

## Message from the President:

# “The Past Two Years Have Been EPIC!”

OK, this is the “business portion” of our meeting today. So I’m going to say a few words about the success of the club this year, a few parting words of my presidency and then have the process of nominations and the new board begin.

If you haven’t already pursued through the Banquet program you will see some very tangible data that clearly demonstrates that “our club rocks”. I like data, most runners do. We wear Gamins, we download our runs we have training plans chock full of miles, pace times, number of repeats etc. We are often concerned about our times and many people in the room can give there PR for almost any distance to the tenth or hundredth of a second. And if you don’t know it, stayed tuned – Tim O’Keefe will give you the data shortly. So club data that demonstrates that our club rocks include

- An all-time high (yep that’s over 40 years ) of members (which includes the running boom of the 80’s of 630 members
- Over \$20,000 raised in our 3 signature races given to charity this past year.
- Over 270 people sign up for our three training programs in the 5K, half marathon and marathon training program. These programs are new to the club and something I thought we were missing when I started my presidency. Crazy to believe that these programs were so popular and showing how the club now fills an important need to our members.
- 7000 people now get our emails advertising raises we support and learning about our club
- We performed 30 finish lines for local races helping organizations in our area raise money for charities and provide running and walking opportunities to over 5000 participants, keeping the community healthy.
- 128 people volunteered at least once for the club which is about 20%
- And we brought back the General membership meeting, in which this year Lori and Ryan Cooper and their beautiful girls showed the similarities between running and life lessons. The membership meeting is important in highlighting what we do as a club and ways in which members can get involved. Starting this year, it will also be the special event in which we will celebrate our volunteers.

But since I wanted to make sure our volunteers were appreciated for the 2014 year we are adding a special thank you to them tonight.

Luanne Hock and I worked together to implement a Volunteer Appreciation program, I felt very strongly that our club's awesomeness really is based on the back of our volunteers. And without them we aren't what we are. I know none of you volunteered because you were short a pint glass or a car seat cover (although those car seat covers are cool as can be) but you volunteer because you love to run, you love to promote running and you love the steeps. And that just makes me very happy. So tonight I want to say a special thanks to our volunteers. Everyone who received a volunteer award please stand. Please give yourself a hand, your friends a hand and please before the end of the night talk to someone who is still sitting and tell them the amazing feeling you get when you volunteer for the club. I say that jokingly but the first time I volunteered to work a finish line was almost magical.

So those were some pretty interesting numbers. And a few more numbers to throw out in this excitement are some low numbers... Like flying fast 5K, like top 25% Age Grade times. Yep this year I'm happy to announce that the Steeplechasers will be putting together a racing team. Much like many of the other MD clubs. Under the guidance of our very own super speedy and all around wonderful Sage Norton. Sage is going to talk about this in a bit more detail shortly but I am so excited for her and this project.

I guess this is the part of the program where I sum up my presidency. First when I started this journey 2 years ago I did so with Crista Horn, Kerry Shephard and Anne Light. As an all-volunteer board at all different stages of life, retirement, new jobs and kids, I end my second year with Crista Horn and Harriet Langlois. All of these women have amazing strengths and have been so helpful the past two years.

So to sum up my presidency I wanted to use one word that was kinda of theme this past year. That word is EPIC.

This year some of you may know is what I called "my year of living Ultraly" and I completed 10 ultras from 50K-100K in the year. And a two year stink as president is similar to an ultra. With any race there is always some uncertainty of how it is going to go. Just like the overwhelming uncertainty I felt when Mark and John asked me to be president. Ultra running and club presidency has inherent unknown factors. For Ultra running you have to ask: Will I have stomach issues and not be able to get enough nutrition into me. Will I get enormous blisters and have feet issues (especially if there is multiple water crossings) and on most trail races there is always the chance of a crippling fall. As president I was worried would anyone sign up for our training programs, would the club ensure inclusivity and can we show our volunteers how much we appreciate them. Throughout my long races I got

to experience many things and encounter some challenges but I vividly recall a conversation with Johnny Leonardis about a signature Dave Horton race. Johnny said “there is a big hill, bigger than all the other big hills in the race, you’ll know it when you get to it but during the race remember to take a look around you at the beauty of the area and enjoy. This is how I feel about the club. At any time I look around, or head out my door and across the street to Baker park where lots of women are gathered to participate in the 5k training with Luanne Houck or Billy Clem is leading the Half Marathon group, or Andrew Quong is meeting the marathon training group while Jan Harris is already along the course putting out aid even though she can’t run---I see the beauty. I see Crista our secretary helping organize Ricks run , man the aid station at JFK and kick butt at her own races, while attending to all the club business, teaching, volunteer coaching for Girls on the Run and taking care of two kids with active extra-curricular activities. I see Anne Light taking on Race Director of the Market Street Mile and using the proceeds to work to create an amazing after school running program for the kids at Lincoln Elementary who may not have any other access to after school sports. And I see Lou King who thankfully retired just in time to rework our website, our scoring system, our membership and training program enrollment and countless other areas of our club. I see the beauty in our club when a nearly a dozen of us in the marathon training program ran more miles than degrees outside. (Yep 15 miles in 13 degrees) And it’s pretty easy to see the beauty in steaming hot coffee and that crazy good sorgum coffee cake at Karen Ochs house at a breakfast run. and in the end I think just like at the top of the ridiculous climb at Terrapin mountain 50+K which yep was bigger than all the other hills as Johnny described and before the crazy slot canyon which gets described as smaller and small each year according to Steve Dobson is this view that takes your breath away and makes you happy and proud of what you have accomplished and you think “Yep, this is Epic.”. Thank you to each of you for making the last two years Epic. I wish us all many more miles together.

*Pam Geernaert, January 24, 2015*