

THE FLEET FOOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB | AUGUST 2020



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GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB INCLUSION ISSUE



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Editor: Robert & Kory Skrob, (850) 270-8295, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

Columnists: Jane Johnson (Featured Feet), Paul Guyas (Pres. Column), Gary Griffin (How they Train), Bill Lott (Race Calendar).

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Submissions/Contributions:

Submissions for publication are strongly encouraged, the preferred format is Microsoft Word. If you have pictures or stories about your running group, don't be shy, photos should be in jpg format. Contact us if you have questions.

Robert & Kory Skrob, (850) 270-8295, FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org

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The start of the 8K and 5K races at Gulf Winds Track Club's 2017 Miller Landing Madness.

Photo credit: Herb Wills



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YOUR MEMBER BRIEFING

Your GWTC Board of Directors met on August 12, 2020. Here's a summary of the board meeting, distilled down for members.

You are welcomed to view the complete minutes by visiting: <https://www.gulfwinds.org/minutes-may-2020/> and <https://www.gulfwinds.org/minutes-june-2020/>



You are welcomed to attend any GWTC Board of Directors meeting. The next meeting will be at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. Email FleetFoot@GulfWinds.org for details if you'd like to attend.

Two Years of Budgeting – David Yon

David provided a summary of the GWTC's finances for the year and addressed projections moving forward. As of May 13, 2020, the club's assets total \$255,115.06, and a net loss of \$21,458.31 was reported for the fiscal year ending in June 30, 2020. A summary of the club's obligated expenses for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2020, was also distributed via email prior to the meeting. Estimated expenditures total \$38,878.66 and include the following items: MiFi costs (for timing), storage warehouse costs, credit card fee, App Embarq monthly fees, insurance and membership costs, software renewal costs (for timing), annual report filing costs, virus protection costs (for laptops), QuickBooks fees, holiday party costs, and annual award costs. The holiday party was estimated as the greatest cost, at \$15,171.66. The holiday party venue, Shiloh Farm, was reported to involve three payments of \$1,400, and it is uncertain whether the GWTC can get out of this venue contract. Collectively, the estimated expenditures suggest that the club will remain viable and able to meet its obligations even without hosting races for the rest of the year. Further, it was

highlighted that races are generally net positive, meaning that the hosting of races would likely yield revenue for the GWTC.

Gulf Winds Track Club Diversity Committee

Paul proposed the formation of a new committee or task force to address diversity, equality, inclusiveness, and related matters, given recent events across the nation. Feedback from the board on this new committee was solicited, and it was noted that a more defined title and description of the committee will be presented at a later date, once the committee is formalized. Discussion on the committee and its potential actions took place. Following discussion, board members interested in joining the committee were encouraged to reach out to Paul Guyas.

SMIRFS Program (2020) Update – David Yon

David shared that progress with the SMIRFS program has been limited and that many of last summer's (2019) SMIRF runners are currently running at a Maclay School summer camp headed by Coach Angie Milford on the Maclay campus.

David has dedicated time and energy to helping Angie with this summer camp, which is estimated to contain about 30 participants.

Fraudulent Debit Card Transactions – David Yon

David addressed matters related to recent fraudulent activity on the GWTC debit card. It was reported that nearly \$10,000 worth of unauthorized charges were made on the GWTC debit card. The funds have since been replenished in full and the card canceled. A new debit card has been issued to the club, and it was suggested that the spending on the second card be limited. David underscored that a detailed report on the fraudulent debit card transactions was created and disseminated to the board. Those who did not receive the report and/or who would like to see the report again were encouraged to reach out to David via email.

Further, in light of this recent banking event, a suggestion was born. Specifically, it was noted that Bill Lott is currently the only person who can sign a check and/or talk to the bank on behalf of the GWTC, and it was proposed that Peg

Griffin be authorized to perform both of these duties, i.e. write checks and talk to the bank on behalf of the club, as well. To expedite the process of authorizing Peg to perform these duties, David drafted a resolution for the board to approve and read that resolution to the board. In addition to the resolution, David drafted letters to the bank that he, as Treasurer, and Paul Guyas, as the President, would sign to grant Peg authorization to sign checks and talk to the bank on behalf of the club. Discussion on this resolution took place. A motion to approve the resolution was made, seconded, and approved with no opposition.

