

RRCA Turns a Corner

by John Farrow

The RRCA finished 2003 with net income for the year of \$163,233. While programs remain curtailed as the financial health of the organization improves, this fact alone bodes well for the future of the organization.

The past year represented a watershed for the RRCA. Following a disastrous (some say illegal) dues policy imposed on clubs in late 2002, several dozen of the largest RRCA member clubs failed to renew their membership and formed a rival organization, the American Association of Running Clubs.

At the 2003 annual convention of the RRCA, five new members of the board of directors were elected. These new faces helped re-orient the direction of the organization and resulted in the contract of the executive director being terminated, expenses being minimized and overtures being made to reunite those clubs in AARC with the RRCA.

In late 2003, the presidents of the two organizations, Freddi Carlip of the RRCA and Jeff Darman of the AARC, executed a Memorandum of Understanding whose stated purpose and intent was “to foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation between the RRCA and the AARC” This document set forth the interest of both in combining organizations to best serve the grass roots needs of distance runners and running clubs and pledged establish a Task Force to make recommendations towards this end.

The Joint AARC/RRCA Task Force issued its

report in mid-January 2004. That report included 15 specific requirements and recommendations that must be met by both organizations in order to successfully conclude such a merger, including budgetary clarity and the streamlining

of the RRCA Bylaws to ensure conformity with current practices and applicable laws. The Task Force Report was unanimously approved by the RRCA board of directors on January 31, 2004.

The RRCA has also established an Executive Director Search Committee jointly with the AARC. Following a review of 13 applicants and interviews with the four most promising candidates, an offer was extended to Becky Lambros to be the third Executive Director of the RRCA. While no agreement has yet been reached as she is currently involved with the Cherry Blossom 10-Miler in Washington, it is hoped that she will shortly be on board in time for this year’s annual convention.

Additionally, talks are underway with a publisher to restart *Footnotes*, the quarterly news magazine of the RRCA, with a pre-convention issue this Spring. Under the terms being discussed, the RRCA will retain editorial control with all costs of publication and mailing being borne by the publisher in return for a significant share of the advertising revenue. This will result in a significant savings to the RRCA, as *Footnotes* has long been a drain on the organization’s budget.

Finally, the 2004 annual convention of the RRCA will be held at the Horizon Casino Report on the shores of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, May 14-16 and hosted jointly by the Sagebrush Stompers and the Tahoe Mountain Milers. Seminars include “Four-Legged Runners’ Health,” “Successful Children’s

Running Programs,” “Running with Limiting Diseases,” “When Is It Too Young/Too Far?” “Injury Prevention” and “The Mystique of the Western States 100.”

Other programs include a return of the ever-popular Bart Yasso of *Runner's World*, the Ugliest Runner's Feet Contest and a Meet the Board reception hosted in the Elvis Suite of the Casino, where Elvis Presley stayed while performing at the Resort in the 1970s. Of course, there will also be lots of running around scenic Lake Tahoe with a race on the last day of the convention to raise money for the restoration of the 1968 Olympic Training Center track located nearby.

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