



Editor's Column By Bill Spencer

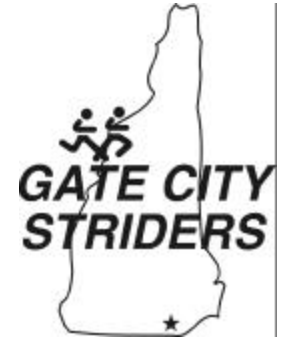
This issue is full of articles detailing the clubs plans for the coming year. Most of those plans are the result of the extensive club survey that was conducted late last year. It looks like this could be an exciting year for club members. Take the time and read the plans. If you have any other ideas,

pass them on to one of your E Board members. The winter months are generally pretty boring for most of us as we wait for the snow to melt and the warm weather to return. For my part, I try to refocus my training after working with our youths during the cross-country season and prepare for the indoor track season. That season will cap for me on March 28th at the Indoor Nationals. In preparing for those races, I regularly run in the BU meets in Boston and the SMAC meets at Smith College. This year, some of our youths decided to use the Indoor meets to maintain their fitness level.. They collected their share of medals in meets at MIT, Smith and Harvard. As an aside, some of these kids have already visited more colleges in their short life than any of my children held in deciding where to go to college. In addition to running in the normal running events, the kid's had a chance to try other events. The result was a first place for Lindsay Panny and a second for Chantal Croteau in the Pentathlon at MIT. Lastly, good luck to all our BAA Marathon runners.



Chantal and Lindsay

If you experience problems with the delivery of the newsletter call our membership chairperson. This newsletter is sent third class mail. There is no forwarding by the post office, so make sure we have your correct address. Advertisements are gladly accepted.



Striding Along is published 6 times a year by members of the Gate City Striders, Inc. of Nashua, NH. For correspondence or a membership application, please write to:

Gate City Striders
PO Box 3692
Nashua NH 03061.

Visit our Web Site
WWW.GateCity.Org

USA Track & Field Club # 157
AARC Club # RC12

Our Mission Statement

The Gate City Striders is an athletic and social organization dedicated to the promotion of running and fitness at all levels. Members vary in ability from beginning joggers to competitive marathoners.

Membership meetings

3rd Wednesday of month at the Merrimack YMCA.

Track workouts

Wednesday nights, Pennichick Junior High, April thru October. Weekly runs are held elsewhere throughout the year. Youth workouts on Monday and Thursday nights. See calendar for details.





President's Column

By Bob Pelletier

The Inverted Pyramid

I believe that it was business consultant and author Tom Peters who first coined this phrase back in the 1980's as it relates to the value by which a company or organization should place on its customers, employees, or members. The organization which is modeled after the inverted or upside down pyramid places the most importance on its customers who are the cornerstone of any business. In the case of our club, the customer is you, the membership.

As the inverted pyramid mapping system tapers it way to the bottom, it flows through a series of team leaders and narrows at the executive board. Its terminus is the President or CEO. This is how your board intends to value you and your feedback in order to manage your club in 2003 and hopefully, well beyond. *The Inverted Pyramid* will be the title for each of the President's Columns that I author in the next year as reinforcement and reminder of keeping you, the customer, first. This process began with the club survey in December which I have broken out for you by category elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have added over thirty years of GCS club experience to your E-board in the last six months with the additions of Bill Gray, Chet Rogers, and myself to best execute your plan. Our other board members are bright, care deeply about your club, and are committed to executing your plan. Total new GCS leadership experience climbs to over forty-five years when you factor in Walter Swanson, our new Competition Coordinator.

I invite you to carefully read the article on the Survey results found elsewhere in this edition of *Striding Along*. This is the steering wheel that will guide your club for the immediate future.

2003 promises to be a great year for our club if we can bond together and focus our energies on having fun with distance running and exercise related events while helping one another when asked. This is reflective of the original vision for our club and its great founders, many of whom who are still active and care an awful lot about its future. I will not get into quoting JFK but you catch my drift, "....ask not what your club can do for you....". When we ask for help it is for a reason. We are not going to wear you out with requests for help. Your E-board prefers to spread the workload over several members rather than keep tapping the same well over and over again. This is how true teams are built. We are rebuilding our leadership for club cornerstone events such as Fitness University, Pack Monadnock, Mt. Washington, and Applefest. This is also your chance to step into an age group Captain's role under Walter for events such as the eight New Hampshire Grand Prix races, and the Lake Winnepesaukee and Mill Cities Relays.

