

## **ATRA Meeting 12/14/16**

**Attending: Adam Chase, Ellen Miller, Eve Mills, Brandy Erholtz, Richard Bolt, Tom Sobal, Ian Torrence, Dave Mackey, Bryon Powell, Peter Maksimow, Nancy Hobbs**

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM.

### **Elections**

- Started with the secretary position because we had a volunteer. Susan stepped down from her role. Adam nominated Brandy Erholtz, Ellen second the nomination. Unanimous vote. Brandy will serve as secretary and start her role tonight.
- Eve would like to continue on as treasurer. Adam nominated her. Brandy second the nomination. Unanimous vote; Eve will continue on as treasurer.
- It was asked if anyone new wanted to run for president or vice president. No one did.
- Adam and Ellen were both willing to continue their roles as president/vice president respectively. We had a vote of acclimation. Adam will continue as president. Ellen will continue as vice president.

### **Finance/Budget (Adam)**

Financial documents were sent before meeting to review. Adam asked if anyone had any questions. Stated the financials looked positive with over \$72,000 in the bank.

Our membership numbers look great and are way up over 2015. We can thank Nancy, Richard and Peter for this as they've been working hard to promote membership at all levels.

Adam asked if our presence at events (OR/The Running Event) were behind this.

Nancy stated it was our presence at events and also because we've added new programs. Since January, we've added the double track membership (\$400) and have 13 members at this level with 2 more coming on board in the next week or so. It is mostly companies joining at this level.

Our relationship with the Event Standards Program has also helped increase membership. Motel 6 and LPTent USA have recently joined at the switchback level and as such, participate in ATRA's Event Standards Program as preferred partners.

We will also be adding a trail ambassador program each month—people who make a difference in their communities will be highlighted. (We received verbal commitments from companies who will partner with us to give “swag” to the ambassadors. These partnerships will be announced soon).

Nancy— the budget for 2017 will include increased travel dollars to increase our presence at events. We'll also allot a bit more money to upgrade the website, primarily the calendar.

Adam asked if we will have tents set-up at the events to recruit membership. Nancy said we'll have tables where it makes sense.

Richard will be attending winter OR and already has some meetings set up. Nancy and Richard will continue working on this.

## **Social/Media Updates (Richard)**

Trailrunner.com—we want it to be one stop shopping for all trail running related news. We have a digital strategy designed to drive traffic here to create value for cooperate members

Traffic is up 80%

- 73% of traffic is to our calendar/races (this is an increase from 2015)
- 14% of traffic is to our trail news (original & new) (this is also an increase from 2015)
- 6% of traffic is to our homepage which is actually a decrease from 2015; this is good as we want people “digging deeper” into our site

With an increase in funding, we'll work on improving the look, feel and on the back end the ability to load/update race information into the data-base. This will make our search engine faster as well.

Adam had a question about banner ads. Ads are currently bundled into cooperate membership, not ala-carte. The higher level of membership, the more exposure through website, banner ad placement on pages with the most traffic. Richard stated bundling seems to work for us as it helps us develop deeper relationships.

Adam had been in a conversation earlier today about where to advertise for more immediate use and said our current system isn't really conducive to situations like this. (Maybe a race director who only wants to advertise for a couple of months each year leading up to a race.) It was brought up that our email newsletter may be the solution for this type of advertising. Bryon confirmed from experience maintaining corporate relationships are worth it. Richard said we don't want to turn away potential income and again mentioned the email newsletter being the best avenue for companies/races with immediate needs in advertising.

## **Search Function of Website**

- 61% of traffic comes from organic search ([trailrunner.com](http://trailrunner.com))—this is an increase from last year; pay search with Google
- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest source of traffic—social, 25,000 followers (FB, Google +, Twitter) (FB-74%)
- Twitter traffic is down
- Google Plus—3% although small, it's free and easy to copy/paste content

Goal to draw traffic

- Interact with community
- Info to community
- Benefit corporate members

Adam—how much have we been paying for the “pay search” experiment? Richard thought in Q2 —between \$6-800 (Richard—trail running key words), 2<sup>nd</sup> experiment around a certain event (Western State Traffic) --- was a failure. Don't know unless you try it. We won't do it again.

Richard said in 2017 he sees possible value in research around general trail running search terms (FB & Google). Nancy said the actual amount paid this past year was around \$400.

