time it snowed so you could not see the white line at Warinanco Park, or the times it was so muddy on the course that it would pull your shoes off, and of course the days when it was 20 degrees out with a gale force wind.

I remember track with the temperature a sunny 72 degrees, and everyone getting personal records. Not the sleet and snow of early April, and digging the shots out of the mud with a stick when it plugged in the frozen mud, or the managers trying to write the results down on a clipboard inside a plastic bag to keep the results dry, with hands so cold they could hardly hold the pencil. I forget about moving the hurdles out at the beginning of the season and putting them away at the end, not to forget setting them up and down during the meets. I forget about moving the pits for each meet in and out so they would not be vandalized.

As I listen to you talk at our reunions, I find we all are guilty of the same thing, selective editing of our memory. We forget about Phil Siegal and Pete Stine getting hit in the head with the shot, or Darrell Huntley winding up in the hospital after he cut his leg running through the parking lot in Millburn when they were supposed to be running Peter Pan Laps (right Mike?). I forget about losing the Sectional Championships by one point, and the Group 4 by half a point, but I remember winning the All Group Championship that year.

Instead, we remember the medals, the trophies, and the victories. We remember the fun, the comradeship, and the lifelong friends we made. We remember the trips to Sacramento, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and stopping on the way down to the Penn Relays to stoke up on crabs.

This is as it should be. Forget the bad and celebrate the good memories.

So when I got home, I thought I'd write this message to you, first, while it was fresh in my mind, and second to beat Joanne out with her holiday greetings. (She always sends hers out the day after Thanksgiving).

So, as Raymond says in his toast, "Here's to the good things, may you always remember them."

Have a Happy, Healthy Holiday season and a great 2011!

Coach  
&  
Wife