

“Running Shorts” Column for Feb. 19

## Races, Coming and Going

The Love Run Marathon. Christmas in the Pines. Neon for Neurons. The Great Muddy Escape. The Hog’s Hunt Trail Run. Sweethearts 5K. CASA Superheroes 5K. The list of runs that have disappeared from our local race calendar in recent years is greater than the list of races that remain. Why is it so hard to keep them going? What’s the secret for those that succeed?

The key thing to realize is that every race has a lot of moving parts. There’s a lot to organize and keep track of. You have to determine a course, and get the word out, and get volunteers for race day, and have food and water and traffic control and timing and awards. You have to design and print and pay for t-shirts. You have to cut bananas and mix Gatorade and clean up everything afterwards.

Occasionally a group will contact me that is thinking of putting on a 5K run to earn some money. We discuss everything that’s involved: what needs to be done, how many people will be needed to do it, the amount it all will cost. After that, most people back off.

Longstanding races and fun runs gain their longevity in one of two ways. The first way is to rely on a group of dedicated volunteers who are in it for the long haul. This is the approach used by the Seven Hills Running Club in putting on the Huntsville Half Marathon and their monthly club runs around town. One person handles the awards, another the course, another the finances, and so on. The procedures for handling each of these things get institutionalized, so no one has to figure out everything from scratch, and knowledge gets passed down through the years.

The other way is to rely on the profit motive. This is the approach taken by the Texas 10 Series, who put on the Texas 10--Huntsville, and by Tejas Trails, who put on the Rocky Raccoon runs at Huntsville State Park. They pay people to handle most vital race functions. In each case, the race director works full time putting on races (these and others), so they get pretty good at it. While not the cheapest, races put on using the profit motive are often well done.

Fortunately, two new local races have popped up on the calendar recently to fill the gaps left by those who have closed up shop. On March 2, Sam Houston’s birthday, the Run with Sam 5K will be held at Sam Houston State University. At \$20, the entry fee is quite affordable. You can learn more and sign up at [www.runwithsam.org](http://www.runwithsam.org).

Then, on Apr. 6, Forest Glen Camp will put on the All Good in the Woods 5K and Fun Run. This run will traipse through the trails on the camp property. Afterwards, participants are invited to stick around for the camp’s Family Fun Fest, in which you can enjoy the ziplines, swimming, canoeing, and more. Call 295-7641 for more information.

I feel a personal connection to this race. Kevin Edney and I helped organize its predecessor, “Run Forest Run,” a few years back, and I will be the race announcer for this new version. Afterwards, I am heading to the zip lines...

## Upcoming Races

February 23 - Sweetheart 5K and 1-Mile, 8 a.m. Region VI Education Service Center, 3332 Montgomery Road, Huntsville. Register at the starting point. \$1 for Seven Hills' members, \$2 for non-members.

March 2 - Run with Sam 5k, SHSU Campus, Huntsville, 8 a.m.

### **Recent Race Results**

February 9 - **Rocky Raccoon 50K, Huntsville**

Angelina Santos 7:44:51 (3rd in Age Group)

February 9 - **Kilgore to Longview 11 Mile**

Steve Allen 1:27:15 (1st in Age Group)

February 3 - **Sunday Night 5K, The Woodlands**

Ken Johnson 44:50

February 2 - **Katy Half Marathon, Katy**

David Keithley 3:07:20

January 27 - **Texas 10 Series, College Station**

#### **10 mile**

Emily Garner 1:15:28 (1st in AG)

Steve Allen 1:16:50

Steven Bickford 1:21:47

Jose Moreno 1:28:55

#### **5 mile**

David Keithley 58:26

Cathy Bickford 1:04:13