

News for You!

November 2009



7 HILLS RUNNING CLUB

Go, Runners, Go!!!

7Hills' New Officers

New 7Hills Running Club President Mr. Jody Slaughter of New Waverly, Texas leads 7Hills Running Club into 2010. Election night, Jody told club members he has spent time enjoying cycling and running events for over 20 years. He is now taking the opportunity to give back to the running and cycling community. Thank you Jody. We look forward to working with you in the coming year!

Phillip Clark - Vice President

Mariah Reynolds - Treasurer

Lavonne Zaiouts - Registrar

Mary Sweeten - Secretary

Membership Updates

Membership Dues

During the November 5th meeting, members voted to have membership fees due on one date each year and to add a "Student" category to the membership fee schedule. Student fees will be \$5 per year; while Individual fees will remain at \$7 per year, and Family fees will remain at \$10 per year.

Starting in 2010, all membership fees will be due on January 1, 2010.

During the transition for the first year, dues will be prorated accordingly to when members paid in 2009:

Dues paid January 2009 – June 2009: full fees are due on January 1, 2010

Dues paid July 2009 – October 2009: members will pay ½ of their membership fee on January 1, 2010

Dues paid November 2009 – December 2009: members will receive credit for 2010; fees will be due on January 1, 2011.

Notices will be emailed to all members in December. Please watch your In Box for your notice.

Did You Know...

You can receive a 10% discount at Luke's Locker, if you mention your Seven Hills membership?

Upcoming Races: www.7hills.us for details

Sugarland Turkey Trot 10K/5K	11/26/09
TXU Turkey Trot 10K/5K	11/26/09
Sheltering Arms Turkey Trot—Houston	11/26/09
GE Run Through the Woods—The Woodlands	11/26/09
Turkey Trot—5K Conroe	11/27/09
Left Over Turkey Club Run 5K/10K Huntsville	11/28/09
Texas Trail Runs 50K, 12.5 miles Huntsville SP	12/05/09

Special points of interest:

- *Meet our new Club President*
- *San Antonio Rock N' Roll family weekend!*
- *Rocky Raccoon—Lavonne tells all!*
- *How to Start Running - Andie Ho gives in*
- *Seeking Webmaster!!*

San Antonio Rock N' Roll Marathon and Half Marathon

Jerry Flanagan and family had a great weekend in San Antonio at the Rock n Roll Marathon and Half Marathon. Here's what Jerry had to say:

First of all, our grandkids Brendan & Ben ran in a 1-mile kid's run Saturday morning at Brackenridge Park. It was a non-competitive run for kid's ages 5 through 10 and was very well organized. The 5th grade ran first and every 15 minutes another wave would start. The kindergarten kids (Ben's group) only ran a half-mile. Both of the boys did well as they had run in the kid's run up in Bremond this past June. My daughter-in-law, Bianca ran and walked her first half-marathon and actually finished it in 3:22. The amazing thing about it is that she had not trained a lick for the race. I finished in 4:28 and qualified for Boston. Also, got 3rd place in my age group (65-69) and was one of only three in my age group to qualify for Boston. It was really warm and humid in San Antonio, but at least there was some cloud cover which helped. I usually do not run well in those conditions but broke out of my funk after about 6 miles and did not experience any problems. There were about 30,000 runners in both races and it took almost 30 minutes for my chute to be released after the gun sounded. Bianca had to wait an hour before her chute started. That is way too long to wait in the heat or cold. *-Jerry Flanagan*

Rocky Raccoon 25 K—November 7, 2009

I prayed. I battled. I endured.

Then I fell. And I bled. But I finished.

Today was my second 25K on the trails at Huntsville State Park. No iPod...just me and the Big Guy spending time in prayer and thanksgiving. Earlier in the week, I asked for prayer requests on Facebook and received quite a few. I also said prayers for some who hadn't asked, but their troubles were weighing heavy on my heart....especially my co-workers D and T.

My plan was to eat a large bowl of oatmeal before heading out, but my stomach and appetite just weren't up for it. This concerned me, but knew I'd have bananas (ugh) and oranges at the Aid Stations to get me through.

