

Running Briefs



Official Newsletter of Running Club North

Volume IX, Issue III

September, 2002

Equinox Marathon turns 40!

Course retains original flavor

This article, written by the newsletter editor, first appeared in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, 9/21/95.

When plotted in graphic form on the Equinox Marathon t-shirt, the course looks like a volcano set to erupt in the mind, legs and lungs of runners and hikers at 8 a.m. September 21.

The unique terrain in the Equinox, which includes ski trails, bike paths, muddy roads and pavement, helps distract runners from the pain the race inflicts.

The Equinox course sets it apart from other marathons. Runners notice the difference from the start.

THE START: A mass start on the soccer-Ultimate field at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Runners and hikers get an immediate taste of the future as the trail ramps 200 feet straight up to the university's West Ridge.

BALLAINE LAKE, MILE 1.5: After the trail follows the UAF ski trails and the cushioned wood chips spread by former race champion Stan Justice and scads of volunteers, runners pop out on the bike path next to Ballaine Lake, then disappear back into the woods to parallel Ballaine Road.

BALLAINE HILL, MILE 2: Runners tackle the second good hill of the race, a single-track ski trail that climbs to Dalton Trail in about 300 feet elevation gain over one mile. Many runners decide to drop a windbreaker or gloves after pumping out some heat here.

MUSK OX FARM, MILE 5: A good place for spectators to see runners while they are still fresh. Runners cross Frankovich Road at the Musk Ox Farm parking lot and regain the rooty UAF ski trails across the road. After emerging from the woods on Lawlor Road a few minutes later, runners see Ester Dome for the first time.

ANN'S GREENHOUSE, MILE 8: Relay runners make the first tag here. The party's over: the climb up 2,400-foot Ester Dome begins.

UP ESTER DOME, MILES 9-12: Some say walking large portions of the Dome are just as efficient as running, but the studs will run. A hump.

ESTER DOME SUMMIT, MILE 12: A good place to watch because runners pass twice and Denali stands out to the southwest on nice days.

THE OUT-AND-BACK, MILES 12-17.5: A roller coaster over the top of Ester Dome and down the northwest side to a turnaround, where runners make a u-turn and see who's on their heels. Relay leg 3 begins at about mile 17.

THE CHUTE, MILE 17.5: As steep as a stepladder, this 100-yard section begins the descent of Ester Dome.

THE ASPEN TRAIL, MILES 18-20: A pleasant downhill on a trail covered by golden leaves. Some runners make up time by blasting through this section.

HENDERSON ROAD, MILE 21: The return of the dreaded pavement. Some runners think the race begins here.

GOLD HILL ROAD, MILES 22-25: Pavement, a nice break along a powerline path, then more pavement as UAF draws near. Runners see the birdbath antenna dish of UAF's Geophysical Institute on Gold Hill Road. The end is near. For a lot of runners, so is "the wall."

UAF SKI TRAIL ASCENT, MILE 25: A cruel 100 feet of elevation gain for tired bodies as runners take the back door to the UAF campus.

THE FINISH, MILE 26.2: The UAF soccer/Ultimate field. The best feeling in the world.

A tale of true grit

by Ned Rozell

A runner in his 40s had just signed up for the Equinox Marathon at the Pump House. He held an Equinox t-shirt in one hand, a new water bottle in the other. When asked how his training was going, he said it wasn't.

"I broke some ribs in a motorcycle accident," he said. "I haven't run in weeks. I'll be walking a lot of the course."

Somebody mentioned to him the possibility of running the relay.

"It's a marathon," he said, brows forming a V.

He headed off into the parking lot, knowing he was in for a day of pain. On September 21, he won't be checking his splits at the Musk Ox Farm. He won't finish in the top three in his age group. He won't set a new PR at this distance. But he will probably finish the 40th Equinox Marathon.

Why run when you know you won't be at your best? Maybe because of the golden leaves, the robin-egg sky, the musk of highbush cranberries. There's the frosted ground outside the Patty Center at 8 a.m., and the people alongside the course, cheering you on like you're doing something for them. There's the exhilaration of taking that last left turn onto the grass, crossing the line, and feeling the triangular knit patch between your fingers. For some people, fall is incomplete without running/walking the 26.2-mile course over Ester Dome.

Only two people will break the tape at the finish. Some of us will win battles against our peers or the clock, but most of us will be like the runner with sore ribs, out there moving along the trails during the prettiest time of year in Fairbanks, and savoring the best race in Alaska.

Happy Equinox.

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Running Briefs

Official Newsletter of Running Club North

EDITOR

Ned Rozell

Running Briefs is printed bi-monthly. If you've just won Leadville or have other running news you'd like to share, send it to Ned Rozell at Box 84598, Fairbanks, AK, 99708 or email at nedr@gci.net.

ADVERTISING

Business Card: \$15/issue

1/4 Page: \$25

1/2 Page: \$50

A few words from your president ...