Lastly, the question of whether a debit card or credit card would be better for general club spending was raised. It was noted that consumer protection laws may be friendlier towards credit cards and suggested that use of the club debit card be limited as much as possible. Discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of debit cards and credit cards took place, and a motion for the Treasurer, David Yon, to get a credit card for the club was made, seconded, and approved with no opposition. 🏃



Kristina Lamb and Erik Davis approach the finish line of the Flash 6K, February 16, 2019.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - PAUL GUYAS



Talking about equality and inclusion

Last month I wrote my best-received, most applauded, and also riskiest column yet. I wanted to say thank you to all those that positively responded and affirmed my message. I'm quite confident that there was some negative sentiment, but in fact, I did not hear any of it. So why was it risky? Because I took a chance on stirring the pot - even just a little. This month, I'm going down that road again. Dare I fly too close to the sun?

Introspection: I have long been a believer that we humans mistakenly divide ourselves up into arbitrary categories. Furthermore, upon inspection, most of those categories don't make logical sense. Assigning, identifying, labeling race is a social construct far removed from biology. I have often viewed myself as side-stepping those ideas and in small ways rejecting those concepts. Essentially, a viewpoint that we are all one and if I don't contribute to the dividing and labeling problem, then I'm helping to make it go away. Admirable? Perhaps. Naive? Yes. Useful? No. So here I am trying to evolve - in this case through words on paper.

But, Paul, talking about racism is divisive. No. Racism is divisive. Talking about equality and inclusion is the opposite - the literal opposite. Throwing the "divisive"

or "controversial" label at equality is incorrect, lazy and simply a thin veil poorly disguising discomfort with the topic. We, middle-aged white dudes specifically (looks in mirror), are going to have to get over it. Your discomfort is not others' divisiveness. We need to push past that initial layer of defensiveness. Defensiveness is part of our innate fight or flight reaction to conflict and it will inevitably lead to anxiety, anger and a peeing contest about who is more "right" - these days often waged in a comment section.

Now relax, it's all going to be fine. Let me help you. Here are five ideas to work through defensiveness.

Practice self-compassion. Be kind to yourself and open to your feelings as you would do for a friend, know there are others out there having the same difficulties/conflicts, acknowledge your emotions and the scale - don't make them bigger than they are.

Take responsibility. Use "I" statements to highlight your perspective and avoid blaming others. This will build toward finding common ground and ultimately solutions.

Borrowing from another author that I read this week: Engage actively, think



Photo credit: Herb Wills

Continued from page 6

reflexively, reason critically. There was a great concept discussed - asking “sideways questions.” The idea is to consider broader aspects of peoples’ experiences as they tell you a story. “How has the speaker cast the story? Why tell it this way? Whose voice is dominant? Whose is unheard? How else could the story be told? What goals and values are being brought by the speaker/ by me? What has shaped their worldview? How do I perceive them? How do they perceive me? Why?

The Harvard Business Review discuss being a “plusser” which means listening to someone and adding to or building on to what they say which may take the form of contributing an adjacent idea or asking for the next step.

They also give the following advice: Breathe once and acknowledge your first reaction (usually defend), but don’t follow through. Breathe again and acknowledge your second reaction (usually retaliate), but don’t follow through. Breathe again and try to find a solution.

Finally, my favorite (ask my girls): Comedian Craig Ferguson delivers similar advice in a different way. He would have you ask yourself three questions before you say anything: “Does this need to be said? Does this need to be said by me? Does this need to be said by me right now?”

My answer to those final three questions is: yes. yes. yes.. 🏃

Everything You Need for the End of the Race (Except the Refreshments)

A collage of various promotional products including medals, trophies, and race gear, set against a background of a map of Florida and a list of product categories.

Product Categories: BANNERS, SWAG, CAPS, RACE APPAREL, INSULATED COOLERS, CAN COOLERS, SPORTS BOTTLES, NECK DRAPES, RESIN FIGURES, TROPHIES, MEDALS, RIBBONS, SIGNAGE.

