

Empire Runners Sonoma County, Ca.

November 2000 Newsletter

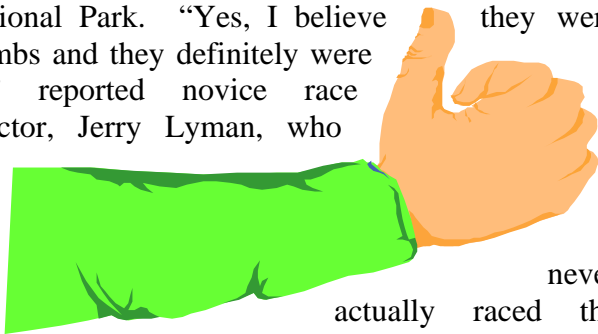
Volume XXVI, Number 1

Race Director Claims

Empire Open Big Success

September 30

Participants in this year's #4 race in the PA/USATF Cross-Country Series overwhelmingly gave thumbs up in their assessment of the new Empire Open racecourse at Windsor's Foothill Regional Park. "Yes, I believe they were thumbs and they definitely were up," reported novice race director, Jerry Lyman, who



never actually raced the course himself but predicted that if he had, his thumb would have been up--way up.

Described by Brian McGuire of *Bay Area Running News* as "fiendish in design," the new course followed Foothill's undulating hills, rocky roads, and winding single-track trails past lakes and through oak-filled forests, offering to all variety and challenge and, to those not running as hard as they should have been, great vistas of Windsor and the Santa Rosa Valley.

This year both men and women covered the same distance, fraudulently billed as 4.15 miles (actually 4.06). A long downhill near the end

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **Saturday, October 28:** PA X-C Series #7, Shoreline Open, Mt. View.
- **Saturday, November 4:** PA X-C Series #8, Tamalpa Challenge, China Camp State Park
- **Sunday, November 5:** McGuire's Breakfast Run, Hidden Valley School, 8 a.m.
- **Thursday, November 9:** Newsletter Deadline
- **Saturday, November 11:** Veteran's Run 10K, Yountville.
- **Sunday, November 12:** PA Race, Clarksburg 30K
- **Thursday, November 16:** CLUB MEETING, **6:30**, RT Pizza,

preceded an abrupt uphill charge to the finish on the dam, inspiring several spirited comments about the dam finish.

Women

Making it first to the dam finish in the women's race was last year's Empire Open winner, Chris Lundy of Sausalito. Her time of 25:32 established the first of numerous course and personal records set during the day!!!! First women's master was Impalan Sara Freitas. First women's senior:

Impalan Maggie Fillmore. First and only super senior: Tamalpan Carolyn Wilson.

Tri-athletic marvel **Shelly Lydon** led the Empire Runners in the women's race. In fact, she was **the first Empire Runner ever to finish the new dam racecourse**. Her time, remarkably, was both a PR and all-club record of 30:54!!!! Following Shelly were Empire Runners **Deb** (NAME CHANGE AHEAD) **Murray**, **Lisa TitusIsabeau**, **Robin Stovall**, **Laura** (NAME CHANGE AHEAD) **Martin**, **Amy Gandy**, and **Lisa Anderson**.

Old Men

The second dam race of the day saw men's master Reebok® Aggie Tim Minor diss the field by over 30 seconds. Minor set a new men's course record of 23:12!!!! Tenth in this race and first senior man was Hoys' Kim Lilot. First super senior (unfortunately in his confusion wearing a Tamalpa singlet) was our own **Dare-all Beardall**.

Stephen Starkweather, the Empire Runners' only entry in the masters division, finished most excellently in 11th. Perhaps he should have forestalled his debut as an old guy and competed in the open race. His presence would have given the Empire Runners a fifth man to qualify a full open men's team. Counting only four, **Christian Wagner** didn't stick around for the open race but went home to rest up for Bridge to Bridge the next day in which he ran well but did his team no dam good. Starkie, by the way, shattered Shelly Lydon's club course record in 26:49!!!!

Our senior men's team, on the other hand, was well-represented and kicked monkey butt. **Bill Brown** led the way as 7th senior, followed by **Robert Holland**, **Les Brodie**, **Phil Widener**, **Don Sampson**, and **Eric Norvald**.

Young Men

A day that started warm and got warmer made the going even rougher for those toughies in the men's open division whose race didn't start until 10:30. Toughest of all was Reebok® Aggie Chris Schille who blazed to yet another new and still standing course record of 21:53!!!! In second place and close behind was teammate and Empire Runner oughtabe, **Hector Delgado** (22:11). Hector, a Windsor local who should have known all the shortcuts, apparently ran the whole course. He led at the halfway point only to be stymied on the

second loop as an abrupt uplift of continental plates put him at a disadvantage.

As already mentioned, the Empire Runners failed to field an open team, but those who showed up deserve great credit. **Ty Strange** clobbered Starkweather's club course record in a swift 23:42!!!! **Kenny Brown** followed Ty in 24:46; then **Eric Downing** in 26:01.

