

The Empire Runner

The Long and Short of It — Dale Peterson

What has Six Legs, Four Eyes and Sixteen Lives?

Answer: Frankie and Chloe our two three-legged cats. I figure they both lost at least one of their nine lives so between the two of them that makes only sixteen lives. If these are not the two most inspirational critters you could ever meet I am not sure what could top them. Frankie had what we thought was a cyst but turned out to be a tumor and so had his back left leg amputated a few years back. Chloe was probably hit by a car or possibly a bicycle and had nerve damage to her right front leg. She too had to undergo an amputation just over a year ago. When Frank came home from the animal hospital he immediately and I do mean immediately tried to run around the room. Only placing him in a cage kept him at bay long enough to heal. Chloe had a tougher go of it and took a while to learn how to get around again. But before her fur was grown out again she managed to escape outdoors, hop over our picket fence and disappear for three stressful days before coming in through the cat door past our dogs in the middle of the night. Frankie hops when he walks but he runs as smooth as ever and has no trouble climbing a six-foot fence. Chloe routinely chases one of our four-legged cats under the couch or some other piece of furniture. Whenever I get an injury I think about how incredibly resilient Frankie and Chloe are and try to have a little of their spirit.

Speaking of Motivation

Like a lot of runners of any age, but especially those on the other side of fifty I probably have seen my last PR. I do my share of whining but generally I try very hard not to be one of those runners who is always looking back and talking about the good old days, one of those runners who always compares their latest race with how they used to be and complains bitterly when they come up short. Even so, it is challenging at times to look to a future of diminishing returns. I find that for me the best way to keep negativity at bay is to always have a goal. The last few years I had first Boston then New York as goals. Quite frankly it has gotten harder since I qualified for and ran in both of these events of a lifetime. When I was waiting for the start of the Clarksburg Twenty in November I thought that rather than run like there was no tomorrow I should *run like there is no yesterday*. Instead of being anxious about living up to some younger and faster version of myself I would run for today – like there was no yesterday. I ran a smart race using all the tricks and experience I gained over the years and did pretty well that day. Most importantly I enjoyed it and appreciated what I could do... when I could still do it. I think that is the key to happiness as an older runner.

The Empire Runner

Life after Orthotics

In my quest to run more naturally I have for the most part stopped wearing my orthotics in my everyday shoes. My feet and knees etc seem fine. I have been doing a few short runs a week without them as well. My right foot is not very happy afterwards but we shall see how it goes. I always have an ache in my right arch where I think I broke a bone quite a few years ago when I stepped funny while scrambling over some boulders. Time will tell if this ache fades. Meanwhile I am still wearing my orthotics in any run over half an hour. Stay tuned.

How do you kill a Writer?

Answer: Promote them to Editor

Coming to a Reality Near You – 2011!

That's right. We all get a do-over starting on January 1st 2011. Starting with our very own Resolution Run. Bring your bleary-eyed broken-down body out to Montgomery HS and make the neighbors give you funny looks. Then, before you know it we will be back at Valley Ford and then on to the spring-time races like the Ilsanjo Classic. Next thing you know you will be ready to make a run at one of the Track Series All Time lists! Go for it. Mount a comeback. Defy the odds. Heck, make a last stand if you have to, but get your shoes on and make it happen!