**Leon Clegg**

Leon Clegg has been a dominant force in his age class for decades in the MRA, earning him induction into the MRA Hall of Fame, but he got involved in running almost by accident. Working at the atomic energy plant in Pinawa, he had a bachelor tennis partner who suddenly acquired a girl friend, making him less available for tennis. Leon had to think of another way to get his exercise and decided to start running a few miles on his lunch break at the plant. In those years, there were a few other MRA enthusiasts at AECL in Pinawa and they tried to get Leon to come to the races, but he was not interested in racing and had no idea how fast he was relative to others. Finally, they came to him and said that they wanted to enter the 1983 Kelly Corporate Relay but needed a fifth runner to complete their team. Leon initially said no, but they told him that if he didn’t come, they could not field a team. He relented. He was surprised at how his pace compared to the other runners and changed his mind about racing. He started entering MRA events and has been involved ever since.

Leon’s proudest achievement was winning his age class in the Twin Cities Marathon in Minneapolis. He ran it many times and consistently placed in the top three for his cohort. Leon also counts that Twin Cities course as his favourite of the many he has traversed, although he really liked the Catfish Classic in Selkirk as well.

Leon has traveled a number of times to the Canada 55+ games and has placed extremely well, often winning his age class in various events on the track and on the roads. He had won all his track events in the championships in Brampton one year and there was a 5km race in the park as part of the race series. He was told that there would be marshals at all of the corners along the course, but as he led the field with one other runner, they came to an intersection with 3 choices (left, right or straight) and no marshal. The course required a right turn and they went straight. About 200 meters later, he and his competitor realized that they had missed the turn and had to back track. They found the field and chased them to the finish. Leon came second to a fellow from Calgary whom he had beaten in all the track races. At the awards ceremony, the winner from Calgary insisted that Leon exchange medals with him since it was obvious that Leon would have won if directed properly on the course. Leon protested but the other runner would not relent. Leon still has the medal, somewhat sheepishly. He and the Calgary runner have remained friends ever since.

At another Canada 55+ games event in Saint John, NB, Leon was warming up on the track with a fellow from Calgary who was telling him how amazing the Calgary team was in Leon’s age category. Leon assumed he had no chance. When the races were held, Leon won gold in every event.

One of Leon’s worst experiences was a 5 km road race in Saint John where there was a descent down a steep hill about 2 miles into the race. Leon pulled his hamstring on that downhill and had to hobble to the finish. He still won his age group, and came 5th overall. Some disasters are less disappointing than others! They gave out medals at the race only to the overall top 3 and not by age class. Leon was a bit surprised at that, but at the dinner, the organizers realized their oversight and gave Leon the gold medal he had won for his age class.

Another unfortunate experience was at Twin Cities, when Leon was in the best shape of his life and was hoping to run sub 2:40 in the marathon. It was cold and raining, and the organizers didn’t send enough buses to the hotel to carry the runners waiting to get to the start line. Leon stood outside shivering in the cold waiting for the next bus for over an hour and by the time he got his ride, he was no longer in any condition to run a PR.

Leon’s best 5 km was 16:40; 10 km was 34:48; 10 mile 56.55; half marathon 1:17.30; marathon was 2:42, all run as a master.