

January 6, 2008 - SMAC Annual Meeting, Held at the Amherst Women's Club

@30 members present, including lots of the BOD, all well-run (from 10:00a.m. to 11:00a.m. plus) and well-fed (from there on). Those present represented something like 10% of the membership.

1. A gracious welcome from the Boss, a.k.a. Donna Utakis, President, followed by an “awesome” Treasurer’s report given by Dave Martula. Rich and full of juicy details, the gist of the report was that the club is on solid financial ground, with @\$6000.00 in the bank. This prompted Derek Beard to query about the hypothetical “Aruba trip,” analysis of which is something of a “snipe hunt”/initiation challenge for newly-nominated BOD members.
2. Membership Ron Hebert noted that we’ve updated the membership list, and that much of its information is now stored in a GooglePages spreadsheet. This way it's at less risk of hardware malfunction, and it's accessible to all BOD members as needed. Membership stands at @ 290 units, with 600 or so individuals (between families and partnerships of various sorts).
3. Sue Grant and Sydney Henthorn (Youth Track Coordinator) spoke effusively of the Indoor Track meet series (three meets to be held at Smith College in January, presided over by the inimitable Bill Durkee) and urged people to come, compete, spectate, or help with officiating.
4. Preparations for the D. H. Jones 10-Miler, SMAC’s flagship race, were discussed with race director Barry Auskern giving an overview. Volunteer efforts at this stage are “great,” and some changes should make it even more successful than it has been. Mizuno has donated racing duffel bags for the men’s and women’s team winners' prizes, and the earlier start time (11:00a.m.) seems very appropriate. Given the classic, challenging course and the good scheduling for those in preparation for the Boston Marathon, it’s hoped that a serious commitment of various teams can be expected.
5. Next came the “M(ost) O(utstanding) R(unner) award, which this year went to Rich Larsen, the utterly durable, he’ll race almost anywhere SMAC stalwart. Rich was 2007’s National Champion in the 55-59 year-old bracket at Saratoga. Rich had come to the meeting with a bunch of the “Shelburne Falls Mafia,” and he immediately paid tribute the Don Grant, Race Director of the Tuesday Night Northampton 5k Cross-Country series.

Don accepted and then deflected this praise with an eloquently-presented special award for Bob Romer. If ignorance truly is bliss, Bob was the most blissful SMAC member present, because he had NO CLUE that he was to be so honored. Don’s praises (all warranted, of course) were too numerous to itemize, but among the triumphs noted were Bob's “three-peat” victories of the Echo Hill Marathon (330 laps), his mastery of the Paul Peele Predicted-Time Pace Races at the Summer Track series, and his profoundly expressed (and utterly-ignored) plea to President George W. (“43”) Bush to “be honest with the American people.” A form response Bob received weeks or months later (“thanks for your support of the President’s policies...”) suggests that the “Education President” is in considerable need of what Bob has lots of - learning! The actual prize given to Bob was a simulated D. H. Jones 10-Miler commemorative T-shirt with all of his finishing times from 1987 to 2005 listed on it.

6. Next followed election of new members to the BOD (Derek Beard, Kathryn Honderd, Sydney Henthorn - Youth Track coordinator, and Jim Plaza, back after an unaccountable lapse of good sense in BOD-ly election politics). The energy and imagination of these new members melded with the sage experience and prescient understanding of returning members all but guarantees

that pizza will be consumed monthly (which doesn't fully explain why the Aruba trip has yet to happen). All were nominated, seconded, and then elected by acclamation. And why not?

Returning members of the BOD (and please correct me if I forget anyone) are: Donna Utakis (President), Dave Martula (Treasurer), Chuck Adams and Cathy Coutu (new Vice-Presidents), Ron Hebert (Membership Secretary), Ben Bensen (SUN Editor and Recording Secretary), Jeff Hansen, Laurie Parker, Carrie Stone, Jeff Hansen, Judy Scott... and who did I forget?

7. Barry Auskern then talked about the track workouts (briefly), SMAC's aspirations for the success of its team, and enthusiasm for future success. Go SMAC team!
8. Sydney Henthorn discussed the Youth Track series. Sadly, Smith College is not making its facilities available for the program, which in years past has been a wonderful training ground for local high school athletes - particularly (this year) the Northampton High School Cross-Country program - 8 "graduates" contributed to that program! Last year some 90 kids ran with the program, and SMAC gained 60 or so new memberships. Noting the success of Amherst Regional High School's long-running and very successful cross-country program, Sydney asked for suggestions about how to promote SMAC's offering, encourage renewed cooperation with Smith, or suggesting an alternative venue.

During the Spring and Summer season there were 20 or so kids involved whose families were SMAC members, and about 245 total participants. Head Coach Jim Clayton needs coaches, officials, and timers. Heather Johnson has been hired as his assistant coach. A major goal for the Youth Track program is to get a SMAC Youth Track team to compete in the New England regional meets and championships.

9. Jeff Hansen then announced the new "Highland Park Trail Races," 3.5 or 7 mile races which will be inaugurated on April 27 in Greenfield. One week after the Boston Marathon (for these who didn't run it) and a week before the Seven Sister's Race (for those tuning up), which is directed by former SMAC President Scott Hunter, this promises to be a great event.
10. The next meeting will be at Bement School, as usual, on January 23, at 7:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted (under the circumstances),

Ben Bensen
Scribe

P.S. For all interested, on January 24 "The Spirit of the Marathon" will be shown at the Hadley mongo multiscreen cinemegaplex.