

May, 2013

Howdy runners,

We just came off two fabulous club events, our April Spring Fling in Elkins Lake, followed by the fabulous Run Forest Run at Forest Glen Camp. Hats off to everyone involved!

Planning and putting on these events takes a lot of work from a lot of great people. One sometimes-overlooked aspect is course design--putting together a course that is the right length, safe, and easy to follow is tough to do!

As we have been having some special club runs and moving some others into neighborhoods--we have been doing a lot of course design. On both the Run for the Governors and Run Forest Run much of the course design was done by longtime club member Don Ortloff, who really has a knack for it. Steve Bickford, among others, has been involved in designing the courses at Elkins Lake and in Forest Hills. This year's Elkins Lake course, designed with the help of Glenn Green and Angie Taylor, was one of the best I have seen in Huntsville--it is definitely a keeper.

But as our club has grown, we need to revisit some old courses as well. In our last officer meeting, we agreed that the standard 5K and 1-mile courses from the HKC, which we use for several club runs, need to be adjusted for safety concerns. They were great when our club runs were smaller, 10-20 people, but we now average about three times that many runners. A committee composed of Ken Johnson, Clayton Heald, Emily Garner, and Scott McDonald will be revisiting both courses this summer. We plan to hold our August "Heat Wave" 5K on our newly designed courses!

**** Our Next Club Run ****

Our next club run is a perennial favorite:

Monday, May 27, 8 a.m.: Memorial Day 5K & 1-Mile Run/Walk, Ken Johnson's House, 114 Timberwilde Drive, Huntsville (Timberwilde Subdivision across Hwy. 30 from the Fairgrounds). Register at the starting point. \$1 entry. Race followed by breakfast. Restrooms will be available.

If you are coming from out of town, from the I-45 exit and Highway 30, head west about 3 miles, and then turn right (north) into Timberwilde, and Ken's house is about half a mile down. Did I mention breakfast will be served? This club run is always well attended and I hope to see you there!!

**** Club News ****

Bumper Stickers! We have bumper stickers! Seven Hills bumper stickers are now available. These high-quality, easy-to-remove stickers are oval shaped, with the club name and web site at the top and bottom, and your choice of four distances in the center: 5K, 10K, 13.1, and 26.2.

We will offer a sticker for free to finishers of the Huntsville Half Marathon (13.1), and to individuals who complete their very first 5K or 10K ever at one of our club runs. Otherwise, you can have yours for the eminently reasonable price of \$2. We will have the stickers for sale at the Memorial Day Run and thereafter. Next time you see Glenn Green or Kristy Vienne, who led this effort--give 'em a hand, they did a great job.

Club members Megan Gautreaux and Aaron McDonald competed at the Texas High School Mountain Bike Championships at Huntsville State Park two weeks ago. Megan and Aaron each finished second in the state in the Freshman/Sophomore division. Hats off to these fine young athletes.

On our latest news, you can see club members running races all over the state--including Courtney West, tearing it up all over greater Houston.

With summer here, the number of races starts to slow down. Our June club run, the June Bug Run, will be held in the middle of the month: June 15. Then, the following weekend is the Polish Pickle in Bremond, one of Ken Johnson's favorite races, with free sausage afterwards that will definitely put right back on all the pounds you just took off running the race :)

All this news and more can be found on our web site, www.7hills.us, which has the latest on everything. Ken Johnson's most recent "Running Shorts" column, if you missed it in the Item, is here: <http://7hills.us/RunningShorts.htm>. Recent race results for club members are here: <http://7hills.us/latestnews.htm> -- always up to date, and includes pictures. Please help Ken, who serves as our webmaster, keep up with your latest race times by e-mailing them to him at 1941runner@sbcglobal.net. Also be sure to check out our Facebook group, here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/55964470688/>, which has lots of pictures and posts about running--there is something new every day.

**** Runner of the Month ****

We have so many runners who love running so thoroughly, you can just tell immediately. For me, that was the case with club member Becca Houts of The Woodlands.

Becca has been having a great spring. Because a power outage stopped her alarm clock, Becca made it up to the Hogs Hunt 25K, in April, with 14 minutes to spare. Fortunately club member J.C. Guzman was there to help Becca "get calmed down and started off well" and then came back after he finished to help her push the last half mile or so. Becca finished second overall in 2:26:43, a PR.

Meanwhile, Jacob Gautreaux has been helping been pushing Becca in her training, especially on the long runs. In mid-June, Becca will compete in the Chattanooga Mountain Stage Race: three

days, three mountains, sixty miles. She's be glad for those long runs then!

Becca shows us the success a dedicated athlete can achieve on the roads, and the power of community--our running community--in helping that athlete achieve that success. Therefore, with the powers invested in me by Graphar, Roman God of Running, Tulips, and Steel Wool, I hereby declare Becca Houts Seven Hills' RUNNER OF THE MONTH. Congratulations Becca!

**** Darren's Training Tips ****

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, we are beginning a series called "Finding Your Zen"--the process of discovering the right mix and amount of training to maintain your conditioning, avoid injury, and keep you excited about running. Over the next six months, I will be asking various club members to explain how they have found their Zen. We will begin with relatively new runners, who just have a couple of years under their belt, and work our way up to members who have been running for decades.

This month's testimony comes from Craig Henderson, a club member almost since he first started running a couple of years ago. When I ran with him in 2011, it was clear he was still Finding His Zen. He has made a lot of progress since then! Here is his story:

Finding my current zen has been about a 6 year journey. It's almost accidental that I started running in the first place. I was exercising at the HKC, and the elliptical machines I preferred were all taken, so I tried running on the treadmill. I was about a mile into it when my thighs started burning, and I started huffing and puffing. My thought was, "I really should be doing more of this." Four months later, I ran my first 5K (the Ken Johnson Memorial Day run), and a year later, I ran my first marathon. I was hooked.

I would love to say that I look forward to each day I run--but in fact, putting one foot in front of another is often a struggle. Taking off weight was a huge motivator. I've lost 75 pounds, and I feel good about that. This keeps me motivated in general, it doesn't really help me with the day to day. Here are some ways that I've found help me maintain my current zen:

1. I've gravitated to people I enjoy running with. The group accountability, as well as the social aspect, is a big motivator. The trail running group helped me stay in the game early on, I've had a steady training partner for about a year now, and recently, I've really enjoyed a weekly run date with my wife. Although it's hard to have intimate conversations while powering through hill repeats, I believe the partnership in just being out there together is enriching our marriage.
2. Crosstraining has been very important--cycling, mountain biking, swimming, and weight training. In fact, after a period of hard running training leading up to the Houston half marathon, I switched to biking, training for the MS150. It gave me a mental break and let me recover from some tendonitis in my Achilles.
3. Mixing up the terrain has also been very helpful. Since I've been running, I've loved going on the trails. My weekly trail running dates with my wife are becoming a highlight of my week. I also enjoy hitting the treadmill hard for speed work, and I love running in new locations, which I am able to do when I travel.

4. Racing is a big motivator. Scheduling “A” races is the carrot I often need to push myself into the notorious “pain cave.” But, I’ve found that balance is in order. I need the recovery time afterwards.
5. This leads me to my last point: easy running is my friend. While high intensity intervals and tempo runs are certainly in order, varying paces is very important for me performing my best—research backs this up—and this includes easy recovery runs. Too much high intensity work kills my enjoyment, and there is nothing like an easy trail run to remind me why I love running in the first place.
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Thank you for helping make us the "biggest little running club in Texas." Happy running!

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