Perhaps not so much these days, but in traditional journalism circles, -30- indicates the end of a story. Some claim its use is derived from the Civil War-era telegraphic shorthand to indicate the end of a transmission.

You hold in your hand the 114th issue of *Marathon & Beyond*. It is also the last issue of *Marathon & Beyond*.

Due to a steady decline in subscriptions over the past several years, the magazine is no longer able to sustain itself in a media environment that is rapidly—and inexorably—changing.

This magazine is certainly not the only printed periodical that is being negatively affected in this way. Newspapers, magazines, and newsletters over the past decade have seen circulation drop precariously, to be replaced by more modern electronic alternatives or, in many cases, not replaced at all.

Although *Marathon & Beyond* has, for some years, offered a companion digital edition, the income from both that and the print edition are no longer sufficient to sustain the publication.

We can also theorize that in a world where quick, easily digested information blasts have become the norm, long-form articles (*M&B*’s stock in trade) that require a sustained attention span have begun to languish.

As our charter subscribers remember, *Marathon & Beyond* was launched in 1997 as a sort of offspring of a short-lived magazine from the late 1970s called *The Marathoner*. Back in those days I was working at *Runner’s World*. At a time when marathons and marathoners were growing at an astonishing rate, the January issue of *Runner’s World* was dedicated to reviewing the growth and health of the marathon from the previous year while also looking ahead to the sport’s prospects for the coming year. To our great surprise, the marathon continued to grow at a remarkable rate, to the point that we could not cover it in one issue alone, so we began to use both the January and February issues to do our marathon review and preview.

But eventually, even that was not enough, so I proposed that we do a quarterly magazine devoted entirely to marathoning. Hence, *The Marathoner* was born, and it premiered with the spring 1978 issue. It was perfect-bound and was divided into four signatures: a four-color on white paper, a black-and-white on gray paper that carried...
the previous year’s marathon performances, a black-and-white on white paper that carried Point-to-Point, and a black-and-white on tan paper that carried a book serialization.

The first signature carried feature stories, including, in that first issue, a feature on Al Arnold who, in the summer of 1977, became the first runner to successfully run from Badwater in the pit of Death Valley to the peak of Mount Whitney. It also carried a feature on the famed London-to-Brighton ultra by Hal Higdon and a hard-core feature on marathon training by 1968 US Olympic marathoner Ron Daws. The second section was the official 1977 US marathon times, where we listed every American male who had broken 3:00 and every American woman who had broken 3:30; it went on for 23 pages in 8-point type. Top times that year belonged to Bill Rodgers (2:10:55) and Kim Merritt (2:37:57). Point-to-Point was essentially an expanded “On the Mark”—a question posed by a reader that we then sent out to a half-dozen experts for their answers. For the first issue of The Marathoner, the book serialization was Marathoning by the German runner and writer Manfred Steffny; Manfred was the editor of the German running magazine Spiridon.

Advertised in a two-page spread in Runner’s World, the first issue had more than 10,000 subscribers. Unfortunately, the magazine lasted a mere five issues. At the same time that The Marathoner came out, Runner’s World also began publishing On the Run, a tabloid fort-nightly that was supposed to be the Rolling Stone of running. It never quite caught on, and after a bit more than 1 1/4 years, being joined at the hip in its P&L statement, On the Run went down and took The Marathoner with it.

The loss of the magazine stung terribly, and in the back of my mind, I dug a little cave where I buried it and visited occasionally in hopes of stirring up a phoenix.

In 1996, the stirred-up phoenix turned into a proposal for a new magazine that would concentrate on the growing fields of marathoning and ultrarunning. I took the proposal to Brian Holding and Rainer Martens at Human Kinetics Publishers in Champaign, Illinois. I had written a book for them in 1989 on exercise addiction (The Exercise Fix) and had a warm relationship with them. After examining the proposal (which included a two-page fold-out budget, this coming from a guy who had twice flunked Economics 101 in college), they decided to go with it. Their thought was that if this worked with running, perhaps in the future they could launch similar magazines dealing with cycling and/or triathloning.

Nineteen years after The Marathoner, Marathon & Beyond was launched as a bimonthly in January 1997.

It began as a 6-by-9 two-color, 128-page, perfect-bound journal/magazine, sort of an offspring of The Marathoner, minus all of the statistical data. It carried feature articles, an “On the Road” column by Kathrine Switzer that reported on what was going on out there along the marathon beat, an extensive review of a specific marathon (in the
case of the first issue, Vancouver), an installment of “My Most Unforgettable Marathon (and What I Learned From It),” and “On the Mark,” the successor of “Point-to-Point.”

Human Kinetics was not a magazine publisher, but it did have a journal division, where it published a variety of research-centered journals in a spectrum of disciplines.

Human Kinetics ran an ad for Marathon & Beyond in Runner’s World, and the whole enterprise was off to a decent start, with the feeling that as the world of marathoning and ultrarunning grew, so, too, would M&B.