By Jane Lanford

President, Running Club North

Thanks to everyone who helped out with running events in any way during this summer season! Early in the season, our equipment was spiffed up by Caroline Brown, Kat Betters, Wayde Leder, Ken Larimore, Mike Hancock, Ted Wu, and Craig McCaa. Twenty-three folks helped out at Midnight Sun Run bib pick-up. Thanks also to the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, which provided a porta-potty at the track. Many of you got involved with bib pick-ups, water stops, road crossings, finish line timing, directing fun runs, selling club merchandise, buying cookies for training runs, storing club supplies, attending board meetings, and doing all the things that make this club, well, RUN! Many hands make light work. Thank you all so much!

AWARD NOMINATIONS and FALL SOCIAL

With all you great folks out there, we'd once again like to solicit suggestions for our three annual awards, to be presented at the October 19th potluck, social and Williams awards event. The three categories are: Most Inspirational Runner of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and Race Director of the Year.

Please submit your nominations for these awards to Bev Weis at bweis@alaska.com; 711 Gaffney Road, Suite 201, Fairbanks, AK 99701; 455-4949. Let her know who deserves to be honored and why. Deadline is September 30th.

The potluck will be at a new location this year – the fellowship hall (aka church basement) of University Community Presbyterian Church on College Road, next to Beaver Sports. There's ample parking in the back. Sorry, no alcohol allowed. We've simply outgrown Dog Musers' Hall, as much as we like the place. In our search for a new location, we found out that many meeting halls don't allow potlucks; instead, you have to pay for catering. We figured you'd prefer not to pay, and we know you folks bring in a wonderful potluck! So ... we hope you like the new setting, which is roomier than Musers' Hall. The event begins at 6 p.m.

ELECTIONS AND ANNUAL MEETING

On October 23rd, the Wednesday following the fall social, you all are invited to the club's annual meeting. It'll be held at Ken Larimore's house, 1016 Eldorado Road, on top of Ballaine hill (not at Keith Pollock's house as the calendar says). The business of the annual meeting is to elect the RCN Executive Council for the following year, and – the fun part – to set the race calendar for 2003.

We're planning to add three at-large members to the board, and maybe rearrange the duties of the current positions somewhat. If you have any interest at all in coming to board meetings and knowing what's going on, please let me know (jane@chcpa.com; 456-7762 work; 479-7230 home). We're looking for fresh faces to fill the new positions. It's not a large commitment since an at-large seat doesn't come with any built-in duties (like treasurer, or membership coordinator). We meet on the first Thursday of the month – except when we reschedule or decide to skip a meeting. We're friendly. We generally have free food during our meetings, too!

DUES NEWS

And now the news you didn't want to hear: Due to increasing costs, the Executive Council has voted to increase dues, effective January 1st, 2003. The new dues will be:

\$20 per year per individual

\$30 per year per family

\$200 per person for lifetime membership

It's the first dues increase ever in the history of Running Club North, and we're still cheaper (less expensive, that is) than many other clubs in the area.

On the bright side, you're getting more for your money these

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days: \$5 off race fees for each of the Gold Discovery Run, Run 'n' Soak, and Equinox Marathon; 10 percent off regular-priced running merchandise at Beaver Sports; the RCN newsletter and RCN calendar in the January issue; membership in Road Runners Club of America and its magazine; free track training on Tuesdays in the summer; lots of free races; and all the other wonderful tangible and intangible benefits of being a member.

If your membership expires in the remaining months of 2002, you'll be getting a renewal notice. If not, you can still extend your membership at the old rates (\$10 per year per individual; \$15 per year per family, or \$100 per person for lifetime membership) by sending a check to: Running Club North, P.O. Box 84237 Fairbanks, AK 99708.

Please indicate how many years and for whom you are paying. Include any snail-mail or e-mail address updates. It must be received in the RCN P.O. box by December 31st, 2002 to qualify for the old rates!

Donations are also gladly accepted at the above address, and they're tax-deductible. Maybe your year-end financial planning could include a large gift to RCN!

Meantime, enjoy the camaraderie, the races, the trails, your good health, and whatever else running brings to you. See you out there!

Jane

PS: Thanks to Williams Alaska Petroleum, Inc. for their continued sponsorship of the Williams Cup Series and their recent donation of \$2,500 to Running Club North! We appreciate all their support!

NYC Marathon director visits Equinox; post-race banquet moved

Running Club North's guest for the 40th running of the Equinox Marathon is Allan Steinfeld, director of the New York City Marathon. Steinfeld, 56, traveled to Fairbanks with his wife Alice Schneider. Steinfeld became race director of the New York City Marathon in 1994, and is one of the world's leading authorities on the technical aspects of road racing. Runners are invited to a potluck reception for Steinfeld on Thursday, Sept. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Bev and Wayne Weis. Call 457-3208 for directions.

Award Ceremony moved: This year's Equinox awards ceremony, Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. will be held downstairs in the University Community Presbyterian Church, 3510 College Road, next to Beaver Sports.

