

## HMRRRC Annual Report to Members

September 26, 2021

Thank you for joining us for the 50th Anniversary of the HMRRRC. The annual meeting is not generally held at a race, but given indoor events and parties are still somewhat questionable in safety, this seemed like the best plan for getting 25 members to attend and meet our bylaw requirements for officer elections. With little racing and socialization in the last year and half, it was nice to have the opportunity to honor some of our members as well.

The state of our club is strong, though admittedly, not the strongest it has ever been. In 50 years, there have been challenges to the organization for sure, but none greater than the COVID Pandemic. Here is a recap of our emergence after the emergency. That statement makes it seem the emergency is over. It is not. Yet we have begun to run again.

In October 2020, HMRRRC had no races or activities on the calendar. A local running company, AREEP, began to safely offer races so community members eager to get out and run had opportunities. AREEP shared its safety plan, and we became interested in resuming our events, yet, our race venues are mostly public property (SUNY, town/city parks, public schools), and it was not possible to get permits. Given our race directors are volunteers who have other full-time jobs, it wasn't realistic to ask them to come up with new venues, new courses, new safety plans, etc. After many brainstorming sessions, our Winter Series was cancelled. As was ROTG, DD, the Master's 10k, and the Distinguished Service Run. Our pandemic debut was the Colonie Track Series. Frank Myers, Ken Skinner, Barbara Sorrell, and Ed Hampston were instrumental in pulling this off with very restrictive requirements from USATF. Then came the Tawasentha Series directed by John Kinnicutt. And with support from CDPHP, Mark Warner and team, the Workforce Team Challenge offered the opportunity for 5000 Capital District employees to race. Less than a 1000 seized the opportunity to head to Altamont on a hot August evening. While the event didn't bring in any funds to further HMRRRC programming, the charities of choice (Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, Ronald McDonald House and Red Book Shelf) each received upwards of \$7000 through runner and corporate donations. HMRRRC mission accomplished. The club hopes to resume this race with the traditional date and location in 2022, but it is unexpected that we return to the 10,000 sellouts we've had in the past. Many work places are permanently different. The Labor Day 5k returned to Schenectady with NNL still the sponsor and John Parisella still the RD. The dedication of race directors in 2021 is a highlight of the year for the club. It was an easy year to fold. An easy year to back out and say "it's not worth the extra effort". It took extra effort in keeping people safe. And our club has always had volunteers willing to go the extra mile.

Some of those volunteers are aging, and this has been a year of transition. We've had transitions in major club roles: Administrative Assistant, Facility Manager, Pace Setter Editor, Public Relations, and we're preparing for transitions in more: Website Administrator, Race Committee Chair, and Race

Committee Treasurer. Change is good and continuity is important. Those leaving their roles have been extraordinary in training their replacements. We're extremely grateful for that. One goal for the future is to better utilize our Google Drive system of record keeping. Having accurate job descriptions and details of processes properly organized will suit our needs should anyone ever leave abruptly and/or be unable to train a successor.

Note in the list of transitions we had no change in RD's for 2021, but we know this won't always be the case. We have very qualified people at the helm of our events, and it will be a challenge to find replacements when needed. We have secured a new Administrative Assistant after Marcia Adam's retirement and a new facility manager after Tom Adam's retirement. Carol Reardon and John Parisella will be assisting race directors in the coming year, but the challenges for them remain. There are a lot of other events out there. While our races have been very popular in the past, will they remain so? What will race directors need to do to keep them competitive? The competition in the running marketplace is changing. 50 years ago, HMRRC was the running club of the community. Now there are clubs associated with running stores, with breweries and restaurants, with coaches and gyms, with social media groups and more. Some people attend races to race. Others attend them to socialize. Our club and race directors have the challenge of meeting everyone's goals, and it isn't easy, but it's HMRRC mission critical. Our membership is down. Understandably, hundreds of members did not renew during the pandemic. Will they re-join? Will they attend our races?

To attract runners to our races and to reward our club members, we have reinstated the Grand Prix, albeit with a reduction in prize money. We shifted the start and end dates so we will be able to recognize winners at next year's annual meeting/awards ceremony. The Labor Day 5k race was the first on the calendar with Tawasentha #2 being the last. To attract volunteers to our races, we are giving them Grand Prix points as well. There is no requirement to be a volunteer, but people must realize there are no races without volunteers.

Another way we can attract runners to our races is to improve our marketing. Ray Newkirk has transitioned the role of public relations to Courtney Breiner who has created an Instagram account for the club. Now you can follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Race Directors are using various social media outlets to advertise their races and some may be developing promotional videos for the future. The continued presence of photographers and participants willing to write race stories and reports will contribute to the marketing as well. In 2021 we saw a change in Pace Setter Editorship from Christine Bishop to Stephen Hallgren back to Christine Bishop. The Pace Setter has always been a means of marketing our events and bringing members together. 2021 was no different.

One-way 2021 was different is that we suspended our grant program for the year. Considering we had no race income in 2020 and considerable financial loss, we halted the grants and reduced our scholarship awards from \$18,000 to \$12,000. We awarded \$3,000 each to 4 Section II runners who are on a mission to continue running in college. Our Just Run program which also supports youth in the

community was on hold this year as schools were not offering extra-curricular activities in that manner. Knowing our funds were low from the lack of races in 2020, Just Run coordinator Ken Skinner paired up with Pete Newkirk to seek out a sponsor for the hefty price tag of the program. After being turned down by several corporations, the club got an offer of \$35,000 from a charitable foundation for the sole purpose of Just Run. Amazing! When Ken Skinner is involved, it's mission not impossible.

From a financial standpoint, the state of our club is strong. Again, not the strongest it has ever been, but due to excellent operational planning in the past, the club had a "rainy day fund" to weather this pandemic. More specific details on club finances to be provided by Treasurer Tom McGuire in a moment.

Whether or not HMRRRC makes it another 50 years is not dependent on the finances of the club. It is dependent on the members of the club. Members of the club must voice their concerns, their wishes, their desires; attend meetings, attend races; direct meetings, direct races. Together we can make another 50 years happen, but let's focus on 2022 first.