

Convention Wrapup

Old Dues Structure, New Board
Members

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USATF CEO Craig Masback Delivers
Keynote

The 46th annual convention of the Road Runners Club of America wrapped up three days of business, seminars and running in Arlington, Virginia, concluding with the Cherry Blossom 10-mile run on April 6, 2003. The convention was hosted by the Montgomery County Road Runners Club of Silver Spring, Maryland.

By the end of Friday's business meeting, which saw considerable debate over a Bylaw proposal that would change the way RRCA member clubs were assessed dues as well as two contested seats on the board of directors, President Freddi Carlip was able to say: "There was a lot of hot disagreement at this year's Convention, but I believe it was much more civil and productive and cohesive than last year. I like the energy. I like the way so many people feel so positive about the RRCA. It renews my commitment and the commitment of everyone who works with us."

During the business session, Secretary-Treasurer Tom Fort reported on the impact of the billing policy of charging clubs for each family member: 145 clubs left the RRCA at a cost of some \$246,000 in revenue. But for this policy, advocated by the executive director in spite of a

Legal Committee opinion that such a move would be in violation of the Bylaws, the RRCA would have had a cash surplus for the year. As such, the office staff has been reduced to two people and *footnotes*, the quarterly magazine of the RRCA and which has the second-highest subscription rate of any running periodical, has ceased publication, at least temporarily.

Most of the convention's fireworks occurred during debate over a proposal that would have made the new dues structure (charging clubs for each family member) a part of RRCA's bylaws. This came despite a lengthy analysis by David Williams, chair of the Legal Committee, that the proposed amendment took aim at the wrong Bylaw section and was thus meaningless.

Ultimately, the amendment was itself amended to state that beginning with the 2004 dues, clubs would be billed for families and not for individuals, in effect returning dues billing to pre-2003 terms. As amended, the amendment was adopted.

Following the election of five new members of the Board of Directors (see separate article on page 1, column 1), whose terms will begin May 1st, the RRCA board will have had seven new members within the last six months as Joe Seeley and Mick Slonaker were recently appointed by President Carlip to fill the terms of two board members who resigned due to lack of adequate time to devote to the many

issues.

The annual awards banquet featured keynote speaker Craig Masback, CEO of USA Track & Field, who encouraged RRCA members to think positively about the future of their organization and its roll in the American fitness movement.

Mixing humor into his address, he recalled only a few years back when he took over a virtually bankrupt USATF. "No one even knew where the bank accounts were," he said. "Of course, that didn't make much difference, since there wasn't any money in the accounts."

He also had to deal with sponsors ignorant of both USATF and the sport of distance running. One wanted to know when his organization's sport became part of the Olympic Games. Masback replied, "775 B.C."

He closed with a good news/bad news story concerning the many running-related groups such as USATF, RRCA, AARC, Running USA, RRIC, ARA, and the National Distance Running Hall of Fame. "You could look at all this as a tribute to the health of distance running," he said. "Or you could look at it and see a tremendous duplication of administrative effort. The challenge ahead is to see how we can eliminate the duplication and focus our collective vision on the growth of the sport."

The convention ended with the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10-mile run along Washington's Tidal

Basin with the cherry trees in full bloom. The race was won by Kenyan John Korir in a time of 46:56. David Spiller was the top American in 10th place. Olga Romanova of Russia was the top woman with a time of 53:43, with Sylvia Mosqueda the top American in 3rd place, only 15 seconds behind the winner. □

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