Claims Others Helped

Nearly 180 runners submitted entries to this year's Empire Open, a few never found their way to Foothill Park, and 158 actually finished the race. There were no serious casualties. Next year's improvements: water at mile 2 and a toilet plunger. Special thanks go to Cat Burgett, Bob Shor, John Anderson, Bob Merritt, Scott Ames and the Windsor high-schoolers, Alec Isabeau, Lisa Titus Isabeau, Darryl Beardall, Dan Preston, Rick Peters, Brendan Hutchinson, Dale Peterson, Lou Garcia, and the almost late great Mojo.

The secret to directing a successful race is to get others to do all the work.

JL

Empire Open Club Results

Women's Race

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Division/Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Shelley Lydon	30	Open/24	30:54.29
Deb Murray	35	Open/29	31:40.49
Laura Martin	51	Open/38	34:07.08
Lisa Anderson	67	Open/44	43:50.12
Lisa TitusIsabeau	38	Masters/7	31:43.98
Robin Stovall	46	Masters/11	33:00.05
Amy Gandy	64	Masters/18	39:55.46

Men's Masters Race

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Division/Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Stephen Starkweather	12	Masters/11	26:49.96
Bill Browne	23	Seniors/7	29:49.49
Bob Holland	28	Seniors/10	31:09.31
Les Brodie	29	Seniors/11	31:21.85
Phil Widener	32	Seniors/14	32:16.06
Don Sampson	33	Seniors/15	32:22.33
Eric Norvald	34	Seniors/16	33:10.46

Men's Open Race

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Division/Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Ty Strange	15	Open/15	23:42.72
Kenny Brown	21	Open/21	24:46.95
Eric Downing	27	Open/27	26:01.87

For complete results visit the Empire Runners Website.

President's Message

At next month's meeting (November) we will take nominations for Club officers for next year, and then vote at the December meeting. So I am in my last few months as Club president and looking back.

One of the first articles I wrote here talked about how the Club is run by a few high school coaches and some other individuals who have kept it on track for years; they just love running, and see the Club as way of supporting it in the community. They are not in it for their own glory, do not get discouraged if they don't get credit for something, and they never get tired of doing it.

It is easy to lose sight of that vision, and there were a few times when I almost blew it. But I had the sense to consult the group and they got me through some difficult situations.

There were three main milestones that occurred on my watch: 1) our website went public 2) we became an official non-profit organization, and 3) we organized a scholarship program. I take full credit, of course, although Ty Strange, Carl Jackson, and Bob Finlay may have had something to do with it.

There were other accomplishments: we successfully moved the Empire Open to a new venue at Foothill Park (thank you, Jerry Lyman); we gave Larry Meredith some relief by assuming the monthly task of getting the newsletter out (although he's still involved); and we had an Open team on the XC circuit for the first time in years (thank you Christian Wagner).

We tried to start a Slow Runners group, but had little success. We need one or two slow runner/walkers (10 minutes/mile or so) who can commit to being at workouts on a regular basis. That's how it's always worked. A core group who just about always shows up, and a much larger group who show up occasionally. If you're interested, start showing up at the Fleet Feet workout on Wednesdays at 5:15 PM, and we'll get something going (I'm always there).

I will be stepping down as president, but will definitely stay involved. I will be joining that group that just believes in running and likes to see it succeed. Empire Runners has enough of those kinds of individuals to keep it going (and me involved) for years to come.

--Dan Preston

Minutes from last meeting (9/28/00)

Attendance:

George Urdzik,	Terry McNeill
Phil Widener	Don Sampson
Lou Garcia	Steven Starkweather
Marline Peters	Rick Peters
Lars Andersen	Alec Isabeau
Dale Peterson	Bob Shor
Jerry Lyman	Bob Finlay
Daryl Beardall	Dan Preston
Rick Peterson	Paul Jensen

Reports of Races: Annadel Loop, Downtown Summer Mile, Viking Opener Alumni Race. Other races: Pacific Sun Cross Country Series and Sonoma Vintage Run. Look for the articles in the newsletter [October and November] for more information on these races.

Upcoming Empire Races: The Empire Open is [was] at Foothill this year. Shiloh Ridge Run is [was] October 22; the course has changes. McGuire's Breakfast Run is November 5. The Last 10 K and Final 2 Mile is in December.

Report on Scholarship committee: They have developed a good scholarship application. It will go out to the schools in January. There is still discussion about raising dues \$5.00 with the additional fee going directly to the scholarship fund.

Other Business: Harvest Fair has [had] a site to register on line.

Bob Finlay is in charge of the Grad Prix Points. If there are any discrepancies please call him so that they may be corrected.

Treasurer's report: Available money for expenses: \$10,700.25

--Liz Sinna and Lisa Anderson

McGuire's Breakfast Run
Hidden Valley School
8 AM, Sunday, November 5
3K & "something like 6 miles"
Bring Potluck to Share
(Run fast, and you may get coffee.)

