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By [Paul Shigley](#) March 3, 2010 [No Comments](#) [Printer-Friendly](#) [ShareThis](#)



You think nothing lasts anymore? If you're talking about electric appliances, I agree. But some things seem to keep ticking. For example, the NorCal John Frank Memorial footrace celebrates its 40th anniversary on Saturday, March 6, at Lake Redding Park.

All right, I'll concede the event has evolved so much over the years that it is nearly unrecognizable from the original Sacramento River Run in 1970. Still, it's essentially the same event, and one of the biggest on the local athletic calendar.

Until 1979, the race was part of the Brightwaters Festival (you'll have to ask an old-timer about that long gone event). The original race course was 7.62 miles, hilly and rugged, because there wasn't any nice, smooth bike path along the river back then. Runners didn't cover a full 10 miles until 1977, the same year that a 3-mile race was added and the name was changed to the NorCal. Thanks to the running boom, the race expanded from "50 entrants and a dog" in 1973 to 765 entrants in 1983, according to current race director John Luaces.

In 1987, the event was renamed for John Frank to honor the 1980 state high school cross country champion from Shasta Lake who had died in an industrial accident the previous year. During the mid- and late-1990s, the race moved to hilly Shasta Lake roads where Frank often trained. The event returned to Redding for its 30th anniversary, and three years later it became a stop on the Pacific Association of U.S.A Track and Field's road championship series, with honest-to-goodness prize money.

Which brings us to today. Not often do we hackers get to toe the line with people who are able to run as fast as last year's winner, Sergio Reyes, of the San Luis Obispo area, who finished in a record 48 minutes and 50 seconds. Reyes is entered again this year. But the event is about more than elite athletes running for money. The NorCal is a celebration of running and fitness and – we can all hope – a glorious springtime. Last year, more than 500 people participated in the 10-mile, 3-mile or 1-mile children's run. That last event, which awards \$1,300 in gift certificates to winning school teams, might be the highlight.

You may still register for any of the races by stopping by the Redding Fleet Feet, 1376 Hilltop Drive, between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Friday, March 5, or beginning at 7 a.m. on race morning at Lake Redding Park. The children's 1-mile run is scheduled for 8:30, with the 3 mile run/walk and big-time 10-miler at 10 a.m. For details, visit the SWEAT running club website, <http://sweatrc.com/>.

• Congrats to Foothill High School Athletic Director Troy Wellington, who was recently named athletic director of the year for the California Interscholastic Federation's Northern Section.

• If you own a business, the federal government just might pay you to add employees. Seriously. Shasta County will receive about \$7.8 million in federal emergency contingency funds, which county officials will award to local businesses who hire new employees. Private and nonprofit employers may get reimbursed for up to 100 percent of wages and payroll costs until September if they hire Shasta County residents with at least one minor child, who are unemployed or underemployed, and who meet certain household income requirements. For details, contact Ron Rossiter at the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency, 245-7605.

• I love the concept and excitement of one-night-only cinema. Doni recently wrote about getting to see the Metropolitan Opera this way, and last fall I was in a packed house for a showing of "Race Across the Sky," a documentary about the Leadville 100 mountain bike race. This week, you can see "Half the Sky," a musical event spurred by a book of the same name by journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn that chronicles the oppression of women worldwide. The book is grim stuff, but the cinematic event is intended inspire and uplift. It will be shown at 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 4, at Cinemark Movies 10 in Redding. Expect appearances by India.Arie, Maria Bello and, one of my favorites, Michael Franti. The event will also include the world premiere of "Woinshet," a documentary by Marisa Tomei and Lisa Leone about the struggles and ultimate triumph of an Ethiopian woman. The details: http://www.ncm.com/Fathom/OriginalPrograms/Event/Half_The_Sky.aspx.



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