

*Running Forward ~
Looking Back*

*“Every runner or would-be runner
will love this collection of true stories!”*

Lynn C. Seely

Running Forward ~ Looking Back

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*Running Forward ~
Looking Back*

Title Poem

~

*Running ever forward
Feet pummel earthen aisle
Demolish every barrier
Redemption in each mile*

*Look back ~ sweet affirmation
Resolved before the start
Unflinching resolution
Within a runners heart*

~

~ *Dedication* ~

*To my husband
John*

*Your unwavering encouragement
And support
Made this book possible*

Additional Book Reviews

Running Forward ~ Looking Back is a great way to meet real people, who just happen to be runners. I'd have to say that some stories will make you laugh out loud, a few will make you reflect on what you have to be grateful for and most will remind you why you want to run.

Lynn invites us to get to know runners and running as only she can! Each chapter is a separate story and is a treat to read! If you are a runner, or thinking about becoming a runner, this is a great book to have!

Jon Dald, best-selling author of "From Couch Potato to Baked Potato" & author of a daily e-newsletter "The CP2BP Newsletter" www.the-wire.com/cp2bp

Running Forward- Looking Back, takes us into the realm of the every-day-runner with not-so-everyday experiences. *A must read!* Truly entertaining stories."

Thomas Sampson, Managing Editor, Sports, Suite 101 Editor, Winston Cup Racing, Suite101.com

Running Forward ~ Looking Back is not a "How to" book. It is a runner's book of true stories that are related with humor, compassion, and graphic detail. She takes us through various experiences of different people who happen to be runners.

To name a few, Lynn Seely vividly captures *humor*... learning to spit while running. *Compassion*...a story about a runner she met at a road race and the story of his faithful dog companion. *Experiences*...Lynn's first "Thon." Many of us can relate to that story as well as the other stories.

This is a "must read" book for all runners from the elite runner to the "back-of-the-pack runner" like me.

Jerry Panarese, runner, age 72
President of the NE 65+ Runners Club
E-mail jpanarese@aol.com

Whether you run or not, you're bound to find some inspiration from the stories written by Lynn Seely. She has a knack of writing in such a way that you find yourself drawn into the story. *Laugh* with the lady who runs with her lucky hat. *Marvel* at the man who used his running training to save his wife's life, and *learn* a little about why to avoid over training from a man who almost died winning a race.

Lynn's writing will inspire you! Her story about running her first marathon is something I will be able to draw inspiration from when struggling through a race.

Read this book! Read about the other runners out there who run for the fun of it. Some with no chance to win. This is a highly recommended "must read" book.

Bob Blickenderfer, marathoner, and editor of
"Tude Fitness Newsletter" www.tudefitness.com

Lynn Seely takes you running with her, no matter if you're an experienced runner or a couch potato. You'll meet interesting people and animals on her runs. Most importantly, you will see the world as never before, because her writing style makes you smell the flowers and hear the birds sing. Trees, clouds and cliffs will look different after you have read this excellent book. I went breathlessly through every chapter, winded at book's end.

Clayton Davis, author of "So, You Want To Be A Pilot"
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/4553/bap.html>

As I read *Running Forward-Looking Back*, I found I could relate to the runners and relate to many experiences they went through. I laughed and cried as I read the inspirational stories told by a great storyteller!

It is along the lines of a "*Chicken-Soup*" for a runner or would-be runner. If you ever needed motivation to get out and exercise, this is it! I feel as if I personally know each one of these people in this book! I can hardly wait for her next book!

Susan Gibson, owner of "Another Day" book store.

This entertaining book by Lynn Seely, is pure enjoyment all the way from front cover to back cover. I almost feel as if I personally know everyone she wrote about.

I have never run in the rain before, but after reading her delightful chapter about doing just that, I can't wait to give it a try. I plan on running my first marathon too. Lynn's account of her gusty performance as she ran her first marathon was inspiring! This book has a lot of special moments any runner will appreciate. A "*must buy*" if ever there was one!

David Colburn; CEO of "Advantage Web Design"

Reviews from the book cover:

“Seely writes real stories about real people—people who touch a lifeline in anyone who’s ever tied on a pair of running shoes. Her stories will touch your heart and warm your soul.”