Not For Sissies:

The Incredible Palisade Trail

Feeling adventurous and fit these days? Tired of the same old loop through Annadel every weekend? Then round up some willing partners and head over the hill to Calistoga for 11 miles of spectacular, rugged running along the Palisade Trail. (Con't)

The Palisade Trail, recently completed and officially opened by the State Parks Department, links the Table Rock Trail up on Mt. St. Helena to the historic Oat Hill Mine Road down in Calistoga. Folks have been bushwacking this route clandestinely for many years, but now the route is public and legal. But don't for a moment imagine that this is now a flat, paved, OSHA-approved highway: the course is not for the faint of heart, floppy of ankle or for those who intend to sue the state for encountering unruly and obtrusive rocks and poison oak bushes. This is not a Nerf Trail -- we are talking adventure here.

The route begins with three miles of single track and worn-out mining road to the rim of Table Rock, a vertigo-inducing sheer cliff of lava overlooking the upper Napa Valley. For the next four miles, the narrow path contours south along the base of the volcanic Palisade Rim, winding through gullies, over rock buttresses, underneath towering cliffs and through deep forest and open meadows. Absolutely awesome!

Around mile seven, the single track meets the Oat Hill Mine Road, a historic wagon road that was used in the 19th century to access silver mines in these wild mountains. The run follows the steep, rocky "road" down a ridge (along the way, notice the ruts worn into the rock from the ore wagons), abruptly ending at a nondescript gate at the intersection of the Silverado Trail and Highway 29, just a few blocks east of downtown Calistoga.

LOGISTICS: You and your friends will need two cars for the drive to Calistoga. Leave one vehicle at the end of the run and by all means remember to stash the key or take it with you on the run! Pile into the second car and drive up Highway 29 to the dirt parking lot at the top of the pass on Mt. St. Helena. The trail is well-marked with a State Park sign that reads Table Rock Trail. (FYI, if you head up the trail on the west side of the highway you can run 10 miles round-trip to the summit of St. Helena, another must-do run, but certainly far less adventurous than the Palisade Trail)

After the run, retrieve your car up on the mountain, return to Calistoga and grab some chow and java before heading home to clean your wounds, take a nap and plan your next running adventure.

Alec Isabeau



Familiar Story:

Vikings Cross Sea, Conquer Natives

Saturday, September 30

Iolani Invitational, Kuoloa Ranch, Oahu, Hawaii

Montgomery High School's varsity cross country teams, already establishing themselves as the best in school history, traveled to Hawaii for an invitational and, by all accounts, the trip was a great success.

The trip that was first imagined 2 years ago and entailed 5 months of fundraising finally took place. Fourteen runners, 3 coaches and 2 parents flew into Honolulu on Thursday, September 28 and the team quickly settled in near Waikiki Beach. Despite intermittent dark clouds and rain, a swim in the ocean was followed by a warm, afternoon run in Kapiolani Park to loosen up the muscles.

After a short, early morning run on Friday under beautiful blue skies, the team headed for Pearl Harbor where we faced a 2-hour wait to experience the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial program. A 20-minute film on the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor was followed by a short boat ride to the memorial building, placed directly above the battleship that rests on the bottom of the channel.

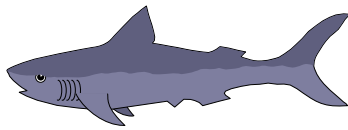
There on the marble wall we found the name R.E. Montgomery carved among the 1177 names of those who died on the ship in 1941. "Billy" Montgomery was the first Sonoma County resident to die in World War II. Santa Rosa now has Montgomery Village, Montgomery Drive and Montgomery High School dedicated to his memory.

A drive north through pineapple plantations took us to the small town of Haliewa for lunch. We stopped at a beach nearby and discovered that it is the setting for the filming of "Bay Watch Hawaii." Assistant coach Josh Dorris rented 8 boogie boards and we spent the afternoon battling the waves and sunning on the sand. Sea turtles drifted in the surf

nearby. Back in Waikiki that evening, the team feasted on pasta at a fine restaurant chosen by team captain Nick Millar. The trip was off to a great start.

We left the hotel at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning for the drive to the meet. As we crossed the mountain range we were presented with a stunning view of impossibly steep, green mountains that rose up just a few hundred feet from the beaches. Those of us who had never been to Hawaii could hardly believe our eyes.

It took nearly an hour to reach the meet course at Kualoa Ranch, the site of Jurassic Park filming on Oahu's east shore. The setting was spectacular with vertical cliffs on one side and ocean surf on the other. A walk of the 3-mile course revealed challenging hills, some mud and a few fresh cow pies. There were open fields and dark jungle areas. The most daunting challenge would be presented by the weather: 90 degrees with more than 90 percent humidity. Clouds occasionally blocked the intense rays of the sun but not while our teams were running. Would our Vikings be able to compete against Hawaii's best runners, who were accustomed to the steamy conditions?



The top 3 boys' teams and top 4 girls' teams from the 1999 Hawaii state meet were here, along with 3 other California teams. The girls faced Antioch High School, the team that took 3rd in California last fall. The boys were up against a very good Clovis West team from the Fresno area.

The girls' varsity race got underway at 11:30 a.m., and it took less than a half-mile before Sara Bei claimed the lead on the first climb. Antioch's girls were positioned very well, with 4 of the top 10 runners. The Viking girls were hanging back in the 2nd group of 10. The longest climb on the course takes place in the second mile, as the runners disappear onto a jungle trail. Sara Bei emerged from the darkness long before anyone else and went on to win by nearly a minute-and-a-half over the Antioch girl (Janie Nolan) who took 2nd to her at last year's California State meet.

