

Empire Runners February 25, 2010 Club Meeting (pending approval at the March 25, 2010 meeting)

President Nate Koch (nathankoch@gmail.com) called the February, 2010 meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Secretary's Report:

Secretary Paul Berg (pmberg@sonic.net) read the January 2010 meeting minutes which were approved as read.

Treasurers' Report:

Treasurer John Harmon (jj2harmon@yahoo.com) reported that the current club balance after deducting Annadel half-marathon is \$33,892.34 up \$2,653.52 from the same time last year. The major expense in the past month was \$1872 for the awards banquet vs. 1788 last year. Grand Prix awards cost \$955. Valley Fords relays had a net of \$132 vs \$138 last year. The Student Grant Fund balance is \$1755.

President's Report:

President Nate Koch reported that the club received a thank-you note from the Annadel Half-Marathon organizing team in appreciation for the club's assistance at the event.

Nate opened discussion of a proposal presented to the Board by Gil Moreno regarding changing the club bylaws. Gil Moreno gave some background of the rationale for the proposed changes, primarily due to the increased size of the club and the perceived unwieldy decision-making process at monthly meetings. He is essentially proposing that all decisions be made by an expanded Board of Directors, comprised of 15 officers and committee heads.

Jerry Lyman raised several procedural questions about how this issue should be resolved. After considerable discussion, Nate Koch explained that the current bylaws require that he will form a committee to convene before the March 25 meeting to consider the proposal and any possible changes. He encouraged any interested members to contact him regarding serving on that committee. At the March 25 meeting all proposals will be presented to the club: Gil's original proposal, the committee's proposal, and the unchanged existing bylaws. All proposals presented at the March 25 meeting will be published in the April newsletter, to be voted on at the April 22 meeting.

Race Reports:

Recent races/Runs:

1. Club Party - 2/6 Val Sell reported good attendance, positive response to the pasta feed, great fun seeing the look on Diggers face when he received the Kathy Van Riper award. She said the raffle was not as well-supported as previous years and may be discontinued. Tanya Narath has agreed to be party chair next year.
2. Annadel Half - 2/7 Val Sell reported a big success in raising over \$20,000 for Annadel. It was suggested TecNu may need to be a sponsor next year, due to poison oak incidents. Results and photos online.

3. Valley Ford Relays - 2/21 Larry Meredith reported perfect cool conditions, record number of 37 teams. Several individual and team records were set, results and story in this month's newsletter. SRHS volunteers were commended for a good job. Bob Shor commented that the record turnout may be due to the fact that it was not on President's Day weekend, and the race director was recommended to consider that for future years. LT suggested that more "Race In Progress" signs were needed on the course to alert drivers.
4. Chinatown 5k/10k 2/21 - Val Sell reported that several people ran in honor of Kathy Van Riper. Jillian Van Riper ran her first 10k, and Val got 4th woman overall. She said it was very festive with the decorations for Chinese New Year. Val noted that the awards and prizes were badly organized, as well as too few bathrooms, in contrast to how well run and inexpensive our events are.

Upcoming Races/Runs:

1. Ilsanjo Classic - 3/14
2. Loop de Loop - 4/11
3. Big Cat - 3/07 at SRHS. Larry Meredith reported that this is usually a good early-season high school event and draws top runners from the area. 9am start.
4. Fitch Mountain - 6/13 Tori Meredith reported that ER will be allowed to have the membership tent there again this year.

Committee Reports:

Clock Update - Bob Shor reported that the club spent \$2986 on a new clock system. The delivery was quick enough to try it out at the Annadel half and Valley Ford relays. Bob said he is very pleased with the purchase. The old clock is being repaired as a backup.

Unfinished Business:

1. Empire Open Course - Jerry Lyman updated members on the request by a Tamalpa runner to change Empire Open course to a less rocky route, and that as race director he has decided against the change (applause). Jerry did say that he explored the Tolay Lake open space near Petaluma, and that may be a possible race site in 3-5 years.

New Business:

1. *Change to January Renewal.* Gil Moreno presented the motion to adjust all membership due dates to January 1 to simplify the renewal process. As outlined last month, he presented a schedule to compensate with race coupons those members whose renewal dates are mid-year during this year only. Anyone who joins after October 1 of any year will receive the full following year membership. Jerry Lyman questioned whether the new software under consideration will take care of the perceived problem, and whether some prospective members would object to joining mid-year if they realized it wasn't for a full year. Tori Meredith said that many members join the PA in August only to run XC in the fall, but still pay for the entire year. Val Sell said that new members already receive a lot of free races and a t-shirt at membership, so mid-year entry would probably not be a problem. Val also suggested that there could be an envelope-stuffing party in December to send membership info to all 600+ members at once, instead of Gil having to do it every month as he does now.

Motion by Gil Moreno: *"To make all membership due December 1st, delinquent January 1st, retroactive to January 2010."* 2nd by John Harmon. PASSED

2. Management Software - Chris/Jerry/Gil. Chris Mason began by explaining the process and goals of a new software system. A committee comprised of Chris, Jerry and Gil was organized in November 2008 to find a replacement for our aging and broken membership programs. Among other features, the committee wanted several features to be incorporated into this system, including automatic email notifications to members, web based membership account access, and an integrated event registration system. After looking into several commercially available products and attempting to have programs developed within the club membership they have selected a product which they believe offers the best range of features for the club. The product they have selected is Wild Apricot Member Software. It is designed specifically for clubs and associations.