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GULF WINDS TRACK CLUB INCLUSION ISSUE

The Fleet Foot contacted several members inviting them to share their perspective on the inclusiveness of the club and to offer ways we could become even more inclusive.

CLEMENT ALLEN

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? My daughter, Jamila, and I joined the Track club in 2012, our 3rd year of doing triathlons. We joined the Track club to become members of the Tri club, where we do most of our participation. The only reason we joined was because in those days Tri club members were allowed to register for Red Hills Triathlon first before it sold out.

The Tri club means a lot to me. Some of my closest friends are people I met through the club. Those friendships have extended beyond triathlons and will be lifelong friendships. As a parent I pay close attention to how people treat my children. The love, support and kindness our club member friends have shown my daughter is the primary reason the Tri club is so meaningful to me.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative?

My experiences with the Tri club have been overwhelmingly positive. Prior to joining the Tri club, I thought it was just

for wealthy, elite athletes. Because I did not see any other African Americans in the club, I also thought it would not be supportive of two new members who did not fit the usual demographic. But as I attended more meetings, did more races, got to know more people and they got to know me, I soon felt a more positive vibe about the club.

There have been a few cases where I have had to educate someone about misconceptions about African Americans or HBCUs (Historically Black College or University) or language that could be divisive. Those cases were moments where I experienced growth too.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? My suggestions are for the Tri club. We can revitalize the South City Multisport Club. We can have a more diverse set of speakers at our meetings. We can host a race on the South side (indoor Tri perhaps). 🏃



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Felton Wright starts heat 1 of Breakfast on the Track 2019.

Photo credit: Fred Deckert

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ETTORE ALDROVANDI



What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? It may seem obvious, but GTWC is a running club, it is made of people sharing my interest and passion for running. But much more than this, it is a group that has given me and my family the opportunity of meeting great many exceptional individuals. We have shared experiences, there are many that I am honored I can call friends. From many I have received invaluable advice and support.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? I can't really think of anything negative. I don't participate a lot (if at all) to the club's social activities, so for me it's mostly the races. And there are a few that I absolutely love.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? This is a hard one, especially for a white European male. So, I'd say that first of all I am not the best qualified person to answer such a difficult question. There's no denying that running is a largely white activity. Aside from recent events, there was an article in a running magazine where an analysis from Strava track records showed that in stark relief. While I don't think GWTC can do much to change the demographics, maybe one thing it can do is trying to diversify its target audience, as far as the club's outreach activities are concerned. 🏃

BRITTNEY BARNES



What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? Gulf Winds Track Club embodies a sense of community and personal achievement. I don't view the club as just a "running" club but one for volunteering locally, helping individuals get out rather it be to walk, run, help put on an event, provide scholarships, mentor our youth or just lift up others. "Track Club" is just the tip of the iceberg in what the club means to me.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? My experiences with the club have always been positive, I have met many different people, who became friends. I don't know everyone in the club but the club has always made me feel welcomed.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? That's a loaded question, it's hard to tackle. Possibly promote more; not just at the typical locations, but put flyers in all communities. Of course, there is a huge gap in the club diversity. I don't think it stems from the club not being inclusive, I think it's just more of a promoting aspect. It can also go along with racing "fees" which are not necessarily expensive, but for some, the idea of paying \$20 for a run pushes it to the back of their list. One step already taken was adding more diversity to the board. 🏃

JAMIE HARRIS

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? I actually was introduced to the track club through my involvement with Capital City Cyclists. My best guy friend Mike Boll (insert prayers for Mike here) encouraged me to show up to intervals at Leon High back when Chuck D. was leading the group. I formed some friendships right away and was inspired to start running and “racing”. I ran my first 5k in August 2009 and was inspired by Jerry C. to run even faster in hopes of being able to run as fast as him one day. In short, it means friends, a family of runners, folks who share a common interest of running, those who run before the sun comes up, after the sun goes down and through the night, those who run for fun, those who run to find themselves, find their limits, those who run a little, those who run a lot. It means there’s a group or person in this community willing to share that experience regardless of my physical traits, gender identity or expression, education level, profession, religious beliefs, etc.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? I’d say all of

my experiences have been positive. I’ve never felt excluded, threatened, unwelcomed or uninvited. My wife and I have been to many GWTC functions including the annual holiday party and have been able to dance together and socialize without fear of reproach.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive?