Although Antioch held positions 2 and 3 and had another in the top 10, Montgomery girls had moved up dramatically on the big hill, putting their first 6 runners in the top 15 with little more than a mile to go. There they remained, with Sara Basher edging teammate Joy Terribilini for 7th place, then another pair, Elisa Pedersen and Kim Conley, taking 11th and 12th. Christy Sweaney, our number 6 runner, beat out Antioch's number 3 girl to take 14th. Amelia Thomas turned in a good race as well, placing 43rd. Montgomery scored a convincing team victory with 39 points to Antioch's 67. Host school Iolani finished 3rd with 101.

“Those of us who had never been to Hawaii could hardly believe our eyes.”

The boys' race began just after noon. The team from Clovis West got off to a fast start along with runners from Hawaii state champ Kamehameha. Those teams dominated the top 10 up the first hill. As the second loop began, Montgomery runners were moving

up, led by Regan Masi in 5th. Zac Fitch, Jon Fitch, Drew Fagent and Nick Millar were all in the top 15 before the pack reached the mile mark.

Clovis West's Kevin Davis, who led from the start, was the first to come down from the hill as the second loop ended, but Masi was moving into 2nd place just a few yards back and Zac Fitch had moved into the top 5 as well. Nick Millar and Jon Fitch were among the top 10 but Clovis West had 3 runners in that same group. With only one runner in the top 10, Kamehameha was no longer a threat to the team title.

As the runners headed up the hill on the final loop Masi was challenging Davis for the lead. Millar was just a few strides back and put on a surge to pass both leaders as the group hit the top of the hill. Zac Fitch pulled into 4th and Jon Fitch was 7th. Drew Fagent held 11th place as our final scoring runner.

Millar pulled away over the final half-mile to win his first cross country race, running a 17:14, just 11 seconds away from the course record. Masi and Zac Fitch paired up for 3rd and 4th while Jon Fitch moved into 6th at the finish and Fagent held 11th. Not far back were the 6th and 7th Vikings, Andrew Gallagher taking 22nd and Jason Fung finishing 26th. With 25 points, the team score was good enough to have beaten all 12 other teams

combined. As it was, the 28-point margin of victory over Clovis West perfectly matched the girls' effort.

The coaches' race provided further Viking success. Assistant coach Tori Meredith moved into the lead in the women's race with just a half-mile to go and held on for the win. Assistant coach Josh Dorris moved up steadily throughout and nearly caught the leader but ran out of room on the 2-mile course as he had to settle for 2nd place. Head coach Larry Meredith finished 5th. Although the coaches were blessed with a cloud cover and only had to cover 2 miles, the heat was oppressive enough to make them realize the heroic effort turned in by the high schoolers over 3 miles under a hot sun.

The host school provided the California teams with lunch and a social gathering at the beach following the meet. We later drove south to another white-sand beach and frolicked in the ocean until dusk. The team dinner was at Planet Hollywood in Waikiki, a perfect ending to a perfect day.

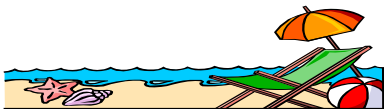
A few runners were able to meet for the 7 a.m. optional run on Sunday, an 8-mile loop of Diamond Head, an ancient volcanic crater. Then the entire team headed over to Hanauma Bay for a few hours of snorkeling. We swam with sea turtles and saw thousands of brightly colored fish. We burned in the sun.

Back in Waikiki that afternoon many of the team members continued their day at the ocean, learning to surf the mild waves there. Kim Conley and coaches Larry and Tori Meredith headed out on a bus to Diamond Head, where we arrived just in time to hike to the top before the park closed.

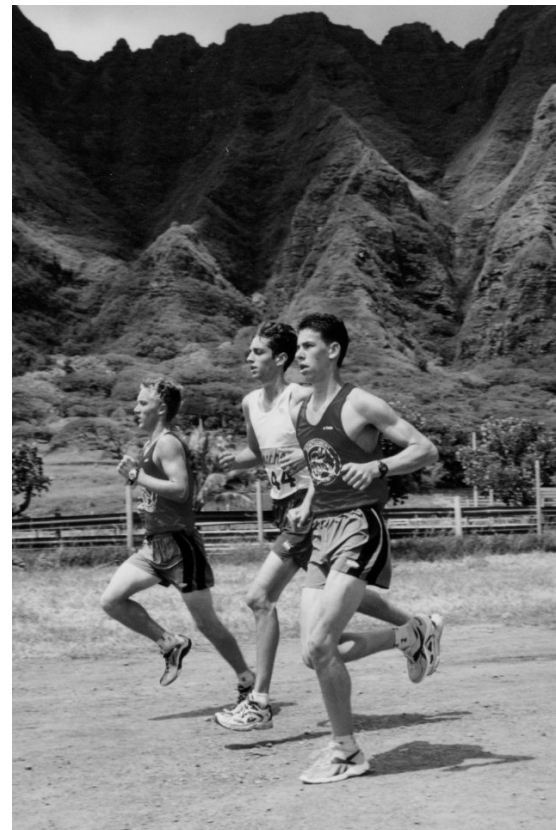
An exhausted group jogged over to Kapiolani Park at 6:30 a.m. Monday for our final Hawaiian workout. As the sun rose over Diamond Head we ran back and forth across the grass, working hard, preparing for the challenges that lay ahead.