Beth M. Eck, Associate Editor, Runner's World magazine

“Lynn Seely’s new book, *Running Forward ~ Looking Back*, lives up to its title. It will satisfy running fans and those who love adventure stories. When reading her book, I was always anxious to get to the end of each chapter and find out what twist would end the story. You will too.”

*Ted Corbitt, Olympian, Ultra Distance Runner extraordinaire.
Known as “The Father of Long Distance Running,”
Hall of Fame, (Multiple Recipient)*

“Lynn Seely captures the right blend of humor, inspiration and strong values in this book. Her caring personality comes through as she shares a variety of true stories that gives you a genuine perspective of why folks run.”

*John Stanton, President & Founder of, Running Room, Canada Inc.
and Author of “Running, Start to Finish”
www.runningroom.com*

“Whether you are an elite professional or a novice runner, Lynn Seely masterfully puts into words stories of real life experiences and feelings that as runners, we can all relate too. The solace of running alone; the pre-race jitters; the feeling of achievement from conquering one’s goals, these are just some of the elements that make up this truly inspirational *must read book!*”

*Scott Dvorak, Top U.S. Distance Runner and 2000 Olympic Hopeful
Co-founder of Self-Source, Inc. Makers of FootFlex Performance
Stretching Device www.footflex.com*

“Lynn is the flag bearer for all of us average runners. Her stories have a knack for plucking fond melodies on my heartstrings. Oprah inspired me to run, and Lynn helps keep me going!”

*Tim Van Wagoner
Dir. of Broadcasting, Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club
& Author of “In The Long Run” www.amazon.com*

~ Preface ~

This exceptional non-fiction book will take you on a journey into the lives of some extraordinary people.

You will meet heroes and a few villains.

Certain individuals had to overcome great obstacles before they were able to run while others have continued to run in spite of extraordinary handicaps, setbacks and disappointments. If you have ever been involved in any aspect of running or know a runner, you will love this collection of stories.

Each and every story is true. Each and every story is a treasure. If you want motivation to run, if you enjoy stories that will astonish you, make you smile, or in a few cases tug at your heartstrings, then you must read this book!



Acknowledgments



First and foremost, I am grateful to the people that have shared their stories with me over the years. This happened in one of two ways. By the person relating the story to me or by my own personal observation. It is my belief that almost every runner has a story to tell. The purpose of this book is to introduce you to a few runners and allow you to glimpse a moment or an event that will inspire, delight, motivate or entertain you!

In a few instances, certain locations have been changed and the real name of the individual has been concealed, but in no case has the essential truth of any story been compromised.

Thanks go to Carol Goodrow for her help during the early stages as I developed this book. Thanks also to Ora Tracy for being my cheering section during the on-going process of writing this book. Special appreciation goes to Clayton Davis for his editorial assistance during the completion of this book.

Thanks all!

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24 Hour Run In a Blizzard!

I met Bill and his wife, Amy, at a local running event in Pennsylvania one clear October morning. A hint of winter was in the chilly fall air. Soon, trees would be bare, but on this day they still sported their vivid kaleidoscope of color. It is this lovely display of colorful foliage that draws so many appreciative tourists to the area and makes running outside such a delight.

Bill is the sort of person who might go unnoticed in a crowd. Unassuming and pleasant, he tends to just blend in. He is of average height and build, has medium colored brown hair with just a trace of gray in it, and brown eyes. He is married to Amy, a petite woman with lovely dark hair. She has a contagious smile, sparkling blue eyes and an engaging personality. Her compassionate nature draws people to her. Her friends know they may confide in her and take comfort in the fact that she will not gossip about any personal

information entrusted to her. Bill and Amy are perfectly suited for each other.

Bill is an affable person, yet he possesses iron-willed determination and an incredibly tenacious spirit. That combination makes him a formidable opponent during any race. When he sets his mind to something, he just won't quit. It is well this is so, considering what befell him.