You want to have fun with your teammates, hone your running skills at track, be entertained at club meetings, compete for a club that cares about your participation and performance rates, be able to communicate with other members and be kept updated with a state of the art web site, and pitch in where you can without being inundated. This is what you have asked as the customer, it is now your board's responsibility to deliver the product to you.

The survey says.....

....Actually it said quite a bit, you spoke from the heart, and for that your E-Board is very thankful. We sent out 348 club surveys in December and received back a healthy 151 responses, a return rate of 43%. We first reviewed the composite results of the survey at our February general meeting. In addition, they can be found on our web site.

In review, we broke the 57 question survey out into ten major categories. This article seeks to report on the key messages and subsequent actions that the board will take in order to align with the information that you provided for each category.

You have provided us with the compass that we need as a board to guide the USS GCS through the waters for the next few years. The ultimate success of the club depends on your enjoyment and resulting participation.

I must warn you that this may be one of the longest articles ever written for *Striding Along* matching some of the legendary pieces authored by Shu Minami. This should also be a great cure for insomnia.

1. Membership Renewal and Dues

You want the option of renewing your dues for more than a year at a time and you want the option of doing this on line. You reported that the current dues structure is very fair.

Action: Look for striking changes and upgrades to our current forum and web site formats around mid-year. These changes are not only being designed to meet your dues paying requests, they will make member to member communications that much easier and user friendly. Dave Delay, Steve Moland, and Allan Rube' will be hard at work when this issue of *Striding Along* arrives on your doorstep.

Dues will be kept in check as long as we have sufficient volunteer support at revenue producing events such as Applefest, Cigna Health 5K, and the Boston Corporate Challenge. More will be reported on this area in the volunteerism category.

Implementation timing: Q3 03.

2. Striding Along Newsletter

You like to receive your copy of *Striding Along* every other month. You would like to see race results continue to be published. Our youth program coverage is about right and the quantity will not change. A small minority of you read the electronic copy of the newsletter in addition to the hard copy. About half of you said that you would also like to receive a weekly update on club happenings.

Action: Don't expect a discontinuation of delivery for *Striding Along* in your mailbox any time soon. We will ask you in a future edition if you simply prefer electronic delivery over the USPS. This will help cut down on the workload for our newsletter stuffing volunteers as well as save a few bucks on postage. The electronic copy and mailed copy options will probably coexist for many more years. The electronic E-mail updates will also

be considered in the design of the new electronic communications system.

Implementation timing: Q3 03

3. Web Site

You access the site somewhere between rarely and once per week. Bill's coverage of youth running is just about right. You would like to see the general meeting minutes published.

Action: In addition to the site upgrades referred to above you can now access club general meeting minutes on the web site.

Implementation timing: General Meeting minutes are now available at: www.gatecity.org

4. Monthly Club Meetings

You want to hear stimulating guest speakers. You do not want to be bogged down with club business minutia. The current Merrimack YMCA venue and time slot meets most of your needs. You want the ability to participate in discussions. Having a monthly meeting in the non-track running months is important to you.

Action: If you have not had a chance to attend a general meeting this winter you have missed several great speakers on distance running related matters as well as a few freebies. We have lined up speakers for each month with the exception of the February annual meeting. We are continuing to seek out stimulating speakers and will ask back those who rated the highest this winter for 03/04. We will also continue to provide you with free pizza and soft beverages during each meeting. Additionally, we are exploring other venue options which allow for a smoke free environment but also allow for the purchase of your favorite beverages. Open feedback forums will be introduced beginning in March. Door prizes such as race fee waivers and StriderWear will also be worked in.

Implementation timing: Ongoing as of October 02. The search for different meeting venues has begun.

5. Club Activities

This could have easily been titled club direction. We were basically focusing in on what type of running club you want. You were certainly decisive in your responses.

You said that the continued management of the three key annual club races(SNHMC 6K, Pack Monadnock, and Applefest) is important or very important to you at a rate of 90%.

About 90% of you also said that coached track workouts are in the same important/very important category.

Another 85% said that Fitness University club support is important/very important.

