

# The Empire Runner

## The Long and Short of It — Dale Peterson

### Speaking of Motivation – More Human than Human

I saw something truly astounding at the Resolution Run. John Anderson ran the 5K course and completed his first race since his devastating accident last year. If you do not know the story, John was heading down Spring Creek trail and took a horrible fall down the embankment all the way down to the creek-bed, completely tearing away the tendons between his quads and lower legs. That's right – both legs! John underwent surgery very soon after the injuries and seemingly started rehab the next morning. His progress has been phenomenal to say the least as he went from hospital bed to wheel-chair to walker to cane to walking unaided to running. Even though I knew he was making good progress I was still stunned to see him complete the Resolution course. It is truly inspiring. Way to go John! You are one tough hombre'.

### Life after Orthotics? Not so much.

The two of you who read this column know that I like many others have been trying to move towards a more natural stride and foot-strike. I have been doing bare-foot or near bare-foot walking and bare-foot strides on the Montgomery HS football field after my Saturday speed workouts. I mentioned last month that I had stopped wearing my orthotics when walking around town and had actually started doing some short runs without them as well - all true. Unfortunately I also began to experience a fair amount of knee pain as I attempted to go without my orthotics. At first I hoped it would just be transitory in nature but once it got to the point where I needed to take a week off I was forced to re-evaluate my approach. Perhaps I was trying too much too soon. So, I have backed off from doing any bare-foot or orthotics free running with the exception of the aforementioned strides on the football field. As soon as I plunked my orthotics back in I was back to my normal near pain-free running again. So, I will continue to strengthen my feet by walking bare-foot or near bare-foot when I can and do my bare-foot striders. I will likewise continue to work on landing mid-foot when I am running while I wear my combination of neutral shoes and orthotics. Next I may try one of the new batch of minimalist shoes such as the Saucony Kinvara or the New Balance Minimus Road. Ultimately I do not know what I will or will not be wearing by this time next year but I do know that I will keep experimenting. There is a lot of ground between being totally bare-footed and wearing heavy motion-control shoes. Somewhere along that spectrum there is an ideal combination of flexibility vs structure for everybody. One size does not fit all.

### Spring Creek, Annadell and “the parks”

It is the start of a new year. This would be a great time for you to show your support and give something back instead of just parking outside or otherwise entering the park for free for the umpteenth-thousandth time. Don't give me that lame “I already pay my taxes” excuse. California State Parks Passes are \$90. Sonoma Co. Park Passes are \$65. Here are the links: <http://store.parks.ca.gov/passes.aspx> and [http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks/p\\_pkpass.htm](http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks/p_pkpass.htm). Both passes are good for 12 months after purchase and can be used at virtually all of the parks in the State and County parks systems respectively. Not only are they a way to help the always cash-strapped parks but they are a great convenience. I have found that I am much more likely to consider a run that starts at the end of Channel drive for instance than I was in the past. Also you may decide to venture out to other parks in the area like Sugar Loaf or Shiloh Ridge. You will never get caught short on cash at the Ranger Kiosk! Get 'em, use 'em tell your friends to do the same. Be part of the solution instead of the problem.