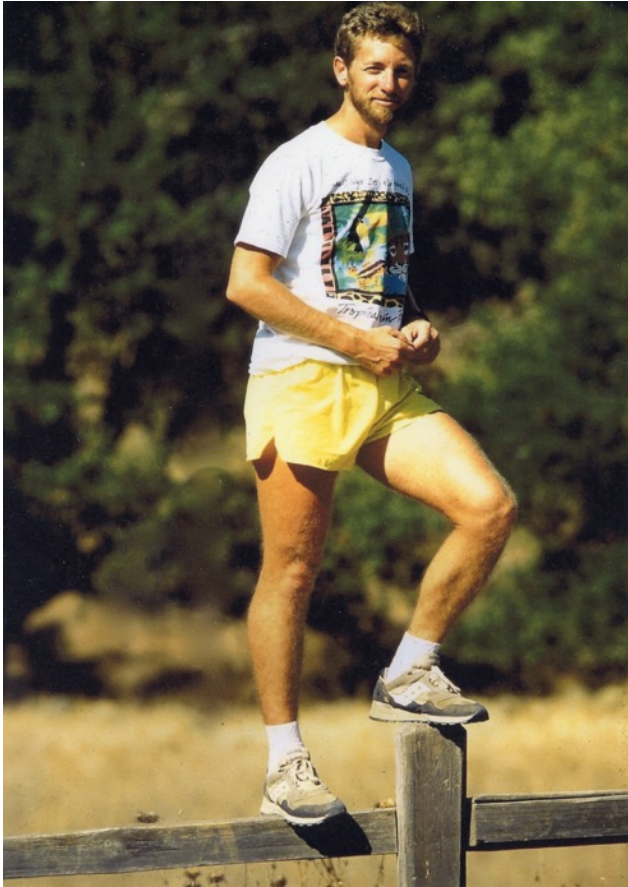


Larry Meredith



Larry was born and raised in a small town near Muncie, Indiana. He had a rather normal childhood sharing the household with 2 sisters and a brother. He got his start in running as a middle school sprinter but when success wasn't imminent he tried the mile. By the eighth grade he finished 5th in a county meet which led him to being a 4 year member of the XC and track teams at Wapahani HS. Larry finished Jr and Sr year as the County Mile Champion with a PR of 4:38 and his senior year XC team finished first as well.

Larry matriculated to Purdue majoring in engineering but finished his studies in PE at Ball State. It was during his time at Ball State that Larry began coaching high school track and realized how much he enjoyed working with the kids. He continued running at Ball State and began marathoning (running 3 marathons in 1979) with a best of 2:52.

Larry moved to Sonoma County in 1981 hoping to get a PE teaching position. Due to the scarcity of jobs, he began working at OCLI, a local tech

company. While still checking on PE positions he spied a notice for a Cross Country coaching position at Montgomery HS. In 1982 he got the job just days before the season opener. Larry was touched by the sportsmanship and encouragement of Piner's Jim Underhill and brought that to his coaching. Larry coached for 18 years at MHS beginning with a second place league finish for boys in his first season and winning league in his second year. Highlights of his coaching career include winning league for boys 5 straight years (12 total), 2 NBL titles for Girls, sending many individual boys and girls and teams to the CIF State XC championships. Larry notes that the girls program really took off when Tori became the girls coach. Larry and Tori have coached many outstanding local runners over their long coaching careers.

In 1987 Larry joined the Empire Runners, looking for a place to develop group training to better his personal running goals. He quickly became involved in many aspects of the club, first as newsletter editor and training director. He was instrumental in developing the Valley Ford Relays with Doug Courtemarche. He also started the high school support program during his 3 year presidency. He has been a volunteer for a variety of club races while racing himself and an entertaining contributor to the newsletter/blog. Larry has been team captain for many events: Mt Diablo Climb, Hood to Coast, Decelles Memorial, Xmas Relays. The trip in 2008 with 23 Empire runners to the Boston Marathon was his favorite. Finally, he has had a major impact on the Empire Runner XC program along with John Harmon.

To truly appreciate his impact, one just needed to be at the 25th Annual Viking Opener when over a hundred of his former athletes descended on the Spring Lake course for the coaches race and raised the running level of each race that followed. After that, over 200 athletes and their families spent the rest of the day at a Doyle Park picnic sharing stories, laughter and tears. As a coach myself, the event answered the question "Is the time spent worth it?" As a fellow runner, teammate and friend, is the time spent worth it? As an active volunteer in all aspects of our club's production and improvement has that time been worth it? I know Larry would say a resounding YES... and I would too!

- submitted by Brad Zanetti