Team members squeezed in a couple of more hours of beach time before heading for the airport. Although everyone wanted to stay and enjoy this beautiful patch of earth in the middle of the vast ocean, all were in agreement that this trip turned out to be as special as we imagined it would be.

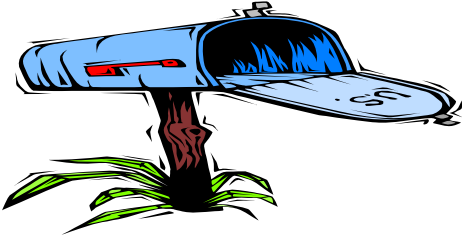
Larry Meredith



Christy Sweaney, Montgomery freshman, nails down a top 15 spot with a half-mile left in the Iolani Invitational. The Vikings' #6 runner here, Sweaney finished 14th.



Montgomery senior runners Drew Fagent, left, and Nick Millar, right, move past a Hawaii runner in the early stages of the Iolani Invitational. Millar came on late to win the race, while Fagent helped wrap up the team title as the Vikings' #5 runner, taking 11th place.



Dear Dan...

mark_young@agilent.com wrote:

- > Dan,
- > I thought you might enjoy this. I'm 56 and consider myself a "jogger" –not really a runner. The other day (Friday 13th) I was jogging in a crosswalk in Sebastopol and was "chased" by one of our esteemed patrolmen. After expressing my disbelief that he was going to cite me for not yielding to a vehicle – keep in mind, I was in a crosswalk -- he called in a backup and proceeded to write me a ticket. Picture this: Two patrol cars, two police officers and me, a sweaty old man in running shorts and a T-shirt getting a ticket for jogging in a crosswalk. To top things off, his entry on the ticket where it indicates "approximate speed", was 48mph! With this in mind, I'd like to know if you can direct me to someone affiliated with the U.S. Olympic team? I think I'm ready!
- > This is a true story and I have the ticket to prove it. I'm anxious to see what the judge has to say when I go to court. By the way, this same guy once gave a ticket to a kid on a tricycle! (Barney Fife?)
- > Please feel free to share this with any of your members who live in west county. My advice? Stay out of crosswalks and keep your speed below 35!
- > I've run every day for the past 26 years and I've never heard of anything quite this ridiculous -- have you?
- > Regards, Mark Young
- > Mayberry (Sebastopol), CA

The Presidio Challenge

The Empire Runners were well represented at the Presidio Challenge, the 5th race in the PA-USATF Cross-Country race series this year. The weather was ideal, overcast and not very windy. We had 5 runners for the men's open team, and 3 runners for the men's senior team. The course was 3.55 miles, and very hilly. As most of you know, who have run any of these races, they are extremely competitive and it is not unusual for even our best runners to finish somewhere in the middle of the pack.

In the Open race, **Christian Wagner** was the first empire runner in a fine time of 20:22, for 11th place overall. He was followed by **Ty Strange** at 20:43, **Eric Bohn** at 21:06, **Larry Merrideth** at 23:33, and **Dan Preston** at 23:43. I understand that the men's open team had to recruit Larry and Dan in order for them to have enough for a team. It was good to see both Larry and Dan there. The senior team offered to pay Dan more than what the open team paid him, to run on their team, but Dan would not accept the bribe (just kidding). Seriously, we would love to have Dan run for the senior team for the rest of the cross-country series.

In the Senior race, **Phil Widener** was the first Empire Runner in a time of 27:30, followed by **Don Sampson** at 28:01, and **Terry McNeill** at 29:56. What I really appreciated, and Don told me the same thing, was the vocal support and encouragement that we got during our race from some of the Empire Runners open team members. We did the same for them while they were running their race. After all, we are all members of a great running club, and I believe that both teams finished either 2nd or 3rd in their respective races. I don't have the official results for the team point standings, but I know that the senior men's team finished first at the Empire Open race and at the Davis Invitational. I believe we were 4th at the first race, and 2nd or 3rd at this race. So, we have an excellent chance of finishing 1st overall for the entire series, because you are allowed to throw out your worst 3 races and only count the best 6 races. I'm not sure how the open men's team is doing, but they are doing very well, considering that the level of competition in the open division is much more difficult. We have had great support on the senior team this year, from Don and Phil who have run all but one of the races, and also from **Gil Moreno, Les Brodie, Jerry Lyman, Bill Browne, Jon Hermstad, and Terry McNeill**. For the men's open team, I believe that **Christian Wagner, Ty Strange, Eric Bohn, Kenny Brown, and Eric Downing** have run most of the races. I'm sorry if I've left any names out for the men's open team, but believe me we appreciate everyone's support, even if they've only run in one of the races. There are still 4 more to go, so let's go Empire Runners!! We need your support in the races.

