

Upon Further Review

by John Farrow

Last month we had perhaps the most excitement this club has had since a runner in one of the early Dirty Dozen races up near the present-day La Cueva High School lost his shorts and inadvertently mooned an elderly retiree on her balcony. She promptly fainted but refused to press charges, stating that was the biggest charge she had felt since the Truman administration.

Anyway, the statement on these pages that the New Mexico Marathon was not being listed on the Race Calendar because the club had decided not to support any races sponsored by Charlie Otero as long as he continued to schedule them in conflict with established races provoked much excavation of musty old board minutes and racking of mile-addled brains as to what in the world all the fuss was about. In the end, however, the minutes do not bear out that the club has taken any such position formally. Suffice it to say that the President has requested that in the future, the *ARR News* Race Calendar include all local races. As long as I know of them, they will be included.

We had a new state marathon record, at least for a few hours, at the recently- concluded Duke City Marathon. Venezuelan Barner Colmenares crossed the finish line in 2:19:40, apparently breaking the old record of 2:20:19 set by Pablo Vigil in the 1985 Duke City. This year's event offered \$ 1,000 to the winner and another \$2,000 for setting a new state record.

Hold the phone, said second place Teddy Mitchell of Alamosa, Colorado. That guy cheated! His agent, Shawn Hellebuyck, filed an official protest that was joined by third place finisher Brantley Lutz claiming that Colmenares had received illegal assistance from his brother who had followed him on the course riding a bicycle. His brother sprayed him with water to help him cool off on the hot day, gave him extra fluids that were not available to other runners and also paced him throughout the race. In races sanctioned by US Track & Field, the rules state that runners may receive fluids only at designated areas along the course and they are not allowed outside help in pacing themselves.

Mitchell warned him about the illegal

assistance early in the race and Colmenares replied with a stream of expletives. Colmenares and his brother were also warned in English and Spanish by Ken Wilson, a former DCM winner leading the field on a bicycle, and by a second, Spanish-speaking pacer, but to no avail.

Initially, race director Tico Navarro was inclined to allow the record to stand. Even Hellebuyek wanted a compromise that would allow Colmenares to keep the record and the prize money. To Navarro, however, the evidence proved to be overwhelming and he would have none of it. "I had no choice. Either we're a serious race or we're not." Bravo!

On a related, slower, note, another review of the DCM results cost your's truly a medal. Not that I was really surprised. The real surprise was in seeing my name third in my age group with a personal worst 5k time more than a minute and a half slower than last year. Since the summer, I have been fighting a very persistent Achilles strain and had run a total of maybe 25 miles in the past three months, including zero miles in August and no track workouts since I don't know when.

Anyway, I was just honestly thrilled to finish the race with no pain. I didn't run with anyone, I didn't try to stay with anyone nor did I even have a goal in mind for the race other than trying not to hurt myself any more. And this I did and felt good about it.

Seeing my name near the top of my age group, however, was literally a shock. I had no idea that my age group had deteriorated so far so fast as to allow a gimpy-legged semi-crip to sneak into the top three. And that proved to be not quite the case. The call from the DCM came Monday afternoon that they had found another finisher's tag ahead of mine for a runner my age with no name on it and that was why his name hadn't appeared in the paper. *C'est la vie*. But that would have been the most undeserved medal yet. □

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