Jan Seeley, who worked in the trade book division of Human Kinetics and who had just come off the monumental task of editing Tom Derderian’s Boston Marathon in conjunction with Boston’s 100th running, was drafted to work as managing editor on Marathon & Beyond. Her move to the journals division also involved her editing several other of the division’s journals in addition to working on M&B.

The first year went well. The magazine found an audience, many of whom were long-running devotees of the sport and who, in keeping with the high-education demographics of the sport, were voracious readers. (Keep in mind that as far as high school and college sports go, typically the sports team with the highest GPA is the cross-country team.)

But there was about to be a seismic disruption. As though the fates had read the too-short history of The Marathoner, there was a shake-up within the HK journals division. Several of the stronger and more established journals were pulled from HK’s stable and with them gone, the P&L situation became tenuous, and once again, after roughly 1 1/4 years, it looked as though M&B would suffer the same fate as The Marathoner had. All of this happened right before Jan Seeley and her husband, Joe, were leaving for an epic run at the Grand Canyon. Right after the trip, Jan sat down with HK owner Rainer Martens and hammered out a deal where she and I would take over the magazine, with HK’s cooperation. Which, near the end of the second year, we did, forming a small corporation, 42K(+) Press, to publish the magazine. We hoped our fiercely loyal subscribers wouldn’t even notice the blip.

The rest is pretty much history.

For the next decade the magazine grew, yet not as rapidly as we hoped, considering the outrageous growth of marathoning and ultrarunning in general. We were a mom-and-pop operation, with limited resources and no huge marketing budget or staff. When we were at marathon expos promoting M&B, the typical response to the question “Have you heard of Marathon & Beyond?” was “No.” We took that as a positive because there was a gigantic untapped market out there—if we could just get to it.

Marathon expos were quite a bit of fun. Jan somehow managed to regurgitate from memory the name of nearly every subscriber who stopped by to visit. On the other hand, I’m terrible with names, but for at least the first
five years of the magazine, I was able
to remember which issue carried an
article a visiting subscriber was trying
to locate.

Meanwhile, on the home front, we
expanded the heft of the magazine,
introduced color, and philosophized
that the “Beyond” in our title involved
not only going farther but getting into
the spirit and zeitgeist of the lifestyle
and therefore going further.

We continued our warm relationship
with Human Kinetics, expanded our
“family” of subscribers, and relentlessly
did things other running magazines
could not do: we occasionally carried
a bit of poetry, sometimes a short story,
and wallowed in being able to carry
feature stories that sometimes surpassed
10,000 words. We ran lengthy stories on
the history of running and in-depth pro-
files of many of the giants of the sport.

We serialized some of the classic
books on the sport from the days when
only a limited number of books were
written on running, books that had gone
out of print but that were still readable
and from which a runner could still
learn a myriad of lessons.

We were able to work with estab-
lished writers in the sport like Joe Hen-
derson and Roger Robinson and Don
Kardong and Hal Higdon and Kathrine
Switzer and Lorraine Moller, while also
working with fresh new writers who had
a story to tell that would not fit in the
more mainstream running magazines.

In that regard, it has been an in-
vigorating and rewarding nearly two
decades: warm and wonderful people
reading the magazine and writing for it,
a dynamic sport and lifestyle, and outr-
ageously supportive advertisers—most
of them marathons, to the point that
many of our subscribers didn’t look at
the marathon advertising as advertising
at all but as announcements of races they
wanted to, indeed, had to sign up for.

In some ways the magazine has
grown like a child that came through a
troubled infancy, made it safely through
the terrible twos, skipped through
childhood, expanded its horizons in the
teens, and then, at 19, got hit by a bus.
At least, that’s how it feels.

If you look at issue #1 and issue
#114, the magazine has enjoyed enor-
mous growth. But at the same time, the
basics remain the same: more than a
half-dozen features, a marathon review,
an installment of “My Most Unforget-
table Marathon/Ultramarathon,” “On
the Road,” “On the Mark,” “About the
Authors,” and the editorial.

This one. The last one. Nineteen
years after its inception, “Beyond”
takes on a whole different meaning.
My wife, Rhonda, had to point out
to me the nearly cosmic aspect of the
launch date between The Marathoner
and Marathon & Beyond (19 years) and
the demise of Marathon & Beyond (19
years). I’m sometimes—often—slow
on the uptake.

We go out with warm feelings for the
folks at Human Kinetics, who initially
had faith in the concept—enough so to
launch it. Warm feelings about our writ-
ers and photographers and especially
about our special artist, Andy Yelenak.
Warm feelings for the good people who
over these many years helped put the
magazine together: Judy Henderson (design/layout), Dick Lipsey (line editing), Jenny Stinson (marketing), Ray Vallese (proofreading), and Chad Hettmansberger (accounting). And very warm feelings for Jan’s Joe (R.I.P.) and my Rhonda.

And the warmest of all feelings for our many subscribers. We’ll miss you.

Nineteen years is a long time to run together. But, as Forrest Gump found out, one day—unfortunately—you just gotta stop.

But just ’cause we hadda stop, don’t mean you gotta. Run on. Run to your heart’s content. And thanks for taking us along with you for at least 19 years of your journey.

—Rich Benyo