Phil Widener

Equinox Marathon

- by Eric Walker

Fairbanks, Alaska - The authors of the "Ultimate Guide to Marathons" consider the Equinox Marathon the fourth most challenging in North America. In the description you see words like "excruciating" and "unpleasant", phrases like "if you can lift your head from your knees" and "(the course) practically falls off a cliff" to describe the event. The course elevation map looks scarily similar to the NASDAQ trend line over the past 18 months. The race is held at a latitude where snow and cold can happen any time, even in summer. Add to all this the fact that the race is 80% cross country and, well, being an ex-miler and more recent road hack, this sounded like the ideal race for me! It would be the perfect way to trash my legs till Christmas and avoid our own excruciating local cross-country series. So, as part of a 10 day Alaskan vacation with my girlfriend, Sheila, I decided to check out the Equinox for myself.

With the review that the marathon book gave, I figured some due diligence before the race was in order. I showed up at the starting line an Equinox rookie, but I was not going to let the thing surprise me, I hoped. I studied up on the race and found that it had been run every year since 1963, except 1992 when it was "officially" canceled because of 2 feet of snow on the course (yes, a few crazy Alaskans still ran that year). The men's course record is "just" 2:41:30 and no one from outside Alaska had ever broken three hours. With that in mind as I started working toward the September 16th race date, I decided that my goal was to crack three hours and, secondarily, to steal a darkhorse win.

We arrived in Fairbanks the Thursday prior to the Saturday race, which afforded me the opportunity to run a little of the course and drive quite a bit of it. Sheila lived in Fairbanks for eight years, and ran the race herself in 1995, so her knowledge of the area was very helpful. The inspection of the course turned up a fair amount of mud (Fairbanks had suffered a very wet Summer), lots of tree roots camouflaged by soft, freshly fallen aspen leaves, infinite twists, turns and rolls and one monster hill at the nine mile mark. Despite the fact that the course was already marked for the race,

during my Thursday run I missed a turn in the trees. Lost in the first mile - that can't be good. At any rate, seeing the course in advance gave me a good idea of what to expect. All of a sudden, three hours was looking like a pretty aggressive goal.

Race day came and, thankfully, it was not snowing. It was 31 degrees, crystal clear and breezy. (Yes! Indian Summer had arrived!) Actually, the cold was a blessing. The muddy parts of the course were frozen, making for a pretty fast surface. The race started with the boom of a Howitzer and in the very first minute headed 150 feet or so up an old ski hill on the University of Alaska campus. For the first few miles I kept close contact with the leader, defending champion and two-time winner Kevin Brinegar, mostly so I would not get lost again in those trees. A look at the two mile split showed 12:20. Too fast. He is going for the record, I thought. Time to run my own race.

For the first nine miles the race winds and rolls through the trees and rural Fairbanks countryside. There were several noticeable rises on this portion, a couple as much as 300 feet, but running 6:20's and 6:30's made them manageable. By nine miles I had fallen behind the leader by about a minute and the 1,800 foot climb up Ester Dome loomed directly ahead. Ester Dome is what makes this race the tough race that it is. It's a killer three and a half mile climb that does not let-up, except for one small section just before you reach the last mile to the summit. A good Sonoma County proxy for the hill would be Bennett Peak, from the very bottom to the very top, except in less miles. The climb starts on a dirt road and ducks in and out of dense trees on single-track trails and old roadbeds. I gave up even more time here where an ill-advised glance at the watch showed that I had just recorded a nine-minute 10th mile. Ouch. The halfway mark was past the summit and showed 1:31:33, about where I figured I would be if everything were going well.

From the top of the Dome, legs overflowing with lactic acid, the race heads for a section appropriately called the out-and-back. This five and a half mile roller coaster takes you from the top of the Dome down 400 feet to the 15 mile mark, and then mercilessly back up again to the top. This was by far the most painful part for me. By the time I saw the summit for the second time I was more than three minutes down to the leader. From there the

race is "fun". You do indeed fall off a cliff at the seventeen-mile mark, dropping what I would guess to be about 400 feet in less than half a mile in a section called "the chute". To avoid slipping on the frozen surface I scooted ungracefully down this part about three inches at a time. The left turn back into the trees and less steep terrain seemed to take forever to arrive.

It was back in the trees after the chute where I had decided that I was going to make my move, if I had one left to make. This part of the course was really nice; dense trees, downhill and absolutely silent except for my breathing. I ran a few 6:10's heading to the 20-mile mark and hit a paved road portion of the course feeling pretty decent overall. The leader was nowhere to be seen, and third place was more than 10 minutes back, so I just kept on clicking off low 6-minute miles. At 21.5 miles the race turned back onto the dirt for a mile and half under some power lines and started back uphill a little. Memories of the Dome were far too fresh to be running uphill at this point in the race. Near the end of this section though, I saw a speck in dark clothing just heading back to the road for the final push. Am I catching the leader I thought? I was not sure. It could have been anyone just out walking for all I knew. By the time I hit the same road though, I could see him about a half mile ahead and he was slowing. I dug down and tried to pick it up but the tank was about empty. By about 25 miles he was less than a minute ahead, as his tank was apparently on fumes as well. The race punches you in the quads just past mile 25 where it heads up a 150 foot hill, through the trees, before approaching the finish. When I popped out I could clearly see the leader and he was looking back as though we might have a kick to the finish. Unfortunately for me, there was not enough course left as he collapsed on the finish line grass just 30 seconds before I crossed the line in 2:57:22. I was very satisfied with the time, as only sixteen men have run faster. I asked the course record holder, who was out monitoring the race in his minivan, how in the world he ran 2:41 and he replied jokingly that he had cheated.