I've always despised the sandy parts of the trails and today they proved to be a bother in more ways than one. After a quick stop at Aid Station 1 (no oranges - darn), then what would be my only pitstop (thank you Lord), I resumed a good pace back along what we call the "south perimeter road", where sand tends to take over in some parts. I lost my footing while running in one section of sand, and though I felt my left knee twist to the left, I was more concerned that I lost footing in my left ankle. Thankfully I was able to catch myself and not fall. Little did I know that the left knee twist would come back to haunt me during miles 8 - 12.

It was great seeing Seven Hills faces along the way. Curtis and Phillip, along with their dogs greeted me at what we call "Amy's Crossing". Next along the way was Aid Station 2, sponsored by Seven Hills....again no oranges :(

I'm not a big fan of bananas during a race. They tend to sit at the top of my stomach and not want to digest. Today, however I had no choice. After my experience with peanut butter during the Huntsville Half, I decided to stick to bananas and chocolate chip cookies.

I tend to people-watch during these longer races. I even go as far as giving names to strangers. For the first half of the race I stuck close behind a guy who reminded me of my dear childhood friend, Randy. This guy was built just like him...long legs, rail thin, and thinning dark hair; hence the name "Randy look-a-like". And there was "Pedro". I loved his pace, but lost him and "Randy look-a-like" after Aid Station 2. And lastly, there was "Lee". He ran just like another childhood friend, LeAnn....kicking his feet out to the side with each step. I even thought I saw Chic Runner. Having her in Huntsville would have been awesome.

Around mile 8 was when the pain in my left knee started. First an ache here and there, but as the race progressed, I started experiencing sharp pains from my knee to my ankle, then from my knee up to my hip. Where I usually tend to take the downhill at a faster pace, I found myself walking (and sometimes tip-toeing) them with extreme caution. Running through sand was unbearable. And walking for some reason was torture. *(continued on page 3)*

Rocky Raccoon (cont.)

During this part of the race, I stayed close behind a husband and wife. "Hubby" took a nasty fall, and seconds later I stubbed my left toe on what might have been the same root. I feared more damage to my knee.

Where I usually tend to look for excuses to walk, I found myself upset that I couldn't run faster. I WANTED to run....mentally, and emotionally. I owed it to those I was praying for. But every time I landed on my left foot, the pain became more intense. But I kept going...

Getting to Aid Station 3 took longer than anticipated. Realizing I only had about a 5K left to the finish, I caught my second wind. I looked at my watch and thought surely it wouldn't take me an hour to run a 5K. Surely a PR was obtainable.

This part of the race seemed a bit crowded. Not with runners, but with hikers, bikers, and Boy Scout troops. What I really enjoyed were the families out for a hike who cheered us along the way. One family with three kids really went out of their way....taking short-cuts through the woods to meet up with us again. This was about the time I befriended Connie, a runner from Houston. Although my knee pain was still there, I was mentally working myself through it. Connie's encouraging words helped a lot.

I look back on what happened next, and can't believe how overwhelm I became at this point. As we came up to the Nature Center, the volunteer informed us we had about a mile left. Emotions overcame me (surprise surprise). But I realized the pain in my knee seemed to subside. And that's when it dawned on me....

Maybe the knee pain was God's way of having me "carry" D and T's pain. Had I just literally physically lifted them up in prayer for the last six miles? I'd like to think that during that time, maybe God allowed me to carry their emotional and physical pain, so that they could be pain-free. I'd like to think that God was holding them in His hands during that time. That's my wish for these two friends.

With these thoughts going through my brain, I was overcome with emotion. I'm known to shed a few tears during my prayer runs, but today I found myself practically heaving during that last mile. Crying for the hurt my friends are going through. Crying that God let me, in some spiritual way, help Him today with D and T. Crying that they have to endure their loss....their trials. Wishing I could make the events from the last three weeks of their lives just be a nightmare.

The noises I'm making at this point are by no means, quiet. Thankfully they didn't bother those around me. I can hear the cheers in the distance, and I get myself together. I see the race photographer and hold up the "peace" sign as she snaps my photo. The finish line is about 75 yards away. The trail ends and I come upon the parking lot. Then I step up to the sidewalk. And that's when it happens....

I trip on the concrete. I fall. I roll. I bleed.