As the three of us chatted before the race, I remarked that it wouldn't be long before winter would be upon us. I inquired whether Bill and Amy planned to run outside during the winter. Amy replied that she preferred the treadmill, but said that Bill always liked to be outside no matter what the season. She then grinned, raised her eyebrows for emphasis and added, "You would think he would *never* want to be outside in the winter again after what had happened to us."

She had aroused my curiosity now, so I asked her for an explanation. She smiled, turned to Bill and remarked, "Bill is really the only one that can tell this story accurately. I think my Bill is a hero for what he did. Let's go for coffee after the race and you'll get to hear the entire story, okay?" I readily agreed, being very interested in learning more.

After the race was over and the award ceremony was finished, we all headed to a cozy cafe for a little conversation and fresh hot coffee. I was looking forward to the conversation and coffee, as well as the delicious blueberry muffins I knew they served there.

We settled down at our table and placed our order. After the waitress brought our coffee, Bill explained that he had once run in a blizzard for 24 hours in a desperate attempt to save Amy from almost certain death. He asked if I wanted to hear all the details. "Are you kidding?" I answered in mock disbelief. "I won't let you leave until I hear every detail!"

As I enjoyed my coffee, Bill began to tell his amazing story. "Amy and I had been backpacking in the mountains of Colorado for two weeks," he explained, "And we needed to buy some supplies. The nearest town was Leadville. We decided to go there and replenish our food supply. After

buying what we needed for the last leg of our trip, we headed out of town. We were going to camp for two more days before heading home."

At this point, Bill paused long enough to finish his cup of coffee. He signaled to the waitress to bring us more. After she refilled our cups, he continued.

"Amy and I hiked about six hours that day, then stopped and set up camp. The view where we were was stunning! Ancient mountains thrust jagged white peaks into the clear, cobalt sky, and as the sun sank lower, it bathed the mountains in beautiful, changing hues. The distant snow-capped peaks reflected first gold, then pink and finally became a dark silhouette looming on the horizon.

"We were entertained by one brown squirrel before dark, as it scampered about in play. It raced up and down the trunks of enormous pine trees, all the while chattering loudly. If it was chattering to another squirrel, we never saw it. We also were thrilled to see a bald eagle soar majestically overhead for a while. Soon after dark, we decided it was time for some shut-eye and turned in for the night.

"We were up early the next morning and had pancakes and hot coffee for breakfast. We then broke camp and after cleaning up the area, left it just as we had found it. We then headed out.

"Our plan was to hike in further and spend one more night, then start heading back the next day. We weren't under any real time constraint, except that we wanted to be on our way home within the next few days or so. All went according to plan that day. We did notice the temperature was dropping slightly, but since the sky was still clear, we were not overly concerned. It was much too early for snow, or so we thought. Even though a cold nip was now in the air, there was no hint we were about to experience any unusual weather.

"We set up our camp just before dark, and after dinner went to sleep early. As usual, I had taken the precaution of tying the food up high in a tree. I had no reason to be

concerned about it. So far, this had been a great vacation. I remember thinking that this was a trip I'd remember all my life. Little did I know that was more true than I could have ever have guessed." Bill took another sip of coffee before going on.

"The morning light was beginning to filter into the tent when I awoke the next day. Something was different. In the first few moments I was awake, I wasn't quite sure what it was. I unzipped my sleeping bag and realized that the temperature had plummeted. It was freezing in the tent! I woke Amy, then unzipped the tent door slightly. As I peered outside I saw things had really changed. During the night it had snowed. In fact it was still snowing. The sky was a hazy gray color and the ground was completely hidden beneath a deep blanket of snow.

"My first thought was that we would have a tough time walking out. I still didn't realize the full implications of what that would mean. The scenery was quite beautiful, but I was having a hard time appreciating it at that moment. When Amy looked out the tent door a few minutes later she exclaimed it was the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. I had to agree it was beautiful to look at. We both noticed how perfectly quiet and still it was except for the soft sound of the snow falling. We found ourselves talking in quiet, hushed voices that morning. For some reason it seemed inappropriate to talk in our normal tone of voice."

He paused in his narration when the waitress walked up carrying a wicker basket filled with blueberry muffins. They were fresh out of the oven and still hot. As soon as the waitress placed them on our table, Bill quickly grabbed one, slathered fresh creamy butter on it, and then took a huge bite. Amy and I selected our own fragrant muffin, but skipped the butter.