I honestly don’t know. I haven’t been as involved in volunteering over the last few years, and I’ve attended fewer races and functions, so I may not be the best person to ask. I am hoping to be involved with the diversity committee. For a long time, I wanted to start a LGBTQIA+ running group as one of the many training groups during the week. But any more I am not sure I need a specialized run group, especially since the club seems to be so welcoming to all interested runners. I think as long as the club information is available and easily accessible and we promote inclusiveness, that is what is important. 🏃



GEB KIROS

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? GWTC is more than a running community to the Kiros Family. Joining the club has been one of the best things that has happened to us in Tallahassee. GWTC has been great for our health, fitness, and socialization. We have met many amazing people and have made great friends. We have been supported and inspired by so many runners and volunteers.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? Our experiences have been extremely positive.

When I asked our children about GWTC, I got the answer “90 percent of the people at GWTC are great.” In fact, I can even go further and hypothesize that if all people were runners, we would have much less problems in the world. No one in our family has negative things to say about GWTC.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive?

Probably more community outreach. 🏃



ADRIANA PIEKAREWICZ



What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? Gulf Winds is the type of running club that feels more like a family than an organization. From my very early beginnings, as an 11-year old running under Gary Droze at Maclay, I developed extremely close bonds with countless members of the Gulf Winds Track Club. Their support throughout my running journey has been nothing short of extraordinary. I currently reside in Winston-Salem, NC and when people ask me what I miss most about Tallahassee, besides my family, it is always the running community that comes to mind. I will be forever grateful for the positive impact that Gulf Winds has had on my life.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? To be completely honest, I cannot think of one negative experience that I've had with Gulf Winds. Everyone in the club makes me feel loved and supported. My most recent experience was at the Olympic Trials

Marathon this past February in Atlanta where I heard more cheers from Tallahassee than from anywhere else. I heard my family, Jorge, Betty and Alejandro Piekarewicz, one of my best friends, Lisa Johnson, as well as Felton Wright, David Yon, Katie Sherron, Sheryl Rosen, Seeley Gutierrez, and in the final miles, when I needed to hear it most, I heard my HS coach, Gary Droze. It is truly special to have a community like Gulf Winds who always seem to find a way to provide endless love and support to their community.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive?

This is a tough one for me to answer because I have always felt included and have always witnessed the organization welcome anyone with open arms. Honestly, in my experience living in other areas around the country, I think that other running organizations could learn a thing or two from Gulf Winds Track Club. 🏃‍♀️

Would you like to contribute to the **FLEET FOOT?**

Share your writing or photography skills with your fellow GWTC members.

Our goal is to encourage running and celebrate making ourselves better each day. Reach out if you'd like to contribute with member profiles, race coverage or have ideas that would make Fleet Foot even more fun to read each month.



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PHIL AND JULIA SURA



What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you?

GWTC means a lot to both of us. We have met many of our Tallahassee friends through the club. We love all the events, not only the races but also the social gatherings like the holiday party or the spring potluck. Over the years we have become addicted to some of the training groups, in particular the Tuesday evening intervals on the FSU track. Where else can you get advice from great coaches and other runners for free? Unfortunately, the FSU track is still closed (and might be for the foreseeable future). That is, we really miss the Tuesday evening workouts and hanging out and chatting with other runners after work. Kudos to Gary and Bill; we miss you! To get our fix, we are now “running” our own Tuesday evening intervals with a small group at a secret location.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? What we think is very positive is that we see runners of all ages and abilities, fast and slow. You don't have to be fast and furious to be respected by other fellow runners. GWTC

is really there for all kinds of runners. It's about the respect for the sport and not (entirely) about speed. In addition, because of running a great variety of races over the years we have seen so many different Tally neighborhoods and trails. On the negative side, fellow athletes sometimes worry a bit too much about Boston Qualifiers and other major events, but you cannot blame that on the club, of course. Perhaps we are currently just too lazy to get there.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive?

