

RUNNING SHORTS

Running clubs support all types of runners

By Ken Johnson

Whether you are new to the sport of running or you are an accomplished runner, a running club can help you in many ways. Some running clubs are exclusively for elite runners and others cater to all runners. Some clubs are loosely organized with sporadic activities. Others are more organized with a wide range of activities, including training runs, races and social activities.

We think that one of the best running clubs around is the Seven Hills Running Club in Huntsville, under the current leadership of Niki Bellnoski. The SHRC was formed in 1985 to promote running as a means of achieving and maintaining physical fitness. It was and still is a club for beginners and experienced runners.

If you have ever run on the streets in Huntsville, it is obvious why “hills” is in the club name. The “seven” is not so obvious. Huntsville, in its early days, was known as the “Rome of Texas,” because like Rome, Italy, it was built on seven hills. The hills are Peckerwood, Gospel, Knowledge, Capitol, Smith, Cotton Gin and Depot. The origin of these names and the location of the hills are listed in the club history on the Seven Hills Running Club web site (<http://www.7hills.us>).

All the club members are listed on the club web site. They make up a cross-section of the community, including college students, professors, correctional officers, professionals and seniors. The club has attracted many runners from other Texas cities and other states and some SHRC members also belong to other running clubs.

The club dues are the same as they were when the club was formed, \$7 a year for an individual or \$10 for the whole family.

Running clubs offer the opportunity for runners to become more involved in the sport. You can interact with other runners, share your experiences and goals and learn more about running. Most of us have self-imposed limits on ourselves and tend to run the same distances at the same speed. With the support of a running club, it is easier to break out of the mold and improve both your distance and speed. Or, a running club can help provide the motivation you may need to continue running on a regular basis. Many runners compete in races on a regular basis. Running clubs can provide recognition for completion of these events. While running clubs, such as the SHRC, provide many activities and information for its members and the community, probably the greatest benefit is the running partnerships that develop among club members. Members get together and train in pairs or small groups and many travel together to races in other cities.

The SHRC offers a wide variety of activities, to include training runs, a monthly club run, club newsletter, meetings, guest speakers, a list of races in the area and the annual Huntsville Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk each October. The club maintains a large web site with useful information for its members and the running community. A printable membership application is available on the web site homepage. If you want more information about the club, feel free to call me at (936) 295-4291.

Recent race results:

Capitol 10K (6.2 miles), Austin, Mar. 30

John Dunphy, 60	57:01
Robert Rodriguez, 37	59:32
Alan Jenkin, 75	1:34:27