"My first concern that morning," Bill said as soon as he swallowed, "was starting our little backpacker stove and making coffee, then breakfast. I found the stove easily and I carried it over to a tree that provided some shelter from the

snowfall. After brushing the snow away from a spot on the ground, I set the stove up. I had a little difficulty locating our coffeepot, as well as some of our utensils under the snow, but I eventually found all of our cooking gear.

"I was down on the ground for a few minutes groping with my hands before I finally found our matches. The matches were in a waterproof container, so I knew they would be dry. The last thing I had to do was lower the food bag from the tree where I had secured it with a rope the night before. It contained all our food as well as our coffee. I walked over to the tree and looked up to where the food bag had been. I saw to my dismay, only the end of the rope with nothing on it. For a moment I thought perhaps the rope had broken, but I soon realized that wasn't possible.

"That rope was capable of holding over 200 pounds and the food pack only weighed about 20 pounds. It was clear that some animal had chewed through the rope and taken the pack. To this day I have no idea what took our pack since it was hanging so far out on a limb. That limb was at least 15 feet from the ground. I had mistakenly believed that no animal could ever get to it.

"I searched the area for any sign of the pack. I was hoping that maybe I would find the pack, or at least some item from it. I never found any trace of it. I finally went back to our tent. Amy had been getting our gear packed up and as I entered the tent, she looked up hopefully, expecting a hot cup of coffee. When she saw none, she looked puzzled and waited for me to explain.

"Well, I told her, I had some good news and some bad news. The good news is, I found most of our cooking gear. The bad news is, we have no food because the food pack is gone. When Amy heard this, she looked more annoyed than worried."

Amy interrupted Bill with a wave of her hand and confessed, "Yes, I was really upset about not having my morning coffee! It was so cold and I had really looked

forward to it. I didn't really give much thought to the food being gone."

"Go ahead Bill," she urged, satisfied she had clarified her feelings of that morning, "explain what happened next."

Bill resumed his story. "Well, it was not a nice situation. There we were, miles from the nearest town and we had no food. At least we could have hot water, but that doesn't get you very far if you are hungry.

"We packed up our camping gear and started to hike out. We now faced a new problem. We could not see the ground and with each step, we sank into the snow up to our knees. It made for some slow going. I had my compass, so at least we wouldn't get lost. I guess I still saw this entire situation as a small obstacle that we would simply solve.

"After we had been hiking for about an hour, the snow started to fall even thicker. The wind was picking up, visibility was diminishing and was down to about thirty feet. Fortunately we had the proper clothing on and were wearing waterproof snow boots, but I was beginning to get worried about how we would make it out. Part of the problem was we could not see where safe footing was.

"We had been making slow but steady progress," Bill said, as he stared into his now empty coffee cup, "but the weather was closing in and the visibility kept getting worse. As we continued to hike, it became more and more of an effort to move through the snow. Although I had a pair of snowshoes, Amy did not. It was not practical for only one of us to use the snowshoes."

He smiled at Amy and added, "The reason I *had* snowshoes with me in the first place, was that Amy had given them to me as my birthday present a few days before. She bought them just before our camping trip and had hidden them in her backpack. On the morning of my birthday after breakfast was finished, Amy went back inside the tent. She came back a minute later with a big smile on her face and handed me a present. It was even wrapped! After I opened the gift, I was surprised to discover a pair of snowshoes, the

type you can run in. I had always wanted to own a pair so I could run during the winter. Amy doesn't keep surprises very well, but she sure kept this one. It would turn out to be a very important gift before this trip was over." Bill added mysteriously.

"Anyway," he continued, "we were hiking along an area that looked safe enough, but it turned out to have numerous rocky areas hidden beneath the snow. The footing was very treacherous. Suddenly, I heard Amy cry out. As I turned, I saw her plummet twenty feet down a steep hillside. She came to rest against a tree and lay still, very still." Bill reached across the table for Amy's hand before he continued his story.