### **Email Blast**—Nancy & Peter

- Peter— has greatly increased subscriber base
- Nancy—lots of work
- 21,000 subscribers!! (Started at 9000, 12,000 and now 21,000!)
- Peter—utilized members, race directors and asked for databases;
- People have the opportunity to unsubscribe
- Open rate is 20-40% —43% are from mobile devices
- We need to continue to ensure the website & newsletter are mobile friendly
- 25-30 email newsletters were sent out in 2016: monthly, race director newsletter since June, holiday ones, shout-outs for trail conferences and some surveys
- Area for improvement would be to increase referrals to the website from the newsletter as we are only at 1% right now.

No questions

### **Community Theme (Nancy)**

Ellen, Eve, Richard, Nancy (Trail Conference)-brainstormed the idea and came up with the idea of different programs. (Trail towns, ambassadors, etc.)

The strategic planning has been very helpful for Nancy, Richard & Peter when trying to generate the community element.

Adam had a question about the trail ambassadors wondering how the selection will be done. Nancy said we will take nominations from our group or others. In the beginning, we may be lacking. However, all of us have ideas—some on advisory board as well. She foresees it being like the trail towns once people understand what the program is. We now we have 10 towns the cue. The program has really taken off. Social media can really help with this. Eve agreed to help out with the program. We will put the profile on the websites. With the partner program, gear, etc. will be provided and will also get some publicity on the website. Nancy has proposals out to 5 companies. 2 have already committed.

Peter had a little to add on the community theme. He has connections at Inov-8. Nancy met with Inov-8 (US/UK) and they've committed at the steep & rocky level (\$2500), Richard has connections with Salomon. Knowing people really helps.

Women in running—Peter is taking the lead on this. We hope to start sharing tips from women on women specific topics and create an interactive community. Jasmine an Inov-8 athlete will be helping with this.

### **Current Initiatives**—

Event Standards, etc.—basically already touched on all of these.

**Memberships**—WAY up; one level we tapped into was the individual supporter level for only \$15 there is the opportunity to win free race entries. We gave over 75 this past year. It's been really positive. Members also get the discounts on magazines.

All corporate levels of membership are also way up as we can see in budget

Budget 43,000 over \$50,000—really good year!

Peter & Richard—Kudos!

### **Presence at Events 2017 (Nancy)**

Not a comprehensive list:

- Road Runners Cup of America (Detroit)
- OR (Winter/Summer)
- USATF
- US Trail Conference
- Birkie ½ Marathon
- The Running Event

Richard, Nancy & Peter will continue to brainstorm ideas.

At table—tips, promotional pens, adding new item—soap—homemade from Colorado—citrus/lemon, logo, available in 6 weeks. Nice for people to walk away with something!

### **Anti-doping Discussion (Adam)**

- Sub group (4 of us)—Adam, Ian Sharman, Ethan Veneklasen, Nancy working on getting funding together for drug-testing at trail events.
- The recent development of the Clean Sport Collective will supplement with our own group.
- Idea—some random testing in 2017 & quite a bit in 2018---real progress has been made in the last couple of months to make this a reality.
- No testing in the past—great likelihood of never getting caught
- Now random testing at random events—huge deterrent for dopers
- Nancy—details of last meeting—go to Clean Sport Collective website
- Meeting—requested funds to utilize for anti-doping as there has never been any at USATF championships. This got people taking notes. Budget has already been assigned for 2017. However, this is definitely something for the budget in 2018. (USATF for anti-doping for championships—at least \$5000, possibly even \$10-20,000 could be allotted)
- MUT committee recently adopted an anti-doping policy which is fairly soft; however, we need to start somewhere.
- Clean Sport Initiative any testing?---relying on sub-group, USADA as testing organization
- Goal is one random event to be tested in 2017 maybe more--\$10,000/event to test.
- Would they be USATF Championships or other events? Probably other events.

Discussion around getting event directors to buy into the phrase-“we may have testing at our event”—possible deterrent for dopers, it could be promoted on entry forms to share with athletes beforehand

Peter suggested we not clarify how many events will be tested. The fear of getting caught will be greater if random.

**Peter**-wanted to share a few other initiatives in the work for 2017:

- women trail tips, beginner & novice, question/answers by women for women
- youth standards initiative—Peter coaches & works with youth— thinks this is important for the younger generation
- community— would like to get input from more runners t (“elite” in particular) about— why anti-doping is important (Sage Canady came to mind); perhaps have athletes write statements in addition to what they already post on social media
- Attending events- more presence
- Trail town: Montpelier, Vermont (Where his wife Nora is from.)

Adam closed by asking if there was anything else. No questions. Thanked us for our time and wished us all a happy holiday season.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7 PM.