

RUNNING SHORTS

Great places to run in your own backyard

By Ken Johnson

We are fortunate in the Huntsville area to have so many great places to run. So, never let not having a place to run be one of your excuses for not getting out and improving your health by running on a regular basis. All of us have preferences for where we run and what surface we run on. And, some of us prefer a variety. We have it all in Huntsville. Here's a list:

1. Huntsville High School and New Waverly High Tracks. Open to the public when not in use by the school. Four loops equal a mile. Rubber surface.
2. Sam Houston State University's track on Avenue O. Open to the public 24 hours a day. Four loops equal a mile. Old cinder surface.
3. Huntsville State Park Trails. The park is 9 miles south of Huntsville on I-45. It has miles of dirt trails for running. Printed trip maps are available at the park. There are also 8 measured courses on the Seven Hills Running Club web site, <http://www.7hills.us>. From the homepage, click on Course Maps.
4. Trail at the Eastham-Thomason Park on 7th Street in Huntsville. This trail is still being developed, but is available for running now. Enter the trail on 7th Street just east of the TDCJ building, across from Sam Houston Elementary School. There is also a concrete trail on the south side of 7th street at the park. The distance is .4 mile around the soccer fields and by the new city swimming pool.
5. Veterans Memorial Parkway. Start at the southwest corner of the West Hill Mall parking lot. Run south on the sidewalk along Veterans Memorial Parkway. There are mileage marks on the sidewalk every half-mile, all the way out to 4.5 miles.
6. Treadmill at home or at a health club. While treadmills are boring for many, they are ideal for running during inclement weather.
7. City Streets and County Roads. Many runners prefer to run on the asphalt streets and roads. Design your own course or use one of the pre-measured course maps on the Seven Hills Running Club web site.

Huntsville area runners are taking advantage of the many races held this time in the Spring. The most recent was the Hog's Hunt Trail Run 50K and 25K at the Huntsville State Park on March 31. Eight Huntsville area runners participated. Completing the 50K (31 miles) race were Felix Montelongo (5:33:29), Gerald Peters (5:49:17), Phillip Clark (5:55:25) and Jan Parks (7:32:51). Completing the 25K (15.5 miles) were Robert Duncan (2:16:58), J. C. Guzman (2:18:46), Matt Wagner (2:38:20) and Curtis Barton (2:55:40). Congratulations to these runners, who endured heavy rain and mud during the race.

The Seven Hills Running Club held it's annual non-competitive trail run/walk at the Huntsville State Park on March 25. Runners and walkers completing this event were: Curtis Barton, Nick Bellnoski, Joey Boeller, Lindsey Boeller, Robert Duncan, Phillip Clark, John Cook, Esther Cousins, True Cousins, Mary Ann Davis, Ron Davis, J. C. Guzman, Marilynn Johnson, Steve McCafferty, Kim Moorhouse, Sara Seale and Niki Swearingen.

Congratulations to Christopher Wilson and Gerald Peters of Huntsville for completing the Bataan Death March Memorial Marathon in the desert at White Sands

Missile Range in New Mexico on March 25. Wilson completed the 26.2-mile event in 4:18:21 and Peters in 5:18:22.

Irvin Harvey, 61, of Huntsville completed the Capitol 10,000 (6.2 miles) in Austin on March 25 with a time of 53:26.

Donald Freeman, 57, of Huntsville completed the Wirefly Half Marathon (13.1 miles) in Washington, D.C. on March 24 with a time of 2:20:16.

Jerry Flanagan, 66, of Madisonville took first place in his age group at the Azalea 10K (6.2 miles) in Tyler on March 24. His time was 53:03.

There are many races in the area during the month of April, including a 5K (3.1 miles) run or walk in Huntsville on the 28th. Check the Race Schedule on the Seven Hills Running Club web site.