A kid helps me up and I keep running towards the finish. I cross the finish at 3:19. A PR by 14 minutes. I remember to stop my watch at 3:20.

My plan was to stick around and watch more of the race. But every bone and blister on my body is hurting. I get home and realize I have chaffed myself in places I've never chaffed before. I try to nap, but it's impossible. My stomach and the pain in my knees won't let me.

Getting out of bed in the morning should be interesting.

Things I saw/learned/realized today:

1. Can't believe a guy actually wore a headband of deer horns on opening weekend. I wore white on purpose, knowing hunters would be in the deer stands around the vicinity of the park. When I came upon Aid Station 2, one hunter was actually volunteering his services, since hunting was out of the question.

2. Saw two ladies take a leak in the woods. You go girls!

3. Although I wore shorts and a short-sleeve shirt, I still managed to overdress. I should have worn a sleeve-less shirt. I was chilled before the race, but once it started, the chill went away F-A-S-T!

4. I've been running with the Renegades too long. I noticed today that my breathing habits are becoming like those of Hans....or maybe it's John.

5. My bladder behaved today. Thank you Mother Nature.

To read more about Lavonne's running experiences, visit <http://bawanie.blogspot.com>

How to Start Running: Get a Beautiful Roommate

You remember that kid in gym class who couldn't do a pull-up, could barely do a sit up and couldn't run a lap to save her life? That was me. I was the fat asthmatic kid in my class, and I did everything I could to avoid any sort of physical exercise. During kickball games, I stood far in the outfield, preferably next to one of my more athletic classmates so that in the event the ball came our way, the more coordinated one of us would dive for it. I fumbled my way through dodge ball, Frisbee, basketball and even line dancing, trying to appear as if I were making an effort so the teacher wouldn't come up behind me and yell "Hustle!" But I could not avoid the dreaded yearly fitness tests, where we had to run a mile (a distance I was sure humans were not built to cover on foot) and perform other various impossible feats of strength, flexibility, speed and coordination. And when I got home, I would watch TV and eat pizza rolls.

My views on running consisted of the following:

[I]t seemed that all runners ever talked about (with the possible exception of mute runners) was running. How today's run felt. How today's run felt compared with yesterday's run. How they felt a cramp around the seventh mile of their run but it started to loosen up around the fortieth mile of their run. In addition to their smug implications that because they wore shorts and owned watches that beeped intermittently they were now members of an elite segment of middle-class white people whose metabolism had magically turned Kenyan. That their hearts now beat only once or twice a year, that pasta now just slid through their bodies and out their [bottoms] looking exactly the way it did when it went in, and that someday they were all going to get together and have a huge electrolyte festival that the rest of us wouldn't be attending because we'd all be dead because we weren't runners.

-*The Other Shulman*, by Alan Zweibel

Like drooling, running was something crazy people did. Why would a person willingly leave the comfort of their couch with the sole aim of sweating copiously when so many after-school cartoons awaited them?

Today, I weigh 30 or 40 pounds less than I did at my peak in college, and while I don't eat as well as I should (the consequences of living with a naturally skinny boyfriend who can lose weight while eating a pizza sandwiched between two hamburgers), at least I have enough of an understanding of nutrition and calorie counts to know what I'm shoving down my gullet every day. I ran my first 5k in February and started training for this year's Huntsville Half-Marathon, although due to medical setbacks I wasn't ready to participate when race time rolled around. My heart really does beat slower, according to my doctor, although pasta still looks different coming out than going in.

My friends who have known me through all my shapes and sizes ask me for my secret. I give them the usual breezy advice—eat less! exercise more!—and tell them all you have to do is get started. It sounds easy enough, as if all you had to do was summon the willpower to lace up your shoes and get out the door. Which makes me a hypocrite. That is not how I started running. I started running because of a boy and a girl. A girl who was not me. During my sophomore year of college, my dorm room looked out onto the university football field, which had a track looped around it. Still an avid non-believer in exercise, I never looked twice at it. Early in the fall, I discovered a new boy living down the hall. He was in ROTC (and looked fantastic in uniform), a devout Catholic and always a gentleman. It didn't take me long to develop feelings for him. We saw each other daily, and soon we began spending evenings together chatting. One night we were alone together in my room with the lights down low. I was sitting on the floor against the wall and he was lounging next to me with his head almost resting on my thigh. While we were talking about nothing in particular, for some reason our tones became lower and more intimate, and we were looking shyly at, then away from, each other. My heart raced, and I remember thinking that it would finally be the night when we revealed our feelings for each other. There was a lull in the conversation, before he gathered up the courage to say what I could tell had been on his mind all evening. Finally, he spit it out. "Your roommate is hot."