So, the darkhorse victory was not to be this year. Still, there were some curious stares as the people who watch and support the runners wondered who this was challenging the two-time champ. I liked the role of unknown runner, but do

dislike losing. When the newspaper reporter asked if I had any thoughts of winning, I responded honestly, that Brinegar was too tough that day. Compliments to the race director and crew who had every mile accurately marked with a metal pole and marker and who produced a truly amazing book of comprehensive results in time for the six o'clock awards potluck. On Sunday morning, in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner, there was an awesome front-page photo of me running up the Dome with the moon setting over my shoulder. A great finish to an enjoyable weekend in Fairbanks.

And yes, the parts of Alaska that we visited over the next seven days were spectacular!



Santa Rosa High School Cross-Country

Panthers in Victoria

Doug Courtemarche

Our team has been to Alabama, Ohio, Mt. SAC, Fresno, and Windsor in past years. Each year I like to travel away from home for a special trip. One of the things I like to do is to stay with host families. This year we were fortunate enough to be hosted by families from Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Our cross-country team met at our regular rendezvous, the Ridgeway Swim Center, at 4 AM on a Thursday. We arrived at San Francisco International Airport at 5:30 AM. The 16 of us with our luggage were dropped off by hearty parent drivers, one of whom parked the Dougiemobile in long-term parking.

We got in the departing Alaskan Airline flight line and made it to the check-in counter only to be notified that our flight was canceled. After some creative negotiations we got a flight to Portland, Oregon, and from there a connecting flight to Seattle. We arrived too late in Seattle to get to our original connection at Port Angeles to cross over to Victoria. So, instead, we headed for

Vancouver to try to make the every-two-hour ferry trip. We did make it, even after going through Canadian customs, which we were well prepared for. I had all of our birth certificates and notarized permission signatures. The Canadians just waved us through after some simple questions. We were so surprised. Earlier we had sung, not "Oh Canada," but "We are going to Canada." Perhaps that was our customs secret.

Once again we got lucky. Ours were the last of the vehicles to board the ferry. (These ferries don't look like ferries at all, but like big ships--prompting all of our athletes to perform dramatic Titanic scenes.)

The ferry took us to Sidney by the Sea in Schwartz Bay. From there we drove the 30 miles to Victoria, getting semi-lost, and finally arrived at Lambrick Park Secondary School with their beacon sign welcoming Santa Rosa High. At the school library we met our host parents. Rules and itinerary were established. The Panther athletes, all 14 of them, were released to their host families. Carrie Joseph and I went off to Coach Tom Turnbull's domicile. There we shared stories and an outstanding Victorian Ale. We also presented our hosts with Sonoma County wine, chocolate, pictures, and a calendar of all that we take for granted. I was tired and that night slept nearly dream-free. The dreams I did have were all of Canada. I awakened completely refreshed.

On Friday Carrie and I went to Lambrick Park Secondary School where we met our Panther students after 1st period. At that time they seemed to have a pretty good idea of the next class. That was going to Mr. Turnbull's class, and he asked some simple Canadian questions which all of our kids flunked. We have some work to do there.

Embarrassed, Carrie and I took our athletes to the British Columbian Provincial Museum to get some education. (Interesting how "Columbian" and Columbus, himself, pervades much of what we do and share.) Anyway, the museum was all about the circus. Our girls became painted performers and our guys remained the same. The boys did make an attempt to rent motorized bicycles, which was not successful. True to say, those Panthers did learn something about British Columbia. From the museum we witnessed the IMAX Cirque de Soleil.

It was drizzling ever-so-lightly when we emerged for our free time.

This was Friday. We all had a shopping agenda. Those Panthers are pretty good shoppers. The exchange rate was almost detrimental in that we knew how great the bargains were and had to take every advantage. We spent a lot of money, both Canadian and American.

We had made a team decision to meet at the Thai restaurant on Fort Street at 5:00PM. So after 1 and ½ hours of free time our team gathered for a pre-race meal of exotic Southeast Asian food. Overall it was pretty good, although Becka Parker's noodles were covered in way too much peanut sauce and not so good according to her. The rest of us had nothing but raves for this restaurant. Carrie and I took our charges back to Lambrick Park School to have them picked up by their parents.

Our hosts loved the Sonoma County wine. Carrie and I prepared for the big race the next day. As for our runners, we had no idea what to expect.

