



N. FLORIDA NEWS
(Some Headlines From The Road)
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MICHAEL'S MOMENT: THAT'S NOT RUNNER'S HIGH, THAT'S JET LAG... –

Hello, North Florida – I'm typing this while in the Atlanta airport...figured I'd try to get some of my thoughts down while they're still fresh.

First of all, any RRCA convention, regardless of the venue, is an unforgettable experience. This one in San Francisco was my fourth; the third as your representative. As a rep it's like a family reunion; tightening relationships with other state reps, the regional directors & officers...persons we “see” more often via e-mail. The individual club reps are great, too, & it's great to see the look on the faces of the first-time attendees from the district when they get to see what the national organization has to offer; the exact same look I know I had in New Orleans five years ago. Last year it was Donna Hiatt from Daytona Beachcombers, this year it was **Michelle Bracken** from **Orlando Runners**. After chatting with Michelle I'm certain she's going to go back to Orlando with at least one good idea for her club.

State reps are required – or strongly encouraged – to attend the convention so we can know what the major strategy for RRCA will be in the coming years. We also get to talk about insurance, championships, club management...the day-to-day nuts-and-bolts of our “job.” Since all state reps are volunteers, it's a challenge to cover the travel, lodging & incidental expenses which come with an event of this kind. Fortunately, the State Representative Silent Auction during the convention helps defray *some* of the expense, & **Al Becken** (RRCA's first Outstanding State Rep) provides a great deal of financial support for rep travel expenses, & for the State Rep program as a whole, each year. (For me, even before the first meeting, it's a tradition to personally see & thank Al.) Every state rep, down to the newest attendee, is grateful to Al. That's another reason we show up for the seminar, outside of the chance to compare practices, suggest improvements & get up to speed with what's on the horizon in the next year & a little farther out.

Some of the big things which might interest you:

Print Media. For those of you who remember the old print version of Footnotes & wish for a return to those thrilling (expensive!) days of yesteryear, I have some bad news: Footnotes isn't coming back in print form to every member family's doorstep. The good news is RRCA is partnering with **The Running Network** to develop a quarterly (at first) print magazine, focused on RRCA clubs, events, & personalities, called *Club Running*. Every club member family will see a copy hit their doorstep, so you'll

need to keep the membership rolls current – this is value-added for every club, which makes us excited.

Championships. This year the Southern Region representatives had the opportunity to show our appreciation to outgoing Southern Region director **Ken Bendy**. We had a brief “roast” during the afternoon training session, just prior to the regional breakout. Ken was given many meaningful & fitting gifts from all of the reps, but these were only a drop in the bucket when compared to the gratitude each of us have for Ken's insight, counsel & tireless service to the RRCA. Fortunately for us, Ken is not completely retiring; Executive Director **Jean Knaack** has tapped him to re-vamp the RRCA Championship program. Ken looks forward to hearing your suggestions on how to make a good program even better.

Outreach. Kids Run The Nation has received a polishing-up, with newly-developed materials: *FUNDamentals of Youth Running*, an eight-week lesson guide, & a guide for youths who wish to start running on their own. RRCA members at all levels have worked together to develop safety & etiquette guidelines for group runs, been profiled in national media articles on road rage & runners, and developed educational brochures to emphasize courteous behavior on the road, trail, track, & race day. The fourth annual Run@Work was also announced, with an updated, unique logo for posters & advertising materials.

If you truly want to know a city, even your own, you have to do it on foot. The convention-goers were treated to many opportunities to experience San Francisco “shank's mare,” with daily run excursions led by the San Francisco Road Runners Club (SFRRC). We had the choice of flat or hilly runs, on paths, sidewalks & trails, in a variety of distances & paces. If there wasn't a group at a pace or distance you could handle, it was probably because you were still asleep. Mother Nature showed up in San Francisco & provided her early spring finest for the convention. For most of the running nation the conditions were fairly comfortable; for Southerners & Floridians it was shorts & long-sleeved top (short-sleeve T-shirt & arm warmer, in my case) weather. The reps also received history lessons on San Francisco running & architecture, already well-established when the RRCA was a fledgling organization, during the many social events which dotted the schedule.

The seminar sessions were too numerous to count & ranged from the seemingly simple topics of nutrition & injury prevention to cutting edge ones like “greening” a running event. If you wanted to learn about starting a training program, it was here. If you wanted to learn how to measure a course, it was here. If you needed coaching education – yes, it was here. We also heard from running luminaries, past (**Frank Shorter**) & present (**Dean Karnazes, Marshall Ulrich**), honored the present & future of American running (**Ryan Hall, Kara Goucher, Jordan Hasay, the 2009 Road Scholar** class) & lauded the accomplishments of RRCA volunteers who lead clubs, develop & administer programs, & tell the stories through print & electronic formats. Just in case you missed my e-mail the other month, **Bill Pennington (Amelia Island Runners)** was honored as the RRCA Club Writer of the Year.

Ah, now to the future. While at the convention, I constantly heard “Oh, so you're doing next years' convention.” At first I told them the **Lakeland Runners** were a South Florida club, which they are. But really, 2010 isn't just Lakeland's convention, or South Florida's, or Don Nelson's, but it's “FLORIDA'S CONVENTION.”

Lakeland, 2010 – it's right in our backyard. It's on the horizon, & getting closer as I write. To steal from Capt'n Fun (a.k.a. **Glenn Windham**), it's our party, & we're going to make certain the other 900-plus club friends who aren't in Florida have the best experience ever. I shook my head after each convention event, from the rep social on Thursday evening until the last moments of the awards banquet on Saturday night, wondering how the Lakeland committee was going to top the efforts of **George Rehmet**, **Len Goldman**, the **Lake Merritt Joggers and Striders**, the **San Francisco Road Runners Club**, the **Dolphin South End Runners**, the **Pamakid Runners**, & the myriad of individuals who made our (nearly) six days in San Francisco so unforgettable.

In closing, I want to thank **Lynn Gray** from **Take...The First Step**, **Dave Bokros** from **Florida Striders**, **Doug Tillett** from **JTC Running**, Bill Pennington from **Amelia Island Runners**, & Michelle Brackett from Orlando Runners (if there were other reps from N. FL, forgive me for overlooking you!) for taking time out from their lives to represent North Florida. Further thanks goes out to my wife, **Suzanne Bowen**, for adjusting her work/travel plans to spend six days working out of a hotel room, hearing me say “*we're late for...*” way too many times (I promise, the wetsuit I bought at the Sports Basement dinner is the last major purchase, until the next major purchase...). Ken Bendy deserves a big “thank you” for putting up with me since he moved up the RRCA food chain; happy “retirement,” my friend.

ONE LAST THING:

If this is the first time you have received this newsletter (or the first time in a long time) it's because I've gone into the World Wide Web & found you. I want to keep the lines of communication open from the national office in VA/DC to your clubs. Sometimes the key workers in the trenches; the ones working the websites, writing the newsletters, announcing the upcoming events at the club runs...need to know as much as the movers & shakers on the board of directors. Please pass any information about upcoming events to me, care of the contact information above...and I'll try to get it out to everyone in (weekly) e-mail or bi-monthly print form...unless you'd rather not have people show up.

Have a safe, mileage-filled day!