

ERC NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2010

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'Tis Better to Give

While not exactly spending money like a drunken sailor, the Edmond Running Club board did approve a few donations at our last meeting. The Edmond Santa Fe Girls' Cross-country Team will receive \$1,000; the boys' team will get \$750. Both of these programs support the Frigid Five. The girls have been my timers and course monitors for several years. Tim Taft and Marc Whitt presented the Edmond North program with \$1,000 to split between the cross-country teams earlier this month. Edmond Memorial was also given the task of finding a needy high school cross-country team within the state for a \$500 donation. These gifts have an even greater significance this year. With the recent school budget cuts, cross-country is often not a priority. More on this story next time. . .

Jerry Faulkner was also at the meeting to accept \$1,600. He and his wife will travel to Chicago for his attempt at qualifying for the Olympic trials. He needs a 2:18. Good luck, Jerry!

Suffering³

ERC is again staffing a relief station at the Redman Triathlon on September 25. Our station is located on the east side of Stars and Stripes baseball field parking lot. This year, Cindy Hunter and Tim Taft are the volunteer captains. Cindy is scheduling volunteers online via the ERC website. We are looking okay for the morning but could use some help afterwards . . . especially after dark. There are thirty free shirts for those signing up early. Last year, the shirts were orange and ugly, so let's hope for something better this year. I've worked all the shifts over the years, but I prefer the evening and late shifts because there is a lot more stuff to eat and drink. (I am not completely to blame for the Vanilla Wafer shortage after 10:00 P.M. last year.) The late finishers are certainly appreciative of our efforts, and volunteering for the Redman is a great way to get involved in the club and meet the members. You can also call Cindy at 923-2392 or email at soonercindy@sbcglobal.net. Clyde and Dana and many other club members have done a lot of work in previous years to make our reputation as the best aide station on the lake.

Free Timed Runs

Evidently, Don Garrett is testing out his new timing equipment and is doing some free, timed runs on Saturdays at Stars and Stripes. These runs are legit, and club members can count the points for our running awards program. Contact Dana Campbell at 245-9618 for information on these runs.

You Have the Right to Remain Silent

I don't brag about things that aren't worth a good word or two: Monday night's running club program was outstanding. Through his connections at the Edmond P.D., Marc delivered one Brian Weathers, a runner and tri-athlete, who just happens to work for Edmond's finest. Brian discussed the rules of running in the city and then talked about several related topics. The bottom line is that as long as we are actually running, the streets are ours. Brian is an early morning runner who admittedly runs right down the middle of the street . . . just like most of

us do. Runners do not have to run on the sidewalks at anytime, nor do we have to run facing traffic. However, he stressed common sense and prudence in all aspects of running. Topics and questions covered several areas—including biking and a guy arrested at Mitch Park while dressed up like a maintenance man and carrying a bowie knife, duct tape, rope, and . . . Oh, you probably aren't interested in this story, but it was pretty juicy stuff for those of us in attendance. Brian was also thrilled that his son just qualified for the National Iron Kids/Iron Man competition. One final note: Brian mentioned a book, *The Gift of Fear*, about listening to your intuition about scary people. He also mentioned the GET system: groin, eyes, and throat—places for women to attack if needed. He encouraged us to report suspicious characters that we spot during runs. Calling 911 is not necessary, however. Just call the switchboard.

Don't Be Cheap

Bill Morris mentioned that of the 340 of us who claim membership in the Edmond Running Club only 40 members are current on the \$16 annual dues. By the way, dues were due in January. Please feel free to keep your membership current. Heck, my article on Lake Hefner is probably worth \$5.00. Mail dues to P.O. Box 1706, Edmond, OK 73083.

Designers Needed

Marc Whitt, head honcho of the Frigid Five committee, mentioned that the next committee meeting is September 12 at 6:00 at Johnny's. I was gratified to hear that we are going back to have the same number of snowflakes on the t-shirt as years of the race. This year we'll need sixteen snowflakes somewhere in the design. Anyone who wants to do the art is welcome to design the shirt. Otherwise, Marc will just put some OSU stuff on it. (See attached email for more information.)

Evolution

Putting together this newsletter can be a lot of work. My low pay (\$0) and lower typing and computer skills leave me in need of assistance. Race reviews, personal tidbits, and any other information to keep ERC members up-to-date and in touch would be appreciated. Call me (608-4552) or email normancrimp@yahoo.com. My intent is to put the newsletter out every six weeks. My goal is to make it interested and informative.

