

Progress through help from others

By Sean Pagett
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We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Accepting change and help from others have always been areas that I have needed to work on.

I was forced to work on those areas back in June. Our expert timer, Mark Greenleaf, decided he needed a break from the chaos of timing events, our old trusty time machine broke and we had some major changes with our volunteers. I was moving and downsizing my life, but I can now happily report that I've done pretty darn good with both of those areas of improvement.

My progress has definitely come from the generosity of the many good people around me who have stepped up and made it impossible for me to avoid change or turn down their very sincere offers of help. Our biathlon on Sunday morning was a prime example of what can be accomplished when we embrace change and allow our friends and loved ones to help us.

Instead of marking what many feared would be the end of our Frozen Pea Productions events, the race now called Peaman's Birthday Bonanza turned out to be one of our best ever. Not only are we keeping our fun and free series of silly events going, I can proudly say that I'm more motivated and inspired than ever. Much of my renewed vigor has come from the good people whose help I have accepted.

Although Mark Greenleaf doesn't come to our Frozen Pea Production events, he still helps us a ton by processing the results. That can be quite difficult considering how simple our pea races are. The dynamic duo of John Simmerman and Laura Dierenfield has taken over the timing. John and Laura have been a godsend, and there's no way we could have kept on going without them.

At the finish line, Chris "Polar Bear" Becker, Jimbo Stickman and Finney and Tina Rossman have been keeping things running smoothly. Our buoy setters and underwater photographers, Bo and Jaime Pardau, have helped my dad, Bill "Papa Pea" Pagett, make sure that the buoys are filled and put in place.

Finally, in the area of prerace and postrace stuff, I have been blessed with Doug Henbest and his daughter, Jessica. They have helped me load and unload stuff from my storage unit, get things set up and clean up at the end. Jessica even donated her brand new mountain bike to our raffle so we could earn some money for a new time machine that we will donate to John and Laura of People's Advocacy for Trails Hawaii. Doug and Jessica have really made the races fun for me, and their generosity has been amazing.

I know I have probably missed many others who give so much to our FPP events, but to me, all of us who are there truly are putting on the show. I'm especially thrilled by how many families we have at each of our adventures. A few of our regulars like the Mortons, the Fooks, the Nottages, the Bartholomys, the Kalawas and the Hauanios always put a smile on my face and keep me motivated to keep our silly events going.

The Kalawa and Hauanio families always go above and beyond at our Birthday Bonanza. They make homemade cupcakes, Western theme lollipops and very clever and creative custom T-shirts.

Our new 2009 schedule of fun free stuff to do is a prime example of both change and accepting help from others. This year's beautiful, color calendar is our best ever and was made by Rani "The Roadrunner" Tanimoto and Penn Henderson. Their time, effort and energy will be appreciated throughout the year as we all keep up to date on the very affordable and free events that Kailua-Kona has to offer.

Even with all of Sunday's merriment, there still were a bunch of energetic peas in our pod who turned in some record breaking performances. Way out front was the very speedy Thomas Vonach, who blazed the course in 37 minutes, 46 seconds. His main competition came from the day's top wahine, Yvonne Van Vlerken. On Oct. 11, Van Vlerken turned some heads at the Ford Ironman World Championship by taking second overall in the ladies race. On Sunday, Van Vlerken took first for the ladies and second overall with a blazing time of 38:44.

Our first local finisher was Geoff Whitener, who clocked in at 40:09. Ben Fisher, dressed in his old-school speedos and legendary aloha shirt, followed in fourth at 41:03. Fifth overall and second for the ladies went to our top local wahine, Jennifer Nottage, who continues to amaze me with her strong performances even though she is a very dedicated mother of two pea-weas and a wonderful wife to her husband, Tad.

In the finned race for our flipped peas, Antonita Villa dominated the mostly wahine group with a time of 47:42. Top honors for the split pea relays went to the family team of Kevin Moats and his son, Karl. They teamed up for a time of 39:16. The pea-wee division at Sunday's bonanza was huge. Zippy Bartholomy blitzed the 200-yard swim and one-mile run course in 13:16. Silas Wiley, who along with his dad, Tim, brought us a really cool Peaman birthday cake from Costco, took second at 17:43. The next three spots went to our leading ladies: Karen Wriighthouse at 18:43, Halle Mae Nottage at 18:45 and Cheyene Avery at 18:46.

The day's biggest honor known as the Perpetual Pea went to the very deserving Doug Henbest, his wife Lori and, of course, his wonderful daughters, Ariel and Jessica. The Henbests truly epitomize what our pea events are all about: family, friends, fitness and fun.

Finally, if this column seems a bit different than usual, it is. When I was writing this column, my dad was at Kona Community Hospital with a bunch of broken ribs and a punctured lung. At this point, he is in the very, very good hands of Dr. Peebles and the fantastic nurses up there. I am confident that with their expert care and the prayers and blessings of all of our family and friends, Papa Pea will be back stronger than ever.