



**Left »** Tara Martin and Meegan Dowe coming into the finish of the Warrior Dash in North Bend, Wash., in July 2011

## Cheers to Weight Loss

FOR A LUCKY FEW OF US, losing weight is simple: just run more. But if you're overweight or obese, it isn't that easy. Many people's bodies can't handle the pounding of a few strides without breaking down. It's a serious health issue that can take repeated attempts to break the cycle of inactivity. In our annual Weight-Loss special, we hope to inspire you with stories of massive transformation and perseverance. Even if your battles with weight aren't as severe, you'll still find some useful nutritional tips and workouts in this issue.

Although losing weight certainly requires that you run more and eat less, how you run is equally important. Recent studies have shown that high-intensity interval training will give you the biggest bang for your buck. Lindsey Craig brings us the story of Tara Martin in her feature 'Huge Loss in Short Bursts,' p.38. Martin lost more than 100 pounds in one year of training, going from 270 to 155. After "growing into her chair," Martin decided it was time to change her habits. She started interval training and, soon, she was going under two hours in the half-marathon and completing her first marathon.

Martin also turned to obstacle course racing for an added adrenaline boost – and a different type of challenge. It's one of the fastest growing trends in our sport today. Our photo editor Dianne Kapral experienced her first Tough Mudder event in August and describes how these events are catching on with a different kind of crowd – one that finds the idea of traditional road racing boring. Her feature ('In Tough,' p.44) is a must-read for running purists and those who are looking for other running-related competitions. It explains why Tough Mudder, Spartan Race and Warrior Dash attracted more than a million participants combined to their events this year.

After trudging up hills, crawling under live electrical wires and wading into pools of ice water, it's probably a good time to crack open a beer. Wait, not so fast. If you want to lose weight, beer probably isn't the best recovery drink, as we learn in Bobbi Barbarich's column ('Under the Influence,' p.20). If you're looking to cut back on your carbs, wine or spirits might be a better choice. Bobbi also points out that alcohol calories are different from regular calories since they tend to be stored as fat. But as long as you're not planning a big workout the next morning, a beer or two won't hurt you. It will calm your nerves, relax your muscles and improve your heart health. Cheers to that.

Mihira Lakshman  
Editor-in-Chief

# CANADIAN Running

Editor-in-Chief Mihira Lakshman  
mihira@runningmagazine.ca

Senior Editors  
Alex Hutchinson, Kevin Mackinnon

Contributing Editors  
Bobbi Barbarich, Charles Mandel

Gear Editor Gus Alexandropoulos  
gus@gripped.com

Senior Photo Editor Chris Lepik  
chris@gripped.com

Photo Editor Dianne Kapral  
dianne@runningmagazine.ca

Digital Media Director Deen Karim  
deen@runningmagazine.ca

Web News Editor Alison Dunn

Web Producer Michael Doyle

Copy Editor Jen Robson-Crespi

Art Director James Cook [Roseander Main]  
layout@runningmagazine.ca

Designers Warren Wheeler, Jennifer Au, Natalie Racz

Production Artist Warren Hardy  
warrenh@gripped.com

Web Design Travis Sitzlar

Publisher Sam Cohen  
sam@gripped.com

Editorial Director David Chaundy-Smart  
dave@gripped.com

Advertising & Sales Director Chris Lepik  
advertising@runningmagazine.ca

Advertising & Sales Andre Cheuk  
andre@gripped.com

Account Manager Brian Turner  
brian@gripped.com

Circulation Manager Dianne Kapral  
dianne@runningmagazine.ca

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Canadian Running Magazine  
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