"I threw off my pack," he said, "and began scrambling frantically down the hill to reach her. I yelled to her to see if she was all right, but she didn't answer me. Just as I reached her, she began to sit up and mumbled something about being clumsy. It was such a relief to see her sit up and hear her voice! I asked her if she was hurt and she said she thought she was fine. And so she was, until she started to stand up.

"As soon as she tried to put any weight upon her right foot, she felt a sharp, shooting pain. I took her snow boot and sock off and examined her ankle and foot. Her ankle appeared to be sprained, but nothing seemed to be broken. Nevertheless we had a major problem. If Amy could not walk, how would we get out of here?

"After putting her sock and boot back on, I helped her struggle up the steep slope. It took a long time, but we finally reached the top. We discussed what our options were. At first, I suggested that I might be able to build some type of litter that she could lay upon, but I immediately discarded the idea. I realized it would not be a safe option due to the steep terrain. We finally came to the same conclusion. We agreed that she should stay behind, while I would go for help. We held each other close for a while after our talk. I'm sure it crossed her mind, as it did mine, that this could be our last embrace.

"I would need to set up the tent for her before I left, but I was concerned that snow might collapse it since Amy would not be able to brush it off periodically. Therefore, I decided to scout the area and search for a cave. I found one close by and proceeded to set up our tent in it.

"Once the tent was up, I placed two sleeping bags together, one inside the other for added warmth and helped Amy into them. I left the stove, matches and a small flashlight for her. I needed to take our large flashlight so I would be able to travel after dark. It was time for me to go. I kissed Amy goodbye and stepped outside. I was reluctant to leave, so I stood by the tent for a moment before I put my snowshoes on. I heard Amy say that she was glad I'd get to use the shoes, but she wished it were under different circumstances. Her voice had wavered slightly and I knew she was trying to sound nonchalant for my sake. I told her I'd be back as soon as possible. It was really difficult to leave her.

"Just before I left, I spread out our large red ground cloth against the side of a tree and tied it. It could be seen easily and since it was hanging up I didn't think snow would conceal it. It would provide a good landmark when I returned.

"As I started walking, I thought about the look of delight on Amy's face when she had given me the snowshoes. They would give me a real chance of making some good time. After a few minutes I began to run slowly. Without a backpack on and with the ability to move on top of the snow, rather than trudging through it, I was amazed how quickly I seemed to be moving. I focused my mind on one thing and one thing only- to keep moving. I only stopped long enough to check my compass and occasionally my watch. In some places, I had to slow down and walk because it was very steep.

"Time soon had no meaning to me. As daylight faded into night, I strapped the flashlight to my waist and kept running. I started thinking about the marathon I had completed

recently. It had been the toughest race I had been in my twenty years of running. I realized it was good preparation for something like this.

"I was running at a pace a little slower than my marathon pace and for a few hours felt strong. Running kept me from getting cold. After about eight hours, my pace had slowed down to a crawl. I was having trouble thinking clearly. I started singing out loud just to stay alert. Unfortunately, the only song I could focus on was 'Old McDonald Had A Farm.' I made the noises of all the animals in the song. Old McDonald ended up having an elephant, a monkey and a large variety of creatures that I don't think were in the original song." Bill added with a grin.

"I became incredibly thirsty. The small water canteen I had with me was empty. I knew eating snow was dangerous, but I also knew that becoming dehydrated was worse. Eventually, I started eating snow in tiny amounts. I didn't want to cool down my core body temperature by eating large quantities. I never did feel that I got enough water from the snow, but it must have helped. I was so tired that I stopped looking at my watch and just concentrated on moving. I was desperate to rest. I wanted to lie down for a brief nap, but knew I could never give in to that urge or I'd never wake up. And if that happened, Amy would perish too. I constantly thought about Amy and hoped that she was warm and not frightened. She was alone in the dark and I worried that something would happen to her, that some wild animal might find her. It never occurred to me that some wild animal might find *me*!

"I ran on and on. I heard animals howling in the distance during the night. Believe me, it's an eerie feeling when you hear that in the wilderness. Finally, it was dawn and the light gradually grew brighter. The snow started to ease up somewhat and visibility became better. Morning turned into afternoon and the snow finally stopped. I was still running, but by now my mind was numb.