

## Seal Beach

### Bill Ayres

Almost Seven months from today, on Saturday, April 10, 2010 Seal Beach will host its 36<sup>th</sup> annual 5K/10K run/walk spearheaded by race director William T. “Bill” Ayres.

According to Bill, this isn't just any run. “This is one of the most recognized 5 /10K runs in the Southern California Racing circuit,” he says. “Its success is a reflection of the race committee volunteers’ diligent efforts.” Like Bill, many of the committee members work on the event throughout the year. Because of the growth of this event, he now finds it necessary to spend seven to eight months working full time on the various details .

While he thoroughly enjoys race day, what’s really rewarding for him is working with the Race Committee Members and the numerous volunteer organizations that make the event come together, especially presenting checks to those community groups, some of which have volunteered to make the event a success. His Race Committee personally works with many non-profit groups for event volunteers and they represent organizations from Seal Beach as well as from nearby cities. At the conclusion of the event, non-profit organizations are invited to apply for a grant funding for recreation, physical fitness and wellness programs, equipment and scholarships from the event’s net proceeds. June 2009 saw a record of \$100,000. in grant funding being awarded to local organizations. The grant requests each ranged from \$600 to \$18,000. with over \$270,000.in total being

requested. Since everyone contributing their time for towards the success of this event is a volunteer the net proceeds are maximized. Over \$500,000 has been given back to the local communities during the past 9 years by the Race Committee.

The volunteers include local citizens, high school booster and athletic programs, middle and elementary schools, youth organizations and the City of Seal Beach itself. The numbers of workers from these groups range from 4 to 170 and totaled 550 in 2009.

Bill moved to Seal Beach about 24 years ago and having been involved in competitive distance running all of his life, Bill quickly got involved with the local running community. His first volunteer work was with the Seal Beach Cancer Run. Today, The Cancer Support Foundation is affiliated with the Seal Beach 5&10K event.

This involvement led him to volunteer for the Seal Beach 10K, an event that was being administered by the City of Seal Beach Recreation Department. According to Bill, the City decided it was too time-consuming for the recreation department to be involved and wanted an outside organization to take it over. During this time, Bill had become the president of the Running Experience Club of Long Beach, which had 220 active members. "I was able to convince our group to take over the handling of the Seal Beach 10K and return most of the proceeds to the City of Seal Beach for recreation purposes," he says. "This process continued for several years and it became apparent that a well-organized local Seal Beach group would be best suited to make this event grow to the next level."

In 1998, Bill took the next step and worked to incorporate the Seal Beach 10K into a nonprofit organization and began putting together the single 10K race into three different races: a 5K run, a 10K run and a 1K Kid's Fun Run, all on the same morning..

Additionally, all proceeds would be given back to the local community for recreational, physical fitness and wellness purposes.

The changes to the race organization run has worked very well. "I have seen the yearly participation grow from 300 runners to a total exceeding over 5,500 runners/walkers in April 2009," he says.

Seven years ago, Bill sold his company, W.T. Ayres & Associates, retired and began devoting most of his time to the Seal Beach 5/10K, which, he says, "I really enjoy and it keeps me busy."

With each year's race completed, Bill and his wife, Gail, enjoy vacations in foreign countries as well as in the U.S. In addition to traveling and working on the annual event in Seal Beach, he runs about 15 miles each week, rides his bicycle along the San Gabriel River bike path and plays golf.

While a high school freshman in San Antonio, Bill began running track, winning the Texas State Championship in the mile run his senior year. He attended Texas A&M University and also ran track there while earning bachelor degree in marketing with a minor in mechanical engineering. Being a member of the famed Texas Aggie Corp of Cadets

following graduation, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force where he served three and a half years. During this period of time Bill participated in competitive long distance running events.