



NORTH FLORIDA NEWS

(Some Headlines From The Road)

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MICHAEL'S MANIC MOMENT FOR THE MONTH: FOLLOW THE MONEY... –

This one might be a little long, and perhaps a little grouchy in tone. I'll try to keep it as positive and brief as possible. The property tax reform referendum passed by an overwhelming majority this week. While the reforms will benefit individual property owners, no doubt (non-essential) public services, such as **police coverage for running events** will be affected...especially in cities where tax base is already low.

Directors of small, church-run events here have already felt the pinch. The city has not only raised the cost per hour for an individual officer, but the minimum number of hours the officer will be paid – in the case of Pensacola, it's five hours at minimum...two hours more than the typical downtown 5K event and post-race. The idea of using volunteers at secondary intersections to ensure participant safety seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The city council and the police department, while at the least understanding, are not going to budge. As of this writing, I heard of two church-sponsored runs that will not be produced this year.

And that's not a good thing.

I would be the last person to say we need fewer runners at RRCA member club events, because they are running at a church-sponsored event on the other side of town. Most church-sponsored events I've been to are family-friendly and attract a population I don't normally see at local RRCA club events. Mom, Dad and 2.5 children can run the 5K or the fun run together and not worry as much about the level of competition. I know not all member club events have beer after their races, but there are some folks who wouldn't mind letting their children learn to have fun as a runner. They don't want their children seeing participants drinking beers after a race, at nine o'clock and think it a normal part of running, or of life. I'm not down on beer; I am passionate about it. There is a time and a place...and I try to minimize the times when I have a beer at nine. And if I had a child I would not take them to those events.

What I'm suggesting is not going to be too drastic, and I think it falls in line with the national mission and vision. I would ask that **individual clubs** begin to look out beyond their own events and see where they can **assist other race promoters**...whether that is equipment, expertise, marketing or even (heaven forbid) financial sponsorship. Sponsorship is little more than advertising, a little *quid pro quo*, give and take, you-scratch-my-back-and-so-on. Small races and their promoters would be overjoyed to have your club cover their back, making it possible for them to let

families run together. Increase the opportunities a child or an adult can participate as a runner, especially when they don't have to feel threatened by high-level competition...the chances increase they will become a life-long runner.

And that...is a good thing.

If you haven't purchased your copy of the **2008 Calendar**, they are fantastic. The photography is top-notch and there's enough space to use it as a training log. In fact, January's space also had a place to write personal goals. My wife loves it; it gave her a place to write all of her trips, my trips and her goals...for me... Important RRCA business dates, such as the National Convention, championship bidding, coaching education and the like, are all posted for you to remember and take action. And as I mentioned last time, the net proceeds go to local running programs and the RRCA Kids Run the Nation Fund.

It's time to look at **National Convention in Cincinnati**. If your club hasn't committed a representative, or you haven't been to a National Convention, I would strongly recommend it. I keep mumbling about how much I have to do in order to get time off, and so on...and each time I've gone I have silently thanked all the folks who twisted my arm to make the decision. This year's convention is May 1-3, and includes all the cool stuff that make convention worthwhile; expo, state rep silent auction (last year's included gear signed by Olympians, entries to major races, great swag, personal training, and so on, and so on...), daily runs, seminars to help you be a better club...and some truly inspiring speakers. If you're an RRCA certified coach, there also will be continuing education opportunities for you. Go to the RRCA web site and click on the CONVENTION tab for more information.

The Saturday business meeting should be interesting, as the following **RRCA Board positions** are **up for election** in 2008: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Eastern Region Director, and Central Region Director. Detailed information (PDF document) about nominations for serving on the RRCA Board of Directors can be found at www.rrca.org/rrca/board. For a copy of the document in Word format, email Jean Knaack at execdir@rrca.org. For questions regarding the nomination process please contact the Nominating Committee Chair, Gar Williams, via email at cellofello63@gmail.com. The deadline for nominations is February 15, 2008. Please, DO NOT send nominations to the RRCA National Office.

A word of warning – **I need your support (that's cool stuff) for the silent auction**, and I'll also have to get some proxy paperwork done for those clubs who won't be able to send a representative to Cincinnati. Keep your eyes open, okay?

A **RRCA coaching seminar** is scheduled for the weekend of February 29 in Sarasota. More information on RRCA's seminar is located on the RRCA web site at <http://www.rrca.org/calendars/showevent.php?id=13046&css=>. These seminars provide the training to help people who are passionate about running to work with adult runners at all levels. Coaching programs can attract more individuals to the sport,

extend running careers, provide more fun running, and minimize the risk of overuse injuries.

ONE LAST THING:

I hope you like the weekly e-mails passing on what your fellow clubs have on their immediate agenda. If you're close enough to commute or are fortunate enough to have more than one club in your city, please don't hesitate to link up with each other. I'll try my best to keep up with you, too.

Have a safe, mileage-filled day!