There is an upcoming section on competition but 75% said that doing well in the NH Grand Prix events and Mill Cities is important or very important to them.

You were lukewarm on the importance of club social activi-

ties. Almost 85% of you rated them as not important to important.

Actions and Implementation timing: We are blessed with a great sponsor in SNHMC for the 6K race and its primary beneficiary, the Fitness University program. Pack Monadnock is our club hosted NH Grand Prix race on June 1. Wait till you see the exciting changes in store for Applefest 2003 by Chet and Emily and their hard working committee.

We're getting back on the track starting this month at Pennichuck JHS in Nashua(exit 7E). Competition coordinator Walter Swanbon and Coach Dave Camire are working out the details of bringing track workouts back to what us old timers came to look forward to each week. More on this in the coaching section.

Shaun McMahan is back as our Fitness University Director. He is looking for some of our members to step up into key roles to ensure for the future success of this event. If you want to help introduce a child to a lifetime of running look no further. This is the place for you. Fitness University has indirectly launched the successful Nashua PAL and Granite State Flash youth running programs. Many graduates have gone on to great high school careers or are presently in the midst of them.

We are a NH Grand Prix level club. This has never really changed over the years. Walter and Dave will be looking to restore our competitive position in the NHGP events in 03. There are eight races and our focus will to have solid representation at each. You will be hearing more details about club prizes for participation and also for scoring leaders.

The monthly general meetings are quickly evolving into a nice social event. You also enjoy the annual Holiday Party, the post Winnie barbecue, and the food related socials at track.

6. Club Hotline

About half of you know that the hotline existed. 75% of you have never had a chance to call the hotline.

Action: In the event that we can design a new web site where we can achieve same day event information status the hotline will be retired. We will retain it in the event that each of its key functions cannot be duplicated in the new web site design.

Implementation timing: Q3 03

7. Coaching

Two thirds of our membership have attended the weekly workouts. Over 80% responded that you attend track at least once per month. Almost all of you work harder in supervised workouts than on your own. You want structure with planned coaches workouts which you feel is a major benefit of your membership.

Action: Coach Camire and his assistants will switch workouts back to the track at Pennichuck JHS this April. The two Nashua HS tracks will not be ready until 04. Dave is working closely with Competition Coordinator Walter Swanbon to better align the workouts with the eight race NH Grand Prix series.

You want a format where every ability level is on the track

doing the same basic workout albeit at separate paces. This is how we meet club members, bond as a club, and pull for one another. This will be worked in wherever practical.

The popular timed mile nights will also return so that you can better gauge your progress.

The weekly club workouts will be posted on the club web site for those who cannot attend but would still like to do them on your own. Coach Camire has committed to this.

Implementation timing: First track night in April 03.

8. Competitive Running

You want the club to support a certain level of competition. You indicated that it is all right to support competition with an allocation of monetary resources, though not overwhelmingly so. You said that some form of sponsorship should be sought to support competitive teams comprised of your peers. It is not important to you, nor does it affect your competition enjoyment, if the club does not seek out elite athletes who often train separately and run for the club in name only. A majority of you have pride in running for GCS and would like to restore a state level competitive program.

Action: Walter will look to the membership for committed captains who can help build their individual teams and raise the rates of participation for the eight NH Grand Prix events in 2003. Many captains are already on board and we thank them for their efforts. We will return to a single team format for GCS for the 2003 series. The board is allocating funds in order to reward the membership for participation points and separate scoring points for 2003 NH Grand Prix events. The total pool will be a handsome amount and rewarded at the conclusion to the Grand Prix season in October.

The exact amount will be announced later this month on the web site.

Track workouts will be better aligned with NH Grand Prix race distances. Options will be available for membership looking to hone their skills in other areas. We have always accommodated membership with separate training goals during track night and will continue to do so.

Dates to Remember:

May 3 - Big Lake Half Marathon - Alton

June 1 - Pack Monadnock 10 Miler - Wilton (GCS Hosted, Please Contact Race Director, Steve Moland if you can fill in for several open race day and preparation roles including food, shuttle, volunteer director, and registration)

Steve can be reached at: Steve@Accessp.com

July 19 - Bill Luti 8K - Concord

August 9- Old Home Days 5 Mile - Sandown

September 1- Frankestown 8K - Frankestown

September 20- Lake Winnepesaukee Relay - 65 miles, 8 legs, Weirs Beach

October 19 - Citizens Bank Run for Shelter 8K - Manchester

October 26 - Free Fall Classic 10K - Rochester

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

We will make a conscious effort to work out carpooling for each of these events. The rear of the 99 Restaurant parking lot in Nashua at exit 7E is a popular spot to meet.

