

LA LUZ TRAIL RUN – 2005

By Rodger Sack – Race Director

This was the 7th year that the La Luz Trail Run has been coordinated by the Albuquerque Road Runners Club and I have been fortunate enough to be the Race Director for all those years. In my opinion, this was the best La Luz Run since I have been involved with this race. I made some slight changes in the registration process for the 2005: 300 on-line registrations from Active.com and 100 walk-in registrations from Fleet Feet Sports. The on-line portion of the registration process was filled in 20 minutes and the walk-in registration process was completed in less than 2 hours. Because of the Forest Service imposed limitation of 400 registrants and ever increasing popularity and publicity that the race is receiving, the registration process is becoming ever more complicated.

The race day this year was a beautiful morning – cool, almost clear, and some humidity in the air. There were a total of 352 finishers this year – higher than in the past. The men and women's 2004 champions (Simon Gutierrez & Rachel (Cuellar) Dobbs) both returned and defended their championships. We did have many new comers to La Luz this year. That has been my goal from the beginning – make La Luz a race that is more accessible to everyone.

This year Boston's Pizza signed on as one of the major sponsors of the race – they provided the awards and all of the refreshments at the Finish Line at the Crest. A big “Thank You” to John Phillips and his crew from Boston's Pizza for their support for La Luz and the Women-In-Training program. They have already indicated that they are willing to help out again next year. Mechenbier Construction again also provided monetary support for the race and I want to publicly thank John Mechenbier for his continuing support of the La Luz Trail Run. Dos Hermanos furnished all of the paper cups that were used at the aid stations – thanks again to them for their ongoing support of the race. The Forest Service provided the bags that were used for packets. Crystal Springs Water again gave us a great deal on the gallon water containers that were used at the aid station – there is enough left over to also cover the Dirty Dozen race this fall. Thanks also to the Scout troop that again helped out with the aid station at the Overlook. Thanks to John Bryl of Fleet Feet Sports for again doing a great job of announcing at the Finish Line. The group of Ham Radio operators also did a stellar job of providing communication throughout the course.

This race requires a great number of ARR volunteers to be a successful event and this year's group of volunteers did a great job. There are too many to list here, but you know who you are and I want to acknowledge all of you and time and effort that you put in to make this another successful La Luz Trail Run. However, I would like to acknowledge Roxie Miller for all of her help with the race – she coordinated all of the volunteers, arranged for the dozen porta-potties that you saw near the start line, and even though not feeling well helped to coordinate the starting line, handed out the awards and compiled and distributed the results to the Press on

Sunday afternoon. Speaking of the Press, the race has been receiving a lot of attention in the press – there was front page coverage of the race in the 8/8/05 Journal, coverage in the Tribune and some publicity from Channel 7 Television (Joe Diaz – their weather guy ran the race).

After a year's absence, this year we also had a photographer that was taking everyone's picture near the finish line, so those of you that ran the race will be hearing from them regarding purchasing finish line photos.

Everyone probably has already heard about the Lottery that I am trying next year for the race registration. I want to make the race registration process as fair and equitable as possible for everyone. This process is already described on the ARR website (ARoadRun.org). Boston's Pizza has already agreed to host us when the 400 self addressed stamped envelopes are drawn from the pool of entrants. I would like to make this selection process fun – I envision it being something like the pro sports player draft process. We could have door prices for those attending as spectators - either to see if their name was drawn or just to watch.

Now it is time for me to try to start getting back into some kind of shape and forget about La Luz for a few months. Thanks again to everyone that helped out with the 2005 La Luz Trail Run. Our club and its events are only as good as the involvement of the membership. See you on the trails this fall and winter.