Attachments

Be sure to open the attachments:

The Frigid Five Design Contest from Sherry Morris

A Good Beginning, So Far by Chongo Mumdene

The 2009-2010 Adventures of a Wannabe Runner by Bill Morris

Lake Hefner Primer

The questions on the minds of my friends would have been: "Why did Joe commit suicide? And, why by train? He seemed happy the last time I talked to him . . ."

This tragedy was only narrowly avoided a few years ago on my seven mile daily from Kelly Park to UCO and back. A train was parked on the tracks across a street off of North Boulevard, so I climbed a few steps up to a walkway atop a coal car to cross to the other side. Anxious to get off the train before it started moving, I thought I'd jump down rather than climbing. I hesitated for just a moment before taking the leap, and seconds later the Southbound Express whisked

by. I would have jumped from the stationary north-bound train only to be smashed by the southbound train. With my headphones on, I hadn't heard the train.

This was back in my pre-knee-trouble days when I could run as much as I made time for. I've run most places in Edmond—Mitch, Haver, the high school tracks, and various distances on roads in and out of the city proper. However, I keep going back to Lake Hefner as the place to train.

While it is true that Hefner is not hilly, the track has its advantages. Hefner is a safe place to run. There are bikes and cars on parts of the trails, but there are also people exercising at all hours which is a good thing. You might find a person whose car was vandalized or you might hear of someone hit by a bike, but it is still the safest place to train in our area.

If you'll oblige me a long article, I'll take you for a trip around Lake Hefner. We'll start at the parking lot off Hefner Road and the Parkway on the northeast corner of the lake.

I've always run the dam first just to get it over with. It's three miles of wind, bugs, and parked cars. The windiest place in OKC is the north side of the lake on the dam. Anytime the lake is white-capping just be prepared. A north wind is preferable since the lake is longest going south. Now, a heady wind does take care of the gnats which hang out in swarms on the dam road. These things are annoying but a person does learn to breathe through the nose in their presence. One potential problem is the lack of facilities on the dam. The options are over the wall, the nursing home at the end of the dam, and the golf course club house at 5 miles.

The dam never lacks for activity.. Rain or shine, frigid or hot, windy or calm, fishermen are present. These guys—I've never seen a woman with a pole—typically drive old, nasty vans or pickups full of nasty-looking junk. I get the feeling that they actually eat what they catch (good because they are poor (not as good)). My main concern is getting hit by one of them opening a door or having a hook or lure snag my nose, ears, or eyes and propel said body part into the lake.

The other action on the dam early in the morning is parked cars. I enjoy surprising these amorous folks; however, most of the passion and the beer probably wore off several hours ago. For the most part, the hedonistic lust of 2:00 A.M. has become bad breath and the reality of sub-dermal, gelatinous, fat rolls of the dawn.

After a short exit by the dam by the back end of some apartments that often feature a discarded mattress or occasional couch, it's over Lakeshore Drive and on to the golf course. A word about etiquette: golfers don't really like runners. We distract, talk, and generally annoy these guys who paid \$40 not to be distracted and annoyed. There used to be a large water can on the tenth tee box which was a welcome stop for everyone at 5 miles. When I asked in the golf shop why it was moved, I was told that runners were talking while guys were on the tee box. Too bad, because now they get us inside the clubhouse. No one has ever said anything to me about my visits, but the refrigerated water fountain was removed at the entrance.

However, the bathrooms are available to runners, and I usually grab a handful of ice from the big water barrel before heading out the door to continue my run. I've always felt a bit smug knowing I'm in better shape than 90% of the golfers and that I can outscore 90% of them on the links.

It's a funny thing about golf and running: the two sports' dynamics could not be further apart. Good running is pretty much dedication and force of will. Good golf takes mental discipline and finesse. Runners need to distract and disconnect from the physicality and pain—golfers seek

concentration. Running is fairly inexpensive; golfing is pricy. I love both sports. I also understand that most runners would just like to run the scenic cart trails and smooth, cushioned fare ways. This is not happening—the best a runner can do is tag along with a golfer and run between shots. If you don't go in the clubhouse there is a port-a-potty 100 yards south of the clubhouse at the marina.

The south end, around the golf course is my favorite part of the lake run. The trail is curvy and mostly heads to the east. The scenery changes frequently and life would be really good except for one thing: the bikes.

Most bikers will stay off the trail until the marina . . . Then they are with you the rest of the way. In cold weather, bikers don't venture out until mid-day. But in the summer, they are out there with us, early morning or late evening. The last four miles on the south and east side of the lake can be hazardous as the bikers are joined by strollers from the restaurants, dog walkers, and family groups just taking it all in.