9. Club Triathlon

Although 70% of you have never attended the club triathlon as a competitor or volunteer it is the fastest growing event that we produce. Outgoing director Chip Geisler has grown this event to over sixty participants and turned it into a money making venture for the club. 75% of you mentioned that the club is adequately supporting this event. 80% of you said that is OK to open the event to non-members.

Action: If you have enjoyed participating or simply watching the triathlon in past years this is your opportunity to step up and direct the event in 2003. Chip will help guide you in your preparation efforts. The event is usually held in August at Lake Potanipo in Brookline. The decision to open the event to the public or keep it within the club is entirely up to the race director.

Without a director this event will not be held in 2003, a loss to the membership. You can express your interest by reaching me at Pelletier.R@attbi.com or Chip at nhgeisler@adelphia.net

Timing implementation: Preparation and site reservation calls will need to be made no later than the end of April.

10. Volunteerism

You do not wish to be badgered to volunteer each time you show up for a track workout. 65% of the respondents had a chance to volunteer at least once in 2002. Thanks for your ef-

forts. 90% of you feel that the current level of volunteer recognition is satisfactory. If a volunteer point based system were available in order to earn club discounts on Strider Wear of discounted race applications, you would support it.

Action: It was encouraging to hear that almost all of the respondents (95%) would support the club in prerace or race day volunteer roles on an occasional basis.

The board agrees with you. There is a time and place for requests of help. This will be done more discreetly via sign up sheets at track and on the web site along with individual conversations.

As we look at the club calendar for this year help will be needed for the three club sponsored races, as well as Mt. Washington, Fitness University, Cigna Corporate 5K, the Club Triathlon, and the Boston Corporate Challenge. Our volunteer support for some of these events generate at-large entries and income for the club which we hope to reward back to the membership in areas of NH Grand Prix and volunteerism perks. If the majority of our members can help out at two of these events per year we will be set. Remember that you can often volunteer and participate in the same event.

Summary: We hope that we provided you with the proper opportunity to offer your input on the type of running club that you want to belong to. We have a tremendous reputation in the Greater Nashua community for the work that we do with children. We are also viewed as solid citizens through our partnerships with the Nashua Police Department and Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. Our ultimate goal is to insure for the health of ourselves and our families while having some fun along the way. Let's not lose sight of these goals as a club.

Bob Pelletier Club President

Annual Parkers Run on April 27th at Noon

Come join a fun group of runners (or is it a group of runners for a fun run?) for a beautiful run mostly on dirt roads, and trails that can be a little tricky when wet! Just ask Ed Deichler, "Real men break their fall with their head" Walter will lead the 8 plus mile loop (more if requested). Traci will lead 6+ loop. The loops are essentially the same - Walter adds on at the end. The course has a few hills (but let's keep that a secret). We run to eat! If you haven't been to Parker's - come on down - it's New England at it's best. Pancakes Galore, waffles, omelets and they make their own Maple Syrup. This has been a Gate City Strider tradition for many years. Does anyone out there know when the first Parker's Run was??? It used to be a point to point starting at Brookdales in Hollis. It was also very early in the morning in February. Well the Swanbon's moved to Brookline and said - are you serious - Let's start at Noon in Parker's parking lot and do a loop. OK, that's not really true. Parker's asked us not to have the run during their busiest season and at their busiest time, sooo we changed the when and a little of the where (a 10 mile plus point to point fun run is hard to coordinate). Does anyone remember line store? But wait there's more. This is Non-running significant others (is that noon and walk, read the paper, play shops or they can also come around 1:00 tions: <http://www.parkersmaplebar.com> road from the restaurant. Please let us reservations can be made.

Thank you,
Traci and Walter Swanbon
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getting yelled at for parking at the Brook-a family event. Everyone is welcome. PC or what) can join us - they can come at checkers on the porch or browse in the and join us for Breakfast/Brunch. Direc-Please park in the parking Lot across the know if you will be joining us - so that