How Michelle spent her summer vacation: mountain racing in Russia

After her running times hit a plateau for the last few years, Fairbanks runner Michelle Mitchell had a breakthrough racing in Russia this summer. She ran her fastest half marathon and mile, which she credits to running with the Russian national team under the guidance of an excellent coach in Moscow. Following is her report of a 30-K mountain race that kicked butt.

By Michelle Mitchell

Imagine running up Ester Dome then down the chute, then up Ester Dome about 100 times over 30-K. Throw in 85-degree heat, and several hairpin turns to keep you on your toes and you have the course for the Moscow Regional Mountain Running Championships, the fifth in a seven-race grand prix for mountain running.

I decided to run this race because I needed a good hill workout—be careful what you wish for! I thought of Steve Bainbridge and Scott McCrea while I was wishing I was running the Ester Dome Ass Kicker or the Equinox because both would have been easier! In order for a course to qualify as a "mountain running" course in Russia it must have a minimum elevation gain of 80 m per kilometer! The Moscow course had cumulative gain of 2530m (the Equinox is about 1500)—translation—you get a real Ass Kicker!

What is even ruder is that the course is 2,530 meters up and 2,530 meters down over a constantly rolling course. The up is just about the same as the up grade of Ester Dome in the steep spots. The downs are equivalent to the steepness of the chute off Ester Dome— you can't run them like a nut or you will fall on your popka! The whole course is on trails.

I rode the train to the race with some friends from the running club; they told me not many women run these types of races

Cook & Haugeberg

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Continued from page 3

because it's still considered a man's sport. But the women who run it are very tough (or just nuts). The 30-K is 21 loops of just over 1400m—Ouch! Lap counters keep track for you. Most of the wise women opted for an 8-K version of the race and only seven runners—five men and two women—were sado-masochistic enough to run the 30-K. The other woman was not a wimp by any means. She was ranked third in the country in mountain running in 2001 and is the course record holder.

My goal for the day was not to finish dead last nor to dehydrate and die! The start was delayed about a 1/2 hr because a tree fell and was blocking the trail and they had to saw it off with handsaw and axe (Steve B., I know you can appreciate this!) When we finally got going I just went out nice and slow. Vika, the other woman, stayed right on my tail through lap 4 and I figured I should just let her go, but she dropped off a little, and by lap 13 I had lapped her!

I almost beat the first man, but when he realized where I was he picked up the last 4 laps to finish in 2:53. I was second overall and first woman in 3:01. After the race the race director told me that I had broken the course record by 8 minutes!

'Alaska' Hilderbrandt continues his quest for 50 marathons in 50 states

by Bob Hildebrandt

Way back in February, I traveled to Birmingham, Alabama. I met up with ex-Fairbanksan Corky Dow to run the Mercedes Marathon. Corky and I enjoyed a tour of the Mercedes-Benz assembly plant, a pasta dinner at the Birmingham Science Expo, and an IMAX movie. The Mercedes was the 27th different state in which I've run a marathon, and my 50th marathon.

Next up was the Mardi Gras marathon in New Orleans, again with Corky. Starting alongside the Superdome, we ran through the French Quarter, through the Garden District, past a spooky-looking graveyard where people are interned in tombs above the ground. The course continued through a city park and finished back at the Superdome.

Following was the L.A. marathon, which is becoming a March tradition for me. More than 24,000

marathoners followed a new course in L.A. It was a great way to see the city, with all the streets blocked off just for you.

On the sixth of April, I traveled to Yakima, Washington for a meeting of 50-state marathoners at the Yakima River Canyon Marathon. Also at Yakima was a new club for "megamarathoners," those who have run a minimum of 100 marathons. I was a piker, with just 52 marathons. Joe Henderson, seasoned marathoner, author and senior staffer for Runner's World, called out finishers' names at the finish line.

The marathon followed a hilly canyon alongside the Yakima River. More than 250 runners competed, among them Dean Redemaker, the founding father of the 50-state group. A fair amount of runners in their 70s ran, as well as my nephew, Fast Eddie Hahn.

I next ran the Wyoming Marathon, in Medicine Bow National

Forest between Cheyenne and Laramie. The race—Wyoming's only marathon—started at about 8,700-feet, dropping to 8,200 feet at the 13.2-mile turnaround. The elevation and my old aged proved a challenge at the beginning, but after 10 miles I started feeling human.

The Wyoming marathon reminded me that running is supposed to be fun. I learned that it is OK to be slow. Maybe that is why I finish with a smile on my face.

The race was followed by an interesting pasta feed full of good fellowship as more than 225 marathoners swapped stories. A lot of friendship exists in our loosely knit group of distance runners. My nephew, Fast Eddie, was there again. For some reason, people call me "Alaska" rather than my name.

I really enjoy meeting with the fellow 50-staters. It helps me rationalize that I am not the only nut out there.

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