Saturday began clear and warm, according to Turnbull, just an ordinary day in Victoria. Carrie, Turnbull, and I struck out for Beacon Hill Park, the site of the races. The girls would run 4K, while the boys went a new distance, 6K. Our senior boys thought that would be great, while Empire Runner Anna Shaver felt cheated because she wanted to do the 6K also. Well, after the races Anna still had the same feeling. She finished second, losing to the phenom girl from Lambrick Park, Adrienne Attorp.

(To be continued...Coming next month, the exciting conclusion to "Panthers in Victoria")

Discounts to Club Members

The following businesses offer discounts on their products and services to Empire Runners Club members. Your current newsletter is proof of membership. Please present it when requesting the club discount.

Real Estate: Michael Falk, a longtime Empire Runner, will offer a discount on real estate services from \$300 to \$1000, depending on the amount of sale, to Club members or to friends and family members who are referred to him. Michael represents Creative Property Services. 832 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. m+falk@hotmail.com Bus: 578-5400. Res: 887-9305

Running Shoes and Apparel: Santa Rosa Fleet Feet owners Ron Jacobs and Rhonda Roman offer a 10% discount to Empire Runners. The store is located at 643 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. 569-1494.

Massage: Stephen Starkweather, C.M.T., offers 10% off work to Empire Runners. Swedish and Shiatsu. In-call or out-call. 542-9739.

Legal: Linda Schaap of Prentice and Schaap, Personal Injury/Employment Law, offers the 10% discount to Empire Runners. 900 Mendocino Ave. 578-3341. Fax: 578-3325.

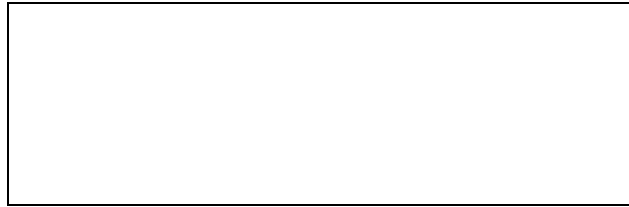
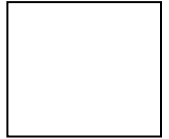
November 2000

Training Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
8:30a Parkfield Drive at Summerfield Drive training run	7:00p 4038 Tourmaline: training run	5:30p SRJC Track: 10 - 16 x 300, walk 50, jog 50	5:15p Fleet Feet Store 4th St.,SR training run	4:30p Howarth Park trail run Note EARLY start		Race: PA XC Tamalpa Challenge Vallejo Mare Island 10K&5K
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Grand Prix Race: McGuire's Breakfast Run 8:30am Channel Drive: training run	7:00p 4038 Tourmaline: training run	4:30p Note EARLY start SRJC Track: 8 - 12 x 400, walk 50, jog 150	5:15p Fleet Feet Store 4th St.,SR training run	Newsletter Deadline 5:30p Howarth Park: trail Run		Race: Yountville Veteran's 10K
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
PA Race: Clarksburg 30K 8:30 Howarth Park: training run	7:00P 4038 Tourmaline: training run	4:30P SRJC Track: Funeral funnel - 800 to 200 to 800 by 100s	5:15p Fleet Feet Store 4th St.,SR training run	4:30p Howarth Park trail Run 6:30p Club Meeting, MV RT Pizza		Race: PA XC Championshi ps GG Park
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:30a Parktrail Dr at Summerfield Dr: training run	7:00P 4038 Tourmaline: training run	4:30P SRJC Track: 12 - 16 x 300, walk 50, jog 50	5:15p Fleet Feet Store 4th St.,SR training run	4:30p Howarth Park trail Run		
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
8:30a Channel Drive: training run	7:00p 4038 Tourmaline : training run	4:30p SRJC Track: Pyramid - 400, 800, 1200, mile, 1200, 800, 400	5:15p Fleet Feet Store4th St.,SR training run	4:30p Howarth Park: trail Run		

Empire Runners Club

3648 Evergreen Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95405



North Bay Race Schedule

- **November 23, Sacramento: Run to Feed the Hungry 10K.** Info: www.jps.net/runinfo/feedhung.htm, (916) 719-4400.
- **November 25, Quadruple Dipsea, 28.4m.** Info: www.run100s.com/qd.htm, (415) 759-2690.
- **November 26, SF: Run to the Far Side 5K & 10K.** Info: www.rhodyco.com/farside00.html, (415)759-2690
- **December 3: Folsom: Cal. International Marathon.** Info: www.runcim.org, (916) 983-4622.
- **December 10: SF: Christmas Relays 4X4.6m, Lake Merced,** Info: (510) 262-8736.
- **December 16: The Last 10K and Final 2 Mile,** Howarth Park, www.empirerunners.org, Info: John Anderson, 527-0673
- **December 17: Christmas Classic 5K and Miracle Mile.** SF GGPark, JFK Drive. Info: (650)589-0837 www.peopleevents.org/Christmas_Classic_2000.html
- **December 25: Christmas Blind Date Relay, 2 X 2m.** SF GGPark, Stowe Lk Boathouse. Info: (415)978-0837 www.dserunners.com/Schedule2000.html
- **January 1, 2001: Resolution Run 5K,** Montgomery High School

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