The new system will be comprised of two areas: Membership Management and Event Registration. Both of these areas will be incorporated into our current club website. The membership management portion of the system will replace all of our current database functions and will add many new features for both administration and for member access. The admin side the new system will offer a much-improved interface and will assist the membership director in managing all of the club members. The biggest change will be the creation of a "members only" area of our website where current members can update and manage their account, as well as renew their membership. New members will also create an account when they join the club. Online payment for new memberships and renewals will occur in this section and payments will be processed through PayPal.

The second component of the system is Event Registration. This will take the place of active.com online registration and will be tied together with the membership management side. Members and non-members will register for events on our website and payment will be handled through PayPal.

This will be very similar to how membership payments are handled.

This new event registration portion of the system will make it very simple and quick for anyone to register for our events.

The cost of the complete system is \$1,080 per year (or \$100 per month)

Savings associated with this system:

Last year 560 Kenwood Footrace participants registered online using Active.com and paid \$12,750 in entrance fees. To encourage online entry, ER paid the transaction charges amounting to \$1705, or 13.4%. Had we used Wild Apricot paired with Paypal, it would have cost us \$538, or 4.2%, saving us \$1167. The savings for Kenwood alone will pay for a whole year of Wild Apricot.

Tori Meredith asked if the new system could also be utilized to mail the newsletter. Jerry Lyman explained that we currently use Constant Contact for the newsletter and e-mail blasts. Jerry said that there are 1800 names in our database, but only 600+ members are sent the newsletter, and once the new system is up and running we may consider dropping Constant Contact if appropriate. Chris Mason said he thought the database limit for members in Wild Apricot was 5000. Dave Goodwin asked if all credit cards were accepted. Chris stated that since it's

handled through PayPal, all major credit and debit cards are accepted.
Motion by Chris Mason: *"To allocate \$1080 to purchase and implement Wild Apricot Member Software."* 2nd by Dale Peterson. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chris Mason stated that the implementation would be in 2 phases, first the database, then the website, and should be complete within 2 months.

3. Kenwood – Val Sell reported that Kenwood footrace is becoming unmanageable for the club to handle alone, and she is hoping to grow participation in a professional manner by implementing chip timing. She had been in negotiations with Synergy Race Systems, but has withdrawn after hearing several bad reports about their services. She is now in negotiation with Capitol Road Race Management. Although more expensive, she believes that they can deliver a superior race outcome for the club. Capitol will charge \$4800 for up to 1500 runners. We have been paying \$1500 for John Staroba to do timing with assistance from many club members for manual timing. Val proposed to raise the entry fee by \$5 per entrant. Capitol will provide email contact, pre- and race-day management, chip timing with mats for finish and announcers, race bibs, digital clocks, complete real-time results, and will only require ER to provide course monitors, traffic control, and hand out t-shirts and glasses. Capitol would also send email notification to their database of over 25,000 runners.

Motion: *"To Allow Val Sell as race director to contract with Capitol Road Race Management for Kenwood footrace timing for 2010."* 2nd by LT. PASSED

4. Elite mile - Alex Woolf-Root began by explaining the idea for a competition at SRHS on May 7 at the conclusion of the All-City high school meet, sponsored by Heart&Sole Sports. The idea is to invite elite male and female runners to run the fastest recorded mile in SR history. Alex explained that to date they had promoted the prize money at \$750-350-250 for the first three finishers in each race, but since the idea for excellence is to break the 4:00/4:40 barrier, some bonus money was needed to encourage an exceptional effort. The Board of Directors plus Val Sell and Alex met on 2/16/10 to discuss the proposal, and it was suggested that Empire Runners put up \$1500 bonus in each race to the winner if they broke the respective time barrier.

Val Sell asked why the elite mile event was scheduled at the end of the meet instead of during the meet, as had been discussed at the meeting. Alex replied that there are CA State HS rules prohibiting a prize-money race during a HS race. Nate Koch mentioned that Danny Aldridge has suggested that the bonus money in each race should be split between all finishers who breaks the target time (4:00, 4:40), not just the winner, to encourage perhaps more than one person to break the target time. It was agreed that the issue of allocating the bonus money would be left to the discretion of the race director at Heart&Sole sports. Larry Meredith suggested that the announcer boldly proclaim that the prize money is provided by ER. It was also suggested that our banner be prominently displayed on the announcer's booth.

Motion by Alex Wolf-Root: *"Empire Runners will agree to award bonus prize money of \$1500 in each of two races:*

-if the winner of the men's race has a finish time better than 4:00:00

*-if the winner of the women's race has a finish time better than 4:40:00
If the winner of a particular race does not achieve the target time, bonus money
will not be paid by Empire Runners in that particular race."* 2nd by LT.
APPROVED!

5. Track & Field – Alex Wolf-Root announced that “Track Is Back!!” He noted the founding of a new Bay Area Track club, and encouraged all members to participate in upcoming PA and masters’ events. Alex agreed to help organize a team.

6. Calendar – Larry Meredith announced that Thursday workouts will revert to 5:30 pm start time beginning next week. He also reminded members that 3/14 is Ilsanjo Classic and the start of Daylight Savings Time (Spring Forward!).

Monkey Business:

New Member John Faye was welcomed to the group.

Raffle: Jen Ortlinghaus won \$20, and \$20 went to the student grant fund

Drawing: Val Sell won \$200 because she attended the meeting !!

President Nate Koch concluded the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Attendance:

Bob Shor, Bill Browne, LT, Super G, Mini-Mel, Dave “Digger” DeSelle, Don Sampson, Gil Moreno, Chris Mason, John Harmon, Val Sell, Brad Zanetti, Bones Koch, Wolfman, Danger Downing, John Faye, “The Swedes Rule” Peterson, Tori Meredith, Larry Meredith, Jen Ortlinghaus, Will Ortlinghaus, Leslie, Dave Goodwin, Darryl Beardall, Paul Berg