From the athletic point of view, we consider GWTC pretty inclusive (see the previous discussion). However, we would like to see more minorities participating in races and other club activities. Perhaps we should have more events in Frenchtown and on the FAMU campus. We really only have run one race at FAMU. We loved it, even the hills, but it was a very small race. Every runner ended up winning (a trophy or other prize). The atmosphere was great. 🏃



Edwina Porter and Bernice Lewis at the Sickie Cell 5K in 2018.

Photo credit: Fred Deckert

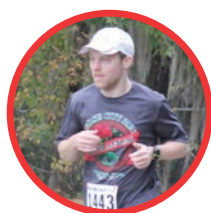
MARK TOMBRINK

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? Gulf Winds Track Club has been a great way for me to take something that I enjoy doing and use that hobby towards making outstanding friendships with extraordinary people whom I would have never otherwise met. It has also been a way to get much more involved with the local community as well as an outlet to challenge myself in terms of what I want to do with the hobby.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? The people that I've met and gotten to know through GWTC have been wonderful and supportive. This has been like an extended family. We care about each other on a personal level, and we can utilize our relationships as a way of dealing with life issues that have absolutely nothing to do with running. When it relates to running, we support each other in terms of applauding our personal goals and challenging each other to push even farther outside of our comfort zones. I would

not be the person I am if I didn't join GWTC.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? This club is great for those who are avid runners. I feel as though some people who are very casual or inexperienced runners may be intimidated by the apparent serious with which some people pursue this hobby, the accomplishments that some have achieved, or the dedication that it may occasionally require. Others may not understand distance running because it is not as flashy as other activities and it is not a "spectator sport". Some groups may not feel as represented by GWTC, such as those of certain ethnic groups or people who work more blue-collar professions. I am unsure of how to target certain sects of the population, but outreach programs such as the beginner running group, for example, is a positive step towards helping bridge that gap. 🏃



HONG-GUO YU

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? GWTC means family. I am proud of being a GWTC member.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? I joined GWTC about 5 years ago. My experiences are all positive. I have participated in several GWTC-organized training groups, e.g. Tuesday evening track and Sunday morning Forest Meadows, and of course many

GWTC-organized races. I appreciate the friendship from my fellow runners. The GWTC leadership and its many volunteers are amazing. I admire their work and appreciate their time and effort.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? In my view, GWTC is inclusive and welcome to all. 🏃



CHRIS TURNER

What does Gulf Winds Track Club mean to you? GWTC to me is a place where my friends, family, and neighbors can come together to have a good time, exercise, and appease our desire for competition. It's also a group that has for years done good work in the community assisting non-profits such as Second Harvest and Girls on the Run.

What have been your experiences with GWTC, positive and negative? Up until last week there was little negative to see. But that's how things are. I always "felt" nothing but positive and support, until we started to discuss ensuring that we are being inclusive. People seemed to take so much offense to that, from the outside looking in I would be wary. The most positive experience was after the Boston Marathon bombing. When Shannon Colavecchio, myself, Mike Williams, and several others decided to put together a charity run and the entire community showed up to support the city of Boston.

What can GWTC do to be more inclusive? Honestly, that's why our committee is meeting. I think people hear "diversity

committee" and think that we are going to walk around counting that there are enough black people at races. That we will force them to move races from the north east down to the south side. That we will make a specific category for BIPOC at the races for awards. Running is cheaper than most sports to take up, but it is harder to do without the right motivators and coaching. A few months back there was a post asking for running shoes for a high school in a neighboring county, while I support helping everyone in need, we can also take this energy and look at the south side. Work on developing a run club (or reigniting the south city club). What will it take? All of US wanting to leave the North East, midtown, Southwood etc, and drive a few minutes south to meet with and help. Establishing some run groups that meet outside of our usual places. Increasing our presence. Small steps. Our goal shouldn't be simply to pull more BIPOC faces into the club, but to make sure everyone knows the club exists and has the same access to it. 🏃



Christopher Turner completing the St. Peters Anglican 5K on June 16, 2018.

Photo credit: Fred Declert

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