

RUNNING SHORTS

Influencing others to run

By Ken Johnson

Bridgette Collins and I worked together at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in the early 90's. I encouraged her to start running, but to no avail. She moved to Dallas and I never heard from her again until last year. She emailed me to tell me that she started running after she moved to Dallas.

Collins has since completed four marathons, works as a fitness coach and consultant and has published two books on fitness. She said that in all her writing and speaking that she attributes her getting started to me. I was shocked; I had no idea that I influenced anybody.

I thought back about how I got started long distance running in 1983. I was a lieutenant colonel at Fort Hood. Our division commander, Major General Woodmansee, a marathon runner, told the senior division officers that after the next monthly staff meeting, that he was going to take us out on a bus 4 miles and make us run back to the conference room. That got me past my mental two-mile limit and was the start of a life of running and trying to stay fit. While his influence was in the form of an order, it was the trigger for a change in my life.

Whether we realize it or not, we all have influence on others.

Obviously, influence can be both positive and negative. It is important as parents that we set a positive example for our children. Staying physically fit by exercising and not smoking will influence your children to do the same. Children can also have a positive influence on the parents. If your parents have settled into a sedentary life style, encourage them to participate in an exercise program. And, it goes beyond family. As I have found, we influence and are influenced by our friends and co-workers.

You do not have to walk down the potato chip aisle at the supermarket to realize that some people need to improve their physical condition. Do your part. Stay fit and be a positive influence on others. Running is a good way to do that.

Hopefully, this column and the race results that are posted with the column will influence others to start a running program.

Recent race results:

Cowtown Marathon (26.2 miles), Ft. Worth, Feb. 27

Ken Johnson, 68 5:49:57

Rodeo Run, 10K (6.2 miles), Houston, Feb. 27

Don Morgan, 30 51:58
Nadine Pharrises, 40 53:27
Scott McClatchy, 40 1:00:24
Mykalyn Mackey, 24 1:01:37
Shane Slough, 35 1:01:52
Jessica Laird, 20 1:04:40

Sweetheart 5K (3.1 miles), Huntsville, Feb. 28

Josh Mizrany, 28	28:17
Leah Koester, 44	29:06
Glen Carter, 59	30:24
Melissa Stelter, 20	31:05
Ken Johnson, 68	34:37

1-Mile

Lavonne Zaiontz, 42	10:08
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Mardi Gras Half Marathon (13.1 miles), New Orleans, Feb. 28

Mark Robinson, 63	2:11:16
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Upcoming Huntsville races:

Mar. 28, Sunday, 2 p.m. – **Run the Trails**, 3.5-mile non-competitive run or walk on the trails at Huntsville State Park. \$3 event entry fee, plus park admission. Refreshments and finisher medals.

Apr. 10 – Hog's Hunt Trail Run, 50K and 25K, Huntsville State Park.

For more about these and other races in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.