Frankly, I don't like bikers. I say this despite the fact that I ride around the lake on my bike a couple of times a week to try to balance my quads (underdeveloped) with my hamstrings (overdeveloped). My reasons for not liking bikers are multi-layered. I don't like bike pants or those matching hi-tech tops they wear. I don't like the fact that their \$5,000 bikes are twice as fast as my used \$300 bike, and, while running, I don't like being passed at 25 miles per hour by some guy or guys who fail to warn me of the inevitable near miss encounter. The best strategy for runners is to have one of the group keep watch for the Stuka/bike attack or just hang on the right side of the trail at all times.

A biker would say that the problem is runners and walkers who take up the entire trail and run on the bike trail on the east side of the lake. I also understand that OKC streets/highways are dangerous for bikers. Awareness and good manners go along way for everyone.

When at mile seven you finally arrive at Stars and Stripes Park, there are decisions to make. Running Stars and Stripes will add $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the total. Running the two bike-less loops on the southeast corner of the lake adds another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile or so. Although scenic, I am usually so desperate to get to the car that I run what is called—at least by me—a Joe Loop. This lap is the shortest possible route around Lake Hefner and includes any and all short cuts including cutting over onto the grass for tangents. It is exactly 9 miles.

When you finally turn north and reach the Hefner Parkway, one final decision remains—do you run the soft bike trail or ruin your knees and invite certain injury by running on the concrete sidewalk? I witnessed the bike trail being expanded. The city put a two-foot wide rubber pad along the outsides of the bike trail. It is really nice to run on. I also called the city parks department to complain about the concrete that runners are supposed to use. I was told that the walk was low maintenance and to live with it. Bikers don't seem to mind if we run on their trail, but it is a good idea to run facing the bikes. Fortunately, most of us move off the trail until the bike passes. The run up the east side is usually with a tail wind and about two miles until the parking lot.

There is another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile concrete loop—the playground loop—before the restaurants that sadistic/compulsive runners do to get the most mileage out of the one lap. Since this loop is out around the lake, it can be really windy and cold in winter.

Running all the loops makes the lake a 12—12 $\frac{1}{2}$ run. The flatness, security and amenities of Lake Hefner make it the favorite marathon training area in Oklahoma City.

It just seems that certain unusual things seem to happen to me. After all, I am the guy who found the pink dildo with duct tape on a trash pickup at Mitch Park (Yes, girls, there was a crack on the thing that had duct tape on it. Just ask Lee Kessinger.) But this true story—never written down by the way—happened on about the coldest day I've ever run and it concerns a self-inflicted first-degree burn on an extremely private body part.

It was a cold, windy January morning, my friends. 30+ mile per hour north winds blew across the lake. Ambient temperature was 15 degrees Fahrenheit, wind-chill in the negative 20's. The good thing about Hefner in winter is that once you've run the dam, the high winds are at your back; your body heats up quite nicely, and things are good until Stars and Stripes. I was in no mood to run any of the loops, so this was a perfect day for a Joe Lap.

My partner on the run was a man I will call John—not his real name. The thing about John was that he was a confirmed bachelor with questionable sexual leanings, but I liked him okay and enjoyed running with him. John was one of those guys who found it hard to hold it for the whole lake. In warmer weather, he had been chased off the golf course by city personnel while making a desperate bid to use one of the many, golfer-only port-a-potties. (Learn from John's mistake: Any runner on the course will be reported and run down by the course marshals.) On this morning, since the pro-shop was closed, we pressed on to Stars and Stripes when nature gave John the usual call. It was so cold that I eased up to the south side of the port-a-potty to block the wind figuring John would take several minutes to do whatever inside. Then my natural curiosity and scientific leanings kicked in. I wondered if it was cold enough to freeze urine on contact with the side of the port-a-potty. I thought I'd just do a quick number one to see. No sooner had I begun, than John popped out of the port-a-potty. Now, there are any number of people I would not mind seeing me in mid-stream, but John is not on that list. With great haste, I pulled my tights up, escaping John's stare, but—men will understand this part—leaving a strategic wet spot in my crotch area.

John and I continued our run turning into the 30 m.p.h. northerly wind coming off the lake with only two miles to go. After a couple of minutes, I felt a slight burning inside my tights. After another minute, I realized that possible frost bite damage was already underway and that neither stopping nor walking backwards against the wind was particularly helpful.

At that point, I just told myself that I was a man and—given the relative ease of my life to that point—could stand 15 minutes of intense pain. The beauty of the situation was that I've never run the lake faster or finished stronger than I did that day. I was red for three days.

I really miss those Sunday morning training runs at the lake. There was always a group of diverse folk whose conversation and experiences made fairly short work of those long weekly runs. Hopefully, the ERC can do more to promote this type of group experience which makes running such a great sport.