I had read in books about people's hearts dropping to their knees, but now I was experiencing it for the first time. I don't remember my reply—in fact, I don't remember any of the rest of our conversation—but I eventually managed to escape by telling him I had to get up early the next day. After he left, I paced in my room, not knowing what to do. When my roommate returned, I knew I couldn't be in the same room with her, not yet. I left the dorm, my chest heaving with anger, humiliation and unshed tears. It was dark, and I headed for the floodlit track. When I arrived, there was nothing to do but start running, jeans and all, to burn up all the raging emotions in my heart. After one lap, the tears started flowing. After two laps, I was wheezing. By the third lap, I wasn't sure how much more I could take, but the memory of his soft voice lusting dreamily after my roommate was like a boost of nitro in a drag race. At the end of the fourth lap, I finally collapsed. As I sat heaving, I realized that I had just run my first mile. Ever.

I kept running day after day, at first to work off my feelings, and then later just because I could. I'd discovered that it *was* humanly possible to run a mile after all and that I, personally, had the ability to do it. I thought that maybe, just maybe, I *wasn't* destined to be the fat kid for the rest of my life. And like Forrest Gump, I just kept going.

I never breathed a word to either of them about what happened that night. The boy who broke my heart got married last month—no, not to my roommate, though they did end up having a fling that year—and my roommate and I still talk regularly. I have to say I'm grateful for my clichéd episode of teenage angst. Because of it, I was able to accomplish what had always seemed impossible. What I initially thought was a blow to my self-confidence was actually the cornerstone for it.

-*Andi Ho*

7 Hills Seeks Webmaster For Possible Long-term Commitment

Do you consider yourself technically savvy? Do you enjoy tinkering online for hours? Do animated gifs, pics and page layout really excite you? Have you ever thought, “Man, that website sure could use - (fill in the blank)”? Step up and show us what you can do with a website. We all enjoy seeing our photos, race results and upcoming events posted to our club website at www.7hills.us.

And although you will not

be monetarily compensated for your time and hard work, the adulation that your fellow runners and club members will surely shower you with day in and day out will more than make

up for it.

Oh, and you get to be called *webmaster*. Oh yeah...

Please contact a club officer if you are interested in maintaining the 7Hills Running Club Website.



Nice to Have the Husbands Back

Club members welcome the Husbands back to town Monday with a 4 o'clock run in Huntsville. Emails flew back and forth Sunday setting the time and place of a reunion run. The Club hasn't been quite the same since they left town. Karen's bright smiling steps and Andrew's long stride have been

missed. John Cook and Hans Jaeger committed immediately to run the State Park trails with the Husbands Monday. The Renegades have their Renegade back. Be thankful for your friends and family this holiday sea-

Karen and Andrew, we miss you! Nice to have you back in town.

son. Near or far, keep them in your hearts. And don't pass up an opportunity to meet up with these far away friends if they are travelling in your area.

Thanksgiving Day and Beyond....

Eat all the turkey, stuffing, sides and pie you want knowing you have chosen a turkey race to help burn off all of those treats! No matter where you may find yourself this Thanksgiving Day you will be very happy to know that there is probably a race nearby. Runners from all over will gather in familiar and new venues to properly celebrate Thanksgiving. Make this race different than any other you've run this year. Take this time

to be thankful for the things that make you happy in life. Maybe you have just set a PR in a recent race, or you have just taken your first step to living an active and healthy lifestyle. Celebrate your success! Also, don't forget to give thanks to the many challenges in your life. Acknowledge your relationship with running. If it leaves you frustrated and feeling deficient because you haven't trained as fast or as long as you thought you

would, find value in your effort. Make this Turkey Run your race to appreciate yourself, your ability to run and even more importantly, your commitment to continue running.

- Mary Sweeten



Happy Thanksgiving! Don't forget to pick a Turkey Run!