

# GOAL GETTERS:

## Two Locals Get Fit

By Benita Baker

**D**etermination, dedication, and commitment... that's what it takes to make a dramatic change to your lifestyle. It is so easy to be complacent, to rationalize poor eating habits and inactivity, to say "I should" but not do anything about it.

Meet two exemplary local residents who were motivated to challenge themselves by going beyond their comfort zones to a place they never would have predicted. From couch potato to endurance athlete, from overweight to fab and fit, their transformations from inactivity to being healthy and in shape have changed their lives. They look good, they feel good, and they have newfound energy and enthusiasm. Here are their inspiring stories.

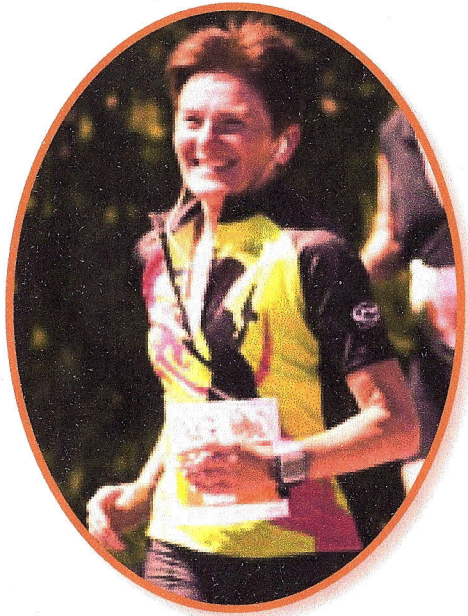
### Nada Milosevic

**W**hen you hear Nada Milosevic tell hers, there are two likely reactions. The go-getters will say, "Why not? You can do anything you set your mind to." The rest of us bewildered amateur sports enthusiasts will ask, "How does she do it?"

Milosevic is training for the Lake Placid Ironman triathlon — a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike loop, and a 26.2-mile run, raced without a break. Participants have a time limit of 17 hours to complete the race, which will take place in July. Milosevic's goal is to finish in 16 hours.

Yet Milosevic, a self-described couch potato, only began running six years ago. With three young children, a husband, and a full-time career as a dental assistant, there just wasn't time for fitness. A growing dissatisfaction with the changes in her body, however, as well as the prompting of her doctor motivated her to get active.

A friend at work introduced her to running. She slowly began building stamina and, by



chance, encountered a group of women runners that welcomed her into their gang. Much to her surprise, Milosevic managed to keep up and, in no time, she was hooked.

"Running got me into something I wasn't looking for," she said. "I am surrounded

by enthusiastic, happy people who are positive and supportive. If I knew then what I know now, I would have started running a long time ago."

Along the way, Milosevic progressed from being a recreational runner to becoming a competitive racer. She has completed 40 races to date, including 14 marathons — three of them, the prestigious Boston Marathon.

When Milosevic's running buddies began talking about the Ironman, she was intrigued. On a website catering to the running community, she read a detailed and emotionally charged firsthand account of competing in an Ironman competition. It convinced her that the Ironman would be her 50th birthday gift to herself.

"I am not competitive, but I like to challenge myself," she says. "So why not try?"

There was a small problem, however. She couldn't swim. Undeterred, she began swimming lessons and, with the same gusto that propelled her running prowess, persevered.

When her friend participated in an Ironman event in British Columbia, Milosevic accompanied the woman to support and encourage her. As she watched her friend toil through the demanding athletic challenges, Milosevic realized that she would have to try something a little less rigorous to build confidence for the Ironman. She set her sights on a Half-Ironman, which she successfully completed last summer in New Hampshire.

"When it was over, I couldn't believe it," she said. "It was such a big moment for me. I was so emotional." It was especially moving for her to be cheered



Nada Milosevic at the Philadelphia Marathon, November 2007

Photos: Dragan Milosevic